

CONNECT

CAPMT



JOURNAL



CAPMT CONNECT

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Message from the President

[Mona DeCesare](#), NCTM • monawudecesare@gmail.com

CAPMT President



Dear CAPMT Members,

Welcome to CAPMT Connect!

Thank you to everyone who has dedicated their time and energy to our CAPMT students, event offerings, and programs in the past eleven months. Thank you to everyone for your willingness to serve.

Our CAPMT 2021 state conference was a hybrid conference; both in-person at California State University Fresno as well as online on Zoom. The theme for the conference was “Recovery and Renewal: Music Moving Forward” and featured guest artists Ran Dank and

Soyeon Kate Lee in a duo piano recital. Our conference also offered a masterclass by our guest artists, performances by our YPLN members, the world premiere performance of our 2021 commissioned composer, Amy Stephens’s new work *Metamorphosis 2021*, as well as a poster session and presentations on a diverse array of topics. There were no overlapping sessions at the conference so that attendees enjoyed each and every session! Thank you to everyone who traveled to Fresno for the conference and for those who attended online; I hope it brought you all inspiration, ideas, and connections. A special word of thanks to our VP for Conferences, Dr. Michael Kirkorian and to our wonderful conference committee, Dr. Eloise Kim, Wendi Kirby, Dr. Mitzi Kolar, Dr. Stephen Pierce, and Noreen Wenjen, for all of their hard work putting this exciting event together.

Dr. Michael Kirkorian and the conference planning team are working diligently on our upcoming state conference this fall. Please mark your calendars for an in-person event on October 21-22, 2022 at Cerritos College.

We offered our student programs, both competitive and non-competitive, in-person this past year following state safety protocol guidelines. Thank you to Grant Kondo, Su-Shing Chiu, Julie Ann Ballard, Ivana Malo, Rowena Asuncion as well as all district and chapter chairs. Participation in the California state MTNA competitions was significant; thank you to Shun-Lin Chou and all the division chairs for your hard work, time, and diligence.

In addition, I am thrilled to report that our website was updated: the Student Program section, including our [Competition page](#) is more concise and easier to navigate. The registration

process for events was much easier and less confusing. Thank you to Grant Kondo, Dr. Julie Ann Ballard, Su-Shing Chiu, Kary Kramer, Noreen Wenjen, Mage Lockwood, and Dr. Mitzi Kolar for all their help in this endeavor. Your willingness to help is greatly appreciated!

We are proud of our many wonderful CAPMT members and I want to acknowledge a few specific individuals for their achievements:

- Prof. Antoinette Perry: 2021 CAPMT Lifetime Achievement Award recipient who was honored at the conference.
- Amy Stephens: 2021 CAPMT Commissioned Composer. Her work, *Metamorphosis 2021*, for piano and tenor saxophone was premiered at the conference.
- Dr. Eloise Kim: recipient for *CAPMT Connect* Article of the Year award. Her article "7 Guidelines for Teaching Students with Autism in a Private Studio."
[CAPMT Connect: Spring 2021, Vol. 6 No. 1.](#)
- Our CAPMT 2021 Outstanding Members are as follows:

District 1: San Diego North Chapter – Elena Yarritu

San Diego South Chapter – Timothy Broadway

District 2: Santa Clara Valley Chapter – Yvonne Reddy & Glenda Timmerman

District 3: South Bay/Santa Monica Bay Chapter – Danielle Yi

District 4: Music Teachers of the Desert Chapter – Alex Danson

Riverside-San Bernardino Counties Chapter – Diane Norcott

District 5: Sacramento Chapter – Soojung Guanikim

District 6: Central Coast Music Teachers Association Chapter – Linda Brady

District 7: Redwood Empire Chapter – Elizabeth McDougall

District 8: Orange County Chapter – Heidi Lee Kim

District 9: Greater Pasadena Chapter – Vera Hoalim

San Fernando Valley Chapter – Nobuyo Nishizaka

Santa Clarita Valley-Ventura Chapter – Lyle Michaud

CONGRATULATIONS to all!

A huge congratulations also goes out to District 3: South Bay/Santa Monica Bay for being selected as 2021 CAPMT Chapter of the Year! This is a phenomenal achievement, and we are so incredibly proud of you!

I wish you a wonderful, restful summer. Stay healthy, strong, and safe!

Mona Wu DeCesare, NCTM
President, CAPMT

Editorial

[Dr. Stephen Pierce](#) • pierces@usc.edu

CAPMT Connect Editor



Hello fellow CAPMT members,

It is hard to believe that spring is coming to an end and summer is just around the corner. It is also slightly surreal to be returning to some semblance of life as we knew it before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Somehow, this past spring seemed busier than ever for many of us. Perhaps it is because we have all been re-adjusting to the pace of in-person activities. One of my graduate students pointed out to me that maybe we feel busier than ever because we are in fact, busier than ever.... He went on to say that many of us have taken on more in-person

activities than ever before because we are now able to do things with and for others again. This particular student played at least seven collaborative recitals this spring in addition to giving several solo performances. When I asked him about this, he said that because he missed playing chamber music and performing in-person so much over the past two years, he wants to grab every opportunity while he still can! I think we can all relate to this sentiment.

I also think that our appreciation for live music-making has forever been changed due to the pandemic. It was a thrill for me to return to Walt Disney Concert Hall as an audience member for the first time this spring. At a stunning concert that included Barber's magnificent concerto for violin and orchestra played by superstar violinist, Hilary Hahn and the LA Phil, live performance never felt so vital; you could have heard a pin drop throughout the event. The entire audience seemed enraptured from start to finish. As such, it was a valuable reminder that nothing replaces the magic of live, in-person performance. To this point, it has been heartening to again host student recitals in person this year and celebrate the joy of live music-making with our students and their loved ones.

In addition to prioritizing and celebrating live music and in-person activities, I would again like to encourage you to spend time fostering a sense of community within your studio. To this end, it has been fun, and dare I say, vitally important for me to spend time socializing with my students this spring! At a recent end-of-semester picnic with some of my graduate teaching assistants, I asked everyone the following question, "How has your musical life changed as a teacher and a performer as a result of the pandemic?" You can read their thoughtful responses in this issue's Coda Column.

I am also delighted to feature a wide-ranging, extensive, and insightful interview with our 2021 CAPMT Lifetime Achievement Award recipient, celebrated pianist and teacher, Antoinette Perry as the centerpiece of this issue of *Connect*. An also happens to be a dear friend and USC colleague and I was fortunate to spend an afternoon in conversation with her. You can read all about our discussion in this issue. We spoke about her background, mentors, teaching philosophy, and more. My hope is that her deep wisdom, humanity, and humility will touch and inspire you as much as it did me.

Also included in this issue is our Independent Music Teachers Forum column penned for the last time by Heidi Saario. For Heidi's final IMTF column she has chosen to focus on the important topic of motivation and practice, and provides some wonderful ideas about how we can inspire our students to keep practicing. I want to thank Heidi for sharing so many terrific teaching insights with all of us in her column over the past few years, and for being so gracious and open to my suggestions and editing. Heidi, I will miss working with you in this capacity!

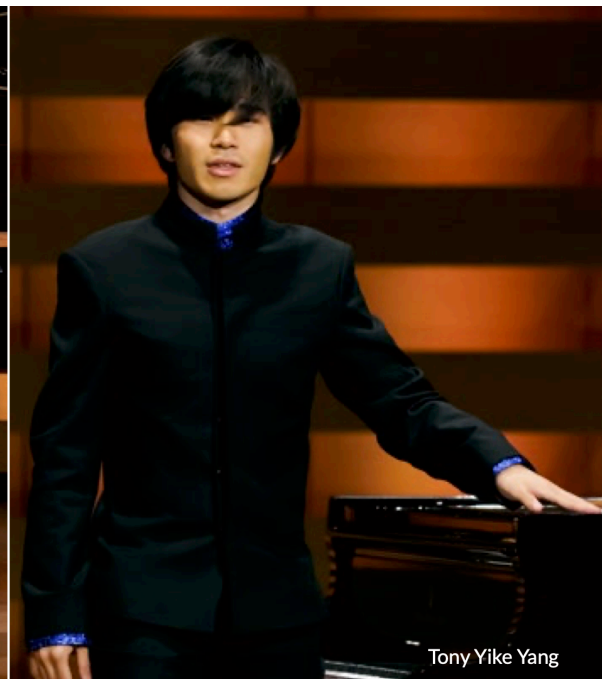
We are also thrilled to include a wonderfully rich wellness column focused on, "A Crash Course in Piano Wellness for the Healthy Pianist" written by our wellness chair, Dr. Jackie Petitto. This is a must-read for all piano teachers, as the prevalence of injury in pianists of all ages and levels is extensive. In addition, Gail Lew has provided us with another outstanding set of recommendations of new publications in her column, "Classic Echoes: Bach, Bartók & Beyond." Many thanks to Gail for keeping us up-to-date about the most attractive new pedagogical piano pieces and latest editions.

