

Movies to Games, Classically Trained with Alpin Hong

School Show Study Guide
from the Artist

Luther Burbank Center for the Arts
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ABOUT ALPIN HONG

Whirlwind American tours and performances across the globe have earned pianist Alpin Hong the reputation as a modern day Pied Piper. His combination of stunning technique, emotional range and rare humor continues to bring audiences young and old to their feet. The *Santa Barbara News Press* described Mr. Hong's performance as "...a tour de force. Hong evoked a kind of Beatlemania when he came on stage. What a showman! What a musician!" The *New York Times* lauded his "crystalline energy... clear and persuasive ideas...and remarkable breadth of coloration" and called him "a pianistic firebrand" in a review of his standing-room only New York recital debut at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall.

In July 2005, *Gramophone* magazine declared his first, self-titled CD (works of Scarlatti, Brahms, Debussy and Stravinsky on MSR Classics) "a debut that enhances this young pianist's reputation," praising his "strong finger-work and keen ear for voice-leading." The release of his second album, *friendtaskmasterteacher*, sold out of its first run within a matter of weeks and garnered critical acclaim.

Rooted in extensive classical training and a background in skateboarding, snowboarding, martial arts, and videogames, Alpin is a creative force unmatched in its youthful vivacity and boundless energy. His astonishing ability to connect to people of all ages, experiences, and backgrounds distinguishes him and shapes his evolving performance style. His uniquely humorous and visionary approach to arts education has resulted in artistic residencies from coast-to-coast. In recognition of the pianist's gift for communicating his passion for music to audiences of all ages, The McGraw-Hill Companies honored him in September 2005 with the \$10,000 Robert Sherman Award for Music Education and Community Outreach. His tireless pursuit to find, inspire, and collaborate with talents in every community results in unforgettable presentations that both expand worlds and hit close to home.

Recent performances included the opening gala celebrations of Hahn Hall in Santa Barbara, CA and Strings Music Pavilion in Steamboat Springs, CO, as well as the opening concert of Kennesaw State University as an All-Steinway School. A sold-out return engagement with the Boise Philharmonic, performing Beethoven Concerto No. 3, enhanced his reputation as "a rock star" in classical music. Alpin's educational outreach efforts in Steamboat Springs culminated in a spectacular event featuring 225 area band and choir students, performing works that ranged from Stravinsky's *Firebird* to Latin jazz standard *Rice and Beans* to *Harry Potter*. His performance at the University of Iowa's Hancher Auditorium featured three young string students in a rendition of video game themes that left a new generation of musicians inspired and cheering.

Alpin Hong is a native of Michigan and made his orchestral debut with the Kalamazoo Symphony at the age of ten. He moved to Los Angeles soon after and garnered competition victories at a young age with wins at the 1989 Stravinsky Piano Competition, the 1993 SYMF Competition and the 1994 Los Angeles Spotlight Awards Competition. He was the winner of the Concert Artists Guild Competition in 2001. His teachers include Mark Richman and Emilio del Rosario. He completed his Master's degree as a student of Jerome Lowenthal at The Juilliard School.



