

The STUDIO NEWSLETTER

Helen R. Weems Piano Studio *** September/October 2018

IMPORTANT VS. URGENT



Not so very long ago, someone in one of my organizations suggested that we needed to limit *Urgent Matters* in favor of *Important Matters*. He quoted President Eisenhower: "*What is important is seldom urgent, and what is urgent is seldom important.*" And we all thought to ourselves, just leave us alone to panic. (And we are reaping the rewards of ignoring the point.)

It's time for many of my students – and me – to feel the *Urgency* of the Keyboard Exam on October 20. Immediately after the exam, we will all feel the *Urgency* of learning some repertoire so that participation in December Outreach Recitals and January Theme Festivals, and February Judged Recitals and competitions from March to May is possible.

This can lead to a lot of *Urgent* last-minute crises. So what is *Important*?

The Keyboard Exam is *Important* because most students will, at some point in their musical lives, use most of the skills found in the test, and many will use all the skills. Sight reading, harmonization, transposition, etc. are skills that allow students to become "social musicians" -- ensemble performers, pick-up band members, or collaborative pianists. The technique learned in the scales and arpeggios, once mastered, will make students sound amazing.

Repertoire is *Important* because this is what students love to hear themselves play – that is, after it is learned and mastered, which can take a very long time. Repertoire is what you share with friends, family, and yourself after a bad day at school.

These *Important* things are best when developed steadily, and less *Urgently*. If I give your child tools for Exam Prep, use ALL of them, to avoid Exam *Urgency*. If I add technique to your Rep – or Rep to your Exam Prep – do ALL of it to avoid Repertoire *Urgency*. The *Important* can be a gift for us all. *Important vs. Urgent* will be this year's Newsletter focus.



Tuesday, September 11	7:30pm	Adult Seminar (Piano Shop on the Left Bank)
Sunday, October 14	3:45-5pm	Fall Rep Class
Saturday, October 20	8am-5pm	MSMTA Keyboard Exams (HCC)
Saturday, October 27	7pm	WunderKind pianist Nathan Lee @ HCC (!)
Thursday, November 22		Thanksgiving Holiday (closed)
Saturday, December 8	3:45-5pm	Holiday Rep Class
Sunday, December 9	3pm	GCMTA Outreach Recital (Morningside)
Tuesday, December 11	7:30pm	Adult Piano Bar
Sunday, December 23	6:15pm	Holiday Caroling Party
Monday-Monday, December 24-31		Holiday (closed)

Parent's Practice Tip # 25:

RANDOM GAMES ARE SO IMPORTANT!!!!!!

The Random Game is essential to help your child prepare for the Keyboard Exam. Here's how to find and use it, and why it is Important.

If your child is preparing Level 3 and higher, direct your computer browser to weemspiano.com. Follow the link found in the text of the Welcome page to the "Random Games." On the Random Games page, you will find a discussion about the games and, scrolling down, a Practice Strategy for your child's level as well as a Random Game for their level. Put the Practice Strategy on some Calendar (electronic or paper, monitored by you or your child if they are up to the task) and make sure it is followed. Print the Random Game, have your child cut it apart and put it into a Ziploc with "Start" sharpied on the bag. Provide two more Ziplocs, sharpied "Trouble" and "Finish". Your child will know how to take it from there.

THE RANDOM GAME SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO THE NEXT LESSON (to show it's been made).

The Random Game allows your child to process their way through several challenging sections of the exam over a period of days, making sure they visit and work on every task, and then to start over once all tasks are practiced and understood. Without a tool like the Random Game, your child could avoid or forget to practice difficult tasks (leading to panic in October), or become overwhelmed with the whole test to practice at once. The Random Game addresses issues of task difficulty (hence the Trouble bag), having too many tasks for one day (one play-through can be spread over several days), or avoiding more difficult tasks (the square will get drawn at some point and must be engaged). Also, the game is random, as opposed to just playing all the tasks of one key signature at once, or all the scales, followed by all the cadences, etc. So, the Game also supports your child on Test Day. **RANDOM GAMES SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF URGENCY.**