Lastly, we have included an article about the exciting and star-studded launch of the Royal Conservatory of Music *Celebration Series, Sixth Edition*, "[Music Lights the Way](#)." If you were unable to attend this event in real time either online or in person, please take a look at this article and watch the recorded event. It was utterly amazing!

Wishing you all a restful and revitalizing summer!

Happy reading and happy teaching.

Stephen Pierce
Editor, CAPMT Connect



The Royal Conservatory Launches the *Celebration Series*®, Sixth Edition with Star-Studded Event

The launch event included a tribute to music teachers and provided additional details on the book giveaway to thousands of teachers across North America.

Published April 28, 2022

Music teachers across North America were honored at a special gala in Koerner Hall to launch The Royal Conservatory's highly anticipated *Celebration Series*®, Sixth Edition for piano – an event that featured performances by an array of internationally acclaimed artists and RCM alumni, and tributes from celebrity guests.

Royal Conservatory Artist in Residence *Stewart Goodyear* gave a moving performance of *Land of the Misty Giants*, by Oscar Peterson, after thanking his music teacher, James Anagnoson, Dean of The Glenn Gould School, for giving him the inspiration and drive to succeed. "One of the things I will always treasure about studying with Jim is how he gave me time to talk about recordings and interpretations ... These discussions about artists and what they contributed to our art form were as important to me as our lessons."

Other leading artists such as RCM Honorary Fellow *Lang Lang* and RCM alumna *Angela Hewitt* performed well-known repertoire from the new series while composer Heather Schmidt played her own composition – *Shimmer* – from the series, and Stewart Goodyear and International Fryderyk Chopin Competition laureate Tony Yike Yang gave world premier performances of RCM-commissioned pieces.

Award-winning RCM alumnus *Jan Lisiecki*, who performed a Level 9 Chopin piece, shared fond memories of his formative years learning to play piano, saying: "I grew up with the *Celebration Series*® and I have very fond memories of discovering the repertoire and learning the piano through these books. It's wonderful to have a balance of different styles and composers."

Also featured were celebrity tributes by *Eugene Levy*, *David Foster*, and *Paul Schaffer*, who all shared the importance of learning music as a key foundational element of their professional success.



The 22-book collection of repertoire and etudes from Preparatory levels to Level 10 contains 514 pieces by composers from over 20 countries including exclusive commissions along with beloved classics. The curated series includes a rich diversity of styles of music in every book, perfect for engaging students and inspiring creativity.

Dr. Peter Simon, President and CEO of The Royal Conservatory, shared his appreciation for teachers, and their dedication to inspiring students with the transformative power of music. He announced that The Royal Conservatory will provide free sets of the new *Celebration Series*® books to 20,000 music teachers as a way of saying thank you for their dedication to the fine work they do as teachers using The RCM curriculum. Vice President Academics and Publishing, **Elaine Rusk**, who led the development of the series, provided additional details about the giveaway.

“Music teachers provide an invaluable service to students and society at large – much of which is not sufficiently recognized,” said Dr. Simon. “The unprecedented gift of printed *Celebration Series*® books will enable us to continue our vital support of music teachers so they can continue to inspire students.”

In addition, **Dr. Janet Lopinski**, Senior Director, Academic Programs, and **Barry Shiffman**, Associate Dean and Director of Chamber Music at The Glenn Gould School, announced a new *Music Lights the Way Piano Festival*, which will offer more than \$200,000 in prizes and be open to piano students of all ages and levels across North America.

“The festival will include two rounds of competitions followed by a Grand Finale in February in Koerner Hall featuring celebrity judges,” said Lopinski. “This is going to be a great opportunity for students to demonstrate their creativity and self-expression through music, while receiving recognition for their achievements.”

Several of the composers with works featured in the *Celebration Series*® also spoke, including **Vincent Ho**, who composed pieces inspired by the Chinese Zodiac and tailored to the educational needs of students in Levels 2 to 7. His daughter, **Claudio Ho**, performed two of his pieces.

Composer **Gary K Thomas** introduced his daughter, **Hope Thomas**, as she performed his work titled *Flip Flops*. And prominent educators **Marvin Blickenstaff**, **Randall Faber**, and **Stephen Pierce** spoke about the importance of the RCM Certificate Program to their students and the teaching community at large.

For over 135 years, the mission of The Royal Conservatory of Music has been to develop human potential through leadership in music education and the arts. The RCM Certificate Program is the foundation of our educational mission, providing students with a pedagogically sound, sequenced program for music study and achievement from Elementary through Advanced levels. More than five million people have studied the Program and have become lifelong learners of music and the arts.

[*Watch Music Lights the Way*](#)



The New Celebration Series®

A lifetime of joy from the very first note.



The sixth edition of the *Celebration Series*® offers a rich diversity of styles you won't find anywhere else. With 514 pieces by composers from over 20 countries, we're celebrating today's favorite composers with exclusive commissions along with beloved classics from the Baroque, Classical, and Romantic periods. Join our online community to listen to recordings of every piece. Access is included with the purchase of any Repertoire or Etudes book.



**Learn more about the new
Celebration Series®, Sixth Edition.**



The Pathway to Student Success: Engage Your Students with the RCM Celebration Series®, Sixth Edition, and Piano Syllabus, 2022 Edition

Join us at one of our free workshops hosted by Dr. Stephen Pierce to explore the new *Celebration Series®, Sixth Edition*, and discover how The RCM Certificate Program and examinations can help you develop the musical potential of your students.

Community School of Music & Arts Mountain View In-Person Workshop

Date: Thursday, June 2, 2022

Time: 9:30-11:30 AM PT

Location: 230 San Antonio Cir, Mountain View, CA, 94040, United States

Register: <https://www.rcmmusic.com/web-forms/csma-workshop>

Santa Clarita Little School of Music In-Person Workshop

Date: Wednesday, June 8, 2022

Time: 9:00-11:00 AM PT

Location: 28306 Constellation Rd, Valencia, CA, 91355, United States

Register: <https://www.rcmmusic.com/web-forms/santa-clarita-workshop>

Pasadena Conservatory In-Person Workshop

Date: Friday, June 10, 2022

Time: 9:30-11:30 AM PT

Location: 100 N Hill, Ave, #105, Pasadena, CA 91106, United States

Register: <https://www.rcmmusic.com/web-forms/pasadena-workshop>

Register today and receive a **complimentary gift bag** containing a copy of our Syllabus, Sampler, and a Repertoire and Etudes selection!



Independent Music Teachers Forum (IMTF)

How to Help Increase Motivation to Practice in Our Students

Heidi Saario

Spring is here and we are nearing the end of another school year. There are a few times during each year when teachers might notice the level of motivation to practice decrease in their students. This can occur towards the end of the calendar year, at the beginning of a new year, or perhaps later during spring, when students start feeling fatigued. A recent discussion at a CAPMT Pedagogy and Play meeting inspired me to share some ideas that might help increase motivation in our students.

As teachers, we know from experience that we cannot simply rely on student's to maintain good practice habits without some support. We also know that regular practice is often a catalyst for helping students feel increased levels of motivation as they experience progress in their skills. As such, how can we support our students to continue regular practice in order to increase their level of motivation? Here are some ideas you might find helpful.

Tracking Practice, Repertoire, and Other Skills

There are many ways that teachers can track students' practice, such as running a 100-day, or a 30-piece practice challenge. Some studios offer practice challenges that last throughout the school year with awards presented at the year-end recital. By contrast, other teachers offer a variety of rewards on a more regular basis to encourage progress. Putting up some type of practice chart on the wall in the studio where students can see everyone's progress can serve as a visual motivational tool for some students.

Other items that teachers might track are the number of repertoire pieces and/or different skills each student has learned throughout the year or semester. It can be hard for some students to experience and notice gradual progress over a long time. With the help of tracking, teachers can remind their students about how far they have come by highlighting the number of pieces and all other skills they have mastered throughout the year. One colleague uses goal cards for her students. At the beginning of each school year, her students write down their own goals for the year. They then check in with the yearly goals at the beginning of January to see how they are progressing.

Repertoire Selections

Repertoire plays an important role in our students' learning experiences. Selecting repertoire that students connect with certainly helps to boost their motivation to practice. Spending the extra time planning for the most suitable repertoire for each student can pay off when teachers

see their students' practicing improve. Themed repertoire such as Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day, or Movie music, can also serve as a motivational tool.

Sometimes assigning repertoire that is a couple of levels lower than the student's current level can also increase motivation. Learning a piece more quickly and getting to the point of enjoying the music on a deeper level in a shorter amount of time can help keep the momentum going. Most students enjoy playing duets and chamber music. Providing more opportunities to collaborate can add excitement to learning. This is especially important now as these activities were limited during the pandemic.

