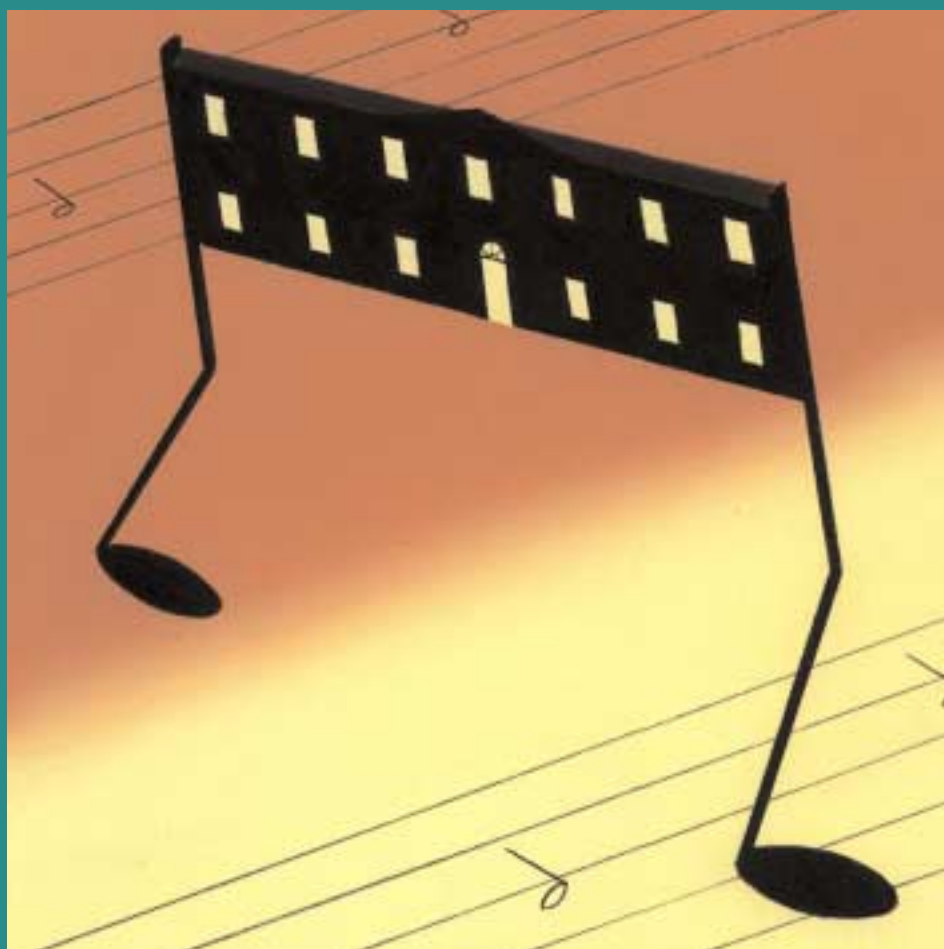


LIBRETTO



On the move

Travelling together:
journeys with your pupils

Making Music 2000

CT student stories

Jazz Notes for improvising

Issue 2000:3



ASSOCIATED BOARD
OF THE ROYAL SCHOOLS OF MUSIC



Outlook

The Associated Board's research *Making Music 2000* (see page 2) discovered things about children's attitudes to playing musical instruments which will interest and surprise many parents and teachers all over the world.

When children were asked who decided they should learn to play, 62% replied it was their own choice (compared with far fewer attributing that decision to teacher or parent). When asked their reasons for wanting to learn an instrument, 69% answered they 'liked its sound' and this was a much more important motive than, for example, the wish to play with friends or the influence of a famous role model. When those who had stopped their lessons were asked why, by far the dominant reason was that they had 'got bored'.

There are some salutary lessons for us adults in these responses. We are not the key influencers in the decision to start learning and yet we have a duty to ensure children are given the opportunity to experience the sound of a wide range of musical instruments at an early age. If many children get bored, then teachers need to acquire more teaching strategies to maintain pupils' interest and enjoyment when the going gets tough. This was in fact an essential idea behind the launch of the Board's CT ABRSM Professional Development course for teachers five years ago.

Although the percentage of children in the UK who play musical instruments has now stabilised, there is no evidence of an upswing. There has conversely been a sharp decline over the last six years in the playing of minority orchestral instruments, such as the oboe, double-bass and French horn. The message for the UK Government is clear. Although stop-gap measures have been implemented with some success, there is a vital task ahead in guaranteeing long-term structures for instrumental tuition above the level of the individual school. Only then can we be sure that every child has the opportunity to learn and that the essential breadth of learning across all instruments is maintained.

Richard Morris
Chief Executive

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those of the Associated Board.



Moving stories

After 93 years at 14 Bedford Square the Associated Board now has a wonderful opportunity to move to newly refurbished office accommodation. As an international organisation at the forefront of music education, constantly evolving, developing and expanding in scope and remit, we will now have a home that is ideally suited to our work and that satisfies our ongoing needs.



This is an exciting time for everyone involved with the Associated Board and the many advantages that our new home can offer are sure to have a positive impact on customers, colleagues and contacts all over the world.

The new offices are located in the heart of London, just a stone's throw from BBC Broadcasting House but within walking distance of the green oasis of Regent's Park. 24 Portland Place happily combines period style with all the advantages of a fully refurbished interior. The building offers flexible accommodation, allowing us to tailor the layout to our own requirements and has the added attraction of space for a purpose-built studio for holding exams, meetings, seminars and all the other activities essential to the Board's work.

In the long term, working within a building designed specifically with modern office practice in mind will enable us to enhance all aspects of our administrative operations as well as strengthening communication procedures both internally and externally. We look forward to offering an even better standard of service from 24 Portland Place and to extending a special welcome to all visitors.

