

POSITION PAPER
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National Conference On Piano Pedagogy
Madison, Wisconsin

The first part of this paper will touch on questions regarding the place of the arts and music in contemporary society, while the second will present certain key philosophic and pedagogic aspects of the Robert Pace piano materials. The student demonstration which will follow is intended to show one teacher's individual interpretation and application of this approach to piano instruction.

I believe strongly that music and the arts should figure prominently in the broad education of our children, and that, in a real sense, music learning is learning essentially as it occurs in other subject matter areas. But until recently, we as a profession have failed to grasp the cognitive significance of the arts in general and music in particular as an important element in the curriculum. This is probably a critical factor in our faring so poorly in this time of retrenchment.

We must find some more persuasive answers to the questions "why music?" Too often at our conventions and conferences, we proceed as if the general public perceives music as basic to all humanity and that music instruction will of itself make us better human beings. On the contrary, most people actually conceive it as extra-curricular and a frill. Far too few of them have derived any lasting benefits from their early musical efforts.

So, why music? The old "art for art's sake" and "historical" rationales for the inclusion of music in the curriculum carry little weight in times of recession and high unemployment. When public school and college budgets are eroded by spiraling costs and declining enrollments, the real views of our decision makers on the value of music in relation to other subjects become painfully clear. Obviously, they cannot be convinced of the basic merits of music when they have so little positive data on which to base their judgments.

As indicated in my earlier remark some of us view music "thinking" or learning as cognition in much the same way we would view thinking and learning in the other subjects. Interesting as this is, even more exciting is the distinct possibility that music learning--as it oscillates within the combined affective, cognitive and psychomotor realms of human experience--may actually enhance the processes of learning in other areas. However, it is not within the scope of this paper to attempt to explore the ramifications of that theory but rather to focus on certain unique features of music learning which should be inherent in our teaching.

Since music is a "time art," in that performance takes place within a certain time-frame and cannot be stopped without being lost, it must be experienced "in motion." The cognitive-affective-psychomotor counterpoint which takes place when one is totally involved in the musical act is fascinating to consider as one probes the thought processes which occur during performance. For both performer and listener, it is experiencing, thinking and reacting in whatever fashion each is capable as one moves through that particular composition for those few moments of time.

To follow this further, not only do we respond "in motion" but there are many different musical sounds, patterns, combinations and changes happening almost simultaneously to which performer and listener must attend. For the performer, there is still another aspect to consider. As he or she thinks in motion and is dealing with the various changing combinations, there is also the important problem of projecting one's own feelings and musical ideas. One might ask, "How can I interpret the various musical symbols of the composer to express my own unique

ideas rather than merely imitating someone else's performance or passively submitting to the teacher's instructions?"

Obviously, all of this does not begin to take pace at the advanced level of performance, but must be nurtured from the outset of instruction. It is critical for teachers to avoid the pitfalls of a product orientation to teaching. Such an approach may turn out students who play pieces with extreme technical accuracy and skill but who lack the necessary insights and learning processes to develop musical maturity and independence.

That esthetic experiences are "enrichments" of human life is a view widely accepted and rarely disputed, *per se*. Yet, as previously mentioned, there are millions of people in this country whose lives really have not been enriched as a result of music study. Too often students, after years of public school music, still are unable to read or perform even the simplest music. And there are those who have spent hours and hours of after-school practice time simply memorizing a piano piece for the spring recital. Probably very few of these individuals really feel that music has enriched their lives.

Yet, it is my hope that these aesthetic moments are well within reach of most people if only we could help each person get the proper balance of the cognitive (factual), affective (feeling) and psycho-motor (performance skills). And it is, indeed, a delicate balance of all three which avoids the problems of too much unrelated theory without application to performance; all technical with little musicianship; or an excess of emotion devoid of understanding appropriate styles of the various periods.

I have found the theories of developmental psychologists to be very useful in gaining insight into the general processes of learning which are applicable to music learning. The works of Piaget are particularly helpful in understanding early childhood conceptualization with the many implications for subsequent mental growth and development. By helping children understand their learning processes at each level, we enable them to achieve better performances (products).

Unfortunately in music study, students frequently memorize, yet learn very little. They memorize a piece by playing it over and over much as they might memorize a phone number. And in both instances, that which was memorized will be quickly lost when repetition ceases. Perhaps a distinction should be made between short term and long term memory. Short term memory might be considered as a "filtering system" and is useful when one is not interested in retaining information for a long period of time. Long term memory, however, serves more as a mental filing system through various conceptualizations and associations. Information is stored in logical ways for later retrieval and use. Herein lies one of the key points of my approach. Both the scope of materials to be used and the sequence, or order of presentation are crucial to the success of the student at each stage of development. Students should understand so clearly what they are doing during the lesson that they can literally teach themselves for the rest of the week. With this in mind, let us examine some of the identifying characteristics of this method.

