3D SOUND IMAGINATION

Understanding Sound Texture

Sound texture is a three-dimensional form of sound imagination.
Rather than hearing notes with the two-dimensional timbre of familiar instruments—like violins or cellos—imagine them as pure pitch within a liquid, flowing texture. Then, gently direct that sound downward in space.
In this context, "pitch" isn't tied to the sound of the piano or voice.
It becomes more like a shadow or echo of the tone—similar to how a familiar melody lingers in the mind.

You're invited to hear pitch as pure vibration and light, free from any association with a specific instrument.
The goal is to dissolve the solidity of timbre and allow the sound to become open, fluid, and expansive.
The idea of a "liquid texture" refers to the kind of resonance we often associate with pedal use: sustained, spacious, and vibrating—never rigid or fixed.

When we say "move the sound down," we are referring to the same principle of sound movement direction.

The Role of Sound Texture in Practice

Imagining notes in sound texture—as fluid, three-dimensional vibrations—helps the hands remain soft, relaxed, and responsive while playing. This directly enhances both tone quality and technical ease.
When you begin to imagine sound in a more spacious, 3D way, it naturally shifts how your muscles respond. The sensation becomes one of melting or dissolving, where the hands feel light—almost as if they don't exist at all.

The downward sound movement we now introduce in 3D sound imagination is fully aligned with our 3D wrist motion. This harmony makes the cycle—imagining the note first, then playing it—feel natural and complete, adding softness, relaxation, and freedom to the hand. The motion itself then inspires the 3D sound imagination of the next note.
If, however, we imagine sound in 3D but move the hand only in 2D, the two are out of sync. Physical sensation will no longer support imagination, and over time, the 2D motion will weaken our ability to sustain the 3D quality of sound.

Why Instrumental Timbre Was Our First Step

When first developing the inner musical ear through mental practice, it's helpful to begin with familiar sounds—such as the timbre of violins or cellos.
These recognizable tones make it easier to grasp the initial concept of sound imagination in a two-dimensional space.
They also help establish the idea of sound movement, as it's easier to imagine direction (left or right) when visualizing the motion of a bow across the strings.

As you transition into imagining sound texture, there is no longer a need to associate pitch with any specific instrument timbre. The sound becomes more abstract—more pure—allowing it to move freely in space and connect more deeply with physical motion and internal sensation.

Steps to Imagining Sound Texture

To begin imagining sound in 3D, give it a liquid, flowing quality. This shift from a flat, 2D experience to a deeper, more spacious one allows the sound to take on depth and dimension.

Start by listening to a note played with the sustain pedal.
Focus on the space and resonance it creates—how the sound seems to expand and vibrate in all directions. Let yourself feel the liquid texture of the sound, without turning it into a visual image like shimmering water.

This is a sensory experience, not a mental picture.

While listening, guide the sound downward—in the same way you've previously imagined sound moving right or left. At the very end, you can gently add horizontal movement as well, letting the sound stretch slightly to the right or left as needed.
This marks the beginning of imagining sound texture. You'll explore this further through specific exercises.

From Visual Pictures to Inner Sound

As you move forward in your practice, it's important to begin letting go of visual imagery when working with sound texture, harmony, and dynamics. The role of imagery is not to be seen with the mind's eye, but to be felt and heard through the inner ear—as true auditory sensations.

Visual cues may be helpful at the very beginning, as a way to access certain sensations.
But over time, they can become distracting or even limiting, pulling your attention away from the depth and subtlety of sound itself.

The one exception is Voicing, which will be explored later in this course. There, we'll introduce the concept of "zooming in" on a sound—creating the feeling of being surrounded by it. This visual analogy can be helpful when used intentionally, but even then, its purpose is to guide you toward more refined auditory awareness, not replace it.

When it comes to sound texture, harmony, and dynamics, keep your focus rooted in how the sound feels and resonates in your inner hearing. Let the experience of sound lead the way—not the image.

OPEN LESSONS