Richard Morris, Chief Executive, commented, 'By relocating to 24 Portland Place, the Board is retaining its essential central London location at

the hub of its national and international networks, while ensuring it can operate with maximum efficiency in modernised IT-friendly accommodation. This move complements all the continuing developments in our range of services and products for teachers and students.'

From 4 September please contact us at our new address:

24 Portland Place
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Telephone and fax numbers
and email remain unchanged:

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ALL CHANGE

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New Chairman for the Board

John Baker



At the end of July Sir Peter Marychurch stepped down as Chairman of the Associated Board. Talking about his retirement Sir Peter said, 'I am very sad to be retiring from the Associated Board after six years as Chairman. During that time I have developed a great respect and admiration for the Board and those who work in it and with it. I wish you all every success in the future!'

Our new Chairman is John Baker CBE who joins the Board following a varied career in both public and private sectors. At present he is a member of the New Deal Task Force and the

Education Standards Task Force and is involved in work for the UN and the World Energy Council. John Baker was made a CBE in the recent Birthday Honours List for services to unemployed people and education.

John Baker has always had a major interest in music and the performing arts – as a choral singer in younger days and through his involvement with the London Symphony Orchestra and the Monteverdi Choir and Orchestra. Currently he is Chairman of English National Opera.

Commenting on his new role he said, 'Music has always been a major thread running through my life and I am greatly looking forward to participating in the work of the Associated Board and all it does to encourage love and understanding of music and the development of the next generation of musicians.'

John Baker joins the Board at a particularly exciting time as we move into our new offices and we all look forward to working closely with him over the coming years.



Making Music 2000

The results of our latest market research were unveiled at the RSA in London on 4 July.



The report, *Making Music 2000*, provides a snapshot of the current situation for musical learning amongst adults and children and highlights emergent trends and patterns in terms of gender, age, social background and region. The report also throws valuable light on how, why and what children learn to play.

Importantly the report shows that the playing of musical instruments by young people has stabilised after the fall shown in our 1997 research, with some recovery in the proportion of primary school age children now playing. The latest research, however, confirms that the likelihood of children learning to play musical instruments if they have not done so at primary school age is very low.



The full report, *Making Music 2000*, is available free of charge: tel 020 7467 8254 email marketing@abrsm.ac.uk

High Scorers' Concerts

10 September

Norwich
Swansea

21 September

Bolton

24 September

Isle of Man

1 October

Doncaster

4 November

Sutton Coldfield

14 November

Bangor



FMS sponsorship deal

This year begins a three-year sponsorship agreement between the Associated Board and the Federation of Music Services. The agreement was announced by Richard Morris, Chief Executive, at the FMS annual conference, a sell-out event with over 100 music services represented.

The conference included sessions presented by Janet Dallas and Nicola Edwards (DfEE), Janet Mills (HMI), Tony Knight (QCA) and Christina Coker (NFYM). Much of the debate during the course of the weekend focussed on future funding structures for instrumental teaching, core provision for instrumental services and the need to bridge the gap between classroom music and instrumental activity in schools.

At the conference Richard said, 'This new sponsorship agreement underlines the Board's continuing support for the work of the FMS and our recognition of its important role in the period leading up to 2002, when the interim Standards Fund arrangements end. The key task now for all those working with music education is to ensure that proper long-term structures are in place, and that a sensible allocation of responsibility and funding between central and local government is established.'



For information about the FMS contact: Richard Hickman tel/fax 01747 820739

Closing dates

Next closing date

22 September

(early entries are welcomed – processing begins 4 September)

Many thanks to all of you who sent entries early last term as requested. The summer session is the busiest of the year, with nearly twice as many candidates as any other session. Our task was to give a high level of service, regardless of the loss of a week due to a late Easter, and your response helped us in this.

When setting closing dates we consider two issues: many teachers prefer a late closing date and teachers also need maximum notice of exam dates. A later closing date means less time to make arrangements and send out notification of exam dates, so the chosen date is always a balance between the two.

On-line entry

Over the past two years we have been developing an Internet entry system for applicants in the UK. This is proving to be very successful and over 10,000 candidates were entered on-line during the summer session.

By submitting your entries on-line you can also take advantage of a later closing date. For the November/December exam session the on-line closing date is Tuesday 26 September, four days after the postal closing date of Friday 22 September.

To use the on-line entry form you need your applicant number and a personal password. You can set up your password by contacting the office responsible for your area:

Midlands & N Ireland

email midlands@abrsm.ac.uk
tel 020 7467 8238

Northern

email northern@abrsm.ac.uk
tel 020 7467 8278

Southern

email southern@abrsm.ac.uk
tel 020 7467 8211

London

email london@abrsm.ac.uk
tel 020 7467 8261

The on-line entry form has been extensively tested on PCs and developed for ease of use. Look out for further developments over the coming year as we hope to be able to expand this service to include on-line payment.

You can find the on-line entry form on our website at www.abrsm.ac.uk

New ways to pay

Following a successful pilot scheme over the summer you can now pay for exam entries by credit or debit card (Visa, MasterCard, Switch, Delta).

Everyone who entered candidates in the summer session received a form with their results outlining the new options. If you have not received a form and would like to pay by credit/debit card please contact us on 020 7636 5400.

Most teachers plan ahead for exams and know well in advance which candidates will be ready for their next exam. Why not send these entries early, perhaps at the end of one term rather than the beginning of the next? Any extra entries can always be made just before the closing date.

Student viewpoint

NEWS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Every year students just starting the Singapore CT ABRSM course travel to England for a week of intensive residential study. This Initial Week takes place at the home of the Benslow Music Trust in Hitchin, Hertfordshire.



