

CONNECT

CAPMT



JOURNAL



# CAPMT CONNECT

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# Message from the President

Dr. J. Mitzi Kolar, NCTM • [mitzi@capmt.org](mailto:mitzi@capmt.org)  
CAPMT President



Dear CAPMT Members:

To serve as the CAPMT President, 2023-2025, is an honor and pleasure. Thank you for electing me and the current 2023-2025 Executive Board to lead the organization and to uphold the excellence of CAPMT. As a Professor of Music Emerita from the School of Music and Dance at San Diego State University, I bring my thirty-seven years of teaching at one of California's public universities and fifty-two years of teaching students of all ages in the SDSU Community Music School and my independent studio to the CAPMT Executive Board. Throughout my

career, I have had extensive experiences in the administration of graduate studies, academic committees, and external music organizations. I pledge to lead professionally and transparently and to explore opportunities to enhance our state organization. My door is always open to creative, new ideas or thoughts about improving the organization. CAPMT is here for you, the members.

I encourage your active participation at the chapter and state levels. Since CAPMT functions with volunteers serving the Executive Board, the Districts, and the Chapters, WE NEED YOU. The volunteers who serve the Executive Board often duplicate leadership roles at the district and/or chapter levels. We are asking too much of a select few. PLEASE FIND A WAY THAT YOU CAN SERVE. CAPMT is better with active, dedicated members, who serve the greater community of music teachers and each other. If you can contribute your ideas, organizational skills, and knowledge, please express an interest to your local chapter or drop me an email. A vital, serving organization requires great volunteers. Thank you to those who already serve or have served. You are the heart of CAPMT!

Throughout California, the seventeen chapters are preparing numerous musical events, including the CAPMT Piano and Ensemble Festivals and the CAPMT MTNA Performance and Composition Competitions. Chapters need help from volunteers, who can assist with venue setup, student check-in, paperwork, timing performances, stage management, hospitality and other areas. A helping hand is an appreciated hand! If you are new to the chapter and membership, please check your local chapter's website. Although the registration for CAPMT Piano and Ensemble Festivals and the MTNA Competitions have

closed, you may find the details of any state events at [capmt.org](http://capmt.org) or visit [MTNA.org](http://MTNA.org) for the MTNA Competitions.

As a member, you will find much information and many opportunities at [capmt.org](http://capmt.org). Please create a sign-in with the email used for joining MTNA and CAPMT. MTNA and CAPMT share your membership information. Your membership listing for CAPMT uses the same email as the one for your membership enrollment at MTNA. Since many have multiple email addresses, you may have forgotten which email you used. If so, please contact [info@capmt.org](mailto:info@capmt.org).

As a member, you still have time to register ([capmt.org](http://capmt.org)) for the 2023 CAPMT Conference, *Beyond Musical Boundaries*, at Santa Clara University, Department of Music, October 27-28. Dr. Eloise Kim, CAPMT Vice President of Conferences and the 2023 Conference Committee, created an exciting conference! The two-day conference is packed with an array of presenters whose topics include creativity, music of different cultures, performance, studio tools and management, and student and family development. You do not want to miss guest artist, Dominic Cheli, performer, educator, composer, and director. Dominic, who challenges musical boundaries, will perform, present, and interact with the members in attendance. The guest artist masterclass with Ginger Kroft, a dedicated and active clarinetist in the greater San Francisco Bay area, promises to provide wonderful teaching strategies across the musical spectrum. The world premiere of Hentor, composed by CAPMT Commissioned Composer, Nate May, will be a highlight during the closing concert on Saturday. CAPMT is honored to have Dr. Gary Ingle, MTNA Executive Director and CEO, attending and speaking at the annual Honors Banquet. The CAPMT Board of Directors would enjoy greeting you at the 2023 Conference!

With best wishes for your Fall 2023!

*J. Mitzi Kolar, NCTM*

# Editorial

[Dr. Sonya Schumann](#), NCTM • [sonya@capmt.org](mailto:sonya@capmt.org)  
CAPMT Connect Editor

Dear friends and colleagues,

The smell of Fall is in the air once again! At the wrap-up of every summer, I feel a twinge of sadness for the summer to come to an end, but soon thereafter, I remember the magic of fall. It's time for layers, back-to-school shopping, new students and colleagues, pumpkin-spiced lattes, and large bags of Halloween candy (if my dentist asks, it's for the kids, of course). There is a certain magic in the beginning of new school years. It's more powerful than the true New Year for me; this is when I make my real New Year's resolutions and when I plan out a full calendar for my household and my students. My



spouse and I have made our aspirational resolves and, as inelegant as it appears, created post-it note reminders throughout our home. On one of them, it simply says, "What one thing will you commit to this academic year?" This year, I renewed my resolve to hold myself to high creative standards, with a healthy dose of forgiveness and kindness. To remind myself of this, I hung a quote I discovered while at the Vatican this summer, attributed to Michelangelo:

*The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it.*

What better way to hold ourselves to high standards and galvanize our spirits to inspiration than to connect and collaborate with our colleagues? On that note, I am excited to return to our annual CAPMT conference! I hope to see you all on October 27-28 at the Santa Clara University School of Music and Dance for amazing performances and lectures. Our tagline this year, *Beyond Musical Boundaries*, is reflected in the illustrious careers of such amazing guests as Dominic Cheli, Dr. Gary Ingle, or Ginger Kroft, as mentioned in Dr. Kolar's message. It is also evident in longstanding friendships, such as the bond many of our CAPMT members have with this year's Lifetime Achievement Award recipient Kathryn Hull, or in my own friendship with this year's commissioned composer, Nate May. He and I share an alma mater (*Go Blue*) and a continued camaraderie! I am especially looking forward to sharing hugs and meals with old friends.

In addition to holding ourselves to high standards, we would all do well to remember to practice grace and gratitude. Our “Musician’s Wellness Column,” written by Dr. Jackie Petitto, will focus on gratitude practices and the benefits of taking purposeful time for giving thanks. Dr. Petitto also wrote in the Fall of 2021 about the benefits of using yoga language in the music studio. Two years later, we are following up with an article from Dr. Karen Koner, who combines her expertises in music education and yoga instruction with her article “10 Minute Yoga and Mindfulness Practices for the Stressed Music Teacher.” I benefited from a personal session to try out these moves with her, and with the many ways in which her routine can be customized for my beginner yogi level, I am very eager to put this into daily practice! Thank you to Dr. Koner for encouraging us all to foster well-being for both body and mind!

Also included in this Fall’s issue is our Independent Music Teachers Forum column by Yvonne Reddy, who prepares us for the challenge of first choosing a good method book and ultimately when to move away from method books. As a piano teacher, it can be all too easy to choose one method and never stray, but our musical worlds are richer with a multitude of styles and approaches. Of course, we are also fortunate to have our regular column New Publication Recommendations, penned by Gail Lew. Gail’s column continues to inspire me to discover more music, as well as buy bigger bookshelves! Special thanks to Jackie, Yvonne, and Gail for their collaborative efforts in making this edition possible.

