

Piano Teaching Skills

A Complete Guide for Piano Teachers

by Elaine Andrus Watts

Intellectual Publishing

About the Author

Elaine Andrus Watts has a Master's Degree in Music Education and graduated a member of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society. She holds professional teaching certificates and has taught band, choral and general music in the public schools.

She has maintained a piano studio for forty-five years, teaching hundreds of private piano students, and presenting them in group and solo recitals. Her students have won contests, have been awarded study grants and have played concertos on symphony youth nights. She also taught approximately ten hours per week for six years as a member of the piano staff of Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah.

She has served as adjudicator for music festivals, contests and public school solo festivals.

She has accompanied soloists, choral groups and professional vocal teachers. She has been a church organist for many years and an occasional vocal soloist. She has composed piano teaching pieces, choral compositions including a cantata, and solos for piano, flute, trumpet and voice.

She has taught her own five children to play the piano. Her son says, "When we turned seven years of age, we were given piano lessons whether it "tickled us pink or not." (They all love music.)

She says that music and students have been like beautiful flowers in her life.

Acknowledgements

I wish to express appreciation to my daughter Christine Watts, a former piano and organ student and a university graduate in Flute Performance, for invaluable help in summarizing and editing some of my information.

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Forward

Elaine Andrus Watts has penned an important book entitled *PIANO TEACHING SKILLS: A Complete Guide for Piano Teachers*.

The premise of this book is of the highest pedagogical goal, inasmuch as she was prompted to write her findings as a piano teacher to assist the development and training of one of her own students, thereby giving the next generation the benefits and wisdom of her many years of piano teaching.

Mrs. Watts has approached her writing with the goal to instruct and detail the many facets of piano teaching, from the beginner to the completion of training and performing in recital. The book is replete with references citing major authorities of the world of contemporary piano pedagogy, in addition to a vast and interesting personal traversal of her many years in the studio with students of all ages.

I highly recommend this book for teachers who are interested in adding to their skills as teachers and developing the proper approach to excellent training. Each will be highly rewarded for the joy of reading this new book.

Paul Pollei

Professor Emeritus of Piano Studies, Brigham Young University

Founder/Artistic Director of the Gina Bachauer International Piano Competition

October 2001

To my students

For the motivation they gave me
to strive for excellence in my profession
and for the joys and satisfaction I received
in teaching them.

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Chapter 1: The Art of Teaching

Piano teachers are teaching skillfully when students acquire skills that enable them to enjoy playing, creating music and participating in musical activities.

Share your knowledge with students in the shortest amount of time to help them become independent. Should they come to need more than what you have to offer, be willing to help them yourself or make any changes which will further their progress. Seek to avoid passing on musical limitations. Let me explain by relating this personal experience.

In my early years of teaching, a young sixteen-year-old high school fellow who was then commuting from Idaho Falls to Salt Lake City, Utah to study the timpani and drums with a member of the Utah Symphony came to me for piano lessons. At his first lesson, he demonstrated his level of skill by playing for me the simplified version of “Romance” by Rubenstein found in the third grade book of John Thompson’s Piano Course.

He was a valuable student as we explored music together. For the first time, I had to evaluate my teaching methods because of his persistent but mannerly “what” and “why.” After teaching him for a year, I recognized that either he should also commute for piano lessons or I needed to become a more knowledgeable and proficient teacher. I decided that I would commute.

Over the next year, I studied approximately once per month with Gladys Gladstone Rosenberg, pianist for the Utah Symphony in Salt Lake City. She was a former student of Arthur Schnabel in New York City. Recognizing the sacrifice I was making to leave my family each month and admiring my deep hunger and desire to learn, she generously gave me lessons that lasted nearly three hours.

Meanwhile, I was teaching my motivated student each week. He entered a contest playing the brilliant first movement of the Shostakovich Piano Concerto in F and won the opportunity to play it with the Idaho Falls Community Symphony Orchestra. He had accomplished this goal with a total of four years of piano study. I had been his teacher the last two years.

Every student will require a different “method” of organized and sequenced learning to steadily gain skills. Build upon their capabilities from where they are and what they presently know. Help them develop standards of accomplishment. Be careful of giving constant praise so they will trust your judgment of what is artistic and what could be improved. Focus on results.

Teachers can help students by setting tasks according to the student’s ability and experience. If the student has had no previous knowledge or experience, then tell and sometimes show. But if some knowledge or experience is there, help them to draw it from themselves and use what they already know. It is good to demonstrate: have the student try and then apply in a situation. In early lessons with young beginners, put the main focus on the activity, not the information.

Beware of set routines in teaching for they can cause stagnation. We learn to teach by teaching. There is a wrong way and a better way to do most things. We can seek more knowledge through study, reading and when possible, attending seminars and master classes.

I ask transfer students to play a piece or a part of a composition for me. (They have been told to come prepared to do this.) I explain this is one of the ways I can know how to help them continue to learn about music and build their playing skills. When they finish, I compliment them on the positive aspects of their playing, give some reasons for suggestions I make and occasionally give

choices of what they could study. My goal is for them to leave the lesson encouraged that together we can enjoy music and that they will be capable in regard to their new assignment.

Guide for beginner's early lessons

What is the best age for children to begin piano lessons? That depends on each child. The greatest consideration is if they want piano lessons. But can their hands span five keys? Have they learned numbers and directions? How long is their attention span? What is their learning environment—the family and friends?

I stress the importance of a parent coming and listening to each lesson for the first several months of a beginner's study. This helps avoid questions about assignments and helps them know what is needed at home to reinforce the learning. My goal is for everyone to be successful.

A child learns more quickly and easily when he likes to do something. Praise, approval and recognition are motivating but should be merited. As students play for me, I often say, "Good," to give them encouragement and to reinforce that they are playing well.

I also give directions as they play; time is saved and more can be accomplished. Listening to me and playing at the same time also builds their ability to concentrate. Occasionally a student unaccustomed to this "discipline" will tell me that it bothers him when I talk during his playing. I answer pleasantly, "You will get used to it, and we will be able to accomplish more during your lessons. It will help your concentration skills." (Give reasons for what you do and expect of them.) If I want the student to stop playing because I have something to say, I put out my hand or say, "Stop." Students can learn your particular ways in communicating.

Children do like to be structured and to know what is expected of them. Write things in their lesson tablet as the lesson progresses; then review with them at the end of the lesson. Be sure they under-

stand. Don't spend time on things they know. Assume children are smart, because they are!

Relate new concepts with something they already know. In teaching a new concept: a) demonstrate b) have the student try and c) apply the concept in a situation. Knowledge is gained by making connections, and there needs to be continuous reinforcement.

Begin note reading in the second lesson so that students will not try to play everything by ear or lose interest. When reading music, do not let students develop the habit of watching their hands. Cover the student's hands with one of the music books for awhile. Ask parents to do the same at home.

To force a beginning student to learn the names of lines and spaces slows him down on his way to becoming a good music reader. This is because the information has to be processed. (Study the detailed information in the chapter on music reading.)

Before younger students begin to play a piece, ask them to tell you about its key signature and time signature. Students can have a habit of not looking at the key signature until they play the music and hear that they've left out sharps or flats.

Assigning new pieces to young students

Do an overview first. Ask the student to tell you about the key signature and time signature. Let them point to the like and unlike patterns. Ask which hand has the melody, left hand or right hand. How do they know? Teach them that chords are usually the harmony. "Melody is like a person, and the harmony is like the person being dressed in nice clothes. Harmony "dresses-up" the melody." Ask them about the tempo markings. Teach them about form. Awareness of patterns helps. (Like sections can be called "A," a different section is "B", etc. If they have learned to use the pedal, talk about it: "Using the pedal is like putting on "make-up"—to make the tone more beautiful." It is best to learn the piece carefully and then add the pedal.

Let the student circle the dynamic markings with a red pen. Say, "Please observe the dynamics as you

practice because a piece is not finished without the dynamics. They will make the music more interesting and give the music personality. Play a phrase for the student; then ask which dynamics they would suggest. Let them put in the dynamic markings if there are none. When there are markings, ask if they think something else would be better. Ask, “Why? Or why not?”

Have the student play parts of the piece with your direction, hands alone. Remind him to practice small sections hands alone; then put them together. Review the section before starting another section. Then learn the new section the same careful way. Say, “I won’t want to listen to you play the piece if there are mistakes.” (Sound serious, but kind; you are concerned and you care.) Ask, “Have you ever had to redo something because you did it in a sloppy way, like washing the dishes over again because you didn’t get them clean or remaking your bed because it still had wrinkles. I wouldn’t want you to have to take the time and work to change mistakes in your pieces, so be careful how you practice.” If you take time to do this, it can help the student avoid mistakes in their practicing. To plan how practicing can best be accomplished frees the student to listen to their playing. Then the music is more likely to be interpreted rather than merely executed. As they grow in their awareness, you will not need to take as much time helping them. End by briefly telling information about the composition—the composer and a few music history facts

Help students approach each new piece with excitement. Your own attitude can be an example. Stress that they should be careful in everything they do, so what the composer intended will be honored.

At the end of the lesson, I ask students to summarize what we have talked about. I ask them to tell me what they need to do to get ready for their next lesson.

Most of my beginner students quickly achieve to the degree that I can assign about eight pages (not pieces) of music per week in addition to theory and

harmony. I use several books at once in which the difficulty of pieces progresses gradually. This is very important to developing good music reading skills and to working with physical maturation.

Within two to three months I introduce a way they can judge their own practice and accomplishment. If there are more than three mistakes per page (not piece), they need to spend more time and be more careful. Mistakes are: wrong notes, wrong rhythm, incorrect tempo, lack of dynamics, starting over, etc. Often, there are no mistakes. If only one line has problems, I may assign only that line for another week. Putting responsibility on the student as soon as possible helps them learn to discriminate and evaluate themselves. This leaves me free to teach instead of “police.”

When a student finishes playing a page or a piece, I ask him to tell me how he feels about his playing. I encourage students to be comfortable in telling me it was played well if it was played well. If there were problems, I ask him to tell me what they were and together we explore the why. I use the Four Ws which are my key questions to learning: Where was the problem? Which hand had the problem? Why was there a problem? What needs to be done to correct the problem?

When communicating with students, be aware of your words and tone of voice. Talk at the level students will understand, but don’t talk too much. Be positive in your instructions, and avoid words that convey blame or guilt. Ask questions to find out what students know. Also, let them show you what they know.

Nine-year-old Jill became one of my beginner piano students. During the first lesson I wondered how I could tame this flighty little pony. Jill had trouble sitting still and concentrating. She often interrupted what was happening in the lesson to share something with me—about other things. After two lessons, I decided to forget my usual routine of getting note reading started. She was trying to do the finger exercise and seemed to enjoy the triads, so I gave her three simple tunes to play by ear in the key of C with the ‘pointer’

(index) finger only. At the next lesson, she played them for me along with two new songs she had picked out—tunes she knew and liked—that I had not assigned. I praised her efforts and then showed her how to play the cadence chords with her left hand to put harmony with the tunes. The next lesson she eagerly showed me what she had accomplished again. Gradually she began to sit still and concentrate better. Little by little I introduced note reading. After three months of lessons she performed two short pieces from memory on a public recital. She had learned them by reading the notes. I was proud of her efforts and my patience.

Teaching good practicing skills

Teaching students how to make wise use of their practice time is one of the biggest challenges for teachers. Also, how do you get the race horses to slow down? I can understand them, for I was one once. I liked music, and I couldn't wait to hear how it sounded. Do play for your students sometimes so they can hear the music. Don't encourage imitation. However, demonstrating sometimes opens a broader understanding and helps students play musically as well as correctly.

We teachers know that quick progress comes by avoiding mistakes that must be corrected and that early prevention is important. Even with fairly advanced students, I go over sections of a new piece with them, hands alone, giving technical and interpretive guidance. Quality practice in the beginning also contributes to an accurate and reliable memory for performances later. Tell this to the students, stressing that you are a partner in their learning and performances and you want the best for them.

I do not listen to sloppily prepared music at a lesson. I say, "Please stop. You are not prepared." If you helped them the week before (calling attention to pitfalls, special challenges, etc.), don't do it again. Let them take the consequences. Say, "I'm sorry to see you decided not to do your assignment correctly. I expect you to be responsible." Be sure your tone of voice is matter-of-fact and not accusing. Be discriminating about giving help you already gave the week

before. If the entire lesson has been sloppily prepared, spend the time on ear training or sight reading together on something entirely different than the lesson.

It is a waste of time and detrimental to practice difficult sections many times with little or no conscious concentration. Continually stress that in practicing a new piece, time and effort will be saved by carefully working on only a small section. Once that section is mastered, review it before going on to another section. By the end of a week, what has been accomplished will be secure. By contrast, if the student practices the entire piece over and over without careful attention, the incorrect practice will certainly fix the piece wrong in the muscle memory, effort will have been lost and more will be needed to make corrections. The best results are obtained by two or three shorter practice sessions each day, allowing the brain to rest after each session.

When students do make mistakes, find out what went wrong. Are they listening to their playing? Do they realize they made a mistake? Students are smart, but don't assume they know; find out why they are making mistakes and spend time correcting that. Take students from where they are and positively build upon what they presently know.

Enforcing practice by keeping a signed record each week encourages resentment of both students and parents. Anyone hates learning if forced to learn. Be realistic in what you expect from students, taking into consideration their personal strengths and weaknesses as well as other time commitments they may have.

Generally, disinterested students have been turned off by drudgery, boredom, too much criticism or too little praise. Challenge them. Give them enough to do, generally more than they can get done. This will motivate them to do quality practice and make good use of their time. Give praise for what is done well, but praise the action, not the person. "This is good work. You accomplished the assignment. I'm proud of what you have done." Sometimes I assign a finished piece again because students enjoy it so much, and I'd like to hear it again too.

Help students learn to establish correct tempos by having them choose between alternatives. If the student has already carefully studied a piece, have them play it in a tempo they consider to be too fast. Next have them play it in a tempo they think is too slow. Ask them which way they think would be correct, and why. Use the metronome for further direction. This gives them experience in becoming aware and taking responsibility for choices. In time, their “inner monitor” will be established which can generally be depended upon.

Determine whether the best fingering choice has been made for playing the piece up to tempo. Have you ever dutifully disciplined yourself to practice slowly in learning one of the masterworks and then to your dismay found that when you played it up to tempo the fingering was less than desirable? To avoid this, divide a passage into smaller segments and play one segment up to speed. What happens naturally? Pencil in that fingering! Do another segment and pencil in the fingering. Then connect and play both segments. Is the fingering acceptable? In this manner, discover the fingering of the entire passage. Your hand is different from that of the composer or the editor. Find what fingering works best for you.

Each lesson should contain a critique of what was accomplished, as well as direction and help for the next week’s assignment. Be frank but positive where the student has not achieved to the degree of his knowledge and capability and improvements are needed.

I ask each student, “How was your week?” All teachers have had students who give excuses as to why they did not practice or their assignments are not finished. If this happens, I say, “Let’s not take time to hear excuses, for that’s what they are. I want to hear what you have accomplished.” Tell students what you consider legitimate reasons for not practicing a piece or their lesson. If a student has been out of town or sick, give any help that is needed on the assigned lesson; then take the opportunity to do ear training, review past skills, play duets from duet books, or sight read pieces by

taking turns playing the treble clef and then the bass clef. Make the time worthwhile; then kindly stress that you expect a good lesson for next time.

Whenever you can, correlate teaching with principles of life. Let students know you have a sense of humor and that you are a real person. Whenever possible, allow students to discover for themselves. If you give too much help, their confidence will not develop, which contributes to frustrations for both student and teacher. Put the main focus on the activity, not the information. Don’t talk too much. When you do talk, match the student’s level of understanding. Always thank your students for a good lesson or the good things within a lesson. Tell them you enjoyed it and smile.

Group teaching—Music Club

Music Club is an opportunity for students to play for each other in an informal setting without their parents. It is also an opportunity to teach things in a group setting.

I present two major recitals during a year, one in May and the other one in December. I also hold four or five Music Club meetings a year. One in April just before the public recital in May. This helps them practice their performance. One in early December on a Christmas theme. One close to Valentine’s Day, another close to Halloween and one at the end of the summer.

Here is the outline of a typical Music Club meeting.

1. Drills
2. Talk about a scene from music history
3. Have the students play for each other. They should be well prepared. They should treat this as seriously as the recital. I know who is going to play and what they are going to play ahead of time. It is a little less formal in that I don’t make programs and the order in which the students play is something the students decide in the moment.
4. At every recital or Music Club, I comment that students will be “sharing” music. I try to lessen the feelings of competition and encour-

age the attitude that each one's musical contribution will add to everyone's enjoyment.

5. Serve refreshments during the last five minutes.

Music Club should last an hour and a half at the most. Parents should bring the student no earlier than five minutes before Music Club and pick them up on time.

I serve only cookies that are not a mess to clean up. Parents are usually very good about coming on time.

Chapter 2: Training Students to Play by Ear and Transpose

To aid students' musical performances and add to their enjoyment in listening to music, begin ear training the first lesson. Before I could read a note of music, I learned to play "My Wild Irish Rose" in the key of C by imitating the playing of an older brother. He then taught me to harmonize the song with the cadence chords. It showed me I could really play something, and I wanted to do more.

Playing by ear and memorizing easily are definite advantages in playing the piano. Many musical principles can be taught by rote playing: dynamic variations; articulation (legato, staccato, slurs, etc.); rhythm; transposition; position and dexterity of hands. Playing by rote gives freedom from having to read symbols and the printed material. If some skill in playing by rote has been developed, learning to read music will be less difficult.

During a child's first lesson, teach this tune by rote:

Flies in the buttermilk, shoo fly shoo;	EECCCEEG
Flies in the buttermilk, shoo fly shoo;	DDBBDDDF
Flies in the buttermilk, shoo fly shoo;	EECCCEEG
Skip to my lou, my darling.	DEFEDCC

Demonstrate using the pointer finger only of the right hand. Begin on E above Middle C.

Ask the student to listen and watch as you play the entire tune. Before playing the first part again say, "Listen carefully to this first part, then listen to the second part and tell me if they sounded alike or different. Let the student answer that the parts sounded different. "Let's call the first part A, and the second part B." Write AB in their tablet. "Now listen while those two parts are played again; then tell me if the third part is like the first part or the second part." The student almost always answers that the third part was like the first part. Write another A in their tablet. "Now listen to me play parts ABA; then I will play a new part, and you tell me if it was like the A part or B part or if the new part is different." The student answers that the new part was different. "Good, let's write it down." Add a C so that ABAC has now been written down. "The form or pattern of this song is ABAC. If I help you, can you play it?"

When students can play the complete tune with right hand alone, ask them to play it with the left hand alone. Use only the pointer fingers. Now ask them to play both hands together an octave apart. Use discretion about how many keys to assign at one time, but eventually students will be able to play the tune in every key.

The first or second lesson, begin teaching all students to play tunes by ear. They do not need to know anything about theory. Children learned to speak by listening. Play the tune in the key of C, first with the right hand and then with the left hand. Another week, ask them to play both hands together an octave apart. This will increase their visual knowledge of the keyboard. Tunes with some repetition will be easier to play. Assign those first.

When the student is free and relaxed playing the tunes in this parallel fashion, teach chordal accompaniments. Help them to harmonize the tunes with the I, IV and V7 cadence chords. Play the right

hand with the pointer finger only. (This is best to avoid establishing poor fingering patterns.) Students enjoy doing this. For small hands, take out the lower B of the V7 chord (in the key of C).

Here are some tunes. Learn a tune first in the Key of C; then transpose it to other keys.

One Chord Songs

Are You Sleeping?
The Farmer in the Dell
Frere Jacques
Three Blind Mice
Old Mac Donald
Row, Row Your Boat
Little Tom Tinker

Two Chord Songs

Mary Had a Little Lamb
Three Blind Mice
Go Tell Aunt Rhodie
Tell Little Indians
Down by the Station
Eensy, Weensy Spider
Down in the Valley
He's Got the Whole World
London Bridge
Merrily We Roll Along
Oats, Peas, Beans
Skip to My Lou
This Old Man
The More We Get Together
Oh Dear! What Can the Matter Be?
Where Has My Little Dog Gone?
Up on the House Top
When the Saints Go Marching
Twinkle, Twinkle

Three Chord Songs

Yankee Doodle (verse only)
Bingo
Battle Hymn of the Republic
Camptown Races
Comin' 'Round the Mountain
Good Night Ladies
Happy Birthday
If You're Happy
I've Been Workin' on the R.
Jingle Bells
Jolly Old St. Nicholas
This Land is Your Land
Oh Susannah
Cindy
My Bonnie
Silent Night

Sometimes using a tape recorder at lessons can be helpful. Play tunes for students on a cassette tape they bring to lessons. Put basic instructions on the tape so students understand and can do the assignment when not at a lesson. This also helps parents to know what is expected. Play the tunes

with the right hand and the student will supply the left hand accompaniment or cadences. Record the same melody in two or three different keys they have learned. The next week, let the students demonstrate how to play accompaniments to the melodies.

