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Message from the President

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

CAPMT President

Dear CAPMT Members,

I am excited for the upcoming CAPMT 2022 state conference. This will be an in-person conference and will take place on Friday, October 21 and Saturday, October 22, 2022 at Cerritos College Performing Arts Center. The theme for the conference is “A Beat Ahead: Supporting Creativity and Collaboration” and will feature Nahre Sol (piano) and Catherine Karoly (flute) as guest artists. Our conference will also offer a Yamaha Disklavier masterclass as well as a masterclass by the 2022 CAPMT commissioned composer, Dr. Ron Anderson. His work “Let His Mind Be in You” for SATB chorus, clarinet,



and piano (words adapted from Philippians 2:5-11, King James Version) will be premiered at the conference. The conference will also feature additional performances, as well as presentations, and poster sessions on a diverse array of topics. Please check out the full conference schedule [here](#). Thank you to everyone who will be traveling to Cerritos for the conference. I hope it will bring you all inspiration, ideas, and connection. A special word of thanks to our VP for Conferences, Dr. Michael Kirkorian, and to our wonderful conference committee: Dr. Eloise Kim, Dr. Mitzi Kolar, Dr. Stephen Pierce, Dr. Joshua Tan, Mie Shirai, and Noreen Wenjen for all of their hard work putting this exciting event together.

I am delighted to announce that we are planning to offer all of our student programs both competitive and non-competitive, in person this year following state safety protocol guidelines. However, we are monitoring the environment carefully and are ready to move these programs online, if necessary.

In addition, I am excited to advertise the CAPMT “Year at A Glance” brochure, many thanks to the Task Force Committee: Dr. Mitzi Kolar, Dr. Julie Ann Ballard, Grant Kondo, Noreen Wenjen and Dr. Joshua Tan for their time, insights and inspiration in creating the beautiful brochure.

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

- Dr. Martha (Marty) Baker-Jordan and Marienne Uszler are our 2022 CAPMT Lifetime Achievement Award recipients and will be honored at the conference.
- Dr. Ron Anderson is our 2022 CAPMT Commissioned Composer. His work for vocal ensemble, “Let His Mind Be in You” will be premiered at the conference.
- Our CAPMT 2022 Outstanding Members are as follows:

District 1: San Diego South Chapter – Magdolna Bornemisza

District 2: San Francisco/East Bay Chapter – Gail Lew

Santa Clara Valley Chapter – Ginger Kroft, Jui-Ping Chou

District 3: South Bay/Santa Monica Chapter – Kayo Harda

District 4: Hemet Valley Music Teachers Chapter – Michi Swanson

Riverside/San Bernardino Counties Chapter – Erika Ramos-Sheidel

Music Teachers of the Desert – Alex Danson

District 5: Sacramento Chapter – Christine Choi

District 6: Central Coast Music Teachers Ass’n Chapter – Louise Frye

District 7: Red Empire Chapter – Elizabeth MacDougall

District 8: Orange County Chapter – No nomination

District 9: Greater Pasadena Chapter – Ginny Atherton

San Fernando/Santa Clarita/Ventura Chapter – Nobuyo Nishizaka

CONGRATULATIONS to all!

I want to thank Dr. Stephen Pierce for his dedication as Editor of *CAPMT Connect* for the past several years. His time and energy are much appreciated. A big welcome to Dr. Sonya Schumann in her new role as Editor of *CAPMT Connect*.

I wish you all a very successful teaching year and look forward to seeing you at the conference. 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,



Happy Fall!

I am writing to you with mixed emotions as this is my last issue as editor of *CAPMT Connect*. Over the past several years, I have enjoyed serving our organization in this role. As editor, I have considered my work as an extension of my teaching – an opportunity to mentor others, particularly the article authors as well as our terrific columnists who have all

contributed so much to our journal. I also hope I have managed to engage and perhaps even inspire you, our CAPMT members. Thank you to everyone who has worked with me as editor – I appreciate you putting up with me! I know I can be exacting and fussy at times but my intentions have always been to try to enhance your fine contributions and deliver the best possible version of our journal twice a year. I will miss writing, editing, and putting each issue together but I am also excited for some new opportunities. Dr. [Sonya Schumann](#) has graciously agreed to take over as editor of *CAPMT Connect* and I am looking forward to seeing how she brings her exceptional scholarship, pedagogical acumen, and creative ideas to this position. Furthermore, I am grateful for her help putting this issue together; I so enjoyed working on it with her. Thank you and welcome, Sonya! Thank you also to the wonderful *CAPMT Connect* editorial committee members for your continued service to our organization, kindness, and support of me as editor. I am thrilled that I will continue to work alongside you as a member of the editorial committee moving forward.

My sense is that the craziness and uncertainty of the past few years, and the effects of the pandemic in particular, have prompted many of us to reassess our priorities. It might also be due to my recent birthday (and the increasingly conspicuous gray hairs, and wrinkles I seem to be sporting lately) that I decided to substantially reexamine my priorities. Reflecting on and reconsidering all that I do has led in part to my decision to step down as editor of *Connect*. This process of reevaluation has also inspired me to prioritize my physical and mental health more than ever before and make some important changes to my lifestyle and regimen. For example, I now try to commute to campus fewer days per week. For me, teaching a few

incredibly long (and exhausting, to be fair) days at school is preferable to the time and stress spent driving to and from campus more frequently. In place of six or seven hours of sleep, I now strive for eight on average while trying to achieve a more consistent bedtime. Instead of working 12+ hours every day, my goal is to work for eight to ten hours and endeavor to use the remaining time for physical exercise, piano practice, a creative research project, or simply rest. I have also started prioritizing time with my partner and scheduling regular visits, calls, text messages, and even trips with friends and loved ones. No-one ever lies on their deathbed wishing they had spent more of their lives working, yet our contemporary lifestyle, together with the training we receive as musicians, seems to prize industriousness and work ethic over everything else while priming us for workaholic-ism. I am therefore beginning a new chapter with the aim of achieving a better sense of work-life balance. I would encourage all of my CAPMT colleagues to do the same!

That said, I am not an athletically inclined person and only a quasi-health fanatic so trying to improve my physical habits and keep healthier is an ongoing challenge. I was always the scrawny kid who never got picked for team sports in elementary school and who failed to stay on the balance beam in first grade. As a child, I also preferred to spend time playing the piano, doing homework, or sitting in the corner drawing pictures rather than playing sporty activities outside. As such, I have started utilizing what behavioral scientist [Katy Milkman](#) calls “temptation bundling” to inspire me to work out and get outside more regularly. Temptation bundling can be defined as “pairing a pleasurable indulgence with a behavior that provides delayed rewards.”¹ As such, it “combats present bias by making behaviors with delayed benefits more instantly-gratifying.”² I learned about this idea as I was taking a walk and listening to [The Happiness Lab](#) podcast presented by [Laurie Santos](#), a psychologist who famously teaches a course on happiness at Yale. Coincidentally, I like to start most days by taking a long, but brisk walk (with occasional sprinting) outside, while I listen to a favorite podcast. The fresh air, beautiful Pasadena surroundings, as well as the podcast all serve as my pleasurable indulgences while the five to ten-mile walk/run provides the benefit of a trimmer physique, decreased anxiety, improved sleep, and better health overall. You might try using a favorite activity or snack as a reward to inspire practice or exercise, and/or complete a mundane or tedious task. The possibilities are endless yet the benefits are considerable. An added advantage is that the podcasts I listen to not only inspire, inform, and entertain me, they also provide insights I can use in my teaching. In addition to *The Happiness Lab*, Malcom Gladwell’s [Revisionist History](#), [Hidden Brain](#) with Shankar Vedantam, and [Twenty Thousand Hertz](#) by Dallas Taylor are among my favorite podcasts. I am also a fan of sleep podcasts such as [Sleep Wave](#), [Sleep Cove](#), and [Sleep With Me](#) as these have all helped to improve my sleep habits. Our

¹ Erika L. Kirgios, Graelin H. Mandel, Yeji Park, Katherine L. Milkman, Dena M. Gromet, Joseph S. Kay, Angela L. Duckworth, “Teaching temptation bundling to boost exercise: A field experiment,” *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, Volume 161, Supplement, 2020, pp. 20-35, ISSN 0749-5978, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2020.09.003>.

² Ibid.

society seems to undervalue the importance of sleep yet getting a greater amount of quality sleep has become a key ingredient to improving my well-being. I think we would all benefit from more and better-quality sleep. I like to share all of this information as well as the resources above with my increasingly overextended students too!

On the topic of wellness, we are delighted to include another inspiring wellness column focused on “Musician Wellness in Higher Education” penned by CAPMT wellness chair, Dr. Jackie Petitto. Jackie’s influential work in this field not only led to the musician’s wellness course she taught at Colburn but also to similar courses offered at peer institutions including USC. Thank you, Jackie for continuing to advocate for musician’s wellness and for your tireless efforts to educate all CAPMT members about the value of wellness, especially as it applies to music teachers and students. I am also thrilled to see an article on “Sight-reading for the Contemporary Pianist” included in this issue of *Connect*, particularly because it was written by members and former members of the MTNA USC Collegiate Chapter for which I serve as faculty advisor. The authors provide valuable insights about keyboard sight-reading in general, while advocating for certain additional activities to be included as part of a more holistic approach to teaching sight-playing.

