



# *I Always Wanted To Play The Piano But...*

by David Longo

During my 25 plus years of piano teaching, a significant portion of my clientele has always been adults - adults who have a life of their own, established in their own right when it comes to their business or other - who just made the choice to supplement their lifestyle with getting involved playing music. Among those whom I've had the privilege of coaching have been nurses, doctors, successful businessmen, lawyers, men and women from all avenues. The differences from one person to another were plenty, let me tell you. But each and every one of them had one thing in common - they wanted music to be a part of their lives. Well, that certainly doesn't surprise me.

"Why?" you may ask...

You see, it's my conviction that each and every one of us has the innate desire and ability to express ourselves musically. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was right on the money when he said "Music is the universal language of mankind." That being true, why should anyone be deprived of the ability to speak this language? Bill Evans, legendary jazz pianist, composer, arranger extraordinaire stated, "When you play music you discover a part of yourself that you never knew existed."

So let me present another question to you. Why should anyone deprive himself or herself of this privilege of self discovery? Trust me, friend, if you have not given yourself the permission to get involved expressing yourself through music, you are depriving yourself.

Now, I can already hear what many people are thinking at this point. "But, Dave, how can I express myself musically when I don't even know one note from another on the piano?" Or "Dave, I only know how to play one chord, and that's it - how in the world can I be creative?"

Whatever comebacks you might have to my claim, let me counter your offer with this. When you were a

child and you knew nothing but "goo goo" and "gaa gaa" ... why didn't you let that stop you from learning more? Hmmm? Answer that for me please.

The truth is that you had a natural desire to express - and you learned little by little. Now the big question: as you listened and learned a little here and a little there, did you judge yourself for what you couldn't yet say or understand? Let me ask you that again. Did you judge yourself for what you couldn't yet say or understand?

Absolutely not... and why? Please pay attention to the answer to this: the reason you didn't judge yourself for what you lacked was because you did not yet learn *how* to judge yourself! Did you get that? The reason you didn't judge yourself for what you lacked was because you did not yet learn *how* to judge yourself!

Beyond "goo goo" and "gaa gaa," you had a little time left before you were able to comprehend the idea of judging yourself. Another big truth is, you shouldn't have learned to ever degrade yourself, but what you learned was subject to the knowledge possessed by those you were in contact with during your early years.

My experience with adult piano students has been that so many of these people put off the endeavor in favor of subscribing to some past belief or beliefs that convinced them to not act on their desire. At various times in their past, they were exposed to certain messages. Among them are the following:

"I'll never be that good - why bother?"

"Playing the piano is for those who have special talent. You either have it or you don't."

(The one that follows is the real kicker that makes me want to do back flips)

"When I was a kid, my piano teacher said I didn't have what it took."

GOOD GRIEF! What a load of trash! I mean it! I can't even begin to tell you what an injustice that was - any teacher who says that to a student doesn't deserve to call himself or herself a teacher. The *real truth* of the matter is this - that "teacher" was unable to adapt to that particular student - that had nothing to do with the limitations of the student - it had *everything* to do with the limitations of the teacher!

Please, my friend, please - if something like that ever happened to you, make a commitment *right now* that you have stopped subscribing to that nonsense! Please do that now! As a matter of fact, whatever reason you may have had that put a damper on your putting music into your life - tell yourself right now that it's over! You won't listen to those past thoughts!

Think about it for a moment, would you please? When we were children, we often didn't have a difficult time not listening to our authorities when it came to so many things - why do we give devotion to those

things, in particular, that they were wrong about?! Do you hear what I'm saying?

Are you giving what we're saying here your serious consideration? I certainly hope so. Let this be a turning point for yourself today. At what stage are you at right now? Have you been thinking about investing in a piano but haven't decided because you weren't sure if it was worth your while? Then in that case I'm going to ask you right this very minute to reevaluate that decision. Start shopping today!

Make a call - look in your local yellow pages and call a piano retailer closest to you. It doesn't matter if you want to do business with that particular outfit or not - just take an action toward saying YES to yourself - get the picture? It's all about action - it's not about reading tons and tons of information before you give yourself permission to get started. That's why this message to you is concise and to the point.

