

THE CHOPIN ETUDES: A STUDY GUIDE FOR TEACHING AND
LEARNING OPUS 10 AND OPUS 25

Min Joung Kim, B.M., M.M.

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APPROVED:

Pamela Mia Paul, Major Professor
Clay Couturiaux, Committee Member
Gustavo Romero, Committee Member
Lynn Eustis, Director of Graduate Studies in
the College of Music
James C. Scott, Dean of the College of Music
James D. Meernik, Acting Dean of the
Toulouse Graduate School

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The etudes of Chopin are masterworks of the piano literature and are designed to go beyond mere technical exercises; moreover, each etude represents not only a technical study but also has a distinct musical character. Alarming, the current trend seems to be to assign the Chopin etudes at an increasingly young age to students who are not yet equipped either technically or musically to handle them. As Chopin's pupil, Carl Mikuli, commented in the preface to his Chopin edition, the etudes were meant for "more advanced students." If Chopin had intended his etudes for students at an intermediate level, he would have assigned them to most of his students; however, only a limited number of students had his permission to work on their master's etudes.

As a teacher, I have always felt the need to devise a systematic teaching plan to guide students to handle the challenges of these pieces both physically and musically. This study examines the repertoire which might help prepare a student to learn the etudes without overstraining his/her muscular and mental ability. Rooted in Chopin's teaching and his recommendation of the pieces to learn before tackling the etudes themselves, this pedagogical study guide intends to help students and teachers to work progressively towards the study of these works. While pinpointing some exercises and simple pieces to assign to a student in preparation for studying the individual etudes, helpful works of later composers are also liberally incorporated, as well as some suggestions for practicing the etudes themselves. Finally, I shall provide my own "re-ordering" of the etudes, with a progressive degree of difficulty, as an additional aid to a young pianist who may eventually want to learn the entire opus 10 and opus 25.

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CHAPTER I

THE HISTORY OF TECHNICAL TEACHING METHODS AND CHOPIN'S PEDAGOGY

A common problem with students of any level is the bad habit of training their fingers with mindless repetitive exercises without considering shaping, layering, and coloring the musical expression in an etude. Unfortunately, one of the most influential pianists and pedagogues in the early nineteenth century, Friedrich Kalkbrenner (1785-1849), in fact, suggested pianists read a book while doing their finger exercising as a daily routine.¹ As unthinkable as this advice is today, Kalkbrenner believed that this was an acceptable “short cut,”² and many students and pianists adapted it unquestioningly. Clearly, today's pedagogical approach to practicing and learning the concert etudes has evolved considerably.

As pianists in the twenty-first century considering the etude as a genre, it is necessary to investigate the history of piano technique: how it evolved in the last 300 years and was revised and altered. Without this knowledge, the mere playing of an etude will most likely be the superficial and shallow act of moving one's fingers. The original purpose of writing an etude was to help students improve their piano technique, and each etude was fundamentally rooted in the pedagogical method of its creator, the composer-pianist-teacher. Thus, we need to understand the composer-pianist-teacher's pedagogical mindset in the process of approaching their etudes. In examining the Chopin etudes in this spirit, this study begins by exploring his predecessors in order to put Chopin's pedagogical philosophy into a broader historical perspective.

The mechanism of the keyboard instruments in the Baroque period was such that playing did not require arm weight. Accordingly, its literature and all the exercises required only the involvement of light fingers. Since Bartolommeo Cristofori (1655-1731), known as the inventor

¹ Reginald R. Gerig. *Famous Pianists and their Technique* (New York: Robert B. Luce, Inc., 1974), p. 134.

² *Ibid.*, p. 134.

of the first pianoforte, introduced his *Gravicembalo col piano e forte* in 1709, it took more than a hundred years to fully realize the necessity of changing keyboard technique to match the changes in keyboard mechanism. As the efficiency and capacity of the piano evolved, the treatment of the instrument also evolved. Pianoforte technique which incorporated the idioms of harpsichord, clavichord, and organ is now far removed from today's piano technique. During the eighteenth century, the "finger school" predominated and remained the only method to follow regardless of the continuous development of the instrument.