In Yvonne Reddy’s first outing as Independent Music Teachers Forum (IMTF) columnist she has focused on the different perceptions of success as understood by the music student, parent, and teacher. Her column was based on a recent panel discussion at a CAPMT Santa Clara Valley Chapter event and provides some fascinating insights. Welcome to the *CAPMT Connect* team and thank you, Yvonne! Gail Lew has again recommended a slew of delicious delights in her column, “Piano Treats to Spark the Imagination.” Our heartfelt thanks go out to Gail for continuing to keep us informed about important new editions of piano music as well as highlighting some of the most enticing, newly published pedagogical piano pieces available. And finally, our Coda column in this issue is focused on the important topic of diversity as it relates to recital programming and the selection of piano repertoire for teaching and performance. Thank you to Sonya Schumann for curating this column and to all of the contributors for their thoughtful remarks.

And so, it is time for me to wrap up this final editorial. Thank you for the privilege and pleasure of serving as editor of *CAPMT Connect*. I have so enjoyed sharing my thoughts and ideas about teaching and more with everyone. I hope to see many of you at the upcoming CAPMT state conference, or perhaps at a future MTNA, CAPMT or RCM event. In the meantime, happy reading and happy teaching!

Stephen Pierce
Editor, CAPMT Connect

Independent Music Teachers Forum (IMTF)

Bridging the Divides Between Music Teacher, Parent, and Student Perceptions of Success

Yvonne Reddy

I had the honor of hosting a panel discussion on “Teacher/Parent/Student Success” at the recent CAPMT Santa Clara Valley “Discovery Day – Bridging Divides” event. The discussion was intended to reveal how each party – teacher, student, and parent – defines successful music study as it pertains to their own role, and how they thought their success is defined by the other parties. The panel comprised a piano teacher with thirty years of teaching experience, the parent of a seven-year-old piano student, and a thirteen-year-old student with six years of lessons. The panelists’ responses have been lightly edited for clarity.

There are many aspects to learning music and a musical instrument. As a music teacher, parent or student how do you define successful music study?

Teacher: My ultimate goal is for the student to enjoy the sound and feel of the instrument. I want the student to show enthusiasm for lessons, a willingness for consistent practice, and to be engaged in choosing music together. A wonderful thing is when a student stays long term and/or continues their music studies as an adult.

Parent: I consider short term success when my child is able to show up in class and do what the teacher asks – follow dynamics, articulation, scales, hand positions, etc. For long term success, I want my child to be able to express herself through music and enrich her life experience. Playing music is also a good way for my child to bond with friends.

Student: As a student, I experience successful music study when I am able to read the music and follow dynamics and all the details written in the piece. It is also when I can add my own twists so that the piece sounds better to my ear and my taste. I think successful music study also includes being able to express myself and my feelings through music.

How do you think the other two parties define success? For example, if you are a teacher, how do you think a parent and student define successful music study respectively?

Teacher on the Parent: I assume they want to get their money's worth out of the investment in their child's music education, to see their child practicing independently, and to see that their child is excited about music. I believe they want to see their child's progress from semester to semester through recitals and other means.

T on the Student: I believe they want to see progress and growth at the instrument, play music they enjoy, and feel good about themselves. They want the ability to keep up with their peers who also play music and have a shared enthusiasm with their peers.

Parent on the Teacher: I think the teacher thinks, “I teach you something in this class, you go home and practice, and when you come back next class you can show and do, and demonstrate that you listened to me.” That is success for the teacher. I think they also define success as the student liking the music they are playing.

P on the Student: I think my child already knows what ‘good sound’ is. When she practices, if she can make the sounds then she is really happy.

Student on the Parent: I think my parents define success by hearing me play music I enjoy. They also want me to continue up through exam levels.

S on the Teacher: I think my teacher defines my success by me being able to enjoy piano and have it as an enjoyable pastime. I also believe she thinks I should progress through the exam levels.

What aspects of studying music do you believe are most crucial for your success as a music teacher, parent or student, as you have defined it?

T: As a musician I want to see consistency in my practice and measured growth at the piano. I want to push my musical boundaries each year, and to build and expand my musical relationships with peers and colleagues. I want to continually find ways to improve my studio space and grow in my teaching abilities. I am always searching for and trying new music as well. I then apply these ideas to my students but at a simpler level. I want to see my piano studio growing as a community.

P: Supporting my daughter when she needs it, such as playing a duet at her first recital. I go to all her lessons and sit with her during practice to have her do what is expected, like a coach. She is still young so she is okay with me being in the lesson, although the teacher might not like it. I am not concerned about my daughter doing exams, but I try to sign her up for every opportunity to perform.

S: I think the most important aspect of studying music is developing a stronger sense of musicality, which will also help me in my dance studies. I also think getting better at theory and finding new ways to learn will help my success.

What things have you encountered that have hindered your success as a music teacher, parent, or student?

T: Lack of communication! Parents who don’t reveal that there is a battle over practicing, piano is viewed negatively at home, or that a life-changing event has occurred, greatly hamper my ability as a teacher. Disrespectful parents who pay late or otherwise don’t respect studio policies. Parents with unreasonable expectations or ideas of how lessons should be progressing, interfere with allowing me to discover their child’s interests and abilities and teach accordingly. Overscheduled students who don’t have enough time in their schedules to practice adequately for their age/level prevent structured teaching.

P: My daughter is very busy during the week so it can be hard to find the time to sit down and practice. Sometimes she just doesn't want to practice. When this happens, we choose an easier piece to work on or a more fun piece, or sometimes I let her not practice that day.

S: One thing that hindered my success was time management. I get a lot of homework from school and was doing other extracurricular activities so at the beginning of the year it was hard to find time for everything. As time went on, I got better at time management. Another thing was social issues. My class at school was filled with unnecessary drama, which distracted me quite a bit in the beginning until I learned to just ignore it.

What do you believe the roles of teacher, parent, and student should be in creating a successful learning experience?

Teacher on the Teacher: The teacher should handle all the expertise and materials, create a clean, safe and welcoming space conducive to lessons in the studio, be a cheerleader for each student at the instrument, keep things positive and moving forward, be an honest and clear communicator, and use firm but gentle communication.

T on the Parent: Parents should facilitate an organized and quiet practice space at home, good communication with teacher, positive attitude at home surrounding instrument practice and lessons, and stay on top of the lesson schedule.

T on the Student: Students should have a sense of enthusiasm. They should be open to the journey and where it leads musically, commit to adequate practice time for their age/level, bring materials to lessons and take good care of books and materials.

Parent On the Teacher: The teacher should be leading the lessons.

P on the Parent: The parent should believe in the teacher and support the student and the teacher. Parents can also enrich and expand upon what the teacher is teaching, such as listening to additional music in the same style or composer with their child.

P on the Student: My child is the one who has to make things happen and be responsible for herself.

Student: I think the teacher, student, and parent should collaborate as a team called the "triple alliance."

S on the Teacher: The teacher should help the student through the entire process. The student should ask the teacher any questions they might have. The teacher should be kind and not intimidating in helping.

S on the Parent: Parents should trust the teacher and let the teacher do their job. Parents should also help the student find time to practice.

S on the Student: Students should do the assignments, come to class prepared and be ready to learn with an open mind.

What percentage of input do you think the teacher, parent, and student should each have in deciding the course of musical study?

Teacher on the Teacher: The teacher bears the main responsibility. I check-in regularly with my students and brainstorm how to keep lessons moving forward. I also try to keep discovering the musical gifts each student has and help develop those as well as shoring up any weaker areas. If a child is not succeeding, I need to change my teaching and communicate with the parents.

T on the Parent: The parent plays a significant role in making music studies a positive experience. Their input is welcome and should be shared but overall, they should trust the teacher's path as much as possible. Parents should also communicate any problems quickly so that they can be addressed quickly.

T on the Student: Students should communicate their musical interests and musical preferences to the teacher. The student needs to complete their assignments.

Parent on the Teacher: The teacher should have more than half of the input.

P on the Parent: Parents are responsible for 40% of the input when children are younger, but become less involved as the student grows and can take on more responsibility for their own learning. Eventually the parent should step back and the learning should be between the teacher and student.

P on the Student: The student's input should start at 10% but take on a greater role as their skills develop.

Student on the Teacher: The teacher should have 60% of the input because the teacher is the expert.

S on the Parent: The parent should have 10% of the input. They need to encourage and provide moral support to their child, while letting the teacher do their job.

S on the Student: The student should have 30% of the input. Students are responsible for daily practice and completing assignments.

It is hoped that by sharing these insights, music teachers can work together with parents and students to help everyone achieve success in their respective musical journeys.



In addition to being an RCM Certified Piano Specialist, [Yvonne Reddy](#) holds a master's degree in Music Education and a BA in Cultural Geography. She teaches a full piano studio in San José, California and is an active member of the CAPMT Santa Clara Valley Chapter. Passionate about the benefits of introducing music to very young children, Yvonne created the PRISMS Preschool Music curriculum and teaches preschool music in Family Child care centers in the South Bay area. When not teaching, attending music workshops and seminars, or mentoring other teachers, Yvonne enjoys traveling to new destinations around the world.