Point out the interval patterns of the tunes. A few examples are:

2nds: Frere Jacques; Row, Row Your Boat; Three Blind Mice
3rds: This Old Man; Skip to My Lou; For He's a Jolly Good Fellow
4ths: Old McDonald; Home on the Range; If You're Happy
5ths: Twinkle, Twinkle; The More We Get Together
6ths: My Bonnie; Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen

Later on as students become more proficient, they can play the harmony using:

Block chords	Arpeggiated chords	(CEGE)	Inversions
Broken chords	Alberti Bass chords	(CGEG)	
	Broken Bass chords	(CGCG)	

Still later, students can improvise by ear or read a melody line and harmonize it with chord symbols that are written above the melody line.

Jane Smisor Bastien's Multi-Key Reading published by General Words and Music Company is invaluable for developing transposing skills. Begin using it when students have learned the four groups of triads and know how to construct the

C G F

D A E

D \flat A \flat E \flat B \flat B F \sharp or G \flat

Also, the line could be played by changing major keys to minor keys. Students zip through them and enjoy showing their skill. The assignment can take one week or as much as four weeks to complete. Adjust the amount of the assignment to each student. Another way to do it would be to have the

major, minor, diminished and augmented forms. (See Chapter 3, Piano Technique.) Take the first line (No. 1) on page 6 in her book and have students transpose it to the keys of the four groups of major triads (twelve different keys):

student transpose the entire page 6 to the Group 1 keys, the next day into the Group 2 keys, then into the Group 3 keys and last the Group 4 keys. Practice the challenging groups on the remaining days of the week.

Chapter 3: Developing Proficient Piano Technique

The first piano lesson for any age student should include instruction about hand position. Make a good arch that will let a pencil pass underneath the fingers without being stopped, like a car going under a bridge. The knuckles (mountains) should be up and the wrist (valley) down. For a time, have students practice making this position hands alone on the keys and

Place the fingers on the piano in the following position:

Octave above middle C	RH	C	D	E	F	G
		1	2	3	4	5
Octave below middle C	LH	C	D	E	F	G
		5	4	3	2	1

Make an arch with the hand, keeping the wrist relaxed. Be sure the end joint of each finger curls out (convex) and all fingers keep a gentle curve. Slowly lift and strike each finger firmly four times. While each finger takes its turn, the other fingers should remain in contact with their key without depressing it. When fingers 4 and 5 take their turn, they could stretch out straight and then curl again before striking the key. Play slowly, hands alone, concentrating on the fingers and the tone. Take care that the first joint of each finger does not cave in, but gently rounds out. Play on the soft cushions of the finger to obtain a warm, singing tone. Begin with the thumb and progress to the fifth finger. Then hit the fifth finger again and progress back to the thumb. Do it slowly and carefully.

Assign this five finger exercise to begin on different keys, perhaps on a different key each day. I stress its importance and that it is to be done first in their daily practice. A teacher's gentle determination sets the expectation and helps determine what students do. Show the parent that the exercise must be done slowly and carefully. At each lesson have young students do the exercise, showing you the progress of their fingers gaining strength.

then both hands together. Until the habit is formed, play on the tips of the fingers to strengthen the end joint and prevent a habit of "caving in."

Children's fingers are weak, and this weakness can put tension in other areas, which is not good. I give this exercise at the first lesson. (One similar could be used.)

Establish this habit and make sure the student is doing the exercise each day. Do not let them depress the keys with the fingers while they wait their turn to play. This is important to prevent unnecessary tension on muscles.

Young students enjoy the *A Dozen A Day* exercise books by Edna-Mae Burnham published by Willis Music. Their variety helps students acquire various technical skills. They can also be a guide to a teacher in making up other exercises to fit special needs of students.

In practicing any exercises, do not tense or tire the muscles. Don't have a regimen of exercises for students. The hands and fingers of all students are different and will require individual adjustments to gain the needed control. Give only a few exercises that help the fingers be independent of each other.

Sitting at the proper height and the proper distance from the piano is important. If the arms slope down from the elbows, the piano bench is too high. The bench is too low if elbows are lower than the wrist. If the distance is correct, the elbow will be slightly away from the body. Elbows should not touch the

sides or be more than an inch away from the body. If the bench is too low at home, the child could sit on a very firm foam cushion that does not wiggle around or perhaps a discarded telephone book. Show the parent at the first lesson what is needed and stress the importance of why it must be taken care of now rather than later.

Feet should not dangle, pulling on the nerve centers of the back. If a child is too short to put both feet on the floor, cut a pasteboard box to the correct size for the child and turn it over so the feet can be placed on it. Follow up to be sure that parents do this. I have an

Major Triads (root position)

Group 1 (all white keys)	C E G	G B D	F A C
Group 2 (one black key in the middle)	D F# A	A C# E	E G# B
Group 3 (one white key in the middle)	D♭ F A♭	A♭ C E♭	E♭ G B♭
Group 4 (all different key arrangements)	B♭ D F	B D# F#	F# A# C#

Broken Form: The finger that played first releases its key at the same time another finger hits the next key. We should hear only one sound at a time with no air space. Play legato with strict rhythm. Use a consistently firm touch. Do not let the end joints of the fingers cave in. The hands take turns beginning with the left hand two octaves below Middle C (531). The right hand then plays one octave below Middle C (135) and the left hand crosses over the right hand fifth finger to play 531 beginning on Middle C. Then the right hand takes its turn with the thumb on the C above Middle C (135). At this point, each hand has taken two turns. Now the left hand crosses over again and the pointer (index) finger plays a single key (the C two octaves above Middle C). Meanwhile the right hand has stayed poised over the keys it played and now plays again, coming back (531). Next, the left hand plays the triad where it had previously played (135). Now the right hand crosses over and plays (531) and finally, the left hand plays where it had first begun (135). Students enjoy playing the triads. Help them memorize the groups and gain the ability to spell the triads without looking at the piano. Parents could help drill at home.

adjustable wooden platform; without it, I would have two or three pasteboard boxes cut and ready for use.

Triads

During the first or second lesson, I begin teaching all beginners of any age and transfer students the four groups of triads. They help students get moving all over the keyboard and teach harmony, ear training, finger independence, rhythm drills, legato touch, etc. First teach the broken form and then the block form.

Block form: Prepare hand position: bridge, mountains, and valley. Firmly hit all three notes together then count 123 for each in steady rhythm. Release the first chord at the same time the next chord is played. Go up the keyboard, each hand playing two times with the pointer finger ending at the top; then come back down the keyboard.

After the major triads are secure technically and rhythmically, teach the other three kinds of triads in the same manner. They look different on the keyboard. Compared to a major triad: the minor triad has a lowered third, the diminished has a lowered 3rd and 5th, and the augmented has a raised 5th.

Let students see that they can build any kind of root position triad starting on any key if they know the half-step pattern. The major triad has 4 half steps from the bottom note to the middle note and three half steps from the middle to the top note. The minor triad has 3 half steps from the bottom note to the middle note and 4 half steps from the middle to the top note. The diminished triad has 3 half steps from the bottom to the middle note and 3 half steps from the middle to the top. The augmented triad has 4 half

steps from the bottom to the middle note and 4 half steps from the middle to the top note.

To vary triad assignments, teach them with different rhythm patterns. Example: 5 finger begins; then 3 and 1 fingers play together. Also: 5 and 3 fingers play together; then the 1 finger plays. Count 1-2-3 for each. Play the inversions when the hands are strong enough to play without producing strain and the fingers can comfortably span the reaches.

Scale Construction: Tetrachords

Within the first few months of study, students should play the tetrachords to understand scale construction. A scale is two tetrachords joined by a

whole step. A tetrachord is a whole step, another whole step and a half step.

First, drill students on recognizing half steps and whole steps. Then have the student memorize and repeat: "A scale is made of two tetrachords joined in the middle with a whole step." Demonstrate using the fingering 4321 in the left hand and 1234 in the right hand. Now have the student memorize and repeat: "A tetrachord is made of a whole step, another whole step and then a half step." Teacher demonstrates this beginning with the left hand fourth finger on C. Next, teacher draws a circle in the student's tablet with the letter C at the top of the circle. The student places their left hand fourth finger on C below Middle C and the other fingers of the left hand on keys D, E, and F without depressing them.

Teacher: "Your fourth finger is on C. What do you need to start making a tetrachord?"

The student says: "I need a whole step."

Teacher: "Wiggle your third finger on the key that is a whole step up from your fourth finger."

The student wiggles the third finger on D, but does not depress the key.

Teacher: "What do you need next?"

The student says: "I need another whole step."

Teacher: "Wiggle your second finger on the key that is a whole step up from your third finger."

The student wiggles the second finger on E, but does not depress the key.

Teacher: "What else do you need to finish making the tetrachord?"

The student says: "I need a half step."

Teacher: "Wiggle your thumb on the key a half step up from your second finger."

The student wiggles the thumb on F, but does not depress the key.

Take time for the student to think out the actions without depressing the keys, rather than play by ear. Even young children are capable of this.

Teacher: "Leave your left-hand fingers resting on the keys. You have shown me one tetrachord. How many tetrachords make a scale?"

The student says: "Two."

Teacher: "A major scale is made up of two tetrachords joined together by a whole step. To create the whole step that joins the two tetrachords together, place your right-hand thumb a whole step

above your other thumb. Leave one key between the thumbs. Place the thumb on the correct key without making any sound.”

The student places thumb on G after seeing that F \sharp will be the one key between the thumbs.

Proceed the same way in making the next tetrachord. When finished, have the student keep their fingers on the keys. Point out in review that the two tetrachords joined together with one key in between makes the C Major Scale, which has no sharps or flats.

Teacher: “Hold your fingers quietly on the keys while I play the tetrachord tune for you in another octave. Listen and watch. Then you can play the tune where your fingers are.” Teacher plays the tune below and then lets the student imitate.

Tetrachord Tune

4 3 2 1 1 1 1 2 3 4 4 4 then coming back 4 3 2 1 1 1 1 2 3 4 4 4
C D E F F F G A B C C C C B A G G G F E D C C C

Teacher: “You did it. Now you can play another scale. Hold your fingers still and listen carefully, then please do what I ask. Wiggle your left hand fourth finger where it is.”

The student wiggles his fourth finger.

Teacher: “Now place that finger on the key that your right-hand thumb is on. Then you can take your right hand off the keys.”

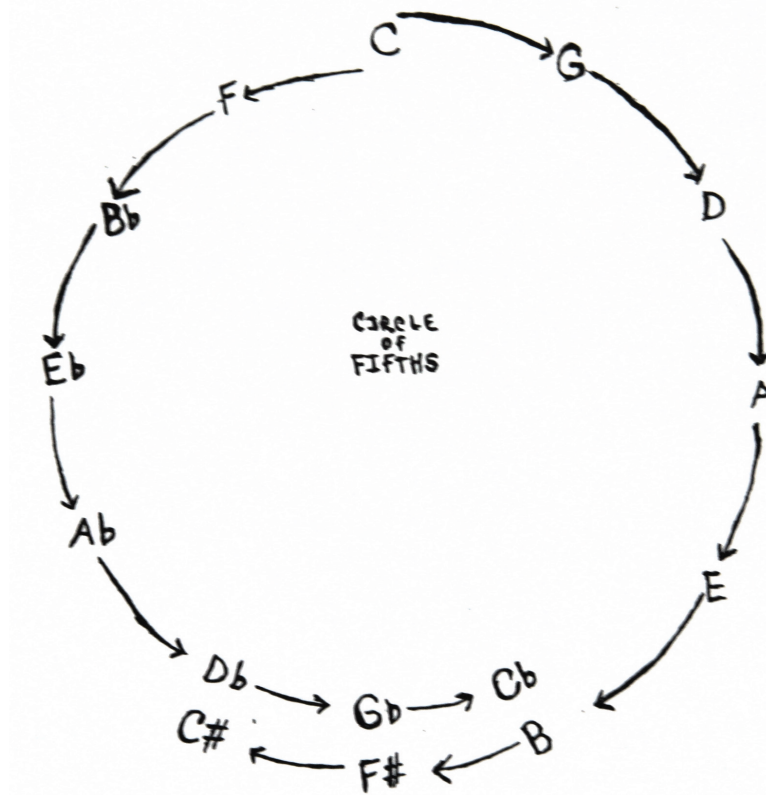
The student places left hand fourth finger on G.

Teacher: “Good. Now I will write a G on the circle. Then we will build another scale with two tetrachords like we did before.”

The teacher writes a G on the circle a small distance to the right of C.

Proceed in the same way and do as many as you have time for so as to help the student firmly grasp the pattern. Assign a few or perhaps the entire circle of fifths, depending upon the student. Caution them that in practicing they are to find the tetrachords

quietly before depressing any keys and that you will expect them to show you they can do this at the next lesson. As they learn the tetrachords, finish filling out the Circle of Fifths you started drawing in their tablet. Be sure they understand it by time they have learned all the scales.



The enharmonic keys

Major Scale Fingering

After learning the tetrachord tune, learn to play the major scales using only three rules and without using music. Learn the left hand first, going down the keyboard two octaves and back. Then do the right hand, going up the keyboard two octaves and back. Do not end scales on the fifth finger. C major: 123 1234 123 1234 1 coming back 4321 321 4321 321. Memorize and repeat the rules.

White Key Rule (C G D A E)

The thumb plays after the third finger, then after the fourth finger; coming back the fourth finger goes over and then the third finger goes over.

Black Key Rule (B F# C# or Cb Gb Db)

The thumb plays the white keys. The fourth finger goes over for the three black keys and the third finger goes over for the two black keys.

Flat Key Rule (Ab Eb Bb F)

Right hand fourth finger always plays Bb; left hand fourth finger plays the last flat of the key signature except in F major which uses the White Key Rule. (When playing the Flat Key Rule scales in contrary motion, the left hand would begin with the third finger followed by the thumb for all these scales except F major.)

It is not difficult for students to memorize these three rules. Play scales hands together in contrary motion before learning to play them in parallel motion. Playing scales gives one the knowledge of the keys and trains the fingers to play evenly and smoothly. Play scales slowly and hands separately so the ear is trained to hear and play each tone with equal strength.

Practicing scales, both major and minor, is important for all students to become familiar with the structure of each key and to develop good

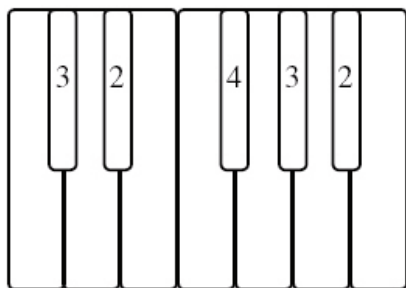
fingering patterns. However, enforced practicing of many scales and exercises can kill a love of playing the piano. Every serious student needs a thorough knowledge of scales and arpeggios, but enough technical value will be gained by practicing them only a bare minimum of time each day. When playing scales, control is more important than speed.

Minor Scale Fingering

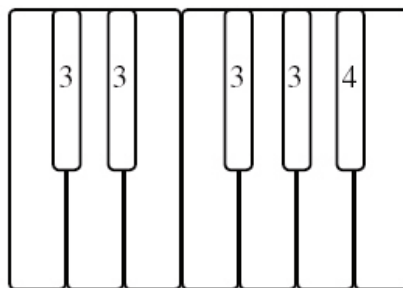
Here is a summary of fingering for the minor scales. I suggest drawing two octaves of the piano keyboard and writing the proper finger number on each key.

Minor scales beginning on black keys

L.H.



R.H.



Play the scale from left to right, then back again.

Arpeggios

Below is a summary of fingering for arpeggios (major and minor keys) which shows that they are not difficult once the major scales are secure. I suggest buying a book in which they are all written

out that includes also the dominant and diminished 7ths. Students should memorize all of them. Make a chart for students to keep in their loose-leaf notebook.

Arpeggio Fingering - Major Keys

C	G	F	F [#] /G ^b	RH	1-2-3
				LH	5-4-2-1
D	A	E	B/C ^b	RH	1-2-3
				LH	5-3-2-1
E ^b	A ^b	D ^b /C [#]		RH	4-1-2
				LH	2-1-4
B ^b				RH	4-1-2
				LH	3-2-1

Arpeggio Fingering - Minor Keys

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	E ^b	RH	1-2-3
								LH	5-4-2-1
C [#]	F [#]	G [#] /A ^b						RH	4-1-2
								LH	2-1-4
A [#] /B ^b								RH	2-3-1
								LH	3-2-1

If there are arpeggios within a piece, block them first. This brings attention to the construction of the music and helps in playing them. I use the metronome to help students establish consistent rhythm and tempo when playing the scales and arpeggios.

Some general tips

Be sparing with time spent on finger exercises, scales, and arpeggios; spend time studying music of the masters. Mechanical practice of studies with like repeated patterns will not prepare the student for playing great music literature. Be sparing in their use and have good reasons for any use. Know technical formulas and make up exercises to apply them directly to challenges within the music. Be aware that technical abilities alone will not produce artistically performed music.

Technique concepts can be modeled by the teacher. Give an example of the concept; then let the student learn by rote. Next, apply the concept to a written example. Then apply the concept within a piece of music.

To help students strengthen fingers and develop good rhythm at the same time, I use Junior Hanon by Allan Small, published by Alfred Publishing Company. Teach each exercise five ways, right hand and left hand alone: 1) accent and hold the first note of groups 2) accent and hold the last note of groups 3) accent and hold every other note of the group 4) do the opposite and 5) play evenly with a staccato touch. Listen for each finger to have the same loudness, except for accents which will be louder. Keep a slow, steady tempo.

To help keep sounds uniform, let the fingers rest on the surface of the keys and strike to the bottom of the key. Do this to obtain a good singing tone, even in delicately shaded passages. Caress and grasp the key rather than strike or hit it. There is a cushion on the bottom of the first joint of the fingers, a little behind the tip, where the finger should connect with the key. If passages require a brittle tone, use the tips of the fingers. For a big sound that is not harsh, the weight and control must come from the

shoulder and arm. Sitting on a higher than average bench can help. Having an adjustable bench is an asset.

Often, chords are struck unevenly, like stubbing one's toe. Most often this habit can be corrected by attentive listening. When playing two-handed chords, both hands must depress the keys at the same time. The melody tones within chords should sing out above the harmony. This aim is accomplished through careful analysis of passages, good listening and the development of strong, independent fingers.

Good technique consists of making only those physical movements that will gain the musical goal. For example, wrist tension is needed in striking a chord, but it is important to relax afterward. Staying tense doesn't affect the sound, and a relaxed arm helps the brain send the impulses to the fingers without restraint. Keep the hand and wrist relaxed as much as possible in order to be flexible and prepare for the next position. In most staccato passages, the fingers stay close to the keys using a wrist staccato, with wrist held high.

For two-note slurs, slightly emphasize the first note, then relax on the second note with a slight upward movement. To keep the rhythm or pulse moving, some of the time value of the second note will need to be stolen (cut off) when releasing the tone.

Teach students about musical effects and how to produce them, keeping in mind that the musical idea is always of first importance. The goal is to be able to produce many varieties of sound in order to achieve artistic interpretation. Know what is needed in the music. This depends upon the piece itself, what the composer intended, and the style or period of the music. Concerning tone, for example, what sound do you want to fit the mood? Knowing the answer will be the guide in how to use the fingers: should they keep close to the keyboard, be struck from a certain height, be played in a curved manner or be played so the cushion of the end joint of the finger comes in contact with the key to give a warm, singing tone. The part of the finger closest

to the fingernail will sound hard, but sometimes this quality is needed.

Inaccurate playing is often the result of the left hand not contributing its full share to the performance. It must be independent, without blurred notes and be rhythmically accurate.

Fast pieces with many sixteenth notes often present a challenge in keeping rhythm steady. I have students play difficult passages in various rhythms. For example, take groups of 16th notes, stress and hold the first of each group of four; then stress and hold the last of each group of four. Next, stress and hold every other note of the group of four; then do the opposite. I can't tell you why it works, but it does. Make rhythmical drills of difficult measures and passages. Practice with various accented rhythms.

The ear is the best guide in playing legato passages. Train it to listen for each note to have the same quality though the dynamics may change. The longer the note values, the more difficult this is. Avoid sticky tones and strive for a clean sound. Careful scale playing, hands alone, will help.

When playing soft passages, play the right hand melody louder (press more weight on the keys) than the left hand bass. This keeps the melody from sounding weak.

