This is to certify that the

dissertation entitled

Basic Principles of Beginning Piano Study: A Comparison of Methodic Approaches of Josef Lhevinne and Abby Whiteside

presented by

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has been accepted towards fulfillment of the requirements for

Ph.D. **degree in** Music Performance-Theory-History/Literature

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Date June 1, 1990

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF BEGINNING PIANO STUDY: A COMPARISON OF METHODIC APPROACHES OF JOSEF LHÉVINNE AND ABBY WHITESIDE

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A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
Department of Music
1990

ABSTRACT

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF BEGINNING PIANO STUDY: A COMPARISON OF METHODIC APPROACHES OF JOSEF LHÉVINNE AND ABBY WHITESIDE

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This paper deals with a comparative study of two approaches for teaching beginning piano students how to practice. Josef Lhévinne and Abby Whiteside, two outstanding performers and pedagogues with contrasting ideas in regard to piano instruction and basic training, are the authors considered. A summary of the basic principles for methodic practice which should allow a piano student to obtain the most efficient use of time and procedures to develop successful performance is provided. The following points of view of these two authors in regard to different aspects of piano playing and teaching are compared; the rôle of piano instructors in training of beginning piano students, selection of students who could become future performers, grading of the repertoire to be learned, choice of editions, and function of coaching and imitation in piano training. General conditions and procedures which could be helpful to develop methodic practice are considered; among the former, self-criticism, listening, attention, mental image, analysis, alertness, and emotion; among the latter, clear purpose, focus of attention, rhythm as an organizer, slow and fast practice, progression and continuity, and

correct chaining. Finally, the results of methodic practice are mentioned: good habits, concept of whole, and imagery. Specific considerations the two authors have in regard to some issues in piano performance are compared: technical exercises, finger action, weight, legato, touch, fingering, pedaling, and memorization.

This comparison between the two approaches illustrates the different points of view between a concert pianist and a studio teacher, who have one common goal, to develop successful playing from the earliest stages in the students' training. The apparently contradictory concepts expressed by each one of these authors could rather complement each other, bringing a better understanding of performing and teaching goals and techniques. With a training based on general principles which have wide application, the students should eventually develop into independent pianists able to plan and realize their own musical achievements, and the teacher should aid them to be creative and active participant in their own growth.

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

As a teacher of beginning piano students, one can see the necessity of helping students develop a method for practicing which should be both efficient and time saving. Musicianship implies a rather complex set of skills which require careful and systematic training. Fine musicians should possess good ear, excellent technique, creative and vivid imagination, seriousness, and clarity of purpose. Since students are required to achieve a high technical and artistic level, teachers should first establish a series of habits which will enable students to play with musicality, fluency, and correctness. One of the teachers' first goals, rather than simply covering a number of pieces from the repertoire, should be to define an attitude toward practice, and specify clear principles to establish a solid foundation for successful performance.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze selected methods of practice which may be considered fundamental in the development of beginning piano students. The methods selected are attributed to the writings of two authors, Josef Lhévinne and Abby Whiteside. Both roughly lived at the same time, and each had a different but important career as performer and pedagogue. Their view-points in regard to piano performance have been influential and acknowledged for their positive results. The fact that several concepts are in opposition to one another makes the comparison between the two

approaches particularly interesting. Books dealing with teaching, performance, and interpretation are numerous. Ideas in this respect are enormously diverse and even controversial among performers and pedagogues. In the matter of piano performance it seems rather difficult to talk in some specific way about such issues as tone production, quality of sound, and effective muscular coordination. All these aspects require a great deal of visual and even more aural demonstration for the discussion to become meaningful. However, the need for some kind of written evidence has prompted teachers and musicians interested in transmitting their findings to formalize in some sort of essay their thoughts and experiences, and thus give these findings a wider exposure. In order to limit this study, only the writings of the two mentioned authors have been considered.

Neither of these approaches is intended to be covered in all its details. Instead, those principles which seem fundamental and the most important in developing a proper foundation for musical performance have been extracted. To undertake a complete comparison of the technique of these two authors would require an entirely new study, involving a physical and anatomical analysis of the playing mechanism. The plan here is to focus only on some of the fundamental aspects of performance in order to summarize the most essential principles which could ensure the student an effective use of practice time. This paper is then directed to those teachers of beginning piano students who are seeking to define an efficient method of practicing which will enable their students to get the best results from their time and efforts.

This paper is divided into four sections. The first part is a review of literature by the two authors, and those writings that quote or refer to either Lhévinne's or Whiteside's teaching.

The second part discusses the attitude that Lhévinne and Whiteside have toward musical training in general and piano instruction in particular. In this section reference is made to the following: the function beginning piano instructors have in the further development of a piano student; the criteria cited by Lhévinne as being used in Russian conservatoires for selection of students, as opposed to Whiteside's ideas regarding who can play the piano efficiently; the importance that each of these approaches gives to grading the difficulty of the pieces a student learns; the opinion of both musicians in regard to the selection of editions for the study of beginning piano literature; and finally, the effectiveness of coaching and imitation in piano training.

The third section deals with the basic principles involved with building discipline in beginning piano students, necessary in practice and refinement. It is divided, in turn, into three parts dealing with the mental awareness a student should achieve during practicing, the procedure itself, and the long-term consequences of methodic practice.

The last section refers to some specific problems of piano performance, such as: technical exercises, finger action, weight, use of legato, touch, fingering, pedaling, and memorization.

The final chapter is a summary and discussion of the main points of the study, from this author's own perspective.

CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Primary Sources

Josef Lhévinne's main ideas concerning piano performance and practice are contained in Basic Principles of Piano Playing, originally written in 1924, and reprinted in 1972 with a Foreword by the author's wife, Rosina Lhévinne.[1] In this book he summarizes what he thinks about such issues as piano technique, foundations in musicianship, ways of acquiring delicacy and power to obtain a beautiful tone, accuracy and control of the instrument, staccato and legato touch, and pedaling. Other scattered writings of his are included in general books about piano performance: "The Art of Modern Pianism," in Modern Masters of the Keyboard,[2] and "Piano Study in Russia," in Great Pianists on Piano Playing.[3]

Abby Whiteside has produced three major writings, in addition to selected publications in journals which duplicate much of the material contained in her books.[4] These are, in chronological

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[1]Josef Lhévinne, Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing, with a Foreword by Rosina Lhévinne (Philadelphia: Theo Presser Company, 1924; reprint, New York: Dover Publications, Inc.,1972).

[2]Josef Lhévinne, "The Art of Modern Pianism," in Modern Masters of the Keyboard, ed. Harriet Brower (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1926; reprint, 1969).

[3]Josef Lhévinne,"Piano Study in Russia," in Great Pianists on Piano Playing, 2d. ed., ed. James Francis Cooke (Philadelphia: Theo Presser Co., 1917), 169-180.

[4]Abby Whiteside, "The Physical Sensation Comes First," ed. R. Sabin, Musical America 71 (December, 1951), 25-6; quoted in Max W. Camp, Developing Piano

order: The Pianist's Mechanism,[5] from 1929. Indispensables of Piano Playing,[6] written approximately in 1948 and published in 1961, and Mastering the Chopin Études and Other Essays,[7] published in 1969, after her death in 1956, by her students Joseph Prostakoff and Sophia Rosoff. This last book contains a number of articles written at different times during her life which have been revised by the editors. A Foreword was added summarizing the stages of development in her thinking regarding piano technique.

Secondary Sources

Among the secondary sources which mention Lhévinne's or Whiteside's writings, Camp's Developing Piano Performance is one of the most comprehensive. It summarizes the most important philosophical and pedagogical approaches to piano teaching and discusses the development of the student from early stages to more advanced ones, "different stages of advancement [being] incorporated into this one book because piano playing is not different at the advanced level; it is only more complex."[8] The author recognizes the necessity of well founded training in beginning piano lessons to provide greater assurance on future success. As he states, good

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Performance. A Teaching Philosophy (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: Hinshaw Music, Inc., 1981), 24 n. 83.

[5]Abby Whiteside, The Pianist's Mechanism (New York: G. Schirmer, 1929).

[6]Abby Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 2d. ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961).

[7]Abby Whiteside, Mastering the Chopin Études and Other Essays, ed. by Joseph Prostakoff and Sophia Rosoff (New York: Charles Schribner's Sons, 1969).

[8]Max W. Camp, Developing Piano Performance. A Teaching Philosophy (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: Hinshaw Music, Inc., 1981), vii.

teachers prove the truth of their ideas with a "line of successful students coming out from their studios."[9] They help the gifted student as well as the slow learner, because their teaching is based on a logical pedagogic philosophy.[10] He mentions Abby Whiteside's approach to rhythmic control of the music as a whole, in each of its architectonic levels,[11] with the entire body working as a rhythmic coordinator in the musical performance.[12] Camp mentions Whiteside's statement that an effective instructional approach must help all kinds of learners, whether they are gifted, average, and below average.[13] He remarks that although there is a lack of writings stating clear objectives to piano study--like Chronister's statement that students should be guided to become musically literate rather than limiting themselves to learn repertoire[14]--Abby Whiteside is one writer who does mention objectives and goals for piano study, namely, to teach students to discover and solve problems with their practice procedures.[15]

In the beginning of this century, music educators began to focus on developing methods which were more effective in piano learning,

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[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Grosvenor W. Cooper and Leonard B. Meyer, The Rhythmic Structure of Music (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), I.

[12]Max W. Camp, Developing Piano Performance, 23-4.

[13]Ibid., 29. He mentions also Heinrich Neuhaus, The Art of Piano Playing (New York: Praeger Publisers, 1973), 8-9; and James L. Mursell, Education for Musical Growth (Boston: Gin and Co., 1948), 7-9.

[14]Richard Chronister, "Piano Teaching--Past, Present, Future," Keyboard Arts (Winter, 1977), 3.

[15]Max W. Camp, Developing Piano Performance, 42.

particularly through the *Gestalt* principles. This cognitivist psychology considers learning as a process of gaining insights. It is a psychology of perception in which the most important goal is not the acquisition of a series of behaviors but rather of wholes or *Gestalten*, the perception and understanding of relationships within an organized whole. The concept that "the whole is more (or different) than the sum of its parts" expresses how the different elements which constitute an experience are subordinated and perceived as parts of the entire phenomenon, and not as separate entities which, added together, do not necessarily provide the impression of the whole.[16] James Mursell is one of the exponents of *Gestalt* psychology, and he explains in his Psychology of Music[17] how these principles work in the perception of music, and how they apply to musical learning.[18]

Both Lhévinne and Whiteside exhibit elements of *Gestalt* principles in their teaching. Camp mentions Josef Lhévinne's approach to "understanding and aural perception,"[19] which should be taught to the student from the beginning lesson. In order to play a piece of music the student should understand it and not merely

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[16]Joe B. Buttram, Handbook of Music Psychology (Lawrence, Kansas: National Association for Music Therapy, 1980), 251.

[17]James Mursell, The Psychology of Music (New York: W. W. Norton, 1937; reprint, New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1970). For a discussion of *Gestalt* principles in the perception of rhythmic units, see Mursell, The Psychology of Music, 176-98. For a short discussion of the *Gestalt* theory of melody, see Robert W. Lundin, An Objective Psychology of Music, 3d. ed. (Malabar, Florida: R. E. Krieger Pub. Co., 1985), 74-5.

[18]James Mursell, Education for Musical Growth (Boston: Gin and Co., 1948).

[19]Camp, Developing Piano Performance, 18.

approach it as a challenge to bravura.[20] Camp goes on to quote both Lhévinne and Whiteside as part of a group of artists who established the thought that successful piano performance requires the development of aural, rhythmic, and technical control,[21] stating that in order to integrate all the complex and diverse aspects involved in piano performance, a *Gestalt* approach would appear necessary.[22]

William Newman mentions the writings of recent years by several musicians--all of whom have done successful teaching--, among them Abby Whiteside, who discuss the approach to the musical composition as a whole or *Gestalt*. These authors "suggest that concentration on an aural image of the piece will direct the learning subconsciously,[23] more efficiently and musically than any conscious, piecemeal methods of building up to performance level."[24] Newman remarks, however, that he has some reservations regarding this approach:

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[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid., 46.

[22]Ibid., 47.

[23]The idea of subconscious learning could be related to Gordon's concept of 'audiation'. He defines this term as the ability to recall or create musical sounds when the source which produced them is not physically present anymore. He developed various tests to measure the student's audiation: Edwin.E.Gordon, Primary Measures of Music Audiation (Chicago: G.I.A. Publications, 1979), and Intermediate Measures of Music Audiation (Chicago: G.I.A. Publications, 1982). In the University of Iowa he developed a test to predict student's achievement in instrumental music: Edwin.E.Gordon, Musical Aptitude Profile (Boston: Hougthon Mifflin Company, 1965). He discusses his ideas about learning processes in Edwin.E.Gordon, The Psychology of Music Teaching (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971).

[24]William S. Newman, The Pianist's Problems. A modern Approach to Efficient Practice and Musicianly Performance (New York: Da Capo Press, 1984), 198.

> the momentum of even the fastest running start toward the goal cannot pick up *all* the details along the way. Certain ornaments simply will not solve themselves, certain fingering will not see ahead to what must come out, certain touches will not coordinate without very considerable stopping for analysis, planning, and that notewise practice.[25]

The *Gestalt* approach, however, differs between the two authors in regard to piano technique: Whiteside contemplates the pianistic mechanism as a whole entity, coordinated by a rhythmic response from the entire body to the musical patterns, while Lhévinne encourages the training of individual motions for every finger. Irene A. Glasford exposes a theory quite similar to that of Whiteside in her book Rhythm, Reason and Response: for the Musician, Pianist and Teacher. In her bibliography she quotes Whiteside's book Indispensables of Piano Playing.[26] Glasford contemplates rhythm as the general coordinator in musical performance. She states that "one may conclude that music--and indeed all art--contains a basic rhythm and is the source of its own organic unity."[27] She says that "technique, in the large artistic sense, implies 'how' to reach the goal through the control of the parts (the pianistic patterns) within the total rhythm."[28] Like Whiteside, she believes that rhythm should be controlled by the performer's body, acting as a whole coordinated entity.

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[25]Ibid., 198-9.

[26]Irene A. Glasford, Rhythm, Reason and Response: for the Musician, Pianist and Teacher (New York: Exposition Press Inc., 1970), 154.

[27]Ibid., 100.

[28]Ibid., 120.

> When the student[s have] actually *earned* a kinesthetic response to the keyboard vocabularies and from the principles of the wholeness of rhythmic motion [which] can extend [their] control from center through the articulation, [they] will not find it necessary to spend hours acquiring facility and speed. [their] challenge lies in [their] ability to move the pianistic patterns in the motion of the whole.[29]

Like Whiteside, Glasford stresses the necessity of developing technique as an entire coordination of levers,[30] rather than to train individual motions, like finger-drills.

> I believe that such drills are useless unless they are rooted in a total technique. One technical pattern is not a whole technique. There is a gap between these fragmented, external, drilled maneuvers and the pianist's need for a totally cooperative system of leverage. . . . All appendages or levers should be balanced through their deep association with and connection to the one fulcrum, the torso. Interdependence of leverage is indispensable because of the need for the entire arm to be supported and carried by the torso in a rhythm of wholeness. Through the stabilization of the torso (the "master lever"), the top arm, forearm, hand, and fingers, joined as one piece, are supported, directed, and freed for movement.[31]

On the other side, Ahrens and Atkinson quote Lhévinne as part of a group of teachers from the late nineteenth century until the present day who stressed such matters as relaxation, use of arm weight, and rotation,[32] all of these separate concepts which should supposedly

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[29]Ibid., 120-1.

[30]Whiteside and her students refer to the different parts of the playing mechanism as levers. They describe the torso as the center of activity, the upper arm (or upper leverage) as the one that starts the movement, which is transmitted to the fingers (called periphery).

[31]Ibid., 50-1.

[32]Cora B. Ahrens and G. D. Atkinson, For All Piano Teachers, 2d. ed. (England/Canada: The Frederick Harris Music Co. Ltd., 1956), 35.

add toward building an efficient technique. In regard to finger action, they state that

> Lhévinne . . . rather favoured having the first phalanx of the finger at a slight angle to the key, and then preserving this same curved position throughout the stroke up and down. This would then leave the whole movement at the joints confined to the knuckle joint only.[33]

In this technical approach each finger is considered to act independently and, therefore, it must be trained to perform a separate movement, raising and falling upon the keys to produce the sound. Such idea of unconnected or separate reactions for each part of the mechanism stands in opposition to the holistic approach exhibited by Whiteside and her students.

