

# Piano Mastery

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Harriette Brower

**D O D O**  **P R E S S**



IGNACE JAN PADEREWSKI

PIANO MASTERY

TALKS WITH MASTER PIANISTS AND TEACHERS

AND

AN ACCOUNT OF A VON BÜLOW CLASS, HINTS ON  
INTERPRETATION, BY TWO AMERICAN TEACHERS  
(DR. WILLIAM MASON AND WILLIAM H.  
SHERWOOD) AND A SUMMARY BY  
THE AUTHOR

BY

HARRIETTE BROWER

*Author of "The Art of the Pianist"*

WITH SIXTEEN PORTRAITS

1915

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## PRELUDE

### TO AMERICAN PIANO TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

The following "Talks" were obtained at the suggestion of the Editor of *Musical America*, and have all, with one or two exceptions, appeared in that paper. They were secured with the hope and intention of benefiting the American teacher and student.

Requests have come from all over the country, asking that the interviews be issued in book form. In this event it was the author's intention to ask each artist to enlarge and add to his own talk. This, however, has been practicable only in certain cases; in others the articles remain very nearly as they at first appeared.

The summer of 1913 in Europe proved to be a veritable musical pilgrimage, the milestones of which were the homes of the famous artists, who generously gave of their time and were willing to discuss their methods of playing and teaching.

The securing of the interviews has given the author satisfaction and delight. She wishes to share both with the fellow workers of her own land.

The Talks are arranged in the order in which they were secured.



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### I.

#### IGNACE JAN PADEREWSKI

One of the most consummate masters of the piano at the present time is Ignace Jan Paderewski. Those who were privileged to hear him during his first season in this country will never forget the experience. The Polish artist conquered the new world as he had conquered the old; his name became a household word, known from coast to coast; he traveled over our land, a Prince of Tones, everywhere welcomed and honored. Each succeeding visit deepened the admiration in which his wonderful art was held.

The question has often been raised as to the reason of Paderewski's remarkable hold on an audience; wherein lay his power over the musical and unmusical alike. Whenever he played there was always the same intense hush over the listeners, the same absorbed attention, the same spell. The superficial attributed these largely to his appearance and manner; the more thoughtful looked deeper. Here was a player who was a thoroughly trained master in technic and interpretation; one who knew his Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Schumann and Liszt. These things of themselves would not hold an audience spellbound, for there were other artists equally well equipped. In a final analysis it was doubtless Paderewski's wonderful *piano tone*, so full of variety and color, so vital with numberless gradations of light and shade, that charmed and enthralled his listeners. It mattered to no one—save the critics—that he frequently repeated the same works. What if we heard the Chromatic Fantaisie a score of times? In his hands it became a veritable Soliloquy on Life and Destiny, which each repetition invested with new meaning and beauty. What player has ever surpassed his poetic conception of Schumann's *Papillons*, or the Chopin Nocturnes, which he made veritable dream poems of love and ecstasy. What listener has ever forgotten the tremendous power and titanic effect of the Liszt Rhapsodies, especially No. 2? When Paderewski first came to us, in the flush of his young manhood, he taught us what a noble instrument the piano really is in the hands of a consummate master. He showed us that he could make the piano speak with the delicacy and power of a Rubinstein, but with more

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technical correctness; he proved that he could pierce our very soul with the intensity of his emotion, the poignant, heart-searching quality of his tones, the poetry and beauty of his interpretation.

Paderewski is known as composer and pianist, only rarely does he find time to give instruction on his instrument. Mme. Antoinette Szumowska, the Polish pianist and lecturer was at one time termed his "only pupil." Mr. Sigismond Stojowski, the Polish composer, pianist and teacher has also studied with him. Both can testify as to his value as an instructor.

Mme. Szumowska says:

"Paderewski lays great stress on legato playing, and desires everything to be studied slowly, with deep touch and with full, clear tone. For developing strength he uses an exercise for which the hand is pressed against the keyboard while the wrist remains very low and motionless and each finger presses on a key, bringing, or drawing out as much tone as possible.

"Paderewski advises studying scales and arpeggios with accents, for instance, accenting every third note, thus enabling each finger in turn to make the accent impulse: this will secure evenness of touch. Double passages, such as double thirds and sixths, should be divided and each half practised separately, with legato touch. Octaves should be practised with loose wrists and staccato touch. As a preparatory study practise with thumb alone. The thumb must always be kept curved, with joints well rounded out; it should touch the keys with its tip, so as to keep it on a level with the other fingers. Paderewski is very particular about this point.

"It is difficult to speak of Paderewski's manner of teaching expression, for here the ideas differ with each composer and with every composition. As to tonal color, he requires all possible variety in tone production. He likes strong contrasts, which are brought out, not only by variety of touch but by skilful use of the pedals.

"My lessons with Paderewski were somewhat irregular. We worked together whenever he came to Paris. Sometimes I did not see him for several months, and then he would be in Paris for a number of weeks; at such seasons we worked together very often. Frequently

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these lessons, which were given in my cousin's house, began very late in the evening—around ten o'clock—and lasted till midnight, or even till one in the morning.

"Paderewski the teacher is as remarkable as Paderewski the pianist. He is very painstaking; his remarks are clear and incisive: he often illustrates by playing the passage in question, or the whole composition. He takes infinite trouble to work out each detail and bring it to perfection. He is very patient and sweet tempered, though he can occasionally be a little sarcastic. He often grows very enthusiastic over his teaching, and quite forgets the lapse of time. In general, however, he does not care to teach, and naturally has little time for it."

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Mr. Stojowski, when questioned in regard to his work with the Polish pianist, said:

"Paderewski is a very remarkable teacher. There are teachers who attempt to instruct pupils about what they do not understand, or cannot do themselves: there are others who are able to do the thing, but are not able to explain how they do it. Paderewski can both do it and explain how it is done. He knows perfectly what effects he wishes to produce, how they are to be produced, the causes which underlie and bring them about; he can explain and demonstrate these to the pupil with the greatest exactness and detail.

"As you justly remark the quality of tone and the variety of tonal gradations are special qualities of Paderewski's playing. These must be acquired by aid of the ear, which tests and judges each shade and quality of tone. He counsels the student to listen to each tone he produces, for quality and variety.

### CLEARNESS A MUST PRINCIPLE

"The player, as he sits at the piano, his mind and heart filled with the beauty of the music his fingers are striving to produce, vainly imagines he is making the necessary effects. Paderewski will say to

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him: 'No doubt you feel the beauty of this composition, but I hear none of the effects you fancy you are making; you must deliver everything much more clearly: distinctness of utterance is of prime importance.'" Then he shows how clearness and distinctness may be acquired. The fingers must be rendered firm, with no giving in at the nail joint. A technical exercise which he gives, and which I also use in my teaching, trains the fingers in up and down movements, while the wrist is held very low and pressed against the keyboard. At first simple five-finger forms are used; when the hand has become accustomed to this tonic, some of the Czerny Op. 740 can be played, with the hand in this position. Great care should be taken when using this principle, or lameness will result. A low seat at the piano is a necessity for this practise; sitting low is an aid to weight playing; we all know how low Paderewski himself sits at the instrument.

"You ask what technical material is employed. Czerny, Op. 740; not necessarily the entire opus; three books are considered sufficient. Also Clementi's *Gradus*. Of course scales must be carefully studied, with various accents, rhythms and tonal dynamics; arpeggios also. Many arpeggio forms of value may be culled from compositions.

"There are, as we all know, certain fundamental principles that underlie all correct piano study, though various masters may employ different ways and means to exemplify these fundamentals. Paderewski studied with Leschetizky and inculcates the principles taught by that master, with this difference, that he adapts his instruction to the physique and mentality of the student; whereas the Vorbereiters of Leschetizky prepare all pupils along the same lines, making them go through a similar routine, which may not in every instance be necessary.

## FINGERING

"One point Paderewski is very particular about, and that is fingering. He often carefully marks the fingering for a whole piece; once this is decided upon it must be kept to. He believes in employing a fingering which is most comfortable to the hand, as well as one which, in the long run, will render the passage most effective. He is most sensitive to the choice of fingering the player

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makes, and believes that each finger can produce a different quality of tone. Once, when I was playing a Nocturne, he called to me from the other end of the room: 'Why do you always play that note with the fourth finger? I can *hear* you do it; the effect is bad,' He has a keen power of observation; he notices little details which pass unheeded by most people; nothing escapes him. This power, directed to music, makes him the most careful and painstaking of teachers. At the same time, in the matter of fingering, he endeavors to choose the one which can be most easily accomplished by the player. The Von Bülow editions, while very erudite, are apt to be laborious and pedantic; they show the German tendency to over-elaboration, which, when carried too far becomes a positive fault.

### CORRECT MOTION

"Another principle Paderewski considers very important is that of appropriate motion. He believes in the elimination of every unnecessary movement, yet he wishes the whole body free and supple. Motions should be as carefully studied as other technical points. It is true he often makes large movements of arm, but they are all thought out and have a dramatic significance. He may lift the finger off a vehement staccato note by quick up-arm motion, in a flash of vigorous enthusiasm; but the next instant his hand is in quiet position for the following phrase.

### STUDYING EFFECTS

"The intent listening I spoke of just now must be of vital assistance to the player in his search for tonal variety and effect. Tone production naturally varies according to the space which is to be filled. Greater effort must be put forth in a large hall, to make the tone carry over the footlights, to render the touch clear, the accents decisive and contrasts pronounced. In order to become accustomed to these conditions, the studio piano can be kept closed, and touch must necessarily be made stronger to produce the desired power.

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### INTERPRETATION

“A great artist’s performance of a noble work ought to sound like a spontaneous improvisation; the greater the artist the more completely will this result be attained. In order to arrive at this result, however, the composition must be dissected in minutest detail. Inspiration comes with the first conception of the interpretation of the piece. Afterward all details are painstakingly worked out, until the ideal blossoms into the perfectly executed performance. Paderewski endeavors uniformly to render a piece in the manner and spirit in which he has conceived it. He relates that after one of his recitals, a lady said to him:

“‘Why, Mr. Paderewski, you did not play this piece the same as you did when I heard you before,’

“‘I assure you I intended to,’ was the reply.

“‘Oh, it isn’t necessary to play it always the same way; you are not a machine,’ said the lady.

“This reply aroused his artist-nature.

“‘It is just because I am an artist that I ought at all times to play in the same way. I have thought out the conception of that piece, and am in duty bound to express my ideal as nearly as possible each time I perform it.’

“Paderewski instructs, as he does everything else, with magnificent generosity. He takes no account of time. I would come to him for a stipulated half-hour, but the lesson would continue indefinitely, until we were both forced to stop from sheer exhaustion. I have studied with him at various times. One summer especially stands out in my memory, when I had a lesson almost every day.”

Speaking of the rarely beautiful character of Paderewski’s piano compositions, Mr. Stojowski said:

“I feel that the ignorance of this music among piano teachers and students is a crying shame. What modern piano sonata have we today, to compare with his? I know of none. And the songs—are they



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not wonderful! I love the man and his music so much that I am doing what lies in my power to make these compositions better known. There is need of pioneer work in this matter, and I am glad to do some of it."

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### II.

#### ERNEST SCHELLING

#### THE HAND OF A PIANIST

As I sat in the luxurious salon of the apartments near the Park, where Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Schelling were spending the winter, sounds of vigorous piano practise floated out to me from a distant chamber. It was unusual music, and seemed to harmonize with the somewhat Oriental atmosphere and coloring of the music-room, with its heavily beamed ceiling of old silver, its paintings and tapestries.

The playing ceased and soon the artist appeared, greeting the visitor with genial friendliness of manner. He was accompanied by the "lord of the manor," a beautiful white bull terrier, with coat as white as snow. This important personage at once curled himself up in the most comfortable arm-chair, a quiet, profound observer of all that passed. In the midst of some preliminary chat, the charming hostess entered and poured tea for us.

The talk soon turned upon the subject in which I was deeply interested—the technical training of a pianist.

"Technic is such an individual matter," began Mr. Schelling; "for it depends on so many personal things: the physique, the mentality, the amount of nervous energy one has, the hand and wrist. Perhaps the poorest kind of hand for the piano is the long narrow one, with long fingers. Far better to have a short, broad one with short fingers. Josef Hofmann has a wonderful hand for the piano; rather small, yes, but so thick and muscular. The wrist, too, is a most important factor. Some pianists have what I call a 'natural wrist,' that is they have a natural control of it; it is no trouble for them to play octaves, for instance. Mme. Carreño has that kind of wrist; she never had difficulty with octaves, they are perfect, Hofmann also has a marvelous wrist. I am sorry to say I have not that kind of wrist, and therefore have been much handicapped on that account. For I have had to work tremendously to develop not only the wrist but the whole technic. You see I was a wonder child, and played a great deal

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as a small boy. Then from fifteen to twenty I did not practise anything like what I ought to have done. That is the period when the bones grow, muscles develop—everything grows. Another thing against me is the length of my fingers. When the fingers are longer than the width of the hand across the knuckle joint, it is not an advantage but a detriment. The extra length of finger is only so much dead weight that the hand has to lift. This is another disadvantage I have had to work against. Yes, as you say, it is a rather remarkable hand in regard to size and suppleness. But I hardly agree that it is like Liszt's; more like Chopin's, judging from the casts I have seen of his hand.

“As for technical routine, of course I play scales a good deal and in various ways. When I ‘go into training,’ I find the best means to attain velocity is to work with the metronome. One can't jump at once into the necessary agility, and the metronome is a great help in bringing one up to the right pitch. You see by the firmness of these muscles at the back and thumb side of my hand, that I am in good trim now; but one soon loses this if one lets up on the routine.

“Then I practise trills of all kinds, and octaves. Yes, I agree that octaves are a most necessary and important factor in the player's technical equipment.”

Going to the piano and illustrating as he talked, Mr. Schelling continued:

“Merely flopping the hand up and down, as many do, is of little use—it does not lead to strength or velocity. As you see, I hold the hand arched and very firm, and the firmness is in the fingers as well; the hand makes up and down movements with loose wrist; the result is a full, bright, crisp tone. One can play these octaves slowly, using weight, or faster with crisp, staccato touch. I play diatonic or chromatic octave scales, with four repetitions or more, on each note—using fourth finger for black keys.

“I sit low at the piano, as I get better results in this way; though it is somewhat more difficult to obtain them. I confess it is easier to sit high and bear down on the hands. Yes, I thoroughly approve of

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'weight touch,' and it is the touch I generally use. Sometimes it is a certain pressure on the key after it is played, using arm weight.

"Ah, you are right. The young teacher or player, in listening to the artist, and noticing he does not lift his fingers to any extent, and that he always plays with weight, hastily concludes these are the principles with which he must begin to study or teach the piano. It is a mistake to begin in that way. Very exact finger movements must be learned in the beginning. As I said before, technic is such an individual matter, that after the first period of foundational training, one who has the desire to become an artist, must work out things for himself. There should be no straight-laced methods. Only a few general rules can be laid down, such as will fit most cases. The player who would rise to any distinction must work out his own salvation.

"In regard to memorizing piano music, it may be said this can be accomplished in three ways: namely, with the eye, with the ear, and with the hand. For example: I take the piece and read it through with the eye, just as I would read a book. I get familiar with the notes in this way, and see how they look in print. I learn to know them so well that I have a mental photograph of them, and if necessary could recall any special measure or phrase so exactly that I could write it. All this time my mental ear has been hearing those notes, and is familiar with them. Then the third stage arrives; I must put all this on the keyboard, my fingers must have their training; impressions must pass from the mind to the fingers; then all is complete."

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### III.

#### ERNESTO CONSOLO

##### MAKING THE PIANO A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

In a long conversation with Ernesto Consolo, the eminent pianist and instructor, many points of vital importance to the player and teacher were touched upon. Among other things Mr. Consolo said:

“It is absolutely necessary that the piano teacher should take his profession very seriously. In my opinion there is most excellent instruction to be secured right here in America, with such teachers as are willing to take their work seriously. The time is not far away, I think, when America will enjoy a very prominent position in the matter of musical instruction, and perhaps lead the world in musical advantages. The time is not here just yet, but it is surely coming. You are still young in this country, though you are wonderfully progressive.

“If I have spoken of the serious aims of many teachers of piano, I cannot say as much for the students: they are often superficial and want to go too quickly; they are apt to be in a hurry and want to make a show, without being willing to spend the necessary years on preparation. No art can be hurried. Students of painting, sculpture, architecture or music must all learn the technique of their art; they must all learn to go deep into the mysteries and master technic as the means to the end, and no one requires exhaustive preparation more than the executive musician. The person who would fence, box or play baseball must know the technic of these things; how much more must the pianist be master of the technique of his instrument if he would bring out the best results.

“At the very bottom and heart of this subject of mastery lies Concentration: without that, little of value can be accomplished. Students think if they sit at the piano and ‘practise’ a certain number of hours daily, it is sufficient. A small portion of that time, if used with intense concentration, will accomplish more. One player will take hours to learn a page or a passage which another will master in

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a fraction of the time. What is the difference? It may be said one has greater intelligence than the other. The greater the intelligence, the stronger the power of concentration.

“If a pupil comes to me whose powers of concentration have not been awakened or developed, I sometimes give him music to read over very slowly, so slowly that every note, phrase and finger mark can be distinctly seen. Not being used to thinking intently, mistakes occur, in one hand or the other, showing that the mind was not sufficiently concentrated. It is the mind every time that wins. Without using our mental powers to their fullest extent we fail of the best that is in us.

“In regard to technical equipment and routine, I do different work with each pupil, for each pupil is different. No two people have the same hands, physique or mentality; so why should they all be poured into the same mold? One student, for example, has splendid wrists and not very good fingers. Why should I give him the same amount of wrist practise that I give his brother who has feeble wrists; it would only be a waste of time. Again, a pupil with limited ideas of tonal quality and dynamics is advised to study tone at the piano in some simple melody of Schubert or Chopin, trying to realize a beautiful tone—playing it in various ways until such a quality is secured. The piano is a responsive instrument and gives back what you put into it. If you attack it with a hard touch, it will respond with a harsh tone. It rests with you whether the piano shall be a musical instrument or not.

“A student who comes to me with a very poor touch must of course go back to first principles and work up. Such an one must learn correct movements and conditions of hands, arms and fingers; and these can be acquired at a table. Along with these, however, I would always give some simple music to play, so that the tonal and musical sense shall not be neglected.

“Of course I advise comprehensive scale practise; scales in all keys and in various rhythms and touches. There is an almost endless variety of ways to play scales. Those in double thirds and sixths I use later, after the others are under control. Arpeggios are also included in this scale practise.

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"I have said that Concentration is the keynote of piano mastery. Another principle which goes hand in hand with it is Relaxation. Unless this condition is present in arms, wrist and shoulders, the tone will be hard and the whole performance constrained and unmusical. There is no need of having tired muscles or those that feel strained or painful. If this condition arises it is proof that there is stiffness, that relaxation has not taken place. I can sit at the piano and play *forte* for three hours at a time and not feel the least fatigue in hands and arms. Furthermore, the playing of one who is relaxed, who knows how to use his anatomy, will not injure the piano. We must remember the piano is a thing of joints; the action is so delicately adjusted that it moves with absolute freedom and ease. The player but adds another joint, which should equal in ease and adjustment the ones already there. On the other hand a person with stiff joints and rigid muscles, thumping ragtime on a good piano, can ruin it in a week; whereas under the fingers of a player who understands the laws of relaxation, it would last for many years.

"This principle of relaxation is exemplified in the athlete, baseball player, and others. They have poise and easy adjustment in every part of the body: they never seem to fall into strained or stiff attitudes, nor make angular or stiff movements. Arms, shoulders, wrists and fingers are all relaxed and easy. The pianist needs to study these principles as well as the athlete, I believe in physical exercises to a certain extent. Light-weight dumb-bells can be used; it is surprising how light a weight is sufficient to accomplish the result. But it must be one movement at a time, exercising one muscle at a time, and not various muscles at once.

"For memorizing piano music I can say I have no method whatever. When I know the piece technically or mechanically, I know it by heart. I really do not know when the memorizing takes place. The music is before me on the piano; I forget to turn the pages, and thus find I know the piece. In playing with orchestra I know the parts of all instruments, unless it be just a simple chord accompaniment; it would not interest me to play with orchestra and not know the music in this way. On one occasion I was engaged to play the Sgambatti concerto, which I had not played for some time. I tried it over on the piano and found I could not remember it. My first idea

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was to get out the score and go over it; the second was to try and recall the piece from memory. I tried the latter method, with the result that in about three hours and a half I had the whole concerto back in mind. I played the work ten days later without having once consulted the score. This goes to prove that memory must be absolute and not merely mechanical.

“Students think they cannot memorize, when it would be quite easy if they would apply themselves in the right way. I ask them to look intently at a small portion, two measures, or even one, and afterward to play it without looking at the notes. Of course, as you say, this can be done away from the piano; the notes can even be recited; but there are other signs and marks to be considered and remembered, so when one can be at the piano I consider it better.

“Piano playing is such an individual and complex thing. I do not require nor expect my pupils to play as I do, nor interpret as I interpret, for then I would only see just so many replicas of myself, and their individuality would be lost. I often hear them play a composition in a different way and with a different spirit from the one I find in it. But I don’t say to them, ‘That is wrong; you must play it as I do,’ No, I let them play it as they see and feel it, so long as there is no sin against artistic taste.

“I trust these few points will be helpful to both player and teacher. The latter needs all the encouragement we artists can give, for in most cases he is doing a good work.

“Volumes might be added to these hurried remarks, but for that my time is too limited.”



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### IV.

#### SIGISMOND STOJOWSKI

#### MIND IN PIANO STUDY

Mr. Sigismond Stojowski, the eminent Polish pianist and composer, was found one morning in his New York studio, at work with a gifted pupil. He was willing to relax a little, however, and have a chat on such themes as might prove helpful to both teacher and student.

“You ask me to say something on the most salient points in piano technic; perhaps we should say, the points that are most important to each individual; for no two students are exactly alike, nor do any two see things in precisely the same light. This is really a psychological matter. I believe the subject of psychology is a very necessary study for both teacher and student. We all need to know more about mental processes than we do. I am often asked how to memorize, for instance—or the best means for doing this; another psychological process. I recommend students to read William James’ *Talks on Psychology*; a very helpful book.

“The most vital thing in piano playing is to learn to think. Has it ever occurred to you what infinite pains people will take to avoid thinking? They will repeat a technical illustration hundreds of times it may be, but with little or no thought directed to the performance. Such work is absolutely useless. Perhaps that is a little too strong. With countless repetitions there may at last come to be a little improvement, but it will be very small.

“There is quite a variety of views as to what the essentials of piano technic are; this is a subject on which teachers, unluckily, do not agree. For instance, on the point of finger lifting there is great diversity of opinion. Some believe in raising the fingers very high, others do not. Lifting the fingers high is not good for the tone, though it may be used for velocity playing. I use quite the reverse where I wish beautiful, singing, tone quality. The young pupil, at the beginning, must of course learn to raise fingers and make precise

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movements; when greater proficiency is reached, many modifications of touch are used. That the best results are not more often obtained in piano teaching and study, is as much the fault of the teacher as the pupil. The latter is usually willing to be shown and anxious to learn. It is for the teacher to correctly diagnose the case and administer the most efficient remedy.



Photo by Ostrer & Nass, New York, N. Y.

To Miss Harriett B. Brower  
with the kindest of remembrances  
Sigismond Stojowski  
New York, April 1913

To Miss Harriett Brower with the kindest of remembrances,  
Sigismond Stojowski New York, April 1913

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### NATURAL TECHNIC

“There is a certain amount of what I might call ‘natural technic’ possessed by every one—some one point which is easy for him. It is often the trill. It has frequently come under my notice that players with little facility in other ways, can make a good trill. Some singers have this gift; Mme. Melba is one who never had to study a trill, for she was born with a nightingale in her throat. I knew a young man in London who was evidently born with an aptitude for octaves. He had wonderful wrists, and could make countless repetitions of the octave without the least fatigue. He never had to practise octaves, they came to him naturally.

“The teacher’s work is both corrective and constructive. He must see what is wrong and be able to correct it. Like a physician, he should find the weak and deficient parts and build them up. He should have some remedy at his command that will fit the needs of each pupil.

“I give very few études, and those I administer in homeopathic doses. It is not necessary to play through a mass of études to become a good pianist. Much of the necessary technic may be learned from the pieces themselves, though scales and arpeggios must form part of the daily routine.

### KEEPING UP A REPERTOIRE

“In keeping a large number of pieces in mind, I may say that the pianist who does much teaching is in a sense taught by his pupils. I have many advanced pupils, and in teaching their repertoire I keep up my own. Of course after a while one grows a little weary of hearing the same pieces rendered by students; the most beautiful no longer seem fresh. My own compositions are generally exceptions, as I do not often teach those. To the thoughtful teacher, the constant hearing of his repertoire by students shows him the difficulties that younger players have to encounter, and helps him devise means to aid them to conquer these obstacles. At the same time there is this disadvantage: the pianist cannot fail to remember the places at which such and such a student had trouble, forgot or stumbled. This has happened to me at various times. In my recitals I would be playing

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ahead, quite unconscious that anything untoward could occur—wholly absorbed in my work; when, at a certain point, the recollection would flash over me—this is where such or such a pupil stumbled. The remembrance is sometimes so vivid that I am at some effort to keep my mental balance and proceed with smoothness and certainty.

“Yes, I go over my pieces mentally, especially if I am playing an entirely new program which I have never played before; otherwise I do not need to do so much of it.

### FILLING IN A PASSAGE

“You suggest that a composer may fill in or make up a passage, should he forget a portion of the piece when playing in public. True; but improvising on a well-known work is rather a dangerous thing to do in order to improve a bad case. Apropos of this, I am reminded of an incident which occurred at one of my European recitals. It was a wholly new program which I was to give at Vevay. I had been staying with Paderewski, and went from Morges to Vevay, to give the recital. In my room at the hotel I was mentally reviewing the program, when in a Mendelssohn Fugue, I found I had forgotten a small portion. I could remember what went before and what came after, but this particular passage had seemingly gone. I went down to the little parlor and tried the fugue on the piano, but could not remember the portion in question. I hastened back to my room and constructed a bridge which should connect the two parts. When the time came to play the fugue at the recital, it all went smoothly till I was well over the weak spot, which, it seems, I really played as Mendelssohn wrote it. As I neared the last page, the question suddenly occurred to me, what had I done with that doubtful passage? What had really happened I could not remember; and the effort to recall whether I had played Mendelssohn or Stojowski nearly brought disaster to that last page.

“As soon as my season closes here I shall go to London and bring out my second piano concerto with the London Symphony Orchestra, under Nikisch. I shall also play various recitals.”

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It was my good fortune to be present at the orchestral concert at Queen's Hall, when Mr. Stojowski was the soloist. It was pleasant to see the enthusiasm aroused by the concerto itself, and the performance of it by the artist.

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V.  
RUDOLPH GANZ



Rudolph Ganz

### CONSERVING ENERGY IN PIANO PRACTISE

“One of the most necessary things is the conserving of vital energy in piano practise,” said the pianist Rudolph Ganz to me one day. “The wrong way is to continually practise the piece as though you were playing it in public—that is to say, with all possible energy and emotion. Some of the pianists now before the public do this, and it always makes me sorry for them, for I know what a needless waste of energy and vital force it is. An actor, studying his lines, does not need to continually shout them in order to learn how they should be interpreted. Neither does the lyric actress practise her roles with full tones, for she is well used to saving her voice. Why then should the pianist exhaust himself and give out his whole strength merely in the daily routine of practise? I grant this principle of saving one’s self may not be easy to learn, but it should be acquired by all players, great and small. I think a pianist should be able to practise five or six hours daily without fatigue. If the player is accustomed to husband his vital force during the daily routine of practise, he can play a long, exacting program in public without weariness. In every day practise one often does not need to play *forte* nor use the pedals; a tone of medium power is sufficient. Suppose, for instance, you are studying the Chopin Étude Op. 10, No. 12, with the left hand arpeggio work. Every note and finger must be in place, every mark of phrasing obeyed; but during practise hours you need not give the piece all its dashing vigor and bravura at every repetition. Such a course would soon exhaust the player. Yet every effect you wish to make must be thoroughly studied, must be in mind, and used at intervals whenever a complete performance of the piece is desired.

“As I said before, it is often difficult to control the impulse to ‘let loose,’ if the work is an exciting one. At a recent rehearsal with the Symphony Orchestra, I told the men I would quietly run through the concerto I was to play, merely indicating the effects I wanted. We began, but in five minutes I found myself playing with full force and vigor.

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“In regard to methods in piano study there seems to be a diversity of opinion, resulting, I think, from the various ways of touching the keys—some players using the tip and others the ball of the finger. Busoni may be cited as one who employs the end of the finger—Pauer also; while the Frenchman, Cortôt, who has an exquisite tone, plays with the hand almost flat on the keys, a method which certainly insures weight of hand and arm. Of course players generally, and teachers also, agree on the employment of arm weight in playing. The principles of piano technic are surely but few. Was it not Liszt who said: ‘Play the right key with the right finger, the right tone and the right intention—that is all!’ It seems to me piano technic has been pushed to its limit, and there must be a reversal; we may return to some of the older methods of touch and technic.

“The vital thing in piano playing is to bring out the composer’s meaning, plus your own inspiration and feeling. You must study deeply into the composer’s idea, but you must also put your own feeling, intensity and emotion into the piece. And not only must you feel the meaning yourself, but you must play it in a way to touch others. There are many pianists who are not cultured musicians; who think they know their Beethoven because they can play a few sonatas. In music ‘knowledge is power.’ We need all possible knowledge, but we also need to feel the inspiration. One of the greatest teachers of our time holds that personal inspiration is not necessary; for the feeling is all in the music itself. All we have to do is to play with such and such a dynamic quality of tone. Like a country doctor measuring out his drugs, this master apportions so many grains of power for *forte*, for *mezzo*, for *piano*, and so on. This plan puts a damper on individuality and enthusiasm, for it means that everything must be coldly calculated. Such playing does not really warm the heart.

“I believe in teaching tonal contrasts and tone color even to a beginner. Why should not the child form a concept of *forte* and *piano*, and so get away from the deadly monotony of *mezzo*? I have written some little descriptive piano pieces, and my small boy learned one of them to play for me. There is a closing phrase like this,” and Mr. Ganz illustrated at the piano; “it is to be played *forte*, and is followed by a few notes to be touched very softly, like an echo. It was really



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beautiful to see how the little fellow reached out for the pedal to make the loud part more emphatic, and then played the echo very softly and neatly. He had grasped the first principle of tone color—namely tone contrast, and also a poetic idea.

“There are so many wonder children in these days, and many marvels are accomplished by infant prodigies. Very often however, these wonder children develop no further; they fail to fulfil their early promise, or the expectations held of them.

“A youthful wonder in the field of composition is Eric Korngold, whose piano sonata I played in my New York recital. I have played this work eight times in all, during my present tour, often by request. To me it is most interesting. I cannot say it is logical in the development of its ideas; it often seems as though the boy threw in chords here and there with no particular reason. Thus the effort of memorizing is considerable, for I must always bear in mind that this C major chord has a C sharp in it, or that such and such a chord is changed into a most unusual one. One cannot predict whether the boy will develop further. As you say, Mozart was an infant prodigy, but if we judge from the first little compositions that have been preserved, he began very simply and worked up, whereas Korngold begins at Richard Strauss. His compositions are full of the influence of Strauss. The critics have much to say for and against these early works. I do not know the young composer personally, though he has written me. In a recent letter which I have here, he expresses the thought that, though the critics have found many things to disapprove of in the sonata, the fact that I have found it worth studying and bringing out more than compensates him for all adverse criticism. To make the work known in the great musical centers of America is surely giving it wide publicity.”

