

LIBRETTO



Musical literacy at Grade 5

New Prep Tests

Teaching diplomas

Latest publications

Paul Harris on simultaneous learning

The power of communication

Issue 2001:3



**ASSOCIATED BOARD
OF THE ROYAL SCHOOLS OF MUSIC**

**AIBIRISIM
PUBLISHING**



Outlook

This issue of *Libretto* includes two articles which argue the case for greater co-ordination within music education. John Treherne (page 6) writes about the ways in which instrumental teachers can contribute to learning in the classroom, while Paul Harris (page 14) explores the potential for closer integration in the learning of diverse musical skills.

The views expressed in these articles can be seen as part of a wider national debate about the fundamentals of music education, which has been particularly active over the past year. For example, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority is currently engaged in an analysis of creativity and in seeking to define the aims of arts education; the National Foundation for Educational Research has sought to portray the effects and effectiveness of education in music and the other arts; and the Performing Right Society has published *The Power of Music*, a directory and commentary on extensive research into the multifarious ways that music impacts on our lives.

There does seem to be a growing recognition of the exceptional diversity and breadth of music compared with other subjects, and even with other arts, taught in schools. The acquisition of skills in composition, performance, listening and appraisal across a range of musical genres, deliverable through technological as well as live mechanisms, is indeed a massive task. Whatever challenges are posed for our educational planners and regulators (and the challenges are formidable), this greater awareness of the plurality of music, its contents and its effects, is much to be welcomed. It is only in the light of such understanding that the need for 'joined-up' music education, as exemplified by John Treherne and Paul Harris, can be fully appreciated.

Richard Morris

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UK closing dates

Many teachers plan a long way ahead for their pupils' exams and find it helpful to know how exam dates fit with school terms and other commitments. The dates for next year's exam sessions are now available in the latest *Regulations & Information* booklet but you may wish to make a special note of the closing dates for 2002.

Closing dates for postal entries are:

- A Period Friday 11 January
- B Period Friday 26 April
- C Period Friday 20 September

How are postal closing dates set?

Before setting dates for the year we research extensively to find out school term dates throughout the UK. Our main priority is to ensure the best possible fit with school term dates. We then aim to set each closing date as late as possible for the benefit of those teachers who have not decided on entries at the end of the previous term. However, we also need to allow enough time to process entries, arrange timetables, book venues and examiners and notify teachers of exam appointments in good time.

What if the closing date is close to the start of your school term?

Teachers often decide with their candidates at the end of the previous term whether or not they will sit an exam in the next term and then send their entry in early. When this is not possible the online entry form provides a later closing date – usually the Wednesday after the postal closing date. This effectively gives a full extra week as there is no need to allow for the post.

- To enter candidates online all you need is your applicant number and a password. For more information about online entry visit www.abrsm.ac.uk

UK and Ireland seminars

Places are still available at a number of our forthcoming seminars for singing and instrumental teachers. The seminar series, entitled *The Whole Picture*, takes place between September and December at venues around the UK and in Dublin.

- For further details and to check availability contact the Marketing Department:
t 020 7467 8254
e marketing@abrsm.ac.uk

For the Dublin seminar contact our Irish Co-ordinator, Miriam Halpin:
t 01 2350752
e musexam@iol.ie

Get practising!



Looking for ways to get your pupils practising? Then the Sargent *Practice-a-thon!* could be the answer. The *Practice-a-thon!* is a fundraising venture organised by Sargent Cancer Care for Children to take place throughout the spring term next year. Young musicians taking part pledge to do 20 minutes' practice every day for two weeks and collect sponsorship from friends and relations. The two weeks could be before a school concert or music exam, with other children or not – the participants get to choose. All those taking part will have a great new incentive to play regularly, knowing that they are raising money for an extremely worthwhile charity that supports young people with cancer and their families. Some great prizes will be awarded to the highest fundraisers, including a full version of Sibelius music notation software.

The Associated Board is supporting this event along with the Federation of Music Services. So far, music services in Bolton, Calderdale, Dudley, Enfield, Kent, Oxfordshire, Redbridge, Sefton, Surrey, Sutton and Wigan together with London's Centre for Young Musicians have signed up for the *Practice-a-thon!* encouraging about 60,000 young musicians to join in.

As a national annual campaign, the Sargent *Practice-a-thon!* is open to all young musicians living in the UK and will take place during the spring term each year.

- To find out how your pupils can take part contact Sargent Cancer Care for Children:
t 020 8752 2866
e janeferguson@sargent.org

Points of contact

How to contact the right department at our London office.

UK & Ireland Exam Administration

For information about dates, venues, entries:

Northern Region Exams

t 020 7467 8252
e northern@abrsm.ac.uk

Southern Region Exams

t 020 7467 8211
e southern@abrsm.ac.uk

Midlands Region Exams

t 020 7467 8243
e midlands@abrsm.ac.uk

London Exams

t 020 7467 8261
e london@abrsm.ac.uk

Ireland Exams

t 020 7467 8243
e ireland@abrsm.ac.uk

International Department

For enquiries about exams outside the UK and Ireland:
t +44 20 7467 8240
f +44 20 7631 3019
e international@abrsm.ac.uk

Special Visits

For exam visits outside the main session:

t 020 7467 8221
e specialvisits@abrsm.ac.uk

Diplomas (UK and Ireland)

t 020 7467 8829
e diplomas@abrsm.ac.uk

Quality Assurance

For any concerns about examiners, the conduct or marking of an exam:
t 020 7467 8262
e qualityassurance@abrsm.ac.uk

Syllabus Department

For questions about syllabus requirements:
t 020 7467 8250
e syllabus@abrsm.ac.uk

NEWS

New UK HLRs

Belfast

Carmel Gibson
t 028 9082 6245
e gibson.family@dnet.co.uk

Burnley

Brian Oliver
t 01282 458164

Esher

Rosalind Henderson
t 01372 468381
e henderson@yaffles8.freeseve.co.uk

Tredegar

Stella Martin
t 01495 303785

UK address changes

Doncaster

Jean Stewart
e jean2001@freenet.co.uk

Nottingham

Sheila Middleton
e vicmiddleton@compuserve.com

Oxford

Janice Allen
e janallen_1@hotmail.com

Peterborough

Christine Frostick
e c.frostick@swcom.net

Preston

Glen Clayton
t 01254 813330

Salisbury

Helena Wright
e queensberry@waitrose.com

UK and Ireland High Scorers' Concerts

23 September

Dublin
Isle of Man

27 September

Bolton

30 September

Doncaster

21 October

Swansea

9 November

Bangor

International applicant cards

One of the International Department's key objectives is to ensure that the highest standard of service is provided to all those using Associated Board exams around the world. Our new IT system has already brought many benefits, including newly designed entry forms and candidate lists, and we are now able to provide a permanent applicant number and card for each international applicant. This will mean less time spent completing entry forms, as the unique reference number replaces the need to supply full contact details on all the forms. It will also help staff in the International Department to respond quickly to exam-related enquiries.

As further IT developments come on board over the coming months we hope to be able to offer further benefits to teachers and candidates worldwide.