Finally, we will wrap up this edition with a CODA discussion on how best to use lesson time if a student has had an injury, with contributions that span from coast to coast, with suggestions for every age and level. I am so grateful to my wonderful colleagues and friends for sharing their thoughts and expertise with us! I would welcome the opportunity to hear more from colleagues and friends old and new: if you’d like to suggest a topic for CODA discussion, start a dialogue about a fresh column, or simply chat all things music and pedagogy, please reach out to me. My inbox happily awaits your questions, comments, concerns, and compliments!

I hope to see you all at the end of the month in San Jose, and I wish you all a Fall season full of creativity, gratitude, and beautiful music!

Sonya Schumann  
Editor, *CAPMT Connect*



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## Independent Music Teachers Forum (IMTF)



### The Method Book Dilemma

Yvonne Reddy

Some time ago, a group of colleagues and I were discussing the use of method books in our teaching. Many of us, regardless of what instrument we teach, generally start students out in a method book series. Method books provide a foundation to music studies through the sequential introduction of concepts and skills. Pieces are short and students feel a sense of accomplishment as they move through the materials at each level. Susan Paradis, creator of a wide variety of supplemental music resources summarizes the situation nicely with:

*We are so lucky as (piano) teachers to have such great method books available. But by slavishly following every page and insisting our late elementary and middle school students go through every book page by page with all the assorted books that go along with each level, we can do them a great disservice. I understand many teachers are very busy with a studio full of students and really need the structure of a method. But we do not have to*

*require students to play every piece in the book, or even that every piece has to be performed perfectly.*<sup>1</sup>

In fact, a British study of instrumental music teaching in the mid 1990s came to the conclusion “that much of the worst teaching they observed occurred where teachers relied too heavily on Method Books, simply working from one page to the next each week, failing to be flexible and creative in meeting students’ needs.”<sup>2</sup>

Orchestra director and violinist, Dr. Charles Laux identifies that the method book dilemma isn’t just for piano teachers but for every instrumental teacher with:

*As the expert in your field and the person who best understands your students, you want to choose a book that will best fit your needs and your particular situation. And because there is no perfect book, most teachers will customize their curriculum with other books, handouts, and resources to be most effective. While being loyal to one book may have some advantages or be a bit more simplistic, there is not one method book that will fit perfectly into a single situation.*<sup>3</sup>

Teachers are well advised to become familiar with a variety of series. Some methods are rote based, while others start right off with note reading. Some series move very quickly, and others very slowly. Some series are filled with cute pictures but these may not necessarily be appealing to an older beginner. Other series have very ‘busy’ pages that may cause more distraction than provide additional assistance for some students. Several current methods are written in comic book or story-telling format to keep pre-teen and younger students interested, but these may not seem “academic” enough for some students or parents. Knowing the strengths and weaknesses of a wide variety of methods allows the teacher to craft the best approach for each individual student.

There are many factors to consider when selecting materials for our students, whether that be a method series or supplemental resources. These include, but are not limited to:

- the age and gender of the student
- their prior musical and academic learning
- their approach to learning and multi sensory needs
- any identified learning disabilities or needs
- their ongoing musical engagement and personal enthusiasms
- your agreed medium term musical goals
- ethnic and cultural considerations.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://susanparadis.com/stuck-in-the-method-book/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://pianodao.com/2017/10/31/the-problem-with-method-books/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.orchestrateteacher.net/choosing-a-string-method-book/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://pianodao.com/2017/10/31/the-problem-with-method-books/>

With this in mind, adopting a 'mix and match' approach using materials from several methods and supplementary sources may better meet the needs of beginning students. If the resources selected do not meet a student's needs, proactively change out materials to find the best fit for a student.

Once a particular method or selection of best materials have been chosen for a student, how long should they stay in that series? An informal survey of Facebook groups, colleagues, and blog posts revealed that the average point at which teachers move from method books is around the equivalent of Piano Adventures 2B. A few keep students in a series until the end of which might be level 5 or 6, supplementing with additional repertoire. Others move away from method books as soon as a student has a grasp of notation, selecting materials to meet a student's needs. Some never start with a published method series, crafting their own curriculum instead. So how do we know when students have reached the point in their musical studies when it is time to say farewell to method books and transition to what is oft times referred to as "real literature?"

Age can be a determining factor in when to say farewell to a student's method books. Very young students can stay in their method books for a long time. The books are almost like a favorite stuffed toy, providing comfort when learning might be a bit challenging. For many of these students, traditional looking literature can be intimidating. Stark black-on-white print and smaller note heads look nothing like what they're used to seeing in their method books. "When students get to a certain age, usually about 4th or 5th grade, they become embarrassed that they are playing baby-sounding pieces."<sup>5</sup> This age may also be embarrassed playing pieces from books with pictures of stuffed toys and alphabet blocks. Many teen students balk at the thought of playing from a method book. These books may seem too restrictive, repetitive and "uncool." Regardless of age, students who are expressing interest in learning their favorite pop or video game songs are ready to move away from method books and into a more varied curriculum, including creative activities.

Another indicator that it may be time to move out of method books is if a student is losing interest in their music studies. If their friends are playing more advanced music, or using books that look more mature, a student may no longer be interested in the music they are expected to learn. Another sign that it might be time to change things up is that a student is no longer making any progress in their studies. If the materials they use are very repetitive, or move slowly a student can become stalled, again losing interest because they're not feeling challenged. When students begin to express interest in playing classical music, or their favorite pop song or video game theme it's definitely time to move away from method books and use these pieces as teaching materials. If you aren't already doing so, this is also a great time to include creative activities in lessons such as composing, lead sheets, and arranging – activities that are often omitted from method series.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://susanparadis.com/stuck-in-the-method-book/>

Since one of the best things about using method books is the structure they provide for both student and teacher, how can one successfully transition out of method books, while still maintaining a high level of instruction? Moving students into a graded exam/assessment program provides a proven path to appropriate skill development. This can help students feel more mature in their studies. The graded materials provide both student and teacher a sound pedagogical approach to musical development. A benefit of this approach is the opportunity for students to take exams if they choose. An independent assessment of a student's progress provides both student and parent a tangible confirmation of progress and skill development. Teachers can use students' exam comments to evaluate their teaching strengths and areas for professional development.

Another option is to follow the syllabus of an exam/assessment program. There is so much alternate repertoire not in the published curriculum books that it is quite possible to create a program of structured advancement while finding music that appeals to both teachers and students. There are sequenced compilations of music in a wide variety of genres available from several publishers. Spend some time at your local music store browsing through these if you need ideas on where to go from method books. Ask colleagues what they are using in their teaching. Fellow teachers are a wonderful resource for discovering new and varied pedagogically sound music.

With the vast array of method books available, and more series being added each year, it is prudent to familiarize oneself with some of the many options available. This includes both hard copy and digital methods. Review a variety of technical exercise books. While the skills being developed may be similar over time, the sequencing or engraving may be more appealing in one book than another to a student. Engage students in choosing materials. One or two questions about how they view the materials they're working from can be very informative and initiate a transition from one set of materials to another. Hopefully, these ideas will help to minimize the method book dilemma that may be occurring in your own teaching.



