

# KEYBOARD GYMNASTICS OF PHOENIX



**Keyboard Gymnastics** is an achievement program for piano students, beginning to advanced. Students are tested in seven areas of study: Theory, Ear-training, Technic, Sight-reading, Performance, Ensemble, and Creative Project. Ten levels of study are included in all areas except Performance, Ensemble and Creative Project (which are subjective). Students are entered at their individual level in each area, not one level across the board. This program is helpful in motivating students to be at the proper level and to reach their potential in all of these important areas of study. Students may enter a few, or all of the events. Awards and prizes are given for outstanding achievement in each

individual event as well as for completing all seven events with a passing score (7.0 or higher). Only those who enter all seven events are eligible for the all-around award and the Gold, Silver and Bronze medals for their division. Prizes and awards may include cash, gift certificates, movie passes, CD's, Ipod or MP3 player, personal DVD players, etc.

Events are passed off throughout the year, as opposed to all on one day. This gives students the opportunity to be well prepared for each event and tested when they are ready.

The first event is **ENSEMBLE**, generally held in mid October. Students will be assigned a recital time and will perform a duet or concerto at the recital. They are adjudicated by 2-3 judges whose points are averaged for the student's final score.

The next event is the **CREATIVE PROJECT**, which is held in January. Students create projects about a music subject which may be displayed or performed. The display format is similar to a science fair, with each student explaining and demonstrating their project to the judges. Creative Project performance format could be an original composition, a skit, a play, a narration, etc. that is performed for the judges. Teachers and students may receive a list of possible project ideas before the event.

The **PERFORMANCE** event is usually held in late Spring. Students are assigned a recital time and will perform two contrasting pieces on a recital. As with the ensemble, students are adjudicated by 2-3 judges whose points are averaged for their final score.

**TECHNIC** and **SIGHT-READING** are ongoing events – meaning that when a student is ready to pass off a technic or sight-reading level, they will be instructed to call a tester and make an appointment to pass off their technic or sight-reading. More than one technic or sight-reading level may be passed off during the year. Tests must be completed by the designated deadline in May.

**THEORY** and **EAR TRAINING** are also ongoing events. Tests can be taken whenever the student is ready. Participating teachers will administer tests (after agreeing to follow specific guidelines to ensure the integrity of the testing) and submit completed tests by the designated deadline in May.

The **AWARDS CEREMONY** is held in mid-late May. Outstanding achievements will be honored for each event, and we may hear selected Gold medal performances. Awards and prizes are given for outstanding achievement in each individual event as well as for completing all seven events with a passing score (7.0 or higher). Only those who enter all seven events are eligible for the all-around award and the Gold, Silver and Bronze medals for their division. Everyone who entered an event, regardless of how many, receive certificates and recognition. Prizes and awards may include cash, gift certificates, movie passes, CD's, Ipod or MP3 player, personal DVD players, etc.

**FEES\***: \$4 per event (\$28 per year if registering for all seven events) if paid by the designated early deadline (usually Sept. 1) Thereafter, \$5 per event, to be paid no later than two weeks prior to each event day for the student to be included in that event.

*\* as of 2006. We do our best to keep the fees as low as possible but various factors may necessitate increases throughout the years.*

Make checks payable to: **KEYBOARD GYMNASTICS OF PHOENIX**. Fees are non-refundable.

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## EVENT DATES FOR 2006-2007:

- **KEYBOARD GYMNASTICS KICKOFF MEETING**: June 5 - 10 AM (Monday)
  - **ENSEMBLE**: October 14 (Saturday)
  - **CREATIVE PROJECT**: January 19 (Friday)
  - **PERFORMANCE**: May 12 (Saturday)
  - **TESTING DEADLINES FOR TECHNIC, SIGHT-READING, THEORY, EAR TRAINING**: May 18 (Friday)
  - **AWARDS CEREMONY**: May 22 (Tuesday)
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# WHY?

*(The following was written by Charlene Zundel, Co-founder of the Keyboard Gymnastics program.)*

Sometimes I am asked by students or parents why I require my students to study "all of this stuff" (theory, technic, sight-reading, etc). Let me expound on the why's of "all this stuff".

## **WHY TECHNIC?**

Technic is the ability to execute an idea in a musical way. If a student has not practiced scales, arpeggios, etc., and when the time comes to execute these skills in a piece, it may sound difficult and clumsy as opposed to controlled and artistic. All of the basic skills found in the repertoire are included in the Keyboard Gymnastics technic program. These technic skills not only strengthen fingers and create good fingering habits, but they teach theory at the keyboard. This keyboard theory includes the actual building blocks of which pieces are made. If a student is proficient at recognizing and executing these building blocks, learning new pieces is easier, sight-reading is enjoyable, and memorization is a snap! Working with the metronome to perfect technic skills strengthens the students sense of steady beat. When it is time to become more expressive, the student can logically and intelligently determine how to use the element of time in music to express himself.

## **WHY SIGHT-READING?**

Sight-reading is the one skill that will keep your student playing the piano. Good reading builds confidence and an "I can do it" attitude. Sight-reading is an essential survival skill for the mature pianist who is asked to be an accompanist.

## **WHY EAR-TRAINING?**

Music is an aural experience. The student must learn to listen to the sounds which they are creating, be educated on what to listen for, and critique those sounds. Every musician should be able to write music on paper, whether one line or an entire composition. Students must be trained to recognize what they hear and be able to translate it into writing.

## **WHY THEORY?**

When a student studies the theory of music, he learns and becomes fluent in the language of music. Not only can the student "converse" better musically (in the way he plays), but he understands the music. When the student understands how a piece of music is put together, he can better communicate what the composer intended to the audience. In addition to this understanding, the student feels a sense of accomplishment in discovering that music is not a mysterious thing, but that there are common building blocks used to create music. Once they begin to see a work with the elements of music, they can begin to appreciate and discover the genius of the great composers and how they put these elements together in a wonderful and artful way – perhaps inspiring some composition of their own. Knowledge is freedom – freedom to express oneself well and intelligently.

## **WHY RECITALS?**

Some students don't enjoy performing on recitals, but the benefits are obvious: confidence, poise in front of an audience, the ability to memorize, the opportunity to express oneself, and the acquisition of a skill that brings joy to oneself and others. Recitals offer an opportunity to develop these skills in a friendly environment. Playing comfortably in public is a skill that is acquired through repetition. Play at every opportunity and it will get a little easier each time. I still may get butterflies when I perform, but they stay in their cages now, and the great feeling after a good performance outweighs all the bad!

## **WHY?**

Because we are training well-rounded musicians, not just piano players!

- Charlene Zundel