

University of Montana

## ScholarWorks at University of Montana

---

Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, &  
Professional Papers

Graduate School

---

1950

### Some aims and values of class piano, their relation to the basic idea in the music education philosophy

Phoebe Said Habib

*The University of Montana*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd>

**Let us know how access to this document benefits you.**

---

#### Recommended Citation

Habib, Phoebe Said, "Some aims and values of class piano, their relation to the basic idea in the music education philosophy" (1950). *Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers*. 3608. <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd/3608>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@mso.umt.edu](mailto:scholarworks@mso.umt.edu).

SOME AIMS AND VALUES OF CLASS PIANO  
THEIR RELATION TO THE BASIC IDEA  
IN THE  
MUSIC EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY

A Professional Paper

by

Phoebe Habib Said  
B.A., American University at Cairo, 1949

Presented in partial fulfilment of the  
requirement for the degree of Master of Music in  
Music Education

Montana State University

1950

Approved:

Stanley M. Teal  
Chairman of Board  
of Examiners

W. P. Clark  
Dean, Graduate School

UMI Number: EP35320

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



UMI EP35320

Published by ProQuest LLC (2012). Copyright in the Dissertation held by the Author.

Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code



ProQuest LLC.  
789 East Eisenhower Parkway  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
THE BASIC IDEA IN THE MUSIC EDUCATION	
PHILOSOPHY . . . . .	5
Statement of the basic American music	
education philosophy . . . . .	5
Factors contributory to this view . . . . .	6
Some trends in music education . . . . .	19
SOME ASPECTS OF CLASS PIANO . . . . .	23
Philosophy and nature of class piano . . . . .	23
General principles and considerations which	
underly the procedure . . . . .	25
Some phases and procedures of class piano	
instruction . . . . .	32
Organization of class piano . . . . .	43
AIMS AND VALUES OF CLASS PIANO . . . . .	51
The value of music and instrumental playing	
to the individual and society . . . . .	51
The suitability of the piano as a medium . . . . .	53
The efficiency and contribution of class	
methods and instruction . . . . .	54
Objections of class piano . . . . .	59
CONCLUSION . . . . .	62
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	63

## INTRODUCTION

### I. IMPORTANCE OF THE QUESTION

Music has universal appeal. To the young and old, educated and uneducated, rich and poor, music has something to offer. The realization of this is causing changes in educational philosophies. Attempts are being made to find means to meet those changes and to embody these new ideals. Class piano is usually regarded as one of these means. Although it is not a new idea, since Liszt used it in the late 1800's, it is now used in a different background and follows a different philosophy. An understanding of its values, and the relation of these values to this basic philosophy and background of music education, is necessary to a realization of the changes taking place in the music education system of today.

### II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The aim of this paper is:

1. To find some of the aims and values of class piano as expressed in the views of those who advocate it.
2. To determine the relation of these to the basic idea in the American philosophy of music education as expressed by leading music educators.

### III. ORGANIZATION

In an attempt to solve this question the following procedure is followed. The first part gives the basic idea in the American music education philosophy, with some mention of the factors contributory to and the trends suggested in this view. Since a knowledge of the procedures and phases of class piano instruction is necessary for an understanding of its aims and values, the second part is devoted to bringout out some of the important points in this connection for the benefit of those who are not acquainted with class piano and how it functions. Consequently, the treatment of the material there follows, in the main, the outline form. The third part deals with the aims and values of class piano in a way which brings out their relation to the American philosophy.

### IV. DELIMITATIONS

Because of the nature of the survey no tables or statistics are included.

The paper aims not at evaluating either the basic philosophy or class piano procedures and aims, but rather, at bringing out the relationship between the two. Hence, little space is given to criticism.

It must be pointed out here that, because of the approach used, the paper, in the main, deals with the philosophy rather than the application of it, with the ideal rather than with what is actually going on, although mention of the latter is sometimes made.

Usually educators mention three types of class piano: the elementary class for children, the adult beginner's class, and the advanced class. The discussion in this paper is limited to the first type, although many of the aims and values and even procedures apply equally well to the other two kinds. A mention of every method and its procedures is practically impossible; therefore, only some of the most general and outstanding phases are stated.

Definition of terms. The word philosophy is here used in its broadest sense, i.e., not to denote necessarily a well-organized system of thought, but to refer to any viewpoint or idea underlying a procedure.

## V. BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

From the very definition of the word philosophy it is obvious that one basic assumption is that there is some sort of philosophy underlying the music education system and behind class piano.

It is also taken for granted that there are different

philosophies concerning music education, each developed to suit the local needs of the community. In this paper the attempt is made to deal with the basic idea rather than the local ideologies.

This basic idea, it is assumed, is that expressed by leading members of the Music Educators National Conference, The Music Teachers' National Association, and other educators in the field.

## VI. SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM

The material is mainly obtained from:

1. Literature on the subject,
2. Observation of piano classes,
3. Courses in class piano methods,
4. Interviews with people connected with class piano.



## THE BASIC IDEA IN THE MUSIC EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY

### I. STATEMENT OF THE BASIC AMERICAN MUSIC EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY

During the last century music has been slowly rising to its present position in the school curriculum. The cry of music educators for the last fifty years has been for "more music in education and more education through music,"<sup>1</sup> and for the removal of music from the exclusive realm of the upper economic bracket of society and of real or supposed talent, to a position within the reach of the average individual. "Music for every child and every child for music,"--the slogan of the Music Educators National Conference--typifies this basic democratic American view, a view which finds its partial practical application in the organization of bands, orchestras, choral groups, appreciation courses, and in the tendency toward class instruction and group activity valuable to the average individual.

The American system, is not unmixed with European ideas and methods, which are the importation of the early colonists and a result of the impact of European culture on American ways and thinking. In his paper entitled "The Time

---

<sup>1</sup>"A Creed for Music Education," Music Educators' Journal, XXX (1943), 17.

Has Come," John Crowder, Dean of the School of Music at Montana State University, says:

The establishment of the public free schools and the gradual development of the curricula within the schools have been subjected to two more or less conflicting influences. The establishment of the free school and its original practical curriculum was a response to a basic need and a new world philosophy. On the other hand, methods of teaching and teaching material followed closely the traditional European pattern.<sup>2</sup>

Implicit in this traditional pattern is the concept of "music for the talented few"--a view which influenced early music instruction in the United States. Its effect can still be noticed in the field of instrumental music teaching today, whereas the early schools of music and conservatories affiliated with the early colleges aimed mainly at the training of composers, teachers and performers with theory and performance taking the lead among the school subjects;<sup>3</sup> today, the same trend can still be seen in the instruction of instrumental music, especially in piano teaching, which still is largely in the private lesson stage.

## II. FACTORS CONTRIBUTORY TO THIS VIEW

The basic American philosophy was not an overnight

---

<sup>2</sup>John Crowder, "The Time Has Come," P. 2, unpublished mimeographed copy.

<sup>3</sup>Edmund Jeffers, Music for the General College Student, (New York: King's Crown Press, 1944), pp. 103-111.

fabrication, but a result of a long process and an outgrowth of philosophical approaches plus educational principles, as well as social, economic, and political conditions. A full discussion of these is impossible in this paper; however, a brief mention of some of the most important among them is necessary for an understanding of this basic philosophy. For purpose of analysis, the factors are treated separately. However, each is implicit in, and a corollary of, the other; and it is through their total effect that their influence on the philosophy can be evaluated.

The Democratic View of Equality of Opportunity for

All: H. W. Anderson, superintendent of schools in Omaha, Nebraska, quotes an American philosopher who says:

The true essence of democracy is not in its political structure; it is instead a wide intimate sharing of experience--a truly social situation.<sup>4</sup>

Democracy does not promise equality of all, but "equal opportunities for all according to their abilities, interests and desires."<sup>5</sup>

The education system of today is showing signs of change as a result of this view. Not long ago the ability to read languages was thought to be a talent and luxury, and

---

<sup>4</sup>H. W. Anderson, "Music's Place in Public Education," Music Educators National Conference Yearbook XXX (1937), 11.

<sup>5</sup>Loc. cit.

consequently was reserved for the "talented" and privileged few.<sup>6</sup> Conditions changed, and public opinion developed; there was a demand not only for reading ability but also for general educational opportunities for the masses. Thus the system of public grade and high schools, meeting the demand of efficiency and economy, was set up, and class instruction supplanted private teaching.