*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.*



## 10-Minute Yoga and Mindfulness Practices for the Stressed Music Teacher

Dr. Karen Koner

Stress in America is a topic that is in the media, discussed around dinner tables, and often referenced when people are discussing their work, family, or finances. According to an article published in the *New York Times* in the spring of 2019, Americans are the most stressed people around the world<sup>1</sup>. In this report from the *New York Times*, 55% of adults in the United States reported feeling stressed during “a lot of the day” in comparison with only 35% of adults reporting this globally. The roots of stress throughout the United States include different variables according to the *American Psychological Association*<sup>2</sup>. When asking the American population about sources of stress, the APA reported that 61% of Americans reported their work or career caused them stress.

A music teacher often has two careers that can cause work stress. The first career, being a performer, includes stressors such as finding time to practice and finding performance opportunities. The second career, being an educator, includes stressors such as student relationships and balancing teaching time with other aspects of a performance career. For a teacher, high stress levels can lead to mental or physical illness, impact relationships between students and teachers, and lower energy levels<sup>3</sup>. These stressors can also lead to teacher burnout and low job satisfaction<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Chokshi, N. (2019, April 25). Americans are among the most stressed people in the world, poll finds. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/25/us/americans-stressful.html>

<sup>2</sup> American Psychological Association. (2017, November 1). *Stress in America: The State of our Nation*. Stress in America survey. <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/2017/state-nation.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Abel, M. H., & Sewell, J. (1999). Stress and burnout in rural and urban secondary school teachers. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 92(5), 287 – 293. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27542224>

<sup>4</sup> Landers, E., Alter, P., & Servillio, K. (2008). Students’ challenging behavior and teachers’ job satisfaction. *Beyond Behavior*, 18(1), 26 – 33.

In addition to the mental strains on musicians and music teachers, a musician also faces physical strains on the body. Music students and professional musicians may develop physical injuries from performing on instruments<sup>5</sup>. For example, a study performed in 2012 discovered that most professional orchestral musicians in Australia had experienced pain or injuries that had interfered with playing their instrument or participating in a rehearsal<sup>6</sup>. The physical demands of playing an instrument can cause such injuries. Professional violinists and violists have experienced musculoskeletal disorders in the neck, shoulders, and jaw due to the prolonged position of the head to hold the instrument<sup>7</sup>.

While there is no quick fix for stress for a music educator or the physical strain on the body, yoga and mindfulness may assist. Yoga can reduce anxiety or depression and increase relaxation<sup>8</sup>. While we often associate yoga with the physical practice and poses, or asanas, yoga also incorporates mind-body practices of breathing, relaxation, meditation, and mindfulness<sup>9</sup>. However, when starting a yoga or mindfulness practice, there are typically two challenges to overcome. The first challenge is knowing where to start. There are many poses and varieties of yoga, which can be overwhelming or too challenging to the beginner trying to start a practice. The second challenge is finding the time in a busy schedule to pursue a consistent yoga or mindfulness practice. However, it does not need to be a huge time commitment, as practicing mindfulness in a daily routine between five to twelve minutes can reduce stress and anxiety<sup>10</sup>.

The purpose of this paper is to provide two yoga and mindfulness practice routines for the busy music teacher that can be completed in 5-10 minutes. I have designed the two yoga sequences discussed below. These sequences target the physical areas of the body that may experience strain for a musician, such as the lower back, stiffness in the hips from sitting for prolonged periods of time, and the shoulders. The first yoga sequence can be completed sitting in a chair if you are not as comfortable getting up and down from the floor and the second sequence can be completed laying on the floor if you prefer that setting. There are two reminders to take with you into your yoga practice; 1) always breathe in and out of the nose if possible; and 2) listen to your body. If something feels painful or uncomfortable, make sure to ease out of the pose immediately.

<sup>5</sup> Chang, A. Y., Boone, H., & Gold, P. (2021). Physical health status of music students in a post-secondary institution: A cross-sectional study. *Work*, 70(4), 1101 – 1110. DOI: 10.3233/WOR-213621

<sup>6</sup> Ackermann B, Driscoll T, & Kenny D. (2012). Musculoskeletal pain and injury in professional orchestral musicians in Australia. *Medical Problems of the Performing Artists*, 27(4):181-7.

<sup>7</sup> Moraes, G. F. & Antunes, A. P. (2012). Musculoskeletal disorders in professional violinists and violists: Systematic review. *Acta Ortopedica Brasileira*, 20(1), 43 – 47. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S1413-78522012000100009>

<sup>8</sup> Polsgrove, M. J., Eggleston, B. M., & Lockyer, R. J. (2016). Impact of 10-weeks of yoga practice on flexibility and balance of college athletes. *International Journal of Yoga*, 9(1), 27-34. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0973-6131.171710>

<sup>9</sup> Dyer, N. L., Borden, S., Dusek, J. A., & Khalsa, S. S. (2020). A pragmatic controlled trial of a brief yoga and mindfulness-based program for psychological and occupational health in education professionals. *Contemporary Therapies in Medicine*, 52, E102470. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ctim.2020.102470>

<sup>10</sup> Burgstahler, M. S. & Stenson, M. C. (2020). Effects of guided meditation on anxiety and stress in a pre-healthcare college student population: A pilot study. *Journal of American College Health*, 66(6). 666-672. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2019.1590371>

## Yoga and Mindfulness Routine #1 - Chair

- Set up your environment = Find a room to sit in where you will not be interrupted. Make sure to turn your phone on airplane mode or do not disturb. You may want some light music in the background or you may prefer to have the room in silence.
- Settle into your seat = Use a chair that has a back you can lean against and have a nice straight spine. Release the hands onto your lap and have both feet placed on the floor.
- Breathing = Close your eyes and start to breathe in and out of the nose. Continue this breathing and try to make your exhales longer than your inhales. Focus just on the sound of your breath and continue for a minimum of one minute.
- Neck Rolls = Keeping your eyes closed, release your chin to the chest and slowly start to roll your chin over to your right shoulder, then back through the middle and over to your left shoulder. Continue this neck roll for approximately one minute.
- Inhale/Exhale = Bring your head back to center. Pull your shoulder blades down and ensure your shoulders are not creeping up towards your ears. As your shoulders remain pulled down, inhale as you lift your hands from the side of your body and over your head. Exhale as you release your hands back to your sides. Repeat this pattern a minimum of three times. Try and complete this with a slow breath pattern. A good start is to inhale for five counts, exhale for five counts.
- Side Twists = Repeat the inhale with lifting your arms overhead, however on the exhale, take a slight twist to the right and release your arms back down. Make sure to twist at the waist as you keep a nice straight spine. If available to you, rest both hands on the back of the chair. Ensure you are twisting at your waist and not pulling on any of the back muscles. Look over your right shoulder, or turn to look over your left shoulder; both are effective and will just bring about a different sensation. Hold this twist between 30 seconds – one minute. Release the pose and repeat on your left side.
- Figure Four = Return to the center and slide to the edge of your chair. Make sure you are not leaning on the back, but rather sitting up with a straight spine. Keep your left foot firmly planted into the ground, and rest your right ankle on the left knee (into a figure four pattern). Put a slight flex into your right foot to protect your knee. Take the right palm and gently push on the upper right thigh to open the hip. If you would like more intensity, inhale with a straight spine and as you exhale, fold over your leg. Hold this pose for between one – three minutes. When complete, repeat on your opposite side.