Do you have a piano that's not in the best of playing condition? Not sure what to do? Get in touch with a local piano technician to have him or her come and evaluate the situation for you. If you do this, I recommend that you hire someone who specialized in both both tuning and technical work, so be sure to ask when you talk to that person. One resource you might consider is [www.ptg.org](http://www.ptg.org).

Okay, so maybe you have a small keyboard - how do you feel about that? Chances are you're going to outgrow that instrument sooner or later. Sure, you can have fun with that, too - at least you have an instrument to start with.

Go get yourself a piano as soon as you can. At the very least, get yourself a digital piano with a weighted action. I'd like to pause and discuss this briefly if I may. There are so many digital pianos out there. Salespeople are more than willing to point out all the wonderful features these babies are capable of. And many of them do offer an array of fun advantages.

But let's be upfront about this. Is it piano you want to play? Then get a piano. Or if you're going to go the digital route, opt for one that has both a genuine piano sound and has a weighted action. By weighted I mean there is an actual resistance when you press the keys, much like that of a piano.

The term "weighted action" has been used quite loosely over the past few years. There are manufacturers who claim to offer a digital piano with a "semi weighted" action which, basically, isn't even worth your consideration. You want a genuine weighted action. Friend, if it's piano you want, then consider the real thing.

The digital pianos offer a couple of major benefits - 1) they don't need tuning, and 2) you can adjust the volume and even use earphones while practicing - this can especially come in handy if you are in an apartment situation, and you need to pay special consideration for those next door.

Okay, that said, I'm going to leave you with this as far as this subject goes: If you can get beyond those two advantages, and don't mind the yearly minimal expense of having your piano serviced, go for the real thing - a genuine acoustic piano. However, if you treasure the benefits that come with going digital, go

for it.

So let's say you have the instrument - it's there waiting for you. Get in touch with a teacher if you'd like. This can be an intimidating process for those who haven't done so before.

You're hearing it straight from the horse's mouth here, so please listen closely. 1) You need to find the *right* piano teacher for you 2) You have to be open to the idea that the first person you elect may not turn out to be the one you wind up with for the long term. It's absolutely crucial that you come to terms with this right here and now. Recall what we said earlier about rapport. A teacher may be perfect for a certain individual and be totally wrong for you (and it works the other way around, too).

So, how do you go about this task? Well, let's not think of it as a task, okay? Let's think about this as more of a rewarding journey. Now, usually, when a person makes contact with a teacher of any kind, there is a certain reservation that goes along with that. Think about this for a moment... he or she have a service that you want (perhaps)... you view them as an authority on the subject, so you feel a certain obligation to take much of what they have to say for granted.

Well, I'm here to suggest that you take on an entirely different approach to the matter. I want you to look at this process of communication as an interview - and *you* are the one conducting the interview. Chances are good you'll earn the teacher's respect for this. And, if that's not the case and it appears that his or her ego seems to be threatened by this approach, then you've just learned (the easy way I might add) that it's time to move on to the next interviewee.

I look at it this way: if an instructor has the desire and ability to adapt to different criteria, including skill levels, specific goals of the individual, amount of time available to the student for practice, then he or she will listen to you enthusiastically.

You see, a true coach wants to know everything he or she can about you and your aspirations upfront. This makes sense, doesn't it? Now let me, just for a moment, introduce you to an example of the flip side of the coin if I may.

On more than just a few occasions, I've been approached by people for the first time who aspire to play - they had virtually no experience, not knowing a "C major chord" from a "G minor," but the first thing they presented to me was something like, "I want to play like Billy Joel". Now, my first inner reaction to these individuals is one of respect, since they have an inner flame of desire - but then I know it's an absolute must to review this goal of theirs with them.

It needs to be put in perspective. If the person I'm talking to has the idea that this goal will be met after 6 weeks, then I might need to consult with this person a little further to determine whether or not they are willing to be more flexible with their expectations. Key point: your goals need to be reasonable.

You see, though, it's the teacher who has to be willing to acknowledge these issues. I highly recommend

that you set up an initial lesson to discuss this kind of information - and be willing to pay for the time for this. It will be worth it in the long run. Even if you decide this teacher is not the one for you by the time the lesson time is over, you'll come out of the situation a whole lot more educated - and you'll be a whole lot more confident when it comes to interviewing your next prospect.

