

John Maul Piano Technique Tips in Pianist 68

FINGER PEDALLING

When we are 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.

- Refer to my *Theme for Constanze* (page 32, Scores Pianist 68).
- The first 8 bars in the left hand (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 them 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. [Watch John's [video lesson](#) where you can see his hands really do the demonstrating.]



Why use such a technique when the sustain pedal would achieve something similar? We also have to consider the right hand (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 seeing as the LH accompaniment covers a wider range and therefore requires us to let go of certain notes. Those same semiquaver melody notes may require you to lift the sustain pedal at that point for the sake of clarity. At the very least, be aware of the dangers. From Bar 17, the LH can again hold down the root notes but from bar 25, we're faced with the same challenge as before where a wider range accompaniment means letting go of certain notes. Give it a try.