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THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ELVINA TRUMAN PEARCE TO PIANO PEDAGOGY

A DOCUMENT APPROVED FOR THE
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ELVINA TRUMAN PEARCE TO PIANO PEDAGOGY

ABSTRACT

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The University of Oklahoma, 2020

Chair: Dr. Barbara R. Fast

Elvina Truman Pearce (b. 1931) was a leading piano pedagogue in the twentieth and twenty-first century. This document presents perspectives on her wide-ranging work as a pianist, teacher, composer, and writer. Throughout her over six-decade long career, Pearce continually elevated her teaching — and that of others — by her contributions to the field of piano pedagogy. Through her work as a piano pedagogy professional at The New School for Music Study in Princeton, New Jersey, North Central College in Naperville, Illinois, and Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, Pearce influenced generations of piano students. As a prolific editor and composer, she reached countless teachers and piano students around the world.

The first chapter of this document introduces Pearce and presents the purpose, need for, and organization of the study, as well as its procedures and limitations. The chapter also includes a review of similar studies of piano performers and pedagogues which were consulted as models. The second chapter outlines Pearce's biography, providing further insight into her life and career. Pearce began her career as a performing pianist, concertizing throughout the United States. Chapter three provides details about her many performances, from her two concerti performances in Chicago with the

Chicago Symphony and the Chicago Theater of the Air, to her milestone recital at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

Pearce's teaching philosophy and practical pedagogy is examined through her work as a teacher in chapter four and as a writer in chapter six. The fourth chapter examines her teaching philosophy as revealed through her own teacher influences, former students' perspectives, and professional workshops. Her teaching precepts are also distilled in this chapter. They include student-centric learning, self-discovery, home practice, and effective repertoire introduction. The sixth chapter examines her work as a writer and editor and further examines her teaching approach and philosophy. For sixteen years, Pearce also influenced piano teaching communities around the world as editor of the "Home Practice" section of *Keyboard Companion.*

The fifth chapter presents an overview of Pearce's teaching compositions for elementary and intermediate piano students. Throughout Pearce's composing career, she wrote and published over 250 educational pieces. Her innovative use of ghosted staff in her best-selling collection, *Solo Flight,* and her penchant for writing pieces that sound more difficult than they are, allowed her compositions to become recital and festival favorites by teachers.

The study concludes with a summary of Pearce's contributions followed by appendices that further augment the research. The goal of this study is to provide a useful resource for students, teachers, and those wishing to understand more about Elvina Truman Pearce's contributions to the evolution of the field of piano pedagogy.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Elvina Truman Pearce (b. 1931) led a distinguished career as a pianist and piano pedagogue for nearly seven decades. Her contributions to the field of piano pedagogy and music education include her work as a teacher, teacher-trainer, composer, pianist, writer, and editor. Through these various roles she influenced the lives of countless musicians, teachers and students and helped enrich the field of piano pedagogy.

Throughout her celebrated career, Pearce achieved success by approaching teaching as seriously and rigorously as she did performing. She strove to bestow her expertise and passion for pedagogy and performance on her students and colleagues, emphasizing that commitment when she said, "Perhaps one of the most important qualifications for being able to successfully teach music making at the piano is being able to do so oneself. It's usually fairly easy to 'talk the talk.' But do we also 'walk the walk?'"[1]

In the concert hall, Pearce performed piano concerti with the Chicago Symphony and Chicago Theater Radio of the Air and gave solo recital performances at the National

[1] Elvina Pearce, *The Success Factor in Piano Teaching: Making Practice Perfect*, (Kingston, NJ: The Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy, Inc., 2014), 245.

Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. She was active as a clinician, giving recitals, workshops, and master classes throughout the United States and internationally. A creative composer, Pearce produced over twenty collections of educational repertoire. A leader in her field, she served on the editorial board of *Keyboard Companion* for sixteen years and as editor-in-chief of *Clavier Companion* from 2000-2006. On the piano pedagogy faculty at Northwestern University for fourteen years, she trained young teachers in the art of pre-collegiate piano instruction. In 2008, the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) named her a Foundation Fellow. In 2011, she was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy.

Pearce's early piano education began in 1939 when, at age eight, she began at-home lessons with Lenore Hunter in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Within two years, Hunter indicated that Pearce needed a more advanced teacher. Her next piano teacher was Helen Ringo, a professor at the University of Tulsa, with whom she studied for eight years. During these eight years, Helen took Pearce to numerous Guy Maier summer workshops where she had the opportunity to perform. One of these workshops took place in Bristol, Tennessee, where Pearce met Frances Clark, Guy Maier's assistant, for the first time.[2] They would meet again at subsequent summer workshops, and thus became acquaintances, and later, colleagues.

[2] Guy Maier (1891-1956) was an American pianist, composer, teacher, and writer who taught at the University of Michigan and the Juilliard School. He traveled extensively throughout the United States giving summer workshops at universities, colleges, and schools. In addition, he wrote for *Etude* magazine.

Pearce began her music career as a performer, becoming a finalist in several national competitions in her teens. At age twenty, she was selected to perform Franz Liszt's *Piano Concerto No. 1 in E-flat Major* with the Chicago Symphony and, later, with the Chicago Theater of the Air. Other performance highlights include concerto performances with the Tulsa and Amarillo Symphonies, as well as solo recitals at Carnegie Hall in New York City and at The National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

For her collegiate studies, Pearce enrolled at the University of Tulsa in 1949. In 1952, after three years and an unfinished bachelor's degree, she left that program due to the death of her piano teacher, Helen Ringo, and moved to New York City to study with Isabelle Vengerova, a famed Russian artist-teacher who also taught Leonard Bernstein and Samuel Barber. In 1955, after three years of study with Vengerova, Pearce was accepted into The Juilliard School at the age of twenty-three. However, Pearce turned down that opportunity, electing instead to study with Frances Clark at Westminster Choir College after being offered a teaching fellowship. Pearce went on to finish her bachelor's degree at Westminster Choir College in 1958.[3] After graduation, she continued teaching through the college's preparatory division.

In 1960, Frances Clark and Louise Goss founded The New School for Music Study in Princeton, New Jersey.[4] Pearce was invited to be a founding teacher and subsequently taught there until 1964. This unique teacher training institution was built as

[3] Allison Lynn Hudak, "A personal portrait of Frances Oman Clark through the eyes of her most prominent students and collaborators" (D.M.A. document, University of Texas at Austin, 2004), 206.

[4] Robert Fred Kern, "Frances Clark: The Teacher and Her Contributions to Piano Pedagogy" (D.A. dissertation, University of Colorado, 1984), 99.

a laboratory school to devise and test new ways of teaching novel pedagogical material. For nine years, Pearce worked and trained with Frances Clark and Louise Goss, two eminent piano pedagogues of the twentieth century. Her experiences during those years reveal the pedagogical issues she and her mentors attempted to tackle, and their shared approach to teaching lifelong learners.

1963-1965 were transitional years for Pearce both professionally and personally. She married John Pearce in 1963 and, a year later, left The New School for Music Study, and moved to Evanston, Illinois where Pearce took a year off from teaching. The following year, in 1965, John accepted a new teaching position and the two of them moved to Naperville, Illinois where she started teaching piano independently. After several years, she also began teaching at two major educational institutions in the Chicago area: North Central College and Northwestern University. Around 1980, Frances Larimer invited Pearce to become a part-time faculty member at Northwestern University, teaching piano pedagogy and, later, serving as head of the Piano Preparatory Division for fourteen years. She also became the Director of Preparatory and Community Music at North Central College in 1980 in Naperville, IL.[5] These positions were held simultaneously.

Pearce's reflections on her extensive experience teaching piano and instructing pedagogy students in an independent studio and two different collegiate settings provides unique insight into what creates a successful piano teacher and, more importantly, a teacher-trainer. Additionally, Pearce's former pedagogy students provide insights into her teaching philosophy and style.

[5] Rebecca Skirvin, e-mail message to author, October 2, 2019.

In addition to her comprehensive pedagogical teaching career, Pearce is well known as a composer and clinician. Between 1981 and 2014, she wrote and published twenty-three collections of piano teaching pieces. Her most famous and best-selling collection, *Solo Flight*, was first published in 1986. Because she intended for its contents to initially be taught by rote, the first eight selections feature a ghosted staff, with the staff printed in light gray print and the notes in black. This emphasis on rote teaching appears to be a key component of Pearce's pedagogy.[6] For decades, and still today, many of her compositions are featured frequently as required pieces at festivals and competitions.

Pearce spent over five decades, from around 1957-2009, giving workshops, recitals, and master classes both internationally and across the United States in over forty states. During her early teaching years, while working with Frances Clark, Pearce and other colleagues traveled the United States extensively, giving workshops and recitals on newly published material from the Frances Clark Library. Major international highlights include appearing as keynote speaker and recitalist at the *Fourth Australian National Piano Pedagogy Conference* in Perth, Australia in 1999. The following year she returned to Perth to present workshops sponsored by the Australian Suzuki Talent Education Association. She was also the first American to present a non-commercial workshop in China.[7]

[6] Elvina Truman Pearce, "Reading with a Dash of Rote: Lecture-demonstration" (video of lecture from The New School for Music Study Press, 1987).

[7] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 248.

Pearce served both The National Conference on Piano Pedagogy (NCPP) and the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) in numerous capacities and on a variety of committees. She also served as the national chairman of the MTNA certification board in the mid-1980s helping work towards MTNA's goal of further professionalizing the field of teaching. On the editorial board of *Keyboard Companion* for sixteen years from 1990-2006, she oversaw that magazine's "Home Practice" section. Additionally, she served as editor in chief of *Keyboard Companion* from 2000-2006.

Pearce's 2014 text, *The Success Factor in Piano Teaching: Making Practice Perfect* is both practical and methodical in its presentation of pedagogical ideas accumulated throughout her long career. Presented here concisely and accessibly, her strategies and studio documents are crucial to understanding her philosophy. Highlights of the text include an exploration of the "hows" and "whats" of teaching, with emphasis on guiding students towards effective practice.[8]

To further understand Pearce's significance in her field, it is helpful to consider how piano pedagogy evolved during her formative years, and to examine major personalities in the field of piano pedagogy during the mid-twentieth century that contributed to its development. During Pearce's most active teaching years, there was a trend to professionalize the field by means of teacher training programs and new master's and bachelor's degree programs in piano pedagogy. In 1945, Frances Clark started an undergraduate piano pedagogy program at Kalamazoo College in Michigan and, in 1955, moved to Princeton, New Jersey and founded a similar program at Westminster Choir

[8] *The Success Factor in Piano Teaching: Making Practice Perfect* contains chapters dedicated to the how we teach and what we teach.

College. Clark's inaugural class included 114 students, including Pearce and Richard Chronister.[9] In 1960, Pearce, along with Frances Clark, Louise Goss, and Richard Chronister, cofounded The New School for Music Study, an independent institution dedicated to teacher training and the development of new teaching materials.[10] Pearce's association with these driving personalities gave her a unique perspective on the profession's evolution.

Pearce's undying dedication to encouraging effective teaching influenced generations of students and teachers. Her professional activities help inquisitive piano teachers better understand and refine important components of effective teaching. Through her workshops, publications, and compositions, she effectively shared her proven ideas and enriched the field of piano pedagogy.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to analyze Elvina Truman Pearce's contributions to the field of piano pedagogy through first-hand interviews with Pearce. Additionally, questionnaires via Survey Monkey were emailed to twenty-eight former colleagues and students to gain perspective on her teaching philosophy. To gain a comprehensive picture of Pearce's contributions, an analysis of her role as editor, composer, clinician, and leader in the field of piano pedagogy was completed. The primary objective of this document is

[9] Samuel Stinson Holland, "Louise Wadley Bianchi's Contributions to Piano Pedagogy" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1996), 73.

[10] Robert Fred Kern, "Frances Clark: The Teacher and Her Contributions to Piano Pedagogy" (D.A. dissertation, University of Colorado, 1984), 99.

for future generations to understand what made Elvina Pearce a renowned performer, piano teacher and piano teacher trainer.

Specific questions to be answered include:

- What early life experiences led Pearce to become a successful pianist, piano teacher and teacher trainer?
- What were the lifelong impacts of first studying with, and then working with, Isabelle Vengerova and Frances Clark?
- What were Pearce's most important professional contributions at Northwestern University and North Central College?
- What were the basic tenets of pedagogy courses she taught at Northwestern University and North Central College?
- What contributions to the field of piano teaching did she make through her twenty-three collections of teaching repertoire?
- How did rote teaching become such a vital part of Pearce's teaching?
- What meaningful practical and pedagogical insight did Pearce contribute through her recurring "Home Practice" advice column in *Keyboard Companion*?
- What are the basic tenets of Pearce's pedagogy teaching and philosophy?
- What led to the writing of her pedagogy text, *The Success Factor in Piano Teaching: Making Practice Perfect*?
- What are recommendations for further study?

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Pearce actively taught, performed, and presented workshops nationally and internationally throughout the second half of the twentieth and early twenty-first century, when the field of piano pedagogy experienced tremendous growth. The history of that time period is now starting to be studied seriously as researchers document the many contributions of respected piano teachers, pedagogues, composers, and clinicians who shaped the field.

There is no study that documents Pearce's wide range of contributions to the field of piano pedagogy, such as her concertizing, compositions, and pedagogical ideas. Because she and many of her colleagues and students are still alive, it is necessary for the study to be completed in a timely manner.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The seven chapters of this document outline Elvina Truman Pearce's contribution to the field of piano pedagogy. Chapter One introduces Pearce and details the purpose, need for, procedures, limitations, organization of the study and review of similar studies. Chapter Two presents a biographical sketch of Pearce. Chapter Three presents details of her career as a concert pianist. Chapter Four discusses her teaching precepts and her role as a teacher, both of students and of participants in collegiate and workshop settings. Chapter Five explores her compositional output. Chapter Six distills her contributions as writer by examining her book *The Success Factor*, the articles written or edited by her for *Keyboard Companion* and other prominent teaching journals. Chapter Seven includes a

conclusion and suggestions for further study. Appendices include interviews questions for Pearce, questionnaires sent to former students, colleagues, and close associates, as well as selected performances and workshops given nationally and internationally. Also included are her topics and articles that she authored in the "Home Practice" section of *Keyboard Companion*, as well as a list of repertoire collections that she composed. Other appendices include selected performance programs and a promotional brochure.

PROCEDURES

The format of this document follows the design of other historical dissertations that review and document teachers, composers, and pedagogues. Biographical and professional information is attained from primary and secondary sources. Written documents, interviews, questionnaires, and online archives provided the majority of the information used for this study. Other sources utilized heavily in this study include the online archives: Newspapers.com, NewpaperArchive.com, and Archive.org. These resources were crucial to providing details of Pearce's early career.

Primary sources included Pearce's written publications in various journals such as *American Music Teacher* and *Keyboard Companion*, her twenty-three published collections of educational piano repertoire, and various committee work and presentations as published in the Proceedings of The National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy. Her 2014 publication, *The Success Factor in Piano Teaching: Making Practice Perfect* was also analyzed as it distills her philosophy and approach to teaching. Several videos that feature Pearce are also evaluated, including "Reading with a Dash of

Rote" and "Thinking Tempo: Teaching Students to Practice Slowly" published by the Frances Clark Center.

Another significant primary resource was personal interviews with Elvina Truman Pearce conducted over three days, July 10-12, 2018, at her home in Naperville, Illinois. These interviews were recorded using an iPhone voice recorder and back-up voice recording device. During the course of the interview, Pearce relayed that she enjoyed reliving and discussing events and ideas she had not reminisced about in a long time. The recall of specific dates was sometimes challenging for her, but overarching ideas about her life story were quite accessible. Beyond her direct answers to questions, anecdotal elements relayed during the interview process revealed her pedagogical priorities and focused on her performing and teaching. While this author was visiting her home, for instance, she insisted that he perform for her. The author played Chopin's two Nocturnes, Op. 27. For questions and topics used in the interview with Pearce, see Appendix G.

Online questionnaires were emailed through Survey Monkey to former students, colleagues and associates. They include former students from The New School for Music Study, North Central College and Northwestern University and former close associates and colleagues from The Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy and *Keyboard Companion*. Individuals solicited to complete surveys included Craig Sale (retired piano teacher and one of Pearce's closest colleagues), Marvin Blickenstaff (internationally renowned teacher and colleague at *Keyboard Companion* and The Frances Clark Center), Samuel Holland (Dean, Meadows School of the Arts, Southern Methodist University and former Executive Director of The Frances Clark Center), Amy Glennon (Educational Director, The New School for Music Study), and Helen Marlais (professional pianist,

author of *Succeeding at the Piano* method series and Pearce's former piano pedagogy student at Northwestern University). Questionnaires used for these populations are in Appendices I, J and K.

Sixteen out of eighteen former students, three out of four close associates, and four out of six former colleagues returned questionnaires via Survey Monkey. One questionnaire was returned via email. The results of these questionnaires helped quantify her impact and reputation, in addition to providing first-hand accounts of her teaching style, philosophies, and successes. See Appendix H for a list of questionnaire recipients.

Secondary sources included previously written documents, theses, and dissertations. Additionally, texts and monographs relevant to the field of piano pedagogy were referenced, and pertinent newspaper articles sourced and consulted.

LIMITATIONS

An exhaustive biography of Pearce's life is beyond the scope of this study. Instead, only information relevant to understanding her contributions to and role in expanding the field of piano pedagogy are evaluated. Evaluations of questionnaires were examined in as much detail as possible to draw conclusions about Pearce's teaching philosophy and how she impacted and advanced the field. The contents of Pearce's publications are analyzed thoroughly, to provide insight about her pedagogy and editorial perspective. Pearce's current age and state of health created limitations in terms of continued interview access and scope.

This study does not aim to detail Pearce's entire output as a pianist, teacher, composer, and writer. Rather, it provides an overview of her significant contributions in

each role and presents her teaching philosophy as it is revealed through the aforementioned sources.

REVIEW OF SIMILAR STUDIES

Materials reviewed for this study include primary sources, previously conducted interviews, journal articles, and published graduate studies on topics that relate to various aspects of Pearce's contributions to the field of piano performance and pedagogy.

Edited by longtime colleague Craig Sale, Pearce's 2014 pedagogical textbook, *The Success Factor in Piano Teaching: Making Practice Perfect*, provides vital insights into her teaching style and philosophy.[11] In this book, her philosophies are outlined in detail, and visual aids help bolster and clarify her ideas. Biographical information can also be gathered from this book, particularly from its descriptive vignettes of Pearce's five most influential teachers. Pearce presents specific examples of best-teaching practices, including how to introduce repertoire properly and how to prepare a student for effective at-home practice.

An examination of Pearce's published journal articles in *Keyboard Companion, American Music Teacher, Clavier, Piano Quarterly,* and *Keyboard Arts* provide a comprehensive look at her pedagogical specialties and teaching philosophy. During her seventeen years serving on the editorial board of *Keyboard Companion*, she oversaw the "Home Practice" section. Her goal of helping students become aware of what they need to learn and how to practice is apparent throughout these articles.

[11] Pearce, *Success Factor*.

Pearce contributed over twenty collections of elementary and intermediate teaching pieces for piano. These pieces provide concrete evidence of which technical skills Pearce believes are important for beginning and intermediate level students. They also highlight her emphasis on rote teaching as evidenced by her pattern-based compositional style.

The secondary sources examined in this study include dissertations, documents, and theses focused on the careers of prominent piano teachers, pedagogues, and music educators. These documents detail the professional, pedagogical, compositional, performing, publishing and presenting achievements of these individuals. The author has organized these studies into two different categories that mirror Pearce's life: that as a performer and as a pedagogue.

Studies on Piano Performers

Pearce's early life paralleled that of other prominent pianists who enjoyed professional performance opportunities before later making their mark as pedagogues and master teachers. Up until her time at Westminster Choir College, Pearce viewed herself as more of a performer than a teacher. Even though she gave several national and regional performances later in life, it is clear that her focus turned toward teaching after she began working directly with Frances Clark at Westminster.

To better understand how other studies were structured, the following piano performers and teachers were examined: Gyorgy Sebok, Nadia Boulanger, Teresa Carreño, Abby Whiteside, Amy Fay, Cecile Genhart, Gray Thomas Perry, Lili Kraus, and Claudio Arrau.

Cynthia Cortright's dissertation on concert pianist and master teacher Gyorgy Sebok relates to this study because it profiles the subject's life through interviews with Sebok, his colleagues, and former students. The author's chapter on former students' reflections on studying with Sebok provides a useful model for how to structure the student interview questions portion of this study.[12]

There are numerous studies on the performer, composer, conductor, and pedagogue Nadia Boulanger. Teresa Walters completed the study that most closely resembles this study of Pearce. Walter's study effectively presents Boulanger's thoughts about musical elements and her ideas about various types of music. It also synthesizes that information, analyzing the scope of her success and influence through her ideas and theories.[13] This study is useful because of Boulenger's prominence in many of the same areas as Pearce, namely composition and performance.

This study of Pearce will mimic the chapter layout of Anne Albuquerque's dissertation on Venezuelan-born child prodigy Teresa Carreño, a pianist who caught the eye of Louis Moreau Gottschalk after a performance in New York City.[14] In her study of Carreño, Albuquerque teases out her life as a pianist, a teacher, and a composer, with a chapter dedicated to each. The chapter on Carreño as a composer provides a model for examining compositions. Carreño taught Edward McDowell and, as a performer, was

[12] Cynthia Cortright, "Gyorgy Sebok: a Profile as Revealed Through Interviews with the Artist, His Colleagues, and His Students" (D.M.A. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1993).

[13] Teresa Walters, "Nadia Boulanger, Musician and Teacher: Her Life, Concepts, and Influences. Vol. I and II" (D.M.A. dissertation, Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University, 1981).

[14] Anne E. Albuquerque, "Teresa Carreño: Pianist, Teacher, and Composer" (D.M.A. dissertation, University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, 1988).

known as the "female Rubinstein." (MacDowell dedicated his second piano concerto to her.) Because of the many similarities between Pearce's and Carreño's career trajectories, two dissertations on Carreño were consulted as part of this study. A more recent study of Carreño by Franco Gurman examines her virtuosic compositions in-depth.[15]

Abby Whiteside is widely known for her thoughts on rhythm as well as her two books, *Indispensables of Piano Playing* and *Mastering the Chopin Etudes and Other Essays.* Due to her fame, there are two dissertations on Whiteside's teaching. Patricia Ann Wood focuses on Whiteside's concepts of rhythm and form and their influence on piano performance.[16] Carol Ann Barry's study takes a second-hand look at Whiteside's performing and teaching principles through Sophis Rosoff's pedagogical approach.[17]

There are two dissertations documenting the legacy of former Eastman School of Music professor and artist-teacher Cecile Staub Genhart, one of which was written by Stewart Lynell Gordon.[18] Genhart's roster of former students includes Stewart Gordon, John Perry, Alfred Mouledous, and Barry Snyder. Many of these students went on to enjoy great professional success and contribute extensively to the piano profession.

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[15] Franco Gurman, "Teresa Carreño and Her Piano Music" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Florida, 2006).

[16] Patricia Ann Wood, "The Teaching of Abby Whiteside: Rhythm and Form in Piano Playing" (D.M.A. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1987).

[17] Carol Ann Barry, "Continuing Abby Whiteside's Legacy – The Research of Pianist Sophis Rosoff's Pedagogical Approach (Based on the Playing Principles Outline in the Book 'On Piano Playing' by Abby Whiteside, with Practice and Performance Observations by Carol Ann Barry)" (D.M.A. dissertation, James Madison University, 2011).

[18] Steward Lynell Gordon, "Cecile Staub Genhart: Her Biography and Her Concepts of Piano Playing" (D.M.A. dissertation, University of Rochester, 1965).

Mandarin Germain Cheung's dissertation focuses on Genhart's success as a teacher by documenting the achievements of her former students.[19]

Gray Thomas Perry was a piano pedagogue relatively unknown outside of Florida. Patricia Jean Trice's dissertation examines Perry's work in a historical context and presents what the author believes to be attributes of effective teachers (see Chapter 5).[20] In this study, Trice lists characteristics of effective teachers based on data from literature in education, music education, and piano performance, and compares them to Perry's teaching. Like this study on Pearce, Trice interviewed Perry and a number of his former students as well as documentation of various recital programs and reviews.

Steven Henry Roberson's dissertation focuses on Lili Kraus, a prominent performer and pedagogue of the twentieth century who studied with Kodály, Bartók, Steuermann, and Schnabel.[21] At twenty years old, Kraus was a full-time professor at the University of Vienna. Later, she served as artist-in-residence at Texas Christian University from 1967 to 1983. Roberson's chapter on Kraus's pedagogical philosophy and evaluations of her teaching practices provide a useful model in structuring students' reflections on their teacher.

Victoria Von Arx's dissertation examines the piano playing principles set forth by Claudio Arrau, an influential teacher with an extensive performing career and an

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[19] Mandarin Germain Cheung, "Pilgrimage of an Artist-Teacher: Cecile Staub Genhart as Remembered by Her Students" (D.M.A. dissertation, Arizona State University, 1999).

[20] Patricia Jean Trice, "Gray Thomas Perry: Piano Performer and Pedagogue" (Ph.D. dissertation, Florida State University, 1988).

[21] Steven Henry Roberson, "Lili Kraus: the Person, the Performer, and the Teacher" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1985).

influential teacher.[22] Her dissertation includes interviews with Arrau's former students and provides a template for this study. In addition, the appendix features a useful chart of the pianist's former pupils, including dates of study and countries of origin. Interestingly, the study includes transcriptions of lessons Arrau gave on Chopin's Ballade Number Two in F Major, Op. 38, Beethoven's Sonata in A-flat Major, Op. 110, and Ravel's *Gaspard de la nuit:* "Scarbo." Lastly, this study contains a chapter on how Arrau's principles apply to teaching the young student.

Studies on Piano Pedagogues

Several studies on composers and pedagogues whose lives and accomplishments closely resemble Pearce's are relevant to this study. Individuals covered in these studies include Frances Clark,[23] Louise Goss,[24] Louise Bianchi,[25] Jane Smisor Bastien,[26] and Marvin Blickenstaff.[27] Like Pearce, these teachers gained national and international recognition through workshops, publications in the form of compositions and journal articles, and the deeply considered philosophies and theories they contributed to the field of piano pedagogy.

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[22] Victoria Von Arx, "The Teaching of Claudio Arrau and His Pupils: Piano Pedagogy as Cultural Work" (Ph.D. dissertation, City University of New York, 2006).

[23] Hudak, "Frances Oman Clark"; Kern, "Frances Clark."

[24] Judith Jain, "Louis Goss: The Professional Contributions of an Eminent American Piano Pedagogue" (D.M.A. document, University of Cincinnati, 2012).

[25] Holland, "Bianchi's Contributions."

[26] Elaina Burns, "The Contributions of Jane Smisor Bastien to Piano Teaching" (D.M.A. document, University of Oklahoma, 2011).

[27] Sara Ernst, "The Legacy of Master Piano Teacher Marvin Blickenstaff: His Pedagogy and Philosophy" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 2012).

The following section of this review of studies is arranged according to (1) historical importance, (2) most influential figures on Pearce's pedagogy, (3) general composer-pedagogues, (4) contributors to the field of piano pedagogy and (5) other significant studies.

Studies of Historically Important Piano Pedagogues

To better understand the history of American piano pedagogy, it is important to examine studies on the following pedagogues from the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries: William Mason, Raymond Burrows, and Robert Pace.

Kenneth Graber's dissertation showcases William Mason as composer, performer, and, more importantly, as a pedagogue.[28] The study highlights Mason's thoughts on technique and his numerous teaching manuals. Like Mason, Pearce's early performances revealed promising signs of a potential future concert career.

Edyth Wagner's dissertation investigates Raymond Burrows' remarkable achievements in elevating the importance of teaching piano in groups.[29] This new wave of pedagogy (group lessons) played an integral role at each of the institutions where Pearce taught throughout her career.

Joan Forester presents Robert Pace's primary contributions as an advocate for group teaching, partner lessons, and teacher training.[30] For this study, a questionnaire was

[28] Kenneth Gene Graber, "The Life and Works of William Mason (1829-1908)" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa, 1976).

[29] Edyth Elizabeth Wagner, "Raymond Burrows and His Contributions to Music Education" (D.M.A. dissertation, University of Southern California, 1986).

[30] Joan Jones Forester, "Robert Pace: His Life and Contributions to Piano Pedagogy and Music Education" (D.M.A. document, University of Miami, 1997).

sent to eighty-two of Pace's teacher/consultants. Forester culls from those questionnaires to analyze Pace's underlying teaching principles through the lens of three educational theorists: Abraham Maslow, Jerome Bruner, and James Mursell. Mason, Burrows, and Pace are paramount to the understanding of the evolution of piano pedagogy in the early twentieth century.

Studies of Individuals Involved with the Frances Clark Center

The most influential figures in Pearce's early lifetime were Frances Clark and Louise Goss, cofounders (along with Pearce) of The New School for Music Study. Two dissertations have been published on Clark and there is one document on Goss. These studies provide insight into the two people with whom Pearce spent her pedagogically formative years. Later in life, Pearce and Marvin Blickenstaff worked together for *Keyboard Companion*, and both Pearce and Blickenstaff served on the board of the Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy. Lastly, one thesis in this section by Hae Soo Kim examines four piano teaching methods, including *The Music Tree*.[31] This is significant because of Pearce's role in presenting workshops on *The Music Tree* series, and because Pearce used it in her own teaching.

Fred Kern's dissertation argues that Frances Clark's contributions to piano pedagogy marked a significant turning point in the field.[32] Kern bolsters this claim by surveying the history of piano methods up to 1940. Additionally, he includes a section on educational psychologists and philosophers, and how they informed Clark's approach to

[31] Hae Soo Kim, "An Examination of Four Leading Piano Methods and Four Master Teachers' Approaches" (M.M. Thesis, University of Southern California, 1987).

[32] Kern, "Frances Clark."

pedagogy. As for Clark's contributions, Kern investigates her teaching materials for young pianists. An in-depth presentation of these materials provides a complete understanding of her philosophy and sequencing practices regarding teaching rhythm, reading musical notation, theory, and technique. Kern reveals that the goal of Clark's materials was to teach musicianship at every level. Clark's interest in teacher training is analyzed, including via the "Frances Clark Answers" column and the inception of The New School for Music Study, where both students and teachers received instruction. This is important because Pearce was a co-founder of the school in 1960.

A dissertation by Allison Hudak features in-person phone interviews and correspondences with subjects who knew Clark and her teaching well, including many who have had lasting impacts on the field of piano pedagogy themselves.[33] Thirteen former pedagogy students of Clark, including Pearce, are presented in a biographical sketch that highlights their own accomplishments as well as their reflections on Clark's impact on their teaching.

Judith Jain's document on Louise Goss was published during Goss' lifetime, allowing her to conduct personal interviews with her subject.[34] While this document is smaller in scope, it sheds important light on a prominent colleague in Pearce's life and provides first-hand accounts of Goss' teaching philosophy. The document includes significant information regarding the founding of The New School for Music as well as pertinent information regarding The Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy.

[33] Hudak, "Frances Oman Clark."

[34] Jain, "Louis Goss."

Sara Ernst's dissertation on the legacy of master teacher Marvin Blickenstaff provides a roadmap of how to document a teaching philosophy. The study also represents an example of how to document a subject's many workshops and clinics.[35]

Hae Soo Kim's thesis on the examination of four piano methods and four master teachers' approaches is relevant because of the inclusion of *The Music Tree* method. Pearce was a founding teacher at The New School for Music Study when *The Music Tree* method was being tested at The New School for Music Study and was tasked with presenting it nationally in workshops. She also employed it with her own students. Kim's breakdown of master teachers' approaches is helpful in focusing and answering questions regarding Pearce's approach.[36]

Maria Isabel Montandon's study on trends in the National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy is a useful resource covering an area in which Pearce was very active.[37] Montandon examines conference papers and committee sessions, and classifies them according to their nature, content, and frequency. This is useful because Pearce was an active presenter and committee member at numerous conferences.

Studies of Composer-Pedagogues

There are many composer-pedagogues who had careers resembling Pearce's. Studies of Lynn Freeman Olson, Jane Smisor Bastien, Jon George, Louise Bianchi, John

[35] Ernst, "Marvin Blickenstaff."

[36] Kim, "Examination of Four Leading Piano Methods."

[37] Maria Isabel Montandon. "Trends in Piano Pedagogy as Reflected by the Proceedings of the National Conference on Piano Pedagogy (1980-1995)" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1998).

Sylvanus Thompson, Willard A. Palmer, and William Gillock are analyzed because of the unique pedagogical teaching materials and repertoire they produced.

In relevant studies, Steven Betts, Constance Herbert, and Leila Viss examine Lynn Freeman Olson's extensive contributions to both piano pedagogy and music education. Olson's most significant contribution was the many teaching pieces for young piano students he composed. Betts investigates Olson's significant output, including piano music and general music education materials.[38] Betts also examines Olson's workshops and writings. Just as Pearce penned the recurring column, "Home Practicing," in *Keyboard Companion*, Olson authored a regular column in *Clavier* entitled "Commissioned by *Clavier.*"

Herbert presents Olson's approach to piano technique, his ideas about effective plans for instruction and learning, and his system for grading repertoire.[39] More importantly, the appendix lists many compositions, organizing them by technical requirements like clusters, blocked fifths, and others. Viss also completed a study on Olson, but the author was unable to obtain it for study.[40]

[38] Steven Lee Betts, "Lynn Freeman Olson's Contributions to Music Education" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1995).

[39] Constance Giesey Herbert, "Lynn Freeman Olson: Technical and pedagogical elements of his music for piano" (D.M.A. dissertation, University of Missouri-Kansas City, 1992).

[40] Leila J. Viss, "Lynn Freeman Olson: His Philosophy of Music/Piano as Reflected in His Literary Works and a Small Sample of His Piano Compositions" (M.A. thesis, University of Denver, 1990).

Elaina Burns' document is centered on the evolution of Bastien's teaching philosophy as evidenced through Bastien's published piano materials and teaching style.[41] An interview with the subject provides a model for questions to ask Pearce.

Dianne Garvin's dissertation on Jon George's pedagogical compositions is essential to this study because the level of repertoire George composed closely aligns to the level of Pearce's compositions.[42] The author's approach to presenting George's supplemental repertoire is a useful example for how to present Pearce's compositions.

A dissertation by Sam Holland on Louise Bianchi analyzes her unique place in the development of a master's degree in piano pedagogy at Southern Methodist University.[43] In addition, the educational and pedagogical ideas presented in Bianchi's *Music Pathways,* a beginning piano method, are assessed. Interviews Holland conducted with Bianchi's closest colleagues provide a roadmap for how to proceed with similar interviews with Pearce's associates.

Cameron Dibble's dissertation on John Thompson attempts to identify the mystique surrounding the author of the successful piano method.[44] The appendices in Dibble's dissertation feature extensive listings of letters, recital programs, and interviews and will be referenced for this study.

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[41] Burns, "Contributions of Jane Smisor Bastien."

[42] Dianne Evans Garvin, "Jon George: The Composer and His Contributions to Piano Pedagogy" (D.M.A. dissertation, University of Miami, 1998).

[43] Holland, "Bianchi's Contributions."

[44] Cameron Shawn Dibble, "John Sylvanus Thompson: Pianist, Pedagogue, Composer." (D.M.A. dissertation, University of Missouri-Kansas City, 1992).

Kathleen Schubert's dissertation on Willard A. Palmer contains a chapter dedicated to American beginning piano methods since 1950 and the trends thereof.[45] The author presents an in-depth analysis of the Music Tree method. *Look and Listen (Parts A-D)* were published in 1962, coinciding with Pearce's time working with Frances Clark at The New School for Music Study.

Kathryn Duarte's document on William Gillock's music includes phone interviews conducted with three individuals reflecting on Gillock's legacy as a colleague and teacher.[46] Again, the examples presented here provide a template for similar interviews that will be conducted for this study.

Contributions to the Field of Piano Pedagogy

Studies on other prominent piano pedagogy figures were examined for this study including: Marienne Uszler, Maurice Hinson, Boris Berlin, Marguerite Miller, Celia Mae Bryant, and Clarence A. Burg.

Karen Beres' document on Marienne Uszler presents her extensive contributions to piano pedagogy, including her work at the University of Southern California, her contributions as a writer for various music journals and periodicals, and her contributions through books, handbooks, and book chapters.[47] Questionnaires are featured in the appendices and organized by relationship to Uszler.

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[45] Kathleen Louise Schubert, "Willard A. Palmer's Contributions to Piano Pedagogy" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1992).

[46] Kathryn Starnes Duarte, "The Piano Music of William Gillock" (D.M.A. document, University of Oklahoma, 2004).

[47] Karen E. Beres, "Marienne Uszler's Contributions to Piano Pedagogy" (D.M.A. document, University of Oklahoma, 2003).

Three studies have been published on Maurice Hinson.[48] Jonathan Brown's dissertation focuses on Hinson's contributions as a composer of intermediate-level piano literature. Vernon Cherrix's provides an annotated bibliography of Hinson's articles, books, and videocassettes as they pertain to piano performance and piano pedagogy. Lastly, the study by Sheryl Lane more directly mirrors this study of Pearce, as it includes interviews conducted with previous colleagues and students.

Laura Beauchamp's document on Boris Berlin's contributions to Canadian pedagogy provides an overview of the history of piano teaching in Canada as well as the hallmarks of Berlin's teaching principles.[49] Since this study on Pearce will closely examine her approach to teaching, an analysis of the study of Berlin's approach to teaching is an essential resource.

For her dissertation on Marguerite Miller, Barbara Fast conducted interviews with the subject, as well as interviews with colleagues both at the University where Miller taught, and outside of that context.[50] Fast's analysis of Miller's contributions to piano pedagogy programs at the collegiate level is helpful when studying Pearce's academic contributions. Also, Miller's contributions to the journal *Keyboard Companion* and her

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[48] Jonathan A. Brown, "Maurice Hinson's Pedagogical Collections for Intermediate-Level Piano Student" (D.M.A. dissertation, Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College, 1994); Vernon Twilley Cherrix, "Maurice Hinson: An Annotated Bibliography of His Writings" (D.M.A. dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1997); Sheryl Rich Lane, "Maurice Hinson: His Life and Contributions to Piano Pedagogy" (D.M.A. dissertation, University of Memphis, 2003).

[49] Laura Beauchamp, "Boris Berlin's Career and Contributions to Piano Pedagogy (D.M.A. document, University of Oklahoma, 1994).

[50] Barbara Fast, "Marguerite Miller's Contributions to Piano Pedagogy" (Ph.D. dissertation proposal, University of Oklahoma, 1997).

committee work at The National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy closely resemble Pearce's committee work and editorial duties.

Carol Baskins' document on former University of Oklahoma piano faculty member Cecile Mae Bryant is laid out in a very similar manner to how this study of Pearce will be organized.[51] Questions Baskins asked of former students and colleagues relating to how they viewed her pedagogical principles are outlined and are a useful resource in constructing interview questions for this study. Baskin's layout of student responses in Chapter Three is unique in that all questions from the questionnaire are answered sequentially, with a summary provided by the author.

Nicole Biggs's document on British composer, musicologist, editor, teacher, and pianist Howard Ferguson attempts to gather all of his compositional and pedagogical writings within a single source.[52] Like Pearce, Ferguson is a composer, and Biggs's musical hermeneutic analysis of his *Sonata* and *Bagatelles* is a useful example for how to examine musical materials in this study.

