

The Sequential Method: An Analysis of Robert Jesselson's Cello Pedagogy

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ABSTRACT

Dr. Robert Jesselson has made significant professional contributions as a cello performer and music educator. His pedagogical approaches are innovative in helping students overcome technical problems, building good work habits, instilling self-discipline, addressing kinesthetic issues, and improving practice techniques. His Sequential Method involves a systematic and logical progression of technical exercises, scale systems, etudes and repertoire. It is unique in its applications for teaching and learning left and right hand techniques, building a progression of etudes which address technical and musical issues, and working through the cello repertoire in an organized and meaningful manner that is appropriate to the playing level of the student.

This dissertation explores Dr Jesselson's approach to cello pedagogy, technique, warm-ups, and exercises. It also addresses issues such as memorization, coordination, concentration, sight reading, and musicality. Finally, Dr. Jesselson's contributions to music education in the United States are reviewed.

Musical instrument pedagogy is often based on the oral tradition. Over time, vital details can be lost. This study codifies Dr. Jesselson's teaching philosophy in a written document that will help cello teachers improve their teaching methods and will interest students seeking to improve their understanding of cello technique. Additionally, it documents Dr. Jesselson's contributions from his over 38 years of teaching at the University of South Carolina, including the affect his teaching has had on teachers and the level of cello playing in South Carolina and in the region.

INDEX WORDS: Cello pedagogy, Cello performance, Practice techniques, Cello warm-ups, Music interpretation.