

# Teaching and Retaining the Post-Millennial Student

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## Utah State University Youth Conservatory



# Generation Shift

2016: Last Baby Boomer turned 50, 49 million Generation Xers at the height of consumer, social, and parenting leadership, last Millennial turns 18 and graduates from high school, entire youth population in a new demographic (post-Millennial, Generation Z, iGeneration, Pluralist, Digital Natives)



## The Post-Millennial (Gen Z)

Born after 1996 (between 8 and 23)

More racially and ethnically diverse

More educated; politically savvy

More socially conscious

Value individuality and community



# Digital Natives

U.S. teens spend an average of 7+ hours per day on screen media for entertainment - and that doesn't include screen time for school and homework.

53% of kids have their own smartphone by age 11, and 70% own phones by age 12.

Only 1 in 10 teens say they enjoy "a lot" creative activities like making digital art or graphics, creating digital music, coding or designing their own video games.

How has growing up in a digital world impacted the ways this generation processes information and interacts socially?

What trends and characteristics have you seen in this generation of piano students?

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"In return for an increase in my allowance, I can offer you free unlimited in-home computer tech support."

## Characteristics of Gen Z

Sheltered

Team Oriented

Autonomous

Achievement Oriented

Pressured

Multitaskers

Techno-Savvy



# Motivating and Retaining the Post-Millennial

Post-millennials are ambitious, creative-problem solvers, and tech-savvy. In one word, they're agile. They expect [teachers] to be the same. Gen Zers don't want someone telling them what to do. Focus on mentoring. Help them work toward long-term goals through well-defined markers, but don't take away the opportunity for creativity. Done well, setting goals in advance can turn goal progression into a game, allowing this generation to "level up" and achieve amazing things."

<https://www.hrexchangenetwork.com/hr-talent-acquisition/articles/rise-of-gen-z-attraction-and-retention>



# Motivation & Practice

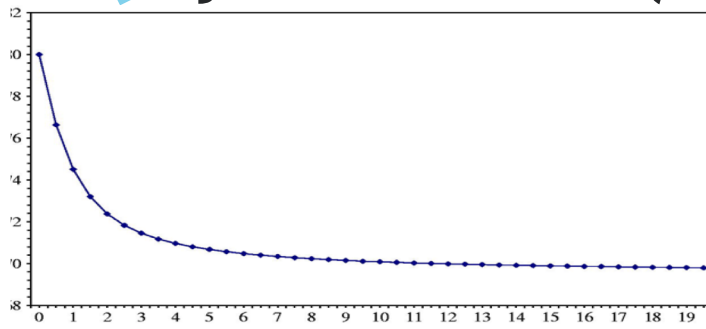
"Children start out enthusiastic and skillful learners. Helping them stay that way is a matter of what teachers give them to learn"—Alfie Kohn, *Punished by Rewards*, 225.

How can we as teachers keep students motivated?





# Why Do Students Quit?



What factors contribute to students and parents deciding to quit piano lessons?

What changes can we make in the ways we approach teaching in the crucial first years of music study?



# Why Do Students Quit?

- Loss of interest
- Not succeeding at a recognizable pace
- Unrealistic expectations of practice time
- Lack of desire to practice
- Difficulty
- Problems with music reading
- Too time consuming/conflicts with other activities

"University Students' Reflections on School Music." Undergraduate Research Journal for the Human Sciences.  
[www.kon.org/urc/v11/stjern.html](http://www.kon.org/urc/v11/stjern.html), 2012.

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"How expensive would it be to just skip practice and get right to perfect?"

# Changing Our Teaching Approaches



## What Motivates You?



# Extrinsic Motivation

When can extrinsic motivation be effective?



