



Quad State Convention Schedule, 2017

(Session descriptions by Forrest Kinney)

Friday Evening, October 13

7:30-8:45pm

Pattern Play Party!

I will teach improvisation to a group of five or six students of various ages and abilities. We will improvise duet and trios together. We may even involve a parent, grandparent, or a teacher in the music making! Students, teachers, and parents will see that any students—if properly guided—can learn to improvise in a safe, supportive, and very enjoyable way!

Saturday, October, 14th

8:30-9:00 Registration

Session 1: 9:00-10:00am The Four Arts of Music: A New Paradigm for Music Education

Someone with command of a language can talk, tell stories, read, and write. Likewise, a musician might improvise (speak spontaneously), arrange (restate traditional themes in a personal way), compose (write musical essays), and read and interpret the compositions of others. While music pedagogy is focused on the art of interpreting, musicians in the Baroque era focused on the other three arts. To become fully expressive in music, we really need all four arts. In this presentation, I give an overview of the Four Arts of Music, how they were once taught, and an introduction to why and how they can be taught today.

Session 2: 10:15-11:30

Teaching Improvising from the First Lesson Onward

We can teach a student to improvise from the very first lesson! This can be done by playing duets with a student, and inviting the student to join in using a set of notes. Later, the teacher gently leads the student into solo playing when the student is ready (this may be months or even years later). The teacher creates a safe, supportive environment for the student, playing rich accompaniment patterns in various musical styles. A student can also learn to improvise in small groups, and so I will demonstrate how groups of students can play improvised trios together. Students love the social aspect of this!

11:30-12:15 LUNCH

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12:15 -12:30 Greetings from MTNA Representative Ginger Hwalek, NCTM

12:30-1:15 Commissioned Composers Concert

Session 3: 1:30-2:30 Teaching Arranging from the First Lesson Onward

How can a student begin the art of arranging in the first lesson? By learning the piano in the way that Clara Schumann did at the age of five. In this presentation, I show how to help a first day student learn to play tunes by ear and cultivate the ear in a healthy, natural way. Once a student can play some tunes, I help them to add left-hand bass notes (by ear), then fifths, and then three-note chords. At this point, a student is ready to begin to learn how to “style” chords in various ways and eventually add “color tones” to the chords. After a few months, the beginning student has developed a small repertoire of pieces they can play by memory, and they understand basic chords and transposition. As they play, they move with the grace of someone who has been allowed to focus on the act of playing melodies rather than on reading notes. This provides an excellent foundation for the process of learning to read. Students learn to read relatively quickly because the musical symbols refer to something that the student has already experienced and accomplished.

Session 4: 2:30-3:30 The Art of Interpreting and Creative Practicing

An English proverb states what every serious pianist comes to accept: “Repetition is the mother of skill.” To be able to play our pieces with any degree of fluency and artistry, we must repeat passages over and over and over...and over again! Yet, too often, the music and the performer both become stale in the process. How can we keep our pieces and our enjoyment fresh? In this talk, I demonstrate a collection of “Creative practicing techniques” that can accomplish this essential task. These practices provide a foundation for a creative, responsive “art of interpretation”.

4:00pm: Adjourn