



Donald Morelock, an instructor at Schoolcraft College and director of the college's piano teachers certification program, recently was named 1983 Teacher of the

Year by the Michigan Music Teachers Association. Here he displays his virtuosity at the keyboard.

Practice makes perfect for 'Teacher of the Year'

By Mary Klemic
staff writer

From the time he was a young boy singing with his family in their home to his present position as head of the piano department in Schoolcraft College, music always has been a large part of Donald Morelock's life.

His enthusiasm for music has brought him to schools around the country and in Europe, as well as to area classrooms and concerts. And it led to his selection by the Michigan Music Teachers Association as that organization's 1983 Teacher of the Year.

Good instructors are essential in music classes for all ages, especially for youngsters, Morelock believes.

"Early training with a good teacher is critical," he said. "It should be that the best teachers teach children. If they don't get trained correctly, they lose out that way."

AS PIANO instructor at Schoolcraft, Morelock directs a piano teacher's certification program at the college. He also developed piano studies programs for students ranging in age from kindergarten to high school.

"They help the teacher experience all age groups," he said.

In one piano workshop, elementary school-age children attend a 60-minute group lesson and a 30-minute private lesson every week. The 36-week program, which runs from mid-September through June, includes "mini-recitals" and a spring recital, Morelock said.

"It's very well-organized," Morelock said. "We see them often enough and train them enough so they have enough knowledge of theory and rhythm. That's important. We help them arrange a regular practice time and encourage them to learn to play for friends."

Music classes today tend to take the individual student into account more than they used to, Morelock said.

"When I took lessons, it was the survival of the fittest," he said. "I enjoyed music, so I practiced hard. But lessons are much more geared for the age of the students today. There's a lot more careful placing done now."

YOUNGSTERS WHO want to take classes in Schoolcraft's workshop first are interviewed for their compatibility, so they will function well in a group, Morelock said. He said the drop-out rate for the program is very low.

"Many students have gone on to take lessons through four or five years," he said.

The certification program started some 12 years ago in response to requests from instructors in the community who wanted to learn more about teaching, Morelock said. Many of his students have received music scholarships.

Morelock would advise parents "not to wait too long" to start their children in music lessons.

"I would tell them not to wait too long and expect a child to want to take lessons by himself or herself," Morelock said. "Maybe at age 7 or 8. They have to be ready for regular practice."

MORELOCK'S INTEREST in, and involvement with, music came early.

"My father sang in the church choir and could play piano," he said. "We always sang, my sister, mother and I. There was always musicmaking at our home."

The saying, "Those who can, do; those who can't, teach" wouldn't apply to Morelock. Morelock, who earned a master's of music degree in piano performance from the University of Michigan, has studied in New York City, Dallas, Aspen and Vienna. In addition, he has performed in two-piano and chamber music recitals throughout Michigan.

Why should anyone take music lessons? "Because it's fun, it's enjoyable," Morelock said. "It can become a lifetime hobby. One keeps wanting to know more about it."

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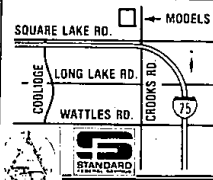


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