On a later occasion, Mr. Ganz said:

“I thoroughly believe in preserving one’s enthusiasm for modern music, even though, at first glance, it does not attract one, or indeed seems almost impossible. I enjoy studying new works, and learning what is the modern trend of thought in piano work; it keeps me young and buoyant.

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“One of the novelties lately added to my repertoire is the Haydn sonata in D. On the same program I place the Korngold sonata. A hundred years and more divide the two works. While I revere the old, it interests me to keep abreast of the new thought in musical art and life.”

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### VI.

TINA LERNER

#### AN AUDIENCE IS THE BEST TEACHER

Between the many engagements that crowded upon the close of her long American tour, Miss Tina Lerner found time to talk over certain topics of significance which bear upon pianistic problems.

We began by referring to the different methods of holding the hands, moving the fingers and touching the keys, as exemplified by the various pianists now before the public.

“It is true that I play with the ball of the finger on the key, which necessitates a flat position of hand, with low wrist.” Here the pianist illustrated the point by playing several pearly scales with straight, outstretched fingers. “I never realized, however, that I played in this way, until Mr. Ernest Hutcheson, the pianist, of Baltimore, recently called my attention to it. The fact is, I have always taken positions of body, arms, hands and fingers, which seemed to me the most natural and easy. This I did when I began, at the age of five, and I have always kept to them, in spite of what various teachers have endeavored to do for me. Fortunately my early teachers were sensible and careful; they kept me at the classics, and did not give too difficult pieces. The principles followed by most great pianists I believe are correct; but I have always kept to my own natural way. In hand position, therefore, I am individual; perhaps no one else plays with such a finger position, so in this I am unique.

“For some reason unknown to me, it has come to be imagined that I have studied with Leschetizky; this is entirely refuted when I say I have never been in Vienna. It seems we are getting away from the idea of helping ourselves out with the name of some great teacher. The question should be: What has the player in himself, what can he accomplish? not, Whose pupil is he? We know of some of Leschetizky’s famous pupils, but we never hear of the thousands he must have had, who have come to nothing. A teacher can only do a certain amount for you; he can give you new ideas, which each pupil

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works out for himself in his own way. The piano student learns from so many different sources. He attends a piano recital and acquires many ideas of touch, tone, phrasing and interpretation; he hears a great singer or violinist and absorbs a wholly new set of thoughts, or he listens to a grand orchestra, and gains more than from all the others. Then there is life to study from: experience—living—loving: all go into the work of the musician. A musical career is indeed the most exacting one that can be chosen.

“I have been asked whether I prefer to play for an audience of ‘music-lovers’ or one of ‘music knowers.’ Perhaps an equal mixture is the happy medium. Of the two sorts it seems to me the music-knowers are preferable, for even if they are very critical, they also recognize the various points you make; they see and appreciate what you are striving for. They are not inclined to say, ‘I don’t like such or such a player’; for the music-knower understands the vast amount of time and energy, labor and talent that go to make a pianist. He rather says, ‘I prefer the playing of such or such an artist.’ The word ‘like’ in connection with a great artist seems almost an affront. What does it matter if his work is not ‘liked’ by some? He knows it can stand for what it is—the utmost perfection of his powers—of himself. And after all the audience is the greatest teacher an artist can have; I have learned more from this teacher than from any other. In this school I learn what moves and touches an audience; how to improve this or that passage; how to make a greater climax here, or more sympathetic coloring there. For in conceiving how a work should sound, I get—in my study of it—a general idea of the whole, and make it as nearly perfect as I am able. But it has to be tested and tried—an audience must pass its opinion—must set the seal of approval upon it. When the work has been polished by repeated trials in this school, interpretation then becomes crystallized in the mind and the piece can always be given in nearly the same way. A painter does not change nor repaint his picture each time he exhibits it; why need the musician change his idea of the interpretation at each repetition? To trust too much to the inspiration of the moment might injure the performance as a whole. When I have my ideal of the interpretation worked out in mind, it becomes my sacred duty to play it always in this spirit—always to give my best. I can never think that because I am playing in Boston or New York, I must strive

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harder for perfection than if I play in a little town. No, I must give the highest that is in me, no matter where it may be. People sometimes ask me if I am nervous before a recital. It is not that I am afraid of people; but I am always anxious about being able to realize my ideal, when the moment comes.

“I can say I prefer playing in America to anywhere else in the world; for there are more real appreciation and understanding here than in any other country. Of course the great music centers all over the world are about the same; but the difference lies in the smaller cities, which in America are far more advanced musically than in Europe. I have proved this to be the case repeatedly. Not long ago I was booked for a couple of recitals in a small town of not more than two thousand inhabitants. When I arrived at the little place, and saw the barn of a hotel, I wondered what these people could want with piano recitals. But when I came to the college where I was to play and found such a large, intelligent audience gathered, some of whom had traveled many miles to be present, it proved in what estimation music was held. The teacher of this school was a good musician, who had studied nine years with Leschetizky, in Vienna; the pupils understood the numbers on the program, were wide awake, and well informed as to what was going on in the world of music.

“One handicap the present day pianist encounters, who plays much with orchestra, and that is the dearth of modern concertos. The familiar ten or dozen famous ones are played over and over, and one seldom hears anything new. There are new ones written, to be sure, but the public has not learned to care for them. The beautiful second concerto of Rachmaninoff has not made a success, even in the great music centers, where the most intelligent audiences have heard it. I believe that if an audience of the best musicians could be assembled in a small room and this work could be played to them, they could not fail to be impressed with its beauties. I am now studying a new concerto by Haddon Wood, which you see in manuscript there on the piano; it is one I find very beautiful.”

A subsequent conversation with the artist elicited the following:

“I might say that I began my music when about four years old, by playing the Russian National Hymn, on a toy piano containing eight

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keys, which had been given me. My older sister, who was studying the piano, noticed this, showed me a few things about the notes, and I constantly picked out little tunes and pieces on the real piano. Finally one day my sister's teacher, Rudolph Heim, came to the house, mainly on my account. This was in Odessa, in the south of Russia, where I was born and where I spent my early years. On this occasion, he wanted to look at me and see what I could do. Unluckily a sudden fit of shyness overcame me and I began to cry; the exhibition could not take place, as nothing could be made out of me that day. You see I was headstrong even at that early age," said the young pianist, with one of her charming smiles.

"Soon after this incident, I was taken to the Professor's studio. He examined me, considered I had talent, and thought it should be cultivated. So he took me in hand. I was then five, and my real musical education began at that time.

"From the very first I adopted a position of hand which seemed to me most convenient and comfortable, and no amount of contrary instruction and advice has ever been able to make me change it. I play scales and passages with low hand and flat fingers because that position seems the most favorable for my hand. When practising, I play everything very slowly, raising my fingers high and straight from the knuckle joint. This gives me great clearness and firmness. In rapid passage work the action is reduced, but the position remains. I am said to have a clear, pearly touch, with quite sufficient power at my command for large works.

"After five years of study with my first teacher, Rudolph Heim, a pupil of Moscheles, I entered the Moscow Conservatory, and continued my studies under Professor Pabst, brother and teacher of the composer of that name. I was then ten years old. Professor Pabst was very conservative, very strict, and kept me at work on the music of the older masters. This kind of music suits me, I think; at least I enjoy it. Even here I still clung to my ideas of holding my hands and of touching the keys, and always expect to do so.

"I remained with this professor about six years and then began my public career.

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“You ask about my present studies, and how I regulate my practise. During my periods of rest from concert work, I practise a great deal—I wish I could say all the time, but that is not quite possible. I give an hour or more a day to technical practise. As to the material, I use Chopin’s *Études* constantly, playing them with high-raised, outstretched fingers, in very slow tempo. One finds almost every technical problem illustrated in these *études*; octaves, arpeggios, scales in double thirds and sixths, repeated notes, as in number 7, broken chords and passage work. I keep all these *études* in daily practise, also using some of the Liszt *Études Transcendantes*, and, of course, Bach. The advantage of using this sort of material is that one never tires of it; it is always interesting and beautiful. With this material well in hand, I am always ready for recital, and need only to add special pieces and modern music.

“In learning a new work I first study it very slowly, trying to become familiar with its meaning. I form my concept of it and *live* with it for months before I care to bring it forward. I try to form an ideal conception of the piece, work this out in every detail, then always endeavor to render it as closely like the ideal as possible.”

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### VII. ETHEL LEGINSKA

#### RELAXATION THE KEYNOTE OF MODERN PIANO PLAYING

The brilliant young pianist, Ethel Leginska, who is located for a time in America, was seen in her Carnegie Hall studio, on her return from a concert tour. The young English girl is a petite brunette; her face is very expressive, her manner at once vivacious and serious. The firm muscles of her fine, shapely hands indicate that she must spend many hours daily at the keyboard.

“Yes, I have played a great deal in public—all my life, in fact—ever since I was six. I began my musical studies at Hull, where we lived; my first teacher was a pupil of McFarren. Later I was taken to London, where some rich people did a great deal for me. Afterward I went to Leschetizky, and was with him several years, until I was sixteen; I also studied in Berlin. Then I began my career, and concertized all over Europe; now I am in America for a time. I like it here; I am fond of your country already.

“The piano is such a wonderful instrument to me; I feel we are only beginning to fathom its possibilities; not in a technical sense, but as a big avenue for expression. For me the piano is capable of reflecting every mood, every feeling; all pathos, joy, sorrow—the good and the evil too—all there is in life, all that one has lived.” (This recalls a recently published remark of J. S. Van Cleve: “The piano can sing, march, dance, sparkle, thunder, weep, sneer, question, assert, complain, whisper, hint; in one word it is the most versatile and plastic of instruments.”)

“As for the technic of the piano, I think of it only as the material—only as a means to an end. In fact I endeavor to get away from the thought of the technical material, in order that I may get at the meaning of the music I wish to interpret. I am convinced there is a great future for the piano and its music. Even now we are taking piano music very seriously, and are trying to interpret it in a far deeper and broader sense than the pianists of, say, fifty years ago



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ever thought of doing. I fancy if Clara Schumann, for instance, could return and play to us, or even Liszt himself, we should not find their playing suited to this age at all. Some of us yet remember the hand position Mme. Schumann had, the lack of freedom in fingers and arms. It was not the fashion of her time to play with the relaxed freedom, with the breadth and depth of style which we demand of artists to-day. In those days relaxation had not received the attention it deserved, therefore we should probably find the playing of the greatest artists of a former generation stiff and angular, in spite of all we have heard of their wonderful performances.

“Relaxation is a hobby with me; I believe in absolute freedom in every part of the arm anatomy, from the shoulder down to the finger-tips. Stiffness seems to me the most reprehensible thing in piano playing, as well as the most common fault with all kinds of players. When people come to play for me, that is the thing I see first in them, the stiffness. While living in Berlin, I saw much of Mme. Teresa Carreño, and she feels the same as I do about relaxation, not only at the keyboard, but when sitting, moving about or walking. She has thought along this line so constantly, that sometimes, if carrying something in hand, she will inadvertently let it drop, without realizing it—from sheer force of the habit of relaxation.

“You ask how I would begin with a young pupil who never has had lessons. I use the principle of relaxation first of all, loosening arms and wrists. This principle can be taught to the youngest pupil. The wrist is elevated and lowered, as the hand is formed on the keys in its five finger position, with arched knuckles. It does not take long to acquire this relaxed condition; then come the finger movements. I do not believe in lifting the fingers high above the keys; this takes time and interferes with velocity and power. I lift my fingers but little above the keys, yet I have plenty of power, all the critics agree on that. In chords and octaves I get all the power I need by grasping the keys with weight and pressure. I do not even prepare the fingers in the air, before taking the chord; I do not find it necessary.” Here the pianist played a succession of ringing chords, whose power and tonal quality bore out her words; the fingers seemed merely to press and cling; there was no striking nor percussion.

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“To return to the beginning pupil. As for a book to start with, I often use the one by Damm, though any foundational work may be employed, so long as correct principles are taught. It is said by Leschetizky that he has no method. That may be understood to mean a book, for he certainly has what others would call a method. There are principles and various sets of exercises to be learned; but it is quite true that none of the Vorbereiters use a book.

“In teaching the piano, as you know, every pupil is different; each has his or her own peculiar hand, and a different degree of intelligence. So each pupil must be treated differently. This is really an advantage to the teacher; for it would be very monotonous if all pupils were alike.

“The piano is such a revealer of character; I need only to hear a person play to know what sort of character he has. If one is inclined to much careful detail in everything, it comes out in the playing. If one is indolent and indifferent, it is seen the moment one touches the keys; or if one is built on broad, generous lines, and sees the dramatic point in life and things, all this is revealed at the piano.

“To refer again to the subject of finger action. I do not believe in the so-called finger stroke; on the contrary I advocate fingers close to the keys, clinging to them whenever you can. This is also Arthur Schnabel’s idea. You should hear Schnabel; all Berlin is wild over him, and whenever he gives a concert the house is sold out. He has quantities of pupils also, and is quite a remarkable teacher. One point I insist upon which he doesn’t: I will not allow the joint of the finger next the tip to break or give in. I can not stand that, but Schnabel doesn’t seem to care about it; his mind is filled with only the big, broad things of music.

“In regard to memorizing piano compositions. I do it phrase by phrase, and at the instrument, unless I am traveling or unable to get to a piano, in which case I think it out from the notes. If the piece is very difficult I take a short passage of two or three measures and play each hand separately and then together; but generally I play the passage complete—say half a dozen times with the notes, and then repeat it the same number of times from memory. Perhaps the next

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day I have forgotten it, so the work has to be done over again; the second time, however, it generally sticks.

“My great longing and ambition is to write music, to become a composer. With this end in view, I give whatever time I am able to the study of composition. I hope some day to create something that will be worthy the high aim I have before me.”

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### VIII.

#### BERTHA FIERING TAPPER

##### MASTERING PIANISTIC PROBLEMS

If environment and atmosphere are inspirational aids to piano teaching and playing, the students of Mrs. Thomas Tapper have the incentives of both in their lesson hours. Her apartments on the Drive have the glory of sunlight all the long afternoons. Outside the Hudson shimmers in blue and gold; indoors all is harmonious and home-like. In the large music-room, facing the river, two grand pianos stand side by side; there are many portraits and mementoes of the great in music; fresh flowers, books—everything to uplift thought; while in the midst of it all is Mrs. Tapper herself, the serious, high-minded, inspiring teacher; the “mother confessor” to a large number of young artists and teachers.

“Music study means so much more than merely exercising the fingers,” she said; “the student should have a good all-round education. When young people come to me for instruction, I ask what they are doing in school. If they say they have left school in order to devote their whole time to the piano, I say, ‘Go back to your school, and come to me later, when you have finished your school course.’ It is true that in rare cases it may be advisable for the student to leave school, but he should then pursue general or special studies at home. I often wish the music student’s education in this country could be arranged as it is in at least one of the great music schools in Russia. There the mornings are given to music, while general studies are taken up later in the day. It is really a serious problem, here in America, this fitting in music with other studies. Both public and private schools try to cover so much ground that there is very little time left for music or anything else. The music pupil also needs to know musical literature, history and biography, to be familiar with the lives and writings of the great composers. Take the letters and literary articles of Robert Schumann, for instance. How interesting and inspiring they are!

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“In regard to methods in piano study my principles are based wholly upon my observations of Leschetizky’s work with me personally, or with others. What I know he has taught me; what I have achieved I owe to him. My first eight weeks in Vienna were spent in learning, first, to control position and condition of hands and arms according to the law of balance; secondly, to direct each motion with the utmost accuracy and speed. To accomplish this I began with the most elementary exercises in five-finger position, using one finger at a time. Then came the principles of the scale, arpeggios, chords and octaves. All these things were continued until every principle was mastered. I practised at first an hour a day, then increased the amount as my hands grew stronger and the number of exercises increased.

“Next came the study of tone production in various forms, a good quality invariably being the result of a free condition of the arm combined with strength of fingers and hands.

“The Leschetizky principles seem to me the most perfect and correct in every particular. Yes, there are several books of the method, by different authors, but I teach the principles without a book. The principles themselves are the essential things. I aim to build up the hand, to make it strong and dependable in every part, to fill out the weak places and equalize it. That this may be thoroughly and successfully accomplished, I require that nothing but technical exercises be used for the first nine, ten, or twelve weeks. We begin with the simplest exercises, one finger at a time, then two, three and so on through the hand. I believe in thus devoting all the practise time to technic, for a certain period, so that the mind is free to master the principles, undisturbed by piece playing. When the principles have been assimilated, the attention can then be directed to the study of music itself. If any weak places appear in the hand from time to time, they can be easily corrected.

“If a pupil comes to me who has played a great deal but with no idea of the principles of piano playing, who does not know how to handle herself or the keyboard, it is absolutely necessary to stop everything and get ready to play. If you attempt even a simple sonata with no legato touch, no idea of chord or scale playing, you can not make the

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piece sound like anything. It is like a painter trying to paint without brushes, or an artist attempting to make a pen and ink drawing with a blunt lead pencil; to do good work you must have the tools to work with.

“For application of all principles, the studies of Czerny, Op. 299, 740, and others, offer unequaled opportunity. They are simple, direct, and give the student a chance for undivided attention to every position taken and to every motion made.

“What happens afterward is altogether according to the individual characteristics of the student. How to recognize these and deal with them to the best advantage is the interesting task of my great master (and those who try to follow in his steps)—the man of keenest intelligence, of profound learning and experience. To learn this lesson from him has been my greatest aim, and to see him at work, as it has been my privilege to do for several summers, has been of the greatest influence and inspiration in my own work.

“My chief endeavor is to create a desire for good musicianship. To this end I insist upon the study of theory, harmony, ear-training and analysis. In the piano lessons I do not have sufficient time to teach these things. I have assistant teachers who help me with these subjects and also with the technical training. Once a month during the season, my assistant teachers bring their pupils to play for me, and we have a class in piano teaching. There are sometimes eighteen or twenty students who come to a class. I can in this way supervise all the work done, and keep in touch with my teachers, their work, and with all the students.

“On the first Saturday of the month I have my own pupils here for a class; they play for me and for each other. Everything is played from memory, not a printed note is used. Students tell me it is very difficult to play here, where all listen so intently. Especially is it difficult the first time a student plays in class, to keep the mind wholly on what he is doing, with sufficient concentration. Later on, at the end of the season, it comes easier.

“This idea of separating the technical work at the outset from the study of music itself, secures, in my opinion, the most perfect

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foundation, and later on the best results. It is sometimes wonderful how, with proper training, the hand will improve and develop in a comparatively short time. I often marvel at it myself."

The writer had the privilege of being one of the guests at the last audition of the season. Eight or nine young artists played a long and difficult program. Among the numbers were a Beethoven sonata, entire; Chopin's Ballade in A flat major; Cesar Franck, Prelude, Fugue and Variations; a Mozart Fantaisie; Grieg Concerto, first movement; Weber's Concertstück, and Chopin's Scherzo in E. The recital was most instructive from an educational point of view. All the players had repose and concentration, and there were no noticeable slips, though every piece was played from memory. Hands were well arched at the knuckles, fingers curved—with adequate action at the knuckle joint; wrists in normal position, and extremely loose; the whole arm swung from the shoulder and poised over the keys, thus adjusting itself to every requirement of the composition. Every note had its amount of hand or arm weight. The tone quality was full and singing. These points were exemplified even in the playing of the youngest pupils. Furthermore they had an intelligent grasp of the meaning of the music they played, and brought it out with conviction, power, and brilliancy.

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### IX.

CARL M. ROEDER

#### PROBLEMS OF PIANO TEACHERS

"The progressive teacher's method must be one of accretion," said Carl Roeder, when interviewed between lesson hours in his delightful studio in Carnegie Hall. "He gains ideas from many methods and sources, and these he assimilates and makes practical for his work. At the same time he must originate and work out things for himself. This has been my experience.

"I was something of a wonder child, and at an early age developed considerable facility and brilliancy. After knocking about as a pupil of various private teachers and conservatories, I became, while quite a young lad, the pupil of de Konstki, then a lion of the day." The speaker joined in the laugh his remark called up, which brought to mind the Chevalier's famous battle-horse, "The Awakening of the Lion."

"De Konstki's style was very brilliant and I endeavored to imitate him in this respect. I did quite a little concert work at that time. Realizing, however, that a pianist's income must be rather precarious, I decided to teach. In those youthful days I had the idea that the teacher of the piano had an easy life. I remembered one of my professors, a man of considerable reputation, who took the duties of his profession very lightly. His method of giving a lesson was to place the music upon the piano, start the pupil going, then retire to a comfortable couch, light his pipe and smoke at ease, troubling himself little about the pupil's doings, except occasionally to call out 'Falsch!'

"So I, too, began to teach the piano. But I soon discovered that teaching was something quite different from what I had imagined it to be, and that it was something I knew very little about. I now set myself to learn how to teach—how to help those pupils who came to me.



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“One of my first discoveries was that most of the pupils were afflicted with stiff wrists and arms, and that this stiffness must be remedied. My own playing had always been free, due to one of my early teachers having thoroughly inculcated the principle of ‘weight,’ so often acclaimed in these days as a modern discovery. But how to bring about this condition in others was a great problem. I studied the Mason method, and found many helpful, illuminating ideas in regard to relaxation and devitalization. I had some lessons with S. B. Mills, and later did considerable valuable work with Paolo Gallico, who opened up to me the great storehouse of musical treasure, and revealed to me among other things the spiritual technic of the pianist’s art. Subsequently I investigated the Virgil and Leschetizky methods. Mr. Virgil has done some remarkable things in the way of organizing and systematizing technical requirements, and for this we owe him much. Such analyses had not before been made with anything like the care and minuteness, and his work has been of the greatest benefit to the profession. My subsequent studies with Harold Bauer revealed him to be a deep musical thinker and a remarkable teacher of the meaning of music itself.

“In my teaching I follow many of the ideas of Leschetizky, modified and worked out in the manner which I have found most useful to my own technic and to that of my pupils. I have formulated a method of my own, based on the principles which form a dependable foundation to build the future structure upon. Each pupil at the outset is furnished with a blank book, in which are written the exercises thus developed as adapted to individual requirements.

### FOUNDATIONAL EXERCISES

“We begin with table work. I use about ten different exercises which embody, as it were, in a nutshell, the principles of piano playing. The hand is first formed in an arched position, with curved fingers, and solidified. The thumb has to be taught to move properly, for many people have never learned to control it at all.

“With the hand in firm, solid position, and the arm hanging freely from the shoulder, I begin to use combined arm and wrist movements, aiming to get the weight of the arm as well as its energy

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at the complete disposal of the finger tip. Each finger in turn is held firmly in a curved position and played with a rotary movement of arm and wrist. When this can be done we next learn hand action at the wrist from which results the staccato touch. In this form of hand staccato there is an element of percussion, as you see, but this element gives directness and precision to the staccato touch, which in my opinion are necessary. After this we come to finger action itself. This principle is taken up thoroughly, first with one finger, then with two, three, four, and five—in all possible combinations. In this way we come down from the large free-arm movements to the smaller finger movements; from the ‘general to the particular,’ instead of working from the smaller to the larger. I find it most necessary to establish relaxation first, then strengthen and build up the hand, before finger action to any extent is used. When these foundational points have been acquired, the trill, scales, arpeggios, chords, octaves and double notes follow in due course. At the same time the rhythmic sense is developed, all varieties of touch and dynamics introduced, and harmonic and structural analysis dwelt upon.

### USE OF STUDIES

“Above the third or fourth grade I make frequent use of studies, selecting them from various books. Duvernoy, Op. 120; Berens, Op. 61; Czerny, Op. 740 I find far more interesting than the threadbare 299. Heller is indispensable, so melodious and musical. Arthur Foote’s studies, Op. 27, are very useful; also MacDowell’s, Op. 39 and 46. Sometimes I use a few of Cramer’s and the Clementi ‘Gradus,’ though these seem rather old-fashioned now.

“For more advanced pupils I find Harberbier, Op. 53 especially applicable; there is beautiful work in them. Kessler, Op. 20, and the Moszkowski studies, Op. 72, have splendid material for the advanced player, and prepare for Henselt, Rubinstein, Chopin and Liszt études. I find that studies are valuable for application of technical principles, for reacting purposes, and for the cultivation of all the refinements of playing. Some teachers believe in applying the technic directly to pieces, and use almost no studies; but I think a study is often more valuable than a piece, because a definite

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technical principle is treated in every kind of way. Though I do not require studies to be memorized, they must be played with all the finish of a piece, if the pupil is to derive the maximum of benefit from them.

### BOOKS THAT ARE HELPFUL

“As aids to my studies in the art of teaching, several books have been most helpful. Among these are two volumes by Dr. Herman H. Home, *The Philosophy of Education*, and *The Psychology of Education*. Another book, from which I have profited much is William James’ *Talks to Teachers on Psychology*. Every teacher should possess it.

“You ask what method I pursue with new pupils who have played a great deal of music but with little idea of correct principles of piano study. Let us take, for instance, one who has had lessons for years but is in ignorance of first principles. Arms and wrists are stiff, hands and fingers held in cramped position; no freedom anywhere. My first move is to have the pupil stand and learn to relax arms, shoulders and body; then learn to breathe. But relaxation, even at first, is not the only thing; after devitalization comes organization, firmness and solidity—in the right places. It must be understood at the very beginning that piano playing is far more than sitting before the instrument working the fingers six or seven hours a day. The mechanical side is only preliminary. Some one has said that the factors in playing are a trinity of H’s—head, hand and heart. I try at once to awaken thought, to give a wider outlook, to show that piano playing is the expression, through the medium of tone, of all that the poet, painter and philosopher are endeavoring to show through other means: to this end I endeavor to stimulate interest in the wonders of the visible universe, the intellectual achievements of men and the deep things of spiritual discernment.

### IN REGARD TO INTERPRETATION

“On this subject I think we should avoid pedantry; not to say to the pupil, you must play this piece a certain way; but rather say, I see or feel it in this way, and give the reasons underlying the conception. I believe the successful teacher should be a pianist. He should

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understand every point and be able to *do* the thing, else how can he really show the manner of the doing? Many of the *nuances*, subtleties of color and phrase, effects of charm or of bravura, cannot be explained; they must be illustrated. And furthermore, only he who has been over the road can be a safe or sympathetic guide. Tolstoi realized he could not be of service to the people he would uplift unless he lived among them, shared their trials and experienced their needs. The time has gone by when the musician and composer was considered a sort of freak, knowing music and nothing else. We know the great composers were men of the highest intelligence and learning, men whose aim was to work out their genius to the utmost perfection. Nothing less than the highest would satisfy them. As George Eliot said, 'Genius is the capacity for taking infinite pains.' Think of the care Beethoven took with every phrase, how many times he did it over, never leaving it till he was satisfied."

In speaking of the great European teachers Mr. Roeder continued:

"We hear much of the Leschetizky method; but with that master technic is quite a secondary matter over which, when once the principles are mastered, he troubles himself but little. It is the conception of the work as a whole which concerns him, how to project it, so to say, most effectively to an audience. He brings into prominence now this part, now that, accenting here, slightly exaggerating there, in order to make the picture more vivid to the listener. Harold Bauer is another illuminating master for those who have a technical equipment adequate to the performance of great works of piano literature. Some go to him who are not ready for what he has to give, but to those who can direct attention to the meaning of the music, he is a wonderful inspirational force. First he will point out a phrase here, another there, and so on through the piece, showing how the same idea takes on various aspects in the composer's thought. Then he shows how to gather up these different threads to form the perfect pattern which the author of the work had in mind; and finally the master teacher reaches down below the surface of form and design to the vital significance of the composition, and the disciple feels the glow and power of the revelation.

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“There is no gainsaying the fact that this age is superficial, and the great office of art is to cultivate that idealism which will uplift and inspire. In an important sense the teacher must be a preacher of righteousness. He knows that ‘beautiful things are fashioned from clay, but it has first to pass through the fire,’ and only those who can endure that scorching can hope to achieve success.

### QUESTION OF PERSONALITY

“If asked to what extent a player’s personality enters into the performance, my answer would be: Only in so far as the performance remains true to the composer’s intention. So long as personality illumines the picture and adds charm, interest, and effectiveness to it, it is to be applauded; but when it obstructs the view and calls attention to itself it should not be tolerated. It is not art; it is vanity.

“Yes, I teach both high finger action and pressure touch, once the principle of arm weight is thoroughly established, although I use high finger action only to develop finger independence and precision, and for passages where sharp delineation is required. I believe in freedom of body, arm and wrist, a firm, solid arched hand and set fingers. That freedom is best which insures such control of the various playing members as to enable the player to produce at will any effect of power, velocity or delicacy desired; thereby placing the entire mechanical apparatus under complete subjection to the mind, which dominates the performance. In other words, I am neither an anarchist who wants no government, namely unrestrained devitalization, nor a socialist, whose cry is for all government—that is, restriction and rigidity. In piano playing, as in all else, ‘Virtue is the happy mean between two vices.’”

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### X.

#### KATHARINE GOODSON

##### AN ARTIST AT HOME

When one has frequently listened to a favorite pianist in the concert room, and has studied impersonally, so to speak, the effects of touch, tone and interpretation produced during a recital, it is a satisfaction and delight to come into personal touch with the artist in the inner circle of the home; to be able to speak face to face with one who has charmed thousands from the platform, and to discuss freely the points which impress one when listening to a public performance.

It has been my recent privilege thus to come into intimate touch with the artist pair, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Hinton, the latter being known all over the world as Katharine Goodson. They have a quiet, beautiful home in London—a true artist's home. One feels at once on entering and enjoying its hospitality, that here at least is one instance where two musicians have perfect harmony in the home life. Mr. Hinton, as is widely known, is a composer and also a violinist and pianist. The beautiful music-room, which has been added to one side of the house and leads into the garden, contains two grand pianos on its raised platform. This music-room is Miss Goodson's own sanctum and workroom, and here piano concertos, with orchestral accompaniment supplied on the second piano, can be studied *ad infinitum*. Mr. Hinton has his own studio at the top of the house.

The garden music-room is lighted at one end by a great arched window, so placed that the trees of the garden are seen through its panes. It is easy to imagine one's self in some lovely sylvan retreat—which is indeed true! All the appointments of this room, and indeed of the whole house, every article of furniture and each touch of color, betoken the artistic sense for fitness and harmony. Miss Goodson has a keen and exquisite sense for harmony in colors as well as for color in the harmonies she brings from her instrument.

"My coming tour will be the fifth I have made in America," she said. "I enjoy playing in your country immensely; the cities of New York,

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Boston, Chicago, and Philadelphia are the most appreciative in the world. It is true we have masses of concerts in London, but few of them are really well attended and people are not so thoroughly acquainted with piano music as you are in America. And you are so appreciative of the best—even in the smaller cities.



Katharine Goodson

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"I can recall a recital which I gave in a city of not more than forty thousand, in the West. The recital was arranged by a musical club; they asked for the program some time in advance, studied it up and thus knew every piece I was to play. There was an enormous audience, for people came from all the country round. I remember three little elderly ladies who greeted me after the recital; in parting they said, 'You will see us to-morrow,' I thought it over afterward and wondered what they meant, for I was to play at a place many miles from there the next night. What was my surprise to be greeted by the same ladies the following evening. 'You see, we are here; we told you we would come.' Fancy taking a trip from London to Edinburgh just to hear a concert! For it was a journey like that. Such incidents show the enthusiasm in America for music—and for piano music.