A similar trend is noticeable in the music education philosophy. The right of everyone for a musical as well as general education is beginning to be recognized. And, in contradiction to the aristocratic idea, public school music tends "to take that which has been regarded as too difficult for the average, as reserved for the genius alone, as available for the few, and as restricted to the socially elite, and make it understandable to, and appreciated by the masses."<sup>7</sup>

The practical criteria of utility and efficiency basic in American thinking. The pragmatic view which employs the principle of utility and which holds that "all propositions

---

<sup>6</sup>T. P. Giddings and W. A. Gilman, Giddings Public School Class Method for the Piano, (Boston: Oliver Ditson Company, 1919), p. 11.

<sup>7</sup>C. J. McCauley, A Professionalized Study of Public School Music, (Knoxville: Joseph E. Advent, 1932), p. 20

are true that will work and only so long as they work,"<sup>8</sup> is regarded as another potent factor. Of this John Crowder says:

This philosophy has its roots in the thinking of the New England Colonists of the 18th century and is the viewpoint of many if not most of our contemporary educational philosophies. It is a distinctly American philosophy, and has a profound influence upon all phases of education.<sup>9</sup>

This attitude was also, to a large extent, responsible for the establishment of the public schools, and has affected the formulation of the curricula therein. It was, in a sense, partly due to it that music was late in assuming its place among the school and college subjects; on the other hand, the first music activity in schools was motivated by it.

The early colonists were imbued with European principles, and in their preoccupation with the maintenance of life and with physical expansion found no place for music for the general student in their education system. Furthermore, music activity by some was believed to be recreational and hence, dangerous to the educational system of the time in which, following the European tradition, mental discipline

---

<sup>8</sup>John Crowder, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>9</sup>Loc. cit.

was the theory in vogue;<sup>10</sup> so that, when and where music was later introduced among the subjects in colleges, its intellectual and formal aspects were the ones stressed, and its approach was from the philosophical, historical and critical viewpoints.<sup>11</sup> and <sup>12</sup>

It was only when music activity was found to meet a social need that its inclusion was considered. When first admitted, it was because of its contribution to the religious life and aims of schools and colleges, and because of its value in improving the congregational singing in the church of the community. Thus, its first introduction took the form of choral singing, emphasis being put on the reading of psalms.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, the need for instrumental music came later and thus its introduction as a regular activity did not keep pace with that of vocal music.

Today, the place of music in the scheme of education is different. It meets different needs, the understanding of which has to be sought partly in the changes in the economic and social structure of society, and partly in the

---

<sup>10</sup>Jeffers, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

<sup>11</sup>M. Antoine, "The Old Versus the New in Music Education," Music Teacher's National Association Proceedings, XXXIV (1939), 256-261.

<sup>12</sup>Here differentiation must be made between the kind of training given in early times, and the one referred to throughout the paper; the latter emphasized the appreciative aspects, and approaches music more as an art.

<sup>13</sup>Jeffers, op. cit., p. 6.

different educational philosophies and approaches.

The growth of the population, the complex social structure, the mechanical trend--all created problems for the education institutions in general, and public schools in particular, to meet.<sup>14</sup> In response, the tendency toward socialization, apparent in other fields, became especially prominent in education. The inclusion of subjects other than the traditional ones in the school curriculum was brought about by some factors prominent among which are the need for better use of leisure time which the machine age put in the hands of the masses; the necessity for counter-acting the weaknesses in the family as an institution and furnishing part of the training formerly carried on in the home; the realization of the materialistic trend in society; the mounting demands on the taxpayer's funds resulting in a tendency to utilize public schools for outside teaching agencies;<sup>15</sup> and the exigency for economy of resources to enable the participation of more people, as well as the view of education for everyone and education to meet the cry for social betterment. Their effect on the procedures is noticeable in the tendency among educators to advocate class and

---

<sup>14</sup>Crowder, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>15</sup>C. M. Tremaine, "Report of the Committee on Group Instruction in Applied Music," Music Teachers' National Association Proceedings, XXVIII (1934), 318.

group instruction for efficiency and economy.

There is another side to the effect of the machine age on music education. It made available the tools by which could be brought to the homes, schools, and community at large. This helped spread music in the culture.

Other educational approaches and views. The change in the basic aim of education is one of the factors which has affected the status of music in the educational philosophy. Whereas in the late 18th and 19th centuries the emphasis in education was on mental discipline--the strengthening of the reasoning power and the furnishing of information--today progressive tendencies try to meet the "student's need for a complete and satisfactory living,"<sup>16</sup> and the development of an integrated personality. This change, it is believed, came about partly as a result of the organistic approach to psychology.<sup>17</sup> The idea of the totality of response or reaction finds its counterpart in the view that learning is not merely an intellectual process but implies physical, emotional, and social reactions and attitudes; hence, education should provide for these aspects.

---

<sup>16</sup>Jeffers, op. cit., p. 121.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 109.



In connection with this H. Anderson states:

According to the old philosophy of education, the teacher stressed the acquisition of facts, specific habits and skills by a passive learner, constantly taught, controlled and directed by the teacher. . . the new philosophy emphasizes the acquisition of variable insights, meanings, ideas, and broad flexible techniques. The emphasis is on the total process by which individuality is achieved resulting in freedom to grow in originality, uniqueness and creativity.<sup>18</sup>

The realization of individual differences which came in vogue at the beginning of the century, and the feeling that education must provide for varied aptitudes and develop individual capacities has led and is still leading to the enlargement and modification of the school curriculum resulting in a change in the status of the arts, including music. In many cases, especially on higher levels of education, the feeling that individual desire should be the starting point has paved the way for having the students choose their own subjects, under guidance.<sup>19</sup> This necessitated the inclusion of a wide range of subjects from which students can choose.

Dewey's dictum "education is life" has been used by many educators with various emphases. Some stress the

---

<sup>18</sup>Anderson, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>19</sup>W. L. Larson, "The Need for an Adjustment to Modern Trends in Music Education," Music Educators National Conference Yearbook, XXX (1937), p. 49.

aspect that educational experience should connect the theoretical with the practical. The effect of this is more noticeable in the approach to, and content of, subject matter. Others have used it to emphasize the social experience in education and the need for making it a pleasurable pursuit. Members of the John Dewey Society have expressed this latter view by saying:

One of the most significant achievements of modern educational practice has been the recognition of the capacity of enjoyment with which children are endowed, and the organization of educational experience so that this capacity can be realized through totality of response within such experience.<sup>20</sup>

Others, still, advocate that education must emphasize those aspects which would have a lasting value to the individual after his leaving school, and which would help in his later serving the community.

All the factors mentioned so far have exerted an influence on the view of educators concerning the status, nature and content of music education. Before proceeding to mention a few of the trends in connection with the content of subject matter, it will be valuable at this point to review, in the light of previous discussion, the most outstanding views of music educators for justifying the inclusion

---

<sup>20</sup>"The Public School and Spiritual Values," John Dewey Society Yearbook, VII, quoted in "Piano Workshop," Music 3114, Montana State University.

of music in the school curriculum.

Some educators urge the inclusion of music for the sake of better music appreciation and the spread of music literacy, thus regarding music education as an end in itself and considering its social values and its contribution to personality development as by-products of musical aesthetic experience. Others think in terms of what music can do for the individual and society, and justify its inclusion in the curriculum on that basis. Within these two groups the emphasis vary although there is interlapping. A few are stated below.

I. The inclusion of music in the curriculum is a necessary factor for the embodiment of the American philosophy of equal opportunity for all. Thus, each is given a chance to develop his capacities. The talented is not hampered by economic disadvantages; the less talented has a chance to get acquainted with one of the most important expressions of culture, and to benefit by its values; all are given a chance to decide what part music will play in their lives.

II. Music education as advocated today has values for both the individual and society. It helps in the development of a richer life and of a well-integrated personality by giving the individual a means of self-expression,

aesthetic experience, and a tool for compensation. E. G.

Hesser quotes:

Music is not just a thing to relieve the tedium of tired hours, not just a thing to be bought and paid for in concert halls, not just a thing reserved for professional performers, not just a thing to tickle the tired businessman and amuse his bored wife, but a thing that can develop in man the capacity for rich and creative emotional and aesthetic response to things that a starkly rational mind may wholly miss and in missing leave men's lives infinitely poor.<sup>21</sup>

It also contributes to a fuller living by developing such characteristics as leadership, self-confidence, self-discipline, cooperation, the power of concentration and a healthy attitude toward competition. Many of these attributes can be attained through group activity, and learning to work together and sometimes "play second fiddle" for the advancement of worthwhile ends.<sup>22</sup>

A society of well-balanced individuals, other things being equal, is a happier and healthier society. Consequently, these values have their repercussions on the life of the community. In the opinions of many, they help in laying the foundation for good citizenship,<sup>23</sup> and even brotherhood and peace.

---

<sup>21</sup>E. G. Hesser, "Modern Trends in Music Education," Music Teachers National Association Proceedings, XXXIII (1938), 247.

