



**FACULTY OF MUSIC
UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

BEING A GOOD PIANO ACCOMPANIST: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

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Declaration of Authorship

“I hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented is the result of my own research and survey, except for the ideas and summaries which I stated their sources. This thesis has not been submitted at any degree in this or any other University.”



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Abstract

This study was carried out in March-May 2014 at the Faculty of Music UiTM, Shah Alam. This study focused especially on Bachelor Degree Music student piano accompanists from Music Education Department, Music Composition Department and Music Performance Department as well as experienced piano accompanists from outside UiTM. This study is based on responses from respondents regarding the issues and challenges of being a good piano accompanist. The main objectives of this study are: 1. To clarify what are the characteristics of a good piano accompanist. 2. To find out the problems and challenges often faced by piano accompanists. 3. To describe the differences in demands on piano accompanists between voice and instruments. This study conclude that student piano accompanists at Faculty of Music UiTM and experienced piano accompanists from outside UiTM faced similar issues and challenges to be a good piano accompanist. Though there are some similarities of the solutions, techniques and strategies applied in order to be a good piano accompanist, there are also a lot of other different ways which experienced piano accompanists used that can be helpful for student piano accompanists at Faculty of Music UiTM.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

Since Baroque period, accompanying has been an ability that requires a high level of techniques and skills. Masters (2011) stated that, “during the Baroque era, the art of accompanying occupied a unique position, no keyboardist could hope to compete for any sort of position without possessing a high level accompanying ability” (p.16).

According to Renaud (1999), “originally, accompaniments were played on the lute. Then, during the baroque period, the harpsichordist became an essential partner, playing the basso continuo.” (p.11). The writer also added that the 18th century Italian Opera’s recitative were still accompanied by basso continuo yet accompaniments in aria became more important at that time. The writer stated that by the end of 18th century, piano became a major instrument for accompaniment and the Alberti Bass was an important role in accompanying.

Renaud (1999) said that the texture of piano accompaniment changed on Schubert’s time when he made the accompaniment depict the emotions of his lieder equals to the soloists. The writer also stated that, “In the lieder by Liszt, Wolf and Mahler, the accompaniment plays a psychological role: It completes the words’ meaning and translates the emotions.” (p.11). In addition, the writer said that piano accompanists has become an important collaborator to form the rhythmic impulse, harmonising the text and developing mood.

According to an article from The Guardian (2012), Ian Burnside who is an accompanist said that most vocal repertoires are likely to be in a piano art form since the outstanding Lieders and vocal music composers were pianists who hardly sang such as, Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Wolf, Faure and Debussy.