



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN – MADISON

School of Music

“The Joy of Downsizing”

The Benefits of Performing and Teaching
on a DS 5.5™ 7/8 size Piano Keyboard

A Special Event with Jessica Johnson
Professor of Piano and Piano Pedagogy

Morphy Hall

2:30 to 10:00 PM

University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Music

Saturday, February 20, 2016

All events are free and open to the public.

Schedule of Events

All events held in Morphy Hall

WORKSHOP

2:30-3:45 PM

*All Hands on Keys:
Strategies for Teaching Students with Small Hands*

COFFEE BREAK

3:45-4:15 PM

Join us in the lobby for coffee, juice and light refreshments

MASTER CLASS

4:15-5:45 PM

Featuring students from the Madison Area Piano Teachers Association

TRY THE PIANO!

5:45-6:45 PM

*All are invited to explore the piano during this time.
UW-Madison students will be available to answer questions*

FACULTY CONCERT

8:00 PM

*With Prof. Jessica Johnson, pianist
Performed on a Steinbuhler DS 5.5™ (7/8) Size Piano Keyboard*

Workshop

2:30-3:45 PM

All Hands on Keys:

Strategies for Teaching Students with Small Hands

The hands of great pianists come in all shapes and sizes. Spending literally thousands of hours at the piano, we develop time-tested, proven strategies for learning repertoire in a way that suits our unique physiology. We know best that which we have experienced within our own bodies. How does this impact our ability to work with students with different hand sizes than our own?

As a small-handed pianist, I have spent my entire professional career seeking creative strategies to adapt to playing conventional sized piano keyboards. I have become a guru of innovative fingerings and have learned how to employ ergonomic movements and compensatory gestures in order to perform technically challenging repertoire on the conventional piano. However, following the life-changing moment when I started practicing on an alternatively-sized keyboard, I have experienced a whole new level of artistic and technical freedom. Research related to the use of Ergonomically-Scaled Piano Keyboards (ESPKs) suggests similar benefits for small-handed pianists, including less pain and injury, greater technical facility and accuracy, and ease of learning.

Using a Steinbuhler DS 5.5™ (7/8) Size Piano Keyboard insert manufactured by Steinbuhler & Company that was custom made for this Steinway B piano, this workshop will demonstrate effective strategies for teaching students with small hands and ways to exploit musical and technical choices that maximize artistry and biomechanical ease.

Coffee Break

3:45-4:15 PM

Join us in the lobby for coffee, juice and light refreshments.

Master Class

4:15-5:45 PM

Featuring students from the Madison Area Piano Teachers Association

Sonata in G major, Op. 79
I. Presto all tedesca

Ludwig v. Beethoven
(1770-1827)

Jessica Jiang
Student of William Lutes



Nocturne in E-flat major, Op. 9, No. 2

Frédéric Chopin
(1810-1849)

Kathleen Leone
Student of Chris Collins



Sonata in C minor, Op. 10, No. 1
III. Finale--Prestissimo

Ludwig v. Beethoven
(1770-1827)

Edwin Zhang
Student of Denise Taylor

Try the piano!

5:45-6:45 PM

*You are invited to explore the piano during this time.
UW-Madison students will be available to answer questions.*

Faculty Concert

8:00 PM

Jessica Johnson, Pianist

Performed on a Steinbuhler DS 5.5™ (7/8) Size Piano Keyboard

Drei Klavierstücke, D. 946

Allegro assai-Andante-Tempo I

Allegretto

Allegro

Franz Schubert

(1797-1828)

Intermission

Ballad, Op. 6

Amy Beach

(1867-1944)

Concert sans Orchestre in f minor, Op. 14 (Original edition)

Allegro brillante

Quasi Variazioni. Andantino de Clara Wieck

Prestissimo possible

Robert Schumann

(1810-1856)

About the Steinbuhler DS 5.5™ (7/8) Size Piano Keyboard

In 2012, Prof. Johnson received a WARF Faculty Research Grant from the UW-Madison Graduate School to purchase a Steinbuhler DS 5.5™ (7/8) Size Piano Keyboard insert manufactured by Steinbuhler & Company, custom made for this Steinway B piano. While the conventional piano keyboard's measures 6.5 inches per octave, the DS 5.5™ measures 5.5 inches per octave, affording the small-handed pianist greater freedom and ease.

For more information, please see Steinbuhler.com.

Program Notes

Composed in 1827-1828, the manuscript of Schubert's *Drei Klavierstücke*, D. 946 bears no title or number. In 1868, Johannes Brahms edited them and supervised their first publication, giving them the simple designation, "Drei Klavierstücke."

D. 946 displays Schubert's incomparable sense of melody, no doubt inspired and informed by the hundreds of songs he composed throughout his life. They are in simple ternary form, similar to his previous Impromptus and other character pieces. No. 1, "Allegro assai," in E-flat minor begins and ends with anxious, undulating triplets, brimming with despair and grief. The "Andante" middle section in the distant key of B major offers an exquisite and meditative reprieve. The tender melody in No. 2's "Allegretto" in E-flat major is interspersed with two contrasting episodes of anguish and longing. No. 3 in C major features a Slavic dance, full of life-affirming joy. He ventures into the Neapolitan (lowered 2nd) D-flat major in the middle section, with the dance moving into a more spiritual realm. This is pure late Schubert, inviting us to simply listen, transfixed and unhurried.