<sup>22</sup>Anderson, op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>23</sup>P. Amidon, "Building Citizenship Through Music," ibid., p. 23.

III. The study of music is necessary for a cultural background both because of its benefit to the understanding and study of any people, and the grasp of other phases of human culture, and because of its contribution to the building of a musical culture in the society of today. The need for spreading music literacy, and bringing music as an integral part of the life of people today is regarded more and more as one of the duties of education.

In the "Music Educators Source Book", the following statement is made:

We believe in America, we believe that music is helping to strengthen the power and ideals of our country. We believe it is our responsibility to bend every effort to the end that this power of music should reach out the whole life of America through every community, and contribute its full share to our national welfare and development.<sup>24</sup>

IV. Connected with the previous point is the one which advocates the inclusion of music in the curriculum as a necessary counterpart to the machine age, and the mechanical trend in society. E. Hesser says:

America is a nation mechanically and scientifically minded, moving with incredible speed. We live on schedules with every hour of the day planned. . . we rush through meals. . . we buy our pleasures, absorb current literature through book reviews and digests, demand entertainment at our church services, and surfeited with mass activities, and membership drives. . . .<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup>H. N. Morgan (editor), Music Education Source Book, (Chicago: Music Educators National Conference, 1947), p. xi.

<sup>25</sup>Hesser, loc. cit.

The need for a force to counteract this materialistic and mechanical tendency which "threatens the artistic progress of a people,"<sup>26</sup> and to foster a sound sense of values and participation in worthwhile activities is the cry among some educators. "Machines cannot save us from social and economic confusion,"<sup>27</sup> says Hatfield.

Dr. Glen Frank, in his book The Role of Music in the Life of the Time, says:

The arts, and music most of all, can help rather than hinder us in making conquest of the forces that today threaten the stability of our social order and the security of our lives. . . because the arts bring into our lives the saving grace of beauty which not only satisfies our emotional craving but lifts us above our machine regulated civilization so that we shall not be dominated and annihilated by our mechanical and scientific development.<sup>28</sup>

Thus music is suggested as the force to counterbalance the mechanical trend in society.

Another side to this consideration lies in the belief that music as a leisure time activity contributes to social betterment.<sup>29</sup> The machine age has put leisure time in the hands of the masses; thus, education should provide whole-

---

<sup>26</sup>L. W. Curtis, loc. cit.

<sup>27</sup>G. Hatfield, "A Layman's View of Education," ibid., p. 25.

<sup>28</sup>Quoted by E. G. Hesser, op. cit., p. 243.

<sup>29</sup>L. D. Coffman, "Social Betterment Through Leisure Time Activities," Music Educators National Conference Year-book, XIX (1937), 15-17.

some and useful means of recreation. The study of the arts offers such a channel.

One may appreciate fine things in life without understanding them, but the more one understands them, the deeper and more enduring his appreciation is likely to be.<sup>30</sup>

V. The contributions of music to the school spirit, home life, and community are used as other justifications. Not only can school subjects benefit by the study of music, but, in social gatherings and activities, whether in the school or outside, music can keep up the morale and offer entertainment. In the home it can act as a force to strengthen the fellowship and comradeship there. In general, it can bring the school, home, and community into closer relationships.

Thus, music finds a place in an educational philosophy which advocates vocational and avocational training and which aims at character training and the enhancement of cultural values as well as furnishing equipment for work day.

### III. SOME TRENDS IN MUSIC EDUCATION

The basic philosophy is accompanied by changes in the approach to the study of music. Among those advocated are the following:

---

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

More Towards appreciation. When the theory of mental discipline was popular, elementary schools emphasized mainly the formal and technical aspects of music instruction, and the colleges, following the European system, stressed the historical, scientific and philosophical elements. In fact, in some colleges music was placed among the sciences. Today educators emphasize the appreciative outlook on music. "The spirit of music should be the guiding influence and not the techniques."<sup>31</sup> In like manner, an attempt is made to bring the vocational and cultural aims in music education together. Hence, the idea of a foundational functional program, foundational in the sense of giving the individual a basis for later understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of music, as well as laying the ground for future study, is one of the basic convictions.<sup>32</sup>

A more inclusive approach towards subject matter.

The philosophy advocates not only the integration between different fields of study but also the blending of different phases of the same subject. It is believed that this attitude has its roots in the view of progressive education which aims at having no sharp demarkation between the theoretical

---

<sup>31</sup>Anderson, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>32</sup>Jeffers, op. cit., p. 87.



and the applied. Its embodiment in the music education philosophy is noticeable in the tendency today to maintain an inclusive music program, as well as the trend toward the practical application of the principles learned. Many educators, among them Mursell, state that a good music program must include listening, performing, and creating, and must have a balance and integration between the expressive, appreciative, theoretical and practical aspects.

In connection with the inclusion of performance,

E. Jeffers says:

For many years the subordination of the performance of music has been asserted from time to time. A close relation may here be observed to the ancient dualistic compartmentalized conception of spirit and body, knowledge and action. In close relation to this has been the compartmental conception of fine arts, which has removed art from its close connection with daily living and placed it in the museum and the concert hall.<sup>33</sup>

Thus performance is beginning to be regarded as an important aspect in music education for the general student, not only because it helps in fostering appreciation, aids in linking the theoretical and the practical, but also because it makes music an integral part of life.

In connection with performance, the tendency as seen in bands, orchestras, choral groups and applied class

---

<sup>33</sup>Jeffers, op. cit., p. 86.

instruction, is toward having both learning and performance a social experience.

Other trends in education are mentioned in relation with principles of class piano.

## SOME ASPECTS OF CLASS PIANO

Class piano is still largely in the experimental stage. It is for this reason that a clear-cut presentation of a standard practice is practically impossible. Methods, emphasis, principles, procedures, and organizations vary with different systems, and each course varies according to the nature and needs of the particular class. In this chapter mention is made of some of the most outstanding general trends, principles, and phases which picture in the opinions of many leading educators in the field, in the hope that an understanding of what a piano class is and how it works, will be furnished. This section is by no means an exhaustive study of how class piano functions, but only a brief survey. For clarity, the elementary class of young beginners is used as an example

### I. PHILOSOPHY AND NATURE OF CLASS PIANO

Class piano does not have as its aim the development of pianists or specialists. Its basic philosophy is to present music fundamentals with their practical application, using the piano as a medium.<sup>1</sup> One of its main aims is to use effective, efficient and economical means to promote

---

<sup>1</sup>Fay Frisch, Calling All Piano Teachers, (Musicians National Conference 1949), p. 84.

musical literacy, growth and interest of the individual, and to give him a functional knowledge of music which will help both in stimulating him to further study and in enabling him to enjoy more deeply the values inherent in music. Thus music is the ultimate end; piano the medium.

Toward this end an attempt is made to develop the desire for creative musical self expression, to enhance the pleasures of appreciation through active participation and acquaintance with music, to hook learning experiences to genuine life activities in the home, school and community, to develop discrimination between artistic and inartistic performance,<sup>2</sup> and to stimulate and lay the foundation for the study of other instruments, realizing that all these are not only musically valuable but also meet the daily needs of the individual and have personal as well as social benefits.

The piano class is not intended to be a form of individual instruction in a class set-up. It is an arrangement whereby a group of students in the same class are guided to discover and learn basic music principles simultaneously. This implies that there is no diversity of activities in the sense of independent individual work; but though individual

---

<sup>2</sup>F. Frisch, Piano Workshop, Music S114, Montana State University.

problems are taken up, the attention of the whole group is directed to the same thing; and what is of value to one individual benefits other members of the class, too.

## II. GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND CONSIDERATIONS WHICH UNDERLY THE PROCEDURES

Educators have advocated ideals to be striven for in class instruction. Many of these, as will be noticed, in a sense, conform with some of the approaches and trends mentioned in Part I.

Piano teaching has been among the last to incorporate modern psychology into an approach to the arts. . . Now, however, some piano classes in the schools are following the same pedagogical and psychological principles as those emphasized in teaching other school subjects.<sup>3</sup>

A few of these principles advocated by various music educators are cited below; although they are all interrelated, here they are grouped under separate headings for purposes of analysis.

### A. Use and Place of Interest:

Interest is aroused and maintained through

1. Short-time goals, each new lesson introducing a new thing,
2. Variety of activity including body movement,

---

<sup>3</sup>Frisch, "Calling All Piano Teachers," (Music Educators National Conference 1949), p. 8.

