

Piano Ebook by Thomas Forschbach with werdemusiker.com

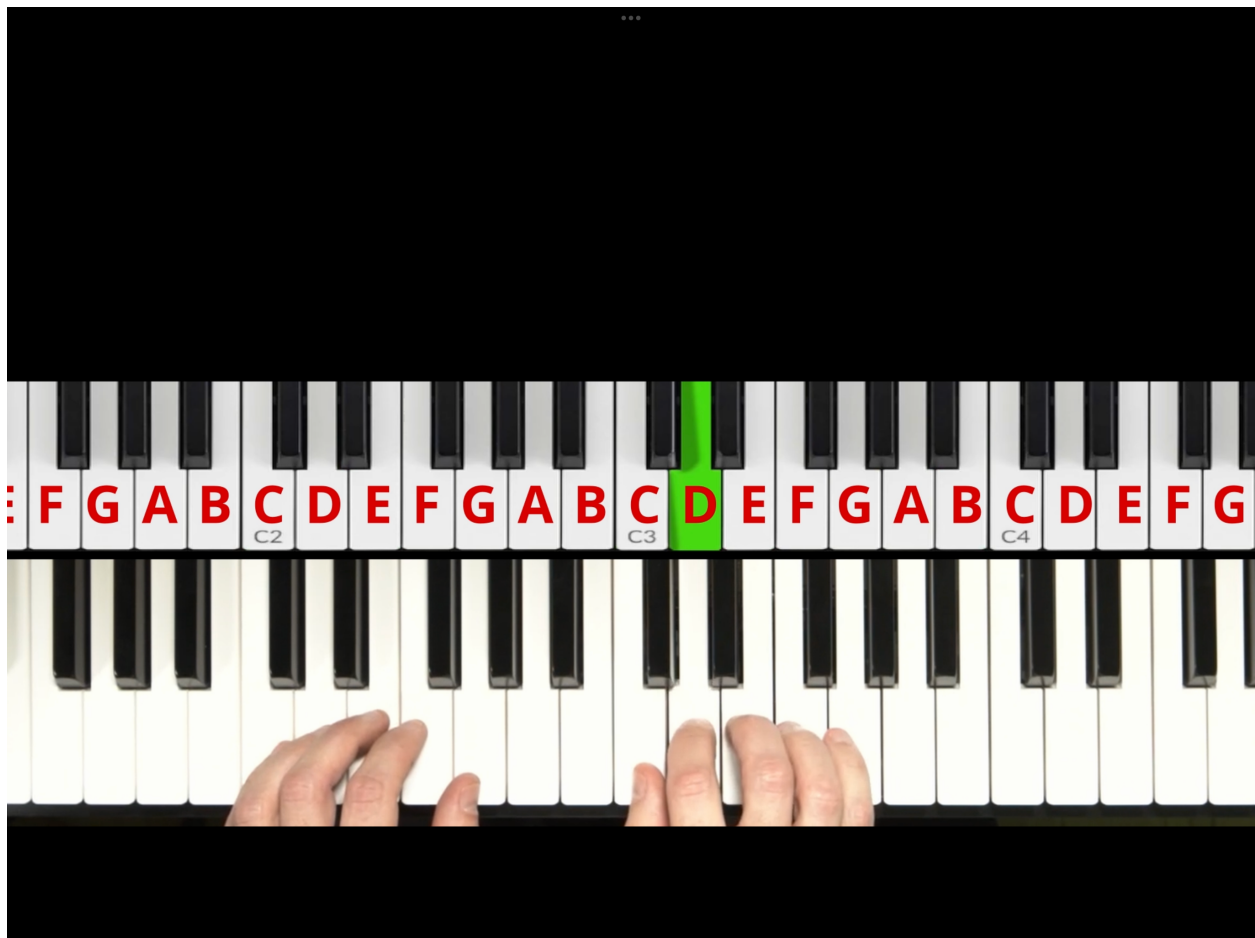


Table of Contents

Part 1: Let's get started.	5
Chapter 1: Important! Before we get started.	6
1. Top 5 reasons to learn to play the piano.	6
2. How often should I practice?	10
3. Playing Piano as an Adult	13
4. Staying Fit Through Piano Playing into Old Age	16
Chapter 2: A journey you will never forget	18
1. Forget everything you've heard about playing the piano so far!	18
2. Sheet music is not good for beginners!	20
3. Sheet music is fantastic!	23
Part 2: The Basics	25
Chapter 3: Let's Get Started with the Piano	25
1. Posture	25
2. Hand position	27
Chapter 4: Let's play	29
1. How to find your way around the keys	29
2. The first 5 notes	32
3. Your First Chord	33
4. Learn 4 EASY Chords, Play 1000 Songs!	35
5. Your First EASY Song	36
6. More Songs for Beginners	36
7. Playing the Piano with Both Hands Independently	38

Part 3: Music Theory	40
Chapter 5: Playing Piano by Reading Sheet Music	40
1. Our Music Notation System & Pitch Levels	41
2. Note Values & the Heartbeat of a Song	41
3. Reading Rhythm	46
4. 3 Tricks To Read and Play Notes QUICKLY	48
Chapter 6: Why Chords are Incredibly Powerful	49
1. Would you have thought that? Chords are the foundation of almost every song!	49
2. How Chords are Formed	51
Chapter 7: A Trick That Allows You to Play Almost All Your Favorite Songs Quickly	52
1. Do this exercise every day, and you will become a master at the piano.	53
Chapter 8: Watch My Piano Students Play!	57
1. Piano Student Videos	57
Part 4: Additional Tips & Information	58
Chapter 9: Tips for Buying an Instrument	58
1. Which piano should I buy?	58
2. What accessories do I need?	60
3. How you should take care of your instrument	64
Chapter 10: Additional Tips	64
1. How to Find the Right Teacher	64
2. What Sleep Has to Do with Playing the Piano	67
3. What movement has to do with playing the piano.	67
4. How to practice effectively & the magic of small practice segments	68
5. Avoid these typical beginner mistakes!	70

Chapter 11: About Your Teacher	70
1. This pianist is fun!	71
2. "More Than 1500 Live Performances - What a Pianist Experiences"	73
3. Duets with Plácido Domingo, Shakira & Germany's Soccer Goal Keeper & World Champion Manuel Neuer	74
4. More Than 350,000 piano students on YouTube.	76
Chapter 12: How to proceed from here in the best way.	77
1. More Courses & Beyond...	77

Part 1: Let's get started.



Chapter 1: Important! Before we get started.

1. Top 5 reasons to learn to play the piano.

Reason 1: Playing the piano can be fun from day 1.

Unlike, for example, with the guitar, you can create amazingly beautiful music on the piano right from the beginning. (Guitarists have to play their fingers (almost) to bleeding before they can really get started...)

In the first lessons of my [free piano crash course for beginners](#), you will immediately learn your first chord. And I promise you, it will already sound beautiful.

No doubt, not everything will sound beautiful right away, but the piano still allows us to have a lot of fun from the beginning. Because when you learn with [the right guidance](#), you will always have a lot of joy and make

progress at the same time.

In many small steps that anyone can take, you will notice how you gradually improve over time and discover more and more on the piano.



Reason 2: You can play songs from almost every musical genre on the piano.

No matter if it's a beautiful piano melody, a classical piece, a current pop song, an evergreen, film and soundtracks, local hits, children's songs, church songs, jazz, blues, even rock music and EDM, can be played on the piano.