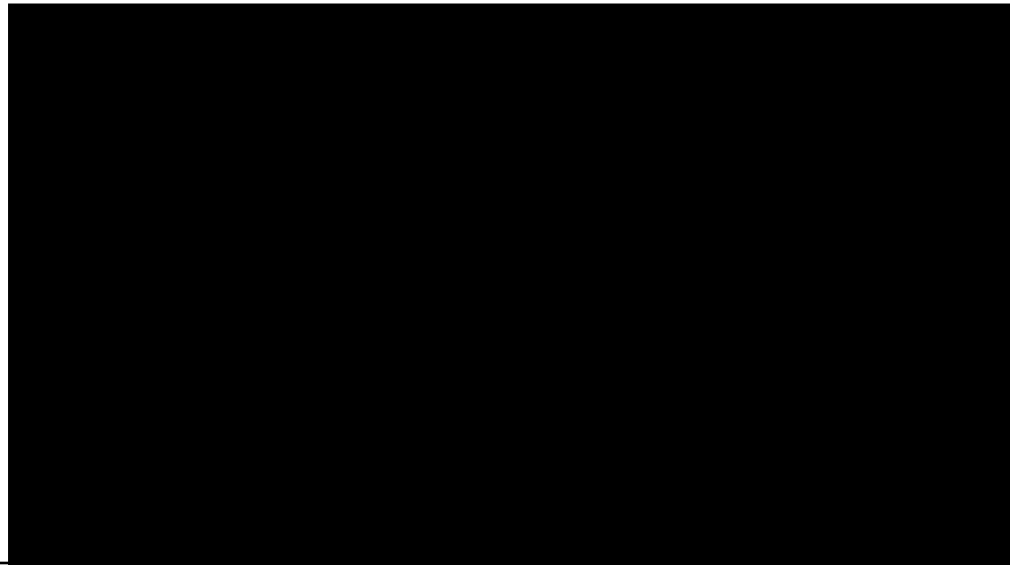
# Extrinsic Motivation

When can extrinsic motivation be effective?

- » Rewards must have value
- » Students must not work only for the reward
- » Rewards lose appeal over time unless they increase in value
- » Rewards have to be constant and fair



# Intrinsic Motivation



## Factors Affecting Motivation

How do Daniel Pink's three motivational areas apply to piano?

- X Repertoire
- X Lesson Content
- X Expectations
- X Practice Strategies
- X Interaction





# Factors Affecting Motivation



# Setting Goals

- » Goals should be:
  - ♦ specific,
  - ♦ challenging but obtainable
  - ♦ short- and long-term
  - ♦ emphasize process over outcome
- Noa Kageyama, author of the website *The Bulletproof Musician*,



"Action leads to motivation, and not the other way around. Any action is better than no action at all. Stop waiting for motivation, and start motivating yourself."

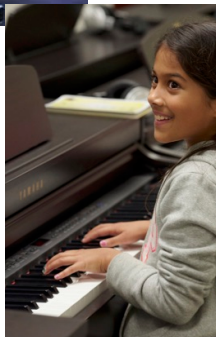
# Create a Sense of Inspiration

- » New practice activities
  - ◊ Improvisation
  - ◊ Playing a new style
  - ◊ Short composition activities
  - ◊ Sight reading popular music
  - ◊ Re-learning a old, favorite piece of repertoire
  - ◊ Study of composer
  - ◊ Comparing recordings

You can find inspiration  
in everything.  
If you can't, then you're  
not looking properly.

— PAUL SMITH,  
FASHION DESIGNER

# Create a Sense of Community



# Create Routines That Foster Success

"I Didn't Practice Because..."

What are some of the root causes of lack of practice or lack of good practice?



## "I Didn't Practice Because..."

What are some of the root causes of lack of practice?