Some *Gestalt* ideas do apply to Lhévinne's thinking, however. For example, in reference to the assumption that fingers should play legato on arpeggios, Ahrens and Atkinson encourage the student to keep the tone even in length and strength, and not to worry too much if the arpeggio is not always perfectly legato where the thumb goes under the hand or the hand goes over the thumb. They quote Mme. Rosina Lhévinne who "always maintained that if the other factors are carefully observed a slight non-legato will never be detected."[34] This perception of the arpeggio as a continuous pattern, even though a break exists between finger-connection, may be considered in accordance with a *Gestalt* principle of closure, which refers to the tendency to perceive incomplete patterns (such as unconnected geometric figures) as complete wholes.[35]

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[33]Ibid., 38.

[34]Ibid. 44.

Both Lhévinne's and Whiteside's approaches, even though departing from different technical principles, have however produced good pedagogical results. The success of Josef Lhévinne as a pianist and teacher has been acknowledged in several writings and interviews with his former students.[36] His love for performance and teaching has been shared equally by his wife Rosina Lhévinne, who was an acknowledged teacher, having taught at Aspen, and for almost five decades at Juilliard.[37] Both Lhévinnes excelled as great musicians, and their students have been among the most prominent pianists in America. Some of these are Mischa Dichter, John Browning, Byron Janis, Rosalyn Tureck, Adele Marcus, and Van Cliburn.[38]

Among Abby Whiteside's students there are some who became teachers themselves and produced their own writings, in which they acknowledged the effectiveness of Whiteside's ideas. One of them is Marion Flagg, who wrote a book on Musical Learning in which she developed Whiteside's principles of body response to rhythm.[39] She refers to Whiteside's piano teaching that "shows how a free, completely adjusted mechanism opens the channels to a revelation of the subtlety and power of musical beauty."[40]

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[35]Joe B. Buttram, Handbook of Music Psychology (Lawrence, Kansas: National Association for Music Therapy, 1980), 253.

[36]Elyse Mach, Great Pianists Speak for Themselves (New York, Dodd, Mead & Co., 1980), 38, 63, 43-4, 48, 131-3, 164.

[37]James Bastien, "An Interview with Rosina Lhévinne," In How to Teach Piano Successfully, 2d. ed., 435-8 (Illinois and California: General Words and Music Co/Neil A. Kjos, Jr., Publishers, 1977), 435-8.

[38]David Dubal, The World of the Concert Pianist (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1985), 115, 218, 309.

[39]Marion Flagg, Musical Learning. A Guide to Child Growth (Boston, C. C. Birchard and Co., 1949). [40]Ibid., v.

CHAPTER III. GENERAL ATTITUDE TOWARD MUSICAL TRAINING

Perhaps one of the factors which makes the comparison between the approaches of Josef Lhévinne and Abby Whiteside so interesting is the fact that they have such a different background. Even though both strive to attain a fine performance from their pupils, their points of view in regard to piano playing and training of professional piano students are very different. They disagree in several aspects of technical approach, and the achievements they expect from their students are quite dissimilar. Their teaching philosophy is by no means the same. Their points of view represent two different fields, yet they complement each other quite successfully. Their common goal remains to produce the best quality in piano performance.

Even though both excelled in the fields of performance and pedagogy, Lhévinne was remarkable as a concert pianist, acknowledged for his extraordinary technique and innate musicality,[1] while Whiteside has been better known for her writings about pedagogical aspects of training all types of students, whether highly gifted, average, and slow learners.[2] Whenever she tried a technical idea, she applied it with tenacity to every situation

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[1]Harold C. Schonberg, The Great Pianists from Mozart to the Present, 2d. ed. (New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1987), 404.

[2]Max W. Camp, Developing Piano Performance, A Teaching Philosophy (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: Hinshaw Music, Inc., 1981), 29.

and with all her students until she found that it actually worked; otherwise, she discarded the concept and strived to look for a new one that could have general application and effective results for *all* her students.[3] She acknowledged the great accomplishments of pianists like Josef Lhévinne himself, stating that:

> The list of players from which to choose models for production is fairly long. To insure a clear understanding of the mechanism under discussion, two names will suffice--Rachmaninoff and Lhévinne. Each is a distinct personality, with a technical equipment which allows full range in speed and dynamics, without effort and always with beautiful tone quality.[4]

Her research aimed to discover the most efficient use of the pianistic mechanism, by observing how such gifted musicians used it so skillfully.

> In this analysis no attempt is made to give the explicit action of the muscles which produce the desired tone. The desire is to suggest the simplicity in coordination that one sees and hears in the playing of such men as Rachmaninoff and Lhévinne.[5]

Quoting a teacher of hers, she said that it is difficult to find somebody to excel both in performance and pedagogy: "Few people create in two fields, and teaching and playing are both creative fields."[6] So even though she was a great pianist, she devoted most of her energy to teaching and discovering new principles and concepts which in many ways challenged traditional thinking about piano performance and pedagogy.

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[3]Joseph Prostakoff and Sophia Rosoff, in Forword to Abby Whiteside, Mastering the Chopin Études and Other Essays, (New York: Charles Schribner's Sons, 1969), 11.

[4]Abby Whiteside, The Pianist's Mechanism (New York: G. Schirmer, 1929), 2.

[5]Ibid., 18.

[6]Ibid. 3.

Born in South Dakota in 1881, Whiteside graduated from the University of South Dakota and travelled to Germany, where she studied with Rudolf Ganz. She returned to the United States, settled in Portland, Oregon, and in 1923 moved to New York to teach there. She also taught in Chicago, Dallas, Portland, San Francisco, and Los Angeles in the Summers from 1922 to 1956, when she died. Her students published posthumously some of her writings.[7]

Josef Lhévinne was a noted and exceptionally gifted pianist with a characteristic virile style, comprehensive technique, and finely trained artistic judgment.[8] He appeared in New York, impressing his critics, and attained great celebrity status in America. Born in Russia in 1874, he was a son of a professional musician. At the age of six he became a student of a Scandinavian teacher named Grisander, and he made his debut at eight. When he was twelve years old he started studying with the Russian Wassili Safonoff at the Moscow Conservatoire, where he was a fellow student of Rachmaninoff.[9] He studied theory and composition with Teneieff and Arensky. In 1891 he was selected by Anton Rubinstein to play the *Emperor* Concerto under his direction, and in 1895 won the Rubinstein Prize in Berlin. From 1902 to 1906 he was Professor of Piano at the conservatory in Moscow.[10] Then he came to America in

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[7]Joseph Prostakoff and Sophia Rosoff, in Forword to Mastering the Chopin Études and Other Essays, 2.

[8]James Francis Cooke, "Josef Lhévinne, Piano Study in Russia," in Great Pianists on Piano Playing, 2d. ed. (Philadelphia: Theo Presser Co., 1917), 169.

[9]Harold C. Schonberg, The Great Pianists from Mozart to the Present, 2d. ed. (New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1987), 402-4.

[10]Cooke, "Josef Lhévinne, Piano Study in Russia," 169.

1907 and taught at the Juilliard School of Music. His students excel as wonderful pianists, several of them contest-winners. He died in 1944. A recording of his playing is available.[11]

A. Rôle of the beginning piano instructor

Musical instruction in Russia is quite different than in the United States. Russian schools and conservatoires are required to provide a thorough technical training, and this is one of the first and most important concerns. Rosina Lhévinne states that "as students in Russia, we were taught from the earliest age to strive for a perfect technique, in other words, 'a complete command of the instrument.'"[12] Several years are employed in this training, and students must pass a number of examinations to secure a certificate to teach.[13] "In Russia the teacher of beginners is often a man or woman of real distinction" who ensures a strong foundation for the students' further development.[14]

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[11]David Dubal, The World of the Concert Pianist (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1985), 356, mentions RCA VIC-1544, stating that Lhévinne's performances of the Strauss-Schulz-Evler '*Blue Danube*' and the Schumann-Liszt '*Frühlingsnacht*' are unparalleled.

[12]Rosina Lhévinne, in Forword to Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing (Philadelphia: Theo Presser Company, 1924; reprint, New York: Dover Publications, Inc.,1972), v.

[13]Josef Lhévinne, "The Art of Modern Pianism," in Modern Masters of the Keyboard, ed. Harriet Brower (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1926; reprint, 1969), 79.

[14]Josef Lhévinne, Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing, with a Foreword by Rosina Lhévinne (Philadelphia: Theo Presser Company, 1924; reprint, New York: Dover Publications, Inc.,1972), 2.

Lhévinne states that in America there is a great need for careful instruction especially in the early years of the student's training. The teacher at more advanced levels should not be compelled to provide basic explanations that students are supposed to have gotten from their first lessons. The beginning piano instructor has then an important position as the one who must provide the grounding on such fundamentals.[15]

Another priorities are concerned in Whiteside's approach. She states that beginning musical training should provide joy and excitement for performance in the first place. The students are meant to love their job and persevere in it mainly because they feel comfortable playing, and this gives them great satisfaction and happiness.[16] Therefore, among the instructor's first goals should be the development of a basic technique which permits the student to play with ease and comfort. This technique should be the most natural and simple. She states that "above all teachers should remember that nature is the prime factor in playing the piano as in every other human activity. They must help nature, not impose intellectual or physical concepts that cannot be understood and motivated from within the body."[17]

As a piano instructor, one might consider that one of the first and most important goal which one has as a teacher is to *motivate* students to learn to play, and to do so in the best and most efficient way. This should be the reason for developing a technique. Even

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[15]Ibid.

[16]Whiteside, The Pianist's Mechanism, 6-7.

[17]Abby Whiteside, Mastering the Chopin Études and Other Essays, ed. by Joseph Prostakoff and Sophia Rosoff (New York: Charles Schribner's Sons, 1969), 163.

though the means might not be the best possible ones, if students are self-motivated they will persist in looking for solutions on their own, and their learning will never end. A piano instructor who discourages students, or presents subject matter as unattainable, would probably be defeating the purpose of succeeding as a teacher and educator. Seroff states that:

> The most important objective for a teacher is to awaken in the student a love for the piano and curiosity sufficient to overcome its technical difficulties. This is much more important than practicing scales and exercises, which could destroy the beginner's desire to become a musician.[18]

Teachers should not lose track of the fact that developing technique for its own sake can become a dangerous trap which may actually drive beginning students away from piano study, rather than convincing them that eventually technique will serve an artistic end.

B. Criterion for selection

Lhévinne states that in the Russian conservatoires, the talent students have, whether they are more or less naturally gifted, is a determining factor in allowing them to pursue a performance career.[19] Great emphasis is placed on the students' mental and physical characteristics, such as the size of their hands, their rhythmical sense, their muscular coordination, as well as their inborn musical talent. These are factors that might decide whether or not a child could consider a professional career as a performer.

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[18]Victor Seroff, Common Sense in Piano Study (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1970), 38.

[19]Josef Lhévinne,"Piano Study in Russia," in Great Pianists on Piano Playing, 2d. ed., ed. James Francis Cooke (Philadelphia: Theo Presser Co., 1917), 176.

On the other side, Whiteside believes that anybody with an average talent could develop a reasonable technique and play the piano with efficiency, as long as the right mechanism is being used. Her focus is not on the individual characteristics of the student, but rather on the teaching process. To play with the simplest means in the most effective way is what constitutes a good technique. The task of the teacher is to develop a good technique in all their students, whether gifted or not. She believes that if a solution does not work for all of them--specifically those who have naturally less skill than others--the conclusion is that such a solution is wrong, or at least not completely correct.[20]

One might consider that the challenge of teachers at a school of music is to try to develop all the possibilities--technical and musical--of the students under their direction, even those who are not particularly gifted. Probably at a certain point in their development students decide themselves if they want to perform professionally or not, but this should be the students' choice. Teachers should be efficient in the task of searching for adequate pedagogical solutions to help any student play with ease. They should correctly diagnose difficulties in order to solve technical and musical problems. If a student is particularly gifted, the teacher might or might not be of great help. Talented students will probably play well anyway. The teacher's job is to look for feasible solutions for those who have the most trouble in order to make them succeed to the best of their abilities.

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[20]Joseph Prostakoff and Sophia Rosoff, in Forword to Mastering the Chopin Études and Other Essays, 3.

C. Grading the difficulty of the repertoire

Lhévinne states that in Russia teachers are greatly concerned about carefully grading the pieces the student learns, and they expect pupils to play acceptably all pieces of a given level in order to go on to the next one. The material to teach a beginning student should still be interesting and challenging enough to keep the student interested. "The main duty in all elementary work is to make the piano study interesting, and the teacher must choose the course likely to arouse the most interest in the particular pupil."[21]

On the other side, Whiteside encourages teachers to accept challenges and once in a while allow students to play a more difficult piece than what actually corresponds to their level. She says that this is really when the help of the teacher is needed, since problems arise when such pieces rather than the easier ones are played.[22] Student are actually confronted with their limitations, and the urgency to solve them becomes even more intense. She gives an example of a beginning adult student whom she taught Bach's c minor prelude BWV 999, not an easy piece to learn at the first lessons. The goal was to transmit the sense of rhythmic vitality which should be the foundation of piano technique.[23] This could be an example of her teaching philosophy, where the idea is to develop in the student a certain concept or ability, rather than just to play

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[21]Lhévinne, "Piano Study in Russia," 174.

[22]Whiteside, The Pianist's Mechanism, 39.

[23]Abby Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 2d. ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961), 141-2.

the piece. Actually, to allow a student to learn a difficult piece could become a profitable experience for both the student and the teacher. This might not be the norm, however, and students most commonly progress according to a specific program, well planned and sequenced. But to sometimes challenge them with a piece slightly above their possibilities might be a good way of forcing their achievement a step ahead. The factor of motivation is a very strong one, especially when the student really likes the piece, and is looking forward to studying it. Even though the performance might not be completely solved at the moment, it will favor progress in ways which one could not imagine. The technical mechanism must necessarily work; otherwise, the piece is not achievable. So the student is pushed toward right solutions by means of the auditory image. At this point the goal is not the piece itself but rather the student's technical development. Students would likely result benefited from a transfer of learning from the more difficult piece, as they play the other works of the repertoire which actually correspond to their level. Actually, the human brain can work in an insightful way that does not always require a sequenced and perfectly established pace in order to learn a new concept or develop a new skill.[24]

Newman mentions the benefits of allowing a pupil to study a piece above her level, stating "[it] showed that careful, intelligent practice in the music itself, and in it alone, could produce specific

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[24]For a discussion of left-brain (logical, analytical, sequential, linear) and right-brain (intuitive, general or global, spatial) learning, see Thomas A. Regelski," Who Knows Where Music Lurks in the Mind of Man? New Brain Research has the Answer," Music Educators Journal 63 (May 1977): 31-8.

achievements far in advance of her general technical level, thanks largely to her knack for creating self-corrective exercises out of the various difficulties that arose."[25] He says that students should be invited to choose the piece they want to study, and to be provided with "access to a basic library of piano music and [do] daily planned sight-reading in it" in order to become acquainted with the literature for the instrument.[26] The students' interest might be greater if sometimes they, instead of the teacher, suggests the repertoire to be studied.[27]

D. Selection of editions

One general concern of beginning students when they start learning repertoire is which edition might be the most acceptable. In this regard, Rosina Lhévinne states that, in order to remain as faithful as possible to the composer's intentions, the student should look for a good edition, one, such as the *Urtext*, without editorial markings, and pay great attention to any original phrase by the composer which can lead to discover the mood or character of the piece (such as "Allegro con brio").[28] "The performer has the tremendous responsibility of remaining true to the composer's

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[25]William S. Newman, The Pianist's Problems. A modern Approach to Efficient Practice and Musicianly Performance (New York: Da Capo Press, 1984), 91.

[26]Ibid., 167.

[27]A pedagogical apprach in which the student becomes an active participant in his own growth, and his learning is in part self-directed, is mentioned in the humanistic psycology of Maslow and Rogers. For a short discussion, see Joe B. Buttram, Handbook of Music Psychology (Lawrence, Kansas: National Association for Music Therapy, 1980), 260-2.

[28]Rosina Lhévinne, in Forword to Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing, vi.

ideas."[29] The importance of consulting the best edition should be stressed from the beginning. If there are editorial markings, students should consider them as mere suggestions, and decide on their own which ones to perform, according to the style of the piece and their own interpretation. To obey editorial markings blindly will not provide good training.

In order to discover the correct style of the pieces being studied, Mme. Lhévinne says that students should be encouraged to read about the lives and environment of the great masters to try to understand their thoughts at the time they wrote the compositions in question. Some knowledge about painting and architecture of the time is also of great help in determining the stylistic characteristics.[30] The right choice of the most reliable editions that actually reflect the intentions of the composer should be the first step toward an authoritative interpretation; therefore, this should be a point to be stressed in the student's training.

