

EPTA UK

Piano Teacher Talk – your quick update on what’s going on in EPTA

Key dates to note:

15.11.18

Masterclass with Angela Hewitt at Kings Place, London, book your ticket here via this link:

<https://shop.kingsplace.co.uk/single/SelectSeating.aspx?p=22415&z=0&syo=1>

EPTA CPD days:

23.9.18 Edinburgh

20.10.18 Swansea

11.11.18 Manchester

Topics include - simultaneous learning, ornamentation, sight reading, techniques, child protection and safeguarding, pedalling, creativity, inspiration plus so much more. Presenters include Murray McLachlan, Paul Harris, Melvyn Cooper, Nancy Litten, Kathryn Page, to name just a few.

FREE to EPTA members! Non-members also very welcome at a nominal cost for the day. Please contact the administrator for more information or to confirm your attendance admin@epta-uk.org

Are you interested in joining EPTA? We provide:

1. Public Liability Insurance
2. Countrywide events for all EPTA members
3. Competitions for performing and composing. Plus more.

Contact us here to find out more: admin@epta-uk.org



Dear Piano Teachers

Welcome to this first online newsletter. It’s packed with things to let you know what EPTA UK is doing and also provide you with some information that will hopefully help you in your teaching.

EPTA UK loves to hear from its’ members and all piano teachers across the UK. Let us know your thoughts about any of this month’s newsletter on our Facebook or Twitter page.

Sending the warmest wishes from all the management committee at EPTA UK and many thanks for all you are doing for Music Education in the UK. Piano teachers provide a wonderful service. Your work is appreciated!



Most importantly, we at EPTA UK can provide connection, the opportunity to meet face to face with other piano teachers and make friendships.

40th anniversary of EPTA

By Karen Marshall

In November 2018 EPTA UK will have been running for 40 years. EPTA feels this is a really special achievement and want to celebrate it. EPTA UK was founded in 1978 by Carola Grindea with the purpose of raising standards of piano teaching, piano performance, pianists working together and general musicianship in the UK. This is achieved through providing opportunities for piano teachers, pianists and other interested parties.

Moving forward EPTA has so much more to give. We are tremendously excited to reach out to piano teachers across the UK to support you in your wonderful work with UK students. EPTA is here to provide connection, to invigorate, excite and enthuse you so you can empower your students to reach their potential. Teaching the piano can be lonely, EPTA is here for local face to face meeting ups but also on Social Media and the digital world.

With some of the most experienced and gifted teachers, musicians, writers and practitioners at EPTA's fingertips - we have something for everyone.

Here is what is planned for the 40th Year:

- * Angela Hewitt will be launching our Birthday activities with a master class on November 15th (7.30pm) at Kings Place London.
- * In January EPTA will be launching their ABRSM/EPTA teaching diplomas. ALL levels can be studied from dip, Associate, Licentiate, Fellowship and the CME. There will be 6 days at Chetham's School of Music. You can do the whole course (£500) or just use it as refresher days (£100) in certain areas of your practice. Go to the link here to find out more: <https://epta-uk.org/cpd>
- * An EPTA Teachers Choice Birthday Piano Book - more details will be released in future newsletters.
- * Birthday celebrations from face to face parties to repertoire playing challenges. We will be in touch letting you know our plans!

Curved fingers or flat fingers...!!!

Dr. Murray McLachlan

A big subject, but in essence I would say a lot depends on the style of the music. If I want to play rapid semiquavers in pre-Beethoven repertoire then I naturally curve my fingers for more articulation. If I wish to have more legato and sonority in the romantic repertoire, then they tend to flatten instinctively. Of course, we should all try to find power, focus and physical control from the knuckles. It is fundamentally bad practice to collapse the first and second joints of the fingers. However, pupils with hypermobility may well find it difficult not to collapse their finger joints inwards as they play. Perseverance, patience and awareness of what they are doing can help. Stress, tension and stiffness should be avoided at all costs. It can certainly help to focus on the knuckles and visualize internally a mental picture of finger movement from the 'bridge' of the hand (knuckles).

But in terms of how curved fingers should be in terms of a default position, try experimenting: To find a pianist's natural finger curve, get them to pick up a pencil without thinking about it. Just say have the thumb on one side, and the fingers on the other. After this is done, look at the curvature of the fingers. What is there is what is comfortable = the correct curvature for that pianist at that time in most normal contexts.