Linda Owen's study focuses on Clarence A. Burg's contributions to piano pedagogy, which share some resemblance to Pearce's contributions by his work as a teacher and professional leader in music.[53] This study is organized to include chapters titled a teacher of pianists, a teacher of teachers, and a professional leader.

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[51] Carol Ann Baskins, "The Contributions of Celia Mae Bryant to Piano Pedagogy" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1994).

[52] Nicole Elizabeth Biggs, "Howard Ferguson's Contributions to Piano Literature and Pedagogy" (D.M.A. documents, University of Oklahoma, 2011).

[53] Linda Joyce Owen, "The Contributions of Clarence A. Burg to Piano Pedagogy" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1997).

Other Significant Studies Considered

Other significant piano pedagogy studies consulted include works on James Lyke and Allison Nelson. These studies were investigated primarily because of their usefulness as a template for interviewing living subjects. Both studies were considered because they featured as a subject Isabelle Vengerova, a formative teacher of Pearce's.

Chee Hyeon Choi's dissertation on James Lyke features selective, rather than comprehensive, lists of articles and presentations.[54] In this dissertation Choi singles out specific chapters from Lyke's pedagogy text, *Creative Piano Teaching*, as well as specific articles to analyze. Choi includes a map showing where the respondents resided and a pie chart indicating their relationship to Lyke. Along with Richard Chronister, Lyke was a co-founder of the National Conference on Piano Pedagogy, where Elvina was also active.

Lynn Worcester conducted interviews with Allison Nelson, as well as interviews with Nelson's colleagues and former students. Nelson's varied career as a performer and teacher bears some similarity to Pearce's.[55]

Two studies discuss the teaching technique of Isabelle Vengerova, the legendary teacher with whom Pearce studied.[56] Darrell Leffler's traces these teaching philosophies

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[54] Chee Hyeon Choi, "The Contributions of James Lyke to Piano Pedagogy" (D.M.A. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2012).

[55] Lynn Worcester, "Allison Nelson: Pianist, Teacher and Editor" (D.M.A. document proposal, University of Oklahoma, 2014).

[56] Darrell G. Leffler, "Czerny, Leschetizky, Vengerova: A Genealogical Study of Piano Technique" (M.A. thesis, San Jose State University, 1998); Jihyun Lee, "Teaching Late Intermediate-level Technical Skills Through Study of Leschetizky, Vengerova, and Neuhaus: Exercises or Repertoire?" (D.M.A. dissertation, University of North Texas, 2016).

through the teaching lineage of Czerny to Leschetizky and to Vengerova. Jihyun Lee's work offers more reflections on Vengerova's teaching approach.

All of these sources provide a model for this study on Elvina Truman Pearce. Because of Pearce's varied roles (performer, teacher, pedagogue, editor, composer, clinician), studies touching on all of these areas are useful and relevant.

CHAPTER 2: BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF ELVINA TRUMAN PEARCE

EARLY YEARS AND ADOLESCENCE

Born in Independence, Kansas on December 22, 1931, Elvina Truman was the only child of Dorothy Truman and Paul W. Truman. She was around two years old when her father took a position as a janitor with Sinclair Oil in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where Pearce spent her formative student years.[57]

Neither of Pearce's parents were musicians, but they placed their daughter in piano lessons when she was eight years old. Pearce's first piano teacher was Lenore Hunter. Along with her sister, a violinist, Hunter traveled from house to house in the Trumans' neighborhood teaching piano for $0.50 per lesson. Pearce recalls a sense of excitement as she worked with Hunter, moving through *Teaching Little Fingers to Play* by John Thompson and subsequent books in that method series.[58] After about three years

[57] Elvina Truman will be referred to by her married name, Pearce, for consistency.

[58] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 240.

of instruction, Hunter told Pearce that she could no longer help her and that she needed to find a new teacher.[59] Reminiscing about her first teacher later in life, two things stood out to Pearce: Hunter taught her how to read and play music, and she did this in a happy and positive environment that fostered productive and successful experiences.[60]

At age eleven, Pearce began working with her second piano teacher, Helen Ringo, a faculty member at the University of Tulsa with whom she would study for nearly nine years. Reminiscing later in life about studying with Ringo, Pearce said, "…I loved going to the lessons because we spent the hour, or however long a lesson would be, making music. And that's the thing that really turned me on. And she worked me like a dog, but I didn't ever think of it as work. I loved it. I loved every bit of it."[61]

Ringo's husband, Boyd Ringo, was also on the piano faculty at the University of Tulsa and during Pearce's high school years, he invited her to attend and perform in his studio classes. "He invited me thinking that I needed to have some influence from the 'superstars' at the University of Tulsa," Pearce recalls. "Every time I got a chance to play, I was thrilled. I played at probably every other meeting."[62] Also present in these classes was Richard Chronister, a student at the University of Tulsa, who would go on to found the National Conference on Piano Pedagogy and Keyboard Arts. Later in life, Pearce would convince Chronister to teach for Frances Clark.

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[59] Elvina Pearce, interviewed by author, Interview 2 of 10, July 10, 2018.

[60] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 240.

[61] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

[62] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

During her junior high years, Pearce traveled with Helen Ringo, attending and performing in workshops given by Guy Maier. Pearce first met Frances Clark at these workshops, where Clark assisted Maier. "She'd do all the work and he'd have all the fun," Elvina recalls.[63] Clark was a longtime friend of the Ringos, having studied alongside them at Guy Maier workshops in the past.[64] One of the earliest workshops Pearce attended took place in Bristol, Tennessee.[65]

In an interview with this author, Pearce recalled her first impressions of Clark from those Guy Maier workshops during Pearce's junior high years: "Oh my. She was a stunning looking woman. She dressed like a million dollars. She really did everything that a person would do to create the impression she wanted to have created of her, but all in a nice way."[66]

These Guy Maier workshop performances connected Pearce with Clark as she travelled to attend them annually. In this way Clark and Pearce developed a teacher/student connection that would later develop into a professional relationship. Guy Maier also made an impression on Pearce at these workshops. In fact, Pearce included Maier on a short list of her most inspirational teachers. In her words: "The fact that he was in love with music. In love with it. And he could turn anyone, I think a stick, into a musician."[67] She later reflected, "I just thought if I could emulate the enthusiasm that he

[63] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

[64] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

[65] Hudak, "Frances Oman Clark," 205.

[66] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

[67] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

had for music, that would be all I would ask for. Of course I wouldn't have that continued emulation going on, and then I'd have to wait until the next time I saw him."[68] These impactful encounters with Maier and Clark marinated within her until she eventually decided to follow in their footsteps and pursue teaching professionally.

Pearce's earliest experiences as a teacher occurred during her piano studies with Helen Ringo. When she was around eleven years old, Pearce helped a fellow piano student of Ringo's who was struggling with practicing. Pearce reminisces: "I was intrigued by the fact that this little girl that I was teaching was my age and in my class in school. [She] had all the same problems that all the other kids had, and I didn't have. She happened to invite me to her home, and I heard her play, and almost immediately I got the impression that she [had] these problems because of the way that she [was] practicing."[69] Pearce was able to diagnose this practice problem and provide solutions, leading to a positive first teaching experience. This early teaching success had an indelible impact on the teacher Pearce was to become. She readily admits, however, that at the time she had no plans of becoming a teacher and was focused exclusively on becoming a pianist.[70]

[68] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

[69] Pearce, Interview 8 of 10, July 11, 2018.

[70] Pearce, Interview 8 of 10, July 11, 2018.

YOUNG ADULTHOOD AND EDUCATION

After graduating from high school, Pearce enrolled at the University of Tulsa in 1949 and continued studying with Helen Ringo as a piano major. During this time, Ringo came to realize that Pearce would greatly benefit from being exposed to performance opportunities outside of Tulsa. She recommended that Pearce audition for an opportunity to perform a piano concerto with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Pearce applied for the audition and was chosen to perform. The concert took place on January 5, 1952 and Pearce played Franz Liszt's *Piano Concerto No. 1 in E-flat Major, S. 124.* An article in the *Tulsa Collegian* (January 11, 1952) states that her performance was deemed "impressive" by Felix Borowski, a music critic for the Marshall-Field Sun-Times in Chicago and that she received six curtain calls.

Later that spring, Pearce again traveled to Chicago, this time with Boyd and Helen Ringo for another audition which took place on May 12, 1952. At that audition, Pearce was graciously given a practice room in Steinway Hall before her scheduled time. But during the rehearsal, an unexpected medical emergency interrupted her practice: her teacher, Ringo, lost consciousness. Pearce recalls: "She passed out. I didn't know what was wrong with her, but I knew she needed some help and there I was, the only person in that whole big old multi-floor building [except for] her and the janitor. Somebody from the Steinway place got a hold of somebody and they came and got her and took her to the hospital, and then I went back to the hotel."[71] Someone — Pearce does not recall who — convinced her that her teacher would want her to go ahead with the audition, despite her

[71] Pearce, Interview 2 of 10, July 10, 2018.

teacher's hospitalization and absence. That same afternoon she completed the audition. She recalls: "I didn't care whether there was anybody there to hear me play or not. I just went ahead and did it . . .. I got through it and I don't think they even [knew] about my circumstances until later."[72] The *Tulsa Collegian* reports: "Mrs. Ringo suffered the attack while playing piano with Miss Truman early Monday morning. She remained conscious almost until her death in late afternoon."[73]

On the afternoon of May 12, 1952, after Pearce's competition performance, Helen Ringo Passed away from a heart attack. Having lost her longtime teacher, Pearce started searching for a new one. Pearce's family and friends reached out to Guy Maier, who recommended Isabelle Vengerova, a famous Russian artist-teacher who had taught Leonard Pennario, one of Maier's former students.[74] Vengerova was also a teacher of Leonard Bernstein, Samuel Barber, Gary Graffman, Abbey Simon, and Menahem Pressler. "He [Guy Maier] said that the only teacher that he would recommend in the world would be Isabelle Vengerova," Pearce recalls.[75]

Pearce was invited to play what turned out to be a grueling audition for Madame Vengerova in New York City. After two hours of performing works by Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt, Debussy, and Schumann, Vengerova finally stopped her. The esteemed teacher told Pearce that she was not impressed by speed, adding somewhat jokingly that

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[72] Pearce, Interview 2 of 10, July 10, 2018.

[73] *The Tulsa Collegian,* Tulsa, Oklahoma, May 16, 1952.

[74] Pennario was a child prodigy who played Grieg's *Piano Concerto in A minor* with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra at age 12.

[75] Pearce, Interview 2 of 10, July 10, 2018.

Horowitz had already broken all the records. This initial audition and interview piqued Pearce's interest. With this interaction, she got a glimpse of what it would be like to study with a teacher who valued musical details beyond playing fast and loud.[76]

Soon after the audition, Pearce left the University of Tulsa with an unfinished music degree and moved to New York City to study with Vengerova from 1952-1955. During those three years, she also taught lessons in her student's homes in New York City. Pearce characterizes lessons with Vengerova as arduous. A perfectionist, Vengerova sometimes demanded so much attention to detail that Pearce felt she could not play a single two-note phrase to her teacher's satisfaction.[77] Many of Vengerova's other pupils recall similar experiences.[78]

During this period, Pearce says she acquired mental and physical discipline. Regarding her studies with Vengerova she says,

> Madame awakened me to my responsibilities as a *musician*… that I must *know* the composer's intentions as indicated on the score and then be faithful to them. And furthermore, on the completion of a passage, it was my responsibility to *know* if I had done what I intended to do. I have often said that I really wonder if I ever listened to a note I played before I studied with Madame! She opened my ear and eyes – and thus turned on my brain.[79]

Further elaborating on her transformative experiences studying with Vengerova, she says, "Although I 'died a thousand deaths' before, during, and after every lesson, I

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[76] Pearce, *Success Factor,* 241.

[77] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 242.

[78] Joseph Rezits, *Beloved Tyranna: The Legend and Legacy of Isabelle Vengerova* (Bloomington IN: David Daniel Publications, 1995), 96.; Gary Graffman, *I Really Should Be Practicing* (Garden City NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1981).

[79] Rezits, *Beloved Tyranna*, 96.

still would not choose another route. In spite of the fact that at the time, 'total devastation' seemed about the only goal of this formidable woman, perhaps she was really attempting to solidify the total person into an indestructible unit that was capable of self-control and of making independent musical judgments."[80]

A Career Pivot

During her time in New York City studying with Vengerova, Pearce periodically met up with Frances Clark and Louise Goss during their once-a-year visits to the city to browse through music libraries at the music store near Carnegie Hall. "When they found out I was there, studying with Vengerova, they arranged for me to meet with them every time they came, and I did, and I had a wonderful time," Pearce says.[81] These visits likely solidified a strong mutual admiration between Clark, Goss and Pearce.

In the fall of 1955, after studying for three years with Vengerova, Pearce was accepted to The Juilliard School in New York City on a partial scholarship. "My plan was to continue to study at Juilliard with Rosina Lhévinne or with somebody that Rosina Lhévinne would probably recommend," she says.[82] Additionally, Pearce planned to teach privately while at Juilliard to provide additional income.

When Pearce spoke with Clark about her plans, Clark insisted that she reconsider her decision. Clark had recently been invited to take over the Piano Department at

[80] Rezits, *Beloved Tyranna*, 166.

[81] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

[82] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey, and was eager to hire Pearce to fill a teaching position there. Pearce was the perfect fit, Clark thought, in part because she knew Pearce's former teachers, Helen and Boyd Ringo, and because she had been familiar with the high level of Pearce's performance abilities since those earlier Guy Maier workshops in Tennessee and the Midwest.

Pearce traveled to Princeton and interviewed at Westminster Choir College.[83] "I remember I went out and met Frances [Clark], on a Friday, I think it was, and met the dean of the school, John Finley Williamson. At the end of the [audition] he told me that I potentially had the greatest soprano voice on campus — he was a winner with words – – and that he would very much like it if I could spend some time teaching there. And of course, I needed the money."[84] At that time, Westminster had reputable choir and organ programs and Clark was brought onboard to raise the piano program to that same high level.[85]

Pearce took the weekend to think about the offer and by Sunday she was convinced to accept it, primarily because that meant she would work alongside Clark. Of her decision to turn down the Juilliard scholarship, Pearce says, "Didn't choose Juilliard. Never looked back. Never thought about it again. Never thought I made a mistake. Never wondered. Totally convinced."[86] This teaching fellowship offer at Westminster Choir

[83] Elvina also auditioned for the choir at Westminster.

[84] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

[85] John Finley Williamson was the founder of Westminster Choir and the co-founder of Westminster Choir College in Dayton, OH in 1920. In 1929, the school moved to Ithaca College, and in 1932, Princeton, NJ.

[86] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

College resulted in a nearly a full-time teaching load and allowed her to finish the Bachelor of Music degree she had started at the University of Tulsa. In 1958, she graduated with her bachelor's degree in music from Westminster Choir College.

Pearce was highly influenced by the content of Clark's pedagogy courses, the *Fundamentals of Piano Pedagogy* and *Practical Piano Pedagogy*. At Westminster, Clark's students enrolled in four pedagogy courses, one for each year in which they were her student. Pearce was enrolled in these courses as a student, part of the fulfillment of requirements for her bachelor's degree. Clark's first-year pedagogy course explored big questions about the nature of teaching itself, not just piano teaching. Examining a variety of non-piano teachers and their philosophies was a memorable experience for Pearce, who, after one class ended, was eager to attend the next. In her words: "Instead of the Liszt Concerto, I was thinking about how you teach an eight-year-old how to play the first piece and to read [music]."[87]

Clark's second-year pedagogy course applied what had been discovered during the first year. Teachers enrolled in this course were required to instruct young children as part of their coursework. During her third-year course, Clark added advanced students to teacher's rosters when she felt confident in their abilities. During the fourth year, a few of Clark's student teachers were tasked with instructing college students who were piano

[87] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

majors.[88] This undergraduate curriculum provided a substantial four-year growth period for novice teachers completing a music degree.[89]

As part of her pedagogy courses, Clark consistently supervised Pearce's teaching. The frequency of these observations led Pearce to feel constantly aware of her mentor's presence. When Clark provided feedback, there was no time limit, and sessions could last as long as an hour or two. Pearce ultimately remembers these observations and feedback sessions as a "really great experience."[90]

Pearce recalls being struck by the fact that teachers in Clark's courses were asked to generate lesson plans. Early on, teachers were asked to write practically every word of a lesson plan in detail. Clark would pour over these plans and follow up by asking questions like, "Why did you do this when you said you were going to do that?" and "What did this lead to?" In this way Pearce felt that Clark was able to insert her voice persistently into the back of teachers' minds. Even when Clark was not physically present, her words and ideas were. "[Those lesson plans] made me think about every aspect of what I did," Pearce says.[91] Writing detailed lesson plans changed the way Pearce worked: "Everything about my teaching became a reflection of what I had thought about and written in this plan."[92]

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[88] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

[89] In 1955, Westminster Choir College offered a degree in piano. Frances Clark required that all keyboard majors, organ and piano, take one year of piano pedagogy.

[90] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

[91] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

[92] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

Interestingly, Richard Chronister, whom Pearce knew from Boyd Ringo's studio classes at the University of Tulsa, joined the faculty at Westminster Choir College in 1956, one year after Pearce came to Westminster.[93] Prior to this, Chronister had been spending his summers in Tulsa, working for Fred Waring as a pianist for his workshops.[94] Pearce and Chronister would, therefore, travel to and from Oklahoma each summer together. During one of those long road trips, Pearce says Chronister got very excited about Clark's work at Westminster Choir College and decided to move to Princeton, New Jersey so that he could work with her. Chronister was familiar with Clark's work through her *Clavier* articles. Pearce recalls, "He saw in [Clark] not just a piano teacher doing a job once a week and passing a degree onto the kids and saying goodbye and have a good life. But it was a way of living, and thinking, and doing."[95]

Pearce sums up Clark's broader teaching philosophy in this way: "It wasn't just so much her students as individuals, but all of these people that we see every week, what are we doing for them? And for their lives? What are we helping them come to grips with? Besides the Chopin Prelude. What's the work about besides that?"[96] Lastly, Pearce states in *The Success Factor in Piano Teaching: Making Practice Perfect* that working with Clark was education for life.

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[93] Hudak, "Frances Oman Clark," 130.

[94] Fred Waring, whose nickname was "The Man Who Taught America How to Sing," was a famous musician and bandleader from the 1920s-1950s. He is well known for his television program called the Fred Waring Show. Additionally, he created the Fred Waring Choral Workshop for music educators and choral directors.

[95] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

[96] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

THE OPENING OF THE NEW SCHOOL FOR MUSIC STUDY

In 1960, after five years at Westminster Choir College, Clark opened The New School for Music Study in Princeton, New Jersey with Assistant Directors Louise Goss and David Kraehenbuel and founding faculty members: Pearce, Richard Chronister, Martha Braden, Larry Lemmel, Doris Martin, Sandford Jones, Phyllis Rappeport, and Joyce Mekeel. Clark's intention in starting the school was, in part, to dedicate more time to training teachers as graduate students and to research teaching methods.

Pearce's role at The New School for Music Study was as a founding teacher and support staff for teaching piano pedagogy. Along with other teachers under the direction of Clark, Pearce helped to pilot-test new materials and curriculum from *The Frances Clark Library*. Clark's materials were altered and revised frequently, so Pearce and the rest of the faculty were required to learn and absorb new ideas and repertoire each year.[97] In 1962, a new edition of Clark's method was published, *Look and Listen, Parts A & B.*

Working at The New School for Music Study was an incredibly enriching experience for Pearce, who remembers gaining valuable insights not only from Clark, but also from other composers and experts Clark invited to the school. Pearce specifically recalls the impact made on her by the composer David Kraehenbuehl, a protégé of Paul Hindemith and a professor of music theory and composition at Yale University. "He would come down once a month or so, and Frances was so impressed with his ideas. She

[97] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

was always impressed with anyone who had ideas that were different, but workable," Pearce says.[98]

One component of employment at the New School for Music Study was the opportunity for faculty members to present summer workshops in which new materials for the *Frances Clark Library* were presented. These workshops, which took place all over the country and were led by Clark and the other teachers from The New School for Music Study, were an outgrowth of fresh ideas garnered during each school year. Sometimes faculty members traveled to these workshops as a group, and sometimes they went alone. "And we all, with Frances' and Louise's guidance, wrote the talks," Pearce recalls. "[We] started writing them probably at the end of the school year and we wrote them until we started going out to give them. They were never right; they were never what she would have said. We had to redo, redo, redo."[99]

These summer workshops included presenting newly published repertoire, theory, and technique books. When on location, Pearce would typically give a workshop as well as a recital. "But we had a ball, I remember. I was [Chronister's] supervisor one year and he would get up and give part of the lecture, and I would sit and watch and listen and write notes. I mean it was just a continual elevation of our thinking. That's what makes a good teacher of anything."[100]

Working with Clark at The New School for Music Study was a formative experience for Pearce, in large part because it was there that she absorbed so many of

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[98] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

[99] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

[100] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

Clark's philosophies about teaching. Pearce elaborates: "Frances' [Clark] idea was that music is part of life. How do we integrate music into the lives of the people that we work with? And from there, they can do the same thing with others, whether they teach or not. She had this one goal, and that was to learn as much as she could about life and what controls us and what makes us come back and why some of us don't. And we learned it was a way of living."[101]

PROFESSIONAL CAREER

After eight years (1955-1963) of working closely with Clark and the rest of the faculty at Westminster Choir College and the New School for Music Study, Pearce made a decision to pursue her own path. "I was half done with my life and I needed to figure out what [I was] going to do with the other half," she says.[102] Several circumstances led to that decision.

While preparing and presenting workshops for Clark, Pearce became familiar with a Summy-Birchard employee named John Pearce who was in charge of organizing the workshops. On one tour through the Midwest, Pearce met John in person for the first time. After seeing her picture on a flyer for a workshop in the window of the Lyon and Healy music store, John decided to drop in and introduce himself. "I was practicing because I always played at least several pieces at the workshops," Pearce says. "He came upstairs and I was the only one there, of course, in the piano room at that hour. I had

[101] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10. 2018.

[102] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

finished a piece of Brahms. That's all I remember. I saw this man standing in one of the door things. He came in and introduced himself… So, he invited me out and we had dinner and got very well acquainted."[103]

On June 29, 1963, Elvina Truman married John Pearce, a choral director at Thornridge High School in Dolton, Illinois at the time.[104] The wedding took place at the Boston Avenue Methodist Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma. After the wedding, John moved to Princeton to be with his new wife and landed a job in Philadelphia with Singing City.[105] That lasted only a year and, in 1964, he decided to move to Evanston, Illinois, where many of his contacts resided. Pearce agreed to resign from her role at The New School for Music Study in order to move to Illinois with her husband. Upon arriving in Evanston, she devoted a year to practicing and resting because, she says, "there was never a vacation with Clark!"[106]

A year after moving to Evanston, in 1965, John Pearce became the choral instructor and Chairman of the Music Department at Naperville Central High School, so the couple moved to Naperville, Illinois. Fortunately, the wife of one of John's new colleagues was an organist at a local church who had around twenty piano students ready for Pearce to begin teaching piano in Naperville. During this time, Pearce was still involved with the Frances Clark workshops and she continued to teach piano privately

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[103] Pearce, Interview 4 of 10, July 11, 2018.

[104] *The Times,* Munster, Indiana, January 13, 1963, Newspapers.com.

[105] Choral organization in Philadelphia founded by Dr. Elaine Brown in 1948.

[106] Pearce, Interview 4 of 10, July 11, 2018.

until she eventually was approached about an opportunity that would lead to the next chapter of her career.

A woman from North Central College in Naperville contacted Pearce, requesting her assistance in enlarging the local college's piano program. Peace gave it some thought and ultimately decided to join the school's piano faculty in 1973.[107] Shortly thereafter, the college decided to discontinue the piano degree, so by the time the enrolled students graduated in 1979, that part of her work dissolved. In 1980, Pearce founded and became director of North Central College's Piano Preparatory Program and Community Music School, a position she held until 1989. Under her direction, the Preparatory Program and Community Music School she founded grew to include over two hundred students. After 1989, Pearce continued to provide pedagogical support for teachers as a consultant for this program, many of whom were protégés of Frances Clark.

Around 1972, Pearce was approached by Frances Larimer, director of Piano Pedagogy at Northwestern University in Evanston, IL.[108] Larimer knew of Pearce through her workshops and invited her to present to her pedagogy class once a semester as a guest lecturer. This was so successful that she invited Pearce to help improve the pedagogy program at Northwestern.[109]

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[107] *Holland Evening Sentinel*, Holland, Michigan, November 5, 1976, Newspaperarchive.com.

[108] *Holland Evening Sentinel*, Holland, Michigan, November 5, 1976, Newspaperarchive.com.

[109] Dana Lamparello, e-mail message to author, September 24, 2019. Pearce's employment dates at Northwestern University are inconclusive. This email indicates that Pearce is listed in the class schedules from 1984-1993. Other sources indicate Pearce taught guest lectures at Northwestern as early as 1972.

Pearce recalls that one of Larimer's primary goals for the Northwestern program was to give college students the opportunity to observe an experienced, successful pre-college teacher work with young students. After a few years of presenting occasional workshops at Northwestern during the semester, Pearce's time there increased to two to three days a week.[110] This involved a two-hour, one-way commute, but for Pearce, it was worth it to instruct student teachers on how to teach piano.[111]

Pearce's teaching at Northwestern encompassed "everything that the Frances Clark books represented," she says. "It was how students learn, what do they learn in the area of technique, theory, musicianship, all those things. We always had a year where they did what we did at The New School [for Music Study], which was we would teach with supervision with Frances [Clark], or someone sitting in on our lessons and then having conferences."[112] During this time, student teachers at Northwestern recorded their lessons and Pearce watched the recordings and gave feedback. "I started out with just doing the teaching followed by lectures," Pearce says. "Then little by little, I would hand over the teaching to [the students], and each one of them would have one student that they would follow up."[113]

Each year at Northwestern University, Pearce students were tasked with preparing a student of their own for a recital, the course's most important project. Pearce was less concerned with taking her students through a comprehensive overview of methods, and

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[110] Multiple sources indicate that she taught at Northwestern for fourteen years.

[111] Pearce, Interview 5 of 10, July 11, 2018.

[112] Pearce, Interview 5 of 10, July 11, 2018.

[113] Pearce, Interview 5 of 10, July 11, 2018.

more concerned with teaching them "how to get kids to play with intelligence and love and confidence and all those good qualities of making music. And how do you get there from square A to square B."[114]

When reminiscing about her time at Northwestern University, she echoed a familiar sentiment of her time with Frances Clark. "It all came down to the one thing," she says, "and that is that we're just not teaching a subject to a kid, but we're teaching them how to think. In this case, how to think about music in terms of their life experience."[115]

In 1981, in response to a challenge from her former student, Lynn Freeman Olson, Pearce composed a collection of elementary piano pieces called, *Sound Reflections,* published by the Alfred Publishing Company.[116] In 1986, she published *Solo Flight* which would go on to become her best-selling collection.[117] Throughout the next three decades, Pearce composed over twenty collections of elementary and intermediate level teaching literature. Her compositions were published by The New School for Music Study Press, Belwin-Mills, Frederick Harris, FJH, Hal Leonard, Bradley Publications, and Alfred Publishing Company.

In addition to her teaching responsibilities and compositional work during this period, Pearce was active within several national professional organizations. The

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[114] Pearce, Interview 5 of 10, July 11, 2018.

[115] Pearce, Interview 5 of 10, July 11, 2018.

[116] Elvina Truman Pearce, *Sound Reflections, Books 1 & 2,* (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Co. Inc., 1981).

[117] Elvina Truman Pearce, *Solo Flight,* (Princeton, NJ: The New School for Music Study Press, 1986).

inaugural National Conference on Piano Pedagogy took place in 1978. In subsequent conferences, she was chair of the committee for intern teaching and served on the committee on piano teaching materials. She also led a teaching demonstration during the 1982 conference.

From 1967-1984 Pearce was also active in developing and implementing teaching certification at the local, state and national level through the Music Teachers National Association. At the national level, she served as chairman of the MTNA Certification Board from 1981 to 1984. "The certification of qualified teachers is one excellent way to publicly promote the upgrading of our image," she wrote in a column. "Becoming certified not only indicates one's affirmation of the need to enhance this image, but also one's willingness to become actively involved in this nationwide project."[118] In 1983, MTNA awarded her a Master Teacher Certificate.

KEYBOARD COMPANION AND ACCOLADES

In 1990, the first issue of *Keyboard Companion* was published. The magazine was founded as a means to present teaching ideas for beginner and intermediate level students. Pearce was approached by Richard Chronister to serve as its associate editor, a position she would hold for seventeen years until her retirement from the journal in 2006. The section of the magazine she edited was titled "Home Practice." It covered topics such as practice expectations for beginners and main concerns about students' home practice habits.

[118] Elvina Pearce, "National Certification," *American Music Teacher* 30, no.1 (1981), 7.

In 2000 when Richard Chronister passed away, Pearce was asked to take over as editor in chief. She held that position from 2000 to 2006, during which time she did not take on any new students. As editor in chief, she continued to replicate what Chronister had envisioned for the magazine, while fulfilling her role as the editor of the "Home Practice" section.

During the latter part of her career, Pearce was honored with numerous awards: MTNA Foundation Fellow (2008), Lifetime Achievement Award from the Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy (2011), Illinois Music Teacher Association, Member of the Year (2011), and the Fox Valley Arts Hall of Fame (2014).

In 2014, she published her book, *The Success Factor in Piano Teaching: Making Practice Perfect*.[119] This provides a summary of her teaching philosophy as well as insights into her approach to piano teaching. She states in the preface, "Most of the book's contents are the outgrowth of actual 'on-site' happenings which have provided invaluable information about what strategies work and which do not—especially in the area of teaching students how to practice in order to achieve maximum success with minimum effort and time."[120]

When reflecting about life in general, Pearce states, "I think it's important to find one's spot in the world and see if you really want to go there, and then go. And not fool around. And not clutter it up with thousands of insignificant things and make people think that that's what it's about."[121] This quote holds true for Pearce's life and is visible

[119] Pearce, *Success Factor*.

[120] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 5.

[121] Pearce, Interview 8 of 10, July 11, 2018.

in her passion for effective teaching and leading students to discover the benefits of a life spent learning.

CHAPTER 3: PERSPECTIVES ON PEARCE AS PIANIST

INTRODUCTION

As a young student growing up in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Pearce's drive and tenacious pursuit of excellence at the piano led to numerous national, high-profile performance opportunities, beginning with her debut recital at age twelve. Over the next fifty years, she continued to perform formidable solo and concerto repertoire, garnering rave reviews and accolades in the process. From her earliest concerto performance with the Amarillo Symphony, given at age nineteen, to her role as a recitalist and keynote speaker at an Australian pedagogy conference when she was nearly seventy, Pearce's lifelong dedication to concertizing reveals the value she places on performance both personally and pedagogically.

This chapter will highlight Pearce's career as a performer, covering her early days as a high school student of Helen Ringo, her multiple solo appearances with symphony orchestras, and the countless recitals she gave as part of workshops at state, national, and international conferences. An overview of these performances is essential to understanding Pearce's work as a pedagogue, teacher, editor, composer, and pianist.

While pursuing her bachelor's degree from 1949 to 1952 at the University of Tulsa, Pearce was an active performer and was on the path to becoming a professional concert pianist. During those years, she gave many solo recitals, participated in numerous competitions, and was a soloist in three symphony orchestra concerto performances, including appearances with the Chicago Symphony and at the Chicago Theater of the Air. While complete documentation of her performances during these years is unavailable, press releases and promotional material from the time paint a substantial picture of her life as a performer during her undergraduate years.

From 1952-1955, Pearce studied with the famous Russian teacher Isabelle Vengerova in New York City. Not formally enrolled in school during these years, she continued to concertize around the New York City area while also teaching private piano lessons to make ends meet.

Pearce's professional focus shifted from performance to teaching beginning in 1955, when, at age twenty-four, she started working with Frances Clark. However, even as she turned her attention toward pedagogy, she continued to perform in workshops and at conferences. Furthermore, as a pedagogue, she became a strong advocate of teachers continuing to practice and perform.

THE DEVELOPMENTAL YEARS (1936-1952)

Pearce's fascination with the piano began at age five when her parents volunteered to store a neighbor's piano in their home for two years while he traveled internationally. The introduction of that instrument into her home transformed Pearce's life trajectory. She recalls vividly,

> This enormous, old, western saloon-style piano moved in with us and consumed virtually all of the space in one room of our small house. Almost immediately, I began to doodle around on it and soon discovered that, with one finger, I could pick out tunes such as 'Twinkle' and 'Yankee Doodle.' Then I discovered how to play using *both* hands! Almost at once, this big old piano became my favorite play-pal.[122]

When she was eight years old, Pearce began formal piano lessons with Lenore Hunter, a neighborhood teacher who gave lessons in students' homes. Pearce studied with Hunter for around two years before transferring to become a student of University of Tulsa piano professor Helen Ringo. Ringo was instrumental in steering Pearce toward performance opportunities and seeking out and enrolling her in numerous competitions and festivals.

Pearce's "debut" recital took place at age 12, while she was a student of Ringo's. Pearce says of that experience, "It was great fun, and I have loved performing ever since."[123] Another documented performance from Pearce's early years with Ringo took place on October 29, 1947, when Pearce was fifteen. Held at the Tulsa High School Auditorium, it was a duet recital with John Sanders, a fellow student of Helen Ringo. A detailed contemporaneous review in a local newspaper highlights the recital's formality and significance. The paper states that the ushers for the performance wore formal gowns and the local high school home economics department hosted a tea as a reception after the recital.[124]

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[122] Edward Darling, "Beyond the Notes: An Interview with Elvina Pearce.," *Clavier Companion* 9, no. 2 (May 2017): Accessed March 28, 2020. https://claviercompanion.com/article-details/beyond-the-notes-an-interview-with-elvina-pearce.

[123] Darling, "Beyond the Notes."

[124] *The McIntosh County Democrat*, Checotah, Oklahoma, October 30, 1947, Newspapers.com.

Pearce's first notable professional performance occurred in September of 1950, during the first semester of her undergraduate studies at the University of Tulsa. At just eighteen years of age, Pearce was selected as one of three finalists out of four hundred and forty applicants for the Patrick Hayes Award in Washington, D.C.[125] In addition to this well-documented success, there is evidence that Pearce was busy with other performances during her undergraduate years as well. An article promoting her November 5, 1950 recital for the Oklahoma Music Teachers Association stated that she had recently given many out-of-state concerts, and was preparing for upcoming performances in Oklahoma, Florida, Texas, and Arkansas.[126]

Pearce continued to perform as a college sophomore, presenting a full recital on the Guy Maier artist series during the summer of 1951 in Denver, Colorado.[127] Again, Helen Ringo facilitated this opportunity. Pearce met Maier through Ringo, with whom she traveled to summer workshops. She also met Maier's assistant at the time, Frances Clark.

Pearce's orchestral debut also took place during her sophomore year at the University of Tulsa. On October 21, 1951, at age nineteen, Pearce performed Robert Schumann's *Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op. 54* with the Amarillo Symphony. After the concert, the Amarillo Music Teachers Association held an open house during which local

[125] *The Alva Review-Courier*, Alva, Oklahoma, November 1, 1950, Newspapers.com.

[126] *The Pocono Record*, Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, April 22, 1952, Newspapers.com.

[127] *Williamsport Sunday Grit National Edition*, Williamsport, Pennsylvania, December 16, 1951, Newspaperarchive.com.

piano students met and spoke with Pearce.[128] Two days later, the Amarillo Daily News posted a glowing review of her performance:

> Elvina Truman, young Tulsa pianist, is undoubtedly one of the coming artists. It took her only a few brief moments to set her audience at rest as to her musicianship. In her concerto, she displayed an amazing fingering technique and a depth of interpretation. She had an assurance born of mastery, particularly noticeable in her fluidity of transition. The young lady has a pleasing stage personality, poised and unfluttered. She was required two encores, the first a Chopin nocturne which the audience found particularly acceptable.[129]

These formative performance experiences helped prepare Pearce for one of the most notable orchestral concert appearances of her career.

On January 5, 1952, Pearce performed Franz Liszt's *Piano Concerto in E-flat Major* with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Attending that concert in support of the twenty-year-old pianist was Helen Ringo, Helen's husband, Boyd Ringo, who was also a piano professor at the University of Tulsa, and both of Pearce's parents. After the concert, a celebration was held in Pearce's honor at the Park Row Room in the Conrad-Hilton Hotel. The performance was heralded as "impressive" by the music critic and composer Felix Borowski, who reported that the young pianist was also enthusiastically received by the Chicago audience, who gave her six curtain calls.[130]

Pearce's performances of virtuosic piano concerti in Chicago and Amarillo led to national recognition in several prominent journals and newspapers. These contemporaneous reports shed further light on the extent of Pearce's professional

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[128] *Amarillo Sunday News Globe,* Amarillo, Texas, October 21, 1951, Newspaperarchive.com.

[129] *Amarillo Daily News*, Amarillo, Texas, October 23, 1951, Newspaperarchive.com.

[130] *The Tulsa Collegian*, Tulsa, Oklahoma, January 11, 1952, 1.

performances during the 1950-1951 and 1951-1952 seasons. For example, Pearce was featured in the September 1951 issue of *Seventeen* magazine as a "Teenager in the News." The accompanying article stated that Pearce gave twenty-eight professional concerts throughout the United States during her 1950-1951 concert season.[131] Additionally, a newspaper clipping from the Christian Science Monitor, dated July 5, 1952, reported the following:

> A high spot in Miss Truman's career was her appearance with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in January, won in competition with thirty-five other artists. By that time, however, she had become a full-fledged trouper, having appeared with the Amarillo Symphony and concertized in Illinois, Colorado, Oklahoma, and Arkansas, making a total of thirty concerts this season.[132]

In addition to performing these many solo and orchestral piano concerts while a student at the University of Tulsa, Pearce also sang with and accompanied the Tulsa University Radio Chorus. In the spring of 1952, she toured the East Coast of the United States with the choir, performing on a radio show in New York City and at several regional high schools, including the Allegany High School Auditorium in Maryland and the East Stroudsburg State Teachers College Auditorium in Pennsylvania in April and May of 1952.[133] On that choir tour Pearce acted as both accompanist and featured piano soloist. In that capacity she performed, "I'll Wait, My Love," a newly composed set of four waltzes for piano and male voices by Tom Waring, and a capriccio by Dohnányi. Furthermore, despite her busy life as an accompanist and solo pianist, Pearce excelled

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[131] "Teens in the News," *Seventeen*, September 1951, 192.

[132] Gertrude Otto, "Miss Truman — Pianist." *The Christian Science Monitor*, July 5, 1952. ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Christian Science Monitor, p. 17

[133] *Cumberland Sunday Times,* Cumberland, Maryland, May 4, 1952, Newspapers.com. *The Pocono Record,* Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, April 22, 1952, Newspapers.com.

academically as an undergraduate, maintaining a 4.0 grade point average throughout her time at the University of Tulsa.[134]

Nearly five days after returning home from that East Coast tour with The Tulsa University Radio Chorus, Pearce went back to Chicago with her teacher, Helen Ringo, to audition for the Michaels Memorial Fund Music Competition, an event for various instruments.[135] While she was warming-up in a practice room at Steinway Hall on the day of that audition, her teacher, Helen Ringo, suffered a heart attack and passed away. Pearce recalls,

> My audition wasn't until that afternoon, and so I went back to the hotel. Some of the people that they had contacted in Tulsa had friends in Chicago, and they immediately jumped to my rescue and came to the hotel and helped me. They convinced me that she [Helen Ringo] would want me to go ahead and have the audition.[136]

Pearce followed the advice of those friends, performed the audition, and was subsequently named an alternate in the Michaels Memorial competition. Ultimately, as a result of that audition, she would receive an invitation to perform on the Chicago Theater of the Air of WGN, a weekly national radio program that featured operettas and musical theater and ran on the Mutual Broadcasting System.