3. A good and flexible lesson plan,
4. The feeling of success and sense of accomplishment on the part of the child, since, from the very first lesson he is able to play something, and see tangible results before leaving the classroom,
5. The attempt of the teacher to develop the "wanting to know more" attitude,
6. The use of games, stories, records, flash cards, the social nature of learning, controlled freedom rather than repressive discipline--all these making learning a pleasurable experience,
7. The chance given to the child for participation in the class discussion and activity thus making him a contributor and not merely a recipient,
8. Competition and motivation in striving for the highest level of capability,
9. Putting interest before drill, pieces before scales,
10. Making the child know what he is doing.

## II. Importance and Use of the "Readiness Principle, and Care in the Presentation of New Questions

Connected with these are the following:

1. Music material is chosen in terms of the maturity and interest of the individual. The child is not presented with works of great masters from the beginning, but with material he can enjoy and understand, e.g., folk songs.
2. Methods move at a reasonable pace introducing one new thing at a time.
3. The principle of proceeding from the known to the unknown is applied.<sup>4</sup> The first approach is through songs which the child knows.
4. The use of many paths to achieve a given goal is advocated.
5. The presentation of a new problem is clear and concise, within the understanding of the child.
6. The time element is considered secondary, and an attempt is made not to aim at reaching a certain goal in a definite length of time. Not how long but how well is the motto.

---

<sup>4</sup>D. D. Oneills, "Beginner's Class Piano in the High School," Music Educators Journal, XXXIV (April 1948), 56.

7. The value of imitation is realized especially in the early learning experience.

### C. Application of Realistic Learning

Under this there are two considerations:

- A. Immediate practical application and experience of what is learned; and
- B. Teaching the subject as a whole, as it really is.

An attempt is made to:

1. See the whole before analyzing the parts,
2. Blend aural, visual and tactual perception and combine brains, ears and fingers,
3. Integrate in one lesson ear training, keyboard harmony, music appreciation, reading, rhythmic activity, and interpretation in an interesting and practical way.

### D. Knowledge Taught with Emphasis on its Use

In connection with this there is a tendency towards:

1. Aiming at giving functional knowledge of music--music that will be of use later in social life and for individual expression,
2. Widening the child's appreciation by presenting a variety of material.
3. Teaching basic fundamentals in relation to their use and as the need arises.



### E. Development of Initiative and Individuality

This is aided by:

1. Giving the student a chance to analyze problems, make decisions and suggest solutions.
2. Having the child himself, as much as possible, realize the need before presenting drill.
3. Considering the child's development and not the subject matter, as of supreme importance.

### F. Creative Approach to Music and the Realization of Ear-Training as a Main Channel in Music Experience and Growth

Joseph Daltry in his book, Basic Musicianship, says:

Music is a language which must be learned in the same way each person learns his mother tongue--by ear. Only when the student can sing a great many good tunes with good intonation and rhythm, only when he can speak the language of music should he try to read it.<sup>5</sup>

In this connection:

1. Exploration and experimentation at the piano are encouraged.
2. The rote to note approach is used. This has some other important contributions.
  - a. It directly associates piano with the child's

---

<sup>5</sup>Quoted by M. Hein, "Alabama Advances in Piano," Music Educators Journal, XXXVI (September 1949), 15.

previous musical experience,<sup>6</sup> and thus makes use of the principle "the thing before the sign."<sup>7</sup>

- b. It sets a pleasurable atmosphere by starting the lesson with a song.
- c. It develops expressive playing, and provides means for self-correction.<sup>8</sup>
- d. It makes achievement from the first lesson easy.
- e. It helps in reading and playing in all keys.
- f. It provides an appeal for home practice and helps in making the child attempt individual work, independent of the teacher.

#### G. Integration with Other Aims and Phases of Education

- 1. Group and individual participation are well balanced so that both the value of group work and individual differences are considered.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup>M. Dunlap, "Modern Trends in Class Piano Instruction," Music Teachers National Association Proceedings, XXXIV (1939), 300.

<sup>7</sup>B. Ramskill, "Class Piano Methods," a course given at Montana State University 1949-50.

<sup>8</sup>Dunlap, loc. cit.

<sup>9</sup>Loc. cit.

## H. Popularizing the Activity

Like all other activities class piano needs to be popularized.<sup>10</sup> Suggestions for popularizing it include:

1. Public performances,
2. Inviting the parents to attend,
3. Advertising by means of pictures,
4. Talks at Parent-Teachers' Association meetings,
5. Submitting students to festivals.

This not only aids in making the community aware of the activities in the school, in helping the parents to understand what they should expect and to offer good practice facilities and a musical atmosphere, but also aids in a higher standard of performance and in arousing the interest of both the child and the community.

## I. The Realisation of Individual Differences

An attempt is made to adapt class instruction to individual needs<sup>11</sup> through:

1. The effort on the part of the teacher to direct class activity in such a way that all can participate, each contributing his best,<sup>12</sup>
2. Giving each a chance to play at the piano so

---

<sup>10</sup>Piano Workshop, June 21-July 30, 1948 at the Montana State University, School of Music, directed by F. T. Frisch.

<sup>11</sup>L. C. Rodgers, "Problems Relative to Piano Class Methods," Music Educators National Conference Yearbook, XXXI (1937), 316-319.

<sup>12</sup>L. Wagner, "Problems of Piano Class Teaching," ibid., XXXIII (1939-1940) 322

- that the problems of each can be analyzed,<sup>13</sup>
3. Supplanting the course by material appropriate to individual needs to help each develop at his own level,
  4. Grouping students with similar problems together,
  5. Having flexible grouping, so that re-organization at the end of a certain period of time can be arranged. Thus individual differences are taken care of within the class set-up and each learns to find his place in the group.

All these are ideals and principles aimed at in class piano. Some of them are applied in many cases, while others are still not incorporated; yet they represent a goal toward which many of the methods of class piano are tending.

### III. SOME PHASES AND PROCEDURES OF CLASS PIANO INSTRUCTION

A brief survey of some of the procedures used in class piano, or at least advocated by many class piano methods, will act as a preliminary to the understanding of its aims and values. Again, here, though the factors are treated separately, in practice they are interrelated.

---

<sup>13</sup>Rodgers, loc. cit.

## A. Reading

"Sight reading is the recognition and recall of familiar symbols in new relationships."<sup>14</sup> Training for reading music in class piano aims at giving the student a functional ability which will help him to read more interestingly and for fuller meaning. This is sought through what is regarded as the correct procedure and through practice.

Steps in reading. There are four steps in the approach to reading:

- A. Rote singing: The child first learns to sing a song and may sing it to words, syllables (do, re, mi, etc.) letters, finger numbers, or non-sensical sounds.
- B. Observation of the music as it appears on the printed page: Usually this is done while the song is being sung.
- C. Supervised study: Under the teacher's guidance the child is introduced to music material directly through the printed page. In this, sometimes the rote approach or observation is employed as the need arises.
- D. Individual work attempted by the student.

---

<sup>14</sup>B. Ramskill, loc. cit.

In the process of learning, students may be divided into two groups, one playing the top voice, the other the bass part.

Considerations in reading. In developing reading ability, the student is encouraged to develop certain habits and procedures of analysis among which are:

1. The analytical approach to the piece after observing it as a whole,
2. The habit of observing key signs, meter, form, direction, temp markings, and dynamics,
3. The continuous feeling for the pulse, and reading rhythmically rather than technically correct,
4. Directional and unit reading which implies:
  - a. Reading in harmonic units whether chords or chordal patterns presented melodically,
  - b. Reading by melodic direction, watching steps and skips, noticing the movement of melodies whether oblique, parallel or contrary.
5. The grasp of the formal aspect. This implies reading phrase-wise, and recognizing repetitions sequences and variations.

Material for sight reading. Careful selection of material is necessary corrolary to the use of good procedures. The material should be well graded, introducing one problem at a time, varied, and giving wide acquaintance with different combination. Parts of it are to be read once, others a few times, and some to be memorized.

In group instruction, sight reading is aided by the fact that while one student is reading through a piece, the others may be analyzing it. This offers another way for the correlation of ear training with reading ability.

#### B. Memorization

"Correct memorizing procedure parallels closely the requirements for developing good reading,"<sup>15</sup> and benefits by the musical and analytic approaches. Here again, certain considerations prove valuable.

#### Considerations

1. Memory takes place fundamentally through the ear.
2. A musical composition is thought of as a whole and the details considered in their relation to the entire picture.

---

<sup>15</sup>R. Burrows, "Piano Teaching Down to Earth," Music Educators National Conference Yearbook, XXXII (1939-40), p. 305.

3. The eye and touch can be helpful too.
4. The intellectual approach through analysis is also employed.

Factors encouraging intelligent memorization. Of these the most outstanding include:

1. Organized presentation of the material,
2. Watching, listening and thinking through the piece while others are playing it.

Memorization is a skill sought after during the first year. A good collection of material including folk songs, some themes from works by classic composers, is often employed.