Sight-Reading for the Contemporary Pianist

Jennifer Cruz, Crystal Rivette, Barry Tan, and Joshua Tan

Helping students to develop fluent sight-reading skills at the piano is an important priority for many piano teachers. While every teacher might provide their own fingerprint, style and approach to teaching keyboard sight-reading, there are certain methods that tend to yield strong sight-reading results in students and other “cure-all” suggestions that are perhaps less effective than teachers realize. This article seeks to bring together several streams of pedagogical thought, from researched pedagogical approaches to teaching keyboard sight-reading, to an exploration of new directions for helping students sight-read music successfully at the piano. Furthermore, the authors will discuss related topics that highlight the varied sight-reading skill set required of the contemporary 21st-century pianist.

Research Studies Focused on Effective Strategies for Developing Keyboard Sight-Reading Skills

Many traditional approaches to teaching sight-reading rely heavily on error detection. As such, sight-reading is focused on note and rhythmic accuracy within the context of maintaining performance continuity. In researching the effectiveness of some of these approaches for developing keyboard sight-reading skills, the findings are interesting. The improvements made by students in their keyboard sight-reading ability, as observed in the various studies cited below, range from speculative to significant improvement. Let’s consider several studies focused on keyboard sight-reading below.

One sight-reading study by Marilyn J. Kostka was focused on undergraduate non-piano music students in beginning-elementary level group piano classes over the course of a fifteen-week semester.¹ Students in the course were divided into three groups, with the first group given preparation practice in error-detection plus instructions to “shadow” (practice silently above the keys without depressing them) before undertaking a sight-reading test. A second group was given only the instruction to shadow, and the third control group was given no instructions. Pretests were administered before and after ten weeks to set up the average level and expectation of performance, and posttests were administered in the fifteenth week, measuring sight-reading ability using the following three factors: rhythmic accuracy, hesitations, and pitch accuracy.² The results of the posttests indicated that while the first group (error-detection practice plus shadowing) showed modest improvement, the second group (shadowing-only) made the most errors on average, and perhaps surprisingly, the control group had the fewest errors on average.³ As the results showed slight but an insignificant improvement of the first group in overall errors made from pretest to posttest, Kostka concluded that the error-detection

¹ Marilyn J. Kostka, “The Effects of Error-Detection Practice on Keyboard Sight-Reading Achievement of Undergraduate Music Majors,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 48, no. 2 (2000): 114-122.

² Ibid., 114, 116-117.

³ Ibid., 119.

approach may result in overall improved sight-reading ability, but that more research is needed to determine conclusive findings.⁴

A shorter study by Pamela Pike and Rebecca Carter focused on a similar group of subjects – first-semester undergraduate music majors in group piano classes – and evaluated the effect of utilizing cognitive chunking techniques on sight-reading ability over the course of several weeks.⁵ The authors stated: “In this exploratory study, the researchers sought to discover whether providing students with drills that encouraged chunking of rhythm or chunking of pitch would result in improved sight-reading performance when compared with students who did not engage in chunking-drill treatments.”⁶ Like Kostka, the study used pretests and posttests for two experimental groups that were given specific preparation activities, together with one control group, and the results were organized using the same categories: rhythmic accuracy, pitch accuracy, and continuity.⁷ This cognitive chunking methodology used preparatory drills that included patterns based on the sight-reading examples for the two experimental groups; the control group was given rehearsal time but no practice drills.⁸ Pike and Carter concluded that “the test data did not result in any significant differences in the overall sight-reading performances between the groups resulting from the experimental treatments.”⁹ However, there were significant score improvements within certain subcategories, i.e. both experimental groups showed improved rhythmic accuracy and continuity when sight-playing, and the experimental pitch group and the control group showed significant improvement in pitch accuracy.¹⁰

A more in-depth study, conducted by Katie Zhukov over two and half years, evaluated three distinct approaches (against a control group) to teaching and developing sight-reading skills in advanced pianists.¹¹ These approaches comprised accompanying activities, rhythmic training, and understanding of musical style, all using carefully chosen materials of an easier level than each participant’s playing level to allow for quick study and to encourage continual, progressive improvement.¹² The aim of this study was to determine which of these three approaches was the most effective in developing keyboard sight-reading skills. The accompaniment training required students to learn two short works for violin/flute and piano per week over the course of a 10-week semester (20 pieces total); in the rhythm training method, students were assigned one or two short

⁴ Ibid., 120-121.

⁵ Pamela D. Pike and Rebecca Carter, “Employing Cognitive Chunking Techniques to Enhance Sight-Reading Performance of Undergraduate Group-Piano Students,” *International Journal of Music Education* 28, no. 3 (2010): 231-246.

⁶ Ibid., 232.

⁷ Ibid., 231.

⁸ Ibid., 233.

⁹ Ibid., 242.

¹⁰ Ibid., 242-243. An interesting speculation by the researchers was that perhaps beginning sight-readers prioritized pitch over rhythm when under pressure, since the rhythm scores did not improve as much as the score in pitch accuracy (241).

¹¹ Katie Zhukov, “Evaluating New Approaches to Teaching of Sight-Reading Skills to Advanced Pianists,” *Music Education Research* 16, no. 1 (2014): 70-87.

¹² Ibid., 74.

rhythmic exercises per week (18 pieces total); the “understanding of musical style” approach used literature from the Baroque and Classical periods that was carefully leveled, and students were tasked with learning two/three short pieces per week (24 pieces total). All three groups were given some kind of instructional preparation to complete: the accompanying group rehearsed once a week with a partner, while the rhythm and style groups were given an ‘analysis checklist’ to identify structural and harmonic components in the assigned scores before sight-reading them. An additional control group was given no specific assignments aimed at improving sight-reading and was asked by the researcher only to continue their regular piano studies.¹³ Results from this large-scale study indicated that the accompanying and control groups improved across all four error categories: “extra notes” (additional notes played that were not in the score), “missing notes” (correct notes that were not played), “beat adjustment” (skipping or missing beats), and “RMS” (‘root mean squared,’ the average number of timing errors per correct note played). The rhythm groups improved in all categories except for the category of “missing notes,” while the style groups improved in all categories except in the category of “extra notes.” According to the authors, the findings suggest that: “rhythm and style training had a more holistic effect on improving participants’ sight-reading skills than mere sight-reading practice.”¹⁴ While this study left out specific details (in particular, the curriculum used), the conclusion was that in general, training sight-reading skills in pianists using these approaches has “a positive impact on sight-reading” although further research is necessary to explore the varied teaching approaches to sight-reading.¹⁵

In short, while the findings of these research studies are interesting and perhaps surprising in some cases, further research focused on keyboard sight-reading will help clarify which pedagogical tools and methodology are best for developing improved sight-reading skills in students.

Lessons on Sight-Reading from a Master Teacher

In addition to these research findings, teachers might also consider the experience and wisdom of a master teacher who has written eloquently on the topic of teaching sight-reading skills to pianists. In *Etudes for Piano Teachers*,¹⁶ Stewart Gordon makes it clear that the process of sight-reading, as with other keyboard skills, is dependent on a student’s basic aptitude for this skill. Some students are more innately gifted readers than others while all individuals exhibit different musical strengths and weaknesses. Gordon advises that teachers incorporate sight-reading activities regularly into students’ lessons from the very beginning.

Gordon also outlines a few popular “cure-all” methods for developing sight-reading skills. According to Gordon, these ideas are often provided to students by well-meaning teachers. They were also suggested to him and include: “sight- read every day,” “read collaboratively,” “keep

¹³ Ibid., 74-75.

¹⁴ Ibid., 83. Interestingly, the control group improved the most across all four error categories. Upon further investigation, transcripts of exit interviews revealed that 8 out of the 25 control group participants were involved in their own self-motivated sight-reading practice activities (77-78).

¹⁵ Ibid., 84.

¹⁶ Stewart Gordon, *Etudes for Piano Teachers: Reflections on the Teacher’s Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 40-43.

going no matter what and “never look at the keyboard.”¹⁷ Unfortunately, none of these well-intentioned ideas helped Gordon improve his sight-reading skills and he goes on to describe why he does not think these suggestions are helpful to weak sight-readers in general. Instead, Gordon details his own sight-reading journey and advocates for a different approach. He suggests that teachers assign repertoire for sight-reading purposes that is easy enough for students to comfortably play with mastery with the following elements in place:

1. [understanding] keyboard positions
2. [achieving] rhythmic flow
3. [managing] up-to-tempo playing
4. [keeping] all the notes in place
5. [maintaining] the eyes comfortably on the score¹⁸

Gordon argues that students can only successfully sight-read with these five elements achieved if they use repertoire that is appropriate for their individual sight-reading level. This might mean starting with material at the beginning level, even if the student’s repertoire and other pianistic abilities are of a much more advanced level, and gradually progressing through subtle gradations to playing sight-reading material of greater difficulty. To this end, Gordon details how he used material, starting from beginning method books and worked his way up, following the parameters listed above. This approach to developing sight-reading skills resonates with Zhukov’s study discussed earlier. As mentioned, the material used in that study for all sight-reading groups was carefully leveled-down, further supporting Gordon’s claim that moving gradually through material, from the most manageable level of difficulty upwards, might be most beneficial for improving a student’s sight-reading ability at the piano.