Remember this, the initial time and money that you invest in determining whether or not a specific teacher's approach can be conducive to your having a rewarding experience is well worth it, so don't rush the process. Along with this, however, understand that you may need to be a little flexible, too, when it comes to adapting to the methods of the teacher.

One thing you should keep in mind no matter what: *No time you spend with any teacher will be a waste of time.* The experience can always be used in your favor one way or another. It's my conviction that everyone has something to offer you, no matter how incompetent they might even be. Enjoy this journey of yours.

Now, here's probably the most important point I can bring up here, and I can't overemphasize it. Remember this: you're getting involved with piano lessons as a fun, relaxing way to compliment and enhance your present lifestyle. It needs to be fun. As you interview your prospective teacher, you should be able to get a feel, from his or her personality, whether or not the time spent learning is going to be fun. Please don't underestimate the importance of this. It should be your number one requisite as far as I'm concerned.

A good teacher will challenge you, not being afraid to take you out of your comfort zone, while making the experience a joy. You're doing this to have fun! And you shouldn't have to wait until you reach a certain level of competency in order to have fun with this - NO! It should not be that way. *Fun is the bottom line.*

Okay, so let's say that you've found yourself a teacher you're willing to settle with for a time. Now do this - make a commitment that you will stay with this person for a minimum of say, six months - don't go through with this in a conditional fashion. Decide now that you're going to have fun with this no matter what - and you're going to make the most of your experience with this teacher for that amount of time. Six months is not a lot of time - it's enough time to determine your progress potential with the teacher, yet it's not so much time that you won't be open to moving on if things aren't living up to your expectations.

If this happens, I encourage you to reevaluate the last six months or so - what is not working? Is it that the teacher has a rather rigid approach? Is he or she not in tune with your practice time limitations? Are you overworked? Is the rapport just not there? Whatever it be, acknowledging the why's will help you to avoid finding yourself in a similar situation with your next teacher.

The important thing is that you keep going and keep learning! Here's a rule that you absolutely must follow: *don't ever allow a negative experience with a teacher influence your inner desire and motivation to continue.* No teacher on earth is qualified to take away your aspirations - got that? Just remember that

you CAN do this - always. And remember that SUCCESS COMES IN "CAN'S" - FAILURE IN "CAN'TS" ---- let's not permit failure to be an option here, okay?

Hey, keep in mind, you're not competing with anyone - you just want to have some fun. Truthfully, if you find yourself wanting to be in a competitive arena for some reason, your acquired skills and ability will be greater had your experience been founded on fun - don't ever take the fun out of this - please don't do that to yourself.

The benefits of playing the piano - or any musical instrument for that matter - are great. That's the beauty of it, because everyone gets involved for their own specific reasons. Expressing yourself musically can mean any of several things to you: Just a few of the benefits that seem to be at the forefront are:

**Relaxation**

**Self Discovery**

**Mental Stimulation**

**Creativity**

Let's look at each of these a little more closely:

*Relaxation* - really, what better way to relax? There's no better way to get your mind off every day stressful events. You know, practicing doesn't have to be - and should not be - a chore that you despise. If that's the case, then you need your teacher to help you to help you with your practice approach. This goes hand in hand, of course, with picking the right teacher for yourself. In fact, this is a good question to present to a prospective teacher during your interview: "What will my practice sessions be like for me? Can you describe a typical practice session for me, according to how you ideally see it?"

*Self discovery* - It's amazing what you can learn about yourself as you stay involved with playing the piano. You'll not only have fun playing with what you learn, but you'll also learn a lot about yourself for sure. To be more specific, you'll actually amaze yourself at times with what you're capable of. You're going to find that this is a perfect vehicle for realizing your potential to break through barriers in your mind regarding beliefs about your ability. Furthermore, you'll also carry this advantage with you in other endeavors!

*Mental stimulation* - Ahh yes, this is inevitable. You see, as you become more and more skillful at playing the piano (and this is probably true of the piano more than any other instrument the way I see it), you will be automatically find that your mind is being used in ways that no other activity could bring out of you. You'll be concentrating on so many things at once, but don't let this intimidate you. Because, often, you won't even be aware that this is happening! You'll understand this as the more you get involved.