Singapore CT ABRSM students during the Initial Week at Benslow

We asked Anna Loo, currently a CT ABRSM student in Singapore, to tell us about her Initial Week.

The Initial Week at Benslow could not be more appropriate! Taking oneself away from the normal work place and all distraction is necessary to remind oneself of the year-long commitment.

Our hosts, Richard Crozier, Lauren Goldthorpe and Moira Hayward, were helpful and friendly making the week most enjoyable. Sessions were inspiring with enthusiasm, humour and great ideas for teaching.

With our mentors, Lauren and Moira, we broke into two groups to cover a range of topics, from teaching beginners to advanced learning, from sight-reading to Alexander Technique. These sessions served as a springboard for further consideration and research.

There was lots of hands on activity and with keyboards in most rooms we could disperse into private corners, and experiment on jazz chords and improvisation before coming together to share presentations. In this way, we were going through the same psychological process as our students when they try out new things. We were all experiencing the learning process and hence there was nothing to be embarrassed about.

The visit to the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music was interesting and informative with an exciting talk on Bach by Professor Simon Nicholls and an incredible masterclass with Clara Taylor.

The Initial Week in Benslow showed me that piano teaching is just one part of music education and that the various elements of a piano lesson need to be planned as partners to all other aspects of music education. Benslow has helped me put my piano teaching into perspective!

Duncan Stafford was a student on the UK CT ABRSM course during 1998-99. Here he reflects on what the course meant to him.

It was a gorgeous sunny Saturday in early April, but I was not about to sit back in my deckchair listening to Radio 3 and dreaming of distant sun-drenched beaches. I had volunteered to spend four hours in a local school so that potential CT ABRSM students could have the opportunity to talk to a past student during a taster session. So why was I prepared to give up a spot of 'down time'? Simple, because I knew it would be an unusually exciting morning.

Until I took the CT course in 1998/99 I would not have believed that I could get so passionate about different methods of keeping a pupil notebook or teaching sight-reading! A few minutes into the April taster session and I knew for certain my experience of the course was not unusual. It is impossible to describe the passion, excitement and challenges generated when teachers are confronted with a question such as 'What should we teach?'

Although I am fortunate to have had a broad-ranging teaching career I was at no particular advantage when I began the CT course over teachers who worked in a single area. But I did find that through being able to choose written assignment topics I could deepen my understanding of particular areas and find a place to express some long-held thoughts.

For me the most valuable part of the course was the lesson observations. Although this might sound daunting at first, it was never like trying to pass an exam or having an OfSTED inspector in your teaching room. It was another set of eyes looking at your lessons – but from 'outside of the circle'. My mentor's feedback raised very interesting points and allowed me to gain a clear focus on certain issues, which I have truly valued.

So, what about the teaching project video? Fear not! It can become a rather enjoyable part of everyday teaching. I bought a television for my teaching studio and now use the video camera on a daily basis. Thanks to the CT ABRSM course my students now, on occasion, get to see themselves the way their teacher does with the result of a speedier resolution to problems with stance and hand position.

The only problem with the CT ABRSM course is that after nine months it comes to an end. However, the experience and knowledge will last a lifetime.

UK awards and course update

The CT ABRSM award ceremony for 1999–2000 was held on 26 July in the Britten Theatre at the Royal College of Music. The Certificate of Teaching was awarded to 167 students this year and 137 were at the Royal College to receive their certificates from the Board's retiring Chairman, Sir Peter Marychurch. The guest speaker was composer and broadcaster, Michael Berkeley.

The closing date for the 2000-2001 CT ABRSM course is 18 September. Remember that you can now choose from three course formats:


- Part-time over 1 year
- Part-time over 2 years
- Modular over 3 years

For a copy of the prospectus or to discuss course options contact:

 Judith Jerome
tel 020 7467 8257
email
profdev@abrsm.ac.uk

Latest prospectuses

The 2001-2002 CT ABRSM prospectuses for Hong Kong and Singapore are available in September from the Hong Kong Examinations Authority and from Su-San Hay at SSO.

 HKEA, tel/ 2328 0061
SSO, tel/ 339 2624

New Administrator

A warm welcome to Judith Jerome who has recently joined the Professional Development department. Judith has taken on the role of UK CT ABRSM Course Administrator, covering Anna Munks' maternity leave.

Jamaica jamboree



At the end of March Richard Morris visited Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica presenting seminars and meeting teachers and representatives. Pictured here are teachers at a seminar in Kingston, Jamaica and Richard with Maurice Gordon, our representative in Jamaica.

From our South East Asia Consultant

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Bill Thomson



High Scorers' Concerts

In the last edition of Libretto we all shared in the pleasure of reading about the National Concert for High Achievers at the Royal Opera House in London. In SE Asia too, we hold annual events for high scorers evoking precisely the same feelings of excitement, pride, and anticipation, even occasional trepidation, amongst the young performers and their families.

In Singapore the annual concert held in January features over 30 performances covering the whole spectrum of instruments and including choirs and ensembles. The Sarawak annual High Scorers' Concert takes place in Kuching and provides a showcase for high scoring Associated Board candidates alongside traditional Sarawakan performers – the wonderful combination of

western music and the traditional music of Borneo makes these concerts quite unique.

Indonesia sees numerous regional concerts each year – a practical response to the geographic spread of the Indonesian exam centres. In April this year, 33 young musicians took part in a concert in Surabaya. This first Indonesian High Scorers' Concert of the new millennium was held in the gracious surroundings of the art deco ballroom of the Majapahit Mandarin Oriental Hotel. Our talented performers enthralled a capacity audience of 350, many of whom had travelled from Mallang and Bandung. The success of the evening was a tribute to Denis Umar, our Indonesian representative, and a team of dedicated teachers.

