

The central newsletter of The United Music Teachers of NSW Inc.

Central Diary



Sunday 16th March,
2pm

Annual General Meeting
2 Loch Awe Cres., Carlingford

Sunday 6th April, 2-4.30pm
Practising with Philip Johnston
East Killara Uniting Church

Sunday 4th May, from 1.30pm
Performance Day
Pitt St Uniting Church, Sydney

Sunday 22nd June
UMT Awards, 12noon
Roger Woodward Awards, 2.15pm
East Killara Uniting Church

Sunday 3rd August
HSC workshop and masterclass
with Brad Merrick

Sunday 24th August 4pm
President's Award
for students 19 and over
East Killara Uniting Church

Committee Meetings - all welcome!

Sunday March 16th after AGM
2 Loch Awe Cres., Carlingford
Phone Alma Wilson 9871-6667

Sunday July 20th at 2.30pm
71 Flers Ave., Earlwood
Phone Fotini Stavridis 9558-9023

Sunday November 2nd at 2.30pm
301/357 Glenmore Rd Paddington
Phone Felicity Martin 9357-420

North Western Diary Dates:

Sunday March 30th
September 14th

Performance Days for students at all levels

A Word from the President

Welcome to the first newsletter for 2014. I hope you have all had a lovely and relaxing summer break and are re-charged and ready for the new year.

I am writing this as I travel across the east coast of the USA with its current sub-zero temperatures. It's cold, very cold, yet the people of New England are warm, polite and very much interested in Australia. I have found that the language of music is understood all over the world and can serve to both break down barriers and build bridges across cultural divides. Fundamentally it is the basis to our betterment and learning. As Plato once said: *"I would teach children music, physics and philosophy; but most importantly music, for the patterns in music and all the arts are the keys to learning."*

Over my last few weeks of travel I have met the most interesting people at operas, dinner parties, and music performances. Invariably conversation turns to one's chosen career; when I tell them that I am a piano teacher their response is often appreciative of what we as teachers do. As teachers we sometimes forget what a great gift we are giving to our students which is often only appreciated much later in life. A great teacher will persevere, support, guide and encourage a student to be their best. As the author and poet William. A.Ward once quipped

"The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires".

We should strive every day to inspire our students.

The UMT committee has some wonderful events planned for this year designed to motivate and inspire us all. Apart from our usual Award and Performance days planned for May and June, we will also be hosting a lecture in April followed by a Lecture/workshop in August. I hope you can all participate and enjoy what we have on offer and continue to support the UMT.

May you all have a great start to your professional year,

All the best,
Fotini Stavridis



Book Review:

Practicopedia by Philip Johnston

Let's imagine your toaster is always burning your toast. Using the just-repeat-it model, you put in another slice of bread. When it burns, you try putting in another slice of bread.

Instead of going through the whole loaf and burning every slice, try stopping to work out why the toast is burning. When you figure out that the toaster is turned up too high, you can turn it down and the problem is solved!

How does this relate to practising? Do your students just repeat problem passages over and over, hoping that it will improve or do they think about what the problem is and how to rectify it? More practise doesn't cure a problem, analysis does. "If at first you don't succeed, stop and think."¹

This is one of the examples Philip Johnston uses in *Practicopedia*, a book which is inspiring and easy to read. It is about how to practise and make more effective use of your time. Covering all aspects of practice, it is *a set of guiding principles so that you can create your own practice instructions.*² The chapters in the book cover topics such as not wanting to practise, getting your piece up to tempo, preparing for performances, learning new pieces, staying focused, saving time and dealing with problem passages.

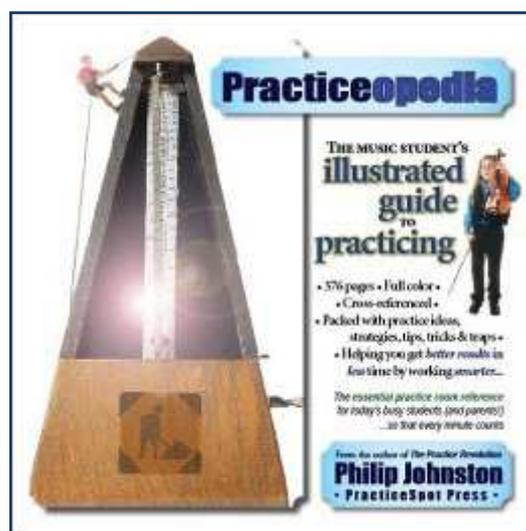
I particularly liked the chapter on *Bug Spotting*. "Practicing is largely about solving problems".³ You need to become good at finding those problem spots. First identify them, and then put a spot above that part (for example, a wrong note, an incorrect rhythm or bad fingering etc). Continue until you have finished the piece. Play the piece several times, repeating this process of stopping to mark the spot each time. Some places will have no spots while some places will look

like they have the measles! Devote some practice time to those sections.

Another chapter in *Practicopedia* is *Pressure testing*. Philip gives a number of goals for testing if your piece is performance ready. Some of his suggestions are playing your piece a number of times correctly **in a row**; playing your piece perfectly with a consequence – for example, you have to practise another 20 minutes if you make a mistake; playing your complete piece perfectly with a metronome; mixing up the order of the sections then play each section perfectly...etc.