International address changes

Australia: Canberra
Peggy Crosskey
f no longer available

Australia: Sydney
Antonia Deasey
e mdeasey47@hotmail.com

Bangladesh
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PO Box 1281
Accra

Iceland
Gardar Cortes
e ad@centrum.is

Sharjah
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f 6 524 2808

South Africa: East Coast
Ayleen Radley
e abrms-ec@xsinet.co.za

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Simon Yiga
Kampala Music School
PO Box 21763
Kampala
t 41 233 215
e klamusic@yahoo.com

USA: Kansas
All enquiries:
t +44 20 7467 8240
e international@abrs.ac.uk

USA: Minnesota
Roderick Teh
t 612 825 5017
f 612 825 6915

New Representative

Trinidad and Tobago
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62 Second Avenue
Mt Lambert
Trinidad
t 638 8416

International High Scorers' Concerts

6 October
Sri Lanka

3, 4 and 5 December
Malta

First exams for the Seychelles



July saw the first Associated Board exams in the Seychelles. Tim Arnold, Head of International Operations, travelled to Mahe to conduct the exams and run a one-day professional development course for teachers. Tim was also able to give interviews with national press and television and meet key contacts including our newly appointed Seychelles Co-ordinator, Bennet Accouche. Bennet teaches trumpet and class music and coaches the choir at the National College for the Arts. He is also an accomplished jazz musician.

The exams went well, including a wide range of instruments and grades and the professional development course exploring topics such as motivation, technical work, aural training and preparation tips was a great success with teachers. We are now looking forward to developing our work and links with the music educators of the Seychelles in the future.

For more information about Associated Board exams in the Seychelles contact: Bennet Accouche
Associated Board Co-ordinator
National College for the Arts
PO Box 383, Mont Fleuri
t 241 007



Jazz in Australia

October sees the launch of Jazz Piano exams in Australia. Charles Brereton will be examining and travelling around the country with Elissa Milne, our jazz contact in Sydney, to present jazz workshops. These events offer jazz educators, music teachers and students an opportunity to find out more about the syllabus and to ask in-depth questions.

Response to the Jazz Piano syllabus in Australia has been very positive and as a result Charles will be examining in all our Australian centres. None of this would be possible without the work of our Representatives in Australia whose help has been invaluable in launching the Jazz Piano syllabus.



For more information about Jazz Piano exams in Australia contact your nearest Representative or the International Department in London:

t +44 20 7467 8240

f +44 20 7631 3019

e international@abrs.ac.uk

Scholarship winners

Congratulations to the latest students to receive Associated Board scholarships for courses of study at the Royal Schools of Music. We wish them all the very best for their forthcoming studies.

Undergraduate

Royal Academy of Music
Robin Gough, French horn, Australia
Simon Hewitt-Jones, violin, UK

Royal College of Music
Zoe Beyers, violin, South Africa
Mark Braithwaite, viola, UK

Royal Northern College of Music
Carmen Craven Grew, violin, UK
Gary Pomeroy, viola, South Africa

Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama
Nico de Villiers, piano, South Africa
Heather Kennedy, violin, UK

Postgraduate

Royal Academy of Music
Andrew Skidmore, cello, UK
Brian Wallick, piano, USA

Royal College of Music
Robin Ashwell, viola, UK
Shannon Foley, voice (baritone), Australia
Naomi Williams, cello, UK

Royal Northern College of Music
Cathal Breslin, piano, UK
Marcus Carvalho, voice (bass), Brazil
Yoon Chung, piano, UK

Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama
Anna Bin, piano, UK
Constantin Soare, guitar, Romania

Musical literacy at Grade 5

EXAMS



Philip Munday writes about links between theory, practical musicianship and jazz at Grade 5

In the last edition I wrote about the reasons why the Associated Board requires candidates to demonstrate their musical literacy before they enter for practical exams at Grade 6 and above. We are committed to the view that developing musicians should have gained and demonstrated a breadth of musical understanding prior to embarking on the higher practical grades.

Isn't a Grade 5 practical exam enough?

You could make a case for saying that anyone who has passed one of the Board's Grade 5 practical exams has already shown that understanding, and you would be right, but only up to a point. We are looking for rather more for Grade 6 practical entry. It is one thing to be able to play pieces of music after several weeks of study with your teacher, but quite another to show you can independently manipulate and really understand time signatures, a range of keys, simple structures and basic terms and signs, and identify or use ornaments, handle basic chord progressions and observe general musical points in music you have not previously seen – which is what Grade 5 Theory and Practical Musicianship candidates have to do. They must also create melodies – as written compositions or performed improvisations.

For many years there has been a choice of exam mode – pencil and paper or through your instrument. But now there is another way. Recently we increased flexibility and access to Grade 6 practical exams by extending the range of prerequisites to include Grade 5 Jazz. The reason for this is that elements of Grade 5 Jazz have much in common with the spirit – and in many respects the letter – of the Grade 5 Theory and Practical

Musicianship requirements. Each exam tests musical literacy to a comparable level but in a different way and through different skills.

How jazz fits into the picture

In the jazz Aural Tests, for example, candidates work with intervals, identify time signatures and improvise by playing or singing a series of free responses. In the Quick Study candidates play by ear or at sight a four-bar passage and improvise an extension to it on their instrument. They show familiarity with a variety of major, modal and pentatonic scales, and arpeggios and 7th chords in the technical requirements, and in their pieces they demonstrate their ability to improvise to a given length, taking account of the harmonic context and so showing they can work with chords. Ornamentation of the melodic, rhythmic or harmonic elements of the music through embellishment is also required.

The links are obvious, and you can see that the successful jazz candidate at Grade 5 is at least as musically numerate and literate as the Theory or Practical Musicianship candidate. Each option has its own flavour and approach, but still provides that evidence of perception, understanding of musical concepts, discrimination and a developing inner ear we are looking for prior to Grade 6 and which give such added value to Associated Board higher grades.



Merit for Theory

Some readers may remember that it was only as recently as 1989 that we introduced a distinction category for theory exams at Grades 1 to 5. Until then this encouragement was only enjoyed by higher grade candidates! We have good news for all those candidates who do much better than simply pass their exam or who just miss a distinction and who may be disappointed that their achievement isn't fully recognised on their certificate. From 2002, a merit category is to be introduced at all eight grades. The new structure leaves the pass and distinction boundaries at 66 and 90 marks respectively, with merits being awarded at 80 marks.

New Prep Tests: descant recorder and guitar

Nigel Scaife, Syllabus Development Manager, introduces some new publications for these early assessments

In October we are publishing new Prep Test books for descant recorder and guitar, both containing more repertoire than the previous volumes. Following a period of syllabus research, during which key organisations such as the European Recorder Teachers Association were consulted, material was field-tested by teachers who regularly enter their pupils at this level. Many technical and musical parameters have to be established before composers are commissioned so, for example, the range of the recorder is limited (E to D) and there are no forked fingerings (ie B flat and F). Above all, the music has to appeal to children. The *Listening Games*, *Fun Page*, attractive illustrations and colourful covers all help to make these publications really child-friendly.

Descant recorder

The book starts off with the three *Tunes* to be played from memory during the Prep Test. Each deals with a different technical issue and is prefaced

with a short note giving a friendly reminder about how it should be played. Pupils can then choose one piece from the four set pieces in the book, two unaccompanied pieces by Anthony Purnell and two by Alan Haughton with piano accompaniment. For the own choice piece, pupils must choose an accompanied piece, either one of those in the book (as long as it is different from the first piece!) or any other piece of their choice.

Guitar

As well as the three *Tunes*, guitarists have five set pieces to choose from. They may choose a second piece from the five as their own choice if they wish, although any other piece may be chosen. If the own choice piece requires an accompaniment, this can be provided either by another guitarist or by the examiner on the piano. The five pieces have been commissioned from Vincent Lindsey-Clark and are in a wide range of styles and moods – something to suit everyone!



Prep Test for Guitar and *Prep Test for Recorder* are published by ABRSM (Publishing) Limited and will be available from your local music retailer from October.



Clara Taylor looks back over the last year's exams

Everyone should be delighted and encouraged to know that the average mark has risen to 116 for Grades 1 to 5, and to 117 for Grades 6 to 8. This clearly reflects greater knowledge of the syllabus and increased preparation which both pay dividends. Here at the Associated Board we would like to think that regular seminars and workshops have also made an impact. In terms of results, the great majority of candidates do pass, the next largest number receive a merit result and the smallest categories, roughly equal in size, are distinctions and fails.