Amy Marcy Cheney was born in Henniker, New Hampshire on September 5, 1867. A child prodigy, she began composing music at age four and performing publicly at age seven. She married Dr. Henry Beach in 1885. Throughout her life, Beach wrote more than 150 numbered works ranging from chamber and orchestral works to church music and songs.

Composed in 1894, *Ballad*, Op. 6, reveals her characteristic late-romantic style, reminiscent of Chopin and Liszt. Like her predecessors, she excelled at the character piece, creating a colorful musical narrative with intense lyricism and passionate outbursts.

Schumann's *Concert sans Orchestre* in f minor, Op. 14 was composed in the summer of 1836 during one of the self-proclaimed "darkest" periods of his life when he was separated from Clara Wieck. Though it is surrounded chronologically by some of his most beloved works such as *Kinderszenen*, Op. 15 and the *Fantasie*, Op. 17, it remains one of his least performed piano works. The first edition was published in 1836 as a three-movement work with the title *Concert sans Orchestre*, most likely attributed to the publisher, Tobias Haslinger. In the Paris journal *Gazette musicale de Paris*, Liszt declared the work "full of substance and vigor."

Schumann's musical universe is replete with symbolism and quotations, creating a secret language between he and Clara. The poignant middle movement, "Quasi Variazioni," based on the theme from an "Andantino" by Clara Wieck, quotes Clara's melodic descending fifth motive, forming the center of the work and generating much of the thematic material. The first movement, "Allegro brillante," opens dramatically with the descending fifth motive in the low register. Similarly, the impetuous "Prestissimo possibile" features the motive in inversion.

Like many of his works, Schumann published a second edition in 1853 containing numerous revisions and the addition of a Scherzo. For tonight's program, I have chosen to perform the original edition believing that much of its spontaneity, even eccentricity, comes from his initial burst of fancy and creativity. As Schumann wrote, "The first conception is always the most natural and the best. Reason errs, but never feeling."

About Jessica Johnson

Jessica Johnson serves on the piano faculty at the University of Wisconsin-Madison as Professor of Piano and Piano Pedagogy. In 2006, she was the recipient of UW-Madison's prestigious Emil Steiger Distinguished Teaching Award for excellence in teaching. In addition to her love of the standard keyboard repertoire, Johnson frequently commissions and programs contemporary solo and chamber works. She regularly performs with Sole Nero, a piano and percussion duo with Anthony Di Sanza, percussion. In an effort to contribute to the repertoire of this diverse medium, the duo has engaged in an extensive commissioning project resulting in many new works by composers such as Laura Schwendinger, Les Thimmig, Evan Hause, Dave Hollinden, Joel Naumann, Joseph Koykkar, Serra Hwang and Michael Kallstrom. In 2004, the duo released its first compact disc recording on the Equilibrium label titled *Musica per Due*.

An active clinician, she has given workshops and presentations at the European Piano Teachers Association International Conference, World Piano Pedagogy Conference, ISME International Conference, MTNA National Conferences, Performing Arts Medicine Association (PAMA), National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy (NCKP), Portland International Piano Festival, as well as held residencies at major universities and colleges throughout North America, Europe and China. Johnson has articles published in *American Music Teacher*, *Piano Journal* of the European Piano Teachers Association, *Clavier Companion*, *Piano Pedagogy Forum* and *Piano Adventures Teacher Newsletter*. She is a two-time winner of American Music Teacher's Article of the Year Award for "Feeling the Sound: Reflections on Claiming One's Own Musical Voice (2014)" and "The Art of Listening with Depth, Understanding, Flow and Imagery" (2007 – in collaboration with Midori Koga, University of Toronto).

A devoted teacher, Johnson's students have secured teaching positions in the U.S., Canada, Europe and Asia. Passionate about community engagement and arts outreach, she serves as Director of Piano Pioneers, a program that brings high quality piano instruction to low-income community members and high-risk youth in Wisconsin. Piano Pioneers has received generous support from the Evjue Foundation, the Morgridge Institute, the Ira and Ineva Reilly Baldwin Wisconsin Idea Endowment, and Steinway and Sons of Madison.

Johnson received the MM in Piano Performance and DMA in Piano Performance and Pedagogy from the University of Michigan. She holds the BM in Piano Performance, magna cum laude, from East Carolina University. Her principal teachers include Arthur Greene, Charles Fisher and Donna Coleman, and piano pedagogy studies with Joanne Smith and Kerry Carlin. She lives in Madison with her husband, Anthony Di Sanza (UW-Madison Professor of Percussion), and her daughter, Maggie.

Special Thanks

This Steinbuhler DS 5.5™ Piano was funded by a faculty research grant from the UW-Madison Graduate School. Thanks to Benjamin Garber, owner of Steinway and Sons of Madison, for generously sponsoring the piano move for tonight's concert. I am indebted to Baoli Liu and Mark Ultsch for going above and beyond to prepare the piano for today's events.

We thank the Vilas Trust, the Anonymous Fund, and our many donors for supporting these concerts and other activities at the School of Music.



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Upcoming Events:

Christopher Taylor

Solo Piano

Works of Bach, Brahms and Scriabin

February 26, 2016

8 PM

Mills Hall

Students Free/General Public \$15

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