

Sykes Piano Teacher Training & Membership Information Booklet

This information booklet provides an introduction to the Sykes Piano Program - its philosophy and an outline of the overall design of the Program. Also included are details of the Sykes Piano Teacher Training - the levels of training, how the training is carried out and what is involved in the training. Sykes Piano Teacher Membership is optional for teachers that complete Sykes Piano Teacher Training. Information about this Membership Program is also provided.



JULIA SYKES

Julia Sykes is an experienced piano teacher that has a passion for students to love learning the piano and become great musicians. She began learning piano when she was 6 years old and started teaching piano when she was 14. She studied a Bachelor of Music Education at the University of Western Australia and has now has about 20 years experience in teaching. In 2003 she began to develop the Sykes Piano Program and since then has been training teachers, has developed many Sykes Music student books and teacher training manuals and DVDs.



Julia is a delightful reacher who has shown individual attention to our son. He loves coming to his piano lessons. Thank you Julia for cultivating his love of music which will last a lifetime.

SYKES PIANO PROGRAM

Julia began developing the Sykes Piano Program because she was not satisfied with any of the other methods that existed. She was passionate about developing wellrounded, flexible and capable musicians with a lasting love of music that would continue throughout their lives. There just were not any programs that ticked all of her boxes. Some had strengths in some areas but were weak in others. She also wanted a program that was enjoyable, well- structured, thorough and capable of preparing students for a successful professional career in music if they so desired. The philosophy of Sykes Music is that students learn to become musicians as well as good performers of the piano. Julia would often hear stories such as, "I learnt piano up to 6th grade and have never played piano again," or "I learnt the piano for 7 years and don't know how to improvise or play by ear." Julia learned piano through the traditional approach. By the completion of 10 years of piano lessons, she could play the piano well, read music and understand the theory of music but was severely lacking in other areas. She had no idea how to play music with others, how to improvise, even how to make three arrangements of Happy Birthday. Her aural skills were very undeveloped - something she realised once enrolled in Music at university. She also had very little knowledge of any music other than classical music, and even that knowledge was very limited. This was the main motivator for Julia. She did not want students to turn into herself! The main philosophical error in many piano methods is that students are developed into piano technicians and not musicians. Music should be about enjoyment, creativity and entertainment. Somehow students are being robbed of the real pleasure and purpose of music.

A good place to begin when looking for a good Piano Program, is to ask yourself this question: If you were looking to employ an excellent, well-rounded pianist, what would be the qualities that you would be looking for? Perhaps these things would be on your list?

- Technically proficient and able to successfully play advanced music
- Have a good ear and be able to work out music by ear
- To be able to play well in ensemble
- The ability to improvise
- The ability to arrange the music
- To be comfortable in many styles of music
- To have a broad knowledge of music its history, understanding of genres, styles, musicians, composers etc
- To be able to write music
- To be able to sing
- To have an extensive repertoire
- To love music

Sykes Music's philosophy is to create these kind of pianists and musicians.



There are many aspects of music that need to be incorporated into a music program to ensure that it is comprehensive and well balanced. The Sykes Piano Program incorporates many aspects of music. Each of these aspects is included in each Level of the Program:

- Performance: Learning to perform pieces of music
- Technique: Learning good playing technique and technical exercises to help students become technically proficient at playing the piano
- Theory: Most theoretical concepts are incorporated with the practical aspects of the program and are not taught in a purely theoretical sense
- Aural: The aural program incorporates many more aspects of aural than what you find in practical piano exams. It includes Kodaly principles which are used for melodic dictation and also working out how to play music by ear
- Singing: The Program uses singing as a learning tool and also includes singing exercises and sight singing based on Kodaly
- Arrangement: Students learn about chords, how to put chords to songs, common chord progressions, how to read chord symbols, accompaniment styles and how to make arrangements of music
- Improvisation: Students learn to improvise in many different styles starting with simple improvisation tasks in the early levels that gradually increase in difficulty as the students progress through the levels of the Sykes Piano Program
- Composition: The compositions are often based on the improvisation idea of that level. Students write at least one composition per grade
- Music Appreciation: This is about learning about composers, bands, musical styles, genres, instruments, music history, etc. When students learn a piece of music, they also learn about the origin and meaning of the piece and about the composer/song writer

COMPREHENSIVE STYLES OF MUSIC

The Sykes Piano Program includes many different kinds of music which contributes to students becoming rounded and flexible musicians. Incorporated into the Piano Program are classical, jazz, blues, pop, folk and other music styles. A lot of effort has been put into selecting pieces of music that sound good, are enjoyable to play and attractive to students. When students enjoy the music that they play, they will play it more, and therefore make better progress and love the piano more. The wide variety of music included ensures that students learn while playing music that they like. In all of the Sykes Grades, many of the pieces are "own choice" pieces, which means that students can develop the Program to their own taste.

