

Piano Pedagogy Forum
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Bowing to the Inevitable: String Improvisation in the College Studio

by Mathias Wexler

From a presentation given at the Pi Kappa Lambda National Convention, New Orleans, La., December 11, 1999.

I am very happy to be able to spend some time with you this morning talking about a musical process, improvisation, that has become part of my ongoing development as a performer and more and more a part of my teaching. I feel a little intimidated to be here in New Orleans, where jazz began and so much great improvisation has taken place. My saving grace is that I will be speaking from the point of view of a classically trained studio string teacher, representing a group of hungry johnnie-come-latelys to the jazz and improvisation banquet. This talk is a good excuse to do publicly what I've been doing privately for a some years, namely, to ruminate about the larger implications for our college performance curriculums of studying music in a changing world. As a group, studio string teachers are probably one of the most influential, but also one of the most deeply conservative of all college music teachers, and it is high time that the ground began to shift. Where might our observations lead us as we peer forward with hope and trepidation into the mists of the new millennium? Where is the study of performance now? And what new curricular directions do we want to pursue? What constitutes a valuable music education at the close of the 20th century?

Improvisation, of course, has been part of many traditions for a long time. It is much older than the European tradition that most of us were raised with, and is used in different musics all over the world, not to mention American pop and jazz, which are central most of our student's musical formation and orientation.

My thesis is at once simple and daunting: music schools across this country are facing an educational and cultural upheaval of unprecedented proportions as they seek to train and educate future generations of musicians and music appreciators. This crisis has been in the making for many years, as technology and demographics have gradually remade the world in which our prospective students develop, and the culture that produced most of our revered repertoire and performance traditions recedes ever further into the past. The fact is that the basic assumptions that for generations have undergirded the world of classical music are being questioned and revised. The distinctions between classical and other types of music are gradually being blurred, and it is harder and harder to claim with impunity that European art music is inherently superior to other kinds of music and therefore can be studied to the exclusion of those other musics.

These cultural issues are not at all abstract for those of us who teach the performance of classical music. The loss of the European cultural hegemony in America poses difficult curricular dilemmas for performance teachers but it may also present a golden opportunity to modernize our methods and try new approaches. Our student's futures in music, either as producers or appreciators, depend on our dealing wisely and

expeditiously with the new realities that confront us.

To say that performance studios in music schools are influential is a gross understatement. Students work with their studio teacher for the entire four years of their undergraduate career. According to 1999 the Higher Education Arts Data Services Survey, there were, as of fall 1998, 26,971 undergraduates, enrolled in Bachelor of Music Programs in the United States. These are all programs with a music content of over 65%. The majority of these students are listed in the survey as being majors in a particular instrument, such as guitar, percussion, or voice. As we all know, to be "in the studio" of so and so means to undertake an involved, committed apprenticeship that may include several meetings a week individually or in small groups. Studios, especially string studios, have evolved strong, self-perpetuating traditions, and artist-teachers, as we are often called have, for the most part, blithely continued to teach the same repertoire that we, our teachers, and their teachers, learned decades ago. It is not only the repertoire, but the entire culture of studios--string studio especially--that seems frozen in an institutional time capsule. Music teaching studios are the last great 19th century holdout of higher education. Within them, older repertoire is still better and we face a growing need to question and examine the teacher's methods or biases. Studio teachers are often unabashedly authoritarian, presiding over every aspect of their student's development, from technical development and selection of repertoire to the formation of their aesthetic taste. There is no explicit, formalized curriculum--the standardizing force is the assumption that students will immerse themselves in the repertoire of the great canon reverently handed down to us through the generations. In other words, classical musicians the string players especially, have become interpreters of great works from earlier times, part artist, part curator.

And because stringed instruments have long been identified most closely with the symphonic, chamber and solo performance of classical music, nowhere is the curricular crisis more glaring than in the teaching of violinists, violists, cellists and bassists. We string teachers need to think more creatively about our options in preparing our students for a profession that is in great flux.

The truth is, we string teachers have been passing on to our students the product of a culture that has little to do with our own. In their dormitories, our students surf the web, downloading samples of Indian rock bands that are in turn influenced by American blues or rap. Even if they have an allegiance to the historical repertoire we are asking them to assimilate, they also feel connected, on their own time, to entirely different bodies of popular music, each variety with its own stylistic and cultural norms. Today's music students, like students generally, are media saturated, and as at home with the technorhythms of MTV as with the classic structure and presentation of a symphony or string quartet. Even IF they love classical music--and some of my students openly admit they don't - they aren't necessarily convinced that it's on a higher aesthetic plane than any of the other genres they listen to.

And of course, more practically, neither is anyone else, and so its not only the cultural foundation, but more importantly, the commercial market for music that is changing. At the Crane School of Music in Potsdam, New York where I teach, the Community

Performance Series used to offer six or seven concerts a year, featuring well-known classical soloists and chamber music groups. Ten years ago the series folded and has been replaced by a series that includes only one or two classical events. A few blockbuster events notwithstanding, the size of the audience for orchestral and chamber music is level at best, and probably declining. The classical record industry recently went through a bloody period of consolidation brought on by declining record sales of Beethoven Symphonies and Mozart piano concertos. And full-time orchestral jobs, for generations the backbone of the music profession, are becoming harder and harder to get. The traditional job market for traditionally trained performing musicians is saturated. Performing musicians, more than ever, will have to be flexible and be prepared to respond with new skills to new opportunities or create their own.

In any case, we need to make sure that our music students of the present will be the music producers of the future. Clearly, the narrowly focused, conservatory-type training needs to evolve. We need to give students new improved tools for a lifetime of artistic growth, and this, I believe, is where the study of improvisation will help tremendously.

Improvisation has a long and honorable history and was for centuries a mainstay of every professional musician. J.S. Bach, Handel, Mozart, Beethoven and Liszt were all improvising performers. Guiseppe Tartini's 1747 treatise on violin playing, *L'Arte Del Arco*, included a chart showing 17 ways of embellishing a particular adagio melody. That same year, Bach, as a way of presenting his credentials to Frederick the Great, improvised on a musical theme given to him at the time. Leopold Mozart's 1756 treatise on string playing includes a chapter on the tasteful way to improvise a fantasia.

As it was two centuries ago, improvising is still one of the best tools teachers have to train well-rounded musicians. Improvisation strengthens memory, and teaches a student about the geography of their instrument, as well as strengthens their rhythmic perception. It's also the most natural way to link student's formal training with the rest of their musical interests and experience, not to mention an opportunity for students to express an individuality that tends to be repressed during all-too-strict traditional studio instruction.

There are a number of levels of improvisation, some more complex than others, as any jazz player will tell you. You can embellish an existing line by changing or enhancing the rhythm, create a new melodies over the same chords that accompanied the original melody, or even, at the highest level, reharmonize and recompose an entirely new idea.

A major interest of mine is incorporating improvisation studies into the college string studio curriculum, a place where it is sorely needed. The first major hurdle, I find, is psychological. Classical music students are very concerned with playing it RIGHT. Can you blame them? After all, that's what its all about isn't it? Playing the right notes at the right time with the right articulation, and so on. It takes a tremendous leap of faith for a student to accept the following statement: "for the next ten minutes, there are no wrong notes." In the context of normal studio culture, this is an insane statement. I have found that creating a safe space for improvisation is a challenge all its own. We need to work to create a culture of improvisation within our college music curriculums where the

experience of learning improvisation is a respected part of growing up musically. To get started, my students and I sat around in a big circle, and I played a simple rhythmic pattern on one string and everyone repeated it together. Jazz players will tell you that this is a form of "call and response". After a couple of times going around the circle, I started to play different rhythms for each person--giving them an opportunity to hear themselves alone without being in a threatening situation. The next level is asking them to respond with a different rhythm, to "finish" what the instructor starts. And slowly, the feeling in the room begins to loosen and relax. Among the other valuable qualities of improvising is that it is tremendous fun, and although we do our best in the studio to be serious and correct, a little fun and relaxation does wonders for morale. After working around the circle several times with one pitch, I begin to add other pitches. Finally, we begin to use entire scales. Another variation of this idea is what I call "cellophone", where each player passes on a short melody, changing the rhythm or pitch as they do. One terrific exercise is to break the players down into small groups and have each group improvise and sustain a chord together - and yes it can be dissonant. Another very useful exercise, is improvising in a particular key, just exploring the feeling of being completely free of the printed page. After a while, you can add specific rhythmic patterns. Even within one key, improvisation is a great way to train a young musical ear. And because improvisers practice patterns, practicing like an improviser is a great way to learn the patterns of your particular instrument.

Once students are feeling more comfortable, there are all kinds of way to offer opportunities to improvise. For example, to combat rhythmic difficulties, you can have someone play a scale with the rhythm section on tape. Then you can ask them to vary the rhythm, while continuing to practice the scale. Then, after a while, I might introduce simple harmonic progressions. Jamie Aebersold has a wonderful series of music minus one CDs, which are graded from very simple to quite complex. I should mention that there are now a number of very good improvising method books available for strings, such those by Jody Harmon and Chris White, as well as excellent non instrument specific methods such as the creativity in Improvisation set by Chris Azzara, Richard Grunow and Edwin Gordon.

Incidentally, I have found, along with Dr. Peck, that improvising is a wonderful way to practice basic harmonic literacy and aural skills: Studio improvisation can be effective reinforcement of aural skills training. String instrumentalists are constantly struggling to feel comfortable with the geography of our instruments, playing in positions and travelling between positions. Improvising is not only great aural training, it can be a way to connect that training with the technical demands offset, the cello., for instance, in a call and response context, use segments of scales to create melodies, practice thinking rhythmically by keeping the rhythmic pattern and changing the notes, or using sequences to create melodies--finally using arpeggios to create melodies, which takes us into a more harmonic way of thinking. Another angle is to improvise in one key, say, C Major, using only fourth position. It is one thing to study out of a book or complete written exercises and quite another to have this information at your fingertips NOW. Of course, there are other angles as well: in the context of building a solo one can discuss different ways to shape a phrase, for example, build these four bars from piano to a forte climax, or, start

forte and let the melody disappear. Transposition was another skill that can and should be practiced by string players in the concrete context of a performance studio., for example, take a three-note cell, which happens to be the root, third and fifth of the first chord in the given progression and transpose it correctly over every chord in the progression - or how about filling in the skips to create ascending or descending scales?

Probably the most exciting thing for my students in discovering the improv world was the sense of connection to the creative moment that each student experienced while improvising, the sense of the interweaving of spontaneity and musical knowledge that occurs when you make your own music. And it was FUN! My students, while feeling frightened at first, ultimately have really enjoyed the opportunity to improvise in class.

Last semester at Crane we had an improvisation festival for cellos. We called it Cellorama, and invited two improvising cellists, Chris White and Sera Smolen, to lead us in a series of workshops designed to further the development of our improvisation skills. The workshop was a smashing success, attended by an international group of cellists and made all who attended much more comfortable with improvisation generally.

My dream is that someday, Crane students will have to demonstrate proficiency in improvisation to pass their minimum competency playing exams, and that the development of improvisatory skills in various contexts will be a part of the core performance experience.

One of the problems with, or perhaps I should say, anxieties that a classically trained musician has about improv is that sometimes it doesn't sound GOOD. By this I mean that sometimes the surface of improv can sound rough or unpolished, with less attention paid to the quality of sound or the FINISH of the presentation. There might even be MISSED NOTES! In our late 20th century world of unnaturally perfect recordings and big name soloists playing the same accepted repertoire over and over, the space for anything even vaguely experimental at the top levels of classical performance has become very small indeed. And that is why improvisation is such a breath of fresh air: it is more process oriented, and the goals are less stale perfection than self-expression, the joy of making your own music, and there is an exciting sense that its alright take a chance, to risk the possibility of making a mistake in the service of self-expression. In fact, we desperately need this kind of training for our students. We performance teachers need to be more concerned with the students subjective CONNECTION to their music and less concerned with the final outcome. Studying music is and should always be more than learning to reproduce correctly - it must be about creativity, connection and total musicianship. I agree with with David Elliot, who, in his book "Music Matters" makes the point that improvising only means composing on the spot in the simplest sense. The originality, complexity, variety and of any improvised performance is linked inextricably to composing, arranging, transposing and of course technical skill. Improvisers must be able to think harmonically and have at their fingertips massive amounts of motivic and scalar material. Improvising and improved musicianship go hand and hand, no matter what the basic level of accomplishment. All our students should be encouraged to do it!

In conclusion, I'd like to return to a question I posed at the beginning: what constitutes a valuable education in musical performance at the close of the 20th century? First of all, I should hasten to add that much of what goes on in music schools IS valuable and necessary. Students still have to learn scales, and certainly I am not advocating turning our backs on Beethoven or Brahms, for the same reason that English or literature students should never neglect Shakespeare. Our musical inheritance is precious to us and we will continue to turn it over, to learn and perform it and think about it. But we must allow ourselves the flexibility to search out new ways to connect with our students, or in this case, to reclaim a very old way, and in the process, open a world of tremendous new educational and musical possibilities. We must face the changing world or be rendered irrelevant and ineffective. We should follow the examples of musicians who routinely cross the jazz/classical barrier, like bassist Edgar Myer, or pianist Keith Jarrett, or Chick Corea, who recently recorded his new piano concerto with the London Symphony. In embracing the culture of improvisation, we will connect our students in the healthiest, most creative way possible to the music of their time, and musics of other times and places as well. The bottom line is that music students of the future will not be able to consider themselves fully educated without a strong grounding in improvisation and performing familiarity with non-classical forms of music making. And if by enhancing, by broadening our educational offerings to include improvisation studies we are effectively engaging our students' interest and passion, we will, as educators, be doing our part to strengthen their life-long commitment to this magical form of communication we call music.

Mathais Wexler has enjoyed appearing as chamber musician and soloist in major centers throughout the United States, Canada and Britain. As a founding member of the Monticello Trio he gave over 400 concerts in cities such as New York, Boston, San Francisco and Salt Lake City and at Festivals such as Aspen, Tanglewood and the Yale Summer Music School. He has been Artistic Director of the award winning Albemarle Chamber Music Festival in Virginia and has collaborated with many notable artists, among them Michael Tree of the Guarneri Quartet, members of the American Quartet, the Muir Quartet, the Lark Quartet, and the Miami Quartet, as well as members of the Shanghai Quartet. He has received numerous grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Koussevitsky Foundation, Meet the Composer and Chamber Music America. Mr. Wexler plays a David Caron cello commissioned in 1991 (Taos, New Mexico) and has recorded for Delos, CRI, and ASV records. His recent recording, featuring music of British composer Nicholas Maw, was a finalist's choice for the 1995 Gramophone Magazine Editors Choice Awards. His upcoming recording features Premieres of newly published Strauss chamber music, also for ASV. A graduate of Oberlin Conservatory and the Yale School of Music, he was appointed to the Faculty of the Crane School of Music in 1995.

Adding Notes: A Reflection on Interpretive Freedom

by John Salmon

Several battle cries for interpretive freedom have converged in my mind recently: John Perry, speaking to an audience at last year's Music Teachers National Association convention in Los Angeles, exhorted pianists to view the *Urtext* as only the beginning of the interpretive process; without creativity, Perry argued, no score, however "definitive," will ever come to life in performance. Robert Weirich, speaking to the same group in Los Angeles, urged us to consider "the spirit of improvisation" that caused such works as Beethoven's "Rage Over the Lost Penny" and Mozart's Adagio in B Minor, K. 540, to come to life, even accepting (if not demonstrating at that moment) the esthetic legitimacy of spontaneous note-changing. William Westney, in the August/September 1999 issue of *American Music Teacher*, warns against the perils of perfectionism, stressing beauty as the true goal of practice and performance. Robert Levin, at a 92nd Street Y gathering, defended ornamentation in Schubert.

I am excited by these proclamations, all of which point to the primacy of the performer and the thin line between "creation" and "recreation." In an age that places emphasis on musicologically refined editions of masterworks, each purporting to take us a step closer to the composer's "true" intentions, I revel in the freedom hinted at by the aforementioned distinguished colleagues. Of course, these and most pedagogues would never dispute the necessity of obtaining reliable versions of the printed score as the starting point of a compelling performance. "Necessary but not sufficient" is the phrase best applied to the musical text's role in the performer's life.

I agree wholeheartedly with the notion of comparing the best - by which I mean the most exhaustively researched, most amply explained - editions of masterworks. I would never play a Mozart piano concerto anymore, without first having consulted the *Neue Mozart Ausgabe*, as well as an *Eulenburg* pocket score and maybe even a *Peters* edition for two pianos. But, having done this, am I assured of giving an enchanting performance, full of sparkle, life, wit, drama, and color? It is daunting for me to consider that Lili Kraus, Edwin Fischer, and, in fact, most of the pianists who have ever performed, gave wonderful performances of Mozart without the benefit of modern scholarship.

Of course Lili Kraus and Edwin Fischer were not ignorant of style either. Both knew of Türk's *Klavierschule* (1789), Leopold Mozart's *Violinschule* (1756), and C.P.E. Bach's *Versuch...* (1753-1762). Both knew the musical traditions of the eighteenth-century Viennese classicists. But, above all, both were pianists who knew how to breathe life into a score, with not a whiff of academic rigidity. I remember performances of Lili Kraus, whom I heard many times in my native Fort Worth, that were, like Madame Kraus herself, dramatic, rhetorical, hyperbolic... freshly invented. She didn't use terms like "authenticity" or "performance practice," nor was she particularly preoccupied with one *Urtext* over another. Rather, each piece was a little opera, with full-blooded characters, emotive conflicts, and special effects. I can still hear her playing through a Mozart concerto at a master class, narrating her imagined story, Hungarian accent intact, all r's

rolled lavishly. "Hee-rre he is so sad ... all is gloom. But, wait ... a rrray of sunshine prromiises new life!"

This flair for the dramatic made her performances come alive. At her best, Lili transformed an *Urtext* into a life-changing proclamation, utterly shattering in its immediacy and vibrancy. This is surely what John Perry meant in his challenge to transcend the *Urtext*. I find it highly ironic that Malcolm Bilson, whose performances also pulsate with wit and color, should have ever been accused of being academic, just because he sought to revitalize the "Mozartian message" through an examination of Mozart's notation and his conclusion that period fortepianos are perfectly suited to express Mozart's musical language. Academic is the last thing I think of when I hear Mr. Bilson's magnificent recordings of Mozart piano concertos.

Nowadays, as both teacher and performer, I remember these important role models even as I take spontaneity a step further: I have no trouble adding notes to masterpieces! It is inconceivable to me that, as one example, Scarlatti would have performed the numerous repeated passages in his sonatas the same each time. In addition to changes in dynamics and articulation, I see nothing wrong with making a virtuosic passage of Scarlatti even more brilliant, especially on the last repetition. (See EXAMPLE 1)

EXAMPLE 1: Scarlatti G Major Sonata, L. 335, K. 55, measures 121-22.

original



possible variant



Scarlatti must have been a fabulous player, improvising wildly in El Escorial with the same abandon and imagination as stridemeister James P. Johnson cutting loose in Harlem "rent parties" of the 1920s. I make this analogy not lightly, for it seems to me that most great keyboardists throughout the ages have also been masterful improvisers.

Speaking of ...we know that J. S. Bach published a triplet version of the first invention. Can you imagine that he never played it any other way? Is it so wrong to think that, in a third performance (assuming Bach ever played his own compositions more than twice!), Bach might have played something like the variant in EXAMPLE 2?

EXAMPLE 2: J. S. Bach C Major Invention, measure 1

original



possible variant



While I'm on the topic of Bach, why are we fixated on only the published versions of ornamentation, as if to add a trill here or take out a mordent there were sacrilege? It is nothing of the sort! Far more perverse, in my opinion, is to practice one - and only one - way of ornamenting.

I heard an excellent Baroque ensemble a few months ago, rehearsing a trio sonata of Handel. They practiced the same spot three times, in which the group paused on a cadential six-four chord and the oboist, poised to solo, played the same descending chromatic scale each time (and no doubt the same way in the performance that night, which I unfortunately could not hear) ... beautifully, soulfully, with perfect breath control through the final cadential trill. But what struck me as odd in this otherwise marvelous performance was that he would have played the same *Durchgang* each time. Surely an 18th-century counterpart would have improvised as the mood struck him. (Or will you who know players of the oboe d'amore proffer that the damn thing is so hard to one is lucky to get a sound out of it at all, let alone *improvise*?)

Improvising "*Eingänge*" and "*Durchgänge*" in Mozart seems less controversial nowadays, though I still don't know why I hear so little of it. Occasions abound in the sonatas and concertos for added flourishes, so I am baffled by all the monochromatic repetitions of rondo refrains I hear in juries and on record. Surely Mozart, in the Rondo in D, K. 485, could have played one version of the theme as suggested in EXAMPLE 3:

EXAMPLE 3: Mozart Rondo in D Major, K. 485, measures 95-96

original



possible variant



I believe the same freedom can be extended to most of Haydn's works, incidentally, a topic Gretchen Wheelock addressed at the 1998 Focus on Piano Literature symposium at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

"But what about Beethoven?" you collectively heave. "Remember that slap on the wrist Beethoven gave to Czerny when the young student dared to add notes of his own?" This one incident (relayed to us via a letter Beethoven wrote Czerny 12 February 1816: "...you must forgive a composer who would rather have heard his work performed exactly as written, however beautifully you played it in other respects...") has surely been blown out of proportion by succeeding generations of piano teachers wishing to impart discipline and a high regard for textual fidelity to their students. I believe Beethoven was reacting to Czerny's heavy-handed, unimaginative emendations more than to the very idea of notational tampering. After all, Beethoven first made his reputation in Vienna as an improviser. I am inclined-no, predestined!-to scandalize some colleagues the next time one of my students performs the "Appassionata" Sonata, and changes some of the

figuration in the repetitions of the middle movement. At the very least, noticeable changes of mood, dynamics, and/or articulation must attend every repeat! Why else should we repeat? Don't talk to me about "organic form development," a term German musicologists invented mainly to prove Beethoven's superiority over Schubert (Beethoven had it, Schubert didn't, so the argument goes). I find no merit in repeating, with exactly the same expression, just so the form can "develop organically." And while I'm on the topic of Schubert, go, Robert Levin!! Surely Schubert's music can be ornamented, filled out, dressed up, as the occasion warrants, according to the talent and whim - yes, whim!! - of the interpreter.

It goes without saying that it is possible to ornament music badly, that one can all too easily deny Mozart's twin dicta of *Geschmack* and *Empfindung*. It is obvious when we hear someone play with taste and feeling ... Nat "King" Cole (1917-1965) comes quickly to mind. Daniel Steibelt (1765-1823), and far too many among the living, on the other hand, are examples of what Mozart hated. Lacking taste and feeling, a performer could never animate a score to Mozart's satisfaction, no matter how dazzling his technique or showmanship. Clearly, mere drama and liveliness will not make us great interpreters (though my invitation to my wife, Mari Pino, to play tambourine during my concerts, as Mrs. Steibelt did, still holds).

In this essay, I will not list chronologically every great composer, demonstrating where I'd change or add notes (since I could probably come up with a list longer than the Bible). But I would like to include remarks on two composers whose works we *never* hear ornamented: Chopin and Ravel. I remember learning Chopin's B Major Nocturne, op. 9 #3 long ago. Believing in the sanctity of absolute textual faithfulness, I tried hard to remember the subtle differences among the piece's five statements of the main theme. I ended up photocopying those statements and taping them alongside each other on one page, so I could more clearly see the divergences and come up with mnemonic means of memorizing them. ("This one is straight and direct. This one slithers down chromatically in quintuplets." And so on.) I do not remember if my final performances of that work corresponded note for note with the printed score, or, even more sadly, if my playing conveyed the improvisatory delight Chopin must have had when he first penned those variants. But I do know now that, were I to play that piece today, I would come up with some of my own possible variants, worry more about playing beautifully and with imagination, and worry less about a perfect recitation of the published text.

Herbie Hancock's recorded version of the slow movement of Ravel's G Major Concerto (on the CD *Gershwin's World*) also comes close to hitting the nail on the head in his improvised *fiorituras*. It helps that Hancock's voicings from the world of bebop coincide with Ravel's harmonic language. (I hope somebody will write an essay someday exploring the relations between 20th-century French composers and post-1945 jazz musicians in America.) I don't know if Ravel would have approved of Herbie's flights of fancy, but, frankly, I don't care. While unorthodox, this performance is alive, authentic, immediate, and unique - all the things that make a musical interpretation worthwhile.

I am certainly not suggesting that we need to tamper with the notes of every work we encounter. The spirit of improvisation, necessary in every great performance, can take many forms. But I believe it is time to loosen the strictures of perfectionism (a euphemism for literalism, after all) that have gradually eviscerated the interpreter's art in this age of "note-perfect" recordings and competitions, and to reemphasize the beautiful, the imaginative. To be sure, there are philosophical ramifications to this reorientation ... about the "immutability" of a great work of art, about the moral or esthetic obligations an interpreter has to seek out the creator's "true intentions," about the extent to which a composer's notation refers to a univocal realization in sound ... but we have to leave something for the estheticians to do, and, anyway, this article is plenty long as it is.

I would gladly sip some wine with you someday to explore these issues further. In lieu of that, a poor substitute would be to e-mail me at: jcsalmon@uncg.edu.

John Salmon holds B.M. and B.A. (philosophy) degrees from Texas Christian University, the "Solistendiplom" from the Freiburg Hochschule für Musik, the M.M. degree from the Juilliard School, and the D.M.A. from the University of Texas at Austin. His awards include a fellowship from The Beethoven Foundation, the Premio Jaén, the Loren Eiseley Memorial Award from the University of Maryland Piano Competition, and the Gina Bachauer Memorial Award from the Juilliard School. Salmon has performed in solo and orchestral appearances in the United States, Central America, and Europe. He has recorded for Radio Suisse Romande, RAI Italian Radio, Spanish National Radio, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, WFMT Radio in Chicago, and C-Span and PBS television. Salmon is also active as a jazz pianist, performs regularly with the jazz quintet Spectrum, and recently released a new CD titled "John Salmon Plays Brubeck". He is founder and director of the annual "Focus on Piano Literature" symposium at UNCG.

Master of Music in Piano Accompanying: The Creation of a Degree Program Part II

by Scott Price

Editorial note: The following article is part of a series detailing progress in the creation of a Master of Music degree in piano accompanying at the University of South Carolina. It is the editor's hope that this series may serve as a resource for other academic units involved in this process.

Bachelor of Music in Performance: Emphasis in Piano Accompanying

In the last issue of Piano Pedagogy Forum, initial surveys and plans for the development of degrees in piano accompanying at the University of South Carolina were discussed and outlined. Since that time, several actions and plans have been developed by the piano faculty and have been reviewed and passed by the music faculty.

The music faculty of the University of South Carolina School of Music passed the proposal for an undergraduate emphasis in piano accompanying. The proposal was forwarded to the Courses and Curricula Committee of the Faculty Senate and will be voted on by the general faculty during the Spring semester 2000.

The successful implementation of this degree will provide our piano performance majors with a healthy concentration in beginning piano accompanying skills coupled with a fair amount of accompanying experience. Currently, all piano performance majors on scholarship at the University of South Carolina are required to perform up to one hour of studio accompanying and up to two hours of rehearsal per week in an applied music studio. Students are required to perform this service for each semester that they receive scholarship money. In addition, piano majors are required to enroll in two semesters of the course MUSC 130R Ensemble Accompanying in which they are assigned to an applied music studio where they perform up to one hour of ensemble accompanying per week. Lower division students are normally paired with lower division students and upper division with upper division. Both of these accompanying experiences often involve performances as part of weekly studio classes, undergraduate performance seminars, and possibly undergraduate junior and senior recitals as appropriate. The coordinator of piano accompanying works closely with faculty and students to ensure that appropriate loads and assignments are made. No system works perfectly and some complications and tempers do occasionally flair although most problems seem to be solved in a mutually beneficial manner.

The students are now supported with course work in sightreading and keyboard skills, as well as class/coaching sessions in basic piano accompanying skills. The degree emphasis is as follows:

Bachelor of Music in Performance: Piano Accompanying Emphasis

General Education Requirements - 42 cr. hrs. Major Requirements - 90 cr. hrs. Total Semester Hours Required - 132

GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

Writing (passed with a grade of C or higher.) **(6 cr. hrs.)** ENGLISH 101, 102 (3 cr. hrs. each)

Foreign Language and non-music Electives (10-11 cr. hrs.) (FRENCH, GERMAN, or ITALIAN language proficiency through 122; passed with a grade of B or higher)

Numerical and Analytical Reasoning (6 cr. hrs.) MATH 122 or 141, plus one course selected from MATH (higher level), PHILOSOPHY 110, COMPUTER SCIENCE, STATISTICS; **OR** two courses from the same field selected from PHILOSOPHY 110-111, STATISTICS, COMPUTER SCIENCE

Natural Sciences (7-8 cr. hrs.) Two courses selected from ASTRONOMY, BIOLOGY, GEOLOGY, MARINE SCIENCE, PHYSICS

Humanities and Social Sciences (12 cr. hrs.) History-3 cr. hrs., Fine Arts other than music-3 cr. hrs., 6 cr. hrs. of choice

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

Theory/History Core (25 cr. hrs.) MUSC 115, 116, 215, 216 Music Theory MUSC 117, 118, 217, 218 Sight Singing and Ear Training MUSC 353, 354 Music History One course selected from MUSC 560-564 Music History Topics Courses

Applied Music (usually 32 cr. hrs.) MUSC 211 barrier jury examination at close of 4th semester MUSC 411 Junior recital (half), Senior Recital (full)

Ensembles (8 cr. hrs.) 2 major, 2 accompanying, 2 chamber, 2 of choice

Required Courses (14 cr. hrs.) MUSC 268 Keyboard Harmony and Sight Reading (1 cr. hr.) MUSC 269 Beginning Piano Accompanying (1 cr. hr.) MUSC 269 Beginning Piano Accompanying (1 cr. hr.) MUSC 333 Basic Choral and Instrumental Conducting (2 cr. hr.) MUSC 518 Form and Analysis (3 cr. hr.) MUSC 558 Piano Literature I (3 cr. hr.) MUSC 559 Piano Literature II (3 cr. hr.)

