Piano Pedagogy Forum
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report by Karen Beres

"The introduction of digital pianos had a significant impact on piano pedagogy and group teaching. Instructional methods centered around the capabilities of digital instruments flourished. This proliferation of literature was accompanied by the rapid improvement of both keyboard sounds and functionality, resulting in a significant body of pedagogical materials for applied and group study. Coupled with a rapidly growing collection of software tools, the resources available to us are astounding."

The above quote, which headed Julianne Miranda's handout for her conference presentation, encapsulates the premise upon which this technology presentation began and from which it expanded. Recognizing that the growth of technology in recent years has been exponential, Miranda stressed the importance of remaining up-to-date with current innovations while understanding that technology's place is simply to support the needs of the teacher and student and the establishment of strong pedagogical goals.

Six fundamental needs were identified as crucial points of continued focus for advances in music technology. These needs include: representing music visually in the form of printed scores, representing music aurally in time with printed notation, supporting musical development and effective practicing, fostering the creative process in students of all ages, enriching the learning experience through access to resources, and developing collaborative learning spaces, ensuring that pianists do not have to grow up in isolation. Miranda then divided her comments about specific innovations into the following categories: digital instruments, music software, intelligent software, office suites and productivity software, internet applications, and pen-based technology.

Digital Instruments

Two instruments of current interest are the Roland Digital HP-i series and the Yamaha DGX505. The **Roland HP-i** is the flagship digital piano in Roland's line, embodying the future of keyboard technology. Although it is not portable, its many benefits include an LCD screen showing music right in the music rack, tutor/replay buttons for use in creating practice drills, a specialized metronome, a touch screen, a visual lesson interactive tutor, and the ability to work with any standard MIDI file, including Finale and Sibelius files. The Wonderland feature, which Miranda says will be part of all keyboards in the future, contains educational games and different metronome sounds. Its USB compatibility allows for exportation of playing as notation for printing but does not permit editing of played examples.

The **Yamaha DGX505** contains many of the same features as the Roland model such as a touch-sensitive LCD screen; its additional strengths include adjustable touch sensitivity, a "lesson mode" that gives feedback on performance, a chord dictionary function, and

improved sounds. The DGX505 uses SmartMedia flashcard technology and is easily portable, allowing its use in a variety of situations.

One of the most important points that a teacher can remember about the new keyboard technology is that the more intelligently a keyboard responds to the user, the more likely it is to be a useful learning tool. The new advances in keyboard technology are certainly leading the way to such a consistent and important use by today's teachers.

Music Software

Today's abundance of software packages and MIDI disks ensures that teachers and students have access to applications useful in virtually every component of music study. Music software of note for teachers and students includes: sequencing software (Cakewalk, Band-in-a-Box), notation software (Finale, Sibelius, Notepad), studio management software (Office Suite), and presentation software (PowerPoint, Dreamweaver, FrontPage).

Intelligent Software

Home Concert and Digital Music Notebook both were mentioned by Dr. Miranda as cutting-edge technologies worthy of note in today's marketplace. Yamaha's **Digital Music Notebook**, offered as a free download, is a good program for people who do not live or work in close proximity to a music store. Its capabilities involve not only access to an extensive library of music scores available for around $3 each but also a keyboard learn mode, where the score will wait to move ahead until the student has played the correct note on the keyboard.

Office Suites and Productivity Software

Traditional tools, such as Office 2003, are now being used in new and innovative ways. A few of these innovations utilitze Powerpoint and Publisher, two of the programs found in the Office suite. **Powerpoint** now has the ability to imbed MP3 files, enabling musicians to include audio examples in Powerpoint presentations. **Publisher** has come out with templates useful in creating e-newsletters, a function helpful to both teachers and students in numerous settings.

Iinternet Applications

The internet is the most rapidly expanding source of tools that we have. Important additions to the musician's internet sources are Macromedia's Robodemo and open source tools such as Wiki and Blog. **Robodemo**, priced at under $200, captures anything that you do on your PC computer screen. Its ability to produce flash documents with no knowledge of flash is its most widely-applicable tool. **Wiki** and **Blog** also have valuable uses for musicians in their possibilities for internet collaboration, allowing students to submit entries to online journals and read similar entries from other students.

Pen-Based Technology

Dy-Know Vision, a collaborative, pen-based application, works through a tablet PC (available for around $40) to transmit teacher hand-written notes, images, and web content to individual student workstations. It can be used as a stand-alone teaching tool and also is designed for two-way transmission. The program replays the thought process of the written notes and can imbed web pages into the teacherÕs notes as well.

A lot of technologies will continue to come and go, but software and hardware applications that respond best to the needs of teaching and learning are those most likely to remain viable for years to come. The most important thing to remember when considering technology for use in the music classroom is that the technology can only be as effective as the teacher using it, and the aforementioned tools work best when driven by thoughtful teachers who place the technology in its proper context.

Karen Beres holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Music Education (summa cum laude) from Lebanon Valley College (PA) and a Master of Music in Piano Performance from Bowling Green State University (OH). In the spring of 2003, she completed a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Piano Performance and Pedagogy at the University of Oklahoma under the direction of Dr. Jane Magrath and Dr. Edward Gates. While at OU, she served as Interim Coordinator of Group Piano and Undergraduate Piano Pedagogy during the 2000-2001 year and was awarded one of three campus-wide Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant awards. Ms. Beres has also served on the faculty of Bowling Green State University in the position of Coordinator of Group Piano. Active as a solo and collaborative artist, she has performed throughout the United States. In addition, she has spent five summers as a member of the Accompanying Staff of the Interlochen Arts Camp.

How to Help Your International Students Adjust to Academic and Professional Life - Ronald Cushing, presenter

report by Victoria Johnson

Ronald Cushing is Director of International Student Services at the University of Cincinnati. His presentation, *How to Help Your International Students Adjust to Academic and Professional Life*, addressed the legal, academic, and personal adjustment issues facing foreign students.

Legal Issues

The United States Department of Homeland Security's Student in Exchange Visitor Information System (SIEVIS) tracks international students' adherence to regulations governing living arrangements, degree programs, employment, and foreign travel. Violation of regulations may result in termination from SIEVIS and deportation. According to Cushing, six major legal issues impact foreign students:

1. All students must report a change of address within 10 days of moving.
2. Students must pursue a full course of study during fall and spring semesters, with very few exceptions (these include medical reasons, pregnancy, and childbirth). Additionally, students in their last semester of school may study part-time, as may graduate students who have completed all coursework and have only university-mandated thesis/dissertation hours remaining.
3. Students must adhere to strict employment regulations.
    - On-campus employment is restricted to 20 hours or less per week during semesters, but is unregulated between semesters.
    - Limited options exist for students to work off-campus in their field of study: - *Optional Practical Training requires application for a work permit from the Department of Homeland Security, a process that takes 90 days. Music students might play with a professional orchestra under this option.* - *Curricular Practical Training is authorized by the university's international student office, not the Department of Homeland Security, and must be an integral part of the student's curriculum.* (Cushing suggested that professors consider building professional requirements into coursework, so that students may take advantage of this option.)
4. In order to transfer to a new university, students must receive authorization from their present school and have their records released in the SIEVIS system.
5. All students are given a time period in which to complete their program of study, and must pay close attention to its expiration date. Extensions must be applied for before the expiration date. In addition, changes in major or degree must be documented within 15 days of starting the new program.
6. Students need authorization from the university's international office to leave and reenter the United States.

Academic Issues

The biggest academic hurdle facing international students is the English language, as many students come to the United States with very weak English skills. This challenge is magnified for doctoral students, who must take written and oral comprehensive exams, write numerous papers, and complete a thesis or dissertation. As a result, foreign students at the University of Cincinnati take an average of 10 years to complete a doctoral degree, whereas domestic students generally finish in six years.

International students also must adjust to differences in the classroom. According to Cushing, in many foreign cultures, students are expected to "sit, listen, and regurgitate," rather than understand, theorize, think critically, and produce original work. Additionally, professors in other nations have an almost "Godlike" stature; as a result, foreign students are often very uncomfortable asking questions, sharing opinions, or voicing disagreement in the classroom.

Personal Adjustment Issues

International students typically face several personal adjustment issues. First, they have left family, friends, and normal ways of doing things behind, and must adapt to an entirely new environment. Even trivial items such as doing laundry and making meals can present significant challenges. Second, foreign students often find that studying and making friends in a new culture are much more difficult than they had anticipated. Finally, students must take conscious steps to become integrated into American life. This is a particular concern in music schools where there is a large international community. Students often congregate with others from their own country, forming "national clumps," and do not get to know many American students. Furthermore, music students spend countless hours practicing and performing; therefore, they rarely have time to take advantage of special programs for international students that can help them improve their English skills and develop an understanding and appreciation of American culture.

Every day, international students deal with a variety of legal, academic, and personal adjustment issues that domestic students do not. An awareness of these issues can help university professors give foreign students the assistance, support, and empathy necessary to live and study comfortably and successfully in the United States.

Victoria Johnson serves as Assistant Professor and Coordinator of Piano Pedagogy and teaches piano pedagogy and applied piano and supervises the group piano program and the Music Academy (LSU's preparatory division). Dr. Johnson earned the Bachelor of Arts in Music and German from Luther College. She earned the Master of Music in piano performance from Bowling Green State University and completed additional studies at the Westfalische Wilhelms-Universitat, Munster, Germany. Dr. Johnson recently completed the Doctor of Philosophy in music education with an emphasis in piano pedagogy at the University of Oklahoma. She served as OU's Interim Coordinator of Group Piano and Undergraduate Pedagogy during the 2000-2001 academic year and received one of three campus-wide Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Awards. Dr. Johnson has written articles for *Keyboard Companion*, *Alfred's Piano Rendezvous* and *Piano Pedagogy Forum* (a web-based periodical), and has presented at the National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy, the Louisiana Music Teachers Association State Convention, the University of Oklahoma Seminar for Piano Teachers, the Luther College Dorian Keyboard Festival, and

numerous local music teacher meetings. She is a member of the Adult Learning Committee of the National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy, the Music Teachers National Association, and Pi Kappa Lambda. Her pedagogy teachers have been Jane Magrath, Reid Alexander, Barbara Fast, Anna Belle Bognar, Virginia Marks, and Cathy Albergo. Johnson's former faculty appointments include four years as Alumni Lecturer in Music at Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, as well as positions teaching group and private piano for children at the Harper Music Academy and North Central College Piano Academy in suburban Chicago.

Teaching and Mentoring International Students - Panel Discussion

report by Alejandro Cremaschi

During the session devoted to *Teaching and Mentoring International Students*, four panelists drew from personal experiences to address the critical and sensitive issue of how to teach, interact with, and meet the needs of international students enrolled in pedagogy classes in American universities. Two of the presenters were students the piano pedagogy program at the University of Cincinnati: Maira Balacon, who was born and raised in Romania and came to the US as a teenager, and Di Zhu, from China, who arrived in this country as a college student. The other two presenters were faculty members in American institutions: Oscar Macchioni, an Assistant Professor of Piano Pedagogy at the University of Texas El Paso, a native of Argentina and former international student in the US and Poland, and Kenneth Williams, an Associate Professor of Piano Pedagogy at Ohio State University, whose interest in this area was awakened a few years ago when he was confronted with the fact that most of the students enrolled in his pedagogy courses came from non-western cultures.

Maira Balacon immigrated to the US with her family as a refugee when she was 14 years old. She went through a difficult period of adaptation when she entered high school - everything, from language, food, cultural traditions and the educational system, was new to her. During her presentation she focused on several aspects teachers should take into account when dealing with international students, and offered useful tips and advice. She addressed how to overcome the language barrier by using clear, simple words, avoiding American idioms, and having a patient disposition when explaining new expressions or repeating ideas using different words. She offered suggestions for lectures: allowing time for note-taking, correcting students in a gentle and tactful way in front of others and using discussion groups to allow the students to practice the new language in a non-threatening environment. Also, she cautioned pedagogy teachers that students coming from other cultures may not be as fluent as Americans in things such as using technology or elementary teaching methods. When advising students, don't assume that they can navigate the "red-tape world" as well as Americans do - students may need help with things that seem natural to us, such as registering for a course, contacting a professor or choosing classes. Observe student teaching and be aware of cultural differences; in some cultures teachers are used to exercising a totalitarian role in the classroom, and your TAs may be used to being either too strict or too lenient with their students. In conclusion, Maira suggested that international students may need special emotional support, and advised teachers to be sensitive, open and caring.

Di Zhu, from China, has been in the US for six years as a graduate student. He pointed out characteristics of the American system that might be completely foreign to a Chinese music student. For instance, in the US students are responsible for registering, classes tend to have a tighter and faster-paced schedule, there is more student participation and discussion, different points of view (even if they conflict with the teacher's) are welcome, and there is much more writing and critical thinking. In the Chinese system, students tend to regard the teacher with great respect as an authority that is not to be challenged with

questions or differing opinions, there is much less discussion, students are less independent, and even things like direct eye contact are avoided, as they may be construed as signs of disrespect. Zhu advised teachers to instill creative and independent learning skills in their Asian students, to involve them in active learning by asking frequent questions and to encourage the flow of communication. He also suggested the teacher be aware of students' personal lives, as they may be going through difficult times adapting to the new culture.

Oscar Macchioni warned teachers that international music students may come to the US very well prepared in some areas, but with tremendous gaps in others. This is the case with many international pianists who enter American schools with a formidable technique and a vast repertoire, but are completely uninformed in the area of teaching elementary repertoire or class piano. He pointed out that, unlike the US, many schools in western and non-western countries do not include adequate piano pedagogy training. Oscar reminded teachers that not only may the spoken language be different from country to country, but also the musical language; a simple example: the notes "C-D-E" in the English-speaking world are called "do-re-mi" in countries that speak Spanish. He also drew attention to the fact that administrators often do a poor job understanding the needs of international students, and advised teachers to help students with administrative paperwork.

Kenneth Williams indicated that there are a great number of international students currently attending American music schools. Problems posed by differences in cultural and educational values between the American and Asian systems became evident when he first taught a pedagogy course to a group of Asian students. He had planned several activities for the course, but later had to revise them to accommodate the students' cultural background. His students had problems, for instance, with practicum teaching because of communication difficulties or cultural differences; students had troubles comparing and evaluating methods because they were not used to thinking critically or challenging the authority of the book; students had problems engaging in discussion and exchanges because this modality of learning was new to them. He then sought help at places like the ESL (English as a second language) program in his university, and read articles and books about cross-cultural communication and multiculturalism. This developed an awareness of cultural differences such as gender and authority perceptions, and prompted changes in his approach to teaching this class. He started asking students to compare methods or articles to encourage critical thinking, and tried to stimulate discussion by addressing specific students with specific questions rather than expecting voluntary participation, among other things.

Alejandro Cremaschi teaches piano, piano pedagogy and class piano at the University of Colorado at Boulder. A specialist in the areas of group piano, technology, and Latin American piano music, he has been a presenter at national and international conferences. An active performer, he has recorded for the labels IRCO and Marco Polo. Dr. Cremaschi holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Minnesota.

Assessment in Group Piano - Panel Discussion

report by Suzanne Schons

Three panelists, Mary Tollefson, Susanna Garcia, and Cynthia Benson, shared their assessment tools in this session, offered useful teaching tips, and discussed important philosophical aspects of teaching group piano. All are established group piano teachers who have developed effective tools for maintaining objectivity and consistency in group piano assessment.

Mary Tollefson

The primary feature of Tollefson's assessment method is the use of specific checklists for each item to be tested. For each testing item, the checklist includes a list of features that should be present in student performances. The instructor then indicates whether the required elements were present by circling "Y" or "N" (YES or NO). Tollefson illustrated the checklist method with several examples, including one for folk song performances. Students in one of her keyboard classes must do two folk song performances per semester, in which they play a chordal accompaniment while leading the class in singing. For the first performance, the following features must be present:

Folk Song Performance #1 Y N Announce song to class Y N Play correct starting pitch for singing Y N Have class sing starting pitch on "loo" Y N Smile Y N Begin playing at appropriate tempo Y N Play correct chords Y N Change chords at appropriate times Y N Keep going (no pauses) Y N Continue playing at a steady tempo

For the second folk song performance, all of the items included in the first checklist appear again, but the following are also added:

Folk Song Performance #2 Y N Play in appropriate style Y N Play correct rhythms Y N Play appropriate introduction

Tollefson awards one point for each "Yes" on the list. Students end up with about 100 possible points by the end of the semester. The checklist method fosters objectivity and consistency on the part of the instructor, and also provides students with concrete objectives to work for in each activity.

An interesting assignment included in Tollefson's second semester keyboard class is to have students record several pieces to disc on a Roland MT-300. Those pieces have their own evaluation checklists, which include basic items such as rhythms, notes, etc., as well as recording to a pre-assigned metronome marking. Tollefson noted that in addition to providing more keyboard playing experience, using the MT-300 helps students learn to use technology.

Susanna Garcia

Garcia explained that consistency is a critical issue in the class piano program at her school because it is a large program, with a mix of instructors that includes both faculty and graduate teaching assistants. Differences among instructors can vary widely, including issues such as philosophical ideas regarding the purpose of keyboard classes, what is taught, what is tested, how tests are evaluated and weighted, how to evaluate slower students, what kind of feedback to provide, etc. Garcia has dealt with consistency by providing graduate assistants with a detailed course outline that includes what to teach, what steps to take, what to assign, what to test, and what grading criteria to use. Grading is based on a point system, so that teachers and students know what to listen for. The grading criteria are posted on Blackboard for students.

Each area to be tested is worth a certain number of points (i.e. Keyboard Theory, Technique, etc.) Each area is then broken down into components, each worth a certain number of points (i.e. Notes, Continuity, Rhythms, etc.). A guide is also created for interpretation of points. For example, on a 0-4 point scale, 4=Superior, 3=Excellent, 2=Good, 1=Fair, 0=No Credit. A reporting document is created for each student and updated throughout the semester. The document includes test name/number, test area, grade, comments, and total grade. Current and past tests are included on the document so that students can see all their scores for the semester.

Garcia noted that using a point system removes the emotional component from grading. It helps teachers be objective and consistent, and also helps students learn by providing them with specific feedback.

Cynthia Benson

Benson's discussion centered around her use of an e-portfolio as an alternative to the traditional piano proficiency. She began by explaining why using an e-portfolio was conducive to achieving her goals as a class piano instructor. These goals include the following: create independent learners, have students learn the value of the skills developed and form links to contexts beyond the classroom, have students be involved in the learning process, motivate students to continue using the skills learned, and have them experience successful music making. The e-portfolio supports her philosophy by prompting students to take part in setting their own goals, evaluating themselves, documenting their progress, and linking the skills to other contexts.

Creation of the e-portfolio includes several steps:

1. Student performances are videotaped with a digital camera in class, on one tape.
2. The tape is given to a graduate assistant, who converts the performances from iMovie to QuickTime.
3. Movies are saved to email format and sent to students' email accounts.
4. Students are given a detailed assessment sheet, which they complete as they

watch the performance, and email it back to the instructor.

Students must also keep a practice log, and set goals for their next performance. At the end of the semester, students compile a final e-portfolio that includes all performances, self-evaluations, and practice logs.

Benson warned that using an e-portfolio requires organization and involves a considerable amount of paperwork. However, she noted that this system fosters objectivity by allowing student and teacher to work together in evaluating performances and setting goals. It also helps students prioritize listening skills and improvement over receiving a certain grade.

Although each panelist took a different approach to addressing objectivity and consistency, it is clear that all three systems are effective for achieving those goals. What is also apparent is that each panelist devised an evaluation system that fosters student learning and growth. Each method of assessment provides specific feedback for students and provides clear criteria for improving on each task.

Suzanne Schons is Assistant Professor of Music at the Crane School of Music, SUNY Potsdam, where she coordinates the Piano Pedagogy and Class Piano programs. She is an active researcher and clinician in piano pedagogy, and has recently presented at the national convention of the Music Educators National Conference (MENC), the Julia Crane International Piano Competition, and the University of Oklahoma Seminar for Piano Teachers. She has upcoming presentations at the 2005 national convention of Music Teachers National Association (MTNA), and a research publication forthcoming in the journal *Contributions to Music Education*. Ms. Schons holds degrees in Piano Performance and Piano Pedagogy, and is currently a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Oklahoma in Music Education with a Piano Pedagogy emphasis.

Technology Demonstration: The Pedagogy/Group Piano Intelligence Room - Michelle Conda and Adam Clark, presenters

report by Carol Gingerich

Part I: "You are Being Watched"

In this session, Dr. Michelle Conda of the University of Cincinnati demonstrated various uses for videotaping in the piano lab. At the Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music, a class piano lab of twelve keyboards is connected to a room next door, the Viewing Room, via a doorway and a two-way glass window. The class piano room has two video cameras and two ambient mikes suspended from the ceiling which feed into a MIDI TV monitor in the Viewing Room. Using MC100, all sounds from the Teacher Console and headset, and all student piano sounds are recorded. The purposes of the two rooms are multiple. Together they can be used to: videotape teaching, watch and instruct graduate student assistants without interfering with the class piano students, create videotapes for job applications, tape "problem" situations, and archive GP3 sessions. A thirteenth keyboard is located in the Viewing Room. The pedagogy professor can use its call button to privately instruct the student teacher. Additionally, it can used for a very real life problem; students who are late can take their test on it. The Viewing Room also contains a pedagogy library, and can be entered by a separate, outside door so that the student teachers do not know when the pedagogy professor has entered to observe them.

The class piano room also contains a Document Camera, manufactured by Samsung, which is essentially a computerized overhead projector. Sight reading scores can be placed on it, and DVD, VCR, laptop, and internet connections to it allow their images to be projected by an LCD projector onto the screen in the front of the room. The class piano room also contains a traditional Visualizer. All electric cords and cables in this room are connected underground to the Viewing Room, which creates an uncluttered floor space, but means that the pianos cannot be moved, and repairs would require that the floor be torn up. The technology in both rooms was funded by IT Student Technology fees, and can be purchased from Yamaha. Michelle suggested that a future improvement would be to purchase digital cameras that could zoom in and out and follow the teacher's movements. She mentioned that potential problems include the "hum" as the system feeds back, a weak input, and recording directly to DVD.

This was a most informative session. Being able to see technology demonstrated in a hands-on fashion was very useful, and Dr. Conda’s open discussion of both strengths and weaknesses of the system made for a well-informed session with direct applications to individual teaching settings.

Part II: "Wasp Bar Code: Inventory Control"

Adam Clark, a graduate student at the University of Cincinnati, presented a step-by-step demonstration of the creation and utilization of a bar code system for the pedagogy

library contained in the Viewing Room. This bar code system allows any professor to electronically monitor pedagogy materials which are not housed within their university library system. The Wasp Nest Bar Code, Business Edition, can create and print labels which contain item descriptions and location. It is able to monitor item check-in and check-out by the use of barcode scanning, and to specify loan periods with the due date automatically being set based on the check-out date. It can search for inventory items via keyword searches, and can locate item holder names and due dates. Ordering information follows at the end of this article.

The clear explanations and easy-to-follow format of this session made it extremely useful for individual applications to home universities. Implementation and utilization of this software could be made into a student Independent Study project. Students could use this to gain familiarity with new technology, review literature, and determine levels of difficulty for repertoire.

Ordering Information

Wasp Nest Bar Code, Business Edition - $199.00 (also called Wasp Nest CCD Barcode Kit/Suite). Includes CCD Scanner ($180.00 if bought separately), WaspLabeler v5 ($125.00 if bought separately), and WaspTrack - Inventory management software.

Carol Gingerich is Assistant Professor of Piano at the State University of West Georgia where she teaches applied piano, pedagogy, literature, collaborative piano, and keyboard skills. She is a graduate of Columbia University Teachers College from which she received a Doctor of Education in the College Teaching of Music degree. There she studied piano with Karl Ulrich Schnabel and piano pedagogy with Robert Pace. She holds a Master of Music in Piano Accompanying and Coaching degree from Westminster Choir College and an Honours Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Western Ontario. As a scholar Dr. Gingerich's research focuses on French piano style and learning style theory, in particular Neuro-Linguistic programming. She has given presentations on these topics at the European Piano Teachers Convention (Rome, Italy) and the World Piano Pedagogy Convention, in addition to numerous teacher workshops. Her articles have been and are being published in "American Music Teacher", "Clavier", "European Piano Teachers Journal" and "Keyboard Companion". She is active as both a solo and collaborative pianist and has been a guest artist at Catholic University, Columbia University, the University of Florida and the University of Miami. She is a frequent adjudicator for piano competitions and her students have been winners of MTNA sponsored competitions.

Technology Demonstration: Intelligent, Interactive Software for Group Piano Instruction - Linda Christensen, presenter

report by Carol Gingerich

Description

Home Concert 2000 can be played along with any standard MIDI disc, including those that accompany class piano textbooks or personally created MIDI files. The score is projected on the screen as students perform, and a two measure count-off is given. Home Concert files can be stored on a campus wide computer network, such as Blackboard or WebCT, and thus made available to any student with a laptop who can then pull up the files and practice at home. A site license needs to be purchased for multiple keyboards. Home Concert 2000 is both PC and MAC compatible, and both formats are included on a single disc which costs $89.00. The disc also contains one Mozart Piano Concerto, although other concerti can be purchased from the website.

It has three modes: Learn, Perform and Jam. In Learn Mode, the software stops and waits until the student plays the correct note. In Perform Mode, the software follows the player's tempo and dynamics, even including such sophisticated fluctuations as ritard and fermata. Just as in a good performance, it does not stop for wrong notes. Jam Mode does not follow the rhythmic fluctuations of the student, but rather requires them to keep going at a steady tempo. However, the overall tempo and volume of the piece can initially be adjusted.

Drawbacks

Linda highlighted several problems present in the software. On the screen only notes from the original MIDI files appear. Unfortunately, no fingering, pedaling, articulation marks, key signatures or clefs from the original are projected. However, since key signatures are not displayed, you are able to customize and add them yourself. Another issue concerned repeat signs. None from the original are written out, but rather the software rewrites the entire repeated passage so students are forced to perform the repeats. Lastly, Home Concert can only display two tracks, or two hands, and not four tracks or ensemble music.

Applications

Linda gave numerous excellent demonstrations and examples of applications to class piano teaching. All three modes are useful for teaching sight reading, which can be done hands separately or hands together. A student's most recent performance may be recorded so they can play it back and hear themselves. The Perform mode is useful to check for accuracy of pitch in repertoire practice. Spot practice can be accomplished by repeating a small section over and over using the Loop Mode, which highlights the section of music to be repeated. However, the Loop Mode repeats the measures after one second of time,

regardless of your original tempo. To solve this problem, if the measures are near the beginning, highlight and include one or two of the count-off measures in your Loop Mode designation, so as to know exactly when to enter. However, this does not work if the measures are not adjacent to the indicated blank count-off measures at the beginning. The developer is working to fix this problem. A new version is coming out very soon which should be able to display the clefs, dynamics and articulations of the original MIDI disc.

Carol Gingerich is Assistant Professor of Piano at the State University of West Georgia where she teaches applied piano, pedagogy, literature, collaborative piano, and keyboard skills. She is a graduate of Columbia University Teachers College from which she received a Doctor of Education in the College Teaching of Music degree. There she studied piano with Karl Ulrich Schnabel and piano pedagogy with Robert Pace. She holds a Master of Music in Piano Accompanying and Coaching degree from Westminster Choir College and an Honours Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Western Ontario. As a scholar Dr. Gingerich's research focuses on French piano style and learning style theory, in particular Neuro-Linguistic programming. She has given presentations on these topics at the European Piano Teachers Convention (Rome, Italy) and the World Piano Pedagogy Convention, in addition to numerous teacher workshops. Her articles have been and are being published in "American Music Teacher", "Clavier", "European Piano Teachers Journal" and "Keyboard Companion". She is active as both a solo and collaborative pianist and has been a guest artist at Catholic University, Columbia University, the University of Florida and the University of Miami. She is a frequent adjudicator for piano competitions and her students have been winners of MTNA sponsored competitions.

Technology Demonstration: PowerPoint Applications for Group Piano - Kevin Richmond and Sandra Ramawy, presenters

report by Gary Graning

Kevin Richmond and Sandra Ramawy presented a session on PowerPoint applications in the group piano curriculum. Use of this software in the classroom requires a screen and projector. The value of this software is that it can focus the class on what you want them to see in the music; for example, the instructor may want the piano group to notice the key signature, meter, bass line, essential patterns in the melodic line such as sequential groupings/ and/or inner lines. The suggested harmony may be emphasized by removing the nonharmonic tones in the melody, leaving only the chord tones.

The instructor can add graphics, such as directional arrows. By using Adobe Photoshop, the notation can be in gray or black score. The changes are added in layers and any slide can be reviewed. Voice-over can be added for use on web-site tutorials.

Little time was available for questions. The only question was, why use Photoshop rather than Finale or Sibelius with this program. The presenters answered that any of the three programs can be used, but that size is easier to maintain with Photoshop.

Gary Graning is currently on the faculty at the University of Akron. He received performance degrees from the Oberlin College Conservatory and the University of Michigan, and his doctorate in Performance Pedagogy from Columbia University Teachers College. with a Dissertation on the piano works of Polish composer, Karol Szymanowski. Gray Graning has taught at Greenwich House Music School, Piano Partners in New York City and Suburban Community Music Center, New Jersey. He has given solo, accompanying, and chamber music performances in New York and New Jersey. Gary Graning studied with with John Perry, Jack Radunsky, Vitya Vronsky, and Lucille Greene.

Technololgy Demonstration: Security Cameras Come to Piano Class - Timothy Shafer, presenter

report by Erica Keithley

While group piano teaching is an efficient, economical, and engaging way to instruct piano students, the layout of many digital piano labs limits visual connections between students and teacher. Many elements of piano technique are best taught through teacher demonstration, a technique that requires that both the teacher and the student have clear views of each other's hands. The students must see the teacher's hands to be able to imitate motions, and the teacher must be able to see students' hands to monitor their progress, make corrections, and offer suggestions. Few digital piano labs are designed to offer this type of visual communication between teacher and students. To overcome this problem Dr. Timothy Shafer designed a group piano lab at Pennsylvania State University that uses surveillance cameras to insure that all students can easily see the teacher's hands and pedaling foot. The increased visual contact between students and teacher allows the teacher to use more demonstration in teaching and provides the teacher with more opportunities to address the physical and technical aspects of piano performance in a group piano setting.

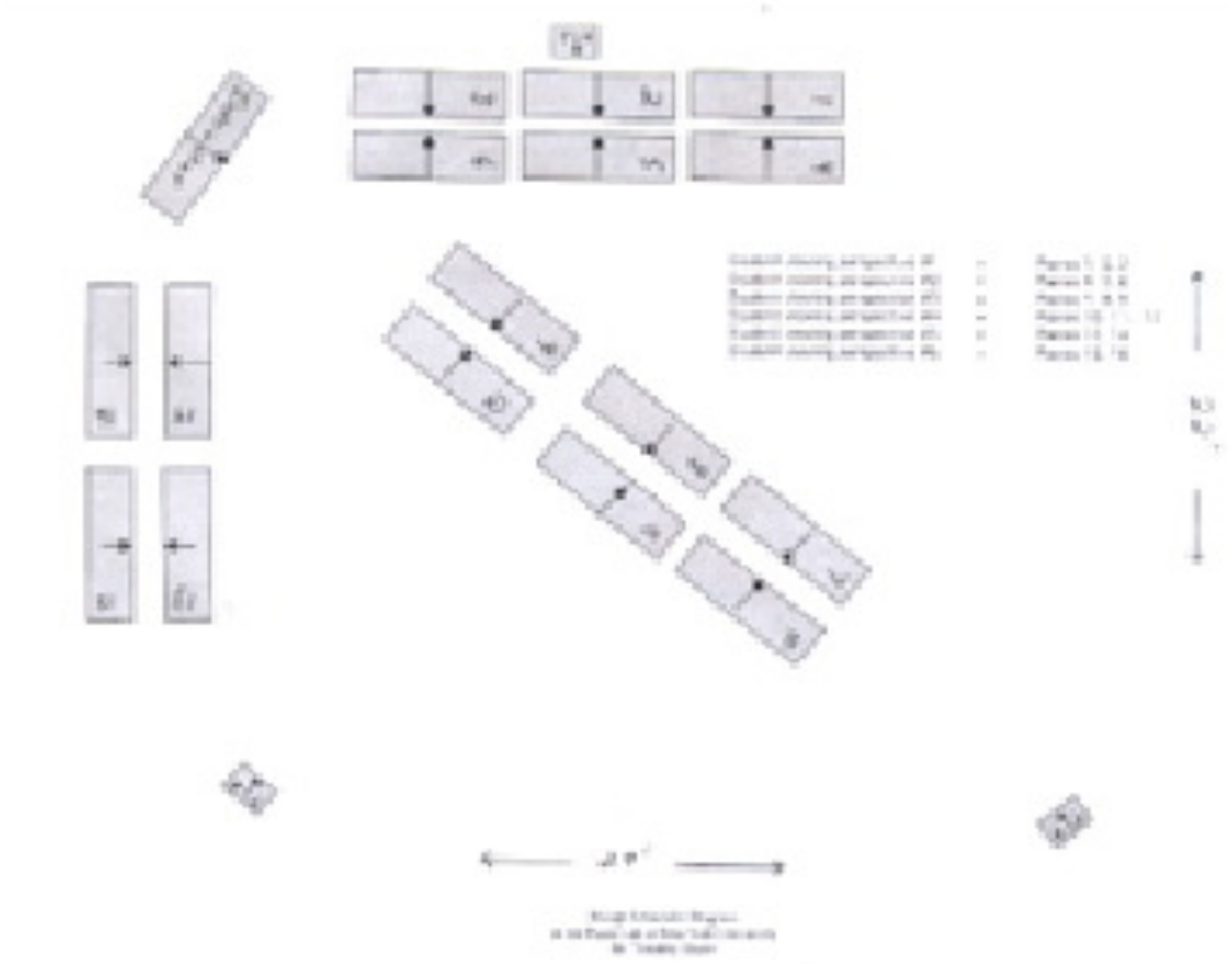
Classroom and Equipment

The classroom Dr. Shafer designed is 29 feet long and 22 feet wide. Equipment used in the room includes one teacher's digital piano and controller, 12 student digital pianos, 4 student Disklaviers, three 20-inch televisions, and four surveillance cameras. The cost of the surveillance cameras and televisions ten years ago was about $6,500. Purchase of one additional camera and a device to display all four camera views simultaneously on a split screen cost $1,700 in April 2004. A smaller system used in Dr. Shafer's home studio that is self-contained and includes four cameras and one display unit was purchased at a local Sam's Club at a cost of $1,000.

Keyboard layout: Enhancing Teacher View of Student's Hands

The digital pianos in this lab are placed in such a way that the teacher can view all students' hands while standing at the teacher's station. The teacher merely needs to move his or her head in order to scan all 320 fingers. The teacher's digital piano is placed in a corner of the classroom, facing out diagonally into the classroom. The students' instruments are placed in rows radiating out from the teacher station like the spokes of a wheel.

Surveillance Camera and Television Placement: Enhancing Student View of Teacher's Hands



The four surveillance cameras in the lab are placed to capture two different views of the teacher's hands and two views of the teacher's pedaling foot. One camera, suspended from the ceiling above the teacher's keyboard, shows a view of the top of the teacher's hands and the keyboard. This "birds' eye" view is similar to what a pianist sees when he looks down on his own hands. The other hand view is from the side of the teacher, providing a "profile" view of the hand and arm. This view shows what a pianist would see if he were watching on hand level from one extreme of the piano. A third camera is placed on the floor by the teacher's piano and shows a "profile" view of the right foot and pedal mechanism, and a fourth camera is mounted below the teacher's piano and shows a top view of the teacher's right foot.

The views of the teacher's hands and foot captured by the cameras are fed into three televisions in the room. As may be seen in the above diagram, when facing forward at

their pianos, the 16 students have 6 sight lines or viewing perspectives. These are indicated on the above diagram with arrows. Using these sight lines as a guide, Dr. Shafer placed three televisions in the classroom, two in corners of the room and one against the opposite wall. To see a television, students merely look up from their piano or look up and slightly to the left or right. By glancing up at the televisions, students have instant access to several views of the teacher's hands and foot.

Teaching Applications

Dr. Shafer uses camera images to demonstrate many aspects of piano technique to students. The teacher can demonstrate hand expansions and contractions by modeling movements and directing student attention to the images captured by the camera that is focused down on the hand and keyboard. In addition, the teacher can show students hand positioning and position changes easily using this camera angle. The side-angle or hand "profile" camera can be shown to students to help them develop good hand position and to demonstrate how the wrist drops down and then lifts in the performance of a two note slur.

Demonstrating how the pianist's thumb passes under the palm in scale passages is also easily shown by this camera. Camera shots of both the right foot and the hands can help students understand better how to coordinate both in passages requiring syncopated pedaling.

Erica Keithley is currently a Visiting Lecturer in Piano and Piano Pedagogy. She received her Bachelor of Music in piano performance at the University of Oklahoma, graduating with special distinction. At the University of Illinois in Urbana, she was a University Fellow and completed Masters degrees in both piano performance and piano pedagogy. Ms. Keithley is currently completing a Ph.D. in music education and piano pedagogy at the University of Oklahoma. Her dissertation explores the musical nuances used by advanced and intermediate level pianists in the communication of emotion. Ms. Keithley has taught on the faculties of the University of Illinois and Georgia Southwestern State University. In recognition of her teaching, she was listed as a "Teacher ranked as excellent by their students" at the University of Illinois. In addition, she was invited to give a teaching demonstration at the National Conference on Piano Pedagogy and was selected as one of three to receive the Provost's Outstanding Graduate Teaching Award at the University of Oklahoma in 2002. Ms. Keithley teaches applied piano, advanced keyboard skills, and piano pedagogy courses at the Georgia State University School of Music, and also serves as coordinator of group piano.

How Do You Monitor or Influence Practice Between Classes? - Group Discussion

report by Jenny Cruz

The perennial question always remains... how do you get a student to practice? Richard Chronister once said, "Never send a student home, unless you've shown them how to do what you want them to do." It is possible that this is where the answer to the question begins. The self-selected discussion group at the GP3 Conference attempted to confront this issue.

Demonstration

1) Inspiration can come from many places. Demonstrating for a student what you feel about the piece or your individual interpretation of the piece can provide this impetus.

2) Using the class piano as a huge demonstration setting. Functional skills can, in fact, be more difficult than repertoire, so showing a student how to practice harmonization or scales in front of the entire class could be helpful.

Attitude

1) Changing the significance of practice from a torturous procedure to a process that is extremely fulfilling can inspire students to practice more often.

2) Reflecting on the "Butt to the Bench" mentality - the hardest part can sometimes be just sitting down and starting. The more often the student can sit down, even if it's just for 10-15 minutes between classes, the faster and further along they will progress. Getting them into the habit of practicing is half the battle.

3) Instill the motto that "Cramming is useless."

4) Choosing good repertoire - appropriate for the student's level and appealing to the student - can make or break a student's willingness to practice.

Teaching How to Practice

1) Teaching a student HOW to practice can in itself inspire practice.

2) For two weeks, have a student make practice tapes, recording EVERYTHING that goes on in a session. This would be turned into the teacher so that they can give input on what they're doing correctly and what they can improve on.

Practice Opportunities

1) Give the student as much time to practice as possible.

2) Offer a tutorial website using MIDI files.

3) Encourage students to attain a keyboard for their room, so that in their spare time they can practice.

Pair Work

1) Have students practice in pairs.

2) Have them turn in partner evaluations. Therefore, the student not only acts as a student, but becomes a teacher as well.

Community

Build a sense of community in your classroom. Give a test to your class, grading them on their knowledge of their fellow classmates i.e. name, primary instrument. Creating a sense of community encourages students to have pride in what they and their fellow classmates produce, thus encouraging them to be prepared.

Accountability

Pop quizzes - everybody hates them, but they send the message to the student that they are responsible every class period for what was covered the previous period.

This self-selected discussion was very well attended - most likely because every teacher has to deal with this issue. The overall reactions were practice doesn't have to be like pulling teeth. The teachers in this discussion proved that there are many motivators for students.

Jenny Cruz is currently pursuing a DMA in Piano Performance from the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, where she studies with Eugene and Elizabeth Pridonoff. She recently completed an internship in Lucca, Italy, and teaches piano at Xavier University and through the University of Cincinnati Communiversity Program.

Open Your Gradebook - Group Discussion

report by Ann Gipson

The following is a summary of group discussions on the topic "Open Your Gradebook" which followed a panel presentation by Mary Tollefson, Cynthia Benson, and Susie Garcia on *Assessment in Group Piano*. Discussion participants were asked to respond to three questions:

1. How do you calculate grades?
2. What weight is given to keyboard patterns vs. prepared repertoire vs. functional skills like sight-reading, harmonization, transposition and improvisation?
3. What computer programs, if any, do you use to help you keep track of grades?

How do you calculate grades?

Responses to how grades are calculated were quite brief, but this topic generated discussion of several related topics. In one discussion group, nearly 90% of the participants consider a point system in grading efficient and effective. Another participant commented on the use of daily assignments to evaluate student progress and issue grades. For a few participants the final exam is worth one-third of the final grade. Some participants give more weight to a student's progress, while others weigh the final musical product alone. At one school, grades are evaluated depending on the degree program. Separate sections, syllabi, and grade books are used for music education, performance, composition, etc. One discussion group wanted to ask the panelists "What is the difference in the various group piano curriculums between instrumental and choral majors?"

Means of Assessment

Most of the discussion groups spent more time exploring a means of assessment. One participant suggested that an entire piano class can record sight reading examples at the same time on individual keyboards allowing the teacher and students to listen and evaluate the performance. Many participants evaluate student performances via recorded disks. While some participants expressed concern about the time needed to evaluate all recordings, some teachers find time to assess the recordings by having students do self assessment.

Several benefits of recorded exams were cited by participants. In addition to encouraging students to use the technology, students can hear their own mistakes and musical weaknesses. Since students are allowed to record as many performances as needed and submit the best one, the recording assessment can build confidence by allowing the student to show his/her best work. Some participants argued that being able to see the student's hand and sitting position are important aspects of assessment. Most participants

agreed that a recorded exam could minimize grade disputes.

Participants were also reminded of the benefit of using recordings for pedagogical purposes. One teacher makes a recording of a piece being studied by the class and students are instructed to mark all errors in the score. This ear training activity is certainly an important aspect of self-assessment.

Grade Inflation

Grade inflation and standards were discussed and all seemed to agree that assigning an "A" for "B" work is a disservice to the student. Students must know the criteria by which they are graded and need feedback to know why they receive a certain grade. Often students do not read written comments, but look only for the grades. Some participants use student and teacher conferences to provide an avenue of communication. The suggestion was made that the student not be allowed to see the grade until the comments had been read or he/she attended a conference with the teacher. Web CT and Black board were mentioned as confidential secure ways of disseminating information. Some participants use Web CT to publish criteria and examples for practice. Participants stated the need to include information about the grading scale in the course syllabus.

Consistency Among Teachers

Consistency among teachers was another related topic discussed by participants. Whether those assessing student performance were graduate teaching assistants or faculty, participants agreed that wide discrepancies on grading can exist. One discussion group suggested that teachers in a group piano program with more than one teacher should follow a plan. Several participants agreed that planning sessions were useful.

When working with graduate teaching assistants, structure is needed both in developing the curriculum and assessing student performance. Exams heard by both graduate teaching assistants and their supervisors provide consistency and objectivity. Participants also stated that teaching assistants should be offered to the best teachers, not just the best performers.

Piano Proficiency Exams

Participants also discussed the manner in which piano proficiency exams are graded. Some universities still keep the piano proficiency exams separate from course grades. In many cases, teachers teach group piano courses that have grades, but proficiency exams are recorded as pass/fail. Schools that have a Computerized Grade Management System often do not allow the student to receive a pass/fail for the piano proficiency and a grade for the course. In these cases, the proficiency exam grade is averaged into the grade for the course.

Regarding retakes on the proficiency exam, some allow parts of the proficiency exam to be retaken once, but most who spoke were opposed to this practice. According to one participant, it is possible to pass the piano proficiency at two different times during the semester; the first opportunity as outlined by the syllabus and then a 2nd try at the final. Some participants use the proficiency as a barrier, with the student required to pass all components at once.

What Weight Is Given to Repertoire, Technique, and Functional Skills?

A variety of answers were provided in response to the weight given to various elements in the group piano class. A small number of participants give more weight to repertoire and technique than other functional skills. According to some participants, harmonization and transposition are closely tied to the theory and ear-training classes, allowing more time to be spent on repertoire and technical skills during the piano class.

The majority of participants responded that all elements (functional skills, technical skills, and repertoire) are given equal weight. Participants cited a possible issue with giving equal weight to repertoire; students are concerned that they spend more time preparing solo repertoire than other functional skills but repertoire and functional skills get equal weight in grading. Another member of the discussion group suggested that the teacher needed to help students establish their practice priorities.

One participant responded that repertoire becomes less important as a student progresses through the group piano sequence. Several people expressed a concern that too much weight has been given to chord progressions that are perceived as unnecessary to a student's future musical career. Regarding scales, some participants weight these equally with other skills, while other participants weight scales 30% of the final grade.

A consensus of two discussion groups ranked sight reading at the top of the most important skills. Participants believed that the principles of good reading that they learn at the keyboard can apply to whatever instrument/voice is their major area and agreed that the study of piano can help students become better musicians.

Another participant spoke about the use of improvisation as an important skill that is developed in his group classes. He stated that it was important for the students to develop the ability to improvise in the style of a classical sonata/sonatina with three movements incorporating themes and key changes. This activity allows the students to apply their theory and listening skills as well as their playing skills.

Although the approach to grading seems to vary among those institutions represented, the participants generally agreed that the development of piano skills must continue beyond the formal training period to be a truly effective and useful skill for the student in a professional setting.

What Computer Programs, If Any, Do You Use to Help You Keep Track of Grades?

Very little discussion time was devoted to the third question regarding the use of computer programs to keep track of grades. A large number of participants use *Blackboard* computer software to keep track of grades. *Blackboard* allows students to always have access to their grade book as well as being able to see class averages without a teacher violating privacy issues.. A built-in calculator adds to its ease of use. One participant also suggested using *Blackboard* for posting power point presentations. The ability for students to print the presentation after class rather than taking notes was cited as particularly beneficial to international students. Another effective tool for teachers is *Gradebook*, a program available online that can be downloaded for a nominal fee. Other computer programs mentioned as a means to keep track of grades included *WebEasi*, *Micrograde*, *Excel*, and *File Maker Pro*.

Conclusion

Although the three original questions suggested for discussion in "Open Your Grade Book" served as a valuable initial point for discussion, it is evident from the variety of topics covered in all the discussion groups that there are many issues related to grading the group piano student that remain ambiguous and uncertain for many teachers. Approaches to curricular design, assessment of student performance and understanding, and the method for feed back vary widely among institutions. As group piano teachers continue to wrestle with issues of consistency, grade inflation, weighing various musical elements/skills, ways to assess student performance, and ways to calculate grades, hopefully greater clarity can be achieved through continued discussions.

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My Favorite Test: Share Your Best, Most Creative Assessment Tool for Group Piano - Group Discussion

report by Erica Keithley

Group Piano and Piano Pedagogy Forum participants have developed stimulating methods for selecting test materials and preparing students for evaluation. Teachers suggested assessment tools that focus on skills and materials that relate to students' interests or majors. In addition, teachers discussed methods used for selecting exercises included in exams. Other activities shared by conference participants have been developed to aid students in preparing for tests. These include activities that stimulate peer evaluation of student performances and guide students to think like a teacher.

Tests That Are Relevant to the Student's Background, Interests, or Major

- *Accompaniment performances* - Many group piano teachers incorporate accompanying experiences into examinations. Students learn simple piano accompaniments for solos of their own instrument and then perform these with a student soloist. Not only do the group piano students then know the piano part of pieces they might teach in future years, but they also have the experience of working as an accompanist with a soloist.
- *Test contents that correspond to the student's major* - At one university, students in their final semester of group piano take a final exam that includes portions specific to their majors. General music education majors and choral music education majors perform a four-voice, open score work; voice performance, instrumental performance, and instrumental education majors play a simple accompaniment for their instrument or voice; jazz study majors comp chords to a jazz standard; composition majors play an intermediate level 20th century solo of their choice.
- *African-American anthem, "Let Freedom Ring"* - At an historically African-American college, one teacher requires that all students learn to play "Let Freedom Ring." This anthem has an important meaning for the students, and the teacher finds that they enjoy being able to perform it.

Processes for Selecting Test Items

- *Lucky draw* - When testing students over scales, arpeggios, or chord progressions, teachers often place slips of paper with required keys in a box. Students then draw from the box to determine the key for each exercise. Knowing that keys are determined randomly stimulates students to practice all assigned keys.
- *You choose, I choose* - Another technique for determining the key in which students have to perform scales, arpeggios, and chord progressions is "you choose, I choose." Students are told that they must play each exercise in two keys, one that they choose themselves, and one that the teacher chooses. This allows students to prepare very well at least one key, but it still encourages them to practice all keys assigned.

- *Allowing students to select items on the exam* - Teachers frequently give students choices of exercises to prepare for exams. For example, in class a teacher may present and assign three solos over the course of three weeks, but allow the student to select one for the exam. Some teachers allow students to decide whether they want to perform an improvisation or an accompaniment for their test. This technique allows student to pick test items that most interest them or those at which they can excel.

Peer Evaluation as a Preparation for Formal Exams

- *Team evaluation* - To teach students to think critically about piano performances and to stimulate student practice, one teacher reported using a team game prior to exams. Students are divided into two teams. Each student performs an exercise or a piece. Members of the other team discuss the performance and as a group give the performance a rating-grade on a scale of 1 to 5. The team with the most points at the end wins. By providing an in-class performance opportunity, this activity stimulates student practice. Student critiques of performances benefit performers by giving them feedback and suggestions for improvement. Moreover, in developing critiques of performances, students learn to think like a teacher, a skill that can inform their own practice in preparation for exams.
- *Written critiques* - Another teacher stated that when students perform in class as preparation for examinations, she often has other class members write brief comments on the performance. Written critiques are then given to the performing students. This activity is done two weeks before the test to help students guide their practice. One benefit of this type of critique is that it diffuses some of the emotional charge that can be created when students verbally present critiques of their peers in the classroom.
- *Partner activities* - Many teachers use student pairing to aid in the preparation for group piano tests. This technique can be used in work on many types of activities. For instance, one student can play the teacher role by randomly selecting keys for scales or chord progressions and then evaluating the other student's performance. This benefits the student in the student role because he or she is put into a situation similar to that in the real test: the student is on the spot and performing for an audience. It benefits the student in the teacher role because the student must be able to evaluate the performance and give meaningful feedback.
- *"Horse" game* - In this variation of the children's playground game, group piano students are paired to work on exam exercises. One student selects an exercise for the other to perform. If the performing student does it correctly, he or she gets to select an exercise for the other student. If the performer makes an error, he or she gets assigned the first letter of the word "horse" and the other student must then perform the same exercise. As students make mistakes, they are assigned letters from the word "horse." The first student to spell the entire word loses.
- *Improvisation teams* - This activity is geared to help students develop meaningful improvisations, to foster cooperation among students, and to stimulate peer evaluation. Students begin by learning a simple harmonization. When this is fluently prepared the teacher pairs students who then create a duo - one student

plays the melody while the other person plays a two-handed accompaniment using the harmonies. Next, students are grouped in quartets: one student plays melody, one plays a two-handed accompaniment, one improvises a bass line, and one improvises a descant. Finally, the original melody is discarded and all students improvise at once. At the end of the activity, quartets perform for each other in a competition-type activity. Students discuss and evaluate each other's improvised quartet and declare a winner.

While the activities suggested by teachers for the preparation and execution of group piano exams varied widely, three common themes were present throughout. First, teachers strive to make group piano assignments and test requirements applicable to students' anticipated pianistic needs. Giving students opportunities to accompany soloists and testing students over specific skills relevant to student majors both relate group piano activities to the piano skills students will use when they become music professionals. Second, teachers try to make classroom activities (and even tests) fun for students. This can be seen in the many game or competition-like activities suggested above as preparation for exams. Finally, teachers endeavor to develop students' critical thinking by challenging them to evaluate performances of their peers in the classroom. Teaching students how to listen by guiding them to provide meaningful verbal or written critiques of performances helps them to become better musicians.

Erica Keithley is currently a Visiting Lecturer in Piano and Piano Pedagogy. She received her Bachelor of Music in piano performance at the University of Oklahoma, graduating with special distinction. At the University of Illinois in Urbana, she was a University Fellow and completed Masters degrees in both piano performance and piano pedagogy. Ms. Keithley is currently completing a Ph.D. in music education and piano pedagogy at the University of Oklahoma. Her dissertation explores the musical nuances used by advanced and intermediate level pianists in the communication of emotion. Ms. Keithley has taught on the faculties of the University of Illinois and Georgia Southwestern State University. In recognition of her teaching, she was listed as a "Teacher ranked as excellent by their students" at the University of Illinois. In addition, she was invited to give a teaching demonstration at the National Conference on Piano Pedagogy and was selected as one of three to receive the Provost's Outstanding Graduate Teaching Award at the University of Oklahoma in 2002. Ms. Keithley teaches applied piano, advanced keyboard skills, and piano pedagogy courses at the Georgia State University School of Music, and also serves as coordinator of group piano.

Class Management Software: The Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Blackboard for Group Piano Classes - Group Discussion

report by Chung-Ha Kim

Blackboard is an Internet-based software that facilitates classroom teaching. Developed in1997, it is used not only at universities and colleges, but also in primary and secondary schools, government agencies, and businesses. The version used at universities and colleges is currently available in 11 languages.

Once an institution has acquired Blackboard, instructors can set up their own websites within the system. A student can access these websites after logging in. Instructors can post announcements, syllabi, assignments, and maintain a grade book on Blackboard. Class lists also facilitate e-mailing the entire class or individual students.

Participants cited many uses for the software. Dr. Andrew Hisey from the Oberlin Conservatory uses Blackboard to host discussion forums. Students post questions and opinions, and discuss various topics outside of class. Dr. Barbara Fast from the University of Oklahoma values Blackboard's instant accessibility by students and teachers, and its ability to keep all of her graduate assistants informed and coordinated. Dr. Ken Renfrow from the University of Miami asks students to send their assignments through Blackboard, using a "Digital Drop Box." These assignments can take the form of MIDI-files or Sibelius-scores. Posting PowerPoint-presentations on Blackboard also enables students to review them after class. Dr. Susanna Garcia from the University of Louisiana in Lafayette posts MIDI-files of repertoire pieces and accompaniments on Blackboard. For many students, this is the only way to listen to a variety of pieces that are not available as regular sound recordings in the library.

As a relatively new "member" to the Blackboard-community, the author of this article values the coordinating aspect of Blackboard most: once all teachers add their classes to the system, students no longer need to check several different websites set up by individual professors. And with more and more students coping with an increased credit hour-load and part-time jobs, anything that can save them time and hassle is greatly appreciated.

As with all things, Blackboard comes with disadvantages, too. The system is rather expensive to purchase and install, and when it breaks down there is not much a teacher can do about it. However, in light of its many advantages, these points should not prevent instructors from using it.