#### G. Technique

Technical development is not considered an end in itself but rather a means, and its study is motivated and arises out of a need. When grasped it is applied to new material.<sup>16</sup> When a class is well directed, technical training can take the form of games.

Considerations. During the first year attention is paid to:

1. Hand position,
2. Body posture,

---

<sup>16</sup>Dunlap, op. cit., p. 300.



3. Beginning of finger strength,
4. Relaxation and freedom,
5. Developing the realization of varying tone qualities; legato, staccatto, forte, piano, diminuendo, etc.

The amount of technical training. The amount of technical training depends on the type of the pupil, the stage of his development, the method used and the skill of the teacher.

#### D. Creative Element

Class piano is concerned more with creative expression rather than the mechanical catechism of notation, scales, lines and spaces.<sup>17</sup> Although the creative approach permeates all the phases, in the sense of composition there are a few helpful approaches to original creations.

1. Building questions and answers at the piano or through singing has been used. This may start by one note. After some time it may take other forms.
  - a. The teacher may give the harmony and ask the

---

<sup>17</sup>Frisch, Calling All Piano Teachers, (Music Educators National Conference 1940), p. 9.

- class to furnish a melody, or vice versa.
- b. The teacher may sing a phrase and ask students to give another phrase in answer to it.
  - c. Variations of a tune and its accompaniment are also helpful in the creative approach.
2. A bodily activity often helps in original composition. A skipping rhythm, for example, may translate itself into music.
  3. Telling a story or an event, reading a poem, looking at nature, using words as guides, all contribute to the creative element.
  4. Listening to music is another valuable factor.

#### E. Rhythm

Plato said:

He who mingles music with gymnasium in the fairest proportion and best tempers them to the soul may be rightly called the true musician and harmonist in a far higher sense than the tuner of strings.<sup>18</sup>

A similar trend is expressed in class piano methods by those who hold that "rhythm must be felt rather than intellectually analyzed." Natural bodily responses to

---

<sup>18</sup>Plato, The Republic, translated by Benjamin Jewell (World Publishing Company, 1945), Book III.

rhythm through hopping, running, walking, bending, as well as through dancing, moving the arms, swaying the body are all advocated in class piano procedures. While games and rhythmic drills prove interesting to children, the feeling for rhythm is further developed through the phrasing of rhythmic motives and figures. Note values are introduced as they come within a song.

#### F. Interpretation

Interpretation is implicit in all other phases. Beautiful, expressive playing is one of the most important goals of class piano. Its achievement is sought through:

1. Developing sensitivity to the expressive qualities inherent in the music, as well as observation and understanding of tempo markings, dynamics, expressions, phrasing, tone colors, balance of parts, pedaling, and a grasp of the form,
2. The comprehending of style through playing records and commenting on the performance,
3. Developing good listening habits since the ear is the final judge in the matter; positive criticism and discussion of the performance of other members of the class is also a valuable procedure.

These points may seem to apply more to the advanced piano class. However, from the very beginning such an approach is necessary. At the start it may take the form of differentiation between different moods, or the realization of the general difference between melodies in major or minor keys, and the effect of that on the interpretation.

#### G. Other Practical Applications of Theoretical Principles

Class piano methods aim at a close connection between the theoretical and the applied. Thus practical application of what is usually referred to as theory forms an important part of the procedures. Under this section three aspects will be considered.

The keyboard. The presentation of the keyboard is introduced as the need arises. The location of the first note in the piece is considered in relation to the black note groups. As more and more pieces are introduced in different keys, more notes are located.

Another aspect concerns itself with the introduction of the positions of octaves on the keyboard, i.e., high, higher, highest.

Keyboard harmony. This includes:

1. Transposition: This is mainly done by ear, al-

though previous analysis of the piece aids the process. Transposition is done to familiar and related keys, and an attempt is made to get away from the middle C approach. Often the first piece the child learns is not in the key of C.

2. Simple improvisation to given chords.
3. Harmonization of a melody.

Harmonic analysis. Under this is included:

1. Aural analysis of primary chord, mainly I and V7 at first,
2. Inversions of chords,
3. Cadential and accompaniment forms (harp song, rolling bass, etc.),
4. Modes (major and minor), introduced by ear at first, the pattern is explained later.

Much of the efficiency of a piano class depends on the course chosen, but even more on the teacher. "A course is as good as the teacher who gives it."<sup>19</sup>

A teacher of class piano must not only know the fundamentals of music, have a broad musical background and knowledge of music literature, and understand piano work, but must

---

<sup>19</sup>Ramskill, loc. cit.

also be familiar with and apply principles of psychology and pedagogy and be acquainted with class work. Among other characteristics mentioned by some educators are the following:

1. Confidence in the value of class piano,
2. Ability to manage groups,
3. Acquaintance with the trends, methods and techniques of class piano,
4. An understanding of the objectives of the school and of the music program and the relation of class piano to the total picture,
5. Ability to integrate all phases in a limited time, by means of a good lesson plan and procedure,
6. Skill in concealing the mechanism which governs the class,
7. Ability to impart the knowledge in an interesting way,
8. Ability to get along with the school administration and parents,
9. The desire to restudy the objectives and re-evaluate the procedures used,<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup>"Piano Instruction in the Schools," Music Educators Journal XXXI (May 1945), 34.

10. Accuracy in keeping accounts. To some, a teachers' training course is an important requirement.

A quotation which appeared in the Syracuse Bulletin sums up this idea effectively:

The successful teacher needs the education of a college president, the executive ability of a financier, the hope of an optimist, the courage of a hero, the wisdom of a serpent, the gentleness of a dove, the patience of Job, the grace of God and the persistence of the Devil.<sup>21</sup>

The idea of a workshop to experiment with problems related to class piano and train teachers in the field has often proved successful. Similarly, the meeting of class piano teachers to discuss various questions has been advocated for the improvement of the methods.

#### IV. ORGANIZATION OF CLASS PIANO

Concerning class organization, as with methods, ideals, and procedures, opinions vary depending on a number of factors, such as the nature and needs of the class, the school program, the availability of equipment, etc. . .

In the grouping certain points are taken into consideration:

1. Age of the students and maturity levels; the difference usually not exceeding one or two

---

<sup>21</sup>Quoted by F. Frisch, Calling All Piano Teachers, (Music Educators National Conference 1949), p. 6.

years,

2. Aptitude,
3. Previous training and experience,
4. Availability of a piano for practice.

There are a few questions, the answers to which will bring out the most important factors in organisation.

A. To whom is class piano offered? There are two main currents of thought concerning this question. Most educators believe that everyone, whether in grade, junior or senior high school, college or university, should have a chance to join in piano classes. Nellie McCarty expresses that view when she says that she believes in class piano "for all children sometime, for most children most of the time, and for some children all the time."<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, some prefer to have it elective and suggest the enrollment only of those in the class who fulfill certain requirements. This view is voiced by those who hold that "class piano should be offered to children who qualify as to musical ability, standing in school, regularity of attendance and practice facilities."<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup>N. P. McCarty, "Some Fundamental Principles of Piano Class Teaching," Music Teachers National Association Proceedings, XXXIII (1938), 40.

<sup>23</sup>"Piano Instruction in the Schools," Music Educators Journal, XXXI (May 1945), 34.



B. Should class piano be intracurricular or extra-curricular? Those who advocate the importance of class piano for all believe in having it intracurricular for the following reasons:

1. It is thus regarded as a regular school subject.
2. There are fewer distractions.

In this case the ideal is to have it during school hours. However, if such a time is not available, instruction can be given after school or during the noon recess.

As to practice facilities, if the school considers class piano an important subject, it will offer opportunities for practice when that is possible. Otherwise, children can practice at home or at some friend's house.

C. For how long does the instruction continue? There is no established pattern in relation to the extent of class instruction. Some demand it until the child masters the fundamentals, acquires skill or shows talent. All these provisions seem to offer no definite limit. In a national survey thirty-one per cent of the schools offering class piano were found to belong to this group.<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, others suggest definite limits of time the majority

---

<sup>24</sup>William R. Sur (Editor), Piano Instruction in the Schools, a National Survey, (Chicago: Music Educators National Conference (1949)).

of which ranges from three to five years.

D. When does class piano instruction start? There seems to be a tendency among educators to mention the second grade as the suitable time to start piano classes, on the basis that early instruction lays a better music foundation, places music on a line parallel with other school subjects,<sup>25</sup> and in general is more effective especially that at that time the child is not too involved in extracurricular activities.

Variations from this view cover the two extremes. Some suggest having the instruction in the kindergarten while others believe that instruction at higher levels is more practical and benefits by the reading ability children acquire in singing classes.<sup>26</sup> All, however, seem to think that, regardless of when piano classes start, they should be offered on high school levels for those who, on elementary levels, did not have the chance.