Use rotary wrist action whenever notes are in a series and move back and forth. In 8th and 16th note passages where one or two of the notes continually

repeat, rest the fingers on the keys as if glued on and let the wrist do a gentle rocking motion. A quiet accompaniment is achieved instead of tiresome bumps that detract from the melody. Do not lift the fingers off the keys. This becomes easy to do if an exercise is made of the motion; start very slowly, gradually accelerate and then ritard again.

Portato touch means tone separation, indicated by combined dots and slurs over the notes, and is usually used in quiet passages. Use an upward wrist motion and a gentle finger action on each note.

Put a slight accent on the first note of triplet, quintuplet and sextuplet groups. In playing two notes against three, three against four, or four against five, practice each hand separately in strict rhythm; then slowly put both hands together. The first notes of each hand hit exactly together; then whichever hand has the most notes starts the "taking turns" between hands. There will be what I call a "stubbing the toe" effect. A good ear can help a smooth flow into the next notation.

Technique is usually measured by fast, accurate playing. But good technique is more. It includes thoughtful phrasing, use of the pedal, tone production and every other element that makes possible the reproduction of the composer's intention, individualized by the performer's interpretation. Technique is musical knowledge combined with physical skill. Together, they lead to artistry.

Chapter 4: How to Prevent Piano Practice Injuries

The book *On Piano Playing: Motion, Sound and Expression* by Gyorgy Sandor, published by Schirmer Books, Collier MacMillan ©1981, gives reasons why piano practice injuries take place and what should be done to prevent such injuries.

Mr. Sandor states that children have a natural coordination. When a child plays loudly, he uses his whole arm and body naturally, with little or no effort. Too often, older students have a loss of coordination caused by unnecessary drills and exercises. Independence of fingers should not be developed at the expense of the overall coordination. The goal should be to make piano playing coordinated, effortless and natural.

He explains why certain types of tedious finger exercises go against the nature of the human anatomy and of normal coordination. An example is the common type of exercise intended to make fingers independent, in which four fingers depress the keys while a fifth finger (each taking its turn) lifts off of and then strikes the key it has been resting on. A certain independence of fingers is gained, but pressing four fingers down while keeping the arm and wrist immobile causes the flexor muscles to be under continuous tension. Also, the active finger is prevented from finding a correct position in line with its muscles, with the result that it functions under a handicap—it can't help pass on power from the arms.

Eventually, in performing these exercises, the pain will diminish because the muscles become insensitive and tough, but further damage is caused because the desensitized muscles lose the ability to warn that forcing is taking place. Normally, the first symptom of incorrect, forced activity is fatigue and tension, and helper muscles rush in to help. These types of exercises that strengthen the

weak muscles deactivate this instinctive mobilization of the stronger muscles, and without their help, numbness and pain result.

He states that there is no need for warming up exercises. Playing becomes effortless when the entire body is activated by distributing motion and effort among all the muscles. Fingers can be rubbed together or the arms stretched if one feels sluggish, but nothing else is needed.

Mr. Sandor gives directions for playing five-finger, scale, and arpeggio motion patterns and stresses that the thumb under the palm should be avoided, though it is the most widespread method of teaching scales. When the thumb is forced into the unnatural, tight position under the palm, the only way to bring the thumb down is to push the whole wrist down. To camouflage the bumpy accent with an extra motion interferes with the fluid motions of the other fingers. Instead, when it is time for the thumb to follow the third or fourth finger, give a slight outward motion of the upper arm and elbow, lift the thumb alongside the hand, slightly lower the wrist, and let it play unrestricted. This makes minimal motions, and the preparation is natural and easy.

The size of the motion decreases as speed increases because the down motion of the wrist—before the thumb plays—helps throw the thumb. Placing the third or fourth finger toward the back area of the keys when played before the thumb, helps the elbow not need to move too far out. When playing on the black keys, the upper arm is slightly higher and in a more forward position, but the wrist is kept in a normal position.

Each finger has its own position in which it functions best. Place each one in a straight line with its respective forearm muscles. Positions come about as the occasion requires and are

modified according to whether playing on white or black keys or at the central or extreme areas of the keyboard. The body leans forward or sideways and the wrist position changes to avoid strain. Move only a little and in the direction where you play; this helps to free joints. If passages are played freely, there is no need to be concerned with such details as raising the wrist or elbow.

The more interaction within the entire body, the more effortless and economical the playing becomes. When the body is totally involved and the muscular action is distributed, the performer may play with speed and produce massive sounds, yet seem to be hardly moving at all.

Finger exercises that incorporate correct arm participation can be useful; evenness and power can be achieved without strain. Coordinate the weaker muscles with the stronger ones. Don't desensitize the warning system of fatigue sensations.

Once a good technique is acquired, it can be used without needing to practice it—like driving a car, or

riding a bicycle. Practice technique only when necessary to make corrections.

Mr. Sandor suggests eliminating studies that feature technique and not music (such as Hanon, Pischner and Czerny) because repetitious, technical patterns lead to mechanical practicing. Instead, assimilate technical formulas in their purest form and when learned correctly, employ them in a musical composition, adapting them to the demands of the piece.

To attain the piano's biggest sonorities, Mr. Sandor outlines simple "free fall" exercises which enable the required motions without mechanical practice. Another equally effective but different way to produce big sonorities is the "thrust" which gives maximum power and fast reflexes from the surface of the keys. The "thrust" is totally effortless if the right coordination of the entire body is achieved; even small or frail people can develop a powerful sound and technique without forcing or using muscle-building exercises. Directions are outlined in Mr. Sandor's book which can be found in libraries or purchased through bookstores.

Chapter 5: How to Teach Music Reading

From rote to note

In reading books, there are stages of transition from rote to words. The reading of music also goes from rote to notes. Teach using imitation and semi-imitation until students gain the knowledge of and skill with mechanics such as intervals, chords, scale lines, repeated notes, rhythm designs and meter. The important link often missing in music reading is that children fail to see that music notation corresponds to an experience. Once children see the link between music and its notation, they will eagerly follow the music, make up their own songs and write them down.¹

1. Provide readiness for rhythm before introducing rhythm concepts: clap, tap, walk, march and run to changing tempos.
2. Whenever you want to teach a music reading concept, begin by doing a problem-solving activity. Give them experiences that help them discern opposites, differences, contrasts and variations.² (For example, show the crescendo sign and have them tell you whether they think this symbol means to get louder, softer or stay the same, and have them tell you the why behind their choice.)
3. Use singing (including echoes, rounds, canons, rondos), rhythm instruments and listening activities to teach rhythm.
4. Explore the principles of notation rather than the system of notation. For example, notate on a chart the rhythm of the song “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star” by representing each quarter note with a star and each half note with a half moon.³

In his article, “The Development of Reading Skills,” Richard Bobbit states that the learning process is more efficient when structured in the step-by-step programmed technique associated with B. F. Skinner’s Operant Conditioning. For example, rhythm studies should include only those rhythms employed in previous exercises, and

interval studies should include only those intervals found in material covered to that date.

Effective programmed instruction should follow this general outline: stimulus-response-reinforcement of stimulus. Each new item should be immediately reinforced by its application in a way that the pupil realizes he is making use of the information himself, and feedback should be given so the pupil is aware of his accomplishment and readiness to go on. The pace of instruction must be carefully controlled to avoid boredom.

Intervals

Begin with the learning of intervals in carefully selected combinations that are not limited to scales and are not based upon traditional harmonic progressions.⁴ Rosalie Liggett states that using such an interval approach from the beginning of music study helps students learn more easily to:

- Play by ear.
- Transpose (which increases reading skill).
- Finger more naturally (seconds step from finger to finger and from key to key; thirds skip a finger and a key, etc.)
- Notice the form of the piece (parts alike and parts different)
- Develop inner hearing.
- Recognize melodic and harmonic triad shapes.

The first steps in reading with the interval approach are to hear, then feel, then see the movement of the pitches. Learn intervals aurally through association with their sound in a familiar song. Play the intervals to feel them. See intervals when playing them in a study or piece. Notice the direction of interval; it is not necessary to decide the name before playing.⁵

Karen Carter suggests associating pitches with the opening notes of familiar songs or themes to learn intervals easily. Her list includes the following:

Minor second	Theme from the movie “Jaws”
Major second	Are you Sleeping?
Minor third	Greensleeves
Major third	Kum Bay Yah
Perfect fourth	Bingo
Augmented fourth	“Maria” from West Side Story
Perfect fifth	Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star
Minor sixth	Let My People Go
Major sixth	My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean
Minor seventh	“There’s a Place for Us” from West Side Story
Major seventh	Theme from TV’s Fantasy Island
Octave	Somewhere Over the Rainbow ⁶

To help coordinate what ears hear and eyes see, do some drills.

1. Have students imitate short melodies that you play.
2. Have students play from examples while naming the intervals.
3. Have students write down short melodies that you play.

Rhythm

Rhythm refers to how music is organized—the grouping of beats into measures. The pattern or grouping of accented and unaccented beats is called meter, and it is indicated by bar lines. Rhythmic patterns help us to perceive groups of notes as patterns instead of successive individual notes. A rhythm pattern often begins on the first beat of the measure, but it may begin on any beat.

Tempo is the speed in which beats or pulses occur and is indicated in general terms, slow to fast, by the Italian words *grave*, *largo*, *adagio*, *lento*, *andante*, *moderato*, *allegro* and *presto*. Metronome markings provide more precise tempo indications.

The metrical beat (designated by the time signature) is not always the same as the beat which is felt (true beat). The time signatures 2/4, 2/2 and 4/4 are all simple duple meters but the appearance of the music in each of them will be different. Triple meters 3/2, 3/4, and 3/8 and quadruple meters of 4/2, 4/4, and 4/8 are also called simple or common meters. In simple meters, the upper number of the signature indicates the number of beats per measure and the lower number indicates which note value receives one beat. This is not true for compound meters which result from multiplying the simple meters by three.

In compound meters, the upper number will be 6, 9, or 12, and each of these can be divided by three to find the number of beats per measure. The lower number of compound meter signatures will be 4, 8, or 16 with the basic beat being the dotted half note, the dotted quarter note or the dotted eighth note. The compound meters most commonly found in music are 6/8, 9/8 and 12/8.

Rhythm reading should be taught as a music process. The student’s attention should be focused on groups of notes organized according to music principles rather than arithmetic ones.⁷

Rhythm readiness steps for beginning music students:

- Talk with students about rhythm being all around: the steady falling of rain, a horse's gallop, the rising and falling of waves, the sounds of feet, and ways people speak.
- Let them clap the rhythm of their name.
- Help them recognize rhythm in music. Play a short piece and let them feel the beat. Then have them clap it.
- Let students hear the rhythm in words. Speak a short poem; then discuss its rhythm.
- Draw a rhythm pattern. Let students draw a pattern.
- Play a few rhythm patterns. Let students clap what was played.
- Walk in rhythm. Have students imitate; then have them create their own rhythm pattern.

Basic rhythm relationships are best introduced by rote through songs.⁸ For further experience, students could play songs using tone bells, sticks, drums or a triangle.

Teach rhythm before having the student try to read the notes

- | | |
|---|------|
| • Teacher demonstrates | Hear |
| • Student imitates by rote | Feel |
| • Teacher shows student what was imitated | See |
| • Student does by himself | Do |

My experiences using chanting in teaching rhythm patterns has been very positive with beginners of any age and also in helping some intermediate students. The notes are related in time value to a








In basic rhythm instruction, the different kinds of notes and their relationship to an even beat should be emphasized. Depending upon the age of a student (some very young students cannot walk steadily to a beat) walking or clapping (or both) is helpful. The reasons for various note values can be understood from walking and clapping long before actual counting is needed.⁹

Early understanding of the eighth and sixteenth notes and how they fit into rhythmic patterns is important to rhythmic reading. Teach students that different kinds of notes can last the same amount of time depending upon the tempo. Have them walk the various kinds of notes at slow, medium and fast speeds. For accents, step harder on every other beat, for example, to teach rhythm moving in twos. They can learn that music moves in twos, threes or multiples and combinations.









Explain the time signatures after doing these activities. Show on paper and explain that in 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4 time signatures the quarter note gets one count. In 3/2, 4/2 and 2/2 time signatures, the half note gets one count. In 3/8, 6/8, and 9/8 time signatures, the eighth note gets one count. Choose the best time to teach this, which is not the first few lessons.

quarter note. My guide comes from a paper written by Charles Heffernam entitled "Teaching Children to Read Music."¹⁰

Heffernam Chart

	chanted as	Walk
	chanted as	Run run
	chanted as	Slow-o (I use Slow-down)
	chanted as	Skip-ty
	chanted as	Hold-2-3 (I use Slow-down-wait)
	chanted as	Stop-2-3-4
	chanted as	Rest

Besides using Mr. Heffernam's chart, I have created my own chants:

	chanted as	Hur-ry up
	chanted as	Hur-ry
	chanted as	Hur-ry run
	chanted as	Hur-ry fast-er
	chanted as	Walk wait run walk (voice stresses the first walk)
	chanted as	Run walk run (voice stresses walk)
	chanted as	Walk run run
	chanted as	Half rest

During the first few weeks I have beginners play their pieces three ways:

- Chant Heffernam style while playing.
- Chant the note names while playing. (For a half note, say the note name twice; for a whole note say the note name four times.)
- Chant the counts: 1 2 3 4.

This helps beginners learn note value relationships intuitively.

More procedures I use to help early rhythm reading

Cover the measure being played so the student has to remember.

- Play only the first beat of each measure of the piece, then the second beat of each measure, third beat, etc.
- Clap or tap a pattern of two to four measures; children repeat by clapping and chanting.

- Drill using rhythm flash cards of measures that are four beats in duration.
- Counting aloud can help train a rhythmic feeling, but drill the counting, naming of notes and chanting before playing. After the first few weeks, do not name notes while playing because it slows the reading. Reading is not helped by counting aloud either.
- Set a reasonable, consistent speed and instruct students to keep up even if they must sometimes skip notes.
- Drills from a blackboard may be helpful if the materials come from the students' music.
- In counting eighth notes, count "one-and-two-and-three-and," etc. with no unevenness.

Explain that syncopated rhythm is like a mixed up clock. Syncopation puts an accent on a tone that is normally a weak beat. (In 4/4 time the natural accents fall on the first and third counts of the measure. If the rhythm in the measure is syncopated, the accent falls on the second or fourth beat.) This shifting of the accent is done by tying over the strong beat or by placing an accent on the weak beat. Today syncopation is used extensively in popular music. However, it occurred earlier in French compositions of the late 14th century; it was also used by Beethoven, Schumann and Brahms. Modern composers, Stravinsky and Bartok, used syncopation to add to or join changing and asymmetric patterns of meter.

List of Reading Skills

The process of learning to read music can be lengthened or shortened according to individual needs. Each of the following learnings contributes to overall music reading facility. If they are applied in real music experiences, they will be more secure.

1. Learn to recognize differences in pitch, duration, intensity and timbre.
2. Understand note to staff relationships, meter, beat and accent, dynamic markings, terms and symbols, instruments and their registers.
3. Learn to recognize visual and auditory differences in rhythm, accent and beats.
4. Learn to draw melodic contour and notate beat, accent, tempo and bar lines.
5. Learn to recognize, sing and play the various diatonic and scalewise passages using numbers to establish tonal relationships.
6. Learn to recognize, play and sing various chordwise passages from the major chords.
7. Learn to recognize, sing and play tunes containing steps, skips and combinations.
8. Learn to recognize and work with the four basic rhythm patterns:

Pattern No. 1



Pattern No. 3



Pattern No. 2



Pattern No. 4



9. Learn to sense the basic harmony in familiar songs through one-chord melodies and when changes occur in the two-chord and three-chord melodies.
10. Learn what are acceptable chord sequences.
11. Learn how to discover the tonal center.
12. Gain control over skills needed in playing simple melodies, rhythms and harmonies.
13. Learn to recognize various combinations of passages and patterns: musical phrase, one-phrase songs, binary form AB, ternary song form ABA and its variations.
14. Learn to differentiate many kinds of songs (i.e., hymn, folk, melody from a master work)
15. Learn to recognize themes by their notation, the opening phrase, and rhythm patterns.

More Suggested Activities

- A. Chant words to the rhythm
- B. Mark identical parts
- C. Mark sequences and repetitions
- D. Mark common chords
- E. Clap hands on difficult parts of the measure: the off beats, etc.
- F. Mark syncopated passages.
- G. Draw the contour of the melody in air
- H. Mark various intervals
- I. Mark syncopated passages
- J. Place a circle around the phrase that is different¹¹

Critical periods of learning, readiness and maturation all affect learning and the acquiring of music skills. To teach effectively, use methods and procedures which are likely to appeal to students. Access their motivation and goals, then adapt teaching strategies to best accomplish the task.

Findings of reading specialists applied

Studies of eye movement made by word reading specialists can be applied to music reading. The eye does not sweep smoothly across the page but moves in a series of jerks or stops called fixations. These account for about ninety percent of reading time. Eye movement takes up the remaining ten percent which lasts an average of one-fourth of a second. Speed in reading is dependent upon quick perception of meaningful units and upon smooth rhythm eye fixations across the page. Large quantities of reading material are given at lower grade levels to smooth out the rhythm of eye fixations. Because the material is easy, the eyes move smoothly from left to right with no need to move backwards for a second look. For the same reasons, considerable music reading material at an easy level should be provided for music students.¹²

Chapter Notes

¹Betty Debban, "Direct Link in Reading Readiness," Music Educators Journal, January 1977, pp. 42-45.

²Rudolph H. Weyland, Learning to Read Music. Dubuque, Iowa: W.C. Brown Co., 1961. p. 5.

³Charles E. Hicks, "Sound Before Sight: Strategies for Teaching Music Reading," Music Educators Journal, April 1980, pp. 53-55.

⁴Richard Bobbit, "The Development of Reading Skills," Journal of Research in Music Education, Summer 1970, p. 154.

⁵Rosalie Liggett, "Developing Reading Skills," Clavier, January 1976, pp. 46-49.

⁶Karen Carter, "Teaching Intervals—A Sure Fire Method," Clavier, January 1983, p.31.

⁷Betty Debban, "Direct Link in Reading Readiness," Music Educators Journal, January 1977, pp. 42-45.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Louise Guhl, "A Highway to Dependable Note Reading," Clavier, September 1971, pp. 15-17

¹⁰Charles W. Heffernam, "Teaching Children to Read Music," College Music Symposium, 1966, pp.49-55.

¹¹Rudolph H. Weyland, Learning to Read Music. Dubuque, Iowa: W.C. Brown Co., 1961, pp. 209-214.

¹²Doris Harrel, "A Plan for Better Sight Reading," The Piano Quarterly, Spring 1978, pp. 23-24.

Chapter 6: How to Become a Good Sight Reader

Sight reading can be fun as it provides opportunities for experiencing music firsthand. Our mind, ear and body are stimulated when we experience the music ourselves.

A foremost goal I have had as a piano teacher is to teach my students to be good readers and useful accompanists. Being a good sight reader will give one performance opportunities others will miss.

During lessons, I help students become good readers by analyzing most pieces with the student as I assign them. What parts are alike, what parts are different? We look over the phrases to see what fingers will be needed. If a piece has what I consider too much fingering, I mark it out with my pen. Sometimes, if needed, I write in fingering at the beginning of phrases. Are the triads melodic (broken shape) or harmonic (block shape)? I don't bog down in too much theory and technique—only enough to notice the constructions of scales and chords. (All music is made up of combinations of scales and chords.) Help students recognize whether chords are broken up either into the melody or the accompaniment. If a teacher takes time to do this, teaching will not be boring and the students will benefit.

Listening to music can help develop music reading ability. Some people will be able to read music more quickly than others because they have heard more music.

The best way to learn to sight read is to sight read. I encourage students to spend a few minutes each day reading music that is not part of their assigned lesson. Teachers might loan out specific sight reading books to the students. Change the book each week so they are sight reading rather than learning and memorizing the music.

To increase speed in learning to read music, select beginner level music for students that is based upon these four possible finger-note relationships:

1. Repeating the same note with the same finger (reiteration).
2. Playing the next finger on the next scale step (stepwise motion).
3. Playing the next finger on the next up or down key (chromatic motion).
4. Using the most natural fingers. For example, C to F, a fourth apart, would use the 1 and 4 fingers.

Teachers, point out these note relationships to the students to help them become observant. Discuss whether there are exact or very similar repetitions of the phrases, melodies or sections.

Hymn tunes are great to practice reading. The player learns to read chords as well as single notes, and the fingering and tempo are easier than many other types of music.

When a person reads music, the mind makes a series of pictures of the actions which are to be made. At first these pictures are made consciously; later on, they are made almost unconsciously. These pictures should be clear and produced one after the other in unbroken succession. Music should be read slowly enough to be free of mistakes. The master teacher, Leschetizky, insisted upon a similar method with his pupils. The notes must be read no faster than they can be played without stumbling. When a student finishes playing, ask them if their attention wandered from the notes.

