


KAMLOOPS SYMPHONY

 WESTERN
CANADA
THEATRE

PRESENT A MARQUIS ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION

**“Funny, clever,
insightful and touching,
full of music, humour,
story and character.”**

-Globe and Mail



2 PIANOS 4 HANDS

Created by Ted Dykstra & Richard Greenblatt

Starring Tom Frey & Richard Carsey • Directed by Richard Greenblatt

FEBRUARY 19 TO 28, 2015

SAGEBRUSH THEATRE

STUDY GUIDE

Thank you for participating in Western Canada Theatre's matinee programming! We would like you and your students to get the most out of your experience with us. Included in this package is some inside information exclusive to teachers and students, discussion questions, classroom activities, and online resources. We hope you find them useful before and after seeing the show.

Please take a few minutes to review appropriate theatre etiquette with your students. While clapping and laughing are most appropriate for the theatre, whispering, talking, and excessive movement during the show is distracting to others in the audience and our actors on stage.

Audience members are encouraged to get comfortable, remove coats, use the washroom and turn all electronic devices OFF before a show begins. Please remind your students that texting is not allowed during the show.

Remembering theatre etiquette makes the show more enjoyable for everyone!



2 Pianos, 4 Hands

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Production Personnel

Cast

Tom Frey
Richard Carsey

Ted
Richard

Creative Team

Richard Greenblatt
Colin Rivers
Brendan Gilhuly
Steve Lucas
Andrea Schurman
Christine Leroux

Director
Producer
Production Manager
Designer
Stage Manager
Apprentice Stage Manager

Western Canada Theatre Staff

Daryl Cloran
Lori Marchand

Artistic Director
General Manager

Administration

Ron Thompson
Marilyn Zuke
Catrina Crowe
Coby Fulton
Bryce Herman
Alexis Tuytten
Terri Runnalls
Sylvia Gropp
Cathy Liu

Financial Manager
Associate Financial Manager
Marketing and Communications Director
Director of Development
Fundraiser and Marketing Consultant
Special Events & Fund Development Coordinator
Education Coordinator
Special Events and Administration Assistant
Marketing and Research Assistant

Production

Ross Nichol
Heather Cant
Gal Minnes
Brian St-Amand
Cindy Wiebe
Andrew Wallace
Jungyeon Ji
Darren John
Roya Mole
Joel Eccleston

Production Manager
Associate Artistic Director
Production Technical Director
Sagebrush Technical Director
Head of Wardrobe
Head of Carpentry
Head of Properties
Technician
Technician
Technician

Facilities

Heather Regan
Jean Choi
Allison Clow
Phyllis Mader
Carling Ryan
Melissa Thomas

Client and Audience Services Manager
Volunteer Coordinator
Guest Services
Guest Services
Guest Services
Guest Services

Kamloops Live Box Office

Janet Riggs
Judy Day
Geraldine Penny

Box Office Manager
Box Office Staff
Box Office Staff

Behind the Scenes

The Writers



TED DYKSTRA (co-writer) started playing piano at age six and peaked at age 12, when he had a particularly memorable string of firsts competing in the Edmonton Kiwanis Music Festival. His acting career began at a young age in St. Albert, Alberta, playing the 2nd Bird in *Once Upon A Clothesline*, but his breakout role was Bilbo Baggins in his school's Grade 8 production of *The Hobbit*. Since then he has gone on to play leading roles on every major stage in Canada, often combining his musical skills. He has appeared in dozens of films and TV shows. He has also voiced dozens of cartoon characters.

In 2000 he turned his attention to directing and since has directed many award-winning shows across the country, notably for Soulpepper; Canadian Stage; The Neptune Theatre; Harold Green Jewish Theatre; and Ross Petty Productions. He has also directed *2 Pianos, 4 Hands* across America and in Australia and Hong Kong.

He is a founding member of Soulpepper Theatre, and in the award department he has received four Doras (acting, musical direction, producing), a Gemini (acting), a Sterling (musical direction), a Merritt (directing) and a Chalmers (writing).

