

2017 IMTA State Conference Presentation Descriptions

Forrest Kinney, Conference Clinician

Session One:

- **Topic 1: Musical Conversations: Teaching the Art of Improvising (to Individuals and Small Groups)**

All of us improvise freely each day—with words. We learned to do this because others talked with us each and every day, drawing out our latent ability to speak. In the same way, any student can eventually learn to improvise by having “musical conversations” with their teacher each week.

In this presentation, Forrest will demonstrate how a teacher can create a safe, supportive environment for the student, and then improvise duets with the student. He will show how the teacher can gently and successfully move the student from the duet experience into a solo experience.

Another excellent way to introduce improvisation is in groups. The presenter will demonstrate various ways to set up group improvisations using students and volunteers from the audience.

- **Topic 2: Teaching the Art of Arranging**

How can a student begin the art of arranging in the first lesson? In this presentation, Forrest will demonstrate an approach quite similar to how Clara Schumann was taught when she was five.

Forrest will first show how a teacher can help a first-day student play tunes by ear rather than by rote or by reading. This approach cultivates the ear in a healthy, natural way. Once a student can play some tunes, the teacher helps them to add left-hand bass notes (by ear), then fifths, and then three-note chords. At this point, a student is ready to begin to learn how to “style” chords in various ways and eventually add “color tones.”

After a few months, the beginning student has developed a small repertoire of pieces they can play by memory, and they understand basic chords. As they play, they move with the grace of someone who has been encouraged to focus on the act of playing melodies. Students can then learn to read relatively quickly because the musical symbols refer to something that the student has already done.

Evening Program:

- **The Four Arts of Music**

The Four Arts of Music can be compared to language arts: To compose music is to write musical essays or scripts. To interpret music is to bring others’ compositions to life, to read and recite them. To improvise music is to speak spontaneously freely without a script. To arrange is to be a storyteller, to make one’s own versions of other’s musical themes.

J.S. Bach trained his students in the arts of improvising, arranging, and composing. Today, most teachers train their students in the art of interpreting the compositions of others.

In this concert/demonstration, Forrest will play music that demonstrates the variety within these four arts, and how they can be combined to create interesting hybrids. He will also briefly discuss the history of each art. He will touch on why the arts of improvisation and arranging largely died out in the 19th century and why they have a vital role in the studio today.

Session Two:

- **Topic 1: Creative Practicing**

An English proverb states what every serious pianist comes to accept: “Repetition is the mother of skill.” To be able to play our pieces with any degree of fluency and artistry, we must repeat passages over and over and over...and over again! Yet, too often, the music and the performer both become stale in the process. How can we keep our pieces and our enjoyment fresh? In this talk, Forrest demonstrates a collection of “creative practicing techniques” that can accomplish this essential task.

In addition, Forrest will demonstrate how the essential aspects of technique and theory (scales, modes, intervals, and chords) can all be introduced and learned in creative, musical ways rather than by mechanical drill.

- **Topic 2: Beyond Correct: Freedom in the Art of Interpreting**

How does one develop the ability to make artistic interpretations of musical scores? The main approach is to practice in a creative and musical fashion, not a mechanical way. Another approach is to view a piece as the end result of a long process of exploration by the composer, and then to playfully re-enter the composer’s creative process by exploring various musical options implied by the score. This develops one’s sensitivity to the nature of the piece as well as deepens one’s understanding of it. The presenter will demonstrate this approach and others that cultivate the art of interpretation.

Session Three:

- **Improvisation Class**

Working with four or five piano students of various ages and stages of musical development, Forrest will demonstrate how nearly anyone can learn to improvise music and develop into a musician with a sense of rhythm, style, and creative responsiveness. He will work with students who either wish to begin improvising or take their abilities in new directions. The topics explored will depend upon each student. Some students may learn to step outside popular idioms and improvise in classical or world-music styles, or play with more rhythmic integrity, or play with greater sensitivity to tone color or the play of consonance and dissonance. With all students, an emphasis will be placed on playing less from the brain and more from intuition and feeling.

- **Demonstration Lesson: The Four Arts of Music**

Forrest is also asked by teachers, “How in the world do you fit all the arts into a weekly lesson?” It can be done!

In this final session, Forrest will teach a lesson to an intermediate student that he has never met before. In this lesson, He will introduce and explore the arts of improvising, arranging, and interpreting literature. If time allows, he will also touch on songwriting or composing. The teaching of music theory and technique will be integrated into the teaching of the four arts.