Additional Sight-Reading Skills for the Contemporary Pianist

In addition to well-developed sight-reading skills, the gigging pianist today is also expected to be well-versed in a variety of styles and settings. It is therefore to our advantage as music educators to not only provide our students with traditional sight-reading material, but also introduce other kinds of sight-reading. Typical gigs for pianists include playing for church services, realizing lead sheets in contemporary music settings, reading open scores for choir rehearsals and performances, as well as developing the ability to improvise in a variety of music genres (pop, musical theater, church music, etc.). As such, the sight-reading skill set of the contemporary pianist needs to be expanded to incorporate the ability to meet these and similar challenges.

¹⁷ Ibid., 41.

¹⁸ Ibid., 42.

Developing Open Score/Choral Reading Skills in Piano Students

According to a 2009 study funded by Chorus America, by conservative estimates there are as many as 270,000 choruses nationwide in the United States.¹⁹ At many choir rehearsals, a pianist is needed to provide pitch support, a harmonic reduction, and musical collaboration with the conductor, in addition to serving a wide range of other essential roles. Pianists are frequently approached to play for a choir, often filling in on short notice. Yet, unless the pianist is highly experienced in this modality of music, they may feel uncomfortable sight-reading a multi-part score. Examples of the unfamiliar can include transposing a tenor part one octave down, revoicing large intervals between the hands, reducing a large number of individual notes into a single chord, and deciding what types of keyboard support to prioritize during a choral rehearsal. As such, being a successful choral collaborative pianist requires specialized sight-reading skills that are not always emphasized in traditional private piano lessons.

Many pianists already have a good grasp of functional harmony through their study of piano repertoire and music theory training. As such, reducing harmony from two or three staves into blocked chords at the piano can feel quite natural for the well-trained student. On the other hand, reading chordal textures from more than two staves can be overwhelming, especially if the voicing of the chord does not fit well into familiar hand positions at the piano. This is why a successful approach to teaching keyboard harmony should encompass a plethora of contexts in order to develop the versatility needed for playing and sight-reading choral repertoire with success. Very often, there is not enough time to analyze every line of the score. As such, the pianist is required to quickly fill in harmonies when only a few voice parts are provided. While there are many resources available in the study of keyboard harmony, R. O. Morris's *Figured Harmony at the Keyboard*²⁰ is an indispensable text for pianists. This treatise approaches harmony from a figured bass perspective and provides important details about many idiomatic patterns found in cadential and sequential passages, as well as terrific information on suspensions. Teachers might explore this text in lessons with intermediate to advanced students. Another important set of resources for the choral pianist are the Chorales of J. S. Bach (1685–1750), edited by Albert Riemenschneider.²¹ Printed in a two-staff edition, these chorales help pianists understand the fundamentals of choral voice leading and counterpoint in a familiar context. The pianist can then progress to reading similar chorales and motets printed in a multi-stave setting.

A challenge that many pianists face when playing for choirs is the ability to score-read polyphonic repertoire printed on multiple staves, particularly if there is not a grand staff reduction provided underneath the various voice-parts. Developing this skill takes time and practice. A book that is particularly helpful in developing this skill is *Preparatory Exercises in Score Reading* by R. O. Morris

¹⁹ Grunwald Associates and Chorus America, *How Children, Adults, and Communities Benefit from Choruses: The Chorus Impact Study* (2009): 25-26, https://chorusamerica.org/sites/default/files/resources/ImpactStudy09_Report.pdf

²⁰ R. O. Morris, *Figured Harmony at the Keyboard* (London: Oxford University Press), 1960.

²¹ Albert Riemenschneider, ed., *371 Harmonized Chorales and 69 Chorale Melodies with Figured Bass* (New York: Schirmer, 1986).

and Howard Ferguson.²² It begins with two-part reading, with the familiar treble or bass clef in one hand, paired with a less familiar clef (i.e. alto or tenor clef) in the other hand. The book then moves to reading excerpts written for three, four, and five parts, which helps the pianist build intervallic reading skills and develop an awareness of how individual voice parts interact. Surveying the standard choral literature is naturally another good way to develop the skill of score-reading polyphonic textures. To this end, Dennis Shrock's *Choral Scores*²³ is an invaluable music anthology that contains significant choral pieces from every major musical era and can be used effectively for score-reading practice.

Lead-sheet Notation/Chordal Realizations

In addition to the challenge of open score-reading, reading and realizing a lead sheet can be just as daunting for the classically trained pianist. This is because a lead sheet contains very little information compared to a traditionally notated score. In today's music market, pianists are frequently contracted for last minute services or gigs that can encompass musical genres not necessarily rooted in classical music. This includes playing keyboard and/or piano in a band for contemporary church services, collaborating with singers in the pop and musical theater worlds, and various other forums that do not utilize traditional two-staff keyboard music notation. In many of these scenarios, pianists are presented with a lead sheet. A lead sheet can be defined as: "an abbreviated form of music notation featuring just the essential musical information."²⁴ While the challenge of sight-reading from a lead sheet can be overlooked and tossed aside by some classically-trained pianists as only meant for jazz or pop musicians, these pianists might be missing out on potentially financially lucrative opportunities. Moreover, realizing lead-sheet notation offers a great learning experience for the classical pianist, and provides tools to further develop as well-rounded and versatile musicians.

When sight-reading lead sheets, chord symbols consisting of succinct abbreviations, often printed above the melody line must be realized successfully by the pianist. When realizing these chords, the pianist has an opportunity to make creative decisions and essentially improvise. This may include playing the chords as arpeggiated figures, solid or blocked chords, spaced out broken chords sustained by the pedal, combinations of the possibilities mentioned above, and more.

The skill of improvisation and chordal realization also provides an opportunity for pianists to exercise their music theory knowledge, taking theory from paper to the keyboard. An article by Jonathan Feist called "Why Lead Sheets?" is an excerpt from his book, *Berklee Contemporary Music Notation*.²⁵ It serves as a good launching pad for helping students understand how to read and understand lead sheet chord symbols. The article provides a concise chord chart, with clear

²² R. O. Morris, and Howard Ferguson, *Preparatory Exercises in Score Reading* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969).

²³ Dennis Shrock, *Choral Scores* (London: Oxford University Press, 2015).

²⁴ Jonathan Feist, "Why Lead Sheets?" Berklee. *Berklee Contemporary Music Notation*, June 1, 2018, <https://www.berklee.edu/berklee-today/summer-2018/lead-sheet>

²⁵ Ibid.

examples of chords of different qualities (major, minor, augmented, suspended etc.) and their abbreviated symbols as they appear in lead sheet notation.

Please see a sample of this chart below:

Quality	Abbreviations	Examples	Notes for C Root
Major	(none, triad only) Ma, Maj, M, Δ	C CMa7	C E G C E G B
Minor	mi, min, m, –	Cmi C–	C E \flat G
Suspended 2	sus2	Csus2	C D G
Suspended 4	sus4, sus	Csus4	C F G
Diminished	dim, ^o	Cdim	C E \flat G \flat
Augmented	aug, +	Caug	C E G \sharp
Five (Power Chord)	5	C5	C G
Sixth	6	C6 C–6	C E G A C E \flat G A
Seventh	7	CMaj7 C7 C7 \flat 5 Caug7 C–7 Cmin(Maj7) C ^o 7 Cdim(Maj7) C7sus4	C E G B C E G B \flat C E G \flat B C E G \sharp B C E \flat G B \flat C E \flat G B C E \flat G \flat B \flat C E \flat G \flat B C F G B \flat

Source: Jonathan Feist, "Why Lead Sheets?" *Berklee, Berklee Today*, June, 1, 2018,
<https://www.berklee.edu/berklee-today/summer-2018/lead-sheet>

Sight-reading lead sheet notation during lesson time can also be a great way of changing up the lesson routine. Moreover, sharpening students' ability to recognize and realize lead sheet chord symbols at the keyboard and improvising chordal figures are wonderful tools for all pianists to develop. There are multiple strategies teachers can use to begin this journey with a student. As a useful starting exercise and introduction to lead-sheet reading, teachers might consider introducing keyboard harmony concepts to early-intermediate students. How-to strategies might include: how to realize basic chords on the piano, (creating major/minor chords, broken and solid chords, 1-2 octave arpeggios, etc.); an introduction to simple chord progressions (I-IV-V-I), (ii-V-I) etc.; playing different chord inversions and more. Utilizing the chart above can also serve as a terrific tool in lessons. Students could use it to help them label certain chords in the music they are playing, or they could choose a chord on the chart, and realize it on the keyboard.

Once students have amassed a basic keyboard harmony skill set, teachers can access a variety of free, public domain resources that contain scores with lead sheet notation. As a starting point, teachers might check out the following websites:

<https://www.pianosongdownload.com/leadsheets.html>

<https://sheetmusicforfree.com/download/jazz/jazz-standards>

<https://sheetmusicforfree.com/download/piano/rock-and-pop-music-sheets-for-piano>

<https://www.musicnotes.com/sheet-music/leadsheet/style/jazz>

<https://www.musicnotes.com/sheet-music/leadsheet/style/pop>

In short, introducing lead sheet sight-reading into piano lessons is a great way to break out of mundane lesson routines, as well as keeping students engaged and challenged in a unique way. To this end, the Royal Conservatory of Music (RCM) Certificate Program has updated their piano syllabus, 2022 edition to include a new option as part of their sight-reading assessment.²⁶ From level 5, students can choose to either realize a lead sheet, or opt to play a traditional sight-reading excerpt on their exam. This update from the RCM confirms the need for developing lead sheet reading skills in students and the value of incorporating a more varied and inclusive approach to teaching sight-reading skills in general.

