

The STUDIO NEWSLETTER

Helen R. Weems Piano Studio *** September/October 2017

MASTERING THE MSMTA KEYBOARD EXAMINATION



Most students in 3rd grade or higher will take the MSMTA Keyboard Examinations. This fall, the test is a month early, and more than ever, advice on preparing for the exam needs to be taken seriously by both student and parent so that the examination can be a successful experience. Your child has a "Test Booklet" – please read it over for your own edification. Also, the weempiano.com homepage has a link to materials created to assist preparing for the Exam. And lastly, feel free to attend one of your child's lessons so that you can reinforce some of these Modules even more effectively.

What makes the Keyboard Exam so important? Why does it include so many different skills? Most students will, at some point in their musical lives, use most of the skills developed by the test and, surprisingly, many will use all of these skills. These are the skills that make students "social musicians" -- ensemble performers, pick-up band members, or collaborative pianists. Encouraging participation in the exam is one of the best gifts I can give your child. Congratulations on their efforts!



Tuesday, September 19	7:30pm	Adult Seminar (Playing Scared)
Saturday, September 30	8am-5pm	MSMTA Keyboard Exams (HCC)
Sunday, October 15	3:45-5pm	Fall Rep Class
Sunday, November 12	3:00pm	Simone Dinnerstein @ UMBC (!)
Thursday, November 23		Thanksgiving Holiday (closed)
Saturday, December 2	3:45-5pm	Holiday Rep Class
Tuesday, December 5	7:30pm	Adult Piano Bar
Sunday, December 10	6:30pm	GCMTA Outreach Recital (Harmony Hall)
Sunday, December 17	6:15pm	Holiday Caroling Party
Monday-Thursday, December 25-28		Holiday (closed)

Parent's Practice Tip # 20:



I read **the best** piano teacher journal ever at the beach last week. Clavier Companion, a journal by and for piano teachers, gave an entire issue to the subject of practicing. I will leave this issue on the table for the month of September for your perusal. Every article was a winner.

One article, "**The Art of Practicing, or, I really should be practicing well**" was a particular delight, going beyond the funny title (borrowed from pianist Gary Graffman's entertaining autobiography, I Really Should Be Practicing). You can find it on page 14 of the issue. Here are some highlights:

Play with alert posture. Your posture should be relaxed, poised for action, and balanced in three places: the bench, the floor, and the keyboard.

Practice as often as possible. Numerous shorter practice sessions lead to more secure learning than fewer sessions of longer duration. Also, the sleep that occurs after a practice session readies the learner for the one on the following day. Therefore, try to practice as many consecutive days as possible, taking some time off each week as well. Practice days are like strikes in bowling – they're worth more when they're next to each other!

Practice no faster than "thinking tempo." Practice at a speed no faster than what permits you to think about what you're doing, and pay close attention to the results. "Thinking tempo" can surprisingly vary from day to day, so stay in touch with *now* – accept what it's telling you.