

Oregon Music Teachers Association Conference

Thursday, June 25th, 2020: Florence

Lower the Rear End of the Elephant Slowly onto the Keys: Teaching Basic Artistic Concepts by Using Colorful Imagery: Dr Peter Mack

If anything is unclear, please do not hesitate to email me:
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GENERAL TEACHING

Medieval city: each student may use a different gate

Goldilocks

'You said it' does not necessarily mean 'they heard it!'

Our goal is to put ourselves out of a job...

Who is your teacher? If I am, once a week; if THEY are...

Sound is the most important thing: bakers deal in dough, realtors deal in houses, we deal in sound

PRACTICING PHILOSOPHIES AND TECHNIQUES

Three stages of learning Ignorant/effort/automatic

Rogues' Gallery

First few bars; learned to ride a bicycle in Japan? It transfers!

Technical skills = Four cars: convertible; truck; bus; limo

Mud on white shirt (overdo)

Piece = pizza Slices, Bites, Chew like crazy!

5 times/abacus or animals cross the River Keys... Coin game

Concentrate on one thing only, or try to do all at once, vary

It's fun to play only the bits you know; but it's first class... on the Titanic

Julie Andrews was wrong...

Problem with rear end (not on bench for long enough)

SPECIFIC TO PERFORMING

Must be loud: "P stands for 'Project'; 'MF means 'More Forceful'"

Tune is like Ice-cream. When it's good, it's very, very good. When it's bad... it's still pretty good!

Tune: when it's loud, it's very, very loud. When it's soft... it's still pretty loud!

Song/Dance/Atmosphere/Story

Tune; Gerbil or Baby Elephant?

Tune; Brother/sister ten years older

Tune; Acting voice/ normal talking voice Sarah Bernhardt on Youtube

Gestures; Stage/TV

All the notes; smile missing tooth

Variety: favorite food? Things to vary? dynamics/voicing/articulation/rubato/ornaments/body

Alpine bus driver

Often, after they've done something especially beautiful, they will mess up. We can't allow ourselves to forget that we still must drive the bus.

Memory points; check them = lifeboat drill

Lower the Rear End of the Elephant slowly onto the Keys: Teaching basic artistic Concepts by using colorful Imagery: Dr Peter Mack Page 2

PERFORMANCE PHILOSOPHIES

Adults and the talking dog

Not brain surgery; no one ever died from a bad recital

Diving board/magic bubble to begin and end

Can you keep a secret? How you think you are doing is none of our business

Even if they don't do everything they could have, it may still be very good

Competitions: organic farmer

INDIVIDUAL PHRASES:

"I didn't say you stole that money"

Sportscar crescendos Pearls or pearl necklace?

One climax per phrase: tea with two cakes; Raspberry OR Chocolate. Leave one for me!

Singer/dancer/composer/architect climaxes (Hint: dessert is when in the meal?)

Fine dining = pause between courses. Fine playing = pause between phrases

GROUPS OF PHRASES:

Q&A 'On top of old Smoky' Mozart: Sonata in C

'Happy Birthday' Phrasing, or "one TWO THREEEEEEEE four"

Three Tries Mozart: Rondo alla T. Clementine 'lawnmower' 'swirl'

Limerick Form (Coming round the mountain)

COUNTING:

Gorilla counting

Leg metronome (drop parachute hands for later open octaves; pickup sideways)

'It is a 1; it is a 2; it is a 3" etc. Over the bar line

Waltz: 'three ONE two' is the unit

THE FRUITY SCALE:

pianists: lift kick relax (old-fashioned – not recommended) / wrist low to high / rotate/
flap from knuckle) Metronome 40 initially

pear 1 note=1 octave

apple 2 notes = 2 octaves

blueberry 3 notes = 3 octaves

huckleberry 4 notes = 4 octaves

hippopotamus/Buffaloberry 5 notes = 5 octaves (a favorite word, used in phrases too)

Mesopotamia 6 notes = 3 octaves (or 'Follow the Yellow Brick')

Walla Walla Washington/ Listen to the Radio 7 notes = 4 octaves

Go for it!