Repertoire showcase,

There is a lot of core repertoire available to us as pianists. EPTA's website has an enormous amount of pieces listed, with the recommended grading. Why not take advantage of this excellent facility if you are looking for something new and stimulating to offer to your students. Here's this month's selection, suggested by Liz Dewhurst:

Grades 1-2

*The Wood Fairies - Walter Carroll

*Little Song: from 30 Children's pieces – Kabalevsky

Grades 3-4

*Curlew Calling – June Armstrong

*The Monkey - Scott

Grades 5-6

*Le Petit Nègre – Debussy

*Morning Bells – Burgmüller

Grades 7-8

*Aria from Goldberg Variations – J.S.Bach

*Street Tango – Piazzolla

Huge thanks to Andrew Eales (Pianodao) for kindly agreeing to make EPTA Piano Teacher Talk available on his blog. We appreciate his support and all the work he does for Music Education.

How to make scales practice more musical and fun with technology from Josie Swallow

I've been using an iPad in my Piano Studio for several years and it has truly become an indispensable teaching aid. Technology can enhance our piano teaching in so many ways, making things more engaging and interactive for pupils. Of all the many musical skills we teach our pupils, scales practice is probably one of the most challenging to present in musically meaningful, engaging and fun ways.

A relatively new app, Scale Tracks, has revolutionised my pupils' approach to scales practice. This app contains backing tracks in every key, to accompany both scales and arpeggios. Simple to use, pupils can vary the number of octaves (from 1 to 4) and the tempo quickly and easily. But what makes this app so special is the myriad variety of backing track styles, in genres as diverse as Classical, Dubstep, Bossa Nova and Jazz. The orchestrations are recorded with real instruments – pupils can play along with a real symphony orchestra or jazz band.

Why do I like it so much?

Scales practice becomes much more creative, fun and musically meaningful. Backing tracks help my pupils' aural awareness, their sense of pulse, metre and melodic shaping. Fingering becomes internalised and automatic as they focus instead on maintaining a steady pulse, or trying to play the scale even quicker! My pupils enjoy playing their scales because who wouldn't enjoy playing a scale called "Bubbles", "At the Beach" or "Danger"?

Currently available for iPad from the Apple App Store. Download for free and try out the backing tracks for C major and A minor, then it is a one-off purchase to unlock all keys and tonalities. Featured in BBC Music Magazine, with positive reviews from Tim Topham, Christopher Norton and Paul Harris. Highly recommended! www.scaletracks.com



Pedalling

What do you do when your student struggles to hear the blurring? Advice from Margaret Murray-Mcleod here:

First Steps in Pedalling, or How to be a Musical Scientist.

The difference between hearing and LISTENING is not always appreciated, especially by children who are bombarded daily by being told what or what NOT to do!! From the very first lessons we should encourage our pupils to listen, not just to how a note begins, but right to its end. The problem with the piano is that after an explosive start a note immediately starts to fade...it cannot *crescendo* on a note like most other instruments.

Listening becomes even more crucial when a pupil begins to use the sustaining pedal; not only should they know how the instrument works, (all those fascinating moving bits inside) but they should begin to understand how to control the sound.

So, let them do some investigating.....

The Experiments:

1. First play a piece to your pupil WITHOUT pedal and then WITH. Can they describe the difference?
2. With their back to the piano can they say which version has pedal when you play again?
3. Using a stop-watch or a watch with a second hand, play middle C *mf*. Listening closely, how long does it last WITHOUT pedal and then WITH?

WITHOUT pedal it lasts.....seconds

WITH pedal it lasts.....seconds

4. Does a LOUD note last longer than a QUIET note?

5. Compare high notes and low notes:

HIGH NOTE lasts.....seconds

MIDDLE NOTE lasts.....seconds

LOW NOTE lasts.....seconds

Listen to the throbbing of the low note as it dies away. Fascinating!

Second steps in pedalling next time.



ABRSM are coming to Scotland!!

They have an exciting roadshow, packed full of wonderful goodies. Do have a look at this link for exciting information:

<https://www.google.com/url?q=https://gb.abrsm.org/courses-and-events/scotland-piano-roadshow/&sa=U&ved=0ahUKEwi3ib2Nra7dAhWkhqYKHZqYCMQQFggEMAA&client=internal-uds-cse&cx=001314958510227271512:aaciyvfkxag&usg=AOvVaw2CiISYjoi-YMZ85boNhTLs>

www.abrsm.org/music