PIANO TEACHING METHODOLOGIES

USED IN THE TRAINING OF FINAL YEAR UNDERGRADUATE

PERFORMERS AT FOUR TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN HONG KONG

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DEDICATION

In thanks for their support, encouragement, and patience during the course of my study, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my father, my mother, my late husband, Jim, and my son, Ka Lok.
DECLARATION

To the best of my knowledge, this thesis contains no resource previously published or written by another person, except where acknowledged in the text.

This thesis has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award.

The content of this thesis is the result of work conducted since the official commencement date of the approved research program.

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>ABRSM</td>
<td>Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>ABSM</td>
<td>Associate of Birmingham School of Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMEB</td>
<td>Australian Music Examinations Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANZCA</td>
<td>Australian and New Zealand Cultural Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARAM</td>
<td>Associate of the Royal Academy of Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARCM</td>
<td>Associate of the Royal College of Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATCL</td>
<td>Associate of Trinity College London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBC</td>
<td>British Broadcasting Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASH</td>
<td>Composers and Authors Society of Hong Kong</td>
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<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>Compact Disc</td>
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<tr>
<td>CUHK</td>
<td>The Chinese University of Hong Kong</td>
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<tr>
<td>DVD</td>
<td>Digital Video Disc</td>
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<tr>
<td>FLCM</td>
<td>Fellowship of London College of Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>FTCL</td>
<td>Fellowship of Trinity College London</td>
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<tr>
<td>GBSM</td>
<td>Graduate of Birmingham School of Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>GRSM</td>
<td>Graduate of the Royal Schools of Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>HKAPA</td>
<td>The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>HKEAA</td>
<td>Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HKBU</td>
<td>Hong Kong Baptist University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HKMO</td>
<td>Hong Kong Music Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>HKSAR</td>
<td>Hong Kong Special Administrative Region</td>
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<tr>
<td>HKSMSA</td>
<td>Hong Kong Schools Music and Speech Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>HKU</td>
<td>The University of Hong Kong</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hon Dip</td>
<td>Honours Diploma</td>
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<tr>
<td>IIMP</td>
<td>International Index to Music Periodicals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIPA</td>
<td>International Index to Performing Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGSM</td>
<td>Licentiate of the Guildhall School of Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LRAM</td>
<td>Licentiate of the Royal Academy of Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LRSM</td>
<td>Licentiate of the Royal Schools of Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LTCL</td>
<td>Licentiate of Trinity College London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PG Dip Mus</td>
<td>Postgraduate Diploma of Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>RILM</td>
<td>Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale</td>
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<tr>
<td>RNCM</td>
<td>Royal Northern College of Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>RTHK</td>
<td>Radio and Television Hong Kong</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>The United Kingdom</td>
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<td>USA</td>
<td>The United States of America</td>
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Lo Pik Yu
Summary

This study examines the piano teaching methodologies used to train final-year undergraduate performance students at four tertiary institutions in Hong Kong. As there is a hierarchical relationship among the philosophies, principles, and methodologies of teaching, this study discusses two chief areas of philosophy, five principles, and six aspects of teaching methodologies that were identified in the literature as being important in the teaching of piano performance. The philosophies include both philosophical ideas and philosophies that are derived from practical experience. The philosophical ideas investigated include rationalism, empiricism, and pragmatism, and the philosophies derived from practical experience cover the issues of inculcating in students an abiding enjoyment and love of music; acknowledgement of the place of aesthetic education in the teaching of piano; recognition of the teacher’s and performer’s roles in transmitting to others musical knowledge, personal insights, and a significant expression of culture; ideally, the need for pianists to be well-balanced intellectually and emotionally and not narrowly focused; the importance of instilling in students a sense of humanity that goes beyond their role as a mere pianist and, ideally, gives them a world perspective.

The five principles identified relating to the teaching of piano performance majors include: the need to nurture in students an ability to express emotions and ideas; the importance of pianists producing a considered and appropriate tonal quality; the importance of developing the imagination and nurturing creativity; recognizing the need for encouragement and stimulation in teaching; and committing to quality teaching. These ideas provide the foundation for the discussion of the methodologies of teaching piano performance, which is divided into the six aspects of technique, style, memorization, practicing, acute listening skills (or extending aural ability), and devising solutions to stage fright. The aspect of teaching technique includes the different ideas that teachers have on artistic sense, mental imagery, hands postures and physical movements, force, and the use of technical exercises. The aspect of style covers several topics, namely, understanding the historical background of the music, the interpretation of symbols, listening to music, the relationship between music and other arts, and a personal style. The four issues that relate to the teaching of memorization are aural, visual, kinaesthetic, and analytic memorization. The aspect of practice includes practising with a goal or target, practising with an intellectual understanding of the cause of problems, slow practise, and productive, effective, and systematic practise. The three main areas for extending the listening skills of performance students include: the importance of listening to recordings by professional artists; attending live performances; and students recording their own playing and critically evaluating it. The different elements involved in relation to stage fright include: good preparation as a basis for feeling secure; performance rehearsal and
performance experience; acute aural awareness and aural concentration; having a positive attitude; and being relaxed.

The information in this research was collected from the four tertiary institutions in Hong Kong that offer a Bachelor degree in music: the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, the University of Hong Kong, the Baptist University of Hong Kong, and the Chinese University of Hong Kong. The heads of department of these institutions, the teachers of final-year undergraduate piano performance students, and the undergraduate students of piano performance themselves participated in the research. The information was collected from the participants through an introductory questionnaire and subsequent face to face interviews. Background information on the four institutions, including their history, facilities, curricula, and expectations of teaching, was collected from the heads of department, along with more general comments on the institutions and Hong Kong society. Case studies of the ten teachers’ are presented that include the learning background of the teachers, their philosophies, their principles, and the teaching methodologies that they used to teach technique, style, memorization, practice, and the development of aural ability, and to solve the problem of stage fright. The data from the heads of department, teachers, and students were analyzed, and the findings from this analysis are presented. Models of philosophies, principles, and methodologies of piano teaching are proposed, and recommendations are offered for teachers, students, and institutions to improve the quality of piano performance teaching.
Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Aims of the study

This thesis is a study of piano teaching methodologies used to train final-year undergraduate performers at four tertiary institutions in Hong Kong. The four institutions are The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Baptist University, and The Chinese University of Hong Kong. The purpose of the study is to investigate the methodologies used by teachers at these local institutions, to discuss the issues and problems that are identified in the research, and to develop a model for the teaching of professional-standard piano performers. The specific areas investigated include the teaching of technique, style or stylistic interpretation, memorization, approaches to practice, acute listening skills (aural development), and ways of dealing with stage fright during performance. The literature review, analysis, and discussion are all conducted using identified philosophies, principles, and methodologies of teaching piano performance as a framework. This study aims to ascertain the piano teaching methodologies – and their underlying philosophies and principles – that are most commonly employed by teachers at tertiary music institutions in Hong Kong. Moreover, the study provides recommendations for the teaching of piano performance in Hong Kong as a means of informing the development of piano teaching both within the Hong Kong context and, ideally, beyond.

1.2 Rationale

The piano has been studied as an instrument in Hong Kong since 1842, when it became a colony of Great Britain (Chan, 1984). Today there are numerous piano examination bodies, piano competitions, piano associations, and music centres involved in various aspects of piano instruction or piano education. Hong Kong has arguably the highest percentage of students learning the piano of any country or region; this is reflected in the large – per capita – number of candidates who participate in public music examinations and piano competitions.

The examination organisations currently operating in Hong Kong include the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM, 2008), Trinity College London (TCM, 2008), the Australian Music Examinations Board (AMEB, 2008), and Australian and New Zealand Cultural Arts Limited (ANZCA, 2008). The first two have a long history in Hong Kong. Trinity College started offering exams in the territory in 1938.
and the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music started their public examinations in 1948 (Lau, 1999). Data from the Hong Kong Examination and Assessment Authority – which represents the government in facilitating the Music Practical Examinations of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music – show that the number of Hong Kong candidates increased from 53,571 in 2000-2001 to 70,328 in 2005-2006 (ABRSM, 2008). The total number of candidates for these exams worldwide is over 620,000 (ABRSM, 2008). Such examinations, clearly, play a leading role in piano education in Hong Kong (Lau, 1999, p. 19).

There are also many music competitions in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong Schools Music Festival, organised by the Hong Kong Schools Music and Speech Association (HKSMSA, 2008) was founded in 1949 (Lau, 1999, p. 19), and the Hong Kong (Asia) Piano Open Competition, organized by the Hong Kong Piano and Music Association, has been running since 1988. Other significant competitions include the Hong Kong Competition for Young Asian Musicians, the Hong Kong International Piano Competition, and the Steinway and Sons International Youth Piano Competition (International Piano Competitions, 2008).

Hong Kong students also compete in international piano competitions, and some have achieved significant results, including First Prize at the 6th Newport International Competition for Young Pianists in 1994, Second Prize at the Gina Bachauer Young Artist International Piano Competition in 1999, First Prize at the International Seiler Piano Competition in 2003, and Sixth Prize at the 15th Frederic Chopin International Competition in 2005 (HKAPA, 2008d).

There are many different music associations in Hong Kong, including the Hong Kong Piano Teacher Association (formed in 1988), the Hong Kong Music Education Association (1987), the Hong Kong Piano Education Association (1999), and the Hong Kong Piano Music Association (1988) (Chow, 1999, p. 55). There are also over 200 music and piano teaching companies in Hong Kong that run commercial piano centres and schools (Lo, 1995), not including private piano teachers. The social and cultural background and educational activities regarding piano education in Hong Kong give the Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) a distinct advantage in nurturing piano teaching and professional piano performers.

Most of the performance training and education at the professional level in the last 30 years has been provided by tertiary institutions in Hong Kong, which thus play a vital role in the teaching of local professional piano performers and teachers. Some of the graduates now teach in primary and secondary schools or music centres, and many of them teach privately in their own studios; some of them have furthered their studies overseas. All of the graduates who have gone on to become teachers are responsible for nurturing young musicians who may well become students of piano performance in the
Although many piano teachers who teach in institutions tend not to adopt a common “systematic” method in the training of young performers, among those who do employ such a method the master-apprentice model is by far the most common approach. In this model, the teacher tells the student how to play, often through demonstration, and the student attempts to directly imitate the teacher. However, no formal study has been made of the relationship between the philosophies, principles, and methodologies of piano teachers and their effect on the students that they teach. To successfully teach young performers at the professional level, the importance of music education and effective methodologies for teaching final-year undergraduates needs to be explored.

This study explores the close relationship between philosophies, principles, and methodologies of music education. Philosophies comprise the interior layer of education, which affects the middle layer of the principles of music teaching and the outer layer of teaching methodologies. That is, teaching methodologies reflect teaching principles and philosophies of education in a mutual interaction. In this study, in order to determine what makes a teaching methodology effective, considerable attention is given to a consideration of philosophies of education and principles of teaching music. This establishes a foundation for the research, discussion and conclusions.

Hong Kong is a society with a culture that is a mix of East and West, because it was ceded to the United Kingdom as a colony in 1842 and reunited with China in 1997 (Chan, 2004). Before 1997, primary and secondary school students were educated in a Western style (Leung, 2002), and as English is an official language of Hong Kong, the majority of the piano teachers who have taught and currently teach in local institutions have studied in the United States of America or Britain. The methodologies and philosophies that these teachers have adopted and developed from their learning has had a continuing impact on the training of local future performers and teachers, and their ideas have certainly had a substantial effect on the vast number of piano teachers who are currently working in Hong Kong.

During the period of this research study there was relatively little communication between the piano teachers of the various institutions of Hong Kong, and there were no regular meetings at which pedagogical matters and other relevant issues were discussed. Furthermore, although there are piano teachers’ associations whose focus is on the non-academic or non-tertiary sphere, they cannot claim to represent the broad spectrum of ideas that Hong Kong piano teachers across the board hold about teaching methodologies. A common arena for discussion and debate on aspects of piano training at all levels would thus be valuable in Hong Kong.

This study attempts to present in detail the philosophies, principles, and methodologies of selected piano teachers in relation to the training and education that is
provided in tertiary music institutions. The findings will contribute to the development of a model of piano teaching methodology in an effort to improve professional standards of piano instruction.

1.3 Definitions

The following are the definitions of the main terms that are used in the research. Further clarification of these definitions is given in the literature review in Chapter 2.

1.3.1 Philosophy

In the context of this study, philosophy has two main meanings. The first relates to the definition of knowledge and the means by which it can be acquired. This study focuses on three of the major philosophies of rationalism, empiricism, and pragmatism. There is a body of literature concerned with these three philosophical streams in relation to music education (Stubley, 1992; Abeles, Hoffer & Klotman, 1994; Reimer, 1992). Rationalism holds that knowledge comes from reason, from rules and truths (Christiani, 1974; Stubley, 1992; Langley, 1995; Sparshott & Goehr, 2001); empiricism regards knowledge as what is accumulated through the senses and experience (Gibbs, 1964; Lacey, 1976; Colwell, 1991; Labuta & Smith 1997; Waal, 2005); and pragmatism considers nothing to be permanent (Jorgensen, 1992; Wagner, 1996), and holds that knowledge can only be gained from investigating different points of view (Abeles, Hoffer & Klotman, 1994; Stubley, 1992).

The second meaning of philosophy in this study is that philosophy derives from practical experience, from which six main aspects are here elucidated in relation to music and music education. As used here, these are ‘overriding’ philosophical considerations that apply regardless of any particular philosophical stream. They are the importance of developing an aesthetic sense with respect to music (Wegener, 1964; Buck, 1944; Fletcher, 1989; Cacioppo, 1994; Goehr, 2001); the importance of inculcating in students an enjoyment and love of music and the arts and its relevance for human development (Dewey, 1934; Cherryholmes, 1999; O’Neill & McPherson, 2002); a belief that an education in music can contribute to a student being ‘well-rounded’, that is, balanced intellectually and emotionally (Murrow & Kidd, 1900; Blocker, 1993; Davies, 2001; Chaffin, Imreh & Crawford, 2002); a belief that music educators have a responsibility for developing in students a sense of humanity (Kowalchyk, 1989; Goehr, 2001; McNerney & Herbert, 2001); a belief that music education involves the accumulation and transmission of knowledge or insight to others (Gordon, 1995; Reimer, 2004; Dunsby, 2001; Blocker, 1993); and a belief that music education has an important
contribution to make to the development of culture and civilization (Green, 2001; Witchell, 2001; Wagner, 2003; Maris, 1989; Laires, 1993). In sum, philosophy in this sense is concerned with seeking the key to an understanding music education.

1.3.2 Principles

Principles in this study represent the basic general rules and ‘truths’ that underlie the teaching of piano performance, and encompass the values, beliefs, and norms that are applied in the teaching of music performance and music education in general. The six main principles that are commonly applied to the teaching of music performance both for the piano and other instruments are the importance of expressing emotion and ideas through music (Langer, 1942; Kivy, 1993; Clarke, 2001); the importance of tone quality and tone production (Wolff, 1979; Bellman, 1994; Palmer & Sande, 1995); the importance of engaging the imagination (Kullak, 1972; Buck, 1944; Rideout, 1992; Kampa, 2000); the importance of developing creativity (Simonton, 2003; Young, 1986; Russ, 1995; Landre, 1996; Bohm, 2003); the role of encouragement in teaching (Merrett, 1986; Hart, 2003; Losoncy, 2000; Inbar, 1996; DuBrin, 2004); and the need to stimulate students in order to bring out the best in all aspects of their playing (Speer, 1994; Blocker, 1993; Kochevitsky, 2004; Tait, 1992; Haack, 1992). It is contended here that these principles, individually or in combination – not necessarily as stand alone items – must underscore a successful methodology for teaching piano performance. To some extent they must inform or underpin any successful methodology for teaching piano performance.

1.3.3 Methodology

In this study, a methodology of teaching is defined as the means of instruction for technique, stylistic interpretation, memorization, approaches to practice, the development of acute listening skills (aural ability), and ways of dealing with stage fright.

1.3.3.1 Technique

Technique in music performance can be defined as the establishment of “channels between the ‘soul’ and ‘body’ in the interpretation of a score” (Wolff, 1979, p. 23). There are various methods of developing technical ability, such as building up the correct hand posture and physical movement (Bree, 1969; Rideout, 1992; Taylor, 1979); understanding the use of weight, tension, and relaxation to achieve a tonal quality that reflects the imagery of the music (Fielden, 1949; Buck, 1944; Elder, 2003a); employing mental cognition in deciding on the best physical movement needed to achieve the desired sound (Taylor, 1979; Gries, 1978; Xu, 2004; Bellman, 1994); developing a sense of tone, touch, and musicality (Krause, 1972; Ching, 1946; Sargent, 2001; Mach, 2003);
and undertaking various technical exercises that address one or more technical ‘challenges’ (Neuhaus, 1993; Last, 1984; Fraser, 2003). To put it differently, technique in piano performance refers to skill in the movement of the upper limbs, including the fingers, palms, wrists, elbows, lower arms, upper arms, and shoulders – and their muscles, bones, joints, and ligaments – to control the keys to produce a sound that represents the desired feeling (Kochevitsky, 1967; Buck, 1944; Elder, 2003a).

1.3.3.2 Style or stylistic interpretation

Style refers to the general manner in which music is performed, and is representative of a person, group, historical period or geographical location. Emphasis is placed on different elements of musical material depending on the characteristic forms of the period in which it was written (Pascall, 2001), and thus understanding the background of the composer and the history of the music is important. Style is presented through the feeling of the sound, which in turn is projected through the manipulation of the keys. Where they appear, the articulations and dynamics marked on the score are also important in interpreting style, particularly where these are the original indications of the composer (Elder, 2003b; Dumm, 2003). Understanding the style of other arts can also be useful in interpreting a given musical style (Xu, 2004; Plummeridge, 2001; Shusterman, 2006). Finally, a player’s personal style of interpretation and performance are also key factors that must be considered in a discussion of style (Wolff, 1979; Ching, 1946; Webster, 1993; Chaffin, Imreh & Crawford, 2002).

1.3.3.3 Memorization

Memorization is a mental activity that involves the performer committing the score to memory and being able to retrieve all of the details to express the meaning and create the desired atmosphere during a performance; it is an important means of “acquiring” a new piece (Bree, 1969). In general, memorization can be divided into recognition, in which new information is matched to previously stored information, and recall, which involves the reproduction in the imagination or behaviour of a previously experienced sequence (Sloboda, 2001). More specifically, music memorization can be categorized as tactile and muscular (Gibbs, 1964; Jordan-Anders, 1995; Wagner, 1996; Aiello & Williamson, 2002), aural (Gibbs, 1964; Foster, 1992; Neuhaus, 1993), visual (Wagner, 1996; Aiello & Williamson, 2002; Langley, 1995), analytical (Brown, 1995; Wagner, 1996), or the result of focused mental cognition (Jorden-Anders, 1995; Gordon, 2004).

1.3.3.4 Methods of Practice

The method used by the player to learn and practise a new work is important
in piano education; it is the means by which performers can learn to play previously unknown music to a high standard. Common methods of practice employed include slow practice (Hofmann, 1976; Cacioppo, 1994; Clavier, 2003; D’Abreu, 1965); mental practice (Green & Gallwey, 1986; James, 1994; Xu, 2004); physical practice (James, 1994; Jancewicz, 2003; Kochevitsky, 2004); practice informed by musical sensitivity and aural awareness (Philipp, 1982; Ching, 1946; Snitkin, 2001); goal-oriented practice (Dyal, 1991; Glaser, 2003; Fraser, 2003); integrated practice (Mach, 2003; Kochevitsky, 2004); and ‘effective’ practice – practice that produces desired results efficiently (Philipp, 1982; Kochevitsky & McCallson, 1989; Hallam, 1997; Fraser, 2003).

1.3.3.5 Development of acute listening skills (aural ability)

The development of an acute aural ability is an essential skill for piano – indeed, all instrumental or vocal – performers. They must have the sensitivity to perceive the different qualities of sound, to understand the characteristics of sound, and to create different sounds to achieve the desired artistic image or effect. Methods of teaching aural ability generally focus on aural perception (Webster, 1993; Haack, 1992; Cross, 2001), which is related to musical knowledge, artistic sense, and the physical movements that produce sounds; the nurturing of musicianship (Drago, 1993; Tarchalski, 1994; Gordon, 1995); and the critical aural evaluation of recordings of one’s own playing as well as that of others (Brown, 1989; Gordon, 1995).

1.3.3.6 Stage fright

Performers blossom when they are able to deal with – and overcome – stage fright (performance anxiety). There are various solutions to this problem, and include cognitive and behavioral strategies (Wilson & Roland, 2002); frequent performance opportunities (Elder, L., 2003; Barry & Hallam, 2002; Feinstein, 2003); building-up self-confidence (Wilson & Roland, 2002) that might involve performing a piece that is below the player’s true standard (Neuhaus, 1993); and solid preparation (Xu, 2004; Fraser, 2003; Langley, 1995).

Using the above definitions, information on teaching methodologies was collected from teachers and students as a means of investigating how teachers apply educational principles to achieve their philosophy of teaching piano performance. Philosophy affects these principles, which in turn affect the teaching methodologies that are used. Working backwards, this means that the principles of music education can be determined from teaching methodologies, and from these principles the underlying philosophy of music education can be discerned.
1.4 Scope and limitations of the study

This study is concerned with the piano teaching methodologies used by teachers in tertiary institutions in Hong Kong that offer degree courses to prepare specialists in piano performance. This does not include overseas institutions operating in Hong Kong that offer degrees, diplomas, or certificate courses. The study concentrates on the teaching of final-year students who have chosen piano performance as their core subject of study; it excludes teachers who work with performance students in the earlier years but not in the final year, as well as performance students who are not in their final year.

The information in this study is based on an extended literature review and interviews with heads of department, teachers, and students at four tertiary institutions. Information based on the observation of piano lessons given by the teachers is not included, nor is information about classes for final-year piano performance students in other subjects, such as music history, harmony, theory, and composition. Further, the study does not explore issues regarding the study of piano as a non-major subject in these institutions.

It is believed that the information that was collected from the teachers is reliable because the teachers were familiar with their students whom, with one exception, they had taught for at least two years (one student had only been with his teacher for one year). The assumption is also made that students who are studying in their final year are mature enough to reflect on the experiences gained from their teachers during the previous two years.

Finally, it must be acknowledged that the interviews with teachers and students were conducted ten years ago. There is no evidence to suggest that the situation regarding piano teaching in Hong Kong has changed such that it would significantly affect the results if the same research were conducted today. That is, there is no evidence that piano teaching methodologies have changed in the four institutions over the period of the research undertaking.
1.5 Research questions

The research questions comprise a primary question and three secondary questions. The main research question guiding this study is:

1. What methodologies are used by piano teachers in the four tertiary institutions in Hong Kong involved in training performers to teach technique, style, memorization, practice skills, acute listening skills (aural ability), and ways of dealing with stage fright?

The secondary questions are:

2. What is the philosophy that underpins teachers’ actions in preparing final-year undergraduate performers at these institutions?
3. What are the principles, derived from this philosophy, that underpin teachers’ actions or methodologies?
4. What constitutes an appropriate model for the teaching of piano performance with respect to the Hong Kong context?

1.6 Summary of the chapters

The thesis is organized into nine chapters: the Literature Review, Chapter 2, follows this introductory chapter and provides an overview of the background to piano performance teaching with reference to general education, music education, and piano education. It includes a discussion of three dominant philosophical streams – rationalism, empiricism, and pragmatism – as well as overriding philosophical imperatives with respect to piano education. It then identifies important philosophical principles and, finally, focuses on key methodological components relating to the teaching of piano performance. Chapter 3 outlines the study’s methodology. Chapter 4 presents relevant information on the four institutions in which the interviews were conducted. Chapter 5 presents the teacher cohort – ten teachers of final-year piano performance students from the four tertiary institutions. This information provides the foundation for further analysis and discussion in the later chapters and is brought together first in Chapter 6 in which the information is analysed collectively in relation to teachers’ philosophies, teaching principles, and methodologies. Chapter 7 presents the information collected from the students with respect to their personal perceptions of their teachers’ philosophies, teaching principles, and methodologies. Chapter 8 brings together the findings from both the teacher and student cohorts; in association with the literature review this leads to the
presentation of a model of piano teaching for performance students. The last chapter, Chapter 9, attempts to resolve the research questions and provides recommendations on how to improve the teaching of piano performance in Hong Kong in terms of philosophy, principles, and methodology. Recommendations for further research are also given.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter provides an overview of the research, including the aims and rationale of the study, definitions of the key terms used, the scope and limitations of the study, and the research questions. A summary of the thesis chapters is also presented to give a complete picture of the study and its direction.
Chapter 2
Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This literature review presents the references that have informed the research. The examined literature is divided into three sections: the philosophy of music education, the principles of teaching piano performance, and methodologies for teaching piano performance.

In the philosophy section, the information is divided into two parts, the first of which is a discussion of three dominant philosophical streams – rationalism, empiricism, and pragmatism – in relation to music education in general. The second part presents overriding philosophical considerations: the importance of developing an aesthetic sense with respect to music; the importance of inculcating in students an enjoyment and love of music and the arts; a belief that an education in music can contribute to a student being ‘well-rounded’, that is, balanced intellectually and emotionally; a belief that music educators have a responsibility for developing in students a sense of humanity; a belief that music education involves the accumulation and transmission of knowledge or insights to others; and a belief that music education has an important contribution to make to the development of culture and civilization.

The section on the principles of teaching piano performance covers six main areas: the importance of expressing emotion and ideas through music; the importance of tone quality or tone production; the importance of engaging the imagination; the importance of developing creativity; the role of encouragement in teaching; and the need to stimulate students in order to bring out the best in all aspects of their playing. In the methodologies section, the literature cited relates to various aspects of teaching piano performance: technique, style or stylistic interpretation, memorization, approaches to practice, acute listening skills (aural ability), and ways of dealing with stage fright.

2.2 Philosophy of music teaching

This section presents pertinent literature on reasons for and the importance of piano teaching. Angilette (1992) has suggested that “A philosophy of music is not expected to offer absolute answers to all the problems inherent to understanding music. Rather, it is a continual exploration, a clarification, that examines problems” (p. 35).
2.2.1 Three major philosophical traditions and their implications for music education

According to Jorgensen (1992) “philosophy is characterized by certain features or conditions that can be recognized despite differences in individual style, rigour, or orientation” (p. 91). In general, the implications of philosophy in music education are profound, but there are many different philosophies of music education, all of which differ in perspective. There are however three pre-eminent philosophies – rationalism, empiricism, and pragmatism – that have that have been most frequently compared, explained, and commented on by scholars (Stubley, 1992; Abeles, Hoffer & Klotman 1994; Lacey, 1976; Waal, 2005; Zecha, 1999; Colwell, 1991; Shusterman, 2006; and the *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, 1993). Whilst this is not to ignore other philosophies and their off-shoots that also gained prominence, especially in the second half of the twentieth century, these three philosophies however still form the corner-stone of so much philosophical thought and debate. Certainly it could be argued that they have a particular relevance to music education in Hong Kong at the present time. This is not to deny also the significance of Confucian philosophy for a contemporary Chinese society.

This study, accordingly, takes these three philosophical streams as the focus for developing a philosophical framework with respect to the teaching of music education, specifically, piano performance. The information collected from the research is analysed from the perspective of these three philosophical streams, and the findings, analysis, and discussion use them as a referential framework.

2.2.1.1 Rationalism

From the literature, four main characteristics of rationalism that are particularly relevant to this study can be identified, namely, a belief that knowledge is built from a rational aspect; a commitment to searching for answers to difficult philosophical questions; a belief that knowledge is the ultimate truth and does not differ with time and space; and a conviction that knowledge obtained by the senses alone is not dependable.

2.2.1.1.1 Knowledge is built from a rational aspect

The *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (1993) states that knowledge consists of doctrines and rules. Stubley (1992) held that knowledge is discovered and elaborated through the rational analysis of ideas. Doctrines and rules are important from the rationalist viewpoint. Neuhaus (1993) suggested that the rules of theory are important in understanding music, and Sparshott and Goehr (2001) presented a similar view that music is built from the
rules of “vertical (chordal) and horizontal (cadential) dimensions” (p. 610). The pianist and teacher, Kochevitsky (1903-1993) (2004) held that there are regulations and doctrines on “counterpoint, form and music history” (p. 184), and Webster (1993) stated that it is important to understand rational aspects such as “phrase structure, repetition and development” (p. 24) in music. The great virtuoso, Solomon (1902-1988) (1992), remarked that different theories of music have special “rules” for performance. Drake and Parncutt (2001) suggested that knowledge of rhythm, grouping, meter, rhythmic organization, and tempo provides a logical and rational means of approaching time in music. Langley (1995) and Neuhaus (1993) pointed out that an understanding of the form and history of music is necessary in helping students acquire knowledge in a rational way: form, theory, and history of music comprise facts, rules, and reasons that give a rational basis for understanding.

From the rationalist viewpoint, knowledge is developed and explored through analysis (Neuhaus, 1993). Christiani (1974), for example, stressed that the analysis of grammatical accents, harmonic dissonance, and the dynamics of melody is essential in music performance. Kochevitsky (1967) emphasized that it is important to “analyze the musical composition and clearly comprehend all its elements” (p. 50), a viewpoint shared by Wolff (1979) who stated that reading and analyzing the score in a rational way is important in teaching music performance as it allows the specific meaning of the notes, embellishments, dynamics, and speed to be revealed. Kochevitsky (2004) and James (1994) suggested that it is helpful to analyze music in terms of texture, chords, form, and phrasing. Deutsch (2001), certainly, was strongly of the opinion that music education should stress analysis.

2.2.1.1.2 Searching for answers to difficult questions

In terms of the characteristic of rationalism, Lacey (1976) suggested that rationalists support any view that holds reason to be the source of knowledge or justification. Kivy (1993) emphasized that rationalists view the importance of “historical accuracy as an intrinsic value” (p. 104), and therefore take responsibility for finding the answers to questions. Lautzenheiser (1993) indicated that enthusiasm is the secret to searching for the truth in music teaching, whereas Abeles, Hoffer and Klotman (1994) stated that rationalists take an “intellectual approach to reality, the way in which reality is known, and the values that should be held” (pp. 48-49). Kohlberg (1996), Engle (1996) and Kilian (1998) commented that rationalists like to search for answers to difficult questions like morality, values, beliefs and reality through discussion. This implies that the rationalist teacher must have a determination and drive to seek answers to difficult questions.
2.2.1.3 Knowledge is the ultimate truth and does not differ with time and space

Stubley (1992) argued that “knowledge is conceived as a fixed body of immutable, fundamental truths relevant to all times and places” (p. 4). Rationalists believe that knowledge is stable, and that “what is true is true, [and] always was true” (Abeles, Hoffer & Klotman, 1994, p. 48). Neuhaus (1993) believed that knowledge in music education stems from aspects of rationalism, because the theory, harmony, and history of music do not change with time and space. Davis (2004) and Bonnett (1994) stressed that rationalists are most concerned with instructing, explaining and telling rather than experimenting. Bennett (1999) said that philosophy is the metaphysics that exists in space and time.

2.2.1.4 Sense and experience are not dependable

The fourth characteristic of rationalism is that sense and experience cannot be depended upon. According to Stubley (1992), rationalists do not believe that knowledge can be received directly through the senses because the senses are unreliable, an opinion supported by the definition of rationalism in the New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles (1993). Waal (2005) indicated that rationalists do not believe experience to be important in the acquisition of knowledge. Wilson (2006), in expressing her understanding of rationalism, stated that knowledge is independent of experience, and stated truths are not justified through sense experience alone. Davis (2004) argued that rationalism depends not on sense experience, but on mental cognition. Contrary viewpoints have, of course, been expressed. Zecha (1999), for example, acknowledged the possibility of learning through experience to solve problems, and Tubert (2005) argued that rationalism does not rest upon reason alone: the senses have a justifiable role to play in rational discourse.

2.2.1.2 Empiricism

The literature on the philosophy of empiricism as it relates to music education reveals it to comprise two important facets. The first is a strong emphasis on experience, and a special emphasis on sense experience, as a basis for attaining knowledge. The second is that good practice derives from experiment and observation. As far as piano education is concerned the general emphasis on experience draws attention to the importance of teaching and performing experience, life experience, and artistic or aesthetic experience.

2.2.1.2.1 Knowledge can be attained through experience

Empiricists believe that knowledge is gathered through experience.
Knowledge or skills, further, arise from practice over time, rather than from books (Colwell, 1991; Stubley, 1992; Fraser, 2003; Waal, 2005), and that the acquisition of knowledge from experience is an active process. According to Colwell (1991), “to know anything about a stable characteristic of our world is to know how that aspect of the world would be experienced” (p. 30). Fraser (2003) argued that “experience leads to conception” (p. 19). In a similar vein, Davis (2004) suggested that personal understanding is based on experience, and Waal (2005) stated that empiricists explicitly seek to develop their system of thought from experience. The logical extension to this is that knowledge can be obtained and deepened through experience.

2.2.1.2.2 Sense-experience, experimentation and observation

The *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (1993) gives the two main characteristics of empiricism as being that “all knowledge is derived from sense-experience” and “practice based on experiment and observation” (p. 809). Stubley (1992) stated that “identifying information received directly through the senses [is] the foundation of all knowledge . . . Propositions express interrelationships between sensory impressions in the form of empirical generalizations or theoretical constructs abstracted from the specific contexts” (p. 4). Stubley also pointed out that knowledge of music and the other arts is a mode of knowing that is associated with affective and emotional experience. For empiricists, then, information received directly through the senses is the foundation of all knowledge (Lacey, 1976; Colwell, 1991; Maris, 1989; Gibbs, 1964). Lacey (1976), for example, held that concepts and knowledge are attained from “experience through the senses” (p. 55), and Colwell (1991) suggested that students learn music with their eyes, ears, feelings, and minds as a means of exploring “worlds of meaning” (p. 16). In the same vein, Maris (1989) drew attention to the need “[to] hear through the student’s ears, see through the student’s eyes, and feel through the student’s ability to play” (p. 27). Gibbs (1964) argued that three senses are employed in learning the piano – hearing, sight, and touch. Kivy (1993) argued that it is through experience that one comes to know different emotions and feelings, and that this is a vital form of knowledge in the performing arts.

For empiricists, sense experience is important for experimentation and observation. Fraser (2003) argued the importance of practise in employing the senses, because “the richer the sensory information being sent to your brain (the actual kinesthetic or proprioceptive images), the better basis you have for organizing movement. In other words, the more you can sense or feel, the more you know what you’re doing – the more you have control over your actions” (p. 23). Abeles, Hoffer and Klotman (1994) suggested that the mind works like a mirror in receiving images,
and that the road to truth is through observation and scientific evidence.

2.2.1.2.3 Experience in relation to music education

In the empiricist literature on music education, the three main types of relevant experience are teaching and performance experience, life experience, and artistic or aesthetic experience.

Gordon (1995) held that in addition to strong teaching ability, a music teacher must also be a strong performer and scholar. Kochevitsky (2004) also believed that teachers must perform frequently and have sufficient stage experience in order to prepare their students for performance. Green and Gallwey (1986) stated that “performance (achievement), experience (including enjoyment), and learning – all complement and add to each other” (p. 26). Chapman (1985), Murrow and Kidd (1990), and Silini (1987) stressed the importance of students having adequate performance experience. Terwilliger (1965) argued that providing students with performance opportunities assists them to perform under pressure. Merrill (1984) argued that by engaging in performance students can also learn from the shortcomings of other students. Taylor (1979) suggested that creating public performance opportunities for students enables them to develop their auditory and sensory experience in relation to their instrument and to correctly judge the acoustics of a performance venue.

With respect to life experience, Reimer (2004) drew attention to research showing that varied life experiences cause particular developments in the brain relating to perception, analysis, organization, and synthesis of knowledge. Varied life experience can also affect or influence a performer’s expressive ability (Taylor, 1979). Green and Gallwey (1986) argued that performers translate life experience directly into performance experience. Merrill (1984) went so far as to suggest that performers who experience struggle and suffering in their lives are capable of expressing special emotions that can touch an audience in a unique way. Labuta and Smith (1997) pointed out that “musical works symbolize life experience” (p. 50).

It is not only life experience that is essential for a musician: aesthetic and artistic experience are also crucial. This is most easily discussed in relation to four dimensions: the relationship between art forms; use of the imagination; providing enjoyment; and forging a closer relationship between art experience and life experience. Xu (2004) suggested that music teachers should explore the relationship between music and other arts, including literature, dance, drama, and painting, and ‘connect’ or draw upon them “to explain the music” (p. 91). Chaffin, Imreh and Crawford (2002) have argued that aesthetic experience with other art forms, including painting and design, is important in developing a musician’s imagination. Hoffer (1993), in arguing that “aesthetic experience is the focusing of attention on
the object being contemplated” (p. 7), suggested that it can be nurtured through involvement with the other arts. Artistic enjoyment itself is also held to be an important aspect of the aesthetic experience; Hoffer (1993), for example, drew attention to the experience of gaining “enjoyment from the work” (p. 7). There is a close relationship between life experience and aesthetic experience because one can consult one’s experience to recall an emotion once felt “for the purpose of representing it in an artistic medium” (Kivy, 1993, p. 240).

2.2.1.3 Pragmatism

According to the literature, the pragmatic philosophical perspective comprises three main ideas. The first views humans not “as spectators looking on the natural world, but rather as creative problem-solvers in constant interaction with it” (Stubley, 1992, p. 4). The second idea, a respect for individual difference, is that students should be taught differently according to their individual abilities, skills and other personal characteristics (Sloboda, Davidson & Howe, 1999; Kuzmich, 1987). The third notion is that “nothing is permanent” (Abeles, Hoffer & Klotman, 1994, p. 46).

2.2.1.3.1 Nurturing students as problem-solvers

The pragmatic viewpoint holds that the fostering of the ability to solve problems is one of the main aims of education. Pragmatic music teachers have a responsibility to help students to learn how to learn, rather than merely telling them what to do. Pragmatic music teachers aim to empower students to deal with previously unseen or unheard music themselves, as distinct from having to rely on a teacher’s input with each new musical encounter. Kampa (2000), referring to Gardner’s theory of intelligence (1993), held that music education involves the development of “the ability to solve problems that one encounters in real life [and] the ability to generate new problems to solve” (p. 133). Hargreaves, Kemp and North (2001) expanded this, suggesting that piano education involves nurturing creative people to seek novel experiences, which is essential in solving the problems of life. Zecha (1999) and Gagne, Briggs and Wager (1988) advocated problem-solving as a major aim of the educational process, emphasising that teachers should teach students how to think and seek answers. According to DuBrin (2004), problem-solving skills include “cognitive intelligence, education, and experience; emotional intelligence; flexibility versus rigidity; intuition; concentration; indecisiveness and perfectionism; risk taking; and value” (p. 120).

In piano teaching, problem-solving involves “playing and working with sounds, motifs, stylistic traits, the creating of a solution” (Kuzmich, 1987, p. 215), and is a means by which students enhance their knowledge (Dottin, 2001). In the
same context, Kuzmich (1987) defined problem-solving as the implementation of musical understanding and aesthetic growth that involves both emotional and intellectual development. Xu (2004) and Blocker (1993) suggested that piano teachers are a major influence in helping pupils to become independent thinkers.

2.2.1.3.2 A respect for individual difference in teaching methods

Pragmatic educators such as Dewey (1993) have argued that respect for individuality is important in education; teaching methods should reflect differences in students’ personality, ability, talent and experience. Differences in the qualities of students include variations in innate potential, attitude, character, and traits. Sloboda, Davidson and Howe (1999) stated that “differences between people in musical ability are directly caused by inherent biological variability” (p. 46), and suggested that some individuals have innate potential whereas others do not. Kuzmich (1987) suggested that “too many variables [are] reflected in students’ attitudes” (p. 221), and Kowalchyk (1989) indicated that students have different aptitudes, backgrounds, and interests that must be taken into account in music teaching and music performance. Reimer (1992) argued that students should be taught independently according to their experiences, characteristics and traits, and Hargreaves, Kemp and North (2001) stressed that the acquisition of music knowledge and skills depends on the student’s personality and temperament. Crouse (2003) held that professional teachers should provide students with instruction, guidance, direction, support and motivation according to their particular characteristics, and Gagne, Briggs and Wager (1988) shared the similar view that teachers “must understand the learner[‘s] abilities and traits . . . that may need to be considered in instructional design” (p. 25). This implies that a method that works with one student will not always work with other students. Elder, L. (2003) reported that the piano teacher L’hevinne (1874-1944) never used a formula to teach, but instead sought to understand his pupils personally and to develop an individual approach to teaching each of them.

Of course, in many teaching situations it is not possible to cater to the needs of all students; this is most obviously so in a group or classroom setting. Catering for individual needs is more feasible in a one-on-one situation such as a private piano lesson. Merrill (1984) argued that in private lessons, instruction should be tailored to meet the specific needs of the individual student, and Gagne, Briggs and Wager (1988) advocated “individual instruction in learner-centered programs” (p. 65). According to James (1994), Max W. Camp suggested that each student has special needs and that teachers have a responsibility to familiarize themselves with them. By extension, teachers must take specific action according to those particular needs (Witchell, 2001). Kochevitsky (2004) even suggested that each student should have an individual plan devised, which requires “a deep analysis of all the individual
traits and peculiarities of each student” (p. 186).

2.2.1.3.3 Nothing is permanent

The final tenet of pragmatism is that nothing is permanent. Jorgensen (1997), referring to the work of Dewey, stated that “growth is an end. It does not have an absolute end outside itself” (p. 14). This implies that there is no absolute answer for the pragmatic teacher, because situations change. Shusterman (2006) believed that “true art is never fixed, but is flowing” (p. 355). James (1994), citing Leschetizky (1830-1915, virtuoso pianist, composer and pedagogue who studied with Czerny), noted the humanistic facet of piano instruction, and argued that there is no single rigid method of teaching – an idea that was also supported by Wagner (1996). This is strongly in keeping with the pragmatic viewpoint, in which a problem or situation is viewed from different angles in order to gain knowledge about it and find a solution to it. McNergney and Herbert (2001) stressed that education is a process that continues throughout one’s lifetime and never ends. Buck (1944) commented that nothing is permanent in aesthetic terms, as the intensity with which we feel varies across individuals.

To conclude, this philosophical overview has been informed by three major philosophical streams: rationalism (doctrines and rules), empiricism (experience and feelings), and pragmatism (using different methods according to the situation). Goehr (2001) has suggested that music incorporates the main tenets of all three philosophies, in that “music has been treated as theoretical speculation and idea; as practice, production and performance; as expression and craft; [and] as natural phenomenon and cosmological force” (p. 602).

2.2.2 Overriding philosophical considerations

In addition to the three main philosophical streams that have been discussed, there are a number of overriding philosophical considerations affecting the teaching of music – and, more specifically, piano – that transcend the tenets of rationalism, empiricism, and pragmatism. As discussed below, these are the importance of developing an aesthetic sense with respect to music; the importance of inculcating in students an enjoyment and love of music and the arts; a belief that an education in music can contribute to a student being ‘well-rounded’, that is, balanced intellectually and emotionally; a belief that music educators have a responsibility for developing in students a sense of humanity; a belief that music education involves the accumulation and transmission of knowledge or insights to others; and a belief that music education has an important contribution to make to the development of culture and civilization.
2.2.2.1 Music education – piano teaching – develops aesthetic awareness

In this section, aesthetic ideas, aesthetic experience, and the educational purpose of an aesthetic sense are defined and discussed. In defining aesthetic ideas, Goehr (2001) postulated that aesthetics is “science which investigates Beauty” (p. 602), and is related to the senses of sight and hearing, such as in architecture, sculpture, poetry, and music. Fletcher (1989) discussed aesthetics in relation to art: an elite activity concerned with disentangling “the intellectual and the sensual components in perceptive cognition” (p. 38). Dewey (1934) believed aesthetics to be the integration of the parts in a manner that is “receptive, loving, passionate, [and] holistic” (Cherryholmes, 1999, p. 29). Buck (1944) defined aesthetics as feelings that are measured by quality, rather than quantity, and highlighted the primacy of a decent quality of life. Watson (1994) defined music as aesthetic feeling in sounds. Reynolds (1993) argued that students’ “musical experience is going to be caused by aesthetic experiences with music – which is the ultimate purpose of music education. But in order to get the ultimate aesthetic of music, they must have tools. So, the teacher develops the tools” (p. 31).

In terms of the meaning of aesthetic experience, Russ (1995) suggested that it is “not one emotion, but rather an emotional experience over a structured period of time. A variety of feelings might be included in an aesthetic experience . . . the aesthetic experience may serve different functions for different individuals and should be interpreted within the context of an individual’s life” (p. 443). According to Russ, life experience is important in acquiring aesthetic experience. Hoffer (1993) extended this idea to piano education which, he suggested, is concerned with the teaching of aesthetics and the relation of aesthetics to life; adding that aesthetic experiences are non-practical in nature and are valued “for their insight, satisfaction, and enjoyment” (p. 7).

In discussing the educational purpose of an aesthetic sense, Buck (1944) opined that music education should be part of moral or ethical education, as it “enables us to discriminate between good and bad” (p. 96). Wegener (1964), Sachs and Ife (1981), and Jorgensen (1997) also suggested that in piano education, the young should be taught “to love the good, the beautiful and to despise the evil and the ugly” (Wegener, 1964, p. 17). Sachs and Ife (1981) suggested that music contributes to the development of elegance, grace, and distinction. According to Goehr (2001), music develops the beauty of the soul, “its effect on the mind and of human reaction to it” (p. 603).

Aesthetic education “heightens or strengthens students’ sensitivity” (Labuta & Smith, 1997, p. 47), and can be imparted through piano teaching (Bohm, 2003; Cacioppo, 1994; Gordon, 1995; Neuhaus, 1993; Colwell, 1991). Piano
education should aim to “help everyone to further awareness of the patterns of sound” (Colwell, 1991, p. 37), a sensitivity that is important for intellectual awareness. Precision, a positive manner, and aesthetic values are all aspects of aesthetic education that are taught through piano education. Cacioppo (1994) stated that the piano teacher “demand[s] precision in performance” (p. 394), and Gordon (1995) suggested that piano teachers help students to practice and perfect a process whilst developing in them creative artistic thinking and aesthetic values. Neuhaus (1993) indicated that an aesthetic sense has an important positive effect on the temperament of humans. He explained that he requires his students to achieve beauty in a performance, which he defined as a simplicity and naturalness of expression in terms of image, content, mood, ideas, and poetry.

Wegener (1964) wrote that music education, as a form of aesthetic education, “is a vital part of total education” (p. 16) and that “aesthetic education is a requirement for the total development of all students” (p. 17). Plummeridge (2001) argued that music nurtures the aesthetic realm of experience, including imagination, creativity, and self-expression. Goehr (2001) drew inspiration from Schumann who believed that the notion of aesthetics across the arts is essentially the same, “only the material is different” (p. 602).

2.2.2.2. Inculcating in students an enjoyment and love of music and the arts

Four issues are identified for discussion in relation to the importance of teachers inculcating in students an enjoyment and love of music and the arts: a love of the arts can promote feelings of ethical or moral dignity; a greater enjoyment of music leads to a fuller life; a love of music and the other arts is important in encouraging support for them; and enthusiasm can unlock talent.

Neuhaus (1993) highlighted the importance of using every means to develop in a student a love of art forms other than music, “particularly poetry, painting and architecture, and, most important of all, making him feel the ethical dignity of the artist, his obligations, his responsibilities and his rights” (p. 21). Only when students have a love of the arts in general, he asserted, will they have the heart to pursue artistic standards to a higher level and cultivate a heightened sense of dignity, decency, elegance, and distinction.

Many educators and teachers agree that a greater enjoyment of music leads to a fuller life. Dewey believed that “the enjoyment of beauty is related to the cycles of life” (Abeles, Hoffer & Klotman, 1994, p. 46), and that “a fundamental premise is that learning brings with it a sense of joy rather than tension and struggle – that learning is growth, and growth is the most natural thing in the universe” (Ross & Petrie, 1986, p. 35). Frederickson (2003) stated that musicians
who have learned how to lead a full life through music share their enjoyment with everyone that they encounter: students, audience, family, and friends. James (1994) argued that individual teaching enables students to experience a greater enjoyment of piano study, and Lee (1984) stated that good piano teaching leads to a lifetime of musical enjoyment and an increased responsiveness to interesting and beautiful sounds. Enjoyment, it must be stressed, is also a strong means of motivating interest in learning (Martino, 1964). This is largely because the enjoyment of music is a subjective experience (Colwell, 1991), a convenient means of emotional expression, and because the “appreciation and enjoyment of music is the perception of a condition, or state of feeling or emotion” (Sunderman, 1964, p. 5). In addition to motivating learning, the enjoyment of making music enhances performance standards (Maris, 1989; O’Neill & McPherson, 2002). Murrow and Kidd (1990) stressed that teachers should prepare students to enjoy music and the arts throughout their lives.

According to the literature, a love of music and the other arts is important in engendering the desire to support them. Hansen (2003), quoting Reimer, claimed that a music educator must have a “love of music, love of philosophizing about music and music education, and . . . a love of teaching about music” (p. 202), and that such love comes from “extensive experience of listening to music and absorbing musical traditions” (Maris, 1989, p. 26). Dewey (1934) stated that for “craftsmanship to be artistic . . . [it] must be ‘loving’; it must care deeply for the subject matter upon which skill is exercised” (p. 47). Love of music also stems from interest and fun, which are also important components of learning (Buck, 1944). Green and Gallwey (1986) suggested that students will improve if they have fun while practising, and Witchell (2001) pointed out the importance of the “intrinsic qualities of the music . . . [being] seen to be relevant to . . . [students’] individual needs and interests” (p. 196). It might be postulated that engendering in students an interest to learn will ensure that ‘traditional’ music will continue to be supported and enjoyed by future generations.

Neuhaus (1993) encapsulated the notion that enthusiasm can unlock talent, suggesting that “talent is passion plus intellect” (p. 24). Lautzenheiser (1993) also believed that enthusiasm is an important characteristic of teachers, and Cherryholmes (1999) agreed with Dewey that an element of passion is important in aesthetic perception. All of this suggests that enthusiasm and a love of music and the enjoyment of learning and performing are important aspects of music education – regardless, it might be argued, of a student’s level of talent.

2.2.2.3 Music educates students to be ‘well-rounded’ and balanced in intellect and emotion
Two of the major purposes often given for music education are to educate students to be ‘well-rounded’ with a range of abilities and skills, and to be balanced in their intellectual and emotional growth. Certainly, writers such as Hoffer (1993), Blocker (1993), Stubley (1992), and Kochevitsky (2004) have suggested that music education trains and develops students to be balanced in intellect and emotion. More specifically, Hoffer (1993) stated that music education teaches “aesthetic experience, in that both intellect and emotion are involved” (p. 7). Blocker (1993) argued that students are developed mentally through the process of learning to play the piano as they have to learn to respond to music intelligently and sensitively, thus encouraging intellectual and emotional balance. Stubley (1992) stressed that musical performance helps performers to reflect on their personal qualities and their sense of who they are, and that piano education cultivates a student’s personality and stimulates intellectual growth. According to Kochevitsky (2004) piano education “stimulates the mental activity of the pupil, develops his self-perceptive ability, [and] awakens the pupil’s emotional responsiveness” (p. 188). It has also been argued that music education strikes a balance between training mental activity and improving a student’s self-perception (Hargreaves, Kemp & North, 2001).

James (1994), Goehr (2001), Swanwick (1990), Neuhaus (1993), Wegener (1964), and Ching (1946) all affirmed that music education trains students to be well-rounded individuals. Colwell (1991), for example, opined that “musical learning contributes to making a person well-balanced or well-rounded in personality” (p. 34). According to James (1994), Abby Whiteside (1881-1956), an influential piano teacher, believed that piano education creates a balanced character because of its emphasis on emotional reaction, aural awareness, and rhythmic control, leading to increased confidence and competence. Goehr (2001) claimed that “the ear is merely ‘the channel of the heart’, the eye ‘the channel of the mind’” (p. 602). Swanwick (1990) used the principles of Gestalt to describe the way in which music is structured and perceived. Neuhaus (1993) posited that piano playing “develops the talent of a pupil . . . [by] making him more intelligent, more sensitive, more honest, more equitable, more steadfast” (p. 23). Wegener (1964) identified ten basic functions that humans possess – “intellectual, moral, spiritual, social, economic, political, physical, domestic, aesthetic, and re-creational” (p.17) – and argued that many of these can be achieved through piano education (p. 17). Ching (1946) analyzed the emotional, psychological, physiological, and mechanical activities that are involved in piano playing, and found that piano education develops skills in many areas. Hansen (2003) presented the notion of multiple musical intelligence, which includes composing, performing, improvising, listening, music theory, and music teaching, and suggested that this could provide a rich basis and possible new methods for broadening music education at all levels. Finally,
piano education can also create well-balanced individuals in a physiological sense. Taylor (1979) stressed that piano education should aim to train co-ordination and the particular reactions of the brain, body, and keyboard. Buck (1944) suggested that piano education provides an all-round training that includes the four main components of “physical – dealing with the body; intellectual – dealing with thought; aesthetic – dealing with the feelings; moral – dealing with conduct and character” (p. 96).

2.2.2.4 Developing in students a sense of humanity

This section discusses the literature on the role of music education – and, more specifically, piano education – in developing in students a sense of humanity. In terms of nurturing students as human beings, James (1994), Gordon (1995), and Kowalchyk (1989) all stressed that an understanding of the growth and development of human beings is vital to both music teaching and learning, and that piano education is essentially a humanistic discipline.

Blocker (1993), Witchell (2001), and Hallam (2001) argued that music education helps students to find the strength to overcome their weaknesses, and that this in turn develops their character, attitude and personality in becoming ‘good’ human beings. Hallam (2001) also stated that music education “utilizes materials to enable each individual to work from their strengths, while also improving their areas of weakness” (p. 65). This entails having a positive attitude and a sense of achievement. Davies (2001) suggested that achievement in music gives people a positive sense of having achieved something valuable in life. Witchell (2001) suggested that through music education students “discover their own strengths, passions and sensibilities, and develop social, spiritual and emotional qualities” (p. 195).

Blocker (1993) and others have argued that an essential human trait that can be developed through piano education is diligence, as piano learning “is aimed at improvement, [and] requires constant self-evaluation” (Chaffin, Imreh & Crawford, 2002, p. 91), and “a proper confidence in [the] ability to operate independently” (Brunner, 1960, p. 127). A number of writers (Fielden, 1949, Kochevitsky, 1967, Neuhaus, 1993; Wagner, 1996) have discussed the necessity of having to practise on a daily basis which, in itself, might be seen as developing a student’s character with respect to diligence, perseverance, achievement, and independence. Hargreaves, Kemp and North (2001) and James (1994) also speak of the development of independence.

Writers such as Merrill (1984), Laires (1993), Colwell (1991), Smith (1992), and James (1994), have suggested that piano teachers have a role in nurturing a student’s sense of humanity. Neuhaus (1993) held that music education
“humanizes” people, and that piano teachers are thus the “engineers of the soul” (p. 204). Smith (1992) stressed that to teach the arts is to teach humanity. Merrill (1984) expressed the view that a sense of humanity is a special quality that can be encouraged through music teaching and must come before the music, because the only connection between the composer, performers and audience in a musical performance is their shared humanity. Laires (1993) claimed that piano education leads “to a deeper humanity” (p. 20), and James (1994) cited Seymour Bernstein’s assertion that piano learning is more than a way of developing musical talent: it is a process of influencing the humanity of students. Smith (1992) argued that the “aesthetic experience of art can both shape the human personality in positive ways and [foster] positive humanistic insight” (p. 749). Colwell (1991) stated that “in teaching us to be receptive to our own and other’s intuitions, insights, and feelings, the arts teach us something even more valuable: how to be empathetic” (p. 18), and that music specifically “provides a fundamental way to understand our own and other people’s humanness” (Colwell, 1991, p. 19). Bohm (2003) suggested that arts education develops in students an unusual sensitivity, which is vital in a humanitarian sense. Witchell (2001) suggested that the aim of music education should be to contribute to the humanity of all students. Reimer (2004) has reminded us that the quality and breadth of human experience, including fulfillment, joy, and spirit, is important in engendering humaneness.

2.2.2.5 Music education – piano teaching – involves the accumulation and transmission of knowledge or insights to others

In a sense, piano teaching is essentially concerned with the transmission of knowledge or insights, including skills. It is self-evident that knowledge is accumulated by and transmitted from teachers to students and from composers to performers and an audience (acknowledging of course that the composer and performer are at times the same person). Gordon (1995) asserted that the teaching of music is difficult to achieve, as it depends on abstract concepts, unwritten traditions, and other elusive characteristics. However, music teachers have a responsibility to pass their knowledge on to the next generation (or their contemporaries). Reimer (2004) stated that by teaching performers, teachers transmit the message of the composer to the audience from generation to generation. Dunsby (2001) similarly stressed the role of the performer “as a creative vessel of transmission from composer to audience” (p. 345). Blocker (1993) highlighted the transmission of knowledge between performers, and implied that piano performance “provides creative flexibility and the opportunity to share and develop musical ideas with another performer” (p. 43). There is an interrelationship among composer, performer, and listener, and it is thus important that “performers discharge faithfully their
aesthetic responsibilities [and] give considerable attention not only to their understanding of the composer’s demands and desires but also to the sensibilities of the audience” (Narmour, 1988, p. 318). Young (1986) emphasized that “the creative artist through his works makes a bridge from his heart and mind to the audience’s” (p. 33). In discussing the role of the performer in transmitting the message of the composer to the audience, Hofmann (1976) highlighted the primacy of the transmission of the spiritual essence of the music to the listener.

2.2.2.6 Music education contributes to the development of culture and civilization

It is generally held in the literature that music education contributes to the development of culture and civilization. Green (2001) acknowledged that each individual student derives a different meaning from a piece of music according to personal beliefs, values, feelings, or behaviour, as music transmits differently to different people; in a more general sense however, performers and teachers play a part in maintaining a culture and civilization, because “music is part of our heritage” (Green, 2001, p. 52) and reflects the culture and social background in which it was written. From an individual student’s perspective, creative exploration of music assists in understanding a culture and societal values (Witchell, 2001). Finally, it should be acknowledged that when re-creating a work of art for the listener students share something of themselves, in addition to the values or social context that underpin the music (Blocker, 1993).

Performance also is instrumental in developing culture. Wagner (2003) noted that the great pianist Schnabel (1882-1951) reminded musicians that “their careers center on . . . promoting the highest values of Western culture, and their vocation goes beyond mastering the technique to play a musical instrument” (p. 54). Wagner also hoped that music students would aim “to contribute to a better culture and . . . plan to do many creative things with it, either as professionals or amateurs” (p. 54). Maris (1989) shared this idea, suggesting that “successful performers and teachers must develop a broad musical knowledge and the ability to understand the cultural meanings of musical messages and codes” (p. 26). Laires (1993) believed it important for students to understand that “the art of music is a result of civilization and culture” (p. 20), and stressed that piano teachers serve to teach the younger generations about life itself, and that “without the strength of these values, society collapses” (p. 20).

From the teacher’s point of view, Colwell (1991) defined two key roles of music teachers in furthering human civilization. The first is to encourage “all students to cultivate and refine their sensibilities” (p.16), and the second is to establish “a basic relationship between the individual and the cultural heritage of the
human family” (p. 18). Neuhaus (1993) asserted that one may not be able to create
talent, but one can create culture, which is the soil in which talent prospers and
flourishes (p. 171). In discussing the notion that music and the arts improve society,
Dewey (1929) suggested that “our garden is the world . . . we create ourselves as we
create an unknown future. Professional teachers, as gardeners, are part of the process
of preparing a century of learners to play a positive role in the political, economic,
and social American and global future” (p. 171). McNerney and Herbert (2001)
added that Dewey believed that education never ends: it is a process that continues
throughout one’s lifetime, and in an ongoing sense improves the quality of culture
and civilization. Further support for this notion has been provided by Shibles (2000),
who suggested that the arts nurture human culture, and McKellar (1990) and
Williams (2000), who argued that music activity provides an opportunity for
students to experience and to pass on the cultural heritage of their nation.

2.3 The principles of piano teaching

Reimer (1992, p. 22) has said that “The term ‘principles’ refers to a
particular level of mental operation. Principles provide general rules, laws, or
guidelines from which specific actions or beliefs might logically spring. As
generalities that capture the determining characteristics or essential qualities of a
phenomenon or activity, principles provide the nexus for consistent doing and
being.” According to the literature, there are some general principles of teaching the
piano that are commonly agreed upon. This section reviews the literature on the
principles of teaching piano performance and identifies five main elements, namely,
the importance of expressing of emotion and ideas through music; the importance of
tone quality and tone production; the importance of engaging the imagination; the
importance of developing creativity; and the need to encourage and stimulate
students in order to bring out the best in all aspects of their playing.

2.3.1 The expression of emotion and ideas through music

To a large extent, piano performance is based on the expression of
emotion and ideas. Music is a form of expression “from the most simple to the most
that “expression is a central concept in the overwhelming majority of work on
performance, since it is fundamental to performance of every kind” (p. 546).
According to Kivy (1993), Eduard Hanslick (1825-1904), the celebrated music critic
and writer, denied that music is an expression of the emotions; Kivy himself
however strongly supported the notion that musical activity involves self-expression
and essentially represents emotions.
Hofmann (1976) stressed that “art belongs to the realm of emotional manifestations” (p. 22) and Reimer (2004) highlighted that “music can certainly indicate sadness or other easily identifiable emotions” (p. 26). Kivy (1993) wrote that “composers express their feelings and emotions in their music; music arouses emotions in listeners; music represents emotions” (p. 278). Komlos (1995) stated, simply, that “music primarily must touch the heart” (p. 126). Juslin and Persson (2002) emphasised that music can represent different feelings and emotions, such as “happiness … sadness . . . anger . . . tenderness . . . and fear” (p. 223). Laires (2005) said that the famous French pianist, Cortot (1877-1962), inspired him “to continue to investigate the hidden, extra-musical meanings . . . and express them in a very personal way” (p. 31). Not all such meanings can be expressed in words, as Davies (2003) has suggested: “a person may feel that he cannot convey in words what is expressed in a musical work” (p. 122). There is a descriptive power in music that brings out emotion, expression, ideas, and feelings beyond the literal.

Kullak (1972) emphasized the special power of music, “the magic of tenderness, flowing grace, delicacy, and warm feeling [that] must inspire both the loftiest and the tenderest expression” (p. 297). Anghel (1992) and Wolff (1979) affirmed that composers express their feelings and emotions through their music. This is also true of performers: in the Leschetizky method, true feeling is expressed by the fingers through different touches, which allows different feelings and tastes to be evoked in performance (Bree, 1969). Snitkin (2001) stated that a musical instrument is used to express one’s feelings and to share them with others, and Gordon (1995) suggested that playing music is a comfortable means of personal expression and a direct line of communication with those who listen. According to James (1994), Liszt insisted that his students have the freedom to perform with personal expression and meaning. Sunderman (1964) stressed the role of feeling and emotion in music and its status as a universal language, and Langer (1942) asserted that “music becomes the ‘logical expression’ of feelings, and has no ‘literal meaning’” (p. 420).

2.3.2 Tonal quality or sound production

Casey (1993) has argued that “If an instrumental education is to be a musical education, developing the tone must occur from the first day” (p. 359). The sound or tonal quality of a piano performance, which is at the heart of the performing art of music, is affected by a number of factors, including the physical movement of the hands. The literature on the movement of the hands is discussed later in the section on technique and physical movement. In this section, the discussion of sound or tonal quality is divided into the subjects of singing tone; tone and aural awareness; mental cognition with respect to tonal production; and tonal
imagination.

2.3.2.1 Singing tone

In this section, the literature on the importance and nature of a singing tone, the advantages of a singing tone, and how such a tone can be successfully achieved are discussed. Sound, which carries a unique feeling, is to a certain extent determined by the quality of the singing tone that is achieved. Throughout history, different musicians have advocated the importance of a singing tone. James (1994) stated that Bach (1685-1750) encouraged students to think vocally when playing, and according to Sargent (2001), Thalberg (1825-1904), the distinguished composer and virtuosic pianist, “stressed the need for tenuto [fingertip supported weight] in bringing out the solo voice imitating the qualities of different vocal timbres” (p. 649). Similarly, John Field (1782-1837), the Irish composer and pianist, explained “how to use the fingers to project a singing tone” (Kochevitsky, 1967, p. 26). Chopin (1810-1849) stressed the need “to sing with the fingers” and asked his students to “phrase and breathe” with the wrists (Bellman, 1994, p. 76). Chopin also taught the “bel canto [an Italian singing style] as a model of pianistic declamation and fullness of tone” (Eigeldinger, 1986, p. 44). Horowitz (1903-1989) emphasised the importance of tonal quality even when practising technique, referring to the need for “expressive treatment of technique to sing scales” (Mach, 2003, p. 47) as distinct from playing them with mere metronomic monotony. This emphasis on tonal quality, even in technical work where the fingers ‘sing’ the melody, is a feature of the Russian school of piano playing (Mach, 2003).

Palmer and Sande (1995) discussed the advantages of playing with a singing tone in relation to presenting the difference ‘voices’ in a work. Elder (2003b) emphasised the relationship between phrasing and a singing tone, asserting that “phrasing is the unfolding and organization of musical sentences that create the beautiful sounds in great musical performances. It takes a special skill to create a singing line while grouping notes into phrases” (p. 14). Last (1980) suggested that singing in the inner ear is an effective means of creating a “gradation of tone in a melodic line [that] is comparable with the rise and fall of the voice” (p. 4). Schenker (2000) stated that the pianist should use the model of the human voice to achieve a singing playing style. In a perfect performance, Gibbs (1964) posited that “singing aids technical proficiency” (p. 333).

To achieve a singing tone, Dumm (2003) said “I think it is important for pianist to think and feel like a singer, to gauge the phrases not mentally, but physically. Determine where you would have to take a breath if you were a good singer with good breath control, and then breathe accordingly. I also think that I feel a lot of the production of the sound at the piano – the singing line. Most singers will
tell you that their pitch is by feel, and I think there is a feel to good piano playing” (p. 20). Neuhaus (1993) pointed out that piano music is full of cantabile playing, but that the first and main concern of every pianist should be to acquire a deep, full, rich tone that is capable of any nuance, “with all its countless gradations, vertically and horizontally” (p. 67). Schenker (2000) believed that “piano singing is the stroking of the air through up-and-down motions of the hand as the bow strokes the string: pressure and reflex” (p. 8). Last (1984) pointed out that cantabile really means “singing”, and suggested that the playing of a “singing” melody, such as a row of notes at moderate speed, involves a series of small circular movements, in which the “right arm moves in an anti-clockwise direction and the left clockwise” (p. 28).

2.3.2.2 Tone and aural awareness

The aural perception of tone is essential for creating the right tone and sound in piano performance. Last (1980) stressed the importance of the sensitivity of the ear: “the ear is the guiding factor” (p.93). Clavier (2003) recounted the views of the pianist, conductor and teacher, Leon Fleisher (b. 1928) on listening in relation to tonal production: “you have to have the idea of the sound that you want in your ear; as you put down the note, you have to be absolutely cognizant of what you are doing . . . if the sound is not precisely what you had in your ear, you adjust what you did . . . to make the next note get what you have in your ear . . . There is an infinite amount of possibilities” (p. 48). Wolff (1979) described Schnabel’s principle that “the performer concentrates at every point on the phrase which is coming up and is to follow directly, in order that it may be heard and shaped in the vivid imagination of listening with the so-called inner ear . . . Thus, as Schnabel often emphasized, the performer’s inner ear hears everything twice: each little bit is mentally anticipated as well as checked out by later control” (p. 20). Kochevitsky (2004) stated that “the quality of a pianist’s tone depends much more on his mental conception and inward hearing of the tone” (p. 152). Snitkin (2001) suggested listening to all styles of music, because the “tone quality that is appropriate for one style may not be appropriate for another. The more you listen, the easier it is to decide what kind you don’t like and how you want your musical voice to sound” (p. 94). Clearly there is a close relationship between tonal quality and aural awareness. The more acutely one listens, the more sensitive one becomes to subtle – and, at times, almost imperceptible – differences of tonal quality.

2.3.2.3 Mental cognition with respect to tonal production

Considerable thinking is involved in the production of tone. Two main ideas that are commonly stressed are thinking the sound in the mind before playing, and thinking how to produce the sound by physical movement. The Russian pianist
Ossip Gabrilowitsch (1999) (1878-1936) stressed that “The ear is quite as important as the organs employed in administering the touch to the keyboard . . . [The pianist] should think first and always of the kind of tone he is eliciting from the instrument, and determine whether it is the most appropriate tonal quality for the proper interpretation of the piece he is playing” (p. 130). Rowley (1989) recommended thinking “nine times before play[ing] once . . . It is all in the mind” (p. 31). Webster (1993) stressed the importance of music teachers being sensitive “to the need to engage students’ thinking about sound” (p. 24), adding that students should be given scope to choose their own sound after thinking about it. Scruton (1997) suggested that sound produces expression through the use of imagination and metaphor; thus emphasizing the importance of thinking about how to produce a sound to represent the meaning of the music.

On thinking about producing the sound through physical movement, Tarchalski (1994) asserted that “the pianist [is] able to control the tone quality through the approach to the keys, or touch” (p. 264) and, at the same time, stressed the importance of mental thinking as a means of producing an ideal sound. As different tonal qualities and a greater dynamic range became possible through advancements in the keyboard, composers began to write compositions that required greater physical strength, endurance, and a variety of approaches to expand the tonal palette.

2.3.2.4 Tonal imagination

In this section, the importance of tonal imagination, imagining different orchestral instruments, and imagining timbre are discussed. Tonal imagination is important, because it is from a boundless imagination that tones that represent images, ideas, feelings, senses, tastes, and stories are derived. Neuhaus (1993) posited that “music is a tonal art. It produces no visual images; it does not speak with words or ideas. It speaks only with sounds. But it speaks just as clearly and intelligibly as do words, ideas, or visual images (p. 54), and “Mastery of tone is the first and most important task of all of the problems of piano technique that the pianist must tackle” (p. 56). Neuhaus (1993) added: “The difference and variety of the tonal picture presented by various great performers is infinite because of the differences in their personalities, just as the paint, colour and light of great painters differ” (p. 68).

