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This book deals with key chapters of piano teaching, such as study, tempo, rhythm, fingering, technique, dynamics, technical exercises, pedal, memorizing, sight reading, aural tests, improvisation, composition, interpretation, teaching and others. As the title says "From left and right", an attempt is made to avoid extreme situations, either on one side or the other, and follow the middle and royal road. This issue is the result of a long term study near distinguished piano teachers.



## From Left and Right

THE PIANO



Christodoulos Vassiliades PhD



Christodoulos Vassiliades was born in Lefkosia in 1965. He holds a PhD in theology and he is a musician. He also has diplomas in piano, byzantine music, harmony, counterpoint, orchestration and traditional violin.

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Christodoulos Vassiliades PhD

# **From left and right**

*The piano*



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Dedicated to the great pianist  
and pedagogue  
Max Hallecker



## Preface

Ich habe Herrn Vassiliadis Buch mit grossem Interesse durchgelesen. Der Studierende findet in vorbildlicher Anordnung vereinigt was er sich sonst in Einzelausgaben zusammensuchen müsste. Die Absicht dieses Buches ist erreicht wenn es ihm gelingt für die Musik tieferes Verständnis zu wecken.

*Max Hallecker*

\* \* \*

I have read the book written by Mr Vasiliades with great interest. With its help the student may of acquire advice and guidance from several sources assembled together in an excellent way. The objective of this book is to enable the student to develop a further understanding of music.

*Max Hallecker*  
*Virtuoso - Piano professor*  
*Athens, January the 25th, 1998*

\* \* \*

Διάβασα με πολύ ενδιαφέρον τὸ βιβλίο τοῦ κυρίου Βασιλειάδη. Ὁ σπουδαστής, με τὴ βοήθειά του, κατορθώνει νὰ βρῆ συμβουλές καὶ ὑποδείξεις, ἀπὸ διάφορες πηγές, συγκεντρωμένες με ἄριστο τρόπο. Ὁ στόχος αὐτοῦ τοῦ βιβλίου εἶναι νὰ ἀναπτύξῃ ὁ σπουδαστής μία βαθύτερη ἀντίληψη τῆς μουσικῆς.

*Μὰξ Χάλλεκερ*  
*Πιανίστας-Καθηγητῆς πιάνου*  
*Ἀθήνα, 25 Ἰανουαρίου 1998*



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## Introduction

Many times I have wondered whether or not I should publish a book of self-written notes on musical issues. It is my belief that silence is much preferred where nothing new and important is to be said.

But what does the word «music» and in particular the word «piano» mean? From a certain point of view, teaching or performing music, for example playing a piece on the piano, is somewhat similar to walking on tiptoe or becoming aware of extreme views from both your left and your right. Yet, you continue to walk on the tight rope, that is, you try to always follow the non-biased and royal route.

The various notions set aside in this book refer to the transformation of act into theory. It is only when you bury your own will behind the «ego» of the past and the present, behind the experience of other well recognised musicians, it is only then, that you become be capable of grasping the ideal and attainable beauty of the art of music.

Within the pages of this book the reader can find many details concerning the movements of the soul and the body, the powers, possibilities and operations which concern music and which spring from the deepest human substance and nature.

The worse damage the conscience of any person may suffer, as far as artistic creativeness is concerned, is its compartmentalisation under the influence of scientific knowledge. That is why the need for a governing science, which serves the purpose of uniting the several secondary sciences, persists until today.

In the old days, a composer did not learn his art through higher educational systems (anyway, the plain study of scientific books usually has nothing more to offer than scentless and tasteless pieces of knowledge). Instead, he devoted his entire life, his whole being, into studying anything associated with the substance of his art.

Every human being is born with a certain number of talents, which one could define as the uncultivated abilities which God in multiple forms offers to each one, such as the ability of perceiving fine sounds, of visually committing to memory various analogies, of object equilibrium etc. From

the very moment of conception these begin to change shape and form. Each individual character, however, should try hard, adding many new aspects in terms of knowledge, emotion, skill etc., if aiming to reach perfection and to transform into an integral musical existence.

It is this process of gradual improvement that we attempt to describe as best as we possibly can within the pages of this book. However, once the student perceives and experiences these in full length (that is, once he himself empirically and practically experiences the objectives presented by this book), he must then unite all different strains of knowledge so that their form is transformed into one and only notion.

Man as an artistic entity aims in finding through music, and more generally speaking, through art, his idol; for he believes that this is real, with substance, and not imaginary. He, therefore, basically tries, consciously or unconsciously (the later case being the most common), to reach the highest possible point beyond which nobody else can go, that is the point of supreme beauty, of current loveliness, of everlasting heavenly music.

And it is only when exhausted from the numerous attempts and pursuits, after having tried all existing musical forms, it is only then that God may have mercy for his creature, for He can see his pointless search. And then, once you have humbled yourself to the point of realising your insignificance, God will reveal to you the true music, the angelic glorification and the glorious beauty that lies hidden within silence.

This small essay is the result of experience that springs from many years of searching for vain knowledge. It describes, in every possible detail, the several movements of the body and of the soul, the «musical falls from both left and right», the route that leads towards musical perfection and most importantly towards the training of the artist for becoming a virtuoso.

The greatest, but unfortunately inevitable, as it seems, crime of our century, is the splicing of a living organism following its description, in an effort to understand this with our irrational reasoning. The consequence of this strategy is to lose the sense of integrity and hence of the essence of things.

Within the «being» of truly great composers, all elements composing the marvellous subject termed music are found together as a whole,

undivided, uninterrupted and not confused entity, as independent yet inseparable parts.

All potentials hidden within the human nature should follow an upward path, moving towards perfection as a unified and non-divided whole, unilaterally and anisotropically, so that no one strengthens at the expense of the others.

Our mind should be under continuous training if it is to become capable of receiving new musical inputs on a daily basis. Moreover, one should exercise body dexterity and ability: of the hand, of the wrist and of the fingers, of vision (so that the performer can «listen» to the music within his soul simply by looking at the score), of hearing (so that when listening to a piece he can «see» the music within his soul). As a final step comes the training of our ability in mastering improvisation.

This book is primarily addressed to piano professors, then to those performing this instrument and finally to advanced students trying to become initiated into the secrets of piano technique and performance.

We are convinced that it is as difficult to become a performer and a soloist, as it is to become a good professor. I say to become because you cannot carry with you by nature all the aptitudes of a good professor, except, of course, those innate qualities of transmitting knowledge and information.

To be an effective piano professor you have to analyse all facts, even the last subdivision, to disarrange them into pieces, to disassemble them into their components, to reach the inferior level of human being, to live the Crucifixion and then rearrange, reassemble them again, arrange them into bigger groups and ascent to the top of beauty of Resurrection and Transformation.

*Christodoulos Vassiliades*  
*Lefkosia, 14 September 2013*



## **Body position and exercises**

*«When playing the piano, acquire the same relaxing feeling as when lying on the surface of the sea».*

1. When studying the piano or when about to perform in a concert, it is best to sit on the front part of the piano stool, so as to stabilise body position by placing weight on your feet.