Studio Events

Studio events can help foster motivation and build a better sense of community. Regular performing opportunities such as group classes, performance classes, themed events/recitals provide students with goals to work towards. Hearing more advanced students play a variety of repertoire can inspire and motivate some students to aim higher and keep practicing to achieve a more advanced level. Studio-wide collaborative composition activities have also been very successful in many CAPMT teachers' studios.

The Role of Parents

Learning to play an instrument requires lots of support from parents and caregivers. Even if the parent does not play an instrument or read music, they can create a supportive environment for music study. This includes setting up a quiet practice space, helping to establish a practice routine, and being the student's "cheerleader" at home. As teachers, we have an important role in educating parents about practicing and supporting them in their efforts at home in between lessons. I am sure every parent who pays for music lessons expects to see results and progress. Different types of tracking charts mentioned earlier, can help show parents how their child is progressing and advancing throughout the year.

Sharing music and talent can be rewarding for students and families on many levels. Using the technological tools of today, I highly encourage students to share their music with family and friends across the world. A regular online video call with an aunt or a grandparent in another state or country in which students perform can serve as a motivational tool. As such, it provides an opportunity for everyone to celebrate the progress of the student while sharing the musical experience together.

Assessments

There are a variety of music assessment opportunities available to our students. For some students, preparing for such an opportunity provides a needed goal to work towards. Earning a new level or certificate accompanied with written feedback from another teaching professional can serve as motivation to continue the hard work onto the next level. Following a

carefully designed curriculum also helps both the student and parent see the progress in their children that they might not notice otherwise.

Conclusion

At the end of the day, we know each music studio is unique and that each student has varied goals for their musical journey. Many of the ideas presented here can easily be adopted to fit different learning goals and teaching approaches. Hopefully, some of these ideas will inspire you to try some new ways to help motivate your students to keep practicing in your studio.



[Heidi Saario](#) maintains a private studio in Alameda, California and is the CAPMT State Chair of the Independent Music Teacher's Forum (IMTF). In addition to teaching, she remains active as a performer. In recent years her solo and collaborative performances have taken her to many cities across Canada and the United States. As a native of Finland, she enjoys programming and promoting Scandinavian composers. Her debut CD, "Jean Sibelius - Compositions for Piano" was released in 2008. Her collaboration with soprano Cindy Koistinen as Duo Freya produced another recording, "Diamonds of the North – Songs from Scandinavia" in 2010. Heidi is a Senior Examiner within the College of Examiners for the Royal Conservatory of Music (RCM) and holds a Master of Music degree in piano performance and pedagogy from the RCM.

A Conversation with Antoinette Perry

Stephen Pierce



Photo Credit: Bravo! International Music Academy

Acclaimed pianist [Antoinette Perry](#) is the recipient of the prestigious 2021 CAPMT Lifetime Achievement Award. An has performed extensively in the United States, Germany, France, England, and in over 15 cities of the People's Republic of China while her recordings are available on the Crystal, Harmonie, Pacific Rainbow, Pacific Serenades, Excelsior, and Navona/PARMA labels. A beloved and sought-after teacher, she continues to inspire legions of piano students as an illustrious member of the Keyboard Studies faculty at the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music.

I have been fortunate to be An's colleague at USC since 2013, where we both serve on the musicians' wellness committee. Almost every semester, we commute together for piano juries and auditions. On these trips to and from campus, we have spent many hours discussing music, teaching, life, and more. As such, An is an inspiring force in my life (as she is for so many others!) and I am honored to call her a colleague, mentor, and friend. I was delighted to interview her at her home recently for this article. Please find excerpts from our conversation below.

Stephen Pierce (SP): Hello An, thank you so much for being with me for this conversation today. It is so lovely to share this time with you.

Antoinette Perry (AP): It is an honor for me.

SP: I want to mention that we are meeting on Mother's Day, May 8, 2022. As a mom of three children, I wondered what you did this morning for Mother's Day?

AP: I asked my son to go hiking with me. I need the spiritual nourishment that nature gives me. To me nature and music are two of the most life-giving spiritual activities that we have in our lives.

SP: It's also apt that we are meeting on Mother's Day as I think of you as such a nurturing piano teacher to your students. Do you agree with this assessment?

AP: Most of us as teachers are concerned about the psychological health of our students, and in nurturing their essential goodness as people. What is interesting is that you can tell by a student's playing what kind of person they are. And we have to keep in mind that music is predominantly a medicine for people. It keeps us healthy; it keeps us whole. Sometimes, because we have to practice so hard, we lose sight of that. The extreme pressure we are under to succeed in music can end up bringing out the competitiveness in us when in fact, this field is a nurturing field; we are like doctors of the soul for other people. We are missionaries for this healing and communicative art of music. We must try to guide our students to see music-making in this light. The more mature the student, the more they will contribute to the world after they leave us with their meaningful and moving performances.

SP: I have always thought that as performers we are so vulnerable; we reveal so much of ourselves on stage, so this sentiment makes a lot of sense to me.

AP: When I have lectured on [The Whole Pianist](#) I have stressed the importance of pianists reading widely in order to develop more depth in their playing. Studying philosophy; asking questions like "why are we here?" for example, is so important. Studying French music is more on the sensual level, which is wonderful too; much German music, especially Beethoven, is on the philosophical level and if you have a deep-thinking student, you hear it in their playing. We have to spend so many hours practicing and we forget to focus on also developing our understanding of what life is all about through the reading of literature and history...and actually through just living, experiencing love and loss.... in other words, we need to spend time living and receiving from the world in order to make sense of it and communicate that through our playing.

SP: You are preaching to the choir! I see it so often among high achieving students; this incredible work ethic and industriousness. However, I agree that sometimes the best thing to

do is not to practice. Rather, we need to nurture these other parts of ourselves as you say, because otherwise there is something missing.

AP: Right! For example, once I had a student preparing for a competition. The closer the competition came, the worse she played. The day before the competition she was honestly sounding pretty bad so I said, “Stop practicing and go to the beach!” She did as she was told and the next day she won the competition! I am positive she would have played far less well had she practiced all day instead.

SP: Do you think students are under more pressure today to practice harder to succeed?

AP: We shouldn’t generalize but I do think students are under more pressure than we of my generation used to be. I believe students need more space to have a wide range of experiences. If we delve in drama, we will create better characters with music, if we dance, our music will dance, if we sing, our music will be more lyrically expressive, if we create visual art, our music just might be imbued with more texture and color. If we have more free time, we will relax and allow our music to breathe and quite possibly to create itself.

Einstein wasn’t able to find his theory of relativity by racking his brain, but when he wasn’t trying. He was simply in a boat on a lake. Of course he had to do a lot of footwork to lay the groundwork for such a feat – as do we musicians.

As musicians, it is hard to find space when we are so busy but I do manage to find some time to read poetry, literature, psychology, and spiritual philosophy. And I couldn’t live without dancing!

SP: This is wonderful advice for all of us!

Let’s go back in time for a moment. Please talk a little about your background growing up and how music featured in your childhood.

AP: My parents were both musicians. My mother was a Juilliard graduate in piano and my father was a vocal teacher in the Juilliard Preparatory Department. My father died when I was young and my mother later married one of his former students, another wonderful singer. I never thought I would make a career out of music; my mother would get depressed when her students did not practice so I kept telling her, “I will NEVER be a piano teacher!” But I enjoyed listening to her when she collaborated with my fathers, and fell asleep to her practicing solo music at night. And I watched my mother teach, as it was a way to be with her after school.

To be honest, I did not practice much as a child. I also did not have lessons half the time because we could not afford it – there were five years when my mother was single and making very little money, but I always played piano for fun.

SP: So did your mother formally teach you?

AP: She tried but it did not last long at all. My mother remembers one instance where she said, "Practice more slowly" after which I proceeded to play one note a minute. As a result, I understood my children's rebelliousness and sent them to other teachers right off the bat! Luckily friends of my mother's would offer to hear me for very little money. One gave me free lessons my entire senior year of high school.

SP: How much did you spend practicing per day growing up?

AP: At most I spent about an hour per day at the piano. Luckily I also enjoyed practicing etudes. My best memories were when in my early teens when my teacher asked me to bring in a different Chopin waltz each lesson. Wonderful!

SP: Is there more you might like to say on the topic of how to help children succeed in their music studies?