Conclusion

In short, sight-reading is an invaluable skill for pianists to develop as it provides a gateway to a lifetime of music making at the piano. Moreover, the contemporary pianist in search of a lucrative career would do well to develop a wider-ranging sight-reading skill set that not only includes sight-playing proficiency of traditional or standard piano literature but also the ability to realize lead sheets and score-read successfully. To this end, Stewart Gordon's advice for developing sight-playing skills of traditional piano repertoire might be applied to reading lead sheets and choral open scores as well. Non-traditional reading activities might also be used in rotation with sight-reading standard keyboard literature. This not only provides a lesson routine change, but these activities may help us prepare our students for a variety of performance opportunities. Furthermore, teaching our students to have a firmer grasp on open score choral reading, and/or understanding and realizing lead-sheet chord notation, also serve to benefit and improve our students' overall musicianship and versatility. And finally, while research has been conducted on how we might best teach sight-reading skills to our piano students, more research in this area is certainly needed, especially with developing an expanded keyboard sight-reading skill set in mind.

²⁶ Piano 2022 Syllabus, *Royal Conservatory of Music*, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2022

<https://rcmusic-kentico-cdn.s3.amazonaws.com/rcm/media/main/about%20us/rcm%20publishing/piano-syllabus-2022-edition.pdf>

Dr. [Jennifer Cruz](#) is an Associate Professor and Director of Keyboard Studies for the School of Performing Arts at California Baptist University. She holds degrees from the University of Southern California (DMA and MM) and the Eastman School of Music (BM) in Piano Performance with minor fields in Music Education, Keyboard Collaborative Arts, and Piano Pedagogy. In addition to adjudicating and performing, Dr. Cruz is former Vice President of the MTNA USC Collegiate Chapter, and an active member of CAPMT, YPLN and MTAC. She regularly conducts master classes and clinics, and presents at music conferences. She has published two articles in the *California Music Teacher*.



Pasadena native [Crystal Rivette](#) is a Doctor of Musical Arts candidate at the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music, where she is studying Piano Performance in the studio of professor Antoinette Perry, and completing minors in Musicology, Piano Pedagogy, and Arts Leadership. She previously served as Treasurer, and Vice President of the MTNA USC Collegiate Chapter and maintains an active teaching and performance schedule in the Los Angeles area. Ms. Rivette is currently in her ninth year as Director of the Artist Certificate Program at Azusa Pacific University, where she has been a member of the keyboard faculty since 2009.

Praised by the *Boston Globe* for his "mesmerizing performance," Canadian pianist Dr. [Barry Tan](#) is based in Los Angeles, and enjoys an active career as a pianist and educator. His solo and collaborative experiences have led him to perform at the Tanglewood Music Center, the Primrose International Viola Competition, Interlochen Arts Camp, the Chan Center of the Performing Arts in Vancouver, Canada, and throughout Southern California. Barry recently completed doctoral studies at the USC Thornton School of Music, where he was honored as Outstanding Doctoral Graduate in Keyboard Studies. During his studies, Barry served as President of the MTNA USC Collegiate Chapter for two consecutive years. At present, he serves as a Staff Pianist at the Colburn Conservatory, and as an Adjunct Professor of Music at California Baptist University.



Dr. [Joshua Tan](#) currently serves on the music faculties of Fullerton College and the Pasadena Conservatory of Music. He is a collaborative pianist for the LA Children's Chorus and maintains an active private piano teaching studio in the Los Angeles area. With his diverse musical background, Dr. Tan encourages his students to explore connections between the various fields of music and beyond. As a baritone singer himself, he particularly enjoys working with vocalists and living composers. Dr. Tan received his DMA in Piano Performance from the University of Southern California, studying with professor Bernadene Blaha. He was also a Keyboard Studies Teaching Assistant, and Director of Outreach for the MTNA USC Collegiate Chapter during his doctoral studies. He currently serves as CAPMT Communications and Advertising state chair.

Musicians' Wellness

Musician Wellness in Higher Education

Dr. Jacqueline Petitto

As a faculty member at the Colburn Conservatory of Music in 2010, I was in the right place at the right time. That year, Colburn received a generous monetary gift from an anonymous donor, specifically earmarked for musician wellness. At last, someone with decision-making power and financial means felt the urgency to incorporate musician wellness into the music performance curriculum. For many years, I had dreamt of designing and teaching a musician wellness course for undergraduate and graduate music students. After all, this was a class I wished I could have taken in college. At that moment, there finally seemed to be substantial momentum and desire for valuable instruction and information geared towards performance students at music departments, schools, and conservatories at large focused on musician wellness.

One of the most influential founding members of the field of performing arts medicine, Dr. Alice Brandfonbrener, came to Colburn in 2010 to give a lecture entitled "Medical Information for Healthy Musicianship." I was so fortunate to meet and interact with Dr. Brandfonbrener, an eminent physician and researcher who started the "Conference on the Medical Problems of Musicians" in Aspen, Colorado. This conference led to the formation of the Performing Arts Medicine Association (PAMA). Back when I was a graduate student dealing with my own injury, I had read so many helpful articles written by Dr. Brandfonbrener and her colleagues published in the journal *Medical Problems of Performing Artists* – the first journal of its kind. After we met in 2010, Dr. Brandfonbrener kindly took me under her wing. She advised and mentored me as she had done for countless other professionals in the field of music.

Shortly thereafter, the Colburn Conservatory prioritized musician wellness as it increased its commitment to the holistic growth of our music students. As a result, a course to address all facets of physical and mental wellness was necessary to prepare music students for the realities of life as a professional musician. Thus "The Healthy Musician" seminar was created in order to enhance the traditional focus on artistry and technique at Colburn. The message was made loud and clear: the seminar became a graduation requirement for all conservatory students because it covered vital concepts and important material.

Once the dean learned of my interest in this field, he immediately asked me to submit a course proposal for The Healthy Musician seminar. Below is what I came up with:

Course Description

A seminar focusing on crucial concepts and proven techniques to intelligently care for the musician's body and mind. The course will offer a setting in which to explore relevant topics through lectures, readings, presentations, discussion and workshops by guest music medicine experts and specialists who will provide hands-on demonstrations.

Course Goals

By the end of the semester, the student should be:

- equipped with tools and resources to maintain a healthy, performing lifestyle;
- knowledgeable and aware of his/her own body especially when making music;
- able to balance the mental and physical aspects of performance.

Course Outcomes

At the conclusion of the course, the student will possess demonstrable knowledge of the physical and mental processes of instrumental music production.

Seminar Topics of Study would include but not be limited to:

- 1. Introduction. Do's and Don'ts of Practice:** identifying injury symptoms; warming up and knowing when to stop; breathing; stretching; body maintenance, avoiding strain, tension, tightness, fatigue, pain; posture and playing position; helpful resources
- 2. Anatomy of the Playing Mechanism:** physiology; the hand; healthy spine; muscles and nerves most used in playing your instrument; differences and similarities between athletes and musicians
- 3. Performance-Related Injuries:** repetitive motion injuries / cumulative trauma disorders; common symptoms and medical definitions for carpal tunnel syndrome, tendonitis, focal dystonia, nerve impingement, thoracic outlet syndrome, bursitis, tennis and golfer's elbow
- 4. Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy (Hand Therapy):** modalities; range of motion exercises and strengthening; postural education; soft tissue and joint mobilization; symptom management; conditioning
- 5. Chiropractic Care:** adjustments; vertebral subluxation; joint manipulation; spinal cord and nervous system working in harmony
- 6. Alexander Technique:** directions and instructions; head-neck-spine alignment as well as position of wrists and elbows (working at your own instrument); table work; relearning basic movements such as sitting and standing ("monkey" stance)
- 7. Feldenkrais Method:** awareness through movement and functional integration; system of physical re-education (replacing old patterns of movement with new ones); restoring balance and enhancing well-being
- 8. Yoga:** Iyengar, Ashtanga, Bikram, Vinyasa, Kundalini; philosophy and practice; *ujjayi* breathing; stretching and strengthening muscles through poses or *asanas*; meditation; *chakras*; *bandhas*; *pranayama*

9. Acupuncture: Oriental medicine practices; treatments and procedures; *qi* energy; meridians; pulses

10. Massage Therapy: acupressure, Swedish, Thai, deep tissue, Rolfing (Leon Fleischer), reflexology/foot massage

11. Pilates: Contrology (balance of body and mind); stronger core muscles; toning body; lengthening; improving flexibility and stability; mat work; equipment

12. Performance Preparation and Stage Presence: relaxation and stress management; mindfulness; breathing techniques; visualization; freedom of movement and expression; artistry; presentation and communication skills

Additional topics covered later within the seminar included: Hearing Conservation/Protection, Tai Chi, Ergonomic Solutions, Music and Brain Health, Nutrition, “On the Road-” Tips for Thriving while on Tour or The Traveling Musician, Body Mapping for Musicians, and more.