The piano is an incredibly versatile instrument. You can elicit delicate, soft, melancholic, and romantic tones from it, but you can also make it sound dramatic, grandiose, rock-like, and much more.

Reason 3: You can play both the accompaniment and the melody of a song on just one instrument.

The piano is one of the few instruments on which you can play both the melody and the accompaniment of a song. Even at the same time!

This makes the piano an instrument that can provide us with a particularly enjoyable time.

However, you can also choose to play only one of them.

Reason 4: A sound that touches hearts.

I don't know about you, but when I hear a piano piece, no matter how simple it may be, something very special happens in my body. My heart is touched in a way that doesn't happen in any other situation. Even a single note,

a small melody has the power to touch my heart. This irresistible sound makes the piano a very special instrument for me, one that receives my love.

Reason 5: The perfect instrument to learn and understand music theory.

I'd like to clarify: you don't need to learn a lot of music theory to play beautiful songs and melodies on your piano or keyboard.

But! The piano is the perfect instrument to learn music theory and then apply it to other instruments.

The unique arrangement of black and white keys allows us to visually understand complex music theory concepts in a way that no other instrument offers.

If you want to learn music theory (and it's actually much more exciting than it may sound at first), you'll have a lot of fun with the piano.

There are many more reasons why learning to play the piano is simply fantastic, and I could probably write about it for hours.

But let's continue with our lessons for now...



2. How often should I practice?

You've probably heard stories of pianists who started learning to play the piano at the age of 4 or 7 and practiced 8 hours a day.

And yes, I wish I had started learning to play the piano at 4 years old and had 8 hours a day to practice.

But unfortunately, that's not the case, and I can assure you, there's no need to worry!

If you practice for just 15 minutes every day, you'll likely be able to play all the songs you want.

I say "likely" because so far, I haven't had any piano students who wanted to learn the entire Piano Concerto No. 1 by Tchaikovsky (the song from the beer commercial on TV).

If you want to play that song or something similarly difficult, you should practice for about 6-8 hours a day for a few years.

But for everyone else, here's what applies:

If you practice regularly, you'll probably be able to play more in the first days, weeks, and months than you ever thought possible.

In practice, it looks like this for many of my students:

Almost no one practices for just 15 minutes per day!

Why?

Simply because once you sit at the piano, time flies by, and you might end up practicing for 30 minutes or even 1-2 hours.

Almost no one practices every single day.

After all, who has the time to do it every day without exception?

Life tends to get in the way from time to time.

Many of my students practice like this:

Practice Type 1:

Some weeks, they practice for 5 days a week, 1 hour each day, and other weeks, they practice 2-3 times a week, once for 2 hours, and twice for 1 hour.

The next week, they might practice every day for about 30-60 minutes.

Practice Type 2:

Some of my piano students have a strict routine and practice every day at 6 pm for exactly 15 minutes.

Practice Type 3:

Some of my piano students travel frequently and might not practice for 1-2 weeks because they don't have an instrument nearby, but then they practice 2-3 times a week for about 30 minutes.

There are other practice types, and each person is unique.

The great thing nowadays is that you can practice (almost) anytime and anywhere you want, and you can even watch your piano teacher's fingers closely if you need to check something quickly.

What I want to say is this:

All these piano students have a lot of fun playing the piano, they can already play many of their favorite songs, read sheet music, improvise beautifully, or whatever they wanted to learn at the piano. They still play after many years because the joy of playing the piano never fades away.

Of course, in general, the more you practice, the faster you'll improve. But practicing is not just about putting in the hours; it's more about acquiring the right skills with the right exercises. And you can get these exercises, for example, in my [free Piano Crash Course for beginners](#).

The wonderful thing about playing the piano is that you don't have to be a top pianist to reap incredible rewards.

3. Playing Piano as an Adult

Many people wonder whether they can learn to play the piano as adults.

Let me answer that for you:

Most of my piano students are adults between the ages of 35 and 65.

But I also have many students over the age of 65 and even children.

And the best situation is still when parents buy a piano for their child, then discover my lessons online, see how quickly their children succeed, and then think to themselves, "Wait a minute... I want to try this too..."

And then a few days later, I receive an email describing this situation along with the sentence, "Now I practice even more than my daughter."

And this last sentence describes perfectly why adults can still learn to play the piano even at an advanced age. And perhaps even better than many children.

Children learn new things faster than adults. That's not even a question.

BUT! Adults usually have more patience, perseverance, concentration, and they simply stick with something they set out to do for a longer time.

In addition, many adults have been dreaming of playing the piano for many many years. (Usually longer than children have even been in the world.)

And this strong desire ignites forces that can move mountains.

Depending on what you want to learn, there will likely be moments at the piano when it becomes more challenging. Moments when you have to "dig in."

Adults who have a strong desire to learn to play the piano stick with it, especially in these situations, and their life experiences tell them that everything will turn out well in the end.

Ultimately, it's not "talent" that decides at the piano, but how often and with what instructions and exercises you practice.

By the way, in my [free Piano Crash Course for Beginners](#), you will not only find the corresponding instructions and exercises but also small steps that will challenge you a bit but are also easy enough not to overwhelm you.

In general, I always design my lessons in such a way that you take many small steps that everyone can do, but they will lead you directly to the top of the mountain.

Learn more about my famous "small practice sections" further down on this page.

4. Staying Fit Through Piano Playing into Old Age

I am firmly convinced that playing the piano can help people live longer or at least stay physically and mentally fit for a longer time.

Although I am not a doctor, scientist, or expert in this field, it is my strong belief that playing the piano can keep us feeling young and vibrant.

Interestingly, some experts seem to agree with this notion. [In this article from Harvard University](#), they discuss the concept of "Super Agers," individuals in their 70s or 80s who have the mental and physical capacity of people ten years younger.

One of the key factors that distinguish these "Super Agers" from others is their willingness to seek out and embrace new mental challenges. Playing the piano is one such challenge, and it not only helps us stay youthful and fit but also brings immense joy and fulfillment.

There are numerous articles that highlight the benefits of piano playing for our brain. Becoming a "Super Ager" through this wonderful pursuit is a beautiful example.



Chapter 2: A journey you will never forget

1. Forget everything you've heard about playing the piano so far!

"Forget everything you've heard about playing the piano so far." With this slogan, I am pointing to the 10 lessons of my [free Piano Crash Course](#). It's a bold statement, I know... But I want to share with you how it all came about.

When I started my YouTube channel "werdemusiker" in 2013 and began uploading piano learning videos or "Piano Tutorials," my goal was clear: these videos shouldn't just be "fun," "somewhat helpful," or "interesting," but they should enable people to truly learn to play the piano.

Before my first video went online, I spent a long time perfecting it. I recorded various videos and showed them to some piano students, friends, and acquaintances in Cologne, observing how they responded. Then I went

back to the keys and the camera, improved the videos, and presented them to people again, watching their reactions. This process continued for some time until I finally figured out how to successfully translate my learning method (which I had already refined) into video format.

The recipe spoke for itself. After just 3 months, suddenly 300,000 people in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland were learning to play the piano with my videos.

I never expected that...

300,000 piano students!!!

Then an idea struck me! With so many piano students, I had the unique opportunity to learn as a teacher and perhaps create something that had never been done before.

