



THE DYNAMICS OF PIANO PLAYING IN CORPORATE CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

Samuel Onimisi Olusegun Auda

D.MA, The Dean, Faculty of Church Music,
Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary,
Ogbomoso, Nigeria

Abstract:

According to Davidson (2002:1), *“Corporate Christian Worship is the dynamic, dramatic and dialogical encounter between the triune God of the Bible and His people, in which God reveals Himself to His people and His people respond positively in an appropriate and Biblical manner.”* For effective use of musical instruments in Christian Worship of which piano is a major one, care must be taken so that there can be a clear demarcation between the secular and the sacred. The appropriateness of the instrument with the issue of how and when it should be used must be taken into special consideration. As we know that, the matter of reverence and awe in worship must not be taken lightly, for our worship is to God Almighty our creator, redeemer and sustainer. Also, sensitivity in the part of the instrumentalist(s) or pianist(s) must be taken seriously. The pianist (instrument) must play with care and reverence. Issues of loudness and softness of instrument and when to play should also be taken seriously. For example, no instrumentalist should be playing the instrument prayer is on, he or she should also pray, when scripture is read, he should also open his or Bible and read along, when preaching is on, he should listen attentively, without distraction etc. The use of musical instruments in worship should serve an accompaniment role in worship, a means to an end, which is encountering God in a meaningful worship (Auda, 2012).

Keywords: piano playing, corporate Christian worship, musical instruments

1. Musical Instruments (Piano) and Worship appropriateness

Magee (1987) rate some musical instruments in the order of appropriateness for public worship – (a) accordion, (b) guitar, (c) organ, (d) piano and (e) zither. Against Magee’s

categorization, I am sure most church people, especially musicians will tends to categorize these instruments in the order of (a) Organ, (b) Piano, (c) accordion, (d) guitar and (e) Zither etc. Although through the ages the organ has long been the instrument most used in worship especially in orthodox, highly liturgical settings, e.g. Catholic and Anglican etc, but for a number of reasons that prominence of organ over other instruments, may be waning. Many congregations are now discovering that the use of piano in Christian Worship is an excellent alternative to the organist to have a break, whole others, have decided to accept the use of piano in place of the organ on a regular basis, especially in smaller churches. They have discovered that the piano accompaniment for their music, Solo Ensemble, Choir and congregation is most suitable and preferable to the use of organ music in their regular corporate worship.

Nowadays, the most common keyboard instrument in most congregations is the electric keyboard, especially in non-orthodox settings, evangelic and Charismatic renewal churches. The reason is not far fetched, these electronic keyboards are in ranges of various prices, depending on how much a church can afford financially speaking. These keyboardist to choose any sound effect he or she wants and which is suitable for the music being presented, in style, mood etc. Even with the presence of the electronic keyboards (Yamaha series, Korg series etc.), Most Orthodox still see the need for them to keep their organ, especially for congregational hymns singing accompaniment and for choir singing anthems and classical stuffs, while the electronic keyboards are used to accompany congregational singing of praise worship songs and to accompany the choir for native air because of the flexible nature of the instruments. For example there are sound effects of flute, saxophone, conga, bell, Gong, organ, piano (even different kinds of organ like electric organ, theatre organ etc., and various Piano sounds-like Grand Piano, Bright Piano, etc.), different kinds of percussive instruments, both Western and African. This is Marvelous; it is like have more than a thousand varieties of kings in one. Although some of these sound effects may not sound like the live instruments, but it all depends on the quality of the electronic keyboard instruments, because some of these effects, coupled with a quality public address system, will sound almost like the live instruments.

According to Magee (1987) in typing to highlight the strengths and weakness of the use of piano in worship. Mentioned that the ability of a pianist to successfully accompany the congregational hymn singing and provide service music for worship depends on the acoustics of the church building, the quality of the musical instrument, and the ability of the musician to perform well on the instrument with appropriate expressions. Although a good instrument under the hands of a competent pianist can produce Marvelous Orchestrations of tone and articulate, crisp rhythms, the piano has neither the sustaining power nor the instrumentation possibilities of an organ.