Music Electives (11) At least 9 credits must be selected from: MUSC 543 Song Literature (3 cr. hr.) MUSC 545 Survey of Opera (3 cr. hr.) MUSC 578 Pronunciation for Singers (3 cr. hr.) MUSC 579 Pronunciation for Singers (3 cr. hr.)

MUSC 100-Recital Class (6 semesters with a grade of "S") (must attend 10 seminars per semester)

With accompanying courses being stipulated as required electives and coupled with standard and required courses, interested students receive the following accompanying background and performance experience upon graduation:

1. Keyboard Harmony and Sight Reading
2. Beginning Piano Accompanying (2 semesters)
3. Song Literature
4. Survey of Chamber Music
5. Pronunciation for Singers
6. Basic Choral and Instrumental Conducting
7. 8 credit hours of ensemble experience:
 - 2 credits in major ensemble
 - 2 credits in accompanying practicum
 - 2 credits in chamber ensembles
 - 2 credits of student's choice

The full implementation of this degree emphasis will require some restructuring of faculty loads and some shuffling of course work currently on rotation. At this time, these changes reflect minor restructuring of the piano area and should not cause any problems with existing faculty loads and/or course rotation schedules. We are very fortunate that the course work, accompanying experiences and service requirements were, for the most part, already listed in the undergraduate course catalog. We believe that the creation of this emphasis provides interested students with a strong academic and performance background, and heightens their chances as they apply for graduate assistant positions at the University of South Carolina and other institutions.

Scott Price is Assistant Professor of Piano, Piano Pedagogy, and Coordinator of Group Piano and Piano Accompanying at the University of South Carolina. A graduate of the University of Oklahoma, the Cleveland Institute of Music, and Bowling Green State University, he has studied with Jane Magrath, Thomas Hecht and Virginia Marks. He has performed at the national conventions of the Music Teachers National Conference, Music Teachers National Association, the National Conference on Piano Pedagogy, and has given performances and seminars at the Meyerson Symphony Center in Dallas TX, the University of Oklahoma Seminar for Piano Teachers, the North Dakota State Music Teachers Convention, the South Carolina State Music Teachers Convention, and the Bowling Green State University Summer Music Institute. He has served as repetiteur with Lyric Opera Cleveland, and as music director for Lyric Opera Cleveland's Educational Outreach program. He has been a faculty member of the Cleveland Music School Settlement and the Bowling Green State University Creative Arts program. Dr. Price is creator and co-editor of the on-line piano pedagogy journal "Piano Pedagogy Forum."

Achieving Individual and Group Success

by Cynthia Benson

One of the many goals for group piano students is to teach them to become independent learners at the keyboard. We cannot teach every skill to its highest level or every piece of music they will ever need to know, but must teach in such a way that they can continue to develop functional skills or learn new music on their own. In developing skills that equip students to use the keyboard after the course, students need to realize that skills learned in class are not only to 'pass the class' but also to be used and improved beyond the class. For this attitude to develop, each student must feel successful and involved in the learning process.

One of the challenges in achieving individual success is the combination of different levels and experiences of students in the same class. Even those in beginning classes with no previous training will show different rates of learning and progress. Added to these challenges, consider these typical scenarios in a group piano class:

1. A student who has missed a day (or more) of classes and does not contact the teacher about make up work before coming to class.
2. A student who does not progress as quickly or have the same facility as others in the class.
3. A student who does little or no practice between classes.
4. A student who is self-conscious and becomes easily frustrated in class.

These scenarios could describe four different students or one student. In all scenarios, the individual will have different needs than the other members of the class for different reasons. While there are many variables in determining student progress, student learning and success in the classroom does affect progress and is the responsibility of the teacher. I recall a saying I read as a graduate student at the University of Texas at Austin: "Learning can occur without teaching however, teaching has not occurred if there is no learning." For whatever reasons the student does not progress, the experiences inside the classroom can determine the future progress and motivation outside of the classroom.

How can individual success be ensured without sacrificing the "good" of the group? As Janet Lyman stated in her article, "Remember the true nature of group teaching and teach to the group as well as the individual." There are a number of advantages to teaching functional skills in a group environment, but how do we approach teaching a group in such a way that ensures individual student success? In developing independent learners, what contingencies will be motivating besides grades since students will not receive grades for continued learning or improving keyboard skills after the course? I consider these questions every time I walk into the group piano classroom and have found some basic principles and strategies that assist me in achieving group and individual success.

Sequencing for Success

One principle is sequencing or structuring the steps of teaching a task in a way that will

maintain involvement of all students with each step of the sequence. For example, when teaching a two-hand accompaniment (RH chords, LH single bass note) notated with Roman numerals:

1. Saying bass note in rhythm
2. Playing (and saying) bass note in rhythm
3. Saying chord names
4. Spelling chords tones
5. Saying chord names while playing
6. Spelling chords while playing
7. Playing chord names or spelling chords in rhythm
8. Playing hands together blocked
9. Tapping rhythm of appropriate style with both hands
10. Playing hands together in appropriate style

Throughout any teaching sequence, I ask students to verbalize what they are playing as in the above example. This lets me observe if they "know" what they are playing and keeps them involved mentally as well as physically. It also works on their coordination of doing two things at the same time. I also have students say finger numbers aloud while playing scales or say chord letter names when reading Roman numerals (or vice-versa) of chord progressions. I have found this helps students unsure of the material when playing in a group and reinforces correct performance of the given task. When reading melodies of transposing instruments, singing solfege syllables reinforces sight-singing skills. When sight-reading single-line melodies or bass line, saying the intervallic relationship between notes or saying/singing solfege syllables encourages students to think not only play. When playing four-part hymns or scores hands separately, calling out the intervals between soprano and alto or bass and tenor helps students 'see' intervals rather than reading one note at a time.

Going back to the typical group piano class scenario of the student who does not have the same facility as others in the class, verbalizing the correct answers is a way for the student to be successful. Breaking down the material into small well-sequenced steps will also help this student in that it demonstrates ways to practice and allows many opportunities for success. The more success this student experiences, the less frustrated s/he will be which, in turn, will lead to more success.

This student will probably need many playing repetitions for success as well. To allow many repetitions without slowing the pace for others in the class, more parts or ways that will make accompaniment more challenging may be added such as:

1. Improvise a countermelody
2. Add an ostinato or walking bass line
3. Read the melody and bass line
4. Use a different accompaniment style

Those who can readily play the accompaniment are met with more challenges, while those who need more repetitions of the steps in the original sequence will be allowed more opportunities for success. The finished product from the whole group can become a nice ensemble as well. To make scales more challenging, change the articulation in one hand or have some play in eighth notes (more octaves) while others play in quarter notes. With any lesson plan, I try to include steps in each part of a lesson plan that will allow all students to be successful and steps that can challenge when needed.

Feedback with Focus

Within a sequence such as the one above, there are also many opportunities for individual response and feedback. Even though group piano is a 'group' situation, there should be many opportunities for individual response/performance. To call on individuals for response or performance is one of the suggestions that I make most frequently to my graduate assistants and pedagogy students. Individual performance or response does not have to be long. Having a student simply play the first note or phrase or respond to short answer questions can be done in a small amount of time and frequently with many students during class. One way to involve the whole class with individual response or performance is to have the class give feedback as well as the teacher. "Did the student spell the chord correctly?" "What chords did s/he use in that harmonization?" "Did s/he use the correct dynamics?" In each of the above steps for learning a two-hand accompaniment, a student could be asked to perform one of the steps before all perform. Since we can not watch all students all of the time, this will also help assess how each individual student is progressing throughout each class meeting. This assessment allows teacher feedback that can be specific and reinforcing to the student. In each class meeting, my goal is to have asked for a response or performance from every student in the class (as many times possible). This feedback is also helpful to the individual student in that it not only shapes correct student responses/performances, but also elicits students' self-perceptions of success. The more often feedback can be given to the student in one of the scenarios who is self-conscious and easily frustrated, the more information this student will have in forming realistic perceptions of progress in the course. Specific feedback can be a proactive response, if the student is set up to give appropriate response or performance. Maximizing the probability of student success allows for more sincere approving feedback rather than reacting to student performance with negative feedback only.

Another point about teacher feedback is that it does not always have to be positive to be given, but specific, frequent and sincere. If feedback is always positive, it can be perceived as insincere. If "good" always follows student or group performance, "good" will not function as feedback. Students can detect this insincerity and research has actually shown that negative feedback is perceived to be more sincere. When the class performs together and not all were successful, specific feedback should be given about both unsuccessful and successful aspects of the performance. "Great! That was the correct fingering for that scale, but some F#'s were missed." Feedback from students about the group's performance can effectively involve all in listening, as well as playing.

Self-evaluation, Self-motivation

I have found that motivating and effective feedback given is not only from the teacher or peers, but from self. Self-evaluation creates involvement of the student in the teaching and learning process and encourages motivation and enthusiasm. One way to include self-evaluation in group piano is to take advantage of in-class solos or playing exams by recording these using video, audio cassette, MIDI sequencer sound module, or the recording option on some digital keyboards. I usually give students the opportunity to evaluate their performance after watching or listening before I give feedback. This way I know if they really hear what needs improvement rather than repeating what I had told them earlier. If playing exams are administered during class time, classmates can also be involved by having them write constructive comments. Recording does not always have to occur with prepared items only. Any material performed in class can be recorded. I have students record any type of skill from sightreading, scales, to harmonization on the recording option of the digital keyboard and self-evaluate their performance. From this evaluation, they know what aspects they need to practice before leaving the classroom. I can also monitor their performance and evaluation through the headsets and lab system. It is important to mention that particular aspects of the music to be performed should be discussed and noted before performance and evaluation. A checklist of these aspects can be derived by the teacher, classmates, or performer. Setting up goals and pinpointing problem spots before sight-reading a piece helps the student self-evaluate during class. I avoid putting students on headsets to practice sightreading until we have 'talked through' the piece. I am also trying to set them up to always think before playing! The student in one of the scenarios who practices little or none between classes may more likely be motivated to practice when s/he evaluates own performance. Students will tend to be their hardest critic, not the teacher. Self-evaluation through video or audio media can be just the incentive needed as it allows the student to observe own progress and success.

Self-evaluation also teaches skills that develop independence and confidence - or an independent learner - and places the responsibility of teaching and learning in the student's hands. In the first scenario, a student has missed a day (or more) of class and does not contact the teacher about make up work before coming to class. If this student feels involved in part of the teaching/learning process, s/he may learn responsibility for own learning and become concerned about what was missed in class when absent.

Self-evaluation or evaluations of others can also demonstrate the student's awareness of both positive and negative aspects of the performance or what the student hears when listening. Listening skills can be effectively developed in the group piano classroom. Another opportunity for evaluation involving the whole class is while students are paired on headsets through the lab system. Many evaluations can occur at the same time during class and sometimes peer evaluation and explanations are more effective than the teacher's. I will pair students not for just duets but also to compare chord choices for harmonization, check each other's scale fingerings, or evaluate performance of literature, transposition exercises, or chord progressions.

I have found one of the most motivating factors in achieving student success in group piano is making music. With all of the functional skills that need to be developed in a short amount of time, it is easy to forget that our goals should have musical outcomes. In every class, I try to have some good music making occur. Since our students are developing musicians on another instrument, they can relate to this expectation. Musical goals could be correct voicing of a two-hand accompaniment, 'phrase-shaping' scales and chord progressions, or correct balance of ensemble playing. Positive associations with keyboard playing through musical outcomes can ensure student success and encourage independent learners and lifelong learning at the keyboard.

Cynthia Benson, Assistant Professor and Coordinator of Group Piano at Bowling Green State University, holds a bachelor's degree in music education from the University of Central Arkansas, a master's degree in piano performance from Rice University and a D.M.A. in music education with an emphasis in piano pedagogy from the University of Texas at Austin. She has presented research at state conferences of the Music Educators Association in Illinois and Texas, and at the 1995 National Association of Music Therapists National Convention in Houston. She currently serves on the National Advisory Board for the Music Teachers National Association Student Chapters and has participated in presentations at the MTNA National Conferences and state MTNA conventions in Texas, Illinois and Wisconsin, and has published articles in Texas Music Education Research, American Music Teacher, Keyboard Companion, Roland's Keyboard Educator and the Illinois Music Educator. Past teaching appointments include positions at Illinois Wesleyan University, Western Illinois University and the University of Texas at Austin. Dr. Benson serves as an adjudicator for piano festivals and competitions, and has participated in summer programs at the Texas Summer Music Academy, the University of Texas at Austin Longhorn Band Camp and Music Camp, Summer Piano Institute at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and the BGSU Summer Music Institute Piano Camp. She frequently performs solo and duo recitals with her husband, Michael Benson.

Why Have Standards?

by Nan Ellis

The issue of standards in piano teaching is powerful, controversial, and perhaps sensitive to those of us who seek to encourage our students toward a high level of artistry. Though I have always been passionately interested in these established levels of quality in our field because they invited challenges to my teaching, I never thought too much about their relevance until I was asked to speak about them to a group of piano teachers recently. It was then that I had to face the issue and ask the question, "Why have Standards?"

Pondering that question prompted further questions. In fact, one question led to another. One of the first questions that came to my mind was, "Are the words standard and teaching related in any way?"

In the dictionary, I found that the origin of the noun standard is the Old French word *estandard*, which means rallying point. The first definition of standard in modern usage is, a conspicuous object (as a banner) formerly carried at the top of a pole and used to mark a rallying point, especially in battle or to serve as an emblem.¹ The word emblem somehow remained in my mind. Consider also that the word standard is synonymous with the words criterion, gauge, yardstick, and touchstone. All of these words can be understood as a means of determining what a thing should be.²

I also looked up the origin of the verb teach, and found the Middle English word *techen*, the Old English word *taecan*, and the modern word *token*.³ A token is an outward sign or expression, a symbol or emblem.⁴ I remembered finding the word emblem connected to the definition of standard. Could it be that our standards are emblems, or tokens, of our teaching? I believe we can think of them that way. We can also determine a definite connection between the words standard and teaching. Both words are linked through their synonyms to the word emblem. The modern definition of the verb *teach* means to cause to acquire knowledge or skill.⁵ One of its synonyms is *educate*, which has an origin in the word *educere*, meaning to lead forth.⁶ If in fact we as teachers are leaders, then surely we must lead forth bearing standards.

The question, "Why have standards?" led me to wonder, "Why not have standards?" As previously defined, a standard is a means of determining what a thing should be. We believe that standards are important when considering the quality of the academic education we want for our children at the precollege level. Today, more than ever, the education of our children is being viewed as one of the keys to our nations future. There is a national outcry these days in favor of more uniform scholastic standards for all of our children. The notion has become a political issue. In my home state of South Carolina, there has been so much effort put into the area of educational improvement in view of our national ranking in recent years, that it is virtually impossible not to be influenced by the movement. What reason, then, do we have for not moving in a similar direction with piano teaching?

We could answer that we are in the uncomfortable position of teaching a subject which competes for a place in the students schedule. And for that reason, perhaps we should be careful about the demands we place on that time.

I like the view of the late Francis Clark, when confronted with this dilemma. She wrote:

“The worry about activities that compete for a student’s time, about lack of practice and lower performance standards has been around as long as I've been teaching. I remember concern that band (with the allure of uniforms, marching, and togetherness) would cut into piano study; I remember the panic when parents first rushed out to buy television sets and teachers were sure no one would ever be able to practice at home again; I remember the pressure of the *Sputnick* days and the hours of homework young piano students had to face for the first time; I remember the advent of after-school sports programs that kept many youngsters on the playing fields until supper time and made it a headache even to schedule their lessons. Now our latchkey children come home to empty houses where computers and VCRs compete with homework (and endless telephone calls?) for time that might otherwise be spent at the piano.

All that's new today is that change is occurring faster, the list of activities that compete for a students time is long and family life as we once knew it has changed. But music is tough stuff. Piano students have survived all these changes; piano study has survived all this competition. Piano teachers must be a tough breed, too, for they have survived as well.”⁷

Ms. Clark wrote these words of encouragement and reassurance in 1985. They are equally relevant as we face the new millennium. Indeed, if we look at ourselves today, as piano teachers we are survivors. As survivors, we must continue the quest for excellence by promoting the highest standards for our students. To do this, we are fortunate to have all of the new insights into the teaching-learning process, along with the latest materials and approaches for meeting our students on their own terms and involving them in an actively creative experience, rather than a passively entertaining one.

My closing thoughts on the question "Why have standards?" led me to ask "What do our students need?" Experience has taught us the following lessons:

1. Our serious students who want to be piano performance majors in college must achieve a high level of proficiency prior to beginning their programs of study. These students will be preparing for auditions and scholarships in reputable music departments or Schools of Music, and will be setting goals for a possible career in music. These students will already have an idea of the performance standards of their chosen institution.
2. Sometimes our best students don't necessarily major in piano performance (or music, for that matter) in college. It is not unusual for these students to major in another field, but later end up teaching piano. With this in mind, we should strive to provide the most well-rounded approach for ALL of our students. We know that a structured program of piano study at the precollege level when persistently followed-through over time

produces students who are highly proficient as pianists and knowledgeable as musicians. Of course this strategy emphasizes carefully sequenced literature representative of the various musical style periods and integrates the appropriate levels of technique, theory, sight-reading, and creative work.

With these directions for successful accomplishment clearly in our minds, we know that our students need recognition. And they need goals in order to achieve recognition. These goals for excellence can be achieved through participation in a variety of events, for example: recital performances, competitions, festivals, master classes, workshops, and summer camps. And it is often the standards and choice of the repertoire performed for these opportunities which determine a student's success.

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7. Francis Clark, Questions and Answers, Practical Advice for Piano Teachers (Northfield, Illinois: The Instrumentalist Company, 1992), p. 6.

Nan Ellis is the Coordinator of Keyboard Studies at Presbyterian College in Clinton, South Carolina, where she teaches applied piano, piano literature, and piano pedagogy and directs the annual Keyboard Clinics. She holds a Doctor of Musical Arts and Master of Music degree from the University of Southern California, and a Bachelor of Music degree from Converse College. As the recipient of several fellowships for international study, Dr. Ellis has appeared in recitals in Germany, Austria, Poland, and India. During the summers she serves on the faculty of the Interlochen Arts Camp.

Growing Up Digital: How Will This Affect Piano Teaching in the Next Century?

by Brenda Dillon

Growing Up Digital by Don Tapscott (McGraw-Hill) focuses on the Net Generation, the generation of children who will be between the ages of two and 22 by 1999. Why is this generation important to piano teachers in the next century?

First of all, the next few years will likely be a time of transition for piano teachers. We will have a foot in the past for students who want and expect traditional piano lessons, but we will need to have a foot in the future for the Net Generation. Who are they, and how do we prepare to teach them?

Don Tapscott tells us that the Net Generation - 80 million strong - are so bathed in bits that they think it's part of the natural landscape. Two-thirds of them use a personal computer at home or at school. They now represent 30 percent of the population, as compared to the baby boomer's 29 percent. A primary difference between the two is that boomers have embraced computer and information technology, but they have done so under duress. Their world was shaped by television, a passive and controlling influence. The Net Generation is rapidly substituting computer activities for watching TV. A recent Nielsen poll found that wired homes watch 15 percent less television. In 1995 virtually no homes were wired. However, by the year 2000, over 40 percent of American households will be connected to the Internet. It is predicted that American children will be watching approximately 100 hours less television a year than they do now. When these children were asked what was more fun - television or the Internet - 92 percent of them chose the Internet.

The reason for this change is that computers are interactive and television is broadcast-driven. The latter is unidirectional, the choice of programming is in the hands of a few, and it is often "dumbed-down" to the lowest common denominator. Television comes from the top down and is done to you, not by you. Computer users can inquire, discuss, argue, play, shop, critique, investigate, ridicule, fantasize, seek and inform. For the first time, children are taking control of a communication revolution. Television may be prime time, but computers are anytime.

Another consideration is that we are shifting from a generation gap to a generation lap, where kids are outpacing and overtaking adults on the technology track. Society has never before experienced this phenomenon of having the knowledge hierarchy so effectively flipped on its head. When it comes to using technology, the Net Generation initially focuses on how to work it, rather than how it works. They expect things to happen fast, because in their world things do happen fast. The computer has changed from a tool for information management to a communications tool. Digital kids are learning about peer relationships, about teamwork, about being critical, about how to have fun online, about friendships across the miles, about standing up for what they think, and about how to effectively communicate their ideas.

What does this mean for teachers? How many of us are facilitating interactive learning environments? Peter Drucker, a leading authority in the business world, shocked the post-secondary world in the March 10, 1997 issue of Forbes magazine by writing, "Thirty years from now, big university campuses will be relics. The impact of the digital revolution is as large a change as when we first got the printed book. The university won't survive as a residential institution. Today's buildings are hopelessly unsuited and totally unneeded."

This view does not coincide with John Naisbitt's HighTech/High Touch prediction in Megatrends, published in 1982: "The more technology we introduce into society, the more people will aggregate. Shopping malls are now the third most frequented space in our lives, following home and workplace." Naisbitt believed that "the more high technology around us, the more the need for human touch."

Tapscott, in a more middle-ground view, writes, "Teachers have legitimate concerns about their role as the learning model changes from broadcast to interactive. The irony here is that if they don't change and transform their classrooms and themselves to the new model, they face even greater threats to their job security. Society will find other ways to deliver learning and bypass them."

Tapscott is a promoter of "learner-centered" education that improves the child's motivation to learn. "Rather than listening to some professor regurgitating facts and theories, students discuss and learn from each other with the teacher as a participant. This does not suggest the teacher is suddenly playing a less important role. The shift is from teacher as transmitter to teacher as facilitator. Learning is becoming a social activity facilitated by a new generation of educators. The teacher doesn't compete with Jacques Cousteau, but rather is supported by him. A teacher is equally critical and valued in the learner-centered context, and is essential for creating and structuring the learning experience. Much of this depends on the subject; no one would suggest, for example, that the best way to learn the piano is the discovery mode."

This last sentence is especially interesting, as Tapscott mentions that he writes music. If he believes learning to play the piano isn't best done by the discovery mode, what portion of the music learning experience is best done interactively? If the information in his book is accurate, we can expect piano students who not only embrace technology, but who demand it. We can expect students who not only understand lifelong learning; it is a way of life for them. We can expect brighter students, as recent studies found that children are registering average raw intelligence scores that are 15 points higher than those reported on tests 50 years ago. They will expect customized learning rather than learning designed to meet the needs of a specific age or grade in school. We can also expect more students. Between 1996 and 2006, public high school enrollment is expected to increase by 15 percent and college enrollment by 14 percent. Even without considering retiring teachers, 190,000 new teachers will be needed.

With the exception of future students demanding technology, all of these predictions are beyond our control. What isn't beyond our control is our willingness to shift from being a

transmitter of broadcast learning to a facilitator of interactive learning. This begins with attitude, and attitude is totally under our control.

It's been said that the only people who like change are babies with wet diapers. However, the challenge for us as piano pedagogues is to adapt to the changing environment, while not losing what makes us unique and necessary. Human beings have an innate desire to make music and we now have even more avenues to participate as a partner in that process. The Net Generation may approach us in a different way and may express unusual learning goals compared to our past students, but the bottom line is that they also have that innate desire to make music. Piano teachers who are open to this generation and their technological bent are going to thoroughly enjoy teaching in the next century. For an even greater rush of adrenaline, consider what it will be like in the year 2999! That's an article I would like to read.

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Teaching Adults: the Rewards and the Challenges

by Ramona Kime Graessle

One of the significant trends affecting music educators in this decade is that adults are living longer, retiring earlier, and maintaining healthier lives. There has also been a growing shift from a linear life plan - one that reserves education for the young, work for the middle aged, and leisure for the elderly - to a blended life plan - one that blends education, work, and leisure at all points throughout life (Cross). As a result, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of participants in adult education.

For piano teachers, this growth in adult learners provides the potential to increase income by tapping another segment of the population. Teaching adults can provide the opportunity to develop rewarding relationships and friendships, and the desire and motivation of adult students can be energizing for teachers. Adult also students benefit from the relationship. In addition to fulfilling what is often a life-long dream to play the piano, studying music may help relieve stress and, for retired adults, can fulfill intellectual, physical, and social needs no longer found in the workplace.

The concept of andragogy

Malcolm Knowles, one of most widely known and respected scholars in adult education, has developed theories on adult learning. In addition to his important writings on the subject, Knowles suggests that the term "andragogy," as opposed to the term "pedagogy," be used when referring to the teaching of adults, emphasizing the difference between teaching adults and teaching children. "Pedagogy" is a Greek word made up of the stem *paid*, meaning "child," and *agogus*, meaning "teacher of," the literal translation being "teacher of children." Knowles feels that the term "andragogy," with its prefix from the stem *andr*, meaning "man," is a more appropriate term. (Elinor Lenz feels that, since *andr* refers to man literally as "male," the term "anthropagogy," with the stem *anthr* referring to "humankind," would be even more appropriate.)

CHARACTERISTICS OF ADULT LEARNERS

Learning abilities of adults

While many potential adult students feel that they are "too old to learn," studies have shown that intelligence doesn't diminish with age, although the rate of learning may slow down. In the end, adults tend to learn more thoroughly than do children, and they retain the knowledge longer. Recent research suggests that factors other than age have more effect on adults' ability to learn (Long) such as the learner's ability to choose his or her own pace, the home environment, quality of health and diet, and the amount and date of prior education. Slower progress by an adult often indicates a more methodical approach to learning, rather than a decline of abilities (Knowles).

Effects of physical aging on the learning process

Physical aging can have an effect on learning (Cross) such as the deterioration of eyesight and hearing. Most eyesight problems, though, can be easily remedied with bifocals or special reading glasses and better lighting directly on the music. Hearing problems can obviously affect piano lessons, both in hearing the music and in communication between student and teacher. As with eye problems, however, most hearing problems can be corrected. A frustration for many older adult students is that their psycho-motor skills often are not at level of their cognitive skills. They know what they are supposed to play, but their fingers don't always follow through with the desired result.

Goals of adult students

Adults are highly motivated to learn; they come to music because they want to, not because a parent is requiring piano lessons. They also often have greater self-discipline, drive, and enthusiasm. Adults come to piano lessons with developed work habits, and their goals are different than those of children (or rather of the children's parents!). Adults usually don't have dreams of playing in Carnegie Hall but rather are playing more for their own enjoyment.

Adult students' own frustrations

In spite of adult students' enthusiasm, they are often more insecure, more self-conscious, and especially fear making mistakes. Adults often lack confidence in their ability to learn, especially if they have been away from formal education for a long time. Adults who already have had exposure to many musical experiences may get frustrated if they can't reach their own standards. They may lack patience when their physical skills aren't at level of their cognitive skills. Sometimes life experiences can hinder the learning process such as poor learning in past music lessons that developed into bad habits. Adults also have many different roles and competing jobs; time can become a big issue, especially for working adults.

USING CONCEPTS FROM ANDRAGOGY IN TEACHING ADULTS

Sharing responsibility for learning with the adult student

Because adults learn differently than children, Knowles feels strongly that there also has to be a difference in the way teachers teach adult students. One of the primary concepts of andragogy is that learning is a joint process between student and teacher rather than one of teacher control. It clearly becomes a give and take relationship between two adults who negotiate, collaborate, and share responsibilities and decisions. It is important to set goals together; together the teacher and student can select music, set the pace, evaluate achievements, and even decide when a piece is "finished."

Creating a supportive learning environment

Because adults usually begin piano lessons with some amount of apprehension and a fear that they're "too old to learn," it becomes even more important to create a pleasant and comfortable learning environment suitable for them. Adults need help in overcoming their insecurities, and they need much praise and encouragement. It is important to help them recognize even their smallest accomplishments and to help them realize that mistakes are a normal part of learning. (I would like to insert here that many of the concepts of good andragogy should also be considered good pedagogy for those working with children. All students, regardless of age, need praise and encouragement and a supportive environment for learning!)

Being flexible in lesson times

A seemingly minor adjustment in teaching adults, but one that can have a great importance for the adult, is the flexibility of the teacher in setting lesson times. While lesson times for adults can often be arranged during the day for retired students and for adults with a flexible work schedule, non-retired adults will often need evening or weekend times, or a lesson time over the lunch hour. Adults often have family or job responsibilities which require an occasional adjustment to the normal lesson time, and some adults choose to take lessons on a biweekly schedule. These all require flexibility on the part of the teacher to adapt to the needs of the adult student.

