

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rae de Lisle

University of Auckland (New Zealand)

Biography

Dr. Rae de Lisle, currently Associate Professor of Piano at the University of Auckland, is widely recognised as New Zealand's foremost piano pedagogue. Her teaching has produced many outstanding pianists, including first prizewinners in the Sydney International Piano Competition and the Lev Vlassenko Australasian Piano Competition. She has served on international competition juries in Dublin, Singapore and the USA and many of her former students are established as pianists throughout the world. Rae received a Teaching Excellence Award from the University in 2011, and in 2015 was made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to music.

Rae's ground-breaking PhD on focal dystonia has resulted in specific concepts about instrumental retraining which have led to presentations and keynote speeches throughout the world. Her experience in teaching students from the very beginning to international competition winners, as well as her own studies with renowned pedagogues Brigitte Wild, Cyril Smith, and Maria Curcio, gives her a unique perspective on injury preventative technique. Her recently published interactive e-book *Fit 4 Piano*, containing more than 80 video examples, is a fun resource for teachers and students designed to assist the establishing of a coordinated technique at every level.

Topic Presented

Playing with ease: applying simple exercises to repertoire of all levels.

Abstract

In my experience, many students are focused only on moving their fingers, and they often do not understand how to coordinate the body as a whole in order to produce a free and beautiful sound. Often, playing is restricted by stiffness, physical tension and pain, and there is little awareness of how to move in a balanced way. These habits can be changed, but how much better it would be if the student was well-coordinated from the earliest lessons. Then technical problems are minimized, and students are free to express themselves musically. In this presentation, I will discuss how a series of simple exercises can be applied to repertoire of all levels in order to make playing easier, more musical and more fun.

Excerpts from my recently published interactive e-book *Fit 4 Piano* will be shown with video examples of exercises that I have found most useful over a lifetime of teaching students of all ages and levels. These very basic exercises cover many of the movements we use in playing the piano, and their purpose is to establish freedom in the arm and wrist while playing. They are intended as a means of establishing a healthy technique, in which injury is less likely to occur. This resource is intended to demystify the complexities of technique in a way which is easy to understand for both student and teacher. Musical examples will show how these exercises are relevant from the easiest pieces to advanced repertoire.