

Guided Meditation for Pianists

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“I” Script

I am feeling very relaxed. I feel my shoulders letting go...my arms letting go...my wrists...thumbs...second fingers...third...fourth...fifth fingers...all relaxing more and more. I'm moving any way I like, in order to relax completely: making circles with my head, or shoulders, or stretching my arms or back--anything that feels good. I take a deep breath, and now I am exhaling, pushing all the air slowly out of my body, as I relax my forehead...scalp...face...neck...and now inhaling for five counts: 1...2...3...4...5. As I hold my breath for a few seconds, I concentrate on relaxing my upper and lower body, and let go even more as I exhale—one, two, three, four, five. Inhaling one more time—one, two, three, four, five. Holding while focusing now on my legs, feet, and toes, and letting them relax completely as I release my breath: 1...2...3...4...and 5.

I feel very comfortable and loose, and as I count from ten to one, I let go even more...10...9... very relaxed...8...7...breathing freely and fully...6...5...releasing my shoulders...4...my arms and hands are relaxed at my side...3...my neck and head feel very light, as if they were filled with feathers...two...fully relaxed now...one...feeling a glow inside and all around my body.

I am so excited about playing the piano. Every moment that I spend practicing is stimulating, and I am proud of my artistic work and achievements. My musical insights are becoming more and more profound, and I am learning to blend together the finest expressions of my body, mind and heart. When I perform, and even when practicing, I reach beyond notes, clean technique and even musical phrasing. I draw on all of my life experience and all of my emotions, and carry them into every sound that I produce. People are moved when they listen to me, because they can hear the meaning underneath the notes.

Negativity has no control over me. Whether it comes from outside or inside, I give those voices no response or emotion, and they pass harmlessly through me. Only positive, supportive voices can occupy my mind and heart. When worry and doubt surface, I wait patiently and calmly while they speak their mind, and then turn with eagerness and enthusiasm to the more colorful, alive voices of creativity and imagination.

I play the piano because I love music. It gives my emotions dignity and purpose. My happiness, compassion, grief, fear, anger and laughter all make sense when they are expressed in music. Other people feel the same way when I play for them. I remember special moments when I played for someone and it made them happy, refreshed and comforted...I have an awesome gift, and I want to develop it more and more, and use it for its highest purpose—to bring happiness and fulfillment to myself and others.

Every day my artistry is blossoming more fully and my understanding of the music I play is more profound. Whenever I practice or perform, time seems to stand still, and I become completely immersed in the beauty of the music and the physical joy of moving my arms, hands and fingers. I remember a time that I felt especially submerged in my practicing...and another time it happened while I was performing (in concert, for a friend or relative, or for your teacher).

I am more and more relaxed when I play the piano. My arms, hands and fingers feel springy, and rebound in a loose, light, easy manner. When I play a fast passage, my arm leads my fingers, and the notes are all played in one large movement, as if I were drawing a long, unbroken line with a pencil. My shoulders, neck and back are loose. My arms move independently of my torso. My torso is still most of the time, except when I move way up or down the keyboard, or need to bear down for extra power.

I am learning that I can play with feeling and meaning and relax at the same time. I can build up tension in a phrase without becoming tense or tight in my body or mind. In fact, it seems like the greater the increase in dynamic, texture or tension, the looser I get. Part of me stands back, away from the thought and the emotion, and just listens and watches. That part of me stays calm, no matter what I am playing, where I am playing or for whom I am playing. That other "me" has all the answers, and I can become that me any time I wish, just by remembering how it feels.

The calm and wise me is like a faucet. Tension and fear turn off the faucet. Letting go turns it on. And now, as I allow my body and mind to relax more and more, the spigot begins to turn and the water begins to drip...and now trickle...now flow... more and more, until it is pouring out. My body and mind are glowing with ideas and creative sparks, and I am becoming more and more eager to sit at the piano and play. I feel as if I could conquer any problem, and play any piece. I feel strong, confident, and excited.

Because I can call on the calm and wise me whenever I want, I don't feel frustrated when I am facing physical or mental problems in practice or performance. I see them as challenges, and I make a game out of trying to find solutions. I let myself try all sorts of things—even things that are supposed to be "wrong"—because I know that exploring freely will bring me to more interesting answers and deeper understanding.

Now I am imagining that I am seated at the piano, ready to begin practicing...I feel the bench beneath me, see the closed music on the note stand, the surrounding furniture, and as many other details as I want...I open the score, my hands descend to the keys, and I begin to play.

But this time I hear the music as never before...the sounds are as fresh as if I had been deaf all my life, and were hearing for the very first time...my shoulders, neck, arms and fingers are so relaxed I am amazed...I look at the music and get a flood of ideas. Everything is so easy and so "right" that I don't want to waste a minute...I'm completely absorbed... I'm learning faster than I ever thought possible, because nothing is blocking the flow of creative thought. All extraneous thoughts have vanished. After a while, I look over at the clock, and am shocked to discover that three hours have gone by in what seemed like three minutes!

Now I visualize myself getting ready for a performance. I can clearly see what I'm wearing...I see the color and feel the texture of the material. I feel confident. It feels so good—like how it feels when I can't wait to share something with a friend...excited, but in a pleasant way.

I can see myself now at the hall or room where I'm going to perform. I'm waiting to play...it will only be a few more seconds. Once again, this feeling of happy excitement comes over me. I think about the parts of the piece or the program that I really love—the parts I have worked on so hard to make

beautiful. In my mind I see the faces of my friends and family (or jurors) in the audience, and imagine how much they will love hearing those parts, and how glad they will be that they came.

I walk toward the piano, listening to the applause. My mind is alert, calm and clear, and my arms and fingers feel loose and elastic. Everyone and everything in the room looks bright and in sharp focus. I feel very happy to be there—I have never felt such well-being in front of an audience before. I breathe deeply and freely, bow, then smile with anticipation. A glowing, glittering bubble surrounds me, getting bigger and bigger, until the whole room and audience is glittering. Something incredible is about to happen.

I sit down and begin to play. At the first sound, I know things are going right. I know this is going to be an inspired performance. Sounds and movements are flowing like water. Everything is so easy! I can hear the music clearly (allow a long silence to mentally run through a few passages of music).

The audience is completely still. They are so wrapped up in my music that they forget to cough, move, look at their phones or daydream. Time doesn't exist for them. I am so carried away that I forget there even is an audience. I am only aware of being enveloped by a swirling cocoon of beautiful, colorful sounds. I'm hardly even conscious that I'm playing—it's more like I'm standing in back of myself, watching and listening.

As I get to the last few seconds of the performance, I wish I could keep playing. I finish, and reluctantly get up. I become aware of the audience once again—they all look ecstatic. The applause is loud and enthusiastic. I bow deeply, and smile once again. I am radiant with joy, because I have given my audience more than just a performance—I have given them a gift of beauty.