- Forward Fold = Come back to center, release both feet firmly on the ground in front of you. Inhale a straight and tall spine and as you exhale forward fold over the knees. Release your neck and if available release your hands to the ground in-between your feet. If the floor is not available to you, release the hands to your knees. Hold this forward fold for between one – three minutes.
- Savasana = Slowly roll the spine back up into a sitting position. Get into a comfortable seated position, allowing the chair to support your back. Close your eyes and release your hands into the lap. Stay in this sitting position, focusing on the sound of your breath for approximately one minute before you return to the rest of your day.

## Yoga and Mindfulness Routine #2 – Floor

- Set up your environment = Find a room to lay down where you will not be interrupted. Make sure to turn your phone on airplane mode or do not disturb. You may want some light music in the background or you may prefer to have the room in silence.
- Lay on the Floor = If you have a yoga mat, that is great, however, it is not needed. You can also just lay on the carpet, or even a comfortable blanket. If you have challenges getting on and off the floor, laying on a bed is also an option. Release your feet to slightly turn out to each side and release your hands by the sides.
- Breathing = Close your eyes and start to breathe in and out of your nose. Continue this breathing and try to make your exhales longer than your inhales. Focus just on the sound of your breath and continue for a minimum of one minute.
- Banana Pose = Reach your hands above the head, releasing to the ground and shift your shoulders and hands towards the right corner of the yoga mat. Ensure that both shoulders are still firmly on the ground. Grasp your hands together. Curve your legs and spine in the same direction, ensuring your hips are firmly on the ground, where your body will have a banana shape. To increase the intensity, you can cross your right ankle over your left. Hold this pose and focus on your breath for one - two minutes. When you have completed the pose, release to the center and repeat on your left side.
- Figure Four = Return to the center of the mat and bend your knees so that your feet are firmly planted into the ground and your knees are pointed to the ceiling. Leaving your left foot planted into the ground, inhale as you point your right foot



towards the ceiling. Holding onto the back of your right thigh, point and flex your foot and complete a few ankle rolls. When ready, release your right ankle onto your left knee in a figure four pattern. Put a slight flex into your right foot to protect your knee. If your body needs a little more intense stretch, bring your left knee towards your chest, holding on behind your left thigh and opening your right hip. Hold this pose for one - two minutes. When complete, release both feet to the ground, and repeat on the other side.

- Inversion = Release your legs back flat to the floor. Slide the hands under your



body, supporting your lower back. Bring your hands to meet together, connecting your thumbs and pointer fingers on each hand to create a diamond shape under your torso. Lift both feet towards the ceiling directly above your hips and hold there for one-two minutes. If this is too intense on your lower back, you can also lean the legs against the wall, while keeping that shape of your legs directly above your hips.



- Savasana = Release your legs back down, release your hands by your sides, and close your eyes. Return to the sound of your breath and try to remain in this final relaxation pose for at least one minute.

## Resources

If you get started with this yoga practice and decide you would like to expand your practice at home, below I have listed a few resources to start an at home yoga practice.

- Downdog Yoga – This application is available to download for free. Additionally, it is free to educators, therefore if you are employed through a K-12, college, or university, you can use it for free. It allows you to create a yoga practice for any time frame and any skill level.  
Website: <https://www.downdogapp.com/>
- Yoga Download – This website and application contains yoga classes for 15 minutes and up through an hour. It has free classes and memberships for a low cost. They have live people leading the classes and oftentimes with someone to model the practice and poses. Classes are all asynchronous so you can practice on your own time.  
Website: <https://www.yogadownload.com/>
- Yoga for All Musicians (YAM) – If you prefer a live class and person, YAM offers a variety of classes given at a specific time over Zoom. The studio is run by all musicians who are also yoga instructors that gear their yoga practices to

address physical needs of musicians. They offer a once a week free class, synchronous classes, as well as an On-Demand option to access recordings of past classes.

Website: <https://www.yogaforallmusicians.com/>

## Tips for Practicing Yoga

Starting a new yoga practice only takes about 5 - 10 minutes a few days a week. One way to start on a yoga routine is to put it on your calendar, as if it was a meeting. It does not need to be the same time every day, but rather work it around your schedule. Additionally, you may try starting each day with a few minutes of yoga. As described above, a yoga practice can be completed while still lying in bed before you start your day. One thing to remember is it is called a yoga “practice” for a reason. Just like practicing an instrument, some days may be better than others. Always remember to listen to your body and if a pose is not available that day, modify or remove the pose during that practice. One final piece of advice I received when writing my dissertation was if I felt writer’s block and needed a break, I should do something physical for a few moments. This also works well when needing a small break in the practice room. Perhaps use this time to engage in a little yoga.



*Dr. Karen Koner serves as Associate Professor and Coordinator of Music Education at San Diego State University. As a specialist in instrumental music education, she teaches courses focusing on K-12 teaching strategies, rehearsal techniques, lesson planning, and curriculum. Her research interests encompass topics related to current needs of pre-service music educators and mental health, stress management, and mindfulness techniques of music educators and students. She has presented her research and work internationally and nationally, and her research can be found in journals such as the Update: Applications of Research in Music Education and International Journal of Music Education. In addition, Dr. Koner is a certified yoga instructor and enjoys combining her love of yoga and music teacher training by working with musicians and educators on techniques to increase health awareness in the music classroom.*

# CONSERVATORY TRACK

*Piano Master Class Series with*

**Craig Richey**



This series is open to **advanced high school juniors and seniors** who are considering a major in music. Teachers are encouraged to recommend their students to participate as an opportunity to visit the Bob Cole Conservatory of Music campus and work with Professor Richey in a master class setting. **The classes are free of charge.**

**Friday December 8th 2023, 6-8 pm**

**Sunday March 10th 2024, 2-4 pm**

**Gerald Daniel Recital Hall  
Bob Cole Conservatory of Music  
at CSU Long Beach**

Please apply directly to Craig Richey: [craig.richey@csulb.edu](mailto:craig.richey@csulb.edu).

Up to Four Students will be accepted for each class.

Participants will be chosen based on teacher recommendation and will be prioritized in order of receipt of inquiry.

Craig Richey, MM Juilliard School of Music, Piano Faculty, BCCM.

Bio: <https://web.csulb.edu/colleges/cota/music/areas/keyboards-studies/craig-richey.php>

## Musicians' Wellness



### **The Importance of Gratitude**

Dr. Jacqueline Petitto

Thanksgiving is around the corner, and our North American tradition of giving thanks has many benefits beyond experiencing togetherness with family and friends. It turns out being thankful not only feels good but is good for you, as noted by many great minds:

*"The best kind of giving is thanksgiving."*

- Gilbert K. Chesterton

*"There are two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle."*

- Albert Einstein

*"Gratitude is the ability to experience life as a gift. It liberates us from the prison of self-preoccupation."*

- John Ortberg

Gratitude is giving thanks for the goodness in our lives and appreciating the many blessings bestowed upon us. We express our thanks by recognizing all that is good (tangible or intangible) and by reflecting on how this goodness emerged. It's not always easy to feel grateful, but it's proven to be an important step towards enhancing physical and mental health. Studies have shown that incorporating gratitude strategies into daily life generates all-around positivity, joy and self-confidence.

