

# ABRSM-EPTA Piano Teachers Development Days

Foundations of Teaching – Course Leader Rowan Cozens

DipABRSM – Course Leader Mark Tanner

[www.epta-uk.org](http://www.epta-uk.org)    [www.abrsm.org](http://www.abrsm.org)

## Plan for each day

**10.00-11.30** Divide into two groups (Foundations of teaching, Dip ABRSM )

11.30–12.00 Coffee and Discussions

**12.00-1.00** The virtuoso teacher - Helen Krizos

1.00-2.00 Lunch

**2.00-3.00** Special ABRSM guest presenters

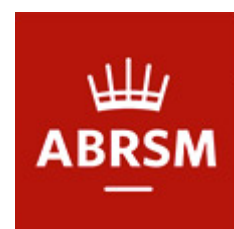
**3.00-4.00** Divide into two groups

4.00-4.30 Coffee and Discussions

**4.30-5.30** Teaching Seminar and ABRSM mock exam videos and marking for all.



*Inspiring all piano teachers, performers and enthusiasts*



## **Day One 27 January 2019: The Inspirational Teacher**

### **Whole group presentations:**

12.00-1.00pm **The virtuoso teacher with Helen Krizos.**

Helen will work with three students of different ages and levels.

2.00-3.00 **Simultaneous learning with Paul Harris.** Teaching proactively through music's ingredients. Making connections. Teaching in an empowering, non-judgemental way.

4.30-5.30 **The small child (5-8 years of age). Teaching seminar**

### **ABRSM Mock Exam Videos and Marking**

In this and the subsequent five CPD Days we will be using ABRSM videos and audio recordings of 'live' piano exam candidates with a view to improving our awareness of the criteria. A variety of grades and styles of music will be discussed, with opportunities to practise writing mock comments and match these to appropriate marks. A knowledge of what examiners are looking for will be of inestimable help as we prepare our pupils for their big day.

### **Foundations of teaching sessions (CertEPTA)**

10.00-10.30 **Foundations of technique:** Prevention is better than cure. Establishing healthy practice, good posture and essential principles from the first lesson. Warm up routines and basic exercises.

10.30-11.00 **Teaching Principles: From the known to the unknown:** Moving forward with confidence to new musical discoveries.

11.00-11.30 **Teaching Principles: From first Principles to first lessons.** The way that we introduce the instrument and deal with the preliminary issues of posture, hand shape, finding notes etc will be discussed.

3.00-3.30 **Choosing appropriate repertoire: Exercises and studies.** Technical development needs to be considered from the very beginnings. Navigating through all of the technical studies and exercises available can be challenging. It is important to know the basic core repertoire and collections of exercises- then use them appropriately.

3.30-4.00 **The Art of demonstration:** Beginning to develop counterpoint and ornaments from the earliest stages

### **DIP ABRSM Sessions**

10.00-10.30 **Planning versus spontaneity in Piano Lessons**

Some of the most inspired lessons we will ever give may not have been planned in advance. But before we can begin to live on our wits as teachers, we need to be confident we have the necessary resources, skills and ideas all lined up and ready to put into action. Good preparation is key to good teaching, especially early on, so in

this session we will look at some of the ways spontaneity and preparation can come together optimally.

**10.30-11.00 Sustaining Motivation and Inspiration**

Is it entirely for the teacher to sustain motivation in their pupils, or should we be encouraging pupils to become self-critical, more independent learners? The truth probably lies somewhere in between, but this is a topic that will never be far away from an effective teacher's mind. We can achieve motivation by a multitude of practical ways, but key to it is communicating our own passion and love for what we do.

**11.00-11.30 Foundations of technique: Building up speed, strength, stamina and security.**

How to develop an energised, healthy, reliable and natural technique. Practising in concentrated ways. Analysing technical challenges in order to overcome problems. Building a transcendental technique from the first lesson

**3.00-3.30 The Art of demonstration: Summing up a piece in a nutshell.**

In these talks reference will be made to the ABRSM exam music (grades 4-6). Analysis of the main technical and musical features present in several Grade 6 pieces will provide preparation for the Demonstration part of the Teacher's DipABRSM.