I had more piano students than anyone else in the German-speaking region. I thought, "I should somehow make the most of this special opportunity..."

I divided some of the piano students who signed up for [my free Piano Crash Course](#) into groups over time and tried out various methods and ideas with the goal of making their learning experience even faster and more enjoyable.

I kept asking myself... "Okay, this is how I learned, and this is how it's always been taught. But what if we tried it this way instead?" Then I tested out those alternative approaches. The experiments varied in duration, some lasting several months or even years.

The result, however, is something very special. A piano method that has never been seen in this form before and still doesn't exist anywhere else today.

If you're wondering, "What's so special about it?" or "What's different?" here's an example for you:
[Continued...]

2. Sheet music is not good for beginners!

First of all... You can absolutely learn to play the piano using sheet music with me. Personally, I play both with and without sheet music. Both approaches have their advantages, and I wouldn't want to miss either! Sheet music is great (more on that in the next section).

BUT! It is not good for beginners to start learning to play the piano with sheet music from day one. Why?

Well, first of all, it was a clear result of one of my tests.

Students who wanted to learn piano playing with sheet music but started without it for the first 2-6 months learned to read sheet music quickly afterward, and their progress was much better than those who learned with sheet music from the beginning.

And not only that... their piano playing sounded much, much more beautiful too!!

And the reason is quite simple:

When we are born as babies, we learn to speak the language first in the early years before we later learn to read and write in school.

And that's exactly how it should be on the piano. First, learn to speak the language of music on the piano before you learn to read and write sheet music.

One thing at a time!

I always say, "In patience lies strength."

There are enough challenges on the piano. What notes are being played? What is the left hand doing? What is the right hand doing? When does the middle finger cross over? Why doesn't the pinky do what I want? And so on...

If you then add reading sheet music and make the mistake of constantly looking back and forth between the keyboard and the sheet music, up and down again, up and down again... then it becomes chaotic! Well, not that bad, but progress just becomes slower than it could be, and the piano playing sounds somewhat "mechanical."

Don't get me wrong... I started learning to play the piano exactly the same way when I began taking lessons.

But that was also the reason why it took me 1 1/2 years to play songs that my online students can often play after just a few weeks. In exceptional cases, even after a few days.

This is just one example of many that has proven to be very sensible. Another one is the carefully selected "practice sections." But more on that later.

For now...



3. Sheet music is fantastic!

I play both piano with sheet music and freely without it. I enjoy improvising and playing songs by ear.

And you can learn all of that with me, of course!

Both worlds are actually quite close to each other.

But let me tell you why sheet music is really great!

In the previous section, I mentioned the example of how we are born into the world and first learn to speak the language before we later learn to read and write in school.

And that's exactly how it should be on the piano.

First, we learn to speak the language (play the piano).

Then we learn to read and (if you want) write the language. The sheet music!

It's essential to understand that it is a language in written form.

Nothing more.

And also, nothing less.

However, many people often treat sheet music as if it were a law. I often hear, "But the sheet music says something else."

That's entirely possible. The person or people who wrote those sheet music might have written it differently.

The thing is, it might be better, different, or even worse, possibly with mistakes.

Yep... You read that correctly. There are sheet music that contains errors! Even quite often. In many cases, there are simply different versions. And that's perfectly fine!

But you should know: Sheet music is not a law!

Just like not everything you read is correct.

You should form your own opinion, and for that, you should first learn the language.

Okay, but what's still amazing about sheet music? If it's just a written form of the language?

Here's the point: Sheet music has been carefully developed for music.

You don't have to read each note individually, but with

time, you will recognize patterns. You won't read notes as individual "letters," but in "words" and even in complete "sentences."

And you'll particularly understand and appreciate it when you first consciously focus on your piano playing and learn to recognize the connections there.

Then you will love reading sheet music afterward!!

Part 2: The Basics

Chapter 3: Let's Get Started with the Piano

1. Posture

I know, you would love to start playing the keys right away. But let's briefly discuss this important topic so that you can avoid back pain and make playing the piano easier for you. Because it starts with the correct sitting and body posture.

Here I have a picture for you of what the perfect posture at the piano looks like, and in the video below I give you a few valuable tips on how to achieve and easily maintain this body posture.

Here are the most important points in brief:

- It's best if you have a piano bench (not a stool)
- You sit on the front edge (so that you're sitting securely and there's no risk of you slipping off)
- Your back is straight, but not artificially kept straight, instead, it's supported by the lower back.



The following video contains a detailed description (It's currently in German with English captions. But I will record an English version soon):

Click this picture to play the video:



2. Hand position

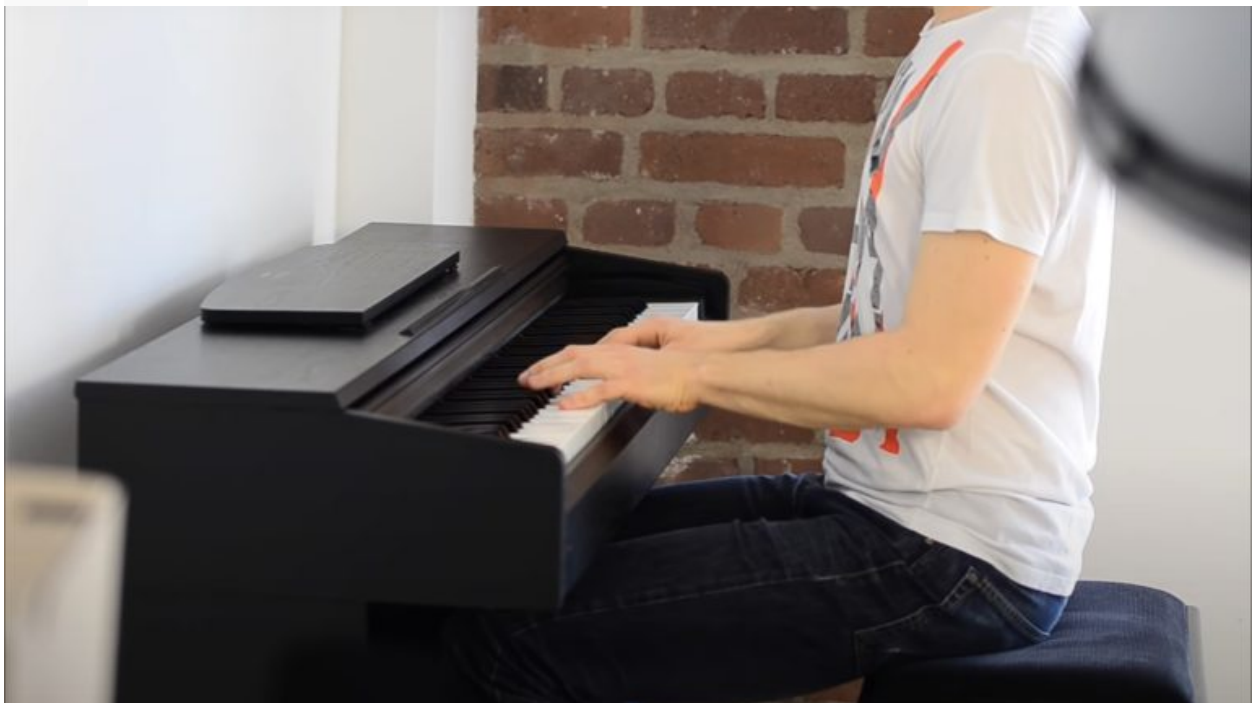
Incorrect: The wrist is bent downward. The arm is too high.