Students must keep their eyes on the music and not look at their fingers or the keyboard. They should learn to “feel” for the notes rather than look for them. They should aim to finger all passages in such a way that movements of extension and

contraction of the hand are used as seldom as possible.

I sometimes watch students sight read to see what they are doing that may hinder their progress. I stop them, talk about it, then have them play it again to see their improvement. Calling students' attention to their problems helps them be aware to help themselves.

Students should see a whole measure at a time rather than one note at a time. Instruct students to look forward a few notes at a time to see whether they will want fingers to the right or to the left of the note they are about to play. If students learn to look ahead, they soon begin to add phrasing, expression marks and fingering.

To teach students to look ahead while reading music, have them play every other measure of the piece, hands alone. Do the same thing but playing the same part with both hands. Let students play only one hand while you play the other hand; then switch parts. Also, read the piece backwards by starting at the end of the piece and progressing to the beginning; read each measure left to right as usual. Another fun challenge is to play every other measure from beginning to end.

The metronome can be valuable in forcing one to look ahead and ignore mistakes when practicing sight reading. Such a taskmaster is motivating to keep going. Keep the speed down to avoid frequent stumbling, but not so slow as to be boring.

Ensemble playing of every kind is very valuable in learning to sight read. It is not desirable to stop to correct mistakes, so the senses stay more alert.

Activities that aid in understanding and using theory are very helpful to sight reading ability. Be careful of using theory methods that are not related to what the student is learning and are therefore boring. Kabalevsky's music is helpful in teaching students to see patterns. Play the chord patterns in block (all notes together) first.

I regularly use the following activities in my teaching.

1. Have students pick out songs (the melody) by rote in all keys. Have the student play the tune hands separately, then both hands together an octave apart. This teaches perception and understanding of the feel of the keyboard. It is not necessary that they know the keys; students need opportunities from the very first lesson to make musical judgments by trial and error. Students learn to listen (develop inner hearing) and musicality comes sooner because the natural learning process of children is being followed.
2. Play songs by rote with simple left hand accompaniments using the I, IV, V7 chords. It is not necessary to explain inversions. Play the accompaniments (chords) in the closest positions to each other. Transpose to all keys.
3. To aid understanding of triads in all keys, make up drills and time the students. Organize the triads into these groups.

Group I	C G F	(all white keys)
Group II	D A E	(one black key in the middle)
Group III	D \flat A \flat E \flat	(one white key in the middle)
Group IV	B \flat B G \flat	(all different key arrangements)

4. Assign students weekly sight reading in one key only or in a different key each day they practice.
5. Make a chart of many isolated musical elements. Do teacher-student drills or drill by group relays. When doing group relays, time and determine winners. Students enjoy this, and when they see rests, repeat signs, fermatas, etc. in the context of the music, they more readily recognize and perform them correctly.
6. Students recognize and read scale passages more readily if they have first learned the scales by the tetrachords; left hand starts 4 3 2 1 and then the right hand finishes the scale with 1 2 3 4. Do not use the fifth fingers because they are hardly used in playing scales. Students can pick out the proper notes without knowing the signatures if they know that between 2 and 1 of the left hand there will be a half step as well as between 3 and 4 of the right hand. Drill by going around the circle of fifths. The left hand fourth finger begins a new tetrachord where the right hand first finger played on the previous tetrachord.

Chapter 7: Remediate Reading Problems

Louise Guhl believes there are so many ineffective and frustrated note readers because note sounds make little sense unless the reader knows beforehand what to expect. Consider the possible confusions in piano study: the pitch goes up from left to right on the keyboard while it often goes down from left to right on the printed page; keys played simultaneously are seen laterally on the keyboard, but notes on paper are seen vertically; left and right hand finger numbers which correspond to scale structure are opposites. Also, music must be read vertically and laterally at the same time. If the sounds they are playing do not make sense, music reading is not worth the trouble to many children. An average aptitude child will probably rebel, and if he is really musical, he may play by ear and improvise; he should not be stopped from doing this for his note-reading should be built upon his skill in making music.¹

Otto Ortman says that for the normal student, difficulties in reading are the result of inability to group the distribution of notes into larger perceptual units rather than actual eye difficulties. To remedy or avoid this problem, show students the structure of their music. Chord groups and melodic groups can be considered instantaneously.² Let students find the like and unlike phrases and the phrases that have only small differences. How many phrases make a section or period? In what positions are the chords? Does the accompaniment have blocked chords, broken chords, or is it mostly another melody?

Stephen Covello urges teachers to avoid giving piano students excessively fingered music because students need to learn to read by a flowing pitch curve rather than by numbers. Also, it is best not to overly emphasize note naming, which focuses on individual notes rather than on note patterns (which slows down reading skill). It is only

necessary to know the starting notes of a phrase and the note relationships and rules for fingering.³

Procedures I have used to improve reading

1. Tape performances during piano lessons.
2. Play easy duets.
3. Play one hand while the student plays the other and then exchange parts.
4. Sing the melody and have the student play the accompaniment.
5. Accompany singers and instrumentalists. Ask parents and older siblings to do this at home with younger students using easy pieces.
6. Sight read hymns and chorales.
7. Play without stopping to correct mistakes.
8. Scan a piece first before playing to understand its structure, terms and symbols.
9. Practice music at various dynamic levels.
10. Keep eyes on the music. Cover hands and play very slowly to overcome looking down.
11. Look ahead and play as many notes at a time as possible. Play every other measure. Also play only the first note of each measure, etc.
12. Do not name the notes.
13. Read music backwards. (Start on the last measure at the beginning of the measure and then skip back to the next to the last measure, starting at the beginning of that measure, etc.) This prevents playing the music by ear.

Chapter Notes

¹Louise Guhl, "A Highway to Dependable Note Reading," *Clavier*, September 1971, pp. 15-17.

²Lorin F. Wheelwright, *An Experimental Study of the Perceptibility and Spacing of Music Symbols*. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1939, p. 7-8.

³Stephen Covello, "The Eyes Have It: The Process of Note Reading," *Clavier*, January 1979, pp. 35-38.

Chapter 8: How To Teach Sight Singing As Part Of Ear Training

One's ability to perform music depends to a large degree on tonal memory. Sight singing and ear training activities will develop aural awareness and help students to play more musically. They will also experience more enjoyment in listening to music.

For ear training, I encourage the use of activities I have successfully used in teaching music in the schools, as well as in my private piano teaching. I've incorporated elements of the Kodaly method. It has proven itself effective in much of the world. In the twentieth century no other way of teaching music has had such impact. It is a method used to teach singing, but many of its principles can be applied to instrumental study. In this method, each lesson must be a musical experience. Children are never to be given the feeling that music is mechanical. Dynamics and phrasing must be considered in all singing, and attention is given to singing in a variety of tempi. Children learn by listening and reproducing what they hear, i.e., the teacher claps or taps a pattern of two to four measures in length and the class or individual child repeats the pattern by clapping or chanting. Reading material must contain only those rhythm and tonal patterns that are already familiar through known songs or activities. Rhythm flash cards aid seeing rhythm in terms of patterns rather than specific elements. Children are set up for success. They are given time to read any new song silently before being asked to sing at sight.

Though it is possible to play an instrument quite well intuitively without understanding the structural nature of the music, this is not possible in regards to sight singing. There must be some understanding of the structural nature of pitch sequences. This can be learned through participation in singing.

Pitch is the impression a hearer has about the highness or lowness of a sound. Play some notes on the piano, ask students to indicate if they are low, medium or high. Have them close their eyes and raise their hand to what they think is the correct answer to your question.

Pitch is relative. The importance of pitch in music is not whether a note is high or low, but whether it is higher or lower than other notes. Play or sing pairs of pitches and ask which one is the higher sound or which is lower. Have students show which is the higher pitch by putting their hand above their heads and indicating the lower pitch by dropping their hand down. Have them close their eyes so they do not copy their neighbor.

Have students hear and then sing a pitch that is sounded. Listen to a series of single tones and then match the pitches with the voice. Play four tones. Pause. Then have students sing the four tones. Tape it as they do it. Then play it back for them to check how they did.

Some children can't hear the difference between pitches, but almost everyone can learn to carry a tune. Don't single these students out in any way or mislead them by saying something is fine, if it isn't. Tell them you are glad they sang and find something to compliment about it—perhaps their attitude in trying or their words were clear, etc. If the student is aware he has a problem, tell him you will both work on it to help it be better. To do this, sing or play single pitches and ask the student to imitate them. Move up by half steps, one at a time; then come down. Spend only a short amount of time in each ear training session—about ten or fifteen minutes. If an ear training session is too long, answers become less accurate though the student is trying. Do echo patterns. Then ask the

student to make up a short tune, humming it. See if they actually use a variety of pitches.

Learn intervals in selected combinations not limited to scales or based upon traditional major and minor keys. Sing or play a scale or parts of the scale beginning at any point, going up or down. Show students a representation of this exercise.

Students enjoy improvised musical conversations. Sing a question and the student sings an answer on subjects related to his interests. This develops a sensitivity to pitch and will help in relating symbols of written notes to their sounds. Also, as the student hears the music, he is developing a sense of relative pitch.

Sing or play a short melody or phrase. Let students hear it one time only, which encourages concentration. Then have them sing it back to you. As they become proficient, let them answer questions about the beat and the rhythm.

Teach students of any age or musical advancement to hear the difference between the four kinds of triads—major, minor, diminished and augmented. Play them asking, “Which was the minor triad; the first one I played or the second one?” Begin this way so there is a choice of answer. After some experience doing this, play any one of the four kinds of triads and ask which it is. This activity develops concentration and is good ear training. Have students repeat the definitions of each kind of triad and tell the half step patterns. Do not let them see the keyboard.

Use visual symbolization after students have had aural experience. A child knows how to talk a few years before he learns the formal definition of objects. In language learning, experience comes before the symbolization. It is the same in music; a definition of “melody” can be memorized, but it is not understood until a melody is heard.

Let students see the music notation that corresponds to a concept. For example, this activity can teach the concept of steps and skips. On a blackboard or on music paper, draw two lines like a railroad track. Draw some notes and tell students that one step is the distance from a line to the next space or from the

space to the next line. Ask how far apart they are (skip or step) and whether the sound moves higher or lower. Say, “It will sound like this.” Sing or play two tones a step away. Now, put in another note higher and let them sing. Say, “While you sing the notes, hold your hand in front of you; move it up or down as you think the pitch of the note goes. Show with your hand where you think your voice should go. Another time, do this same activity with a very short song. Children can learn the melody by imitation. Hearing the song repeatedly will help them get a sense of the pitch, melody and rhythm. Then you can show how a melody goes up, go down, or stays the same. You can do other activities such as build music sentences from music cards. The music cards are notation of music patterns they have previously learned to sing.

After students have learned to recognize the relationship of sounds to symbols they can begin learning to notate what they hear. In giving dictation, caution the students to not start writing too soon. If they don’t remember all of it, they should write what they can remember. They should listen first, try to visualize the rhythm of the music and sing it in their mind. Are they aware of the distance between tones? As they become proficient with this type of exercise, dictate a scale with a few sharps and flats that are chromatic.

No perfect plan exists for teaching, but try to build on what the student knows and build skills as you give information. Have realistic objectives of what you want to accomplish for single lessons as well as long range objectives. Use appropriate materials, decide how you will approach the task and then evaluate what happens.

To help students remember what they learn, make the material as interesting as possible. Be creative in your situation, whether one-on-one with students or in group Music Club settings. Be sure that new material relates to previously learned material. Review the previous material; don’t just repeat it which may cause students to lose interest. One way to review original learning is by using a word, a

sound or playing a short melody to trigger the memory. Find a way to test the material learned.

It is better to learn a skill in several short sessions than in one long session. Leave something unfin-

ished and come back another time; staying with something too long can produce negative results. Keep a good balance between persistence and mechanical repetition.

Chapter 9: How To Teach Musical Terminology

Students need to know the definitions and meanings of musical terms to facilitate their progress as they experience musical learning. If memorizing can be accomplished in an enjoyable setting, retention will be better. Kids usually enjoy competition.

During Music Club sessions with groups of students, take a few minutes to do relays. Divide the group into two sections, A and B. Count slowly to five or a higher number (depending upon the age and advancement of students) after you point to a symbol on a large chart. By time you finish counting, if the correct answer is not given by a student in Section A, then point to a student in Section B and begin counting again. Give one point for each correct answer.

When a student gives the correct answer, go to a student in the other section for the next symbol. If a student does not know the correct answer by time the counting is finished, point to the next student in

the other section and begin counting again. This gives many students the opportunity to play in the limited time you will want to spend on the activity; the other students will learn by listening and watching. Go to the end of the chart; then tally the points to find which section won the relay.

If a student helps another student, deduct a point from their section and go to the other section for the next symbol. To keep students interested in playing the relay at later times, play only one or two times in one session.

To help students individually, provide a copy of the chart on a sheet of paper. List the answers on the back. Let students take it home for family help and fun. If using the chart in a piano lesson, count as you did with the group. Skip entries the student does not know and talk about them when finished. Keep a record each week and show the student his progress.

How to Make the Chart

Draw the symbols with a black marker on a firm piece of card stock about 24 inches by 36 inches. Do not write any words for students to read; use symbols only.

- | | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. sharp | 13. quarter rest | 25. pedal sign | 37. flat | 49. clarinet |
| 2. slur | 14. eighth notes | 26. ff | 38. kettle drum | 50. tuba |
| 3. natural | 15. triplet | 27. sixteenth note | 39. violin | 51. oboe |
| 4. half rest | 16. tie | 28. eighth rest | 40. flute | 52. triangle |
| 5. whole rest | 17. p | 29. mp | 41. trumpet | 53. trombone |
| 6. half note | 18. cresc. sign | 30. sixteenth rest | 42. xylophone | 54. drum |
| 7. measures | 19. 4/4 | 31. 3/4 | 43. saxophone | 55. bassoon |
| 8. repeat | 20. 6/8 | 32. melodic interval | 44. cello | 56. cymbals |
| 9. fermata | 21. a viola | 33. 2/4 | 45. F. horn | 57. guitar |
| 10. treble clef | 22. decres. sign | 34. mf | 46. bass viol | 58. harp |
| 11. bass clef | 23. pp | 35. f | 47. piccolo | 59. accent |
| 12. whole note | 24. dal segno sign | 36. mp | 48. viola | 60. DC al fine |

Students' answers should explain the picture. For example:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1. Picture of a sharp. | Answer: "Sharp. Go up a half step." |
| 40. Picture of a flute. | Answer: "Flute, a woodwind instrument." |
| 24. Dal segno sign. | Answer: "Repeat to the sign." |

Before doing a relay with the chart, discuss with students each symbol and its application to music. Keep definitions to only a few words. Have students repeat aloud the definition to reinforce their memory.

Inexpensive pocket manual dictionaries of musical terms and their definitions can be purchased in music stores. Encourage students to buy one for their own use. Teachers should keep one readily available. When assigning new pieces, talk with the student about any music terms that are indicated on the music. If the term is unfamiliar to the student,

look it up together. Pronounce the term aloud, discuss what it means and then have the student write the definition on the music or in his lesson tablet.

Music Club Activities for Identifying Feelings Expressed in Music

Take a few minutes in Music Club sessions to play about three minutes of a music recording. Before playing, discuss the following chart which you have made on a piece of heavy construction paper about 24 by 36 inches:

Listening to Music

Mood	Happy, Sad, Peaceful, Playful, Worshipful
Tone Color	Bright, Subdued, Both
Dynamics	Quiet, Loud, Flowing
Tempo	Fast, Slow, Changing
Rhythm	Even beats, Uneven beats, Both
Pitch	High, Low, Changing
Mode	Major, Minor, Modal
Form	AB, ABA, ABCA, Other
Harmony	Chords with melody, two or more melodies together

After listening to the music, have the students call out their answers as you go down the chart or have students take turns answering. Listen to the same music again while pointing to the correct answers to reinforce their learning. Ask students to describe how expressive effects were achieved. Tell students the name of the compositions and a few interesting facts about the composer.

Ask students to listen quietly with eyes closed and head down to a part of a song or composition that you will sing, play on piano or play from a

recording. Before starting, show students a small chart with the following words that describe feelings: patriotism, worship, happiness, sadness, love.

Find good examples of music. Discuss the words. Tell something about the composer.

After listening to two or three minutes of the music, tell students to keep their heads bowed with eyes closed and raise their hands when you say the word that describes the emotion the music made them feel.

Repeat the words—*patriotism, worship, love, happiness, sadness*—then ask them to open their eyes while discussing the correct answers.

Make the following chart to teach the tempo terms and their practical relevance to each other.

Presto	Flying
Allegro	Running
Allegretto	Skipping
Andante	Walking
Lento	Poking along
Grave	Dragging

Children will relate to these easier than the formal definitions. Teach the students how to correctly pronounce terms. During piano lessons, call attention to the charts when applicable.

Make the following chart to teach dynamic terms and their practical relevance to each other.

pp	Pianissimo	Very soft
p	Piano	Soft
mp	Mezzo piano	Moderately soft (medium soft)
mf	Mezzo forte	Moderately loud (medium loud)
f	Forte	Loud
ff	Fortissimo	Very Loud

Let students hear you play a chord using all the dynamic levels. Then have them play a chord using all the dynamic levels.

Using charts contributes to learning and understanding because students see, hear, and feel (by

touch). They see the chart, they hear you play, and they use touch when they play it themselves.

Seeing, hearing and feeling help learning and understanding.

Chapter 10: Curriculum and Repertoire Guides

How does one decide what study materials to use for students of any age or level? All method books for beginners have both strong and weak features. A comprehensive method would provide reading, technique and theory. Make a survey of available methods by using these guidelines: new concepts and discoveries should be introduced in a natural and orderly organization; the left hand should be given as much experience as the right hand, and all fingers should be given equal opportunity; technical practice should be given in a musical context (recurring patterns in a piece); and there should be reviews and reinforcement of all concepts.

Because students are different, it is likely that providing some supplementary materials with any method would be beneficial. I believe that the practice of using method books only will bring loss of enjoyment in teaching and is not best for the student. Use your creativity and imagination rather than be too structured by someone else's way.

In using early method books, I have students learn all the pieces, usually in the order that they are presented. At the same time, I supplement with other books. The difficulty of pieces I assign will progress very gradually.

Use high quality music. With all the great literature available for study, don't spend time on inferior music. When choosing music from collections, be discriminating. Occasionally a piece may not be interesting to a student; replace it with something that is.

Shop the price of books. Find good materials of economical cost so more books may be afforded—an asset for music reading as well as for enjoyment. Provide a well-rounded musical diet; the greater the variety of music, the better.

Take a tablet to a music store. Write names of music books, the cost, composer and publisher. Have a page for each category: Very Early Beginner, Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, etc. List supplementary books such as Christmas music and duets. Write notes in your tablet about each entry.

Choose literature for students that is at first read a challenge but not too hard. If it isn't a challenge, the student's motivation may be lost. If it is too difficult, the student won't gain satisfaction from his efforts.

Children want to play pieces immediately. Try to make choices each student will enjoy. Explain your reasons for assigning particular compositions. Guide the student in acquiring a comprehensive repertoire fitted to his intellectual and physical capacities.

Before assigning transfer students to buy books, I sometimes loan my books for a few weeks until I know better their level of advancement or I may use books they already have. If students have many music books at home, have them give you a list of them for possible future use.

Eventually, use music from all music history periods; help students to develop an appreciation for all styles of music. Introduce the music of J. S. Bach through his easier dances, followed by the short preludes and fugues and all of the Two-Part Inventions. The French Suites are wonderful, followed by the more difficult English Suites. Studying contrapuntal music from the Baroque period will train students to follow voice lines and phrase one voice against another. It is also fine discipline for developing legato playing. Help students see and hear this fugal music as a "conversation" of participants, their relationship to each other constantly shifting. Music of the 17th and

18th centuries was easily played on the clavichord, harpsichord and the earlier forte-piano. When played on our piano, the dynamic range should not exceed forte, and the touch and tone should be lighter than in homophonic music. Use a semi-legato touch on the quick moving notes to help the most actively moving part stand out. Be sparing in the use of the pedal to keep the melodic lines unclouded. Treat all parts with equal importance.

Purcell to Mozart Vol. 1 by Presser Co. is particularly valuable in studying short Classical pieces that are musically pleasing to students and not too difficult.

It is harder to find lower level Romantic style music. Robert Schumann's music is contrapuntal and the melody is found in various voices. At times it is difficult to bring out the melody and sustain it with the fingers. However, his *Album for the Young* is valuable for intermediate students. Studied seriously, it will develop a firm technical foundation because the details of his music—the perfect legato and phrasing, for example—must be carefully observed. Students must develop a deep, warm tone quality to bring out the meaning in the music. This book is among those on the top of my list.