But, the problems most pianists face in using the piano in worship does not have much to do with the piano, but with the lack of appropriate literature because unlike the organ, the piano has no much heritage of repertory explicitly written for use in church worship the pianist should find a way of filling this gap. It has been discovered that many classical piano compositions may be appropriate for worship. What musicians need is to judiciously choose on the basis of length, style, avoiding pieces that are very familiar and with experiences outside of the worship service and some of the pieces written for organ manuals only, without pedals could also be adopted for the piano. This kind of music maintains the dignity of a tradition, creates no tension by association with other styles, and generally supports the aim of worship. It is only the sound difference in the two instruments.

“Only the sound itself is different: the pianist must decide whether a particular work is too idiomatic for the organ to be used effectively the piano”.

(Magee, 1987)

The pianist must be able to use his judgment to decide appropriateness piano literatures for the worship service. Piano hymn tune arrangements are good for worship use, because most of the efforts of adaptation of secular tunes are unsatisfactory due to association outside of worship traditions.

Magee, also add principles of quality, moderation and appropriateness that should be taken into consideration in selecting piano worship pieces.

1. Choose pieces you can play well for easy expression. This is better than choosing a music piece you will be struggling with, because you are trying to sight read it.
2. “Avoid obvious virtuosity. The music should assist worship and never be confused with a recital performance.
3. In the place of a hymn-based piece, care should be taken so that the arrangement does not defect the original character of the tune and the text associated with the tune, due to technical challenges or chromatic movements.
4. Any style with a strong association with music outside the context of worship service should be avoided.
5. The music should be seen as an offering into the Lord, avoid any mediocrity or show-off.
6. Give careful thought to the place of music in the liturgy and be guided by the Holy Spirit on your choice of music – quiet and meditative music, or festive and celebrative music. The mood and associated text, if there is one, should be compatible with the church season and or worship theme.

The following are important technical aspects of Piano playing to be considered for effective worship use:

2. Piano Pedagogy

Piano Pedagogy is the study of the teaching of piano playing. It faces on the teaching of musical skills to piano students at the individual level. This teaching takes place mostly at the private/semiprivate instrumental level, commonly referred to as piano private instruction or piano lessons. The practitioners of pedagogy are simply called piano pedagogues, or piano teachers.

According to Bastian (1988), the factor which determine the competency the competency of instruction and the professional quality of a piano teacher includes the teacher's competence in musical performance, knowledge of music genres, music history and theory, piano repertoire, teaching experience, the ability to adapt one's teaching method to students with different personalities and learning styles, education level (etc.)

Ulszer (1995) affirms that piano pedagogy involves the study of the teaching of *"the motor, intellectual, problem-solving, and artistic skills involved in playing the piano effectively"* Bryanskaya (2007) a Russian American Piano pedagogue at Longy School of Music, in citing the influence of great pianists like Zoltan Kodaly, Carl Orff and Emile Jaques Dalorze, Advocates a holistic approach which integrates as many aspects of music making as possible at once would result in the most effective piano teaching.

According to Goss (1990) piano pedagogy should include topics as learning theories and the application of the theories to piano teaching, communication skills, lesson and curriculum planning, fundamentals of piano technique (basic courses, supplementary materials, with a focus on elementary literatures), teaching aids and equipment. As we stress the importance of piano pedagogy, care must be taken in order not to do emphasize performance. As rightly observed by (Goss, 1990:29) pedagogy degrees, tend to draw students away from the performance degrees. Through the certificate option, students may earn.

Cooper (2001) describes in his investigation about adult's perception of piano studies, he identifies their music and non-music interest and he also describe the perceptions of home influences as related to music. He is of the opinion that the home has a great impact on pupil's music appreciation in life, especially piano playing. The purposes of this investigation were to access and describe the attitudes and perceptions of adults toward their past or current piano study, to identify their music and non-music interests, to describe their perceptions of home influence related to music and piano study. Areas investigated are (1) participants as children and/or as adults (2)

piano lessons, piano practice, and piano playing (3) music & non-music interests (4) perception of skill and (5) positive or negative rating of lessons their desired degree while simultaneously earning credential in piano teaching.