This book is highly recommended for all music teachers. When your student sees the benefits of practising more effectively, he or she will find it more exciting and enjoyable. It gives you powerful tools to direct your students to achieve their personal best.

Andrea Sheffield



Make sure you get to see Philip Johnston in person presenting for WMT on 6th April!

¹ Philip Johnston, *Practicopedia*, PracticeSpot Press, p74

² p 8

³ p54



The United Music Teachers of NSW presents

Practising: Getting great results from the six days between music lessons

An afternoon with Philip Johnston,
author of *Practiceopedia*

Teachers, students and parents all welcome!

Sunday 6th April

2.00 – 4.30pm

East Killara Uniting Church
(Corner of Wentworth and Fairbairn Avenues)

Afternoon tea is provided

COST:

Members of UMT & MTA: \$30

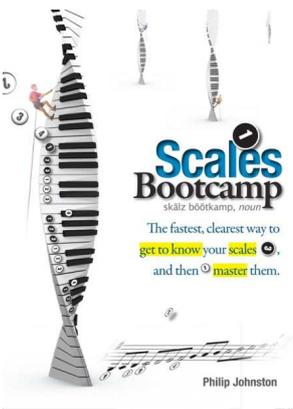
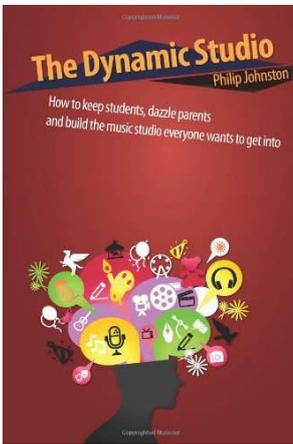
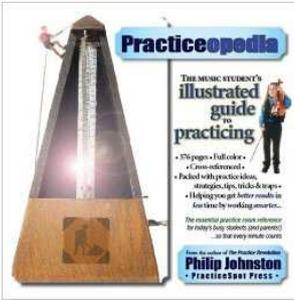
Non-members: \$35

Parents and students of members: \$20

(Booking by the teacher is necessary for this reduced rate)

BOOKINGS AND ENQUIRIES:

please email andreasheffield@optusnet.com.au



Serving you and your studio

The Carlingford Music team is devoted to serving your needs as a studio teacher.

- ✓ Carlingford Music is Australia's largest independent KAWAI piano dealer
- ✓ Large range of selected and pre-serviced modern and older pianos
- ✓ All musical instruments in stock
- ✓ Extensive selection of sheet music and teaching materials

CARLINGFORD MUSIC CENTRE
320 Pennant Hills Road, Carlingford
Phone 9873 2333
Website www.carlingfordmusic.com.au



U.M.T. Committee Members

Fotini Stavridis (President).....9558 9023
Marjorie Docherty (Vice-President)
.....9558 6795
Ron Wilson (Treasurer & Membership
Secretary)9871 6667

Regional Representatives

City and Inner Suburbs

Mariamamma Mitchell.....9557 1310

South West

Marjorie Docherty.....9558 6795

North Western

Alma Wilson.....9871 6667

North Shore

Sheila Warby.....9144 3958

Felicity Martin.....9357 4203

Greater Western.

Andrea Sheffield.....9622 8371

Book Review

Christopher Dunn:

Take Five – and pass first time

This book is designed to explain music theory to the level of ABRSM Grade 5, as an independent publication. ABRSM already has an official *Guide to Music Theory Part 1*, by Eric Taylor, so it is useful to compare the two books.

Neither book has worksheets for the student – the ABRSM has another publication called *Music Theory in Practice* which gives grade-by-grade sets of exercises following the format of the exams. The Dunn book explicitly works on the assumption that the student will not have sat for Grades 1-4, but is sitting for Grade 5 Theory as a prerequisite for a Grade 6 performance exam – apparently the case for many students.

The first obvious difference between the official and the independent book is the size of the format – *Take Five* is A4 size and well-bound so that the book opens flat and the opposite pages are clearly spaced from each other. The official ABRSM book is octavo size which is significantly smaller, with narrow margins which disappear into the binding.

Dunn has a chatty tone in his book – e.g. 'Meet the relatives' is the heading for the section on related major and minor keys. Obviously an experienced teacher, he spends time on issues that tend to arise for students, maybe helping out with some memorable phrase such as "a minor (minor) digs down and that a major gets promoted upwards" for remembering the positioning of related keys.

Taylor's language is clear but more formal. Often his explanations are pitched at a high level of musical maturity. His discussion of word setting, for example, has many musical quotes, but for someone who has never put words to music before it would be quite bewildering. Dunn, on the other hand, has the excellent advice for a heading *Keep it simple, make it musical*, and deals with the topic at a much more basic level.

Take Five is highly recommended as a text for students taking ABRSM Theory exams. I would also recommend it for anyone who is looking for ways of approaching the teaching of theory in any context, as it has many helpful ways of explaining the material.