Adding a social component

Adding a social component to lessons can be important to adults and has become a very important part of my studio. One of my students' favorite activities is our bimonthly "Adult Student Gathering" (the word "recital" was too intimidating for my students!). We meet at students' houses for a few hours on Sunday afternoons, and everyone brings *hors d'oeuvres* to share. It helps adult students when they realize that they aren't the only beginning adult piano student. I don't require students to play, but they all do, albeit reluctantly at first! Students can also choose to be "background" music to conversation, so that the focus is not on them, but eventually students become comfortable with others listening to them perform. As my adult students have gotten to know each other, they've become less afraid of performing, and they are wonderfully supportive and encouraging of each other.

Choosing appropriate music

Choosing materials appropriate for adult students seems like an obvious part of teaching adults, but I've had many adult transfer students who had been using children's method books. Simple writing and children's pictures can often be insulting to an adult. There are many adult method books available (see Appendix A), and more are being written all the time. There are also many good supplemental books available in a variety of styles to satisfy the musical interests of almost any adult student (see Appendix B). With some students, however, it can be a challenge to satisfy their musical interests and still find pedagogically appropriate music. Adults usually want to play music they have heard before (Moonlight Sonata is a favorite!), whether or not it's at their level, so the challenge

is to find simplified versions of those pieces. Often adult students can be satisfied with similar, but easier, music until they're ready for "that piece."

A word of warning is appropriate here. There are many poor arrangements and bad transcriptions of favorite pieces, both in classical and in popular music, and often such arrangements can discourage and frustrate even the most diligent student. I have had adults arrive at a lesson, eager to show me music they just found, but unfortunately, they sometimes bring in poor arrangements or transcriptions. I use that as an opportunity to discuss the problems with them, and I show them potentially awkward passages. Just because it says "easy" on the front cover doesn't mean that it's truly pedagogically easy. (I have avoided some of these problems by planning occasional trips to the music store with my adult students so we can browse through music books together. I can direct them to good arrangements and editions and steer them from making poor choices in music.)

Teaching adults can be a challenge, but applying concepts of andragogy can help the process be more effective and enjoyable. Adult learners are in the student role because they have chosen that role. As music educators we have an opportunity to expose those motivated adults to music in a positive environment. Through our involvement in the lifelong process of education, we can help adults grow in their love of music, whatever their musical interests, and, at the same time, provide enrichment and meaning for their lives.

References

Cross, K. Patricia. Adults as Learners: Increasing Participation and Facilitating Learning. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1981.

Knowles, Malcolm. Modern Practice of Adult Education (Rev. ed.) New York: Cambridge, 1980.

Lenz, Elinor. The Art of Teaching Adults. Troy, Mo.: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1982.

Long, Huey B. Adult Learning: Research and Practice. New York: Cambridge, 1983.

APPENDIX A - ADULT METHOD BOOKS

Bastien: The Older Beginner Piano Course

- variety of supplemental repertoire books
- many folk songs and familiar tunes, Christmas carols, classical pieces

Bastien: Piano for Adults

- variety of music including classic themes, folk songs, spirituals, ragtime, and

original music

Bastien: Piano: 2nd Time Around

- review course for adults

Glover: Adult Piano Student

- well-known melodies, some classical arrangements, many original pieces
- upper levels are primarily classical music; Repertoire includes other styles

Kern: Adult Piano Method Play by Choice

- many supplemental books in a variety of styles
- primarily familiar music in variety of styles and textures

Lancaster/Renfrow: Piano 101

- written for a class piano setting but works well in a private lesson setting
- wonderful teacher accompaniments in fresh, interesting styles

Noona: The Adult Pianist

- well-known popular melodies and classics; many original pieces
- wide variety of styles and textures

Palmer/Manus/Lethco: Alfred's Basic Adult Piano Course

- well-known folk, popular melodies, some original pieces
- variety of supplemental repertoire books

APPENDIX B - SUPPLEMENTAL BOOKS ENJOYED BY MY ADULTS

There are many reasons to use supplemental materials with adults. Because adult method books often include a large percentage of familiar pieces, adult students sometimes rely on their ear to learn pieces and don't always develop good reading skills. Beautiful but newly written music can appeal to adults while helping their reading skills. As with younger students, supplemental music can help adult students whose physical or cognitive skills need reinforcement before moving on to the next level. For adults, who often come to piano lessons with strong musical interests, supplemental music can provide pedagogically sound music matched to those musical interests.

While I haven't included duets in this list, they are wonderful to use for sightreading. Occasionally I have adults who know they won't have much time to practice for a period

of several weeks or months. Often they will decide that, rather than quitting lessons during that time, they want to sightread duets during each lesson. Much can be learned and yet the student doesn't feel guilty that he or she isn't practicing. Duets can also serve as a "less scary" alternative to performing solos at gatherings and recitals.

Alexander, Dennis. First Lyric Pieces. Alfred Pub. Co. (late elementary)

- original solos in romantic style (adults often prefer slow "pretty" music)
- simple, but beautiful pieces

Bastien. Older Beginner Piano Course. Levels 1-2. Kjos. (early to late elementary)

- supplemental books: Favorite Melodies the World Over, Solo Repertoire, Religious Favorites, Easy Piano Classics, Classic Themes by the Masters
- Favorite Melodies includes sing-alongs, Christmas, hymns, patriotic, classics

Faber & Faber. Piano Adventures, Levels 1-4. FJH Music Co., Inc. (early elementary to early intermediate)

- supplemental books to average-age method: Classics, Popular, Hymns, Ragtime & Marches, Rock & Roll, Jazz & Blues, Christmas
- no children's pictures, so appropriate for adults
- wonderful books to satisfy the variety of adults' musical tastes
-

Goldston, Margaret. Romances, Books 1-3. Alfred Pub. Co. (late elementary to late intermediate)

- original solos in romantic style; variety of moods
- very nice melodic pieces, even at the elementary level

Guryan, Margo, ed. The Collection: 27 Piano Solos. CPP/Belwin. (intermediate to advanced)

- primarily "the favorite standards" of all periods, mostly Classical, Romantic

Kern, Fred. Adult Play By Choice. Hal Leonard. (elementary to early intermediate)

- many supplemental books: Country, Standards, Movie Themes, Classics, Christmas Favorites, Sacred Inspirations, Broadway, Sing-Alongs
- includes fairly current popular music as well as older favorites

Magrath, Jane. Melodious Masterpieces, Levels 1-3. Alfred Pub. Co. (early intermediate to early advanced; levels progress in order of difficulty)

- pieces from all periods, but emphasis on music from Romantic period

- very popular with my adults

Mier, Martha. Romantic Impressions, Books 1-3. Alfred Pub. Co. (early to late intermediate)

- original solos in Romantic style; very melodic

Palmer/Lethco/Manus. Alfred's Basic Adult Piano Course, Levels 1-2. Alfred Pub. (elementary to early intermediate)

- supplemental books: Sacred, All-Time Favorites, Christmas, Country, Pop, Greatest Hits
- Greatest Hits includes current popular music and old favorites

Palmer, Willard and Margery Halford. The Romantic Era: An Introduction to the Piano Music. Alfred Pub. Co. (intermediate to early advanced)

- includes discussion of ornamentation, the piano, Romanticism, pedaling, rubato, life and music of each composer
- Romantic piano music in its original form, including some standards and many beautiful less familiar pieces

Rollin, Catherine. Spotlight on . . . Style. Alfred Pub. Co. (intermediate)

- series includes original music in the Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Impressionist, Jazz, and Ragtime styles
- Romantic and Impressionist books are especially enjoyed by my adults
- Romantic book includes pieces in preparation for the works of Chopin

Rollin, Catherine. Preludes, Books 1-2. Alfred Pub. Co. (intermediate)

- beautiful original piano solos; some modeled after specific classical pieces
- good for students who think they don't like fast pieces: many pieces are fast but all are still beautiful

Rollin, Catherine. Lyric Moments, Books 1-2. Alfred Pub. Co. (intermediate)

- beautiful original piano solos
- very popular with my students; they can satisfy an adult who can't quite play standard Romantic music

Small, Allan, ed. Standard Piano Classics. Alfred Pub. Co. (late intermediate to advanced)

- includes some of the favorites: "Fur Elise," "Moonlight Sonata" 1st mvt, easier Chopin

dances

- primarily Romantic composers and the "romantic" music of Schubert, Beethoven, and Debussy

Yeager, Jeanine. Personal Touches. Kjos. (intermediate)

- original music, mostly in Romantic style

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Notes on Centering Your Students in the Learning Experience.

by John Kenneth Adams

Plato was noted for saying that if you want your pupils to appreciate the beautiful, then you must present them with something beautiful to observe, with the ensuing dialogue between master and student unfolding the path to self-discovery. Obviously all of us who teach piano want our students to play with an appreciation and understanding of how to create the enormous range and expressive power possible on our instrument of choice. It is through this process of observation and ensuing dialogue that we begin to learn just how our students are actually experiencing the learning process. At the same time, we are giving them the opportunity to explore our own creative world. I think keeping a delicate balance between these two very different worlds, ideally that of the questioning student and the nurturing master, is the real secret in developing the high level of trust and respect so necessary for a true learning experience. It can also be the catalyst for stimulating the students' emotional development, which in turn will lead them towards new goals in musical taste and feeling.

BEGIN BY TRYING TO FIND THE CENTER...

The question of "where to begin" challenges us as teachers over and over. For me, it is really a question of "centering" the student, the art of trying to place the student in the center of the learning experience, so they can learn exactly where they are in relation to what they are trying to do. It is, in some ways, like looking at the iceberg; we only see the tip of it, but we know that the vast reserve of it is totally hidden from view. We have to slowly pull back the curtain that hides that part of the student we have yet to know, and in doing so, formulate our plan of action. In doing this, we have to respect the fact that time has become so compressed in modern life that it often seems impossible to slow the learning process down to a more measured pace. If you teach privately, you battle all the pitfalls, especially time limitations imposed on students by school and extra-curricular activities. Those of us who teach in higher education battle a whole different set of problems, chief among them the ability to move the student through the various levels at a reasonable pace, and also ensure that they play well-prepared examinations and recitals. Time is our most valuable commodity, and how we use it will determine to a great degree the success of our teaching.

The first few times I hear a student play I try to glean the very best they are offering, ignoring as much as possible those things that I find annoying. So much is observed in these moments. For one, natural musical instincts can carry so much weight in themselves that they override many of the more bumpy detours. You can determine such important factors as the level of confidence, overall technical ability, response to rhythm and form, and most importantly, emotional involvement. At this point I feel the most important objective is to point out what you like best in their playing, and *how* you say this is going to be a real cornerstone of the developing relationship. Everyone thrives on praise, and all of us have many complex emotions built up during previous learning experiences, so praise what you can and avoid presenting a long lists of faults, as this

only allows you to pontificate over your views at the expense of the student's adjustment to a new environment.

AIM RIGHT AWAY FOR THE BIG POINTS...

This process of centering is going to be an unpredictable period, hence one might be wise in not trying to tackle too much at one time. It is always sobering to realize how few major changes can be made in a short amount of time. What you *can* do is change attitudes and develop stronger work habits. Things work best when you try to identify as quickly as possible two or three main objectives that can be accomplished with the student in a reasonable amount of time, three months seeming a good time objective. High on this list of objectives is the level of physical comfort at the keyboard. Observe the picture your students present while playing. What type of posture do they assume? What type of hand do they have? Are shoulders relaxed? Does obvious physical tension stick out, or do they play fluently with a high level of co-ordination? Are they missing notes, yet getting some sense of the music, or just getting the notes but not making much music along the way? It impels us at this juncture to make a stab at identifying the two or three things that appear to need immediate attention, and let the rest ride along as before, to be addressed later.

For instance, a student may read reasonably well, cover the keyboard with a fair amount of confidence, and have some good natural instincts to bring to the music. If you have taught a while you might smile and say to yourself "this person sounds like a pretty good student!" But it might also be obvious that the student forces tone, exerts pressure into the key long after it is necessary, only plays with fingers, constantly blurs the pedal, and never takes a breath. Technically, addressing all these points might be difficult in a semester, but even two or three key points of this nature might make a splendid start. I make it a rule in my teaching to never address a musical or technical point with a student without offering a salient illustration. The illustration will be best remembered by the student if you put the "handle" of personal observation on it. It also serves the purpose of removing the idea from the area of the abstract into the more everyday world. For example, one of my teachers once told me that I couldn't play a passage fast enough because I was letting too much weight down into the keys. He made the point that if I were desperate to catch a train, and it was already beginning to move away, I certainly wouldn't make it if I was weighed down by too much luggage. Hence, the moral: throw the bags away and run for the train.

In long decades of teaching I find that few students have any rational idea how the body actually functions at the keyboard, and this remark applies to students on every level. Even the most simple explanation of the fact that to merely get your hands into position on the keys has forced you to turn your hands in a position that is not normal for them can come as a big revelation. This small observation can lead you into a dialogue on the principles of rotation. Or, the fact that you might be glued to the bottom of the keys after a big chord may have deterred you from realizing that you need only hold on with the fingertips the instant you hear sound, thus sparing your forearm the agony that only leads to tendonitis. Perhaps this observation might provoke a discussion on the physics

surrounding the fact that force expended in one direction has to exert equal force in the opposite direction. Ask the student how they think they can get rid of the force pushing back against their arm. Resultant answers can be illuminating! Since they are sitting at the piano, ask them to push the piano away from them. This request will immediately galvanize their attention! There will be such a force pushing back against them that they will understand immediately what you are referring to.

As for blurred pedal, it is never too late to attack the principle of syncopated pedaling. Take a simple triad and walk it up the scale, applying the rule that after you have struck the first chord (applying the pedal after you hear the first chord sound) you lift the pedal as you hear the "edge" of the new sound occurring with the next triad, and then, in that split second, put the pedal back down, causing one chord to melt into the next. I have rarely had a student leave the studio not being able to accomplish this in one short exercise at the keyboard. Poor pedaling is really just bad listening. A resulting dialogue about the proper type of shoes that facilitate sensitive pedaling ought to prove amusing in light of current fashions. For instance, if the student can't feel the pedal under them with sensitivity, they will likely jerk it down, then jerk it up. The big goal is to feel the pedal like a lever, with the foot in constant contact.

CENTERING STUDENTS IN THE RIGHT REPERTOIRE...

Selection of repertoire is one of the most challenging aspects of the centering process, especially in the very early stages of working with a new student. You must place before them the pieces that will best let them explore the main concepts you are presenting them with. This must sound quite simplistic, but in truth, more mistakes of judgment are made in the selection of repertoire than in any other area of teaching. If there are a lot of problems to be addressed, I find it useful to assign quite a few shorter works. For instance, an entering college level performance major may have already had the experience of a major sonata or concerto, but in the process of learning them, may have been pressed to confront all the challenges presented. Or, as is often the case, they really haven't played a lot of repertoire, concentrating instead on two or three advanced works that might give them lots of motivation, but at the same time perhaps were really too challenging for them. To center such a student, I would probably give them a couple of Preludes and Fugues by Bach that could be learned quickly, a couple of Moszkowski Etudes, carefully selected to underline the technical problems you want to explore, perhaps one movement of a classical sonata, and a romantic work of moderate duration that you feel would fit their current emotional maturity. In other words, I would expect the student to have sufficient skills to handle all of this so that they would develop the comfort level necessary to play the pieces under pressure at the end of term. It is also my job to sell the student on my choices, as they can easily feel that they have already passed this level, and need a bigger challenge. Now is the time to broaden their horizon by slowly but surely *convincing* them that new concepts and ideas will refine their musicianship and allow them to polish things to a higher degree.

If, on the other had, the student is a college student still pushing to get to the late intermediate - early advanced level, as is the case with so many music minors and music

education students, I would first of all incorporate keyboard harmony into the curriculum, presenting them with a series of exercises that present the principal basic chord progressions, first and foremost, the ability to play I - IV - V - I in four voices, (with correct voice leadings), modulate to the dominant, and then return to the principal key . If this proves useful to the student, I take them through a whole series of keyboard harmony exercises by Nadia Boulanger, inherited from my college theory teacher Virginia French Mackie. If their rhythm is deficient, the collection of 300 Kunz Canons (Ricordi) are greatly satisfying, and at least thirty or forty of these should be mastered before approaching even the simplest piece in counterpoint. These canons are perhaps the strongest ally you will have in establishing true contrapuntal independence of the hands. Early Czerny exercises are important links, and for learning pieces in all the keys, "Lyric Preludes' by Gillock are hard to beat. If you can find a copy of "Rondolettes" by Bernice Bentley, or the Diller-Quaile duet books, (I believe both of these are out of print), your day will be brightened. In other words, lots of variety, don't spend too much time on any one thing, and always finish up with a piece that the students obviously likes. Save the best for last. Once you have centered the student on this level, you can approach a bigger piece, but with the understanding that it is going to be learned slowly over a long period of time. All of the aforementioned works lead comfortably up to the level of the less complicated pieces in Schumann's "Album for the Young", short pieces by Cramer and Mendelssohn, and the rich sonatina literature.

"YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO APPEAL TO THE EMOTIONS UNTIL..."

I think the emotional area in teaching is the most difficult to address, and I also feel that it is much more difficult in our current age. Nadia Boulanger was found of saying that no one had the right to appeal to the emotions until the intellect had been thoroughly satisfied. That is certainly a lofty goal, with more than a grain of truth about it. If you have done your groundwork meticulously enough in the earlier stages of learning, then the student's technical problems will have stabilized and will hopefully hold up under pressure. If you have done as much as possible to look at music from all its formal aspects, then the next big step is to see that they enter into the music on a satisfying emotional level. As the student heads in the direction of public presentation, perhaps a recital, competition or examination, the emotional impact of the music needs to be constantly in the forefront. Of course, there are some big talents who blaze forth at this point and rise to the challenge for the most part on their own, having natural gifts of communication that just can't be taught. But I would venture the opinion that the vast majority of our students need a big dose of emotional development, so that they can begin to trust their emotions under the strain of public exposure, and to "reach down deep" to create a personal statement.

In helping students reach for this higher goal of music making, I find that after the initial learning period everything in the interpretation has to be refined down to its essential broad strokes so that the big line remains in the forefront. Observation is now totally on the elements that will make the piece most intelligible to the listener. At this point, I take the average listener's viewpoint , acting like I have never heard the piece before, have no idea about the character, no idea about its technical difficulties, and am not aware of how

much of a struggle it has been to learn it! What I am most concerned with is how much is registering on my own emotional response meter, whether the student is making me listen to them at the exclusion of everything else. Matters of tempo, balance, phrasing, tone color, all the many things worked out throughout the learning experience, have to be adjusted at this point, with the viewpoint that what sounds fine in the studio might sound quite different in a larger space. This is where the "comfort zone" mentality kicks into action. The atmosphere of performance has to be created, so that the student is not practicing at this juncture, but rehearsing. There is a big psychological difference between the two. As so many good teachers say at this time, "you have to MAKE it happen!" One of my professors use to refer to it as "this THING that has to come out!" Perhaps the most vivid explanation of this was given by the great actress Helen Hayes on one of her many visits to our campus. When asked by a student how she managed to soar to such great heights as a performer, she answered that it was because when she performed she felt her technique under her like a great platform she could plant her feet on. And by technique, she implied the sum of her learning experience.

WHAT IS GOOD TEACHING...?

Good teaching means lowering the anxiety level by remaining calm, never assuming students know many answers, not having unreasonable expectations, and always conducting the lesson as a dialogue. It also means learning to solve complex issues with the simple tools of basic musicianship. You can't solve complexity with complexity. When you have centered your student, you can then take the time that is necessary to start helping make choices in matters of taste and refinement. You have also come a "miracle mile" in developing a learning environment that ensures communication and mutual respect. I have found over the years that having high expectations is a goal that has to be carefully cultivated. If one applies too much pressure the student may fold prematurely. If, on the other hand, you approach teaching as a long range project, with intermittent pauses for positive feedback and evaluation, then the student will begin to build up some kind of personal history that leaves an identifiable trail of accomplishment. It is very easy in this "feel good" society we live in today to become glib about accomplishment. Real accomplishment is never won easily. Learning to play an instrument is just about as difficult an occupation as anyone could dream up, and it is our responsibility to make the experience a "life experience," letting the students determine what they will eventually do with these skills . After all, you are helping them to learn that hard lesson that one has to walk through a bit of fire and water to get a glimpse of Paradise.

John Kenneth Adams serves as Professor of Piano and Piano Literature at the University of South Carolina. A graduate of the University of Missouri at Kansas City, he studied with Mary Newitt Dawson. During this period he also studied with Carl Friedberg and with Joanna Graudan at the Aspen Festival. He holds both the Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees from Yale University School of Music where he was a student of Bruce Simonds. While a student there, he won the Julia Lockwood Prize in piano and performed twice as soloist with the Yale Symphony. A Fulbright Award followed to the Royal Academy of Music, London where he studied with Hilda Dederich. During this time, he also studied at the Casals Festival in Zermatt, Switzerland. He also studied extensively with Frank Mannheimer, and with Ilonka Deckers-Kuszler in Milan. Professor Adams has performed around the world, including concerts at Wigmore Hall in London, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam and Weill Recital Hall in New York City. He is particularly well known in South America, where he performed over 150 concerts in Brazil, Chile, Peru,

and Colombia under the sponsorship of the United States Information Service. He has also performed many concerts for the same organization in Spain, Italy and Turkey. His concerts in America include many recitals for the Matthay Association and the Mannheimer Festival. He was recently guest artist for the Minnesota Music Teachers Convention in Saint Paul, and also for the Minneapolis Women's Club. He also performs frequently in South Korea where he is known for his master classes and lectures. In South Carolina, Professor Adams is well known for his many radio broadcasts for the SC Educational Radio Network, and for his series of Piano Portraits presented across the state. In 1986-87 he performed all the piano music of Debussy in five recitals. A member of the French Piano Institute in Paris, he has written three articles on the piano music of Debussy for the Piano Quarterly. Professor Adams has had student winners in many prestigious competitions including the MTNA Young Artist Competition, the Dimitri Mitropoulos Scholarship Foundation, and the Rotary International Fellowships. At the University of South Carolina he has had 20 students perform with the University Symphony as winners of the Concerto Competition. His students have also frequently performed with the South Carolina Philharmonic. In May, 1997, John Adams gave masterclasses at the National Conservatory in Sofia, Bulgaria. In July, he returned for his third visit to the French Piano Institute in Paris, performing there on the "Soirees musicales" and also gave recitals in Cortona, Italy and in Cirencester, U. K.

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Richard Chronister: A Retrospective

compiled by Barbara Fast

death of Richard Chronister on December 31, 1999. Being aware that Richard contributed so much to the field of pedagogy throughout his career, I was sorry that no over-arching retrospective of his life had taken place in print. With this in mind I contacted several members of the pedagogy community to share their remembrances of Richard. Elvina Pearce, Jim Lyke, and Bruce Berr kindly agreed. Additionally, Margaret Lorince graciously made available the tributes to Richard Chronister given at the MTNA Convention 2000. The speakers included Joan Reist, Louise Goss, Marvin Blickenstaff, Suzanne Guy and Margaret Lorince. As Richard's colleagues attest, his influence was far-reaching, affecting both the direction and content of piano pedagogy.

I Remember Richard by Elvina Pearce Vice-President, The Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy Associate Editor, Keyboard Companion

One thing I remember about Richard Chronister is that he had a memory like an elephant! He never forgot anything, and almost every time we were together since our Princeton days of the 60's, he'd recall something or someone from our past - "Do you remember when...?" Usually I didn't and so he'd refresh my memory down to the last detail, a ritual that often ended in much hilarity, and then some more reminiscing.

In this memoir, however, I have remembered a number of things about Dick. (Back in the 50's when we first met at the University of Tulsa, everyone called him "Dick", and if my memory serves me well (for a change), he was also "Dick" in the Princeton days of the 60's. Not too many years ago, I said to him, "I guess I'm about the only person in the world who still calls you 'Dick'. Would you prefer 'Richard'?" His response was, "Nah - call me whatever you like." So "Dick" it remained and will be throughout the rest of this memoir.

At the University of Tulsa, he was a junior when I was a freshman. We studied piano with a husband/wife duo-piano team - Boyd and Helen Ringo - two wonderful people and teachers. In addition to teaching piano, Mrs. Ringo also taught a piano pedagogy course (back in the 50's!) which Dick and I took and which, I'm sure, planted the seeds for our intense interest in piano pedagogy that was to develop some years later.

Roger Grove (who I'm sure many remember as a successful composer of educational student piano music) also studied with the Ringo's. Roger lived in Sapulpa, a small Oklahoma town not far from Tulsa and on weekends, he taught piano in his home. He frequently invited Dick and me to come down on a Friday afternoon and conduct "repertoire classes" for his students. We loved this event (as well as the delicious snacks, which his mother always had ready for us to consume during our breaks.) I don't recall Roger's ever paying us a cent for our services but neither do I recall either of us ever thinking that he should. I guess our "pay" was just having a good time, the wealth of the

experience itself, and of course, Mrs. Grove's snacks!

During his T.U. student days, Dick also taught piano all day Saturday in his home in Okmulgee (another small Oklahoma town a bit further away from Tulsa than was Sapulpa). Since he didn't own a car in those days, I would frequently pick him up at the bus station in Tulsa on Saturday night and we'd take in a movie. (The only one I can remember seeing with him was "New Faces of 1952" and I do recall that we laughed ourselves silly through-out most of it.)

I also recall several other incidents from those "early" Tulsa days. Occasionally on a Saturday, Dick did not go to Okmulgee and then we would sometimes get together at the university and read through duet and two-piano literature. I remember that there was some music by both Faure ("The Dolly"), and Gliere ("Six Original Pieces", Op. 41) that he was particularly fond of.

During one short period in our college days, Dick and I and another T.U. piano major got off on some sort of a Yoga kick, and among other things, we practiced assuming various contorted sitting positions (crossed legs, arms behind the back, the whole nine yards; later I found out that these antics were usually very easy for girls but quite difficult for guys). Somehow, Life magazine got wind of this (I guess the novelty of three "serious" piano students practicing Yoga intrigued them for some reason), and they asked if they might come to the campus, take some pictures and do a possible article about us. Of course we were thrilled by this prospect and welcomed them. Although they did come and interview and photograph us, nothing ever came of it. I guess that after seeing us and the pictures they took, they must have decided that we should forget Yoga and stick to the piano! (I did end up with one memento from the event - a large glossy picture of the three of us on whose backside it reads, Property of Life Magazine, May 18, 1950.)

Another memory dating back to the 50's relates to a trip which Dick and I took from Tulsa to Chicago. I was to perform the Liszt E-Flat Piano Concerto on the WGN "Chicago Theater of the Air" and since my parents were unable to accompany me there, they asked Dick if he would be willing to go along as my "escort". He agreed and we had a great time - 13 hours on the train with meals in the diner, staying at the Conrad Hilton Hotel, and of course, sightseeing. I do remember, however, that we had one major argument during that trip. I wanted desperately to go to see the "Minsky's Burlesque" and Dick put his foot down, saying "No way!" Needless to say, he won that one, hands down.

In 1952 I left Tulsa and headed for New York City to study piano with Isabelle Vengerova. By this time, Dick was already teaching piano on the faculty of the University of Tulsa. During the summers, he would go to Pennsylvania and serve as accompanist for the Fred Waring Workshops. (He was always a fabulous reader and accompanist!) During these same summers, I was a counselor at girls' camp out on Long Island and at the end of the summer, Dick and I would both head back to Tulsa. (He owned a car by this time and was gracious enough to offer me a lift home.) Often there were one or two others also sharing the ride - always guys. I remember one time that we decided to take a scenic route down South through the Smoky Mountains in Tennessee

and as we were approaching Gatlinburg, we got caught up in a long line of traffic. It was a very hot day and so Richard had the top down on the convertible (no car air conditioning in those days!). One of the guys, a pianist and also a trumpet player, frustrated by the traffic delay, took out his trumpet, stood up in the car, and played "Charge". I recall some townspeople walking along the highway who looked at us - a carload of "gypsies" - and disdainfully ordered us to "Get out of town!"

In 1955, I became a pedagogy student of Frances Clark as well as a member of her piano faculty at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, NJ. Dick was still teaching at the university and also still involved in the summer Waring workshops. He was also still willing to allow me to catch a ride home with him in August. It was during one of those trips that he began quizzing me about Frances Clark and her philosophy of piano pedagogy. He became more and more intrigued until he finally said, "I've got to go to Princeton and get some of this first hand!" And so he did. He resigned his position at the university and he, too, became a pedagogy student of Frances as well as a faculty member at Westminster and later at Frances' New School for Music Study (of which he, too, became one of the founding faculty).

Those Princeton days were wonderful! Studying pedagogy with Frances Clark was almost an around-the-clock event and all of us on her staff were sort of like one big family. Dick had a small apartment, a piano, and the same convertible. I rented a room in a private home, had no piano, and only a bicycle. Dick was always generous to a fault and he frequently let me practice at his place when he was not there. He also often loaned me his car. (Later he laughingly told me that one day one of his Westminster students told him that they had seen him downtown driving ELVINA'S car!)