Parncutt (2007:16) in his approach to piano pedagogy is against the idea that some performance teachers may object that foreign instructions and teachers might interfere with the content and quality of their teaching and their relationship with their students. He is of the opinion that students should be allowed to have Wide Avenue of instruction, not just one source. He supported his argument with the fact that most great performers in history. Past and present generally had different teachers, suggesting that this is a good strategy for all students. *“Students should have the rights and freedoms to seek out information from a range of sources.”*

Parncutt (2007) explain further on objections based on pedagogical tradition, point out that most performance teachers may consider it unwise to change a successful pedagogical tradition. But, for the fact that a pedagogical tradition is good, does not mean that it cannot be made even better, *“and a tradition that promoted excellence in the past may lead to mediocrity if it does not keep pace with changes in musical practice, pedagogy and culture.”*

To optimize content and pedagogy, Parncutt (2007:19) suggest that academic units for music students should as much as possible be especially designed for music students, different from units offered at regular academic institution in the following suggested respects.

1. Teachers should avoid unnecessary academic language and terms. He opines that research terms into the language easy for them to understand. This does not mean that musicians and music students are not adequate in their intellectual abilities, but because of their practical tendency, they are more interested in direct, transparent communication of practically oriented ideas.’
2. The pries and philosophies should be presented with specific examples that students can easily relate with.
3. Music teachers should be researcher-performers, not researchers only.

According to (Bastian, 1988) for effective piano teaching, the music teacher should set up a studio time that works best for himself or herself and the student and should try as much as possible to make it professional. The teacher should be dynamic in his teaching approach; he should use a method that works best for each student in ago teaching-learning process.

2.1 Ear training

According to (Dr. Bryanskay, 2007), the most important duty of a piano teacher, especially at the beginning of teaching-learning process, is to work on the listening habit of the student towards quality music performance.

2.2 Rhythm

For a piano student to learn a piece accurately, the adequately teaching of rhythm is very important. This will also help the student to confidently perform a piece well practiced. Piano teachers should always encourage students to count out loud whenever they are practicing, especially a new piece, or practice with a metronome to help the student to develop a sense of internal steady beat counting, a very important skill for every musician, most especially, pianists.

Clark (1986:48) in providing answers to some of the common questions by music students, especially as it comes to rhythm issues. Says “...when playing music, students are dealing not only with rhythm, but with pitch notation, phrasing, dynamics, articulations, techniques, and musical content as well. When we are working on rhythm per se, free of all other musical considerations, the rhythms can be more concentrated and more complex than those the students could handle in performance” there should be tapping exercises and use of syllable to help simplify the rhythms for students.

2.3 Improvisation

Chappelli (2000) registers that the modern trend of piano lessons tends toward an overemphasis on the learning of notes and reflects the nothing needed for developing the creative mindset and sensitively of the ears that leads to expressive music making. Studies has revealed that there is need for a multiple approaches to the learning of musical skills that will engage the two sides of the brain which are, the analytical and the intuitive which will assist the student in the mastering of all aspects of playing. Therefore, the teaching of improvisation is very important in piano lessons, it is an essential skill for any piano student and performer, this also keep training and performance alive and interesting for all musicians, especially pianists (Campmeier, 2008).

For Parncutt (2007), the ability to improvise, although very useful, may be unnecessary for students with a classical focus. But, for Gellrich (1992) the topic of improvisation is interesting and the skill is inevitable for all musicians and music educators from beginning musical life and to the advanced performers. He further mention that a piano teacher can play an ostinato accompaniment while a student improvises a simple melody over the top and (or) vice versa.

Lassnig (2004) developed a psychologically inspired strategy for piano teachers in teaching improvisation. He recommended that students should first improvise with “strictly defined limits” e.g. student can improvise on a single note, by alternating the rhythm, later on two notes etc.

2.4 Practicing

After private piano lesson or piano studio experience students are left on their own for a week of practice without a teacher or instructor. During this time they are supposed to commit themselves to a daily practice. How well the students use their personal practice time depends on how committed they are to the instructions and also how clearly the teacher communicated during the piano class.

Clark (October, 2001:26) gave some guidelines to follow whenever a piano teacher is presenting a new idea to a student, so that their practice time could be effectively used, *“first explain the concept, then show them what you mean by demonstrating it at the piano, next the student tries the new idea several times; if he doesn’t understand the concept, repeat it and demonstrate it again.”* If the student still find it difficult, use another approach. Each student should have an assignment notebook, what to work on for the week. Each student should keep a practice log regular, for a good monitoring of their progress.

