

# Testimonials

## Introduction

These testimonials have been mercilessly condensed because inclusion of all complete testimonials would fill a 300 page book. I was compelled to publish these partly because, from their passion, it was clear that the words were pouring out from the writers' hearts. You can't fake what you will see below. Many provide additional insights. Thanks for writing -- your contributions should be shared.

## From Amazon book reviews

Chang sets out a number of incredibly important insights about practicing and playing the piano which you will find nowhere else. He also talks about speed in arpeggios, leaps and octaves in a way that I have only heard discussed from one master teacher, Artur Schnabel's assistant, in the 1930s. If you follow what he says, it will transform your playing. There is no other source which will give this kind of practical information.

Best book yet on how to practice a musical instrument . . . . it has probably the best information ever assembled about how to practice and learn music efficiently. I am a published author in this field myself, and I unhesitatingly recommend Chang's book . . . .

I play about 20 instruments regularly, guitars, bass, mandolin, violin, celtic whistle, clarinet, cornet, piano, recorder, etc., in a host of styles. I have been playing piano literally all my life. I always loved it, but lessons or no lessons, I never made the great strides I had hoped for, though I put the work into it. Why are Bach and Beethoven the ultimate heights and not just stepping stones to things greater? Because the instructions don't work.

After reading Chang, a great deal of it made sense. Chang got these ideas from someone who worked with Claude Debussy. Following the methods of the book, I am now able to play Thelonious Monk's 'Round Midnight, which is not only one of the heights of jazz, but it is stride, meaning the left hand alternates between bass notes and chords, while the right plays a melody. I am able to play in front of people, something I found difficult before. I can improvise freely because I have confidence that I will hit the notes. 22 note runs of Chopin's Nocturne in B flat minor fly out of the fingers with ease, without effort, correctly, every time.

The finger work really becomes the easy part; my mental coordination has grown by leaps and bounds. Unlearning common wisdom is the hardest part. The open mind of a child who didn't have to unlearn so much would save years of mind numbing

practice, concentrating on expression instead and still having time to pursue other interests.

This isn't a book. It's a miracle. The best bargain I have ever seen.

This book is truly the missing link for students stuck at a point of fear in public recitals, passages of music they can't ever seem to master, fluidity in playing and zest in performance. Chang's strength is his clarity and ability to dissect a physical movement and/or mental process, analyze the movement and suggest a more efficient path. Chang argues that prodigies are made, not born. A million 'thank you's'.

This manual should be required reading for all piano students. It represents unique techniques and insights into the methods of practicing the piano. It will surely accelerate the learning process and give you additional incentive for continuing your studies.

I have read books on piano playing, from the greatest teachers and pianists; it was not until I read this book that I had the breakthrough that really opened up my abilities. Before, I was hesitant to play in front of persons outside my own family. Through these methods, I have learned my pieces so well that I now have the confidence to play in front of complete strangers. It was the single greatest find in all my pianistic ramblings.

This book radically improved my piano playing. It taught me how to practice the piano musically and in a year and half all the Mozart and Haydn sonatas are within range and I am able to play for teachers and friends without falling apart. I no longer creep through scores looking for approachable adagios; I go straight for presto and allegro con brio. It explains what's wrong with the way many students and teachers approach piano practice and tells you how to do it correctly.

### **From my emails**

Testimonials received before 2004 are in the book. Those between 2004 and 2006 are in a different computer that is temporarily disconnected and have not been entered here. The following are selected (condensed!) testimonials received after 2006.

Reading your book makes me want to cry. It is probably one of the most important things that I have read. I am 21 and have played saxophone, keyboard, guitar, bass guitar, and drums and have played for years in a small band. I never got any good at any of these instruments. It was hard to keep up motivation because practicing didn't really improve my playing except after weeks and weeks of practicing more than an

hour every day -- I decided that I simply was a terrible musician. It angers me that the world is such that this kind of ignorance can exist.

Your book helped to change my life. Reading it, I understood why I had failed over the years! The methods are simply genius; I discovered that I actually could be a "talented" musician through REWARDING hard work. This kind of work is EASY; much easier than any of the academic work which I have succeeded in.

I tested some of the methods in the book by re-analyzing a piece of toccata and fugue by Bach and was able to obtain almost unlimited speed as easy as putting one foot in front of the other within three days. What was before the most difficult part now feels ridiculously easy. I also was surprised to find that I am able to reliably sing a few notes without any reference -- I had thought that I was tone deaf. By practicing what you showed, I discovered what I could do.

Your book has brought me more than an "easy" path to my wildest dreams. Most of the techniques in this book can be abstracted for use in developing practically any skill. No one ever told me that I was ALLOWED to come up with my own techniques before. I have now developed my own mnemonic for memorizing the multiplication table, learning Chinese characters, etc. Thank you for redirecting my life in such an amazing and important manner.

I had been listening to your book on podcast, and then bought your book. I used to be a statistician, but am now a violinist aspiring to be an arranger/composer, and studying piano for music theory education and the joy of playing piano. What prompted me to purchase your book was a comment from my music teacher - she does not know I study your book; however, I use your methods for my piano practice. Upon observing the quickness in which I have been progressing, she said, "You seem to be a musical genius." Thanks for making me a 'genius'.

I started playing the piano at age 39 and have been discouraged by my slow and painful progress. I heard a Bach number on the radio and said I've got to learn that one - English Suite II - and found a youtube performance by Benedetta -- it was good. A short while later, she posted a new one, and wow, the skill and technique was 10 times greater! I asked her how long she practices and she responded with "it is not how long I practice but how I study" and told me to google your name. After 4 days of reading and practicing the new methods every day, I'm so impressed at my progress. I've emailed all the 9 piano teachers I have contact with in my community.

The book got me from a point where I was ready to give up on learning the piano because I was making so little progress to where I enjoy playing every chance I get. I could say tons more, but will keep it simple -- thank you!

I'm a pianist and violinist, came across your site, and must admit I was astounded. I agree that the available literature on piano practice is incomplete - I had been searching for months for such a book on piano practice. I had read what I consider one of the finest books that covers the complete spectrum of musical playing of an

instrument, Leopold Mozart's "Versuch einer grundlichen Violinschule" on violin. Reading that book, I had no doubts where his son's genius came from - like you, Leopold approached the playing of the instrument with a scientific rigor and clarity.

I'm enjoying your book immensely; the chapter on warm-ups inspire me to write a book of my own! In my experience, the most effective way to warm the fingers and forearms is by raising the core temperature of the body. A few minutes of martial arts or a 15-minute walk prepares me for playing music better than any amount of hot water.

I have recommended your book to teachers and students here in X State as I am the past president and member of the X Music Teachers Guild and also a member of the X State Music Teachers Association. I think both of these organizations should be apprised of your book and the tenets therein. I studied with a teacher who was trained in France under Margaritte Long (Y. Combe's teacher) . . . . . If you come to X State, I would like to extend an invitation to lecture for the guild . . . . .