Chung-Ha Kim is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree at the University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music (CCM), majoring in piano performance with piano pedagogy as her cognate area. Ms. Kim has appeared as soloist with orchestras in Germany, and has received numerous prizes in the "Jugend musiziert", and Steinway-Competitions in Germany, as well as an award for outstanding performance of music by J. S. Bach from the Manhattan School of Music in New York. Ms. Kim worked as a teaching assistant at the College-Conservatory of Music from 1999-2004, teaching both group piano and private lessons. She has been invited as a judge for the OMTA Auditions Festival for the

past three years, and has twice been nominated for the "Excellence in Teaching Award for Graduate Assistants" at CCM. She is currently teaching class piano and in the Preparatory Department of Millikin University in Decatur, Illinois. Ms. Kim holds a Bachelor of Music-degree from the Manhattan School of Music (NY) and a Master of Music-degree from the University of Cincinnati.

How Do You Incorporate Intermediate Teaching Literature into Your Piano Pedagogy Course? - Group Discussion

report by Pamela Pike

Separate Intermediate Literature Classes and Learning Objectives for Students

Discussion in almost all of the groups during this break-out session began with teachers sharing whether or not they were able to offer a separate pedagogy class devoted to exploration of the intermediate teaching literature. While many participants favored a one-to-two semester undergraduate intermediate literature class, many were not able to offer such a course within the confines of their limited pedagogy curriculum. Many participants agreed that the most pressing issues included: acquainting pedagogy students with the vast quantity of intermediate piano music that is available and; equipping students with the essential knowledge and tools needed to level and sequence their teaching of intermediate literature.

One of the most revealing comments came from a group of recent graduates in attendance who noted that as students they believed they had spent ample time on intermediate literature during undergraduate pedagogy classes. However, once they started teaching intermediate students after graduation they realized how inadequate their preparation had been. For the remainder of the discussion, participants offered various suggestions for achieving the learning objectives noted above.

Familiarizing Students with the Various Levels of Intermediate Literature and Appropriate Sequencing of the Repertoire

It was suggested that pedagogy students should explore less well-known repertoire to become better acquainted with the literature. Many participants expressed concern about the difficulty in covering the vast amount of teaching literature that is available, within the context of a pedagogy course. It might be a good idea to assign each applied piano student a couple of intermediate pieces to play during studio class so that all piano students are exposed to this literature. Review of anthologies of teaching literature, which included lots of analysis and reference to Jane Magrath's ten levels of literature as described in *The Pianist's Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature*, was a popular assignment for pedagogy students.

One teacher assigned pedagogy students several intermediate pieces each week. Students were required to fill out detailed reports on these works, then discuss and perform them during class. It was noted that students find it difficult to get to the salient features of intermediate pieces. Giving students a template of what to look for in a new piece can be helpful, as can having students work together in groups so they can share and discuss thoughts and ideas about unfamiliar music. Another pedagogy teacher sends students, equipped with scores, to an hour or so of an intermediate piano competition to expose them to a vast array of the literature. Some teachers change the list of repertoire that is

explored each year, as this expands the pedagogy teacher's horizons as well. The Federation of Music Clubs Junior Festivals Repertoire List, the *Celebration Series* and the Illinois State Music Teachers Association Repertoire List were cited as additional useful resources.

One participant had students put together an intermediate teaching literature reference book, in order of ascending difficulty. Since students should be sure not to violate copyright laws, a thematic index assignment was suggested as a valuable alternative that has been used by some teachers and can help students to become aware of how to sequence pieces when teaching intermediate students. Several teachers gave graduate students a diagnostic exam where they were given ten pieces from Jane Magrath's *Pianist's Guide to the Standard Teaching and Performance Literature*. These students were asked to arrange the selections in order of difficulty, listing specific techniques that intermediate students must have mastered in order to achieve success with these particular pieces.

Another participant suggested exploring the level ten literature to begin with and work backward so that future teachers might begin to understand how the techniques presented in the early-level literature will be expanded upon and eventually lead students toward a mastery of the more difficult repertoire. One teacher had students look for intermediate repertoire that might prepare students to play a specific, more advanced, piece. It was suggested that a valuable assignment could be to develop a spiral curriculum around a particular concept that encompasses several levels of literature. Since organizing and synthesizing all of this information can be overwhelming, pedagogy students could create a database or excel spreadsheet to organize the teaching literature that they are studying. Also, projects designed around choosing literature for an intermediate transfer student have been helpful.

Artistic Performance of the Intermediate Repertoire

Discussion-group participants were emphatic about the fact that they expected their pedagogy students to perform intermediate music as artistically as they would play artist-level repertoire. Yet, many people expressed dismay over the unmusical interpretations that numerous pedagogy students displayed while performing their intermediate teaching repertoire assignments. While many participants said that they would like to see their pedagogy students study intermediate repertoire during their applied piano lessons, most believed that this accommodation would not be made at their schools. Since it will be important for future teachers to play this music with a high level of artistry when they demonstrate for their intermediate students, several suggestions for improving the quality of musical interpretation of intermediate literature were offered.

One teacher had students present one or two recitals of solo and duet teaching literature, complete with typed program notes. Another teacher had four dates throughout the semester when pedagogy students performed, in public, intermediate repertoire that had been chosen by the instructor. Additionally, the students were expected to hand in a written description of how each piece would be presented to an intermediate student. One

person had students perform intermediate repertoire for the final exam. Another teacher had the class do a group lecture-recital where each student performed one intermediate teaching piece while giving a brief description of the pedagogical attributes of the work.

Additionally, students have been given various recording assignments that have led to increased performance artistry. One pedagogue had students make a professional compact disc with three pieces from each of Jane Magrath's ten levels. Another teacher has had students perform and record intermediate music on a Disklavier, while several others had their pedagogy classes perform intermediate music in the recital hall, with those performances being burned to compact discs. Having students listen to high-quality performances on CDs containing intermediate literature has also proved helpful in convincing students of the value and significance of performing the intermediate teaching literature with artistry and musicality.

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What Do You Do in the First Three Sessions of Your Pedagogy Course - Group Discussion

by report by Leslie Sisterhen

Participants were asked to share the activities they used and topics they addressed during the first three sessions of their pedagogy courses. This report is a compilation of the many practical and creative ideas shared by pedagogues from colleges and universities across the United States.

Course Design, Syllabus, and Projects

Many teachers elect to dedicate the first piano pedagogy class to practical elements by presenting an overview of the course, the curriculum, and the entire pedagogy class sequence. It is important to define the class for the students as a literature-based or theory-based class. During this time, teachers may have the students talk about their own course expectations and what they want to get out of the class. By bringing student needs and expectations into the class discussion, teachers can demonstrate a genuine concern for the students and learn more about how to generate an effective discussion within the dynamics of that particular class.

The course syllabus is often handed out during this first class period. Pedagogy teachers agreed that the syllabus should usually be somewhat flexible in order to accommodate students with different levels of teaching experience. Many pedagogy classes include both undergraduate and graduate students, so the class must cover material that will be beneficial to all members.

Some teachers believed that it is best to wait until the second class to present the syllabus. In this situation, the teacher would first get information from the students about their previous teaching experience, which method books and levels they have previously used, and other pedagogy classes they have taken so that they can mold the syllabus to address the needs of all students. The syllabus should always include a limited number of ground rules regarding absence, late work, grading, and general decorum.

The first day may also be a good time to hand out supplemental study aids such as library resources, supplemental readings, and project assignments. It is also helpful to explain to students how much time they will need to prepare projects and study for the course. A list of sample test questions might be appreciated during the semester so that students will know how to prepare for the final exam.

Teachers agreed that student projects should be flexible and should be designed in such a way that students can build the project according to their own skill level and interests. By offering pedagogy students choices on the components of a project, or allowing students to modify a project according to their own needs, teachers celebrate the needs of each individual and enable all students to fill in the gaps in their teaching knowledge.

"Getting Acquainted" Games and Activities

In an attempt to build a community of learners from the beginning, some pedagogy teachers spend time on the first day letting students get to know each other with group activities. One teacher has students sing major and minor triads in different inversions. Other teachers have their students sing songs that may be used for preschool or kindergarten music classes. These types of creative activities can help the students loosen up and feel comfortable with each other. In addition, it gives students the opportunity to experience child-like activities, which will get them in the mindset for understanding and working with elementary-level students.

Toward a Philosophy of Teaching

Most teachers agreed that class discussions on the first day of pedagogy classes should be directed toward developing a philosophy of teaching. To that end, many teachers begin by discussing the students' prior experiences as a beginning piano student. Ideas for discussion include when they first learned how to play the piano, which method books they used, what repertoire they played, and what they liked and did not like about their first piano lessons. These questions offer an excellent opening discussion because most students remember their first piano lessons well and enjoy talking about the impact of those lessons on their later musical development. Students from different countries can add much to the discussion because they may have learned from different method books. In addition, the type of teaching prevalent in their country may be quite distinct from the pedagogical approach used in the United States.

Such a discussion can lead easily into the development of philosophical ideas about how students become intrinsically motivated, what makes a piano lesson enjoyable, and how students learn. Additionally, many pedagogy teachers agreed that an important question to be addressed on the first day of class is "What are the qualities of a good teacher?" One teacher approaches this topic as a group activity in which students interview each other to talk about the qualities they encountered in previous teachers. The class may then come up with a checklist of good habits of teachers and good habits of learners. Students can reflect on the above questions and come up with their own list of qualities that they want to bring to their teaching. One teacher elected to have students keep a journal in which they regularly answer questions regarding their music philosophy. Another teacher saved the answers until the end of the term, and then asked the same questions again. By revealing the change in answers to students at the end of the term, the students can see their progress over the semester and appreciate how much they have developed in their understanding of basic pedagogical concepts and issues. Students may be more inspired to write about their teaching philosophy after reading articles such as "The Quality Music Teacher" by Lynn Freeman Olson in the January 1986 issue of *Clavier* or "The View from the Second Floor" by Robert Weirich in the April 1992 issue of *Clavier*.

Topics for the First Three Days of Class: Gaining an Appreciation for Pedagogy

As an introduction to pedagogy, many teachers have the students discuss what it means to

be a professional piano teacher. Some students, especially in performance schools, will not want to be in a pedagogy class. Teachers should take time in the initial class to win over these performance-oriented students. One teacher explained this as an opportunity to "romance the Steinway jockey" into teaching. Students might first discuss their career plans, being reminded to maintain a healthy dose of pragmatism and realism. This will naturally lead to the realization that most musicians are going to teach at some point in their life. Many teachers also try to get their pedagogy students to pinpoint their inspiration to pursue music professionally. By doing this, some students will realize that the desire to share music with others is naturally satisfied through a teaching career.

Topics for the First Three Days of Class: Personality and Learning Styles

An excellent offshoot from the philosophical questions about what makes an ideal teacher and an ideal student is a discussion on how personality interacts with teaching and learning. During the process of learning about different personality and learning styles, students often enjoy taking a personality test such as the Myers-Briggs Personality Inventory. Such a test is a useful device for helping the class members get to know one another, and it also helps them to learn more about themselves and how they will teach.

Writing Assignments: Article Reading

After the first class, many teachers have students read an article from such publications as *American Music Teacher*, *Clavier*, *Keyboard Companion*, or *Piano Pedagogy Forum* and assign students to write a summary of that article. This type of assignment can serve two purposes. First, it introduces students to the written resources available for professional teachers. Secondly, it can facilitate classroom discussion on the day that students turn in their written assignments. Some teachers might assign specific articles from any of the above resources. Other teachers give students a specific topic, such as functional skills or sightreading, and students must find an article on that topic on their own. This type of assignment requires students to learn how to use the library and online resources while enabling students to pursue individual interests by choosing their own article.

Developing a Niche

In graduate classes, one pedagogy teacher expressed a need for graduate students to begin to develop their own niche in the field. To serve this purpose, students must complete a writing assignment in which they explain their individual goals within the course and the entire degree. Such an assignment may direct the graduate students to take measure of their own skills, interests, and entrepreneurial spirit to describe a career path they envision for themselves. The responses can address the students' passions, strengths, personal motivations, or needs that must be addressed in the field. Uszler's introduction to the *Well-Tempered Keyboard Teacher* on pages xiii-xvi may be useful in helping students outline a career based on their own skills and interests.

Student Teaching

In explaining the content of the first three classes, many instructors began to expound upon their particular student teaching requirements as a component of the piano pedagogy class. Some teachers had students begin teaching during the fourth or fifth week of class. Students in these classes often had one or two private students that they taught on a regular basis during the semester. Other students had only occasional teaching practice teaching requirements.

One teacher had her undergraduate pedagogy students teach private students in a demonstration piano class right away. She therefore chose a more organic approach in creating the content of the course, so that the first semester was built on the problems and concerns as they occurred in student teaching. By creating a general syllabus, there was a great deal of freedom in the sequencing of course topics, and the students felt more involved in the unfolding of the course.

There were several elements mentioned that should be addressed with students before they begin teaching. First, students may feel consoled after their first teaching experience if they are told beforehand that they will not be perfect and will probably make mistakes. Students should also be given a lesson plan ahead of time with a list of specific teaching items. These items should be ordered or leveled according to their priority, because many beginning teachers are not efficient enough in their pacing to get through all of the skills that a seasoned teacher might expect to cover.

It is also helpful to have students write out exactly what they will say during the first lesson and practice teaching it on their own or with another student in the class. Although they may not use that exact wording during the lesson, it may be helpful by preventing students from straying from the task at hand or using extraneous words.

One instructor said that adult beginners are the easiest students to begin teaching. She explained that adult students are generally more accepting of beginning teachers, and their communication style may feel more comfortable for pedagogy students who have not had much interaction with children.

Summary

Teachers have a great deal to cover during the first three days of a piano pedagogy class. They should assess student needs and experience, and then modify the syllabus to meet those needs by designing projects that allow for some flexibility. The pedagogy teacher should generate a list of goals for the course that includes information every piano teacher must know. They can then mold the other parts of the course requirements to account for differences among students.

Teachers should introduce pedagogy to their students as a profession, in which every teacher can decide who they want to teach and where they want to specialize. They

should charge their students to come up with their own philosophy about what constitutes good teaching. It is during these first few classes that a community of learners can be built, so games and activities to help students get acquainted with one another can be useful. Generating class discussions is also helpful for creating a comfortable and positive environment. Most importantly, these first three class days offer a chance for students to begin to assimilate their previous experiences and their own character and values so that they can begin to devise a personal philosophy of what it means to be a professional piano teacher.

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Moving from "Theory" to "Style Analysis": An Effective Means for Developing Performance Interpretation

by Valerie Cisler

As teachers, we continually strive to create meaningful ways to help our students better comprehend and communicate the music they perform. To this end, we set up curricular musicianship goals to develop functional skills, theory, improvisation and technique, and a variety of related activities that we believe will develop a sense of "good taste" in their interpretive decisions. We recognize that some of these activities serve to enhance the subconscious musical mind - such as exposure to high caliber live performances or recordings by reputable master musicians. And in lessons, we may conduct or demonstrate the shape of a musical line, the gradual stretch of a climactic *allargando*, or the forward movement of a *stretto* passage and ask our students to imitate and experiment with various possibilities of musical expression.

But we know through experience that the art of making good musical choices in performance and in practice is often a constant shift between what we feel instinctively, on a subconscious level, with a more objective, conscious decision-making side, that has been enhanced through our study of music history and theory. We know that as our understanding of musical concepts grows, we are able to make more accurate, efficient and convincing choices related to style interpretation.

Most of our students have not yet gained this holistic conception of learning music; they often do not comprehend how the knowledge acquired in theory books or period-composer studies relates to performance. If they are not educated to understand the reasons for the expressive nuances we make with articulation, dynamic shape and tempo, we cannot expect them to transfer interpretive concepts from one piece to another and they may be continuously dependent on imitation. Students need to learn from us the "hows" and "whys" of our decision-making process.

Traditional Theory Studies

The growing number of available method and supplementary theory books attests to the increasing awareness of the importance of including the fundamentals of theory into our piano lesson curricula, even for very young children. Unfortunately, the study of music theory is a very long process that is often appreciated only after many years of layering and interrelating fundamental concepts. It is a fascinating journey to observe. When accomplished effectively, it becomes an exemplar model for spiral learning - a continual balance and shift between learning details and conceptualizing the whole at graduating levels of comprehension.

Traditionally, the study of music theory is based on elements of harmony - moving from intervals and scales, to chords, inversions and progressions, to harmonic analysis. Our own experience as piano students likely reflects this typical progression. In scale study at the elementary level, most of us were probably taught to play the C major scale first, then

perhaps G and D or F. As difficult as it may have been to grasp as a child, if our teachers took the time to help us understand the larger concept - that all major scales had the same half-whole step pattern, we were then able to apply that knowledge to build major scales beginning on any white or black key. And further, if our teachers demonstrated how to play a scale with expression, we learned a most basic, valuable listening and technical skill - to play with a natural, even crescendo to the top and a diminuendo down.

At the intermediate level, one of the first activities we may have been asked to accomplish was to memorize all the major and minor key signatures along with playing a simple I - V7 - I chord progression in each key. The memorizing may have seemed exceedingly difficult until our teachers drew a diagram of the circle of 5ths, showing the progressive order of the keys and their respective key signatures. At this point, we likely discovered the logical order of the keys, signatures, and dominant chords with one picture as they all move by the interval of a Perfect 5th. And beyond the inherent patterns of cadences, if our teachers explained basic voice-leading principles and demonstrated the half-step pull of the dissonant tension of the interval of the tritone to its resolution to the tonic root and third, we may have gained an early, basic understanding of harmonic shaping. From this knowledge, our ears and technique began to respond dynamically to the harmonic color.

It is generally at the collegiate level that most of us first learned to identify non-harmonic tones, secondary dominants, Augmented 6th chords and borrowed chords. The relationship of the chords to the home key became clearer as we worked through a large number of written and aural exercises, with Roman numeral analysis, that represent traditional functions as compared with those that express added color and tension. Our true grasp of functional tonality emerged slowly, as each new concept is seen to contribute to an understanding of the ways and means composers seek to unify, vary, and extend their works.

Unfortunately, for many, the labeling of chords through Roman numeral analysis becomes an objective exercise rather than a means to guide interpretation. Until our students begin to see how harmonic patterns, modulations, and altered chords directly convey the shape and movement of a piece through varied levels of tension and resolution, they may fail to make the transfer to performance.

We see that to ensure a student's genuine understanding at each stage of their development, the teacher has a two-fold responsibility: 1) to present and reinforce concepts, building from the known the unknown in a carefully sequenced manner; and 2) to provide the means for students to place the many conceptual details into a larger picture. The real joy of teaching theory comes as we help our students discover that the concepts they are learning in theory books relate to the fundamental expressive choices they will make in interpreting a new piece of music.

A Move to Style Analysis

Although we recognize the importance of harmonic analysis in theory study, as musical

styles move further away from functional harmony it is imperative that we help our students develop additional tools to more fully understand and analyze contemporary and non-western music. One of the textbooks I've found to be most influential in expanding my perception of analysis and later, in my methods of teaching, is *Guidelines for Style Analysis*, by Jan La Rue (W.W. Norton and Company, NY). More than any other source, I've found La Rue's comprehensive approach to analysis to be an important bridge between theory and interpretation. Most importantly, any type of music, from any era, may be approached through this framework; therefore, important discoveries made through comparing works of various composers and style periods serves to enhance our students' interpretive abilities.

The basic tenet of La Rue's approach is that Style Analysis begins with the "simple central premise that music is a growth process combining two aspects: first, the largely momentary impressions that we feel as movement; and second, the cumulative effects of this movement that we retain as a sense of shape." (La Rue, viii) Toward this end, we must guide our students through an exploration of the relationship and function of four basic elements of musical shape and movement - sound, harmony, melody and rhythm.

MUSIC
GROWTH PROCESS
MOVEMENT and SHAPE
Sources

SOUND - HARMONY - MELODY - RHYTHM

We begin to see that our traditional method of teaching theory - scales, chords, functional harmony - is but one aspect of a much larger picture. I believe we can begin to teach our students to make an examination of all the elements of musical growth at a much younger age. This comprehensive approach to analysis will enable them to make appropriate decisions related to style interpretation.

Practical Application - Intermediate Students

The use of discovery learning has long been advocated by educational psychologists and piano pedagogues alike, as one of the most effective means for acquiring an ownership of concepts. Style Analysis can readily serve as a springboard for this process, particularly if first presented to students with repertoire that is significantly easier than their current performance level. Following is a synopsis of La Rue's recommendation for the process of style analysis divided into three main stages:

THREE MAIN STAGES OF STYLE ANALYSIS

I. BACKGROUND
Developing a historical frame of reference for the piece being studied

II. OBSERVATION
Viewing a work in its large, middle, and small dimensions
Exploring the main structural elements:
Sound, Harmony, Melody, Rhythm

III. EVALUATION
Determining the achievement of growth through:
Movement and Shape
Balance of Unity and Variety
Originality and Richness of Imagination - piece as a whole

If possible, the ideal venue for beginning style analysis would be an intermediate level group class that meets once a month, extending over the course of an entire academic year - nine to ten classes. To begin, select four pieces of fairly equal level, representing the four basic style periods, that could easily be covered within this time frame. This schedule would afford students the opportunity to work on the analysis, research historical references, and practice the pieces between class meetings. The process can then be reinforced in subsequent years with a gradual increase in repertoire complexity.

Recommended Class Calendar with Sample Repertoire

Class 1 - BAROQUE PERIOD

Repertoire Piece: J.S. Bach, Little Prelude in CM, BWV 939

I. Background

- Listening examples of the music of J.S. Bach
- Reading and discussion of the Baroque Period and literature of the era, biography of Bach, performance of piece by teacher

II. Observation

- Exploration of main structural elements: Sound, Harmony, Melody, Rhythm

Class 2 III. Evaluation

- Exploration of Growth through Movement and Shape as related to composer's use of the main elements (may use diagrams)
- Discussion of composer's use of balance of Unity and Variety
- Discussion of what factors make this piece unique and interesting

Performance

Student performances of the piece with discussion of style-appropriate articulation, dynamic levels and shape, overall tempo and possible fluctuations

Classes 3 and 4 - CLASSICAL PERIOD

Repertoire Piece: Muzio Clementi, Sonatina in C Major, Op. 36 #3/i (same format as above: Background, Observation, Evaluation, Performance)

Classes 5 and 6 - ROMANTIC PERIOD

Repertoire Piece: Robert Schumann, "Traumerei" from *Scenes from Childhood* (same format as above: Background, Observation, Evaluation, Performance)

Classes 7 and 8 - 20th CENTURY

Repertoire Piece: Bela Bartok, "Change of Time" from *Mikrokosmos*, Vol. V (same format as above: Background, Observation, Evaluation, Performance) For further study - This compositional time period, including contemporary music, has a large number of style possibilities for students to explore.

Classes 9 and 10 - COMPARING STYLES

Discussion of features unique to each style period, particularly in range of dynamics, melodic construction, phrase lengths, use of ornaments, articulation, formal structures, thematic development, harmonic movement and color, rhythmic complexity, texture, use of the piano, character delineation, climactic points, etc. (Comparative graphs may be devised.)

- Discussion of elements that are similar between style periods
- Performance review and discussion of stylistic interpretation as related to performance practice and technique

Guidelines for Observation and Evaluation

In an effort to guide teachers and students through the Observation and Evaluation stages of style analysis, I've compiled the following set of questions related to Melody, Rhythm, Harmony, and Sound (moving from easier to more complex elements). You may want to simplify the wording of these questions for students, based on their backgrounds and level of musicianship. For instance, for the question "What is the basic texture of the piece?" - we are familiar with such terms as homophonic and polyphonic, but we could ask the students questions like "Is the texture thick or thin? Is it melody with accompaniment and bass? Is it chordal? Is there more than one line that could be considered melodic?" We can break the questions down to fit the level of the students. Further, you may want to add or delete any of the questions based on the content of the pieces being analyzed.

Melody

1. What is the shape of the melody? conjunct/disjunct; range; high points; points of rest; chordal outline
2. Is there an underlying melodic skeleton to help you hear the direction of the line? Simplify the melody by finding the main notes
3. How are chromatic tones used? To embellish; To establish a new tonal level
4. What are the unifying features of the melody? Related motives; repetition
5. What are the contrasting features of the melody? New motives; change in rhythm or key
6. What is the phrase structure of the piece? Length of phrases - same or different Subdivisions within longer phrases Cadences - strengthened or weakened by melodic points of rest
7. Is articulation an important feature of the melody? What different articulations are used (legato, staccato, slurs, accents) Do they remain constant throughout (entire piece, motives or themes)

Rhythm

1. Is the rhythm simple or complex? Varying?
2. What is the rhythmic structure of each phrase?
3. Identify the repeated rhythmic features used throughout.
4. Identify the related rhythmic features used throughout.
5. How do phrasing and rhythm interact?
6. What is the relation of rhythmic emphasis to the meter? Stress on strong beats; stress on weak beats; stress off the beat
7. Does the rhythmic intensity remain constant?
8. Is there a steady, underlying pulse throughout? Look for Ritard, accelerando, tempo changes, rubato

Harmony

1. Indicate those elements which determine key: Final tone, key signature, important resting tones, chordal outlines, leading chords
2. Do modulations occur? Where?
3. How are these keys related to the tonal center? Example: Dominant, relative major
4. How is harmony used to create tension or relaxation? Color?
5. Are there harmonic sequences within the piece? Example: movement through the circle of 5ths
6. Are climactic points dependent upon harmony?
7. How does the thematic material relate to harmony? Example: second them of a sonata
8. How does the harmony help delineate phrase shape?
9. What harmonic differences are there between those phrase endings which have a forward pull to them and those which relax?

10. How does the bass line movement create strength or weakness for a particular phrase?
11. Are there harmonic surprises? What chord might you have expected?
12. What is the basic harmonic rhythm? Slow; fast; varying
13. How does the harmonic rhythm change within each phrase? Ends of phrases; Cadences
14. How does the harmonic rhythm change through the piece? Contrasting thematic ideas; climactic points

Sound

1. What is the basic texture of the piece? Homophonic; polyphonic; pseudo-contrapuntal Or - thick/thin; chordal; melodic counterpoint; melody/accompaniment/bass
2. How melodically should one think? How harmonically?
3. Are high points different in texture?
4. Does the texture change during the piece?
5. Do the various voices have different levels of importance?
6. Are pedal markings indicated? Is the pedal used to connect sounds or blend sounds?
7. How many sections does the piece have?
8. How do different elements work together to determine form?
9. How is repetition used to help unify various parts of a form?
10. In addition to repetition, what other unifying factors are present? Imitation, sequence, inversion, similar motivic shapes and rhythms
11. What elements create unity in the piece? Variety in the piece? Phrase lengths; phrase shape; use of figures and motives; articulation; rhythmic features; tempo; texture; register of keyboard/range; accompaniment patterns; key; harmonic progressions (color, surprise, rate of change, strength of keys, bass and melodic lines); character; dynamics

Comparing Styles

After all the pieces have been analyzed and performed, students are encouraged to continue the observation and evaluation stages by comparing the stylistic similarities and differences between composers and between the various style periods. Students will likely discover significant differences between the rate of harmonic rhythm, the use of the piano, the construction of thematic ideas, phrase lengths, range of dynamics, among others. In comparing the similarities between the pieces, students will find that the pieces share several basic compositional principles: 1) Various elements are used as unifying features throughout a work such as tempo, rhythms, melodic ideas, repetition or sequence of patterns, and/or texture; 2) Variety and contrast of elements are utilized on some level to create interest such as changes in keys, dynamics, melodic and rhythmic patterns, register, and/or harmony; and 3) Multiple combinations of elements serve to shape the growth and movement of a work through varying degrees of tension and resolution.

Again, the following questions are designed to serve merely as a guide for comparing

pieces and may be modified in any way that is useful to teachers and students:

- How do melodic lines differ from one period to another? What do they have in common?
- Is the melody, rhythm, harmony the most predominant characteristic?
- How does the harmonic rhythm vary from one style to another?
- How is the piano used?
- Lyrically (vocally) instrumentally/orchestrally percussively registers pedaling
- Does the pulse remain constant or does it fluctuate?
- Do strong cadences occur within each piece?
- Do embellishments play an important part of the style?
- How is articulation used differently from one style to the next?
- How would you describe the character of each piece? Does it remain in the same character throughout or change as the piece progresses? How do the elements work together to give it a particular character?
- How do the musical elements work together to create tension or stability?
- How are dynamics used differently from one style to the next?
- How are phrases structured differently? Phrase lengths, phrase shapes
- Compare the textures used in each piece.
- Does each piece have a strong tonal center? Is the tonal center strengthened by similar or different harmonic means?
- To what key(s) does each piece modulate? How are they related to the tonic?
- How are unity and variety achieved? Find similarities and differences between the styles: phrase lengths and shapes; rhythmic features; motives; accompaniment patterns; texture; dynamics; articulation; tempo; harmony and harmonic rhythm
- Does each piece have a particular climactic point? Where in the piece does it occur? Compare pieces.
- What is the form of each piece? Which is the most clear-cut? Would you expect to find similar forms in other pieces of a particular style?

THE ADVANTAGES OF TEACHING STYLE ANALYSIS

- Develops independent learning
- Develops discovery learning through guided questions relating to all elements of music
- Encourages a complete learning process: Experience (listening/playing the repertoire) to Understanding (analysis) to Retention of concepts to Transfer of knowledge to learning new works
- Develops a holistic conception of music as a means for accurate and informed interpretive decisions about stylistic aspects such as tempo, articulation, dynamics, and phrase shaping
- Develops a better understanding of the printed score which helps students direct correct physical motion and improves technique
- Aids reading and memorizing as students begin to see patterns, unifying features, form, etc.
- Helps student communicate the music better as they discover how the elements combine to give each piece its particular character

- Modified style analysis can be used at an early age; teacher can adjust and create questions according to level of the student
- Style Analysis can be used for musical works from any style period and genre

Our ultimate goal in incorporating Style Analysis into our musicianship curriculum is to offer our students the opportunity to discover how various composers combine the use of all the elements of music to create shape and movement in their works. With continued use of this three-stage approach to analysis (Background, Observation and Evaluation), students learn to differentiate between "typical" characteristics for each style period. Equipped with this new understanding, they are likely to make interpretive choices that best convey the composer's intentions.

Valerie Cisler is an active performer, author, clinician, and adjudicator. Conference performances include the MTNA National Conference, Washington, D.C.; the World Saxophone Congress XIII, Minneapolis; Festival of Women Composers - International, IUP; and the College Music Society International Conference, University of Costa Rica-San Jose; with premieres at state, regional, and national conferences in Illinois, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas. She is currently on the roster for the Nebraska Arts Council *Touring Artist Program*. Dr. Cisler has written numerous journal articles, coauthored the Composition Book series for *Alfred's Basic Piano Library*, and recently published *Technique for the Advancing Pianist*, with Maurice Hinson (Alfred). She received the DMA from the University of Oklahoma in Piano Performance and Pedagogy, where she studied with Edward Gates, E.L. Lancaster, and Jane Magrath. Her DMA Document, *The Piano Sonatas of Robert Muczynski*, was selected for inclusion in the permanent collection of *The Center for American Music*, University of Texas-Austin. Dr. Cisler is Professor and Chair of the Department of Music and Performing Arts, where she teaches applied and class piano, and directs the piano pedagogy program. She is a member of the Society for American Music, College Music Society, Phi Kappa Phi, Nebraska Music Teachers Association, and holds national certification with MTNA.

I Have Come to This... Puzzle and Perspective on a Career in Teaching Class Piano

by Fred Kern

I started teaching more than thirty-five years ago and in my very first job I did all three things I said I would never do: teach general music in junior high; teach band and choir; and teach in my hometown. As I often suggest to my current college students who are sometimes very adamant about what they will do, or need to know after they graduate, life's circumstances may force adjustments in those rigid stances that originate in youthful inexperience. (I call up Geezer Lecture #1.) It is puzzling to try to find the appropriate match of desire, ability, interest and opportunity. How is it possible to maintain professional momentum and avoid burnout in a career?

It has taken me several decades to recognize that I was meant to be a generalist who likes to see the forest, while knowing and embracing the fact that forests, trees, leaves and their veins are all part of the big picture. I am talking about this now as background to understanding how a career pedagogue could still be looking for a better way to teach class piano.

I am in my twenty-fifth year as Coordinator of Keyboard Skills and Music Fundamentals at the University of North Texas. Translated, those subjects mean "general music for theory and piano" and they involve about 800 students, three faculty members and fifteen graduate teaching assistants peryear. So, after four degrees in music, I am still doing what I originally found appealing - generalizing knowledge and skills that relate to many levels of more specific technical, stylistic, historic and theoretical information in music. As I progressed through my years of formal education, I was not aware of the natural and continual pull I felt "to acknowledge what I was meant to do," although the indications were there all along.

I first majored in music education with piano as my primary instrument. That is somewhat of a square peg in a round hole to start with, but I'm sure many of you have been there too! Next, I momentarily took a swing toward piano performance, and while I completed a masters degree in it, I realized that performance was not my primary gift, desire or dedication.

After that, and two years of public school music teaching, a second masters degree seemed like a good out - but what would I specialize it? - music history? "no"; music education? "maybe, but I really did like the piano best!" My interest in music education was in the curricula and foundational philosophies of creative teaching, but not so much in their application to pre-college music programs in public schools. Doesn't that sound like the same place I was in five years ago?

I went to Northwestern University and my experience there was life-changing. Dr. Clifton Burmeister was the chair of the music education department and he recognized my conflict and was sympathetic to it. He was willing to let me complete a Master of Music degree in music education with piano as my area of specialization. By so doing, he

accidentally created the first *ad hoc* degree in piano pedagogy at NU. Frances Larimer was my main professor and champion in that area. She mentored me from student to Assistant Professor until it was time for this bird to fly completely on his own. I flew south for the winter of 1980 and made my nest at what was then, North Texas State University.

The last piece of the four-degree puzzle was yet to be put in its place, although this time, with the help of Dr. James Lyke, I found a school and degree that matched me: a Doctor of Arts in Piano Performance and Pedagogy at the University of Northern Colorado. The degree required performances and a dissertation with a lot of opportunities to custom-fit and individualize the details of the program. It was perfect for someone who wanted to be creative in a formal academic structure. I was still walking that line between fish and foul and trying to fit the square in the round. Guess what! I'm still doing it. I am officially a member of the Division of Music History, Theory and Ethnomusicology. I teach Music Fundamentals to 200 students per year, with the majority of my appointment in the Keyboard Division, coordinating twenty-nine Keyboard Skills classes.

What happened to the perspectives? What now and what's next? When I started in this area of teaching it was called "class piano," and still is in many locales. To put it bluntly, class piano has often been perceived by students and some faculty as having no "class" and not enough piano. Other titles have included group piano, functional piano, keyboard skills, etc. Right now I am thinking that we should perhaps change the course title to "Piano Skills." That would continue to make it clear that the course is not piano performance and would separate it from any confusion with the newer computer terminology which uses "keyboard" and "keyboarding" to mean something else. I have not proposed that change yet, but I'm thinking about it.

Other changes that I have seen and participated in have had to do with the focal points of the functional use of the piano and the "dreaded" Piano Proficiency Exam, a graduation requirement for every music major. By the way, that exam used to be called the "Piano Barrier" at my school. Talk about positive reinforcement! In proposing change, I pointed out to the administration that barriers in roads are something to "get around," rather than something to accomplish or achieve. That seemed to make sense to everyone and we changed it.

Within the actual requirements of a proficiency exam I have seen changes from mostly scales and memorized repertoire to more and more practical and at-sight skills. This makes the instrument useful to the individual musician who needs to study scores, or to a teacher/performer who wants to use the piano as a reliable resource.

We have transfer students coming to UNT who say "I passed the piano requirement at my other school." I am shocked to hear that some of those tests are still primarily four-octave scales (hands together) and memorized repertoire, such as a Bach Invention! Why, and what good will that ability, such as it is, do a future band, choral or general music director?

"Well, what do you do?" is the question I am sensing from the reader at this point. I have come to this in the fall semester of 2004:

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS COLLEGE OF MUSIC SECONDARY PIANO PROFICIENCY EXAM (2004-5)

TEXTS: KEYBOARD STRATEGIES, Master Text II, (KS II) by Stecher, Horowitz, Gordon, Kern & Lancaster (G. Schirmer, Inc.) ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS 2000 FOR STRINGS, Piano Accompaniment, Book 1 (EES), by Allen, Gillespie & Hayes (Hal Leonard).

1. SCALES: Play all major & parallel harmonic minor scales, in tempo, with a metronome, hands separately or tog. (four octaves, four notes/beat, MM = 60).

2. PROGRESSIONS: Play progressions (pages 22 e & 92 c, KS II) in keys through 4# & 4b (major & relative minor).

3. HYMN SCORE READING: Read at sight, two non-adjacent voices (ST, AB, SB) on a grand staff.

4. CHORAL SCORE READING: Read at sight, pairs of voices (Soprano/Alto; Tenor/Bass) in a four-part open score. (Examples of difficulty in KS II, pages 392-405.)

5. HARMONIZATION/FIGURED BASS: At sight, play melody(R) & bass line(L). (Examples of difficulty in KS II, pages 216 #15; 216 #18; 218 #20; 290 #5,6; 294 #17; 295 #19.)

6. READING & ACCOMPANYING: Accompany a solo from ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS FOR STRINGS (melody numbers 100-192) to be selected by the examiner. Simplify.

7. TRANSPOSITION: Play melody in RH and blocked chords in LH, in a key selected by the examiner (up or down, a half or whole step).

(All of my syllabi and proficiency information are updated yearly and are available on line at www.music.unt.edu/piano, click on "Resources" Studying Keyboard Skills at UNT.)

I make a continual effort to improve upon the relevancy of work in piano classes to prepare for future application by the students. While we use a basic text, the newest aspects of the proficiency test include the ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS 2000 FOR STRINGS, Piano Accompaniment, Book 1, by Allen, Gillespie & Hayes (Hal Leonard). I added that book this year for Piano 3 & 4.

For Piano 1 & 2, I added ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS 2000 COMPREHENSIVE BAND

METHOD, Piano Accompaniment Book 1, Lautzenheiser, et al, (Hal Leonard). I needed both of these books as texts because the band methods are mostly in flat keys and strings are in sharp keys. Since the Essential Elements methods for band and strings predominate in the public schools of Texas, and by extension, much of the rest of the country, there is no denying the future and direct application for instrumental music education majors who will teach.

In general, they provide more adaptable sight reading, accompanying, harmonization and figured bass resources than can ever be exhausted in class or practice. Thus, I no longer have to search for an easy answer for my teachers or students when they ask, "Where can I find some more sight reading material?" The student method books also have CD's and DVD's available, although I have not used those as yet. Many of the methods classes use the student books of Essential Elements, so it also makes for some continuity with other courses they take.

I have found the professional place for me. I am able to learn, teach, write and create as a productive faculty member and individual. The job allows me to use the practical materials of music at the piano and to enjoy the progress of undergraduates and teaching assistants as they go on their way. The opportunity to learn and apply is refreshing and invigorating. An educational writer once said, "If you haven't learned anything lately, you probably haven't taught much either." I am still a student too. It is my habit in presenting pedagogy sessions to end with a few quotes to summarize the day and my approach to the teaching profession. I will do the same here.

Fred Kern, Professor of music and a specialist in piano education and basic studies at the University of North Texas, has been on the faculty of the College of Music since 1980 where he is coordinator of keyboard skills and music fundamentals. He is co-author of the recent, multiple-volume *Hal Leonard Student Piano Library*. He has published six texts on piano instruction and has more than two hundred original compositions and arrangements in the Warner Bros., Kjos, G. Schirmer and Hal Leonard catalogues. Widely known as a clinician at state and national gatherings, Kern holds the master teacher certificate awarded by the Music Teachers National Association. He received his bachelor's degree from Illinois State University; a master's degree from Illinois Wesleyan University, a second master's degree from Northwestern University and a doctorate from the University of Northern Colorado.

Improvisatory Keyboard Skills in the College Curriculum

by Kevin Orr

As university teachers, we are rightly faced with questions regarding the professional opportunities that our students may encounter upon graduation. In no profession are such questions posed more than in the arts, an arena which is often perceived to be of marginal importance in much of society. This reality has brought me to consider ways in which we could better equip piano students with a more diverse range of skills, suited to today's professional music world. It has become clear to me, in light of the sheer broadness of *our* society's appetite for music, that we should consider expanding the scope of instruction to encompass more than the great masterworks, particularly in a modern climate where students' aspirations often include goals other than, or in addition to, the concert stage. An addendum to the piano curriculum is in order, that would provide, or at least introduce, skills with which students could discover new musical interests, and thereby play a more active role in the music profession. I submit that the teaching of improvisatory keyboard skills, specifically improvisation and playing "by ear," should be central to this broadened approach - not in a way to compromise traditional piano study, but to *complement* it. Before continuing, however, I must state that one need only observe my own performance activities to realize that I would not advocate the hindering of classical piano study. It remains my true passion, not to be *overshadowed* by any supplemental interest. However, I can also speak, from personal experience, to the advantages brought about from the ability to play to play a piece upon hearing it, as opposed to reading it. The sheer confidence one has in performance, knowing that his or her ear will chart the course, even in classical performance, provides an intangible advantage upon which no price can be placed.

Focusing upon 'The Practical'

It is important to clarify that, by improvisation, I am not referring to so-called free improvisation - a manner of experimentation at the keyboard, often encouraged of children for development of their musical ear. While I *strongly* advocate this activity for the young, and believe that such exposure is directly related to one's success at more advanced levels of improvisation, this paper is concerned with improvisatory skills of a 'practical' nature, relevant at the older student - that is, the improvisation of a melody over a given chord progression, or the improvisation of accompaniment from chord symbols alone - skills that are more immediately *relevant* to today's pianist.

Commonalities between Improvisation and Playing by Ear

While improvisation and playing by ear are essentially separate activities, I submit that in many ways, they demand the same skills and place the same sort of demands upon the performer. Each skill prompts an intuitive response, for which the results will differ every time - generally not the case in classical performance, except, of course, in regard to interpretation. Each of these skills relies upon the performer's ability (and courage) to play without the security of the printed page, as I noted earlier, letting the ear 'chart the

course'. And, perhaps most importantly, each demands a well-trained musical ear. Should one question the relevance of such studies, I would refer them to any of the many respected writings, long in existence, on the merits of keyboard-related aural skills. In his classic text "The Pianist's Problems", William S. Newman notes that "...by translating to the piano a mental concept recorded by the ear, rather than a printed page recorded by the eye, the student does much to heighten his harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic acuity." Certainly, we could agree that "harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic acuity" are values sought-after in all musical circles. Therefore, even if one's musical tastes lay solely in the classical realm, there is much to gain from the supplementary studies proposed here, as I will now detail.

Justification I: Benefits for the Teacher

As piano pedagogues, the ability to play by ear is possibly one of the most powerful teaching tools that we can possess. Teachers who play by ear have a considerable advantage in teaching by *demonstration* - something to which most students respond well. The spontaneous demonstration of passages from a variety of works, even if not originally composed for the piano, greatly enhances our ability to make a musical point. In my own teaching, I encourage students to consider the genres for which a particular composer may be better known when attempting to understand his or her piano works. In Mozart, for example, it is often useful to draw comparisons to the composer's operatic masterpieces when attempting to understand the dynamic musical character of his sonata themes - not an original idea - one I picked up from a former mentor and friend, Dr. Daniel Shapiro at the Cleveland Institute of Music. Nonetheless, a few relevant measures from *Don Giovanni*, or *The Magic Flute* do much to illuminate the change of thematic character in Mozart. While most of us could certainly memorize such passages to use in our teaching, and we do, of course, the ability to demonstrate *spontaneously by ear* - to walk to the piano and perform a passage that delineates a specific musical point, is a more desirable, not to mention more stimulating, skill to possess. After all, one cannot predict what may be necessary to demonstrate *before* a given lesson occurs. To be sure, instrumental music teaching is a *very* personal art form, for which each of us has developed his or her own means of communicating to students. I intend, in no way, to detract from those who find it more effective to express themselves through the spoken word. I am merely admitting that my own spoken word is *far more* effective when accompanied by some degree of performance, especially of a spontaneous nature, pertinent to a *specific* musical situation.

Justification II: Benefits for the Performer

As improvisational skills are somewhat of a misunderstood art form, they often lie outside the concentrated studies of the traditional pianist. However, among the many profits to the performer, the refined ear that develops from engaging in improvisatory activities vastly enhances the ability to, among other things, learn and memorize music. The sharpened ear assimilates and retains new pieces much more easily, and thus more rapidly. Furthermore, an aural association of the keyboard is developed whereby pitches are conceived internally *before* they are played - the process of "audiation", as Edwin

Gordon has often discussed. Such capability greatly aids in *surviving* the inevitable memory lapse during a performance. One must witness typical student keyboard performances for only a short time to observe that much of the memorization is purely 'mechanical' - that is to say, the memorization is based upon the mechanical movements of the fingers, or 'finger memory', as it is often called. Of course, some element of harmonic and melodic retention exists, but I would submit, not *nearly* to the degree necessary. Consequently, upon suffering a memory lapse, students are often unable to begin *within* a phrase (or sometimes even within a major section), and are instead forced to return to the beginning of a section, or even the beginning of the work, to recover. Such occurrences illuminate, to use Mr. Newmann's term, a lack of aural acuity of a piece - a lack of inner hearing of the harmonic progression and the manner with which the melody interacts. Conversely, students who are encouraged to play 'by ear', gain a greater aural comprehension of *everything* that they perform, and are thus *far more* likely to recover from the inevitable error in a more effective way, perhaps even a *musical way*, befitting the harmonic content of the passage. Not surprisingly, students whose ears are accustomed to such listening automatically retain new music much faster. They listen *polyphonically* - that is, they listen to *all* of the voices, relying less and less upon their *eyes* and more upon their *ears* in subsequent readings of a piece. They are able to *think through* a piece when away from the piano at an earlier stage, fostering a greater level of retention in day-to-day practice. Ultimately, the notion of 'memory practice' will become a thing of the past, as pieces become memorized unconsciously.

Justification III: Broadening the Stylistic Repertoire

While thus far I have attempted to justify improvisatory skills for the traditional pianist, those active in other musical styles often recognize improvisation and playing 'by ear' as basic skills for survival. Pianists, who make their living in popular music, jazz, and church music, are, by necessity, already fluent in various forms of improvisation. Performances in these styles are often inspired as much by intuition as by the printed page. Interestingly, to them it is often *classical* performance that seems a lofty task. Yet, performance opportunities for the keyboard improviser far exceed those of the traditional pianist. For example, the world of commercial music - those duties fulfilled by the recording studio musician, is essentially closed to those who are unable to perform and, most importantly, adapt, to any given musical style presented to them. The emphasis in this setting is focused upon getting results quickly (as recording costs are prohibitively high), sometimes requiring the performer to intuitively react to an audio *recording* rather than read from a printed page of music. How would the purely classical pianist respond in this setting? In light of what I would deem as 'declining musicality' in both popular and commercial music, I would propose that the trained musicians, composers, and arrangers reclaim this territory - an excellent opportunity, in deed, for the promising music student fluent in a broad range of styles.

There are a variety of methods by which these skills can be included in the curriculum. At this point, I would like to detail some specific approaches that I have found useful for meaningful implementation.

Implementation Approach I: The Separate Course

Without question, the most effective realization of these skills has occurred through the development of a specific elective course on the topic. I developed such a course four years ago, with the intention of addressing two general areas:

1. The study of music presented in a 'fake-book' format 2. The learning of pieces 'by ear' from an audio recording

Other areas that I have noted above, such as the exposure to music technology, are woven into these two activities. The 'fake-book' format, whereby the student is presented with only a melody and accompanying chord symbols, *requires* an ability to improvise, at least in terms of producing an accompaniment from the chord symbols alone. Additionally, the 'freer' nature of such a piece fosters the opportunity to 'embellish' the melody, or even 'improvise' over the chords, as done in jazz. The *true* strength of the activity, however, lies in the preparatory activities that it demands, the most fundamental of which being drills in jazz chord voicing. And, while voicing is, perhaps, the most intricate and sophisticated topic of the jazz idiom, students gain, at least, a basic understanding of how to approach the peculiarities of typical jazz-inspired chord progressions. Given the fact that students are often intimidated at the thought of improvising a melody, the activity is first approached by altering the rhythm or by adding chromatic pitches to the *existing* melody - a fairly safe approach for most. From this stage, students can *progress* to improvising an entirely new melody upon the existing chords - admittedly, an improvisation 'with rules', although certainly a form of the skill most practical to real-world applications. As mentioned earlier, 'free improvisation', may be thought-provoking, and indeed, even a means for fostering composition, but it is only modestly relevant to the trained college pianist in search of the 'practical'.

The other main component of the course, learning pieces 'by ear' from an audio recording, is directly related in that it demands a great deal of 'inner' hearing of a piece or passage *before* it is played. Students then transfer that which they hear to the keyboard, much in the same fashion they would if improvising a melody, and quite differently from the practice of reading music, where the eyes are the primary stimuli. Actually, a refined *ear* can be a great *detriment* in reading music, as one may try to *anticipate* the melodic or harmonic direction, only to be terribly fooled. I've been the victim of this very thing many times, as have many of my students.

Since students are likely to be drawn to playing pieces 'by ear' that specifically appeal to them, the range of music for this portion of the class is necessarily wide. I recorded a number of short piano excerpts to CD, representing a variety of styles that include musical theater, pop music, patriotic songs, and folk songs. Each student possesses his or her own copy of the CD for study. Since the activity is new to virtually everyone, much preparation is again necessary to achieve any degree of success. We begin by listening to a selection as a group, with each student responding to questions about what they hear - questions relating to the complexity of the harmony, the number of different chords present, the rhythm, the distribution of notes among the fingers and hands, the direction

of the bass voice, etc. Such difficult questions, naturally, foster a detailed discussion in which all are actively engaged. From this discussion, students embark upon the assignment with a general understanding of the harmonic content and physical arrangement of the notes on the keyboard. They are thereby aptly prepared for the trial-and-error process of deciphering the selection using only their ears, fingers, and a CD player. In actuality, what is *really* being learned, however, is not so much the specific piece within each assignment, although they have been chosen for their usefulness and popularity; what is *actually* learned is a method of *how to listen* when playing 'by ear'. Students gain a sense of how to approach this eccentric task in a practical way. They learn how to separate the individual voices of a recorded performance 'by ear', and transfer them to the keyboard in a musically appealing way - always a highly-stressed point in class.

Understandably, creative activities such as these are often achieved, initially, at the expense of good musicianship. For example, to grasp something concrete, students will often interpret chord symbols not in a manner stylistic to the piece at hand, but as block chords, and in the octave below middle-C, to avoid interfering with the right hand melody. Of course, the result is anything *but* musical. Low-register block chords produce little more than a dissonant blur, and the physical distance between the right-hand melody and left-hand chords creates an unappealing, empty texture. Fortunately, such problems are merely the product of the student shifting his or her focus to other issues of the task. Upon observing a few effective examples, students will begin recognizing and correcting these voicing problems on their own.

As one might expect, the success of such a course is heavily dependant upon the maintaining of a small enrollment. Each student will develop these skills to a different degree (largely dependant upon the sharpness of their musical ear), and will take a completely unique approach to each task. Likewise, each student will pose different problems and questions, each of which requiring very unique explanations. This has certainly been my experience thus far, and is the impetus behind my efforts to maintain a low enrollment in the course.

Implementation Approach II: Within the Private Lesson

Meaningful inclusion of improvisatory skills into more traditional settings of musical study, such as the private lesson, is another matter entirely. These are sacred arenas in which anything viewed as superfluous is not readily welcomed. Justifiably, the time is directed to meeting specific musical goals set by the instructor for the student. Fully respectful of this point of view (and quite supportive of it in regard to my own teaching), I would suggest that improvisation may be introduced, not as a separate activity, but within pieces that specifically lend themselves to it. For example, there are numerous slow movements of Mozart piano sonatas where the composer presents the simplest of melodies, seemingly as a set-up for later embellishment through ornamentation, or other improvisational tactics. A study of several of these works would provide the insightful student a palette of tools with which to experiment with his or her *own* improvisations of the melodies. Other such learning opportunities could arise from the study and

interpretation of figured bass symbols, Baroque ornamentation, or perhaps even an endeavor to create one's own concerto cadenza. Of course, such things never have to leave the confines of the studio, or even the practice room, but the degree of creative research and practice required to even *approach* such activities is of the highest educational value, in my estimation.

As in other areas of the arts, a great many of our music students will maintain private teaching studios, in which they may draw upon the influence of *our* instructional style. I certainly draw upon the teaching styles of many influential mentors on a daily basis. In light of this inevitable ideological transfer, we can assume that students will be greatly impacted, not only by what we say about a given piece, but *how* we say it. The manner in which we make our argument *can be* the most significant factor in its successful comprehension. To recall an earlier premise, the art of teaching by demonstration, particularly in the manner of spontaneous reaction to a given situation, can have an immeasurable impact upon our students. This is especially true as they begin to develop their own instructional style. It is, in my estimation, a teaching skill that they will strive to achieve.

Closing Remarks

As I trust you have gathered, my argument for including improvisational keyboard skills within the college music curriculum is one driven, not to satisfy a generic desire for a more broad-based curriculum, but to address specific skills that, I believe, would better prepare our students for a professional life in music. The responsibility of presenting our students with a fine education is partnered with the necessity of recognizing the ever-changing professional world of which they will soon be a part.

Kevin Orr maintains an active schedule as a soloist and collaborative performer, masterclass clinician, and lecturer throughout the United States and abroad. Recent activities include a number of concerts and masterclasses at conservatories in China, and in the summer of 2004 he was Artist In Residence at The University of Wollongong, NSW, Australia. He is currently Assistant Professor of Piano/Piano Pedagogy at the University of Florida, where he maintains a studio of advanced piano students, teaches courses in pedagogy and keyboard improvisation, and directs the University of Florida Young Pianists Festival each summer for pre-college pianists. Orr studied at the Cleveland Institute of Music and at The Dana School of Music at Youngstown State University, where his principal teachers included Paul Schenly, Robert E. Hopkins, and Caroline Oltmanns. He is a recipient of the William Kurzban Prize in Piano from the Cleveland Institute, and of the Aurora Ragiani Martin Piano Award from The Dana School.

Plug In, Boot Up, Turn On and Focus!

by Martha Hilley

In the most perfect of all worlds there would exist the single perfect method or text book, depending on the type of teaching you do, that would address the needs of all of your students. Alas, we all know that this old world is far from perfect and such a wonder of publication probably will never exist. And this is a good thing - who wants students who are stamped out of a cookie mold blindly marching in a perfect row, never needing additional drill, never questioning a presented concept, never creatively pushing the envelope. All teachers have as their long-term goal students who no longer need us but what fun would teaching be without the challenges?

It is because of the ever-changing challenges within the classroom that I turned to technology several years ago. I was looking for something that might help that student who was hesitant to put up his or her hand when I asked the perfectly ridiculous question, "Are there any questions?" Most students would rather bite off their arms than admit in front of their peers that they do not understand something. Even in a one-to-one teaching environment our students will tend to agree with us ("Is this all clear?" brings a reply of "Uh-huh.") I know, and you know, that students leave our studios and classrooms every day with unanswered questions - questions that were never asked. Some even leave with the best of intentions to "figure it out on their own." Technology provides a wonderful opportunity to allow this student to do just that - figure it out.

I have also found technology to be a great way to accommodate the different learning styles of students. Within one computer "tutorial" it is possible to address the visual, aural and kinesthetic learner. I have been very encouraged by the number of conversations about learning styles and teaching styles I have overheard at pedagogy conferences, MTNA conferences, as well as state and local meetings. If I might take just a moment to refer you once more to the excellent article by Susanna Garcia that originally appeared in Piano Pedagogy Forum Volume 5, No. 1 and is featured in the "Best Of" issue of PPF (Volume 7, No. 2) - a wealth of information for those both experienced and inexperienced in the area of learning styles.