"I hope to play both the Brahms and Paderewski concertos in America. To me the latter is a beautiful work—the slow movement is exquisite. I have as yet scarcely done anything with the composition, for I have been on a long tour through Norway, Sweden, and Finland. It was most inspiring to play for these people; they want me to come back to them now, but I cannot do so, nor can I go next season, but after that I shall go. I returned home greatly in need of rest. I shall now begin work in earnest, however, as summer is really the only time I have for study throughout the year. I shall have six full weeks now before we take our usual holiday in the Grindelwald. On the way there we shall stop at Morges and visit Paderewski, and then I will go over the concerto with him and get his ideas as to interpretation.

### MEMORIZING BY ANALYSIS

"You ask how I memorize. First I go over the work several times to get a general idea of the whole. Then I analyze it, for I feel it absolutely necessary to know keys, chords, and construction. A work should be so well understood along these lines that it can be played in another key as well as in the one in which it is written. For the actual memorizing of the piece I generally do it phrase by phrase, not always 'each hand alone,' though occasionally I do this also. I remember learning the Bach A minor Prelude and Fugue in this way.



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If I were now asked to play any measure or passage in any part of it I could do so; it is mine forever, never to be forgotten."

Asked about the different ways of teaching the Leschetizky method by various teachers, Miss Goodson said:

"As we all know, people claim to understand and teach the Leschetizky principles who are not competent to do so. I do not recall, for instance, that the professor requires the tips of the fingers to form a straight line on the edge of the keys. I myself have never done this. I believe in a perfectly easy and natural position of hand at the keyboard. When this is the case the finger-tips form a curve, the middle fingers being placed a little farther in on the keys than is natural for the first and fifth. Of course the hand takes an arched position and the joints nearest the tip of the fingers must be firm; there should be no wavering nor giving in there. The whole arm, of course, is relaxed, and swings easily from the shoulder.

### A PIANO HAND

"I have, as you say, a good hand for the piano; much depends on that; I have always had a good deal of what is called a natural technic. Thus when I am obliged to forego practising I do not lose my facility; an hour's work puts the hand in condition again. What do I do to accomplish this? Different things. First some finger movements, perhaps with fingers in an extended chord position; then some scales and arpeggios; then a Chopin étude, and so on. When practising regularly, I do not generally work at the piano more than four hours a day; it seems to me that amount is sufficient, if used with absolute concentration."

Later we adjourned to the pretty garden back of the music-room, and here we were joined by a beautiful gray Angora cat, the pet and pride of his mistress, and a very important personage indeed. He has a trick of climbing to Miss Goodson's shoulder, from which point of vantage he surveys the world about him with all the complaisance of which an animal of such high degree is capable.

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XI.  
MARK HAMBOURG

FORM, TECHNIC, AND EXPRESSION



MARK HAMBOURG

In one of the most quiet, secluded quarters of London can be found the home of the Russian pianist, Mark Hambourg. Mr. Hambourg

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lives on a terrace, "far from the madding crowd," and difficult enough of access to keep mere curiosity seekers at a distance. One can scarcely picture to one's self, without an actual sight of them, the quaint charm of these short passages or streets, usually termed "terraces," or "gardens." This particular terrace looks out on a restful green park, where luxuriant trees make long shadows on the sunlit turf. The house is large and comfortable—built over a hundred years ago; its rooms are spacious, and the drawing-room and library, which lead one into the other, form a fine music salon. Surely, amid such surroundings, with priceless pictures and *objets d'art* all about, with exquisite colors, with space and quiet, an artist must find an ideal spot for both work and play. I expressed this thought to Mr. Hambourg when he entered; then we soon fell to discussing the necessary equipment of the teacher and pianist.

"I agree with you," he said, "that it is the beginning of piano study which is the most difficult of all; this is where the teacher has such great responsibility and where so many teachers are so incompetent. Perhaps there are more poor teachers for the piano than for the voice. The organs of voice production cannot be seen, they can only be guessed at; so there may be a little more excuse for the vocal teacher; but for the piano we have the keys and the fingers. It should not therefore be such a very difficult thing to learn to play intelligently and correctly! Yet few seem to have got hold of the right principles or know how to impart them."

"I have heard a number of the young pianists here," I remarked, "and they all play with very little finger action—with fingers close to the keys. Do you advocate this?"

### LOW HAND POSITION

"Do not forget that for centuries England has been a country of organists; without doubt organ playing has had some effect on the piano touch. Some schools of piano playing advise lifting the fingers high above the keys, with a view to producing greater power; but I think the tone thus produced is often of a somewhat harsh and disagreeable quality. Then, too, high lifting interferes with smoothness and velocity. For myself I advocate keeping the fingers

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close to the keyboard, and pressing the keys, which gives the tone a warmer and more elastic quality."

"A point in hand position I should like to ask you about. Some teachers advise placing the finger-tips close to the edge of the keys, forming a straight line with them; it seems to me such a position is forced and unnatural."

Mr. Hambourg smiled assent.

"I do not advocate anything forced and unnatural," he answered. "So many people think that a beautiful touch is 'born, not made,' but I do not agree with them. One can acquire, I am sure, a fine piano touch with the proper study. The principal requirement is, first of all, a loose wrist. This point seems simple enough, but it is a point not sufficiently considered nor understood. No matter how much the player may *feel* the meaning of the music, he cannot express this meaning with stiff wrists and arms. Some people have a natural flexibility, and to such the securing of a musical tone presents far less difficulty; but with time, patience, and thought, I fully believe all can arrive at this goal.

### AMOUNT OF PRACTISE

"In regard to practise I do not think it wise for the aspiring pianist to spend such a great amount of time at the piano. Four hours of concentrated work daily seems to me sufficient. Of course it is the quality of practise that counts. The old saying, 'Practise makes perfect,' does not mean constant repetition merely, but constant thinking and listening. I advise students to stop after playing a passage several times, and think over what the notes mean. This pause will rest ears and hands; in a few moments work can be resumed with fresh vigor.

"I have been so frequently asked to write on the subject of technic that I have done so in a few articles which have been printed in a small booklet. From these you may see what my ideas are on these points. I do very little teaching myself—just a few talented pupils; they must be something out of the ordinary. You see, I do not live in London continuously; I am here only about four months of the year;

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the rest of the time is spent traveling all over the world. Only that small part of the year when I am stationary can I do any solid work. Here it is generally quiet enough: the Zoological Garden is not far away, however, and sometimes I have the roaring of the lions as an accompaniment to my piano.

“I am always increasing my repertoire, though I find the public does not care for new things; it prefers the old. It may listen to the new if forced to, but it will not attend a recital unless various familiar things are on the program.

“I have made several tours in America. The rush of travel from place to place over there, is fatiguing, but I feel that your people are very appreciative. You demand the best, and concert giving in America is so costly that a manager can afford to exploit only the highest artists. Here in London, where the expense is only about two hundred dollars, say, to get up a recital, almost any one can scrape together that sum and bring himself or herself before the public. In America the outlay is four or five times greater. No wonder that only a very good artist can take the risk.”

On leaving, Mr. Hambourg took us to another room, where he showed us with much satisfaction, a very valuable painting of the old Italian school, by Ghirlandajo, of which he is very fond.

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### XII.

#### TOBIAS MATTHAY

##### WATCHING THE ARTIST TEACHER AT WORK

One of the first things accomplished after my arrival in London was to seek out Tobias Matthay, the composer and teacher, for an echo of his fame had reached me across the water.

Matthay has done much to make the principles of piano technic so clear and simple that even a child can understand them. If he has stated facts in a way which seems to some revolutionary it is because these facts are seldom understood by the rank and file of piano teachers. The work he has done has compelled attention and admiration; his ideas are now accepted as undeniable truths by those who at first repudiated them. The writings of Mr. Matthay will doubtless be better known in America a little later on than they are at present. They consist in part of an exhaustive work on *The Act of Touch in all its Diversity*; *First Principles of Piano Playing*; *Relaxation Studies*; *The Child's First Steps in Piano Playing*; *The Principles of Fingering and Laws of Pedaling*; *Forearm Rotation Principle*; and, in press, *The Principles of Teaching Interpretation*. These very titles are inspiring and suggestive, and show Matthay to be a deep thinker along educational lines.

Matthay's activities are enormous. He is professor of advanced piano playing at the Royal Academy of Music; also founder and head of his own school of piano playing. So occupied early and late is he, that it is almost impossible to get a word with him. I was fortunate enough, however, to obtain an hour's audience, and also permission to attend various private classes at the Royal Academy, and hear a number of pupils in recital.

In appearance Matthay is a striking personality. His head and features recall pictures of Robert Louis Stevenson. His tall, muscular form has the stoop of the scholar; and little wonder when one remembers he must sit in his chair at work day in and day out. His somewhat brusque manner melts into kind amiability when discussing

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the topics in which he is vitally interested. In his intercourse with students he is ever kind, sympathetic and encouraging. They, on their part, treat him with profound respect.



*Cordially Yours  
Tobias Matthay*

Cordially Yours, Tobias Matthay

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Matthay believes, and rightly, that the beginning pupil should learn essentials of note values, rhythm, time, ear-training and so on, before attempting to play anything at the piano. When first taken to the instrument, its mechanism is carefully explained to the learner, and what he must do to make a really musical tone. He says (*Child's First Steps*): "Before you take the very first step in tone production, be sure to understand that you must never touch the piano without trying to make music. It is only too easy to sound notes without making music at all. To make music we must make all the sounds mean something, just as it is no use to pretend to speak unless the sounds we make with our lips mean something, that is unless they form reasoned phrases and sentences."

Here nothing is left vague. Matthay shows clearly how all musical Form and Shape imply Movement and Progression: the movement of a phrase toward its cadence; the movement of a group of notes toward a beat or pulse ahead, or the movement of a whole piece toward its climax, etc. This original view of his regarding form, which he has advocated for the last twenty years, is now being accepted generally by the more up-to-date of the English theorists and teachers.

In regard to key mechanism and what must be done to produce all varieties of touch and tone, Matthay has made exhaustive studies. He says (*First Principles of Piano Playing*): "The two chief rules of technic, as regards the key, are, therefore: Always feel how much the key resists you: feel how much the key *wants* for every note. Second, Always listen for the moment each sound begins, so that you may learn to direct your effort to the sound only, and not to the key bed. You must never hit a key down, nor hit *at* it. The finger-tip may fall on the key, and in gently reaching the key you may follow up such fall by acting against the key. This action against the key must be for the sole purpose of making it move—in one of the many ways which each give us quite a different kind of sound. And you must always direct such action to the point in key descent where the sound begins."

I quote also this little summary from the same work:



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“(a) It is only by making the hammer-end of the key move that you can make a sound. (b) The swifter the movement the louder the sound. (c) The more gradual this swiftness is obtained the more beautiful the quality of sound. (d) For brilliant tone you may hit the string by means of the key, but do not, by mistake, hit the key instead. (e) You must ‘aim’ the key to the *beginning* of each sound, because the hammer falls off the string as you hear that beginning, and it is too late then to influence the sound except its continuance. (f) It is wrong to squeeze the key beds, because it prevents tone, impairs musical result, impedes agility, and is, besides, fatiguing. (g) You must feel the ‘giving way point’ of the key, so that you may be able to tell how much force is required for each note. Never, therefore, really hit the keys.”

Mr. Matthay as minutely gives directions as to the muscular problems of touch and technique. For instance, he explains how all varieties of tone, good and bad, are caused, all inflections of Duration, and the laws which govern the attainment of Agility and ease of Technique; and also explains the nature of incorrect muscular actions which prevent the attainment of all these things. He shows where the released arm weight should be applied, and again, where it should be eliminated; makes clear the two opposite forms of technic implied by “flat” and “bent” finger actions, and he goes exhaustively into the little-understood question of forearm rotary exertions, the correct application of which he proves to be necessary for every note we play.

In speaking of methods in piano teaching, Mr. Matthay said to me:

“I can say I have no method *of playing*, and moreover I have not much faith in people who have. My teachings merely show how all playing, good or bad, is accomplished. There are certain principles, however, which every player should know, but which, I am sorry to say, are as yet scarcely apprehended even by the best teachers. The great pianists have experimented till they have hit upon effects which they can repeat if all conditions are favorable, and they are in the mood. As a rule they do not know the laws underlying these effects. You may ask the greatest pianists, for example, how to play octaves. ‘Oh, I play them thus’—illustrating. Just what to do to attain

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this result they cannot explain. In my own case I have done much experimenting, but always with the view to discovering *how* things are done—the facts and laws governing actual tone production and interpretation. I made a study of Rubinstein's playing, for I found he played a great deal better than I did. So I discovered many things in listening to him, which he perhaps could not have explained to me. These facts are incontrovertible and I have brought many of my colleagues to see the truth of them. More than this, I have brought many even of my older colleagues who had a life-time of wrong mental habits to impede them, to realize the truth of my teachings.

"The work of a teacher should speak for itself. For my own part I never advertise, for I can point to hundreds of pupils—this is no exaggeration in the least!—who are constantly before the public, as concert pianists and successful teachers.

"If there is one thing that rouses me deeply, it is the incompetence of so many teachers of piano. They say to the pupil: 'You play badly, you must play better'; but they do not tell the pupil *how* to play better. They give doses of études, sonatas and pieces, yet never get at the heart of the matter at all. It is even worse than the fake singing teachers; I feel like saying it is damnable!"

It was my privilege to be present at some of Mr. Matthay's private lessons, given at the Royal Academy. Several young men were to try for one of the medals, and were playing the same piece, one of the Strauss-Tausig Valse Caprices.

Matthay listens to a complete performance of the work in hand, then turns back to the beginning and goes over it again for corrections and suggestions. He enters into it with absolute devotion, directing with movements of head and hands as a conductor might direct an orchestra; sometimes he dashes down a chord in the treble to urge more force; at other times lays a restraining hand on the player's arm, where the tone should be softer. His blue pencil is often busy adding phrasing marks. In the pauses he talks over with the pupil the character of the piece, and the effects he thinks should be made. In short his lessons are most helpful and illuminating.

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I also had the opportunity to attend a pupils' "Practise Concert," and here the results attained were little short of marvelous. Small children, both boys and girls, played difficult pieces, like the Grieg Variations for two pianos, the Weber *Invitation to the Dance*, and works by Chopin and Liszt, with accuracy and fluency. Almost every selection was played from memory. The tone was always musical and often of much power, and the pupils seemed thoroughly to understand what they were doing and the meaning of the music. They certainly exemplified the professor's maxim:

"Never touch the piano without trying to make music."

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Not long afterward I received a copy of the new book, which had just come from the press. Its comprehensive title is *Musical Interpretation, its Laws and Principles, and their Application in Teaching and Performing*. The material was first presented in the form of lectures; on repeated requests it has been issued in book form. The author at the outset claims no attempt to treat such a complex problem exhaustively; he has, however, selected the following seven points for elucidation:

1. The difference between Practise and Strumming.
2. The difference between Teaching and Cramming.
3. How one's mind can be brought to bear on one's work.
4. Correct ideas of Time and Shape.
5. Elements of Rubato and its application.
6. Elements of Duration and Pedaling and their application.
7. Some details as to the application of the Element of Tone-variety.

Such themes must cause the thoughtful reader to pause and think. They are treated with illuminating originality. The great aim of the teacher must ever be to awaken thought along correct lines; the pupil must be assisted to concentrate his thought on what he is doing: to constantly think and listen. Teaching does not consist merely in pointing out faults; the teacher must make clear the *cause* of each fault and the way to correct it. That section of the book devoted to

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the Element of Rubato, is illustrated with many examples from well-known compositions, by which the principle is explained. He shows how frequently this principle is misunderstood by the inexperienced, who seem to think that rubato means breaking the time; whereas true rubato is the *bending* of the time, but not *breaking* it. If we give extra time to certain notes, we must take some time from other notes, in order to even things up.

The subject of Pedaling is aptly explained by means of numerous illustrations. The author deploras the misuse of the damper pedal, which can be made to ruin all the care and effort bestowed on phrasing and tonal effects by the fingers. The fault can, in most cases, be traced to inattention to the sounds coming from the piano.

There are quotable paragraphs on every page, which in their sincerity and earnestness, their originality of expression, stamp themselves on the reader's imagination. Every teacher who is serious in his work and has the best interests of his pupils at heart, should read and ponder these pages.

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### XIII. HAROLD BAUER

#### THE QUESTION OF PIANO TONE

Buried deep in the heart of old Paris, in one of the narrow, busy thoroughfares of the city, stands the ancient house in which the master pianist, Harold Bauer, has made a home.

One who is unfamiliar with Paris would never imagine that behind those rows of uninviting buildings lining the noisy, commercial street, there lived people of refined and artistic tastes. All the entrances to the buildings look very much alike—they seem to be mere slits in the walls. I stopped before one of the openings, entered and crossed a paved courtyard, climbed a winding stone stairway, rang at a plain wooden doorway, and was ushered into the artist's abode. Once within, I hardly dared to speak, lest what I saw might vanish away, as with the wave of a fairy's wand. Was I not a moment before down in that dusty, squalid street, and here I am now in a beautiful room whose appointments are all of quiet elegance—costly but in exquisite taste, and where absolute peace and quiet reign. The wide windows open upon a lovely green garden, which adds the final touch of restful repose to the whole picture.

Mr. Bauer was giving a lesson in the music salon beyond, from which issued, now and again, echoes of well-beloved themes from a Chopin sonata. When the lesson was over he came out to me.

"Yes, this is one of the old houses, of the sort that are fast passing away in Paris," he said, answering my remark; "there are comparatively few of them left. This building is doubtless at least three hundred years old. In this quarter of the city—in the rue de Bac, for instance—you may find old, forbidding looking buildings, that within are magnificent—perfect palaces; at the back of them, perhaps, will be a splendid garden; but the whole thing is so hidden away that even the very existence of such grandeur and beauty would never be suspected from without."

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He then led the way to the music-room, where we had an hour's talk.



*for Miss Harriette Brower  
Harold Bauer  
Paris, 1913*

HAROLD BAUER

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"I was thinking as I drove down here," I began, "what the trend of our talk might be, for you have already spoken on so many subjects for publication. It occurred to me to ask how you yourself secure a beautiful tone on the piano, and how you teach others to make it?"

Mr. Bauer thought an instant.

"I am not sure that I do make it; in fact I do not believe in a single beautiful tone on the piano. Tone on the piano can only be beautiful in the right place—that is, in relation to other tones. You or I, or the man in the street, who knows nothing about music, may each touch a piano key, and that key will sound the same, whoever moves it, from the nature of the instrument. A beautiful tone may result when two or more notes are played successively, through their *difference of intensity*, which gives variety. A straight, even tone is monotonous—a dead tone. Variety is life. We see this fact exemplified even in the speaking voice; if one speaks or reads in an even tone it is deadly monotonous.

### VARIETY OF TONE

"Now the singer or the violinist can make a single tone on his instrument beautiful through variety; for it is impossible for him to make even *one* tone which does not have shades of variation in it, however slight they may be, which render it expressive. But you cannot do this on the piano: you cannot color a single tone; but you can do this with a succession of tones, through their difference, through their relation to each other. On the other hand you may say any tone is beautiful if in the right place, no matter how harsh it may be. The singer's voice may break from emotion, or simulated emotion, in an impassioned phrase. The exact note on which it breaks may not be a beautiful one, it may even be very discordant, but we do not think of that, for we are moved by the meaning back of the tones. So on the piano there may be one note in a phrase which, if heard alone, would sound harsh and unpleasant, but in its relation to other tones it sounds beautiful, for it gives the right meaning and effect. Thus it is the *relation of tones* which results in a 'beautiful tone' on the piano.

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“The frequent trouble is that piano teachers and players generally do not understand their instrument. A singer understands his, a violinist, flutist or drummer knows his, but not a pianist. As he only has keys to put down and they are right under his hand, he does not bother himself further. To obviate this difficulty, for those who come to me, I have had this complete model of piano-key mechanism made. You see I can touch the key in a variety of ways, and the results will be different each time. It is necessary for the pianist to look into his instrument, learn its construction, and know what happens inside when he touches a key.

“As you say, there are a great many methods of teaching the piano, but to my mind they are apt to be long, laborious, and do not reach the vital points. The pianist may arrive at these after long years of study and experimenting, but much of his time will be wasted in useless labor.

“In my own case, I was forced by necessity to make headway quickly. I came to Paris years ago as a violinist, but there seemed no opening for me then in that direction. There was opportunity, however, for ensemble work with a good violinist and ‘cellist. So I set to work to acquire facility on the piano as quickly as possible. I consulted all the pianists I knew—and I knew quite a number—as to what to do. They told me I must spend many months on technic alone before I could hope to play respectably, but I told them I had no time for that. So I went to work to study out the effects I needed. It didn’t matter to me *how* my hand looked on the keyboard; whether my fingers were curved, flat, or stood on end. I was soon able to get my effects and to convince others that they were the effects I wanted. Later on, when I had more leisure, I took more thought about the position of hand and fingers. But I am convinced that much time is spent uselessly on externals, which do not reach the heart of the matter.

“For instance, players struggle for years to acquire a perfectly even scale. Now I don’t believe in that at all. I don’t believe a scale ever should be even, either in tone or in rhythm. The beginner’s untrained efforts at a scale sound like this”—the speaker illustrated at the piano with a scale in which all the tones were blurred and run into



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each other; then he continued, "After a year's so-called 'correct training,' his scale sounds like this" — again he illustrated, playing a succession of notes with one finger, each tone standing out by itself. "To my thinking such teaching is not only erroneous, it is positively poisonous—yes, *poisonous!*"

"Is it to be inferred that you do not approve of scale practise?"

"Oh, I advise scale playing surely, for facility in passing the thumb under and the hand over is very necessary. I do not, however, desire the even, monotonous scale, but one that is full of variety and life.

"In regard to interpretation, it should be full of tonal and rhythmic modifications. Briefly it may be said that expression may be exemplified in four ways: loud, soft, fast, and slow. But within these crude divisions what infinite shades and gradations may be made! Then the personal equation also comes in. Variety and differentiation are of supreme importance—they are life!

"I go to America next season, and after that to Australia; this will keep me away from my Paris home for a long time to come. I should like to give you a picture to illustrate this little talk. Here is a new one which was taken right here in this room, as I sat at the piano, with the strong sunlight pouring in at the big window at my left."

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On a subsequent occasion, Mr. Bauer spoke further on some phases of his art.

"As you already know I do not believe in so-called 'piano technic,' which must be practised laboriously outside of pieces. I do not believe in spending a lot of time in such practise, for I feel it is time wasted and leads nowhere. I do not believe, for instance, in the struggle to play a perfectly even scale. A scale should never be 'even,' for it must be full of variety and life. A perfectly even scale is on a dead level; it has no life; it is machine-made. The only sense in which the word 'even' may be applied to a scale is for its rhythmic

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quality; but even in this sense a beautiful scale has slight variations, so that it is never absolutely regular, either in tone or rhythm.

“Then I do not believe in taking up a new composition and working at the technical side of it first. I study it in the first place from the musical side. I see what may be the meaning of the music, what ideas it seeks to convey, what was in the composer’s mind when he wrote it. In other words, I get a good general idea of the composition as a whole; when I have this I can begin to work out the details.

“In this connection I was interested in reading a statement made by Ruskin in his *Modern Painters*. The statement, which, I think, has never been refuted, is that while the great Italian painters, Raphael, Coreggio, and the rest have left many immature and imperfect pictures and studies in color, their drawings are mature and finished, showing that they made many experiments and studies in color before they thought of making the finished black and white drawing. It seems they put the art thought first before the technical detail. This is the way I feel and the way I work.

### AVOID RESTRICTING RULES

“Because our ancestors were brought up to study the piano a certain way, and we—some of us—have been trained along the same rigid lines, does not mean there are no better, broader, less limited ways of reaching the goal we seek. We do not want to limit ourselves or our powers. We do not need to say: ‘Now I have thought out the conception of this composition to my present satisfaction; I shall always play it the same way.’ How can we feel thus? It binds us at once with iron shackles. How can I play the piece twice exactly alike? I am a different man to-day from what I was yesterday, and shall be different to-morrow from what I am to-day. Each day is a new world, a new life. Don’t you see how impossible it is to give two performances of the piece which shall be identical in every particular? It is possible for a machine to make any number of repetitions which are alike, but a human, with active thought and emotion, has a broader outlook.

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“The question as to whether the performer must have experienced every emotion he interprets is as old as antiquity. You remember in the Dialogues of Plato, Socrates was discussing with another sage the point as to whether an actor must have felt every emotion he portrayed in order to be a true artist. The discussion waxed warm on both sides. Socrates’ final argument was, If the true artist must have lived through every experience in order to portray it faithfully, then, if he had to act a death scene he would have to die first in order to picture it with adequate fidelity!”

### THE QUESTION OF VELOCITY

In speaking of velocity in piano playing and how it is to be acquired, Mr. Bauer continued:

“I believe the quality of velocity is inherent—an integral part of one’s thought. Even a child, if he has this inherent quality, can play a simple figure of five notes as fast as they need to be played. People of the South—not on this side of the water—but of Spain and Italy, are accustomed to move quickly; they gesticulate with their hands and are full of life and energy. It is no trouble for them to think with velocity. Two people will set out to walk to a given point; they may both walk fast, according to their idea of that word, but one will cover the ground much more quickly than the other. I think this idea of a time unit is again a limiting idea. There can be *no* fixed and fast rule as to the tempo of a composition; we cannot be bound by such rules. The main thing is: Do I understand the meaning and spirit of the composition, and can I make these clear to others? Can I so project this piece that the picture is alive? If so, the fact as to whether it is a few shades slower or faster does not enter into the question at all.

### OBTAINING POWER

“Many players totally mistake in what power consists. They think they must exert great strength in order to acquire sufficient power. Many women students have this idea; they do not realize that power comes from contrast. This is the secret of the effect of power. I do not mean to say that we must not play with all the force we have at

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times; we even have to pound and bang occasionally to produce the needed effects. This only proves again that a tone may be beautiful, though in itself harsh, if this harshness comes in the right time and place.

“As with velocity so with power; there is *no* fixed and infallible rule in regard to it, for that would only be another limitation to the feeling, the poetry, the emotion of the executant’s *thought*. The quality and degree of power are due to contrast, and the choice of the degree to be used lies with the player’s understanding of the content of the piece and his ability to bring out this content and place it in all its perfection and beauty before the listener. This is his opportunity to bring out the higher, the spiritual meaning.”

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### XIV.

#### A VISIT TO RAOUL PUGNO

##### TRAINING THE CHILD

"An audience has been arranged for you to-day, with M. Raoul Pugno; he will await you at four o'clock, in his Paris studio." Thus wrote the courteous representative of *Musical America* in Paris.

It had been very difficult to make appointments with any of the famous French musicians, owing to their being otherwise engaged, or out of the city. I therefore welcomed this opportunity for meeting at least one of the great pianists of France.

At the appointed hour that afternoon, we drove through the busy rue de Clichy, and halted at the number which had been indicated. It proved to be one of those unpromising French apartment buildings, which present, to the passer-by, a stern façade of flat wall, broken by rows of shuttered windows, which give no hint of what may be hidden behind them. In this case we did not find the man we sought in the front portion of the building, but were directed to cross a large, square court. The house was built around this court, as was the custom in constructing the older sort of dwellings.

At last we discovered the right door, which was opened by a neat housekeeper.

"M. Pugno is not here, he lives in the country," she said, in answer to our inquiry. (How difficult these French musicians are to find; they seem to be one and all "in the country"!)

"But, madame, we have an appointment with M. Pugno; will you not be good enough to see if he is not here after all?"

She left us standing, but returned almost immediately with the message that M. Pugno had only that moment entered his studio, to which she would conduct us.

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RAOUL PUGNO

In another moment we had crossed the tiny foyer and were standing within the artist's sanctuary. At first glance one felt as though in an Oriental chamber of some Eastern monarch. Heavy gold and silver Turkish embroideries hung over doors and windows. The walls were covered with many rare paintings; rich *objets d'art* were scattered about in profusion; an open door led out into a pretty garden, where flowers bloomed, and a fountain *dripped* into its marble basin. A raised dais at one side of the room held a divan, over which were draperies of Oriental stuffs. On this divan, as on a throne, sat the great pianist we had come to see. He made a stately and imposing figure as he sat there, with his long silvery beard and his dignified bearing. Near him sat a pretty young woman, whom

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we soon learned was Mlle. Nadia Boulanger, a composer and musician of brilliant attainments.

"I regret that I am unable to converse with you in English, as I speak no language but my own," began M. Pugno, with a courteous wave of the hand for us to be seated.

"You wish to know some of my ideas on piano playing—or rather on teaching. I believe a child can begin to study the piano at a very early age, if he show any aptitude for it; indeed the sooner he begins the better, for then he will get over some of the drudgery by the time he is old enough to understand a little about music.

### TRAINING THE CHILD

"Great care must be taken with the health of the child who has some talent for music, so that he shall not overdo in his piano study. After all a robust physical condition is of the first importance, for without it one can do little.

"A child in good health can begin as early as five or six years. He must be most judiciously trained from the start. As the ear is of such prime importance in music, great attention should be paid to tone study—to listening to and distinguishing the various sounds, and to singing them if possible, in solfeggio.

"At the outset a good hand position must be secured, with correct finger movements. Then there must be a thorough drill in scales, arpeggios, chords, and a variety of finger exercises, before any kind of pieces are taken up. The young student in early years, is expected to play various études, as well as the technic studies I have mentioned—Czerny, Cramer, Clementi, and always Bach. In my position, as member of the faculty of the Conservatoire, a great many students pass before me. If I personally accept any pupils, they naturally must be talented and advanced, as I cannot give my time to the children. Still it is interesting to see the child-thought develop."

The conversation turned upon the charming studio with its lovely garden—where absolute quiet could be secured in spite of the noise and bustle of one of the busiest quarters of Paris. The studio itself,

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we were told, had formerly belonged to the painter Decamps, and some of the pictures and furnishings were once his. A fine portrait of Pugno, life size, filling the whole space above the piano, claimed our attention. He kindly rose, as we admired the painting, and sought a photograph copy. When it was found—the last one he possessed—he presented it with his compliments.

We spoke of Mlle. Boulanger's work in composition, a subject which seemed deeply to interest M. Pugno.

"Yes, she is writing an opera; in fact we are writing it together; the text is from a story of d'Annunzio. I will jot down the title for you."

Taking a paper which I held in my hand, he wrote,

*"La Ville Morte, 4 Acts de d'Annunzio; Musique de Nadia Boulanger et Raoul Pugno"*

"You will certainly have it performed in America, when it is finished; I will tell them so," I said.

The great pianist smiled blandly and accepted the suggestion with evident satisfaction.

"Yes, we will come to America and see the work performed, when it is completed," he said.

With many expressions of appreciation we took our leave of the Oriental studio and its distinguished occupants; and, as we regained the busy, noisy rue de Clichy, we said to ourselves that we had just lived through one of the most unique experiences of our stay in Paris.

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(The above is the last interview ever taken from this great French artist, who passed away a few months later.)