E. What is the equipment needed? This question depends to a large extent on the size of the class, the space and finance available. Though it is the ideal to have

---

<sup>25</sup>O. P. Steinwald, "Piano Prelude," The Educational Music Magazine, XXVI (March 1947), 23.

<sup>26</sup>"Piano Instruction in the Schools," loc. cit.

several pianos with a student at each one, it is by no means necessary. One or two pianos well tuned can be sufficient.<sup>27</sup> The rest of the equipment consists of:

1. Dummy keyboards, one for each child. These may be:
  - a. Flat printed paper or wooden keyboards, two or three octaves each,
  - b. Wooden keyboards with raised but immovable keys,
  - c. Raised, movable but silent keyboards consisting of four octaves each,
  - d. Improved toy pianos.

The third type is the one preferred since it gives tactual sense and key action as well as visual knowledge of the keyboard. Furthermore, it is more convenient in developing the habit of looking away from the keyboard while playing.

2. A paper keyboard picture, thumbtacked on the wall on which the teacher can illustrate,
3. Racks for holding the music,
4. A blackboard, chalk, erasers, etc.,
5. Tables or desks,

---

<sup>27</sup>R. Burrows, "The Why and How of Class Piano," National Educational Association Journal, XXXVIII (January 1949), 37.

6. Flash cards, if possible,
7. Music books including both a course book and supplementary material. A good selection of material is not only interesting and adapted to the age and experience of the group, but must be diversified. Usually it includes:
  - a. Folk songs and dances from different countries.
  - b. Themes from the works of great masters.
  - c. Pieces from different periods in history.
  - d. Pieces working out some interpretive or technical problem.

As much as possible, students are rotated at the piano. Sometimes there are two students there at a time.

F. What is an appropriate number of students in a class? This again depends on the teacher's ability, the size of the room and the equipment available. The view concerning this question seems to range from four to twelve, with minor variations; some giving six to ten as the appropriate number, while others four or five to ten, or eight to twelve,<sup>28</sup> etc. The trend seems to be towards having moderate sized groups, although some classes have

---

<sup>28</sup>R. Burrows, loc. cit.

been conducted with twenty-four students.

G. How often are lessons given and how long are they? This again depends on the individual need of the class. For students who have no pianos at home, one lesson per day takes the form of supervised practice and has often had pleasing results.<sup>29</sup> The length of the period depends on the ages of the children, the frequency of the lesson, the size of the group, and the stage of achievement. In the lower grades, shorter and frequent lessons are advocated, while on higher levels some believe in one hour lessons twice a week,<sup>30</sup> while others give forty minutes as the suitable length.

H. How is the program financed? Ideally, class piano instruction should be offered free. Yet there are four main plans followed by different schools.<sup>31</sup>

1. Teachers may be engaged by the school board on the same basis as other teachers. Children receive their lessons free but supply their own books.
2. Teachers may be engaged by the school board but a nominal fee (25¢ to 50¢) is collected from

---

<sup>29</sup>Crowder, The Piano Teaching Workshop (The Music Educators National Conference 1949).

<sup>30</sup>K. W. Gehrhens, Music in the Junior High School (Boston: C. C. Birchard and Company, 1936), p. 119.

<sup>31</sup>Report presented in "Class Piano Methods," a course given at Montana State University, 1949-1950.

each student, for each lesson. The students also supply their own books.

3. Schools may promise the teacher a certain guaranteed amount and collect from the children fees to be used to offset, as nearly as possible, the teacher's salary.
4. The program may be self-supporting, fees collected from the students directly by the teacher.

Fees are usually collected in advance. The amount depends on the number of students in class and may range from ten to fifty cents. No matter which plan is used, it is believed that each results in substantial saving to the parents.

If the instruction is free, more students would enroll and the set-up would be more in keeping with the basic American philosophy. However, it is better to have classes with a small fee than not to have them at all. Sometimes civic minded individuals and groups sponsor the program.

It will be noticed that each item concerning the organization depends on the other.

## AIMS AND VALUES OF CLASS PIANO

"Why have piano classes?" is one of the basic questions in the answer of which a statement of the aims and values of class piano can be found. These values have been expressed by advocates of class piano and accrue when school administrators are interested, when the teaching techniques are good, when classes are opened to all or at least to many students, and when the objectives and procedures are clearly in line with those of the school as a whole.<sup>1</sup>

There are three considerations implicit in the answer to this question. First, what does the study of music fundamentals and piano playing contribute to the individual and society; second, why choose the piano for the instrument; and third, why have class instruction?

### I. THE VALUE OF MUSIC AND INSTRUMENTAL PLAYING TO THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY

In the views of music educators concerning the value and place of music in the school curriculum mentioned in Part I, is found the answer to the first question. Not

---

<sup>1</sup>John Crowder, The Piano Teaching Workshop, (The Music Educators National Conference 1949).

only does music instruction and the ability to play an instrument meet present and future needs, foster music literacy and a better understanding and enjoyment of music, but it also helps in character building and the development of a well-rounded personality. Characteristics of leadership, self-confidence and satisfaction, self-discipline, cooperation and the competitive spirit can all be enhanced by the ability to play a musical instrument, piano in particular. A person who can give entertainment and accompany or lead a group singing can develop characteristics of leadership.<sup>2</sup> Piano playing develops self-discipline as well as offers a means of self-expression. Self-confidence and the sense of satisfaction come as a result of the realization of one's ability to do something constructive. In accompanying and in ensemble playing cooperation can be developed. Similarly, the individual's ability to play an instrument is valuable to society since it can bring the school and community closer, offer entertainment and foster the group spirit in social situations, church, club, family and friendly gatherings.

---

<sup>2</sup>Crowder, "Social Values in Piano Study," an unpublished mimeographed copy.



## II. THE SUITABILITY OF THE PIANO AS A MEDIUM

The answer to the second consideration is found mainly in two facts. First, the piano is a fundamental instrument. Frank Crane said, "Piano is the best door to the knowledge of music."<sup>3</sup> It is the most easily obtainable of the instruments which give a complete musical picture, presenting elements of melody, harmony and rhythm concurrently.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, form, interpretation, style, and music literature as a whole can all be implanted with the piano as a medium. It is for this reason that piano instruction is not only valuable for the presentation of basic music fundamentals but also as a background underlying future study of any instrument. Organ is another instrument of this group, yet its scarcity, size, immobility, expense and demand for coordination make it impractical for offering elementary training.

Second, piano is the instrument best adapted to the individual's use in the home and society. Its availability, familiarity, and appeal, the possibility of its use not

---

<sup>3</sup>Helen Hannen, "Piano Classes in the Cleveland Public Schools," Music Educators National Conference Yearbook, XXXII (1939-1940), 300.

<sup>4</sup>B. Ramskill, "Class Piano Methods," a course given at Montana State University, 1949-1950.

only for solo and ensemble instrumental playing but for the accompanying singing make it an instrument of wide social use, and makes its study contributory to later life.

Music educators thus urge the inclusion of piano instruction in the curriculum because of its contribution to the development of a many-sided program in music.

### III. THE EFFICIENCY AND CONTRIBUTION OF CLASS METHODS AND INSTRUCTION

The advantages and values so far mentioned can apply equally well to private teaching. Class instruction has more to offer.

A. The methods and procedures of class piano are regarded by educators as pedagogically and psychologically sound. They point towards an approach which may prove quite revolutionary in the field of piano teaching. In spite of the fact that many of the procedures function more effectively in class situations, the principles and methods can act as an inspiration to the private teacher.

B. Class piano offers to a large number of people a chance for musical expression and the acquisition of basic music elements in an efficient way. It gives to all a better understanding of, and foundation in, music, which

is further aided by the chance for actual participation. It presents the average individual with functional music knowledge; it serves those who are unable to afford private instruction and also acts as a laboratory for the discovery of talent in an inexpensive way; even those who have no pianos at home are offered a convenient chance through the "one lesson a day" plan.

C. Piano classes present an effective and efficient way of teaching. The combination of a social learning process with independent performing ability aids in the musical growth of the individual, augments the effectiveness of the learning process, helps in arousing and maintaining the interest of the students as well as fosters personality development.

From the musical standpoint, class piano offers good opportunity for a wide variety of musical experience. Especially on the more advanced stages, it acquaints the student with a large musical repertory and gives better understanding of style. This is not only aided by having different students interpret different musical works of the same composer, but a clever teacher can incorporate listening to records as part of class instruction. The power of appreciation and a discriminating ability can be outcomes

of class piano teaching. Positive criticism and the give and take of ideas, which include both appreciation of the performance of others as well as positive suggestions, contribute to the promotion of intelligent listeners. Thus, individual differences are not stifled, but encouraged and developed in a social atmosphere, and directed to channels where varied backgrounds and aptitudes benefit the whole group.