Being able to imagine how the sounds of different orchestral instruments might be played on the piano is generally held to be important. Neuhaus (1993), Wolff (1979), Fraser (2003), and Blocker (1993) all stated that the piano is a reproductive instrument that can mimic different instrumental tonal characteristics. Neuhaus (1993) suggested that imagination helps students to produce different
qualities of sound for different orchestral instruments, and quoted the pianist, Anton Rubinstein (1829-1894): “You think it [the piano] is one instrument? It is a hundred instruments” (p. 55). Rubinstein also asserted that the piano is the best “actor” of all of the instruments, as it can play the most varied roles, including the human voice, the French horn, the trombone, the violin, and the ’cello. The player’s imagination should be able produce specific musical images of every existing variety of shade and timbre that is contained in the human voice and in “every instrument on earth in order to reveal fully all the wealth of the piano’s potential” (Neuhaus, 1993, p. 64). Schnabel found it “easy to imagine all sorts of various instruments playing this [piano] music” (Wolff, 1979, p. 154). Fraser (2003) noted that “to orchestrate effectively at the piano, the coloring of contrasting voices through differentiation of dynamics must be done in a huge way, far more than you may have imagined, and this takes strength” (p. 17). Blocker (1993) suggested that a pianist should learn to play a phrase “the way a violinist would play it” (p. 43). Snitkin (2001) spoke of “developing a concept, or mental image” of the sounds you want to produce: “In time, you develop a taste for how you expect your instrument to sound” (p.19).

Other musicians have remarked on the relationship between musical timbre and imagery. Rideout (1992) stressed that there is a strong positive correlation between imagery and the judgment of pitch, suggesting that imagery can be used to identify certain musical timbres. Kochevitsky (1967) asserted that he required his students “to imagine the pitch and volume” prior to producing it (p. 8). The importance of tonal imagination is also stressed in the literature because of a belief by some that performers should aim to produce the sound that the composer originally envisaged. In raising this perennial issue, Kivy (1993) suggested that the concept of the historically authentic performance means that we must at the very least listen to the sound as Bach would have heard it performed.

2.3.3 Engaging the imagination

The following discussion relating to the use of the imagination touches on four main aspects: the importance of engaging the imagination in music education; engaging the imagination in piano playing; use of the imagination as a means of encouraging creativity and personal interpretation; and the importance of aural imagination. Many educators have argued strongly that imagination plays a vital role in music education. Kullak (1972) commented that “music assumes greater imaginative activity than other arts” (p. 320), and suggested that the charm of music is related to its form, artistic image, and poetry. Clavier (2003) cited Fleisher’s belief that a lack of imagination can account for a lack of vitality in music. In addition to being an activity that requires mental cognition, using the imagination is also important for emotional and personal development (Kampa, 2000). D’Abreu (1965)
stated that imagination produces art that is a product of emotions and expression. Imaginative experiences provide students with the opportunity to explore “new and powerful roles that would not be ‘appropriate’ in their everyday lives. These new roles involve responsibility, power, courage, decision-making and judgment” (Kampa, 2000, p. 109). In the words of Einstein, “imagination is more important than knowledge; for knowledge is limited, but imagination encircles the world” (Buck, 1944, p. 109). Dewey brought to teachers’ attention the important role of both “intuition and imagination in the learning process” (Jorgensen, 1992, p. 97).

The role of imagination in piano playing was touched upon above in the section on tonal imagination. Xu (2004) suggested that technique and musical imagination are the foundations of good piano playing. Neuhaus (1993), who recognized the role of the imagination, claimed that “with a really creative artist and pianist a beautiful tone is a most complex process of combining and ordering the relationship of tones of varying strength, varying duration” (p. 68). He posited that if pianists have imagination, then in one note they can express a variety of shades of feeling: “tenderness, daring, anger, loneliness, emptiness and much more, of course, by imagining that the sound had a ‘past’ and has a ‘future’” (Neuhaus, 1993, p. 116). It is a process that cannot be achieved without the use of the imagination.

Kochevitsky (1967) highlighted the importance of imagination in creating mood and atmosphere, and suggested using words to reflect the images of a feeling, such as “singing, warm, harsh tones, colourful sonority.” He implied that the title of a piece gives the performer an indication of the mood and images of the music.

Educators today generally accept that the use of the imagination is essential for creative output. Swanwick (1990) suggested that it is through the use of the imagination that art is produced. Imagination provides the foundation for creation and interpretation – including diverse interpretations of the same work. Wagner (1996) argued that pianists’ use of imagination opens the door to personal and diverse interpretations of the same score. Kochevitsky (2004) opined that “brightness of imagination not only enriches a pianist’s musical interpretation but consequently brings the highest refinement to his technique” (p. 188). It is through the use of imagination in musical interpretation, combined with a high level of aural awareness and technical dexterity, that the most insightful and stylistically accurate performances are achieved.

Referring specifically to aural imagination, Rideout (1992) emphasized that piano students should pre-hear sounds before they produce them, and that this aural imagination can be developed from exercises and listening. Through such exercises, students can imagine the sounds in the inner ear; and it is this tonal imagination that guides the physical movements needed to produce the sound and create the mood. This view is supported by Clavier (2003), Hofmann (1976), and
Neuhaus (1993). Wagner (1996) stressed the importance of ‘hearing’ or creating music through aural imagination, because it is in this way that musicians can create new sounds every time they play a piece. He also stressed that mental practice develops a musician’s aural imagination and encouraged his students to think through a piece, imagine themselves playing it, and envisage the score in their minds. Haack (1992) stressed the strong relationship between listening and imagination, and emphasized that listening skills are related to music imagery. In a series of reports, he showed that visual images are created in response to musical stimuli, and that listening to music stimulates mood responses, movement responses, and verbal responses. Aural imagination is thus central to the performance and creation of music.

2.3.4 Developing creativity

In this section, two main ideas on creativity are discussed: that creativity is important in education; and that creativity is important in piano performance. It should be noted, as was implicit in the previous section, there is a strong overlap between creativity and use of the imagination; frequently these two areas are treated as one broader area. The *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Encyclopedia* (2000) defines creativity as “the ability to produce something new through imaginative skill, whether a new solution to a problem, a new method or device, or a new artistic object or form. The term generally refers to a richness of ideas and originality of thinking” (p. 411). Robinson (2005) highlighted the importance of creativity not just for education, but for global development. He referred to two forms of creativity: a measurable, problem-solving approach, and an emotional and comparatively uncontrolled approach. Teaching for creativity is seen to be a means of enriching and developing a culture (Simonton, 2003). Siddons and Allan (2001) highlighted the close relationship between the “wide-spread human need to solve problems and think creatively” (p. 241). DuBrin (2004) advocated the search for “creative and imaginative solutions to problems” (p. 130). Numerous writers have spoken of the benefits of creative exploration for children. Landre (1996), for example, has argued the importance of creativity in nurturing independence; this applies to music as much as it does to any other area of pursuit.

Creativity is important for piano performance, because performance is “a re-creative rather than reproductive act” (Clarke, 2001, p. 546). Clarke added that performance is a re-creative activity based on the score, and that the performer’s role is to engage in creative exploration to bring out the meaning and ideas of the music such that it becomes more than merely playing the notes and rhythm as notated on the page. Performance in other words – as has been seen in the discussion of the imagination – is an interpretive-creative act. Young (1986) supported this view,
suggesting that “the creativity is in the presentation and the interpretation, not the raw material” (p. 33). Writers such as Landre (1996) have argued that encouraging creativity stimulates a deeper understanding of music and allows students to make sophisticated decisions in their interpretation. It is affirmed by many writers that music education in general should be concerned with teaching young people to have open, critical and creative minds (Williams, 2000).

2.3.5 Encouragement and stimulation

The use of encouragement is a vital element in teaching generally, and no less so in the teaching of the piano. To ensure development or improvement, Merrett (1986) stressed the importance of encouragement as a means of providing positive reinforcement that in turn can lead to better results. Hart (2003) and DuBrin (2004) similarly stressed the importance of music teachers using encouragement to improve learning outcomes. Encouragement of course can come from many sources, including parents, teachers, and peers. Woody (2004) argued that “young expert musicians do not possess one singular inspiration that propels them to great accomplishments . . . the best motivation for pursuing formal instruction is an intrinsic interest on the part of the child (based on pleasant experiences with music) or positive encouragement on the part of parents” (pp. 17-18), adding the importance of receiving “continual positive feedback and praise for musical accomplishments” (p. 19). Losoncy (2000) asserted that encouragement – which is more important than mere praise – develops self-motivated, courageous, confident, and creative people who are good problem-solvers. Davidson (2002a) has suggested that expectancy-value theory “effectively explains why some young people find it more rewarding than others to engage in musical activities. This argues that people learn tasks if they value the activity or product or anticipate being successful” (p. 95). Three types of motivation are identified: extrinsic, social, achievement, and intrinsic. “Existing research into how children engage with music suggests that the three external sources of motivation – extrinsic, social and achievement – often precede and develop into intrinsic motivation” (Davidson, 2002a, p. 95).

Psychologically, stimulation guides response. Verbal stimulation is useful in piano teaching to illustrate the abstract meaning of moods and techniques. Speer (1994) stated that verbal behaviour plays an important role in sequential patterns of instruction. Neuhaus (1993) stressed the use of “every kind of metaphor, simile and comparison to help a pupil to understand” or to feel the abstract meaning of the music (p. 100). Blocker (1993) highlighted the importance of using language precisely, concisely, and consistently to make efficient use of time in lessons.

It has been argued that verbal stimulation that engages the imagination has an important role to play in developing an artistic sense. Tait (1992) suggested
that the imagination can be stimulated by words, and that through metaphors words can evoke qualities of feeling, such as dryness, violence, or nervousness. Haack (1992) stressed “the importance of verbal imagery and the value of verbal skills in teaching and learning about music learning” (p. 461), and Neuhaus (1993) proposed that to be equal to the best, a musician must develop imagination through the use of apt metaphor, poetic similes, or by drawing analogies with natural phenomena or events in life, and in particular the spiritual or emotional life (p. 20). Ree (1999) stated that in learning music, stimulation comes from the five senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch, adding that there is a strong relationship between sound and the soul. Svalbe (2005) referred to Cortot, who said that students play music more convincingly when they have in mind a story for the piece. Wolff (1979) suggested using different arts to stimulate piano performance, and recounted how “like a conductor in an orchestral rehearsal, Schnabel would let the pupil repeat a phrase (usually without playing it again himself) until it sounded right to his ear, even if it took twenty repetitions. He would sing it, conduct it, invent words to an instrumental melody in order to get the right declamation, walk to it, make dance steps, explain poetically and philosophically why this phrase had to sound the way he wanted it” (p. 181). Goldblatt and Brown (1997) suggested that the arts in general – painting, photography, film and video art, architecture, painting – are valuable sources of stimulation for improving performance.

2.4 Methodologies for teaching piano performance

This section examines the literature on methodologies for teaching technique, style or stylistic interpretation, memorization, approaches to practice, acute listening skills (aural ability), and ways of dealing with stage fright. But before the literature on methodologies of teaching piano performance is discussed in relation to each of these aspects, several prominent ideas relating to the principles of piano teaching are presented as background.

The Alexander Technique, which was originally developed in relation to problems experienced with the voice, rests on three main principles: “(i) the instrument must be in good order, (ii) the player’s mind, emotions, and body must be harmoniously balanced, and (iii) s/he must have the necessary knowledge, motor skills, and specific techniques for playing that instrument” (Bosanquet, 1987, p. 229). Proponents of this technique assert that students must make good use of their ‘mechanical’ attributes in order to become more confident and better able to express their music.

Educators such as Kochevitsky (1967), Maris (1989), Neuhaus (1993), James (1994), Tait (1992), and Xu (is 2004) have presented ideas on learning the
piano that involve sight, hearing, physical movement, and the mind. Kochevitsky (1967) argued that the stimulation of our eyes and ears is important, and Maris (1989) spoke of the coordination of the “eye-ear-mind-hand” (p. 27), suggesting that teachers analyze these aspects of performance in their students. For example, when the eyes are stimulated by a note sign, the information is “transmitted from the visual to the auditory area” (Kochevitsky, 1967, p. 30), a unique sound is heard inwardly, the motor act is anticipated, the motor act results in the sound being produced, and finally the auditory perception and evaluation of the sound occur. Rideout (1992) opined that the mental presets that are learned through music education contain aural, visual, and kinesthetic models of instruction, listening, and performing. The process of learning an instrument involves responding to different sensory cues to retrieve a command from the stored memory to process the appropriate muscles. Reimer (2004) asserted that visual, aural, tactile, and gustatory perceptions must be learned. Taylor (1979) suggested that piano playing is an activity that involves the interaction of brain, body, and keyboard. Fraser (2003) argued the importance of students developing their powers of attention, hearing, sight, and kinaesthetic sensation.

Theories such as these have been presented in various guises and there is often considerable overlap in the principles discussed. Philipp (1982), for example, noted that piano performance places demands on the soul, the ear, and the brain, whereas Neuhaus (1993) suggested that performance involves the intellect, imagination, and temperament (p. 19). W. S. Newman (1912-2000), an American pedagogue, stressed that piano playing involves the mind, ear, and body (James, 1994). Tait (1992) suggested that three types of modelling are involved in learning piano performance: visual modelling (image), aural modelling, and physical modelling.

Whereas some educators stress the importance of learning through imitation in relation to piano performance, others dispute this view. Kochevitsky (1967) recounted that Kullak required his students to repeat like parrots until they had it exactly right, and Uszler (1992) recommended the approach of the teacher as model who demonstrates, directs, comments, and inspires. James (1994), on the other hand, remarked that in the later nineteenth century, pedagogical thought had already shifted from imitation to focus on developmental learning. L’hevinne, for example, opined that direct teaching through imitation is harmful for students because it produces a kind of musical parrot. Swanwick (1990), however, has argued the role of imitation within the realm of imagination. Imitation, he said, should not be seen as mere copying for it entails a sense of sympathy, empathy and identification; imitation, he suggested, has the potential to lead to personal creation.
The literature abounds with diverse theories on the teaching of technique. Krause (1972) stated that the principles of technique are “look, listen, and touch” (p. 19). He argued that the manner in which the keys are touched is a physical process that affects the resulting tonal quality. Colwell (1991) has argued that the movements that contribute to this physical process are not only perceived by the eye, but also “by the organs of touch and motion. And in music we hear motion, but it is a curious sort of motion because there is nothing that moves” (p. 80).

In discussing the learning of technique many people have highlighted the importance of mental and physical understanding. Fielden (1949) suggested that “a knowledge of muscular processes is desirable,” as is “a deep study of the marvelous mechanism of the hands and arms,” with the goal being “the mental and nervous control of all the movements of which these wonderful implements are capable” (p. 10). Schnabel asserted that technique is the faculty that enables us to establish “channels between the ‘soul’ and ‘body’” (Wolff, 1979, p. 23) in the interpretation of a score. Buck (1984) reflected that “technique may be either mental or muscular” (p. 23). Last (1980) argued that “speed and strength can be attained only through physical discipline of the arms, hands, and fingers, whereas tonal control is largely attained through mental discipline in which the ears and fingers are completely attuned” (p. 2). Uszler (1992) stressed that technical instruction should involve mental practice, that is, the imagination of the sound prior to the production of tone (p. 585).

In addition to such broad approaches, there are numerous others, some of which are ‘visible’ and others ‘invisible’ or imperceptible in that they can only be ‘felt’. Five main approaches to technique can be identified in the literature, and these are discussed in the following section. The first relates to hand posture and the physical movement of the fingers, wrists, arms, and shoulders; the second is natural weight, tension, and relaxation; the third is touch and tonal quality; the fourth is mental cognition; and the fifth is concerned with technical exercises.

2.4.1.1 Hand posture and the physical movement of the fingers, wrists, arms, and shoulders

There is a significant body of writing on the importance of the posture of the hands and the sitting position. Correct hand posture is particularly important in piano performance (Bree, 1969; Taylor, 1979; James, 1994; Bosanquet, 1987; Wolff, 1979; Tarchalski, 1994). Bree (1969) pointed out that Leschetizky’s method stipulates a particular hand position and posture, whereby the wrist must be held lower than the knuckles and the finger so curved that the tips of the joints touch the
keys vertically. Parncutt and Troup (2002) noted that two other celebrated piano teachers, Otto Ortmann (1889-1979) and Jozsff Gate (1913-1967), also advocated the idea of a correct hand position, and explained that a vertical touch serves to reduce the distance fingers travel and provides an opportunity for the fingertips to play with the correct muscle force. According to James (1994), Bach preferred his students to play with arched fingers rather than flat fingers. Sachs and Ife (1981) discussed the importance and requirements of having a good hand position and moving the hands effectively in both directions, up and down the keyboard; they also stressed the importance of correct fingering.

Taylor (1979) highlighted the importance of posture not only in terms of the position of the hand, but also the way in which the body is maintained in position, emphasizing that “posture is therefore the key to the problem of talent” (p. 25). In drawing attention to the posture of the body he referred to the head, neck, muscles, shoulders, and arms. Philipp (1982) stated that it is important to “keep your natural position with your body flexible. Maintain a free wrist and floating elbow” (p. 8). In terms of the effect of physical movement on tonal production, Rowley (1989) asserted that “what you do [in terms of physical movement] before playing the note affects the tone, what you do after affects the length of the sound” (p. 31). Clearly there is a range of different opinions about the movement of the fingers, arms, wrists, and shoulders and general body posture. Whereas some emphasize individual movements, others emphasize the combined movements of different parts of the arm, wrist, and fingers.

Of those who emphasize the individual movements of the fingers and arm, Bach and Handel both held that the weight of the fingers alone was sufficient, but arguably this was due to the mechanism of the instruments of that time and does not apply to today’s piano (Fielden, 1949). Kochevitsky and McCallson (1989) opined that pianists should concentrate on the sensations of the finger movements, and recommended that the fingers should be felt “clearly and distinctly” (p. 30). In terms of the movements of the arm, Beethoven advocated the use of the arm as back-up strength. The celebrated teacher Ludwig Deppe (1825-1890) also believed that dropping the weight of the arm produces a better tone (James, 1994).

Among those who advocate the importance of the combined physical movements of the upper limbs, different combinations are emphasized, such as the fingers and arms; the fingers and wrists; the hands and arms; the wrists, hands, and fingers; the arms and wrists; and the fingers and shoulders. These physical movements are all held to affect the tonal production. Last (1980) emphasized the combination of fingers and arms, and stated that finger tips produce a warm singing tone and a light arm helps to soften the tone. Elder (2003a), James (1994), and Tarchalski (1994) expressed similar ideas. So too did Kochevitsky (1967), who said
“nothing by fingers without arm, nothing by arm without fingers” (p. 33). Bree (1969) highlighted the combined movement of the fingers and wrists, citing Leschetizky’s method of playing staccato by using wrist pressure, which throws the fingers upward. Kiorpes (2005) referred to Cortot’s approach to piano technique which advocated “a supple wrist and free movements using the elbows and shoulders” (p. 29). Wilson and Roehmann (1992) suggested that there is a complex interaction between the hand and arm, and Kochevitsky (1967) asserted that the movement is that of a controlled free fall from hand to arm.

Writing on the movement of the fingers, hands, wrists, arms, and shoulders as a whole, Elder (2003a) recommended “Kalkbrenner’s method” as reported by Chopin, who stressed that using the wrist only is wrong, and that students should use “the forearm and upper arm in addition to the wrist, hand, and fingers” (p. 12). According to Elder (2003a), the virtuoso pianist Walter Gieseking (1895-1956) advocated movement from the shoulders and the fingers. James (1994) and but Tarchalski (1994) both referred to Ludwig Deppe, who advocated the technique of combining both arms and fingers to play from the shoulder to the fingertips.

Stressing the combined movement of the hands and fingers, Deppe taught his pupils to use supple hands and “to rest their fingers lightly on the surface of the keys” (Fielden, 1949, p. 3). Deppe also wrote about the combined movement of the arm and wrist, which should involve “rounded and smooth movements, the rotation of the forearm and upper arm, and a supple and flexible wrist” (Kochevitsky, 1967, p. 8). Finally, Krause (1972) believed that piano music should be played by the “pulling” mechanism of dropping the upper limbs and the “pushing” mechanism of thrusting different parts of body upward.

Much has also been written on the way in which the muscular movement of the hands – involving muscles, joints, tendons, and ligaments – affects piano performance. Opinions differ somewhat in this area. Krause (1972) asserted that “different parts of a muscle situated side by side are perfectly able to work independently . . . a muscle does not always pass over one joint only . . . there are numerous muscles which are related to two or even more joints” (p. 46). He added that “muscle tensions which do not work against other muscles but against ligaments, thus ensuring firmness, are often necessary in our technique” (p. 58). Gries (1978) explained that piano technique involves the control of muscles, bones, and tendons; he noted the importance of muscular processes as a “smoothly connected series of gestures” (p. 41). He stated that the muscles that control a finger do not only generate motion in the finger, but also set the finger up (or activate it) to transmit motion or power through its skeletal structure (the bones and the momentarily immobilized joints between them). Such movements are dependent on the
multi-functional ability of the muscles that control the small levers. Buck’s (1944) ideas are similar to those of Kochevitsky (2004), who stated that “each muscle, tendon, joint, and ligament have their representatives in the motor area” (p. 167) and highlighted the importance of “the sensations from the movements of the playing parts, the muscles and joints, finger touch” (p. 124), because “all sensations from the movements of the peripheral organs, as well as tactile sensations, are transmitted through afferent nerve fibers” (p. 134). Kochevitsky (2004) also mentioned “tactile sensations” (p. 151), and suggested that a “chain response is the foundation of smooth running movements” (p. 170). Taylor (1979) held that “the fingers are the links in the chain of co-ordination [with the keyboard]” (p. 57).

A number of writers have discussed technique in relation to finger and hand gymnastics, and choreographed movement. Applying the idea of gymnastic and choreographed movement to piano technique, Gries (1978) stated that a task in “musical performance is to establish a sense of motion” (p. 37). James (1994) and Kullak (1972) stressed the importance of gymnastic exercises to develop the fingers to enable the pianist to execute passages of technical difficulty. Buck (1944) noted that there are infinite numbers of movements of the limbs. Taylor (1979) noted the close relationship between “pianism and the art of dancing” (p. 59), and Gries (1978) suggested that the shape of the upper limbs not only has to be imagined, but also “must be choreographed” (p. 41).

2.4.1.2. Natural weight, tension, and relaxation

There are several discussions in the literature on the relationship between technique, weight, tension, and relaxation. Buck (1944) stressed that “the muscles of a joint can be in any of three conditions: absolutely rigid (tension), absolutely loose (relaxed), or balanced (natural weight)” (p. 24). Many pianists advocate using the natural weight of the shoulders and arms. According to Fielden (1949), Tobias Matthay (1858-1945), one of the greatest piano pedagogues, believed in the principle of using the hand weight, forearm weight, and upper arm weight to achieve a tonal palette through “different degrees of weight and variations of . . . speed” (p. 6). Rubinstein claimed that “all his life he had never been tired after a concert because he had always played with the weight of the arms and shoulders,” and similarly, the Chilean pianist, Claudio Arrau (1903-1991) stated that if “you want a greater forte, use the weight of your shoulders as well as the weight of your arms” (Elder, 2003a, p. 12). Clavier (2003) reported that Leon Fleisher played using the weight of the shoulders and upper arms, and suggested that “each finger remain[s] in a natural position in relationship to the other muscles of the arm” (p. 12).

On the relationship between technique and tension, Glaser (2003) held that “tension is the response of mind and body to stressful moments, difficulty,
uncertainty, or physical discomfort (p. 18). Stiffness or tightness in any part of the arm reduces its flexibility, diminishes its strength, and causes poor hand-arm and shoulder-back coordination. A tight thumb, wrist, or elbow prevents the arm from moving easily or quickly to new positions; the resulting arm stiffness can lead to uneven scales, arpeggios, double notes, and trills. Muscle tightness may contribute to rhythmic unevenness, which disrupts the flow of the music” (p. 20). Bree (1969) argued in favour of Leschetizky’s technique of tension and relaxation, in which the hand is rested after the tension of forte playing through the relaxation of the joint. With this approach the movements of the hand and arm vary according to the character of the piece that is being played, for example, the hands should be lifted abruptly to produce energetic passages and slowly for melancholy strains. Buck (1944) suggested that different tonal qualities can be achieved by the differential tightening of the muscles.

There is much in the literature on the importance of relaxation in general. Breithaupt advocated “a balanced and controlled fixation and ultimate relaxation” (Fielden, 1949, p. 9), and Schnabel apparently believed the secret to a successful performance to be “absolute relaxation” (Taylor, 1979, p. 32). Taylor further endorsed the notion that “relaxation exercises help to promote suppleness” (p. 37), which is important along with “many other factors in piano technique. The pianist James Francis Cooke (1875-1960) was another who stressed the importance of concentrating on relaxation (Wolff, 1979). According to Fielden (1949), both Matthay and Rudolf Breithaupt (1873-1945) were very conscious of the importance for tonal quality of muscular relaxation.

Many pianists have supported the importance of relaxing different parts of the body. D’Abreu (1965) stated that relaxation is essential to tonal control, and Wolff (1979) remarked that to Schnabel “complete physical relaxation, including the neck and shoulder, was the necessary preliminary condition under which his technique would work” (p. 173). Neuhaus (1993) advocated that “the hand and arm, from the wrist to the shoulder . . . [be] completely relaxed” (p. 91). Fielden (1949) stressed that relaxation involves playing with support from the weight of the chest and shoulder. Matthay recommended that players “raise the hands by exerting the shoulder muscles. The shoulder always supports the arm and should never be relaxed” (Last, 1984, p. 12). Elder (2003a) shared this idea, and suggested focusing on relaxation by allowing the arms to move the keys down “with the arm weight supported from the chest and shoulders” (p. 16). Sachs and Ife (1981) preferred the technique of playing with “the hand loosely and lightly” (p. 36), and Kochevitsky (1967) recommended “a loose and heavy arm” (p. 9) and playing with the hands “as light as a feather” (p. 38). James (1994) recounted that Bach found relaxation to be important in extending and contracting the hands.
To conclude, to a large extent the literature distinguishes between the three different conditions of natural weight, tension, and relaxation in controlling technique to produce different tonal qualities. For some these would seem to be treated as independent variables: for others they are interdependent.

2.4.1.3 Touch and tonal quality

Much of the writing on technique has focused on touch and tonal quality in relation to producing a ‘musical’ sound or developing a ‘musical sense’. Writing on touch, Krause (1972) referred to Pichier’s theory of the pianist’s touch as “a technique based on the deepest understanding of the nature of the instrument and of the human body, and an art of phrasing based on the most profound receptivity to each individual musical composition” (p. 12). In referring to the striking of the keys, Sachs and Ife (1981) stated: “this can be done by lowering the wrists and extending the ends of the fingers; striking the keys in this way makes the notes sound full and sweet and mellow. The reason for this is that, since the flesh is soft, its touch is soft and smooth” (p. 10). Kullak (1972) advocated a stroke that consists of lift, fall, and pressure, a cycle that is related to “the time of contact with the key” (p. 146).

Whilst some of the literature emphasizes physiological aspects of producing sound, there is also much reference to aspects such as the speed or velocity employed in depressing the keys (and, in turn, the hammers). Ching (1946) spoke of the relationship between tonal control, depth of touch, and speed. Neuhaus (1993) opined that tone is produced by the relationship between mass, velocity, and height. Taylor (1979) advocated using different hand heights to produce different tonal qualities. Bree (1969) remarked that the Leschetizky method emphasises the fingertips to bring out a full strong tone, because tone is determined by the speed at which the keys are lifted; in this method, the hands should be lifted abruptly for energetic passages and raised slowly for melancholic passages. Sargent (2001) suggested that “touch is produced by the motion of the fingers, [and] the speed and position of the hand” (p. 649). Philipp (1982) explained that touch affects the tone colour, which changes with the varying speed of the hammer: “the hammer, after leaving its bed, moves either fast or slow, correspondingly producing loud or soft tones” (p. 43).

Some writers have written on the importance of singing in relation to tonal quality and the development of a musical sense. Last (1980) supported the idea of singing the music: in this way one “can discover a great deal about the shape of a phrase” (p. 3) because “the gradation of tone in a melodic line is comparable with the rise and fall of the voice” (p. 4). Schenker (2000) suggested the use of the special technique of piano singing which is “the stroking of the air through up and down motions of the hand – as the bow strokes the string . . . [then] depress[ing] the key
with pressure” (p. 8).

Some pianists and teachers have written on the relationship between technique and developing a musical sense. Sargent (2001) stated that piano technique is related to musical sense in that a performer must understand, for example, that the Viennese style requires strength and elasticity in the fingertips and that “Debussy’s fortissimo chords had to be played from the surface of the keys with great impetus of arm weight in the fingertip” (p. 650). Matthay asserted that skill cannot be separated from musical sense, and it is vital to acquire the musical understanding that is necessary for a truly artistic piano performance (James, 1994). Fielden (1949) asserted that the musical sense of performers is stimulated by imagination and inspiration, and is the means by which they convey their aesthetic expression through their physical movements. Philipp (1982) indicated that “the ears control the intensity of the tone, and the sensitivity of the fingers” (p. 44).

Touch and tonal quality are clearly essential aspects of technique that must be mastered in the development of a musical sense. How this can be best achieved is the subject of ongoing discussion.

2.4.1.4 Mental cognition

In discussing technique as it relates to mental cognition or thinking, two main points can be gleaned from the literature: the movement of the hands must be systematically analyzed, and the pianist must think or reflect on the aesthetic of the sounds produced in the execution of a work. Commenting generally on the analysis aspect, Rideout (1992) stated that music education involves mental thinking using aural, visual, and kinesthetic models. Kochevitsky (1967) opined that “the main factor in technique is the brain; the main condition for technique is concentration; and the main subject of technique is evenness” (p. 50). Xu (2004) stated that technique is a complex problem that requires creative thinking and involves “intelligence for the complete utilization of the mechanics and unlimited imagination for the accurate projection of a musical idea” (p. 108). Hofmann (1976) suggested making “the mental tonal picture sharp; the fingers must and will obey it” (p. 39). Gries (1978) noted that “analytical techniques reveal the structural syntax of a work and [the] concepts of muscular coordinations used in playing to promote the expression” (p. 37). Ching (1946) stated that using the correct arm movements and touch of the fingers involves mental analysis, and Krause (1972) drew attention to the cognitive task of choosing the right kind of movement for the joints of the hands and fingers, as “different joints vary in the extent of their flexibility” (p. 40). Sargent (2001) and Kullak (1972) argued that performers must decide on the touch of the hands, muscles, and joints that they will use and the speed of the movements needed to create a tonal quality that expresses the imagery of the music.
With respect to mental cognition or thinking in relation to the aesthetics of sound, James (1994) cited Deppe (1825-1890) and Fay (1844-1928), who advocated working with conscious mental control and a knowledge of aesthetics and tonal beauty. Fraser (2003) stated that piano performance requires a “good head, hands, and heart” (p. 343). Philipp (1982) suggested that musicians should listen attentively to tonal effects and constantly analyze the sound to produce an appropriate musical quality.

2.4.1.5 Technical exercises

Writing on the value of technical exercises, Fielden (1949) emphasized the importance of a range of exercises that train the hands, arms, and shoulders; he also advocated the use of gymnastic exercises such as the flexion and extension of the muscles of the fingers and joints. Rowley (1989) advocated five finger exercises, claiming they provide an equal amount of practice for each finger, echoing Clementi’s suggestion that by practising finger exercises, one can achieve an even tone, equal finger action, and strength and fluency of the fingers (James, 1994). According to Kochevitsky (1967), “Clementi believed that all five fingers must be equally strong and therefore equally trained . . . he required the pupil’s hand to be kept immobile and the fingers [to be] raised high” (p. 3). Philipp (1982) claimed that one should spend many hours practising scales and finger exercises to “strengthen the fingers and develop controlled dynamics” (p. 7). To keep the hands elastic, Hofmann (1976) suggested that finger exercises should be practiced for half an hour daily. Of course, piano pedagogues differ on the types of exercises that should be undertaken and the amount of time that should be spent on them.

Some pedagogues have supported practising scales and arpeggios because they instill in students a method of fingering (Fielden, 1949, p. 156); but this is not the only reason for practising them. Fraser (2003) reported that in the past “all Russian conservatory students underwent an exceptionally rigorous technical regime. Rachmaninoff said that scales and arpeggios were the foundation of his technique and that all his life he practiced them religiously” (p. 2). According to Eigeldinger (1986), Chopin believed that practising scales, arpeggios, trills, octaves, double notes, and chords was vital to achieving individuality and independence of the fingers. Snitkin (2001) claimed: “The more comfortable you feel with scales, the easier it will be to perform any style of music” (p. 97). Wisely, Kochevitsky and McCallson (1989) introduced a cautionary voice: “the danger of some exercises is that they are easily executed mechanically, without the participation of the controlling ear and mind” (p. 30).

Bree (1969) suggested many types of exercises for improving technique, such as exercises to strengthen the fingers: exercises for playing broken chords,
arpeggios, octaves, one finger exercises, two finger exercises, three finger exercises, four finger exercises and five finger exercises, exercises for diatonic scales and chromatic scales, exercises for paired notes, scales in thirds and sixths, exercise for playing embellishments.

Elder, L. (2003) asserted that students at the early-intermediate level should play scales in the traditional way, separated by thirds, sixths, and tenths, and in contrary motion. In discussing technical exercises, James (1994) referred to Clementi’s book *Introduction to the art of playing the pianoforte* (1803), one of the earliest piano method books containing details of music fundamentals, fingering directions, and a number of one-measure finger exercises. Wagner (1996) advocated playing Moszkowski etudes because not only are they charming pieces but also wonderful for the fingers and teach students to master fast tempi, arm rotation, and clear fingering.

2.4.2 Style or stylistic interpretation

Stylistic interpretation will be discussed in relation to four particular aspects: the importance of a performer having a knowledge of the background of the composer and the history of the music; the need to understand all of the details marked on the score; the benefits of being able to compare musical styles with corresponding stylistic expressions in other art forms; and the role of a personal style.

2.4.2.1 The background of the composer and the history of the music

The great Venezuelan pianist Teresa Carreno (1853-1917) said: “Every music student should be familiar with the intensely necessary and extremely valuable subject of musical history. How else can he become familiar with the personal individualities of the great composers?” (p. 118). D’Abreu (1965) believed that if students obtain enough knowledge of the composer and the background history of a piece, then they will be able to develop their own style. Komlos (1995) supported not only understanding the lives of composers, but also the development of the instruments of a particular time in order to achieve the appropriate style in performance. Kochevitsky (2004) suggested that the piano teacher “should have a thorough knowledge of the theory and history of pianism” (p. 184). According to Pascall (2001) and Kullak (1972), in discussing the style of a piece of music reference must be made to harmonic, textural and various other features within an historical context. Pascall (2001) also noted that in different periods characteristic forms “have depended on different elements of musical material in different emphases” (p. 638). Barry and Hallam (2002) posited that there are two methods of interpretation – intuitive and analytic – and that “when an analytic approach is
adopted, interpretation is based on extensive listening to music, comparison of alternative interpretations, and analysis of the structure of the music” (p. 156). Reid (2002) has noted that “Some performers analyse in order to gain a detailed knowledge and understanding of the work which will then inform their interpretative decision-making, while others use analysis as a means of solving specific interpretative problems” (p. 108). Arguing much more broadly, Pascall (2001) went so far as to suggest that a study of style might go beyond purely musical considerations to include geographic and language differences because these can have an important effect on cultural differences and, in turn, influence ‘local’ compositional and performance styles. Of course, to this could be added the importance of considering the prevailing political and social climate. Walls (2002) said, “If it is the responsibility of the performer to realize the composer’s intentions, then the first step is, clearly to try to understand the music as fully as possible. Some aspects of this understanding will not directly . . . involve a sense of history. . . . But so many other aspects of understanding the music . . . demand an historical perspective” (p. 31). At the same time, Rink (2002) has argued that “the insights gained from analysis . . . are but one factor influencing the performer’s conception of the music. The success of a performance will be measured by oneself and one’s audience not so much by its analytical rigour, historical fidelity or even technical accuracy . . . as by the degree to which ‘resonance’ is achieved in drawing together the constituent elements into something greater than the sum of those parts, into a musically cogent and coherent synthesis.” (p. 56)

2.4.2.2 Understanding the detailed markings on the score

Understanding the articulations and markings on the score are important in interpreting the style of a piece of music. Kullak (1972) asserted that style refers to the “observance of all marks of expression given by the composer . . . and the expression with which the player shall endow the composition from his own feeling” (p. 72). Elder (2003b), Dumm (2003), Hofmann (1976), and Kullak (1972) all advocated this notion. Elder (2003b) in particular noted that “the master composers took great pains to mark the phrasing in their works, and these markings are integral to their musical style. Only when teachers and students understand and closely follow these markings will the sound approximate what the composer wanted” (p. 14). Hofmann (1976) also took a strictly literal approach to a composer’s markings, stating that the pianist should play “only what is written” (p. 54). Dumm (2003) intimated that for Schnabel, however, the emphasis was on understanding the composer’s mind and believed that “the clue to Schnabel’s thinking was not whether Beethoven marked a mf, p, or pp – not simply to play that dynamic – but to ask yourself always why or why not” (p. 20).
2.4.2.3 Comparing musical styles with corresponding stylistic expressions in other art forms

Xu (2004) suggested that in teaching musical style teachers should provide a broader perspective by comparing music with expressions in other art forms, including literature, drama, and painting. Goldblatt and Brown (1997) argued that different art forms such as painting, photography, film, video art, architecture and sculpture provide different insights into artistic style that can inform the stylistic judgments of musicians. In support of this notion of interplay or cross-referencing between art forms, Plummeridge (2001) highlighted the commonality of art forms in that they share the characteristics of “imaginativeness, creativity and self-expressiveness; these are taken to be the characteristic features of the aesthetic realm of experience and meaning” (p. 132). Shusterman (2006) referred to Dewey’s postulation that the common spirit of aesthetic experience “involves heightened vitality and feeling” and that “true art is never fixed, but is flowing” (p. 357).

2.4.2.4 Personal style

Casey (1993) argued that teachers “should develop students’ sense of style and students’ judgment so they can move toward selecting a style independently” (p. 354). Ching (1946) believed that one achieves the power of personal artistic interpretation only when one is well equipped in terms of technique. Pascall (2001) asserted that style is dependent on “personality and temperament” (p. 641). Wolff (1979) stressed the unique quality of a personal style. Kullak (1972) believed that good interpretation is founded on a unique personal style. Palmer (1989) argued that interpretation is essentially individualistic, according to the ideas and musical intention of the performer, which may be unconscious. Barry and Hallam (2002) suggested that “the course of learning to play the piece is based on [personal] intuition” (p. 156). As a methodological approach in assisting students to develop a personal style, Webster (1993) suggested “asking students to answer questions like ‘How could this music be played differently?’” (p. 24). Speaking more broadly, Chaffin, Imreh and Crawford (2002) suggested that learning from different art forms opens up the aesthetic realm and experience, which in turn assists in the development of a personal interpretive style. Finally, it should be acknowledged that – as Ritterman (2002) has suggested – “in much performance teaching, while lip service is paid to the role of the student’s musical judgment and intuition in the shaping of an interpretation, it can be all too easy in practice to neutralize their impact” (p. 84). These are cautionary words for teachers. Ritterman added: “Stylistic integrity demands . . . [a] wholeness of approach, in which composers’ ideas are complemented by performers’ understanding – understanding
of themselves as well as of the music they play. Only then can performers confidently clothe themselves in their own individuality . . . and perform with conviction and integrity” (p. 84).

2.4.3 Memorization

Memorization is an important skill for performance students. “Williamon has commented: “Performing music from memory can be extremely demanding. Not only is there the initial challenge of retaining thousands of notes and complex musical structures, but also the equally formidable task of remembering and executing them in stressful performance situations” (p. 113). Philipp (1982) posited that “when playing from memory, the student will gain self-assurance, the art of expression will come more naturally and he will learn that it is easier to play by heart” (p. 61). Memorization can be discussed from a number of perspectives. Buck (1944) and Sloboda (2001) both suggested that memory can be divided into the functions of recognition and recall, where “recognition is sometimes called memory proper; recall happens when we search in our minds for something” (Buck, 1944, p. 55). Sloboda (2001) explained that recognition is the perception of matching “information to previously stored information” (p. 539), whereas recall is the reproduction, “either in imagination or behaviour, of a previously experienced sequence” (p. 540). Dunsby (2001) identified four types of memory: recollection, recall, recognition, and re-learning. Rideout (1992) referred to aural, visual, and kinesthetic models of memory. Bliss (1989) pointed out that there are many methods of memorization and that no pianist relies exclusively on only one. According to Bree (1969), Leschetizky’s method emphasized memorization as the best way to permanently ‘acquire’ a new piece, because it engenders feelings of confidence. Williamon (2002) has provided a note of caution: “Unfortunately, no prevailing evidence exists to suggest whether aural, visual or kinaesthetic memory or a combination of these is the most efficient or produces the most secure memorized performances” (p. 121). Certainly, the literature abounds with numerous theories on memorization. In this research, five main aspects are identified: kinaesthetic, or tactile and muscle memory; aural memory; visual memory; memorization based on an analysis of the score; and memorization through the training of the brain. But before discussing these it is worth keeping in mind that “Although performing from memory has become the predominant custom of our time, it has not always been so and is not a universal practice. . . . Memorization is an important part of the student’s education. It teaches analysis, leads to a thorough understanding of and identification with the music, and, in general, sharpens the musical mind. Performance from memory is a desirable but entirely optional corollary . . . which should, by all means, be encouraged and guided, but never insisted upon especially

2.4.3.1 Kinaesthetic, or tactile and muscle memory

Brown (1995) favoured tactile memorization to memorize fingerings. Wagner (1996) and Jordan-Anders (1995) also acknowledged that memorization includes tactile training. Philipp (1982) recommended that “the easiest correct fingering must first be established” (p. 61) and, by implication, memorized. D’Abreu (1965) highlighted the importance of muscle memory. Aiello and Williamson (2002) pointed out that “kinesthetic memory is valuable in helping us to perform without the score” (p. 175). Langley (1995) explained that the purpose of “a muscular memory is to remember the physical ‘feel’ of the passage to be played” (p. 40). Neuhaus (1993) advocated pianists making use of muscular memory, which he regarded as the physical work of memorization. He added that the sound should be listened to first, after which the muscle memory should be developed. Gibbs (1964) stressed that “muscles somehow find it easier to accomplish what the inner ear hears” (p. 333). By the same token, Aiello and Williamson (2002) have cautioned that “the kinesthetic memory seems to be the one that is most questioned by concert pianists” (p. 175). Although generally regarded as being relatively unreliable, it is usually that which young students, especially, most employ when memorizing a piece.

2.4.3.2 Aural memory

Wagner (1996) and Newman proposed that students who have a good ear benefit from playing by ear and memorize music easily (James, 1994). Aiello and Williamson (2002), and Jordan-Anders (1995) stressed the importance of listening in memorizing a piece. Foster (1992) argued that listening carefully while playing builds up the memory. Chaffin, Imreh and Crawford (2002) suggested that the auditory memory and motor memory are much more central than other types of memory. Aural memorization is mostly focused on melodic and harmonic memory and the overall musical sound. D’Abreu spoke of the importance of developing an aural memory in relation to both the melody and the harmony. Brown (1995) advocated reciting the pitch to develop harmonic memory. Langley (1995) stated that “aural memory is the mental realization of the sounds to be produced in performance” (p. 40). Neuhaus (1993) and Gibbs (1964) both affirmed that in developing their musical memory, pianists must listen to the sound of the playing. Hofmann (1976) stressed the importance of repetition in order to hear and internalize a piece. The great Cuban-born pianist, Jorge Bolet (1987) (1914-1990) commented: “My memorization is almost one hundred percent aural. It’s a question of my ear. To me, it’s like breathing. You never have to think about breathing. It’s
something that you do automatically twenty-four hours a day, period. Memorizing to me is just that natural” (p. 19). Unfortunately, it is not that natural for many others.

2.4.3.3 Visual memory

2.4.3.4 Analysis of the score as the basis of memorization
Agay (1981) has argued that “The basis of memorization is analysis, a planned, systematic effort to organize the various aspects and elements of the music into distinctive patterns, images, and relationships which the mind is able to store, retain, and reconstruct better and more easily than a jumble of indistinct bits of information” (p. 220). Brown (1995) advocated formal analysis, whereas Wagner (1996) recommended the analysis of the connections between the various sections and the basic structure of a piece. He suggested that an understanding of the physiology of the brain is important, and especially the way in which the brain develops paths to connect one action to the next. Philipp (1982) asserted that “going from note to note, phrase to phrase, and harmony to harmony will also train the student not to let the mind wander away from the notes” (p. 61). Bliss (1989) highlighted the analysis of the music from a theoretical viewpoint, recommending that the student “be aware of every element; finger patterns, harmonic progressions, chord inversions, etc” (p. 48). Willamon (2002) has advocated that “musicians should be encouraged to develop their own analytical strategies and to integrate them into the early stages of learning. This will enable them to recognize and rely with assurance on important landmarks within a piece, to which they can refer as a performance progresses or which will help them resume a performance that has unexpectedly halted” (p. 124). Rink (2002) has suggested that rigorous analytical study is important not only for solving conceptual or technical problems, but also “in memorizing and in combating performance anxiety” (p. 39).

2.4.3.5 Memorization through the training of the brain
Jordan-Anders (1995) asserted that the memorization of music involves training the left and right brain functions, and that when learning a piece it is beneficial to bear in mind the way in which the brain develops paths to connect one action to the next. Aiello and Williamon (2002) further explained that “the fingers
are the servitors of the brain; they perform the action the brain commands” (p. 175). Langley (1995) said that the conscious mind is used in memorization. Bliss (1989) stated that certain procedures can be employed to develop the memorizing ability of the brain: “memorize each hand separately; play one hand and think the other; play the whole piece in your imagination, away from the keyboard; analyze the chords” (p. 48). Brown (1995) and D’Abreu (1965) suggested that certain activities can improve the ability to memorize by controlling the brain. Brown suggested a memory checklist, which includes digital memory, armchair practice from memory, slow practice from memory, and writing down the notation. D’Abreu (1965) offered several methods of memorization, such as memorizing away from the keyboard and memorizing by section. Hofmann (1976) suggested that “silent reading of the piece away from the piano” (p. 24) may be a helpful memorization technique. Foster (1992) commented on the problem of memory lapses, and suggested several methods to prevent them, including memory checkpoints.

2.4.4 Practice methods

Many different opinions on practising are offered in the literature. An age-old question is ‘How much practice is enough?’ There are no definitive answers, but many opinions. O’Neill and Sloboda (2001) acknowledged the importance of practice, motivation, and training. Woody (2004) asserted that an important goal of music instruction is teaching a student how to practise. It has been said that superior practising strategies enable musicians to improve their performance skills more quickly, and that practice is the greatest contributor to the acquisition of music performance skill. Kochevitsky and McCallson (1989) held that if the mind is actively engaged, then practising is never boring. James (1994) suggested that aimless or mechanical practice is worthless. Reid (2002) has said that “Performers must monitor their own actions in order to assess the effectiveness of their practice techniques and to avoid error. The efficiency of practice can be improved in performers constantly ask themselves three questions while practising: (1) What am I hoping to achieve? (2) What methods can I employ to achieve my goal? (3) Have my methods been successful?” (p. 110). A distinction is made in the literature between slow practice; mental or cognitive practice that engages the pianist’s full concentration and attention; practice that concentrates on kinaesthetic or motor movements of the fingers, hands and body; practice that focuses on aural acuity (which, in turn contributes greatly to the development of a musical sense); targeted or goal-oriented practice; practice as an integrated activity; and effective practice; all of which are discussed in the following section.
2.4.4.1 Slow practice

The method of slow practice is a popular one, and is advocated, amongst others, by Kochevitsky and McCallson (1989), D’Abreu (1965), James (1994), Snitkin (2001), Elder, L. (2003), Cacioppo (1994), Wolff (1979), Hofmann (1976), and Fraser (2003). Slow practice affords a pianist time to mentally digest and physically execute the music. By contrast, D’Abreu (1965) asserted that fast practice is futile; on the other hand, he asserted that slow practice can assist in overcoming frustration that a pianist might be experiencing and, additionally, can aid the analysis of one’s musical progression. William Mason (1829-1908) and Egon Petri (1881-1962) also advocated slow practice for effective learning (James, 1994); so too did Charles Cooke (1941). In short, these and other pianists and pedagogues stressed that a solid foundation for piano playing can only be formed through slow, patient practice. It is generally seen to help prevent unnecessary errors.

The pianist Andor Foldes (1913-1992) believed that practising slowly enough allows all of the details of a performance to be impressed on the memory, and that slow practice allows time for the nervous system to correct faulty playing (James, 1994). Elder, L. (2003) indicated that only through slow practice can the brain replace wrong notes with correct notes, and thus students who are willing to practice slowly will progress much faster than those who practice at top speed. The pianists Charles Cooke and Gyorgy Sander (1912-2005) also believed that slow practice is important for mentally digesting and physically executing whole or part of a work (James, 1994). Slow practice affords time to concentrate on and address problems. Langley (1995) asserted that concentrated, slow practice is essential (p. 42), and Hofmann (1976) suggested that slow practice makes a confused tonal picture clearer and more orderly. Snitkin (2001) summed it up by saying that “practicing slowly gives you time to listen for, and develop, good tone quality and intonation and accurate finger motion, as well as other qualities” (p. 54). Slow practice, in other words, can facilitate technical as well as musical and aesthetic development. But having said this, it is worth noting Feinberg’s (2007) qualified his support for slow practice: “I set great store on the value of slow practice in exercises. However, one should never linger too long over playing things through slowly”, adding that “one should never turn this slow playing into a purely mechanical process” (p. 44).

2.4.4.2 Mental or cognitive practice that engages the pianist’s full concentration and attention

Buck (1944) has stressed the importance of practising with acute concentration and attention. Langley (1995) held that there are two kinds of attention: “spontaneous and deliberate” (p. 45). According to James (1994), Gyorgy
Sander believed that pianists use the conscious mind when learning or practising a piece, but the subconscious and unconscious mind when performing. Sander found conscious practice to be more efficient than mechanical practice, and warned that mechanical and haphazard practice can imprint incorrect mental impressions that can be detrimental in performance. Hofmann (1976), Elder, L. (2003), Chaffin, Imreh and Crawford (2002), and Xu (2004) expressed similar ideas. Chaffin, Imreh and Crawford (2002) added that “distractions can be ill-afforded” (p. 82). Xu (2004) advocated practising with one hundred percent concentration and stopping when the mind wanders. According to Elder, L. (2003), “when the mind wanders, bad habits develop, including wrong phrasing, awkward fingering, missed staccatos, and so on” (p. 9).

In terms of the function of concentration, Snitkin (2001) suggested that “concentration is the secret to not getting lost” (p. 35); adding that concentrated mental practice aids memorization and contributes to the development of an artistic sense. Dumm (2003) also emphasized that concentrated mental practice away from the keyboard assists the player to recall the score. Fraser (2003) opined that when a high level of concentration is a feature of practice this is an effective way of improving one’s artistic sense by training the “mindful hand” (p. 406). To test their level of concentration, Green and Gallwey (1986) suggested that students ask a friend “to work as distracter” (p. 118).

2.4.4.3 Kinaesthetic practice: concentration on motor movements of the fingers, hands and body

The prominent American teacher, Celia Mae Bryant (1914-1999) believed that practice develops automatic responses that meet the physical or kinaesthetic demands of tone production (James, 1994). In discussing physical practice as it relates to the movement of the body, Jancewicz (2003) remarked “with each repetition I encourage students to pay attention to a different physical aspect of playing, such as the movement of the wrists, elbows, hands, or shoulders, and legs” (p. 10). D’Abreu (1965) encouraged students to use dotted rhythms to practice trill chords to improve their physical technical ability. Fielden (1949) recommended a scheme of work for daily practice that includes gymnastic exercises for the fingers, joints, forearms, upper arms, and shoulders, and keyboard exercises for practising different tonal qualities. He also held that sound is produced by “the fingers and hands swing[ing] freely . . . and their muscles contract[ing] to support the weight of the arm” (p. 153). Kochevitsky however was against focusing too much on practice in a purely motor sense, believing that students who do so run the risk of descending into superficial virtuosity (James, 1994).
2.4.4.4 Practice that focuses on aural acuity

This section discusses the importance of practising with aural awareness or aural acuity and the means of training students to do so. According to James (1994), the esteemed American piano teacher Seymour Bernstein (1909-1999) posited that aural control and aural imagination are important to the achievement of productive practice. James also cited two other American piano teachers, Abby Whiteside, who believed that aural awareness plays a vital role in piano practice, and Amy Fay (1844-1928), who stressed that intense listening to the aesthetics and tonal beauty of one’s playing while practising is important in creating music that is more exciting. Philipp (1982) asserted that “practicing without concentrating the thoughts and the ear on each note is a waste of time” (p. 49), adding that students should practice with critical ears and demand more of themselves than simply observing wrong notes.

In discussing how to train students to practise in order to develop a musical sense that is informed by aural acuity, Fielden (1949) suggested that students must continually explore different tonal qualities. Jancewicz (2003) emphasized that students should practice by “focus[ing] on sound, balance, articulation, and dynamics” (p. 10). Snitkin (2001) stressed that good practice depends on how well one develops an ear. He asserted that hearing how different the same music sounds and feels at various tempos is one effective way of developing aural acuity. He suggested that “at lessons you rent your teacher’s ears” (p. 17), because teachers develop a sensitivity to sound through listening, practising, studying, and applying these skills over the years. Wolff (1979) referred to the importance of acute listening when practising, suggesting that students should “play the three parts of a four-part fugue while singing the fourth part, repeat this process with all four parts in turn, and then, while playing all four together, listen to each part in turn” (p. 176).

2.4.4.5 Targeted or goal-oriented practice

Many educators have suggested that a good performance standard can only be achieved through targeted or goal-oriented practice. Woody (2004) remarked that goal setting and self-monitoring are critical practice skills that distinguish purposeful drill from mindless repetition. Snitkin (2001) pointed out that “studying the problem before practicing is important” (p. 60). Dyal (1991) suggested that teachers should encourage students with constructive criticism and teach them how to practise in order to achieve good results. Glaser (2003) stressed that “giving students appropriate practice instructions will help them feel more comfortable and confident as they prepare new assignments . . . how to practice problem spots, how to recognize fatigue and tension, how to sight read” (p. 22).
Few would argue the importance of practising with a target or goal in mind. At the same time, there are different ways of approaching targeted practice and teachers should be familiar with a range of practice strategies or emphases in order to extract a good quality of performance from their students. Concentrating on note accuracy, fluency, interpretation, musical feeling, and an artistic sense are all important here. Bree (1969) highlighted Leschetizky’s method of setting a target to practice from three aspects: the intellectual (mental); the physical; and the emotional (musical). Hallam (1997) and Barry and Hallam (2002) suggested practising in manageable sections. Finally, Reid (2002) has argued: “Whether practice is intended to develop technique or formulate an interpretation, it will be most effective when the musician has clear, achievable goals and has decided on the means of realising them” (p. 110).

2.4.4.6 Practice as an integrated activity

Many pianists and piano pedagogues have highlighted the integrated nature of practice. Chaffin, Imreh and Crawford (2002), for example, suggested that practice involves concentration, goal setting, evaluation, particular strategies, a schedule, the monitoring of energy levels, and the anticipation of future goals. Integrated practice involves the brain, the ears, and the hands. Snitkin (2001), argued that “practicing requires both mental and physical effort” (p. 35); to this might be added emotional effort. Just as performance itself is an integrated activity, so too, it has been asserted, should this be mirrored in practice.

Kochevitsky (2004) emphasized that “true practicing demands the active participation of the mind and ear” (p. 157). The role of the mind and ear were also stressed by Horowitz, who, according to Mach (2003), eschewed mechanical practice, taking great care to practise with the utmost accuracy, control, and aural acuity to ensure that everything was properly measured and precise. Bree (1969) and James (1994) both noted Leschetizky’s emphasis on thinking, action, and evaluation in practicing. Leschetizky advocated planning in the mind, then concentrating the brain to guide the movement of the fingers, with performers evaluating their own playing. Hofmann (1976) agreed, stating that “before your fingers touch the keys you must begin the piece mentally – that is, you must have settled in your mind the tempo, the manner of touch” (p. 55). Andor Foldes considered practice to be a combination of art and science, in that the artistic image is presented by the sound, which is related to the speed and height of the physical movement and the control of the muscles (James, 1994). Relatedly, Jancewicz (2003), revealed that he always told his students “to focus on the way a passage feels as well as the way it sounds. As students master a piece, their concentration broadens to include as many aspects of the music as possible to keep the piece in balance” (p. 10).
2.4.4.7 Effective practice

Effective practice has underscored much of the above discussion. Effective practice should also be efficient practice. According to the literature, effective practice is achieved through concentration, practising in small units, continuous correction, and practising the hands separately. Chaffin, Imreh and Crawford (2002) suggested that as “practice time is precious; concentration is important” (p. 82).

The German pianist Emil Sauer (1999) (1862-1942) argued that “One hour of concentrated practice with the mind fresh and the body rested is better than four hours of dissipated practice with the mind stale and the body tired” (p. 238). Philipp (1982) emphasized practising by concentrating the thoughts and the ear on each note, suggesting that otherwise it is of little value. He also stressed that practice requires constant self-evaluation and correction if improvement is to be achieved.

Bree (1969) highlighted Leschetizky’s recommendation that students analyze the score, study it slowly, and gradually shade in the details; he also supported practicing each part separately. Kochevitsky (1967) advocated that “each part should first be perceived clearly and practiced separately, especially in polyphonic music. Then take the . . . voices together in various combinations” (p. 50). He further advised that “after playing a piece fast once he [the student] has to play it five times slowly” (Kochevitsky 2004, p. 169). Fraser (2003) claimed to have been made to play the subject of a fugue “precisely and exactly the same way five times in a row” as a student (p. 382). Kochevitsky and McCallson (1989) suggested dividing a passage into short units and later recombining them. Barry and Hallam (2002) supported this idea, stating that “the structure of the music determines how it is divided into sections for practice . . . the more complex the music, the smaller the sections . . . as practice progresses, the units become larger” (p. 156). Similarly, Reid (2002) has suggested: “If repetitive practice is to be effective, a complex task might have to be broken down into smaller, simpler tasks . . . this might consist of practising only a small section of a work and then, when it is mastered, incorporating it into a larger ‘chunk’, and so on” (p. 105). Barry and Hallam (2002) went so far as to suggest not only that teachers provide students with examples or models of good performances and, at the same time motivate them to practise, but also to supervise them during their practice (p. 158).

Davidson (2002a) has noted that “A number of studies have shown that the most directly effective activity for acquiring skill is deliberate practice. In music, a clear relationship has been found between the accumulated hours spent engaging in ‘formal’ practice (scales, technical exercises and repertoire) and achievement” (p. 93). As has been suggested here however, it would be simplistic to believe that
practice of itself is sufficient: it is the nature of the practice that is vital to development. As Reid (2002) has observed, it is “the quality and nature of practice activities . . . [that] runs throughout the pedagogical literature” (p. 104). He added: “For musicians to obtain the optimal benefits from their practice time, they must therefore refine and develop their practice techniques” (p. 104).

2.4.5 Development of acute listening skills (aural ability)

Referring to the importance of developing acute listening skills, Haack (1992) stressed that listening to music is “a vital part of all other musical skills” (p. 451). Maris (1985) emphasized that aural training “reflects a well designed philosophy of music education”. Bree (1969) cited the Leschetizky method, in which acute aural awareness and concentrated thought are held to be vital to learning and performing. The following discussion looks at aural ability with respect to the development of acute listening skills under three headings: the function of aural perception; the importance of nurturing musicianship; and critical evaluation of recordings of one’s own playing.

2.4.5.1 The function of aural perception

Aural perception is important in building up musical knowledge, developing an artistic and aesthetic sense, and developing appropriate kinaesthetic skills. In terms of musical knowledge, Colwell (1991) stated that “learning to listen is learning to perceive the details of rhythm, harmony, and form . . . [and] giving names to these perceptions” (p. 86). Cross (2001) highlighted the importance of listening to a piece of music in order to better know the melody and harmony, adding that through listening, students obtain increased knowledge of style as it relates to various historical periods; this they can then apply to their own performances. Acute or concentrated listening – an aspect of music cognition – is important for what Webster (1993) has identified as “the perception of subtleties of phrase structure, repetition and development of musical ideas or gestures that are combinations of musical elements such as tone color and rhythm, and use of transitions between major sections of the music” (p. 24). Drake and Parncutt (2001) argued that the perception of rhythm involves the “organization of events in time” (p. 535), and identified four important elements to listen to: “surface organization; grouping and meter; accent; and rhythmic organization and tempo” (p. 535).

In relation to the development of an artistic and aesthetic sense, Haack (1992) stated that the constructive process that defines listening as a mode of music knowing is typically identified as aesthetic perception. She believed that music listening skills can be acquired, and remarked that the “developmental aspects of listener responses to music have been approached from a variety of viewpoints, such
as the perceptual/aesthetic responses. . . . mood response, personality-related responses, verbal responses, movement responses, and familiarity” (p. 456). Kochevitsky (2004) drew attention to another artistic attribute of musicians, arguing that those who have good aural ability should “be able to hear inwardly” (p. 203) before realizing the sound on the instrument itself. Maris (1989) held “teachers of performance and of pedagogy continually need to help students develop sensitive ears and to correlate that with sensitive souls” (p. 27). McAdams (2001) suggested that players who naturally possess a good ear have a refined sense of shading, but that an “inner” ear can nonetheless be developed to improve the quality of a player’s performance style.

There is a close relationship between aural perception and kinaesthetic or physical movement. Philipp (1982) stated that “the ears control the intensity of the tone, and the sensitivity of the fingers will learn to respond the more the student progresses” (p. 44). Blocker (1993), Colwell (1991) and Tarchalski (1994) asserted that the perception of music relates to the actions of the music and the actions of the hand. Blocker (1993) further opined that “right thinking produces right action for the appropriate sound” (p. 24). According to Tarchalski (1994), Liszt felt that a musician should listen first, then train the body and fingers to produce the sounds that the ears desire. Fleisher made a similar point, stating that performers should use their hands to play the note that they have in their ear, of which there are “an infinite amount of possibilities” (Clavier, 2003, p. 48). Last (1980) suggested that a sensitive ear is essential for a musician, as “the ear is the guiding factor” in producing a good sound (p. 93).

2.4.5.2 Nurturing musicianship

It is essential for a teacher to develop and nurture a student’s musicianship skills. Drago (1993) stated that acquiring a certain level of musicianship allows students to explore various intellectual and aesthetic aspects, and involves learning about rhythm, melody, harmony, form, timbre, and the expressive elements of tempo and dynamics (p. 41). Wolff (1979) recounted that in Schnabel’s opinion “the performer concentrates at every point on the phrase which is coming up and is to follow directly, in order that it may be heard and shaped in the vivid imagination of listening with the so-called inner ear . . . Thus, as Schnabel often emphasized, the performer’s inner ear hears everything twice: each little bit is mentally anticipated as well as checked out by later control” (p. 20). This, of course, requires a high level of musicianship. In referring to the importance of listening as an aspect of musicianship, Colwell (1991) stressed that it is important “that enjoyment accrues and the desire to listen be established” (p. 84). Gordon (1995) has pointed out, further, that in developing a student’s enjoyment of listening, the teacher increases the student’s sense of perception in all areas. It is essential that
acute listening skills be developed from an early age with respect to the learning of a musical instrument such that all competent performers, like Schnabel, can hear everything twice.

2.4.5.3 Critical evaluation of recordings of one’s own playing

There is general agreement in the literature on the merit of critically listening to recordings of one’s own playing. Last (1980) for example said “many pianists do not listen critically to their own playing” (p. 1). Brown (1989) suggested that students should make frequent recordings of their own playing to provide them with permanent, objective documentation of their accomplishments, and evidence of their improvement (p. 25). Tarchalski (1994) recounted that Fredrich Wieck (1785-1873), teacher and father of the celebrated pianist Clara Schumann, stressed mental awareness and self-listening in developing aural ability – long before recordings were possible. Gordon (1995) extended the notion of students recording their own playing to teachers videotaping and critiquing their own teaching. Students today are extremely fortunate in having access to inexpensive but excellent recording devices that make it a relatively simple task to record and evaluate their playing. Finally, one must not forget the paramount importance of listening to others, for as Reid (2002) has said: “Both the pedagogical and the psychological literature suggests that listening to the performance of others is the most effective means of developing interpretative skill” (p. 107).

2.4.6 Stage fright

As Valentine (2002) has noted, “Performance anxiety, commonly known as ‘stage fright’, is an age-old problem” (p. 168). It is experienced by many soloists (Chaffin, Imreh & Crawford, 2002). Wilson and Roland (2002) postulated that anxiety is caused by the personality trait of perfectionism, but other causes have also been suggested. Valentine (2002) has suggested that “Rather than fear of performance per se, it is fear of public performance that is at issue, with the risk of negative evaluation and consequent loss of self-esteem. . . . Negative thinking has a bad effect on performance quality” (p. 169). In similar vein, Fraser (2003), proposed that “negative performance anxiety derives from a sense of insecurity. If I have a real basis to feel confident then I won’t experience that kind of nervousness” (p. 10). He therefore advocated diligent practice as a solution to stage fright. On the positive side, Hargreaves, Kemp and North (2001) suggested that a degree of anxiety may be beneficial for motivational purposes, but, like Fraser (2003), suggested that uncertainty or doubt can be solved by serious practice. The following discussion of stage fright is not concerned with anxiety that is simply the result of inadequate practice – this cause is relatively easy to address. Solutions to stage fright
offered in the literature include: cognitive strategies; behavioral strategies; increasing the frequency of performance opportunities (including performing in front of small groups); choosing less difficult pieces; and cultivating a confident appearance.

In terms of cognitive strategies, Wilson and Roland (2002) suggested that stage fright can be solved by adopting a positive approach which might include positive self-talk, mental rehearsal of the performance, and goal setting. Others have recommended positive thinking or positive ‘self-talk’, focusing on the task itself (Valentine, 2002, p. 178). It will be recalled in the above discussion of memory, Rink (2002) advocated “rigorous analytical study . . . in combating performance anxiety” (p. 39). In terms of behavioural strategies to combat nervousness, Wilson and Roland (2002, p. 58), among others, have stressed the importance of practising performance routines, that is, behaviour rehearsal.

Davidson (2002b) drew attention the importance of having sufficient opportunities to perform: “One way to develop and learn to coordinate automatic and conscious thought and action is to rehearse in front of others . . . to stay focused on the task, rather than be distracted by the audience” (p. 145). Elder, L. (2003) stressed that frequently performing in front of small groups helps students with nerves and prepares them for concert performances in front of large audiences; to this end he enrols his own students in competitions and festivals to give them experience at playing in public. Feinstein (2003) offered a similar solution stage fright, suggesting that students perform “as frequently as possible for audiences of family members and friends, and then for a few strangers” (p. 14). Davidson’s (2002b) comment applies equally to stage fright: “The research literature suggests that familiarity with a variety of performing contexts . . . and having plenty of performance opportunities are ways of overcoming potential problems with presentation skills” (p. 99).

In discussing stage fright, Barry and Hallam (2002) recommended the performance of a simple piece “in a relatively unthreatening environment, such as an informal concert” (p. 157). The rationale for this approach centres on minimizing anxiety which, ideally, should lead to increased enjoyment in performance. It should not be assumed, further, that anxiety and a diminished level of enjoyment is confined to the student or the inexperienced performer. As Neuhaus (1993) has commented: “There were excellent virtuosi who suffered from stage fright and whose performances in public were usually much below their real standard” (p. 205).

On a different tack, Langley (1995) stated that pupils should be encouraged to cultivate a confident appearance, and to convince themselves that, whatever their inward feeling may be, “the situation is one [they] can overcome” (p.
48). Xu (2004) stressed the importance of preparation in relation to performance anxiety and the development of confidence, believing that with practice and experience, stage fright can be overcome. Jorge Bolet (1987) succinctly summed-up the need to display a sense of confidence: “If you don’t have the ability to come out on a stage and, by the way you act, by the way you sit at the piano, and by the way you play every note, if you cannot communicate to the audience, ‘You had better sit still and listen,’ then you’re not really a performer. You’re just a player” (p. 22).

In leaving this literature overview it is important to keep in mind that “although it is in many ways productive to break down a complex phenomenon into identifiable components in order to study it carefully and systematically, it is also important to remember that the individual components are not independent . . . Musical performance is the construction and articulation of musical meaning, in which the cerebral, bodily, social and historical attributes of a performer all converge, and if we choose to regard this convergence as an expression of the performer’s mind, then we must remember that the mind is neither driving the body nor confined within the head” (Clarke, 2002, p. 68). This is a salutary reminder to piano teachers, regardless of what methodological approach they adopt in piano teaching.

2.5 Overview

In this chapter, relevant aspects of the literature on piano and music teaching have been reviewed to provide a solid foundation for later discussion. The three pillars for this discussion centred on philosophies of music teaching, principles of piano teaching, and methodologies for teaching piano.
3.1 Introduction

The topic of this research is “Piano teaching methodologies used in the training of final year undergraduate performers at four tertiary institutions in Hong Kong”. The research is based principally on interviews and questionnaires involving piano teachers at the selected institutions. Two kinds of questionnaire were used: an introductory one and one that was administered through face-to-face interviews. Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003) stated that information can be obtained from questionnaires on a range of subjects to transmit useful and accurate information or data from respondent to researcher. Interviews are another effective method of collecting reliable data. Tierney and Dilley (2002) suggested that interviews played a central role in educational research throughout the 20th century. Gubrium and Holstein (2002) found that in an interview a respondent “offers information from his or her personal cache of experiential knowledge” (p. 3), and asserted that an interview can “improve our understanding of the social contexts of learning” (p. 455). Such social contexts can include both organizations and units within organizations, such as schools or classrooms. The interviews involved department heads, teachers and students at the four tertiary institutions; they were designed to elicit information relating to the teaching and learning of piano in Hong Kong. As the institutions are organizationally different, the Department Head was that person who had direct responsibility for piano performance teaching. In the case of HKU and CUHK this was the overall Head of the Music Department, while HKAPA and HKBU this was the Head of the Keyboard Department. The introductory questionnaires were given to the department heads and the target teachers to collect, respectively, background information on the music department as a whole and the teachers as individuals.