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The following items concerning M. Pugno's manner of teaching and personal traits, were given me by Mme. Germaine Schnitzer, the accomplished French pianist and the master's most gifted pupil.

"Pugno had played the piano almost from infancy, and in early youth had taken several piano prizes. Later, however, he gave much more of his time to the organ, to the seeming neglect of the former instrument. How his serious attention was reverted to the piano happened in this wise. It was announced that Edward Grieg, the noted Norwegian, was coming to Paris. Pugno was one day looking over his piano Concerto which had recently appeared. 'Why don't you play the work for the composer when he comes?' asked a friend. 'I am no pianist,' objected Pugno. 'Why not?' said his friend; 'you know enough about the piano, and there are still four weeks in which to learn the Concerto.' Pugno took the advice, practised up the work, played it in the concert given by Grieg, and scored a success. He was then thirty-nine years of age. This appearance was the beginning; other engagements and successes followed, and thus he developed into one of the great pianists of France.

"Pugno was a born pianist; he had a natural gift for technic, and therefore never troubled himself much about teaching technical exercises nor practising them. If the work of a pupil contained technical faults, he made no remarks nor explanations, but simply closed the music book and refused to listen any further. The pupil, of course, retired in discomfiture. He was fond of playing along with the pupil (generally with the left hand), or singing the melodies and themes, in order to give him ideas of the meaning and interpretation of the music. This gave independence to the pupils, though it often afforded them much amusement.

"With advanced students Pugno spoke much about music and what it could express; he translated themes and passages back into the feelings and emotions which had originated them; he showed how all emotions find their counterpart in tones. 'Above all let kindness and goodness control you,' he once wrote; 'if you are filled with kindness, your tone will be beautiful!'

"Pugno's instruction took the form of talks on the inner meaning of the composition, and the art of interpreting it, rather than any

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training on the technical side; about the latter he concerned himself very little. It goes without saying that only talented pupils made progress under such a master; indeed those without talent interested him not at all. He was a wonderful teacher for those who had the insight to read between the lines, and were able to follow and absorb his artistic enthusiasms.

"I have said that Pugno did not concern himself about teaching the technical side of piano playing. Even with me, his best pupil, he rarely touched upon technical points. I must mention a notable exception. He gave me one technical principle, expressed in a few simple exercises, which I have never heard of from any one else. The use of this principle has helped me amazingly to conquer many knotty passages. I have never given these exercises to any one; I am willing however, to jot them down for you."

(The following is a brief plan of the exercises, as sketched by Mme. Schnitzer)

The image displays five musical exercises, numbered 1 through 5, written in treble clef. Each exercise is a single line of music on a five-line staff. Exercise 1 shows a sequence of eighth notes with a '1' below the first note and 'etc.' at the end. Exercise 2 shows a similar sequence with a '2' below the first note and 'etc.' at the end. Exercise 3 features a sequence of eighth notes with a '3' below the first note, a slur over the next two notes, and 'etc.' at the end. Exercise 4 shows a sequence of eighth notes with a '4' below the first note and 'etc.' at the end. Exercise 5 shows a sequence of eighth notes with a '5' below the first note, a slur over the next two notes, and 'etc.' at the end. The exercises are designed to be played in both ascending and descending directions.

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“Pugno wished the thirty-seconds and sixty-fourths to be played with the utmost quickness. This idea is not alone applicable to all scales, but can be used with any difficult passage found in a composition.

“Pugno took a keen interest in my work, my progress and career. A few sentences culled here and there from the many letters of his which I have preserved, may serve to throw more light on the inner nature of the man:

“I have endeavored to make clear to your young mind the thoughts expressed in music, so that your understanding and your emotions also might grow; all this has created a link of gratitude in you and an affection within me. I have opened the windows for you and have given you light, and I have reaped the satisfaction of my sowing.’

“Hear all the music you can—do not miss any of the pianists either good or bad; there is always something to be learned, even from a poor player—if it is only what to avoid! Study great works, but even in those there are some figures and phrases which need not be brought into the foreground, lest they attain too much significance.’

“(After playing with Hans Richter’s Orchestra): ‘What intoxication of sound—what exhilaration and collaboration in music! What a force within us, which sways us and throbs through us, developing and expressing each sentiment and instinct! What art can be compared to music, which finds expression through this medium, called an orchestra. I feel myself greater amid the orchestra, for I have a giant to converse with. I keep pace with him, I lead him where I will—I calm him and I embrace him. We supplement each other; in a moment of authority I become his master and subdue him. The piano alone is too small for me; it does not tempt me to play it except under such conditions—with a grand orchestra!’”

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### XV.

#### THUEL BURNHAM

##### THE "MELODY" AND "COLORATURA" HAND

A prominent figure in the musical life of Paris is Thuel Burnham, pianist and teacher.

Mr. Burnham is an American, who for a number of years has made his home in Paris. He has studied with the greatest masters of his instrument on both sides of the water. More than this he is a musical thinker who has worked out things for himself, amalgamating what he has found best in other methods with what he has discovered in his own experience. He has been able to simplify the whole fabric of technical material, so there is no time lost in useless labor.

As a pianist Mr. Burnham takes high rank. Technical difficulties do not exist for him. He has come to the last turning of the road; before him rise the heights of supreme spiritual mastery. A touch that is limpid, clear, and capable of many gradations of tints; splendid power in *fortissimo*; delicacy, velocity and variety are all his; together with all this he has a sympathetic insight into the mood and meaning of the composer. Of late he has been giving several recitals of a semi-private nature, at which he has brought out some of the larger works in his repertoire. These recitals have taken place in his charming studios, and it was my good fortune to be present when two concertos were played, the MacDowell in D minor, and the Grieg in A minor. Mr. Burnham is a warm admirer of the works of our great American composer, and has prepared an entire program of MacDowell's music, which included the Tragic Sonata, Polonaise, and many of the shorter pieces.

In a conversation with Mr. Burnham in regard to methods of teaching, he gave many helpful points, explaining how he had reduced technical difficulties to a minimum through the exercise of a few simple principles.

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### PRINCIPLES OF TOUCH

“The position and condition of the hand varies according to the character of the music, and the tone you wish to produce. If you give out a melody, you want a full, luscious tone, the weight of arm on the key, everything relaxed, and a clinging, caressing pressure of finger. Here then, you have the ‘Melody Hand,’ with outstretched, flat fingers. If, on the contrary, you want rapid passage work, with clear, bright, articulate touch, the hand must stand up in well-arched, normal playing position, with fingers well rounded and good finger action. Here you have the ‘Technical’ or ‘Coloratura Hand.’

### MELODY HAND

“The Melody Hand is weighty and ‘dead,’ so to speak. The touch is made with flat fingers; the ball of the finger comes in contact with the key, the whole arm, hand and fingers are relaxed—as loose as possible. You caress the keys as though you loved them, as though they were a very part of you; you cling to them as to something soft, velvety or downy—with pressure, pressure, pressure, always.”

(This illustration recalled to the listener’s mind one of Kitty Cheatham’s stories, the one about the little girl caressing a pet kitten. She was asked which she loved best—her mother or the kitten. “Of course I love her best,” was the rather hesitating answer; “but I love kitty too—and she has *fur!*”)

“To acquire the melody touch, I teach it with the simplest exercises, sometimes with only single tones. When the idea is apprehended, the pupil works it out in some lyric piece, like a *Song without Words*, by Mendelssohn.

“There are three touches for melody playing: First, the *down touch*, made by descending arm and hand; second, the *up touch*, made by elevating the wrist, while the finger lies upon the key; third, the *wiping-off touch*, which draws the finger off the key, with an arm and hand movement.

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### THE TECHNICAL HAND

“The technical hand employs finger touch and finger action; the hand is held up, in military position, so to speak; the finger movements are quick, alert and exact; the hand is *alive*, not dead and heavy, as is the melody hand. The two ways of playing are quite opposite in their fundamental character, but they can be modified and blended in endless ways.

“For the technical or coloratura touch, the hand is in arched position, the five fingers are well rounded and curved, their tips are on the keys, everything is rounded. When a finger is lifted, it naturally assumes a more rounded position until it descends to the same spot on the key from which it was lifted, as though there were five little imaginary black spots on the keys, showing exactly where the fingertips should rest. The fingers are lifted cleanly and evenly and *fall* on the keys—no hitting nor striking. I make a great distinction between the coloratura touch and the melody touch. The first is for rapid, brilliant passage work, sparkling, glittering, iridescent—what you will—but cold. It is made, as I said, with arched hand and raised finger action. Melody touch expresses warmth and feeling; is from the heart. Then there are the down and up arm movements, for chords, and, of course, scale and arpeggio work, with coloratura touch. I generally expect pupils who come to me to go through a short course of preparatory study with my assistant, Miss Madeleine Prosser, who has been with me for years, and does most thorough work in this line.

### ASSIMILATION OF PRINCIPLES

“Many pupils come to me with no very definite ideas as to touch and what they may express through it. They think if they *feel* a passage sufficiently, they will be able to use the right touch for it. Sometimes they may be able to hit upon the effect they want, but they don't know quite how they got it, nor can they repeat it another time at will. I believe the principles governing certain touches can be so thoroughly learned and assimilated that *when the player sees a certain passage, he knows at once what touch is required to express it*. A great actor illustrates what I mean—he knows how to employ his features

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and body to express the thought of his lines. When you go to the Theatre Français in Paris, you know every member of the company is thoroughly trained in every phase of his art. You are aware that each actor has studied expression to such an extent that the features naturally fall into the required lines and curves whenever a certain emotion comes up for expression. So with the pianist—he should have the various touches at his finger-tips. The step beyond is to express himself, which he will do easily and naturally, when his has such a preparation as I have referred to.

### MEMORIZING

“I am often questioned on the subject of memorizing. Some pupils think if they play the piece a sufficient number of times they will know it; then are troubled because they cannot at all times remember the notes. Such players must know every note of the piece away from the piano, and be able to recite them. I have students who are able to learn their music away from the instrument, and can play it to me without having tried it on the piano. I require the piece so thoroughly memorized that if I correct a measure or phrase, the pupil can go right on from that point, without being obliged to start farther back, or at the beginning. In some cases, however, if the pupil has her own method of committing to memory, and it is successful, I have no desire to change it.

### OCTAVE STUDIES

“For octave study, form the hand with the ‘octave grimace,’—that is with arched hand, the unemployed fingers slightly curved. In staccato touch of course use light wrist. Begin with one beat in sixteenths and finish with the ‘wiping off’ touch. Build up more and more beats in notes of the same value, always ending the passage with the same touch, as above mentioned. This exercise can be played the full length of the keyboard, in all keys, and also chromatically. It can be played in the same fashion, using four-voiced chords instead of octaves. When such an exercise can be prolonged for twenty minutes at a time, octave passages in pieces have no terrors for the pianist. For the octaves in Chopin’s Polonaise

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Op. 53, he would merely have to learn the notes, which can be done away from the piano; there is no need for exhaustive practise of the passage.

### KEEPING UP REPERTOIRE

“In order to keep repertoire in repair, one should have it arranged so that old pieces are gone over once a week. Group your repertoire into sections and programs. It might be well to begin the week with Chopin, playing through the whole list; after which pick out the weak places, and practise those. Tuesday, take Schumann, and treat him in the same way. Then comes Liszt, Russian music, modern composers, concertos, and chamber music. In this systematic way the whole repertoire is kept up.

### DETAILS OF PRACTISE

“My mornings are given up to practise, my afternoons to teaching. Of these practise hours, at least one hour is given to technic, scales, arpeggios, octaves, chords—and Bach! I believe in taking one selection of Bach, say a Two-voiced Invention, and perfecting it, playing it in various ways—transposing it into all keys and polishing it to the highest degree possible. The B flat Invention is a useful one for this treatment. So with études; instead of playing *at* so many, is it not better to perfect a few and bring them up to the highest degree of completeness?

“I am very susceptible to color, anywhere, in anything—especially in pictures. Music should express color. Certain compositions seem to embody certain colors. As you suggest, red is certainly the motif of Chopin’s great Polonaise, Op. 53.”

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Mr. Burnham should certainly look forward to success in his visit to his native land. His fine touch and tone, sincere and musicianly style,



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and buoyant, genial personality will make friends for his art and himself everywhere.

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XVI.

EDWIN HUGHES

### SOME ESSENTIALS OF PIANO PLAYING

When one has read with pleasure and profit the published ideas of a musical worker and thinker, it is always an interesting experience to meet such an one personally, and have the opportunity to discuss points of special import, particularly when the meeting can take place in some ideal spot in the old world. Such was my thought in visiting Mr. Edwin Hughes, an American who has made a name and place for himself among the pianists and teachers of Europe. After years of study in Vienna with Leschetizky, where he also acted as one of the *Vorbereiters*, he has established himself in Munich, where he feels he has found a true home of music and art. Here, amid beautiful and artistic surroundings, he lives and works, dividing his time between teaching and concert playing. As a pianist Mr. Hughes has met with gratifying success in the most important cities of Germany, while as a teacher he has been sought by students from almost every State in America, from Maine to Texas, and also from Canada. What has given him special satisfaction is that during the past year a number of pupils have come to him from the Conservatory here in Munich. They have been greatly pleased with their progress, only regretting they had not come to him before.

As to whether he uses the Leschetizky method in its entirety, Mr. Hughes testified in the affirmative.

“If you were to ask Leschetizky about the ‘Leschetizky Method,’ he would probably laugh and tell you he has no method, or he would tell you his ‘method’ consists of only two things—firm fingers and pliable wrist.

“These are the principles upon which I base the technical training of my pupils. I first establish an arched hand position, and then test the firmness of the fingers and knuckle joints by tapping them. At first the joints, particularly the nail joints, are very apt to sink in when tapped by a lead pencil; but by having the pupil continue the

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tapping process at home, it is not long before he acquires the feeling of conscious firmness in his fingers.

“Along with this exercise it is most important to begin at once with wrist exercises, as otherwise, from the effort to acquire firmness of finger, the wrist may become stiff and unwieldy. The wrist exercises consist in raising and lowering this joint, with the hand and arm supported first on each finger separately, then on two, three, four and five fingers. The wrist should not be so limp as to be incapable of resistance; but rather it should be like a fine steel spring—a ‘spring-wrist,’ I call it—capable of every degree of resistance or non-resistance the quality of tone demands.

“High finger action is not so necessary for beginners as most piano teachers imagine. It is much easier to teach pupils to raise their fingers high, than it is to teach them the acquisition of the *legato* touch at the piano, which is only to be attained by playing close to the keys, without raising the fingers. It is difficult to get pupils to play a perfect *legato* who have had years of training with high finger action, something which should be taken up for *non-legato* and *staccato* finger work *after* the more difficult *legato* touch has been mastered.

## TONE PRODUCTION

“The subject of tone production is one which is much neglected by piano teachers. Viewed from this standpoint the piano is an instrument apart from every other, except in some respects the organ. A young violinist, ‘cellist or flutist has to study for some time before he can produce a tone of good musical quality on his instrument. Think what the beginner on the violin has to go through before he can make a respectable middle C; but anybody, even a totally unmusical person, can play middle C on the piano without the least trouble. It is just this ease in tone production at the piano which leads to carelessness as to the *kind* of tone produced; and so piano teachers, above all others, complain they cannot get their pupils to listen to what they are playing. Pupils should be made to listen, by means of a special course in tone production, which should go hand in hand with the technical exercises used at the very

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beginning. Otherwise they imagine they are making music when they place the printed page on the rack, and set the correct keys in motion.

“There is no other instrument with which it is so easy to ‘bluff’ a large part of the audience; for the character of the piano is such that the general public often think it fine music if the player makes a big noise. Pianists of considerable reputation often take advantage of this lack of discrimination on the part of piano-recital audiences, which, above all the other audiences, seem peculiarly incapable of judging correctly the musical value of a performance.

“Of the hundreds of piano recitals which take place yearly in the musical centers of Europe, only a comparatively small number are of real musical interest. In many cases it seems as though the players were merely repeating something learned by rote, in an unknown language; just as though I should repeat a poem in Italian. The words I might pronounce after a fashion, but the meaning of most of them would be a blank to me—so how could I make others understand them.

### RHYTHM IN PIANO PLAYING

“The subject of rhythm is an important one, and more attention should be given it. Leschetizky once said that tones and rhythm are the only things which can keep the piano alive as a solo instrument. I find in pupils who come to me so much deficiency in these two subjects, that I have organized classes in ear-training and rhythm.

“If pupils have naturally a poor sense of rhythm, there is no remedy equal to practising with a metronome, using this instrument of torture daily until results are evident, when, of course, there must be a judicious slowing down in its use. The mechanical sense of rhythm, the ability to count three or four to a measure, and to group the notes of a piece correctly, can be taught to any person, if one has the patience; but for those delicate rhythmic *nuances* required by a Chopin mazurka or a Viennese waltz, a specific rhythmic gift must be possessed by the pupil.

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“Leschetizky says little to his pupils on the subject of technic; I cannot remember his having spoken a dozen words to me on the subject, during all the time I have known him. His interest, of course, lies wholly in the matter of interpretation, and technic comes into consideration only as a means and never as an end.

“Leschetizky likes to have the player talk to him, ask questions, do anything but sit still and not speak. ‘How do I know you comprehend my meaning,’ he asks, ‘that you understand what I am talking about, if you say nothing?’ At first a student may be silent from nervousness, but if he is bright he will soon ‘catch on,’ and see what is expected of him. Leschetizky says sometimes: ‘When the Lord made the ten commandments He omitted the eleventh, “Thou shalt not be stupid.”’ If one is not very quick, one may have a hard time with this master.

“As a high school in technic I use Joseffy’s *School of Advanced Piano Playing* with my pupils. This work leads to the highest possible technical development at the keyboard, and I consider it the last word in piano technic. The hundreds of exercises have been devised with most wonderful ingenuity, and the musicianship of the author stands out on every page. The book is not a dry series of technics but has vital connection with all the big technical problems found in the literature of the piano.

“In teaching, I consider a second piano an absolute necessity. There are so many things in piano playing which cannot be put into words, and the teacher must constantly illustrate. How can one teach the interpretation of a Chopin nocturne, for instance, by merely talking about it. I can say, ‘play loud here—soft there’; but how far do such directions go toward an artistic conception of the piece? One cannot indicate the swell of a melody, the tonal and rhythmic *nuance* of a *groupetto*—and a thousand other things in any other way than by the living example. Through imitation one learns rapidly and surely, until one reaches the point where the wings of one’s own individuality begin to sprout.

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### ABOUT MEMORIZING

“On the subject of memorizing who can lay down rules for this inexplicable mental process, which will hold good for every one? For myself, I hear the notes mentally, and know their position on the keyboard. In actual performance much must be left to finger memory, but one must actually have the notes in his mind as well as in his fingers. Before a concert I go over all my program mentally, and find this an excellent method of practise when traveling from one city to another. To those who study with me I say, you must try various methods of memorizing; there is no universal way; each must find out by experiment which is most suited to his individual case.

“With some pianists visual memory of the printed page plays the principal rôle in memorizing; with others visual memory of the notes on the keyboard; with still others ear-memory, or memory of the harmonic progressions. I believe in making the pupil familiar with all these different ways, so that he may find out which one is most helpful to him.

“For pupils with weak hands and arms I recommend simple gymnastic exercises to be done morning and evening. Physical strength is a very necessary essential for a brilliant technic; the student who would accomplish big things must possess it in order to succeed.

### KEEPING TECHNIC IN REPAIR

“The only way to keep one’s technic in repair is to be constantly working at it. Technic is the mechanical part of music-making; to keep it in good working order one must be constantly tinkering with it, just as the engine driver tinkers with his locomotive or the chauffeur with his automobile. In the course of his technical study every intelligent pupil will recognize certain exercises which are particularly important for the mechanical well-being of his playing; from these exercises he will plan his daily schedule of technical practise.

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“In order to keep a large repertoire going at the same time, one must have a weekly practise plan, which will allow for a frequent repetition of the pieces. Those pieces which have been recently added to one’s list will require more frequent repetition, while those which have been played for a longer period may be left for an occasional brushing up. Frequent playing before others, either publicly or privately, is above everything else to be recommended to the pianist, as the greatest incentive to keeping up his repertoire and toward growing in his art.

### AMERICAN VERSUS EUROPEAN CONDITIONS

“In America many people who have little talent study music, intending to make it their profession; whereas in Europe there is such a profusion of music and music-making that only those of more than average gifts think of making music their life work. In America we are still ‘in the making,’ from a musical standpoint, and although we have accomplished much there is still much to be done. It is the office of the piano teacher in America to make music study easy and interesting to pupils of moderate ability. Just these conditions have brought about very excellent methods of piano and music study for American children, which have no counterpart in Europe.”

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### XVII.

#### FERRUCCIO BUSONI

#### AN ARTIST AT HOME

As a man's surroundings and environment are often reflections of his character, it is always a matter of deep interest to get in touch with the surroundings of the creative or executive musician. To meet him away from the glare of the footlights, in the privacy and seclusion of the home, gives one a far more intimate knowledge of the artist as a man. Knowing how difficult it often is to obtain such an opportunity, I can be the more thankful that this privilege has been granted me many times, even with those artists who hold themselves most aloof. I was told Busoni was exceedingly difficult to approach, and the only way I could see him was to call at his house quite unannounced, when I might have the good fortune to find him at home and willing to see me. Not wishing to take him by storm in this way, I quietly waited, until I received the following note: "While I am not fond of interviews, if you will come to tea on Thursday afternoon, you will be welcome."

Busoni is located in a stately *Wohnung* overlooking the handsome Victoria Luise Platz, in the newer western section of Berlin. Mme. Busoni met us as we arrived, and conducted us to the master, who rose from a cozy nook in a corner of the library to greet us. Tea was soon brought in and our little party, which included a couple of other guests, was soon chatting gaily in a mixture of French, German and English.

During the sprightly chat I could not help glancing from time to time around the great library in which we sat, noting its artistic furnishings, and the rows upon rows of volumes in their costly bindings, which lined the walls. One appreciates what Dr. Johnson meant when he said that whenever he saw shelves filled with books he always wanted to get near enough to them to read their titles, as the choice of books indicates character.



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Presently Busoni turned to me: "I am composing a rhapsodie on American Indian themes."

"And where did you capture the themes?" he was asked.



Ferruccio Busoni

"From a very charming lady, a countrywoman of yours, Miss Natalie Curtis. She has taken great interest in the idea and has been most helpful to me."

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“One of the German music papers announced that you are about to leave Berlin, and have accepted an offer elsewhere—was it in Spain?”

“I intend leaving Berlin for a time,” he admitted, “and will go to Bologna—perhaps you thought that was in Spain,” with a sly side glance and a humorous twinkle in his eyes. “My offer from Bologna appears most flattering. I am appointed head of the great conservatory, but I am not obliged to live in the city, nor even to give lessons. I shall, however, go there for a time, and shall probably teach. I am to conduct six large orchestral concerts during the season, but aside from this I can be absent as much as I wish. We shall probably close up our house here and go to Italy in the autumn. Living is very cheap in Bologna; one can rent a real palace for about \$250 a year.”

Mme. Busoni now invited us to inspect other parts of the house. We passed to the adjoining room, which contains many rare old prints and paintings and quaint old furniture—“everything old,” as Mme. Busoni said, with a smile. In this room stands a harpsichord, with its double keyboard and brilliant red case. It is not an antique but an excellent copy made by Chickering.

Farther on is a veritable musician’s den, with upright piano, and with a large desk crowded with pictures and mementoes. On the walls hang rare portraits chiefly of Chopin and Liszt. Beyond this room came the salon, with its two grand pianos side by side. This is the master’s teaching and recital room, and here are various massive pieces of richly carved furniture. Mme. Busoni called our attention to the elaborate chandelier in old silver, of exquisite workmanship, which, she said, had cost her a long search to find. There are several portraits here of the composer-pianist in his youth—one as a boy of twelve, a handsome lad—*bildschön*, with his curls, his soulful eyes and his big white collar.

Busoni soon joined us in the salon and the conversation was turned to his activities in the new field.

“When you have finished the new rhapsodie you will come and play it to us in America—and in London also,” he was urged.

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“Ah, London! I am almost homesick for London; it is beautiful there. I am fond of America, too. You know I lived there for some years; my son was born there; he is an American citizen. Yes, I will return, though just when I do not yet know, and then I will assuredly play the rhapsodie.”

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### XVIII.

#### ADELE AUS DER OHE

##### ANOTHER ARTIST AT HOME

Another opportunity to see the home of an artist was afforded me when Frl. Aus der Ohe invited me to visit her in her Berlin home. She also lives in the newer western portion of the city, where so many other artists are located. One feels on entering the spacious rooms that this home has the true German atmosphere. Adele Aus der Ohe, whose personality is well remembered in America, on account of her various pianistic tours, now wears her brown hair softly drawn down over her ears, in Madonna fashion, a mode which becomes her vastly.

“My time is divided between playing in concert, composing, and my own studies,” began the artist. “I give almost no lessons, for I have not time for them. I never have more than a couple of pupils studying with me at one time; they must be both talented and eager. The amount of time I consider necessary for practise depends, of course, on quickness of comprehension. In general, I may say four, or at most five hours are quite sufficient, if used with absolute concentration. The quality of practise is the great essential. If the passage under consideration is not understood, a thousand times going over it will be only vain repetitions; therefore, understand the construction and meaning of the passage in the beginning, and then a thousand repetitions ought to make it perfect.

“There is so much practise which can be done away from the instrument, by reading the notes from the printed page and thinking about them. Is this understood in America? Always *listen* to your playing, to every note you make on the piano; I consider this point of the very first importance. My pupils are generally well advanced or are those who intend making music a profession. I have, however, occasionally taken a beginner. This point of listening to every note, of training the ear, should stand at the very foundation.

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### LETTING THE HAND FIND ITSELF

“In regard to hand position, I endeavor not to be narrow and pedantic. If pupils play with good tone and can make reasonably good effects, I take them, at the point where they are and try to bring them forward, even if the hand position is not just what I would like. If I stop everything and let them do nothing but hand position, they will be discouraged and think they are beginning all over again. This beginning again is sometimes detrimental. To take a pupil at his present point, and carry him along was also Liszt’s idea. He did not like to change a hand position to which the player has grown accustomed for one which seems unnatural, and which the pianist has to work a long time to acquire. He felt that one’s time could be spent to more advantage. There are so many legitimate positions, each hand is a separate study, and is apt to take the position most natural to itself.

“I shall play numerous concerts and recitals in Europe the coming season, but shall not be in America. I know your country well as I have made several tours and have lived there. I left it the last time under sad circumstances, as my sister, who always accompanied me, had just passed away after quite a long illness. So you see I have not much zest to return.

“However I am fond of America, and admire the great progress you are making in music and art. And you have the courage of your convictions; you do not admire a musical work simply because some one else says you should, or the critics tell you to. You do not ask your neighbor’s opinion before you applaud it. If you do not like it you are not afraid to say so. Even when it is only ragtime that pleases you, you are not afraid to own up to it. When you learn what is better you say so. It is this honesty which leads to progressive results. You are rapidly becoming competent to judge what is best. I have found the most appreciative audiences in America.”

Miss Aus der Ohe had much to relate of the Woman’s Lyceum. The Department of Music was founded by Aus der Ohe herself. Not long ago there was an exhibition of woman’s work in music. Women composers from all over the country sent examples of their work.

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Our own Mrs. H.A.A. Beach, who has been located for some time in Munich, was well represented. There are branches of this institution in other German cities.

Several paintings of large size and striking originality hang on the walls of the pianist's home. They all illustrate religious themes and are the work of Herr Aus der Ohe, the pianist's only brother, who passed away at the height of his career.

"Yes," said the composer, "my mother, brother and sister have been taken away, since I was last in America, and now I am quite alone; but I have my art."

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XIX.

ELEANOR SPENCER

### MORE LIGHT ON LESCHETIZKY'S IDEAS

Eleanor Spencer, whose first American tour is announced for the coming season, happened to be in Berlin during my visit there. I found her in her charming apartments in the Schönberg section of the city, far away from the noise and bustle of traffic. Her windows look out upon a wide inner court and garden, and she seems to have secured the quiet, peaceful environment so essential to an artist's development. Indeed Miss Spencer has solved the problems of how to keep house, with all the comforts of an American home, in a great German city.

"I grew so tired of living in *pensions* that I took this little apartment over two years ago," she said, "and I like it so much better.

"I have been away from America for nine years, so the foreign cities where I have lived seem almost more like home to me than my native land, to which I have only paid two short visits during those nine years. But I love America, and perhaps you can imagine how eagerly I am looking forward to my coming tour.

"The first eight years of my life were spent in Chicago, and then my family moved to New York. Here I studied with Dr. William Mason. When I was about fifteen I went to Europe for further study, and although I had another master at first, it was not so very long before I went to Vienna, to Leschetizky, for I felt the need of more thorough preparation than I had yet had. There is nothing like a firm technical foundation; it is a rock to build upon; one cannot do great things without it. I have had to labor hard for what I have attained, and am not ashamed to say so. I practise 'all my spare time,' as one of my colleagues expresses it; though, of course, if one studies with the necessary concentration one cannot practise more than five hours to advantage.

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To Miss Brover in appreciation and pleasant remembrance of our Berlin meeting ...ELEANOR SPENCER

"I thoroughly believe in practising technic outside of pieces; I have always done so and still continue to do it. This brings the hand into condition, and keeps it up to the mark, so that difficult compositions are more readily within the grasp, and the technical requirements in them are more easily met. When the hand is in fine condition, exhaustive technical practise in pieces is not necessary, and much wear and tear of nerve force is saved. In this technical practise, to



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which I give an hour or more daily, I use very simple exercises, but each one contains some principle of touch, movement or condition. Hand over thumb and thumb under hand; different qualities of tone; staccato or clinging touch; scales, arpeggios and various other forms are used. Part of the technic study period is always given to Bach.

“I began my studies in Vienna with Mme. Bree, to get the preparatory foundation, but before long combined her lessons with those of the professor, and later went to him entirely.”

“Just here I should like to mention a trifling point, yet it seems one not understood in America by those who say they are teachers of the Leschetizky method. These teachers claim that the professor wishes the fingers placed on a straight line at the edge of the keys, and in some cases they place the tip of the thumb in the middle of its key, so that it extends considerably beyond the tips of the other fingers. Is this the position taught by the *Vorbereiters*, or favored by Leschetizky?”

Miss Spencer’s laugh rang out merrily.

“This is the first I have ever heard of the idea! Such a position must seem very strained and unnatural. Leschetizky, on the contrary, wishes everything done in the most easy, natural way. Of course, at first, when one is seeking to acquire strength and firmness of hand and fingers, one must give time and thought to securing an arched hand and steady first joints of fingers. Later, when these conditions have been thoroughly established, the hand can take any position required. Leschetizky’s hand often lies quite flat on the keys. He has a beautiful piano hand; the first joints of the fingers have so long been held firmly curved, that they always keep their position, no matter what he is doing; if he only passes his fingers through his hair, his hand is in shape.

“Leschetizky is indeed a wonderful teacher! The player, however, must divine how to be receptive, how to enter into the master’s thought, or it may go hard with him. If he does not understand, nor grasp the master’s words he may suffer terribly during the ordeal of the lessons. I have witnessed such scenes! Those who are equal to the situation receive most illuminative instruction.

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“I trust I do not give you the impression of being so devoted to, and enthusiastic in, the work I enjoyed with my venerated master that I wish to exclude other masters and schools. I think narrowness one of the most unpleasant of traits, and one I should dread to be accused of. I see so much good in others, *their* ways and ideas, that, to me, all things great and beautiful in art seem very closely related.

