

How Traditional Piano Lessons Cripple Our Children

By: Hellene Hiner



The commonly accepted traditional methods of teaching beginners to play the piano are about as dangerous for the mentality of our children as throwing them alone into the middle of the ocean to teach them to swim. They are as painful as pulling teeth without anesthesia. Even though we love music and have an endless desire to learn the music language, the majority of the existing methods of teaching music instruments is a waste of time, money and energy for most people. This is because they were primarily designed for the low percentage of musically gifted people. As for the average person- these lessons aren't only useless, but may cause incurable wounds, and as a result could negatively affect the character of the learner and his perception of life in general.

This is exactly why there is an abundance of different systems and methods of teaching music, but only a little amount of people who can actually play and sight-read. Our society is sharply separated into the small stratum of music experts and all of the illiterate masses that can't read music at all. Piano lessons have been associated with so many disappointments passed from one generation to another that the amount of people that still want their children to study music decreases every year. This has had a negative impact on the development of music as a language, on music as a performing art and on the music industry in general. For example, according to the Blue Book of Pianos, since the year 1956, the total number of piano sales has dropped to half as much. Music publicists, performers and music teachers greatly suffer from a lack of interest from the general public to study music. However, the greatest damage that music illiteracy brings to public education is its impoverishing of our perception, limiting our imaginations, and weakening our minds and creativity. Currently, the crisis is being worsened by music recording technology, which has weakened the motivation of people to receive a music education at all. Why struggle, if in order to hear music all you have to do is push a button on a CD player?

The currently existing systems of teaching music are as absurd and ineffective as the teaching of literacy in the Middle Ages. Then, scholars learned in the Latin language, which was extraneous to their perceptions, by memorizing large texts from the teacher's drills. This is why teaching one to be literate was selective, individual, and was offered only to the most mature adults and teenagers. Only prodigies with extraordinary memory and analytical abilities were able to advance from mere acquaintance with a bunch of senseless sounds to their comprehension and structure. In the Middle Ages, it was also commonly believed that literacy was just for a selected few people and that global illiteracy wasn't to be questioned.

Luckily, today the methods of teaching children literacy have improved so drastically that we are able to teach every child to read and write from as young as 6 years old in a group setting in public schools. We've forgotten how literacy was earned in the Middle Ages long ago. More than that! Even recent existing methods (for example, the popular method in which children were required to memorize the shape of letters, rather than the sound, developed by Scott Foresman in the 50's-60's) are considered absurd.

However, music education is still based on the blunders related to the ignorance of the most important psychological rules of human perception. This throws us back onto educational traditions from several centuries ago, and puts the mentality of contemporary people in danger. The errors of music pedagogy are not as innocent as we used to think them. They contribute to the low self-esteem and disappointment of our children, and kill the desire to study music at all. This is the real reason for the total music illiteracy of people. The cutting of budgets in public music education is the only material proof of the general catastrophe.

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