Let's talk equipment for a moment. All of you know that I am a group teacher and therefore use digital keyboard labs, etc. For those of you reading who are also in a higher education situation, let me briefly describe my setup - two digital labs each consisting of 16 student keyboards (no disk drives), teacher instrument with the majority of the bells and whistles (on-board arranger, disk drive, etc.), KeyNote Visualizer, laptop computer at teacher station, 8 X 8 wall mounted screen, and ceiling mounted computer projector. Software available in each room is Microsoft Office, Finale, Sibelius, Dreamweaver, Audacity, Roland Visual Music Tutor, plus incidental programs for pedagogy demonstrations. Check into the computer/technology fee that your students pay to your college/university for funding possibilities.

For independent music teachers, calm down! You don't need all of this to get completely involved in the wonders of technology. I would suggest one digital keyboard (88-key, touch sensitive, disk drive are minimums), a laptop computer (Mac or PC), Microsoft Office with PowerPoint, either Finale or Sibelius or some other notation program that allows you to save files in a format such as TIFF or PICT, and Audacity (free download recording software that will allow you to save sound files in an mp3 format - much smaller files). You will also need to go to a dealer such as Radio Shack and get an adapter cable that will allow you to go directly from the Audio Out of your digital instrument to the Line In of your computer. Don't get me wrong, all of this is a significant contribution from your checking account or VISA but it is tax deductible **and** if you are smart, you will charge a technology fee in your studio and let your students help pay for all of the equipment they will be using. Set all of this up as a technology station in your waiting area, have students bring their own headsets and make the station available as a reward for a successful week of practicing.

If you would rather not get into all of this then take advantage of those of us who have jumped feet first into the technology pool. You are more than welcome to use any of the files included in this article. If you would like to explore the uses of programs such as PowerPoint, Dreamweaver and Director, please contact me (mfhilley@mail.utexas.edu). I have created tutorials that will allow you to get a taste of working with each of the programs. The drawback is that you must have the program on your computer. PowerPoint is included in Microsoft Office and therefore present on virtually every computer. Dreamweaver is web-authoring software from Macromedia. It is icon driven and has an extremely short learning curve. Director is a multimedia authoring software also from Macromedia and is for those who are serious about getting into animation, audio and video. The program is quite expensive so you might want to hold off jumping on that bandwagon. If you are affiliated with an institution of higher learning check with your computer lab and see if they have this program available. It is fairly common within the fine arts due to its applications to music, theatre, dance and art.

The programs I have found most useful for delivering information to my students are Microsoft PowerPoint, Dreamweaver, and the Visual Music Tutor. For those of you interested in studying the possibilities of PowerPoint in piano instruction, I offer you copies of all tutorials I have created. Please send a blank CD with return postage to my home address - 7513 Downridge Dr., Austin, TX 78731. Indicate PC or Mac as there are certain transition issues that may occur when going from one platform to the other.

The Visual Music Tutor has proven to be indispensable to our group piano program. We have built an extensive library of sight reading and transposition exercises to be used for prima vista in-class practice. Any standard MIDI files saved with right hand on Track 4 and left hand on Track 3 (at this point the industry standard for piano method disks) can immediately be shown as manuscript on any PC. Within our classrooms at UT Austin these SMF examples are projected on an 8 x 8 wall mounted screen - a great way to get students' eyes up off the keyboard!

The true technology workhorse in our classrooms is the web site created specifically for the group piano program. Dreamweaver by Macromedia is the web design software used for the creation and on-going revision of this web site. Software programs used to create the majority of the tutorials, drills and exercises found on the web site are Director, Finale, Peak, QuickTime, and Shockwave. I invite you to look at the web site: http://mml.music.utexas.edu/5e. There are particular lessons that are in the process of being revised and/or repaired and for your inability to open them, I apologize ahead of time. This particular version of the web site will be up for another year. The 6e version will be up and running by mid-April or May.

The best way to share some technology ideas with you is to show you these ideas. You will need the following on your computer: Shockwave Player plug-in (free download http://www.macromedia.com/software/shockwaveplayer/); QuickTime Player plug-in (free download http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/). I have listed some hypothetical and some not so hypothetical scenarios to help demonstrate the usefulness of technology. Any of these could be put on a web site. I could then let the student or students know by email that a special lesson or tutorial was on the web site just for them. Take a moment and go through the scenarios that interest you.

Note: videos no longer available

Scenario #1 – Your high school student from 4:30 this afternoon had some trouble with rhythm and you will not see her for another week. You have just had an idea that could help her with the particular problem not totally solved in today's lesson.

Scenario #2 – A student in the morning freshman piano class has asked for additional help with note reading. Your schedule is full for the next three days.

Scenario #3 – It is obvious that a few students within class do not completely understand harmonization and how to decide chord choices by looking at the melody. You don't want to take any more class time for this activity.

Scenario #4 – A student is sick and must miss a partner lesson. The student who was at the lesson should not have to "pay for" the other student's absence. You also do not want the absent student to get behind.

Scenario #5a – It is time to address improvisation with your student/s. Some of these students are going to be unable to shake the inhibition that couples itself to the mere mention of the word improvisation. They need a chance to try it on their own.

Scenario #5b – For that visual learner who needs the reinforcement at this point – still the same improvisation concepts as before.

Scenario #6 – You have a delightful group of "more mature" students who have given themselves the name Scarlatti Seniors. They learned the first part of Amazing Grace by ear at the last class. They need some gentle support throughout the week.

Scenario #7 – You have spent several lessons/classes on blues improvisation and it is time for your student/s to start creating their own bass lines. There was no time to introduce this in the last lesson/class but you want your students to have a "heads up" before your next meeting.

Scenarios 1, 4, and 5a are also available as PowerPoint presentations. The beauty of PowerPoint is that you can burn a CD for your student and he/she can take it home to work with. It is a great tool for reinforcement. Yet another way to get the point across – and that is really the key, isn't it? How many different ways can you say the same thing? How many different ways can you demonstrate a new concept?

One last technological suggestion is to use a digital camcorder. This can provide immediate feedback to your students about a variety of points. I use "iMovie" to create QuickTime movies, burn them to a CD and give them to my students. This is particularly helpful when students do not understand grades given during mid-semester and final juries. For those of you in higher education positions now is the time for your graduate assistants to begin building their library of teaching DVD's to be used in the job application process. Use digital cameras during observation and they have immediate documentation of their teaching.

Another use of the camcorder is to document the really wonderful things that happen in the lesson/classroom and then post them on your studio/class web site. I have provided you with three QuickTime movies. The composition movies were all winners of the "Best in Show" for group piano. Students vote on students and the winners are posted on the group piano web site.

Casey Thompson and Megan Pachecano – a composition assignment using an Ogden Nash poem, *The Panther*.

Kimberly Pearce – a composition assignment to write a "descriptive miniature" – the class had to guess the title after hearing the composition.

David Rosales – a composition assignment to write a rhythm ensemble. The composer then had to conduct a class performance.

Technology is forever changing. New versions of software and updates of digital equipment seem to appear overnight. The changes can be very frustrating not to mention incredibly expensive as you try to stay up with what is the "latest." **But**, the big plus is that you will never be bored. There is always the challenge of finding a more appropriate, more pedagogically sound, more appealing way of presenting information to your students. The ability to enhance enthusiasm and curiosity in your students is worth the long hours you will spend creating new materials for them. Technology is fun, time-consuming, exciting, expensive, addictive, and appealing to students and teachers of all ages. I invite you to embrace it with open arms. Technology will never take the place of the flesh and bones teachers that we are. It can, however, provide that extra spurt of

motivation that we and our students need from time to time. So, plug in and enjoy!

Martha Hilley joined the faculty of The University of Texas School of Music in 1982 as coordinator of group piano. In 1986, she became head of the keyboard division and served in that position until 1989. She served as Associate Director of the School of Music as well as Director of Undergraduate Studies from 1994-1999 and as Chair of the University of Texas Faculty Council for the 1999-2000 academic year. She currently serves as South Central Vice President for the Texas Council of Faculty Senates. Ms. Hilley has been an active participant in workshops, conferences and seminars on the international, national, state and local levels. She has been pedagogy faculty for the International Pedagogy Workshops in Italy, Belgium, Hawaii, Australia and Norway as well as pedagogy faculty for the Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival in Alaska and Tunghai University's Summer Keyboard Institute in Taichung, Taiwan. Through national televideo conferences (KTV I & II) Ms. Hilley had the opportunity to communicate as one of five panelist to over 29,000 music teachers across the country. Her abilities as a teacher were recognized in 1983 when she received the Texas Excellence Teaching Award and again in 1988 when she was awarded one of four Dad's Association Centennial Fellowships for excellence in undergraduate teaching. In 1992, Professor Hilley was recipient of the prestigious Orpheus Award presented by Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia in recognition of her contributions to the field of music. In 1997, she was awarded the Outstanding Collegiate Teacher Award by the Texas Music Teachers Association. In the Fall of 1998 she was awarded the William Blunk Endowed Professorship given for excellence in undergraduate teaching. In 2002 she was named as MTNA Foundation Fellow for the state of Texas. Professor Hilley's articles have been published in *Clavier*, *Piano Quarterly* and *Keyboard Companion*. She is co-author of two college piano texts: Piano for the Developing Musician (in 5th edition) and Piano for Pleasure (in 4th edition). The texts were the first to embrace dedicated digital sequencer technology through disks furnished to teachers as well as the first to provide web-based computer tutorials.

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Gold Medal Practice: What Musicians Can Learn from Sports Training

by Scott Donald

When you consider the multifaceted nature of musical performance it is truly awesome what we do. The development and refinement of musical skills is a long and involved process that requires much guidance. All musicians would agree that good training and practice is vital to our success. How we practice has a direct correlation to the success of a performance. The domain of practice is where musicians spend a great deal of time and energy. Musicians are not alone in this endeavor. Athletes face the same challenges as musicians. In fact, there are many aspects of sports training that are directly related to musical training. When you think about the similarities between the two it makes sense. We develop skills in the same way as our favorite sports personalities.

The ability to play a musical instrument is a collection of motor skills that we have acquired and developed over time. Making a connection between sports and music helps young students, especially those involved in sports, understand the physical nature of musical performance. Analogies that draw from their particular sport and relate to something we are doing at the instrument make that connection possible. The main difference between what we do in music and what happens in sports is that we don't sweat as much or get quite as dirty. The fact that musical performance is a collection of motor skills places musical training right along side of sports training. What happens on the playing field is very much the same as what happens on the performance stage.

What is involved in motor performance? Let's first consider the physiology and science of motor skill development. The hand has about 30 muscles to control 5 fingers with 3 phalanges for each finger.[3] These hand muscles act in coordination with several layers of muscles in the forearm, upper arm, and shoulder. Combined, these muscles contribute to the action of each finger and its three joints during motor performance. Considering the number of motor neurons, muscle fibers, and the timing requirements dictated by the music notation, you see there is a large amount of regulation in musical performance to be monitored and accomplished. How do we organize all of this physiology into coordinated movement?

One of the key elements of coordinated motor skills is timing.[6,7,8] Skilled performance of motor skills is developed with practice and, as skill is developed, motor programming becomes more extensive and complex. This process is controlled, especially in music, by an internal clock. This implies that there must be considerable precision in the timekeeper generating a time scale in the coding of these motor programs. Timing, or tempo, becomes a crucial element in the coordination of motor skills.

Another theory proposed to explain how the many variables involved in complex motor skills are controlled and organized is that of coordinative structures.[4] Coordinative structures are defined as muscle groups that act as a unit to reduce the number of possible variations. They maintain their coherency through three elements: spatial, temporal, and scaling. Spatial coherence indicates that the same set of muscles is activated as a unit.

Temporal coherence requires that movements within each unit act synchronously in a fixed time relationship and are maintained regardless of other movement parameters. Scaling means that the relationships between the spatial-temporal elements remain proportional regardless of the size of the movement.

To summarize, when we learn new skills there is a certain amount of information that goes into the coding of the skill; speed, magnitude or size of the movement, and duration or length of the movement. These parameters may change and most certainly will over time as the skill becomes more developed and practiced but the overall organization remains basically the same. When we compare novice and expert performers in the arts or sports we can see the difference between the overall ease and flow of their performance. How do we shape those performers into a more efficient and polished performer? How do we train them for that gold medal performance?

THE PROCESS OF LEARNING MOTOR SKILLS

Training for a gold medal performance begins with a process of gathering information, sorting that information and creating a physical plan to perform the desired task. This is called Information Processing.[3] Take a look at a diagram to follow this process.

INPUT Processes involved in obtaining information

DECISION MAKING Analysis or interpretation of what the input means and what to do (perception, response selection, response organization)

OUTPUT Executing response chosen

FEEDBACK Evaluating performance How efficient Desired result

In order to improve the accuracy and efficiency of motor performance, the player must decide what factors lead to successful performance and then practice in ways that will enhance improvement of these factors.

The beginning stages of learning new musical repertoire follows this diagram quite accurately. We begin by studying the score for its notational information. The next step would be processing that information and applying it to the instrument. We determine any technical difficulties that must be further practiced and evaluate the efficiency of our performance based on the comparison of the desired outcome and the actual performance. Mastery is attained after the performer has polished the overall technical demands of the music and developed a musical performance of the repertoire.

PRACTICE

The statement “practice makes perfect” is not quite true but rather “Perfect practice makes perfect”. Practice encompasses the areas of Input, Decision Making and Output in

our motor learning diagram. How should practice be organized so that the greatest improvement will occur? The type of practice may depend upon several factors:

7. Type of skill
8. Time available
9. Goal of the activity
10. Skill level
11. Other pertinent characteristics of the individual

The idea of breaking down a larger skill into a series of subskills is not unique to piano or sports. We use this technic in both contexts. In sports training, it may be used in an activity like basketball where multiple tasks are going on concurrently such as running dribbling the ball, negotiating opposing players, and shooting the ball. In piano performance it may involve multiple independent parts between the hands. When considering the use of Whole/Part practice these factors should be considered:

- Organization and complexity of skill
- Skill of the learner

While parts may be practiced individually we must consider what difficulties exist when the parts are performed simultaneously. We should consider the interrelationship among the parts of the skill. Tasks which have high complexity and low organization can benefit from part practice. As organization increases and as skill parts become more interrelated, whole practice is preferable. For more skilled performers, whole practice is the method of choice with part practice used as needed. As learners become more skilled and expand their repertoire of motor skills, the need for part practice tends to diminish. Frequently, expert performers will isolate elements for focused and concentrated practice but rarely use the extended practice of parts that can be beneficial to less skilled or novice performers.

Take for instance, the difficulties of first putting hands together. How long should students have practiced hands separately until it establishes the consistency and before it impedes the coordination of the parts together? In basketball, a series of combinations may be implemented to prepare the player to go from one spot on the court to another while doing all those tasks associated with playing a game. Combining hands together in piano performance has to be introduced in a similarly methodical manner such as brief segments and building up to the entire length.

Observing a coaching session between the expert and the novice athlete one can see how these skills are divided into subskills and then implemented into the learning process. For instance, an ice skating coach may work on a particular element such as a jump. The coach would systematically lead the athlete through a series of warm up subskills that would contribute to the overall understanding of the complete process from preparation to landing. If the student is experiencing difficulty in the landing, the coach may break down the landing and make sure that the athlete understands physically what happens in the landing such as the ending position of the body, the placement of the arms and head,

and speed on the ice. The coach would make the student aware of the placement through statements such as, “Notice the tilt of your head and that you are looking over the right arm past the fingers. Notice the position of the arms in relation to the body with the fingers extended.” All of these statements guides the student in “feeling” the correct body placement and makes them self-aware of what is a good land of the jump.

We can take the same approach when working on repertoire for piano. For instance, when rapid position shifts are required in piano performance our ability to consistently play accurately is definitely tested. As teachers, we need to be able to break down the skill and guide students in their physical approach to this technique. In a piece such as “Musette” from the Anna Magdalena Notebook we encounter this technique with both hands shifting away from each other in the A section. Students should be made aware of the physical requirements for performance. The teacher could lead them through a series of subskills that would include some hands separate work to negotiate the moves away from the body. This is important to establish the distance required in each hand then the coordination of the hands should be immediately addressed. One subskill would simply be the ending position before and after the jump occurs. Isolating this in practice can prove to be very beneficial in establishing the motor performance required by the musical score. Repetition of this isolation will lead to consistency and accuracy during performance.

Enough can not be said about the use of repetition in practice. This is where sports training really excels. Just watch a batting practice session and you will see how important repetition is. It is remarkable how many opportunities the batter has to refine hitting in a consistent manner. There is no, “I'll try it until I get one right” attitude. Athletes must be able to consistently perform with incredible accuracy. Gymnastics is one of those sports that requires incredible accuracy in an event such as the balance beam. Correct repetition is one of the keys to success for an apparatus skill such as this. Why not expect the same kind of practice for musical performance. The ability to consistently perform a given passage in music during a recital is just as important as in a gymnastics meet. The use of correct repetition is a fundamental element in the refining and development of any motor skill.

How can we incorporate this strategy into practice and expect our students to do it on their own?

- Keep counts of correct performances
- Make goals for number of correct performances in a row
- Incorporate elements from piece into a warm-up to use as constant practice

TRAINING FOR GOLD MEDAL PRACTICE

One of the big differences between sports training and musical training is the amount of time spent with a “coach”. Unfortunately, qualified expert “coaches” are not available every time a student practices a musical instrument. Therefore, as musical “coaches” we must provide a model for student success at home. We have to provide those models

while they are in our presence and educate our parents about what should happen during their time at home. Most importantly, the student has to show the teacher by "practicing" in the teachers presence the correct model for success. We can learn a lot about training for practice from watching interaction between coach and player. The use of feedback to shape a desired performance is crucial to the development of motor skills. Sports coaches use a variety of methods to correct and shape the necessary skills for performance. These sessions provide the player many opportunities to "practice" while in the presence of their coach. The feedback from a coach provides a model for success when the player is working independently.

There are two basic forms of feedback that we can focus on that involves the actual motor performance:

- The Outcome
- The Movement itself

Students must be able to compare the actual outcome to the desired goal and also the actual movement with the intended movement to reach the desired goal. It is of great help to have someone else available to provide input into the analysis of the movement to reach the desired goal but is possible to make students aware of what to look for or feel as they execute the necessary motor skill.

Another training technic is the use of specific lists to help facilitate feedback. The use of checklists can help guide the student and focus attention to the necessary elements of a task. This can be used for self-evaluation when the teacher is not available.

Here is an example from tennis:

Know What to Look For

8. Where the ball goes out
9. How far the ball travels
10. What path does the ball take
11. What is the speed of the ball

Identify Things That Could Cause Error

9. Held racket too loosely
10. Swung racket in an arc
11. Swung too early
12. Swung too lat

Let's take an example from piano performance: Ascending scale passage in RH with LH alberti bass.

What to Listen For

15. Even dynamic sound to the top
16. Even rhythmic sound to the top
17. Balance between LH and RH
18. Coordination between the hands

Things That Could Cause Error

12. Uneven descent into key
13. Thumb not moving under efficiently
14. Finger independence for rhythmic evenness
15. Hands not timed together
16. LH too loud for RH

Once the task is performed, the student should decide, based on the desired outcome and the actual outcome, how to alter the subsequent performance to reduce any error, then implement the plan with the adjustment and evaluate again. This process continues throughout the learning process and beyond. Providing a series of checklists or practice steps that can be used at home during practice gives the student a model to follow when they are working independently. These practice steps will help guide a student using general tasks that can be adapted for the specific needs of the music. Here is an example of basic practice steps that can be used at the elementary level Training students for practice success can also be related to the way we as teachers provide feedback through either concurrent feedback (while the performance is in progress) or terminal feedback (after the performance). One of the most effective ways of training the student for practice is to delay terminal feedback briefly until the performer independently analyses the performance. The student can be cued to analyze specific events through checklists, rating scales, or comparison to the desired goal.

Modeling can provide important information to the student regarding performance of a desired skill. Models can also be used to create a checklist or structure feedback for the learner. As an example Elvina Pearce recommends recording practice hints which give the student an automatic checklist and model for home practice. In sports, coaches may demonstrate a desired skill outcome while in musical training teachers may provide an aural or visual model for our students to emulate. Comparisons from student to teacher performance can provide structure to the feedback while delaying the terminal feedback from the teacher. The student is actively participating in the shaping of the skill and is more apt to remember the changes by taking ownership of the learning process.

As you can see, there are many things we can learn from sports training in terms of organization of practice and in the training of our students' practice at home. Through out the process we should keep in mind the overall process of Input, Decision making, Output, and Feedback in determining how errors occur and how to practice to eliminate those errors. Students must be guided through the process of performance and evaluation in order to provide models for them as they practice and grow as independent learners.

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Molto Piano: Managing Your Piano Inventory

by Linda Holzer and Ann Garee

How to handle a piano? To paraphrase Lerner and Lowe: "Simply love it." But what if you work for an organization or at an institution that has more than one piano? How do you adequately care for a fleet of important keyboard instruments? Love isn't enough. You need inventory management techniques. Many of these techniques are borrowed from the world of computers, in which the technical support staff for an office must oversee the equipment for many computer users.

Let's start with the basics: What have you got, where is it, and what kind of shape is it in? All of this information can be addressed by compiling it in a computerized inventory database. Common software programs for this purpose include:

12. Microsoft Access
13. Filemaker Pro
14. Microsoft Excel (in cases of small inventories, this spreadsheet can be used in lieu of a database)

Constructing a Database - Inventory Identification

A good database includes fields to account for all the relevant information about a piano.

- Your organization's inventory number for the piano:
- The instrument's Serial Number (from the piano's manufacturer):
- Model:
- Brand:
- Year:
- Age:
- Building:
- Room:
- Former location:
- Usage (i.e. concert hall, classroom, sanctuary, rehearsal hall):
- Technician:
- Tuning and Maintenance History:
- Value:
- Trade-in/Replacement:
- Comments:

It is important that conventions for entering data are followed consistently every time a new record is added to the database. This can be accomplished by designing the database to include edit controls on the specific fields that you want to sort by, such that it forces you to enter the data correctly. For example, when entering the year the instrument was manufactured, the field should be formatted to require four digits, i.e. "1966." If you don't follow conventions, and sometimes enter "1966" but other times only enter two digits as

'66, you won't be able to sort the data accurately by year. Ultimately, you need support from administrative staff who are familiar with database design in order to set up a solidly functional database.

How is the make identified? The make of the piano is often stenciled on the exterior and cast into the plate inside. For the model, look for an additional marking that may include letters and numbers either close to the serial number or in a different location altogether (e.g. Yamaha "C7" or Steinway "L"). In the absence of such a marking, refer to grand models in terms of their length, measured from the keyslip[1] to the edge of the lid in its closed position. (e.g. 5' 2" grand). For upright models, refer to the height of the instrument measured from the floor to the top of the lid. (e.g. 36" spinet, 42" console, 48" studio, and 52" upright).

Where is the serial number located? The typically 4-8 digit number is most often located near the tuning pins, either printed directly on the plate or engraved in the wooden pinblock. Or, the number may be printed elsewhere on the plate or on the soundboard.[2]

The serial number of a piano is as distinctive as the serial number of a car. It is unique to that particular instrument. Once you have located a piano's serial number, you can look up the serial number in the reference books *The Pierce Piano Atlas*, or *Atlas der Pianonummern* (Germany), or *The Musician's Piano Atlas* (England), to find out the year of manufacture. Several websites will allow you to type in the serial number to find this information as well.[3] If the instrument is more than 30 years old, depending on the kind of use it gets and the condition of the parts, it may need restoration work, such as new strings, or new hammers. The 30+ year old upright, exposed to daily practice room wear, should be put in the trade-in/replacement category. A piano technician can advise you on these and other condition and maintenance issues.

Designing a Maintenance Request Form

Providing a piano maintenance request form for users (pianists) is essential to keeping the instruments in good working order. The partnership with your piano technician will be enhanced through use of written maintenance requests. The form should be written in a way that helps the user focus on relevant specifics, and gives the piano technician enough information to quickly zero-in on mechanical problems.

So many people who play the piano are unfamiliar with how the instrument works. They enjoy the sound, they know the names of the keys and pedals, but when something isn't working quite right, they aren't sure how to describe it. And yet, the piano technician depends on the people who use the instrument most frequently to communicate with him or her about what needs to be fixed.

The web site PianoFinders.com[4] highlights a common initial challenge of talking with your piano technician:

"What to call the keys" (or, "Which C is this one over here?")

"A problem often arises from the fact that on the piano keyboard there are several different C's, D's, A's, etc. What do you call the C two octaves below middle C? . . In one system that has been around since anyone can remember, the notes are numbered according to the octave in which they lie, and each new octave starts with C. . .Thus, the first C at the far left of the keyboard is C-1, the next C an octave up is C-2, then C-3, C-4, C-5 etc on up to C-8 at the top of the keyboard. Because each octave begins on C, the notes below C-1 are labeled A-0 (A-zero), A#-0, and B-0. . . .this system has been used for many years, and many musicians and piano tuners still use it today. In this system, middle C on the keyboard is C-4."

Sidebar 1 is a sample maintenance request form currently in use at a university music program, making use of the key-naming convention described above. (Sidebars are viewable with Adobe Acrobat which may be downloaded at www.adobe.com)

Sidebar 1

REQUEST FOR PIANO MAINTENANCE
Music Department

Date _____

This request refers to the piano(s) in Room # _____
If there is more than one piano in the room, please identify the piano by make & model and/or where it is in the room (e.g. the one near the door).

This request relates to (please circle as many as apply):

Sticking piano keys	Pedal malfunction
Tuning problem	Missing chair or piano bench
Action/Repetition	Other:

In the space below, please describe the problem (i.e. which keys are sticking?) Please use the following convention for identifying the piano keys:

A_0 C_1 C_2 C_3 C_4 (middle C) C_5 C^6 C^7

Sidebar 2

Hello, Dolly!

The safest way to move a grand piano to a new position on a stage or in a rehearsal room is to move it on a piano dolly. Most grand pianos do not come with dollies. This is an additional purchase that can be built into the purchase agreement and installed upon delivery. If you currently own a grand piano that is not on a dolly, you may purchase a dolly separately. Parts of the dolly are susceptible to wear and tear, just like parts of the piano. What do you do if the tires (aka casters) on your grand piano dolly are cracked and falling apart? Replacement casters can be purchased as a set. Look at the dolly to find the manufacturer's name. A common dolly brand is Colson. Vendors such as Piano Showcase (http://www.vandaking.com/) Pianotek Supply Company (http://www.pianoteksupply.com) and Schaff Piano Supply Company (www.schaffpianol.com), among others, sell piano dollies, and also sell replacement casters in sets of 3.

If you have an unusually large dolly for an instrument like a Bosendorfer Imperial Grand, the replacement wheels are considerably larger than those for a Steinway. If the dealership from which you purchased the piano cannot provide assistance about replacement casters, you may find it helpful to consult a vendor such as Service Caster.Com (http://www.servicecaster.com/). You will be asked to measure the axel and other parts of the current wheel assembly in order to find a suitable replacement.

Consult a piano technician for assistance in replacing old casters, or dolly installation.

Ideally, pianists should make it a point to learn the basics of piano technology. Not that you're going to tune the instrument or change strings yourself, the way a violinist would care for her instrument. But you should know the basics of how the piano functions in order to be able to talk intelligently with a piano technician about problems you want repaired.

Many resident piano technicians at large music schools offer introductory piano technology courses for pianists. In some cases, a course like this is required as part of the curriculum, in others it is an elective. Sometimes, local piano dealerships will offer a workshop on the subject. Other educational resources include:

- *The Piano Book*, 4th edition by Larry Fine
- *The Piano Technicians Guild* web site:
- *College & University Technicians Guidelines for Institutional Maintenance* web site:

There are comprehensive programs in North America for those that want more in-depth training towards a career path in piano technology, including:

- University of Western Ontario (London, Ontario, Canada)
- North Bennet Street School (Boston, MA)
- Chicago School of Piano Technology (Chicago, IL)

For further study on high-end concert work, piano design and action geometry issues, there is now a Master of Arts in Piano Technology degree program at Florida State University.

How to Schedule Service

It is easier for the technician to keep the users happy if the technician gets good information in a timely way. Establish an "in box" for your piano technician to keep track of maintenance request forms as they are turned in by users. Let your technician know before he or she arrives on-site what problems have been reported, so that an estimate of parts and time needed for service can be done ahead of time.

According to the Piano Technicians Guild, it is recommended that tunings be done at least twice per year to deal with the climate and humidity changes that accompany the change of seasons. However, instruments that are played often will go out of tune more quickly. Concert hall instruments typically need in excess of four tunings per year. Ideally, these instruments should be tuned before most concerts and recitals, receiving weekly and sometimes daily attention during peak concert season. Other maintenance such as repairs to broken strings, or adjustments to fix squeaking pedals or sticking keys may become necessary, and should be noted for your technician on maintenance request forms.

Action regulation refers to more extensive adjustment to the mechanism of the piano. According to Larry Fine, for a home instrument that is only played occasionally, action regulation may only be needed once every 10 years.[5] But for an instrument that is played professionally many hours per day on a regular basis, the process may need to be done annually. Voicing is an adjustment to the tone of the piano, concentrating on the hammer

felts. The amount of playing the piano receives determines when it needs voicing.

As maintenance is completed, the facts need to be logged in the database. Studying the maintenance history can help you and the technician identify future needs. Your piano technician will be able to advise you on when action regulation and voicing or major restoration work are needed based on the kind of maintenance requests being turned in over time, and how the instrument is responding to service. For example, if the strings on the piano are breaking repeatedly, even with modest use, the technician may diagnose age-related metal fatigue, and may recommend that re-stringing be done.

This system of maintenance request forms and an inventory database also works well for digital piano inventory for similar reasons. Heavy use results in wear and necessitates service. Keeping good records makes it easier to provide relevant service in a timely way for all your instrumental equipment.

Who Views and Maintains the Database?

The person in charge of overseeing maintenance, and the personnel hired to perform maintenance view and maintain the database. If you work at an institution or organization that employs a full-time piano technician, these roles are filled by the same person. But if you contract out for tuning and maintenance, this process is covered by two people, one who works for the institution, and one (the piano technician) who is employed as needed. The database should be kept at the institution where the pianos reside.

There are two ways to approach the essential business of backing up electronic data. Institutions without an Information Technology (IT) staff need to back up the inventory files on CD, DVD, or an external hard drive to make sure that the data is preserved in case of a computer malfunction. Institutions with an IT staff need to coordinate the best way to back up documents and work within established security protocols. There may be an existing, overall inventory system that could function quite nicely for piano inventory and could be accessed from a central server. In this way, multiple people with password protection could access the database for annual evaluation and campus-wide inventory. The database can be further protected by granting "read only" capability for most viewers, avoiding costly mistakes in accidental deletions, etc. Your piano inventory database is the equivalent of the medical history of your pianos. After investing time noting all the details for your inventory, you want to ensure that the records are secure.

Who's Protecting the Investment?

Pianos affect every sector of a music program: music appreciation, history, theory, performance studies, and music education. When the pianos don't work well, it's everybody's problem. Managing piano inventory is a time-consuming process, but necessary. The time that it would take a professional technician to manage this inventory and oversee maintenance translates to an enormous extra workload for a faculty member whose time is already full with teaching, committee service, publishing, and performance

activities. It is in the best interest of administration to find the resources to increase staff positions by hiring a piano technician.

Piano inventory may be worth anywhere from $2,000 to $1,000,000 depending on how many and what kind of instruments your institution owns. A half-time or full-time staff member whose job is tuning, maintenance, and inventory management can, over time, elevate performance standards. From a financial standpoint, a well-managed inventory also staves off instrument replacement in many cases.

If there is an inventory management system in place that can record what happened during the year, it allows administration to evaluate which instruments have been neglected, jeopardizing the investment. With a simple report from the database, administrators can analyze the Big Picture, and make informed decisions about allocation of resources.

Rationale

Why is this so complicated? "On a modern piano, each of the 88 keys represents a series of 7 moving parts - keys, wippen, repetition lever, jack, hammer, damper lever and damper wire."[6] There are more than 12,000 parts on a piano. A typical year for your institution's pianos may include numerous concert or worship service performances, festivals, competitions, auditions, workshops and rehearsals, and all those parts get quite a work-out.

If the only attention your pianos receive is a couple of tunings each year when the seasons change, and there is no formal process for requesting maintenance beyond tunings, frustration will build in two directions. The musicians will get tired of struggling with instruments that aren't mechanically responsive to their musical efforts. And the piano technicians will get annoyed that they are expected to magically transform the piano to perfect working order when they show up to simply tune it, with no input from the people who play on it every day.

Keep good records about your piano inventory. Build an accurate database. Communicate regularly in writing with your piano technician. Make piano maintenance request forms available to all your users. These tools will go a long way towards preserving harmony. The race car driver understands that the love of racing alone doesn't get you across the finish line. It takes a supportive pit crew to win the race. In the musical arena, the magical team of piano, technician, performers, and administration is the winning combination for the instrument we love.

Notes

1. The keyslip is the piece of wood below and in front of the piano keys. Larry Fine, The Piano Book, 3rd ed., Brookside Press, Boston, MA: 1994, p. 8.

2. Fine, 157.

3. A Google search on the phrase "search piano serial number +name of manufacturer" will help you find the most relevant web sites for your purposes.

4. Karen E. Lile and Kendall Ross Bean, PianoFinders.com/educational

5. Fine, 181.

6. David Rostkoski, "Taming the Temperamental Tyrant: A Piano Technician Speaks Out," *American Music Teacher*, August/September 1991.

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Anne Garee has enjoyed a career in piano technology for twenty-two years at Florida State University. She designed and implemented the Master of Arts in Piano Technology degree program in 2003 and joined the faculty in 2004 as Program Director. A registered technician with the Piano Technician's Guild, she has offered technical courses for pianists and technicians at FSU, in Costa Rica, and in mainland China.

The Real World: A View from the Institution

by Jessica Johnson

Upcoming graduates of my piano pedagogy program are always asking me what they should be doing to prepare for the real world. At first this was incredibly jolting for me -- after all, the few times I stuck my proverbial toe out of the academic domain, I was quickly motivated to start another degree, or seek a college teaching position. Having relatively little experience in the private realm, I felt ill equipped handing out advice about how to thrive there. As a result, I routinely invite experts to present workshops for my classes to fill in these gaps. But this query ultimately led me to consider the question from a different perspective: What is it that I love so much about working in an academic environment? How might one simulate those features while working outside institutional walls?

Remain a "Student"

I have always loved being a student and the stimulation resulting from the quest for knowledge. While one is a student, it is ok not to know everything, to seek outside input, and to spend time investigating new ideas (e.g. not always being a "productive" member of society). Students have time to practice and read and learn. The great thing about most academic positions it that if you are not doing these things, you probably won't get tenure, promotions, grants, or sabbaticals. The academic system at it's best is designed to encourage these types of intellectual pursuits.

There are many ways for independent teachers to continue to develop as musicians and scholars:

15. *Don't pretend that you know everything*. When making the transition from student to professional remember that you still have things to learn. Academic faculty are lucky to have experts in specialized disciplines just down the hall to consult on a regular basis. Seeking out help is not a sign of weakness but rather an indication that you are unafraid to acknowledge limitations and address them.
16. *Stay current on how to conduct musical research*. With the internet, one can gain access to the world's greatest libraries without leaving the house. Use interlibrary loan (especially if your local library lacks specialized resources). Take a workshop at your local library about integrating the latest electronic resources into your research.
17. *Attend music conferences, piano workshops, and concerts*. These all fall under the heading of "continuing education." College faculty are expected to attend and contribute to professional organizations on a regular basis. The hope is that one stays up to date on current trends in the field and remains aware of the latest research.
18. *Learn from your peers and students*. When one is a student, it is natural to engage in stimulating conversations and musical interactions with peers. A similar relationship can exist in the teacher-student model. Be willing to acknowledge

when your students discover a unique way of approaching a musical problem. Use their ideas in your own playing and teaching. This cross-fertilization is one of the most rewarding aspects of teaching. When working closely with graduate students, it is easy to recognize significant research. But, this premise also applies to interactions with very young students. One of my life mottos is that "my students are teaching me how to teach."

19. *Know what is going on at local colleges and universities*. Most academic institutions offer free concerts, masterclasses, and lectures that are open to the public (many events are even scheduled prior to prime teaching hours). If you are particularly interested in a course, contact the professor and ask to observe or audit the class.
20. *Read a book or attend a presentation not directly related to music*. Another advantage of the university environment is that you have easy access to other disciplines. Stretching outside your comfort zone invites you to think in new ways, examine a different perspective, and ultimately enriches your musical life by giving you additional experiences from which to draw.

Nurture your own musical growth

Most university music professors learn a great deal of repertoire each year for solo and chamber recitals considered "part of the job." Creative research and professional development are considered a critical component of their workload.

- *Schedule at least one public performance each year/Learn new repertoire* (even a small soiree at your house counts). Demand this of yourself even if it isn't an official requirement. In a sense it is: it encourages you to build your knowledge of the repertory, expands your musical and technical vocabulary, and it nurtures your musical growth. People who perform frequently are less likely to stagnate. One avoids burnout because energy is coming in as well as going out.
- *Take a lesson or perform for a colleague (teaching observations included)*. One of the primary benefits of teaching in a university setting is the daily interaction with colleagues. I often ask colleagues to listen to a dress rehearsal, observe a class or lesson, and review my research. This allows one to profit from another's expertise. And, the balance between input and output is more easily maintained.
- *Continually expand your "teaching" repertoire*. This might seem obvious, but requiring yourself to learn and study new pedagogical repertoire promotes growth as a teacher. I rarely teach *Fur Elise* (unless a great deal of begging and pleading are involved on the part of the student) because it is difficult for me to get excited about that piece. I've simply taught it too many times. Learning new teaching repertoire not only ensures that you will be better equipped to find the right piece for your student, but also further advances your knowledge and skills as a teacher (While I'm on this subject, don't forget to include contemporary repertoire in this category).
- *Make music with other people*. While this is related to public performance, I feel that chamber music and accompanying deserve special mention. Making music with others is a stimulating and rewarding endeavor that yields many benefits.

Interaction with other musicians activates different parts of our musical brains. Chamber music requires a unique type of listening with greater awareness of breath, pacing, and musical texture. And it sets a great example for students!

- *Set specific goals for summer study*. Plan to learn new repertoire, attend workshops, actually read those music journals to which you subscribe, etc. Most teachers have a significantly reduced load during the summer. Take advantage of that sacred time and find ways to rejuvenate and stimulate your individual growth.
- *Find a mentor and stay in touch with old ones*. In the academic arena, junior faculty members are assigned a mentor who helps guide them through the tenure process. Surrounding yourself with people who understand your artistic objectives and who emulate the type of musician and teacher you would like to become is a good way to keep your musical curiosity alive. Having lived in several places, I have always found a few extraordinary people who have had a significant impact on my musical development. Inspiring, devoted teachers are everywhere. Seek them out and find ways to benefit from their experience. Invite them to lunch. Ask to observe them. Everyone has something to learn from professional teachers with a wealth of experience. Don't lose touch with past mentors. Sometimes a brief phone conversation with an influential person in your life can generate enough energy for six months of teaching.
- *Become a member of relevant music organizations at the local, state, and national levels*. Many music organizations offer opportunities for teachers and students alike. Members have access to newsletters, publications, reduced conference rates, etc. You will have the opportunity to interact and work with people who share the same passion for the arts and education.
- *Diversify your professional responsibilities*. In addition to performing regularly, most full-time piano faculty teach in several areas: applied music, chamber coaching, piano literature, class piano, piano pedagogy, etc. During my few years of independent teaching, I recall being exhausted after teaching every afternoon from 2:30-9:00 p.m. I quickly learned that dividing up my time with a variety of responsibilities helped me to avoid burnout. Consider distributing your workload to include an array of musical endeavors such as, teaching a group class, teaching adults (who may be able to study in the mornings), accompanying and chamber music, directing a choir, etc.

Be an Arts Advocate

Most academic positions require faculty to maintain professional affiliations and be active in the service realm. While holding an office, serving on committees, organizing competitions or conferences, and the like are very time-consuming, they directly contribute to the quality of music education and arts awareness.

- *Continually remind yourself (and others) about the many benefits of long-term music study*. Regularly re-evaluating your musical values and priorities helps you better articulate your position. Not only will you promote music study and arts awareness in general, but you will also stay in touch with how music has the power to bring people together and nurture the human spirit.

- *Promote the achievements of your students (and those of others)*. While it might seem like boasting, advertising the successes of our students in newspapers, internet sites, on the radio, etc., reminds the community of how vital the arts are and how music study can change lives.
- *Coordinate with arts advocacy groups*. This might mean working with music groups, arts groups, or other organizations that campaign for the arts in a culture where they continue to be marginalized. Consider offering a scholarship to a student who might otherwise not be able to afford music lessons.
- *Educate the parents of your students*. Teachers often focus so much on teaching students that they forget about the role parents have in this musical triangle. Parents are our greatest allies. Not only can they reinforce our efforts by encouraging our students to practice and follow-through, but they can also spread the word about music study. Parents can open doors with school systems, and for performance venues and funding opportunities.
- *Be accessible and non-judgmental (like Leonard Bernstein and Yo-Yo Ma)*. Classical music gets a bad rap. With every passing decade, we are losing more orchestras and yielding smaller audiences. Consider giving a "lecture"-recital aimed at reaching a broader audience. Be open to including many musical genres and styles (e.g. jazz, popular, etc.) in your teaching curriculum. By acknowledging the music that matters to our students, we are more likely to convince them to expand their musical horizons and in the process, create an audience for future musical performances.

While we, as independent and college teachers, have incredibly demanding schedules, it is critical to find ways to nurture our own musical growth. Teaching by its very nature demands us to expend a great deal of energy. If we don't find ways to re-charge our batteries, we are in danger of stagnating and losing heart. Many of the activities mentioned in this article require compromise. In order to make time for them you may have to cut back your teaching load, resulting in driving an older car, taking a less exotic vacation, eating out less, etc. Nevertheless, the rewards far exceed the demands. You and your students will benefit because you will reignite your passion and remember why you chose to pursue a career in music in the first place. We are privileged to earn a living doing what we love.

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For Piano Teachers Who Love to Teach: Tools for Developing Music Literacy

by Christy Vogt

I love piano teachers, I really do. I love them because they come in such a wide variety of shapes and sizes, so to speak. There are teachers who specialize in early childhood music and early elementary piano teaching. Then there are those who have mastered the skills for teaching intermediate skills and repertoire. Finally, there are teachers who specialize in teaching the complexities of advanced repertoire and performance techniques.

Regardless of one's specialization, there is one ultimate challenge all piano teachers face: to inspire all students to be life long music lovers who participate in and sustain the musical fabric of our society. Music and the arts are an indispensable thread in the fabric for our society. Yet we seem to be losing so many students to video games, competitive sports teams, and other extra-curricular activities. How exactly are we to keep our students involved in music learning for life?

One simple but powerful answer to this question lies in the phrase "**music literacy**." Music literacy can be defined in a variety of ways. Many assume that being musically literate means having an understanding of music theory. While an understanding of music theory is certainly important, music literacy goes far beyond this one facet. The musically literate student uses their understanding of music theory to recognize the phrase structure and form of a piece. They can also demonstrate their knowledge of theory in the creative skills of improvisation, harmonization, composition, and transposition. Being musically literate includes having an understanding of music history and how the historical background of a piece affects its performance. It also means having the ability to accompany others with ease. The musically literate can sight read well but are not afraid to pick out melodies by ear and harmonize them. Essentially, a musically literate student is one who has an intimate grasp of music as a language and can utilize it in a variety of dialects.

Piano teachers who once thought they were doing their job if they taught pieces and technique are becoming more concerned with teaching students to harmonize, transpose, memorize, improvise, create, ornament, and analyze. The piano teacher is becoming a music educator who uses the keyboard as a tool, one who is more aware of process than product, and one who leads the student to integrate assorted skills.[1]

Developing music literacy is the ultimate goal during pre-college piano study because it allows students to retain skills into one's adult years. As adults, former students are able to play the piano functionally for their own pleasure and attend concerts with an essential understanding of what they hear.[2] We should acknowledge the fact that, for many of our students, the ability to perform on the piano is only one key to musical satisfaction. Many of our students may enjoy sight-reading, improvising, composing or simply harmonizing melodies much more than giving a recital performance of one or two pieces. We must also keep in mind that the sight-reading and harmonization skills the pre-college student develops are notably important since the student will probably not study formally in later

years, thus relying on former training and minimal practice.[3]

While we would all enjoy teaching only those students who are committed to daily practice and a high level of music making, our profession would be better served to acknowledge that we must teach a curriculum designed for the general public. To most people, "music" means country and western, rock, blues, and easy listening styles of music; however, few piano teachers incorporate these non-classical styles of music into their curriculum. While few would argue that at least a small amount of attention should be paid to these forms of music within the professional music curriculum, it seems equally questionable that such music should receive no attention.[4] We would be wise to redesign our curricula in order to attract the busy students of contemporary society. In order to attract more students, teachers can focus on making music fun.[5] Making music fun does not mean decreasing the quality of performance or lowering one's expectations; it simply means adjusting curricular goals to include more functional skills such as harmonization and improvisation. It is these skills that allow a student to function at the piano long after performance pieces are forgotten.

Perhaps sharing my own personal story of developing of music literacy will illustrate this concept in a more poignant manner. When I first began teaching class piano as a graduate assistant at the University of Oklahoma, I was the furthest thing from being "musically literate." Oh yes,I could play my scales and repertoire. But transposing primary chords into ALL major keys and ALL minor keys?? My goodness, who would have ever thought of doing that? I had never been required to do that before. (My apologies to any former teachers who are thinking, "Of course she did that.") I spent many an hour preparing harmonizations and chord progressions in all keys so I wouldn't look like a fool in front of my group piano classes.

The church I attended at that time sang worship choruses from chord charts. As a classically trained pianist, sight-reading was a breeze, but what in the world was I supposed to do with a chord chart? All things do indeed work together for good and as a result of teaching class piano and being required to play from chord charts at church, my journey to becoming musically literate was begun. At my current stage of musical development, I wonder how I got through so many years of learning repertoire with such a minimal understanding of theory. Now I make connections between harmonic structure, phrasing, and musical line that help me perform more expressively and enjoy playing in a deeper, more personal way.

As a result of my experiences, I take to heart the challenge of developing musically literate piano students at every level of learning - from pre-college students to piano majors. One way I start my students on the path to musical literacy is to follow a strong theory curriculum. Theory curricula can be found in a multitude of instructional books. Many MTNA state affiliates have developed theory curricula which provide a foundation for teaching theory skills. However, it is the teacher's responsibility to take theory knowledge beyond paper exercises and mind-numbing repetitions of chord progressions. This knowledge must be applied to creative exercises such as improvising a melody over a chord progression, harmonizing a melody, or creating a short composition. These

creative exercises allow a student to take their theory knowledge to a new level and use it in a way that is personal and meaningful. Martha Hilley hit the nail on the head, so to speak, when she wrote that "theory done for the sake of theory is soon forgotten." She continued by saying that theory concepts should be transferred to exercises in transposition, harmonization, improvisation, and analysis of repertoire. "Theory applied to the keyboard and all aspects of music study is theory that students retain and enjoy."[6] Once students "own" their music, i.e. have developed a sense of being musically literate, they will be lifelong learners and participants of music.

In my experience, one of the biggest challenges for incorporating functional skills such as harmonization into the pre-college curriculum is finding appropriate materials. As the former director of Keyboard for Kids, the preparatory program at the University of Miami, I was constantly looking for simple harmonization exercises. I merely wanted our students to make the connection between theoretical head knowledge and music making. Often I found appropriate exercises, but they were couched in the middle of a large, adult-oriented piano text, or the exercises would be in the wrong key.

A new format of harmonization materials has been developed to fill this exact need. They are called Harmony Worksheets and can be found at www.harmonysheets.com. While the harmonization exercises were developed specifically for the pre-college learner, they can be used with any age student. Melodies are appropriate for students with a smaller hand or for students who have a limited note reading range. Many of the melodies used for the worksheets are familiar tunes so that harmonizing can be done by ear as well as by analysis. The greatest benefit is that the melodies have already been transposed into all major and minor keys. The teacher is free to use the melody in whatever key is needed in each individual teaching situation.

Harmonization exercises were divided into seven levels. These levels were based on those found in various State MTNA Syllabi and piano pedagogy texts.

21. Level 1: Harmonizing with I chords, major and minor keys
22. Level 2: Harmonizing with I and V chords, major and minor keys
23. Level 3: Harmonizing with I, IV, and V chords, major and minor keys
24. Level 4: Harmonizing with ii and primary chords, major and minor keys
25. Level 5: Harmonizing with ii, vi and primary chords, major and minor keys
26. Level 6: Harmonizing with ii, vi, iii and primary chords, major and minor keys
27. Level 7: Harmonizing with various secondary dominants, major keys only

There are five melodies, therefore five harmonization exercises, for every level. These exercises have been transposed into all major and minor keys. This gives the teacher maximum flexibility to emphasize whatever key they wish. When a level is purchased, the copyright for that level is also purchased. This means the teacher is free to print and copy exercises as much as needed.

Another benefit to this new format of worksheets is that they are completely customizable. Once a level is purchased online, the teacher is free to manipulate the

worksheets using Finale 2004 or Finale notepad (visit www.codamusic.com for more details on these programs). If a teacher disagrees with the phrasing or the placement of harmonizing chords, they can easily make those changes to the worksheets. Suggested harmonizations are included for each melody.

These worksheets can be the springboard for guided experiences in composition and improvisation as well. Once the student has harmonized the melody, the melody can be deleted, leaving only the harmonizing chords. The student can then improvise or compose a new melody over the existing harmonization.

Many teachers, at this point, may be rolling their eyes, thinking that while all this sounds wonderful, there's simply no time to add more elements into an already crammed lesson time. My hope is that piano teachers will give their students the opportunity to explore the creative activities of harmonization, composition, and improvisation. Keep in mind that children do not need a 15 minute lecture every lesson until they are fluent in these skills. They do, however, benefit from a brief, guided exploration into the areas of harmonization, transposition, improvisation, and composition. Students must be given the opportunity to grasp, internalize, and reproduce music theory concepts in a way that is personal to them.

It is absolutely necessary that our students be given the chance to develop a sense of music literacy. By providing the opportunity to explore and experience music learning in a way that is uniquely personal, our job is halfway done and our long term goal of creating musically literate, lifelong lovers of music is on its way to being met.

Notes

1. *Research on the Teaching of Keyboard Music*, ed. Richard Colwell, *Handbook of Research on Music Teaching and Learning* (NY: Macmillan, 1992), xv.

2. Jane Magrath. "An Approach to the Teaching of Theory/Musicianship Classes for the Pre-College Pianist as a Supplement to Private Instruction": (DM diss., Northwestern University, 1982), iii.

3. Ibid., 4.

4. Marienne Uszler. "The Independent Music Teacher; Practice and Preparation", *American Music Teacher*, October/November 1996, 26.

5. Brian Chung. "Where Do We Go From Here?", *American Music Teacher*, June/July 2002, 26.

6. Martha Hilley. "Questions and Answers", *Clavier*, January 1999, 48.

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Using Recording and Sequencing Technology in Group Piano Instruction

by Lisa Zdechlik

Current technology affords the group piano instructor and learner a diverse set of resources that facilitate learning both within and outside the classroom. Web-enhanced tools, video- and DVD- instruction, sequencing technology, and MIDI and audio files are all resources at the disposal of the group piano instructor. Recording and sequencing technology is readily accessible as an on-board feature found on many digital pianos. Alternatively, sequencing software can be easily interfaced with a digital piano or keyboard via a computer.

Recording and sequencing technology can be an effective tool in the group piano curriculum to further the development of comprehensive musicianship skills including repertoire, harmonization, improvisation, sight reading, accompanying and ensemble playing. This technology may also be effectively used to teach techniques of arranging and orchestration and as a tool for score reading and score study and rehearsal preparation. Recording technology provides dynamic and instantaneous feedback that enables students to listen to and critically assess their performance, to reflect on their learning process, to take ownership of their progress, and to formulate strategies to improve their practice and performance.

This article demonstrates ways that I have integrated recording and sequencing technology into the group piano curriculum at the University of Arizona. The keyboard laboratory at the University of Arizona has twenty-one Yamaha CVP 103 Clavinovas, each with an on-board sixteen-track sequencer and floppy disk drive, permitting students to record and save their work on a regular basis. The teacher's console is equipped with a Yamaha CVP 107, a Yamaha MLC-100 lab controller, a document camera and a data projector, which is used to display the main screen of the teacher's instrument so that recording and multi-track sequencing can be easily demonstrated.

Repertoire

Recording and sequencing technology enhances the process of learning repertoire, provides an instrument for peer- and self-evaluation, and is a valuable tool in the testing of repertoire.

Learning Repertoire

Students may use sequencing technology to create a practice disk that helps them learn a repertoire piece. For instance, in learning the *Minuet in F Major* by Leopold Mozart[1] students are instructed to:

28. Complete a harmonic analysis of *Minuet in F Major* using both Roman numerals and pop chord symbols. Write these in the score.

29. Choose a timpani sound on the first track and record a rhythmic "outline" of the *Minuet*. a. Play the root note of each chord using the notated rhythm of the left hand. b. Some of the pitches may need to be played in a different octave so the timpani will sound in the appropriate register.
30. Select a sustained string sound for track two and record a harmonic "pad" of 3-4 note sustained chords. a. To record this "pad," use the chord inversions that frame the melody of the Minuet. For instance; in mm. 1-2, play an F major chord in first inversion; in mm. 3-4, play a B-flat major chord in root position. b. Sustain each chord until the next harmonic change. For example, in mm. 9-12, the C major chord will sustain for the entire four measures.

Recording in this manner transforms the process of analysis from a passive written exercise to an active experience. Recording the rhythm and harmony reinforces the rhythmic fluctuations of the on- and off- beats of the accompaniment and develops an aural sense of the underlying harmonic structure. After this harmonic/rhythmic framework is recorded, students can practice hands separately, then hands together, with their created accompaniment disk. They now have a way to interact with both the harmony and the rhythm of the Minuet.

Peer- and Self-Evaluation of Repertoire

Another effective use of recording technology is as a self-evaluation or peer-evaluation tool for repertoire that students are learning. At various junctures in learning a piece, instruct students to record a performance and then to reflect on their performance, progress, and practice. This evaluation may be formal or informal and may focus on general or specific aspects. The objective is to provide students with a series of questions to assist them in evaluating their progress in the practice and performance of the piece. The same type of reflection tool can be effectively used for peer-evaluation.

General questions might include:

- Where do I need to make improvements in the performance of *Minuet in G*?
- What is my greatest frustration in playing ? Is it a coordination problem? Rhythmic problem? Do I have a strategy to overcome this problem?
- How do I want to be playing this piece by next week? What two practice strategies would help me achieve this goal?

Specific questions might include:

- For Rhythm: Is my tempo appropriate for the piece? What is my target tempo? Am I playing each rhythmic pattern correctly? Are there places where I have continuity issues? Does my playing communicate a strong metric sense?
- For Dynamics: Am I playing with the indicated dynamics? What is my general range of dynamics? Did I begin the *crescendo* in m. 5 too loud?