According to Ceella (October, 2000:30) in her opinion in keeping track of lessons given to students with an assignment notebook, many teachers still use a lined composition book which waste the time of students and teachers, because of the time wasted in recording activities, when the actual teaching should be going on. A simple practice log should be designed that is simple enough for the students to manage and the teachers cross check weekly.

2.5 Musical Expression

Music, especial piano students rarely receive clear instruction on specific ways of musical expression. But, they do imitate the expression styles of their instructors and other performance musicians that they experience at concerts or listen to their recordings. Most common, is that music performance and the performers are based on accounts of music talents and genius.

According to Pancutt, (2007:10), in his article on “Psychological research on expression” has clarified the issue in a number of ways. First, a distinction has been made between structural and emotional communication. Expressive performance parameters that make it clear, for example when a phrase ends and a new phrase begins, are structural. The way in which this is done (the shape of tempo/dynamic functions or gestures) can determine the specific emotions that are communicated.

Thus, it is possible to separate the goals of structural and emotional expression but not the means.

2.6 Repertoire

Bachus (1986:18) in his suggestion on how a teacher should go about choosing music for his or her students, said a music teacher should look for a good piece a piece that something interesting, something musical to say, not just the music of the great masters of music, Like Bach, Handel, Mozart, Bartok, Beethoven etc. but the repertoire should “encompass all styles and idioms”. The repertoire also needs to be renewed and refreshed, year after year, for the sake of the teacher and the student.

Bachus added that “*It has always given me great satisfaction and pleasure to include in my teaching collections not only music of the great master, but also of lesser-known and unknown fine writers whose works have been unduly neglected.*”

Bryanskaya (2007) gives a list of well-known piano works written with special attention for pedagogical purposes in mind these pieces are as follows:

1. Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach (1725) by family & friends of J.S. Bach
2. Wavierbuchlein Fir Wilhelm Friedemanna Bach, Little Preludes and Fugues, Inventions and Sinfonias & the Well-Tempered Calvier by J.S. Bach
3. Sonatinas by Muzio Clementi
4. Album for the Young, Op. 68 (1848) by Robert schumann
5. Album for the Young, Op. 39 (1878) by Protr Ilyich Tchikovsky
6. Music for Children, Op. 65 (1935) by Sergei Prokofier
7. Pieces by Igor Stravinsky, Dmitri Kabalevsky and Aram Khatchaturian.
8. Mirokosmos, Sz.107, BB 105 (1926-39) by Bela Barto’k

Among the African stuffs, there are pieces that could serve same purpose e.g. “Nwon Ketewa” by Edward Boamah etc.

2.7 Technique

Bryanskaya (2007) affirms that a good playing technique of piano involves the simultaneous understanding, both in mind and in the body, the relationships in between the elements of music theory, the recognition of musical patterns, both in notation and on the fingertips, as a pianist. Also, the understanding of the physical landscape of the range of a keyboard finger independence and dexterity, wide range of touch and tone production with variety of emotional expression. The greater sense of coordination of these will allow the elements of technique to sound alive with a greater sense of musicality as the pianist performs.

Mark Thomas, stressing the importance of techniques in the training of a pianist in his book titled ‘what every pianist needs to know about the Body’ talk about how to

gain greater fluidity of movement whole playing to improve the quality of experience. this book encourages musicians especially pianists to develop a broader understanding of the involvement of the entire body in playing and the string playing places on the body by focus on body mapping to increase awareness of the body's function, size and structure. This book by Mark is a very essential material for players of piano, organ, harpsichord, clavichord, and digital keyboards, for it teaches how to eliminate or prevent "tunnel syndrome and other debilitating conditions without traditional medical treatments" (<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/what-every-pianist-needs-to-know-about-the-body> – accessed on February 12th, 2014, wed.)

2.8 Pedaling

Banowefz (1992) in his fabulous book on the art of pedaling for piano titled. "The pianist's Guide to pedaling" gives short history of the piano's pedals, pedal mechanics and operations. He also gives the pedaling works of composers and varying styles of music. He gave musical examples in almost every page. He has three chapters in romantic music, chapter on pedaling in Chopin by Manrice Hinson. He gave separate chapters pedaling in Liszt & Schubert, principles of pedaling of the Catalan School.