2. Your feet should always face forwards (even when studying, to avoid the danger of any other position becoming a habit and an addiction), and should be slightly open.

3. As the danger of losing body balance always exists when playing very high or low notes, it is best to sit close to the piano -not too close, however- so as to maintain this balance.

### **A. Exercises for the shoulders**

4. Raise your shoulders up high and allow them to come down freely.

5. Having your head facing downwards, bend forwards; raise your hands upwards, allowing them to freely come down again (do this at least five times).

6. Stand upright, raise your hands and again allow them to freely come down (repeat this at least five times), so as to form a circular motion.

7. Stand upright, close your eyes and allow yourself to be carried away by a feeling of upward lift. When this is achieved, the body shall take its proper position.

### **B. Exercises for the hand**

8. Bend your hand upwards, aim at a note and allow it to come down freely.

9. From a high position play various staccato chords, abruptly raising your hand. Several pianists often employ this method as a means for showing off.

10. Weight lifting or sports such as tennis etc., does your hands great damage.

### **C. The wrist**

11. Depending on the piece to be performed (its speed, era or composer, whether it is rhythmical or melodic), movement of the wrist can be in the right or left direction, upwards or downwards.

### **D. Exercises for the fingers**

12. Lightly, without exercising any force, place your fingers on the piano or on the table; then, move your fingers one by one, or two by two in the upward or downward direction.

13. Place your fingers, one by one, on the table and press them until a sense of contact and depth is created.

14. The fingers must be very close to the keys so as to be able to control the sound; there are, of course, exceptions to this rule. When about to perform a piece of high complexity and extreme speed, it is a must for all fingers to be positioned very close to the piano, if possibly adjoining to it. The reason that all fingers should be touching the keys is so that they can be extremely ready to immediately perform anything, however difficult this may be. We must first, however, train our fingers to correctly articulate the various sounds.

## Notes on how to study

*«Small mistakes can turn into bad habits difficult to uproot».*

1. When studying, be careful so that the tempo with which you play a piece is neither too fast, nor too slow, but is the exact tempo which will enable you to observe and perform all those things that you have in mind and wish to perform. Try to think of everything in advance; do not correct anything after having made a mistake.

2. When studying non-stop, your interest for what you are playing gradually fades away. For that reason, it is best that your study consists of small pauses that will allow you, on one hand, to not lose your interest and on the other to relax and avoid the danger of hypertension.

3. It is best to study a phrase of four bars until you learn it in great detail, almost off by heart, rather than studying one or two pages, repeating these from beginning to end.

4. When studying, you should be relaxed and it is best to take a shower before beginning your piano study. The desire to study should come from within you, it should not be something that you thrust upon yourself. For reasons well understood, it is best to study during the morning hours.

5. Choose pieces that you personally enjoy studying, otherwise you will have no enthusiasm left to finish what you have started. The most important thing of all is to maintain your enthusiasm until the end. Do not blame your teacher when observing no progress in your work; look for the one at fault inside you.

6. One way of learning a piece is to first learn it all in terms of rhythm, melody and fingering gradually adding the details to it. This strategy allows for the initial enthusiasm to be maintained until the end.

7. Personally, we prefer the method of performing the piece from the start bar by bar in every detail. This way you train your fingers to do all those things that you wish them to do, from the start. In this way there will be no need for changing any parts in your performance afterwards, as you will have these ready from the beginning. It is much more difficult to change something after you have learned it and has become a habit.

8. The slightest detail, if neglected and not noticed from the beginning, will become much more noticeable when playing the piece in its normal tempo and will be much harder to correct.

9. After having learned a piece, do not lose your concentration; always stay on the catch until all those elements composing the piece become passion, habit and second nature.

10. If you do not succeed in performing a certain part of the piece, both subdivide this into smaller time values (semiquavers, demisemiquavers), and convert it into exercises. It is best, once having learned this technique, to transform all difficult parts into exercises rather than study several exercises not directly connected to the piece.

11. When studying a piece in a slow tempo for the first time perform this in a soft tone, as it is a habit to play more loudly when the piece is performed much faster.

12. When studying a Fugue for the first time, first play the different voices separately, paying no real attention to correct fingering, while simultaneously singing another voice out loud. This way, the various musical lines become engraved in your mind. As a second step, study separately the music corresponding to the left and to the right hand. In this way, you shall acquire correct understanding as far as playing the Fuge is concerned.

## Timing

*«Accuracy is good, haste is tragic,  
delay is marvellous».*

1. There is one and only tempo in which any piano piece must be performed; neither faster, nor slower.

2. It is only after you perfect and experience a piece having first discovered everything there is to discover including it, about its composer and era, that you can find the correct speed for it.

3. It is important to use a metronome when learning a piece. Play lighter than you ought to, so that you can hear the metronome. The louder you play, the less you listen to the metronome.

4. To gain your freedom, a freedom that will be genuine and real, you must first submit yourself to the beat of the metronome and become its faithful servant. If you attempt to perform the various tempo changes (ritenuto, accelerando, rubato etc.), without first having stabilised the tempo inside you, failure is bound to come.

5. When studying a piece, take care to do this slowly, until every detail subconsciously becomes second nature, until it becomes a passion, a habit, so that when playing the piece at its normal speed, the need for thinking anything else apart from expression, no longer exists.

6. A melodic tune should have a spontaneous inward fluency and not consist of independent, unconnected parts. That is why, once having learned a piece, you must dissociate yourself from the need of the metronome.

7. If you face difficulties in this section and believe that your logic predominates your performance which should spring from your heart and feeling through logic, an easy method for putting the situation right is to perform the piece at a slightly faster tempo. This will resituate your brain so that it no longer acts as the restraining factor.

8. The correct tempo for any piece varies slightly each time depending on the mood of its performer, as well as on the tone in which it is performed, this may be slightly louder or softer.

9. When studying a piece with the aid of a metronome, check yourself regularly to ensure that the beat has not accelerated or retarded with respect to that indicated by the metronome.

10. It is the habit of some performers to adopt a slightly or much faster tempo than the right one; yet, this is purely adopted as a means of self-projection or show-off, not because it serves the correct interpretation and execution of the piece.

11. When spotting a rhythmic difficulty, gradually reduce the speed with which you are playing the piece until you reach a very slow tempo, so that you can detect just like a good doctor would- the source of the error or difficulty.

12. For succeeding in reaching a perfect *ritenuto* in between or at the end of a piece try to picture this as an engine which, having been turned off, slowly retards from 100 to 95, to 90, to 80, to 70, to 50, to 30, to 0.

13. If wishing to place greater emphasis on a note, it is common practice to slightly delay playing the last note or chord of a piece; taking a small breath is an even more effective tool.

14. Always keep in mind the following rules: in music, anything said at exactly the right tempo is good, anything said before its time is a crime and sometimes a few things slightly delayed can be wonderful. It is way better to delay a note (where permitted, goes without saying), so that the audience does not hear the sound where expecting to, but with a slight delay.

15. Ensure that the *ritenuto* at the end of any piece is performed in the correct and orthodox way. Depending on the piece to be performed, there is always only one correct type of *ritenuto*.

