

Color My Music! Bring Tonal Color to Repertoire Through a Variety of Touches

Presented by

Joanne Haroutounian, PhD

jharouto@gmail.com

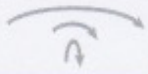




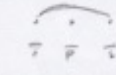
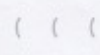


www.joanneharoutounian.com [youtube.com/@joanneharoutounian](https://www.youtube.com/@joanneharoutounian)






March 27, 2023

MTNA Conference, Reno, NV

Students can individualize their music with a vocabulary of touches to create vivid tonal colors. Presentation time is limited at the conference so I am including helpful ideas describing the touches you can teach (5 legato, 6 staccato, 5 chordal) with samples of a few exercises at elementary and intermediate levels.

Quick Glance Chart

	TOUCH	DESCRIPTION	MARKING
LEGATO	Rotating Wrist	Round, melodic tone Transfer a relaxed arm weight from one finger to the next using a flexible wrist.	
	Simple	Static, smooth tone Fingers play lightly into the keys with minimal hand and finger movements. Wrist remains poised, but relaxed.	simple
	Articulate	Crisp, "fingery" tone Sharply curved fingers lift above the keys after playing them.	articulate
	Flat-Finger Legato	Distant, hazy tone The hand is flat on the keyboard and uses a lateral wrist movement with fingers gently depressing 1/2 into the keys.	
	Caramel Legato	Rich, ultra-smooth tone Hold one note (key) into the next note for a portion of a second using a rotating wrist to create a smooth band of sound.	
STACCATO	Wrist	Loose, bouncy tone With a loose, bouncy wrist starting above the key, drop fingers into the key and back up again.	
	Up	Short, crisp tone Start on the surface of the key, snapping the wrist upward with a quick movement. "Touch up" quietly plays from 1/2 into the key. "Grab up" snaps up from the base of the key.	
	Portato	Sticky, "almost legato" tone A forward movement of the wrist as fingers slide inward along the key with a poised upward-wrist follow-through.	
	Scratch Staccato	Quick, clear-cut tone A quick snap of the finger from the key surface back toward the palm of the hand.	
	Brush Staccato	Delicate, subtle tone Finger brush the keys forward or backward, releasing them gently.	
	Dig (Down) Staccato	Solidly accented and detached tone Use the forearm to bounce forward (dig) into the key and up again to form an accented tone.	

TOUCH	DESCRIPTION	MARKING
Placed Chord	<p>Defined, round tone</p> <p>Play the chord with a forward placement and release of the wrist. "Place hold" stays on the keys. "Place release" has a forward wrist follow-through and release.</p>	
Up Chord	<p>Crisp, defined staccato tone.</p> <p>Shape the hand in the position of the chord and snap the wrist upward with a quick movement as you play. "Touch up" from the (key) surfaces, or "grab up" from the base of the keys.</p>	
Toss Chord	<p>Free and relaxed bouncy tone</p> <p>With the wrist a bit higher than with the wrist staccato, hang fingers close to the surface of the key, bouncing into the key with less upward wrist movement.</p>	
Shove Chord	<p>Sharp, aggressive tone</p> <p>Similar to the place-release chord, use a quicker forward wrist movement and release. "Shove-release" has a follow through release; "shove-hold" keeps the hand in place for the length of the chord.</p>	
Cling Chord	<p>Round, legato tone</p> <p>An ultra-smooth tone similar to caramel legato. The hand remains on the surface of the key between chords, transferring weight from one chord to the next to create a continuous legato sound rather than separate released chords.</p>	

Legato Collage Exercise – Elementary Level

Legato Collage Exercise

Play each legato touch as written, following the dynamics carefully to create many different legato colors within this one exercise.

1 wrist
mf (½)
mp ← *mf* → *mp*
5 wrist wrist

The first system of the exercise is in 4/4 time and consists of four measures. The first measure features a treble clef with a half note G4, marked with a '1' and 'wrist' above it, and a dynamic of *mf* (½). The bass clef has a whole rest. The second measure has a whole rest in the treble and a half note G2 in the bass, marked with a '5' and 'wrist' below it. The third measure has a treble clef with a half note G4 and a half note F4, marked with a '1' and 'wrist' above it, and a bass clef with a half note G2 and a half note F2, marked with a '5' and 'wrist' below it. The dynamic is *mp*. The fourth measure has a treble clef with a half note G4 and a half note F4, marked with a '1' and 'wrist' above it, and a bass clef with a half note G2 and a half note F2, marked with a '5' and 'wrist' below it. The dynamic is *mp*. A crescendo hairpin is shown between the third and fourth measures, with *mf* written above it.