It is highly encouraging to see a growing interest in overall physical and mental wellness at institutions of higher education. In the 1990s, very few people seemed to talk about musician wellness, wellness in general or even know what it was. In 2010, the term and concept of wellness started popping up everywhere. Nowadays, everyone seems to know and talk about wellness. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has renewed our focus and appreciation for general health and wellbeing. More specifically, the landscape of musician wellness in higher education has been radically transformed and continues to evolve. Several university, college and conservatory music programs even offer a webpage dedicated to musician health and wellbeing or music wellness with links to valuable resources such as the NASM (National Association of Schools of Music) guidelines, websites, books, articles, videos, and other pertinent material.

As a teacher and performer, I am energized by this innovative, relevant, and equity-minded framework of education. In the end, it is all about preparing our students and ourselves for a long, healthy, and productive life in music. Stay healthy everyone!

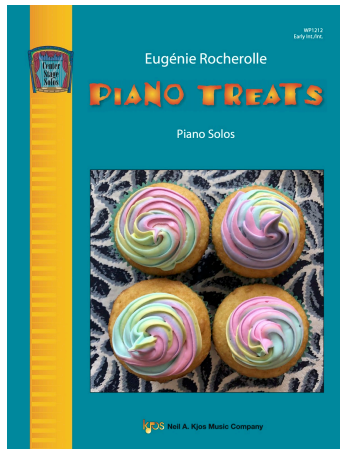


Pianist [Jacqueline Petitto](#) is an active soloist and chamber musician who has performed domestically and abroad. She has taught at the University of Southern California, University of La Verne, Pasadena City College, Los Angeles City College, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Baptist University, 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

Piano Treats to Spark the Imagination

Gail Lew

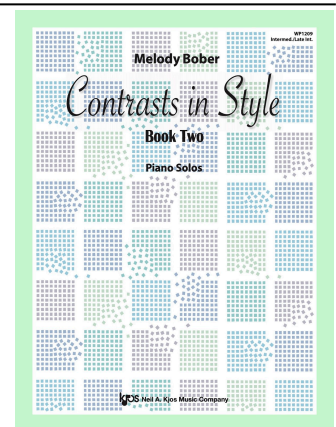


PIANO TREATS
Eugénie Rocherolle
KJOS Music Company ©2022
www.kjos.com
24 pp., \$6.95
Levels 3-4¹

Eugénie Rocherolle never disappoints when it comes to creating piano solos aimed to motivate and delight students. This collection includes a few previously published favorites along with some beautifully crafted new pieces. Rocherolle's compositional style is characterized by harmonic richness and melodic lyricism along with a sprinkling of New Orleans flavor and Southern charm. Her writing capitalizes on the piano's capability to generate coloristic sound using the pedal and many of these pieces showcase the exquisite harmonic richness for which the composer is known. This compositional characteristic is evident in the pieces, *Desert Flower* and *Lullaby*. As one might expect, *Cowpoke* is slow and nostalgic. The quarter-eighth rhythm in 6/8 meter depicts the slow gait of a cowboy's horse loping along. A *French Waltz* is a lilting waltz with delightful French flair. The French waltz can be distinguished by its melodic inventiveness and elegant rhythm, and is never hurried like the Viennese waltz. The composer provides ample opportunity for developing a sense of rubato, and time-taking in this piece. *Summer Day* is a bright, cheery G-major romp in the park. The staccatos keep the piece light and playful. The B section reveals a more relaxed mood with time to watch floating clouds and fleeting butterflies. *Seventh Heaven* is filled with the luscious sound of major seventh, minor seventh, half-diminished, and diminished seventh chords. With a generous amount of syncopation added to boot, this intermediate solo sounds like a sophisticated jazz solo. Once again, Rocherolle has succeeded in creating pianistic solos that inspire and engage students.

CONTRASTS IN STYLE BOOK TWO

Melody Bober
KJOS Music Company ©2022
www.kjos.com
32 pp., \$7.95
Levels 5-6



This winning collection of nine exciting solos expands on the contemporary repertoire contained in [Contrasts in Style Book One](#). The first book in this

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.

series was featured during the New Music Session at the 2021 CAPMT state conference. From the expressive and delicate *Dreamland* to the rousing and upbeat *Straight River Rag*, this collection includes pieces in a wide variety of styles, keys, and tempos. As such, it offers a varied palette of interpretive possibilities. *Thunderstorm!* written in the key of A minor, is fast, furious, and toccata-like. The opening A theme uses triads in root, first, and second inversion alternating between the hands. The middle B section features a left-hand octave melody against a right-hand broken-chord accompaniment. A descending two-octave chromatic scale heralds the return to the brilliant A theme. The final descending two-octave chromatic scale crashes down to A minor chords and low A octaves, bringing the piece to a dramatic close. The right hand in *Jazz on Fourth Street* is harmonized throughout using fourths. The driving beat in this C-minor solo is accentuated with harmonic fifths and sixths in the left hand. The gorgeous soaring melodic line swells repeatedly from *mp* to *f* as *The Eagle Soars* and as hands fly effortlessly from low bass to the upper register of the keyboard. The continuous and repeating broken triads in different inversions lie comfortably under the hands thereby allowing students to easily bring these rapid sixteenth-note passages up to tempo. Students will love the highly syncopated *Malagueña* with its wide extremes of dynamics, touch, rhythms, and a rapid-fire staccato passage in the middle section that alternates between the hands. These pianistic solos offer terrific teaching moments and provide exciting recital repertoire.



INTERMEDIATE FRENCH FAVORITES

Various Romantic and Twentieth-Century French Composers

Hal Leonard ©2022

www.halleonard.com

84 pp., \$12.99

Levels 1-10

This wide-ranging compendium of intermediate French piano repertoire provides teachers with a glimpse into the rich music history of France. With the inclusion of the complete *Gymnopédies* and *Gnossiennes* by Erik Satie (1866–1925) and all of the most famous piano pieces by Claude Debussy (1862–1918), this volume is a great resource and offered at an affordable price. The collection also features interesting repertoire by Mélanie Bonis (1858–1937), Cécile Chaminade (1857–1944), Louise Farrenc (1804–1875), Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924), César Franck (1822–1890), and Maurice Ravel (1875–1937) that deserves a more prominent place in recital performances. The volume opens with the charming Level 1 solo *The Sewing Machine* by Bonis. Though fun to play and delightful for the listener, it is not an intermediate-level piece. Instead of including this selection, the editor could have chosen a more appropriate intermediate piece such as the *Barcarolle in E flat Major*, Op. 71 by Bonis, a piece influenced by Fauré.

Chaminade wrote two series of *Album des Enfants*, Op. 123 and Op. 126. This collection features three selections from the Op. 123 set. For an intermediate collection, choices from Op. 126 such as *Valse Mignonne* or *Élégie* might have been more appropriate. One can hear the influences of Clementi and Hummel in Farrenc's *Étude in C Major* and *Étude in A minor*, whereas her *Impromptu in B minor* is Schumanesque in style and mood. The *Improvisation*, Op. 84, No. 5 and *Romance sans paroles*, Op. 17, No. 3 by Fauré feature luscious harmonic excursions though both are closer to Level 8 in difficulty. *The Doll's Lament* by Franck is a solid Level 4, intermediate piece. Ravel is represented by two Level 10 pieces: the gorgeous *Prélude* (composed as a sight-reading test piece) and his famous *Pavane pour une infante défunte*. The editor is to be credited for featuring so many women composers in this expansive compendium.



FAURÉ PAVANE OP. 50

Gabriel Fauré

Bärenreiter ©2022

www.baerenreiter.com

10 pp., \$13.95

Levels 10

Gabriel Fauré's *Pavane*, written in F sharp minor, features one of the most haunting melodies ever written. The composer's conception of this sixteenth-century courtly dance flows

freely and gracefully. As each iteration of the melodic line is introduced, the melody becomes more enchanting, first as a solo melodic line, then harmonized in thirds, then in octaves, and finally with a third added to the octave, as the music climaxes to a *forte* and returns in the final measures to *piano*. An insightful performance on piano roll recorded by Fauré in 1913 can be accessed on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kd8v8v8v8v8). This edition is based on the only published source while taking into account the manuscript, the published final orchestral version, and Fauré's piano roll recording. A few dynamic indications found in the orchestral score were added when deemed appropriate given the pianistic context. The recording reveals greater use of the damper pedal than is indicated in the score which is important additional information to help performers achieve a successful interpretation of this piece. Editorial additions are carefully documented. This new Bärenreiter edition serves as an invaluable teaching resource and a welcome addition to teacher libraries!



MICROJAZZ COLLECTION BOOKS 4 & 5

Christopher Norton

Boosey & Hawkes ©2021

www.boosey.comAvailable as Book &
Online Audio/Video Downloads

52 pp., \$22.99

Levels 6-7

Christopher Norton's acclaimed [Microjazz](#) series has won worldwide popularity with teachers and students

alike for its stimulating variety of contemporary genres. [Microjazz Collections](#) Books 4 and 5 contain pieces in popular styles such as jazz, blues, rock 'n' roll, and reggae that progress in difficulty throughout each collection. Helpful teaching notes, and online audio resources containing both full performances and backing tracks are provided to enhance both practice and performance. *The Coolest Guy In Town* provides an opportunity for teachers to present music in a popular style and teach important elements of technique at the same time. From the beginning, students will need to keep the left hand short and light while observing the accents in the melody. The arm can drop into the keys but lift in order to observe all of the marked phrasing, keeping phrases exact and precise as indicated in the score. Students will need to practice the left-hand walking bass until they can play it smoothly without accents. Each of the pieces in both volumes provides great teaching moments for improving technique and rhythmic accuracy. Best of all, students will love the music. These collections provide a great way to encourage sight-reading and independent learning. Listen to Norton's performance of *Clowning Around* on [YouTube](#) and experience the fun!