AP: I think it's very difficult for a teacher and parent to find the right balance for children in their music studies because our most important challenge is to not interfere with a child's natural love for music. I read a study in which great artists were asked to describe their first music teachers. Some said that their first teacher was good, some said that their first teacher was not good. However, all of them said that their first teacher was enthusiastic and kept their curiosity alive! I sent my kids to the Waldorf school, which makes a point of letting children be children, allowing them the space and tools to be creative. When given freedom, children are naturally creative. There was very little homework. Because of an earlier eye problem, one of my kids could barely read upon entering high school but he later made up for it with his curiosity; as a senior he received the excellence award as the top student in his English class. Now all three of my children lead successful and happy lives.

I also feel that children do not need to practice as much as some people think, even if they are going to be professional pianists. When a child practices so much, who are they listening to? They are listening mostly to themselves, and they're obviously not yet great musicians. As such, it can form a boundary to future development. I also know great musicians who did not study music in college. They did not grow up under a lot of pressure and maintained their love for music as a result. There are also those who grow up under a lot of pressure and they play beautifully but then there is a kind of limit to how well they do as adults. And there is a limit to how much they actually love it too. It is important to remember that, according to some scientific studies, we learn faster when the learning process involves love! I find it to be true: those students who really love their study of music absorb their lessons more readily. And what is great about music cannot be taught – when you hear a really great student, you think, "I couldn't teach that" – it goes beyond the teaching.

SP: Yes, but I think a teacher can still mess things up for a gifted student – we need to know how to nurture great talent.

AP: Yes, as they say about visual artists, they have to know when to stop. And I am still trying to figure that out! What is subjective and what is objective in music: the hardest thing a teacher can learn is how to distinguish between the two. And sometimes as a teacher, rather than spoon-feeding everything, maybe you can find just one little thing that unlocks a lot of talent.

SP: For example?

AP: Yesterday a student came in who is the perfect student who always wants to do the “right” thing. I just said, “you always want to do the right thing and that is getting in your way.” She spends her time wondering if everything she is doing is the “right” thing. But if there was only one “right” way to play a piece then one person would play it “right” and no one else would ever have to play it again and we would just listen to that person, or that person’s recording! When we worry about what can be wrong we rob ourselves of creative freedom.

Now, I do think when we are reading a Beethoven score, we have to observe every detail because Beethoven is definitely a greater musician than we are! And he writes it all down so if we don’t do everything, it is not going to be as good. But most composers consider the interpreter as powerful an influence on the music as they are. We have to realize that as performers we are not just trying to find out what the composer wanted; we are really trying to go beneath the notes. We are trying to express something really great, something the composer isn’t able to write down that comes from within us that we have learned from our experiences of life.

SP: Yes, indeed – I often say that the notation is not the music – it’s only the beginning of our exploration.

So you said music and the piano were fun, but at what point did you become serious about music?

AP: When I was a freshman at Kansas University (KU), I majored in Russian and Anthropology – which I loved and studied for all four years of my undergraduate degree. However, after just one semester on campus, I really missed having music around me. So that I could take piano lessons I told the school that I was adding a music major. I remember telling my mother that I would see how it felt to practice for four hours per day – and I loved it immediately. I think because music and practicing was never forced on me at all, I was able to do it out of pure love.

SP: Your first college teacher was Richard Angeletti at KU. What do you remember about him?

AP: At first I thought that there were better teachers because he did not say that much to me in lessons. He did give me this wonderful technical regime, the seeds of which I still teach now to all of my students. After a year at the University of Texas I came back to play for him. He only had one thing to say but then I realized it was the most important thing. So in retrospect, I realized that he was a truly great teacher. I also learned from him that as teachers we do not always need to say a lot to our students to effect positive change.

SP: You have had some other amazing teachers. These include John Perry, Carlo Zecchi, Gilbert Kalish, Richard Goode, and Danielle Martin. What do you especially remember about each of them and their teaching that you might like to share?

AP: Danielle Martin at the University of Texas was wonderful in her attention to detail of voicing and playing with the whole body. She was also really passionate about her teaching, which was contagious!

And then there was John Perry. He was like a god to me. What distinguished him was that he was able to teach by osmosis. On a gut level, pure instinct. He could also play anything by ear, including orchestral scores and had a naturally strong hand. There was demonstration, conducting. It was osmosis – the music went straight from him to you which was really thrilling and inspiring! He was also able to impart a sense of the power in feeling the musical line. His students could not help but listen to and feel between and through the notes, which can be so elusive for a pianist.

John sent me to Europe to study with Carlo Zecchi during the summers. Zecchi had been one of John's teachers and had reinvigorated John's love for music. Zecchi was quite old when I studied with him, and couldn't walk. He would prop himself up in the crook of the piano and then conduct and sing wildly. He was Schumann reincarnated! I adored him. Another osmosis person with such passion. A very special man!

I studied with Gilbert Kalish in Tanglewood and played for him when he came to LA thereafter. He is a very creative man. He enjoys contemporary music because he can really create his utmost with it. When I studied with him, he would practice until the middle of the night every night. He inspired his students to always be fresh and original with their interpretations and never get stuck in rules – if you wanted to strike the keys forcefully with flat fingers, great! He freed up his students – helping us play more freely and creatively.

And Richard Goode – I played in a masterclass for him and then coached with him when in New York. He oozed musicality and could never stop talking about music. He loved to point out interesting books to read about music. One of the many times he played a concerto with the LA Phil I went backstage to greet him after the performance. After he spotted me, he left everyone standing in line to greet him to come over to me to say,

“Isn’t it amazing how different Beethoven and Mozart are?” – he was much more interested in talking about music than in meeting his fans!

Though he was not one of my formal teachers, I also learned so much from listening to Leon Fleischer.

Each of these mentors nurtured and inspired me in different ways. All of them stressed learning a variety of technical approaches and I loved and adored all of them.

SP: Did you not also perform with Fleisher?

AP: Yes, for his 75th birthday and the 150th anniversary of the Aspen Music Festival, I got the opportunity to perform with my idol from my youth and his wife, Katherine Jacobson playing the Mozart concerti for two and three pianos (Fleisher conducted both and played the third piano part in the 3-piano concerto). One simply cannot describe the feeling! I felt, “I had arrived!” I was ecstatic all year practicing this joyful music!

There is an important thing we can learn from Fleisher with his injury; after he was able to play with two hands again, even though plenty of notes were wrong, it didn’t matter a bit because of what he was able to communicate. The music, as imperfect as it was note-wise, was life-changing. The way he could make Beethoven or Brahms a suspenseful experience from beginning to end was absolutely amazing!

SP: In addition to Fleisher, you have collaborated with so many great artists, playing chamber music, concertos and more. Are there any particular highlights that stand out that you might like to share?

AP: I have been so blessed to play with so many great musicians over the years. I don’t want to feel that naming some would diminish the others.

However, I’d like to describe my playing with Ralph Kirshbaum the first time. One of my close musician friends had passed away of AIDS the week before the concert. A couple of days later, the program director asked us to add the Fauré *Elégie* to the following weeks’ concert, in memory of his own father, who had also passed that week. Ralph was thinking of my friend as he played. The sound of his cello and his exquisite playing didn’t leave me for days afterwards. It had penetrated my being. When there is extra meaning given to something like that, it is very special. But I remember so many great collaborations and I am happy to say that I am starting to put them on my [YouTube](#) channel.

SP: You have also premiered new music and worked with notable composers over the years. What is that process like? Is there anything in particular you might like to share in this regard?

AP: One thing I like to tell my students, is that composers are more open than we think (in these days of following scores meticulously) to different interpretations. And I must say, almost every time I have asked if I can take certain interpretative liberties, they say, “we write down the notes, now it’s your piece!” So, when you are playing for a composer and you want something written differently, go ahead and tell them. They are usually very appreciative because that is how they learn. And I know that the great composers of the past always worked with performers and would adjust their pieces to a certain extent to accommodate what performers felt. I think we sometimes diminish our importance as interpreters but composers certainly do not.

SP: So has this mindset then informed your performances of everything?

AP: Yes, exactly. And then people say they heard a great composer performing his or her own piece without doing what was indicated in the score, or not following the tempo marking! So we have to keep in mind that we are creative beings when we interpret. When we are younger, and learning the rules, we think music is entirely rule-based and we have to stay within this box. As adults, we can be more flexible with the rules we learned when we were young. Visual artists think that way and I think we need to think more like this to let our communication flow.

We have to keep in mind that playing music is about communication more than anything else. And we have to ask ourselves, “What do we have inside to communicate?” and “How do we feed what we have inside so that we have more to communicate?” We feed that with other arts – reading books, going to plays, going to dance performances – and living – traveling, going hiking, and to the beach, having space to fall in love and out of love, experiencing someone close leaving us – that is all feeding us and helping us grow. We have to make room for those things, otherwise we become a desert. We might have great skills at the piano but what are we doing with them?

I also think the older we get the more open-minded we seem to become about interpretation. I remember hearing John Browning play a Mozart sonata in Aspen when I was much younger. It was totally different from how I had taught it. He seemed to be doing the opposite of everything I had taught and it was wonderful! That was really an eye-opener!