THE LEVELS AND GRADES

The standard Sykes Piano Program begins with Levels 1 - 4. Each of these Levels are carefully designed to take the average student 10 weeks to complete. This ensures that these Levels are short- term and achievable goals. Students, parents and teachers also enjoy the satisfaction of the student progressing from Level to Level. In other methods, or usually if students are learning through an exam-based program, the goals normally take students around a year to complete. These are too long and drawn out. The student, teacher, and parent do not feel the same satisfaction of progress even if the student is progressing. Having short 10 week Levels motivates the student to practise and complete the Level so that they can progress to the next Level. Following Levels 1 - 4 comes Preliminary Grade, then Grade 1, Grade 2 etc. Each of these Grades is of the same standard as examination Grades such as AMEB though students learn between 15 - 20 pieces per Grade. All of the Grades have been designed into 3 Levels. For example Preliminary A Level, Preliminary B Level and Preliminary C Level. Each of these Levels are designed to take students 13 weeks to complete. The two main reasons for this division of the Grades into 3 Levels are so that the large goal of a Grade is divided into smaller, more attainable goals. Also each Level incorporates all of the aspects of the Sykes Program listed in the previous paragraph "Comprehensive Aspect of Music" ensuring that students are always learning through a well-balanced Program. At the completion of all of the Levels, students sit a Theory and a Practical Test.

THE SYKES LITTLE MAESTRO PROGRAM

The Sykes Little Maestro Program is a Piano Program for 4 - 6 year olds. It is an unique and effective method for teaching piano to very young children. It is enjoyable and sees young students become quite competent pianists in a very short amount of time. The Sykes Little Maestro Program includes approximately 50 pieces and exercises specially chosen for this age group. Students first of all learn to play the piano without any reading of music, and then music reading is introduced towards the later part of the Little Maestro Program. Included in the Sykes Little Maestro Program are all of the pieces and exercises of the Sykes Level 1. Once students have completed the Sykes Little Maestro Program, they move onto Level 2 of the Sykes Piano Program and then continue through the Sykes Levels. It takes students between 6 - 12 months to complete the Little Maestro program. Therefore it is quite common for students that learn through this Program to be in Preliminary Grade by the time they are 6 years of age. One of the aspects of the Sykes Little Maestro Teacher Training focuses on specific, effective teaching techniques for 4 - 6 year olds.

It's an excellent Program. You should be proud of what you have done and the good that you are doing for people.

HOW READING OF MUSIC IS TAUGHT

The reading of music when learning the piano in traditional methods, often restricts the progress of students. It is difficult and slow. Many students give up before they make it through this slow process. Also many methods only approach learning the piano through reading music. The method used in the Sykes Program is based on the idea that first play, then read. Therefore in Level 1 students do not read any music, reading is introduced in Level 2. This means that students can enjoy playing great sounding pieces on the piano straight away and fall in love with playing the piano. By beginning to read in Level 2, the reading music process is not delayed too much. In Level 2, students follow two streams: one is they learn to play pieces of music and exercises through not reading music, and concurrently they are learning the principles of music reading through interval writing and reading exercises and the introduction of the written form of High C and Low C. Therefore when these two streams meet in Level 2, Level 3 and beyond, students are able to read music that uses both hands and notes all over the piano, including leger lines at a surprisingly advanced level of difficulty. In fact the first piece of music that they read in Level 2 uses both hands, chords and a jazzy rhythm. Also Sykes Music teaches the reading of music in a way that is much easier and more efficient than the traditional approach to reading. It is an interval based method that uses the 'Cs' as reference points. Letter names are used to a minimum in the early Levels. Students can read all notes on the piano by Level 4 (in one year of lessons for an average student) and they become very competent and independent sight readers. Because the students are such independent readers they are able to learn the notes of their pieces at home. This means that lesson time can be spent teaching rather than helping students work out how to play the notes. It also frees up more lesson time for other activities such as aural, improvisation and music appreciation.