**3.30-4.00 Choosing appropriate repertoire: Baroque Keyboard Music on the Modern Piano. A look at the issues involved in transferring music from early keyboard instruments to the modern piano.**

## **Day Two 24 February 2019: The Effective, Consistent Teacher**

### **Whole group presentations:**

12.00-1.00pm **The virtuoso teacher with Helen Krizos.**

Helen will work with three students of different ages and levels.

2.00-3.00 **Special ABRSM guest presenter**

4.30-5.30 **The adventurous teenager: Teaching Seminar**

### **ABRSM Mock Exam Videos and Marking**

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### **Foundations of teaching sessions (CertEPTA)**

10.00-10.30     **Foundations of Technique: Finger Independence.** Controlling the ten digits. Five finger exercises. How to build up reliability and control of finger-work.

10.30-11.00     **Teaching Principles: Achieving a balanced lesson**  
Variety is the spice of life. In lessons it helps to keep interest and concentration going if you vary the activities or the order of doing things from time to time.

11.00-11.30     **Teaching Principles: The Importance of Take-Home Messages**  
Here we discuss the importance of notebooks or charts to show what you expect your pupil to do between lessons.

3.00-3.30       **The Art of Demonstration: Pedalling.** How to control and develop facility and co-ordination with the sustaining pedal and the una corda. An introduction to the sostenuto 'middle' pedal. Teaching and demonstrating pedalling with confidence. Demonstrating Legato, Rhythmic (direct), Staccato, Legatissimo, Una Corda, and sostenuto pedalling need not be daunting.

3.30-4.00       **Choosing and Teaching Appropriate Repertoire: Classical Period.**

Much early, middle and late classical repertoire can be a great source of study, both from a musical and technical perspective. How to approach and develop technical, stylistic and interpretive understanding in music by Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Clementi and their contemporaries. Repertoire from ABRSM grades 1-3 will be highlighted for particular consideration

### **DIP ABRSM Sessions**

10.00-10.30     **Dip.ABRSM Teaching: Teaching How to Practise Effectively**

It is surprising how many advanced pianists possess a relatively rudimentary practising technique. A 'blood, sweat and tears' approach will carry us only so far, whereas ideally, practising should be enjoyable and beneficial in equal measure. In this session we will be tackling ways of becoming more ordered and effective in our own practice sessions; by extension, we will find ourselves better able to help our pupils to practise more effectively.

10.30 – 11.00     **Sustaining a Healthy Psychology as a Teacher**

So much of the CPD teachers are offered these days is pupil-centric, as indeed it ought to be. But a teacher's mental/physical wellbeing is easily overlooked in the frenzy to achieve measurable success with our pupils, perhaps especially in a school environment. Accountability can lead to less creative, enjoyable teaching, ending in stress and frustration. This session will explore ways by which a teacher can sustain a healthy psychology over the longer term by recharging their batteries in decisive ways. We will also look at how to strike a healthy balance between the energy teachers put into their work and what they themselves get from their teaching.

- 11.00-11.30     **Foundations of Technique: Rhythmic Vibrancy, including Rubato**
- Principles and exercises to consider for the development of pulse, rhythmic discipline, flexibility and variety. ‘Chopin’ rubato. Agogics. Conducting and dance for inspiration.
- 3.00-3.30       **The Art of Demonstration: Using the una corda and sostenuto pedals.** How the pedals work and how much should we use the una corda pedal. If we have a ‘middle’ pedal, where can it be usefully applied?
- 3.30-4.00       **Choosing appropriate repertoire: Avant garde and contemporary styles**
- New musical notations, together with some of the ways 20<sup>th</sup> century composers have reinvented conventional notation to their own ends. Looking beyond the obvious – towards what cannot be notated.

### **Day Three: 31 March 2019 ‘The Clear-Sighted Teacher’**

#### **Whole group presentations:**

12.00-1.00pm   **The virtuoso teacher with Helen Krizos.**

Helen will work with three students of different ages and levels.

2.00-3.00       **Special ABRSM guest presenter**

4.30-5.30       **Coaxing out the cautious piano player: Teaching Seminar**

#### **ABRSM Mock Exam Videos and Marking**

We will be using ABRSM videos and audio recordings of ‘live’ piano exam candidates with a view to improving our awareness of the criteria. A variety of grades and styles of music will be discussed, with opportunities to practise writing mock comments and match these to appropriate marks. A knowledge of what examiners are looking for will be of inestimable help as we prepare our pupils for their big day.