In addition to these general trends, we thought it might be helpful to relate some other more specific impressions:

Nerves: Candidates have generally approached their exams with a reasonable level of self-assurance; breakdowns, tears and unfinished exams have been very rare. Adults, however, still suffer badly from nerves and many underachieve on the day.

Scales, arpeggios and broken chords: Mostly played adequately, but sometimes very slow indeed without the sense of flow that would ensure more marks. There are favourite scales, and the reverse, with piano black-key melodic minors being bottom of the popularity stakes. Broken chords in Grade 1 frequently have a clipped dotted crotchet in the middle, which spoils the rhythm and string players often lose marks with poor intonation in the top octave, although some play evenly and accurately showing that it can be done.

Pieces: Generally played with more awareness of dynamics but phrasing is often less successful; musical detail needs to be integrated for higher marks, however fluent the notes. Many performances just miss the next category of marks when in the heat of the moment the planned dynamics do not happen.

Repeats: Remember that repeats are not required but *da capos* are!

Sight-reading: On the whole, candidates manage to keep the piece moving but it is common, at all grades, for the performance to set off without any awareness of time or key.

Aural tests: These are going well. Now thoroughly used to the current format, candidates are happily cruising through the tests. At Grade 8, the chords in the A Test caused problems, with relatively few candidates able to follow the pattern of the bass line. Even if the cadence question has been answered correctly, some candidates still can't identify the chords. However, this is a comparatively small part of the overall assessment of these tests.

So, a very encouraging year, which pays tribute to teachers' dedicated work, put in so consistently for all their candidates.



Jazz notes



Charlie Beale, Lead Jazz Consultant, discusses pitch choice in improvising

All Jazz Piano pieces at Grades 1-5 include sets of guideline pitches for use in the solo section. At Grade 1 there are between three and five pitches, rising to seven or eight by Grade 5. They are there to provide a starting point – a helpful way in to improvising in the early stages. They should be seen only as a starting point and not as a 'set' route: players can choose to play whatever pitches they like and ignore suggested pitches altogether, if they wish. In the exam, the examiner listens for the way in which the player chooses their pitches and does not have an expectation that the candidate will necessarily use the pitches given. Indeed, to get a distinction, the criteria indicate that playing will tend to be 'inventive, perhaps surprising'. A candidate is likely to receive a higher mark if they choose from a wider range of pitches than those in the boxes, and uses their chosen pitches in surprising or inventive ways. So, jazz teachers need to develop strategies for encouraging their pupils to be as varied as possible in the pitch choices they make.

Let's explore some of the ways in which you can get your pupils to group pitches together. At Grades 1-3, harmony is less of a factor, so players might choose to group pitches in stepwise intervals or perhaps with gaps of various kinds. Pitches chosen from more conventional scale patterns, including majors, pentatonics and modal shapes can be contrasted with chord shapes such as classical arpeggios, 7th chords and other broken chords. Later, try introducing the idea of a home note or *doh* – a place to work away from or to return to.

By Grades 4 and 5, players are likely to choose pitches that have relationships of various kinds with a moving chord sequence, as well as with the root or key. Try asking whether a chosen pitch, or set of

pitches, fits with the sequence or not. Don't necessarily discourage more dissonant playing, as this is part of the style, but check for awareness of when dissonance occurs. Examiners will recognise this more refined awareness of pitch choice as a sign of merit and distinction level playing at these grades.

Here are some ideas for teaching the exploration of pitch:

- Use suggested pitches as a basis initially, but always explore other pitches too.
- Don't always start with the first pitch in the box. Explore the range of available melodic shapes: rising/falling; scalar/leaping; repeating one note/using a variety; repeating a melodic shape/adding variations and embellishments; question and answer.
- To encourage disciplined improvising, ask the player to state which pitches they are going to use before they begin to play. Do they stick to their choices? If not, why not? Later use freer approaches, perhaps finishing a session with a run through where the player can 'play whatever they like'.
- Sometimes choosing a set of pitches while playing is a problem. Practise using one set of pitches for a while, and then choosing another contrasting set as you go along. Repeat the exercise, this time choosing a different set of pitches for the second half. Are the choosing processes clear?
- Discuss how your pupils can create moments of contrast, variety and surprise in their playing. Encourage creative thinking about how they can sustain musical interest using pitch.



Teaching diplomas: the *Viva Voce*

EXAMS



Communication is the essence of teaching and it also lies at the heart of the *Viva Voce* part of the teaching diplomas. During the *Viva Voce* the examiners lead the candidate through the vital areas of teaching making sure that foundations are in place and can be described clearly and effectively. Areas of questioning may include:

- Beginners (children and adults)
- Teaching materials and repertoire
- Posture
- Technique
- Scales and technical exercises
- Relationships between teacher and pupil
- Aural skills, sight-reading and their integration into lessons
- Exam preparation

Reference may also be made to the Written Submission and, in the case of LRSM candidates, to the Case Study Portfolio and Video of Teaching Practice.

As demonstration is such an important part of teaching, diploma candidates are required to prepare three pieces from the relevant syllabus:

- DipABRSM – three pieces from the Grade 6 syllabus (one from each list)
- LRSM – three pieces from the Grade 8 syllabus (one from each list)
- FRSM – three pieces from the DipABRSM syllabus

During the *Viva Voce* candidates are asked to play sections of their pieces and to discuss some of the teaching issues involved. They need to

demonstrate a clear approach to technique and show that strategies are in place to deal with potential problem areas.

A general acquaintance with Associated Board graded materials is expected. Examiners will not be looking for a comprehensive knowledge of the repertoire lists, rather an ability to draw on suitable examples at various levels. At FRSM level candidates are expected to have a very good grasp of the repertoire for their instrument. Candidates may refer to any of the repertoire they currently teach and are advised to bring a selection of their favourite teaching materials with them to discuss with the examiners

There will usually be two examiners present, a specialist and a generalist, and candidates may be asked to 'teach' certain aspects of technique to the generalist examiner. This gives a clear indication of communication style and how flexible, or otherwise, the approach is likely to be in a real situation.

The written work necessary for the teaching diplomas ensures that candidates have given considerable thought to their subject. A reading list is available and although it is not necessary to read every book on the list, exploring various approaches to teaching will help develop a breadth of knowledge and understanding. It will, however, be immediately obvious to the examiners if the candidate has read books on teaching but has little experience of practical application!

Even the most anxious are likely to find that the *Viva Voce* is held in a friendly, encouraging way. There is plenty of time to expand on and develop initial answers, and candidates are given every opportunity to demonstrate verbally, and on their instrument, that a secure technical and musical background is in place.

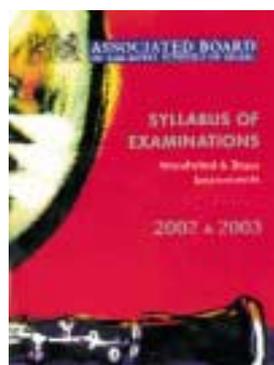
Finally, much thought needs to be given to communication, for example: how to form successful relationships with pupils and how to combine planning with spontaneity in every lesson. It is in this area that the star teacher excels.



The Diploma Syllabus is available online at www.abrsm.ac.uk, from your local music shop or directly from our diploma office. You can find the reading list on our website or for a paper copy, contact the diploma office:
t +44 (0)20 7467 8829
e diplomas@abrsm.ac.uk



Woodwind and brass syllabus



The new syllabus for woodwind and brass instruments is now available. The syllabus, which is current for 2002 and 2003, includes revised repertoire lists for oboe, saxophone, trumpet (cornet and flugelhorn) and tenor trombone.