SP: Speaking of great piano skills, you competed in the 6th Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. What was the experience like playing in such a high profile event?

AP: Well, what I always loved was preparing for these competitions. I just loved the practicing for them, having the goals and the challenges. During the actual competition it was nerve-wracking for me to represent my country. Some people thrive on the Olympic atmosphere of a competition but personally I don’t.

SP: What is your opinion regarding music competitions: are they more helpful than harmful?

AP: I think it depends on the student. If they are excited to prepare for it, if they love the whole process and are not hurt if they don't win, then it's wonderful!

I also judge competitions a lot and enjoy it. But even as a judge, I have a difficult time because each competitor might have something really special to offer and it is very difficult for me to decide that, well, this gift is more important than that one. And I notice other judges think completely differently – we all have our own thoughts and we do not always agree. It is important that competing students are made aware of the subjectivity of competitions and that another set of judges may effect a completely different outcome.

So, I would say that I prefer concerts, which celebrate everyone equally. Fear of failure or of not “winning” gets in the way of true artistry. Fear and love cannot be felt at the same time. The feeling of being judged can then creep into other performances. We have enough stressors in our lives! The focus should be on our desire to make a present of the music we love to the audience we love.

SP: You are known for being a master teacher with a particularly keen ability for developing a fluid, healthy, dexterous and comprehensive piano technique. You also mentioned your teacher Richard Angeletti's technical regime. Please share some insights about how you approach technique at the piano.

AP: I am one of those who swears by a technical regime of 20-30 minutes to start one's practice. I have done my technical regime every day since I was 19 – it works! It's both a kind of meditation, clearing the mind and relieving the body of the day's stresses, and also a way to develop stamina. Most of the exercises are focused on arm weight in the keys – our default sound should be big and rich, a firm bridge in the hand to accept the weight of the arm while wrists, elbows and shoulders are relaxed and pliable. Good posture and diaphragmatic breathing are absolutely necessary. Then this all carries effortlessly over to the repertoire.

SP: When I think of your students and your own playing, there is also a special beauty in the tone quality. How does one achieve that special sound at the piano?

AP: Of course we need to relax in the arm but there has to be firmness in the bridge of the hand to support our arm weight, as I mentioned. A fully relaxed body and abdominal breathing help us become mediums for music, which comes to us from the spiritual realm.

I think great artists feel the music is happening through them; great composers have said the same thing, “I am not writing this, it is coming through me.” So we have to be a

relaxed receptacle for that to happen. I know that sometimes in my teaching too I will think, "There is something wrong but I don't know what it is," so I'll sit down and start playing and listen to what emerges. I will then say, "Oh, yeah, OK, this is what is you have to think about." Little do they know that I had no idea what I was going to say before I demonstrated! This kind of thing does not go through my conscious brain but it comes through me. So, we have to allow the music to come through us. We also have to listen and work with the sounds. There is an element of letting go. Oriental philosophy says, "in not doing, you are doing." We have to practice so hard – we have to do the learning, the footwork – but in the end, we have to let go and let it happen through us. That is when the greatest music happens. I also imagine the composers are in the room while I practice. Schumann said something like, "Imagine there is a great artist in the room when you practice." I imagine that spirit is there and working through me.

SP: Such wonderful and inspiring advice! What other advice do you have for CAPMT music teachers and students?

AP: I feel so honored to be a part of this exceptional group of teachers in California. I don't think my learning from my colleagues will ever be finished.

One of the most difficult challenges we face as interpreters is we must strive to balance integrity towards the score while at the same time being open to spontaneous creativity. We should never fall into a rigid interpretation, and must be able to respond to our feelings as they are at the moment of performance. Our emotions are complicated, and never the same. There is life in the performance that is fresh. Do we want the audience to think, "Wow, what an excellent pianist!", or do we want their lives to be transformed?

Of course we must practice to achieve perfection, but then we must avoid the rigidity and static quality that perfection can engender.

SP: Yes – we are in the business of moving people!

Speaking of our business – every day, we read and hear about budget cuts to the arts, that Classical music is in crisis etc. What do you think about the future of our artform?

AP: I don't think it is in as much crisis as other people think. People talk about the grey-haired people at concerts but they talked about that when I was young too. I think when many people are younger adults, they are busy raising their families. The problem I see in society here is that parents rarely bring their children to concerts. However, in Europe, there are all these kids at concerts. And in China, the halls are packed with people, half of which are kids. While Classical music can be seen by adults as a niche thing, I must say that most kids love it. I used to go around to different schools in various areas of LA with Dr. Zipper, Yehuda Gilad and others, and play for kids. And it did not matter where we went or the socioeconomic circumstances of the kids we played for – they were

absolutely enraptured. They would come up excitedly afterwards and want try to play the piano, the clarinet, or the violin. I'm not sure what makes some people close their minds to Classical music as they get older, since one's first instinct is to love it.

So it is very important for parents to bring kids to concerts, and for teachers to encourage young students to go to concerts to hear great musicians. In fact, it is more important for parents to encourage going to concerts and listening to great artists versus spending hours and hours practicing. It is essential that the desire and discipline to practice comes from the child and their love for music and not from the parents. Two of my three kids majored in music and I think it was possibly because I was very conscious that they not lose their love of music. I was therefore not so forceful. And my other son enjoys playing pieces like the Schubert, B flat Major Sonata (D. 960) and the Beethoven Sonata Op. 110, just for himself, for his own soul.

SP: Such important and inspiring words, thank you so much, An! Any final words?

AP: Yes – I forgot to stress the importance of sleep, good nutrition, and exercise for us as musicians, since we are also athletes!

Antoinette Perry's album, [Beethoven Bookends \(Live\)](#) featuring Beethoven's sonatas Op. 7 and Op. 111 and the Bagatelles, Op. 119, released under the Navona/PARMA label, is available on Apple Music, Spotify, Amazon Music and other digital platforms. On July 8, 2022, Navona/PARMA will be releasing another Live album containing works by Schumann, Schubert, Rachmaninoff, Gottschalk and Gershwin. She can also be heard on [SoundCloud](#) and on her [YouTube](#) channel.



Dr. [Stephen Pierce](#) serves on the keyboard studies faculty at the USC Thornton School of Music, teaches at Interlochen Arts Camp each summer, and operates a private piano studio in Pasadena, CA. At present, he is CAPMT District 9 Director, CAPMT Collegiate Chapters state chair, Editor of CAPMT Connect, an RCM Academic Ambassador, and proud member of the RCM College of Examiners.

Musicians' Wellness

A Crash Course in Piano Wellness for the Healthy Pianist

Dr. Jacqueline Petitto

As a pianist and piano teacher who has dealt with an injury, I think about piano well-being daily. This column is meant to be a crash course in helping pianists to stay healthy and includes information about preventing and managing injuries. My hope is that the information shared here is valuable and meaningful to all CAPMT piano teachers and their students. It is by no means exhaustive but aims to provide a point of departure and some context from which we can explore further.

Prevalence of Injury

The prevalence of injury in pianists of all levels is significant and widespread. Did you know that all of these pianists suffered injuries: Chopin, Robert and Clara Schumann, Liszt, Scriabin, Rachmaninov, Busoni, Gould (during the last 22 years of his career), Paderewski, Fleischer and Graffman (right hand injury), Pogorelich, Landowska, De Larrocha, Schnabel, Brendel, Perahia (underwent surgeries), Goode, Schiff, and Lang Lang (left hand injury)? Sharing this information with our piano students and colleagues can help destigmatize injury, invite discussion, and lead to treatment when needed.

Common Symptoms

Frequent symptoms experienced by pianists include pain, muscle tension, reduced endurance, loss of power, weakness, loss of dexterity or fine motor control, tingling, numbness, loss of sensation, decreased range of motion, stiffness, swelling, tenderness, locking, and triggering. If one of our students is experiencing symptoms, we can encourage them to seek treatment from a medical professional such as a physician or experienced physical or occupational therapist.

Diagnoses

It is imperative that students be diagnosed by and seek treatment from a knowledgeable medical professional. The most common diagnoses of pianists' medical problems are muscle tendon pain syndromes ("overuse" causes tendonitis), nerve entrapments (carpal tunnel syndrome causes the median nerve to be compressed at the wrist), and focal dystonia (a neurological movement disorder that Leon Fleischer suffered which causes the inability to control the fingers).

Treatment

Typical treatment options as directed by a medical professional involve the following: rest, applying ice which constricts blood flow, applying heat which increases blood flow, taking anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen, wearing splints, physical/occupational therapy sessions, posture re-education, technique retraining, instrument modification, behavior adjustment, pain management (cortisone shots), and undergoing surgery as a very last resort.