Whiteside does not think either that editorial markings improve the development of musical judgment or taste. Sometimes there is no significant change in the student's playing when different scores are used, because listening and rhythmic habits are not modified by editorial suggestions; thus, the music does not gain a lot from these markings.[31] It also happens that "the edition of phrasing more often stands in the way of finding the inner meaning of the music than it helps. . . . because there is no physical counterpart of that

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[29]Ibid., v.

[30]Ibid, vi.

[31]Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 57-8.

phrase--no movement that is continuous and intensifies the meaning."[32] Instead of following editorial markings, she suggests the teacher should focus on making the student feel the rhythmic motion through the entire body in order to provide vitality to the phrasing.

The important fact that underlies the concerns of both Whiteside's and Lhévinne's approach is that the teacher should develop musical judgment in the students. It does not help much when editorial suggestions get in the way of assimilating the composer's own ideas. When students are presented with an original edition it is likely that they will develop their own musicality to guide them in the correct interpretation of the work. Specifically when studying compositions from the early literature of the keyboard, a good *Urtext* edition would be most appropriate.

An excellent idea not explicitly mentioned be either Lhévinne or Whiteside could be to make the student compare different editions of the same work, in order to check for accurateness as well as develop criteria for different fingerings or possibilities for interpretative nuances. Careful editors usually provide their own suggestions in small characters and footnotes which are clearly distinguished from the composer's original markings. Such editorial indications are often useful for young beginners, as long as they consider them just as suggestions.

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[32]Ibid., 64.

E. Coaching and imitation

Coaching and imitation are two very common procedures used in piano lessons to guide the students' interpretation of the piece they are learning; however, their effectiveness is another point of controversy between the approaches of Lhévinne and Whiteside. Even though Lhévinne does not talk specifically about this matter, his wife Rosina Lhévinne makes some general commentaries that suggest the way in which they both worked with their students. They do use coaching to direct the students' performance of a work, though remain flexible so as to allow students to decide for themselves, for example, where to situate the climatic points of the phrases, even though they might have a different opinion. "We agreed that each phrase must have one high point--but as to where that point was, we often felt quite differently."[33]

On the other side, Whiteside has reservations regarding the effectiveness of coaching, which she says can only "touch the surface of a musician's playing habits."[34] The problem with coaching, as she states it, is that it usually involves imitation. The students' means of producing an interpretation of the passage are not always considered, but rather the teachers try to transmit into the students' mind and physical mechanism their own concept of the music. Whiteside states that:

> Coaching is supposed to deal with interpretation. This implies that one handles the manner of using shading, retards, accelerandos, specific ways of turning a phrase, etc. Coaching almost exclusively involves attention to

[33]Rosina Lhévinne, in Forword to Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing, vii.

[34]Joseph Prostakoff and Sophia Rosoff, in Forword to Mastering the Chopin Études and Other Essays, 20.

> discriminating listening, so that the student can skillfully imitate the master. In order to do this the student must have the same kind of physical equipment as the master has, as well as the discriminatory ear. This is the reason why he [she] frequently does not profit from expert coaching. The coach may demonstrate the beauty of a phrase, but he [she] does not deal with the physical basis of producing this beauty--at least not enough to rectify the faulty physical habits of the student, and to supply him [her] with the same controls for power, distance, and rhythm that the master uses.[35]

In her opinion, teachers should analyze and diagnose the musical or technical problem students have in some particular passage, in order to provide the pertinent advice, and then make the students *do* themselves what they are asked for in order to play the passage with the right coordination or musical expression.

> We need to learn that facts, as related to skills, become pertinent and usable only when the body has learned the movements that produce the right results. It is the doing that teaches students the facts. The intellectual concept is not meaningful without the experience of achievement.[36]

Eventually, students should become independent and base their interpretation of the pieces on their own musical concepts.

One should consider that even though coaching is necessary, it should not be the only procedure by which the student learns to play a piece in correct style and good taste. In order to teach students which are the things they have to listen for, the teacher should do a far more complete guidance directed to develop the students' musicianship as applied to the instrument. Critical hearing and observation of fine musicians in recordings and live performances

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[35]Whiteside, Mastering the Chopin Études, 186-7.

[36]Ibid., 186.

are some of the activities that could increase the students' musical understanding. In lessons, teachers should base their commentaries and criticisms on the positive aspects already achieved in the students' version, and try to correct the less successful parts by giving reasons why they might not be working. A diagnosis of the problem will be most useful for the students' further development, since it will provide a principle to be applied in any similar situation. Perhaps the last note of the phrase is accented, or there is not enough breath between sections, or a note sticks out of the dynamic contour the students are creating, or they are not using the precise movement to deliver power to the keys. Whatever the cause, teachers should point it out to help students analyze the problem the next time it occurs. This might be more effective than merely playing their own version for the pupil to imitate it. In this way students should gradually acquire judging elements, and could be able to direct their own practice by helping their ear keenly discriminate what is coming out in their playing.

CHAPTER IV. METHOD OF PRACTICE

In this chapter some of the fundamental principles in which students should base their practice will be discussed; certain mental awareness the student must achieve, some procedures to develop discipline in methodic practice, and long-term consequences which such discipline will provide. Application of such principles might vary widely, according to particular requirements. Students should observe some basic principles, however, in order to establish solid foundations in their training to become professional pianists.

A. Mental awareness while practicing

One of the most challenging tasks with which teachers are confronted when working with beginning students is teaching them to create musical concepts. Eventually students should be able to build their own artistic personality, and perform with conviction and effectiveness. In order to succeed, they must establish good mental and physical habits from the very beginning. Their imagination should be stimulated and refined so that they become critical thinkers and performers. The teachers' task is to direct the students to play on their own initiative, helping with constant analysis and proper diagnosis of the cause for any musical or technical problem which could arise, but always suggesting rather than imposing their own musical concepts.

In order to provide the right expression for the passage, Rosina Lhévinne insisted that her students define one and only one climatic point for every phrase--"Josef always said that to have two peaks in the same phrase would be like having two heads on one torso"--[1] though there was not always an agreement as to where such an expressive climax must be.[2]

Whiteside stresses the idea that "the pupil[s are] better off if [they] use [their] own ideas of interpretation at any early date, and the teacher should keep hands off, except where flagrant bad taste is displayed."[3] The task of the teacher is to provide the right tools and specific remedies for the correction of difficulties. Students, however, should do their own building. "It is always the aim of the efficient teacher to strive to make the student[s] independent, and able to make [their] own criticism and correction."[4]

In order to eventually achieve their self-dependence, students should seek from the very beginning a mental awareness when they practice. One will actually learn what one *does,* playing just the way one practices; therefore, any mental, physical, and aural habits should be established while practicing, in order to ensure that the results are carried into performance. Students should seek for a certain mental awareness with the following characteristics.

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[1]Josef Lhévinne, Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing, with a Foreword by Rosina Lhévinne (Philadelphia: Theo Presser Company, 1924; reprint, New York: Dover Publications, Inc.,1972), vii.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Abby Whiteside, The Pianist's Mechanism (New York: G. Schirmer, 1929), 9.

[4]Whiteside, The Pianist's Mechanism, 51.

1. Self-criticism

Student should develop a discipline that involves criticism to what they do; otherwise, they might be establishing faulty habits which can later interfere with successful performance. They should assume the rôle of the performer and the listener, in order to develop a critical attitude which allows them to realize objectively what is coming out of the instrument. Every time they play a passage they should judge the result, evaluating by comparison with their own aural image. By doing so they should be able to improve their performance, and new ways of approaching the piece should arise from their critical judgment.

Lhévinne stresses the fact that students should always be self-critical of their own playing. Their improvement will be conditioned by this attitude, and without it practice will be a waste of time.[5]

Whiteside states that when students develop the habit of self-criticism, they can learn from any teacher or artist they hear or watch. They could then be able "to make every concert a lesson for perfecting [their] own playing."[6]

Students should learn from the earliest lessons to realize at what point they have achieved a certain objective. During practice, their own judgment should become the leader. If they lack the discipline of evaluating their own playing, it will become extremely difficult to establish any lasting qualities in their performance, and they might be guideless to plan and direct their own learning when the teacher is not available to help them.

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[5]Lhévinne, Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing, 39.

[6]Whiteside, The Pianist's Mechanism, 52.

2. Listening

The ear is for the musician what the eye is for the painter. The necessity to refine auditory discrimination becomes one of the first and most important goals in the students' elementary stage of training. The primary tool musicians use to shape and define their work is the ear. Therefore, students must rely upon critical listening at every moment during their practice session in order to decide if they are moving in the right direction.

Lhévinne states that the value of ear training in piano performance can never be overly stressed. The sense of aural harmony is very important. A student should be able to identify all kinds of chords, such as common chords, seventh chords, and any others by ear as a basic foundation for achievement in any musical ground.[7]

The tight connection between ear, brain, and mechanism has been extensively acknowledged by performers and teachers. Lhévinne continues to say that the ears must act constantly during practicing to achieve beauty of sound. He encourages the students never to practice with inattentive ears; even with technical studies: "Scales are valueless unless the student[s] practice them with [their] 'ears' as well as [their] fingers. . . . Try practicing for beauty as well as practicing for technic."[8] The finest students, he says, are those who have learned how to listen.[9]

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[7]Ibid., 11-12.

[8]Lhévinne, Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing, 39.

[9]Ibid., 11.

Whiteside states that for the pianist the ears are the main guide in developing a good technique. "Little of value to the performer is accomplished in ear training classes when there is no associated muscular action."[10] Ears rather than eyes should point out the problems which should be analyzed in order to perform with the right coordination.[11] She assigns to the ear the function of major controller in developing a good technique. The eye can help locate a problem, but it is the ear which should decide if the musical message is not getting across.[12] Students' listening habits, however, are conditioned by the muscular habits they use while practicing; notewise practicing develops notewise listening:

> *For a performer all listening is conditioned by the kind of physical activity which dominates his [her] playing.* If there is a separate initiation of power for each tone he [she] will listen notewise, and then there will be insufficient subtlety in the use of power to create a beautiful statement. But, if tones are produced inside a current of power, . . . he [she] will listen in a comprehensive manner from the beginning to the end of the musical statements.[13]

Whiteside suggests that with beginning students who are not very fluent with their reading skills, a new piece could be taught by rote, in order to enhance the rôle of the ear in the learning process. Other means to develop the aural image are to practice transposition and improvisation. These activities force students to think the entire

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[10]Abby Whiteside, Mastering the Chopin Études and Other Essays, ed. by Joseph Prostakoff and Sophia Rosoff (New York: Charles Schribner's Sons, 1969), 173.

[11]Abby Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 2d. ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961), 140.

[12]Whiteside, Mastering the Chopin Études, 45.

[13]Ibid., 28.

phrase as a unit, rather than learning note by note as might occur when they are learning to read notation.[14]

One could also consider that a suitable way to improve students' hearing capacity is to ask them to sing what they play. A melody that because of the nature of the instrument cannot actually be sustained, a hidden voice within an intricate texture, a bass-line sustained with the pedal, provide instances in which the student could take advantage of singing in order to help them perceive a melody as a unit.

Often the voice provides a wonderful means to shape dynamic contour. The piano can become an extremely mechanical instrument, since no breathing or bowing is necessary for sound production. A good pianist should imitate the sound which a string-player does with the bow, or the phrasing a wind-player or singer does with the breath, in order to make the music sound expressive. Sound must be prolonged in one's mind as if it was physically sustained through contact with a vibrating string, or with a continuous breathe, so that the succession of tones are produced within the right dynamic level.

3. Attention

This aspect is closely associated with the two preceding ones. In order to be critical when they listen, students should keep their attention as sharp and keen as possible. Nothing positive will be derived from mechanical playing, without care and a conscious attempt to improve the passage musically and technically. Lhévinne

[14]Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 62.

states that:

> A beautiful touch, a beautiful legato, will not come by merely wishing for it. It will not come by hours of inattentive playing at the keyboard. It is very largely a matter of developing your tonal sense, your aesthetic ideals, and mixing them with your hours of practice. . . . Technic is worthless in your playing, if it means nothing more to you than making machines of your hands.[15]

Whiteside remarks that students should strive to keep their attention keen in order to get the right idea of a new piece they are learning from the first time they read it. First impressions are the most lasting; therefore, students must avoid faulty first impressions both aural and muscular.[16]

The span of time that attention can be maintained varies from person to person. Student should be alert to the moment in which concentration is lost, and either take a rest, or change to a different passage, piece, or composer. Whiteside warns students not to try to cope with fatigue. Once they get tired, they should quit practice and return later to the problem to approach it fresh, and with better chances of solving it in a fast and efficient way.[17]

One might consider, however, that to practice attentively for a period of time every day is not an isolated factor when considering methodic practice. A certain amount of time and work is necessary in order to ensure improvement. Playing an instrument implies the development of complex muscular and mental habits, which need enough repetition to be established.[18] The important thing is how

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[15]Lhévinne, Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing, 39.

[16]Whiteside, Mastering the Chopin Études, 45.

[17]Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 143.

[18]Lundin explains how repetition affects learning of musical skills in Robert W.

to make this repetitive process effective, without wasting too much time on passages that can already be played with ease and working longer with the most difficult ones.

In order to increase the students' attention, Lhévinne proposes that they divide their practice periods, doing technique at one time and repertoire at another. He recommends to spend two hours on each aspect as a good measure. "Over-practice is just as bad as under-practice."[19] During this time, he suggests:

> Avoid worry and distractions of any kind when you are practicing. Your mind must be every minute on what you are doing, or the value of your practice is lessened enormously. By intense concentration, love of your work and the spirit in which you approach it, you can do more in a half hour than in an hour spent purposelessly. Do not think you have been practicing, if you have played a single note with your mind on anything else.[20]

Students should secure variety in their practice, in order to avoid dull repetition. To play scales with different touches, dynamics, rhythms, speeds, is a way of keeping the mind concentrated on what could otherwise become boring and mechanistic practice.[21]

Beginning students often waste time and energy practicing inattentively because it is so easy for them to play for the fun of playing that they tend to lose track of the discipline involved in

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Lundin, An Objective Psychology of Music, 3d. ed. (Malabar, Florida: R. E. Krieger Pub. Co., 1985), 135-6. The thoughts of some behaviorist psychologists in reference to the rôle of repetition--Watson (frequency), Guthrie (stimulus pattern), Thorndike (law of exercise), and Skinner (operant conditioning)--are summarized in Joe B. Buttram, Handbook of Music Psychology (Lawrence, Kansas: National Association for Music Therapy, 1980), 238-45.

[19]Lhévinne, Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing, 43.

[20]Ibid., 44.

[21]Ibid.

becoming professional performers. Playing should always be enjoyable, but yet a high quality should be developed by practice done in a methodic manner. From the beginning students should enhance the habit of keeping their mind precisely on what they do.

4. Mental image

One of the most important aspects in the students' training is the development of a mental image to direct the performance of a piece of music. From the early lessons students should be able to imagine the sound they are about to produce; otherwise, they have no way to verify when they have produced the right result. Lhévinne states that "every piano student who aspires to acquire a beautiful tone must have a mental concept of what a beautiful tone is."[22] Poor or successful performances depend to a great deal on the mental concept students have of the piece they are learning, and the tonal quality they aim for in their mind.

A different aspect of imagination is referred to by Whiteside. Mental images might often help to solve a technical problem which is not easily grasped by a student. Teachers should transmit any image which could exemplify the action desired, such as for example pulling down a window sash, or turning the steering wheel of a car to learn the movement of the top arm.[23] Analogies are useful tools to transfer a meaning to a new situation, either muscular action or musical concept. To produce mental images that suggest the right

[22]Lhévinne, Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing, 17.

[23]Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 38.

coordination is an excellent means of actually achieving it.[24]

As piano instructor, one should realize that mental images of musical patterns should be developed from the very first stages in the student's training. When students are first introduced to the keyboard, a way to reinforce the aural image is to have them play without looking at the keys. Even at this early stage, when they start sight-reading and establishing the relationship between written notes and the sound produced, they should do so guided by their ears and kinesthetic sense rather than their eyes, which should remain on the score.

A mental image also refers to the muscular aspect of performance, the actual connection between a certain fingering and the corresponding key-pattern (scale, arpeggio, chord). It is a mental-muscular-aural relationship established by the students when they practice a piece away from the keyboard, as they imagine the sound. This is an excellent way of enhancing the mental conception of the piece, the musical and technical relationships become clear and more distinctly imprinted in one's mind, and this provides an effective and more lasting means for memorization.

