



Piano  
Curriculum

I would like to thank the following faculty and staff for their assistance in developing the piano curriculum:

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Jeff Uhlig  
Larisa Yanovitsky

Sincerely,



Helen Eaton  
Chief Executive Officer  
Settlement Music School

## **Objectives**

The curriculum is designed to follow a student beginning from age five or six through grade twelve. Students starting at a different age, or who transfer from an outside place of study, may enter the curriculum at a level deemed appropriate by the teacher and Branch Director. The projected progress of a student allows him/her to certify each year for a new level. Students may skip a level depending on their rate of progress in any given year if considered appropriate by the teacher and Branch Director.

The objectives of the Settlement Music School Piano Department Curriculum encompass the overall development of a pianist throughout his/her musical study.

The curriculum should lead to the development of basic musicianship through piano study:

- a. By providing a logical sequence of repertoire from level to level that should represent a full range of styles and periods and include various levels of difficulty
- b. By supporting the building of keyboard skills in a logical and sequential way, while simultaneously enhancing musical literacy through the basic understanding of keyboard harmony
- c. By developing technical proficiency sequentially per level

### ***Jazz Piano***

Students wishing to take jazz piano lessons must be able to complete the requirements for Level 4 or demonstrate such requirements to the Branch Director. These requirements can be demonstrated at any point throughout the year prior to study.

## **Concepts**

*All the concepts below should be incorporated from the beginning of study*

**Phrasing** – Phrasing can be directly compared to speech. A clear understanding and execution of a composition’s phrasing includes taking into account the harmonic progression and the melodic direction as well as rhythmic accentuations, all of which create the intended shape of the musical line. One must understand the composer’s intentions and subsequently learn to execute the phrase through musical comprehension, developed by approaches such as singing of the musical line, understanding the underlying harmonic and rhythmic patterns, and learning to apply technical skills appropriate to the specific phrase. Actively engaging the imagination so as to encourage creative self-expression is also imperative.

**Tempo** – While the use of a metronome is vital in practice, students must develop an internal understanding of rhythmic pulse. The ability to hold a steady tempo and to make adjustments becomes the external manifestation of the internal pulse.

**Dynamics** – In beginning through advanced piano study, shaping and tone quality should always be a focus. Students should understand how to produce dynamics and voicing through knowing how the key is depressed. At the earliest levels, students are taught to listen to the sounds they are created, and to hear the sound they want to make prior to attempting to produce it.

**Stylistic Interpretations** – All music being played must be performed with the understanding of the era, history, and circumstances surrounding the piece.

**Pedaling** – Pedaling should appropriately reflect the style of music through enhancing the tone and line of the music being studied. The correct usage of pedaling combines both a technical and aural approach to using the pedal clearly and skillfully. Technical aspects include proper foot and leg placement. Aural aspects include the addition of pedaling to aid in tone color and to produce certain types of legato in passages which require legato lines.

**Listening** - Students must learn to listen keenly to the sounds they are producing to adequately understand what they are hearing. Strong listening skills will help students to discern texture as illustrated by the interaction of the vertical and horizontal elements of a phrase.

**Practicing** - Students need to learn how to practice. The mind must always be engaged. Students must be trained to think so that all of the multiple layers of hearing, determining and carrying out physical movements, responding to the results, and changing the approach where necessary, all become a part of the mental concentration which practicing requires. Students are taught to view challenges as opportunities with the option of trying different practice techniques. The process of practicing is emphasized rather than only searching for an end result.

## LEVEL 2

### **TECHNIQUE**

#### Scales/Five Finger Patterns

- All 5 finger patterns
  - All White and Black Key Majors and Minor(s)
  - Hands separately and together
  - Ascending and Descending

#### Broken and Blocked Chords

- White Key Major and Minor broken and blocked chords in root position
  - Hands separately
  - Ascending and Descending (Black keys at teacher's discretion)
- Major and Minor broken chords - hand over hand legato, two or more octaves,
  - Ascending and Descending (Black keys at teacher's discretion)

#### Progressions

(Transposition into all keys is encouraged, Black Key Minors at teacher's discretion)

Three note chords or open fifths and sixths

- I, V7, I on all White Keys
- i, V7, i on all White Keys
  - Black Keys at teacher's discretion

#### Exercise Books and Etudes

- *Dozen a Day* I- Burnam
- *Music Tree* - warm ups and activities - Frances Clark
  - as located at the end of each *Music Tree* unit
- *Music Tree Activities* – Frances Clark
  - Supplementary materials at teacher's discretion
- *Technic Is Fun Prep Book* - Hirschberg

### **REPERTOIRE**

#### Methods (and Supplemental Materials)

- *Music Tree* - Frances Clark
- *Music Pathways* – Olson
- *Piano Adventures* - Faber and Faber
- *Keyboard Towne*- Robyn
- *Suzuki* – Suzuki

#### Repertoire

Bach	Bach for Beginners, Bk. 1 (Boosey and Hawkes) First Lessons in Bach, Bk. I (Alfred Masterwork) Introduction to His Keyboard Works - easier selections (Alfred Masterwork)
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Bartok	Mikrokosmos, Bk. 1 (Boosey and Hawkes)
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## **LEVEL 2 continued**

Bernstein	Raccoons, Bk. 1 and 2 (Tetra Music) Warbles and Flutters (Broude)
Kabalevsky	Twenty-Four Pieces for Children, Op. 39 (Alfred Masterwork or Schirmer)
Satie	Children's Pieces for Piano (Novello)
Shostakovich	Six Pieces for Children (Alfred Masterwork)
Stravinsky	Les cinq doigts (eight easy pieces - 1921) (Mercury Music)
Tansman	Pour les Enfants, Bk. 1 (Durand – Max Eschig)
Waxman	Piano Pageants, Bk. 2 (Galaxy)

### **COLLECTIONS**

Clark	Piano Literature of 17th, 18th, 19th, and 20th Centuries (Francis Clark Library)
McGraw	Four Centuries of Piano Music (Boston Music Co.)
Noona	The Contemporary Performer (Heritage Music Press)
Anthology	Easy Keyboard Repertoire (Alfred Masterworks)
Anthology	Essential Keyboard Repertoire Bk. 1 (Alfred) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 100 Early Level Selections, Baroque to Modern</li></ul>
Anthology	Twentieth Century Composers, Easiest Piano Pieces (Peters Edition) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Finney, Rorem, Hovaness, Stravinsky, Wuorinen</li></ul>

### **CERTIFICATION**

All technical requirements should be performed from memory except for material from exercise and etude books. Technical requirements should be from three keys. Two keys will be chosen by student and one by the jury.

#### Repertoire for Certification

Three selections of contrasting style and mood to be drawn from methods, repertoire and/or teaching pieces. One of the three must be memorized and one selection should be chosen by the student. The student will be asked to explain why he/she chose the piece. The piece chosen by the student can represent any era or style including contemporary, pop or rock.