

Motivation. Inspiration. Partnership. Responsibility. Accomplishment. These are the concepts that describe a half-century of instruction by master teacher and pianist Amanda Penick. The University of Alabama music professor will receive a Governor's Art Award in May, and she holds the distinction of being the longest tenured professor in higher education in the State of Alabama. Penick has taught at the Capstone since 1953, and she represents the pinnacle of piano teaching in our state.

In a recent conversation with Amanda Penick, her love of music and teaching is apparent immediately. "As a teacher, when one has good students who provide stimulus and motivation for the teacher, the teacher reciprocates, and in turn provides stimulus and motivation for the student. It is dual motivation, and it is a marriage of sorts. We all have the love of music, and with that we are recreating and re-defining the craft of music, and that in itself has been my reason to continue to teach." Penick thinks of teaching as an ever-enlarging circle, believing practice leads to accomplishment, accomplishment leads to motivation, and that subsequent motivation produces more practice. "But always, the music itself is of the utmost importance as we strive to be better as teachers and musicians."

It is insightful teaching philosophies such as these that have made Amanda Penick a successful and prolific teacher and musician. Her accolades are many. A native of Alabama and a lifelong resident of Tuscaloosa, Amanda received her Bachelor of Music from Hollins College in Roanoke, Virginia in 1952 and her Master of Music degree from the University of Alabama in 1953. Following her master's degree work with Roy McAllister at the University, she subsequently studied with Irwin Freundlich and Joseph Prostakoff. She has served as guest artist, clinician, adjudicator and conductor of master classes for numerous local, district, state and national levels of the Music Teachers National Association. Penick is past president of Pi Kappa Lambda, the Alabama Music Teachers Association, and has been a member of the Southern Division Executive Board of MTNA. She is an honorary member of XXXI Club, Omicron Delta Kappa and the Golden Key Honor Society. Her students have won many awards and competitions including the MTNA Collegiate Artist Competition and the Young Keyboard Artist Competition. Amanda Penick holds the Master Teacher Certification from MTNA, and in 1988 was the recipient of the University of Alabama's Outstanding Commitment to Teaching Award.

In 1998, a \$20,000 endowment fund in Penick's name was established by the Music Teachers National Association. This endowment is one of only four perpetuated by the Board of Trustees of the Music Teachers National Association. Recently she also received the Druid Arts Musician of the Year Award from the Arts Council of Tuscaloosa. As a performer, she has given recitals and master classes throughout the Southeast, has appeared extensively as soloist and chamber musician, and has performed with the Alabama Symphony Orchestra and the Tuscaloosa Symphony Orchestra.

In recognition of her teaching excellence and in service to the Alabama Music Teachers Association, the community and the state, Penick was awarded the inaugural AMTA Teacher of the Year in 1998. When she received this award, she unselfishly remarked that "This honor really should go to those teachers who have gone before us and have shared their ideas, and to those who have made us the best we can be." She truly feels that the inspiration and the fine

teaching she received from former teachers and fellow musicians have helped bring her to where she is today. She remarks that her studies with Roy McAllister were very inspiring to her as a young student, and he passed down a series of principals that have served as a guide in her own teaching.

Amanda Penick's teaching approach has evolved from many experiences. She states that many of the pedagogical concepts she uses with her students have evolved from her own teaching experiences over the years. Her many travels have no doubt given her teaching added historical perspective and her colorful use of imagery and ethnic flavor has enhanced her stylistic approach to pieces.

From personal experience, the three years that I worked as a doctoral student under Amanda's instruction will always be the most productive and satisfying years of piano study for me. Through years of teaching experience, she instinctively chooses literature that is the perfect match for the student. Her psychological approach with each student is extremely intuitive, and she is able to instill in each student the confidence factor that is so important in performing. Penick makes each student the best that the student can possibly be. This is the hallmark of superior teaching.

Alabamians around the state continue to enjoy her weekly show on Alabama Public Television. For 25 years, "The Pianist at Work" has showcased Penick's outstanding students, as well as many of her "grand students" from all corners of the State of Alabama. In the format of a master class, the young pianist not only performs but also is given pedagogical suggestions regarding the performance. Often Amanda shares a delightful historical or a personal anecdote about the composer or composition. Anyone watching the show, whether amateur or professional, should be able to go away with ideas that could be applied to daily piano teaching or performing, and many times, just life in general.

How has her teaching changed over the years? Amanda Penick says she has totally changed her approach since she began teaching fifty years ago. "At first I was learning how to teach, and I was learning the music that I was teaching." Now as a mature and seasoned professor, the emphasis has shifted to continually exploring different methods by which to communicate a particular concept to the student(s). The overall enjoyment of the music is the ultimate priority, but she places much emphasis on sound and memorization. When Penick studied with Freundlich in New York, she told Freundlich that she "wanted a Madison Avenue Sound." The development of a beautiful sound is one of her major priorities in teaching, along with emphasizing to students the ability to really listen to the sound(s) that they are producing.

Amanda Penick is also known for her quick wit and wonderful sense of humor. Long-time friend, colleague and duo piano partner Gloria Moody recalls with fondness the fun and great times that she and Amanda have shared over the years. Coincidentally, the daughters of Amanda and Gloria were expecting their first children at approximately the same time. In celebration of the birth of the first grandchildren for both of them, Amanda and Gloria worked on and performed the "Mother Goose Suite" by Ravel on Amanda's weekly program, "The Pianist at Work." Amanda very dryly commented to Gloria, "When one is young, one plays what one is required to play; when one is older and more mature, one plays what one wants to play, and

when one is much older, one plays what one is able to play!” Of course, both ladies have always performed wonderfully, and they still collaborate occasionally.

Penick also experiences the conflict of time between performing and teaching. “Each craft involves many hours. When I pour my energy and my heart into teaching, it is always difficult to pull away and dedicate myself to performing.” Penick seems to have accomplished that task very well, as she has continued to perform and give much sought-after master classes throughout the state and region.

The encouragement and inspiration that Amanda Penick gives to her students are evident. She has graduated more UA School of Music doctoral candidates than any other professor. Penick feels that the students are her responsibility as long as they are under her tutelage, and she is very supportive of their endeavors and sincerely wants to help them do well throughout their careers. For Penick “it is a joint collaboration in a great musical venture”. When asked if there is one thing she would say to excite and to encourage young music students, while remaining realistic, she replied, “Music is not the most lucrative profession, and it is definitely not a sedentary job, but it is very rewarding to those who love it as much as I.”

Amanda Penick has dedicated her life to bringing music to the State of Alabama and undoubtedly has produced more former students who have become outstanding piano teachers around the state than anyone else. Her commitment to teaching is most outstanding and is evident from her long list of award winners as well as masters and doctoral graduates from the University of Alabama. Penick’s superior legacy has raised the bar for piano teaching and performing for the entire state. Her musicianship is superb and she transfers that love of music to each and every student. Kudos to Amanda Penick, recipient of a Governor’s Arts Award, a distinction which she so readily deserves. Her service to the State of Alabama for half a century of musical dedication is truly outstanding and remarkable.