GROUP LESSONS

Sykes students can learn in small groups. Most students that learn in small groups, learn faster than students that have private lessons because they are fun and they have an added element of competition. The ideal group size is 3 students with a lesson duration of 50 minutes. Only one piano is used during group lessons and the students learn together all of the time though they often take it in turns to play. These lessons are also economical plus they have the added bonus of being great for group activities such as aural, improvising, theory, music appreciation, rhythm exercises and duets.

A whole new easier way to reading music.

REPERTOIRE

Repertoire maintenance is an integral part of Sykes Music. The greatest benefit to students when they maintain their repertoire is that it provides a solid foundation on which to build the learning of new and more difficult pieces. Another benefit is because students know how to play their repertoire pieces, they can then focus on the 'way' that they are playing these pieces, such as tempo and expression. To help students maintain their repertoire, students are provided with a Sykes Music Repertoire Book. In this book students tick the pieces that they play and when they have ticked a certain number of boxes, they receive a special sticker. The Repertoire Book is a way of rewarding students for maintaining their repertoire plus it motivates students to play more. With a well maintained repertoire, students always have something to perform. Also when students play their repertoire they enjoy playing because it is easy and they sound good. Musicianship is improved through two ways, by improving previously learned pieces and by learning new material. Sykes students are encouraged to always maintain a balance between both forms of learning.

INTEGRATION

The Sykes Piano Program uses an integrated approach with theory, technique, performance, music appreciation, improvisation, composition and aural. For example students will learn about the duration of notes and the names of note values, then learn how to perform rhythms using these notes, then as part of aural they will have these rhythms in their rhythmic dictation and also apply this rhythm knowledge into the performance of their pieces.



IT is such a berrek method than the way piano used to be raught.

STUDENTS PROGRESS QUICKLY

Sykes Piano students progress very quickly. The average student begins Preliminary Grade after just one year of lessons practising only 15 minutes 5 times a week. Then in Preliminary Grade they learn approximately 20 pieces in one year with 20 minutes practise 5 times a week. There are many reasons why Sykes students progress quickly:

- Two Hand Coordination: This is one of the most difficult aspects of playing the piano, that is, two hands playing different things at the same time. In the Sykes Piano Program this difficulty is deliberately tackled head on. Level by Level students are provided with coordination challenges that increase in difficulty. In this way students quickly have the ability to play advanced pieces. The Piano Program includes many exercises and pieces which are specially designed with the intent purpose to improve two hand coordination
- Reading: The method used to teach students to read is so easy and efficient; it allows students to progress quickly
- Enjoyment: The Sykes Piano Program is enjoyable. The music selected has been specially chosen to be nice to play and listen to. Also because the Program is well balanced and includes performance, improvisation, aural, technique etc, the lessons themselves are a pleasure and so are the tasks set for the week to practise. This also allows students with different strengths and weaknesses to shine in at least one area. The way that the program is designed is student friendly. The overall structure of the Program provides satisfaction to the students. The side effect of students enjoying themselves is that they want to play more and because they are playing more, they progress more quickly. This has a catch 22 effect. Because they are progressing quickly, they enjoy playing more. So positive feeds positive
- The Levels: Because the Levels are short-term goals of 10 13 weeks, students are motivated to progress from Level to Level and this helps them progress faster. Also because the students have assessments and are graded during these assessments students are motivated to work hard to attain good results
- Parental Involvement: Because parents are involved in their children's lessons, students are able to turn to their parents for help at home. This in effect means that the piano teacher has a teacher assistant. Also because the parents have more understanding, they tend to be more encouraging and supportive
- Group Lessons: The competition helps students progress quickly
- Performances: These help keep students motivated and practicing
- Rewards: Students are rewarded for practicing through praise, stickers and prizes
- The Teachers: Because the teachers are qualified, well trained and competent, the students are in capable hands. The teachers write lesson plans, so they have good direction during lessons and are well organised, which means that lesson time is utilised to greatest capacity and the students have the greatest chance of success. Teachers through their training, are equipped with the skills to help students overcome difficulties, and have effective strategies to help students learn their pieces and exercises in the most efficient and effective way
- Comprehensive Program: Because the Sykes Piano Program has a broad approach
 to the way music is learned, plus includes many aspects of music, students with
 different learning styles are well catered for. Students are able to progress and are
 not hampered by a Program that does not suit their style of learning