FESTIVE OVERTURE

Melody Bober

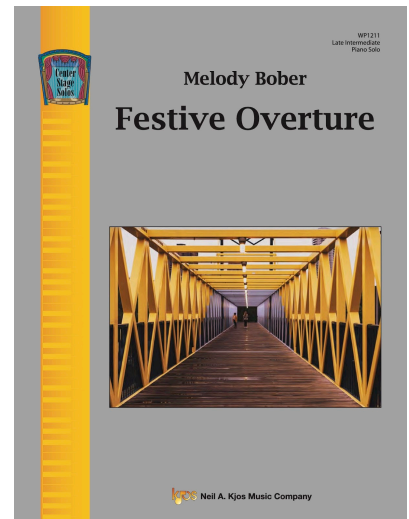
KJOS Music Company ©2022

www.kjos.com

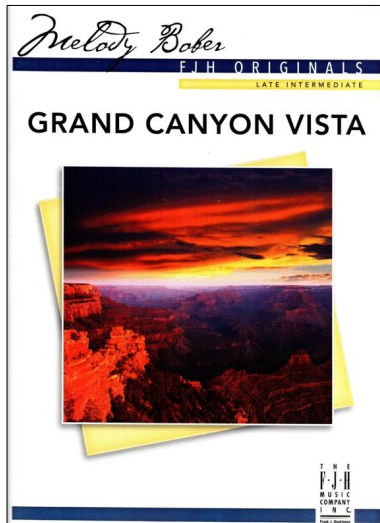
Sheet Music \$4.95

Level 7

This flashy recital piece features powerful opening chords followed by a descending octave passage that leads into a gorgeous, lyrical theme. The 6/8 meter promotes continuous forward momentum that is enhanced by continuously rising crescendos and movement through various tonal centers. The expressive B section with its undulating left-hand arpeggiated accompaniment is scored in a slower 4/4 meter and provides a short respite of calm. The dramatic D-major chords reappear and restate the opening thematic



material bringing the festivities to a close. Pedagogical features include mastering two against three rhythmic figures, octave passages in both hands simultaneously, sixteenth-note scale passagework, changing meters, and arpeggiated left-hand legato accompaniment figures, as well as achieving a wide range of dynamic contrasts. *Festive Overture* is perfect as a recital finale!



GRAND CANYON VISTA

Melody Bober

FJH Music Company Inc. ©2022

www.fjhmusic.com

Sheet Music \$3.95

Levels 7-8

Standing at the rim of the Grand Canyon overlooking the steep cliffs is a thrill one never forgets. The great depth of the Grand Canyon and especially the height of its strata can

be attributed to five to ten thousand feet of uplift of the Colorado Plateau, starting about 65 million years ago. The powerful right-hand triads in inversions that introduce the A section bring to mind the overwhelming power of the canyon's imposing rock formations. The plateau uplift is depicted over and over again in the rising broken-chord arpeggios, played hand-over-hand. Descending left-hand octaves crescendo as we scale the steep cliffs that plummet to the depths of the canyon only to rise again to thunderous inverted triads in both hands. As the piece reaches a rising climax in the *Presto* section, we feel the power and speed of the Colorado River cutting increasingly through the rock until finally reaching the *ff* conclusion. This powerful solo is made to order for recital programs. What a showstopper!

MAJESTIC REDWOODS

Wynn-Anne Rossi

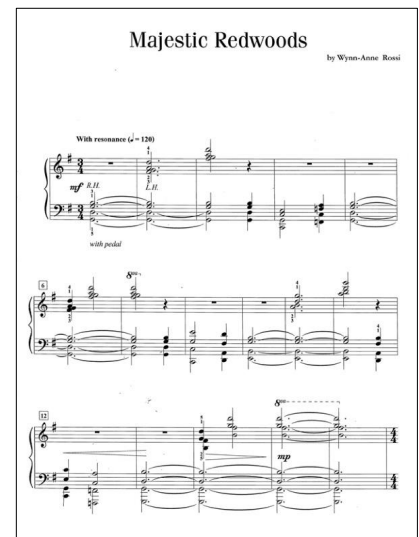
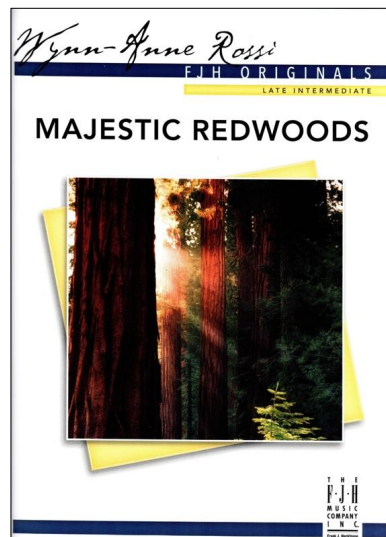
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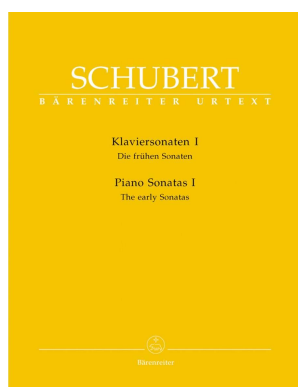
Sheet Music \$3.95

Levels 6-7

Looking up to the sky from the base of earth's tallest tree is one of life's most humbling and amazing experiences. Composer Wynn-Anne Rossi shared her experience among the redwoods in a recent e-mail conversation with me. "*Majestic Redwoods* was premiered at



the wedding of one of my former students in a gorgeous grove of redwoods near Los Gatos. Speakers were placed high up in the trees and when I touched the keys, the music floated down. A magical moment that I'll never forget!" Scored in a slow triple meter, this G-major solo features ascending and descending chords in the 16-measure introduction. The melodic line is then introduced in the left hand against an undulating eighth-note pattern in the right hand, occasionally interspersed with a rising melodic line voiced in sixths in the treble clef. The melodic line is then seamlessly transferred to the right hand followed by a call and response echo between the hands. A four-octave descending eighth-note pattern brings us back to the majestic chords of the opening introduction for a powerful 16-measure Coda. John Steinbeck once wrote, "The redwoods, once seen, leave a mark or create a vision that stays with you always. From them come silence and awe. They are ambassadors from another time."² Wynn-Anne has successfully captured the majesty of these extraordinary trees with her musical tribute.



SCHUBERT PIANO SONATAS I THE EARLY SONATAS

Edited by Walburga Litschauer

Bärenreiter ©2022

www.baerenreiter.com

184 pp., \$54.99

Level 10

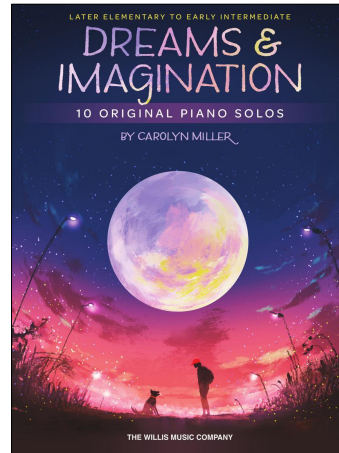
Schubert composed his earliest piano sonatas in 1815 while serving as a teacher's assistant at his father's school in Vienna. At that time, Schubert was taking composition lessons free of charge from Antonio Salieri. The eight sonatas in this edition reflect the rapidly vanishing eighteenth-century musical tradition represented by Clementi, Mozart, and Haydn. Most especially striking about these early sonatas is their wide-ranging choice of keys; Schubert rarely composed in keys such as D flat major, F sharp minor and B major. This New Schubert Edition provides valuable information concerning the interpretation of specific notational markings and questions of performance practice regarding articulation, pedaling, and embellishments, as well as a special emphasis on Schubert's idiosyncratic treatment of hairpins. Schubert's drafts and fragments of the sonatas will soon be posted on the [Bärenreiter website](http://www.baerenreiter.com) (see BA 9642 Extras).

The publisher has taken care to make this new edition a pleasure for performers to use. For example, the engraving is carefully laid out with mostly four measures per system, unlike older editions of these sonatas by other publishers which feature five measures per system. The page turns are also well planned, while the buff-colored, anti-glare paper makes note reading easier on the eyes. Teachers, pianists, and historians alike will especially appreciate the valuable performance suggestions that make this new scholarly edition an indispensable resource.

² John Steinbeck, *Travels with Charley in Search of America* (New York: Viking Press, 1962).

Included in this volume are the following pieces: *Sonata in E Major*, D. 157, *Sonata in C Major*, D. 279, *Sonata in E Major*, D. 459, *Sonata in A minor*, D. 537, *Sonata in A flat Major*, D. 557, *Sonata in E minor*, D. 566, *Sonata in D flat/E flat Major*, D. 568 (both the first and second versions) and *Sonata in B Major*, D. 575.

