

Top Ways To Sound Great Playing Piano

Here are the top two ways to sound great playing the piano: 1) Develop and refine your piano technique. No matter how advanced your playing develops, you'll always benefit from returning to the basics. Returning to the basics in fact, is one of the top ways to sound great playing piano and it means practicing your scales, chords, sharps, flats, and all the other grunt work you learned as a beginner. You'll want to be so skilled that you can repeat your lessons with your eyes closed! After you've mastered the basics, you'll want to then practice playing the piano emotionally. There are several tools you can use to convey emotion in your performance, many of which manipulate volume and rhythm with range dynamics, legatos, slurs, staccatos, ties, transposes, and more. These are some of the items you can develop and refine before you set out to play chords progressions and accompaniment. Quite often, learning pianists will rush into their lessons without taking the time to appreciate the details. As they say, the devil is in the details. So resist the temptation to skip lessons 4, 5, and 6 before you've even learned lesson 3! Lesson 7 after all, may introduce concepts that depend on knowledge gained from the lessons you might have "glossed over."

2) Developing and refining your musical ear. We know a fellow who likes to poke fun of speech and emphasize an important reality about our senses. He likes to tease people who say they have an ear for music or an eye for art. As always, this fellow's response to such a phrase is, "Oh really? Well I have two! One on each side of my nose!" Although he's a bit too literal for our tastes, he does make a good point. And that is to "see" clearly, or in our case, to "hear" clearly. We suppose our friend is really saying, listen 'twice' as hard. At the same time that you listen to a great piece of music -- and enjoy it -- you're also evaluating it. Even while you're playing the piano yourself, you're evaluating how faithfully you're representing the song's emotion and technical notation. To strengthen your listening skills however (or to listen with *both* of your ears as our friend would insist), you can record yourself playing the piano, and then evaluate the result. After enough practice, you'll be able to do this without the aid of a tape recorder and make an immediate assessment the minute that you press a key. Another way to strengthen your listening skills is to evaluate the music that moves you. While listening to the music of others, ask yourself what it is about that music that excites you. Then try to incorporate its characteristics into the music that you play (or at least, into your playing style). Of course you could do just the opposite as well. Evaluate what it is about music that bores you to death and then do everything you can to avoid it in your own music! Just don't make the mistake of believing that your opinion is the only one that matters. Seek out the opinions of others and ask for honest criticism. Don't ask for just the sugarcoated stuff. Ask your friends and family to be a brutally honest as they care to be. Then use that criticism to improve your style.

About the Author

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