SYKES PIANO TEACHER TRAINING

The Sykes Piano Program is a great way to teach piano and it an easy way and inexpensive way of teaching piano. You do not need to spend thousands of dollars on music, you don't have to learn on the job with your student's suffering along the way. You do not need to figure out 'what' to teach your students, 'when' to teach things, and 'how' to teach these things, because this is all laid out for you. You can have peace of mind that you are not neglecting any area's of your student's learning, that your students are progressing as quickly as possible and enjoying their learning at the same time, and you will be having a good time too.

The Sykes Piano Program is a very different way of learning piano and to be able to deliver the program as effectively as possible, it is necessary for you to learn how to teach the Program. Sykes Piano Teacher Training shows piano teachers how to teach the Sykes Piano Program and become very effective and successful teachers. The training is a distance education program. Teachers are able to learn in their own homes, and at their own pace. There is a lot of information in the Sykes Piano Teacher Training Program. Having the course set up as distance education means that teachers can process this information at a rate that is suitable for them.

Training can be spread out over as long a period as you desire. It is recommended that you complete training up to Preliminary Grade reasonable quickly so that you are able to teach a range of students, but then after this, for example, you may like to do just 1 module of training per year.

The teacher training consists of:

- reading the Sykes Piano Teacher Training Manuals
- watching the Sykes Piano Teacher Training DVDs
- phone calls and skype sessions with your teacher trainer
- ongoing support, consultations and feedback from your teacher trainer
- written assignments
- practical teaching assignments
- written assessments
- practical assessments

MODULES OF TRAINING

- 1. An Introduction to Sykes Music and Teaching Piano
- 2. The Sykes Little Maestro Program and Level 1
- 3. Sykes Piano Program Levels 2 4
- 4. Sykes Piano Program Preliminary Grade
- 5. Sykes Piano Program Grade 1
- 6. Sykes Piano Program Grade 2
- 7. Sykes Piano Program Grade 3
- 8. Sykes Piano Program Grade 4
- 9. Sykes Piano Program Grade 5

AN INTRODUCTION TO SYKES MUSIC AND TEACHING PIANO

This training is made up of two main sections. The first section is An Introduction to Sykes Music and Teaching Piano. Here are some of the topics included in this training:

- Why learn piano and why teach piano?
- The history of Sykes Music and why it was developed
- Why the Sykes Piano Program is enjoyable, why students progress quickly and why it is a comprehensive program
- A detailed look at all of the aspects of the piano program including performance, technique, theory, aural, singing, arrangement, improvisation, composition and music appreciation
- How the Sykes Piano Program is comprehensive of all age groups
- How the Sykes Piano Program caters for different learning styles
- How the Levels are designed and why they are designed in this way
- Why Sykes Piano students learn so many pieces per grade
- The rhythm aspect of the program
- How music reading is taught in the Sykes Piano Program and why
- Group versus private lessons
- Repertoire maintenance
- How parents should be involved
- Setting up a healthy home environment for students
- Good teaching principles such as staying on time, dealing with bad behavior, being firm but fair, rewards, good explanations and instructions, how to teach pieces or exercises, when and how to correct students, how to introduce topics or exercises and student self confidence
- Lesson format and lesson planning
- The standard Sykes Music lesson plan
- A look at Sykes Music and other methods of learning piano

The second section of this training is called Administration and includes many aspects such as:

- How to set up your music studio
- Looking after yourself and setting yourself up personally for success as a teacher
- Sykes Music recommended administration procedures for example the initial point of contact with new students, what topics to cover in your trial lesson or first few piano lessons, timetabling procedures, enrolment procedures, invoicing procedures and student cancellation procedures

The Sykes Piano Teacher Administration manual includes a digital copy of all Sykes Music administration and marketing material. The manual explains each form and a spreadsheet and how to use these.

