The Art of Piano Performance:

THE Spectrum of Expressive Touches

By Professor Peter Coraggio

Illustrated by Jon J. Murakami



MAESTRO PROFONDO

Musician extraordinaire



MUSABELLA

Profondo's lovely teaching assisstant



AGITATO

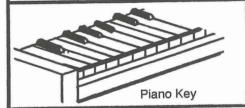
Neophyte student



Before the piano was invented, the popular keyboard instrument was the harpsichord. Harpsichord sounds are made from strings that are plucked.



Although they both have keyboards, the piano is very different from the harpsichord.





The tradition of playing the piano with the finger tips and with fingers raised very high came from the way many of the earliest pianists played the harpsichord in the 18th century.



Harpsichord keys were much shorter and smaller than the keys on today's pianos.

Piano sounds are made by hammers striking strings. The piano key mechanism is a sort of catapult. Pianists make music by flipping hammers at strings with levers (keys) at different speeds.



No matter how loud or soft, beautiful or ugly, all piano music is produced by pianists controlling the speed that the keys are depressed, which determines the speed that the hammers are thrown at the strings.

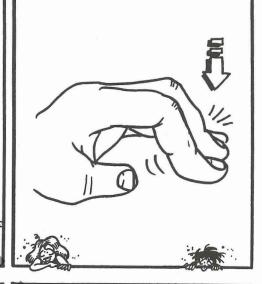




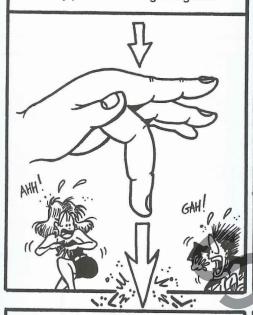
They play on their fingertips with curly fingers...



They play on their fingerprints with collapsed fingers...



They poke with straight fingers...



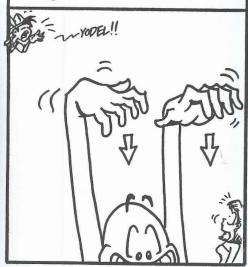
They pluck imaginary strings by snapping their fingers back quickly...



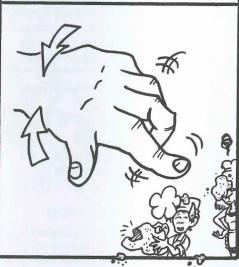
They dust off the keys...



They attack the keys from a great height...



They massage the keys as if they are soft dough.



But pianists at the early stages have to begin with a basic, natural position.



SITTING AT THE PIANO, GETTING YOUR BEST HAND SHAPE, AND HOW TO USE YOUR FINGERS.