A grateful mindset also creates more meaningful relationships and stronger social connections. Make it a priority to acknowledge important people in your life. Remember, life is short and every minute counts. Do not wait to thank others for the kindness and generosity you've received. Mutual appreciation is commonly reciprocated, which benefits both parties immensely.

The medical benefits are numerous: gratitude supports a healthy heart, helps manage stress, decreases depression and anxiety, improves your sleep habits, and much more.

- **Increases Heart Health:** Studies have shown that grateful thoughts assist with controlling heart disease and lowering diastolic blood pressure. This in turn seems to slow down and regulate your breathing to synchronize with your heartbeat. Folks that practice gratitude tend to embrace heart healthy habits such as eating and sleeping well in addition to regular exercise.
- **Manages Stress:** Practicing mindfulness involves being present and in the moment. By gently focusing your mind on the here and now, stressful and negative thoughts about the past and future can be dissipated or melted away. Mindful meditation that highlights what you're thankful for can be a valuable tool. Looking at the bright side or staying positive invites us to seek calmness and optimism.
- **Reduces Depression and Anxiety:** People dealing with symptoms of depression and anxiety are more likely to see improvements in their overall well-being as they experience gratitude. It has been reported that being grateful leads to less aches and pains as well as less doctor visits.
- **Promotes Better Sleep:** Your body and mind need rest to recharge and function properly. For a deeper, more relaxed and restful sleep, try thinking of life's gifts you're grateful for right before bedtime.

If you're not sure how to start, try making it part of your daily routine. Simply acknowledging what or who you are grateful for everyday may make a big difference in your perspective and overall mood. Activities that promote feelings of thankfulness include writing a gratitude letter or thank-you note, gratitude journaling and making a gratitude list. Writing a letter or thank-you note to someone who has supported you and contributed positively to your life, yet might not have received a proper thank you, will feel like a big weight has been lifted off your shoulders. This illustrates that gratitude is other-oriented, not self-oriented.

Keeping a gratitude journal helps us focus on positive things, people and happenings in our lives. Effective approaches to the gratitude list include going around the dinner table sharing an experience you're grateful for, going for a walk while noticing the wonderful nature around you, reflecting on your day before going to sleep and recalling something or someone that impacted you in a positive way.

During difficult situations, it is imperative to be aware and mindful of the many gifts provided to us. When your tank is running on empty so to speak, rely on gratitude to keep

you moving forward. If needed, take a step back to refocus your attention on positive feelings, outcomes, and lived experiences.

What do music teachers living in California have to be thankful for? So much. First of all, several music teachers indicate feeling privileged to be in the profession of teaching music. While dealing with students can prove challenging at times, it is essential work (as witnessed during the COVID-19 pandemic) and deeply rewarding. Over the years, many students have expressed their appreciation for their music studies and their dedicated music teachers. In my case, I am always thanking my lucky stars for the continuous learning process that is spurred by my teaching. I find the act of meeting and interacting with people who share my love for music stimulating, inspiring and absolutely worthwhile. It's the gift that keeps on giving. It motivates me to keep searching for new ways to engage and feel connected. We are very blessed to be able to live and work in such a terrific state. I believe recognizing all of the beauty California has to offer is an act of thankfulness in itself. From the breathtaking nature to the incredible diversity that exists here, our state is a unique and vibrant place.

Gratitude is quite an effective way to produce greater happiness and satisfaction with life. Aim to cultivate more gratitude by concentrating on what you have and enjoy instead of what you don't have. Feeling content does not mean you lack ambition. Look at it as a new way of reframing your outlook on life. More times than not, I find we are simply not aware of how fortunate we are which is why we need to practice gratitude.

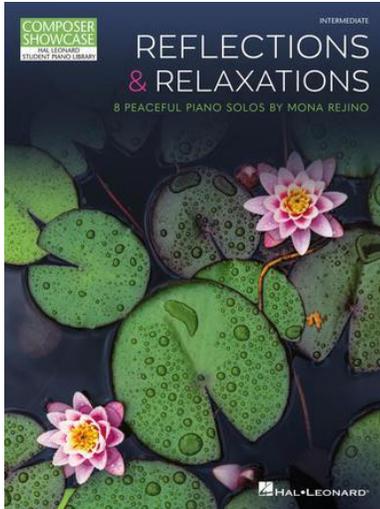


*Pianist Jacqueline Petitto is an active soloist and chamber musician who has performed domestically and abroad. She has taught at the University of Southern California, University of La Verne, Pasadena City College, Los Angeles City College, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Baptist University, Colburn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

## Recital Treasures and Reflections

Gail Lew



### REFLECTIONS & RELAXATIONS

By Mona Rejino

Hal Leonard ©2022

[www.halleonard.com](http://www.halleonard.com)

HL01136160 \$10.99

Levels 4-5

Students are provided with an avenue to relax and reflect as they play through this contemplative collection featuring six new original compositions by the composer along with the traditional spiritual, *Deep River*, and the popular Irish folksong, *Danny Boy*. The cheerful *New Beginning* is scored in A major with a key change to A-flat major in the B section. The beautiful melodic line allows for an interpretive performance and rhythmic freedom in the eighth-note passages. *Restless* is a fast-paced, syncopated G-minor romp with lots of dynamic variety. Students will be able to relate to the variety in moods and styles throughout the collection from the jazzy *Restless* to the melancholy *Dreaming of Home*, along with the humorous *Whimsy* and the expressive *Deep River*. The collection concludes with the jubilant and happy *Joyful Contentment*.

### RECITAL TREASURES

By Karen Wilson

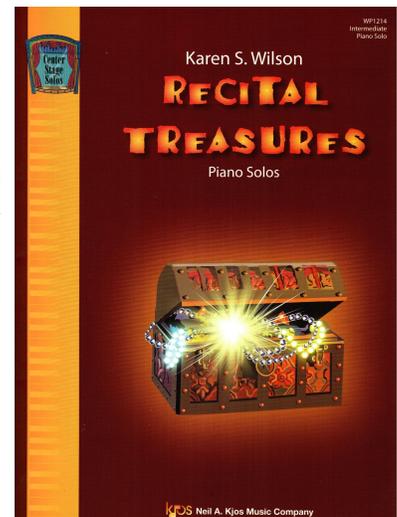
KJOS Music Company ©2023

[www.kjos.com](http://www.kjos.com)

WP1214 \$7.50

Levels 4-5<sup>1</sup>

Teachers looking for showy intermediate-level pieces will find wonderful recital choices in this delightful collection. Moods vary from upbeat, syncopated Latin beats to lyrical waltzes, meditative masterpieces, and virtuosic pieces filled with drama and excitement. *Nostalgic Waltz* tosses the melody from right hand to left hand and requires a careful balance between melody and accompaniment. The lilting *At the Mousequerade Ball* is reminiscent of the *Skater's Waltz* by Émile Waldteufel as the eighth-note melodic line skates along. *Swirling Snowflakes* are depicted in the rise and fall of the d-minor arpeggios as they ascend and descend across several octaves of the keyboard. *Fiesta!* and *Llama Rumba*, with their rhythmic, toe-tapping syncopation will no doubt be student favorites. *Twilight Meditation*, *A Winter's Dream*, and *Lullaby for a*



<sup>1</sup> 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.