We also shared many happy (and some not-so-happy) memories of our early experiences when we were being trained as workshop clinicians. Our internships involved summer cross-country Frances Clark Workshop tours during which we attended all of Frances' lectures, often assisted her, and also had opportunities to try our own wings as lecturers. (Each of our attempts at this were always observed and evaluated by either Frances or her assistant, Louise Goss, and the post mortems were usually terrifying, to say the least!)

Being able to work with Dick for so many years on the national pedagogy conferences, on Keyboard Companion Magazine, and most recently On The Frances Clark Center For Keyboard Pedagogy was truly a joy and a privilege. The last time I saw him was in Chicago in September of 1999. At the time, many of us were troubled by the apparent state of his ill health but none of us dreamed that the end was so near. I continued getting an occasional e-mail from him after he returned to Los Angeles, but these became fewer and further between. The very last one I received had only one brief message for me - it said, "We've got to talk!" Dick, we never did, but I'm confident that we will, sometime, some place, somehow. Till then, thanks for everything, and particularly, thanks for the memories.

Remembering Richard by James Lyke Professor Emeritus University of Illinois (Champaign-Urbana)

In 1978 I received a phone call from Richard Chronister, a person I knew professionally but not personally. I had just published the first edition of "Creative Piano Teaching" and had written about Keyboard Arts which Richard and David Kraehenbuehl had founded. He told me he liked what I said and would I be interested in joining him in a new venture, the founding of an organization devoted solely to piano pedagogy. I jumped at the opportunity because I'd read many articles by Richard, heard him perform at MTNA and knew of his work at the New School for Music Study at Princeton. We planned that first meeting with phone calls and writing and finally met face to face at Liberty, Missouri during a very cold January. When we came to know each other, there was instant rapport, like two close brothers. That first meeting of about 80 people paved the way for the National Conference on Piano Pedagogy, which had a profound effect on piano teacher training and piano teaching in general. The fifteen-year run of that organization (1979-1994) brought about more understanding between the work of applied piano teachers and piano pedagogy teachers. It also informed those involved in piano teacher training what was happening in various colleges and universities throughout the country. Moreover, the NCPP attracted many European piano teachers to its meetings. Each conference consisted of headliners giving major addresses, papers being read, demonstration teaching, committee reports and live music by various artists such as Ian Hobson, Ruth Slenczynska as well as college piano pedagogy teachers such as Phyllis Lehrer, Tony Caramia and Elvina Pearce. Later in the conference's history, Lifetime Achievement awards were given to such distinguished teachers as Frances Clark. It was a magic time, and it was Richard's idea.

Labor Day weekend of 1999, I was settling into a Manhattan apartment which I'd bought earlier in the spring. And who should call but Richard, hoping I was in New York. He and his wife Marj were only a few blocks away, so we all had lunch at the boathouse on the lake at Central Park. Marj took pictures of Richard and me which I cherish. She told me they were the last pictures of him. After our lunch Richard came to see my apartment. He was so happy for me, my impending retirement from Georgia State University in Atlanta, and my eventual move to New York, a city he really loved. We immediately went into our talk mode (we used to talk by phone about once a week) and he was full of excitement about the new Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy he founded with an impressive board of trustees. I'd known about his illness and we talked of that. Though he'd been through some surgery and was a bit thin, he seemed like the same old Richard to me, full of future plans and still incredibly committed to improving piano teaching. I couldn't have guessed I'd never see him again.

Richard's death has caused me to reflect on Richard the person and on all his talents. He had many skills. He was a brilliant writer, a great teacher, a searching thinker, and most of all a leader. He had vision, integrity and warmth toward others, especially young people in the profession. I was so pleased in both my university positions to have invited

Richard as a guest teacher for various piano teacher workshops and piano camps for teenagers. At our final NCPP conference in Schaumburg, Illinois (1994), Richard had asked my group, The American Music Trio, to perform at the banquet. This group consisted of Tom Birkner, singer and Mike Kocour (Northwestern University) and myself on pianos. I had the idea to dedicate the tunes to various members of the banquet audience. I chose Sondheim's "Old Friends" for Richard's wife, Marj and for Richard, Cole Porter's "You're the Top." And Richard, YOU ARE THE TOP for everyone in our profession. We love you and we'll miss you.

Richard Chronister Remembered by Bruce Berr Associate Editor, Keyboard Companion

I met Richard for the first time in 1988 at the National Conference on Piano Pedagogy, and worked with him on several projects in subsequent conferences. I came to know him much better since 1996 when he invited me to become an associate editor for Keyboard Companion magazine. The frequency of our e-mails and phone calls grew as I became more involved with the magazine as an editor and as the website creator, and as we became friends.

Richard loved to talk pedagogy whenever his busy schedule permitted it. If you wanted to bounce an idea off someone, there was no one better than Richard. He was both a superb listener and also an instigator of deeper thought on any topic brought his way. No matter how involved or simple a scenario, he had an uncanny ability to see both further complexities and overarching simplicity. I phoned him one day about two years ago, very excited, about my "discovery" that there was a possibility that the learning needs of beginning piano students and the learning needs of beginning pedagogy interns might be in exact opposition to one another and that an effective learning sequence for one might be backward from what was effective for the other. If this were indeed true, it would be almost like a pedagogical equivalent of the Comma of Pythagoras! One of the implications of this was that beginning pedagogy interns might master teaching skills more securely by starting to teach intermediate or early-advanced students first in internships, and then work their way back to elementary students, finally getting to the hardest task of all, teaching beginners. To my surprise, Richard related that he had suspected years ago that this might be true, and proceeded to elaborate for quite a while on why he thought it might be so. It was clear that he had thought much about this issue despite his not having taught a pedagogy class for several years. Like the great teacher he was, he left certain aspects of the topic purposefully vague, saying things like, "You should check that out for yourself" or "Let's talk more about this when we visit in person." I learned a great deal about the pedagogy of pedagogy from that one relatively brief phone call. Ideas from that day have reverberated continually in my imagination since then, inciting much successful experimentation in my teaching of pedagogy. Unfortunately, we never did have that follow-up conversation on this topic.

But my most powerful memories of Richard do not deal with pedagogy at all. At the 1990 Conference, I needed to speak to him to clarify some logistics on student performances slated for the following day. We were between events, and there was a short line of about five people waiting to talk to him. The line moved slowly as Richard

gave his seemingly undivided attention to whoever he was speaking with while also answering questions from numerous people who needed very quick answers to problems (in retrospect, it reminds me of Captain Jean-Luc Picard signing the ensigns' clipboards while navigating the Enterprise on Star Trek Next Generation!). When there was finally only one person left in front of me, I saw the clock ticking toward the time of the next scheduled event. This person was the author of a series of books that was used in one of the conference presentations earlier that day. I couldn't help overhearing the interaction. This person was quite angry about how the presentation was handled, and ranted and raved to Richard in the most unreasonable and inappropriate way (it seemed to me, anyway, and to the few people standing around us). I believe most people in that situation would have simply dismissed this person as irrational and would have gotten back to the very demanding job of coordinating the conference. Instead, Richard listened patiently, then gradually calmed the person down (while still answering harried questions from audiovisual folks and others). He succeeded in genuinely assuring this person that the problem would be remedied somehow. When he finally did get to me, he switched gears immediately, not allowing his previous conversation to influence the one with me.

This was not the voodoo of a spin doctor, nor the smooth talk of a slick politician, nor the oblique and conniving persuasion of a PR person, nor was it like the dozens of other kinds of people who masquerade as leaders in our modern society. Richard Chronister was strong enough and secure enough and wise enough as a person that he had time, energy, and caring left over to help others become the best people that they could become. This was the everyday work of a true leader, and it was not an isolated occurrence. In these past ten years, in countless settings both public and private, I saw and experienced firsthand Richard's selflessness and authenticity.

I greatly miss Richard the teacher, the editor and writer, the pedagogue. But the loss of Richard Chronister the person on the night of December 31, 1999, is our greatest loss of all. Quite simply, has anyone who ever knew him personally known of a finer or more decent human being?

I think back to a moment in a Conference keynote address given by Frances Clark in the early 1990s. She said something that now seems ironically inaccurate. She postulated that when we awoke on the morning of Jan. 1, 2000, that our world would be just about the same as it was in 1999.

She was wrong.

We had already lost her, and just the night before, we lost Richard. Our lives will never be quite the same.

The following are tributes given at the presentation "Remembering Richard - a Celebration of His Life and Work" at the MTNA Convention, 25 March 2000.

Tribute by Joan Reist President, Music Teachers National Association

It's my privilege to welcome you as we celebrate the life of a one-of-a-kind colleague -- a person whose time and energy -- and passion --were devoted to helping us do what we do that much better.

I believe Richard would smile his enigmatic smile at the sight of this gathering, and would allow his modest self a smidgen of pride that so many wish to praise him in this very appropriate way.

To be praised by Richard was always significant -- I may stake claim to being the only person to receive his heartfelt thanks for brevity. My paper at the 1994 National Conference on Piano Pedagogy fell short of its allotted time, allowing the technologically challenged program to almost resume its charted course. I'll try -- just in case he's listening -- to match that accomplishment today!

I don't think Richard would mind my sharing a line or two from a letter he wrote last May -- vintage Richard, and further proof of why we're so indebted to him.

"I can't help but feel," he wrote, "that all musicians would react as I did -- with a feeling of fantastic pleasure -- if they really get to know musicians who aren't like them and get the chance to learn from them."

And, underscoring his concern that we do a better job of preparing the next generation of teachers, he closed: "No one knows the future, and if we wait to see what it will bring, it's too late."

Thanks, Richard -- I believe that you've helped us to be ready to meet that unknown future.

Tribute by Louise Goss Chair, The Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy

For 43 years Richard was my close colleague and treasured friend. No one will ever replace him in my life, or in yours. But there is one thought that comforts me -- imagine the joy in Heaven when Richard and Frances were reunited, so much sooner than either would have expected. Imagine the long discussions, the intense arguments, the meeting of minds, the laughter. I smile every time I think of it!

There is no way to sum Richard up in three minutes (or 3 hours) so let me just mention a few of his qualities which meant the most to me. First, there was his persistence. He never stopped working, but that work was always guided by careful thought, meticulous planning, and ebullient follow-through. He set his goals long ago, and he never stopped

trying to reach them. Then there was his precision. I've never known anyone who so delighted in detail or who carried everything through with such attention and consistency.

And there was Richard's passion. His passion for music and for beauty, for teaching and learning, for honor and integrity, for family -- Marjore, their sons and their grandchildren ? and for friends. No one had a larger circle of friends.

Precise, persistent people don't often have great depth and breadth of vision. But Richard was one of the true visionaries in our field. In fact it is that very vision which has brought us all together over the years, and which brings us here today.

As you know, his last great vision was the Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy. He began to dream about this long ago, and first mentioned it to me in 1992. He held onto that dream until it could become a reality just a year ago. Of course it was Richard who became the Center's President, and it was Richard who worked harder than anyone else to bring it into being.

Persistence, precision, passion, vision. It is these qualities -- and many, many more, that set Richard apart, that caused us to acknowledge his leadership, and that made us love him.

When Richard was about 28, we were having a long, leisurely dinner And talking about the future. For some reason, I asked him, "What do you want to do with the rest of your life?" Without missing a beat, he declared: "I want to touch , effectively, every piano teacher alive today."

And isn't that just what he did?

Tribute by Marvin Blickenstaff Associate Editor, Keyboard Companion

Richard Chronister's creativity hovered in a realm most of us would readily ascribe to the category of "genius." Who else might have conceived of a periodical devoted entirely to the area of elementary piano teaching and one which consisted of a series of questions: questions which were answered not by renowned pedagogues, but by teachers who deal with those issues on a day-to-day basis. It sounds like the perfect formula for failure. Yet such a periodical was Richard's dream, and the dream realized its fruition for nine productive years. It's success is witnessed by the fact that few subscribers ever discarded a single issue, and our copies are now stored in bank safety deposit boxes, for we know there will be no forthcoming issues. The magazine's success is also evidenced by the multitude of voices who registered shock at the news of Richard's death, and whose comments always ended with the same question: "What will happen to Keyboard Companion?"

Richard's approach to the magazine was typical of his all-embracing spirit. His focus was on the sharing of ideas. His editorial policy was based on the belief that we grow when

confronted with attitudes other than our own and backgrounds of contrasting experiences. Everyone who read Keyboard Companion felt the impact of that approach. We learned from one another, and every issue changed our teaching in some way.

Richard did express one area of intolerance. He was impatient with what he referred to as the "workshop posture." He insisted that the articles share the ways we deal with issues on a day-to-day basis in our studio, not telling others how to do it.

As editor of the magazine, Richard was a superb mentor. His advice on areas to explore, angles to pursue, and writers to choose was extremely helpful. When one's well ran dry, when I could not think of interesting questions to pose for the Rhythm or Repertoire columns, Richard would send a list of 15-20 provocative topics to consider. It was at such moments that I recognized the wealth of creativity he embodied.

Richard was flexible with his staff of Associate Editors. Deadlines and lengths of articles were negotiable. Advertising, the financial foundation of any periodical, took a decidedly secondary seat in Richard's approach. If a series of responses was submitted which exceeded our space allotment, Richard's reply was invariably "That's fine. This is important material for the readership. We'll adjust the advertising."

We honor this afternoon the profound contribution of the man who impacted the piano teaching profession more significantly than any other person in the latter half of the 20th century. Few people can be called "irreplaceable," but in the case of Richard Chronister, that adjective is not only appropriate, it is painfully true.

Tribute by Suzanne Guy Independent Music Teacher

One of my precious memories of Richard was the rich experience of joining him on the faculty at the International Workshops in 1995 in Graz. I grabbed the opportunity to attend all of his sessions, and I was impressed that he never opened a lesson or lecture with words. It was always MUSIC FIRST. He began with what we all want to teach - the SOUND of music! Like Chopin said, "sound came before the word." It was a subtle message - that teachers often talk too much. If one picture is worth a thousand words, one demonstration probably is worth several books.

How appropriate that we began this celebration of Richard's life with the lovely sounds of Nelita True's interpretation of Schumann's Romance. As a piano teacher, and the teacher and mentor for music teachers nationwide, Richard saw the "big picture". He was a visionary who could look at the acorn and see the oak tree. He did this with students, with teachers, and yes, with the idea of keyboard pedagogy.

Just think of the first National Conference on Piano Pedagogy, back in 1979. As co-founder, Richard had the vision to bring together eighty go-getters at William Jewell College on that bitter cold January day. He saw the potential of the oak tree it became, a biennial event up through 1995. Today we have the legacy of NCPP Proceedings totaling

more than 1350 pages, from nine wonderful conferences with as many as 1000 music teachers in attendance sharing insights and teaching techniques. Many of us still refer to those encyclopedias of ideas, conversations and demonstrations, for inspiration in our day-to-day teaching.

Richard was the champion of the independent piano teacher. Karen Koch, who studied under Richard, says "he saw independent teachers as potential saviors of the profession, who only needed to add knowledge to our innate motivation to become fine teachers and pass the wonders of music on to the next generation."

In leadership roles at Keyboard Companion, the National Keyboard Arts Associates, the Frances Clark Center, and nine consecutive NCPPs, Richard worked tirelessly to help us gain that knowledge and see our real potential and strength. Independent piano teachers all over the country responded with enthusiasm.

Each of us knows that inside every new six-year-old beginner is a potential accomplished pianist- amateur or professional. Richard would have said it differently. Pointing up our vital role, he would have said that inside every adult pianist is a six-year-old who needed a good foundation in reading and tone production but instead is carrying around baggage from poor early training. Has anyone else ever told us the truth so bluntly, with no sugar coating, like these words from Piano & Keyboard last December: "We have not yet even begun to address what it takes to produce fluent readers. Until we believe that all students are capable of reading and playing fluently from a new score, we will never change the face of piano teaching." If he did not invent the term "sightplay," he certainly popularized it.

His vision was clear, and he marched to a different drummer - that is no surprise with any mover and shaker. What is surprising, and rather remarkable, is that his friends and proteges were not expected to follow his cadence. They also were expected to march to their own internal drummers, with their own oak tree visions. The faith in our diversity is one of his greatest gifts.

Mendelssohn honored his mentor by playing an all-Bach concert in 1829, featuring the all-but-forgotten St. Matthew Passion. That night Robert Schumann wrote in his journal, "would that I could record last evening in these pages with golden letters. Again I thought how we are never at an end with Bach, how he seems to grow more profound the oftener he is heard." To me those words about Bach's music offer a perfect description of Richard

Chronister's ideas. The more I hear them or read them, the more profound they show themselves to be.

One can never mention Richard without thinking of Marjore, the angel he married. Their relationship reminds me of the quotation from France's supreme writer, Antoine de St. Exupery, "it was not that they were always looking at each other, but they were always looking in the same direction."

What is that direction? It's best summed up in another French writer's words, the poet Apollinaire:

Come to the edge. It's too high. Come to the edge. We might fall. Come to the edge. And they came. And he pushed them. And they flew.

Tribute by Margaret Lorince Chair, MTNA Pedagogy Committee

I know you all share with me many memories of Richard and how he impacted our lives. His contributions to the field of piano pedagogy spanned nearly 40 years and his achievements brought about lasting changes in the way we view the importance and obligations of our profession. Like many of you, my first personal association with Richard came through the National Conference on Piano Pedagogy. What a tremendous impact this brain-child of Richard's had on the keyboard pedagogy community!! For the first time we had an active network of keyboard teachers coming together to share ideas, learn from each other and discuss our various approaches to teaching and the training of future teachers. It was a sad day when Richard announced his decision to bring these conferences to a close.

It was immediately evident that MTNA must take up the crusade which he had begun. The MTNA administration endorsed the idea of bringing together a small committee of pedagogy experts from the piano, string and vocal fields to explore the potential for a on-going MTNA pedagogy committee. There was never any doubt that Richard's participation was essential in shaping the direction and focus of this committee's work. He eagerly accepted our invitation to serve on the committee.

Richard took on his work on this committee with the same sense of responsibility and commitment he gave to everything he did. I remember an email from him in which he said he had been thinking as he walked to his office that morning about a Pedagogy Saturday program we were working on. He then proceeded to lay out the skeleton of a format for the entire day. It was marvelous - just what we needed. Needless to say, I later wrote him many times when I needed help with a problem to ask if he would consider walking to work again. His creative mind never went to sleep and he was generous beyond measure with his ideas.

Two years ago it was my honor to be asked to speak about his contributions on the occasion of his receiving the MTNA Lifetime Achievement Award. How could we know how little time we had left to honor him? I said at that time: "His constant questioning of how we can become better teachers does not allow us to rest on our laurels. His creative thinking stimulates and leads us, and his sincere and deep concern for the future of music teaching continues to inspire us."

We remember Richard with love and gratitude and are the richer for his having walked among us. Now we have an obligation to keep the faith and continue to carry on the crusade to which we devoted his life.

Hard copies of these remarks and the program of the entire memorial are available by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to:

Attn. Rachel Kramer Asst. Executive Director Music Teachers National Association 441 Vine Street, Suite 505 Cincinnati, OH 45202-2811

Contributions are welcomed to:

The Richard Chronister Memorial Fund The Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy P.O. Box 651 Kingston, NJ 08528

and/or the MTNA Foundation (designate Richard Chronister Endowment), 441 Vine St., Suite 505, Cincinnati, OH 45202-2811.

Barbara Fast is Chair of the Piano Area and Associate Professor of Piano at the University of Northern Iowa. She has performed in solo and chamber settings throughout the midwest and in Japan and Korea, as well as presenting lecture recitals and master classes. She performs with three chamber groups: *Zephyr* - flute, cello, piano; *Spectrum* - flute, oboe, piano; and the Fast/Kroeker Piano Duo. Additionally, she presents workshops throughout the United States and frequently serves as a clinician. As Technology Chair for the Iowa Music Teachers Association, she started a column in *The Iowa Music Teacher* that profiles independent teachers around Iowa and their integration of technology into their teaching studios. Her preparatory students have won numerous state and local competitions. Former faculty appointments include Interlochen All-State Summer Program, University of Detroit, Detroit Center for Creative Studies, Hesston College, and Woodstock International School in India. She recently completed her doctorate in piano pedagogy from the University of Oklahoma.

A Tribute to Richard Chronister

by Jane Magrath

Few of us could come to grips with the fact that Chronister could be that ill, and only rarely did his demeanor betray his illness during his last months to those who saw him publicly. He had been such a rock and mainstay in the field of elementary piano pedagogy, and it never occurred that he would not be here to spur us onward. Chronister always had a hand in whatever activity was taking place, and he left an indelible mark on the profession. Because of him we all are more skillful and more thoughtful teachers.

During the fall of 1998 Chronister presented one of his last public workshops at the University of Oklahoma to an audience of enthusiastic piano students and teachers who clung to his enlightened presentation. While corresponding with me prior to that occasion, Chronister, surprisingly like many of us, was concerned about reaching his audience, concerned about doing a good job. We had several conversations about what he would present. He tackled the challenge of a four-hour workshop like the most conscientious new comer to the field, striving to be thorough, poignant, and timely. It was a reflection of the way he had lived his professional life, with concepts and points to make clearly focused and directed.

This article will present several points made by Chronister at that workshop on August 29, 1998 at the University of Oklahoma in public lecture, and as such, it provide a reference point as to where he was in his thinking at the time. At the outset Chronister stressed that there are three points to consider to be an effective teacher: knowing what to teach, knowing how to teach, and knowing why to teach. When our students fail to learn a concept, we assume that it is the student who is just not talented. Is it perhaps not that our teaching has failed? When students fail, one should first ask what went wrong with him/herself, since, after all, it is the teacher's job to start each student's mind working.

Chronister then followed with discussion of eight fallacies in teaching that have found their way into the mainstream of piano teaching. He stated the first fallacy as the belief that "I've told you, now you know." He reiterated that teaching is not telling and that one would not expect a student to remember everything we say. Excellent teachers create the situation in which students can experience what we want them to know. One example, he said, would be to create a situation where the student must remind himself to add the dynamics. The student should know what the teacher will always ask first, and that question should be, "Show me what you did at home." In teaching we need to fix the concept rather than just fixing the piece. In fact, the main role of the teacher is to make the student want to play the pieces. When a teacher's mouth is open, learning is probably not going on. The teacher's words prepare students and help them think, but it is only what the students tell themselves when we are not around that really counts.

Fallacy No. 2: The best way to present material is in a mass of fragments. To the contrary, it is the context of the whole that provides meaning.

Fallacy No. 3: We assume the fragment is the same to the student as it is to us. The problem in this area centers on the teacher's use of imprecise words.

Fallacy No. 4: It is more important to measure than it is to teach. Chronister goes on to state that much of our educational system proves this. In the system the teacher assigns and the student studies, then recites, followed by the teacher who measures and grades. Students need many pieces studied in a row with the same new element to reinforce a concept. Just because they can accomplish a new concept in one piece does not mean that they necessarily know the concept. To the contrary, it is important that students have the opportunity to measure themselves. Teachers should assign to the students pieces to learn on their own to help in thwarting this fallacy and to help students learn to measure their own progress.

Fallacy No. 5: The teacher furnishes the motivation. To the contrary, a good teacher makes use of the motivation that already exists in the student. The teacher finds and expands existing motivation. What we choose to teach a student should have a direct impact on motivation. The music we teach at every level must have a satisfying sound and a satisfying feeling if we want students to be motivated to play it.

Fallacy No. 6: The answer is more important than the process by which it is reached. It is unfortunate that students who understand process but make a little mistake along the way get the lower grades in life. A year-end recital does not really show what a student understands, but only what the teacher was able to get him to do. The teacher's job is to create a situation in which a student understands how a piece is made and then in which the student practices in that way.

Fallacy No. 7: Working on tasks devoid of purpose is good discipline. Tasks without purpose make no sense and lead students to hate practice. Only tasks that feed purpose can be called good discipline. Much of your students' practice is to solidify. Do not ask them to practice something until you know they can do it.

Fallacy No. 8: Education is preparation for life. As we all know, a real education is not preparation for life, but it is life itself. Would you go to a piano teacher for lessons even now, and then listen to recordings and lectures, but never play the piano yourself? Of course not.

Chronister never let up the pressure. The development of the teacher was his passion and his plea.

Richard Chronister was a cofounder of Keyboard Companion Magazine, a quarterly periodical on early-level piano study, and served as its editor and publisher until his death. He also was cofounder, president, and educational director of National Keyboard Arts Associates, an organization active in developing, testing, and publishing piano education materials for elementary and intermediate students. Chronister was cofounder and executive director of The National Conference on Piano Pedagogy, a foundation whose aim was the promotion of communication among those who work in the field of piano

teacher training. Chronister served as a faculty member of The University of Tulsa (Oklahoma), Westminster Choir College and the New School for Music Study (Princeton, New Jersey), William Jewell College (Liberty, Missouri), the University of Southern California, and the Colburn School of Performing Arts (Los Angeles, California). With Keyboard Arts cofounder, David Kraehenbuehl, Mr. Chronister concertized as a team for more than 25 years, performing much of the two-piano and four-hand piano literature. He was active in developing piano teacher training programs for more than 40 years and was known throughout the world for his frequent lecture tours and many contributions to the field of piano pedagogy. Chronister passed away on December 31, 1999 in Los Angeles, California.

Jane Magrath is Professor of Music in Piano and Piano Pedagogy at the University of Oklahoma. She has presented over 200 recitals, workshops and masterclasses in over forty states as well as in locations in Europe, Southeast Asia, and Australia. She is a regular writer of *New Music Reviews* for *Clavier*, and her articles have appeared in the major piano journals. She has written, compiled, and/or edited over 25 volumes including the multi-volume series *Masterwork Classics*, *Practice and Performance*, *Technical Skills*, *Masterpieces With Flair*, *Melodius Masterpieces*, and *Encore* for Alfred Publishing Company. Her major reference book *The Pianist's Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature* was published in 1995 by Alfred Publishing. She has served as Coordinator of Piano for the National Conventions of the Music Teachers National Association and in major capacities for other organizations including the National Conference on Piano Pedagogy. She has also served as the Rildia Bee Cliburn Lecturer at the Cliburn Piano Institute at TCU in Fort Worth, TX on two different occasions. A recipient of the University of Oklahoma Regent's Award for Superior Teaching and a two-time recipient of the Associate's Distinguished Lectureship, Dr. Magrath is a McCasland Foundation Presidential Professor at the University of Oklahoma where she serves as Chair of the Piano Department and teaches applied piano and courses in piano pedagogy.

Master of Music in Piano Accompanying: The Creation of a Degree Program Part III

by Scott Price

Editorial note: The following article is part of a series detailing progress in the creation of a Master of Music degree in piano accompanying at the University of South Carolina. It is the editor's hope that this series may serve as a resource for other academic units involved in this process.

A survey of degree programs provided a useful perspective and set of tools in setting up an accompanying degree program at the University of South Carolina School of Music. The resources available at South Carolina, and the faculty loads and coursework already in place, dictated the following approach and actions concerning entrance requirements and degree requirements, and two tracks, instrumental and vocal, were created as part of the degree. A course proposal dealing with special topics in piano accompanying was also created to allow freedom for special interest studies within the degree. Having passed through the piano faculty, the degree now needs to go through the appropriate channels before being forwarded to the state Committee on Higher Education for approval.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS:

Major area: *The major area of study constitutes 17 credit hours and consists of the following:*

8. Piano Accompanying (4 cr. hrs.; 4 semesters)
9. Music Literature (3 credit hrs.) MUSC 543 Song Literature (3) or MUSC 545 Survey of Opera (3) (Vocal Track) MUSC 549 Survey of Chamber Music (3) (Instrumental Track)
10. Applied Piano (8 credit hrs.) MUSC 711 (four semesters)
11. 2 Chamber Recitals (2 credit hrs.) MUSC 795 (1 credit hr.)