One should realize that imagination should grow in the musician's training hand in hand with the physical medium to translate the musical concepts, and the ear should be in charge of evaluating that such correspondence between mechanism and mental image does occur.

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[24]Ibid., 60.

5. Analysis

Analysis allows students to improve on every aspect of their performance by discovering suitable solutions for problems which their ears have detected. It is necessary, however, to create the habit of precisely defining the spot where the difficulty occurs. To be able to point out the problem is actually part of its solution. A vague description of the trouble is quite common in the early stages, when students still do not have a clear perception of what they need to look for in order to solve a certain difficulty. The sooner they can become aware of this first step of the analysis, the faster they will learn to solve the challenges present in a piece.

In order to describe the problem and design a strategy to solve it, Whiteside determines that ears must lead brain and muscular activity in order to conform the actual performance with the aural image.[25] Her approach is to analyze the physical aspect of the mechanical problem (scale, arpeggio, chromatic scale), isolating it as a first step toward finding a suitable solution. Analysis of the mechanism which produces the movement, starting from the upper arm and connecting with the bony structure of hand and fingers, is as important as the pattern itself. Not what is practiced but how it is practiced puts emphasis on the movement rather than the pattern. A correct movement has to be used; otherwise, the repetition of a wrong coordination will be harmful rather than profitable. To perform with the wrong movement merely perfects the mistakes; therefore, students should analyze and seek for a balanced combination of movement that produces the desired progression.[26]

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[25]Whiteside, The Pianist's Mechanism, 2-3.

Another aspect of analysis is discussed by Lhévinne. He states that playing should be thoroughly grounded on real musicianship. Students should be aware of the form, harmony, and general design of the piece they are learning. Knowledge of the key, common chords, seventh chords, scales with their fingerings, enharmonic relationships, harmonic progressions, fingerings for chords and arpeggios should be as familiar to the students as their own name; otherwise, they put themselves in the position of the parrot that can only repeat words but does not understand what it says.[27]

In summary, analysis should be applied in two senses, to the structure of the music itself, to discover the composer's intentions as appearing in the score, in order to develop a thorough musical concept to support the interpretation of the work, and to the technical or mechanical aspects of the performance in order to solve the difficulties present in the piece, so that the entire message can come across to the audience with clarity and conviction.

6. Alertness

The preceding principles refer to the mental characteristics students have to have when they practice. This one deals with the physical aspect. Whiteside states that a performer should adopt, when playing, an attitude of alertness and activity.

> Action does not necessarily mean the moving of a lever; it may mean simply holding the lever in alert readiness for movement. It certainly does not mean relaxation. It is the cat ready to spring--not the cat sleeping in the sun.[28]

[26]Ibid., 3.

[27]Lhévinne, Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing, 9.

In regard to relaxation, Whiteside warns the teacher against using such a word to refer to an efficient pianistic action. There should not be relaxation but rather a blended coordination of the entire mechanism, which should be at every moment active, alert, and elastic to transmit the vitality of the rhythmic flow.

> Relaxation in no way suggests the alert blended action that is the basis for speed; and it develops habits of releasing power between tones. Rather, beautiful playing is related to the absence of releases. They ruin both a rhythm and the subtle use of dynamics. . . . Speed is the result of an alert blended balance in activity--not of relaxation.[29]

Lhévinne agrees that there should be "firm, elastic, vibrant tones, not produced by flabby, relaxed fingers. . . . There must generally be resistance in the fingers, no matter how loose wrists and arms may be."[30]

Piano teachers must consider that the correct use of the mechanism should encompass the entire body, from the torso to the tip of the fingers. The actions should be performed with accuracy and effectiveness. This idea is not precisely suggested when the term "relaxation" is employed. The inert, passive concept of weight is not the exact image one would want to transmit to the students in order to make them play with speed and alertness. They should be using their muscles, bones, articulations in the most comfortable and effective way, and to do so they should avoid any unnecessary action which might get in the way of good coordination. But one

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[28]Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 36.

[29]Ibid., 54.

[30]Josef Lhévinne, "The Art of Modern Pianism," In Modern Masters of the Keyboard, ed. Harriet Brower (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1926; reprint, 1969), 76.

should not forget that the coordination itself must involve a group of muscles and levers in movement, not only one single action which puts the rest of the mechanism into a straight jacket. As Mursell observes: "Any movement, even the smallest, involved in actuating a musical instrument, is essentially a coordination of many cooperating muscles and an intricate system of leverage. It directly involves the entire arm to the shoulder, and indirectly the whole of the body."[31]

An attitude of alertness refers then to a physical awareness of all the subtleties demanded by the mental image. Muscles should be prompt to achieve the exact action required to play any specific key or group of keys with the desired dynamics and in the precise moment it must occur. Music is an art which implies dynamic motion. As an activity that occurs in time, and requires manipulation of time to be expressed, the attitude which better corresponds with a musical idea should be that of movement and alertness.

7. Emotion

The emotional element should not be underestimated as a fundamental part of the students' attitude. Projection of the expressive content of music students are learning must be a primary concern, even though they might have played it several times, repeating passages and dividing up technical problems in order to

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[31]James L. Mursell, The Psychology of Music (New York: W. W. Norton, 1937; reprint, New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1970), 250.

solve them mechanically. At a certain point during the practice session, even if students have to play at a very slow tempo, they need to put together the separate elements and bring out the musical expression of the passage. This should represent the synthesis of all the work done up to that moment, and it is necessary in order to make sense of the entire passage when put into context.

Whiteside proposes a solution to achieve a blended attitude of physical alertness and emotional projection which consists of using the body as a whole coordinated entity to reproduce, through a rhythmically organized physical response, the mental image previously conceived. The routine repetition of purely mechanical habits should thus be avoided, and instead an attitude of commitment and concern about expressive projection of the musical content should be achieved:

> The entire musculature changes when the emotions are involved. Routine drill of mechanics excludes this emotional factor. Practice perfects only the elements in use. Why not consistently practice using the complete tools needed for an arresting performance. No other kind of practice is adequate for developing the full potential capacity of the performer, and routine practice may very easily balance the odds against the exciting performance.[32]

Whiteside states that students should not be embarrassed about expressing physically what they feel. Though several of these movements have been labeled as mannerisms, they truly express the response of the performer to the music.[33] These movements, however, should not distort the rhythmical integrity of the piece,

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[32]Whiteside, Mastering the Chopin Études, 110.

[33]Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 65, and Mastering the Chopin Études, 29.

but rather intensify and underline its rhythmic basis.

Lhévinne writes that "one cannot always be in exalted mood, either when alone or before an audience." In such cases, one needs to think of what the music expresses, and try to voice its meaning. Performers should be in complete control of themselves, their mechanism and the instrument. That should be the purpose of all the technical work.[34]

One should encourage students to strive to maintain a fresh impression of the piece at every moment during their practice period. They should make sure that they are able to transmit the emotional content of the music to the audience at the moment of performance. The job of the pianist, like that of the actor, requires the quality of being convincing. Only if students assume a strong, assertive attitude to transmit what they are trying to express will their message get across to the audience and be perceived by sensitive listeners. The emotional factor in practicing is the one which could provide such strength.

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[34]Lhévinne, "The Art of Modern Pianism," 80.

B. Procedure for Practicing

One of the most important factors when one is considering methodic study is the use of time during the practice session. Time must be used in the most effective way so that the best results are achieved without waste of energy and concentration. Superfluous repetition and playing without some specific purpose in mind should be rejected, and convenient strategies should be taken to solve the specific problems with which the student is engaged at that particular stage. The art of efficient practice of pieces already in the repertoire, as well as the learning of new works, consists of conveniently dividing into achievable objectives a goal that might otherwise seem unattainable. Some principles that should be observed are the following.

1. Clear purpose

Students should define a clear goal for every repetition of a given passage they are learning. This *specific purpose* should direct their activity at any particular moment during the practice session. As long as this principle is observed, any dull or wasteful repetition will be avoided. Each time students play the passage they should add a new feature, a new nuance of which they have to become aware. They should never allow themselves to play the passage without clearly stating their purpose.

Lhévinne suggests having a different purpose in mind for each repetition; students could change the touch, tempo, dynamics, play one hand legato while the other is played staccato, and notice every

imaginable detail that could improve their perception of the passage. In order to maintain interest, he states: "Practice in this way, using your brains and your ingenuity, and your practice will not be a bore to you."[35] This will create the habit of searching for specific goals, no matter how insignificant or easy to achieve they seem at one particular stage.

One might consider that a useful procedure which will greatly assist students throughout their development is that of dividing into shorter segments the longer sections of a piece. A complex work can always become simpler if one separates its parts into phrases, semiphrases, or even motives which are easier to understand and assimilate. By practicing short sections, the student should establish "landmarks every few measures at logical cadential points," as Newman suggests.[36] A good procedure is to "practice skipping about arbitrarily from one to any other" to ensure that the student is able to start playing at any point within the piece.[37] In the process of learning a work, students should start with a new segment every time, rather than practicing always from the beginning, "thus doing [their] hardest concentrating while [they are] freshest."[38]

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[35]Josef Lhévinne, Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing, with a Foreword by Rosina Lhévinne (Philadelphia: Theo Presser Company, 1924; reprint, New York: Dover Publications, Inc.,1972), 44.

[36]William S. Newman, The Pianist's Problems. A modern Approach to Efficient Practice and Musicianly Performance (New York: Da Capo Press, 1984), 137.

[37]Ibid.

[38]Ibid., 129, 136.

Procedures such as learning left-hand parts separately from right-hand parts, dividing longer units into shorter ones, playing the structural tones of the melody to understand its shape, are some examples of how to separate concepts in order to make them easier to achieve, and gradually build larger units toward the performance of the entire work.[39]

A rather different idea is suggested by Whiteside, who proposes that students should learn a piece as a whole. She encourages teaching by rote at the beginning, when student are not familiar yet with musical notation. When pieces become more complicated, however, she does suggests learning them in shorter segments, building up from a basic rhythmic framework which gradually adds more notes to its basic scheme until the entire pattern is completed. She describes this process as "outlining" or "scanning" a piece, and it will be further discussed in the section referring to Rhythm.[40]

2. Focus of attention

This condition is tied to the preceding one. Once a clear purpose has been stated, students should observe attentively whether or not they have achieved their goal. One specific thing at a time should be observed and evaluated. Working systematically, students will gradually build longer sections, until the entire piece can be played precisely as they aim, with ease and accuracy, in tempo, and with

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[39]The process of gradually shaping more complex responses is discussed by behaviorist psychologists. See Robert W. Lundin, An Objective Psychology of Music, 3d. ed. (Malabar, Florida: R. E. Krieger Pub. Co., 1985), 132-8.

[40]Abby Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 2d. ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961), 141-2.

the right expression. The principle is simply to focus each time on one aspect until it is mastered, and gradually integrate more complex goals, depending on how fast the mind, ears, and fingers can assimilate them. Newman states that the student should devote more practice time to the difficult spots, rather than wasting much time with those which take care of themselves.[41]

Lhévinne points to clarity, accuracy, and beautiful tone as factors on which students should focus their attention. In his approach: "Accuracy, beautiful legato and refined staccato are so important."[42] Students should be trained to control their fingers in order to provide a successful performance of the music they are studying. He comments that "in these days of keenest competition the student must look upon inaccuracies an unpardonable."[43]

Both authors agree that inaccuracies occur because of a faulty mental image. Lhévinne states that mental uncertainty is the reason for inaccurate playing. "Take your simplest piece and play it at a normal tempo. Keep your mind upon it, and inaccuracy disappears."[44]

Lhévinne recommends that one take special care with the left hand, since a great number of inaccuracies occur in this part. The student must treat both hands as having an equal rôle, and practice the left hand alone as though it were the only one, giving to each part its own individuality, independence, and character.[45]

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[41]Newman, The Pianist's Problems, 128.

[42]Lhévinne, Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing, 39.

[43]Ibid., 32.

[44]Ibid., 33.

Whiteside states that students' attention should be focused in both the horizontal and vertical aspects of their performance. There are two fundamental distances they should be aware of, the horizontal distance, which controls the right pitches (movement from one side to the other on the keyboard), and vertical distance, which controls the touch to produce the sound (key-drop, downward movement for each key). Horizontal distance is responsible for accurate playing; vertical distance, for tone production.[46]

In Whiteside's approach, "ease must come first and accuracy second."[47] She regards ease and clarity as results of a good perception of the rhythm, which becomes the maximum organizer and coordinator of the action to transmit emotion to performance. Accuracy and speed are achieved later, once students have been able to obey this basic rhythm. They command their entire body to respond to it, and do the necessary muscular adjustments to transmit to the music a sense of progression:

> Stopping for a faulty tone is one of the deadly sins established when a faulty tone is made more important than a going rhythm. See to it that the aural image is accurate; but see to it that a going rhythm is more important in your piano playing life than a faulty tone.[48]

One should realize that, even though students need to become extremely careful and concerned about reading and playing with accuracy, this should be mainly observed when they are learning and practicing a piece. Once they have to play it in a recital or other

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[45]Ibid., 35.

[46]Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 72.

[47]Abby Whiteside, The Pianist's Mechanism (New York: G. Schirmer, 1929), 47.

[48]Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 145.

sort of public performance they should not be concerned about hitting incorrect notes. Accuracy should take care of itself, if the practice has been effective. They must have already adjusted their mechanism correctly in order to play with the greatest possible neatness and ease. If they remain too preoccupied about playing perfectly, their performance will probably become less free and spontaneous. At the moment of performance their mind should be concerned only with transmitting the musical message. The whole concept is more important than too much concern for the details.

3. Rhythm as an organizer

Every nuance of musical interpretation and fluent technique is realized within a precise rhythmic scheme. Such a scheme constitutes the framework into which the rest of the elements--pitch, phrasing, dynamics, articulation--are organized. The rhythmic element has the function of unifying all the different aspects of performance.[49]

Both Whiteside and Lhévinne agree that rhythmic precision is a fundamental aspect the student should develop through training. Without this basic element all the rest might become meaningless. Mursell remarks that "the on-flowing steady beat which the German writers have called the *Takt*, and which is one but only one of the constituent elements of musical rhythm, is the spine of the composition."[50]

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[49]Grosvenor W. Cooper and Leonard B. Meyer, The Rhythmic Structure of Music (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), 1.

[50]James L. Mursell, Education for Musical Growth (Boston: Gin and Co., 1948), 182.

For Whiteside, rhythm is the foundation of a good technique. It is the very first thing students should be aware of, and the only one which will permit them to coordinate their entire body as a unit to transmit the musical image through a muscular action. She considers rhythm as the main factor to achieve such coordination.

> A basic rhythm is the only possible over-all coordinator, for it is not merely the instigator of beautiful musical production, but it is the sole factor that can successfully translate the image in the ear and the emotion which must be at the bottom of all beautiful music into a function of the whole body.[51]

Lhévinne remarks that nothing bothers him more than students that play with a lack of rhythmic control.[52] He says that "among the fundamental things pupils generally lack are rhythmic precision, variety of tone color, principles of relaxation, and the like."[53] Students should regard rhythm as part of the personality of a piece. "It should be marked by a strong vigorous design in the background."[54] "Rhythm should not be thought of as something dead. It is live, vital, elastic. . . . Whether the piece is played slower or faster the rhythmic design must not be obscured."[55] He thinks that rhythm must be felt, so that it can be transmitted to the audience and become contagious to a certain extent.[56]

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[51]Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 4.

[52]Lhévinne, Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing, 7.

[53]Josef Lhévinne, "The Art of Modern Pianism," In Modern Masters of the Keyboard, ed. Harriet Brower (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1926; reprint, 1969), 77.

[54]Lhévinne, Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing, 44.

[55]Ibid., 45.

[56]Ibid., 8.

For Lhévinne, the fact that students can handle timing correctly depends to a great degree on their ability to remain calm. Nervous haste could destroy the proper poising of the music.[57] In order to develop a rhythmic sense, he recommends playing duets, hearing a great deal of rhythmic music, or accompanying an instrumentalist or a singer with a strong rhythmic sense.[58] He thinks counting and time beating will develop a rhythmic feeling in the students, particularly in the early stages of their training.[59]

On the contrary, Whiteside observes that counting is inadequate to develop a subtle sense of timing. "Counting takes care of the sequence of beats; . . . it does not connect up with the physical action of progression where rhythm is ensconced."[60] In order to make it work, a definite association should be made with the physical action. In addition, counting is not concerned with the time unit of the measure, so it establishes no mold of which the beats are a part, a subdivision. The subtle sensing of time values lies rather in "the physical action of progression, a timing which is related to a rhythm."[61]

Whiteside suggests that the rhythmic feeling must be in charge of producing both the right coordination and the best emotional reaction to music. The excitement of a performance depends on this precise factor.[62] She suggests the use of improvisation to help the

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[57]Lhévinne, "The Art of Modern Pianism," 78.