Pedaling management skill is very important in piano playing for a good expression and to avoid blurring in sound. When a pianist moves from one chord to a different chord e.g from chord I, to Chord IV or any other Chord he needs to lift his foot from the pedal and place it back when he comes on the new chord, without which there will be a blur in sound due to chords overlap.

According to Beauchamp (2012), the way a pianist handles the pedal has a great effect on the whole sound picture of the music. He believes that pedaling should be introduced to piano students as early as possible in the career of piano playing. He is of the opinion that a pianist should imagine the colour of the sound he or she desires before applying the pedal, so that the pedaling could be done appropriately.

In the preliminary exercises, the pianist should place his heel on the floor while the front part of the foot press gently on the damper pedal and also lifts gently when the need arises. In the main exercises, the author, Beauchamp mention "the legato pedal overlap pedal, articulation pedal, half pedal effects and half damping. He also mention the combination of balance and clarity with pedaling and that if a pianist do not pedal carefully and listen well to the sound, he could blur the sound.

Also pedaling should be done according to the performance practice of the period (era) in which the composer lived and the piece was written. Beauchamp's idea is a welcoming one because the good management of the pedal, especially the damper pedal marks the difference between a good and a bad pianist. Good pedaling gives clarity of sound.

Wilson (n.d.), quoting Author Rubinstein “*the more I play, the more I am convinced the pedal is the soul of the piano forte*”, and also quoting Claude Debussy “*abasing the pedal is only a means of covering up a lack of technique and that making a lot of noise is a way to drown the music you’re slaughtering*”. Wilson stressed further by mentioning that the sustain pedal has two major principles (1) Allowing the Sound to continue even after we release the rays (2) changing the timbre of the sound, make it deeper, warmer, more intense, more ‘alive’. He mentioned that a good pianist should pedal well and also engage his ears well to know how to manage the pedal well He mentioned that legato pedal is the simplest form; pedal marking should be placed accurately by composers and editors. He also mentions Debussy’s pedaling technique, who woods bass roles that cannot be sustained without the help of the pedal. Wilson’s article, is very helpful, because most pianist has find it difficult to play Debussy’s pieces well especially handling the bass line.

Barowetz (1992) provides the history of piano pedals the first ‘*gravicembalo col piano e forte*’ built in Florence by Bartolommeo Cristofori in 1709, in many respects its sound still resembled that of the clavichord and harpsichord. He handles pedaling techniques. “*The pedal is highly personal part of any piano performance, and no two players will use exactly the same pedaling, nor will the same performer use identical pedaling from performance to performance. The most common sign for depressing the right (sustain) pedal is the cumbersome ped, with the * being used for its release*”

The right pedal (sustain) mostly used has two primary roles to prolong and connect tones that cannot be held by the fingers alone, and to color them. The foot needs to be well positioned to give a sensitive interaction between foot and hands. The middle pedal is frequently termed the *sostenuto* pedal or the “tonal” pedal, the left pedal is often termed the *una coda*, to enable the pianist play softly and to enhance the mellowness of the sound.

2.9 Pedaling works of selected composers and style

Many performers insist that because right pedal did not exist on the instruments for which Bach wrote his keyboard music, it should not be used when playing his music on the piano. When you see pedaling it is probably and most likely editorial, not by the composer. For Haydn & Mozart, Some musicians feel that the pedal should be used sparingly and not at all with Mozart.

Pedaling the piano works of Chopin by Maria Hinson “*the correct way of using the pedal remains a study for life*” – Frederic Chopin – a true pioneer in the use of pedaling. He constantly explored the rich new territory that the invention of the damper pedal had made possible. Chopin made frequent use of the pedal “*No pianist before him has*

employed the pedals alternately or simultaneously with so much tact and provides a wealth of piano teaching literature which can pave the way to musical and technical advancement."

Although concise, but articulate and thoroughly researched. This book will be enormously useful to anyone teaching, performing or studying the piano. In it thousands of works has been evaluated and described in detail, (1) composers are listed alphabetically by historical period for each reference (2) Includes explanations of composers works and their pedagogical use (3) comments on interpretation, unique characteristics, technical requirement and potential problems are helpful for selecting material that will enable the student to excel quickly in his or her piano playing career (4) lists publisher sources, including those difficult to find (5) works are graded from level 1 to level 10 a tremendous help for any one guiding their students or themselves to performing excellence.