Plans are now underway to establish further regular High Scorers' Concerts in SE Asia focussing in particular on Peninsular Malaysia. In the immediate future, we are planning a concert in Penang and a joint concert for Kuala Lumpur and Selangor state.

The opportunities afforded by these magical events are diverse: valuable performing experience; development of communication skills and poise; increased awareness of repertoire for performers and audience and the delight and wonder of seeing and hearing such a wide range of talented young musicians. The atmosphere is happy and friendly and most importantly the young performers are always the stars!



Performers at
the High Scorers'
Concert in
Surabaya with
Bill Thomson and
Denis Umar

Cyprus hits 50

The year 2000 marks 50 years of Associated Board exams in Cyprus.

Cyprus is one of our most important areas of activity in Europe. We hold two practical sessions each year with exams in Larnaca, Limassol and Paphos and two centres in Nicosia.

Our exams in Cyprus are administered locally by the British Council, a fruitful partnership that began in 1960 and now also encompasses High Scorers' Concerts and seminars for teachers. In recent years our Travel Grant Scheme sponsored study in London for three Cypriot teachers and last December Clara Taylor, Chief Examiner, visited Cyprus to launch the new diploma syllabus.

To celebrate this special jubilee year all candidates will receive unique commemorative certificates and we will be holding two gala High Scorers' Concerts: 30 November, British High Commission, Nicosia North; 1 December, Pasydy Theatre, Nicosia. Full details will be available in the autumn from the British Council in Cyprus.

PDP 2000: Professional Development Programme

Have you ever considered the similarities between the working life of an instrumental teacher or piano teacher in private practice with that of a taxi driver? Sometimes, I think that they have rather a lot in common. In both jobs each individual often works anti-social hours, in a confined space, in close proximity to their 'customers' and both generally have very limited contact with others from their profession. In a sense, it is also true of both professions that a 'journey' is at the heart of each encounter, and, if nothing else, one person constantly gives directions whilst the other constantly listens to directions!

Being a music teacher can be lonely as one embarks on this musical journey with each individual student, and I hear frequently from teachers who simply want a second opinion or advice on some topic. Behind PDP is a fundamental recognition that private music teachers want to identify with and communicate with each other and that they are professionals who want to know about good teaching and learning practice. They are looking for training, qualifications and up to date information about changes and developments in their sphere of professional life.

For several years now many hundreds of teachers in Malaysia and Singapore have attended Associated Board seminars, with their strong emphasis on professional support and development. These seminars develop an

Seychelles climb aboard

At the invitation of the Ministry of Culture and Youth, Philip Munday, Director of Examinations, visited the Seychelles in April to work with music instructors at the National College of the Arts in Mahe. As a result the Seychelles are to join our list of international exam centres. Theory exams will take place in October and the first practical exams in July 2001.

For more information contact our representative in the Seychelles: Vivien Bosteen National College of the Arts PO Box 1383 Mahe tel 32 13 13 fax 32 15 91



increased awareness of style, explore new syllabuses and re-examine teaching strategies through a varied programme of lectures and workshops. Importantly, these seminars encourage delegates to engage with each other and participate in the art of professional networking.

The new PDP focuses further on the concept of professional support, with a series of seminars led by Clara Taylor, Chief Examiner, Richard Crozier, Director of Professional Development, and Paul Harris, examiner and author of many popular teaching publications. The seminars include in-depth sessions on diplomas balanced with sessions exploring creative teaching methods. These events take place in Malaysia in late August and in Singapore in early September.

In 2001 look out for seminars on jazz piano, piano and violin repertoire and teaching music theory using computer software packages.

Perhaps teachers who attend these seminars have rather less in common with the taxi driving profession!

For more information contact: Bill Thomson SE Asia Regional Consultant tel/fax (60) 3 705 3944 email billt@pfb.po.my

Piano & Bowed Strings 2001 & 2002



The new syllabus includes revised repertoire lists for piano, violin and cello. The publication of new repertoire lists for double bass and viola has been postponed and these will now feature in the 2003/2004 syllabus.

Harpichord, Organ, Guitar, Harp, Percussion, Singing & Ensembles 2001 & 2002



The new syllabus, applicable from January 2001, features expanded lists for singers at Grades 1 to 5. The singing lists have been revised and enlarged to provide a more varied choice of repertoire. Also from January 2001 an additional three minutes will be allocated for singing exams at Grades 1-3 and maximum programme times will be set.

New Violin Prep Test



The Prep Test for violin has been completely rewritten and a new Prep Test volume for violin will be published in November. The test contains three short 'tunes' written to encourage a sound approach to playing, a choice of set piece and some aural 'games' which provide enjoyable preparation for the Grade 1 tests.

Syllabus of Diplomas from 2000

The new diploma syllabus is now available, with the first exams in the UK and Ireland in December and in all other countries from January 2001. The syllabus has been published in two versions: complete, covering all three subject-lines and every instrument; and for piano only.

The piano version of the syllabus contains everything required for preparation and entry – the full regulations, the guidance for piano performers and piano teachers and the full requirements for each level of award.

The LRSM 1992 syllabus will run concurrently with the new syllabus. Part 1 may be taken up to the end of 2001, and Part 2 up to the end of 2002. The Advanced Certificate syllabus remains in force up to the end of 2001.

Welcome to Jazz Notes,
a new column devoted
to jazz education.

In this issue, Charlie Beale, Chief Moderator and Jazz Project Co-ordinator for the Associated Board, talks about how to prepare your improvising...