For him, all of the above pales compared to being the proud father of Theo and Rosie and their hamster, Buttercup.



Dykstra (left), Greenblatt (right) in *2 Pianos, 4 Hands* (2003). Photo Robert Bodrog.



RICHARD GREENBLATT (co-writer) is an actor, director, writer and musician, who has been a professional theatre artist for the last 37 years. He was born in Montreal and studied piano for 10 years with the late Professor Dorothy Morton of the McGill Conservatory of Music.

He received his acting training at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London, England. Upon graduating, he worked at Leeds

Playhouse for a season, returning to Canada in 1975. Since then, he has performed in theatres in Toronto, across Canada, and abroad.

He has directed well over 100 productions for theatres across the country, the vast majority being original and/or Canadian works. He has also directed the premieres of many groundbreaking and award-winning plays for young audiences.

As a writer, he wrote or co-wrote *2 Pianos 4 Hands*, *Sibs*, *The Theory Of Relatives, i.d.*, *Letters From Lehrer*, *Care and Soft Pedalling*. *2 Pianos 4 Hands* has played on five continents and in more than 150 cities since it opened at the Tarragon Theatre in April 1996. Greenblatt himself has performed the play with co-creator Ted Dykstra a staggering 750 times across Canada and in New York City, Washington, D.C., London and Tokyo.

A mentor and teacher to young talent, he has taught acting, directing and play creation at most of the theatre training institutions in Canada, including Ryerson University, University of Alberta, George Brown College and the National Theatre School of Canada.

He has been Resident Director at Young People's Theatre, Deputy Artistic Director at Canadian Stage and Artistic Director of The Hour Company. He has received numerous nominations for his work and has won six Dora Awards and two Chalmers Awards.

He lives in Toronto with partner Tanya Greve and their daughter, Amelia, and is the proud father of Natasha and Will.



2 Pianos, 4 Hands
Photo by Lydia Pawelka

Play Synopsis

2 Pianos 4 Hands is the riotous tale of two boys in Canada sharing the same goal: concert pianist stardom. They work fervently towards their dream amidst pushy parents, eccentric teachers, hours of repetitive practice, stage fright, the agony of competitions and the dream of greatness.

Two actors, two pianos and many characters grace the stage as 15 years of learning the art of piano playing unfolds in an hour and a half.

In the beginning each actor plays a younger version of himself while the other becomes the teacher, the adjudicator, the parent. No costume changes – just posture, voice and mannerisms to indicate a new character has entered the scene.

As the boys mature, so does their piano playing. They also become more aware of the gap between the very good and the great – and come to the humbling realization that greatness may be out of reach. Through Ted and Richard, *2 Pianos 4 Hands* captures the humour that comes with learning to play the piano and the sense of loss when eventually learning to let go of the dream.

Production History

In 1994 Ted and Richard formed Talking Fingers to write and workshop their new script, *2 Pianos 4 Hands*. The play was subsequently programmed as part of Tarragon Theatre's 1995-96 season in Toronto and premiered in April 1996 to rave reviews and sold-out houses. Talking Fingers and Tarragon Theatre shared the 1996 Dora Mavor Moore Award for Outstanding Production, and Ted and Richard received the prestigious Chalmers Award—Canada's National Playwriting Award—that same year.

Immediately following the close of the premiere run in Toronto, Ted and Richard embarked on a national tour. They travelled from coast to coast with the show, stopping back at the Tarragon for a second run in the fall of 1996 and concluding in Vancouver in September of 1997 at the Vancouver Playhouse.