16. After having learned a piece well, it is best to allow the metronome to beat for a whole bar rather for every note. If, for example, a quaver is to be played at a beat of a 120, have the metronome beating for the half dotted at 40 (for a bar of three fourths). This is a clever trick offering greater fluency to the piece being performed without accelerating the tempo, transforming it into an embodied and authentic reality before the audience.

17. If performing a piece at a slightly faster tempo, the end result is nicer when performance is softer; when, however, performing a piece slightly more slowly, it is better to play this more loudly, as this adds sound and majesty to the piece.

18. On several occasions, especially when a slow, melodic line is concerned, the performer wishes for the tempo to be slightly slower than the right one. He must also, however, pay special attention to the needs of the audience, which almost always wishes for the piece to have greater motion and expression, thus - achieving the distinct reshaping and recreation of the musical pictures.

19. When having a fast tempo of three fourths, it is best to count every two bars, as if having before us a bar of six fourths. This adds much motion to the musical line.

20. After having personally conquered the nature of a piece, a performer can «break the time framework» and perform it without following a specific tempo. Anything he then performs will be good. A beginner, however, must take great care as far as the important musical «tempo» chapter is concerned.

21. The reason behind the existence of compound time is the maintenance of fluency, preventing the time-constrain of performance. The terminology of compound time (borrowing the term from the Art of Psalms) is the condensation of two bars into one and not the one mistakenly given by the current theory of music (See Christodoulos Vassiliades, Theory of Music, First Theory, Chapter 5, paragraph 10, page 6).

22. Time should never be lost within the melody or tone of a certain piece, or within musical notes of great value. Within us, two powers are naturally always in combat; melody and time fight each other. Making use of the virtue of discrimination, we must always keep the two dimensions, these being the melodic line and time, inseparably bound and cleverly balanced.



# Rhythm

*«The marriage of Rhythm and Melody  
is the beginning of progress».*

1. Rhythm is the only element steadily and constantly repeated within any composition.

2. If when playing a certain rhythmical motif you face difficulties, try to first visualise it, attempting to play it on the piano only as a second step; this method aids immensely as far as rhythmical motifs are concerned.

3. The smoothness of the melodic line as well as the tone of the rhythmic line is frequently indicated by the triplet; for this reason, this is performed slightly more slowly (and smoothly) than a dotted note, then latter being performed more abruptly and with a much more intense rhythmical manner.

4. When encountering a certain rhythmical problem (not being capable of accurately and uniformly performing demisemiquavers, for example), try correcting the mistake in your slow study, observing whether you have neglected correcting a small detail that was enlarged at this faster tempo.

5. There are two basic methods by which one can perform a certain rhythmic pattern (triplet, dotted values, etc.), these being rhythmically or melodically, depending on what is requested by the melodic phrase.

6. A truly mastered piano performer is one who becomes a witness of the spiritual wedding and secret marriage between Rhythm (the «bridegroom») and Melody (the «bride»).

7. If you cannot feel the tempo of a pattern from beforehand, you will never be able to truly understand its rhythmic structure.

8. When having various notes grouped into groups of fives, sevens, nines, etc., divide them into two smaller teams (2-3, 3-4, 4-5, or, 3-2, 4-3, 5-4), the slight rhythmic accent falling sometimes on one intermediate note and sometimes on another, depending on the case under consideration. It is quite difficult for the accent to drop between two intermediate musical notes when counting quickly.

9. A general rule is that notes of small value tend to almost always approach those of large value, that is, the former, somehow, to attract the latter.

10. When playing triplets consisting of quavers with your right hand whilst playing ordinary quavers with your left hand, place all your attention on your right hand so as to be capable of performing the triplets with rhythmic accuracy; the left hand functions as a machine, requiring no thinking. Try playing the piece with your right hand alone, then with your left; once having mastered the melodic lines, try joining the two hands. What you must always have in mind, is that the first note of a triplet is performed along with the first note of the group of quavers, whereas the other two are performed the second one before and the third one after the second note of the group of quavers. Place a slight accent on the first note of both hands and try to play slightly louder with your right hand.

11. When facing a certain rhythmic difficulty (for example when having quavers together with triplets of quavers on the same hand), try clapping the rhythm before performing it on the piano.

12. If studying a piece with your left and right hand in separation while simultaneously having to play the syncopation for one of the hands, try to lightly beat the time with your foot while the piece is still at its first stages. This will immensely aid in the correct performance of the piece, especially when this has to be performed at a very fast speed. Gradually, given the empirical learning of the piece and after joining the two hands, this must be minimised until completely abandoned.

# Fingering

*«Simplifying fast parts while complicating slow ones can solve many technical difficulties».*

1. It is easily understood that the first thing one must watch out for when studying a piece for the first time, alongside with rhythmic and melodic accuracy, is fingering.
2. Write down the fingering as a first step, after first having tried it, that is. It is of course highly likely that you will change and improve this by the time you perfect the piece.
3. On several occasions, the various fingerings to be used depend on the tempo with which the piece is to be performed.
4. The various fingerings should be directly related to the melodic line.
5. When having to play the same note for more than once, use the same finger or different, depending on the occasion.
6. When the piece is slow and melodious, it is preferable to keep changing fingers, mainly in the direction of fifth towards first (the natural movement of the fingers, is from the fifth to the first finger and not vice versa).
7. When, however, the piece is too fast to allow smooth alteration of the fingers for the same note, or if the change will ruin the position of your wrist on the piano, then it is best -or rather necessary- to use the same finger throughout.
8. The fingering written down should be directly related to the one preceding and following the musical phrase.
9. When trying to find the best fingering, try out all possibilities; if you do not give up, this is bound to come naturally. Fingering always follows a hierarchy, starting from the best, to the second best, etc. Students must first, however, learn correctly the rhythm and notes and then the fingering.
10. When performing a piece with separate hands for the first time, the three basic elements that you should watch out for are rhythm, notes, and fingering.

11. Fingering which is convenient when a piece is performed slowly is not necessarily the suitable one for performing the piece at a faster (its normal) rhythm.

12. It is a custom to use more complicated and elaborated fingering for slow pieces or parts; these are simplified as much as possible when fast pieces or parts are to be performed.

13. Fingers (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th) move from the loudest (1st) to the weakest (5th) analogously and sequentially. Being the strongest ones, the three first fingers are usually burdened with having to perform the very speedy parts, while the other two (4th and 5th), are not.

14. The third finger, being the middle one, is somehow more greatly balanced than the rest of the fingers, as it is positioned at the centre of the wrist, having two fingers on its left and two on its right.

15. There are several exercises that one can employ in order to strengthen the weak fingers and vice versa (that is, weaken the strong ones), yet it is neither proper nor right to reverse natural laws.

16. Watch out for the relationship between the various fingerings of a piece, as well as for the fingerings of a motif, in connection to the preceding and following ones.

17. If it is necessary to change fingers twice when playing a note, there are two ways for doing this. The first one is to change the two fingers extremely quickly, almost simultaneously; when using this method the two fingers are written side by side and are linked with a curved line. The second method is to allow for a slight delay above or below the particular note.