- ◆ Practice goals unclear
- ◆ Practice time expectations not understood
- ◆ Student (and parents) don't know what to do during practice
- ◆ Practice tasks seem overwhelming or difficult
- ◆ Practice has no novelty or appeal
- ◆ Repertoire not appealing
- ◆ No clear end-goal



# “ I Didn’t Practice Because... ”

“Deep practice is built on a paradox: struggling in certain targeted ways—operating at the edges of your ability, where you make mistakes—makes you smarter. Or to put it a slightly different way, experiences where you’re forced to slow down, make errors, and correct them—as you would if you were walking up an ice-covered hill, slipping and stumbling as you go—end up making you swift and graceful without your realizing it.” --Daniel Coyle, The Talent Code

Quality practice is:

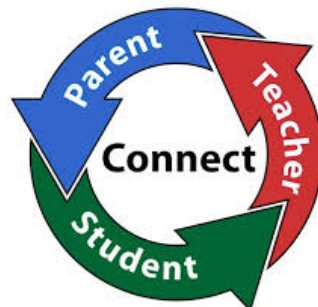
- Consistent
- Intensely focused
- Lies at the edge of our natural abilities



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## Practice: A Team Effort

- X Specific and accessible feedback for students and parents
- X Communication (text, e-mail, after-lesson meeting)
- X Make sure all three members of the practice team are on the same page



MARCH 23 HOLLAND  
TECH JATTNTTY 26-27  
SCALE MONSTER  
play 1x slow  
1x medium  
1x fast  
NO GLITCHES!  
BITTERSWEET BIVES  
FINGERPOWER #13 HT  
LESSON 32-33  
NO BREAKS  
(esp. 24 back  
to the start)  
34-35  
ECCASSAISE  
RH NONE  
LH NONE



# Repertoire for Post-Millennials

## Imaginations

Book 1

By Kevin Olson

Elementary/Late Elementary



### Android Attack

Mysteriously, rhythmic ( $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 160$ )

Sheet music for "Android Attack" in 4/4 time, featuring a mysterious and rhythmic melody. The piece is marked *mp* (mezzo-piano) and includes a section marked *L.H. over* (Left Hand over). The music is presented in three systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system includes a *mp* dynamic marking and a *L.H. over* instruction. The second system includes a *mf* (mezzo-forte) dynamic marking. The third system includes a *f* (forte) dynamic marking. The piece concludes with a final chord in the bass staff.

# Repertoire for Post-Millennials

## Imaginations

Book 4

By Kevin Olson

Intermediate/Late Intermediate



### Serengeti Sunset

With energy and spirit ( $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 160$ )

Sheet music for "Serengeti Sunset" in 4/4 time, featuring a lively and energetic melody. The piece is marked *p* (piano) and includes a section marked *mp* (mezzo-piano). The music is presented in three systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system includes a *p* dynamic marking. The second system includes a *mp* dynamic marking. The third system includes a *mp* dynamic marking. The piece concludes with a final chord in the bass staff.

# Repertoire for Post-Millennials

## Imaginations

Book 4

By Kevin Olson

Intermediate/Late Intermediate



### Cityscape

Gracefully; with motion ( $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 160$ )

Sheet music for the piece "Cityscape" from the book "Imaginations" by Kevin Olson. The music is in 3/4 time and consists of three systems. The first system is marked *p* (piano) and includes a ped. simile instruction. The second system is marked *mp* (mezzo-piano). The third system is marked *mp* and includes a ped. simile instruction. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some measures containing rests.

# Repertoire for Post-Millennials

## Imaginations

Book 4

By Kevin Olson

Intermediate/Late Intermediate



### Nocturne romantique

Expressively; with rubato ( $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 138$ )

Sheet music for the piece "Nocturne romantique" from the book "Imaginations" by Kevin Olson. The music is in 3/4 time and consists of three systems. The first system is marked *p* (piano) and includes a ped. simile instruction. The second system is marked *mp* (mezzo-piano). The third system is marked *mp* and includes a ped. simile instruction. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some measures containing rests.