In October of 1997, backed by a team of producers including David and Ed Mirvish, *2 Pianos 4 Hands* opened Off Broadway at The Promenade Theatre. The production was widely acclaimed and ran for six months before transferring to the Kennedy Centre in Washington in the spring of 1998. Ted and Richard returned to Toronto later that summer and again played to sold-out houses, this time at the historic Royal Alexandra Theatre, with Mirvish Productions. The show had its European premiere at the Birmingham Rep in the spring of 1999, a production that transferred later that fall to the Comedy Theatre in the West End of London. Since then, Ted and Richard have twice reunited to perform in Toronto with Marquis Entertainment / Talking Fingers / Mirvish Productions, twice toured to Japan (presented by Shochiku), where they have performed in Tokyo and on tour throughout the country, and in 2011/12 embarked on a Farewell Tour that included visits to Toronto, Ottawa, Vancouver and Edmonton.

There have been many other productions with other actors, both male and female, in Canada and across the globe. Since its premiere, *2 Pianos 4 Hands* has had 4,000 performances at 200 different theatres throughout Canada, the US, the UK, Japan, Australia, Hong Kong, South Africa, Austria, Finland and beyond. Nearly 2 million people have seen the play on five continents worldwide, making it one of the most successful Canadian plays ever.

Notable Numbers for *2 Pianos, 4 Hands*

- Ran for 6 months Off Broadway at The Promenade and The Variety Arts Theatre
- 4 completely sold-out productions in Toronto that played to 150,000+ people (Tarragon – 5 weeks in 1996, Tarragon – 5 weeks in 1997, Royal Alex – 6 weeks in 1998, Elgin Theatre – 4 weeks in 2003)
- Sold-out 12-city tour coast to coast across Canada from May 1996 - Oct 1997
- 2003 - ranked by *American Theatre Magazine* as one of the Top 10 Most Produced Plays in the USA
- 2006 – Marquis Entertainment’s production won the award for Outstanding Touring Production by the Connecticut Theatre Critics Circle (winning over Broadway touring productions of *The Lion King* and *Wicked*)
- Featured in many Top 10 Productions of the Year lists, including *The New York Post* (Clive Barnes, 1997)
- 1996 - won Toronto’s Dora Award for Outstanding Production and a Chalmers Award (Canadian National Award) for Playwriting
- Ted Dykstra and Richard Greenblatt have personally played 750+ performances (of the show’s total of 2,500)
- Ran for 5 weeks at the Kennedy Arts Centre in Washington, DC, in 1998, 10 weeks in London’s West End in 1999, and 3 weeks in Tokyo in 2004
- Nearly 4,000 performances in 175 cities worldwide
- Played to 2 million people
- Arguably the most successful play in the history of Canadian Theatre

Behind the Keys

The Piano

The **piano** (an abbreviation of **pianoforte**) is a musical instrument played using a keyboard. It is widely used in classical and jazz music for solo performances, ensemble use, chamber music, accompaniment, and for composing and rehearsal. Although the piano is not portable and often expensive, its versatility and ubiquity have made it one of the world's most familiar musical instruments.

An acoustic piano usually has a protective wooden case, surrounding the soundboard and metal strings, and a row of 88 black and white keys (52 white, 36 black). The strings are sounded when the keys are pressed and silenced when the keys are released. The note can be sustained, even when the keys are released, by the use of pedals.

Pressing a key on the piano's keyboard causes a padded (often with felt) hammer to strike strings. The hammer rebounds, and the strings continue to vibrate at their resonant frequency. These vibrations are transmitted through a bridge to a soundboard that amplifies, by more efficiently coupling the acoustic energy to the air. When the key is released, a damper stops the strings' vibration, ending the sound. Although an acoustic piano has strings, it is usually classified as a percussion instrument because the strings are struck rather than plucked (as with a harpsichord or spinet); in the Hornbostel-Sachs system of instrument classification, pianos are considered chordophones. With technological advances, electric, electronic, and digital pianos have also been developed.

The word *piano* is a shortened form of *pianoforte*, the Italian word for the instrument (which in turn derives from the previous terms *gravicembalo col piano e forte* and *fortepiano*). The Italian musical terms *piano* and *forte* indicate "soft" and "strong" respectively, in this context referring to the variations in sound volume the instrument produces in response to a pianist's touch on the keys: the greater the velocity of a key press, the greater the force of the hammer hitting the strings and the louder the sound of the note produced.