18. It is only when you learn a piece very well and off by heart that you can settle down to the fingerings that are more suitable for using on each occasion.

19. I frequently place the third finger of my right hand above the fourth one when wishing to give a different tone, or better, greater power to the note that is to be performed by this particular finger.

20. When studying a piece for the first time, the first thing to be decided is the correct tempo that ought to be reached. It is only then that you may

begin writing down the various fingerings, which should correspond to the natural tempo of the piece and not to the slow one employed towards the initial stages of your study.

21. The same way that a harmonic or melodic chain exists, a chain of fingerings also exists and learning how to use this can solve many problems.

22. Simplifying difficult fingerings and, systematically grouping these so that they are connected to other groups, facilitates their memorisation.

23. When making a mistake concerning fingering, you should not try to reassure yourself that it was nothing more than a slight slip; on the contrary, it is necessary to join the notes for which the mistake was made with the preceding and following musical pattern. Music represents the joining of various factors and not their separation.

24. Correct fingering is the orthodox means and method leading towards your final goal, this being nothing more apart from your perfection in playing the piano; for that reason, fingering should never become autonomy or an end in itself.

25. If you have to play the same note successively and sequentially with your third, second and first fingers, place all three fingers close to one another on the note so as to adjoin the key. In this way you save time, while maintaining finger position.

26. The different types of fingering come to the surface themselves when you are not really thinking about the particular form of fingering that you should use. In other words, when you allow your fingers to freely perform a particular musical phrase without imposing a particular form of fingering, they themselves shall reach the most accurate combination.

27. Every time you have difficulty in deciding which fingering is best to use, it is beneficial to think of the advantages and disadvantages for each type and, after having weighed the arguments for and against, to make the right, to your opinion, choice.

28. At some final stage, it may be necessary to try the several types of fingering using both hands, so as to assure that a balance exists between the left and right hand. It is this compliance and uniformity between the two hands, which is the most important factor of all in this great chapter titled: «Fingerings».

29. Every time you come across the same musical pattern, you should use the same fingering, so as to produce the same sound quality and maintain a logical continuity and punctuality from beginning to end. An exception to the rule is when having to play the same pattern twice, wishing to somehow slightly alter the sound effect the second time round; in such a case changing the fingerings is permitted.

## Tonality or sound

*«The theatre hall determines the fullness and on many occasions the quality of sound».*

1. The sound that you produce using your fingers, wrist and hand as a whole, should primarily have depth. In order to achieve this your fingers should maintain a good contact with the keys.

2. The piano is an instrument having a wide sound range; for this reason it can produce the sounds of all other instruments. The artist should, therefore, try to produce, depending on the range within which he is performing, the sounds of several instruments, thus creating the impression of listening to a whole orchestra playing.

3. On many occasions the several melodic lines are in the form of questions and answers between the several orchestral instruments (flute, violins, horns, violoncellos, etc.).

4. When a piece belongs to the romantic era, join the various notes so as to produce a very good «legato». When, however, a piece belongs to the pre-classical or even the classic era (Mozart, Haydn), perform the piece playing «non legato».

5. When having to perform a piece containing chords for the right hand score, then, a special tone must almost always be given to the highest melodic note. A good exercise for achieving this end-result is to shape your palm and fingers above the chord notes, yet only playing the highest note.

6. Most of the times the low notes are played by the left hand (just as the double bass in an orchestra). It is then that one must produce a really beautiful and whole sound and tone, so that an entire series of harmonious notes can be consequently produced from within the soundboard.

7. A view exists, which I also share, that the left pedal usually serves the purpose of producing, according to the piano that is, a dull, gloomy sound or tone; for this reason it should not be frequently used, unless of course, one wishes to produce that particular sound effect.

8. The sound that must be produced varies according to whether we are performing in a small room, a concert hall or a spacious hall. We should always, therefore, keep in mind that it must, qualitatively and quantitatively, be analogous to the room in which the pieces being prepared will eventually be performed.

9. Generally speaking, the sound produced by the piano should be resemble to that produced by the harp, not that produced by percussion.

10. Iron bars inside the piano prevent the sound from escaping to the outside. This opposes the sound of the harp, which possesses an element of freedom, and is much more melodic and clear.

11. We should try to adopt the character of the era during which a piece was composed, yet it is impossible to produce the same sound by means of the modern day piano; this can only be done by using instruments of that particular era.

12. To produce the sound desired, you should try to imagine the tone that various instruments produce; if a piece is melodic, a good thing to do is to sing the various melodies.

13. When performing a composition that has the style of a song at a slightly slower tempo, the sound produced should be fuller and more complete than when performing it at a faster tempo. Performing a piece at a slow tempo is much harder than performing the same piece at a slightly faster tempo - when this is, of course, possible. For this reason, when learning a slow movement of a piece (such as, for example, the first movement of the Sonata Opus 27 Number 2 of L. v. Beethoven), it is preferable to play this faster to begin with, then gradually adopting a slower and more expressive tempo as your performance matures.

## Technique

*«Everything in music moves both paralalled  
and opposity.  
Transform difficult parts into easy ones  
and easy ones into difficult».*

1. Generally speaking, fingers should be at very close distance to the keys; the wrist should move, but as little as possible.

2. Movement of the wrist or of the hand, in the upward or sideways direction (as for example in Mazurkas and other dancing plays), if not affecting the note following, is necessary and assists the better expression of the spirit of the play.

3. The wrist usually moves to the left or right according to the flow of the melody.

4. Having learned to examine human substance in its entirety, scientifically and systematically, internally and externally, man can by himself learn everything.

5. Movement shall come naturally, on its own, when you allow yourself to loosen up and relax.

6. To be able to perform a composition as best as you possibly can, you should be completely relaxed.

7. Usually in music everything moves both in paralalled and opposite direction. When playing a fast piece you should relax, whereas when performing a slow piece you should try to preserve movement within melody.

8. When originally studying a piece at a slow rhythm, you should allow yourself to be rightly expressed by means of appropriate movements of the fingers, wrist, hand and body, analogously, avoiding exaggerations. In this way, when learning to play the piece at its normal tempo, these movements will, within the correct boundaries, become natural, thus aiding and assisting the correct interpretation and performance of the composition.

9. The wrist should always, especially when you are studying, maintain an elastic movement in all directions (upwards, downwards, to the left and right). In this way, when learning to play the piece at its normal tempo, movements will become limited within their natural boundaries.

10. If you have to play two or more notes simultaneously, you should slightly tighten your fingers in order to achieve this. It is self-explicatory that it is not the fingers but the wrist, in combination with the hand that perform the chords.

11. During a proper execution of a trill, fingers hold 50% of the movement, the rest 50% being held by the wrist. The slower the trill, the bigger the movement of the wrist, whereas the faster the trill the more the movement of the wrist is reduced. While that of the fingers is increased. When wishing to perform the trill loudly (*forte*), use your wrist more (80%) and your fingers less (20%) frequently. When wishing to perform the trill lightly (*piano*) (the way in which it should usually be performed), use mostly your fingers (80%) and less your wrist (20%).

12. Performance of fast solo compositions presupposes three factors:

- a. Grouping
- b. Preparation of position
- c. Performance, where required, using positions instead of fingering.