The last section of this administration training is about marketing procedures and covers effective marketing strategies and how to implement these.



This training teaches how to effectively deliver the Sykes Little Maestro and Level 1 Sykes Piano Program. It includes a Sykes Little Maestro and Level 1 Teacher's Manual and 2 Sykes Little Maestro and Level 1 Teacher Training DVDs. Some topics included in this training are:

- The history of the Sykes Little Maestro Program
- The benefits of 4 6 year olds learning piano
- How to teach 4 6 year olds (this section has 34 points)
- The Sykes Little Maestro lesson format

The majority of this training is practical. There are 74 pieces and exercises included in the Sykes Little Maestro and Level 1 Piano Programs and the teacher manual and training DVDs go through each of these in detail explaining:

- The pedagogical purpose of the piece or exercise
- How to teach it
- The typical difficulties that students will have and strategies to help students overcome these
- Extra notes about the piece or exercise

There are some simple music reading and writing exercises in the Sykes Little Maestro Program and this training shows teachers how to teach these.

This training finishes off with a few points such as adults students in Level 1, the Sykes Little Maestro Program Suggested Teaching Order and Level 1 Lesson Plans.



I don't have to ask my child to go and practise the piano.



The majority of this training is practical and includes the Sykes Piano Program Levels 2 - 4 Teacher Manual and the Sykes Piano Program Levels 2 - 4 Teaching Training DVDs.

This training begins with a few general points such as:

- An overview of all 3 Levels
- How to begin a Level
- Teaching adult students
- How to run group lessons

A lot of this training is practical and goes through in detail how to teach all of the 86 pieces, exercises, music reading and writing exercises and theoretical concepts in these Levels once again looking at:

- The pedagogical purpose of the piece or exercise
- How to teach it
- The typical difficulties that students will have and strategies to help students overcome these
- Extra notes about the piece or exercise

The practical aspects of this training are interspersed with many other topics including:

- How to conduct the Sykes Music tests
- Teaching students how to practice
- Methods to help students practice more
- Creating performance opportunities

SYKES PIANO PROGRAM PRELIMINARY GRADE TO GRADE 5

All of the training from the Sykes Little Maestro Program through to Grade 5, is a combination of reading, watching, feedback from your trainer, assignments and assessments. The training has topics applicable to teaching in general or related to teaching students at these particular Levels. The majority of the training is very hands-on and practical, relating specifically to how to teach pieces, exercises (including technical, aural, improvisation etc), music reading and theory. Teachers have practical assignments such as filming themselves teaching a particular piece, teaching a lesson or their students performing a piece. There are also written assignments. The assessments also have practical elements - such as teachers performing the pieces in a Level of the program during a skype session and explaining to their trainer how they would go about teaching particular pieces or exercises.



For the piano learning experience to be successful, there are three essential elements:

- 1. The **student** is required to put in time and dedication
- 2. The **program** needs to be excellent
- 3. The **teacher** teaching the Program needs to be an excellent teacher

It is necessary for teachers to have a suitable level of knowledge in music and skills in playing the piano to be an effective and powerful teacher, therefore Sykes Music has prerequisites for teachers to enrol in training. These prerequisites are very reasonable.

Training Level	Prerequisites
All training up to Preliminary	Grade 3 Piano Grade 1 Theory
Grade 1 Training	Grade 4 Piano Grade 2 Theory
Grade 2 Training	Grade 5 Piano Grade 3 Theory
Grade 3 Training	Grade 6 Piano Grade 3 Theory
Grade 4 Training	Grade 7 Piano Grade 4 Theory
Grade 5 Training	Grade 8 Piano Grade 5 Theory

I can't believe that I couldn't play the piano a year ago and now look at where I am at! I couldn't have done it without your program.

AUDITION

If you do not have formal qualifications, then an audition can be arranged for you. The audition consists of two parts, a video call and a theory test:

- 1. You perform 2 pieces of contrasting pieces of music on the piano
- 2. A sight reading exercise
- 3. A couple of aural exercises
- 4. A few theory questions

At the completion of your audition, you will receive a report outlining what Level of training you will be able to complete at your current level of piano playing and music knowledge.

