

THE CRACKED SOUNDBOARD

Hello! Visit: www.JohnLampkin.com for a free subscription and a look at my catalogue of award-winning scores and CDs! This month, we provide helpful hints to piano teachers, and to those of you who are perhaps considering entering the profession. If so, good luck! And please feel free to fwd this copy.

HOW TO TEACH "HOT CROSS BUNS" TO A FIVE-YEAR OLD BOY

by John Lampkin

- 1) Start by demonstrating this classic folk song. Ask the student to stand beside the piano and watch and listen while you sing and play the right hand alone. When you reach the end of the first measure, pause and politely ask him to please turn around so that he can observe your fingerings. When you reach the end of the first phrase, tell him to return from your window, where he is breathing heavily onto the glass.
- 2) Seat him beside you on your right hand side, so that he has a clear view of your correct hand position, and start the second phrase. Pause in the middle to retrieve him from your telephone where he is dialing numbers at random. Make a mental note to call the phone company to get credit for the calls.
- 3) Seat him firmly beside you on the bench, this time on your left. As you compliment him for his nice shirt, touch his sleeve, and as unobtrusively as possible, hold onto it tightly with your left hand.
- 4) After finishing the second phrase, take the piece of torn cloth, which you are now holding, and set it aside. Retrieve student from beneath your piano where he is banging on your soundboard with a ruler. Carefully remove the ruler from his grip while complimenting him on his creative way of discovering how the piano is able to generate such beautiful sounds. As you hold the ruler, reflect nostalgically on the pedagogical uses it was put to in yesteryear.
- 5) Quickly estimate the cost of a new shirt. Add \$5 to be generous, and deduct this amount from his parent's next tuition payment.
- 6) Take a penny from your pocket to give special dramatic emphasis to the phrase "One-a-penny."
- 7) Retrieve penny from goldfish bowl. Using cloth which you had previously set aside, dry hands.
- 8) Demonstrate "One-a-penny" again, this time while holding onto penny.
- 9) Repeat step seven.
- 10) Forget about that extra \$5 and make a note to inform parents that regrettably, as of the next lesson, there will be a substantial tuition increase.
- 11) As you prepare to demonstrate "Two-a-penny," pluck him from your drape, which he is now climbing. Remove drape tie-back.
- 12) Using a fool-proof "grannie-knot," fasten drape tie-back to piano bench leg and secure student to bench. Because the lesson time is almost up, skip the "Two-a-penny" line, saving it for the next lesson. Demonstrate the final line of "Hot Cross Buns" instructing him to observe closely your slight, yet expressive, ritardando and diminuendo.
- 13) Tackle student in your front yard. Marvel at his throwing arm while noting the location of tie-back in tree. The leg to your piano bench should be nearby.
- 14) As his parents pull into your driveway and wave, remove your prodigy from birdbath. Smile.