Pearce's ability to perform under pressure in the Michaels Memorial competition despite the emotional turmoil of her teacher's sudden passing granted her an opportunity to play on a nationally syndicated radio show. This time, her performance of the Liszt

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[134] *The Tulsa Collegian*, Tulsa, Oklahoma, January 11, 1952.

[135] *Chicago Tribune*, Chicago, Illinois, May 15, 1952, Newspapers.com.

[136] Pearce, Interview 2 of 10, July 10, 2018.

Piano Concerto No. 1 in E-flat Major was broadcast nationwide, giving her what was likely the largest audience of her performing career. Pearce recalls,

> It was broadcast all over the country, [there] wasn't a television in those days. You could hear it on the West Coast, in the middle of the country. I was just thrilled. I played the Liszt again, and we had to cut it a bit because it was too long for the radio broadcast, but it turned out to be quite good.[137]

On August 10, 1952, an announcement for that WGN broadcast in the Chicago Tribune listed the program as follows: "Bruce Foote sang 'Almost Like Being in Love' and 'My Old Kentucky Home.' Miss Elvina Truman, who was alternate finalist in the recent Michaels Memorial Music award competition, played Liszt's 'Piano Concerto in E-flat.' The career performance artist, Mildred Hill of Philadelphia, sang the mad scene from 'Lucia di Lammermoor.'"[138]

THE VENGEROVA YEARS – NEW YORK CITY (1952-1955)

After the death of her piano professor, Helen Ringo, Pearce decided to leave the University of Tulsa in the middle of her degree and look elsewhere for a new teacher. While pondering her next step, she and her parents sought the advice of Guy Maier. He recommended to them that she audition with Isabelle Vengerova, a famous Russian teacher located in New York City whose students included Gary Graffman, Samuel Barber, Joseph Rezits, Lukas Foss, Abbey Simon, and Leonard Bernstein. Pearce performed a grueling two-hour audition for Vengerova, during which she played almost

[137] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

[138] *Chicago Tribune*, Chicago, Illinois, August 10, 1952, Newspapers.com.

her entire repertoire, including "a Bach Prelude and Fugue, a Beethoven Sonata (Op. 110), several Chopin Etudes and Chopin's F Minor Ballade, a Liszt Hungarian Rhapsody, a couple of Debussy Preludes, and portions of three piano concerti (Beethoven's First, the Schumann, and the Liszt E-flat.)"[139]

In the fall of 1952, Pearce moved to New York City to begin her studies with Vengerova. For the young pianist, acceptance into Vengerova's studio was a validation of her ability and pianism, placing her in the company of many esteemed professional musicians, pianists, and teachers. While a student of Vengerova from 1952 to 1955, Pearce continued to perform extensively throughout the New York City area, giving recitals at Carnegie Recital Hall, Steinway Hall, New England Women's Club at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City, The Kosciuszko Foundation, and The Barbizon Recital Hall.[140] Insights into many of these New York City performances are garnered from press releases in the Amarillo Sunday News Globe, as well as in marketing brochures that Pearce published many years later. See Appendix F for Pearce's promotional brochure.

In the spring of 1954, Pearce returned to her home state of Oklahoma to perform for her fraternity, Mu Phi Epsilon, on two separate occasions. An announcement for the first of those recitals highlighted the extent of her performance career, stating that she had

[139] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 241.

[140] *Amarillo Sunday News Globe*, Amarillo, Texas, November 25, 1956, Newspaperarchive.com.

performed in over forty concerts in fourteen states over the previous two years. The program for the March 2, 1954 concert consisted of the following repertoire:[141]

Choral Prelude 'I Call on Thee, Lord' by Bach-Busoni
Two Sonatas by Scarlatti
Sonata in G minor, Op. 22 by Schumann
Variations Brilliantes by Chopin
Two Preludes, Op. 25, no. 17 and 16 by Chopin
Ballade in F minor by Chopin
Soiree dans Grenade by Debussy
Jeux D'eau by Ravel
Hungarian Rhapsody No. 11 by Liszt

This program, which includes a substantial selection of major piano solo works, reveals that Pearce regularly performed artist-level works on concerts. When she returned to Oklahoma on April 20, 1954, to perform for the Mu Phi Epsilon fraternity again, the press announcement for that recital did not include the program. It did, however, indicate a busy performance schedule, stating that Pearce had a projected concert tour of the Southwest United States scheduled for early 1955.[142]

Pearce's experiences as a student of Vengerova influenced the trajectory of her career. Throughout her high school years and her time at the University of Tulsa, Pearce was intent on developing a career as a concert pianist. However, while working with Vengerova, she became plagued by self-doubt. It is unclear precisely why Pearce terminated lessons with Vengerova in 1955, but it is apparent that Vengerova's highly demanding teaching style, which is well-documented, played a role in Pearce's decision. Pearce recalls Vengerova's parting words, "I'm sorry you are leaving because I think I

[141] *The Daily Oklahoman,* Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, February 14, 1954, Newspapers.com.

[142] *The Record-Citizen*, Bristow, Oklahoma, April 15, 1954. Newspaperarchive.com.

might have been able to make a pianist out of you yet."[143] Pearce also states that after leaving Vengerova, "I didn't know whether I loved or hated music, but I knew that I never wanted to go near a piano again."[144] In 1995 when interviewed about her lessons with Vengerova by Joseph Rezits, Pearce shared the following sentiment: "I wish that more of today's institutional piano teachers—particularly those that work with majors—were as candid and forthright with their students about their prospects for future careers as was Vengerova."[145]

THE FRANCES CLARK YEARS (1955-1964)

Pearce's next career move was heavily influenced by another mentor: Frances Clark. Initially, when Pearce left Vengerova's studio in 1955, she planned to attend The Juilliard School, where she had been granted a partial scholarship. However, when Pearce shared her Juilliard plans with Clark, she was met with a counteroffer. Clark invited her to finish her degree and join the piano faculty at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey.

Pearce had met Clark at Guy Maier's summer workshops, where she had often performed as a student. Over the years, Pearce and Clark had developed a friendship, occasionally meeting for coffee in New York City when Clark was in town perusing the music stores. In 1955, Clark was the newly appointed chair of the piano department at

[143] Darling, "Beyond the Notes."

[144] Darling, "Beyond the Notes."

[145] Rezits, *Beloved Tyranna*, 97.

Westminster and was looking for accomplished pianists to join her staff. Pearce ultimately turned down the offer of a scholarship from Juilliard and accepted Clark's proposal. She enrolled in classes at Westminster, where she simultaneously finished her bachelor's degree and served on the teaching faculty. Pearce candidly recalls why Clark invited her to Westminster: "All she [Clark] wanted was somebody to teach that she knew, and [that she] knew how they played. She knew I would be good, probably."[146]

For Pearce, the self-doubts that arose during her studies with Vengerova subsided quite quickly. During her first semester teaching and studying under France Clark at Westminster Choir College, she continued to perform regularly, giving several major solo concerts and concerto performances. Pearce recalls, "I decided that I also wanted to resume performing. Frances [Clark] was 100 percent supportive of this idea. And bless her! It was she who was responsible for resuscitating my pre-Vengerova love of music and playing the piano." On November 19, 1955, Pearce presented her fourth concerto performance debut in four years with the Tulsa Philharmonic in Tulsa, Oklahoma, performing Felix Mendelssohn's *Piano Concerto No. 1 in G minor, Op. 25*.

On November 22, only three days after the performance with the Tulsa Philharmonic, Pearce performed a solo recital at the First Baptist Church in Oklahoma City for her music fraternity, Mu Phi Epsilon, to raise money for their scholarship fund.[147] The concert featured a Rondo by C.P.E. Bach, three Preludes by Debussy, two Etudes by Scriabin, Chopin's "Ocean" Etude, Liszt's *Sonetto 123 del Petrarca*, and

[146] Pearce, Interview, 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

[147] *The Daily Oklahoman,* Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, November 19, 1955, Newspapers.com.

Soiree de Vienna by Strauss/Grünfeld.[148] A newspaper post at the time stated that Pearce gave the concert as a "thank you" to the fraternity for a three-year scholarship she received from them while attending the University of Tulsa.[149]

On December 9, 1955, Pearce appeared as the piano concerto soloist with a symphony orchestra for the fifth time. As a featured performer with the Scotch Plains Symphony Orchestra in Scotch Plains, New Jersey, she gave her second performance of Felix Mendelssohn's *Piano Concerto No. 1 in G minor, Op. 25*.[150] In the spring of 1956, Pearce received an award in recognition of performances she had given in New York City. A significant honor, she was awarded the Josephine Fry Memorial Award from the New York City Congress of Piano Teachers. This award was bestowed on the "most outstanding young pianist to have appeared before their group in recital during a period of two years."[151]

On November 27, 1956, while a student and faculty member at Westminster, Pearce was featured as piano soloist with the Amarillo Symphony for the second time, performing *Piano Concerto No. 2 in G Minor, Op. 22* by Saint-Saëns. Tickets to the concert sold for $2.50. Promotional material in the Amarillo Daily News described her as "a gifted young artist and Tulsan — a young lady endowed with beauty, personality,

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[148] *The Daily Oklahoman,* Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, November 22, 1955, Newspapers.com.

[149] *Labor's Daily,* Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, November 22, 1955, Newspapers.com.

[150] *The Courier-News*, Bridgewater, New Jersey, December 7, 1955, Newspapers.com.

[151] *The Amarillo Globe-Times,* Amarillo, Texas, November 27, 1956, Newspaperarchive.com.

vivacity, poise and great talent."[152] Another review indicated that she performed two encores and that she "proved as smooth as a pianist as we are likely to find." For the concerto, the review stated that she "had a sureness of rhythm, naturalness and vitality."[153]

One highpoint of Pearce's three student years at Westminster Choir College was a solo performance she gave at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., on March 10, 1957. For that recital, Pearce recalls,

> I submitted the repertoire that I [wanted] to play and got a very nice letter back from the chairman, who was a conductor that signed people up for the evening concerts. He said that they would like something that was not so familiar to everyone, and to send them another program at some point that included some of the pieces of that time.[154]

In the end, the program for that concert, which was broadcast on the radio, consisted of the following repertoire:

Suite No. 5 in G major by Handel
Nocturne, Op. 62, no. 2 by Chopin
Etude, Op. 25, no. 12 by Chopin
Ballade no. 4 in F minor by Chopin
Poems of the Sea by Bloch
From the Diary of a Fly by Bartok
Musiques Nocturnes by Bartok
A Bit Tipsy by Bartok
Sonata No. 3 by Kabalevsky

Pearce recalls the landmark recital:

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[152] *The Amarillo Daily News,* Amarillo, Texas, November 27, 1956, Newspaperarchive.com.

[153] *The Amarillo Daily News*, Amarillo, Texas, November 28, 1956, Newspaperarchive.com.

[154] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

> For years they had a Saturday night concert series for everyone, and it was free. And I just remember it was a dark room except for the piano. I don't remember anything about it except that I went over, rehearsed in the morning, took a nap in the afternoon, and went back and played that night. I remember that I did okay. I was pleased with it. But those were the experiences that I got out of performing with the Chicago Symphony and the auditions, and it just proved to me that sometimes you can get things that are even better than winning an audition.[155]

Pearce cited the following glowing review in her marketing material later in life:

> Few recitals can boast the kind of playing we heard last night. Miss Truman's Handel was amply and nobly conceived. The Chopin pieces found seemingly inexhaustible technique, a striking sense of pacing and design, and tone that never lost its limpid warmth. Difficult tonal effects called for in the delectable excerpts from Bartok's 'Mikrokosmos' and in Bloch's 'Poems of the Sea' were superbly managed; and the final one of the Bloch pieces, as well as the Kabalevsky Sonata, were played with true virtuosity. She has had unusually good guidance – a highly gifted musician.[156]

Later that year, in November of 1957, Pearce returned to Tulsa to play the same program for a benefit concert for the Helen Ringo scholarship fund.[157]

Although she would continue to perform publicly throughout her life at workshops and conferences, that 1957 National Gallery of Art recital marked the end of Pearce's most ambitious period pursuing a professional performance career. Studying piano pedagogy with Frances Clark opened Pearce's eyes to a new approach to teaching, which then began to consume more and more of her time and attention. Gradually, Pearce's performance career took a back seat to her teaching career as her energies and focus were redirected toward piano pedagogy. Pearce explains, "By the time I was involved with the Princeton bit [Frances Clark], [performing] was secondary to me. I

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[155] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

[156] Frank C. Campbell, critic for the *Evening Star* in Washington, D. C.

[157] *The Daily Oklahoman*, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, November 3, 1957, Newspapers.com.

wanted to play, but I knew I couldn't do both. But Frances thought I should play if I wanted to, and so I did, but not much."[158]

Frances Clark's summer workshop tours, which were sponsored by Summy-Birchard, offered Pearce an outlet for continued public performances. Each summer, Pearce and her colleagues were expected to travel extensively around the United States, presenting a vast number of workshops promoting newly published materials form the Frances Clark Library. Clark admired the performance abilities of Pearce and her Westminster colleagues and decided to highlight them through recitals, which were scheduled as part of the annual workshop tours. Given her extensive concertizing history, Pearce was perfectly prepared to fulfill that role. Pearce recalls, "There was Doris Martin and Martha Braden, a two-piano team who were fabulous. They played, I played, someone else played. I think we presented at least two concerts at every workshop. So that forced us to keep practicing. Frances had ways of making us practice."[159]

While touring with the Frances Clark workshops during the summer of 1958, Pearce was featured on the Claremont Summer Session Artist Series.[160] That same year she also performed at the Lake Texoma Lodge, where local newspapers described her as a "Tulsa Pianist who has gained attention in the national limelight."[161]

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[158] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

[159] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

[160] *The San Bernardino County Sun,* San Bernardino, California, July 18, 1958, Newspapers.com.

[161] *The Daily Oklahoman,* Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, July 27, 1958, Newspapers.com.

From 1959 to 1962, Pearce participated annually in Clark's summer workshops. In 1959, workshops and recitals took place in Minneapolis, Minnesota; Claremont, California; Kingston, Oklahoma; Brevard, North Carolina; Salina and Dodge City, Kansas; and Amarillo, Texas. Documentation from The New School for Music Study states that for the summer of 1960, seventy-five workshops were scheduled in major cities throughout the United States and Canada.[162] For the summer workshops of 1961, Pearce presented and performed in Nashville, Tennessee; Waco, Texas; Orlando, Florida; Lumberton, North Carolina; Mansfield, Ohio; and Boston, Massachusetts. In 1962, Pearce, along with six of her Westminster colleagues, gave a total of 195 one-day workshops.[163] It is unclear via available documentation whether or not Pearce performed recitals during each of these summers.

THE ILLINOIS YEARS (1964-PRESENT)

Ultimately, The Frances Clark Summer Workshops gave Pearce confidence in both her teaching ability and her preparedness as a pedagogical presenter. As a pianist, Pearce was adept at performing in front of large audiences. However, these summer workshops also gave her experience as a public speaker and presenter. She would greatly benefit from those skills throughout the remainder of her career.

After eight years of working with Clark, Pearce found herself seeking a new beginning after marrying John Pearce in 1963. John joined her in New Jersey for one year

[162] Archives, The New School for Music Study, Kingston, NJ.

[163] *Edmonton Journal*, Edmonton, Alberta, July 28, 1962, Newspapers.com.

of her time at The New School for Music Study. However, in 1964, the couple moved to the Midwest after John accepted a teaching position in Evanston, Illinois. The following year, the two of them relocated to Naperville after John accepted another teaching position at Naperville High School. Pearce has made her home in Naperville ever since and continues to reside there today.

From 1967 to 1969, while teaching privately and on faculty at North Central College, Pearce continued to present various workshops, recitals, and lecture-recitals on her own regionally, including in Janesville, Wisconsin and Hinsdale, Illinois. On September 24, 1969, for example, she gave a recital for the Milton College Piano Teachers Workshop. The program included Handel's *Prelude, Minuet and Allegro* (from Trois Lecons), Chopin's *Waltz in E minor*, Opus Posthumous, Chopin's *Ballade in F minor, Opus 52*, Pinto's *Scenas Infantis*, Debussy's *La plus gue lente*, Tauriello's *Toccata*, and *Four Small Piano Pieces* by Liszt.[164]

In the 1970s, Pearce returned to the symphony concert stage as a featured soloist twice with the DuPage Symphony in Wheaton, Illinois. At age thirty-eight, on May 3, 1970, she performed Robert Schumann's *Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 54* with that orchestra.[165] A press release for the concert stated that Pearce had previously performed in the Illinois towns of Aurora, Hinsdale, Homewood, Mount Prospect, Naperville, and Northwestern University, and at the Eleanor Club in Chicago. Four years later, on May 11, 1974, Pearce returned as a soloist with the DuPage Symphony for a performance of

[164] *Janesville Daily Gazette,* Janesville, Wisconsin, September 22, 1969, Newspapers.com.

[165] *The Bensenville Register*, Bensenville, Illinois, April 29, 1970, Newspapers.com.

Felix Mendelssohn's *Piano Concerto No. 1 in G minor, Op. 25*, her third career performance of that concerto.

From the 1970s to the 2000s, Pearce continued to travel regionally, nationally, and internationally, presenting both recitals and workshops. Documentation of all of her performances during this time is lacking, but several performances are recorded in online newspaper archives. In addition to bringing her talent to new audiences, she also returned to familiar locales. In April of 1980, she presented a recital, lecture, and workshop to the Oklahoma City Private Music Teachers Association.[166] She returned to Princeton in 1988, 1994, and 1996 to participate as a clinician in Westminster Choir College's Summer Session.[167] In 1994, she played works by Brahms and Beethoven on a recital and in 1996 she gave a lecture recital on waltz form.[168]

One performance experience Pearce remembers fondly took place at the National Conference on Piano Pedagogy in 1990, where she performed Chopin's *Nocturne in C-sharp minor* and *Waltz in E minor* on an evening recital. She shared the stage that night with piano pedagogy professors from around the country, including Tony Caramia, James Lyke, and Phyllis Lehrer.[169] Pearce recalls that concert:

> I was really enjoying being a part of it [the recital] and remember it just as vividly as if it happened yesterday. I remember how still it got before I played anything. When I went to the piano, I sat down. Suddenly the room was just… not a soul was in there. I'm not sure why that happened, but I'm convinced that it did

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[166] *The Daily Oklahoman,* Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, April 7, 1980, Newspapers.com.

[167] *Town Topics*, Princeton, New Jersey, July 17, 1996, Archive.org.

[168] *Town Topics,* Princeton, New Jersey, June 15, 1994, Archive.org.

[169] Richard Chronister and Linda Timmons, ed*., National Conference on Piano Pedagogy: Proceedings and Reference* (Princeton, NJ: The National Conference on Piano Pedagogy, 1991), 14.

> happen. I recall thinking, 'what is it about some people's performance that causes people to want to hear what they have to say and other performances that have many fine qualities but are not overly captivating?' [It's] something about what a person is and takes to the instrument that other people want. What is that thing? What are we doing to inspire it? I believe that one tends to play better than one does ordinarily when you sense that you have an audience that really is with you.[170]

International audiences also had the opportunity to hear Pearce perform recitals. In 1999, Pearce was invited to be the keynote speaker and recitalist for the Fourth Australian National Piano Pedagogy Conference, held at Western Australia University in Perth, Australia.[171] Biographies in Pearce's teaching collections also indicate that she performed in Taipei, Taiwan, although the circumstances and dates of those performances are unknown.

PERSPECTIVES ON PEARCE'S PIANISM

While there are no extant recordings of Pearce's performances available in the public domain, it is clear from reviews and other contemporaneous materials that she was perceived as possessing exceptional talent as a pianist and her performances resonated with large audiences. From her humble beginnings playing recitals in her hometown of Tulsa, Oklahoma, to her highly successful concerto performances in Chicago, Pearce's exuberance and love for the music she played, as well as her deep understanding of the composer's intent, was always at the forefront of her preparation and presentation of piano repertoire. A former colleague at *Keyboard Companion*, Craig Sale, had the

[170] Pearce, Interview 8 of 10, July 11, 2018.

[171] Elvina Truman Pearce, *Excursions Book 2*, (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Music, 2003), 25.

opportunity to her Pearce perform on several occasions. His recollection of her performances sums up her ability: “Her playing was filled with stunning elegance and great flair.”[172] In retrospect, even though Pearce’s performance aspirations were squelched by her studies with Vengerova, her tenacious spirit and studies with Frances Clark allowed her to reclaim her love for performing.

The years Pearce spent dedicated to becoming a concert pianist also prepared her to become a successful teacher and writer. She admits that as a teenager, she did not think much about how to practice for performances. However, Pearce says she learned from Vengerova how to practice for concerts efficiently. And although those lessons were often discouraging, Pearce was able to take what she learned from Vengerova about good practice habits and, with help from Frances Clark's tutelage, pass them on to her students.

As a teacher, Pearce often drew from her own performance experiences, identifying and distilling Vengerova’s successful practice strategies into techniques she passed on to her students. She would go on to be considered an expert on home practice, contributing essays on the subject to *Keyboard Companion* for sixteen years.

[172] Craig Sale Questionnaire.

CHAPTER 4: PERSPECTIVES ON PEARCE AS TEACHER AND PEDAGOGUE

INTRODUCTION

Informed by her teachers, most notably Frances Clark and Isabelle Vengerova, Pearce took a practical approach to her teaching philosophy. She believes that successful music educators prepare students to become their own teachers. In her words: "Great teachers lead us to the threshold of self-discovery and thereby make us aware that all really important answers lie within, not outside of ourselves."[173] This overarching belief system informs her approach to piano education.

[173] Rezits, *Beloved Tyranna*, 97.

As an active clinician, Pearce taught pre-collegiate students, pedagogy students at the university level, and piano teachers around the world. Her influence spread far and wide, making information regarding her teaching practices ample and accessible via questionnaires filled out by her former students, colleagues, and close associates. In first-hand interviews, Pearce also described her approach to teaching each of these categories of students in detail.

Across these diverse teaching experiences, Pearce was steadfastly dedicated to the following overarching goals: refining the teacher/student lesson experience, improving students' home practice habits, promoting the benefits of group teaching, and developing critical thinking skills in students that would benefit them at the piano and beyond. In pursuit of these goals, Pearce often emphasized the importance of teaching students how to practice with purpose, a technique she referred to as "self-directed practice."[174] This includes training students to identify the cause of a problem, equipping them with practice tools to fix the problem, and guiding them to implement those tools independently in their practice to achieve desired results.

Pearce's pedagogical approach is student-centered and emphasizes discovery learning, a technique that builds on a student's existing knowledge and skillset when introducing new concepts. In practice, this calls for a teacher to gently and organically guide a student from the known to the unknown, as opposed to presenting new material didactically. This approach encourages less teacher-talk and teacher-telling, leaving more room for student self-discovery.

[174] Elvina Truman Pearce, "Self-Directed Practice: A Key to both Student Success and Motivation," *American Music Teacher* 54, no. 2 (Oct 2004).

Pearce's other best teaching practices include using rote learning as an integral part of the note-reading process, a procedure she referred to as "rote to note." She also espouses extensive analytical study as an important first step when introducing new repertoire to a student. Armed with knowledge and plans derived from careful score study and analysis, she believes students are better equipped to experience success during the process of learning. She also sought to be an effective teacher through proper sequencing when planning students' lessons. Finally, as outlined above, she believes in limiting teacher-talk in lessons and suggests that teachers rely more on providing aural models through performance and demonstrations at the keyboard.

TEACHER INFLUENCES

To better understand how Pearce arrived at her pedagogy philosophy, it is vital to look at the teaching styles of formative educators she worked with during her student years. Craig Sale, a longtime colleague of Pearce, explains: "I believe she was most shaped by the experiences that she had with her own teachers. She took what she learned from the good and the bad and created an approach that provided positive, successful experiences with music at the piano."[175] Sale's statement sums up the amalgamation of experiences Pearce encountered as a student while preparing for a career as a pianist, and later as a teacher.

When discussing formative experiences that shaped her approach to education, Pearce references five memorable teachers: Jane Harnish, a first-grade elementary school

[175] Craig Sale Questionnaire.

teacher, her piano teachers Lenore Hunter, Helen Ringo, Isabelle Vengerova, and her pedagogy mentor, Frances Clark.[176]

Pearce admires the way her first-grade classroom teacher, Jane Harnish, demanded excellence from all of her students and was dedicated to helping all of them experience success. Pearce sees those qualities as interconnected, two parts of a recipe that led Harnish's students to experience a sense of accomplishment and pride. She says she remembers Harnish "…As one who always expected and demanded great things of them, which ultimately resulted in their success."[177] In her own teaching philosophy, Pearce mimics Harnish's emphasis on high standards and expectations.

Pearce describes her relationship with her first piano teacher, Lenore Hunter, as nearly perfect and filled with "happy, positive, and productive experiences."[178] It was in that supportive environment she first learned to read and play music, a foundational learning experience that laid the groundwork for how she would go on to plan and facilitate her own beginning students' lessons. Later, as a piano teacher and pedagogy teacher, she would preach about the importance of positive lesson experiences for students.

Pearce's second piano teacher was Helen Ringo, a professor at the University of Tulsa, with whom she studied for eight years. Pearce recalls Ringo's emphasis on sound quality and producing a tone that was "never harsh, never percussive," something that

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[176] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 239-43.

[177] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 239.

[178] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 240.

became a priority for Pearce as a pianist and teacher. From her lessons with Ringo, Pearce also discovered that the environment in which a lesson is taught is as important as the contents of a lesson. Ringo's love of music permeated her lessons and proved contagious — a motivating factor Pearce felt was essential.[179]

When recalling lessons with her third piano teacher, Isabelle Vengerova, Pearce describes a seemingly contradictory atmosphere that was demoralizing in some respects, and positive in others. In short, with Vengerova, Pearce experienced some pedagogical practices she wanted to emulate, and others she decidedly did not. During her three years of study with Vengerova, 1952-1955, Pearce explains that she "experienced both the best of times and the worst of times. The best of times were the days when I did *not* have a lesson. The worst of times were the lesson days when Mme.'s persistent dissection of my playing mechanism and aural awareness became so comprehensive that I couldn't even play a scale or a two-note slur to her satisfaction."[180]

Pearce began lessons with Vengerova intending to pursue a performance career. However, their time together ultimately nudged her away from that goal. In contrast to the positive, encouraging atmosphere Helen Ringo had provided, Pearce describes lessons with Vengerova as often terrorizing and discouraging. Ultimately, Vengerova's pedagogical approach left the young pianist doubting her abilities as a musician and performer.

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[179] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 241.

[180] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 242.

In a 1979 article for *The Piano Quarterly*, Pearce recapped several of the positive ways in which Vengerova influenced her.

> One of the great gifts of time is perspective, and now, looking back on my study with Vengerova, what do I remember the most? I remember the gifts of patience and self-discipline that she helped me acquire. I remember the birth of artistic standards that allowed me to continue to reach for the stars.[181]

Pearce also recalls that Vengerova's tutelage shaped her musicianship and her understanding of the importance of careful score study.

> I remember the opening of ears that *really* hear, and eyes that *really* see the notation on the printed page. And I remember a growing awareness of respect for the score as a representation of the composer's intentions and my responsibility as a musician to convey these intentions in performance.[182]

Vengerova's approach to the art of practice also left a mark on Pearce. She recalls,

> I also remember countless approaches to practice that replaced endless hours of mindless repetition and helped to ensure maximum success in a minimum amount of time.[183]

Pearce's approach to technique was also formed by her time with Vengerova. She says,

> Last, but by no means least, I remember the painful years spent in pursuit of the 'Vengerova Technique,' an acute awareness of the function of each part of the playing mechanism and a knowledge of how to integrate all parts into a workable whole to deal effectively with any type of pianistic problem that presents itself in a piece of music.[184]

In a separate account, Pearce describes the Vengerova technique in more detail:

> I also learned a technical approach which was based on beginning tone production *on* the keys as opposed to lifting up individual fingers before

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[181] Rezits, *Beloved Tyranna*, 96-97.

[182] Rezits, *Beloved Tyranna*, 96-97.

[183] Rezits, *Beloved Tyranna*, 96-97.

[184] Rezits, *Beloved Tyranna*, 96-97.

> striking the keys. The 'on-the-key' approach produces a true legato and a non-percussive sound, both of which are characteristic of Vengerova's students.[185]

With Vengerova, Pearce experienced first-hand how a teacher can both negatively and positively affect a student. From Vengerova, she learned that draconian, punitive tactics only serve to demoralize students. However, she also learned the usefulness of replacing mindless repetition with thoughtful and purpose-driven practice, and of analyzing a piece thoroughly before learning it. These experiences with Vengerova, the good and the bad, inform Pearce's teaching philosophy.

Pearce spent nine years working closely with her next influential teacher, piano pedagogue Frances Clark. Under Clark's tutelage at Westminster Choir College (1955-1960) and The New School for Music Study (1960-1964), Pearce embraced piano pedagogy as a new career path. In these settings, Clark supervised Pearce as she gave private lessons, teacher workshops, and feedback to pedagogy students. "I just think everything that I came to believe as a student of Clark has become more apparent," Pearce says. "When I first came [to Westminster Choir College], I didn't know what the word pedagogy even meant. I began to learn that there's an art and a science in teaching people how to teach, and I was grateful that I was involved in that."[186] From Clark, Pearce picked up pedagogical tools both practical and philosophical. She recalls, "In terms of teacher training and what studios should include, etc. I feel very, very wealthy to

[185] Darling, "Beyond the Notes."

[186] Pearce, Interview 8 of 10, July 11, 2018.

have had that experience with [Clark] for so many years. When you signed up, it was not just for a class."[187]

Under Clark's mentorship, Pearce grew into a teacher who was obsessed with studying how children learn and how best to instruct average-age beginners. She adds, "I think what people fail to realize with Frances is that it was preparation for life. She was much more interested in keeping up with the times and finding out what was going on out there than I was, for example."[188] Pearce was inspired by Clark's hunger to learn as much about life as possible and to apply those broader life lessons to the study of music. In her own teaching, she incorporated Clark's philosophical and practical ideals, seeking to fully understand and appreciate a child's learning process and how piano study fits into the larger picture of life.

The fusion of Vengerova's and Clark's influence molded Pearce's teaching approach. Vengerova helped Pearce achieve high standards in her own piano playing, an experience Pearce emulated as she consistently demanded the best from her own students. From Vengerova, Pearce also learned how to be efficient and effective while practicing technical exercises and repertoire. Furthermore, from Clark, she gained a philosophical understanding of sequencing, the importance of healthy student practice habits, and practical tools for how to guide students to become independent musicians. Ed Darling, a former student of Pearce's at Westminster Choir College, provided the

[187] Pearce, Interview 4 of 10, July 11, 2018.

[188] Pearce, Interview 4 of 10, July 11, 2018.

following summary of how Pearce's most influential teachers shaped her teaching philosophy:

> Pearce's confidence was based, in part, I believe, in her 'survival' of studying with Isabelle Vengerova when Elvina was young. She always says she learned much from Vengerova, but it was a difficult time. She came out of that and gained confidence in herself and her playing. Her years of teaching pedagogy students and teachers, in performing, in composing, in writing and editing, in working with high-achieving colleagues like Frances Clark, Louise Goss, David Kraehenbuehl, Richard Chronister gave her confidence. Her ability to learn pieces through a wealth of approaches in practicing gave her confidence.[189]

Pearce fused her own student experiences with the philosophies she absorbed from Clark, eventually finding her own voice and unique perspectives and contributions as a pedagogue.

TEACHING PRECEPTS

Influenced by her teachers and her own extensive practice, performance, and teaching experiences, Pearce developed distinct pedagogical views. This section will define and present the central tenets of her teaching approach. Among the topics covered will be Pearce's dedication to ensuring effective and efficient learning habits in her piano and pedagogy students and how she did so (e.g., a student-centric approach built on a foundation of discovery learning). Pearce thinks logically about sequencing concepts and repertoire, and so this section will also cover her practical approaches to introducing new repertoire and teaching technical skills like scales and arpeggios. Additional teaching

[189] Ed Darling Questionnaire.

philosophies covered here will include Pearce's focus on musicality from the very first lesson, and her dedication to developing independent practice habits in her students.

Pearce describes her students as her most significant source of motivation, explaining that she felt inspired daily by each individual she encountered in her studio. Describing that thought process, she said, "…the problems that we had last week, are we still going to have them in the lesson today? And what can I do to solve them, and what can I do to prevent them?"[190] Pearce's former students recognized and appreciated the individualized manner in which she approached each one of them. One former student, Kim Nagy, recalls, "Elvina [Pearce] wanted the absolute best for her students and from her students. She wanted all of us to experience the great joy she took from being an exceptional musician and teacher."[191]

As a teacher of teachers for over twenty years at North Central College and fourteen years at Northwestern University, Pearce developed a keen understanding of what to look for in young teachers and how to help them develop and improve as music educators.[192] In 2004, Pearce participated in a panel discussion at MTNA's first Pedagogy Saturday in which she was asked to describe qualities she noticed and observed in promising pedagogy students. The following list, taken from the Editor's Page of the

[190] Pearce, Interview 8 of 10, July 11, 2018.

[191] Kim Nagy Questionnaire.

[192] Rebecca Skirvin, e-mail message to author, October 2, 2019. Documentation of Pearce's time at North Central College (NCC) is inconclusive. This email states that she was on faculty from 1974-1979. Pearce then served as director of the Division of Preparatory and Community Music in the continuing education program from 1980 until 1989 and as a consultant from 1989 to at least 1999. One former student indicated studying with Pearce at NCC from 1965-1966.

Winter 2002 edition of *Keyboard Companion*, gives insight into her response to that prompt. According to Pearce, the following questions were vital in evaluating teachers:[193]

1. How much lesson time is spent hearing and making music as opposed to just talking about it?
2. How successfully does the teacher prepare the student for new things that will appear in the coming week's assignment?
3. How successful is the teacher in bringing about obvious changes in the repertoire heard in the lesson?
4. When working on pieces, does the teacher try to make too many points rather than zeroing in on just one or two and really making them?
5. Does the teacher get too refined too soon?
6. How effectively does the teacher structure the lesson content and distribution of lesson time?
7. What is the quality of the lesson environment and the student/teacher relationship?
8. Final questions to ask oneselves as the student leaves the lesson:
    1) Did the student leave today's lesson having experienced a lot of music making beyond the notes, as well as the fun of discovery?
    2) Did he/she leave with a clear idea of the coming week's goals and how to practice to achieve them?
    3) Above all, did the student leave the lesson feeling successful?

Pearce's evaluation questions provide direct insight into her definition of effective and efficient teaching.

Student-centric

Pearce takes a student-centered approach to lessons, advising her pedagogy students to consider an individual student's unique needs rather than taking a one-size-fits-all approach to lessons. "She taught me the importance of teaching the student — not the method," former pedagogy student Karen Walker says. "Each student learns in a different way and we must have the flexibility to inspire our students. There were no

[193] Elvina Truman Pearce, "The Editor's Page," *Keyboard Companion* 13, no. 4 (Winter 2002), 3-4.

'bells and whistles.' Just good, solid pedagogy."[194] Walker recalls Pearce making this point humorously by saying, "You cannot teach an owl the same way that you teach a monkey!"

Many of Pearce's former pedagogy students vividly recall her dedication to student-centered pedagogy. Camille Conforti, a former piano major from North Central College, explains Pearce's precision when guiding student teachers, "I learned to be as clear, yet concise, as possible during the lesson and make sure it was 'student' focused."[195] Amy Glennon, Educational Director at The New School for Music Study, also stresses this vital part of Pearce's pedagogy: "After her time with Frances Clark, [Pearce] further developed her own ideas, focusing on student-centered learning and highlighting the importance of developing student independence." [196]

Other former students expanded on this, offering further insight into how central this student-focused approach is to Pearce's teaching. Kim Nagy, former private student and later pedagogy student of Pearce's provided more definition as to what student-centered means to Pearce: "Her overarching goal was student independence and student-centered lessons. She asked the student questions. She asked them to actually listen to their own playing – to adjust on their own."[197] Emily Jane Katayama, a former high school student of Pearce's, explains the impact this student-centric teaching approach had on her and how this student-centered approach encourages thoughtfulness. "I have found

[194] Karen Walker Questionnaire.

[195] Camille Conforti Questionnaire.

[196] Amy Glennon Questionnaire.

[197] Kim Nagy Questionnaire.

that many students are overburdened and over-scheduled to the point of entering their lessons shut down and simply wanted to be told what do to and when. But Elvina [Pearce] encouraged (and required) us students to think, and we were all the better for it."[198] These accounts reveal how consistently Pearce promoted and practiced student-centric teaching.

Self-discovery

At the heart of Pearce's student-centric pedagogical approach was a dedication to encouraging student self-discovery. Pearce believed it is far more valuable to provide a student with the tools to make their own informed musical decisions than to tell them explicitly how to shape a phrase or precisely how to execute a dynamic marking. When students experience self-discovery, she believed, they gain a sense of pride and ownership over new repertoire, technique, or concepts. On the contrary, she believed that when teachers simply tell students what to do without helping them experience self-discovery, they promote passive learning resulting in uninspired performances.

In an interview, Pearce gave a vivid description of how she helped one student achieve self-discovery while working on Mozart's "Fantasy in D minor."[199] The student was not grasping or communicating the larger structure of the piece early in the learning process. Instead of telling the student exactly how to shape the piece, Pearce guided them to come to their own unique understanding of its structure by asking strategic questions. She asked the student to consider how each section of the piece differed, and then asked

[198] Emily Jane Katayama Questionnaire.

[199] Pearce, Interview 8 of 10, July 11, 2018.

them to demonstrate those differences. Then, Pearce played the piece for the student and asked them to describe what they heard and compare and contrast her interpretation with theirs. In this way, she encourages the student to listen critically and make their own decisions about the piece rather than follow instructions blindly. When the student then experimented with new interpretations, she asked them to articulate their experience, which inevitably led them to make their own decisions. Pearce explains,

> There's very little of just my saying play this passage all forte. Or taper the ends of these phrases. Why do you taper the end of a phrase? The answer to those questions can be determined by every student's studies if they study long enough with a good enough teacher. And the more they learn about what to do with situations, the more interested they're going to become in what they do, not in what the teacher does or what the teacher tells them to do, but what they experience.[200]

By guiding students to a deeper and more personal understanding of musicality, Pearce nudges them toward becoming self-informed, lifelong musicians with the ability to perform musically, which is ultimately her goal.

Sequencing

As a teacher, Pearce was skilled at effectively sequencing concepts in lessons, an essential tool for encouraging self-discovery in students. On this front, Pearce was heavily influenced by her time working with Frances Clark to develop the *Frances Clark Library Keyboard Literature* books. That process required Pearce to consider sequencing thoughtfully and analytically, enhancing her ability to break down complex musical concepts and organize and present them to students in a useful, logical manner.

[200] Pearce, Interview 8 of 10, July 11, 2018.