4 notes in a triplet - avoids short-short-long problem

Rhythm: short long short: "We're ladies, on diets; we're doing aerobics"

Lower the Rear End of the Elephant slowly onto the Keys: Teaching basic artistic Concepts by using colorful Imagery: Dr Peter Mack Page 3

RUBATO:

Alcoholic rubato

Run to the beloved, but walk away

Too many agogics = Const. Needs to flow (unfortunate image pairing)...

But tastefully done; birthday cake only once a year to keep it special

IMAGES AND TECHNIQUES SPECIFIC TO PERFORMING PIANO

Speed; Elephant's rear end!

Adjust to piano/space: two options upright/4/6/7/9

Nine ways of playing chords:

- i) Wrist low to high 'go IN'
- ii) Wrist high to low - Start at fallboard
- iii) Dust off the piano
- iv) Put the dust back in - 'Expand'
- v) Rotate/clap and release/rotate out
- vi) Nike swoosh
- vii) Pelvis (Demo. with teddybear)
- viii) Rear end off the seat: Parent with Waldo Book
- ix) Push head back/ away from the piano

Hips: egg balanced on little end Swivel pelvis in for intense (teddy bear demo)

Lean in for intense "May I touch your head?"

Scales: RH up = deck of the Titanic, down = air under the elbow (45 degree angle to key)

Chromatic scale: '543' is the password to the secret club

Arm moves and carries fingers, not fingers moving carrying arm (321321321 move)

Arpeggios: Russian transfer/French legato with wrist behind finger - 'Yankee Doodle' exercise to throw hand

Collapsed fingers: show on lid 'knock knock' sound

Bony tips vs. fleshy pads

Thumb/5th shorter; Poland "No opening drawers" Avoid in and out

Smileyface/Rainbow Undershape/overshape Infinity sign in tetrachord scale one 8ve scales L5432 R2345

Straight line fingertip to elbow... Draw on them?

Roll over ball of fist/ whiffle ball on pencil

Chicken Coop!

Knuckle mountain/ rubber and steel

Wrist behind/spy

Rotate: Italian ambivalence; woodpecker; hold finger with the other hand

Thumb/guillotine/corner of nail

"I pledge..." practice; one hand feels for tension while the other plays

Lower the Rear End of the Elephant slowly onto the Keys: Teaching basic artistic Concepts by using colorful Imagery: Dr Peter Mack Page 4

Octaves 'catch and release' 'frog's tongue'

Small Hand: 'If it **sounds** like you're playing all the notes...'

Arpeggiated chords: ripped 'Band Aid?' (Slow is not treated same as fast)

Hamsterdam; The three pianos

Atom bomb = low notes

Pedal = Jam sandwich: Where is the jam layer?

Body parts: Pedal with your... Breathe with your...

Salt/Goldilocks Salt is not a vegetable: it's a seasoning

SOME SELECTED INDIVIDUAL COMPOSERS:

Bach: i) conversation

ii) many, many children

iii) concerto grosso form

iv) two-part invention form = predict the future! relative major/dominant; or dominant/rel. minor

v) one TWO **THREEEEEEE!** four

vi) in a Bach competition? Above all you need...

Beethoven: i) compression: Moonlight, Waldstein

ii) wants to be Bach

Chopin i) **bad marksman is where the beauty lies (like Dick Cheney)**

ii) **texture in three parts: supertanker/sea bed/sparkling little fishes OR diva/bell/perfume!**

Mendelssohn: it all came so easy

Mozart: opera's demon king/Lilliputian Trumpets (from Doug H.)

MOZart, HAYdn, SCHUbert, BEEthoven

Rachmaninoff: Russia, it's a big country, so play louder; front-load tunes

Ravel: photo (Le Belvedere, Montfort-l'Amoury (S.&O.) T.89)

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