# Piano Ensembles

USU PIANO AREA RECITAL  
**DYNAMIC DUOS**  
FEATURING PIANO MUSIC FOR  
FOUR (AND MORE) HANDS

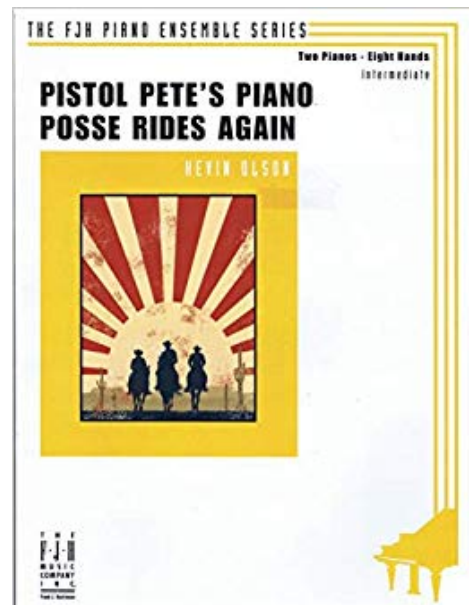


**MONSTER**  
CONCERT 2019

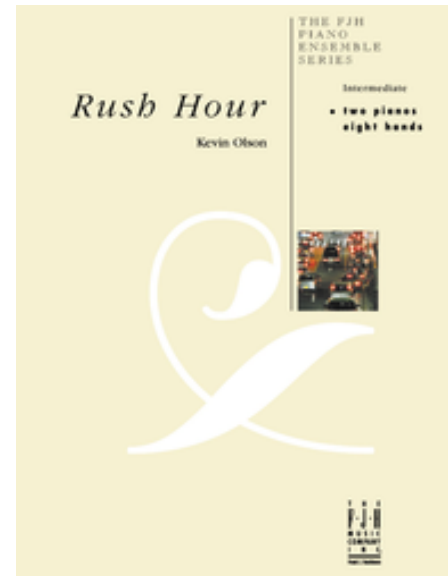


# Piano Ensembles

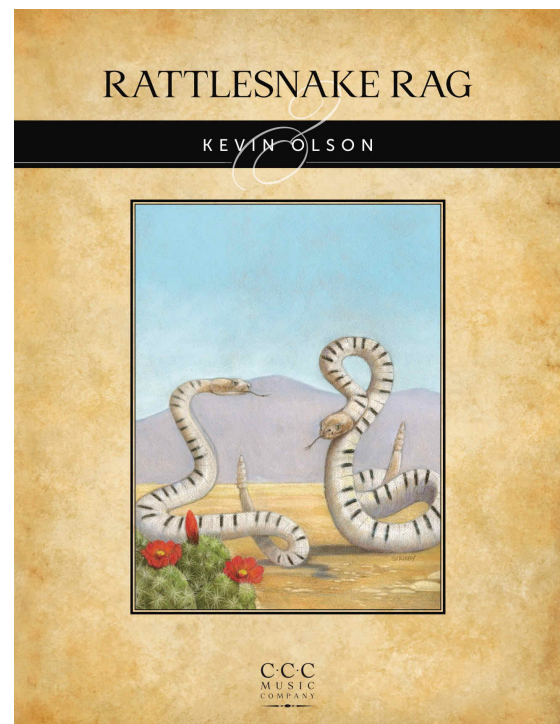
JUNE 9, 2018  
PISTOL PETE'S PIANO  
POSSE RIDES AGAIN



# Piano Ensembles



# Piano Ensembles





“By understanding today’s learners it is evident the role of the educator must change. No longer is education given to students for recitation through a text and lecture model. This generation is a collaborative and social generation that has a focus on understanding and building knowledge through various forms of media to discover answers. It is for the educator to provide an arena for engagement and discovery as well as being a content expert and mentor.”—Michele Monaco & Malissa Martin, *The Millennial Student: A New Generation of Learners*. *Athletic Training Education Journal*; 2017: 2 (Apr-Jun): 42-46.