[58]Lhévinne, Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing, 6-7.

[59]Lhévinne, "The Art of Modern Pianism," 77, 78.

[60]Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 56.

[61]Ibid., 56.

student feel the sense of continuation that an ongoing rhythm produces, the going toward a destination. Improvisation uses ears and rhythm as a fused unit.[63] Other means to transmit to the student a rhythmic feeling is through duet playing.[64]

Whiteside proposes another primary tool for achieving a basic rhythm which she calls "outlining" or "scanning,"[65] a procedure she created in which the student plays the piece through "pulsing" only the important tones and creating with them a "starkly simple but beautiful line of musical progression."[66] These tones could be the first beats of the measure; or being more creative, students could choose from the entire texture those notes which they find to be more significant. The important thing is to keep a clear sense of rhythmic flow, and to shape notes, whatever they are, into this basic background. The same spontaneity and freedom as in improvisation should be achieved. This procedure provides a means to subordinate the details to the main line, and thus produces a phrase as a whole musical unit. When one is first learning a new piece this procedure might help more than the common sight-reading that gets so much involved with details. "If details are stressed at the beginning, there are innumerable chances for going wrong in the process of developing the entire mechanism as a unified whole."[67]

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[62]Abby Whiteside, Mastering the Chopin Études and Other Essays, ed. by Joseph Prostakoff and Sophia Rosoff (New York: Charles Schribner's Sons, 1969), 27.

[63]Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 135-6.

[64]Ibid. 139-40.

[65]Whiteside, Mastering the Chopin Études, 54.

[66]Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 146.

[67]Whiteside, Mastering the Chopin Études, 133.

Whiteside notices yet another way of making students aware of the basic rhythm, to make them play the bass line alone. In many cases here is the harmonic and rhythmic support for the entire piece, especially in dances like a waltz, mazurka, or march. Living rhythm is related to dancing, or skating. It must be felt with the entire body.[68] A way of doing this is to play the bass with both hands one or two octaves apart, depending on the musical texture.[69]

One could consider that with beginning students, the procedure of counting and time beating might be a preliminary means to help them understand the relations between time values and meter. But the teacher should be aware that correct counting does not guarantee correct sensing of the rhythm of the music, and that probably performance might still lack rhythmic vitality. Sometimes a physical action, such as beating the time values on the knees, or the lid of the piano might help a young beginner to sense the relationship between the two hands, and the correct pacing and distribution of time values. Any type of corporal activity that could help the student to establish a rhythmic feeling should be encouraged.[70] And perhaps counting could be rated as one of the weakest means to provide the desired result. The swinging of the torso could better

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[68]Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 19-20

[69]Whiteside, Mastering the Chopin Études, 57.

[70]In reference to the relationship between rhythm and muscular movement, see Raymond. B. Stetson, "A Motor Theory of Rhythm and Discrete Sensation," Psychological Review 12 (1905): 250-70, 293-350, and Christian. A. Ruckmick,"The Role of Kinaesthesis in the Perception of Rhythm," American Journal of Psychology 24 (1913): 303-59.

transmit, in some cases, a sense of rhythmic motion.

The connection between playing and dancing or skating--or any physical activity that involves rhythm as one of its essential elements--has been extensively discussed by music educators. The Dalcroze philosophy of Eurhythmics is based on this concept, and is a very successful approach which makes students feel the connection between body movement and musical rhythm.[71] Music must be felt through the entire body, and then rhythm will be positively translated into the performance.[72] Once students are aware of this basic movement the entire rhythmic element becomes evident and their playing improves.

4. Slow practice

Without losing track of the basic rhythmic activity, at whatever tempo the student chooses to play, slow practice will ensure control and attention to the minimal details of the musical texture. This procedure can be recommended as a valuable aid for mind and fingers to learn intricate passages which might otherwise seem

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[71]Emile Jaques-Dalcroze, Rhythm, Music and Education (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1921). An historical antecedent for Dalcroze's education, as well as other music pedagogy theories, could be traced to the 18th century writings of the Enlightenment. Rousseau (1712-1778), in his *Emile* (1762), refers to the individual as a complete, integrated human being with his own needs and potentials. Children should not longer be treated as small adults, into whom knowledge should be poured, but rather as persons with capabilities to learn, according to their particular stage of development.

[72]The findings of psychologists in regard to rhythmic response as dependent on the action of voluntary muscles (Motor Theory) are mentioned in Robert W. Lundin, An Objective Psychology of Music, 3d. ed. (Malabar, Florida: R. E. Krieger Pub. Co., 1985), 123-5.

incomprehensible. It could be established as a basic principle for students to learn a new piece or to practice one in their repertoire.

One should instruct students to choose a tempo that is slow enough to allow them to perform precisely all the notes, rhythms, dynamics, and expression without altering the basic rhythmic scheme. A common mistake of beginning students is to play easier passages faster, and to slow down toward a more comfortable pace when difficulties arise; rather, they should create the habit of keeping the same tempo all the way through, particularly when learning a new piece for which they have not clearly understood its rhythmical organization. A basic rhythmic figure--eighth, quarter, or whatever might be convenient depending on the passage--could be taken as the basis to establish a consistent tempo throughout. All the elements will thus achieve their right proportion, and the piece as a whole will acquire significance. Newman points out that "the metronome may be of some help, for its use can pull together the over-all form of a piece that has a single or prevailing tempo by integrating its diverse rhythms."[73]

Lhévinne recommends slow practice as a useful procedure to acquire accuracy and neatness in performance: "It takes strength of will to play slowly."[74] It is much better to play accurately than to play fast. To play at a faster tempo, without poise or repose, produces no artistic pleasure. It is always necessary to have the fingers under control, and to do so, the student should be able to play a fast composition at any speed: "Start playing with it very slowly,

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[73]Newman, The Pianist's Problems, 141.

[74]Lhévinne, Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing, 33.

and gradually advance the speed with succeeding repetitions."[75] To help regulate the speed students could use the metronome, and then do the same thing without it. They should develop a sense of tempo, and never exaggerate to either the slow or the fast side.[76]

Whiteside dismisses the effectiveness of slow practice to develop virtuosity and ease in performance, however. She thinks that this procedure emphasizes notewise production of sound and thus leads to notewise hearing, so a complete phrase is not grasped as a unit. "Slow practice does not perfect the blend in activity that is necessary for speed. . . Slow practice, particularly when it is legato, may permit the establishing and constant strengthening of habits which inhibit beauty and the easy flow of music."[77] She argues that the type of coordination used when playing slowly is different than when playing at a faster tempo: "The chief reason that slow practice is often injurious is that the entire adjustment is more lax, and the application of the power is far slower than it should be for speed."[78] She also opposes the usefulness of this procedure to ensure accuracy in a fast tempo, pointing out that:

> The matter of accuracy which has led to the belief in slow practice hints at concentration on precision, while speed hints at taking chances. The physical attributes related to these attitudes are quite dissimilar. . . Accuracy in speed is dependent, first of all, on an accurate aural image; second, on the smooth continuity of a basic rhythm; and third, most emphatically on the right control for horizontal distances. This right control must be at the center of the radius of activity of the playing mechanism and not at its peripheral

[75]Ibid.

[76]Ibid., 34.

[77]Whiteside, Mastering the Chopin Études, 180.

[78]Whiteside, The Pianist's Mechanism, 13.

> extensions. Slow practice may very well not include any of these attributes.[79]

Whiteside recognizes, however, that slow practice might be useful to change old faulty habits into new correct ones, as long as the student makes sure that when the tempo increases the same care and control continue.[80]

> Unless the student[s] can duplicate, in a slow tempo, the action that [they use] when momentum is gathered, [they are] never completely master of [their] mechanism, . . . care should be taken in slow practice to use the exact mechanism which can be carried over into the fastest playing without any change in the action.[81]

As piano teacher, one realizes that slow practice might provide a very good way to achieve muscular control, as long as the right actions are used. The coordination should be the same as that which will be used at tempo, and it will help one learn the exact distances of the keyboard, and to perform with confidence. If students know exactly which keys should they play, the upper arm will coordinate the movement, and the only difference from the actual performance is that more time will be allowed to ensure this coordination. In addition, the emotional aspect may also be enhanced. By playing at a slower tempo, the ears are forced to pay attention and react to all the notes in the musical texture which might otherwise be neglected. The accompaniment could be placed in its right proportion in relation to the melody, the counterpoint could become clear, so the student can become aware of the voices which might have been missed when playing faster, time relationships will

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[79]Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 55.

[80]Whiteside, Mastering the Chopin Études, 51.

[81]Whiteside, The Pianist's Mechanism, 14.

become precisely established when the correct proportions are carefully observed, and the large gesture will intensify the emotional meaning of the passage. These are some of the multiple advantages from which students will benefit from slow practice, if conscientiously done. But, as Newman warns, even though slow motion might present a problem of keeping the flow going throughout the phrase, a broad sense of direction that transcends the beats and even the barlines should be consistently maintained.[82]

5. Fast practice

In spite of the fact that this principle might seem to contradict the preceding one, this is not actually the case. The procedure referred to here implies a different stage in the study of a piece. Once the notes have been learned, and the rhythmical units and musical expression understood, fast practice might be employed as a technical solution to achieve speed, easy, and virtuosity. As Newman points out, "some difficulties show up only at full speed."[83]

Whiteside proposes an interesting idea, based on the assumption that the type of coordination used when playing at speed is not the same as when doing the passage slowly. Just as the feeling is different when walking and when running, a change in the mode of coordination occurs when playing slowly and when playing at a faster tempo. She states the differences by saying that "slow

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[82]Newman, The Pianist's Problems, 114.

[83]Ibid., 129.

practice can establish habits which are completely unrelated to the coordination demanded for speed. Add legato playing to slow practice and the result will be that one is tied to a post rather than skimming the ground."[84]

Whiteside suggests achieving the rhythmical shaping of difficult passages through rough movements, not completely defined in all their details. Starting from a rhythmic movement as the basis, the different elements are gradually shaped into a more defined and accurate performance. In order to integrate details into the idea of a whole, she recommends playing succession of notes as a glissando, or as grace-notes or embellishments. In this way they will be produced in the same impulse, and thus the coordination will be the simplest. Inaccuracies will be avoided by "adjusting to position on the keyboard, without tone."[85]

The rapid realization of a group of notes will force both mind and fingers to respond quickly, and thus find the right coordination which will be used when one is playing at speed. Of course, it is essential not to lose clarity and control of every single note, even within a fast glissando, and this might represent a challenge for the ear, which will anyway benefit with such activity.

In regard to developing speed, Lhévinne and Whiteside have opposite points of view. Lhévinne states that not all students are able to play with virtuosity. He says that there might be a physical limitation according to individual characteristics. "It is mental as well as muscular and nervous."[86] In order to develop velocity the

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[84]Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 54.

[85]Whiteside, The Pianist's Mechanism, 51.

student could follow a general principle, the habit of playing with an extremely loose, floating hand, avoiding rigidity of muscles.[87] He remarks, however, that those students who are able to play fast should rather develop their weak points, and play enough pieces where there is no occasion for bravura, virtuosity or velocity.[88] He stresses the danger of bravura and recommends that the faster the piece is played, the more clarity is required in its performance.[89]

On the other side, Whiteside supports the idea that anybody who uses the right mechanism could be able to play with ease and virtuosity. Speed depends on the correct handling of the power from the upper arm to the fingers. In her approach, the most simple and natural coordination should ensure ease in performance:

> If ease, not accuracy and speed, were always the first requirement, and if it were always demanded, many of the common faults in piano playing would not appear; for, where there is talent and industry, accuracy and speed naturally result when there is ease in production.[90]

As long as students use the right coordination, there should be a chance to develop their technique in order to achieve efficiency in performance. It is the task of the teacher to discover the mechanical principle and its application in order to help the student, especially one not particularly gifted, to achieve such ease and virtuosity. Fast drills are invaluable patterns that can help to coordinate the mechanism with efficiency, and they have been recommended by several teachers as being very useful to develop

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[86]Lhévinne, Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing, 45.

[87]Ibid.

[88]Ibid., 46.

[89]Ibid.

[90]Whiteside, The Pianist's Mechanism, 4.

alertness both of ear and muscular actions.

6. Progression and continuity

At any moment during practice, if the piece is already in the students' repertoire or if they are learning a new one, if they are practicing slowly or can already play at tempo, a sense of progression and continuity must be achieved. The movement of fingers, wrists, arms and torso should be continuous, giving the impression that it never stops. As in dancing, where the continuity of the movement is an inherent part of its aesthetic effect, pianists in a certain way are choreographing their own playing; therefore, no stumbling or stopping which breaks the continuity of the movement must be allowed. Such interruption hinders the principle of continuity which should be present if the work is to be performed with fluency.

Several pedagogues have noticed the relationship of movement to space and music. Reference has been made to Dalcroze's philosophy of Eurhythmics which is based on this idea.[91] Mursell mentions a motor theory of rhythm which many musicians and dancers apply in their teaching.[92] Whiteside refers to the vivid effect of balancing the body to feel rhythmic continuity, just as in dancing or skating. She says that "rhythm stems from the point of resistance to the application of power. It creates its magic by a follow-through

[91]Emile Jaques-Dalcroze, Rhythm, Music and Education (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1921).

[92]James L. Mursell, The Psychology of Music (New York: W. W. Norton, 1937; reprint, New York: Johnson Reprint Co., 1970), 157-64.

activity which involves a balancing of weight of the entire body."[93]

In addition to playing the right notes as a flowing progression, the student should keep in mind the musical continuity and play each phrase as a unit. Here is another instance where the voice could serve as an aid to achieve continuity in playing; namely, to sing and play a melody breathing properly and giving it its right musical inflection. Many pedagogues advise one to take advantage of breathing, even though it may not be an inherent characteristic of the piano mechanism. Glasford states that "respiration is a means to create unity of rhythm in performance."[94]

In Whiteside's approach one of the main ideas is to strive for continuity, which is the only source that will achieve a rhythmic coordination. She proposes the procedures of "outlining" or "scanning" already described to achieve a sense of progression. In this way the student will learn to practice the line as a whole, with details subordinate to the general rhythmic continuity of the phrase. She says that "an integral factor in a rhythm is that it is going forward: its essence is destination."[95] Even silence should be part of the general movement. She describes a sense of progression where rests are as full of action as held tones.[96]

Lhévinne also points out that "rests have powerful dramatic effect."[97] Therefore, they are of vital importance. Their full value

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[93]Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 8.

[94]Irene A. Glasford, Rhythm, Reason and Response: for the Musician, Pianist and Teacher (New York: Exposition Press Inc., 1970), 88.

[95]Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 127.

[96]Ibid., 56.

[97]Lhévinne, Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing, 3.

has to be carefully observed. "They provide the element of balance and symmetry which is natural to art."[98] They are part of the rhythm of the music as much as the sounds. Lhévinne emphasizes that students need to be aware of them, "the method of stopping the sound of the note is quite as important as the method of sounding it."[99] The wrist is gradually raised until the finger leaves the key, so that the damper functions smoothly.[100]

Piano instructors often report that accurate and meaningful performance of rests is one of the points where beginning students usually have a problem; therefore, it is one of the first things to be established as a habit in their practice and performance. An action to release the key should be as clear as the one to bring it down. The student should become aware from the earliest lessons of the importance of silence in the musical texture. Rests will acquire significance only if they are perceived as part of the rhythmic continuity, and should be performed as thoroughly and accurately as the sounds themselves.

7. Correct chaining

One last principle which should be mentioned is that of correct chaining. Chaining is the process of connecting one unit to the next one so that the entire section becomes smooth and continuous.[101]

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[98]Ibid.

[99]Ibid., 22.

[100]Ibid., 23.

[101]Skinner defines chaining as the process by which one behavior becomes the new stimulus for another response, until a complete chain or unit of behavior is established. See Joe B. Buttram, Handbook of Music Psychology (Lawrence, Kansas:

Not only when reading a new composition, but also when memorizing one, students should establish effective connections. Muscular actions and auditory images should interact in order to build blocks that succeed one another in a continuous flow. Each segment should be practiced in order to function as a stimulus for the following one, until the entire section is accomplished as a unit. Memorization is the immediate result of good chaining habits. If a proper chaining has been established, and students do not interfere with the natural course of their memory by trying to anticipate in their mind what must come next, the correct succession of musical ideas should then follow each other, in a fluent and effortless way.