*Ladybug*, offer lyrical, reflective choices for students who love expressive pieces that are enhanced by rubato and personal interpretation.

### Childhood Excursions: We're Going on a Trip!

by Amy Stephens

Seven Fun Piano Etudes for Arm and Wrist Fluidity



Elementary Level

## CHILDHOOD EXCURSIONS: WE'RE GOING ON A TRIP

By Amy Stephens

Red Leaf Pianoworks ©2023

[www.redleafpianoworks.com](http://www.redleafpianoworks.com)

AS-PS004, \$10.00

Level 1

Can etudes be fun? Can working on technique be fun? The answer is yes! As elementary students embark on this musical adventure, along the way they practice and learn a drop-lift motion (*Time to Pack*), elbow and wrist circles (*Driving*), moving elbows across the keys from side to side horizontally (*Our First Hike*), moving in toward the backboard of the piano and out again executing half steps (*Watch Your Step*), wrist rotation (*A Beautiful Vista*), contrary motion (*Don't Jump on the*

*Bed*), and dropping straight down into the keys while using syncopated pedaling (*Time to Sleep*).

These short, engaging "etudes" are easy repertoire pieces that focus on one particular technique. By keeping the pieces short, the student can give their full attention to the quality of the movement and the sound. Adding to the fun are elements like the honking of horns found in *Driving* and clever comments such as "We did it!" when climbing up the hill on *Our First Hike* as the student completes an ascending major scale. What a fun-filled introduction to essential piano technique. You may access a video recording of *Childhood Excursions: We're Going on a Trip* [here](#).

## MYSTERIES AND LEGENDS

By Ross Petot

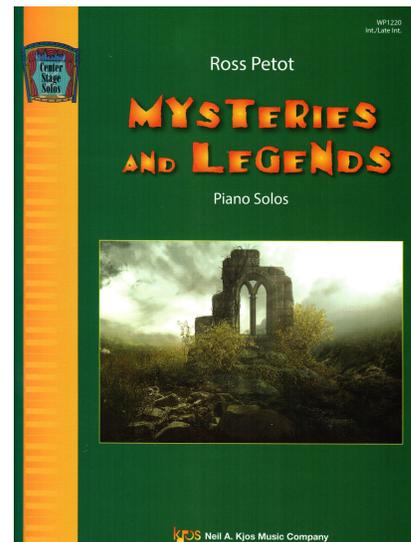
KJOS Music Company ©2023

[www.kjos.com](http://www.kjos.com)

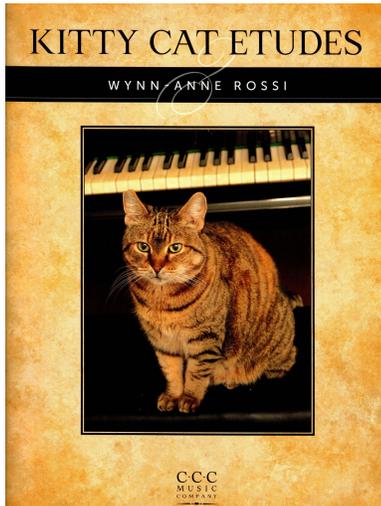
WP1220, \$7.50

Levels 6-7

Composer Ross Petot is an American ragtime, jazz and stride pianist. Throughout this contemporary collection are elements that reflect his propensity to jazz mixed with various harmonic excursions and creative chords changes and modulations. *Dusk on Loon Lake* aptly depicts the characteristic haunting sounds of the loon with its rich yodeling and moaning calls. *The Lost Key* with its fresh, contemporary harmonies is a slow ballad. The expressive *Cobwebs* features some crossed-hand playing and requires a delicate, light touch. *Gargoyles* begins with an intense *pesante*. The Largo tempo seems appropriate for a depiction of the ominous stone monsters that were a feature of Gothic architecture. *The Devil's Grotto* uses ominous harmonic fourths, seconds, and sevenths set against a constantly repetitious ostinato that slowly descends chromatically. The mood of *Halo* is ethereal and with the *sotto voce* marking, **pp** volume, and use of *una corda*, one might



imagine recreating the sun-god Helios or one of the Roman emperors who would often appear with a crown of rays. The collection includes the legend of *Sleepy Hollow*, and a majestic *Pavane*.



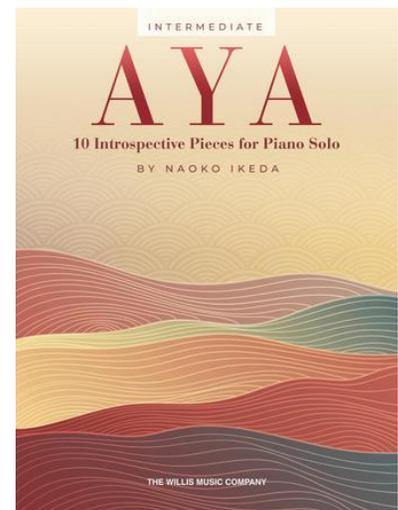
### KITTY CAT ETUDES

By Wynn-Anne Rossi  
 CCC Music Company ©2023  
[www.cccmusiccompany.com](http://www.cccmusiccompany.com)  
 EP20178, \$5.99  
 Levels 3-4

Composer Wynn-Anne Rossi has captured the mischievous antics of our feline friends in these delightful one-page etudes. *Proper Paw Warmup* begins with crisp staccato clusters as the cat pounces playfully. Then perfectly synchronized five-finger patterns are played in contrary motion as another cat joins in the fun, running and pouncing. *Long Graceful Tail* is captured in smooth legato passages that combine half steps and whole steps to create a mysterious aura as the kitty cats prowl around. *Stalk & Pounce!* makes use of *crescendo* and *decrescendo* followed by staccato triads to build up suspense before the attack. *Purr-fect Interlude* purrs along smoothly with a syncopated interplay between right hand and left hand. *Royal Meows* join together in a majestic, albeit dissonant chorus of insistent meows. Each etude presents an opportunity to incorporate artistry and musicality while addressing technical aspects of performance. A recording of "Kitty Cat Etudes" performed by Wynn-Anne Rossi may be accessed [here](#).

