



Intermediate Piano Teaching

With Cherith Alexander

Technic

- RELAXATION
- FLEXIBILITY in WRIST
- FIRM “FINGERTIPS”
- FAILURE TO RELEASE
- SHOULDERS ARE A SYMPTOM
- LET ARMS HANG AT SIDES

SCALES

- Compact Hand
- Close to Keys
- Finger 5 !!
- Pulse in Sixteenth Notes

Arpeggios

- Use thumb as pivot
- Elbows away from body but not imitating a chicken
- As tempo increases think “shift” – hand position remains intact
- Hand points in the direction you are going

Four-Note Chords

- Broken – circular motion – wrist must not be “fixed”
- Solid – relaxation after each chord is essential

Octave Scales

- Let the **spring** of the staccato TAKE you to the next key
- Finger 4 on black keys if student can reach
- Move towards the black keys

- Legato Pedaling
- Two Against Three Rhythm
- Melodic Tone/Voicing

Musical Style and Form

- Ternary Form
- Sonata-Allegro Form

Conscious Learning

- Teaching intermediate students to practice wisely is crucial.
- 3x through each piece does not work any longer!
- Have you ever spent an entire lesson teaching a student a new piece?
- Create practice plans – ideally with the help of the student.

Bach Invention #8 – Slide 1

- Find and play all subjects (measure 1-2) with correct fingering
- Practice all the "rattles" (measure 5-6 and similar) in dotted rhythms watching for rotation in wrist
- Practice pattern in RH measure 15 and similar pointing out moving line and keeping repeated notes light

Bach Invention #8 – Slide 2

Divide into three sections

Measure 1-12, 12-25, 26-34

For each section practice:

- All eighth notes staccato
- All sixteenth notes legato
- Hands together RH forte and LH piano
- Hands together RH piano and LH forte

Bach Invention #8 – Slide 3

Whole piece

- Practice entire piece with slow metronome playing only eighth notes then only sixteenth notes.
- Practice entire piece forte then piano
- Practice entire piece staccato
- Go through entire piece marking which hand is prominent in conversation between hands OR if they are equal. Rehearse entire piece listening for voicing. Each hand takes a turn in the spotlight.

Bach Invention #8 – Slide 4

- Note: Not all eighths need to be staccato. Use some imagination in articulation but be consistent.
- Note: photocopying the piece in order to mark motives and/or voicing with a highlighter may be useful.

Repertoire and an Inspiring Challenge

- Themes
- Not everything has to be “perfect”
- Popular Selections
- One “big” piece
- Piano Concerti
- Performing opportunities – Jean McCulloch