#### **Foundations of teaching sessions (CertEPTA)**

- 10.00-10.30    **Foundations of Technique: Freedom and strength: The Essence of Technical Vibrancy**
- How to encourage and develop flexibility, relaxation and power. Basic exercises and approaches for all pupils that will grow and develop with each lesson.
- 10.30-11.00    **Teaching Principles: Reinforcing Central Teaching Themes**
- What are the basic essentials that we need to continually stress in our day to day teaching?
- 11.00-11.30    **Teaching Principles: Teaching Character and Personality in Pieces**
- Our ability to make the music speak; to paint vivid pictures and reach out to

the listener must always be our goal. Passing this on to our pupils is one of the joys of teaching.

3.00-3.30 **The Art of demonstration: Dynamics and Articulation.** Using current exam pieces to illustrate (grades 1-3) interpreting the signs and adding our own.

3.30-4.00 **Choosing appropriate repertoire: Romantic Period.** The importance of knowing the strengths of our pupils and guiding them towards suitable pieces...especially for concerts and exams.

### DIP ABRSM Sessions

10.00-10.30 **Dip.ABRSM Teaching: Tactics for ABRSM Viva Voce Examination**

Even good, experienced drivers might well struggle to pass a driving test tomorrow. In the same way, becoming a fluent, confident teacher will not necessarily lead to a strong success in the highly specific setting of an ABRSM viva voce exam. Exam strategy is a subtle art, and a rather important one, too - how, for example, might you steer the topic of conversation towards areas you want to talk about, such as repertoire or an aspect of group teaching? How can you be sure you are conversant with the elements that will likely be tackled in the viva voce, and what are some of the ways you can put yourself at ease beforehand?

10.30-11.00 **Dip.ABRSM Teaching: Written Submission**

The ABRSM Written Submission is sometimes greeted with consternation by prospective teaching diploma candidates. This session will open your eyes to the best ways of approaching this potentially rewarding component, which is done several months prior to the main exam 'event' - it's your opportunity to focus a little more sharply on a topic you feel lies closest to your range of interests and experience. In this session you will learn how to write a really impactful submission!

11.00-11.30 **Foundations of Technique: Phrasing** Basic principles for teaching shape and structure in intermediate repertoire, with analysis of ABRSM grades 4-6 pieces from different periods. How to encourage sensitivity and understanding in phrasing for all our pupils.

3.00-3.30 **The Art of Demonstration: Teaching Balance Between the Hands.** Teaching approaches for the development of tonal control across different periods. Dismantling melody and accompaniment, harmony and counterpoint, phrasing and counter-phrasing and the balance between the hands in scale and arpeggio practice. Exercises that can help to encourage independence only between the hands but between different strands of a piece. ABRSM grades 4-6 repertoire will be chosen for analysis and discussion.

3.30-4.00 **Choosing and Teaching Appropriate Repertoire: Impressionism.** How to cultivate sensitivity and understanding in French Repertoire. Performing to the title of a piece. Suitable repertoire of the different impressionist and 20<sup>th</sup> century piano composers.

## **Day Four 2 June 2019 'Towards a more personal approach'**

### **Whole group presentations:**

12.00-1.00pm **The virtuoso teacher with Helen Krizos.**

Helen will work with three students of different ages and levels.

2.00-3.00 **Special ABRSM guest presenter**

4.30-5.30 **The intermediate player: Teaching Seminar.**

### **ABRSM Mock Exam Videos and Marking**

We will be using ABRSM videos and audio recordings of 'live' piano exam candidates with a view to improving our awareness of the criteria. A variety of grades and styles of music will be discussed, with opportunities to practise writing mock comments and match these to appropriate marks. A knowledge of what examiners are looking for will be of inestimable help as we prepare our pupils for their big day.

### **Foundations of teaching sessions (CertEPTA)**

10.00-10.30 **Foundations of Technique: Touches: Legato, Staccato, Portato, Leggiero.**

Articulation needs to be cultivated and nurtured from the first piano lessons. Principles and exercises can and should be set up and experimented with, allowing our pupils to 'play' rather than 'work' at their techniques.