Students need to feel they are making some decisions about the music they study. They enjoy pieces that show off. Russian music has appeal because it is written for the stage. Students like to play ragtime, which was a predecessor of jazz. They especially enjoy Scott Joplin's piano solos. "Golliwog's Cake Walk" from Debussy's *Children's Corner Suite* is another lilting, syncopated piece they might enjoy.

A good list of piano albums divided into Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Impressionistic and Contemporary categories appeared in the April 1984 *Clavier* p. 27: "After the Method Books: A Guide to Intermediate Literature" by Cathy Alberg and Reid Alexander. Obviously, the "Contemporary" section has expanded since 1984. New collections have come out containing music from all the style periods.

The November 1981 *Clavier* article, "Pupil Savers," lists compositions under the following headings: Recreation; Full Sound/Flowing; Romantic; Bravura Type; Rhythmic Pleasure/Melodic Appeal; and Mixed Collections. This list can increase your repertoire knowledge, though some of the compositions may be out of print.

When possible, use an edition of the music in which the composer's markings can be distinguished from those of the editor. When students buy music, tell them which edition to purchase. Do your own research in order to advise them competently.

Music from many of the masters is available from authentic editions due to the wonderful contribution of the late Willard A. Palmer. The versions are not altered, and there are editorial suggestions with performance practices carefully researched and explained. Alfred Music is the publisher.

Students enjoy ensemble work, and the benefits cannot be overestimated. The May/June 1982 *Clavier* article "Piano Duo and Duet Performance" by Nikki Landre lists piano duets. "Ensemble Repertoire for Class Piano" by E. L. Lancaster in the November 1976 *Clavier*, lists piano duets, eight hands at two pianos, sextets and trios, duets for two pianos and arrangements for six pianos.

Concerto playing is an important experience for intermediate and advanced high school students. Allow plenty of learning time before performance. A good list that is divided into Intermediate, Intermediate to Advanced, and Advanced is found in Joan M. Purswell's February 1982 *Clavier* article "Concerto Study—Don't Wait Till They Graduate."

Advance students into repertoire that can be handled both intellectually and technically. Before studying compositions in the Senior Concertos category, students will do well to have already studied a few compositions from the following composers' works: Mendelssohn's Songs Without Words, Chopin's mazurkas and preludes, Schubert impromptus, the Kabalevsky and Scarlatti sonatas, Grieg's lyrical pieces, Mozart fantasies and works of Schumann.

“The National Federation of Music Clubs Junior Festival program is designed to promote study, stimulate interest in American and world music literature, and encourage each participant to reach a high standard of musical achievement.” This direct quote is taken from the Junior Festivals Bulletin which contains graded lists of music from Pre-Primary Class through Musically Advanced Class II and Junior Class 1A through Senior Concerto Class. For information in obtaining these bulletins, write to The National Federation of

Music Clubs, 1336 North Delaware, Indianapolis, IN 46202.

The articles mentioned in this chapter are no longer in print but copies may be obtained by contacting universities. Libraries usually have complete collections of *Clavier Magazine* from which photo copies of the articles could be obtained. This information was given to me by “Clavier” on December 15, 1998.

Chapter 11: Musical Expression and Interpretation

When possible, choose music with “singing melodies” to help students learn to play music with a singing tone. Teach them that the softest tone must have all the qualities of a powerful one. Determine if the melody is in the right hand, left hand, or both hands and let it sing out. Harmony helps to give the melody its character. Therefore, it is important also. Encourage slow practicing in order to listen to the quality of the tone. Demonstrate occasionally, but use imitation sparingly and only as an aid in certain circumstances.

To help students be aware that they can control the tone instead of just hit notes indiscriminately, demonstrate repeating a single note several times very slowly, making a crescendo towards the middle and diminishing towards the end. Try the exercise with chords. Help them do these exercises and then assign for home practicing.

To obtain a singing tone, press the key all the way down. Try to caress and grasp rather than strike or hit the keys. The cushion at the end of the first joint which is a little behind the tip of the finger should connect with the key. Gently round the fingers; knuckles should be up, not caved in. Use the tips of the fingers when passages require a brittle tone.

Produce a crescendo by gradually increasing the volume at every note. Diminuendos can be produced in the same way—gradually decreasing the volume with each note. When crescendoing, it is important not to accelerando for it weakens the climax. Do not let diminuendos slow down the tempo; they must not interfere with the pulse of the music. Ritardandos should be hardly noticeable. Make every sound meaningful. Let the musical line flow naturally.

All students need to listen to their playing. Ear training, even if at irregular intervals, is important

in teaching them how to listen. Teach students to evaluate their own playing. Performing is creating and re-creating. Ask students to play a phrase or two; then stop them. Ask, “Did you like that? Why, or why not?” Don't overwhelm them with too many suggestions and advice, but come back again and again to the musical meaning.

To keep a melody from sounding weak though it is soft, play, for example, the right hand melody louder (press more weight on the keys) than the left hand bass. For a good singing tone, the wrist must be flexible, but kept stiff for fast, brilliant passages. At the end of passages raise the wrist gradually as the finger leaves the key. When teaching this to young students, I tell them to “pet the kitty.” The forearm and upper arm must never feel tight or cramped, but rather like “floating” with the elbow slightly extended out from the body. I tell students to lean forward slightly in forte passages, which draws upon the weight of the shoulders and body.

Illustrate phrasing for young students. Phrases can be broken up into small segments, but do not play them that way. Don't try to fit phrases into rhythmic patterns. The first beat of a measure is more often the end of a phrase, rather than the beginning. There is a natural tendency to take a breath after each phrase. To avoid phrase endings that sound “punched” or broken off, lift the wrist and let the fingers gently slide off the keys without disturbing the rhythm. To do this, some rhythmic value may need to be stolen from the last note of the phrase unless a rest follows the last note.

Let your imagination work with a piece. In every composition there are one or more climaxes. Find and build to them. Do not play all phrases alike and never play the same phrase twice the same way. Try finding the specific musical meaning within each phrase, how it relates to other phrases and

then to the piece as a whole. Every phrase has a peak to build to and come away from, but do not exaggerate the accent at the peak of a phrase. Do not accelerate when making a crescendo to it. Be careful in particular of the dynamic level with which you end the phrase; the ending of a phrase should prepare the listener for the next phrase, blending into it so that the whole remains intact.

What you are saying musically is important, but always portray what the composer intended. All notes represent an emotional or intellectual idea of the composer. Study and understand the structural relationships of a work. Where are the climactic points? Where should you let down? How does everything tie together? Analyze rapid passages and give them the right phrasing, dynamics and accentuation. Serious pianists should study college level harmony and theory and then take a few composition classes. One's composing efforts, even though elementary, critiqued by a knowledgeable teacher are invaluable in developing more awareness of musical structures.

Good fingering is crucial to good playing. If a passage is fingered incorrectly, the flow of the music will be destroyed. When necessary, change the fingering to fit the hand. The best fingering requires the least shifting of the hand. Use fingering that helps shape the musical phrase and the quality of touch that is needed.

Inaccurate rhythm or an improper tempo will detract from the spirit of an otherwise artistic interpretation. Strictly observe all rests. They must not be hurried over or ignored for they have an important effect in the artistic symmetry of a work. I use the example of a Grandfather's clock pendulum. Its swing is never hurried whether the music tempo is fast or slow. Accompanying or playing duets and ensembles helps in developing a good rhythm sense.

Tempo rubato (time stolen) originally described vocal improvisation (adding notes, changing rhythms and not staying with the accompaniment except at the beginnings and ends of phrases.) By the late 18th and 19th centuries rubato became a compositional technique applied to instrumental and vocal

music. The 19th and early 20th century musicians considered it "elastic" rhythm or rhythmic flexibility, dictated by the changing mood of the music. Terms like *stretto*, *accelerando*, *rallentando*, *ritard* and *ritenuto* came to mean the same as rubato.

A slight deviation of the tempo (robbing and then making it up) is acceptable in all styles of music if applied with good taste. The amount used can vary with the different periods of music. Chopin of the Romantic period, for example, wrote in a rubato style. It is good to sometimes "tighten up" that rubato. Mozart of the Classical period wrote in a tighter style. However, his music should not be played with rigid tempos; in particular, the slow movements need rubato if they are to be played with expression and depth. The artistic and skillful use of rubatos is of the highest importance in interpreting music and can be the deciding factor of a mechanical or artistic rendition of music.

Study about the life and time of the composer and be familiar with some of his works. This helps in studying one particular work. It also contributes a broader perspective to the interpretation. Studying with the help of recordings can contribute to knowledge like a reference book. Don't try to imitate artists exactly. Listen to get ideas and understanding and then recreate the music applying the principles.

Musical principles will be the same with all composers; there are more similarities than differences between composers. Make a study of finding them. Understand the indications of the composer. What were his emotional and intellectual ideas and the message he was trying to give through the composition? Your perceptive understanding will charge your emotions, and then you can become the medium by which the listener receives the composer's message.

Encourage and help students to study as many styles of music as possible, attend live performances of artists and listen to good recordings. I remember as a young teenager feeling total awe at live performances of Misha Elman, the world famous violinist and the *Messiah* with professional soloists, chorus and orchestra. My love and appreciation for great

music was born during these concerts. These feelings did not come from a parent or a teacher but from how I was affected by the live performances.

Piano teachers can help awaken the imaginations of their students by telling them to play a melody like a cello solo, for example, or other instruments. This gives the music color and helps the physical technique rise to the challenge.

For a few years I accompanied the vocal lessons of a retired Danish concert artist. His approach to interpretation was to understand the meaning of a song in order to create intellectually and emotion-

ally a feeling which then enabled the body to produce and deliver a certain quality of tone. The result was a rich purity and beauty of tone rather than only correct sounds. It drew in the listener as a participant in a unique musical experience.

Encourage students to be competent technically and then re-create the music emotionally with their hearts. When they have made it their own, they will play it differently each time—in the relative level of the dynamics, energy and projection—portraying their own artistry, yet staying true to the composer.

Chapter 12: Pedal Technique

In teaching proper pedal techniques, the current method books for beginners can be the first introduction. Using the damper pedal wrong is a common fault, so demonstrate the technique and then help the student. Write out a few basic pedal exercises and give copies to students for practicing with their lesson assignment. This will save lesson time and help establish a good foundation.

The damper pedal on the right is depressed and released with the right foot. When depressed, the dampers move away from the piano strings and allow the overtones of other strings to vibrate as well as the strings that are being struck by the hammers when the piano keys are played. The result is a richer tone. When the foot lifts—releasing the pedal—the dampers fall on the strings and stop the vibrations.

The main reason for using the damper pedal is to enhance the tone rather than to sustain tones. I call using the damper pedal putting “make-up” on the tones to make them more beautiful. The pedal should not be a crutch for producing a good legato that your fingers should do.

When using the damper pedal, keep your heel firmly on the floor. Play with an up and down ankle motion. **DO NOT** lift the leg. The ball of the foot is placed on the damper pedal and stays in contact with the pedal.

General guidelines for using the damper pedal

- Change the pedal for every new chord.
- Take the pedal off when a melody moves in scale-wise fashion.
- Change the pedal at the beginning of a new phrase even when the harmony does not change.
- In harmonic progressions, make sure that pedal use supports phrasing and doesn't cloud melodic lines or build up a sound that is overwhelming.

Composers and editors indicate the use of the damper pedal by various signs. If there are no pedal markings, still use pedal unless there is a special reason not to. Let your ear be the judge.

Sometimes it is impossible to connect the bass line of a composition with the hands. The damper pedal can help sustain the notes. This ability to sustain tones and lend a singing quality to them were the reasons for the widespread use of the damper pedal by the Romantic period composers.

When playing Chopin on our modern piano, know that you are playing on a different instrument than what Chopin used. Therefore, experiment with pedaling, but never depend upon it.

Technical facility in playing should be independent enough to not need the pedal to cover deficiencies. Use it for accents, shading and in certain circumstances to obtain a “singing” sound. Sometimes press the damper pedal down before hitting the chords to obtain richer sounding chords. Be careful of too much sound and reverberation. The greatest artists brought out clear voices and strong lines, a real legato, with little or no pedaling.

Arpeggios, runs and tremolo will sound better with the pedal regardless of which period or style. When using it in runs or passages, change it when a modulation takes place. In slower passages the pedal should be changed more often. To make harmonically different chords sound smooth and legato, use the syncopated pedal technique: raise the pedal **AS** the new chord is played then quickly press it down again.

Handle the pedal carefully in polyphonic music. Though Baroque music was written before our modern piano came into use, it is acceptable to use the pedal if doing so will make the music sound best. In J. S. Bach's time, for example, the keys on the instruments were smaller and more narrow, making it possible to play the notes in legato style

without needing help from a pedal. It is acceptable to use the pedal when playing fugues on our present piano. But use it only where the fingers cannot make the necessary ties and then use only quick presses.

The pedal on the left is called the *una corde* or soft pedal. In written music, *una corda* means “put on the soft pedal.” *Tre corde* means “stop using the soft pedal.” The soft pedal should be used like a violinist uses a mute to produce a particular sound. If you wish to play softly, your fingers should do that through their touch.

The period of music and composer’s intention will guide you in how to use the *una corda* pedal. Here are the basic mechanics. Depress the soft pedal before playing the notes and keep it depressed until finished with the particular passage. When the pedal is depressed before the finger touch, the strings will vibrate somewhat. The high treble strings are least affected by the pedal; the bass strings vibrate much longer and the tone carries longer.

Many grand pianos have a *sostenuto* pedal located between the outside left and right pedals. It is used to prolong individual tones or chords. All pianos are different, so whenever possible, try out the piano before a performance.

It is as important to know when to release a pedal as when to put it on. Experiment with the techniques of what I call press pedal, syncopated pedal, half pedal and barely a touch on the pedal to achieve what is best according to the style of the music. When using syncopated pedal, release the damper pedal when striking a chord and then immediately depress it again. When using press pedal, depress the damper pedal and then quickly release it again. Use it on particular notes to create an accent effect and/or to enhance the tone quality. Use half pedal only for tone color effects, not to sustain notes. In general, listen to the effects of what you do with the pedal. Let your ear be your guide. Was it good? Why, or why not?

Chapter 13: How to Incorporate Music History

When assigning new music, sharing a general knowledge of the music period and a few facts about the composer and his contributions will help students in interpreting and performing a composition in the correct style and as the composer intended. Knowing some conditions that surrounded the composer—which had an effect upon his creativity—will increase the students’ appreciation for the music and indirectly motivate them in learning the music.

I encourage teachers to take time to communicate their feelings about the music and the composers with their students. Throughout my adult life, learning, teaching, performing and listening to the music of great composers has brought feelings of admiration and reverence for their gifts. I place a higher value and respect upon the music and feel a more responsible commitment in my own musical experience and involvements. I believe my students respect and enjoy the indirect unveiling of my own values and human qualities as I share this information with them.

Make a large chart for your studio that can be easily referred to which shows the periods of music with their general dates. Include names and dates of the most important piano composers of the periods. This same information could be put on papers for students to keep in their loose-leaf notebooks. Also, write up in chronological order certain composers’ particular contributions to the history of Western music.

Give parents a list of the following books to buy for their children. Tell them they will be helpful in furthering the student’s musical progress. I highly recommend them for every teacher, all music students and anyone who appreciates and enjoys music.

Classical Music for Beginners, by Stacy Combs Lynch, ©1994.

Available through Writers and Readers Publishing, Inc. P.O. Box 461 Village Station, N.Y., N.Y. 10014. \$11. This is an overview of composers and music history periods.

More Big Book of Questions and Answers ©Publications International, Ltd. Louis Weber, C.E.O. 7373 No. Cicero Ave. Lincolnwood, IL, 60646 This book was written for grade school age children. It answers 36 questions about music with 40- to 80-word descriptive paragraphs. It also answers hundreds of other questions on animals, holidays, games and toys and much more.

Spiritual Moments with the Great Composers by Patrick Kavanaugh ©1995 Forward by Jerome Hines, Metropolitan Opera. Zondervan Publishing House (Division of Harper Collins Publishers), Grand Rapids, MI, 49530.

Talks with Great Composers by Arthur M. Abel ©1995 A Citadel Press Book. Paperback by Carol Publishing Group ©1994 \$16.95. My appreciation for composers’ contributions increased because of the above two books.

Lives of the Musicians, Good Times, Bad Times (and What the Neighbors Thought) ©1993. Published by Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich, 1250 Sixth Ave, San Diego, CA 92101 or 111 Fifth Avenue NY, NY 10003. \$18.95 This is a delightful book with unique illustrations written by Kathleen Krull, and illustrated by Kathryn Hewitt. It has “fascinating and often humorous stories of 20 famous musicians . . . appealing to those who love music, to those who like to hear the story behind a famous name, and to just about everyone else.” (An extra bonus in the book is a list of musical terms and definitions.)

A brief overview of music history periods

Early and Medieval Music

Rock paintings in caves, as early as 4000 B.C. show single and double flutes made from reeds. There is evidence that between 1500 and 1300 B.C., harps with 15 to 20 strings were played. The Old Testament of the Bible speaks of harps, flutes, trumpets and percussion instruments.

Plain chant, Latin words taken from the Bible that were sung to melodies without accompaniment, was the music of the medieval world. Thousands of these melodies were used in Catholic church services before the 6th century. Since most people went to church, everyone knew them. Children learned them in school, and they were adapted to become folk songs. Music based on them eventually evolved into our western music.

In the 8th century, church musicians began to sing in two or more voice parts. At first, the parts they sang moved at the same time in parallel motion and later the parts moved in different directions. Eventually, the parts became different in their rhythm as well. This was the beginning of polyphony, which means “many voices” and is described as horizontal music; vertical music, which is built on chords, developed centuries later. These polyphonic pieces were called organum. For seven or eight hundred years, “horizontal music” passed through various stages, reaching its culmination in the intricate Italian and English madrigals sung all over Europe—especially in England at the time of Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth.

During the Dark Ages with its wars and plagues, the Catholic church furthered and watched over music. During this time, songs of the people flourished and elements of them became part of the religious music regardless of the Church’s efforts against that. About the end of the tenth century, music that resembled a composition began to emerge. One of the forms this music took was the round or canon. In it, the melody started, and then one or two measures later the same melody began again in another voice.

From the 10th to the 13th century, jugglers in the south of France traveled to castles, monasteries, and country fairs, singing songs and playing instruments. By the 13th century, noblemen called troubadours were singing their own songs rather than hiring a juggler to sing them. These songs included chansons (love songs to a knight’s lady), spring songs, ballads (that recounted historical events), pastorellas, and dawn songs. The troubadours played the lute, brought from the East by the Crusaders, to accompany themselves rather than the small fiddles with curved bows that the jugglers played. The troubadours contributed a great deal to the progress of music. Their songs were expressions of the time. They did not use the old church modes. Their songs fell into major and minor tonality like most of our music today. They used duple time rather than the usual triple because it fit best with their marching and walking.

The Renaissance Period (1450-1600)

During the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries there was controversy about what was proper in music. Music theorists maintained that the parallel 4ths, 5ths and octaves of organum were the only mathematically perfect consonances, but composers used 3rds and 6ths whether or not they were considered dissonant because they made more interesting music. The motet used plain chant as the organizing voice as in good church music, but above it, other parts might be in different languages, have themes about nature or drinking, and sometimes included indecent words about love and sentiment.

The Pope, John the 22nd, complained about the music and passed an edict that he hoped would do away with the polyphonic developments of more than 400 years. He decreed that occasionally 4ths, 5ths and octaves could be used, but single-line plain chant was to be the music for the Church. This was a powerful ban, but polyphony had come to stay, and composers continued to draw upon old practices while adding their own tonal innovations. Polyphony moved along in smooth, harmonious lines while parallel 4ths, 5ths and octaves came to be outlawed—which is the rule today in composition.

By the end of the 15th century, the motet had developed into the greatest sacred form of the Medieval and Renaissance periods. Vocal polyphony reached its “golden age” in the 16th century when the madrigal, a secular form, became equal in beauty with the sacred motet. Though the year 1600 is considered the end of the Renaissance period, its characteristics lasted well into the Baroque period.

The Baroque Period (1660-1750)

Italian ideas dominated the music of the Baroque period. Rhythms were not as steady or predictable as before, the outlines of major and minor tonalities began taking shape and a more vivid outward expression in music appeared in the new forms of cantata and opera.

Though the masses in England and Italy could not read or write until the middle of the 16th century, they knew and practiced the madrigals in their homes and shops. The master of the castle and his servants sang together around the same table.