Three different open-ended questionnaires for the department heads, teachers, and students were used in the interviews. In discussing the strengths of the open-ended questionnaire, Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003) stated that “open-ended questions impose none of the restrictions of closed and multiple-choice questions. They allow for the recording of any response to a question provided by the respondent. The answers to open-ended questions are in no way predetermined – this can make analysis difficult. Each response must be recorded and analysed or coded to reveal the meaning of the response” (p. 11). Sommer (2002) asserted that “an open-ended format is desirable (1) when the researcher does not know all the possible answers to a
question; (2) when the range of possible answers is so large that the question would become unwieldy in multiple-choice format; (3) when the researcher wants to avoid suggesting answers to the respondent; and (4) when the researcher wants answers in the respondent’s own words” (p. 138). In this research it was decided that the open-ended questionnaire would be an ideal way to collect first-hand information for detailed analysis. Gubrium and Holstein (2002) found that it is common in education research for interview respondents to comprise three types: parents, students, or teachers; administrators; and policy makers. In this research the interviewees included teachers, students, and department heads (administrators and policy makers), but information from parents was not sought because the research is related to adult education, and thus parental involvement is minimal compared to their involvement with younger, school-age children. This study is based on interviews rather than lesson observation, thus allowing the subjects themselves – as distinct from an observer – to provide direct information in relation to piano teaching. This is a common, economical method of collecting reliable information.

This chapter details the nine stages that comprised the research methodology. The nine stages are formulating the research questions; higher degree research application and ethics approval; devising the introductory questionnaire and the schedule of questions for the face-to-face interviews; seeking approval from the tertiary institutions to undertake the research; literature review; data collection; transcription, translation and presentation of the data; analysis and discussion of the data; and development of a model for the teaching of piano performance to the target group, conclusions, and recommendations for further research.

3.2 Formulating the research questions

In Hong Kong there are many students and piano performance graduates who have won or reached the finals of international piano competitions (further information will be provided in Chapter 4). Of itself, this gives some indication of the quality of the professional piano teaching provided by tertiary institutions in Hong Kong; over many years this teaching has nurtured new generations of musicians and teachers. It might be argued that, over the years, this piano teaching culture has contributed to improved standards of music performance, discernment and expectations. Further, it might even be conjectured that this piano teaching culture has contributed to the quality of life of those who have been part of this culture. Laires (1993) stated that “the experience of playing and of understanding [proves] that the art of music is a result of civilization and culture,” and that “piano education [leads] to a deeper humanity” (p. 20). Neuhaus (1993) similarly argued that music education
humanizes people and improves the quality of their lives. Anecdotally, for some years it has been accepted that music graduates in Hong Kong have benefited from the experiences provided by their respective institutions and teachers. However, it is rare to find documentary evidence about the methods of teaching piano performance that are employed in higher education institutions in Hong Kong, even though the newest institution was founded more than twenty years ago. In this study, the main area of consideration is piano teaching methodologies used to train final-year undergraduate performers at four tertiary institutions that offer degrees in music. These institutions are The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA), Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU), and The University of Hong Kong (HKU).

The main research question of this study was:

1. What methodologies are used by piano teachers in the four tertiary institutions in Hong Kong involved in training performers to teach technique, style, memorization, practice skills, acute listening skills (aural ability), and ways of dealing with stage fright?

Teaching methods can be seen to reflect certain philosophies that are translated into principles that lead to particular methodological approaches. The relationship is hierarchical: a philosophy of music education underpins certain principles of piano teaching and these principles in turn guide a particular method (or methods). Therefore, in order to gain richer and more in-depth information, three secondary research questions were posed:

2. What is the philosophy that underpins teachers’ actions in preparing final-year undergraduate performers at the four tertiary institutions in Hong Kong involved in training performers?
3. What are the principles, derived from this philosophy, that underpin teachers’ actions or methodologies?
4. What constitutes an appropriate model for the teaching of piano performance with respect to the Hong Kong context?

It needs to be acknowledged that the particular methodological approach used relied on the teachers’ ability to discern and discuss fully and accurately their piano teaching practices. Equally, it relied on students’ ability to reflect on and discuss the practices of their teachers as well as their own learning.

Much research has been conducted that provides evidence of the
importance of education, arts education, music education, and piano performance education. The aim of this research is to identify problems and issues related to the teaching of piano performance in Hong Kong in order to consider possible ways of addressing them. Ideally, investigating the application of teaching methods, teaching principles and philosophies will lead to an enhanced standard of piano teaching and performance. It might be conjectured that this will not only be relevant for teaching in the four tertiary institutions that are the focus of this study, but be more widely applicable. It is believed that the findings of the present study will make a positive contribution to the field. It is hoped that the study will stimulate further research relating to piano teaching in Hong Kong and beyond in relation to methodologies used by piano teachers working with students at different age and ability levels.

### 3.3 Higher degree research application and ethics approval

To obtain approval to conduct this research, a higher degree research application had to be completed. The information required included the title, a brief description of the research, the rationale for the program, and the method by which the research would be undertaken. A brief description was given of the historical and social background of the problem; the purpose, aim, objectives and scope of the research, and the problems to be investigated; the main research question, secondary questions, and principal references that would be used to support the research; and the location of the program. In the rationale for the program, an explanation of the importance of undertaking the program was given. In relation to the research methodology, an explanation of how the relevant information would be collected, the proposed program sequence, and the schedule were provided; it was noted that as the numbers were small the entire research population and not a sample would be used. The declaration required to be signed by the interviewees stated that all of the information collected would remain confidential and was for academic use only. The ethics application was also submitted to the RMIT University Ethics Committee for approval.

### 3.4 Devising the introductory questionnaires and the schedule of questions for the face-to-face interviews

#### 3.4.1 Introduction

In order to obtain relevant background information on piano performance training in Hong Kong, two introductory questionnaires – one for the department heads and one for the piano teachers – were devised and distributed before the
interviews. Face-to-face interviews, using a structured schedule of questions, were then conducted with the department heads, piano teachers of the final-year performance students, and the final-year students themselves. All of the interviews were conducted by the researcher to help ensure that the information was valid, relevant, and reliable. The questions for the interviews were designed to elicit information about the methodology of teaching piano performance ‘step by step’ – that is, moving from a broad perspective to more specific questions. The different categories of interviewees were asked for information that reflected their particular perspective: the department heads were asked about the policy of teaching piano performance students, the teachers about teaching methods, and the students about how they learned from their teachers. All of the questions were in an open-ended format.

3.4.2 Introductory questionnaires

Two introductory questionnaires were devised: one for the department heads (see Appendix A) and the other for the teachers (see Appendix B). The questionnaire for the department heads comprised three sections. The first section sought information on the history of the department; the departmental facilities, including libraries, practice rooms, and venues for performances; the number of lecturers and students; the availability of scholarships; and the number of instrumental instructors, both for piano and other instruments. The second section sought pertinent data on the previous four academic years of the department, including information on the undergraduate courses in performance that were offered; the department’s music education, composition and musicology offerings; and the number of graduates majoring in the different fields. The third section of the questionnaire sought more specific information about the undergraduate and postgraduate courses offered by the institution, such as degrees, diplomas, and certificates, and about any exchange programs, summer music camps, and summer courses organized in conjunction with overseas institutions to give students the opportunity of studying abroad. Three of the department heads (at HKU, CUHK, and HKBU) asked their secretaries to complete the questionnaire, and the other (HKAPA) provided the information himself.

Prior to interviewing them, an introductory questionnaire was also distributed to the teachers who taught final year performance students. This included questions on their current position; educational background, including qualifications, where they trained, and their teaching and performing experience; the total number of performance students they were currently teaching and the number of these who were in their final undergraduate year; and the teaching models and particular methods that they followed.
3.4.3 Face-to-face interviews and interview questions

Interviews were conducted with the department heads, teachers of final-year piano performance students, and the final-year piano performance students themselves. In addition to confirming and clarifying the information collected through the introductory questionnaires given to the department heads and teachers, the face-to-face interviews enabled the researcher to elicit additional information. The open-ended questions allowed the interviewees to provide as much relevant information as possible, and especially helped the teachers and students to provide detailed information on methods of teaching piano performance with particular reference to style, technique, memorization, practice, acute listening skills, and stage fright. The teachers were asked questions in six categories; four of these corresponded to the questions asked of students. The information gained from these two cohorts was cross-referenced. The interviews with the teachers and students provided an effective picture of the teaching of piano performance and, specifically, an insight into their respective ideas and understanding relating to philosophies, principles and methodologies.

In the face-to-face interviews, the department heads (Appendix C) were expected to answer questions from a broader perspective as ‘designers’ and administrators of the departmental curriculum. Information was sought in three categories: general information; information on teaching, courses and facilities; and additional comments they wished to make as well as their vision and expectations. In the general information section, they were asked to outline the history of their institution and department; the ‘streams’ offered in the degree and diploma courses; the total number of students in the music department, and the number of final-year undergraduate performance students in all instruments. In the second section, relating to teaching, courses and facilities, the department heads provided information on the provision of group classes for piano performance students in such areas as aural training, keyboard harmony, and transposition. Other information related to audio-visual equipment and practice room facilities. They were also asked about opportunities to participate in regular concert performances, piano master classes, and vacation study programs in other countries or institutions. Finally, they were encouraged to reflect on how the institution helped its teachers to teach successfully, including arranging scheduled meetings for teachers to discuss piano teaching, methods for assessing students, and the encouragement and level of support given to teachers to attend international conferences on piano pedagogy. The third section dealt with the expectations and vision of the department heads; this included their expectations of students and teachers, the facilities they believed would improve the
teaching of piano performance, their opinion of piano performance in Hong Kong, and their comments on the future in relation to the training of performers in Hong Kong.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with the teachers who taught final year piano students. (It needs to be noted that there were also teachers who taught piano to 1st and 2nd year students only but these teachers were not interviewed because this study focused on final year students – not those in earlier years). In these face-to-face interviews (see Appendix D), information was sought on each teacher’s philosophy, principles and methodology of piano teaching. There were six parts to the questionnaire: personal background information; information on the institution; the teacher’s philosophy and principles with respect to teaching piano performance; methodology; student selection and teacher expectations of students; and the teacher’s recommendations, expectations, and any additional comments.

In the first part of the interview, the teachers were asked about their learning and teaching experience, including the names of their teachers, the reasons why they studied with these teachers, characteristics of these teachers that they admired and disliked, the teaching techniques of their teachers that they had incorporated into their own teaching, and their family background with regard to music.

In the second part, teachers provided information on their institution, such as details of group classes in musicianship, keyboard harmony, master classes, and concerts; vacation classes or programs organized in association with other institutions, and opportunities for students to further their performance skills overseas; the organization of meetings to discuss pedagogical matters; and the teacher’s participation in international conferences on piano pedagogy either undertaken entirely by themselves or with the support of the department.

In the third part, the teachers answered questions about their philosophy and principles of teaching performance that formed the foundation of their teaching methodology. Information was sought on books, educators, philosophers, and performers that had in some way affected how they taught piano; reasons why they considered being a teacher of performance students a worthwhile pursuit; their definition of a good performance and a good performer; the principles or philosophy that they followed in teaching piano performance; and their pedagogical ideas about piano performance. In the fourth part, the teachers provided information on student selection and teacher expectations of students: the criteria used for selecting performance students; requirements for performance students, such as practice time and memorization; whether they made fixed practicing plans for their students; considerations in selecting repertoire for particular students, such as syllabus requirements, physical attributes, areas that may need improvement, the personality or
character of the student, and whether the selection is goal-oriented or student-oriented; and finally whether they required students to listen to recording on their performance pieces frequently. In the fifth part they were asked about their teaching methodology, including whether they had written their own method text; the essential characteristics of a method book; whether they followed a specific method book; whether there were any aspects of the methods of important teachers that they particularly followed; how they taught their students to practise; how they taught technique, style, and memorization; how they prepared students for the performance experience and assisted them to deal with performance stress and stage fright; the specific methodology that they employed in teaching final-year undergraduate performers with respect to such aspects as musical knowledge, historical background, physical ability, acute listening skills (aural training), and the development of an artistic sense; and the specific characteristics of teaching final-year students. In the sixth part, the teachers were asked to comment on their expectations and vision with respect to the teaching of piano performance in Hong Kong. This included discussion of the nature of today’s students; whether social background has a discernible impact on students; the future of teaching piano performance in Hong Kong; and recommendations for the education of piano performance students.

No introductory questionnaire was given to the students. (It must be noted that with one exception all of the teachers of these students participated in the study; only one teacher, who taught one of the students, declined to participate.) The questions posed in the face-to-face student interviews (Appendix E) corresponded to four of the six categories in which teachers were questioned: personal information; courses and facilities provided by the institution; the teaching methodology used by their teacher; and their comments and expectations. In the first part, the students provided personal information, including any qualifications in piano performance from overseas music institutions (for example, a diploma from the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music); the reasons for taking performance as a major; whether any of their family had received a musical education or achieved significantly in the field; what they regarded as basic requirements in the selection of a teacher; expectations of their teacher; the definition of a good performance and a good performer; elements that are involved in the performance experience; performers whom they used as models and aspects of these performers that they particularly admired; their own strengths and weaknesses in piano performance; the number of hours they practised, their practice routine, and the daily goals they set for their practice; the frequency with which they taped their practice sessions; and the frequency of their concert performance attendance and listening to recordings of performances. In the second section they answered questions on the courses and
facilities offered by their institution, including group classes in which they could share and learn from other students, such as musicianship classes in keyboard harmony and transposition; the frequency with which they performed in concerts and master classes and the value of such experiences; whether they had the opportunity to attend vacation study programs, such as studying with guest teachers (visiting lecturers); and the opportunities that they had to attend conferences on piano pedagogy and performance, either of their own volition or under the auspices of the department. The third section was designed to elicit information on the methodology used by each student’s piano teacher in relation to such aspects as practice, goal setting, selection of repertoire, technique, aural development, style, memorization, and stage fright. In the fourth and final section, the students were asked to give their comments, expectations and recommendations in relation to such aspects as facilities at their institution, their teacher, and the training of performers in Hong Kong.

3.5 Seeking approval from the four tertiary institutions to undertake the research

Obtaining permission to undertake the research at the four institutions necessitated explaining the research project to the department heads, who were sent ten documents: a covering letter from the researcher (Appendix F) to explain the purpose, procedure, and contribution of the research; an introductory letter from the researcher’s supervisor (Appendix G) explaining the importance of the research to the field and requesting cooperation; a covering letter to the teachers and students (Appendix H) introducing the research, including its purpose and methodology of gathering information from questionnaires and interviews; an introductory questionnaire for the department heads as a means of obtaining background information on the institution (Appendix A); an introductory questionnaire for teachers as a means of collecting background information on their professional history and teaching experience in relation to piano (Appendix B); copies of the three schedules of questions to be used in the face-to-face interviews with the department heads, teachers, and students, respectively (Appendices C, D and E); a plain language statement (Appendix I) detailing information on the researcher and the need for the research; and a sample of the consent form for all participants (see Appendix J).

The introductory letter and plain language statement contained a declaration that the information was for academic research only and conformed to regulations regarding anonymity; it was also stated that interviews would be audio-taped. Additionally, these documents stated that the analysis and discussion would be based on the results obtained from the interviews and questionnaires, and
would lead to the development of a piano pedagogy model. All department heads gave approval for the researcher to proceed with the project: the heads from The University of Hong Kong and The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts doing so by telephone, and the heads of Hong Kong Baptist University and The Chinese University of Hong Kong by letter (see Appendices K and L).

3.6 Literature review

Source material was collected from electronic databases, books, newspapers, libraries, and the Internet. The literature, including journals, periodicals, books, and articles, was searched in the libraries of The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Baptist University, and the Arts Resource Centre, which is an arts reference centre housed in one of the public libraries in Hong Kong. Information was also collected from visits to the libraries of The University of Melbourne, RMIT University, and the Auckland Public Library of New Zealand.

Various electronic databases were consulted for up-to-date information relating to philosophies of arts education, piano performance and principles of teaching. These included Academic Search Elite via ABI/Inform Global (ProQuest), Arts & Humanities Citation Index (ISI), Arts Hub Australia, EBSCOhost, Art Full-text, ERIC (included in OCLC FirstSearch), Grolier Online, International ERIC (included in Dialog@Site), International Index to Music Periodicals (IIMP) Full Text, International Index to the Performing Arts (IIPA) Full Text, ProQuest Education Journals (ProQuest 5000), MUSIC INDEX, and RILM. The journals and periodicals examined included, among others, *Clavier, American Music Teacher, Piano Quarterly, Australian Journal of Music Education, British Journal of Music Education, International Journal of Music Education, and Music Educators Journal*. Topics searched included the philosophy and principles of education; music education; piano performance and piano teaching; historical overviews of piano teaching; principles of piano pedagogy and piano teaching methodologies; and teaching methods of significant music pedagogues.

Information relating to piano teaching and performance in Hong Kong was collected from a range of sources, including relevant official documents from The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Baptist University, and The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Another valuable source was WiseNews, an electronic database of articles from newspapers in Hong Kong, mainland China, Taiwan, and Macau. Searching for information through the Internet proved to be an effective method of obtaining up-to-date information about Hong Kong. Source material was also elicited from the major overseas music
examination bodies that examine in Hong Kong: Trinity College, the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, the Australian Music Examinations Board, and Australian and New Zealand Cultural Arts. Organisations that conduct music festivals and piano competitions in Hong Kong were another valuable source of information; these included the Hong Kong Arts Festival, the Hong Kong Schools Music Festival, the Hong Kong (Asian) Piano Open Competition, and the Steinway and Sons International Youth Piano Competition.

3.7 Data collection

Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003) proposed five stages for the development and use of interviews: “draft the interview, pilot the questions, select the interviewees, conduct the interviews and analyse the interview data” (p. 44). The present study employed this method to collect the data.

Before commencing the research with the targeted research population, a pilot study was conducted with a retired head of department, two teachers, and two students in order to clarify any ambiguity in the questions. Pilot studies have been found to be invaluable in the collection of reliable, precise, and valid data (Sommer, 2002; Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003).

3.7.1 Identifying the target research cohorts

Because the numbers in the target research cohorts were low – four department heads, ten piano teachers and fifteen students – there was no need to select a sample; as noted, all members of the target groups, with the exception of one teacher, agreed to participate. Although the research population in this study was not large, it was sufficiently robust, assisted to some degree because the research population comprised the whole cohort of each of the target groups and not a sample of each cohort.

A major aim of this study was to collect reliable data on the piano teaching methodologies used in the training of final-year undergraduate performers at the four tertiary institutions in Hong Kong involved at this level. It is reasonable to conjecture that, overall, final-year piano students are more mature and better able to reflect on their teaching than students in earlier years; in addition, given that, with one exception, these students had been studying with the same teacher for two or more years the researcher believed that they would be able to provide a relatively well-informed account of the teaching methodologies used by their teachers and, at the same time, reflect on their own progression.
After gaining the piano teachers’ consent to participate in the study, all fifteen students were contacted (including the student whose teacher had declined to participate) and invited to participate. Five documents were sent to teachers: a covering letter (Appendix H), an introductory questionnaire (Appendix B), the schedule of questions that would be used in the face-to-face interview (Appendix D), a plain language statement (Appendix I), and a consent form (Appendix J). The students were sent four documents: a covering letter (Appendix H), the schedule of questions that would be used in the face-to-face interview (Appendix E), a plain language statement (Appendix I), and a consent form (Appendix J). All information obtained was stored in a secure location in accordance with RMIT University policy.

A total of twenty-nine interviews were conducted: ten with teachers, fifteen with students, and four with department heads. At the time of the interviews there were 11 teachers working with final-year piano performance students: three at The Chinese University of Hong Kong; two at The Academy for Performing Arts; one at Hong Kong Baptist University; three at The University of Hong Kong; and one who taught at three institutions: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts and Hong Kong Baptist University. As noted, one of the teachers – who taught at The Chinese University of Hong Kong – refused to be interviewed because it was not an employment requirement; consequently only ten of the eleven teachers in the target group participated in the interviews.

Of the fifteen students involved in the study, six studied at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, three at The Academy for Performing Arts (one of whom took performance accompaniment – as distinct from concert performance – as her major), three at the Hong Kong Baptist University, and three at the University of Hong Kong.

Of the 29 interviewees, 28 answered the questions in face-to-face interviews, and one teacher answered the questions by telephone and sent the consent form and introductory questionnaire by facsimile. All of the information, including the introductory questionnaires and consent forms, was collected on the day of the interview.

3.7.2 Data collection period

The data were collected through the questionnaires and interviews between September 1998 and April 1999. All of the interviews were conducted by the researcher. The interviews at The Academy for Performing Arts were conducted from September to October 1998, those at The University of Hong Kong from November to December 1998, those at Hong Kong Baptist University from January to February 1999, and those at The Chinese University of Hong Kong from March to April 1999.
3.7.3 Duration and method of interviews

The interviews with the department heads took between 45 minutes to one hour, those with the teachers took one to one-and-a-half hours, and those with the students took around one hour to complete. All of the information on the philosophies, principles, and methodologies of teaching piano performance was collected through the individual face-to-face interviews, starting with the introductory questions and then building up to more specific questions. Many of the questions asked of students corresponded to those asked of the teachers, thus assisting the researcher to verify responses in relation to the teachers’ philosophies, principles and methodologies (the only exception was the one student whose teacher was not interviewed). The questions posed in the face-to-face interviews had an open-ended format.

3.7.4 Interview venues

Most of the interviews were conducted at the campuses of the respective institutions. Various venues were used. All the department heads were interviewed in their offices, five of the teachers were interviewed in their offices (Teachers 1, 2, 3, 4 and 10), three (Teachers 6, 8 and 9) were interviewed at their home, one (Teacher 5) at a public restaurant, and one by telephone (Teacher 7). Two of the students (Student 1 and 8) were interviewed in public restaurants and one (Student 10) was interviewed at the researcher’s home. The remaining students were interviewed on campus, in such venues as practice rooms, the canteen, and the common room.

3.7.5 Problems with the interviews

It was initially difficult to make direct contact with the interviewees to arrange the interviews. The department heads were busy with their administrative and other professional duties, the teachers were busy with their heavy teaching and performance workloads, and the students were occupied with their academic studies, performance requirements and practice schedule. Eventually, suitable times were established by agreement.

It became clear in interviewing the department heads that they were unable to readily supply some information relating to such things as student numbers, concerts and masterclasses and this had to be obtained subsequently from the secretary of the department; in turn this was cross-checked by the researcher referring to a range of documents, including the prospectus, handbook, and website. When interviewees across all three cohorts did not directly answer the question, or where answers were somewhat vague or incomplete, the researcher persisted in getting them to focus on the topic. This problem is not unusual when using an open-ended format,
as is the fact that some respondents will address the same topic in response to different questions. All of the responses were recorded for transcription and analysis and to assist in addressing issues such as these. The analysis of the interviews enabled the researcher to interpret answers and categorise them in relation to topics in order to facilitate the subsequent discussion of this research.

3.8 Transcription, translation, and presentation of the data

Poland (2002) stressed the importance of high quality transcriptions and having them independently verified. This, certainly, was paramount in the present study, with a great deal of time being devoted to the transcription process, the translation, and proofreading of the data.

Twenty-seven of the interviews were conducted in Cantonese, one in English, and one in Mandarin. The interviews in Cantonese and Mandarin were transcribed into Chinese and then translated into English. The interview in English was transcribed directly in English. The entire content of the interviews was transcribed from the tapes and subsequently translated into English. The researcher transcribed fourteen tapes that contained recordings of interviews with three department heads, nine teachers, and two students from Cantonese into Chinese. An assistant transcribed fifteen tapes that contained the interviews with one department head, one teacher, and thirteen students from Cantonese into Chinese. The transcriptions were proofread and corrected by the researcher. In total, seven people were involved in the process of transcription, translation and verification: the researcher, one transcriber, three translators who helped to translate and verify the English meaning of the text, and two proofreaders.

3.8.1 Transcription

There were considerable difficulties in transcribing from the spoken language to the written language because of hidden meanings and subtleties of expression and gesture (which, of course, being visual, was not considered in relation to the translation). Further, sometimes an expression had more than one meaning. When the researcher came across this problem in the interview she asked the interviewee to clarify exactly what was meant, but such double meanings were not always picked up during the interviews. Moreover, as the interviewees answered as part of the conversational flow, some words were implicit but omitted; this had to be taken account of in the transcription. The exact meaning of the conversations could only be satisfactorily established after listening to the tapes three to five times.

The process of transcription entailed listening intensively to the tapes.
Essentially this involved an initial listening to gain a ‘flavour’ or overview of what the speaker was saying, followed by concentrated listening with respect to each statement, and then transcription so that the intrinsic meaning of the responses was accurately represented. After each interview had been transcribed the researcher proofread the Chinese by listening to the tape at least three times to ensure accuracy and a high quality transcription.

3.8.2 Translation

To translate the transcriptions from Chinese into English, the researcher herself first translated the transcriptions into English and made an English summary in point-form to give to the translator. This summary included a guideline and directions for solving problems with regard to specific terms and meanings that the translator might not understand. It assisted the process of translating the Chinese version into English in order to best represent the spirit and meaning of the responses. Three experienced translators were employed, all of whom had good Chinese and English language skills.

The Chinese transcriptions, English translations, point-form summaries, and audio tapes were handed to the two translators. Translator 1 completed and proofread the translations of 14 of the interviews (four department heads and ten teachers) and Translator 2 completed the remaining 15 translations of students. The translators were asked to listen to the tapes and read the Chinese transcriptions first, and then proofread and correct the meaning of the initial English translation to ensure that the meaning in Chinese was accurately rendered in English.

Before the analysis, the researcher listened to the tapes and read the translation to ensure accuracy. An ongoing dialogue went on between the researcher and translators over a period of 10 months to discuss the translations in detail and to negotiate the most appropriate words that would retain the original meaning of what the interviewees discussed.

After the translation process was completed, the researcher checked all of the English translations against the tapes and transcriptions. A selection of English translations, including those of the interviews with two department heads, four teachers, and four students, were checked against the tapes by Translator 3 to verify the accuracy of content and meaning. Finally, two proofreaders read all of the translations to guarantee that the quality of the translations was standard.

All the tapes were copied to Mini Disc for storage. The tapes, English translations, and transcriptions were then returned to the interviewees to confirm the accuracy of the transcriptions, and to offer them an opportunity to amend or clarify the information. Follow-up telephone calls were then made to the interviewees to
confirm the accuracy of the translation, to confirm specific details in the transcription, and to clarify and further discuss in detail certain issues that were initially raised in the interviews. Certain terms mentioned in the interviews were clarified, including, for example, “contemporary music” and “teaching technique,” in addition to such things as the names of some performers (artists) and books mentioned during the interview.

3.8.3 Problems encountered in the transcription and translation process

In the process of transcription and translation three problems commonly occurred: accurately translating some terminology and phrases from Chinese into English, transcribing the spoken language into the written language, and a sentence being ‘multi-layered’ in terms of meaning.

Because of cultural differences, some of the terminology and proverbs that were used in Chinese could not be translated directly and clearly into English. In these cases, the closest English equivalent was used. For example, the expression “half-pail of water” is Chinese slang to denote a situation in which a person learns something but their achievement is only half what the normal result should be (from the interview with Teacher Nine). Another example is “shovelling one’s own snow in front of one’s own house,” which refers to people who are selfish and narrow minded (from the interview with Teacher Nine).

There were some difficulties in transcribing the spoken language into the written language. This was largely because the conversational flow of responses to questions was not always clear and some sentences were disconnected. Of primary concern to the researcher was clarity of meaning in the transcription of the tape and thus it was essential that transcribers could fully grasp the meaning and intention of the speaker’s words. To ensure this the researcher – who most understood the musical language and perspective of the speakers – exercised a strong degree of quality control to ensure that the transcription accurately represented the ideas and thinking of the interviewee as portrayed on the tape.

Another problem was that not only can one sentence reflect different subtleties of meaning, but also sentences can have a range of meanings and emphases. This can present problems for a researcher who is attempting to classify responses according to concepts, topics, or particular emphases. For example, Teacher Three stated, “you must understand the sound first and know how to consider it. That is purely technique – sound is produced from technique and imagination.” This sentence brings together three different concepts: sound, technique, and imagination, and thus had to be referred to three times under different sections or topics in the analysis of the data in order to accurately reflect all of the information elicited, that is, the
‘multi-layered’ nature of the response.

3.8.4 Presentation of the data

Chapter 5 presents the case studies of the ten teachers involved in this research. Each case study provides background information on the teacher, followed by a presentation of their views or opinions relating to the three major topics that form the basis of this research: their philosophy in relation to teaching piano performance, the primary principles that they subscribe to – explicitly or implicitly – in this process, and their actual methodology of teaching. This last topic, methodology, is discussed in relation to six areas, namely, assisting students with respect to technique, style, memorization, practice, acute listening skills (aural ability), and stage fright.

Chapters Six and Seven present the data derived from the questionnaires and interviews through tables and matrices. Two matrices were drawn-up of the major points made by teachers and students respectively. These matrices allow comparison of responses of both cohorts; they also provide a means of comparing and cross-checking responses of teachers and their respective students in relation to major issues or areas of consideration. (As already mentioned, the only exception is the one student whose teacher did not participate in the research.)

Presenting data using tables is an effective way of looking at particular areas or issues both horizontally and vertically. Using horizontal analysis, it was easy to determine the number of the interviewees who supported a particular issue, and using vertical analysis it was possible to determine the total number of issues that each interviewee supported.

3.9 Analysis and discussion of the data

The transcription and translation of the interviews presented the researcher with a great deal of information. This was not always question specific, that is, information on a single topic could be found in responses to several different questions; consequently, in undertaking the analysis, pertinent points often had to be taken from responses to different questions. All of the direct quotes from the teachers and students were assembled under particular sections with predetermined headings and sub-heading to facilitate the analysis. The three main headings used to organize the information obtained from the teachers related to the philosophy, principles, and methodologies that provided a basis for their role as teachers of piano performance.

It will be recalled that in the Literature Review reference was made to Stubley (1992) who suggested that there are three major philosophies that provide a foundation for education: “the rationalistic, empiricist, and pragmatic schools of
thought” (p. 6). These three philosophies provided the focus for analysis in this research; however other philosophies, or variants of these three, are also identified and discussed in relation to teaching piano.

The headings used in the analysis of students’ responses were the same as those used for the teachers. There were however some variations in the sub-headings, because the information collected from the students was slightly different from that collected from the teachers. In other words, the analysis of students’ responses is an examination of what teachers were doing from the perspective of students.

The discussion of the findings looked initially at the responses of the teacher and student cohorts separately, and then compared them. The discussion is based on teachers’ philosophy, principles and methodology of teaching piano with reference to the literature.

3.10 Development of a model, conclusions and recommendations for further research

Based on the information gathered from the review of the literature and the analysis of the interviews, a methodological model for the teaching of final-year piano performance students, is proposed. A balance of the three philosophies – rationalism, empiricism, and pragmatism – alongside consideration of select overriding philosophical issues was deemed to be appropriate in informing the development of this model. Additionally, the model was informed by reference to dominant principles that were identified in the research: from the literature and from the interviews. The model has been developed with due consideration of the Hong Kong context.
Chapter 4
Background information on the four tertiary institutions in Hong Kong

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides information on the four tertiary institutions that are central to this research, namely, The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA), The University of Hong Kong (HKU), Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU), and The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK). Each institution is discussed from four perspectives: general information, the courses and curriculum of the Bachelor of Music degree, the institution’s facilities, and an interview with the head of department. (As identified in the previous chapter, the Department Head was that person who had direct responsibility for piano performance teaching. In the case of HKU and CUHK this was the overall Head of the Music Department, while at the HKAPA and HKBU this was the Head of the Keyboard Department.) The general information section provides a brief history of each institution, its aims and educational mission, the degrees it offers, and the number of students and staff. The curriculum section gives details of the courses that students must complete under the Bachelor of Music program and any training that is given in group performance, including choir, orchestra, and ensemble programs. The section on facilities provides information on the libraries, special instruments (such as harpsichord and gamelan), practice rooms, performance venues, and any lectures on performance that are given, such as master classes. The final section provides a summary of the interview with the department head, which offers perspective on the courses and facilities offered by the institution as well as personal and institutional expectations in the context of the perceived role of music education in society. Much of the information was collected from the relevant introductory questionnaires and from Websites and institutional publications that included prospectuses, annual reports, bulletins, and handbooks. Most of the information contained in this chapter focuses on the training provided to undergraduate students by the four tertiary institutions. The chapter also includes additional information to provide a broader contextual framework in relation to piano teaching in Hong Kong, including data on piano examinations, music organizations, and music competitions.
4.2 The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA)

4.2.1 General information

HKAPA was established in 1984. It is a major tertiary institution in Hong Kong offering professional education, training, and research in the performing arts and related technical arts. In 1998-1999, when the data collection was undertaken, there were four schools in addition to the School of Music: the School of Dance, School of Drama, School of Film and Television, and School of Technical Arts. In 2007-2008, the School of Theatre and Entertainment Arts replaced the School of Technical Arts, and a new department of Chinese Traditional Theatre was established that offers diploma and certificate programs (HKAPA, 2008a).

Then and now, the School of Music has been charged with preparing students to enter the music profession. In 1998-1999, the School provided 39 major subjects for students, including Western music instruments (principally piano, strings, woodwind, brass, percussion, harp, guitar and vocal), Chinese music instruments (principally zheng, er-hu, and pi-pa), composition, and electronic music. In the 2008-2009 academic year, 43 major subjects were offered – the four additional subjects being trombone, opera, electronic music, and zhong hu (HKAPA, 1998-1999, p. 22; HKAPA, 2008-2009, p. 48). prospectus notes that the teaching methods of the School of Music are “comprehensive” and performance focused. Academic assessment includes practical, written and oral examinations, the submission of prepared work, and continuous assessment (HKAPA, 1999).

At the time the research project was undertaken the School offered seven certificate, diploma, and degree programs: the Bachelor of Music (Honors) Degree, Professional Diploma in Performing Arts, Advanced Diploma in Performing Arts, Diploma in Performing Arts, Professional Certificate in Performing Arts, Advanced Certificate in Performing Arts, and Certificate in Performing Arts. In 2005-6, it introduced the Master of Music in Performance and Master of Music in Composition degree programs. In the 1998-1999 academic year there were seven teachers teaching the piano major as part-time employees, 28 full-time teaching staff teaching other subjects, and 73 part-time teachers teaching other instruments. In the 2008-2009 academic year there were 10 teachers teaching the piano major, 30 full-time teaching staff teaching other music subjects, and 103 part-time instrumental teachers teaching other instruments (HKAPA, 2008-2009, pp. 105-112). In 1988-1999, there were around 200 music students studying Western or Chinese music, of which 41 were full-time piano students in the keyboard department studying for various qualifications. In the final year of the degree program, there were two students majoring in piano performance and one who was majoring in accompaniment and
included in the research cohort. (The degree program in performance at the HKAPA can be undertaken in piano solo or piano accompaniment. Both have the same standards and the requirements.) This information was ascertained from the introductory questionnaire completed by the head of the keyboard department (see Appendix M).

4.2.2 Courses and curriculum

The syllabus of the Bachelor of Music (Honors) degree covered a wide spectrum: major study (practical), keyboard musicianship skills, knowledge of keyboard instruments, harmony and voice-leading, piano accompaniment, chamber music (piano performance), aural perception, English communication, liberal arts and arts administration, the history of Western music, concert practice, concert attendance, and form and analysis. Students had two hours of private piano tuition and one-and-a-half hours of concert practice every week (see Appendix N, Bachelor of Music (Honors) Degree Curriculum of The Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts, 1998-1999, p. 5). Keyboard students must also participate in the choir and the chamber choir. The 2007-2008 curriculum for the Bachelor of Music (Honors) degree was substantially the same (HKAPA, 2008b) (see Appendix O).

4.2.3 Facilities

Library. In 1998-1999, the Academy library had a collection of 33,000 books across all disciplines, 14,000 music scores and parts thereof, 13,000 audio-visual items, 302 serials, and a number of reference and index database CD-ROMs. The library placed a strong emphasis on music scores, plays, and audio and video recordings of music, drama, and dance, but also had audio-visual facilities and a sound retrieval system (HKAPA, 1998-1999, p. 38). In 2006-2007, there were 66,000 books and bound volumes of periodicals, 23,500 music scores and parts thereof, and the electronic resources collection boasted over 9,000 titles. The audio library had 128,000 sound effect recordings and 9,500 music tracks (HKAPA, 2006-2007, p. 88).

Spaces and Instruments. At the time of undertaking the research there was only one campus: now there are two: Wanchai and Bethanie (Pokfulam) (HKAPA, 2006-2007, p. 88; HKAPA, 2008-2009, p. 91). In 1998-1999, HKAPA had 11 dance studios, four drama rehearsal rooms, 38 teaching rooms, 13 classrooms, and 20 music practice rooms. It also had six performance venues: the Lyric Theatre, the Drama Theatre, the Studio Theatre, a concert hall, a recital hall, and an open-air theater (HKAPA, 1998-1999, p. 38).

In 2008, HKAPA had 18 dance, drama, and movement studios, 44 teaching rooms, 11 classrooms, and 20 music practice rooms. The School of Music had 37
standard grand pianos and eight concert grand pianos. There were two new performing venues at the new Pokfulam campus: the Wellcome Theatre at Bethanie and Bethanie Chapel (HKAPA, 2008-2009, p. 91).

Concerts and master classes. Students performed in weekly evening concerts every Friday. In the 1997-1998 academic year, ten master classes were held by visiting artists in cello, violin, piano, horn and composition. Distinguished performers and teachers from around the world who have given master classes include the pianists Lazar Berman, Ivo Pogorelich, and Peter Donohoe and the violinist Isaac Stern (HKAPA, 1998-1999, p. 23). In 2007, the Academy hosted over 200 solo, chamber, orchestral, and choral concerts – both in the evening and at lunchtime – at which music students performed. Visiting pianists giving master classes included Emanuel Ax and Krystian Zimerman (HKAPA, 2008-2009, p. 51). Master classes such as these introduce students to new interpretations and provide further insights into presentation skills that widen their musical insight and stimulate their musical thinking. Students also come to understand prevailing world standards and are hopefully inspired to become professional performers, composers, or teachers of music.

4.2.4 Interview with the Head of the Keyboard Department of The Hong Kong Academy For Performing Arts (HKAPA)

According to the head of the keyboard department of HKAPA, Mr. Gabriel Kwok, the Academy’s courses “offer the traditional rudiments training to our students, but in addition to history, harmony, form, and analysis, the institution offers courses to train students in performance.” Students who major in piano performance must take two specialist courses, “a major study (practical) and concert practice. The major study is a private lesson taught on the master-apprentice model, whereas concert practice is a group class that provides an informal concert setting in which students can obtain performance experience. After each performance, teachers offer their comments. During concert practice students have the opportunity to perform and present their ideas, and this also allows the other students to hear a range of repertoire in different styles.”

Mr. Kwok stated that the institution “aims to nurture young performers. We have to widen their perspective on performing arts, therefore we provide courses in aural perception and keyboard musicianship skills, which are very useful to the performers. Furthermore, there are also courses to train their perception of music and performance skills, such as knowledge of keyboard instruments, piano accompaniment, and concert attendance.”
Mr. Kwok explained the process by which students are selected for the performance major: “Students who wish to take piano performance as their major must gain recommendations from their major study teacher and the head of department. They are assessed through examinations at the end of the semester and solo concerts that are performed before graduation . . . Each concert, assessed by internal and external examiners, lasts around 50 to 60 minutes, and the repertoire that is performed must include different styles from different periods. Moreover, students must play from memory and submit program notes in English or Chinese. Apart from the evaluation of the solo concert, students must also perform in open lunchtime or evening concerts at least twice each academic year.”

Regarding facilities, Mr. Kwok complained that there was an insufficient number of practice rooms for the increasing numbers of students, and that “the quality of the pianos is not good enough to train the sensitivity of the pianist to subtle variations in sound . . . which is very important for nurturing their perception and performance skills.” Describing the pedagogical practice at the Academy, Mr. Kwok explained that “there are no meetings in which teachers can discuss teaching matters, and teachers are not required to submit teaching plans for particular students. He further added that “the department does not sponsor teachers to attend any international conferences on piano teaching and performance.”

Mr. Kwok laid out his expectations of the keyboard department of HKAPA: “I expect the institution’s piano teachers to enhance their teaching standards by pursuing prevailing standards; I expect the students to have a positive attitude towards learning, preparing, and performing . . . It is really exciting and encouraging to see students receiving awards and prizes in international competitions.”

Commenting on piano performance in Hong Kong, Mr. Kwok opined that “in general, the future of piano performance depends on financial support from the government. Moreover, the government has an important role in sponsoring music education in general, not only piano education.”

Commenting on the training of children gifted in music, Mr. Kwok asserted that “compared with China and Russia, there are insufficient resources to train young children who are gifted in music performance in Hong Kong . . . [The education system] is too intensive for children, and they do not have space and time to digest what they have learned and to enjoy the process of learning . . . Moreover, the ‘crowded’ curriculum prevents them from exploring their enjoyment of making music.” He suggested that “the government must have two plans for piano education, one that is aimed at nurturing the gifted and another for normal children.” Nevertheless, Mr. Kwok concluded that “it is encouraging to see that there has been
an obvious improvement over the past ten years. Many good teachers have contributed their time and effort to nurturing students, and this has improved the future prospects of piano performance in Hong Kong. I am sure there is a bright future for teaching and learning piano performance.”

4.3 The University of Hong Kong (HKU)

4.3.1 General information

The University of Hong Kong (HKU) was founded in 1910 and in 1999 comprised nine faculties: Architecture, Arts, Dentistry, Education, Engineering, Law, Medicine, Science, and Social Sciences (HKU, 1999a). In 2008, there were ten faculties, the additional faculty being that of Business and Economics (HKU, 2008d). The Department of Music was founded in 1981 and is situated within the Faculty of Arts. Then and now the department offers courses to students who are taking music as a major or specialty. The courses have aimed to deepen the understanding among students of the functions, concepts, structures, and value of music and its role in society. They have also been designed to broaden students’ knowledge of the diverse musical cultures of the world and to train them to think critically through creative and active composition and performance. The department has had a commitment to the provision of a comprehensive education that connects students to the wider world of learning in the humanities, sciences, and commerce (HKU, 1999b).

The main areas covered by the department’s programs included the role of the world’s music in society; historical and contemporary perspectives; the application of technology in music; and the composition and performance of music. Learning through cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary interests is particularly encouraged. All first year students were required to take the university choir and university gamelan courses for ensemble training.

In 1998-1999, the department had nine teaching staff and 18 full-time final year students, three of whom were taking piano performance as their major (see Appendix P). The department also offered M.Phil. and Ph.D. qualifications in musicology and composition (HKU, 1999a). In the 2007-2008 academic year there were ten teaching staff in the music department (HKU, 2008f).

4.3.2 Courses and curriculum

The undergraduate curriculum offered several perspectives, including the
harmony and structure of music, covering an introduction to the music of the world, an introduction to music in Western culture, and music technology; analysis of Western art music; the analysis of orally transmitted music; love, sex, and death in music; Western music history; composition; the music of contemporary Hong Kong; performance; performance practice; music in the commercial world; popular music from Cantopop to techno; topics in Asian music history; and computer and electronic music. Students who took piano performance had a weekly one-hour lesson in performance in each year of their degree program (see Appendix Q, Undergraduate Curriculum of The University of Hong Kong) (HKU, 1998-1999, p. 3). Choir was mandatory for all years, and gamelan in 1st year only, with the option of studying it in the other years as well. In 2007-2008, new courses were introduced to diversify the curriculum. These included understanding music; music in society; the business of music; music and culture in Bali; an overseas fieldtrip; American music; contrapuntal techniques; orchestration; orchestral studies; rhythms of life; advanced tonal chromaticism and analysis; Chinese opera; and defining the arts scene in Hong Kong (see Appendix R) (HKU, 2008b).

4.3.3 Facilities

The music library was founded in 1981 and since then has supported the curriculum, research, and performance needs of the faculty and the Department of Music. At the time of the study, the collection housed over 25,000 items, including reference works, books, scores and reference scores; audio-visual materials such as compact discs, LPs, audio cassettes, videocassettes, laser discs, VCDs, and DVDs; microform materials that comprise microfiches, microfilms, kits, and slides; over 170 journals in Western languages, of which 140 were current subscriptions; over 40 journals in Eastern languages, of which 16 were current subscriptions; electronic resources; Internet resources; and a special collection of works in the Asian Archive of contemporary Japanese composers. The library had a Listening Room with ten booths for the listening and viewing of audio-visual materials (HKU, 1998-1999, p. 4). In 2008 the collection comprised over 38,895 items, including books, scores, video and sound recordings; microform materials; electronic resources (22 databases); 55 e-journals; 207 e-books; and 386 journal titles in both Western and Eastern languages (HKU, 2008e; HKU, 2007-2008, p. 5).

In 1998-1999, the Department’s Electronic Music and Recording Studio consisted of two rooms – the main functions of which were recording and supporting teaching and research in acoustics, computer music, sound synthesis, studio techniques, composition, audio-visual synchronization, musical analysis, and
popular music. The department possessed collections of various instruments, including a harpsichord, clavichord, table piano, virginal, a chamber organ, a complete set of recorders and crumhorns, Balinese gamelans, Javanese gamelans, and Chinese instruments. In terms of more traditional facilities there were, at the time of the study, five piano practice rooms accounting for a total of five up-right pianos and one grand piano. In the 2007-2008 academic year there were seven pianos on which students could practise. In the 2007-2008 academic year, the Electronic Music and Recording Studio combined into one electronic music studio accommodating up to ten musicians, and comprising a professional soundproof recording studio and adjacent electronic studio in which the recording operations, teaching, and research could be conducted. In 2004 a multimedia laboratory was founded jointly by the Department of Music and the Department of Computer Science with a view to offering a facility for multimedia authoring, instruction, and research (HKU, 2008c). (This information was obtained from the visit of the researcher to the department and interviews with the students in 1999, and from discussions with the Department of Music staff on 7 April 2008.)

In 1998-1999, the department organized the Performing Arts in Historic Loke Yew Hall Series, a diverse program that covered local and international performing arts ranging from traditional Chinese and Western classical music to more exotic programs from other cultures, such as Beijing opera, Cantonese opera, dance and shadow plays, contemporary Spanish guitar music, and accordion music. Every year, the department has provided professional quality performing arts programs to enrich the university’s cultural life. It has continued to host a regular series of lunchtime concerts and recitals that form an essential part of the university experience. Each year the Department of Music has welcomed a variety of distinguished visitors for concerts, recitals, lectures, colloquia, exhibitions and other academic and cultural activities (HKU, 1999c; HKU, 2008a).

4.3.4 Interview with the Head of the Department of Music of The University of Hong Kong

In the opinion of the Head of the Department, Dr. Manolete Mora, the university “offers a wide range of courses in music, giving the students a wide perspective on music . . . our aim is to nurture the students to engage in creative and critical thinking on music, broaden their knowledge of diverse musical cultures, and stimulate their interest in cross-cultural principles.” Dr. Mora stated that the music department is not based on the performing arts, “therefore, we do not have courses or the facilities to teach musicianship classes in aural training, keyboard harmony, and
transposition... However, students must complete a computer training program to acquire knowledge of music harmony and structure through listening.” He asserted that this course develops the aural ability and sense of keyboard harmony of the students. Dr. Mora added: “If students take performance as their major, they have to pass an audition to demonstrate their performance standard. In addition to receiving supervision from a private [external] instrumental teacher who is approved by the department, they must study performance and performance practice courses, and are assessed through coursework and an examination.” Dr. Mora expects students to “focus on a particular field of study in music, but they should think of it as part of a whole. Rather than treating it simply in relation to their own lives, they should relate music more broadly to other aspects of the world.”

Referring to the evaluation of students, Dr. Mora explained that “performance students must prepare a performance of around 40 minutes at the end of each semester. There is also a written assessment in performance practice on matters relating to performance theory, including historical performance practice and twentieth-century techniques. In this assessment students are asked to choose a piece and to analyze its style and particularities. Overall assessment is based on the written examination, performance examination, and performances in lunchtime concerts. Students must use advanced twentieth-century techniques in their examination performances.” This reflected the department’s strong commitment to 20th music.

In terms of pedagogy and administration, Dr. Mora explained that “it is difficult to organize all of the part-time instrumental teachers to meet at the same time, so there are no formal meetings at which teachers can discuss pedagogical matters. However, should any special teaching issues arise, then individual contact is made with the teachers so that the issue can be discussed.” On the issue of offering financial support to teachers to attend conferences, Dr. Mora stated that “teachers who are interested in attending conferences on piano pedagogy and performance must attend as individuals. Financial support is offered by the university to teachers to attend conferences of an academic nature only.” In terms of support for external student programs, the department “encourages students to participate in international workshops, music camps, and summer study groups, but there is no formal exchange program with other universities.”

Commenting generally on piano performance in Hong Kong, Dr. Mora stated: “I am not a pianist, but I see many remarkable young piano performers. Compared to other international cities like New York or San Francisco, Hong Kong has a very high proportion of young people who learn the piano. I feel that piano education will remain popular in the near future.”
4.4 Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU)

4.4.1 General information

HKBU, which was formerly known as the Hong Kong Baptist College, was established in 1956. In 1998, it had five faculties or schools: the Faculty of Arts, the School of Business, the School of Communication, the Faculty of Science, and the Faculty of Social Science. In 2008, a new campus was established in Shek Mun in Shatin and more faculties and schools were established, including the School of Chinese Medicine and the School of Continuing Education. There is also now an Academy of Visual Arts. The philosophy of the institution is that of whole-person education and the development of the physical, intellectual and spiritual capacities of students. The university is committed to its mission of academic excellence in teaching, research, and services (HKBU, 1999b; HKBU, 2008b).

The Department of Music and Fine Arts provides training for professional musicians in the areas of music theory, composition, performance, and music education. Founded in 1972, its courses aim to develop the creative, intellectual, and performance abilities necessary for a variety of careers in music. The courses also aim to broaden the perspectives of students beyond their major field of study, encourage them to search for cultural inter-relationships, and promote the examination of personal philosophical or religious positions. The Department acknowledges the relationship between performance and teaching (HKBU, 1998-1999, p. 145). In addition to the undergraduate courses, the M.A. in Music, M. Phil. and Ph.D are offered for students who wish to pursue postgraduate work (HKBU, 1999c). At the time of the study, the department had 12 staff and over 57 part-time adjunct lecturers assigned to teach instruments and voice on an individual basis. There were 29 full-time music students, three of whom were taking piano performance as their major (see Appendix S for the information collected from the department). The Department accepts an average of eight performance students each year, some of whom are pianists, some study other instruments, and some study voice. In the 2007-2008 academic year there were 13 full-time and four part-time teaching staff and 41 adjunct lecturers teaching various instruments (HKBU, 2008b).

4.4.2 Courses and curriculum

The courses consist of core subjects that are taken by all students throughout the three-year program and specialist subjects in the student’s area of concentration that are taken in Years Two and Three (see Appendix T) (HKBU, 1998-1999, pp. 145-147.) The core subjects offer the students a broad general
knowledge of music history, theory, performance, and technology. The specialist subjects complement this with an in-depth examination of composition, performance, history, or music education, and lead to the honors degree and independent work in Year Three (HKBU, 2008b). In 2007-2008, some new courses were introduced, including the principles of pedagogy, style and performance, and group instrument/vocal study (see Appendix U) (HKBU, 2007-2008, pp. 63-64).

The curriculum features a broad range of topics, including the materials and structures of music; the history of Western music; the history of Chinese music; the principles of music education; the principles and applications of music education; keyboard skills; pedagogy and repertoire for a major instrument; orchestration; recording techniques; composition; tonal analysis; analysis of twentieth-century music; advanced tonal analysis; contemporary music workshops; choral and instrumental conducting; and orchestration and electronic music. Students who take piano performance as their major have one weekly one-and-a-half-hour lesson in performance.

Students are also required to perform in one of the university’s major ensembles, namely, the University Choir, Girls’ Choir, or Orchestra, and may participate in one of the smaller ensembles, such as the Chamber Choir, Handbell Choir, or Baroque Ensemble. In the 2007-2008 academic year there were, in addition to these activities, several other ensembles and activities in which students could participate, namely, the Jazz Ensemble, African Drums Ensemble, Balinese Gamelan Ensemble, Wind Band, and Woodwind Ensemble (HKBU, 2008c).

4.4.3 Facilities

At the time the study was undertaken the university library had a comprehensive collection of Chinese and Western books, periodicals, and non-print materials. The library possessed over 489,000 books across all disciplines, over 12,000 music scores, and 73,410 volumes of bound periodicals in 6,630 titles. It also contained 46,770 items of materials in other formats. The Media Services section of the library was equipped with a variety of audio-visual equipment and materials for independent learning purposes. The library had up-to-date information searching tools and facilities that allowed library users access to databases in the United States and the United Kingdom. The library also subscribed to various bibliographic CD-ROM databases, most of which were accessible on the university computer network. CD-ROM workstations were also available in the library.

The university also had a music library that had acquired various types of
audio-visual materials, all of which were housed in the Multimedia Learning Centre. As of June 1999, it had over 20,000 multimedia items in a variety of formats, including CD-ROMs, computer software, videocassettes, laser discs, VCDs, DVDs, audiocassettes, and CDs (HKBU, 1999a).

In 2008, the collection comprised more than 974,610 bound volumes, some 3,560 active serial titles in print form, 164 databases, approximately 26,710 full-text electronic journal titles, over 124,000 audiovisual and microform items, and a collection of over 15,000 volumes of music scores. The Multimedia Learning Centre contained over 115,900 CD-ROMs, VCDs, DVDs, CDs, videocassettes, laser discs, audiocassettes, and microfilms (HKBU, 2008a).

In 1998-1999, the Department of Music had 25 practice rooms and a music laboratory. Students could also use the computers, electronic instruments, and recording technology available in the Electro-Acoustic Music Centre, which was one of the finest facilities of its kind in a tertiary institution in Southeast Asia, and served to broaden the traditional foundation of the course. There was an Academic Community Hall with around 1,000 seats and a Lecture Hall with over 200 seats, both of which were used for lectures and performances. Master classes were held once or twice a term in which students could perform and learn from a renowned performer. The Department of Music also organized performances by performers from around the world. As performance has always been considered an essential aspect of music education at HKBU, the Department’s ensembles have performed in many other countries as a means of providing students with extensive performance experience.

In the 2007-2008 academic year the number of practice rooms had increased from the 25 that existed at the time of the study to 31. There were over 50 pianos on campus (HKBU, 2008b).

4.4.4 Interview with the Head of the Keyboard Department of Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU)

The head of the Keyboard Department, Dr. David Chung, asserted that to create well-rounded music students the department “offers courses to train all types of music students. Although aural ability, keyboard harmony, and musicianship are important training for pianists, we do not provide any specific courses for systematic training in these areas . . . However, tutorials are held on piano performance in different musical styles from different periods in music history, such as Baroque music, Classical music, Romantic music, and twentieth-century music. Although these tutorials do not carry any credits, students are motivated to learn through them as attending such tutorials gives them valuable experience in musical interpretation.”
Dr. Chung offered detailed information about the selection of students wishing to major in piano performance. “Students who wish to take piano performance must undergo an audition. For assessment and evaluation, Year Three students in the first term must perform all of the movements of a concerto, in which they will be accompanied by the university orchestra or a second piano, and in the second term they must give a recital as their final year project. The assessment concert lasts for around 45 to 60 minutes, and program notes must be submitted.” Dr. Chung added that “to provide more opportunities for students to perform and to nurture their ability, students must also give at least one concert performance a year at one of the weekly music assemblies. If students are interested in performing more, they can organize evening concerts by themselves.”

Regarding the pedagogical practices of the department, Dr. Chung commented that “there are no meetings among piano teachers to discuss pedagogical matters. However, a meeting is held at the beginning of the academic year that provides a chance for all of the part-time piano instructors to discuss administrative matters.” In terms of support for teachers to attend international conferences, he stated that “if any report or research is to be announced, then the department will sponsor the member of teaching staff who is responsible for the work to attend conferences overseas.”

Dr. Chung commented that he would like the facilities to be improved: “the number of practice rooms should be increased and each room should have more space. Moreover, some piano rooms should be equipped with pianos that are fitted with recording equipment, such as a disc clavier, so that students can listen back to what they have played.” He stressed the importance of not neglecting the “musicianship class, in which students learn keyboard harmony and dictation.” He commented: “I believe that students will perform to a better standard only when they understand the real meaning of music.”

Dr. Chung offered several recommendations for improving the standard of piano performance at HKBU: “The university should offer different categories of music performance teaching in addition to solo piano performance, such as chamber music, ensemble, and group performance.” He explained that “music is a broad subject, and the piano is but one of the instruments that reflects the artistic aspect. Therefore, students should aim to obtain artistic inspiration from other types of music or art performance and use this in their piano playing. I believe that the new generation must keep in touch with different types of music performance to enhance their own performance standard.”

Commenting generally on piano education, Dr. Chung opined that “it is encouraging to see that there is an increasing number of students learning piano all
over the world, including Hong Kong. Moreover, as Hong Kong is a place where the interchange of Western and Eastern cultures takes place and where it is easy to absorb the different concepts, ideas, and artistic sense of both cultures as a foundation for learning – no matter whether it is in literature, aesthetics, logic and so on – Hong Kong is in an advantageous position to educate performers.” However, to nurture the maturity of performers, Dr. Chung suggested that “a good performer also needs to study overseas to experience different cultures and the history, arts, and social background of a particular place. This sense of culture cannot be taught by a teacher, as it is a kind of feeling that students must sense, feel, and acquire for themselves. I believe that experience is the invisible knowledge that nourishes the performer to improve their perception, comprehension and interpretation.”

4.5 The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK)

4.5.1 General information

The Chinese University of Hong Kong was founded in 1963 by the amalgamation of three colleges: the New Asia College (founded in 1949), Chung Chi College (founded in 1951), and the United College of Hong Kong (founded in 1956). A fourth college, Shaw College, was added in 1986. Five additional colleges will be incorporated into the university structure in 2010-2012. In 1999, the university had seven faculties: Arts, Business Administration, Education, Engineering, Medicine, Science, and Social Science (CUHK, 1999a; CUHK, 2008e).

The Department of Music, which was founded in 1965 by Chung Chi College within the Arts Faculty, was the first degree-granting music institution in Hong Kong. The department promotes that the best undergraduate music education consists of a well-chosen balance between a performing-oriented approach and the traditional academic and scholarly study of music. Undergraduate music students can elect to study the following areas in more depth: Performance (Western, non-Western, or Early Music), Theory, Composition, Music History, and Chinese Music. In the 1998-1999 academic year the department had 11 full-time teaching staff and 29 full-time music students, of whom six were majoring in piano performance and three were majoring in performance on another instrument (see Appendix V for information collected from the department). All of the full-time staff in the Department of Music held doctorates from well-respected universities. Of the 100 part-time instrumental instructors, 20 taught piano performance. In 1998-1999, the department also included post-graduates who were studying for M. Phil, M. Music, Ph.D. and D. Music qualifications (CUHK, 1999b).
In the 2007-2008 academic year, there were 16 full-time teaching staff in the department, 13 adjunct Assistant Professors, and over 160 part-time instrumental instructors teaching Chinese and Western instruments, 30 of whom taught piano (CUHK, 2008a; CUHK, 2008c). There were approximately 160 undergraduate students enrolled in programs leading to a B.A. in Music, and more than 100 enrolled in postgraduate programs (M.A., M. Phil, M. Music, Ph.D, and D. Music) (CUHK, 2008d).

4.5.2 Courses and curriculum
In the 1998-1999 academic year the curriculum for undergraduate students covered a wide spectrum, including the materials and structures of music, the history of Western music, form and analysis, the history and theory of Chinese music, Chinese folk-song, Chinese narrative singing, aural training, performance, counterpoint (tonal and modern), compositional techniques, composition, selected studies in musical analysis, an introduction to world music, an introduction to transcription and analysis, musical notation, the pedagogy and literature of a given instrument, orchestral techniques, music in contemporary Asia, an introduction to musicology, electronic music, and topics on the orchestra and orchestral music (see Appendix W) (CUHK, 1998-1999, pp. 99-100). Students taking piano performance as their major had a weekly one-and-a-half-hour lesson. They also had the opportunity of being involved in a choir, an orchestra, a baroque ensemble, a Chinese music ensemble, or a Javanese Gamelan ensemble.

In addition to its full-time undergraduate program, the Department of Music offers graduate programs in ethnomusicology (Chinese music), music theory, historical musicology (Western music), and composition. The 2007-2008 curriculum featured some new courses, namely, Senior Recital, Performance Practices to 1800, and Computer-aided Composition (see Appendix X) (CUHK, 2007-2008, pp. 195-196).

4.5.3 Facilities
In 1998-1999, the library of The Chinese University’s Chung Chi College held over 20,000 scores and monographs and more than 100 periodicals about music, all of which are kept in the Elizabeth Luce Memorial Library. The music reference collection included more than 170 collected editions of Western music, and was the most comprehensive collection of Western music in Asia. The Department of Music maintained an Audio Library in the Hui Yeung Shing Building, which, together with the Chinese Music Archive, contained over 20,000 tapes and discs. The Chinese Music Archive alone had over 10,000 sound recordings, and was the largest of its kind
outside mainland China. There were 389,383 books, 36,043 bound journals and 146,225 non-print materials (CUHK, 1999b).

In terms of performance facilities, the university had the 1,200 seat Sir Run Run Shaw Hall, used for large-scale performances, and the Chung Chi College Chapel, used for choral and chamber orchestra concerts. A small rehearsal room that seated about 80 was ideal for master classes and chamber performances. In 2001, a new professional performing environment was built in the form of the 270-seat state-of-the-art Lee Hysan Concert Hall. The hall was especially designed for music performances, and includes a chamber organ and recording studio.

The Music Department’s practice and teaching facilities included 40 grand and upright pianos, and a wide range of Western, non-Western, and Early Music instruments, including an electronic music studio, Javanese gamelans, Japanese kotos, Indian sitars, a Kleuker pipe organ, a set of Tang dynasty replica instruments, a set of bianzhong, a manual harpsichord, and a modern harpsichord (CUHK, 1999b). By 2007-2008 the instrumental collection had expanded to include portative organs, violas da gamba, Chinese stone-chimes (bianqing), and baroque and renaissance flutes, recorders, and bassoons (CUHK, 2008b).

For many years master classes and seminars have frequently been given by visiting scholars and musicians who have included Yo Yo Ma, Claude Frank, and Boris Berman. Students who major in performance continue to be required to perform frequently at lunchtime or evening concerts.

4.5.4 Interview with the Head of the Department of Music of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK)

The head of the music department of CUHK, Professor Chan Wing Wah explained that the department offers “a course of aural training for students to learn melodic dictation, harmonic progressions, and rhythmic patterns. Moreover, there is an elective course in pedagogy and literature for each chosen instrument that all students can choose to study, even those who do not take performance as their major.”

According to Prof. Chan, “all music students must learn about playing instruments, and must take performance examinations at the end of each term.” Performance students “must also perform at least once a term in a concert series in the Sir Run Run Shaw Hall, in addition to the end of term examination performance before a jury. Students thus have two or three opportunities to perform per term. To assess their performance standard in the third year, students must perform in both terms in concerts of around 45-60 minutes, for which they must also submit program notes. The final performance result is evaluated by instructors and a jury that comprises internal and external examiners.”
When asked about organizing activities for students, Prof. Chan explained that CUHK “has joined forces with Yale University to organize courses for Asian pianists in the summer holidays . . . the department also encourages students to participate in summer camps or summer courses. Moreover, regular summer programs are held in Kagoshima and Okinawa in Japan by organizations that invite the university to send students to participate.” Prof. Chan stated that “regular meetings are held for staff to discuss academic matters, but there are no formal meetings that instrumental instructors can attend to discuss pedagogical issues.” Regarding conferences, “the university offers subsidies to teachers to present papers at international conferences.”

Prof. Chan asserted that “the curriculum provided by CUHK is comprehensive. Therefore, in many subjects, students do not have opportunities to learn in-depth. However, students of music at the undergraduate level master a good knowledge of both Western and Chinese music which helps to widen their musical knowledge and provides a solid foundation for them to further their studies in performance, composition, or education later on.” He also commented that “the three-year curriculum is too short. Apart from the heavy workload of the academic studies for music, performance students have to spend a lot of time practising their performance pieces . . . I expect them to make good use of the summer holidays to prepare.”

When discussing music education with respect to Hong Kong society, Prof. Chan opined that “there is a great demand for learning the piano, but most parents send their children to learn not for their enjoyment, but to obtain examination certificates or competition awards.” He expressed the hope that “more teachers and students will come to appreciate music more . . . [but] if teachers and students are short-sighted and do not explore the true meaning of music, then they will not have the enthusiasm to explore the different interpretations of a particular style . . . and thus the music will be without soul, meaning, and spirit . . . This is not the aim of teaching and learning music.”

### 4.6 Background information on piano education in Hong Kong

In this section, some background on music education in Hong Kong is sketched out by providing information on overseas examination bodies that have a high profile in Hong Kong, music festivals, competitions, and the various music associations in Hong Kong.

On the subject of overseas examinations in piano in Hong Kong, Lau (1999) states that they started “in 1938, [when] the Trinity College of Music conducted [its]
public examinations in Hong Kong . . . [and in 1948 when] the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music started [its] public examinations” (p. 19). According to the figures of the Hong Kong Examination Authority, 71,773 candidates took practical examinations and 19,162 theory examinations in music in 2006-2007 (HKEAA, 2008). Relatively recently, two new piano examination systems have been established in Hong Kong: those of the Australian Music Examinations Board (AMEB) (AMEB, 2008) and the Australian and New Zealand Cultural Arts (ANZCA) piano examinations (ANZCA, 2008).

There are several music festivals and piano competitions in Hong Kong, the first of which was the Hong Kong Schools Music Festival, founded in 1949 (Lau, 1999, p. 19) (HKSMSA, 2008) which conducts an annual music competition. The Hong Kong (Asian) Piano Open Competition, founded in 1992, is another major competition. Others include the Schumann International Youth Piano Competition (2008), the Steinway and Sons International Youth Piano Competition (2008), the Hong Kong Competition for Young Asian Musicians, the second Hong Kong International Piano Competition (2008), the Hong Kong Young Musicians of the Year awards (2008), and the Asian Youth Music Competition (2008). There are also many music and arts festivals in Hong Kong, such as the New Vision Arts Festival (2008), the Hong Kong Arts Festival, which in 2010 is in its 38th year (2008), the Le French May Arts Festival (2008), and the Hong Kong Fringe Club’s Music Festival (2008), which introduces twentieth-century and traditional music and Eastern and Western arts.

Music associations in Hong Kong are plentiful and diverse. They include the Hong Kong Piano Teacher Association (established in 1988), the Hong Kong Music Education Association (1987), the Hong Kong Piano Education Association (1999), the Hong Kong Piano Music Association (1988), and the Composers and Authors Society of Hong Kong (1977) (Chow, 1999, p. 55). There are also two government organisations that deal with arts development: the Academy for Performing Arts Council (1982) and the Hong Kong Arts Development Council (1994) (Chow, 1999, p. 63).

According to information from the Hong Kong Music Organization (HKMO, 2008) (see Appendix Y), in 2008 Hong Kong had 12 Western orchestras, 14 Chinese orchestras, 10 wind bands, 26 choirs, 11 child and youth associations involved in music education, and 20 performing groups associated with music. The main music groups are the Hong Kong Chamber Orchestra, Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, Hong Kong Sinfonietta, Hong Kong Symphony Society, Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, Hong Kong Youth Chinese Orchestra, Hong Kong Symphonic Band, Hong Kong Symphonic Wind Band, Hong Kong Art Chorus, Opera Society of
Hong Kong, Opera Hong Kong, Hong Kong Children’s Choir, Hong Kong Children’s Music Theatre, Hong Kong Composers’ Guild, Hong Kong Jazz Association, Hong Kong International Cello Association, and Hong Kong Live Music Professional Association.

Under the Hong Kong Music Organization, there are several institutions offering vocational and continuing education in music, including the Hong Kong International Institute of Music, the United Academy of Music, the Hong Kong Music Institute, and the Music Office. Continuing education is also provided by the HKAPA, HKU, CUHK, and HKBU in the form of certificate and diploma programs. In 1995, there were over 200 music and piano teaching companies in Hong Kong (Lo, 1995); from the information of the Yellow Pages business telephone directory (2008), there were almost 300 music stores and piano companies teaching piano, not including private piano teachers, in 2008.

4.7 Conclusion

Hong Kong is a place where Eastern and Western cultures come together. There is a long history of music education in Hong Kong, which has largely been provided by four tertiary institutions: The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Baptist University, and The Chinese University of Hong Kong. These four institutions have very different characteristics. The HKAPA concentrates on courses in piano performance, with an emphasis on keyboard skills, concert performance, and knowledge of keyboard instruments. In contrast, the courses provided by the universities take a broader perspective, although again each institution has different characteristics. HKU provides broad and innovative courses that include music of the twentieth century, music of the world, historical and contemporary perspectives, the application of technology in music, and the composition and performance of music. The university also focuses on new music, music and its relationship with culture and commerce, and music in Hong Kong and Asia. At HKBU and CUHK a more traditional training in music education is offered that involves theory, harmony, history, and counterpoint. The courses at HKBU allow students to learn about electronic music, techniques in twentieth-century composition, the principles of education, recording techniques, and contemporary music workshops. CUHK provides a broad curriculum in music education, and combines traditional training in Western music and Chinese music, including instrumental music, folk songs, and singing narratives; it also offers an introduction to world music, musicology, composition, orchestral techniques, music in contemporary Asia, electronic music conducting, and music pedagogy.
In 2007, some developments were initiated that aimed to improve the courses provided by these four tertiary institutions. HKAPA developed a new department of Chinese Traditional Theatre, and HKU began to provide more traditional music courses such as orchestration, contrapuntal writing, the rhythm of music and Chinese opera. HKBU placed more emphasis on electronic composition and group instrumental and vocal studies such as gamelan performance, and CUHK began to provide more opportunities for performance practice and senior recitals.