Testing of Repertoire

An excellent way to prepare for testing is to ask students to record a repertoire piece and then to complete a self-evaluation of their playing using the same rubrics that will be used in the examination. Hence, each student experiences the evaluation process and knows what to expect during the actual examination. My experience is that after students have recorded, evaluated and scored their own performance, the quality of performance improves in testing.

Using recording technology as a mechanism during testing provides an opportunity to give instantaneous feedback to students in the form of a mini-lesson. One method to test repertoire is to listen to each student play at his or her keyboard, simultaneously recording the performance. Then immediately discuss the student's performance with him or her using the recorded performance to support your verbal feedback. To point out strengths and weaknesses of the performance, cue the recording to the measure(s) under discussion so that the student and you can listen together. Then ask the student to record these measures again to immediately implement your feedback in his or her playing. When graduate teaching assistants grade repertoire, the recorded performance provides documentation of the student's performance so that if a student contests a grade, the professor has a means to objectively evaluate the performance.

As a documentation of students' work, recordings serve as a portfolio of their performances as well as a journal of their development throughout the semester. By reviewing and reflecting on their progress, students develop a dialectic between themselves and their learning processes. In turn, this creates an environment where students learn how to learn and to take ownership for their progress.

Harmonization

The skills involved in learning to harmonize include understanding harmonic functions of chords in major and minor keys, the ability to think and play chord progressions fluently, and facility in transposition. Furthermore, perceiving the tonal and rhythmic design of a melody and its interaction with the harmony is an integral component of harmonization.

Understanding Harmonic Function

At the outset of teaching harmonization, it is important to establish an environment where students are engaged in activities that foster divergent thinking. Otherwise, students resort to convergent thinking in which they are only concerned about finding the one "right" harmonization. When this occurs, students miss out on an exploratory process of discovering the harmonic choices implied in a given melody.

A simple two-track recording is an invaluable tool to lead students through the thinking processes involved in working out an effective harmonization. Instruct students to record the melody on one track and experiment with possible harmonic solutions while the

recorded melody is playing. As students play different chords, they are free to listen to how each chord interacts with the melody. Prompt students to try out different chords and to generate two to three harmonizations. For instance, "What if the ii chord were used here instead of the IV?" "How would the vi chord sound in this measure?" "What is the effect of ending on the I chord instead of the V in the first phrase?" Then instruct students to record a number of possible harmonizations. To accomplish this in the most efficient way, use the "copy" feature found on most digital pianos rather than asking students to record the melody a number of times.

When students arrive at their most effective harmonization through experimenting in this manner, instruct them to record the harmonization on track two. Then ask students to exchange disks with a partner and subsequently dictate the harmony used by their partner. Follow this with a discussion between partners in which they compare and contrast each other's harmonization, justifying their individual choices. After students have been given ample time to discuss each other's harmonizations, bring the entire group together for discussion and confirmation of the most effective harmonization as well as to elicit basic principles of harmonization based on students' discoveries. While learning from each other, this activity encourages students to apply multiple skills such as critical thinking, harmonic dictation, and explaining and justifying one's musical choices.

After the harmonization has been worked out, the same two-track recording may be used to experiment with different accompaniment patterns. Practicing the left hand with the recorded melody allows students to experience an accompaniment without initially coordinating both hands, allowing them to hear, see, and feel how the accompaniment synchronizes with the melody. From this process, students rapidly create a stockpile of accompaniments.

Rejuvenating the Chord Progression

We have all observed students going through the painstaking machinations of playing a chord progression when they do not understand the voicing or function of chords or do not have enough experience with the keyboard to understand the topography of a new key. The thought process goes something like this: "keep the right hand thumb and fifth finger in the same place, move the second finger of the right hand up a whole step, while the third finger of the left hand moves down a third." All the while, the student is intently starring at his or her hands, forcing the fingers to move with the eyes. So, where are the ears?

Establishing a process of learning that helps students connect their ears to voice leading and harmonic function is critical to learning chord progressions. To develop this listening, divide the class into four groups and ask each group to play aloud and sing (in solfege) one voice of the chord progression. Instruct students to listen for the voice leading and the individual color of each harmony as they move from one chord to the next.

The next step is to complete a four-track recording of the chord progression in the same manner. This process engages the students' ears on a deeper level and ensures that they

are listening for voice leading rather than painstakingly searching for whole and half step motion. In addition, this models a way for students to practice the harmonic progressions in the practice room or away from the piano.

Another way to rejuvenate a chord progression is to introduce the automatic accompaniment and style features found on most digital pianos and keyboards. Students enjoy experimenting with the different styles such as a "hip-hop" or "bossa nova" and are motivated to practice the progression when they hear a fleshed-out accompaniment of their chord progression. Far more interesting than the monotonous "click-click-click" of a metronome, the automatic accompaniment serves as a glorified metronome, helping guide students who struggle to maintain a steady beat or have difficulty changing the chords in rhythm.

Transposing the Harmonic Changes of a Melody

Most keyboards have a transposition feature that allows the user to transpose a recorded piece to another key and still maintain the original key on the keyboard. This feature provides a useful practice tool-students can record a melody in one key then use the transposition feature to change to another key. As the recorded melody plays in a new key, students can play along, transposing the harmonic changes to the new key. Practicing in this manner develops fluency and accuracy in transposing a chord progression within the context of a piece of music rather than as an isolated exercise.

Improvisation

Improvisation is one of the most enlivening and rewarding aspects of music making; however, for some students, the idea of spontaneously creating music causes high anxiety. The music background of many students has not included improvisation on their major instrument, yet suddenly they are asked to improvise on a new, secondary instrument. Technology can be effectively used to bypass this fear and to immediately involve students in improvisation. Not only can students improvise over disk accompaniments but they may also record their improvisations and listen without the fear of their peers listening to and evaluating their improvisation. Both structured and unstructured improvisations are useful in developing improvisational skills.

Structured improvisations

Improvising a melody over a harmonic progression becomes more interactive and meaningful when students are able to first record the progression on one track, improvise as they listen to the harmonic changes, and finally record their improvisation on a second track. When students have to record the progression themselves, rather than relying on a pre-recorded commercial disk, they tend to hear the harmonic changes more clearly and begin to anticipate these changes in their melodic improvisations. A variation of this activity is to use the pre-selected style settings available on most digital pianos or keyboards to add a stylistic background to the harmonic progression. The next step is to

improvise a melody that complements the selected style.

Two-track recordings can also be used to test improvisation. In the second semester, students pre-record a twelve-bar blues accompaniment using a piano sound.[2] For the examination, students improvise and record a second track using a melodic instrument that is appropriate to the style.

Creating a collaborative improvisation is another way to use recording technology to engage students in both critical listening and playing with the musical ideas of their peers. Ask students to first record a sixteen-measure accompaniment and then to improvise and record a series of phrases over the accompaniment. For instance, each partner is instructed to improvise and record an a phrase, leave four measures blank, and then record an "A1" or "B" phrase. Partners then switch disks and attempt to imitate the recorded phrases, playing in the blank measures. Students can then be asked to transcribe their partner's improvised phrases.

Once students obtain a performance level with a repertoire piece, ask them to record the piece as written, then improvise and record an obligato or countermelody using the harmonic changes as a framework. Prelude-type compositions such as *Dreamscape* by George Peter Tingley,[3] *Toccatina* by E.L. Lancaster[4] and *Summer Mood* by Lynn Freeman Olson[5] are well suited for this activity.

Unstructured Improvisations

The objective in using an unstructured improvisation is to tap into the students' innate musicality by exploring musical elements and the sonorous characteristics of the piano. One such improvisation is called *Creating a Musical Painting*. This is a non-judgmental activity-the focus is not on creating a "good" or "right" improvisation. Students are given a suggested topic or one of their own choosing to guide their improvisations. For instance, they may be asked to play a piece that captures the essence of flowers and dew. As students are introduced to musical elements and the characteristics of the piano, they are also given specific musical or pianistic concepts to incorporate into their musical painting. For instance, "in your improvisation, explore the different registers of the piano, the damper pedal, the range of dynamics from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo* and the contrast between *staccato* and *legato* articulations."

Recording technology is helpful because students can record and compare a number of improvisations. As students become more comfortable with this type of improvisation, have them listen to a classmate's recorded improvisation. Students can comment on what they hear in the improvisation in terms of the treatment of musical elements and the use of the piano. Providing an exploratory guide to focus students' attention and listening on the use of the piano and different musical elements helps students continue to grow musically and to gain confidence in their improvising.

Another activity to engage students in unstructured improvisation is what I refer to as *Galumphing with Sound Patterns*. Galumphing, a Lewis Carroll word, is a combination of galloping and triumphant![6] In his book *Free Play: Improvisation in Life and Art*, Stephen Nachmanovitch explains galumphing as "the immaculately rambunctious and seemingly inexhaustible play-energy apparent in puppies, kittens, children, baby baboons-and also in young communities and civilizations."[7] Galumphing sets the stage to improvise at the piano in the uninhibited spirit of pure fun and play. When students are introduced to sound patterns (major/minor five-finger patterns, whole-tone, pentatonic, blues, etc.), galumphing is an excellent means to discover and become comfortable with the sound and the topographical feel of these different patterns. Students record their "galumphs" to listen to the distinguishing sound of a pattern and as a way to hear how they have brought the pattern into "play." As a follow-up ear training activity, students play their recorded galumphs for a partner and the partner identifies the sound pattern used. These recorded "galumphs" are certainly not masterpieces, nor are they intended to be. Their purpose is to serve as an improvisatory vehicle for students to "play" with various sound patterns. These galumphs also become a springboard to composition, serving as a recorded sketchbook of musical ideas. The benefit of using this technology is that it allows students to listen to, review, and choose their galumphing sound patterns for compositions.

Sight Reading

Sight reading is a skill that requires consistent, persistent practice and one in which students progress at vastly different rates. As they practice sight reading students are many times not in engaged in a level a reflection in which they contemplate, "What did I miss?" "Why did I mess up that rhythm?" "Did I really anticipate the harmony of the chord progression?" One way to use recording technology to build sight-reading skills is to have students sight-read and record a musical selection, listen to their playing, and complete a written reflection on their process and performance. This reflective/evaluative tool prompts students to listen for pitch and rhythmic inaccuracies and to reflect on possible causes of these inaccuracies. An example follows:

Sight Reading Reflection

- Give yourself 2 minutes to examine sight reading example #1.
- Examine the piece again considering the coordination involved. Imagine how the piece would sound. Imagine how the piece would feel to play. Describe (on paper) how the piece would feel to play.
- Record your sight-playing on song #_____. Play the piece through from beginning to end one time only.
- Listen to your recording and complete the self-reflection for each example. a) Did you have any pitch errors? Where? What caused the error(s)? List all that apply.
  - lack of awareness of key signature
  - harmonic error
  - fingering
  - lack of awareness of hand position change

inaccurate visualization
other

- b) Did you have any rhythmic errors? Where? What caused the error(s)? List all that apply.
  lack of steady beat
  started too fast
  coordination
  incorrect meter
  rhythmic pattern inaccuracies
  fingering
  didn't internalize rhythmic patterns
  other
- c) Did any of the above contribute to continuity errors? d) If you were going to play this again, what would you do differently?

During examinations, students record the sight reading example. They are given a segment of time to review the sight reading, mark the score, and think it through. Then students press record and play through the example one time. To lessen test anxiety, it is essential for students to practice using this process often throughout the semester. After examinations, listen to and evaluate students' sight reading and compile a sampling to use for class discussion and feedback. If you teach multiple sections of group piano, use an example from one section and demonstrate it another so that an individual's sight reading is never subject to identification. After listening to each example, have students identify strengths and weaknesses in the playing and suggest solutions and strategies to improve their sight reading.

Accompanying

Collaborative and accompanying skills are important components of musicianship. Two-track recordings effectively foster these skills because they engage students in a virtual experience of collaboration in which they first take on the role of soloist, then that of accompanist. For instance, with a piece such as *Aura Lee* (written for solo B-flat trumpet and piano accompaniment)[8] or *What'll I Do*[9] (written for voice in lead line notation) students first record the melody on track one and then "accompany" themselves by playing along with the recorded melody. In completing an assignment such as this, students have to step outside the box of their individual instruments and consider the performance concerns of other instruments.

When assigning this project, first ask students to record the melody using the metronome, playing precisely on the beat. As students become more familiar with the melody, ask them to record it a second time with sensitivity to the breathing, attacks, and releases that a singer or instrumentalist would use. For the second recording, prompt students to dynamically shape each phrase and add rubato to their performance. After students have re-recorded the melody, instruct them to critically listen to it, noting the shape of individual phrases and their use of rubato. They may need to listen to the nuances of their melody a number of times before they are comfortable in synchronizing the

accompaniment with the melody. This activity develops heightened sensitivity to the expressiveness of the solo line and the interaction between the soloist and accompanist as well as an awareness of the decision-making processes involved in developing an interpretation.

Ensemble Playing

Ensemble playing reinforces sight reading, develops collaborative skills and fosters the ability to listen to one's own part in relationship to the group. Sequencing technology allows students to partake in a virtual reality experience of an ensemble, strengthening each of these skills.

Multi-track recording projects of ensembles are assigned in each semester of group piano. These assignments provide students with instructions for each project that include the objective of the recording, a process for recording, what to listen for as they record, and how their final project will be evaluated. Here is an example of a four-track recording project, assigned in the first semester of group piano.[10]

Multi-track Recording: Erie Canal, p. 83

The objective of this project is to simulate an ensemble experience by completing a multi-track recording of the ensemble. As you add each of the individual parts to your recording, you will need to carefully listen to the interaction between the different parts. For instance, listen to these different combinations of parts: Part 1 + Part 3, Parts 2 + 4, Parts 3 + 4, etc. A recording process is outlined below.

12. Decide on an appropriate tempo. (quarter note=66-92)
13. Choose the instruments that you will use for each part of the ensemble. Write these in the score.
14. Record the melody first on track 1. Make sure you use the metronome and record 1-2 blank measures at the beginning of the recording.
15. Record each of the other parts of *Erie Canal* on separate tracks. C Each part will be graded on pitch and rhythmic accuracy and musicality (continuity, dynamics, phrasing, articulation). C Your finished ensemble will be graded on dynamic balance between the parts, rhythmic alignment between the parts, and instrumentation.
16. Name the song "Erie Canal" and indicate the song number. Song #_____
17. Hand in this sheet with your disk recording.

After students have completed a multi-track recording assignment and played the ensemble in class, their rhythmic skills are more precise and their ears more attuned to dynamic balance between the parts. In addition, students gain a deeper understanding of how the parts interrelate and they begin to listen more critically to their individual parts and to the ensemble as a whole.

Sequencing projects of this type are integrated throughout the four to six semesters of the group piano curriculum at the University of Arizona. To ensure success in implementing multi-track recording, the scope and sequence of instruction must be carefully thought through and structured. Students complete one to two sequencing projects each semester. In the first semester of group piano, students begin with a one-track recording, progress to a two-track recording, and finally sequence a four-track recording. In the second semester, students complete a five-track recording.[11] In the third and fourth semesters, students complete a multi-track recording project involving an ensemble of seven different instruments.[12] In the fifth and sixth semesters of group piano, students arrange and sequence a piano accompaniment to a choral score.

Arranging and Orchestration

For some ensembles, the instrumentation is indicated per the score; for others, students will need to decide on an appropriate instrumentation. Being able to use sampled instruments as well as multi-track recording technology involves students in a dynamic process that is integral to developing an understanding of orchestration. The process of orchestrating and sequencing helps students build a knowledge base of the ranges and characteristics of instruments as well as effective instrumental combinations. Sequencing an ensemble allows students a measure of freedom in their orchestration as they explore and choose instruments that will most effectively express each of the parts of an ensemble. For instance, a bass line should not be recorded with a flute nor can a pizzicato string execute a truly legato line. After students hand in their recorded sequences, compile a representative sampling of orchestrations so that students have the opportunity to hear the orchestral sequences of their peers. As students critically listen to and discuss each sequence, an experiential and knowledge base of orchestration emerges giving students fresh ears and ideas to bring to their next project.

In the fifth and sixth semesters of group piano (Functional Piano for the Music Education Major), students complete sequencing projects that involve more complex arranging skills. One such project involves creating an accompaniment to a song from a general music basal series, arranging and sequencing the accompaniment for multiple instruments, and presenting it to their peers. Another project consists of arranging an instrumental sequence of a piano accompaniment (using five to seven instruments) that demonstrates students' creative use of the piano and the digital piano.

Score Reading

When first encountering an open-score or a large multi-part score, students are often intimidated by the multiple layers and may not be able to readily read and play the parts together. Managing the multiple layers of a score in listening, reading, and playing takes time to develop and is facilitated through sequencing the score. Pre-reading and studying these scores via the process of multi-track recording promotes both vertical listening and reading. It helps students slow the process of reading the whole score so that they are able to incrementally grasp it in its entirety. For students who hastily read through a score (seemingly getting the big picture but missing the details), sequencing forces them to

slow down and experience a worm's eye view of the score.

Score Study and Rehearsal Preparation

An objective of score study is to be able to look at a score and hear it with the inner ear. Multi-track recording serves as an intermediary step to this goal, giving students a tangible way to interact with each part of a score through actually playing and recording each part. One of the most beneficial applications of using a sixteen-track sequencer in reading and studying a large ensemble score is that students can approach the score in a concrete hands-on manner and simulate a large ensemble experience. For the wind ensemble, orchestra, or choir director, this technology provides an invaluable tool for score study and rehearsal preparation, augmenting the standard tools of the trade. Recording each instrument of the ensemble on a separate track helps students learn the intricacies of individual parts as well as hear, study, and rehearse the score from the perspective of different instruments. Sequencing each part intimately involves students with the performance concerns of the particular instrument and in decoding and performing transposed parts. This is an entirely different process than listening to a recorded performance of the score.

The process of sequencing a score allows students to take greater ownership of the music while the product of sequencing, the multi-track recording, functions as a practical tool for preparing a rehearsal. When first rehearsing a score, a conductor may experience a sense of disorientation upon hearing the mass of sound produced by the full ensemble, resulting in the inability to distinguish individual instruments or to accurately hear the ensemble. This problem is partially overcome by using multi-track recording to study and rehearse the score. The multi-track sequence can be used to isolate and pre-rehearse anticipated problem areas of the score. Individual instruments can be solo-ed or played in different combinations, tempo adjustments can be made, and options such as pause and rewind allow students to isolate and cue the sequence to a specific measure.

A score study/rehearsal project that students accomplish in the fifth and sixth semesters of group piano (Functional Piano for the Music Education Major) is to sequence, rehearse, and accompany a three-part choral score. The objective of this project is to demonstrate the ability to rehearse a score using sequencing technology-students' sequenced recordings are in effect the rehearsal pianist. Students rehearse one, two, and then three voices of the ensemble, they isolate and rehearse portions of the score by cuing the sequence to selected measures, and they practice a particular passage in different tempi. After rehearsing their "choir," students play the accompaniment live with the three-track recording.

Summation

These are some of the ways that I have integrated recording and sequencing technology into the group piano curriculum at the University of Arizona. This technology has been an invaluable teaching and learning tool for students and for me. It has challenged me to rethink the design of the curriculum, the delivery of instruction, and assessment practices.

For students, it has enhanced and enriched the overall learning environment by stimulating them to become more involved in their own learning processes. In addition, it has also helped students to develop keener critical listening skills, finer musicianship, and a heightened level of performance.

Notes

1. E. L. Lancaster and Kenon D. Renfrow, *Alfred's Group Piano for Adults*, Book 1, 2nd ed. (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., 2004), 160.

2. E. L. Lancaster and Kenon D. Renfrow, *Alfred's Group Piano for Adults*, Book 1, 2nd ed. (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., 2004), 304.

3. Elyse Mach, *Contemporary Class Piano*, 6th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 514-515.

4. E. L. Lancaster and Kenon D. Renfrow, *Alfred's Group Piano for Adults*, Book 1, 2nd ed. (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., 2004), 88-89.

5. Martha Hilley and Lynn Freeman Olson, *Piano for the Developing Musician*, 6e (Belmont, CA: Thompson Schirmer, 2006), 108-109.

6. Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*. (Woobury, New York: Bobley Publishing Corp., 1979), 140.

7. Stephen Nachmanovitch, *Free Play: Improvisation in Life and Art*. (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam), 43-44.

8. E. L. Lancaster and Kenon D. Renfrow, *Alfred's Group Piano for Adults*, Book 2. (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Co., Inc. 1996), 61.

9. James Lyke, et al, *Keyboard Musicinaship*. (Champaign, IL: Stipes Publishing Co., 1999), 47.

10. E. L. Lancaster and Kenon D. Renfrow, *Alfred's Group Piano for Adults*, Book 1, 2nd ed. (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., 2004), 83. Other examples include: *Alexander's Ragtime Band* from Martha Hilley and Lynn Freeman Olson, *Piano for the Developing Musician*, 6e (Belmont, CA: Thompson Schirmer, 2006), 281-283.

11. E. L. Lancaster and Kenon D. Renfrow, *Alfred's Group Piano for Adults*, Book 1, 2nd ed. (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., 2004), 194-195. Other examples include: *Alexander's Ragtime Band* from Martha Hilley and Lynn Freeman Olson, *Piano for the Developing Musician*, 6e (Belmont, CA: Thompson Schirmer, 2006), 281-283.

12. E. L. Lancaster and Kenon D. Renfrow, *Alfred's Group Piano for Adults*, Book 2. (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., 1996), 174-175 and 330-331.

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Ten Maxims for Adolescents Entering the World of Advanced Piano Literature

by John Kenneth Adams

I have long been fascinated with the development stage for young pianists as they enter into adolescence. During this period young people exhibit all the well known characteristics of personality fluxuation and rapid physical development. At the same time, they are looking for a safe harbor from all the new sensations and revelations they are experiencing. Music study can provide such a haven, as long as the teacher is aware that there are no rules for this period. In other words, it is a time for exploration and, sometimes, radical approaches to learning. Since this period is so unpredictable, teachers have to adjust their sights and expect the unexpected. For the very talented student, the demands of their repertoire suggest pieces of more length and complexity. It also means that what has been taught almost by osmosis in the early stages must now acquire labels and new connection of ideas. Students in general are approaching the main body of piano repertoire at a much earlier age. This is simply a fact, and attending most any audition of merit will see this point vividly portrayed. While one may not agree with this approach, it is out there and has to be dealt with. The question that has to be answered at this point is how do we proceed into the world of more advanced literature at a time when the student is not highly organized and emotionally volatile.

If you have taught for a long time, you realize that two principal areas will be your strongest aid when you work with this age group: your experience with a wide body of teaching materials and encountering a large number of students over a period of years. This enables you to make a plan of action centered around the individual, rather than just depending on some literature series book or graded list. Wide variances are the rule in this period, and you will find yourself working on several levels at the same time with any particular student. Weak points in technique have to be addressed, along with the greatly expanded world of harmonic complexity. Just because they may be able to play the notes does not necessarily imply that they are hearing what they are playing! Or, they might actually hear quite well, but do not yet have the keyboard mobility they need to make it happen. These are two enormous points to consider. Another point of equal importance is how the student is actually reacting to the figuration of the music. Are they seeing patterns, are they seeing musical shapes, are they hearing the harmonic underpinnings of these shapes and patterns?

For younger teachers who have only taught a short while, a path through this stage will emerge in the following paragraphs. What you have learned in pedagogy classes can be an idealized world, where adolescents miraculously develop in lock step with the graded materials at hand. Hence the overwhelming popularity of series books. It has been my experience that series books can be a mixed blessing, often consisting of the same materials printed over and over in various versions. The really gifted student is most likely ahead of the literaure in these books. The adventuresome teacher will explore the great literature and find isolated movements of sonatas and suites, preludes and nocturnes, and character pieces by the great composers. Many works by composers that were formerly very expensive are now available in affordable editions. For example, if you

teach a Prelude by Debussy you should have them purchase the complete set. The same applies for Schubert Impromptus and Chopin Preludes; have the whole set in front of them so they can explore on their own the other works and their relationship to one another.

There are a lot of ups and downs during the adolescent years, but big gains can be made if you stay focused on the larger scheme of things. In taking on a longer advanced compositions after years of much shorter works, students will need a lot of structure in their work, perhaps learning a whole new set of work habits. What follows are ideas learned from many years of teaching that have stood the test of time. I am addressing both the teacher and the student throughout these maxims.

Ten Maxims

1. Learn to incorporate theoretical training into the learning procedure, constantly referring to the principal key relationships and how they affect the character of the music. There is often a disconnect between the learning of facts concerning theoretical matters and their application to the music at hand. This is often driven by fulfilling theory requirements for MTNA and other similar type auditions, matters which, more often then not, are left to the last minute. All students should learn simple I-IV-V-I chord progressions, inversions of chords and major and minor scales in four octaves by Junior High, if not before. How often do we ask them to identify these elements in the pieces they are learning? Great composers simply break the rules more often than they follow them. Learning how to identify what is usual and what is NOT usual in a composition can be a tremendous learning tool. For example, If you move from major to minor in a composition (or vice versa) this should be reflected not only in the concept of emotion implied in such a move, but also in how this affects the whole. Mozart is the great genius in the use of this device. His changes from major to minor are so heartfelt they render mere "descriptions" useless. Some changes of this kind happen quickly. Others occur at key points, for example the middle part of a slow movement, or a section within a rondo.

2. Keeping key structure firmly in mind, note unusual modulations and harmonic patterns. How many times in a lesson do we stop and tell a student to listen to what he is doing. More often then not the problem is they don't hear the implied harmony underneath the figurations they are playing. The teacher should reinforce the student's listening at this point by playing the progression as a duet to the students part. You will be amazed how the student lights up and responds. And the teacher will get some practice in keyboard harmony! Difficult modulations and harmonic patterns should be simplified so that the student plays just an outline of the passage, for instance the top and bottom lines. You might go so far as to copy out in their notebook the exact pared down progression. This can save hours further down the line. A student is never secure with what he doesn't hear correctly.

3. Note unusual changes in scale patterns, especially the rapid interweaving of harmonic, pure and harmonic minor scales within the same pattern. This is why we study Bach. He is the greatest genius of counterpoint who ever lived. Students often forget Bach

Inventions so readily because they have learned them on automatic pilot. One lesson going over the various scale patterns will be enlightening for the student and teacher. Beethoven often starts scale passages in 16ths on the second 16th, preceded by a 16th rest. Take a quick breath on the 16th rest and head for the next pulse. This applies to an anacrustic entry in all scale passages, now matter where it starts in the bar. Otherwise the accent falls in the wrong place and a pile up is just around the corner. What goes into the mind incorrectly at this stage is almost impossible to correct later. Both these examples stress the need to both know all the scales, but also to know how the composers use them

4. In passages that expand over many bars, begin to search out inner patterns in the figurations that outline the harmonic movement. An example is continuous 16ths or 8ths that run without a break for many bars, especially in Mozart, Schubert and Bach. This area of teaching is one of the most challenging, as it means working across bar lines as patterns don't always start automatically on the down beat. What was so easily accomplished in earlier stages by just organizing the music by two, four, and eight bar bits, now means that overstressing of the downbeat goes at cross purposes with the musical sense of the music. Of course, one must always note and feel the downbeat, but the overstressing of it will kill the flow of the music more readily than anything else. All long phrases are the sum of many parts. Breakdowns occur because of the long attention span required. Solving this type of problem is a key to understanding longer compositions as a whole. Everything in music is a pattern. These patterns are reflected in the figuration and spell out the progressions involved. This sounds almost trite, but is needs to be said at every lesson. It will enlighten the student to the true nature of rhythm and how it grows like a mighty river FORWARD towards the ultimate climax of the whole.

5. Learn to break down difficult technical passages into small fragments. Don't be a slave to the fingerings recommended in the score. Always look for a pattern, no matter how small, so that you learn a series of physical sensations, not just a lot of accents. Nine times out of ten a mistake occurs BEFORE you actually make the mistake. Failure to recognize pattern change, not noting modulations, poor fingering, inaccurate rhythm…all these contribute to that mistake waiting to happen. If you find yourself continually breaking down in certain places, copy those places out into your notebook, number them, and practice them at odd moments. I often stop while walking past my own piano and play just one or two bars, so that I can say I know them DEAD ON! Of equal importance is the habit of practicing parallel passages, for instance passages that might be almost the same on repetition, or may be quite different Place these passages side by side so you learn their differences, and how to anticipate those differences while you are playing. Learn to think like a race car driver, that is think ahead far enough to avert a mishap.

6. Avoid repetition practice that numbs the ear. Most problems are actually listening problems. TECHNIQUE IS LISTENING! If you can develop the patience, stop after you play a section and critique yourself. This takes time, but it actually saves far more time further down the road. Just repeating a passage over and over is not secure practice. You end up practicing the same mistake over and over.

7. Go from broad strokes to more detailed investigation over a period of time. Don't pile

on information before the student is comfortable with the basic physical and technical skills required. Put the main emphasis on rhythmic stability and physical comfort in the early stages. Learn to sometimes practice UNEMOTIONALLY so that your energy is directed to the solving of layers of problems. I repeat again Nadia Boulanger's great maxim: "Do not appeal to the emotions until the intellect has been thoroughly satisfied."

8. Constantly refer to the metronome to ensure you stay within the same tempo for the whole movement. Never practice with the metronome ticking away through the whole piece. Use it as a prop to test yourself against.

9. Always think of the mood of the piece your are playing. This is your greatest aid in determining the color and nuance you want to bring to the music. Be aware that you need a variety of touches to make music truly come alive. Experiment with how you approach the key. For instance, if you take hold of the key just as you might clasp an object, coning in to the key from above, you will be in touch with the key as it makes its decent to the tone spot for a longer period of time, enabling you to judge the resistance of the key more readily. The result will be a more controlled and beautiful sound.

10. As you approach performances, have enough sessions playing in front of people so you are comfortable with all aspects of the piece. Try to remember a performance is just that and nothing more. It is NOT the end of the world. Let your feelings guide you so that you are in a communicative mood. Avoid all last minute cramming, as all this does is make you more nervous. As a rule of thumb, you should be at performance standard at least a month before the event. Set deadlines for memory work.

One last thought students. One has to take a chance to make a big jump. Things will not be as predictable as many risks are involved. Keep you ambitions geared to the big picture. You are laying down a deep foundation for the years ahead. Just think. At age fourteen you still have four more years before college beckons. Spend your talent dollars wisely now and reap the bigger rewards later.

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From Paper Keyboards to MIDI: A Brief Look at Group Piano Through the 20th Century

by Richard Anderson

While it's difficult to pinpoint when and where group piano began in the United States, it may be that it began almost the same time as the piano was becoming the accepted keyboard for instruction. In 1815, Johann Bernhard Logier (1780-1846) started teaching group piano lessons in Ireland. He quickly gained international fame, and in 1818 at least two teachers traveled from the eastern United States to take his pedagogy course.[1] Prior to the Civil War, classes in piano were taught at schools for females in the South. In the 1880's, Calvin Bernard Cady, who taught at the University of Michigan and Columbia Teachers College in New York, may have been the first to establish and publish a teaching philosophy in class piano, indicating three areas of musicianship that should be attained: "understanding musical ideas, developing the ability to express these ideas verbally, and providing ample time in the lesson for the experience to manifest these ideas at the keyboard."[2]

By the beginning of the 20th century, piano sales were increasing rapidly and by 1913, class piano was seen as a way to combat the cost of private lessons and provide instruction for more people. Two of the leaders for incorporating class piano both in and out of the public schools were Thaddeus P. Giddings and Hazel Gertrude Kinscella of Minneapolis. In 1915, they introduced the "novel, original and in many ways revolutionary" concept of teaching piano in classes.[3]

In Giddings and Kinscella's program, class sizes averaged sixteen students who paid twenty-five cents a class to use the latest materials. The instructor received a salary of two dollars per lesson. Classes grew quickly and within two years, a manual was created entitled *Giddings' Public School Class Method for Piano*. This manual became a primary reference for piano class instruction.[4] Within ten years, programs would be reported in fourteen other cities.

Growth continued into the 1920s and a group within the Music Supervisors National Conference, which represented music instruction in the public schools, added keyboard specialists to their membership. Out of this group would come a thirty one-page manual entitled *Guide for Conducting Piano Classes in the Public Schools*.[5] Numerous school districts were introducing class piano programs. Paper keyboards were the primary tools, but various other instruments began to appear. The Starr Silent Portable Keyboard was first marketed in 1925, followed by the desktop sized Wessell, Nickel and Gross School Class Piano, an instrument whose sound was made by reeds. Also new in the 1920s were records for students to listen to and play along with.

The piano class movement had a high level of growth from 1926 to 1930, when 873 cities reporting class piano instruction programs in their school districts. It is not known how many programs were being run outside of the schools. The demands for trained teachers soon exceeded the supply.[6] After 1930, the movement declined over the next two decades

with a decrease of 659 school programs by 1948. Only 221 school districts reported having programs in that year. [7] Undoubtedly, the Depression, World War II, the beginning of the Korean War, and the increasing number of private methods and private teachers played some part in this decline. The emphasis appeared to be shifting from public school programs to incorporating class piano as part of the private lesson.

During the 1950s and into the 1960s, class piano began to grow again as a viable option or tool for teaching. Silent keyboards had been the most common tool up to this time, but companies such as Wurlitzer Inc. began introducing electronic keyboards specifically designed for class piano instruction. While Baldwin, Rhodes and others also introduced electronic pianos, Wurlitzer seemed to be at the forefront in marketing and development introducing its first electric piano in 1954. It was given the model number 112, was a heavy (nearly one hundred pounds) wood-framed instrument, had a shortened keyboard, and its tones were produced by reeds. By 1956, Wurlitzer was advertising a lab concept that included keyboards with headphones and a "Multi Piano Monitor" that allowed the instructor to listen to each student.[8]

The 1950s and 1960s saw major growth in publications, presentations and pedagogical materials to match the new technology. This growth is seen in the creation of organizations for promoting and teaching group pedagogy, and three major periodicals, *Piano Quarterly, American Music Teacher and Clavier*, who published a variety of articles on group instruction. For example, at the 1955 MTNA national convention, Dorothy Bishop, who would supervise the group piano section of *Clavier* magazine, spoke on incorporating group teaching into the high school.[9] By 1965, Guy Duckworth, the supervisor of Northwestern University's preparatory department, had published a four-volume series for group instruction.

Robert Pace also developed materials and began offering a three-week workshop on class piano instruction at Teachers College, Columbia University. The National Piano Foundation, the educational arm of Piano Manufacturers Association International was founded in 1962 and retained Dr. Pace as its Educational Director of NPF for the purpose of implementing group teaching seminars throughout the United States.[10]

While *American Music Teacher* and *Piano Quarterly* published a limited number of articles on group instruction in the 60s and 70s, *Clavier* had the largest representation. Between 1960 and 1980, *Piano Quarterly* only published three articles on group instruction. However, it did devote a whole issue in 1978 to group instruction covering all areas, private through college. *Clavier* had the largest representation, publishing 34 articles in this same time period.

The vast majority of articles during this time emphasized incorporating group instruction into the private setting, a representation that failed to recognize the progress being made in public school and college programs. In Clavier, for example, only four articles dealt with public school programs. Tommie Pardue authored an article entitled "Class Piano Instruction in Your School,"[11] John Roberts authored an article on the class piano program in the Denver public schools,[12] Edward Adelson published an article entitled

"Group Piano in the Public School Music Class,"[13] and Doris Dolence asked the question, "Where are the Electronic Labs in the Public Schools?"[14]

And only two articles published in *Clavier* dealt specifically with the college program. In a 1962 article, J. George Hummel asked the question, "Will Colleges Meet the Challenge of Group Teaching,"[15] encouraging colleges to create group pedagogy courses for teaching children. William Richards wrote an article dealing with finding success with the piano proficiency exam.[16] One article in *Piano Quarterly*, by Helene Robinson, detailed the creation of two electronic labs and the piano proficiency at Arizona State University in 1975.[17]

As more electronic labs began to appear in public schools and in private studios, the amount of pedagogical materials markedly increased. In 1971, E. L. Lancaster presented two articles featuring a comprehensive list of materials for piano classes. Featured in the list were texts for adults and college classes, repertoire collections, as well as materials for sight reading, accompanying, ensemble playing, popular and jazz music, audiovisuals and reference books. These articles were later up-dated in another article in 1980.

It appears the 1970s was the decade that group piano pedagogy and the group piano program began to grow into its own recognized specialty with a supporting industry of instruments and specialists. After Robert Pace's resignation from the National Piano Foundation in 1977, Martha Hilley and Marguerite Miller coordinated more NPF group teaching training sessions through the World of Piano seminars. Presentations in other regional and national conferences increased and in 1972, the Music Teachers National Association national convention added a division solely dedicated to group piano with the first sessions being chaired by James Lyke. Through these and subsequent conferences, nationally recognized specialists, such as E. L. Lancaster, Francis Larimer, Larry Rast, Martha Hilley, and Fred Kern, among many important others, began to emerge and have a major influence on the development of group pedagogy.

During the 1980s, group instruction continued to blossom. In 1981, the first National Group Piano Symposium was held and group piano training sessions continued to be featured at the MTNA national convention. Tommie Pardue and Linda Garcia were establishing model labs in public schools in their respective cities. The college program was becoming an integral part of the music curriculum. Pedagogues, such as E. L. Lancaster and Martha Hilley, developed model pedagogy programs and labs for the training of the group piano teacher.

The number of texts and pedagogical materials being published increased at a steady rate as group piano coordinators created comprehensive textbooks to meet the unique proficiency requirements of their individual music programs. James Lyke had been among the first to author a comprehensive adult text that presented a thorough representation of basic keyboarding skills. Others soon followed. Supplementary materials flourished as group piano coordinators and other teachers and instructors more clearly defined their needs in skill areas such as sight reading, harmonization, improvisation, score reading and transposition, etc.

The most important development in the late 70s and early 80s was the digitation of instruments and technology. The digital electronic keyboard was a vast improvement over the older instruments. In 1981, Dave Smith proposed a MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) standard in a paper presented to the Audio Engineering Society and the MIDI Specification 1.0 was first published in 1983. This would dramatically influence the direction of group pedagogy and continues to be an integral part of the developments of all aspects of group piano instruction. It not only changed the instruments and technology available, but MIDI made it possible to draw on new and effective teaching tools and techniques. MIDI became standardized in the music industry in 1991 allowing for the interfacing of hardware from different companies.

While the keyboards became digitized and offered more sounds as well as recording and playback options, the 1980s and 1990s offered more external units such as the Roland MT-200 that could be interfaced with the keyboards. These units contained a large number of synthesized and sampled sounds making possible recording, sequencing and quantizing on multiple tracks. Along with the industry, teachers could compose and orchestrate accompaniments for the exercises and pieces a student would be learning. These orchestrations could be played at variable speeds with no change in the quality of sound, an incalculable improvement over tape players.

Eventually, these units became a part of the instrument itself. Students and teachers could now compose, orchestrate, sequence, record and save music to a computer disk. Prepared disks could be used to enhance instruction and practice. MIDI allowed for interface with computers and a myriad of instructional software programs became available. Students could now receive instruction outside of the classroom in the different skill areas, have programmed practice sessions, and prepare materials for evaluation.

Conferences in the 1980s, 90s and beyond regularly included in the technological aspect of the pedagogy. After the year 2000, conferences continued in a variety of settings. For example, the National Piano Foundation and MTNA began co-sponsoring regional group teacher training sessions that were held in Indianapolis, IN (2001), Dallas, TX (2002) and Orlando, FL (2003). "Due to the success of these regional conferences, NPF and MTNA began co-sponsoring group teaching sessions at the national conferences (Kansas City, KS in 2004, Seattle, WA in 2005, and Austin, TX in 2006). Thirteen group piano sessions were presented at the recent MTNA convention, with special sessions presented by Dr. Robert Pace, Dr. Guy Duckworth and Carolyn Shaak."[18]

As we approach two hundred years of group piano in the United States, one has to wonder what marvelous developments lay in the future and what challenges will be faced. Undoubtedly, group piano will continue to grow as an influential component of the piano industry, especially if it is able to recognize, perfect, and fill its niche in the changing milieu of piano instruction. By doing so, it will impact both student and teacher and garner continued support of the music industry. Joan Reist, emeritus faculty member of the University of Nebraska and former president of the Music Teacher's National Association, is another group pedagogue and advocate who has had an incalculable influence on group piano throughout her career. She has indicated that the success of

group piano will continue at all levels because of several reasons:

"The dropout rate where group lessons exist is considerably lower than other (settings). Group teaching, and the attendant peer teaching and cooperative learning, is fundamentally and educationally sound. Senior citizen programs, pre-school programs, and after-school programs can flourish in a group setting, and will, I believe, encourage the support of the music industry. Teaching of keyboard skills at the college level is most efficiently and effectively accomplished in a group setting."[19]

For greater success at the college level, she correctly points out:

"that there needs to be a better connection and understanding between applied, history, and especially theory faculty, so that the keyboard skills curriculum reflects the philosophy of the music department -- and is practical and makes sense to the students who are required to enroll."[20]

Coordinators and teachers at the college and university level need to be aggressive and to exert all efforts to inform, educate and involve their colleagues regarding the academic importance of group pedagogy and the valuable role it plays in the departments and schools of music.

Group piano pedagogy needs to establish itself as a central part of the pedagogy curriculum and be less of an addendum, especially within the piano teaching profession.

As Dr. Reist points out:

"There is a specific skill required of group teachers -- you don't just gather a bunch of students together and hope for the best. So, college pedagogy curricula must address group techniques and strategies, the basics of developing a group studio, and the various ways of adopting group teaching to a studio setting. Perhaps the most important aspect is that there must be support of group teaching by the entire profession -- not lip service, but rather acknowledgement that students learn, enjoy, flourish, and develop a love for music in a positive group environment. Every conference session of music teacher associations needs to address the power and positive energy that group lessons can provide."[21]

Undoubtedly, the future of group piano instruction will be assuredly brighter and more exciting if current teachers will aggressively promote group piano pedagogy and educate their colleagues as to its value. Amongst the believers, there is no doubt as to the valid and important role group piano has in the piano teaching profession and the contribution it is making to the music profession in general. But we still have work to do in verifying its validity outside of our own circles.

At the community level, group piano instruction can solve a number of issues facing instructors, students and parents. Economically, group instruction can be cheaper for parents and at the same time much more lucrative for the teacher than what the private lesson would be. Dr. Tim Shafer, Group Piano Coordinator at Penn State University and

co-author of *Class Piano for Adult Beginners*, has indicated that economically, group piano's

"growth as an educational tool is largely dependent on business-savvy independent teachers who weigh the risk of the initial cost of a group piano purchase with the long-term financial benefits. Piano teachers who see the financial viability of (group lessons) will be successful in convincing potential students and/or their parents of the economic benefits of early level study in groups. This is a win-win financial situation for teacher and student. Depending on the number of pianos purchased, the teacher can easily be collecting $100.00 or more per hour of contact time, and students reap the benefit of the reduced cost of group lessons over and above private lessons."[22]

Social issues will continue to present a number of challenges and obstacles for the teacher and student. One big issue is time. Today's society is confronting students with more and more choices for how they will spend their time. Too many of these choices fall into the "instant gratification" category, a category made up of an assortment of fleeting past times that sit totally contrary to the learning of any valuable skill.

Since it seems likely that this problem will increase rather than diminish, piano teachers will have to adapt. More so than in the past, they may have to accept a secondary role as they compete for their student's time and interest. The average child or adult is not likely to practice for multiple hours a day or even a week. And yet, these students should not be cast off as potential pianists and musicians. At the least, an appreciation for and skill of piano playing, even minimally gained, will likely be passed on to and increased in the next generation.

Group piano, as Dr. Shafer points out, has valid potential in light of these social issues.

"Social influences are brought to bear by the culture and the children themselves. A child's piano lesson is one of the few (if not the only!) activities of his week for which he is expected to invest multiple hours in order to prepare in the days prior (to a lesson). No other activity (gymnastics, ballet, soccer, etc.) requires the solitude and preparation for the meeting time with the instructor. Group piano can remedy both of these social aspects."[23]

As group piano adapts to the changing social climate and mores, the impact of the Internet and related technologies is of prime importance for group pedagogy. Technology will more and more become an integral component of piano instruction and group piano is a perfect fit for its integration. Electronic keyboards, CD's, keyboard disk players, computers, MP3 players, the web, iPods, and other such electronic paraphernalia will have a growing role in assisting teachers in their instruction.

When asked how she feels technology is influencing group piano, Dr. Carolynn Lindeman, Professor of Music Emeritus of San Francisco State University and author of the group piano text, *PianoLab*, said,

"Technology has made a big difference in how group piano instruction is delivered and has to be one of the most significant influences for the future. With the quality of electronic pianos getting better and better, even those who were resistant to the notion of electronic over acoustic, are seeing the advantage. And all the technical options make teaching so much easier and music making more interesting! With the internet possibilities, students will be able to download additional exercises, music, worksheets, etc. and be offered links to learn more about their keyboard composers, the piano as an instrument, etc. Hopefully, this will allow the piano instructor to spend maximum class time on piano instruction and allow students to work on out-of-class web activities to practice and expand those skills introduced in class. The technological possibilities have certainly made me stretch my thinking and become more creative in what I can do as a teacher to make piano instruction better and more interesting to students. Obviously, our goal is to turn our students on and make them want to continue to play the piano after they have walked out our classroom door."[24]

And finally, there is the great unknown. Undoubtedly, there will be developments we cannot conceive of at this time any more than group piano teachers in the 1950's could have conceived of the wide reaching power and influence of the Internet. However, because these dedicated group pedagogues moved forward, developing all they could within their means using the tools that were present, they have always been in a position to incorporate each new development.

One thing is certain, with a rapidly changing society, and the continuing growth and development of technology, materials, and pedagogical techniques, group piano makes it possible for an ever increasing number of students to learn to play and comprehend piano music more thoroughly, quickly and with greater enjoyment. The teaching experience continues to become more fulfilling and effective than at any other previous time. And as more and more students reap the benefits of group piano instruction, its influence will be broadly felt in all levels of society and of the profession. It will continue to be a profession that does not limit its challenges, but challenges its limits.

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Student Teachers: An Untapped Resource

by Meg Gray

Why should students teach?

One of the issues in piano teaching today is the lack of qualified younger teachers. In many towns across the country, piano students find themselves on waiting lists, and piano teachers find themselves overworking. As the years pass, teachers choose to retire or their life priorities change. There aren't enough new teachers to fill the gap. A solution to this problem is to encourage interested, willing, and qualified high school-aged piano students to try teaching beginning students.

High school pianists may feel intimidated by the thought of teaching piano. They may not consider themselves advanced enough to be good teachers. Or, they may feel that they do not know how to teach. With proper supervision and encouragement, high school students can do a fine job with beginning piano students. And by beginning to teach, they will gain both as musicians and as human beings.

There are musical advantages to training high school pianists to teach. Teachers have to introduce basic concepts such as counting and reading. It is not possible for a teacher to present a concept clearly when they do not fully understand it. Ideas such as subdividing the beat or reading intervallically become crystal clear when they have to be presented and demonstrated to a young pupil. Reviewing the basics of reading and counting can strengthen a teachers' own skills in the fundamentals, and may actually fix problem areas in their own playing.

Unless they are accompanists, high school-aged pianists may not be reading new music frequently. As a student piano teacher, they will greatly increase the amount of new music that they read. They should be encouraged to play through several piano methods and to have input in selecting the proper methods for their beginning piano students. They will have to play through a lot of lower level repertoire when selecting recital or motivational music for their students. And they should be encouraged to play lots of teacher-student duets from their beginner's piano method. This will motivate the beginner and help them to develop a sense of steady pulse. It may also motivate the high school student teacher, increase their reading fluency, and improve their sense of beat!

Sometimes teachers may feel that comments to high school students about their repertoire and performance habits go in one ear and right out the other. A student teacher may find themselves using some of the following phrases with their beginners: “play with more tone please,” “make sure you practice every day,” or “are you reading and following your complete assignment?” When they can see for themselves the importance of these suggestions and others like them, high school students will be more likely to pay attention to the quality of their own playing.

There are non-musical benefits to encouraging student teachers. Successful piano teachers are organized, disciplined, and assertive. In guiding the high school student teacher, the importance of these traits must be emphasized. As the student teacher learns to schedule lessons, work with parents, and deal with the occasional discipline problem, they will develop or strengthen these qualities out of necessity.

Most high school students are thinking about their future career choices. Internships with businesses are a common way for students to gain real life experience in potential job fields. Students that are seriously interested in music as a career can benefit immensely from an introduction to teaching.

A reality in the field of music is that most musicians end up teaching in some form during at least part of their career. Having a teaching experience at this age can help high school pianists decide whether teaching is for them or not.

Another non-musical benefit for student teachers is financial gain. While they should not be charging the same rates as experienced, certified teachers, they need to earn a fair price for their services. Teaching piano may compensate high school students enough to keep them from having to work at their local fast food restaurant…thereby freeing them up to do more of their own practicing!

Who should student teachers teach?

One aspect of teaching that student teachers must consider is learning to maintain a professional relationship between teacher and student. They type of professional distance maintained differs from one teacher to another depending on teaching and personality styles, but it is a quality that should be present in some form for most effective teaching.

To assist student teachers in building a professional relationship with their students, two things must be considered: the relative ages of teacher and student, and the relative ability levels of teacher and student. Average-aged beginning piano students are probably the best choice for beginning student teachers.

It would seem at first glance that pre-school students would be an excellent choice for the student teacher. However, specialized training in dealing with the emotional, physical and mental characteristics of 3-4 year olds is needed for the successful early childhood music teacher.

Adult beginners are at a comfortable level of musical ability for student teachers. However, student teachers may feel uncomfortable teaching someone older and perhaps wiser than themselves. And, because of the special circumstances of teaching adults - their differing physical, emotional and social needs - pedagogical training in teaching adults is necessary.

Student teachers will need assistance and training in dealing with the non-teaching aspects of their situation. Parents of both the student teacher and their prospective beginning students should be aware and supportive of the situation. Both the teacher and beginning student should commit to a semester if not a year of instruction; interrupted and short term study is not productive for either person. The student teacher should prepare and present a studio policy, and should stick to that policy. The beginning students should be pre-screened by the mentor teacher. Beginners with learning, behavioral, or emotional challenges should be taught by experienced teachers rather than student teachers.

How should student teachers teach?

Excellent teachers are eager, educated, confident, and willing to continue to learn. These qualities can best be developed in a new teacher by observation, supervision, and training. Student teachers should be mentored by experienced teachers, and experienced teachers should be compensated for the experience.

Training can take many forms. One possible way to train future teachers is to hold a pedagogy seminar or camp - during the summer, over several weekends, or in a bi-weekly or monthly meeting. Student teachers should be introduced to the basic reading and counting approaches, and to whatever piano method or methods that the mentor feels are appropriate. It can be very helpful for this training to take place in a group. In a group setting, student teachers have opportunities to practice peer teaching, and to discuss various aspects of teaching and learning.

Student teachers should observe good teaching as much as possible. Although they have been in piano lessons for years themselves, they probably haven't thought about how to structure and pace a lesson. They should focus on observing beginning students so they can learn how to deal with concerns for this age group and level. Have student teachers observe and take notes for specific tasks such as developing a steady beat. Follow up on their observations with discussion of the effectiveness of the teaching.

A third important component of effective teacher training is supervision. When student teachers are just beginning to teach, a high amount of structure is both comforting and effective. Providing lesson plans and having the student teachers practice peer teaching are ways to ensure their success. As student teachers become more experienced, they can develop their own lesson plans. Keeping a copy of the lesson plans in a notebook is an effective way for them to plan ahead and for the mentor to keep tabs on what is happening.

Student teachers should video their teaching so that they can review it with their mentor. Reviewing video is time consuming; however, one way to keep this task from being overwhelming is to have the student teacher record a specific part of the lesson several weeks in a row. This way, they can see the progression of their teaching from week to week in an efficient manner.

Student teachers should encourage their beginning students to participate in the activities of their mentor's studio, such as recitals and festivals, and credit should be given to the student teacher for their beginners' participation. This way, other piano students can see how rewarding it is to teach, and the mentoring program can grow.

In many independent piano studios across the nation, we have an untapped resource in our intermediate and advanced level high school piano students. They are intelligent and energetic. Training high school students to teach can assist them in their own musical study, provide them with a source of income, and help them make decisions about their careers. Taking advantage of this valuable resource can help alleviate the teacher shortages that are found in many communities.

Meg Gray is associate professor of piano and class piano at Lincoln University of Missouri. She also maintains an independent piano studio in central Missouri, and is active in the Music Teachers National Association. Dr. Gray holds graduate degrees in piano performance and pedagogy from the University of Oklahoma where she studied with E. L. Lancaster, Jane Magrath, Edward Gates, and Digby Bell.

Motivation Through Strengths-Based Strategies in Piano Pedagogy

by Yeeseon Kwon

Methods of teaching such as visual, or verbal, ways presenting information, personality traits of teachers, all affect learning. No single learning strategy will work equally well for all students, and few, if any, strategies will work optimally on all tasks. The effectiveness of a strategy will change as a skill develops. Regardless of learning styles, students can learn strategies that enable them to be effective. None of the learning styles makes nearly as much difference as the student's prior knowledge, intelligence, and motivation. When students learn in more meaningful ways they are more likely to develop intrinsic motivation for learning rather than being solely focused on tests and grades. Similarly, when students become interested in a topic, they are likely to think more about it. In these ways cognition and motivation are interdependent.

Many students enter higher music education with the perception that they have not been taught how to practice by their teachers. Recent research in music education from Norway by Siw G. Nielsen investigated which strategies used during practice were most relevant to improving performance and whether first-year music students' perceptions of self-efficacy were correlated to these practice strategies. Self-efficacy was defined as "people's judgment of their capabilities to organize and execute the required courses of action to attain designated types of performances" (Nielsen, 2004). This particular study of Norwegian students in six Norwegian institutions of higher music education investigated the ways in which learning and study strategies of advanced vocal and instrumental music students were impacted by their self-efficacy beliefs. Participants were first-year music students in Norwegian higher education between the ages of 18 and 43. The study revealed that a student's level of confidence in his or her ability to practice affects the way he or she practices. It also showed there were significant gender differences between female and male students with regard to self-efficacy, without significant differences regarding instrument groups or degree programs. Lastly, students who perceived themselves as able to learn or able to perform a task by their instrumental practice also reported using more learning and study strategies. These findings may have compelling implications for the field of piano pedagogy as it impacts the development of new teaching approaches for increasing student motivation.

Strengths-Based Teaching and Learning

Strengths-based education identifies talents and strengths to measure achievement and positive outcomes, and individualizes work with students to personalize the learning experience. Positive emotional experience may lead students to pursue their interests more vigorously and think more expansively about subjects of interests. Research evidence indicates that positive affect has been shown to lead to greater creativity, flexible thinking, and increased negotiation and problem-solving skills (Isen, 1987, 2002). Positive affect also seems to encourage intrinsic motivation. A teacher's positive emotions can be contagious and can help others maximize on positive events. Edward "Chip" Anderson, who has conducted extensive research from the Center For Strengths-

Based Education, explains the strengths philosophy of individual talents and strength in these ways:

“while each and every person has talents, our most dominant talents provide our greatest opportunity for achieving to levels of excellence. A 'strength' is a personal quality that enables and empowers a person do certain things very well. It is the ability to provide consistent, near perfect performance in a given activity. Talents are transformed into strengths through knowledge, skills, and experiential learning. Specific qualities that are considered strengths include behavior patterns that make you effective, thought patterns that make you efficient, beliefs that empower you to succeed, attitudes that sustain your efforts toward achievement and excellence, and motivations that propel you to take action and maintain the energy needed to achieve.”