13. Sometimes you have to tighten your fingers (especially when playing chords), while on some other occasions you may have to loosen them. As long as you allow yourself to feel relaxed, the guide for when to do each, so as to transmit the analogous strength to the fingers, is your own self.

14. Chords of the harp mainly include the movement of the wrist and to a much lesser extend of the fingers. Thus, learning the art of how to change difficult parts into easy ones, and vice versa, is very important.

15. When performing a small trill or a fast appoggiatura, raising your wrist slightly prior to the musical ornament immensely aids in their correct performance.

16. For purely technical reasons, a group of notes belonging to one hand may be chosen to be played by both hands; the music produced, however, should sound as if being played by one hand alone. As a first step you should study the notes just using one hand, allocating them analogously to both hands only as a later stage, yet paying attention to

retain the same hue, as if they are being played not by two, but by one hand alone.

17. When performing chords, stabilise and slightly tighten your fingers, while always keeping your wrist loose, so as to be capable of playing the different notes simultaneously.

18. For fast parts or pieces, movements of the fingers should be minimised as much as possible, while movements of the wrist and hand should become more frequent. This, of course, is always relative and analogous.

19. Every time you have to learn a composition, group together all notes into positions with the appropriate fingering; when in the same position, it is the fingers which play and move more rather than the wrist.

20. A basic rule on how to play notes quickly while keeping the wrist in the same position, is to move your fingers at a close distance to the keys; the wrist should be kept stable and passive, avoiding unnecessary and pointless movements.

21. When having to perform a slow and tranquil movement of a composition, exaggerate and emphasise notes of great values, so as to avoid breaking of the sound at the middle or towards the end of these notes by the sounds of other voices that may interfere.

22. On the contrary, notes of small value should be performed softly and gently, without any effort at all from your behalf.

23. When the sign of a small trill is found above a note, it is good to first perform that part without the trill, so that the correct rhythm can be imprinted in your soul; add the small trill at a later stage. In this way you will succeed in achieving rhythmic accuracy.



# Dynamics

*«Where a “diminuendo” finishes, a breath is born»*

1. Slow study in combination with careful movement of the fingers, wrist and hand is required in order to achieve correct dynamics.

2. A simple method and exercise for achieving and perfecting the «crescendo» and «diminuendo» is to begin by finding the softest and the loudest note. Afterwards, start playing the notes one by one, slowly and sequentially, emphasising accordingly, little, more, even more, only to allow the sound to die out again. That is, sound intensity should be increased or decreased according to the dynamic indicated (eg. ppp, pp, p, mp, mf, f, mf, mp, p, pp, ppp) each time. In this way you will easily achieve the building up and dying out of sound while avoiding the danger of accenting isolated notes.

3. Seriously consider this piece of advice: On many occasions, a breath is born where a «diminuendo» ends. Once you have digested this truth, you will have solved the problem of whether or not to take a breath at a particular point, as well as how long or brief this should be.

4. Sometimes, you might have a phrase consisting of notes of small value, not requiring a breath either at its end or in between, but simply a complete dying out of the sound, which may resemble a breath.

5. Define the intensity which «piano» should have from the beginning; moreover, it is important to maintain freedom in performing extreme dynamics (eg. pp, ppp, ff, fff, etc.). Thus, do not define the intensity as either too loud (for then you will be incapable of performing «loudly», f), or too soft (for then you will be incapable of performing very softly, pp).

6. The accent placed on a note has nothing to do with whether this has to be played loudly (forte), neither does staccato have something to do with accenting; a note marked staccato can be played with or without accent, loudly or softly.

7. An accented note marked as staccato will last longer than one that does not have an accent.

8. For a musical phrase marked with «crescendo», the dynamics and volume should generally increase only slightly and not a lot, as it is customary.

9. The most important subject arising when having to play «diminuendo», always according to my humble opinion, is the bridging of the last note, which should be played very softly, with a slight upward movement of the wrist, until the sound dies out...

10. Fortunately or unfortunately, language does not assist in achieving this perfect dying out of sound, for most Greek words are stressed on the final syllable, whereas most English words are stressed on the antepenult. The connection and imperceptible influence of language upon music, is nowadays all too evident.

11. The word 'modulation' usually implies the transition from one planet to another, from one world to a different, brightful one; for that reason we should come up with a completely different and original dynamic when modulating.

12. Pay particular attention to giving a special dynamic and tone to sensitive notes of dynamic chords, for these are the ones that add a delicate feeling to the overall expression of the composition.

13. At the first stages of your study, it is a good idea to study the piece with separate hands, using no dynamics whatsoever. This will, enable you on the one hand to produce a uniform sound for all notes, and on the other to perceive the beauty and grace of the dynamics used in the particular composition.

14. The success in performance of the various dynamics depends on the correct combination of colouring and tone.

## Phrasing

*«Music may be described by just two words: tension -relaxation».*

1. Knowing where a phrase begins and ends is of major importance. Just as an organism needs to breathe in order to remain alive, so must the composition that you are performing.

2. Theoretically, knowing where to take a breath is very difficult, but this becomes much easier by singing the piece. Do not trust phrases used by publishers, for these are often wrong.

3. A general, yet not absolute, rule, as it has its exceptions, is that a breath should be taken following notes of great value.

4. A general rule is that music, within its melodic lines, can be characterised by simply using just two words: tension and relaxation. A good observer may easily understand this characterisation when observing the mechanism by which living organisms breathe (inhalation-exhalation).

5. Generally speaking, anything repeated in music is never performed in the same way. Sometimes the repeat should sound like an echo -in which case the sound should be softer than the first time round- and sometimes it should be heard more loudly, just as if saying something to a person with hearing problems, in which case you should repeat it using a louder tone.

6. Although two notes may not be joined together with a slur, they may tend to attract each other; on the other hand, two notes may be joined with a slur, yet they might not attract each other.

7. When having to play two consecutive notes joined together with a slur (legato), try to think that no end or beginning exists for either of the two, but simply one point which marks both the end of the first and the beginning of the second note.

8. As long as you are sensitive enough to listen, music alone will tell you when and how to play something.

9. Give this piece of advice great thought: On many occasions, an imaginary breath may be better than one being heard in the melodic line.

10. A certain motif should be performed in exactly the same way as the syllables that you may use (eg. pam-pam, pa-ram-pam, pa-ram, yiam-pa-ra-ram-pam) are sang. Two notes that must be performed in exactly the same way are defined by the same syllables (pam-pam).

11. Some have the good habit of performing having their mouth slightly open. This shows both that their music is breathing and that their performance is not fake but alive, just like a human being.

12. There are two ways for performing two joined chords. The first is to join only those notes within the chord that can be joined, whereas the second way is to hold the first chord until the last moment, lifting your fingers with an abrupt, yet unconscious movement, to play the second chord.

## Scales

*«When playing two octave scales, count for two quavers,  
when three count for three quavers,  
when four for four semiquavers, when five for quintoles  
and when six octaves for sextuplets».*

1. Before commencing your study, dedicate fifteen to twenty minutes to the sole and slow studying of scales.

2. Playing the scale (alongside with its arpeggios) in which a particular piece was composed prior to commencing your study, can prove very helpful.