Forging links

John Treherne on how instrumental teachers can become involved in class music

From my work in a medium-sized town, I am aware that many class teachers, particularly in the Primary sector, are not confident when teaching music. This is where the expert instrumental teacher is such a valuable resource. Music specialist and class teacher can work effectively together and pupils will benefit greatly from such a partnership.

Many instrumental teachers are increasingly involved in school workshops. By taking part in interactive music workshops in school, as opposed to more formal attendance at recitals, pupils' musical awareness is heightened. In Gateshead, four teams of musicians present up to 12 workshops in any given week and it is hard to meet the demand. Colleagues enjoy the stimulus and challenge and one teacher reported that workshops form the high point of his week.

So, as an instrumentalist, how can you become involved? A musician of any discipline who would like to work in education should think about what he or she has to offer. First, look through the *National Curriculum* for music and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) *Scheme of Work* for music to get an idea of what is required. Instrumentalists working with one or two other colleagues could consider forming a workshop team. Plan carefully, including activities which involve the pupils, decide what age of children you would like to work with and

consider whether you would like to involve a single class, or a larger number of children. Talk to class teachers about the topics that the children are studying, find a 'tame' school, which will allow you to try out your programme and contact your local Music Adviser, Inspector or Head of Music Service, who will be happy to offer advice and guidance.

After a period of decline in instrumental tuition in state schools there is an increasing demand for a wide range of music teaching. Remember that there are many openings for those who are willing to be adaptable and happy to learn new skills and if in some small way we can have a positive impact upon our pupils' musical development, we will have achieved something worthwhile.

John Treherne is Head of Gateshead Schools Music Service. He is an Associated Board examiner, composer, harpsichordist and Course Leader for the CT ABRSM course in Gateshead.

 You can find the *National Curriculum* for music online at www.nc.uk.net or you can obtain the relevant booklet from The Stationery Office:
www.clicktso.com
t 0870 600 5522

The QCA *Scheme of Work* for music is available at:
www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes
or from QCA publications:
t 01787 884 444

CT ABRSM UK

This year's award ceremony for CT ABRSM students in the UK was held on 25 July at the University of London's Senate House. 144 successful students were present to receive their Certificate of Teaching from the Associated Board's Chairman, John Baker CBE. The event was hosted by Richard Morris, Chief Executive, and Richard Crozier, Director of Professional Development with Sir Philip Ledger CBE, Principal of the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, as guest speaker. Students, their guests and CT ABRSM Course Leaders and mentors attended a celebratory reception after the ceremony.

The next CT ABRSM course starts in October and with a closing date of 17 September there's still time to apply.

 For more information contact the CT ABRSM Course Administrator, Judith Jerome:
t 020 7467 8257
e profdev@abrsm.ac.uk

CT ABRSM Hong Kong and Singapore

Prospectuses for the next courses, starting in April 2002, are now available. To request a copy contact either the Hong Kong Examinations Authority (HKEA) or Singapore Symphonia Ltd (SSO).

 **Hong Kong**
Selina Yuen
HKEA
t 2326 0937

Singapore
Su-San Hay
Singapore Symphonia
Company Ltd
t 339 2624
e hay@sso.org.sg

The closing date for the Hong Kong and Singapore courses is 5 January 2002.

Taiwan travel grant courses

In October we are running two short professional development courses for teachers in Taiwan. The courses, supported by the Associated Board's Centenary Travel Grant Fund, will be led by Richard Crozier, Director of Professional Development, and a member of the CT ABRSM mentor panel.

Each course takes place over three days and teachers can choose to attend in either Taipei or Tainan:

Taipei: 11–13 October
Tainan: 15–17 October

 For further information contact our Representative in Taiwan:

Shao I Shih
Union Music Centre
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Spectrum 3 launch at the BBC

Spectrum 3 on CD
All 25 pieces in Spectrum 3 performed by Thalia Myers, on Metronome Recordings



Spectrum 3 an international collection of 25 pieces for solo piano compiled by Thalia Myers



The BBC Radio Theatre in central London was the venue for the exciting launch of *Spectrum 3* on 23 May 2001. Presented by Fiona Talkington of BBC Radio 3, some 200 specially-invited guests and 15 composers enjoyed the world première of all 25 pieces, written by composers from round the world, to commissions by Thalia Myers.

Competition winners

In the competition for May 2001 we asked you to name the Basque national dance which appears in *Spectrum 3*. The answer is **Zortziko**. This piece was written by the Spanish composer Ramon Lazkano. We also asked you how many composers, in total, wrote music for *Spectrum* and *Spectrum 2*. The answer is **30**. Twenty of the composers contributed to both volumes of *Spectrum* with an additional 10 composers featured in *Spectrum 2*. See our website for further details.

Congratulations to these winners who have received a copy of *Spectrum 3* and a CD:

- Mrs C M Tapper
Christchurch
New Zealand
- Miss H J Ward
Mansfield
UK
- Mr John McParland
Belfast
N Ireland
- Ms Jade Young
London
UK
- Ms Bridget Halpé
Kandy
Sri Lanka



The performers included, from left to right, Andrew Hawkett, a member of the Associated Board's IT staff, Sarah Nicolls, fresh from her South Bank Park Lane Group debut recital, the Latvian composer and pianist Pēteris Plakidis, 16-year old Lynn Carter from the Royal Academy of Music Junior Department and 11-year old Anna Hashimoto from the Royal College of Music Junior Department, and Thalia Myers.

Following the performance of *Spectrum 3*, members of the audience had the opportunity to put questions to Thalia Myers about how the *Spectrum* series has contributed to piano teaching and to ask the Associated Board's Director of Publishing, Leslie East, about the future of the series.



Composers, pianists and guests attended a reception held in rooms at the Novartis Foundation, Portland Place, London.

Karen Tanaka, Richard Morris, Anna Hashimoto and Mrs Hashimoto

During the afternoon, two groups of composers joined seminars to discuss their pieces in more detail. Andrew Ball, Head of Keyboard Studies at the Royal College of Music, led a seminar at the Associated Board offices. A second seminar was held at Queen's College, Harley Street where Matthew Greenall, Director of the British Music Information Centre, led the discussion.



Sarah Nicolls and Pēteris Plakidis



Naji Hakim and Sylvie Bodorová



At the end of the day, the 15 composers and Thalia Myers assembled at the entrance of the Associated Board offices.

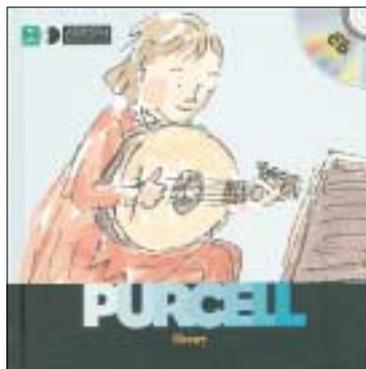
Back row: Hafliði Hallgrímsson, Pēteris Plakidis, Alexandre Lunsqui, Sylvie Bodorová, Toek Numan, Detlev Glanert, Faidros Kavallaris, Victoria Borisova-Ollas, Thalia Myers, Karen Tanaka, Joyce Bee Tuan Koh, Sohrab Uduman
Front row: Naji Hakim, Param Vir, Lyell Cresswell, Rodney Sharman

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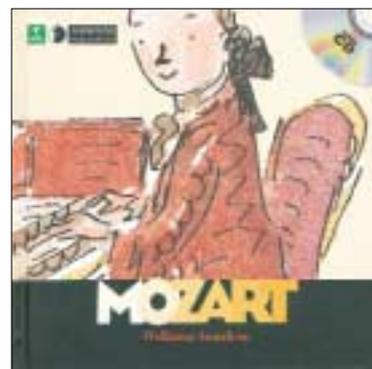
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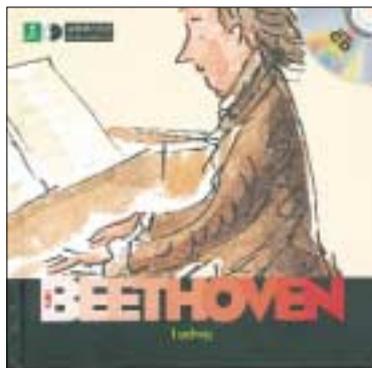
NEW!

