

A Glossary of Terms found in the SCALERAIL Handbook

- Arpeggios** The notes of a chord played one after the other. Arpeggios in all major and minor keys, as well as diminished and dominant sevenths, form an important part of a pianist's technical training.
- Broken Chords** The notes of a chord arranged in a pattern and used for the accompaniment of a melody or to construct *passage work*. They are often used as a first step in the study of arpeggios. When played in all keys, using different patterns, they form useful finger exercises.
- Broken Octaves** An octave where the notes are played one after the other rather than simultaneously. Broken octaves with the lower note sounding first are more common, but it is useful to practise broken octaves with the upper note sounding first as well. In either case the accent can be varied so as to occur on either the upper or lower note in each case.
- Broken Sixths** A sixth where the notes are played one after the other rather than simultaneously. (The same comments for broken octaves apply to broken sixths).
- Chromatic Scale** A scale consisting of twelve ascending or descending semitones. The most common fingering pattern is 1-3 with 1-2 being used on any two consecutive white notes, but other fingering patterns are available and can prove useful.
- Five-finger Exercises** Five-finger exercises make use of ascending and descending sequential patterns and are used for training the independence and strength of the fingers. They can be practised in many different ways – legato, staccato, using various dynamic levels, different rhythms, different touches and speeds.

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- Key Blocks** The flat wooden blocks at either end of the piano keyboard, the one at the bass end usually being wider. They are used to support the **SCALERAIL** when it is in position at the piano (See **SCALERAIL** handbook for detailed instructions)
- Lateral Movement** a) Movement of the hands up and down the keyboard in a straight line. When playing scales or arpeggios this lateral movement should be smooth and uninterrupted, with the hand facing forward and the elbow quiet and relaxed.
b) Sideways movement of the hand at the wrist joint.
- Octave** The interval spanning eight notes, from one note to the note above or below with the same letter name. Scales in octaves form an important part of piano technique. **SCALERAIL** can help you to practise the technique of playing octave scales from the wrist.
- Passage Work** Keyboard figuration often based on scales and arpeggios. It forms a major part of idiomatic writing for the piano and helps to link the main thematic material in a composition. Passage work often requires both speed and evenness of touch. Bespoke exercises can be created out of figurations in specific sections of passage work to help promote these attributes, but the routine practice of scales and arpeggios is also a very useful method of acquiring the necessary technique.
- Piano Technique** The physical aspect of playing the piano, including the use of the body, arms, hands and fingers. Technique should never be thought of as being separate from musical expression – it is the means by which the performer brings the printed score of the composer to life through the medium of the piano - not an end in itself. It therefore follows that all technical practise should have a musical intention.
A good teacher will always ensure that the student's technique develops alongside their study of appropriate repertoire.

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- Practice** Practising the piano needs to be both regular and structured if the student is to make progress. In the early stages of learning the student needs to be taught HOW to practise and sessions are best supervised. As the student learns how to practise their work can gradually become more autonomous.
Methods of practice and their expected outcomes should always be clear to the student before practice begins. The final goal of the student is to be able to work independently of the teacher.
The teacher should strive to enable this to happen.
- Scales** A series of notes ascending or descending by step. Different types of scale include: major, minor, chromatic, whole-tone, pentatonic. The practise of scales (and arpeggios) forms an essential part of developing a strong and flexible piano technique.
- Sixth** The interval spanning six notes. Scales played in sixths use a similar technique to scales played in octaves.
- Technical Exercises** Keyboard routines designed to develop different aspects of technique. Technical exercises can take many forms and there are a large number of published collections available. It is always important to understand what individual exercises are designed to achieve and to practise them with musical intent. Technical exercises can also be devised by student or teacher to help solve a specific difficulty encountered in piece the student is studying.
- Tone Production** The art of producing the desired quality of sound from the piano. Much has been written over the years about the nature of tone production on the piano, and it remains a subject on which scientists and musicians can still disagree. It is helpful if the student understands how the piano works and how its mechanism (the system of levers called the 'action') becomes an extension of the player's own mechanism – body, arms, hands and fingers.

The cultivation of a good tone is something that the student should strive for whatever they are playing – this means that each note should have the desired duration and intensity, and the student should be sensitive to this whenever they play.