Just as we need to prepare before we play music that's been written down, jazz musicians also need to prepare before they play solos. We learn the bassline and the chord sequence, we practise playing in the groove of the arrangement and we generally get comfortable by learning some vocabulary in the style. More advanced players will spend long hours listening to the 'licks' of their favourite players, and practising them in all 12 keys. They call this 'learning the language', and just as you're never likely to say 'the cat sat on the mat' in a real conversation, learning little melodic lines is useful, though we'd rarely use them in performance, because it would sound boring and stilted. For less experienced jazz musicians, such preparation is vital.

So there are two equally undesirable extremes. At one extreme, the candidate arrives in the exam unprepared, or at least under prepared, but 'creative'. We've met a few of those and the result is often spontaneous(!) but is less likely to keep to the form, reflect the character of the tune, or establish a really clear and consistent groove. At the other extreme is the over prepared solo, which sounds dull, stilted and predictable, because much of it is off-by-heart. We get a few of those too! Most of us, most of the time, will be somewhere in the middle, well-prepared, but prepared in such a way that we can go in many different directions in the performance, instead of just the one. The criteria suggest that improvising should ideally be 'flexible', 'inventive' and 'perhaps surprising'.

Top tips for preparing to improvise

- 1 Learn the sequence thoroughly – bassline, chord shapes and main chord tone movements, singing as well as playing. Do all the changes last for the same amount of time, or does the harmonic rhythm change?
- 2 Practise playing the sequence over the groove, and perhaps slower and faster than the given tempo for flexibility.
- 3 Learn some licks (short melodic phrases) to start you off. Listen to a player you like, and choose some vocabulary that means something to you and is in your technical range. Learn each by ear (write them down for reference only), and practise them in as many different ways as you can: high, low; at different points in the solo; as the beginning of a phrase and as the end etc.
- 4 Find as many different ways through the solo as possible. Always keep searching for new ways to be flexible. Do it differently every time.

Photocopying



DO NOT PHOTOCOPY © MUSIC

The illegal photocopying of copyright music is a serious problem for music publishers worldwide, including the Associated Board. All music published by the Associated Board is copyright and should not be photocopied without permission. As part of a campaign to address this issue ABRSM Publishing has commissioned cartoonist Martin Shovell to devise a logo to remind people, in a light-hearted yet serious way, that they must not photocopy copyright music. The cartoon makes its first appearance in the new *Selected Piano Examination Pieces 2001-2002* and *Selected Violin Examination Pieces 2001-2004*, published in July.

Page-turning

But how does this affect the use of photocopies to avoid problematic page-turns? Publishers in the UK who are members of the Music Publishers Association (MPA) have issued a *Code of Fair Practice* which allows the copying 'of a page of

the work for ease of performance', without seeking the publisher's permission. However, publishers outside the UK, and those who are not members of the MPA, are not covered by this code, and the copying of one page may be illegal. For complete clarity refer to the code (available from MPA Ltd, 3rd Floor, Strandgate, 18/20 York Buildings, London WC2N 8JU) or to the publisher/distributor concerned.

Generally, candidates are responsible for making their own page-turns and the examiner cannot be expected to help with page-turning. Within the exam situation examiners just don't have the time or the opportunity to turn pages, whilst also listening intently and writing comments on the mark form. Do remember, however, that examiners will be aware of potentially difficult page-turns and they will be understanding should any pauses or problems result. Any slight mishaps will not affect the mark.

In some cases page-turns will remain virtually impossible without a page-turner. Generally this applies to candidates taking higher grades (7 and 8) on instruments that present extreme page-turning difficulties: organ, double bass, guitar, harp and percussion. So, in some cases we do allow candidates to bring a page-turner into the exam room. If you want to explore this option you will need to gain permission in writing. Write to us at the time of entry giving details of the piece containing the problematic page-turns and the edition to be used. We will then consider your case and write to you with our decision.

Similarly, in the new diploma exams candidates may be allowed to bring a page-turner if absolutely essential. Again, you will need to get permission from us in writing, at the time of entry.



You can find more information on page-turning in:
Examination Regulations & Information Syllabus of Diploma Examinations These Music Exams

All page-turning queries should be addressed to the Director of Examinations, Philip Munday.

Diploma feedback

Since the publication of the new Syllabus of Diplomas we have received much positive feedback from teachers and potential candidates. The breadth of the syllabus, rooted in real world personal experience and the built-in flexibility, allowing candidates to play to their strengths, have all been praised. Typical is this quote from a recent letter, 'I must write to congratulate you on publishing such a well-thought-out syllabus. I find the content very approachable with a wide range of choice.'



Let us know what you think by writing to Philip Munday, Director of Examinations or by emailing direxams@abrs.ac.uk



Travelling together

Tim Arnold



Tim Arnold is a pianist and teacher. He is also an examiner, Course Leader on the CT ABRSM course and an experienced presenter of workshops and seminars.

'Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for choosing to fly British Airways and we hope you have a pleasant stay here in Hong Kong.'

Having just returned from my first visit to the Chinese University in Hong Kong for the 2000-2001 CT ABRSM course, I was thinking about our need as teachers to look at our teaching and reflect on its effectiveness. As a result I was prompted to ask myself some questions.

Do my pupils enjoy their lessons?

It is so easy to become depressed when pupils 'forget' to achieve any practice or even worse, 'forget' to arrive for lessons. Could this be something to do with the way I approach my teaching? Have I lost that initial enthusiasm, when, as Mrs Curwen said, 'Every lesson is sixty minutes worth of a thousand discoveries'? Perhaps I have forgotten to consult with my pupils about their lessons.

Do I have a route plan?