Risk Factors for Pianists

There are several risk factors for pianist injuries. These include the type of instrument used (a grand piano and artist bench are ideal), time spent playing and sudden increases in play/practice time, choice of repertoire (which needs to fit the body, hands and playing level), technique (avoiding awkward positions and excessive force), teacher/new teacher, playing environment (too cold is not good, for example), conditioning, general health (diet, exercise, rest), posture, individual factors (including different bodies, hand size, hand shape, flexibility, etc.), daily life activities, stress, and gender (joint laxity), and most notably, the fact that piano playing is highly repetitive.

Possible sources of stress for piano students include academic pressure, living environment, relationships, financial concerns, illness (self, family), absence of usual supports, expectations, preparing for important performances (auditions, recitals, juries, competitions), memorization, performance anxiety, and career uncertainty.

Posture Pointers

The piano playing mechanism involves the torso and the limbs. Attention to body alignment and balance are essential. Pianists should consider each of the following points carefully:

- Rest the head directly on top of the torso
- Feel a sense of lift and length in the spine
- Align the shoulders with the hips while the knees align above the ankles
- Support and stability in the torso allow the arms to move freely and with power
- Collapsing the spine and chest limits breathing and inhibits the flow of emotional energy
- Posture affects musical communication
- Think of the sit-bones as “the feet that support the torso”
- Energy should circulate freely between your body and the piano
- Give in to gravity and let the instrument support you

Hands and Arms

To minimize hand tension, pianists should be fussy about sitting at a proper height (with elbows level with the white keys) and an ideal distance from the keyboard (look for a 90-degree angle at the elbows). For energy to flow from the torso to the fingertips, all joints (shoulders, elbows, wrists) need to be loose and ergonomically positioned. There are three main nerves that run through the arms: the radial, median and ulnar. Each of these nerves lives in a tunnel. The median nerve runs through the carpal tunnel. Inflammation of the nerve can result in tingling, numbness, pain, etc. Muscles need rest between contractions since muscle fibers need room to slide back and forth. Initiating movement with a released arm will give pianists more power and freedom, so it is essential to let the weight of the arm drop into the piano.

To take good care of the fingers, pianists should avoid curling, over-gripping, over-stretching, or exerting excessive force. A neutral versus extreme finger position is optimal. It is helpful to remember that fingers do not have muscles in them. Tendons connect muscles in the rest of the hand and forearm allowing control of the fingers. Letting fingers rest on the keys while they are

not playing minimizes tension in the hand and forearm. In addition, thoughtful fingering choices minimize over-stretching.

Mobility and stability of the wrists is vital for pianists. Pianists should allow energy to flow between the fingers and forearms by maintaining supple and loose wrists and avoid stiffness, rigidity or twisting in the wrists. Each wrist contains eight bones. The neutral position means that the hand at the wrist is in line with the forearm. Carpal tunnel syndrome develops when wrists constantly bend into extreme positions. Notably, the wrist will need to rise slightly for big reaches or to play with shorter fingers, but this should not be maintained for long periods.

Neck and Shoulders

The head is heavy (think of it as a big melon) and needs support from the neck. If left unsupported, tension is transferred to the shoulders, elbows, wrists, and hands. Neck muscles extend down across the shoulders (try slumping forward to notice this). Neck and shoulder tension puts pressure on the nerves which can lead to numbness or pain in the hands or forearms. The upper arm bone attaches to the shoulder blade which attaches to the collarbone. To be more aware of this connection in the body, pianists can move their left hand to the right collarbone and then move their right arm upward. In this way, the pianist feels how the shoulder blade connects to the fingers.

Spine and Back

Inside the spinal column lies the spinal cord which holds nerves from the brain stem down to the tailbone. Depending on their location along the spine, vertebrae or spinal bones are identified as cervical (neck), thoracic (upper back or rib cage), lumbar (lower back) and sacral (pelvis or base of the spine). Anecdotally, women seem more prone to upper back injuries while men are more susceptible to lower back injuries. Spinal discs support the spine and act as shock absorbers. Disc issues include herniation, rupture, bulging, and degeneration.

Conclusion

I believe the expression “knowledge is power” is very appropriate here. All pianists and piano students should have a basic understanding of how the playing mechanism of the human body relates to the instrument and vice-versa. After all, we benefit significantly from learning which movements lead to success at the piano. It all comes down to playing the piano with mindfulness and clear intention.

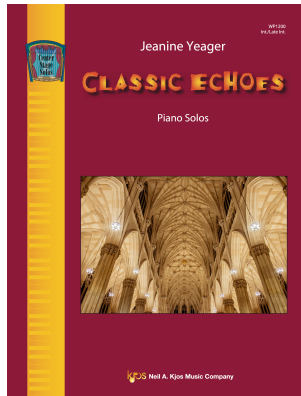


*Pianist **Jacqueline Petitto** is an active soloist and chamber musician who has performed domestically and abroad. She has taught at the University of Southern California, University of La Verne, Pasadena City College, Los Angeles City College, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Baptist University, Colburn Conservatory of Music (where she created a Musician Wellness course), and was Assistant Professor and Director of Keyboard Studies at Long Beach City College. Dr. Petitto's strong commitment to wellness resulted in her recent appointment as CAPMT Wellness Chair. She has presented at universities, conferences, and for music teacher organizations, and translated a musician wellness book from Spanish into English.*

New Publication Recommendations

Classic Echoes: Bach, Bartók & Beyond

Gail Lew



CLASSIC ECHOES
 Jeanine Yeager
 KJOS Music Company ©2022
www.kjos.com
 32 pp., \$7.95
 Levels 5-6¹

Reflecting her musical creativity, Jeanine Yeager has composed sensitive and introspective miniatures inspired by the great music of the Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and Contemporary periods. The Baroque Period is reflected in *ala Bach* with appropriate Baroque articulation and *A Bit of Baroque* with its fantasia-like scale passages. Classical Style is represented in *Sicilienne*, a genre popularized by composers such as Haydn, Mozart, and Cimarosa, *Aria*, with the expressiveness found in Mozart arias, and *Scherzo in C*, a playful sonatina romp with a contrasting B section in A minor. Romantic period qualities are portrayed in *Valse Romantique*, *Pas de deux*, *Lament*, and *Prelude in D*. The rousing, Contemporary *Toccata in A Minor* uses rapid-fire inverted triads reminiscent of Heitor Villa-Lobos. These pianistic solos offer terrific teaching moments, and exciting recital repertoire.

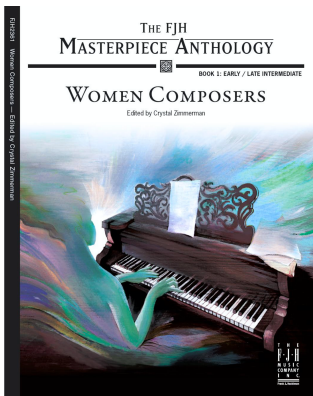
PROGRESSIVE PIANO REPERTOIRE VOLUME TWO
 Selected and Edited by Keith Snell
 KJOS Music Company ©2021
www.kjos.com
 48 pp., \$8.95
 Levels 2-3



There is a demand for serious piano repertoire at early levels that effectively bridges the gap between method books and intermediate repertoire. *Progressive Piano Repertoire* (Volumes One and Two) fills this need. Keith Snell has carefully selected excellent pedagogical works by composers such as J. S. Bach, Bartók, Rebikov, Haydn, Gurlitt, Schumann, Burgmüller, Maykapar, and others for these two volumes. The rapid and evasive flight of *The Moth* by Maykapar is captured in the use of rapid high treble-register sixteenth-note passages, and interspersed staccato eighth notes. With a marking

¹ Level guidelines are based on Jane Magrath's literature leveling in *The Pianist's Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature* (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing, 1995). See page xi.

of *molto vivace*, Gurlitt's *Stormy Weather*, Op. 140, No. 20 is an easy but virtuosic-sounding piece with sixteenth-note passages that help to develop agile fingers. Students love the gesture of crossing hands. *Distant Bells*, Op. 63, No. 6 by Streabbog provides continuous opportunities to cross hands as students ring the "bells." Along with some less-familiar works are early-intermediate solos from the standard repertory: *The Bear* by Rebikov, *The Wild Horseman* by Robert Schumann, *Sonatina in G* attributed to Beethoven, *Minuet*, BWV 116 from J. S. Bach's *Notebook for Anna Magdalena*, *Sonatina in C Major*, Op. 36, No. 1 by Clementi, *Circle Dance* by Bartók, and many more. As such, Snell's collection makes an important contribution to early-level pedagogical literature.