First Discovery
Music series
for children

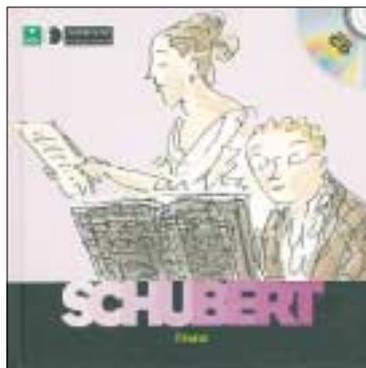
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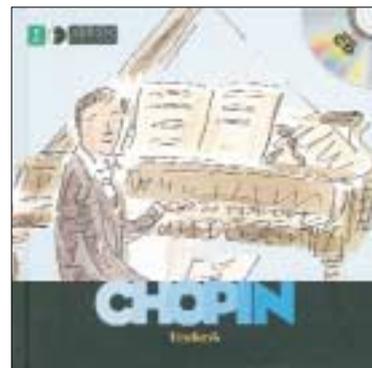
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Competition

For our latest *Libretto* competition we are giving away copies of the new *First Discovery Music* series.

One lucky winner will receive a set of all five titles and four runners-up will receive a copy of the Mozart volume.

Send a postcard with your answers to these two questions, not forgetting to include your name and address, to:

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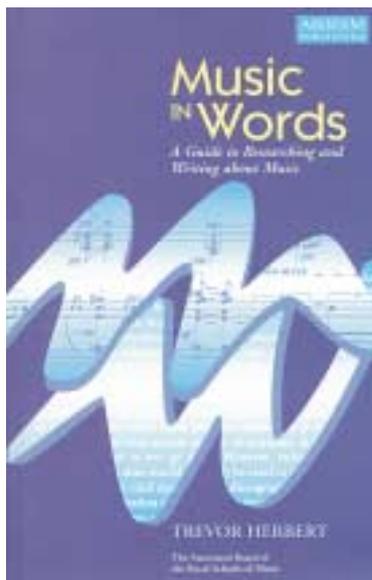
to arrive no later than
Friday 30 November
2001.

What is the name of
the last opera that
Mozart wrote?

What nationality was
Chopin's father?

We are pleased to present the *First Discovery Music* series – illustrated listening books designed to introduce young children to the lives of the great composers in pictures, music and words. The CD has extracts of each composer's music together with a narration of their life story so children can listen, learn and enjoy.

The first five titles in this series present the lives of Purcell, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert and Chopin. Five further titles are planned for next year.



D 236 X

Music in Words

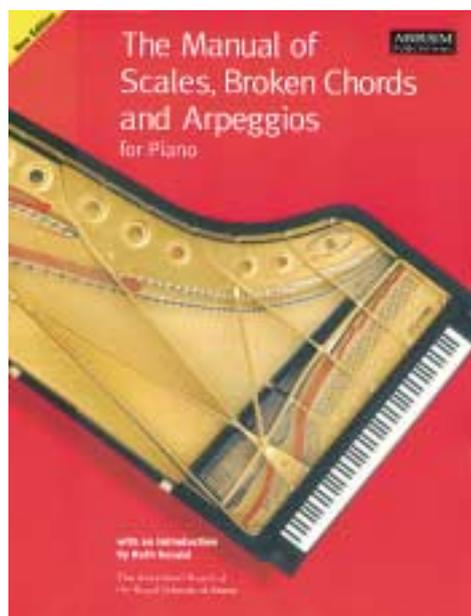
A Guide to Researching and Writing about Music
Trevor Herbert

Many books are written about performing, composing and analysing music, but very few on how to research and write about it. *Music in Words* does just that. Author Trevor Herbert, Professor of Music at The Open University, addresses the issues encountered when tackling writing tasks, from programme notes to dissertations.

The book is in two parts: a 'how-to' section and a quick-reference compendium of information. It includes an introduction to the strategic use of the internet and details of useful websites.

The book's straightforward approach makes *Music in Words* a much-needed support and reference tool for students, professional musicians and experienced writers, and will be of particular use to anyone taking the Associated Board's diplomas.

The Manual of Scales, Broken Chords and Arpeggios for Piano



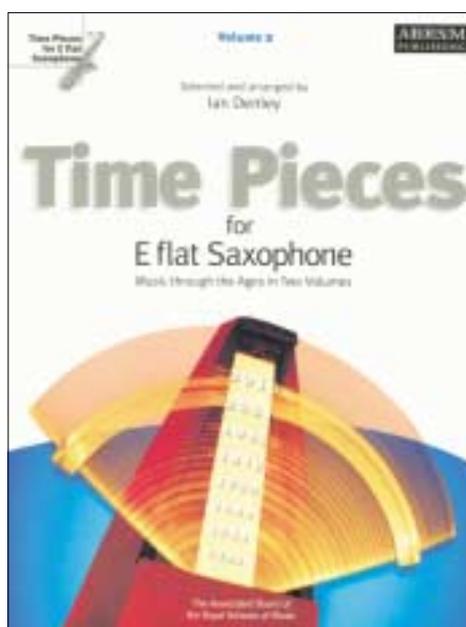
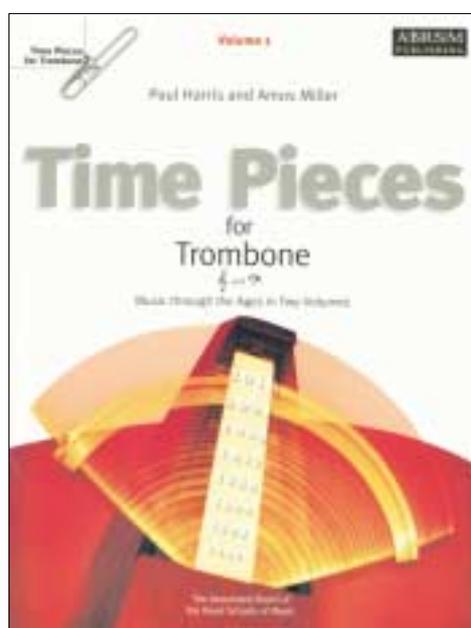
The Associated Board's popular and well-established *Manual of Scales, Arpeggios and Broken Chords for Piano* is now published in a new modern edition. Still containing all the standard scale and arpeggio patterns, it has been enlarged to include whole-tone scales, augmented arpeggios and additional broken chord patterns.

Ruth Gerald, formerly Head of Keyboard Studies at the Royal College of Music and a senior Associated Board consultant and examiner, has written an informative introduction, which includes technical guidance and practice suggestions. This new edition with its much-improved page layout and clarity is an excellent resource for all pianists.

D 112 6

Time Pieces

Music through the Ages



Time Pieces for E flat Saxophone, Volume 1 D 198 3

Time Pieces for E flat Saxophone, Volume 2 D 199 1

Time Pieces for B flat Saxophone, Volume 1 D 196 7

Time Pieces for B flat Saxophone, Volume 2 D 197 5

Time Pieces for Trombone, Volume 1 D 232 7

Time Pieces for Trombone, Volume 2 D 233 5

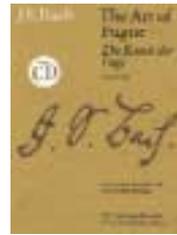
Time Pieces is an exciting series of repertoire which explores the wealth of music written from the fifteenth century to the present day. The pieces are presented chronologically within each volume and all include the year in which they were written too, so you can map your journey through time!