Pupils seem to feel much more involved in their progress if they feel there is a planned journey towards a known goal. The goal might be a performance at the end of term, a pupil's party at home, an exam, a GCSE practical assessment or perhaps getting ready to play for Grandma! Sometimes it may be necessary to take an unusual route, there may be diversions, but at least teacher and pupil can have some idea of where they are going.

Preparation for performances and goals can include:

- Reading the music and understanding the composer's intentions
e.g. What is the difference between a waltz and a minuet, how is a gavotte different from a jazz blues piece?
- Overcoming technical challenges
e.g. Fingering, bowing, breathing, embouchure etc.
- Understanding the expression and meaning and making it personally relevant
e.g. How do dynamics relate to key changes and how does the harmony demonstrate the structure?

- Developing listening skills to enable pupils to become self-critical
- Acquiring communication skills so the performance really says something to the audience

Your route plan also needs to take into account the long-term objectives for each pupil. Not all our pupils will become concert pianists or violinists, but that does not mean they need not have some sort of ultimate goal in mind.

Do I really know about my pupil's journey?

In some of my early piano lessons teachers would start the lesson with a question like 'What did we do last week?' This is an admission of failure on the part of the teacher, who can't remember what was done in the last lesson. Very basic record-keeping need only take a few moments and ensures that there is always continuity from lesson to lesson. I'm not talking here of a notebook for pupils (by the way, older pupils may prefer to write their own lesson notes) but of my own independent records.

Many long haul flights show progress through the journey with the position of the plane displayed on a map showing how far has been travelled and how far there is to go – food for thought here perhaps!

Why do I teach anyway?

It was a moment of great poignancy for me in Hong Kong when one CT ABRSM student shared part of her mission statement as a piano teacher with me, 'Teach for joy not for money.' However, occasionally we can all find our *raison d'être* being called into question.

Someone once said, 'Those that can't teach, teach others how to teach and those that can't teach others how to teach write books about teaching!' I don't subscribe to this view at all – considerable inspiration can be gained by reading books written by and for instrumental teachers. (One of my personal favourites is *Not Pulling Strings* by the guitar teacher Joseph O'Connor.)

'I don't know what you're taking, but can I have some?'

Are my lessons pupil focussed?

A former CT ABRSM student said that 'if lessons take place in a safe and relaxed atmosphere with an enthusiastic and good-humoured teacher, pupils will relax and experiment without fear of failure.'

This is surely something to aim for, but so often in the 'busy-ness' of teaching I find it easy to fall into the trap of only looking at the obvious in my pupils' playing. To help guard against this I try to develop a pupil-led approach. This can be done by asking questions, non-threatening of course, like 'Where do you feel this phrase should be loudest?' and 'How loud is loud?' Also, I find it very helpful to let my pupils make choices about the music they are playing. Questions like 'Are there any other ways of playing this piece?' and 'Could you phrase this differently?' will help my pupils to develop independence. Indeed my overall aim should perhaps be to teach towards my own extinction – towards the point where my pupils will be in a position to teach me! The brief teacher/pupil relationship between Haydn and Beethoven, prior to Haydn's journey to England in early 1794, might serve as an example.

How do I react when I hear my pupils play?

Some teachers fix that smile in place and desperately search for something positive to say. It is sometimes hard to find a positive point, but we all respond much better when told we've done something well. The next thought can then become 'OK, so how can I make it better still?' Just occasionally it can come as a wonderful surprise to a pupil if I say 'Well done – I enjoyed your playing very much.'

Let me quote Mrs Curwen again, 'Move from the known to the related unknown.' I have come to realise that it is helpful to plan the lesson so that some new point of musical interest or technique will be included. In this way it is possible to comment on our pupils' playing in terms of where we are hoping to lead them in the future. For example 'I enjoyed your playing of... now I would like to help you achieve...'

Yes, but how should my pupils achieve?

Experienced teachers will know that far more is achieved by playing something in six different ways rather than playing it the same way six times, and this is where imagination can be developed. I sometimes ask a pupil to play a short passage in as many ways as they can – finding that the technical challenge is met in the process.

Take a risk and try something new in your teaching – it can be exciting. By experimenting constantly we can discover what works and what doesn't – particularly bearing in mind that our pupils are individuals and what suits one may not work for another.

How much importance am I giving to imagination?

Some of the most inspiring lessons that I have been privileged to watch have been those where imagination has been allowed to develop in both teacher and pupil. We can use our own imagination to develop a story behind a piece of music, but perhaps it is even more helpful to encourage our pupils to do so. Ask your flute pupils to write a narrative based on *Two Tunes for the Parrot*, clarinet students can develop an imaginary character to match the Demnitz study they might be playing and, of course, there is no end to what you could think up for *The Swinging Sioux!*

Do I encourage my pupils to listen?

Many will be familiar with the triangular relationship between composing, performing and listening. We may not all feel confident about developing improvisation or composition in our teaching, but we can certainly give our pupils the opportunity to listen to music.

Encourage pupils to listen to music on the radio, as a means of improving their appreciation of style, musicianship and repertoire (also helpful for the D Aural Test in Associated Board exams). You can also demonstrate other music by composers being studied – I recently played a recording of Evgeny Kissin playing Rachmaninov's 3rd Piano Concerto to one of my pupils who is studying a Rachmaninov Prelude.

One of my essential items of equipment has to be the tape recorder; asking pupils to listen to themselves can open their eyes/ears to what they are really playing, be it scales, sight-reading or pieces.

Am I maintaining my own sense of enjoyment?

If my pupils and I are travelling together then my enjoyment will become infectious. Finding out why our pupils were motivated to learn in the first place and revisiting the initial motivating factor can often inject another shot of enthusiasm.

Be warned though – this sort of thing can backfire. I remember becoming very animated in an effort to inspire one of my pupils when at the end of my dancing and pirouetting he simply said, 'I don't know what you're taking, but can I have some?'