5 simple
1 simple
pp (½)
5 simple simple

The second system of the exercise is in 4/4 time and consists of four measures. The first measure features a treble clef with a half note G4, marked with a '1' and 'simple' above it, and a dynamic of *pp* (½). The bass clef has a whole rest. The second measure has a whole rest in the treble and a half note G2 in the bass, marked with a '5' and 'simple' below it. The third measure has a treble clef with a half note G4 and a half note F4, marked with a '1' and 'simple' above it, and a bass clef with a half note G2 and a half note F2, marked with a '5' and 'simple' below it. The fourth measure has a treble clef with a half note G4 and a half note F4, marked with a '1' and 'simple' above it, and a bass clef with a half note G2 and a half note F2, marked with a '5' and 'simple' below it.

9 articulate
f (base)
1 articulate articulate
5 3

The third system of the exercise is in 4/4 time and consists of four measures. The first measure features a treble clef with a half note G4, marked with a '5' and 'articulate' above it, and a dynamic of *f* (base). The bass clef has a whole rest. The second measure has a whole rest in the treble and a half note G2 in the bass, marked with a '1' and 'articulate' below it. The third measure has a treble clef with a half note G4 and a half note F4, marked with a '5' and 'articulate' above it, and a bass clef with a half note G2 and a half note F2, marked with a '1' and 'articulate' below it. The fourth measure has a treble clef with a half note G4 and a half note F4, marked with a '5' and 'articulate' above it, and a bass clef with a half note G2 and a half note F2, marked with a '1' and 'articulate' below it. A triplet of eighth notes is indicated by a '3' above the notes in the treble clef.

Staccato Collage Exercise – Intermediate

Staccato Collage Exercise

Play each staccato touch as written, following dynamics and articulation markings carefully to create different staccato colors within this one exercise. Feel free to transpose the exercise to different keys, or repeat it using a single staccato touch each time.

The musical score is divided into four systems, each with piano and bass clef staves. The first system (measures 1-3) features: Measure 1 with *mf* (1/4) wrist articulation; Measure 2 with *mp* (1/2) up articulation; Measure 3 with *mf* (1/4) portato articulation. The second system (measures 4-6) features: Measure 4 with *mp* (1/2) scratch articulation; Measure 5 with *f* (base) dig/down articulation; Measure 6 with *f* (base) dig/down articulation. The third system (measures 7-9) features: Measure 7 with *p* (1/2) brush articulation; Measure 8 with *mp* (1/2) scratch articulation; Measure 9 with *mf* (1/4) wrist articulation. The fourth system (measures 10-12) features: Measure 10 with *mp* (1/4) up articulation; Measure 11 with *f* (base) articulation; Measure 12 with *f* (base) articulation. The score includes various articulation symbols such as upward and downward arrows, and dynamic markings like *mf*, *mp*, *p*, and *f*.

Chordal Collage Exercise - Intermediate

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of four systems of piano accompaniment. Each system includes a treble and bass clef staff with chordal textures. Dynamics range from *p* (piano) to *f* (forte). Articulations include accents, staccato, and slurs. Performance instructions are provided above the staves: 'place' (measures 1-3), 'grab up' (measures 7-9), 'touch up' (measures 10-12), 'toss' (measures 13-15), 'shove' (measures 16-18), and 'cling chord' (measures 19-21). Measure numbers 7, 13, and 19 are indicated in boxes at the start of their respective systems.

Chart and Exercises from:

Palette of Touches, Elementary Level, edition #WP618 ©2015 Kjos Music Press, Neil A. Kjos Music Co., Distributor

Palette of Touches, Intermediate Level, edition #WP619 ©2016 Kjos Music Press, Neil A. Kjos Music Co., Distributor

All reprinted with permission 2023 – www.kjos.com