New titles for publication in late 2001

J S Bach The Art of Fugue

Edited by Richard Jones
(includes CD performed by Davitt Moroney)

Leading Bach scholar Dr Richard Jones has re-examined the principal sources of this key work from Bach's final decade. In this new edition the two-stave keyboard layout makes *The Art of Fugue* accessible to modern players. It is enhanced by the editor's extensive analytical and performance notes. The edition includes a specially-recorded CD, performed on the harpsichord by Davitt Moroney.



Mozart Mature Piano Pieces

Edited by Richard Jones

This new selection of Mozart's keyboard pieces includes a variety of works dating from 1777 to 1791. The volume presents an interesting range of origins and styles: one famous piece was originally written for glass harmonica, three are composed in an improvisatory style and three more are partly indebted to the style of Handel. Two of the collection, the Rondo in A minor and the Adagio in B minor, are among the finest keyboard pieces of Mozart's maturity. This edition, with useful historical notes on each piece, has been carefully prepared by Dr Richard Jones.

Pianists should note that this new volume replaces *Miscellaneous Pieces for Pianoforte* which will not be reprinted once stocks are depleted. However, the following 13 pieces from *Miscellaneous Pieces* are included in *Mature Piano Pieces*:

Allegro in B flat, K400
Prelude and Fugue in C, K394
Fantasia in C minor, K396
Fantasia in D minor, K397
Suite in C, K399
Rondo in D, K485
Rondo in A minor, K511
Adagio in B minor, K540
Gigue in G, K574
Minuet in D, K355
Andantino in E flat, K236
Allegro in G minor, K312
Adagio in C, K356

These five pieces are published by us for the first time:

Four Contredanses, K269b
Four Præambula, K284a
March in C, K408
Funeral March, K453a
Andante in F, K616

Two of the sets of Variations, K455 and K573, from *Miscellaneous Pieces* will still be available as separate editions. Other pieces will be available through our archive service:

Allegro Music, Birmingham, UK
t +44 (0)121 643 7553
e sales@allegro.co.uk
www.allegro.co.uk

A Selection of Italian Arias 1600-1800, Volume II

This new, authoritative edition of well-known arias is an ideal introduction to singing in Italian, as well as providing useful material for the advanced performer. Many of the best-known arias from the repertoire are included, such as *Già il sole dal Gange* (Scarlatti), *Sebben, Crudele* (Caldara) and *Vittoria, vittoria* (Carissimi).



A Performer's Guide to Music of the Baroque Period A Performer's Guide to Music of the Classical Period A Performer's Guide to Music of the Romantic Period

This new series of multi-author guides, edited by Anthony Burton, presents reliable information about the interpretation of the music of these periods, encouraging the reader to think about period performance in relation to their playing, singing or listening.

Each volume contains chapters covering the historical background, notation, source issues and the different instrumental families. The guides will be of particular use to students and of great interest to amateur and professional musicians, concert-goers and CD collectors.

Prep Tests for Recorder and Guitar

Oxford University Press is the sole worldwide sales agent and distributor for ABRSM (Publishing) Ltd.

There are two new additions to the Associated Board's Prep Tests, the series designed to introduce young children, via a friendly environment, to the concept of music exams. These initial assessments are to be taken by pupils who have been playing for just a few terms.

Sibellius ad full page

The power of communication

We learn pieces of music by playing or singing them. This in turn points towards a performance in which we seek to communicate our feelings to an audience, large or small, interested or disinterested, knowledgeable or ignorant. To achieve a good performance we need to develop technical skills on our instrument to enable us to perform securely. What brings a performance to life though is our ability to convey our understanding of the composer's intentions and to communicate with our audience through the music. The former requires some understanding of performance practice and what an authentic performance of the piece might have sounded like at the time it was written. The latter requires imagination, creativity and an ability to engage with and demonstrate a personal interpretation of the music itself.

Here, four experienced teachers and performers discuss issues of communication and performance and stress the benefits of developing these skills alongside the process of mastering the technical demands of a piece.

Telling a story

For singers, as well as an understanding of stylistic features and conventions of the various genres of musical composition, it is important to convey the words with both colour and conviction. It is the ability of the singer to convincingly 'tell the story' which is essential to true musical communication. The real secret of effective interpretation is the development of personal imagination, but there are techniques to assist this process.

To address the issue of making the words come alive we can look for the adverbs and adjectives and give emphasis to these to help create colourful and suggestive descriptions. Care is needed to give correct stress and shading to the individual syllables of words. The length and stress given to consonants and the timbre used in the vowel formation are important in giving effective coloration to the words. When analysing words in music, looking at the words which fall on the accented beats of the bar may give an indication of the emphasis that the composer had in mind.

A strategy I use is to take a simple phrase such as 'I'll not go with you tomorrow' to be sung down a major scale in various emotions: anger; defiance; humorous taunting. Try placing emphasis on a different word each time. Another ploy is to sing 'the sun is shining and I am happy' and contrast with 'the sky is grey and I feel sad'. The text being sung needs to be suitable for the age and personality of the singer, who must be able to identify with the emotion being expressed.

Finally, to convey the words convincingly requires appropriate body language, involving attention to posture, facial expression, eye contact and presentation, all of which assist in communicating innermost emotions.

Dr Andrew Padmore
Associated Board examiner and
CT ABRSM voice mentor

The element of choice

To inform a piece with a sense of performance involves an understanding of how to engage an audience. To be able to inform a piece with a sense of performance practice involves some prior knowledge of the style involved. These are two separate issues and need addressing in different ways in the learning process, as the first is biased towards nature (ie how the basic character of the performer affects performance) and the second towards nurture (ie what the performer learns about the character of the music to be performed).

Very often, both processes are sadly left to a later stage of instrumental development, on the mistaken assumption that learners need to acquire a technique of some substance before they can deliver the 'advanced' goods of performance and stylistic performance. Both also involve a large element of choice – the performer chooses how to deliver, and in the case of performance practice will have that choice limited by stylistic constraints to a larger degree. This element of choice is of fundamental importance in establishing a sense of performance.

Even complete beginners with only, say, two or three notes at their disposal can be introduced to the concept of choice. They could be invited to perform those two or three notes as a simple melody so that they sounded either calm or energetic. This could be followed with an exploration of how they achieved that difference (eg loud/soft, long/short). It is then a smaller step to informing them that, for instance, in a jazz phrase those three notes might often be made up of a long/short/long combination. By using such simple strategies, pupils at any level can be introduced to and begin to explore the issues of interpretation, style and performance.

Ian Lowes
CT ABRSM brass mentor

Shaping music

Teachers may feel uncertain and insecure about authenticity in music, perhaps regarding it as a speciality and avoiding it in their teaching. Synonyms for the word authentic – genuine, real, original – all have a positive meaning which can be dangerous and intimidating. For whilst the historically informed styles of playing explored over the last three or four decades have gained general acceptance it is also the case that some teachers and indeed professional musicians are intimidated by and buck against this authoritative implication of authentic.

But 'style', 'historically informed' and 'interpretation' are in truth synonyms for each other. Ignore the supposed superiority of 'authentic' and one realises that we all offer versions of the same thing as performers and teachers. What the musicology and cumulative research of the last decades offer are various tools – ways of making particular kinds of music. In essence the problem of style, historically informed or not, is really one of getting a player of any standard to realise that the job of playing goes beyond the mere reproduction of the notes whether written or not. Music in performance is a re-creative art, not a re-productive one!