### AYA

By Naoko Ikeda  
 Willis Music Company ©2022  
[www.halleonard.com](http://www.halleonard.com)  
 HL00370900 \$12.99  
 Level 4-5

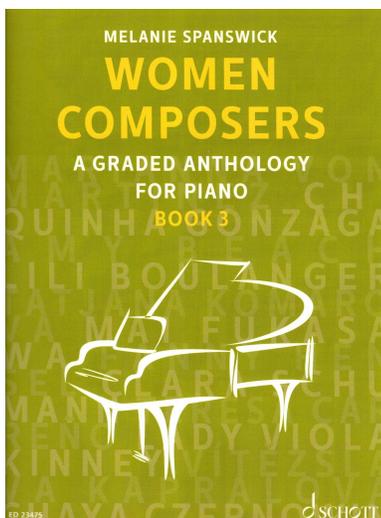


According to Ikeda, her new collection was written with the Japanese word "Aya" in mind. Two Japanese characters represent "Aya"; the first translates into *shimmering colors and a glowing appearance*, while the second invokes *beautiful shades and hues, intricate patterns, and the feel of elegant silk*.<sup>2</sup> The cover artwork, presented on a smooth, buff-colored background, deliciously evokes the essence of movement and horizontal melody melded together in a tapestry of interwoven designs. The ten pieces featured in the collection are: *Vega*, *Chō* (The Butterfly), *The White Phoenix* (Homage to Itō Jakuchū), *Fujin* (Soul of the Wind), *Yūjō* (Friendship), *Umi* (The Sea), *Romance No. 1* (Moon), *Romance No. 2* (Ocean), *Romance No. 3* (Earth), and *Elegy*. *The Three Romances* and *Elegy* particularly stand out for their musical imagination.

<sup>2</sup> Fanny Po Sim Head, "Interview with Japanese Composer Naoko Ikeda," *Interlude E-Newsletter on the Web* 13 September, 2023 [Interview With Japanese Composer Naoko Ikeda \(interlude.hk\)](https://www.interlude.hk/interview-with-japanese-composer-naoko-ikeda).

*Romance No. 1* utilizes rolled triads in inversions and rolled seventh chords in root position that seem to dance in the sky around the moon, first as written and then played an octave higher. *Romance No. 2* conveys the feeling of the ocean wanting to get close to the moon. The eighth-note passages rise and fall playfully with the ebb and flow of the tide. *Romance No. 3*, with gorgeous harmonies, left-hand arpeggiated triplet accompaniments, and expressive use of dynamic contrasts and tempo changes brings us back to earth. *Elegy* was written in loving memory of Ikeda's father and for anyone who has lost a loved one. Written in G minor, this tribute is emotional, moving from **p** to **ff** in a passionate statement of grief, yet with hope and healing as the B section modulates to E-flat major. Ikeda provides a short introduction about each piece, which students and teachers will find helpful as an entry point to understanding the context, cultural significance, and meaning of the works. It is the different cultural perspective and approach that undoubtedly gives these pieces their unique appeal and distinctive qualities. Ikeda's pedagogic experience and insight are evident throughout; her writing fits well under the fingers and is intuitive, both in its physical ergonomics and sonorous use of the instrument. She seemingly borrows figurations from William Gillock while retaining her unique voice.

Students are provided with ample fingering throughout the book and appropriate pedaling is clearly marked. The notation is well-spaced, with an intelligent layout that minimizes page-turns.



### **PIANO MUSIC BY WOMEN COMPOSERS BOOK 3 A GRADED ANTHOLOGY FOR PIANO**

Compiled and edited by Melanie Spanswick  
Schott Music ©2022

[www.schott-music.com](http://www.schott-music.com)

Book 3: HL.49046926 \$17.99

Levels 9-10

The lack of women composers throughout history is a subject that has interested many music historians. Throughout history many women composers have written musically exciting gems that deserve to be better known. To address this issue, Melanie Spanswick has carefully researched and selected beautiful, varied compositions that students will love, audiences will appreciate, and teachers will enjoy teaching.

These three volumes recognize the talent and creativity of many fine women composers. Book 3, the latest addition to this progressive compendium of educational piano music, features composers Amy Beach, Lili Boulanger, Teresa Carreño, Chaya Czernowin, Mai Fukasawa, Chiquinha Gonzaga, Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel, Vítězslava Kaprálová, Lady Viola Kinney, Tatjana Komarova, Marianna von Martinez, and Clara Schumann.

Biographical information on each composer and performance notes on each piece is interesting, helpful, and insightful. Repertoire is grouped by level of difficulty from advanced to late-advanced repertoire. The editing includes some fingering, suggested metronome markings, and pedal markings where deemed appropriate. Several works composed by living composers were written especially for this series. Programming music by women composers will help our students better understand the role of women in music history. This compendium of music by women composers is filling a void in piano repertoire and we are fortunate to be the beneficiaries of the editor's countless hours of research

and inclusion of commissioned works. These collections deserve a permanent place in every teacher's library.

## SCHUBERT PIANO SONATAS II THE MIDDLE SONATAS

Edited by Walburga Litschauer

Urtext Edition

Bärenreiter ©2023

[www.baerenreiter.com](http://www.baerenreiter.com)

BA 9643, \$50.50

Level 10



Schubert wrote 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. Schubert's middle piano sonatas, written between 1818 and 1825 comprise four completed and five unfinished works. Of Schubert's middle sonatas, the Sonata in A minor D 845 is of key importance; it is the first of three sonatas, out of a total of eleven completed and twelve unfinished works in this genre, that appeared in print during Schubert's lifetime. With the publication of this newly-researched edition, the three-volume Bärenreiter Urtext edition of Schubert's piano sonatas is now complete. Included in the present volume are the most widely performed *Sonata in A major* (Op./posth. 120, D 664), *Sonata in A minor* (Op. posth. 143, D 784), Schubert's most important unfinished sonatas *Sonata in C major* (D 840), the large-scale work *Sonata in A minor* (Op. 42, D 845), and the virtuosic *Sonata in D major* (Op. 53, D. 850) written for the virtuoso pianist Karl Maria Bocklet.

The Critical Commentary documents the exhaustive research that went into the preparation of this definitive edition. Schubert's drafts of the sonatas are accessible on the Bärenreiter website (see Shop: Extras). The buff-colored paper is easy on the eyes, and the engraving is clear, clean and devoid of unnecessary editorial markings. This authoritative Bärenreiter edition of Schubert's middle sonatas should definitely be the "go to" edition for students and teachers.



**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, a 2023 MTNA Foundation Fellow, 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



### **“How do you use your lessons if a student is injured or unable to play for an extended period of time?”**

The scenario is unfortunately a familiar one to many a teacher: “My child broke their arm yesterday, should we even bother coming to their piano lesson? They can’t play, right?” Usually to the parent’s surprise, my answer is nearly always, “Come!” If they feel well enough to go to school, then come to the lesson. If the house floors are being renovated and the child doesn’t have access to the piano for a month (true story), then come to the lesson. If the child is confined to the bedroom from an illness and doesn’t have access to the piano, then come to the lesson virtually. Apart from the fact that my student is not feeling like their usual self, I find these are actually some of my favorite lessons to teach because we get to break out of the normal lesson routines. The student likes the extra creativity and encouragement to find different ways to practice, and they learn yet again that not all practice means sitting on the piano bench the entire time and playing. If the student loves working on technique, focus on one-handed scales, arpeggios, chord progressions, etc. If they like sight reading, have them sight read one hand of a piece or exercise; or the teacher can play one hand, the student the other, and then switch parts the second time around! Students can also do rhythm review or focus on learning some more complex rhythm combinations. Is the recital coming up and they still need to finish learning and memorizing their piece? Analyze the piece, map it out on a piece of paper, play one hand while singing or saying the rhythm of the injured hand, and start learning the injured hand’s part away from the piano. Memorize the piece by having the student

sing and play “air piano” or “ghost play” for the injured hand part so they can still show they have memorized the patterns or sections of the piece. Another fun (and favorite) activity is “Find the Mistake” - the teacher plays a section of the student’s piece with some intentional mistakes, such as an incorrect note, a wrong rhythm, swapped dynamics, etc. - and the student has to tell the teacher what they played incorrectly and then show or explain the correct way. This really helps them pay attention to all the details of the piece.