Incorrect: The wrist is bent upwards. The arm is too low.



Correct: The forearm and the back of the hand form a straight line.



Chapter 4: Let's play

1. How to find your way around the keys

Finding your way around the keys is easier than it may seem at first glance.

Although a piano has 88 keys, and your instrument may have more or fewer keys (for more information, check out the article: [How many keys does a piano have?](#)), we only have 12 different notes!

Yes, you read that right. There are only 12 different notes, and most of the time, we only need 7 different notes for each song!

But how do we know which key corresponds to which note?

Thanks to the black keys, it's actually a piece of cake!

As you can see, we always have a group of 2 black keys

and a group of 3 black keys on the piano.

Now, we have two ways to find our first note. Choose one of them and stick with it for now.

Option 1 (the German version):

1. Go to the pair of 2 black keys.
2. Then, go to the left of the two black keys.
3. Then, go to the white key on the left. That is "c."
4. From there, count upwards on the white keys: c, d, e, f, g, a, b, c.

That's it!

As you can see, the first and last note is "c." From then on, it repeats.

Option 2 (the international version):

The note "b" is called "h" in German. Internationally, it is referred to as "b." If you want to know more about this, you can check out this article.

For this reason, in the international version, we can use the alphabet.

Here's how:

1. Go to the group of 3 black keys.
2. Then, go to the middle black key.
3. Then, go to the white key on the right. That is "a."
4. From there, count upwards on the white keys: a, b, c, d, e, f, g.

That's it!

So, we simply start with "a" instead of "c" in the international version.

We'll continue with graphics and exercises below. But now might be the perfect time for you to try out a video lesson with some great exercises and even play your first simple song.

Why not give it a try with your 1st piano lesson here!

Click this picture to play the video:



2. The first 5 notes

This Ebook is brand new (as of September 16th, 2023) and still in progress.

However, I have many video lessons here on my blog and, of course, my popular Piano Crash Course for Beginners, which is how most of my piano students started learning to play.

I am currently working on this Ebook daily. So feel free to come back soon to download a newer updated copy. In the meantime, get yourself enrolled in [my free Piano Crash Course](#).

Click this picture to play the video:



3. Your First Chord

Let's move on to your first chord!

Chords are super important on the piano and in music-making in general.

More about this will be covered in Chapter 6 below.

In simple terms, chords are 3 or more notes that sound very beautiful and harmonious when played together.

This time, we will play 3 notes simultaneously.

Place your thumb on the C key and the remaining fingers on the adjacent white keys.

We will be playing the C, E, and G notes together.

The key to remember is to strike all 3 keys simultaneously.

The goal is for it to sound like a single, magically resonant tone.

This might not be easy at first.

Take a few minutes now to practice this at least 10 times, but it's even better to aim for 20 or 30 times.

And remember: Patience is key!

Your patience will be rewarded in the long run.

In the short term, you will be rewarded with the beautiful sound of a major chord.

In this case, it's the C major chord.

Congratulations!

You've just played your first chord.

It took me 2 months when I first started learning the piano to do the same.

In the sections below, you will learn more chords. In Chapter 6, we'll cover the theory behind chords and how they work.

But in the next section, you'll get a taste of what's possible with chords.

4. Learn 4 EASY Chords, Play 1000 Songs!

I had already mentioned that chords are super important on the piano. In Chapter 6, you will also find out exactly why.

In the following video, I want to invite you to try it out and experience for yourself what is possible with just 4 simple chords.

You will already create beautiful music from your piano.

Definitely give it a try!



5. Your First EASY Song



How to play piano 1 EASY & FUN Song for beginners in 10 min

6. More Songs for Beginners

I have created some songs and piano tutorial series that adapt popular songs, which are not originally for beginners, to be beginner-friendly.

That means if you are a beginner and would like to play one of these songs, you should definitely try it out with one of these video series.

I have broken down these songs into many small practice sections, so it's possible.

Again... it's not entirely easy...

But you can do it.

Here are the songs you can learn with me on YouTube or here on my blog:

- Für Elise
- River Flows in You
- The soundtrack from the movie "Amélie"
- The soundtrack from the movie "Forrest Gump"
- Experience by Ludovico Einaudi

On YouTube, you will find many more songs that you can learn with me at werdemusiker.

[Click here to go to the channel.](#)



7. Playing the Piano with Both Hands Independently

Playing with both hands simultaneously is one of the biggest challenges in playing the piano, especially when it comes to playing independently with each hand. The brain needs to learn a completely new skill when playing different things with each hand, which requires patience and practice.

You should know that as soon as you start playing with both hands, it may feel like you can't do anything at all. This feeling is entirely normal! You are not alone! It will get better 😊

In the following video, I have a very detailed exercise for playing a complex piece with both hands together. The exercise breaks down the piece into smaller sections and gradually builds up to playing the entire piece.

It's essential to practice each hand separately before attempting to play with both hands. The left hand plays the chords, while the right hand plays the melody.

By repeating the exercise slowly and gradually increasing the speed, it helps the brain process and learn the

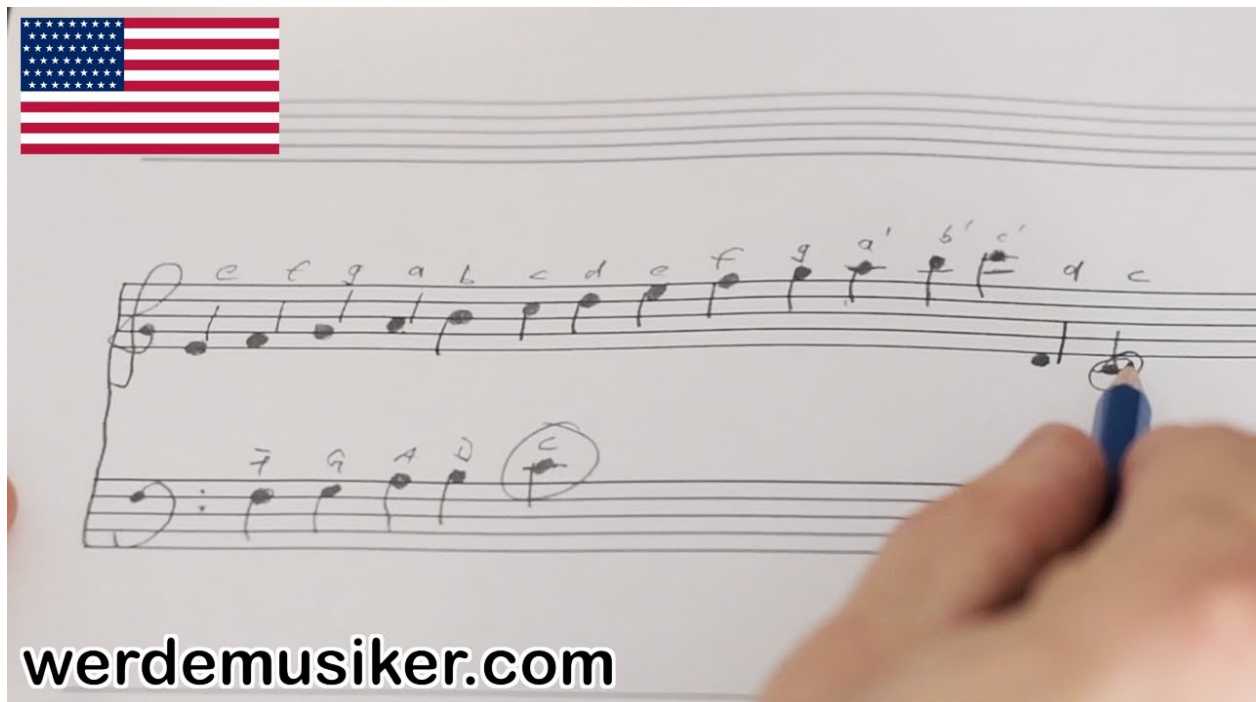
movements. It's normal to have difficulties at first, but with patience and repetition, playing with both hands will become easier.