3. When a beginner is playing a one-octave scale for the first time, he should be slowly counting every note.

4. At a later stage, when beginning to perform two-octave scales, he should start counting placing an accent on every other note. Accenting the first of two notes is, of course, wrong, as he will eventually have to perform the scale without accenting (or even counting, even silently!). Accenting can, however, help the beginner avoid the much greater danger of emphasising the dominant (1st scale) and subdominant, the notes that is, performed by the thumb.

5. It is only at a later stage, after having surpassed this danger that a student may begin to perform scales correctly, that is, without accenting, but with proper, internal counting.

6. One can tell if somebody is a good teacher from whether or not he can tell when his student, not accenting any of the notes, is counting correctly or wrongly, when counting is being done internally.

7. When playing two-octave scales, group the notes into teams of two quavers. When playing three-octave scales, group the notes into teams of triplets or three quavers. When playing four-octave scales, group the notes into teams of four semiquavers. When playing five-octave scales, group the notes into quintoles and when playing six-octave scales, into sextuplets or groups of six quavers.

8. An advanced pianist should make use of the whole piano range, especially when performing various romantic or modern day compositions. He should, therefore, perform five, or if possible, six-octave scales.

9. When performing scales which are enarmonious with certain others, the pianist should be thinking of both scales (e.g. C flat and B).

10. With scales, as with all compositions in general, the wrist should maintain a certain degree of elasticity and comfort, especially when a composition is to be studied at a tempo slower than the correct one for the first time. When playing quickly, be careful to avoid tightening your hand, especially your wrist and perform the scales gracefully. The faster and more complicated a scale, the less the effort and tension that should be placed on it. Try to understand the meaning of the phrase: « The effort of non-effort».

11. The several scales, always in accordance to their key, have acquired through the centuries, a certain tone and style, this being heroic, melancholic, etc.

12. There are pieces for which the wrist should move quickly, preparing the forward part; there are, however, pieces (dances, etc.) for which the wrist should move upwards.

## Technical exercises and others

*«Correct your mistakes from your own experience, and not superficially and you shall gain much confidence».*

1. We should always use various and several exercises and studies, including technical ones, as long as these can put right several difficulties. They should never, however, become an end in themselves, but serve the final goal and end, which is nothing more than the correct expression and performance of the compositions which we wish to perform.

2. Pianists, just as dancers and athletes, should never stop exercising, that is, they should never cease their athletic training. All of us have several defects or imperfections which can only be put right from own experience and not by superficial methods; several exercises may be employed to enable us to be freed from them.

3. A fairly good and practical method and exercise, is to convert several parts of the composition into individual exercises or to group notes together according to position. The several works or technical exercises should be classified in order of hierarchy depending on their degree of difficulty.

4. Technical exercises, listed according to degree of difficulty, include:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Work</b>	<b>Composer</b>
Introductory	Le petit clavier	Morhange
Preliminary	Le deliateur	
Grade 1, 2	100 Recreations	Cerny
Grade 3, 4	200 picoli canoni	Kunz
	Petit Pishna	Wolf
	30 Studies	Czerny
	40 Studies	Czerny
	Studies Op.47	Heller
Grade 5, 6	Hanon	
	Pischna	Wolf or Rehberg
	Virtuosity Studies	Morkofsky
	Studies Op.45, 46	Heller

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Work</b>	<b>Composer</b>
Grade 7, 8	L' ecole du virtuoso	Cerny
	L' art de delieur les doigts	Cerny
	Ecole de la main gauche	Cerny
	Principes rationnels de la technique pianistique	Cortot
	Etudes de concert	Chopin-Liszt
	Rafael Joseffy School of Art	Moskovsky-Moheles
	Gradus ad Parnasum	Clementi-Tausing

5. Works of J. S. Bach, according to degree of difficulty:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Work</b>	<b>Number</b>
Inr.-2	Der erste Bach	1,2,4,7,8,5,9,11,16,13,10,18,25,24,22
3	Der erste Bach	15, 21, 19, 17
4	Small Preludes and Fugettes	
5	Two-part Invasions	4,1,3,10,7,8,14,15,13,12,6,11,9,2,5
6	Three-part Invasions	15,6,7,13,12,1,5,3,4,14,11,10,2,8,9
	French Suites	
	Preludes and Fuges (1st Volume)	2,5,6,10,11,13,14,15,16,17,18,3,21 23,1,8,9,7,19,24,22,4,12,20

6. Several Sonatinas in order of difficulty:

**Clementi**; Op.36 No.1 (1st mov.), Op.36 No.1 (3rd mov.), Op.36 No.3 (2nd mov.), Op.36 No.3 (3rd mov.), Op.36 No.2 (3rd mov.), Op.36 No.2 (2nd mov.), Op.36 No.2 (1st mov.), **Kolau**; Op.55 No.1, **Clementi**; Op.36 No.5 (3rd mov.), Op.36 No.3 (1st mov.), Op.36 No.4 (1st mov.), **Kolau**; Op.20 No.1, **Clementi**; Op.36 No.4 (3rd mov.), Op.36 No.4 (2nd mov.), **Kolau**; Op.55 No.3, Op.55 No.3, **Clementi**; Op.36 No.5 (1st mov.), Op.36 No.6, **Mozart**; Sonata K.545 in C, **Kolau**; Op.20 No.2, Op.20 No.3, **Dousek**; Op.20 No.1, **Haydn**; Sonatina in C, **Beethoven**; Op.49 No.2 in G, Sonata Op.49 No.1 in G minor.

7. Beethoven's Sonatas in order of difficulty:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Sonatas of L. v. Beethoven:</b>
3-4	Op.49 No.2, Op 49 No.1
5-6	Op.79, Op.14 No.1, Op.14 No.2, Op.2 No.1, Op.10 No.1, Op.10 No.2
7-8	Op.13, Op.7, Op.22, Op.10 No.3, Op.26, Op.2 No.3, Op.2 No.2, Op.27 No.2, Op.27 No.1, Op.90, Op.28, Op.31 No.1, Op.31 No.2, Op.31 No3, Op.54, Op.78, Op.81a, Op.53, Op.110, Op.109, Op.57, Op.101, Op.111, Op.106

## Pedals

*«Learn to listen and you will have found the solution as to when to use the pedal»*

1. The pedal should not be used in your study before a piece has been perfected or before your fingers have learned to follow everything you order them to do.

2. You should try to achieve as much as possible by simply using your hands; use the pedal only when your hands alone are incapable of achieving the desired effect.

3. Composers use the pedal very rarely and only for parts which are very difficult to perform. Anyway, writing where the pedal should be used on a stave, is quite a difficult task on its own.

4. Writing where the pedal should be used is wrong, for its use depends on several factors (the room, the particular piano, the mood of the artist, the sound volume, the era in which the piece was composed, etc.).

5. It is not a custom to use the soft pedal to achieve a soft sound (piano) effect; instead, try to achieve this by positioning your fingers close to the keys.