10.30-11.00 **Teaching Principles: Teaching memorisation.** Many are frightened of performing from memory. There are several ways of going about memorising, and here we look at some of them.

11.00-11.30 **Teaching Principles: Involving Analysis.** To fully appreciate a piece and be able to give a meaningful performance, it is essential to understand its structure.

3.00-3.30 **The Art of Demonstration: Coordination and Syncopation** Exercises and practising techniques which can build facility and security. Internalising music.

3.30-4.00 **Choosing and Teaching Appropriate Repertoire: 20th Century Styles** A survey of the major trends in 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> century piano music. Bartok's 'Mikrokosmos' will be especially used in this preliminary exploration.

### **DIP ABRSM Sessions**

10.00-10.30 **Dip.ABRSM Teaching: Keeping Scales and Arpeggios Interesting**

Scales and arpeggios are rarely met with glee by pupils, but in this session we will be looking at some of the ways teachers might re-invent these important technical elements to keep them fresh and enjoyable. For the more advanced player, the 'arpscalpaggio' can be a fun way to combine scales and arpeggios, while at a more

grass roots level, there are fun ways teachers can thread these essential exercises into the broader learning experience.

**10.30-11.00 Dip.ABRSM Teaching: Teaching Memorisation**

Not everyone agrees that memorising is an indispensable aspect of performing at the piano, whether in an exam, festival or even professional setting. But, assuming we see some advantages to doing so, how might we improve our rate of efficiency when memorising? Learning *is* memorising, or at least to some degree, so perhaps the answer lies in how we go about tackling learning music in the first place?

**11.00-11.30 Foundations of Technique: Voicing and Counterpoint** Developing a reliable and approach to practising ABRSM grades 4-6 repertoire.

**3.00-3.30 The Art of demonstration: Rubato.** Rubato is one of the most important means of expression. What it is (and isn't), how to teach it and how to apply it tastefully are the questions facing every mindful teacher, and not just in romantic repertoire.

**3.30-4.00 Choosing appropriate repertoire: 18<sup>th</sup> century elegance.** 'Playing with good taste' was the watch-word in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. How do we achieve this vital grace?

## **Day Five: 30 June 2019 'The Flexible, Empathetic Teacher'**

### **Whole group presentations:**

12.00-1.00pm **The virtuoso teacher with Helen Krizos.**

Helen will work with three students of different ages and levels.

2.00-3.00 **Special ABRSM guest presenter**

4.30-5.30 **Taming the overambitious: Teaching Seminar.**

### **ABRSM Mock Exam Videos and Marking**

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### **Foundations of teaching sessions (CertEPTA)**

10.00-10.30 **Foundations of technique: Movement and Flexibility.** Developing and encouraging freedom of movement via exercises, encouragement, principles and relaxation.

10.30-11.00 **Teaching Principles: Workarounds for smaller hands.** Many pupils have a limited stretch. Here we share some ideals to help.

11.00-11.30 **Teaching Principles: Pedalling for ambience**



Introducing the sustaining pedal and listening to the magical effects it can produce. Pupils usually cannot wait to begin using it; but just when is the right time?

3.00-3.30 **The Art of Demonstration:** Exaggerating to make a point.

3.30-4.00 **Choosing and Teaching Appropriate Repertoire:** Off the beaten track - quirky repertoire and how to tease out its special qualities.

### DIP ABRSM Sessions

10.00-10.30 **Dip.ABRSM Teaching: Acquiring a Musical Overview when Playing**

The 'bigger picture', as it's sometimes called, is something which can only come into view once a player has mastered the main technical and musical aspects of a piece. Until this point has been arrived at, a performance may resemble a series of random points of interest. Helping pupils to acquire a convincing overview - a sense of direction in what they are playing (especially in more sprawling works, such as sonatas) - ranks among the more sophisticated challenges teachers face. This session will offer concrete ideas and 'ways in' to help teachers become more effective in this elusive area of interpretation and performance.

10.30-11.00 **Dip.ABRSM Teaching: Voicing Harmonies**

Unlike many other instrumentalists, pianists rarely think hard enough about their *sound*. Though we may play with sensitivity, dynamics and articulation, it is in the domain of voicing that the pianist can really begin to impress, even at a relatively early level. An ability to bring out specific notes in harmonies becomes a skill that will transform your pupils' playing (and perhaps your own!).