## MEMORIZING

“How do I memorize a composition? I first play it over a few times to become somewhat familiar with its form and shape. Then I begin to analyze and study it, committing it by phrases, or *ideas*, one or two measures at a time. I do not always take each hand alone, unless very intricate; sometimes it is easier to learn both hands together. It is a good thing to study out the melodic line, to build each phrase, to work with it till you get it to suit you. Then come the larger proportions, the big climaxes, which have to be thought out and prepared for in advance. A composition should be so thoroughly your own that you can play it at any time, if your hand is in condition. Or, if it has been laid aside for a long time, a couple of days should bring it back.

“The subject of forming a repertoire is one often overlooked or not understood. The repertoire should be comprehensive and built on broad lines. A pupil intending to make music a profession should know the literature of the piano, not only the small and unimportant works of the great composers (as is too often the case), but the big works as well. If one is well grounded in the classics at an early age, it is of great benefit afterwards.

## POWER AND VELOCITY

“For gaining power, heavy chords are very beneficial; combinations of five notes that take in all the fingers are most useful.

“The principle of velocity is the doing away with all unnecessary movement—raising the fingers as little as possible, and so on. But in early stages of study, and at all times for slow practise, exactness and

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clearness, the fingers must be raised, Leschetizky *is a great believer in finger action; he holds it to be absolutely necessary for finger development.*

"I have been concertizing for the last three years, and studying alone. This does not mean I have learned all the masters can teach, but only that I have come to a place where I felt I had to go alone, that I must work out what is in me. No master can teach us that; we have to find ourselves alone.

"I shall probably play considerably with orchestra next season. There is a Concerto by Rimsky-Korsakow which is quite short, only one movement. It is charming and brilliant, and I think has not yet been played in America. There is also a new work by Stavenhagen for piano and orchestra, which is a novelty on the other side. I greatly enjoy playing with orchestra, but of course I shall play various recitals as well."

Miss Spencer has appeared with the best orchestras in England and on the continent, and has everywhere received commendation for her pure, singing tone, plastic touch, and musical temperament. She is certain to have success in America, and to win hosts of friends there.

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XX.

ARTHUR HOCHMAN

### HOW THE PIANIST CAN COLOR TONE WITH ACTION AND EMOTION

“A pianist, like a painter, should have an infinitude of colors on his palette,” remarked Arthur Hochman, the young Russian pianist, in a recent chat about piano playing. He should paint pictures at the keyboard, just as the artist depicts them upon the canvas. The piano is capable of a wonderful variety of tonal shading, and its keys will respond most ideally to the true musician who understands how to awaken and bring forth all this tonal beauty from the instrument.

“The modern pianist is often lacking in two important essentials—phrasing and shading. Inability to grasp the importance of these two points may be the cause of artistic failure. An artist should so thoroughly make his own the composition which he plays, and be so deeply imbued with its spirit, that he will know the phrasing and dynamics which best express the meaning of the piece. When he has risen to such heights, he is a law to himself in the matter of phrasing, no matter what marks may stand upon the printed page. As a rule the editing of piano music is extremely inadequate, though how can it really be otherwise? How is it possible, with a series of dots, lines, dashes and accents, to give a true idea of the interpretation of a work of musical art? It is *not* possible; there are infinite shadings between *piano* and *forte*—numberless varieties of touch which have not been tabulated by the schools. Great editors like von Bülow, Busoni and d’Albert have done much to make the classics clearer to the student; yet they themselves realize there are a million gradations of touch and tone, which can never be expressed by signs nor put into words.

### FOUR REQUISITES FOR PIANISTS

“Four things are necessary for the pianist who would make an artistic success in public. They are: Variety of tone color; Individual and artistic phrasing; True feeling; Personal magnetism. Colors mean so much to me; some are so beautiful, the various shades of red, for

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instance; then the golden yellows, rich, warm browns, and soft liquid blues. We can make as wonderful combinations with them as ever the painters do. To me dark red speaks of something tender, heart-searching, mysterious." Here Mr. Hochman illustrated his words at the piano with an expressive fragment full of deep feeling. "On the other hand, the shades of yellow express gaiety and brightness"; here the illustrations were all life and fire, in crisp, brilliant staccatos. Other colors were just as effectively represented.

"What I have just indicated at the keyboard," continued the artist, "gives a faint idea of what can be done with tone coloring, and why I feel that pianists who neglect this side of their art, or do not see this side of it, are missing just so much beauty. I could name one pianist, a great name in the world of music—a man with an absolutely flawless technic, yet whose playing to me, is dry and colorless; it gives you no ideas, nothing you can carry away: it is like water—water. Another, with great variety of tonal beauty, gives me many ideas—many pictures of tone. His name is Gabrilowitsch; he is for me the greatest pianist.

### MAKING CLIMAXES PIANISSIMO

"In my own playing, when I color a phrase, I do not work up to a climax and make that the loudest note, as most pianists do, but rather the soft note of the phrase; this applies to lyric playing. I will show you what I mean. Here is a fragment of two measures, containing a soulful melody. I build up the crescendo, as you see, and at the highest point, which you might expect to be the loudest, you find instead that it is soft: the sharpness has been taken out of it, the thing you did not expect has happened; and so there are constant surprises, tonal surprises—tone colors not looked for.

"It is generally thought that a pianist should attend many recitals and study the effects made by other pianists; I, on the contrary, feel I gain more from hearing a great singer. The human voice is the greatest of all instruments, and the player can have no more convincing lesson in tone production and tone coloring, than he can obtain from listening to a great emotional singer. The pianist should

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hear a great deal of opera, for there he will learn much of color, of effect, light and shade, action and emotion.

### WE DO NOT WANT CUT-AND-DRIED PERFORMANCES

“The third requisite for the pianist, as I have said, is true feeling. I have no sympathy with dry, mechanical performance, where every effect is coldly calculated beforehand, and the player always strives to do it the same way. How can he always play the same way when he does not feel the same? If he simply seeks for uniformity where does the inspiration come in?

“The true artist will never give a mechanical performance. At one time he may be in a tender, melting mood; at another in a daring or exalted one. He must be free to play as he feels, and he will be artist enough never to overstep bounds. The pianist who plays with true feeling and ‘heart’ can never play the same composition twice exactly alike, for he can never feel precisely the same twice. This, of course, applies more especially to public performance and playing for others.

“Another essential is breath control. Respiration must be easy and natural, no matter how much physical strength is exerted. In *fortissimo* and all difficult passages, the lips must be kept closed and respiration taken through the nostrils, as it always ought to be.

### DISSECTION OF DETAILS

“Yes, I do a great deal of teaching, but prefer to take only such pupils as are intelligent and advanced. With pupils I am very particular about hand position and touch. The ends of the fingers must be firm, but otherwise the hand, wrist and arm, from the shoulder, are all relaxed. In teaching a composition, I am immensely careful and particular about each note. Everything is dissected and analyzed. When all is understood and mastered, it is then ready for the stage setting, the actors, the lights, and the colors!”

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"I was intended for a pianist from the first. Born in Russia, I afterward came to Berlin, studying seven or eight years with Xaver Scharwenka, then with d'Albert, Stavenhagen and others. But when one has all that can be learned from others, a man's greatest teacher is himself. I have done a great deal of concert work and recital playing in Europe, and have appeared with the leading orchestras in the largest cities of America."

Mr. Hochman has done considerable work in composition. Numerous songs have been published and doubtless larger works may be expected later.

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### XXI.

#### TERESA CARREÑO

##### EARLY TECHNICAL TRAINING

A music critic remarked, "That ever youthful and fascinating pianist, Teresa Carreño is with us again."

I well remember how fascinated I was, as a young girl, with her playing the first time I heard it—it was so full of fire, enthusiasm, brilliancy and charm. How I longed and labored to imitate it—to be able to play like that! I not only loved her playing but her whole appearance, her gracious manner as she walked across the stage, her air of buoyancy and conscious mastery as she sat at the piano; her round white arms and wrists, and—the red sash she wore!

During a recent talk with Mme. Carreño, I recalled the above incident, which amused her, especially the memory of the sash.

"I assure you that at heart I feel no older now than in the days when I wore it," she said. The conversation then turned to questions of mastering the piano, with particular reference to the remarkable technic of the artist herself.

"The fact that I began my studies at a very early age was a great advantage to me," she said. "I loved the sound of the piano, and began to pick out bits of tunes when I was little more than three. At six and a half I began to study seriously, so that when I was nine I was playing such pieces as Chopin's Ballade in A flat. Another fact which was of the utmost advantage to me was that I had an ideal teacher in my father. He saw that I loved the piano, and decided I must be properly taught. He was passionately fond of music, and if he had not been a statesman, laboring for the good of his country, he would undoubtedly have been a great musician. He developed a wonderful system for teaching the piano, and the work he did with me I now do with my pupils. For one thing he invented a series of stretching and gymnastic exercises which are splendid; they did wonders for me, and I use them constantly in my teaching. But, like



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everything else, they must be done in the right way, or they are not beneficial.



TERESA CARREÑO

### 580 TECHNICAL EXERCISES

“My father wrote out for me a great many technical exercises; to be exact, there were 580 of them! Some consisted of difficult passages from the great composers—perhaps originally written for one

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hand—which he would arrange for two hands, so that each hand had the same amount of work to do. Thus both my hands had equal training, and I find no difference between them. These 580 exercises took just three days to go through. Everything must be played in all keys, and with every possible variety of touch—legato, staccato, half-staccato, and so on; also, with all kinds of shading.”

(Think of such a drill in pure technic, O ye teachers and students, who give little or no time to such matters outside of études and pieces!)

“Part of my training consisted in being shown how to criticize myself. I learned to listen, to be critical, to judge my own work; for it was not up to the mark I must see what was the matter and correct it myself. The earlier this can be learned the better. I attribute much of my subsequent success to this ability. I still carry out this plan, for there on the piano you will find all the notes for my coming recitals, which I work over and take with me everywhere. This method of study I always try to instill into my pupils. I tell them any one can make a lot of *noise* on the piano, but I want them, to make the piano *speak*! I can do only a certain amount for them; the rest they must do for themselves.

### VALUE OF TRANSPOSING

“Another item my zealous teacher insisted upon was transposing. I absorbed this idea almost unconsciously, and hardly know when I learned to transpose, so natural did it seem to me. My father was a tactful teacher; he never commanded, but would merely say, ‘You can play this in the key of C, but I doubt if you can play it in the key of D.’ This doubt was the spur to fire my ambition and pride: I would show him I could play it in the key of D, or in any other key; and I did!

“With all the technic exercises, I had many études also; a great deal of Czerny. Each étude must also be transposed, for it would never do to play an étude twice in the same key for my father. So I may say that whatever I could perform at all, I was able to play in any key.

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“For one year I did nothing but technic, and then I had my first piece, which was nothing less than the Capriccio of Mendelssohn, Op. 22. So you see I had been well grounded; indeed I have been grateful all my life for the thorough foundation which was laid for me. In these days we hear of so many ‘short cuts,’ so many new methods, mechanical and otherwise, of studying the piano; but I fail to see that they arrive at the goal any quicker, or make any more thorough musicians than those who come by the royal road of intelligent, well-directed hard work.”

Asked how she obtained great power with the least expenditure of physical strength, Mme. Carreño continued:

“The secret of power lies in relaxation; or I might say, power *is* relaxation. This word, however, is apt to be misunderstood. You tell pupils to relax, and if they do not understand how and when they get nowhere. Relaxation does not mean to flop all over the piano; it means, rather, to loosen just where it is needed and nowhere else. For the heavy chords in the Tschaikowsky Concerto my arms are absolutely limp from the shoulder; in fact, I am not conscious I have arms. That is why I can play for hours without the slightest fatigue. It is really mental relaxation, for one has to think it; it must be in the mind first before it can be worked out in arms and hands. We have to think it and then act it.

“This quality of my playing must have impressed Breithaupt, for, as you perhaps know, it was after he heard me play that he wrote his famous book on ‘Weight Touch,’ which is dedicated to me. A second and revised edition of this work, by the way, is an improvement on the first. Many artists and musicians have told me I have a special quality of tone; if this is true I am convinced this quality is the result of controlled relaxation.”

I referred to the artist’s hand as being of exceptional adaptability for the piano.

“Yes,” she answered, “and it resembles closely the hand of Rubinstein. This brings to mind a little incident. As a small child, I was taken to London, and on one occasion played in the presence of Rubinstein; he was delighted, took me under his wing, and

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introduced me all about as his musical daughter. Years afterward we came to New York, and located at the old Clarendon Hotel, which has housed so many men of note. The first day at lunch, my aunt and I were seated at a table mostly occupied by elderly ladies, who stared at us curiously. I was a shy slip of a girl, and hardly ventured to raise my eyes after the first look around the room. Beside me sat a gentleman. I glanced at his hand as it rested on the table—then I looked more closely; how much it reminded me of Rubinstein's hand! My eyes traveled slowly up to the gentleman's face—it was Rubinstein! He was looking at me; then he turned and embraced me, before all those observing ladies!"

We spoke of Berlin, the home of the pianist, and of its musical life, mentioning von Bülow and Klindworth. "Both good friends of mine," she commented. "What a wonderful work Klindworth has accomplished in his editions of Beethoven and Chopin! As Goethe said of himself, we can say of Klindworth—he has carved his own monument in this work. We should revere him for the great service he has done the pianistic world.

"I always love to play in America, and each time I come I discover how much you have grown. The musical development here is wonderful. This country is very far from being filled with a mercenary and commercial spirit. If Europeans think so it is because they do not know the American at home. Your progress in music is a marvel! There is a great deal of idealism here, and idealism is the very heart and soul of music.

"I feel the artist has such a beautiful calling—a glorious message—to educate a people to see the beauty and grandeur of his art—of the ideal!"

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### XXII.

WILHELM BACHAUS

#### TECHNICAL PROBLEMS DISCUSSED

“How do I produce the effects which I obtain from the piano?”

The young German artist, Willielm Bachaus, was comfortably seated in his spacious apartments at the Ritz, New York, when this question was asked. A grand piano stood close at hand, and the pianist ran his fingers lightly over its keys from time to time, or illustrated some technical point as he talked.

“In answer I would say I produce them by listening, criticizing, judging—working over the point, until I get it as I want it. Then I can reproduce it at will, if I want to make just the same effect; but sometimes I want to change and try another.

“I am particular about the seat I use at the piano, as I sit lower than most amateurs, who in general are apt to sit too high. My piano stool has just been taken out for a few repairs, or I could show you how low it is. Then I am old-fashioned enough to still believe in scales and arpeggios. Some of the players of the present day seem to have no use for such things, but I find them of great importance. This does not necessarily mean that I go through the whole set of keys when I practise the scales; but I select a few at a time, and work at those. I start with ridiculously simple forms—just the hand over the thumb, and the thumb under the hand—a few movements each way, especially for arpeggios. The principle I have referred to is the difficult point; a few doses of this remedy, however, bring the hand up into order again.”

The pianist turned to the keyboard and illustrated the point very clearly.

“As you see, I slant the hand considerably across the keys,” he said, “but this oblique position is more comfortable, and the hand can accommodate itself to the intervals of the arpeggio, or to the passing of the thumb in scales. Some may think I stick out the elbow too

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much, but I don't care for that, if by this means the scale becomes smooth and even.



WILHELM BACHAUS

### OVERHAULING ONE'S TECHNIC

"I have to overhaul my technic once or twice a week, to see that everything is all right—and of course the scales and arpeggios come

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in for their share of criticism. I practise them in legato, staccato and in other touches, but mostly in legato, as that is somewhat more difficult and more beautiful than the others.

“Perhaps I have what might be called a natural technic; that is I have a natural aptitude for it, so that I could acquire it easily, and it stays with me. Hofmann has that kind of natural technic; so has d’Albert. Of course I have to practise technic; I would not allow it to lapse; I love the piano too much to neglect any part of the work. An artist owes it to himself and the public to keep himself up in perfect condition—for he must never offer the public anything but the best. I only mean to say I do not have to work at it as laboriously as some others have to do. However, I practise technic daily, and will add that I find I can do a great deal in a short time. When on tour I try to give one hour a day to it, not more.”

Speaking of the action of fingers, Mr. Bachaus continued:

“Why, yes, I raise my fingers whenever and wherever necessary—no more. Do you know Breithaupt? Well, he does not approve of such technical exercises as these (illustrating); holding down some fingers and lifting others, for technical practise, but I do. As for the metronome, I approve of it to cultivate the sense of rhythm in those who are lacking in this particular sense. I sometimes use it myself, just to see the difference between the mechanical rhythm and the musical rhythm—for they are not always the same by any means.

“Do you know these Technical Exercises of Brahms? I think a great deal of them, and, as you see, carry them around with me; they are excellent.

“You ask me about octaves. It is true they are easy for me now, but I can remember the time when they were difficult. The only alternative is to work constantly at them. Of course they are more difficult for small hands; so care must be taken not to strain nor over-tire the hand. A little at a time, in frequent doses, ought in six months to work wonders. Rowing a boat is good to develop wrists for octave playing.

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“You ask if I can tell how I obtain power. That is a very difficult question. Why does one child learn to swim almost immediately, while another cannot master it for a long time? To the first it comes naturally—he has the *knack*, so to speak. And it is just so with the quality of power at the piano. It certainly is not due to physique, nor to brute strength, else only the athlete would have sufficient power. No, it is the ‘knack,’ or rather it is the result of relaxation, as you suggest.

“Take the subject of velocity. I never work for that special thing as some do. I seldom practise with great velocity, for it interferes with clearness. I prefer to play more slowly, giving the greatest attention to clearness and good tone. By pursuing this course I find that when I need velocity I have it.

“I am no pedagogue and have no desire to be one. I have no time for teaching; my own studies and concert work fill all my days. I do not think that one can both teach and play successfully. If I were teaching I should no doubt acquire the habit of analyzing and criticizing the work of others; of explaining and showing just how a thing should be done. But I am not a critic nor a teacher, so I do not always know how I produce effects. I play ‘as the bird sings,’ to quote an old German song.

## MODERN PIANO MUSIC

“Your MacDowell has written some nice music, some pretty music; I am familiar with his Concerto in D minor, some of the short pieces and the Sonatas. As for modern piano concertos there are not many, it is quite true. There is the Rachmaninoff, the MacDowell I mentioned, the D minor of Rubinstein, and the Saint-Saens in G minor. There is also a Concerto by Neitzel, which is a most interesting work; I do not recall that it has been played in America. I have played it on the other side, and I may bring it out here during my present tour. This Concerto is a fine work, into which the author has put his best thought, feeling and power.”



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### A BRAHMS CONCERTO

As I listened to the eloquent reading of the Brahms second Concerto, which Mr. Bachaus gave soon afterward with the New York Symphony, I was reminded of a memorable event which occurred during my student days in Berlin. It was a special concert, at which the honored guest and soloist was the great Brahms himself. Von Bülow conducted the orchestra, and Brahms played his second Concerto. The Hamburg master was not a virtuoso, in the present acceptance of the term: his touch on the piano was somewhat hard and dry; but he played the work with commendable dexterity, and made an imposing figure as he sat at the piano, with his grand head and his long beard. Of course his performance aroused immense enthusiasm; there was no end of applause and cheering, and then came a huge laurel wreath. I mentioned this episode to Mr. Bachaus a few days later.

“I first played the Brahms Concerto in Vienna under Hans Richter; he had counseled me to study the work. The Americans are beginning to admire and appreciate Brahms; he ought to have a great vogue here.

“In studying such a work, for piano and orchestra, I must not only know my own part but all the other parts—what each instrument is doing. I always study a concerto with the orchestral score, so that I can see it all before me.”

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### XXIII.

ALEXANDER LAMBERT

#### AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN TEACHERS

Among American teachers Alexander Lambert takes high rank. For over twenty-five years he has held aloft the standard of sound musicianship in the art of teaching and playing. A quarter of a century of thorough, conscientious effort along these lines must have left its impress upon the whole rising generation of students and teachers in this country, and made for the progress and advancement of American art.

It means much to have a native-born teacher of such high aims living and working among us; a teacher whom no flattery nor love of gain can influence nor render indifferent to the high aim ever in view. There is no escaping a sound and thorough course of study for those who come under Mr. Lambert's supervision. Scales must be, willingly or unwillingly, the daily bread of the player; the hand must be put in good shape, the finger joints rendered firm, the arms and body supple, before pieces are thought of. Technical study must continue along the whole course, hand in hand with piece playing; technic for its own sake, outside the playing of compositions. And why not? Is the technic of an art ever quite finished? Can it ever be laid away on the shelf and considered complete? Must it not always be kept in working order?

"Have you not seen many changes in the aims of students, and in the conditions of piano teaching in New York, during the years you have taught here?" I asked Mr. Lambert, in the course of a recent conversation.

"Some changes, it is true, I have seen," he answered; "but I must also say that the conditions attending piano teaching in America are peculiar. We have some excellent teachers here, teachers who can hold their own anywhere, and are capable of producing finished artists. Yet let a pupil go to the best teacher in this country, and the chances are that he or she is still looking forward to 'finishing' with

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some European artist. They are not satisfied until they have secured the foreign stamp of approval. While this is true of the advanced pianist, it is even more in evidence in the mediocre player. He, too, is dreaming of the 'superior advantages,' as he calls them, of European study. He may have no foundation to build upon—may not even be able to play a scale correctly, but still thinks he must go abroad!

"You ask if I think students can obtain just as good instruction here as in Europe? That is a little difficult to answer off-hand. I fully believe we have some teachers in America as able as any on the other side; in some ways they are better. For one thing they are morally better—I repeat, *morally* better. For another they are more thorough: they take more interest in their pupils and will do more for them. When such a teacher is found, he certainly deserves the deep respect and gratitude of the American student. But alas, he seldom experiences the gratitude. After he has done everything for the pupil—fashioned him into a well-equipped artist, the student is apt to say: 'Now I will go abroad for lessons with this or that famous European master!' What is the result? He may never amount to anything—may never be heard of afterward. On the other hand, I have pupils coming to me, who have been years with some of the greatest foreign masters, yet who are full of faults of all kinds, faults which it takes me years to correct. Some of them come with hard touch, with tense position and condition of arms and body, with faulty pedaling, and with a lack of knowledge of some of the fundamental principles of piano playing.

### POWER WITHOUT EFFORT

"How do I teach them to acquire power with little effort? Relaxation is the whole secret. Your arm is really quite heavy, it weighs considerable. Act on this principle then: let the arms fall with their full weight on the keys, and you will have all the power you need, provided the fingers are rounded and firm. That is the other half of the secret. The finger joints must be firm, especially the third joint. It stands to reason there can be no power, no brilliancy when this joint is wavering and wobbling.

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"I teach arched hand position, and, for children and beginners, decided finger action; the fingers are to be raised, in the beginning, though not too high. Some teachers may not teach finger action, because they say artists do not use it. But the artist, if questioned, would tell you he had to learn finger action in the beginning. There are so many stages in piano playing. The beginner must raise his fingers in order to acquire finger development and a good, clear touch. In the middle stage he has secured enough finger control to play the same passage with less action, and still perform it with sufficient clearness; while in the more finished stage the passage may be played with scarcely any perceptible motion, so thoroughly do the fingers respond to every mental requirement.

"Sometimes pupils come to me who do not know scales, though they are playing difficult compositions. I insist on a thorough knowledge of scales and arpeggios, and a serious study of Bach. I use almost everything Bach ever wrote for the piano; the Two and Three Part Inventions, French and English Suites, Well-tempered Clavichord, and the organ Preludes and Fugues, arranged by Liszt."

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XXIV.  
FANNIE BLOOMFIELD ZEISLER

THE SCOPE OF PIANO TECHNIC



Photo by Hagen, Chicago

*With sincerest good wishes  
Fannie Bloomfield Zeisler Chicago  
Dec 30 '14*

With sincerest good wishes Fannie Bloomfield Zeisler Chicago Dec  
30 '14

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Each year, as Mme. Bloomfield Zeisler plays for us, we feel the growth of a deeper experience, a clearer insight into human nature, a broader outlook and grasp on art and life. Such a mentality, ever seeking for truth and the sincerest expression of it, must continually progress, until—as now—the greatest heights are reached. Mme. Zeisler is no keyboard dreamer, no rhapsodist on Art. She is a thoroughly practical musician, able to explain as well as demonstrate, able to talk as well as play. Out of the fulness of a rich experience, out of the depth of deepest sincerity and conviction the artist speaks, as she plays, with authority and enthusiasm.

“The first thing to be done for a pupil is to see that the hand is in correct position. I explain that the wrist should be about on a level with the second joint of the middle finger, when the fingers are properly rounded. The knuckles will then be somewhat elevated; in fact they will naturally take care of themselves, other points of the hand being correct. Two things are of supreme importance: namely, firm finger joints and loose wrists; these must be insisted on from the very beginning. I sometimes use firm wrists in my own playing, if I wish to make a certain effect; but I can safely affirm, I think, that no one has ever seen me play with weak, bending fingers.

### WHAT TECHNIC INCLUDES

“Piano technic includes so much; everything goes into it—arithmetic, grammar, diction, language study, poetry, history, and painting! In the first stages there are rules to be learned, just as in any other study. In school we had to learn the rules of grammar and mathematics. Just such rules are applicable to musical performance. I must know the rules of versification in order to scan poetic stanzas; so I must know the laws of rhythm and meter to be able to punctuate musical phrases and periods. Pupils who have long passed the stage of division and fractions do not seem able to determine the time-values of the various notes and groups of notes used in music; they do not know what must be done with triplets, dotted notes, and so on. So you see ‘just technic’ includes a multitude of things; it is a very wide subject.

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### EACH PUPIL A DIFFERENT PROBLEM

“Each pupil presents a different problem as to physical formation of hand and body, intelligence and talent. Those who are the most talented do not always prove the most satisfactory students. They grasp the composer’s ideas quickly enough, it is true, so that sometimes in a few days, they can take up a difficult composition and clash it off with such showy effect as to blind the eyes of the superficial listener; but these students are not willing to work out the fine points of the piece and polish it artistically. Neither are they willing to get right down, to the bed rock of technic and work at that seriously and thoroughly. If this course is suggested they grow restive, think they are being held back, and some times prefer to study with a more superficial teacher. The consequence is they never really amount to anything; whereas if these same players possessed perseverance along with their talent they could become great artists. I would rather have an intelligent, earnest, serious pupil, who is obedient and willing to work, than a very gifted pupil. The two seldom go together. When you find both in one person, a marvelous musician is the result, if assisted by the right sort of training.

### HARMONY STUDY

“One thing a teacher should insist upon, and that is that the pupil should study harmony. He should have a practical working knowledge of keys, chords, and progressions. There may be no need for him to study orchestration or composition, but he must know the foundation and structure of the material of music. My pupil must be familiar with the various chords of the scale and know how to analyze them, before I can make clear to him the rules of pedaling. Without this knowledge, my words about the use of the pedals are as so much Greek to him. He must go and learn this first, before coming to me.

### ACCORDING TO RULE

“Experience counts for much with the teacher, but much, more with the pianist. The beginner must go according to rule, until he has

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thoroughly mastered the rules. He must not think because he sees a great artist holding his hands a certain way at times—turning under his unemployed fingers for octaves perhaps, or any other seeming eccentricity, that he himself is at liberty to do the same things. No, he must learn to play in a normal, safe way before attempting any tricks. What may seem eccentric to the inexperienced student may be quite a legitimate means of producing certain effects to the mature artist, who through wide experience and study knows just the effect he wants and the way to make it. The artist does many things the pupil should not attempt. The artist knows the capabilities of his own hand; his technic is, in a certain sense, individual; it should not be imitated by the learner of little or no experience. If I play a chord passage with high wrist, that I may bring out a certain effect or quality of tone at that point, the thoughtless student might be under the impression that a high wrist was habitual with me, which is not true. For this reason I do not give single lessons to any one, nor coach on single pieces. In the case of the interpretation of a piece, a student can get the ideas of it from hearing it in recital, if he can grasp and assimilate them.

### ON INTERPRETATION

“Interpretation! That is a wide subject; how can it be defined? I try to arouse the imagination of the student first of all. We speak of the character of the piece, and try to arrive at some idea of its meaning. Is it *largo*—then it is serious and soulful; is it *scherzo*—then it should be blithe and gay. We cannot depend on metronome tempi, for they are not reliable. Those given in Schumann are generally all wrong. We try to feel the rhythm of the music, the swing of it, the spirit of it. In giving out the opening theme or subject, I feel it should be made prominent, to arrest attention, to make it clear to the listener; when it appears at other times in the piece, it can be softened or varied. Variety of effect we must have; but whether a passage is played with decreasing or increasing tone, whether this run is soft and the next loud, or vice versa, does not matter so much as to secure variety and individuality. I may look at it one way, another player an opposite way. One should be broad-minded enough to see the beauty of each interpretation. I do not expect my pupils to copy me or do things just



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as I do them. I show them how I do it, then leave them to work it out as they see it.

*"Pianissimo* is one of the later things to teach. A beginner should not attempt it too soon, for then it will only result in flabbiness. A true *pianissimo* is not the result of weakness but of strength.

### MUSICAL CONDITIONS IN AMERICA

"America has made marvelous progress in the understanding and appreciation of music; even the critics, many of them, know a great deal about music. The audiences, even in small towns, are a pleasure and delight to play to. I am asked sometimes why I attempt the last sonata of Beethoven in a little town. But just such audiences listen to that work with rapt attention; they hang on every note. How are they to learn what is best in music unless we are willing to give it to them?

"The trouble with America is that it does not at all realize how much it knows—how much talent is here. We are so easily tricked with a foreign name and title; our serious and talented musicians are constantly being pushed to the wall by some unknown with a name ending in *ski*. These are the people who tour America (for one season at least), who get the best places in our music schools and colleges, crowding out our native musicians. It makes me very bitter against this utterly mistaken and fallacious idea of ours. I have many talented students, who come to me from all over the country. Some of them become most excellent concert artists. If I recommend them to managers or institutions, should not my word count for something? Ought I not to know what my students can do, and what is required of a concert artist? But instead of their securing an engagement, with such a recommendation, a foreigner with the high-sounding name is the one invariably chosen. When I first started on my career I endeavored in every way to get a proper hearing in America. But not until I had made a name for myself in Europe was I recognized here, in my own land. All honor to those who are now fighting for the musical independence of America!"

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### A GROUP OF QUESTIONS

Not long after the above conversation with Mme. Zeisler, I jotted down some questions, leading to further elucidation of her manner of teaching and playing, and sent them to her. The artist was then fully occupied with her long and arduous tours and later went to Europe. My questions remained unanswered for nearly a year. When she next played in New York, she sent for me to come to her hotel. As she entered the room to greet me, she held in her hand the paper containing the questions. I expressed surprise that she had preserved the bit of paper so long.

“I am very conscientious,” she answered; “I have kept this ever since you sent it, and now we will talk over the topics you suggest.”

(1) What means do you favor for gaining power?

“I can say—none. There is no necessity for using special means to acquire power; when everything is right you will have sufficient power; you cannot help having it. If you know the piece thoroughly, your fingers have acquired the necessary strength through efficient practise, so that when the time comes to make the desired effects, you have the strength to make them, provided everything is as it should be with your technic. Power is a comparative term at best; one pianist may play on a larger scale than another. I am reminded of an amusing incident in this connection. My son Paul, when a little fellow, was fond of boasting about his mother; I could not seem to break him of it. One day he got into an argument with another boy, who asserted that his father, an amateur pianist, could play better than Paul’s mother, because he ‘could play louder, anyway.’ I don’t know whether they fought it out or not; but my boy told me about the dispute afterward.