Despite their differences, all of the institutions provide a solid foundation in music education and all have an effective and productive curriculum. All four institutions systematically plan their courses to include the history of Western music, harmony, form and analysis, and instrumental learning. All emphasize three aspects of training in performance: group performance, solo performance, and seminars and master classes. The group performance activities offered include ensembles, choirs, gamelan ensembles, orchestras, chamber choirs, handbell choirs, baroque ensembles, and so on – activities through which students learn co-operation with respect to group performance, and improve their listening ability. Ideally, such skills also lead to an increased aesthetic sense. Each university has dedicated venues in which students can give regular solo performances in concerts and music assemblies. All of the institutions organize seminars and master classes that provide valuable opportunities for students to enhance their performance standard and learn from both their peers and from renowned performers, musicians, and educators. Each institution systematically evaluates all of its music students in performance, even those who are not majoring in performance, and the four institutions accord performance an equal weight to academic pursuits.

There is an increasing demand to learn piano in Hong Kong, partly as a result of overseas examinations, music festivals, and local and international music competitions. The various arts programs, performances and festivals also serve to enhance the aesthetic sense of the community and, at the same time, provide a solid background for nurturing young musicians.
Chapter 5
Case studies of ten teachers

5.1 Introduction

This chapter details the interviews with the ten teachers involved in the study that was conducted in 1998-1999. It starts with a short account of their musical background, and then presents their ideas on the philosophy, principles, and methodologies of teaching piano performance. A summary of their philosophical viewpoints is given, with a special focus on how these relate to the philosophical theories of rationalism, empiricism, and pragmatism. A second perspective on teachers’ philosophies is also provided in relation to three ‘overriding’ issues that were paramount in their discussions: the importance of helping students to develop the capacity to enjoy and love music; the importance of nurturing and developing personal characteristics or qualities in students; and the importance of transmitting knowledge and insights to others: teacher to student, and performer to audience. All of this is examined with reference to piano education.

In the section on ‘principles’, information is given on what the teachers feel to be the important principles of piano teaching, with particular reference to the expression of emotion and ideas through music, sound and tone production, the use of the imagination and creativity, the importance of encouragement and stimulation, and the need for children to be taught as well as possible.

The section on the methodologies used in teaching piano performance details the different methods and approaches these teachers use in relation to technique, style, memorization, practice techniques, the development of acute listening skills (aural ability), and stage fright.

5.2 Teacher One

5.2.1 General information

Teacher One, who was born in Britain, was brought up in a musical family. One of his brothers is an amateur flute player, another a professional cellist, and his sister is a professional violinist. His first teacher was Frederic Gevers. Teacher One graduated from Cambridge University, and is a prolific composer and performer. When he was young he often performed in concerts broadcast by the BBC. In Hong Kong he has presented many programs on Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) Radio Four, one of four government radio stations, this one being devoted to music.
He is also a music critic for various newspapers and an adjudicator at music festivals and piano competitions. He is currently an Emeritus Professor of Music, and has been a regional consultant for the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music for several years. He has accumulated 40 years of teaching and performance experience. He has four performance students, two of whom are in their final year.

5.2.2 Philosophy

Teacher One believes that knowledge comprises rules and facts, and that the procedure for acquiring knowledge involves building from the simplest concepts upward. Applied to piano teaching, this philosophy translates as finding the simple structure of the melody and subject of a piece, and then examining the complexities of the chords and harmony. His long experience of teaching and of performing has influenced the way he teaches. He argues that teaching different students using different methods is vital, because every student is unique.

He believes that students should experience enjoyment irrespective of how much they practice or perform, and that a performer needs a strong personality in order to convey the music to a listener. He emphasizes that students can develop their personality and character in a musical sense by being taught a well-rounded syllabus.

In his teaching, Teacher One selects for his students works that develop technique as well as exciting – even ‘flashy’ – pieces in different styles from different periods. This he believes is especially effective for students who are passive and withdrawn and who need to improve their interpretation skills. Further, because of his belief in the strengthening of technique as a means of developing his students’ abilities, he selects pieces that are difficult enough to help “polish” technique and, at the same time, contribute to the development of students’ interpretative abilities in relation to a particular style or period. Thus, in preparing students for performance, any weaknesses in their personality insofar as it relates to them as performers, are strengthened.

5.2.3 Teaching principles

Teacher One requires his students to play music with expression and a sense of ‘meaning’. He believes that a good performer conveys the message of the composer with a degree of showmanship that engages the enthusiasm and imagination of the audience; central to this is beautiful tone production. In emphasizing the importance of sound and tone he stresses that these can be improved by paying attention to the sitting position, the weight of the body, the arm movements, and relaxation. He believes strongly that students should be taught as well as possible so that they gain a broad understanding about the complete concept of playing music of
different periods and styles, regardless of whether they become professional musicians after graduation. The important principles of teaching for Teacher One are to inspire students to make ‘breakthroughs’ with respect to their playing, and to give them encouragement.

5.2.4 Methodologies

Teacher One has not published on methodology, however, he expresses the view that all complicated tasks are built up from the simple. It is therefore important that students approach each task beginning at a simple level and gradually increase the difficulty or complexity.

5.2.4.1 Technique

Referring to technique, Teacher One believes that a teacher should have a list of aspects that need to be taught. Students must develop certain types of finger work, different touches (including legato and staccato), and movements of wrists, arms and shoulders when performing music of different styles. Aspects of playing such as scales, arpeggios and broken chords must be approached in a specific manner to express the style and mood of a piece. He believes that practice is the way to master a technique, and that technique itself is a tool for ‘bringing out’ the music. When teaching, he first considers the quality of the sound, and then shifts the emphasis on technique from being a physical exercise to being a musical experience in practice and performance. He believes that students are best introduced to a range of different techniques through working on a broad repertoire.

5.2.4.2 Style

To teach different styles, Teacher One introduces students to the ways that pieces were played at the time they were written. By way of example, he suggested that quavers at the time of Haydn and Mozart would have been played legato, whereas they would have been played in a lifted or detached manner in the Baroque style. Another example relates to different interpretations of ornamentation at different periods. He believes that once the historical background of a piece is understood and relevant performance practices considered, individual players can then interpret a work in their own way.

In terms of interpretation, he emphasizes that each individual plays a piece at least slightly differently, and that if there were four students all playing a Bach Prelude and Fugue, for example, he would not want each of them to play the work in an identical manner. Although students should understand the ground-rules of style, he believes that to a certain extent they should be encouraged to have their own ideas.
relating to phrasing, expression, and speed. At the same time he stresses that the issue
of style is a tremendously difficult one, being concerned as it is with different
techniques for playing. He believes that listening to music is an effective way to learn
about style as an aspect of performance. He is adamant that certain music must be
played in a particular style, and if it is played in another style it will not convey what
the composer intended.

5.2.4.3 Memorization
Teacher One does not force his students to play from memory. At the same
time, if a student wants to play from memory he does not discourage them. He points
out that in most of his own performances he played the accompaniment and thus
rarely played from memory.

Referring to the teaching memorization, he believes that students must
learn to memorize quickly, and should be able to look at a few bars, close the book,
and play them from memory. To further develop the ability to memorize, he suggests
that students should analyse the chords and structure of the piece. With respect to the
issue of students having a memory blank during performance, he stresses the
importance of repetitive practice at ‘playing by heart’ and practice also in moving
forward when mistakes occur (and not stopping). Whilst he has no particular method
for teaching memorization he believes that if students want to play from memory they
should be encouraged to develop this skill at an early age.

5.2.4.4 Practice methods
Teacher One expects his students to practise along the lines that he
suggests in the lesson, with the ensuing result – ideally – that each successive lesson
will reveal a significant improvement in the playing of a piece. For him, practising
according to his dictates is a fundamental requirement of a student. To this end he
takes a lot of time to help students understand the importance of practising well. A
responsible teacher, he believes, not only introduces students to different styles of
music and performance, but also teaches them how to practise; ideally they in turn
will do the same with their own students if they go on to become teachers. He
suggests that there are two reasons for practising: to practise technique and to practise
for performance, stressing that students need to learn how to give a good performance
even when mistakes occur. He advocates practising difficult passages at least ten
times without mistakes, and if a mistake is made to start over again. He does not
recommend a set amount of practice time.
5.2.4.5 Acute listening skills (aural development)

Teacher One discourages his students from initially listening to a recording. He believes that learning music is about discovering and exploring, rather than copying and imitating, and that when students listen to a performance from a recording, particularly when they find the performance to be attractive, they tend to believe that it is the only way to perform the piece. It is then very difficult for a teacher to point out that this particular style of performance might not be what the composer actually intended. However, once students have begun to master the technique of a piece, he encourages them to critically listen to other performances of the piece. He points out that upon listening to a recording of a great performance some students can be disappointed – either with their own playing or with the performance itself – whereas others might find it absolutely marvelous and stimulating. But regardless of the particular response of a student, he stresses that the important thing is to develop critical ears. In short, he believes that listening to recordings can do more harm than good unless students really know the piece.

Teacher One encourages his students to attend public performances because he believes this to be more valuable than listening to recordings. He also recommends that students listen to the radio as background music, because it makes them more sensitive to music and helps them to react quickly and instinctively to it. He does not encourage his students to listen to recordings of their own performances. When he does recommend listening to a recording he believes that it should be a distinguished performance; he has special admiration for artists such as Cortot.

5.2.4.6 Stage fright

Teacher One emphasizes that stage fright is a common problem for all performers, but the important point is that even if mistakes occur one should keep on playing. He stresses the importance of obtaining enough performance experience as a means of overcoming stage fright, adding that it is useful to have a ‘dry run’ under concert conditions to experience some sensation of the tension and excitement of the performance. He also points out that pianists must enjoy the performance and have a sense of satisfaction from knowing that they have performed a piece to the best of their ability, have played it from the heart, and have coped well with all of the technical demands.

5.3 Teacher Two

5.3.1 General information

Teacher Two obtained qualifications from the Royal Schools of Music
(ARCM, GRSM, LRAM, and ARAM) and later furthered her studies in the United States, where she obtained a Postgraduate Diploma from the Manhattan School of Music in New York. She has two older sisters and one younger sister, all of whom graduated from the Royal Academy of Music.

Teacher Two has been teaching piano performance at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA) for over 10 years. She has attended many international pedagogical conferences, a number of them in the United States. She has also attended international competitions in the United States, Poland and several other European countries, where she has had the opportunity to observe international standards of piano performance. She has been an adjudicator at the Hong Kong Schools Music Festival and the Steinway and Sons International Youth Piano Competition in Beijing. She is an artist-in-residence in the Keyboard Department of the HKAPA, a part-time instructor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and a regular visiting teacher at the Shenzhen Arts School in China. Her students have won many national and international competitions. She has performed in England, the United States, China, and Hong Kong, and given master classes in Beijing and Sichuan. She is the Chair of the Hong Kong Piano Teachers Association.

Teacher Two first studied in Hong Kong, then in England, France, and the United States. She studied with Betty Drown, Frederic Jackson, Max Pirani, Vlado Perlemuter, Arthur Balsam, and Joseph Reiff. Of these she credits her first teacher, Ms Betty Drown, with whom she commenced at an early age, as having had the greatest influence on her. Betty Drown did not teach technique in detail, but instead stimulated the interest of her students and tried to get them to produce a good quality sound by encouraging them to think about the sound that they produced. She built on the foundations of piano playing. Ms Drown emphasized the significance of motivation in learning, and Teacher Two feels that she owes much to her for her own teaching philosophy. At the same time, she is appreciative of all of her teachers, in that they were all patient, warm, musical, and creative, and offered inspiration to their students. In her own teaching she incorporates aspects of the techniques of all of them in order to bring out the uniqueness of each student. She has ten years experience in teaching piano performance. Of her four piano performance students, one is in final year.

5.3.2 Philosophy

Teacher Two believes that a performance at this level reflects a student’s understanding of the music. She emphasizes that the performer must totally understand the score, and that every written marking, phrasing, and articulation has its functional purpose, adding that there is a special meaning in the particular expression that the composer has used. Students, she asserts, should analyze and understand the
music so that they can share how they feel and what they have learned with others. Finally, she stresses the importance of the overall structure of a performance such that the different segments of a piece come together as a whole. Structure, she argues, is a presentation skill that is essential in performance.

Teacher Two also emphasises the importance of life experience for a performer, suggesting that ‘taste’ and interpretation of a piece will change according to the pianist’s experience. Accordingly, she provides a range of opportunities for students to listen, to express themselves and their understanding of the music, and to perform once they have begun to understand the music intellectually, emotionally, and technically.

Teacher Two believes that each student’s personality and character affects their interpretation and playing and for this reason she tailors her teaching according to the individuality of each student. She gives her students ‘space’ to make choices and use their imagination in creating their own interpretations. She points out that whereas some students will still need to improve technically, others may need more time to delve into the music, to think about it in order to have a better understanding of it. The duty of the teacher, she suggests, has much to do with knowing the limitations of every student, and when to push them and when to allow them time to digest and understand the music. She believes that students should be taught to solve problems using any of the methods they have learned from their lessons. Her hope for her students is that they will learn to creatively find ways of solving independently any problems that they encounter in the music.

Teacher Two emphasizes that her philosophy is to nurture students with love and patience, which she owes to her first teacher who taught her as though she were her daughter. This teacher, Betty Drown, never lost her temper or scolded her. Teacher Two says that her own students all share a motivation to learn, practise, and perform, and all show an enthusiasm for music.

Teacher Two believes that the learning process of preparing for a piano performance instills in students a positive attitude and traits such as obedience and diligence because they must follow the teacher’s instructions with regard to practice and performance. She requires her students to practice four to five hours a day. This is a basic requirement; she is adamant that only practice will make a performance perfect. She plans two recital programs each academic year for each of her students, one of which is for academic evaluation to demonstrate strengths, and the other is to develop any weaknesses. In the process of preparing for a performance she believes it is essential for students to absorb different ideas and approaches to a work.
5.3.3 Teaching principles

Teacher Two stresses that the music produced from the piano must express the feelings and thoughts of both the performer and the composer. A piano performance is an opportunity for the pianist to express his or her feelings, emotion, and ideas. She is strongly committed to the importance of students producing a good tonal quality, suggesting that if the quality of the sound is weak, it is like listening to a singer without a voice. Accordingly, she advocates the production of a “singing” tone. Sound, she suggests, can represent a story, an animal, an object, an action, or an expression. In this connection, she argues that sound not only comprises the notes themselves, but also the particular feeling and meaning that is conveyed through the quality of sound produced in playing each note. She also believes that sound and timbre must be appropriate to the style of a piece. It is not enough that the sound is beautiful: it should be stylistically correct in relation to the composer and the historical background, and the atmosphere of the piece. For her, tonal quality is thus a tool for the expression of images, feelings, and experience.

Influenced by her first teacher, Teacher Two encourages and praises her students; for her, encouragement and positive stimulation are essential. Successful teaching, she says, is about stimulating students to perform, to use their imagination, and to create music that expresses their own individuality. She underscores the importance of experience and the imagination. She recalls that her teachers inspired her to use her imagination to pursue the sound that would represent the meaning of a piece.

5.3.4 Methodologies

Although Teacher Two has not written any method books, she acknowledges that it definitely helps to have a method book that categorizes all of the topics for teaching. She writes notes on different scores for teaching purposes; these relate to such aspects as the structure of the music, methods for practicing, technical points, and artistic feeling.

5.3.4.1 Technique

Teacher Two applies a range of methods in her teaching. She uses a mixture of methods to teach arm weight, finger technique, and legato, staccato, and marcato playing. She encourages her students to use their imagination when learning technique. For example, she suggests different ways of describing finger staccato, such as the crispy feeling of eating a cracker or a raindrop on a roof, and of describing legato, which she helps students to associate with the feeling of the wind blowing or floating clouds. She emphasizes the independence of finger technique, stressing that
each finger should have an even touch. As technique transmits sound into emotion, she believes that performance is not only about the action of the fingers running up and down the keyboard but also about the expression of the performer’s feelings; one must play sincerely from the heart to create dynamic variation, and thus technique is an instrument for the expression of feelings and emotions. All in all, she argues, performers must use their ears to listen and create an image of a sound, and then use technique to express that feeling.

5.3.4.2 Style
In teaching style, Teacher Two describes the concept of style and encourages her students to understand that there is a close relationship between the style and harmony of different periods. In this respect she believes it important to analyse the use of chords and harmonic structure in different compositional styles. She encourages students to listen to different kinds of music so that they find it easier to comprehend the similarities and differences between styles. She holds that listening is the foundation of music learning, and is the only way for students to learn, feel, and understand different styles. She observes that students have their own individual ‘sound’ when performing pieces from different periods, which includes the quality of the sound, the level of dynamics, and, in an artistic sense, the shape or emotional contour of the music.

5.3.4.3 Memorization
In teaching memorization, Teacher Two asks her students to memorize the separate hands and then work with the two hands together. She requires her students to play from memory and to play along with a metronome. She also encourages her students to remember the score visually, so that if they close their eyes they can see the whole score in their mind’s eye. In the process of teaching memorization she stresses the importance of students listening very attentively to their own playing.

5.3.4.4 Practice methods
Teacher Two instills in her students the paramount importance of practice. She identifies the aspects of their playing that they need to focus on, and finds that students show a marked improvement when they correct problems through focused practice.

To encourage students to practice not only physically but also mentally, she requires students to read the score with extreme care. She believes that there is special meaning in the subtleties of a score, and that an outstanding performance, and one that is stylistically sophisticated, comes only through reading the score hundreds
or thousands of times, and understanding the music thoroughly. In practice, it is vital for students to use their ears to listen and their mind to imagine how the sound represents the feelings, emotion, and ideas that they want to convey.

5.3.4.5 Acute listening skills (aural development)

In training students to listen, Teacher Two encourages them to listen to different recorded versions of the same piece. She believes that it is also beneficial to listen to different music by the same composer, such as orchestral and chamber work. Moreover, she encourages her students to record their playing so that they can keep track of their improvements through self-evaluation.

5.3.4.6 Stage fright

As a means of addressing stage fright and performance anxiety, Teacher Two asks her students to take a deep breath before the performance and to learn to feel the centre of the body, ensuring that there is no stress in their shoulders. She observes that when students panic their minds become “messy”. To help overcome this she suggests that they learn to concentrate on the way in which their hands manipulate the keyboard. She believes that students should use their ears to judge the music and the coordination of their hands to control the tone. The most important thing in performance is to listen attentively to the music while playing.

5.4 Teacher Three

5.4.1 General information

Teacher Three was born in Hong Kong and studied piano at the Royal Academy of Music in London on an Associated Board Scholarship. His qualifications include ARAM, LRAM, ARCM, and FTCL. He studied with Guy Jonson at the Royal Academy, and later with Louis Kentner.

Since his return to Hong Kong in 1978, he has combined the careers of teacher and performer. He has appeared frequently in concerts as a soloist and as a member of a chamber orchestra. He has been involved with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra and the Hong Kong Sinfonietta, and has taken part in the Hong Kong Arts Festival. He was artist-in-residence at Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) Radio Four. He has been on the panel of judges for many international competitions, including the Rome International Piano Competition and the Vianna da Motta International Piano Competition. He has given master classes in Hong Kong, the UK, the USA, and Australia.

Teacher Three credits his teachers with having given him a great deal of
inspiration in music and recalls that all of them had a strong musical sense. Their enthusiasm and attitude towards music affected him greatly, and their personality, good temperament, and distinguished performance in piano playing were among the aspects he most admired.

Teacher Three, who is Head of Keyboard Study at one of the institutions in Hong Kong, has twenty-one years of performance teaching experience. Of his five performance students, one is in final year.

5.4.2 Philosophy

Teacher Three does not have any specific philosophy of teaching piano performance. He instead discovers new ideas and creates new teaching methods from his daily life, such as from reading books, attending other arts performances, listening to recordings, and attending concert performances. He said that everything in his life affects the ways in which he teaches. He believes that there is never a single way or method to present musical knowledge and skills, believing that if one observes an object from different perspectives one can explore and discover new inspiration.

Teacher Three does not use a formula to teach. He advises students of the possible methods they can employ, and encourages them to select the method best suited to their own musical thinking, understanding, and aesthetic sense. Therefore, the outcomes of individual student’s performances are different according to the distinct presentations of different students. From a pedagogical point of view, Teacher Three’s attitude to all his performance students is the same, but he uses different methods according to their individual personalities and abilities.

Teacher Three believes that if one has a profound experience of performing, then one will instinctively know how to teach, and that knowledge of pedagogy accumulates from teaching experience. He believes that some knowledge can be only be obtained by experience, and cannot be written down. For him, teaching performance students is a rewarding and fulfilling pursuit if students come to develop a profound love of music from his teaching. He states that this goal is far more meaningful and worthwhile than teaching students piano performance merely for the purpose of winning competitions.

Teacher Three strongly believes in the importance of building-up an interest in music in children because it helps them to think and can positively affect their temperament. This experience, he suggests, is unique, and is beneficial for child development, adding that it is only in a good environment that children can be nurtured to love music and the arts. Certainly, he is deeply committed to developing and nurturing in his students an enthusiasm for playing the piano. To this end he employs a range of methods to stimulate his students to practise and to explain
different ways of thinking about playing. He believes that music is an art that is
difficult to quantify or measure.

Training students for performance, he believes, is character building for
them. He chooses certain basic elements from different musical periods that his
students must learn, and through the teaching-learning process aims to improve their
temperament and personality. He believes that a good performer must possess the
temperament of an artist, a background knowledge of the music, an excellent
technique and a strong aesthetic sense. In piano performance training, he asserts, these
elements account for a performer’s ability to bring out the message of the music and
communicate effectively with the audience. He acknowledges the importance of
students reading widely, listening to recordings, and being involved in other related
arts experiences.

5.4.3 Teaching principles

Teacher Three believes that a good performance brings out the ideas of the
music and, to the extent to which it is possible, represents the composer’s intentions.
He is committed to teaching students to express their emotions through music, and
suggests two ways in which this should be approached: through the student’s
individual personality and character, and through the interpretation of the composer of
a particular style or period. He emphasizes that there must be soul and life in music,
otherwise it is meaningless. The sound produced helps to represent a particular style,
and there is a close relationship between the sound itself and interpretation. At the
same time, he observes that there are many different and acceptable interpretative
versions of Beethoven, for instance. Initially, he suggests, one should follow
everything that is contained in the score, adding that if one then produces the proper
sound in the mind first, one will know how to create the unique sound that represents
the appropriate style.

Teacher Three provides a range of material and information in order to
stimulate different students to think and perform. He suggests that students enjoy
having a degree of freedom to invent or create their own styles and interpretations. He
also acknowledges the importance of stimulation with respect to practice and
cognitive understanding of a work.

5.4.4 Methodologies

Teacher Three has not written any method books because he thinks it is
difficult to explain live experiences in writing or to explain technique in words.
However, he agrees that books that introduce the philosophy of music or offer a guide
to teaching can be useful.
5.4.4.1 Technique

Teacher Three believes that technique is one of the most important issues in teaching and performing piano music as differences in stylistic interpretation are the product of the use of different techniques. For example, he teaches advanced students ways of moving their hands, as the different movements of different parts of the hand – such as the fingers, joints, ligaments, and wrist – produce different kinds of sound. He also stresses listening in relation to piano performance. He says that sound is produced by technique and imagination, but opines that 90% of students do not know how to produce sound on the piano, because although some sounds are very natural, others are difficult to perceive: without a proper awareness of good tonal quality most students can only manage to produce a flat sound. For him there is never an end to the exploration of technique, and there are many different techniques for playing the same music, such as staccato or legato. A good technique, further, is a tool for realising the mood of the music. He emphasizes that it is essential for teachers to continuously look for new methods for teaching technique.

5.4.4.2 Style

In terms of teaching style, Teacher Three believes that acquiring background knowledge is the first step. For example, to introduce his students to impressionism he asks them to look at impressionist paintings and to listen to recordings of impressionist music so that they can apprehend the rudiments and salient features of the music. He then encourages them not only to listen to recordings of a specific piano work, but also to other instrumental music. He believes that this approach over time will enable students to gain an insight into the style of impressionism. He suggests that it can be difficult for people in the East to understand Western music as it reflects neither their roots nor their culture. Therefore, repeated listening to music in order to sense its feeling and style can help to stimulate students’ thinking about music and introduce them to stylistic differences. He acknowledges that the development of a sense of style is difficult to teach and is something that students must search for and explore by themselves, adding that the same piece may be performed by different people in different styles. He strongly advocates students listening to the playing of great pianists in their quest to understand stylistic differences. He adds that it can be a source of inspiration for students if they have a teacher who has a special favorite composer who has had a profound influence on their own sense of style and taste.

5.4.4.3 Memorization

Teacher Three observes that there are many different aspects to the
teaching of memorization. He emphasizes that aural training is the most important issue, but also acknowledges the importance of analysis. He encourages his students to memorize and believes that this should begin at a very early age: it is when children are very young that the fundamentals should be established, suggesting that it is impossible to start at the tertiary level with any degree of success. He has observed that some students play from memory easily because they have ‘perfect pitch.’ He does not require students to play from memory in the first lessons, but they must do so for concerts or examinations, with the exception of accompanists or when performing in a chamber music ensemble.

5.4.4.4 Practice methods

Teacher Three does not require his students to practise for a fixed duration of time every day, but does encourage them to practise as much as they can. He suggests that it is difficult to determine how many hours are sufficient as it differs for each student: some are outstanding and some are not. He suggests that the extent to which a student should practice depends on their intelligence and ability. He believes however that students should approach practice with an understanding of the problems that need to be addressed. This entails that they listen with a critical ear when practising: listening with great care is paramount. High-quality practice, he suggests, guarantees a perfect performance.

5.4.4.5 Acute listening skills (aural development)

Teacher Three observes that many students do not know how to produce a good quality sound from the piano: even when their hands are ready on the keyboard, they do not think about the notes before they play. It is through an enhanced aural ability, he believes, that students can most effectively produce sounds to represent an image, a feeling or a mood. For string players, this means thinking about the sound before they play, but piano students, even at an advanced level, have often not developed the habit of listening to themselves. He argues that if students develop a sensitive ear they will better be able to perceive problems and improve their tonal quality. Once this is achieved, he suggests, they have the potential to become great pianists.

Teacher Three seldom asks his students to record their playing and listen back to it. Instead, he encourages them to listen to the recordings of professional musicians, and not only pianists but also other instrumentalists. Additionally, he encourages his students to attend concerts, believing that live performances are more convincing than recordings.
5.4.4.6 Stage fright

In order to overcome stage fright and performance anxiety, Teacher Three emphasises the importance of a performer preparing well. Essential to this, he believes, is a good technique, a good memory, a good ear, an acute sense of concentration, and experience. In addition, he argues, performers must know how to express music and convey its meaning to an audience.

To prepare students for the performance experience, Teacher Three creates many opportunities for them to play in front of their friends and other students. He argues the importance of students understanding that they must perform well under any situation, regardless of whether it is in a small theatre or a large concert hall. To this end they must obtain performance experience in different situations and environments. The process of preparing students for performance entails ensuring that they feel secure and are confident about their ability to perform.

5.5 Teacher Four

5.5.1 General information

Teacher Four is an adjunct lecturer at one of the Hong Kong institutions. She graduated from Hong Kong Baptist College (the former name of the Hong Kong Baptist University), with an Honors Diploma and furthered her studies for two years at the Birmingham School of Music in England where she gained a Post Graduate Diploma of Music. Her other qualifications as a performer include an ABSM, GBSM, LTCL, and LRSM. She has performed in public concerts as a chamber music player and an accompanist.

In Hong Kong she studied piano with Tam Ka Kit. In Britain she studied with Malcolm Wilson, head of the keyboard department at the Birmingham Conservatoire. None of Teacher Four’s family members received a musical education or has achievements in this field. With seven years of performance teaching she has five performance students, two of whom are in their final year.

5.5.2 Philosophy

Teacher Four believes that reading books is an important way of acquiring musical knowledge. In her teaching she emphasizes the basic foundations of performance. Her own teachers had taught her that basic technique was very important in piano performance.

For Teacher Four, knowledge is gained from experience. In order to perceive and interpret music from a range of perspectives she believes it is essential to broaden one’s viewpoint and experience. For example, she asks her students to see
films and read books to open their minds to new experiences and a broad palette of emotion. She also encourages her students to talk to each other in order to share and obtain different life experiences. She believes that observation acquired from life experiences opens students’ minds and better equips them to express emotion from different perspectives.

Teacher Four does not have a fixed philosophy or set of principles for teaching. She has incorporated different aspects of teaching technique gleaned from her own teachers, and uses different methods to teach different students according to their personality and ability. She believes that if a teacher understands the personal goals and personality of her students, then it is easier to plan their learning experiences. Moreover, she commented that her first teacher had inspired her because he did not teach music as a very technical subject but always related music to the other arts and even to a philosophy of life. She hopes that her own students understand that music is an important element in their lives. For her, the importance of piano education lies in students learning to think independently so that they can make personal judgements and learn how to handle the different elements that are related to music. She encourages in her students a love of music and an enjoyment in performing it and believes that if students embark on an ongoing quest to explore their interest in music they will be motivated to pursue it for life.

Teacher Four believes that piano education can develop well-rounded individuals whose unique personality is evidenced in their playing. Central to the process is the development of a positive attitude to music. One must be humble, confident, objective, and have a strong character to overcome problems in learning music, she suggests. She adds that a good performer is capable of systematic planning in thinking and working, and is good at organizing the details. In her philosophy of teaching, she argues that the most important thing – which is far more important than technical progress and musical growth – is to teach students to be objective, to be human beings and to have a sense of humanity. She emphasizes that if a student’s attitude towards life is healthy, then it will be easy for them to learn from observation and exploration.

Above all, Teacher Four believes that music passes on special ideas to others. She defines a good performer as one who has the maturity of technique, confidence, and ability to communicate with and touch the audience. Through her teaching of piano performance she hopes that students will be able to share in her experience of music and become acquainted with the precious ideas that she learned from her teachers.
5.5.3 Teaching principles

Teacher Four believes that a good piano performance engenders meaning. She believes that the audience will be touched or convinced by a performance if the music conveys a meaning that cannot be described by words. She finds satisfaction when she sees improvement in the performance of her students – especially when they succeed in conveying their idea of the music on stage.

Teacher Four suggests that mature or experienced performers should know how to create an atmosphere when performing. Moreover, mature performers should have a technique that enables them to present the internal workings or ideas of the music through their performance. As a means of developing this ability she encourages her students to try different things, including participating in performances and listening to different recordings of the same work.

A core principle for her is that students should be taught as well as possible, and to this end she is open to learning new methods in order to help her students to improve their musical sense and technique. Her aim is the continual improvement of her students.

5.5.4 Methodologies

Teacher Four has not written any method books, stating that she has not had the time to write a handbook to collect her ideas in a systematic way. She adds however that she has developed many workable ideas and approaches to teaching that she employs with her students. She acknowledges that there are many different methods for teaching, and that a method book can be a good resource for teachers to read or to use as a reference. At the same time she suggests that as individual philosophies and pedagogical ideas differ, following a particular teaching method presented in a book has its own problems. Usually, she uses her own ideas and synthesises ideas from different method books. In short, she likes to experiment with her teaching methods, and believes that students stimulate her sufficiently to share her pedagogical ideas.

5.5.4.1 Technique

For Teacher Four, technique is about performing a difficult passage with ease. Her methods of teaching technique are not based on books, but rather on her own experience. She first persuades her students to understand why they should think and play a technical passage in a particular way. She acknowledges that students can still achieve the same outcome without adhering to such a special practicing technique, but that it takes them more time. In the process of developing technique she guides students to express their understanding and feeling through their playing.
5.5.4.2 Style

For Teacher Four, teaching style is about encouraging students to think and feel. She believes that students should listen to different kinds of music from different periods. For example, if learning a piece from the Baroque period, she suggests to her students that they play the harpsichord or organ to experience the feeling of playing the music as it would have been played originally. The piano works of Mozart, in contrast, are symphonic and operatic in character, she argues, and thus to perform Mozart’s work well students must listen to his orchestral music and watch his operas. She also advocates that students have a familiarity with a range of art forms, including painting, drama, dance, and film, as this can stimulate them to explore and understand appropriate styles of music interpretation and performance.

5.5.4.3 Memorization

All of the performance students taught by Teacher Four must learn to memorize as she believes this will help them to learn more quickly. She concedes that different people use different methods to memorize, but says that, in general, if students learn every detail in the process of practising, then they will not find it difficult to memorize the music. She believes there is a close relationship between memorization and aural ability, and requires her students to sing as a conductor might in order to learn the different parts of a piece, such as the melody and the bass.

5.5.4.4 Practice methods

After identifying problems in her students’ playing, Teacher Four suggests appropriate practice methods as a means of overcoming them. She stresses that students must understand the cause of their problems as a basis for practising effectively. She guides students’ practice according to their level. She first asks them to analyze the score from a theoretical point of view, and then encourages them to listen for the broad meaning, paying attention to such aspects as chords, harmonies, melody, and rhythm. She emphasizes practising with a critical ear, and guides her students to talk about such aspects as the colour and tonal quality of the sounds they produce, the need to create atmosphere and mood, and considerations relating to the development of an artistic sense in general.

For students who are sitting for an examination and do not know how to plan their practice, Teacher Four sets specific goals. She encourages performance students to practice as much as possible, but she accepts that this requirement is sometimes hard for students as they have many other activities and homework commitments.
5.5.4.5 Acute listening skills (aural ability)

Teacher Four believes that there are two reasons for listening to recordings. The first is that it is important to have a stylistic understanding of ‘typical’ performance practices with respect to each composer; this can be gained by listening to different instrumental works of the same composer, including solos and ensembles. The second reason is so that students learn to compare performances of different pianists. In guiding students’ listening, Teacher Four sets questions for students to consider as a means of encouraging them to express their feelings and their knowledge of the characteristics of a piece. Finally, she asks her students to record their practice and playing, and to listen to it and evaluate themselves, although she believes that students benefit more from playing in front of people or performing in a range of situations.

5.5.4.6 Stage fright

In relation to stage fright and performance anxiety, Teacher Four advocates students being given more opportunities to perform in front of others and to share their experiences with others. She also suggests that if students are provided with more opportunity to talk with their teachers about the performance experience, then they will gain greater confidence; it is a process of students learning to be relatively calm and controlling their nerves. She uses different methods with different students, but providing opportunities for students to perform at different venues is her main approach in assisting students to overcome stage fright.

5.6 Teacher Five

5.6.1 General information

Teacher Five studied at the Beijing Central Conservatory of Music and the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA), where she majored in piano performance. In Beijing her piano teachers were Li Qifong and Yin Chengzong. In Hong Kong she studied under John Winther, Head of the Keyboard Department at HKAPA. After completing her professional diploma at HKAPA she studied at the San Francisco Conservatory for four years under Mack McCray on a full scholarship and obtained a Masters degree.

While studying at the San Francisco Conservatory Teacher Five gave solo recitals and performed concertos with the orchestra there; she also performed as a soloist and as a member of a chamber music ensemble at music festivals, including the Mozart Festival and the Lancaster Festival in Ohio. She has given master classes.
at the college of Santa Rosa and the Lancaster Festival. In Hong Kong she gives recitals in schools every year and has performed chamber music with members of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra. She has also performed in the Young Musician Series for RTHK Radio Four. In 1997 she gave her own recital in Hong Kong. There is a close relationship between Teacher Five’s family and music. Both of her parents are singers, and of her two sisters one is a violinist with the Hong Kong Sinfonietta and the other, a viola player, is a music teacher.

Teacher Five has thirteen years of teaching experience, and teaches keyboard skills at The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts in addition to being a part-time piano teacher at The University of Hong Kong. She has three performance students, one of whom is in final year.

5.6.2 Philosophy

Teacher Five believes that background knowledge is important; accordingly, before learning a piece she advises students to listen to and analyze the music as well as studying other relevant material, such as books or pictures as a means of gaining greater insight into the background of the piece.

Influenced by her own teachers, she emphasizes emotions and feelings more than technique. Indeed, her feelings for music most influence her teaching. She believes that she has an obligation to help human kind to feel the truth and the beauty of God through music.

Teacher Five believes that experience begets knowledge, and that the experience of teaching is more important than learning to teach from a book. She has read many method books, both in Chinese and English, and finds them to be too theoretical. She believes in bringing theory into actual experience.

In her teaching philosophy, she uses different methods for different students. She argues that students are unique and cannot be generalized. Her pedagogical ideas and ultimate goals are to teach students how to learn independently, both musically and technically. She says that each student is different and significant, and tries her best to communicate and inspire all of her students.

Teacher Five believes that piano education plays an important role in developing the personality and character of students. She believes in striking a balance between obedience, diligence, and creativity, and discourages imitation. For her, teaching performance students is a most worthwhile pursuit because it is a way of passing on the most valuable notions about music from teacher to student, and from one generation to the next. She believes that she is able to influence her students by sharing her enjoyment of performing.
5.6.3 Teaching principles

Teacher Five is committed to the belief that music brings out ideas, emotions, and feelings. For her, a good music performance is one that communicates with and touches the hearts of the audience; it brings out the feelings of an audience to such an extent that it can make them cry. She believes that good performers play music from the bottom of their hearts. She observes that some students play perfectly well in terms of technique, however, due to a lack of life experience they do not play with feeling and soul and, as a consequence, are not good performers. Good performers, she suggests, should have their own style and be capable of interpreting a work with emotion on a personal and abstract level.

In terms of teaching principles, Teacher Five believes in stimulating students’ imagination. She never makes them follow everything she says, and encourages them to try different methods to create a sound. She never blocks the thinking of her students, and believes that imagination, creativity, and encouragement are important in helping students to learn how to bring out the meaning, expression and emotion of the music. She does her utmost to nurture talented students. As a means of enriching the different artistic styles of her students she chooses a wide-ranging repertoire in order to assist them to discover and express different aspects of the artistic experience.

5.6.4 Methodologies

Teacher Five has not written any method books, but suggests that it is helpful to read them as a reference. She has a conscientious approach to learning about various methods. As noted, she stresses the primacy of teaching experience over learning about methodologies from a book.

5.6.4.1 Technique

In teaching technique, Teacher Five gives her students many finger exercises to practise; these are taken from the works of Czerny and Hanon and are directed at strengthening the independence of the fingers. She also explains to students how to use the weight of their hands, how to relax the arms and shoulders, and how to use the back to support the body. She emphasizes the importance of relaxation – including relaxation of the whole body – when playing. She suggests that if students can manage a difficult passage and play it skillfully with ease, then they have a good enough technique to perform large works.

5.6.4.2 Style

Teacher Five advocates reading books to understand the lives of
composers and the characteristics of instruments as a basis for comprehending stylistic differences with respect to different types of music. In teaching style, she asks her students to listen to recordings of other works by the same composer as a means of them becoming more familiar with the style of that composer. She also suggests that students listen to other music from the same period in order to broaden their understanding of the style of that particular time. In addition, she encourages students to become familiar with the different piano touches as would have been heard in the baroque classical, romantic and more recent eras.

In relation to personal style, Teacher Five – who is Chinese herself – observes that Chinese students are passive, shy, and lack a freedom of spirit and confidence, and do not like to express their feeling, ideas, and opinions. According to her, teachers have a responsibility to develop students’ personality through their piano playing. For her, one of the purposes of teaching is to lead students to an understanding of the abstract mood, meaning, atmosphere, and character of music. To assist in this process she employs stories, some of which she creates herself, to illustrate her own feelings and experience of a piece.

5.6.4.3 Memorization

In teaching memorization, Teacher Five focuses on analyzing chords, harmonic progressions, patterns and sequences, and approaching a work section by section. She also emphasizes the use of the kinaesthetic method to memorize music combined with a conscious recognition of the physical actions and movements required to execute a piece. In short, she combines mental and physical training to develop the ability of students to memorize a score by sections.

5.6.4.4 Practice methods

Teacher Five provides clear practice guidelines for her students and teaches them economical methods for practising. She encourages slow practice of small sections at a time, arguing that the brain cannot memorize an entire piece quickly within a short span of time. Repeated practise of the same passage separately as well as slowly is also of benefit, she suggests, and students should play it three to five times continuously without mistakes to ensure that they have really mastered it. She stresses that in order to correct errors, patience and time are needed to teach the hands and fingers how to move to the proper position and function as required.

To ensure that their practice sessions are as effective as possible, at the end of each lesson Teacher Five explains to her students the goal of their practice for the following week and the improvements she expects to see by the next lesson. She does not recommend a set time for practising, but believes that students should show
considerable improvement with regular practice if they follow her advice.

5.6.4.5 Acute listening skills (aural development)
Teacher Five chooses a wide-ranging repertoire for her students to learn, and suggests that they record their practice and listen back to identify any problems. Moreover, she recommends they listen to other works by the same composer as a means of becoming strongly familiar with stylistic considerations and interpretative possibilities.

5.6.4.6 Stage fright
Teacher Five requires her students to memorize the piece (or pieces) that they are due to perform at least one month before the performance. She then creates for them the atmosphere of a real performance whereby students play as if they were performing live or sitting an examination, and proceed to play without interruption despite any mistakes. She also invites groups of students to sit in and watch her students perform, believing that students need to learn to perform well under some tension. She regards concert practice as very important and encourages her students to perform as much as possible prior to a real performance or examination.

5.7 Teacher Six

5.7.1 General information
Teacher Six has an international reputation as a concert pianist, teacher, and competition adjudicator. He has won many awards in competitions, including third prize at the Third International Smetana Piano Competition at the Prague Spring Festival (Czechoslovakia) in 1957, first prize at the First George Enescu International Piano Competition in Bucharest (Romania) in 1958, and fourth prize at the Sixth International Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw (Poland) in 1960.

From 1984 to 1989 he was Vice-president of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, and between 1964 and 1999 was an adjudicator of various competitions in Japan, Russia, Canada, Italy, Spain, and Poland. From 1993 to 1997, he was Artist in Residence at Hong Kong Baptist University, and since 1999 has been a professor at The Chinese University of Hong Kong teaching performance students.

He studied at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music under Alfred Wittenberg and Tatiana Petrovna Kravchenko, who was a professor at the St. Petersburg Conservatory of Music. He remembers his teachers for their dedication, enthusiasm, and professionalism, both in teaching and performing music. He has fifty years experience in piano teaching. One of his students is in the final year, majoring in
performance.

5.7.2 Philosophy

Teacher Six believes that a good piano performance reflects the harmony, texture, structure, articulation, and dynamics of the music. A good performer knows the content of the music clearly, including the historical background, and has a good foundation of musical knowledge. Moreover, he argues that students must learn to master techniques so that they can solve problems in music independently. He considers an absolute and thorough training in basic technique to be essential.

Teacher Six, who agrees with the great piano educator Leschetizky, who said that there is no fixed or single teaching methodology, does not follow a particular method. At the same time, he stresses that he has learned much from different educators, philosophers, and performers. He strongly believes that each student will benefit from different teaching methods, as each encounters different problems. Accordingly, he is in favour of using different methods to teach different students because the needs of students differ according to their personality, ability, aptitude, and background.

Teaching private piano students, he says, is totally different from giving a lecture at a university. The piano lesson is tailor-made to cater to the personality or nature of the individual student and involves imbuing students with an artistic sense and developing personal characteristics in relation to performance. By contrast, he argues, in a lecture the teacher prepares all of the content, and the mode of delivery is one way. However, the piano lesson is more interactive and the teacher cannot prepare it completely in advance because problems that the student confronts need to be addressed as they arise in the course of the lesson itself. Piano teachers therefore need to be able to improvise with their teaching method in order to ensure that it is appropriate to the problem being solved and the individual ability and nature of the student.

The most important aspect of Teacher Six’s teaching philosophy is the ‘formation’ of the student. Commencing with a basic foundation, a good music teacher can shape, frame, mould, and develop personal characteristics of students. Teachers have an obligation, he believes, to ensure not only that students are well-prepared but also to bring out their full potential. For the student’s part, daily training or practice is essential. All of this contributes to a student developing a personal style.

5.7.3 Teaching principles

Teacher Six stated that art involves feeling, atmosphere, and mood and has
a special meaning for human beings. He believes that music brings out meaning, emotion, and image and that a good performer is the ‘middle-man’ who is responsible for bringing out the music to reflect the thinking and ideas of the composer with regard to style and structure. He stresses that the imagination has a key role to play in the arts experience and that it is the responsibility of the teacher to cultivate, educate, and nurture the imaginative sense and musical understanding of students. He suggests however that many piano teachers do not teach this aspect, and instead use other ways to explain music, such as that a note should be played longer, shorter, stronger, or weaker; this for him is not sufficient. In the process of developing students’ imaginative sense, he requires them to prepare their pieces both musically and technically according to his instructions; this is their responsibility in the learning process.

Teacher Six believes that a good performance should involve stimulation, imagination, a creative sense, and inspiration. In a performance, music should convey something beyond the notes and rhythm, and when this is achieved, music comes alive.

5.7.4 Methodologies

Teacher Six has not written any method books and does not use them in his teaching; as noted, he does not employ any specific method in his teaching.

5.7.4.1 Technique

Teacher Six believes that technique should be accumulated little by little. He teaches his students to master all of the basic techniques. However, technique is not only about finger movement: it should be taught and practised with a musical sense. He stresses that a good sound is produced through a combination of good technique and musical sense and, at an artistic level, should convey feeling and mood. A good pianist, he asserts, should play with a technique that leads the audience to imagine what the sound represents.

He argues the close relationship between technique, musical sense, and imagination. Therefore, all of the aspects of technique, such as using the fingers, wrists, and forearm movements to play different combinations of slur, staccato and so on must be taught together, and must be fully absorbed for performers to convey their imagination and musical sense, otherwise the playing will become boring and meaningless.
5.7.4.2 Style

In teaching style, Teacher Six highlights three elements: the importance of listening to performances, reading to obtain background information, and the need to create a personal style. For him, it is through listening to all of the works of a particular composer that one comes to understand that composer’s style. Reading books is essential in coming to understand the background and the environment that moulded the personality of the composer and the composer’s work.

In teaching different styles of music, Teacher Six emphasizes that every student should develop their own style in performing music of different periods. For him, the concept of style is related to the personality of the performer. He points out that mature artists have their own individual personality.

5.7.4.3 Memorization

Teacher Six believes that playing from memory has a vital role in piano performance. Accordingly, he encourages his performance students to memorize their pieces. First of all, he asks his students to memorize the harmony and chord progressions, and then asks them to memorize the different lines and the tonal qualities and pitch. He is critical of the fact that many students do not develop the ability to memorize all of the details of the music.

5.7.4.4 Practice methods

In teaching students how to practice, Teacher Six makes sure that his students understand the importance of productive and effective practice as he does not want them to take two hours to accomplish something that can be completed in two minutes. Moreover, he stresses the importance of musicality – or playing with a musical sense – regardless of what students are practising. When he corrects their mistakes, he makes sure that they understand the reasons for the problems, especially as the same problem may be encountered in different situations. He believes that students should be guided to find solutions to problems independently and not have to rely on the teacher. As for the process of practising, he does not set any specific outcomes or goals for his students to achieve; he does however expect them to practise effectively, stating that the more they practise effectively the better the results.

5.7.4.5 Acute listening skills (aural development)

Teacher Six emphasizes that listening to recordings from a broad perspective is important. He explains that if a student performs a sonata, then it will
not be enough to listen to recordings of that sonata, but that the symphonic and other works of the composer must also be approached. Further, it is helpful to know the different styles of music in the various life stages of a composer, and this too can be approached through listening to recordings.

5.7.4.6 Stage fright
Teacher Six believes that the stage fright normally results when the student is ill-prepared, but adds that unknown or unforeseen factors can also produce stage fright. He believes that students can overcome the problem by ensuring that they are extremely familiar with the music by playing from memory often and preparing thoroughly before the performance. He emphasizes that it is necessary to “make all the unknowns known,” including the notes, the rhythm, the sound, the timbre, and the mood of the piece.

5.8 Teacher Seven

5.8.1 General information
Teacher Seven, has a Doctoral degree in performance. She has been a faculty member at Hong Kong Baptist University, The University of Hong Kong, and The Academy for Performing Arts, and her students mainly come from these institutions. She is now an artist-in-residence at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. She performs in various schools in Hong Kong with the Bauhinia Piano Trio to promote chamber music, and recently performed on RTHK's Radio Four. She has been an adjudicator at many piano competitions in different countries, including Spain and Hong Kong.

Teacher Seven studied in England when she was a teenager and graduated from the Royal College of Music where her teachers included Louis Kentner and Peter Norris. Later, she studied piano performance in the United States, where her teachers were Vlado Perlemuter and Gilbert Kalish. Her Doctoral degree is from the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

She was brought up in a musical family. Her father was a music teacher in a secondary school, her mother is a graduate of the Shanghai Music Conservatory, and her two sisters are pianists and teachers. As she puts it, she grew up “surrounded by music”. She is teaching three final-year students from Hong Kong Baptist University, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, and The Academy for Performing Arts. Two of them are taking piano performance as their major, and the other is majoring in piano accompaniment.
5.8.2. Philosophy

Teacher Seven acknowledges the importance of students having a thorough knowledge of a piece of music – such as its history and cultural background – to stimulate them in thinking about how to interpret the style of the work. She also emphasizes that a strong technique and awareness of the pulse of the rhythm in the music are vital in piano performance. She explains that a musical sense will grow if students have a secure and strong foundation of technical training. Rhythm for her is the lifeblood of music.

She acknowledges the importance of experience in both teaching and learning. Through teaching a range of students she has learned how to deepen their understanding of the different ways of articulating music. She is committed to the belief that a teacher should teach every student differently, because each student is unique. Teachers, she says, should adjust their methods according to the different personality, character and learning ability of students. Sometimes she improvises a teaching method using her personal experience as inspiration. She also is intent on teaching her students how to teach themselves, as she believes that students should know how to learn independently instead of being spoon-fed. She expects and requires her students to be diligent and hard working, and to have a passion for piano music.

Influenced by her own teachers, Teacher Seven wants students to be inspired by music and to develop an artistic sense; she is also concerned to develop their personality as performers. Her goal is that her students will come to love music through her teaching and have a passion and enthusiasm for music. She derives great joy from experiencing and sharing music with her students and in the process has come to understand how different students learn. She finds it very rewarding to see students improve, even if they lack talent. The most important aspect of her pedagogy is the process and experience of sharing in teaching and learning because it leads to knowledge being transferred from one generation to the next.

5.8.3 Teaching principles

Teacher Seven argues that a good piano performance should move and touch the hearts of the audience, and that good performers should convey their sense of enjoyment and their personal ideas through the music. She argues that it is through the development of a musical sense that performers convey their thoughts and feelings – but this must be fostered at an early age.

Teacher Seven pays attention to the overall development of her students regardless of whether they are bright and talented. She believes that teachers have a responsibility to use different methods at different stages of a child’s development.
according to their strengths and abilities. Her teaching continues to be influenced by ideas gleaned from pedagogical writings that she deems are worthy of employing or experimenting with. Accordingly, she reads widely – journal articles and books – in order to broaden her knowledge of teaching. Reading, she says, inspires her thinking and this has led her to use a range of stimuli in her teaching.

5.8.4 Methodologies
Teacher Seven does not use any method books in her teaching, and has not written any such books either. At the same time she believes that method books provide a systematic pedagogical approach, some of which are different from traditional approaches and well worth studying or referring to for reference.

5.8.4.1 Technique
Teacher Seven emphasizes the importance of a strong technical foundation; for her, technique is the servant of music. Different moods can be conveyed in different kinds of music using different techniques, and different fingerings and hand shapes produce different tonal qualities. She stresses that students should know what kind of timbre, tone color, and musical sense they want to pursue, and should use different techniques accordingly in order to communicate the musical ideas of a work. Equally does she believe in the importance of listening to the sound produced; she combines her method of listening with physical movements. She believes that technique is strongly related to the co-ordination of the muscles, joints, and ligaments of the fingers, wrists, and arms to produce different tone colors and moods. Performers, she says, must understand how to co-ordinate the different movements of the hands in order to produce the sound or achieve the tonal quality that represents the artistic feeling and mood of their mind and heart.

5.8.4.2 Style
Where appropriate, in teaching style Teacher Seven encourages her students to understand the feeling of the piece that they intend to perform by looking at pictures or paintings that are in some way related to it. She asks her students to find out about the cultural and historical background of the piece and recommends that they think about how the ideas of the pictures can be conveyed. Moreover, she asks her students to listen to performances and recordings. For example, in teaching Baroque music she requires her students to listen to harpsichord, forte-piano and organ music as a means of learning more about the style of that particular period. Students, she says, can be inspired by background information, and their interest is thus cultivated and nurtured.
5.8.4.3 Memorization

Teacher Seven uses several methods to develop her students’ ability to memorize pieces. First, she requires them to learn the notes through listening and to memorize and play them using their aural ability. Second, she encourages them to memorize the music by sight and view the score as a picture; when students close their eyes they should be able to visualize the score. Third, she asks them to memorize the geographical contours of the piece on the piano with respect to hand shapes, positions of chords, scales, and leaps. Finally, she suggests that students memorize their pieces by analyzing the score from a theoretical point of view, including its forms, structure, texture, and harmonic progressions.

5.8.4.4 Practice methods

Teacher Seven laments the fact that most students do not know how to practise because they are not sufficiently cognizant of their problems. She firmly believes that technique and a musical sense can be improved by listening to music of different genres and styles. She emphasises the importance of concentrated listening during practice, and stresses that the development of an artistic sense in playing cannot be achieved without due attention to tonal quality. Whilst she acknowledges that practice can be somewhat boring, she believes that when it is undertaken with critical ears to enable students to learn how to produce the right sound and convey artistic feeling, it comes alive. She believes that, ideally, students should set their own goals in order to benefit most from practice. If however a teacher sets the goals or targets for practice it is imperative that students monitor their improvement and not leave it to the teacher alone to decide if the practice has been effective.

5.8.4.5 Acute listening skills (aural development)

Teacher Seven encourages her students to record their playing and to listen back to it as a means of developing an attitude of independence in piano development. Listening to recordings of one’s own playing is a process of self-evaluation. She adds that when students have acquired the necessary skill to master a piece they should also listen to recordings by a range of performers for further reference and comparison. This will assist them to develop their own interpretative ability with respect to the works they play.

5.8.4.6 Stage fright

In preparing students for a performance, Teacher Seven encourages them to experience playing for others. She believes that such exposure in front of different
audiences is an excellent means of assisting students to deal with stage fright. Regardless of the audience or situation, it is essential that students learn to maintain their highest standard of performance. Moreover, from a psychological point of view, she suggests, students should learn to develop a healthy attitude towards performance and view it as a chance to share their musical achievement, as distinct from merely being an opportunity to show off. In a performance a pianist should have something to say, and should say it self-consciously and subjectively through the fingers.

5.9 Teacher Eight

5.9.1 General information

Teacher Eight studied in England and graduated from the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) in Manchester. She obtained a Post Graduate Diploma, and Diploma in Professional Performance. Upon graduating she returned to Hong Kong and is now an accompanist for church choirs and a part-time instructor of piano and performance at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Her first piano teacher, her aunt, aroused her interest and musical sense in her early childhood. Before enrolling at RNCM she had studied piano in the United Kingdom with Ms M. Clementi for six years. Teacher Six had two students majoring in piano performance, one of whom is in final year.

5.9.2. Philosophy

Due to the profound influence of her teacher Ms Clementi, Teacher Eight uses methodical training when working with her students and requires them to be very disciplined when they practise. She has extremely high expectations of her students and expects them to be able to convey all of the details of a piece of music in order to achieve an excellent level of performance. She requires her students to employ a range of learning methods with each piece so that they will feel secure in performance. She stresses the importance of teachers exercising diligent judgement with respect to the ability of their students, and believes strongly in the importance of a teacher taking into consideration the aspirations of a student, especially one who is in their final year of performance and who wishes to further their studies overseas. These students should be given a broadened repertoire that should include the music of Chopin and Brahms, she argues.

Teacher Eight instills in her students that regardless of whether they play well or not, they have a right to share the enjoyment of music at different learning stages, even if this means performing just a simple piece. She emphasizes the enjoyment of music in life and hopes that her students will share music with others.
She also believes that with a good teacher the learning of the piano can nurture a positive attitude in students, and holds that a student who works diligently will develop into a competent pianist over time. For her, an integral role of the teacher is to develop a student’s confidence in performing.

A major goal of an education in piano performance, she suggests, is the development of independence in learning because ultimately it is the responsibility of the performer to interpret and convey the music of a composer. She finds it extremely rewarding to be a teacher of piano performance and gains great joy and satisfaction in identifying and tapping a student’s potential and helping them to improve their skills.

5.9.3 Teaching principles

In terms of pedagogy, Teacher Eight notes that there are three important elements in her approach to teaching performance students: using imagination, enabling students to understand that music conveys ideas and emotion, and the importance of stimulation in teaching and learning. Underpinning this is an emphasis on technical training. A teacher has a responsibility to develop such aspects as perception, feeling, interpretation, and stylistic understanding: the development of these qualities provides the basic foundation upon which performance students develop their individual personality which is so essential in performance. She cautions that students should not be treated as machines but, rather, always encouraged to develop and refine their unique human qualities and insights into the music they perform, adding that the performance of music should always be a lively experience.

Teacher Eight stresses that stimulation is an important element in teaching and learning, and in this respect she herself has learned a great deal from reading pedagogical books and journals. She believes that students can learn much from master classes and piano competitions, both in terms of technique and the development of their own persona.

5.9.4 Methodologies

Teacher Eight does not have her own method book, but instead likes to read and share with students what she has learned from writings on piano teaching. She believes in sharing teaching experiences and methods, and encourages discussion on teaching and learning with her students. Many of her ideas come from her extensive reading on teaching methodologies and where appropriate she adapts or applies the principles discussed or implicit in these to create her own methods.

5.9.4.1 Technique

In her teaching of technique, Teacher Eight focuses on finger exercises and
the physical movement of the hands. In laying the foundations for such work she 
bорrows strongly on the training method of Hanon. She notes that because all of these 
exercises are in C major, students do not have to concentrate on reading the notes, and 
can instead focus on improving any physical weakness. Her approach to teaching 
technique is very methodical. As students progress she requires them to play finger 
exercises in all 24 major and minor keys, emphasizing the production of a clear and 
bright tone with each finger. She also requires her students to practise different 
combinations of rhythmic patterns.

A major emphasis in her teaching of technique is enabling students to 
recognize the relationship between physical movement and technique. She believes 
that many students concentrate too much on the wrist to the detriment of their finger 
training. At the same time she is cognizant that students need to develop the necessary 
arm weight to play chords and must learn to project the melodic line with both the left 
and the right hands. In other words, her approach to the teaching of technique is 
comprehensive and includes attention to fingertips, wrists, arms and shoulders. 
Another aspect of technique that she emphasizes is legato playing. In addition to 
Hanon, she also advocates the work of Czerny. She notes, finally, that students should 
not aim for speed, but for clarity and strength of the sound.

5.9.4.2 Style

In discussing the teaching of style Teacher Eight acknowledges the central 
role of listening. She believes that teachers need to demonstrate at least two radically 
different styles of performing the same work and ask students to think about which is 
correct. For example, in playing J. S. Bach, she will demonstrate a romantic 
interpretation and one that is more appropriate to a Baroque performance style. In 
discussing the importance of an acceptable stylistic interpretation of music she argues 
the importance of students learning to perceive and feel the inner aspects of the music, 
including the “scenery” of the sound. She suggests that to some extent a performance 
style is closely related to the personality of the performer and observes that style is 
difficult to teach if students are shy or reticent in acknowledging and expressing their 
thoughts and feelings.

5.9.4.3 Memorization

Teacher Eight believes that memorization should be taught step-by-step. 
First, she teaches students to divide the music into small sections and to memorize the 
hands separately. If the music is complicated, she teaches students to recognize the 
different shapes or patterns in the music. In general, she teaches her students to 
memorize music by analyzing the similarities and differences in structure, form, and
harmony. For example, for a sonata, students must learn to analyze the exposition, development, recapitulation and coda of the 1\textsuperscript{st} movement, as well as the form of the subsequent movements. To help them to memorize details, she teaches them to analyze chords and sequences, paying attention to similarities in fingering.

At a more advanced level she employs a ‘complicated’ method to consolidate the memorization of a work in which students play one hand and sing the notes of the other hand simultaneously and then swap over. Another approach is to have students play the right-hand notes of the first bar and sing the left-hand notes of the second bar, then play the right-hand notes of the third bar and sing the left-hand notes of the fourth bar, and so on. She cautions students that memorizing from the kinaesthetic movements of the fingers is not reliable. She has no doubt that memorization is an effective way of preparing students for performance.

5.9.4.4 Practice methods

Teacher Eight requires her students to practice for at least three hours a day, half of which is spent focusing on technical exercises and the other half involves practising for style, tonal quality, and musical sense. In teaching students how to practise, she focuses on how to achieve a goal effectively and purposefully. She emphasizes step-by-step progress, and uses a variety of methods, both simple and advanced. She teaches students to practise complicated exercises, as she believes that if one can master difficult methods with ease, then one can perform simple exercises to perfection. It is her belief that if one uses easier and more direct methods to practise complicated passages the result is not as favourable. In essence, she deliberately makes problematic passages even harder for student to practise.

Teacher Eight identifies the specific improvement that she expects to see in a student by the next lesson. For example, a student may be encouraged to play with separate hands first and then both hands together, but always with a clear musical theme and motive in mind that is expressed through different parts and voices. She sets special targets for different students to achieve. For students who do not practise well she draws up a practice schedule that details where to practise, how to practise, and for how long; in addition she assists such students to divide up their daily practice into several sections in order to achieve the specified outcome.

5.9.4.5 Acute listening skills (aural development)

Teacher Eight encourages her students to listen to recordings by renowned pianists as well as recordings of themselves playing. She believes that a student’s perceptive sensitivity – including their awareness of the broad spectrum of tonal variation – is improved through such listening.
5.9.4.6 Stage fright

Teacher Eight advocates performance experience as a constructive means of assisting students to overcome stage fright. She encourages her students to perform in front of friends, peers and others as much as possible. As students become more experienced she advocates the progressive extension of performance time as yet another effective method of addressing stage fright and performance tension. She argues that repeated performances of the same repertoire is a good method of controlling the standard of performance.

Teacher Eight attributes stage fright to students coming up against the psychological barrier of worrying that their performance will not be as good as they would wish. It is essential therefore that they feel completely secure with the music. Memorization, she suggests, is one means of building confidence in students. She emphasises that students should familiarize themselves with the performance environment, including the piano and the stage, and have a rehearsal. Finally, she stresses that students must not allow any mistakes that might occur during a performance to interrupt their playing.

5.10 Teacher Nine

5.10.1 General information

Teacher Nine started to learn the piano in Hong Kong at age 11. He went on to graduate from The University of Hong Kong (HKU) with a major in Law. Following this he studied at The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA), obtaining an Advanced Diploma in piano performance. While studying at HKAPA he studied piano performance with Mr. Gabriel Kwok, piano pedagogy with Ms Eleanor Wong, chamber music with Dr. Mary Wu, and piano accompaniment with Ms Nancy Loo. After graduating he became a freelance pianist. This has included performing with the Sinfonietta Orchestra, becoming an accompanist for the Junior School at HKAPA, and working in the drama department at HKAPA to train vocal students to sing songs from Broadway musicals. He also works as an accompanist for instrumental students of the violin, viola and trombone and performs in concerts. He is a part-time piano instructor at The University of Hong Kong and has one performance student in final year.

5.10.2 Philosophy

Teacher Nine emphasizes four elements in teaching piano performance. The first is that performance is a kind of integrated knowledge pertaining to style,
technique, historical background, structure, and harmony. The second is that musicality is a personal feeling and the tone colour and mood of a piece are affected by one's artistic sense. The third element is the importance of developing a good technique such that students can produce an appropriate tonal quality in their playing. The fourth is that students should have a personality that enables them to play with a sense of authority and maturity in order to persuade and communicate with an audience; performers must be touched by the music and through their interpretation should touch the audience.

He does not believe in adhering to a single method but instead uses a range of methods, depending on each individual student's needs. His approach is pragmatic. When there is a problem he encourages students to discuss it with him, as discussion and interaction enable students to solve problems themselves.

Teacher Nine hopes that his students enjoy and love music, and he derives great pleasure from sharing piano music with them. He believes that teaching students at the university is a privileged opportunity, as it enables him to share his experience with students at a time in their lives in which they are free to think, explore, and experience life as young adults. He observes that life experience is a valuable dimension that contributes to the maturity of students at this level. He believes that studying piano performance is character-building and helps frame the personality of students.

5.10.3. Teaching principles

Teacher Nine believes that music is a means of expressing oneself and conveying emotions and ideas. He has been greatly affected by his teacher at HKAPA, Ms Loo, who taught her students to play every note in a poetic way. She taught him that musical imagination was linked to emotion. He too encourages his own students to use their imagination to stimulate different emotions and moods in their performances.

He believes strongly in the importance of tonal quality and sound production in learning and performing music; in this respect he has much admiration Mr. Gabriel Kwok at HKAPA who trained him in the development of tone and sound. He also attributes to Mr. Kwok his own aural sensitivity and is grateful for having been trained to distinguish subtleties in tone colour that can be difficult for the ordinary ear to perceive.

Teacher Nine encourages his students to search deeply within themselves in order to bring out the feeling or emotion in music. He also encourages them to think about the reasons behind performance problems and to see that these can often be inter-related. He discusses with his students such issues as the sonority of the tone
they produce, technique, musical intelligence, and musicality because he believes that such attention to detail ultimately leads to a better performance.

5.10.4. Methodologies

Teacher Nine has not written a method book. He believes that experience, interaction and sharing with students and other teachers is more valuable than writing a book. He has nonetheless read many method books and adapts a range of pedagogical methods and thinking in his teaching.

He follows all of the good methods that he learned from his own teachers, including the importance of cultivating a sensitive ear with which to judge sonority and tone color; the methodical teaching of technique through clear verbal descriptions; instilling in students a poetic perspective and a strong artistic sense, which are related to musical imagination, passion, and experience; the emphasizing of teaching with patience, a kind heart, and love; and the development of sensitive and integrated musicianship through training in rhythm, harmony, theory, and pitch.

5.10.4.1 Technique

Influenced by his own teachers, Teacher Nine likes to explain to his students how to feel the music and how to move the hands, arms, and shoulders to express emotion. He gives a clear verbal description of the feeling and motion of every muscle and joint involved in playing and demonstrates these elements for students to observe. He requires students to pay attention to the motion of the fingers and emphasizes the support of the fingertips. Sometimes he emphasizes practising with curved hands – which means that the wrists are held in a low position and the fingers are lifted high – to strengthen the feeling in the third joints of the fingers (the first joint is near the fingertip). Under normal circumstances however he encourages his students to play on the surface of the keys: this he considers to be an effective way to produce sound employing a minimum action of the fingers. He encourages the use of the fingertips to produce a variety of tonal qualities and gradation. He believes that five-finger exercises are good for training technique and are fundamental skills that students should learn. He also believes that the weight of the shoulders, arms, and wrists is important, and that relaxation of the body is essential for students when they are performing.

5.10.4.2 Style

In teaching style, Teacher Nine believes in demonstrating for his students. But first he gives his students background and historical information, including the origin of the piece, and encourages them to listen to the music and use their
imagination as a means of stimulating different emotions and moods. In an attempt to elicit passion in a student’s playing he links the piece to other compositions and will engage students in different activities, such as singing certain phrases of the piece or getting them to imagine conducting an orchestra or string quartet. He also uses other art forms, such as drama and pictures, to illustrate the abstract meaning of a piece. For example, in impressionism, he suggests that Debussy’s music is related to Monet’s paintings. He believes that in making comparisons between different art forms he is providing students with another perspective to think about stylistic difference. A student’s sense of stylistic possibilities – and artistic sense – is enhanced, he believes, when music is viewed from different angles.

5.10.4.3 Memorization

Teacher Nine advocates a number of different approaches when assisting students to perform from memory. This includes memorising the sound through listening to the music and then either singing or playing it; this, he suggests, is an ideal way to ‘co-ordinate’ the ears and the brain. He cautions that it is unsafe to use kinaesthetic memory only as it depends solely on the motion of the muscles, and when one is nervous this type of memory is unreliable. Another approach he uses is to analyse harmonic progressions. He argues that in developing musical intelligence performers must memorize horizontally (the melody) and vertically (the harmony). Finally, he encourages students to ‘block’ music into small sections when memorizing it. This method is effective and safe, he says, because if something goes wrong during a performance one can simply shift to another section of the score.

5.10.4.4 Practice methods

Normally, Teacher Nine requires his students to spend half an hour each day practising technical exercises – including scales and five-fingers exercises – one hour on etudes, and one hour on selected pieces. Ideally, he expects his students to practise for at least three hours every day. However, he thinks that this is probably an unrealistic expectation for university students who generally only practise some scales, some sections of their pieces, and then play through all of their pieces in their entirety once.

To compensate for their lack of practice time, Teacher Nine encourages his students to use the co-ordination of the hands, ears, heart, and brain in practising: in other words, “intelligent practise” which, he says, is far more effective than practice that is not properly focused or, worse, aimless. He also asks his students to memorize their pieces early in the learning process so that they can concentrate on conveying mood and feeling through their playing.
He teaches his students to systematically plan their practice and sets specific goals for them to achieve in relation to a specified standard. First, he encourages them to divide the music into small sections and to practise for musical understanding and musicality. To strengthen their technique, he recommends they use different rhythmic patterns in practising. He uses a range of methods that include not only attention to rhythmic patterns, but also such aspects as attention to chords and leaps in practising specific passages. He strongly believes in the importance of students being encouraged to practise imaginatively as a means of developing an aesthetic or artistic sense.