Part 3: Music Theory

Chapter 5: Playing Piano by Reading Sheet Music

I will discuss some basic elements of our musical notation system below the video. However, for a more in-depth breakdown, I recommend checking out this comprehensive article or this lesson here:



1. Our Music Notation System & Pitch Levels

This Ebook is brand new (as of September 16, 2023) and still in progress.

I am currently working on this Ebook daily. So feel free to come back soon to download an new updated version.

In the meantime, get yourself enrolled in [my free Piano Crash Course](#) if not already.

[Click here to go to the page where you can enroll.](#)

2. Note Values & the Heartbeat of a Song

Note values tell us how long notes should be held.

In conjunction with measures, they also dictate the rhythm.

And here it gets a little exciting and, to be honest, also a bit complicated.

You see, there aren't many pitch values. I mentioned

earlier that we usually only need 7 different tones.

But with rhythm, there are almost infinitely many possibilities!

That's another reason why it's better for beginners to start without sheet music.

Don't worry! It's certainly possible, and there are many great exercises, but you'll make much faster progress at the beginning if you leave out the sheet music for now. You'll simply improve much more quickly. And then it will be easier to handle the notes and rhythms afterward.

Alright, but let's still briefly talk about note values because having some basics helps with understanding...

Before we even know how long a note should be held, we need...

A time signature. We also call it the meter.

The time signature is the heartbeat of every piece of music.

The time signature beats evenly at a predetermined speed.

For example, often above the staff, there is a small note

that looks like an equal sign (=) with a number next to it, e.g., 60.

This note here is called a quarter note, and the number 60 means that we have 60 quarter notes or 60 quarter beats per minute.

In short: 60 beats per minute.

So, unlike our human heartbeat, where the heart doesn't always beat at exactly the same speed, in music, these 60 beats should be as evenly spaced as possible. Like a clock.

That's why it's always a good idea to practice piano pieces with a metronome that precisely indicates this time signature.

In fact, the time signature is usually given in quarter notes. (More about quarter notes below).

And this is determined right at the beginning of a piece of sheet music, just after the key signature.

It's called the time signature.

For example, here it's 4/4 time signature.

The top 4 indicates that we always count to 4 evenly

before the next measure starts, and then we start again at 1.

So, it's always evenly 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4, and so on.

The bottom 4 indicates that what we're counting are quarter notes. This is especially important when we come to note values.

Note Values

The most well-known note value is the quarter note.

Simply because the most common time signature is 4/4.

This means it was simply decided that we count quarter notes when we evenly count to 4.

So, in one measure, there can be 4 quarter notes.

It looks like this.

As you can see, these notes are played exactly on the quarter note beat.

This brings us to other note values.

Eighth notes.

Eighth notes are played exactly twice as fast as quarter notes.

So, we can play twice as many notes. Namely, 8 eighth notes per measure.

There are further note values like

Sixteenth notes, thirty-second notes, sixty-fourth notes, half notes, whole notes, dotted notes.

For more on this, it's best to refer to the article specifically created for it.

At this point, I just want to mention that note values can be combined.

As I mentioned earlier, in a 4/4 time signature, you can have either 4 quarter notes or 8 eighth notes. The thing is, this is not an option, it must be that way!

A measure must always be filled.

4 quarter notes fill a 4/4 measure.

2 eighth notes can replace one quarter note.

It looks like this, for example:

Or like this:

Or like this:

As you can see, they can be combined differently.

Notes can also be replaced by rests.

For each note value, there is also a corresponding rest.

This way, music can be notated very rhythmically, and it can get quite complicated to read.

It looks like this, for example:

Or like this:

Or like this:

3. Reading Rhythm

To read rhythm, you first need to be familiar with note values.

Since we have been dealing with quarter and eighth notes so far, let's focus on these two examples.

Here is our first example measure:

The composer has established a 4/4 time signature. And 84 quarter beats per minute.

Here's how it works:

1. Count evenly to 4. 1 2 3 4. Again and again. 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 (You can use a metronome set to 84 BPM to help you with this)

2. Identify the shortest note value (the higher the number below the fraction line of the note value, the shorter the note value). In this case, eighth notes.

3. Now, we add an "and" between the numbers while maintaining the same tempo. This is how it works with eighth notes. So, we count 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and | 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and | 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and |

Important: Continue counting the numbers on the metronome beat. The word "and" always goes in between. So, we now have to say twice as many words in the same amount of time.

For a better understanding, you can watch this video here. It also explains how we associate the notes with this rhythm: [Insert link to the video].

4. 3 Tricks To Read and Play Notes QUICKLY

To be able to read sheet music quickly, there are specific exercises. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, I recommend beginners to start without sheet music for now.

However, if you already know how to play the piano to some extent and would like to improve your ability to read sheet music more quickly, I recommend watching the following video.

It provides some really useful tricks on how you can use musical notation to read and play sheet music faster.

Chapter 6: Why Chords are Incredibly Powerful

1. Would you have thought that? Chords are the foundation of almost every song!

It's amazing that this isn't more widespread... In fact, many classical pianists are not aware of it. For example, my music teacher back in school was widely known beyond the city borders for her musical achievements and won numerous awards. But when I played something for her in music class for the first time, there was a huge pause afterward... Dead silence... I thought, "What's coming now?" ... and then she burst out, "Wow!! How did you do that?" It would go beyond the scope to tell the whole story here. (By the way, I have a mini-course where I tell this story in full and provide corresponding piano exercises. It's called "Secrets that remain forever hidden from most pianists." I usually sell it, but because you are so attentive

and reading these lines, you'll get it for free as a bonus to my Piano Crash Course if you sign up for it here in the following field.)

In short... I played a song for my music teacher and the class. I think it was a mix of the songs "Canon in D" and "Gangsta's Paradise" (a current song in the charts at that time). At the end of the song, I really went wild and improvised over both songs, creating a "mashup."

One thing my music teacher didn't know back then is that chords are the foundation of every song. She had a classical education. She studied at the conservatory and was really competent. But she wasn't aware of that.

I then showed her using the example of Beethoven's "Für Elise."

"Here... these are the chords A minor and E major," I showed her.

To this day, many pianists are not aware of this.

But once you know this and then learn the theory and connections of chords (and that is definitely possible for anyone!), a completely new world opens up for you on the piano. Everything else becomes easier. You learn new songs faster. You can read sheet music faster and better. You can improvise with ease. You can learn new songs

completely without sheet music in record time. You quickly memorize songs and can still play them after years without forgetting.