Although, the book was aimed at the piano instructor, it is also essential to the student or the amateur performer looking for suitable, excellent and challenging literature to play.

2.10 Tone production

According to Gustafson (1981), reporting the research carried out by Otto Rudolph Ortman on tone production on the piano. Ortman's work marked a turning point in the history of piano pedagogy and set a new standard for piano related scholarship. Ortman wrote in the early 20th century, he was both an accomplished pianist and a scientist. He was one of the first to consciously and meticulously combine from the scientific point of view. Ortman's article is a good material for all pianists to help understand the sciences that goes in the fingers as he or she tries to make music. When a pianist presses down a piano key, the two factors governing the production of tone are energy and weight in the arms and fingers.

Oyadiran (2001), writing in the same vein with Gustafson but focused more on the piano compositions of Joshua Uzoigwe, a Nigerian acclaimed pianist and composer. One unique thing with Uzoigwe is that he uses the piano to drum like African indigenous instruments and he named each of the compositions according to the African instrument he is imitating on the piano. For example, he wrote "Dundun" (a tensioned African drum) and 'Bata' (an African drum originally associated with the worship of Sango, the god of thunder) etc.

Uzoigwe wrote these pieces to sound on piano like the indigenous instruments. His work is a challenge for Nigerian composers who may be tempted to think that piano is only a western.

2.11 Chords and Scales

According to Gold (2000:6-7), Chords and Scales are the building block for any music, especially, piano music. *“All scales have a pattern of whole and half steps. Once students can play smooth chord changes within an octave, the next step is to introduce voice leading and chord inversion. As students become proficient, they can find different ways to play the chords.”* Piano students should be able to analyze chords by themselves, and possibly indicate chord symbols if need be.

Arpeggio playing is another technique any pianist must learn and master, because music generally is built of scales, chords and Arpeggio.

2.12 Posture

Posture is the sitting position of the pianist while playing the piano. The correct posture of a pianist will have a positive effect on his or her performance quality. The correct posture of a pianist is that the piano seat should not be too close to the piano to allow for a free body movement of the pianist. The pianist should sit in a manner that will allow the free movement of the hands, so that the hands can move more freely up and down the piano as the pianist performs.

The piano seat should be at the distance that allows the pianist's knees to be at the edge of the piano, barely touching the piano.

If the pianists do not sit well, he or she can get tired easily very soon, due to inconvenient body movement, this can also affect hand position. Correct posture is also important to allow the hand joints to move freely, the fingers, the arms and the forearms and the shoulders.

Correct posture assists the pianist to play for a long time without easily feeling pain in the body and hands. A Concert Pianist should be able to practice 6 to 8hrs daily, not necessarily at a stretch

2.13 Performance Style Practices:

Adedeji (2007:3) in his article on the performance styles, and practices in Nigerian Gospel musicianship mentioned that 'performance styles' and 'performance practices' are key issues in stylistic criticism and African musicology. According to him, *“performance style has to do with the variable factors that preempt the overall stylistic outlook of musical performances of the research musician especially a church pianist or keyboardist. Apart from the fact that he talked about singing styles, he mentioned important factors concerning general performance styles, performance practice that is based on the principle of contextualization or adaptability that is obtained in traditional settings, where the audience determines flexibility.”*

The article by Adedeji is of a major interest to the researcher because the pieces that the writer is presenting in this project are pieces that must be contextualized into a church setting. He also mentions the factor that the place of excellence in church music, especially in the use of instruments in worship, must not be underplayed. Adedeji's argument should be commended, because most people think that anything goes when it comes to church music, this is a wrong attitude, because the best should be given to our God, creator of all thing.

A church pianist (Keyboardist) should endeavour to give the best to the Lord. According to Pancutt and Holming (2000) affirms that immediately musicians acquire substantial technique there is the tendency to focus on expressive communication and interpretation, both as performers and teachers. If care is not taken this has a great consequence on the student's performance.

Goebel W. (2001:110,563-572) in his opinion did observed that most student pianists knows little nothing about the physics, physiology and psychology of piano performance art because of their lack of interest, but due to a lack of exposure to the piano teacher, piano performers who understand these techniques well enough to teach others Goedel stressed further as by Parncutt.