This approach to music learning is based on Comprehensive Musicianship. This term has taken on certain specific meanings in recent years because of its use in identifying various music projects throughout the country. For our discussion, however, it means an inter-relate and carefully sequenced program of rudiments, harmony, ear training, sight-reading, dictation and improvisation as applied to, and found in, music literature from the Baroque to the present time, with appropriate technical application for performance. The scope of the program from the beginning provides a balance of the various musical systems of Western music, including

diatonic, chromatic, bi-tonal, modal, twelve-tone and quartal in polyphonic and homophonic settings. The materials are sequentially organized in both an upward and outward spiral so that students advance upward in difficulty of repertoire as they simultaneously broaden their

musical understanding at each level. This is in sharp contrast to approaches which center almost exclusively from the beginning on repertoire and technique, with exposure to music fundamentals being delayed until the college level.

Educational theorist Jerome Bruner has stressed the importance of structure in learning, since there always seem to be certain prerequisites for subsequent learning. When these prerequisites are encountered in an appropriate sequence, students not only solve the immediate problem, but they learn how to go on their own more easily in the future. An application of Bruner's concept can be found in the way basic harmony is taught in the Robert Pace Series. First, the students play melodies to be harmonized with the I and V7 chords. This is a prerequisite for learning to use the IV chord in slightly more complex materials. This in turn would be followed by the ii chord, etc. These chords exist in the pieces students are learning and the materials have been carefully selected to avoid problems more complex than they are prepared to meet at the moment. This same concept of organization applied to the learning of rhythms, melodic designs, and the various musical forms.

The Music for Piano Series is multi-key since it exposes students to all keys from the very beginning. In distinct contrast to this middle C approaches usually restrict students to a limited number of keys during the elementary phases of instruction. Here are a few of many reasons why I prefer the multi-key approach to piano study:

1. The multi-key approach immediately develops a sort of tactile sensitivity to the black keys similar to that of Braille. This tactile awareness will facilitate the development of reading skills in much the same manner as "touch typing" enables one to type from the printed copy faster and more accurately than if one looks at the typewriter keyboard.
2. This approach is highly useful since it allows one to transpose up or down when necessary and it alleviates the fear of playing pieces in keys with several sharps or flats.
3. There is historical precedent for the multi-key approach since keyboard literature from the time of Bach has encompassed all keys.

Students must be the center of their own learning as they explore ways of acquiring new knowledge and skills. Consider the following points as part of this learning paradigm:

1. The rate of progress is related to the quality of preparation, therefore students must learn how to practice and work efficiently.
2. Students are in a sense their own teachers 6/7 of the time, since they usually see their piano teacher only one day a week. Therefore, materials in the books must be carefully sequenced for ease of practice with brief and clear instructions.
3. The teacher functions as a facilitator or expediter of learning rather than a tutor.
4. The materials and daily practice activities are designed to elicit creative thinking rather than meaningless repetition and drill.
5. A variety of short examples rather than only a few long ones stimulate student concentration throughout the practice period.
6. The numerous slightly differing examples found Creative Music and Theory Papers facilitate indirect transfer of learning to other pieces as students learn to recognize similarities and differences.

7. Instructions on each page encourage students to build positively day by day to avoid the necessity of undoing wrong applications after a week of improper practice.

8. In the book, Creative Music, importance is placed on individuality and diversity through creative activities including the student's own unique interpretation of various music symbols.

Next, we shall consider modes of instruction and teaching strategies. Probably more piano teachers throughout this country use these books in individual or private lessons rather than in groups. In recent years, many articles have appeared in the various journals in which the relative merits of group and individual piano instruction have been discussed, therefore, it does not seem necessary to review those ideas here. However, it might be appropriate to reflect on how harmony, ear training, sight-reading, improvisation, etc., are taught at the college level. Obviously, these are all taught in some sort of group or class to reduce unnecessary repetition and redundancy. For this reason, alone, I would encourage teachers to use the Theory, Creative Music and Finger Builder Books in a group learning situation. Ideally, this could be done with a dyad plus another session with eight or ten students, but excellent results can be obtained from overlapping two dyads as shown here:

3:00 Dyad	Repertoire
3:40 Class of Four	Theory, Creative Music, Technique
4:20 Dyad	Repertoire

Teaching repertoire with a dyad is exciting since the teacher can involve both students in helping each other solve their various problems. This lively peer interaction is valuable preparation for meeting the challenges of daily practice and helps avoid plateaus and doldrums. Constructive peer evaluation encourages students to learn pieces quickly, to play accurately and in a musical way, and to be prepared at each lesson. These interactions provide an excitement about one's own learning, (growth motivation), as opposed to the deficit motivation of contests gold stars and other "payoffs."

A final point which is central to this approach is that sufficient knowledge and competence must accrue at each level of advancement so that students will always have something to show for their efforts. No one can forecast exactly how long students will continue to study nor what level of achievement they will attain. A few may ultimately use music as their profession, but for the vast majority, music should provide pleasure and personal satisfaction in their lives. After several years of instructions, one student might wish to transfer from piano to another instrument, while another might simply want to explore music on his or her own. Because of their musical literacy and competence, both students would have the basic knowledge and variety of experiences to pursue their own interests with no feeling of musical failure for having discontinued piano lessons. Indeed, this musical preparation will help all students go on their own more easily in the future.