“What do you think makes a great player?” I asked him.

“‘If you play soft enough and loud enough, slow enough and fast enough, and it sounds nice,’ was his answer. It is the whole thing in a nutshell: and he was such a little fellow at the time!

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“As I said, you must have everything right with your technic, then both power and velocity will come almost unconsciously.”

(2) What do you do for weak finger joints?

“They must be made strong at once. When a new pupil comes to me the first thing we do is to get the hand into correct position, and the fingers rounded and firm. If the pupil is intelligent and quick, this can be accomplished in a few weeks; sometimes it takes several months. But it must be done. Of what use is it to attempt a Beethoven sonata when the fingers are so weak that they cave in. The fingers must keep their rounded position and be strong enough to bear up under the weight you put upon them. As you say, this work can be done at a table, but I generally prefer the keyboard; wood is so unresponsive.

“I think, for this work, children are easier to handle than their elders; they have no faults to correct; they like to hold their hands well and make them look pretty. They ought to have a keyboard adapted to their little delicate muscles, with action much less heavy than two ounces, the minimum weight of the clavier. As they grow and gain strength, the weight can be increased. If they should attempt to use my instrument with its heavy action, they would lame the hand in a few moments or their little fingers could not stand up under the weight.”

(3) Do you approve of finger action?

“Most emphatically. Finger action is an absolute essential in playing the piano. We must have finger development. As you say, we can never make the fingers equal in themselves; we might practise five hundred years without rendering the fourth finger as strong as the thumb. Rather let us learn to so adjust the weight and pressure of each finger, that all will sound equal, whenever we wish them to do so. I tell my pupils that in regard to strength, their fingers are in this relation to each other,” and the pianist drew with her pencil four little upright lines on the paper, representing the relative natural weight of the four fingers. “The fifth finger,” she said, “figures very little in scale or passage playing. By correct methods of study the

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pupil learns to lighten the pressure of the stronger fingers and proportionately increase the weight of the weaker fingers."

(4) Do you approve of technic practise outside of pieces?

"I certainly do. The amount of time given to technic study varies with the pupil's stage of advancement. In the beginning, the whole four hours must be devoted to technic practise. When some degree of facility and control have been attained, the amount may be cut down to two hours. Later one hour is sufficient, and when one is far advanced a very short time will suffice to put the hand in trim; some rapid, brilliant arpeggios, or an étude with much finger work may be all that is necessary.

"The player gains constantly in strength and technical control while studying pieces, provided correct methods are pursued. Every piece is first of all a study in technic. The foundation must be rightly laid; the principles can then be applied to étude and piece."

(5) What do you consider the most vital technical points?

"That is a difficult question, involving everything about piano playing. There are the scales of all kinds, in single and double notes. Arpeggios are of great importance, because, in one form or another, they constantly occur. Octaves, chords, pedaling, and so on."

"The trill, too," I suggested.

"Yes, the trill; but, after all, the trill is a somewhat individual matter. Some players seem to have it naturally, or have very little trouble with it; others always have more or less difficulty. They do not seem able to play a rapid, even trill. Many are unable to finish it off deftly and artistically. They can trill for a certain number of repetitions; when they become accustomed to the monotonous repetition it is not so easy to go into the ending without a break."

(6) What means do you advise to secure velocity?

"I make the same answer to this question that I made to the first—none. I never work for velocity, nor do I work *up* velocity. That is a matter that generally takes care of itself. If you know the piece

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absolutely, know what it means and the effects you want to make, there will be little difficulty in getting over the keys at the tempo required. Of course this does not apply to the pupil who is playing wrong, with weak fingers, uncertain touch and all the rest of the accompanying faults. I grant that these faults may not be so apparent in a piece of slow tempo. A pupil may be able to get through Handel's Largo, for instance; though his fingers are uncertain he can make the theme sound half-way respectable, while a piece in rapid tempo will be quite beyond him. The faults were in the Largo just the same, but they did not show. Rapid music reveals them at once. Certain composers require almost a perfect technical equipment in order to render their music with adequate effect. Mozart is one of these. Much of his music looks simple, and is really quite easy to read; but to play it as it should be played is another thing entirely. I seldom give Mozart to my pupils. Those endless scales, arpeggios and passages, which must be flawless, in which you dare not blur or miss a single note! To play this music with just the right spirit, you must put yourself *en rapport* with the epoch in which it was written—the era of crinoline, powdered wigs, snuffboxes and mincing minuets. I don't mean to say Mozart's music is not emotional; it is filled with it, but it is not the emotion of to-day, but of yesterday, of more than a century back.

"For myself, I love Mozart's music. One of my greatest successes was in a Mozart concerto with the Chicago Orchestra. I afterward remarked to one of my colleagues that it had been one of the most difficult tasks I had ever accomplished. 'Yes, when one plays Mozart one is so *exposed*,' was his clever rejoinder."

(7) How do you keep repertoire in repair?

"If you mean my own, I would answer that I don't try to keep all my pieces up, for I have hundreds and hundreds of them, and I must always save time to study new works. A certain number are always kept in practise, different programs, according to the requirements of the hour. My method of practise is to play slowly through the piece, carefully noting the spots that are weak and need special treatment. To these I give a certain number of repetitions, and then repeat the whole to see if the weak places are equal in smoothness to the rest. If

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not, they must have more study. But always slow practise. Only occasionally do I go through the piece at the required velocity.

“My pupils are always counseled to practise slowly. If they bring the piece for a first hearing, it must be slowly and carefully played; if for a second or third hearing, and they know it well enough to take it up to time, they can play it occasionally at this tempo before coming to me. But to constantly play a piece in rapid tempo is very harmful; it precludes all thought of analysis, of *how* you are doing it. When you are playing at concert speed, you have no time to think of fingering, movement or condition—you are beyond all that. It is only in slow practise that you have time and opportunity to think of everything.

“As an illustration, take the case of a pianist in a traveling concert company. He must play the same pieces night after night, with no opportunity to practise between. For the first few days the pieces go well; then small errors and weak spots begin to appear. There is no time for slow practise, so each nightly repetition increases the uncertainty. In a few months his playing degenerates so it is hardly fit to listen to. This is the result of constant fast playing.”

(8) How do you keep technic up to the standard?

“If one is far advanced a few arpeggios and scales, or a brilliant étude will put the hand in condition. After one has rested, or had a vacation, some foundational exercises and finger movements may be necessary, to limber up the muscles and regain control and quickness. One may often have to review first principles, but technical facility is soon regained if it has once been thoroughly acquired. If one has stopped practise for quite a period, the return is slower, and needs to be more carefully prepared.

“I use considerable Czerny for technical purposes, with my pupils. Op. 299, of course, and even earlier or easier ones; then Op. 740. A few of the latter are most excellent for keeping up one’s technic. The Chopin Studies, too, are daily bread.”

(9) The best way to study chords?

“From the wrist and with fingers of steel Small hands must of course begin with smaller positions.”

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(10) What gymnastic exercises do you suggest?

“Whatever seems necessary for the special hand. Tight hands need to be massaged to limber the fingers and stretch the web of flesh between them. The loose, flabby hand may also be strengthened and rendered firm by massage; but this is often a more difficult task than to stretch the right hand. If technical training is properly given, it is sure to render the hand flexible and strong.”

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XXV.

AGNES MORGAN

### SIMPLICITY IN PIANO TEACHING

One of the busiest of New York piano teachers, whose list of students taking private lessons in a season, almost touches the hundred mark, is Mrs. Agnes Morgan. Mrs. Morgan has been laboring in this field for more than two decades, with ever increasing success. And yet so quietly and unobtrusively is all this accomplished, that the world only knows of the teacher through the work done by her pupils. The teacher has now risen to the point where she can pick and choose her own pupils, which is a great comfort to her, for it dispels much of the drudgery of piano teaching, and is one of the reasons why she loves her work.

When one teaches from nine in the morning till after six every day of the season, it is not easy to find a leisure hour in which to discuss means and methods. By a fortunate chance, however, such an interview was recently possible.

The questions had been borne in upon me: By what art or influence has this teacher attracted so large a following? What is it which brings to her side not only the society girl but the serious art-student and young teacher? What is the magnet which draws so many pupils to her that five assistants are needed to prepare those who are not yet ready to profit by her instruction? When I came in touch with this modest, unassuming woman, who greeted me with simple cordiality, and spoke with quiet dignity of her work, I felt that the only magnet was the ability to impart definite ideas in the simplest possible way.

"Dr. William Mason, with whom I studied," began Mrs. Morgan, "used to say that a musical touch was born, not made; but I have found it possible to so instruct a pupil that she can make as beautiful a tone as can be made; even a child can do this. The whole secret lies in arm and wrist relaxation, with arched hand, and firm nail joint.



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### INSPIRATION FROM AN AMERICAN TEACHER

"I feel that Dr. Mason himself was the one who made me see the reason of things. I had always played more or less brilliantly, for technic came rather easy to me. I had studied in Leipsic, where I may say I learned little or nothing about the principles of piano playing, but only 'crammed' a great number of difficult compositions. I had been with Moszkowski also; but it was really Dr. Mason, an American teacher, who first set me thinking. I began to think so earnestly about the reason for doing things that I often argued the points out with him, until he would laugh and say, 'You go one way and I go another, but we both reach the same point in the end.' And from that time I have gone on and on until I have evolved my own system of doing things. A teacher cannot stand still. I would be a fool not to profit by the experience gained through each pupil, for each one is a separate study. This has been a growth of perhaps twenty-five years—as the result of my effort to present the subject of piano technic in the most concise form. I have been constantly learning what is not essential, and what can be omitted.

### SIMPLICITY

"Simplicity Is the keynote of my work. I try to teach only the essentials. There are so many études and studies that are good, Czerny, for instance, is splendid. I believe in it all, but there is not time for much of it. So with Bach. I approve of studying everything we have of his for piano, from the 'Little Pieces' up to the big Preludes and Fugues. Whenever I can I use Bach. But here again we have not time to use as much of Bach as we should like. Still I do the best I can. Even with those who have not a great deal of time to practise, I get in a Bach Invention whenever possible.

"When a new pupil comes who is just starting, or has been badly taught, she must of course begin with hand formation. She learns to form the arch of the hand and secure firm finger joints, especially the nail joint. I form the hand away from the piano, at a table. Nothing can be done toward playing till these things are accomplished. I often have pupils who have been playing difficult music for years, and who consider themselves far advanced. When I show them some

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of these simple things, they consider them far too easy until they find they cannot do them. Sometimes nothing can be done with such pupils until they are willing to get right down to rock bottom, and learn how to form the hand. As to the length of time required, it depends on the mentality of the pupil and the kind of hand. Some hands are naturally very soft and flabby, and of course it is more difficult to render them strong.

### FINGER ACTION

“When the arch of the hand is formed, we cultivate intelligent movement in the finger tips, and for this we must have a strong, dependable nail joint. Of course young students must have knuckle action of the fingers, but I disapprove of fingers being raised too high. As we advance, and the nail joint becomes firmer and more controlled, there is not so great need for much finger action. Velocity is acquired by less and less action of the fingers; force is gained by allowing arm weight to rest on the fingers; lightness and delicacy by taking the arm weight off the fingers—holding it back.

“I use no instruction books for technical drill, but give my own exercises, or select them from various sources. Certain principles must govern the daily practise, from the first. When they are mastered in simple forms later work is only development. Loose wrist exercises, in octaves, sixths, or other forms, should form a part of the daily routine. So should scale playing, for I am a firm believer in scales of all kinds. Chords are an important item of practise. How few students, uninstructed in their principles, ever play good chords? They either flap the hand down from the wrist, with a weak, thin tone, or else they play with stiff, high wrists and arms, making a hard, harsh tone. In neither case do they use any arm weight. It often takes some time to make them see the principles of arm weight and finger grasp.

### QUESTIONS OF PEDALING

“Another point which does not receive the attention it deserves is pedaling. Few students have a true idea of the technic of the foot on the pedal. They seem to know only one way to use the damper

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pedal, and that is to come down hard on it, perhaps giving it a thump at the same time. I give special preparatory exercises for pedal use. Placing the heel on the floor, and the forepart of the foot on the pedal, they learn to make one depression with every stroke of the metronome; when this can be done with ease, then two depressions to the beat, and so on. In this exercise the pedal is not pressed fully down; on the contrary there is but a slight depression; this vibration on the pedal has the effect of a constant shimmering of light upon the tones, which is very beautiful." Here the artist illustrated most convincingly with a portion of a Chopin Prelude. "One needs a flexible ankle to use the pedal properly; indeed the ankle should be as pliant as the wrist. I know of no one else who uses the pedal in just this fashion; so I feel as though I had discovered it.

"Yes, I have numbers of pupils among society people; girls who go out a good deal and yet find time to practise a couple hours a day. The present tendency of the wealthy is to take a far more serious view of music study than was formerly the case. They feel its uplifting and ennobling influence, respect its teachers, and endeavor to do carefully and well whatever they attempt.

"While necessary and important, the technical foundation is after all but a small part compared to the training for rhythmic sense, and for the knowledge of how to produce good and beautiful results in musical interpretation."

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XXVI.

EUGENE HEFFLEY

### MODERN TENDENCIES IN PIANO MUSIC

Eugene Heffley, the Founder and first President of the MacDowell Club, of New York, a pianist and teacher of high ideals and most serious aims, came to New York from Pittsburg, in 1900, at the suggestion of MacDowell himself. He came to make a place for himself in the profession of the metropolis, and has proved himself a thoroughly sincere and devoted teacher, as well as a most inspiring master; he has trained numerous young artists who are winning success as pianists and teachers.

Mr. Heffley, while entertaining reverence for the older masters, is very progressive, always on the alert to discover a new trend of thought, a new composer, a new gospel in musical art. He did much to make known and arouse enthusiasm for MacDowell's compositions, when they were as yet almost unheard of in America. In an equally broad spirit does he introduce to his students the works of the ultra modern school, Debussy, Rachmaninoff, Florent Schmitt, Reger, Liadow, Poldini and others.

"My students like to learn these new things, and the audiences that gather here in the studio for our recitals, come with the expectation of being enlightened in regard to new and seldom heard works, and we do not disappoint them. Florent Schmitt, in spite of his German surname, is thoroughly French in his manner and idiom, though they are not of the style of Debussy; he has written some beautiful things for the piano; a set of short pieces which are little gems. I rank Rachmaninoff very highly, and of course use his Preludes, not only the well-known ones—the C and G minor—but the set of thirteen in one opus number; they are most interesting. I use a good deal of Russian music; Liadow has composed some beautiful things; but Tschaikowsky, in his piano music, is too complaining and morbid, as a rule, though he is occasionally in a more cheerful mood. It seems as though music has said all it can say along consonant lines, and regular rhythms. We must look for its advancement in the realm of

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Dissonance; not only in this but in the way of variety in Rhythm. How these modern composers vary their rhythms, sometimes three or four different ones going at once! It is the unexpected which attracts us in musical and literary art, as well as in other things: we don't want to know what is coming next; we want to be surprised.

"Of the classic literature, I use much Bach, when I can. I used to give more Mozart than I do now; latterly I have inclined toward Haydn; his Variations and Sonatas are fine; my students seem to prefer Haydn also. I thoroughly believe in the value of polyphonic music as a mental study; it is a necessity. And Bach is such a towering figure, such a rock of strength in musical art. Bach was essentially a Christian, and this element of devoutness, of worship, shines out in everything he wrote. I do not believe that music, without this element of worship, will live. Tschaiikowsky did not have it, nor Berlioz, nor even Mozart, for Mozart wrote merely from the idea of sheer beauty of sound; in that sense he was a pagan. I doubt if Strauss has it. One cannot foresee how the future will judge the music of to-day; what will it think of Schönberg? I am holding in abeyance any opinion I might form regarding his work till I have had more time to know it better. I can only say I have heard his string Quartet three times. The first time I found much in it to admire; the second time I was profoundly moved by certain parts of it, and on the third occasion I felt that the work, especially the latter part, contained some of the most beautiful music I had ever listened to.

"In regard to the technical training my pupils receive, it is not so easy to formulate my manner of teaching. Each pupil is a separate study, and is different from every other. As you well know, I am not a 'method man': I have little use for the so-called piano method. To be a true teacher of the piano is a high calling indeed; for there are many pedagogues but comparatively few real teachers. I make a distinction between the two. A pedagogue is one who, filled with many rules and much learning, endeavors to pour his knowledge into the pupil; whereas the true teacher seeks to draw out what is in the pupil. He strives to find what the pupil has aptitude for, what he likes to do and can do best. The teacher must be something of a

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psychologist, or how can he correctly judge of the pupil's temperament, his tastes, his mentality, and what to do for him?

"When a new pupil comes, I must make a mental appraisal of his capacity, his likelihood to grasp the subject, his quickness of intelligence, his health, and so on. No two pupils can be treated in the same way. One who has little continuity, who has never followed out a serious line of thought in any direction, must be treated quite differently from one of an opposite mentality and experience. It would be useless to give Bach to the first pupil, it would only be a waste of time and patience: he could not comprehend the music in any sense; he would have no conception of the great things that Bach stands for. Such a course of treatment would only make him hate music; whereas to one of a more serious and thoughtful turn of mind, you might give any amount of Bach.

"A student with a poor touch and undeveloped hand, must go through a regular course of training. The hand is first placed in position, either at the keyboard or on a table; the fingers are taught to start with up movements, as the lifting muscles need special attention. A muscle or a finger, is either *taut*, *flabby* or *stiff*; it is the taut condition I strive for—to make the finger responsive, like a fine steel spring.

"It is absolutely necessary to establish correct finger action at the outset; for the sake of finger development, clearness, and accuracy. When single fingers can make accurate up and down movements, we can put two fingers together and acquire a perfect legato. I teach three kinds of legato—the *passage* legato, the *singing* legato, and the *accompanying* legato; the pupil must master the first before attempting the others. I advise technic practise with each hand alone, for you must know I am a firm believer in the study of pure technic outside of pieces.

"As the student advances we take up chord playing with different touches, scales, arpeggios and octaves. I institute quite early what I call polyphonic technic—one hand doing a different movement or touch from the other. This works out in scales and arpeggios with a variety of touches—one hand playing a passage or scale staccato while the other playing legato, and vice versa."

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Asked if he taught technical material without a book, Mr. Heffley replied:

“No, I generally use the Heinrich Germer work, as it covers the ground very satisfactorily; it is compact, concise, and complete in one volume. I also use Mertke to some extent. Every form of exercise must be worked out in all keys; I find the books useful for all kinds of students. I may add that I use comparatively few études.

“If the student seems to have a very imperfect rhythmic sense, I use the metronome, but as sparingly as possible, for I want to establish the inner sense of rhythm.

“In regard to memorizing. I give no special advice, but counsel the student to employ the way which is easiest and most natural to him. There are three distinct ways of committing music: the Analytic, Photographic, and Muscular. The Analytic memory picks the passage apart and learns just how it is constructed, and why; the Photographic memory can see the veritable picture of the passage before the mind’s eye; while the Muscular memory lets the fingers find the notes. This is not a very reliable method, but some pupils have to learn in this way. Of course the Analytical memory is the best; when the pupil has the mental ability to think music in this way, I strongly recommend it.

“One point I make much of in my teaching, and that is Tone Color, as a distinct factor in musical interpretation. It is not merely a question of using the marks of expression, such as FF, MF, PP, and so on; it is more subtle than that—it is the *quality* of tone I seek after. Sometimes I work with a pupil for several minutes over a single tone, until he really comprehends what he has to do to produce the right quality of tone, and can remember how he did it. The pedal helps wonderfully, for it is truly the ‘soul of the piano.’

“Some pupils have fancy but no imagination, and vice versa. The terms are not synonymous. Reading poetry helps to develop the aesthetic sense; pictures help also, and nature. I must necessarily take into account the pupil’s trend of temperament while instructing him.

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“Interpretative expression is not a positive but a relative quantity. One player’s palette is covered with large blotches of color, and he will paint the picture with bold strokes; another delights in delicate miniature work. Each will conceive the meaning and interpretation of a composition through the lens of his own temperament. I endeavor to stimulate the imagination of the pupil through reading, through knowledge of art, through a comprehension of the correlation of all the arts.

“The musical interpreter has a most difficult, exacting and far-reaching task to perform. An actor plays one part night after night; a painter is occupied for days and weeks with a single picture; a composer is absorbed for the time being on one work only. The pianist, on the other hand, must, during a recital, sweep over the whole gamut of expression: the simple, the pastoral, the pathetic, the passionate, the spiritual—he is called upon to portray every phase of emotion. This seems to me a bigger task than is set before any other class of art-workers. The pianist must be able to render with appropriate sentiment the simplicity and fresh naïveté of the earlier classics, Haydn, Mozart; the grandeur of Bach; the heroic measures of Beethoven; the morbid elegance of Chopin; the romanticism of Schumann; the magnificent splendor of Liszt.

“In choosing musical food for my pupils, I strive to keep away from the beaten track of the hackneyed. The mistake made by many teachers is to give far too difficult music. Why should I teach an old war-horse which the pupil has to struggle over for six months without being really able to master, and which he will thoroughly hate at the end of that time? The Scherzo Op. 31, of Chopin, and the Liszt Rhapsodies he can hear in the concert room, where he can become familiar with most of the famous piano compositions. Why should he not learn to know many less hackneyed pieces, which do not so frequently appear on concert programs?

“Herein lies one of the great opportunities for the broad-minded teacher—to be individual in his work. According to his progressive individuality will his work be valued.”



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### XXVII.

#### GERMAINE SCHNITZER

##### MODERN METHODS IN PIANO STUDY

"It is difficult to define such a comprehensive term as technic, for it means so much," remarked Germaine Schnitzer the French pianist to me one day, when we were discussing pianistic problems. "There is no special sort or method of technic that will do for all players, for every mentality is different; every hand is peculiar to itself, and different from every other. Not only is each player individual in this particular, but one's right hand may differ from one's left; therefore each hand may require separate treatment.

"An artistic technic can be acquired only by those who have an aptitude for it, plus the willingness to undertake the necessary drudgery; practise alone, no matter how arduous, is not sufficient. Technic is evolved from thought, from hearing great music, from much listening to great players; intent listening to one's own playing, and to the effects one strives to make. It is often said that the pianist cannot easily judge of the tonal effects he is producing, as he is too near the instrument. With me this is not the case. My hearing is so acute that I know the exact dynamics of every tone, every effect of light and shade; thus I do not have to stand at a distance, as the painter does, even if I could do so, in order to criticize my work, for I can do this satisfactorily at close range.

"I hardly know when I learned technic; at all events it was not at the beginning. At the start I had some lessons with quite a simple woman teacher. We lived near Paris, and my elder sister was then studying with Raoul Pugno; she was a good student and practised industriously. She said she would take me to the master, and one day she did so. I was a tiny child of about seven, very small and thin—not much bigger than a fly. The great man pretended he could hardly see me. I was perched upon the stool, my feet, too short to reach the floor, rested on the extension pedal box which I always carried around with me, I went bravely through some Bach Inventions. When I finished, Pugno regarded me with interest. He

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said he would teach me; told me to prepare some more Inventions, some Czerny studies and the Mendelssohn Capriccio, Op. 22, and come to him in four weeks. Needless to say, I knew every note of these compositions by heart when I took my second lesson. Soon I was bidden to come to him every fortnight, then every week, and finally he gave me two lessons a week.

“For the first five years of my musical experience, I simply played the piano. I played everything—sonatas, concertos—everything; large works were absorbed from one lesson to the next. When I was about twelve I began to awake to the necessity for serious study; then I really began to practise in earnest. My master took more and more interest in my progress and career: he was at pains to explain the meaning of music to me—the ideas of the composers. Many fashionable people took lessons of him, for to study with Pugno had become a fad; but he called me his only pupil, saying that I alone understood him. I can truly say he was my musical father; to him I owe everything. We were neighbors in a suburb of Paris, as my parents’ home adjoined his; we saw a great deal of him and we made music together part of every day. When he toured in America and other countries, he wrote me frequently; I could show you many letters, for I have preserved a large number—letters filled with beautiful and exalted thoughts, expressed in noble and poetic language. They show that Pugno possessed a most refined, superior mind, and was truly a great artist.

“I studied with Pugno ten years. At the end of that time he wished me to play for Emil Saur. Saur was delighted with my work, and was anxious to teach me certain points. From him I acquired the principles of touch advocated by his master, Nicholas Rubinstein. These I mastered in three months’ time, or I might say in two lessons.

“According to Nicholas Rubinstein, the keys are not to be struck with high finger action, nor is the direct end of the finger used. The point of contact is rather just back of the tip, between that and the ball of the finger. Furthermore we do not simply strive for plain legato touch. The old instruction books tell us that legato must be learned first, and is the most difficult touch to acquire. But legato

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does not bring the best results in rapid passages, for it does not impart sufficient clarity. In the modern idea something more crisp, scintillating and brilliant is needed. So we use a half staccato touch. The tones, when separated a hair's breadth from each other, take on a lighter, more vibrant, radiant quality; they are really like strings of pearls. Then I also use pressure touch, pressing and caressing the keys—feeling as it were for the quality I want; I think it, I hear it mentally, and I can make it. With this manner of touching the keys, and this constant search for quality of tone, I can make any piano give out a beautiful tone, even if it seems to be only a battered tin pan.

### STONE WHICH VIBRATES THROUGH THE WHOLE BODY

“Weight touch is of course a necessity; for it I use not only arms and shoulders, but my whole body feels and vibrates with the tones of the piano. Of course I have worked out many of these principles for myself; they have not been acquired from any particular book, set of exercises, or piano method; I have made my own method from what I have acquired and experienced in ways above mentioned.

### ON MEMORIZING

“In regard to memorizing piano music I have no set method. The music comes to me I know not how. After a period of deep concentration, of intent listening, it is mine, a permanent possession. You say Leschetizky advises his pupils to learn a small portion, two or four measures, each hand alone and away from the piano. Other pianists tell me they have to make a special study of memorizing. All this is not for me—it is not my way. When I have studied the piece sufficiently to play it, I know it—every note of it. When I play a concerto with orchestra I am not only absolutely sure of the piano part, but I also know each note that the other instruments play. Of course I am listening intently to the piano and to the whole orchestra during a performance; if I allowed myself to think of anything else, I should be lost. This absolute concentration is what conquers all difficulties.

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### ABSTRACT TECHNIC

“About practising technic for itself alone: this will not be necessary when once the principles of technic are mastered. I, at least, do not need to do so. I make, however, various technical exercises out of all difficult passages in pieces. I scarcely need to look at the printed pages of pieces I place on my recital programs. I have them with me, to be sure, but they are seldom taken out of their boxes. What I do is to think the pieces through and do mental work with them, and for this I must be quiet and by myself. An hour’s actual playing at the piano each day is sufficient to prepare for a recital.

“It must not be thought that I do not study very seriously. I do not work less than six hours a day; if on any day I fail to secure this amount of time, I make it up at the earliest moment. During the summer months, when I am preparing new programs for the next season, I work very hard. As I said, I take the difficult passages of a composition and make the minutest study of them in every detail, making all kinds of technical exercises out of a knotty section, sometimes playing it in forty or fifty different ways. For example, take the little piece out of Schumann’s *Carneval*, called ‘The Reconnaissance.’ That needed study. I gave three solid days to it; that means from nine to twelve in the morning, and from one to five in the afternoon. At the end of that time I knew it perfectly and was satisfied with it. From that day to this I have never had to give a thought to that number, for I am confident I know it utterly. I have never had an accident to that or to any of my pieces when playing in public. In my opinion a pianist has a more difficult task to accomplish than any other artist. The singer has to sing only one note at a time; the violinist or ‘cellist need use but one hand for notes. Even the orchestral conductor who aspires to direct his men without the score before him, may experience a slip of memory once in awhile, yet he can go on without a break. A pianist, however, has perhaps half a dozen notes in each hand to play at once; every note must be indelibly engraved on the memory, for one dares not make a slip of any kind.

“An artist playing in London, Paris or New York—I class these cities together—may play about the same sort of programs in each. The

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selections will not be too heavy in character. In Madrid or Vienna the works may be even more brilliant. It is Berlin that demands heavy, solid meat. I play Bach there, Beethoven and Brahms. It is a severe test to play in Berlin and win success.

“I have made several tours in America. This is a wonderful country. I don’t believe you Americans realize what a great country you have, what marvelous advantages are here, what fine teachers, what great orchestras, what opera, what audiences! The critics, too, are so well informed and so just. All these things impress a foreign artist—the love for music that is here, the knowledge of it, and the enthusiasm for it. A worthy artist can make a name and success in America more quickly and surely than in any country in the world.

“For one thing America is one united country from coast to coast, so it is much easier getting about here than in Europe. For another thing I consider you have the greatest orchestras in the world, and I have played with the orchestras of all countries. I also find you have the most enthusiastic audiences to be found anywhere.

“In Europe a musical career offers few advantages. People often ask my advice about making a career over there, and I try to dissuade them. It sometimes impresses me as a lions’ den, and I have the desire to cry out ‘Beware’ to those who may be entrapped into going over before they are ready, or know what to expect. Of course there are cases of phenomenal success, but they are exceptions to the general rule.

“People go to Europe to get atmosphere (*stimmung*)—that much abused term! I could tell them they make their own atmosphere wherever they are. I have lived in music all my life, but I can say I find musical atmosphere right here in America. If I listen to the Boston Symphony Orchestra, or to the Kneisel Quartet, when these organizations are giving an incomparable performance of some masterpiece, I am entirely wrapt up in the music; am I not then in a musical atmosphere? Or if I hear a performance of a Wagner opera at the Metropolitan, where Wagner is given better even than in Bayreuth, am I not also in a musical atmosphere? To be sure, if I am in Bayreuth I may see some reminiscences of Wagner the man, or if I

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am in Vienna I can visit the graves of Beethoven and Schubert. But these facts of themselves do not create a musical atmosphere.

“You in America can well rejoice over your great country, your fine teachers and musicians and your musical growth. After a while you may be the most musical nation in the world.”

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### XXVIII.

#### OSSIP GABRILOWITSCH

##### CHARACTERISTIC TOUCH ON THE PIANO

Arthur Hochman, Russian pianist and composer, once remarked to me, in reference to the quality of tone and variety of tonal effects produced by the various artists now before the public:

“For me there is one pianist who stands above them all—his name is Gabilowitsch.”

The quality of tone which this rare artist draws from his instrument, is unforgettable. I asked him one morning, when he was kind enough to give me the opportunity for a quiet chat, how he produced this luscious singing quality of tone.

“A beautiful tone? Ah, that is difficult to describe, whether in one hour or in many hours. It is first a matter of experiment, of individuality, then of experience and memory. We listen and create the tone, modify it until it expresses our ideal, then we try to remember how we did it.

“I cannot say that I always produce a beautiful tone; I try to produce a characteristic tone, but sometimes it may not be beautiful: there are many times when it may be anything but that. I do not think there can be any fixed rule or method in tone production, because people and hands are so different. What does for one will not do for another. Some players find it easier to play with high wrist, some with low. Some can curve their fingers, while others straighten them out. There are of course a few foundation principles, and one is that arms and wrists must be relaxed. Fingers must often be loose also, but not at the nail joint; that must always be firm. I advise adopting the position of hand which is most comfortable and convenient. In fact all forms of hand position can be used, if for a right purpose, so long as the condition is never cramped or stiff. I permit either a high or low position of the wrist, so long as the tone is good. As I said, the nail joint must remain firm, and never be crushed under by the

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weight of powerful chords, as is apt to be the case with young players whose hands are weak and delicate.