Assessing individual strengths on college campuses typically involves the Clifton StrengthsFinder, which has been administered to over 1, 000, 000 people worldwide. The internet-based measurement tool consists of 180 paired comparison items that take about 35 minutes to complete. Upon completion, the respondent receives feedback on the five most dominant of 34 possible themes, referred to as “Signature Themes” of talent, and a description of strategies for capitalizing on their talent and turning them into strengths.

As a strengths-based campus, all entering first-year students at Greenville College take the StrengthsFinder assessment. This facilitates ongoing feedback from professors and advisors during the rest of the college years on cultivating these qualities for nurturing successful academic, social, vocational pursuits. Strengths-based teaching is an approach that capitalizes on the instructor's strengths and deliberately connects students' strengths to strategies for mastering the course content, so that students are more motivated and engaged in the course.

Based upon Nielsen's findings on motivation and students' learning strategies in music education and ongoing research on a strengths-based educational approach, there may be a compelling link to increasing motivation and self-efficacy through strengths-based strategies in piano study. The development of strengths-based pedagogical strategies may provide new insights on how best to affect and improve motivation and practice in first-year non-keyboard music majors in class piano, and piano majors in applied study. The learning strategies section of Nielsen's study assessed 50 items from the Norwegian adaptation of the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ-inventory) and categorized into the following three general types of scales (Pintrich et al., 1991).

Cognitive Strategies: Rehearsal, Elaboration, Organization and Critical Thinking

Rehearsal relates to what extent students use strategies to repeat parts of the material to master the task. For example, 'I select important technical and musical parts, repeating these over and over again.' Elaboration addresses to what extent students use strategies to integrate new information with existing knowledge. For example, 'I try to develop musical ideas by making connections between alternative interpretations from listening to music and from lecturers.' Organizational scale addresses to what extent the students use

strategies to select appropriate information and to construct connections within the information. For example, 'When I practice, I go through the music and try to find the most important musical ideas.' Critical thinking addresses to what extent the students make critical evaluations with respect to standards of excellence. For example, 'I often find myself questioning technical solutions and interpretations on my main instrument to decide if they work.'

Metacognitive Strategies: metacognitive self-regulation addresses to what extent students plan, monitor and regulate their problem solving during practice. For example, 'When practicing, I set goals for myself to direct my practicing.'

Resource Management Strategies: time and study environment, effort regulation, peer learning and help seeking. These four scales relate to students' regulatory strategies for controlling other resources besides their cognition. Examples of time and study environment: 'I find it hard to stick to a practice schedule.' Effort regulation: 'I often feel so lazy or bored when I practice, that I quit before I finish what I planned to do.' Peer learning: 'When practicing repertoire, I often try to perform the piece for a classmate or a friend.' Help seeking: 'Even if I have trouble learning the music, I try to work on my own, without help from anyone.'

Nielsen's Results/ Strengths-based Applications in Piano Pedagogy

31. Use of Specific Learning and Study Strategies: Overall, advanced students used cognitive and metacognitive strategies in their individual practice. However they used strategies to manage their resources to a lesser extent, in other words, *advanced music students did not seem to engage in practice planning*
32. Relationship Between Self-Efficacy Beliefs and Strategy Use: *Overall, students who perceived themselves as able to learn or perform a task by their instrumental practice also reported using more learning and study strategies*. Findings also showed female first-year students as greater users of learning strategies, but less efficacious than males in instrumental practicing. Previous studies on pre-conservatoire students have shown that past experiences in contests and concerts, social comparisons and reinforcement from others may contribute to shaping the first-year student's self-efficacy beliefs. Thus, present findings suggest that males have had more performing mastery experiences than females, as successes strengthen self-efficacy, whereas repeated failures undermine it. A firm sense of efficacy built on the basis of past successes is believed to withstand temporary failures. (Bong and Skaalvik, 2003).
33. Students tended to use help-seeking and peer-learning strategies to a lesser extent. The research findings show that *first-year music students do not use fellow students to help and support individual learning on the instrument.*

Strengths-based Application for Class Piano

Strengths-based instruction increases students' perceived sense of self-efficacy, or confidence in their ability to learn or perform a task on the piano.

- identify teacher and individual student's strengths. Specifically, the instructor explains the strengths philosophy to students on the first day of class. The instructor then describes own strengths and how they are used to accomplish the tasks within the course. Students may then realize their personal potential for creating positive learning outcomes in practice and performance. Deliberately connecting the student's strengths to strategies for mastering the course content will enable students to be more motivated and engaged to practice.
- provide more class teaching strategies and increase class time for pair and small group work in harmonization, improvisation, and sightreading.
- provide more class teaching strategies and increase class time for ensemble work for reading and repertoire performance.

In spite of the fact that practicing is an individual activity, students will find it constructive and improve learning during instrumental practice to be greater users of peer-learning and help-seeking strategies, in other words, employ more group strategies!

Strengths-based Application for Applied Piano

Based upon findings that show that first-year music students do not use fellow students to help and support their individual learning on the instrument, instructors could help students

- create an environment for peer learning, as well as an environment in which they can benefit from hearing different perspectives regarding a particular piece or a task. This could include such pedagogical activities as interpretation seminars, or studio classes that encourage peer critique and group discussion.
- discuss the technical and musical challenges of a piece with fellow students resulting in a greater sharing of ideas that, in turn challenges each person's capacity to engage in metacognitive strategies in his or her own practice.
- encourage more ensemble participation and concert attendance. Mature musicians may be affected in their interpretation of a given work by listening to a variety of artists' renditions of a the same work, consideration of alternative views regarding the interpretation of a particular musical work prepares musicians to set their own goal strategy for the interpretation of the music.

Other resource management strategies for both class piano and applied piano students to engage in practice planning could include having students turn in practice logs or schedules that set aside blocks of time to practice, ensuring effective use of that practice time. Having individuals organize the study environment and committing oneself to completing practice goals are important aspects of piano practice.

It is a shared responsibility of instrumental teachers and the institutions to increase their students' competence and confidence as they progress through higher music education. Educational programs that seek to empower students must not only cultivate the skills to succeed but must endeavor to maximize the will for success by nurturing the belief that one can indeed succeed and encouraging the self-regulatory strategies required to help

bring about that success (Pajares, 2002). Students' awareness of strengths builds self-efficacy because their strengths reflect their abilities and their ability to achieve maximum success. Among the future developments in piano pedagogy helping students cultivate and apply their strengths could provide the impetus that will have tremendous impact on student motivation and promote effective practice and achievement.

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Improvisation in Group Piano Curricula: Meeting the Requirements of the National Association of Schools of Music

by Mark Laughlin

Improvisation has been an essential part of performance practice and composition in every epoch of music. This skill was one of many expected from every performer regardless of instrument, but was never more prevalent than in the realm of keyboard performance. Throughout history, important composers and performers of keyboard literature were masters of improvisation including J. S. Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin and Liszt. It is well documented that Mozart would take great care in scoring the orchestra parts of his piano concerti, leaving the piano part in a skeletal form. This allowed him the opportunity to improvise ornaments and embellishments on the performance.[1] In the nineteenth century, performers such as Chopin and Liszt elevated the sophistication of their extemporaneous prowess to such a degree that their abilities and reputations developed into mythic lore. The students of Chopin have documented in numerous correspondence that his written compositions were mere sketches of his improvisations and Liszt, the constant showman, would take themes from his audience on which to improvise.

In the early twentieth century, improvisation became an essential means of expression in the world of jazz and blues. With the standardization of basic forms (e.g. 12 bar blues, binary, ternary, strophic and theme and variation) within those styles, musicians were provided with more opportunity and freedom to improvise, which allowed them to embellish the harmonic structure and develop improvised melodic fragments called "riffs". These improvised riffs served as the foundation for many jazz and blues compositions. As improvisation began to flourish in the world of jazz and blues, the skill drastically declined in Western art music, especially within academia.

The most current and readily available way to experience contemporary extemporaneous creation is to observe jazz musicians. Although jazz musical idioms and styles are different from those of Western art music[2], the main objective of their improvisation is similar: to express the performer's creativity and musicality. Improvisation provides every musician, not only the jazz musician, with a personal and vital creative experience that utilizes the laws of harmony, melody and rhythm.[3]

Improvisation of all types is useful as a means of learning music because it requires the total involvement of the teacher and student. Although improvisation techniques, materials and approaches vary from era to era and style to style, the overall task is similar. Rules are given, a style is prescribed, and a strategy emerges. An easy way to begin to improvise is by embellishing the melodies of folk songs, patriotic songs, and other easily remembered diatonic melodies or by simply altering the style of a work.

A student must truly understand the form, style and harmonic and melodic structure of a period to improvise in the style of that era. If a student listens to and understands the structure of various styles, they can be taught to improvise in those styles.[4] Once a

student reaches this level of stylistic understanding, the student can then begin to apply advanced levels of musicianship into his/her improvisations including the application of knowledge from music history, music theory and aural skills courses. This type of understanding and application increases the overall musicality of the student.

It is believed by many scholars that those who learn to improvise begin to internalize forms, scales, chords, melodic construction and development, harmonic vocabulary, ear-training and many other aspects of music at a faster rate than those who do not. Dr. Edwin E. Gordon (1997) noted improvisation as one of the seven most important stabilized music aptitudes - the others were melody, harmony, tempo, meter, phrasing, and creativity.[5] Dr. Gordon continued to express the importance of improvisation by stating, "If for some reason a choice had to be made between the teaching of literacy and the teaching of improvisation and creativity skills, literacy would appear to be of less importance."[6] Through the study of improvisation one begins to develop overall musical understanding and has the opportunity to explore and express individual creativity through music.

The National Association of Schools of Music, recognizing the importance of improvisation in building overall musical aptitude, included it among the requirements for accreditation. Improvisation was first added as an addendum to the handbook for standards for undergraduate degrees by the National Association of Schools of Music in 1991-1992 and was later incorporated as a requirement at the 1993-1994 national meeting. It did, however, undergo revisions in 1999 and the current N.A.S.M. requirement states students must acquire the following skills:

VII. Competencies Common to all Professional Baccalaureate Degrees in Music and to all Undergraduate Degrees Leading to Teacher Certification.

B. Common Body of Knowledge and Skills

3. Composition and Improvisation

Students must acquire:

a. Rudimentary capacity to create derivative or original music both extemporaneously and in written form.

b. The ability to compose, improvise, or both at a basic level in one or more musical languages, for example, the imitation of various musical styles, improvisation on pre-existing materials, the creation of original compositions, experimentation with various sound sources, and manipulating the common elements in non-traditional ways.

Since this regulation was integrated into the National Association of Schools of Music membership handbook, colleges and universities have relied on group piano courses to insure that this requirement is properly met. Although this requirement can be met by other means, group piano courses maintain and/or absorb this responsibility due to the

prominence of group piano labs in schools of music, music departments and music programs across the United States. Group piano courses also provide many other first musical experiences for music majors and non-music majors including transposition, composition, harmonization, multi-clef reading, open-score reading, figured bass and the reading of pop symbols or chord changes. The group piano setting allows students the opportunity to perform and improvise music from different musical genres and permits students the opportunity to apply skills from music theory courses (e.g. figured bass, pop chord progressions and voice leading) into an applicable performance medium. It is within this group atmosphere that improvisation may be fostered to give all students, regardless of skill and ability, the opportunity to explore and develop creative skills with the help and support of his or her peers.

Thirteen years have elapsed since N.A.S.M. incorporated improvisation into its requirements for membership. In this thirteen-year time period, strides have been made to increase awareness of the importance of improvisation and to develop this skill within the group piano curricula. Since its inclusion, improvisation has been the avenue of discussion in several annual reports and conferences by the National Association of Schools of Music. The majority of these reports focused on the importance of improvisation, the musical and educational benefits of the skill, and on examples of how to incorporate extemporaneous activities into the classroom setting. Among these include articles by many of our esteemed colleagues including:

E.L. Lancaster, "Composition and Improvisation in the Preparation of K-12 teachers," *Proceedings of the 72nd Annual Meeting: National Association of Schools of Music* (1996).

Martha K. Hilley, "Composition and Improvisation in Class Piano: Curricula Approaches," *Proceedings of the 72nd Annual Meeting: National Association of Schools of Music* 85 (1997): 47-49.

Gerald J. Lloyd, "Improvisation and Composition: Thinking in Music," *Proceedings of the 71st Annual Meeting: National Association of Schools of Music* 84 (1995): 3.

David Rosenboom, "Improvisation and Composition: Synthesis and Integration into the Music Curriculum," *Proceedings of the 71st Annual Meeting: National Association of Schools of Music* 84 (1995): 22-23.

Ann Collins, "What is Improvisation?" *Proceedings of the 71st Annual Meeting: National Association of Schools of Music* 84 (1995): 13.

Dorothy K. Payne, "Composition and Improvisation in the Core Music Curriculum," *Proceedings of the 71st Annual Meeting: National Association of Schools of Music* 84 (1995): 9-10.

Ten years after the initial requirement was included into the handbook, I created a survey instrument to investigate how academic institutions accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music meet the improvisation requirements set forth by N.A.S.M. in their group piano curricula.

This particular research had three primary focuses: (1) the familiarity of the instructor with improvisation, (2) what text was being used in the group piano curriculum at each represented institution and (3) if/when/how improvisation was included within the group piano curriculum. The research instrument was not intended to collect specific data including syllabi, exams, or detailed institutional requirements concerning keyboard ensemble courses, keyboard skills courses for piano majors, private piano lessons, or jazz related courses.

The Population

The population for the study consisted of one hundred group piano instructors at four-year degree-granting colleges and universities accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music. Only full-time faculty members at the surveyed institutions were considered for participation.

The Institutions

Two colleges and universities were selected from each state to participate in the survey. Among those surveyed included the resident university (e.g. The University of Alabama, The University of South Carolina), as well as the state college (e.g. Mississippi State University, North Dakota State). Institutions that were chosen to participate in the study were selected from the National Association of Schools of Music membership roster.

Data Analysis

The research instrument was divided into four sections (Sections A, B, C, and D). Section A of the survey was designed to elicit basic information about the educational background of each instructor and to ascertain if each instructor had taken academic courses in group piano pedagogy and if improvisation was a part of that education. Section B contained questions designed to ascertain the respondent's introspective view of his or her own improvisation abilities. Section C was designed to gain information concerning the respondent's overall teaching experience and teaching approach, as it pertains to group piano. The last section, Section D, inquired about the inclusion of improvisation in the group piano setting at each respondent's particular institution.

Before the survey could be designed or administered, one very important question had to be answered - **What is improvisation?**

For the purpose of the study, improvisation was defined and classified into six categories:

34. Ornamentation of Melody
35. Figured Bass
36. Modal Improvisation
37. Chord Based Improvisation
38. Pop Symbols and Lead Sheets
39. Free Improvisation

Respondents were asked to indicate which category best described the type of improvisation taught at their respected institutions. The respondents were asked to check all categories that were applicable. The results are as follows:

- Ornamentation of Melody - adding grace notes, trills, mordents, etc. Of those surveyed, 10% taught this method of improvisation.
- Realization of Figured Bass and Roman numerals. Of those surveyed, 22% utilized this method of improvisation.
- Modal Improvisation - students must improvise utilizing various modes. Of those surveyed, 16% included modes as part of improvisation.
- Chord Based Improvisation - students must improvise over a given chord structure. Of those surveyed, 70% utilized this method of improvisation.
- Pop Symbols or Lead Sheets - which included improvisation that used pop symbols or chord changes. Of those surveyed, 40% used this method.
- Free Improvisation - students must improvise with no given key or chords. Of those surveyed, 10% taught this method of improvisation.

Section A

Section A determined if current group piano instructors had taken academic courses in group piano pedagogy and if improvisation was a part of that education.

Sixty percent of those surveyed had taken at least one course in group piano pedagogy (which includes children, adult and/or college level group teaching).

However, of the 60% of instructors who had taken at least one course in group piano pedagogy, only half were required to teach improvisation as part of their training. These results indicated that only 15 instructors out of 50 respondents had been required to teach improvisation in a group setting under the supervised guidance of a faculty member. This is obviously an area that needs to be addressed. How can we as educators expect the next generation of piano pedagogues to foster a skill as important as improvisation if we are not nurturing the skill in our own academic setting?

Section B

Instructors were asked to self-evaluate their own improvisation ability as a classical

pianist. The results are as follows:

8% - Very Weak 28% - Weak 32% - Mediocre 20% - Strong 12% - Very Strong

Instructors were asked to rate their own improvisation ability as a jazz pianist. The results are as follows:

65% - Nonexistent 10% - Very Weak 8% - Weak 10% - Mediocre 4% - Strong 3% - Very Strong

Instructors were asked to rate their ability to teach improvisation on an elementary, intermediate and advanced level.

How would you rate your ability to teach improvisation on an elementary level?

0% - Nonexistent, 0% - Very Weak, 6% - Weak, 32% - Mediocre, 32% - Strong, 30% - Very Strong

How would you rate your ability to teach improvisation on an intermediate level?

0% - Nonexistent, 4% - Very Weak, 20% - Weak, 38% - Mediocre, 26% - Strong, 12% - Very Strong

How would you rate your ability to teach improvisation on an advanced level?

18% - Nonexistent, 26% - Very Weak, 24% - Weak, 8% - Mediocre, 20% - Strong, 4% - Very Strong

Section C

Respondents were asked: How often is improvisation taught in group piano courses at your institution?

Every Class Meeting - 0%, Once a week - 11%, Once every two weeks - 21%, At the discretion of the Instructor or Graduate Assistant - 58%, Never taught - 10%

Is improvisation addressed only as it appears in the group piano text?

Yes - 48%, No - 42%, N/A - 10%

Section D

It was then important to discover what text was being used for group piano courses. By knowing which text is used, we can determine to some degree how often and to what

extent students in the 48 percentile are being exposed to improvisation.

The top nine group piano texts are as follows:

Alfred's Group Piano for Adults (Lancaster, Renfrow) - 36%, Piano for the Developing Musician (Hilley, Olson) - 12%, Keyboard Musicianship (Lyke) and Keyboard Strategies (Stecher, Horowitz) - 8%, Piano 101 (Lancaster, Renfrow) - 6%, Progressive Class Piano (Heerema), Piano for Pleasure (Hilley), Piano Lab (Lindeman), Piano for Adults (Bastien) - 4%

Of the 42% that address improvisation beyond how it appears in the group piano text - 36% use a secondary group piano text for supplemental material and 6% have created their own text through a variety of sources.

The top six secondary group piano texts are as follows:

Harmonization at the Piano (Frackenpohl) - 14%, Alfred's Group Piano for Adults (Lancaster, Renfrow) - 6%, Piano for the Developing Musician (Hilley), Keyboard Strategies (Stecher, Horowitz), Contemporary Class Piano (Mach), Adult Piano Adventures (Faber) - 4%

The overall results from the research instrument indicated that every instructor surveyed feels that improvisation is an important aspect of each student's musical education. However, improvisation is still considered as an afterthought or something "extra" as opposed to being truly integrated into the curriculum. Great strides have been made toward curriculum integration but there is much more to be done.

Learning to improvise can be one of the most rewarding aspects of music study, but like every skill and performance practice, it takes time to develop, mature and blossom. This can only happen with a dedicated and involved teacher who has the foresight to understand the importance of the skill and the patience to allow it to develop within each individual student.

The complete results from the *Survey of Improvisation in Group Piano Curricula in Colleges and Universities Accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music* are published through UMI Research Press and may be accessed/ordered online at www.il.proquest.com or by contacting Mark Laughlin directly.

Notes

1. Frederick Neumann, Ornamentation and Improvisation in Mozart. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 240.
2. Mark C. Grideley, Jazz Styles: A History and Analysis. 6th ed. (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1997), 6.
3. Bill Dobbins, The Contemporary Jazz Pianist: A Comprehensive Approach to

Keyboard Improvisation, Vol. 1. (Jamestown, Rhode Island: GAMT Music Press, 1978), 55.
4. David Baker, "Improvisation: A Tool for Music Learning." Music Educators Journal, 66 45, 42-51.
5. Edwin E. Gordon, A Music Learning Theory for Newborn and Young Children 1997 ed. (Chicago: GIA Publications, 1997), 12.
6. Edwin E. Gordon, Learning Sequence in Music: Skill, Content and Patterns. 1984 ed. (Chicago: GIA Publications, 1984), 5.

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Discussion Group: "Friday Discussion Groups with Panel Presenters" by Julie Knerr, University of Missouri-Columbia

Discussion Group: "Share Your Favorite Piano Pedagogy and Group Piano Projects that Relate to the Millennial Student" by Erica Minneman, Tacoma

Discussion Group: "Group Piano and the Millennial Student" by Lesley Sisterhen, Baylor University

Welcome to the Tenth Anniversary Issue of Piano Pedagogy Forum!

Please, on behalf of the entire community of musicians at the USC School of Music, accept my hearty welcome to our campus, through the magic of our fine website. I am delighted to bring you these greetings through one of the more significant achievements on our site, the PIANO PEDAGOGY FORUM, as it celebrates its Tenth Anniversary here in January 2007.

The PIANO PEDAGOGY FORUM is an example of so many things that are right in our profession: a unique publication that illuminates vital accomplishment and discovery in this important field, a purposeful demarcation of the critical nature of piano pedagogy study and practice at the University of South Carolina, and the first such dedicated on-line journal of its kind in piano pedagogy and indeed in many of our art's most enduring sub-disciplines. I am grateful to Professor Scott Price and his colleagues here at USC and through the world who have helped bring this distinctive serial to our industries for the past ten years.

It is also a privilege for me to help the FORUM and its editors and contributors look forward to the next ten years, first by recognizing the efforts of MARVIN BLICKENSTAFF, one of the great leaders in the field and a mentor to many of the FORUM's most important board members. His most recent work appears elsewhere in this Tenth Anniversary Issue.

We have much to be proud of with the PIANO PEDAGOGY FORUM as it prepares to represent what is best in the teaching of piano for another ten meaningful years. Thank you for being a part of it by visiting it, contributing to it, and sustaining it.
With all best wishes,

Tayloe Harding, Dean USC School of Music

Tayloe Harding became Dean of the School of Music at University of South Carolina on July 1, 2005. He was most recently the Head of the Department of Music, Professor of Music, and Chief Advancement Officer for the Arts at Valdosta State University (VSU) as well as serving as Executive Director of the Valdosta Symphony Orchestra. He has previously served in faculty and administrative capacities at North Dakota State University, Virginia Commonwealth University, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Georgia State University. Dr. Harding's works have received performances throughout the United States, Canada and on six continents. He has received grants for new works and premiers from Meet the Composer, the National Endowment for the Arts, Lila Wallace-Readers' Digest Foundation, Philip Morris, Inc., and a variety of state and local agencies in Florida, Georgia, Virginia, Wisconsin, Illinois, Kentucky, Minnesota, and North Dakota. Commissions for his new works have been received from Thamyris, the Atlanta Winds, the African-American Philharmonic Orchestra, the Atlanta Community Orchestra, the Fernbank Museum of Natural History, the Chicago Saxophone Quartet, the Gainesville (FL) Civic Orchestra, Chorus and Ballet, and from numerous individuals and Universities. His has been a fellow of the Ragdale and UCROSS Foundations, as well as of the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, the Hambidge Center for the Arts, and the Atlantic Center for the Arts. A member of ASCAP, his works are published by Mareba Music, and Collected Editions, Ltd. He is currently serving as President of the College Music Society, the nation's only comprehensive professional and scholarly membership organization in music in higher education has been active in many national and international organizations, but most recently the Society of Composers, Inc. and the National Associations of Schools of Music.

Welcome to the Tenth Anniversary Issue of Piano Pedagogy Forum!

Dear Colleagues,

It is my distinct pleasure to welcome you to this special tenth anniversary issue of Piano Pedagogy Forum. In this special issue, we celebrate the talents and achievements of a remarkable member of our profession: Marvin Blickenstaff. This gifted and multi-talented individual is one of the driving forces in our profession today and we are privileged, indeed, to recognize him in this way. We are also pleased to present the reports from the National Group Piano/Piano Pedagogy Forum national convention as part of our continued partnership with this important and profession-shaping organization.

As of this writing, Piano Pedagogy Forum has published 20 issues with participation from 102 writers from 84 different colleges/universities, 28 different states and two foreign countries. My initial hope when creating the journal was to fill a niche and create a vehicle for delivering college-level pedagogy information to teachers, students, and the public. It was paramount in my mind, without question, that the journal and its contents had to be available to everyone at no cost. In 1997, Piano Pedagogy Forum was a unique endeavor and I wasn't sure that it would continue to exist past the first two years of publication, or that the response would be positive, or that the journal would even be read by anyone!

Ten years later, articles from Piano Pedagogy Forum have become required and recommended reading in piano pedagogy courses, have been reprinted in The American Music Teacher, Keyboard Companion, and The Greek Music Education Journal, and I receive numerous copyright permission requests each year for inclusion of our articles in college-level course packets. We have received requests for information about Piano Pedagogy Forum from the United Kingdom, Australia, China, India, Malaysia, and Lebanon, making Piano Pedagogy Forum a truly international resource. We also continue to share an exciting and rewarding partnership with the National Group Piano/Piano Pedagogy Forum (GP3) national convention by publishing the reports of their past conferences which are available in this issue, and in the back-issue archives.

I refer to Piano Pedagogy Forum as "we" because it truly is a collaborative effort between the editorial board, the 102 writers (many of whom have contributed articles on several occasions), and the general readership. I believe the journal represents some of the best attributes of our profession in that we as a community of artists, teachers, and educators have all come together to create a resource that is freely available to anyone who has need. And, that is a rare thing indeed in today's current market mentality. Everyone involved in this endeavor has given so generously of their time, work, and talent (without a single request for remuneration) for the "greater good" in our profession. I thank you sincerely for your continued support during the past decade.

This collective "we" includes many people behind the scenes without whose support the publication of this project would not be possible. I must give special thanks to Dorothy

Payne (Dean of the University of South Carolina School of Music from 1994-1998) for her unwavering support of the initial start-up of the project; Jane Magrath, Barbara Fast, and Steve Clark who serve tirelessly and magnificently on the editorial board; Jason Trenary (IT Specialist at the University of South Carolina School of Music) who has been a truly invaluable resource and source of support for ten years; the University of South Carolina and the School of Music for their collective support; the founders and board members of the National Group Piano/Piano Pedagogy Forum national convention; and, not least, to the writers/contributors and readers who have made Piano Pedagogy Forum such a success. I thank all of you with my deepest sincerity for your involvement in this project.

It is no secret to readers of Piano Pedagogy Forum that the early format of the journal owes a great debt to Keyboard Companion and the late Richard Chronister. Richard's vision was extraordinary and continues to be a driving force behind many of the important endeavors in our profession. Credit must be given where credit is due, and a very large part of the success of Piano Pedagogy Forum is due to Richard Chronister's legacy and vision.

I once again extend to you my warmest welcome to our tenth anniversary issue, and thank you with all my heart for your continued support of Piano Pedagogy Forum. It is all of you who make this journal what it is today, and who make me proud to be able to serve our extraordinary profession.

With warmest regards and only my best of wishes to all of you,

Scott Price
Editor-in-Chief

Scott Price currently serves as Associate Professor of Piano and Piano Pedagogy, Chair of the Piano Area, Coordinator of Group Piano, Coordinator of Piano Pedagogy, and Coordinator of Community Piano Programs at USC. A graduate of the University of Oklahoma, The Cleveland Institute of Music, and Bowling Green State University (OH), his recent engagements have included performances and clinics at the national conventions of the Music Teachers National Association, the National Keyboard Pedagogy Conference, and solo recitals throughout SC, GA, ND, OH, OK, KS, MO, TX, and Washington DC. Dr. Price is creator and editor-in-chief of the on-line piano pedagogy journal "Piano Pedagogy Forum". Dr. Price has recorded 28 compact discs of educational piano music for Alfred Publishing Company, and has published educational compositions with Alfred Publishing Company and the FJH Music Company. He serves as chair of the Committee on Special Needs Students for the National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy, and served on the planning committee of the 2006 National Group Piano/Piano Pedagogy Forum National Convention. Special teaching interests of Scott Price include teaching students with disabilities, very young children, and teaching keyboard improvisation to piano students ranging from beginning to advanced levels. His work with disabled students has been featured on WISTV (SC) and WLTX (SC), and in The State newspaper (SC), Columbia Metropolitan Magazine, and was featured at the 2005 National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy. One of Dr. Price's autistic students was recently featured on Dateline NBC, and CNN. Scott Price was awarded the "Best of BGSU Outstanding Graduate" alumnus award from Bowling Green State University in Ohio in 2002, and was invited back to the University of Oklahoma as a "Distinguished Guest Alumnus" in March of 2005 to perform, lecture, and present a piano masterclass. Other recent engagements include performances and masterclasses in Thailand, Singapore, and in Kuala Lumpur and Penang in Malaysia, and lectures at the 2005 Georgia State Music Teachers State Convention.

Upcoming appearances include performances, lectures and sessions with the Ohio Music Teachers Association, and the International Collaborative Conference of the Music Teachers National Association/Canadian Federation of Music Teachers/Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, Canada.

"Good Luck"

by Marvin Blickenstaff

Being honored by the *Piano Pedagogy Forum* in this way comes as a total surprise. Both hands are insufficient to count the number of equally deserving piano pedagogues who should be receiving this exceptional tribute. I am humbled, flattered, and feel undeserving.

But such is my luck. My life has been one of rich and undeserved rewards. I was born to wonderful parents who taught me, by example and word, life's important lessons. Why was it my good luck to become part of that family, when countless others are born into poverty, broken homes, war-torn political turmoil, etc? From my parents I learned the value of hard work and perseverance, that life is for *giving* and not for *getting*. An atmosphere of love and affirmation prevailed in our home. My piano study was encouraged, although it was uncertain that I would be permitted to major in music. Our family was "medical," and it was anticipated that I would follow the paths of my older brothers. I shall never forget the scene at the breakfast table when I was a senior in high school and recently returned from having won a state piano competition. My dentist father put down his fork, looked across the table and said "Mother, if Marvin wants to major in music, I think we'll let him." (That statement says much about who was in charge of our family!)

Good luck played a most decisive role in my pre-college piano training. As a seventh grader I suggested to my mother that it was time for me to stop piano lessons, for that was the age when my two older brothers became piano drop-outs. Mother countered with a plan to change teachers, and she contacted Fern Nolte Davidson, by far the most outstanding teacher in our area. Good luck was mine once again, for Fern accepted me as a student. After a few lessons I was convinced of my life's goal: I would be a pianist. What I learned from Fern Davidson in those six years remains my constant companion as I teach. Many of her ideas about technique and curriculum sequencing are evident in my studio. Occasionally I will suggest to a student "It's time for you to take a lesson from Mrs. Davidson," and we examine every bit of ink on the page as I learned to do under her watchful eye. Fern and I have been best friends for over five decades. This fall we will honor her 100th birthday, and scores of former students will be on hand to celebrate the extraordinary "good luck" of having studied with Fern Davidson.

I had the good luck of being accepted into the Oberlin Conservatory on scholarship. The environment was totally stimulating, most especially being part of the Oberlin College Choir under Robert Fountain. All senior piano majors were required to take the obligatory piano pedagogy course. We regretted the time spent in class when we could be practicing. I loathed the reading in music education and looking through files of outdated teaching materials. However, we were required to teach a child from the community, and that experience went far beyond "tolerable." I totally enjoyed the work with my first student.

The dislike I felt for my one undergraduate piano pedagogy course has returned in the form of a divine retribution. Life is filled with ironies: each college position I have held has required that I teach piano pedagogy courses and my professional reputation is inextricably linked with the field of piano pedagogy. I'm sure that Oberlin piano pedagogy teacher looks down from heaven, shakes her finger at me and says "I knew you would end up teaching!"

My first college positions were in Kansas, and after six years I took a leave-of-absence and moved to New York for advanced piano study. A most unfortunate loss of money to a scam concert manager in Canada sent me scrambling for a job in the Big Apple. Eventually I found employment at Carl Fischer, Inc. where I worked in their orchestral rental department and traveled around the country presenting promotional workshops on their piano catalogue. I was urged to solicit new composers for Carl Fischer publications, which resulted in Lynn Freeman Olson's being published by Fischer. Ultimately Lynn and I were asked to create a piano course for Carl Fischer. Lynn suggested that we add Louise Bianchi to the team. Those years working with Lynn and Louise were another stroke of good luck. The missing links in my piano pedagogy background were now being filled with the inspiring and stimulating collaboration with Lynn and Louise, both trained by Frances Clark and Louise Goss. The end product of our years of working together was the piano course *Music Pathways*.

Lynn Olson's untimely death left gaping holes in many lives and organizations. Nelita True took over Lynn's responsibilities as the director of piano activities for the International Workshops. Nelita invited me to join the faculty one summer, and that invitation extended through the ensuing fifteen years. How lucky can you get?! A paid trip to a different European city each summer, meaningful friendships, inspiring concerts and lectures, and contacts around the world.

My teaching career has been associated mainly with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Goshen College. Good luck followed me in both positions in the form of amicable and affirming collegial relationships, and many fine students who have become lifelong friends. I feel embraced by those friendships and the affection of former students. I'm very lucky.

Richard Chronister's premature death in 1999 left the Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy without a President of the Board. When Louise Goss and Sam Holland extended the invitation of the Board to join them as president, I was totally dumbfounded. No one could fill Richard's shoes. We all recognized that. The privilege of working closely with Sam and Louise as the executive committee of the Center has been the most meaningful professional relationship of my life. The planning of the three National Conferences on Keyboard Pedagogy has meant untold hours of work, but their success has been totally gratifying. Another example of my good luck.

The calendar suggests that I am well beyond legitimate retirement age. But I don't feel ready for "real" retirement. Furthermore, there are many students who need piano lessons, some teachers' groups and conferences who need workshops, and some audiences who

need to hear live classical piano repertoire. Mine is the good luck of health, energy, and the desire to share. As I write these lines I realize once again that my road has been a smooth one, with few uncharted detours and no serious accidents. I tell my piano pedagogy students that, were I given the opportunity to live my life over, I would choose once again to be a piano teacher.

Seventy-plus years of good luck - mixed with discipline and work. What a wonderful life I have had. Many of you have contributed to make it so. How very fortunate and grateful I am to have such fine colleagues in the piano pedagogy community, and to have had such good luck!

Marvin Blickenstaff is known among piano teachers throughout the country for his teaching, lecturing, performing, and publishing. He has presented workshops for piano teachers throughout the USA, and appears frequently as soloist and lecturer at state conventions of music teachers and at the national convention of the Music Teachers National Association. For the past eleven years he has been on the faculty of International Workshops where he has performed and lectured in Canada, Austria, Scotland, Norway, France, and Switzerland. In 1992 he was honored by the Indiana Music Teachers Association with the citation of "Teacher of the Year." In 1995 The Registered Piano Teachers of New Zealand sponsored him in concert and a 15-lecture tour of that country. He currently serves as Board President of the Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy. *Music Pathways*, a 36-book instructional series, was co-authored by Blickenstaff, Lynn Freeman Olson and Louise Bianchi. He serves as a piano editor for the Frederick Harris Music Company (Toronto) and has published *Celebration Series: A Handbook for Teachers* with co-authors Cathy Albergo and Reid Alexander. Blickenstaff has been on the editorial board of *The American Music Teacher* and is an associate editor of the periodical *Keyboard Companion*. Blickenstaff's teaching career is associated with the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill where he taught for nine years and served as Chairman of Instruction in Piano, and with Goshen College (IN) where he taught for over twenty years. He now resides in the greater Philadelphia area and is teaching at The College of New Jersey (Ewing), the Westminster Choir College and Conservatory of Rider University and The New School for Music Study (Princeton). Blickenstaff holds degrees from The Oberlin Conservatory of Music and Indiana University where he received both performing and academic honors. His teachers have included Fern Nolte Davidson, Emil Danenberg, and Bela Böszormenyi-Nagy, and he has coached with Leon Fleisher and György Sebök.

A Tribute to Marvin Blickenstaff

by Scott Donald

When I was asked to write a tribute to the pedagogical brilliance of Marvin Blickenstaff, I immediately responded with an enthusiastic "YES". After accepting this offer, the immensity of it became apparent. I have the distinct privilege of working with Marvin at the New School for Music Study. Our teaching environment is very collaborative. That means that I get to see his teaching and benefit from his guidance every week. The best insight I can provide into Marvin's contribution to the field of piano pedagogy is one of his work in the trenches.

The question that many of us ask on a daily basis is what makes for effective teaching. How can we as teachers provide the most efficient models for success with each of our students as well as make a meaningful musical experience in every lesson. It is easy to find articles that describe what general characteristics are present in expert teaching. In my opinion, Marvin Blickenstaff exhibits these characteristics in his day-to-day teaching. A very important aspect present in expert teaching is breadth of knowledge. Marvin's mind is an amazing storehouse of information on repertoire, stylistic interpretation, historical anecdotes and personal stories that he adds to the mix. His ability to share with his students this information in an informal way is remarkable. It is never presented in a lecture fashion but rather as an aside comment that advances the musical goal during the lesson. He focuses on the musical intent and utilizes his command of information to enhance the presentation of material.

Another characteristic of expert teaching is Marvin's ability to organize and present sequential tasks to ensure that the student attains success during the lesson and to provide structure for when the student is practicing at home. At the New School we have a program that allows students to participate in a more structured and advanced curriculum. It is in this program that each teacher is able to observe Marvin teaching our students. I am able to witness his seamless interaction with these students and how he structures each task to ensure that success is attained during the lesson. This also gives the teacher an opportunity to see the process that Marvin uses to set the student up for success when he leaves the lesson.

Finally and probably the most endearing quality that Marvin possesses is his constant questioning and assessment of his own teaching. As much recognition and praise as he has received over his lifetime, he still questions, "Did I do the best job I could do" with each of his students. We have had conversations about student problems and he is always consulting with other colleagues about solutions to problems he is encountering. How many "artist teachers" do you know that ask for suggestions regarding their own teaching? To top it all off, Marvin still works with all types of students. This includes what all of us would consider average students. He gladly and enthusiastically accepts these students into his studio at the New School. I find this incredibly refreshing and humble. In my opinion, that is the true mark of expert teaching that Marvin exhibits.

It is hard to find a musician in the pedagogy community that fully embodies the qualities of expert teaching as Marvin does. I feel fortunate to be able to benefit from his work and teaching. We all are indebted to him for his continuing work in providing a model to us all as we strive to become expert teachers.

Scott Donald is Administrative Director and Senior Faculty at the New School for Music Study in Princeton, NJ, and serves on the faculty of the College of New Jersey. A native of Greenville, South Carolina, Dr. Donald received his Bachelor of Music degree from Furman University. He was awarded degrees of Master of Music in applied piano, and Doctor of Musical Arts in Music Education/Piano Pedagogy from The University of Texas at Austin, where he worked under the guidance of Dr. Robert Duke and piano pedagogy with Amanda Vick Lethco and Martha Hilley.

A Tribute to Marvin Blickenstaff

by Louise Goss

I had known him for many years - the kind of casual collegial acquaintance that is warm and easy, but somehow never gets beyond that. I had heard him play, sat in on his master classes, and marveled at his many talents. I had always wanted to know him better and to find a way to work with him. I remember saying to Frances on more than one occasion, "That Marvin Blickenstaff...we need to find out what he's all about." Yet somehow it never happened, at least not in Frances' lifetime.

Then in 2000, a major change occurred in his life that was to turn my long-held dream into reality. Marvin retired from Goshen College, and moved to just outside Philadelphia. I heard he was to become our neighbor, and called him on the phone. Would he be interested in teaching at the New School for Music Study? He would. And so began one of the most significant relationships of my professional life.

At the same time, the Frances Clark Center was being organized, and Richard Chronister, its new president, grew gravely ill and suddenly died. Even in our shock and grief, we knew a new president had to found, and suddenly it occurred to us that Marvin Blickenstaff, newly in our midst, was the perfect choice. We invited him to join the Board, and to succeed Richard as its president. He agreed to join the Board, but refused the presidency, claiming the boots were too big to fill.

One September afternoon, before he started teaching, I invited Marvin to my home, sat him down in my most comfortable chair, and persuaded him that if anyone could fill those boots, he was the man. An hour later, his resistance worn down, he had agreed, and the rest is history.

Today Marvin not only serves as President of the Board, but directs the "Program for Excellence in Piano Study" ("PEPS"), an accelerated program for highly motivated piano students at the New School. Naturally he is in great demand as a private teacher, producing young pianists who play with exceptional technical prowess and musical brilliance. His classes are models of what a repertoire class can be when developing complete musicianship is its goal. In addition, he is a father figure to our faculty, advising them on technique and repertoire, observing and critiquing their lessons, coaching their piano performance and counseling them on musical, pedagogical and personal issues.

Recently I asked Sam Holland to describe Marvin Blickenstaff's role in American piano pedagogy, and Sam replied, "He's the best loved piano teacher in America." My jumping off place for this tribute is that sentence of Sam's and an examination of why it is true.
Why is he the best loved piano teacher in America? What is it that distinguishes him from other leaders in our field?

There is no question that it begins with the family in which he grew up. His parents were unusually successful in developing three sons, all of whom were serious students,

outstanding athletes, devout members of the Church of the Brethren, and filled with health, enthusiasm, and ambition. Despite the fact that Marvin's father and his two brothers all had careers in medicine, when Marvin's musical gifts and passion for the piano became evident, he was encouraged and supported at every step. Thus he grew in a nurturing environment, in which he knew himself to be unconditionally loved and supported as he found his own way.

Through good fortune and parental guidance, he was privileged to work with excellent teachers from an early age. He is passionate about performance, and devotes a great deal of time and energy to his practice. He learns a new program each year and takes every opportunity to play in public. As a result his technical prowess and musical artistry have grown steadily year by year. It is a privilege to hear his exceptional musicianship, across a wide spectrum of composers, forms and styles.

As a piano teacher, he is equally enthused and successful in teaching young children and advanced pianists. Parents fight for places in his studio, and professional teachers and pianists clamor for his coaching. He is masterful in the way he develops technical skill at every level, and the artistry of his students' musical expressivity is legendary. He is meticulous in his lesson planning and skillful in his use of lesson time. He begins with careful analysis of the work being studied, both its form and its harmony. His work-out of a new composition is slow, careful and filled with meaningful repetition of accuracy. His work in later stages is energized by the shape and detail of each phrase, knit together by the sweep of large musical gestures.

As a teacher of master classes, these same pedagogical characteristics apply, but the entire class is vitally involved in the work with each student, and the participation he achieves is a model of the best kind of group teaching.

Among his favorite teaching activities are the workshops which he has been giving for many years across the country and around the world. He is prepared on a large variety of topics, each of which is presented with enormous enthusiasm, delivered in elegant language, and illustrated with musical examples which he plays with great beauty and sensitivity.

Since joining the Board of the Frances Clark Center he has been a member of the executive committee, responsible for planning the biennial National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy. While the entire committee works on the entire Conference, Marvin's lead responsibility is outlining the details of the whole program and securing the participants, presenters, keynote speakers and artists. This is a year-round role, but an extremely heavy duty during the odd-numbered years in which the Conference takes place.

This merely hints at the highlights of Marvin's prominence in the various aspects of his career. The thing that really makes him "the best loved piano teacher in America" is a quality beyond all the rest - the open, supportive, warm, caring human being in whose presence the rest of us can grow and flourish.

Louise Goss, is an internationally recognized teacher, lecturer, author and editor. She is chair of the Board of Trustees of the Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy and co-founder of The New School for Music Study. Louise Goss also is co-author and editor of the Frances Clark Library for Piano Students, and has conducted workshops, seminars and study courses at colleges and universities nationwide, and has appeared as lecturer, clinician and consultant in the U.S. and abroad. She has pioneered the production of video teaching tapes, which are used extensively in college and university piano pedagogy departments across the country. From 1983-2000 Louise Goss served as adjunct associate professor of piano pedagogy at Westminster Choir College of Rider University. Louise Goss is a recipient of the 2005 MTNA Achievement Award.

A Tribute to Marvin Blickenstaff

by Sam Holland

I know of no other individual of any age or background who has made a more profound or distinguished impact on the disciplines of piano performance, piano pedagogy, and piano teaching in the last quarter century than Marvin Blickenstaff.

In a career that has now entered its fifth decade, Marvin Blickenstaff has distinguished himself not only as a performing artist, an artist/teacher, a method author, a lecturer and clinician, but as a great human being and a compassionate leader. In all these categories, there is no one more respected and beloved than Marvin Blickenstaff. Few can perform in the world's great concert halls one day, give a workshop to local piano teachers in the hinterlands the next, write a method book the next, and manage an international conference the next. Yet, Marvin Blickenstaff has done this and more for four decades with little sign of slowing down.

As the record shows, he has performed on three continents in major cities to high critical praise. He has held teaching appointments in important institutions including the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Goshen College, and the College of New Jersey. He has led hundreds of workshops for pianists and piano teachers throughout the world. *Music Pathways*, the method series he co-authored, is a landmark accomplishment in progressive music education that broke new ground in its approach to developing skills in music apprreciation, music reading, performance practice, keyboard theory, and technique. The *Celebration Series: Handbook for Teachers* is a monumental compendium of pedagogical and contextual commentary that is used by teachers and students throughout North America. His editions of Bach, Beethoven, and Grieg are thoughtfully prepared and carefully researched.

Since his appointment in 2000 as President of the Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy, Mr. Blickenstaff has taken the helm of one of the most influential positions in the field of music pedagogy. As President, he serves as the senior executive of the New School for Music Study, as a principal planner for the National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy, and the executive publisher of *Keyboard Companion* magazine. Thus, he plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of keyboard music in our culture and throughout the world.

I have to admit that when Marvin became President of the Frances Clark Center, I did not know him personally. Of course, I was well aware of and duly impressed by his credentials. But, in the intervening seven years and the combination of vision and sweat that we have poured into the Frances Clark Center, I am proud to say that we have developed a close professional friendship, one that I treasure. Almost every Friday morning at 8:00AM, I pick up the phone and dial a conference call with Marvin and Louise Goss. Often we talk for up to two hours about the field of piano teaching and the role of the Frances Clark Center in advancing our profession. Details of the National Conference are hashed out. The magazine, the New School, the Board, the website, the

staff, our graduates, our students and more all figure in that call. But, take away the surface and the day-to-day concerns, and what emerges is a feeling of privilege to be in the presence of Marvin (and, of course, Louise). Never in my life have I known a more selfless person or a more generous spirit than Marvin Blickenstaff. Not only the talent and accomplishment, but the love he exudes for music and the joy of teaching music is unique. If you were to arrive for the National Conference two or three days early, you might very well encounter Marvin somewhere in the hotel with his sleeves rolled up carrying boxes around. He is a person that does what needs to be done when it needs to be done. But, the thing that would strike you the most (after you got over the notion that it's Marvin Blickenstaff carrying boxes around), is the smile with which he does it. Why are there so few people like that today?

Marvin would be the first to say that computer technology does not come natrually to him. But, if you were able to peer into his computer and count the number of sent and received messages as he labors to organize the program for the Conference, I'm sure it would number in the tens of thousands. The volume is staggering. If, however, you were the recipient of one of those messages, you would feel the warmth, the respect, and the attention to detail that Marvin invests in even the smallest human interaction. And therein lies the most wondrous and ineffable attribute of this great man - the reason, if one can be named, for his belovedness throughout our field. I have often wished I could begin life all over again as his piano student.

Few individuals' life work is so influential that it can be said to have changed a discipline, even helped to chart the course for a discipline. That can easily and truly be said of Marvin Blickenstaff's accomplishments. His accomplishments have dwarfed those of most who have earned doctorates and held more prestigious positions because of his immense talent, his tireless labor, his undying love, and his indomitable spirit. I can think of no one more completely deserving of a special tribute than Marvin Blickenstaff and I feel blessed to have a part in it.

Sam Holland is a Professor of Music and Associate Director for Academic Affairs of the Division of Music at Southern Methodist University Meadows School of the Arts. He holds degrees in performance from The University of Texas and the University of Houston where he studied with John Perry and Abbey Simon, respectively. He received the Certificate in Piano Pedagogy from the New School for Music Study under Frances Clark and a Ph.D. from the University of Oklahoma. Dr. Holland has co-authored over fifty critically acclaimed books with the school's founders, Frances Clark and Louise Goss. His articles have appeared in journals in the US and abroad and he is the author of *Teaching Toward Tomorrow: a Music Teacher's Primer for Using Keyboards, Computers, and MIDI in the Studio* as well as the new 30-volume Frederick Harris *Celebrate Composers* series. Dr. Holland has presented hundreds of concerts and lectures throughout North America, Australia, and Europe. He was named the Texas Music Teachers Association Collegiate Teacher of the Year in 2006. He has two grown children - one a newspaper reporter, the other studying to be an industrial engineer. He now lives in suburban Dallas with his wife, Bethany, a professional cellist; 12-year old son, Eli, a veteran baseball pitcher; and the best dog in the world - a yellow Lab named Race.

A Tribute to Marvin Blickenstaff

by Beverly Lapp

Certain names cause associations in one's psyche. The name of a particular politician may lead us to nod with affirmation or cringe with despair. Names of loved friends or family members cause feelings of warmth or worry, depending on circumstances. Teachers who become expectant parents trying to find the perfect name will find that some names are ruined forever due to associations with difficult students. Names take on tremendous meaning according to our experiences.

Recently we hosted a holiday luncheon for several families. The topic of childhood music lessons came up, and one friend mentioned that he had taken five years of piano lessons in the Goshen College piano preparatory program. "Who was your group lesson teacher?" I asked, on a hunch, and he answered "Marvin Blickenstaff." The resulting murmur around the table clearly communicated the association: deep respect. Marvin left the Goshen community nearly seven years ago, but his reputation lives on as a pianist and piano teacher extraordinaire, one who for twenty years in Goshen positively impacted the lives of hundreds of students and thousands of listeners at his many recitals and concerts.

I will forever consider myself lucky to have been an undergraduate at Goshen College in the late 1980's. Goshen College, a small liberal arts college in northern Indiana, had long attracted me for reasons of family tradition and overall academic program. Knowing that I would have the opportunity to study with this master teacher on Goshen's music faculty also influenced my decision. As I explored possible majors and life directions at Goshen College it didn't take long to fall in love with the piano. How the piano would shape my vocational path wasn't always clear; all I needed to know was that I left lessons and pedagogy classes feeling more inspired than at any other moment during the week.

I recently came across the following journal excerpt from May of 1989, a term when I was having extra lessons with Marvin to prepare for a competition. It expresses, perhaps better than anything I could write now, the impact of this remarkable teacher on a young person's soul:

I don't think I've ever dreaded a piano lesson as much as I did today. I didn't feel prepared, I was not in the mood, and I felt so tired. I wasn't sure if I could handle Marvin's intensity.

But of course I had to go, and as has happened many times before, it lifted me up! It was intense and while every so often I thought of the security and comfort of my dorm room, those 45 minutes sped by, leaving me wishing I could say longer.

The more I study with Marvin, the more I realize how much I value him as a teacher. He helps me feel the magic in music, the stories, emotions, and meanings. Sometimes I wonder: am I really up to his expectations? In spite of my doubts, I know that even if I

don't study piano for the rest of my life, the work that I am doing now with Marvin is helping me grow tremendously as a person.

Today as I left his studio he shook my hand and said, "Congratulations! It is wonderful for us to meet every day like this." I swallowed hard and agreed out loud, saying, "Yes, it is." As I dropped my music off in my locker, inside I felt like crying, dancing, shouting, doing something to tell the world how uplifted and overwhelmed I felt.

With the benefit of more life experience and perspective, I can now more easily identify a trilogy of impact that Marvin offers as a piano teacher. He skillfully enables the physical and aural delight of good music making. He also allows the student to leave the lesson with a boost to self-esteem (the significance of which we teachers should not underestimate in our work with young people). Finally, he empowers the desire to be a better person and musician.

In lessons with Marvin I remember affirmation being specific, non-redundant, and meaningful. His teaching was infused with solid pedagogy, strengthened with wisdom, and energized by humor and joy. He kept in focus the ultimate goal of teaching his students to think independently. I recall many an awkward moment of silence after being asked for my own ideas regarding interpretation. Those steady invitations to express myself were key in allowing me to grow in confidence in my own musical sensibility.

It was both unexpected and thrilling to find myself back at Goshen College in the late 1990's as Marvin's colleague. I remember commenting to him, after one year of teaching numerous music majors working towards piano proficiency, that my own skills in playing by ear, improvising and harmonization were vastly improving as I taught the material. I will never forget Marvin's succinct response: "Teaching is learning." This simple but profound concept, which I had surely heard before but in that moment became lodged in my consciousness, is one I continue to challenge myself to consider in every studio and classroom teaching situation I find myself in: give the student tools to in effect "teach" themselves and the learning will be more profound.

When I recall Marvin's presence on Arts 3rd, the music department's humble home until we moved into a new facility in 2002, different scenes fill my memory: Marvin regularly being in his studio before light and after dark, the always present cup of coffee as he worked and taught, the whisk of a tall, dark-haired man through the halls, his contagious laugh, and the rapid clicking on his manual typewriter until he reluctantly (but quite adeptly) moved into the computer age. Most of all, I remember the sounds of music leaking through the poorly soundproofed door of his studio. When I needed to check something with Marvin I would approach his office door and if it was closed, rather than walking away, I sometimes allowed myself to stand and listen for a while. Whether it was his own efficient and inspired practicing or that deep and distinguished voice giving feedback between a student's played phrases, those brief moments of listening sent me back to my own studio eager to practice or teach.

While it was a huge privilege for me to experience Marvin as a faculty colleague during those years working together in the Goshen College music department, I will always consider him to be my teacher, mentor, and friend. I know many individuals identify him in the same way. Marvin told me recently that he still finds it very difficult to say no to the numerous invitations that come his way to teach, present workshops, and perform. It is the music world's great fortune that he says, "yes" whenever possible. The name "Marvin Blickenstaff" is one that causes a wonderful association for thousands across our nation and world. I count myself blessed to be among this cloud of witnesses attesting to his brilliance.

Quotes from recorded piano lessons with Marvin Blickenstaff, May 1989:

"No one in all of music history has ever played a piece absolutely perfect."

"Understanding the harmonic progressions will make this incredibly easy to learn."

"I'm a little concerned about your four different tempi in variation five."

“This passage just does not sound fun enough!”

"If you can't go beyond just merely playing the notes, then there's no justification for playing."

"Imagine here farmers with their big, heavy feet, 90% drunk, swaying with linked arms."

“It's too obvious, too extreme…this isn't music to get sea-sick by.”

"Missed notes are miscalculations of hand positions. Practicing slowly will help your hands learn."

"You will never play this *loud* enough, *dramatic* enough, *slow* enough."

Beverly Lapp, NCTM, is in her twelfth year on the Goshen College music faculty where she has had diverse experiences in teaching and administration. In addition to teaching piano, piano pedagogy, and humanities she has previously served as interim chair of the music department, director of the piano preparatory program, and director of international study terms in Peru and the Dominican Republic. She is co-coordinator of the Piano Workshop and Academy, a four-day summer event for piano teachers and high school students. Lapp's undergraduate and graduate degrees are from Goshen College and Westminster Choir College of Rider University.

A Tribute to Marvin Blickenstaff

by Elvina Pearce

I consider it both an honor and a privilege to have been asked by the Piano Pedagogy Forum to share a few of my thoughts about Marvin Blickenstaff - the man, the musician, and master teacher.