"Listening to others is learning for oneself."<sup>5</sup> The class set-up thus aids the learning process. Seeing one's mistakes in another is one step towards their solution. Similarly, memorization, ear training, and sight reading can be fostered where the individual listens and watches through the performance of others.

Socializing music instruction, as in class piano, augments the interest of the student, helps make the learning experience a happy one, and offers a good background where the game attitude finds fuller application. These are further aided by the fact that the child is not withdrawn from his companions in order to learn music, but rather shares its pleasures with them.

---

<sup>5</sup>K. W. Barry, "Discussion on Class Piano Instruction," *Montana Education*, XXV (January 1949), 24.

In the process of sharing music with others the individual develops valuable social characteristics. Group spirit and cooperation find a fertile ground in a situation where students perform together. The values of healthy competition can be better fostered in a class situation especially when the standards are kept high enough so that the individual is not satisfied with haphazard preparation. Furthermore, the class set-up offers a natural audience for the performance and creation of music, and thus helps, not only in making music-playing a social activity, but also in developing self-confidence and poise in performance.

D. Class piano instruction offers a good example of the economy of means--effort, time, teachers, and finance. One teacher can teach eight pupils in an hour, each of whom is learning all the time, instead of having to spend eight hours individually with endless repetition of the same principles. From the financial standpoint, the per capita cost of a lesson is materially reduced; thus, those who cannot afford private instruction, those who are studying other instruments and those who want to get acquainted with music fundamentals, have within their reach an inexpensive way to learn.

E. For the school and the community, class piano has its contribution. Regular "class instruction places piano music study on a par with other subjects to be learned. The child is thus led to pursue his piano music study with regularity."<sup>6</sup> It also makes easier the correlation of music with other subjects and activities. Language, physical education and culture studies are among the fields which can benefit from class piano. Furthermore, the school program profits by the musical foundation laid in the piano class, by the chance it offers for the discovery of talent, but even more by the fact that piano classes make available a great number of students who can serve the school as soloists and accompanists in assemblies, classrooms, and other programs. The same applies to its contribution to the home, and the community at large.

To sum up it can be said that

Class piano is not merely a place where students learn the mysteries of musical notation, and acquire skill and virtuoso finger technique. It is a place where listeners, performers, and composers are developed. It is a place where the joy of musical participation is discovered. It is a place where the strength of making music a social activity is realized. It is a place of broad fundamental

---

<sup>6</sup>T. P. Giddings, Public School Class Methods for the Piano (Boston: Oliver Ditson Company 1919), p. 15.

techniques and for fine subtle appreciations. It is a place for the development of musicianship.<sup>7</sup>

#### IV. OBJECTIONS OF CLASS PIANO

Certain objections have been raised to class piano. It is appropriate here to mention a few of them and state some of the answers given by class piano advocates.

A. The objection that the private teacher is at a disadvantage when piano classes are established. To this the advocates answer that class piano is not intended to substitute the work of the private teacher, but rather support it. Both are necessary; class piano trains for general musicianship while private instruction concentrates on special phases. "A class piano teacher is like the general practitioner, while the private teacher is like the specialized physician. Both are needed for the essential and complete training of the individual."<sup>8</sup> In fact, class piano instruction builds up the work of the private teacher in the following ways:

1. It acts as a place for the discovery of talent which could later be concentrated upon through

---

<sup>7</sup>R. Burrows, quoted by Level Shuck, "What the School Director expects of the Piano Class," Music Educators National Conference Yearbook, XXXII (1939-1940), 310.

<sup>8</sup>F. Frisch, Calling All Piano Teachers, (Music Educators National Conference, 1949), p. 21.

private instruction.

2. It arouses the interest in piano playing of a greater number of people.
3. The methods of class piano can be experimented upon and applied by the private teacher.
4. It gives the teacher an effective set-up, which, if combined with individual lessons, would have good results.
5. It gives a good foundation for further piano study.

The need, however, for cooperation between the school and the private teacher is realized.

B. The view that class set-up does not meet individual differences. The answer to this is given before.<sup>9</sup> However, there is the possibility that when class piano is established as a regular school subject, the size of the class will be such that in spite of rotation at the piano, individual differences will not be developed very effectively. To this, the solution is found in the fact that even if the child does not play, he gains by seeing others'

---

<sup>9</sup>Page 31.



mistakes which are often his own, too. On the other hand, the aim toward having more trained teachers seems to be an attempt at the partial solution of this question.

C. The seeming contradiction between the educational aim of developing good citizenship and the approach which aims at fun in education. Good citizenship implies the ability to cope with hard situations, stand against obstacles, and the willingness to do what one does not necessarily enjoy. Some class piano methods, in fact, progressive education in general, is condemned of being "sugar coated" and thus inadequate in the training of responsible individuals.

In answer educators declare that it all depends on the teacher's ability. Progressive education may be used as a tool for lazy instructors; on the other hand, it can be directed to develop individuality, independence, perseverance, and dependability, while still maintaining a pleasurable learning atmosphere.

## CONCLUSION

Class piano is an attempt at embodying the basic American music education philosophy, and has a place in the music education system of the school. It meets the democratic view and demand for "more music in education and more education through music," by bringing music literacy and appreciation as well as its values whether personal or social within the reach of the average individual. Class piano has something to offer to the talented as well as the average. It follows the pragmatic approach by offering an efficient and economical way of teaching which gives a fundamental and functional knowledge of music in many of its phases. It gives the individual something of lasting value to him, to society, and to the community in which he lives.

Class piano instruction in the schools cannot become a universal practice overnight. There is a need for adequate equipment and qualified teachers; but even more, public opinion must also be aroused to a realization of what class piano has to offer, and society must be convinced of its value--that value which time and efficiency alone can prove.

Its universal application will be one step towards the fuller realization of the slogan "music for every child, and every child for music."

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### A. BOOKS

- Barnes, N. C., Music as an Educational and Social Asset. Philadelphia: Theodore Presser Co., 1927.
- Davison, A. T., Music Education in America. New York: Harper Brothers, 1926.
- Finney, P. L., A Brief History of the American Public School. New York: Macmillan and Company, 1927.
- Gehrrens, K. W., Music in the Grade Schools. Boston: C. C. Birchard and Company, 1934.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Music in the Junior High School. Boston: C. C. Birchard and Company, 1936.
- Giddings, T. P., Gilman, W. A., Public School Class Methods for the Piano. Boston: Oliver Ditson Company, 1919.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Backer, E., High School Music Teaching. Appleton: Lawrence Conservatory of Music, 1922.
- Jeffers, Edmund, Music for the General College Student. New York: King's Crown Press, 1944.
- McCauley, C. J., A Professionalized Study of Public School Music. Knoxville: Jos. E. Avent, 1932.
- Morgan, H. N. (Editor), Music Education Source Book. Chicago: Music Educators National Conference, 1947.
- Mursell, J. L., Human Values in Music Education. New York: Silver, Burdett and Company, 1934.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Music in the American Schools. New York: Silver, Burdett and Company, 1934.
- Plato, The Republic, World Publishing Company, 1945.
- Schilling, E., Haske, C., Haske, G. M., McConathy, O., Oxford Piano Course, Teachers First Manual. New York: Oxford University Press, 1929.

Yont, Rose, Status and Value of Music in Education. Lincoln, Nebraska: The Woodruff Press, 1916.

#### B. PERIODICALS

"Adapting Piano Class Instruction to the Individual Child," National Education Principal, XIX (1940), 346-354.

Allen, W., "Different Objectives in Music Education," Music Educators National Conference Yearbook, XXX (1939-40), 24-30.

Alverson, C., "The Need of a Broad General Culture," Music Educators National Conference, XXXth year, (1937), 27-28.

Amidon, P., "Building Citizenship Through Music," Music Educators National Conference, XXXth year, (1937), 23-24.

Anderson, H., "Music's Place in Public Education," Music Educators National Conference, XXXth year, (1937), 11-14.

Antoine, M., "The Old and the New in Music Education," Music Teachers National Association Proceedings, XXXIV (1939), 256-261.

Barry, K. W., "Discussion on Class Piano Instruction," Montana Education, XXV (January 1949), 22-25.

Batterskill, E., "Ear Training Aids in Class Piano Work," Music Educators National Conference Yearbook, XXXth year (1937), 327-28.

Bond, W. S., "Renaissance in Piano Study," Etude, LIV (June 1946), 316.

Burrows, R., "Can High Standards be Attained in a Piano Class," Education, LVI (May 1936), 547-553.

