

## **Teaching Mixed Meter and Suggested Intermediate Level Repertoire**

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Hello everyone! My name is Mengyu Song. Originally from China, now I am pursuing a doctoral degree in piano pedagogy at the University of South Carolina. I am very excited and grateful to present my virtual lightning talk in SCMTA. Thank you for allowing me to be here and thank you for all your efforts in arranging the conference during this special time.

Today I am going to talk about “Teaching Mixed Meter and Suggested Intermediate Level Repertoire”.

From the extensive piano literature, there are many advanced mixed meter pieces among excellent composers, such as Alberto Ginastera’s Suite de Danzas Criollas and Alexander Scriabin’s Piano Sonata No. 5, Op. 53. However, most of the pieces from elementary method books are in a one time signature. A large part of those pieces is in a symmetric meter; few of them are in an asymmetric meter. Students, at this time, start to learn the concept of asymmetric meter. As a transition period, the intermediate years is a great time to teach mixed meter to students before they study advanced mixed meter literature. In this presentation, I will discuss how to facilitate the study of mixed meter and select progressive repertoire for early intermediate, intermediate, and late intermediate levels.

The key to understanding and playing mixed meter is that the underlying small notes remain steady. One effective strategy is using conducting patterns to conduct the rhythm first. To begin with, we can conduct a steady beat with our students. In the next step, we can conduct a steady beat while counting the mixed meters.  $1/2/1/2/3/1/2/3/4$ . What we just did, is the mixed meter of  $2/4+3/4+4/4$ . Lastly, we will add conducting patterns while counting the mixed meters. By counting and conducting as the starting point, students will be able to keep the steady beat. From intermediate literature, contemporary composers, such as Seymour Bernstein, Robert Starer, and Bela Bartok, has explored the mixed meter in their compositions.

“Evens and Odds” by Robert Starer is a wonderful introductory piece for early intermediate level students. It includes  $4/4$ ,  $3/4$ ,  $5/4$ ,  $6/4$  meters.



This is the first four bars of Evens and Odds. As I mentioned before, let's start to conduct a steady beat with our students. The next step will be conducting the steady beat while counting the mixed meters. Lastly, let's do the conducting pattern with counting the beat. By using the conducting pattern, students will be able to facilitate the underlying pulse with body engagement and involvements. I have attached the conducting pattern in the handout for your reference. There is also a list of suggested progressive mixed meter repertoire for intermediate levels in the handout.

Thank you for joining me today. I hope you enjoy this short lecture.