The History of the Piano

The story of the piano begins in Padua, Italy, in 1709, in the shop of a harpsichord maker named Bartolomeo di Francesco Cristofori (1655-1731). Many other stringed and keyboard instruments preceded the piano and led to the development of the instrument as we know it today.

Humankind's knowledge that a taut, vibrating string can produce sound goes back to prehistoric times. In the ancient world, strings were attached and stretched over bows, gourds, and boxes to amplify the sound; they were fastened by ties, pegs and pins; and they were plucked, bowed or struck to produce sounds.

Eventually, a family of stringed instruments with a keyboard evolved in Europe in the 14th century. The earliest of these was a dulcimer, a closed, shallow box over which stretched wires were struck with two wooden hammers. The dulcimer led to the development of the clavichord, which also appeared in the 14th century. These were followed by the spinet, virginal, clavecin, gravicembalo, and finally, the harpsichord in the 15th century.

The harpsichord, however, was limited to one, unvarying volume. Its softness and loudness could not be varied while playing. Therefore, performing artists could not convey the same degree of musical expression as that of most other instruments. The artistic desire for more controlled expression led directly to the invention of the piano, on which the artist could alter the loudness and tone with the force of one's fingers.

The harpsichord was a particularly important development leading to the invention of the piano. Its ability to project sound more loudly than its predecessors and refinements in the action (or touch) inspired many more musicians to compose for the keyboard and, thus, to perform keyboard works.

First exhibited in Florence in 1709, Cristofori's new instrument was named gravicembalo col piano e forte (roughly "soft and loud keyboard instrument"). Eventually, it was shortened to fortepiano or pianoforte and, finally, just piano. His earliest surviving instrument dates from 1720 and is on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

Despite many improvements during the past 300 years, it is truly astonishing to observe how similar Cristofori's instruments are to the modern piano of today.



Cristofori's gravicembalo col piano e forte

Activities in the Classroom

Activity #1: Music and Composers

Curriculum Connections

Social Studies	Think Critically, Evaluate Information and Practise Effective Communication
Drama	Historical and Aesthetic Context
Communications	Exploration and Context
Language Arts	Oral Language, Reading and Viewing, Speaking and Listening

A Preshow Activity

2 Pianos, 4 Hands is filled with incredible music from beginning to end. The composers range from the classic greats, such as Bach, Beethoven and Mozart (to mention just a few), to the more contemporary favourites, such as Billy Joel. Below is a list of the music and composers used in the play.

ACT I

Concerto in D minor, 1st Movement (J.S. Bach)
Heart and Soul (Hoagy Carmichael)
The Birch Canoe (Lelia Fletcher)
By the Stream (Richard Greenblatt)
Our Band Goes to Town (arrangement J. B. Duvernoy)
Sonatina No. 6 in F Major (Beethoven)
Sonata Facile in C Major, 1st Movement (Mozart)
Sonata for One Piano, Four Hands in D Major, 1st Movement (Mozart)
In der Halle des Bergkonigs, Peer Gynt Suite 1 (Edward Grieg)
Concerto in D minor, 1st Movement (J.S. Bach)

ACT II

Prelude in D flat Major (Chopin)
Leyenda (I. Albeniz)
Rondo for Two Pianos, Four Hands in C Major (Chopin)
Fantasiestucke No. 2 (Schumann)
Pathetique Sonata No. 8 in C minor, 1st and 2nd Movements (Beethoven)
Ballade No. 2 in F Major (Chopin)
Mephisto Waltz No. 1 (Franz Liszt)
A Medley of Pop Tunes Impromptu in A flat (Schubert)
My Funny Valentine (Richard Rogers / Lorenz Hart)
Piano Man (Billy Joel)
Horowitz Recording (Mephisto Waltz)
Concerto in D minor, 1st Movement (J.S. Bach)

Have your class break into small groups of 2-4. Have them choose a song from the list above. As a group, have them research the piece and composer and report back to the class. The presentation to the class could become as big as you wish. Have each group play the piece for the class. Below is a list of questions and ideas that could be posed to the groups to get them started.

