

# TAUBMAN & ALEXANDER

## Overviews and Pedagogical Applications

by

KRISTEN NEEL

### Similarities

- Focuses on recovery/prevention, proper alignment, fostering self-awareness
- Heavily rooted in the study of anatomy
- Reduces tension
- Instructor is necessary, individualized instruction

### Taubman Approach

- A piano technique developed by pianists and pedagogue, Dorothy Taubman (1917-2013)
- Specific to pianists/piano
- Perspective: natural alignment is intrinsically known
- Instructor is a pianist - Lessons take place at a piano

### Alexander Method

- A postural re-education approach created by actor, Frederick Matthias Alexander (1869-1955)
- Holistic – applicable to anyone
- Perspective: natural alignment is not intrinsically known
- Instructor may or may not be a pianist/musician – First lessons, away from instrument

### Basic Ideas

- Coordination Motion Theory (8 parts)
- Proper alignment & balance: *includes thumb position, arm weight*
- Efficiency of movement
  - Walking hand & arm: *straight alignment of fingers/hand/arm behind each other*
  - Forearm rotation: *allowing freedom of movement, the motion needed for turning a doorknob*
  - In-and-Out motion: *motion toward or away from the fallboard to compensate for differing finger lengths on the hand, especially on black keys*
  - Shaping: *movements that control attack, release, and other dynamic elements*

### Basic Ideas

- Conscientious control: *continual refinement of awareness needed to foster good use*
- Inhibition (as defined by Alexander): *one must inhibit poor habits that resurface, lifelong process*
- Recognizing the force of a habit: *knowledge of the origin and force behind an established habit in order to re-educate oneself*
- Faulty Sensory Awareness: *students are not able to intrinsically know good & bad use & need instructor*

### Pedagogical Applications Examples:

- ♪ "Heavy Wet Ropes" & "Thumb Perch" (Technique and Artistry, Primer Level, 2nd ed., p. 5)
  - ♪ "Gymnastics" (Technique and Artistry, Level 1, 2nd ed., p. 28)
  - ♪ "Around The World" (Technique and Artistry, Level 2a, 2nd ed., p. 20)

### Sources

- \* **American Society for the Alexander Technique.** Last modified 2017. Accessed March 31, 2017. <http://www.amsatonline.org/faq#17n687>.
- \* Faber, Nancy and Randall and Victoria McArthur. **Piano Adventures: Technique & Artistry Book - Primer Level.** 2nd ed. Ann Arbor, MI: Dovetree Productions, Inc., 2011.
- \* Faber, Nancy and Randall and Victoria McArthur. **Piano Adventures: Technique and Artistry Book - Level 1.** 2nd ed. Ann Arbor, MI: Dovetree Productions, Inc., 2011.
- \* Faber, Nancy and Randall and Victoria McArthur. **Piano Adventures: Technique & Artistry - Level 2a.** 2nd ed. Ann Arbor, MI: Dovetree Productions, Inc., 2012.
- \* **The Golandsky Institute.** Last modified 2017. Accessed March 31, 2017. <https://www.golandskyinstitute.org/about/taubman-approach>.
- \* Perlmutter, Adam. "**Guitar and Keyboard: Demystifying the Taubman Technique.**" *Teaching Music* 17, no. 5 (February 2010): 49, accessed March 31, 2017, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/227185004?pq-origsite=summon&accountid=7014>.
- \* **Sydney Alexander Technique.** Last modified 2017. Accessed March 29, 2017. <http://www.alexandertechnique.com.au/about/alexander-technique>.
- \* Tarr, Jen. "**Habit and Conscious Control: Ethnography and Embodiment in the Alexander Technique,**" *Ethnography* 9, no. 4 (December 2008): 477-97, accessed March 31, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24047911>.
- \* Taubman, Dorothy, Edna Golandsky, Ernest Urvater, John Bloomfield, and Alex Yagupsky. **The Taubman Techniques: A Series of Ten Videocassettes Presenting the Keyboard Pedagogy of Dorothy Taubman.** Medusa, N.Y.: Taubman Institute, 1994.

### Additional Resources

- ♪ Taubman-Tapes.com & YouTube Channel – by The Golandsky Institute
- ♪ MTNA's website & Bibliography - <http://www.mtna.org/member-resources/wellness-resources/>
- ♪ Keyboard Wellness Seminar - [keyboardwellnessseminar.com](http://keyboardwellnessseminar.com)

### CONTACT

| [neel.kristen@gmail.com](mailto:neel.kristen@gmail.com) | <https://neelkristen.wixsite.com/pianist> |