That is one of the main reasons why most of my piano students continue learning with my online courses for years (many of my students have been with me for over 10 years!!), enjoy it, and even become really, really good.

2. How Chords are Formed

There are many different ways chords are formed.

Here's the simplest and most suitable for beginners:

Major Chords

1. Choose any note on the piano. This will be the first of the 3 notes in our chord. The root note. Remember this key.

2. Then, go up 4 half steps. This is the 2nd note. Remember this key as well.

3. From there, go up 3 half steps. Remember this key too. Now our major chord is complete. It's named after the first note you chose + the word "major." "Root Note-Major" If the first note you chose, for example, is "C," the chord is now called "C Major."

Minor Chords

Minor chords are formed very similarly. The only difference is the number of half steps in steps 2 and 3. So:

1. Choose any note on the piano. This will be the first of the 3 notes in our chord. The root note. Remember this key.
2. Then, go up 3 half steps. This is the 2nd note. Remember this key as well.
3. From there, go up 4 half steps. Remember this key too. Now our minor chord is complete. It's named after the first note you chose + the word "minor." "Root Note-Minor" If the first note you chose, for example, is "C," the chord is now called "C Minor."

Chapter 7: A Trick That Allows You to Play Almost All Your Favorite Songs Quickly

1. Do this exercise every day, and you will become a master at the piano.

I have recorded a video for this exercise.

The exercise is somewhat advanced, but even beginners can give it a try. It trains various aspects of piano playing in a playful manner. Moreover, it is very impressive what one can achieve with it.

The exercise starts in the video at Part 2 (02:48 min).

Below the video, there is a written explanation.



Here is the written explanation:

1. I go to my favorite search engine and enter the title of the song I want to play. Let's say "Hotel California." Additionally, I add the word "Chords" or "Akkorde" (German for chords). In most cases, it will bring up the website ultimateguitar.com, but e-chords.com and other sites also work.

2. I open this page, scroll down a bit, and then I see a section titled "Intro" and "Verse." There is also the song's lyrics, and above the lyrics, there are letters like C or Gm, etc. These are the chords of the song.

3. With these chords, I can now go back to the piano and start with the verse.

For example, if the first chord is "Am," it stands for the A minor chord. If there is no "m," it's a major chord.

As you learned in the previous section, you know how to form chords. And that's exactly what we can apply now.

Since we need the A minor chord, we first go to the note "a." This is our root note. Then go up 3 half steps. This is the "c," our 2nd note. Remember this key as well. From there, go up 4 half steps. Remember this key too. This is the "e," our 3rd note. Our A minor chord is complete. A, C, and E.

In most cases, we only need major and minor chords. For example, if you see a 7, it's just a variation of a major or minor chord (e.g., C7 or Cm7). But for now, it's enough to play major and minor chords without the 7, even if it's written there.

There are also other chords (dim, aug, +5, and many more...), but that's more of an exception and would exceed the scope of this beginner's guide.

Let's move on to Part 4.

4. Learning melodies. Here's another thing that many pianists are not aware of: The melody is based on the chords!

When we play our "Hotel California" song, you can see in the video that the melody at the beginning plays the notes e, d, and c. Both e and c are part of the A minor chord we are playing here. The "d" is a neighboring note or, in this case, also called a "passing tone."

What we can remember here:

1. The melody almost always follows the chords.
2. That means the 3 notes that make up a chord appear in the melody.
3. Additionally, neighboring notes often appear. We call them "passing tones" or "changing tones."

4. We always have to keep an eye on the chords. Because when the next chord comes, we have 3 new notes that the melody follows.

The entire process is not quite simple.

It is definitely a more advanced technique.

But you can imagine that if you "jump into the cold water" and dare to do this exercise over and over again without fear of making mistakes, you will make great progress at the piano with this exercise alone.

By the way, you are training various aspects of piano playing:

- Music theory
- Your musical ear
- Your finger dexterity
- Melody formation
- And much more

It's a great exercise routine!

But don't worry... if this is not for you, there are many other beautiful ways.

Overall, it's better to take smaller steps, learn everything step by step, and do exercises like this only occasionally.

That's why there's my [free Piano Crash Course](#) or my [premium course, Piano Complete](#).

Chapter 8: Watch My Piano Students Play!

1. Piano Student Videos

Time and time again, my piano students send me videos where I can see them play. It makes me incredibly proud! Because what I see there often brings tears to my eyes.

[You can find these videos in the playlist on YouTube.](#)
([Click here to access the playlist on YouTube.](#))

2. Piano Competition "We Love the Piano"

Then there are occasional community events, such as the competition "We Love the Piano," where my students could submit a video and have a chance to win great prizes.

[You can find these videos in the playlist on YouTube.](#)

Part 4: Additional Tips & Information

Chapter 9: Tips for Buying an Instrument

1. Which piano should I buy?

I have written two comprehensive articles on this topic on my website werdemusiker.com

The first article discusses different types of pianos (piano, grand piano, keyboard, electric piano, digital piano, upright piano, etc.). The decision on which type of piano you should buy should be made first before proceeding, and it highly depends on your personal situation.

You can find the first article here:

Click here: [“Buying a Piano - Making the Right Decision!”](#)

In my second article, I talk about specific manufacturers and more concrete solutions. I want to emphasize that my recommendations are 100% independent of any manufacturer and are solely based on my personal experience, opinion, and over 20 years of professional experience as a pianist.

You can find the second article here:

Click here [“Buying Guide - What Piano Should I Buy?”](#)

Here in this Ebook, let me briefly outline the most important points:

1. Nowadays, almost all new instruments are excellent!
2. Your instrument should definitely have "touch sensitivity" or "key sensitivity." This means that when you press a key slowly and lightly, the sound is soft and the tone is smoother. And when you press it quickly and firmly, the sound is louder and more intense.
3. You should have a sustain pedal (also known as a damper pedal).

And that brings us to the next point: accessories.

2. What accessories do I need?

Generally, you don't need a lot of accessories when learning to play the piano. In fact, in most cases, the necessary accessories come automatically with your instrument.

However, not everyone has a new instrument, and each instrument is slightly different. Therefore, here are the most important points and essential accessories so that you can check if you are perfectly equipped.

1. A Pedal

First and foremost, you definitely need a pedal, specifically a sustain pedal, also known as a damper pedal. If you have an acoustic piano, you will most likely find three foot pedals on your instrument. I'm referring to the right one here.

Some electric pianos and digital pianos also have these three pedals. If that's not the case for you, you probably have a single foot pedal that came with your instrument.

If you have an older electric piano or use a keyboard, you might not have a pedal yet. In that case, it's essential to

get one. It costs between €5 and €25.

For more information, you can also check my blog article "Buying Guide - What Piano Should I Buy?"

2. A Piano Bench

Next, I highly recommend getting a piano bench. Yes, you read that right: a bench, not a chair or stool. When playing the piano, we sometimes shift our body weight to the left or right, and it's possible to fall off a stool. A piano bench is wide enough to accommodate weight shifts in the upper body comfortably.

3. Metronome

It is built into almost all electric pianos and keyboards: a metronome, also known as a timekeeper. This metronome sets the beat, the heartbeat of every song (as described in Chapter 5.2).

The special thing about a metronome is that it beats perfectly evenly and always gives a different sound on the first beat (remember, we usually count 1, 2, 3, 4, and repeat that all the time). The metronome also helps us find the first beat. It sets a tempo (e.g., 82 beats per minute) and then beats exactly and evenly at 82 beats per minute!