Music Research: 2 credit hrs.; MUSC 707 Music Bibliography and Research

Music History: 3 credit hrs.; appropriate placement by exam and advisor

Music Theory: 3 credit hrs.; one 700-level analytical course required

Elective Credit Hours: To provide opportunities for specialization, degree candidates will be advised into appropriate course work from a list of cognate studies:

Suggested Electives - Vocal Track:

- MUSC 501V Secondary Voice (1)

- MUSC 543 Song Literature (3)
- MUSC 545 Survey of the Opera (3)
- MUSC 569 Intermediate Piano Accompanying (1-repeatable for credit)
- MUSC 769 Advanced Piano Accompanying (1-repeatable for credit)
- MUSC 586 The Articulate Body (3)
- MUSC 700 Current Trends in Piano Accompanying (2)

Suggested Electives - Instrumental Track:

5. MUSC 501 Secondary Applied Music (1-harpsichord or other non-voice instrument)
6. MUSC 543 Song Literature (3)
7. MUSC 545 Survey of the Opera (3)
8. MUSC 569 Intermediate Piano Accompanying (1-repeatable for credit)
9. MUSC 769 Advanced Piano Accompanying (1-repeatable for credit)
10. MUSC 586 The Articulate Body (3)
11. MUSC 578 Pronunciation for Singers (3)
12. MUSC 579 Pronunciation for Singers (3)
13. MUSC 700 Current Trends in Piano Accompanying (2)
14. MUSC 735 Chamber Music (1)

ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS:

- Entering candidates must have earned a Bachelor of Music Degree in Piano Performance or Piano Accompanying.
- Entering candidates must perform an on-campus audition consisting of solo repertoire, and vocal and instrumental accompaniments prepared from a list of audition repertoire approved by the piano faculty. Auditions for graduate assistantships will also be administered at this time.
- Entering candidates must demonstrate proficiency with varied keyboard skills including sight reading. Students who do not demonstrate mastery of keyboard skills must enroll in MUSC 268 Keyboard Harmony and Sight Reading for non-degree credit. Completion of MUSC 268 satisfies entrance requirements in keyboard skills.
- Entering candidates must provide proof of at least 2 semesters of foreign language study or its equivalent in French, German, or Italian with a grade of "B" or better. Students demonstrating language deficiency must enroll in a Language 315 course for non-degree credit to fulfill language reading requirements:
 - FREN 315 Intensive Readings in French (3) S/U grading
 - GERM 315 Intensive Readings in German (3) S/U grading
 - ITAL 315 Intensive Readings in Italian (3) S/U grading

MUSC 569/769 PIANO ACCOMPANYING COURSE FORMAT:

MUSC 569/769 Intermediate/Advanced Piano Accompanying is an ensemble coaching class. Students enrolled in MUSC 569/769 receive instruction in the basics of ensemble accompanying through demonstration of accompanying techniques and examination of

the intrinsic properties of non-keyboard instruments. Student ensemble collaborations receive coaching on ensemble matters between themselves and their partners. Ensemble pairings normally result from graduate assistantship assignments, enrollment in MUSC 735, preparation of degree recitals and collaboration on undergraduate junior recitals, and assigned partnerships where needed. Course meetings are TBA and generally occur in late afternoon and early evening times to accommodate student schedules. Regular attendance at faculty and student recitals is expected and required.

MASTER OF MUSIC Piano Accompanying: Vocal Track

MUSC 707 Music Bibliography and Research (2 credit hours)

Major Area Studies (17 credit total hours)

Piano Accompanying (4)

- MUSC 569 Intermediate Piano Accompanying (1)
- MUSC 569 Intermediate Piano Accompanying (1)
- MUSC 769 Advanced Piano Accompanying (1)
- MUSC 769 Advanced Piano Accompanying (1)

Music Literature (3)

- MUSC 543 Song Literature (3) or
- MUSC 545 Survey of Opera (3)

Applied Piano (8)

- MUSC 711 Applied Piano

Chamber Recital MUSC 795 (1)

Chamber Recital MUSC 795 (1)

Music History (3) Music Theory (3; one 700-level analytical course required)

Music Electives (7)

- MUSC 578 Pronunciation for Singers (3)
- MUSC 579 Pronunciation for Singers (3)
-

MASTER OF MUSIC Piano Accompanying: Instrumental Track

MUSC 707 Music Bibliography and Research (2)

Major Area Studies (17 total credit hours)

Piano Accompanying (4)

- MUSC 569 Intermediate Piano Accompanying (1)
- MUSC 569 Intermediate Piano Accompanying (1)
- MUSC 769 Advanced Piano Accompanying (1)
- MUSC 769 Advanced Piano Accompanying (1)

Music Literature (3)

- MUSC 549 Survey of Chamber Music (3)

Applied Piano (8)

- MUSC 711

Chamber Recital MUSC 795 (1)

Chamber Recital MUSC 795 (1)

Music History (3) Music Theory (3; one 700-level analytical course required)

Music Electives (7)

COURSE PROPOSAL:

To provide optimal opportunities for degree candidates to gain experience, to stay current in the field of Piano Accompanying, and to support a candidate's career potential, the following course is proposed:

MUSC 700 Current Trends in Piano Accompanying. (2 credit hours) Special topics in piano accompanying such as research, pedagogy, advanced keyboard skills, opera and vocal coaching.

Justification:

Candidates for the degree "Master of Music in Piano Accompanying" enroll in a four-semester sequence of accompanying courses. As the field of piano accompanying continues to change and grow, it is imperative that a course in current accompanying trends be implemented to ensure that students graduate with skills and knowledge beyond the required sequence of course work. The proposed course provides accompanying faculty with an arena to experiment with new academic developments and to test and produce creative materials such as highly specialized course syllabi and texts. The strengths and needs of a particular class of graduate students are better served by a topics course that caters to their interests and supports their quest for employment in a highly competitive job market. The proposed course would be on an annual rotation and would examine a selected topic such as:

- Research in Piano Accompanying Specialized research topics in piano accompanying such as: edition preparation, literature surveys, performance analysis, historical overviews, sound recording evaluation, text development.
- Pedagogy of Piano Accompanying Study of teaching techniques and their application in the undergraduate and graduate accompanying course. Emphasis on the communication and transference of accompanying skills.
- Orchestral Reduction Preparation The orchestral reductions printed by major publishing houses often do not reflect the actual range, color or sound textures of the original orchestral score. Students would be required to research and examine the original orchestral score of a modest work with the goal of producing a performance accompaniment that matches as closely as possible the orchestral original while reconciling the limitations of the piano.
- Advanced Keyboard Skills Intensive advanced keyboard skills such as sightreading, harmonization, improvisation, transposition.
- Advanced Vocal/Instrumental Coaching Study in advanced accompanying techniques such as song text and accompaniment relationship, texture and sound color management in instrumental accompaniments.
- Opera Accompaniment and Coaching Specialized techniques in vocal coaching, rehearsal accompanying, opera styles, recitativo accompaniment.
- Score Reading for Keyboard Majors Specialized training in reading from three-or-more staves, 3-4 clef chorale settings, reading from full orchestral and opera scores.

Accompanying Program Creation and Administration Survey of appropriate coursework, program development, degree creation and degree program administration.

Scott Price is Assistant Professor of Piano, Piano Pedagogy, and Coordinator of Group Piano and Piano Accompanying at the University of South Carolina. A graduate of the University of Oklahoma, the Cleveland Institute of Music, and Bowling Green State University, he has studied with Jane Magrath, Thomas Hecht and Virginia Marks. He has performed at the national conventions of the Music Teachers National Conference, Music Teachers National Association, the National Conference on Piano Pedagogy, and has given performances and seminars at the Meyerson Symphony Center in Dallas TX, the University of Oklahoma Seminar for Piano Teachers, the North Dakota State Music Teachers Convention, the South Carolina State Music Teachers Convention, and the Bowling Green State University Summer Music Institute. He has served as repetiteur with Lyric Opera Cleveland, and as music director for Lyric Opera Cleveland's Educational Outreach program. He has been a faculty member of the Cleveland Music School Settlement and the Bowling Green State University Creative Arts program. Dr. Price is creator and co-editor of the on-line piano pedagogy journal "Piano Pedagogy Forum."

Cooperative Learning in the Piano Classroom

by Alejandro Cremaschi

Introduction

Cooperative Learning is an educational approach whereby students rely on each other to learn. It involves students working together as a group towards an identified common goal, sharing resources, knowledge, information and ideas. Cooperative Learning activities are structured in such a way as to encourage student cooperation, transforming individual competition into a detrimental attitude that obstructs the attainment of specific group goals. As opposed to the traditional competitive approach to education, where "your loss is my gain; and your gain is my loss," cooperative learning emphasizes a framework where "my gain is your gain; my loss is your loss."

Group activities where students help one another is not a novel idea in the field of class piano. Good piano teachers have been using the group approach for many years, either in a loose, intuitive way, or in more carefully structured versions. Cooperative Learning is a highly structured subset of the general group approach that has been developed and researched only recently, during the last 25 or 30 years, by the leading education theorists David and Roger Johnson (University of Minnesota), Robert Slavin (Johns Hopkins University), and Spencer Kagan (University of California). Cooperative Learning has since proven a successful vehicle for learning in a variety of different fields. The purpose of this article is to introduce the basic elements and benefits of the Cooperative Learning Model, and to provide some examples of how this model can be applied to particular activities in class piano teaching.

In the Cooperative Learning Model, learning is inherently a social constructive process. Group work is in its foundation. It provides opportunities for the students to talk, listen, share, and to teach each in an active mode, to develop higher-order thinking and to apply what they are learning in a safe, peer-to-peer environment. Through cooperative activities, the student becomes an active part in his or her learning process, rather than a passive recipient of information. The instructor is often transformed from a lecturer and information deliverer into a facilitator of learning.

Key Elements

There are five social elements that must be present in all group activities for Cooperative Learning to take place successfully. These elements are:

1. **Positive interdependence.** Positive interdependence encourages cooperation within the group. It is the opposite of negative interdependence, which encourages competition. Positive interdependence is achieved when the students need each other to complete the group's task, and when the group goal can only be

- accomplished by the full participation of its members. The slogan usually used to describe positive interdependence is "swim or sink together." There are four ways to establish positive interdependence: by setting up mutual goals ("learn and make sure all other group members learn"), joint rewards (such as group points in a tournament), shared resources (such as dividing the task into as many parts as there are members in the group and assigning a part to each student), and by assigning member's roles (summarizer, leader, encourager of participation, etc).
2. Face-to-face interaction. For cooperative work to be successful, the instructor must make sure to provide opportunities for students to discuss, listen, agree, disagree, and teach each other individually and independently. The instructor must temporarily relinquish his or her teaching authority to become the activity planner, and the facilitator or moderator of peer interaction. The effectiveness of this type of face-to-face interaction is based on the premise that the best way to learn something is by teaching or showing it to someone else ("talk to me and I will just listen, involve me and I will learn")
 3. Individual accountability. Individual accountability in group work is essential to avoid "free-riders" and "social loafers" within the group. It can be accomplished in several way: by frequently assessing the students individually and giving the results to both the group and the individual; by making each member in the group responsible for contributing a unique and fundamental part to the group's whole; by asking the group to file periodic reports with the contributions of the members outlined.
 4. Interpersonal cooperative skills. In order for the learning groups to function well, teachers must show these skills purposefully. Students should be taught and encouraged to develop social cooperative skills such giving praise, taking turns, disagreeing in an agreeable way, coping with multiple and conflicting points of view, resolving conflict, accepting criticism and using time efficiently. Though forcing this kind of interaction may seem at first artificial and awkward, it should be done until it becomes natural.
 5. Group processing. This is one of the most important elements of the Cooperative Learning model: at the end of the task, the members of the group examine and assess how well they have functioned together. The students should periodically review their rate of success in achieving the goals and maintaining effective working relationships. By recognizing flaws and possible improvements the students become more involved in their learning and make a commitment to improve themselves as individuals and as a group.

Some of these elements are already present in class piano teaching in several shapes and forms, as well as in many other types of music activities in general. For instance, positive interdependence and individual accountability are particularly evident when working with music ensembles --whether in class piano, band, choir, or other ensembles. In this setting, the work, effort and cooperation of the individual contributes toward the achievement of a common group goal (positive interdependence), and the individual is supposed to take responsibility for its own role in order for the group to be successful (individual accountability).

On the other hand, other elements of the cooperative model are present only in some occasions. How many band conductors, for instance, give their members a chance to experience face-to-face interaction to solve performance problems? In class piano, however, this desirable kind of interaction is not uncommon, and should be highly encouraged. An example of this kind of interaction is when students are grouped with peers after each of them has worked on a problem individually --such as a harmonization exercise--, to share what they have learned, to show the solutions, and to acknowledge other ways. Or when the groups are given autonomy to make their own decisions and to assume specific roles to tackle the performance of ensemble music.

Far less common in class piano is the fifth element, group processing, whereby the groups analyze their outcomes and modus operandi, and perfect themselves. Group analysis is highly desirable when working with long-term, well established groups. It should be done by each group or each individual, privately or publicly. This analysis may consist of a written group self-evaluation of outcomes and attitudes. The instructor may provide a specific set of guidelines to generate group self-awareness, by asking questions such as "name three things that the group did well today," "name one thing that would make the group better," "as a group, list three ways in which the members help the group," or "individually, tell the group members something effective they did to help you."

Group Types

Cooperative work as a tool can be applied with different intensity, ranging from sporadic and occasional subgrouping, to classes entirely taught using long-term groups. Occasional groups, also called informal groups, are usually formed "ad hoc." They are small and their member's roles are not pre-assigned. This type of groups is usually suitable for specific problems and tasks that can be solved quickly, in 2 to 5 minutes (answering a question, checking the spelling of a chord sequence, checking fingering, etc.). Group processing is usually not an issue in this type of setting, since informal groups are sporadic and tend to change. Formal groups, on the other hand, are groups that remain bonded for a longer period of time, with a more complex goal in hand. Usually, their member's roles are assigned or encouraged by the instructor. These groups are generally the most useful in class piano settings; they can deal very effectively with a longer project such as creative group improvisation or arranging, preparing an ensemble piece, or polishing repertoire for performance. This type of group work is usually enriched by post-task processing, and needs more regular guidance and monitoring from the instructor. The third and most complex type of groups, the base group, is a group that has been built and "solidified" throughout a longer period of time, such as a semester or quarter. These groups start taking a personality of their own, and work very efficiently together. There is deep trust in cooperation, and group interaction occurs naturally and spontaneously. This type of groups are the most difficult to form, and occur only in rare occasions.

Some Examples

There are a number of structured techniques that have proven effective in Cooperative Learning. The following paragraphs show a few examples of practical applications of these techniques. They are presented just as models, and can be transferred to other situations.

- **Harmonizing a New Melody that does not Feature Chord Labels.** This activity uses a technique called "Think-Pair-Share." It is most effective with a class that already understands the basics of harmonization, but is not completely comfortable choosing harmonies. The instructor assigns a single melody for harmonization to the class, provides a list of possible chords to be used, and establishes a time limit (usually 5 minutes). The students work individually harmonizing the melody. After 5 minutes, they are grouped into pairs. Each student must play for the other and compare harmonizations. Then they must come to a mutual agreement, and quickly prepare and practice a single version of the harmonization by taking the best of each version (this forces them to analyze and discuss why certain chords work better in certain circumstances). After a few minutes, the instructor calls on each group to play and share the harmonization with the rest of the class. They are also supposed to tell the rest of the class about their "negotiations" to arrive to the final version. If the result of one particular group is poor, the instructor may request the opinion or comment of other groups. If the correct solution does not come from other groups, the instructor should then explain the right answer making sure not to dishearten the groups. If there are other versions of the harmonization, the other groups then play their work. In order not to discourage original contributions, the instructor must make clear that sometimes there are many "correct" ways to harmonize a melody.
- **Clef Tournament.** This activity is based on a technique called STAD (Student Teams-Achievement Division). It involves four components: teaching, team study, tournament, celebration. This activity is used to practice intervallic reading, conducive to clef reading and transposing instrument reading. In previous classes, the teacher has taught and drilled the elements necessary for intervallic music reading. Groups of three students are formed. The teacher distributes sheets to each group with the same 4 or 5 simple, short, modal pieces (white keys only), where one hand features a simple accompaniment such as a drone in a familiar clef (treble or bass), and the other hand features a melody written in an unfamiliar clef (in any C clef, or in a "custom" clef where middle C is, say, on the second space). The melody in the unusual clef features intervals up to an octave. The team practice begins. Each group works for 15 minutes. One member of the group keeps the time. The group can choose its own practice method, or can use some or all of the following teacher's directions:
 1. find out the range of the melody (find and name the top and bottom notes)
 2. scan the piece for difficult intervals (usually intervals larger than a 5th) and figure out what they are
 3. play the piece ignoring the rhythm, while each member names the upcoming interval before playing the corresponding note (e.g. starting on C (member A) "fourth up..." [everyone plays F], (member B) "third up" [everyone plays A],

(member C) "fifth down" [everyone plays D], etc.)

4. perform the piece individually for the group using the notated rhythm, and receive comments.

After the preparation, there comes the tournament stage. Members of any two groups compete by playing the same piece. A third group judges the accuracy of the performance. Accurate performances will earn points for the group. The group with the most points gets a prize. After the tournament, each group discusses briefly their group work. This activity may be repeated on another day, after the students have practiced additional reading material. The prospect of earning more points for the group should encourage extra practice time.

- **Chord Progressions in Different Keys.** This activity is used to practice chord progressions in different keys. It works best during the first semester of class piano. It makes use of a cooperative technique called "Inside/Outside Circle." The instructor prepares as many different cards as there are students in the class. Each card contains, in its front side, the name of a key (e.g. d minor), two or three measures of rhythm (e.g. 2/2 quarter quarter | quarter quarter | half ||), and a Roman-numeral chord progression underneath the rhythmic notation (e.g. 2/2 i iv6/4 | i V6/5 | i ||). In its back, the card features the same exercise in regular staff notation, and a written description of each chord (e.g. d minor , g minor in second inversion | d minor, A7 in first inversion | d minor ||). Each student gets one card, and is supposed to quickly learn and practice the sequence with the help of both sides of the card. Then students are paired into 4 dyads: dyad 1 (composed of students A and B), dyad 2 (students C and D), dyad 3 (E & F), and dyad 4 (G & H). Each dyad is given 5 minutes to work privately. Student A shows the FRONT of his card to student B. Student B is supposed to perform the progression. If there are mistakes or hesitations, student A must coach and explain the progression to student B WITHOUT spelling out the chords, until B learns it and is able to play it. Then student B shows the front of her card to student A, who in turn must play it and get coaching if necessary. After five minutes, students A and B exchange cards (student A keeps student B's card and vice versa). Immediately after, students A, C, E and G move to the next dyad in the following way.

Original formation: A-B, C-D, E-F, G-H

New formation: G-B, A-D, C-F, E-H

The playing and teaching process is repeated. This time, student B in dyad 1 must teach student G the progression she just learned from A a few minutes ago, and G must teach B what he learned from H in the previous round. The rotating process is repeated until everyone has played all progressions.

- **Guided Group Improvisation.** The instructor creates several different sets of 4 or 5 cards. Each card in the set describes a different musical attribute that the improvised piece must include, such as a key, a meter, a harmonic progression, the length in measures of the improvisation, some rhythmic or melodic motives, a loosely described musical character (i.e. blissful, pensive, serene, adventurous), etc. Groups of 3 or 4 students are created, or established long-term groups are summoned together. The groups must work on interconnected headphones. The roles of the group are

decided internally; one person takes the bass line, another creates the harmonic filling, another creates the melody, and another a countermelody. One person acts as moderator and another as time keeper. Each student in the circle gets a chance to contribute with one idea at a time, and the group decides whether the idea is worth adopting. After all the basics have been decided, the group starts "building up" the improvisation, guided by the moderator. Instrumentation is also decided at this point. Usually the activity works best if the chord accompaniment is improvised first, then the bass, and finally the melodies. This fact can be left to the groups to discover. After each group has rehearsed their creations, they show the cards to the other groups and play their work on speakers. The listeners discuss how the basic elements have been used. The performers discuss how they arrived at the final version - who contributed, how they made the pertinent decisions, etc.

- Improvising and Polishing Variations as a Group. Prior to this activity, the class has worked on repertoire that includes variations on a theme. The variation techniques have been analyzed and described. Groups of 4 or 5 people are formed. Each group works on interconnected headphones. Different harmonized themes are given to each group. The themes must be basic and skeletal enough as to allow many different types of variations. The group learns and practices the theme. Different types of variations are internally decided and assigned. The group is separated to allow individual work. Each student improvises and records (in the keyboard sequencer) a variation. The group is connected again. Each student plays the improvisation from the sequencer, and receives comments and suggestions from the group. More individual time is then allowed to incorporate suggestions. After one final group check, the group plays the whole set of variations for the class from their sequencers.
- Improvising and Polishing "Question-Answer" in Pairs. The instructor presents several general suggestions for improvisation to the class (harmonic progressions, modes, meter, etc.). Pairs are formed. One student improvises a question phrase using some of the instructor's suggestions, or creating her own. The question is recorded in track 1 of her keyboard sequencer. The other student answers the question immediately after the first student finishes. This answer is recorded in track 1 of the second student's sequencer. The pair replays the question and answer from their sequencers for each other, and decides if the improv. is worth saving to show it later to the whole class. If they decide to save it, the next question-answer improvisation is saved in track 2 of the sequencers. After the groups have saved two worthy improvisations, each pair plays them from their sequencers for the rest of the class. The students receive comments from other students and the instructor about some of the most interesting or significant elements in their pieces.
- Fingering Jigsaw Polishing Repertoire: Coach-Discuss-Practice. This type of activity is especially useful with formal or long-term groups. Besides being an effective way to develop musicality, it makes the students less apprehensive toward receiving suggestions and playing in front of others. Groups of three students are formed. Each student performs a piece-in-progress for the group while recording the performance to his keyboard sequencer or to a disk. Then they exchange ideas, and receive comments and suggestions from others in the group. Suggestions should be made in an agreeable way and should include some type of modeling by the person making the suggestion. The student receiving the suggestions should try them for the group. Each member

keeps a private journal of suggestions he or she has received, and grades them from most useful and desirable to least useful. The group breaks and the individuals strive to incorporate the best ideas into their playing. On a different day the group joins again. The students play their original recording of the piece, explain what they tried to improve or incorporate, and then perform their new, improved versions. New suggestions are made, and they are recorded in the journal, to be incorporated in future practice. The group assesses each student's progress and the success in incorporating the suggestions. In order to encourage contributions or to model new or more sophisticated ideas, the instructor may choose to intervene and to make suggestions publicly after asking a student to play for the whole class.

- **Ensemble Polishing.** An activity similar to "Polishing repertoire" can be used for polishing ensemble pieces for multiple pianos. The parts are divided among the members. Each student works on his or her part privately. The group is formed. All students set their sequencers to record, and perform the piece together. Then they play back all the recordings simultaneously, and take turns to critique their group performance. Positive comments should be encouraged. Suggestions and ideas are discussed and tried as a group. Students practice their parts alone. The piece is recorded again and compared to the older version. The instructor may want to guide the student discussion by providing a "check list" of items such as balance, tempo, articulation, character, instrumentation, etc. The instructor should also monitor and intervene with suggestions.

Tips on how to start cooperative group work in class (adapted from Johnson, Johnson & Holubec)

- Start small. Keep it short at first.
- Do something cooperative every day.
- Sell the students on it before starting.
- Plan carefully!
- Choose goals intrinsically interesting and achievable.
- Choose activities that lead to results immediately visible.
- Explain procedures clearly. Keep it simple!
- Plan routines.
- Let the student make mistakes.
- Monitor and intervene if necessary: walk, listen, praise.
- YOU choose the groups. The most effective grouping is often done by random.
- Be patient. Be positive. Be encouraging.
- DON'T give group grades. They tend to discourage group synergy. Work with tournaments and group points.
- Remember to include all five elements of Cooperative Learning in every lesson.
- Create opportunities for group processing or analysis.
- Provide closure and explain the point of each activity.

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Forming Your Teaching to the Teaching of Form

by Timothy Shafer

Four years ago, when my 7-year-old student was a beginner, I said things like, "Is the next group of notes the same, almost the same, or different than the last group of notes?" Two years ago, when my 9-year old student was at the late elementary stage of piano instruction, I said things like, "Is the next phrase identical, similar, or different than the previous phrase?" And last week, when my 11-year old student was playing intermediate level repertoire, I said, "With which motive in the next phrase does the descending sequence begin that causes this phrase to decrescendo?"

Does a similar series of questions occur in your studio? Is this scenario really possible? Believe me, it is! Implied in the above sequence of questions is a manner of instruction that provides a continuing enrichment of a student's concept and practical use of form.

The knowledge of form from the beginning stages of piano instruction is invaluable. The daily application of that knowledge reaches into almost every aspect of piano study at every stage of learning. I'd like to take a few moments to encourage you to consider teaching and using musical form as an integral part of your teaching.

For the sake of clarity in our discussion, let's use the following layman's definitions for these basic terms:

12. Motive - shortest musical idea, often identified by a distinctive rhythm and sometimes a general pitch contour. Usually can't stand alone.
13. Phrase - melodic equivalent to a sentence. Often ends with a long note or rest which encourages a breath
14. Phrase group - frequently pairs or trios of phrases which "go" together to fulfill a melodic and rhythmic expectation set up by the first phrase. Examples of phrase groups include "question-answer" phrase groups (also known as antecedent-consequent phrases or periods) and bar forms or "sentence" forms (aab)
15. Section - several phrase groups bundled together to create a larger unit of a piece. Exposition, development, A section, etc., are examples of sections.
16. Movement - several sections cohesively bound by melody and key to create a complete musical composition.

The easiest of the above to teach to beginning level children is the phrase itself. In American piano methods, much of the music is set with text. The text frequently helps to portray the musical imagery of the piece and most piano teachers are real pros at using the words to help motivate the child by evoking the scenes they create. However, a lesser-used, but equally valuable use for the text is to begin the process of teaching the concept of form. Chanting (or better yet singing) the words of these songs while pointing out the places to breathe or rest can help the child become aware of the meaning in a group of notes. Often, this can be enhanced with the assistance of familiar childhood rhymes and poems.

Once your student is accustomed to the idea that music, like words, occurs in meaningful groups, it is time to begin to compare those groups. Begin this simply, as stated above, by asking the child to decide if the next group of notes is the same, almost the same, or different than the first group of notes. Amazingly, their response is almost always correct! From here, it is easy to give names to those groups - "a" to the starting group, "a1" to a group that is almost the same, and "b" to a group that is different. With these names in place, teachers suddenly have the potential to make lesson assignments with musical meaning *in the very wording of the assignment!* Compare the following potential entries in your student's assignment book:

For Monday:

County Fair - Review hands together to the bottom of the first page - Learn the first three lines of the second page hands separately - Practice measures 8 and 9 three extra times

OR

County Fair - Review the "A" phrases hands together - Learn the "B" phrase hands separately - Practice the last measure of the "A" phrase and the first measure of the "A1" phrase three extra times

Which assignment, by its very wording, teaches your student more about the inner workings of the piece and the composer's mind? Assignments using lines, pages, and measure numbers focus on the random way a publisher has placed the music on the page, and they waste a valuable opportunity to pour information into the student's mind!

Uses For Form

1. Initial Learning Stages

The number of different ways students and teachers can use this information is astounding.

During the initial stages of the learning process form is vital to making meaningful assignments. Assigning new material using phrase names creates boundaries and goals for the student. An assignment that reads, "Learn the a, a1, a2, and a3 phrases in the B section this week," causes the student to start and *stop* his/her practice in musically meaningful places rather than play through the piece haphazardly from beginning to end. These boundaries give students time to focus on the many details of the score; articulation, fingering, pedaling, note and rhythmic accuracy are achieved in a much more dependable fashion. Learning to distinguish the tiny differences between the various similar phrases from the very beginning increases intimacy with the detail of the piece.

Developing sequential strategies that help the student learn these phrases is also a means of developing independent learning through goal-setting. For instance, when a student is unable to play the "a1" phrase hands together at sight, a series of prerequisite strategies can be developed to help achieve this goal:

- Count aloud
- Play hands separately
- Play melody alone (sometimes different than playing hands separately)
- Play accompaniment alone (sometimes different than playing hands separately)
- Vary the tempo
- Silently block the hand position shifts
- Repeat a pre-determined number of times in a row perfectly

One-at-a-time, or in combinations, the above strategies will help develop a series of steps the student can use any time the phrase is too difficult to accomplish in the first few attempts. Tangibly achieved goals can be made by assigning a specific number of repetitions for the phrase to be performed perfectly in a row. (Be careful in setting this number too high – it can be overwhelmingly frustrating!) This kind of practice is beautiful to watch! Young children can be seen practicing like a pro - repeating a phrase for accuracy while counting aloud in a variety of tempi, hands separately, then together. This kind of practice is *very difficult* to develop in beginning and intermediate students without knowledge of phrase structure.

Once each phrase has been learned fluently by itself, continuity can be achieved by assigning a week or more of "neighbor phrase" practice. That is to say, assign your student to begin at each learned phrase and learn to play it followed immediately and fluently by its next neighbor. Again, set a number of times for perfect repetition and you can simply marvel as problems with continuity dissolve.

2. Technical Facility

One of the basic ideas of improving a player's technique is a close examination of the efficiency of the movement of the hand. Musical motives provide an ideal way to for a student to focus on a *meaningful* fragment of a passage that is small enough to allow a close examination of the movement of the hand(s) and to repeat for technical ease. Motives frequently cross boundaries between melody and accompaniment and are interesting to trace as a compositional tool for unity in the work.

3. Sight-Playing

As students become accustomed to the standard types of phrase groups, aural expectations begin to develop. After finishing the short "a" phrase of a bar form for instance, a player begins to expect either an identical subsequent phrase or a very similar one of the same length and rhythms, followed by a "b" phrase that is twice the length and based on similar material. These expectations (especially rhythmic ones) offer considerable improvement to a musician's sight playing ability.

4. Musical Decisions and Interpretations

Not only is the recognition of these formulae an essential part of improving a player's sight reading, but also of appreciating much of the humor used by composers who expect that all musicians will have such an understanding. When composers set listeners up for these formulae then dash their expectations, surprise and laughter result. Additionally, composers frequently depend on a musician's awareness of phrase group closure (cadence), motivic fragmentation, and phrase extension as a gauge for rubato.

At the risk of oversimplifying this portion of the discussion, most phrases contain a single note that is able to be distinguished as the "climax" of the phrase. Usually this is based on that note being the highest pitch of the phrase, having the longest duration of the phrase, its metric placement within the phrase, or simply because the composer has described it that way with a nuance that marks it as such. Teaching students to discover this climax point of the phrase and to focus their practice on executing a beautifully gradual crescendo/decrescendo becomes an addition to their strategies and goals.