I once heard the re-productive skill summed up as 'the right notes in the right places'. Of these two primary elements – intonation and rhythm – most interpretative, stylistic and performance practice issues centre on the latter. In lessons and in their practice pupils can be encouraged to experiment with ways of reading and playing note lengths, the directions of phrases and articulations that assist the structure of the music. This can go hand in hand with explorations of: how to shorten or lengthen notes; how to direct a phrase; when to rhythmically emphasise main beats in dance movements; in short, how to become a sculptor of time.

Shaping music is an acutely aural skill, and as teachers our role is to create an awareness in our pupils that such shaping matters and that 'the dots', written or not, are just the starting point. Involving pupils in the re-creative process reaffirms the joy of why we, and they, play music. Getting beyond the re-productive skills to something that communicates is the summit to which all of our work and our pupils' work should be directed. It can be easy to lose sight of this and the feeling that it is an irrelevance can take over. Persist, and it can become an extraordinary motivating power.

Tony Shorrocks
CT ABRSM string mentor

Persuasive performing

There is a widely held belief that pupils should only listen to a performance of a piece once they have learnt it for themselves. The reason given is that pupils must not be encouraged to copy but to develop an interpretation for themselves. There can be a feeling that style and interpretation form the icing on the cake and that exploration, creativity and musical fun are best encouraged when the fundamentals (ie notes and rhythms) are already in place. Although teachers may place style and interpretation very much on the agenda, it tends to be viewed as a separate and secondary process. This approach contrasts markedly with that of jazz education where learning through listening and exploratory skills is encouraged as a primary process.

In the absence of a clear approach to musical style and interpretation, audience and performer alike would become bored. Music only makes sense through its capacity to communicate. The excitement which makes an audience tingle with emotion and the performer feel proud and elated, cannot come through an appraisal of the notes alone.

When we hear a persuasive performance it is likely to demonstrate the following:

- 1 Clear textures
- 2 A workable, well-graduated dynamic range
- 3 Ability to shape the line with good length
- 4 An understanding of the underlying harmonic structure
- 5 An understanding of the inherent rhythmic characteristics
- 6 An awareness of the composer's intention
- 7 A capacity to bring all the above to life
- 8 An ability to communicate the emotional content of the music (as directed by the composer and interpreted by the performer)
- 9 An ability to sense the 'moment' of performance and to create an interpretation afresh

It is possible to teach a pupil to achieve the first six characteristics with little if any reference to the performance of a particular piece, either by the teacher or an external source. The resultant performance may well be an interesting, even polished one. However, if the goal is to foster musical enjoyment and, more importantly, a desire to communicate that enjoyment, then the teacher must place equal importance upon developing the latter three qualities.

Perhaps the best way to encourage pupils to enjoy making music is through listening to music, in an active and purposeful way, and through encouraging the process of musical exploration and self-awareness.

Peter Noke
*Associated Board examiner and
CT ABRSM piano mentor*

Paul Harris Simultaneous learning – teaching pupils to think musically



Paul Harris gives an insight into his teaching philosophy, explaining how to make lessons more effective by adopting a 'joined up' approach to learning and enabling pupils to make musical connections.

As an examiner I always find it disappointing when candidates play their pieces tolerably or even very well and then fall down, sometimes dismally, on the other stuff. I hear the cry of 'but how can you possibly devote quality time to technique, scales, sight-reading, aural, memory, improvisation, theory, composition (the list seems endless) in a normal lesson span? There are simply not enough minutes.' Perhaps those precious minutes that go to make up a lesson or practice session are not being used as effectively as they could be.

Let's deviate for a moment, and ponder the question, 'Why are some people more musical than others?' The answer, to a degree, lies in their genetic inheritance and therefore, literally, in the way their brains are connected. However, nature must be supported by nurture. Those who, by virtue of sensitive, caring and imaginative parents, have had an early upbringing rich in creative activities (anything, for example, from singing and dancing, drawing and painting to playing with building bricks or jigsaw puzzles) will be in a very much more advantaged position than those subjected to an early life empty or starved of such activities. Through such activities, strong connections are formed in the brain, and with the aid of sensitive and aware teaching which will further strengthen them, the type of connections that lead to musical thinking are developed.

So, what is musical thinking?

The answer is to be found in the way musicians make intuitive and instinctive connections between all the various elements that go to make up music. When musicians read music they hear it in their musical ear, they understand key and rhythm, they perceive balance and sonority, structure and meaning. When they hear music, they instantly know about it. This knowing is similar, if somewhat more complex and multi-layered, to the way we might know, say, a grape or a plum – it is a kind of holistic knowing. In an instant we know what a grape is (whether we have one in our hand or not) – we know what it looks like, feels like, and tastes like, and what its constituent parts are. Anecdotal evidence tells of Mozart's excitement when a composition became fully formed in his mind – he was able to 'see' the entire work in an instant – the ultimate in holistic thinking. This kind of musical thinking can only operate to its fullest when the whole brain is being accessed. For a very small number, who are genetically set up with

an unusually generous number of neural connections, this will happen more naturally; for others – the majority – effective teaching can help to cause the pupil to make the necessary mental connections and relationships to help bring about development of true musical thinking.

So how can the teacher help? What is the teacher's job? It is not simply to teach pieces. It certainly ought not to be a process of correcting pupil's mistakes – a form of passive (or reactive) teaching that is boring and demotivating for both teacher and pupil alike. It should be to teach pupils to become better musicians – and this can come from a process I call *simultaneous learning*.

Many lessons are taught in a rather compartmentalised way. Lots of work on pieces, and then, if time permits, a scale or two, possibly some sight-reading, and, if the next pupil is late, there may be just a few moments to sneak in a quick aural test. But this is far from ideal, and pupils are not being taught to become independent musical thinkers.

To get into the spirit of simultaneous learning, write down all the activities you feel ought to be part of a lesson and begin to make two or three connections between them. For example, sight-reading and scales (many patterns in sight-reading are simply different scale patterns); then find connections between scales and aural, aural and pieces, pieces and memory, memory and improvisation...the more you think, the more connections you will begin to make. In fact, the number and kinds of connections between the various activities are virtually infinite – it just takes a bit of effort to kick-start the mental process. Once you are thinking along these lines lessons begin to take on a new lease of life. Teachers are no longer reacting to (often) poorly prepared work, but are setting the agenda. One idea leads to another in a much more musical way. The process of teaching becomes much more imaginative – a lesson becomes a voyage of discovery – and both pupil and teacher become positively motivated, fired up with a real excitement for learning.

Most pupils find learning and playing pieces the most obviously enjoyable part of their work. So pieces must remain the central focus of the lesson. But it is how the pieces are taught that really counts. All good teaching will have had at least some preparation. In preparing to teach a particular piece it is important to identify the musical ingredients: scale, arpeggio and other melodic and

Paul Harris is a teacher, composer, writer, clarinettist, educationalist and examiner. The author of over 250 publications including The Music Teacher's Companion (ABRSM (Publishing) Limited) and the Improve Your Sight-reading! series (Faber Music) and many works ranging from short educational pieces to five concertos and a ballet.

rhythmic patterns for example, markings and other instructions. And it is important to know the piece. We then begin to teach not the piece, but the ingredients. We are continually making connections into aural, technical work (including development of key sense through scales), memory, sight-reading, improvisation, composition and theory. In this way the skills, related knowledge and subsequent musical understanding become linked and a much more powerful and effective form of education has taken place. We are teaching the language, we are teaching our pupils to see and understand; to hear and understand. We are teaching them music.