WOMEN COMPOSERS BOOK 1

Compiled and Edited by Crystal Zimmerman
FJH Music Company Inc. ©2022

www.fjhmusic.com

44 pp., \$8.50

Levels 3-4

Shortly after Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904) arrived in the United States in 1892 for a historic visit that resulted in the creation of his *Symphony no. 9, "From the New World,"* he made a cursory remark to a Boston newspaper about gender and the field of music, "Here all the ladies play," Dvořák said. "It is well; it is nice. But I am afraid the ladies cannot help us much. They have not the creative power."²

His contention that women might play but not create—that they could be performers, not composers—was commonplace at the time. Ten days later, though, another paper published a rebuttal from an up-and-coming Boston composer named Amy Beach (1867–1944), who would soon go on to prove Dvořák wrong.

The lack of women composers throughout history is a subject that has interested many music historians. There are reasons behind this issue and many hypotheses about why there is such an uneven male to female ratio among composers. Throughout history many women composers have written musically exciting gems that deserve to be better known. This collection recognizes the talent and creativity of many fine women composers.

The compositions in this first book by women composers spans the Baroque to the 1900s. Included are compositions by Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel, Amy Beach, Clara Wieck Schumann, Cécile Chaminade, Hedwige Chrétien, Elisabetta de Gambarini, and Agatha Backer Gröndahl. Composer biographies, photos, and additional information about the pieces offer an inspiring historical perspective. As such, this is a welcome addition to the piano repertory!

² Maxine Carter-Lome, "Amy Beach: A Composer of Musical Firsts," *Journal of Antiques & Collectibles* (2022).

SELECTIONS FROM FOR CHILDREN, VOLUME ONE

Béla Bartók

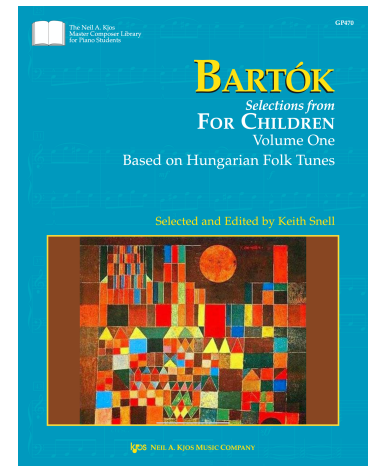
Selected and Edited by Keith Snell

KJOS Music Company ©2021

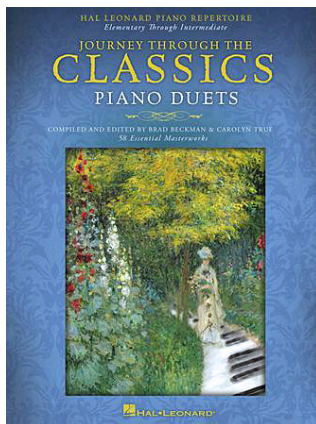
www.kjos.com

32 pp., \$7.95

Levels 2-3



Bartók composed *For Children* for didactic purposes and intentionally without octave stretches. As such, it is an ideal elementary-level teaching collection and occupies a similar position in the teaching canon as Robert Schumann's *Album for the Young* and J. S. Bach's *Little Preludes*. The melodies in Volume One are all based on Hungarian folk tunes. Bartók marked his pieces in detail and provided fingerings and dynamic markings. Editor Keith Snell has carefully selected seventeen of the forty-two pieces from the 1909 edition. Included are the pieces especially loved by teachers and students: *Children at Play*, *Pillow Dance*, *Children's Game*, *Circle Dance*, *Jest*, *Jeering Song*, *Swineherd's Dance* and more. The engraving is clear, clean, well-spaced, and easy to read. When teaching these pieces, teachers might explore Bartók's own recording of *For Children* which is available on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kj0sMj0sMj0s).



JOURNEY THROUGH THE CLASSICS: PIANO DUETS

Compiled and Edited by Brad Beckman & Carolyn True

Hal Leonard ©2021

www.halleonard.com

178 pp., \$27.99

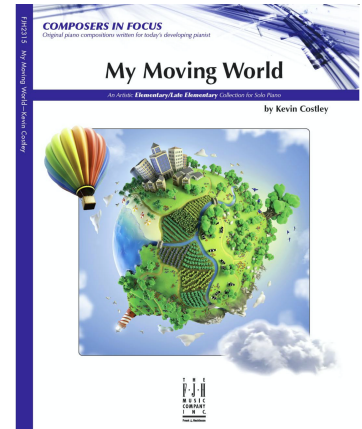
Levels 1-4

This comprehensive, piano-duet compendium provides teachers with fifty-eight piano duet choices for recitals, festivals, and music evaluations. Presented in progressive order, each duet is carefully edited to provide fingerings and musical suggestions, and organized with easy page turns whenever possible. In addition, early levels are engraved on facing pages, with secondo on the left page and primo on the right. Intermediate-level duets are engraved in score form with the primo part set above the secondo part. Elementary repertoire parts use the same clef sign for each part, i.e. two treble staves for primo and two bass staves for secondo. Pieces by Byrd, Czerny, Türk, Rousseau, Köhler, and others are thoughtfully arranged by Beckman and True and feature major and minor five-finger positions with some shifts in position.

Later elementary duets include original compositions by Diabelli, Türk, Gretchaninov, Vanhal, Köhler, Wohlfahrt, and Czerny. Pedagogical challenges in the early-intermediate duets include chordal texture accompaniments, finger legato, sixteenth notes in both parts, shifting of melody

and accompaniment between the parts, dotted eighth note rhythms, articulation changes, and hand staccato from the wrist. Intermediate-level duets by Gurlitt, Brahms, André, Spindler, Schmitt, Schubert, and others provide each student with opportunities to match tone quality, foster rhythmic integrity, create non-verbal gestures, and execute the phrasing, articulation, balance, dynamics and tempo changes of their own part while listening to another pianist.

MY MOVING WORLD
Kevin Costley
FJH Music Company Inc. ©2022
www.fjhmusic.com
28 pp., \$7.50
Levels 1-2



This collection of elementary solos by Kevin Costley allows students to explore a world of movement and color. The consistent use of five-finger patterns provides stability and ease of note reading as students focus on dynamics, phrasing and articulation. Multiple hand positions, as well as crossing of hands are featured, but each piece adheres mainly to one position, while left-hand accompaniments comprise harmonic fifths and sixths. The pieces are primarily composed in G major, G minor, C major, as well as middle C, and middle D positions while the composer makes creative use of accidentals. Descriptive titles offer a hint about the interpretation of each selection: *Jumping Jelly Beans*, *Running Buffalo*, *Throwing a Baseball*, *Catching Lightening Bugs*, *Ocean Waves*, *Raindrops on the Window*, and many more fun titles. These carefully crafted pieces with varied repetition of musical phrases and sequences will help students to solidify their technical skills.



AN EXPEDITION INTO CZECH PIANO MUSIC
Selected by Ivo Kahanek
Bärenreiter ©2021
www.baerenreiter.com
64 pp., \$25.95
Levels 5-7

This collection provides a cross-section of Czech piano literature from the eighteenth to the late twentieth centuries. It contains pieces by Czech composers from the Classical period (Benda and Dussek), Romantic era (Voříšek, Smetana, Dvořák, Fibich, Suk, and Novák), as well as early-advanced pieces in various styles from the latter half of the twentieth century (Vřešťál, Kabeláč, Eben, Sluka, Dlouhý, and Martinů). All of the pieces included appear in their original form with only some editorial fingering added.

Bedřich Smetana was an excellent pianist and his piano compositions are well-written for the pianist and the instrument. His stylized dances go beyond the popular genre of salon music and form the basis of nineteenth-century Czech piano repertoire. Like Smetana, Dvořák also composed effectively for the piano. Other Czech composers who made important contributions to the piano repertoire include Zdeněk Fibich, Vítězslav Novák, and Josef Suk. Leoš Janáček left behind a piano sonata and two extraordinary cycles that belong to the core Czech piano repertoire. Czech composers of the twentieth and twenty first centuries have embraced the legacy of this tradition while incorporating and absorbing new ideas, colors, and sounds.

This valuable collection presents gems from the second half of the eighteenth century to the present day. The editor has selected student favorites like *Humoreske* by Dvořák and *Sonatina in A minor* by Benda, as well as lesser-known exciting and dramatic works like *Devil's Polka* by Novák. Smetana, and Dvořák were pioneers in the Czech nationalistic musical scene. Smetana's *Friendly Landscape* is a sentimental and expressive work that requires careful control of rubato. Dvořák's cheerful, comic piece, *Goblin's Dance*, with its chords extended to the octave, rolled chords, staccato passages, and wide range of dynamics is sure to be an audience favorite. Throughout the collection, teachers will find compositions that encompass a wide range of genres from sonatinas, to character pieces like *The Barn Owl Has Not Flown Away!* by Janacek, to dances by Smetana, and Martinů.

