

# Pianist 68

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# Scores



## NEW VIDEO LESSONS FROM JOHN MAUL

Go to the *Pianist* website to find video lessons on the beginner pieces in this issue's scores, all taught by John Maul – pianist, arranger, composer and freelance demonstrator for Roland. Read John's advice below, look at the pieces in the scores and then click on [www.pianistmagazine.com](http://www.pianistmagazine.com) for the complete learning experience!



John Maul pictured at the Roland LX-15 on which he gives his lessons

When you watch John's video lessons online and read the below, you'll find out about two clever tricks of the trade: *finger pedalling* and *finger substitution*. These techniques feature throughout all types of piano music. You can find examples of finger pedalling and finger substitution in John's composition *Theme for Constanze* on page 32. So read what John has to say, then start learning – with the help of his online video lessons of course!  
-Erica Worth, Editor

### Finger pedalling

When we are first taught the piano, we hold on to a key for as long as the composer asks, and then release it when we move on to the next. Finger pedalling is a technique in which you can actually hold the notes down *longer* than their written value. This is a very useful technique for creating a richer sounding chordal or Alberti bass accompaniment without relying too much on the sustain pedal.

See what I mean by referring to my *Theme for Constanze* (page 32). The first eight bars in the LH feature a typical arpeggiated accompaniment. It should be played very smoothly with a little emphasis on the root notes. You can do this by holding the notes down for a longer length. If I were to play this section without pedal, and with exact quaver length notes, it would sound quite dry. However, if I were to play using a finger pedal technique, still without the pedal, it sounds more smooth and sonorous.

Why use such a technique when the sustain pedal would achieve something similar? Well, this is where we also have to consider the RH melody. Bar 2 for example has the two semiquavers played a semitone apart. There's a danger that too much pedalling would make these notes muddy. This finger pedalling technique helps us compensate for that by

using less sustain pedal. The next section, from bar 9, forces us to be more reliant on the pedal however, as the LH accompaniment covers a wider range that therefore requires us to let go of certain notes. Those same semiquaver melody notes may require us to lift the sustain pedal at that point for the sake of clarity. At the very least, be aware of the dangers.

### Finger substitution

Finger substitution is used when you want to create a connecting, flowing legato. The simplest kind is when a finger replaces another finger during a rest; the more difficult kind is to replace one finger with another while a note is being played. The latter is what I'll discuss here. At bar 17 of *Theme for Constanze* there's quite a big octave stretch in the RH from the lower quaver D to the top crotchet D, and for many pianists, using the thumb followed by the fifth finger would be the obvious choice. The only problem here is that the next note is the E above, and this is tricky to play legato as the E also needs to use the fifth finger. So here's a trick that classical organists like to use all the time because they don't have sustain pedals: I play the top D with my RH little finger, but then I *swap* ('substitute') fingers – without making a noise – to the fourth finger, keeping the key held down throughout. I then play the E with my free fifth finger.

It's very important to use only the bare minimum weight required to hold down the key. Otherwise your hand may tense up. The more you learn how to play this way, the less dependent you will be on using the sustain pedal for legato. You will find many places within all types of repertoire where a little finger substitution can do a lot of good.

Let us know what you think of John's video lessons. Write to the editor at [editor@pianistmagazine.com](mailto:editor@pianistmagazine.com)

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Quick guide to  
UK/North American  
note value terminology

- ♩ = semibreve/whole note
- ♪ = minim/half note
- ♪ = crotchet/quarter note
- ♫ = quaver/eighth note
- ♮ = semiquaver/16th note
- ♯ = demisemiquaver/32nd note

YOU CAN WATCH A VARIETY OF BEGINNER  
LESSONS ON THE PIANIST TV CHANNEL  
AT [WWW.PIANISTMAGAZINE.COM](http://WWW.PIANISTMAGAZINE.COM)

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