IMTA Member Presentations

Mark Hansen: Little Known Nocturnes - A Treasure Chest of Musical Gems

This lecture-recital presents little known Nocturnes, most at a late intermediate to early advanced level. The pieces which will be performed add significantly to the repertory available to late intermediate and early advanced students and represent some of the most beautiful gems in the literature.

Arthur Houle: The Unknown 'Considerable Improvements,' Copious Errors, and Creative Possibilities in Clementi's Op. 36 Sonatinas

Modern editions of Muzio Clementi's Sonatinas, Op. 36 are usually based on his original version, first published in 1797. However, Clementi later issued a dramatically revised version (c. 1815) subtitled, "With considerable improvements By the Author." Myriad details – notes, dynamics, tempos and articulations – were altered. Houle's presentation will delve into Clementi's revisions and also reveal creative possibilities (e.g., lead-in cadenzas and variant repeats), the many egregious errors in modern editions, and common misconceptions about interpretation.

Walden Hughes: Benefits of Recording Your Students (& Yourself)

Why record yourself? Listening while playing is very different from listening while NOT playing. On a recording, you hear yourself as if it were someone else playing. Did you achieve your musical intentions? You may surprise yourself. This process is extremely valuable for all pianists.

Colleen Hunter: Relate, Reboot & Retain - A discussion on successful teenage teaching

Students in the teenage years often lose interest in piano for a variety of reasons. We'll look at some of the whys and look at the ways we adapt and plan as teachers and consider tips to keep them involved.

Morgan Kline: Kids and Counterpoint – Teaching Off the Bench

Teaching students to play counterpoint accurately is a challenge I've discovered with my own students, especially 5-12 year olds. In my presentation, we will discuss where this difficulty comes from, as well as see how singing, movement, and mind games benefit a student's understanding of counterpoint. By using off-the-bench exercises, we can help students concentrate on multiple things simultaneously, which will benefit their musical development and their understanding of polyphony.

Svetlana Maddox: Schumann's Carnaval, op. 9

Dr. Maddox will give a Lecture-Recital with a PowerPoint presentation on Schumann's "Carnaval" Op. 9. The lecture will consider Robert's Schumann early life, his programmatic suites of character pieces, personal composition style, and musical cryptograms. It will also describe and examine each piece of the "Carnaval," including the enigmas of the "Sphinxes" and

“Letters Dansantes” and draw parallels between the “Promenade” in Schumann’s “Carnaval” and the “Promenade in Mussorgsky’s “Pictures at an Exhibition.”

Roger McVey: Piano Music of Henryk Gorecki

The Polish composer Henryk Górecki (1933-2010) achieved widespread fame for his Symphony No. 3 and his choral music. Although he has become one of the most noted and loved composers of the 20th century, his piano music remains virtually unknown. This presentation will introduce teachers to Górecki’s published works for piano (the Four Preludes, Sonata, and Intermezzo), examining elements of style, as well as discussing strategies for teaching these pieces.

Melody Morrison: Elements of Jazz in Pedagogical Pieces

In a 2012 survey of over a thousand music teachers, 85% said that integrating jazz styles into their teaching enhances students’ musical education. However, only 30% of teachers feel confident teaching jazz. This lecture will present pedagogical pieces that teach fundamentals of jazz. The goal of this lecture is to give teachers a plethora of resources to choose from so they can consciously incorporate knowledge of jazz expand the education of their students even further.

Jovanni Rey-de Pedro: When “Beauty” Isn’t Enough: Communicating Endless Artistic Possibilities

“Beautiful playing!” As an adjudicator, teacher, and audience member, I have been guilty of using this blanket statement when I cannot directly admit that the performance I have just heard, although polished in its own right, was just plain boring! Join me as I discuss ways of going beyond “beautiful playing” to create and identify nuances in sound and intention in order to give a performance that communicates endless possibilities.

Megan Rich: American Nationalism: Native American Pedagogical Works

Although Native Americans are a musical people, their music unfortunately hasn’t been widely explored. This presentation will explore pedagogical repertoire of the Indianist Movement, which is both authentic and accessible. Additionally, the lecture will discuss musical features unique to each tribe in order to formulate a more authentic performance, and highlight challenges that students and teachers may encounter.