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Small Hands, SOS! : Circumventing Injury and Succeeding at the Piano

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Small Hands, SOS!

Circumventing Injury and Succeeding at the Piano

Invited Paper:
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Recommendations:

Detach notes as needed—join with pedal.
Release bass and inner voices early as needed.
Insert dynamic fluctuations within a long fortissimo passage.
Maximize the bass through long pedals.
Use stronger fingers.
Supplement action of the fingers with a forward and upward motion of the forearm.
Use the thumb and fifth finger exclusively for octave passages.
Omit notes from successive large chords.
Use staccato touch for selected notes in arpeggio.

Keep hand compact.
Use “rebounding” motion.
Insert moment of rest between every chord.
Use the damper pedal to create a legato sound.
Keep the hand pliable.
Control shape and size of forearm rotation.
Redistribute long fortissimo octave passages between the hands.
Redistribute notes between the hands.
Use the thumb to express a tenor melody.
Break fingerings into small units that require more hand shifts.
Refinger to eliminate stretches.
Redistribute notes to eliminate stretches between interlocked hands.
Redistribute notes to allow for ease in trills.
Redistribute notes to allow for ease in trills.

Conclusions:

Do not recommend exercises or devices that purportedly strengthen fingers or increase hand span.

Give specific feedback.

Be cautious of repertoire that contains stretches just barely within reach of the hand.

Be flexible and experiment to find effective solutions to technical problems.

Strive to return to “anatomic neutral” at the hand and wrist as often as possible.

Take any complaint of pain or fatigue seriously. Encourage healthy practice habits.

Educate students about inherent problems of small hand size. Encourage experimentation.

Cultivate an appreciation for different styles of performance.

Support the seven-eighth-sized keyboard as a viable option to standard-sized keyboards.