

THE CONSERVATORY
Preparatory Program

Right from
the Start

Guiding Principles



THE PUBLISHING
CONSERVATORY

P R E F A C E

Where are the little Mozarts? Much has been said about the genius of Mozart. But for all his miraculous gifts, he learned to write and perform music by study, not by instinct or talent alone. Mozart was a genius, but his father Leopold, who was a teacher himself, is credited for teaching his son music. Concerning his years of study, W. A. Mozart said, "People make a mistake who think that my art has come easily to me. Nobody has devoted so much time and thought to composition as I. There is not a famous master whose music I have not studied over and over."



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

An old English proverb says, "A good beginning is a good end." The young Mozart reached his potential, in part, because of those who gave him his start. Children do not need to be geniuses to deserve the same opportunity to study music as Mozart. Students are impressed to know that they are capable of playing the music played or written by Mozart as a child, or written for him by his father.

The time for learning is lost by:

1. The lack of spontaneous singing and exposure to all types of music at home
2. Oversimplification once lessons begin instead of steady and consistent progress
3. An emphasis on talent rather than on the importance of study
4. The natural ability of children to entertain mistaken for achievement
5. Shortcuts made by the teacher that give a false impression of progress
6. Entertainment and personal interests pursued over knowledge
7. Difficult music theories simplified giving parents the idea students are learning when they are not

The time is now for the benefits of studying music. For children, the benefits of this experience are the most profound. As they learn how to control their mind and muscles musically during the lesson, they are growing in their ability to concentrate, which helps students in school and all that they do.

Mary Hovland
Author of The Hovland Piano Course

"A great achiever is
right before us in every student."

INTRODUCTION

EDUCATIONAL LOSS

Long ago the founder of general music in American schools, Lowell Mason (1792-1872), believed that all elementary school children had the right to a music education. He established music as an integral part of education and developed a public school curriculum for teaching children to read music. Mason wanted to provide the public with the opportunity to participate in music at a higher level, which was available at the time to just a few educated elite. He also wanted to raise the standards of school and church music; to do so, he compiled books from which to read music while singing. Mason composed many hymns. One of the best known is "Nearer My God to Thee" (well-known by all as the song played on the Titanic when it was sinking).



Lowell Mason

Sadly, children today can no longer read written music without shortcuts and hints. And hymnals from which to read music are now rarely used in churches. This is the same new level of illiteracy in music as Mason tried to alleviate. Now the time has come to restore music education to what was established by great masters and educators from the past. Music should not be viewed as some mysterious gift that a select few possess. Every student has the ability to learn music and it is the job of the educators and parents to make the musical future of every student bright. This booklet is meant to help take the mystery out of music and introduce parents to Hovland Conservatory and its vision of helping a new generation to grow up musical in every way.

NEARER MY GOD TO THEE Lowell Mason 1792-1872

Brightly

Near - er, my God to thee, Near - er to thee,
Though like a wan - der - er, The sun gone down,
Then let my way ap - pear Steps un - to heaven;

The image shows a musical score for the hymn "Nearer My God to Thee" in 4/4 time. It features a treble clef and a bass clef. The melody is written in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The lyrics are written below the notes.

LEARNING PERSONAL MUSICIANSHIP

Personal musicianship is the ability to perform any style of music for one's own enjoyment or for others to enjoy. Personal musicianship is not the same as talent. Becoming musical is studied in private lessons during which students learn to read music and react with precise timing and touch on every note they play. The concentration needed to mentally and physically make music creates an instantaneous flash of intelligence that helps students in everything they do.

In a lesson, students are in a different world; one in which the teacher guides them to play in a professional manner. Children become little adults for thirty minutes every week. This experience cannot be duplicated at home or in a classroom.

Music is a lot of things to a lot of people and its benefits are largely overlooked, but we know this - everyone identifies with the music introduced to them as children all their lives, and it is best to start formal music study when all other academic subjects are being learned. From this beginning, music can be taken to the highest degree. Even Beethoven, one of the most famous composers in history, said at the end of his life, "I believe I am as yet at the beginning."



Ludwig van Beethoven

LEARNING THAT LASTS

Learning personal musicianship is multi-sensory and requires that all these styles of learning work together. To make music instruction a valuable and lasting experience, teachers must recognize and balance each source. To achieve balance, attention must be given to the weaknesses of the students to make them strong, instead of the usual temptation of music teachers to rely primarily on the student's strengths.

Too often teachers will follow a teaching method which focuses heavily on one aspect of playing while ignoring others. On one end of the spectrum some methods rely strictly on playing by ear while others may rely only on the printed page. Any one-sided approach creates a student with deficiencies. The Hovland approach balances all musical needs of the student and creates a well-rounded student with all necessary tools for eventual professional or personal aspirations.

T H E H O V L A N D P R O G R A M

EVERY STUDENT IS A GOOD STUDENT

Hovland Conservatory is a nonprofit organization providing private piano and violin lessons for kindergarten through adult age students. Over the years, with thousands of students, we have developed a proactive method for teaching music that helps every student to be a good student.