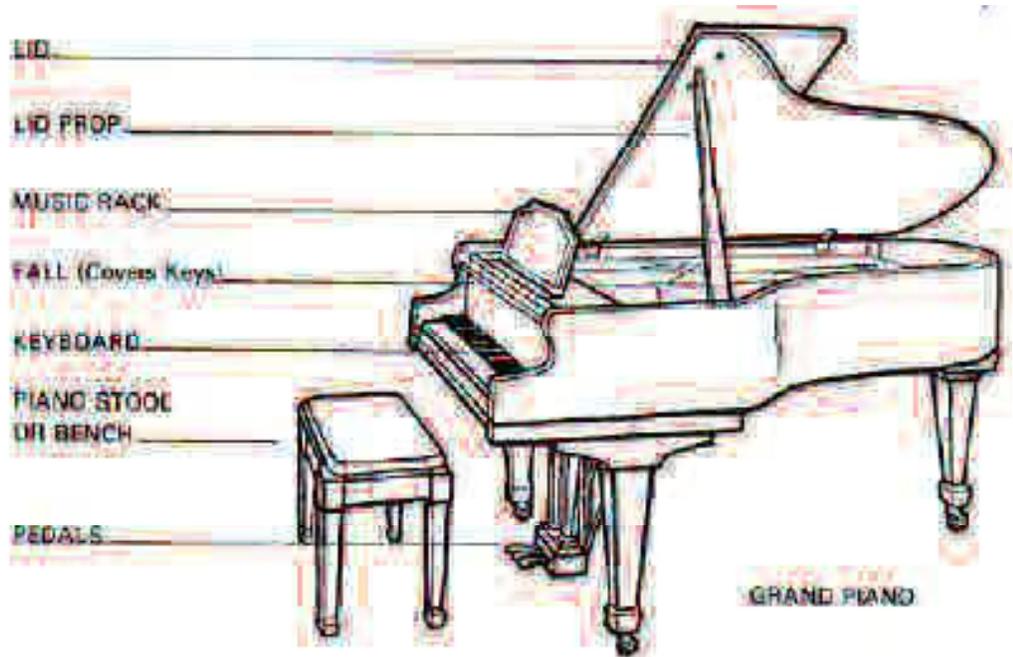
TYPES OF PIANOS

THE GRAND PIANO

In grand pianos, the frame and strings are horizontal, with the strings extending away from the keyboard.

There are different sizes of grand pianos: the concert grand, the parlor grand, the boudoir grand and the baby grand.

Full-size grands are usually used for public concerts, whereas smaller grands are often chosen for domestic use where space and cost are considerations.

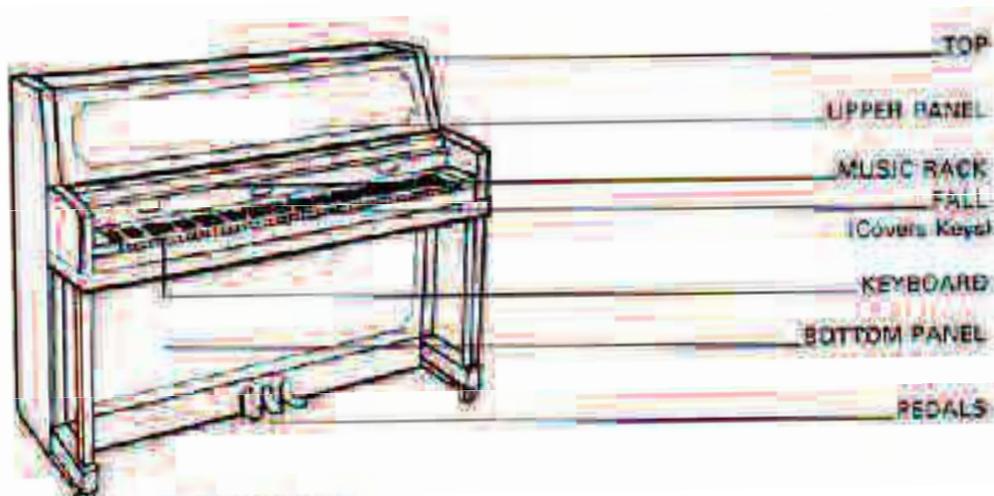


THE UPRIGHT PIANO

Upright pianos, also called vertical pianos, are more compact because the frame and strings are vertical.

Upright pianos with unusually tall frames and long strings are sometimes called upright grand pianos.

Studio pianos are around 42 to 45 inches tall. Console pianos are a few inches shorter than studio models. Anything taller than a studio piano is called an upright.



THE PIANO'S SOUND

www.onlypiano.com

The fundamental way a piano produces sound is by vibrating strings. As with stringed instruments like guitars, violins and harps, the pitch of a string changes with the length and tension of the string. Unlike a guitar however, a piano contains individual strings (in practice, groups of two or three) for each pitch you might play, so there is no need to change the length of a string as you play it. To play any note, you simply press the key that causes hammer to hit the strings that are tuned to that note.