5.10.4.5 Acute listening skills (aural development)
Although Teacher Nine encourages his students to listen to CDs and other recordings of music, he suggests that they seldom do so. Normally, he asks his students to interpret a piece themselves before listening to recordings of others playing it. After a few lessons, when they have developed some insight into a work, he asks them to listen to three different recordings. In the lessons that follow he discusses the piece and elicits feedback, asking his students to choose their favorite rendition of the work and the reasons for their choice. From a psychological point of view, he suggests, if students listen frequently to recordings of their pieces, they will learn them more effectively. He also believes that it is beneficial for students to listen to music from the same period or by the same composer but for instruments other than the piano.

5.10.4.6 Stage fright
To prepare students for the performance experience, Teacher Nine asks them to run through all of the pieces in detail three lessons before the examination or performance. First, he asks them to perform without warming up such that they experience the tension of the performance situation, during which time he stands next to them as they play. In the second lesson, he allows them to perform the pieces without interruption. He writes down his comments, and then works with the student point by point to assist them in mastering technical and artistic issues. Before finishing the lesson he makes the students play through the program again.

In the last lesson before an examination or performance, he asks other students or family members to listen to the performance. This, he suggests, is a good opportunity to ascertain the standard of a student’s performance, as when one performs under pressure stage fright, or at least performance tension, is common, even for famous pianists such as Horowitz and Rubinstein. To assist them, he insists that they know what it is that they want to convey and express in the music. In
discussing this he says that everyone plays wrong notes and has memory slips, and so it is important that students are focused in their mind on what they wish to convey through the music when performing. With such concentrated focus he believes that even if students play wrong notes they will keep on performing the piece with the main musical ideas set firmly in their mind.

5.11 Teacher Ten

5.11.1 General information

Teacher Ten has been teaching and performing as a soloist and accompanist since 1983. He graduated from the Royal College of Music in London with the qualifications of FLCM, ARCM, and LGSM, and obtained a Bachelor’s degree from the University of London and a Masters degree from Reading University.

In Hong Kong he learned piano from Ms Susan Wong and in England his teacher was Ms Phyllis Sellick. Teacher Ten admires the professional attitude of Ms Wong who, he says, was an all-rounded and responsible teacher who taught him aural skills and theory. She took good of care of her students, and attended closely to details. He appreciates Ms Phyllis Sellick for her seriousness and strictness. She was a teacher in the French style, and had herself learned from students of Chopin and Ravel. When she taught Ravel she quoted his words as a means of assisting her students to better understand how to perform his music. But regardless of the composer she always tried to help students to understand the subtlety of the pieces they were playing.

With more than ten years’ experience of teaching in institutions, he is currently a lecturer at The Hong Kong Institute of Education and also a part-time piano instructor at The University of Hong Kong. He has one performance student in final year.

5.11.2. Philosophy

Teacher Ten believes that his students should perform according to a set of rules that cover style, articulation, and interpretation. He points out that this applies as much to popular music as it does to classical music: regardless of the music, students should explore the use of different touches to produce a sound, and must count and perform different rhythmic patterns precisely. Through his teaching he hopes that his students will keep in touch with different kinds of music to broaden their repertoire, and he encourages them to learn music from the Baroque period to the twentieth century.

Many different elements have affected the way in which Teacher Ten teaches. He does not follow any method book or philosophy but says, rather, that he
has learned how to teach from experience. He makes reference to a range of personal experiences as a means of teaching students how to solve problems that might occur during recitals. He likes to discuss problems with other teachers, believing that the experience of exchanging ideas is an effective way of learning for both teachers and students.

Teacher Ten stresses that students have the ability to learn independently. He aims, accordingly, to teach only approximately 30% of new concepts to his students and believes that the remaining 70% can be left up to them to discover through their own exploration. He suggests that whether students make good performers or not depends on their personality and character, their enthusiasm, and their love of music. He believes that in nurturing students it is essential that they be trained in aural ability and sight-reading. Regardless of whether performance students become performers or teachers, he believes it is imperative that they should know how to solve problems encountered in a piece and how to use their own interpretative ability to shape the music. In the process of training he argues that students should be able to grasp the concepts of performance, which involves technique, phrasing, and analysis of form, style and history. To achieve these goals he carefully selects the repertoire that he gives his students to learn.

5.11.3. Teaching principles

Teacher Ten believes that a music performance is concerned with conveying meaning and feeling. Performers, he says, must know how to communicate with an audience in order to convey their understanding of a work and their artistic sense. A good performance, he argues, is one that attracts attention and touches the hearts of an audience.

Teacher Ten acknowledges that sound quality is vital in music. He generally chooses a concert pianist – such as Claudio Arrau – as a model for his teaching, and plays video recordings of the pianist as a means of stimulating his students. From these recordings of performances, he says, students learn about the tonal feeling that the pianist produces, the clarity that the pianist projects, and the level of strength that is employed. Through such observations, he believes, students come to understand how to interpret a piece and how to develop a rich sonority and a meaningful tonal quality. In other words, he suggests, students benefit from watching and listening to an artist who has a unique professional attitude, tonal palette, technique, and interpretative ability.

Teacher Ten is committed to training students as well as is possible. In teaching performance students he uses a specific repertoire that includes music from a range of periods. He expects his students to learn quickly and be able to play a new
piece after three weeks. He stresses the importance of self-evaluation in learning. To assist students in this respect he often makes tape and video recordings of their playing so that they can hear and see their weaknesses and shortcomings. He also believes in the importance of providing opportunities for students to perform in public, such as concerts and master classes.

5.11.4 Methodologies

The teaching methods that Teacher Ten learned in England have been useful for him, such as knowing how to practice, how to memorize, and how to play scales. He believes that understanding these elements is fundamental for both teachers and performers. He has not written any method books, nor does he follow a particular method in teaching. He recommends reading the writing of Kendall Taylor on piano technique, but overall believes that using a method book to teach practical performance makes the process too theoretical. At the same time, he acknowledges that a method book can serve as a guideline for teachers to follow and in his own teaching he draws from a range of methods.

5.11.4.1 Technique

Teacher Ten believes that a good technique and accuracy are the basic requirements of an exemplary performance. To improve technique he requires his students to play scales and exercises such as Czerny’s Op. 599, Op. 849 and the studies of Cramer. He emphasizes scales – as music is replete with passages based on countless variations and combinations of scales – to train student to play with different articulations and in different rhythmic patterns. With respect to arpeggios, he believes that playing them using fixed fingering with separate hands is good preparation for chord practice. He gradually increases the difficulty, such as asking students to play different inversions of chords with two hands at the same time. He has also invented exercises based on scales to familiarize students with the notes and fingering and to develop the touch and coordination of different parts of the hands in playing different combinations of articulations. He emphasizes wrist relaxation, natural movement, and finger flexibility. Normally, he uses new pieces to check the sight-reading ability of students, and to uncover any technical problems that they may have.

5.11.4.2 Style

In teaching style, Teacher Ten begins by explaining the historical background of a piece and then encourages students to listen to a range of recordings of other keyboard music – but not initially the work being studied – from the same era.
as a means of familiarizing themselves with the style of the period and, in particular, the composer. This enables students to understand the characteristics of the instrument during the period in which the music was written, and leads them to an appreciation of the different styles and taste that were in vogue at the time. It is through listening, he believes, that students learn about the phrasing and stylistic characteristics of a piece. He also encourages students to listen to recordings of music by other composers of the period and for different instruments. He stresses that artistic feeling and knowledge of the historical background to the piece they are learning are the foundation materials for learning about style. In requiring his students to play in an appropriate style he does not accept an overly personalized style.

5.11.4.3 Memorization

Teacher Ten requires his students to play from memory and uses a number of approaches to develop their ability to memorize. This includes the use of visual aids. He allows students to look at the score, and then asks them to answer questions about the patterns, chords, and keys. He also requires students to memorize passages with separate hands, and specifies sections for them to play. Another approach involves students analyzing patterns, especially in difficult passages. He also asks his students to write down the notation from memory. In practising memorization he requires students to play extremely slowly. Yet another approach involves students playing a recording of the piece at the same time as they themselves are playing it from memory as a means of testing how well they can perform in the presence of ‘distractions’. By using these approaches, and combinations of them, he develops in students a much more secure ability to perform from memory than one that relies principally on memorizing from the physical or kinaesthetic movement of performing only – a method that he stresses is most unreliable.

5.11.4.4 Practice methods

From his experience of teaching in various institutions, Teacher Ten understands that performance is only one of the subjects that students learn, and that they have to spend time on other subjects as well. He therefore suggests that his students practise for four hours a day. Whilst he does not set specific outcomes or goals for his students in practising, he does give them guidelines for setting their own goals. In learning a contrapuntal piece by Bach, for example, recommends that students use rhythmic variation to practise the runs of semiquavers to enable them to play the music fluently and easily. In practising chordal passages he emphasizes the importance of students placing equal weight on the fingers. In practising broken chords he emphasizes the use of different accents for different fingers, and encourages
students to practise the chords by leaping from different positions, as in the accompaniment to Chopin’s waltzes. He believes that practising slowly but with quick energetic movements guarantees good results; he also advocates the use of different tempos and fingering as an effective practice tool. He says that students should be trained to demand more of themselves when they practise than their teacher demands of them.

5.11.4.5 Acute listening skills (aural development)

Teacher Ten does not suggest that his students listen to a recording of a work prior to practising as he believes that this will lock in or restrict their imagination and creativity; at the same time, he does ask them to listen to other works from the period as a means of better familiarizing themselves with stylistic features. Subsequently, when students are playing the work competently and have mastered major concepts inherent in the work, he then asks them to compare performances by different pianists and to discuss the different styles of playing and interpretations that the performers employ. He believes that this helps students to gain a better idea of what a good performance demands of the performer.

5.11.4.6 Stage fright

When preparing students for a performance, Teacher Ten asks them to get everything ready one-and-a-half months ahead. He consciously sets out to create opportunities for his students to perform. For example, he groups different students to play for each other so that they can learn from each other and build up their courage and confidence in a performance situation.

If students are to overcome stage fright or performance tension, Teacher Ten says, they must not only be well prepared but also grasp every opportunity to perform. He speaks of the importance of relaxation before a performance, suggesting that students learn to reduce the pressure by playing scales, popular music, or anything other than the pieces to be performed. He also advocates deep breathing.

5.12 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the results of the interviews with the ten teachers who were teaching final year piano performance students. In addition to providing some background information on each teacher, it reveals, in the spirit of their own words, their thoughts and views on philosophy, principles and methodologies with respect to teaching piano at this level. This information is fundamental to the study and contributes, along with the student interviews and the
literature review, to the development of a model or framework as well as recommendations for teaching advanced students.
Chapter 6
Analysis of the teachers’ interviews

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses and synthesizes the information and ideas that were expressed by the ten teachers in the interviews presented in the previous chapter. The interviews centered on three major topics: the teachers’ philosophy of music education and, in particular, piano teaching; their principles of piano teaching; and the methodologies they employ in teaching various aspects of piano performance. In the following discussion, each of these topics is discussed in relation to the interviews and analysed from a number of perspectives. The discussion highlights particular findings of the research, which are supported by quotes from the teachers as extracted from the transcripts of the interviews. The analysis reveals a close relationship between the teachers’ philosophy, principles, and methodologies of teaching piano performance.

6.2 Philosophy

This section discusses firstly the expressed philosophies of the teachers as they relate to rationalism, empiricism, and pragmatism. Following this, the discussion moves on to consider three overriding issues that emerged from the literature review and the teacher interviews.

In looking at teachers’ beliefs and approaches to teaching piano in relation to three major philosophies the first part of this section begins by considering the particular characteristics of each philosophy. The philosophy of rationalism holds that music is a form of knowledge that is built from a rational aspect, and therefore two analogous ideas about the teaching of performance can be identified: the importance of understanding the historical background of music, and the importance of an analytical approach to the music. Empiricism, with respect to this study, is concerned with four related ideas: the importance of teaching experience; the importance of performance experience for students; the role of life experience in relation to musical or artistic understanding; and the integral role of listening in all aspects of teaching and learning music. The study has identified three relevant ideas derived from pragmatism: pedagogical approaches to teaching are not ‘fixed’ or permanent; students should be taught to be independent learners and problem-solvers; and different students should be taught differently, that is, there is no single approach that is appropriate for all students.
The second part of this section looks at three overriding philosophical issues that are not limited to any single philosophy. These are the importance of helping students to develop the capacity to enjoy and love music; the importance of nurturing and developing personal qualities or characteristics in students; and the importance of transmitting knowledge and insights to others: teacher to student, and performer to audience.

6.2.1 Rationalism

As discussed in the literature review, there is a range of definitions of rationalism. In general, rationalists believe that knowledge is comprised of facts, truths, and definitions. Stubley (1992) stated that “knowledge is conceived as a fixed body of immutable, fundamental truths relevant to all times and places” (p. 4). Abeles, Hoffer and Klotman (1994) agreed: “the central thesis of rationalism is that knowledge is a fixed body of truth that applies in all times and places” (p. 48).

The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles (1993) defines rationalism as “the doctrine or theory that reason rather than sense-experience is the foundation of certainty in knowledge” (p. 2482). Stubley (1992) in turn suggested that rationalism is “knowledge that is discovered and elaborated through rational analysis of ideas independent of empirical data or authoritative pronouncements” (p. 4) and stated that “rationalism defined the initial content of music education as a distinct branch of knowledge and led to the development of a scholarly discipline dedicated to deepening and broadening this concept of music as subject matter” (p. 6). Rationalists believe that knowledge is discovered and elaborated through rational and systematic analysis.

The interviews suggest that to varying degrees the teachers involved in this study use aspects of rationalism in their teaching. There is a sense in which they would appear to believe that to some extent at least knowledge of music comes from rational analysis, and for some there was an implication that music is a branch of knowledge concerned with rules and facts that do not change. More specifically, two ideas belonging to the rationalist tradition are paramount: the importance of understanding music within an historical context, and the importance of undertaking a theoretical analysis of the music.

6.2.1.1 Placing music in its historical context

Eight of the ten teachers commented on the importance of students understanding the historical background of a piece of music if they are to perform it to a higher standard. Teacher One stated: “I have to introduce the students to what is known about the way people played in the days when the pieces were written.” He
added that he teaches students the basic ground rules of style in relation to particular periods, and explained that “Certain music, like that of Mozart, requires a particular style of playing. If the performer diverges from that style, then it does not really sound like Mozart.” He also opined that to perform Mozart well the player needs to understand not only performance requirements relating specifically to Mozart, but, more broadly, prevailing stylistic approaches to performance that were prevalent at the time. Teacher Three suggested that style is best taught by approaching it from an historical perspective: “It is hard to teach style. I would say that history comes first.” Teacher Five stated: “I ask them to read books about composers’ lives, and to have an understanding of the instruments that were prominent at the time. They should know the characteristics of the instruments of different periods, such as Mozart’s piano, Beethoven’s piano, and twentieth-century pianos.” Teacher Six suggested: “One must know the social background and environment that moulded the personality of the composer and his works.” Teacher Seven put it: “They [students] should have knowledge of the relevant history and cultural background as a means of stimulating their thinking about stylistic interpretation.” Teacher Eight said, “I insist that students know about the historical background and lives of the composers who they perform. They benefit from an understanding of the compositional style of individual composers.” Teacher Nine suggested that historical information increases one’s ability to understand music in a logical and rational way: “The style and structure of baroque, classical, and romantic music – all of these the students can learn from history.” He went on: “Speaking of Brahms, I like to tell the story about him and Clara Schumann; in fact, it is very important. Opp. 116, 117, and 118, for example, why are they important? Because Clara Schumann was old and Brahms wrote some brief pieces especially for her. Why is each note filled with emotion? Because of their long relationship. Students can perform better after they hear about the background and feel touched by it.” Teacher Ten drew attention to the importance of understanding the historical development of instruments as a means of understanding stylistic performance practices of a particular period: “Starting from Bach, quavers need to be detached . . . because of the development of the [keyboard] instrument.” It might be concluded that statements such as these attest to the importance of having an intellectual understanding of history in relation to piano teaching and learning. Teacher Ten believes that an intellectual understanding of history is important to understand musical styles: “starting from Bach, quavers need to be detached . . . I tell them [my students] why this should be so – because of the development of the instrument.” As a consequence he acquaints his students with the nature and development of the keyboard over the centuries as a means of improving their interpretive and performance skills.
6.2.1.2 Undertaking a theoretical analysis of the music

All ten teachers supported the importance of students analyzing the music they perform. Teacher One asserted: “I also tell my students that they must analyze the chords and know the structure of the piece.” Teacher Two stated that the theory of harmony is important as it “help[s] them to understand that the harmonies of Bach, Chopin, and Debussy are all different.” She further opined that an analysis of the chords is essential in coming to terms with the style of a work and that the different rules and features of the styles of different periods are reflected in harmony. She stressed that “earning to analyze and understand the score is important. Each note the composer wrote has its own meaning and function in the music.” Teacher Three suggested that analysis is important for a number of reasons, including the fact that it helps students to memorize their pieces. Teacher Four requires her students to have an intellectual understanding of the pieces they play: “I expect my students to analyze theoretically . . . [to analyse] the score as soon as they get a new piece.” Teacher Five stated: “I teach them to recognize the harmony. Many sixteenth-note musical patterns are the same . . . Once the students feel the chords and understand the harmonic progressions, then they can grasp the piece quickly.” Teacher Six spoke in a similar vein, “I teach my students to memorize the score in many ways, such as the harmonic progression . . . and melodic lines.” In terms of the final stage of memorization, Teacher Seven remarked: “[I tell them to] analyse the score theoretically and memorize the forms, structure, texture, and harmonic progressions.” Teacher Eight stated: “I ask them [students] to find the exposition, development, recapitulation, and coda. I teach them to analyze the chords and first and second subjects, and to recognize the fingering sequences.” Teacher Nine spoke of the importance of his students being able “to analyse and memorize harmonic progressions.” Teacher Ten argued: “Analyzing the patterns and the structure makes it a lot simpler and easier for students to understand the music.” In summary, all of the teachers strongly agreed that an understanding of music theory and analysis are of great benefit to students with respect to piano performance.

6.2.2 Empiricism

Definitions of empiricism stress that practice is based on experiment and observation. For empiricists, further, “concepts and statements have meaning only in relation to sense-experience” (New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles, 1993, p. 809). Propositions, according to them, “express interrelationships between sensory impressions in the form of empirical generalizations or theoretical constructs abstracted from the specific contexts in which they are originally
identified” (Stubley, 1992, p. 4). The main characteristics of this theory are that knowledge is essentially derived from sense-experience, and that people rely on observation to obtain knowledge; this in turn underscores the importance of experience in general. Lacey (1976) stated that “our concepts or our knowledge are, wholly or partly, based on experience through the senses and introspection” (p. 55). Sense experience, experiment and observation, and life experience are the vital features of empiricism. The following discussion of empiricism in relation to the teaching and learning of piano performance is based on four ideas: the importance of teaching experience; a belief that performance experience is a sine qua non; a conviction that life experience contributes to artistic development and maturity with respect to teaching, learning, and performing; and the paramount importance of acute listening.

6.2.2.1 The importance of teaching experience

Eight of the teachers agreed that teaching experience is invaluable and that there is no substitute for it. Teacher One stated that the “great influence on the way I teach comes not from books but from the teaching experience that I have gained throughout the years . . . the more frequently I teach, the more easily I can tell whether the student has certain qualities or abilities that are essential for a real performer.” Teacher Three offered: “I learn a lot from my students as I teach,” adding that he learns even more than his students when he finds a solution to help them. Teacher Four said that her pedagogical ideas derive mostly from her teaching experience: “[they are] not based on any books, purely from my experience,” adding that “sometimes stimulation [for teaching methods] comes from my students.” Teacher Five reflected that “a method book may help, but I think [teaching] experience is much more important than a book.” She added that the process of teaching stimulates her to look for new ideas and insights. This was reinforced by Teacher Seven who stated that “through the teaching process teachers can learn how to teach different people to deepen their learning of . . . the music.” Teacher Eight, in acknowledging the importance of teaching experience, said that she loves to read method books and journals to acquire information on piano teaching: “it is good for sharing teaching experiences and methods, and for discussing teaching matters.” Teacher Nine stressed that “teaching must be a practical and interactive experience,” and said that he acquired knowledge of pedagogy from teaching piano performance. Teacher Ten reflected: “I learn while I teach and absorb different experiences, such as recognizing problems and mistakes that my students or others have made as they perform.” In line with their belief in learning from teaching, three of the teachers mentioned requiring their students to have some teaching experience. They suggested that in demonstrating
their own teaching abilities students also reflect their own musical understanding. Teacher Four said “I ask them to think about how they would teach their students if they ran into problems [such as those that they have encountered].” Teacher Nine spoke of asking students “how to teach legato, reversing my role with theirs. Let them teach me how to do it.” Teacher Ten stated that “sometimes I ask the senior students to teach scales to the junior students. In this way, I can observe how much they know and their skills from the way they teach.”

6.2.2.2 Performance experience is a *sine qua non*

Five of the teachers argued the importance of performance experience. Teacher One mentioned it firstly with respect to the teacher: “performance experience informs the teacher’s own teaching tremendously,” adding, “if the teacher is experienced in performance, then he will teach performance students effectively.” He went on to stress the importance of performance experience for students and to this end he encourages them to avail themselves of any opportunity to perform, including master classes. Teacher Four suggested that “teachers should encourage students to perform more often in different situations.” Teacher Seven stated that “they [students] need to gain more experience of performing.” She emphasised that students need to develop a positive attitude of wanting to share their musical experience rather than merely approaching performance as a means of showing off what they have learnt. Teacher Eight also stressed the importance of students having “more chances to perform in front of audiences” and, like Teacher One, suggested performing in master classes. Whilst Teacher Ten also encourages his students to participate in master classes he suggested that “the way [one performs] in front of a group of people in a master class is very different from a concert setting.” At the same time he acknowledged that any performance provides a great learning opportunity: “I ask students to attend more performances and to find more chances to perform”. To this end he organizes student concerts. Overall, teacher responses reinforced, explicitly or implicitly, the importance of student performance.

6.2.2.3 The importance of life experience

Eight teachers commented on the positive effects of a broadened life experience on a student’s artistic development and maturity, suggesting that a relatively rich life experience assists students in making the transition from the concrete to the abstract.

In discussing the teaching of music, Teacher Six argued that it went beyond showing students “how to play the music faster or slower, longer or shorter, stronger or lighter. This is not music at all.” At a mature level, he said, teaching music
involves using a student’s life experience to bring out the essence of the music. To put it differently, he suggested that life experience contributes to “artistic feeling”.

Teacher Seven commented: “I love to create methods of teaching through my personal daily experience.” Teacher Ten reflected on the importance of exchanging ideas and engaging in discussion with other teachers based on shared experiences as an effective means of acquiring a deeper understanding of teaching in its many facets. The sharing of teaching experiences and life experiences is an important means of developing personal teaching methods, he said.

In discussing music learning, Teacher Four opined: “I like performance students to exchange ideas. It is quite difficult; their experiences are so different. Some grow up in a good environment and it isn’t easy for them to understand feelings of desperation. I can only tell them to talk to each other, to observe more, and to stimulate their imagination, and one day they may become more mature.” In this way, she argued, students have a broader life palette from which to draw in expressing artistic feeling or meaning. In acknowledging the abstract nature of artistic feeling, she offered a refreshing insight: “Sometimes I tell them [students] to watch more movies, read more books, and engage in more arts experiences. If they don't know the context of the music they are playing, then it will be hard for them to imagine and play well.” She suggested that when students have the relevant understanding, it is relatively easy for them to express the abstract meaning of music. Teacher Five commented that most students cannot play Beethoven and Brahms ‘perfectly’ as they do not have enough life experience to enable them to feel and understand the music. “Even when you do have that feeling, it is still difficult no matter what you do. Once you get older, however, experience definitely does help your playing.” Teacher Nine was another who argued the importance of students having a rich life experience: “how can one understand Brahms’ deep feelings if one is a young girl who doesn't know much about the world and hasn’t got much insight? [In this case] I tell her about something personal to stimulate her feelings . . . this is exactly what my teacher said about passion being connected with real life.”

Regarding performance, Teacher Two stated that “personal experience enables you to perceive and express artistic feeling in music. Teacher Eight said, “When you perform music, it should not be machine-like, but rather a live experience.’’ The importance of life experience with respect to performance was also implicit in most if not all of the conversations of the other teachers.

6.2.2.4 Learning from listening

All of the teachers spoke of the importance of acute listening. This section presents a summary quote from each of them. In discussing technique, Teacher One
said that when he practises technical exercises he is conscious of the quality of the sound he is producing: “I simply sit there and think about the quality of the sound and the way to turn the physical exercise into a musical experience.” He added that he built up his technique by listening with care. Teacher Two opined that in teaching technique, “listening comes before practice.” Students perform well, she said, “when [they] have an understanding of sound and are well prepared both intellectually and technically.” Teacher Three drew attention to the close relationship between sound and technique: “You must understand the sound first and know how to consider it.” Teacher Four spoke of the importance of students listening perceptively to a range of works representing diverse styles: “Let them listen to the music of different periods to learn about style.” She also suggested careful listening to different recordings of the same work. Teacher Five asserted: “I ask them to listen to music, such as instrumental music by the same composer or from the same period.” Teacher Six spoke in a similar vein and referred to the learning of a Beethoven piano sonata by way of example, suggesting that in doing so “you need to know all his piano sonatas from his early, middle, and late periods.” Teacher Seven emphasised another aspect of listening: “I ask them [students] to listen to the notes and then memorize them.” Teacher Nine was another who stressed that “listening to the sound is very important for memorizing the music.” Teacher Eight said that “asking them [students] to listen is the most important thing in getting them to understand the style of different periods.” Teacher Ten opined that listening to “a comparative performance or recording should wait for last.” He too endorsed the importance of not confining one’s listening to a recording of the piece being studied.

6.2.3 Pragmatism

There are many definitions of pragmatism. Stubley (1992) states that “knowledge [can] no longer be considered immutable and fixed for all times and places. Pragmatists, consequently, understand propositions to express working hypotheses, rather than binding axioms . . . Pragmatists, however, do not view humans as spectators looking out on the natural world, but rather as creative problem solvers in constant interaction with it . . . Humans come to know by identifying a problem or imbalance in experience, hypothesizing a solution, and exploring the desirability of the potential outcomes through direct action” (p. 4). Abeles, Hoffer and Klotman (1994) opined that pragmatists believe that “nothing is permanent . . . Pragmatist music teachers do not even have a set method for teaching their students how to learn, because situations change. Methods are different for each student because of individual backgrounds, interests, and abilities. What works with one student sometimes does not work with other students” (p. 47). The following discussion is
based on these essential characteristics of pragmatism in relation to pedagogy, namely, that nothing is immutable or fixed; students should be taught to be independent learners and problem-solvers; and students should be taught according to their individual needs, that is, there is no single methodological approach suitable for all students.

6.2.3.1 Nothing is immutable or fixed
Two of the teachers specifically stated that piano pedagogical theories are not immutable. According to Teacher Three, “One can always discover something new everyday. There is no absolute way to present things or ideas in music. Knowledge is never the same and one is never too old to learn . . . For instance, if you observe an object from different points or angles, you explore and approach something new from every new angle. This is because everything can affect your perceptions and observations.” In terms of his philosophy and principles of teaching, Teacher Three stated: “I don’t have any. I always improvise, read books and get ideas for reference.” He stressed that “All of this is something students are learning every day, such as how to play staccato or legato, different techniques for playing the same piece. They may discover something that is new even to the teacher.” Teacher Six recounted: “When people asked Leschetizky what method he had used to teach his students, he told them that his method was no method.” This is an apt summary of a pragmatic approach to teaching piano: one that is not fixed but responsive to the needs of the student and the occasion.

6.2.3.2 Students should be taught to be independent learners and problem-solvers
Nine of the teachers broadly agreed with this notion: six argued the importance of students being independent learners, two argued that students should be taught to be problem solvers, and one (Teacher Ten) concurred strongly with both aspects.

Commenting on students being independent learners, Teacher Three stated: “A student should expose himself as much as possible to many realms of knowledge. I encourage my students to be self-motivated and self-disciplined, and they are quite good at that.” He also remarked on the difficulty of teaching style, suggesting that this is an area that students need to explore by themselves. Teacher Four said: “My goal is to help my students become independent in thinking and in making judgments on how to handle different pieces though a process that can be pretty exhausting.” Teacher Five agreed: “I feel that a successful teacher should have as an ultimate goal teaching students to gradually learn to become independent from the teacher.” Teacher Seven
similarly opined: “The main thing is to teach students how to teach themselves. Never spoon-feed them, otherwise they will never learn to be independent.” She also suggested that teachers should encourage students to record what they play and listen to it afterwards, because “it is a good way to train them in self-learning. After they have grasped the basic ideas of a work, then they can listen to different performers for reference.” Teacher Eight said that students who have been with her for a long time should be “independent learners” by the time they graduate. To help them gain confidence, she spoke of the importance of allowing them time to think, adding: “If the student is quite mature, then I allow him to have his own ideas and encourage him to discuss more with me.” Like Teacher Eight, Teacher Nine said: “Generally, when they begin to learn a new piece, I do not ask them to listen to the recording of that piece or to other works of the composer. Rather, I require them to interpret the piece based on their limited knowledge in order to see what they already know and to what extent they can, at this stage, bring out the meaning and feeling behind the notes.” Teacher Ten reinforced this idea: “I always say that with one lesson a week, I can only give them 30%; their best teacher is their own ears. Their ears can judge whether they play well or not. They hear themselves every day, which makes up the remaining 70%.” He added: “I ask them to engage in self-evaluation by either recording or video-taping themselves during practice. The latter is the best because students can see their own shortcomings that they may not be aware of when on the stage.”

Three of the teachers specifically argued that student should be taught to be problem-solvers. Teacher Two suggested that final year students should try to “solve problems using any method they have learned from their lessons”. Teacher Six said that he preferred students to discover their own mistakes and then work out a solution. He gave the teaching of technique as an example: “[Teachers] need to train their students to be capable of mastering all of the basic techniques, which means that whenever there is a technical problem they should have their own solution.” Teacher Ten was of the same mind, arguing that advanced students should know how to solve problems encountered in a piece and also use their own interpretive skills without necessarily having to seek the teacher’s advice.

6.2.3.3 Acknowledging individual difference: no single methodological approach is suitable for all students

All of the teachers interviewed agreed that different students should be taught differently. Teacher One said: “Teaching the piano to students individually [as distinct from a class situation] is relatively unique because of the one-on-one situation. Every student is completely different . . . one pedagogical method will not work for every student.” He illustrated this point with a comparison: “When teaching a class of
piano students, in theory you cannot apply only one method to all 40 people, but in practice, to some extent at least, the teacher has to regiment everything and cannot tailor-make the lesson for all forty students at once.” Teacher Two opined: “We must teach different students according to their own unique qualities. Some will not be able to go as far as others. This is why not all students take performance. However, to some extent my demands are the same regardless of whether they are performance students or not. The most vital thing to acknowledge is that different methods fit different students. It depends on how fast they can digest what they have learned in the lesson. To those who are slower, I give a little more time. Those who digest information very quickly and can apply it, I push to go further and work faster. As a teacher, you need to know your student's limits, how to push, and how much time the students need for a break. Give students time to digest, and then ask them to go for it. Pushing too hard or too fast is not profitable for the student’s growth.” Teacher Three asserted: “I well may use different teaching methods for different students for the same piece. Teaching is based on a student’s personality and character, not a formula. Of course I teach technique to a certain extent, and then, in the end, I leave it up to the student to adopt the method that works best for him. I provide many options and give them advice . . . however I want all of my students to develop their own unique style and character in learning piano performance.” He also emphasized that the learning process comes naturally to some, but not for others, highlighting again the need for personalized teaching. Teacher Four agreed. “I have different requirements for different students and this depends on the qualities they possess . . . [as a consequence] I need to improvise in my teaching. Sometimes stimulation [for a particular teaching method] comes from my students . . . As every student is unique and comes from a different environment, one cannot just use one approach.” Teacher Five stated: “It depends on the individual student. . . . I teach different students using different methods . . . Everybody is different. . . . [even] their hands are different from mine.”

In comparing teaching piano to giving a lecture, Teacher Six argued that “teaching piano is more complicated. Lectures can be prepared ahead, but not piano lessons . . . because [the teacher] needs to solve the problems of individual students at the moment they arise . . . There is no lesson planning model for piano teachers [in the way that there is for giving a lecture].” He also said that “different methods appeal to students with different levels of talent. There is not a definitive method that can be used to teach all students.” Rather, the method used by a good teacher “should be different according to each student’s individual situation. . . . The best teacher is one who can form and be sensitive to the personality of his students through his teaching.” Teacher Seven stated: “It is up to the teacher to adjust the pace of teaching to students’ individual qualities . . . by using whatever approach is best suited to their needs.”
Teacher Eight approached the issue from a different angle, arguing that students should be taught differently according to whether they want to be a scholar, a teacher, or a performer. “Everyone has weak points and strong points; you won’t know what to give him in advance of him coming to you. For final year students, the goal after graduation is all that counts, regardless of whether they ultimately take up music for a career. Some don't. But for students who want to further their study in music, then the teacher’s requirements will be totally different.” Teacher Eight stated: “On different levels, different students have different abilities and also different goals.” Teacher Nine asserted: “I don’t believe that one principle is applicable to all. Completely different approaches are needed for student A and student B . . . I use different methods to teach and to engage them in discussion with me.” In regard to teaching technique, he said: “I encourage students to use many different methods to practise a given passage, and to split it up into different ways of learning.” Teacher Ten confidently asserted: “Some students major in performance, some want to be teachers, and others study music just for fun; I have them all sorted out.” In summary, it is clear that all of the teachers tailor their teaching methods to the individual needs of their students, depending on their learning goals, their expectations, their abilities, the pace at which they learn, and their progress.

Following is a discussion of the three overriding notions that emerged from the literature review and the teacher interviews with respect to a philosophy of teaching piano performance: the importance of helping students to develop the capacity to enjoy and love music; the importance of nurturing and developing personal characteristics in students; and the importance of transmitting knowledge and insights to others: teacher to student, and performer to audience.

6.2.4 Imbuing students with an enjoyment and love of music

There was much support for the notion that guiding students to develop an abiding enjoyment and love of music is at the heart of motivating them to learn. Nine teachers commented on the importance of students enjoying or having a love of music – or both. Six teachers referred specifically to ‘enjoyment’. Teacher One said: “I have certainly chosen some showy works and flashy pieces for students who are very withdrawn, because they need some extra work [to come out of themselves] to enjoy music.” Teacher Four spoke of “letting them [students] enjoy music.” Teacher Five summed up the importance of enjoyment as follows: “When you are a performer, you share it [music] with others; when you perform, your enjoyment is very important. I share my own enjoyment with my students and encourage them to enjoy playing and share their enjoyment.” Teacher Seven stressed that a performer “should enjoy every
bit of it [the music] in a performance.” Teacher Eight spoke of “allowing them [students] to enjoy music in their lives, to share the music that they learn . . . I always teach them that no matter whether they can play well or not, they have the right to share the enjoyment of music . . . even if it is a simple piece.” Teacher Nine said that students “should enjoy it [music], and enjoy this blessing.”

Six of the teachers referred to the importance of students having a ‘love’ of music. Teacher Two recalled her own learning experience: “Once I started, I loved playing the piano . . . Praise and encouragement made me love playing the piano.” Teacher Three finds that “Teaching music to a student and bringing him to love it means more than winning an award in a competition. He learns because of his enthusiasm for music – not because music is an easy subject to study, or to show-off on stage, or for victory, although there are many teachers and students who study music for these ends. Achievements and awards give students the incentive to keep going . . . The love of art really depends on education. It is important for children to be nurtured while they are still young.” Teacher Four suggested that love for music develops from an interest and involvement: “Once they develop an interest in music they will be motivated to do something with it.” Teacher Seven recounted that her love of music was stimulated by her teacher: “My piano teacher gave musical inspiration that made all of his students love music through his teaching . . . I would like to inspire my students to like music and to find a passion in it. I want to share the love of music with my students.” Teacher Nine said: “I tell my students from day one that I will not be disappointed if they cannot play well even on their last day of learning from me, but that I will be very upset if they do not like or love music after learning from me . . . I hope that my students learn to love music and to appreciate it.” He also said that he stresses the importance of students playing the piano for the love of it, rather than simply to gain credits or pass examinations. Teacher Ten agreed that “a good performer is character-driven [by] his enthusiasm and love of music and the expression of musical sense and feeling through the instrument.” He added that a love of music is important because such an interest in a subject is a major incentive in the pursuit of life-long learning.

6.2.5 Nurturing and developing personal characteristics and qualities in piano students

The teachers interviewed presented a range of views on this issue. They considered it important to develop and nurture in students such characteristics as diligence; they spoke of music’s role in both shaping and reflecting a student’s personality or character; and underpinning many of their conversations was an emphasis on the teaching of music being seen within the broader perspective of reflecting a person’s ‘world view’ or sense of humanity.
6.2.5.1 Being diligent

All of the teachers agreed that the routine of piano practice trains one to be diligent. Teacher One said: “I do take quite a lot of time in some lessons trying to explain what I mean by practising well . . . The students should have everything they need to go on by themselves.” He recounted that when he was a student he practised very hard and conscientiously to achieve as fluent a performance as possible, and that he often achieved it daily. Teacher Two succinctly summed up the importance of practice: “Without practice, it is useless.” Teacher Three emphasised that students must be “willing to practise as much as possible . . . I suggest that they practise as much as they can. It is hard to tell how much is enough; it differs from student to student. Some are outstanding, but some are not. My goal is for them to prepare well.” Teacher Four stated it similarly: “I encourage performance students to practise as much as they can.” Teacher Five said: “I think one should have three things: diligence, obedience, and creativity. If you can find a balance between them, then that is good.” Teacher Six argued that “the success of the method depends on how diligent the students are.” Teacher Seven opined that “students should be willing to work hard and be diligent.” Teachers Eight and Nine shared similar ideas on diligence, with Teacher Eight suggesting that it is important to “believe in hard work and have faith in them [the students]. In time everyone can be a good musician even though one may not be a good performer.” Teacher Nine also is committed to a belief that success depends on how hard the student works: “I only ask students whether or not they practise diligently; I don’t like students who rely solely on their natural by talent because although they can turn out a good performance they are never good students. Those who benefit most from a lesson are those who are willing to practise at home.” Teacher Ten nominated the number of hours that he expects at this level: “I think four hours is good enough.” Certainly, all of the teachers concurred that through conscientious piano practice students develop a sense of diligence.

Three teachers discussed diligence in relation to obedience, suggesting that students should obediently follow the instructions of the teacher. Teacher Two, for example, stressed that she expects her students to obediently follow her instructions “in producing a particular sound”. Reference has already been made to Teacher Five’s belief in “diligence, obedience, and creativity”. Teacher Six drew a parallel between the relationship of doctor and patient and that of teacher and student: “Certainly, patients are responsible for the way they take their medication. The same goes for teaching – the success of the method depends on how diligent the students are and whether they follow the teacher’s instructions.”

In their discussion of diligence three teachers also referred to the
importance of students developing a positive attitude. Teacher Two, for example, discussed this in the context of preparing for a piano competition: “There is something about competitions – through them one can build up a tough, aggressive and competitive character. Moreover, one gains confidence to perform and pursue music at a higher level; through competitions, students know their level and their standard. This stimulates a positive attitude toward learning in students . . . and builds up their sense of responsibility and attitude toward practising.” Performance, but not necessarily competitive performance, was also addressed by Teacher Four. A performance, she said, “reflects not only the musical aspects, but also the attitude of the performer.” Teacher Six agreed: “As the Chinese saying goes, ‘Never fight an unprepared war’. Students should always prepare themselves to give their best performance,” adding that this is the basis for developing a positive attitude. Diligence and practice were seen to be essentials in training students for performance.

6.2.5.2 Shaping the personality of students

All of the teachers agreed that the learning of music and preparation for performance can in some way and to some extent shape the personality or character of students. Teacher One mentioned taking a relatively novel approach by selecting pieces that are contrary to the personality of students or are in a style that will present them with new challenges: “I have plenty of students who don't want to play certain types of music and sometimes I insist on them doing so. I want them at least to experience it before they give up on it entirely, because sometimes they find that they are wrong.” He adheres to a belief that students should be given a wide range of repertoire as a means not only of musical development but also personal development. In another insightful comment, Teacher Two suggested that “interpretation depends on an individual’s character, which affects their mode of expression. Character and personality affect the way [people] perform.” This notion was reinforced by Teachers Three and Five. Teacher Three stated that “music helps one to think and nurtures one’s temperament . . . Through [learning] pieces, character, temperament and personality will be formed and developed elegantly.” He went so far as to suggest that when children who learn piano grow up they know how to appreciate the arts and rarely display anti-social behaviour. Teacher Five highlighted the fact that teachers not only have to work with a student’s musical ability, but also their personality characteristics: “When you are at the piano your own character and personal involvement become very important in the lesson – in the teaching and learning process.” Teacher Four expressed a similar belief: “I think that performance can reflect the performer’s personality . . . The audience may agree and share [the performer’s] thoughts and spirit . . . I would like them [my students] to be free thinkers with decent characters.”
Teacher Six was adamant that “Without personality, one can never be a mature artist . . . The best teacher is one who can form the personality of his students through his teaching. Some students may be very obedient to their teacher and do everything the teacher tells them to, but they will never become excellent students or mature artists because they have not developed their own personality at all. In fact, everyone has their own personality; but it takes the teacher to think of a method to bring it out.”

Teacher Seven said: “Teachers can influence students and should help them to develop a passion for music and be concerned with the growth of their personality and character.” Teacher Nine also opined that learning piano performance can be character building, adding, “I hope my students can be rational, emotional, and have a good technique when they perform.” Teachers Eight and Ten shared similar ideas on the shaping and development of personality through piano education. Teacher Eight stated: “You need to build up the interior, the inner self, to be a person with the personality to carry off the music.” She made particular reference to style, suggesting that it “is something that you have to feel on your own.” Therefore she emphasizes students learning pieces in a wide range of styles as a means of shaping their personal characteristics. Finally, Teacher Ten, in suggesting that piano study develops personality and temperament, said that “a good performer is good at communicating with others through music and is well prepared. It is about artistic sense and disposition.”

In speaking of music developing the personality, character or disposition of students, four teachers referred to a notion of objectivity suggesting, essentially, that performers must be true to the score – the composer’s wishes – and must not let their own subjectivity or personality over-ride the desires of the composer. Teacher One, for example, expressed it as “A good performance is one that conveys as completely as possible the message of the composer.” It follows that the performer’s own personality must not be so strong as to ignore the composer’s wishes. Teacher Four referred to the words of Claudio Arrau to express a similar sentiment: “A good performer must have confidence with humility and objectiveness, and be tough in character and truly know how to handle his emotions.” Teacher Six quoted another great pianist to express a similar sentiment: “Schnabel said that a performer is only a bridge, a middle-man between the composer and the audience. The performer must be objective.” Teacher Eight expressed it as: “A good performer should be a loyal interpreter and not show off. He is there to interpret and bring out the music . . . He is a faithful interpreter who adds his own taste and creativity to the performance.”

Whilst a performer’s personality and performance characteristics will imbue a performance with an individual or personal interpretation, it should not ignore or override the desires of the composer.
6.2.5.3 Having a sense of humanity

The above discussion in relation to nurturing a student’s personality and character needs to seen from an even broader perspective: ensuring that students develop a ‘world view’ or sense of humanity – a humanitarian spirit. This is a much broader notion than the previous two already discussed. Whilst the concept of having a sense of humanity was implicit or touched on obliquely in statements by many teachers, it was perhaps best addressed by Teacher Four who said that “like me, I hope my students learn what I have gained through music, such as humanity and philosophy.” He went on: “It is important to teach them [students] about humanity. Starting from an understanding of humanity is essential; it encompasses an attitude to learning and seeing things from different points of views. If one has a positive attitude and thinks sensibly, then it is easier to learn how to be a human being . . . To teach music is only a fragment of life. It must be taught within the context of knowing what it means to be human.” It is an ideal that should underpin all teaching.

6.2.6 Transmitting knowledge and insights to others

Two main views emerged from the teacher interviews with respect to the transmission of knowledge, ideas or insights: the role of teachers in passing on knowledge and insights to students, and the role of performers in transmitting knowledge and insights – and, in a sense, the ‘thinking’ of the composer – to the audience.

6.2.6.1 Teachers passing on their knowledge and insights to students

Eight of the teachers explicitly referred to the role of teachers in passing on their own ideas and insights to their students. Teacher One expressed it as: “What they [the students] should have obtained by the time they finish learning [from me] are broad ideas about the whole concept of performing the piano and performing a piece in different styles, so that when their own pupils come to them they can devise the right method of teaching that is applicable to each of their students . . . I believe teachers also need to teach their students how to practise so that when these students become teachers they can convey this to their own students.” Teacher Two stated that “the sound that my teacher could produce had a great influence on me, and I demand a similar sound from my students.” Teacher Four stated: “I hope I can pass on to my students the good things that I learnt from my teachers and those aspects that I think will be helpful to them.” Teacher Five began with a metaphor, suggesting that “performing music is like preaching, in that what you pass on to students they in turn can pass on. The best thing about music is to be able to pass it from teacher to student,
from one generation to the next.” Teacher Seven acknowledged: “I got some of my ideas from them [my teachers], and in particular the love of music that my teachers really inspired in me . . . to be a teacher, one can share the thing that one likes – music – with others, and through this sharing transfer knowledge to the next generation . . . I do think the key in teaching musical instruments such as the piano is sharing – the pedagogical idea is to share in the teaching and learning process of both the teacher and the student.” Teacher Eight remembered the way her teacher taught her and this has influenced her greatly: “My teacher was very methodical and disciplined. This had a great impact on me. I followed what she taught.” Teacher Nine said that he had synthesized what he had learned from various teachers: “I use all methods, so there are no specific models. I simply put all the best things I have learnt from my teachers together and form my own method . . . My objective is to share music with my students, and in particular piano music.” Finally, Teacher Ten recalled particular aspects he had learnt from one of his teachers and which he now passes on to his own students: “When I studied in England my teacher taught me how to practise, how to memorize the score and how to play scales. I learned a lot from my teacher’s teaching.”

6.2.6.2 Performers transmitting the composer’s ideas to the audience

All of the teachers discussed the notion of the performer conveying the ideas of the composer to the audience. Teacher One asserted that “a good performance is one that conveys as completely as possible the message of the composer . . . [A good performer] really has to encourage the participation or involvement of the audience and express everything that the composer is trying to convey.” Teacher Two argued: “As a human being, you share what you know and what you learn about music with others . . . the pursuit of sound is ongoing until the moment of performance, at which time one shares the sound that one has been seeking during practice and preparation for the performance.” Teacher Three stated: “A good performance can communicate the ideas or message of the composer . . . and a good performer has the ability to bring out the message.” Teacher Four expressed the hope that the audience would “agree with and share [the performer’s] thoughts and spirit . . . [being] a good performer means having the maturity of technique and the ability to communicate and touch the heart of an audience.” Teacher Five opined that “When you are a performer you share it [music] with others . . . a good performance means touching or communicating with the audience.” Teacher Six expressed it as: “A good performance . . . is able to reflect accurately the desires of the composer . . . images are created by a good performance . . . [A good performance] should give the audience a revelation, meaningful thoughts and, after listening to it, the music should
linger on in the audience’s mind.” Teacher Seven stressed the need for students “to
gain more experience in performing; their attitude to learning and performing music
should be one of sharing with the audience.” Teacher Eight stated that the “performer
is there to interpret and bring out the music and share the enjoyment with others.”
Teacher Nine insists that his students “have something to tell the audience” through
piano performance. Teacher Ten advised: “You must touch the listeners’ hearts, move
them . . . and a good performer is good at communicating with others through music
and is well prepared.”

6.3 Principles

It was noted earlier that the term ‘principles’ as used in this study refers to
the basic general rules and ‘truths’ that teachers use to achieve their ideal philosophy.
These principles underpin the methodologies that teachers use; in other words, they
underpin the teaching of piano performance and encompass the values, beliefs, and
norms that are applied in teaching. The following discussion of the piano teacher
interviews focuses on the following principles: music as a means of expressing
emotion and ideas; the importance of achieving a good tonal quality; use of the
imagination; the role of encouragement and stimulation in teaching; and the
importance of quality teaching.

6.3.1 Music as a means of expressing emotion and ideas

The teachers were unanimous in their strong support of this principle.
Teacher One recalled “Cortot, who was a wonderful player, with a terrific freedom of
expression.” Teacher Two stated that “sadness can be expressed in different styles
through sound and mind . . . To express one’s feeling and emotion is the most
important aspect – you are truthfully playing the sound from the bottom of your
heart.” Teacher Three asserted: “I do hope that my students are able to express their
emotions, ideas, or anything through the pieces they perform . . . when one plays
without liveliness, it is like displaying things meaninglessly.” Teacher Four referred to
the importance of an audience being “touched or convinced by a performance” or
leaving thinking that “the music made you feel like you gained something.” Teacher
Five elaborated on this idea: “The basic element for a good performer is to play the
music from the bottom of your heart. I’ve seen many students who play very well,
who are technically perfect and musically polished, but I do not feel that something
has been communicated by them. I just do not feel anything; the feeling is not real.”
Her approach is to stress the emotional quality of a piece from the beginning: “The
whole piece has to make sense . . . It is an emotional process. I believe that it was the
same when the composer wrote it – he was not randomly putting feelings together.” Teacher Six spoke of the importance of a performer communicating feeling, emotion and ideas and giving the audience a “revelation”. Teacher Six argued that “the performer has to read the meaning behind the notes, and turn the blueprint into live music.” He referred to the importance of expressing the emotion and meaning that are behind the notes. Teacher Seven expressed it as: “A good performance is one that can move and touch the feelings in the heart of the audience,” adding that music expresses the musical mind of the composer and the performer. Teacher Eight described the performer as “a faithful interpreter who adds his own taste,” which for her includes “personal emotions and feelings”. In describing his approach in teaching a student how to bring out the emotion and expression in a piece Teacher Nine said: “I tell her about something personal to stimulate her feelings.” Teacher Ten stated: “You must touch the listeners’ hearts and move them; if the music is poignant and the listener really feels sad, then that is a good performance.”

6.3.2 Tonal quality

Seven of the teachers specifically mentioned the production of a good tonal quality as being an important principle in teaching piano. Teacher One stated that a pianist must have “a marvellous ability to produce a beautiful sound.” Teacher Two argued: “It is true that students produce their own sound within the rules and characteristics of a particular period. But in the aspect of interpretation, the quality of a sound has its own unique form and shape that one can sense and feel, such as the sound of the romantic period.” Teacher Three drew attention to the importance of a pianist producing a singing tone and likened it to the task of the singer: “If you do not know how to produce the right sound with your voice then you will never be a good singer. You must understand the sound first.” Teacher Five spoke of “the expressiveness of tone to convey meaning, feeling and emotion.” Teacher Seven drew attention to the close relationship between technique and sound, suggesting that “one can use different fingers and hand shapes to produce different tonal qualities. Students therefore need to know what tonal quality they are aiming for and then use appropriate means to produce it.” Teacher Nine recalled: “From day one to the last lesson my teacher focused on teaching what good sound is. The most significant thing was that he trained my ears to have the ability to differentiate between qualities of sound. I find that the sensitivity of my ears is extremely acute; I can hear more nuances of sound, sonority and tone colour than most ordinary people.” Teacher Ten referred to a “performer [who] used little movement but was capable of producing such a grand and rich sound”. He suggested that tonal quality is the “soul” of piano music.
6.3.3 Imagination

Two perspectives arose in teachers’ discussion of the imagination as an important teaching and learning principle: firstly, using the imagination as a tool in teaching and learning and, secondly, using the imagination as a means of deciding on the expression, emotion and feeling that a piece requires.

6.3.3.1 Imagination in teaching and learning

Five teachers spoke in support of using the imagination as a teaching-learning tool. Teacher Two coupled mention of imagination with reference to personal experience, suggesting that the latter provides a useful ‘basis’ for using the imagination: “Personal experience along with imagination are very important.” Teacher Five finds engaging students’ imagination useful in teaching musical style: “[I] inspire their imagination with stories that help them to understand.” Teacher Six said that “teachers should nurture students to use their imagination in interpreting and performing] music. This is actually very important, because I know that many piano teachers in Hong Kong and China do not teach about the imagination.” Teacher Eight suggested that “imagining a scene” is important. She also said that in her teaching, she will approach a work by “demonstrating the right style, singing the music, and making a lot of body movements” as a means of stimulating her students to use their imagination: “For example, Chopin is passionate and romantic, and requires the students to imagine from their real experience . . . style is something that you have to feel on your own . . . it requires the student's imagination.”

Three teachers said that they engage a student’s imagination when teaching technique. Teacher Two stated: “I teach technique by using imagination . . . For example, a student can learn to play staccato by pretending to touch a hot stove.” Teacher Three said: “You must understand the sound first and know how to consider it. That is purely technique – sound is produced from technique and imagination.” Teacher Five said that in teaching students “to be musically and technically independent you can ask them to try doing things in different ways, but always using their imagination.”

6.3.3.2 Imagination in relation to expression, emotion, and feeling

Five of the teachers focused on the imagination in relation to expression, emotion, and communication. Teacher One spoke of this in relation to the audience: “The music should be able to engage the enthusiasm and imagination of the audience. Obviously, it [imagination] helps the performer enormously to communicate with the audience.” Teacher Two asserted that “even beginners need to understand what sound
is and how to imagine what the sound is about. Give students a sound and what do they imagine? Using sound to stimulate the imagination will arouse student’s interest in sound.” Teacher Five reflected on her own learning as a student: “My teachers focused on feelings more than technique; they talked about emotions and feelings more than anything else and tried to inspire me and encouraged me to use my own imagination to express myself.” Teacher Eight said that “both the mind and the imagination are very important,” because performers use imagination to shape music to express their feelings, ideas, and emotion. Teacher Nine gave an example from his own teaching: “To guide my students to understand the meaning of *con fuoco* [with fire], I ask them to imagine how they would feel if they broke up with their boyfriend or girlfriend. This is exactly in line with what my teacher said about passion being connected with real life."

It should be noted that teachers tended to discuss use of the imagination as an aspect of creativity. It will be recalled further that Teacher Five had also drawn attention to the importance of creativity when discussing diligence: “I think one should have three things: diligence, obedience and creativity. If you can find a balance between them, then that is good.” Certainly, in their discussion of imagination some teachers did so in relation to its creative dimension. Indeed, for some of them these terms appeared to be synonymous or interchangeable. Teacher Eight suggested that a good performer is “a faithful interpreter who adds his own taste and creativity to the performance.”

6.3.4 Encouragement and stimulation in teaching

Eight teachers identified the giving of encouragement and eight identified providing stimulation as another important teaching principle. Encouragement and stimulation – like imagination and creativity – are discussed here as being two related aspects. The giving of encouragement was mentioned, amongst others, in relation to establishing in students a love of music, motivating them to practise, preparing them for performance, and undertaking self-evaluation. Teacher One stated that “teachers must be encouraging, so I try very hard to incorporate into my teaching truthful and encouraging comments.” Teacher Two recalled her own piano lessons: “Praise and encouragement made me love playing the piano.” Four teachers identified encouragement as a means of motivating students to practise. Teacher Three stated: “I cannot be with them when they practise, so I encourage them instead.” Teacher Four said: “I encourage performance students to practise as much as they can . . . I encourage them to try different things to develop their understanding so that they can have a greater appreciation of the music.” He expanded on this: “I encourage them to learn more works by different composers . . . I require them to record their
performances and encourage them to perform more often in different situations.” Teacher Five argued that a teacher should “never make them [students] follow everything you say . . . [but, rather,] encourage them to try different methods” in playing or practising. This was supported by Teacher Nine: “Encouragement and appreciation in the process of learning are both important . . . I encourage students to use many different methods to practise a given passage.” He also encourages students to debate issues with him as a means of them gaining greater insights. Teacher Eight expressed a similar opinion: “If the student is quite mature, then I allow him to have his own ideas and encourage him to discuss more with me,” adding that “if students are ready to perform and a master class [for example] is a possibility, then I will encourage them to participate.” Teacher Seven encourages students to undertake self-evaluation: “I encourage them to record what they play and listen to it afterwards.” There is no doubt that through encouragement students go on to pursue higher standards of pianistic accomplishment.

The other – related – half of this principle is providing stimulation and eight teachers gave insights into this aspect. With the exception of Teachers One and Six, the same teachers who mentioned encouragement also mentioned stimulation. Teacher Two uses sound itself as a means of stimulating students’ imagination and “deepening the love of music.” Teacher Three stated: “I only hope that they [students] can reason things out that stimulate their thoughts. To stimulate their thinking is the point.” He noted that his own lessons from his teachers stimulated him in his creation of teaching methods, adding, “They gave me a lot of inspiration and a strong musical sense.” Teacher Four was similarly inspired by her teacher: “My teacher gave his students a lot of inspiration in music . . . music was not taught as a technical subject, but as being related to many other kind of arts, even to life. He made me think about many things. He taught me to think about how to practise and become more successful.” Teacher Five stated: “Musically, I use a lot of examples from daily life to guide and stimulate my students.” She added that another way in which she stimulates students is to use their own experiences as a teaching and learning tool. Teacher Seven said that her own life experience is an effective stimulation in informing her teaching: “Everything that I feel and hear that is related to music influences the way I teach, especially the inspiration and stimulation that I get from music.” She also acknowledged the importance of her teachers in stimulating her ideas about teaching: “I got some of my ideas from them and in particular the love of music that my teachers really inspired in me . . . I would like to inspire my students to like music and to find a passion in it.” Some teachers commented that they are stimulated in their teaching as a result of wide reading. Teacher Seven said: “In order to broaden my knowledge and up-grade the quality of my teaching I read pedagogical books to help
me think about my teaching; to consider if any of the ideas may be useful or appropriate for my students. Actually, reading other kinds of books sometimes stimulates my thoughts and feelings on teaching as well.” Teacher Eight stated: “I love to read method books and also pedagogical journals . . . they talk about teaching experiences, methods, and discuss teaching matters.” She acknowledged that this stimulates her own teaching; she also noted that her teaching methods were stimulated from her experience of teaching different students. She then discussed the importance of performing in master classes and participating in competitions as an effective form of stimulation for student learning: “It gives them a chance to learn from other teachers; there are different approaches that can accelerate their learning, just as taking part in a [music] festival would do.” Teacher Nine suggested that applying visual and aural stimulation from daily experience can assist in developing a student’s artistic sense: “I require them to link music with other art forms such as drama and painting . . . I see this world as consisting of many different disciplines that are all related . . . I like to draw comparisons and this is very stimulating for students.” Teacher Ten mentioned using visual and aural stimulation in the form of videos and VCDs: “For example, I play videos and VCDs of performers like Claudio Arrau and let my students watch. They see how he performed in his last concert at such an old age: his steps may have been shaky but the sound was solid because the strength was there . . . I introduce different performers so that my students will understand different interpretations.” These other performers include Lipatti, Zimmermann, Pollini, and Argerich.

6.3.5 Quality teaching

In the interviews, seven of the teachers directly commented that students should be taught as well as possible. Teacher One stated: “I think it is vitally important that they are taught as well as possible.” Teacher Four expressed it as: “When I discover problems in my students’ playing I try as many methods as possible to solve them.” Teacher Five spoke of students who show particular promise: “If I see someone who is really talented and able, then I do my utmost to nurture him or her.” Teacher Six opined that “a good teacher needs to bring out the full potential of students through daily training.” He commented that in nurturing students he uses a range of methods. Teacher Seven emphasised the importance of excellence in teaching and was adamant that “it is the teacher's responsibility to bring out the best in students . . . to let their qualities and talent blossom.” Teacher Eight argued that it is the responsibility of the teacher to bring out a student’s talent, adding that it is also “rewarding because you can see students’ potential and help them to bring it out. As well as musical ability you can also help them explore other skills relating to playing.”
Teacher Ten uses various approaches in his quest to teach students as well as possible:
“I organize student concerts and tell them to participate in master classes as
performers or even page-turners – it is valuable stage experience and a chance to learn
more about repertoire. To be an accompanist or turn pages for others provides a
chance to read scores and to listen: these are valuable opportunities.”

6.4 Methodologies

The teachers gave detailed information on methodologies in relation to
technique; style; memorization; practice; acute listening skills (or extending aural
ability); and stage fright.

6.4.1 Technique

As might be expected, the ten teachers held a range of views on methods
for developing technique. Two of them provided general comments on the importance
of technique: Teacher Seven stated that “one must have a strong and solid technical
foundation” and Teacher Six opined that “teachers must provide a very solid
fundamental training for their students.” The following discussion centres on five
aspects relating to technique: technical exercises such as finger exercises (including
scales and arpeggios); physical movements (of the arms, wrists, and fingers) that
produce different touches; relaxation; musical expression; and the importance of
listening for good sound production.

6.4.1.1 Finger exercises

Five of the teachers spoke of the importance of finger exercises. Teacher
One emphasised the importance of scales and arpeggios because they strengthen the
fingers, saying that his students “have to practise scales and arpeggios in a specific
manner to prepare themselves to play the running passages in [for example] Mozart.”
Teacher Five said: “I give many finger exercises to them [students] to practise,”
including Czerny studies. Teacher Eight stated: “It is very effective to go through all
of the exercises from the book of Hanon; it strengthens weak fingers. Everyone
concentrates on training their technique using one technique book . . . I also use
Pischna and Berens to develop the technique of the students.” On the same point,
Teacher Nine opined that “students need to spend half an hour each day practising
scales, octaves, double thirds, arpeggios (every inversion), and the finger exercises . . .
of Hanon and Pischna. The more practice the students undertake the more skill they
obtain. I also require them to practise Chopin Etudes and other technical exercises for
an hour a day.” Teacher Ten indicated that the teaching of technique mainly revolves
around scales, the studies of Czerny (Op. 559 and Op. 849), and the Cramer exercises – but most importantly scales “because many variations diverge from these. For arpeggios, students play the entire chords using one set of fingering. When the left and right hands commence on different notes of the chords at the same time, the difficulty increases.”

6.4.1.2 Physical movements of the arms, wrists and fingers that produce different touches

Nine of the teachers discussed technique in relation to physical movements that produce different touches or tonal qualities. They pointed out that there are different techniques for using arm, wrist, finger and overall body weight. Teacher One, in referring to playing a passage or a whole piece said that “you can do it in many different ways: staccato, marcato, legato . . . There are things such as the way to sit at the piano, and the way to use the fingers, wrists, arms, and shoulders to play. These aspects are called technique.” He added that “students should study different types of music . . . in order to develop different techniques.” Teacher Two stated that “finger technique means the independence of each finger and an even touch, not just the action”; it goes beyond mere technical exercises. Teacher Three said: “I teach technique in terms of how to move different parts of your hands in different ways and at different angles to project the sound.” Teacher Five stated that technique should be taught “physically and technically – how to use the hand, how to relax the arm, the shoulder, and how to use the back for support.” Teacher Six opined that good teachers “need to train their students to be capable of mastering all of the basic techniques,” including how to play slurs and staccato using different physical movements. Teacher Seven stated that “With technical skill, one can use different finger and hand shapes to produce different tonal qualities.” She further opined that “technique is also about the physical problems that one may need to overcome as one plays, like how to operate the joints and muscles.” Teacher Eight expressed the opinion that “teaching technique is very methodical: everything, such as fingertips, wrists, arms, legato, and staccato, should be trained in an exact way. No detail can be missed.” Teacher Nine stated: “In detail, I am quite concerned with the support of the fingertips. I teach my students to use high fingers to accentuate the third knuckle. For those whose third joints are not strong, the high finger position can help them to feel the strength. This is an easier way for students to play close to the surface of the keys and to keep the fingertips as close as possible [to the keys] when they play.” Teacher Ten opined that “[students] must know scales and the appropriate fingerings well so that they can practise the different touches with two handed coordination. There are many different ways of practising scales, such as four semi-quavers in a group, the right hand playing a
three-note slur and the fourth note detached in equal time, or the left hand playing all legato. Moreover, students can play at different speeds and with different touches, such as performing with a relaxed and natural movement of the wrist.”

6.4.1.3 Relaxation

Five teachers stressed the importance of relaxation in connection to technique. Teacher One emphasised “sitting properly, using the weight of your body and arms properly, playing while relaxed.” Teacher Four stated that “fingering, hand shape, and relaxation when playing piano” are important. Teacher Five opined that “relaxation is the most important. If somebody can relax their body when they play, it is so much better than anything else, because it is very difficult to have a natural posture and project tone.” She added that when the body is relaxed it allows different parts of the hands, wrists, and arms to project a better range of sounds. Teacher Nine stated that he asks his students “to play every chord down to the bottom of the keys whilst being totally relaxed.” Teacher Ten mentioned that different touches are produced with a “relaxed and natural movement of the wrist.”

6.4.1.4 Musical expression

Seven of the teachers spoke about musical expression when discussing technique. Teacher One mentioned that when he practised he imagined the sound prior to producing it in order to imbue it with meaning or expression, adding, “I recognized . . . the way to turn the physical exercise into a musical experience.” He expounded that there is a ‘transfer’ from technique to musical feeling: “Sometimes even Mozart made quite large gestures when he was performing . . . so technique is related to style . . . [and] style demands certain kinds of technique and touches.” Teacher Two expressed the relationship between technique and musical expression as: “The technique of performance is not only about the fingers running up or down the keyboard. To express one’s feeling and emotion is the most important aspect – you are truthfully playing the sound from the bottom of your heart.” Teacher Three put it as: “Technique will change your way of interpreting the music; you are limited if your technique is not sufficient.” He went on to mention that there is a variety of techniques that can be employed to express musical sense or feeling. In discussing the relationship between technique and playing with feeling, Teacher Four said that if students can master a “mature technique”, then they will have the “ability to communicate and to touch the heart of the audience.” Teacher Six opined: “I tell them that technique is not only about finger movement; it must be performed with a musical sense.” Teacher Seven was clearly in agreement: “musical sense can be enriched when one has learnt the technique . . . Technique is like the servant of music;
it is used to express the different scenes, moods, and feelings of different kinds of music.” Finally, Teacher Nine stressed: “When I ask students to practise technique, I require them not only to practise fingering, but also to express their feelings from their hearts.”

### 6.4.1.5 Listening and sound production

Five teachers made reference to sound production in their interviews. In reference to practising technical exercises Teacher One said: “I . . . sit there and think about the quality of the sound.” He referred to the close relationship between sound and technique. Teacher Two opined that “finger technique is only the means of reaching the standard for what you want to express. So listening comes before practise. Listen to the sound first.” She explained that students perform well “when [they] have an empathy with sound and are well prepared both intellectually and technically.” It Reference has already been made to Teacher Three’s statement that “You must understand the sound first and know how to consider it. That is purely technique – sound is produced from technique and imagination.” Teacher Seven stressed the importance of “using the ears to produce the right tone or sound and expression . . . It is very important that one knows about tonal production.” In teaching technique, Teacher Nine remembered that his teacher taught him to listen to the sound first: “how to play good legato: my teacher said to use the ears first, to hear what legato is, and then try to achieve the effect.”

### 6.4.2 Style

Four aspects relating to style can be discerned as a result of the teacher interviews. The first relates to historical background, the second is listening to music, the third is the relationship with other arts, and the fourth is personal style. (Relevant quotations regarding the first of these – understanding the historical background – have already been presented earlier in this chapter and will not be repeated here.)

#### 6.4.2.1 Listening to music to understand style

Not surprisingly, all of the teachers spoke of the importance of listening to music as an important means of developing an appreciation of stylistic interpretation. Teacher One stated that sound reflects a particular historical background: “Certain music, like that of Mozart, requires a certain style of playing. If the performer plays out of that style, then it does not really sound like Mozart and therefore does not convey what the music is trying to say.” Therefore, Teacher One encourages his students to engage in extensive listening as a means of coming to terms with stylistic differences in performance. Teacher Two asserted that “one can only understand style
by playing and listening often.” Teacher Three stated: “One must develop one’s own interpretation and think about the feelings that arise from the experience of listening . . . That is why one must first listen.” Teacher Four ensures that his students listen to the works of a composer to appreciate his style – both through his piano pieces and through his other works. That means listening and comparing piano works and other works by the same composer – or a different composer – as well as comparing the ways that different artists play them.” It was seen earlier that Teacher Six spoke similarly when referring to the learning of a Beethoven piano sonata, suggesting that this should entail a familiarity with all of his piano sonatas. Teacher Seven believes that “listening to recordings of performances is a good reference for students to understand the style.” She also advocates listening to performances on keyboards of the period. Teacher Four argued that the “rules” or “truths” of a particular style can be grasped by listening widely to different recordings. Teacher Five asserted: “I ask them to listen to other music, including instrumental music, by the same composer or from the same period.” But in saying this she drew attention to a dilemma: “A teenager in Hong Kong has to feel the late Beethoven of almost two hundred years ago. When you do not have that feeling, it is difficult no matter what you do.” Teacher Eight stressed that “asking them to listen is the most important thing in understanding the style of different periods.” She mentioned a particular approach that she uses, namely, playing a baroque piece, for example, in a classical, romantic and baroque style and then discussing the most appropriate style with her students. Teacher Nine referred to the teaching of Haydn, stating that his slow movements are generally in a cantabile style: “Therefore I let my students listen to how people sang in a cantabile style at that time, and how the phrases are structured. Then I play recordings of orchestral music and string quartets for my students to listen to and ask them to differentiate between the parts and shapes of the sound within the music.” To provide another perspective and give students a broader palette for comparison he also encourages them to listen to “popular music, big band, and Broadway music.” Teacher Ten stated: “I play recordings for them, and most of the time they must sing to feel it [the style] . . . to know baroque, they must listen to Bach, Handel, and Purcell. Even [by listening] just a little, they can feel the music on their own. I mark down the points to listen for and the questions that they must answer.”