Students of Hovland Conservatory progress through a program of lessons that guarantee a full and fluent knowledge of the piano or violin. Typically, students start in Kindergarten and go through the following stages: Budding Musician, Preparatory, and Conservatory. Children are introduced to piano and violin through our Budding Musician Program. This program exposes students to music lessons while allowing parents the opportunity to introduce music to their children. The Preparatory Program follows and is divided into three divisions (basics, proficiency, and fluency). The Preparatory Program teaches and develops the whole musician in preparation for continued study in The Conservatory Program, which provides students with teacher training or continued preparation for college study.

Students starting later than kindergarten go through the same track; however, they are given a different lesson book which allows them to advance at a faster pace to reach grade progress.

Budding Musicianship

At the first lesson, students begin learning the skills needed to read and perform musically. Everything that they learn in their lessons will develop new pathways in the brain that will help them both musically and academically.

Basics Skills Division

During this beginning stage, students are dependent on the teacher to help them read and play musically. Everything they play at home has been studied at the lesson. Students learn to recognize symbols and signs and are trained in proper technique.

Technical Proficiency Division

The organization of music begins to make sense and students are ready to study music theories. Students study the large universally accepted body of piano literature and are taught to apply music theory to improvising in various musical styles.

Musical Fluency Division

Students in this level become fluent music readers and study composers of all periods and times. Students learn theory from which to pass at college equivalent. They respond instinctively to the language of music and its organization at an artistic level. They are now capable of playing major works of length and have developed more skills in improvisation.

Specialization

Specialization is the fourth and continuing stage of learning. Students continue their study in which they acquire a larger performance aptitude, specializing in specific styles of music, theory, and composition, or obtaining music teacher training.

H O V L A N D C U R R I C U L U M

THE HOVLAND PIANO COURSE

The Hovland Piano Course includes one music book and five lesson books per school grade that are used progressively. Each lesson book makes up a course and contains eight individual lessons. Student's who begin after kindergarten will receive a condensed lesson book for each grade level until caught up to grade progress. The condensed lesson book allows students to move at a faster pace in order to catch up to grade progress.

Music Book

The Music Book contains one year's worth of music and has five sections: 1) Method - explains musical ideas and concepts. 2) Etudes - melodious patterns from which to study technique. 3) Exercises - repeating patterns to develop and maintain dexterity, speed, and skills. 4) Repertoire - traditional melodies and literature that is universally accepted for study. 5) Amusements - famous melodies from which to teach music appreciation. The Music Book is used in combination with the Lesson Book during the lesson.

Lesson Book

There is a lesson book for each 8-week course. Students study five courses per grade. Each course contains five distinct pieces each with a specific educational purpose: Lesson Skill, Technical Exercise, Famous Piece, Classic Piece, and the Seasonal Performance Pieces. For students starting later than kindergarten, a condensed lesson book will be used (one for each grade level) which covers the same material, but allows the student to progress at a faster pace until they reach grade progress.

What is Music Literature?

The Hovland Piano Course restores how music was once taught in America by bringing back a classic and universally accepted standard. While popular trends in music come and go, music that has stood the test of time is classic. However, due to the way music is commonly taught, there are fewer and fewer people who are familiar with the classic children's music literature or are fluent enough to read it. The Hovland Piano Course does for music literature what Harry Potter did for children's literature: offers books to children in an academic format that is both stimulating, interesting, and captivating.

Think of a world without such literary greats for children as: A Christmas Carol, Secret Garden, Hansel and Gretel, or Alice in Wonderland. This is the case with great children's repertoire; young students are no longer exposed to the music written for them by master composers such as Bach, Mozart, or Beethoven.

What are Master Works?

A major goal of music study should be to become a fluent music reader in order to play works from the masters of the past and from contemporary composers of our day. If this is not the goal of music study, then centuries of musical works lay silent and lost. There is no question that becoming a fluent reader of music is not easy, but the genius of a composer such as Mozart can live in the hands of a young child who has learned how to recreate it. If it were a painting, it would be called a reproduction. In music, performance is not a copy of the original. When a child plays a piece by Mozart, they play the actual piece that Mozart himself played. It is a priceless thing to be capable of performing an artist's work. It undoubtedly gives the performer a rare sense of gratification and value. Every child who is capable of performing a piece by Mozart owns his or her own 'Rembrandt'.

H O V L A N D I N S T R U C T I O N

MUSIC IS FUN

Everyone likes what they can do well. When students learn to play well, they are having fun. The goal of every lesson at Hovland is to help students become superior in their performance in the most efficient way possible and always with the goal of having fun. The means to this musical success is by providing the necessary skills to every student rather than being dependent on natural talent or intellect. Hovland uses Exact Instruction which adheres to one approach while eliminating the confusion other methods and teachers create. At every lesson students develop the mechanics to play naturally, correctly, and with strength so that their training endures for a lifetime. Each lesson is a physical workout to gain the skill and strength and stamina required for playing musically.