I first met Marvin at a MTNA convention back in the 70's. It was shortly after the publication of the first books of the Music Pathways series which he co-authored with Louise Bianchi and Lynn Olson. At the convention, he and Lynn were greeting people at the Carl Fischer booth in the exhibit hall. Lynn (a long-time friend and former student of mine at the New School for Music Study in Princeton, NJ) introduced me to Marvin and I was immediately aware that here, indeed, was a gentleman in the truest sense of the word. As I have come to know Marvin over the years, I have become increasingly impressed with his personal skills in dealing with both teachers and students - always gracious and sincere, and always the quintessential "gentleman."

As a musician and pianist, Marvin's performances always display the depth of his musical sensitivity and artistic standards. This, of course, becomes the essence of his skill as a master teacher, and as one observes him working with students, either individually or in a group setting, it is apparent that he expects these same high standards to characterize each of their performances, regardless of their age or innate musical abilities. A lesson with Marvin has, I'm sure, enabled many a student to obtain a level of excellence and artistry never before experienced. And perhaps even better, this has taken place in such a positive and encouraging environment that all leave feeling better about themselves and their music-making abilities than they did when they arrived!

Marvin's expertise as a master teacher of piano is equaled by his similar expertise in the training of piano teachers. Those students who had the opportunity of enrolling in his pedagogy classes at Goshen College in Indiana (where he taught for many years before relocating in the East), received some of the finest and most comprehensive pedagogical training available anywhere at the undergraduate level. Apropos of this, many of his students went on to pursue graduate study in piano and pedagogy, and I had the opportunity of observing a number of them teach during their internships at the *New School for Music Study* in Princeton. Although these observations were not prefaced by my being informed about any of the student teachers' backgrounds, I found that I was almost always able to recognize those who had done their undergraduate work with Marvin at Goshen. His legacy in the area of piano pedagogy surely lives on through many of these individuals who are now teaching piano and pedagogy, both independently, as well as at institutions throughout the country.

When I assumed the editorship of *Keyboard Companion* Magazine back in 2000, I had the pleasure of working more closely with Marvin who headed up the magazine's REPERTOIRE department. The topics he selected to explore in his column provided great diversity, and his choice of writers to address these topics provided similar diversity.

Marvin's own editing of his column was always impeccable, and although he was undoubtedly one of the busiest individuals I knew, he was somehow always able to meet his magazine deadlines.

Finally, Marvin deserves great kudos for his service as President of the Board of Trustees of the *Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy*. His always positive leadership has provided the Center with an abundance of imaginative goals and ideas -- both idealistic and practical -- along with workable ways to fulfil them. The value of Marvin's contributions to the planning, content, and structure of the Center's national conferences in '01, '03, and '05 is inestimable, and when evaluating the outcome of these three events, he surely deserves a huge portion of credit for their success.

Hats off to Marvin Blickenstaff - the man, the musician, the master teacher! And thank you, Marvin, for the many gifts you have so graciously and unselfishly given to so many of us for so long.

Elvina Pearce, NCTM, studied piano with Isabelle Vengerova in NYC, and pedagogy with Frances Clark. She has presented recitals, workshops and master classes in over 40 states as well as in Canada, the Republic of China, and Australia. Her pianistic career is highlighted by an Orchestra Hall appearance with the Chicago Symphony performing the Liszt E Flat Concerto, by a coast-to-coast broadcast over the *Chicago Theater of the Air*, and by solo recitals at Carnegie Recital Hall and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. She was one of the founding faculty members of the *New School for Music Study* in Princeton, NJ, as well as of the *Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy*, for which she has served as Vice President on its Board of Trustees. From 2000 until 2006, she also served as Editor-in-Chief for *Keyboard Companion* Magazine. Elvina directed the preparatory division and taught piano pedagogy for 14 years at Northwestern University. In addition to her ongoing career as a pianist, teacher, lecturer, and author, she is also a nationally recognized composer of educational piano music.

A Tribute to Marvin Blickenstaff

by Scott Price

I suppose it would be safe to say that everyone in our profession knows Marvin Blickenstaff in one guise or another. He is a fine pianist, inspired teacher, impassioned educator, a prolific writer, keen administrator, sensitive musician, and a guiding light and friend to many of us.

I first came to know Marvin Blickenstaff in my undergraduate pedagogy course. We surveyed Music Pathways as part of our unit on piano methods, and while my young mind had a lot to learn, I could sense that something "just seemed right" about the pedagogical methodology contained in the series of books. I had not yet met the author, but knew that there was something about his ideas that I needed to absorb and remember. I still use many of the ideas from Music Pathways in my teaching and it is one of the central methods that my undergraduate and graduate pedagogy students study in their courses. My comments to them usually take the form of "read it, play it, learn from it". Upon returning to an in-depth look at the books several years ago, I was very humbled (and somewhat chagrined) to find that some of my own "grand and inspired" ideas were actually things I had absorbed and learned many years earlier from Marvin's teaching.

As I (hopefully) grew up and matured in my studies and teaching, I started attending music conferences and got to see "that guy" that I had read about in my pedagogy coursework. Anyone who has attended one of Marvin's sessions or lectures knows that the energy level in the room is ignited the moment he begins to talk. His enthusiasm infuses the room and he is one of the few educators I have encountered who can get an entire room of teachers (many of whom are tired, worn down, and a little jaded) excited and up on their feet and involved in his demonstration of teaching techniques and exercises. That is no mean feat when confronted by a kid like me who had a bit of an attitude problem and was somewhat "too cool for school" at the time. I didn't know it then, but the lessons I absorbed from the sessions were legion - not just about teaching, but about communication, commitment, and the true meaning of service. I continue to marvel at Marvin's ability to impart to minds young and old the complexities of music and piano playing in language that is always caring, inspiring, enthralling, and age-appropriate, human, and understandable in every way. He simply cares about the development of the person and not just the fingers.

Several years ago, I finally got the chance to know Marvin on a more personal level. He was presenting a series of workshops here in Columbia, SC, and one of them was on the *Op. 28 Preludes* by Frederic Chopin. The lecture was so insightful and comprehensive in a way that provided such a wealth of information not only about the pieces, but also their place in Chopin's entire opus and their influence and place in the culture of the era. And, Marvin's playing was simply beautiful, masterful and refined in every respect. I recall becoming very annoyed that I couldn't just stand up and demand two lectures - one on the works themselves, and also a complete and uninterrupted performance by Marvin. I took

home quite a few lessons that day - most notably on tone production, technique, bel canto playing, musical refinement, and personal musical expression.

I have been involved with teaching piano to autistic children and children with other disabilities for many years. Marvin had been so friendly and approachable at our last meeting that I took the chance and wrote him a note to ask if the National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy would be interested in this subject and interested in including it in their service activities. This area of teaching is still a bit "on the fringe", but Marvin immediately said "yes" and worked some sessions on the subject into the 2005 conference. This was, again, another lesson in the true meaning of what we do as teachers - service not only to our profession, but also to mankind. I have taken that thought to heart over the past few years and continue to marvel at Marvin's generosity to our profession and community in this respect.

I had the pleasure of sitting with Marvin before and during Van Cliburn's address at the 2006 Music Teachers National Association National Convention. While chatting, I was struck by Marvin's genuine interest and concern for me, and my work. Since that time, I have come to know him as someone who genuinely cares about people and one who is always the first to step forward and say "how can I help you?". A great many of us are indebted to Marvin for that generous personal and professional help he has so freely extended to us over the course of our careers.

I think this is the greatest lesson I have learned from Marvin Blickenstaff. It is not enough to be a technically proficient pianist, a knowledgeable teacher, an intellectual writer, an organized administrator, and a fine musician. Marvin embodies every one of these qualities and more. But, all of those things are for naught if one does not develop a deep and personal awareness of the piano and music, and what they mean to people as sustaining, rewarding and life-affirming activities in a world that can be very difficult and mean to so very many people. Marvin has taught me the importance of being a real and caring person to my students, and that we have such a great responsibility not to get, but to give of our gifts to those around us.

For that, Marvin, I thank you, and I aspire to live and work to your example.

Scott Price currently serves as Associate Professor of Piano and Piano Pedagogy, Chair of the Piano Area, Coordinator of Group Piano, Coordinator of Piano Pedagogy, and Coordinator of Community Piano Programs at USC. A graduate of the University of Oklahoma, The Cleveland Institute of Music, and Bowling Green State University (OH), his recent engagements have included performances and clinics at the national conventions of the Music Teachers National Association, the National Keyboard Pedagogy Conference, and solo recitals throughout SC, GA, ND, OH, OK, KS, MO, TX, and Washington DC. Dr. Price is creator and editor-in-chief of the on-line piano pedagogy journal "Piano Pedagogy Forum". Dr. Price has recorded 28 compact discs of educational piano music for Alfred Publishing Company, and has published educational compositions with Alfred Publishing Company and the FJH Music Company. He serves as chair of the Committee on Special Needs Students for the National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy, and served on the planning committee of the 2006 National Group Piano/Piano Pedagogy Forum National Convention. Special teaching interests of Scott Price include teaching students with disabilities, very young children, and teaching keyboard improvisation to piano students ranging from beginning to advanced levels. His work with disabled students has been featured on WISTV (SC) and WLTX (SC), and

in The State newspaper (SC), Columbia Metropolitan Magazine, and was featured at the 2005 National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy. One of Dr. Price's autistic students was recently featured on Dateline NBC, and CNN. Scott Price was awarded the "Best of BGSU Outstanding Graduate" alumnus award from Bowling Green State University in Ohio in 2002, and was invited back to the University of Oklahoma as a "Distinguished Guest Alumnus" in March of 2005 to perform, lecture, and present a piano masterclass. Other recent engagements include performances and masterclasses in Thailand, Singapore, and in Kuala Lumpur and Penang in Malaysia, and lectures at the 2005 Georgia State Music Teachers State Convention. Upcoming appearances include performances, lectures and sessions with the Ohio Music Teachers Association, and the International Collaborative Conference of the Music Teachers National Association/Canadian Federation of Music Teachers/Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, Canada.

A Tribute to Marvin Blickenstaff

by Nelita True

Because Marvin Blickenstaff has been my admired friend and colleague for many years, it is a special privilege for me to pay tribute to him and to thank him for all that he does for our profession. Often, when I think about him, "selfless integrity" flashes across my mind. His high personal standards infuse every aspect of his professional and personal lives. He is congenitally incapable of dishonesty, always thinks of others before himself, and generously promotes the careers of his colleagues.

As everyone knows, Marvin brings the highest levels of professionalism and musicianship to his work. He possesses a rare gift for communicating meaningfully with people of all ages. Although many musicians may work well with advanced students and others with intermediate or elementary students, what sets Marvin apart is his ability to work effectively with all levels. How I have marveled when he transforms the performances of students, often in a matter of a few minutes. I remember a particularly challenging master class at the International Workshops in Austria, where he gave a group lesson to German-speaking students for an English-speaking audience. Marvin spoke to the students in German and then translated for us. It was a smashing success, and the students could not have been more responsive, or more delighted.

Perhaps what impresses me most about Marvin is his total devotion to piano pedagogy, completely devoid of any egocentricity. He never gets mired in methods and procedures, but, instead, focuses exclusively on the music. His frequent lectures reveal meticulous preparation and comprehensive knowledge. I learn from every lecture he gives - and I have heard many. His imagination and creativity seem in endless supply.

We owe Marvin an incalculable debt for his leadership in reviving the National Keyboard Pedagogy Conference, along with Louise Goss and Sam Holland. The large number of teachers and students in attendance is clear testimony to the vision inherent in these conferences.

Even with his busy schedule of teaching, workshops, and leading the Frances Clark Center, Marvin has managed to maintain a high level in his own piano performances. He proved himself early in his career as the First Prize winner in the National Federation of Music Clubs Competition, which led to performances in a number of different venues in the United States.

How fortunate we are to have this multi-talented man of such impeccable character in our profession. Long may he continue to inspire us!

Since **Nelita True** made her debut at age seventeen with the Chicago Symphony in Orchestra Hall and her New York debut with the Juilliard Orchestra in Avery Fisher Hall, her career has taken her to the major cities of Western and Eastern Europe, Indonesia, Korea, Japan, Mexico, Iceland, New Zealand, Brazil, Australia, Canada, and to Hong Kong and Singapore, as well all fifty states in America. She was a visiting

professor at the St. Petersburg Conservatory in Russia, performing and conducting master classes and has been in the People's Republic of China fourteen times for recitals and master classes. She has played recitals on French national television and on Australian national radio. Her most recent recital in Boston was cited as one of the "Ten Best Classical Performances of the Year." Ms. True has been a jury member for the China International Piano Competition (Beijing), the Queen Sonja International Piano Competition (Oslo), the National piano Competition in Brazil, the Horowitz Competition (Kiev), the Concours de Musique in Canada, the PTNA (Tokyo), the Lev Vlassenko Competition in Australia, and the Gina Bachauer, New Orleans, Hilton Head, and William Kapell International Piano Competitions in the U.S. A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Michigan with Helen Titus, Ms. True went on to Juilliard to study with Sascha Gorodnitzki, and then earned the DMA with Leon Fleisher at the Peabody Conservatory, In Paris, she studied with Nadia Boulanger on a Fulbright grant. Formerly Distinguished Professor at the University of Maryland, Ms. True is currently Professor of Piano at the Eastman School of Music. Many of her students have won top prizes at national and international competitions, including an unprecedented five First Prizes in national MTNA competitions. Ms. True was awarded the Certificate of Merit by the Alumni Association of the University of Michigan, the Eisenhart Award for Excellence in Teaching at Eastman, the 2002 Achievement Award from MTNA, and a Lifetime Achievement Award from National Keyboard Pedagogy Conference (USA). SH Productions of Kansas City produced a series of four videotapes, "Nelita True at Eastman," featuring her performances, lectures, and teaching. These videos are currently being seen on five continents. She has been the subject of feature articles in *Clavier*, *Piano Today*, *The European Piano Teachers' Journal*, and was the subject of the cover story of *Keyboard Companion*. An interview with Ms. True appears in the latest edition of James Bastien's "How to Teach Piano Successfully," along with interviews with the legendary Rosina Lhevinne and Adele Marcus. Ms. True has been invited to record over 100 works for Advance, Mark, Educo, and Academy Records.

Conference Presentation: "Understanding the Millennial Student" Craig Vickio, presenter

by Kathryn Duarte

Craig Vickio is a clinical psychologist and director of the Bowling Green State University Counseling Center. His presentation, Understanding the Millennial Student, identified the qualities and characteristics of millennial students, reviewed the apparent consequences through a listing of merits and drawbacks of these traits, and discussed the instructional implications for teachers.

Who belongs to the "millennial" generation?

Persons considered to be of the "millennial" generation were born approximately between 1982 and 2002. In his opening remarks Vickio offered a reflection of the differences between the life experiences of the "millennials" and those who were born thirty or more years ago. For instance, today's youth have no fear of nuclear war, no memory of the Iranian hostages, and know only one Germany. Furthermore, they have always had answering machines and cable but have not used typewriters, a rotary phone, a record player, or an eight-track player.

Vickio identified five fundamental characteristics of "millennial" students. These characteristics paint a picture of today's youth as being:

40. Used to structure and respectful of authority
41. Sheltered and protected
42. "Techno-savvy" and used to instantaneous results
43. Connected and team-oriented
44. Special and confident in their ability to achieve

Vickio cautioned that these are common generalities and would not be true of everyone.

Used to Structure and Respectful of Authority

Today's youth have highly structured lives. Activities may include sports practices and games, choir rehearsals, piano lessons, etc. Parents lay out their children's schedules in minute detail and often know where they are at all times and with whom. Vickio took us on a trip down memory lane to demonstrate the contrast between life today and life in the fifties and sixties. In this earlier era, for example, there was a greater amount of free time and the primary restriction was that you be home in time for dinner.

The apparent consequences are that these students are receptive to guidance and mentorship but have minimal experience with self-advocacy and little need for self-initiative or forging their own path. They are compliant, obedient, and trust teachers and

parents to make decisions on their behalf.

As teachers, we might make the most of this trait by building syllabi that clearly define the course aim, specify our rules, and detail our performance expectations. Our challenge is to prepare our students for real life where there is no specific guide. We need to help them to create their own structure and realize they must be flexible and able to create contingency plans. Vickio also encouraged us to embrace a broad definition of respectful that would not inhibit their critical thinking.

Sheltered/Protected

Nowadays parents, teachers, and mentors tend to act and make decisions for their charges. Being so sheltered sends the message that we cannot trust them to take care of themselves. It is a fact that suffering leads to active coping and growing. It is important that adults let them face life even when it hurts so that they may learn to cope and move forward.

The apparent consequences are that today's youth are inclined to feel valued but not empowered. They are not used to functioning autonomously and lack opportunities for developing problem-solving skills.

As teachers and mentors, we can cater to this trait by creating a classroom environment that feels like a safe haven. Be available to help our students with their problems but at the same time assist them in developing coping and problem-solving skills for themselves. Point out to them that if we play it too safe we end up as spectators rather than participants in life. Vickio noted that psychologists have found that most people feel regret for things they held themselves back from doing or missed opportunities rather than from things they had done.

Techno-savvy and used to instantaneous results

Their immersion in a large variety of technical devices has contributed to the ability of today's youth to multi-task. Vickio introduced a second trip down memory lane to recall that in the fifties, sixties, and seventies, the *Wizard of Oz* was broadcast on television once a year and that it was a highly anticipated event. Today, kids can watch a movie at any time. Additionally, they are used to the convenience of microwaves, computers, bank machines, cell phones, and more.

An apparent consequence is that today's youth are able to navigate in our technologically advanced world with ease but are used to immediate results and lack patience. A key aspect of coping involves patience and the ability to tolerate setbacks. Vickio reported seeing worrisome trends in college mental health and needs for immediate services that support this consequence. He offered as evidence a chart documenting the number of emergency contacts recorded over a four-year period from 2002 to 2006 at Bowling Green. The number rose from 350 to 600 during this brief span and every year set a new record. Twenty years ago, emergency coverage did not exist. Currently, there is a 24-hour

call service that is often double-booked. This is telling and says something about the coping and problem-solving skills, or lack there-of, that today's youth possess.

Connected/Team-Oriented

This quality points to students being comfortable with collaboration and extending support and assistance to others. "Millennial" students tend to be civic-minded and community service oriented. They will also say that their parents are close friends. A third journey down memory lane recalled that in an earlier time there were few group projects and interaction with others usually applied to kids living nearby. What is more, it was typical to call parents only once a week. Today, group projects are the norm as are daily contact with all kinds of people, parents included.

The apparent consequences are that today-s youth are comfortable with collaboration, adept at establishing support networks, and are interested in helping others. As psychological findings have found that relationships with other people are a buffer to stress and give meaning to life, this is good news. Less positively, today-s youth are not used to flying solo and find interdependence much easier than independence.

We, as teachers, can appreciate and applaud their attitude of working together. However, we should also encourage and promote the attitude that it is okay to be by oneself. Challenge them to think individually.

Special/Confident in their Ability to Achieve

Today's youth and young adults receive an unprecedented amount of certificates, awards, and honors. In his fourth and final look back in time, Vickio described receiving one trophy as a small boy. Today, kids get awards for everything-more trophies than can fit on a mantel, in fact. They receive certificates simply for participating. The apparent consequences are that they believe in themselves and are optimistic about their chances of success but may be unrealistic in their expectations.

Research shows that people can accomplish great things when they believe in themselves. As teachers, we should assist students in understanding that success requires mistakes, setbacks sometimes occur, and there is room in the big picture for mistakes and setbacks to occur along the way. Remind them that success is a process, not a single act. For example, a single piano performance is not the measure of a pianist. Furthermore, it is easier to take risks when we can separate our self worth from the outcome of our individual acts.

Concluding remarks

Vickio encouraged us to appreciate the tremendous opportunity we have been given any time we step into a classroom. He concluded his presentation by describing five aspects of being a good teacher that he believes transcend generational differences.

A good teacher...

- Strives to balance challenge and support
- Treats students in a holistic manner
- Is a good role model
- Is genuine with students
- Conveys the message to students that "The material I am teaching is important, you are important, and our collaboration is important."

Vickio's parting wish was that we be the kind of teacher who feels privileged to be an influence in the lives of today's students.

Kathryn S. Duarte earned a Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance from Appalachian State University and a Master of Music in Piano Performance from the University of Cincinnati, College-Conservatory of Music. She completed a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Piano Performance and Pedagogy at the University of Oklahoma where her teachers included Dr. Jane Magrath, Dr. E. L. Lancaster, and Dr. Digby Bell. Competition awards include First Prize in the OMTA State Piano Competition, Graduate Division and the ASU Concerto-Aria Competition, and Prize Winner in Asheville's Young Artist Concerto Competition. Recent professional activities include adjudication of the Southwest Youth Music Festival and the California Association of Professional Music Teachers' District Three Festival, as well as a master class presentation at the invitation of the Diamond Bar Music Teachers' Branch of MTNA. In addition to fifteen years of experience as an independent teacher, Dr. Duarte has served on the faculties of the School for Creative and Performing Arts in Cincinnati and the Preparatory Department of Northern Kentucky University. In the spring of 2007 Dr. Duarte will assume the duties of Visiting Instructor of Piano Pedagogy in the Crane School of Music at the State University of New York at Potsdam.

Conference Presentation: "Working Together to Learn: Cooperative Learning in the Group Piano Classroom" Alejandro Cremaschi and Christopher Fisher, presenters

by Grace Huang

Presenters Alejandro Cremaschi (University of Colorado-Boulder) and Christopher Fisher (Ohio University) discussed essential principles of the cooperative learning approach and its application to the field of group piano teaching. Drs. Cremaschi and Fisher, who have utilized cooperative learning extensively in their own teaching, shared their research findings and provided numerous ideas for creative application in any group piano setting, for students at any level.

Cooperative Learning Defined

Developed in the 1970s and 1980s by educational theorists David and Roger Johnson (University of Minnesota), Spencer Kagan (University of California), and Robert Slavin (Johns Hopkins), cooperative learning can be defined as "the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning" (Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec). Students are actively involved in every stage of the learning process, whether through collectively discovering concepts and principles, participating in research and teaching, or drilling and reviewing material. The instructor's role is transformed into one of facilitator and moderator.

Benefits of the cooperative learning approach were highlighted:

45. Learning is not passive but participatory in nature.
46. Cooperative learning allows for immediate application of the information learned.
47. Students have the support and encouragement of their peers, a crucial factor in lowering anxiety and producing a safe learning environment.
48. Cooperative learning utilizes higher level critical reasoning strategies.
49. Students are challenged to view situations from several perspectives, to share information and resources, and to assist each other for the good of the group.
50. Cooperative learning produces higher retention rates, resulting in higher achievement.

The presenters showed further proof of the latter by displaying the Learning Pyramid, which reports the average retention rates from various methods of teaching. Lectures resulted in a 5 percent rate of retention. Audio and Visual Aids increased student retention rate to 20 percent; Demonstration resulted in a 30 percent rate. Immediate Use of Learning (when students were asked to apply what they had just learned by teaching it to others) resulted in a 90 percent retention rate.

The Successful Cooperative Learning Activity

Cremaschi emphasized five important elements necessary in creating an effective cooperative learning activity:

- Face-to-face interaction: students must have the opportunity to interact with each other, whether through discussion, listening, or teaching each other.
- Cooperative skills: students should develop skills such as dealing with multiple viewpoints and accepting and giving constructive criticism.
- Group interdependence: students must realize that they need each other in order to complete the task. The instructor-s responsibility is to ensure that students share common responsibilities and goals and may choose to assign students specific roles within the group as well as provide the possibility of joint rewards.
- Individual accountability: in a group setting, it is still necessary to insure that individual work is done. Teachers should frequently assess students on an individual basis, at random times.
- Group processing and self-evaluation: the students are autonomous; at the end they must evaluate their own work (both the process and end result) and evaluate how well they worked together.

Cooperative Learning Structures

Some important cooperative learning structures for use in the classroom were described:

- **Jigsaw**: Each student within the group receives a task to learn or knowledge to master. Students then work individually to master the task and teach each other what they learned. One or more students from the group share the whole with the class.
- **3-Step Interview**: Student A quizzes, coaches, or teaches Student B and vice versa. At the end, each student shares with the class the information received from his/her partner. (This is an effective way to polish repertoire, read new repertoire, find tricky spots within a piece, or do a flash card review of concepts.)
- **Think-Pair-Share**: Students first work individually on material presented by the teacher. They then pair up to discuss and come up with a single best solution (Interdependence). Each pair shares their answers with the rest of the class (Accountability). (This structure is well-suited for harmonization exercises where students can compare chord choices and decide on the best answer. This is also effective for reading a new piece, transposition exercises, and more.)
- **Group Investigation**: Designed by Sharan, another pioneer in the field of cooperative learning, this is an effective learning structure for long-term class projects. Students form groups based on a common interest or topic and devise strategies for how they'll approach their investigation. The group synthesizes the information they find and presents their findings to the entire class.
- **Student Teams-Achievement Divisions (STAD)**: The teacher presents the material. Students then study and review the material together, quizzing each other on the material taught. At the end, students are quizzed individually, receiving an improvement score according to how well they are performing compared to their usual level. Teams receive recognition for the sum of their improvement scores.
- **Teams-Games-Tournaments (TGT)**: Similar to STAD but consisting of games

instead of quizzes, team members work and study together. They then divide to compete in tournaments with members from other teams. Points are awarded for successful completion of a task.

A Few Specific Applications of Cooperative Learning Techniques for Group Piano

Several effective cooperative learning activities in group piano were illustrated, either through video clips of group piano classes in action or through active participant involvement. These activities are based on the structures described above.

- **Note Reading Jigsaw**: A video clip showed a teacher with a group of younger students engaged in the task of note reading, an activity that was described to the students as "a game where you're going to teach each other." The teacher assigned each student an acronym, asking the student to memorize it silently. Each student then taught the acronym to the group (EGBDF, for instance, was taught as "Every Grizzly Bear Digs Fish"). The acronym was repeated by the group as a whole, and the teacher tested individual students by asking them to review it out loud.
- **Sight Reading Drill Pair with Eye-Check**: Student A plays the role of Performer/Thinker/Observer, scanning through a new piece and verbally identifying any potential problems (accidentals, rhythms, articulations, etc.). Student B, as Coach/Motivator, then provides additional suggestions. Student A sight reads the excerpt. During the performance, Student B monitors accuracy and eye movement, making note of how many times Student A looked down at his/her hands. (This activity was demonstrated at the beginning of the presentation, when Cremaschi and Fisher divided participants into dyads to read through "Dance" by Michael Praetorius.)
- **Technique Tournament**: A video clip showed a group piano class engaging in a tournament where student teams worked together to help each other learn required technical skills (major and minor scales and arpeggios, Hanon exercises, etc.). Teams competed in a play-off tournament that consisted of various rounds with each round containing a specific required skill. Prizes such as candy or bonus points were awarded to the winning team. Fisher found this activity to be a great motivating tool for learning keyboard technique and was an enjoyable way for students to develop their skills. Students also developed a sense of camaraderie and team spirit in the process.
- **Improvisation Investigation**: A video clip was shown of a group piano project, "Group Improvisation," which involved student research on various genres of American music (jazz, swing, bebop). The clip showed one group of students playing sound clips of their group's selected genre, describing characteristics of that genre, and performing their ensemble improvisation in that particular style for the rest of the class. This proved to be a good introduction to the concept of improvisation in a stylistically appropriate manner.

Several detailed handouts were provided which contained further applications of cooperative learning techniques to group piano teaching, group project ideas, and a comprehensive list of resources. Resources included literature on cooperative learning

theory, technique, and its application to the classroom, written by Johnson and Johnson, Kagan, Slavin, Sharan, Kaplan, as well as Drs. Cremaschi and Fisher themselves.

Grace Huang received her DMA and MM in Piano Performance from the University of Minnesota and her BM in Piano Performance from Vanderbilt University. Solo and collaborative performances have taken her throughout the United States as well as to festivals such as Aspen, Madeline Island, Eastern, and Hampden-Sydney. She is an active adjudicator and clinician, and recently published an article in the fall issue of *Georgia Music News*. She previously taught on the faculties of St. Cloud State University, St. Joseph's School of Music (Minnesota), and the University of Georgia, where she served as Class Piano Coordinator.

Conference Presentation: "*eMirror*": An Interaction Analysis Software Program for Group Piano Ann Porter and Michelle Conda, presenters

by Chung-Ha Kim

Developed by Dr. Birch Browning, Cleveland State University and Dr. Ann Porter, University of Cincinnati, College-Conservatory of Music, *eMirror* is designed to facilitate the observation of group teaching and subsequent evaluation. Dr. Michelle Conda, head of the secondary piano department at the University of Cincinnati, worked with Dr. Porter on a component geared specifically towards group piano teaching, in order to better evaluate her teaching assistants. She summarized the problems that arise with the traditional method of videotaping her teaching assistants, followed by written comments as follows: "I have nine graduate assistants teaching in my department: watching their videotaped classes already takes a minimum of nine hours, with me stopping the tape frequently to write comments. And no matter how careful I am, some of them still get offended once they read my comments. Asking them to watch the tapes themselves also doesn't help: they tend to focus on their appearance rather than their teaching performance, getting distracted by the way their hair looks, their clothes, etc... Getting them to watch themselves in the first place is not an easy task either!"

The videotape and written comments are two entities that Dr. Porter sought to combine with the Interaction Analysis Software. Once the equipment is assembled (a digital/video camera, a computer that will convert the video to *QuickTime*, and the software itself), everything is in one place, with the observer being able to insert comments directly into the video. At this time, the software is still in a trial phase: it is currently only available as part of a research project and for Mac OS X. However, Drs. Conda and Porter hope to have it available for everyone and compatible with PCs as well in the near future.

Besides the option of inserting individual comments, this software program also has modules that facilitate the evaluation of certain teaching aspects. For example, the current model has four different modules: headphones (on/off), group instruction, individual instruction, and small group instruction. Ideally, teaching assistants should include all of these in their teaching to maximize effective management of class time, and to keep classes interesting. Once an activity, such as small group instruction, is pursued for more than three seconds, the corresponding module is selected and activated by the observer. The module then keeps track of the amount of time spent on this particular activity, converting it into a percentage grade at the end.

The advantages of this program are clear: teaching assistants and pedagogy student teachers can now evaluate their teaching performances themselves, rather than relying on a supervisor. The modules give them clear criteria to focus on while watching the video. Selecting one module at a time, teaching assistants will code the events while watching, and afterwards, print out the results and/or e-mail them to their supervisor - a powerful learning and sharing tool indeed.

Relying on her many years of observing secondary piano teaching assistants, Dr. Conda acknowledged that pianists often have a greater need for self-evaluation when it comes to teaching in a classroom setting: "Sitting behind a keyboard with music in front of them makes it difficult for them to maintain eye contact with the class. My TA's are wonderful pianists who bring a lot of knowledge to the classroom. Yet the delivery of it is often poor." With another module for eye contact almost finished, this software program would help to alleviate this problem as well.

For those who are too impatient to wait for *eMirror*'s completion, there is a similar program available already, called "Scribe." It was developed by Dr. Robert Duke at the University of Texas. Instead of modules, this program lets you choose which behavior you want to evaluate.

If you would like more information on *eMirror*, or would like to participate in the trial phase of it, please contact Dr. Michelle Conda (condajm@ucmail.uc.edu) or Dr. Ann Porter (porteram@ucmail.uc.edu).

Chung-Ha Kim currently teaches applied piano, class piano, and piano pedagogy at Western Illinois University in Macomb. She holds a Bachelor of Music-degree in Piano Performance from the Manhattan School of Music, a Master of Music-degree in Piano Performance from the University of Cincinnati, and a Doctor of Musical Arts-degree from the University of Cincinnati, with Piano Performance as her main, and Piano Pedagogy as her cognate area. Dr. Kim has published articles in *Clavier* ("Clementi's Last Piano Sonata," April 2004) and *Piano Pedagogy Forum* ("Class Management Software: The Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Blackboard in Group Piano Classes," January 2005). She is an active member of MTNA and ISMTA, and currently serves as a State Competition Coordinator.

Conference Presentation: "Technology Demonstration: What is Podcasting" Mario Ajero, presenter

by Kathryn Koscho

Mario Ajero shared with us the joys of podcasting in his lively technology mini-session. Throughout the session, he answered the following questions: 1) What is a podcast? 2) What equipment is needed to watch or hear a podcast? 3) Where can a consumer find and subscribe to podcasts on the internet? 4) How much does it cost to access a podcast? 5) What equipment is needed to produce a podcast? 6) How can a piano teacher use podcasting in the studio?

1. What is a podcast? Ajero's definition of podcasting is as follows: "a way to deliver audio or video content over the internet automatically to an audience." Some podcasts have audio content only, like a radio show. Other podcasts contain video content as well, like a slide show or a movie. Podcasts can cover any number of topics, but Ajero quickly honed in on those dedicated to piano pedagogy.

2. What equipment is needed to watch or hear a podcast? To hear or watch a podcast, no iPod is needed, just a computer. Podcasts can be produced and viewed on all types of computers, not just Macs. Additionally, podcasts can be transferred to a mobile device, like an iPod, and it is this capability that has led to the name podcasting. Many different types of software will run podcasts. Podcatching software, like iTunes and Juice, allows the content to be viewed or heard on a computer and transferred to a mobile device. Also, websites like podcast.yahoo.com, podshow.com, and podcastalley.com run podcasts using a Web browser.

3. Where can a consumer find and subscribe to podcasts on the internet? In addition to the Websites listed above, podcasts can be found on the iTunes store. From the main page, click on the Podcasts link in the left sidebar. This opens a page devoted to podcasts sorted by topic. Unfortunately, browsing through the listings under music could be cumbersome, so it might be better to search for specific terms using the search engine. Ajero searched for "piano teaching" and found his own podcast! After locating an episode title of interest, double click on it to hear a preview. Podcasts that have a TV icon by the title have video content, so they can be watched like a television show. By clicking on the Free Subscribe button, any new podcasts in the future from the series will be downloaded to you automatically.

4. How much does it cost to access a podcast? Listening to podcasts is free on iTunes.

5. What equipment is needed to produce a podcast? To produce a podcast, one needs a computer with broadband internet access, a video camera, and a microphone.

Producers can record their audio and video content with the video camera and microphone, edit the content using software like iMovie, and then publish on the web.

6. How can a piano teacher use podcasting in the studio? According to Ajero, teachers can broadcast student recitals and performances. Recently, he podcasted an adult student's performance, since that adult student did not have a recital on which to play. We can share teaching tips with each other, as Ajero does in many of his podcasts. Also, we can show video of playing on the keyboard and show written notation and fingering so that viewers can learn to play songs. This can be very motivating for viewers and lead them to seek out piano lessons and buy sheet music!

Ajero cautioned against infringing on copyright; he showed a site for Podsafe Music, music.podshow.com, where artists make their compositions and performances available for podcasting for free as long as the use is acknowledged.

Linking podcasting to the overall theme of the forum, Ajero noted that podcasting connects us with the technologically-savvy Millennial Generation and taps in to their desire for technological communities as witnessed by the overwhelming popularity of Websites like MySpace.com.

Readers may contact Mr. Mario Ajero at mario.ajero@gmail.com. To watch his podcasts, go to marioajero.blogspot.com.

Kathryn Koscho teaches Class Piano, Piano Pedagogy, and Applied Piano at Oklahoma City University. She is a doctoral candidate for the DMA in Piano Performance with an emphasis in Piano Pedagogy at the University of Oklahoma and holds degrees from the University of Kansas and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Conference Presentation: "Technology Demonstration: Integrating Smart Board Technology Into the Group Piano Lab" Courtney Crappell, presenter

by Kathryn Koscho

In the technology demonstration, "Integrating Smart Board Technology Into the Group Piano Lab," Courtney Crappell presented an overview of the University of Oklahoma's new piano lab, provided uses of Smart Board technology for group piano, and showed video clips on using Yamaha Clavinova features for special needs students by Dennis Stanfill.

The University of Oklahoma piano lab contains sixteen Yamaha Clavinova keyboards that are connected to a Yamaha console. Audio from the teacher console can be sent to the student keyboards or to the desktop Mac computer, which can then be heard through the classroom sound system. Video from the computer runs through a projector onto the Smart Board; the projector also is connected to a document camera.

Crappell explained how he integrates one use of the computer in his classes. Students can save performances as mp3 files in the keyboard lab using recording software on the computer, and then the instructor can post these recordings on Desire 2 Learn, a web-based learning interface for classes.

The Smart Board, a touch-sensitive board mounted on the wall like a chalkboard, provides an interactive visual atmosphere for the classroom. Teachers can write on the Smart Board like a white board using Smart Board. Once a pen is lifted, that color is activated on the board, and any writing done with the pen or with the finger will appear on the board in the designated color.

Smart Boards come with Smart Board software, which allows the screen to be used in many different ways. Using the Notebook software, teachers can create numerous slides of information. One touch on the toolbar will provide a new, clean screen, which eliminates the need to erase. However, the old information is not deleted; it is treated as a separate slide, which the teacher can bring back in view at any point by simply touching the thumbnail of the slide in the right sidebar. In fact, slides can be prepared in advance, saved, and quickly referred to in class by opening the saved file. Crappell mentioned that slides containing standard information like scale fingerings could be made prior to class, saving time. Smart Board slides can be saved as notebook files or can be exported as tif, jpg, html, or pdf files.

Crappell noted that using a Smart Board allows the teacher to stand at the screen near the visual information. In other classrooms which project information from a computer onto a screen, the instructor would need to sit near or hover over the computer and use the mouse to manipulate information on the screen. With the Smart Board, teachers can just touch the screen.

Crappell then discussed creative ways of working with notated music. Teachers can project scanned pdf files of music onto the Board. By using the Smart Board pens to mark on the projected score, the messy clean-up required for overhead projector slides vanishes. The view zooms in and out with one touch on the toolbar, making adjustment on the screen easy. Also, for visual clarification of scores, the Spotlight tool highlights a certain area of the board and darkens or dims the rest. This allows the teacher to draw attention visually to specific sections of the projected piece.

Projecting Finale files onto the Smart Board yields even more interactive opportunities for the classroom. Teachers can make use of the playback feature in Finale to immediately hear any projected notation. Crappell says that using Finale files for long-term notation projects works well; students can modify a score over time without having to re-write the example for each class meeting. He shared that his students enjoy entering notation directly onto the touch-sensitive Smart Board and suggested having students write out their improvisations on the Board.

In the question and answer portion of the presentation, Crappell said that to run a Smart Board, one needs a computer, a Smart Board, and a projector. The Smart Board is not connected to the piano keyboards. He recommended purchasing a projector with a high number of lumens; in a well-lit classroom, the screen will need to be bright in order to be legible.

Crappell also showed video clips of Dennis Stanfill discussing the use of the Yamaha Clavinova for special needs students. Mr. Stanfill showed two ways that special needs students might use the Yamaha Clavinova. First, the Any Key Mode in the Guide Mode allows a player to press a single key, either with a finger or with a paddle, and have a fully orchestrated part sound. It does not matter which key is played, but in order for the piece to sound like it should, the player must follow the lights behind the key and press the key in rhythm. Students with little to no mobility in the hand can make music at the keyboard using this function and learn about rhythm.

Second, the Follow Lights Mode works like the Any Key Mode, but the player must press the correct key for the fully orchestrated music to sound. Students follow lights which light up behind a specific key when it is time to play. Stanfill noted that this can work well for students who need to learn how to focus. Generally, students tend to start playing with just one finger, but eventually change to using more than one finger and then adding the second hand.

In conclusion, Stanfill told of a visit to a music class with special needs students at Boca Raton High School in Boca Raton, Florida which made use of these two functions. A young woman with MS used a paddle to successfully play a piece in the Any Key Mode. Also, a young man with Downs Syndrome used the Follow Lights Mode to play a piece with both hands in a focused manner.

Kathryn Koscho teaches Class Piano, Piano Pedagogy, and Applied Piano at Oklahoma City University. She is a doctoral candidate for the DMA in Piano Performance with an emphasis in Piano Pedagogy at the

University of Oklahoma and holds degrees from the University of Kansas and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Conference Presentation: "Working with Special Needs Students" Tami Bush, presenter

by Oscar Macchioni

The focus of the 2006 GP3 Conference at the University of Oklahoma was The Millennial Student. Mrs. Tami Bush's presentation on "Working with Special Needs Students" opened the Friday forum. Mrs. Bush has more than 22 years of experience teaching students with learning disabilities and attention deficit disorder impairments. She is a learning specialist, counselor and school psychologist, certified in learning disabilities, mental retardation, autism, blind and visual impairment, counseling and psychotherapy.

Disabled learners (DL) do not lack intelligence, most of them have an average or above average I.Q. Mrs. Bush stressed the importance of timing and clarity: "they just have a different time to process the information and they have to process not only the answer but also the question." Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder students (ADHD) have a slower learning curve and therefore require more time to reach the same place as the rest of the class. They are not always hyperactive; there is another classification called *inattentive type*. Examples of famous people with learning disabilities including dyslexia are: Ludwig van Beethoven, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, George Frideric Handel, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison, Louis Pasteur, General George Patton, J.F. Kennedy, Winston Churchill, Alfred Hitchcock, Stevie Wonder, and Tom Cruise.

Tami discussed the pros and cons of medicating an ADHD student and provided an example of performance on a spelling test, before and after taking the medication within the span of two days. The results were incredible; the medication helped the student concentrate and achieve an almost perfect score. Scientific examples of normal and ADHD brain tissues were also shown.

Mrs. Bush advised that in order to diagnose DL students, an analysis spanning at least six months must be made regarding performance in different aspects of their life, such as music lessons, school and home. DL children may have at least two or three of these problems:

51. Short attention span
52. Low tolerance for frustration
53. Insatiability
54. Low self-esteem
55. Learned helplessness
56. Sequencing and memory deficits
57. Hyperactivity
58. Anxiety disorders
59. Deficient motor skills

Regarding DL to teaching music, Mrs. Bush made the following recommendations for teachers:

- Students need constant reassurance and praise.
- These students work better if parents are not present during the lessons.
- Use white-out to cover irrelevant information on the page.
- Speak slowly and enunciate clearly.
- Give only one direction at a time and have the student repeat the direction to you.
- Set a predictable routine: these students dislike changes.
- Be consistent with everything including terminology and color coding.
- Break the lessons into smaller segments so as to help them concentrate better.

Many of these students have sensory integration issues, it may be necessary that they:

- Chew gum in order for their brain to organize.
- Smell scents, avoiding sweet smells like flowers. Use warm scents such us vanilla and cinnamon.
- Use as much natural light as possible, avoiding fluorescent lights. Some students can hear the 60 beat cycle of a fluorescent light bulb and are unable to concentrate.
- Rock back and forth or move as they play. If students rock sideways let them rock back and forth also; this may help organize their brain.
- Use ball chairs; having to maintain their balance helps students concentrate.
- Replace behaviors, do not suppress them. For example: if they tap on the table, ask them to tap their foot on the floor instead, then just their toe.

Mrs. Bush also made the attendees experience what it is like to be a learning disabled person through a few exercises. One of them was to see what a Dyslexic child may be looking at when reading a text: words are randomly separated and/or connected to other words without space; and "p", "b", "q" and "d"'s randomly replace each other, signifying that a Dyslexic child may see just a circle connected to a line without discriminating different shapes. Another interesting exercise was to trace a shape on a piece of paper looking at its reflection in a mirror. This experiment generated a lot of laughs, including this reporter's, since many attendees couldn't follow the lines and became somewhat dizzy.

Oscar Macchioni is an Assistant Professor of Piano and Piano Pedagogy at the University of Texas at El Paso. Upon his graduation from the National University of Tucumán in Argentina, he received a scholarship from the Polish Government to study piano at the Krakow Academy of Music. He received his Master of Music from Louisiana State University and his Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Piano Performance from the University of Arizona. He has been sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. (Fellow Graduate Student, summer 2000), the Polish Government, and the Organization of American States (OAS). Most recently, he received the Music Teachers National Association "Student Achievement Award" (StAr), was named "Distinguished Graduate Student" by the University of Arizona School of Music, and was featured in the French Magazine *Piano*, *La Lettre du Musicien*. Oscar Macchioni has performed extensively in his native Argentina, Poland, Mexico, and in the USA. In March of 2005 he presented a solo recital at the esteemed Myra Hess Memorial Concerts at the Chicago Cultural Center. Dr. Macchioni has served as a lecturer and adjudicator for the Arizona Music Teachers Association and El Paso Music Teachers Association. In the summer of 2006, he was hired by the International Piano Performance

Examinations Committee of Taiwan to conduct piano examinations to about 1,200 students nationwide. He also enjoys research activities and presented lecture recitals at national and international conferences.

Conference Presentation: "Using Recording and Sequencing Technology in the Group Piano Curriculum" Lisa Zdechlik, presenter

by Siok Lian Tan

Dr. Lisa Zdechlik presented a session on how she used recording and sequencing technology to enhance her teaching of keyboard skills and comprehensive musicianship in her group piano classes at the University of Arizona. She shared her ideas on teaching repertoire, harmonization and transposition, improvisation, and score reading with the conference participants in a Yamaha Clavinova Lab.

When teaching repertoire, Dr. Zdechlik asked her students to record, listen, and evaluate their own playing at different junctures in the learning process and prior to testing and performance. Using a skill checklist, her students were guided to develop strategies for improvement and practice based on the listening and reflecting process. Dr. Zdechlik also used recordings to provide feedback to her students and to serve as a performance portfolio and "journal" of development.

In learning to harmonize a melody, Dr. Zdechlik's students recorded the melody first and "accompanied" themselves by playing appropriate chords along with the melody. They were encouraged to explore every possible choice of chords to harmonize the given melody and select their best choice. Using two-track recording, her students recorded their chosen set of chords on top of the pre-recorded melody. Dr. Zdechlik also extended this assignment to include ear training and harmonic dictation components. In this case, each student recorded a harmonization on a disk and exchanged the disk with a partner. The student had to listen critically and notate the partner's harmonization. To develop transposition skill, her students used the "transpose song" feature on a recorded melody. They then played the harmonic changes along with the melody in the new key.

Using a completed harmonization recording from above, Dr. Zdechlik's students could improvise and record a countermelody or additional parts on top of the melody and accompaniment.

Finally, to enhance score reading skills, Dr. Zdechlik assigned her students to record a two- to eight-track sequence of an ensemble or vocal score. The assignment helped to develop a better understanding of the overall texture of the music and how different parts of a score integrated with each other. In order to hear each part clearly, students sang each individual part before they recorded them. They were also encouraged to be creative in their instrumentation for their sequenced ensemble.

This was an informative, hands-on session. Each participant at the session sat at a keyboard and was given the opportunity to record two musical excerpts during the presentation.

Siok Lian Tan is Associate Professor of Piano at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio. She teaches applied piano and piano pedagogy, and coordinates the class piano program at the Department of Music. She holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Piano from University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music

(CCM). A native of Penang, Malaysia, Tan went to Cincinnati in 1988 as a scholarship student of Frank Weinstock at CCM. She has been heard in live broadcasts on Cincinnati Public Radio Station WGUC and has appeared as soloist with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and Miami University Symphony Orchestra. As an active pianist, Tan has performed in Asia, Europe, Australia, Africa, and the United States. Her recent performances include solo and chamber music concerts in New York, Chicago, Luxembourg, Cologne, Cape Town, Hong Kong, and London. She also performs regularly with her violinist husband, Tze Yean Lim. An active clinician and adjudicator, Tan has presented lectures at College-Music Society-Great Lakes Conference, Ohio Music Teachers' State Conference, and the National Group Piano and Piano Pedagogy Forum. She has also presented master classes at University Sains Malaysia, Sedaya International University in Malaysia, Hong Kong Baptist University, and the University of Cape Town.

Conference Presentation: "Application of WebCT to Group Instruction" Pamela Pike, presenter

by Christy Vogt

The integration of technology into the classroom continues to change with the ebb and flow of technological developments. College professors currently seek to support and streamline student learning through the use of university based websites. One such platform is called WebCT. Pamela Pike has been utilizing WebCT to provide practice tools for her piano classes at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

Pike began her session by explaining the dynamics of her current academic environment at the university. The school is considered a commuter campus with an enrollment of approximately 12,000 students. The average age of students is 27 and most have families and full time jobs. Most of Pike's undergraduate students are unable to read music when beginning the program. In order to facilitate learning for this type of student, Pike utilizes WebCT to provide 24 hour access to assignments, class information, and video tutorials that help students practice more effectively.

WebCT is very similar to Blackboard, being on online tool for making information and study tools available to students 24 hours a day. The content module includes the syllabus and course schedule, a calendar which is updated weekly, practice and written assignments, Power Point or video tutorials, quizzes, and a discussion room. Pike requires students to check the site three times a week. Pike also includes links to other websites and university services on her WebCT site. Instructors can enter student grades in the Grade Book, which can be linked to an Excel grade book.

Because this session took place in the piano lab, Pike was able to access her WebCT site directly and show us her class website first-hand. While some elements of the site were expected, it was exciting to see how Pike has spent time creating video tutorials for her classes. We briefly viewed video tutorials for playing a G major scale correctly and for learning a repertoire piece.

Pike's students have reportedly accessed the site frequently and found it immensely helpful. One of the specific benefits they have noted are the 24/7, round-the-clock availability of the tutorials. Pike found that it also puts more responsibility for learning on the students, allowing them to review tutorials often. The tutorials allow students to see and hear technical facets to assignments they might have missed during class. The video also provides a musical or aural example for them to follow.

Because so many students are "commuter" students, the discussion rooms helped create a sense of community among the students. Quite often, they would help one another with questions, coming to correct conclusions independently.

Pike found that using WebCT, while time consuming at first, was a better use of her time. Students could find all class materials in one place. By providing a hub of information,

she found that it gave the adult learner a sense of control over the learning environment. It also provides the opportunity to present materials in a variety of ways, meeting the needs of the different learning styles that students have.

Resources:

Understanding by Design. Wiggins & McTighe

141 Practical Tips for Teaching Online Groups. Hanna

Christy Vogt is Assistant Professor of Piano/Piano Pedagogy at McNeese State University in Lake Charles, Louisiana. She holds graduate degrees in piano pedagogy from the University of Oklahoma and the University of Miami where she studied pedagogy with Kenon Renfrow, E.L. Lancaster, and Jane Magrath. Christy has taught in pre-college programs at Wheaton College and Texas Christian University. Additionally, she was director of Keyboard for Kids, the preparatory program at the University of Miami, during her doctoral studies.

Panel Presentation: "Teachers of Special Needs Students Discuss Teaching Techniques, Materials, and Experiences" Sue Steck-Turner, Dan Craig and Cynthia Pullin, panelists

by William Budai

The 2006 GP3 Forum featured an excellent panel presentation entitled "Teachers of Special Needs Students Discuss Teaching Techniques, Materials, and Experiences." Three very experienced teachers of special needs students shared their thoughts and expertise on how to effectively work with this population of students. Sue Steck-Turner provided a detailed account of how students with Asperger's syndrome and autism learn, Dan Craig discussed how to effectively teach ADD/ADHD students, and Cynthia Pullin described the difficulties dyslexic students face in learning to read music.

Asperger's Syndrome and Autism

Students with Asperger's syndrome and autism typically exhibit a number of distinct characteristics. These students may have problems with ordinary social interactions and communication. They may have difficulty making eye contact, initiating or sustaining conversation, and will often take what you say very literally. In addition, these students usually will have a preoccupation with one interest that is abnormal in intensity (such as an intense fascination with storms or thunder) and will strictly adhere to certain routines or rituals. An additional distinguishing characteristic of autism is their repetitive motor movements.

In working with these students, the teaching environment must be comfortable, teacher-controlled, and consistent: if you must make changes, you will need to prepare the student well in advance. Lesson plans should establish a routine and consist of much repetition. Within the framework of a routine, however, it is helpful to provide the student with opportunities for choice. As always in teaching, it is important to correct errors immediately.

The teaching materials used should be very "friendly" - simple, large print, and uncluttered on the page. The teacher should feel free to manipulate the materials as needed, such as removing (i.e., cutting out) the pictures and teacher notes on the page. The use of manipulatives or tactile activities (especially kinesthetic activities away from the piano) is also ideal, as well as the use of color or other visual effects, which can be quite effective. For example, one could use colors to highlight the different hands or different notes.

In addition, teachers of students with Asperger's or autism will need to think and work small: work on short pieces, give little assignments, and set small, incremental goals. In the end, the teacher will need to be flexible and adjust to the student; if the student is uncomfortable, he or she will withdraw from the lesson.

ADD/ADHD

There are three main types of ADD/ADHD: 1) predominantly inattentive, 2) predominately hyperactive/impulsive, and 3) the combination of the preceding two. Symptoms of these disorders typically surface between 6 months and age 7 and affect 4-6% of the U.S. population. Children are more likely than adults to have ADD/ADHD, and males are more likely than females. While the most common form of treatment is a stimulant or other medication, treatments such as cognitive behavioral therapy and psychotherapy can be used in some instances.

In terms of music education, these students typically find it difficult to engage in the lesson; they progress at a slower pace, have less retention of the material, and experience greater frustration. There are also behavioral concerns that can affect the lesson: these students may have difficulty staying on the piano bench, will be easily distracted, have difficulty with a practice routine, and have off-topic responses and comments.

To be successful with these students, the teacher can employ a number of important strategies. As with most any student, motivation is a key factor. Determine the student's musical and non-musical interests to find pieces that are fun and enjoyable. It is also important that the teacher attempt to reduce distractions for the student. This may include closing doors in the room, looking at only one page at a time, enlarging the score, pointing as the student plays, and providing clear, simple instructions. The teacher should only present one item at a time and maintain eye contact as much as possible when teaching. In addition, allow frequent breaks (every 5-10 minutes), and change activities frequently.

Depending on the student, neurological techniques may be employed as a strategy to manage behavior. These techniques include the use of weighted vests or heavy blankets, or providing the student an opportunity to "self-regulate" using an inflated cushion seat or ball. It is important, however, to discuss the use of any neurological technique with the parent first.

Dyslexia

Dyslexia can manifest itself in a variety of ways, the most common being visual perception problems. To a dyslexic person, "p" "q" "b" and "d" all consist of a circle with a line on it. Specific trademarks of dyslexia include inconsistency in performance, difficulty finding place after looking away, omitting words or writing the same word twice, and greater difficulty with numbers. Dyslexic students may typically rely on kinesthetic or aural skills to compensate for difficulty in reading. These students are typically very bright students, although they may tire more quickly than others since greater concentration is needed.

Many of the same strategies mentioned previously would also work well with dyslexic students. For example, enlarging the score or copying music onto colored paper to avoid

the glare often found with white paper and black print can be very advantageous. Preparing carefully planned and sequenced lessons that build in small steps and establishing a quiet and organized work environment to eliminate distractions can also help. As dyslexic students may have great difficulty with directional reading and spatial awareness, multi-sensory instruction - combining hearing and seeing along with singing and movement - will help the student remember patterns of notes and patterns of rhythm.

With all special needs students, a great deal of patience is required. With the proper instruction and a supportive environment, these students can indeed be quite successful in music lessons.

William Budai is the coordinator of group piano at Indiana University/Purdue University at Indianapolis (IUPUI) where he teaches group piano, applied piano, and serves as the director of the IUPUI Music Academy, a community music school affiliated with the University. Dr. Budai holds degrees in Music Education from Central Michigan University and Piano Performance and Pedagogy from Bowling Green State University (OH). He recently completed a PhD in piano pedagogy from the University of Oklahoma, where he studied with Dr. Jane Magrath, Dr. Reid Alexander, and Dr. Edward Gates. In addition to his IUPUI responsibilities, Dr. Budai maintains a studio of pre-college students and has spent 12 summers serving as an accompanist and as part of the group piano faculty at Interlochen Arts Camp.