It was becoming common for a person to play several instruments. Well-to-do homes had the older lute and fiedel, but many also owned the newer viols of various sizes which substituted well for missing voices in the madrigal and also amplified parts.

Composers were writing many fantasies, similar to the old canons, in which viols played alone. Also, several kinds of instruments were played together—flutes, trumpets and sometimes a portable organ that was patterned after the church organs that had been in use since the beginning of the fourth century.

In almost every home there were one or more of the new keyboard instruments that had been invented in the later part of the 15th century. The harpsichord had strings that were plucked. Clavichord strings were struck by a metal wedge. Small table models were called virginals and spinets. Music books contained court dances and theme-and-variation compositions.

The industrial revolution gradually changed peoples’ attitudes. Building factories, making homes in cities and accumulating wealth became the dominant concerns. Composers and listeners became more interested in music that featured the playing of these new instruments by the gifted rather than the singing of the masses.

The Classical Period (1750-1820)

The music became noble as well as entertaining, expressive within bounds, free of unnecessary technical complications and pleasing to most listeners. Music masters during this period were Gluck, Haydn, Mozart and the young Beethoven.

The orchestra became larger with more reliable and varied instruments. Haydn developed the string quartet into a sophisticated form of chamber music. Cristofori, an Italian harpsichord maker, invented the “piano e forte,” a keyboard instrument that could play both soft and loud (the harpsichord could not), and this opened up endless tonal possibilities. Four of J. S. Bach’s sons and their contemporaries worked with the new instruments and new forms, particularly the sonata allegro form.

The Romantic Period (1820-1900)

The age of Romanticism, following the French and American revolutions, brought an awareness of the worth of the individual. Learning and the consideration of ideas became a part of the lives of the masses. People came to see writing and the arts as the way to express their inner life. Many composers drew upon or developed folk songs in their works.

The industrial revolution brought about an increase of people living in cities. Nature became more valued. It was a source of creative inspiration for artists, musicians and writers.

Composers expanded their use of harmony, melody and orchestral color to express new ideas. With the use of distant modulations, complex chords, chromatic harmonies and more nonharmonic tones, the outlines of tonality became less distinct.

The Romantic movement drew heavily upon the music of the distant and immediate past composers. Music publishers began to offer the works of J.S. Bach and Palestrina.

Impressionism (near the end of the 19th century)

A group of painters in Paris contended with scholars about what subjects were proper for painting. These painters, later called Impressionists, sought to capture the momentary impressions of light and color on scenes and objects.

Claude Debussy found in the art of these painters and poems of their friends what he wanted to say in music. He felt that the old tonal idiom was outworn and not suited for his musical expressions. At the Paris Exposition, he heard a Javanese orchestra. Its exotic tones, organized in a scale made only of whole tones and played on eastern instruments, fascinated him. He experimented with chords made from whole tone scales and used them in progressions that moved in parallel motion.

Visiting Rome, Debussy heard Gregorian chant and organum. He used these effects. At the Paris Conservatory he was regarded as a revolutionist because he broke the established rules of composition. He considered the sonata structure outworn and restrictive and would not use it. He used all sorts of dissonant chords: 7ths, 9ths, 11ths and 13ths in parallel motion. He avoided the usual cadences. His rhythms were unique and innovative. He experimented with tonal color. The modernists coming after him have carried on his innovations.

Modernism

Many modern composers are interested in tone, strong rhythm, interesting effects—the use of music elements for their own sake. They use techniques to create design, color and rhythm in various stimulating effects. Rhythmic structures are more complex than they were in the Romantic period and there is a greater variety of patterns, while melody has had less radical change. The harmony makes even more extensive use of sharp dissonance.

One of the most significant developments of 20th century music is the revival of interest in polyphonic writing. Contrapuntal devices such as the fugue, canon, and cantus firmus (a melody used as the basis of a polyphonic composition) are used but with the freedom of modern harmonic concepts.

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Music Appreciation Lessons

(For Music Clubs)

The following are some examples of things I have found of interest to students.

You can make a handout for their loose-leaf notebooks.

Program Music

An old legend of the Middle Ages tells of a curious event that took place each Halloween. At midnight all the ghosts left their graves and held a dance in the cemetery. When the cock crowed in the morning, the ghosts vanished into their tombs to sleep another year.

For hundreds of years this story has been told in different ways. At first, it was a folk tale one person told to another. Then artists painted pictures of the story which can be seen in several art galleries of Europe. Poets put the story into poems. The most interesting way to hear the tale is in “Danse Macabre,” an orchestral piece by the noted French composer, Camille Saint-Saens (1835-1921). Because it tells a story, it is called “program” music.

The dance, written as a waltz, is based on the tune of an old hymn called “Hymn of Death.” Listen for the sound of the xylophone. It is used to make the rattling sound of skeleton’s bones as they dance. This is the first time the xylophone was used as an orchestral instrument in serious music. Among the many other compositions Saint-Saens wrote is “The Carnival of the Animals.” It is a set or suite of short musical pieces that musically describes animals. “The Swan,” one of the pieces in the suite, has been arranged in solo, duet and trio for many instruments.

Wales, Land of Song

Bards, like the minstrels of England, sang heroic tales. They also played the tune, “Monarchy of Britain,” before any battle. They were important because they brought music to the common people. In records dating back to the tenth century, some of the laws gave special rights to the bards. They were to have a harp from the king which they should never part with; they also had a horse and a gold ring from the queen. Celtic music is very popular these days. Wales is one of the main lands from which Celtic music comes. Scotland and Ireland are two other countries that have a rich Celtic tradition. Play a piece of Celtic music. You could talk about the bagpipe, the harp, the penny whistle and the ornamentation.

Spanish Music

The music heard in the north of Spain is different than what is played in the south, where it sounds like the music of Arabia. Spain in earlier days was the connecting link between Europe and Africa. During the Middle Ages, many Moors living in Morocco—a part of northern Africa—came to Spain. The Moor’s ancestors had come west along the African shores of the Mediterranean Sea from Arabia to Spain. They brought their love for beautiful buildings, intricate carvings, bright colors and beautiful music. Plaintive melodies and primitive rhythms of the type found in the music of Arabia and Persia are in many Spanish folk songs and dances. Bright, colorful decorations painted on tile called arabesques can be seen in the castles

they built. Musical adornments, also called arabesques, are heard in the Moorish and Spanish music.

The Moorish soldiers brought some of their games and dances from Africa; soon the Spanish people were dancing Moorish dances. Some people from Africa and Spain went farther north to parts of England, taking their Moorish dances and games with them. The people in England changed the name of the dances calling them “Morris Dances.” Shakespeare mentions them in some of his plays. He probably danced them. Old stories tell that Sir Walter Raleigh often danced these dances. Costumes of the Morris dancers were similar to those in Spain. They were made of gilt and silver leather trimmed with little bells. The dancers carried castanets in their hands. Later they wore bands of bells tied upon their arms and knees. Sometimes they carried swords or wands, making patterns as they moved. Other times they waved rich silk handkerchiefs in the air in time to the rhythm of the music.

The Trumpet

Until the 16th century, trumpets were used in war as a signal instrument and for festivals to provide the fanfare announcing the approach of an important guest. Later, Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth assembled bands made only of trumpeters.

The trumpet was part of the coronation ceremonies in England. The King’s champion, preceded by a group of trumpeters and a royal herald, rode horseback into the banquet room in Westminster Hall after a coronation. The King’s champion would meet in personal combat any challengers of the new monarch’s right to rule. The herald would read the champion’s challenge three times. When the proclamation was read, the challenger threw down his gauntlet, a glove of chain armor with a steel cuff, and anyone who wanted to fight against the new king picked up the gauntlet. This meant he was entitled to meet the King’s champion in a duel. No one ever dared accept this challenge. Being the King’s champion was a great honor and was

handed down from father to son. The Dymoke family performed this honor from the 14th century until after the 1820 coronation of George IV of England. Then the old custom ceased. However, the loyalty and courage of the Dymokes was rewarded by the honor to carry King George IV's treasured standard at this crowning in the Abbey.

The First Opera

When a story is acted out with conversation sung usually accompanied by an orchestra, it is called an opera. In grand opera all of the conversation is sung; in light opera, it is sung or spoken.

The first real opera, *Orpheus and Eurydice*, written by Jacopo Peri, was performed in 1600 in Florence, Italy. When Maria de Medici was to marry Henry the Fourth, King of France, her father, wanted to have some beautiful music that was different than the people had heard before to celebrate his daughter's wedding. He called for the composer Peri and told him that he wanted some beautiful music written for the occasion. Peri used the old Greek legend about Orpheus, the Greek god of music, who mourned so deeply for his beloved wife Eurydice. As he wrote the music for this legend, Peri decided to have the people on the stage act out the story and sing their words to each other. The instruments that played for the opera were a lyre, harp, guitar and three flutes. This was the beginning of the orchestra and the first time musicians played accompaniments for the singer. When the opera was finished and taken to Maria's father, he liked it and arranged to have it performed at his palace in Florence.

Before this time, simple "dramas," old folk tales and myths of Greece, were acted out in the public squares. Some Grecian players had invented a stage built into a cart that could be moved to other locations. In Italy, actors called strolling players told Bible tales. They built many kinds of stages into their carts. In England, during the Middle Ages, "street-plays" were given to tell Bible stories and to teach the people. In the old English city of Chester, twenty-four separate and complete plays from Bible stories were given in one year. All the plays were performed in one day and given several times during

the day on important holidays when people were free from their work. There were plays for almost every season of the year.

Singing Watchmen

Many of England's celebrated musicians are descendants of the ancient "Waits." In early days, the musical night watchman guarding the towns and cities called or sang the time at the close of each hour. They gave information about the weather and then played a short melody on their instruments.

The First Paying Audience for a Public Concert

John Bannister, born in London in 1630, was the son of a popular "Wait." He left the service of the king, set himself up as an independent music teacher and with some friends gave a public concert in his home on New Year's Day 1762. This was the first time noted in history that musicians, for the payment of a fee, offered a concert that was open to the general public. Bannister's concerts were so well received that many other musicians followed his example. London soon became one of the leading concert centers of the world.

Concerts in a Coal Shed

Thomas Britton, a poor English country boy, was apprenticed to a London coal dealer. He could not go to school but was anxious to learn. He would save his small earnings to buy books. He spent his evenings in study and taught himself to play an old bass viol. At age 21, he bought an old house, filled it with coal to sell and made the attic into a fine music room that could be reached only by climbing a shaky ladder.

Britton's love for music and his musical skill gradually brought him friends who were the best musicians of London. Once each week they brought their musical instruments, climbed to the long, low-ceilinged narrow room over the coal shed and played music until dawn. The fame of the weekly concerts spread. The greatest people in England began seeking invitations to attend—perhaps because George Frederick Handel, Britton's best friend, usually played the harpsichord.

Art Song

An art song is different from a folk song or a ballad where all the verses are sung to the same tune or melody. Instead, the accompaniment is composed to compliment and add to the meaning of the words. Sometimes the main melody is taken from the singer and played by the accompanist while the singer sings a less important part. Franz Schubert (1797-1828) was one of the greatest composers of art songs. His song, “The Erl King,” is considered the greatest art song written. Notice how the pounding octave triplets help you feel the galloping of the horse and the anxiety of the father as he rides through the stormy night with his frightened child in his arms. Schubert has used musical description so well that it is possible to tell what is going on in the story even though we may not understand German. See if you can.

Marches

In early times, marches were thought of as part of war. Warriors played drums to help soldiers march on their way to battles.

Marches have been written to tell stories of battles. When they came home, if victorious, the marches were lively; but if the battle was lost, marches were sad and somber. The idea of funeral marches came from these sad marches. “The Dead March” by Handel is part of his first oratorio, “Saul” and has been played at the funerals of many famous men and women. Beethoven wrote a beautiful funeral march in his piano Sonata, opus 26. Chopin wrote the best known funeral march for the piano as part of his Sonata, opus 35.

Marches have also been used for weddings. Two of the best known wedding marches are the “Wedding March” from the opera *Midsummer Night’s Dream* by Mendelssohn and the “Bridal Chorus” from Richard Wagner’s opera, *Lohengrin*.

Another famous wedding march is “Norwegian Bridal Procession” by Edward Grieg. It is music written about a wedding—a musical picture of wedding customs of Norway, not music played at the ceremony. A simple tune is repeated several

times as if the people who are singing and playing the song are gradually coming nearer. It grows louder and louder, then passes and goes into the country church.

The oriental “Turkish March” from Beethoven’s “The Ruin of Athens” was written for orchestra and is a dramatic telling of the war fought between Greece and Turkey from 1821 until 1829.

Beethoven had heard the roar of Napoleon’s cannons from his home in Vienna. In the music, the steady beat of the Turkish drums keep time to the marching of the soldiers. It gradually grows louder as the army comes closer and then softens after the soldiers pass and march away.

“March Slave” by Tchaikowsky uses old Russian folk songs as its themes. The march begins with a chant. Then Russian folk songs are played one at a time, followed by the entire orchestra playing the folk song. The march ends with an old national anthem. Tchaikowsky wrote another famous march as part of the Nutcracker Ballet. Can you tell which piece is that march?

Carols

The first recorded incidence of carols heard on the earth was when the angels announced the birth of Jesus Christ. The early carols were often sung to popular dance tunes accompanied by dancing. They were popular with the people because they expressed their emotions in the people’s language. For a long time, Christmas carols were only heard outside the walls of churches; they were frowned upon by the Church and not included in worship services.

A new spirit of interest in Christmas spread throughout Europe when St. Francis placed the first Christmas crib in his parish church at Graecia, Italy in 1223. The creche, or crib of St. Francis can be seen in many churches today. By the 15th century, caroling was fairly well established among the people. Silent Night, considered the world’s most popular carol, was created because of a broken organ in Bavaria. Franz Gruber, church organist, suggested to his friend Joseph Mohr, the

vicar, that a new song might help with the services. Mohr wrote the words of “Stille Nacht” and Gruber composed the music. It was presented at the Christmas Midnight Mass, sung in a three-part harmony accompanied by a guitar.

Blues

“Blues” music came from the early African Americans. The scale it is based on is different than the ones in European music, and the whites in America did not use it. The minor third interval is important (for example $E\flat$ down to C). The preacher and the congregation “preached” with it as they echoed each other in their Deep South rural church congregations.

Blues usually have a 4/4 meter, but rhythms from the slavery period are part of it too. These rhythms which have strong African characteristics are referred to as “sanctified” rhythms because they were sung in the hymns of old original “sanctified churches” that the slaves attended.

The twelve-bar form is the most common, but blues come in many variations. Other forms, such as ballads, are called “blues” because of the feeling or general nature of the composition. Blues songs are folk song ballads. Lyrics are simple and plain, about everyday life and events. Jazz developed, in part, from the blues.

Black singer Bessie Smith (1894-1937) interpreted and improvised upon blues and ragtime tunes. Her recordings rank among the best in jazz. “You’ve Been A Good Old Wagon, But You Done Broke Down,” and “Cold in Hand Blues” are examples of the simplicity and sincerity associated with the finest of African American musical genius. Her style, more purely “African” than the average blues singer uses a small range and a limited scale. She sings tones that often do not “harmonize” with the chords of the accompaniment according to European harmonization. She pays little attention to the notes as she improvises or the words of the printed version. She does not add much ornamentation to the original tune, but simplifies it, making it more

“primitive.” Her melodic style reflects a deep-rooted African musical instinct.

Jazz

Jazz, which became popular around 1900, features improvisation, usually on a popular tune. The music is not written down, but made up spontaneously. Jazz players become composers as they alter a tune, keeping the melodic and harmonic outlines, creating variations with their embellishments. There are endless possibilities to this creative process.

Musicians agree on what tune to play, the key in which they’ll play it and the order in which each player will appear as soloist. A jazz player does not know what other players will do but follows his own musical instincts to fit in with whatever happens. Each time he takes his turn, he varies his solo, keeping in mind the harmonies and melody of the song. On the final chorus, all players play together as if they are having a musical conversation.

As you listen to jazz soloists, notice how one solo performer’s style is different than that of another soloist improvising on the same melody. Are there predictable characteristics in his playing if he takes multiple turns or are his improvisations different each time? What type of ornamentation is used? Is the melody “lost” when the group plays a “conversation” together?

Country Western

Country western music, popular since the 1940s, is a type of American popular music associated with rural culture and the Southern region of the United States. Developed in the 1800s it combines elements of folk music from Great Britain, the “blues” of Southern rural blacks, popular songs of the later 1800s and religious music. Most country western songs are about love—both the happy and sad feelings. Also, there are songs about work, religion, current events and humor. Old folk tunes are still sung, but in the style of popular vocalists or with varying styles such as bluegrass. In the early 1930’s country singer Jimmie Rodgers combined country yodeling with black blues. The “Nashville sound” in the later 1950s and the 1960s blended country and

pop music with vocal and string background ensembles that were electronically amplified. Instruments vary with each type of country music, but generally include the fiddle from Great Britain, the banjo from West Africa, the guitar from Spain, and the mandolin from Italy. The piano, Hawaiian steel guitar, double bass, horns and reed instruments were added as the music came under the influence of other styles of music.

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Chapter 14: Musical Ornamentation

Following is a brief sketch of the evolution of the ornamentation found in piano music from the various periods of music history.

Ornamentation probably originated in improvisation (playing without previous planning or without written notes). In the Baroque era (1600-1750) a musician didn't have all the notes written out for him. Instead, he was given a figured bass to work from—notation that showed chord progressions and indicated each chord's place in the key structure. This guided his own extemporaneous improvisation.

Later, composers began to embellish certain notes in their compositions. Ornaments had an expressive function as well as being decorative. Some ornaments were indicated by special signs: trills, turns, mordents and appoggiaturas attached to one or two of the written notes.

Ornamentation kept a certain spontaneity even when the ornaments came to be partially or wholly written out. Vocal and instrumental soloists were expected to add notes (ornamentation) to the solo melodic lines of compositions they performed. This was done spontaneously without rehearsal or written instructions, and the performance was according to the individual's taste and skill. Through the years, singers have embellished notes and passages within operas. During the Christmas season, skillful soloists embellish notes and passages in the arias and recitatives of *The Messiah*, by George Frederic Handel. In certain forms of instrumental music, and in the late Baroque opera, a cadenza was a common practice. The cadenza was played without accompaniment and was designed to show off the virtuosity of the soloist. It had the quality of an improvised performance even if it was planned or even written out. It was supposed to sound as if it were being made up by the performer in the moment.

In "blues," a kind of music that developed in America from the various musical expressions of blacks, moderate length trills are used most often on the intervals of a third, sixth and octave. Typically, the final chord in the last measure is ornamented with several chromatic and scale-like notes. The human voice and many wind and string instruments can "bend" a note by using a flat or sharp (half-step up or down.) On the piano, grace notes are used to "bend" notes.

Here are some activities students could do. Have them listen to country western and folk music, listening for improvisation and embellishment patterns. Compare the improvisation and embellishments of "pop" singers today with the recorded "pop" singers of earlier times. Make up some variations to a melody and embellish it. There are many styles of music. Have them try creating a style of their own.

Guides in playing ornaments and embellishments

Most people use the terms "ornament" and "embellishment" interchangeably. In Europe by 1700, embellishments were a well-developed part of the Baroque style. Within another one hundred years they became a refined art. They are a complex subject and can be confusing. However, the music during this time period is not complete without them. They give stress and accent to tones and enhance the expressiveness of the music.

A table of ornaments written by J.S. Bach found in the first pages of his son Wilhelm Friedemann's *Little Clavier Book*, contains most of the essential French Baroque ornaments. J.S. Bach knew and mastered the Italian embellishment style, but his own treatment of keyboard ornaments was generally in the French style. Ornaments with shorthand signs are generally identified with the French harpsichord composers. Small-note free

embellishments are Italian, identified in particular with vocal and stringed-instrument writing.

On clavichords and pianos, single notes can be brought out above other notes by depressing the keys more firmly. This does not happen on harpsichords and organs. Therefore, composers used ornaments to call attention to the single notes that otherwise would not have been emphasized.

Ornaments should be a natural part of the melodic line, not stand out like Christmas tree ornaments hung on a limb. Most embellishments are many quick notes performed with finger action. A relaxed hand and arm helps to play them smoothly and with expression. Learn pieces first without ornaments. Then add those the composer indicates.

Ornamentation can be played differently each time a piece is played. The style of ornaments should match in the first half and second half of the composition. Be sparing in their use. At times, vary the figuration from what has been planned to give a spontaneity and feeling of improvisation that was common within the style. When ornaments occur several times, try changing the dynamics and timing.

In Baroque music, if the composer gives ornaments for certain notes in the theme's opening statement, the ornaments can be repeated any time the theme is repeated though the sign may have been omitted. Be cautious in following this practice with composers of the Classical period, for the notation was more explicit.