Once each phrase is beautifully shaped, it is time to compare adjacent phrases to one another to determine their dynamic relationship. For instance, if the "a1" phrase is the "a" phrase because it is sequenced a step higher than the "a" phrase, then a louder version of the climax is in order for "a1." This creates dynamic and architectural hierarchy, as well as a long sense of line. Many times, students will begin to understand why a composer chose the dynamics he did when phrases are examined this way.

5. Memorization

Assigning memorization by section and phrase has many advantages. Typically, students play through a piece from beginning to end until they have achieved a superficial tactile memory. While this form of memory is an absolute necessity, it is also too fragile to allow to stand on its own. Assigning phrase-at-a-time memory ("Memorize all the "b" phrases in the "A" section this week.") enforces thoughtful consideration of the tiny details that distinguish one phrase from another similar phrase. By requiring the student at the next lesson to play the "b4" phrase followed by the "b2" phrase, followed by the "b1" phrase, etc., the student learns *meaningful* memory landmarks that are useful in a crisis on stage. Ironically, if your student's preparation is successful, the very act of using the beginnings of phrases as memory landmarks prevents the need for them on stage! (In one case I had a recent transfer student performing on his first recital as my student. We had just gone through this procedure in preparation for his recital playing Kabalevsky's "A Little Joke." He was thoroughly familiar with the phrases independently but nevertheless came to a screeching halt during this, his first nerve-wracked performance. After a few uncomfortable seconds of silence I called out from the audience "B2!" whereupon he immediately picked up the thread and continued flawlessly to the end!)

Conclusion

Many additional possibilities exist for the use of form. I also use them to assist with the review and polish of previously performed pieces as well as the development of active listening skills. It doesn't take much to begin this fascinating expedition into the use of form in your teaching. Best wishes as you begin or expand your journey!

Timothy Shafer received the Pennsylvania Music Teachers Association Teacher of the Year Award for 1997. He teaches studio piano and coordinates the class piano and piano pedagogy programs at both undergraduate and graduate levels at Penn State University. Shafer earned the bachelor of music degree in piano performance from the Oberlin Conservatory, where he won several performing awards, including the Rudolf Serkin Outstanding Pianist Award. He received master's and doctoral degrees in piano performance from Indiana University, where he was the winner of the 1985 Concerto Competition. Shafer appeared in Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall in 1995 with violinist James Lyon as member of Duo Concertant and returned in 1997 for his solo debut. He is currently recording his second compact disc, a collection of the works of Brahms and Liszt. He is an active performer, clinician, and adjudicator throughout the country for professional music organizations and colleges, and is a frequent soloist with many regional orchestras. Shafer is the co-author of *Class Piano for Adult Beginners*, published by Prentice-Hall, and is a workshop clinician for Frederick Harris Music Company.

Growing Up Digital: How Will This Affect Piano Teaching in the Next Century?

by Brenda Dillon

Growing Up Digital by Don Tapscott (McGraw-Hill) focuses on the Net Generation, the generation of children who will be between the ages of two and 22 by 1999. Why is this generation important to piano teachers in the next century?

First of all, the next few years will likely be a time of transition for piano teachers. We will have a foot in the past for students who want and expect traditional piano lessons, but we will need to have a foot in the future for the Net Generation. Who are they, and how do we prepare to teach them?

Don Tapscott tells us that the Net Generation - 80 million strong - are so bathed in bits that they think it's part of the natural landscape. Two-thirds of them use a personal computer at home or at school. They now represent 30 percent of the population, as compared to the baby boomer's 29 percent. A primary difference between the two is that boomers have embraced computer and information technology, but they have done so under duress. Their world was shaped by television, a passive and controlling influence. The Net Generation is rapidly substituting computer activities for watching TV. A recent Nielsen poll found that wired homes watch 15 percent less television. In 1995 virtually no homes were wired. However, by the year 2000, over 40 percent of American households will be connected to the Internet. It is predicted that American children will be watching approximately 100 hours less television a year than they do now. When these children were asked what was more fun - television or the Internet - 92 percent of them chose the Internet.

The reason for this change is that computers are interactive and television is broadcast-driven. The latter is unidirectional, the choice of programming is in the hands of a few, and it is often "dumbed-down" to the lowest common denominator. Television comes from the top down and is done to you, not by you. Computer users can inquire, discuss, argue, play, shop, critique, investigate, ridicule, fantasize, seek and inform. For the first time, children are taking control of a communication revolution. Television may be prime time, but computers are anytime.

Another consideration is that we are shifting from a generation gap to a generation lap, where kids are outpacing and overtaking adults on the technology track. Society has never before experienced this phenomenon of having the knowledge hierarchy so effectively flipped on its head. When it comes to using technology, the Net Generation initially focuses on how to work it, rather than how it works. They expect things to happen fast, because in their world things do happen fast. The computer has changed from a tool for information management to a communications tool. Digital kids are learning about peer relationships, about teamwork, about being critical, about how to have fun online, about friendships across the miles, about standing up for what they think, and about how to effectively communicate their ideas.

What does this mean for teachers? How many of us are facilitating interactive learning environments? Peter Drucker, a leading authority in the business world, shocked the post-secondary world in the March 10, 1997 issue of Forbes magazine by writing, "Thirty years from now, big university campuses will be relics. The impact of the digital revolution is as large a change as when we first got the printed book. The university won't survive as a residential institution. Today's buildings are hopelessly unsuited and totally unneeded."

This view does not coincide with John Naisbitt's HighTech/High Touch prediction in Megatrends, published in 1982: "The more technology we introduce into society, the more people will aggregate. Shopping malls are now the third most frequented space in our lives, following home and workplace." Naisbitt believed that "the more high technology around us, the more the need for human touch."

Tapscott, in a more middle-ground view, writes, "Teachers have legitimate concerns about their role as the learning model changes from broadcast to interactive. The irony here is that if they don't change and transform their classrooms and themselves to the new model, they face even greater threats to their job security. Society will find other ways to deliver learning and bypass them."

Tapscott is a promoter of "learner-centered" education that improves the child's motivation to learn. "Rather than listening to some professor regurgitating facts and theories, students discuss and learn from each other with the teacher as a participant. This does not suggest the teacher is suddenly playing a less important role. The shift is from teacher as transmitter to teacher as facilitator. Learning is becoming a social activity facilitated by a new generation of educators. The teacher doesn't compete with Jacques Cousteau, but rather is supported by him. A teacher is equally critical and valued in the learner-centered context, and is essential for creating and structuring the learning experience. Much of this depends on the subject; no one would suggest, for example, that the best way to learn the piano is the discovery mode."

This last sentence is especially interesting, as Tapscott mentions that he writes music. If he believes learning to play the piano isn't best done by the discovery mode, what portion of the music learning experience is best done interactively? If the information in his book is accurate, we can expect piano students who not only embrace technology, but who demand it. We can expect students who not only understand lifelong learning; it is a way of life for them. We can expect brighter students, as recent studies found that children are registering average raw intelligence scores that are 15 points higher than those reported on tests 50 years ago. They will expect customized learning rather than learning designed to meet the needs of a specific age or grade in school. We can also expect more students. Between 1996 and 2006, public high school enrollment is expected to increase by 15 percent and college enrollment by 14 percent. Even without considering retiring teachers, 190,000 new teachers will be needed.

With the exception of future students demanding technology, all of these predictions are beyond our control. What isn't beyond our control is our willingness to shift from being a

transmitter of broadcast learning to a facilitator of interactive learning. This begins with attitude, and attitude is totally under our control.

It's been said that the only people who like change are babies with wet diapers. However, the challenge for us as piano pedagogues is to adapt to the changing environment, while not losing what makes us unique and necessary. Human beings have an innate desire to make music and we now have even more avenues to participate as a partner in that process. The Net Generation may approach us in a different way and may express unusual learning goals compared to our past students, but the bottom line is that they also have that innate desire to make music. Piano teachers who are open to this generation and their technological bent are going to thoroughly enjoy teaching in the next century. For an even greater rush of adrenaline, consider what it will be like in the year 2999! That's an article I would like to read.

Brenda Dillon serves as education consultant for Roland Contemporary Keyboard Division and associate editor of Roland's Keyboard Educator. Her background includes experiences in academia and the music industry. Her formal education includes bachelor and master degrees as well as doctoral work in music from the University of North Texas. After teaching music at two Dallas community colleges, Brenda served as Dean of Fine Arts at Brookhaven College. Throughout her teaching career, she presented workshops at state and national conferences, authored numerous articles, co-authored two books, and consulted on projects for several piano manufacturers. She has served as chairman of several organizations, including the National Group Piano Symposium, the Texas Group Piano Association, a keyboard committee for MENC, and as cochair of MENC's Music In Our Schools Week. Brenda Dillon's formal association with industry began when she became Executive Director of the National Piano Foundation. Her experience includes coordinating NPF's Research Project with McGill University in Montreal and writing kits for educators, technicians and retailers (*Piano Marketing Essentials*, *Teaching Bigger Fingers to Play*, a *SPELLS Action Kit -- Study of Piano Enhances Learning and Life's Success*). The latter was developed for a market development program sponsored by the piano manufacturers and was presented to retailers, technicians and educators in 50 cities throughout the U.S. Brenda Dillon presently serves as associate editor of Keyboard Companion.

Emotional Health and the Musician

by Douglas Weeks

Creativity and emotional health -- a topic not extensively addressed in the music curriculum and one both sensitive and complex to discuss - is the subject of the pioneering work of Swiss psychotherapist Alice Miller. She has achieved international recognition for her work on the causes and effects of childhood emotional trauma. Her books, especially *The Drama of the Gifted Child*, have become classics in the literature of graduate education and psychology programs.

In layman's terms, Miller tells us that a child needs to be loved unconditionally - for the unique individual that he or she is. If the child at an early and crucial stage does not receive this unconditional love, then there is a likelihood that a narcissistic disorder will result. In other words, a child must develop from infancy a healthy narcissism by seeing an acceptance of his or her own image reflected in the mother's, or primary caretaker's, eyes. If the child sees nothing of him or herself reflected, but sees only what the care giver wants that child to be, i.e., a reflection of the mother's own narcissistic needs, then the child may not develop an inner sense of self, but rather will do everything possible to please the mother by fulfilling the mother's needs and expectations.

Alice Miller writes about this condition in *Drama of the Gifted Child* (originally published as *Das Drama des begabten Kindes*, 1979):

Quite often we are faced here with gifted patients who have been praised and admired for their talents and their achievements ... According to prevailing, general attitudes, these people -- the pride of their parents -should have had a strong and stable sense of self-assurance, But exactly the opposite is the case. In everything they undertake they do well and often excellently; they are admired and envied; they are successful whenever they care to be -- but all to no avail. Behind all this lurks depression, the feeling of emptiness and self-alienation, and a sense that their life has no meaning. These dark feelings will come to the fore as soon as the drug of grandiosity fails, as soon as they are not "on top," not definitely the "superstar," or whenever they suddenly get the feeling they failed to live up to some ideal image and measure they feel they must adhere to. Then they are plagued by anxiety or deep feelings of guilt or shame. (5-6)

The child has learned to equate love and acceptance with fulfilling the parent's expectations of achievement. Often this means overachieving in life. Obviously this does not mean that all people who have significant professional accomplishment to their credit are children who have been emotionally abused. The difference is that the narcissistically disturbed, like the miser who never has enough money, will never achieve enough. He or she will spend a lifetime chasing a prize that will never be found because it was never there to begin with - the unqualified love of the mother or father for the essential individual child. Miller describes this state as follows:

The parents have found in their child's "false self" the confirmation they were looking for, a substitute for their own missing structures; the child, who has been unable to build up his own structures, is first consciously and then unconsciously ... dependent on his parents. He cannot rely on his own emotions, has not come to experience them through trial and error, has no sense of his own real needs, and is alienated from himself to the highest degree. Under these circumstances he cannot separate from his parents, and even as an adult he is still dependent on affirmation from his partner, from groups, or especially from his own children. (14)

What concern is this condition to musicians and teachers of musicians? Have we ever known a colleague or a student who fits this profile? Do some of us see some, or a great deal, of ourselves in this profile?

Music is one of the talents that reveals itself at an early age, especially in the gifted child. In fact, the term prodigy is probably more often than not associated with music or mathematics. If a musical child is traumatized in the manner that Alice Miller has described, then we as teachers wield a profound power because we can either choose to aid the healing process, or we can wound the child even further. We all have known musicians with an unquenchable thirst for success, who struggle to be in positions of superiority, who must win competitions, or whose students must win competitions. We have all witnessed the "out of control" ego. And we know that there are many, many deeply unhappy musicians. Again, this does not mean that a healthy pursuit of excellence, a healthy pursuit of lofty goals, is not possible and indeed positive. But Alice Miller is addressing values and validation, and we as musicians and teachers should be addressing the value of music and music making on its own terms. We teach our students values by how we value them as individuals.

As music students and as teachers, most of us have probably at one time or another run into the "out of control" ego. One of the many teachers I have had, who was absolutely outstanding in most respects, said to me in a lesson, "Well, either you're musical or you're not!" He closed the book on the problem we were trying to solve, and, in effect, closed the book on me. Some might say that he was challenging me to work harder for my own good. But the actual effect was demoralizing. Instead of feeling challenged, I felt unmusical and incapable of understanding what it was he was trying to teach me. Looking back on it, I realize that he might have been frustrated because he couldn't get me to understand. He may have felt not only frustrated but also somewhat inadequate. So he turned the tables on me. A little incident? I've carried it with me for three decades. But out of that incident I resolved never to say anything so disparaging to one of my students.

Far worse was the time one of my teachers actually grabbed the music from the rack and hit me in the face with it because I had begun a crescendo too loudly, He got his point across, some would say. He also got across that my musical crime merited corporal punishment, like the stereotypical "old school" teacher who would painfully rap on knuckles with a ruler to correct errant fingering. It was not the physical pain that hurt. It was the immense indignity that I felt -- the personal violation. Certainly, I learned to execute a more effective crescendo. But, I came to realize after several months of study

that I meant less as a human being to this man than I did as a potential prize winner in a competition. That was the bottom line. While my playing did improve that year, substantially I might add, I have never been able to answer the question of whether studying with him was worth the emotional pain. Could I not have received the same excellent training elsewhere -- without the humiliation? My gratitude to this teacher for what I learned will always be intertwined with a burning resentment for how he treated me.

And, there are other little incidents. The teacher who would slap his forehead and make faces to ensure that anyone watching him would know that he was not responsible for his student's mistakes in recital. Or the teacher who accosted his student backstage after her full recital, dressing her down in front of her peers for all her musical failures. Or the teacher who put a guilt trip on one of his students who did not want to enter a competition because she felt that she wasn't ready to compete. He told her that he hadn't had a winner in a long time, and, by golly, she had to compete and to WIN. Said he, with an alarming lack of self awareness, "You gotta do this for me!"

I could go on, and I imagine that many of you could relate your memories of unpleasant incidents. Here is my point: IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THIS WAY. Part of the problem is the legacy of a few legendary teachers who, although great pedagogues, were also known for their neuroses and even, their cruelties. But great talent does not excuse abuse. There are also those equally great pedagogues who are revered for their kindness and for their nurturing attitude toward their students as well as for their wealth of knowledge. The large majority of my own teachers fall into the latter category. And to them I will always be grateful for not only what they taught me, but also for how they taught me.

I am in no way suggesting that musical standards be lowered or that a piano lesson be turned into a therapy session. I am suggesting that when a teacher belittles, mocks, ridicules, or shames a student for not playing well, or for not wanting to compete, or for wanting to change teachers, or majors, or for maybe not even wanting to pursue music as a career, he or she is modeling values. The crucial question follows: do we as teachers have a responsibility to teach only the music, or are we also responsible for teaching the human being?

In *Drama of the Gifted Child*, Alice Miller succinctly describes the parent's responsibility towards the child: ". . . - if we are willing to open our eyes to the suffering of the child, we will soon realize that it lies within us as adults either to turn the newborn into monsters by the way we treat them or to let them grow up into feeling -- and therefore responsible - human beings" (xv). As piano teachers in the unique position of interacting with individuals in a private setting week after week, year after year, an intimate bond often develops. We are not their parents, but we are their mentors - powerful in our influence. We must put the needs of the student above our own needs. Exploring the work of Alice Miller and others can help us to deal ethically and humanely with students, with colleagues, and with ourselves.

References

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Addendum: Other Works of Alice Miller

For Your Own Good: Hidden Cruelty in Childrearing and the Roots of Violence Thou Shalt Not Be Aware: Society's Betrayal of the Child Pictures of a Childhood: Sixty-six Watercolors and an Essay The Untouched Key: Tracing Childhood Trauma in Creativity and Destructiveness Banished Knowledge: Facing Childhood Injuries Breaking Down the Wall of Silence: The Liberating Experience of Facing Painful Truth Paths of Life: Seven Scenarios

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A Journey Beyond the Expected

by Elinor Freer

In today's society, more and more creative musicians are finding themselves making music in unconventional ways. As a classically trained pianist, I have also begun to realize that much can be gained from performing in situations that vary from the traditional concert experience. Most of us spend years of conservatory training performing in only the most controlled of situations: degree recitals given in a favorable acoustic with a supportive audience of peers, teachers, and family. However, upon exiting school, frequently we find ourselves performing in less than ideal situations: on an unruly instrument, in a difficult acoustic, or perhaps in an unfamiliar or non-traditional setting. Almost four years ago, I had the opportunity to travel to China to perform. This adventure was not only memorable in many ways in and of itself, but also taught me many lessons about performing in unusual situations.

My journey to China began a few months prior to that morning, when I received a phone call while on summer vacation. A manager in the United States who specialized in bringing performers back and forth between the US and China had scheduled two tours for the Fall of 1996. I was being asked to fill in for a young woman who had just cancelled, and to join another American pianist (Noel Benkman from San Francisco) for two separate series of concerts in both Northern and Southern China. Once I realized that it was not a friend on the other end of the line playing a joke on me, I started checking into the offer. After talking to other pianists who had been on this same tour in previous years and assured me that it was the opportunity of a lifetime, I began to get ready for what was to be a truly amazing experience.

Slowly the details of the trip filtered down to me. I learned that we would be playing solo and duo piano music by Chinese and American composers, including a two-piano version of "Rhapsody in Blue," in which we would be accompanied by students from various conservatories across China. Chinese piano students would also be performing on the concerts, playing multi-piano selections as well as novelties such as, "Voices of a Multitude," a piece written especially for the concerts and performed by 100 fingers (ten students) at one piano. The conductor/organizer of the event would be John Kozar, who had traveled to China extensively and who had rounded up an experienced staff to travel with us. Our entourage would also include two American managers who were fortunately both fluent in both English and many Chinese dialects. Once in China, we would be working with a huge Chinese management company that was already busy putting the details of this huge extravaganza into place.

What was to be a trip like no other began to unfold. The things that I learned from my experiences in China can be translated into a set of informal guidelines, which can apply to anyone venturing outside the normal performance situation.

1. Go with the flow. Whatever happens, happens.

This is probably the single most important adjustment I had to make. Fortunately I began to realize it even before my feet had left American soil. Up until one day before departure I had no plane ticket, no itinerary, and absolutely no idea where or when the concerts would be occurring. Until the moment that I actually boarded the plane, some small part of me thought that the whole thing might not really be happening. In China, it seems that everything is decided and arranged at virtually the last minute. Even events for which months of planning must be required are never confirmed until hours before curtain. I always got the impression that no one seemed for certain that a concert would even take place that evening until the morning. Rehearsal schedules, concert programs, travel arrangements, piano moving and transport: all seemed decided at a moment's notice. In the end though, almost every event and concert came off beautifully organized and with very few hitches, which always mystified me. The night before we were all supposed to fly back to our respective homes after our first tour, poor Noel still had no plane ticket back to the US. I still remember his sad face as we all drove off to the airport and left him in the hotel lobby in Beijing. He had no idea whether or not he would ever get out of China and back to his family. (I'm happy to say he did, and that he even joined us for the second tour!) Maybe there is something to be said for abandoning our Western ways of over-organization and efficiency. However, it can be a frustrating way of life until you learn to relax and let go.

2. Be prepared to play under any conditions.

Probably the thing that surprised me the most about performing in China was the nature of the concerts we gave. I had no idea before leaving that we were going to be performing amplified concerts in stadiums for thousands of audience members. Although they do have some small performance spaces and intimate halls in China, the majority of places where concerts are held tend to be huge cavernous spaces, for which a maximum number of tickets can be sold. I got the impression that the Chinese are fond of big, elaborate spectacles rather than something like a low-key chamber music concert. Where else would I ever have the opportunity to play for over 60,000 people at an outdoor festival on the ocean in Qing-dao? (The beer of the same name had sponsored the festival, and had supplied giant beer kegs that were rolled out onto stage and nestled next to the pianos. I don't think I'll ever again play Chopin while surrounded by giant beer kegs!).

The audience's behavior was also surprising to me, but not when you consider the practicality of getting 10,000 people to remain quiet for two hours. I felt like I was at a sporting event with all the hum and chatter of the audience, and they were not shy about showing their appreciation or enthusiasm for a particular piece or performer. By the end though, I got used to the noise and felt that it contributed somehow to the excitement in the air on the night of a performance.

One concert in Shenzhen stands out in my memory. In an old, rather run-down stadium, the pianos were set up center court. Someone (presumably at the request of the sponsors) had decided to suspend huge, inflatable 7-Up and Coke cans above our heads. I will

never forget looking up and seeing those giant balloons waving in the air while hanging by threads and wondering what would happen if they fell on us. For that same performance, our Chinese manager had engaged a well-known Chinese television personality to be the master of ceremonies. A man with a gentle face and warm personality, he would give us elaborate introductions as we waited backstage. I would hear a quick patter of Chinese, and then something that sounded vaguely like my name. At that point, an assistant would push me out onto stage and I would be greeted by the roar of 10,000 excited audience members. It was all quite surreal.

3. Be a dry sponge.

As with many life experiences, in China you will absorb as much as you give. Come prepared to soak up the richness of this incredible and ancient country. Nothing prepared me for the assault on my senses: giant, sprawling cities like Beijing and Guangzhou, covered with smog so thick that it literally burned my lungs; open air markets that went on for miles with the most incredible array of fresh meats and fish, live animals for sale, spices, hundreds of varieties of bean-curd and the most incredible smells imaginable (both good and bad). The juxtaposition of old and new is unbelievable; times seems to have stood still in the rural areas, while in the cities, skyscrapers are going up faster than you can imagine and most people carry a cell phone. The streets in Beijing and Canton teem with mopeds and tiny cars spewing black smoke, while at the same time a peasant in a straw hat drives his cattle through the very same traffic. In the cities one finds tenement high rises in the cities, gray from the layers of smoke and pollution that stretch on for miles; just outside in the country, tiny thatched-roof huts house entire families, and farmers are still working the land with an ox and plow.

4. Leave your shy self at home.

The Chinese are warm, wonderful and social people. One of the first nights in the country, we drove through areas of Beijing, where entire communities were congregated outside on the streets, probably due to the intense heat. Groups of women were sewing by the dim light of street lamps, men were playing cards and drinking beer, while children played in the street; it all seemed like a giant backyard party. Life seems to go on in the streets, and the people never seem to be alone.

Those who can speak a little English are dying to practice the language and want to know all about a visitor's life. We gave endless radio and television interviews and were constantly approached on the street and asked to speak English. The people are gentle and open, and they love a guest who returns those qualities. Almost every night we were treated to banquets and huge festive dinners with various dignitaries, at which we were treated to eloquent and beautifully spoken toasts and acknowledgements. Noel had great success as our "toastgiver," as he practiced and perfected the art of gracious speaking.

4. Be prepared to hear "No."

I've never seen a society that existed with so many rules and regulations than that of the Chinese. Very often, we found ourselves needing answers from people who had little or no authority to make decisions. This would always result in endless discussions with the higher-ups in order to get even the simplest task completed. I was amazed that people are forced to live with such a complicated system of bureaucracy, and I wondered if all Chinese are confronted with such complex rules, or whether they are just imposed on the visiting Westerners. Often these arguments, which seemed to make little or no sense, would take on the air of a comic opera. For example: near the end of our second tour, Noel and I were eating in the restaurant of a rather nice hotel where we were staying. Although the Chinese food that we ate daily was always incredibly delicious and exotic, by this time the American in both of us was craving a hamburger or something Western. We took a look at the menu and decided to take a chance on the "Gold Sandwich," which was the house specialty. When we tried to order it, the waitress just shook her head, "No." Finally a group of managers appeared and a flurry of heated discussion ensued. Shortly thereafter one of our interpreters joined the debate. Apparently our group was not authorized to have that particular item on the menu; it was only for certain tour groups. Eventually they relented and we got the sandwiches which hit the spot.

This type of scenario happened on a daily basis. I tried to buy postcard stamps at the hotel, where they were advertised for sale. The man behind the reception desk told me that I would have to come back between 3-5pm (it was about 2:50pm), because that is when postcard stamps were sold. When I came back ten minutes later, the same man asked to see my postcards. When I showed them to him, he said "No," and refused to sell me stamps. Again, the interpreter showed up, and told me that I was unable to send the cards, because I had signed my name on the bottom right side of the card instead of on the left where the message belonged. Therefore they could no longer be considered postcards, and I would have to put them in envelopes and send them as letters, for which I could buy stamps the next day between 1-3pm.

5. Enjoy your special status.

As Western classical musicians we were honored with special treatment and lavish welcomes from mayors to hotel clerks. No matter how much we tried to convince people that we were not famous American pianists, they would not believe it! During our visit, our hosts treated us like Hollywood royalty. At some hotels, the staff would line up with flowers to greet us as we arrived. I signed more autographs than I will ever sign during the rest of my life, and sometimes people would even chase after our bus as we drove away from the concert. On our visit to Tiananmen Square (a powerful and must-see stop on anyone's list), we were surrounded by people wanting to touch us, and have their photo taken with our group. Old women would come up and hug me and touch my hair, and Noel's beard attracted a lot of attention and giggles from the women and girls.

I could recall endless anecdotes about my trip abroad and recount for days the richness of the journey. In a way, it would also be easy to write off this experience as an isolated

event, something that happened half a world away with little relevance to American life. However, I have come to realize that these lessons have continued to nourish my present musical activity. Teaching at a small university in Western Kansas, I recently had the opportunity to organize a chamber music residency which brought live music into non-traditional venues in a rural area. In some ways I was surprised to notice that I faced the same challenges and issues as in China. In the course of putting the project together, I had to often remind myself to go with the flow and not to let a "no" stand in the way of my goals. The other musicians and I certainly found ourselves playing in less than ideal situations, reaching out to appreciative first-time audiences, and enjoying the novelty of bringing live music to out-of-the-way places. I believe that today classical musicians are often called upon to journey beyond the expected. We all must challenge ourselves to create opportunities in which we can contribute in meaningful and relevant ways to the world around us.

A native of Missoula, Montana, pianist **Elinor Freer** has performed as soloist and chamber musician across the United States and throughout Holland, China, Germany, England, the former Soviet Union, and the Czech Republic. In America she has appeared as soloist with orchestras in Georgia, Kansas, North Carolina, Ohio, and Tennessee, and her performances have been broadcast on numerous public radio and television stations across the country. While residing in The Netherlands for three years, Ms. Freer performed at The Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, at the Valery Gergiev Festival with members of the Rotterdam Philharmonic, recorded several times for national Dutch radio, and toured Germany and Holland with Ensemble Ascoltate, a German ensemble dedicated to the performance of works by women composers. She also performed in Moscow under the sponsorship of the Dutch government and was twice the recipient of a Dutch grant to study and perform at the *Akademie Muizicky Chumeni* in Prague. In 1996, Ms. Freer was one of two American pianists selected to perform live and on radio and television specials in both Northern and Southern China in tours designed to promote cultural relations between the US and China. Ms. Freer has been the recipient of the Presser Foundation Fellowship at the Ravinia Festival, the Paul Jacobs Fellowship at the Tanglewood Music Center, and a prize winner and laureate in competitions such as the Joanna Hodges International Piano Competition, the Elizabeth Harper Vaughan Young Artist Competition, and the American Pianists Association Auditions. Also a winner of the Frank Huntington Beebe Foundation Award for study abroad, Ms. Freer holds degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music, the University of Southern California, and the Utrechts Conservatorium in Holland; her principal teachers have included John Perry, Paul Schenly, Kyoko Hashimoto, and Ferenc Rados. Ms. Freer has also been invited to perform at such festivals as the International Musicians Seminar in Prussia Cove, England, and at Pianofest in The Hamptons on Long Island. She is currently Assistant Professor of Piano at Fort Hays State University in Kansas and in 1999 served on the collaborative piano staff at the Ravinia Festival in Chicago. As founder and director of the Cottonwood Music Project, an educational program designed to bring live chamber-music into the public schools and community venues, Ms. Freer is the recipient of grants from the Kansas Arts Commission and the Mid-America Arts Alliance.