Several of Pearce's former students point to her ability to develop lesson plans and create practical practice assignments as examples of her talent for sequencing. Karen Walker, a former master's student at Northwestern, says Pearce influenced her teaching style in the following manner: "She opened up the world to me in an invigorating way. She empowered each of her students through experiences and practical advice. Nothing trendy or gimmicky about it — sheer logic and sequential learning through discovery."[201] Walker lists several other defining characteristics in Pearce's pedagogical approach: "The sequential understanding of piano pedagogy for young beginning students — practical application and introduction to piano study. Also, the importance of careful, thoughtful planning for each lesson. Each student will learn differently, and therefore your teaching must be adaptable."[202]

Pearce's meticulous approach to sequencing was particularly useful in developing lesson plans. Camille Conforti, a former student from North Central College recalls, "She was very detailed in her approach about how we, as future teachers, should organize our lesson plans."[203] Walker explains further, "Expectations were made clear at every lesson. Elvina [Pearce] had a way of setting the student up for success through the very specific nature of her assignments. Practice strategies were clearly stated throughout every stage of development."[204] Julie Rieth, a former graduate student at Northwestern, defines Pearce's careful planning and deep understanding of how to achieve goals, "Her

[201] Karen Walker Questionnaire.

[202] Karen Walker Questionnaire.

[203] Camille Conforti Questionnaire.

[204] Karen Walker Questionnaire.

thoughtfulness in her approach and sequencing made it easier to reach the goals she was setting."[205] In addition to these first-hand accounts, evidence of Pearce's talent for sequencing appears in lesson plans she generated for group classes and distributed to pedagogy students.[206] Sequencing is an integral part of her pedagogical practice, a tool she uses in conjunction with a student-centric approach to foster student self-discovery and efficiency in student practice.

Repertoire Introduction

Pearce's emphasis on appropriately introducing new repertoire to students is heavily informed by her intense studies with Vengerova in New York City. Pearce recalls that, when she was a student of Vengerova's, she was required to complete a full analysis of each new piece of music before starting to learn it in order to better inform practice strategies. From Vengerova, Pearce learned that a useful repertoire introduction was key to efficient learning and practicing.

Pearce places great significance on "initial experiences," a focus that informs the way she introduces each new piece of music to a student. She believes that laying concrete musical foundations from the very start is invaluable. She explains: "What does that piece mean to him when he's working it out from the beginning? And how effective is he in his work out of his piece because of it?"[207] Pearce believes that those first

[205] Julie Rieth Questionnaire.

[206] Julie Rieth's Pedagogy Class Notebook. Email scans were provided by Rieth dating from March 3-10, 2020.

[207] Pearce, Interview 8 of 10, July 11, 2018.

impressions in the learning process are crucial to the success a student might achieve with a piece of music.

Pearce explains her own justification for analyzing repertoire during the introduction stage in more detail,

> I would like to think little children that are learning how to analyze their music grow up and create beautiful music rather than people who just say, here's a piece, you learn it and play it for me. And oh, that was good, I think you should crescendo more here. No, let's find out why, not just do it because the teacher said to. Those are the kinds of things that make music exciting to students. There's too much telling and doing, but not experiencing what it is all about. The performers that I have heard over the years that I have the greatest respect for are not the ones who just played the most notes in the shortest amount of time but had something to say with those notes.[208]

Pearce makes a point of noting in interviews that this philosophy was not inherent in her. Rather, it grew out of her experiences as a student and teacher. She says those same experiences also led her to a deep respect for and understanding of the power of music study. That, she believes, should be a piano teacher's first priority.

Another aspect of Pearce's approach to repertoire introduction involves extracting musical elements that might pose technical problems for students. Rieth explains Pearce's approach, "Repertoire should be carefully analyzed so its difficulties are known before it is assigned. Those difficulties should be taught before they appear in repertoire. Sequencing is essential."[209]

Amy Glennon, Educational Director at The New School for Music Study, gives specific details into Pearce's approach when learning new repertoire, saying,

> One area that appears to me to diverge from Clark's philosophy is Pearce's belief in the importance of subdividing when learning new repertoire. The

[208] Pearce, Interview 8 of 11, July 18, 2018.

[209] Julie Rieth Questionnaire.

> routine: find the "smallest note value" and set the metronome to click on this note value at a tempo that allows for no errors (thinking tempo). My recollection was that Clark did not mention subdividing as much as feeling the larger beat, and I do not recall the same intense focus on metronome work.[210]

A former student of Pearce's at Westminster Choir College, June Frank Tipton, recalls the inspiring and accessible way Pearce introduced challenging repertoire. "Like the Bartók Sonatina — that was not typical of the pieces that I usually played, and it was demanding for me. But she was very good at directing me exactly what I needed to do," Tipton says. "She was also patient when I was struggling with something. I enjoyed that Bartók piece and studying it with her. I really did."[211]

For a more in-depth discussion on Pearce's suggested best practices for repertoire introduction, see pages 125-128 in Chapter 5.

Practice

When asked what sets Pearce apart from other teachers, her former students underscored her ability to diagnose problems and provide solutions through effective practice strategies. Kim Nagy submitted:

> Her ability to break a piece apart into components and develop practice steps to learn quickly and efficiently was revelatory to me. From the very beginning pieces in 'Time to Begin' to the Schumann Concerto, she helped her students break it down, so nothing seemed inaccessible.[212]

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[210] Amy Glennon Questionnaire.

[211] June Frank Tipton, 2019, Interviewed by Amy Glennon. Accessed March 30, 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GMVChDzlfRE&feature=youtu.be

[212] Kim Nagy Questionnaire.

After a new piece was introduced through analysis and teacher performance, preparation for a week of practice was the next order of business. Pearce guided students to experience effective practice procedures during the lesson, a teaching technique she believes presents the strongest opportunity for a teacher to make a meaningful contribution. "It's what you have them do in the lesson," she says. [213]

Pearce's students vividly recall the ways in which she shaped their practice habits and strategies. Katayama explains that Pearce insisted on establishing a practice plan, "Elvina [Pearce] always stressed the importance of having a strategy in place before mindlessly playing!"[214] Conforti recounts Pearce's explanation for the importance of practicing, "Piano pedagogy involves, more than anything else, proper practice techniques. If that is not stressed at the lesson, student performance success and ability is limited."[215] Reith points out Pearce's diagnostic strengths, writing that, "Pearce was very good at honing in on exactly what the problem was and eliciting solutions for addressing the problem. She was never one to let students off the hook, but she was kind, enthusiastic, and fun while doing so. She never lost sight of her goals and knew how to teach others to reach those goals. She made students think critically for themselves."[216]

For more details regarding specific practice strategies, see pages 153-159 in Chapter 6.

[213] Pearce, Interview 8 of 10, July 11, 2018.

[214] Emily Jane Katayama Questionnaire.

[215] Camille Conforti Questionnaire.

[216] Julie Rieth Questionnaire.

Modeling

Aurally and physically modeling concepts and repertoire is a key component to Pearce's effectiveness as a teacher. She sees the process of introducing each new piece as laying the groundwork for any potential success that can be achieved during at-home practice. For Pearce, this means that she typically performs new pieces for her students in order to ignite their imagination, provide an aural model, and inspire them to practice. Pearce explains, "If it was a piece that I wanted the students to play in recital, I would always perform it. But that doesn't mean that the student will listen to my performance and learn from it. The main reason I want them to hear it is I want them to be as excited about playing it as I was."[217] Pearce also voices concern that teacher performances of a student's pieces in a lesson might be the only time that student is exposed to sophisticated musical performances of their repertoire, a vitally important means for piquing a student's interest in a given piece of music.

Stephanie Myers, who observed Pearce's beginning group classes during her master's degree at Northwestern University, explains Pearce's dynamic approach to aural modeling,

> I remember when she was introducing 'forte and piano' to beginners, she demonstrated with such enthusiasm that even those of us who were observing her almost jumped. Her *forte* was so loud —we were never allowed to say that word, instead [were advised to say] 'big sound' — and energetic as opposed to her *piano*. She demonstrated [that] in her body language as well. These seem like such normal things but left such an impression. I realized this type of teaching is not done by every teacher.[218]

[217] Pearce, Interview 7 of 10, July 11, 2018.

[218] Stephanie Myers Questionnaire.

Pearce's ability to model convincingly in a wide range of styles and tone colors grew out of her own extensive training as a performer. Two of Pearce's students highlight the unique tone and color Pearce drew from the piano when modeling. Susanne Baker, a former graduate student from Northwestern says, "She always demonstrated with the highest musicality, wonderful tone, and in the most professional way."[219] Nagy explains, "She also has a clear concept of what sound she wants in every piece. Her color palette is vast, and she gets the same from students."[220]

Pearce's teaching approach is also composer-centric. She believes students are more apt to play musically when they pay careful attention to the composer's intent as outlined in the score. This emphasis may have been informed by Pearce's own work as a composer. She often gave her compositions evocative titles that were designed to inspire students' imaginations. Modeling that expressivity in the lesson is key. She explains, "Most of the talking at the lesson is done at the piano by hearing the sounds of what I want the student to experience and project in their performance."[221] Here again, Clark's influence on Pearce is apparent. Clark was also a proponent of minimizing teacher talk and maximizing demonstrations in lessons.

Teacher Talk

Pearce was a proponent of the efficiency of language, insisting that student teachers under her supervision minimize teacher talk during lessons as much as possible.

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[219] Susanne Baker Questionnaire.

[220] Kim Nagy Questionnaire.

[221] Pearce, Interview 8 of 10, July 11, 2018.

Katayama recalls, "Elvina [Pearce] was so good to refrain from incessantly talking throughout lessons. She gave space for a student to reflect and for beauty to be heard."[222]

Rieth humorously reminisces about Pearce's disdain for too much teacher talk,

> I'm just now chuckling to myself thinking of how rich Pearce would be if she had a penny for every time she told one of us student teachers we talked too much during our teaching of a lesson. I cringe to think of what she would say if she saw some of my lessons today. Her voice is always in my ear when I'm pacing my lessons.[223]

Just as she emphasizes minimizing teacher talk, Pearce believes lessons are also more effective when student talk is kept to a minimum. She says she prefers for students to answer questions and communicate via sound (e.g., by singing or playing) instead of via words. She explains: "I'll say, 'Show me what you would do with this passage.' And they begin to tell you. And I say, 'No, I want to hear you tell me with your fingers what you would think about.' And whenever they do, they are much more successful than if they would be if they were trying to vocally tell you what they think about it."[224]

Musicianship

Pearce firmly believes that each student possesses the potential to play artistically, regardless of innate musical talent or gift. Informed by this belief, she asks students to be musically expressive from the very start, encouraging them to approach even the simplest pieces of music with thoughtful artistry. She believes that technique and artistry cannot be separated and should be taught as one.

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[222] Emily Jane Katayama Questionnaire.

[223] Julie Rieth Questionnaire.

[224] Pearce, Interview 8 of 10, July 11, 2018.

Many of Pearce's former students and colleagues recount this same emphasis on musicality from the start in her teaching. Emily Jane Katayama recalls, "Pearce focused her teaching energy on helping me reach my own personal potential and challenged me to think deeply of musical emotion."[225] Helen Marlais recalls Pearce using vivid imagery in lessons to effectively communicate musical concepts.[226] Julie Rieth writes that she learned from Pearce that "Musicianship can be built in from the beginning lessons."[227]

Katayama, who studied with Pearce as a high schooler, recalls one pivotal learning experience: "As a high school student playing a Brahms Intermezzo, Elvina told me, 'We don't need beautiful notes. We need beautiful notes with *meaning.*' In that lesson, I understood the difference between a pleasing sound and a heartfelt emotion."[228]

Technique

Pearce espouses a two-pronged approach to developing student's technique, recommending the use of both prewritten exercises and technical exercises extracted from musical passages. For Pearce, strong technique is not a goal in-and-of-itself. Rather, it is a means to an end. Pearce firmly believes that proper technique enabled students to play and perform with more musicality.

Pearce outlines a system of developing technique in her self-published, *Technic Syllabus for Piano Students.* (See Chapter 5 for an overview of the Syllabus.) By

[225] Emily Jane Katayama Questionnaire.

[226] Helen Marlais Questionnaire.

[227] Julie Rieth Questionnaire.

[228] Emily Jane Katayama Questionnaire.

sequencing these technical exercises, she provides pedagogy students and other teachers with a road map for advancing students' technical skillset. Marlais describes Pearce's technical exercises as "A clear system of practicing scales, cadences, arpeggios, always with the metronome."[229]

Pearce deems it essential to start all lessons with warm-ups so that students understood their importance. Through these warm-ups, she addresses technique, tone, and hand shape. Myers recalls, "Pearce frequently demonstrated when working on technique and never let the students get away with bad hand positions."[230]

Teaching Beginners

Pearce believes that first impressions are of utmost importance because of how deeply they are capable of affecting the trajectory of students' musical education. She believes that just as a positive first impression can spark interest, a negative one can derail a learning experience before it even starts. In the wrong teaching environment, she says, a student's first year of piano lessons can quickly become his or her last. To avoid this scenario, Pearce is meticulous in the way she approached first lessons with beginners. She describes her philosophy and plan for a first lesson:

> That's the most important lesson I would ever teach that student. And I would take where they're interested in playing piano. I would sit there and make noise with the instrument. And I would teach them how to play two or three of the pieces from *Time to Begin* by rote. And that was enough to turn them on if I did a good job. And they could go home and play those pieces over and over again and hardly wait to come back.[231]

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[229] Helen Marlais Questionnaire.

[230] Stephanie Myers Questionnaire.

[231] Pearce, Interview 8 of 10, July 11, 2018.

In addition to the very first lesson, Pearce was focused on making all early lesson experiences positive. Continually feeding a beginning student's excitement and enthusiasm was essential to their success, she thought. Helen Marlais explains Pearce's philosophies about how beginning private and group lessons should ideally be constructed:

> For the beginner students, she always said that it takes time for students to understand a new concept, especially when it comes to reading. So, she spent a lot of time on the whiteboard asking students about intervals and if they go higher or lower. We had our own beginner student to teach a private lesson to after the group lesson, which is something that I do in my own piano pedagogy class I and II at Grand Valley State University. She always told us that we needed to change activities often, so that students don't get bored, and that there always needed to be review pieces within the duration of the lesson.[232]

Pearce places great emphasis on ensuring that students achieve success in each lesson. Susanne Baker, a former graduate student at Northwestern University, explains Pearce's effective approach to preparing and teaching pieces from *Time to Begin*:

> She played the song many times so the student could listen and answer questions, discussing what the piece was about, [and] having the student engage in many activities like 'say and play,' 'point and play,' 'clap and play' before performing the piece or practicing [hand position] moves, etc. Everything was done so the student could experience success when playing the piece for the very first time.[233]

Over the course of her long career, Pearce gained immense experience teaching beginning students, and thus honed her talent for crafting an ideal first impression at a piano lesson. Her wisdom here is apparent in the way she describes her secret to engraining good hand shape: "[Demonstrate it to a student] over, and over, and over, and

[232] Helen Marlais Questionnaire.

[233] Susanne Baker Questionnaire.

over again for however many years they study. Until it becomes a part of them," she says.[234] Amy Glennon, Educational Director of The New School for Music Study, surmises that Pearce's goal when teaching young beginners was "to develop well-rounded musicians who play expressively and confidently. To instill effective practice techniques." She adds, "Her emphasis on rote pieces would help students to develop technically and musically."[235]

Effectiveness as a Teacher

In her own studio, Pearce was able to put her teaching philosophies into practical use regularly. This allowed her to refine her pedagogical skills and discover for herself which teaching techniques were successful and which were not. The teaching techniques she espouses, then, are those she found consistently effective in developing independent musicians with strong technique and reading skills. Julie Rieth attests to Pearce's effectiveness as a teacher:

> Pearce was so insightful, clear, and consistent in her messaging and teaching. She had specific things she was helping me to improve over and over through practice and critique. She always stayed on-point with the things she was trying to teach. This focus and consistency while maintaining a pleasant and positive demeanor was incredibly effective. She knew what she was going for, and she kept teaching it until she got it. Her thoughtfulness in her approach and sequencing made it easier to reach the goals she was setting. Her feedback was always relevant, focused, and helpful, yet insistent on maintaining her standards (usually around the teacher not talking so much!).[236]

[234] Pearce, Interview 8 of 10, July 11, 2018.

[235] Amy Glennon Questionnaire.

[236] Julie Rieth Questionnaire.

TEACHING EXPERIENCES

Early Teaching Experiences

Pearce's proclivity for teaching became evident early when she was in fifth grade and offered to help a classmate, named Diane, at the piano. After listening to Diane perform her piece several times, Pearce correctly surmised that Diane did not know how to practice effectively. "I was intrigued by the fact that this little girl had the same problems that all the other kids had, and I didn't have," she said. "And I wondered why. She happened to invite me to her home, and I heard her play, and I almost immediately got the impression that she was [having] these problems because of how she's practicing."[237]

Throughout high school and the first two years of her undergraduate studies at the University of Tulsa, Pearce consistently worked towards a promising performing career, while also maintaining a small teaching studio of nine students.[238] After dropping out of the University of Tulsa following the death of her teacher, Pearce moved to New York City to study with Vengerova. In New York, When Pearce was not practicing or in a lesson herself, she traveled to several students' homes each week to give them lessons. In this way, she supported herself financially. Looking back on that experience later in her career, Pearce recalled feeling like she had no idea what she was doing in those lessons. In an interview with her former student, Ed Darling, she described her teaching capacity,

> From junior high through my New York years, I taught several students a week – mostly average kids who were only studying because their moms made them. They disliked practicing—and probably me, too! —and their progress was

[237] Pearce, Interview 8 of 10, July 11, 2018.

[238] "Teens in the News," *Seventeen*, September 1951, 192.

> minimal. I only suffered through these lessons because I needed the money, such as it was. During all of my student years, my goal continued to focus on becoming a concert pianist, even though the longer I studied with Vengerova, the reality of that ever happening seemed less and less likely.[239]

Westminster Choir College

In 1955, after three years with Vengerova, Pearce terminated her private lessons and accepted a Teaching Fellowship in piano to study with Frances Clark at Westminster Choir College. The Fellowship afforded her the credits she needed to complete her bachelor's degree and provided her a nearly full-time position on the piano faculty.[240]

Pearce worked with Clark at Westminster from 1955 to 1960, a five-year period of time during which she became fully invested in becoming an effective piano teacher. As she worked with Clark to build a reputable piano department at Westminster, Pearce taught piano lessons under Clark's pedagogical tutelage. She was elated to be a charter member of Clark's staff and said that after her first year there, she was "completely hooked on pursuing a teaching career!"[241] "I just knew that I wanted to be a teacher and be able to incorporate what Frances knew. And I never had any instruction on how to teach and knew I needed it," she says.[242]

Studying piano pedagogy under Frances Clark at Westminster Choir College was an intense and highly structured experience. A typical plan of study in Clark's undergraduate program included the following: Year one focused on non-piano related

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[239] Darling, "Beyond the Notes."

[240] Hudak, "Frances Oman," 206.

[241] Darling, "Beyond the Notes."

[242] Pearce, Interview 8 of 10, July 11, 2018.

philosophical and educational study. During that year, Pearce was asked to read and examine the writings of Quintilian, Comenius, and Plato, an experience that she says ignited a spark of excitement in her about the potential of a career dedicated to piano teaching. Studying this material led Pearce to think more philosophically about teaching, leading to an interest in a student-centric and discovery-learning approach. Year two with Clark was all about the practical application of philosophical concepts in piano lessons with young students. During year three, student teachers were generally assigned more advanced students to teach, and during year four, some would assist in teaching undergraduate piano majors.[243] However, Pearce transferred into Westminster with two years of college credits, so her track was slightly different, and she completed a truncated version of the plan. Of her years studying under Clark, Pearce says, "Everything that we learned from her, most of it didn't even have anything to do with piano or music. It was, 'Well, how do these people think? How would their thinking affect us and our lives.' It was a wonderful experience."[244]

After three years of study, Pearce earned her bachelor's degree from Westminster Choir College in 1958, staying at the school for two more years after that as a full-time teacher. It was during those two years that she taught Ed Darling, who at the time was an organ student in his junior and senior years. Darling continued to study with Pearce after they both left Westminster Choir College. Reminiscing about his studies with Pearce, Darling stated that he "had the impression that she understood any problems or

[243] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

[244] Pearce, Interview 5 of 10, July 11, 2018.

challenges of mine because she had dealt with similar problems or challenges."[245] He remembers Pearce's emphasis on thinking of technique as a means of producing a desired sound, and he specifically recalls the way she taught him to approach the ends of musical phrases: "Let it end before you rush into the next one."[246]

The New School for Music Study

In 1960, at the age of 28, Pearce left Westminster Choir College (WCC), along with Clark and Louise Goss, to establish a graduate training center called The New School for Music Study (NSMS) in Princeton, New Jersey. Clark wanted to start a master's degree in pedagogy, but this was not a popular idea among the faculty at WCC.

Pearce became a founding teacher of this new community laboratory school that approached piano pedagogy in a pioneering way. Louise Goss described their innovation, "We differ from most of the other piano-teacher training programs around in the depth and breadth of our teaching experience. We have much more supervised teaching because one learns by teaching, not by being talked at about teaching."[247]

During her four years at NSMS (1960-1964), Pearce served as the Chairman of Private Instruction and was on the support staff as a teacher of piano pedagogy. This meant that in addition to teaching private lessons and group classes, she regularly observed pedagogy students and gave them feedback about their teaching. At NSMS, faculty members were required to teach private lessons, group classes, and pedagogy

[245] Ed Darling Questionnaire.

[246] Ed Darling Questionnaire.

[247] Hudak, "Frances Oman Clark," 60-1.

students' private performance lessons.[248] Students enrolled in the certificate program were required to take private piano lessons in addition to their teaching duties.

Pearce continually refined her pedagogical style at NSMS. She continued to develop her beliefs about how to most effectively introduce new music to students, believing that it was the teacher's duty to accurately capture and convey the mood of a piece when modeling or playing it. Informed by her three years of study with Vengerova, she understood that students were more inspired and better prepared to succeed when their first experience with a new piece of music was artistic and engaging. Darling recalls one instance in which she presented a new piece with commitment and flair: "I remember at The New School [for Music Study] her playing new pieces for review by David Kraehenbuehl which were to be published in the new [Frances Clark Library] Technique series: Books 4, 5, 6. Many of these pieces convey a mood. One is 'Maudlin,' I remember Elvina playing it 'in character' with effect."[249]

Frances Clark Summer Workshops

While working at The New School for Music Study, Pearce was also expected to travel throughout the United States, giving recitals and workshops on newly published material from the Frances Clark Library. The Frances Clark Piano Pedagogy Summer Workshops were held in numerous locations around the United States and Canada during the summer months of July and August. Pearce recalls the grueling task of preparing the workshops and the intense travel schedule. She exclaims rather humorously, "I know I

[248] Hudak, "Frances Oman Clark," 58.

[249] Ed Darling Questionnaire.

didn't spend a summer at The New School for Music Study teaching, and I know I didn't sit around watching football!"[250]

Each summer, Pearce and her colleagues traveled extensively throughout the United States, sharing their pedagogical advice through the Summer Workshops. For example, the extended workshop tour of 1958 featured Frances Clark, Louise Goss, Richard Chronister, Martha Braden, Doris Martin, and Pearce giving five-day presentations at the MacPhail School of Music in Minneapolis, MN, Claremont College Summer Institute of Music in Claremont, CA, and Lake Texoma Lodge in Kingston, OK. In those locations, Braden and Martin presented solo as well as duo works, and Pearce gave a separate solo recital. Attendees at the California workshop included teachers from Iowa and Michigan. More than fifty teachers registered for the Oklahoma workshop. Other workshop locations in 1958 included Brevard, North Carolina, and Salina, Kansas. In 1959, locations included Dodge City, KS, and Amarillo, TX. For the summer workshops of 1960, Pearce and three other teachers from NSMS — Doris Martin, Richard Chronister, and Louise Goss — embarked on an eight-week tour taking them to seventy-five cities throughout the United States and Canada. In each city, they gave a six-hour-long presentation emphasizing better teaching methods through teaching demonstrations at four different levels.[251] For the summer workshops of 1961, Pearce traveled to Nashville, Tennessee, Waco, Texas, Orlando, Florida, Lumberton, North Carolina, Mansfield, Ohio, and Boston, Massachusetts. In 1962, Pearce, along with six

[250] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

[251] *Town Topics,* Princeton, Princeton, New Jersey, July 10-16, 1960, Archive.org.

other colleagues, gave a total of one hundred and ninety-five one-day workshops throughout the United States.[252]

While the format varied from workshop to workshop, they were typically led by a presenter and assistant presenter. As a senior faculty member, Pearce was usually the lead presenter. She often incorporated role-playing activities into these workshops, which included a presentation of "Time to Begin," the primer level of *The Music Tree*. She advocated for role-playing in presentations as a useful and practical way of communicating teaching philosophies to audiences. When interviewed, Pearce explained the goal of these workshops: "The whole purpose was to improve the skills of teaching children. There wasn't a focus on that in those days."[253] She explains:

> [These workshops] really turned out to be a way to monitor what was being done with the writing of the [Frances Clark Library] books in Princeton. And then we'd go back and share the experiences we had had with the books. How were they received? Were people going to use them? Did they understand them? What was not clear? What didn't work? All those things.[254]

Martha Braden, a fellow faculty member at NSMS, recalls that it was Frances Clark and Louise Goss who selected NSMS teachers to travel around the country each summer presenting workshops. Each presenter/teacher was given a stipend of $100 per week.[255] Sometimes the selected presenters traveled as a team with a fellow teacher, and other times they traveled alone. Frequently, Pearce would give a solo recital in addition to presenting the workshops, as discussed in more detail in chapter three.

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[252] Archives, The New School for Music Study, Kingston, NJ.

[253] Pearce, Interview 4 of 10, July 11, 2018.

[254] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

[255] Hudak, "Frances Oman Clark," 122.

The Naperville, Illinois Years (1964-present)

In 1963, Elvina Truman married John Pearce. John had been living in Chicago but moved to Princeton to join his new wife after they wed. The couple spent one year in Princeton while Pearce continued to teach at The New School for Music Study. However, 1964 marked the end of Pearce's time teaching at The New School for Music Study. "It was a hard decision to leave [Clark], but at the same time, I knew I had to because I had to get a life of my own."[256]

In 1964, Pearce moved to Evanston, IL, with her husband, John, who had been hired for a position at Thorndike High School in Dolton, IL. During her first year in Evanston, Pearce did not teach. Instead, she took time off to take stock of her life and career. The following year, in 1965, John accepted a position at Naperville Central High School, and so the couple moved to Naperville, where Pearce continues to live. Pearce recalls that when she moved to Naperville, she met a local organist, a colleague of her husband's, who introduced her to approximately twenty piano students in need of a teacher. Pearce sarcastically comments on the ease with which she quickly acquired students, "Unfortunately, one can teach piano anywhere."[257]

Pearce felt fortunate to find almost a full studio of students in Naperville practically waiting for her upon her arrival. As she began her private teaching career in her new hometown, she also looked for professional connections and community. "One of the first things I did, as soon as we got established in the community, was to find out if there was a music teachers' group," she says. "In those days, there was not enough

[256] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

[257] Pearce, Interview 4 of 10, July 11. 2018.

interest or not enough piano teachers in Naperville. The nearest [music teacher's group] was Wheaton College, and so I went there with two or three other people from here [Naperville] for a number of years, until this one was built. Now Naperville is one of the biggest teacher groups in the state."[258]

North Central College

In addition to maintaining a private studio in Naperville, Pearce taught on the piano faculty at North Central College (NCC). Documentation of her exact start date is lacking, but Camille Conforti's questionnaire confirms that she studied with Pearce during her senior year at NCC, the fall of 1965 and the spring of 1966. Other documentation states that, in 1976, Pearce inaugurated a pedagogy course that was part of the degree plan for NCC's Bachelor of Music Degree.[259] As part of the piano program, students in the course were required to teach young piano students from the community who were enrolled in NCC's Community Outreach Program.

Conforti recalls her experience as a student of Pearce during her senior year, "Pearce was always willing to answer questions and share experiences in a clear and concise manner."[260] She also remembers Pearce's emphasis on teaching students proper practice techniques. If those practice techniques were not successfully transmitted to a student during the lesson, Pearce explained to Conforti, that student's potential for success would be limited. Pearce also taught her NCC pedagogy students always to take

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[258] Pearce, Interview 6 of 10, July 11, 2018.

[259] *Holland Evening Sentinel*, Holland, Michigan, Friday, November 5, 1976, Newspaperarchive.com.

[260] Camille Conforti Questionnaire.

the time to thoroughly analyze and study new repertoire before presenting it to a student.[261]

In 1974, administrators from NCC approached Pearce and asked her to expand the college's piano program. Pearce saw the request as an opportunity to become more involved in teacher training. So, in 1980, she founded and became the director of NCC's Piano Preparatory Division. In developing and structuring the new curriculum, Pearce drew from her experiences at The New School for Music Study. Under her direction from 1980 to 1989, NCC's Piano Preparatory Division grew to enroll an average of two hundred students per year.[262]

As director of NCC's Piano Preparatory Division, Pearce supervised her student teachers as they taught and recalls observing them once or twice a semester. During faculty meetings, she guided them to consider "where we were, and what we were producing, and what we wanted to produce, and all that was strictly related to the music that we were teaching."[263] (Pearce clarified in interviews that the Preparatory Division's teachers were not necessarily all affiliated with NCC. Some were recent graduates, many from The New School for Music Study or Northwestern University.) Craig Sale, a teacher at NCC, recalls that Pearce always demanded excellence from the teachers she supervised, and continually strove to elevate her own teaching as well. He recalls, "she

[261] Camille Conforti Questionnaire.

[262] Pearce, Interview 5 of 19, July 11, 2018.

[263] Pearce, Interview 5 of 10, July 11, 2018.

would normally address pedagogical issues in monthly staff meetings or in staff memos."[264]

Northwestern University

Pearce's teaching experience, reputation for excellence in group class teaching, and success with developing the Piano Preparatory Division at North Central College led Frances Larimer, a Piano Pedagogy Professor at Northwestern University, to seek her pedagogical expertise as a guest lecturer starting in 1972.[265] "[Larimer] wanted [her pedagogy students] to have some experience seeing somebody who successfully worked with children and knew something about how you teach a kid," Pearce said.[266] Initially, Pearce visited Northwestern once a year for a three-hour session. After a year or two of that arrangement, Larimer invited her twice every semester. Eventually, Pearce assumed a larger role in the pedagogy program and taught a pedagogy class each semester. Documentation of the years she was on faculty is inconclusive. Multiple biographies state that she taught piano and piano pedagogy for fourteen years. She is listed on the class schedules at Northwestern from 1984 to 1993.[267]

At Northwestern, Pearce ensured that the pedagogy courses she taught were never limited to lectures or dry overviews of methods and materials. Rather, she believed

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[264] Craig Sale Questionnaire.

[265] *Holland Evening Sentinel*, Holland, Michigan, November 5, 1976, Newspaperarchive.org.

[266] Pearce, Interview 5 of 10, July 11, 2018.

[267] Dana Lamparello, e-mail to the author, September 24, 2019. Documentation of Pearce's starting date as a faculty member at Northwestern University is lacking and inconclusive. Northwestern University's archivist confirmed Pearce is listed in the class schedules from 1984-1993.

hands-on teaching experiences were essential, and the best place for student teachers to learn "how to get kids to play the piano with intelligence and love and confidence and all those good qualities making music. And how do you get them from square A to square B."[268] This student-centered approach permeated her own teaching and her approach to pedagogy during her time there.

Pearce's experiences with Frances Clark continued to inform the way she structured her piano pedagogy classes. She explains:

> Once I started as a faculty member, we always had a year where they did what we did at The New School [for Music Study], which was we would teach and with supervision from Frances, or someone sitting in on our lessons and then having conferences. So, in the first year at Northwestern, I did the same thing. I did it more compact, but I started out with me just doing the teaching and then followed by lectures. Then little by little, I would hand over the teaching to them, and each one of them would have one student that they would follow-up. By the time the year was over, the first year of pedagogy, they had either sunk or swum.[269]

Pearce also explains the positive changes she saw her pedagogy students enrolled her classes.

> Most of them really enjoyed it. Those were the ones that were so gloomy about having to spend an hour or two of their time going to my class. They really came out, and I can remember several of them that admitted later on when we had our final seminars together, it was individually, that they were so bored by the idea that they were going to have to take the class. And by the end of the year, they were just thrilled.[270]

Pearce also gives her perspective on how this change took place by adding,

> They didn't just sit there and sleep and write down stuff and then show you a beautifully organized notebook, and not knowing any more about teaching than they did when they walked in. But they had to get up and prove that they did.

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[268] Pearce, Interview 5 of 10, July 11, 2018.

[269] Pearce, Interview 5 of 10, July 11, 2018.

[270] Pearce, Interview 5 of 10, July 11, 2018.

> They each had a student, and they became very, I don't know the word that I'm looking for, but they were proud of that student.[271]

One aspect of teaching at Northwestern that Pearce especially enjoyed was watching videos of her pedagogy students giving lessons and providing them with feedback based on those recordings. At the time, VHS tape recording was a relatively new technology. Pearce was thrilled to take advantage of the way it allowed her to observe her students and record their progress. "I watched the video, and then we met," she says. Pearce further describes her process of watching the videos as follows,

> I picked out things that I felt needed attention that I had seen, so it worked well. If I were to observe somebody, then that week before the next lesson, I would have had a meeting with that person that I observed. I would have looked at the tape and made notes, and we would discuss them. It was my responsibility to make it something that they could see as a result that they were becoming better teachers. And, that they hadn't thought of this, or this and that and the other. I liked that part.[272]

Julie Rieth, a former master's student in piano performance and pedagogy at Northwestern, describes in detail the impact of Pearce's video critiques:

> The most effective thing I remember was sitting in her office, critiquing videos of my teaching. We would be videotaped while teaching groups or private lessons. We would watch the videos on our own and critique them using specific parameters. Then we would sit with her individually and watch it again while she critiqued our teaching and compared notes on our own critique of ourselves. Critiquing our own and others' teaching was a crucial component of the pedagogy program. Watching her teach and critiquing her teaching was also a very effective method.[273]

At Northwestern, Pearce was also responsible for teaching beginning group piano classes. In that capacity, she demonstrated excellence in classroom management and

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[271] Pearce, Interview 5 of 10, July 11, 2018.

[272] Pearce, Interview 5 of 10, July 11, 2018.

[273] Julie Rieth Questionnaire.

facilitation of group interactions. Most pedagogy students at Northwestern were required to observe Pearce's group classes. Nagy describes her expertise in that setting and expresses a fondness for how Pearce approached it. “The way she handled group classes was terrific — giving each student in the class a specific thing to listen for while hearing a classmate’s performance, i.e. ‘Bobby, will you please listen for the change from forte to piano’ — that type of specific goal setting is vital and immediately quantifiable."[274]

Other former pedagogy students of Pearce's give similar accounts of her group teaching style, consistently describing her as a master teacher who was professional, prepared, dedicated, passionate, focused, positive, and knowledgeable. Helen Marlais, a former DMA student at Northwestern and current Associate Professor of Music at Grand Valley University and Director of Keyboard Publications for FJH Music, adds the following description of Pearce’s process:

> When teaching early advanced students, she had a carefully written out assignment page for the student as well as for me (her doctoral student). When she observed me teach, she would fill out an observation form. An example of one of these is: 1) What one or two main points were made with the piece? Exaggerated dynamic changes. The teacher modeled both softs and louds. 2) In what way was the pupil's performance of the piece changed for the better after it was worked on? Student’s dynamics did improve. She encouraged me to sing, conduct, etc., anything to help carry the performance along in the desired direction. Then she wrote down some other aspects that she really enjoyed my teaching... I still have all of the observation forms that we needed to fill out when observing the private lessons, monthly group lessons for older students, and weekly group lessons with the beginner students.[275]

Marlais also portrays Pearce’s procedure for giving feedback on performances:

> For each early advanced student who played in a monthly group class, she would say one positive thing about the playing, and they would tell everyone one aspect of the piece that could be better. For example, in a Haydn sonata, there needs to

[274] Kim Nagy Questionnaire.

[275] Helen Marlais Questionnaire.

> be more dynamic differences. In a Debussy prelude, apply the words of a poem to the title... For a Bach sinfonia, more slow practice was needed. For a Prelude by Vandall, she asked what the main mood was and asked if this was conveyed by the student's playing.[276]

Finally, Marlais summarizes Pearce's passion for training effective teachers by saying,

> I LOVED that Elvina truly cared about how we said things to students - such as 'say PLAY' instead of 'do.' Or 'play this piece' instead of 'do it for me.' And, 'songs are sung, pieces are played.' My, how many times I have said the same to my student teachers![277]

Susanne Baker describes the skills Pearce possessed that set her apart from others, emphasizing her strength as a group teacher. "Her clarity of presentation, clear standards of excellence, and the ability to motivate young students in a class setting with positive encouragement and excellent materials."[278]

Pearce reflected on her fourteen years working with Frances Larimer in the piano pedagogy department at Northwestern by saying, "We did great things there, too. We really built a program where there were advances, at least with the student teachers, on how you teach piano."[279] For more on Pearce's ideas on what she deems important when observing student-teachers, see pages 82-83 in this chapter.

[276] Helen Marlais Questionnaire.

[277] Helen Marlais Questionnaire.

[278] Susanne Baker Questionnaire.

[279] Pearce, Interview 5 of 10, July 11, 2018.

PROFESSIONAL WORKSHOPS

Pearce spread her pedagogical passion locally, nationally, and internationally, touching the lives of many teachers as a clinician through countless workshops over fifty years. After she left The New School for Music Study in 1964, she differentiated herself as an expert on home practice. It became her favorite topic to present at the hundreds of workshops she gave across the country and around the world. She says, "No matter what we called it [the workshop], it turned out how do you practice to get there?"[280]

While an exhaustive examination of her workshops is beyond the scope of this document, press releases from 1964 to the present highlight the extent of her influence as a clinician. Throughout her time residing in Naperville, she frequently presented workshops at local music teachers association chapter meetings sharing her knowledge and pedagogical expertise with area teachers. Themes from her workshops generally included technique, making practice perfect, and musicianship. See Appendix A for a list of topics presented at selected venues.

Pearce also impacted teachers through her work with the National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy, formerly known as the National Conference on Piano Pedagogy. This conference was started by Pearce's friend and former colleague, Richard Chronister, as a way of getting teachers to understand teaching elementary students, "All we talked about was teaching normal, average children how to make music with intelligence."[281]

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[280] Pearce, Interview 6 of 10, July 11, 2018.

[281] Pearce, Interview 5 of 10, July 11, 2018.

Pearce's experience with group teaching at Westminster Choir College, The New School for Music Study, North Central College, and Northwestern University led to her invitation to give a teaching demonstration on group classes at the 1978 Music Teachers National Conference and the 1982 National Conference for Piano Pedagogy. At the 1982 conference, Pearce taught two different levels of her own students from Naperville, one group of three ten-year-old students, and another group of four junior high students. She defined the group classes as performance classes, not theory or keyboard drill classes. Performances took up around seventy-five percent of the class time. The remaining time was spent on various class activities, including reinforcement of musicianship skills like rhythm, theory, ear training, and structural analysis of the pieces performed.[282] For the 1990 conference, she served as a Master Teacher for Intermediate Children's Group Teaching Demonstration. She was invited back in 2001 to give a teaching demonstration to a private elementary lesson and again in 2005 to an intermediate student. In addition to her teaching demonstrations, Pearce served on various committees as a service to the development of the field of piano pedagogy.