In order to connect one section to the next, Lhévinne recommends a focus upon the musical meaning rather than the symbols or notation. Students should be able to recall what makes sense to them, rather than a sequence of unrelated units. "The thing to remember is the thought, not the symbols."[102] He says that just as in remembering beautiful images and phrases in a poem, students should rely on the musical content of the units to help them relate one event with the next.[103] "Chords are musical words," and students should grasp their harmonic meaning in order to understand and make some sense out of the whole progression.[104]

Mental connections established by students work most efficiently if they discover the interrelationships themselves in order to make

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National Association for Music Therapy, 1980), 244.

[102]Lhévinne, Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing, 42.

[103]Ibid.

[104]Ibid.

them meaningful. Newman points out that:

> He must see the details in intelligible groups and patterns. A succession of dominants, a chord built in fourths, a series of three-measure phrases, a bass line that descends by two, a rondo design, a canonic progression--all of these are dependable aids to the player who discovers them.[105]

In regard to the muscular habits of chaining, Whiteside discourages the use of a procedure commonly suggested for connecting one section with another; namely, that of "preparation," which consists of reaching the next key before it is actually sounded. She says that it causes a useless habit, because it "makes for a procedure by dots and dashes, rather than smooth continuity."[106] As an alternative, the process of "outlining" already discussed would be more adequate, as long as it provides such sense of progression and thus helps muscular coordination to work in a simpler and more effective way.

Several teachers, however, find very useful the procedure of preparing new positions in the keyboard, particularly when wider distances are implied. To separate the horizontal movement (sidewise through the length of the piano) from the vertical (to play the group of notes itself) helps the student achieve control and confidence in accurately reaching the right place for the next unit. An ultimate goal of continuity, however, has to be achieved, and the student should strive to play an entire passage within a rhythmic unifying movement which contemplates the entire section as a whole.

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[105]William S. Newman, The Pianist's Problems. A modern Approach to Efficient Practice and Musicianly Performance (New York: Da Capo Press, 1984), 134.

[106]Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 51-2.

In any case, whatever procedure the student chooses to apply, the connections between one unit and the next should be worked out as much as the units themselves. Sometimes the beginning student presupposes that a smooth continuity will eventually come by itself, and therefore neglects to think and practice the connections between groups of notes. It should be remarked that this is an important aspect of learning which should be taken into consideration for the student to achieve fluency and smooth succession of musical ideas and physical actions.

C. Results of methodic practice

The long-term consequences that systematic study brings to the students' growth will become evident as they develop their musical mind and kinesthetic response. They would have a number of means to plan and evaluate their own performance. Through continuous discipline enhancing correct habits, students should be provided with ever increasing elements of analysis which will permit them to design adequate strategies for the solution of technical and musical problems to further their development. Eventually, students should be responsible for creating their own ways of solving any specific problem.

1. Good habits

Throughout methodic training students should create a stock of aural, mental, and muscular habits which will assist them in the solution of increasingly complex pianistic challenges. By providing them with a set of principles which could be applied to a number of works, teachers will enable their students to become self-dependent. As Newman remarks, "the guiding of the practice toward the day when student[s] can become [their] own teacher[s] is the most important mission of the piano teacher."[107] Whenever the pupils are confronted with new pieces, or if they eventually become teachers themselves, they will have a wide variety of approaches and resources to solve performing and interpretative problems. This

[107]William S. Newman, The Pianist's Problems. A modern Approach to Efficient Practice and Musicianly Performance (New York: Da Capo Press, 1984), 94.

should be the ultimate goal of their training. The transference of musical and technical concepts will depend on the well-established habits of methodic study and analysis. As Seroff points out: "Only analysis of all the problems can lead [students] to complete independence and eventually enable [them] to study and interpret a new work without help from anyone and on [their] own authority."[108]

Whiteside repeatedly points out that first impressions are the most lasting; therefore, the right habits of coordination should be learned from the very beginning, and habits related to the actual performance must be established:

> First impressions have been linked with first things in importance. And the first plank of all future complicated coordinations has been put down. . . . Some way must be found to practice for performance at the outset, not after habits unrelated to a performance have been established.[109]

Newman agrees, pointing out that "we learn exactly what we practice." Therefore, to establish correct habits from the very beginning and avoid faulty ones as much as possible should become a main concern when practicing methodically.[110] That is the reason for avoiding any stuttering and errors: "Whatever is done is learned and becomes a muscular coordination. Mistakes become learned and stick just as correct procedures do."[111]

Lhévinne's approach is directed as well to the creation of good habits of tone production, musical thinking, and professional

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[108]Victor Seroff, Common Sense in Piano Study (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1970), x.

[109]Abby Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 2d. ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961), 145.

[110]Newman, The Pianist's Problems, 125.

[111]Ibid., 126.

reliance. The student should strive to develop themselves into infallible performers who accurately interpret the composer's intentions, as they appear on the written score.[112] The technical and musical abilities should have a solid and substantial basis in habits of effective technique and musicianship.[113]

In order to develop a set of good habits teachers should force themselves to teach principles, as general as necessary, rather than focus the students' training in learning pieces from the repertoire. Their function is not only to coach but to actually teach students to think by themselves, in order to apply those principles to different situations.

2. Concept of whole

This is a principle that causes a great deal of controversy among musicians and pedagogues. Lhévinne and Whiteside have contradicting view-points in regard to this concept. Lhévinne recommends great attention to details, while Whiteside contemplates the details in the context of the piece as a whole.

Lhévinne thinks that details are of great importance and establishes that the final result depends a great deal on those little things in which artistic progress must be based.[114] How long a note is held, how short it should be, what precise dynamic or timing it

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[112]Josef Lhévinne, Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing, with a Foreword by Rosina Lhévinne (Philadelphia: Theo Presser Company, 1924; reprint, New York: Dover Publications, Inc.,1972), v.

[113]Josef Lhévinne, "Piano Study in Russia," in Great Pianists on Piano Playing, 2d. ed., ed. James Francis Cooke (Philadelphia: Theo Presser Co., 1917),177.

[114]Lhévinne, Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing, 5.

should have are very important issues of which the student has to become aware. The technical aspect should be carefully analyzed in all its details if one wants to achieve a professional performance. Details are those upon which the ones that aspire to be masters work the hardest.[115]

Whiteside establishes that too much attention to details could be dangerous, since they may distract from the building of a phrase as a whole. The meaning of each nuance could only be clear if it is part of a general progression in which rhythm is the main factor of unification. The entire body should find the right coordination to transmit the feeling of the whole--phrase, piece, or entire performance--and the details should be shaped within this concept without disturbing it but rather contributing to its beauty.[116]

Whiteside also states that students could be able to improve even when there are overwhelming things to correct in their playing. "It is always possible to make progress without attention being focused upon old faults."[117] This is in complete accordance with pedagogical principles which state that the teacher should take into account the students' development, and from this stage start changing what needs to be shaped, but without destroying what they have already achieved.[118]

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[115]Ibid., 23.

[116]Abby Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 2d. ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961), 56-7.

[117]Abby Whiteside, The Pianist's Mechanism (New York: G. Schirmer, 1929), 50.

[118]For a discussion of the effect of positive reinforcement in musical learning, see Robert W. Lundin, An Objective Psychology of Music, 3d. ed. (Malabar, Florida: R. E. Krieger Pub. Co., 1985), 132-8.

Both Lhévinne and Whiteside are actually referring to different stages in the learning of a piece of music. The idea of careful and precise work on the whole, as well as the details, is necessary. The two concepts enhance and complement each other, although a pianist will focus on each one of these aspects at a different point during the study of a piece. One might observe that frequently teacher and student provide criticism and evaluation of a number of particular features which are considered to get in the way of successful performance. It is difficult, however, to keep the right perspective if these specific factors are isolated. Rather the details should be considered in reference to a general framework. Once a particular stage of the study has been completed, when students can play the notes accurately, and needs to evaluate where they are, they might want to tape the whole excerpt in order to facilitate re-hearing. Then they could ask themselves general questions, such as what is the character of the piece, if the dynamic range is wide enough to provide emotional effect, if the section flows and sounds lively or if it is static and lacks rhythmic interest. They can then start analyzing specific aspects, such as what is missing and what is already sounding right. Details acquire significance only when they are considered in the context of the piece as a whole.

Newman agrees that the student should stress the over-all perspective of the work before becoming concerned with specific details. He encourages students to read the entire piece a couple of times until they get familiar with it.

An understanding of form is an important means of arriving

> at a *concept of the whole* in performance, . . . Even established performers will play through extended compositions with remarkable attention to detail and little or no sense of the broad interrelation of large sections. They will fail, for example, to perceive the climaxes on a comparative basis, or will lose track of the prevailing tempo, or do each return to a theme in the same manner, or make a sudden dynamic thrust, such as an extra-loud final chord, that is wholly out of keeping with the general level of the piece.[119]

Understanding of the piece as a whole should arise as a natural consequence of careful and methodic practice. It students have successfully achieved each one of the stages in the study of a piece, the entire composition will gradually acquire significance as a complete unit.

3. Imagery

At a certain point, reliance upon imagery might become necessary and desirable. A touch of imagery might help to clear out a problem which has not been solved by analysis. Whiteside refers to imagery as that element which can bring life and actually suggest a solution for a certain passage after one has struggled with it for a long time. She states that:

> Failure in achieving a result, when working with a planned procedure which includes many repetitions of the balky passage, can sometimes be turned into success by a flash of good imagery. When all is said and done, we do not know so very much about what actually happens in the body to make beautiful playing a reality. Nature has far greater skill in action than teachers have in making an analysis of that creative activity. Imagery touches off that capacity which is inherent in a skilled coordination.[120]

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[119]Newman, The Pianist's Problems, 141.

[120]Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 59.

By keeping their imagination fresh and alert, students become aware of these flashes of so called 'inspiration' which insight produces, and which bring a sudden solution, long searched through reasoning and analysis. Not only musical, but also physical ease and fluency might arise from this element.

> Muscles act in areas, and when imagery stimulates a coordination there is no boundary line for these areas. There is, instead, cooperation from all the areas. When good imagery suggests a result there are far more chances for nature to take over the coordination in a skilled manner than when a so-called analysis of leverage is made.[121]

Lhévinne recommends using imagery to get the idea of the sound students are looking for, stating: "Think moods and conditions into [their] arm and fingers. [Their] mental attitude means a great deal in the quality of [their] playing."[122] Arm and fingers in some way respond to the different qualities of emotion; joy, horror, pain, sorrow, scorn, meanness, and project them in playing, without one's mind being concerned about the details, which have become automatic.[123] In this way such emotions will be transmitted to the audience and the whole performance will become meaningful.

After a long period of practice, when students can already play a piece, and feel comfortable and confident with it, they acquire a sense of security by which, relying on their musical instinct, they react to the mood and inspiration at the moment of performance. This is a rewarding experience which will compensate them for all the time and effort spent practicing.

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[121]Ibid., 60.

[122]Lhévinne, Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing, 26.

[123]Ibid.

CHAPTER V. SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT METHODIC PRACTICE

In this chapter reference will be made to some specific aspects of piano performance, as regarded by Lhévinne and Whiteside. This should further clarify the ideas discussed in the preceding sections. Many of the issues exhibit divergences between the two approaches; therefore, the discussion compares points of disagreement and sets forth some applicable principles which could be profitable for beginning students. Aspects which show the greatest differences are the following: importance of technical exercises in order to develop a solid foundation for the pianist's further development, use of finger action, application of weight to produce a beautiful tone, concept of touch, and handling of legato in piano technique, importance of fingering as an aspect to be emphasized in the practice of beginning students, use of the pedal, and function of memorization in the overall training of a pianist.

A. Technical exercises

Technique is one of the fundamental elements of the students' training toward the goal of becoming accomplished performers. No matter how musical students' ideas might be, they require an efficient mechanism to transmit them to the audience; therefore, a major portion of students' daily work should be devoted to this aspect. Bastien suggests dividing the beginner's lesson into four

main areas, repertoire, technique, sight-reading, and theory.[1]

Technique is a controversial aspect between Lhévinne's and Whiteside's approach. Several of their technical concepts are based on different principles. According to Lhévinne, technique is a very important aspect in the training of a Russian pianist. Considerable time and efforts are employed to strive for an efficient technique. Students need to spend several years building a substantial foundation for their further development; five of the eight or nine years at the conservatoire emphasize work on scales and arpeggios. Several hours a day are devoted to practice technical exercises, and pupils are not supposed to play pieces of the repertoire if they lack a solid technique to support them.[2]

Rosina Lhévinne states that Russian students are trained to strive for a perfect technique. But "*technique was never a goal in itself;* rather, *it was only a means* to express the ideas of a composer."[3] Performers should adjust their interpretation to whatever the presumable intentions the composer are, as they appear in the written score (on a reliable edition, such as the *Urtext*).[4] Emphasis on scales, arpeggios, and technical exercises in the pianists' training could be summarized in Josef Lhévinne's

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[1]James Bastien, How to Teach Piano Successfully, 2d. ed. (Illinois and California: General Words and Music Co/Neil A. Kjos, Jr., Publishers, 1977), 153.

[2]Josef Lhévinne,"Piano Study in Russia," in Great Pianists on Piano Playing, 2d. ed., ed. James Francis Cooke (Philadelphia: Theo Presser Co., 1917),176-7.

[3]Josef Lhévinne, Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing, with a Foreword by Rosina Lhévinne (Philadelphia: Theo Presser Company, l924; reprint, New York: Dover Publications, Inc.,1972), v.

[4]Ibid.

phrase "regular daily technical work systematically pursued through several years."[5] This philosophy, however, does not mean that practicing scales should become dry or tiresome; new interest should be added by emphasizing nuances like evenness, touch, or rhythm.[6] Throughout the years scales and arpeggios become more complicated, more varied, more rapid, but are never omitted from the daily work.[7]

Whiteside regards technique as an analytical and creative process in the pianists' work, which will aid emotional development.[8] "Technique is not only a means to an end: it can be a stimulating factor in emotional expression."[9] It will provide the ease and fluency in the playing mechanism to respond to the artistic image the performer has in mind. In her approach mechanical problems are analyzed as patterns to be solved through an integrated coordination of the different levers, with the action starting at the upper arm and being transmitted to the fingers. She thinks that scales and arpeggios should be left last, because of the danger of overusing finger actions. They present more problems of coordination than other patterns that use the entire arm as the center of activity. Scales and arpeggios demand a difficult coordination to develop a feel for the movement that starts at the upper arm and is transmitted to the fingers. Fingers should not be trained to reach for their positions at the keyboard or initiate any

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[5]Lhévinne, "Piano Study in Russia," 177.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Abby Whiteside, The Pianist's Mechanism (New York: G. Schirmer, 1929), 3.

[9]Ibid., 9.

movement by themselves, but only to provide a connection between the upper arm's action and the keyboard. Thus scales should be left for later in the student's training. Octaves or chords are more easily played from the center (torso) to the periphery (fingers) and therefore could be taught earlier. The coordination required to play wider intervals on the keyboard will help students to sense the action of gauging distances with the upper arm.

> There is value in using a difficult pattern early, but only the kind of pattern which balks until a right balance in activity is established. Octaves and double thirds are examples of this kind of useful difficulty. They remain difficult and practically unplayable until they are produced in the easiest possible manner. Thus they are extremely valuable in establishing a technique. . . . Educators in other fields have learned to start with the large movements first in establishing a desirable coordination.[10]

For more advanced students, Whiteside suggests that the focus of technical training should be the musical problems themselves. Pieces like Chopin Études that present varied and comprehensive technical and interpretative problems are used as a source of material to solve mechanical challenges. They offer musical interest enough to raise the enthusiasm and motivation of the students, providing better material than simple scales, which might lose their beauty--as a musical pattern--when they are subject of dull and boring repetition. She warns that the repetitive drill of an inadequate coordination might actually damage the student. Correct use of the mechanism rather than the dull routine of technical exercises should be the foundation of technique. Solidly built, good

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[10]Abby Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 2d. ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961), 51.

technique will not be lost if students have to spend some days away from the piano. If the correct coordination has been learned, it will be easy to recover when they sit down again to practice.[11]

Teachers should consider that there is always a danger that mechanical drill might become tiresome; even if students are given different goals to achieve (evenness, touch, rhythm, dynamics). It is hard to keep a fresh and emotional response to what is being done, if there is no context out of which the mechanical problem arises. It is always necessary to go back to this context, the musical piece, in order to make sense out of any technical result. To practice scales and arpeggios, as well as any other exercise for its own sake might not be the best solution to develop ease and joy in performance. Though necessary, any technical exercises are only means to achieving a more artistic end. Accuracy and speed should remain important goals, but never at the expense of emotional meaning and transmission of the musical content of the work.