To play an even trill requires a good ear and relaxed muscles. Play it slowly and in exact time, gradually increasing the speed until a tenseness is felt and it becomes uneven. Stop. Then practice several times to that point. Change fingers during the trill to build independence and relieve muscle stress. In time, if you listen carefully to keep the exactness of the rhythm, playing trills will become easier and skill will develop.

The length of trills depends upon the skill of the performer and what would be in good taste for the composition. Short trills are generally played fast. Do not try to conform to a time unit. The trill on a

long value note can stop any time after playing at least four notes or remain stationary until the main note value is completed. Long trills may speed up but should not slow down. They should accelerate gradually until they end. Less often, they can begin to slowly accelerate and then slow toward the end.

On the piano, play very rapid trills by only slightly depressing the keys. Switch fingers during long trills to avoid tension build-up: 1-3, 2-4, 4-1 as well as 2-3. In most cases the damper pedal should be used with the trill. If the next main note is a second higher or lower than the last note, the trill can be finished by playing the lower auxiliary (the next lower scale note) and then the main note before proceeding on. This is acceptable for most trills.

There are different styles in which to play trills, but they share basic rules:

1. Begin on the upper auxiliary (the next higher scale note.) This is for Baroque, Classical and early Beethoven music. Trills and most 18th-century ornaments generally begin where the note occurs rather than before the note.
2. Begin on the beat at the time the main note should be played.
3. Alternate back and forth between the main note and its neighboring note.
4. End on the main note after playing at least four notes.
5. Play trills with dynamic shadings and speeds which fit the mood of the piece.

It is good style to add trills in the cadences at the ends of each half of the composition even though they are not written. When choosing to add ornaments for decoration, use a trill if it is a descending progression; use a mordent when it is an ascending progression.

Mordent: begins on its principal note and on the beat. The lower auxiliary note is played quickly, followed by the principal note again. Then hold the principal note for the remainder of its value.

Inverted mordent: begins on its principal note and alternates with the higher auxiliary. Do not confuse its sign (without the vertical line in the middle) with

the trill in J.S. Bach's Table of Ornaments. It is not executed the same way.

The turn: begins on the note above the principal note. The lowest note is usually a half step below.

The inverted turn: begins on the note below the principal note with its highest note usually a whole step above the principal note. (The turn sign is similar, but not the same.)

Acciaccatura: comes from the Italian word "acciaccare," meaning to crush. Strike the two notes almost together and immediately release the acciaccatura. It is used less often in Baroque than in Classical music. Stay within the key in deciding whether a whole step or half step is to be used. Any accidentals should support the current tonality.

The appoggiatura: is a grace note (a small note above a principal note). Its length, borrowed from the principal note is generally half the principal note's duration. If the principal note is dotted, it takes two-thirds of its value. To avoid its being confused with the acciaccatura, the modern practice is to notate it as it is to be played.

Several inexpensive books published by Alfred that feature Bach's keyboard music edited by Willard Palmer contain detailed information about Baroque ornamentation. Some are *Selections from Anna Magdalena's Notebook, Inventions and*

Sinfonias, and 18 Short Preludes. The book entitled *The Baroque Era: An Introduction to the Keyboard Music* is an invaluable resource on ornamentation and for interpretation of Baroque music in general. It contains representative pieces of intermediate difficulty from the Italian, English, French, and German Baroque styles. Included are pictures of the instruments of the era and explanations of the Theory of Affects and the custom of Inequality. If you cannot find these books in your local music store, they can be obtained by contacting Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., 16380 Roscoe Blvd., P.O. Box 10003, Van Nuys, CA 91410-0003.

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Chapter 15: Teaching The Basics of Transposition and Modulation

Transposition is playing music in a key other than the key in which it was written. Practicing transposition skills will help students to listen while playing music. Sight reading ability will also improve. Like any skill, proficiency will come with consistent, thoughtful practice.

Probably the easiest way to learn to transpose is by playing a piece in a new key by ear. This involves listening to what has been heard and then starting on a different key and testing the memory as to what comes next. It is helpful to play by ear when the student is familiar with the melody.

For beginners of any age, begin within the first months of lessons to transpose pieces to the keys of C, F, and G. When comfortable with these keys, assign the keys of B \flat and D and then let them choose other keys. As they gain confidence, they will enjoy the challenge and feel less anxious in trying new keys. Knowing the tetrachord tune will give them confidence in the feel of the keyboard.

Transposing music by intervals is easiest when reading single-line melodies. This involves taking what you see and thinking up a half step or down a half step, and it can be done without knowing or having heard the melody. Only the key signature changes. After thinking the intervals up or down in half steps, think up or down by whole steps. It helps to visualize the new key signature (think of what sharps or flats are in that key). For example, when students are able to read music in the various keys, show them how they can transpose a piece in the key of D into the key of D \flat by reading the same notes. Have them think of which flats belong to the key of D \flat before they start to play.

The concept of tonality in music originated with the Baroque period of music. Before that time, music was polyphonic (made up of more than one

melody) in nature. Baroque composers began to think more about the harmonic organization of music. They developed a system based on the idea of a tonal center. In this system, the tonic chord (built on the tonal center) was the most important and tension could be created or eased using the other chords depending on their relationship to it. With the new emphasis on harmony, the modes, on which the melodies of earlier music were based became less important and decreased to just two, which today we recognize as the major and natural minor scales.

The I, IV, and V chords are used most often in any key and are the foundation of traditional harmony. Used continually in one key they become monotonous because the ear knows what to anticipate. This is why composers developed the technique of modulation—changing from one key or tonal center to another one—to add variety and interest to their compositions.

Various dances of the Baroque suite and many Classical period sonatas modulate into the dominant (V) or their relative minor key for their secondary theme. In the compositions of Bach, Mozart and Beethoven, modulations are widely spaced and clearly establish each new key. Compositions begin and end in the same key but take “short trips” to other keys. Nineteenth century Romanticism intensified all the musical processes, and the modulations became more frequent and less standard.

Being able to modulate from one key to another is a valuable skill. Pianists are often expected to create a transition between pieces when accompanying for various occasions.

In modulating, one way to get from one key to another is by means of a pivot chord. It is called a pivot chord because it is the chord by which you

turn (change direction) and establish a new key. For example, if you are in the key of C and want to go to D major, one possible pivot chord would be A C \sharp E G. It is at the same time an altered chord built on the 6th tone of C major (altered because a triad built on the 6th tone of a major scale is minor—A C E) and the V7 of D major.

Try to have at least one tone in common between the chord of the key you are in and the pivot chord. In the above example, the tones shared between the C major chord (CEG) and AC \sharp EG are E and G.

You can make a smooth modulation by playing both the C and D major chords in root position and the A7 chord in the first inversion (C \sharp -E-G-A). You can practice doing this type of modulation by walking up the keyboard: C major—A7—D major; D major—B7—E major, E major—C7—F major, etc. With a little practice, the chord changes come naturally, particularly if you can play the four groups of triads from memory.

In popular music it is a common practice to transpose up a half step for the last chorus or section of a tune. This is a very easy way to modulate. The pivot chord Ab7th, which is the dominant seventh (V7) of the key of Db major (the half-step higher key), accomplishes the modulation of going from C major to Db major. Practice walking up the keyboard beginning with C major—V7(C-Eb-Gb-Ab)—Db major.

It is possible to modulate from one key to any other key but is easier if done between related keys which have five or more of their seven tones in common. Modulation to the dominant key, as from C to G, is

the most frequent and will sound all right without a pivot chord. Modulation to the subdominant (from C to F) can also be done without a pivot chord. The supertonic and relative minor or major keys all have six or seven notes in common but need pivot chords to make the modulation sound complimentary.

Direct pivot chord modulations are possible when the key you are in and the minor key you are moving to have one or more chords in common. A major key and its natural relative minor key have all chords in common. A major key and its harmonic relative minor have four common chords. A major key and its relative melodic minor have only one chord in common.

In analyzing musical form, there can be questions as to when a modulation really is a modulation. Modulation is a shifting of the tonic or home key. If a change colors the harmony only briefly it is not a modulation.

For a tonality shift to be considered a modulation, there must be:

- a first key clearly established
- one or more pivot chords and
- a clearly established new key

In writing music, if it is your intention that the performer play in a new key for some time, draw a double bar at the end of the section which is in the old key and change the key signature in the new section. If a modulation makes a quick return to the original key, do not change the key signature; let the accidentals signal the harmonic changes.

Chapter 16: Guides in Teaching Beginning Improvisation and Composition

Improvisation gives students opportunities to work with rhythm, melody and harmony. At the first lesson, have students hold down the damper pedal continuously while they improvise tunes on the black keys only. At first, play single notes, taking turns with each hand; then play with both hands at the same time. When the student is comfortable with this, have them play more than one note at a time (chords). Play in all parts of the keyboard. Assign them to play black key tunes every day and prepare to play one of their best at the next lesson. Continue this assignment for a few weeks.

Sometime, spend a little time together playing “Chopsticks” and the “Black Key Doodle” (Peter Pumpkin Eater) $B\flat G\flat A\flat G\flat E\flat G\flat D\flat G\flat$ | $B\flat G\flat A\flat G\flat E\flat G\flat D\flat G\flat$ | $B\flat G\flat A\flat G\flat E\flat G\flat D\flat G\flat$ | $B\flat G\flat A\flat G\flat G\flat G\flat G\flat$. Students enjoy playing these as duets, and it is a constructive activity for developing listening and coordination skills. The distraction of hearing a different part played while they are playing their part helps to develop their concentration. If a teacher will play with a relaxed, easy going manner, students will learn speedily and will benefit from these activities.

Playing the following rock patterns of a syncopated single bass note with the chords is fun. Someone at home can learn the patterns by rote to play while the student improvises melodies. Write down the patterns for students to keep in their loose-leaf notebook.

The first example shows a bass clef with a key signature of one flat. The right hand plays chords in the treble clef, and the left hand plays a syncopated bass line. The second example shows a similar pattern with different chord voicings.

On a cassette tape, record the rock patterns and the basic accompaniment “Heart and Soul.” In the key of C, I-vi-IV-V7 is played over and over again. The left hand plays a single note in the bass clef, and the right hand plays the chords in their closest positions in the treble clef. The hands take turns, beginning with the left hand.

The score shows the melody in the right hand and the accompaniment in the left hand. The right hand plays a simple melody, and the left hand plays a bass line with chords. The key signature is C major, and the time signature is 4/4.

Send the tape home with the student to improvise several melodies with the accompaniment. Help the student write down one of his melodies. Later on for another assignment, the student could use the melody for a short composition. Several variations of the melody could also be written down, making a theme and variations composition.

Buy simplified solos with guitar chord symbols of well-known movie music. Play the melody in the right hand and change the chords in the left hand

according to the guitar symbols. Using root position triads, break up the chords bottom to top varying the style. For example, begin by playing C and then E and G together. Then play the triad as a basic Alberti bass pattern. If students have a good hand span, spread the triad by playing C to G to E. Next, syncopate the rhythm. These activities teach students to use triads and better recognize them in their music.



Improvise a melody with this traditional twelve-bar blues pattern.

4 measures on C
2 measures on F
2 measures on C
1 measure on G
1 measure on F
2 measures on C

Count four beats to each measure (4/4 time).
Also try two beats to each measure (2/4 time).

Intermediate students would benefit from Walter and Carol Noona's books, *The Improviser* and *Improviser Projects* published by Heritage Music Press.

Even beginning students can improvise a satisfying eight measure melody, determine what the meter is (2/4, 3/4, 4/4), write down the rhythm pattern and fill in appropriate chords. This is composing. As they gain confidence and experience, they can work out twelve and sixteen measure melodies.

Use all of these activities at appropriate times. Make parents aware that improvising activities should not prevent students from preparing their other lesson assignments.

When students compose music, they are getting experiences in using the common elements of music in meaningful ways. It also develops creative

thinking. Composing should be a joy that all music students experience.

On page 23 in *Improviser Projects A*, there is a pattern for a four-measure Question phrase and a contrasting four-measure Answer phrase. The plan is for a 32-measure AABA song. It would be helpful for students to see this pattern.

Improvising on and writing down melodies from old timer and folk songs is a good beginning. Perhaps start with "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star." Also, young students enjoy composing a piece that expresses their feelings about a holiday. Make a theme and variations by altering the rhythm and melody of a favorite nursery rhyme or song. Try using a minor mode; a pentatonic or whole-tone scale could also be used. Assign students to play

short tunes they've composed in as many variations as possible and then write them down.

Though there is no set way to compose, they could begin with a rhythm pattern, develop it and then assign pitches to make an interesting melody. This teaches the student to think rhythmically and tonally at the same time they are creating. Later on, descants and even counter-melodies could be composed to harmonize with the melody.

Critique the student's melody so they know they're on the right track. Make sure they have the right key and time signatures. Have them write in the chords that harmonize with the melody. Next, add the tempo and dynamic markings. Students should have a loose-leaf binder containing music paper for these composition activities in addition to the binder for writing their lesson assignments. Give the students the following general rules to keep in their loose-leaf binder.

General Rules of Composition

1. A phrase in music is like a sentence in a paragraph. It presents a complete thought.
2. A phrase has a question and an answer. Two kinds of answers are:
 - parallel: starts the same as the question
 - contrasting: starts differently than the question
3. A question has about four measures. The answer has about four measures.
4. A question can begin on any note.
5. The end of each answer should end on the keynote (first note of the scale).
6. Accidentals may be used within the melody.
7. Decide on an interesting rhythm for the melody.
8. Strong feeling beats must fall on the first count of each measure.
9. Consider the proper tempo in playing the melody.
10. Use dynamics to give interest to the music.

General Rules for Composing Melodies

1. Melodies need both repetition and contrast.
2. Change a melody by writing a motif or the complete phrase upside down (inversion).

3. Change a melody by writing it backwards (retrograde).
4. Change a melody by giving the melody some octave displacement (octave leaps).
5. Change a melody by creating variations of the rhythm or melody.
6. Change any element in the melody for contrast.

Use this pattern from an unknown source to set a poem to music

1. The rhythm and accent of the words in the poem can dictate the rhythm and accent of the melody to be created. Speak the poem, and clap or walk the beat. Write the words, and show by a symbol where the stressed syllables come. Compose a melody so that the metric accents coincide with the stressed syllables. Draw the bar lines and fill in the rhythm signatures.
2. The mood of the music is determined by the message of the words. Ask the student if the melody fits the mood of the words in the poem.
3. Do the words fit well with the melody's steps and skips?
4. The climax of the poem, the words which have the most force or power, should coincide with the climax of the melody. Let the student decide which part of the poem is the climax. Ask if the music increases in force and power before arriving at the climax. If not, what could be done?
5. Melodies can be lengthened by an introduction at the beginning and a coda at the end. Is there a phrase or part of the melody which could be used for that purpose? If none is suitable, compose an introduction and a coda.
6. Melodies are made up of phrases with cadences. Play some examples of various kinds of cadences and ask the student to experiment with putting different cadences to their melody; then choose which is most appropriate.
7. If the melody ends on the home tone or first note of the scale, there will be a feeling of completeness. Have the student end the melody in various ways and ask which they think is the best.

8. Phrases may have different lengths (two, three, four or more measures.) Have the student identify the phrase lengths in the melody he has composed.
9. Repetition in a melody gives unity while contrast provides variety. If one phrase of the melody has a contour that goes up, the next phrase could go a different direction (stay mostly in the same range or go in a downward direction). Also, the first four measures of two consecutive phrases could be exactly alike, but the ending measures of both phrases could be different.
10. Tempo and the dynamics give the melody expressiveness. Read the poem at different speeds, and let the student decide which speed he thinks is appropriate to the meaning and mood of the song. Now read the poem at the speed or tempo decided upon but with no expression in the voice. Next, read the poem with some voice inflections (dynamics) implied by the text. Ask the student which way they liked the best and why?

Chapter 17: Helping Students Enjoy Music and Value Instruments and Books

Though parents may not be musicians and know a lot about music, they can encourage a child to practice, seek dedicated teachers for them, attend musical functions with their child and help promote musical activities their child can share in with other young people (ensembles). Parents can develop love of music in their children by exposing their sons or daughters to music at an early age (CD's, trips to music stores, live concerts, etc.). They can begin musical training and appreciation even before birth. As children get older, it is helpful to make available books like the ones mentioned at the end of Chapter 13. Another important book that I recommend that parents, teachers and students read is *Raising Musical Kids*, by Patrick Kavanaugh ©1995, published by Vine Books. It can be bought or ordered at bookstores.

Taking a child along when buying music or shopping for musical instruments teaches the child an awareness of the monetary costs and gives them an example of parents who value music and instruments.

Let children help polish, care for and keep attractive a purchased instrument. Do it together so it is less likely to be perceived as a chore. This teaches respect for the instrument and develops feelings of pride concerning personal ownership and responsibility.

Suggest to parents how they can help make piano practice a pleasant experience. A student cannot concentrate well if the piano sits in a noisy part of the home. They will not enjoy practicing if a piano is obviously out of tune and has sticky keys. Recommend a proficient tuner and suggest that the student and his parents could watch the tuning and ask questions of him about caring for the piano.

You may want to give a list of good books about music to the parents that they could purchase as gifts or rewards. Suggest that they encourage their child to pay for his choices of music from their own earnings. Teachers could give students sheet music or music books for birthday presents and special incentive rewards. Make a large chart for the studio that has all the students' names on it. Over a three month period keep track and post how many pages of music each student finishes at every lesson. During Music Club or a recital, give every student a reward corresponding to what was accomplished. Give music pins they can wear to a few students who accomplished the most. A variety of incentives can be purchased at music stores or through a catalog such as "The Music Stand" in W. Lebanon, NH, 1 800 717-7010.

Teachers should keep informed of musical events in the community, post information about them in the studio and encourage students and parents to attend. Explain to parents that taking their children to musical events and listening to different types of music together is another way to encourage good attitudes about music. Before going to live performances, get to know something about the music and performers; this encourages attentive listening and constructive discussion afterwards.

If children come to piano lessons with dirty hands, take a teaching moment and explain, after they wash, that every piano should be played with clean hands so others will want to play the piano after they have played it. Also, their clean hands will help preserve their music books and keep them looking nice. Students may not have thought about these things. If students lay car keys or music books on the piano say, "Please put your things over here (indicate where) so the piano will not be scratched or look cluttered." A teachers' attitude about instruments and books can influence the students' attitudes.

Chapter 18: Recital Etiquette and Good Stage Presence when Performing

If students dread performing, it may be because of self-consciousness or realizing they have not prepared well or both. Holding Music Club every few months gives students opportunities to perform for each other and is good experience before they perform on formal recitals or in festivals and contests. The teacher can take notes and share insights with the students during their private lessons. Telling students what they did right and kindly giving constructive suggestions on how to improve will help lessen the anxiety about future performances.

I tell all students, regardless of age or level, that when they are well prepared they can “claim” the satisfaction and reward of performing well. Should they momentarily forget, they will recover and come through because they have ‘paid the price’ and they can count on that. I ask them to visualize (imagine) before going to sleep at night that they are having a successful, enjoyable performing experience. I tell them to visualize the same thing upon awakening in the morning. I caution them to say only positive things about a coming performance.

Talk about and give students a written copy of these general rules for performances.

1. Empty your mouth of gum or candy before walking to the piano.
2. Keep movements at a minimum while sitting on the piano bench.
3. Do not pucker their lips or make up-and-down or side-to-side head motions while performing. Keep your head and lips still.
4. Do not be in a hurry walking to the piano or leaving the piano after performing. Stand up straight and walk naturally with head up and shoulders back.
5. After performing, stand up, turn to the audience, smile and nod your head down and back up once. This is a polite thank-you to acknowledge the applause. If the audience is spread out, turn your head to one side, smile and nod; then turn to the other side, smile and nod.
6. Do not talk, whisper or rattle programs while anyone is performing. Show respect for the other students and people by giving your quiet, full attention to the one playing.
7. Do not leave the room or walk into the room when someone is either performing or talking about pieces that they will play. Try to stay in the room, but if it is really necessary, leave and come back only during the applause.
8. Do not clap between movements of a composition (a sonata, for example). Clap only at the end of the whole performance. The teacher should explain this to the audience before a recital begins.

Before performances, take time at a private lesson to help the student learn to stand up and bow. Tell them it is never silly to be polite and that the audience should be acknowledged for their kind attention. At the bottom of recital programs I print: Thank you for not whispering, leaving the room, or rattling programs while students are performing.

Parents should not consider that performance opportunities are the teacher’s sole responsibility. Students could share their talents within the home for special occasions such as a grandparents’ visit or for a neighbor or friend. Appearances in their church and community could be arranged. Volunteer programs could be given at rest homes and for handicap organizations. Mention these options to parents and point out that performing should be considered as sharing rather than showing off. Have them begin early.