On numerous occasions, Pearce was invited to give recitals and workshops on home practice and other topics internationally. She traveled to China twice during her career, once because she was invited by Yamaha International to present a non-commercial workshop.[283] She also presented to teachers in Perth, Australia, and Taipei, Taiwan. She recalls one of her trips to China:

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[282] Martha J. Baker, ed., *National Conference on Piano Pedagogy: Journal of the Proceedings*, (Princeton, NJ: The National Conference on Piano Pedagogy), 1983.

[283] Fox Valley Arts website, Accessed: March 3, 2020, https://www.foxvalleyarts.org/pearce_elvina.htm.

> I'm trying to think of how the woman that invited me heard about me. She had come to one of my things in the US and was so impressed. She spoke very good English and was the head of the music teachers association in China where I went. And so, she pushed having me come there with her members, and they agreed.[284]

Pearce says of that workshop: "It was very well received, so this teacher group invited me to come again and speak just to them. That was a three-day event, and it was really, really great. I did it all day long for three days."[285] Pearce also adds, "I was amazed that they wanted me to come the very next summer. I asked if it wouldn't it be better to space it a little bit? No, no, we want it right away. So, I went and had a great time."[286]

When asked about the language barrier she faced in China and how she communicated during workshops, Pearce exclaimed, "I don't remember. All I remember is that using a different language was never difficult. It was because I talked with music more than with my voice. If I wanted to illustrate something, I said it with my body instead of my mouth."[287]

PERSPECTIVES ON PEARCE'S PEDAGOGY

Pearce's educational and teaching philosophies stem from pivotal first-hand experiences as a student and a teacher. As a piano student, Pearce was dedicated to her instrument and the study of music. Furthermore, she was a keen observer of her teachers'

[284] Pearce, Interview 6 of 10, July 11, 2018.

[285] Pearce, Interview 6 of 10, July 11, 2018.

[286] Pearce, Interview 6 of 10, July 11, 2018.

[287] Pearce, Interview 6 of 10, July 11, 2018.

methods, behaviors, and moods. From her teachers she learned the value of efficient, meaningful home practice. Just as importantly, through first-hand observation of her mentors' contrasting teaching styles, she discovered the most efficient means of transferring that skill to her own students.

Defined by practicality rooted in deep philosophical consideration, Pearce's pedagogy offers clear, simple instructions for achieving sophisticated results. She is precise in her espousal of group teaching and efficient home practice, and broad in her understanding of the emotional, physical, mental, musical, and educational needs of students. For Pearce, providing students with a positive learning environment and helping them to develop universally applicable critical thinking skills is equally as important as teaching them correct pedaling or fingering.

Pearce's mature educational philosophy represents an amalgamation of diverse influences, including that of Jane Harnish, Lenore Hunter, Helen Ringo, Frances Clark and Isabelle Vengerova. She combined what she learned from them with her own experiences and found a distinct, confident pedagogical voice. Her firm understanding of how to develop technique and musicality in students, as well as expertise on the subject of home practice was bolstered by her determination to excel. Amy Glennon, a fellow former pedagogy student of Frances Clark's, described Pearce's influences, "Obviously Pearce was shaped by her work with Frances Clark. She credited Clark as a life-altering influence. Pearce was also shaped by her own experiences as a piano student."[288]

Several of Pearce's former students commented on her role in mentoring them when they were first getting started with their careers. In questionnaire after

[288] Amy Glennon Questionnaire.

questionnaire, they described Pearce's dedication to growing them into more excellent piano teachers. She demonstrated best practices efficiently and clearly, and sparked inspiration with her enthusiasm. Glennon submits,

> Pearce was interested in sharing concrete ideas on how to be an effective teacher with others, and her teaching strategies were so concrete that they could be directly implemented. Everything about Pearce's teaching approach is practical and directly applicable.[289]

Descriptions of her teaching style and the impact Pearce had on their careers, like this one by Julie Rieth, epitomize that sentiment:

> Pearce taught me that I could teach, and that I could be good at teaching. She taught me how teaching could be organized and planned with specific goals and how to be effective in reaching those goals with students. She taught me critical thinking in teaching music and in evaluating my own effectiveness. She helped unlock my own creativity through the medium of teaching. I've had a fulfilling career of teaching music to many, many students, and helping them unlock their own gifts of music and creativity. Pearce's pedagogical instruction made this possible for me.[290]

Jennifer Cohen, Pearce's private piano student for eleven years, adds the following:

> She went above and beyond to help mentor me. The best compliment I can give is that, early in my teaching career, I would often hear the same words come out of my mouth to my students that I heard from Elvina when I was her student. Many of my successful teaching practices and strategies are directly and indirectly learned from Elvina, some intentional, but many from my subconscious.[291]

Just as her own teachers left an indelible impression on her, Pearce imprinted her legacy on teachers, students, colleagues, workshop attendees, and readers around the world. The consistency of her students' and colleagues' descriptions of her as a teacher

[289] Amy Glennon Questionnaire.

[290] Julie Rieth Questionnaire.

[291] Jennifer Cohen Questionnaire.

and person reveals the constancy of her strongly held beliefs about piano education, and her dedicated commitment to practical pedagogical techniques.

CHAPTER 5: PERSPECTIVES ON PEARCE AS EDUCATIONAL COMPOSER

INTRODUCTION

Just as Pearce's teaching style is student-centric, her compositional approach was focused on student needs. Over thirty-three years, during which she was also busy teaching, performing, writing, and lecturing in many capacities, Pearce composed more than twenty collections of educational piano repertoire for elementary and intermediate piano students. As she composed, she kept students' artistic and technical development needs at the forefront of her mind. Her pedagogical values are woven into the fabric of each piece, and all of her compositions are designed to highlight students' strengths. Extensive use of pedaling, whole-tone scales, chord clusters, and use of the entire keyboard are employed intentionally to help students sound their best, even at early elementary levels.

Pearce's colorful compositions were thoughtfully designed to develop students' abilities to express themselves at the piano musically. She chose descriptive titles for her compositions in order to spark students' imaginations and inspire them to be explorative,

expressive, and thoughtful, and find musical meaning in their playing. In the forward to her *Happy Times* collection, she explains, "As a composer, my intention is always to create pieces that represent an image, a mood, or an activity (puppets strutting, an angel playing a harp, grey skies, etc.). I hope the titles of the twelve pieces in this collection will stimulate the player's own imagination so that his or her performance of each piece will create a convincing sound picture."[292] Pearce's collections are versatile and intended as a supplement to method books or other repertoire.

An overview of Pearce's compositional output, including pedagogical descriptions of outstanding selections from each collection, sheds light on her compositional approach and pedagogical beliefs. In addition to twenty-three repertoire collections, Pearce self-published syllabi for technique and theory. Examining the technique and theory syllabi alongside her compositional output provides further insight into the creative ways in which she developed technique and musicality in her students.

TEACHING REPERTOIRE

Pearce's former student, Lynn Freeman Olson, and colleague, Roger Grove, first challenged her to compose. Both composers themselves, they insisted she also try her hand at writing music.[293] In 1981, Pearce accepted their challenge and composed two books of intermediate pieces. She sent *Sound Reflections, Book 1* and *2* to Alfred

[292] Elvina Pearce, *Happy Times*, (Mississauga, ON: Frederick Harris Music Co., 2005), 2.

[293] Pearce, Interview 3 of 19, July 10, 2018.

Publishing, and promptly received a response indicating their desire to publish both books.[294]

The seventeen pieces in *Sound Reflections, Book 1* and *2* represent a wide range of compositional styles and foreshadow Pearce's penchant for writing Spanish-inspired pieces ("Blue Bolero" and "Castanets" from Book 2) and her interest in world music ("China Bells," Scottish Lilt," and "Persian Bazaar"). Pearce's use of the whole-tone scale, a compositional device that appears in every one of her subsequent collections, is also apparent here. Always intent on challenging students' aural awareness, she employs bi-tonality in the good-humored "Interrupted Waltz." A review of *Sound Reflections, Book 1 and 2* in *Clavier* magazine in 1985 stated, "Each of these solos has a strongly defined musical character. The solos are pleasingly tuneful, and every one has a distinctive rhythm. This high-quality supplementary literature may be used with the later volumes of most method or after the conclusion of the method."[295] The pieces from these two collections fit nicely into levels two through four of Jane Magrath's *Pianist's Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature.*[296]

The years between 1984 and 1987 were particularly fruitful for Pearce compositionally. During that time, she composed and published seven collections, including *Solo Flight* and *4 o'clock Tunes* (published by The New School for Music

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[294] Pearce, Interview 3 of 10, July 10, 2018.

[295] Jane Magrath, "New Music Reviews," *Clavier* 24, no. 2, (February 1985), 30.

[296] Jane Magrath, *The Pianist's Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature*, (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Co., 1995).

Study Press), and *Expressions, First Impressions*, and *Second Impressions* (published by Belwin-Mills in Miami, Florida). Two other collections, *Effective Sounds,* and *Intervals* were published by Bradley Publication in New York City, her only collaborations with that publisher.

Solo Flight and *First Impressions* represent a departure from Pearce's *Sound Reflections* books, as the pieces in these collections are technically simple and designed for early beginners. Even in these relatively sparse pieces, Pearce focuses on style, character, and expression. While technically the pieces in these collections are highly accessible at the elementary level, they evoke sophisticated sounds when performed, due to heavy use of the pedal resulting in a big, robust sound, use of entire keyboard, and use of open fifths to easily create harmony.

Pearce's purpose in composing the pieces in *Solo Flight* was to provide students with pieces that sound big and impressive in performance, without the aid of teacher accompaniments. Although most of the pieces in *Solo Flight* look and sound sophisticated or "hard" when they are performed, they are quite easily accessible and quickly understandable to beginning pianists. Using a "rote-to-note" approach helps students learn these pieces efficiently and experience success quickly. *Solo Flight* was published by The New School for Music Study Press in 1986 under the supervision of Frances Clark and Louise Goss, who requested that Pearce write a book suitable for use alongside their Level A materials.[297] Pearce presented the first eight pieces of the collection with a ghosted staff ("Balloons," "Pogo Hop," "Floating," "Gliding," "Festival

[297] Pearce, Interview 7 of 10, July 11, 2018.

Bells," "Misty Morning," and "Spider Webs"). All of the pieces in *Solo Flight* can easily be taught by rote. However, Pearce's regular practice is to send her students home with the book after the first lesson so they could play the pieces as they learned to read them. *Solo Flight* went on to become Pearce's most successful collection of teaching pieces.

First Impressions was first published in 1985, with a second edition published in 2003 that includes four new pieces ("Ceremonial Dance," "Jazzin' Blues," "Black Swans," and "Foggy Morning"). The repertoire in *First Impressions* provides insight into the skills and techniques Pearce focused on when developing early-level pianists. Many of the pieces in *First Impressions* use five-finger positions that move around the keyboard; thus, no expansions or contractions of the hands are required. Instead, there is an emphasis on open fifths, providing teachers with an opportunity to help their students develop a strong knuckle bridge. As a testament to how much importance Pearce places on this technique-building opportunity, eight of the twelve pieces in the collection devote at least one hand to playing open fifths exclusively (i.e., "Piggy-back," "The Hammock," Scotch Plaid," "Ceremonial Dance"). Seconds, thirds, and fourths — harmonic and melodic intervals that also fall within a five-finger position — are also encountered. The level of pieces in this collection varies, with "Moon March" potentially the most difficult because it requires harmonic thirds in the right hand and harmonic fifths in the left.

4 o'clock Tunes was also commissioned and edited by Frances Clark and Louise Goss but was designed to cater to later elementary students than *Solo Flight* or *First Impressions* did. Again, each piece in the collection is based around one or two simple patterns, providing students with the means to achieve rapid success in understanding and learning the music. The Preface of *4 o'clock Tunes* describes the collection's accessibility

to students: “Throughout the book, the reading, rhythm, and technical demands are minimal, the musical rewards great. If your students are like ours, this will be the first book they open when they begin to practice at 4 O’CLOCK!”[298] Big, satisfying sounds and accessible patterns make these pieces rewarding to practice and perform. The authors of the Music Tree selected a favorite from this collection, “Rockin’ Slow,” to be featured in *Music Tree Students’ Choice Part 4*, published in 1995.

In 1987, a promotional video titled “Reading with a Dash of Rote” was produced to accompany *Solo Flight* and *4 o’clock Tunes*. The video provides teachers with guidance on how ideally to present and teach the pieces in each collection. Pearce says, "These collections came about as the result of increased awareness that our beginning students needed big-sounding solo pieces in addition to the traditional music in their course books."[299] To achieve that goal, Pearce incorporated several compositional techniques: requiring the use of both hands across the entire keyboard, heavy use of the damper pedal, and heavy use of blocked fifths, sixths, and chord clusters. Additionally, because most pieces in these collections are based on just one or two easily understood patterns, students can learn to play them quickly by rote without having to read notation.

In “Reading with a Dash of Rote,” Pearce demonstrates a lesson on “Indian Braves” from *Solo Flight.* Before she plays the piece, she guides the student to observe thoughtfully as she performs it for them. Pearce comments, “Will you watch the keyboard as I play it? See what kinds of things go on in this piece.” After she plays for

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[298] Elvina Truman Pearce, *4 o’clock Tunes,* (Princeton, NJ: The New School for Music Study Press, 1984), Preface.

[299] Elvina Truman Pearce, “Reading with a Dash of Rote: Lecture-demonstration” (video of lecture from The New School for Music Study Press, 1987).

the student, she says, “Now, I’m sure that you noticed the left hand playing this pattern,” and explains the way the left-hand pattern in this piece mimics the stereotypical sounds of Native American drumming. The student in the video then correctly identifies the left-hand interval as an open fifth and “discovers” that this pattern is the only one played by the left hand in the piece. The student then plays the left-hand pattern as Pearce joins in with the right-hand melody. Following that playthrough, student and teacher explore the score together, identifying the left-hand fifths and paying particular attention to rhythmic variations in the pattern toward the end of the piece. The student then correctly identifies the first note of the right-hand melody. Pearce chimes in, noting that the right hand begins with that same note every time it enters. Once again, Pearce demonstrates her emphasis on analyzing a piece and identifying the patterns as a crucial step in learning a piece.

Pearce also introduces “Desert Camel” to a young student in the “Reading with a Dash of Rote” video. Here she again starts by analyzing the piece with the student, a perfect example of how Pearce regularly used this teaching technique to ensure students’ success in learning new repertoire quickly. She asks them to identify and point to where the first section begins and ends. Pearce labels the first section ‘A,’ then asks the student to identify and label section ‘B,’ the return of ‘A,’ and the Coda. Pearce teaches the dotted-quarter/eighth-note left-hand pattern of the piece by rote. The student circles the pattern in the music, and then Pearce reminds the students, “Listen carefully to the left hand to get it into your ear.” In the ‘B’ section of the piece, the left hand continues along with the same rhythmic and intervallic pattern but shifts up a minor third. Instantly, the student identifies it as an easy pattern, exemplifying discovery learning in action. When

introducing the right-hand melody, the student independently locates the opening dyad and correctly identifies it again as a fourth. Pearce guides the student to practice performing the dyad in three ascending octaves, reminding the student that she does not need to look at the music, but can instead focus her attention on her right hand as it moves up each octave. The child does not need the music, Pearce explains, because each position is the same.

Pearce then provides the student with a clear roadmap for how to practice at home. As discussed in chapter four, Pearce's former students frequently commented on her dedication to providing students with detailed at-home practice steps and rehearsing those steps with them in the lesson. This video provides a clear example of Pearce's clear teaching of these principles. She asks the student to play the left hand "circles" three or four times. To master the right-hand passage, the student must practice playing the piece's opening dyad and rehearse the octave jumps in the coda. Pearce then asks the student if she thinks she is going to have any problems practicing the piece at home. The rhythm of the piece was never counted, it was only taught by rote. In order to reinforce it in the student's memory, Pearce plays the piece again. This time, however, she also plants the seeds of musical expression and score-reading in the student's mind, asking her to indicate in the music where the sound should change from forte to piano. "Follow along and see if you hear what you expect to hear," Pearce comments.

In the same video, but without a student participant, Pearce presents "Robot Rock" from *4 o'clock Tunes.* Here again she begins with the left hand and an examination of intervals and positions. The left-hand rhythmic pattern stays the same throughout this piece, except for the concluding measure. In the right hand, an eighth-note triplet figure

made up of ascending and descending seconds appears on the fourth beat of each measure, giving the piece a firm rhythmic identity. Fully animated, Pearce then gives a rousing performance of "Robot Rock" that is sure to spark the aural imagination of any student.

Pearce published *Expressions* in 1986 by Belwin-Mills. On the original back cover of the collection, the level indicated is slightly more advanced than *First Impressions.* Among these more challenging pieces, "Rickshaw Ride" is arguably the most advanced, Magrath's level 3. Essentially an etude, it requires the right hand to play successive ascending and descending harmonic fourths. The result is a delightful gigue. Other pieces in the collection once again are based on whole-tone scales, including "Moonmist," "Sea Breezes," and "Star Dust."

Published a year later, *Second Impressions* (1987) features exuberant compositions like "Scotch Flight," "Celebration!" and "Joyful Bells." Pearce guides students to explore bi-tonality in "Snow Swirls," and to connect to music emotionally in colorful pieces such as "Gray Day," "Waltzin' Blue," and "Lullaby in Blue." In the lullaby, students are required to execute a relatively sophisticated, syncopated pedaling technique.

Two years later, in 1989, Belwin-Mills published Pearce's first collection of duet pieces, *Let's Duet!* The secondo and primo parts are similarly accessible and can be performed by students at about the same level. Simple in structure, secondo parts generally function as accompaniment, while the primo is given the melody. "Singin' the Blues" follows this pattern, anchored in the secondo by melancholy seventh harmonies. "Stargazing," likewise, features an ostinato pattern in the left-hand secondo part.

Undulating between a cluster of three black keys and middle C, the piece eventually moves through E Major, D Major, and C-sharp Major. As in so many of her compositions, Pearce again here is challenging students' ears and guiding them to discover a variety of musical sounds through stimulating and engaging repertoire. For many students, this piece may mark the first time they are playing in this combination of whole-tone and major and minor tonalities.

Pearce's next three collections, *Seven Preludes in Seven Keys, Books 1* (1991), and *2* (1993) and *Bagatelles* (1995), all published by Belwin-Mills, are reminiscent of *Sound Reflections, Books 1* and *2* in style. All five collections contain pieces of similar length and difficulty, corresponding with levels two through five of Magrath's leveling system. Pearce states that her favorite collections are the *Bagatelles* and the two books of *Preludes*. She comments that they "were the way that music ought to be."[300] Interestingly, these intermediate-level pieces do not have programmatic titles, rather they were given the title of "Prelude" or "Bagatelle." Instead, they reveal Pearce's approach to traditional forms students would later encounter via Beethoven or Chopin.

Pearce's *Seven Preludes in Seven Keys, Book 1* was published in 1991, with *Book 2* following in 1993. Each Prelude in the collection is built around a single musical gesture. For example, broken chords and inversions are used in the right hand for the "Prelude No. 1 in C major," and a left hand broken chordal accompaniment pattern supports a wistful melody in the "Prelude No. 7 in B Minor." *Book 1* features one Prelude in each white key (C major, D minor, E major, F major, G major, A minor, and B minor). The pieces in this collection fit into levels 2-4 of Magrath's leveling system.

[300] Pearce, Interview 3 of 10, July 10, 2018.

The preludes in *Book 2* cover more complex key signatures and are suitable for levels 3-4 of Magrath's leveling system. Each piece is composed in a black key: (D-flat major, E-flat minor, E-flat major, F-sharp major, F-sharp minor, A-flat major, and B-flat major). Again, the musical material of each prelude is based on a single, distinct musical idea. "Prelude No. 5 in F-sharp Minor," for example, is built around the theme of a double-third gesture in the right hand, with the left hand performing a two-voice accompaniment pattern underneath it. The tuneful "Prelude No. 8 in B-flat Major" provides students with the opportunity to explore a 6/8 time signature.

Bagatelles, from 1995, bears the subtitle "Character Pieces." A review in *Clavier* magazine describes the ten Bagatelles: "Clothed in a traditional cover, the works feature a variety of keys, even polytonal writing, interesting and pianistic figurations; they are anything but traditional."[301] In this collection, Pearce delivers some of her most challenging works and chooses to categorize them as intermediate. The pieces correspond with levels three through five of Jane Magrath's *Pianist's Guide to Standard Teaching and Performing Literature.* In "Bagatelle No. 3," a left-hand offbeat accompaniment figure is juxtaposed against a "mocking" right-hand gesture, resulting in a playful piece that is gratifying to perform. In "Bagatelle No. 5," syncopation between the right-hand melody and left-hand power chords (open fifths) creates a sense of driving vigor, a quality that often appeals to adolescent students. In contrast, the tenderness of "Bagatelle No. 9," which features a descending half-step bass line, evokes a sense of yearning and is ripe for interpretation by a sensitive soul of any age. Alternatively, "Bagatelle No. 10,"

[301] Jane Magrath, "Bagatelles" *Clavier* 36, no. 2 (February 1997), 38.

which completes the set, offers students the satisfying experience of feeling their hands leap up and down the keyboard with staccato hand over hand crossings.

Excursions, Book 1 & 2, first published in 1992 by Belwin-Mills Publishing, were published a second time by Warner Brothers in 2001 and 2003, respectively. In the new editions, Book 1 includes two additional pieces ("Shifting Sands" and "Clown Shuffle"). Four pieces were added to Book 2 ("Butterflies," "Desert Palms," "Gondola Ride," and "Sword Dance") and one was removed ("Mountain Air"). The pieces in these collections start to venture out of five-finger positions. In a review of the re-issued collections, Harriet Green writes that "Elvina has done her usual excellent job of writing music that students will enjoy playing. They employ singable melodies, catchy rhythms, and such devices as whole-tone and pentatonic scales."[302]

In *Excursions, Book 1*, 'Clown Shuffle' stands out as a testament to the way Pearce thoughtfully kept students' performance experiences in mind as she composed. Rests appear on the downbeats of measures four and eight of this piece. Strategically placed, they provide students with one beat of silence just when they need it most – – ahead of a transition to a new right-hand position. Additionally, in measures nine through fourteen, Pearce introduces a syncopated rhythm in the right hand but eases the student into the new rhythm with the aid of a steady, quarter-note pulse in the left hand. This rhythmic configuration allows the student to feel the "big beat," and therefore, more successfully execute the subdivided syncopation. Later, in measure seventeen of the piece, once the student is confident with that syncopated rhythm in one hand, Pearce requires the student to perform the syncopated rhythm in both hands.

[302] Harriet Green, "Reviews," *American Music Teacher* 42, no. 3 (December 1992), 69.

Pearce's seventeenth collection, *Adventures,* was published in 1997 and contains nineteen solos. The National Federation of Music Clubs chose it in 2001, 2002, and 2003 as an official selection for their Junior Festival. A review of the collection in *Clavier* magazine stated, "these descriptively-titled pieces are technically easy but will challenge students' ears with tritones, whole-tone scales, and ostinatos. Pearce does an excellent job of composing interesting and stimulating music on an elementary level."[303] The range of difficulty in this collection is larger than in Pearce's previous collections. Some selections from *Adventures* are appropriate for second-year students, while one of the more difficult pieces, "Wishful Thinking" corresponds to level two of Magrath's leveling system. Five pieces in this collection require just one hand to perform, making them useful to teachers when a student inevitably arrives at a lesson with a broken arm or hand. Other pieces in the collection require more complex pianist technique: To perform "Wishful Thinking," students must execute the holding of notes with varying durations within one hand. In the most challenging piece in the collection, "Carnival!," successive descending double thirds in each hand require a reliable technique which put it in Magrath's level 4.

Pearce revisited the theme of "adventure" five years later, in 2002, with the publication of *Adventures in Style, Books 1 & 2* by Belwin-Mills. The forward to these books states, "The pieces sound harder than they are and will give students a profound sense of accomplishment."[304] These books again feature a wide range of tonality and style, including the blues. Highlights include "Tahitian Tango," which dances along over

[303] Ray W. Urwin, "New Music Reviews" *Clavier* 36, no. 10 (December 1997), 32.

[304] Elvina Pearce, *Adventures in Style, Book 1,* (Miami, FL: Belwin-Mills Publishing, 2002), 1.

a consistent left-hand ostinato and features long melodic notes in the right hand and multiple hand-crossings. The "Tango" ends with an ascending and descending flurry of notes, highlighted by sudden dynamic shifts. In "Faded Valentine," a descending half-step pattern in the left hand evokes nostalgia. "Skeleton Scamper" is a charming work that requires precise wrist staccatos throughout to give it the sense of scurrying across the keyboard.

In 2003, Frederick Harris published two collections by Pearce, *Fun at the Fair* and *Happy Times*, neither of which is in publication today. Many of the pieces in *Fun at the Fair* feature an optional teacher duet that adds harmonic interest. Staff reading is introduced gradually throughout the collection, which starts with two pieces notated off-staff entirely ("Dinosaur Dance" and "Marching Band"). "Goldfish Swimming," "Summertime Groove," "Cradle Song," and "Bagpiper's Tune" are presented on-staff, but without treble or bass clef signs. In place of a grand staff in these pieces, starting notes are indicated by a letter name with an arrow pointing to its corresponding line or space. This presentation encourages intervallic reading. Later, when the grand staff is employed, the bottom number of the time signature is replaced by a note value. This approach is similar to Frederick Harris' piano method, *Celebrate Piano!* Stylistically, the compositions in *Fun at the Fair* conjure youthful energy and evoke the palpable excitement of a carnival or fair atmosphere.

The pieces in *Happy Times* are slightly more complicated with the more difficult pieces fitting into Magrath's level 1-2. Here again, seven of the ten pieces in the book feature a sparse, optional teacher accompaniment part, and unexpected tonalities are explored throughout. Interestingly, in "Out-of-Tune March," half-step dyads are used to

create the illusion of the piano being out of tune. “Bounce and Glide,” which juxtaposes staccatos in the A section and long legato lines in the B section, became a Preparatory B level repertoire choice for The Royal Conservatory in its 2015 Piano Syllabus.

Of *Fun at the Fair* and *Happy Times,* Pearce said,

> It is my hope that this set of pieces will provide early-level pianists with an opportunity to experience a broad spectrum of musical moods and styles, portrayed by fresh-sounding melodies, harmonies, and interesting rhythms. Structurally, the pieces are designed so that young players can learn them quickly and experience a rich texture and impressive sound when playing with their teacher.[305]

One of Pearce’s final two collections, *At the Lake*, is a compilation of six piano solos and four duets published by Hal Leonard in 2014. To accompany this collection, Pearce contributed practice and performance notes for each piece. The notes provide a glimpse into Pearce’s pedagogical process and reveal her ideas about problem-solving. For example, about the piece "Sandcastle," she writes:

> If we were building a sandcastle, we would first need to construct its foundation, then put up its walls, build the tower, add some arches, a tunnel, etc. When it’s all built, then we can begin to decorate it — carve a design into the sand, add a drawbridge, make some windows, maybe a staircase, build a moat, etc. Building a piece of music is much like building a sandcastle. We first have to construct it (learn its notes, rhythm, and fingering), and then when secure, we add the decorations — the dynamics, pedal, ritards, and other expressive markings, etc.[306]

Expanding on that idea, Pearce explains, “As a pianist, whenever I find a piece that I want to learn to play, I always search for some practice procedures that will help me learn

[305] Elvina Pearce, *Fun at the Fair,* (Ontario, CA: Frederick Harris Company, 2002), 2.

[306] Elvina Pearce, *At the Lake,* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2014), 3.

it as quickly as possible and with a minimum amount of effort. As a teacher, I have found that my students have similar goals for the pieces they want to play."[307]

The second of her two final collections published in 2014, *Pictures in Sound*, is Pearce's only publication from FJH Music Company. Characteristically, it contains pieces representing a wide variety of styles. "Goodbye at the Station," for instance, is a beautifully constructed melancholy piece dominated by seventh chords. In contrast, "Do-Si-Do," which closes out the collection, is a rousing, energetic work. Pearce's sense of humor shines through in the final two measures of the piece when she quotes "Shave and a Haircut," and inserts an unexpected aural surprise by altering one tone of the familiar melody by a half step. In "Flower Shop in Paris," Pearce provides students with an opportunity to develop their voicing capabilities by writing a whole-note-dominated left-hand accompaniment under a busy, syncopated right-hand melody. Thoughtful compositional choices like these reveal the foundation of pedagogical wisdom from which all of Pearce's compositions emerge.

In 2005, Alfred Publishing Company purchased Warner Brother Publications, and thus the majority of Pearce's composition became part of their catalog. In 2015, Alfred Publishing Company collected forty-five of Pearce's most popular original solos from fifteen of her collections and published them in three new collections titled, *Elvina Pearce's Favorite Solos, Books 1,2 & 3*. As a result, Pearce joined the ranks of composers who also had *Favorite Solos* collections published by Alfred including Martha Mier, David Carr Glover, E.L. Lancaster and Gayle Kowalchyk, Dennis Alexander, Catherine Rollin, Robert D. Vandall, Carol Matz, Mike Springer, and Willard A. Palmer.

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[307] Elvina Pearce, *At the Lake,* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2014), 3.

COMPOSITIONAL ELEMENTS

Pearce's extensive teaching experience and deep understanding of student's technical and motivational needs heavily informed her compositional choices. Analysis of her compositions, therefore, provides insight into her pedagogical priorities and precepts. The following characteristics emerge as significant themes throughout her compositions:

1. Pattern-based musical material
2. Music sounds more difficult than it is
3. Use of intriguing harmonies to expand the ear
4. Technical accessibility
5. Utilization of the entire keyboard
6. Pedagogically informed (entire piece is at the same level)
7. Charming and compelling melodies
8. Intrinsically musical and pianistic

Pearce describes one of her primary compositional techniques: "I use a lot of fifths because they are comfortable to play, they fit the average hand very nicely, they help build a good strong hand position, and they have a nice sound when used as an accompaniment."[308] With this one choice, she addresses accessibility and utilizes a pianistic, harmonically informed pattern that can easily be repeated across the entire keyboard.

Melodically and harmonically, Pearce did not limit herself to major and harmonic minor tonalities but chose to also incorporate bi-tonality and whole-tone scales in order to prepare students' ears to engage with impressionistic repertoire. Works exhibiting whole-tone scales include: "Spider Webs" from *Solo Flight*, "Arctic Air" from *Adventures*,

[308] Elvina Truman Pearce, *Keyboard Theory for Piano Students, 5th ed.,* (Naperville, IL: Elvina Truman Pearce, 1986), 24.

"Desert Balm" from *Elvina Pearce's Favorite Solos, Book 3*, "The Haunted Castle" from *Adventures in Style, Book 1*, "Snow Swirls" from *Elvina Pearce's Favorite Solos, Book 2.*

Pearce's primary goal as a composer was to "write pieces that kids could understand and liked well enough to want to learn them. I think I was pretty much able to accomplish what I hoped to when I started writing them. We need more music like that, that sounds big, that sounds a bit fresh. It's not [just] middle C, up a third, down a second."[309] Pearce successfully accomplished that goal in nearly every composition by effectively utilizing patterns to achieve full-sounding pieces that are rewarding to perform. About composing pieces that sound difficult but are actually quite simple, Pearce reminisces: "It was a great outlet for me. I learned a lot by doing those pieces, and I learned a lot about teaching, and what makes a piece hard, and what makes a piece easy, and tried to put them in the music."[310]

As a pedagogue, Pearce was relentless in her dedication to a student-led, discovery-based learning approach, and, as a composer, she was confident in her ability to write music that facilitated that priority. Descriptive titles inspire students to tap into their creative side and explore artistry and musicality. Exposing students to new tonalities and styles promote discovery learning and fosters open ears and adventurous musical appetites. For Pearce, compositions are a means to an end, another avenue through which she seeks to create students who are life-long musicians and who understand style and can convey it to an audience.

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[309] Pearce, Interview 3 of 10, July 10, 2018.

[310] Pearce, Interview 3 of 10, July 10, 2018.

TECHNIQUE SYLLABUS

In addition to her compositions, Pearce self-published both a theory curriculum and a technic syllabus. Analysis of both of these publications gives critical insight into how Pearce sequenced technique and theory development in her students.

Pearce self-published the first edition of the Technic Syllabus for Piano Students in 1976, four years before composing her first collection of teaching pieces. Subsequent editions of the syllabus were published in 1977, 1979, and 1982. The fourth edition (1982) was consulted for this document. Pearce describes the syllabus as follows:

> The exercises in the Technic Syllabus were designed to be used as 'warm-up' drill preceding each practice period. Ideally, the playing of such exercises should consume approximately one-fourth of a student's daily practice time. The student should memorize the pattern of an exercise at once so that he is free to give his full attention to how his hand looks, feels, and sounds as it plays.[311]

Pearce offers the following suggestions to students for practicing technical exercises:

1. Play each exercise hands separately until it feels secure. Then, play it hands together. (Most of Pearce's exercises were designed to be played in parallel and contrary motion and should be practiced both ways unless otherwise indicated.)
2. Initially, play each exercise with a full, rich tone, and a very slow tempo. When secure, lighten up the touch and work for security at a faster tempo.
3. When playing hands together, space the hands two octaves apart unless otherwise indicated.
4. Practice with a metronome is encouraged, as it aids the student in maintaining a slow tempo and setting and achieving faster tempo goals.[312]

Pearce divides her technical syllabus into seven chapters, the first of which is devoted to early elementary exercises. Here, technique begins with exercising fingers two

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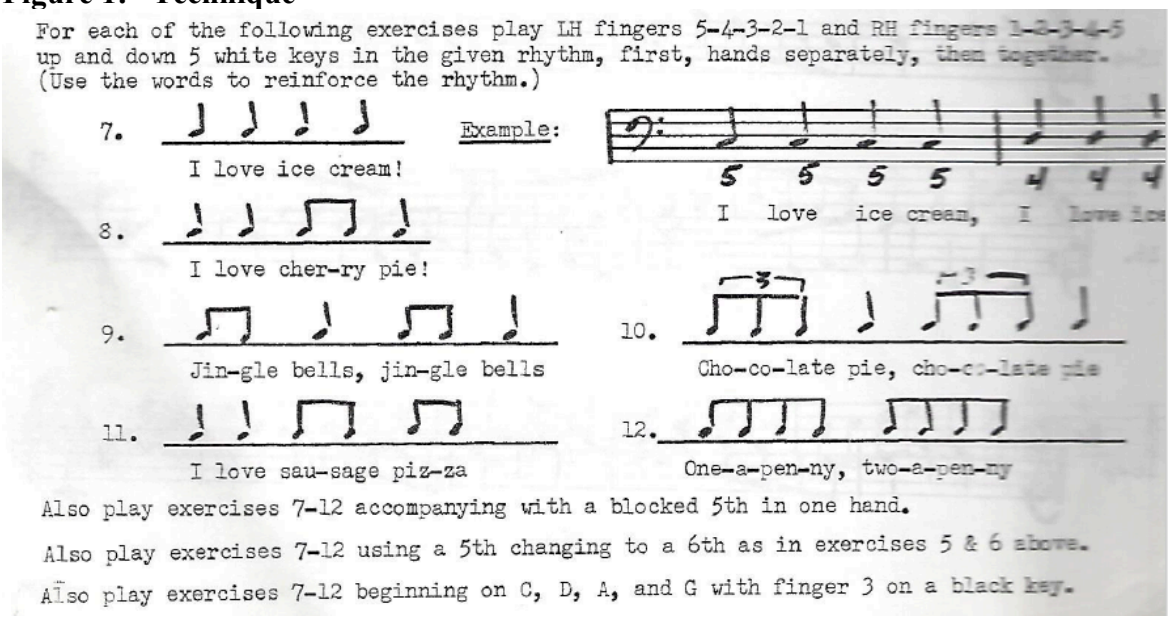
[311] Elvina Truman Pearce, *Technic Syllabus for Piano Students, 4th Ed.,* (Naperville, IL: Elvina Truman Pearce, 1984), Foreword.

[312] Pearce, *Technic Syllabus*, Foreword.

and three on the easily locatable groups of two black keys. The fourth finger is then added into the mix while the student plays on groups of three black keys. This approach mirrors the way technique is introduced in *The Music Tree's Time to Begin* book. One difference between the two is that, in her syllabus, Pearce specifies that students should play hands separately first, then hands together.

Building on that foundation, Pearce then adds harmonic fifths moving up by seconds from C to C. Within the same section, she introduces expansions of the hand from a fifth to a sixth. In the next section, she notates various rhythmic exercises that employ words to reinforce the rhythm. These are indicated to be played with fingers 5-4-3-2-1 in the left hand and 1-2-3-4-5 in the right hand. She notes that when comfortable, students should play hands together ascending and descending.

Figure 1: "Technique"



Chapter two entails various five-finger pattern exercises in the keys of C, G, F, and D. The exercises then move through the five-finger diatonic positions of each key, resulting in the thumb playing on black keys at times. Variations include different

rhythmic permutations (quarters, eighths, sixteenths), as well as different intervals. There are eight variations in which the hands play in parallel motion. In two additional five-finger pattern exercises, one hand plays legato quarter notes while the other plays a repeated staccato on eighth notes and vice versa.

Chapter three is devoted to miscellaneous exercises such as legato thirds and trills. Exercise one consists of a three-note figure that changes from C, D, E, to C, D, E-flat, and finally to C, D-flat, E-flat. This pattern is then transposed to all keys. To execute this pattern and exercise all fingers of the hand, Pearce suggests using fingers 1-2-3, then 2-3-4, and finally 3-4-5. The goal of this exercise is to develop an awareness of keyboard topography. The following two exercises are based on five-finger-pattern positions. The first pattern works on legato thirds, Pearce suggests students break them up melodically first (e.g., C-E-D-F-E-G), before blocking them together harmonically (C and E, D and F, E and F). Next, she instructs students to repeat this exercise in the minor keys, ascending by half steps. The next exercise in the syllabus addresses the development of trill technique. Pearce first asks students to practice a large gesture by playing two-note slurs with an accent, developing the tactile. Then, to develop finger strength, she guides students in practicing five-finger patterns with varying accents. Throughout nine variations of this exercise, the frequency of the accents is diminished, and the note values decreased, facilitating a gradual development of trill technique.

In chapter four, Pearce turns to a classic and incorporates traditional Hanon exercises with variations. She selects various exercises from Charles-Louis Hanon's *The Virtuoso Pianist* (exercises 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, and 10). For each, she suggests practicing with a variety of rhythmic permutations, including combinations of quarter and eighth notes,

eighths and sixteenths, and dotted rhythms. She also advises students to practice these exercises with a variety of articulations and opposing articulations, reiterating her focus on helping students achieve fluent technique.

Major scales are introduced in chapter five and presented in thoughtfully organized and sequenced groups: Group 1 covers D-flat, G-flat, and B; Group 2 includes F, E-flat, and E; Group 3 introduces A, D, G, and C; and Group 4 presents A-flat and B-flat. Explaining her reasoning behind this grouping, Pearce said that F major "is easy because the thumbs always play at the same time and because the 2-3-4 and 2-3 groups occur at the same time."[313] E-flat and E mirror each other when played hands together because the same fingers play simultaneously in contrary motion. For this reason, Pearce suggests approaching Group 3 keys, A, D, G, and C, by teaching contrary motion scales first.