Photo by Adolf, (Chicago)

To Miss Harriet Brower.  
Ossip Gabrilowitsch

TO MISS HARRIETTE BROWER, OSSIP GABRILOWITSCH



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### TECHNICAL STUDY

“Yes, I am certainly in favor of technical practise outside of pieces. There must be scale and arpeggio study, in which the metronome can be used. But I believe in striving to make even technical exercises of musical value. If scales are played they should be performed with a beautiful quality and variety of tone; if one attempts a Czerny étude, it should be played with as much care and finish as a Beethoven sonata. Bring out all the musical qualities of the étude. Do not say, ‘I’ll play this measure sixteen times, and then I’m done with it.’ Do nothing for mechanical ends merely, but everything from a musical standpoint. Yes, I give some Czerny to my students; not many études however. I prefer Chopin and Rubinstein. There is a set of six Rubinstein Studies which I use, including the Staccato Étude.

“In regard to technical forms and material, each player may need a different tonic. I have found many useful things in a work by your own Dr. William Mason, *Touch and Technic*. I have used this to a considerable extent. To my knowledge he was the first to illustrate the principle of weight, which is now pretty generally accepted here as well as in Europe.

“An ancient and famous philosopher, Seneca, is said to have remarked that by the time a man reaches the age of twenty-five, he should know enough to be his own physician, or he is a fool. We might apply this idea to the pianist. After studying the piano for a number of years he should be able to discover what sort of technical exercises are most beneficial; if he cannot do so he must be a fool. Why should he always depend on the exercises made by others? There is no end to the list of method books and technical forms; their name is legion. They are usually made by persons who invent exercises to fit their own hands; this does not necessarily mean that they will fit the hands of others. I encourage my pupils to invent their own technical exercises. They have often done so with considerable success, and find much more pleasure in them than in those made by others.

“Two of the most important principles in piano playing are: full, round, exact tone; distinct phrasing. The most common fault is indistinctness—slurring over or leaving out notes. Clearness in piano

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playing is absolutely essential. If an actor essays the rôle of Hamlet, he must first of all speak distinctly and make himself clearly understood; otherwise all his study and characterization are in vain. The pianist must likewise make himself understood; he therefore must enunciate clearly.

### VELOCITY

“You speak of velocity as difficult for some players to acquire. I have found there is a general tendency to play everything too fast, to rush headlong through the piece, without taking time to make it clear and intelligible. When the piece is quite clear in tone and phrasing, it will not sound as fast as it really is, because all the parts are in just relation to each other. As an illustration of this fact, there is a little Gavotte of mine, which I had occasion to play several times in Paris. A lady, a very good pianist, got the piece, learned it, then came and asked me to hear her play it. She sat down to the piano, and rushed through the piece in a way that so distorted it I could hardly recognize it. When she finished I remonstrated, but she assured me that her tempo was exactly like mine as she had heard me play the piece three times. I knew my own tempo exactly and showed her that while it did not differ so greatly from hers, yet my playing sounded slower because notes and phrasing were all clear, and everything rightly balanced.

### POWER

“How do I gain power? Power does not depend on the size of the hand or arm; for persons of quite small physique have enough of it to play with the necessary effect. Power is a nervous force, and of course demands that arms and wrists be relaxed. The fingers must be so trained as to be strong enough to stand up under this weight of arms and hands, and not give way. I repeat, the nail joint must remain firm under all circumstances. It is so easy to forget this; one must be looking after it all the time.

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### MEMORIZING

“In regard to memorizing, I have no special rule or method. Committing to memory seems to come of its own accord. Some pieces are comparatively easy to learn by heart; others, like a Bach fugue, require hard work and close analysis. The surest way to learn a difficult composition, is to write it out from memory. There is a great deal of benefit in that. If you want to remember the name of a person or a place, you write it down. When the eye sees it, the mind retains a much more vivid impression. This is visual memory. When I play with orchestra, I of course know every note the orchestra has to play as well as my own part. It is a much greater task to write out a score from memory than a piano solo, yet it is the surest way to fix the composition in mind. I find that compositions I learned in early days are never forgotten, they are always with me, while the later pieces have to be constantly looked after. This is doubtless a general experience, as early impressions are most enduring.

“An orchestral conductor should know the works he conducts so thoroughly that he need not have the score before him. I have done considerable conducting the past few years. Last season I gave a series of historical recitals, tracing the growth of the piano concerto, from Mozart down to the present. I played nineteen works in all, finishing with the Rachmaninoff Concerto.”

Mr. Gabrilowitsch has entirely given up teaching, and devotes his time to recital and concert, conducting, and composing.

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### HANS VON BÜLOW AS TEACHER AND INTERPRETER

Those who heard Hans von Bülow in recital during his American tour, in 1876, listened to piano playing that was at once learned and convincing. A few years before, in 1872, Rubinstein had come and conquered. The torrential splendor of his pianism, his mighty crescendos and whispering diminuendos, his marvelous variety of tone—all were in the nature of a revelation; his personal magnetism carried everything before it. American audiences were at his feet.



HANS VON BÜLOW

In Von Bülow was found a player of quite a different caliber. Clarity of touch, careful exactness down to the minutest detail caused the critics to call him cold. He was a deep thinker and analyzer; as he

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played one saw, as though reflected in a mirror, each note, phrase and dynamic mark of expression to be found in the work. From a Rubinstein recital the listener came away subdued, awed, inspired, uplifted, but disinclined to open the piano or touch the keys that had been made to burn and scintillate under those wonderful hands. After hearing Von Bülow, on the other hand, the impulse was to hasten to the instrument and reproduce what had just seemed so clear and logical, so simple and attainable. It did not seem to be such a difficult thing to play the piano—like *that!* It was as though he had said: “Any of you can do what I am doing, if you will give the same amount of time and study to it that I have done. Listen and I will teach you!”

Von Bülow was a profound student of the works of Beethoven; his edition of the sonatas is noted for recondite learning, clearness and exactness in the smallest details. Through his recitals in America he did much to make these works better known and understood. Nor did he neglect Chopin, and though his readings of the music of the great Pole may have lacked in sensuous beauty of touch and tone, their interpretation was always sane, healthy, and beautiful.

Toward the end of a season during the eighties, it was announced that Von Bülow would come to Berlin and teach an artist class in the Klindworth Conservatory. This was an unusual opportunity to obtain lessons from so famous a musician and pedagogue, and about twenty pianists were enrolled for the class. A few of these came with the master from Frankfort, where he was then located.

Carl Klindworth, pianist, teacher, critic, editor of Chopin and Beethoven, was then the Director of the school. The two men were close friends, which is proved by the fact that Von Bülow was willing to recommend the Klindworth Edition of Beethoven, in spite of the fact that he himself had edited many of the sonatas. Another proof is that he was ready to leave his work in Frankfort, and come to Berlin, in order to shed the luster of his name and fame upon the Klindworth school—the youngest of the many musical institutions of that music-ridden, music-saturated capital.

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It was a bright May morning when the Director entered the music-room with his guest, and presented him to the class. They saw in him a man rather below medium height, with large intellectual head, beneath whose high, wide forehead shone piercing dark eyes, hidden behind glasses.

He bowed to the class, saying he was pleased to see so many industrious students. His movements, as he looked around the room, were quick and alert; he seemed to see everything at once, and the students saw that nothing could escape that active mentality.

The class met four days in each week, and the lessons continued from nine in the morning until well on toward one o'clock. It was announced that only the works of Brahms, Raff, Mendelssohn and Liszt would be taught and played, so nothing else need be brought to the class; indeed Brahms was to have the place of honor.

While many interesting compositions were discussed and played, perhaps the most helpful thing about these hours spent with the great pedagogue was the running fire of comment and suggestion regarding technic, interpretation, and music and musicians in general. Von Bülow spoke in rapid, nervous fashion, with a mixture of German and English, often repeating in the latter tongue what he had said in the former, out of consideration for the Americans and English present.

In teaching, Von Bülow required the same qualities which were so patent in his playing. Clearness of touch, exactness in phrasing and fingering were the first requirements; the delivery of the composer's idea must be just as he had indicated it—no liberties with the text were ever permitted. He was so honest, so upright in his attitude toward the makers of good music, that it was a sin in his eyes to alter anything in the score, though he believed in adding any marks of phrasing or expression which would elucidate the intentions of the composer. Everything he said or did showed his intellectual grasp of the subject; and he looked for some of the same sort of intelligence on the part of the student. A failure in this respect, an inability to apprehend at once the ideas he endeavored to convey, would annoy the sensitive and nervous little Doctor; he would become impatient, sarcastic and begin to pace the floor with hasty strides. When in this

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state he could see little that was worthy in the student's performance, for a small error would be so magnified as to dwarf everything that was excellent. When the lion began to roar, it behooved the players to be circumspect and meek. At other times, when the weather was fair in the class-room, things went with tolerable smoothness. He did not trouble himself much about technic, as of course a pupil coming to him was expected to be well equipped on the technical side; his chief concern was to make clear the content and interpretation of the composition. In the lessons he often played detached phrases and passages for and with the student, but never played an entire composition.

One of the most remarkable things about this eccentric man was his prodigious memory. Nearly every work for piano which could be mentioned he knew and could play from memory. He often expressed the opinion that no pianist could be considered an artist unless he or she could play at least two hundred pieces by heart. He, of course, more than fulfilled this requirement, not only for piano but for orchestral music. As conductor of the famous Meiningen orchestra, he directed every work given without a note of score before him—considered a great feat in those days. He was a ceaseless worker, and his eminence in the world of music was more largely due to unremitting labor than to genius.

From the many suggestions to the Berlin class, the following have been culled.

"To play correctly is of the first importance; to play beautifully is the second requirement. A healthy touch is the main thing. Some people play the piano as if their fingers had *migrane* and their wrists were rheumatic. Do not play on the sides of the finger nor with a sideways stroke, for then the touch will be weak and uncertain.

"Clearness we must first have; every line and measure, every note must be analyzed for touch, tone, content and expression.

"You are always your first hearer; to be one's own critic is the most difficult of all.

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“When a new theme enters you must make it plain to the listener; all the features of the new theme, the new figure, must be plastically brought out.

“Brilliancy does not depend on velocity but on clarity. What is not clear cannot scintillate nor sparkle. Make use of your strongest fingers in brilliant passages, leaving out the fourth when possible. A scale to be brilliant and powerful must not be too rapid. Every note must be round and full and not too legato—rather a mezzo legato—so that single tones, played hands together, shall sound like octaves. One of the most difficult things in rhythm, is to play passages where two notes alternate with triplets. Scales may be practised in this way alternating three notes with two.

“We must make things sound well—agreeably, in a way to be admired. A seemingly discordant passage can be made to sound well by ingeniously seeking out the best that is in it and holding that up in the most favorable light. Practise dissonant chords until they please the ear in spite of their sharpness. Think of the instruments of the orchestra and their different qualities of tone, and try to imitate them on the piano. Think of every octave on the piano as having a different color; then shade and color your playing. (*Also bitte coloriren!*)”

If Bülow’s musical trinity, Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms, had a fourth divinity added, it would surely have been Liszt. The first day’s program contained chiefly works by the Hungarian master; among them *Au bord d’une Source*, Scherzo and March, and the Ballades. The player who rendered the Scherzo was advised to practise octaves with light, flexible wrist; the Kullak Octave School was recommended, especially the third book; the other books could be read through, practising whatever seemed difficult and passing over what was easy. Of the Ballades the first was termed more popular, the second finer and more earnest—though neither makes very much noise.

The *Annees de Pelerinage* received much attention. Among the pieces played were, *Les Cloches*, *Chasse Neige*, *Eclogue*, *Cloches de Geneva*, *Eroica*, *Feux Follets* and *Mazeppa*. Also the big Polonaise in E, the two Études, *Waldesrauschen* and *Gnomenreigen*; the Mazourka, Valse



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Impromptu, and the first Étude, of which last he remarked: "You can all play this; thirty years have passed since it was composed and people are only just finding out how fine it is. Such is the case with many of Liszt's works. We wonder how they ever could have been considered unmusical. Yet the way some people play Liszt the hearer is forced to exclaim, 'What an unmusical fellow Liszt was, to be sure, to write like that!'"

"Exactness in everything is of the greatest importance," he was fond of saying. "We must make the piano speak. As in speaking we use a separate movement of the lips for each word, so in certain kinds of melody playing, the hand is taken up after each note. Then, too, we cannot make the piano speak without very careful use of the pedals."

The Mazourka of Liszt was recommended as one of the most delightful of his lighter pieces. The *Waldesrauschen* also, was termed charming, an excellent concert number. "Begin the first figure somewhat louder and slightly slower, then increase the movement and subdue the tone. *Everything which is to be played softly should be practised forte.*"

Of Joachim Raff the Suite Op. 91 held the most important place. Each number received minute attention, the Giga being played by Ethelbert Nevin. The *Metamorphosen* received a hearing, also the Valse Caprice, Op. 116, of which the master was particular about the staccato left hand against the legato right. Then came the Scherzo Op. 74, the Valse Caprice and the Polka, from Suite Op. 71. Von Bülow described the little group of notes in left hand of middle section as a place where the dancers made an unexpected slip on the floor, and suggested it be somewhat emphasized. "We must make this little witticism," he said, as he illustrated the passage at the piano.

"Raff showed himself a pupil of Mendelssohn in his earlier compositions; his symphonies will find more appreciation in the coming century—which cannot be said of the Ocean Symphony, for instance."

Of Mendelssohn the Capriccios Op. 5 and 22 were played, also the Prelude and Fugue in E. Von Bülow deplored the neglect which was

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overtaking the works of Mendelssohn, and spoke of the many beauties of his piano compositions. "There should be no sentimentality about the playing of Mendelssohn's music," he said; "the notes speak for themselves.

"The return to a theme, in every song or instrumental work of his is particularly to be noticed, for it is always interesting; this Fugue in E should begin as though with the softest register of the organ."



DR. WILLIAM MASON

The subject of Brahms has been deferred only that it may be spoken of as a whole. His music was the theme of the second, and a number of the following lessons. Bülow was a close friend of the Hamburg master, and kept in touch with him while in Berlin. One morning he came in with a beaming face, holding up a sheet of music paper in Beethoven's handwriting, which Brahms had discovered and

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forwarded to him. It seemed that nothing could have given Bülow greater pleasure than to receive this relic.

The first work taken up in class was Brahms' Variations on a Handel theme. Von Bülow was in perfect sympathy with this noble work of Brahms and illumined many passages with clear explanations. He was very exact about the phrasing, "What cannot be sung in one breath cannot be played in one breath," he said; "many composers have their own terms for expression and interpretation; Brahms is very exact in these points—next to him comes Mendelssohn. Beethoven not at all careful about markings and Schumann extremely careless. Brahms, Beethoven, and Wagner have the right to use their own terms. Brahms frequently uses the word *sostenuto* where others would use *ritardando*."

Of the Clavier Stücke, Op. 76, Von Bülow said: "The Capriccio, No. 1 must not be taken too fast. First page is merely a prelude, the story begins at the second page. How wonderfully is this melody formed, so original yet so regular. Compare it with a Bach gigue. Remember, andante does not mean dragging (*schleppando*), it means going (*gehend*)." To the player who gave the Capriccio, No. 5 he said: "You play that as if it were a Tarantelle of Stephan Heller's. Agitation in piano playing must be carefully thought out; the natural sort will not do at all. We do not want *blind* agitation, but *seeing* agitation (*aufregung*). A diminuendo of several measures should be divided into stations, one each for F, MF, M, P, and PP. Visit the Zoological Gardens, where you can learn much about legato and staccato from the kangaroos."

The Ballades were taken up in these lessons, and the light thrown upon their poetical content was often a revelation. The gloomy character of the *Edward Ballade*, Op. 10, No. 1, the source of the Scottish poem, the poetic story, were dwelt upon. The opening of this first Ballade is sad, sinister and mysterious, like the old Scotch story. The master insisted on great smoothness in playing it—the chords to sound like muffled but throbbing heartbeats. A strong climax is worked up on the second page, which dies away on the third to a *pianissimo* of utter despair. From the middle of this page on to the end, the descending chords and octaves were likened to

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ghostly footsteps, while the broken triplets in the left hand accompaniment seem to indicate drops of blood.

The third Ballade also received an illumination from Von Bülow. This is a vivid tone picture, though without motto or verse. Starting with those fateful fifths in the bass, it moves over two pages fitfully gloomy and gay, till at the end of the second page a descending passage leads to three chords so full of grim despair as to impart the atmosphere of a dungeon. The player was hastily turning the leaf. "Stop!" cried the excited voice of the master, who had been pacing restlessly up and down, and now hurried from the end of the salon. "Wait! We have been in prison—but now a ray of sunshine pierces the darkness. You must always pause here to make the contrast more impressive. There is more music in this little piece than in whole symphonies by some of the modern composers."

Both Rhapsodies Op. 79 were played; the second, he said, has parts as passionate as anything in the *Götterdämmerung*. Both are fine and interesting works.

Again and again the players were counseled to make everything sound well. Some intervals, fourths for instance, are harsh; make them as mild as possible. For one can play correctly, but horribly! Some staccatos should be shaken out of the sleeve as it were.

The first time a great work is heard there is so much to occupy the attention that only a small amount of pleasure can be derived from it. At the second hearing things are easier and by the twelfth time one's pleasure is complete. The pianist must consider the listener in a first rendering, and endeavor to soften the sharp discords.

With a group of five notes, play two and then three—it sounds more distinguished. Remember that unlearning gives much more trouble than learning.

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In this brief résumé of the Von Bülow lessons, the desire has been to convey some of the hints and remarks concerning the music and its

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interpretation. The master's fleeting sentences were hurriedly jotted down during the lessons, with no thought of their ever being seen except by the owner. But as Bülow's fame as a teacher became so great, these brief notes may now be of some value to both teacher and student.

If it were only possible to create a picture of that Berlin music-room, with its long windows opening out to a green garden—the May sunshine streaming in; the two grand pianos in the center, a row of anxious, absorbed students about the edge of the room—and the short figure of the little Doctor, pacing up and down the polished floor, or seating himself at one piano now and then, to illustrate his instruction. This mental picture is the lifelong possession of each of those players who were so fortunate as to be present at the sessions. It can safely be affirmed, I think, that the principles of artistic rectitude, of exactness and thorough musicianship which were there inculcated, ever remained with the members of that class, as a constant incentive and inspiration.

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### HINTS ON INTERPRETATION FROM TWO AMERICAN TEACHERS

WILLIAM H. SHERWOOD AND DR. WILLIAM MASON

WILLIAM H. SHERWOOD

While a young student the opportunity came to attend a Summer Music School, founded by this eminent pianist and teacher. He had surrounded himself with others well known for their specialties in voice, violin and diction; but the director himself was the magnet who attracted pianists and teachers from the four corners of the land.

Perhaps the most intimate way to come in touch with a famous teacher, is to study with him during the summer months, in some quiet, retired spot. Here the stress of the metropolis, with its rush and drive, its exacting hours, its remorseless round of lesson giving, is exchanged for the freedom of rural life. Hours may still be exact, but a part of each day, or of each week, is given over to relaxation, to be spent in the open, with friends and pupils.

It was under such conditions that I first met Mr. Sherwood. I had never even heard him play, and was glad the session opened with a piano recital. His playing delighted me; he had both power and delicacy, and his tone impressed me as being especially mellow and fine. There was deep feeling as well as poetry in his reading of both the Chromatic Fantaisie of Bach, and the Chopin Fantaisie in F minor which were on the program. This opinion was strengthened at each subsequent hearing, for he gave frequent recitals and concerts during the season.

My summer study with Mr. Sherwood consisted mainly in gaining ideas on the interpretation of various pieces. Many of these ideas seem to me beautiful and inspiring, and I will set them down as fully as I can from the brief notes jotted down at the time. I trust I may be pardoned a few personal references, which are sometimes necessary to explain the situation.

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With advanced students Mr. Sherwood gave great attention to tone study and interpretation, even from the first lesson. He laid much stress on the use of slow, gentle motions in practise and in playing; on the spiritualization of the tones, of getting behind the notes to find the composer's meaning. He had, perhaps, a more poetic conception of piano playing than any master I have known, and was able to impart these ideas in clear and simple language.

The first composition considered was Schumann's *Nachtstück*, the fourth of the set. He had a peculiar way of turning the hand on the middle finger, as on a pivot, for the extended chords, at the same time raising the whole outer side of the hand, so that the fifth finger should be able to play the upper melody notes round and full. In the middle section he desired great tenderness and sweetness of tone. "There are several dissonances in this part," he said, "and they ought to be somewhat accented—suspensions I might call them. In Bach and Handel's time, the rules of composition were very strict—no suspensions were allowed; so they were indicated where it was not permitted to write them."

Chopin's *étude* in sixths came up for analysis. "This study needs a very easy, quiet, limpid touch—the motions all gliding and sliding rather than pushing and forceful. I would advise playing it at first *pianissimo*; the wrist held rather low, the knuckles somewhat high, and the fingers straightened. In preparation for each pair of notes raise the fingers and let them down—not with a hard brittle touch, if I may use the word, but with a soft, velvety one. A composition like this needs to be idealized, spiritualized, taken out of everyday life. Take, for instance, the *Impromptu* Op. 36, Chopin; the first part of it is something like this *étude*, soft, undulating—smooth as oil. There is something very uncommon, spiritual, heavenly, about the first page of that *Impromptu*—very little of the earth, earthy. The second page is in sharp contrast to the first, it comes right down to the hard, everyday business of life—it is full of harsh, sharp tones. Well, the idea of that first page we get in this study in sixths. I don't want the bare tones that stand there on the printed page; I want them spiritualized—that is what reveals the artist. In the left hand the first note should have a clear, brittle accent, with firm fifth finger, and the double sixths played with the creeping, clinging movement I have

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indicated. If I should practise this étude for half an hour, you might be surprised at the effects I could produce. Perhaps it might take ten hours, but in the end I am confident I could produce this floating, undulating effect. I heard Liszt play nearly all these études at one time; I stood by and turned the pages. In this étude he doubled the number of sixths in each measure; the effect was wonderful and beautiful.

“The Chopin Octave study, number 22, needs firm, quiet touch, elevating the wrist for black keys (as Kullak explains) and depressing it for white keys. The hand must be well arched, the end fingers firm and strong, and the touch very pressing, clinging, and grasping. You always want to cling whenever there is any chance for clinging in piano playing. The second part of this étude should have a soft, flowing, poetic touch in the right hand, while the left hand part is well brought out. The thumb needs a special training to enable it to creep and slide from one key to another with snake-like movements.

“Rubinstein’s Barcarolle in G major. The thirds on the first page are very soft and gentle. I make a good deal of extra motion with these thirds, raising the fingers quite high and letting them fall gently on the keys. The idea of the first page of this barcarolle is one of utter quietness, colorlessness; one is alone on the water; the evening is quiet and still; not a sound breaks the hushed silence. The delicate tracery of thirds should be very soft, thin—like an airy cloud. The left hand is soft too, but the first beat should be slightly accented, the second not; the first is positive, the second negative. Herein lies the idea of the barcarolle, the ebb and flow, the undulation of each measure.

“Begin the first measure very softly, the second measure a trifle louder, the third louder still, the fourth falling off again. As you stand on the shore and watch the great waves coming in, you see some that are higher and larger than others; so it is here. The concluding passage in sixths should diminish—like a little puff of vapor that ends in—nothing. On the second page we come upon something more positive; here is a tangible voice speaking to us. The melody should stand out clear, broad, beautiful; the accompanying



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chords should preserve the same ebb and flow, the advancing and receding wave-like movement. The exaggerated movement I spoke of a moment ago, I use in many ways. Any one can hit the piano, with a sharp, incisive touch; but what I refer to is the reaching out of the fingers for the notes, the passing of the hand in the air and the final gentle fall on the key, not in haste to get there, but with confidence of reaching the key in time. If you throw a stone up in the air it will presently fall back again with a sharp thud; a bird rising, hovers a moment and descends gently. This barcarolle is not at all easy; there is plenty of work in it for flexible hands; it is a study in *pianissimo*—in power controlled, held back, restrained.”

Taking up the Toccata of Rheinberger, Mr. Sherwood said: “I like this piece, there is good honest work in it; it is very effective, and most excellent practise. You ought to play this every day of the year. It is written in twelve-eighths, which give four beats to the measure, but I think that gives it too hard and square a character. I would divide each measure into two parts and slightly accent each. Though your temperament is more at home in the music of Chopin and Schumann, I recommend especially music of this sort, and also the music of Bach; these give solidity and strength to your conception of musical ideas.”

We went through the Raff Suite, Op. 94. “The Preludio is very good,” he said; “I like it. The Menuetto is, musically, the least strong of any of the numbers, but it has a certain elegance, and is the most popular of them all. The Romanza is a great favorite of mine, it is very graceful, flowing and melodious. The concluding Fugue is a fine number; you see how the theme is carried from one hand to the other, all twisted about, in a way old Bach and Handel never thought of doing. I consider this Raff fugue one of the best examples of modern fugue writing.”

Mr. Sherwood was fond of giving students the Josef Wieniawski Valse, for brilliancy. “There are many fine effects which can be made in this piece; one can take liberties with it—the more imagination you have the better it will go. I might call it a *stylish* piece; take the Prelude as capriciously as you like; put all the effect you can into it. The Valse proper begins in a very pompous style, with right hand

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very staccato; all is exceedingly coquettish. On the fifth page you see it is marked *amoroso*, but after eight measures the young man gives the whole thing away to his father! The beginning of the sixth page is very *piano* and light—it is nothing more than a breath of smoke, an airy nothing. But at the *poco piu lento*, there is an undercurrent of reality; the two parts are going at the same time—the hard, earthly part, with accents, and the spiritual, thin as air. To realize these qualities in playing is the very idealization of technic.”

The Chopin-Liszt *Maiden's Wish*, was next considered. “The theme here is often overlaid and encrusted with the delicate lace-like arabesques that seek to hide it; but it must be found and brought out. There is so much in being able to find what is hidden behind the notes. You must get an insight into the inner idea; must feel it. This is not technic, not method even; it is the spiritualization of playing. There are pieces that will sound well if the notes only are played, like the little F minor Moment Musicale of Schubert; yet even in this there is much behind the notes, which, if brought out, will make quite another thing of the piece.

“Schumann's Andante, for two pianos, should have a very tender, caressing touch for the theme. The place where the four-sixteenths occur, which make rather a square effect, can be softened down. On the second page, be sure and do not accent the grace notes; let the accent come on the fifth finger every time. For the variation containing chords, use the grasping touch, which might be described as a certain indrawing of force in the end of the finger, as though taking a long breath. The variation in triplets seems at first sight almost a caricature, a burlesque on the theme, but I don't think that Schumann had any such idea. On the contrary he meant it as a very sweet, gentle, loving thought. The last page has something ethereal, ideal about it; it should be breathed out, growing fainter and fainter to the end.

“The G minor Ballade, of Chopin, begins slowly, with much dignity. The opening melody is one of sadness, almost gloom. The *a tempo* on second page contains four parts going on at the same time. At the *pia forte*, care must be taken to have the outer side of the hand well raised, and moved from the wrist. The idea here is one of great

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agitation and unrest. The fifth page needs great power and the legato octaves well connected and sustained. The feeling of unrest is here augmented until it becomes almost painful, and not until the *animato* does a restful feeling come. This should be played lightly and delicately, the left hand giving the rhythm. The *presto* demands great power and dash. Let the wrist be low when beginning the chords, raise it after the first and let it fall after the second. Always accent the second chord. Begin the final double runs slowly and increase in speed and tone. So, too, with the octaves, begin slowly and increase in power and fire."

Numerous other compositions were analyzed, but the ones already quoted stand out in memory, and give some idea of Mr. Sherwood's manner of teaching.

### DR. WILLIAM MASON

Years after the foregoing experiences I had the privilege of doing some work with the dean of all American piano masters, Dr. William Mason. I had spent several years in European study, with Scharwenka, Klindworth and von Bülow, and had returned to my own land to join its teaching and playing force. My time soon became so largely occupied with teaching that I feared my playing would be entirely pushed to the wall unless I were under the guidance of some master. With this thought in mind, I presented myself to Dr. Mason.

"You have studied with Sherwood," he began. "He has excellent ideas of touch and technic. Some of these ideas came from me, though I don't wish to claim too much in the matter. Sherwood has the true piano touch. Very few pianists have it; Klindworth did not have it, nor von Bülow, nor even Liszt, entirely, for he as well as the others, sought for a more orchestral manner of playing. Sherwood has this touch; Tausig had it, and de Pachmann and Rubinstein most of all. It is not taught in Germany as it should be. The best American teachers are far ahead in this respect; in a few years the Europeans will come to us to learn these things." (This was Sherwood's idea also.)

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The first composition played to Dr. Mason was the G minor Rhapsodie of Brahms, with which, as it happened, he was unfamiliar. I played the entire piece through without interruption, and he seemed pleased.

“You have a beautiful tone—a really beautiful tone, and you play very artistically; much of this must be natural to you, you could not have acquired it. You also have an excellently trained hand. I may say that in my forty years of teaching I have never had any one come to me with a better position, or more natural and normal condition. Now, what do you think I can do for you?”

I explained that I needed some new ideas in my teaching, and wished to keep up my own practise.

“I will explain my theories to you, and we will then study some compositions together.

“There is everything in knowing how to practise, but it is something that cannot be taught. I played in public ten years before I found out the secret.

“Practise slowly and in sections. Not only must all the notes be there, they must be dwelt on. There must be a firm and rock-like basis for piano playing; such a foundation can only be laid by patient and persevering slow practise. If the player has not the control over his fingers to play a piece slowly, he certainly cannot play it fast. Slow practise—one difficulty at a time—one hand at a time; Napoleon’s tactics, ‘one division at a time,’ applies to music study. Above all do not hurry in fugue playing, a universal fault. Bach needs a slower trill than modern music. Chords are not to be played with percussion but with pressure. The main things in piano playing are tone and sentiment. When you take up a new piece, practise a few measures slowly, till you know them, then play faster; take the next few measures in the same way; but at first do not practise the whole piece through at once.

“Just as in life every experience of great joy or great grief leaves one better or more callous, so every time you practise you have either advanced or gone back. Right playing, like good manners in a well-

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trained child, becomes habitual from always doing right. As we are influenced for good or evil by those we associate with, so are we influenced by the character and quality of the tones we make and hear. Be in earnest; put your heart, your whole soul, your whole self into your playing."

Among other pieces we studied together was the Schumann sonata in F minor, the *Eusebius Sonata*—a glorious work! In the opening movement the left hand should be very serious and ponderous, with the hand and fingers held close to the keys; using arm weight. The melody in octaves in right hand is beseeching, pleading, imploring. In many places the touch is very elastic. The second movement begins very softly, as though one heard something faintly in the distance, and did not quite know what it was, but thought it might be music. The accents in this movement are to be understood in a comparative degree, and are not as strong as the marks seem to indicate. The Scherzo is extremely pompous and is to be played with heavy accents and a great deal of vim and go; the chords with the utmost freedom and dash. One must use the "letting-go" principle, which Paderewski has to perfection.

