Converting a Private Lesson Studio to Group Webinar Outline

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The Mayron Cole Piano Method Ensembles

- are usually 4 to 6 pianos
- Each piano is reading different notes and when played together it is a piano band
- The Mayron Cole Piano Method has ensembles are for all levels
  - From the first week of piano to college level
- Some Mayron Cole Piano Method Textbooks include ensembles:
  - Blast Off with Piano, Blast Off Sacred Music, EZ Keys, Menehune, Level 1B, Older Beginner Level 1, Older Beginner Level 2, Level 6B, Level 8B
- The Mayron Cole Piano Method carries 50 ensembles that are supplemental to the textbooks
- Ensemble Includes: One of *each* student piano part, a conductor's score (not in text books), a Teacher's Part (when applicable)
- Holiday ensembles for Christmas, Easter, 4th of July, Halloween, Valentine's Day, Mardi Gras

Why Teach Ensembles?

- Fun! Fun! Fun!
  - Piano is a hobby… it should be fun!
- Enhance students' sight reading skills
- Enhance rhythm counting skills
- Impress your audience
  - Perform at recitals
- Students learn to play and perform with other musicians
- Perform in Public
  - Great Marketing Tool
  - at church, at a holiday gathering, at a retirement home, open for a school play



Choosing an Ensemble

- Music must be the level at which each student in the class can sight read his/her part
- Ensemble music should be a bit easier than the music that students are currently playing in the textbook
- Playing an ensemble is more difficult than a solo, so music needs to be more simple

Assigning Parts

- Piano Part # 1 is *usually* the tune
  - The tune is the easiest part, but also the most important…
  - In beginner ensembles, you are also playing the tune.
  - Don't give the tune to the best student, don't give it to the worst student.
- In more advanced ensembles (when there is no teacher's part), the lowest bass part keeps the beat…
  - Need a very good student on low bass



Teaching a Beginner Ensemble in a 45 minute class

- 5 minutes:
  - Hear students' homework from last week
- 10 minutes:
  - Hand out ensemble parts and explain that they will each be reading different notes and when we put it together is it a piano band
  - Each student sight reads and practices his/her own part
  - You walk around to assist when needed and make sure each student can play his/her part
- 10 minutes:
  - Time to start putting ensemble together
  - Explain that you cannot call out the key because everyone is playing a different key, so you will count the rhythm
  - Also explain that they will be hearing themselves play different notes than the person sitting next to them
  - When you first put the ensemble together, you should only play the tune in the teacher's part, do not play any counter rhythm
  - Slowly put the ensemble together
    - That was so much fun!
  - After practicing it a few times, try playing it without counting the rhythm aloud
- 5 minutes:
  - You now play the full teacher's part with the group
  - Might have to count the rhythm aloud the first time through
- 10 minutes:
  - Now, the really fun part...
  - Pick out different instrument sounds!
  - Get creative about which instruments will best portray the ensemble.
  - Allow the students to come up with ideas, too.
  - Instrument examples: Fur Elise Ensemble
    - Classical instruments
    - Harpsichord, Piano, Violin, Oboe, Flute
  - Instrument examples: Mission Bells Ensemble
    - Perhaps a brass quintet



        - Soprano Sax, Trumpet, Alto Sax, French Horn, Trombone
    - Practice ensemble a few times with instruments
    - Will need to adjust volume of each keyboard
- 5 minutes:
    - IF the ensemble sounds great, invite the parents in to hear the class perform
        - Explain to the parents that each student is playing a different part so playing an ensemble is quite difficult
    - IF the ensemble does not sound good enough to perform, say, "That was fun!" and have students do theory sheets for the last 5 minutes of class
    - At the end of class, tell the students they did such a great job on the ensemble, that they have no homework this week.
    - If you plan to perform the ensemble at a recital, do not bring parents in during the last 5 minutes of class and have the students practice their ensemble part for homework.



Teaching an Advanced Ensemble in a 45 minute class

- Teach the ensemble the same way as a beginner ensemble, but students will spend more time working on their parts individually and the class will spend less time putting the ensemble together as a group.

Notes:

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