Robin Osterley: Doing it for love

*Robin Osterley is
Chief Executive of the
National Federation of
Music Societies*



On 14 April, the National Federation of Music Societies hosted a conference about amateur music-making under the auspices of The Music Experience, our 3-year community development project funded by the National Lottery through the Arts Council of England and by BT. This article highlights some of the fascinating information revealed at this conference.

An *unconscionable* number of people give up enormous quantities of time to indulge in this thing called amateur music-making. According to Robert Hutchinson and Andy Feist in 1991, there were 5,400 amateur music-making groups in the UK. There are many more now. The 1996 National Music Council report estimated that more than 600,000 people participate in live music-making.

NFMS occupies a significant position in this world. Our 1800 members comprise some 1100 choirs, 300 orchestras and 320 music clubs, who are amateur promoters putting on professional concerts. We also have a range of other organisations such as steel bands, male voice choirs, Indian classical music clubs and so on. Our members extend to all parts of the UK, including many parts of the country where live music would simply not happen were it not for the activities of our members. And indeed were it not for the individuals from our member groups, much of the music profession would simply have no audiences or customers.

This link with the profession has always been of the utmost importance to us. Imagine an amateur orchestra. Such a band will contain a sprinkling of professional 'stiffeners' who might be hired to do a particularly hard solo part or just add expertise. It will also contain a number of highly experienced musicians; they could be music or instrumental teachers, arrangers, composers, performers in other areas, amateurs, managers or agents. Some of them would have been perfectly capable of becoming professional musicians, and indeed may well have gone through the whole gamut of conservatoire training but have chosen to make their careers elsewhere. Such an orchestra will be conducted by a professional. In such ways are the distinctions between amateur and professional blurred. And there is another crucial way in which the distinction is blurred, and that is the

financial contribution the voluntary sector makes to keeping the music business afloat. I will be looking at this in more detail later.

For many years NFMS has been lobbying hard to keep these critical facts in the minds of the funders and administrators of this country. To this end, we recently undertook a survey of our membership and some of the results were pretty startling. Here are a few myths and their respective explosions:

Myth 1: Amateur societies are dying out

In an average year our members promote about 7,700 concerts, or an average of 21 a day. They have membership of around 136,000, or 0.3% of the adult population. They entertain audiences of some one and three quarter million, i.e. an average of 227 per concert. In terms of other participatory activities, more people go to the concerts of our members than go horse riding, play cricket, or go ice skating and the biggest participatory sport in the country, angling, attracts only one million people.

Myth 2: Music societies don't feature contemporary music

On average, 4,800 (or 62%) of our members' concerts feature at least one piece of music by a 20th century composer, and 2,900 (or 38%) by a living composer. Purely for comparison, the South Bank Centre's programme for March and April featured some 82 events in the 'classical music' genre, of which 57% contained works by a 20th century composer and only 26% by a living composer. These figures do not include the non-classical contemporary events at the South Bank which are very numerous; my point here is that the non-subsidised sector does pretty well in promoting contemporary music.

Perhaps the most heartening fact is that over the last five years, on average, our members have commissioned 238 pieces of new music per year! This, in my view is a most surprising and refreshing statistic. We do not have figures on exactly how many minutes of music this represents, but even if every piece was only 15 minutes long we would be talking about nearly a million pounds going to composers every year. Thus the tradition of the UK choral scene producing pieces such as Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* seems to be alive and well.

Myth 3: Music societies are exclusive and inaccessible

Our survey shows that 39% of our membership have at least one member from an ethnic minority, and 57% have at least one member who is disabled. For audiences, the figures are equally revealing, 85% and 92% respectively. In addition it is worth mentioning that 54% of our performing society members don't audition.

Myth 4: Music societies are the province of the elderly

The survey shows that 37% of our performing society members have an average age of less than 45.

Myth 5: Amateurs are not making a financial contribution

There is little doubt that if it were not for the astonishing financial contribution made by the voluntary sector to the music business as a whole, the latter would suffer dramatically, perhaps to the point of extinction. We have already seen the enormous amount of money spent with composers, but it is worth noting that our members spend nearly £9 million on professional artists each year. This is about the same as any three of the regional contract orchestras combined. In addition, three quarters of a million pounds is spent by our members with music publishers – our best guess is that this is at least a third of their UK hire income. They are the principal employers of small chamber ensembles, recitalists and soloists in the land. They keep venues going with their hire fees. They produce programmes and publicity material, and hire staging and percussion equipment. Indeed, their total turnover is somewhere in the region of £23 million – about twice the turnover of the UK's largest Internet Service Provider, Freeserve.

Myth 6: The funding system looks after the grass roots

In spite of apparently excellent intentions from government and the funding system, around 37% of our members make a loss on the season and have to make up the income by fundraising. Only 6% describe themselves as regularly making a profit on the season. 60% of our performing societies are never funded by their Arts Council or Regional Arts Board, and a similar number are never funded by their local authority.

Myth 7: Amateur musical organisations do not get involved with community-based activities

Our recent feasibility study funded by Carnegie (UK) has revealed that some 20% of our membership has regular contact with young people in their community, and that approximately 21,000 young people have benefited from these activities. Our recent

funding schemes for community activities have been hugely over-subscribed, and thrown up projects as diverse as marketing partnerships with supermarkets, tourist attractions, hotels and restaurants, choral workshops in schools, open-air concerts with local rugby clubs, jazz workshops and community practice sessions.

I hope our survey has been able to explode a few myths and provide some interesting information. There are of course musical organisations out there that are not members of NFMS, so in reality the overall picture is much larger than I have painted.