6.4.2.2 Comparisons with other art forms

Five of the teachers mentioned that they make reference to other art forms in their attempts to develop a stylistic sense in students. Teacher Three asserted: “Take impressionism for example –what is impressionism? They [students] need to read books, look at paintings, and know the French language to understand style.” Teacher
Four reinforced this point by saying that students should “have contact with all aspects of the period, including music, paintings, and books. These stimuli provide background information for the student.” She said that she encourages her students to take every opportunity possible to look at art and watch movies to perceive similarities of style between these art forms and music. Teacher Five similarly spoke of the importance of students immersing themselves in “listening, reading books, or looking at pictures” as a means of gaining a richer stylistic perspective. Teacher Seven said: “I tell my students to look at all kinds of pictures and paintings; inside the art work, they can perceive the artistic image directly from the artist.” In turn she hopes her students can transfer the feeling experienced into musical expression. Teacher Nine indicated requiring his students “to link music with other art forms such as drama and painting. In playing Debussy, I want them first to look at Monet’s paintings and get the idea of impressionism.” He encourages his students to become acquainted with prevailing stylistic practices through the broad perspective provided by a study of other art forms.

6.4.2.3 Personal style

Five of the teachers made reference to the development of a personal style. Teacher One stated: “I hope that if I have four students all playing the same Bach prelude and fugue that they will play it differently in the sense that the style will be there, but I would expect them to have their own individual ideas about some of the phrasing and expression.” Teacher Two reflected that “interpretation depends on an individual’s character, which affects their mode of expression. Character and personality affect the way [people] perform . . . Personal experience and imagination are very important too. The same piece has a different impact when played by different players.” Teacher Three suggested: “The most important thing is that the students themselves grasp the artistic sense of the piece that is to be expressed, rather than being forced to follow only one mode of playing. In this way they have the space to express their own style . . . It is difficult to teach style; students need to explore it by themselves.” Teacher Six expressed the view that “personality is style, and can be taught and formed by the teacher. Without personality, one can never be a mature artist. Teachers need to use different methods to form the unique personality of each student; it depends on their individual development . . . There is no fixed method for teaching; instead I use different methods to mould their personalities.” Teacher Eight stated that “style is something that you have to feel on your own.” Most teachers related this aspect of style to a student’s individual personality.
6.4.3 Memorization

With the exception of Teacher One, all of the teachers required their students to perform from memory. The analysis of the interviews reveals that they adopt a number of approaches in helping students to memorize. These include an aural approach; a visual approach; an analytical approach; physical or kinaesthetic memorization; a step-by-step or ‘staged’ approach; and others. It should be added that teachers did not restrict their students to one method of memorization.

6.4.3.1 An aural approach

Six teachers indicated using an aural approach in helping students to memorize. Teacher Two expects her students “to listen to the tune and memorize it. Then they play from memory and listen carefully, focusing on what they are playing.” Teacher Three observed that “students who have ‘perfect pitch’ find it easy to memorize music, in many respects,” adding that for everyone “aural training is very important.” Teacher Four stressed that students “need to listen more – it is all about aural ability.” She went on to say that students should “sing more, and not only the rhythm, but also the linear parts. I require them to know exactly what a conductor does.” Teacher Six requires his students to memorize the sound horizontally and vertically: “[I teach] the harmonic progression of sound and melodic lines.” Teacher Seven stated: “I ask them to listen to the notes and then memorize them.” Teacher Nine opined that “listening to the sound is very important in memorizing the music, so it is essential for my students to be able to sing the music by heart, listen to the sound and then perform it by ear . . . the hands can follow the sound in the mind and re-create the sound from the heart.”

6.4.3.2 A visual approach

Four of the teachers said that they encourage their students to memorize the score visually. Teacher One stated: “I tell my students to look at a few bars and then close the book and play them without taking another look.” Teacher Two tells her students to “visualize the score and seal this memory in their brain by closing their eyes and seeing whether the score is still in their mind.” Teacher Seven opined: “I tell them to treat the score as a picture, to visualize it and memorize it.” Teacher Ten offered: “At first I use visual aids. I let the students read a score that they have never played before for a minute, and then I ask questions on chords and patterns.” This he found to be excellent preparation for assisting students to visually memorize works that they are playing.
6.4.3.3 An analytical approach

Eight of the teachers mentioned requiring students to analyse the score as a means of memorizing it. Teacher One stated: “I [also] tell my students that they must analyze the chords and must know the structure of the piece.” Teacher Three suggested that memorization by analysis is most effective if students undertake the analysis by themselves; whilst the teacher can “help them, the teacher should offer advice only.” Teacher Five stated: “I teach them to analyze the harmony of the chords, and then we analyze similar patterns.” Teacher Six said: “I teach my students to memorize the score in many ways, such as the harmonic progressions and the melodic lines.” Teacher Seven stressed the importance of students “analysing the score theoretically and memorizing the forms, structure, texture, and harmonic progressions.” Teacher Eight said: “I teach them to recognize patterns and how to identify different sections and parts. For example, if students are memorizing a sonata, then I ask them to find the exposition, development, recapitulation, and coda. I teach them to analyze the chords and first and second subjects, and to recognize the sequence of the fingering.” Teacher Nine stated that “it is better for my students to analyze and memorize the harmonic progression. I tell my students to follow my way of practising so that they can memorize faster.” Teacher Ten cautioned: “Without analyzing a piece, although you may be able to memorize it . . . you will not be able to go on once you slip.” On the other hand, he said, if students memorize using detailed analysis, then even if they panic and forget the music, they will be able to pick it up and continue.

6.4.3.4 Physical or kinaesthetic memorization

Two of the teachers spoke in support of physical or kinaesthetic memory, albeit not as the only method to be employed. Teacher Five stated: “Finally, I ask my students to memorize the actions and the movements of the muscles of the hands using kinesthetic memory.” Teacher Seven stressed: “I want them to build up their geographical memory of the keyboard, which is the physical training of memorizing the position of the hand when playing piano, such as in chords, scales, and where to move the hands.” She commented that performers who depend on muscular memory alone may easily forget the notes when they are nervous.

6.4.3.5 A step-by-step or ‘staged’ approach

Five of the teachers liked to break-down memorization into a number of stages. Teacher Two stated: “I teach the students to memorize the left and right hand parts separately.” Teacher Five agreed, adding that she also asked them “to memorize section by section.” Teacher Eight claimed that she teaches students “step-by-step
according to the piece, dividing it into ‘blocks’ or ‘paragraphs’. If it is Bach, then students must use separate hands to practise because the left hand also has a melody that is quite complicated.” Teacher Nine stated the benefit of “break[ing] up the musical passages into small parts to practise them so that they [students] will have memorized [the piece] once all the practising is done”. Teacher Ten said that he required his students to memorize the hands separately – but not necessarily all of the piece: “One can memorize the separate hands . . . It is not necessary to memorize the whole piece, but certainly the most difficult parts.”

6.4.3.6 Other methods

Teachers Eight and Ten outlined yet other approaches to memorization. Teacher Eight stated: “I teach them different ways to memorize: after recalling the score, I ask them to practise with the left hand silently, playing only the right hand; or while singing the right hand part in the mind, playing with the left hand only; or singing one bar then playing the second, singing the third then playing the fourth, and so on. If the students prepare using all of these steps, then they can memorize the music. Memorizing by fingering alone is not safe. The students must know the score fully by heart.” Teacher Ten said that he asks to his students to “play other music on a tape or CD while they play from memory, to see whether they can concentrate without being distracted. I got this idea from my teacher and I have found it very useful. I still remember the music after many years.” He also suggested another special method of “using the left hand to play the right hand melody, so that the melody of the right hand is memorized or even played with one finger.”

6.4.4 Practice Methods

Six main points were evident in teachers’ responses to the issue of practice: practice based on an intellectual understanding of the cause of problems, efficient practice, slow practice, practising a step-at-a-time, practising with a critical ear, and goal oriented practice.

6.4.4.1 Practice based on an intellectual understanding of the cause of problems

Seven of the teachers agreed that students need to have an intellectual understanding of the problem needing to be addressed when practising. Teacher One stated: “[I] explain what I mean by practising well . . . and I believe teachers also need to teach their students how to practise.” Teacher Two said: “I teach them how best to practise and how to find and concentrate on the thing most needing practice . . . I teach them how to solve their problems.” Teacher Three stated that students must
learn how to “find the problem and know how to practise in order to rectify it.”
Teacher Four offered: “During practice, I expect my students to analyze the problem theoretically first.” She said that she gives students guidelines to assist them in understanding a problem. In stressing intellectual understanding Teacher Five said: “I teach them to recognize the harmony. Many sixteenth-note musical patterns are the same: I require them to practise them like chords.” Teacher Six stated: “I correct their mistakes and then tell them the cause of their problems,” and in this way shows them how to diagnose problems for themselves. In arguing the importance of intellectually understanding a problem Teacher Seven said: “Students do not know how to practise or where the problems are when they practise.”

6.4.4.2 Efficient practice

Six of the teachers stressed the importance of practising efficiently. Teacher One suggested: “An incredibly good method for difficult passages is to practise them ten times continuously and make them perfect each time. So, if a student gets up to nine and makes a mistake, then he has to start again. I have done that myself in my younger days. It is a really good method of practising.” Teacher Four stated: “I tackle the students’ inadequacies. I suggest methods for them to practise. I want them to practise in an effective and efficient way.” Efficiency was also stressed by Teacher Six: “I stress on them not to spend two hours accomplishing something that can be done in two minutes; the main thing is efficiency.” Teacher Eight stated that one should “always practise efficiently with purpose and continue step-by-step, using both simple and complicated methods.” Teacher Nine opined: “I want my students to practise with intelligence, because time is tight.” Teacher Ten offered the idea that using different rhythmic patterns to practise is both effective and efficient: “For example, in Bach’s two-part and three-part inventions, partitas, and preludes and fugues, there are many semi-quavers: one should work on the rhythmic variations and establish the fingering first.”

6.4.4.3 Slow practice

Two teachers, highlighted the importance of slow practice. Teacher Five claimed: “I want them to practise slowly. . . [keeping in mind that] the brain can't absorb long pieces: if you proceed too far and too fast you have to repeat the same thing very slowly again and again.” Teacher Ten argued that slow practice ultimately allows students to play quickly and with a confident tone, adding: “In quick pieces, like the fastest passages of the etudes and ballades of Chopin, for all notes, even the semi-quavers, students should use whole notes to practise and play from memory.”
6.4.4.4 Practising a step-at-a-time

Four teachers stressed the importance of practising a step-at-a-time, that is, little by little, section by section, and from simple to complicated. Teacher Five advocated practising little by little, section by section. She requires her students to practise “always with the hands separately first, and then by putting them together slowly.” Teacher Eight advocated moving from the simple to the complicated: “As a teacher, I always see what kinds of problem need to be tackled with students. I challenge them in their practice. After they practise well, things become easier. I simplify the difficult points for them when necessary.” Teacher Nine stated: “I encourage students to use many different methods to practise a given passage, and split it up and get them to approach it in different ways . . . During lessons I use different ways to practise the difficult parts with them and require them to do the same at home.” Teacher Ten also argued for systematic practice: “In a five-note chord, since the fourth finger is the weak finger, students should play the note of the fourth finger firmer than others; so practising every finger separately with an accent is a good method for making sure that all of the fingers play with an equal weight.”

6.4.4.5 Practising with a critical ear

Five of the teachers stressed the necessity of practising with a critical ear. Teacher Two stated: “Listening comes before practice. Listen to the sound first.” Teacher Three emphasized: “Only after listening to your playing with a critical ear will you find your problem and know how to practise and improve. I teach students how to move their hands, but listening is still the most important thing . . . I tell them to use a critical ear to listen when practising.” Teacher Four stated: “During practice . . . listening is also very important. They should listen in a broad way – chords and notes are only the surface of it, tone colour lies within, and mood may be more abstract.” Teacher Seven opined: “The theory of practising is very dull: only by using the ears to produce the right tone or sound and expression in the music can this dull theory come alive.” Teacher Nine stated that students “must practise with their brain as well as their hands, with their heart and also their ears.

6.4.4.6 Goal oriented practice

Six of the teachers require students to practise with particular goals in mind. Teacher One asserted: “I expect them to practise as suggested in the lesson, and their playing of the piece to have somewhat improved by the next time.” Teacher Four reflected: “Sometimes, if a student does not know how to plan his practice and needs to sit an examination, I set up a plan and tell him which movements to work on and what to memorize”. Teacher Five explained: “I write what I require on this page for
this week and what they [students] should do over the next week.” Teacher Seven stressed: “I ask my students to set goals for themselves. If I set goals for them, then they need to check the improvements that they are supposed to have made for the next week’s lesson. A good student has a target and aims to learn.” Teacher Eight expressed it as: “I tell them where I expect them to improve or what level they should reach next time.” Teacher Ten was somewhat pessimistic: “I set goals for them, but the outcome isn’t satisfactory most of the time. I expect them to play without mistakes in the next lesson, and ask them to play at a suitable tempo with correct fingering.”

6.4.5 Acute listening skills (or extending aural ability)
All of the teachers stressed the importance of students at this level listening acutely to recordings by professional artists. Two, further, advocated students attending concerts or live performances, and six recommended that students record their own playing as a means of self-evaluation.

6.4.5.1 Recordings
Although all of the teachers advocated that students listen to recordings, some believed that this should wait until the student can play the piece to a certain standard before hearing it played by someone else. Teacher One pointed out: “I tend to discourage them from listening to CDs of other people’s performances initially because the importance of learning music is to discover it on your own . . . I teach my students that their business is not to imitate somebody else, but to build up a performance by themselves.” He then added: “I think it is dangerous to listen to recordings unless the student really knows the piece well.” Teacher Nine stated: “In the first few lessons I don’t want my students to listen to recordings as I want to prevent their minds from being prejudiced. After they start thinking [about the piece] on their own, they can listen to about three different recordings that I recommend to them. They then have to give me feedback on the recording they liked the most and their reasons.” Teacher Ten asserted: “I object to students listening to recordings too early . . . not until they are halfway through learning the piece.” He added that he didn’t want their minds to be influenced early on by the interpretation they hear on a recording.

With provisos such as these, as expressed by a minority of teachers, all of them advocated students listening to recordings at some stage during the learning of a work. Teacher Two commented in relation to a work by Mozart: “I ask them to listen to different piano versions of the same piece, as well as [Mozart’s] orchestral music and operas. They should listen to all sorts of music, not necessarily the pieces they are now learning.” Teacher Three offered the opinion that “all sorts of CDs, and not just
piano music, are useful. They learn about style through listening, writing down how they feel, then discussing it and sharing it with others and the teacher.” Teacher Four agreed: “Let them listen to the music of different periods to learn about style. For baroque, I ask them to play the harpsichord or organ. For classical, Mozart’s works are actually quite symphonic. I ask students to try to listen to a range of his music, and relate to the characters in operas.” Teacher Five asserted: “I also ask them to listen to other pieces by the composer.” Teacher Six emphasized that “if you perform his [Beethoven’s] sonatas, it will not be enough to listen only to his sonatas,” but also to his symphonies and other works. Teacher Seven said: “After they have grasped the basic idea of the piece they can listen to different performers for reference.” Teacher Eight offered: “I ask them to listen to recordings of themselves playing as well as recordings by famous players.” Teacher Nine was straight to the point: “I ask my students to listen to recordings.” Teacher Ten opined that “a comparative performance with a recording should wait for last; let students know that there are many different ways to interpret a piece and then find out the differences in interpretation and style among the various recordings. Performers can create a unique, acceptable way of playing, but should not imitate others.” He also expects his students to listen to other music from the same period as the work being studied.

6.4.5.2 Live performances

Teachers One and Three emphasized the importance of attending live concerts. Teacher One said that he encourages his students “not only to listen to the pieces they are learning, but to go to public performances, because it is much more valuable than listening to a CD.” Similarly, Teacher Three stated: “I ask them to attend concerts more . . . it is better to go to live concerts than to listen to recordings.”

6.4.5.3 Evaluation from listening to self-recordings

Teachers Two, Four, Five, Seven, Eight and Ten, encourage their students to record their own performances and listen back to them for evaluative purposes. Teacher Two stated: “I also ask them to record their own playing.” Teacher Four asserted: “I require them to record their performances,” and Teacher Five said: “I do ask them to tape and listen to their own playing.” Teacher Seven stated: “I encourage them to record what they play and listen to it afterwards. It is a good way to train them in self-learning.” Finally, Teacher Eight said: “I ask them to listen to recordings of themselves playing as well as recordings by famous players.” Teacher Ten said, “self-evaluation in learning is important. Tape and video recordings of their playing assists students in seeing and hearing their weaknesses and shortcomings.”
6.4.6 Stage fright

All of the teachers addressed the problem of stage fright with their students, with particular emphasis being given to overcoming the psychological barrier; the need for acute aural familiarity with a work; the benefits of performance rehearsals and performance experience; and the need for good preparation.

6.4.6.1 Overcoming the psychological barrier

Five of the teachers discussed psychological issues in relation to stage fright. Teacher One stated that “one of the most important things the students have to know in their minds is that they have already done their best, have practised the pieces to the best of their ability, have done all the technical things, and have played from the heart. They have done absolutely everything that they can to ensure that the performance will be right.” He added: “When they get on the platform and actually start playing, this terrible fright begins to go and they start to enjoy themselves. . . . The greatest performers make mistakes, and we can even find them in recordings of the great pianist Cortot who sometimes played wrong notes.” Teacher Four stated: “It is unavoidable. Encourage the students to perform more and discuss their performances with them more, because they will have greater confidence if their minds are settled.” Teacher Seven stressed the importance of students having an appropriate attitude: “Their attitude to learning and performing music should be one of sharing with the audience.” She explained that performers tend to be quite subjective, but must approach a performance with an attitude that it is a moment of sharing, rather than showing off. Teacher Eight emphasized students feeling comfortable with the stage environment prior to the performance: “[Say to yourself] ‘I am sitting here, the piano is here’; and imagine the audience being there also and ask yourself ‘How will I perform?’ One should always imagine this as one warms up. It’s fine when you play at home, because you are familiar with your environment. Tell yourself, ‘Now it's my duty to bring out the music as best as I can. I am ready for any mistakes that occur unintentionally.’ Stage fright is a psychological problem; students need counselling to learn to accept that they will make mistakes.” Teacher Nine stressed: “Everyone has stage fright when they perform. Horowitz got scared, and so did Rubinstein. But I say, when you go out, if you have something to share and you can express it through the music, then you won't be that scared. If you go out just to play the notes and the rhythm of the score without expression and meaning, then you may be afraid.”

6.4.6.2 Acute aural familiarity with a work

Teachers Two and Three drew attention to the importance of a performer
having acute aural familiarity with a work – a basis for having adequate confidence in dealing with stage fright. Teacher Two emphasised that the ears must always listen to the sound that is being produced by the hands. She explained that the hands affect the performance, and listening to the quality and image of the sound guides the movement of the hands: “When you are afraid, do not concentrate on your hands but on your ears. Believe your ears when you play.” Teacher Three expressed it similarly: “When you are scared, I suggest you listen to what you play. Why are you scared? It is because you cannot hear what you are playing.”

6.4.6.3 Performance rehearsals and performance experience

Eight teachers spoke in favour of students being given opportunities to perform their program in a range of contexts prior to the actual performance as a means of assisting them to deal with stage fright. They also emphasised the benefit of performance experience – something that is built-up over time – in dealing with stage fright. Teacher One stated: “They can invite their friends and play the pieces to them or they can play in a slightly less important venue somewhere before their main performance, because the art of performance is in fact the art of having performed.” Teacher Three argued: “Many things, like concentration, different environments and the touch of the piano, affect your performance. You need experience in learning to deal with these during a performance so that they will not affect your playing.” He stressed the importance of frequent performance experience as a means of overcoming stage fright: “Once a week every student should perform somewhere . . . [of course] it is not feasible for one to perform at the Cultural Centre right away without any prior performance experience. Regardless, you have to be perfectly prepared wherever you perform with the aim of developing the confidence to perform in places like the Cultural Centre.” Teacher Four stated: “It depends on the student. I give them many chances to perform because they will feel different in front of different audiences and in different venues.” Teacher Five stressed: “Concert practice is very important. [Students should] grab any performance opportunity prior to a scheduled performance – even performing for parents or classmates is good.” Teacher Five agreed: “I create a performance atmosphere for them [students] by asking them to play as if they were taking an examination, non-stop. Alternatively, I call a group of students to sit there and watch a student play.” Teacher Seven opined: “Let them have the experience or even just the feeling of performing, as if they're playing for others in a different environment. Provide more chances for them to play in public, let them know it's rare for them to be one hundred percent in control when they perform, that they still need to learn to improve their ability to deal with any unexpected disturbances.” Teacher Eight stressed that “it is very important that they have more
chances to perform in front of an audience, and this includes playing for other students or friends, performing in school, and making their own recordings. Performance time is also essential: at first students should perform for 5 minutes, and then extend it a bit, and try to repeat the repertoire more frequently so that they can grasp the skill of performance and familiarize themselves thoroughly with each piece.” She noted also the benefits of performing in a range of venues. Teacher Nine argued that in preparing students for a performance, a degree of ‘pressure’ must be created: “Finally, I ask them to run through it again before the end of the lesson. Sometimes, I try to get an audience to listen to them. When no one is available, I ask the next student to come earlier, or get one of my family members to act as the audience.” Teacher Ten stressed: “I think that with more on-stage experience, less stage fright occurs . . . It is important to provide more opportunities for students to perform before different audiences . . . so that they can listen to more opinions from others prior to a real performance or examination. I group my students together to share a performance experience.”

6.4.6.4 Good preparation

Seven of the teachers referred to the importance of good preparation in relation to stage fright. Five of them focused on having the program ready some weeks before the actual performance. Teacher Four posited that “one must be perfectly ready one month before the actual date of the performance. This secures the performance. I allow more time for them [students] to run through the program so that they can see their problems each time. It also takes a lot to get ready psychologically.” Teacher Five argued: “The student must be ready, with their pieces memorized, at least one month before.” Teacher Six suggested that students “should be well prepared two weeks before the examination and then get ready to practise on stage to get the feeling and the atmosphere.” Teacher Nine stated: “[I allow] at least three lessons before the performance or examination in which I do the final preparation with my students.” Teacher Ten said: “I hope my students are fully ready one-and-a-half months in advance . . . First of all, students must be well prepared.”

Three of the teachers focused on the importance of good preparation from another perspective. Teacher Three said: “Many things will make you scared when you are on stage. The technique must be good. How do you check technique? It depends on how capable the performer is of producing a sound on the piano: you have to know what you need to do.” Teacher Six argued that “students have stage fright because they are not well prepared, but there are many unknown factors, too. To solve the problem, a teacher needs to teach students how to turn all of the unknown factors into known factors. Students will not be afraid of a thing that is well known to them.”
Teacher Eight suggested that stage fright is caused by poor preparation and poor memorization: “stage fright mostly happens because we are afraid that we don’t play well enough, or that we don't reach the standard or meet the requirements. So you must tell yourself to do your best in your preparation. I teach students to practise running passages in a difficult way using different rhythmic patterns while they memorize the score. Getting them to practise in difficult ways can build their confidence. They consolidate their knowledge of the music with good preparation.”

6.5 Conclusion

The information collected and synthesized from the teacher interviews paints a picture of the philosophies, principles, and methodologies used by them in training piano performers in Hong Kong. It could be argued that the philosophies of the teachers represent the ultimate goals of piano education. Teacher responses with regard to their philosophy of piano teaching have been examined within a framework of three major philosophical traditions: rationalism, empiricism and pragmatism. From a rationalist perspective, emphasis was placed on approaching music within its historical context (80%, or eight teachers), and undertaking a theoretical analysis of it (100%, or all ten teachers). Four vital viewpoints derive from empiricism: the importance of the teaching experience (80%), the importance of performance experience (50%), the importance of life experience with respect to artistic development from the perspective of teaching, learning and performing (80%), and the importance of listening as a learning tool (100%). To pragmatism is owed the beliefs that teaching pedagogies change and are not permanent (20%), students should be taught to be independent learners and problem-solvers (90%), and the need for teaching to accommodate individual differences (100%).

In addition to looking at teacher’s philosophies within a framework of these three traditions, the philosophical analysis also focused on three overriding dimensions that transcended philosophical ‘barriers’. The first of these is the importance of helping students to develop the capacity to enjoy and love music (90%). The second is the importance of nurturing and developing personal characteristics or qualities in students, which discussed ‘diligence’ (100%); shaping the personality and character of students (100%); and having a sense of humanity which, although only mentioned specifically by one teacher was mentioned obliquely or appeared to be implicit in the discussion with many teachers. The third philosophical dimension is the importance of transmitting knowledge and insights to others: teacher to student (80%), and performer to audience (100%).

The interviews elicited seven important principles that underscore the
teachers’ methodological approaches. These are that music is a means of expressing emotion and ideas (100%); the importance of tonal quality (70%); the importance of engaging the imagination, with 50% of teachers speaking of imagination in relation to teaching and learning and 50% mentioning its importance for imbuing a performance with appropriate expressive qualities (when discussing imagination some teachers also made explicit or implicit reference to creativity); the place of encouragement (80%) and stimulation (80%) in teaching; and a belief in quality teaching, that is, teaching students as well as possible (70%).

The third section of this chapter was concerned with teaching methodologies. Six major topics relating to methodology were identified as a result of the teacher interviews: technique, style, memorization, practice, acute listening skills (or extending aural ability), and stage fright. With regard to the first, technique, five issues were elucidated: finger exercises (including scales and arpeggios); (50%); physical movements (of the arms, wrists and fingers) that produce different touches (90%); relaxation (50%); musical expression (70%); and the importance of listening for good sound production (50%).

The second topic discussed in relation to methodology was style. The discussion identified five issues: historical background (80%); listening to music to understand style (100%); comparisons with other art forms (50%); and personal style (50%). The third topic was memorization. This was discussed in relation to using an aural approach (60%); a visual approach (40%); an analytical approach (80%); physical or kinaesthetic memorization (20%); a step-by-step approach (50%); and other methods (20%).

The fourth topic was practice: practising with an intellectual understanding of the cause of the problem (70%); efficient practice (60%); slow practice (20%); practising a step-at-a-time (40%); practising with a critical ear (50%); goal oriented practice (60%). The fifth topic was acute listening skills (or extending aural ability): listening to recordings by professional pianists (100%); attending live performance (20%); and evaluation from listening to self-recordings (60%). The sixth topic was stage fright: overcoming the psychological barrier (50%); aural awareness (20%); concert or performance rehearsals and experience (80%); and good preparation (70%).

This chapter, along with the next, provides basic information that informs both the model for piano teaching that is to be presented and the conclusions and recommendations of the study.
Chapter 7
Analysis of the students’ interviews

7.1 Introduction

The information in this chapter was collected from the final year piano performance majors who – with one exception – were students of the teachers interviewed (it will be recalled that one teacher declined to be interviewed). This involved fifteen students. The questions asked of the students corresponded to many of those asked of the teachers. The aim was to ascertain students’ personal views as well as perceptions of their piano teacher’s philosophy, principles and methodology. The quotations are extracted from the transcriptions of the tape recordings of the interviews. The students’ comments provide a valuable insight into their perceptions on the role of their teachers and of themselves in the teaching-learning process.

7.2 Philosophy

This chapter is organized in a similar way to the previous chapter under the headings of rationalism, empiricism and pragmatism with respect to students’ teachers’ philosophies, and the ‘overriding’ philosophies that they deduced from their lessons, namely, the importance of helping students to develop the capacity to enjoy and love music; the importance of nurturing and developing personal characteristics and qualities in students; and the importance of transmitting knowledge and insights to others: teacher to student, and performer to audience.

With respect to rationalism, the first of the three philosophies investigated, two ideas emerged: the importance of understanding the historical background of a work, and the importance of analysing the score. With respect to empiricism, three were ideas were identified: the importance of life experience; students learning from teacher demonstration; and learning from listening. Two ideas emerged in relation to pragmatism: teaching students to learn independently as problem-solvers; and teaching students using different methods according to their individual needs.

As with the teachers, the three ‘overriding’ philosophical ideas that emerged were the importance of teachers instilling in students a capacity to enjoy and love music; the importance of teachers nurturing and developing personal characteristics or qualities in students; and the importance of transmitting knowledge and insights to others: teacher to student, and performer to audience.

The following analysis of the students’ responses provides a
complementary perspective for building-up a more comprehensive picture of teachers’ approaches to training final year piano performance students in Hong Kong. The analysis is undertaken using a similar format to that used when discussing teacher responses.

7.2.1 Rationalism

It will be recalled that rationalists view knowledge “as a fixed body of immutable, fundamental truths” (Stubley, 1992, p. 4). In order to compare the students’ responses to those of their teachers, two topics are considered here: the importance of placing music in its historical context, and the importance of undertaking a theoretical analysis of the music.

7.2.1.1 Placing music in its historical context

Eleven of the fifteen students indicated that they had a much better understanding of how a work should be played – that is, a greater stylistic understanding – as a result of gaining insights into the historical background of the pieces they were learning. Student Two said: “I think it is very important for the performer to understand how the composer wrote the score and then to interpret the composer’s feelings.” Student Three reflected that her teacher had told her “to read books on how to play classical music, how to play Beethoven for example, and how the character [of his music] should be interpreted.” Student Four’s teacher similarly asks her to become “familiar with the composer’s background and history through books.” Student Five, in discussing the importance of understanding the background of a piece said: “Take Prokofiev for example. . . . She [the teacher] would first talk about the political background.” Student Seven explained that his teacher “talks about a piece, how to play it, and what the composer wants to express.” Student Eight offered: “My teacher talks about the mood of the music. For example, when he teaches the style of Beethoven or Schubert, he first tells me about their lives, their personalities and how they approached expression and mood at that time.” Student Ten explained that her teacher tells her “what to learn in the piece and what it is saying or trying to express.” She added: “When I play Mozart, she [the teacher] says Mozart requires a very clear sound . . . Usually I play, then she comments, then she begins to shape the music.” Student Eleven’s teacher “talks about the piece first, how to play the staccato or legato, how to form the mood.” Student Twelve stated that her teacher discusses the stylistic background of the work and “explains what tonal quality I should produce to play it in an appropriate style . . . Also, the version [edition] of the musical score is very important because some editors interpret it differently. And if you follow the different [and sometimes conflicting] instructions, then the
resulting styles will vary.” Student Thirteen said that the teacher “gives me some background . . . about the piece.” Student Fourteen noted that when her teacher gives her information about a piece, he usually talks first about the “historical and social background of the period and the history of the composer.”

7.2.1.2 Undertaking a theoretical analysis of the music

Ten students suggested that it is essential to undertake a theoretical analysis of the music in order to memorize the score. Student Two commented: “He [the teacher] teaches me to learn from theory and to try to figure out the relationship between the notes and the chords in patterns.” Student Four spoke of the need to apprehend “the form of the piece” as a basis for memorization. Student Six stated: “She [the teacher] taught me to memorize chords and harmony.” Student Eight offered: “I memorize the harmony only . . . He [the teacher] analyses the score theoretically in lessons. With an understanding of the structure, texture and everything about the piece I can memorize the score easily.” To memorize the works of a contrapuntal style, Student Nine explained: “She [my teacher] asks me to memorize the hands and different voices separately. When putting the hands together she then asks me to remember ‘vertically’ to memorize the chords.” Student Eleven said: “My teacher teaches me to memorize the melody and then the harmony, even for technical parts. I have to memorize each harmony and look at the keys on the keyboard.” Student Twelve stated: “She [my teacher] has mentioned many ways to memorize the score, such as harmonic progression, memorizing the hands separately, and putting similar sections together and memorizing them.” Student Thirteen emphasized: “He [my teacher] taught me to analyse the score and then read it as frequently as I can.” Student Fourteen asserted: “He [my teacher] teaches me to analyze every chord of the piece, to understand the changes in the scales, and to discover the harmonic progressions between the chords. I have to analyse the harmony, the modulation . . . then he tells me to memorize chord by chord.” Student Fifteen stressed that her teacher “analyses the chords and cadence to help me to remember more easily.”

7.2.2 Empiricism

As previously discussed, empiricists believe that practice is based on experiment and observation (Lacey, 1976, p. 55; Stubley, 1992, p. 4), and that knowledge can be acquired through sense-experience (New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles, 1993, p. 809; Stubley, 1992, p. 4). The information gathered from the student interviews will be discussed under three headings: the importance of life experience, learning from teacher demonstration, and learning from listening.
7.2.2.1 The importance of life experience
Six students mentioned the importance of life experience in relation to piano performance. Student Two expressed it as: “Life experience and the imagination of performers enables them to express their feelings completely.” In contrast, Student Five commented that her teacher stimulates the way that she thinks about life: “My teacher helps me understand more about life than I knew before.” Student Six reflected that her teacher once explained the feeling of a particular piece by Brahms by relating it to a specific experience from her own life, recalling that in the process the teacher “was almost on the edge of an explosion but not quite.” Student Eight explained that her teacher “asks about certain experiences [of mine] as a means of helping me perform in a certain style.” Her teachers believe that good performers “should perform not only from their own understanding of the score, but also using their own life experience and feelings.” Student Twelve stated that performance “involves personal experience . . . some of the feelings that I experience match the emotional mood that the composer expresses through the music.” Student Fourteen suggested that “life experience is involved in the performance experience, and sometimes it seems that I’m playing my own life story within the music.”

7.2.2.2 Learning from teacher demonstration
Twelve of the students spoke of teacher demonstration being an important element in their learning with respect to technique, expression, and stylistic interpretation. Student One reflected: “In teaching [style], he always demonstrates once before I start to play a piece, asking me to listen carefully.” Student Two observed: “He [the teacher] usually demonstrates and tells me what he wants me to do when he teaches me about the style of a certain period.” Student Three related that “she [the teacher] shows me through demonstration, telling me how to do it.” In assisting her to achieve an appropriate tonal quality, Student Four said that her teacher “plays a chord many times; each time with a different sound quality.” Student Seven stated that “if there is a difficult passage with octaves, double octaves, or big leaps, she demonstrates before I play.” Student Eight explained that her teacher demonstrates for her slowly, and she then imitates after observing. Student Ten explained that when she starts to learn to shape the music her teacher “plays several different versions” for her to listen to and comment on. Student Eleven said that her teacher shows her different styles of playing through “comments and demonstration.” Student Twelve said of her teacher: “She demonstrates. I think this is very important . . . she plays it through once to show me how to do it. I imitate her after hearing her play. Then I can obtain the same effect.” Student Thirteen related that “He [my teacher] demonstrates
and explains clearly and precisely the feeling of the quality of the sound. When I fail to play certain notes in the correct manner, he asks me to observe his demonstration and try again.” Student Fourteen stated that her teacher demonstrates to give her “an overall impression of what he says. After listening to his playing, I then start to practise.” Student Fifteen said that her teacher “sometimes plays for me and I listen to the way she performs.”

7.2.2.3 Learning from listening

All of the students reflected on the importance of learning from listening, particularly with reference to stylistic and expressive interpretation of a work. Student One affirmed: “I am used to listening to recordings of pieces I am playing, and like to hear other performers play the same piece in their own style. Then I synthesize my own style.” Student Two agreed: “He [the teacher] requires me to listen to some performances on CD so that I can get the different feelings of the same piece as played by different pianists.” Student Three mentioned that her teacher asks her “to find out about . . . the music and to listen to CDs.” Student Four was adamant that “listening to CDs is a must in learning piano performance . . . Mostly, I listen to CDs and make comparisons among different versions of performances and different composers.” Student Five reflected: “One has to listen. If not, then it is like putting oneself outside of the music . . . I listen to many recordings because the more you listen, the more you understand.” Student Six asserted that she uses CDs “as a model.” She mentioned that if a piece is a part of her learning program, then she listens to it attentively: “Before I learn a new piece, I listen to it. After I have learnt to play it well, I double check my interpretation.” Student Seven stated: “When I listen to CDs or the radio I pay careful attention to [all aspects of] the music.” Student Eight’s teacher “gives me his recordings to listen to.” Student Nine affirmed: “I listen to my own repertoire . . . about once a week,” adding “I also listen to different performers’ recordings of the same piece.” Student Ten stated: “I listen repeatedly to recordings of pieces I am learning and others as well.” Student Eleven said that her teacher asks her “to listen to a disc, not necessarily of the piece I’m playing – sometimes just a certain performer . . . She asks me what the differences are among performers.” By way of example she said: “When playing a Chopin polonaise, my teacher tells me to listen to other polonaises,” adding that this includes polonaises played by other instruments. Student Twelve’s teacher “suggests listening to CDs of certain performers whose style she thinks might be correct according to her experience . . . I first listen to different performers, then pick a recording that I think both my teacher and I would agree matches my style of playing, and concentrate on listening to that.” Student Thirteen explained: “He [the teacher] first gives me a general idea, introduces certain good
performers for me to listen to, or even asks me to listen to all of the instrumental music of a composer to learn about the style of that composer . . . when I play Mozart he tells me to listen to Mozart’s violin sonatas so that I can learn the phrasing and the style.” Student Fourteen offered: “I listen to performances of a similar style or different works by the same composer.” Student Fifteen stressed: “For pieces that I am performing I sometimes listen to recordings, but I always listen to recordings of my examination pieces. I listen to the pieces . . . if I find them difficult.”

7.2.3 Pragmatism

It will be recalled that pragmatists believe that nothing is permanent and knowledge is not immutable (Stubley, 1992, p. 4; Abeles, Hoffer & Klotman, 1994, p. 47). The pragmatic view is that different understandings can be obtained from different points of view, and therefore in terms of teaching piano performance, teaching methods should be viewed from many different angles. Moreover, a pragmatic piano educator should use different methods to teach students according to their needs (Abeles, Hoffer & Klotman, 1994, p. 47). The goal of the pragmatic piano educator is to train individuals to be independent learners and problem-solvers (Stubley, 1992, p. 4). The information collected from the students highlights two ideas that are based in pragmatism: the need to teach students to become independent learners and problem solvers; and the importance of respecting individual differences or individual needs, meaning that no single methodological approach is suitable for all students.

7.2.3.1 Students should be taught to be independent learners and problem-solvers

Ten of the students offered their thoughts on this issue. Student Two said “[My teacher] never forces me to plan how to practise each week, it’s . . . up to me. However, he requires me to study every piece of music in detail and practise all of them thoroughly.” Student Three stated: “As a matter of fact, she teaches me how to think and study on my own, and explains to me how to meet her practice requirements. Her way is to give me some questions to think about.” Student Four stated strongly that her teacher “knows how to open one’s mind” to think independently. Student Five was appreciative that her thinking on how to solve problems had improved since she commenced learning from her piano teacher: “She doesn’t tell me what I should do, as I am a performance student. As an undergraduate, I should be very independent.” Student Six emphasized that her teacher does not set any goals for her practice, because “being a grown-up, I should be more independent.” Student Eight stated: “He [the teacher] never tells me what to think or what to do. Instead, he expects me to
think for myself . . . he tells me to play using my own ideas to control my technique.” Student Nine’s teacher gives her “freedom to control the articulation and tone colour and mood in different ways.” In learning the different style of pieces, Student Ten’s teacher “doesn’t define what is good and ask me to follow. Because of this I feel that the scope of my playing is greater, and it won’t become a copy of someone else’s playing.” Student Fourteen stated: “A performer performs with their own interpretation of the music and convinces the audience with their own style.” Student Fifteen said that her teacher “won’t tell you the style of the composer and ask you to play like that. She first gives you the freedom to bring it out.”

7.2.3.2 Acknowledging individual difference: no single methodological approach is suitable for all students

Twelve of the students said that their teachers chose repertoire for them according to their personalities and technical ability. Student Two stated: “In giving me ideas on how to develop a personal style my teacher considers my personality and character.” Student Three’s teacher “selects some pieces I’m not good at, so that through the learning process I can improve and my mistakes can be corrected . . . She takes into consideration if a piece is difficult to play with small hands.” Student Four explained that her teacher “considers the personal characteristics of each student in choosing pieces for them.” Student Five commented on her teacher: “She teaches according to who you are,” adding that her teacher considers her technical ability in choosing pieces for her: “the most important thing is to have the technical ability. If you can’t handle it, then it will be impossible to play.” Student Eight stated: “He [the teacher] gives me pieces that do not suit my character at all, such as the sorrowful ones that are totally opposite to my joyful personality. He wants me to learn how to express music regardless of my own personality.” Student Nine recognized that his teacher takes into consideration students’ different personalities, acknowledging that “even if it is the same piece, different performers play it differently.” In teaching style, Student Ten’s teacher “plays several different versions for me to listen to and comment on . . . giving consideration to my technique and what I can manage and make my own.” Student Eleven acknowledged: “[My teacher] considers my personality and my weaknesses” when choosing pieces. Student Twelve asserted: “Most pieces are chosen by her [the teacher], as she knows my ability, style, personality, and technique.” Student Thirteen stated: “[The teacher] suggests a lot of different methods that suit me, and tells me to choose the best for myself.” Student Fourteen’s teacher “considers my character, for he knows me well,” and Student Fifteen’s teacher “recognizes that every piece has a different flavour when it is performed by different people, so what I play is different from what she plays.”
7.2.4 Imbuing students with an enjoyment and love of music

An important role of the teacher is to imbue students with an enjoyment and love of music. This also acts as an important source of motivation for ongoing learning. Eight of the students referred to their enjoyment and love of music. Student One was the most succinct: “I like playing piano”. Student Two stated: “I have always loved playing piano and I am interested in learning more about performance.” Student Three suggested that when she performs, she “shares the enjoyment of music” with the audience. Student Four noted that the joy she gets from music is present at every stage of the learning process: “from knowing nothing about the score, to learning the notes, followed by other things that are related to the music, and then to performing onstage”. Student Five explained: “I like playing piano, and am willing to spend time on it . . . I enjoy practising, and I like to perform. I enjoy it because of the sense of achievement I get from the process of practising . . . The performance should delight the audience . . . the audience must enjoy it.” Student Six emphasized that playing the piano “is my favourite thing. I love it and I like to express my own feelings. I enjoy playing piano,” adding that a good performance should be “enjoyable and under the performer’s control.” Student Eleven said: “Piano performance is my great interest; in the past few years I have taken many accompaniment jobs.” Student Thirteen stated: “I love to play piano and I want to improve my technique . . . as I perform, I can share my thoughts with others and express what I have in my mind. I enjoy communicating with others in this way.”

7.2.5 Nurturing and developing personal characteristics and qualities in piano students

The students spoke of a number of areas in which their teacher has ‘shaped’ certain personal characteristics, namely their sense of diligence – with some referring, relatedly, to the importance of having a positive attitude – and their personality or character (including the development of confidence).

7.2.5.1 Diligence

Seven of the students referred to the importance of adopting a diligent attitude to practice and learning. Student Two said of her teacher: “He requires me to study every piece of music in detail and practise all of them thoroughly.” Student Five put it: “Practising diligently helps me to be a performer.” Student Eight recounted that her teacher had instilled in her a hard-working attitude: “My teacher is good because he is strict enough to prevent me from being lazy. His teaching attitude pushes me to practise more. I think he has improved my standard.” Student Eleven attributed her diligence in part at least to her teacher, who would say: “How can it be done without
practice? One must practise. It cannot be done without practice.” In discussing her
diligent attitude to piano, Student Seven stated: “I practise three hours a day,” and
recounted that his teacher stressed the importance of practising “hands separately for
three to six hours daily to gain a professional standard.” Student Fourteen said: “[My] 
teacher requires me to practise as much as I can.” Student Fifteen opined that to be a 
performer, one “must work diligently.”

It will be recalled from the previous chapter that in discussing diligence
some teachers referred to the importance of students having a positive attitude. Four
of the students also referred to this attribute. Student Nine spoke of it as the need to 
have “the heart and motivation to explore.” Student Eleven said that a performer
“must be very serious in preparing for a performance . . . the performer must have
done their utmost . . . To a certain extent, playing the piano shows one’s attitude
towards life, toward issues; you can see the performer’s personality.” Student
Fourteen stated: “I think that whether or not a piece is performed well depends on the
extent to which the performer has a positive attitude about what he can achieve.”
Student Fifteen reflected that her teacher inculcates in her students a positive attitude
towards music, suggesting that it is because of her teacher’s attitude that she is able to
“bring out a positive feeling in her students.”

7.2.5.2. Shaping the personality of students

Eleven of the students reflected on how their teachers had helped shape
t heir personality or character. Student One suggested that good pianists reveal “their
own character” when performing, and referred to the importance of a teacher instilling
in students a sense of “devotion, concentration, imagination, and expression,” adding
that this takes a ‘genuine disposition’ on the part of the piano student. Student Two
spoke of the importance of a performer having a sense of sincerity and humility,
suggesting that a good performer “doesn’t show off. With self-confidence, [a pianist]
performs to share their own ideas and to interpret the composer’s thoughts through the
music.” Student Three suggested that her teacher teaches her in “a rounded manner”
that involves “technique, an artistic sense, and a musical sense”. Student Four stressed
that piano education is an issue of developing “one’s own personality.” Student Five
argued that “a good performer must have a good temperament, strong observation
skills, and be knowledgeable not just about music, but about many more facets of the
arts. They should experience many things to fulfill the music.” Student Six stated: “I
appreciate temperament – they [performers] use their heart to perform. The intrinsic
part of their musical thinking conveys their meaning in music. Moreover, their
character has to be well-rounded.” Student Eight also made reference to the
importance of students developing a “well-rounded character”. Student Ten suggested
that piano education helps develop a balanced character: “A performer’s personality is very important. They can be emotional and rational, but not bad tempered, and should be quite objective.” Student Twelve offered: “A performer must display a good disposition and temperament.” Student Thirteen, in referring to the importance of a performer having a well-rounded character, stressed that whilst there should be “meaning in every note the performer plays [they] shouldn’t over-inflate their passion or show-off their emotions.” Student Fifteen reflected that she has developed “the character of a performer” and now has “the confidence to express myself.”

Five students – including Student Fifteen, the last student quoted – discussed the shaping of personality with reference to the importance of students developing confidence as a performer. Student One suggested that having confidence can make the difference between an average performance and a remarkable performance. Student Two agreed, suggesting that a good performer must be “confident enough to convey the music to the audience . . . [to] share their own ideas and to interpret the composer’s thoughts.” Student Three acknowledged: “My teacher stated that I lacked confidence, even when talking to a stranger . . . But now I have improved a lot through piano performance.” Student Twelve insisted that “performers must have confidence. They should be well prepared so that the audience will find it [the performance] a rewarding experience.” She added that by memorizing a work “I build up my confidence and play more fluently.”

7.2.6 Transmitting knowledge and insights to others

Eleven students spoke of the transmission of knowledge and insights to others. Of these, ten spoke of a performer passing on a musical message to the audience, and four acknowledged that their teachers pass on knowledge to them, including musical knowledge, pedagogical techniques, and an attitude to life. Some discussed this with respect to both the transmission of knowledge from teacher to student and performer to audience; others referred to only one of these.

7.2.6.1 Teachers passing on their knowledge and insights to students

Four of the students said that their teacher transmits knowledge to them, including musical knowledge and an attitude to life. Student Two observed that her teacher shares his experience with her and the method that he uses to solve problems: “he [the teacher] is willing to share his experiences with me and the methods that he uses to solve his problems [with piano performance].” Student Three explained that her teacher passes on knowledge of the experience of teaching to her: “I think based on the way the teacher teaches you, as a student with your own understanding, you come to know how to teach your students too.” Student Five stated: “I have learned
from my teacher how to motivate a student to love playing piano.” Student Fifteen recounted: “during lessons, other than teaching piano, she [the teacher] talks about herself; teaches me the principles of life, and shares with me stories about her family life . . . She even shares with her students her own difficulties and unhappiness.”

7.2.6.2 Performers transmitting the composer’s ideas to the audience
Ten of the students suggested that performers transmit a message to the audience based on the score. Student One suggested that this message, as revealed through “a good performance can attract the audience.” Student Two commented: “It is great when my music touches the heart of the audience.” Student Three suggested that “if the music really touches you, then you should be able to feel like you are in the same context [as the performer].” Student Four suggested: “The music of a successful pianist, even if they play wrong notes, can convince the audience . . . the most important thing is the feeling of coherence at that moment.” Student Nine argued that a good performer is one who can “communicate with the audience.” Student Ten stated: “If one plays with good musicality, then one can communicate and touch the audience.” Student Twelve opined that “the essence of a good performance is that the music is conveyed to the audience.” Student Thirteen stressed: “The most enjoyable thing about a performance is that I can share my thoughts with the audience.” Student Fourteen reflected that a good performance “must convey a mood and feeling to move the audience.” Student Fifteen agreed: “When a piece is being performed, it moves others; there’s no need to choose very difficult or hard pieces to play. The most important thing is that it [a performance] engages and touches the audience.”

7.3 Principles

It has been suggested herein that principles are the ‘bridges’ between philosophy and methodology; as such, they can offer guidelines for adapting different methods. The questions asked in the interviews with students were similar to those asked of the teachers, and related to music as a means of expressing emotion and ideas; the importance of achieving a good tonal quality; use of the imagination; the role of encouragement and stimulation in teaching; and the importance of quality teaching.

7.3.1 Music as a means of expressing emotion and ideas
Ten of the students spoke of music being a means of expressing emotion and ideas in relation to the composer or performer. Student One emphasised that a performer’s expressive ability is a vital element of a performance: “A good
performance will attract the audience and express the character of the music. . . . The most important thing is the performer’s ability to express the music.” Student Two argued that a good performance “expresses the music fluently with a rich musical sense . . . [performers] share their own ideas in interpreting the composer’s thoughts.” Student Four suggested that a satisfactory performance must be true to “the style of the composer” and faithfully portray “the musical meaning.” Student Six suggested that a performer sets out “to play what they want to express and has methods of bringing out the music.” Referring to performers whom she admires, she said that she appreciates pianists who “use their hearts to perform. The intrinsic part of their musical thinking conveys their meaning in music.” Student Seven asserted that there are many “hidden meanings inside the music,” and that a good performer tries to present “what the composer wants to express and at the same time reflect their own personal style.” Student Eight suggested that in a performance pianists “should be able to express something new every time, even when they play the same piece over and over again.” [The performance should be based] not only on their own understanding . . . but also their feelings . . . A good performance conveys the meaning of the music and it is revealed like a picture, a mood, or a feeling through the imagination of the performer.” Student Eleven spoke of “performances that express the performer’s feelings and ability for stylistic interpretation.” Student Thirteen opined: “A good performance . . . expresses a rich musical sense . . . as I perform, I can share my thoughts with others and express what I have in my mind.” Student Fourteen asserted that pianists “present their own interpretation of the music and attempt to convince an audience by means of their own style of presentation.” Student Fifteen said that performers should be able to “convey their feelings to the audience.”

7.3.2 Tonal quality

Ten students referred to tonal quality being a basic principle of piano playing. Student Two said: “To me, the piano is an orchestral instrument; I am eager to know how to express the orchestral tone colour of the piano.” Student Four stated that her teacher pays special attention to “the quality of the sound.” Student Seven similarly stated that his teacher always reminds him to be “aware of the quality of sound that you produce.” Student Six argued that a performer conveys feeling from the heart, and that “the tone colour can change regardless of the notes to express [the performer’s] feeling.” Student Eight stated: “I would say they [performers] must have a good technique to play a great variety of tone colours in their music . . . In teaching technique, he [the teacher] teaches me to listen and learn more about sound, which is very abstract. He tells me how to project the sound.” The teacher of Student Nine “doesn’t teach [tonal production], but rather asks me how I should play the contrasts,
the loud and soft sounds.” Student Ten said: “In playing a piece, she [the teacher] asks me to think about orchestral colour, and suggests that legato can also have many nuances.” Student Eleven simply asserted: “She [my teacher] emphasizes tone colour.” Student Twelve reflected that her teacher describes the quality of the sound that is required and demonstrates how to achieve this effect: “She explains what sound I should produce in accordance with the style of the piece . . . The sound that is conveyed varies according to how a piece is played.” Student Thirteen asserted that her teacher explains “clearly and precisely the feeling of the quality of the sound” after demonstrating a piece.

7.3.3 Imagination

As with the teachers two perspectives arose in the students’ discussion of the imagination as an important teaching and learning tool and, secondly, using the imagination as a means of deciding on the expression, emotion and feeling that a piece requires.

7.3.3.1 Imagination in teaching and learning

Nine of the students expressed the importance of the imagination in teaching and learning. Student One stated: “things like devotion, concentration, imagination, and the expression of what the music says are all involved in the performance experience.” In relation to the lessons, Student Two agreed that performers can express and bring out the music if they imagine the artistic feeling that is related to their life experience. Student Three responded that learning a work includes “things like breathing, phrasing, mastery of the music, and imagination”. Student Four stated that in the lesson her teacher stimulates her imagination: “my teacher uses metaphors to enlighten me, as there are things that can’t be explained directly.” Student Five confirmed that imagination is important: “[With imagination], I come to understand and appreciate different methods of piano performance better.” She explained that the performer must use the imagination to interpret a piece and prepare for a remarkable performance. Student Eight stressed that a good performance “conveys the meaning of the music,” which is revealed like “a picture, a mood, or a feeling through the imagination of the performer . . . I use my own imagination to figure out the picture of the music.” She stated that this experience is obtained from reading literature, poems, and novels. Student Eleven related how she learned a piece by Franck that needs to be performed happily and peacefully: “she [the teacher] showed me by walking with a chair and pretending to look at flowers, trees, and birds.” Student Twelve said “imagining and listening to the sound is important in learning technique”. Student Fourteen commented that “My teacher likes to use
imagination in gesture (hand movements on how to project the right tone) to solve a technical problem”.

7.3.3.2 Imagination in relation to expression, emotion, and feeling

Eight of the students agreed that there is a close relationship between imagination and the conveying of expression, emotion, and feelings. Student Two said that “the life experience and imagination of performers enables them to express their feelings completely.” Student Five asserted: “If one’s imagination is lacking, then one must make up a story.” She argued that imagination is important if one is to express oneself musically, and that imagining a story through music makes the abstract concrete. Student Six stressed that her teacher guides her imagination as a means of eliciting the appropriate mood. Student Nine said that “using imagination helps one to develop a musical sense,” adding that imagination is important as a means of acquiring, perceiving and expressing the feeling and emotion of music. Student Ten stated that her teacher uses verbal instructions to guide her imagination: “[While] playing a passage from Chopin’s Nocturne, she asked me to think about a bell ringing in heaven, or a sudden beam of light shining through total darkness.” Student Twelve explained that some of the feelings that she experiences “match the emotional mood that the composer expresses through music; when that is not the case, imagination is very important”. Student Thirteen stated that her teacher uses metaphors such as “as deep as the sea” to help me to express the emotion of music. Student Fifteen referred to the importance of “imagination for the expression of sensation and personal mood.” Moreover, she highlighted that her teacher requires her to perform with “feeling and devotion” to the pieces, and to imagine the feelings and emotions that she wishes to convey.

It was noted in the previous chapter, when discussing imagination in relation to the teacher interviews, that a related concept is creativity. Student Five was the only one who referred specifically to creativity: “My teacher encourages me to be more creative, not just in teaching me piano, but also in helping me to grow up.”

7.3.4 Encouragement and stimulation in teaching

The importance of encouragement and stimulation in teaching was argued earlier in this thesis. The following discussion focuses firstly on encouragement, and then on stimulation. Ten of the students indicated that their teachers encouraged them in different aspects of their learning. Student One stated: “He [the teacher] is patient and gives me encouragement. Whenever I feel bad about myself and want to give up, he praises me and encourages me to go on.” Student Two’s teacher “is encouraging and understanding to all of us; even though we make mistakes he never scolds or yells
at us.” Student Four stated that her teacher gives positive comments at first, as a means of building-up a student’s confidence, and then gives more critical comments. She said that her teacher always encourages her by telling her: “You’re doing pretty well.” Student Five said that if she performs below her average standard her teacher telephones her after the performance: “I think she’s encouraging me, though it sounds like she’s scolding me.” Student Eight said that her teacher encourages her to broaden her artistic frame of reference: “He encourages me to read poetry, even Chinese novels.” Student Ten, who had some concerns about studying piano performance, said: “My teacher encouraged me to take this subject.” Student Eleven commented that her teacher is “very nice, very positive, rarely uses negative words,” and although she often feels nervous on stage, her teacher’s comments after finishing a performance are “always positive.” Student Twelve spoke of the encouragement she has received from a different perspective: “At the beginning, my teacher said I couldn’t play Beethoven, but now she says I can,” adding that she found this to be great encouragement.

Student Fourteen was grateful that her teacher always “encouraged me to attend master classes to broaden my horizons of music performance”. Student Fifteen stated: “She [the teacher] says that I have no confidence when I perform sometimes, so she really encourages me and even if I don’t play well she still praises me or says that this time is better than last time . . . [and] she tells me if there is a particular part where there is still room for improvement.”

Seven of the students referred to the manner in which their teachers stimulated them with respect to their playing. Of these, Students Six and Thirteen were the only ones who had not also mentioned the importance of encouragement. Student Two stated: “My teacher likes to use metaphors to describe feelings to me.” Student Four also said that her teacher “uses metaphors” as a means of stimulating her to perform better. Student Six’s teacher also “uses a lot of metaphors” as a means of stimulating her to develop a feeling for a piece. Likewise, Student Twelve recounted that her teacher has used metaphors such as “It’s like an aeroplane taking off” as a means of stimulation. Student Five opined: “Observing the environment [the surroundings and the ambience] allows one to develop better sensitivity and it stimulates the imagination.” Student Thirteen said: “My teacher likes to stimulate my imagination as a means of instructing me precisely how to improve.” Student Fifteen’s teacher “uses images to direct my playing . . . and stimulate my thinking about a piece with the love of a mother.”
7.3.5 Quality teaching

Three of the students spoke quite specifically of the professional care and responsibility – that is, the quality of teaching – that teachers had shown to them. Student Five discussed this in relation to her previous teacher, prior to commencing her performance studies: “My [former] teacher helped me to find the teacher I should follow,” suggesting a teacher who is “more practical than theoretical.” Student Eleven referred to the ‘open classes’ her teacher arranges for students before an examination, noting that she “even arranges Sunday afternoons for us to perform at her home – and this is free of charge. Her kindness touches our hearts.” The teacher of Student Twelve is conscientious to the extent of drawing up “a table of my progress and asks me to indicate how long I spend practising something in order to see how much time it takes me to make progress.” It should be noted that in their discussion other students also acknowledged – albeit somewhat implicitly – a belief in their teacher’s professional and conscientious approach to teaching.

7.4 Methodology

In this section of the interview the students were asked to discuss how their teachers teach and the methods they employ in their teaching. This is presented in relation to six aspects of piano teaching methodology: the teaching of technique; style; memorization; practice methods; acute listening skills (or extending aural ability); and addressing stage fright. It is interesting to note that whilst acknowledging their teacher’s personal or unique approaches to teaching, only two of the students were able to identify where these methods originated from – and both were referring to practice methods. Student Two stated: “He [my teacher] has mentioned that many famous pianists use the approach of slow practice.” Student Eleven stated that her teacher taught her how to develop her technique using a Russian method and a Hungarian method that originated from Liszt.

7.4.1 Technique

The information gleaned from the students regarding technique is presented under three headings: physical movements of the arms, wrists and fingers that produce different touches; technique and relaxation; and technique in relation to listening and sound production. The students’ responses relate to the nature of technical preparation, methods of teaching, and the opinions of the teachers and students on technique.
7.4.1.1 Physical movements that produce different touches

Ten of the students spoke of technique in relation to ‘touch’, suggesting that there are different rules and theories of the movement of the hands, fingers, arms, and wrists to produce different sounds. Student One stated: “He [the teacher] teaches me how to move my hands correctly.” Student Three said that her teacher encouraged her “to listen the melody and to observe the movement (of the hands),” pointing out the close relationship between tonal quality and kinaesthetic movement. Student Four’s teacher “shows me how to use force, such as being firmer with the fingers, and then tells me to practise again slowly. He teaches me methods to control strength.” Student Five offered: “She [the teacher] describes in detail how to play with flat fingers or ‘standard’ fingers. Sometimes she asks me to think and then to play on the lid of the piano so that I can test my finger positions without sound.” Student Six reflected: “She [the teacher] teaches all about using the fingers, wrists, and arms . . . I observe her movements; the fingers need to stick to the keys. I’m not the kind whose fingers stay close to the surface of the keys.” She commented that her teacher’s method is a good method “to project the sound,” and that “if I lift up too high, the weight that is produced by my fingers is not steady.” Student Seven’s teacher stresses the importance of the independence and strength of the fingers: “She mainly tells me why I can’t play shorter notes clearly, because my fingers lack independent motion and all my force comes from my forearms, so I get tired easily and my fingers lack strength.” Student Eight stated: “He [the teacher] mainly focuses on the flow of the music. He sometimes talks about physical analysis, but not very often.” Student Nine recalled that his teacher asks him to think more about “how the hands move, especially in the difficult parts . . . I tend to press hard on the notes . . . my teacher said that I play a bit too heavily. She asks me to play more lightly, and I have to use fingers more instead of my wrists. This results in less force being applied . . . She also taught me how the muscles work.” Student Ten said that her teacher concentrates on “the correct movement of the hands, arms, and wrists to help me to handle it [the music] without getting tired, as this will also help me to play fluently.” Student Ten’s teacher analyzes “each movement of the arms or hands with me – for the loud chords she explains how to move, up or down, left or right, inward or outward, and how to practise with different rhythmic patterns well.” Student Eleven stated: “She [the teacher] emphasizes tone colour, and believes that the sound should be produced by the force that is concentrated in the fingers.” She referred to her teacher using the ideas of Liszt and the Russian school in teaching her how to practise with strength: “In the Russian method, the five fingers play ‘E, F#, G#, A#, B’ with a high wrist, all at once, practicing at a quick speed just touching the keys.” These exercises train “the strength of the fingers” and build up the hand shape.
7.4.1.2 Relaxation

Seven students acknowledged a close relationship between technique and relaxation. Student Three stated that her teacher explains “how relaxed you should be” to play difficult technical work. Student Two said: “My teacher teaches me how to play more relaxed at the wrists.” Student Five said: “For different parts she [the teacher] advises me to play with relaxed wrists.” Student Fifteen reflected that “when the melody spans octaves, she [the teacher] teaches you how to relax and play it.” Student Nine stated: “My fingers are very tense; often I find it hard to relax . . . she [the teacher] always reminds me that I’ve got to relax my shoulders and wrists.” Student Eleven’s teacher offers the following advice when practising technique: “First you concentrate, then you relax.” Student Fourteen stated: “My teacher says that my shoulders are tense when I play, and thus I need to be more relaxed when I play.”

7.4.1.3 Listening and sound production

Nine of the students made mention of their teacher stressing the relationship between technique and tonal quality or sound production. These students mentioned being encouraged firstly to think about the sound and then to explore different techniques to achieve it – all of the time listening intently to what they are producing. Student Three said that her teacher tells her “how to do it [the physical movement], to listen to the sound produced, to see [the movement], and explains how relaxed you should be and what the feeling is like.” Student Four reported that her teacher focuses on tonal quality: “My teacher is very good on sound production . . . He plays a chord many times; each time with a different quality.” Student Six stated that sound comes first in music, and that new techniques must be used to achieve certain sounds: “She [the teacher] stresses the sound; what I hear and what I think it is. She teaches me a specific technique according to the requirements of the passage.” Student Nine offered: “In accordance with the score I think the sound first, and then play it. Afterwards, I listen to the sound and make adjustments [to the technique] to produce the sound that is in my mind.” Student Eleven also suggested that sound production is an important aspect of technique: “She [the teacher] emphasizes tone colour, and believes that the sound should be produced by the force that is concentrated in the fingers.” Student Twelve’s teacher emphasises that first and foremost a pianist must “imagine and listen to the sound”, stressing that this comes before any other aspect of expression. Student Thirteen explained her teacher’s approach: “He uses many
different ways to teach me technique in detail... For example, he places his hand on the bottom of the piano and asks me to play the note at the bottom of the key”. Student Fourteen recounted that in teaching technique her teacher “teaches me to listen to the sound.”

7.4.2 Style

All of the students reflected on how their teachers teach style. The responses can be divided into five aspects: placing music in its historical context; listening to music to understand style (as well, of course, as other aspects of the music); comparisons with other art forms; personal style; and teacher demonstration (which, like listening, is concerned with the teaching of style as well as aspects such as technique). The first of these – placing music in its historical context, which was mentioned by eleven students – has already been discussed in relation to rationalism, the second – listening to music, mentioned by all students – and the last – teacher demonstration, referred to by twelve students – were discussed with respect to empiricism and the student quotations will not be repeated here. Therefore the following discussion will focus only on the importance of making comparisons with other art forms, and developing a personal style.

7.4.2.1 Comparisons with other art forms

There is a strong relationship between musical styles and style with respect to other art forms. Accordingly, some teachers endeavour to widen the scope of students’ stylistic perception to encompass other arts in the belief that it will better inform their interpretative decisions. Seven of the students said that their teachers encourage them to compare stylistic similarities between music and other arts. Student One said that when she plays Debussy's music her teacher relates it to visual images and, in particular, impressionist paintings; similarly, when playing Mozart sonatas her teacher encourages her to think of them “as an opera with different scenes.” Student Two similarly stated that her teacher “advises me to watch opera to learn how the music is expressed through dialogue – in Mozart’s music especially.” Student Four related: “I watch Spanish dances or listen to Spanish folk songs if I am playing Spanish music, and view impressionist paintings if I am playing Debussy.” Student Eleven commented: “sometimes I look at Monet’s paintings to understand impressionism.” Student Thirteen commented: “When I play Debussy’s music, he [my teacher] advises me to look at Monet’s paintings, and compare the patches of colour with the rich tone colours that Debussy has in his music. When I learn Baroque music, he advises me to look at Baroque architecture.”

Three students claimed that they read poetry and other literature to get a
better feeling for stylistic interpretation. Student Four explained that her teacher asks her “to become familiar with the composer’s background and history through books.” Student Eight said that her teacher encourages her “to read poetry”. Student Ten offered: “If I play a piece of Granados, she [the teacher] asks me to find a piece of poetry that reflects the atmosphere of his music.” She further related that her teacher also likes to investigate other art forms as a means of gaining a deeper stylistic feeling for the period in which a composer lived.

7.4.2.2 Personal style

Eight of the students acknowledged that their teachers encourage them to develop their own personal style. Student Two commented that her teacher expects her to “develop my own style and not just copy others . . . he always reminds me that regardless of what I learn, it is only for reference and I must create my own style.” Student Four opined that “each of us performs with our own characteristics . . . He [the teacher] considers the personal characteristics of each student in choosing pieces for them, so that they can discover their own style.” Student Five stated: “I think style has to be developed by oneself. . . . I feel that it is very difficult to teach [and can] only be developed through your own thinking under a teacher’s guidance.” Student Six was referring to the development of a personal style in suggesting that pianists “use their hearts to perform. The intrinsic part of their musical thinking conveys their meaning in the music.” In acknowledging the importance of developing a personal style Student Eight recounted that her teacher “never tells me what to think or what to do. Instead, he expects me to think for myself.” Student Nine agreed: “She [the teacher] has given me a lot of freedom with regards to style . . . Her way of teaching is more personal, which means that she teaches me how to personally interpret a piece . . . She says even if it is the same piece, different performers play it differently.” Student Ten’s teacher “plays several different versions for me to listen to and comment on . . . She doesn’t define what is good and ask me to copy it. Because of this I feel that the scope of my playing is greater, and it won’t become a copy of someone else’s playing.” Student Fifteen stated: “She [the teacher] recognises that every piece has a different flavour when it is performed by different people, so what I play is different from what she plays.”

7.4.3 Memorization

All of the students commented on the methods of memorization that their teachers had taught them. Four methods were discussed: developing visual and aural memory; memory based on analysis; physical or kinesthetic memory; and developing memory using a systematic approach.
7.4.3.1 A visual or aural approach

Three of the students spoke of the importance of visual ability in memorization, with one of them also indicating using aural memory. Student One said that sometimes she memorizes the “picture of the score.” Student Five said: “For pieces written in the 20th Century, I memorize the image of the keyboard.” Student Seven’s teacher taught him the method of “visualizing – memorizing the image of the score.” In addition, Student Ten noted that she also memorizes aurally, using “the sound to remember the piece.”

7.4.3.2 An analytical approach

This has been discussed above in relation to Rationalism (7.2.1.2. Undertaking a theoretical analysis of the music), where 10 students supported the notion of using an analytical approach to memorization.

7.4.3.3 Physical or kinaesthetic memory

Four of the students referred to physical or kinaesthetic memory. Student Six expressed it as: “I memorize by the position of my hands on the keyboard. . . . I can’t think of the notes without the piano.” Student Nine stated: “in the Baroque style, I must remember the chord and key areas. Sometimes she [the teacher] asks me to memorize the fingering on the keyboard.” Student Ten supported the use of “kinaesthetics – repeating the hand movement many times so that it [the music] can be memorized.” Student Eleven stated that she memorizes according to the movement of the fingers: “Fingering is very important. The first thing she [my teacher] stresses is that if you have set fingering for a piece and know how to do it, then this will help you to memorize the music easily.”

7.4.3.4 A step-by-step approach to memorization

Four of the students commented on using a step-by-step approach to memorization. Student Three stated: “It’s best to memorize each hand separately; practise each hand so that you know exactly where you are.” Student Nine’s teacher “mostly teaches me how to memorize by sections: each phrase and then the whole paragraph.” Student Eleven’s teacher “teaches me to memorize with single hands.” Student Twelve said that her teacher suggests that she “memorize with separate hands; putting similar sections together and then memorizing them. . . . she thinks that memorizing in sections is the safest way, starting with big sections and then dividing them into small sections. . . . I tried, for example, Six Dances in Bulgarian rhythm, No. 6 from Bartok’s Mikrokosmos vol. 6, and I became so familiar with each section that
my teacher could pick any one of them and I could play it well.”

7.4.4 Practice methods

Twelve of the students provided constructive ideas on the methods they used when practicing. Five major aspects can be identified with respect to the way they approach practice: aural awareness, or practising with a critical ear; targeted or goal oriented practice; systematic practice, or practising a step-at-a-time; use of rhythmic variation; and slow practice.