Pearce suggests that minor scales be introduced only after a student can play all major scales, two octaves, in parallel motion, ascending and descending. She does not specify which version of the minor scale should be introduced first, but does group them as follows: Group 1 is C, G, D, A, E, B; Group 2: F and G-sharp; Group 3: C-sharp and F-sharp; Group 4: B-flat and E-flat. For Group 1, the fingering is the same as the parallel major, so she suggests reviewing the parallel major before playing the minor scale.

Once scale fingerings are mastered, Pearce provides fifteen different ways to practice major and minor scales geared toward building finger strength and intermediate-level technique. She suggests the following scale variations for practice:

1. Blocked by finger groupings (1-2-3, 1-2-3-4)
2. Thumb plus blocked (1, 2-3, 1, 2-3-4, etc.)

[313] Pearce, *Technic Syllabus*.

3. Skeleton Scale (1-3-1-4-1-3-1-4, etc.)
4. Crossing exercises (1-2-1-2-1 on C D E D C, etc.)
5. Impulse practice (one octave plus one note, and two octaves plus two notes)
6. Accents (in three's, four's, five's, six's)
7. Beginning and ending on each different scale degree
8. Contrasting Touches (one hand legato, the other staccato)
9. Contrasting Tempos
10. Metronome Practice (quarter note = 48)
    a. Play up and down one octave, one note per tick
    b. Play up and down two octaves, two notes per tick
    c. Play up and down three octaves, three notes per tick
    d. Play up and down four octaves, four notes per tick
    e. Play up and down four octaves, eight notes per tick.
11. Two against Three
12. Bi-Tonal Scales (suggested keys: C/F#, D/Bb, etc.)
13. Hands together in sixths, tenths, and thirds
14. Hands together with different rhythms in each hand
    a. Right hand plays up and down two octaves, left hand one octave
    b. Right hand plays up and down three octaves, left hand one octave
    c. Right hand plays up and down four octaves, left hand one octave

Chapter six is dedicated to triads and inversions, which are presented blocked and broken. Chapter seven focuses on arpeggios and contains a detailed fingering chart that groups arpeggios together based on fingerings in root position, first inversion, and second inversion. Pearce also offers suggestions for various hand-crossing exercises for the arpeggios.

The 1982 edition of Pearce's technique syllabus includes an Addendum of Supplementary Studies consisting of fifteen exercises. Many of these exercises are pattern-based, and Pearce suggests practicing them on each scale degree of a given key. For a variation of Hanon #1, for instance, she recommends moving up a half-step every measure (e.g., first measure in C major, second measure in D-flat major, etc.).

KEYBOARD THEORY

Elvina self-published *Keyboard Theory for Piano Students* in 1976 with subsequent editions appearing in 1977, 1981, 1982, 1986. For this document, the fifth edition (1986) was consulted. It contains thirteen sections dedicated to major and minor five-finger patterns, triads, scales, and chord progressions. Pearce explains the purpose of the exercises in this syllabus as:[314]

1. To introduce the piano student to the fundamentals of theory and harmony.
2. To give the student maximum experience at the keyboard with each fundamental so that it can be identified by ear as well as written and played with ease.
3. To encourage creative keyboard activities through drills designed for improvisation and harmonization.

As indicated above, students are encouraged to play and practice patterns. Scales are introduced as tetrascales (left hand using fingers 4-3-2-1 and right hand using fingers 1-2-3-4). Next, Pearce introduces an exercise that harmonizes a scale melody with I, IV, and V chords. See Figure 2.

Figure 2: "Scale Harmonization"



Chord progressions (I, IV6/4, I, V6/5, I) are introduced and developed first with dyads — blocked fifths and sixths — and then the middle notes are added to create a

[314] Elvina Truman Pearce, *Keyboard Theory for Piano Students, 5th ed.,* (Naperville, IL: Elvina Truman Pearce, 1986).

triad. Later in the curriculum, Pearce uses the closest position chord progressions to harmonize scales, moving students away from the earlier root-position-only iteration.

Pearce's philosophy of moving students seamlessly from the known to the unknown is apparent in her approach to introducing minor scales. Rather than introducing them as something new and completely different from the major scales, Pearce guides students to "discover" parallel minor scales by lowering the third, sixth, and seventh pitches of each major scale. Major, dominant, and diminished chords are presented here as well, but the half-diminished chord is not addressed.

Pearce devotes one section of her theory text to harmonizing melodies with a variety of accompaniment patterns. Broken and blocked chords, waltz bass, march bass, Alberti bass, and jump bass are all introduced. Melodies in the text are frequently familiar folk tunes such as "This Old Man," "On Top of Old Smokey," and "Old Folks at Home." Once students can comfortably harmonize and play these pieces in C major, she suggests they transpose each song to G, F, D, A, E, and E-flat.

The final section of Pearce's theory text is dedicated to harmonizing and improvising. Here, Pearce builds an understanding of these skills in students starting with five-finger patterns harmonized by root position chords (first I and V, then I, IV, and V). In this section, she also presents an exercise in which the right-hand plays a major scale while the left hand adds harmony via diatonic seventh chords. Once comfortable with this exercise, students are asked to perform it in all keys that begin on a white note, followed by all keys that begin on a black note. There are several instances throughout this text in which she uses this structure, dividing major and minor keys into "white key" and "black key" groups.

To help students develop a sense of freedom when improvising, Pearce suggests using chord charts and provides two in her text. To illustrate the different possibilities, she offers five suggestions for rhythms and voicing of the harmonies between the hands. Here is an example of the chords used for the second chart that appears in the text:

a F G C

a D G C

F E a

When students are comfortable with these chord changes, she suggests they try to improvise on them, incorporating her suggestions.

It is safe to assume that Pearce followed a similar strategy and process when presenting technical and theoretical concepts to her private students. Therefore, both her Keyboard Theory and Technic syllabi act as essential windows into her pedagogical practice.

CONCLUSION

Pearce's compositional output spans over three decades, 1976-2014, and provides outstanding supplemental repertoire suitable for use with most modern piano methods. Her twenty-three repertoire collections contain 251 compositions with the most complicated pieces fitting within Jane Magrath's levels 1-4.

Through her compositions, a vision for students' musical and technical development emerges. Her keen use of dyads, specifically blocked fifths, helps to build strong knuckle bridges in beginner students. Her effective use of whole tones and chord clusters, coupled with the use of the pedal, introduces new and novel sounds to expand

students' aural vocabulary, especially at the elementary level. Descriptive titles are designed to spark students' imaginations and encourage them to bring the character or mood of a given piece to vivid life. Furthermore, Pearce keeps students' best interests in mind by composing pieces that sound hard, but are easy to play because they are based on easily memorizable patterns. Many of Pearce's compositions are influenced by rock, blues, and world cultures and, therefore, appeal to a wide range of students. Students who play her compositions find fulfillment in their charm, flair, and attractive musicality. Ed Darling, Pearce's former student from Westminster Choir College, states that her compositions, along with her book, *The Success Factor*, are her ultimate contributions: "Her music is an expression of beauty and representations of reality."[315]

[315] Ed Darling Questionnaire.

CHAPTER 6: PERSPECTIVES ON PEARCE AS WRITER

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will provide a synthesis of Pearce's pedagogical philosophies through an analysis of her work as a writer and editor. Over a lifetime of experiences as a performer and teacher, Pearce accumulated a treasure trove of pedagogical wisdom, much of which she committed to writing as an editor, author, and magazine contributor. In the same way that her pedagogical philosophies are embedded in her compositions, her ideas about teaching permeate her writings.

Pearce was prolific, sharing details about her teaching philosophy through anecdotes and examples in writings published in a variety of professional journals. Throughout her career, Pearce contributed essays and articles to *Keyboard Companion, Clavier, Keyboard Arts, Piano Quarterly*, *The Piano Teacher, Piano Guild Notes,* and *American Music Teacher.* Additionally, for sixteen years (1990-2006), she served as editor of the "Home Practice" section of *Keyboard Companion*, overseeing its content across sixty-six issues. See Appendix D for a list of topics and articles she oversaw for the 'Home Practice' section of *Keyboard Companion.* In 2000, she was promoted to

editor-in-chief of *Keyboard Companion*. She served in that position from 2000 to 2006, overseeing the publication of twenty-seven issues. In these roles and through her writing, she reached piano teachers all over the world. In this chapter, an examination of these resources provides insight into Pearce's teaching ideas and practices.

Pearce became the editor of the "Home Practice" section of *Keyboard Companion* in 1990 at age 58. When Richard Chronister began assembling personnel to help publish the magazine, he reached out to Pearce and asked her to be an associate editor of one of its sections. She agreed to serve as associate editor of the home practice section because, she says, "It wasn't that I didn't like any of the other topics, but I felt that [home practice] was the one subject that I could offer something of value.[316]

When Chronister died in 2000, Pearce was asked by Louise Goss to take over as the magazine's editor-in-chief. According to Marvin Blickenstaff, "Elvina [Pearce] 'saved the day' when she agreed to become the editor-in-chief of *Keyboard Companion.* She single-handedly made it possible for *Keyboard Companion* to survive."[317] Pearce served in this capacity for six years, from 2000 to 2006.

In 2014, Pearce's book *The Success Factor in Piano Teaching: Making Practice Perfect*, an essential educational text for pedagogy students that is also useful as a source of review materials for seasoned teachers was published.[318] Written with the perspective of seven decades of teaching and teacher training, *The Success Factor* offers advice on effective teaching practices for professional piano teachers. Pearce says she wrote the

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[316] Pearce, Interview 6 of 10, July 11, 2018.

[317] Marvin Blickenstaff Questionnaire.

[318] Pearce, *Success Factor*.

book after "seeing what teachers really needed to know. All of my experiences with music, with learning, with having lessons, I tried to put in there."[319] Although she states clearly that the book was not intended as a pedagogical text, much of its content is useful for novice teachers and pedagogy students alike.

For generations of music educators, Pearce was an invaluable resource for guidance and inspiration. Across all of her published writings, several areas of expertise emerge, including effective teaching, at-home practice, and group lessons. Other topics frequently addressed include technique, rhythm, repertoire introduction, memorization, and performance. Pearce also outlined her thoughts on lesson planning, assignments sheets, and professionalism.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

In her writing, Pearce articulates a personal teaching philosophy heavily informed by her piano and piano pedagogy teachers as well as her own teaching and performing experience. She takes the best of what her former teachers offered and fuses it with her own experiences to create a philosophy that is both student-centric and rooted in the mission of creating lifelong lovers of music. Through her many years of experiences and training, Pearce came to believe that learning how to teach well requires a lifetime of practice and that successful piano teachers adhere to the following seven principles:[320]

1. Teaching is not telling.

[319] Pearce, Interview 1 of 10, July 10, 2018.

[320] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 13-19.

2. To be thoroughly understood by a student, each discovery must be repeatedly used (experienced and drilled) in a variety of formats until it becomes a habit.
3. Learning is growth.
4. Understanding the "whole" of a piece should precede drilling sections.
5. When piano students are well prepared, nothing is too difficult for them to learn or to demonstrate with security and authority at the keyboard.
6. Students learn better in an environment that is primarily "student-centered" as opposed to one that is "teacher-centered."
7. Unless students experience success during a lesson employing suggested practice strategies, they are unlikely to repeat them at home.

Behind so many of these principles is the idea that student self-discovery is essential to the learning process, a core tenet that Pearce outlined vividly in her earliest published work, an article titled, "Whats vs. Whys." Appearing in the January 1969 edition of *American Music Teacher*, the article outlines her ideas about what constitutes good teaching and articulates philosophies and best practices she would continue to espouse for decades.

In "Whats vs. Whys," Pearce uses detailed descriptions of two very different types of teachers to illustrate her point. The first teacher she describes focuses on the "whats" — what they are teaching — and the second on the "whys" — why they are teaching. The "whats" teacher fixates on instructing students prescriptively, Pearce writes. Instead of asking a student to contemplate a musical decision for themselves, the "whats" teacher provides students with explicit "do this" or "don't do that" instructions and tells them information about a piece instead of asking them to consider it thoughtfully themselves. Pearce explains that a "whats" teacher often inserts tempo or dynamic markings onto a student's score without discussion or explanation.[321]

[321] Elvina Truman Pearce, "Whats vs. Whys," *American Music Teacher* 18, no. 3 (January 1969), 38.

On the other hand, Pearce explains, a “whys” teacher places tempo, dynamics, and articulation markings into musical context, asking a student questions about a piece based on what the student already knows and in so doing leading them toward discovery learning. Pearce provides an example of both types of teachers using a piece that evokes the image of an elephant walking. When introducing this piece, she writes, it is useful to ask the student how they would expect the piece to sound given its descriptive title.[322] She confidently asserts that this type of teacher-led student discovery results in better retention of musical concepts. On the contrary, when a student is told precisely what to do (i.e., “play this piece slow and loud”), it is more likely they will forget the instruction when practicing and performing.

To further illustrate this point, Pearce describes how an excess of teacher talk during a lesson can result in pedagogically unsound instruction. Rather than rely on wordy explanations, she argues, teachers should gently guide students to come to their own conclusions by harnessing knowledge, skills, and technique they already possess and applying those concepts to new musical scenarios. In other words, Pearce advocates for teachers as musical shepherds who lead students from the known to the unknown. She states that it is crucial to minimize teacher “telling” and maximize student participation in acquiring new knowledge.[323] As a teacher, Pearce lived this out daily, teaching with a "whys" approach and adhering to her mantra of moving the student from the "known to the unknown" through a process of self-discovery.

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[322] Pearce, “Whats vs. Whys,” 38.

[323] Elvina Truman Pearce, “Teacher ‘Talk and Tell’ Vs. Student ‘Discover and Do,” *Clavier Companion*, (January 15, 2014), accessed September 24, 2019. https://claviercompanion.com/article-details/teacher-talk-and-tell-vs-student-discover-and-do

TEACHERS CONTINUING TO PRACTICE

Pearce is also a fierce proponent of teacher practice. She feels it is important for teachers to continue to practice the piano themselves throughout their careers, perhaps in preparation for their own performances, but most importantly, in practicing their students' repertoire.

In 1976, twelve years after leaving The New School for Music Study, Pearce penned an article titled, "The Importance of Practicing What We Teach," which was published in both *American Music Teacher* and *Keyboard Arts*.[324] In it, she argues that teachers who cease practicing limit their musical and technical judgments. She writes, "Surely one of the reasons for unmusical performances by students is that they do not often enough have the highest artistic standards before them as a model."[325] Emphasizing this point, Pearce argues that as they are for students, performances are also the best motivators for teachers to practice. She offers suggestions for various performance opportunities for teachers, including participation in local MTNA group sponsored recitals, performances on student programs, and performances in lessons and repertoire classes. She adds the caveat that she is not trying "to build a case for performance, but rather for practice, and performance is cited only as one very good stimulus for practice."[326]

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[324] Elvina Truman Pearce, "The Importance of Practicing What We Teach," *American Music Teacher* 25, no. 4 (February/March 1976),10-11. Elvina Truman Pearce, "The Importance of Practicing What We Teach," *Keyboard Arts* (Winter 1977), 8-9.

[325] Pearce, "The Importance of Practicing What We Teach," 8.

[326] Pearce, "The Importance of Practicing What We Teach," 9.

Pearce reiterated the importance of teacher practice when sharing her prescription for student success in a 1979 piece in *Clavier.*[327] When new repertoire is introduced, she writes, two variables contribute to the success, or lack thereof, of the presentation: student readiness and teacher readiness. She asserts that for a teacher to be ready to introduce a piece of music, they must have a clear understanding of the piece's formal structure, its unifying and contrasting factors, and a plan for fingering. Furthermore, she posits that their own practice should inform those ideas. Teachers must be able not just to play through a piece, but also to clearly communicate musical goals to a student aurally as they do so. After the piece is introduced, a teacher must continue to draw from the well of their own healthy practice habits in devising practice strategies with the student for solving music and technical issues and tackling memorization. In summary, Pearce believes teachers must enter every lesson with a firm, practice-informed understanding of how to lead a student from learning a piece to performing it musically.

STUDENT PRACTICE HABIT DEVELOPMENT

The theme of practice permeates much of Pearce's writing and became an even more central theme in her work once she was appointed editor of the "Home Practice" section of *Keyboard Companion* in 1990. For each quarterly issue of the magazine, Pearce solicited responses from teachers on topics she selected. Periodically, Pearce also weighed in with contributions, shedding further light on her philosophies surrounding

[327] Elvina Truman Pearce, "Prescription for Student Success," *Clavier* 18, no. 2 (February 1979).

student practice. For a full list of topics from the "Home Practice" section of *Keyboard Companion,* see Appendix D. Pearce also dedicated a chapter in *The Success Factor* to developing student practice. In "Teaching Students How to Practice," she prefaced her ideas by clarifying that they are intended to work for the average student.[328]

When offering tips to teachers on how best to guide student practice, Pearce drew from her own extensive experiences practicing and teaching students how to practice. In 2006, after nearly fifty years of teaching, Pearce published an article "What Makes Practice Perfect," in which she shared some of her hard-earned wisdom on the topic.[329] In that article, Pearce reiterates that teaching students how to practice improves their chance of success at the piano more than any other factor. She writes that many students are clock-directed versus self-directed when they practice. Pearce explains that clock-directed practice results in students merely playing through repertoire for an allotted amount of time with little regard for tempo, accuracy, or artistry. Such practice often leads to student dropouts, she explains. On the other hand, she says, when students are self-directed in their practice, they are engaged with their music as active listeners and score-studiers.

In *The Success Factor*, Pearce provides practical home-practice advice culled from her own lived experiences as a teacher-performer.[330] She understood first-hand the

[328] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 47.

[329] Elvina Pearce, "What makes practice perfect?" *Keyboard Companion* 17, no. 4 (Winter 2006), 10-15.

[330] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 48-52.

importance of establishing efficient and effective practice habits and gave the following advice to teachers and students:

1. Establish a regular practice time.
2. Practice in multiple short sessions rather than one long one.
3. Start learning new pieces by analyzing them.
4. Keep a pencil at hand to mark in the score.
5. Know how to select a “thinking” tempo.
6. Include repetition while practicing.
7. Tackle challenges first.
8. Vary the order of your practice sessions.

She also advocates for "backward" practice or rehearsing the end of a piece first so that it would be as strongly prepared as the beginning.[331]

From Frances Clark, Pearce understood the importance of the teacher’s role in prepping students for home practice. It was a topic covered regularly in her teacher-training sessions with Clark, and a lesson she internalized. Pearce explains: "Creating lesson situations in which students can repeatedly experience success as a result of utilizing intelligent practice procedures is, of course, one of the teacher's major responsibilities."[332] While it may seem counter-intuitive, Pearce also believes that teachers should work to become disposable to their students. In her own teaching, she took great pride in ushering her students toward independence.

[331] Elvina Pearce, Alan Chow, Barbara English Maris, “What have you learned from your own practice that has affected what and how you teach your students about practice?” *Keyboard Companion* 6, no. 1 (Spring 1995), 6-9.

[332] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 53.

When Pearce was concerned about a given student's at-home practice habits, she addressed them directly in the lesson. In a 1992 *Keyboard Companion* article, she provides the following in-lesson suggestions for improving student practice:[333]

1. All practice steps assigned for home practice must be experienced in the lesson.
2. Always start the lesson with warm-ups to set an example for the student.
3. Record portions of the lesson containing suggested practice procedures so that the student can listen at home and have a "mini-lesson" each day.
4. Encourage students to stick with practicing small segments.
5. Rotate through different practice procedures throughout the week.

To illustrate that last point, Pearce explains that a piece containing three different sections should be approached with three different practice procedures. This tactic adds variety to a student's home practice and therefore is more likely to sustain their attention and interest.

Pearce believes a piano lesson's primary purpose is to prepare a student for at-home practice. In *The Success Factor*, she writes that students must have an understanding of "specific goals for each piece or activity in the assignment and specific practice procedures for fulfilling them."[334] Pearce then identifies four primary study goals for every piece:[335]

1. Be able to play the whole piece 100% accurately and with technical security at a "thinking" tempo.
2. Be able to play the pieces at tempo with technical ease and security.
3. Be able to express the musical "message" of the piece convincingly.
4. Achieve secure memorization (NOTE: this goal is required when memorization is assigned.)

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[333] Elvina Pearce, Brenda Dillon, Marvin Blickenstaff, Joyce Cameron, Richard Chronister, "What Are Your Main Concerns About Your Students' Home Practice?" *Keyboard Companion* 3, no. 2 (Summer 1992), 10-11.

[334] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 55.

[335] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 55.

Pearce also acknowledges that students sometimes become frustrated when they are not able to play through passages with ease and accuracy. Therefore, in the initial stages of learning a piece, she advises refraining from assigning the most demanding musical elements until after the student has demonstrated the ability to play the piece accurately at a given tempo. Mistakes are more likely to creep in when a student is forced to think about too many musical elements at once, Pearce says.[336] She believes a student's success with a piece is determined in large part by how the teacher initially presents it, and what practice steps the student experiences in the lesson.

To increase the likelihood that a student will follow all practice steps at home, Pearce suggests providing a take-home checklist so they can mark each step as completed. Another tip: If a student repeats the same mistake week after week, pre-performance exercises are suggested to focus their thoughts on preventing the mistake. These pre-performance routines include isolating and working on a problem spot, playing the section in which the problem spot exists successfully on its own, then playing through the entire piece.[337]

To help a student increase the tempo of a piece, Pearce calls for teachers to develop fast-thinking students who are secure in their fingering. Fast-thinking students, she writes, develop their skills through impulse practice. For instance, if a piece is in 4/4, the student should start by practicing just the first two beats of a measure and stopping on

[336] Elvina Pearce, Steven Betts, Kim Nagy, Elaine Smith, Eric Unruh, Stephen Zolper, "What basic approaches do you want your students to use when working out a new piece?" *Keyboard Companion* 7, no. 1 (Spring 1996), 8-11.

[337] Pearce et al., "What Are Your Main Concerns?" 10-11.

the third. The student should then repeat the third beat and add two more beats. Next, the student should increase the number of beats that are part of each impulse. Finally, one impulse might include multiple measures, resulting in a state of flow across a passage of music.[338]

Pearce also believes that verbalization during practice can strengthen a student's grasp of various concepts. For instance, if a student is careless about using correct fingerings, Pearce recommends they verbalize finger numbers aloud as they play. To further reinforce good habits, she also suggests that teachers ask students to verbalize dynamic changes, pedal changes, and other details as they play.[339]

Throughout her many writings on home-practice, Pearce is clear that one of her main teaching goals is to develop students who are self-directed in their own practice. In 2004, after nearly fifty years of teaching, Pearce presented a workshop on "Pedagogy Saturday" at the MTNA National Conference in Kansas City, Missouri, titled, "Self-Directed Practice: A Key to Both Student Success and Motivation."[340] The presentation was also repackaged editorially and published in the October/November 2004 edition of *American Music Teacher*. In both settings, Pearce argued that in order to achieve success at self-directing, students must be decided on specific goals, possess a toolkit to achieve those goals, and be active participants in lessons. She also lists five ways teachers can

[338] Pearce et al., "What Are Your Main Concerns?" 10-11.

[339] Pearce et al., "What Are Your Main Concerns?" 10-11.

[340] Elvina Truman Pearce, "Self-Directed Practice: A Key to both Student Success and Motivation." *American Music Teacher* 54, no. 2 (October 2004), 29-30.

encourage students to be active participants in lessons, outlining specifically the best language to use in each instance. These five ways include:

1) Involve students in choice making.
2) Encourage students to make use of the pencil in the lesson.
3) Involve students in the setting of pre-performance goals.
4) Involve students in post-performance evaluation.
5) Involve students in demonstrations of practice strategies.

ASSESSING HOME PRACTICE

Pearce believed so deeply in the value and importance of efficient home-practice that she began researching how students practiced at home. Understanding the reality of at-home practice accurately, she surmised, would provide insight into how students arrive at a finished product. To gather this information, Pearce used a variety of tactics, including disseminating student questionnaires and observing mock home-practice sessions during the lesson.

In one instance, Pearce created and organized a study of seven teachers and twenty-nine students from the Piano Preparatory Department at North Central College.[341] Students were assigned a piece and asked to learn it on their own with absolutely no outside help from teachers, parents, friends, or siblings. The students were instructed to record their first practice session, then record themselves practicing again five days later. They then made one more recording after two more weeks of practice. Additionally, the student's teachers filled out evaluations twice during this process.

[341] Elvina Pearce with teachers of the Preparatory Piano Division of North Central College, "How can we find out more about our student's home practice?" *Keyboard Companion,* Vol. 6, no. 2 (Summer 1995), 8-11.

One finding of the study that surprised Pearce was that students generally did not make fingering or other markings in their scores. In fact, only nine of the twenty-nine students observed marked anything in their scores. Pearce speculated that many students are used to their teachers doing all the writing in the score during the lesson. That, and other discoveries from the project, led her to conclude that teachers should regularly and frequently assign independent learning pieces in order to evaluate the efficacy of students' home practice habits and strategies.

Another method Pearce championed for evaluating students' home practice was for teachers to watch students demonstrate home practice in a lesson. In a series of vignettes, Pearce describes what she discovered from observing her own students' in-lesson practice demonstrations.[342] In one example included, she dedicates a significant part of a lesson to observing a student practice an assignment, which in this instance includes working through five pieces. After observing that there is room for improvement in the student's practicing, Pearce begins by addressing the positive and commending the student for what they executed well (e.g., the student counted out loud with a steady beat). She then offers suggestions on areas in need of improvement (e.g., students should start with warm-ups and finish with theory homework).

In another example, Pearce describes a student who starts practicing a new piece at home without analyzing it first. Skipping this crucial step hinders the student's ability to digest the piece accurately and efficiently. For Pearce, this is confirmation of her belief that analysis plays a vital role in successful home practice.

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[342] Jennifer Merry, Elvina Pearce, "What do you see when you watch your students practice?" Vol. 10, no. 4 (Winter 1999): 6-9. Beth Jones, Elvina Pearce, "What do you see when you watch your students practice? Part II" *Keyboard Companion,* 11, no. 1 (Spring 2000), 8-11.

Pearce also surveyed the practice habits of well-trained pianists after adjudicating a national competition in 1992. She investigated by asking each pianist to describe his or her practice routines.[343] Questionnaires were sent out to select participants of a non-specified national piano competition, resulting in twenty-one student responses, ages twelve to nineteen. All of the students surveyed reported that their parents supervised their practice at some point, and fourteen of them said their parents regularly attended their piano lessons, revealing the outsized role of parental supervision and participation in successful students' lessons and home practice sessions. Other key success factors revealed by the questionnaire results include excellent teaching and significant practice time. Raw talent appeared to play a less critical role in determining a student's success level. Interestingly, Pearce also found that all of the respondents reported attending classical concerts regularly, and all of them listed Chopin as their favorite composer.

In her studio, Pearce frequently inquired about her students' practice habits and opinions about lessons using questionnaires she generated. Questions asked in these surveys include the following:[344]

1. Why are you studying piano?
2. What are your goals for yourself in piano this year?
3. What do you like about coming to the lesson?
4. What do you like about not coming to the lessons?
5. What do you enjoy about practicing?
6. What do you not enjoy about practicing?
7. What pieces that you are now working on do you like the best?
8. What pieces that you are now working on do you not like?
9. Name some pieces or kinds of music you wish you could be studying instead of the ones you don't enjoy.

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[343] Elvina Pearce with 21 contest winners, "What Do National Contest Winners Say About *Their* Practice (and Other Things)?" *Keyboard Companion* 4, no.1 (Spring 1993), 8-10.

[344] Elvina Pearce and students, "What do students have to say about their practice and lessons?" *Keyboard Companion* 11, no. 3 (Fall 2000), 6-9.

10. If your parents would allow you to stop lessons now, would you do it?
11. How many of your friends take piano lessons?
12. If you have friends who used to take piano lessons but have dropped out, why do you think they quit?
13. If you had only group lessons, would you enjoy piano more?
14. What do you like about group lessons?
15. What do you not like about group lessons?

Pearce went to great lengths to become better informed about her student's home practice habits and, in the process, became a better, more informed teacher.

TECHNIQUE

Pearce possessed a remarkably strong technique thanks to her rigorous training as a pianist/performer, and she was eager to pass that skill set on to her students. In chapter seven of *The Success Factor*, she outlines steps for how to develop secure and reliable technique in students, providing examples of stand-alone exercises as well as exercises derived from technical challenges within the select repertoire. Pearce values traditional, stand-alone exercises like five-finger patterns, scales, and arpeggios, but believes students should learn them by rote rather than from a score. For each of the fourteen derivative exercises presented in the chapter, she offers excerpts from standard teaching literature and provides a practical roadmap for further exploration of each concept in additional literature. For both categories of exercises, she offers suggestions of specific topics and ideas students should think about and listen for while playing.

Pearce was comprehensive in her presentation of technical concepts. She includes extensive body warm-up exercises, addresses posture at the piano, provides a list of technical goals and exercises for beginners, and discusses scales in great depth, including

covering how to present them and outlining a variety of scale-practice routines.[345] Full-body warm-up exercises for beginners include shoulder lifts, arm swings, elbow lifts, wrist flaps, and hand and finger shakeouts. When presenting scales, Pearce suggests starting with preparatory exercises (playing blocked groups of three and four notes based on the specific fingering of the scale), then rehearsing skeleton scales using fingers 1-3, 1-4, etc.

For further insights into Pearce's approach to technical development, see the discussion of her self-published technique book, *Technic Syllabus for Piano Students,* on pages 138-142 of Chapter 5.

RHYTHM

Pearce offered her thoughts on teaching rhythm in the 2012 July/August issue of *Clavier Companion.* The article was a response to an invitation by editor Bruce Berr for her to contribute her thoughts on essential rhythmic skills for the early-level student. The detailed article provides insight into how she approached establishing rhythmic stability in her students. Several suggestions she makes in the article do not deal with rhythm directly, but instead address elements of playing that often affect rhythm. For example, Pearce emphasizes the importance of proper posture and thoughtful repertoire selection. To establish rhythmic stability in students, she writes, it is essential that teachers assign music of appropriate length and difficulty.

In the piece, Pearce explains her approach to counting as such:

[345] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 110-22.

> I firmly believe that counting should never be introduced until playing and maintaining a steady pulse has become part of a student's habit. Unless this is the case, students can count until the cows come home and still end up with tempo instability and inaccurate rhythmic relationships of note values.[346]

She also explains that metronomes do not help students establish a reliable internal beat, nor do they promote active listening, which one needs in order to maintain rhythmic stability. She also emphasizes the importance of pre-planning the tempo of a piece. In lessons, this can be taught by asking students to count-off out loud before playing. Once a student is secure with this practice, she says, they may execute the count-off silently.

REPERTOIRE INTRODUCTION

One frequent topic of the "Home Practice" section of *Keyboard Companion* is how to effectively introduce new repertoire in a lesson. Pearce believed the way a teacher introduces a piece heavily influenced how effectively a student practices it at home. She emphasizes to teachers the importance of assigning specific practice steps as part of a new piece's introduction.

As an example, Pearce describes her approach to introducing Kabalevsky's *Toccata*, Op. 60 to a student.[347] The *Toccata* features a section in which the right-hand does double-duty, playing sustained melody notes and accompaniment patterns at the same time. Instead of asking the student to execute that technical challenge in the right hand from the start, Pearce advises splitting the right-hand accompaniment and melody

[346] Elvina Pearce, "Rhythmic Stability—the Prime Ingredient of Technical Security and Expressive Musicality," *Clavier Companion* 7, no. 7 (July/August 2012), 52.

[347] Pearce et al., "What basic approaches," 8-11.

sections between both hands. Because playing the passage with two hands is easier, students can then focus more attention on listening for and generating the desired sound. Pearce was convinced that when a student focused first on sound, they would find technique much more comfortable to achieve. This was useful because, she argues, students who are forced to think about and execute too many musical elements at the same time too soon (fingering, voicing, dynamics, etc.) are often less secure with a piece in performance. "Because working on musicality [interpretation] requires almost total concentration of one's focus, I believe that this aspect of practice is most productive when the student no longer needs to think about 'mechanics' [accuracy]."[348]

In another article, Pearce uses William Gillock's "Dragon Fly" from the *Lyric Preludes in a Romantic Style* to demonstrate what she expects in terms of self-directed practice from intermediate students.[349] She suggests beginning with a thorough analysis of the music, a habit she picked up from her studies with Isabelle Vengerova.[350] Additional suggestions included building a student's practice toolkit so that they are able to achieve performance tempo as well as technical security. She also reiterates, here again, her core belief that student input is a vital component to developing students who are self-motivated to practice.

Pearce brought all of her thoughts on introducing repertoire together in an essential chapter of *The Success Factor.* In "From Presentation to Performance – Getting

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[348] Pearce et al., "What basic approaches," 8-11.

[349] William Gillock, *Lyric Preludes in a Romantic Style,* (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Co. Inc., 1994).

[350] Darling, "Beyond the Notes."

It All Together," she chose three pieces to illustrate the central tenets of her teaching philosophy: *Fantasie in D minor, K. 397* by Mozart; *Fantasy Dance, Op. 124, no. 5* by Schumann; and *Notturno, Op, 54, no. 4* by Grieg. She suggests that when teachers introduce these pieces, they use the following four-point plan:[351]

> Step 1: Discuss what the piece is about with students.
> Step 2: Hear a performance of the piece as preparation for analysis.
> Step 3: Analyze the piece's formal structure and mark and label its parts.
> Step 4: Provide the first week's assignment.

In addition to these universal steps, Pearce goes into more detail, providing specific instructions for introducing each of the four pieces. Separately, in a blog article for Alfred Music, she provides the following more concise way of communicating and remembering that four-point repertoire-introduction plan: explore, listen, analyze, practice.[352] (For more of Pearce's ideas on introducing her own repertoire successfully, see Chapter 5, pages 125-128.)

Pearce believes teachers should always provide students with clear and specific practice goals, arm them with proven, results-driven practice strategies, and guide them toward their own discoveries in a lesson rather than wasting time with teacher-centric talking and telling. She writes, "It is the repetition of success that makes practice perfect, and this is what produces students who want to continue with music study and with their ongoing journey into the wonderful world of music – both as listeners and as music-

[351] Pearce, *Success Factor*.

[352] Elvina Pearce, "How to Strategically Introduce a New Piece to Your Piano Student." *Alfred Music.* February 27, 2018. https://www.alfred.com/blog/how-strategically-introduce-new-piece-piano-student/ (accessed September 24, 2019).

makers themselves!"[353] In addition to arming students with practice procedures designed for student success, Pearce goes to great lengths to follow through on these strategies as part of each lesson.

MEMORIZATION

Pearce tackled the topic of memorization on several occasions in her role as editor for the "Home Practice" section in *Keyboard Companion*.[354] She states that she does not believe musicians necessarily perform better when they are playing by memory. Instead, she says, it is the artistic quality of a given performance that ultimately matters more than how it is presented (memorized or with the score). However, she also believes that performing from memory does provide some benefits, and she feels strongly that every student should have that experience.

Pearce reiterates that a thorough analysis of a piece and its structure are essential and provide a strong foundation for secure memorization. When stating this point, she often quotes a Frances Clark maxim: "Memorizing is remembering what we understand." Students who understand how a piece is constructed will be more secure in their memorization, she posits. More specifically, Pearce recommended students memorize hands separately, playing each part with the music several times before playing from

[353] Pearce, "What Makes Practice Perfect?" 15.

[354] Elvina Pearce, "How do your students practice memorizing?" *Keyboard Companion* 8, no. 4 (Winter 1997), 8-10.

memory. Hands-together practice follows in the same manner. Her suggestions for memorization continue:[355]

1. Practice each section without the music.
2. Play the whole piece without the music, very slowly, and all at one dynamic level.
3. Practice playing each hand alone without the music.
4. Practice playing every other measure.
5. Practice stopping on any single note, put your hands in your lap for four counts, and then continue with the very next note.
6. Practice playing the LH alone for one measure. Then practice the RH alone for the next measure. Then repeat this pattern.
7. Continue to play with the music regularly to check back in with the score.
8. Vary the way difficult sections are practiced.
9. Arrange performance opportunities to practice playing by memory in front of an audience.

Additionally, she advises students here again not to always begin their practice with the opening measures of a piece. Instead, to ward off memory slips, she suggests students choose a variety of different sections within the piece from which to begin playing by memory.

STUDENT PERFORMANCES

When Pearce discusses in *The Success Factor* how teachers could best prepare students for performance, her pedagogical philosophies become particularly apparent. She states with conviction, "Although achieving readiness for successful performances should be the natural outgrowth of successful teaching, it should never be the sole reason for teaching and certainly not a valid reason for parents to enroll their children in piano

[355] Pearce, "How do your students practice memorizing?"

lessons."[356] To avoid negative connotations sometimes associated with the words "student recital," she re-branded those experiences for her students, calling them "informal piano programs." When choosing repertoire for those informal programs, she started by asking her students to make a list of the pieces they most enjoyed learning and playing that semester. She then selected their performance repertoire from that list. She reminded students that any piece they added to their list of favorites had to be a work they could play accurately and securely. Given these parameters, she claims, students always make the correct choice.

When a student is preparing for a performance, Pearce believes maintenance practice is a necessity. Pearce writes in *The Success Factor* that there are several ways to maintain a piece ahead of a performance. She suggests that students record themselves playing through the piece three to four times a week, then listen to the recording while following the music.[357] This activity highlights weaknesses and reveals to the student exactly which sections need to be rehearsed with the score. Pearce also states here that students should vary the way they approach challenging sections, and, when playing from memory, practice playing only the final few measures of a piece to avoid end-of-the-piece memory slips in performance.

To help students' perfect public performances, Pearce offered many other suggestions for preparation as well.[358] In lessons, for instance, she asked students to

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[356] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 165.

[357] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 167.

[358] Elvina Pearce, Gail Berenson, Martha Baker-Jordan, Burton Kaplan. "How do your students practice to prepare for a public performance?" *Keyboard Companion* 10, no. 1 (Spring 1999), 6-10.

always approach the piano with energy and enthusiasm, just as they would in a performance. She taught them to take time to adjust the piano bench to the appropriate height, and to think about their music with their hands in their lap before lifting them to the keyboard. She also insisted that students practice bowing and leaving the piano after the performance with the same energy and enthusiasm with which they approached it.

COMPETITIONS

When addressing competitions and contests in *The Success Factor*, Pearce posits that those experiences should always be pursued with a student's best interest in mind. Before a student enters a competition, she writes, they must be psychologically prepared for a loss and understand that adjudicators' comments are subjective. During debriefings with a student following a competition performance, Pearce again suggests practicing a student-centric approach. Teachers should first ask the student to relay their thoughts on their performance, she explains, before jumping in with their own opinions and feedback. She also writes that with her students, she always made it a point, both before and after competitions or contests, to discuss the educational value that those experiences provide.[359]

Pearce also addresses appropriate repertoire selection for contests and competitions in her text.[360] Pearce's experiences as a clinician and adjudicator left her with the impression that students often play music that is too difficult too soon. As a

[359] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 172-3.

[360] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 173-5.

result, she says, students are often clueless about the music they are performing. She stated that "my own pedagogical philosophy prohibits me from assigning music that I think is inappropriate [too hard] for a particular student, regardless of the reason. To do so would necessitate lowering my standards and expectations for excellence, and this, in my opinion, would be a no-win situation for both the student and for me."[361] She summarizes her views on contests and festivals by stating that the real prize for students is a "lifetime of enjoyment and of being able to make it themselves at the piano."[362]

Finally, in an article selected by readers of *American Music Teacher* as one of their six favorite pieces from 1975 and 1976, Pearce shares observations from her years of grading and adjudicating contests and competitions.[363] She notes that in her experience, students performing in competitions often ignored dynamic symbols, exhibited improper balance between melody and accompaniment, lacked balance between linear voices, and rarely performed dynamic shading or phrase shaping. She advocates for more teachers modeling as one means of remedying this persistent problem.