*Creativity* - Well, yes, of course - you do indeed have the ability to be creative. And if you have ever

entertained the idea that you don't have what it takes to create music of your own, or improvise something you've already learned, perish the thought right now! I've had people writing their own music within just a few short months of studying with me - and they started with me without understanding what the difference between a major and minor chord was.

Don't cheat yourself out of the benefits that playing the piano can offer you because of some false belief that you've been holding onto. Chances are great that the belief(s) holding you back was learned from someone else who didn't understand the truth to begin with! (I'm not kidding)

If you feel that your age is a factor in learning, then you have some more re-evaluating to do. It doesn't matter what you're age is, but let's suppose you are 60, for an example. What are your musical goals at this point? Chances are good that you would like to acquire enough skills to be able to express some favorite songs of yours - or you would like to be able to create some music of your own. That's great!

If you working from the premise that you have to start from the point of a 6 or 7 year old and make it through all those books, year after year after year, to get to the point of enjoying the piano for your own enjoyment, banish the thought - it's simply not true! As a matter of fact, this is where the right teacher comes into the scene. You see, if you hook up with teacher who is only geared toward providing this kind of instruction, with a rigid approach of his or her own, then that is not the teacher for you.

There is a teacher out there for each unique situation, and this needs to be understood. You can reach your musical goals, so let's accept that as reality now, okay? Good.

As time has evolved, the Internet has become a powerful learning resource. With that being true, I have become in tune (don't mind the pun) with another basic truth. Considering a number of factors, there are people who will not pursue lessons with a private teacher. Is this wrong? No, not necessarily.

People have their own reasons, and they vary quite a bit. A teacher may not be available locally. The commitment to showing up for a lessons each and every week turns some people off. With some people, their schedules just don't allow for consistency like that. With others, the cost of lessons is an issue not to be taken lightly. In addition, some individuals are self starters who like to do things on their own. Also, I don't deny that finding that compatible teacher described above is not always and easy task. And even with a good one, not every teacher knows everything, which brings me to...

My purpose for creating [www.Free-Easy-Piano-Lessons.com](http://www.Free-Easy-Piano-Lessons.com) ... I personally feel there is no reason why a person shouldn't incorporate music into his or her life. I made a commitment to use the availability of the Internet (24/7) as a means to serve and benefit those people who have even the slightest interest in learning piano. Whether it's 7 at night or 3 in the morning, the lessons are there for your enjoyment - and they are free for you anytime you choose to utilize them.

Another reason I feel so strongly that a resource like this is highly beneficial is because I do realize that a lot of learning can, in fact, be done on your own. I know this from personal experience. I'll be upfront

with you - although I did have my share of one-on-one piano lessons with a private teacher in my earlier days, there is no denying that so much of what I learned throughout the years was via my own initiative - reading what people had to say, watching others, etc. You see, even if you do pursue private study, you will also be inspired to learn material that goes beyond the scope of your lessons for sure.

It is my hope that you will find this site to be an invaluable resource during your piano learning journey. I wholeheartedly wish you the best of enjoyment and success along this wonderful avenue. Notice that I mentioned *enjoyment* before *success*, the reason simply being that if you first learn to enjoy yourself, that is a success all its own - progress will naturally follow.

By all means, get involved beginning today - right now, even if it means visiting the site, reading through one tutorial, clicking a few samples... just get started. I'm happy for you. Actually, I'm excited. I'm having a blast presenting this material to you. If you catch even a fraction of the joy I am having making this all available to you, then I've served my purpose. So, let me encourage, motivate, and inspire you as you allow yourself to become absorbed in the wonderful art of playing piano.

If I may, I'd like to add a few words for your careful and serious consideration:

Friend, you have what it takes. Music is not just for a "precious few" - that's nonsense. Comparison is a trap - everyone has a song in his or her heart; in addition, everyone has the right to express it. Let yourself do this for yourself. Get involved musically. Like I said earlier:

Everyone has the innate desire and ability to express himself or herself musically.

My friend - yes, I'm talking to *you* - that truth applies to *you*.