How does pressing a key cause the hammer to strike a group of strings? This task is performed by the action, which is a complicated connection of wood or plastic parts that transfers the downward motion of pressing the key to the striking motion of the hammer. This striking motion is the defining feature of the piano and separates it from its predecessors like the harpsichord and clavichord. No matter if you tap the key or hold it, the string is struck briefly by the hammer, which then immediately pulls away from the string to let it vibrate (though it will be damped once the key is no longer depressed). Furthermore, the volume depends upon how hard you pressed the key. Before this invention strings were either plucked, or struck and held in specific places to both sound the string and create the correct pitch. Neither way offered very much dynamic control.

A few strings vibrating in air does not create a very loud or robust sound, which is why pianos and their precursors all have a soundboard. This is a large piece of slightly concave wood that “collects” the vibration of the strings and retransmits them with more volume (like the body of a violin or acoustic guitar).

Those are the basics of how a piano creates and transmits its sound. It is also important to stop strings from vibrating, which is why all strings are damped except when the key associated with them is depressed. Much of the innovation in piano-making has involved more sophisticated ways to control the dampers, mainly with the use of pedals. Some prevent any dampers from being applied, or prevent only the bass dampers from being applied, or leave strings to vibrate if their keys were depressed when the pedal was depressed.

PIANO NOTES

www.playpiano.com

New pianists learn notes first. An understanding of musical notes and their values is the foundation for learning any instrument. That includes the piano. The values of the notes are easy to remember because their names denote their values.

Whole note: A whole note looks a bit like an egg on its side. It is round or oval-shaped and not shaded/solid. A whole note is held for four beats in 4/4 time.



Half note: A half note is so called because it is held for half as long as a whole note. In other words, it is held for two beats. It resembles a smaller version of whole note, but with a line attached to its side.



PIANO NOTES CONTINUED...

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Quarter note: A quarter note is held for a quarter of the time a whole note is held: one beat. A quarter note looks like a half note, with one minor difference. While the half note is not shaded, the quarter note is.



Eighth note: The eighth note is, of course, an eighth of the value of a whole note. In other words, it is held for half a beat. It looks like a quarter note with a curly "tail" at the end of its line. Eighth notes can also be joined together in groups of two, three, or four. If they are joined, they are connected by a bar across the top, rather than having a "tail."



Sixteenth note: The sixteenth note is one-sixteenth the length of a whole note when held. It is held for a mere quarter of a beat. A sixteenth note looks similar to an eighth note, but has a double "tail." When two, three or four are joined, they are connected by a double bar.



PIANO FUN FACTS

1. The piano is known as "The King of Instruments"
2. The average medium size piano has about 230 strings, each string having about 165 pounds of tension, with the combined pull of all strings equaling approximately eighteen tons
3. Six Steinway pianos are now in the Smithsonian collection
4. A new piano should be tuned four times the first year, with the change of seasons, and at least twice a year after that
5. There are over 10 MILLION pianos in American homes, businesses, and institutions
6. The name piano is an abbreviation of Cristofori's original name for the instrument: "piano et forte" or "soft and loud"
7. There are currently over 50 Brand Names of pianos
8. The exact middle of the keyboard is not middle C, it is actually the space between E and F above "middle" C
9. Sitka spruce are used in the construction of Steinway pianos
10. Beethoven's Studio Piano is in the National Museum, Vienna, Austria

