

Curating Your Student's Library

How can an enthusiasm for, and enjoyment of, music be encouraged if there are no beautiful books at home to play from and a variety of pieces to try? ... How then can we expect students to learn, to develop a life-long love of music, and to want to continue their musical journey, without music books? - Maureen Foster

Forster, M. (2004). Why a lost skill? and lost interest? or the high cost of photocopying. *Music Teacher Magazine*, 10(5), 22.

How do we keep our students playing after lessons stop?

- Good sight reading skills
- The ability to improvise from chord symbols
- A collection of books of great music to play

The goal

- As teachers, we suggest and recommend the repertoire that our students play: and largely, where that repertoire comes from. What if we were to consider this as an opportunity to build a library for our students? A broad, comprehensive, inspirational library that might encourage joyful exploration of music for the rest of their lives?

The basic idea

- Select repertoire with books in mind
- Aim to build a diverse library
- Gradually curate a library for your student

What are the advantages?

- Composers as individuals
- Developing musical taste
- Larger context
- Interesting discussions
- Tracking gaps in repertoire

Multiple uses for pieces in the same book

- Exams
- More pieces for later grades
- Harder, aspirational pieces for later
- Easier pieces for developing independence
- Holiday repertoire
- Dabbling
- Later in life: "Sunday afternoon pieces"

What about parents?

- We have to sell it (assume authority)
- Better value – will be useful for later grades as well
- Siblings can use or swap books
- Useful for a lifetime, not just this exam

What makes a good library?

- A range of different genres
- A range of different periods of history
- A range of difficulty levels
- Master composers?
- Different types of publications...

Different types of publications

- Composer opuses, e.g. Albums for the Young
- Composer highlight collections
- Compilations by genre
- Compilations by difficulty

Opuses... Five essential books?

- J. S. Bach et al: The Anna Magdalena Notebook
- Clementi: Six Sonatinas, op. 36
- Tchaikovsky: Album for the Young, op. 39
- Kabalevsky: 30 Pieces for Children, op. 27
- Kerin Bailey: Jazzin' Around 2

Some other opuses

- Schumann: Album for the Young
- Satie: Gymnopédies and Gnossiennes
- Bach: Two-Part Inventions
- Bartók: Musical Cameos
- Sculthorpe: A Little Book of Hours
- Debussy: Children's Corner
- Burgmüller: 25 Progressive Pieces, op. 100
- Sonny Chua: Assorted Fairies
- Christopher Norton: Microstyles Collection

Composer highlights

- e.g. Henle Verlag "At the Piano" series, Alfred Masterwork Editions, Schirmer Favourite Piano Works

Compilations

- Alfred "Sonata Album," the "Essential Keyboard Repertoire" series, Wirripang collections of Australian composers and Australian women composers

A more advanced library?

- Bach: The Well-Tempered Clavier
- Haydn: Piano Sonatas
- Mozart: Piano Sonatas
- Beethoven: Piano Sonatas
- Chopin: 24 Preludes, Nocturnes, Waltzes
- Schumann: Kinderszenen
- Liszt: Consolations
- Brahms: Intermezzos op. 118 and 119

- Schubert: Moments Musiceaux and Impromptus
- Mendelssohn: Songs Without Words

The Goal...

- We as teachers foster the desire to explore and differentiate between the works of the great composers
- We introduce the student to the joy of building a library, and encourage them to continue to build their library throughout their lives
- The student accumulates a library of music that will enable them to continue to play and explore music long after lessons have ceased

“Whatever your level of skill, it is never too early to begin to assemble a keyboard library. The music will be part of your future, and a resource for study and performance for years to come” – David Urrows

Urrows, D. (2000). Great Music for Your Library. Clavier, 39(5), 23.

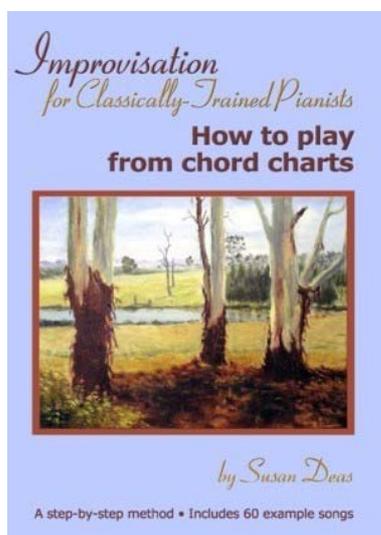
About Susan Deas

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Susan Deas is a professional musician, lecturer and teacher. She has been teaching piano for over twenty-five years, and her students learn both classical and contemporary styles, including playing by ear and improvisation. Susan also gives professional development workshops and lessons to private music teachers. She performs professionally as a pianist and organist, and lectures in music theory and music appreciation for Sydney University's Centre for Continuing Education. Susan's training includes a Master of Music Studies (Studio Pedagogy) from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, a Bachelor of Music, a Bachelor of Arts (Communications), and an A.Mus.A in Musicianship.



Join Susan's email list to hear about resources and future events by going to www.susandeads.com.au/maillinglist.html



Improvisation for Classically-Trained Pianists: How to Play from Chord Charts

This book teaches you how to play from music which has a melody line and chord symbols. It takes you through a step-by-step process, with plenty of practice examples, that will give you the freedom to play with confidence.

This book will help you:

- Turn a melody line and chords and into a full piano arrangement
- Play from 'busking books,' 'fake charts,' or 'lead sheets'
- Re-arrange songs with chords marked in which are too easy or too hard
- Turn songs you have composed or worked out by ear into full arrangements

More information at www.susandeads.com.au/publications.html