\_\_\_\_\_, "The Piano Class as an Agency for Developing Musicianship," Music Educators National Conference Yearbook XXXth year, 319-325.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Piano Study--a Fundamental," Music Educators Journal, XXXIV (September 1947), 54.

- Burrows, R., "Providing a College Education that Includes Piano Performance," Music Teachers National Association Proceedings, XXXVIII (1944), 337-342.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "The Why and How of Class Piano," National Educators Association Journal, XXXVIII (January 1949), 36-37.
- Charbounel, A. B., "Piano Music in a Community School," Music Teachers National Association Proceedings, XXXVIII 333-337.
- Coffman, L. D., "Social Betterment Through Leisure Time Activities," Music Educators National Conference Yearbook, XXXth year (1937), 15-17.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "A Creed for Music Education," Music Educators Journal, XXXIV (April-May 1948), 17.
- Crowder, J., "The Piano Teaching Workshop," Music Educators Journal, XXXV (February 1949), 21-22.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "Social Implications of Piano Study," Etude, LXVIII (January 1950), 7.
- Curtis, W., "How the Needs of the Fine Arts in Secondary Schools Can be Met by Music Education," Music Educators Conference Yearbook, XXXth year (1937), 18-22.
- Dalton, H., "Class Piano Instruction in 1943," Etude, LXI (April 1943), 224.
- Dickenson, G. S., "Mutual Objectives of Music Education in Schools and Colleges--a Critical Approach," Music Teachers National Association Proceedings, XXXIII (1938), 175.
- Dubois, "Piano Classes in the Schools: Purpose, Problems and Possibilities," XXXIV (January 1948), 26-27.
- Dunham, F., "Music--a New Force in America," Music Educators National Conference Yearbook, XXXIst year.
- Dunlap, M. E., "Modern Trends in Class Piano Instruction," Music Teachers National Association Proceedings, XXXIV (1939), 299-304.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "Education for General Welfare," Music Educators Journal, XXXVIII (January 1949).

- Flagg, M., "Mutual Objectives in Music Education," Music Teachers National Association Proceedings, XXXIII (1938), 168-174.
- Fonts, "Advantages of Group Teaching," Etude, LXVI (January 1948), 28.
- Gehrkens, K. W., "About Piano Classes," Etude, LXVI (October 1948), 600.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "How to Start Piano Classes," Etude, LXVI (September 1948), 538.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "How to Teach an Adult Piano Class," Etude, LXVI (March 1948), 156.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "Should Piano Be Taught in Schools," Etude, LXVI (April 1948), 228.
- Gest, G., "Talks to Piano Teachers," Music Educators National Conference Yearbook, XXIth year (1937), 331-332.
- Gralapp, A., "Music in a General Education Program," Music Educators National Conference, XIX (1939-1940), 22-23.
- Griggs, E. H., "Music in the Cultural Life of America," Music Educators National Conference Yearbook, XXIst year (1938), 11-17.
- Hannen, H., "Piano Classes in the Cleveland Public Schools," Music Educators National Conference Yearbook, XXX (1939-1940), 300.
- Hanson, H., "Music in American Life Today," Music Educators National Conference Yearbook, XXXX (1939-1940), 11-13.
- Harper, E. E., "Some Values and Functions of the Fine Arts in American Life and Education," Music Educators National Conference Yearbook, XXX (1939-1940), 13-18.
- Hatfield, G., "A Layman's View of Education," Music Educators National Conference Yearbook, XXXth year (1937), 25-27.
- Heffernan, H., "Point of View in Music Education," Music Educators National Conference Yearbook, XXXth year (1937), 52-57.

- Hein, M., "Alabama Advances in Music," Music Educators Journal, XXXVI (September 1949), 15-16.
- Hesser, E. G., "Modern Trends in Music Education," Music Teachers National Association Proceedings, XXXIII (1938), 242-249.
- Hood, M. W., "Piano Instruction Moves into the School Class Room," Education, LXIX (March 1949), 413-416.
- Hudson, O., "Does Class Piano Instruction Pay," Musician, XXXVII (July 1932), 12-13.
- Keeny, M. G., "Why I Believe in Piano Classes," Music Teachers National Association Proceedings, XXIX (1934), 224-227.
- Kinkeldey, D., "American Higher Music Education Compared with That of Europe," Music Teachers National Association Proceedings, XXXIX (1934), 20-28.
- Kirn, G., "Reconciling Realities and Aspirations in Music Education," Music Educators National Conference Yearbook, XXXth year (1937), 42-44.
- Kuersteiner, K. O., "Aims and Objectives of Piano Study," Music Teachers National Association Proceedings, XXXVIII (1949), 380-385.
- Landbury, J., "Education Through Music," Music Educators National Conference Yearbook, XXX (1939-1940), 19-21.
- Larson, W., "The Need for an Adjustment to Modern Trends in Music Education," Music Educators National Conference Yearbook, XXXth year (1937), 47-51.
- Leinsdorf, E., "Towards a Sounder Philosophy of Musical Education," Etude, LXVI (March 1948), 46.
- Maddy, J., "The Music Educators New Responsibility," Music Educators National Conference Yearbook, XXXth year (1937), 33-34.
- Maier, G., "Those Waiting Lists," Etude, LXVI (June 1948), 8.

- Malpas, W. F., "Practical Success in Class Piano Teaching," Etude, LX (February 1942), 94.
- McCarty, N. G., "Some Fundamental Principles of Class Piano Teaching," Music Teachers National Association Proceedings, XXXIII (1938), 40-45.
- Miessner, O., "Forces Affecting Musical Progress," Music Educators National Conference XXXIst year (1938), 21-28.
- Moor, E. V., "Readjustments in Education in Music--the New Era," Music Teachers National Association Proceedings, XXXVIII (1944), 99-111.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "More and Better Music--a Panel Discussion," Music Educators National Conference Yearbook, XXXth year (1937), 44-47.
- Mursell, J., "The Educational Values of Creative Music," Music Educators National Conference Yearbook XXXIst year (1938), 334-337.
- Oneills, D. D., "Beginner's Piano Class in High School," Music Educators Journal, XXXIV (April 1948), 56.
- Pach, S. N., "Mirrors," Educational Music Magazine, XXVIII (January 1949), 26.
- Palmer, C., "Music Appreciation and Life," Music Educators National Conference, XXXth year (1937), 39-41.
- Payhe, D. S., "Bringing Delight to Music Study," Etude, LXV (April 1947), 184.
- Richter, A., "Fun and Profit in the Piano Class," Etude, LVIII (July 1940), 461.
- Rogers, L., "Problems Relative to Piano Class Methods," Music Educators National Conference Yearbook, XXXIst (1938), 316-319.
- Scanbon, M. B., "An Investigation of Early Influence on Modern Music Education," Music Educators National Conference XXX (1939-1940), 57-62.



- Shwin, H. L., "Twenty Questions about Class Piano," Music Teachers National Association Proceedings, XXXIV (1934), 228-335.
- Snow, R. L., "How Can Group Instruction Be Maintained," Music Educators National Conference Yearbook, XXXth year (1937), 326-327.
- Stoddard, A., "Music Education Becomes a Fundamental," Music Educators Journal, XXXIV (April-May 1948), 24.
- Thompson, W., "Music and the Abnormal," Music Educators National Conference Yearbook, XXXth year (1937), 29-32.
- Tremaine, C. M., "Report of the Committee on Group Instruction in Applied Music," Music Teachers National Association Proceedings, XXXIX (1934), 317-318.
- West, A., "The Advanced Piano Class as a Medium for the Teaching of Music Appreciation," Music Teachers National Association Proceedings, XXXIX (1934), 236-242.
- Withrow, M. F., "Survey of Piano Class Work in California," Music Educators National Conference Yearbook, XXXth year (1937), 328-330.

#### C. PAMPHLETS, REPORTS, COURSES

- Class Piano Manual, Chicago: National Association of Music Merchants, Inc.
- Frisch, F. T., Calling All Piano Teachers, Music Educators National Conference, 1949.
- Madelon, W. J., Adventuring with Music in the Home, Bulletin 195 of Agricultural Extension Service, Ohio State University.
- Manual for Organizing a Community Music Council, Chicago: American Music Conference.
- Music Education Curriculum Committee Reports, Biennial Interim Series, Chicago: Music Educators National Conference.

Piano Workshop, Music 114, Montana State University, 1948.

Piano Workshop, June 21-July 30, 1948. Montana State University.

Ramskill, B., Class Piano Methods, a course given at Montana State University 1949-1950.

Sur, W. R. (Editor), Piano Instruction in the Schools, a report and Interpretation of a National Survey, Chicago: Music Educators National Conference, 1949.