Nationalist Czech composers, inspired by the Bohemian landscape, folklore, and historical events, brought their sentiments to life in music. The music of these gifted composers deserves a place on recital programs. Hopefully this collection will help this outstanding music attain a more prominent place in the standard piano repertory.

THE LARK

Glinka – Balakirew

Edited by Wendelin Bitzan, Fingering by Evgeny Kissin

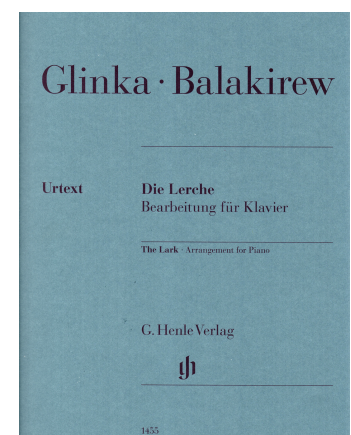
G. Henle Verlag ©2021

www.henle.de/com

12 pp., \$8.95

Level 10

Mily Balakirev's most successful and best-known transcription is of Mikhail Glinka's song *The Lark*. This virtuosic piece is an ingenious adaptation, exhibiting similar compositional characteristics to those found in Liszt's song transcriptions. Balakirev's autograph manuscript, believed to have been lost, was recently rediscovered. In addition, a print copy with revisions in the composer's own hand that document the definitive version was also consulted for this edition. The excellent layout and engraving, wider-spacing, well-planned page turns, and meticulous research that went into the preparation of this edition make it the go-to edition of this bravura piece. A brilliant performance by Evgeny Kissin, who provided fingering for this new edition, can be viewed on [YouTube](#).





PIANO PIECES FROM THE YEARS 1880–1885

Franz Liszt

Edited by Michael Kube

Bärenreiter ©2022

www.baerenreiter.com

38 pp., \$31.99

Levels 8-9

The significance of Liszt's late piano pieces has been the subject of considerable debate. Some scholars consider these pieces to be harbingers of the elderly Liszt's waning inspiration; others praise these as visionary pieces on the basis of their radical simplicity yet bold harmonic language. As a composer, Liszt's music was both harmonically and structurally advanced for its time. This is especially true of his cryptic late works, in which he pushed well beyond the confines of traditional tonality.³ As such, this volume holds an important place in the library of every teacher. Included are some of the pieces most revealing of Liszt's late style. Teachers might also note that some of these pieces are of moderate difficulty and suitable for intermediate-level students. In *Romance oubliée* the editor preserves Liszt's original annotations concerning articulation, dynamics, pedaling, and fingering. In *Chant du berceau* both hands are scored in the treble clef. As such, the entire piece floats strangely in the piano's upper register. *La lugubre gondola* is predictably written in 6/8 meter, and concludes with a forty-four-measure left-hand tremolo in the Coda. *Unstern! Am Grabe Richard Wagners, R.W. - Venezia. Frage und Antwort* (Nocturne), *Schlaflos! Frage und Antwort, Trube Wolken* and *En rêve* (Nocturne) are some of the other important works included in this collection. The engraving is elegant, the page turns are thoughtful, and the valuable performance suggestions by Steffen Schleiermacher make this new, long-overdue scholarly edition indispensable for pianists, teachers, and music historians.

COMPLETE PIANO SONATAS III

Alexandr Skrjabin

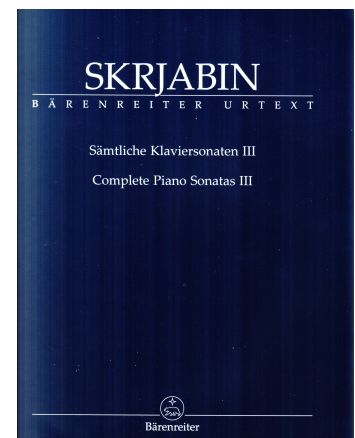
Edited by Christoph Flamm

Bärenreiter ©2022

www.baerenreiter.com

92 pp., \$56.99

Level 10+



Scriabin's Piano Sonatas Nos. 6, 7, and 8 are presented in this new edition. These pieces were written between 1911 and 1913. The history of the piano sonata after Beethoven has witnessed no more a dramatic, profound, and

³ Maurice Hinson, "Franz Liszt," *Guide to the Pianist's Repertoire*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000.

rigorous transformation than in Scriabin's sonatas. Each of these sonatas, written in one movement, exploits dissonances while possessing mystical and ominous qualities. In his later works, Scriabin expanded his harmonic language and began to utilize altered and extended harmonic structures. He created his mystic chord using a dominant ninth chord with a lowered fifth and a major sixth appearing in stacks of fourths. He also made use of the octatonic scale. In these post-tonal works, the concept of key ceases to apply and Scriabin dispenses with key signatures altogether. This scholarly edition features important research in the Preface while the Critical Commentary provides additional information and editorial considerations. Bärenreiter remains at the cutting edge of musical scholarship and with this volume, the new complete edition of Scriabin's piano sonatas has reached completion and deserves to become a permanent part of every teacher's library.



Gail Lew is an editor, arranger, piano teacher, clinician, and nationally-respected leader in the field of piano pedagogy. She is an independent studio teacher in the San Francisco Bay Area, a member of CAPMT District 2 and a judge for state, national, and international piano events. Gail holds degrees and credentials in piano performance, music history, and music education. Highlights of her 30-year career in music include her tenure as senior piano editor for Kjos Music, director of keyboard publications for Warner Bros. Music, editor of the California Music Teacher magazine, and contributing editor to American Music Teacher magazine. Gail maintains close ties with major publishing companies in the United States, Canada, and Europe and presents workshops nationwide on contemporary music focusing on living composers.

Coda

“How has your musical life changed as a teacher and a performer as a result of the pandemic?”

There is no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic has deeply affected our work as music teachers and performers. It has also taught us some valuable life lessons. One of the greatest lessons I have learned over the past two years is that for us to thrive as artists and teachers, we need to continually strive to build and foster a sense of community. The pandemic also profoundly impacted my appreciation for live musical performance. With all of this in mind, I presented the question above to some of my keyboard studies graduate teaching assistants at a recent end-of-year gathering. Please read their thoughtful responses below.

– Editor

The pandemic forcefully created a situation where I had to technologically adapt in a variety of ways. I had to learn how to edit and create video teaching demonstrations and how to research and properly utilize streaming software with recording equipment. I have found that this technological adeptness has improved my ability to communicate with my students using a variety of media. The very human aspect of what we do was also readily apparent to me. I talked to many of my students about how the pandemic was affecting them and found myself in a position of emotional support. I think this highlights how we, as music educators dealing in a very human artform and study, often act as emotional support systems for our students. A stronger, empathetic bond allowed me to cultivate each student's musical voice in a purely human manner.



Colin McDearman is a native of Jackson, Mississippi. He is a current doctoral student majoring in piano performance at the USC Thornton School of Music where he is a student of Prof. Bernadene Blaha. He performs frequently as a solo and collaborative artist throughout the United States and has written and presented on topics concerning constructivism in the university classroom.

As a piano teacher, the pandemic opened my perspective to include non-local options for work. However, I didn't find these remote methods ideal as they don't allow for the entire personality to come across—even when the Wi-Fi is strong. For more advanced students and theory, the digital familiarity everyone developed is and will continue to be useful.



The pandemic was more helpful regarding my performing career as I was able to reach out to established international artists who were at home like all of us. Many were willing and able to provide lessons or sessions for career advice.

[Matthew Krell](#) is a composer, pianist and actor from British Columbia, Canada. He has been recognized in artistic competitions in Canada and the US—most recently at the 2021 PianoHouse International Competition—and maintains an active teaching, performing and recording career in Los Angeles. He is pursuing a doctorate in piano performance at the University of Southern California where his teacher is Dr. Stephen Pierce.

The pandemic definitely made clear the importance of knowing recording techniques and audio production. Online teaching has helped me devote more attention to quality of sound in recording and live performance as well. These are all important aspects to music and technology as we move forward towards working even more online and using digital media platforms.

William Chiang is an award-winning pianist and student of Bernadene Blaha at the University of Southern California, where he is pursuing a doctorate in piano performance. He is also pursuing elective fields in collaborative piano, music teaching and learning, and music technology. William will begin serving as the MTNA USC Collegiate Chapter secretary this fall.



During the pandemic, we were tested in many ways as musicians. In a time of such struggle, my relationship with music deepened in a way where I realized that it was a necessity in my life. While I may have become more tech savvy and resourceful as a teacher, I now value performing and teaching in person so much more.

[Erica Lee](#) is currently pursuing a master of music degree in piano performance at the University of Southern California where she has studied with Dr. Lucinda Carver since fall 2017. Outside of school, she is an avid piano teacher and serves on the faculty at the Pasadena Conservatory of Music. Erica is also the current MTNA USC Collegiate Chapter social media coordinator.

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