EXACT INSTRUCTION

Using the system of Exact Instruction, students are exposed to a balanced and consistent music education. Exact Instruction is a proactive rather than reactive approach to teaching. It eliminates the common teacher errors that have become deeply rooted in most American music education. These errors are the primary cause for the differences in students, and the reason why so few people are fluent, skilled or well-rounded in music, even despite years of study. Music theories are taught from a script to insure they are introduced in logical order that is coherent and easily comprehensive. Through Exact Instruction, students train as athletes do, to maintain concentration, control finger reflexes, and develop strength, all of which combine to create a professional level of performance starting from the very beginning.

Practice at the Lesson

Parents help their student succeed by bringing them to lessons and encouraging them when they need support. However, the act of teaching music is a precise and delicate task can only be done under the supervision of a qualified teacher. Students "learn how to learn" at the lesson. They start learning a piece by first reading it slowly and deliberately with precise technique and timing on every note. After students have developed the right touch, they are able to play each piece faster and independently for a real musical experience.

Students must play at home to keep active on the piano, but parents should not help them. Getting help at home is, in most cases, counterproductive. When parents help at home they can confuse students and also interfere with the teacher's ability to evaluate the student's real progress.

Repetitions Not Stopping

Students learn by playing repetitively. At the lesson, students play with supervised repetitions, not stopping. At home, students should do the same, not taking breaks to rest or do other things. To develop mental and physical stamina, students must play without stopping to rest. When repetitions are played under the supervision of the teacher without stopping, the differences in students disappear and even the most resistant students learn to play musically and enjoy their lessons. Teachers make repetitions fun by coaching students as they play, and by giving positive and encouraging comments to help them "reach the finish line", just as if they were running a race.

The Script for Professional Consistency

Due to their age, young children start music lessons with little differences in their potential. A young student with no previous experience is a latent musician waiting to be awakened. In fact, differences in students are due more to how they are taught and to their temperament than talent. By using the script, all Hovland teachers teach with the same lesson plan and have the same expectations of quality performance from their students. The common mistakes that have become common-place in teaching music have been eliminated.

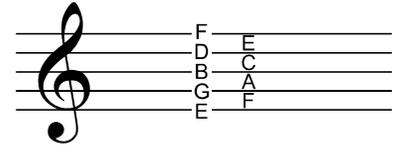
THE HOVLAND DIFFERENCE

There are many schools and individuals who offer music lessons but few of them possess the skills and methods necessary to create consistent results. It takes years of experience to learn how to teach effectively. Hovland's system of Exact Instruction allows students and teachers to take advantage of the collective knowledge and wisdom acquired from years of experience. Below is a comparison of some of the problems with modern methods and how our method of instruction is different.

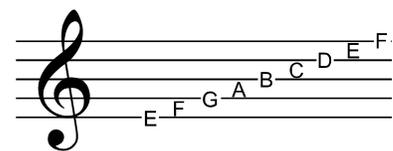
NO SHORTCUTS

Hovland does not use "shortcuts" to teach music. Numerous ideas in modern methods have been invented over the years to try to teach music to children. These "shortcuts" or "tricks" are not based on any real musical theory. For example, a shortcut that is popular in modern methods is teaching note reading by using pneumatic devices for reading lines and spaces. To read and identify notes many methods teach the pneumatic device "Every good boy does fine" for remembering the order of the lines on the staff as E G B D F. This approach can often stunt a student's ability to read and identify notes fluently. Notes were intended to be read alphabetically (E F G A B C D E). Hovland applies this systematic and efficient way of reading music so that students read notes by relation.

INCORRECT ILLUSTRATION NAMING THE STAFF



CORRECT ILLUSTRATION NAMING THE STAFF



The false ideas that are common in many methods are weeds that have become trees rooted in the American educational system, and have not been proven to work in helping students understand music, become musical, or appreciate music more. Hovland uses classic methods which have no confusing "shortcuts". Classical methods have a common format; the elements for understanding music are presented all at once so their relationships can be conceptualized. Gradually ideas are explained through practical application with music, starting simply and gradually becoming more complex.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Hovland Conservatory believes in standard lesson procedures and objectives by which all students have an equal opportunity to reach their full musical potential. Children are different in every conceivable way and, therefore, can often subconsciously "typed" into categories that hinder their ability to succeed. This evaluation of the student can affect what the teacher and parents expect of them, usually lower the standards at which they play. Hovland proactively teaches and guides each student through exactly directed lessons, regardless of interest, ability, or temperament.

CONCLUSION

Everyone is exposed to music on a regular basis, whether it's in the background or actively being listened to for entertainment. While everyone at every age listens to music, there are few people who have learned to read music fluently or understand it at an analytical level. Those who have studied music have a broader understanding and enjoyment of it. Albert Einstein who began his study of music at the age of five, said, "If I were not a physicist, I would probably be a musician. I often think in music. I live my daydreams in music. I see my life in terms of music... I get most joy in life out of music."