"Piano students know relatively little about the mechanics and acoustics of the piano, the relevant physiology of the fingers, hands and arms, and relevant aspect of the psychology of motor control and rhythmic coordination. They are unclear about what can and cannot affect the timbre of a single piano tone or a whole passage of music. They do not know that the timbre of an isolated tone depends only on key velocity, noises (hammer-string, key-key bed, finger-key) and pedals. Nor can they explain how the piano nevertheless produces remarkable timbral richness and variation. They are unable to describe their own strategies for determining fingerings and the contrasting roles of physical, anatomic, motor, and cognitive constraints, and they are often unclear about how fingering may depend on expertise and interpretation."

This above stated argument of Goebi shows that it is helpful for a pianist to have some knowledge of the physics behind piano or piano technology, which is a separate field entirely, but for the importance of the knowledge. Definitely, this knowledge will go a long way to assist a pianist in his or her performance.

Price (1991) reiterates this fact that stylistic insights into the performance practice skill into appropriate and correct performance of pieces from various historical periods and different genres. Therefore, the understanding of the performance practice of each piece is a very important issue for a pianist in a meaningful performance of any piece. This also imply that the pianist should have an adequate understanding of the history

behind any piano piece for a meaningful interpretation- the history of the time or era in which the piece was written, the life of the composer the style of composition of the time and the detailed and analytical study of the piece.

According to Timmers, Renee and Henkjan (2002) there is need for an expressive timing in piano performances of western classical music which helps a pianist to meaningfully interpret the music.

Expression is also a very important aspect of music, this added value of a performance which help the pianist to make the music come alone and interesting to listen to.

“A performer brings to music a variety of sources and perspectives. For example he or she (the pianist) makes a conceptual interpretation of the music, positions it within a certain stylistic period and practices the movement actions.”

(Timmers and Honing, 200:16).

3. Conclusion

I will like to close this thesis with a suggested prayer for every pianist (Keyboardist). The prayer was said by Elwynne Price (1997:4), and is titled “A prayer” the prayer is as follows:

“Thank you, Lord, for the joy of playing for you, in your holy place, for your people. Use the music to praise your name, to witness of your love and salvation to comfort the hurting, to lift the meek, and never be a hindrance because of lack of practice or lack of attention. Keep my mind on you. Amen.”

Elwynne Price is pianist and Hand Bell coordinator and Director, Olivet Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA.

References

1. Adedeji, S. O. (1999). *The Role of Music in God’s Work*. Ile-Ife: Bolakay Press.
2. _____ (2007). “Performance Styles and Practices in Nigerian Gospel Musicianship” an unpublished article.
3. _____ (2012). Augustus O. Vidal *selected Topics on Nigerian Music* (General Nature, History and Musicology, Music Education). Ile-Ife: IMEF African Music.

4. Anderson, Keith (1996). *The A to Z of Classical Music*. The Great Composers and Their Greatest Works. Marco Polo: HNH International Ltd.
5. Auda, Samuel Onimisi. (2010). *Musical Instruments in Congregational Singing*. Ibadan: Heavens way Publisher.
6. Bachus, Nancy (1986-11-18), "Transmitting the Joy of Music". *Clavier*, vol. 25, no. 9. Northfield, Illinois: The Instrumentalist Publishing Company.
7. Banowetz, Joseph & Bernard Mc Ginn (1992). *The Pianist's Guide to Pedaling*. Indiana: Indiana University Press.
8. Bashen, James. 3rd edition. *How To Teach Piano Successfully*. San Diego, California. A kjos Music Co.
9. Bastein, James W. (1995). *How to Teach Piano successfully*, 3rd edition. San Diego, California: General Words and Music Company.
10. _____ (1988). *How to Teach Piano Successfully*. New York: Neil Kjos Music Co.
11. Boyd, Malcolm (2000). *The Master Musicians BACH*. New York: Oxford University Press, 101-110.
12. Camp, Max W. (1992). *Teaching Piano (The Synthesis of Mind, Ear and Body)*. Los Angeles: Alfred Publishing Co.
13. Chappell, Sally (2000). Developing The Complete Pianist: a study of Importance of a whole-brain approach to Piano Teaching. *Piano Journal*.
14. Clark, Frances (Nov.1986). "Questions and answers". *Clavier*, vol. 25, No.9. Northfield, Illinois: The Instrumentalists Publishing Company.
15. Clark, John O.E. (2004) *Abiola's Mini English thesaurus*. Yaba, Lagos: Abiola Publishing Ltd
16. Clark, Lauren Schack (200110-26). "Smart Practice". *Clavier*, vol.40, No.8. Illinois: The Instrumentalist Publishing Company
17. Cooper, Thelma L (2001). "Adult's perceptions of Piano Study". Achievements and
18. Davidson, Paul O. (2002). *Come, Let Us Worship*. Ibadan: Baptist Press Nigeria Ltd.
19. Gellrich, M. & Parncult, R (1998). Piano Technique and fingering in the 18th and 19th centuries: *Bringing a forgotten method back to life*. *British Journal of Music Education*, 15 (1), 5-23.
20. Goebel, W. (2001). "Melody Lead in Piano Performance: Expressive device or artifact?" *Journal of the Acoustical society of America*.
21. Gold, Michael (2000-6-7). *Clavier*, vol.39, no.8, October ed. Northfield, Illinois: The Instrumentalist Publishing Company.