We next took up the Grieg Concerto; the Peter's edition of this work has been corrected by the composer. At the first lesson, Dr. Mason accompanied on a second piano, and seemed pleased with the work I had done, making no corrections, except to suggest a somewhat quicker tempo. "Not that I would do anything to impair your carefulness and accuracy, but you must take a risk, and from the beginning, too. I am reminded of the young man who has been very carefully brought up. When the time comes for him to strike out and take his chance in life, he holds back and is afraid, while another with more courage, steps in and takes away his opportunity."

We discussed the slow movement at great length. "Note in this movement the slow, dreamy effect that can be made at the ending of the second solo, and the artistic use of the pedal in the following chords. The third movement must have great swing and 'go'; the octave passage cadenza should be practised in rhythmical groups, and the final Andante must be fast."

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The third time we played the concerto I had it well in hand. Dr. Mason accompanied as only he could do, and at the close praised me on the way I had worked it up, and the poetry and fire I was able to put into it. Who could help playing with fire and enthusiasm when led by such a master!

Dr. Mason was a most inspiring teacher, quick to note and praise what was good, and equally vigilant in correcting what was blameworthy. His criticisms were of the utmost value, for he had such wide experience, and such a large acquaintance with music and musicians. Best of all he was a true artist, always ready to demonstrate his art for the benefit of the pupil, always encouraging, always inspiring.

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### VITAL POINTS IN PIANO PLAYING

#### COMPOSITE PRINCIPLES DEDUCED FROM TALKS WITH EMINENT PIANISTS AND TEACHERS

##### SECTION I

How things are done, how others do them, and the reasons for the doing of them in one way and not in another, used to occupy my thoughts back as far as I can remember. As a child I was fond of watching any one doing fine needlework or beautiful embroidery, and tried to imitate what I saw, going into minutest details. This fondness for exactness and detail, when, applied to piano study, led me to question many things; to wonder why I was told to do thus and so, when other people seemed to do other ways; in fact I began to discover that every one who played the piano played it in a different fashion. Why was there not one way?

One memorable night I was taken to hear Anton Rubinstein. What a marvelous instrument the piano was, to be sure, when its keys were moved by a touch that was at one moment all fire and flame, and the next smooth as velvet or soft and light as thistle-down. What had my home piano in common with this wonder? Why did all the efforts at piano playing I had hitherto listened to sink into oblivion when I heard this master? What was the reason of it all?

More artists of the piano came within my vision, Mehlig, Joseffy, Mason, and others. As I listened to their performances it was brought to me more clearly than ever that each master played the piano in the manner which best suited himself; at the same time each and every player made the instrument utter tones and effects little dreamed of by the ordinary learner. What was the secret? Was it the manner of moving the keys, the size of hand, the length of finger, or the great strength possessed by the player? I had always been taught to play slowly and carefully, so that I should make no mistakes; these great pianists had wonderful fearlessness; Rubinstein at least did not seem to care whether or not he hit a few wrong notes here

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and there, if he could only secure the speed and effect desired. Whence came his fearless velocity, his tremendous power?

### ESSENTIALS OF PIANISM

Little by little I began to realize the essentials of effective piano playing were these: clear touch, intelligent phrasing, all varieties of tone, all the force the piano would stand, together with the greatest delicacy and the utmost speed. These things the artists possessed as a matter of course, but the ordinary student or teacher failed utterly to make like effects, or to play with sufficient clearness and force. What was the reason?

In due course I came under the supervision of various piano pedagogues. To the first I gave implicit obedience, endeavoring to do exactly as I was told. The next teacher said I must begin all over again, as I had been taught "all wrong." I had never learned hand position nor independence of fingers—these must now be established. The following master told me finger independence must be secured in quite a different fashion from the manner in which I had been taught, which was "all wrong." The next professor said I must bend the finger squarely from the second joint, and not round all three joints, as I had been doing. This so-called fault took several months to correct.

To the next I am indebted for good orthodox (if somewhat pedantic) ideas of fingering and phrasing, for which he was noted. The hobby of the next master was slow motions with soft touch. This course was calculated to take all the vim out of one's fingers and all the brilliancy out of one's playing in less than six months. To the next I owe a comprehension of the elastic touch, with devitalized muscles. This touch I practised so assiduously that my poor piano was ruined inside of a year, and had to be sent to the factory for a new keyboard. The next master insisted on great exactness of finger movements, on working up velocity with metronome, on fine tone shading and memorizing.



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### THE DESIRE FOR REAL KNOWLEDGE

Such, in brief, has been my experience with pedagogues and teachers of the piano. Having passed through it (and in passing having tried various so-called and unnamed methods) I feel I have reached a vantage ground upon which I can stand and look back over the course. The desire to know the experience of the great artists of the keyboard is as strong within me as ever. What did they not have to go through to master their instrument? And having mastered it, what do they consider the vital essentials of piano technic and piano playing? Surely they must know these things if any one can know them. They can tell, if they will, what to do and what to avoid, what to exclude as unnecessary or unessential and what to concentrate upon.

The night Rubinstein's marvelous tones fell upon my childish ears I longed to go to him, clasp his wonderful hands in my small ones and beg him to tell me how he did it all. I now know he could not have explained how, for the greater the genius—the more spontaneous its expression—the less able is such an one to put into words the manner of its manifestation. In later years the same impulse has come when listening to Paderewski, Hofmann and others. If they could only tell us exactly what is to be done to master the piano, what a boon it would be to those who are awake enough to profit by and follow the directions and experiences of such masters.

In recognition of the strength of this desire, months after a half-forgotten wish had been expressed by me, came a request by *Musical America* to prepare a series of interviews with the world famed pianists who were visiting our shores, and also with prominent teachers who were making good among us, and who were proving by results attained that they were safe and efficient guides.

### SEARCHING FOR TRUTH

Never was an interesting and congenial labor undertaken with more zest. The artists were plied with questions which to them may have seemed prosaic, but which to the interrogator were the very essence of the principles of piano technic and piano mastery. It is not a light

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task for an artist to sit down and analyze his own methods. Some found it almost impossible to put into language their ideas on these subjects. They had so long been concerned with the highest themes of interpretation that they hardly knew how the technical effects were produced, nor could they put the manner of making them into words. They could only say, with Rubinstein, "I do it this way," leaving the questioner to divine how and then to give an account of it. However, with questions leading up to the points I was anxious to secure light upon, much information was elicited.

One principle was ever before me, namely the Truth. I desired to find out the truth about each subject and then endeavored to set down what was said, expressed in the way I felt would convey the most exact meaning. In considering the vital points or heads under which to group the subjects to be considered, the following seem to cover the ground pretty thoroughly:

1. Artistic piano technic; how acquired and retained.
2. How to practise.
3. How to memorize.
4. Rhythm and tone color in piano playing.

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### SECTION II

#### *Hand Position, Finger Action, and Artistic Touch*

##### WHAT TECHNIC INCLUDES

When we listen to a piano recital by a world-famous artist, we think—if we are musicians—primarily of the interpretation of the compositions under consideration. That the pianist has a perfect technic almost goes without saying. He must have such a technic to win recognition as an artist. He would not be an artist without a great technic, without a complete command over the resources of the instrument and over himself.

Let us use the word technic in its large sense, the sense which includes all that pertains to the executive side of piano playing. It is in this significance that Harold Bauer calls technic “an art in itself.” Mme. Bloomfield Zeisler says: “Piano technic includes so much! Everything goes into it: arithmetic, grammar, diction, language study, poetry, history and painting. In the first stages there are rules to be learned, just as in any other study. I must know the laws of rhythm and meter to be able to punctuate musical phrases and periods. Pupils who have long since passed the arithmetic stage have evidently forgotten all about fractions and division, for they do not seem to grasp the time values of notes and groups of notes used in music; they do not know what must be done with triplets, dotted notes and so on. Thus you see technic includes a multitude of things; it is a very wide subject.”

##### HAND POSITION

The first principle a piano teacher shows his pupil is that of hand position. It has been my effort to secure a definite expression on this point from various artists. Most of them agree that an arched position with rounded finger joints is the correct one. It was Paderewski who said, “Show me how the player holds his hands at the piano, and I will tell you what kind of player he is”—showing the Polish pianist considers hand position of prime importance.

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"I hold the hand arched and very firm," — Ernest Schelling.

"The hand takes an arched position, the finger-tips forming a curve on the keys, the middle finger being placed a little farther in on the key than is natural for the first and fifth." — Katharine Goodson.

"The hand is formed on the keys in its five-finger position, with arched knuckles." — Ethel Leginska.

"The hand is formed in an arched position, with curved fingers, and solidified." — Carl Roeder.

"The hand, in normal playing position, must stand up in well arched form, with fingers well rounded." — Thuel Burnham.

"I first establish an arched hand position, with firm fingers." — Edwin Hughes.

"I teach arched hand position." — Alexander Lambert.

"One must first secure an arched hand, with steady first joints of the fingers." — Eleanor Spencer.

"The first thing to do for a pupil is to see that the hand is in correct position; the knuckles will be somewhat elevated and the fingers properly rounded." — Bloomfield Zeisler.

"A pupil must first form the arch of the hand and secure firm finger joints. I form the hand away from the piano, at a table." — Agnes Morgan.

Leschetizky teaches arched hand position, with rounded fingers, and all who have come under his instruction advocate this form. It is the accepted position for passage playing. A few pianists, notably Alfred Cortôt and Tina Lerner, play their passage work with flat fingers, but this, in Miss Lerner's case, is doubtless caused by the small size of the hand.

It is clear from the above quotations, and from many other opinions which could be cited, that the authorities agree the hand should be well arched, the end of the finger coming in contact with the key;

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furthermore there should be no weakness nor giving in at the nail joint.

### FINGER ACTION

The question of lifting the fingers seems to be one on which various opinions are held. Some pianists, like Godowsky for instance, will tell you they do not approve of raising the fingers—that the fingers must be kept close to the keys. It is noticeable, however, that even those who do not speak favorably of finger action, use it themselves when playing passages requiring distinctness and clearness. Other players are rather hazy on the subject, but these are generally persons who have not gone through the routine of teaching.

The accepted idea of the best teachers is that at the beginning of piano study positive finger movements must be acquired; finger action must be so thoroughly grounded that it becomes second nature, a very part of the player, something he can never forget nor get away from. So fixed should it become that no subsequent laxity, caused by the attention being wholly centered on interpretation can disturb correct position, condition, or graceful, plastic movement.

“For passage work I insist on finger action; the fingers must be raised and active to insure proper development. I think one certainly needs higher action when practising technic and technical pieces than one would use when playing the same pieces before an audience.”—Clarence Adler.

Alexander Lambert speaks to the point when he says: “I teach decided finger action in the beginning. Some teachers may not teach finger action because they say artists do not use it. But the artist, if questioned, would tell you he had to acquire finger action in the beginning. There are so many stages in piano playing. The beginner must raise his fingers in order to acquire finger development and a clear touch. In the middle stage he has secured enough finger control to play the same passages with less action, yet still with sufficient clearness, while in the more or less finished stages the passage may be played with scarcely any perceptible motion, so thoroughly do the fingers respond to every mental requirement.”

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It is this consummate mastery and control of condition and movement that lead the superficial observer to imagine that the great artist gives no thought to such things as position, condition and movements. Never was there a greater mistake. The finest perfection of technic has been acquired with painstaking care, with minute attention to exacting detail. At some period of his career, the artist has had to come down to foundation principles and work up. Opinions may differ as to the eminence of Leschetizky as a teacher, but the fact remains that many of the pianists now before the public have been with him at one time or another. They all testify that the Viennese master will have nothing to do with a player until he has gone through a course of rigorous preparation spent solely in finger training, and can play a pair of Czerny études with perfect control and effect.

## ARTISTIC TOUCH

One of the greatest American teachers of touch was Dr. William Mason, who made an exhaustive study of this subject. His own touch was noted for its clear, bell-like, elastic quality. He remarked on one occasion, in regard to playing in public: "It is possible I may be so nervous that I can hardly walk to the piano; but once I have begun to play I shall hold the audience still enough to hear a pin drop, simply by the beauty of my touch and tone." Dr. Mason's touch specialties were "pressure" and "elastic" or "drawing-off" touches. He found these gave both weight and crisp lightness to the tones.

Mr. Tobias Matthay, of London, has given much time and thought to the study of touch and key mechanism. He says: "The two chief rules of technic, as regards the key are: Always feel how much the key resists you, feel how much the key *wants* for every note. Second, always listen for the moment each sound begins, so that you may learn to direct your effort to the sound only and not to the key bed. It is only by making the hammer end of the key move that you can make a sound. The swifter the movement, the louder the sound. The more gradual the movement the more beautiful the quality of sound. For brilliant tone, you may hit the string by means of the key, but do not, by mistake, hit the key instead."

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Thuel Burnham, a pupil of Mason and Leschetizky, has welded the ideas of these two masters into his own experience, and simplifies the matter of piano touch as follows:

### MELODY AND COLORATURA HANDS

“The position and condition of the hand varies according to the character of the music and the quality of tone you wish to produce. If you give out a melody, you want a full, luscious tone, the weight of arm on the key, everything relaxed and a clinging, caressing pressure of finger. Here you have the ‘Melody Hand,’ with outstretched, flat fingers. On the contrary, if you wish rapid passage work, with clear, bright, articulate touch, the hand must stand up in well-arched, normal playing position, with fingers well rounded and good finger action. Here you have the ‘Technical’ or ‘Coloratura Hand.’”

The distinction made by Mr. Burnham clears up the uncertainty about arched hand and articulate touch, or low hand and flat fingers. Both are used in their proper place, according to the demands of the music. The player, however, who desires a clean, reliable technic, should first acquire a coloratura hand before attempting a melody hand.

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### SECTION III

#### *The Art of Practise*

We have seen that if the pianist hopes to perfect himself in his art he must lay the foundation deep down in the fundamentals of hand position, body condition, correct finger movements and in careful attention to the minutest details of touch and tone production.

The remark is often heard, from persons who have just listened to a piano recital: "I would give anything in the world to play like that!" But would they even give the necessary time, to say nothing of the endless patience, tireless energy and indomitable perseverance which go to the making of a virtuoso.

How much time does the artist really require for study? Paderewski owns to devoting *all* his time to it during the periods of preparation for his recital tours. At certain seasons of the year most of the artists give a large portion of each day to the work. Godowsky is an incessant worker; Burnham devotes his entire mornings to piano study; Germaine Schnitzer gives six hours daily to her work, and if interrupted one day the lost time is soon made up. Eleanor Spencer "practises all her spare time," as she quaintly puts it. A professional pianist must give a number of hours each day to actual practise at the keyboard, besides what is done away from it. The work is mentally going on continually, whether one really sits at the instrument or not.

The point which most concerns us is: How shall one practise so as to make the most of the time and accomplish the best results? What *études*, if any, shall we use, and what technical material is the most useful and effectual?

Wilhelm Bachaus, whose consummate technic we have so often admired, says: "I am old-fashioned enough to still believe in scales and arpeggios. Some of the players of the present day seem to have no use for such things, but I find them of great importance. This does not necessarily mean that I go through the whole set of keys when I practise the scales. I select a few at a time and work at those. I start



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with ridiculously simple forms—just the thumb under the hand and the hand over the thumb—a few movements each way, but these put the hand in trim for scales and arpeggios. I practise the latter about half an hour a day. I have to overhaul my technic once or twice a week to see that everything is in order. Scales and arpeggios come in for their share of criticism. I practise them in various touches, but oftener in *legato*, as that is more difficult and also more beautiful than the others. I practise technic, when possible, an hour a day, including Bach.”

Sigismond Stojowski considers that scales and arpeggios must form a part of the daily routine.

Thuel Burnham says: “Of my practise hours at least one is given to technic, scales, arpeggios, octaves, chords, and Bach! I believe in taking one selection of Bach and perfecting it—transposing it in all keys and polishing it to the highest point possible. So with études, it is better to perfect a few than to play *at* so many.”

### THE PIANIST A MECHANIC

Edwin Hughes, the American pianist and teacher in Munich, remarks: “Technic is the mechanical part of music making; to keep it in running order one must be constantly tinkering with it, just as the engine driver with his locomotive or the chauffeur with his automobile. Every intelligent player recognizes certain exercises as especially beneficial to the mechanical well-being of his playing; from these he will plan his daily schedule of technical practise.”

Teresa Carreño asserts she had in the beginning many technical exercises which her teacher wrote out for her, from difficult passages taken from the great composers. There were hundreds of them, so many that it took just three days to go the rounds. She considers them invaluable, and constantly uses them in her own practise and in her teaching. Each exercise must be played in all keys and with every possible variety of touch and tone.

Paderewski gives much time daily to pure technic practise. He has been known to play scales and arpeggios in a single key for three

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quarters of an hour at a stretch. These were played with every variety of touch, velocity, dynamic shading and so on.

It is seen from the instances quoted that many great pianists believe in daily technic practise, or the study of pure technic apart from pieces. Many more testify that scales, chords, arpeggios and octaves constitute their daily bread. Some have spoken to me especially of octave practise as being eminently beneficial. They feel these things are essential to the acquiring of a fine technic, and keeping it up to concert pitch.

Some artists are partial to certain technical studies. Bachaus highly recommends those of Brahms, for instance. All artists use Bach in connection with their technic practise; in fact the works of Bach may be considered to embody pure technic principles, and pianists and teachers consider them a daily necessity.

### INVENTING EXERCISES

Together with their studies in pure technic alone, the artists invent exercises out of the pieces they study, either by playing passages written for both hands with one hand, by turning single notes into octaves, by using more difficult fingering than necessary, thus bringing into use the weaker fingers, changing the rhythm, and in numerous other ways increasing the effort of performance, so that when the passage is played as originally written, it shall indeed seem like child's play.

Another means to acquire technical mastery is through transposition. One would think Bach's music difficult enough when performed as written, but the artists think nothing of putting it through the different keys. Burnham relates that during early lessons with Dr. Mason, that master gave him a Bach Invention to prepare, casually remarking it might be well to memorize it. The simple suggestion was more than sufficient, for the ambitious pupil presented himself at the next lesson with not only that particular Invention learned by heart, but likewise the whole set! De Pachmann, in his eagerness to master the technic and literature of the piano, says that when a Bach Prelude and Fugue was on one occasion assigned him by his teacher,

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he went home and learned the whole twenty-four, which he was able to play in every key for the next lesson!

### SLOW PRACTISE

The question is often put to artists: "Do you deem it necessary to work for velocity, or do you practise the composition much at the required speed?" Many pianists practise very slowly. This was William H. Sherwood's custom. Harold Bauer believes velocity to be inherent in the individual, so that when the passage is thoroughly comprehended it can be played at the necessary rate of speed. Bachaus testifies he seldom works for velocity, saying that if he masters the passage he can play it at any required tempo. "I never work for velocity as some do," he remarks. "I seldom practise fast, for it interferes with clearness. I prefer to play more slowly, giving the greatest attention to clearness and good tone. By pursuing this course I find that when I need velocity I have it."

Clarence Adler counsels pupils always to begin by practising slowly—faster tempo will develop later, subconsciously. Velocity is only to be employed after the piece has been thoroughly learned, every mark of expression observed, all fingering, accents and dynamic marks mastered. "You would scarcely believe," he adds, "how slowly I practise myself."

### A FEW EXCEPTIONS

There are very few exceptions to the general verdict in favor of technic practise apart from pieces. Godowsky asserts he never practises scales. Bauer cares little for pure technic practise, believing the composition itself contains sufficient material of a technical nature.

Whether or not these brilliant exceptions merely prove the rule, the thoughtful student of the piano must decide for himself. He has already discovered that modern piano playing requires a perfect technic, together with the personal equation of vigorous health, serious purpose and many-sided mentality. Mme. Rider-Possart says: "Technic is something an artist has to put in the background as

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something of secondary importance, yet if he does not possess it he is nowhere." The student will not overlook the fact that to acquire the necessary technical control he must devote time and thought to it outside of piece playing. He must understand the principles and follow out a certain routine in order to secure the best results in the quickest and surest way. While each one must work out his own salvation, it is an encouragement to know that even the greatest artists must toil over their technic, must keep eternally at it, must play slowly, must memorize bit by bit. The difference between the artist and the talented amateur often lies in the former's absolute concentration, perseverance and devotion to the highest ideals.

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### SECTION IV

#### *How to Memorize*

At the present stage of pianistic development, an artist does not venture to come before the public and “use his notes.” No artist who values his reputation would attempt it. Everything must be performed from memory—solos, concertos, even accompaniments. The pianist must know every note of the music he performs. The star accompanist aspires to the same mastery when he plays for a famous singer or instrumentalist. We also have the artist conductor, with opera, symphony or concerto at his finger-tips. Hans von Bülow, who claimed that a pianist should have more than two hundred compositions in his repertoire, was himself equally at home in orchestral music. He always conducted his Meiningen Orchestra without notes.

Let us say, then, that the present-day pianist ought to have about two hundred compositions in his repertoire, all of which must be played without notes. The mere fact of committing to memory such a quantity of pages is no small item in the pianist’s equipment. The problem is to discover the best means of memorizing music quickly and surely. Here again we are privileged to inquire of the artist and of the artist teacher. His knowledge and experience will be practical, for he has evolved it and proved it over and over again.

It is a well-known fact that Leschetizky advises memorizing away from the instrument. This method at once shuts the door on all useless and thoughtless repetition employed by so many piano students, who repeat a passage endlessly, to avoid thinking it out. Then they wonder why they cannot commit to memory! The Viennese master suggests that a short passage of two or four measures be learned with each hand alone, then tried on the piano. If not yet quite fixed in consciousness the effort should be repeated, after which it may be possible to go through the passage without an error. The work then proceeds in the same manner throughout the composition.

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### ONE YEAR'S MEMORIZING

A player who gives five or six hours daily to study, and who has learned how to memorize, should be able to commit one page of music each day. This course, systematically pursued, would result in the thorough assimilation of at least fifty compositions in one year. This is really a conservative estimate, though at first glance it may seem rather large. If we cut the figure in half, out of consideration for the accumulative difficulties of the music, there will still remain twenty-five pieces, enough for two programs and a very respectable showing for a year's study.

It may be that Leschetizky's principle of memorizing will not appeal to every one. The player may find another path to the goal, one more suited to his peculiar temperament. Or, if he has not yet discovered the right path, let him try different ways till he hits upon one which will do the work in the shortest and most thorough manner. All masters agree that analysis and concentration are the prime factors in the process of committing music to memory.

Michael von Zadora, pianist and teacher, said to me recently: "Suppose you have a difficult passage to learn by heart. The ordinary method of committing to memory is to play the passage over and over, till the fingers grow accustomed to its intervals. That is not my manner of teaching. The only way to master that passage is to analyze it thoroughly, know just what the notes are, the sequences of notes, if you will, their position on the keyboard, the fingering, the positions the hands must take to play these notes, so that you know just where the fingers have to go before you put them on the keys. When you thus thoroughly understand the passage or piece, have thought about it, lived with it, so that it is in the blood, we might say, the fingers can play it. There will be no difficulty about it and no need for senseless repetitions."

### PHRASE BY PHRASE

Most of the artists agree that memorizing must be done phrase by phrase, after the composition has been thoroughly analyzed as to keys, chords, and construction. This is Katharine Goodson's way,

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and also Eleanor Spencer's and Ethel Leginska's, three of Leschetizky's pupils now before the public. "I really know the composition so thoroughly that I can play it in another key just as well as the one in which it is written, though I do not always memorize it each hand alone," says Miss Goodson. "I first play the composition over a few times to become somewhat familiar with its form and shape," says Eleanor Spencer, "then I begin to analyze and study it, committing it by phrases, or ideas, one or two measures at a time. I do not always take the hands alone, unless the passage is very intricate, for sometimes it is easier to learn both hands together." Germaine Schnitzer avers that she keeps at a difficult passage until she really knows it perfectly, no matter how long it takes. "What is the use of going on," she says, "until you are absolutely sure of the work in hand."

It is plain from the opinions already cited and from many I have heard expressed that the artists waste no time over useless repetitions. They fully realize that a piece is not assimilated nor learned until it is memorized. When they have selected the composition they wish to learn, they begin at once to memorize from the start. The student does not always bring to his work this definiteness of aim; if he did, much precious time would be saved. The ability to memorize ideas expressed in notes grows with use, just as any other aptitude grows with continued effort.

Instead, then, of playing *with* a piece, why do you not at once begin to make it your own? Look at the phrases so intently that they become as it were, photographed on your mind. Ruskin said: "Get the habit of looking intently at words." We might say the same of notes. Look at the phrase with the conviction that it can be remembered after a glance or two. It is only an indication of indolence and mental inertness to look continually at the printed page or passage and keep on playing it over and over, without trying to fix it indelibly in the mind.

In my work as teacher I constantly meet students, and teachers too, who do little or no memorizing. Some do not even approve of it, though it is difficult to conceive how any one in his right mind can

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disapprove knowing a thing thoroughly. The only way to know it thoroughly is to know it by heart.

### CONSTANT REPAIRS NECESSARY

A repertoire once committed must be constantly kept in repair. The public player, in his seasons of study, generally has a regular system of repetition, so that all compositions can be gone over at least once a week. One artist suggests that the week be started with the classics and concluded with modern compositions and concerted numbers. Thus each day will have its allotted task. The pieces are not merely to be played over, but really overhauled, and all weak places treated to a dose of slow, careful practise, using the printed pages. Artists on tour, where consecutive practise is difficult or unattainable, always carry the printed notes of their repertoire with them, and are ceaselessly studying, repairing, polishing their phrases, thinking out their effects.

To those who wish to become pianists, I would say: "Keep your memory active through constant use. Be always learning by heart; do it systematically, a little at a time. So it will be daily progress. So your repertoire is built!"



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### SECTION V

#### *Rhythm and Tone Color in Piano Playing*

How shall two such opposites as rhythm and tone color be connected, even in name, some will ask. One belongs to the mechanical side of piano playing, while the other appertains to the ideal, the poetic, the soulful. The two subjects, however, are not so wide apart as might at first appear; for the beauty and variety of the second depends largely upon the mastery of the first. You must play rhythmically before you can play soulfully; you must first be able to keep time before you can attempt to express color and emotion through any fluctuation of rhythm. One depends on the other, therefore time and rhythm come first; when these are well under control, not before, we can go further and enter the wider field of tonal variety.

Rhythm is one of the pianist's most important assets, something he cannot do without. It might be said that the possession of a well-developed rhythmic sense is one point in which the artist differs greatly from the amateur. The latter thinks nothing of breaking the rhythm at any time and place that suits his fancy; while the artist is usually conscientious about such matters, because his time sense is more highly developed. A perfect time sense is often inherent in the artist, a part of the natural gift which he has cultivated to such a high state of achievement. It may be he has never had any difficulty with this particular point in piano playing, while the amateur has constantly to struggle with problems of time and rhythm.

#### THE METRONOME

When the subject of using such a mechanical aid as the metronome to cultivate rhythmic sense, is broached to the executive artist, it does not always meet with an assenting response. With such bred-in-the-bone sense of time as the artist commands, it is little wonder he takes no great interest in mechanical time-beating. Josef Hofmann's

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censure of the metronome was probably due to his inborn rhythmic and artistic sense; yet his words have doubtless had their effect on many students, who, lacking his sense of rhythm, would have been greatly benefited by its use.

Godowsky, when asked his opinion of the metronome, replied: "I assuredly approve of its use; I have even devoted a chapter to the metronome in the *Progressive Series*, my great work on piano playing." Edwin Hughes remarks: "If pupils have naturally a poor sense of rhythm, there is no remedy equal to practising with the metronome, using it daily until results are evident, when there can be a judicious letting up of the discipline. The mechanical sense of rhythm, the ability to count and to group the notes of a piece correctly, can be taught to any person, if one has the patience; but for the delicate rhythmic *nuances* required by a Chopin Mazourka or a Viennese Valse, a special rhythmic gift is necessary."

Artists and teachers who have come under Leschetizky's influence and use his principles, are generally in favor of the metronome, according to their own testimony. The fact is, they as teachers often find such deficiency in their pupils on the subject of time sense and accuracy in counting, that they are forced to institute strict measures to counteract this lack of rhythmic comprehension.

Granting, then, that the correct use, not the abuse, of the metronome is of great assistance in establishing firm rhythmic sense, let us turn our thought to the fascinating subject of—

## TONE COLOR

When De Pachmann affirmed that he uses certain fingers to create certain effects, the idea was thought to be one of the eccentric pianist's peculiar fancies. Other players, however, have had the same thought, and have worked along the same line—the thought that on the fingering used depends the quality of tone. For instance you might not play an expressive melody with a consecutive use of the fifth finger, which is called a "cold finger" by Thuel Burnham. He

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would use instead the third, a “warm finger,” to give out a soulful melody.

### TONAL VARIETY

The pianist who desires to play effectively, must continually strive for variety of tone, for tonal coloring. These can be studied in scales, chords, arpeggios and other technical forms. The singer seeks to make a tone of resonant color, not a straight, flat tone; the pianist, on his part, endeavors to give color and variety to his playing in the same way. Harold Bauer thinks variety must be secured by the contrast of one tone with another. Even a very harsh tone may be beautiful in its right place, owing to its relation to other tones, and its ability to express an idea. To render the playing expressive by the contrast of light and shade, by tonal gradations, by all varieties of touch, by all the subtleties of *nuance*, is a great art, and only the most gifted ever master it in its perfection. These are the things that enchant us in Paderewski's performance, and in the tonal coloring of Gabrilowitsch. Hofmann's playing is a marvel of atmosphere and color; such playing is an object lesson to students, a lesson in variety of light and shade, the shifting of exquisite tonal tints.

The sensitive musician is highly susceptible to color effects in nature, in art or in objects about him. Certain colors attract him, for he sees an affinity between them and the tonal effects he strives to produce. Other colors repel, perhaps for the opposite reason. Brilliant red is a warlike color, and finds analogous expression in such pieces as Chopin's Polonaise *Militaire*, and MacDowell's Polonaise. We cannot help seeing, feeling the color red, when playing such music. Soft pink and rose for love music, tender blues and shades of gray for nocturnes and night pieces are some of the affinities of tone and color. Warm shades of yellow and golden brown suggest an atmosphere of early autumn, while delicate or vivid greens give thoughts of spring and luscious summer. Certain pieces of Mozart seem to bring before us the rich greens of a summer landscape; the *Fantaisie in C minor*, and the *Pastorale Varie* are of this type.

Arthur Hochman says: “Colors mean so much to me; some are so beautiful, the various shades of red for instance, then the golden

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yellows, rich warm browns, and liquid blues. We can make as wonderful combinations in tone color as ever painter put upon canvas. To me dark red speaks of something tender, heart-searching, mysterious. On the other hand the shades of yellow express gaiety and brightness.”

It has been said that a pianist should study color effects in order to express them in his playing. He can do this to special advantage at the theater or opera, where he can see unrolled before him the greatest possible variety in light and shade, in colors, and in the constantly changing panorama of action and emotion.

The pianist can receive many ideas of tone color when listening to a great singer, and watching the infinite tonal gradations produced on the “greatest of all instruments,” the human voice.

In short the pianist draws from many sources the experience, the feeling and emotion with which he strives to inspire the tones he evokes from his instrument. The keener his perceptions, the more he labors, suffers, and *lives*, the more he will be able to express through his chosen medium — the piano!