11.00-11.30 **Foundations of Technique: Tone and Colour** Finding new sounds, touches, colours and effects, while also imitating instruments of the orchestra at the keyboard. Making the most of the instrument's 'sweet spot'.

3.00-3.30 **Teaching Jazz and Pop Styles Effectively**

Teachers sometimes appear reluctant to step into the realm of pop or jazz, particularly if they feel their own training has left them bereft of an affinity for these lighter styles. And yet, for many pupils, it will be the more modern forms of piano music which offer the greatest attraction. You don't need to be an instinctive jazzier or improviser to help others grasp the essence of 'feel', 'swing' and 'delay' – here we will look at how to connect you and your pupils to jazz and pop with greater confidence and imagination.

3.30-4.00 **Choosing and Teaching Appropriate Repertoire: Lighter Styles** Embracing music inspired by the folk tradition, as well as popular styles, jazz and transcriptions of film scores, etc.

## **Day Six 21 July The Dynamic, Motivational Teacher**

### **Whole group presentations:**

12.00-1.00pm **The virtuoso teacher with Helen Krizos.**

Helen will work with three students of different ages and levels.

2.00-3.00 **Special ABRSM guest presenter**

4.30-5.30 **The advanced learner: Teaching Seminar.**

### **ABRSM Mock Exam Videos and Marking**

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### **Foundations of teaching sessions (CertEPTA)**

10.00-10.30 **Foundations of Technique: Principles of Effective Pedalling.** The basic techniques explained and discussed. How to cultivate creative pedalling that is based on aural perception and interpretation rather than convenience.

10.30-11.00 **Teaching Adult Learners – from LRSM**  
Adults are often rewarding pupils; they want to learn. But there can be difficulties with technique and with fulfilling their own expectations.

11.00-11.30 **Teaching Principles: Keeping Your Teaching Fresh and Invigorating**  
Teachers can become weary of saying the same things over & over. How can we maintain our enthusiasm and joy of teaching?

3.00-3.30 **The Art of Demonstration: Engaging the Imagination.** Finding inspiration and insights from literature, poetry, art, sculpture, drama, ballet, nature. Synaesthesia. Extra pianistic musical influences.

3.30-4.00 **Choosing and Teaching Appropriate Repertoire: Duets, 6 hands, 8 hands** Using Nadia Lasserson's book 'Piano Need not be Lonely' as a starting point, repertoire for mutipiano combinations is considered. The importance of duet playing in particular cannot be over-stated.

## DIP ABRSM Sessions

### 10.00-10.30 **Dip.ABRSM Teaching: Looking Beyond the Notes**

With hundreds or even thousands of notes to summon in every piece we play, pianists understandably tend to become bogged down by the machinery of learning - if we are not careful, our pupils will become slaves to note-learning. How might teachers help their pupils to see 'beyond the notes', and hence prise out the interesting musical detail?

### 10.30-11.00 **Dip.ABRSM Teaching: Using Apps and Handheld Devices in our Teaching**

Like it or not, technology is here to stay. Besides, why resist the advantages apps can offer us? An average handheld device has greater power than the earliest generations of bulky computer, so teachers need to be alive to the ways these can help us teach even more imaginatively. Examples might include apps to help pupils to improvise, or to practise theory - alternatively, to play with one hand at a time, at half speed...or even double speed. There are apps designed purely to alter the order of what we do each lesson in order to minimise predictability, as well as ABRSM apps to help sight-reading and aural.

### 11.00-11.30 **Foundations of Technique: Pedalling in Practice.** Pedalling techniques are cited and studied from repertoire. Material from ABRSM Grades 4-6 in particular will be used for study.

### 3.00-3.30 **The Art of Demonstration: Getting Your Pupil to teach you!** Asking Questions should be a regular feature in our teaching. Getting your pupil to show you how to do something is part of that same process and a lot of fun, too!

### 3.30-4.00 **Choosing appropriate repertoire: Transcriptions, Arrangements.** The Piano Repertoire is huge compared with other instruments, but there is surely a place also for good arrangements and transcriptions.



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