6. The soft pedal adds a different, rather gloomy character to the piece and thus should only be used when production of this particular effect is desired.

7. The pedal adds a certain degree of vibration to all notes. It functions in the same way as vibrato in singing or on the violin.

8. The effect of the pedal varies according to the piano range; for example, the sound should be softer when playing low notes, as these strings vibrate much more than the rest.

9. When playing chords the fingers and wrist should normally be lifted prior to lifting the pedal.

10. When beginning a piece, it is usually a custom to press the pedal before playing the notes; in this way, the sound being produced acquires a

unique sound shade and an echo is produced, which can give an exceptional sensation when performing in a large room.

11. A practical and useful exercise can be the following:

While holding the sustaining pedal:

a. Make two movements simultaneously, that is, play the chord with your fingers and lift the pedal (at exactly the same moment).

b. While holding the chord, press on the sustaining pedal again.

c. Afterwards, lift your fingers (wrist and arm) from the keys.

12. Pay particular attention to clearing the sound being produced by the preceding chord (so that nothing overlaps the new chord) and keep all notes in the new chord free from all foreign sounds.

13. In most cases (not all, of course), the sustaining pedal is used following and not preceding a note.

14. For impressionist works (as for Debussy and several other composers), pedals are used to a great extent, joining various chords (which are, however, performed very softly in order to prevent dissonance from becoming obvious).

15. For slow movements or when having to perform notes of large value, delay pressing on the sustaining pedal as long as possible. This is to allow time for the soundboard to be cleared from sounds being produced by the preceding chord, so that the last chord is not trapped within sounds produced by the effect of the pedal on the following chord.

## Memorisation

*«For memorisation to be substantial and lasting,  
you should first understand the harmonic,  
rhythmic and melodic structure of the composition».*

1. Repetition is a basic requirement for memorising a piece, for as the saying goes, «practice makes perfect».

2. Understanding the harmonic, rhythmic and melodic structure of a composition precedes its substantial memorisation.

3. There are two types of memorising; empirical and rational memorising. The former is accomplished by means of constant repetition, while the latter by the rational understanding of the several individual parts of the composition. The best results are achieved by using a combination of both.

4. Having learned a piece by heart does not necessarily imply that you have also experienced it. Some time should pass, during which repetition of the piece should lead to you experiencing and discovering its basic and subsidiary messages.

5. Understanding the structure of a composition and remembering the differences rather than similarities that exist between its various similar parts immensely aids its memorisation.

6. Learning the music of the right and left hand off by heart makes memorisation of the whole composition much easier.

7. You are not advised to listen to various recorded versions of a composition unless you have learned this well, as this might influence you both substantially and subconsciously. The only thing, which might be gained from such a practice, is the internal imprinting of several melodic phrases aiding your faster learning and easier memorisation of the composition. You should, however, just like a bee, be careful and selective in choosing the performances which to listen to, ensuring that these belong to well accomplished piano virtuosos.

8. Mark five to six places 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 etc. from which to restart the piece in case you make a mistake (nobody is perfect), so as to avoid repeating

the whole thing from the beginning. It is from these places that your study should start every time.

9. Another sign that should be marked, is an arrow at the exact position that a page should be turned, in case somebody can do this for you (this should be marked one, two or three bars, or even a whole line, before the end of the right page, depending on the speed at which the composition is being played).

## First sight-reading

*«Learn to concentrate and do not burst off when playing the piano».*

1. Studying the left and right hand scores separately is of no use to this exercise; it is, however, necessary, as all requisite details making up the melodic line of each hand should be learned.

2. When about to perform a composition for the first time, you should be so well prepared, that the saying «eyes listen to the melodies while ears read the notes» perfectly applies to you. That is, the whole score should march before your eyes when listening to a composition, while when looking at a page of music for the first time you should be able to listen to all melodic lines composing it, with your imagination.

3. To be able to imaginarily listen to the whole composition just by looking at the score, you should first perform and include in your repertory a plenitude of works from all eras and composers.

4. To be able to visualise the notes while listening to a composition, you should first practise in dectee, that is, listening to anything and writing this down.

5. As far as first-sight reading is concerned, you should play slightly softer than usual so as to be able to concentrate on the piece rather than express your true feelings or burst off on the piano.

6. Two powers or senses within you are always in combat as to which will predominate; hearing and vision. Many times, when performing something for the first time, you may discover that other melodies, different to the ones written down are created within you.

7. When reading at first-sight one should continuously be moving forward, forgetting the parts which have already been played, his glance always falling on the note or chord which immediately follows. On the contrary, when performing a composition in a concert, the internal forward movement should still be maintained, but your thought should stay focused to what is being performed at that particular moment. Perfection is reached when the two practices are combined.

8. You should never correct a mistake or slip, if you accidentally stumble somewhere or play some wrong notes. This of course, should also be done during your study time. Correction of a mistake should occur at a later point, after the problematic part has been isolated. It is important to focus your attention on this basic matter, for, marks are deducted during exams; whereas if you move on confidently, with a continuous forward movement («forgetting those that you have left behind, advancing toward those ahead»), you will gain a considerable amount of marks.

## Aural exercises

*«He who has learned to listen with his eyes  
and see with his ears is advancing towards perfection,  
as feasible as this can be in the field of music».*

1. When a student is out of tune, the first thing you should do is to find the note he is singing. Afterwards, play this on the piano or an instrument producing a loud sound and from this note slowly and steadily start ascending or descending towards the various neighbouring notes.

2. If you wish for your student to reach a higher note, ask him to sing louder; if, on the other hand, you wish for him to reach a lower note, ask him to sing softer. Using this clever method you can achieve your goal, which is nothing more than to consolidate and implant within your student the various note pitches.

3. As a first step, the student may sing two notes that the teacher plays on the piano; later on, when the student has practised a lot, the teacher may play three or four notes and at a later stage a whole musical phrase.

4. At home the student may listen to various melodies that attract his attention on the radio, simultaneously writing these down as a start. When a full picture of the scale in which the piece was composed, as well as of the notes making it up, has been shaped within him, he will be capable to listen to any melody and automatically write this down on the staff.

5. The different orchestral instruments may often create confusion within us as to the accuracy of the correct pitch. For that reason we should practise our hearing using a different instrument each time, so as to become experienced in recognising any note, whichever instrument this might be coming from.

6. Some people have «perfect hearing» from birth, this being one of God's gifts to humans. It is very difficult, almost impossible, for anyone borne without it to acquire it. On the other hand, «positive hearing» may be promoted given correct training.

7. «Perfect hearing» is considered as a major advantage by many, yet to my opinion this can often be an obstacle, especially for all those practising

on instruments belonging to the Baroque era (as the notes of these instruments are usually heard a semitone lower than present day notes), as well as on «transposable» instruments, such as the clarinet, (in which case the note written down on the score is different to the one heard).

8. Usually the sense of hearing opposes that of vision; for that reason, it is good to practise both senses in parallel. It is hard to find a piano player with both senses well developed. The most frequent is for hearing to predominate at the expense of vision or vice versa.