22. Goss, Louise (April/May 1990). Pedagogy Certificate Programs Within The College Curriculum. *American Music Teacher* (The National Association) Cincinnati, Ohio: MTNA, Inc.
23. Lassnig, J. (2004). Theorie and Praxis der kreativitat als arundlage einer improvisations- Didaktik im jazz-Unterricht, diplomarbeit, kienstuniversitat Graz.
24. Lyke, James, Yvonne Enoch and Geoffrey Haydon. (1996). *Creative Piano Teaching*. Campaign, Illionis, Stipes Publishing Ltd.
25. Oyadiran, Kola (2001). *African Pianism – The Versatility of Pianoforte as adapted in Joshua Uzoigwe’s Piano composition*. Ile Ife: Nigerian Music Review, Vol.2, 56-67.
26. Pancitt, Richard & Holming, P.G.S. (2000). *Is scientific research on Piano performance useful for Pianists?* Poster and abstract at International Conference on Music perception & cognition (keele, England, July).
27. Palmieri, Bob & Meg (2003). *The Piano: An encyclopedia*. Taylor and Francis. Instrument: “Piano et forte genandt” was an expression Bach also used when aefry as Silbermann’s agents.
28. Palmieri, Bob ed; Robert (2003). *Encyclopedia of Keyboard Instruments Volume 2*, Rovitledge, pg 437.
29. Parnantt, Richard (2007- 1-25). “Can Researchers help artists? Music Performance research for music students” *Music Performance Research MPR*. Vol. 1. Graz, Austria: Royal Northern College of Music
30. Price, Deon Nielsen (1991). *Accompanying Skills for Pianists*. Culver City, California: Culver Crest Publications.
31. Price, Elwynne (1997). “A Prayer”. *Pedal point- Church Music and Study helps for pianists and Organists*. Nashville, Tennessee; Sunday School Board, Southern Baptist Convention.
32. Schaum, Wesley and Joan Cupp (1991). *Keyboard Teaching* (with greater success and satisfaction). Mequon, Wisconsin, Schaum Publications.
33. Timmers, Renee & Henkjan Honing (2000-16). “On Music Performance, theories, measurement and diversity” *Cognitive Science Quarterly*. Nijmegen, The Netherland: Hermez Scienc Publications.
34. Turabian, Kate (2007). *A manual for writers of research papers, theses, and Dissertations*. Chicago Style for Students and Researchers.
35. Ulszer, Marianne (1995). *The Well-Tempered Keyboard Teacher*. New York Schirmer Books.

Creative Commons licensing terms

Author(s) will retain the copyright of their published articles agreeing that a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0) terms will be applied to their work. Under the terms of this license, no permission is required from the author(s) or publisher for members of the community to copy, distribute, transmit or adapt the article content, providing a proper, prominent and unambiguous attribution to the authors in a manner that makes clear that the materials are being reused under permission of a Creative Commons License. Views, opinions and conclusions expressed in this research article are views, opinions and conclusions of the author(s). Open Access Publishing Group and European Journal of Education Studies shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage or liability caused in relation to/arising out of conflicts of interest, copyright violations and inappropriate or inaccurate use of any kind content related or integrated into the research work. All the published works are meeting the Open Access Publishing requirements and can be freely accessed, shared, modified, distributed and used in educational, commercial and non-commercial purposes under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).