There are numerous other activities that don’t even require playing. Analyze the next several pieces they will be playing that semester (this is a favorite for my students!). Do a listening activity by watching video recordings of great performers playing their pieces, compare and contrast each interpretation, and have the student determine which aspects they might consider incorporating into their own interpretation of the piece. Do some sight singing, theory work, or review games. Learn about a new composer or dig deeper into a favorite composer. The options are endless, and I have never once felt like a student “lost progress” due to an injury or illness as long as they are still able to show up to lessons, be excited to learn, and do other forms of practicing at home.

*Kelly Herd is a piano teacher in the upstate of South Carolina, where she owns her private piano studio and teaches all ages and abilities. She has taught classroom music and private piano for 15 years. She currently is Director of Piano for Young People, the pre-college music program at Furman University in Greenville, SC, where she also serves as adjunct faculty. Kelly holds a Bachelor’s in piano performance from Furman University.*

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It’s those dreaded words that no teacher enjoys hearing: “I’m injured!”

I certainly don’t celebrate when I hear this, but I also know that all is not lost. There are many times in lessons where I wish I had a few extra minutes to share an inspiring performance video or give students a chance to listen to a new style of music within their instrument’s repertoire. Of course, this can be assigned for homework, but one-on-one directed listening can be so meaningful in the post-pandemic era. The extra lesson time can also be used to develop sorely needed skills in a focused manner, such as mastering rhythms, improving note-reading, and facilitating creative improvisation (including composition). Many of these things can be done away from the instrument.

Taking a page out of the athlete’s playbook, the concept of “cross-training” can also be a big benefit to one’s students during an injury that prevents any playing at all (e.g. teaching singing if the student’s primary instrument isn’t voice or teaching percussion to a string player). Of course, this only applies if one feels comfortable facilitating this with their own musical training and background as a teacher. As a singer, I invite my students to explore their voices using good vocal technique during piano lessons, even if they aren’t injured!

Recently, I had a beginning adult piano student who broke his right finger at the gym, and so I assigned him a piece for left hand from Melody Bober's *Grand One-Hand Solos for Piano*. Things seemed to be going well, since this student had struggled to play with adequate continuity and flow when coordinating two-handed repertoire. He actually felt more successful playing a piece that sounded complete when using only one hand. Several weeks passed and he came to me with a second stroke of misfortune: a broken finger on the *other* hand! Luckily, his right finger had healed enough for us to switch to another Melody Bober piece for right hand alone. We used the additional lesson time to improve physical gestures with just one arm, work on subtlety of tone in the right hand, and isolate tricky rhythms that never received enough attention. We also prioritized a music theory course that was typically left for extra time at the end of the lesson. I would argue that this student now reads and plays music twice as well after the injury. He also discovered an interest in music theory that would have otherwise been untapped. We are now exploring the possibility of adding a music composition component into lessons.

I realize that not every instrument has the luxury of modification, but it is important to consider whether or not one's primary instrument can be adapted—via repertoire selection or physical approach—to address injuries while still maintaining musical quality and satisfaction of learning.

On a final note, if a student has a playing-related injury, it may be a good use of lesson time to slow down and assess that individual's approach to learning, both in terms of technical development and difficulty of repertoire. At the piano, for example, it may be a chance to encourage a student to adopt less technically demanding pieces that focus on how to drop weight into the keys more efficiently. One could also address the mechanics of treacherous passagework that lead to repetitive strain by requiring soft, slow, and intentional practice. After all, recovering from an injury is only the first step—management, awareness, and building healthy habits are equally important to ensure lifelong success!

*[Dr. Joshua Tan](#), NCTM is an award-winning pianist, baritone, and composer. He holds degrees in piano performance from the University of Southern California, University of Arizona, and University of Houston. Additionally, he earned a degree in choral music education with a K-12 teaching credential. Joshua's musical mentors include Professor Nancy Weems, Dr. John Milbauer, and Professor Bernadene Blaha. He currently teaches in several different capacities at Fullerton College and the Pasadena Conservatory of Music.*

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When a student is either disabled or injured to where one hand isn't able to play the keys, I simply eliminate that part of the music. I've had a student with a weak left arm and would do therapy to strengthen it but that wasn't going to get stronger any time soon, so I gave him the treble clef part, as a beginner, to learn the notes, play, count out loud and

play on time. I would play the accompaniment, or left hand part, so the full piece was heard. In other similar situations, I'll record a video of myself playing either part for the student to listen to and play along with. I would then have the student play the accompaniment with his right hand in the correct octave so he could read both clefs and also learn that the right hand can play not only lower on the keyboard, but also the bass clef notes and vice versa. As a student progresses to more advanced music, recording shorter parts makes more sense since the student can usually understand how the music is going to sound, but during an injury students can get frustrated by not being able to play both hands together. With my playing either part with them, the music is heard live and still brings the same joy. It makes the student aware of how precious their hands, arms, and fingers really are. An injury is a hard way to learn this so it's why I make the student aware when they begin lessons.

*Michelle Valdivia is a graduate of California State University Long Beach with a focus in percussion. She is a certified beginning piano teacher and has been teaching piano, drums and percussion in her studio, Only Just Begun Music Studio, for over 20 years in and around Downey, CA.*

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## Music + Neuroscience + Fun = Benefits for Every Child

**The Royal Conservatory**, a leading institution in music education for over 130 years, is excited to launch **Smart Start**, a new and transformative early childhood music program. This fun and engaging music program was created by the RCM's **Neuroscience Research Centre** in collaboration with expert music educators.

Tailored specifically to the developmental stages for children ages 0-3, the program's curriculum consists of age-targeted, weekly classes delivered by a certified Smart Start teacher.



### **Smart Start: 0-1 years**

Begin making lifelong connections with music and developing the foundations for basic cognitive skills through fun parent-child activities.

### **Smart Start: 1-2 years**

Expand your child's musical skills through movement, and further develop cognitive skills in fun and engaging ways.

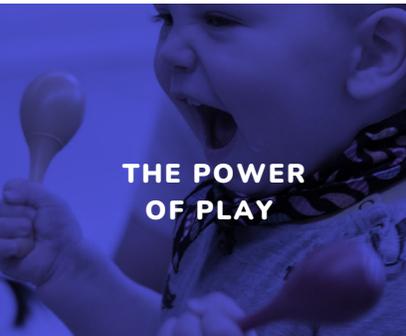
### **Smart Start: 2-3 years**

Develop your child's musical abilities through more independent activities, and expand cognitive skills through creativity and self-awareness.

### **Smart Start: 3-4 years**

Singing, dancing, playing games - children adore this active, play-based learning environment.

**SCAN TO  
LEARN MORE:**



**THE POWER  
OF PLAY**



**DIGITAL  
RESOURCES**



**DEVELOPMENT  
OF KEY SKILLS**



**MEASURABLE  
RESULTS**

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