GROUP LESSONS

Ever since her time working alongside Frances Clark at Westminster Choir College (1955-1960) and The New School for Music Study (1960-1964), Pearce was a

[361] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 175.

[362] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 240.

[363] *Evening Sentinel*, Holland, Michigan, November 5, 1976, Newspapersarchive.com. Elvina Truman Pearce, "Standards for Judging." *Clavier* 15, no. 2 (February 1976), 48-51.

fierce advocate for teaching piano in groups. She addressed the topic thoroughly in a 1978 *American Music Teacher* article in which she writes about the benefits of group classes and the reasons she chose to incorporate them into her curriculum. She writes that group classes "provide students with regular opportunities to perform, to learn actively, and to imaginatively listen to music, specifically to piano repertoire played by their peers."[364] Group classes were not meant to be technical drill sessions, she clarifies, but rather a place in which the vast majority of the time — seventy-five percent of an hour-long class — could be dedicated to music-making and listening. She also advocates for the incorporation of additional activities to vary the pace of the class and build aural awareness through technical and ear-training activities.

Pearce further summarizes her thoughts on group lessons in an essay she authored and distributed to her students and their parents titled, "Why Group Lessons?" (The essay also appears in *The Success Factor.*)[365] Here, Pearce summarizes her reasons for including group lessons in her curriculum and reiterates the advantages of such classes. Group lessons, she says, provide a ready-made audience for regular performance opportunities and therefore act as a valuable practice incentive. Additionally, group lessons provide students with the opportunity to practice the art of listening to music and engaging with performances thoughtfully. She explains that students participating in group lessons are encouraged to give positive feedback to their peers by offering one suggestion each for how to increase the effectiveness of a given performance. In

[364] Elvina Truman Pearce, "Group Lessons: A Plus for the Private Student," *American Music Teacher* 27, no. 6 (June/July 1978), 22.

[365] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 194-6.

summary, Pearce outlines the following advantages of group lessons for students and teachers:[366]

1. Increased opportunities for ensemble playing.
2. Additional instruction time for the student.
3. Additional time for reinforcement drills.
4. Positive forum for presenting or working on student compositions.
5. Reinforcement of intelligent music practice strategies.
6. Increased opportunity for socialization aiding in minimizing the solitude many students associate with piano lessons.

LESSON PLANNING

In *The Success Factor*, Pearce asserts that successful teachers regularly dedicate time to both long-term and weekly lesson planning. Weekly lesson plans, she says, must summarize the contents of a lesson and include important notes and details about how to practice new and review pieces at home. She notes that weekly lesson plans should also be flexible, serving as a helpful guide and a jumping-off point for teachers rather than a rigid schedule.[367]

With her students, Pearce says long-term planning was a hybrid of reflection and looking forward. She describes her process in detail: At the end of each school year, she compiled a comprehensive list of materials studied by each student. Using that list as a starting point, she then made informed decisions about future areas of study. Additionally, she provided an end-of-year evaluation form to her students annually.[368]

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[366] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 195-6.

[367] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 23-4.

[368] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 23.

To help students achieve their weekly practice goals, Pearce says she provided students with pre-printed assignment sheets kept in a three-ring binder. While Pearce admits an assignment sheet does not guarantee practice, she firmly believes it can be helpful as a daily reminder of specific goals and practice steps.

Additionally, Pearce's students were often required to record each lesson on tape so that both they and their parents could reference it to review concepts covered in the lesson and reinforce practice guidelines. Over time, she discovered that students who reviewed those tapes weekly were better prepared in lessons.

BEGINNING STUDENTS

The Success Factor also addresses the specific challenges and rewards of teaching beginning students. Pearce believes that students' "firsts" — their first piano lesson, first teacher, and first method — are of utmost importance. She writes, "I believe that it is the beginning experience that determines everything that is to evolve during subsequent years of study."[369]

Pearce explains her method of teaching beginners by comparing and contrasting rote and reading approaches. When teaching beginning students new repertoire, she suggests starting with rote instruction. She articulates the following as three primary goals of the rote approach:[370]

1. To develop excellent aural skills.
2. To develop a high level of technical coordination, control, and facility.

[369] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 33.

[370] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 31.

3. To teach students how to play impressive-sounding pieces on the piano in a relatively short period of time.

When teaching students to read notation, Pearce advocates for a reading-readiness approach over starting with the full Grand Staff. This philosophy represents a clear example of Frances Clark's influence on Pearce's pedagogical practices. Pearce outlines the two primary goals for the reading-readiness approach: First, to ensure complete comprehension of every principle related to the fluent reading of music notation, and second, to develop the ability of students to translate this understanding with technical security, control, and musicality at the keyboard.[371] This approach usually starts off-staff, ensuring that beginners develop a complete understanding of the components of reading music before they discover which lines and spaces correspond to a specific key on the piano.

TRANSFER STUDENTS

Always rooted in practicality and a realistic understanding of obstacles teachers regularly face, Pearce also addresses the topic of transfer students in her writing. She acknowledges that teaching a transfer student is often an enormous challenge. To make the transition into a new studio smoother for students, she advises teachers to make professional and personal adjustments as the first step. She suggests that teachers always be transparent with incoming parents and students by asking thorough questions in a pre-enrollment interview. She says it is imperative that teachers communicate goals,

[371] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 33.

standards, and expectations with parent(s) and students clearly, viewing that process as vital to maintaining a student's progress during a transition period. When a transfer student interviewed with Pearce, she requested that they come to the pre-enrollment interview prepared to play three pieces (memorization not required). One of the pieces was then selected and worked on with the student immediately, allowing them the chance to experience what lessons will be like with their new teacher, and allowing the teacher to observe how the student responds to instruction.[372]

When transitioning a student from another teacher into her studio, Pearce says she was always careful to ensure that the student never felt as if they were being demoted. With that in mind, she shares her ideas about how to approach remedial work on reading, theory, technique, and practice habits. She writes that in her own experience, transfer students' practice habits typically required the most attention.[373] Ensuring that assigned practice steps are always rehearsed in the lesson was essential in these instances. Finally, Pearce offers professional advice to teachers, reminding them never to suggest to a student or their parent that a previous instructor poorly taught them.

PROFESSIONALISM FOR TEACHERS

Through her work and writings as National Chairman of the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) National Certification Board, Pearce advocated for elevating the piano profession through certification. While president of that board from

[372] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 37-44.

[373] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 43.

1981 to 1984, she regularly contributed a column in *American Music Teacher.* In one article in that magazine titled, "Issues in Piano Pedagogy II," Pearce recommends that teachers become nationally certified through MTNA and lays out her justifications for doing so.[374] Certification, she argues, raises student standards and provides credibility and documentation of teacher competency. Furthermore, certification becomes an avenue through which independent music teachers can achieve recognition if they are meeting the highest professional standards.

Pearce addresses other aspects of professionalism in *The Success Factor*, including how to get started as a piano teacher.[375] She discusses a variety of potential teaching scenarios and compiles a list of ideal sources for teachers to take advantage of when seeking to acquire new students. She encourages teachers to generate a pre-enrollment packet for prospective students. Suggested packet content includes teacher's credentials, studio calendar and policies, practice expectations, group lesson information, and curriculum and materials required for the lessons.

Pearce discusses pre-enrollment interviews, which she says would be approached differently depending on whether or not a student is a beginner or a transfer. During an interview with a beginner, she writes, the most crucial activity is to teach the child a piece of music by rote. This activity reveals to the teacher whether or not the student is ready to begin lessons. With transfers, as addressed earlier, Pearce's priority was working on a

[374] Elvina Truman Pearce, "Issues in Piano Pedagogy II," *American Music Teacher* 34, no. 3 (January 1985), 14, 16.

[375] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 181-5.

piece with the student during the interview so that both teacher and student could get a taste of their working dynamic.

Other professional decorum addressed in *The Success Factor* includes attire, punctuality, answering the phone or door, allowing pets in the studio, and eating during lessons. Pearce also discusses studio events and procedures, highlighting the importance of hosting an annual parents' meeting, and of parents regularly visiting lessons. Student progress reports, which she issued twice a year in her studio, are also discussed. Pearce indicates such reports should include comments on how a student is progressing with practice, following assignments, weekly preparation, technique, musical expression, attitude in lessons, and other miscellanies.

PERSPECTIVES ON PEARCE'S WRITINGS

Through her comprehensive writings in her book and many published articles, Pearce's legacy as a practical, approachable pedagogue shines through, and her priorities and philosophies are emphasized. An invaluable resource for novice and seasoned teachers alike, Pearce's writings provide a lasting record of her contributions to the field of piano pedagogy. Furthermore, her writings reveal her commitment to a student-centric teaching approach that fosters self-directed practice, self-discovery, and the joy of making music.

Apparent across Pearce's writings is the enormous impact her experiences with her own teachers, both positive and negative, had on her pedagogical philosophies. Pearce articulated a desire for high standards in students but was sure to clarify that when demanding those standards, teachers should always treat students with respect. Pearce's

negative lesson experiences with Vengerova undoubtedly shaped her ideas on that front. By the time she began studying with Vengerova, however, Pearce had already experienced the power of positive lessons with her first two piano teachers, Lenore Hunter and Helen Ringo. In her writings, she advocates for emulating those positive experiences instead of the negative ones. Many of Pearce's writings also reflect her studies with Frances Clark, who was instrumental in molding Pearce's philosophies about teaching beginners how to read musical notation and the value of group lessons and a student-centric approach to teaching.

Pearce's prolific writings on practice serve as a how-to guide for teachers to become more effective and efficient. One positive practice habit she garnered from Vengerova and consistently espouses in her writings is the inclusion of analysis as an approach to repertoire introduction. Pearce recalls Vengerova insisting that the first step of learning a new piece is always doing a full analysis of the score, including studying formal structure, notational symbols, and word cues. Pearce was loyal to that approach, often writing about the importance of analysis to student learning, practice, and memorization.

In her writing, Pearce also consistently espouses that students should always have a high-quality, positive music-making experience in each lesson. It is the teacher's responsibility, she says, to raise a student's awareness of the thrill of making music. Pearce recommends that at the end of each lesson, teachers ask themselves, "In all of today's lessons, did every student have an opportunity to hear at least some 'good' music performed 'live' and really well — with artistry, authority, enthusiasm, energy, vitality,

drama, and imagination? And was it obvious to the student that the performer was enjoying the performance experience?"[376]

As a writer, Pearce addresses teachers with the same sort of positive approach. As she instructs them on how to help their students best, she offers them the same uplifting, encouraging spirit she provided her students. Brenda Dillon, who worked with Pearce on the editorial board of *Keyboard Companion*, says, "I was always impressed with her kindness and her willingness to encourage those of us who definitely didn't have her stature. I found her quite lovable."[377]

[376] Pearce, *Success Factor*, 227.

[377] Brenda Dillon Questionnaire.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

Throughout the second half of the twentieth century and early decades of the twenty-first century, Elvina Truman Pearce made an indelible mark on the field of piano pedagogy as a teacher, performer, composer, and writer. Although her talents were many, her focus was singular; she devoted her life and every aspect of her career to advancing the field of piano pedagogy. Pearce shared her educational philosophies and ideas about piano pedagogy generously through concerts, workshops, journal articles, piano lessons, pedagogy classes, and her comprehensive text, *The Success Factor: Making Practice Perfect.* As she did so, she spread her ideas far and wide, reaching countless pianists and piano teachers across the United States and worldwide. This chapter provides conclusions about her contributions to the field and recommendations for further study.

Pearce's diverse career spanned over five decades and was propelled by early aspirations to become a concert pianist. During her formative years as a piano student (1948-1955), Pearce mastered a large body of sophisticated solo piano and piano concerti repertoire and concertized throughout the United States. Before her twenty-third birthday, she had performed concerti with the Chicago Symphony, Amarillo Symphony, Tulsa Philharmonic, and the Chicago Theater of the Air. Additionally, she gave solo recitals at

Carnegie Hall in New York City and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. In contemporaneous reviews of Pearce's public professional performances, reviewers consistently expressed high praise for her technical and artistic abilities. Pearce's experience performing as a young professional gave her a unique perspective into the life and routine of a concert pianist.

The year 1952 was pivotal for Pearce both personally and professionally. That year, Helen Ringo, Pearce's University of Tulsa piano professor, had a heart attack and died. That tragic loss spurred Pearce to audition for a place in the studio of esteemed Russian piano pedagogue Isabelle Vengerova, which she won. Pearce moved to New York City and studied with Vengerova for three years, a learning experience that influenced her pedagogy for years to come. As a student, Pearce found studies with Vengerova tough and seldom positive. However, she gained insight from that experience and aspired to do better for her own piano students as a compassionate and kind teacher. Studies with Vengerova led Pearce to replace mindless repetition with purposeful practice and to embrace the importance of analyzing a piece before study. These two ideas became hallmarks of Pearce's pedagogy. In addition, Pearce credits Vengerova with opening her ears to listen to the sounds she was producing at the piano as well as developing her sense of touch through the pursuit of the Vengerova technique.

After her three years of studying with Vengerova, Pearce shifted her focus to teaching and began studying piano pedagogy with Frances Clark. She worked with Clark first as a student at Westminster Choir College (1955-1958), then as a faculty member at Westminster (1958-1960), and finally as a founding teacher at the New School for Music Study (1960-1964). From Clark, Pearce learned that one could have a career as a

performer and as a teacher, and both can be equally rewarding. Working on Clark's team required total commitment, so Pearce's strong work ethic was advantageous. Throughout her pedagogical studies with Clark, Pearce learned to distill concepts and techniques she discovered as a performer into practical teaching precepts. In so doing, she became adept at making musicianship accessible and meaningful even to the youngest of beginners. Pearce fully realized the potential and importance of group instruction along with private lessons by studying pedagogy with Clark. Pearce incorporated groups classes throughout the rest of her teaching career even giving demonstration classes later at the 1978 Music Teachers National Association National Conference and the 1982 National Conference on Piano Pedagogy.

After twelve years on the East Coast, Pearce moved to Illinois (1964) when her husband, John Pearce, received a job offer in Evanston, Illinois. One year later, her husband received another job offer which resulted in another move, this time to Naperville, Illinois, where Pearce still resides. In addition to operating a private teaching studio in Naperville, Pearce taught piano and piano pedagogy at North Central College from around 1965 to 1980. In 1980, her role at North Central College changed when she founded the school's Piano Preparatory Division and served as director until 1989. This program grew to enroll over two hundred students per year, each of which encountered Pearce's pedagogy through here work with student teachers.

Pearce's influence was also substantial at Northwestern University beginning in 1972 when Piano Pedagogy Professor Frances Larimer, sought her expertise as a guest lecturer and later as a part-time faculty member where she served for fourteen years (ca. 1980-1994). While at Northwestern, Pearce served as the head of their Piano Preparatory

Division, a role that allowed her to mentor student teachers as a group piano teacher and a supervisor of teaching, an avenue where she excelled according to her former pedagogy students. During Pearce's time at Northwestern, former graduate students recall that she helped them diagnose problems and provide sound solutions, ultimately helping them to become effective teachers themselves.

Pearce also shared her pedagogical expertise in other influential ways. From 1967 to 1984, Pearce was active in establishing the Teacher Certification program through the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA), first at the state level in Illinois, then at the divisional level, and finally as the National Chairman of MTNA Teacher Certification from 1981 to 1984. From 1984 to 1986, she was recruited to serve as a consultant to establish the Preparatory and Community Piano Program at Concordia University in River Forest, Illinois. Her role included preparing a proposal and a budget plan.

Pearce also helped Richard Chronister establish the National Conference on Piano Pedagogy and the journal, *Keyboard Companion.* As editor of the "Home Practice" section of *Keyboard Companion* from 1990-2006, Pearce revealed her expertise on the subject through essays and articles and invited piano teachers from around the country to share their ideas as well. In this way Pearce's ideas and philosophies about how to teach students to practice efficiently and independently were documented for posterity. Furthermore, when she assumed the role of editor-in-chief of *Keyboard Companion* in 2000-2006, Pearce continued the mission set forth by Richard Chronister, "to provide real, varied, and practical teaching advice from a variety of perspectives."[378]

[378] Craig Sale Questionnaire.

In 2014, Pearce distilled her ideas about teaching, home practice, and music-making into the practical and comprehensive text, *The Success Factor: Making Practice Perfect*. A summation of what she learned throughout her many years as a teacher, it is an invaluable resource for information about her teaching philosophies and practices. Throughout the book, the topic of home practice is emphasized over and over, revealing it again to be a primary focus of her work and one of her most enduring contributions to the field. Through her work as a writer and editor, therefore, Pearce solidified her influence on future generations of piano teachers through the articulation of her distinct perspective on how to develop students who are productive, independent home practicers.

Pearce's teaching philosophy is revealed through her various writings, her definitive text, interviews with Pearce and questionnaires completed by former students. Her philosophy is guided by the principles of student-centered learning and self-discovery. She also is a master at sequencing musical concepts and introducing repertoire effectively. Likewise, Pearce espouses minimizing teacher talk while maximizing student playing in lessons, a practice she strongly emphasizes when training new teachers.

Pearce is always focused on developing students who understand not just what the dots and lines on a page of music meant to do, but also what they represent. She summarizes:

> What I object to is the sense that anything can be learned overnight. The real teacher is the one who is interested in musical literacy, not having a kid move his fingers from one place to another. I'm sure you could teach a chimpanzee to do that. There's a big difference between an educator and a manipulator.[379]

[379] *Corvallis Gazette-Times*, Corvallis, Oregon, February 9, 1992. Newspapers.com.

Pearce achieved success as a composer as well with over 250 compositions complied across twenty-three teaching collections, all composed between 1981 and 2014. In 1981, when approached by her former student, Lynn Freeman Olson, and former colleague, Roger Grove, and asked to compose educational pieces for beginners and intermediate students, Pearce accepted the challenge, albeit somewhat begrudgingly. Despite her initial hesitation, Pearce rose to the challenge, composing enticing supplemental piano repertoire built on the foundation of sound pedagogical principles. Her compositions have been featured in the Royal Conservatory of Music Piano Syllabus (2015) and on National Federation of Music Clubs lists. Pearce's landmark, best-selling collection, *Solo Flight*, gained lasting popularity thanks to its approachable rote teaching/ghosted staff format.

As a pianist, Pearce performed with the same thoughtful musicality that she strove to nurture in her private piano students and pedagogy students. Her professional experiences as a performer and teacher promoted a desire in her for achieving the highest level of sophistication in her teaching, her pedagogy students' teaching, and her piano students' playing. Pearce defined successful teaching as instruction that promoted a musical and emotional connection between a student and her music. She strove to help her students understand music as a function of life and a beautiful way of expressing one's feelings and desires. Brenda Dillon, a fellow editor at *Keyboard Companion,* explains the effect of that focus, "[Pearce] loved teaching, and I hope she knew how inspiring she was to many of us. I found her to be modest about her accomplishments, but they were very evident."[380]

[380] Brenda Dillon Questionnaire.

Across her long career, Pearce received many accolades and awards, including MTNA Master Teacher Certificate in 1983, MTNA Foundation Fellow in 2008 and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy in 2011. That same year, she was also named Illinois Music Teachers Association Member of the Year.

During the latter part of her career Pearce continued to further the pedagogical mission of Frances Clark. In 1999, she became a founder of the *Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy*, serving as Vice President on its Board of Trustees from 1999 to 2006.

Finally, Pearce's pedagogical contributions are useful and readily available because of her great generosity. Whether she was giving recitals as a "thank you," as she did for her sorority and the music fraternity, Mu Phi Epsilon, or donating a "generous and transformative" gift to the Frances Clark Center to help further their mission of quality teacher education, as she did in 2018, Pearce was always giving. A generous teacher, presenter, writer, and mentor, she provided generations of pedagogues with a clear and practical roadmap for transforming students' lives and relationships to music as a successful piano teacher.[381]

In closing, Pearce's reflection on teaching in the twenty-first century beautifully highlight her pedagogical ideals:

> … where we are right now is but the result of where we came from — of all that we have seen, heard, and experienced about life, music, performance, learning and teaching. And where we shall be tomorrow and next week and next year will always be but a composite of all the "nows" that make up our pasts and present.

[381] The Frances Clark Center, Kingston, New Jersey. Accessed April 1, 2020. http://keyboardpedagogy.org/images/Elvina_Pearce_Gift_Press_Release.pdf

We, as performers, pedagogues, and students, are never static but are always in the process of becoming.[382]

RECOMMENDATIONS

This document focuses on Elvina Truman Pearce's contributions to the field of piano pedagogy. Through the exploration of this topic, several areas have emerged that warrant further study. They include the following:

1. Conduct a study of Elvina Truman Pearce's colleague, Richard Chronister. His significant contributions include launching the first National Conference on Piano Pedagogy, developing a journal called *Keyboard Arts,* and founding *Keyboard Companion.* Additionally, he is a crucial figure in the field that worked tirelessly as a publisher of materials designed to aid teachers of average, beginning students.

2. Document the archives, history, and development of the National Conference of Piano Pedagogy. Information regarding the conferences, while not readily available, would be a valuable resource for the field of piano pedagogy.

[382] Maris, Barbara English, Jean Barr, Marvin Blickenstaff, and Elvina Pearce. "Music Teaching in the New Millennium: Part 3: Music for a Lifetime: Pedagogy for Everybody: Teacher Training for the Pianist in Preparation for the 21st Century." *American Music Teacher*, 06, 2000. 37, http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.uh.edu/docview/936504?accountid=7107.

3. Study other influential music educators, such as Dr. E. L. Lancaster, Dr. Jane Magrath, Dr. Samuel Holland in order to build a comprehensive picture of the key figures in piano pedagogy. These may include teachers who have contributed significant pedagogical compositions or texts.

4. Document the circumstances surrounding the inception of the Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy. Who were the leading figures, and how did they contribute?

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Robertson, Steven Henry. “Lili Kraus: the Person, the Performer, and the Teacher.” PhD diss., University of Oklahoma, 1985.

Schubert, Kathleen Louise. “Willard A. Palmer’s Contributions to Piano Pedagogy.” PhD diss., University of Oklahoma, 1992.

Viss, Leila J. “Lynn Freeman Olson: His Philosophy of Music/Piano as Reflected in Hist Literary Works and a Small Sample of His Piano Compositions.” MA thesis, University of Denver, 1990.

Wagner, Edyth Elizabeth. “Raymond Burrows and His Contributions to Music Education.” DMA diss., University of Southern California, 1986.

Worcester, Lynn. “Allison Nelson: Pianist, Teacher and Editor.” DMA doc, University of Oklahoma, 2014.

INTERVIEWS

Pearce, Elvina Truman. 2018. Interviews by author over three days. Naperville, Illinois. Recordings retained by author. July 10, 11, 12.

Tipton, June Frank. 2019, Interviewed by Amy Glennon. Kingston, New Jersey. Accessed March 30, 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GMVChDzlfRE&feature=youtu.be

APPENDICES

A. Selected Major Performances and Workshops
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APPENDIX A

SELECTED MAJOR PERFORMANCES AND WORKSHOPS

SELECTED MAJOR PERFORMANCES AND WORKSHOPS

Prominent Concerto Performances

Oct 21, 1951 – Amarillo Symphony, Amarillo, TX
Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 54 by Robert Schumann
Jan 5, 1952 – Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Piano Concerto No. 1 in E-flat major by Franz Liszt
August 8, 1952 – Chicago Radio of the Air
Piano Concerto No. 1 in E-flat major by Franz Liszt
November 19, 1955 – Tulsa Philharmonic, Tulsa, OK
Piano Concerto in G minor, Op25 by Felix Mendelssohn
December 9, 1955 – Scott Plains Symphony, Scotch Plains, NJ
Piano Concerto in G minor, Op25 by Felix Mendelssohn
November 27, 1956 – Amarillo Symphony, Amarillo, TX
Piano Concerto in G minor, Op. 22 by Camille Saint-Saëns
May 3, 1970 – DuPage Symphony Orchestra, Wheaton, IL
Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 54 by Robert Schumann
May 11, 1974 – DuPage Symphony Orchestra, Glen Ellyn, IL
Piano Concerto in G minor, Op25 by Felix Mendelssohn

Goshen College Piano Workshops – Guest Clinician

1974, 1975, 1978, 1993, 2001

Selected Workshops

"Lesson Planning"
Northwest Suburban Music Teachers Association, Randhurst, IL
October 15, 1968

"The Certification of the Music Teacher"
South Suburban Chapter – Illinois State Music Teachers' National Association
January 26, 1969

"What Makes Practice Perfect"
Milton College Piano Teacher's Workshop, Milton, WS
September 24, 1969

"What Makes Practice Perfect?"
South Suburban Chapter – Illinois State Music Teachers' National Association
March 23, 1970

"What Makes Practice Perfect? Chapter 2"

South Suburban Chapter – Illinois State Music Teachers' National Association
November 23, 1970

"Going for Baroque"
South Suburban Chapter – Illinois State Music Teachers' National Association
September 27, 1971

"Tips on Technique—guidelines for growth for the average student"
Illinois Valley Area Music Group, Ottawa, IL
June 12, 1972

"Memorization"
Indiana Music Teachers Association, Hammond, IN
May 21, 1974

"Makings of Musicianship"
South Suburban Chapter of the Illinois State Music Association, Homewood, IL
September 23, 1974

"Putting it into Practice for the Intermediate Student"
Holland Piano Teachers Forum & Hope College
November 8-9, 1976

"From Preparation to Performance"
South Suburban Chapter of the Illinois State Music Association
September 23, 1978

"Piano: From Preparation to Performance"
University of Wisconsin-Madison Extension
September 19-26, 1979

"Preparation for Performance"
Illinois State Music Teachers Association Annual Convention, Millikin University, Decatur, IL
November 13, 1983

"Piano Pedagogy: Developing a Program" (with Frances Larimer, EP, Marcia Bosits)
Westminster Choir College Summer Session, Princeton, NJ
July 9-13, 1984

"Priorities in Practice"
MacMurray College, Jacksonville, IL
April 21, 1986

"New Dimensions in Piano Teaching"
Westminster Choir College Summer Session, Princeton, NJ
July 7-11, 1986

"Goals for Piano Students at Every Level: Preparation, Practice, Performance"
Westminster Choir College Summer Session, Princeton, NJ
August 1-5, 1988

"Piano Perspectives from Composer/Pedagogues"
Westminster Choir College Summer Session
July 17-21, 1989

"Group Piano Lessons—A Plus for the Private Student?"
West Suburban – Illinois State Music Teachers Association
September 5, 1991

"The Beginning Piano Students: Perspectives in Techniques, Works Habits, and Musicianship"
South Suburban Music Teachers Association, Homewood, IL
April 27, 1992

"Group Teaching"
Naperville Area Illinois State Music Teachers Association
September 3, 1992

"Development of Technique: Both in and out of Pieces"
West Suburban – Illinois State Music Teachers Association
December 7, 1995

"Teaching Toward 2000: A Frances Clark Workshop"
Westminster Choir College Summer Session, Princeton, NJ
July 22-26, 1996

"Self-Directed Practice: A Key to Student Success and Motivation"
Illinois State Music Teachers Association, West Suburban Chapter
September 7, 2006

"Revisiting Old Favorites—Tips for Teaching, Practicing, and Performing Mozart's 'Fantasy in d minor' and Grieg's Nocturne, Op. 54"'
West Suburban Illinois State Music Teachers Association, Wheaton, IL
October 1, 2009

APPENDIX B

SELECTED CONCERT PROGRAMS

Chicago Symphony Orchestra

RAFAEL KUBELIK, *Musical Director and Conductor*

GEORGE SCHICK, *Assistant Conductor*

THE POPULAR CONCERTS

THIRTY-NINTH SEASON

SATURDAY, JANUARY 5, 1952, *at* 8:15

Conductor, GEORGE SCHICK

Soloist, ELVINA TRUMAN

MOUSSORGSKY . . *Introduction and Polonaise from "Boris Godounoff"*
(Arranged by Rimsky-Korsakoff)

TCHAIKOVSKY . . *Suite, from the Ballet, "The Nutcracker," Opus 71a*
Miniature Overture.
Characteristic Dances.
March.
Dance of the Sugarplum Fairy.
Russian Trepak Dance.
Arab Dance.
Chinese Dance.
Dance of the Flutes.
Waltz of the Flowers.

LISZT . . . . . *Concerto for Pianoforte, No. 1, E Flat Major*

[INTERMISSION]

BRAHMS . . . . . *Symphony No. 4, E Minor, Opus 98*
Allegro non troppo.
Andante moderato.
Allegro giocoso.
Allegro energico e passionato.

The Piano is a BALDWIN, the official piano of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra

PROGRAM NOTES

MODEST PETROVICH MOUSSORGSKY . . *Introduction and Polonaise from "Boris Godounoff"*

Born March 28, 1835, at Karevo. Died March 28, 1881, at St. Petersburg

NICOLAS RIMSKY-KORSAKOFF
Born March 18, 1844, at Tikhvin. Died June 4, 1908, at St. Petersburg

Moussorgsky's opera tells the story of the overthrow of a Czar by a pretender. He once said, "While I wrote *Boris,* I was Boris." Although at first rejected by the Imperial Theaters, it became very popular as soon as it was produced.

The polonaise is a stately dance—one of the national dances of Poland.

PETER ILJITCH TCHAIKOVSKY . . . . *Suite, from the Ballet, "The Nutcracker," Opus 71a*

Born May 7, 1840, at Wotkinsk. Died November 6, 1893, at St. Petersburg

The ballet from which the movements of this suite are taken has a delightful fairy-tale quality of the incredible come true, the fantastic turned into reality.

Program Notes — Continued

But the music is so vital that it has itself become more true and real than the original stage version, where a children's party is the first scene, the castle of the Sugarplum Fairy the second. Thither the nutcracker turned into a prince has spirited the little girl who threw her slipper at the king of the mice at the height of the battle between them and the toy soldiers; and to entertain her there are these dances. A *Miniature Overture* and a *March* belong respectively to the children's party and the battle scene. The *Dance of the Sugarplum Fairy* (celesta and bass clarinet) is the first of the castle dances. Each has its own character created by Tchaikovsky with the simplest means and complete effectiveness. The *Russian Dance* is the next, the *Arab Dance* (low clarinets and muted strings) and the *Chinese Dance* (bassoons and high flutes). A chorus of three flutes is the special characteristic of the *Danse des Mirlitons* (a *mirliton* is both a reed pipe and a kind of confectionery) and lastly there is the *Flower Waltz*, one of Tchaikovsky's many successful excursions into the domain of Strauss of Vienna.

FRANZ LISZT . . . . . *Concerto for Pianoforte, No. 1, E Flat Major*

Born October 22, 1811, at Raiding, Hungary. Died July 31, 1886, at Bayreuth

The form of this concerto more nearly represents that of Liszt's symphonic poems than that of the conventional concerto.

JOHANNES BRAHMS . . . . . *Symphony No. 4, E Minor, Opus 98*

Born May 7, 1833, at Hamburg. Died April 3, 1897, at Vienna

If Brahms had had to wait for renown until the critics had acclaimed him, he would have waited a long, long time. Ever since Schumann had called him the "Messiah of Music," Brahms had been the recipient of many critical brickbats. It was, of course, the old problem of modernists versus traditionalists—as each new work appeared, the battle was renewed with increased fury. It was the same when the Fourth Symphony first appeared. Even the composer's staunchest supporters shook their heads over the new score: Hanslick is said to have "sighed heavily" after the first movement, when he first heard it, and remarked, "Really, it sounds to me like two tremendously witty people arguing."

The symphony was composed in 1884-85, when Brahms was in his early fifties. The manuscript was nearly burnt in a fire that broke out in Brahms' house, but was fortunately saved by one of his friends.

ADVANCE PROGRAMS

(Subject to change)

Saturday, January 19, *at* 8:15
Series A

Conductor, George Schick
Soloist, Evelyn White

HANDEL . *Arietta and Passacaglia*
SCHUMANN . . . . *Concerto for Pianoforte, A Minor, Opus 54*

[INTERMISSION]

STRAUSS . *Tone pom, "Death and Transfiguration," Opus 24*
WAGNER . . . . . *Overture to "Tannhäuser"*

TICKETS FOR THIS CONCERT NOW ON SALE

Saturday, January 26, *at* 8:15
Series B

Conductor, George Schick
Soloist, Russell Stepan

VERDI . . . . . *Overture to "La Forza del Destino"*
ROUSSEL . *Sinfonietta for String Orchestra, Opus 52*
KODÁLY . . . . . *Suite, from "Háry János"*

[INTERMISSION]

GRIEG . . *Concerto for Pianoforte, A Minor, Opus 16*
de FALLA . . *Three Dances from "The Three-Cornered Hat"*

"Pop" Concert Prices : 60c, 95c, $1.50. Box Seats $2.00.
George A. Kuyper, *Manager*
Orchestra Hall, Chicago 4

THE A. W. MELLON CONCERTS

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART
Washington, D. C.
672nd Concert
Sunday, March 10, 1957
8:00 P. M.
In The East Garden Court

ELVINA TRUMAN, PIANIST

Program

Handel		Suite No.5 in E Major
	Prelude	
	Allemande	
	Courante	
	Air with Variations	
Chopin		Nocturne, Opus 62, No.2
		Etude, Opus 25, No.12
		Ballade No.4 in F Minor

I N T E R M I S S I O N

Bloch		Poems of the Sea
	Waves	
	Chanty	
	At Sea	
Bartok		From the Diary of a Fly
		Musiques Nocturnes
		A Bit Tipsy
Kabalevsky		Sonata No.3
	Allegro con moto	
	Andante cantabile	
	Allegro giocoso	

This concert is broadcast by Station WGMS-AM (570) and FM (103.5).

APPENDIX C

TEACHING REPERTOIRE COLLECTIONS COMPOSED BY ELVINA TRUMAN PEARCE

TEACHING REPERTOIRE COLLECTIONS COMPOSED BY PEARCE

Adventures. Miami, FL: Belwin-Mills Publishing, 1997.[383]

Adventures in Style, Book 1. Miami, FL: Belwin-Mills Publishing, 2002.[384]

Adventures in Style, Book 2. Miami, FL: Belwin-Mills Publishing, 2002.[385]

At the Lake. Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2014.

Bagatelles. Miami, FL: Belwin-Mills Publishing, 1995.

Diversions. Miami, FL: Belwin-Mills Publishing, 1994.[386]

Effective Sounds. New York, NY. Bradley Publications, 1984.

Elvina Pearce's Favorite Solos, Book 1. Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Music, 2015.

Elvina Pearce's Favorite Solos, Book 2. Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Music, 2015.

Elvina Pearce's Favorite Solos, Book 3. Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Music, 2015.

Excursions, Book 1. Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Music 2001.[387]

Excursions, Book 2. Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Music, 2003.[388]

Expressions. Miami, FL: Belwin-Mills Publishing, 1986.

First Impressions. Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Music,1985.[389]

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[383] Republished by Warner Bros.

[384] Republished by Warner Bros.

[385] Republished by Warner Bros.

[386] Republished in 2004 by Warner Bros. with additional pieces.

[387] First published in 1992 by Belwin-Mills Publishing. Republished in 2001 by Warner Bros with two additional pieces.

[388] First published in 1992 by Belwin-Mills Pulishing. Republished in 2003 by Warner Bros. with three additional pieces. One piece was also removed in the new edition.

[389] First published by Belwin-Mills Publishing.

Fun at the Fair. Mississauga, Ontario: Frederick Harris, 2005.

Happy Times. Mississauga, Ontario: Frederick Harris, 2005.

Intervals. New York, NY. Bradley Publications, 1984.

Let's Duet! Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Music, 2002.[390]

Pictures in Sound. Fort Lauderdale, FL: FJH Music Company, 2014.

Second Impressions. Miami, FL: Belwin-Mills Publishing, 1987.[391]

Seven Preludes in Seven Keys, Book 1. Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Music, 1991.[392]

Seven Preludes in Seven Keys, Book 2. Miami, FL: Belwin-Mills Publishing, 1993.

Solo Flight. Princeton, NJ: The New School for Music Study Press, 1986.

Sound Reflections, Book 1. Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Co. Inc., 1981.

Sound Reflections, Book 2. Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Co. Inc.,1981.

4 o'clock Tunes. Princeton, NJ, The New School for Music Study Press, 1986.

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[390] First publishing in 1989 by Belwin-Mills Publishing.

[391] New edition published by Warner Bros. in 2003.

[392] First published by Belwin-Mills Publishing.

APPENDIX D

PEARCE'S TOPICS AND ARTICLES IN KEYBOARD COMPANION 'HOME PRACTICE' SECTION

TOPICS AND ARTICLES IN KEYBOARD COMPANION

John T. O'Brien, Richard Chronister. "How Do You Expect a Beginner to Practice at Home After the First Lesson?" Vol. 1, no. 2 (Summer 1990): 8-10.

Ruth Chown, Harriet Green, Gayle Kowalchyk, Robert Vandall. "What are your Studio Policies on Home Practice?" Vol. 1, no. 3 (Autumn 1990): 12-14.

Donald Morelock, Mary Craig Powell. "What Special Practice Techniques Do Your Students Use for Performance Preparation?" Vol. 1, no. 4 (Winter 1990): 10-12.

E. Gregory Nagode, Louise Lepley. "How do your Students Practice to Assure Memorizing?" Vol. 2, no.1 (Spring 1991): 14-16.

Fifty piano students "What do you like – and What do you not Like – About Practice?" Vol. 2, no. 2 (Summer 1991): 10-12.

Bruce Berr, Beth Hillenbrand Jones. "How Do You Get Your Students Off to a Good Start on a New Piece?" Vol. 2, no. 3 (Autumn 1991): 10-12.

Rebecca Johnson, Jean Hull, Joseph Rezits "How Do You Keep Your Students Interested in Practicing Scales?" Vol. 2, no. 4 (Winter 1991): 8-10.

Jane Magrath, Mary Ann Lenti, Marvin Blickenstaff. "Describe Your Home Practice. Why Do You Do It?" Vol. 3, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 10-12.

Elvina Pearce, Brenda Dillon, Marvin Blickenstaff, Joyce Cameron, Richard Chronister. "What Are Your Main Concerns About Your Students' Home Practice?" Vol. 3, no. 2 (Summer 1992): 10-11.

Craig L. Sale, Ted Cooper, Carol Winborne. "What is Included in Your Weekly Written Assignments?" Vol. 3, no. 3 (Autumn 1992): 8-10.

Elvina Pearce, Brenda Dillon, Marvin Blickenstaff, Joyce Cameron, Richard Chronister. "What Are Your Main Concerns About Your Students' Home Practice? Part II" Vol. 3, no. 4 (Winter 1992): 8-12.

Elvina Pearce with 21 contest winners. "What Do National Contest Winners Say About *Their* Practice (and Other Things)?" Vol. 4, no.1 (Spring 1993): 8-10.

Georgann Gasaway, Mary Beth Molenaar, Sam Holland. "How Do Your Students Practice a New Piece When You *Don't* Give Them any Help?" Vol 4, no. 2 (Summer 1993): 8-11.

Rebecca Johnson, Ingrid Clarfield, James Lyke. “What have you learned from listening to your own children’s practice?” Vol. 4, no. 3 (Autumn 1993): 10-13.