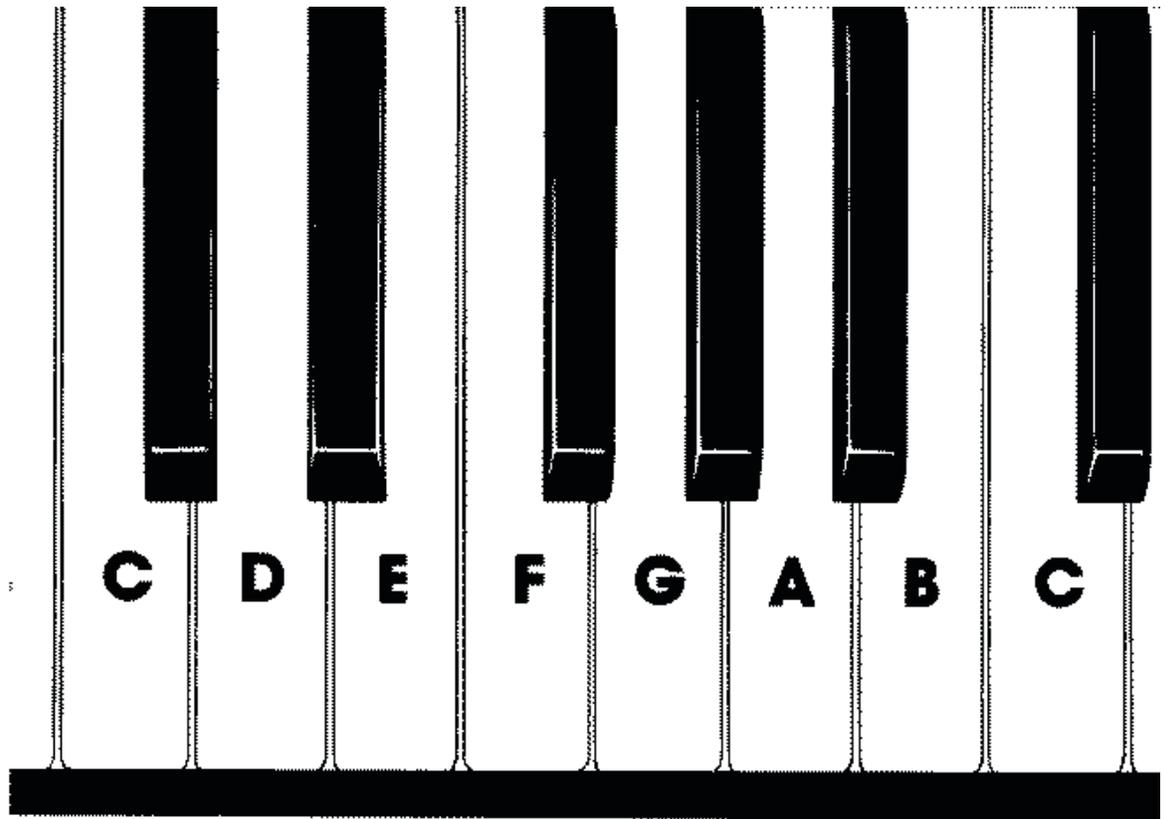


PIANO KEYS

www.playpiano.com

There are seven different names for the keys on a piano. If you look at the keyboard on a piano, you'll see that the keys repeat their order every eighth white key. The names of the keys are denoted by letters of the alphabet.

The middle white key on the piano is called "middle C." Going up the scale from C, the rest are D, E, F, G, A, B, and they start again with C. The notes from any C on the keyboard to the next C make up an "octave." It is so called because it contains eight keys, or eight notes.



The notes in a song or scale are written on a "staff." These are the series of lines and spaces that you've probably seen on a piece of music. The staff consists of a treble clef and a bass clef. Each line and each space on the clef denote a particular key/note. The notes on the treble clef begin on the bottom line of the staff with E above middle C. The notes on the bass clef begin on the bottom line of the staff with the G below middle C. Which type of note appears on which line or space on the clef determines which key is played and for how long that key is held. In other words, if a whole note appears written on the bottom line of the treble clef, then the instrumentalist would play an E above middle C. It would be held for four beats. Once the note types and names are learned, the beginner is ready to start playing!