Mariamamma Mitchell

See Better, Teach Better, Sound Better

Professional Development for Music and Voice Teachers

This NSW Teachers Institute accredited professional development program is designed to develop an understanding that the way we use our bodies is an important part of performing music with ease and effectiveness.

Teachers learn to observe how students are moving and coordinating their body as they perform. They learn how to provide effective feedback that can transform a student's playing.

Tense and unbalanced body use is the cause of many problems, including poor tone production, an inability to play fast and accurately, discomfort while playing and even chronic injury.

Poor movement habits established in early years of training can become significant restrictions on technical skill and professional development later in life. This course helps teachers to ensure a safe learning and working environment in the preparation for a life making music.

Current research is suggesting that musicians health, wellbeing and creative practice are linked through body awareness. This is a new area which has important implications for music teachers (ref: "You cannot Perform Music without Taking Care of Your Body" . Medical Problems of Performing Artists Vol 27, No 3, Sept 2012).

TextBook

The text "What Every Musician Needs To Know About The Body" by Barbara Conable is provided as part of this training course.

The Teacher



Greg Holdaway has over twenty years experience teaching Musicians and Music Teachers the Alexander technique. He has taught at many Performing Arts institutions and is currently on-staff at the Mitchell Conservatorium in Bathurst NSW. He has a Masters in Human Movement which included research into movement reflexes and has a particular interest in the spatial and kinaesthetic aspects of movement control.



Program Structure

This program is delivered in four modules (each module is 3 hours);

Module 1: Seeing the whole, foundations of balance and movement

Module 2: Common mapping and coordination errors

Module 3: Spatial and kinaesthetic feedback- getting the 'right feeling'

Module 4: Teaching applications, planning for your students.

The program is highly practical and interactive, please bring along your instrument, piano provided in the space.

Post Training Evaluation

The evaluation process includes face to face discussion with teachers plus follow up survey.

Participants will be invited to share their contact details to continue professional discussions and learning post program.

For more information call Greg Holdaway on 0408 257 174.

The United Music Teachers Awards

Finals: 12 noon, Sunday 22nd June 2014
East Killara Uniting Church (Fairbairn Ave)
Door entry: \$5 including performers

Awards: Up to seven successful performers are each awarded a United Music Teachers' Award certificate together with a cheque for \$70. In addition, there is a special Musicianship Award of \$70 for the most musical performance.

Contact your Group Representative about preliminary auditions

Rules of Awards

1. Pianists and other instrumentalists should be 14 years or under at 23rd June 2014.
2. Singers should be 21 years or under.
3. Each performer or group of performers should perform one or two works with a maximum of 6 minutes and a minimum of 3 minutes of performance time. Please do not perform repeats (but *da capo* returns are obligatory).
4. **Winners of UMT Awards from previous years may not compete again.**

Roger Woodward Awards

Finals: 2.15pm, Sunday 22nd June 2014
East Killara Uniting Church
cnr Wentworth and Fairbairn Avenues
Audience entry: \$10, Children under 12: \$5
Families: \$20

Awards

- *One main award covering all categories of piano, vocal and instrumental..... \$400*
- *Fine Music FM Award of 1 hr recording session (up to 45 minutes of material)*
- *Carlingford Music Centre Award... \$150*
- *UMT Encouragement Award..... \$150*
- *Best performance of a Baroque work. \$100*
- *Carlingford Music Centre Encouragement Award..... \$100*

Please note that these awards may be varied at the adjudicator's discretion.

Rules of competition

1. Two works are to be presented, with a strong contrast in period, mood and style.

2. An advanced standard of performance is required (8th grade or more).
3. Total performance time should not exceed 12 minutes.
4. Pianists and other instrumentalists should be 18 years or under at 22nd June 2014.
5. There is no age restriction for singers.
6. Pianists and singers must perform from memory. For instrumentalists, memory is encouraged, but optional.
7. No winner of Roger Woodward award of over \$300 from previous years may enter again.
8. Those currently holding music scholarships of \$5000 or more are ineligible.
9. If the adjudicators feel that the standard is not high enough, then they may withhold an award.
10. All decisions of the adjudicators are **final**.

Preliminary Audition

Entrants will audition in their own area, where 3 entries will be chosen to proceed to the finals.
There is an entry fee of \$10, which will be paid at the time of this audition.
For information about the auditions in your area, contact your Group Representative.

Group representatives only!

For both the Roger Woodward Scholarships and the UMT Awards, please give full details of entries:

- Name of Group with contact phone number
- Name of performer(s) including accompanists
- Category (Piano/Instrument/Voice)
- Contact phone number of performer
- Title and composer of each item(s)
- Timed duration of performance(s)

Please make sure that teachers are financial members of UMT before auditioning students.

**Entries must be received by Tuesday 13th June.
LATE ENTRIES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED!**

For Roger Woodward Scholarships:

Group Representatives please send entries (**with fees**) to: Felicity Martin, 301/357 Glenmore Rd
Paddington 2021 phone 9357 4203

For UMT Awards:

Group representatives please send entries to:
Mrs Alma Wilson, 2 Loch Awe Crescent,
Carlingford 2118 phone 9871-666