HOW YOU ENROL IN TRAINING

There are no 'start dates' for modules of training. Teachers can enrol in training when they like. In future though, we may offer teachers the option of running modules of training with specific start dates, so that groups of teachers can undergo the training at the same time.

To enrol in training, simply fill out the Training Enrolment Form, attach your qualifications and return to Sykes Music. Once your enrolment has been approved, you can begin training.

I hope that this has given you a good insight into the Sykes Piano Teacher Training program. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.



The Sykes Music Program is a great way to learn and develop an appreciation of music. The program encompasses a wide variety of music taught in a fun and non-threatening environment.



Sykes Piano Teacher Membership is available to all teachers that have completed at least one Level of Teacher Training. Following are the benefits received from Teacher Membership:

	Non-Member Teacher	Sykes Member Teacher
The right to use the Sykes Piano Program with your students	/	/
15% discount on the RRP of all Sykes Music materials		/
15% discount on Sykes Music workshops		1
Student referrals		/
The right to use the Sykes Music name and logo in advertising		/
Your profile, studio location and contact details on the Sykes Music website www. sykesmusic.com.au		/
A digital copy of administration forms and advertising material		1
Ongoing support and mentoring from Julia Sykes		1
Updates on developments and new material in the Sykes Piano Program		1
Newsletters with piano teaching advice and relevant information for piano teachers such as information about pianos, workshops, conferences, performances and research		
Membership of the Sykes Piano Teacher support group		1



"Doing the Sykes Music teaching training course has been the best decision I have made as a music teacher."

"I really enjoyed and found the course inspiring. It has given me a lot more confidence to teach and opened up a new career path, a whole new world, which I hadn't thought possible. My students are all enjoying the program and excited about being able to play in such a short time. Thank you Julia."

"Becoming a Sykes Piano Teacher and going through the Sykes Piano Program is one of the best decisions I have made; It is an investment towards my Musical and Personal growth. Like any other investments, there are good times and bad times. However, going through the Sykes Piano Program under the mentoring and guidance of Julia has opened up doors and taught me so much with regards to Music Teaching. Julia's 'modern' approach towards Music Teaching is unique, easy and most importantly efficient. Try it you won't regret it!"

"Training as a Sykes music teacher has boosted my confidence and added much enjoyment to teaching music. Not only do students enjoy learning, I learn too!"

"It's very rewarding to see the kids that I teach have fun during the lessons. They progress quickly as well, which is important. Normally it takes students a while to get to a certain level – with Sykes it only takes a term to reach a new level. You cover lots of aspects of music and you're not just stuck with pieces and scales. It's easier because all the work is there, its easier for the students to understand and for a teacher to teach."

"When I was starting to teach music I wasn't quite sure where to start. The Sykes Program gave a really solid base. The thing that attracted me the most as a teacher was how enjoyable it seemed compared to the traditional classical method I learned from. It allows you to incorporate all different styles and the students become really well rounded."

"It's a really effective method to apply to younger students because they can start earlier and progress at a good rate which means they have more fun. Having learnt through the Sykes program myself, I have experienced first hand the benefits of the program and have been able to carry that over into my teaching."

"Discovering Sykes Music was probably one of the best things that happened to me - and channelled me to the right direction in my career."

"I have just had nice feedback from one my parents that she's really happy with the Sykes approach as she said she has friends with kids doing the trad approach and she can see how plodding it is in comparison."

"Thank you very much for this fantastic program. Most of my students have been with me for a very long time due to this wonderful teaching method. The support from you as a mentor has been amazing and I couldn't be more happier with my teaching choice. Thanks for everything once again!" DP: LTCL- (Classical piano), Bachelor of Music (classical piano performance), Master of Teaching (Primary and Secondary - UWA)

"There are so many benefits that I have achieved (completing Sykes Piano Teacher Training) it would be hard to number. This information has been like putting on a pair of well fitting glasses after previously been squinting and trying to work out hazy outlines. Most people have a hazy idea of what it is to be a good teacher but compared to the Sykes method it has comprehensively demonstrated to me more than that. It has armed me with the information to question, to prepare, to demonstrate, to lead a student who is endeavouring to broaden his or her knowledge in music."



If you would like to know more about Sykes Music, please call: +61 8 9771 8174, email: info@sykesmusic.com.au or go to

www.sykesmusic.com.au