As a teacher, I used to become frustrated at having seemingly taught a pupil something and then finding that they could not then apply that same knowledge in a different context. For some reason, effective learning had not taken place. In a good simultaneous learning lesson there must be a good deal of dialogue – the asking of searching questions designed to encourage pupils to develop connections and think for themselves. Pupils must be encouraged to solve their own problems. Teachers guide and direct. This is how progress is really made and it will allow pupils to transfer knowledge and understanding much more readily.

So how might a simultaneous lesson unfold? There is an infinite variety of possibilities. You may base the lesson on an unseen piece of sight-reading; you may base it on improvisation or composition related to the piece being learnt. For now, let us assume we are dealing with a lowish grade pianist who has prepared a C major scale and the first half of a carefully chosen Allegretto in C. We begin by singing (there should always be singing in lessons) then performing the scale. The pupil is questioned: was it rhythmical? Was the tone even? Were there any technical faults? Any remedial work to be suggested by the pupil. Getting pupils to take ownership of their playing is essential if we are to produce independent musical thinkers. Next, some very simple improvisation in C major – free if you like, or perhaps based on a melodic phrase from their piece (but keep the music out of sight!). Recalling the improvisation discuss the range of dynamics used. Now try a second improvisation but making use of a different or perhaps greater dynamic range. Discuss other interesting aspects of the improvisation. Could it be improved? How? Perhaps a technical point may have emerged which can now be explored through either more improvisation or some favourite exercise.

Next, move on to the piece – but still keep the music book shut. Can the rhythm of the first few bars be clapped? How much can actually be played from memory? Work at however much (or little) is memorised. Any particular feature (be it melodic, rhythmic, a particular marking or stylistic idea) can now be explored by talking about it and putting it

into different contexts (still the music is out of sight). Perhaps play a melodic fragment in different keys, exaggerate or alter a marking, the variety of possibilities are only limited by the imagination.

Now finally open the music. Read the music through silently, in the head first, before playing it. Try singing the right-hand line and playing the left. Then (assuming there is nothing the pupil may really find difficult and again after silent reading) sight-read a further few bars. It doesn't matter if the silent reading was not a hundred per cent accurate at this stage. The very fact of trying will develop all sorts of musical skills. Again, talk about and work at the ingredients of the new section. Never simply teach the piece.

Now decide on what is to be the focus of the week's practice and talk about how practice is to be undertaken – simultaneous learning should be assimilated into practice just as it is in lessons. More work on C major – perhaps it is to be played at different dynamics or using particular rhythms found in the piece; beginning to think about composing their own Allegretto in C (perhaps they might improvise different ideas or work on the first few bars) and more work on their piece – with as much memory work as possible. Pupils should keep a practice notebook, noting down the various different ideas they had during their sessions. Practice thus becomes a creative and imaginative experience – not a half-hearted, mindless twenty minutes that pupils would rather be spending doing something else!

So, in such a lesson (and its related practice sessions, which must be clearly connected in both spirit and content) we have included technical work, aural, improvisation, rhythm, composition, scales, memory work, sight-reading and the development of other aspects of musicianship. Music has been at the heart of the activity throughout with the piece acting as the point of departure.

Simultaneous learning is about making connections.

Once a teacher/pupil team embark on this kind of learning the horizons become increasingly wider. The imagination of both parties is being accessed – and that is where music really lives. A music lesson should have very little to do with correcting mistakes, with showing pupils how pieces 'go'. Simultaneous learning is about making connections. Through teaching pupils to make these connections, we are really developing their musical ability. It is certainly more of a long-term approach and it will take a bit of courage, but the rewards will be considerable. We are developing pupils' musical independence, the likelihood of them giving up is diminished and we are endowing them with a unique gift for life.



Your chance to share experiences and ideas with other readers.
In each issue our Chief Examiner, Clara Taylor, introduces a subject for discussion. We then publish your responses in the next issue. Your contribution may be edited for publication.

Write to Clara Taylor, marking your envelope Forum, or email chiefexaminer@abrs.ac.uk

Adult essentials

Seven years ago I returned to piano lessons. My previous experience was during the 1950s. The past seven years have been extremely rewarding. An essential is a teacher who is sympathetic, professional and able to communicate with learners who may be older than themselves!

*Lynn Donald
Falkirk, Scotland*

Pleasure in learning

I have a number of adult students, most of them wishing to take exams and some having to deal with the business of nerves. Not one of them is looking for an easy route to learning. I get immense pleasure from teaching adults. The rewards are great and I strongly urge all teachers to grab the chance to teach an adult if an opportunity arises. Their pleasure in learning is worth everything.

*Anthony Steel
Isle of Wight, UK*

A joy to teach

My oldest pupil is 68 and came to me two years ago as a complete beginner. He is taking Grade 2 Practical next and has just passed Grade 3 Theory. Music has changed his life! His arthritic hands have improved and he has a whole new attitude to life. I find my adults a joy to teach and feel privileged to give them a chance to experience the pleasure of playing and singing in later life.

*Liz Littler
Kidderminster, UK*

The value of Performance Assessment

I wholeheartedly endorse your comments about the value of the Performance Assessment for adult learners. When I was preparing for the DipABRSM exam the examiner's assessment and advice really set me on the road to greater confidence and was a good 'reality check' on the standard I had reached.

*Hilary Millichamp
Oxford, UK*

A different approach

I have to adopt a different approach when teaching adults. They commence lessons with the best of intentions, but are often so busy that they do not find time to play their instrument. They are easily 'put off' and I have to treat them with kid gloves. They are cross with themselves if they do not immediately understand or if their fingers will not do as they want them to. On the credit side, teaching adults can be rewarding, for they are thrilled when they have mastered a problem, be it technical or otherwise, and maturity is an advantage. As most teachers would I'm sure agree, it's great to have adults 'giving it a go'.

*Alison Masters
Rotorua, New Zealand*

Look, they are doing it too!

I have been teaching adults for many years but it was when I became a Piano Co-ordinator at The City Literary Institute that I started to do it on a much more serious note and I love it! I think it makes much more sense for adults to learn in a workshop situation, it increases their confidence and provides a supportive social background – 'Look, they are doing it too!' They feel much more relaxed about making a mistake or feeling insecure. They are amongst friends!

*Yekaterina Lebedeva
Piano Co-ordinator
The City Literary
Institute, London*

The right reward

As a young teacher I have often wondered how I should encourage my older students. Then one day, I decided to reward one of my adult students with a sticker on her book. To my surprise, when she reached home, she proudly showed it to her grown-up daughter. I now realise that adult students need encouragement and rewards just like younger learners.

*Siong Ng
Auckland, New Zealand*

Correction

On our last Forum page we referred to a Bach Fugue in E minor. This fugue was actually by Telemann; the reference to Bach was an editorial error. Apologies to Margaret Huntington whose letter this mistake involved.

Next topic: memory



Clara Taylor

Candidates sometimes arrive in the exam room without their music. Often they have left it at home or in the car and panic ensues until a spare copy is found. Rather less frequently the candidate will play their pieces from memory. Their confidence may be rewarded by fluent performances with no distracting page turns but sadly, on other occasions, an obviously well-prepared performance comes to a grinding halt when memory fails under exam pressure. It is distressing for candidate and examiner when attempts to restart are not successful.

Singers, of course, do perform from memory except in oratorio items, but if necessary they can be quickly prompted by the pianist. Instrumentalists rely rather more

on various different forms of memory: physical – when the fingers appear to know their way without prompting; melodic – the sound of the piece; and visual – when the look of the page prompts memory, even if it's not being read note-by-note. We need all these forms of memory for safe performances. To play from memory is a big decision for teacher and pupil and there needs to be a high level of confidence and previous performance practice to be certain of a safe outcome.

The various forms of memory make a fascinating focus in lessons. We have recently had several letters about memorising and it would be extremely interesting to hear your views on the subject.