If you have an acoustic piano and don't have a

metronome, you can either buy one or search the internet, as there are online metronomes and apps available in the iOS App Store and Google Play Store that provide a beat.

4. Tablet/Smartphone/Computer

Next, I strongly recommend having a tablet, smartphone, or computer on hand.

Tablets are widespread among musicians nowadays. It's simply because you can read notes, texts, and sheet music very well on a tablet, while it might be too small on a smartphone.

For learning purposes, it is also excellent because you can work with video lessons very well, and they can be displayed on a tablet at a convenient size, fitting on a music stand.

Depending on your instrument, a laptop might fit better on your instrument and may have an even larger screen. So, if you have a relatively deep but large space on your instrument, a laptop would be perfect.

There are also other reasons why a device like a tablet, smartphone, or computer can be beneficial for practicing. For example, it is a great exercise to occasionally record yourself while playing. It can be an audio recording or even a video recording. You don't have to show or play it

for anyone else, but you get valuable feedback about yourself. For example, you can check if you are sitting at the instrument correctly with a healthy posture and also judge how your piano playing sounds. However, it is essential not to be overly critical. On the one hand, you should be a little critical because you want to improve, but on the other hand, we often tend to be too critical of ourselves. Keep that in mind. After all, it should be fun! If you are too critical of yourself, know that you are not alone. So, please don't be too hard on yourself.

Another useful application of having a computer close to your instrument is that you can control very high-quality piano sounds in the computer with most digital and electric pianos. We are talking about virtual instruments or software instruments. These computer programs are partly free or cost up to around €200. However, you get the sound of the best concert grand pianos in the world, which would cost over €100,000 if you were to buy them in real life. Of course, there is still a difference between having the real instrument or using software, but if you connect some headphones to the computer, the experience is, in my opinion, already very good. Personally, I often use such software instruments.

5. Music Stand

Finally, it's good to have a music stand. Most pianos and keyboards have one integrated in some way. If that's not

the case for you, and you want to use sheet music or notes (you don't have to use either if you don't want to play from sheet music and prefer using a laptop as a tablet), you will need a music stand.

3. How you should take care of your instrument

This part of the Ebook still needs to be updated. (Piano Tuner)

Chapter 10: Additional Tips

1. How to Find the Right Teacher

How to Find the Right Piano Teacher?

First and foremost, I'm delighted that you are here, and I would be thrilled if you continue learning with my tutorials, video lessons, and courses. I have been a professional

pianist and piano teacher for over 20 years and I love my job with all its aspects. You can find more about me in the next chapter 11 or by Googling my name (Thomas Forschbach).

However, my goal with this article is also to provide an impartial source of information. Here are my tips:

1. Try Different Teachers

The most important tip in this section is to try out different teachers. You don't need to pay too much attention to specific details or keep a checklist of what is better or worse with each teacher. Instead, focus on how comfortable you feel. Who do you enjoy learning from the most? Where do you feel well supported, and where does communication work best? It's essential that your teacher understands your questions and that you understand their answers and instructions.

2. Practice with Multiple Teachers and Learning Materials

It's also beneficial to practice with multiple teachers and learning materials. This has several advantages. First, no one knows everything, and second, you gain different perspectives. Personally, I constantly educate myself, remain open to new ideas, and enjoy exploring various perspectives on the same topic. I pass this knowledge on to my students, but not everyone does that, and I am not

all-knowing either. Therefore, practicing with different teachers and materials is a good idea.

3. Observe Professionals and Watch Their Fingers

This third tip helped me a lot in the past, especially when there was no internet to access great information from anywhere, and finding a piano teacher was not as easy as it is today.

I once heard an interview with Michael Jackson where he said that he learned the most by closely watching his role models and other professionals. He would then go home to practice.

When I was 13 years old, I took this advice to heart, even against my parents' wishes. I used to go to the city in the evenings to find professional pianists and observe them closely while they worked. I literally watched their fingers.

For example, in a bar, I would stand next to the entrance to the restroom all evening. All the guests would ask why I was there, and the answer was simple: It was the best spot to watch the pianist's fingers. Four years later, I was the professional pianist sitting at that very piano in that bar!

4. Music Conservatory

Finally, if you aspire to a career as a professional classical concert pianist, you should have (multiple) teachers specializing in that area. Additionally, attending a music conservatory is recommended.

2. What Sleep Has to Do with Playing the Piano

The brain processes what you have learned during the day while you sleep. You will be surprised by the wonders that happen when you have slept on it for a night.

3. What movement has to do with playing the piano.

I am often asked how I manage to make my piano playing sound so soft and emotional.

Here is my secret: Relaxation!

On one hand, playing the piano is an excellent way to unwind and relax from everyday life.

On the other hand, the same applies in reverse.

For many years, I have been taking a one-hour walk every day.

4. How to practice effectively & the magic of small practice segments

In this section, we will discuss a very inconspicuous tip. It is a technique that is often underestimated, yet incredibly valuable.

It's about the magic of small practice segments, or rather, the "right" practice segments.

Let me explain it to you.

There are three types of piano students. The third type is by far the rarest because hardly anyone knows this tip. However, it is also the most powerful way to practice and can make a huge difference in your progress at the piano.

Piano student number 1 makes a typical mistake. This person practices a piece from the beginning, and if they make a mistake, they start again from the beginning.

Piano student number 2 knows that it is better to practice

a complete piece by focusing on small sections. They select 2 or 4 measures and repeat those measures over and over. If they make a mistake, they start again from the beginning of those 2 or 4 measures and repeat until they get it right.

Piano student number 3 knows the tip and trick we are talking about here. These students understand that every piece has easier and more difficult passages. The difficult passages need to be repeated, but the easier ones do not. It is a complete waste of time to repeat the easy passages as often as the difficult ones. However, this is exactly what students 1 and 2 do. This can lead to the fatal result that they lose interest and motivation to continue practicing because it simply takes too long for them to play a new piece, or they get stuck on easy pieces.

Instead, piano student 3 (brace yourself) makes progress up to 1000 times faster and learns difficult passages and pieces in a very short time.

It is one of the reasons why some beginners manage to play songs like "River Flows in You" or the soundtrack from the movie "Amelie," even though these pieces are not considered beginner-friendly.

I break down these songs into the right small practice segments for them. And step-by-step, they reach their goal.

But how do you find these "right" practice segments?

Quite simply... in all my tutorials, courses, and video instructions, these practice segments are an important and significant part. It is indeed not quite easy to find these segments by yourself without having a comprehensive music-theoretical knowledge of the song you want to practice.

However, you will always get that from me.

Either I provide you with the specific practice segments (often without you even realizing it), and later, over time, you will learn how to find these segments yourself.

5. Avoid these typical beginner mistakes!

Chapter 11: About Your Teacher

1. This pianist is fun!



"If you want to have a really good time and experience many artists, then you should go to Thomas Forschbach!" (Barbara Schöneberger, Germany's No. 1 TV Host)



Take a look at the following video to see a small excerpt from one of my concerts.

For me, one thing is always clear: Life is too short not to have fun and do what you want. That's why I sometimes rappel down from the ceiling to play the piano upside

down during concerts and always go through life with a smile."