DREAMS & IMAGINATION
Carolyn Miller
Willis Music Company ©2021
www.halleonard.com
32 pp., \$9.99
Levels 2-3



Students can use their imagination to create a musical picture for each of these delightful vignettes. Teachers can encourage students to mentally paint a picture in their minds of what the title of each piece describes before performing these pieces. To this end, teachers might ask their students the following kinds of questions: can you picture yourself inside a lonely castle (*The Lonely Castle*)? What would it be like to float on a cloud (*Floating on Cloud Nine*)? How would you feel on a beautiful night of *Star Gazing*? Can you hear the *Whispering Wind*? What would it feel like *Flying on a Broomstick*? Pedagogical and musical features include 8va and 15ma writing, navigating an extensive four-octave range over the keyboard, legato pedaling, shifting melody from right hand to left hand, tapping on the fallboard, crossed-hand playing, glissandos, and harmonic intervals not exceeding a seventh (making this piece a great choice for students with small hands). Carolyn Miller offers students so many interpretive possibilities to dream, imagine, and create in these engaging pieces.



[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 for the *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

“What is your approach to picking diverse repertoire, both for your own programs and for your students’ study?”

When choosing repertoire, both for my own programs and my students’ study, I consider a few things. Firstly, I aim to create programs that include a healthy balance of cultural, gender, and stylistic expression. Currently, I’m preparing a program for Piano Spheres, an L.A. based organization which promotes contemporary music. It includes musical gems by European, American and African composers, and a commissioned work by a South African Composer. The stylistic expression ranges from Brahms’ romantic *Intermezzi*, Op. 117 to Coleridge-Taylor’s vivacious Baroque-homage *Toccata*, juxtaposed with Price’s *Fantasie Nègre in E minor*. Having gender diversity is essential to codifying the connection between the performer, the composer, and the audience. The same is true for my students; they are eagerly motivated to practice and perform repertoire by composers that resonate with their cultural, gender, and musical identity. Secondly, I consider the level of difficulty when choosing a piece for an upcoming student presentation (e.g. semester recital, piano jury or competition). It is important to select a piece that complements the student’s physical capacity. To that end, I investigate any technical and musical challenges such as hand stretches, awkward finger patterns, hand crossings, intricate polyrhythms and phrasing. To assist with leveling, I refer to William Nyaho’s five volume set of Piano Music of Africa and the African Diaspora. This indispensable set is organized with works from early-intermediate (Volume 1) to advanced (Volume 5) with fingering suggestions and composer biographies included. While most of these works are immediately accessible to the college-adult student, it is certainly attainable for the precocious pre-college student. Similarly, Artina McCain’s collection of *African American Folk Songs* offers 24 wonderful introductory Folk piano arrangements from the late-elementary to early-intermediate levels. Each piece includes illustrations and notes about the song from which the arrangement is derived. The pieces are immediately accessible to pre-college and college students. Lastly, I try to consider the possible link between the musical personality of the composer and myself (or the student). While it is certainly not the primary predictor of performance success, the musical link has served as a useful reference for determining the learning and performance experience.



[Leonard Hayes](#) is a doctoral student and graduate teaching assistant at the University of Southern California. Prior to USC, Leonard was the Head of Piano Studies at Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing Arts. Leonard has performed in prestigious venues including the Walt Disney Concert Hall, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Meyerson Symphony Center, Winspear Opera House, Wisconsin Union Theater, Kilbourn Hall, and Sweelinckzaal (Conservatorium van Amsterdam). Leonard holds a Master’s degree from the Eastman School of Music and a Bachelor’s degree from Lawrence University. His primary teachers include Bernadene Blaha, Douglas Humpherys, Catherine Kautsky, and T.J. Lymenstull.

A magical performance is the result of pairing distinctive repertoire with a receptive and invested performer. To test whether a piece will be a good addition to my repertoire, I often ask the question, “What is the unique connection I have with this piece?” That unique connection might stem from my personal identity (race, politics, gender identity, etc.), from my unique set of musical experiences and skills (for me, playing both through-composed pieces and improvising), or even from a deeply personal emotional connection or memory (maybe something I heard my teacher play or a favorite song of my grandparents).

It is especially important to lean into music by diverse composers in the post-George Floyd age. When researching these composers and their works, I still want to make sure that I feel an authentic connection with any music that I perform. Playing a piece solely out of “obligation” can sometimes be worse than not playing it at all!

I admire artists who look beyond obvious repertoire choices and bring non-traditional pieces into the classical repertoire based on their experiences and identity. I am particularly proud of the work I have done helping to expand the classical music repertoire as an arranger. I have worked with performers like soprano Julia Bullock and pianist Lara Downes to write arrangements of pieces that they are passionate about by composers like Nina Simone, Lovie Austin, Oscar Brown, Jr., Debbie Friedman, Abbey Lincoln, Eubie Blake, Lil Hardin Armstrong, and Connie Converse. It is exciting to be part of the effort to expand the idea of what classical repertoire can be by creating new piano music that reflects the moment and reexamines the past.



Pianist-composer [Jeremy Siskind](#) is a top finisher in several national and international jazz piano competitions, a two-time laureate of the American Pianists Association, and the winner of the Nottingham International Jazz Piano Competition. A highly respected educator, Siskind has written a number of celebrated instructional books including [Playing Solo Jazz Piano](#), [Jazz Piano Fundamentals](#) (two volumes), and [First Lessons on Piano Improv](#). He currently teaches at Fullerton College, chairs the National Conference for Keyboard Pedagogy’s “Creativity Track,” and spreads peace through music with the non-profit organization, Jazz Education Abroad.

I am always on the lookout for music and composers that I connect with. I love building relationships with working composers in my own communities and being able to bring their music to the stage. Attending new music concerts is an easy way to discover composers and engage with a musical community brimming with suggestions for who or what to listen to. As a

second generation Korean-Canadian, I also feel a calling to focus my commissioning efforts with those that share similar lived experiences. Next season, I will be recording the works of Nahre Sol, Vivian Fung, and Alexina Louie, two of which are freshly commissioned pieces.

To encourage our piano students at San Diego State University (SDSU) to engage with diverse repertoire, I started instigating a 48-hour challenge a few years ago. For this assignment, I compile a selection of low- to moderate-difficulty pieces by living female or people of color (PoC) composers. Students then learn and perform this repertoire within 48 hours. Examples include the composers Sofia Gubaidulina, Gabriela Ortiz, Nkeiru Okoye, and a commissioned set of pieces by SDSU composition faculty member, Texu Kim. Resources that I've scoured to find new repertoire include Jane Magrath's *Piano Literature for Teaching and Performance*; the 2022 Royal Conservatory of Music *Celebration Series*; and the online database on aseatatthepiano.com. The 48-hour piece challenge is a great start to introducing collegiate pianists who are so often preoccupied with the canon, to new and diverse composers. My hope is that my students leave my studio with a richness of stylistic offerings and musical perspectives.

Dr. [Tina Chong](#) is an international award-winning pianist, currently serving as Assistant Professor of Music at San Diego State University. She performs regularly with the San Diego Symphony as principal keyboardist. Tina is a passionate advocate of alternatively-sized keyboards and is responsible for the acquisition of two ergonomically-scaled piano keyboards at SDSU, the first in a university on the west coast. She holds degrees from Indiana University and Oberlin Conservatory, where she worked with her mentors, Arnaldo Cohen, Elisabeth Wright, and Angela Cheng.



In a world with seemingly endless complexity and tragedy, diversity in the arts can seem trivial, but programming and assigning music is a public expression of our values as individuals and as a musical community. Unfortunately, the Western classical music community, like much of the wider world, is only beginning to remediate a long history of institutionalized discrimination. We as teachers and performers have the opportunity to normalize historically marginalized composers for our students and audiences by embracing their works as part of a more inclusive musical canon.

Students often spend tens or hundreds of hours practicing an individual musical assignment. Because of this, repertoire selections have the potential to have an immense impact on their musical, technical, and ideological development. Assigning repertoire is both a huge responsibility and a tireless pursuit, as we seek music with not just beauty, craft, imagination,

expressivity, symmetry, appropriate technical challenges, and authenticity. On top of all this, we must find pieces that provide rich, diverse musical encounters, that illustrate how Western music is evolving and relevant, and that will inspire students to make music for the rest of their lives.

In essence, we must heed the words of Grace Lee Boggs and “transform [ourselves] to transform the world” both to address past discrimination and to create a welcoming environment for musicians and audiences. Fortunately, there are many initiatives and resources addressing the significant disparities of representation in Western classical music including a useful list of databases of repertoire by under-represented composers at www.americanorchestras.org, and performance programs like Keys to Inclusion.

Music can heal and unify us; it can encourage empathy and help us recognize our commonalities, our common aspirations, and our common desire for belonging, connection, and significance. Programming is one of the most powerful tools we have as performers and teachers to inspire a better world.

Acclaimed as “deft, relentless, and devastatingly good” by the Washington Post, Dr. [Elizabeth Schumann](#) has performed as a soloist at the Kennedy Center, Ravinia’s “Rising Stars” Series, Vienna’s Bösendorfer Saal, Australia’s Huntington Festival, Toronto’s Koerner Hall, on NPR and PBS. The winner of the Gilmore Young Artist Award, Bösendorfer International Piano Competition, and Pacific International Piano Competition, she also won prizes at the Cleveland, Hilton Head, Montreal, and World International Piano Competitions. A member of the piano faculty at Stanford University, Dr. Schumann also directs the [Schumann Music Studio](#) in San Francisco, where she records, performs, teaches, collaborates, and devises projects to engage new audiences with innovative combinations of music, art, and technology.



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