

## Chapter 1 : Professional Mothering: John Thompson Review

*21 Practice Tips, Tricks and Secrets Piano Teachers Need to Know: (What every Piano Teacher and Parent needs to know before teaching or paying for a child's piano lessons!).*

I knew that a lot of parents already had piano books, and I wanted to help them save money. Well, that was a good learning experience for me. Because of that approach, I got to see and use a variety of different methods, from Bastian, Alfred, Thompson, and Schuam. For some reason I never did use the Faber piano method, which I have heard great things about. After a few years of teaching like this, I realized that method books really do matter. Ultimately, most parents will need to buy more piano books anyway, as their students progress. So with that introduction, here are a few reasons I love John Thompson: He uses primary sources early on in the series. There really is something new every lesson. I like the history blurbs that many of the pieces have. I admit other methodologies have this perk too J. I really like the duet book for the primer, "Teaching Fingers to Play Ensemble". This is a fantastic resource if you play! Most importantly I really like the songs in his books. They are cute and often clever. They are real music. I loved them as a child, and as an adult who taught for a few years from several other methodologies, I found that charm lacking. I also want to address some of the criticisms I have heard of the John Thompson method. Some say his books are too hard. Some are rightly concerned of the excessive fingering in his books, stating that the student will develop a dependency on finger numbers. Well, that really is the case sometimes. Even so, the First Grade book does introduce a lot of different key signatures, and it helps the student play proficiently sooner. I think this concern can be avoided by starting flash cards when they start the "First Grade" book. I personally never developed a dependency on finger numbers as a child, and I credit my teacher for her consistent use of flash cards at every lesson, as well as sight-reading exercises out of other books. Besides, being able to follow fingering is important. The other concern some have with J. I think Music Theory is very, very important. I will probably find a separate theory book for my children when they finish the primer. Unless you know music theory well yourself and can correct the errors to your students, stay away. I had some very interesting discussions with my students when, again and again, I had to tell them why the book was wrong, and why the authors might have tried to explain things the way they did. I was sorely disappointed that such a popular series could get away with having so little scholarship. Currently, I am simply requiring my children to practice every day, but I am not requiring them to sequentially work through the book. They have skipped around a lot, playing the songs that tickles their fancy. They can choose to practice from the primer book, or the nursery rhymes from The Solfege Train. I am starting to require that they play songs with both hands. The songs in this primer book are already familiar to my children because I have been playing them for them for years, and we have a separate piano book upstairs with our story books. We have separate rhythm exercises that we do away from the piano, independent of piano practice, so I am letting them focus their piano practice on the mechanics of playing the piano. I require them to practice with the fingering in the book, and in the key the music is written. My son wants to transpose everything back to "C". Oddly enough, my daughter will play the songs in keys like F major if the insert has been left there, without batting an eye. I always preface a new song by pointing out, "This song is in F major, so we need to move the "Do" behind the "F". Anyway, this is our piano program. I am planning on getting them finished with the J. I bet if I bought "Tangled" music, my daughter would eat it up! Overall, the John Thompson series is a great course. Alexander Schreiner, world class organist and my great-great-uncle recommended this series, and his advice gives me more confidence in recommending this series to you.

## Chapter 2 : John Thompson's Modern Course for the Piano | Awards | LibraryThing

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