When was the composer alive? What was life like then?

What kind of life did the composer have? This should include family life, as well as their social and economic background. How did this influence their music?

When was the piece written? At what point in the composers career was the piece written?

What do you like or dislike about the piece?

How did this piece make you feel after a first listen? How did it make you feel after you had done the research?

Have your students keep an ear out for their piece during the show!!

Did they have an extra attachment to the piece when it was played? Did they feel their chosen piece fit into that portion of the show? Why? How did their piece enhance what the writers were trying to convey in that section of the show? In essence, why did the writer choose that particular piece at that particular moment?

Ongoing Conversation:

How does music enrich our experience at the theatre?

How does music make us feel?

This is a wonderful group discussion about senses and feelings. Encourage your group to talk about music in other mediums as well (film, video games, radio, television, etc).

Activity #2: Importance of Mentorship and Dreaming Big

Curriculum Connections

Language Arts	Writing and Representing
Drama	Defining, Recognizing and Analysing, Reflection, Discussion and Critical Analysis

2 Pianos, 4 Hands is the story of two young students who dream of making it big as concert pianists. Ted and Richard both deal with teachers, mentors, parents and friends who influence them along their journey. There are moments in the play where the characters are challenged in their pursuit and question their intentions all together. While not all dreams are realized, there is much they learn along the way.

On the following page is a worksheet that will encourage your students to dream big!! This is a self-reflective project that the students can take with them.

Have your students fill out the sheet to the best of their abilities. Some of the dreams may already have been fulfilled, while others may be goals for the future.

A good introduction to the worksheet can begin with a discussion of the characters in the play. This could be done as a whole class or perhaps in intimate groups of 2 or 3 to encourage more thoughtful discussion.

Who were Ted and Richard's influences? At what point in Ted and Richard's life and career did these mentors arrive? Were they all positive? How did each boy learn from each of their mentors? What can we learn from their negative experiences?

What is a positive mentor? Perhaps share with your class a positive mentor in your life, how they influenced you and encouraged you to pursue your dreams.

What is your biggest dream(s)?

What does that look like? What are the steps needed to take to achieve this dream(s)?
How would you feel if you achieved this dream? Why?

What does being a mentor mean to you?

Do you currently have a mentor? If so, who are they and how did they fill this role? If you do not have a mentor, write who could fill this role and why they are someone you wish to be a mentor. Why are they important to you?

How can your mentor help you achieve your dreams?

Are you a mentor for anyone else? Explain.

Activity #3: Playing the Piano

Curriculum Connections

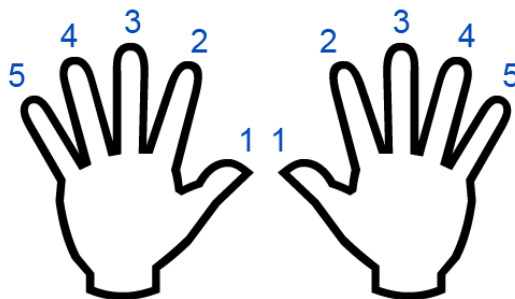
Music	Structure, Self and Community
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Playing the piano is certainly not this simple!! However, through this exercise, students can get a very elementary idea of the movement of their hand when playing a simple tune on a piano.

On the following pages, there is a diagram of a scale on the piano. Please print these for each student or make a copy that the entire class can easily see via a projector or Powerpoint display.

The piano keys are labelled for a song in the key of C Major. While this in itself can be a whole explanation, the idea is not to get overwhelmed with music terminology. Some of the members of your class will certainly know this term, while others may not. Keep this in mind for the entire activity. Our purposes here are to have your class be able to quickly move their fingers to a simple tune, enabling them to get an idea of how the movement feels.