## **Clumsy and skilful improvisation and composition**

*«Subordinate your will before the past,  
in order to achieve great things in the future».*

1. Many are those who began piano studies, but very few those who managed to reach their desired goal, for during the course of their journey they were misled into the footpaths of clumsy improvisation.

2. To improvise you must first study everything written in the field of music and in particular the field of your instrument. It is only then that you may allow yourself to get involved in the extremely hard, yet so attractive task of improvisation.

3. If you are concerned with improvising during the first stages of your studies, you will undoubtedly get carried away into inaccessible paths leading to dead ends.

4. To be in a position to improvise, your standard should allow for this, while all musical elements should be working within you concurrently (melody, rhythm, harmony, structure). Your composition should spring from the harmonic structure of the piece, while the harmonic and melodic course shall guide you to perfect your composition.

5. Do not try to pressure yourself and do not insist on continuing an improvisation when this has reached a dead end. Put it aside until this matures inside you once more, and then you will be able to continue it in the best possible way.

6. To achieve your goal as far as skilful improvisation is concerned, you should under no circumstances be influenced by any melody that you have previously heard. For this reason, when about to express your personal experiences on the piano, it is necessary to avoid becoming occupied with or be studying any other works, since these create musical pictures and impressions inside you, from which is difficult and takes time to escape.

7. In order to be capable of composing exceptional and original work, you must first experience, assimilate and live earlier tradition as a whole. It is then important to allow yourself to be freely expressed, moving within

the life-giving spirit of living tradition while not copying this, or even worse breaking away from it.

8. To my opinion, a composer should not submit his will before any musical form. He should simply always keep in mind the legacies and try to follow them in as much detail as possible, without yet suspending the creative powers of his inner self. An then, he shall witness, given time, the new musical forms that will gradually start being shaped within him; in this way the composer's destination shall be fulfilled in an organic and vivid way.

# Performance

*«Carefully search in your heart to find  
the correct way for performing a composition»*

1. To express a composition as appropriately and accurately as possible, you should pay special attention to several elements, handily recited here as ten:

- i) The mood that you yourself transmit to the audience while performing a composition.
- ii) The various accents (>, sf, etc.).
- iii) The various shifts of dynamics (forte, piano, crescendo, etc.).
- iv) The change in tempo (ritenuto, accelerando).
- v) Rubato.
- vi) Breaths and phrases.
- vii) The various sound shades used to portray the melodies.
- viii) Fluency of the melodic line of the composition.
- ix) Expression, which should vary according to the character of the work being performed (eg. Mazurka, Fugue, etc.).
- x) Expression, which should coincide with the composer's spirit and era (Chopin, Mozart, etc).

2. To perform a composer's work accurately and in the correct way, you should know and keep in mind his mother language (e.g. Chopin's was Polish), for this means of expression, the language, that is, that a composer speaks, subconsciously, yet fundamentally, influences the other means of expression, that being music.

3. When performing a piece on the piano, you should primarily be thinking of two things. The first and most important one (70%) is to perform the composition, accurately while the second one (30%) should be the notes which you are playing on the piano.

4. To achieve my pre-set goal concerning the melodic line and phrasing of a piece being performed, you should first imagine this goal; the desired effect then comes naturally. A general rule is that both your thought and imagination should keep pace with and coincide with reality, with what you are performing and what you ought to achieve in your performance.

5. If during the slow movement of a piece the left hand accompanies the right one mainly by playing arpeggio chords, the former should always follow and abide by the commands and motions of the right hand.

# Teaching

*«I was lead by your cane and walking stick».*

(Psalm 22,4)

1. To teach something, you must first get hold of it in great depth yourself.

2. If you wish to transmit something concerning a particular subject to your student, you should start analysing it both generally and specifically.

3. If you have learned to play the piano without ever searching inside you for the particular musical themes, that is, how something is produced, you will never be able to transmit various pieces of knowledge to your student, as these shall have the form of dexterity or skill rather than knowledge inside you.

4. When having to repair a machine, I break it down into small pieces, find the mistake, fix it and reassemble it. I follow the same procedure with my student. I look inside him, try to locate any mistakes, fix them and afterwards reassemble the various partial pieces.

5. A teacher should internally impose a classification on big and small musical subjects, so that his student may progress integrally and not partially.

6. I have seen many playing the piano expressively and with correct notes, yet being extremely deficient as far as rhythm is concerned.

7. A correct classification may be the following: rhythm, melody, fingerings, dynamics, technique, phrasing, and expression.

8. A good teacher is he who can tell where to use his cane and where his walking stick, that is when to encourage and when to scold his student.

9. If when about to begin your lesson, you can tell your student has put a considerable amount of effort into his work and has studied his piece fairly well, praise him and note the parts for which he has shown improvement. In this way you shall always keep him close to you and shape him in whatever you wish, for you shall have already conquered his will.

10. Afterwards, however, you should advise and correct him, with the strictness that springs from the true love for music, even for the smallest detail. Do not forget that the biggest mistakes start from small and insignificant details.

11. At the end of the lesson encourage him once more, showing your satisfaction for the progress that he is making.

12. I have heard many students, and even teachers, saying that different teachers share different views as to how something should be played. What they are unaware of, however, is that on each occasion, a good teacher emphasises a different element required for learning a work; keeping this in mind, all contradicting views are nothing more than the different energies and powers of one nature and substance.

13. You can tell whether someone is a good teacher or not, from whether he can, on each occasion, select the correct tempo at which his student should perform or study a piece.

14. To be able to understand your student's soul and win his affection, you should teach in a pleasant and light way and not with excessive strictness. If, however, this method does not work, try frightening him. The best teaching method consists of a combination of both, that is, keeping your student at some distance, while having him as friend at the same time.

15. A discrete teacher should focus his attention on one and only subject each time, so that he can explain this to the student thoroughly and in the best possible way.

16. On many occasions a student may not be in a position to understand something that his teacher is telling him to do. It is to the student's best benefit, however, to obey even if he cannot understand it at the time, rather than try explaining it with his vain and fruitless logic. Time shall come during which he shall find a solution to his problem without even realising how.

17. Never underestimate anyone, for you can learn a lot even from the worst and least well-known musician or music teacher. It is mentioned in the Gerontikon that before Father Arsenios, who lived in imperial palaces, abandoned everything to become a monk, he once asked a wise Egyptian monk about his own views and thoughts. The latter replied: «Father Arsenios, how come you, who know everything there is to know about

Roman and Greek wisdom, are asking me, the illiterate, to give you my opinion about your thoughts?». And Father Arsenios confessed: «Although I know and possess the Roman and Greek education, I have not yet learned the alphabet of this illiterate person».

18. Every time you are about to teach, it is the lesson itself that shall show you what ought to be done and how you should act, given, of course, that you have the sensitivity and perception to conceive this.

19. Try to prevent your student from performing a composition at the speed that he has managed to reach at home, by encouraging him to perform it at a slightly slower speed. In this way you achieve to focus your student's attention on details and avoid any slips which in the end prove to be disappointing, rather than encouraging, for the student.

20. During the first stages of learning the piano it is necessary for the teacher to hold his student's wrist, so that the latter may relax and use his wrist correctly, in combination with his fingers and whole arm and later on his whole body.

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