Piano Pedagogy Forum

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Pianist to Pianist: Collaborative Learning in the Piano Studio

by Diane D. Orlofsky and Art Williams

Being able to encourage a younger student was worth all the time I spent. Being involved in this program will help me in the future as I plan to teach piano privately. (College student on collaboration with middle schooler)

It was nice to have input and feedback from someone who appreciates the art form. It's good to get feedback from someone other than the teacher and it helps enhance relationships within the studio. (College student on collaboration with peer)

I liked hearing my student helper play. It was fun and it taught me a lot. (Middle schooler)

Private piano study can be a lonely, even isolating experience, particularly for younger students. Granted, there is weekly feedback from the teacher, general supportive comments following performance opportunities, and maybe an occasional studio class. But most of the dialogue occurs in the solitary confines of practice sessions... between the pianist and the piano.

And yet, few people would question the belief that students should be active participants in their own learning. The teaching/learning paradigm is rich with possibilities, not the least of which encourages the learner to logically formulate ideas and beliefs separate from and along with other people.

Enter collaborative learning. There is a large body of research that supports claims that collaborative learning enhances a student's cognitive and social development. Special thought processes are required during this type of student-to-student learning. Even early research identified collaborative learning as an opportunity for students to "co-construct", working to devise plans together and to communicate as equal partners.¹

As a university professor, I teach music education majors who have piano as their principal instrument. I am constantly trying to find opportunities to move them out of the isolation of the practice room and into situations where they exercise their pedagogical, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills. Since little exists in the literature that uses collaborative learning in the private piano studio, I launched out on my own.

In the fall term of 1998, I took six of my piano principals and paired them with six middle school pianists from the surrounding community (upon the recommendation of their piano teacher). In addition to weekly lessons, the collegiate and community students met with each other weekly for seven weeks. During these sessions, the collegiate students had the opportunity to practice piano pedagogy techniques while listening and responding to their younger colleagues' pieces. The collegiate students would also play one of their own works-in-progress for the younger students. Each piano principal was

required to keep a journal of their experiences. At the end of the seven week period, all participants were invited to perform in a studio class setting. Everyone also filled out a reaction questionnaire at the conclusion of the time period.

In order to further expand collaborative learning opportunities, I paired college piano principals with each other for an additional seven-week period, following the same format as before.

The overall response to this program was favorable. All of the younger pianists loved the sessions and perceived an improvement in their performance as a result of the sessions. Sixty percent indicated that their practice time also increased. The collegiates responded in kind, except they reported no substantial increase in their individual practice schedule when they were paired with peers. It was very interesting to note that the college students practiced more when they knew they would be playing in a "mentor" situation rather than when they were participating in a "peer" performance situation. The most difficult element of this program involved the coordination of time schedules and logistics. Piano teachers are keenly aware that they are "in competition with other after-school activities and this program was not an exception to that challenge. Yet the journal entries reveal that the pianist-to-pianist dialogues brought an extra spark to the acquisition of playing skills and musical understanding. Here is a sampling of the collegiates' journal entries during the collegiate to community collaboration:

The things she needs work on most are dynamics and playing eighth notes evenly. She tends to run the eighth notes together. Throughout the whole piece, she doesn't pay attention to dynamics, so I showed her where she needed to follow them and also pointed out crescendos and decrescendos.

I shared my struggles about bringing out the independence of hands and making the dynamic changes match the shape of the melodic line. This compared well to the piece she was currently playing.

I showed her that in order to play the piece evenly and in tempo, she must think about how fast she will play the sixteenth notes and then play the half note accordingly. One thing that has helped me help her is that she has trouble with many of the same things I do.

After I played Moonlight Sonata, she said, " When you started playing that song, I fell in love with it! " Kind of boosted the old ego. She likes to play and hear soft, arpeggiated music, although she didn't use those exact words.

After I played Arabesque No. I for her, we talked about painting pictures with our music, and discussed what this particular piece made us think about. I said water, and she said she imagined someone in a long dress playing for a dinner party or in a shopping mall.

And here are a few comments taken from the collegiates' journals during their

collaborative pairing with peers:

Today I played Traumerei ... She told me about the importance of connecting the phrases and making them separate and distinct. We talked about the high points of each phrase and how to crescendo to the point and decrescendo to the end Everything she said made perfect sense and she said it in terms that I could easily understand and interpret into the piece.

On the fifth and sixth phrases, her fingers got tangled It was only in these two phrases that I noticed her discomfort, less dynamic contrast, and expression. She admitted to feeling the same way and seemed a little frustrated at not being able to deliver what she felt the music should present. It was wonderful to see her care, though. She is very technically efficient, and her lyricism and expression are coming along very nicely.

Meeting with another musician on a higher level and with more experience was very helpful because she knew where I needed work because she had gone through the some problems.

Since I was looking for problems in my partner's pieces, I became more aware of the problems in my own pieces.

As a piano teacher, I see great potential in collaborative learning techniques as they are applied to the university piano studio. Scheduling aside, motivation to learn can be initiated and maintained by the sense of belonging that exists within part of a collaborative learning team.² The opportunity to dialogue with others encourages would be piano teachers to "find the words", to make connections, to hone their listening skills, to explore performance practices - to make an investment, if you will, in their instrument of choice. An investment that will, hopefully, yield a great return.

Notes

1. Sullivan, H. S. (1953) *The interpersonal theory of psychiatry*. New York: Norton.
2. Glasser, W. (1986). *Control theory in the classroom*. New York: Harper & Row.

Diane Denicola Orlofsky is an Associate Professor of Music at Troy State University. Orlofsky has earned music education degrees from Cedarville College (B.M.E.), Wright State University (M.M.), and Florida State University (Ph.D.). She is the music education methods (P-12) specialist at Troy State and is the primary instructor for piano principals. She is active in the Music Educators National Conference, having served as state, divisional and national adviser for Collegiate MENC, in addition to organizations such as the College Music Society, Phi Kappa Phi, and the Association of Teacher Educators. She is an active researcher whose articles on teacher education and keyboard training have appeared in the *Music Educators Journal*, the *Journal of Research in Music Education*, *The National Forum*, *Contributions to Music Education*, *Teaching Music*, *Clavier*, and the *Bulletin of Research in Music Education*. Orlofsky was named an American Fellow in 1997 by the American Association of University Women and has received numerous teaching awards while at Troy State. Her book, *Redefining Teacher Education: The Theories of Jerome Bruner and the Practice of Training Teachers*, will be published by Peter Lang Publishing in 2001. Other current research interests include the use of collaborative learning in the music methods classroom environment.

Music Competitions and the Role of Musicianship

by Bonnie Kellert

I am grateful for this opportunity to write to you, my musical contemporaries. I feel that my remarks should focus on something meaningful, something I feel passionate about. This time, my passion is about competitions -- actually, what we ourselves might do to enhance them. This is perhaps a highly charged topic drawing strong reactions from all sides, but my goal is not to be provocative or ruffle feathers. I believe there are genuine musical issues at stake here worthy of discussion in a forum like this.

I accept that competitions are a necessary evil, a part of dealing with large numbers of aspiring young musicians. But what I observe and really object to is an ongoing trend that emphasizes technique rather than musicianship. I think there are things that we musicians and educators can do to shift this trend to the betterment of our art.

I realize that musicianship is a complex notion, but I believe that it involves the following essential ingredients in balance:

- Interpretation: Understanding the meaning of a piece, its stylistic qualities, phrase structure and overall harmonic structure, and presentation of these concepts with appropriate thoughtfulness and conviction. Idiomatic playing.
- Personality: Incorporating a performance with that extra special something, conveying personal, unpretentious involvement and insight, and presenting something genuinely heart felt.
- Tone: Enticing the ear with a singing tone, a variety of sounds and colors and pedaling effects.
- Technique: Performing musical ideas unencumbered by technical hurdles, with impressive agility but not just athletic display as an end in itself.

From my vantage point, as a competition winner, jurist and chairperson, it seems to me that many young pianists today are too narrowly focused on technical aspects of their playing and striving to impress with technical prowess. I am attracted to the musical aspects of a performance and, as a judge, my comments on technique reflect the means of achieving musical goals. I admit that technique is a necessary attribute, but I feel it is far too dominant an element. Granted, some repertoire showcases technique and it is impressive to hear blinding technique, but entire programs featuring fast and loud playing are fatiguing and disheartening. Understand that I have deep respect for pianists who have developed enormous technical skills, but athleticism itself is not musical. Note perfect performances are also impressive, in their way, but isn't there more to music making than mere robotics? Emphasis on technical ability and note perfection in the competition venue seem so important to some juries that playing wrong notes or having memory slips, which are very human, are deemed grounds for dismissal. Technically demanding works, featuring roaring percussive passages, facile finger work, or cascading octaves lead to center stage, while the more artistic, introspective contestant is left waiting in the wings. When was the last time someone won a competition with a Mozart Concerto?

Are we selecting repertoire in order to please jurists? I watch fellow teachers assign sophisticated and challenging pieces that impress on technical merit alone. Is this the legacy we want to pass on to our students? How many of us have sometimes found it necessary to teach more advanced pieces in anticipation of upcoming competitions because past experience has shown that judges are often swayed by technically demanding repertoire? What a sad reflection.

I am also bothered by competition situations where the required piece, performed by fifty contestants, can genuinely lead a jury panel to distraction. Exhausted from repetition, their selection settles on a "middle of the road" interpretation. Is it then any wonder that they sit up with attention when someone performs an optional selection, particularly a demonically and technically challenging piece? As long as a required piece is an imperative for comparison, hours and hours of listening will dull most senses and adversely affect the final decision.

As I said earlier, I believe we can change the strategy. I think it is important to first understand the pyramid of influences at work here. At the position of highest influence, there's the formulation of the competition itself, its repertoire, and the guidelines for judging and judge selection. Next, there are the judges who impart their tastes and attitudes to the evaluation process. Then there are the teachers who are intent on producing winners. And finally, there are the students who aim to please. Everyone can find a level of involvement that is comfortable and effective.

We can, and we should, get more involved in guiding competition committees. I love to see competition repertoire that offers greater opportunities for artistic expression and mature thought. We can use our influence as teachers to address these issues, say, the next time we serve as competition director or on a jury or other selection process. We can revise judging standards and procedures to encourage more thoughtful appreciation of musical temperament and not mere flash. If the opportunity presents itself, we can choose or nominate judges, or at least voice opinion about past judging selections.

We can also affect outcomes in our studios. In my own teaching, I've learned to:

- Assign music designed to advance a student's thoughtfulness and awareness of style.
- Demonstrate often and augment ideas with verbal description.
- Carefully explain and demonstrate all physical movements and choreography.
- Address technical issues as well as musical ones.
- Avoid unnecessary hours of mechanical practice.
- Encourage musical practicing at all times.

I would like to see more emphasis on a learning experience stressing musical content. Walter Gieseck consistently encouraged musical practicing where each finger motion and physical movement directly affects the musical process. Even exercises should be practiced musically, not mechanically. I'm convinced that listening to and observing master teachers can greatly enhance awareness of the musical interpretation. I encourage my students to listen to great masters and to participate in or attend Master Classes to

gain further insights.

Great musicians of the past had a mastery of idiomatic style. They held their performances together with thoughtful analysis of the structural concept, yet incorporating sensitivity, expression and flair. They promoted a singing style and a singing tone without forcing the tone. Unspliced recordings, often of live concerts, reveal occasional imperfections, but these giants were wise enough not to allow their interpretations to be impeded by these minor occurrences. Consider the likes of Lhevinne, Schnabel, Fischer, Samaroff, Cortot, Horowitz, Rubenstein, Gilels, Richter, Kapell, Fleisher or Gould. These masters are remembered for their spontaneity and fire, their projection of distinctive personalities, their refinement and excitement, and not just their supreme technical facility. The great performances that leave you breathless, that stick with you for a long time, involve far more than technique.

I've advised you to guide your students, and now I'd like to share guidance my teachers gave that stuck with me. It should be apparent that I come by my opinions honestly. Emerson Meyers advised me to "...strive to be a musician first, and a pianist, second." Leon Fleisher said "...The pianist is there for the sake of the music... Students love to be in the trenches, digging out and working on their technical problems. Once they are solved, they think, they'll worry about the rest. I want them to think about concept right from the beginning, because that determines how they should work on the music."

In a *Clavier* magazine interview with Carol Montparker, Fleisher went on to say that, "...There's always room for greatness (in today's competitions), but the level of mediocrity is continually rising... Judges often choose the safest, least-likely-to-embarrass candidate, (one) who is not necessarily the most brilliant talent...the one that is least offensive to the greatest number of jurors... I think the quality of any competition is determined by its jury... I sit on juries less and less (because) there are more problems with competitions than solutions... It's a diseased system from many points of view." These remarks were made nearly twenty years ago and perhaps Fleisher has become more optimistic today. As I've said repeatedly in this article, I believe the situation can be ameliorated. I'm an optimist. I believe that pessimism and apathy are self-fulfilling. All of us should strive to make the situation better and more rewarding. I hope that budding young pianists are encouraged at all levels to make musicianship their top priority.

Bonnie Kellert is a faculty member of the Levine School of Music and also conducts private lessons in her studio in Potomac, Maryland. She is Past President of the Montgomery County Music Teachers Association and the Washington, D.C. Alumni Chapter of Mu Phi Epsilon Music Fraternity and was an active board member of the Friday Morning Music Club of Washington and the FMMC Foundation. She has served as national judge for the Mu Phi Epsilon Scholarship Awards, the International Young Artist Piano Competition, and for affiliates of Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. Music Teachers Associations. She has given master classes at Western Maryland College, Columbia MTA, the Levine School of Music and lecture recitals for affiliates of MSMTA and VMTA. Lectures include the Smithsonian Institute's Resident Associate Program, Maryland State MTA Convention, and the Columbia Institute of Fine Arts in Virginia. An MTNA nationally certified teacher, her students have consistently won awards at local and state competitions of Maryland State and Washington, D.C. Music Teachers Associations. Bonnie Kellert performs frequently as a soloist and in chamber ensemble. Her solo recitals have included the National Gallery of Art, Phillips Collection, Cosmos Club, and American University, and she has been featured on radio and television locally and abroad. She has won several competitions,

including First Prize in the Washington International Competition for Pianists and the Jordan Piano Award, and she was also a semi-finalist in the William Kapell International Piano Competition. A student of Leon Fleisher, Emerson Meyers and Alexander Lipsky, she holds a B.M. and M.M. in Piano Performance from Peabody Conservatory of Music, which she attended under full scholarship and with academic honors.

Problem Solving in Group Lessons

by Sylvia Coats

Following is an excerpt from a book that I am writing on teaching piano in individual and group lessons. I have overlapping roles of teaching children to play the piano on all levels of advancement; teaching college students to teach piano; and teaching college students to play piano as their second instrument. My daily writing is inspired by graduate and undergraduate pedagogy students, whose teaching I supervise. These students prepare lesson plans and comment on their lessons; then, I observe a video of their teaching and evaluate their teaching effectiveness. These lessons provide food for thought as I write and give me real lessons for examples to explain the teaching process.

The student's exploration of music concepts is aided by the group setting. In other words, two or more heads are better than one. As music teachers we want to present music concepts to students in each lesson and develop their skill in playing musically with ease. The ideas of several students give more possibilities for exploring a concept and discovering how to apply the concept. The teacher's responsibility is to help students identify the problem, limit the conditions of the problem, facilitate the exploration of solutions to the problem, and provide clues to help solve the problem. Think of the problem to be solved as an objective for the lesson. A lesson may focus on one objective such as to improve a performance, or several objectives such as to learn a rhythm, a scale, and dynamic contrast. Problems will arise from the student's playing, a student's question, or from the teacher's presentation of a musical concept.

Plan Lessons Rich In Concepts

In planning a lesson consider these areas that will encourage problem solving: include music concepts and direct experience with concepts, limit conditions to focus on particular concepts, and transfer concepts to other music.

Plan lessons that are rich in musical concepts, that appeal to students' expressiveness, and that enable the contrast of several approaches. Find a balance between introducing enough concepts to provide challenge, yet limiting the number of concepts to provide focus. For instance, if a student's scale playing is uneven, concepts to consider are tempo, rhythm, fingering, metric stress, dynamics, and technique. Any one of the related concepts may give direction to the student to improve the scale playing. There is more than one solution to uneven scales, and each student in the group may use a different solution. For instance, playing in a slow tempo or in dotted rhythms with the metronome may improve the a tempo scale. Choosing a legato fingering as it relates to the white and black keys may work for another student. Playing in a meter such as 4/4 with varying stress to each beat will give direction toward the first beat and help make the scale even. Changing the placement of the thumb to eliminate unintended accents may improve the scale playing. Because many concepts are utilized in effective problem solving, students benefit from learning more than one approach to playing a scale evenly.

Too Few Concepts

Following is an example of a lesson that uses only one concept contrasted with a lesson that uses many concepts. A student teacher, Tom, complained that a class of freshman piano majors did not understand his presentation of the secondary dominant chord. His lesson included a theoretical explanation, transposing cadential exercises, finding secondary dominants in sight reading and lead line harmonizations, and using a secondary dominant in the harmony for a song played by ear. Yet his students did not seem to understand the new chord. In observing Tom's lesson I commented that in addition to the theoretical explanation, he might also describe the expressive basis of how the chord effects tension and release of a phrase, the shaping of the phrase, and the strength of the cadence. A suggestion was to direct the students' listening to the tension of the secondary dominant and its need for resolution. Appealing to the students' sensitivity in performing the examples gives them an expressive reason for understanding the theoretical concept. The secondary dominant in a key naturally resolves to the dominant chord because it sounds like a brief modulation to the dominant. For example, in the key of D Major the dominant seventh is A7 and the dominant of A is E, so an E7 resolves to an A then finally back to the tonic D. An expressive interpretation is to crescendo to the secondary dominant and diminuendo when it resolves to the dominant. The V7 of V often precedes the dominant to strengthen the V at the end of a phrase. The louder volume keeps momentum until the dominant appears and provides impetus toward the resolution to the tonic in the next phrase. Expressive playing using the concept of dynamics will help students understand a theoretical concept.

Talking about expressive playing is not the same as doing it. Conduct the students in their playing so they experience the tension created by the secondary dominant. After the presentation and experimentation of a new concept, ask questions to assess and clarify their understanding. At the next class Tom reinforced the new concept by having students transpose the following progression to several keys: V7 of V to V to V7 to I. He directed their listening to the tension and resolution created by the progression and as each student played, others labeled the chords out loud. The students' responses were evidence that they understood the secondary dominant and could demonstrate it theoretically and expressively.

Contrast Concepts

During the first year of a group of children's study, Diane used contrast of concepts effectively in a lesson on introducing the touches of legato and staccato. First she told the students to play a piece legato, then she asked them to play the same piece staccato. They explored the similarities and differences between each student's legato and staccato performances. After they had experienced the touches, she asked them what symbols are used to show legato and staccato. This is an excellent demonstration of a direct experience in which students first explore the concept's sound and its physical production before defining the abstract symbol.

Jim also used contrast of touches in the first lesson with beginning college music majors. He explained and demonstrated five-finger scales and had the twelve students play several scales together. The sound was unmusical with some students playing much louder even though the digital pianos had the same volume adjustment. Jim gave a short lecture on posture and legato playing. An effective analogy he gave was to think of playing like being on a teeter-totter. One end goes up when the other end goes down, just as one finger rises on the key as the next finger descends on the next key. When he had the class play a scale together, the legato sound was quite astonishing. The students looked amazed at their beautiful legato in a balanced ensemble sound. Jim then directed them to play the scale staccato which they found more difficult. The beauty of Jim's teaching is that he focused their attention on the sound and expressiveness of playing a scale, rather than only on the theoretical fact of the whole and half steps in a major scale.

Symbols Equal Sound And Movement

Too many symbols to learn can frustrate the beginning student. Students see abstract symbols of pitch, rhythm values, and clef signs that are supposed to relate to a keyboard that looks like a checkerboard of black and white. If we teach musical symbols without relating them to sound and movement, we inadvertently train students to respond to symbols like typists with finger strokes devoid of any aural sensitivity. Students have no motivation to just push notes, but when they relate to the sound they get from playing, their response is both emotional and intellectual. When their listening is directed to sounds that move higher and lower, they can respond by singing a melody, and therefore relate those higher and lower sounds to the keyboard to create a song. When their listening is directed to sounds that are longer or shorter, they can physically respond by walking the beat and clapping the rhythm values, and therefore relate those long and short sounds to the movement of a melody played on the keyboard.

Limit Concepts

In the first lesson with five beginning students ages eight to ten, Barbara planned to teach note values of quarter, half, whole, and eighth notes; note reading from treble and bass clefs; and the dynamics of piano and forte. She introduced the symbols with flash cards and directed students to choose a piece in their method book, practice it, and play it for class. The students had no idea how to relate the abstract symbols they saw on the flash cards to sounds on a piano. The class became one of individual lessons with the teacher trying to explain the symbols of each chosen piece. Other students waited impatiently for their turn with the teacher. The students became quite noisy with students running around the room. Barbara felt she had no control of the class and was very frustrated. In classes thereafter, she limited the number of concepts, taught the concept at its most basic level and provided activities to experience the concept, not just to name the symbol. She had students clap rhythms of each others' pieces and directed students to describe step and skip movement rather than pitch names. Limiting the concepts along with establishing rules of conduct helped the children focus their attention and enjoy their lesson.

Transfer Concepts

Teaching music concepts and their expressive relationships, which form general principles, enables students to see more similarities rather than differences in their music. No longer will students start from scratch with each new piece. Concepts that students learned in previous music will transfer to music new to them. In order to encourage transfer of a concept between pieces, I asked Michelle, a graduate student teacher, to use the following model for introducing tonic and dominant harmony to her beginning college music majors. The students' text introduces harmony with only the single-note, chord roots of the tonic and dominant rather than the full chord. The chord is difficult for beginning adults to coordinate and the roots focus their attention to the primary notes of the scale. A suggestion was to announce that the topic of the lesson will be harmonizing with tonic and dominant chords. As the students play five-finger major scales, direct them to name the first and fifth notes (tonic and dominant notes). Direct students to analyze and to write in I and V for tonic and dominant notes in their reading, transposing, and repertoire assignments. Other suggestions were to improvise using only tonic and dominant notes and play rhythm exercises using the tonic note in the left hand and the dominant note in the right hand. In the next lesson, Michelle taught sight reading and limited the pitch range to a fifth. Students were asked to identify the key of each of four examples and identify the tonic and dominant notes as they played. They were directed to write in the intervals and label I and V notes in both right and left hands. Next they transferred what they had learned about tonic and dominant by transposing what they sight read. Then half of the class played a written melody and the other half chose either dominant or tonic notes to harmonize the melody. Then they improvised melodies in major five-finger scales while accompanying with the tonic or dominant notes, and were directed to end on the tonic. Focusing on the concept of tonic and dominant and comparing the similarities of tonic and dominant in several skills gave the lesson unity and direction and solidified the students' understanding.

In summary the teacher provides problems that are rich in musical concepts, that appeal to students' expressiveness, and that focus on general principles that can be transferred to other music. The teacher finds a balance between introducing enough concepts to provide challenge, yet limiting the number of concepts to provide focus.

Sylvia Coats is active as a performer, teacher, adjudicator, and workshop leader and has published several articles on piano pedagogy. Dr. Coats is currently writing a book about piano pedagogy. She is Associate Professor of Piano Pedagogy and Class Piano at Wichita State University, and previously served on the faculties of the University of Oklahoma, Norman, and Texas A&M University, Kingsville. She is a member of the Sotto Voce Trio who have performed contemporary Music from coast to coast, most recently in a tour of Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, and Wisconsin. Other recital tours have included universities, recital series, and children's concerts in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Virginia, Nevada, and Oklahoma. Dr. Coats has given presentations at several Music Teachers National Conventions. She presented a session on "Dancing the Baroque Dances" at the 1999 MTNA convention in Los Angeles, as she did at the 1997 National Piano Pedagogy Conference in Cherry Hills, New Jersey. Topics for Pedagogy Saturday III and IV in Nashville and Minneapolis were "Group Dynamics" and "Advanced Technique Lesson." She also presented "Technology in the Piano Pedagogy Curriculum" at the 1996 MTNA Convention in Kansas City. She is President of the West Central Division of the Music Teachers National Association and is a past president of the Kansas Music Teachers Association and has served as MTNA National Chair for Student Chapters.

The graduate and undergraduate programs in piano pedagogy which she directs at Wichita State University are recognized as leading programs in the field and draw students from the US and abroad. Dr. Coats holds bachelor and masters degrees in piano performance from Texas Tech University where she studied with Louis Catuogno and a Doctor of Musical Arts in performance and pedagogy from the University of Colorado where Dr. Guy Duckworth was her major professor.

Practice Methods that Optimize Your Time

by Richard Prokop

On a purely technical level, a piece of music offers us this unique challenge: *"Play me from the beginning to the end without making a mechanical or mental error."* Implicit in the phrase "without making a mechanical or mental error" is the idea that you will train yourself to play all the notes and rhythms of the piece strictly in time (and preferably from memory) *prior to attempting interpretive nuances of a more refined and subjective nature.* You will then have established a solid foundation to which you can always return to build upon (or deviate from) - one that ensures that you are capable of being in total control for the duration of the piece. However, this is no small order. The methods below will help to bring you closer to this goal.

METHOD 1

Work on mastering smaller sections of the piece with the ultimate aim of linking them together to form increasingly larger structures of completion. Let us refer to the beginning point of a small section as "A" and the ending point of that same section as "B".

Developing the ability to play from point A to point B *with total control* is one of the most important concepts to understand and utilize. Having the experience of complete control provides you with a psychological edge, a feeling of power over the piece that you are playing. Having the recollection of playing from A to B without making a mistake provides you with a certainty *that you **are** capable of doing it correctly.* I term this a beneficial memory, as opposed to a detrimental memory (one with numerous stops and rhythmical errors between points A and B).

It is important to understand that the distance from A to B can be of any length. It can be one measure. It can be half a measure. It can be two beats if necessary. The critical factor is that you train yourself to go the distance without making a mistake, ensuring a sound foundation and beneficial memory.

It is also important to understand that the distance from Point A to Point B can be played at *any* speed. Playing at one half or one third of the performance tempo will still provide you with a beneficial memory of a complete and mechanically perfect event even though it is experienced at a slower speed.

Speed, for the most part, is an illusion. In a very fast passage, the individual fingers are firing in sequence very quickly. However, they do not necessarily play that often.

Ex.1



In the example above, the fifth finger is simply doing the following on the second and fourth beats of each measure:

Ex.2



To a beginning or intermediate level student, this would appear to be an easy task. However, if in Ex.1, the student attempted to play at the speed of twelve sixteenth notes per second, then the precise moment of time afforded to the playing of the fifth finger (or any other finger in the example) would be one twelfth of a second. (This is also true if Ex.2 was attempted.) Therefore, the misfiring of the fifth finger by as little as one tenth of a second would have an adverse effect on the proper realization of the entire passage. To an experienced listener, the passage might sound uneven. To the student, a vague sense of physical awkwardness might prevail with the source of the discomfort being difficult to identify. In order, then, to feel comfortable while playing Ex.1, it is essential for the fifth finger to fire at a *precise moment in time* without the slightest amount of stress or drag. The ability to do this successfully is primarily a function of the finger's extensor muscle that performs the bulk of the work when a finger fires. Extensor muscles are optimally developed by slow, synchronized practice. Extreme patience is required during this process. It takes millions of synchronized repetitions before a finger can play quickly and lightly at a precise moment without stress.

Test to see whether your slow practice is working by occasionally playing a passage up to speed. Lack of success at a faster speed indicates that many more sessions of slow practice are required.

METHOD 2

Analyze the chord changes of the piece and write them above the staff each time the harmony changes.

Nocturne

F. Chopin Op. 9, No. 2

Andante Eb Bb7 b9 Eb C7 C7b9/F Fmin

Bb7 G7 Cmin Adim7 Bbsus4 Bb7 Eb

Then, memorize the chord changes so that you are able to verbalize them along with a recording of the piece. If this step is too difficult, train yourself to say the chord changes as you play through the piece. Do this over and over until it is fluent.

BENEFITS OF METHOD 2

I learned the above technique while studying jazz. Jazz players routinely commit the melody and the chord changes of the tunes they are playing to memory. This provides the player with an unshakable foundation upon which an improvisation can then be realized. An accomplished improviser is able to play a tune at a slow or fast tempo and is able to carry the tune through an array of different styles depending on the taste of the other musicians with whom he/she is playing. Simply put, a strong foundation gives you more freedom of expression which in turn contributes to your ability to play with more spontaneity during a performance. In addition, having this newfound knowledge about the piece you are playing eradicates an unnecessary layer of anxiety that would otherwise

be present during a performance.

Richard Prokop pianist, jazz pianist, teacher and composer, is the author of *Piano Power, A Breakthrough Approach To Improving Your Technique*. He received a B.F.A. in Piano/Performance at the State University of New York at Purchase in 1975 and has taught piano for twenty-five years. In addition to his private teaching, he is a faculty member at The Music Conservatory of Westchester and performs regularly in the White Plains area. A sampling of Mr. Prokop's music may be heard on the Internet at: www.pianopower.com.