Panel Presentation: "Group Piano and the Millennial Student" Jamila McWhirter, Garth Alper and Fred Kern, panelists

by Lesley Sisterhen

In a panel discussion dedicated to the topic of "Group Piano and the Millennial Student," panelists presented their viewpoints on the needs of millennial students who are enrolled in group piano classes. They were asked to consider what keyboard skills are necessary for this generation of music students and whether class piano teachers are delivering this information in ways that make it relevant for the students. Panelists included Jamila McWhirter, Garth Alper, Brad Beckman, Karen Beres, and Victoria Johnson. The five panelists provided their own unique insights in the areas of technology, jazz and popular music, and the practical application of functional piano skills.

Jamila McWhirter

Dr. Jamila McWhirter, who teaches at Middle Tennessee State University as an assistant professor of choral music education, presented her research on functional piano skills for secondary choral music educators. Stating that there is a lack of consistency among piano proficiency requirements at different universities, McWhirter designed a research study to assess whether collegiate preparation in piano is related to what will actually be used by teachers in the classroom.

McWhirter created a survey for secondary choral educators regarding what piano skills are utilized in the classroom. The educators who were surveyed were also asked about their expectations of what piano skills should be possessed by student teaching interns. The study focused on how frequently educators used the skills and how important they believed these skills were for student teaching interns. The online survey was completed by members of the Southwest Division of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA). The results of the survey were presented for the 2006 National Association of Music Educators (MENC) National Convention.

Data from the survey indicated that the majority of secondary choral music educators use many functional piano skills "daily" or "frequently." Additionally, most secondary choral music educators believe that functional skills are "important" to "extremely important" for student teaching interns. Many secondary choral music educators stated that they would use functional piano skills more often if they were more proficient at these skills, particularly with regard to accompanying.

Survey results also indicated that secondary choral educators frequently use the piano to play warm-ups and to prepare for teaching and conducting. The majority play the piano in their classes. Other uses of the piano include playing or sight-reading vocal parts from an open score at the piano, singing one vocal part while playing one or more parts on the piano, and playing or sight-reading accompaniments. The categories of harmonization, transposition, and improvisation received lower ratings as having less frequent practical

applications. In written comments, the educators suggested placing less emphasis on memorized solos in piano classes or excluding them altogether.

The survey also asked respondents to rate the importance of particular skills needed by student teaching interns. The highest number of responses was given for playing the following: a single vocal part at sight, warm-ups, open score, simple accompaniments, and four-part chord progressions. Respondents were also asked to rate the piano skills of student teaching interns. The majority of those surveyed felt that the piano skills were "somewhat adequate" or "not adequate."

Using the results of this study, McWhirter made recommendations to help guide collegiate music departments in their creation of piano proficiency requirements. She recommended that piano proficiency requirements may differ depending on the specific music education area. Given the importance of basic piano skills for choral music educators, she suggested that some courses might be eliminated to allow for more piano course work. In addition, functional piano skills should be reinforced across the curriculum, rather than just in group piano classes.

Garth Alper

Garth Alper is a jazz pianist and educator who believes that popular music and jazz should be included in the class piano curriculum. He presented ways in which keyboard skills combined with the use of technology can lead to improvisation and composition in popular and jazz styles. In Alper's opinion, music schools are not keeping up with current technological trends. Additionally, the training of many class piano teachers is limited to Western art and these teachers may not feel comfortable teaching jazz or popular music. For these reasons, most class piano instruction focuses on the analysis and performance of classical music but ignores contemporary music that may be motivating and relevant for the millennial generation.

Group piano labs are an ideal setting for teaching students about the components of popular music. Many pianists believe that popular music lacks complexity, but Alper called this believe a myth and cited the rhythmic complexity of music by The Roots, the harmonic complexity of music by Steely Dan and Stevie Wonder, and the timbral complexity found in music by the Chemical Brothers as evidence that popular music is not always "simple."

Students may be given assignments to help them become familiar with the components of popular music. For example, students might be required to transcribe the bass part, drum beat, and chords from an assigned contemporary pop tune. This transcription can then be entered into a sequencer, which is often built into the electric pianos in group piano labs. Alper gave three examples of current songs that would work well for a transcription assignment. These included "Real Gone" by Sheryl Crow and "Put It Behind You" by Keane. These songs, which exhibit clearly heard chord changes and fairly simple rhythm and bass parts, can be found under “Today's Top Albums” in iTunes. An example of a more rhythmically complex song that might be more appropriate for a percussion major

is "Feng Shui" by Gnarls Barkley.

According to Alper, the most important jazz skills that students should learn are the following: playing major and minor triads and seventh chords, as well as half-diminished seventh chords; reading a lead sheet; improvising over some basic song forms; and playing the ii-V-I chord progression over standard rootless voicings. Jerry Coker's *Keyboard for Pianists and Non-Pianists* and Bill Boyd's *Jazz Chord Voicings for Keyboard* are two books that contain helpful explanations of jazz chord voicings.

Alper also suggested that time should be spent in group piano classes on listening. If the task of transcription is too time-consuming, teachers may elect to give listening assignments and quiz their students on the pieces. The discography found in *The Jazz Piano Book* by Mark Levine and "*Down Beat*'s Guide to 50 Essential Piano and Keyboard Jazz Recordings" from the September 2002 issue of *Down Beat* are two guides that can help teachers identify important jazz piano recordings.

Students might begin improvising by using major and minor scales. For the purpose of learning to improvise, they should also become familiar with the blues scale and some commonly used modes such as Dorian and Mixolydian.

For teachers who are not jazz pianists and may not feel comfortable teaching students to play in the jazz style, Alper offered the following advice: take lessons from a jazz pianist or attend a summer workshop by Jamey Aebersold in order to learn these skills. Alternatively, one might choose to bring in a jazz pianist from the community to teach a few weeks of the course.

Fred Kern

Fred Kern was unable to be present at the conference, so Dr. Brad Beckman took his place and delivered Kern's remarks on the needs of music majors in diverse specialties. Piano classes may fall under different headings, such as group piano, class piano, secondary piano, or keyboard skills, but the functional skills presented in these classes remain the same. Kern divided piano skills into four categories: know it, read it, play it, and fake it. Students should know scales, chords, chord progressions, and transposition. They should be able to sight-read simple scores in real time. Students should have the adequate technical ability to be able to "play it" and must also be able to "fake it" by improvising and comping patterns at the keyboard.

In reference to the question of what has changed for contemporary class piano courses, Kern states that there is less emphasis on memorizing and polishing repertoire or on pure technique. He added that the future of class piano teaching depends on changes in requirements given by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM).

Most importantly, class piano teachers must be able to communicate effectively with students and faculty. If students do not see the relevance of learning basic piano skills,

they may not be motivated to learn these skills and may have a negative attitude toward the course. Teachers can deter this attitude by learning how to communicate effectively with students of the millennial generation.

Karen Beres and Victoria Johnson

Dr. Karen Beres and Dr. Victoria Johnson shared their findings on how applied music teachers use the keyboard as a tool in their teaching and practice. Dr. Beres is the coordinator of group piano and piano pedagogy at the North Carolina School of the Arts, while Dr. Johnson is Assistant Professor and Coordinator of Piano Pedagogy at Louisiana State University.

The two panelists collaborated in a research study in which they surveyed applied music faculty regarding how they use the keyboard. They used an online Front Page survey and received 171 responses, with at least one school surveyed from each state. Respondents included performers in each of the following categories: vocalists (35%), wind instrumentalists (40%), and string instrumentalists (19%).

Johnson discussed the results of the survey in which participants ranked piano skills by their importance for the performer or studio teacher. More than half of the participants rated accompanying as the most important skill, while ratings for other skills were much lower: 15% cited chord progressions as the most important skill, and 11% named score reading as most important. Technique, harmonization, improvisation, playing by ear, and solo repertoire received the lowest number of responses.

The responses in the survey highlighted the importance of basic piano skills for music majors. Over eighty percent of those surveyed felt that piano skills were "important" to "very important." When asked about the frequency of their current piano use, the musicians surveyed were asked to answer with "weekly," "monthly," or "never." In studio teaching, 30.6% of the respondents sight-read accompaniments daily, while 21.7% sight-read accompaniments in their own practicing.

Beres discussed how the research findings might be implemented in group piano classes. Performance majors tend to have fewer piano requirements than music education majors, but their learning goals are similar. Given the fact that sight-reading accompaniments received such a high rating, Beres suggested that this should be the class piano teacher's main goal for performance majors. Sight-reading every day should be part of the class piano curriculum. An early emphasis on sight-reading, chord progressions, and technical command can provide the building blocks for learning to accompany at the piano. In teaching chord progressions, class piano instructors should emphasize the fact that chords have a function. Musical literacy can be built through an understanding of harmonic analysis.

Suggestions for the class piano teacher included using "real-life assignments" with a practical application of piano skills. Teachers should also incorporate technology and

include collaborative activities in their lessons. In addition, students should be involved in the planning for the class. If they design their own goals and chart their own progress, students will be more motivated to learn and will be more likely to see the relevance of class piano.

One of the challenges in teaching the millennial student is the fact that many students feel entitled to receive an A in the class. As a way of solving this problem, Beres states in her syllabus that attendance, preparation, and class participation make up 10% of each student's grade. However, it is a skill-oriented class, and 90% of the grade depends on the students' performances on daily grades, a midterm exam, and a final exam.

Grading expectations should be clarified early in the semester. A teacher might demonstrate a performance that would qualify for the grade of A, B, or C, so that students are aware of how polished an exam must be to receive an A. Students can also listen to a recording of their own playing and assign themselves a grade through the process of self-evaluation.

It is the group piano teacher's responsibility to help students become both versatile and marketable. The skills necessary for professional musicians include score reading, especially for a church position; transposing, especially for accompanists in a voice studio; jazz chords, especially for music theater majors; and fluency at reading figured bass and sight-reading.

During the last three weeks of class, an instructor may illustrate the importance of piano skills in the "real world" of professional musicians by having students demonstrate their piano skills in a mock interview. The teacher might ask the class "Who would I hire from this class?" Engaging in this type of scenario may help class piano students to see the importance of learning to play the piano. It may also prompt them to become more diligent in their preparation for the class.

Summary

Group piano teachers must continue to re-examine their teaching with an eye toward the relevance of piano skills for millennial students. Incorporating the newest technological trends and integrating jazz and popular music into the curriculum may help to draw in the current generation of piano students. However, teachers must place the highest priority on developing proficiency in skills that students will use in their career as professional musicians.

Lesley Sisterhen serves as Assistant Professor of Piano Pedagogy at Baylor University, where she directs the piano pedagogy program, teaches class piano and piano pedagogy, and supervises the Piano Laboratory Program. She holds degrees in performance from the University of Houston and Florida State University and recently earned the Doctor of Musical Arts in Piano Performance and Pedagogy from the University of Oklahoma. Dr. Sisterhen has written articles for *American Music Teacher* and the online *Piano Pedagogy Forum*. An active clinician and researcher, she gave a presentation at the 2006 national convention for the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) and has presented for numerous music teacher organizations. Her previous faculty position involved teaching group and applied piano on the faculty at the

University of Central Oklahoma.

Panel Discussion: "Teaching to the Millennial Generation" Martha Hilley, Peter Jutras and Lauren Walworth, panelists

by Kathy Thompson

The question for the panel discussion was "Are our teaching methods in sync with the core tendencies and personality characteristics of the millennial generation?" The three panelists were all piano teachers, each representing one of three different generations. Martha Hilley, coordinator of class piano and piano pedagogy at the University of Texas at Austin, represented the Baby Boomers. Peter Jutras, piano and piano pedagogy professor from the University of Georgia in Athens, spoke for Generation X. Lauren Walworth, recent M.M. graduate from the University of Oklahoma, shared perspectives from the Millennial Generation.

Panelists began by attempting to clarify the question. Hilley asked if the question pertained to methods or teaching styles. Jutras asked if it referred to teaching piano teachers in pedagogy classes or teaching piano students. Walworth thought the question was inclusive of methods, styles, computer use, and group lessons, but moreover, how to help millennial students considering their particular characteristics. Most of the discussion evolved in two directions - how to appeal to their characteristics, and how to lead them out of limitations typical to the millennial generation.

Panelists referred to characteristics of the millennial students from Craig Vickio's presentation from the previous session and from Robert DeBard's article, *Millennials Coming to College* (New Directions for Student Services No. 106, Summer 2004, copyright Wiley Periodicals, Inc.) Typical millennial students were sheltered and highly protected by "intruding" parents. Having highly structured schedules from childhood, they also like structure in their classes. From playing video games they are used to immediate feedback, and they are quite savvy technologically. Millennials generally have a high level of trust toward authority. They tend not to question as much as Generation X students, and often avoid thinking for themselves. Millennial students are team-oriented and enjoy working in groups.

Walworth agreed with the characterizations of her own generation and mentioned that she and her peers had often been showered with trophies and medals not just for winning, but for effort, and that they were used to making A's in high school if they came to class and followed the rules. As current college students, they are most concerned about how to make the grade in college and have the perception that without the 4.0 one can't land a job or get into a good graduate school.

As the panel continued their dialog, several recommendations surfaced for teaching millennial students.

60. *Syllabus and Structure*: A very specific syllabus provides the structure that makes millennial students more comfortable in knowing what to expect from the course, and therefore frees them from some of the worry. Breaking down long-term

assignments into smaller steps or check-points also appeals to this need for structure.

61. *Motivation*: Walworth suggested not to include only minimum standards for assignments, but to appeal to higher achievement. Giving examples of high quality is one way to motivate. To encourage the student to get away from trying just to please the pedagogy teacher, one might suggest to students, "Make this project meaningful to you."
62. *Grading*: Hilley suggested explaining that the traditional meaning of A is exceptional, B excellent, and C average, not tantamount to failure. Explain to students often that not everyone will make an A because skills do not develop as soon for some as for others. Explaining rubrics and giving feedback satisfies the student's desire for structure. On the other hand, to lead them away from the need for constant feedback, Hilley does not constantly tell her students how they are doing. Walworth agreed that this is not a disservice because it may be hard to separate self-worth from the feedback.
63. *Self-assessment*: All agreed that there is a need to help students become goal-oriented for intrinsic rewards rather than the A grade. Jutras encouraged moving feedback from the teacher's realm to the student's by asking questions, such as, "Do you think that was too loud?" and "What did you hear?" Another suggestion for taking ownership of assessment was to have students record and evaluate their playing.
64. *Practice*: Hilley commented that students want the short cut to a good grade. She recommended that teachers capitalize on millennial students' characteristic trust of authority and show them how to practice to conquer a skill. "Trust me and try it."
65. *Teachers' use of technology*: Hilley cautioned teachers to use technology in a genuine way to enhance and serve our teaching, not to impress millennial students who likely are more computer-savvy. On the other hand, teachers must keep learning the new technology to be current and effective for this generation.
66. *Students' use of technology*: Jutras mentioned that as amazing as it is, technology is an obstacle for trusting, unquestioning millennial students, who report all kinds of information from web sites without knowing who wrote it or judging its authority. Teachers should demand that students learn to think for themselves and give them tools to judge the quality of information. Today's students avoid working with books in favor of websites, so teachers need to require other sources as well.
67. *Diversity*: Hilley mentioned that diversity presents both challenges and opportunities for students. Jutras agreed that millennial students have experienced more diversity and are more sensitive to accept differences. We can use their awareness of differences to equip them with skills to reach students of all generations. Walworth suggested that appreciation for diversity has come from the technology of communication, and that celebrating diversity should become easier as students want to reach out to the world.

This panel was quite effective in bringing generational perspectives to bear on teaching today's college students. Ms. Walworth provided credibility to the characteristics ascribed to the millennial student and reinforced the suggestions made by the experienced

professors.

Kathy Thompson is Associate Professor of Music at Oklahoma Christian University in Oklahoma City, where she teaches piano, piano pedagogy, music theory, and music education courses, and supervises the OC Music Academy. She is currently the Vice President for Membership for the Oklahoma Music Teachers Association. She holds a M.M. degree in Piano Performance and Pedagogy and a Ph.D. in Music Education from the University of Oklahoma.

Discussion Group Report: "Friday Discussion Groups with Panel Presenters" Sue Steck-Turner, Dan Craig and Cynthia Pullin, presenters

by Julie Knerr

After a panel presentation by three teachers of special needs students, Discussion Groups were led by each of the presenters in order to allow more interaction with teachers specifically interested in a certain type of learning disability. The three discussion group panelists were Sue Steck-Turner, who focused on Asperger's Syndrome and Autism; Cynthia Pullin, who discussed students with Dyslexia; and Dan Craig, who dealt with the topic of ADD/ADHD.

Sue Steck-Turner Sue Steck-Turner's discussion group was organized in a question and answer format. Following are some of the questions asked by the attending teachers with Steck-Turner's answers. The discussion focused on three topics: general questions on the disabilities, parental attitudes, and specific materials and teaching strategies.

General Questions on Asperger's Syndrome and Autism

68. What are some of the primary differences between Autism and Asperger's Syndrome? There are many aspects to the diagnoses of these conditions. However, Autistic children usually are higher functioning intellectually than Asperger's Syndrome students, and they are usually extremely sensitive to sound and to environmental factors such as the weather. Asperger's Syndrome students make little eye contact with people. In teaching them, much repetition is required, and few master the fine details of playing. Most children with Asperger's Syndrome are boys
69. Do some Autistic students interact with other students? Steck-Turner said that she does pair some of her Autistic students and that in recitals she mainstreams all students, grouping them according to age. She said that her regular students treat her Autistic students kindly. Steck-Turner also noted that piano can be life changing for many disabled students, because it helps boost the students' self-esteem. For example, Steck-Turner said she taught a student who was missing fingers on one hand. He had trouble with relationships in school, but he inspired the students when they heard him play a piano solo at the end of the year. This kind of positive attention, plus the relationship that can be developed through music between disabled students of all types and regular students, enriches the lives of all students.

Questions Regarding Parental Attitudes

- Do you work with the parents in any special way? Steck-Turner said she checks in with the parents regularly to stay informed about the student's life. She also noted that often the child's doctors are interested in how the student is progressing in piano lessons.
- I have a student whose parents do not want to tell the next piano teacher about a

diagnosis. What do you think? The new teacher must know about the diagnosis in order to teach the student well. It is important for people to learn what these students are capable of accomplishing, so that parents will not be ashamed of the diagnosis. For instance, one of Steck-Turner's students was on TV and in the newspaper after his success at Guild auditions. This kind of attention creates positive publicity for all learning disabled students.

Questions Regarding Specific Materials and Teaching Strategies

- Would an Autistic student do well with an aural approach like Suzuki? The Suzuki approach would probably be much too complex for an Autistic student. Both Autistic and Asperger's Syndrome students need an incredible amount of repetition. An example of the extreme need for repetition was presented by another teacher in the discussion group, who noted that her student was resistant to learning the white keys after having spent quite a bit of time playing on the black keys. Steck-Turner said this is probably because the student needed even more repetition on the black keys and was not yet ready to move to the white keys. She encouraged the teacher, noting the student would eventually be ready to take the next step, especially if the teacher looked for ways to make the white keys attractive to the student.

Steck-Turner noted that in addition to repetition of material, these students need the repetition of a strict lesson routine. To help learning disabled students focus, clutter should be reduced in the studio as much as possible, and especially in the learning materials. Reducing unnecessary material on the page can be accomplished by cutting a piece of music from a method book and pasting it on a blank sheet of paper. Steck-Turner also noted that most piano methods go too fast for learning disabled students and recommended Vogt and Bates' *Piano Discoveries*, *My First Folksongs* by Kowalchyk and Lancaster, or pre-school methods such as Bastien's *Piano Party* to meet the need for slow pacing and repetition of concepts. If suitable materials do not exist, the teacher can create materials to suit individual students in order to help each student succeed.

Cynthia Pullin

In the discussion group on Dyslexia, Pullin emphasized that not all Dyslexic students are the same. Some reverse numbers, some reverse letters, and some reverse both. Using color and enlarging the music print can help these students with music reading, and the teacher should experiment to find which colors work best with each student. Although Dyslexic students will have difficulty sightreading, they can become proficient at memorizing. Having the student listen to recordings of a new piece for several weeks before beginning to learn the piece can be helpful. In the lesson, Pullin suggested starting with a piece the student is successful at and enjoys and then working on learning a few lines of a new piece, alternating tasks so that the student does not get frustrated with the difficulties of music reading.

Pullin emphasized that patience is the main requirement for teaching learning disabled

students and said that pedagogy students should be given opportunities to discover whether teaching learning disabled students is something that they would like to include in their careers. To help pedagogy students learn about this specialized branch of teaching, Pullin suggested having them observe teachers of learning disabled students and teach some lessons to learning disabled students if possible.

Dan Craig

Teachers in Dan Craig's discussion group completed a Quick Learning Assessment to determine their individual learning styles, whether visual, aural, or tactile. Craig then had the teachers break up into groups based on their learning styles. It was noted that half the teachers were visual learners. Craig asked the teachers in each group to discuss ways to help students learn according to their preferred learning style. Interestingly, the dynamics of each group of teachers mirrored the learning style represented in each group. For instance, the visual learners quietly perused their learning assessments before discussing strategies for teaching, the aural group read their thoughts aloud to each other, and the tactile group made many gestures while talking.

The visual learners presented the following strategies for helping students who are visual learners:

In private lessons:

- Stay in the student's line of vision.
- Make frequent eye contact with the student.
- Arrange the room in a pleasing way.
- Have the students write their assignments.
- Use pictures to illustrate concepts and ideas.
- Use post-it notes to list practice steps.
- Use colored pens or removable tape to mark places in the score that need attention.
- Construct a colored map of a piece to discuss form.
- Point to things in the score often.
- Email students.
- Use visualization and stories.
- Use paper keyboards.

In group lessons:

18. Use a Visualizer.
19. Demonstrate concepts away from the piano by playing in the air.
20. Use a step by step approach.
21. Have students observe each other.
22. Use teacher demonstration.

The teachers who were aural learners suggested the following teaching strategies to help students who are aural learners.

13. Teach by rote.
14. Sightread familiar pieces.
15. Have the student read through pieces they have already learned.
16. Sing.
17. Teach the sound before introducing the symbol.
18. Improvise and compose.
19. Use teacher demonstration.
20. Perform aural exaggerations.
21. Use mnemonic devices.
22. Tape-record the lessons.

The teachers who were tactile learners suggested the following strategies to help students who are tactile learners. Craig noted that ADD/ADHD children tend to be tactile learners.

19. Include off the bench activities frequently throughout the lesson.
20. Use computer software and games.
21. Have students perform expressive movements.
22. Touch the student's arms to demonstrate technical concepts.
23. Assign physical movements to theoretical concepts. For instance, in ear training, have students stand on tiptoes when they hear a V7 chord and relax when they hear a I chord.
24. Allow students to place their hands on the teacher's hands to feel motions.
25. Rotate to different pianos if possible.

Craig emphasized that instead of being frustrated by concepts a student has trouble with, teachers should focus on what a student can do well and build on the student's strengths. Because learning disabled students may take longer to master concepts, the teacher must be creative to find the best approach for each student.

Conclusion

The three panelists presented a wealth of practical information for teaching learning disabled children with a variety of diagnoses. The panelists all held the following three suggestions in common for working with learning disabled students. 1) Encourage students and provide them opportunities to build their self-esteem. 2) Be patient and individualize teaching to conform to each student's individual learning pace. 3) Be creative in finding ways to teach so that students can live up to their potential. In doing so, the lives of learning disabled students can be enriched through piano study.

Julie Knerr is Assistant Professor of Piano and Piano Pedagogy at the University of Missouri-Columbia, where she teaches pedagogy, applied piano, and oversees the group piano program. She completed her PhD in Music Education with an Emphasis in Piano Pedagogy from the University of Oklahoma in November 2006. Prior to moving to Missouri, Dr. Knerr was on the piano faculty at Oklahoma City University. She is a frequent adjudicator at festivals and competitions, and has maintained private studios in several states. Her research interests include development of piano technique in pre-college students, group piano

teaching, and pre-college piano repertoire.

Discussion Group: "Share Your Favorite Piano Pedagogy and Group Piano Projects that Relate to the Millennial Student"

by Erica Minneman

The Millennial Piano Student differs from piano students of previous generations in many ways. As piano teachers, we are called to teach fundamental piano skills in a variety of ways so as to meet the needs of diverse students. These projects, discussed by teachers in breakout sessions, are examples of ways in which we can teach today's students essential skills in ways they find meaningful.

Craig Vickio, in the keynote address, outlined several unique characteristics of millennial generation students. He described students born since 1982 as comfortable with structure, team-oriented, techno-savvy, and sheltered. Vickio also suggested these students need to be challenged to take ownership of their education and to develop independence. The following projects discussed at the conference breakout session are organized according to the characteristics of the millennial student to which they apply.

Creating Structure, Inspiring Organization

Dr. Vickio pointed out that today's piano students are comfortable with structure. They enjoy knowing exactly what is expected and frequently feel uncomfortable in unstructured situations. Through these pedagogy projects, we can provide students with needed structure or challenge them to create their own structure within open-ended assignments.

70. *Syllabus and project structure*. Several teachers emphasized the importance of providing students with syllabi that are highly structured. By carefully outlining project requirements and expectations, teachers can facilitate student work.
71. *Piano pedagogy notebook*. Many piano pedagogy courses require that students develop a notebook of materials relating to music teaching. Course notes, handouts, projects, music reviews, etc. frequently form large parts of these notebooks. The notebook can be a valuable reference tool for the student long after the course is over. Often, millennial students are uncomfortable with the freedom involved in selecting materials to include in their notebooks. By providing students with notebook models or giving students lists of types of materials to include, teachers can help students develop their own structure with this project.
72. *Repertoire lists*. Several teachers indicated that they ask students to compile repertoire lists of elementary, intermediate, and advanced level pieces. Some teachers give the projects to student groups, assigning one student to each style period. This type of highly structured project appeals to millennial students.
73. *Discovering resources*. Making an annotated bibliography of library materials that relate to piano pedagogy helps students learn about pedagogical topics and provides awareness of valuable resources. At the same time, this project can help students develop organizational skills.

74. *Video self-evaluation of teaching*. In this project, piano pedagogy students are required to record lessons or segments of lessons that they teach which they then review to provide a self-evaluation of their work. Students are instructed to include positive qualities that they demonstrate in teaching and areas that they feel need improvement. This open-ended project can be given a structure that appeals to millennial students by providing them with a checklist form to guide their self-evaluation process.
75. *Design a beginning piano method book*. The name of this project says it all! Students develop the music, explanations of concepts, and exercises used to teach a beginning student. Moreover, they must develop organizational skills as they order materials in a logical teaching progression.

Fostering Teamwork, Independence and Creativity

All students benefit from being able to work well individually and in groups with their peers. Millennial students enjoy working in teams with other students, but frequently feel uncomfortable working independently. Some of the projects below can be used to capitalize on students' team building skills; others are specifically designed to help students achieve greater independence and creativity.

- *Team method reviews*. Teachers can foster teamwork by requiring each student to review method books or other materials with another classmate. Students tend to think more deeply about the materials being studied when they can discuss their ideas with a colleague than they do when they work alone. They also tend to develop their own ideas about materials, rather than merely adopting opinions found in books and internet articles.
- *Jazz improvisation teams*. A group piano teacher at one breakout session has had much success in team building through a project involving jazz improvisation. In this project, students are grouped as trios: one student plays a bass line, one comps jazz chords, and one improvises using the blues scale. Students develop skills in working together musically, communicating verbally about music, and helping one another learn to play better.
- *Team composition project*. Using WebCT or Blackboard, one group piano student posts a theme he has composed. Each student in the class downloads the student's melody and creates his own variation on the theme, which he then posts back to the group. Students then discuss the theme and the variations created by classmates over the internet.
- *Developing a philosophy of teaching*. In this project, students are asked to elucidate their personal philosophy of teaching. Teachers can stimulate students' thought processes by posing specific questions, such as: Who should you teach? What topics should piano students learn? What lesson format(s) should be used? What music should students learn? Why is music education important? This project challenges students to think independently about music learning and to present and defend their opinions concerning piano teaching.
- *Composition for the piano studio*. Several piano pedagogy teachers indicated that they emphasize student composition in projects. One teacher asks students to compose

pieces of various levels of difficulty. This helps students more deeply understand the demands of different difficulty levels and fosters their creativity. Another teacher requires piano pedagogy students to compose scale accompaniments.

Encouraging Student Ownership

Today's piano students are often receptive to guidance from authority figures. However, they have little experience with forging their own paths. By developing projects that encourage students to take ownership of their education, we give students the opportunity to build confidence and self-reliance.

- *Curricula that meet student interests*. One teacher said that she has graduate piano pedagogy students fill out a survey on the first day of class to learn what the students hope to learn from the class. The teacher then uses this information to mold course content.
- *Exploring your past*. In this project, each piano pedagogy student is asked to recall a piece that he was successful in playing in the past and present it to his peers. In the presentation, the student discusses what he was able to accomplish through his study of the piece and how he did it. This project helps students develop ownership of their musical development.

Teaching through "Real World" Projects

Dr. Vickio described students of the current generation as sheltered. Because they grew up in protected environments, many millennial students lacked opportunities for developing problem solving skills. Piano teachers can facilitate the development of these vital skills through projects based on "real world" scenarios.

- *Students interviewing students*. Today's piano pedagogy students can learn about the needs of millennial piano students by interviewing pre-college and adult leisure piano students. Through asking open-ended questions, piano pedagogy students can learn about what piano students value about their current teacher and music study.
- *Parent interviews*. Piano teachers are part of a service industry, and parents of piano students are their clients. Piano pedagogy students gain valuable information about how to be successful business people and teachers by interviewing parents to discover what they value in a teacher, what they feel is important to their child's music study, and what they have found to be successful with their child.
- *Group piano tutoring internship*. At some schools, piano pedagogy students serve as tutors for group piano students who fail their piano proficiency examinations. The tutor is responsible for giving the group piano student individualized instruction on materials selected and provided by the group piano instructor. This provides piano pedagogy students the opportunity to work with intermediate level college-aged piano students.
- *Master class series*. To facilitate this project the piano pedagogy instructor invites local piano teachers to send elementary and intermediate piano students to perform in

master classes taught by piano pedagogy students. Piano pedagogy students benefit not only from the opportunity to teach in a master class situation; they also have the opportunity to observe and analyze the teaching of their peers.

- *Group class series*. Through this project, piano pedagogy students provide group classes for local piano students. The piano pedagogy teacher contacts local piano instructors to recruit pre-college piano students to participate in the classes. Piano students are carefully assigned to groups of six based on the length of their piano study, their age, and the musical concepts that they have learned. Piano pedagogy students develop a curriculum, select materials for the classes, and teach all class segments. Each group class is organized around a theme (i.e. review of 4ths and 5ths), and class activities include sight-reading, theory, ear training, ensemble, technique, and creative activities. All class teaching is video taped, and class teachers review the tapes together to determine what activities worked well and which could be improved. The teaching team then plans the next class.
- *Design a piano studio or a community music school*. In each of these projects, students are required: to create studio policies, a sample budget, and marketing strategies for the business; to select equipment and materials used in the business; and to describe how physical space in the studio or school with be utilized. One teacher interviews each student about his or her studio plan, asking probing questions and generally playing devil's advocate.
- *Networking for the future collegiate teacher*. By having piano pedagogy students work as interns with local teachers or requiring student attendance at conference sessions and performances, the pedagogy teacher can help students learn to make the personal contacts that are necessary for success as a collegiate teacher.
- *Adjudication preparation*. Piano pedagogy students observe adjudicators at festivals and competitions and give written commentary on how the adjudicator interacts with the student, the types of comments made to the student, and the criteria used in judging.
- *Professional development projects*. Conference attendees mentioned several projects that help piano pedagogy students develop materials that will help them to secure employment. Some teachers have students prepare resumes. Others require that students develop teaching portfolios for MNTA certification. Additional professional materials that frequently are evaluated by piano pedagogy instructors include studio websites, online job portfolios, and online piano studio marketing materials.
- *Teaching preparation exercises*. To help student teachers learn how to plan lessons, one teacher has piano pedagogy students do research on several intermediate level pieces. Students research and report information concerning the piece's composer, level of difficulty, and technical demands. Finally, the student lists what he or she would address when teaching the piece.
- *Intermediate repertoire study*. In this project, piano pedagogy students learn to play various intermediate level piano pieces and then receive lessons on the music from both their pedagogy and applied piano instructors. After having lessons on the music, these student teachers are well prepared to teach the works to their own students.
- *Piano technique scavenger hunt*. One of the most important skills of a piano teacher is

the ability to find music that will challenge or reinforce specific technical skills. In this project, students are given a list of technical problems. They must then find repertoire pieces that could be used to help a student overcome each technical challenge.

- *Mix and match methods, or the Supplement game*. In this project, the pedagogy instructor has students explore beginning piano methods while imagining how different materials could be used to supplement or complement one another.
- *Modifying lesson plans*. Piano teachers must be prepared to teach students with a variety of different strengths and weaknesses. To help pedagogy students become flexible in teaching essential skills to a variety of students, one teacher gives a project in which students develop a basic lesson plan for a beginning student and then modifies it to meet the needs of a dyslexic student. The same basic lesson plan could be modified again to be used with an ADD/ADHD student.

Challenging the Techno-Savvy Student

Millennial piano students are frequently very adept at using modern technology. The internet and computer technology have always been a part of most of their lives. Projects can help students learn how to use technology effectively to do anything from creating Power Point tutorials to advertising their private studio online.

23. *Creating student tutorials*. One piano pedagogy teacher requires that students use Power Point to create three student tutorials, one for an elementary piano student, one for an intermediate student, and one for an advanced student. Tutorial slides include information used to introduce a new repertoire piece, review an old piece, or complete a creative activity.
24. *Creating a website*. Several teachers give projects in which piano pedagogy students develop websites.
25. *Using the iPod for practice*. One teacher designed a project in which students are challenged to find innovative ways to use the iPod in their practice.
26. *Dream Studio Grant Proposal*. In this project, students are required to write a grant proposal to obtain financing for equipment used to enhance their teaching or studio operations. Equipment listed in the proposal can include hardware, software, and keyboards. Pedagogy students may choose to request equipment for use in studio marketing or operations, professional development, group teaching, or student performances. Pedagogy students research current technology and resources, list skills that they will need to develop in order to use the equipment, provide a time frame for gaining these skills, articulate how student-learning outcomes will be enhanced by the materials, and give the total cost of the equipment.
27. *Design a piano lab*. A teacher requires that pedagogy students provide a plan for a complete piano lab, including all essential equipment. Students are required to keep all purchases within a specified budget.
28. *Student designed independent projects*. Pedagogy students frequently have better ideas about how to incorporate technology into their teaching than their instructors do. Consequently, some pedagogy teachers let students design and

execute their own technology projects.

29. *Putting Music Theory Software in Context*. In this project, pedagogy students fully explore music theory software programs and then determine how concepts presented and tested in the software correspond to and align with concepts that appear in the state music teachers' theory syllabus.
30. *Evaluating websites*. As preparation for this project, teachers lead class discussions in which students learn how evaluate the credibility of a variety of websites. Then students explore the internet, select a few websites, and evaluate them. The project culminates with in-class tours of selected websites and discussions of the credibility and value of the sites.

Interestingly, several teachers mentioned that they found their students to be too technology-savvy. To make sure that students explore a variety of resources when preparing papers and assignments, some teachers require that students cite at least two non-internet sources.

The many projects discussed in breakout sessions give specific ways in which piano pedagogy and group piano instructors can meet the needs of millennial piano students. By building on their characteristic strengths and bolstering their weaknesses, college teachers can prepare today's piano student to meet the needs of future generations.

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Discussion Group: "Group Piano and the Millennial Student"

by Lesley Sisterhen

On Saturday, August 5, participants in the 2006 GP3 Conference broke into seven discussion groups to converse about the topic of "group piano and the millennial student." Much of the conversation that occurred during the breakout sessions revolved around issues presented during previous sessions on the millennial student. On the previous day, Craig Vickio had given an overview of characteristics of the new generation of students. A panel discussion on Saturday morning about group piano and the millennial student also provided fuel for discussion.

Given the broad nature of the topic, a diverse range of issues was addressed among the seven discussion groups. Prior to the conference, participants had been asked to bring ideas for projects or assignments that they have used in their group piano classes that seem to work particularly well with today's generation of students. After sharing these ideas, participants conferred about the following issues: characteristics of the millennial student and how these affect group piano teaching strategies; changes in technology that affect group piano classes; what kinds of skills are most important to implement in class piano, such as theory, aural skills, and accompanying; and problems that arise in the setup of a typical four-semester sequence of class piano.

Activities for today's group piano classes

Teachers were asked to bring their own ideas for activities or projects that are useful for today's group piano students. Linda Owen, who teaches at the University of Central Oklahoma, uses what she referred to as the "chopsticks project" on the first day of class. For this activity, she teaches students to play "Chopsticks," which most students have already heard. Students can be taught by rote to play the piece in the key of C by only using finger 2 with both hands. This motivating and enjoyable activity may be used to reinforce the names of notes on the keyboard. Once students learn the piece, Dr. Owen teaches a simple accompaniment using alternating hands on the tonic and dominant notes C and G. Half of the class then plays the melody while the other half plays the simple accompaniment.

Carlyn Morenus from Illinois State University enjoys teaching jazz scatting with her group piano classes. The students listen to pre-recorded MIDI backgrounds and record their own improvisation. Another teacher has his students perform for a fundraiser. Using the Hal Leonard book *Your First Fake Book*, the students improvise two-hand accompaniments while singing.

Students are often motivated by games or competitions. One instructor plays the game of "Jeopardy" to reinforce scale fingering. In this version of the game, students play scales for 200 points each and the winners receive brownies. Another participant came up with a version of "musical chairs" that incorporates an improvisation activity. In this game, one student improvises and then comes to a sudden stop while the other students in the class

rush to find a chair. The student who does not get a chair then becomes the next improviser.

Characteristics of the millennial student

During the presentation on millennial students, Craig Vickio mentioned that one characteristic of students in this generation is their need for connection with other people and their typically team-oriented approach to learning. Teachers in one discussion group agreed that this characteristic intensified the need for using grouping and partnering activities in group piano. It is well documented that partnering is one of the most effective means of learning, and teachers agreed that most of their students were comfortable working in pairs or small groups.

Most millennial students are techno-savvy. Given the interest and ability of today's student in using technology, some of the discussion groups debated the role of technology in today's group piano classroom. Many students now own iPods, and some participants wondered how they might be used in group piano classes.

Valerie Cisler from the University of Nebraska at Kearney suggested that students could bring in pieces that have been downloaded to their iPod and transcribe them. She added that students enjoy this activity because it allows them to feel successful when they see the end result. Ann Porter, who teaches at the University of Cincinnati, mentioned that a piece of music can be automatically transcribed if it exists in an mp3 format by using a notation program such as Finale or Sibelius. The extra editing that is required makes this an educational activity, and Porter uses this process with her music education students. When questioned about copyright laws, Porter stated that using the transcribed piece for study purposes is fine, but problems arise when the pieces are used for performance.

A participant in another group stated that music files relevant to the group class can be converted to mp3 files and then downloaded to the iPod. A free converter is available from iTunes. For teachers in labs using 3.5" disk drives, it is possible to download the files from these disks by using an external drive that is plugged into the computer. The files can be converted to an mp3 format and then made available to iPods.

What skills should be taught in group piano?

Teachers from various discussion groups agreed that aural skills and music theory concepts should be integrated into class piano courses. By investigating the relationship between these skills, teachers can illustrate the relevance of piano skills across the music curriculum. At one university, all NASM standards for keyboard are fulfilled through aural skills classes rather than class piano. The instructor who represented this particular university explained that students meet three times per week for this class and are required to work at the keyboard during one of the class days each week.

The importance of teaching accompanying was highlighted during the panel discussion

on Saturday morning. Research findings by Jamila McWhirter, Karen Beres, and Victoria Johnson illustrated the fact that accompanying should be taught in class piano. Accompanying is a practical skill that is used often by professional musicians. For future choral directors, the importance of developing accompanying skills becomes especially evident at competitions where the director often doubles as the accompanist. This point led teachers in various discussion groups to address the skill of accompanying and how it should be included in a class piano curriculum.

In the groups that addressed this topic, few teachers presently include accompanying in the curriculum. One individual suggested that vocalists should learn to accompany themselves. If the written accompaniment is too difficult for the students' current skill level, they may work instead on analyzing the harmony and playing "boom-chuck" patterns while they sing. Another suggestion was for students to record part of an accompaniment on a sequencer and then play the other part along with the recording.

Group piano teachers differ widely in the amount of time spent on repertoire pieces during a group piano class. Some people were interested in hearing other teachers' perceptions of the importance of learning repertoire and how many pieces should be assigned during a semester. Carlyn Morenus espoused her philosophy that "we are not teaching these students how to be pianists, but how to be functional at the piano." Therefore, she felt that more emphasis should be placed on functional skills rather than polishing solo repertoire. Other teachers in the discussion group argued that repertoire can be a motivational tool for class piano students and is therefore one of the most important components of the curriculum.

Problems with the typical class piano sequence

In two separate discussion groups, some teachers lamented the perceived problems with a typical four-semester sequence of class piano. They noted that after completing their requirements in piano, most students do not continue to practice at the instrument. By the time these students graduate, their piano skills have often deteriorated considerably. The subsequent lack of keyboard skills may have a negative impact on the student's ability to obtain or be successful in a teaching position, especially for choral directors. One teacher remarked that it might be beneficial for students to delay enrolling in group piano until the last two years of school. Another solution cited by a participant was to require students to utilize piano skills regularly in upper-division music courses.

It was noted in one discussion group that group piano might be more beneficial if it is offered after freshman theory is passed. In addition, piano skills should ideally be addressed across the music curriculum rather than only in class piano settings so that the usefulness of these skills is reinforced. The biggest challenge faced by many teachers of class piano is knowing how to teach all of the necessary piano skills in only four semesters.

Summary

Deciding what should be included in a piano curriculum is a difficult task when there are so many skills that must be included. A high priority should be placed on the practical skill of playing piano accompaniments. Aural skills and theory concepts should also be integrated into group piano classes for a well-rounded music education.

Group piano teachers today face many challenges, not the least of which is helping music majors to understand the importance and relevance of learning basic piano skills. Instructors may be able to reach the millennial generation by incorporating technology such as iPods into their classroom activities or placing students into small groups for team-oriented activities. In order for students to be successful in class piano, today's teachers must analyze the traditional structure of group piano teaching and decide how effective these strategies are with the current student population. The need for basic piano skills remains the same for professional musicians in the millennial generation, but the way in which these skills are taught may need to be modified.

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The Music Teacher Selection Process: Establishing a Reputation for Teaching Excellence

by Katherine Goins

As piano teachers, we believe children should have the opportunity to engage in music making throughout their lives. For this to occur, the selection of a piano teacher becomes a critical process, involving careful research, interviews, observation, and discussion. Yet for many parents, music lessons are only one of a multitude of activities they wish to provide for their children. How do parents choose a music teacher or program for their children? Are there differences between the process of choosing a music teacher and the process of choosing a teacher for other types of extracurricular activities? How are music programs and studios advertised? Are advertisements, brochures, and websites effective in attracting parents and students?

What's out there?

College music students, graduate music students and recent graduates across the country attempt to supplement their income with private teaching. A common answer to the question, "What are you going to do after college or graduate school?" is "Well, I guess I'll just find some students and teach." Depending on the size of the university and city, piano students can be plentiful or a rarity in high demand. How does one begin to "find some students and teach?"

Little empirical information exists about marketing for private piano teachers, making it difficult for teachers, particularly beginning teachers, to make informed decisions about how to promote themselves and their studios. Journals targeting independent music teachers discuss issues of marketing and advertising. *The American Music Teacher* has a column entitled "It's All of Your Business," which features marketing and business ideas for independent music teachers such as developing professional studio documents and tax advice for small studios. Magazines such as *Keyboard* and *Music Marketing* also feature articles on public relations and small business developing, again from a personal experience perspective. A multitude of books on marketing and advertising for independent business owners exist, but are not geared towards a small music school or private teacher.

In music education research journals, virtually no information exists discussing music studio marketing or business strategies. Journals targeting school music teachers and independent studio teachers occasionally present business strategies, marketing, and advertising ideas, but these are usually based on personal experience and not experimental research. For example, the *Music Educator's Journal* created a special focus issue in 1992 that discussed marketing and promoting elementary school music programs, testing a music program's promotional effectiveness, and methods for raising public awareness of school music performances. Earlier issues of the *Music Educator's Journal* occasionally contained articles regarding support for music programs and advertising strategies, but after the 1992 special issue, marketing and music has not been a focus area.

Additionally, MENC created resources in the early 1990's such as marketing action kits and videos, but less has been done in recent years.

Marketing skills are necessary for success as an independent piano teacher or small music school, but little research exists documenting the complexities involved in choosing a music school or teacher and what type of advertising is most effective. The lack of sufficient research in this area indicates a need for investigation of how people choose music teachers or schools, and how that information can help teachers market their business in a more effective way.

Can research answer these questions?

I designed a research study to understand how music programs and teachers advertise their business and how advertising influences parents' choice of a music teacher. I analyzed the content of brochures and websites of music programs and teachers, asked parents of music students about the factors that influenced their choice of a music teacher/program and other activities for their children, and identified key factors affecting the music teacher selection process.

Seventy-seven parents of children ages 4 through 17 enrolled in music lessons through five suburban music programs participated in this project. One hundred surveys were distributed to eight different music programs or private teachers throughout a suburban area and 77 surveys were returned. Because of accessibility and parent willingness, 62 of the 77 completed surveys came from a university based string preparatory program and a university based piano preparatory program, and 13 surveys were completed by students of three different private teachers, two piano and one voice. The majority of surveys were completed by the students' mothers. To understand what information is generally included in advertisements, brochures or websites from 15 local music schools were included in the content analysis. 10 of the analyzed programs were community music schools, two were university based preparatory programs, and three were private music teachers.

To develop a questionnaire, I conducted a pilot test with the parents of five piano students about the music teacher selection process for their children, and if or how that process differed from their selection of other activities or teachers for their children. I revised the questions based on the replies from these five parents and developed a questionnaire about the music teacher selection process and advertising influences.

Survey Results

How do parents choose a music teacher or program for their children? Are advertisements, brochures, and websites effective in attracting parents and students? According to this study, parents choose music teachers based on word of mouth. 82% of participants identified word of mouth as their most influential advertising source, with 52% citing a recommendation from family or friends as most important. This news is not

surprising to experienced piano teachers and community music schools, who rely less and less on marketing strategies such as websites and brochures and instead depend on their reputation and students to advertise for them.

Additionally, results showed that 53% of parents surveyed did not think the process of choosing a music teacher or program was different than that of choosing another teacher or program for their children. However, parents who had taken music lessons in the past answered differently. 58% of parents who had taken private lessons in the past thought a difference existed in the process of selecting a music teacher for their children, as opposed to the selection of other activity teachers, while only 32% of parents who had not taken private lessons thought there was a difference in the selection process. This finding is very important, implying that successful past experience with music lessons leads to more careful selection of a music teacher in the future.

Parents who thought a difference existed in the teacher selection process for music versus other activities placed more emphasis on the music teacher's reputation, philosophy, and actual teaching skills. Parents who did not think a difference existed between choosing a music teacher or choosing an extracurricular teacher for their children did not indicate strong feelings about the music teacher's reputation, philosophy, or teaching ability.

Why does this matter?

The selection of a music teacher is an important decision, and results indicate that parents put thought into the decision making process. Although 53% of survey participants did not think a difference existed in the process of choosing music teachers versus other teachers, 47% did think a difference existed. For this group of parents, program reputation, philosophy, and teacher quality played an important role in the decision process, outweighing factors such as location, cost, and other opportunities. Out of 37 comments parents wrote on the survey about why the process was different, 18 comments related to the value or priority of music over other activities. Parent comments included statements such as:

76. "I'd like music to be constant. Other activities are just activities, and I would like for music to be a way of life."
77. "In the music teacher choice, I was discriminating and kept trying options. For other activities, if the most convenient choice does not work, we do not participate."
78. "A music teacher has more personal interaction and closer influence on the success of my child."
79. "Music is a higher priority."

For some parents, no difference existed in teacher selection for different activities. Comments included statements like "I care about both activities" or "I let my child choose because I did not have a strong opinion." These parents could value all the activities their children are involved in, and care about teacher quality, program reputation, and philosophy for all programs, or they could care equally little about the

activities and teachers.

What can we do?

Because the majority of people in this study based their teacher selection on word of mouth and recommendations, advertising becomes more of problematic area for new piano teachers. Experienced teachers often do not advertise, simply because their reputation precedes them and there is no need for continued marketing. But for beginning teachers who do not have the advantage of word of mouth recommendations, developing a reputation as a careful and effective teacher is important. Beginning teachers should contact other music teachers in their area, get involved in professional organizations, and become visible in the field.

As a beginning piano teacher, how should I market my new studio? How can I develop a reputation for excellence?

- Get involved in your community music teacher organizations
- Become active in local, state, and national organizations
- Network with other local teachers, both private and public school teachers
- Offer to serve as an adjudicator or accompanist for local music festivals
- Collaborate with more experienced teachers to fill a need in your community - start a music festival, organize a recital series, get involved with community outreach

As an established teacher, how does this information apply to me?

- Serve as a mentor for beginning teachers
- Open your studio for college student and beginning teacher observation
- Establish and maintain high expectations for all students
- Create public awareness of what is happening in your studio and in music lessons in your community
- Continue to market yourself through excellent teaching

As piano teachers, it is our job to continue to promote excellence in music teaching, serve as resource persons for people in the music teacher selection process, and act as mentors for beginning teachers. Awareness of the need to educate people about the music teacher selection process and care for the future of music teaching will allow our field to continue to develop and improve.

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Evoking the Flow State as a Means of Teaching (Group) Piano

by Thomas Parente

Those of us who teach class piano to college students are faced with immense challenges. We must attempt to accomplish with many students (this can range from five students to twenty or more) what a private teacher does with one. Administrators are under pressure to fill every class to capacity, and colleagues whose daily pedagogical challenges involve only one student at a time are then quick to advise that the only way to be effective in such a setting is to lower the artistic bar in favor of a producing students who are pianistically "proficient." Thus, the word "proficient" has come to mean using the piano as a tool rather than as a conduit for self-expression. Who can blame our colleagues for offering such counsel: "Ten students?" they say, "I don't know how you do it!" all the while shaking their heads with a combination of awe and sympathy.

I am an assistant professor at Westminster Choir College of Rider University, where my primary responsibility is teaching secondary class piano. Typically, I teach between four and six classes per semester, and these are normally grouped homogeneously according to level. Class size ranges from six to ten students per class. There are no classes that contain both beginning and advanced students. Being a choir college, the vast majority of Westminster's secondary piano students are singers majoring in vocal performance, music education, music theater, or sacred music. Thus, while most students in each class are at a similar level of pianistic development, their majors can vary widely.

Having up to fifty applied students (as I often do), many of whom are not all too eager to learn to play piano and see it as just another requirement to pass, can be exhausting both physically and mentally. After all, each one of these students is still an individual with unique challenges and abilities. The fact that there are so many students in a class comes with the territory of group piano. Nevertheless, each student requires the same level of pedagogical nurturance as a student in a one-on-one lesson. Attempting to provide this attention is quite a challenge, since there is simply not enough time to provide each student with the technical, theoretical, personal, and expressive elements necessary for proper musical development. Too often, we who teach group piano are forced into having to make the terrible choice of addressing only one or two pianistic problems among the ten to fifteen issues that need attention. Like many group instrumental teachers, I have often found myself asking such questions as whether I should address one student's faulty fingering at the expense of another student's awful rhythm. Do I correct his poor accuracy or focus on her low self-esteem? Do I address one student's poor practicing habits or another student's stiff arms and "Frankensteinian" hand position? To paraphrase Hawkeye of the hit television series Mash, who is often confronted with life-and-death choices in the operating room, "I have to sacrifice her arms in order to save his rhythm." It is no wonder that I often found myself finishing a day's teaching in less than a cheery mood. In attempting to address everyone's problems, I ended up giving few the careful, focused instruction commensurate with their need. I was overfunctioning as a teacher and attempting to do the impossible. My enormous effort yielded results that were well beneath my artistic aspirations. Fortunately, I found another way-a much better way.

Instead of asking my students to submit themselves to the drudgery of daily practice, I insisted that they try to make the experience as pleasurable as possible by attempting to go into the psychological state known as "flow." I assured them that they would both enjoy the experience and become super learners as a result of being “in flow.”

In his many scholarly works on the subject, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (e.g., 1975, 1990, 1997) explores happiness within the context of individuals whose intrinsic motivation drives them to participate in a given activity. His exploration into the sense of satisfaction that people experience while participating in appropriatelychallenging pursuits led him to study the altered psychological state that occurred during these periods. Csikszentmihalyi found that his subjects often used the word "flow" to describe a variety of activities that were both pleasurable and challenging (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991).

Csikszentmihalyi found that the following conditions are present in those who claim to be in the flow state. All are self-evident with regard to playing the piano at a high level:

80. One is engaged in a challenging activity that requires skill.
81. There is a high level of concentration, leading to the exclusion of extraneous thoughts such as worry or anxiety.
82. There is a clarity of goals.
83. There is a sense of control.
84. Self-consciousness diminishes or disappears and one's perception of time becomes altered.
85. Action and awareness merge.

I told my students that the presence of these factors would so concentrate their minds that their progress would be both faster and more pleasurable. I introduced the subject of flow with each of my classes at the beginning of the semester by asking them to recall a time when they were so involved in an activity that time ceased to be a factor and their concentration was total. I also emphasized that such experiences likely had given great pleasure and that their cares and worries probably had vanished for the duration of the activity. This was a wonderful way to begin the semester as we all shared our pleasurable experiences. After this introductory statement, I saw that I was on to something by the look in my students' eyes. Almost all of them had something to contribute to our discussion. Many of them cited examples of being in the state of flow when they were on stage or when they were jogging or socializing with their friends. One student, an avid deer hunter from Texas, waxed rhapsodic about the feeling he gets while sitting up in a tree on a deer stand waiting for deer to appear. Another student said that she goes into the flow state as soon as she begins to talk to her mother on the telephone. Many students cited experiences such as dancing or playing sports as being flow inducing. One student related how immersed he becomes while playing soccer. He becomes so engrossed in the game that it is always a shock to him when the referee blows the whistle to mark the end of halftime or the end of the game. He says that a twenty-minute half goes by as though it were only a few minutes.

After listening to my students relate these wonderful tales in which they were confident, fulfilled, challenged, and proud, I told them that it would be possible for them to replicate these experiences while practicing the piano. I will admit the raising of more than one eyebrow in response to this assertion, but Csikszentminhaly's research supports this claim:

"In our studies, we found that every flow activity, whether it involved competition, chance, or any of the dimensions of experience, had this in common: It provided a sense of discovery, a creative feeling of transporting the person into a new reality. It pushed the person to higher levels of performance, and led to previously undreamed of states of consciousness. In short, it transformed the self by making it more complex. In this growth of the self lies the key to flow activities" (1990, p. 74).