B. Finger action

Finger action is one aspect of technique that is regarded from different angles by the two authors. Lhévinne states that touch is founded on finger action. Therefore, one of the most stressed aspects in his students' training is the development of a suitable finger action that will produce the desired tonal quality. Whiteside disagrees with the use of fingers as the main action to produce movement or actually reach for the keys. In her approach such action, as well as any other directed to achieve a coordinated

[11]Whiteside, The Pianist's Mechanism, 7.

movement, should start in the upper arm, the center of the system, and from there be transmitted to the periphery, the fingers.[12]

Lhévinne states that "as a foundation of every touch stands the one produced by well-developed finger action. . . *Fingers must be raised.* Nothing else so develops clearness of touch, trains the muscles and forms the background for good technique."[13] There must be hand and finger firmness to achieve accuracy and good tone: "We must have both firmness and relaxation at one and the same time, but not in the same place. There must generally be resistance in the fingers, no matter how loose wrists and arms may be."[14]

Whiteside opposes the use of fingers as the means to develop an efficient technique to play with ease and virtuosity. Fingers should be carried in a position of readiness for the application of power.[15] Their function should only be to transmit the action of the upper arm, rather than initiating any action of stretching sidewise to reach their position in the keyboard.[16] She stresses the use of a technique which she calls "other than fingers," referring to the use of the torso, upper arm, forearm, and wrist acting as a whole integrated coordination organized entirely by a rhythmic response of the body to the beauty of the music.[17]

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[12]Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 31.

[13]Josef Lhévinne, "The Art of Modern Pianism," in Modern Masters of the Keyboard, ed. Harriet Brower (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1926; reprint, 1969), 75.

[14]Ibid., 76

[15]Whiteside, The Pianist's Mechanism, 26.

[16]Abby Whiteside, Mastering the Chopin Études and Other Essays, ed. by Joseph Prostakoff and Sophia Rosoff (New York: Charles Schribner's Sons, 1969), 174-8.

The two approaches actually complement each other. It is extremely important that beginning piano students learn different ways of using their fingers, arms, and torso. To provide their brain, muscles, and ear with a diversity of possibilities will enable them to use the most suitable in any specific situation. There might be a problem with the exclusive development of finger-action technique, as well as with the indiscriminate use of the fingers to allow the upper arm to take action in the production of the sound. At some point in their training, students should be provided with both options. As they further develop, their own insightful process would make use of the best means to produce the desired result, as long as they have a precise mental image. To stress the training of finger-action technique at the expense of other parts might become actually a problem of coordination. It is rather important to work out other movements as well, the arm-action technique, or a so-called 'integrated'-action technique, so that students can learn to handle their entire mechanism and decide how to use it in the solution of a particular passage.

C. Weight

Weight is another dangerous concept which provokes great controversy among performers. Probably because of the lack of a clear definition of the concept, or the assumption that it means more or less than what the actual word suggests, teachers and pianists debate the importance and correct use of weight to produce a solid and beautiful sound.

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[17]Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 30.

Lhévinne states that

> there must always be some weight, even if one plays the veriest pianissimo, or ppp. Without weight the tone sounds thin and dry. Just as a voice without resonance has no carrying power, so touch without any weight has no quality.[18]

Whiteside dislikes the word "weight" because it is an ambiguous concept that does not give students the right idea of what the teacher wants from them. She warns against the use of the term because it defines an inert pressure held against the keybed, which is completely opposite to the alert attitude the arm needs to have in order to produce speed and virtuosistic playing,

> It is exactly the inert pressure of weight which cannot be used for speed. Words are important in teaching. Words of action are needed to suggest the coordination for speed. Weight does not suggest the muscular activity which moves the weight of the arm. It does suggest an inert pressure.[19]

Whiteside recommends, instead, employment of a concept of the arm carrying through with a continuous movement which better responds to the ongoing rhythm of the music; a weight that bounces, an elastic application of power to the key-bed rather than an inert pressure applied to keep the key down.

> If weight were used as the sole motive energy the key would simply act as a block to its fall. That would involve unnecessary percussion for the amount of tone produced, and destroy the feeling for continuity in production which is essential in developing a delicately proportioned use of dynamics. . . . When speed is desired the muscles carry the arm, ready for action. There is no lifting and dropping nor relaxed weight against the key. The arm becomes a constant unit of weight poised at the level of the key-bed, and the weight element of the power used for speed is only the

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[18]Lhévinne, "The Art of Modern Pianism," 77.

[19]Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 54.

> energy created by the momentum of the poised arm as it is propelled sidewise along the keyboard by the muscles of the shoulder.[20]

One should consider that the correct handling of the weight should be one in which a support for the entire action is felt all the way through, and when applied to the keyboard it will produce a full and rounded tone. Both listener and performer should be satisfied with it. The former will perceive a beautiful sound, and the latter will feel comfortable playing, with a clear sense of "touching ground," rather than feeling the insecurity that arises when the hands seem to fly away from the keyboard. There should be a precise balance, however, and the inner pressure never be such that it will hinder the fluency of the passage by pressing the keybed as an anchor after the sound has been produced. The image of an elastic spring rather than an inert weight might describe more precisely to the students the feeling they need to achieve. Teachers should consider that the use of action verbs, rather than static or passive concepts, might be of more help to describe to the student the right coordination. Both Lhévinne and Whiteside, however, are referring to the same musical result, a rounded, supported tone that is produced when the mechanism is working at its best.

D. Use of legato

The problem with legato in piano playing is that the actual mechanism of the instrument does not permit a physical connection of one tone to the next one, as will occur with a string instrument or

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[20]Whiteside, The Pianist's Mechanism, 20.

the voice. The prolongation of a sound produced by the breathe or the bowing of the string is not available to the pianist, who has contact only with the keys but not with the string that produces the sound. The lever transmits the action to the hammer, which is the one that in turn gets in contact with the string by striking it and making it ring. But this contact is instantaneous, and ceases the moment the hammer reaches the string. The pianist has no further control over the sound, except for the moment when the key is released, and the damper then stops the vibrating string, producing silence. A physical problem has to be solved by psychological means. The pianist is meant to prolong in the ear and mind the sound of the note just played in order to produce the next one within the exact dynamic point that will give the impression of connection between each tone of the line. This characteristic of the piano mechanism has been the cause for a number of discrepancies among performers. Whether legato in the piano is a matter of dynamics or it actually depends upon holding a key down until the next one has been played is another subject of controversy between the two authors.

For Lhévinne there are four fundamental touches, legato, non-legato, staccato, and sharp staccato. The legato is the most difficult to produce, and involves a perfect connection of the tones produced by the fingers. Fingers sometimes even overlap in order to sound perfectly legato to the ear. The pedal might be used, though it does not produce the same quality as connecting with the fingers, "for the purest legato is that made with the fingers alone."[21]

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[21]Josef Lhévinne, "The Art of Modern Pianism," In Modern Masters of the Keyboard, ed. Harriet Brower (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1926; reprint, 1969), 73-4.

For Whiteside, the legato quality of the piano is a matter of dynamics rather than holding keys down. Legato is a subjective, qualitative perception in the performer's ears. It does not have much to do with actually holding the keys--particularly with the fingers--in order to connect one note to the next. Indeed this habit of finger connection rather inhibits ease when one is playing at speed: "There is nothing that hampers speed more than the habit of holding the key down after tone is produced. The basis for all speed is the shortest possible application of power for tone."[22]

An additional problem which Whiteside points out is that by holding the keys down there is an instinctive reaction to press even harder when passages get more difficult. The pianist's legato needs to be concerned with horizontal progression, carefully modeling of dynamics so that an effect of legato is produced even when there is no real connection between one key and the next.[23]

One should consider that the musician's ear must be trained in order to distinguish subtleties of touch such as the gradation of legato or staccato. This has to do with the amount of separation between tones as well as with the connecting dynamic contour that provides a sense of continuity. There is no physical need of actually connecting one finger with the next--though such an action might probably help to develop a connecting ear so that any bump or unevenness in dynamics could be actually perceived--but rather a minute and careful handling of dynamics which permits a quality of

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[22]Whiteside, Mastering the Chopin Études and Other Essays, 67.

[23]Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 21.

legato that could be perceived by the listener. When playing at speed the legato quality becomes, rather, a psychological grasp of the line, which could either be perceived as a whole, if the dynamic element is correctly handled, or as a series of separated tones, even though the fingers might be physically connecting one key to the next one. Therefore training should be directed toward ear acuity rather than to the muscular action of holding the keys down.

E. Touch

Touch in piano performance is another controversial issue. In fact the term refers to the timbral characteristics of the tone produced. Pianists refer to it as the different qualities of sound and the means to produce them. However, sometimes, like some other terms that do not reflect their exact meaning, this one is used ambiguously and thus causes confusion and disagreements among teachers. A very general definition of a beautiful tone quality in the piano might be the sound which is produced with enough intensity and small proportion of noise. The matter of how to acquire such a quality is described by each author in his own terms, which could be psychological or rather physical explanations. Newman expresses that what "produces the illusion of touch or the sense of tone production. . . is the relative volume or weight of the tone," and that "to produce the renowned 'singing tone' of Hofmann and others mainly means *hearing that each tone of a melodic line sounds over the accompaniment and right into the next tone*, especially long-lasting tone."[24] He mentions some factors that contribute to the

[24]William S. Newman, The Pianist's Problems. A modern Approach to Efficient

illusion of touch; degree of legato, use of the pedal, sense of direction imparted by intelligent phrasing, rhythmic grouping, and harmonic inflections, lack of external noise, and relative intensity or volume of the tone.[25]

For Lhévinne "touch is a matter of elimination of non-essentials, so that the greatest artistic ends may be achieved with the simplest means."[26] He considers actions of the fingers from the metacarpal joints the simplest. He thinks that to a great deal the quality of the tone depends on individual differences, the characteristics of the player's hands. In general, "the thicker the cushions of flesh upon the fingertips, the wider the range of variety of touch."[27] However, he mentions as a general principle that of striking the "key bottom in order to obtain a fine touch."[28]

Lhévinne also states that "tone in piano playing is the result of touch."[29] The pianist should devote a great deal of practice to develop a beautiful touch, one that produces an expressive tone of melting sweetness and beauty, rather than a sharp, strident one. He acknowledges the piano as a mechanical instrument, but recognizes a different quality according to the way in which tone is produced. In a general way he states that "rounded fingers played on the tips produce a more or less brilliant tone; fingers played more upon the ball produce a more velvety quality."[30] To obtain delicacy the key

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Practice and Musicianly Performance (New York: Da Capo Press, 1984), 118.

[25]Ibid., 119.

[26]Lhévinne, Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing, 12.

[27]Ibid., 14.

[28]Ibid., 15.

[29]Lhévinne, "The Art of Modern Pianism," 74.

is struck with the fingertips rather than the fleshy ball that produces round singing tones. Arm and forearm should be gently floating in the air. For a "floating arm" the elbows extend slightly from the side of the body; however, the fingers must play all the way down to the key bottom.[31]

Lhévinne states that application of power is also important. A beautiful tone, like that of Rubistein, depends on how the natural weight of the arm and shoulder are administered upon the keyboard, without ever hammering into it but rather with a pressure properly controlled and handled.[32] The wrist should remain flexible in order to be a shock absorber, like a spring that avoids bumping.[33] Students should practice daily in order to ensure the production of a beautiful tone, which they should be able to achieve automatically, as their entire mechanism responds to their mental concept.

The legato touch for Lhévinne is produced by a floating effect between tones, which should have a similar quality that prevents the listener from hearing a different color for each one. The same touch should then be maintained for at least one phrase in order to provide the feeling for a beautiful legato. Because in the piano the moment a key is struck the sound starts to die, it is particularly difficult to do a legato in a slow tempo. The sound of each tone must ring enough so that it will not disappear before the next tone; and when striking the succeeding note one must take into account the amount

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[30]Ibid., 74-5.

[31]Lhévinne, Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing, 26-7.

[32]Ibid., 31.

[33]Ibid., 18.

of diminution in the intensity so that the new tone will not be introduced with a "bump."[34]

Lhévinne also refers to various types of staccato; one that reduces the noise and increases the lightness and character, performed by raising the wrist; another one, finger staccato, produced by an action of wiping the keys; and a brilliant staccato where the whole forearm is involved, and the wrist is held stiff.[35]

Whiteside refers to touch as one of those dangerously undefined concepts used to describe piano playing. She states that the pianist is able to handle two dimensions in music, rhythm and dynamics. In regard to color--the term often referred to when touch is described--pianists have no control, since they do not get in touch with a string as violinists do, or with the actual production of the sound, as wind players do. The actual quality of the sound in the piano is provided by the manufacturer of the instrument.[36]

As she states, the terms commonly used to define the quality of pianistic sound have to do rather with the dynamics with which the tone is produced, or the noises of the mechanism which accompany the production of the sound. The qualifications are subjective, sweet, harsh, dull. However,

> one cannot "color" a piano tone, but the word is habitually used to describe a sensitive performance. There is no such thing as a "singing" tone with the piano. The piano tone diminishes in volume from its very inception. What is meant is a succession of tones which leads the ear forward to a completed statement because of the subtlety in the use of dynamics. There is no "harsh" tone. There is simply a

[34]Ibid., 37-8.

[35]Ibid., 36.

[36]Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 18-9.

> succession of loud tones which have no subtlety in gradation of intensity and perhaps, in fact very likely, have a greater amount of percussive noise than is necessary, because of a faulty delivery of power--power delivered below the level where the hammer trips as the key is depressed.[37]

For Whiteside the importance of staccato and legato lies in their relation to emotional expression. She states that staccato and legato should have significance within the long-line rhythm which deals with the phrases as a whole.[38]

One might conclude that the controversy between the two approaches arises because of the use of the terms, not so much because of the concepts being discussed. Both authors refer to the necessity of training the student to develop a sense of quality in sound production. There is no actual discrepancy in the musical result but only in the explanation a student receives about how to achieve it. Teachers might use subjective adjectives (harsh, rounded, crystalline) to help students create a clear mental image of the sound they perceive, or they might define the physical characteristics of the tone by describing the noises that accompany its production (stroke against the keybed, knock of the finger against the key). To describe the quality of a tone is a good way of training the students' ear to discard those sounds that are inadequate or that do not fit the dynamic contour they are creating. By teaching them how to recognize a beautiful tone, full sounds with different dynamic ranges, good quality and lack of percussive noise, teachers could actually help them to know what they are after by

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[37]Whiteside, Mastering the Chopin Études, 153.

[38]Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 22.

describing with adjectives how the sounds produced are perceived by someone from outside. Explanations dealing with the physical mechanism could help the teacher to get the point across, but they should have significance in regard to the final musical result the student is trying to achieve.

F. Fingering

Fingering is one factor in the beginning student's training which is regarded as extremely important by some teachers and completely neglected by others. Lhévinne and Whiteside have opposing points of view in regard to this issue. Lhévinne stresses that fingering must be consistently observed, while Whiteside thinks this is not a major factor, and that any finger near the place where it is needed could transmit the action of the upper arm.

Lhévinne says that fingering must be carefully thought out. Students should decide and keep the best fingering for a passage in every successive performance. A criterion to decide which is the best fingering is that of ease. Students should experiment and find out the most comfortable for their individual hand.[39]

For Whiteside fingering is not important in the performance of a piece. As long as the correct delivery of power is used--from the upper arm to the fingers--there will always be a finger ready to connect the action through the keyboard, just as it happens with a gifted untaught eight-year-old child, or a jazz player who has not taken piano lessons. With the idea that "only the right way is ever easy,"[40] they find their own fingerings, sometimes completely

[39]Lhévinne, Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing, 34-5.

unorthodox, which seem to work perfectly for them. "With control from center the entire coordination operates to make it easy to have a finger available at the moment it is needed for transmitting the power of the arm."[41]

As a piano instructor, one could notice that in teaching of beginning piano students, fingering is one of the first things of which they need to become aware. A fingering can either make or break a piece, as Newman remarks, and therefore should never be neglected.[42] Students should take responsibility from the very beginning to think and determine the most suitable fingering for the piece they are learning, and this should become a habit so clearly established that performance could be grounded on a strong foundation. Newman states that: "Our fingers are the means of contact between ourselves and the piano. All that we practice so hard [to accomplish] is finally put into effect by these fingers."[43] Therefore, to define the best fingering with great care from the earliest stages in the study of a work is of primary importance. The facility to which Whiteside refers should be achieved anyway, but the right coordination cannot be left to chance. This fact is particularly obvious when performance under stressing conditions might destroy the spontaneous flow of the subconscious activity that guides the fingers and arm actions, which is what might

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[40]Whiteside, The Pianist's Mechanism, 7.