7.4.4.1 Practising with a critical ear

A major element of practice is aural awareness or practising with a critical ear. Five students indicated that their teachers stressed this approach. Student One said that her teacher emphasizes the relationship between listening and practice. Similarly, Student Two’s teacher tells her “to practise . . . and listen carefully.” Interestingly, “the day before a performance, he asks me not to practise much. Instead, he wants me to read the score and use my mind more” – in other words, use her inner ear to ‘practise’. Student Four’s teacher “tells me to listen.” Student Six reflected: “One has to listen. If not, then it is like putting oneself outside of the music.” Student Eight stressed that her teacher emphasizes the importance of listening to “the quality of the sound that is produced.”

7.4.4.2 Goal oriented practice

Eleven of the students indicated that they practise with a goal in mind. Student One explained: “Generally speaking, he [the teacher] likes to identify certain parts for me to practise, and it may be just one bar. Unless I have practised these parts well enough he won’t move on to the general things.” Student Two said that her teacher “requires me to study every piece of music in detail . . . I circle particular passages or bars that I haven’t handled well and then devise a plan to practise them . . . I set daily goals for my practice.” Student Three’s teacher “marks her requirements on the score . . . telling me to concentrate on a daily basis on the parts that I play badly, and teaches me methods of practising.” In addition to attending to problems identified by her teacher that she has “to practise thoroughly during the following week in order to make progress,” Student Four identifies problems as they arise during her practice sessions and sets goals to address them. Student Five stressed: “I first pick the difficult passages from the piece to practise . . . I set goals for myself every time. I make myself improve the parts that I can’t play well. This is the goal I have every time I sit down to practise.” Student Nine’s teacher “has a notebook in which she writes notes for me, and if I have a problem with the left hand or the right hand, she
tells me how to practise my technique at home. She takes notes and so do I. Also, she plans goals: they are in the book in which she writes down what I have to do.” Student Eleven said: “Many of my problems happen repeatedly. I write them down . . . If I have forgotten them . . . I look at my notebook . . . My teacher is very nice. When the piece is ready to perform she writes down her comments and the problems that she has identified. Afterwards she gives me her notes.” Student Twelve’s teacher “draws a table of my progress, and asks me to indicate how long I spend practising something in order to see how much time it takes me to make progress.” Student Thirteen stated that her teacher “doesn’t set daily goals, but he instructs me clearly in what I should practise for each individual piece.” Based on this she sets herself targets for practice. Student Fourteen related: “He [the teacher] does set goals for my practice, things like how many times I need to practise and what he expects me to achieve by the next lesson.” Student Fifteen commented: “When something needs to be corrected, she [the teacher] tells me during the lesson and teaches me how to practise. She writes it on the score or in a notebook; then I practise at home.”

7.4.4.3 Practising a step-at-a-time

Eight of the students indicated that their teachers teach them how to practise systematically, or a step at a time. Student One said: “I am weak at building up tension, and so he [the teacher] discusses with me how to build up the tension of the phrase, then the tension between the phrases, and then the tension between the sections.” She mentioned that her teacher solves problems starting with the smallest issue and progressing to the larger issues in steps. Student Two explained: “To help me with technical problems, my teacher breaks the sections into smaller units. He asks me to concentrate on practising two notes until I feel secure. Then, he allows me to proceed with practising them together with the notes that follow. When no mistakes occur, I move on to another small unit.” Student Three stated that her teacher recommends “practising the hands separately so that you know exactly what the mistakes are.” Student Five said that when she improves on a difficult passage “I then put the passage back in the music and add a few bars before and after the passage and practise again. I first try to play well technically, and then think about the artistic sense.” Student Eleven recounted her teacher’s approach to technical exercises: “Liszt suggested playing scales using a special method: with hands together an octave apart, playing an ascending scale for two octaves in similar motion, then following it by two octaves in contrary motion, and then playing two octaves in similar motion again. The pattern should be repeated with a descending scale for two octaves in similar motion, followed by two octaves in contrary motion, and then two octaves in a descending scale in similar motion.” Student Twelve recounted that her teacher advocates the
benefit of practising “similar sections together” and that “starting with big sections and then dividing them into small sections” is the best way to proceed. Student Fourteen’s teacher “teaches me to divide a piece into sections” in order to be able to pick up the mood easily if there is an interruption in the performance. “For instance, for a Schubert variation, he selects variations of a similar style for me to practise. Sometimes, he selects a variation randomly. Then he asks me to play the first note with the right mood straight away.” In practising Bach, Student Fifteen said that her teacher taught her to “practise units of similar notes and rhythmic patterns. For a piece with four voice parts, I first practise the highest part and listen to the melody . . . then pull out similar parts to practise from other sections. Afterwards, I find another type of pattern to analyse and practise again, and so on to the next section.”

7.4.4.4 Rhythmic variation

Five of the students indicated being encouraged to employ rhythmic variation when practicing. Student One recounted that her teacher taught her different ways to practise, one of which involved “using different rhythmic patterns to practise the same phrase.” Student Ten explained that when playing passages of fast notes of arpeggios for the left hand she would slip off the keys easily and could not play correctly and precisely, then her teacher “suggested that I pull that part out and practise it using different rhythmic patterns . . . [using] a pattern of fingering that ensures the notes are played correctly.” Student Eleven stated: “If one plays a few bars of fast notes unevenly, then one may use a dotted rhythm to practise with the fingers relaxed to improve the problem.” Student Thirteen said that her teacher suggested she practise using “different rhythmic patterns.” Student Fifteen related that her teacher requires her to “practise scales and Hanon (The Virtuoso Pianist) . . . [and to] use different rhythmic patterns” as a means of building-up a strong technical foundation.

7.4.4.5 Slow practice

Six students offered comments on the notion of slow practice. Student One said that her teacher “tells me to play and practise from a slow to a normal speed.” Student Two commented: “When I have a concert or performance coming up, my teacher tells me to practise every piece slowly so that I can listen carefully.” Student Four asserted that her teacher supports the theory of slow practice so that students can hear the different sounds that are produced by different techniques: “I can’t hear it at first, then slowly he plays it for me. One must hear the sound in the first place, then think how to reproduce it . . . and then practise it again slowly.” Student Five stressed: “As I handle the music better, I move from slow to fast practice.” Student Seven stated that her teacher helps her by “training me to play the notes very slowly.”
Student Thirteen’s teacher “insists that I practise slowly.”

7.4.5 Acute listening skills (extending aural ability)

This section discusses three important ways in which students extend their listening or aural skills: listening to recordings by professional artists; attending live performances; and self-evaluation from listening to recordings of themselves playing.

7.4.5.1 Recordings

Not surprisingly, all of the students indicated that they listen to CDs – to CDs of their performance pieces and to CDs of other music. The responses of five of them (Students One, Nine, Ten, Twelve and Fifteen) have been presented when discussing listening in relation to Empiricism (7.2.2.3) and these will not be repeated here. Of the other eight students’ responses, Student Two said: “I always select – and listen to frequently – to one or two recordings of master performances that are related to the pieces I am learning.” Student Three stated: “After listening to the CD at least you know this melodic line is like that, where the phrase goes, where the melody is, and generally know what is going on.” She added that her teacher asks her to study different styles by listening to different CDs. Student Five asserted that she listens to quite a lot of music but that “it must relate to my own performance.” Student Six stated: “Before I learn a new piece I listen to it. After I have learnt to play it well I double check my interpretation . . . If a piece is in my program then I listen to it attentively.” Student Seven commented that he usually listens to recordings that are “within the examination syllabus.” Student Eight reflected: “I listen to piano performances more than other types of music as I can understand them better.” Student Eleven said: “I only buy those [recordings] I need to listen to for my performance.” Student Thirteen opined: “For a piece I am learning I do not listen to any recordings until I have learned it from my teacher and understood what he wants to teach me first.”

Additionally, nine of the students affirmed that they listen to recordings of music other than the works they are learning. Student Two stated that she “listens to other symphonic work for an hour each day.” Student Four explained: “I rarely listen to recordings, but I listen to pop music when I’m free, just for a change. I also learn something from that.” Student Five offered: “I listen to others playing, there is a connection with my own performance.” Student Six stated that she “always” listens to music, even if it is not part of her performance program, often listening to it “as background music.” Student Seven asserted: “I also listen to piano concertos and male treble choirs on CD.” Student Eleven said that “even if it’s not a piece I am learning, I still listen to it. I am pushing myself to listen more to orchestral works. Every night
before bed I listen to one movement and read the score.” Student Twelve also listens to other recordings, especially “those related to my composition lessons.” Student Thirteen commented: “He [the teacher] . . . even asks me to listen to all of the instrumental music of a composer to learn about the style of that composer.” Student Fourteen listens “to performances of a similar style or different works by the same composer.”

7.4.5.2 Live performances

All of the students said that they attend live performances, including music performances and other arts performances such as opera, ballet, and drama. Four of the students expressed opinions on attending live performances other than piano recitals. Student One stressed: “I also like to watch opera, musicals, orchestral work, and even some multi-media performances.” Student Four stated: “I attend the theatre. Watching drama performances, I learn quite a lot about another aspect that could be related to performance: seeing how the actors interpret a role has something in common with how I interpret a composition.” Student Eleven asserted: “I listen more to orchestral music, even ballet and chamber works.” As an example of listening beyond the parameters of Western and Chinese music, Student Fifteen made particular mention of a “gamelan performance at Hong Kong University.”

7.4.5.3 Self-evaluation from listening to recordings of themselves playing

Nine of the students supported the idea of listening to recordings of their practice sessions or their actual performances for self-evaluation. Student One suggested: “I do record performances sometimes, but certainly not my practice,” adding that this enables her to detect and solve problems. Student Two stated: “I tape my practice once a week. It is an easy way for me to find the mistakes I have made, and I think it is essential for proper practice.” Student Six said: “I perform from memory when recording. I play from memory, especially during the last month before an examination.” Student Eight commented: “I rarely tape my practice, but I do tape my performances sometimes.” Student Ten explained that she tapes her practice when a performance is near, and listens back for self-evaluation: “Usually, I tape my performances, but not my daily practice – except when the time for a performance is near.” As an accompanist, Student Eleven emphasized the importance of recording: “We listen to the recordings together after rehearsals and make comments . . . When the parts [solo and accompaniment] are ready and the effect is balanced, we record every day before the concert . . . and listen to it continuously.” Student Twelve agreed: “I do [record], but not frequently. I tape the practice sessions before recitals in addition to taping the actual recital.” Student Thirteen stated: “I tape my practice
before examinations but I don’t do it frequently – only once or twice.” Student Fourteen asserted: “I tape my practice, but only before an examination.”

7.4.6 Stage fright

Valuable information relating to the issue of stage fright was collected from the students. In their responses, most of them synthesized their own experiences and what they had learned from their teachers. This will be discussed in relation to the importance of having practised sufficiently; the need to engage in frequent performance experience; being sufficiently relaxed; and having a positive attitude and a high level of concentration.

7.4.6.1 Sufficient practice

Three of the students stressed the importance of having practised sufficiently if the performer is to have confidence when playing. Student Two stated: “With careful practice I can establish how I am going to perform and gain enough self-confidence.” Student Ten suggested that “being nervous means having to practise more.” Student Eleven commented: “Nervousness in fact is due to a lack of preparation or a problem in preparation.”

7.4.6.2 Frequent performance experience

Three of the students supported the view that the more one engages in performance the less chance there is of experiencing stage fright. Student Seven commented that having “more opportunities to perform” reduces the tension of stage fright. Student Nine acknowledged that her teacher advised her “to perform more.” Student Ten agreed that “getting more opportunities to perform” is an effective way of dealing with stage fright, adding: “When I have more chances to play in front of others, the feeling is really different.”

7.4.6.3 Being sufficiently relaxed

Seven of the students expressed the view that being sufficiently relaxed is important in addressing stage fright, with three of them (Students Three, Seven and Nine) arguing the efficacy of taking deep breaths before commencing a performance. Student One offered: “I relax . . . and throw myself into the music as soon as possible.” Student Three stated that a way of overcoming stage fright is to “enjoy the music first, and then relax . . . and breathe.” Student Four spoke of the importance of relaxation and said that her teacher tells her to “just play it [the piece] as usual,” adding: “The less I practise closer to the concert . . . [the more] I relax as though nothing special is happening.” Student Six spoke similarly: “She [the teacher] tells me
not to play too much piano before the performance . . . and to be calmer.” This was again echoed by Student Fourteen: “He [the teacher] tells me to relax.”

7.4.6.4 A positive attitude and a high level of concentration

Ten of the students spoke of the importance of having a positive attitude and a high level of concentration in order to overcome stage fright. In terms of attitude, Student Two suggested: “I believe that as soon as I perform on stage with full enthusiasm and sharing what I have learnt about a piece, there’s nothing to be afraid of.” Student Five explained that her teacher “has analyzed it [stage fright] rationally with me.” Student Seven asserted that his teacher tells him “to concentrate on my own playing and ignore who is there and what they are doing.” Student Eight observed: “The best way to overcome it [stage fright] is to concentrate on the performance.” Student Nine stressed: “She [the teacher] said that when I am afraid and my heart is beating fast I waste my energy because there is a certain energy that is used when one is afraid due to increased blood-flow and a faster heart beat. My teacher advised me to save my energy, to transfer my nervousness from my heart to my brain for the sake of my concentration and interpretation. In short, it is good that one gets a little nervous, because one then concentrates better.” Student Ten stated: “She [the teacher] usually tells me not to be afraid and to concentrate without thinking of the audience.” Student Twelve explained her approach: “I keep working on my memorization so I won’t be nervous when the time comes.” Student Thirteen commented: “My teacher often tells me that a performer is scared only if he wants to show off his technique or worries too much about playing wrong notes. If he performs to express his own feelings and thoughts, to communicate well with the audience, then any wrong notes he plays won’t affect the whole picture he is bringing to his audience. Therefore, all he needs to do is to concentrate on the message he wants to deliver.” Student Thirteen indicated that apart from concentration, having a strong desire to share the music with the audience during a performance is a positive attitude that can be adopted to overcome stage fright. Student Fourteen recounted: “Before the performance, he [the teacher] reminds me to think it all over once – remembering what it is about, how it begins and flows, and where the climax is – then start, concentrate, and dwell on the spirit of the performance immediately.” Student Fifteen stated that her teacher “is very positive and this helps me to gain confidence.”

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter details the responses to the questions asked of the fifteen final year performance students at interview. The responses not only provide some insights
into the students’ thinking about various aspects of music learning, but also give another perspective on the approaches of their teachers. The students’ comments thus provide a valuable insight – from their perspective – on the role of their teachers and of themselves in the teaching-learning process. This has been studied with respect to their teacher’s philosophical approach, the principles of teaching that they would seem to subscribe to, and the methodologies they employ.

In attempting to gain another perspective on their teacher’s philosophical approach, the discussion again focused on rationalism, empiricism, and pragmatism. With respect to rationalist theory, two ideas were pre-eminent: the importance of placing music in its historical context (73.3%); and the importance of undertaking a theoretical analysis of the score (66.7%). Empiricist theory would support the emphasis placed on life experience (40%); learning from teacher demonstration (80%); and learning from listening (100%). Pragmatists would stress the need for students to become independent learners and problem solvers (66.7%); and the importance of acknowledging individual difference in adopting teaching methodologies (80%).

In addition to looking at these three philosophical streams independently, the discussion also focused on three ‘overriding’ philosophical ideas that were not an exclusive tenet of any one particular stream. These three ideas, which correspond to those identified by the teachers, were the importance of teachers instilling in students a capacity to enjoy and love music (53.3%); the importance of teachers nurturing and developing personal characteristics or qualities in students: diligence (46.7%) and shaping the personality and character (73.3%); and the transmission of knowledge and insights to others: teacher to student (26.7%), and performer to audience (66.7%).

In looking at students’ perceptions of the prevailing principles of teaching used by their teachers, five were discussed: music as a means of expressing emotion and ideas (66.7%); the importance of pianists achieving a good tonal quality (66.7%); use of the imagination as a teaching-learning tool (60%); use of the imagination to express emotion and feeling (53.3%); the role of encouragement (66.7%) and stimulation (46.7%) in teaching; and the dictum that students should be taught as well as possible, that is, the need for quality teaching (20%).

The discussion of students’ perceptions of the methodologies used by their teachers focused on six major aspects: teaching technique in relation to physical movement (66.7%), relaxation (46.7%), and listening in relation to sound production (60%); style: studying music in its historical context (73.3%); listening (100%); studying other art forms (46.7%); developing a personal style (53.3%); and teacher demonstration (80%); memorization: visual (20%) and aural (6.7%); analytic (66.7%); physical or kinesthetic (26.7%); and a step-by-step approach (26.7%); practice methods: practising with a critical ear (33.3%); goal oriented (73.3%); step-at-a-time
(53.3%); rhythmic variation (33.3%); slow practice (40%); acute listening skills or extending aural ability: listening to recordings of others (100%); attending live performances (100%); and self-evaluation by recording oneself (60%); and stage fright: sufficient practice (20%); frequent performance experience (20%); being relaxed (46.7%); and having a positive attitude and a high level of concentration (66.7%).

Consideration of the students’ responses – together with those of the teachers – and the relative emphasis or weight given to each issue, provides the basis for the following chapter in which guidelines for the development of a model of piano teaching are proposed.
Chapter 8
Discussion and model for teaching piano performance

8.1 Introduction

The thesis has argued the relationship between methodologies, teaching principles, and three major philosophies in relation to piano education. It has been suggested that methodologies are the tools used to achieve philosophical goals under the guidance of selected teaching principles. This chapter contains a three-part discussion of the philosophies, principles, and methodologies evident in the teaching of final-year piano performance students in Hong Kong, and looks at particular trends that emerged from the research data. The discussion is based on the responses of the ten teachers and fifteen students in the context of prominent themes that have emerged from the literature review. Following this a model for teaching piano performance based on the three perspectives of philosophy, principles and methodology is proposed.

8.2 Philosophies

This section looks at the findings firstly in relation to rationalism, empiricism and pragmatism. Next the discussion focuses on the three overriding issues that have been identified: the importance of instilling in students an enjoyment and love of music; of developing and nurturing students; and of transmitting knowledge to others.

8.2.1 Rationalism, empiricism, and pragmatism in relation to piano teaching

A synthesis of the three main philosophical approaches explored in this study – rationalism, empiricism, and pragmatism – is presented below. Figures 8.1a and 8.1b illustrate the responses of the teachers and students, respectively.
Figure 8.1a Teacher responses categorized according to the philosophies of rationalism, empiricism, and pragmatism. N = 10

Figure 8.1b Student responses categorized according to the philosophies of rationalism, empiricism, and pragmatism. N = 15
8.2.1.1 Rationalism

Two of the main ideas of rationalism are that knowledge is acquired through rational analysis and that one should seek answers to difficult questions. In determining the use of rationalism among the respondents, two particular topics were identified, namely, the importance of placing music in its historical context, and the importance of undertaking a theoretical analysis of the music or score. Eight of the teachers (80%) supported the notion of music being studied from an historical perspective, and all of the them (100%) indicated teaching their students to undertake a theoretical analysis of the music. Eleven of the students (73.3%) stated that an understanding of historical background is essential, and ten (66.7%) agreed on the importance of analyzing the score.

Two issues arise from these results. First of all, it is encouraging to see that all of the teachers understood the importance of undertaking a theoretical analysis of the score, but the responses of the students would seem to suggest that they understood this less well. Secondly, whilst both students and teachers accorded a similar level of importance to understanding the historical background or context of the music, neither group gave it full support – eight of the ten teachers, and eleven of the fifteen students. It is contended in this study that the history of music is a relatively fixed body of knowledge through which students can come to have a richer understanding of the particular style and characteristics of a work. This knowledge, it is contended, is beneficial in enabling students to perceive, understand and perform the music. Having said this, the fact that only eight teachers (80%) and eleven students (73.3%) gave support to the importance of placing music in its historical context suggests that it is an area needing further investigation if not improvement. Kivy (1993), for example, has argued that “historical accuracy has an intrinsic value” (p. 104). Certainly it has been argued here that repertoire should be studied within an historical framework if students are to have a rich perspective on what they are playing. Such a perspective might include viewing composers within the wider context of their other works as well as works by their peers; understanding the stylistic norms of composition and performance that were prevalent, including an acquaintance of keyboard practices; having an insight into other art forms of the period; and, ideally, having an understanding of dominant cultural, social and economic norms. This, in turn, it might be argued, can lead to a more insightful level of interpretation and performance. If such an approach is to be stressed it places a great responsibility on the teacher. Ideally, the benefits include students developing into pianists whose interpretations and performances reflect not only a high level of specialization but also a breath of knowledge that informs their playing.

From the rationalist perspective, knowledge is built through a rational approach to seeking answers to difficult questions. Abeles, Hoffer and Klotman (1994)
defined a rationalist music teacher as one who insists that students have an intellectual understanding of music. James (1994) and Webster (1993) said that mental or cognitive analysis is important for gaining an understanding of phrase, form, and structure. Neuhaus (1993) and Kochevitsky (2004) stated that piano teachers have a responsibility to teach theory, history, counterpoint, and form. It should not be surprising therefore that all (100%) of the teachers advocated the importance of undertaking a theoretical analysis of the music. By contrast, only two-thirds (66.7%) of the students supported this notion, which might suggest that not all of the teachers were successful in imparting their belief to their students. At the very least it suggests that some teachers might have to question their particular methodology in imparting to their students the importance of this aspect of piano education. This is especially important if we are to believe that undertaking an analysis of the score can benefit students with respect to stylistic interpretation, memorization, and practice techniques.

The discussion of rationalism in the Literature Review identified other features of this philosophy which, whilst not revealed overtly in the research data, nonetheless may have relevance for piano education. These are that rationalism is concerned with seeking answers to difficult philosophical questions (Lacey, 1976; Kivy, 1993; and Lautzenheiser, 1993); that knowledge is the ultimate truth (Abeles, Hoffer & Klotman, 1994; Neuhaus, 1993); and that a rationalist approach does not depend on the senses and experience (Stubley, 1992; Waal, 2005). One or more of these aspects might be further explored in future research relating to piano education. Suffice to say here that the first – seeking answers to difficult philosophical questions – draws attention to the need for piano teachers and students to explore philosophical issues in relation to music; this might, for example, include the possibility of teachers and students delving in depth into the nature of the aesthetic experience in relation to interpretation and performance. It is left to future researchers to investigate the other features of rationalism that may or may not have relevance to piano education.

8.2.1.2 Empiricism

From the empiricist viewpoint knowledge is acquired through the senses and experience. Empiricists emphasize practice through observation and experiment, and hold experience to be important. These beliefs can be seen in responses from both teachers and students.

Four ideas (Fig. 8.1a) were gleaned from the responses of the teachers. All of them (100%) supported the importance of learning from listening. Eight of them (80%) agreed that life experience contributes to a deeper artistic understanding with respect to teaching, learning, and performing. Eight (80%) also mentioned the importance of teaching experience. Five (50%) referred to the importance of having
performance experience. The students’ responses (Figs. 8.1b), showed that all of them (100%) supported the importance of learning from listening; six (40%) acknowledged the importance of life experience; and twelve (80%) believed that learning from teacher demonstration is beneficial.

Overall, it can be said that to varying degrees the data supports the importance of listening, life experience, teaching experience, performance experience, and teacher demonstration (another aspect of experience for the student) – important tenets of empiricism. Not surprisingly, all of the teachers and students (100%) acknowledged the importance of listening – supporting the empiricist idea that knowledge is acquired through the senses; in this case the ears, but not exclusively so. Whilst 80% of teachers agreed on the importance of life experience, this was acknowledged by only 40% of students. It may be that as students mature and develop a greater perspective on their learning more will come to see the importance of life experience. In other words, it is possible that the lower percentage of students who acknowledged the importance of life experience is in fact a reflection of their lack of life experience. Certainly, writers such as Kivy (1993), Hoffer (1993), Dewey (1980), and Green and Gallwey (1986) have argued the importance of life experience with respect to giving a more convincing performance that expresses real – experienced – emotion. Kivy (1993) for example asserted that to “consult one’s experience, is to recall an emotion once felt” (p. 240). Whilst eight teachers (80%) spoke of the importance of teaching experience, only five (50%) referred to the importance of performance experience for students. A related issue, not discussed here, is the importance of teachers having performance experience: this has been at the centre of instrumental teaching for many years. At its heart is the issue of whether good performers necessarily make the best teachers. The field of instrumental teaching has long been divided on the importance of a teacher having had performance experience; and to complicate the issue it is to some extent a question of degree and indeed agreeing on what actually constitutes ‘adequate’ performance experience. Even among the teachers themselves there was a range of performance experience. Nonetheless, it must be said that some writers such as Gordon (1995) have asserted that piano teachers should be well-rounded and perform in recitals, teach at universities, and present papers at conferences regularly. The debate is a continuing one.

The students’ support of teacher demonstration (80%) sends a strong message to teachers. Empiricist philosophies of teaching posit that demonstration provides an excellent opportunity for experiment and observation. At the same time it must be noted that such observation should not lead to mere imitation. Kochevitsky (1967) and James (1994) suggested that mere imitation produces musical parrots who simply copy without playing with their heart and soul. It is thus important that students use the experience of teacher demonstration as a basis for experimenting.
themselves with different ways of playing to come up with solutions that are not merely imitative but represent a personal style or interpretation of the music.

8.2.1.3 Pragmatism

Three of the main tenets of pragmatist philosophy are, first, a belief in nurturing students to become independent learners and problem-solvers; second, that students should be taught according to their individual needs: there is no single methodological approach suitable for all students; and third, that nothing is immutable or fixed. The analysis of the teacher and student interviews reveal strong elements of the first two of these tenets (see Figs 8.1a and 8.1b). Nine of the teachers (90%) and ten of the students (66.7%) were of the opinion that students should be taught to be independent learners and problem-solvers. All ten of the teachers (100%) believed that students should be taught according to their individual needs and twelve of the students (80%) stated that their teachers acknowledge individual differences in their teaching methods. With regard to the third tenet, that nothing is immutable or fixed, only two teachers (20%) acknowledged this and none of the students saw evidence of it in their teacher’s approach. Yet, ironically, as will be seen in the following discussion, the notion of nothing being fixed is inherent in the first two tenets.

Gagne, Briggs and Wager (1988) argued the importance of teaching students to become problem-solvers, and Blocker (1993) emphasized that piano teachers should help pupils to become independent thinkers. Stubley (1992) pointed out that pragmatists view humans as creative problem-solvers who go through the process of identifying problems and then combining, analyzing, and synthesizing information to solve them. Pragmatic music teachers are keen on helping students to learn how to learn, and consequently do not have a fixed or entrenched method for teaching as circumstance are always changing. It should not be surprising, given their lack of maturity and experience, that a smaller percentage of students compared to teachers believed in the importance of students becoming independent learners and problem-solvers.

Gagne, Robert and Wager (1988), Elder, L. (2003), James (1994), Crouse (2003), and Merrill (1984) argued the need to respect individual differences in teaching, including a student’s personality, interests, ability, aptitude, background, and so on. Pragmatist philosophy suggests that treating individuals differently can lead to teachers developing innovative methods to cater for these differences. In this sense, methods cannot be immutable or fixed. Despite the fact that only two teachers (20%) subscribed to the belief that nothing is immutable or fixed, there is a sense in which this concept is inherent in both cohorts’ belief in the importance of problem-solving and respect for individual difference. Conceivably, with further clarification of these tenets and discussion of practices from both teacher and student perspectives,
responses to this third tenet might have been more positive.

It is evident that all three philosophies of rationalism, empiricism and pragmatism have much to contribute to a theory or model of piano teaching. No single philosophical approach can stand alone in the development of such a theory. Nor are aspects from all three philosophies sufficient in developing the model for piano teaching that will be proposed in this chapter. It will be recalled that in addition to looking at these three philosophies, the study also investigated three overriding philosophical considerations.

8.2.2 Three overriding philosophical considerations

The three overriding philosophical considerations that have been identified are the importance of helping students to develop the capacity to enjoy and love music; the importance of developing and nurturing personal characteristics or qualities in students (diligence; personality; a sense of humanity); and the importance of transmitting knowledge and insights to others (teacher to student, and performer to audience). Teachers’ and students’ responses in relation to these three issues are summarized in Figures 8.2a and 8.2b, respectively.

![Figure 8.2a Teacher responses categorized according to three overriding philosophical considerations. N=10](image)

Figure 8.2a Teacher responses categorized according to three overriding philosophical considerations. N=10
Almost all of the teachers (90%) emphasised the importance of instilling in students an enjoyment and love; by contrast, only eights of the students (53.3%) were of this opinion. The literature, certainly, holds the enjoyment and love of music to be paramount with respect to music education in general. Kochevitsky (2004) and Neuhaus (1993) discussed the importance of imbuing students with a love of all of the arts, and Sunderman (1964) wrote of the relationship between enjoyment of music and the perception of emotion and feeling. Hansen (2003) wrote that a love of music helps teachers to teach, and James (1994) asserted that it is important to help students to experience greater enjoyment in individual piano lessons. Colwell (1991) argued the importance of enjoyment in music learning, and Frederickson (2003) and Lee (1984) asserted that enjoyment leads students to pursue beautiful sounds in their playing. Glaser (2003) stated that enjoyment of music depends on the freedom to express feelings and emotions through the music. On ongoing challenge for piano teachers is to ensure that their students develop an abiding enjoyment and love of music – and for students to be aware of its importance in their development as pianists.

Three aspects have been identified for discussion in relation to the importance of developing and nurturing personal characteristics or qualities in students: the need for students to be diligent; piano education shaping aspects of a student’s personality or character; and the importance of teachers nurturing in students a sense of humanity. All (100%) of the teachers supported the first of these – the need for students to be diligent in their approach to the learning of piano – but only seven students (46.7%). Conceivably, the students’ lack of maturity or experience might explain the much lower percentage of students who recognized the need for diligence.

With regard to the second aspect, all teachers (100%) agreed that learning
the piano can shape facets of a student’s character and personality; and this was supported by approximately three-quarters (11 or 73.3%) of the students. Stubley (1992) argued that musical performance helps performers to reflect on their sense of self – who they are – and nurtures them to be more sensitive and responsive. James (1994) suggested that piano students undergo personal and intellectual growth as a result of their lessons. Terwillger (1965) asserted that piano lessons help to develop the personality through self-expression. Colwell (1991) argued that musical learning contributes to making a person well-balanced or well-rounded in personality, and that music education produces good citizens. Neuhaus (1993) suggested that “music develops the talent of a pupil by making him more intelligent, more sensitive, more honest, more equitable, [and] more steadfast” (p. 23). This aspect of piano teaching and learning – shaping a student’s character and personality – is something that should not be under-rated and is clearly recognized by all of the teachers and a relatively large percentage of students.

Although only one teacher – and no students – argued the importance of the third aspect, namely, nurturing in piano students a sense of humanity, it is an issue that nonetheless merits attention. Gordon (1995), James (1994), and Neuhaus (1993), for example, have argued that piano education is a means of humanistic development that trains a human being to express the beauty of the soul. Neuhaus (1993) suggested that music education humanizes people, and Merrill (1984) argued that its ability to nurture humanity is a special feature of music education. Laires (1993) expressed it as “piano education [leads] to a deeper humanity” (p. 20). The importance of a humanistic education is commonly associated with humanistic psychology and music’s role in this will be considered in the models proposed later in this chapter.

With regard to the transmission of knowledge and insights to others, eight of the teachers (80%) and four of the students (26.7%) were cognizant of this occurring from teacher to student, and ten of the teachers (100%) and ten of the students (66.7%) discussed this in relation to performers passing on their ideas to an audience. That only four students (26.7%) indicated that their teachers pass on knowledge and insights to them is somewhat surprising. Perhaps it can be explained by a subtlety in the manner of teaching with students genuinely believing that they had come to have certain insights purely as a result of their own – and not their teachers’ – endeavours. Part of the explanation might also be that students cannot always be expected to see the teaching-learning process in perspective until they have matured or gained great life experience. Gordon (1995) has stated that music teachers have a responsibility to pass on knowledge to the next generation, and Gelfand (1986) suggested that the next generation of pianists will inherit the pedagogical skills and principles of their teachers. Teachers (100%) and students (66.7%) supported more strongly the performer’s role in transmitting ideas and insights to an audience. Again,
it can only be assumed that with more experience all students will come to see this as an important function of a performer.

It should be noted that none of the teachers or students mentioned aesthetics *per se* in their responses to questions. At the same time, several responses referred to particular aesthetic considerations. Undoubtedly, aesthetic considerations relate to the notion of instilling an enjoyment and love of music in students and to the transmission of knowledge and insights to others (just as they do to other aspects of piano learning, including, for example, expressive and interpretive elements). Wegener (1964), expressed the hope that children will learn to love the good and the beautiful and to despise what is evil and ugly through piano education. Cacioppo (1994), Gordon (1995) and others also argued that aesthetic values can be taught through piano education. Neuhaus (1993) stated that he requires his students to achieve beauty in performance, and Colwell (1991) suggested that beauty is what we experience in music, and expressed the hope that people experience aesthetic richness through music. Russ (1995) suggested that “the appropriate unit of analysis for aesthetic experience is not one emotion but rather an emotional experience over a structured period of time. A variety of feelings might be included in an aesthetic experience” (p. 441). Piano performance, in a sense, is aesthetic education. Despite not being referred to overtly, it might be assumed that it underpinned at least some of the teachers’ and students’ responses to questions.

8.3 Principles

Principles are the important ideas and concepts that guide a piano teacher’s methodology. Five main points have been identified from the responses of the teachers and students: music as a means of expressing emotion and ideas; the importance of achieving a good tonal quality; use of the imagination; the role of encouragement and stimulation in teaching; and the importance of quality teaching. Findings are summarized in Figures 8.3a and 8.3b below.
Figure 8.3a Teacher responses regarding teaching principles. N=10

Figure 8.3b Student responses regarding teaching principles. N=15
All of the teachers (100%) and two-thirds of the students (66.7%) are committed to a belief in music being a means of expressing emotion and ideas. Goehr (2001, p. 602) has expressed it as music being “allied . . . with human emotion, with purely sensuous expression.” Snitkin (2001) has said that music is played on an instrument to express one’s feelings and to share them with others. Gordon (1995) has argued that playing music is a means of personal expression, and that music gives life to ideas. Davies (2003) asserted that music expresses feelings that cannot be conveyed in words. It is difficult to account for the fact that one-third of the students did not see that music is a means of expressing emotions and ideas. At the very least it serves as an indicator to teachers of the need to emphasise this point. It also raises the question of what these students think they are doing when they perform. It may even be that there are cultural undertones present whereby it is not normal for Chinese students to be encouraged to express – or at least display – their feelings and emotion so overtly; that is, it might be argued that the overt expression of emotion runs counter to the Confucian heritage culture which has been discussed extensively by Watkins and Biggs (2001).

Seven of the teachers (70%) and ten of the students (66.7%) referred to the importance of tonal quality or good sound production. The importance of students producing an excellent quality of sound has been discussed herein. Snitkin (2001) has commented that the “tone quality that is appropriate for one style may not be appropriate for another. The more you listen, the easier it is to decide what kind you don’t like and how you want your musical voice to sound” (p. 945). This is an ongoing challenge for both teachers and students.

Five of the teachers (50%) spoke of the importance of using the imagination as a teaching-learning tool and another five (50%) referred to it in relation to expressing emotion and feelings. Nine of the students (60%) referred to the imagination in regard to the learning experience, and eight (53.3%) recognised its role in conveying emotion and feelings. It might have been expected that more teachers and students would have recognized the importance of the use of imagination both as a learning tool and as an interpretive-expressive tool. It suggests that use of the imagination is not pre-eminent in teaching and learning piano in Hong Kong despite the fact that numerous performers, composers, and writers have highlighted its importance. Neuhaus (1993) asserted that “Music is a tonal art. It produces no visual images, it does not speak with words or ideas. It speaks only with sounds” (p. 54). As a consequence, he said, pianists must use their imagination to produce sounds that represent the meaning of the music and their own interpretive ideas. Rideout (1992) stressed that there is a strong positive correlation between imagery, pitch judgment, and musical timbre. James (1994) referred to Bach, who used to ask his students to use their imagination to perform and learn keyboard music. Wagner (1996) suggested
that the imagination of the pianist opens the door to different interpretations. Imagination, certainly, is something that will be given due attention in the model of piano teaching proposed at the end of this chapter.

It was noted when discussing the teacher interviews that creativity was also mentioned in the context of engaging the imagination. Although not shown in Figures 8.2a and 8.2b, reference to creativity was disappointingly low, with only two of the teachers (20%) and one of the students (6.7%) acknowledging its role in music teaching, learning and performance. It is argued herein that not only is creativity essential in the arts but that there is a close relationship between it and the use of the imagination. Creativity is important in problem-solving and is related – amongst others – to interpretive ability in music. The lack of recognition of its importance highlights what might be seen as a core problem in relation to piano education in Hong Kong and one that will be addressed in the model to be presented later in this chapter.

The responses of the teachers and students showed strong support for the principle of encouragement. Eight of the teachers (80%) and ten of the students (66.7%) agreed that encouragement is vital in teaching and learning. Woody (2004) has argued that the best motivation is positive encouragement as this leads students to pursue musical arts to a deeper level. Encouragement of course can take many forms, and may be verbal, involve gestures, the giving of prizes and awards, and so on. It is a basic teaching principle regardless of what one is teaching.

Eight of the teachers (80%) but only seven of the students (46.6%) recognized the importance of stimulation in teaching and learning. Haack (1992) stressed “the importance of verbal imagery and the value of verbal skills in teaching and learning about music” (p. 461). Tait (1992) has argued similarly, and has asserted that through the use of metaphor, words can evoke feelings. Neuhaus (1993) stated that the imagination can be developed by “the use of apt metaphor, poetic similes, by analogy with natural phenomena or events in life, particularly spiritual, emotional life” (p. 20). As with encouragement, stimulation is another basic teaching principle.

Seven of the teachers (70%) referred to the importance of quality teaching and three students (20%) acknowledged the professional care and responsibility their teachers had shown in working with them. To some extent this was also further evidence of the importance of teachers recognizing individual difference in teaching. But it might have been expected that all teachers would have acknowledged the importance of this factor in piano teaching – or perhaps it was the case that they simply took it as a given. It is interesting that so few students acknowledged the quality of the teaching they received.
8.4 Methodologies of teaching

The research on the methodologies of teaching brought together information on six topics: style; memorization; practice; acute listening skills (extending aural ability); and stage fright.

8.4.1 Technique

Teachers’ and students’ responses are summarized in Figures 8.4a and 8.4b below.

![Figure 8.4a Teacher responses regarding methods of teaching and learning technique. N=10](image)

![Figure 8.4b Student responses regarding methods of teaching and learning technique. N=15](image)
Five aspects of technique were identified in the responses of the teachers. Nine of them (90%) agreed that technique involves the physical movement of the arms, wrists, and fingers to produce different touches; five (50%) argued the importance of relaxation in relation to technique; five (50%) referred to the role of listening in producing a good sound; seven (70%) discussed technique in relation to musical expression and style; and five (50%) stated that technical exercises such as finger exercises are important. A considerably smaller percentage of students (66.7%, or ten students) spoke of technique in relation to the physical movement of the arms, wrists and fingers to produce different touches; results for relaxation were only slightly below those of teachers (46.7% or seven students); whereas a higher percentage (60% or nine students) acknowledged the relationship between listening and sound production. It is somewhat surprising that none of the students referred to technique’s association with musical expression and style.

There is not enough information from the research to determine categorically the different artistic effects that are the product from the physical movements of different parts of the body, such as the fingers, joints, bones, ligaments, muscles, wrists, elbows, shoulders, forearms and upper arms. At the same time, the literature is replete with theories attributing various aspects of technique and tone production to various physical movements. Elder (2003a), Tarchalski (1994), Taylor (1979) and Kochevitsky (1967) all suggested the technique of consciously using the different parts of the upper limbs in combination, and Tarchalski (1994) mentioned that Liszt believed that every movement of the fingers is co-ordinated with the whole arm. Kochevitsky (2004) stated that “each muscle, tendon, joint, and ligament have their representatives in the motor area of the cortex” (p. 167), and suggested that running passages make the muscles engage in chainlike movements. Kochevitsky (1967) mentioned that in the anatomic-physiological school of piano teaching, it is important to introduce students to the concept of the different movements of the hands. Elder (2003a) emphasized that Gieseking advocated the use of the shoulder to project tone and commented that Chopin supported the use of the forearm and upper arm in addition to the wrist, hand, and fingers. Fraser (2003) pointed to the many recent articles that link the ancient Chinese martial art of T’ai Chi to piano playing, because both disciplines emphasize the soft, flowing quality of movement and the idea that circular motions are so much more graceful and effective than linear, angular moves. Some piano teachers talk about chorography and dancing in relation to the body movements involved in playing. It is encouraging that nine of the teachers (90%) recognized the importance of physical movement in relation to various types of tone production; two-thirds of the students (66.7% or ten students) acknowledged this. In addition, five of the teachers (50%) recognized a need for technical exercises such as
finger exercises; one might have expected this to be higher.

Surprisingly, only half of the teachers (50%) and slightly less than half of the students (46.7%) acknowledged the importance of relaxation. Much has been written in the literature on this subject however. Glaser (2003), for example, in arguing for a relaxed approach to playing, argued that tension is harmful to the performer, and often reflects difficulty, uncertainty, or physical discomfort. Bree (1969) cited Leschetizky, who suggested resting the hand after the tension of forte playing by relaxing the joints. D’Abreau (1965) stated that relaxation and preparation are essential to tonal control. Snitkin (2001) asserted that relaxation and ease are important attributes of a performer. Neuhaus (1993) stressed that “a good tone is complete freedom and relaxation of the arm and wrist from the shoulders to the tips of the fingers, which should always be at the ready like soldiers at the front” (p. 67).

Only five of the teachers (50%) acknowledged the importance of listening with respect to sound production; a little more, 60% or nine students, referred to this. Yet listening is basic to the production of an appropriate tonal quality and has been discussed widely in the literature. James (1994), for example, noted that Leschetizky made his students use different methods to produce a range of tonal qualities – with the ear being the guide and arbiter of success. James (1994), further, referred also to Matthay, another great pianist and teacher, who stressed that with the aid of the ear, the pianist can control the tonal intensity and tonal quality at any dynamic level. Neuhaus (1993) stressed that “mastery of tone is the first and most important task of all the problems of piano technique that the pianist must tackle” (p. 56); the more acutely sensitive the ear is to tonal difference the greater the possibility of producing a wide range of tonal contrasts. Clavier (2003) referred to Fleisher, who stated that having a certain sound in mind – in the inner ear – and experimenting to find the movement to achieve that sound is the essence of technique. In similar vein, Tarchalski (1994) argued that Liszt believed that a musician should listen first in his mind and then train his body and fingers to produce the sounds in his ears. Ching (1946), in analysing control of individual finger touch, advocated an aural approach to technique in which piano technique is built up by the ear and the mind, rather than simply through physical movements. The results from the interviews with both teachers and students suggest a need to pay more attention not only to producing an excellent tonal quality, but to ensuring that students are encouraged to listen intently to the sounds they are producing as a means of achieving this goal. This aspect, of course, is intimately tied up with technique in relation to musical expression and adopting an appropriate touch according to the style of a piece, which was referred to by only seven of the teachers (70%); yet, as James (1994) has said in referring to both Deepe and Matthay, technique and musical expression cannot be approached as separate problems, but must be mastered simultaneously. It might have been expected
that overall support for these aspects would have been higher for there is a close relationship between technique, sound production and various aesthetic factors, prime of which is beauty of sound and musical expression.

8.4.2 Style

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historical background or context</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to music</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship to other arts of the period</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal style</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8.5a Teacher responses regarding teaching style. N=10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historical background or context</td>
<td>73.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to music</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship to other arts of the period</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal style</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher demonstration</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8.5b Student responses regarding teaching style. N=15

Four aspects relating to the teaching and learning of style were commented on by both the teachers and students: the importance of understanding the historical background or context of a work; the importance of listening to music to gain an insight into stylistic interpretation; investigating other art forms as a means of gaining a wider perspective on stylistic considerations with respect to music; and personal style. In addition, in their responses the students drew attention to the importance of
Eight of the teachers (80%) and eleven of the students (73.3%) acknowledged that students obtain information on stylistic considerations through an understanding of the historical background of a particular piece of music. D’Abreu (1965) in fact argued that students cannot make their own stylistic interpretations until they have obtained enough knowledge of the composer and some contextual knowledge relating to the piece. Dumm (2003) stressed the need to try to understand the composer’s mind.

Listening to music to understand style is an important teaching-learning method. All of the teachers (100%) and all of the students (100%) endorsed this view.

Five of the teachers (50%) and seven of the students (46.7%) recognized the benefits to be gained from relating music to other art forms of the period, such as drama, architecture, painting, dance, literature and so on. It might be argued that style is not a one-dimensional concept and that in order to have a fuller appreciation of the richness of a style it should be seen in the context of other artistic expressions pertaining to the era. In this way too students can come to have a greater appreciation of the aesthetic mores of an era as they relate to interpretation and performance. This aspect presents a challenge for teachers.

Five of the teachers (50%) and eight of the students (53.3%) endorsed the importance of students developing their own unique style of playing. The importance of recognizing individual difference has been argued in previous chapters. This can result in students using their imagination and creativity to develop their own style based on a broad perspective that includes listening to other performances, having a contextual understanding of the music and, even more widely, seeing it in the context of artistic expression that was in vogue at the time.

Finally, twelve of the students (80%) acknowledged the usefulness of teacher demonstration as a means of learning about stylistic elements of performance. Teacher demonstration is a method of providing information ‘on the spot’ and as such can be a great stimulus for students. Swanwick (1990) highlighted that imitation is not mere copying, but is about identification. The dangers of mere copying have already been highlighted and can lead to what has been referred to as ‘parrot-like’ performances. At the same time, teacher demonstration, used in conjunction with other methods for developing a student’s ability to interpret a work, can be a very positive teaching-learning tool.
8.4.3 Memorization

Both teachers and students mentioned using a number of approaches as a means of memorizing music: visual or aural, analytic, step-by-step (or sequenced), and kinaesthetic. Two teachers also identified other approaches.

Six of the teachers (60%) and only one student (6.7%) referred to the use of aural memory, compared to four teachers (40%) and three students (20%) acknowledging visual memory. Eight of the teachers (80%) and ten of the students (66.7%) responded that they memorized a score by analysing it. Two of the teachers (20%) and four of the students (26.7%) referred to kinaesthetic memorization. Five teachers (50%) and four students (26.7%) mentioned using a step-by-step or sequenced approach to memorization. Two of the teachers (20%) referred to other
methods of memorization such as playing one hand silently and playing from memory with distractions. It might have been expected that more teachers and certainly more students would have used aural memory in their teaching and learning respectively.

There are many different methods for teaching memorization. Wagner (1996) supported the use of tactile memory (not identified specifically in this study, although it may include kinaesthetic memory), which Brown (1995) suggested includes the memorization of fingerings and the movement of the two hands with different touches. D’Abreau (1965) advocated the development of muscular memory (which also has some association with kinaesthetic memory). On the other hand, Aiello and Williamson (2002) and Neuhaus (1993) specifically acknowledged kinaesthetic memory. In terms of aural memory, James (1995) argued that any memorization is at best partial if it lacks an aural dimension. Brown (1995) suggested reciting pitches, and D’Abreau supported memorizing melodically and harmonically. On the subject of using a step-by-step or sequenced approach, D’Abreau (1965) advocated memorization in sections, whereas Jordan-Ander (1995) supported the memorization of sections and the basic structure. Both Brown (1995) and D’Abreau advocated the use of photographic or visual memory, which Brown referred to as memorization of the notation.

Some writers have warned against relying on only one method of memorization. Jordan-Ander (1995) stated that memorization should combine the senses of hearing, touch, and sight and should involve the analysis of connections. James (1994) noted that Andor Foldes believed that the auditory, visual, and physical modes of memory work together in the process of memorizing. Neuhaus (1993) suggested two methods of memorization, the musical (spiritual) and the muscular (bodily), both of which focus on the senses, the former involving intense and concentrated listening to the sound of the music and the latter focusing on the physical aspects of playing. It is suggested here that the more methods teachers use to assist their students to memorize the more likely it is that the students will discover for themselves what approaches work best for them. Certainly, it is reasonable to conclude that a combination of methods is the best approach to memorization. Ideally, students in turn will choose a combination of methods according to their strengths and abilities.
8.4.4 Methods of practicing

![Bar chart showing teacher responses regarding practice methods. N=10]

Figure 8.7a Teacher responses regarding practice methods. N=10

![Bar chart showing student responses regarding practice methods. N=15]

Figure 8.7b Student responses regarding practice methods. N=15

The issue of practice was discussed in relation to six areas: goal oriented practice, practising a step-at-a-time, slow practice, practising with a critical ear, practising with an intellectual understanding of the cause of problems, and efficient practice.
practice. The first four of these were mentioned by both teachers and students.

The first, goal oriented practice, has been argued by James (1994), among others, who cited the ideas of Ronald Payne, a great piano pedagogue. It is interesting that more students (eleven or 73.3%) than teachers (six or 60%) spoke of this. With regard to practising a step-at-a-time (sequenced practice), Bree (1969) noted that Leschetizky stressed the importance of the sequence of practicing. Blocker (1993) went so far as to suggest that sequenced instruction for practice should be available in a spiral curriculum format. But only four (40%) of the teachers and eight (53.3%) of students made reference to this approach. Despite the strong discussion in the literature of the merits of slow practice, only two or 20% of teachers and six or 40% of students mentioned it. D’Abreau (1965), for example, argued the futility of fast practice, but suggested that slow practice helps one to analyse the progression of the music. James (1994) noted that Bach advocated slow practice to build up the control of the fingers. Clavier (2003) stated that Fleisher strongly recommended slow practice. Elder, L. (2003) argued that slow practice gives the brain time to think and correct mistakes, and Snitkin (2001) suggested that slow practice allows the player time to listen and evaluate the performance. Disappointingly, only five of the teachers (50%) and five of the students (33.3%) made reference to the importance of practising with a critical ear. James (1994) quoted Ronald as saying that listening is important if practice is to be effective, adding that it can be divided into three aspects: pre-listening, reactive listening, and post-listening. Only the teachers (seven or 70%) advocated the importance of students having an intellectual understanding of the cause of a problem when practising, an issue that has been argued strongly for example by Snitkin (2001). Six of the teachers (60%) but none of the students referred to the importance of practising efficiently, an issue that has been stressed by Dyal (1991) and Woody (2004) as something that students need to be taught to do. An area mentioned only by students was the benefit of using rhythmic variation when practising (five students or 33.3%). This method is commonly used despite the fact that no teachers made overt reference to it. D’Abreau (1965) for example advocated dotted rhythms as an ideal method for practising.
8.4.5 Acute listening skills (extending aural ability)

Listening to CDs by professional artists, critically evaluating recordings of one’s own performances, and attending live performances are some of the most productive ways to extend listening skills at the performance level of the students who were interviewed for this study – indeed, for students at any level. Such experience is important for developing stylistic sensitivity, interpretative abilities, and developing a feeling for aesthetic and expressive possibilities with regard to performance.

All of the teachers and all of the students spoke of the importance of listening to recordings by professional artists. Six of the teachers (60%) indicated that they encouraged their students to evaluate their own playing by recording it and
listening to it critically. Nine of the students (60%) indicated that they did this. Surprisingly, only two of the teachers (20%) stressed the importance of attending live performances; by contrast, all fifteen of the students (100%) indicated that they attended live music performances, with four of them (26.7%) also attending performances relating to other art forms, such as ballet.

It would of course be expected that both teachers and students would recognize the importance of listening to recordings by great artists (although this has not always been possible – and has only become a relatively common practice for music students during the last 50 years or so). The benefits do not need arguing and the teacher and student responses (both 100%) would appear to support this as being a normal practice. However the results suggest that the benefits of students evaluating themselves playing is not so commonly accepted. This is a pity, given that this is no longer the onerous or impossible task that it has been in the past. Brown (1989) stressed that evaluation from tape recordings allows students to perceive their improvement and provides evidence of their accomplishment. It can also alert students to aspects of their playing of which they might not have been aware but which need addressing. To some extent live performances are an extension of recorded performances by professional artists – but they provide certain dimensions that are lacking on a recording. No recording – not even a DVD – can adequately give students the feeling of being present in an auditorium when an artist is playing. It is contended here that teachers should strongly encourage students to engage in this activity – and not only live performances of music. Neuhaus (1993) for example has argued that it is important to nurture in students a love of other art forms as well because of the close relationship between appreciation of them and music appreciation.

8.4.6 Stage fright

![Figure 8.9a Teacher responses regarding stage fright. N=10](image-url)
Stage fright can affect a performance to varying degrees. Four solutions were suggested by the teachers: overcoming the psychological barrier (five teachers or 50%); good preparation (seven teachers or 70%); concert or performance rehearsals and experience (eight teachers or 80%); and acute aural awareness and concentration (two teachers or 20%). The students came up with four solutions: sufficient practice of the works being performed (three students or 20%), which might be seen to be a sub-set of what teachers identified as good preparation; frequency of performance experience (three students or 20%) – in the teacher responses rehearsal experience was also mentioned; being relaxed (seven students or 46.6%); and having a positive attitude (ten students or 66.7%). Results overall were somewhat mixed. The literature certainly is replete with suggestions for addressing stage fright or even just performance tension. Elder, L. (2003) and Feinstein (2003) have advocated giving students the opportunity to perform frequently in front of small groups. Merrill (1978) suggested that whilst the individual personality of students may be a factor, inadequate preparation and lack of experience are main factors contributing to stage fright. Gordon (1995) drew attention to relaxation in conquering stage fright. Certainly, the responses of both teachers and students have identified areas that might profitably be addressed.

8.5 Model of piano teaching for final year performance majors

Following is a proposed model for teaching final year piano performance students based on the research findings from piano teachers and students in Hong Kong. At the base of the model are philosophies of piano teaching; next are the teaching principles; with teaching methodologies comprising the top layer. It is contended that a coherent methodology is essential if the philosophy, informed by select teaching principles, is to be achieved. That is, a successful teaching scheme should comprise the three elements of philosophy, principles, and methodology in an
interdependent relationship.

8.5.1 Philosophy

[Diagram showing philosophical model of piano education]

Figure 8.10 A philosophical model of piano education

The proposed philosophical model relates to some of the major tenets from
three philosophical streams – rationalism, empiricism, and pragmatism – as well as selected over-riding issues concerned with piano or music education. Although the model is specifically designed for final-year piano performance students it also has relevance for other levels of piano teaching.

As has been seen, the three philosophies have many implications for the teaching of piano performance. In the model, three ideas are taken and adapted from rationalism: knowledge comes from rational analysis; the importance of understanding music within an historical context; and the benefit of undertaking a theoretical analysis of the musical score. From empiricism, the model is indebted to the emphasis on experience: sense experience, life experience, teacher experience, and performance experience; a belief that good practice derives from experiment and observation; and finally, the obvious importance in music education of the sense of hearing, referred to in this context as acute listening. From pragmatism comes a belief that nothing is permanent (this is seen for example in the changing nature of performance practices and the differing interpretations of a score); a belief that students should be taught to be independent learners and problem-solvers; and respect for individual difference, which implies that no methodological approach is suitable for all students.

The model contains five over-riding philosophical considerations that transcend rigid philosophical streams or traditions. These are the notion of inculcating in students an abiding enjoyment and love of music (as well as the other arts); acknowledgement of the place of aesthetic education in the teaching of piano; recognition of the teacher’s and performer’s roles in transmitting to others musical knowledge, personal insights, and a significant expression of culture; ideally, the need for pianists to be well-balanced intellectually and emotionally and not narrowly focused; the importance of instilling in students a sense of humanity that goes beyond their role as a mere pianist and, ideally, gives them a world perspective. In a sense some of these might be seen to be lofty ideals: they are nonetheless attainable and serve as guidelines for what teachers and students can strive to achieve.
8.5.2 Principles

The research has identified five principles relating to the teaching of piano performance majors: the need to nurture in students an ability to express emotions and ideas; the importance of pianists producing a considered and appropriate tonal quality; the importance of developing the imagination and nurturing creativity; recognizing the need for encouragement and stimulation in teaching; and committing to quality teaching. The importance of these principles has been discussed above.

8.5.3 Methodology

The model comprises six methodological aspects: technique; style; memorization; practice; acute listening skills (or extending aural ability); and stage fright. These are discussed individually below.
8.5.3.1 Technique

The model delineates five main aspects for teaching technique: developing a stylistic and artistic sense; mental imagery; hand postures and physical movements; weight, tension and relaxation; and exercises for training different articulations. All of these are related to tonal quality. The first of these, developing a stylistic and artistic sense, is dependent on aural sensitivity. Students need to learn how to produce a range of tonal and dynamic contrasts as a means of conveying what it is they wish to express whilst having due consideration for appropriate stylistic interpretations. The second aspect of technique, mental imagery, is concerned with thinking about or imagining the sound that is about to be produced. When performers have a particular sound in mind they have at their disposal a range of physical or kinaesthetic movements to produce the tonal quality needed to represent the artistic image or feeling that they wish to convey. In terms of hand posture and physical movement, teachers need to ensure that students understand that different possibilities of tonal quality depend on the positioning of the wrists, hands, knuckles and fingers; but not only this: various muscles, the lower and upper arms and the elbows also have a role to play in producing the ‘right’ sound. The speed at which a note is depressed is also important. Neuhaus (1993) went so far as to suggest that the physical movements of technique include speed, mass and height, and it is these that affect tonal quality. The next aspect of technique that piano students must consider is natural weight, tension and relaxation of different parts of the body; it is essential that pianists are ‘in tune’ with their body and know when to exert force and when to relax. Failure to relax various parts of the body can result in injury. Finally, there is no dearth of exercises written as an aid to the development of a range of articulations. Chief among these are finger exercises which serve to complement the benefits of practising scales, arpeggios, and studies, all of which contribute to the production of rich and subtle sounds. All five of these aspects of technique present challenges for both teachers and students.
8.5.3.2 Style

Figure 8.14 Model for teaching style

The model for teaching style incorporates six aspects: understanding the historical context of a work and prevailing compositional practices; appropriate interpretation of symbols and directions; the benefits of listening to the music of composers who were contemporaries of the composer being studied; the relationship between music and other art forms; the need to engage the imagination; the development of a personal style; and the importance of teacher demonstration in acquainting students with stylistic considerations.

As a first step in considering appropriate stylistic representation of a work it is essential that performers understand the historical context – including the artistic milieu – and prevailing compositional and performance practices of a composer and his or her works. This entails listening to recordings of the particular work being studied as well as other works by the same composer.

The interpretation of a score’s symbols and directions is another essential element in becoming acquainted with a score and, in turn, deciding on an appropriate performance style. In a sense, these directions and symbols are the most basic resource for interpreting a piano piece. Students must understand that each of them conveys a special meaning that helps to shape the particular style of the piece. At the same time, students need to be cautioned that many markings on scores do not originate from the composers themselves, but from editors. This in itself presents a challenge for teachers and students with respect to a score’s authenticity.

Listening to the music of other composers of the period is an effective way of a performer gaining additional insights into common stylistic practices. Such an acquaintance provides another dimension in understanding the music of the particular composer being studied. Students, further, should not limit themselves to keyboard music only.

Familiarising oneself with other art forms from the same period as the music being studied is another invaluable means of widening one’s stylistic
The arts of a particular period normally share a common ground with respect to perception, expression and aesthetics. They can provide another useful dimension for a more in-depth study of stylistic understanding and interpretation in music.

Enabling students to develop a personal style of interpretation and performance that can be justified within the ‘constraints’ of commonly accepted practices is perhaps the most important aspect of style that teachers need to develop in students. Of course, ‘acceptable’ stylistic interpretation is something that changes over time as pianists discover new insights and challenge previously accepted limits of performance. The path to a student having complete autonomy in their interpretative skills is a major challenge for both teacher and student. From the teacher’s perspective it entails having a deep understanding of a student’s unique personal qualities and musical and pianistic skills and, where possible, addressing shortcomings. From a student’s perspective it involves not only having a breadth of understanding of stylistic interpretation, but also recognizing their strengths and weaknesses, both personally and musically. It requires, among others, intellect, imagination and creativity.

Teacher demonstration is a most effective method of students gaining important insights into stylistic interpretation. It will be recalled that in their interviews students made mention of this, but teachers did not, suggesting, perhaps, that teachers underestimated the importance of this approach. As has been argued however, it is important that performance students use the demonstration as a basis for experimenting themselves in order to come up with solutions that are not merely imitative but represent a personal style or interpretation of the music. Teacher demonstration, of course, can also be useful for learning other aspects of music, including technique.

8.5.3.3 Memorization

[Diagram of Memorization]

Figure 8.15 Model for memorization
The model contains four methods for teaching memorization: aural memory; visual memory; kinaesthetic memory; and analytic memory. Another approach to memory mentioned by both teachers and students was step-by-step or sequenced memory, which essentially entails memorizing sections of a work at a time, with the result that one has a series of 'posts' that mark each section as the piece proceeds. This approach however is essentially procedural and could entail memorizing using any of the other four approaches. As a procedure however it is a useful way of approaching memorization. It is contended here that no single approach to memorizing a work – be it aural, visual, kinaesthetic, or analytic – is sufficient for a secure performance. Ideally, performers should use more than one means of memorizing.

Aural memory entails memorizing the pitch, melodic, harmonic and rhythmic elements of a work – individually or collectively, horizontally and vertically. Visual memory has two aspects. The first is visualizing the score as a ‘photograph’ (somewhat akin to having a photographic memory). The second aspect entails visualizing the notes on the keyboard as the piece proceeds, such that the performer memorizes the ‘geographic’ position and sequence of the notes that comprise the score. Both methods are used by pianists, sometimes in combination. Kinaesthetic memory involves memorizing the physical movements of the individual parts of the hands as the fingers depress the keys; tactile memory is a subset of this. Kinaesthetic memory is generally regarded as the most unreliable form of memory, but the one that students most commonly rely on. Analytic memory, which is essentially an intellectual or cognitive process, involves a comprehensive analysis of the score, paying attention to the structure of the music and the components on which it is based. The score is approached logically and theoretically and the method focuses in part on looking at relationships – and similarities and differences – between various aspects of the music, such as harmonies, melodies, rhythmic patterns, and textures.

There are of course other methods used in memorizing music. An important task for teachers is to assist students to understand their own learning style and then choose methods of memorizing that best suit that style.
8.5.3.4 Practice

![Diagram of practice elements]

Figure 8.16 Model for teaching students how to practice

Practice is essential for anyone learning an instrument. However the nature of the practice and the most efficacious ways of doing it are aspects of piano teaching that are often neglected in the teaching studio. Just as students need to be taught other aspects of piano performance, they also need to be shown how to practice. The model includes four elements: goal oriented practice; having an intellectual or cognitive understanding of the cause of problems; slow practice; and practising a step-at-a-time, that is, mastering a piece section-by-section before proceeding further. Other aspects of practice were also mentioned by teachers and students. In the above model they underpin the four elements delineated and are: the importance of practising at all times with a critical ear; practising efficiently, that is, not wasting time on practising what is already ‘mastered’; and concentrating mentally on what one is doing as distinct from practising mechanically, which tends not to engage the mind and ears.

Goal oriented practice is a means, firstly, of recognizing what needs to be achieved and then devising a plan of action to reach that goal; this may entail setting a number of targets to be reached along the way. A challenge for teachers is to teach students how to set their own goals and targets themselves. Another challenge for teachers is assisting students to identify problems that need to be addressed as well as understand the cause of each problem. It is not enough to recognize the problem: the student also has to learn what to do to overcome it. Having an intellectual understanding of the problem might entail dealing with both technical and expressive issues and being able to devise a method or methods for dealing with them. The literature is replete with suggestions for slow practice. It allows the pianist time and space to perceive, reflect on, and evaluate what is happening musically and technically, and then address any issues. Slow practice, further, affords the pianist time to concentrate on any one difficulty – or a combination of difficulties – that is not possible to the same extent when a piece is played at a normal speed. The last element
in the above model is the need to practise a-step-at-a-time, that is, mastering a piece section-by-section. It is generally far easier to concentrate on a section of a work than on the whole piece. Mastery of one section can often assist in learning subsequent sections. This may entail breaking-up the music even further, proceeding from the simple to the difficult; it may for example involve hands separate practice, working on the melody or a rhythmic difficulty, or concentrating on an expressive quality that needs attention. As with the other elements, it is essential that a critical ear is used to evaluate progress and decide on the next target.

8.5.3.5 Acute listening (extending aural ability)

![Figure 8.17 Model for acute listening (extending aural ability)](image)

Figure 8.17 Model for acute listening (extending aural ability)

The model highlights three main areas for extending the listening skills of performance students: the importance of listening to recordings by professional artists; attending live performances; and students recording their own playing and critically evaluating it. The extension of listening skills in this way is important for developing stylistic sensitivity, interpretative abilities, and a feeling for aesthetic and expressive possibilities with regard to performance. Of course, underpinning these three approaches is an acute aural sensitivity to rhythm, pitch, harmony, texture, as well as tonal and expressive qualities of sound.

The first element in the model, listening to recordings of professional artists, is a means of students becoming acquainted with and comparing performances from a musical, aesthetic, stylistic and technical perspective. It is an excellent teaching-learning tool and is to some extent an extension of teacher demonstration. Students should be encouraged not only to listen to the works they are learning, but also to other works by the same composer – and not confined to piano works – as well as works by contemporaries of the composer. It has been argued that the second element, live performances, provides yet another perspective that cannot be replicated
on a recording, be it a CD or DVD. Recording technology over the last fifty or so years has made it increasingly easy for students to record their own playing for self-assessment purposes. This provides an important avenue for self-evaluation in that when listening to a recording of themselves playing students can identify issues that they are often not aware of during a performance; to some extent, this is an extension of using the teacher’s critical ears.

8.5.3.6 Stage fright

![Figure 8.18 Model for addressing stage fright](image)

Five elements are identified in the above model in relation to stage fright: good preparation as a basis for feeling secure; performance rehearsal and performance experience; acute aural awareness and aural concentration; having a positive attitude; and being relaxed. It is contended that if these aspects have been adequately addressed, the likelihood of stage fright affecting a performance is significantly reduced. Security through preparation includes being thoroughly familiar with the piece and having addressed all perceived weaknesses, both technical and musical. During the performance, aural awareness and concentration should be at the highest possible level: the mind and the ears should not wander from the performance for a split second. Not only is it important to have adequate ‘on stage’ rehearsals prior to a performance: real live performance experience itself greatly assists the development of confidence needed to deal with stage fright and performance stress in general. Teachers and students should ensure that as much performance experience as possible can be obtained prior to a performance and on an ongoing basis. Students need to have a positive attitude towards performance: the more frequently they perform and the more successful they are, the more likely it is that this will develop. Finally, it is important that students learn to be relaxed when performing; this, of course, is quite different from being overly confident, but if the other elements have been satisfactorily attended to a relaxed state of mind will enable the student to concentrate fully on the performance. Having said this, it must be acknowledged that performers –
even concert pianists – differ in the extent to which they are anxious before or during a performance; to some extent this is a matter of personal disposition. The challenge for teachers is to do everything they can to enable their students to overcome or at least deal with any semblance of stage fright so that their performance is not overshadowed by their nerves.

8.6 Conclusion

This chapter has brought together the piano teacher and final year performance student interviews and presented these within the framework of three perspectives: philosophical, teaching principles, and methodological approaches. The chapter concludes with a model for teaching piano at this level. This model is based on the teacher and student interviews and, in addition, is informed by research, much of which is identified in the Literature Review. That is, the model is a synthesis of the literature and the teacher and student responses. The specific content of the model in relation to each of the three perspectives was made by the researcher; other emphases are also possible. There is no evidence to suggest that the results would be significantly different if a similar project were conducted with two similar cohorts in Hong Kong today. Changes in piano teaching at this level – and indeed at other levels as well – have not been evident since the initial interviews were conducted. It must be stressed that the model is specifically designed with Hong Kong final year performance major students in mind. At the same time it has relevance for other levels of piano teaching. It is salutary to note that centuries ago C. P. E. Bach was concerned by “the lack of good performance teaching. He deplored the fact that most students . . . were not exposed to works by composers of earlier periods or other national traditions” (Ritterman, 2002, p. 77). It behoves us to keep this in mind today; in a sense, it is a call for appropriate methodology in teaching piano performance. And, regardless of the model of piano teaching that is devised, it is salutary to remember that “performance teaching needs to help musicians to clarify their personal convictions as performers” (Ritterman, 2002, p. 84).

The following chapter presents the study’s conclusions and the recommendations.
Chapter 9
Conclusion and recommendations

9.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations of the research and highlights the most important issues and findings that have emerged in response to the research questions. The main research question was ‘What methodologies are used by piano teachers in the four tertiary institutions in Hong Kong involved in training performers to teach technique, style, memorization, practice skills, acute listening skills (aural ability), and ways of dealing with stage fright?’ The first two secondary questions were ‘What is the philosophy that underpins teachers’ actions in preparing final-year undergraduate performers at these institutions?’ and ‘What are the principles, derived from this philosophy, that underpin teachers’ actions or methodologies?’ In determining philosophies a two-pronged approach was used: ascertaining teacher philosophies within a framework of three major philosophical traditions (rationalism, empiricism, and pragmatism), as well as delineating overriding philosophical issues that transcend rigid philosophical boundaries. The findings derive from the responses that the ten surveyed teachers (of a possible total research cohort of eleven) gave in interviews, and are supported by responses from interviews with the fifteen students (which was the entire cohort of final-year performance students across the four institutions). On the basis of this the third secondary question, ‘What constitutes an appropriate model for the teaching of piano performance with respect to the Hong Kong context?’ lead to the presentation in the previous chapter of a possible model.