Begin Simply: Have the students look at the key diagram. Have them put the thumb of their right hand on the “C” key, with the remaining fingers taking up the next keys in order: D (pointer finger), E (middle finger), F (Index finger) and G (pinky finger). These fingers are also labelled below in number form to make it easier. We will only be using the right hand for this activity.



To get their fingers moving, simply call out keys (C through G). Explain that for this beginning lesson we are beginning with the thumb (finger 1) on the middle C. Therefore it is easy to assume that the finger 2 will strike D, finger 3 will strike E, finger 4 will strike F and finger 5 will strike G. The fingers will move to the right of the piano, or up the scale.

What finger will strike the G, A and B to the left of the middle C (down on the scale)? Or the A key on the right end?

Have them begin again with finger 1 on middle C. The G key to the left will be struck by bringing finger 2 overtop of the thumb. Therefore allowing fingers 3 and 4 to hit keys A and B.

Begin at middle C again with the thumb. Have the class put their fingers on D, E, F, and G. The thumb will then leave the middle C and go underneath the other fingers to strike the upscale A.

A good note to remember is that when moving to the left (down the scale) on the piano, the fingers go over the thumb. When moving to the right on the piano, the thumb sweeps under the fingers. There are certainly exceptions to this rule as different pianists may choose to use a different finger to better suit the tempo of the piece of music. Again, for simplicity with your class, we will use the above instructions.

On the following page are the keys for playing *The Itsy Bitsy Spider*. This song begins on the G key, so this is where our thumb will begin. Have your class place their thumb on the first G key. In order to be able to glide along the keys, pianists will often return their thumb to the C. Therefore when there is a double playing of a key, regardless of the finger used, the thumb will take the second playing of this key.

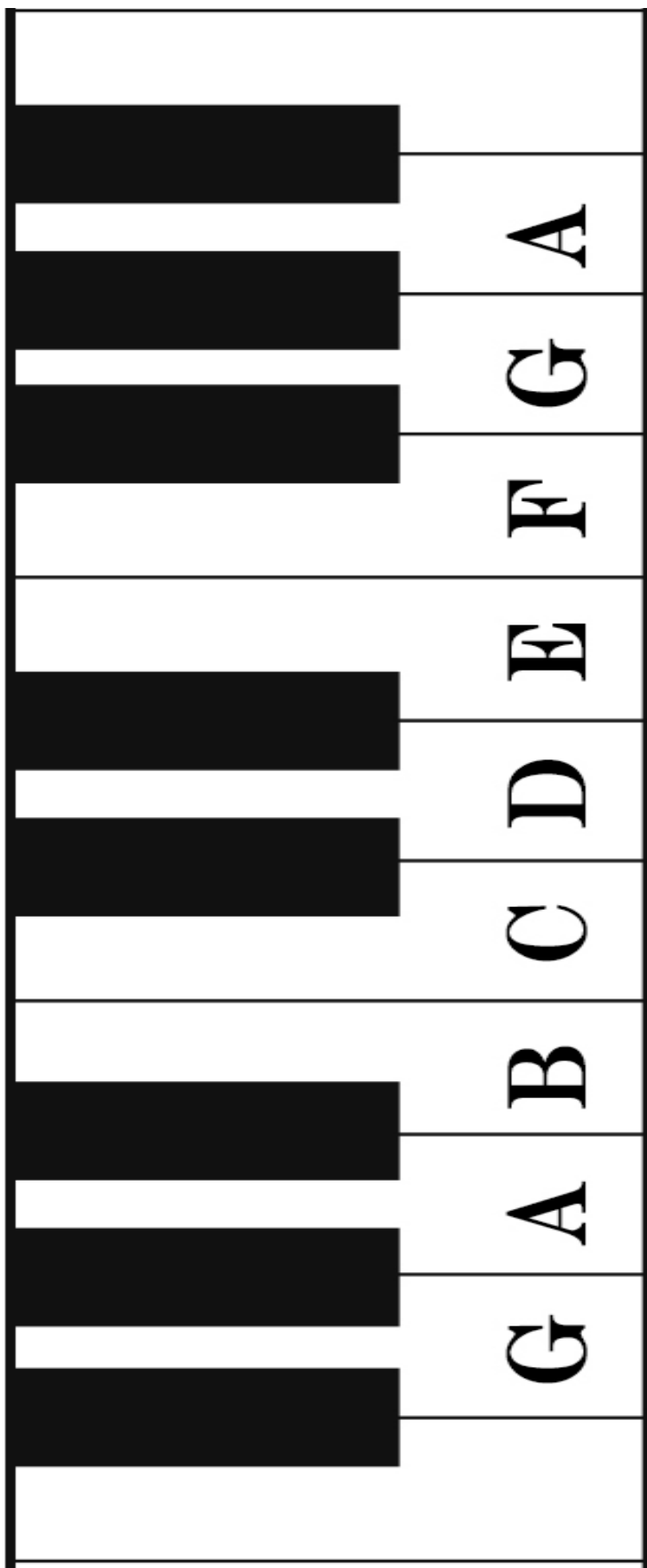
For instance in our first line, the keys are G, C, C, C, D, E, E. Our thumb begins on G, finger 2 will strike C, then the thumb will come back to play the C again. It is then in place for the next key: C. Finger 2 will strike D and finger 3 will strike E twice. So the numbers of the fingers and the keys work like this:

Keys:	G	C	C	C	D	E	E
Fingers:	1	2	1	1	2	3	3

Have the students perform this until they feel comfortable. Have them sing along quietly to help establish the rhythm. Students can then continue through the song on their own, or with the teacher leading.

The keys below are accompanied with the finger numbers, if there is a debate over which finger should strike which key. Again, you can remind students that different pianists may use different fingers when striking different keys, depending on the tempo and speed of the piece.

If you are lucky enough to have a piano at your leisure, allow some of your students to try it out!! After going through these easy steps, it would be a wonderful end to your simple lesson to have them hear the notes!



Itsy-Bitsy Spider



The itsy-bitsy spider

G C C C D E E
1 2 1 1 2 3 3

Climbed up the water spout

E D C D E C
3 2 1 2 3 1

Down came the rain

E E F G
3 3 4 5

And washed the spider out

G F E F G E
5 4 3 4 5 3

Out came the sun

C C D E
1 1 2 3

And dried up all the rain

E D C D E C
3 2 1 2 3 1

And the itsy-bitsy spider

G G C C C D E E
1 1 2 1 1 2 3 3

Climbed up the spout again

E D C D E C
3 2 1 2 3 1

Activity #4: Post Show Discussion

Drama	Exploration and Imagination
Communications	Comprehend and Respond
Music	Thoughts, Images and Feelings
Language Arts	Oral Language, Speaking and Listening

1. Have your students review the play. This can be through a written paragraph or through a classroom discussion. What did you like or dislike about it? Talk about the supporting characters and their influence on the two leading characters.
2. Have a discussion regarding the music in the play. Did you enjoy the music? Why? Did it lend itself to the play? How? Did it enhance your theatrical experience?
3. How does seeing music performed live differ from listening to it?
4. Have you ever learned a musical instrument? Did it help you relate to the play? Did you see yourself in the characters of Richard or Ted? How so? If you haven't had the opportunity to learn a musical instrument, did the play peak your curiosity to do so? How and why?
5. The characters in the play face disappointment. Talk with your class about not achieving your dreams, how that can feel, and what you learn in the process. How do we adapt? How do we pick ourselves up and move on?

Resources Used

Greenblatt, Richard and Ted Dykstra. *2 Pianos, 4 Hands: A play*. Talking Fingers. 1996, updated 2004.

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