[41]Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 44.

[42]William S. Newman, The Pianist's Problems. A modern Approach to Efficient Practice and Musicianly Performance (New York: Da Capo Press, 1984), 96.

[43]Ibid., 97.

coordinate the mechanism of a jazz player or a talented child.

The teacher should discuss the advantages or flaws of the fingering proposed in order to give the student elements to decide which might be a good solution for the passage. Often the editor's suggestions are not completely satisfactory, so alternative fingerings should be found, and once decided upon, the student must use them consistently. Fingering is anyway a very personal issue, depending on the size of the hand, or the notions of technical handling of specific patterns, as Newman states.[44] To develop a discipline of writing out the fingerings to be used--in those places where ambiguity exists--and following it all the time, should be one of the first goals in the student's training to become a professional pianist. Planning is required. Analysis of similar sections (as for example the exposition and recapitulation of a sonata form), patterns of scales and arpeggios, sequences, melodic direction, voice leading in chordal progressions, provide some criteria to decide the most suitable fingering for a passage, one based on rational decisions rather than mere chance. As Newman notes, "experimentation is required to discover the technical superiority of one fingering over another, and over-all planning is required to make the fingering consistent," and this should be done just as the student "has given enough readings to the general idea but not enough readings to establish bad habits."[45] Faulty habits in fingering are among the most difficult to change, and they tend to come back at the most inopportune moments.

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[44]Ibid., 99.

[45]Ibid., 98.

G. Pedaling

One basic aspect of piano technique, though frequently neglected or not stressed enough in piano lessons, is that of pedaling. Teachers often complain about problems in the way students use the damper pedal. Over-pedaling is a common mistake, particularly with beginners, as well as the opposite problem, avoidance of the pedal, which results in a dry and colorless performance. Teachers sometimes do not give enough emphasis during the lesson to this particular aspect of the student's performance, however, or they provide ambiguous criticism ("too much pedal!," or "too dry, not enough pedal!") which does not really orient students as to precisely what they need to listen for in order to develop an effective pedal-technique.

Lhévinne states that pedaling demands a meticulous study. "It should be used with the same intelligence and definiteness as the fingers. It should be applied in the fraction of a second and released at just the right moment."[46] He says that there are two types of pedaling, regular pedaling (when the pedal is depressed as the note is struck), and syncopated pedaling (when the pedal is depressed after the note has been struck). There are also different gradations, full pedal, half and one-quarter pedal, or just a touch, with the dampers barely removed from the wires. Different effects are produced as a result of a keen use of the pedal. But the pedal must be treated with great care, and pedaling in say, a Haydn Sonata, is not the same as it is in Chopin's *Berceuse*. Knowledge of the

[46]Lhévinne, Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing, 47.

periods in history as well as the different stylistic characteristics are a determining factor in correct pedaling.[47]

Whiteside states that the student should "never allow the use of the damper pedal to become an outlet for rhythmic expression."[48] She warns against using the foot as a channel for feeling the meter and tapping the pedal, which completely hinders its right application. She encourages the student to play without pedal until the expression of spacing and rhythm has become clearly established. There is always a danger of overusing this resource. She states that "the better the playing, the less the damper pedal is used. It should never be allowed to blur the etched outline of musical progression."[49] She refers to the use of the soft pedal as a mute, like a violinist producing soft tone.

One could consider that pedaling is one of the most neglected aspects in the training of beginning piano students, even though it should become one of the most subtle and successful resources in the handling of the instrument. Good pedaling is one of the qualities that distinguishes a professional performance from an amateurish one. Students should be asked to pay special attention to the moment when they release the pedal. The keen coordination of foot and fingers is most important and should be developed from the earliest stages in the student's training. It is a matter of discriminating with the ear what is coming out from the instrument. As Newman points out, the teacher should constantly "remind and

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[47]Ibid.

[48]Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 63.

[49]Ibid., 63-4.

re-remind the student[s] to hear what [they] play."[50] The moment a sound or a harmony is blurred, or the connection between tones in a long legato line is broken, the ear should react immediately to point out the problem. This is one aspect in which both aural and visual demonstration are essential. Demonstration is one of the main means a teacher has to transmit to the student the concept of correct pedaling. It sometimes also helps to have the student observe the actual mechanism, looking at the dampers at the moment they are released and when they fall again upon the strings. The visual impression will enhance the aural and muscular action of the foot, and thus its correct handling will become clear.

H. Memorization

Memorizing is one of the skills which requires systematic development from the very early stages. Once students memorize a piece and get the notes inside their mind, ear, and coordination, they can concentrate exclusively upon musical concerns. As Newman points out, "the elimination of note reading and page turning allows the performer[s] to devote just that much more attention to [their] performance."[51]

In regard to memorization Lhévinne and Whiteside have different thoughts; whether memorization is subject to patient development, as Lhévinne states; or it is a natural process that should depend mainly on auditory images, as Whiteside suggests. Lhévinne recommends memorizing only what is useful and necessary, not all

[50]Newman, The Pianist's Problems, 123.

[51]Ibid, 132.

the pianistic repertoire. He recommends memorizing phrase by phrase rather than measure by measure, paying attention to the musical units rather than the notes alone: "The thing to remember is the thought, not the symbols."[52] Memory should be accurate and reliable, and to develop it is a matter of persistence, time and training. He suggests doing daily drill in memorizing. As an aid, "a firm grasp of the elements of harmony" is necessary to understand the sequence of chords, which are like musical words.[53] Not everybody memorizes easily, but for those who have worked hard in developing this skill, a piece will come "back to [them] with a readiness dependent upon the thoroughness with which [they] originally learned it."[54]

Whiteside remarks that the only reliable memory is the aural image. One recognizes music by its sound, though muscular habits will condition a great deal how a student hears. "Note-wise procedure (single initiations of power as with a finger technique) will develop note-wise listening, and that will hamper facility and security in memorizing."[55] Students must hear and play the phrase as a whole in order to make their memorization process work. She says reliance upon rhythm will be the best solution to aid memory. Harmonic analysis might be as much help for memorizing as it is for actual interpretation. The aural image and basic rhythm are the most effective factors for developing memory.[56]

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[52]Lhévinne, Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing, 42.

[53]Ibid.

[54]Ibid., 43.

[55]Whiteside, Indispensables of Piano Playing, 60.

Memory has been an extensive subject of thoughts and writings among teachers and pianists. Several refer to the relationship between memorization and performance. The best results might be obtained from a proper combination of the different types of memory.[57] There are mainly four kinds, auditory, analytical, digital or muscular, and visual memory.[58] Which one works the best for each student depends greatly on individual characteristics. People who are more analytical will tend to carefully examine the form, harmonic movement, motivic development, and other compositional means which are used to put the piece together, and this will be the foundation of the other types of memory. Others might feel more comfortable leaving as much as possible their mind out of the question, and trusting their kinesthetic sense in order to learn sequences of movements. There are students who have a good skill for sight-reading, and probably they will more easily make use of their visual memory.

The fact is that, particularly at the beginning level, all these types seem to regard the priority of auditory memory on learning music. Music is composed of sounds and silence, and even though its representation on the staff, or its performance through muscular actions, or its structure from an analytical point of view might be important, the most immediate and relevant fact is that it affects the ears. Beginning students should therefore enhance their auditory

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[56]Ibid., 62.

[57]Edwin Hughes, "Musical Memory in Piano Playing and Piano Study," The Musical Quarterly 1:4 (October 1915): 592-603.

[58]Newman, The Pianist's Problems, 133. Also Victor Seroff, Common Sense in Piano Study (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1970), 46.

memory, which will be in close relation to their keen discrimination of every element that contributes to the musical texture.

Muscular memory, as Newman states, "is the sort that allows us to play the piece by physical feel and momentum. . . It is habit. It plays an important part in the automatic quality of continuous playing from memory, as does hearing. The habit on which touch memory depends is muscular coordination."[59] Both types are aided by intellectual memory which results from a conscientious knowledge of the music and is concerned with "tonality, counting, technique, melodic line, or programmatic association."[60] As students acquire a thorough musical background, the muscular, visual, and analytical memory will become gradually integrated into their learning process, each one contributing to enrich the overall experience, and thus the students' memorization skills will become gradually strengthened.

As a teacher, one should warn students to go back and recheck the score periodically after they have memorized a piece. Mistakes can arise when they plays carelessly, or become more preoccupied with other issues of interpretation, and it is always necessary to refresh in their mind the impression of the score in order to ensure accurateness in performance.

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[59]Newman, The Pianist's Problems, 134.

[60]Ibid.

CHAPTER VI. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

As a way to conclude this study, in this last chapter the different issues discussed throughout the paper will be summarized, and the most significant points of divergence and agreement between the approaches of Josef Lhévinne and Abby Whiteside will be confronted from this author's own perspective.

Lhévinne and Whiteside represent two different postures, that of a concert pianist and that of a pedagogue. Yet as piano teachers they both have a common goal, to develop in their students the best discipline in order to ensure successful performance.

Lhévinne had mostly talented students who eventually became accomplished and renown pianists. He did not mention specifically how to deal with average pupils. His students were selected according to their mental and physical characteristics, such as good rhythmic sense, excellent ear, and solid musical foundations. On the other hand, Whiteside was active in teaching students of different levels of ability, whether highly gifted, normal, and below average. She relied on the effectiveness of her teaching method, which she believed should function for anyone who wanted to play the piano and worked enough to achieve this goal.

Whiteside's approach seems to be more relevant for teachers in a school of music, who will have to strive to develop a suitable

pedagogical approach in order to respond to the needs of every student under their direction. Effectiveness as a teacher normally is evaluated through the success achieved with a great number of students, consequently teachers should refine their pedagogical techniques in order to provide the most feasible solutions for their students' accomplished performance.

Teachers should be flexible to allow their pupils to improve at their own pace. Lhévinne states that special care should be taken to follow a logical and gradual sequence in learning new repertoire, in order to provide solid foundation for further development. However, Whiteside encourages students sometimes to extend beyond the established canons, and learn more difficult pieces than what actually corresponds to their level, in order to provide motivation for faster improvement. Even though musical learning is a complex activity, which may seem to depend on systematic teaching (gradually shaping complex responses through positive reinforcement, as supported by behaviorist psychology), evidence exists (in cognitivist psychology) that some students are able to circumvent this sequential learning and progress at a different pace, employing insightful processes which provide a faster and more integrated development. Some of these pedagogical principles are mentioned in the second chapter, and reference is made throughout the paper as to how do they apply to Lhévinne's and Whiteside's teaching.

This author considers that, even though teachers in a school of music usually will follow a carefully sequenced program, this should not mean that they are unaware of mental and physical characteristics of their students which might play a rôle in how teachers employ their pedagogical methods. Some students respond better to one approach or the other, and while some might require a more sequential learning environment, others might benefit more when allowed to follow a less structured method.

Whiteside and Lhévinne agree with most music teachers that students should develop their musical judgment in order to refine their interpretation skills when studying a piece of music. As a piano instructor, one might be of great help in diagnosing difficulties and providing strategies for technical and musical solutions, but students should eventually learn to become more self-reliant in their own interpretation. Every basic instruction should lead to this important goal. The ultimate stage in the students' training should be their self-dependence.

Lhévinne and Whiteside discuss certain general principles in which methodic practice should be based, such as self-criticism, careful listening, attentive practice, creation of mental images, analytical attitude, alertness in muscular response, and emotion involved in conveying the musical content. The practice of such principles should lead to the development of a coordinated technique involving the most efficient use of arms, wrists, and fingers, as

well as control of the instrument to produce the desired sound. Even though both authors have their own preference as to the different levels of the students with which they might wish to work, they agree that at any stage methodic practice is the most reliable path that can lead to successful performance, and beginning piano students should develop such discipline from the very early levels in their training. One of the fundamental tasks that confronts the teacher of beginning piano students is to establish the proper foundation for this discipline. As a piano instructor, one should focus the teaching toward general principles that might be applied to a wide diversity of situations, musical as well as technical. To provide students with a set of principles which have general application will be most useful in their further development. Therefore, the mere teaching of pieces from the repertoire, if musicianship is disregarded, might leave no lasting foundations on which students could later build their own growth.

In regard to the actual procedures underlying practice, every pianist and pedagogue has a personal opinion. Lhévinne and Whiteside provide varied suggestions based on their own experiences. However, some general principles could be extracted, as for example the fact that students should repeat a certain passage with a clear purpose in mind, focusing their attention toward a specific achievable goal, and gradually chaining and building more complex responses until they can play the entire piece. These principles will be in accordance with behaviorist theories already mentioned (the desired responses are reinforced by positive

comments, while the undesired ones are ignored so that they eventually disappear through the process called 'extinction').

Lhévinne and Whiteside agree that rhythm must organize all the elements in the performance, providing a sense of progression and continuity, but they have opposing ideas as to whether slow or fast practice is more effective in developing accurateness and ease in piano playing. While Lhévinne supports the usefulness of slow practice to ensure accurate and clean playing, Whiteside encourages the opposite view-point, arguing that the muscular actions change when playing a passage at different speeds. She states that practice perfects the mechanism used; therefore, in order to develop virtuosity, fast practice is necessary. In fact, both authors could be referring to different stages in the study of a piece. While one procedure might be useful at a certain point--slow practice is necessary when first learning a work--another might be helpful later, when the basic rhythmic relationships, accurate notes, dynamics, articulations, and other nuances have been learned, and the student is striving to play the piece in tempo and with continuity.

According to this author, to define a unique or infallible procedure for practice might be unrealistic. Ideas and suggestions of teachers and pianists are to be taken into consideration, but students should develop eventually their own means to apply the basic principles for methodic practice. Because there is not one single and perfect approach, piano performance usually provides a wide field for personal experimentation.

Lhévinne and Whiteside state that long lasting consequences of methodic practice will be the establishment of good aural, mental, and muscular habits in which further development can be based. In addition, both recommend use of imagery to clear out problems which have not been solved through analysis, stating that muscular actions as well as musical concepts could be easily achieved if the student has the help of a suitable image in mind.

The two authors, however, express different opinions in regard to practice of the piece as a whole. Whiteside encourages the approach to technical and musical work as an entire, integrated unity, while Lhévinne recommends to take special care of the details. A balance between the two approaches seems to be necessary. Practice should contemplate both aspects: Careful and systematic attention to the details is necessary, as well as the integration of these details into the context of the whole work. This should be achieved through different stages in the study of a piece. A first sight-reading might provide a right perspective of the whole work, but the student must deal immediately with specific issues such as fingering, accurate observance of notes, rests, articulations, and every nuance written by the composer. Once the piece is learned, every detail should become integrated, so that the work as a whole acquires significance.

The two authors have different opinions in regard to the most efficient way to solve technical problems. Lhévinne stresses the

training of individual motion for each finger, even though the weight of wrist and arm should support this action. Whiteside states that technique should develop a whole integrated mechanism where the upper arm is the center of activity while the fingers merely transmit the movement to the keyboard. Both approaches are effective, however, having produced successful pianists.

Teachers should find a right balance in the technical development of their students in which they apply finger-action technique, as well as integrated- action technique (implying the coordinated movement of arms, wrists, and fingers), to provide their students with a variety of possibilities to approach technical problems. Over-emphasis on any one of the two extremes will actually limit the muscular responses the student should develop in order to respond to any technical demand presented in the pianistic literature.

The comparison between the two piano practice approaches might be quite useful, if the apparently opposite view-points are better understood as complementing each other, giving a better understanding of performing and teaching goals. The mentioned view-points relate to the following, technical exercises, finger action, weight, legato, touch, fingering, pedaling, and memorization.

The two authors often use different arguments referring to the same issue. For example, when explaining to a student the nature of beautiful tone in piano performance, Lhévinne describes, in psychological terms, the tone for which the student should aim, employing adjectives and images such as crystalline, velvety, blue,

and other descriptive words. Whiteside is more specific and employs physical explanations, describing tone quality according to the dynamic and rhythm with which the sound is produced, and the amount of noise which accompanies it. Yet the two of them are aiming for the same good quality in sound production.

Several times it is just a matter of terms rather than concepts that causes disagreements. Probably both authors agree in the basic movement, coordination, or musical idea. But it is the way in which it is expressed that might cause confusion. Use of "old coined terms," as Whiteside calls them (such as "weight," or "relaxation"), should always be done with extreme care so that the student actually understands what the teacher is saying. Precise anatomical and physical descriptions should clarify the issue, and extensive demonstration should be used in order to aid aural and visual learning.

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