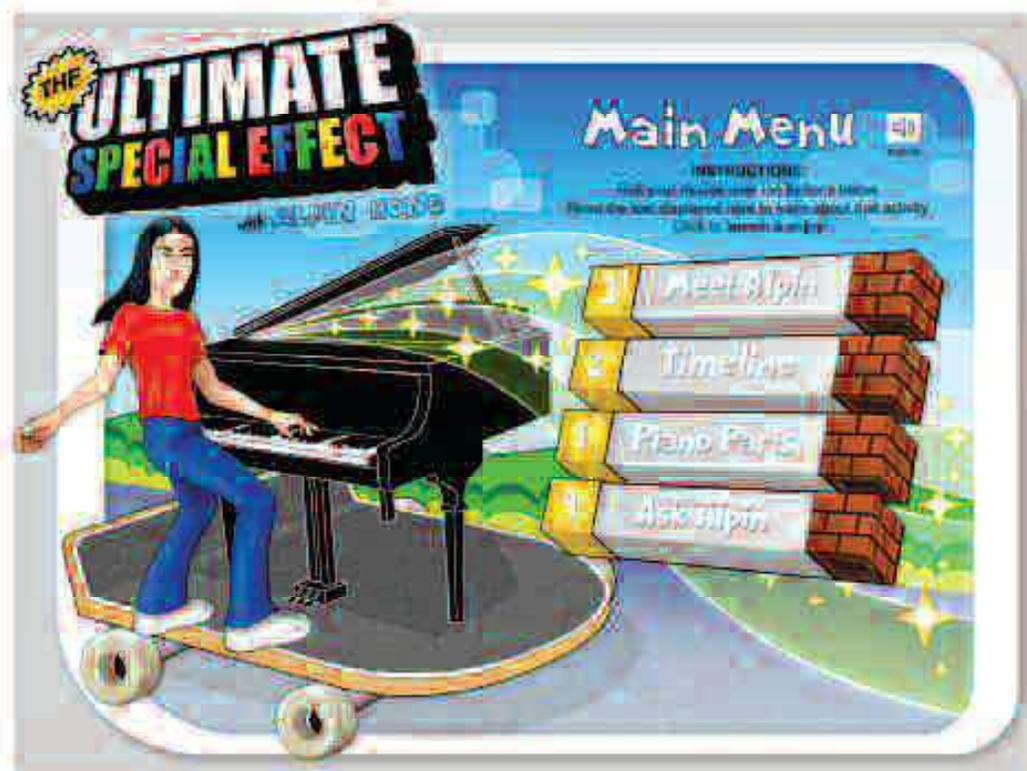


RESOURCES

Check out Alpin Hong's website at www.alpinhong.com. There is a special "For Kids Only" section with lots of video, information and interactive learning!

AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE

The Anchorage Concert Association is very pleased to have ALPIN HONG with us for this school performance. We encourage students and teachers to share with one another their experience of attending performances, and to consider the audience's role as part of a satisfying performance. As an audience member you are the final collaborator to ensure that the performance is a success.



Please give your students these guidelines to prepare them for an enjoyable theater experience.

- Performers depend on the audience to help provide an atmosphere in which they can give the best performance possible. To do this, the audience members must shift their attention from one another toward the presentation.
- The lights above the audience dim as a signal that the performance will begin. Students should prepare to listen and watch.
- Students will be excited about what they are to see; encourage them to whisper or not talk at all.
- Applaud respectfully to let the performers know that you appreciate their efforts to give you a great performance! Applause is always welcome during and at the end of the show. If you are disappointed in the performance, it is acceptable to simply not applaud. Loud expressions of disapproval are not appropriate.
- The Alaska Center for the Performing Arts' house furniture should be treated like furniture in a home that the students are visiting.
- Food, drinks, gum, hand-held video games, beepers, cell phones, cameras, and recording equipment are not allowed in the ACPA theaters.
- When your class leaves the hall at the end of the performance, walk out of the row and through the aisles. Fast movement, pushing, or crowding on the slanting floor and stairs makes it easy for someone to get hurt.
- Leave nothing behind in the theater seats. Take paper, tissues, purses, or extra clothing with you when you go.
- Enjoy the show!