Donald Walker, Karin Edwards, William Hughes. “As a college teacher, what would you like your incoming freshman to know about how to practice?” Vol. 4, no. 4 (Winter 1993): 10-12.

27 parents. “What do parents have to say about their children’s practice?” Vol. 5, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 10-12.

Willard Palmer, Valery Lloyd-Watts, Carole Bigler, Mary Ann Lenti, Elvina Pearce. “What suggestions do you give students for how to practice ornaments?” Vol. 5, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 12-16.

Karen Zorn, Sue Steck-Turner, Scott McBride Smith. “What steps would you suggest for practicing the Kabalevsky Etude, Op. 27, No. 3” Vol. 5, no. 3 (Autumn 1994): 8-12.

Jean Barr, Christopher Hepp, Gail Berenson. “What suggestions would you give two students to ensure productive ensemble practice?” Vol. 5, no. 4 (Winter 1994): 8-14.

Elvina Pearce, Alan Chow, Barbara English Maris. “What have you learned from your own practice that has affected what and how you teach your students about practice” Vol. 6, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 6-9.

Elvina Pearce with teachers of the Preparatory Piano Division of North Central College. “How can we find out more about out student’s home practice?” Vol. 6, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 8-11.

Jean Stackhouse, Rosalie Gjerde, Richard Chronister. “How can we find out more about out student’s home practice? Part II” Vol. 6, no. 3 (Autumn 1995): 8-12.

Carla Dean Day, James Goldsworthy, Bruce Berr. “How do you teach your students to vary their practice routines?” Vol. 6, no. 4 (Winter 1995): 8-11.

Elvina Pearce, Steven Betts, Kim Nagy, Elaine Smith, Eric Unruh, Stephen Zolper. “What basic approaches do you want your students to use when working out a new piece?” Vol. 7, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 8-11.

William Phemister, Jeanine Jacobson, Janice Razaq. “How do you keep students interested in practicing a piece over an extended period of time?” Vol. 7, no. 2 (Summer 1996): 8-11.

Alys Terrien-Queeen, Carmen Shaw, Ingrid Jacobson Clarfield. “Practicing technique exercises—Why? When? How?” Vol. 7, no. 3 (Autumn 1996): 8-13.

William Westney, Phyllis Lehrer, Gail Berenson. “I played it perfectly at home—why not here?” Vol. 7, no. 4 (Winter 1996): 8-11.

Janet Johnson, Richard Chronister. “How do your students practice sightplaying?” Vol. 8, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 10-12.

Craig Sale, Luise Mary, Nancy Liley. “What do you do in the lesson when the student has not practiced?” Vol. 8, no. 2 (Summer 1997): 8-10.

Eleaner Carlson, Kathleen Murray, Janet Mann. “What is musicianship and how do your students practice it?” Vol. 8, no. 3 (Autumn 1997): 10-13.

Elvina Pearce. “How do your students practice memorizing?” Vol. 8, no. 4 (Winter 1997): 8-10.

Martha K. Smith, Carole Flatau, Steve Betts. “What practice steps would you assign for Burgmüller *Ballade* prior to a recital?” Vol. 9, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 8-12.

Elvina Pearce, Beverly Lapp, Susan R. Osborne, Marilyn Crosland. “What do you include on the student’s assignment sheet for home practice?” Vol. 9, no. 2 (Summer 1998): 8-13.

Joyce Unger, Scott McBride Smith, Elvina Pearce. “What steps would you assign for the first two weeks of practice on Kabalevsky’s *A Little Joke*?” Vol. 9, no. 3 (Autumn 1998): 10-14.

Kelley Benson, Helen Marais, Judy Plagge. “How would you ask a student to practice C.P.E. Bach’s *Solfeggietto* to achieve the tempo of (quarter note) = 88?” Vol. 9, no. 4 (Winter 1998): 8-12.

Elvina Pearce, Gail Berenson, Martha Baker-Jordan, Burton Kaplan. “How do your students practice to prepare for a public performance?” Vol. 10, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 6-10.

Mary Venard, Joan Reist, Vicki Diefenbacher. “How should I practice this piece at home?” Vol. 10, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 8-11.

Louis Nagel, Gloria Febro Grilk, Elizabeth Gutierrez. “How do your students practice contrapuntal music?” Vol. 10, no. 3 (Autumn 1999): 8-11.

Jennifer Merry, Elvina Pearce. “What do you see when you watch your students practice?” Vol. 10, no. 4 (Winter 1999): 6-9.

Beth Jones, Elvina Pearce. “What do you see when you watch your students practice? Part II” Vol. 11, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 8-11.

Sue Haug, Virginia Campbell, Kenneth Williams. “How do your students practice to avoid/overcome common technical problems?” Vol. 11, no. 2 (Autumn 2000): 8-11.

Elvina Pearce and students. “What do students have to say about their practice and lessons?” Vol. 11, no. 3 (Winter 2000): 6-9.

Teachers from Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, South Dakota and Australia. “What do teachers have to say about their students’ lesson and practice?” Vol. 12, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 8-11.

Carla Dean Day, Joan Johnson, Stephanie Nakahara Myers. “What practice steps would you assign for Kabalevsky’s ‘Toccatina’?” Vol. 12, no. 2 (Summer 2001): 8-11.

Martha Maker-Jordan, Alisa Delliquadri, Anna Harriette Foshee. “How do your students practice to maintain contest and recital repertoire?” Vol. 12, no. 3 (Autumn 2001): 8-13.

Rick Andrews, Gregory Nagode. “What steps do you assign for pedal practice?” Winter Vol. 12, no. 4 (Winter 2001): 8-11.

Linda Barker, Andrew Cooperstock, Margie Nelson. “How much hands-separate and slow practice do you assign, and when?” Vol. 13, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 10-17.

Birgit Matzerath, Melanie Foster Taylor, Karen Zorn.“What technique exercises do your students do as warm-ups for practice?” Vol. 13, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 8-13.

Nelita True. “Nelita True discusses practice—both her own and that of her students.” Vol. 13, no. 3 (Autumn 2002): 8-11.

Nancy Breth, Ted Cooper, Steven Rosenfeld, Karen Kan-Walsh. “Practice Puzzlers—“What do you do when…?” Vol. 13, no. 4 (Winter 2002): 10-15.

Nancy Breth, Ted Cooper, Steven Rosenfeld, Karen Kan-Walsh. “Practice Puzzlers—“What do you do when…? Part II” Vol. 14, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 14-19.

Emily Morlan and students. “What have you learned about how to practice?—an end-of-the-year student survey” Vol 14, no. 2 (Summer 2003): 10-15.

Lisa Caramia, Beth Jones, Sue Steck-Turner. “What do you tell parents/students in the pre-enrollment interview?” Vol. 14, no. 3 (Autumn 2003): 14-21.

Ruth Nordine Chown, Heidi Mayer, Craig Sale. “What practice steps do you assign for early level repertoire?” Vol. 14, no. 4 (Winter 2003): 12-16.

Barb Hinnendael, Allison Hudak, Helen Marlais. “What practice steps would you assign for the Burgmüller ‘Ballade’ of Op. 100?” Vol. 15, no. 1 (Spring 2004)

Kelley Benson, Sue Haug, Kenneth Williams. “What practice strategies would you assign for the ‘Fantasy Dance’ from Op. 124 by Schumann?” Vol. 15, no. 2 (Summer 2004)

Scott Donald, William Hughes, Martha Baker-Jordan. “How do you get students to listen to themselves as they practice?” Vol. 15, no. 3 (Autumn 2004)

Alisa Delliquadri, Nancy Liley, Judy Plagge, Karina Sysko, Camille Witos. “A teacher’s roundtable on solutions to common practice problems” Vol. 15, no. 4 (Winter 2004)

Rick Andrews, Karin Edwards, Robert Satterlee. “What tips would you give for practicing trills, accompaniment patterns, and polyrhythms in the music of Bach, Haydn, and Chopin?” Vol. 16, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 12-19.

Kathy Christian, Carole Flatau, Carmen Shaw.“What technical warm-ups do your early level students practice?” Vol. 16, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 14-19.

Marilyn C. Andersen, Nancy Breth, Carol Ann Ishman. “What are the pros and cons of parents supervising their children’s practice?” Vol. 16, no. 3 (Autumn 2005): 10-15.

Jessica Klett, Jessica Dean-Modaff, Emily Morlan, Timothy Smile. “What do college piano majors have to say about their piano study and practice?” Vol. 16, no. 4 (Winter 2005): 10-15.

Andrew Cooperstock, Janet Palmberg, Rebecca Shockley. “What suggestions would you give for maintenance practice of C.P.E. Bach’s ‘Solfeggietto’?” Vol. 17, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 14-19.

Phyllis Lehrer. “The Schumann ‘Romance in F#, Op. 28, No. 2”—its evolution from workout to pianistic performance” Vol. 17, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 12-15.

William Phemister. “What are some of your favorite routines for practicing scales?” Vol. 17, no. 3 (Autumn 2006): 14-19.

Elvina Pearce. “What makes practice perfect?” Vol. 17, no. 4 (Winter 2006): 10-15.

APPENDIX E

OTHER JOURNAL ARTICLES AUTHORED BY ELVINA TRUMAN PEARCE

JOURNAL ARTICLES AUTHORED BY ELVINA TRUMAN PEARCE

Pearce, Elvina. "Rhythm: Rhythmic Stability--the Prime Ingredient of Technical Security and Expressive Musicality." *Clavier Companion* 7, no. 7 (July 2012): 50-53.

Pearce Elvina Truman. “Group Lessons: A Plus for the Private Student.” *American Music Teacher* 27, no. 6 (June/July 1978): 22-23

Pearce, Elvina Truman. “The Importance of Practicing What We Teach.” *American Music Teacher* 25, no. 4 (February/March 1976): 10-11

Pearce, Elvina Truman. “The Importance of Practicing What We Teach.” *Keyboard Arts* (Winter 1977): 8-9

Pearce, Elvina Truman. “Issues in Piano Pedagogy II.” *American Music Teacher* 34, no. 3 (January 1985): 14, 16

Pearce, Elvina Truman. “National Certification.” *American Music Teacher* 31, no. 5 (April/May 1982): 47

Pearce, Elvina Truman. "Self-Directed Practice: A Key to both Student Success and Motivation." *American Music Teacher* 54, no. 2 (October 2004): 29-30.

Pearce, Elvina Truman. “Whats vs. Whys.” *American Music Teacher* 18, no. 3 (January 1969): 38, 49.

Pearce, Elvina Truman. "Standards for Judging." *Clavier* 15, no. 2 (1976): 48.

Pearce, Elvina Truman. "Prescription for Student Success." *Clavier* 18, no. 2 (1979): 34.

Pearce, Elvina Truman. "Memoirs of Madame: Personal Recollections of Isabelle Vengerova." *The Piano Quarterly* 37, no. 145 (1989): 28.

Pearce, Elvina Truman. "Issues in Piano Pedagogy: Standards for Private Teachers." Proceedings of the Annual Meeting - National Association of Schools of Music., no. 72 (1984): 62-66.

APPENDIX F

PEARCE'S PROMOTIONAL BROCHURE

FROM THE CRITICS
AS SOLOIST WITH ORCHESTRA AND IN RECITAL

"PIANIST ELVINA TRUMAN…IMPRESSIVE IN DEBUT":

"Miss Truman rose eagerly to her opportunities, striking fire with vigorous octave passages, sweeping the keyboard with scintillating runs."

FELIX BOROWSKI, CHICAGO SUN TIMES

..."a vivacious personality... does everything with enthusiasm. In her debut with the orchestra, she displayed brilliant technic, dynamics, opulence of tone, and a sense of interpretation with true temperament."

MUSICAL LEADER, CHICAGO

"It took her only a few brief moments to set her audience at rest as to her musicianship. In the (Liszt) concerto she displayed an amazing technique and a depth of interpretation. She had an assurance born of mastery."

AMARILLO DAILY NEWS

..."a very sensitive player: She has a fine musical feeling and understanding of nuances."

ALICE EVERSMAN, WASHINGTON EVENING STAR

"Few recitals can boast the kind of playing we heard last night. Miss Truman's Handel was amply and nobly conceived. The Chopin pieces found seemingly inexhaustible technique, a striking sense of pacing and design, and tone that never lost its limpid warmth... Difficult tonal effects...were superbly managed... True virtuosity... She has had unusually good guidance... a highly gifted musician."

FRANK C. CAMPBELL WASHINGTON EVENING STAR

..."Hers is a talent based on keen understanding and great affection for the music she plays."

TULSA TRIBUNE

"The quality of her musicianship is pure and pleasing. Delicacy of touch is teamed with forcefulness and she convinces her audience of the composer's intentions and her mastery of the instrument."

TULSA WORLD

THE MUSIC OF ELVINA TRUMAN PEARCE

For the Elementary Pianist:

ADVENTURES (Warner Bros. All rights administered by Alfred Music Publishers.)
"This set of *Adventures* utilizes the pedal to help create big sounds. The eighteen pieces are full of rhythmic interest with titles that capture the imagination and consequently inspire good interpretation. A great mix!"
Carole Flatau, Keyboard Editor for CPP/Belwin, Inc. (1997)

FIRST IMPRESSIONS (CPP/Belwin. All rights administered by Alfred Music Publishers.)
"… 12 solos for early level piano featuring a wide range of styles. … (They) are carefully written to lie nicely under the hands so that young students can achieve great sounds. This book will also appeal to the older beginner."

SECOND IMPRESSIONS (CPP/Belwin. All rights administered by Alfred Music Publishers.)
"… pleasantly varied in style, each (piece has) a different focus. Elvina Pearce covers a wide range of the keyboard and creates a great diversity of sounds. Careful use of the pedal, careful patterning, and planned dynamics support the fine creative ideas."

LET'S DUET! (Revised Edition, 2002; Alfred Music Publishers)
"Because the compositional possibilities are so limited at this level, it is especially delightful to find interesting writing for elementary students. Pearce's harmonies are fresh, punctuated by frequent use of seventh chords. Students in the first through third years (of piano study) will enjoy these engaging duets." *Clavier (September;* 1990)

SOLO FLIGHT (New School for Music Study Press/Warner Bros. All rights administered by Alfred Music Publishers.)
"Many teachers … will be pleased with … these 16 solos. Unlike most early (level) pieces, these have … shifts in each piece, requiring the child to change positions quickly and smoothly. This collection will work well with the first volume of any method." *Clavier (July-August;* 1987*)*

"Rich, appealing music … (with a wide) dynamic range that uses the entire keyboard and pedal. Satisfying to play, yet easy to learn."

For the Intermediate Pianist:

SEVEN PRELUDES, BOOKS 1 AND 2 (CPP/Belwin. All rights administered by Alfred Music Publishers.)
"Following the historical precedent of Bach, Chopin, Kabalevsky and others, Elvina Pearce has composed a set of preludes, either major or minor for each white key in *Book One*, and for each black key in *Book Two*. Each prelude creates one main mood, is usually made of one primary musical gesture, (and reveals) a special emotion, and each allows sensitive, personal involvement."

BAGATELLES (CPP/Belwin. All rights administered by Alfred Music Publishers.)
"Elvina Pearce has composed this wonderful set of bagatelles in the spirit of her two books of preludes. Each is a short 'character piece' designed to create one primary mood. Untitled, each has performance suggestions (such as) 'with grace,' 'bustling and happy,' 'gently but moving along'."

EXCURSIONS, BOOKS 1 AND 2 (CPP/Belwin. All rights administered by Alfred Music Publishers.)
"… valuable supplementary books that can be used with any method. The rhythms and melodies are logical, the patterns are clearly defined, (and) the sounds are exciting. … Let's have more excursions!"

DIVERSIONS (Warner Bros. All rights administered by Alfred Music Publishers.)
"(At the approximate same level as) Elvina Pearce's *Excursions*, these pieces will delight teachers and students who appreciate quality supplementary material (and) enjoy rich, full sounds with a minimum of demands. This music (provides) long-lasting rewards."

For more information about the print music of Elvina Pearce, please contact Alfred Music Publishers, Inc. (http://www.alfred.com)

Elvina Pearce
etpearce@wowway.com

Elvina Truman Pearce

A DISTINGUISHED CAREER

As a Pianist ~

Elvina Pearce grew up in Tulsa, OK where she attended the University of Tulsa as a piano performance major. While still in her teens, she was twice a finalist in two major national competitions – the *Patrick Hayes Award Competition* in Washington, D.C., and the *Michaels Memorial Award Competition* in Chicago.

Upon completing her studies at the University of Tulsa, she went to New York City to become a piano student of Isabelle Vengerova, the renowned Russian artist teacher. (Among Mme. Vengerova's students were Leonard Bernstein, Samuel Barber, Lukas Foss, and Gary Graffman, to name just a few.)

Elvina's concert career is highlighted by a performance of the Liszt *Piano Concerto in E flat* with the Chicago Symphony, an "encore" performance of the Liszt in a coast-to-coast radio broadcast over WGN's "Chicago Theater of the Air," and by solo recitals in Carnegie Recital Hall in NYC, and The National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

As a Teacher ~

Following her New York study, Elvina was appointed to the piano faculty of Westminster Choir College now a part of Rider University in Princeton, NJ. While in Princeton, she studied piano pedagogy with Frances Clark, internationally acclaimed author and teacher of teachers. She subsequently became one of the founding faculty members of Dr. Clark's *New School for Music Study* in Princeton. In 1999, she became one of the founders of the *Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy*, serving for six years as Vice President on its Board of Trustees.

Upon moving to Illinois in the 60's, Elvina taught at North Central College in Naperville for whom, in 1980, she designed and then directed the college's Division of Preparatory and Community Music. For 14 years, she also taught piano and piano pedagogy at Northwestern University where she served as head of the school's Piano Preparatory Division.

As a Clinician ~

For over half a century, Elvina has been active as a workshop clinician presenting seminars, master classes, and recitals for teachers and students in more than 40 states including Hawaii as well as in Canada. She has the distinction of being the first American invited to present a non-commercial piano workshop for teachers in the Republic of China (sponsored by *Yamaha International*).



In 1999, she appeared as a keynote speaker and recitalist at the *Fourth Australian National Piano Pedagogy Conference* held at Western Australian University in Perth. The following year, she was invited to return to Perth to conduct a week-long teachers' workshop sponsored by the *Australian Suzuki Talent Education Association*.

Elvina's numerous professional activities throughout the United States include the presentations of lectures at state, divisional, and national conferences sponsored by *Music Teachers National Association (MTNA)*, the *National Association of Schools of Music (NASM)*, the *National Group Piano Symposium*, the *National Federation of Music Clubs*, and the *National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy*.

As an Advocate of National Certification for Independent Music Teachers ~

For 17 years, Elvina worked in behalf of developing and implementing a music teacher certification program for *MTNA*, serving first as the Certification Chairman of the *Illinois State Music Teachers Association (ISMTA)*, then as *MTNA's* five-state NE Divisional Certification Chair, and finally as the organization's National Certification Chair.

As an Author and Composer ~

A frequent contributor to national music journals, Elvina's articles on teaching have been featured in *The American Music Teacher, Clavier, Keyboard Arts, Piano Guild Notes, The Piano Quarterly, The Piano Teacher*, and *Keyboard Companion* magazines. For the latter she was on the editorial staff for 17 years, and served as its Editor-in-Chief from 2000 to 2006. She has authored a book for pianists and teachers which is scheduled for publication by the *Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy* in the Spring of 2014.

Elvina has also received national acclaim as a composer of more than twenty published collections of piano pieces for students. Reviews of her music that have appeared in national journals have said: *"Elvina Pearce has done her usual excellent job of writing music that students will enjoy playing."..."The real pleasure is to discover that each piece has something to say even when the technical demands are minimal."..."This elementary music (is infused with) textures, moods, and ideas that are all too rare in early level piano writing."..."high quality, supplementary literature."*

Awards ~

While a student in New York, Elvina was the recipient of the *Josephine Fry Memorial Award* presented biennially to an outstanding young artist by the New York Congress of Piano Teachers.

In 2008, she was named as an *MTNA Foundation Fellow*, and in 2011-12, she was designated as the *Teacher of the Year* by the Naperville chapter of *ISMTA*. In 2011, Elvina received a Lifetime Achievement Award presented by the *National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy* at its Biennial Conference held in Lombard, IL.

APPENDIX G

COVER LETTER AND INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR ELVINA TRUMAN PEARCE

COVER LETTER TO ELVINA TRUMAN PEARCE

Todd Van Kekerix

[Address]

May 4, 2018

Dear Ms. Pearce,

My name is Todd Van Kekerix and I am a doctoral student in piano performance and pedagogy at the University of Oklahoma. At this point, I am choosing a topic for my final research. Your accomplishments as a teaching artist, composer, piano pedagogue and performer have left a lasting impression on the field of piano pedagogy and stand out as warranting further documentation.

I am keenly interested in your pedagogical studies with Frances Clark and your affiliation with The New School for Music Study, since I was on faculty there from 2007-2016. While there, I heard wonderful accolades about your teaching and approach to teacher training from both Amy Glennon and Marvin Blickenstaff. Additionally, I am interested in your work in the pedagogy programs at Northwestern University and North Central College, your experience as a workshop presenter, your extensive publications of teaching repertoire, and your contributions to both The National Conference on Piano Pedagogy and Keyboard Companion.

I have reached out to Craig Sale regarding your potential interest in this project, so you may have heard about this in passing from him. Would you be interested in being interviewed for this project? I would travel to the Chicago area for an in-person interview during the summer and would arrange a time that is convenient for you.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Todd Van Kekerix

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR ELVINA TRUMAN PEARCE

1. Pre-Professional Life
    a. Verification of personal data
        i. Birthplace/Birthdate: December 22, 1931
        ii. Pre-college education, location/date
    b. Inspirational Teachers
        i. Who were they? And how did they influence you?
        ii. What traits of theirs are present in your teaching?
    c. Pre-college level memories and experiences, both musical and nonmusical
        i. Parents' involvement in piano study
        ii. Describe the presence of music in your upbringing.

2. College Education and Beyond
    a. College experience at the University of Tulsa
        i. Dates at the University of Tulsa (1948-1952??)
        ii. Who was your teacher?
            1. Boyd and Helen Ringo
        iii. What characteristics from those lessons have resonated with you throughout your teaching career?
        iv. What do you recall from the Piano Pedagogy course that Helen Ringo taught?
    b. You met Frances Clark at a workshop in Bristol, TN. What year?
        i. What prompted you to attend the workshop?
        ii. How old were you? High School? College?
        iii. What were the subsequent meetings like?
        iv. What was your first impression of Clark?
    c. What caused you to not finish your degree at the University of Tulsa?
    a. What prompted the decision to move to the NYC?
    b. How did the lessons with Isabelle Vengerova come about?
        i. You've stated that your studies with Isabelle Vengerova as the best and the worst of times. Can you expand on that?
        ii. What aspects of her teaching did you adopt into your philosophy and style?
        iii. Were these private lessons or were they part of an institution?

2. Major Performances (1950s)
    a. What circumstances led to a performance with the Chicago Symphony?
    b. With the "Chicago Theater of the Air"?
    c. Carnegie Hall?
    d. National Gallery of Art?
    e. Amarillo Symphony?
    f. Tulsa Symphony?

g. DuPage Symphony?

3. Westminster Choir College (1955-1958)
    a. What prompted your decision to attend Westminster Choir College as opposed to studying at Juilliard?
        i. Who did you study piano with?
    b. What's your degree from Westminster?
    c. What are the most meaningful concepts that Frances Clark taught you at Westminster?
    d. Describe the pedagogy classes with Frances Clark.
        i. What was the primary content?
        ii. Did she supervise any of your teaching during your time at Westminster?
        iii. If so, how often?
        iv. How did she give you feedback?
    e. Describe the lesson planning that was required of Clark's students.
        i. How much detail was expected?
        ii. Long range? Week to week?
        iii. How did this benefit your teaching?
    f. What was your role in the two years (1958-1960) after you completed your bachelor's degree and the opening of The New School for Music Study?

4. The New School for Music Study (1960-1963)
    a. What circumstances led to the inception of The New School for Music Study?
    b. What role did you first have at The New School for Music Study?
        i. Did it change?
    c. What were Frances Clark's and Louise Goss's vision for the school at that time?
        i. How much did you interact with them?
    d. Who else was considered a co-founder?
    e. Was Frances Clark's and Louise Goss's approach to piano teaching new to you?
    f. What changed in your teaching after working with Frances Clark and with other colleagues at The New School for Music Study?
    g. What was the environment at The New School for Music Study like at that time?
    h. Frances Clark Workshop Tours
        i. Describe these workshops
        ii. How many workshops did you attend/assist with?
    i. What prompted your departure from The New School for Music Study?

5. Naperville teaching years
    a. What brought you to Naperville, IL?
    b. How large was your private studio?
    c. Did you run partner lessons or group classes?
    d. Did you employ any additional teachers throughout this time?

6. Northwestern University (DATES?)
    a. What circumstances led to your appointment at Northwestern?
    b. What was your title/job description?
    c. Describe the pedagogy degree program at Northwestern while you were on faculty.
        i. What did you want to achieve with the pedagogy students by the time they graduated?
        ii. Did this change throughout your time there? If so, how did it change?
    d. Pedagogy Courses
        i. Describe the content of your pedagogy courses.
            1. What was your underlying philosophy in teaching piano pedagogy?
            2. What was the sequence of pedagogy courses?
            3. What projects did you have your pedagogy students complete to prepare them for teaching?
        ii. Did you supervise student's teaching as part of the degree program?
            1. How did you give feedback? In person?
            2. How often?
            3. Did you find that giving feedback after observing students was challenging?
            4. If so, did you develop tactics to make it easier?
        iii. Were the pedagogy students required to teach in the preparatory program?
        iv. Lesson planning
            1. Describe the lesson planning that you required of your students.
            2. Long range? Week to week?
            3. How much detail was expected?
    e. Preparatory Division and Children's Piano Laboratory Program
        i. Did you start these programs at Northwestern or were they already in place?
        ii. Were the programs modeled after Westminster Choir College or The New School for Music Study?
            1. Did you use Time to Begin?
        iii. Programs of study
            1. Describe a typical plan of study for an average age student?
            2. How often did the group classes meet?

3. Were there private only lessons as well?

f. What other roles did you have at Northwestern?

7. North Central College (1980-??)
    a. What circumstances led to your appointment at North Central College in Naperville, IL?
        i. What years did you teach there?
        ii. Did you teach pedagogy courses while at NCC?
    b. Division of Preparatory and Community Music
        i. What were some of the challenges that you underwent in the process of building the Preparatory Department?
        ii. Did you model the program after Westminster Choir College, The New School for Music Study, or Northwestern University's program?
            1. Did you use time to Begin?
        iii. Programs of study
            1. Describe a typical plan of study for an average age student?
            2. How often did the group classes meet?
            3. Were there private only lessons as well?
    c. What other roles did you have at NCC?

8. Role as Composer
    a. How did you begin composing?
    b. How would you describe your compositional style?
    c. What was your first piece or collection that was ever published?
    d. What prompted you to write over 20 collections of teaching pieces?
        i. Many educational composers talk about writing for a specific student, were they written for a specific student? Were they written to solve a problem?
        ii. Are there any that you think are unique or represent you well? What do you think is your best?
        iii. Do you have a favorite piece? Collection?
    e. Solo Flight
        i. What prompted its publication?
        ii. Was this your first publication?
        iii. How did you come up with the idea of the (ghosted) staff?
    f. Rote
        i. What prompted you to start working with the idea of rote teaching?
        ii. Why have you found it to be so beneficial?
        iii. How do you use rote teaching in intermediate and advanced teaching?

9. Pedagogy Book – *The Success Factor in Piano Teaching: Making Practice Perfect*
    a. What prompted you to compile all your teaching ideas into a published book?
    b. Is there anything that was left out of the book that you wish would have been a part of it?
    c. The book is full of practical advice and solutions to real-world problems. I can only imagine that you were able to get results with your students almost instantly. Any pearls of wisdom you wish to offer?
    d. If you could say one thing to the five teachers you list in the book who had the greatest impact on your life as an educator, what would that be?
        i. Jane Harnish
        ii. Lenore Hunter
        iii. Helen Ringo
        iv. Isabelle Vengerova
        v. Frances Clark

10. Workshops
    a. Which topic was your favorite to present?
    b. What did you feel were your most popular workshops?

11. National Certificate Chairman for the Music Teachers National Association
    a. How did the certification process develop?
    b. What let to your appointment as Chairman?
    c. Were you there for its inception?
    d. What years did you serve as the chairman?
    e. What was the process for a teacher seeking certification at that time?

12. Keyboard Companion (1990-2006)
    a. What led to your first appointment at Keyboard Companion?
    b. Were you still teaching at Northwestern and NCC?
    c. Who was choosing content and direction of the magazine at that point?
    d. Associate Editor, Home Practice section
        i. What was your goal as Associate Editor?
        ii. Were topics chosen collectively or did you choose them yourself?
        iii. How autonomous was this role?
        iv. What do you consider your greatest accomplishments as associate editor?
        v. What were some of the challenges that you faced?
    e. Editor-in-Chief (2000-2006)
        i. What led to this appointment?
        ii. What do you consider your greatest accomplishments as editor-in-chief?

iii. Did you implement any changes when you succeeded Richard Chronister?
iv. What led to your resignation in 2006?

13. Describe your activities between 2006 and 2018.

14. Pedagogy and Philosophy
    a. At what point in your life did you know you wanted to become a piano teacher?
    b. What motivated you every day in your teaching?
    c. Frances Clark has been quoted many times about "meeting the child where they are?" What does it mean to you?
    d. How do you define a successful piano teacher?
    e. How has the field of piano pedagogy changed over the course of your career?
        i. For the better?
        ii. For the worse?
    f. What are some ideas that have come and gone throughout your career?
    g. What are the musical foundations you feel are important to teach every student?
    h. How and at what level do you teach artistry?
    i. What are your tenets of teaching in each level? (What's most important to you?)
    j. What's most important to your teaching?
        i. Technique?
        ii. Artistry?
        iii. How did you balance teaching both aspects so successfully with students?
    k. Describe what you would do in a typical first lesson with an average 6-year-old student.
    l. What are some challenges facing a 21st century piano teacher?
    m. Are there certain aspects about teaching piano that you feel you do well?
    n. How did "practice" become such a central theme in your contributions, from your 'Home Practice' section in *Keyboard Companion* to the *Success Factor: Making Practice Perfect!*?
    o. What do you consider your most unique and most important contributions to piano teaching and the teaching profession?
    p. Where do you feel like you made your strongest contribution to most? Writing, Compositions, Preparatory Programs, Workshops?
    q. What are you the most proud of in your career?

APPENDIX H

QUESTIONNAIRE RECIPIENTS

QUESTIONNAIRE RECIPIENTS

Former Students:

Baker, Susanne
Bosits, Marcia
Chao-Casano, Helen
Cohen, Jennifer
Confroti, Camille
Cronin, Nellie
Jones, Beth Hillenbrand
Jones, Sanford
Katayama, Emily Jane
Kwon, Yeeseon
Magrath, Jane
Marlais, Helen
Merry, Jennifer
Myers, Stephanie
Nagy, Kim
Osborne, Susan Ramey
Renggli, Catherine
Rieth, Julie
Snow, Jennifer
Stoser, Sharon
Tipton, June Frank

Former Colleagues:

Darling, Ed
Dillon, Brenda
Heerema, Elmer
Johnson, Rebecca
Larimer, Frances

Former Close Associates:

Blickenstaff, Marvin
Glennon, Amy
Holland, Samuel
Sale, Craig

APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FORMER STUDENTS

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FORMER STUDENTS AT THE NEW SCHOOL FOR MUSIC STUDY, NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY AND NORTH CENTRAL COLLEGE

1. Do you wish to participate in this research?
2. Are you 18 years or older?
3. Are you willing to be named and quoted in the document that results from this research?
4. How long have you known Elvina Pearce?
5. During what time period (years) did you study with or take classes from Pearce?
6. Can you give a general profile of your teaching or student experiences with Pearce while at either The New School for Music Study, Northwestern University or North Central College?
7. When you think of Elvina Pearce, what words first come to mind?
8. What skills did Pearce possess that set her apart from other teachers?
9. What do you recall Elvina Pearce saying about her concerto and solo performances?
10. As a performer, how did Elvina Pearce make a connection with piano pedagogy?
11. What were Pearce's weaknesses as a teacher?
12. How would you describe Pearce's approach to teaching and what did you learn from it?
13. How did study with Pearce change your teaching?
14. Were there important lessons regarding any of the following?
    a. Musicianship
    b. Reading
    c. Technique
    d. Repertoire introduction
    e. Rote teaching
    f. Others
15. Can you share any anecdotes that would help portray Pearce's teaching style?
16. Describe the effectiveness of Pearce's teaching.
17. Did Pearce influence any aspect of your life or career? If so, please explain.
18. Is there anything else—such as additional comments, anecdotes or recollections—that you would like to add that would be of value to this study?
19. Do you have any notes from classes that you took with Elvina Pearce that you would be able to share?
20. Can you suggest any other individuals that I should contact?
21. Other

APPENDIX J

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FORMER COLLEAGUES

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FORMER COLLEAGUES

1. Do you wish to participate in this research?
2. Are you 18 years or older?
3. Are you willing to be named and quoted in the document that results from this research?
4. How long have you known Elvina Pearce and how were you introduced to her?
5. What was your professional relationship with Pearce?
6. Did you collaborate with Pearce in performances, seminars, masterclasses or other events? If so, can you elaborate on the details?
7. Describe the personality and style of Pearce.
8. How would you characterize Pearce as a teacher?
9. In your opinion, what motivated Pearce in her professional life?
10. What do you recall Elvina Pearce saying about her concerto and solo performances?
11. As a performer, how did Elvina Pearce make a connection with piano pedagogy?
12. To the best of your ability, describe Pearce's philosophy regarding piano pedagogy.
13. If applicable: What were Pearce's contributions to the pedagogy program at Northwestern University? North Central Community College? Clavier Companion?
14. What are Pearce's most enduring contributions to the field of piano pedagogy?
15. Can you share any anecdotes that would help portray Pearce's character, personality, or style?
16. Is there anything else—such as additional comments, anecdotes or recollections—that you would like to add that would be of value to this study?
17. Can you suggest any other individuals that I should contact?
18. Other

APPENDIX K

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CLOSE ASSOCIATES

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CLOSE ASSOCIATES

1. Do you wish to participate in this research?
2. Are you 18 years or older?
3. Are you willing to be named and quoted in the document that results from this research?
4. How long have you known Elvina Pearce and how were you introduced to her?
5. Did you collaborate with Pearce in performances, seminars, masterclasses or other events? If so, can you elaborate on the details?
6. What was your professional relationship with Pearce?
7. Describe the personality and style of Pearce.
8. What do you recall Elvina Pearce saying about her concerto and solo performances?
9. As a performer, how did Elvina Pearce make a connection with piano pedagogy?
10. How would you characterize Pearce as a teacher?
    a. What were her approaches to common teaching problems?
    b. What were her goals with teaching piano pedagogy?
    c. What were her goals when teaching group piano classes?
    d. What were her goals when teaching young beginners?
11. To the best of your ability, describe Pearce's philosophy regarding piano pedagogy. What shaped her thoughts and actions?
12. Can you describe Pearce's strengths and weaknesses as the following?
    a. Teacher
    b. Pedagogue
    c. Clinician
    d. Composer
    e. Performer
13. If applicable: What were Pearce's contributions to the pedagogy program at Northwestern University? North Central Community College? Clavier Companion?
14. What are Pearce's most enduring contributions to the field of piano pedagogy?
15. Can you share any anecdotes that would help portray Pearce's style?
16. Is there anything that you would like to add that would be of value to this study?
17. Can you suggest any other individual's that I should contact?
18. Other

APPENDIX L

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS – APPROVAL OF INITIAL SUBMISSION & APPROVAL OF STUDY MODIFICATION

The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA

Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects

Approval of Initial Submission – Expedited Review – AP01

Date: May 11, 2018 **IRB#:** 9300

Principal Investigator: Todd Van Kekerix **Approval Date:** 05/11/2018 **Expiration Date: 04/30/2019**

Study Title: The Contributions of Elvina Truman Pearce to Piano Pedagogy

Expedited Category: 6 & 7

Collection/Use of PHI: No

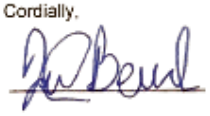
On behalf of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I have reviewed and granted expedited approval of the above-referenced research study. To view the documents approved for this submission, open this study from the *My Studies* option, go to *Submission History*, go to *Completed Submissions* tab and then click the *Details* icon.

As principal investigator of this research study, you are responsible to:

- Conduct the research study in a manner consistent with the requirements of the IRB and federal regulations 45 CFR 46.
- Obtain informed consent and research privacy authorization using the currently approved, stamped forms and retain all original, signed forms, if applicable.
- Request approval from the IRB prior to implementing any/all modifications.
- Promptly report to the IRB any harm experienced by a participant that is both unanticipated and related per IRB policy.
- Maintain accurate and complete study records for evaluation by the HRPP Quality Improvement Program and, if applicable, inspection by regulatory agencies and/or the study sponsor.
- Promptly submit continuing review documents to the IRB upon notification approximately 60 days prior to the expiration date indicated above.
- Submit a final closure report at the completion of the project.

If you have questions about this notification or using iRIS, contact the IRB @ 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

Cordially,



Fred Beard, Ph.D.
Vice Chair, Institutional Review Board

The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA

Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects

Approval of Study Modification – Expedited Review – AP0

Date: October 07, 2019 **IRB#:** 9300

Principal Investigator: Todd Van Kekerix **Reference No: 696512**

Study Title: The Contributions of Elvina Truman Pearce to Piano Pedagogy

Approval Date: 10/07/2019

Modification Description:
I'm requesting approval to send out questionnaires through SurveyMonkey to former colleagues, associates, and students of Elvina Truman Pearce.

The review and approval of this submission is based on the determination that the study, as amended, will continue to be conducted in a manner consistent with the requirements of 45 CFR 46.

To view the approved documents for this submission, open this study from the My Studies option, go to Submission History, go to Completed Submissions tab and then click the Details icon.

If the consent form(s) were revised as a part of this modification, discontinue use of all previous versions of the consent form.

If you have questions about this notification or using iRIS, contact the HRPP office at (405) 325-8110 or irb@ou.edu. The HRPP Administrator assigned for this submission: Nicole A Cunningham.

Cordially,

Fred Beard, Ph.D.
Vice Chair, Institutional Review Board

The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA

Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects

Approval of Study Modification – Expedited Review – AP0

Date: November 04, 2019 **IRB#:** 9300

Principal Investigator: Todd Van Kekerix **Reference No: 697770**

Study Title: The Contributions of Elvina Truman Pearce to Piano Pedagogy

Approval Date: 11/04/2019

Modification Description:
Adding questions to surveys.

The review and approval of this submission is based on the determination that the study, as amended, will continue to be conducted in a manner consistent with the requirements of 45 CFR 46.

To view the approved documents for this submission, open this study from the My Studies option, go to Submission History, go to Completed Submissions tab and then click the Details icon.

If the consent form(s) were revised as a part of this modification, discontinue use of all previous versions of the consent form.

If you have questions about this notification or using iRIS, contact the HRPP office at (405) 325-8110 or irb@ou.edu. The HRPP Administrator assigned for this submission: Karen L Braswell.

Cordially,



Fred Beard, Ph.D.
Vice Chair, Institutional Review Board