Recitals motivate students and give them examples of excellence to strive for. There is no finer musical experience than for a serious piano student to work

on presenting a recital—a solo recital or a joint recital with another student. Encourage students to attend college or university student recitals and live performances of professional pianists when possible. To hear a composer’s works performed is inspiring and is a finer teaching experience than lectures or a teacher’s comments.

Aristotle, a follower of Socrates and student of Plato, believed all persons are capable of art expression as well as enjoying art experiences. To deny ourselves participation in art is to limit ourselves. We must nurture all of our abilities if we expect them to develop; our divine spirit emerges in direct relation to the nurturing we give it.

Richard L. Gunn states in his book, *A Search for Sensitivity and Spirit*, that “each of us has at some time walked with someone who pulled us into lengthening our stride.” Be that kind of teacher for your students.

Somehow find time to keep playing the piano. It is important that you be able to play sometimes for

your students and their parents. Play the materials that students are studying, but also have a curriculum of your own to help keep up your skill and to be ready for opportunities that may come for you to share your talents. Set an example for them by preparing a new piece to play on each of your public recitals.

Continuing your own study can help you evaluate your teaching techniques and procedures and help you identify problems that need correcting. Is what you expect of the students realistic? Will they experience a well-rounded development? If you have deficiencies in your playing, will you pass them on, or are you trying to overcome them? The knowledge you gain can be valuable to you and to your students. Perhaps there is a music organization you can attend monthly to learn more about teaching. Could a group of teachers meet together at regular intervals to play for each other? This would be an incentive to practice. Re-discover your own talent and experience the joy in music that has already brought you this far.

Chapter 19: Motivation

Very few people will be motivated to major musical development by listening to music or performing music for the sheer joy of doing it. People learn when they are interested.¹ They are different and are therefore motivated by different activities. It is the teacher's responsibility to discover those musical activities that are of the highest intrinsic value to students and use them to get students involved at a high level of interest.

When you want students to be motivated to achieve a musical goal:

1. Identify what you want the student to do.
2. Identify something that will serve as an incentive.
3. Arrange the situation so that performance occurs before the student receives the reward.

Your approval and disapproval are a strong motivational tool.² Some other motivation tools available to you include: workbooks, having students give themselves points, peer approval in group activities such as Music Club, progress charts, etc.

Jacquelynne Eccles in the article "Children's Motivation to Study Music," suggests ways a teacher can structure positive experiences for students:

1. Access each student's motivation and goals and adapt your teaching strategy accordingly.
2. Give children some choice over materials. Let them listen first to the music they are to learn if possible.
3. Point out that students can improve. Point out the role effort plays in developing proficiency. Don't let students conclude they have no ability because it is hard for them.
4. Focus attention on improvements. Encourage understanding that improvement is under their control. Using a tape recorder can help.
5. Use praise AND criticism.

6. Do what you can to reduce anxiety in the highly anxious student.³

Competition

Because they provide opportunities for music discovery and self-discovery in a supportive environment, sharing activities are the most likely to motivate music students. The students have to invest something of themselves in music and they can see a relationship between themselves and what is to be learned.⁴ Competition is motivational or not depending on the student's potential for success. Students that are already success oriented tend to thrive on competition, but students that have experienced a lot of failure will not enjoy competitions. The majority of persons are between these extremes and are more likely to be influenced by other considerations besides task competencies, such as extrinsic rewards and gaining the approval of peers and significant others.

Success leads to positive feelings and failure leads to negative feelings. If students are placed in competitions, it should be those that are within their range of competence.⁵ The ideal is to handle competition as needed while focusing increasingly on the process of performing for its own sake—attaining one's own personal goals. If the focus is on sharing, then all can grow.⁶

Teachers motivate by directing practice

Motivational problems are not problems of motivating people, but problems of directing behavior.⁷ Teachers direct students to put forth effort (practice) and the students are affected by the results of that practice. It is important to choose wisely so that students will have positive experiences.

Don't try to base lessons on the natural interests of children; you'll have to change or leave out much of the content of the curriculum. Students need to

be lead into mature motives and concepts. Try to show students that the subject has real value to them. Then use all the influences you can to see that they study and get some satisfaction from their efforts. A student who has developed a negative attitude through his experiences can gradually be brought into a more positive attitude if he begins to succeed and is helped to continue to succeed.⁸

Teachers must fit activities to the maturity level of the students. Goals and standards should be high enough to challenge each learner but should not be out of the realm of attainability. If teachers and parents have high expectations for students, they have high expectancies for themselves and do better in their course work.⁹

The student's technical abilities should be taken into consideration when you choose a piece for him. Choose music that is challenging enough. When music loses its complexity and is no longer challenging, it may become dull. Students will work over a lengthy period of time on a very challenging piece because they continually fall short.¹⁰

However, choose music that is within their reach. Students are not going to want to continue practicing if they participate in many activities that show them to be incompetent either.

Factors to consider in choosing music and setting up learning activities for a student include:

- mental and physical readiness
- neuromuscular system readiness
- exposure to prerequisite concepts¹¹

Teachers should make every effort to choose music that appeals to the student. If a student likes the music he is to work on, he will be motivated to develop the skills to play it.

Personality factors

Joel O. Raynor gives helpful insight into adapting motivational strategies to student personalities in his article "Step-Path Theory and the Motivation for Achievement." He says that:

Success-oriented individuals are challenged by:

1. Difficult tasks (but not too difficult).
2. Long term challenges that are worked on in achievable segments.
3. Feedback that is given as to their progress.
4. Role models and career opportunities.

These students are motivated by doing their best. They need:

- long term goals
- short term goals
- new goals to take the place of goals as they are accomplished

Failure-threatened students respond best when:

1. Doing one's best and capability is de-emphasized.
2. The focus is on what they will do right now versus the future.¹²

Effort

A teacher's stress on effort among older students will be counter-productive. Students are preoccupied with the need to establish and maintain a sense of competency. They may feel a sense of shame and humiliation after failing to perform well. This is because failure implies low ability. The degree to which they feel distress in failure depends on the amount of effort they put forth. If they try hard and fail, they will likely feel more shame, not less, for if they work hard and fail anyway, the implication is that they have low ability. If they don't try, the failure doesn't necessarily mean they have low ability. So, to cope with the risk of failure, students may appear to try but not too energetically and make excuses. It often works. Teachers make allowances for low effort if students have plausible explanations for why they do not study. At the same time, excuses act to reduce student shame and feelings of worthlessness. However, it is an excellent strategy to sabotage the sustained pursuit of personal excellence.

It is different with young students. Effort at a young age is considered evidence of brightness. Use reinforcement with them. Recent research suggests

that the youngsters who believe that ability is a repertoire of skills which can be expanded through instruction and experience are more likely to be less preoccupied with learning as a test of their worth.¹³

Super stars value effort, even failing effort, despite its implications for low ability because one isolated failure is not enough to raise self-doubts among these successful musicians.

Tips to ensure students continue studying music

John G. Nicholls in his article “Task-Involvement in Music” gives suggestions that increase students’ likelihood of continuing their music studies over time.

1. Convey the idea that music is a medium for creating and expressing beauty and other important human sentiments.
2. Convey the idea that music has intrinsic worth—is not a means to an end.
3. Spend some time discussing the functions students think music serves.
4. Offer students choice of what to work on and methods to achieve the order. Give students choice of the order in which they do teacher-assigned work to keep them from feeling they are doing work because they have to rather than because they want to. Remember to offer choices between the best possible materials and methods; don’t ask whether or not they want to perform or listen to music.
5. Set a goal of getting students to take increasing responsibility for their own learning.
6. Teacher and students focus on what the student is learning and the business of improving over previous performance. Compare previous performance and realistic individual goals—not other students. Help students see learning as a means to an end rather than the end itself.
7. Teach students to look to others to learn, but not to see how competent they are.
8. Be an example. A teacher’s delight in music can be contagious.
9. Focus on and encourage the student’s performance rather than the student. Praise focuses on the person. Encouragement is an expres-

sion of pleasure with what the student is learning and of hope for what they will learn.¹⁴

Teachers can maintain positive motivation in themselves by

1. Recognizing their best efforts will produce maximum effect for only a relative smaller proportion of learners.
2. Recognizing that different strategies may produce maximum motivation in different students, and that the outstanding music student is a relatively rare individual. This holds for teachers of all subjects.
3. Understanding that (1) people are different (2) strong positive motivation depends upon a particular combination of factors (3) many factors are as important as the desire to bring enrichment to all students.¹⁵

If music teachers have high teaching ideals and goals while continually improving upon their own individual musical and teaching abilities, students will gain positively from such inference and associations. The results will be broader horizons in all living—present and future.

This evaluative statement given by Edward L. Walker at the Ann Arbor Symposium I gives both reassurance as well as challenge: “When pleasure and interestingness are at a maximum, learning efficiency is also at a maximum. Effective teachers are also happy. The moral is quite clear: If either learning or teaching is dull or frustrating, somebody is doing it wrong.”

Chapter Notes

¹ McMurray, Foster. “Pragmatism in Music Education,” *Basic Concepts in Music Education*, NSSE, The Fifty-Seventh Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, Editor Nelson B. Henry, 1958

² Greer, Douglas R. “An Operant Approach to Motivation and Affect: Ten Years of Research in Music Learning,” *National Symposium, MENC*, Ann Arbor, Michigan. August 1982.

- ³ Eccles, Jacquelynne P. "Children's Motivation to Study Music," National Symposium, MENC, Ann Arbor, Michigan. August 1982.
- ⁴ Tait, Malcolm J. "Motivation and Affect," National Symposium, MENC, Ann Arbor, Michigan, August 1982.
- ⁵ Raynor, Joel O. "Step-Path Theory and the Motivation for Achievement," National Symposium, MENC, Ann Arbor, Michigan, August 1982.
- ⁶ Maehr, Martin L. "The Development of Continuing Interests in Music," National Symposium, MENC, Ann Arbor, Michigan. August 1982.
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ Woodruff, Asahel D. *Basic Concepts of Teaching*, San Francisco, CA: Chandler Publishing Company, 1961.
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- ¹¹ Woodruff, Asahel D. *Basic Concepts of Teaching*, San Francisco, CA: Chandler Publishing Company, 1961.
- ¹² Raynor, Joel O. "Step-Path Theory and the Motivation for Achievement," National Symposium, MENC, Ann Arbor, Michigan, August 1982.
- ¹³ Covington, Martin V. "Musical Chairs: Who Drops Out of Music Instruction and Why?" National Symposium, MENC, Ann Arbor, Michigan, August 1982.
- ¹⁴ Nichols, John G. "Task Involvement in Music," National Symposium, MENC, Ann Arbor, Michigan. August 1982.
- ¹⁵ Raynor, Joel O. "Step-Path Theory and the Motivation for Achievement," National Symposium, MENC, Ann Arbor, Michigan, August 1982.

Chapter 20: The Home Studio

A teacher's responsibility is to do more than collect a fee and put in time. I believe in giving quality lessons to help a student develop their abilities, motivate them to make consistent progress, encourage and direct good practice habits and develop a friendship of mutual respect and trust regardless of age.

Private teaching of all ages presents a variety of challenges. Cooperation from parents is necessary. I do not teach child beginners unless a parent is willing to come to every lesson the first several months. This helps give the student and I the necessary support for maximum success. After we have come through what I consider this crucial period, I let parents decide about attending the lessons. I tell them they are always welcome, but students eventually want to be responsible themselves and generally prefer coming without a parent.

I have interviews with parents and students before they decide to take lessons, but more often, lessons are arranged over the telephone because they are a referral and already know about my policies and commitment as a teacher. If the initial contract is made over the telephone, I make sure we talk at an unhurried time—I may need to call them back. I want to know as much about the student as the parent is willing to tell me, and I believe it is better not to have the student present. Also, I want time to explain my goals and commitments.

In addition to our discussion, I believe it is wise to give a short, carefully written page of my expectations, policies concerning payment, prompt attendance, how missed lessons will be handled and what happens if students arrive late for lessons.

Policies that have worked for me over the years:

1. I do not send bills. I appreciate being paid the first week of each month in advance for the month. The number of lessons can be

counted—how many Tuesdays there are, for example. Five week months help my income because I do not teach most of Thanksgiving week, two weeks for Christmas or the last weeks of May and August. I do not charge for them. Advanced students preparing solo recitals are given free extra lesson time.

2. I am punctual and students must arrive no more than five minutes before their exact lesson time. I explain that I can't be relaxed and give quality teaching with people 'piled up,' so please do not come earlier. They know if they arrive late, it is impossible for me to give the full lesson time. Also, students are to be in my studio or in their cars, not wandering around the premises, inside or out. Parents are usually cooperative about bringing and picking up the students. I ask that I not be called during teaching hours if possible because each student has the right to my full time and attention during their lesson.
3. If a lesson is missed because of illness or another important reason, I try to find time to make it up, but if not possible, I tell the parent when they call about a lesson they will have to miss, "Please remember to deduct it next month from your check." (I usually do not charge when I haven't taught—which doesn't happen often—and there are times that parents tell me that they want to pay anyway.) If I am not called and students do not come, I do charge for the lesson, but this seldom happens.

It is good to give each parent a copy of your weekly schedule and post a copy in your studio. Ask permission to put their telephone number beside their child's name. Let parents know how busy you are and how difficult it is to make up lessons. Sometimes they call each other (even though they may not be acquainted) to exchange lesson times.

I do not have people sign contracts with me about lessons, but I explain that teaching is my living and that I need a steady

income. I try to project my unspoken ethic “I will be fair with you, and I know you will be fair with me.”

4. I teach during the summers. They are an opportunity for students to make good progress. I ask to be paid the same way and offer two but no more than three weeks off for their vacations without paying me. If more time is taken, they should pay, and I will try to arrange make-up lessons.
5. I schedule Music Clubs on late Saturday afternoons or on Fridays at 4:00; the frequency is about every other month. Parents are cooperative in bringing students on time and picking them up an hour and a half later. I begin and end on time. I find that parents respect my needs when I am respectful of their time and schedules.

At times, I have had parents call and want to talk of their concerns that their child is practicing enough or displaying the proper attitude about their lessons. I try to put the parent at ease at such times. I understand they are not being critical of me, but want the best for their child. If it is a time when I cannot listen in an unhurried manner, I tell them and ask when it would be convenient for me to call them. Usually a situation of this nature happens when I am already aware of an ‘attitude’ on the part of the student.

When the parent and I talk, I respect that they are the parent, but also, I have a regard for the student and am a professionally trained teacher. I realize their call may be an indirect request for support and encouragement about their own problems with the student. Over time and with experience, teachers can be aware of these situations and deal with them effectively. There are not simple answers because we live in a complex society. Do your best—perhaps give a few suggestions, but do not give advice. There is a difference. Often, a listening ear is how you can encourage their patience and a broader understanding. Many times, the parents arriving at a new ‘stage’ of their child’s development appreciate and need support in dealing with it.

If questions are asked of you and your methods, answer in a pleasant, matter-of-fact voice, and do not feel or sound defensive. Thank them for calling and

invite them to call again. Tell them you do appreciate their concerns and assure them you will keep trying to be effective in your teaching. Express something complimentary about the student.

How much should you charge for lessons? There is no easy answer. This depends to a degree upon your location, your credentials and what other teachers are charging. Many piano teachers have other sources of income and do not rely upon teaching for their livelihood; their prices may be lower than they should be. This detracts from what you can and should be able to charge. A teacher who does have very low prices may not have thought about how that can hurt other teachers.

The best teachers who are getting good results usually have as many students as they need and want. Before you begin teaching in an area, find out about some of the teachers’ credentials and what they charge. Often, this information can be obtained from a music store’s referral file for inquiries about teachers. List yourself.

Find ways you can show your own skills through church, community, schools and volunteer situations. Tell people you are teaching and that you want to attract a clientele. Let your strengths and goals be known. Occasionally advertise in newspapers. This is not undignified but another way to become known. Let other teachers know that you are teaching and ask them if they would refer students to you. Give out lists of your credentials. Be straight forward, but do not exaggerate. List ways you can be contacted. Do not put your lesson prices on the list; you are trying to attract and talk with people who are most serious about learning rather than bargain hunters. If you are new in the area and have not yet built a reputation, do set up an interview before you answer many, if any, telephone questions. Be pleasant, but firm. After an interview, accept the student immediately or tell the parent you will call later.

How should you handle make-up lessons? This depends upon your personal situation, but with planning, good communication and a consistent policy, they can be worked out. Perhaps one hour a

month could be scheduled for group make-up lessons where you could teach theory, music history and composition.

Business Advice

Keep accurate tax records and prepare for taxes all year long. You will need:

1. **Student Ledger Card:** This is an official record of lesson income. It is used for expenses. Also list the dates of materials, recitals, festivals, refreshments, etc.
2. **Student Materials Record:** Keep a record if you buy books or materials for the student and are not reimbursed for them.
3. **Business Expense Record:** This would include any and all expenditures, the amounts of checks and the check numbers. If paying cash, list how much and to whom paid. Keep information about services, materials, rent, fees, dues, cleaning, utilities, advertising, telephone, office supplies and miscellaneous expenses. Record these expenses as they occur, so that nothing will be left out. Keep all receipts and canceled checks.
4. **Personal Expense Record:** Enter all tax-deductible personal expenses such as medical and dental bills, donations, interest on loans, finance charges, sales tax of anything you have bought.
5. **Car Mileage Record:** List dates, where and why, total miles traveled, beginning and end of the year odometer readings. (Keep this in your car to record.) Also, it is tax deductible for traveling to and from seminars, professional meetings, concerts if you or students perform, trips to the music store and going to a store to purchase items for your studio.

I have found it an advantage to have a qualified tax specialist. Tax laws change and are complex. To get maximum tax deductions, accurate records must be kept. Seek professional information about setting up a retirement plan according to your needs and means. Consider your cash flow, age, the amount you can afford to put away and the best methods to do this in light of tax rules. You need to prepare for the time when your teaching load may be cut because of health or other reasons and when

you should take time for yourself and perhaps do some traveling.

Be sure you are adequately covered with liability insurance in case an accident happens in your studio or on your property. This could be part of your home owner's policy. Again, seek the advice of a professional.

Selecting a Piano

A piano may sound well in a show room of a piano store but sound badly in a carpeted and furnished room of a home or apartment. Select a piano with a sustaining quality of tone; a note struck in any part but the extreme treble should continue sounding for some time with the key held down. This is the best test that the piano will sound well in any room. Listen for a pure tone. Because pianos get more brilliant with use, select one that is somewhat mellow in sound.

Play the instrument or have someone play it whose opinion you respect. How does the touch and the action feel? Does it respond well when using the pedals? Is the amount of sound from the bass balanced with the sound coming from the treble?

Be sure the piano has been manufactured by a good maker. Be careful that the makers are not relying on the name made by the founders rather than the quality of their manufacture. Consider rising companies with good recommendations of the instruments they are producing; their pianos are sometimes lower in price and often of better quality.

Avoid purchasing a "cheap" piano that has inferior materials or workmanship. Some pianos have laminated soundboards, and it is not possible for the average person to know. The resonance and durability of a piano is greatly affected when pressure is put on a laminated soundboard. Here, you must be able to trust the integrity of the salesperson. Be careful in purchasing at auction sales.

A piano with a light touch will not help develop the student's fingers. Upright pianos generally have a lighter touch than grand pianos and the keys may

not return quickly enough. For performing, the action must be resistant and responsive.

Care of the Piano

Because a piano is extremely susceptible to dampness and changes of temperature, never place one against an outer wall, too near a fireplace, door, or open window. Keep the piano away from direct sunlight which dries the wood and harms the finish. Cover nearby air ducts or direct the air away from the piano.

Loading the top of the piano with music books will absorb the tone. Ornaments can pick up the frequencies and cause unwanted sounds. Use soft dusting cloths and carefully select furniture polish. Newer pianos with a high gloss finish do not need polish. Occasionally wipe the steel strings with a soft, dry cloth if the room temperature is damp. Clean the keys with a diluted solution of mild dish washing liquid soap. Furniture polish on the keys

will discolor and make them slippery for playing. To avoid sticky keys, carefully dust the piano on the inside as well as the outside.

A new piano will generally need more than one tuning; be sure this is in your contract. It is best to let the piano have some time to settle before tunings begin. Regular tunings should be done every six months or every year, but how often will depend upon several factors such as climate and the amount of use. I try to schedule tunings after a new season of the year is well established—midwinter and midsummer. The best tuners agree that if regulating and voicing of the piano is done with each tuning, the piano will consistently function close to its full potential over time. Only a reputable tuner/technician should make any repairs needed and give specific advice for the care and maintenance of your piano.