But these statistics, important as they are, disguise the single most important thing that is derived from all this activity – the huge contribution that it makes to people's quality of life. Participative music-making has benefits which people come to rely on for their well-being and satisfaction. But is it just a social activity? Is this panoply of music-making the base of a pyramid of quality that starts with top-flight soloists and moves inevitably downwards, as it does in sport? The answer is a very firm 'no'.

In spite of the amateur status of these clubs and societies, there is no shortage of quality. It is interesting to note that all the large symphonic choruses, e.g. London Symphony Chorus, Philharmonia Chorus, Hallé Choir, are amateurs, these days without much professional 'stiffening' either. The best chamber choirs in this country are mostly amateur, and some of these operate to an exemplary high standard. And some NFMS orchestras are, I maintain, able to play anything that professionals can, albeit with rather more rehearsal.

How are such high standards achieved? The answer is rehearsal. Most music societies meet weekly, although some meet on a project basis, with intensive rehearsal periods leading up to the performances. They would typically have much more time to rehearse works than the professional equivalent is allowed. The focus is on doing a small number of things as well as possible. Not only does this allow for more time rehearsing, but it also allows time for corrective action to be taken if problems arise. A good conductor will also have spent a considerable time on the sound, and this can be tailored to the venue since the venues typically will be well-known to the society. In this way some of the performance standards can be very good indeed, and there is no doubt that some of my most memorable musical experiences have been with amateur choirs and orchestras.

So it is a thriving and lively scene. Our members pump enthusiasm, effort and indeed cash into the music business in a way that only amateurs can. They do it for love – and everybody wins as a result.

For a copy of the membership survey results, or for further information about the NFMS contact:

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Advance stage fright

I read Clara Taylor's comments about confidence with interest and engagement in realisation that performances can achieve a quite unexpected degree of expressiveness and even profundity once one has laid the technical foundations thoroughly enough. An additional point comes to mind here from experience, that in preparing for performances generally and not least for exams, a teacher does well to advise pupils to conjure up possible 'stage fright' in advance.

Trying hard a week or two prior to the event to imagine the real sense of pressure that will occur, will motivate towards just that extra bit of practice that can turn a knife-edge performance into a joyous one.

*Ian Bamford-Milroy
Spilsby, England*

A round of applause

Each summer I arrange an informal concert at which all my pupils play the piano to parents and friends. In the early days I was asked by a nervous lass, 'What if I get lost and stop playing?' I told her, 'We will clap you.' It has become a little ritual that before the children begin their programme the audience rehearses a special ripple of applause, nicely orchestrated to move across the hall. Because this is fun, nobody minds if a breakdown happens. As a result the youngsters, being less worried, seldom need the audience's applause before the end of their piece.

*Fay Atherton
Bury, England*

Creating a positive atmosphere

I spend part of my week in a junior school running a reading scheme called the Better Reading Partnership. This involves working with individual children to improve their reading. They are not children with special needs, but whose reading is just a bit behind. I often find that their reading is fair, but they are very lacking in confidence.

Many of the methods used to help these children become more confident readers, also help my piano pupils as they acquire the skills they need. We always start with something familiar, progress to something seen once before, and finally to something new. The children are always given lots of praise. The praise is specific, 'The dynamics were really good on the third line' or 'The phrasing was much better than last week!' Sometimes there is praise before we start, 'Good hand position. Well done.' Even if the performance is dreadful, I always try to find something to commend!

Then we move on to areas for improvement. I try to draw their attention to mistakes with a statement, 'Play bars 3-4 again and listen carefully to the chord at the end of the bar.' This is better than, 'You played a B instead of a C there', and it helps the students to listen more carefully to themselves.

I continue to encourage by giving out mini certificates. Some of these are for scales or good listening, others are more general and are given for trying hard. I also have stickers for something really special and on days when I have time to bake (rare) a home-made cake! At the end of term I award full-size certificates for effort during the term. This is backed up with a newsletter to parents telling of exam successes etc. I find these incentives really help to create a positive atmosphere, and build confidence in the students.

*Briony Watkinson
Middlesbrough, England*

Next topic: parents – a mixed blessing?



Clara Taylor

The relationship between music teachers and the parents of their pupils is a delicate one.

There is no doubt that the actions of a few mothers and fathers unfairly give a bad name to the rest. You only have to say 'parents...' in any group of teachers to hear a collective sigh strong enough to fill the sails of a yacht. Teachers hope for the following benefits from the parents of their charges: friendly, open communication; a regular home routine which allows a sensible time for practice; support and encouragement for the pupil without interference and of course to be paid on time with proper notice given for lessons missed.

Problems seem to occur most frequently in two contrasting ways. Parents are sometimes so uninvolved and/or disorganised that they hardly seem to notice that their child is having lessons at all. It's so sad when the teacher enquires, 'Does your mother like this piece?' to be told, 'She never listens.'

The opposite situation is perhaps more familiar. Parental interest is so intense that the child feels under tremendous pressure,

especially as exams approach. A healthy result of 116 (incidentally, around the average mark) is unfortunately not the cause for congratulations, but rather the disappointed question, 'Why didn't you get a merit or a distinction?' No wonder the child becomes reluctant to continue when the outcome is seen as more important than pleasure or progress.

Teachers are often asked to enter pupils for exams against their better judgement. It's difficult to refuse when the parents see exam results as a measure of the quality of the teaching without taking into consideration the level of ability of their own children. Teachers point out in vain that you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, (no doubt using rather more tactful words). The typical 'pushy parents' are a nightmare, and can sabotage the whole enterprise for the child, as well as increasing the teacher's blood pressure.

Do you have any tried and tested ways of dealing with these problems? Do write in, if only to get your experiences off your chest and reassure others that they are not alone!