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## ARE YOU THE MUSICIAN YOU WANT TO BE?

*Is fear keeping you from achieving your musical goals? What if you could move past it?*

*For thirty years Adam Cole has been breaking down the barriers between music and people who want to make it. In his classes and workshops he helps people find the places where they are stuck and brings them through it to greater ability, confidence and happiness. On his YouTube Channel Adam talks with people about their musical journeys, from beginners to pros, and even some famous faces!*

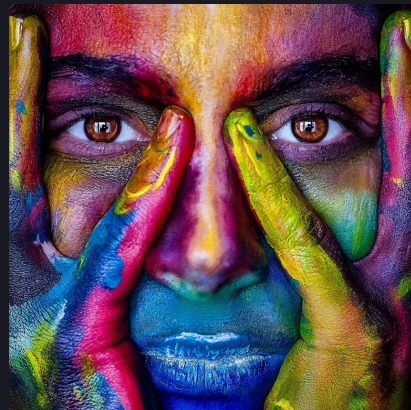
## THE WORLD NEEDS YOUR ART!

*The world is damaged. It needs passion, dedication, courage: in short, you.*

*You have all of these things. They manifest when you perform and when you prepare yourself to perform. They come out and they inspire people.*

*Decide that you're going to be the performer you imagine you could be, maybe even the performer you never thought you could be!*

*What's stopping you?*





## TIME TO HEAL. TIME TO GROW.

*There could be lots of things stopping you from performing.*

*It could be an emotional block that's kept you from tapping into the intense passion that belongs to you.*

*It could be a mental trap where you circle around and around and never find your way.*

*If could be a physical issue that's affecting how you feel and how you think without your even knowing it.*

*All of these things can be seen, recognized, and transcended.*

## IMPROVEMENT IS ENDLESS

*So are you ready?*

*We can't wait to work with you!*

*If you want to learn with us add your name below. Subscribe to our YouTube channel. Be a part of our community and join the conversation!*





Willow Music offers private instruction on piano, violin, drums, voice and guitar to children and adults of all ages. We also offer classes and workshops as well as Music Summer Camp. Our philosophy emphasizes the health and well-being of the students, and as a result we see them become great musicians who enjoy practicing and getting better. There are many different types of musicians.

## “Fearless Artist”

For beginning students, young children, and adults who deal with a persistent fear of performance, we bring students to a beginning mastery of their musicianship at a pace that is comfortable for them. We promote student understanding of their own learning process so that they can advance their skills at their own rate, always in a place of joy and curiosity.

## “True Musician”

For emerging musicians of all ages, we offer superior Classical and Jazz instruction on the piano, violin, drums, voice and guitar. Our focus is always on mastery through process-based instruction. “How good can you get?” is always answered only with the question “Better than I am now.” As an example of the progress of our youngest students, watch our [Rhythm Explorers](#) grow over 16 weeks.

## “Emerging Writer”

For creatives, beginning and experienced, who seek to learn to write and compose in an environment that instills confidence in themselves and their emerging process. While our focus is on music, we welcome writers and artists who are looking for a different way to approach their creativity. We develop improvisation and body-listening to unlock the interior voice.

Questions? Contact the Director at [adam@willowschoolga.com](mailto:adam@willowschoolga.com)

Want to take a virtual tour of the Willow School? [Click here!](#)

[Read what our students say!](#)

Learn more about our highly qualified teachers!





## About Willow Music

What do parents want for their kids?

They want them to be:

Resilient

Intelligent

Able to cooperate with others

Happy!

We help our students develop these very traits by teaching sophisticated music-making in an age-appropriate manner. Together we become people who are brave enough to sing in front of a crowd, smart enough to read a music score, able to jam with a group of friends!

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In Part Two of our interview, Tony Award Winning Set Designer Beowulf Boritt explains what Stephen Sondheim taught him about the potential of theater. He also talks in depth about working with Kenny Leon and getting out of his own comfort zone to tell necessary stories. Not to be missed! www.truermu.com #sondheim #blacktheatre #setdesign #broadway

Watch Part 1:  What Does It Take to Be a Broadway Se...

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# Counting Out Loud: A Fresh Look at a Traditional Practice Tool

By Adam Cole

**I** give my piano students many tools to improve their practice, such as logging their time and playing their music backwards, but one of the most useful tools is counting while playing. This technique is one of our most-loved pedagogical practices, and its benefits cannot be understated. By outlining these advantages for ourselves and our students, teachers can renew their commitment to this important teaching tool.

The basic idea is simply stated: players count out loud while they play a piece of music. The question of *what* and *how* to count is slightly more involved.

## How to Count While Playing

The most direct method is to count the meter according to the time signature. In my instruction, I explain that the top number of the time signature tells us what the music counts *to*, and the bottom one tells us what it counts *with*. If the meter is in 4/4, we count “to 4 with quarter notes.”

The time signature tells us which counting number will fit the music best but you can, of course, count *any* number to a piece of music. Why should we choose the meter?

Although you can wear any size coat, you choose to wear a coat that fits the best. In musical terms, the number that “fits” will be the top number in the time signature because counting it will always land us on “1” when we begin a new section of the piece. If we counted to “7” instead of “4” in a 4/4 piece, each new section might start on a different number.

It is true that counting to “2” in a 4/4 piece will also result in each section beginning on “1.” However, when we choose to count with the number that “fits,” we can also reliably keep track of the number of measures in a piece of music without having to look at the score.

Having established the idea of the correct number, we ask the player to count *with* the division specified at the bottom of the time signature. If a piece is in 4/4, for instance, we ask a player to count “1, 2, 3, 4” with quarter-note pulses. We continue the count no matter what is happening in either the left or the right hand, and also during any rests or pauses.

The time signatures 3/8, 6/8 and 9/8 are a little more

difficult. They are called “compound meters” because they actually count to two different numbers *at the same time*. For instance, because counting to six with eighth notes is usually too fast in a 6/8 piece, one would generally count to two with the two dotted quarter-notes per measure: “1 x x 2 x x, 1 x x 2 x x.”

The odd 5/8 and 7/8 meters are even more problematic. The teacher will have to examine the intent of the meter, whether it is music with a lilt such as the folk-inspired pieces in Bartok’s fourth book of the *Mikrokosmos*—a series of complex rhythmic ideas that vary from measure to measure—or a compositional artifice that actually hides a simple rhythm behind it. For most instances, one would either count every eighth note, or group irregular beats corresponding with the meter and the intent of the music: i.e. 5/8 = “1 x x 2 x, 1 x x 2 x.”

In pieces that change meter, (four measures of 4/4, followed by one measure of 3/4, then back to 4/4) one would be asked to change the count accordingly. In this case, all the previous rules must be applied at once. This careful study of the music will go a long way towards clarifying its structure for the player.

## Approaches to Counting

Counting approaches that subdivide the meter, such as “1-e-and-a, 2-e-and-a” are plentiful. These have been famously used by choral conductors such as Robert Shaw as a powerful teaching tool. Counting out loud is an excellent way for singers to discover musical subdivisions.

For pianists, I find that it is more helpful to have a steady, un-subdivided count. Hearing the contrast between the metrical pulse in the voice and the elements of the music in the hands is far more stimulating than it would be against a minute subdivision. Syncopations jump out and rhythmic oddities cannot be glossed over when one is sticking to a basic count.

There are two ways to count the basic meter:

- 1) Allowing oneself the freedom to slow down and speed up
- 2) Keeping a steady tempo.

Both are valid and serve different functions at different stages of practice.