You can imagine that my students were skeptical of the promise that piano practice could be as pleasurable and fulfilling as playing soccer or dancing cheek to cheek. It was quite a bold statement to make, especially to this particular population. Secondary piano students often take the class only because it is a prerequisite for student teaching and for graduation. In my 25 years of class piano teaching, I have encountered a relatively small number of students who came to class for the intrinsic joy of making music through the medium of the piano. Rather, extrinsic motivators such as maintaining a decent grade-point average, meeting curricular requirements (which I have cited above), and future use of the piano as a teacher of another instrument are the main reasons, in my experience, that students work, often reluctantly, at secondary piano. And I, like many other teachers I am sure, have been guilty over the years of overemphasizing the fact that learning the piano is essential to students' future success as either a studio or classroom teacher. Human nature being what it is, this logical and well-reasoned approach - take it; it's good for you - seldom had the desired effect of motivating my students to become the enthusiastic and accomplished pianists I had envisioned. The promised reward was insufficiently enticing. Its fulfillment was too far in the future, and, perhaps most importantly, was aimed at the head, not at the heart (or the rest of the music making apparatus!).

Bringing flow into the picture as a motivating force implied a radically different approach to teaching. Instead of holding over their heads the stick that their grades depended on learning to play the piano, I began to offer the carrot that playing the piano would give them a sense of joy and fulfillment. I was offering to help them to love the experience. Future measures of accomplishment such as their grades and overall expertise, while important, became secondary, and would indeed ultimately largely depend on their attitude toward playing the piano.

My students naturally wondered whether in the confines of the practice room they would really be enjoying the experience. Many wondered whether they in fact were *capable* of enjoying the experience. Bolstered by my own love of the piano and Csikszentmihaly's research, I assured them that it was possible. As Csikszentmihaly put it:

"The key element of optimal experience is that it is an end in itself, even if initially undertaken for other reasons, the activity that consumes us becomes intrinsically rewarding… It refers to a self-contained activity, one that is done not with the expectation of some future benefit, but simply because the doing itself is the reward (1990, p.67)."

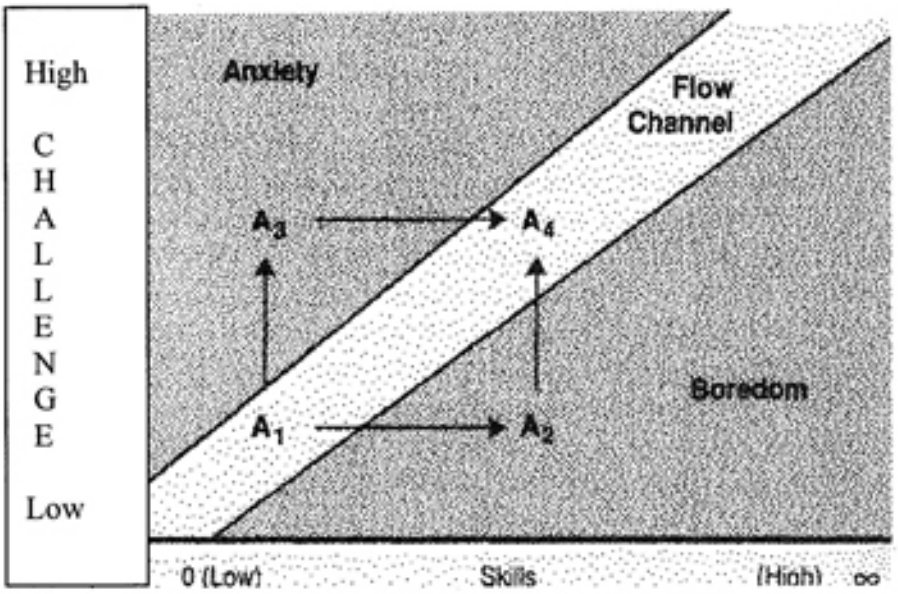
I emphasized that, as they themselves had already learned, when one is in flow, nothing else seems to exist but the activity itself and that the flow state tends to occur when one is faced with clear set of goals that require appropriate responses. Dr. Lori Custodero, who is noted for her research on the flow experience in young children observes that

"Confirmed by MRI studies that show activation of multiple brain regions during musical performance, the physiological perspective provides of view of how music challenges us to be completely attentive with mind and body (2002)."

Csikszentmihalyi has cited many examples of activities in which flow is experienced. These include rock climbing, dancing, composing, performing surgery, playing chess, as well as many other activities that due to their compelling nature allow for complete immersion. Playing the piano is of course one such activity, and it can and should promote total intellectual, musical and emotional immersion. It is a perfect vehicle for the attainment of flow, since the goals and the kinds of actions - both mental and physical - necessary to implement these challenges can be so clear.

However, there is an essential difference between those who do an activity for its own sake and those who find little pleasure in it, such as, alas, so many secondary piano students, many of whom come to the piano with neutral or even negative associations. Over the years, I have learned that my students' less than positive feelings toward the piano are generally the result of frustration rooted in anxiety and fear of failure, or boredom. Frustration is related to the gap that most often occurs between a student's aspirations related to a musical challenge and the requisite skill needed to meet the challenge. Boredom, on the other hand, was often the result of a student's not being sufficiently challenged.

One of the essential features that is present in those who experience flow is a perfect match between the challenge and their skill. Skiers attempting to improve their skills will often challenge themselves by tackling mountains that are just above their current skill level. To choose a mountain beneath their skill level would result in boredom, while attempting to ski a slope well beyond their reach could result in frustration (not to mention injury or death). Thus skiers search the world for the perfect challenge, knowing that if they are successful in finding it, they will experience flow, and in so doing increase their skill level, so that someday they may be able to ski even more challenging slopes. The relationship of flow to boredom and anxiety is expressed in the following chart (Csikszentmihaly, 1990, p. 74):



When the challenge is too great and the skill too low, frustration, anxiety and fear of failure results. Conversely, when the challenge is too low and the skill level high, boredom ensues. Since my students were enthusiastic musicians, their love for music was never in question. Since I believed that deep down, my students really would love to learn to play the piano, I sought to relieve them of the impediments of frustration and boredom. I hypothesized that his could be done by asking them to consciously attempt to seek flow every time they played the piano. Although much research states that flow happens as a *consequence* of participating in a pleasurable activity, I was asking my students to find flow while playing the piano *in order to make it pleasurable and to become super learners!* The results were astounding.

In order to create the conditions whereby flow could exist, I asked my students to be mindful of their responses while practicing. I asked that they monitor their feelings at all times. If they felt frustrated, I advised them to simplify the task that they were working on. If they were bored, I instructed them to increase the challenge. I reminded them they should seek at all times to enjoy the experience of practicing and to work to dispel any notion that equated practicing the piano with drudgery. As I have already mentioned, the most common feeling that my students experienced in the practice room was frustration resulting from attempting to learn far more in one sitting than they were capable of.

This sense of frustration frequently led to their simply playing through the music without stopping to master any portion of it. They would simply "run the piece" several times, an exercise they called practicing, before moving on to another piece. Not only is this mode of practicing unproductive, but it is also extremely frustrating, since all of the challenges within the piece remain unaddressed and unresolved. Progress is thus extremely slow or nonexistent. This negative state of affairs often leads to a reluctance to practice, thus exacerbating the problem with diminished time on task. To counter this downward spiral,

I asked my students to observe their frustration and immediately reduce the challenge they had set for themselves to one on which they could focus their attention and have a feeling of making progress. This, of course, had the effect of making them mindful about how they were practicing and about how much they were practicing. When they observed themselves to be in the situation described above, their reaction was to work on a smaller task. I then instructed them to take only that portion of music that they were capable of playing in a manner that was musically and kinesthetically pleasing. Thus, my students would work on what I termed "micro portions.' A micro portion could be as small as one chord voiced well and played in a balanced comfortable position by both hands. It could be a simple phrase played with the right hand - even if the phrase was no longer than one measure. The main thing that the students were instructed to observe was whether their musical aspirations were being realized with every gesture that they made. They were to ask themselves repeatedly whether the portion that they were working on was becoming fun and easy. There were also to apply "massive repetition" to these portions and to adjust their hand position, fingering, overall kinesthetic sense, and resulting sound with each repetition. Because their musical sensibility and kinesthetic sense were constantly being monitored and adjusted for pleasure, I theorized conditions were being created under which they could lose themselves in the music and experience flow.

As Custodero observes, "Keeping challenges and skill levels balanced requires extemporaneous self-monitoring; feedback is therefore crucial in order to make the necessary adjustments for sustaining flow experience" (2002). By deliberately monitoring their reactions, students found that frustration was not necessarily a bad thing. It was merely a marker, indicating that a modification was needed in either the amount of music that was being attempted; the tempo; or the size, angle, height, or organization of the kinesthetic gesture. I counseled students that they could go into a state of flow even with the smallest amount of music and that they should continually reduce or simplify the task until they no longer felt frustration. This might mean that instead of struggling with four phrases, they might end up working on as little as half a phrase, or even less. The key was that they were to modify the quantity of music until only the challenge that remained was within their reach, with a resulting elimination of frustration.

During the course of the semester I determined that it would be good for my students to communicate with one another and with me as to the efficacy of this new approach to learning to play the piano. I therefore set up several forums using the "blackboard" computer communication program that our university provides to faculty and students. To facilitate this communication I required my students to contribute to these forums by answering questions that I posed pertaining to their practice efforts. The following is one of the statements to which I asked the students to respond:

As we progress deeper into the semester, my notions of how we may approach and use the flow state in our practice continues to develop. I would like to share these observations with you in the hope that we may continue to become super learners. A couple of realizations have emerged as a result of this approach to music. First of all, I have discovered that many of you have suspended disbelief and realize that the flow state is real and can be attained. This is very significant, since you now know that you really

can immerse yourself in what you are doing and that this state is highly pleasurable as well as pedagogically potent. Furthermore, in order to become super learners you have become monitors of your psychological state while working. Such an approach to learning has enabled many of you to recognize that feelings of boredom, frustration, worry, and anxiety can be used to increase or decrease challenges so as to promote the conditions whereby flow may occur. Your reactions to practicing thus become a monitor that enables you to decide the appropriate amount of challenge. Aesthetics, of course, plays an integral part in your work, since striving for the fulfillment of your artistic vision is connected to your innate love of music.

I was amazed by the overwhelmingly positive nature of my students' responses. Typical student responses included:

- "I had the most amazing flow moment on the piano the other day… it was like my fingers were floating on the keyboard."
- "Well, when I get to the piano I love it. I am a beginner, so it's very exciting to me to see my progress. I find flow after about 20 minutes and I then start to learn a lot. When my boyfriend and I get into a fight that is what soothes me, going to the practice room and playing. That's basically all!"
- "I think piano has been a lot more enjoyable for me this semester with the whole concept of trying to achieve flow. Again, it's hard (for most of us) to find enough time to really let that happen, and I notice a big difference between practicing for just a short time to get it done and really giving myself enough time to find flow... when I know there's not enough time for that to happen, it feels really tedious..."
- "For me, an indicator of whether or not I was in flow was how quickly time passed. Because I was unaware of time, I kept practicing; I did not want to stop. I would play my pieces over and over again. And with so much repetition, the pieces were learned steadily and solidly."
- "I admit when I first heard you say about flow (and how that to get the ultimate practice you need to be in it) I didn't believe it. I just didn't think that there was a way to immerse yourself in practicing so that the rest of the world didn't matter. When I practice now, I go in there with the mind set that I am going to be in flow. As I go into flow the things around me disappear and I am concentrating on the piano keys, the music, and how I am hitting the keys. I found out that, while in flow, I am less frustrated and that helps a lot in practicing. When practicing and in flow I don't ever check a watch or time and I play until everything is perfect and that could be 2 hours to 45 minutes."

During the course of the semester I gradually noticed an increase in attendance and in general preparedness. I found myself losing track of time, being fully concentrated and really enjoying each class. Clearly, the positive synergy which was created by this approach was affecting (or rather should I say "infecting"?) this veteran professor of thirty years! I was in flow, and it was, in the words of one of my students, a “beautiful thing”! Most gratifying of all, however, was my students' sterling results. There was a marked improvement in the accuracy, sensitivity, and musicality of their performances, quizzes, and exams. In addition, I found that my students were more willing to take on and succeed at challenges that were in my experience unprecedented. Clearly, the overall

confidence level of my students increased markedly. In addition, there was a great diminishment in performance anxiety as a result of their being able to enter replicate the flow state while performing.

Teaching in this manner and observing the wonderful results have profoundly affected the way I teach. It was not easy to relinquish the control that I was accustomed to exerting over my students and to adopt instead a curious "let's see what happens" approach. For flow to come into being, my students needed the freedom to explore and to grow, each in his or her own unique way. They also needed to be trusted to have the best artistic intentions and the desire to pursue those intentions, not for the grade but for the sheer love of making music at the piano. And indeed, my students taught me that their artistic intentions were to be trusted and if given the right vehicle and freedom to explore, their aspirations were generally realizable.

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Thomas Parente is an Associate Professor of Piano at Westminster Choir College of Rider University where he teaches Dalcroze eurhythmics and teaches and coordinates secondary piano. He is the author of Essential Materials for Class Piano - a textbook for college students studying group piano. He is also a coauthor of Experiencing Choral Music an innovative series of choral books that is published by McGraw Hill/Glencoe and Experiencing Choral Music which is published by GIA. Mr. Parente is a frequent clinician and has presented workshops, courses and clinics both nationally and internationally for Teachers College - Columbia, Metropolitan Opera Guild, the Dalcroze Council of Australia's, the Hawaiian Arts and Humanities Conference, the Gina Bachauer Piano Festival, the Conservatorio de Puerto Rico, the National Piano Pedagogy Convention, the Delaware State Music Teachers Convention, Westminster Choir College's Summer Session, Montclair State University, Towson State University and for many other organizations. He has presented workshops for the World Piano Pedagogy Conference held in Portoroz, Slovenia, for the Institute Jaques Dalcroze's "Conference Rhythmique" which is held in Geneva, Switzerland and for the International Society of Music Education conference which was held in the Canary islands. He is currently finishing coursework towards a doctorate in Music Education/College Teaching at Teachers College - Columbia. His dissertation will explore the subject of "flow" as related to secondary piano students. He maintains an active studio of private piano students in his Montclair, NJ home.

The Art of Listening: Putting First Things First

by Kathleen Riley

Music learning involves sensory learning - developing listening skills, tactile motor skills, and reading skills. In music making the visual cues of notation are interpreted and produced through our ears and hands, for notation is a set of symbols for sounds and their placement on a particular instrument. Developing listening skills in our students is most important - the ears must listen intently for what is coming. Just as we listen intently in conversation to others in order to understand the meaning of their words, so we must listen in music making.

For example, let's consider the melody to "Ode to Joy" played in C Major. As the opening E is played, you can immediately anticipate the succeeding E with your ear a split second before it is played and so on. The notes are heard and understood as a complete phrase, not separately. When one is engaged in listening intently while playing music, the ear is always ahead of the hand, hearing the notes fall into place as they unfold, listening for the natural inflection, or articulation, of the notes. I call this listening "between the notes." Today we must take into consideration that many, if not most students do not know how to listen between the notes. Most of their listening experiences are of music as background, subliminally affecting the mood of the environment, whether in the doctor's office, shopping mall or the car.

As performers we need to listen on two levels, macro and micro. On the macro level we hear the overall shaping of the phrases and the entire composition, and on the micro we hear "between the notes" as one note becomes the next note and so on. This is especially important at the piano where we create illusions of sound. As each hammer strikes the strings the sounds begin to decay. We cannot make a note get louder after the key strike. Organists have the advantage of the foot pedals to sustain or crescendo a note. Wind instruments, as well as the voice, connect notes with the breath and string players connect with the bowing. The pianist's bow or breath lies in the choreography of movement in the arms, hands and fingers, directed by the ear.

I believe that the same pathway exists between the ear and the hand in creating music as between the ear and the mouth in speaking. If we intently listen for what we want to hear, our hands and fingers are guided as the sounds are produced. If we listen for the natural inflection or articulation of a phrase we have a much better chance of achieving it with the proper understanding of technique. Students often run into the problem of their fingers going ahead of their ears and the results are random and very frustrating. By the time the ear "catches up" it has already missed part of the next phrase as the fingers race ahead! To put it simply, we cannot play what we do not hear. How often have we as teachers heard students play melodies, such as Ode to Joy, and known instantly that they are not listening or understanding how to articulate and phrase the notes!

When we learn a foreign language, for example Italian, we listen to the pronunciation of words and phrases and repeat them, trying to imitate the nuances we heard. In that

moment we are listening for "what we want to hear" as we repeat the word, rather than thinking about where to place our tongue or how to shape our lips. If we think too much we become tongue-tied! And we would be even more confused if, instead of listening intently to Italian over and over again, we heard Greek and Chinese. But that is precisely what many of our students are doing as they attempt to learn different styles and genres within what we call the classical style! How many students, while working diligently at mastering Chopin or Bach, rarely, if ever, listen to performances of the composers they are studying? Instead, most have a steady diet of hip-hop, rock, pop, reggae, country and rap. While attempting to "speak" the language of Chopin, listening to these would be like listening to Chinese while trying to speak Italian!

Now back to "Ode to Joy" and our students. As beautifully as we can imagine the piece being played, we can only hear it as our students hear it (or don't!) during their performances. Are they listening ahead for each note to become the next, like two syllables of the same word, or are the notes being hammered out? Are they listening for the end of the phrase to get a bit softer as our voices do at the end of a sentence? Do they listen for the natural syllabic stress found in different rhythms? For instance, groups of 4 notes have a natural articulation of strong-weak-medium-weak - just have students listen for a word with the same stresses being sung as the notes are played, like Cal-i-for-nia. I find it works every time! As with speech, if the ear does not know what to listen for, the hand cannot produce it.

Obviously students need to be taught to listen for such nuances and to understand the subtle differences that distinguish the style of each composer and genre. From the beginning the ear must be developed along with technique. My definition of technique is that it is a vocabulary of sound at our fingertips. The physical choreography of the arm, wrist, and hand produces the sound, which is first and foremost initiated in the ear. It is then the ear that provides the crucial feedback on the resulting sound, a necessary step in order to achieve consistency each time the piece is played. How often do students just go through the motions in practicing without listening and guiding their hands?

Having your students listen to live performances is the best way to engage them in the art of listening. I remember my childhood music teacher giving me recordings to listen to, but they never inspired me as much as experiencing a live performance. I often wished that she had played the pieces herself for me in the lesson. If we take time to introduce our students to the sound of a particular composer before introducing them to the notated page, they have a better chance of intimating the nuances "behind the notes" as they begin to learn a piece. I find that recording my performances on the Disklavier and playing them back for my students allows me to discuss the performance in detail, repeat certain passages, and even slow them down, while they are hearing the performance "live." Many piano methods come with CD's today which are also helpful. I like the CD's to be a back-up to my performing and explaining the piece in the lesson first.

Bach minuets are one of my favorite choices for introducing students to listening for and playing two melodic lines at the same time. How many of our students assume the common misperception that the right hand is the melody and the left hand is the

accompaniment? I like to begin by playing the left hand to Bach's Minuet in G in the octave above middle C adding a simple left hand accompaniment. Most of them, if not all, will think it sounds great. Next I play the melody in the left hand in its original octave, recording it on the Disklavier. During playback I add the famous right hand melody on top, recording it as a second voice with the left-hand part. I enjoy the look of surprise on their faces as I ask them to listen for the left-hand as they listen to the playback. They are now listening between the notes in two voices!

In transferring this listening technique, my first assignment to my students with this piece is to learn the left hand alone and then add the right hand, practicing in 4 bar phrases. Having heard my performance of the left hand first, as its own melody and then joined by the right hand melody, my students can remember the shape of the melodies, and anticipate each succeeding note with their ears a split second before playing the keys. Of course the best feedback for them is to record their playing and listen to their playback - an invaluable teaching tool in teaching students how to listen. Having students listen back to their performances as well as those of their teachers and other artists provides them with an opportunity to listen intently, over and over again, to a "live" performance. They can begin to detect what is happening between the notes - was the legato consistent, the dynamic scale large enough, how were the phrases articulated - and make informed choices for interpretation. Now we have truly engaged them in the art of listening to the language of music.

Kathleen Riley teaches private piano and keyboard harmony classes, and conducts research in music pedagogy at New York University. Dr. Riley's work opens the door to a significant area of research at the interface between the scientific study of learning and musical pedagogy. She has evaluated the effectiveness of different kinds of multi-modal biofeedback (auditory, and visual in terms of piano roll, video recording, movement analysis, and electromyographic recording) in enhancing the transfer of learning necessary to achieve high-level performance mastery of the piano. Her research has been featured in articles in the New York Times and Scientific American. Published articles appear in the *Journal of Technology in Music Education* (June 2005), *American Music Teacher* (April/May 2005), and *Medical Problems of Performing Artists* (June 2005).

Teaching Musicality in Group Piano Classes

by Lesley Sisterhen

At the university level, group piano teachers face a constant challenge when trying to equip music majors with the piano proficiency they need before graduation. This basic piano aptitude includes such functional skills as accompanying, score reading, harmonization, transposition, and improvisation. Technical exercises such as scales, arpeggios, and chord progressions are often utilized as a stepping-stone to familiarize students with common patterns at the keyboard. The group piano course also functions as a tool for applying music theory concepts and harmonic analysis at the keyboard. With this wide array of skills addressed in the average four-semester sequence, teachers may focus just on getting the right notes, rhythms, and fingering. It is all too easy to leave out perhaps the most important skill for music majors to acquire: the ability to play musically.

Challenges Unique to Group Teaching

Group piano teaching presents unique challenges when compared with private teaching. As private piano teachers, we can spend a great deal of time with each student helping them to develop their technique and sound. We can focus on the needs of the individual student as well as the problems or challenges of each particular piece. Perhaps this is the reason that many piano teachers eschew group teaching and choose to specialize in the more traditional route of private lessons.

There are many obstacles that teachers face in group teaching that often prevent a focus on playing musically. First and perhaps foremost, the teacher must divide his or her attention among every student during the class period. With such a limited amount of time available to work with individual students, it is difficult to hear every student and give them individual feedback to help them grow technically and musically.

A second challenge is the fact that students are playing on electronic keyboards, rather than acoustic pianos. The touch sensitivity and sound capability of even the most advanced electronic keyboards cannot compare to what students would hear or feel at an acoustic piano.

A third challenge is the fact that in most group piano programs, the focus has moved away from learning solo repertoire. Often, group piano teachers simply do not have the time to polish repertoire when they have so many functional skills to cover during class. Furthermore, the philosophical stance of many group piano teachers is on developing well-rounded musicians rather than pianists. General musicianship skills such as the ability to harmonize or transpose melodies therefore tend to be given more emphasis than learning and refining repertoire.

But with every challenge, an opportunity presents itself. In this case, it is an opportunity to question our philosophy of teaching and our way of approaching the group piano class. A well-rounded music education includes not only knowledge in music theory and music history, but also the ability to listen actively, make refined musical judgments, and create music that is expressive in character and is within the principles of style and taste.

Time Management

When teachers are deciding how to divide their attention among the many members of the class, time management becomes a key issue. Musicians tend to teach as they have been taught. Group piano teachers in particular who have undergone intensive private training have to battle their tendency to conduct detailed work with individual students. There simply is not enough time in a group situation to attend to every student in the class. Instead, teachers have to hold their students' attention, give almost constant demonstration, and keep their eyes and ears open for students who need special attention. When working with students individually, efficiency is the key; time should be taken mainly on problem areas and in short sections. The teacher should draw the student's attention to places in the music where the same ideas can be applied in similar sections. The student will then transfer these larger musical concepts to different parts of the music, making musical and stylistic generalizations that will help him or her to learn independently.

Teacher demonstration is a powerful tool in any setting, but in a group class it is indispensable as perhaps the best way to teach musicality. Teachers often demonstrate solo repertoire for students before they tackle a piece, but they often neglect to do so in learning other basic skills such as harmonization exercises. Simply playing the melody can be a way to help students hear appropriate phrasing or articulation. Students should be actively involved while the teacher is playing; for instance, they can play the tonic or dominant tones in the left hand or call out when a I chord is going to be used in more complicated melodies.

In demonstrating appropriate phrasing, teachers may elect to play a passage two ways and have students choose the way that sounds best. The class may discuss what made that passage sound better. Teachers can also use students to demonstrate musical skills such as balance or phrasing. After privately listening to a particular student and deciding on what the student is doing well, the teacher could have that student demonstrate for the class. It is often beneficial to tell students exactly what to listen for.

A teacher may not be able to hear each student play each example individually, but it is always a good idea to have each student play out loud for the group or for a peer at every class. When students know that they will be heard by their peers, it is often a powerful motivator to practice and prepare for class. The teacher may demonstrate a short phrase and have one or two students mimic just those few measures. It is vitally important in these instances to give students immediate feedback and have them repeat the phrase if necessary to meet your musical requirement. Care should be taken, therefore, that the challenge is limited so that students will be able to succeed. For example, if students will

not be able to coordinate the passage hands together while playing the correct articulation, have them just play one hand by itself. If it is just a few measures, it will not take much time out of class. One of the greatest benefits to group teaching is that students are able to learn by listening to their peers.

Students should also be given an opportunity to make their own decisions regarding the musical performance of a given piece or exercise. It is helpful if students are given guidelines and are asked specific questions related to tempo or dynamics. One way to get students involved in their own decision-making is to have a student set the tempo for the class. The simple act of cueing students with "1, 2, ready, play," for example, may assist in preparing students for leadership positions as choral directors or conductors. It also emphasizes the importance of setting the tempo in one's mind before playing.

The scores for many pieces in *Piano for the Developing Musician* (2006) are purposefully left blank to allow students to make their own decisions about interpretation. It is often surprising how otherwise lackluster students become engaged and enthusiastic when asked to come up with their own ideas about the music. Of course, the teacher runs the risk of hearing some off-the-wall ideas from less experienced musicians. If unmusical ideas are put forth, the teacher might elect to play the passage in the suggested way, exaggerating how bad it sounds, and then play it in a more musical way. The students could then be asked to decide between the two examples. This technique still allows students to be part of the decision-making process without directly insulting the student who presented his or her idea to the class.

In some classes, students will come up with the same ideas and will agree on the appropriate dynamics, phrasing, or tempo. In other classes, there might be two or three argumentative students or students who openly criticize the ideas of others. Teachers have to be careful in these situations to maintain a flexible, non-threatening learning environment so that students do not feel competitive or hesitant to share their ideas. The teacher may want to share a general musical idea or rule with the class and then open the particular piece up for discussion. For instance, the teacher could point out sequences in the music and discuss how if the sequence steps up, it is typical for the dynamic level to intensify. The students will therefore understand that each motive will be a little bit louder than the next, and they will be more likely to agree about their ideas.

The Electronic Keyboard Lab

A group piano teacher must learn how to teach musicality on an electronic keyboard. The technological advancement in keyboard labs provides teachers with opportunities to listen to individual students, group students to work together, and speak to the class as a group without the chaos of hearing multiple pianos at the same time. These benefits for group teachers far outweigh the negative aspects of an electronic keyboard versus an acoustic piano. In demonstrating at the teacher keyboard, it is often necessary to exaggerate dynamic levels and the contrast between melody and accompaniment when working on balance. The teacher may also elect to keep an acoustic piano in the classroom and occasionally demonstrate on that piano. Important student performances may also be

given on the acoustic piano rather than the keyboard. Students should have an opportunity to play for the class at the acoustic piano before their performances are given as part of a quiz or exam.

Students should regularly give performances for their peers at the acoustic piano. When playing repertoire pieces, it may be effective for the teacher to direct the listeners' attention to specific elements in the music. If a student plays a piece and the teacher allows the class to comment on the performance, the door is opened for either direct criticism between students or generic praise such as "you made it all the way through the piece." The teacher may, for example, ask students to listen for a steady beat, musical phrasing, or dynamic contrast. In a way, the constructive criticism may seem less personal if it is focused on a specific component of the music. The performer may feel less threatened and will be more likely to listen carefully to that aspect of his or her playing.

It can also behoove group teachers to utilize MIDI accompaniments. The orchestration on the accompaniments can offer keys to the character of a piece, and it can provide clues to appropriate dynamics, timing, and phrasing. If teachers want to be free to walk around the class to monitor the progress of their students, the MIDI accompaniments not only keep the class together but also provide a musical demonstration when the teacher cannot do so.

Teaching Balance and Voicing

When students are learning about the concept of balance at the piano, the teacher must be careful to consider this skill as consisting of two separate components: first, the ability to listen for and be aware of appropriate balance; and second, the physical coordination necessary to demonstrate balance. This is especially true if the students are music majors but are beginning pianists. In a homophonic texture, the students should be aware that the melody in one hand should be louder than the chords played by the other hand, but they may have a difficult time coordinating this contrast between the hands.

When working for listening, the teacher might elect to have half of the class play the right hand while the other half plays the left hand. The teacher could even have the students playing the melody turn up the volume on the keyboard. The same idea could be applied when students are working on voicing within a chorale texture. Half of the class could play only the top voice, using the correct fingering that they would use if playing all of the voices and perhaps touching the other keys silently. The students could also record one hand or voice on their keyboard, and then play the other hand or voices while playing back their recording.

When working on coordination, the teacher may have students play the melody in one hand while tapping the rhythm in the hand that is playing the accompaniment. The students could then play the melody in one hand while silently touching the keys in the other hand. Achieving the physical coordination of balance between the hands can be assisted if the students are listening more for the melody, so having students sing the

melody while playing both hands may also be helpful.

Ensemble playing is often a vital component in the group piano curriculum. Ensembles evolve naturally in a group setting, providing variety during the class period, and students may be motivated by playing along with their peers. It may be useful when students are working together in groups for teachers to direct the student's attention to listen for balance between the parts. In *Alfred's Group Piano for Adults* (2004), the ensembles are often divided into four parts: melody, countermelody, two-hand accompaniment, and bass line. The teacher may discuss what parts should be brought out the most and have students adjust the volume on their keyboards accordingly. The use of other instrument voices may also help students to distinguish the parts and consider the most desirable sound for each one. After an ensemble performance, the teacher may want to ask the students who were listening about their perception of the balance. Opening it up for discussion will involve all students in the class in order to engage them in listening practice.

A Continual Focus on Making Music

There may not be enough time to focus on refining solo repertoire during the group piano class. However, every skill that is covered during the class should be focused on music-making. When playing technical patterns such as scales or arpeggios, even the most musical students may sink into the rut of playing mechanically with a heavy downbeat and no sense of direction. Teachers can challenge this habit by directing students to a common tradition in phrasing: students can use a *crescendo* during an ascending line and apply a *decrescendo* when the line is descending. When thinking about a longer line, students will be likely to play with more fluidity. Perhaps more importantly, they will be encouraged to listen actively every time they sit at the keyboard.

Students should be encouraged to play musically on every item that is addressed during the group piano class. On every melody that is harmonized or transposed, direct students' attention to the line of the phrase and have them actually draw *crescendi* and *decrescendi* in the music. Learning to pinpoint the high point or climax of the phrase is a good exercise for all music students.

Another way to get students to think musically is to have them sing. If students sing at the very beginning of the group piano sequence, they will see this activity as a natural component of playing the piano. Music majors are usually enrolled in a concurrent sight singing course and should feel relatively comfortable singing in front of their peers. Students often sing melodies more musically than they play them at an instrument. Employing solfege is an excellent way to invoke ear training into the group piano course, and it underscores what students are learning in other music courses. At the very beginning of piano study, students may sing finger numbers, note names, or intervallic direction (such as naming step, same, or skip). They can sing the melody by itself or while tapping correct finger numbers. In this way, students get the melody in their ear and think of the natural direction of the line before they are confronted with the physical challenge of playing through the piece. In addition, teachers receive feedback to ensure

that students know the correct finger numbers or notes.

All too often, the applied teacher in a student's major instrument is given the main responsibility for helping students to cultivate this musicality. Group piano classes may not only help students to apply music theory concepts at the keyboard, but may also teach students how to apply the same musical skills that they are already using on their major instrument. When a continual focus on music-making takes place across the curriculum, students will be likely to be more active listeners and more sophisticated and well-rounded musicians.

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Intonatsiia and the Politics of Expression: Towards an Understanding of Russian Intonation in Theory and in Practice

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In faraway Moscow, its air chill with the smell of evergreen and peppercorn honey, success comes with a price. During the dark days of Stalin's sinister rule, achieving success as a musician was a life altering event; sometimes a matter of life or death. Failure to win an international contest or two usually meant being exiled by the authorities to a teaching life of zero opportunity out in the remote Arctic provinces. Success, on the other hand, meant freedom of travel, the luxury of having one's own private flat, and every manner of privilege that westerners normally take for granted.

My former teacher there, Margarita Alexyeevna Fyodorova, now in her 80s and long a professor at the Moscow Conservatory, spins a strange story about those unhappy times. As one of an elite corps chosen to participate in the International Bach Competition in Leipzig in 1950, where Shostakovich would adjudicate, Margarita Alexyeevna had prepared her program well. But a week before she was scheduled to depart, the Dean of the conservatory informed her that her work was not yet finished: she would have to add the *Goldberg Variations* to her program to increase her chances of success. "But I've never studied the *Goldberg Variations*" she protested, to the Dean's deaf ear and his even more deafening silence. But her resolve was as steely as her discipline was great. She did indeed learn and memorize the entire work in one week, claiming victory as the silver prizewinner in that contest, astride Tatyana Nikolayeva's gold and Jorg Demus's bronze.

I have collaborated with Margarita Alexyeevna in two-piano recitals, and have observed her at work in rehearsal as she committed new material to memory in less than an hour. I asked her how she did this. "Motivically," she replied. For her every motive has its own unique characteristics, which she likens to a human face. Thus does she exercise her memory, proceeding at first in fragments which she then combines into progressively larger units. She commits to her psyche every melismatic contour, every shadowy recess and efflorescent protrusion, as she illuminates nuance.

Doubtless there are those among you here whose musical memories are every bit as keen as Margarita Fyodorova's. Regrettably, mine is not one of them! But the entire issue, as one that embraces a pianist's ability to identify with and command so thoroughly an entire range of intellectual and emotional complexes, moves beyond memory to something considerably more complex: it refers to the cultivation of a listening apparatus that collapses onto its subject as surely as light onto a black hole. Here all the components of musical interpretation - expressive declamation, articulation, inflection and even that gestuary of physical movements that is all too often apocryphally described as "technique" - dissolve one into the other like so much sugar in coffee.

What I refer to here is something the Russians call intonatsiia, which is a particularly important concept, and which I'll define in a moment. I prefer to use the Russian word, rather than its translation, intonation, which in more generic households can be construed to mean whether or not a fiddler is playing in tune. But for Russians, who learn the value of intonatsiia as children, it refers to something much greater, and embraces a vast reservoir of signifiers. I became interested in it when I realized that, in Russia, intonatsiia has long enjoyed the status of an articulated concept used routinely in teaching. Though it is also understood, among Russian theorists, as a compositional technique that governs intervallic relationships, it is its ordinary, every-day meaning that intrigued me. Indeed, I was always astounded at how often Margarita Alexyeevna, and virtually every Slavic musician I've ever known, used the word, not only at lessons and in master classes, but in reference to musical expression. And as I began to take a closer look, it became increasingly apparent that intonatsiia, *as a generic concept*, is so universally understood and accepted by every Russian schoolchild that no one even bothers to talk about it anymore. It's something one learns as easily and with no less assurance than riding a bicycle. It's a skill that, once learned, is learned for life.

So just what is intonatsiia? Essentially, it is the codification of the musical tension that governs intervallic relations, In its attempt to adapt one genre, music, to another, speech, intonatsiia provides a mechanism for the expression - and experience - of musical affect. Like the baroque era's Doctrine of Affect, the concept proposes an aesthetic connection between musical expression and speech, and refers to the dynamic tension *between* notes. While its domain is that of micro-dynamics, intonatsiia's aim is to sculpt the musical gesture as it assimilates inflection. From this perspective, it is an interpretive tool that allows the performer to illuminate the psychological dimensions of a composition.

The fundamental breeding ground of intonatsiia is the interval, that is, the distance between two pitches. Intonatsiia refers to the attraction that one tone has for another. The nature of that attraction we call an *affect*. Two early 20th century Russian theorists, Boleslav Yavorsky and Boris Asafiev attempted to codify intonatsiia as a tool of compositional procedure. Yavorsky described it as "a principle of auditory gravitation. It is the smallest basic tonal unit in time and discloses the expressivity of a system, or motivic cell. It is, in effect, the unfolding in time of the potential energy of that cell." No less significant is his subsequent observation that "the comparison of two tones (or moments)…that have different gravitations [suggest] the expressiveness of speech, the transfer of its sense and character." When two or more pitches are sequentially distributed, they form independent, identifiable rhythmic units, or *motives*. These articulate a work, inform its immanent character and lend it consistency as it progresses. They are, in effect, the musical motors of a composition that drive it on.

Asafiev, on the other hand, viewed intonatsiia as a consequence of social conditions. From this point of view, social behavior itself and all that implies (angst, longing, tension, resolution of tension, anger, frustration, contentment etc.) hemorrhages into music, and finds symbolic expression in compositional categories. "The people, the culture and the historical epoch define the state of intonations," he wrote, "and through intonation are determined both the means of musical expression, and the selection and interconnection

of musical elements. The musician must hear and evaluate intonations...as music of a concrete social environment, constantly changing its formations." Thus in the rhythmic play of these tiny compositional motors lurks the source of all musical declamation: here music whispers, cajoles, rages, sighs, ponders, shouts, seduces.

What concerns intonatsiia, then, are not the notes themselves, but what occurs between them. Intonatsiia presides in the realm of innuendo and bridges the gap between music and language, between artistic expression and social conventions. Intervallic space is rarely empty, but a kind of gravitational field in which tones emerge, shift, emigrate, collide and resurface. Each pitch is a repository of cumulative energy, pregnant with the one that follows. Working much like neurons in the brain, intonatsiia duplicates those sinuous structures; it is a synaptic process that telegraphs meaning across distance. Once purged of the word, which in speech and song plays host to intonatsiia, instrumental music is free to give sanctuary to pure affect and inflection.

But silence and distance (including rests), while properties of intonatsiia, are not identical to it, but a measure of its inflective character and its affective potential. You might say that intonatsiia is to music what light and shadow are to painting: a means for determining perspective. It relies on an exponential procedure that gauges dynamic perspective and renders affective expression intelligible. What occurs between notes, between phrases, and indeed, between entire movements is dynamic, alive, prescient; "space" - and by this I refer neither to rests nor to silence, but to the distention in time of a pitch or group of pitches - is filled with expectation, pregnant with what is to come and redolent of what has just occurred. Like an invisible glue, intonatsiia is not silence, but something full, plentiful, and imaginative, a kind of psychical plasma that fills the synaptic space that links one tone (or phrase, or movement) to another. The compelling inevitability we experience when a simple seventh chord resolves onto the tonic, for example, or when a tritone moves outwards to a sixth (or inwards to third) is something we experience viscerally, even physically, in the gut as it were. Four hundred years of immersion in tertiary harmony has conditioned us to expect these things in music. And yet, at the same time, they remain immanent tendencies within music itself, to which each of us relates in a specific way.

The concept is more familiar to singers, wind and string players; for them intonatsiia is a property of the instrumentarium, as well as the manner of playing. Where most instrumentalists can manipulate breath or bow to modify the duration or intensity of a single pitch, either in its own right or en route to its neighbor, we pianists enjoy no such advantage. On an instrument thoroughly incapable of pitch prolongation, we must rely largely on our imagination (notwithstanding a few clever tricks of the trade that depend on refined pedaling to enhance sonorities). In this realm of diminishing vibration there is precious little to work with, at least materially. Thus other means must be harvested to fill in these gaps and reproduce what comes so easily to our vocal and instrumentalist colleagues.

That said, the issue of intonatsiia, understood and taught as a specific *concept* has largely been ignored in American teaching, and has thus failed to become a part of a critical

interpretive and technical language indispensable to fathoming musical substance. It would be too easy to attribute this failure to the cultural differences and attitudes that distinguish Russian from American sensibilities. But equally culpable is the failure of the English language itself to embrace and develop intonatsiia, and thus to create an environment favorable to a systematic delivery of its principles.

And if I may digress for a moment, the single most disturbing problem I see with American piano teaching is the shameless abuse of the English language. Far too often teachers, many of them on the faculties of major universities and conservatories, rely exclusively on useless metaphors, or worse, on a kind of nauseating purple prose as a means to avoid responsibility. Though it is certainly true that extra-musical images and ideas can be used to inspire those who have already done their theoretical homework, such empty filibustering conveys absolutely nothing that is useful or even concrete in technical categories. It is used instead at the expense of specifically musical, that is, compositional and interpretive issues. Given the enormously rich musical vocabulary that has been at our disposal for more than 300 years, there is no excuse for such intellectual laziness and unconscionable pedagogic behavior.

It's all well and good to talk about constructive criticism, but the whole point of a critical exegesis is to break down its object before reintegrating it into a single cohesive texture. Thus, don't tell me, for example, that *Cloches a travers les Feuilles* from Debussy's *Images* is about clouds and autumn leaves. Who cares? That's not what students are paying us for. Tell me instead it's about the destiny of sequential cells of major seconds within a soup of whole tones and octatonic scales whose immanent trajectory evaporates bar lines, but not pulse, en route to its ultimate dissolution.

This goes a long way to explain why our Russian colleagues can become so exasperated and impatient when confronted with American students who have not been trained in the context of intonatsiia. It evokes the story of Claude Levy Strauss, who in his famous anthropological study, discovered a primitive Aboriginal culture was unable to understand or "read" a photograph'; to them, it was no more than a 2 dimensional collage of colors on some high-tech papyrus. Untrained in the context of the *idea*, or even the materiality of the photograph, the Aborigines were completely unable to comprehend or even recognize it as an image of something familiar.

Of course, this does nothing to alter the fact that musicians from different cultures, even non-western ones, *are* intimately familiar with intonatsiia (though they may call it something different; for example, I know several fine teachers right here in the USA who, perhaps intuitively, have developed their own way of describing intonational phenomena. Our distinguished colleague, Constance Keene (1921-2005), for example, advised her students, in a nifty turn of phrase, to "show the distance" that demarcates larger intervals from smaller ones.) After all, the Russians didn't invent intonatsiia. If anyone did, it was the Italians, from whose late Renaissance and early baroque operatic traditions evolved the notion of musical rhetoric and speech.

As the Russians have known for more than a century, there is indeed a way to measure intonatsiia, to engage its principles as a kind of autonomous consciousness even as we practice. What they have done, essentially, is to systematize it as a means of musical expression. What's more, they have found a way to convey it materially to students barely out of diapers. The manipulation of these synaptic sonorities is as much the province of the ear as it is the body; it demands an investment of psychical (imaginative) energy perhaps disproportionate to its physical (gestural) counterpart. The idea that a specific means of expression, that is, a way of turning a phrase into something vibrant, plastic and flexible, or a motive into something shapely and identifiable, can be harvested and taught with precision, even to a 5 year old, is probably worth pursuing.

But how do we "use" intonatsiia in everyday pianistic life? Doubtless, some of you are familiar with the frustration of conducting a master class, or even a private lesson, only to hear an otherwise talented students play flatly, without expression, as if the musical terrain were the cornfields of Iowa or the Dutch low lands; there are no hills and valleys, no recesses and shadows, no mountains and vistas. For such people music is one big canvas where every note and every phrase is played with equal importance. They demonstrate little if any feel for harmonic orientation, nor for the immanent tension and internecine dramas that fuel the work at hand. Absent too is any sense of moving in a specific direction towards concrete compositional goals; in short, some students occupy a musical world devoid of compositional *events*.

Intonatsiia cultivates an awareness of such events. From this perspective, each interval assumes its own character; as a general rule (but one that is hardly written in stone) the larger the interval, horizontally distended, the longer the time should be taken to move across it. More often than not that extra time can be measured in mili-seconds; by no means does this suggest that note values should be radically altered or distorted. We are talking after all about *nuance*. The distinguished conductor, early music scholar and author Nicolaus Harnoncourt has called such affective fluctuations and intensification *micro-dynamics*, which rely on the performer's ability to deftly characterize and shape even the smallest motivic units.

As an exercise, mainly for the ears, I ask students to play through various intervals, starting with the smallest ones - a minor second perhaps, and then, following the same procedure exponentially to move up two octaves, using the lowest pitch of the progression as the base. With each successive step, the time he takes to traverse the interval should be a bit more. Thus to travel across a major second will take a bit longer than a minor 2nd, a minor third a little longer than a major second and so on. And it's important to exaggerate the sensation, not only to listen to and envision it, but to *feel the distance in the gut*, that is, to incorporate in every fiber of the body the stretch from one pitch to the next, until the largest interval is breached; by this time the student should feel as if he's just scaled Mt. Everest.

Indeed, where crescendi and decrescendi are concerned, this exercise is particularly useful, in that it conveys with such visceral intensity those cumulative dynamic forces *against* which we are obliged to draw a crescendo or decrescendo en route to its climax

or dissolution. It is not simply a question of getting louder or softer, but of cultivating a feel for those opposing dynamic forces that would stand in the way of our reaching a goal. This, by the way, is how a fine actor conveys heartbreak with persuasive poignancy: not by bawling uncontrollably on stage, but precisely by making every effort *not* to, that is by attempting to stay in control and maintain dignity in the face of impossible emotional odds. In music, the same approach creates intonational and thus psychological tension, for in this context, we experience the crescendo/decrescendo as a kind of overcoming that at once celebrates the gradual accumulation and ultimate release of that tension. This is, in effect, Freud's Pleasure Principle in musical action.

However it would be an oversimplification to say that intonatsiia refers simply to the differences between large and small intervals. In fact it concerns the manner in which we inflect and characterize them, or any motivic configuration for that matter. For example, it may refer simply to the way we enhance the opening impulse of a pitch at the beginning of a phrase, perhaps by slightly lengthening it, like a skater pushing off onto the ice or a dancer inaugurating a jete. It refers to elements of surprise, suspense and even violence (unexpected dissonances or syncopes, such as those that so frequently invigorate Beethoven, for example); to the function of pedal points to illustrate either stability or uncertainty; to the manner in which we convey the symbolic, such as in Scriabin's music, for example, where contrapuntal dovetailing and lingering cadences evoke the ceremonial character of liturgical chant, and chordal clusters are deftly dispatched to duplicate bell changes; to the multi-dimensional qualities of musical textures, which, as any devotee of Schenkerian analysis will tell you, yield a structural Diaspora of foreground, middleground and background. In short, intonatsiia embraces an array of expressive systoles that inform a work and give it its shape.

As a protégé of Heinrich Neuhaus, Margarita Fyodorova continues to pass on that great pianist's recommendations on how to practice effectively with a keen ear for intonational matter. To open up the "inner ear", she recommends practicing slowly, very quietly (pianissimo) and *espresivissisimo*. This is what Claudio Arrau who, as both a musician and teacher was equally savvy and comfortable with this concept, referred to as the *beseelung*, which is more or less the German term for intonatsiia: it means to throw one's soul into the music, even into the passagework. This approach to practicing encourages the student to explore and exploit the expressive potential of every intervallic systole, to elaborate a musical grammar within the trajectory of a phrase, and to delineate and inflect more carefully the character and shape of a motive. It is the kind of work that must be done with the greatest care, patience and I dare say enchantment. What it produces is a mode of listening that migrates into every aspect of playing, whatever the tempo; henceforth nothing, not even a prestissimo scale can ever be taken for granted or dispatched mechanically, but projects a melodic attitude.

Such practice need not be limited dogmatically to this specific regime (for example, Richter, another Neuhaus protégé, practiced slowly and fortissimo, while Arrau would sometimes work on a rapid passage much faster than he would actually play in performance, in order to acquire a command even greater than he actually needed).

Finally a word on the "political" to which I allude in the title of this paper, and which refers to intonatsiia as a socialized phenomenon. In the late 20th century, the culture industry continues to encourage performers to hang on to an aesthetic that values the streamlined, the "analytically correct", the note perfect and above all the homogeneous. This serves its recording engineers well. Gone are the days when a bit of decadence or outrageous fantasy was allowed to creep in and bite, like a ravenous vampire exsanguinating his victim. Today among the young Russians, a certain didacticism has crept in. But it's not that the playing among these young competition-winning lions wants for passion. On the contrary, their playing is perpetually passionate and relentlessly intense, even at moments when repose is needed. Whatever there is that was "Slavic" about it has become, in some cases, a parody of itself. Indeed, if there is any difference between the modern pianist and the so-called "golden era" player, its just this: nowadays the fetishization of the most explicit elements of a musical text prevails at the expense of the discrete, the quiescent and yes, even the ambiguous. Music making itself, in some ways, has become ideology. It's aim now is to simulate an idealized image of itself, as one would expect from a recording. What's more, it perpetuates and nourishes a kind of false consciousness that the culture industry finds even easier to market than ever. What was once possible only on record is now the norm in concert.

This is all very much in line with contemporary popular ideals: the results suggest an in-your-face, Oprah Winfrey-like weepy willingness to bare all, no matter what the consequences. The idea these days is to bring all the parts of a texture to the foreground in the context of a non-stop, propulsive rhythm. While that's an improvement, I suppose, over the metrical rote playing that defined a certain segment of an earlier generation of pianists in the 1960s, it nevertheless forsakes Schenker's aforementioned critique of musical dimension: if everything is always in the foreground, or only lingers languidly in the background, there can be no depth. Pianists don't take the kind of "liberties" they once did, but then again the very notion of liberty has emigrated into an entirely different context, one that reifies "authenticity" in an effort to legitimize interpretation. In their determination to become technically free, and interpretively liberated, contemporary pianists have raised the stakes, reinventing a new ideology that enslaves them to the politics of popular expectation.

Now it's entirely possible that we relate to a recording of a "live" concert in a fundamentally different way than we do to a studio product. In spite of technical compromises that affect, among other things, the acoustics, the instrument, the engineering, or even the playing itself, something of a residue survives, engulfing the sound, or at least the way we experience it, in a kind of acoustic halo. Though the recorded live performance is still a snapshot, a moment frozen in time that is reproducible, we enter into a certain camaraderie with the invisible audience whose coughs and applause document its domain. Listening to such a recording approximates virtual reality, and indeed, may have been the technological kernel that foreshadowed it. *Where the studio recording reifies the interpretation, the live recording reifies the event*. As for me, I prefer to think of the components of a composition not only as structurally indigenous and indispensable to compositional consistency and coherence, but as a kind of evolutionary collective in a perpetual state of development, like an emulsion coming into

view.

From this perspective, the performer does more than recite or parrot a text, but engages it as he lives in the moment; once on stage he abandons nothing of his curiosity or wonder. He is always looking for something new, moving along in a journey of discovery that refuses to reify music, that is, to turn it into a thing, something frozen, or inflexible. For such a performer, who willingly celebrates his vulnerability, the work is allowed to move in on him. Of course, as a matter of preparation, he has laid it out structurally and strategically. He has become cognizant of its harmonic goals, rhythmic trajectory and the like. But by the time he reaches the stage, he must be free *not* to anticipate what's about to happen next. Just as an actor must "find" the words of the script as if he'd never read or heard them before, so must the pianist do with the notes, looking behind, between and beyond them for meaning. The French philosopher and semiologist Rolande Barthes described this process as inscribing oneself in the text, wherein reading is no less an active engagement than writing. Ideally, we should "write" what we read, re-inventing the text as we "inscribe" ourselves within its dialectic. In so doing we dissolve barriers that would otherwise separate the one activity from the other.

Intonatsiia, then, may provide a key to understanding - and performing - music in the context of the conventions of the composer's era and aesthetic philosophy as well as our own. Where the motive is elevated to the status of an icon, as it is, for example, in the late works of Scriabin, intonatsiia becomes a musical field theory of perpetually expanding and contracting sonorities, or as Marc Silverman writes, a "continuous expansion of all musical parameters." A vestige of its archaic heritage, the motive is an enigma of sorts, an intonational archetype, an ontological emblem of a culture. Perhaps the "oohs" and "aahs" intoned by the chorus at the close of Scriabin's *Prometheus*, are more than a prescient echo. They form intonatsiia's motivic mantra, an archaic shudder that sings the Slavic soul. Thus when Andrei Biely resonates the collective unconscious in the eerie alliteration of his novel *St. Petersburg*, he too alludes to the shadowy origins of the creative spark, to the gift of Prometheus, and perhaps to intonatsiia itself:

Those who ventured at nighttime into the open suburban spaces heard a persistent moan with stress on the note 'Oo'. 'Oo-oo-oo-oo' sounded in the open spaces. It was a sound from some other world and it attained a rare strength and clarity. ' Oo-oo-oo-oo'...such was the sound that came, not too audibly from the fields on the outskirts of Moscow, Petersburg and Saratov...Did you hear this October Song of the year 1905?

John Bell Young whose recordings of the music of Friedrich Nietzsche on the Newport Classics and Sony Classical labels earned international critical acclaim, is an authority on Scriabin. He has performed throughout the U.S., Europe, Asia and often in Russia, including appearances at the Glinka Capella, the Scriabin Museum, and the Riga Philharmonic. Winner of the 1985 Chopin Foundation Council Prize, his master classes and lectures have taken him to Brown University, the Juilliard School, and the Leningrad and Boston Conservatories. In the US, he has performed at such prestigious venues as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York; the Kravis Center for the Performing Arts in West Palm Beach; and the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, DC. In 1990 he was awarded a generous grant from the [Rockefeller] Trust for Mutual Understanding to lead the American delegation to the International Scriabin Conference and Festival in Moscow. His monograph Scriabin Defended Against His Devotees: A Critical Evaluation of the Composer and his Music in the Context of Russian History, Religion and Culture has just been

published in Russia by Sovietskii Kompozitor in co-operation with the Scriabin Museum. He is a critic for the *St. Petersburg Times*, *American Record Guide*, *Opera News*, *Clavier*, and *Classical DisCDigest*, and a frequent annotator for Sony Classical. Profiles and feature articles about Mr. Young have appeared in *Time*, the *New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *US News and World Report*, *Lingua Franca*, *Hamburger Abendblatt*, *Bunte* (Berlin), *Pravda* (Moscow), *Le Monde de la Musique* (Paris), *Chaspik* (St Petersburg, Russia), *Musica Rivista Italiana* (Rome) the *Christian Science Monitor*, *Rolling Stone*, *New York Magazine*, the *American Record Guide*, *Clavier*, the *St. Petersburg Times* (Florida), *Dagens Nyheter* (Stockholm), NPR's Performance Today, WNYC's New Sounds with John Schaefer, ABC-TVs 20/20, and David Dubal's nationally syndicated radio broadcast (WQXR in New York) Reflections from the Keyboard. Mr. Young served on the advisory board of the 1995 Scriabin International Competition in Moscow, where a special prize for the best performance of an early Scriabin Sonata was established in his name. In addition, Mr. Young is a frequent adjudicator at international piano competitions, including the European International Piano Competition (Sweden), thereta Erikson Nordic at Kil (Sweden), the RAMA (Boston), the Young Prince (Russia), the Boston Outstanding Amateur (Boston); the International Russian Music Piano Competition (San Jose); and the Premio Jaen (Spain). His recording of music by Scriabin, Mahler, Leo Tolstoi, Hugh Downs and Michel Block, entitled "Prisms" was released on the Americus Records label in 2000. In 2002 Americus released Mr Young's critically acclaimed recording of Richard Strauss's rarely performed *Enoch Arden*, a melodrama for narrator and piano, in which he collaborates with the celebrated British actor, Michael York. His worldwide tour with Michael York in *Enoch Arden* has included appearances at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Kravis Center in Palm Beach, and at the Royal Palace in Stockholm. They have been invited to tour South Africa and Russia with the work in 2007. Mr. Young is also a recording producer (for Americus, Angelok, Newport Classics, and other labels), as well as the founder and Executive Director of Identity Marketing for Concert Artists, Inc., a career consultant to classical musicians.