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KEYS TO ARTISTIC PERFORMANCE






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The Purpose of This Book

This book is designed to teach students the skills that will transform average performances into polished, artistic ones. These skills are used by professional pianists to make their performances more expressive and dramatic. They are the “keys to artistic performance.”

The five “keys” for achieving performance artistry are:

-  Color
-  Pedaling
-  Rubato
-  Characterization
-  Choreography

These “keys” should be thought about during the learning process and reinforced after the music is technically and rhythmically solid.

Choice of Music and Sequencing

The authors have selected repertoire that showcases the five “keys” highlighted in this series. Several familiar favorites have been included, as well as some less-familiar pieces. Dennis Alexander has composed

pieces especially for this series that feature and highlight the “keys to artistic performance.”

The pieces are arranged in approximate order of technical and musical difficulty. However, they can be assigned in a different order to support and reinforce the student’s technical and musical needs.

Editorial Suggestions

Each piece appears in its original form with editorial suggestions. Fingerings are provided to facilitate musicality and technique. Students should try suggested alternate fingerings and use the ones that are most comfortable.

All of the composers’ original indications for dynamics and articulation are provided. However, there are many additional suggestions included to help the student achieve better balance, voicing and greater musical expression.

Metronome markings are suggested in a wide range to allow students to find a tempo at which they can comfortably perform the music artistically.



Once you have learned all the correct notes, rhythms and basic dynamics of the music you are studying, there are certain things you can do to make your performance truly artistic. In this book, you will learn some of the skills that concert pianists use to make their performances more dramatic and imaginative.

How to Use This Book

Information about the “keys to artistic performance” appears on pages 4–10. Special symbols and terminology indicated in the

music are listed on pages 8 and 10 for easy reference. In addition, at the top of each page of music there is a section called “Keys to This Piece.” These “keys” apply specifically to the piece that follows, and reinforce information found in the more general *Keys to Artistic Performance* section.

You may also incorporate your own ideas to help make your performance even more interesting. The more expressive and dynamic your performance is, the more you and your audience will enjoy it!




Key to Artistic Performance: Choreography


How a performer moves at the keyboard clearly affects what the audience experiences. More importantly, it affects the way a performer expresses the character of the music and helps the shaping, tone and timing of the piece.


This movement at the keyboard, or choreography, is also helpful in preparing the performer and the audience for the mood of the music. Before you begin playing, lower your head and rest your hands in your lap; this will help you get “into character.” When you are about to play, bring your hands to the piano according to the character and tempo of the piece. For example, if you are playing a slow, flowing, elegant piece, you would bring your hands up gracefully.


At the beginning of some pieces in this book, there is a description of an appropriate physical gesture to begin the piece. Also, at the end of some pieces, there is a description of an ending gesture. Throughout the pieces, there are additional directions on how to move your body while playing. All suggestions for choreography are recommended to enhance musical expression and convey the mood of the music.


Choreography Symbols and Terms Used in This Book

 Lean to the right

 Lean to the left


 Lean in


 Lean back

Arc—use a graceful gesture to fill out a large leap. 

Freeze—lift the hands over the keyboard and remain still to preserve the character of the music.

Fill out—when holding long notes, keep forearms and elbows moving for the full value of the note.

Place it—a graceful gesture that highlights the importance of a specific note by timing it carefully. Gracefully lift the wrist () and come down with a relaxed wrist.

—gracefully lift the wrist at the end of a phrase.