Easy Audio: A Guide for Upgrading Your System and Getting into Web Audio

by Steve Clark

It's an ironic fact that the Internet, which began its existence primarily as cold war tool of the United States military industrial complex, has some thirty-five years later developed into a world-wide hot-bed for the arts. In their attempt to overcome the anticipated effects of nuclear war, the single most important concern designers of the Internet had been to make it as decentralized and as free of a single authority as possible. Much to the surprise of the original network administrators, who had intended use of the Internet strictly for long distance computing projects, it was this very characteristic of decentralization which opened the door to use of the Internet in other and eventually every aspect of human endeavor. Musicians who use the Internet today owe a debt of thanks to those early "Born to Be Wild" days on the Internet which established the credo that use of the Internet should be left to the discretion of users and whatever they could accomplish technically.

Although the association of the arts with the Internet has been almost from its beginning, the development of the Internet as a driving force in the field of music occurred only relatively recently. Perhaps the single major technical obstacle that had to be overcome by musicians using the Internet was the huge size of sound files. In order to be of sufficiently high quality, sound files had to be so large that it was completely impractical to transmit them over the Internet. Recent advances in file compression algorithms and faster Internet connections, such as cable modems, have done much to eliminate this barrier and now there is literally an explosion of musical happenings on the web.

The personal computer has overtaken the stereo as the preferred means of audio playback and creative musicians of every stripe are discovering the overwhelming advantages of distributing their music over the web. While there is obviously no way to anticipate details of what the future will bring, the one thing which is perfectly clear is that the web is the future place for audio.

Get Your Motor Running...

As one might expect from the wide-open beginnings of the Internet, no single file format is standard for all of the overwhelming audio resources of the web. What's more, some audio formats are delivered over the web in static format while others are streamed. Through the use of a software buffering system, streaming audio allows playback to begin before an entire file has been transferred to one's machine. On the other hand, static downloading requires an entire audio file's content to be downloaded before it can be accessed for playback.

Several software media players are capable of handling multiple audio formats, but no single player accommodates the performance of all file types. Therefore, having two, three or four different media players and switching between them is essential if one is to make the most of web audio.

Included below are the web addresses for several sites where some of the more common and better media players can be downloaded. In addition to software downloads, these sites often feature information about web audio and links to other audio content sites. Several of these sites also offer "deluxe" versions of their products for sale. While these deluxe versions do have some interesting "bells and whistles", basic versions feature the same audio technology, deliver just as high quality sound and, best of all, they are free. Furthermore, after trying the basic versions for a while, you can always return and get the upgrade if you are sufficiently impressed.

The [Microsoft Media Player](#) easily handles a wide variety of audio formats and is available for free download. The [QuickTime](#) media player is generally preferred by Mac users, but there is also a version of this software for Windows users. An excellent player for Macintosh is the [SoundJam Player](#) which is also a free download in its basic version. The [Winamp Media Player](#) supports a fairly wide variety of file formats and even more through the addition of various plug-ins. [Real Audio](#) charges for the deluxe version of their audio player, but the basic version is a very recommendable media player and it's a free download. Liquid Audio, one of the premier audio web sites, makes their really cool [Liquid Media Player](#) available for free download and one of best media players around is the [Sonique Media Player](#). The Sonique Media player is also a free download.

Downloading all or a selection of the above free media players will position you to handle almost any audio format you're likely to encounter on the web, but it is a simple fact of life that more and newer software makes increasingly complex demands on a computer's operating system. The variety and complexity of Internet files, particularly multi-media files like audio, can be an ever-increasing challenge for a computer's operating system.

Sluggishness of response is often undeniably due in large part to a function of hardware, especially random access memory (RAM), but it is also true that keeping one's operating system updated in and tip-top running condition will assist in obtaining the maximum performance possible from ones current system. After all, every piece of software makes use of the machine's operating system in some fashion or another and those applications can run no faster than the operating system will allow. Therefore, it is a good idea to periodically check the web site of the manufacturer of ones operating system for "What's New" type announcements and the like, and to take advantage of these almost always free improvements which are yours simply for the downloading.

To update your Windows operating system, go to [Microsoft's](#) web site, choose the Downloads tab and select Windows Update. From the Windows Update page select the link to Product Updates. The Windows Update will automatically examine your hard drive and create a customized list of suggested updates for your operating system. Anything listed as a Critical Update should definitely be downloaded and of course you may download anything else which appears interesting as well. Similar updates, add-ons, plug-ins and supplemental software for the Macintosh Operating System can be acquired by visiting the [Mac OS X section](#) of the Apple web site.

Of course, the ultimate quality of one's web audio experience can only be as good as the weakest link in one's entire audio system. With that in mind, no audio tune-up would be complete without a look at a system's hardware. Minimum requirements these days would call for a minimum processor speed of Pentium 200MHz or faster, a minimum of 32MB of random access memory (RAM) and 64MB preferred, and a 16-bit sound card.

And let's not forget the audio speakers. Without high-quality speakers including a sub-woofer for improved bass response, your audio experience on the web will be severely compromised. While no place I know of is giving away hardware, the good news is that this may not cost as much as you think. Specific recommendations for hardware upgrades are extremely difficult to provide without a complete knowledge of ones current hardware profile, but a few general recommendations can be helpful by providing an overall list of equipment needs and an estimate of general cost. Here is a phased list of suggested audio hardware add-ons that would be required beyond the basic system requirements outlined above:

The reader should keep in mind that all prices and models are subject to change over time. Specific prices and model information are offered here only as a very general guide.

The purpose of this section is to offer some very general cost, model and contact information regarding audio add-ons or upgrades for those whose systems already meet the basic recommended system requirements given in the main body of the article. Beyond satisfaction of basic system requirements, the topic of audio add-ons can be divided into separate phases depending on ones intended audio goals. Recommendations below are structured accordingly with phase one comprised of recommendations for those who simply wish to have a quality listening experience with downloaded web audio content and recommendations for those who wish to take the next step into creation of their own compact discs through the conversion of web audio files and the creation of web audio files from audio sources such as compact discs listed as phase two.

Audio Add-on Recommendations for Macintosh:

Phase One: Speakers [focus on web audio playback only]:

17. Three piece speaker system: Sound Sticks by Harmon Kardon [USB]. Price: \$199.00 - available from the [Apple Store](#).
18. Sub Woofer [a real must for quality audio] Harman Kardon's iSub subwoofer [20-watt, USB]. Price: \$99.00 - available from the [Apple Store](#).

Phase Two: CD-ROM Drives and Associated Audio File Conversion Software [extension of capabilities to include CD and web audio conversion and creation]:

- Re-Writeable CD for MAC QPS Que! Fire 8x4x32 CD-ReWritable Drive. Price: \$399.00 - available from the [Apple Store](#).

- MP3 encoding software [SoundJam](#) MP3 player/encoder. Price \$49.00

Audio Add-on Recommendations for PC:

Phase One: Speakers [focus on web audio playback only]:

15. Three piece speaker system: [Altec Lansing](#): ADA 305 Digital Powered Cube System. Price: \$149.95
16. Sub woofer: [Altec Lansing](#): ACS251W Powered Subwoofer. Price \$69.95

Phase Two: CD-ROM Drives and Associated Audio File Conversion Software [extension of capabilities to include CD and web audio conversion and creation]:

- Re-Writeable CD for PC [Plextor 8x4x32 CD-RW Drive](#). Price: 184.94 - Available from [Amazon.com](#)
- MP3 encoding software [Real Entertainment Center](#). Price \$49.98.

Get Out on the Highway...

After completing your audio system tune-up, you'll no doubt be aching to take it out for a test drive on the web. First steps in web audio would certainly have to include a visit a few of the more famous sites devoted music downloads. Any short list of such sites would include the following:

[Listen.com](#)

[Real.com](#)

[LiquidAudio.com](#)

MP3.com and Napster.com are currently involved in copyright infringement litigation. *(Piano Pedagogy Forum does not endorse Napster, MP3, Listen.com, Real.com, or LiquidAudio.com. These websites are cited as resources in web audio production by the author and do not reflect the views or opinions of Piano Pedagogy Forum.)*

These are some of the most visited spots on the web and in many ways they make an excellent introduction to web audio because in addition to free downloads they also contain lots of general information, frequently asked question files, help files, and product guides that will keep you informed of developments in web audio.

Looking for Adventure...

Once you've gotten your feet wet with web audio you'll no doubt want to venture into the "deep end of the pool" so to speak and experience more of the full extent of audio resources on the web. One of the best ways to locate audio files is through any one of the major search engines. Some say this is the best approach because large search engines typically offer a variety of options that enable refinement and focusing of a search on a particular type of music, a certain file format or even a particular composer or piece. The following example will serve to illustrate the staggering extent of audio resources on the web. A recent keyword search for "mp3" at the [AltaVista](#) search engine listed 4,510,230 web pages found which matched the search criteria. Narrowing the search criteria to "mp3 + Mozart" still resulted in 552,494 pages being found. Further refinement of the parameters of the search to: "mp3 + Mozart + sonata" yielded 42,982 pages found and a search crafted as "mp3 + Mozart + sonata + K.331" still presented 934 pages found. Unless you've got way too much free time on your hands, that's probably more than enough adventure to keep you busy quite some time to come. If you don't have that much time, you could try further narrowing of the search criteria through inclusion of a particular performing artist or some other criteria of your own choosing.

Equivalent searches conducted on other major search engines would yield similar numeric though not identical results. Therefore, one often finds smaller, strictly audio oriented search engines found on large audio web sites to be best suited to web audio searches. [Scour.com](#), one of the most outstanding audio sites on the web, makes available to its visitors a search engine specifically designed for web audio files. Use of these so to speak "in-house" search engines is another excellent way of locating high-quality audio on the web.

In Whatever Comes Our Way.

One of the most popular developments in web audio has been the introduction of web radio. Since the debut of streaming audio technology the number of radio stations broadcasting via the web has rapidly risen to literally thousands. Because with web radio broadcasts physical distance from the broadcast source is irrelevant there are now literally thousands of stations available to listeners and the personal computer is now also taking over as the most popular means of listening to listening to radio broadcasts.

Web programming from [National Public Radio](#) may be obtained by visiting their web site and audio feed from the numerous broadcasts of the [British Broadcasting Company](#) can be downloaded their web site as well. Links to other a myriad of other stations are to be found on web audio sites, through search engines and often though radio channel guides included in various software media players. There is a searchable list of 2500 web radio broadcast stations from which to choose included in the basic version of Real Player software. These days, one can easily find all types of web radio programming from music to news to sports, and yes even talk radio stations.

One of the most exciting possibilities with web audio is the ability to create your own web audio files from compact disc recordings and the possibility of creating your own compact discs from MP3 audio files that have been downloaded from the web. Conversion of compact disc audio files into MP3 requires obtaining a software program called a "ripper". A ripper is used to copy music from a compact disc onto a computer's hard drive in .wav audio format. After that another software program called an "encoder" is used to convert those .wav files into the MP3s audio file format for use in burning your very own compact discs with a writeable CD-ROM drive.

A selection of free, downloadable rippers and encoders are available at the really cool [MPFree](#) web site. It is also possible to find a player, ripper and an encoder in a single, easy-to-use piece of software. One such program is RealJukeBox available from [Real.com](#). This program will not only help you burn your own CDs, if you have a writeable CD-ROM drive (CD-RW), but it will also print CD labels, record from analog sources, such as microphones or cassette players and allow you to rescue your old analog LP record collection by turning it into compact disc recordings or MP3 audio files. While the basic version of RealJukeBox is a free download, RealJukeBox Plus is recommendable because of the simplicity it brings by having all aspects of audio handling contained in a single piece of software and all for less than thirty dollars, US.

(Piano Pedagogy Forum does not endorse Napster, MP3, Listen.com, Real.com, MPFree.com or LiquidAudio.com. These websites are cited as resources in web audio production by the author and do not reflect the views or opinions of Piano Pedagogy Forum.)

... Fire all of your guns at once and

With any technological revolution there can be a down side. At this point a small word of caution regarding observance of copyright laws is appropriate. There are substantial copyright prohibitions for those who wish to distribute the music of others over the Internet. One should not go lightly into those dark woods without considerable, and accurate legal counsel. This admonition is certainly not meant to rain on anyone's web audio parade, but rather simply to incorporate some consideration of the blood, sweat and tears of fellow musicians and their right to fair compensation for their efforts. As musicians yourself, I'm sure you understand.

Explode into (cyber)space!

The effects of web audio on the music industry have already been tremendous. Consumers now have access to an unlimited supply of audio content from around the world which is only as far away as their desktop and performing musicians are no longer at the mercy of large recording companies in order to get their music before the public. Distribution of audio over the web is now an entirely acceptable alternative from the standpoint of quality and the web and it possible for a single person to reach out and change the world.

"Born to Be Wild" by Steppenwolf, 1968. Free audio sample available through www.steppenwolf.com.

Steve Clark is a member of both the American Matthey Association and the American Liszt Society and he appears frequently in recital. Students from his studio have been declared winners and finalists in state, national and international piano competitions. He is a nationally recognized clinician in the field of music technology and the creator on numerous Internet-based resources for musicians including web pages such as The Piano in CyberSpace and Internet mail lists: Pno-Ped-L and Chopin-L. He serves the Georgia Music Teachers Association as chair of the Committee on Technology and the Music Teachers National Association as National Chair of Student Competitions. Mr. Clark serves on the faculty of the Schwob Department of Music at Columbus State University where he teaches Piano, Piano Pedagogy and Music Technology.

Supervised Piano Teaching With Local Teachers As Mentors

by Michelle Conda

As a piano pedagogy instructor, I have wrestled for years with the difficulties of supervising pedagogy students in teaching situations. I have been the only pedagogy instructor at the schools I have worked, and my job has always been coupled with group teaching. I have never been given "load credit" (at least "adequate" credit) to cover the amount of time it takes to observe all my student teachers, much less have weekly meetings with them. This has been compounded by the problem of obtaining willing "guinea pigs" for my pedagogy students. It's easy in my position at the university to get beginning piano students that are college age, but to get beginning students that are of traditional age has been almost impossible.

Several years ago I went to a session at an MTNA conference about local teachers mentoring pedagogy students. Why not? Who better to mentor budding young teachers than local piano teachers? They often have years of teaching experience, practical knowledge, and a willingness to share. I like the idea that local studios differ in teaching philosophies. It's nice to be able to work with a teacher who uses technology in teaching as well as someone who is strictly repertoire based. Variety is the spice of our profession!

How do you choose a mentoring teacher?

Since I am not from the Cincinnati area, I needed to get to know the teachers and their studios. I joined the local MTNA chapter and attended meetings. I went to local piano events and festivals, as well as competitions for local students. I gave and attended masterclasses for local organizations. Most of all, I talked and became friends with lots of teachers. We shared teaching philosophies and studio policies. I chose teachers that I thought were excellent in the type of teaching they did. It does not matter to me that they teach as I teach—it matters that they enjoy teaching and are professional in their pursuits. Given a choice, I prefer to use teachers that are MTNA certified, but that is not always a criteria. I have had several local teacher/mentors that were members of other piano organizations, such as Keyboard Teachers Association.

How do you get a local teacher to mentor?

A simple mention of the mentoring program was all it took to get the seed of possibilities in the minds of our local teachers. I started with one teacher and one (very responsible and bright) pedagogy student, Andrea. The mentor I chose already had years of teaching and pedagogy training, so the idea of being watched and watching a student teacher was not a foreign concept. We built up responsibilities slowly. Andrea started by assisting the mentor in "housecleaning" duties, such as sending letters to parents, filing music, helping with recital programs, and ordering music. From this she "graduated" to watching lessons, and giving help sessions for recitals and Associated Board Examinations. After this,

Andrea started substituting for lessons. Eventually, she was hired as a teacher for the studio. The most important point I made with the mentor was Andrea needed to learn all aspects of a piano studio, not just the teaching part. I believe this helped alleviate any threat the mentor might have felt having someone else "shadowing" her every move. After our first successful experience, the mentor passed the word on to others how nice it was to have an "assistant." Now I have more offers for mentoring than I have pedagogy students to send into the field.

What is expected of the student teacher?

Supervised teaching at the conservatory translates into one credit hour. One credit hour translates into 3 hours of work. Therefore, I expect the student teacher to be available for the mentor three hours a week. Sometimes mentors prefer student teachers to come out for longer times and less often. I am very flexible about this - I only ask that a student teacher is available for 30 hours (in 10 weeks). The student teacher must be on time, dress appropriately, and behave professionally. They are responsible for taking notes about their teaching and turn them in to me weekly or monthly (depending on the teaching situation). I allow a form for student teachers to fill out or free-formed ideas. This is flexible, depending on the ability of the student teacher to focus her/his thoughts on the situation. They are under no circumstances allowed to recruit students out of the studio they are assisting.

What is expected of the mentor?

The mentor must allow the student teacher to come into their studio for 30 hours during a 10 week period. Sometimes the time is spread over more weeks because of a studio recital schedule. Flexibility is the key here. The mentor reports to me in person or in writing at the end of the 10 week tenure. They are not responsible for issuing a grade, but furnish information to me that helps me decide on the grade. The mentor is not responsible for giving piano students to the student teacher. However, there has only been one instance in which a student teacher didn't get a chance to teach (her English at that point did not allow for good communication). The mentor is required to allow the student teacher to observe them regularly.

What are the traveling logistics?

Often student teachers do not have cars to take them off campus. Luckily, there is often a mentor within walking distance. One of my student teachers took a bus to the mentor's house. It was well worth it for her, because the studio who mentored her eventually hired her as a full time teacher. If all else fails, I issue beginning college piano students for those who can not get off campus. Any experience is better than no experience at all.

Who issues the grade?

As the pedagogy professor, I issue the grade, based on conversations/written reports from the mentor and the weekly reports from the student teacher.

How is everyone compensated?

The student teacher received no compensation for student teaching. The mentor does not receive any money either. Most of the mentors arrange the student teachers to take over for them while they are on vacation or at MTNA conventions. Since the student teacher is not paid for 30 hours of work, the mentor gets a free substitute.

What are different mentoring scenarios?

A student teacher can go weekly to a mentor's studio. Another scenario was used by Amy Rose, president elect of Ohio Music Teachers Association. She taught 10 hours while being observed by the student teacher. She watched 10 hours of that student teacher working with the same children and made criticisms/corrections. She allowed the student teacher to teach without observation for 10 hours, but received feedback from her students. She turned in to me a detailed report after the 30 hours was completed.

What problems have occurred since starting this program?

I found out that when a student is off campus for any reason, they may not be covered by university insurance. We have had no problems so far, but I worry about what would happen if a student got in a car accident on the way to their mentor. While at the mentor's studio, the mentor will be responsible for the student teacher's safety. I suggest contacting your university about insurance issues before starting this program. There has been an occasional problem with a student teacher planning to go to their mentor's studio, and then the lesson is cancelled. I prefer to let the student teacher make this time up later (thankfully, the mentor has called in advance). In one case, the student was not able to get enough hours in with her mentor. I allowed her to make it up working with me in the group class situation. Knock on wood, every student teacher I have sent into the field has acted responsibly. I make it clear to both the student teacher and the mentor that if there are any problems I will pull them immediately out of the situation. If this happens, I have them finish their work under my guidance. If I have a questionable student teacher, I prefer not to send them into the field at all. I reserve this privilege for those whom I feel deserve it.

What does the mentor get out of this situation?

It is nice to have a change in their daily routine. Mentors often find having a "fresh face" next to them makes them think about their teaching and helps improve their teaching. They also get someone to substitute for them while they are gone (and for free!). After the student teacher is done with their 10 weeks, the mentor with an expanding studio has

a potential teacher to hire as part of the studio. This happens regularly in Cincinnati. Since the student has mentored in their studio, there is no doubt that teaching philosophies would be understood from the beginning. Our mentors enjoy helping new teachers. They get a charge out of the excitement and take pride that they can help. It also potentially boosts their studios (in numbers and fees) when they can say they work in collaboration with the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music.

What does the student teacher get out of this situation?

This type of mentoring is the most realistic situation a student teacher can be put in if they decide to open an independent studio. They get the complete picture of the business aspect of teaching as well as the practical teaching aspects. Their student teaching often results in being hired as part of a studio.

Conclusions

Local mentoring does not work for all student teachers. Also, the above reflects only one 10 week period of student teaching. Hopefully, we are able to expect at least a year of teaching as part of pedagogy training. If I don't feel the group of students I have are going to be able to work with a mentoring teacher, I devise an in-house alternative, including teaching a class of three year olds. But even with this, I would prefer my student teachers get the actual experience in a local studio. I have had no problems with using local teachers as mentors. I believe the key to its success is flexibility - in field times, what is done in the field, reporting on what is done, and on who I allow in the field. The result has been a mutual respect between the Conservatory and the local teachers as well as well-prepared future piano teachers.

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Rediscovery: The Path to Pianistic Renewal

by Steve Clark

From time to time we hear tales of an epiphany of some kind in piano playing. Often times this takes the form of a "Damascus road" type of experience, prompted by the guru teacher *du jour*, in which one truly sees the light, rises above all myth, and finds oneself on the short cut to artistic mastery of the instrument. Of course I engage in a bit of hyperbole here, but the zeal with which many seem to constantly seek for novelty in piano playing is difficult to exaggerate.

I suppose it's only human nature, a product of our advertisement saturated society or perhaps the industrial revolution (always a convenient target) that we are susceptible to the promise of a quick fix. We find ourselves trying to sit as low as Glenn Gould, mimicking the gestures of Horowitz, or something of that sort, in an attempt to instantly transform our playing. Don't get me wrong, I'm a huge fan of experimentation at the keyboard, but looking back, it's pretty comical the extent to which we will go, and more to the point it is astonishing the amount of credence we automatically give to things new. I doubt anyone seriously disputes that decades are required for the cultivation of artistry at the piano, yet somehow we just can't help ourselves when it comes to the latest fad of transcendental meditation, beta blockers, or whatever. Kept in proper perspective there's certainly nothing wrong with most of these things, but often times pursuit of a novel approach becomes the principle driving force in one's quest for artistry and that can lead to an unfortunate discounting of the importance of our great heritage as pianists.

Unfortunately, pursuit of the novel so permeates thinking in some pianistic circles today that it is not unusual to hear remarks such as, "There's nothing new about that" or "That's been done before" impatiently offered as the sole basis on which important concepts are rejected. This clearly indicates an under-appreciation, misunderstanding or a down right lack of knowledge about many of the core ideas long held as indispensable parts of the pianists' art.

Sadly too, a closer inspection of these so-called newly discovered "truths" often reveals them to be nothing but clever, and in some cases not so clever, repackaging of positions advocated by renowned teachers of the past. The famous English pedagogue Tobias Matthay (1858-1945), whose writings are prolific, has often fallen victim to such treatment.

Anyway, I think it is safe to say that we would all be delighted to have the ability to play now as Myra Hess or Rachmaninoff did in their day and we should keep in mind that new and different certainly does not always equate with best. Hindemith is definitely newer and different than Beethoven, but not necessarily better.

In the eloquent preface to his edition of the *Goldberg Variations*, Ralph Kirkpatrick says regarding phrasing, "we might define phrasing as the exposition through dynamic and agogic means of the relationship, relative value, and expressiveness of the notes

comprising a melodic line or harmonic progression". Rarely has this been so well expressed, but we should ask ourselves, are these ideas still prominent featured in modern performances and when is the last time a performance so impressed with such playing?

I think what bothers me most, that which I consider to be the "mark of the beast" so to speak, is the use of speed as a substitute for inflection, articulation and coloring in performance. Don't get me wrong, when the need arises, I'm never in favor of sparing the horses, but displays of this type are far too frequent these days and our field is being led into a veritable arms race in power playing which is leaving behind all hint of subtlety, nuance and artistry in playing.

On the positive side anyone who listens to Moura Lympany's (a pupil of Tobias Matthay) recording of the complete *Preludes* of Rachmaninoff on the Erato label will know just what I mean. This performance captures a range of expression totally which is unheard today, it is ever so subtle in the variety of articulations and the conceptions are completely in touch with the intention of the score and compelling in every sense of the word.

As we consider outstanding artists of the past this leads to the interesting question of whether there is really one essentially basic approach to playing the piano that will work for all, or if each of us plays the piano in ways that are significantly different? As artists, the notion that we are all unique is so firmly engrained in our psyche that this might at first strikes a sympathetic chord with us. If, however, we continue with this assumption, then readers should continue no further because nothing I, or anyone else, could say would matter much to anyone else's own particular situation.

If, on the other hand, a single basic approach to the instrument works for all, that begs the question of whether each new generation discovering the art of playing the piano is in fact rediscovering it? While adoption of the position that pianists today are merely rediscovering how to play the piano does not address all possible conceivable complications, by far the vast majority of the ones outstanding are merely perceptive in essence. Simply because an idea is new to you does not mean that it is in fact a new idea.

In fairness, let me hasten to add that I know the answer to this dilemma is not entirely an "either-or" proposition. I am aware that we all have at least minor differences of both a physical and especially a psychological nature that contribute in ways to our own unique approach to the piano. I do not, however, believe these differences rise to the level of requiring a totally novel approach to the instrument. Therefore, as tempting as it may be to continue the never-ending investigation of new ideas, certainly at this stage of the game we should see through this gimmick approach to our art and get on with the joy of rediscovery.

Toward that end I offer as an apt starting point a complete list of the writings of Tobias Matthay for those interested in exposure to the thoughts of a truly renowned teacher of the past. A roster of famous Matthay pupils would include such great pianists as Clifford Curzon, Myra Hess, Eileen Joyce, Moura Lympany, Eunice Norton and Irene Scherer.

Performances by most of these outstanding artists are currently available on compact disc and each disc is a complete education in and of itself on what we as pianists should be about today.

Writings of Tobias Matthay

19. THE ACT OF TOUCH IN ALL ITS DIVERSITY
20. THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF PIANOFORTE PLAYING/ Being an abstract from the author's "The Act of Touch". Designed for school use and with two additional chapters - "Directions for Learners" and "Advice to Teachers".
21. COMMENTARIES ON THE TEACHING OF PIANOFORTE TECHNIQUE. A supplement to "The Act of Touch" and "First Principle".
22. RELAXATION STUDIES - in the muscular discriminations required for touch, agility and expression in pianoforte playing.
23. THE PRINCIPLES OF FINGERING AND THE LAWS OF PEDALLING. An abstract from above.
24. THE FOREARM ROTATION PRINCIPLE: ITS APPLICATION AND MASTERY.
25. THE CHILD'S FIRST STEPS IN PIANO PLAYING. Written for children, but also for adults as an introduction to their teaching.
26. THE PIANIST'S FIRST MUSIC MAKING. The music material to accompany above, by Felix Swinstead and Tobias Matthay.
27. THE NINE STEPS TOWARDS FINGER INDIVIDUALIZATION. A supplement to "The Pianist's First Music Making" and "The Child's First Steps" and summary of technique. These three together are in place of the now out-of-date "Tutor".
28. DOUBLE-THIRD SCALES: THEIR FINGERING AND PRACTICE.
29. Practice Card No 1.
30. THE T.M.P.S. PRACTICE TRIANGLE AND CARD. Exercises for Rotational Freedom, Finger Extension and Freeing.
31. MUSICAL INTERPRETATION, Its laws and principles, and their application to teaching and performing.
32. ON MEMORIZING and playing from memory, and on practice generally. A Psychology Lecture.
33. ON METHOD IN TEACHING: A LECTURE.
34. THREE PSYCHOLOGICAL LECTURES.
35. THE ACT OF MUSICAL CONCENTRATION. A lecture on the function of analysis in playing.
36. THE VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE in pianoforte technique: A summary of the laws of technique.
37. AN EPITOME from same (for School use).
38. SOME PIANO FALLACIES OF TODAY.
39. THE SLUR OR COUPLET of notes in all its variety. Its interpretation and execution. A lecture: A continuation of "Musical Interpretation".
40. ON COLORING AS DISTINCT FROM TONE-INFLECTION. A lecture.
41. FOUR DAILY EXERCISES for advanced players.

42. THE APPROACH TO MUSIC by Tobias Matthay, Harold Craxton and Felix Swinstead. Book I. "How Do You Do Mr. Piano" Book II. First Solos Book III. First Duets Book IV. Second Solos Book V. Second Duets Book VI. Third Solos Book VII. Third Duets
43. FIRST LIGHTS ON PIANO PLAYING THE GENTLE ART OF CHORD SPREADING: A lecture ready for press.

Finally, my intention here is not to shut the door on the possibility of discovery, but rather to regain a more proper perspective on it, to dispel any concern that our inheritance as pianists is in some way irrelevant today and to suggest the possibility of rediscovering of our past as fertile ground for pianists of the future. We should be able to recognize the fact that the way to play the piano has already been discovered and that what we are doing, no matter how new the experience may seem to us, is actually rediscovery of how to play the instrument. Now is the time that we as pianists and mature artists must reclaim the rich heritage that we have lost, both the sake of ourselves and our art.

Steve Clark is a member of both the American Matthay Association and the American Liszt Society and he appears frequently in recital. Students from his studio have been declared winners and finalists in state, national and international piano competitions. He is a nationally recognized clinician in the field of music technology and the creator on numerous Internet-based resources for musicians including web pages such as The Piano in CyberSpace and Internet mail lists: Pno-Ped-L and Chopin-L. He serves the Georgia Music Teachers Association as chair of the Committee on Technology and the Music Teachers National Association as National Chair of Student Competitions. Mr. Clark serves on the faculty of the Schwob Department of Music at Columbus State University where he teaches Piano, Piano Pedagogy and Music Technology.