



A Handbook for Roomful of Pianos on Make Music Day

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Why a multi-piano performance?

Playing multi-piano music is tremendous fun, has a great visual impact, and comes with important pedagogical benefits.

The ability to simultaneously perform a part, listen to other parts, and follow a conductor is required in band, orchestra, and choir. But, the opportunity to build this skill is often overlooked in the education of a piano student.

Pianists must develop this ability so that one day, they may accompany an instrumentalist or singer, perform chamber music where the pianist must know all other parts, or accompany a choir and play various voice parts in combination to assist the choristers. Ensemble practice should begin early, and occur regularly, for the student to have the time to assimilate these skills.

The joys of multi-piano performance are many yet the opportunity to perform in this medium are rare. I encourage all to take advantage of this opportunity.

Why on Make Music Day?

Make Music Day is the international celebration of music, which began 44 years ago in France (where it's called the *Fête de la Musique*).

On Make Music Day, musicians around the world turn public spaces into musical stages on the first day of summer. Tens of thousands of amateur songwriters, professional mariachis, jazz combos, and MCs come out to perform on streets and parks. In 2025, Make Music Day in the U.S. included 5,471 free public concerts at over 1,500 locations, all on June 21.

This year, dozens of piano stores have agreed to open their doors to MTNA chapters on **Sunday, June 21, 2026** and host colossal, free multi-piano performances, creating Make Music Day's first nationwide opportunity for pianists.

These events will be promoted by the national Make Music Alliance, the MTNA, the NAMM Foundation, and a network of 150+ local Make Music Day chapters across the country.

Some Tips for Preparing Roomful of Pianos

- Choose one person to take charge of the logistics, and be in touch with the piano store.
- You will also need to select a conductor (who could be a piano teacher).
- Meet with your local piano dealer early on, so you can see their space and get to know them. Each piano store has graciously agreed to allow use of their facility and instruments on Make Music Day (June 21), and for at least one other day for a dress rehearsal. The exact times and rehearsal date(s) are for you to work out with them directly.
- As you visit the space, keep in mind that each performer will need a clear sight line to the conductor. Think about where the conductor should stand, and feel free to ask if it's possible to rearrange the instruments to create better sight lines (it might not be, but it doesn't hurt to ask).
- Once you know how many instruments you'll be able to use, determine repertoire right away, and make it available to your teachers and students to start practicing! See below for repertoire suggestions.
- When in doubt, err on the side of choosing music that's too easy – there will be plenty of newness in experience.
- Set a deadline date for students to sign up, listing the number of students for each piece. You can explain that any group may fill up before the deadline date (first come, first served).
- Performers should have music well learned before the first rehearsal.
- For performers new to a multiple piano experience, the first rehearsal can be both wonderful and confusing as they hear the sound of pianos in all directions. It's a good idea to have a teacher (or more advanced students) available to move about the group as a TA to help students during the rehearsal.
- As you begin to promote the event, be sure to send details to marketing@makemusicday.org for inclusion in national promotions.

Repertoire Suggestions

Duets

Elementary

Premiere Piano Duets (Alfred)
Kaleidoscope Duets 4 Books, Jon George (Alfred)

Late Elementary

Duet Favorites Books 1 and 2, Jane Bastien (Kjos)
Hats Off to You! - Duets, Melody Bober (FJH)

Intermediate

Round N' Round - Duet, Lynn Freeman Olson (Carl Fischer)
performers stand and trade places while playing
Neon Lights - Duet, Margaret Goldston (Alfred)

Late Intermediate

Dynamic Duets - 2 books Melody Bober (FJH)

Early Advanced

Take Five - 2p, 8h Desmond, Bober (Alfred)

Advanced

Dolly Suite Op. 56 - Duet, Gabriel Fauré (Alfred)
Ma mère l'oye - Duet, Maurice Ravel
Jeux d'enfants Op. 22, Georges Bizet (Alfred)

Multi-Piano Arrangements

Early Intermediate

Eight works by Robert D. Vandall (Kjos)
Four to six parts per work. Each part is single staff. May assign one or two parts per student. My favorites are Shenandoah, Five Will Get You Four, and Variations on Skip To My Lou.

Intermediate

Dances of the Young Republic arr. by Krauss & Hinson (Alfred)
Popular dance and march tunes from the 18th century. 1 piano, 4 hands; 1 piano, 6 hands; 2 pianos, 8 hands.

Late Intermediate

Jambalaya - A Portrait of Old New Orleans, E. Rocherolle (Hal Leonard)
2 pianos, 8 hands

Note:

For very advanced pianists, unpublished multipiano arrangements created for Roomful of Pianos at The NAMM Show are available upon request to aaron@makemusicday.org. These include España by Emmanuel Chabrier (arranged for 4 pianos, 8 hands), Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 by Franz Liszt (arranged for 5 pianos, 20 hands) and Nocturnes by Claude Debussy (arranged for 5 pianos, 20 hands).