2. "More Than 1500 Live Performances - What a Pianist Experiences"

3. Duets with Plácido Domingo, Shakira & Germany's Soccer Goal Keeper & World Champion Manuel Neuer

As pianists, we have the advantage of gaining an exclusive glimpse behind the scenes. When everyone else is already at home, the lights are out, and the power is off, the piano is still alive, and that's when some otherwise shy personalities emerge from the shadows.

This has led to some very special moments.

For example, I sang the worldwide hit "We are the world" together with national goalkeeper Manuel Neuer. I met Shakira completely unadorned during rehearsal. And meeting Plácido Domingo was also a truly special moment for me.

Ein Kölner klimpert durch die Welt

„Macaronni“-Pianist pendelt zwischen Rhein und Übersee

Heute Paris, morgen New York und dann wieder nach Kölle! Als **Thomas Forschbach** im Alter von 17 Jahren erstmals im Macaronni aufgetreten ist, hätte er sich

großen Hotels in den Metropolen vermittelten. Mittlerweile ist der kölsche Jong fest gebucht im Ritz in Paris oder im New Yorker Plaza-Hotel.

Auf seinen Touren traf er auch auf Prominente wie **Shakira** (bei der Unesco-Gala in Düsseldorf), **Placido Domingo** spielte Forschbach in Paris vor. Über seine Gäste verliert er nicht viele Worte, nur so viel: „Einmal hat der Schumi-Manager **Willy Weber** für seine Frau „You are so beautiful“ gesungen. Das war richtig schief, hat aber Spaß gemacht.“



EXPRESSO
Die Köln-Kolumne
von Bastian Ebel und Bastian May
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E-Mail: expresso@express.de

eine Weltkarriere nicht erträumt. „Wahnsinn. Das hatte ich nicht gedacht. Aber ich habe auch viel dafür gearbeitet“, sagt der 29-Jährige.

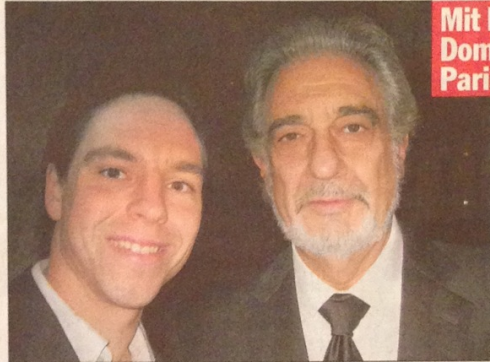
Vor fünf Jahren gelang ihm der große Durchbruch, als Gäste ihm den Kontakt zu den

Bei allem internationalem Engagement bleibt Forschbach seiner Heimatstadt treu, denn: „Hier bin ich zu Hause und fühle mich am wohlsten.“ Dass der Weltenbummler ein Herz für Köln hat, beweist seine große Ostergala, die er mit befreundeten Musikern im Maritim veranstaltet. „Da will ich alles spielen: Von **Udo Jürgens** über die **Bläck Fööss** bis zu **Abba**“, freut sich Forschbach auf den 8. April. Tickets bei www.koelnticket.de



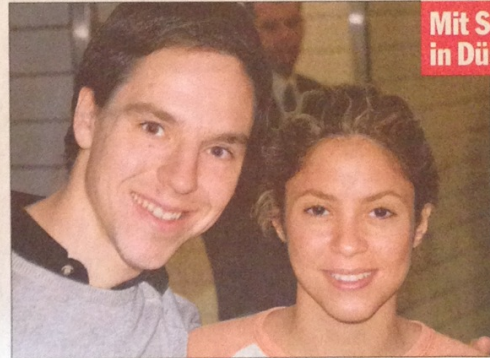
Im Plaza in New York

Regelmäßig ist der Kölner in den großen Hotels der Metropolen, hier in New York, gebucht.



Mit Placido Domingo in Paris

Der große Tenor **Placido Domingo** hörte **Thomas** in Paris zu. Nervös ist Forschbach bei so viel Promis nicht. „Da bleib ich locker.“



Mit Shakira in Düsseldorf

Bei der Unesco-Gala in Düsseldorf traf **Thomas** nach dem Soundcheck auf seine singende Kollegin **Shakira**.

Fotos: privat



Mit Höwedes, Neuer und Westermann in Köln

Letztes Jahr trafen sich im Macaronni die Profikicker **Heiko Westermann**, **Manuel Neuer** und **Benedikt Höwedes** (v. l.), um mit Forschbach zu singen.

Anzeige

center.tv

Die Band „Pelemele“ – die Rockmusiker für Kinder – sind im „RHEINZEIT“-Studio



HIGHLIGHTS am DONNERSTAG

- 18:10 RheinSPORT**
Neben den Ereignissen des Tages berichtet der RheinSPORT über die Fußball-Partie Freialdenhoven gegen Gladbach.
- 18:30 RHEINZEIT**
Lust auf Kino? In unserem „Movie der Woche“ verraten wir, welcher Film sich wirklich lohnt. Außerdem begrüßt Tinalisa Patscher die Veranstalter der 1. Kölner Kindermusikmesse, die von Sonntag bis nächste Woche Mittwoch im Bürgerhaus Kalk stattfindet. Mit im Studio dabei ist die Band Pelemele, die Rockmusik für Kinder macht.
- 19:00 heimat kompakt**
- 20:10 heimspele! Der Fußball-Talk**
- 21:00 stadtsprache spezial**
Joachim Frank im Gespräch mit Christian Lindner (FDP Politiker)

Mehr Infos zum Programm unter koeln.center.tv

Here, Franz Beckenbauer didn't quite know how he felt when I asked him to sing the Cologne hit "Viva Colonia."

At this moment, Sarah Engels and Pietro Lombardi were still a couple and particularly enjoyed how delicately I played the keys. (Notice the friendly gentleman at the piano 😊)

4. More Than 350,000 piano students on YouTube.

Chapter 12: How to proceed from here in the best way.

1. More Courses & Beyond...

You can probably imagine that the journey with the piano is infinite.

And that's exactly what it is!

It can always go on. You can always discover more. And I can promise you this: It's beautiful and it never gets boring!

But how should you proceed now with so many possibilities?

1. If you haven't done so yet, get my free Piano Crash Course now. It will guide you step by step. In the beginning, you'll find the most important exercises for beginners, and later on, I'll introduce you to more possibilities and step-by-step instructions, depending on

what you want to learn and pursue further. (Do you want to learn to play your favorite songs? Learn improvisation? Improve and speed up your music reading? You can learn everything, but it's best to take it one step at a time. In many small steps that won't overwhelm you.)

[Here's the page where you can sign up for free.](#)

2. If you already know that you want more and want to immerse yourself fully in the world of piano playing, you can also purchase a premium course from me on my website werdemusiker.de. [Here's the page.](#)

For the starting point, I recommend my course "[Piano Complete.](#)" After that, you can learn with my course "[The Art of Sight-Reading](#)" and then move on to my course "Tips & Tricks for Advanced Players."

By doing so, you're not only supporting my work but also getting a course that I'm sure you'll love. And because I mean that sincerely and would rather have one less customer than an unhappy one, each of these courses comes with a 60-day money-back guarantee.

If you have any questions, you can always write me an email at thomas@werdemusiker.com.

I love hearing from my piano students!!

It's great to have you here, and it's wonderful that you made it to the end of this page!!

I'm sure we'll have a fantastic time together 😊



Thomas Forschis