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Play Piano As Fast As Possible!

By Ronald Worthy

One of the rules of practicing we all hear over and over is "Be sure to practice slowly." (I'm guilty of this too!) Often the result of this is a feeling of inhibition, which leads to tedium. Picture yourself filled with excitement and yearning in setting out to learn a new piece. Suddenly a voice from the darkness whispers: "Don't touch those keys! Sit erect, play slowly, stay strictly in time, watch that fingering..." and your smile is gone. I'm beginning to feel a cramp just talking about it.

The fact is, a certain amount of slow practice and attention to small scale detail is absolutely necessary. But there is something lacking in the approach so many of us have taken; we set out to make music, and end up playing what amounts to no more than a series of sterile exercises.

How can we overcome this problem?

First of all, it's important to remember that music comes to life through shading, dynamics, differences in touch, the shapes of its phrases, the rhythmic vitality that is so much a part of the right tempo. These qualities are all missing in a slow, rigid "practice" version of a piece. They are just as essential as correct fingering, and they don't come across without careful work.

So, perhaps we should change that rule from "Be sure to practice slowly" to "Practice as fast as possible." But Wait! This requires some further discussion. The slow part of practice helps teach the fingers where to go, and makes it much easier to learn the work. But in order to learn how to create music, how to make the piece sing—we must practice it at a tempo that will help reveal musical relationships and subtleties of form.

Pianists must have the opportunity to experiment with touch and phrasing while practicing, and there is little chance of boredom when so many exciting elements are introduced to the practice session.

In my E-book, I've included many basic exercises with background music to assist you in acquiring this level of keyboard performance. In other words, you will be practicing with other instrumentalists. You will hear the drums, bass and an unobtrusive piano accompaniment that provides a harmonic blanket for YOU to practice your course material!

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Ideally, then, both ways of practicing should be used!

First, we should practice slowly enough to learn the notes and fingerings. Then, we should "practice as fast as possible"; that is, as fast as we can without losing control of the basics we learned in slow practice.

Here's how this would work. Take a short part of the piece; you might choose a four- or eight-measure phrase. Practice it slowly. When you feel comfortable with the music, increase the tempo. Don't wait until you've practiced the entire work slowly. In this way, at each sitting you'll get to learn a little section, bring it up to tempo, and feel into what is needed to bring it to life.

At the next sitting, work on the next four or eight measure. When you have that section brought up to tempo, combine it with the first section. Now, you will begin to understand how the phrases relate to

each other. You can introduce the idea of dynamic shading and decide which lines to bring out at a given moment. In fact, you will be making real, exciting music—even before you've learned the whole piece!

As you go on in this way, you will probably change your mind about how to play the work as new sections are added. This is part of the process of discovery and experimentation. Concert artists are always re-interpreting, because they think about these elements all the time.

So play as slowly as you need to; but as fast as you are able!

I wish you the best of success.

Ron Worthy

<http://www.mrronsmusic.com/playpiano.htm>

Ron Worthy is a Music Educator, Songwriter and Performer. He provides online piano instruction for all ages at:

<http://www.mrronsmusic.com/playpiano.htm>

It's Never Too Late To Take A Beginner Piano Lesson!

By IPRWire Staff Writer

Sometimes all it takes to get started down the road of music is a beginner piano lesson. How many times have you told yourself that you should learn to play an instrument before it gets too late? And how many times have you put off your first lesson because you just don't have the time, or because you don't know where to go? When you learn online, you eliminate the need to go looking for lessons because everything can be accomplished in the comfort of your own home.

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For many people, learning to play the piano may seem intimidating, especially for those who are older. The piano may seem like it is a difficult instrument to play, but once you have your first lesson, you will realize it is not as hard as it looks. Sometimes all you need to do is rely on your hearing to learn how to play songs that are both easy and more complex.

Once you find the right online source that can instruct you on how to play the piano, you need to kick back and trust that they know what they are doing. Take a look at the testimonials and see how others have learned to play music. You will find that people of all ages and from all backgrounds are just as interested as you in learning to play the piano. And just how successful they have been.

If you don't already have a piano in your home, you can buy a small keyboard to get started. Your main goal when you first start to learn the piano is to play a few notes and simple songs. Once you come to the end of your online piano course, you may find that you want to purchase a piano in order to improve your sound. But to start lessons, a keyboard is all you need.

Online piano courses are designed in such a way that you start off slowly, stepping up the pace as you build up confidence and skill. Learning at your own pace allows you to master each lesson plan before you're ready to move on. This means that you will have all the concepts you need before you move on to the next lesson, which increases your ability to be more proficient at playing the piano.

After your first beginner piano lesson, you will be ready to start taking your lessons seriously. In no time at all, you can be playing the piano like an expert for your family and friends.

Hear and Play specializes in providing piano lessons and learning guides for those who wish to become more proficient in playing the piano by ear. Our programs are designed for beginners and advanced players - everyone has the opportunity to refine their skills and successfully play piano by ear. Contact us at

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