This chapter presents a series of conclusions on teaching methodologies, teaching principles, and teaching philosophies, and recommendations are made with respect to each of these areas. The importance of undertaking this study is discussed from the point of view of private studio teaching in piano, teaching piano in institutions, and its general contribution to society. Recommendations for providing possible solutions to the identified teaching problems and for further research are also suggested.
9.2 Conclusions with respect to teaching methodologies used with final-year piano performance students in Hong Kong, and recommendations for addressing identified issues

This section summarizes the findings on the methodologies used to teach final-year performance students across the four institutions in Hong Kong that offer a piano performance major. Both positive findings as well as problems that can affect the achievement of a higher standard of piano teaching and learning in the long term are highlighted, and general recommendations provided. The methodologies are discussed in relation to technique; style; memorization; practice; extending listening (aural) skills; and stage fright.

9.2.1 Technique

Technique is an important part of teaching piano – and any other instrument. The most positive results were that nine of the ten teachers (90%) and ten of the fifteen students (66.7%) spoke of technique in relation to the physical movement of the arms, wrists, and fingers to produce different touches. In addition, seven (70%) of the teachers – but none of the students – discussed technique in relation to musical expression and style. That is, the majority of teachers acknowledged the relationship between technique and the musical (to which could possibly be added aesthetic and artistic) aspects of a performance as distinct from the purely ‘mechanical’ aspects; unfortunately, this was not reflected in student responses.

Whilst all aspects need addressing, three major issues were identified from the responses. Somewhat disconcertingly, only five (50%) of the teachers and nine (60%) of the students discussed technique in relation to sound production; in other words, conceiving technique within a musical framework that involves careful listening as distinct from a purely mechanical approach. Again, only five (50%) of the teachers and seven (46.7%) of the students acknowledged the important role of relaxation in coordinating technique and touch, and only 50% of the teachers and none of students referred to the place of technical exercises such as finger exercises.

It is contended here that listening carefully to the quality of the sound produced is important for the development of musical expression and style, regardless of whether one is working on technique or practising a piece; that is, students should not divorce tonal quality – indeed, musicality – from technique. Teachers have a responsibility to ensure that students are conscious of the importance of good sound production every time they depress the keys of a piano. Indeed, it is contended that teaching students to discriminate sensitively between tonal qualities should begin in early piano lessons and not left to a later stage of the learning process. There are
infinite ways of changing the quality of a sound and this should be seen as a basic element of learning technique. This approach also has the added advantage of making the practice of technique more interesting for the student – and certainly more musical; it also engages a student’s imagination and this too is important in all aspects of piano playing.

Relaxation is another important element in the development of technique. Students need to understand the mechanism of physical movement – including the upper body as well as the wrists, hands and fingers – in order to properly employ relaxation in their playing. Relaxation, in association with tension and the natural weight of the arms and hands, is an essential tool in exploring expressiveness and a range of tonal and dynamic contrasts in piano playing. Responses from teachers and students in this research referred to relaxation only and not the allied concepts of tension and weight. However, the literature (e.g., D’Abreu, 1965; Elder, 2003a; Ching, 1946; and Taylor, 1979) recognises the broader parameters of relaxation and teachers are urged to embrace this in their teaching.

Finally, technical exercises are important for training and strengthening the hands and fingers. It is incumbent on teachers to carefully choose exercises for students to practise regularly as a means of improving the agility and strength of the fingers, muscles, wrists, elbows, upper arms, forearms, and shoulders. Such technical exercises build up the flexibility of the hands and fingers for playing a range of articulations.

9.2.2 Style

Five major issues were identified from the responses. Firstly, it might have been expected that all teachers – and ideally all students – would have been aware of the importance of becoming acquainted with the historical background or context of a work at this level – that is, with performance majors. But only eight (80%) of the teachers and eleven (73.3%) of the students endorsed this. Secondly, all of the teachers (100%) and all of the students (100%) acknowledged the importance of listening as an essential element in learning about style. Thirdly, only five of the teachers (50%) and seven of the students (46.7%) made reference to the possibility of investigating other art forms as a means of gaining a broader stylistic perspective. Fourth, only five of the teachers (50%) and eight of the students (53.3%) mentioned the importance of students developing a personal style. Finally, none of the teachers acknowledged the importance of teacher demonstration, but it was mentioned by twelve of the students (80%). Such endorsement sends a strong message to teachers and reinforces the contention here that teachers need to recognise the role of demonstration in piano teaching.
The following proposals are offered as a means of addressing, to some extent at least, these issues. It is essential that students see the works they are playing within an historical context with respect to the general output of the composer as well as works by other composers. This in turn should be seen within the context of the prevailing musical practices and aesthetics of the period. In addition to what is written, for decades now students have had relatively easy access to excellent recordings by professional artists – a situation that has become increasingly common over the past fifty or so years. It is reasonable to expect that all teachers and students would avail themselves of these sources for listening to music. It is suggested next that a study of music can not stand alone: students gain an additional perspective when engaging with the music of any era if they also refer to prevailing aesthetic considerations and practices with respect to other art forms; this in turn can provide new perspectives for stylistic interpretation. All of this, of course has the potential to assist students in developing their own personal style of interpretation and playing: the wider their frame of reference – even outside the immediate sphere of music itself – the richer the palette on which they can draw when engaging their imagination and creativity to develop a style that is personal to them. Finally, the importance of teacher demonstration should not be underestimated – as it has been by teachers in this study. Whilst it is important to guard against mere imitation, demonstration is an excellent way of enabling students to gain new insights ‘on the spot’ and can also stimulate them to engage in creative exploration of other possibilities, be they interpretive or technical.

Although not mentioned in the interviews, the literature cautions players to pay careful attention to all of the symbols and markings on a score with respect to interpreting it correctly from a stylistic perspective. At the same time it is important that students – and teachers – approach a score cautiously, given that not all of the markings are the work of the composer but some have become editorial additions. This entails that an advanced performer has an enquiring and creative mind and is prepared to research and compare different editorial editions of the same work as a basis for making interpretive decisions. Again, listening to recordings by professional artists offers another means for making stylistic and interpretive decisions.

9.2.3 Memorization

In terms of memorization, the most strongly supported approach – mentioned by eight (80%) of teachers and ten (66.7%) of the students – was detailed analysis of the score. Six (60%) of the teachers supported aural memorization and four (40%) spoke in favour of visual memorization, compared with only one student (6.7%) and three students (20%) respectively.
The major issue is not that only five (50%) of the teachers and four (26.7%) of the students indicated using a step-by-step or ‘staged’ approach to memorizing a score (for to some extent this is a procedural approach that does not entail or prescribe any particular method or memorization), nor is it that only two (20%) of the teachers and four (26.7%) of the students indicated using a kinaesthetic approach (which, it has already been suggested is one of the most unreliable ones approaches) – of considerably more concern is the fact that only one student (6.7%) indicated using an aural approach as an aid to memorization. The importance of listening and developing an acute aural ability has been strongly argued in this thesis and it is surprising that it was endorsed by only one student and, indeed, not even all – only 60% – of teachers. This is contended despite the fact that another tenet of this study has been recognition of the importance of respecting individual difference and in this respect it is understandable that some students might favour one method of memorizing over another. Despite this, one might have thought that regardless of any other method that is used, an aural approach would have been a dominant one with students at this level. Certainly, it is recommended that teachers and students place more emphasis – and considerably more emphasis in the case of students – on developing aural memory as a major foundation for memorizing a work. At the same time, it has been stressed that students should use not rely on one form of memory only; it behoves students to do everything they can to employ a number of approaches when committing a piece to memory.

9.2.4 Practice

On the positive side, three responses are encouraging, two of which were given by teachers, and one by both cohorts. Seven (or 70%) of the teachers advocated the importance of students having an intellectual or cognitive understanding of the cause of a problem when practising, and six (60%) stressed the importance of practising efficiently. These allied concepts of diagnostic and efficient practice are important at all levels of piano study. Surprisingly, none of the students appeared to recognize their importance. Students did however draw attention to goal oriented practice with eleven (73.3%) acknowledging its importance compared to six (60%) of the teachers. It is a concern that only two (20%) of the teachers and six (40%) of the students highlighted the importance of slow practice which affords students time to think carefully about their technique and what they are trying to achieve musically and, at the same time enables them to give more careful attention to perceived problems. Another concern is that only half (50%) of the teachers and a third (33.3%) of the students advocated practicing with a critical ear: it might be argued that practising with a critical ear should underpin all forms of practice. Finally only four
(40%) of the teachers and eight (53.3%) of the students acknowledged the importance of sequenced practice or practising a step-at-a-time, essentially a procedural consideration but an important one. It is contended here that students should be acquainted with all of the methods of practice referred to in this section, all of which should be undertaken with a critical ear such that they can effectively evaluate their practice for, just as with self-evaluation of a performance, this too helps them to become independent learners.

9.2.5 Acute listening skills (extending aural ability)

The research focused on extending aural skills in relation to listening to performances of music, including recordings of self-performances. Listening to recordings and attending live performances of professional artists is an excellent way of gaining greater technical and musical, aesthetic, interpretive and stylistic insights into a work. Listening to self-recordings with a critical ear is another means of engaging in self-evaluation; it also assists students to become more autonomous in their learning.

It is not surprising that all of the teachers and all of the students spoke of the importance of listening to recordings by professional artists. Given the accessibility of recordings, it is strongly recommended that students listen not only to recordings of works they are playing themselves but also, more broadly, to a wide repertoire of the composer’s works, as well as works by other composers of the period – and across musical genres.

Issues relate to the other two aspects: self recordings and attending live performances. Only six (60%) of the teachers encouraged students to record and evaluate their own playing, with nine (60%) of the students indicating that they did this. The benefits are such that all students should be strongly encouraged to engage in this activity. Surprisingly, only two (20%) of the teachers stressed the importance of attending live performances, whereas all (100%) of students indicated doing this. It is conceivable that this is not an activity that teachers believe needs stressing, given that students appear to do it of their own volition; at the same time it is one that teachers should encourage if only to the extent of identifying performances that students might consider attending. It was suggested earlier that no recording – not even a DVD – can adequately replace the experience of being present in an auditorium for a live performance. To this end there are also benefits to be gained in attending live performances other than music, such dance.

9.2.6 Stage fright

Stage fright can ruin a potentially good performance and, in extreme cases,
prevent a student’s talent from blossoming. Eight (80%) of the teachers acknowledged the importance of students rehearsing for a performance (ideally in the performance venue) and gaining adequate performance experience. Only three (20%) of the students mentioned the importance of gaining adequate performance experience and none mentioned the importance of rehearsal experience. Seven (70%) of the teachers recognized the importance of good preparation. By contrast again, only three (20%) of the students drew attention to the need to have practiced sufficiently – which might be seen to be a sub-set of good preparation. Ten students (66.7%) recognized the importance of having a positive attitude in dealing with stage fright.

In addition to the issues implicit in these findings, other issues are the fact that only half (50%) of the teachers – and none of the students – suggested a need to overcome a psychological barrier with respect to stage fright. And only two teachers (20%) – and again none of the students – suggested that acute aural awareness and concentration might be of assistance in dealing with the problem. Seven students (46.7%) but none of the teachers mentioned that being sufficiently relaxed was an important consideration.

The responses by teachers and students have identified areas that might profitably be addressed by a teacher who is sensitive to the problem of stage fright, indeed performance tension or stress in general. By assisting students to identify and address any problems relating to stage fright, teachers can ensure to the best of their ability that students will not succumb to it during a performance. Perhaps, underpinning it all, is the need for secure preparation, adequate rehearsal experience, and ongoing opportunities to gain as much performance experience as possible.

9.3 Conclusions with respect to the principles that underpin the teaching of final-year piano performance students in Hong Kong

Well-designed teaching principles are needed to underpin the identified teaching methodologies. All of the teachers (100%) but only ten (66.7%) of the students indicated that music is concerned with expressing emotion and ideas; eight teachers (80%) and ten students (66.7%) agreed that encouragement is vital in teaching and learning; eight teachers (80%) and seven students (46.7%) acknowledged the importance of stimulation in teaching and learning; seven teachers (70%) but only three students (20%) referred to the importance of quality teaching; seven teachers (70%) and ten students (66.7%) drew attention to the importance of tonal quality or good sound production; and five teachers (50%) referred to the use of the imagination both as a teaching-learning tool and in expressing emotion and feeling,
compared to nine students (60%) who saw the relevance of the use of the imagination as a teaching-learning tool and eight (53.3%) who acknowledged its role in the expression of emotion and feeling.

Whilst the students’ support for these principles was generally less, there is reason to be disappointed with the support for most of the principles from both cohorts. Certainly, the importance of all of these principles has been argued in this study. It might have been expected, for example, that both cohorts would have recognized more strongly the need for quality teaching. And not only did the role of the imagination in teaching, learning, and interpreting a work’s expressive possibilities receive quite weak support from both cohorts but – as discussed in the previous chapter – creativity, an allied concept, received minimal recognition by both cohorts two teachers (20%) and one student (6.7%). It might be conjectured that to some extent at least this reflects the status of the role of imagination and creativity in education in general in Hong Kong. But these of course are not the only areas that need addressing. It is contended that teachers should give strong consideration to all of the principles proposed in this study and, additionally, to ensure that they communicate their importance to students.

9.4 Conclusions with respect to philosophies that underpin the teaching of final-year performance students in Hong Kong

This section discusses the teaching philosophies that appeared to be implicit in responses of the research respondents in relation to three major philosophical traditions: rationalism, empiricism, and pragmatism. The second part looks at overriding philosophical considerations that emerged from the literature and teacher and students responses.

9.4.1 Rationalism, empiricism, and pragmatism

It is evident from the research that the teachers interviewed adopted or adapted – consciously or unconsciously – aspects of rationalism, empiricism, and pragmatism when working with final year piano performance students. Evidence for this is seen in both teacher and students responses. In terms of rationalism, eight (80%) of the teachers and eleven (73.3%) of the students acknowledged the importance of placing music in its historical context; and all of the teachers and two-thirds (66.7%) of the students recognized the value of undertaking a theoretical analysis of the music. An aspect of rationalism that was not acknowledged by either cohort was a need to seek answers to difficult questions; it is nonetheless something that is worth paying heed to, for piano teachers and their students are often confronted with issues that
demand them seeking answers that are not easily forthcoming.

In terms of empiricism it is not surprising – given the nature of music, which, to state the blatantly obvious, is concerned with the sense of hearing – that all the teachers and all students acknowledged the importance of listening to professional recordings. Eight teachers (80%) acknowledged the importance of experience in general, and the same number recognized the importance of teaching experience. But only five (50%) referred to the need for students to have performance experience. The importance of this however has been argued herein, as has the need also for rehearsal experience. It has been seen that performance experience can take many forms, ranging from the informal to the formal. Understandably perhaps, given their relative immaturity, only six (40%) of the students recognized the importance of life experience. Mention has already been made in this chapter of the fact that twelve of the students (80%) spoke strongly in support of teacher demonstration in general. Surprisingly, this was not discussed by teachers but is nonetheless an aspect of piano teaching and learning that clearly needs to be given recognition and prominence. It has been argued that teacher demonstration is an excellent means of imparting aspects of style, interpretation and technique to students ‘on the spot’.

Two findings related to pragmatic philosophy. Nine (90%) of the teachers and ten (66.7%) of the students recognized the importance of students becoming independent learners and problem-solvers; and all (100%) of the teachers and twelve (80%) of the students acknowledged the need to consider individual differences, which implies that students need to be taught differently according to their needs – in other words, no single methodology is appropriate for all students. This concept is allied to some extent to a belief that nothing is permanent or fixed, but only two (20%) of the teachers and none of the students mentioned it.

These results suggest that piano teaching in Hong Kong – at least at the level of performance majors – is grounded to varying degrees in essential elements of all three philosophies of rationalism, empiricism, and pragmatism. To the extent that elements of these three philosophies provide a sound basis for piano teaching, they might be profitably used to guide the development and improvement of teaching in the future. Indeed, the basic tenets of these philosophies that have been supported in this study might be further enshrined in teaching on a more systematic basis; further, they might well form the basis for the training of piano teachers in general.

9.4.2 Conclusions relating to the overriding philosophical considerations

Strong support was received from teachers (nine or 90%) for the notion that the teaching and learning of music is concerned with instilling in students an enjoyment and love of music. Surprisingly, only eight of the students (53.3%)
acknowledged this. In discussing the development of personal characteristics, all of the teachers (100%) referred to the importance of diligence and a teacher’s role in shaping the personality and character of students with respect to performance. By contrast, only seven students (46.7%) referred to diligence, with eleven (73.3%) acknowledging the shaping of personality or character. The importance of teachers developing a student’s sense of humanity received minimal support – one teacher (10%) and no students; clearly, this is something that teachers do not see as their role. Whilst eight teachers (80%) saw their role as being the transmission of knowledge and insights to students, surprisingly, this was only acknowledged by four students (26.7%). And again, whilst all teachers (100%) emphasised the importance of a performer transmitting knowledge and insights to an audience, only ten students (66.7%) did so. This is surprising coming from final year performance students. Certainly, the results highlight areas that might profitably be addressed in relation to the teaching-learning situation.

9.5 Importance of this research

There is a long history of learning piano and performing in Hong Kong. Some courses in tertiary institutions go back over forty years, and even the youngest has been in operation for over twenty years. The results of this research provide some insight into the teaching of piano performance in Hong Kong in several ways. This comes from the literature review and the interviews with final year students majoring in piano performance, their teachers, and relevant department heads. Most importantly, the research has investigated methods used to teach piano performance in Hong Kong’s four major tertiary institutions that specialize in this field. Teaching methodologies have been explored in relation to technique, style, memorization, practice, the extension of listening (aural) skills, and stage fright. The study, further, has argued that teaching methods are affected by relevant teaching principles and philosophies and these also have been discussed at length.

It is believed that the results of this research, including the proposed model, have the potential to assist teachers working with advanced performance students to work with them more systematically or strategically in developing their pianistic skills in the context of their overall musical, artistic and personal development. But the research, although centred on performance students, has implications for teaching students at any level. The proposed model, whilst not definitive or rigidly prescriptive, offers teachers a comprehensive framework that has the potential to be of benefit in the teaching of students in general, regardless of their level. At the very least, this framework might stimulate teachers to reflect not only on the particular methodologies they employ but also on the philosophical bases and principles of
teaching that they value. It is not unreasonable to conjecture that this might lead to the teaching of piano being put on a more secure footing and not being something that is, in some cases in Hong Kong, approached without due thought being given to its multifaced nature. That is, the research has the potential to assist teachers to understand that teaching piano is not only about teaching the right notes and rhythms, with some attention given also to dynamic markings, but also involves aesthetic considerations, a responsibility for nurturing in students an ongoing enjoyment and love of music, and the development of personal qualities.

Finally, it is hoped that the attempt to ascertain and systematize the methodologies used in the teaching of piano performance in Hong Kong will lead to other research that might contribute to deeper understanding and improvement in piano teaching – indeed instrumental teaching – generally.

9.6 Recommendations for further research

This research could be extended in a number of ways. For example, case studies of specific teachers – not limited to those teaching in tertiary institutions – who have made contributions to piano performance teaching could provide valuable insights, especially if information could be elucidated relating to philosophies, principles, and methodologies of teaching; ideally, this could extend to teachers beyond Hong Kong. Further, comparison with the philosophies, principles, and methodologies employed by teachers in mainland China and East Asia could provide additional insights into piano education. Such information could be enhanced or refined by observing – directly or through recording – a substantial number of lessons with students at different levels.

A complementary study might involve direct observation of piano lessons as a means of discerning the nature and mode of teaching and learning. This ‘external’ appraisal would add another dimension to such a research undertaking. An extension of such a study might include investigating the teaching of aspects that have not been investigated in this study, such as improvisation, and sight reading; whilst it might be argued that these are not ‘key’ issues with respect to advanced performance training within a ‘classical idiom’, they are nonetheless valuable skills in their own right.

The research could also be extended into a field of piano education that has not been the concern of this study: group piano lessons. These are also offered by the four institutions in Hong Kong that were the focus of the present study. Such research could examine the function of these group piano lessons and compare the effect of different curriculum designs. This would serve to draw further attention to issues relating to piano teaching in Hong Kong.

The research could also be extended to look at piano teaching in Hong
Kong in relation to the various examining bodies from overseas that examine students at the grade and diploma levels. It could, for example, attempt to tease-out philosophies, principles and methodologies that are implicit or explicit in these examining bodies’ syllabuses. Such research might be undertaken in relation to current attitudes and practices of piano teachers in Hong Kong teaching in private studios and in music centres.

Most obviously perhaps, the research could be extended to look at the teaching of beginner or intermediate students – including students at different ability levels – in Hong Kong, as distinct from advanced, final year performance students which is the focus of this study. If this were undertaken, other issues would need to be studied, for example, the teaching of rhythm, phrasing and articulation, pedalling, ornamentation, sight reading, the early development of aural training, and so on.

The research could explore in further detail the tenets of the three philosophies that have given direction to this study and extend it to other philosophical traditions, streams and discourse, including philosophies that are embedded, to varying degrees, in contemporary Chinese culture. One particular issue that might be pursued is the notion of the aesthetic experience from the perspective of the teacher, the student, the performer and the audience in relation to the teaching of piano.

Finally, it must be acknowledged that in looking at teachers’ approaches to final year piano performance students, the research relied not only on their ability to accurately discern and discuss what they do in practice but also on students’ perceptions on these teaching practices. Future research might examine more closely to what extent personal perceptions are sufficiently indicative of practice in this context.

9.7 Conclusion

In the process of nurturing young piano performers, there is a close relationship between methodologies, principles, and philosophies. This conclusion summarizes issues that have been identified in the teaching of piano performance at four tertiary institutions in Hong Kong.

In relation to the primary question of this study, the methodologies used in teaching final-year performance students have been identified, as have prevailing philosophical tenets and teaching principles. Consideration of these led to the development of a model of teaching, based on the literature and interviews with teachers, students and Music Department Heads in the four tertiary institutions that were the focus of this research.

The model has the potential to improve teaching and learning with respect
to advanced piano performance students. It also offers insights for teaching and learning at lower levels. Finally, it is important in extending the debate regarding methodologies for piano teaching and learning not only in Hong Kong but more widely. But let the last words go to Fanny Bloomfield-Zeisler (1866-1927) (1999) who was ranked by critics with the foremost pianists of her day: “Do not pin your faith to a method. There is good and, alas! some bad in most methods. We hear a great deal these days about the Leschetizky method. During the five years I was with Leschetizky, he made it very plain that he had no fixed method in the ordinary sense of the word. Like every good teacher, he studied the individuality of each pupil and taught him according to that individuality. It might almost be said that he had a different method for each pupil” (p. 83), to which she added: “Success in public appearance will never come through any system or method except that which works toward the end of making a mature and genuine artist” (p. 85). And it is towards this goal that the present study has been directed.
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Appendix A

Introductory questionnaire for the heads of department
The purpose of this questionnaire is to establish information about the institution, the department, the number of piano performance students in relation to the number of students of other disciplines, and the profile of piano performance students.

Section A  Profile of the institution

History
Facilities
Teachers
Scholarships

Number of staff teaching piano:

Number of instrument/vocal staff:

Total staff (full-time and part-time)

Section B  The data from 1995 to 1999


Piano
Other instruments/voice
Total number of final-year students:

Composition
Music education
Musicology (Chinese/Western)
Accompaniment
Not majoring in performance
Piano
Other instruments/voice
Type of undergraduate courses offered
   Performance
   Music education (teaching)
   Composition
   Musicology

Section C  The Curriculum and activities for students

Please stated different type of courses offered including undergraduate and postgraduate by the institute.

Are there exchange opportunities for students to study overseas?

What is the relationship of your institution with other institutions in terms of organizing other classes or courses?

Are courses available in pedagogy to prepare students to become piano teachers?
Appendix B

Introductory questionnaire for teachers
Introductory Questionnaire – Teachers

Name:
Current position:
Qualifications:
Place of training:

How long have you been teaching performance students?

Number of performance students:

Number of final-year undergraduate performance students:

What are your models for teaching?

Do you follow a particular method?
Appendix C

Questions for the heads of department for use in the face to face interviews
Detailed Follow-up Questions – Head of Department

A. General

1. Could you outline the history of your institute and department?

2. What areas are offered in degree and diploma courses by your institution?

3. What is the total number of students in the music department and the number of performance students of instruments other than the piano?

B. Courses and facilities

1. Are there any group classes that are organized by the department for piano performance students?

2. Are there any musicianship classes, such as aural training, keyboard harmony, and transposition, for performance students?

3. Are there any concerts that students can perform in regularly?

4. Does the institution organize master classes in which performance students can perform?

5. Are there any vacation study programs that allow students to learn in different places or institutes?

6. What facilities are available for music students (for example, audio-visual equipment and practice rooms)?

7. Are there any meetings for teachers to discuss the pedagogy of piano teaching?

8. Are teachers required to hand in their teaching plans for each student?

9. What method is used to assess the standard of piano performance students at the end of the term?
10. Are teachers sponsored by the department to attend international conferences about piano pedagogy?

C. Expectations

1. What kind of facilities do you think need to be improved in the teaching of piano performance?

2. What are your expectations of students and teachers?

3. What is your opinion of piano performance in Hong Kong?

4. What do you see as being the future for the training of performers in Hong Kong?
Appendix D

Questions for teachers for use in the face to face interviews
Detailed Follow-up Questions/Interview – Teachers

A. Teacher’s background information
   i. General
   1. What are your qualifications as a teacher and performer?
   2. Could you outline your experience as a teacher and performer?
   3. What is your current position at your institution?

   ii. Personal
   1. Where did you study piano performance?
   2. Who were your piano teachers?
   3. Why did you choose to study with these teachers?
   4. What characteristics of your teachers did you admire the most?
   5. Are there any characteristics of your teachers that you disliked?
   6. Do you incorporate aspects of the technique of your teachers in your own teaching?
   7. Did your family members receive any music education or obtain achievements in this field?

B. Institution’s background information
   1. Are there any group classes that performance students can take?
   2. Are there any musicianship classes, including improvisation, transposition, accompaniment, aural training, or keyboard harmony classes for performers?
   3. Are concerts organized regularly in which students can perform?
   4. Are any master classes offered to performance students in which they can perform? If so, how often? Is it a requirement of the course for students to perform in master classes? What is the value of this experience to the student?
   5. Does the institution offer any vacation classes (in association with other institutions) for students to further their performance skills?
   6. Are there meetings for teachers within the institution to discuss pedagogical matters?
   7. Have you attended any international conferences about piano pedagogy, either independently or under the auspices of your department?
C. Philosophy and principles of teaching performance
1. What ideas (including pieces, books or people such as educators, philosophers, and performers) have affected the way in which you teach piano?
2. Why do you believe that it is worthwhile to be a teacher of performance students?
3. What is your definition of a good performance and a good performer?
4. What are the principles or philosophy that you follow in teaching performance students?
5. What are your pedagogical ideas about piano performance?

D. Requirements for students
1. What criteria do you use to select your performance students?
2. What are your requirements for your performance students (for example, practise time, memorization, fluency of playing)?
3. Is there a fixed plan that you recommend for your students in practicing?
4. What considerations are given to the selection of repertoire for particular students (for example, syllabus requirements, physical attributes of the students, particular areas that need development, whether physical, musical, psychological or, related to the character or personality of the student)?
5. Do you ask your students to listen to recordings of their performances frequently?

E. Methodology
1. Have you written your own method book?
2. What are the essential characteristics of a method book?
3. Do you have a specific method book that you follow?
4. Are there aspects of the methods of important teachers that you particularly follow?
5. How do you teach your students to practise?
6. Do you set specific goals for your students to achieve with their practice?
7. How do you teach style?
8. How do you teach technique? What aspects of technique do you teach?
9. How do you teach memorization?
10. How do you prepare students for the performance experience?
11. How do you teach students to deal with stage fright and performance stress?
12. Do you teach students to teach performance pedagogy?
13. Can you identify the specific methodology that you employ in teaching final year undergraduate performers (for example, musical knowledge, including rhythm, historical background, and forms; physical ability, such as technique; ear training; and the development of an artistic sense)?
14. What are the particularly unique aspects of teaching final-year students?
15. Is the teaching of final-year students different from the teaching of other students?
F. Comments, recommendations, and expectations

1. What are your comments on today’s students?

2. What do you see as the future of teaching piano performance in Hong Kong?

3. Do you have any recommendations for the education of students in piano performance (for example, equipment, conference attendance, master classes for teachers)?
Appendix E

Questions for students for use in the face to face interviews
Detailed Follow-up Questions/Interview – Students

A. Personal information

1. Do you have any overseas qualifications in piano performance (for example, LTCL or LRSM from overseas music institutions)?
2. Why did you take performance as a major?
3. Have any of your family members received a musical education or have significant achievements in this field?
4. What were your basic requirements in the selection of a teacher?
5. What are your expectations of your teacher?
6. How would you define a good performance?
7. How would you define a good performer?
8. What is involved in the performance experience?
9. Who are your models among performers?
10. What aspects of their performance do you particularly admire (for example, technique, musicianship, personality)?
11. What are your strong points and weak points in piano performance?
12. How many hours do you practice per day? What is your practice routine? Do you set daily goals for your practice?
13. Do you record your performance practice sessions frequently?
14. How often do you attend concert performances?
15. How often do you listen to recordings of performances (please state particularly the range of recordings of works that you are currently studying)

B. Courses and facilities provided by the institution

1. Does your institute provide any group classes in which you can share and learn from other students?
2. Are musicianship classes to train keyboard harmony and transposition a part of your course?
3. Do you perform regularly in any concerts?
4. Do you perform in master classes? What is the value of this experience?
5. Do you have the opportunity to attend vacation study programs in which you can or study with guest teachers (visiting lecturers)?
6. Have you attended any conferences about piano pedagogy, either by yourself or under the auspices of the department?
C. Methodology

1. How does your teacher teach style?
2. How does your teacher teach technique?
3. How does your teacher teach memorization?
4. How does your teacher help you to overcome stage fright?
5. Does your teacher have any particular methods for practising or goal planning?
6. Are you aware that your teacher follows a particular methodology? Have you discussed this with your teacher?
7. Do you have a choice in the repertoire that you study? What determines this choice?

D. Comments, recommendations, and expectations

1. Do you have any comments on the facilities of the institute?
2. Do you have any comments on your teacher?
3. In your point of view, what is the future of piano performance in Hong Kong?
4. Do you have any additional comments on the training of performers in Hong Kong today?
Appendix F

Covering letter to the heads of department
15th September 1998

Dear Head of Music,

I graduated from the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1991 with a major in music, and in 1995 received a Master of Arts degree in Music Education from the Hong Kong Baptist University. I am currently enrolled as a Ph.D student at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University in Australia.

My Ph.D. study is a descriptive research project that investigates piano teaching with respect to the educational philosophy, pedagogical principles, and teaching methodologies used by teachers in tertiary institutes in Hong Kong. The study will involve interviewing the heads of the music departments, piano teachers, and students teaching and learning piano performance in four tertiary institutes in Hong Kong, namely, the Hong Kong University, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Baptist University, and the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts.

The purpose of this letter is to enlist your support to proceed to the next stage in the study, which involves conducting the interviews with those who agree to participate. This part of the study will need to be approved by the RMIT University Ethics Committee before any interviews can commence. In the meantime, however, I would appreciate it if you could indicate whether I might be able to conduct the research in your department.

The research will be objective, as there are many teachers who teach in more than one institute. Moreover, I can assure you that all of the information gathered from the interviews will remain confidential, and will not identify individual institutes.

I believe that the results of the research will improve the understanding of piano pedagogy with respect to the training of piano performers in Hong Kong. The results will lead to the formulation of a model of piano pedagogy that will not only enhance the quality of piano performance training in Hong Kong, but should also broaden the scope of piano performance teaching both in Hong Kong and the rest of the world.

I do hope that you will be able to support this research project. I enclose eight documents, including a letter from my Senior Supervisor, Professor Martin Comte; an introductory questionnaire for the heads of department of the target institutes; an
introductory questionnaire for teachers; a more detailed questionnaire for the heads of department to be used in face to face interviews; a questionnaire for teachers to be used in face to face interviews; a questionnaire for students to be used in face to face interviews; a plain language statement from the researcher; and a consent form. If you have any questions about the research, then please contact me on the above numbers or Professor Comte on +61 3 9468 2832.

I look forward to your reply at your earliest convenience.

Yours faithfully,

___________________
(Lo, Pik Yu Packy)
Appendix G

Introductory letter from the researcher’s supervisor
Dr Martin Comte
Professor of Music Education
Associate Dean (Research)
Faculty of Education, Language and Community Services

7 June 1997

Dr. Chan Wing Wah
Head of Music Department
Chinese University
Hong Kong

Dear Dr. Chan,

I am writing as a colleague to ask you to assist Ms Packy Lo, Pik Yu, in research she is undertaking at my university in Australia for a Ph.D.

Packy’s Ph.D. thesis will be concerned with piano teaching in tertiary institutions in Hong Kong. This will involve interviewing piano teachers and students majoring in piano performance. Packy is particularly interested in researching pedagogical principles that underpin teaching methods.

I would greatly appreciate it if you could facilitate her access to staff and students. You can be assured that interviews would be conducted according to extremely strict ethical and professional principles which my university imposes on all students undertaking research. Confidentiality will, of course, be assured.

I believe that the proposed research would make an important contribution to the field of piano pedagogy with particular emphasis on Hong Kong.

If you have any questions I would be very happy to discuss them with you by telephone, email or fax.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Professor Martin Comte.
Appendix H

Covering letter to teachers and students
Dear teachers and students,

I am a Ph.D. student at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT University) specializing in piano education. I graduated from the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1991 with a major in music, and in 1995 received a Master of Arts in Music Education from the Hong Kong Baptist University.

My Ph.D. thesis is a descriptive study of piano teaching in relation to the educational philosophy, pedagogical principles, and teaching methodology used in four tertiary institutions of Hong Kong, namely, the Hong Kong University, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Baptist University, and the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts. The involvement of piano teachers and students teaching and studying piano performance in the final year is solicited for the study. The results will remain anonymous.

Hong Kong has a nearly 20-year history of providing degrees in music. It is undeniable that the piano education offered at Hong Kong institutes has played an important role in training both performers and teachers, with several students going on to win awards in international piano competitions.

In the United States and the United Kingdom, there are many journals, such as Clavier, the American Music Teacher, and Music Quarterly, that discuss piano education. In addition, there are many Ph.D. theses that document piano teaching methods in Asian countries such as mainland China, Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea. However, there are no studies of piano pedagogy in Hong Kong, and I believe that it is high time that the methods used to train performers in the territory are documented.

To fulfill this goal, I need to collect information through questionnaires and interviews with the heads of department, teachers, and students at the aforementioned four institutes. I hope that you will be able to help me in this quest to objectively describe the piano methodologies used in training performance students in Hong Kong. The ultimate aim of the thesis is to develop a model of piano pedagogy that will not only enhance the quality of performance training in Hong Kong, but also broaden the scope of piano performance teaching both in Hong Kong and the rest of the world.

20\textsuperscript{th} September 1998.
I do hope that you will be able to support this research project. I enclose five documents, including an introductory questionnaire for teachers; a questionnaire for teachers to be used in face to face interviews; a questionnaire for students to be used in face to face interviews; a plain language statement from the researcher; and a consent form. If you are interested in participating in this study, then please contact me to arrange an interview with you at your earliest convenience (preferably no later than October 1998). My telephone number is 2567 6300 and my mobile phone number is 9201 0234.

I hope that you will support this research, and look forward to receiving your call soon. Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

___________________
(Lo, Pik Yu Packy)
Appendix I

Plain language statement from the researcher
Plain Language Statement

My name is Lo Pik Yu. I am currently enrolled for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) at RMIT University, in the Department of Industry, Professional and Adult Education (IPAE). I am undertaking to write a thesis titled Piano teaching methodologies used in the training of final year undergraduate performers at four tertiary institutes in Hong Kong.

The study is an investigation of the teaching methodologies and pedagogical principles employed in the training of final year undergraduate performance major piano students at four tertiary institutes in Hong Kong. The study will also provide background to the institutes, the entry requirements of students, the qualifications and training of staff, facilities, as well as the cultural background. The conclusions and recommendation of this study will inform the debate on performance teaching methodology and be used to propose a model for the delivery of piano pedagogy in the wider music field in Hong Kong.

This information invites you to consider being a part of the project. You can become involved by participating in the program of interviews that will be undertaken.

If you would like to contribute to this work you must read the following information regarding privacy and consent.

1. All participants in this program must sign a consent form.

2. You will remain anonymous, as your identity will not be revealed.

3. All information provided will be treated with strictest confidence, and only used within this project.

4. Access to the raw data will be restricted only to myself and my supervisor(s).

5. All interviews will be audio taped. A copy of the audiotapes will be sent to you if you so desire. A copy of the transcription of interviews will be sent to you for verification and for contextual checking.
6. On completing the research, a thesis will be published and copies will be circulated to supervisor(s) and any other external examiner(s) as required by the University. In this material all participants and identifying information will be protected as discussed by anonymity.

Please note that participation in this research is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time during the research. Please find attached a letter of consent to be signed and returned. Should you have any problems or queries, please do not hesitate to contact me

Lo Pik Yu BA (Hons) MA
Home 852-25676300.
Or if you require any further clarification please contact my supervisor:
Dr David Forrest, RMIT University, Department of Industry, Professional and Adult Education, Tel: (+613) 9925 7831.

Lo Pik Yu

For any further detail about completion of this form, or for additional supporting material, please contact the Secretary of your Faculty HRE Sub Committee or the Secretary to the RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee C/o University Secretariat, (+613) 9925 1745.
Appendix J

Consent form
Prescribed Consent Form For Persons Participating In Research Projects Involving Interviews, Questionnaires or Disclosure of Personal Information

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, PROFESSIONAL & ADULT EDUCATION

FACULTY OF EDUCATION, LANGUAGES & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Name of participant: …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Project Title: *Piano teaching methodologies used in the training of final year undergraduate performers at four tertiary institutions in Hong Kong*

Name(s) of investigator(s): **LO, PIK YU** Phone 852-25676300

1. I have received a statement explaining the interview/questionnaire involved in this project.

2. I consent to participate in the above project, the particulars of which - including details of the interviews or questionnaires - have been explained to me.

3. I authorise the investigator or his or her assistant to interview me or administer a questionnaire.

4. I acknowledge that:

   (a) Having read the Plain Language Statement, I agree to the general purpose, methods and demands of the study.

   (b) I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied.

   (c) The project is for the purpose of research and/or teaching. It may not be of direct
benefit to me.

(d) The confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded.

(e) The security of the research data is assured during and after completion of the study. The data collected during the study may be published, and a report of the project outcomes will be provided to the interviewees. Any information which will identify me will not be used.

(f) The interview will be audio taped.

Participant’s Consent

Signature: ……………………………………..Date:…………………..

( Participant)

Signature: ……………………………………. Date: …………………..

(Witness to signature)

Any complaints about your participation in this project may be directed to the Secretary, RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee, University Secretariat, RMIT, GPO Box 2476V, Melbourne, 3001. The telephone number is (03) 9925 1745.
Appendix K

Approving letter for the research from
the Hong Kong Baptist University
Ms. Packy Lo,
Flat 24-F, King Tien Mansion,
Taikoo Shing,
Hong Kong

Dear Ms. Lo,

Ph.D. Research Project

Thank you for your letter of 18 June concerning the possibility of interviewing piano teachers at the Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) who might be relevant to your Ph.D. research project registered at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT). Since HKBU has frequent academic exchange with RMIT, I am in a position to let you know that the Music and Fine Arts Department will co-operate with you fully in order to bring your project to full success. Please approach individual teachers you have in mind and explain the situation clearly, before you set up your interviews. Do let me know if you encounter any problems.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Dr. Lam Ching Wah, Head

Kowloon Tong, Hong Kong
Tel: (852) 2339 7047
Fax: (852) 2339 7870
Appendix L

Approving letter for the research from
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Appendix M

Data on the number of teachers teaching
and the proportion of students taking piano performance
at The Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts,
in 1998-1999
The Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts

Number of full-time staff (1998-99) : * 28
Number of part-time teachers teaching piano major (1998-99) : 7
Number of part-time instrumental teachers teaching other instruments (1998-99) : 73

* (Full time teaching staff in keyboard dept.: 17; other school of music full time staff: 11)

Distribution of final-year music students

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<td>4</td>
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No. of students

- 0
- 5
- 10
- 15
- 20
- 25
- 30
- 35
- 40
- 45

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Appendix N

Bachelor of Music (Honors) degree curriculum of
The Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts, 1998-1999
### Bachelor of Music (Honours) degree curriculum of The HKAPA 98-99

#### Required Courses and Credits

**KEYBOARD: PIANO**

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Total Credits: 15.5/11.5

Total Credits Required to Graduate: 109
## KEYBOARD: PIANO PERFORMANCE

**CW:** Contact hours per week  
**CS:** Credits per semester

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**Total Credits: 20.5/20.5**

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Total Credits: 16.5/12.5

Total Credits Required to Graduate: 10

Retrieved from the curriculum of The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, 1998-99 p.4-5
Appendix O

Bachelor of Music (Honors) degree curriculum of
The Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts, 2007-2008
# Bachelor of Music (Honours) degree curriculum of The HKAPA 07-08

## Required Credits and Courses

### KEYBOARD: PIANO

**CW:** Contact hours per week  **CS:** Credits per semester

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<td>1/1</td>
<td>1/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>1/1</td>
<td>1/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Choir/Chamber Choir</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>1/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Concert Attendance</td>
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**Total Credits:** 20.5/20.5
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<th>CW</th>
<th>CS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>Major Study (Practical) III</td>
<td>1.5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MUPS 1309-10</td>
<td>Concert Practice</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MUPS 1311-12</td>
<td>Piano Accompaniment Class</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>1/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MUPE</td>
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<td>1/1</td>
<td>1/1</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>MUOC 1307-08</td>
<td>Choir/Chamber Choir</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>1/1</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Concert Attendance</td>
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*Total Credits: 15.5/11.5

---

**KEYBOARD: PIANO PERFORMANCE**

CW: Contact hours per week  CS: Credits per semester

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<th>Course</th>
<th>CW</th>
<th>CS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>MUPS 1109-10</td>
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<td>MUPS 1135</td>
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<td>MUPS 1111-12</td>
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<td>MUOC 1107-08</td>
<td>Choir/Chamber Choir</td>
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<td>MUOC 1105-06</td>
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*Total Credits Required to Graduate: 109
<table>
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<td>1/1</td>
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<td>MUPE</td>
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<td>MUPS 1215-16</td>
<td>Concert Attendance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>MUPS 1201-02</td>
<td>Aural Perception II</td>
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<tr>
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<td>MUPS 1203-04</td>
<td>History of Western Music 3,4</td>
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<td></td>
<td>MUPS 1205-06</td>
<td>Harmony &amp; Voice-leading II</td>
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<td>1/1</td>
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<td>LGEN 1107/1207</td>
<td>2 courses of second year Degree English (as directed)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Civilisations I,II</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>6/6</td>
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<td>MUPS 1309-10</td>
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<td>1.5/1.5</td>
<td>1/1</td>
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<td>MUPS 1311-12</td>
<td>Piano Accompaniment Class</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>1/1</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>MUPS 1305-06</td>
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<td>1/1</td>
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<td>MUPE</td>
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<td></td>
<td>MUPS 1315-16</td>
<td>Concert Attendance</td>
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<td><strong>GENERAL MUSIC STUDIES</strong></td>
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<td>MUPS 1301</td>
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**Total Credits:** 20.5/20.5
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<tr>
<td>LSLA 1309</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2/-</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*Total Credits: 16.5/12.5

*Total Credits Required to Graduate: 109

Appendix P

Data on the number of teachers teaching and the proportion of students taking piano performance at The University of Hong Kong, 1998-1999
Number of full-time teaching staff (1998-99) : 9
Number of part-time instrumental teachers teaching other instruments (1998-99) : Not define

* If students select their teachers, they have to report to and approve by the head of department.

### Distribution of final year music students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Piano performance</th>
<th>Non-piano major performance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996/97</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997/98</td>
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<td>1998/99</td>
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<td>1999/00</td>
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</table>

*No. of students*
Appendix Q

Bachelor of Arts in Music degree curriculum of
The University of Hong Kong, 1998-1999
The curriculum of Bachelor of Arts in Music of The University of Hong Kong 1998-99

1. First year music specialists and intending majors
All first year students who intend to major in music must take the Music Admissions Test as a placement exam before beginning classes.

First year music specialists and intending majors must take:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Year</th>
<th>B. Course Code</th>
<th>HKU Course Title</th>
<th>Unit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>MUSI-1101</td>
<td>The language of music</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MUSI-1003</td>
<td>Harmony and structure of music</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MUSI-1004</td>
<td>Introduction to music of the world</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MUSI-1005</td>
<td>Introduction to music in Western culture</td>
<td>6</td>
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</table>

And one of the following two courses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>HKU Course Title</th>
<th>Unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>MUSI-1006</td>
<td>Music technology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MUSI-1007</td>
<td>Music performance</td>
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</table>

And, if they achieve less than a passing grade on the music theory section of the Music Admissions Test,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C. Year</th>
<th>D. Course Code</th>
<th>HKU Course Title</th>
<th>Unit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>MUSI-1002</td>
<td>Basic music theory</td>
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</table>

2. Second year music majors and specialists
For second year music majors and specialists, the following courses are compulsory:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E. Year</th>
<th>F. Course Code</th>
<th>HKU Course Title</th>
<th>Unit</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>MUSI-2003</td>
<td>University Choir 1</td>
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<td>MUSI-2005</td>
<td>Analysis of Western art musics</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MUSI-2006</td>
<td>Analysis of orally transmitted music</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MUSI-2007</td>
<td>Western music history 1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MUSI-2008</td>
<td>Western music history 2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MUSI-2009</td>
<td>Topics in Asian music history</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MUSI-2010</td>
<td>Music of China</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For second year music majors and specialists, the following courses are optional:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>HKU Course Title</th>
<th>Unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3. Third year music majors and specialists

For third year music majors and specialists, the following courses are compulsory:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>HKU Course Title</th>
<th>Unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>08262/MUSI-2005</td>
<td>Analysis of Western art musics</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>08261/MUSI-2006</td>
<td>Analysis of orally transmitted music</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>08263/MUSI-2007</td>
<td>Western music history 1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>08264/MUSI-2008</td>
<td>Western music history 2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>08265/MUSI-2009</td>
<td>Topics in Asian music history</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>08260/MUSI-2010</td>
<td>Music of China</td>
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<td>08252/MUSI-3003</td>
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They are also required to attend the following course without registration:

<table>
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<th>HKU Course Title</th>
<th>Unit</th>
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<tr>
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<td>J. MUSI-3007</td>
<td>University Choir 2</td>
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<td>MUSI-3008</td>
<td>University of Gamelan</td>
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For third year music majors and specialists, the following courses are optional:

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>L. Course Code</th>
<th>HKU Course Title</th>
<th>Unit</th>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>08258/MUSI-2011</td>
<td>Composition 1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>08314/MUSI-2012</td>
<td>Composition 2</td>
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<td>08259/MUSI-2013</td>
<td>Computer and electronic music</td>
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<td>08244/MUSI-2014</td>
<td>Music in a commercial world</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>08267/MUSI-2015</td>
<td>Popular music: From Cantopop to Techno</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>08212/MUSI-2016</td>
<td>Music of contemporary Hong Kong</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>08268/MUSI-2017</td>
<td>Love, sex &amp; death in music</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Code</td>
<td>Course Title</td>
<td>Credit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>--------------------------------</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Special topics in music 1</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Special topics in music 2</td>
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<td>Performance 2</td>
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<td>08313/MUSI-3002</td>
<td>Performance practice 2</td>
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<td>08318/MUSI-3004</td>
<td>Seminar 1</td>
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<td>08319/MUSI-3005</td>
<td>Seminar 2</td>
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<tr>
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Appendix retrieved from Handbook 1999-2000, Department of Music, University of Hong Kong, pp.7, 9, 14.
Appendix R

Bachelor of Arts in Music degree curriculum of
The University of Hong Kong, 2007-2008
The curriculum of Bachelor of Arts in Music of The University of Hong Kong 2007-08

Year 1
*First year music specialists and intending majors must take:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>MUSI 1001</td>
<td>The language of music</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*MUSI 1004</td>
<td>Introduction to music of the world</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSI 1006</td>
<td>Music technology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSI 1011</td>
<td>Orchestral studies and techniques</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*MUSI 1014</td>
<td>Aural skills</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUSI 1016</td>
<td>University Choir I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSI 1017</td>
<td>Performance workshop I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSI 1018</td>
<td>Advanced music performance I</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*MUSI 1019</td>
<td>Fundamentals of tonal music I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*MUSI 1020</td>
<td>Fundamentals of tonal music II</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>*MUSI 1021</td>
<td>Western music history I: from ancient Greece to the Renaissance</td>
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</table>

Year 2&3
Second and third year music majors and specialists must take:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MUSI 2004</td>
<td>University gamelan I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSI 2052</td>
<td>Advanced tonal chromaticism and analysis</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUSI 2057</td>
<td>Western music history 2: from the rise of opera to Beethoven</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUSI 2058</td>
<td>Western music history 3: from Beethoven to the present</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

And at least THREE of the following five courses. All five courses will be available over a two-year period. Please check with the Music Department for details:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credit</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MUSI 2006</td>
<td>Analysis of orally transmitted musics</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSI 2010</td>
<td>Music of China</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSI 2015</td>
<td>Popular music: from Cantopop to techno</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSI 2029</td>
<td>Chinese music history</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSI 2055</td>
<td>Chinese opera</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The following courses are elective. All music majors and specialists must take at least nine elective credits from Level 200 or 300 courses. Students are free to choose from any category.
### Thinking in Music

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MUSI 2009</td>
<td>Topics in Asian music history</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSI 2016</td>
<td>Music of contemporary Hong Kong</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>MUSI 2031</td>
<td>American music</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Music and culture in Bali: an overseas fieldtrip</td>
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<td>Love, sex, and death in music of the ancient and modern world</td>
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<td>MUSI 2044</td>
<td>Film music</td>
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<td>Music, language, and meaning</td>
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<tr>
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<td>The piano</td>
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### Technology and Composition

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<td>MUSI 2030</td>
<td>Composing for the commercial world</td>
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<td>Audio digital signal processing</td>
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</tr>
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<td>MUSI 2042</td>
<td>Contrapuntal techniques</td>
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</tr>
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<td>MUSI 2043</td>
<td>Orchestration</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSI 2053</td>
<td>Post-Tonal techniques and advanced analysis</td>
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### Practical Applications

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<td>The business of music</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSI 2032</td>
<td>Orchestral studies and techniques 2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSI 2041</td>
<td>University choir 2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSI 2046</td>
<td>Performance workshop 2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>MUSI 2047</td>
<td>Advanced music performance 2</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>MUSI 2051</td>
<td>Rhythms of life: music and culture in West Africa</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSI 3008</td>
<td>University gamelan 2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>MUSI 3012</td>
<td>Orchestral studies and techniques 3</td>
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<td>MUSI 3017</td>
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<td>MUSI 3019</td>
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The information retrieved from: [http://www.hku.hk/music/undergraduate/](http://www.hku.hk/music/undergraduate/)
Appendix S

Data on the number of teachers teaching and the proportion of students taking piano performance at the Hong Kong Baptist University, 1998-1999
### The Hong Kong Baptist University

Number of full-time staff (1998-99) : 12  
Number of part-time teachers teaching the piano major (1998-99) : 18  
Number of part-time instrumental teachers teaching other instruments (1998-99) : 39

### Distribution of final year music students

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Piano performance</th>
<th>Non-piano major performance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996/97</td>
<td>31</td>
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<td>1997/98</td>
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<td>1998/99</td>
<td>20</td>
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<table>
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<td>1996/97</td>
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No. of students

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<td>3</td>
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Appendix T

Bachelor of Arts in Music degree curriculum of the Hong Kong Baptist University, 1998-1999
### The curriculum of Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Music of the Hong Kong Baptist University 1998-99

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Year</th>
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<th>Unit</th>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MUS 1121-2</td>
<td>History of Chinese Music I</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MUS 1131-2</td>
<td>Materials &amp; Structures of Music</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MUS 1211-2</td>
<td>First Instrument I</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MUS 1221-2</td>
<td>Choir/Orchestra/Music Activities I</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MUS 1231-2</td>
<td>Second Instrument I</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>MUS 2001-2</td>
<td>Music Assembly II</td>
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<td>History of Chinese Music II</td>
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<td>MUS 2130</td>
<td>Tonal Analysis</td>
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<td>MUS 2211-2</td>
<td>First Instrument II</td>
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<td>MUS 2221-2</td>
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<td>First Instrument (Performance/Pedagogy) II</td>
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<td>Orchestration</td>
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<td>MUS 2481-2</td>
<td>Recording Techniques</td>
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<td>MUS 3130</td>
<td>Advanced Tonal Analysis</td>
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<td>MUS 3211-2</td>
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<td>MUS 3221-2</td>
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<td>MUS 3411-2</td>
<td>Electronic Music</td>
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<td>MUS 3421-2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>MUS 3431-2</td>
<td>Choral &amp; Instrumental Conducting</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>MUS 3441-2</td>
<td>Repertoire for Major Instrument</td>
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<td>Course code</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>1st Semester units</td>
<td>2nd Semester units</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUS 3451-2</td>
<td>Special Topics in Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUS 3461-2</td>
<td>Special Topics in Chinese Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUS 3591-2</td>
<td>Honours Project</td>
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Performance/Pedagogy Concentration

Year II

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Year III

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<td>First Instrument (Performance/pedagogy) III</td>
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<td>MUS 3421-2</td>
<td>Contemporary Music Workshop</td>
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<td>MUS 3441-2</td>
<td>Repertoire for Major Instrument</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
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</table>

There are other concentration : Composition/Music Production Concentration, Music Education Concentration, and General Concentration.

Appendix Retrieve from the Calendar/Bulletin 1998-99, Hong Kong Baptist University, p.145-149
Appendix U

Bachelor of Arts in Music degree curriculum of the Hong Kong Baptist University, 2007-2008
## The Curriculum of Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Music of the Hong Kong Baptist University 2007-08

### Core Courses

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>MUS 1111-2</td>
<td>History of Western Music I</td>
<td>6 units</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUS 1121-2</td>
<td>History of Chinese Music I</td>
<td>4 units</td>
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<td>MUS 1131-2</td>
<td>Materials &amp; Structures of Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUS 1221-2</td>
<td>Choir/Orchestra/Music Activities I</td>
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<td>MUS 1240</td>
<td>Music Theory Fundamentals</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUS 1331-2</td>
<td>Group Instrument/Vocal Study I</td>
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<td>MUS 2001-2</td>
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<td>MUS 2130</td>
<td>Form &amp; Analysis I</td>
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<td>First Instrument III</td>
<td>2 units</td>
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<td>First Instrument IV</td>
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<td>Choir/Orchestra/Music Activities II</td>
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<td>Group Instrument/Vocal Study II</td>
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<td>MUS 2410</td>
<td>Techniques of Twentieth Century Composition</td>
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<td>MUS 2481-2</td>
<td>Recording Techniques</td>
<td>4 units</td>
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<td>MUS 3001-2</td>
<td>Music Assembly III</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUS 3130</td>
<td>Form &amp; Analysis II</td>
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### Core Elective Courses

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<td>History of Chinese Music II</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUS 2251-2</td>
<td>Topics in Western Music I &amp; II</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUS 3120</td>
<td>Comparative Studies of Asian &amp; Western Musics</td>
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## Concentration and Elective Courses

### 15 units

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</tr>
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<td>MUS 1230**</td>
<td>Canto-pop, Manda-pop, &amp; Chinese Rock’n’ Roll: Musical &amp; Cultural</td>
<td>3 units</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUS 1510#</td>
<td>Meanings</td>
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<td>MUS 1520#</td>
<td>Chamber Music I</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUS 2121-2</td>
<td>Chamber Music II</td>
<td>4 units</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUS 2251-2</td>
<td>History of Chinese Music II</td>
<td>4 units</td>
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<td>Topics in Western Music I &amp; II</td>
<td>2 units</td>
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<td>2 units</td>
</tr>
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<td>MUS 2420</td>
<td>Principles of Music Education</td>
<td>2 units</td>
</tr>
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<td>MUS 2431-2</td>
<td>Composition</td>
<td>2 units</td>
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<td>MUS 2440</td>
<td>Orchestration</td>
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<td>Principles of Pedagogy</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUS 2510#</td>
<td>Keyboard Skills</td>
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<td>MUS 2520#</td>
<td>Chamber Music III</td>
<td>1 unit</td>
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<td>MUS 2790**</td>
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<td>MUS 3311-2##</td>
<td>Comparative Studies of Asian &amp; Western Musics</td>
<td>2 units</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUS 3321-2</td>
<td>First Instrument (Performance/Pedagogy) III</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Principles &amp; Applications of Music Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUS 3411-2</td>
<td>Group Instrumental/Vocal Study III</td>
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<td>MUS 3421-2</td>
<td>Electronic Music</td>
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<td>MUS 3431-2</td>
<td>Contemporary Music Workshop</td>
<td>4 units</td>
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<td>MUS 3441-2</td>
<td>Choral &amp; Instrumental Conducting</td>
<td>6 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUS 3451-2</td>
<td>Style &amp; Performance</td>
<td>4 units</td>
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<td>MUS 3461-2</td>
<td>Special Topics in Music</td>
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<td>Chamber Music VI</td>
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</table>

* For students of Music Education Concentration (2+2).

** Primarily for non-majors but open to Music majors.

# No more than 2 units may be taken to fulfill music elective requirements toward the BA (Hons) in Music degree.

## For students of Performance/Pedagogy Concentration or with departmental approval only.
Performance/Pedagogy Concentration

Year II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Title</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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</tr>
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<td>MUS 2440</td>
<td>Principles of Pedagogy</td>
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Year III

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Units</th>
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<tr>
<td>MUS 3311-2</td>
<td>First Instrument (Performance/Pedagogy) III</td>
<td>2 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUS 3421-2</td>
<td>Contemporary Music Workshop</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUS 3441-2</td>
<td>Style &amp; Performance</td>
<td>6 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>And 1 unit Music Elective Course.</td>
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</table>

There are other concentration: Composition/Music Production Concentration, Music Education Concentration, and General Concentration.

Appendix Retrieved from the Calendar/Bulletin 2007-08, Hong Kong Baptist University, pp.68-69
Appendix V

Data on the number of teachers teaching
and the proportion of students taking piano performance at
The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1998-1999
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Number of full-time teaching staff (1998-99) : 11
Number of part-time teachers teaching the piano major (1998-99) : 20
Number of part-time instrumental teachers teaching other instruments (1998-99) : 82

Distribution of final year music students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total student in music</th>
<th>Piano performance</th>
<th>Non-piano major performance</th>
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<tr>
<td>1995/96</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996/97</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997/98</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998/99</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
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No. of students
Appendix W

Bachelor of Arts in Music degree curriculum of
The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1998-1999
### Bachelor of Arts in Music degree curriculum of The Chinese University of Hong Kong 1998-99

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<tr>
<th>M. Course Code</th>
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<th>Unit</th>
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<td>1 (each)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Applied Music IX to XVI</td>
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<td>MUS 1092/1093</td>
<td>Class Instruction for Chinese Instrumental Playing - Di I/II</td>
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<td>MUS 1094/1095</td>
<td>Class Instruction for Chinese Instrumental Playing - Zheng I/II</td>
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<td>Class Instruction for Chinese Instrumental Playing - Pi Pa I/II</td>
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<td>Class Instruction for Chinese Instrumental Playing - Er Hu I/II</td>
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<td>Materials and Structures of Music I/II</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUS 1213</td>
<td>History of Western Music I</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUS 1223</td>
<td>History of Western Music II</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUS 1413</td>
<td>Form and Analysis I</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUS 1511/1521</td>
<td>Aural Training I/II</td>
<td>1/1</td>
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<td>MUS 1712</td>
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<td>MUS 1812</td>
<td>Introduction to World Musics</td>
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<td>MUS 1993</td>
<td>Selected Study I</td>
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<td>4013,4023</td>
<td>MUS 2014,2024, 3014,3024, 4014,4024</td>
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<td>MUS 2122</td>
<td>20th Century Materials &amp; Structures</td>
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<td>MUS 2213</td>
<td>History of Western Music III</td>
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<td>MUS 2223</td>
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<td>MUS 2233</td>
<td>Hymnology and Liturgical Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUS 2313</td>
<td>Compositional Techniques</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUS 2323</td>
<td>Counterpoint (Modal)</td>
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<td>MUS 2353</td>
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<td>MUS 2413</td>
<td>Form and Analysis II</td>
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<td>Chinese Instrumental Music</td>
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<td>MUS 2622</td>
<td>Chinese Operatic Music</td>
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<td>MUS 2993</td>
<td>Selected Study II</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>MUS 3243</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUS 3323</td>
<td>Counterpoint (Tonal and Modern)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUS 3333</td>
<td>Orchestral Techniques</td>
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<td>MUS 3353</td>
<td>Composition II</td>
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<td>MUS 3413</td>
<td>Selected Studies in Musical Analysis</td>
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<td>MUS 3530</td>
<td>Music in Contemporary Asia</td>
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<td>Pedagogy and Literature of the Chosen Instrument</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>MUS 3632</td>
<td>Chinese Folk-song</td>
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</tr>
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<td>MUS 3642</td>
<td>Chinese Singing Narrative</td>
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<td>MUS 3712</td>
<td>Chinese Music: History &amp; Theory III</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>MUS 3993</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>MUS 4213/4223</td>
<td>History of Western Music: Special Topic I/II</td>
<td>3/3</td>
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<td>MUS 4343</td>
<td>Electronic Music</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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<td>MUS 4353</td>
<td>Composition III</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>MUS 4543</td>
<td>Conducting</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUS 4712</td>
<td>Chinese Music History: Special Topic</td>
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<td>MUS 4862</td>
<td>Introduction to Transcription and Analysis</td>
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Appendix retrieved from The Chinese University of Hong Kong Undergraduate Student Handbook 1998-99, p.99-100
Appendix X

Bachelor of Arts in Music degree curriculum of
The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2007-2008
# Bachelor of Arts in Music degree curriculum of The Chinese University of Hong Kong 2007-08

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<td>MUS 1021</td>
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<td>MUS 2011</td>
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<td>Compositional Techniques</td>
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</table>

Retrieved from The Chinese University of Hong Kong Undergraduate Student Handbook 2006-07, pp.195-6
Appendix Y

Hong Kong Music Organizations
Hong Kong Music Organizations

**Western Orchestras**

City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong [http://www.ccohk.com](http://www.ccohk.com)
City University Philharmonic Orchestra [http://www.cityu.edu.hk/cityupo/](http://www.cityu.edu.hk/cityupo/)
The Hong Kong Chamber Orchestra [http://www.hkchamber.org/](http://www.hkchamber.org/)
Hong Kong IVE (Shatin) Orchestra [http://www.geocities.com/iveiris](http://www.geocities.com/iveiris)
Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra [http://www.hkpo.com/](http://www.hkpo.com/)
Hong Kong Medical Association Orchestra [http://www.geocities.com/hkma_orchestra/enter.htm](http://www.geocities.com/hkma_orchestra/enter.htm)
Hong Kong Sinfonietta [http://www.hksinfonietta.org/](http://www.hksinfonietta.org/)
Hong Kong Symphony Society [http://www.hksymphony.org/](http://www.hksymphony.org/)
The New Philharmonic of Hong Kong
The Hong Kong Tertiary Students' Ensemble

**Chinese Orchestras**

Hong Kong Polytechnic University Students' Union Chinese Orchestra [http://www.geocities.com/cmig_hk/index1.html](http://www.geocities.com/cmig_hk/index1.html)
Hong Kong Youth Chinese Orchestra [http://yco0.tripod.com/](http://yco0.tripod.com/)
Hong Kong YWCA Chinese Orchestra [http://www.hkywcaco.net/](http://www.hkywcaco.net/)
Chinese Orchestra, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology [http://ihome.ust.hk/~su_corch/](http://ihome.ust.hk/~su_corch/)
Chinese Orchestra, City University of Hong Kong [http://www.cityu.edu.hk/cityu_co/](http://www.cityu.edu.hk/cityu_co/)
Tsuen Wan Yuen Yin Chinese Orchestra
Wang Kwong Chinese Orchestra
**Wind Bands**

Hong Kong Festival Wind Orchestra [http://www.hkfwo.org/about/director/](http://www.hkfwo.org/about/director/)
Hong Kong Performers Winds [http://www.hongkongband.com/](http://www.hongkongband.com/)
Hong Kong PopsWind Orchestra [http://www.hkpwo.org/](http://www.hkpwo.org/)
Hong Kong Symphonic Band [http://www.hksband.org/2008/](http://www.hksband.org/2008/)
Hong Kong Wind Philharmonia [http://www.hkwp.org/](http://www.hkwp.org/)
Hong Kong Young Musicians' Wind Orchestra [http://www.hkymwo.org/](http://www.hkymwo.org/)
Hong Kong Youth Marching Band [http://www.hkmba.org.hk/](http://www.hkmba.org.hk/)
Joint Alumni Band

**Choirs**

Allegro Singers [http://www.geocities.com/allegro_singers](http://www.geocities.com/allegro_singers)
Bel Canto Chorus [http://www.geocities.com/belcantochorushk](http://www.geocities.com/belcantochorushk)
The Cecilian Group
Hong Kong Art Chorus [http://www.hkartchorus.net/](http://www.hkartchorus.net/)
Hong Kong Bach Choir [http://www.bachchoir.org.hk/](http://www.bachchoir.org.hk/)
City University Choir [http://www.cityu.edu.hk/choir/new_index.html](http://www.cityu.edu.hk/choir/new_index.html)
Hong Kong Melody Makers [http://hkmm.tnc.hk/](http://hkmm.tnc.hk/)
Hong Kong Singers [http://www.hksingers.com/](http://www.hksingers.com/)
Hong Kong Young People’s Chorus [http://www.hkypc.org/](http://www.hkypc.org/)
Hong Kong Treble Choir's Association [http://www.hktreblechoir.com](http://www.hktreblechoir.com)
Hong Kong University Students' Union Choir [http://www.hku.hk/suchoir/](http://www.hku.hk/suchoir/)
Hong Kong Voices [http://www.hkvoices.org/index.htm](http://www.hkvoices.org/index.htm)
Hong Kong Young Ladies Chorus [http://www.geocities.com/hkylc/intro.htm](http://www.geocities.com/hkylc/intro.htm)
Hong Kong Youth Peoples' Chorus [http://www.hkypc.org/index.html](http://www.hkypc.org/index.html)
Hong Kong Youth Choir [http://www.hkyc.org/](http://www.hkyc.org/)
Hong Kong Baptist University Girls’ Choir
The Pro-Musica Society of Hong Kong [http://www.pro-musica.org.hk/choir.htm](http://www.pro-musica.org.hk/choir.htm)
The Student Chorus of the Chinese University of Hong Kong [http://logic.itsc.cuhk.edu.hk/~z044538/](http://logic.itsc.cuhk.edu.hk/~z044538/)
The University Choir, HKUSTSU [http://ihome.ust.hk/~su_choir/](http://ihome.ust.hk/~su_choir/)
Children & Youth Associations

Bear Productions  [http://www.bear.com.hk/]
Hong Kong Children's Choir  [http://www.hkcchoir.org.hk/]
Hong Kong Choir of Outstanding Children  [http://www.hkcoc.org.hk/]
Hong Kong Children Music Theatre  [http://www.cmt.org.hk/tc/]
Hong Kong Treble Choirs' Association  [http://www.hktreblechoir.com/]
Hong Kong Youth Wind Philharmonia  [http://www.hkywp.org/]
Hong Kong Festival Youth Wind Orchestra  [http://www.hkfwo.org/]
Junior Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra  [http://www.hkco.org/BIG5/chkco_tc.asp]
Metropolitan Youth Orchestra of HK  [http://www.myohk.com/]
The New Philharmonia Youth Orchestra of Hong Kong  [http://www.npyo.com/eng/index.html]
_Angel Children Choir  [http://hk.geocities.com/angels_childrens_choir/author.htm]

Performing Groups

[Acappella] M33  [http://m33.hk/Web/m33web.html]
[Chamber Ensemble] Concerto da Camera  [http://www.concertodacamera.org/]
[Ensemble] Ensemble ad Infinitum  [http://claying.net/ensemble/]
[Guitar Ensemble] Hong Kong Guitar Ensemble  [http://www.hkgg.org/]
[Hand Bells] Gloves Handbell Hong Kong  [http://www.hkhandbell.com/teacher/index_e.html]
[Harmonica] YMCA Harmonica Orchestra  [http://www.ymcaho.org/index_tc.html]
[Jazz band] Basic Notes  [http://www.basicnotesbigband.com/]
[Percussion Quartet] Jenga Percussion Ensemble
[String Orchestra] Hong Kong Pure Strings
[Wind Quintet] Eastern Winds Ensemble
[Wind Sextet (incl. Piano)] les six
**Associations**

[Jazz] Hong Kong Jazz Association [http://hkja.org(blog/](http://hkja.org)

**Music Institutions**

Department of Music, The Chinese University of Hong Kong [http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/mus/](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/mus/)
Department of Music & Fine Arts, Hong Kong Baptist University [http://arts.hkbu.edu.hk/~mfa/index2.html](http://arts.hkbu.edu.hk/~mfa/index2.html)
Department of Music, The Hong Kong University [http://www.hku.hk/music/](http://www.hku.hk/music/)
Music School, The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts [http://www.hkapa.edu/asp/music/music_introduction.asp](http://www.hkapa.edu/asp/music/music_introduction.asp)
Department of Creative Arts, The Hong Kong Institute of Education [http://www.ied.edu.hk/ca/front.htm](http://www.ied.edu.hk/ca/front.htm)
Hong Kong International Institute of Music [http://www.hkiim.edu.hk/](http://www.hkiim.edu.hk/)
The United Academy of Music [http://unitedacademymusic.100free.com](http://unitedacademymusic.100free.com)
Baron School of Music [http://www.baronschoolofmusic.com/](http://www.baronschoolofmusic.com/)
Hong Kong Music Institute [http://hkmi.net/](http://hkmi.net/)

**Concerts & Festivals**

Arts Festivals by Leisure and Cultural Services Department
ISCM-ACL World Music Days 2007 Hong Kong

Live Music at Hong Kong Fringe Club http://www.hkfringe.com.hk/