Published in 1801, in his *Introduction to the Art of Playing on the Pianoforte*, Muzio Clementi (1752-1832) insisted that in order to train for strong fingers, one has to lift the fingers as high as possible and strike them towards the keys while not moving the hand and arm at all.³ The hand should be strictly round and the tip of the fingers bent inwards towards the palm. He also prohibited the movement of arms and required that they be fixed near the body for the sake of the proper posture of the hands and wrists.⁴ Then by sitting as high as possible, the pianist could play powerfully by pressing the fingers down from the upper body's force. His successors such as Johann Baptist Cramer (1771-1858), Aloys Schmitt (1788-1866), Ignaz Moscheles (1794-1870), Stephen Heller (1813-1888) and Adolf Henselt (1814-1889) certainly progressed somewhat from this position, but they were still bound to the conventional path. Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778-1837) was also very much aware of the absolute importance of training the fingers⁵ as can be seen by his more than two thousand etudes. Carl Czerny (1791-1857) developed numerous ways to practice finger work and emphasized the importance of

³ George Kochevitsky, *The Art of Piano Playing: A Scientific Approach* (Evanston, IL: Summy-Birchard Company, 1967), p. 3.

⁴ Muzio Clementi, *Introduction to the Art of Playing on the Pianoforte* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1974). p. 14-15.

⁵ Kochevitsky, p. 4.

mastering the technique first before preceding to work on compositional pieces. Charles-Louis Hanon (1819-1900) believed that if all the fingers could be equally and evenly played, one could perform any work without difficulty.⁶ On the other hand, living in the same period as the above-mentioned pedagogues, Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849) was indeed the genuine innovator who headed in a new technical direction. He stands as the leading pedagogue who emphasized the use of other parts of the body and required a particular attention to color of sound.

Certainly in the area of piano technique, different opinions coexisted in the same era. For instance, one can find opposite opinions about technique between Czerny and Chopin who lived in the same generation. In his treatise, *Complete Theoretical and Practical Piano Forte School, from the First Rudiments of Playing, to the Highest and most Refined State of Cultivation; with The Requisite Numerous Examples, Newly and Expressively Composed for the Occasion*, Opus 500, published in 1839, Czerny conveys fundamental rules which were the established tradition in that period. Here are some of his fingering suggestions:

- (1) The 4 long fingers of each hand must never be passed over one another.
- (2) The same finger must not be placed on two or more consecutive keys.
- (3) The thumb and the little finger should never be placed on the black keys in playing the scale.⁷

Conversely, comments from many of Chopin's students indicate that their teacher advised them to be free in passing over other fingers and in playing consecutive notes with the same finger. He was also known to use the thumb on the black keys.

Chopin marked fingering on his scores liberally, especially the type peculiar to himself... Chopin did not hesitate to use the thumb on the black keys, or to pass it under the little finger..., where it facilitated the execution, rendering the latter quieter and smoother. With one and the same finger he often struck two neighboring keys in succession...

⁶ Charles-Louis Hanon, *The Virtuoso Pianist in Sixty Exercises* (New York: G. Schirmer, Inc. 1911), preface.

⁷ Gerig, p. 113.

without the slightest noticeable break in the continuity of the tones. He frequently passed the longest fingers over each other without the intervention of the thumb.⁸

Instead of straining the fingers to play evenly as his predecessors and even contemporaries like Liszt advised to do,⁹ he advocated unique fingerings, and was not afraid to break the common rules prevalent in his time. Chopin indeed freed himself from any set rules. As far as we know, he was the first to utilize the use of arm and its weight when playing scales and arpeggios:

According to Chopin, evenness in scale-playing and arpeggios depends not only on the equality in the strength of the fingers obtained through five-finger exercises, and a perfect freedom of the thumb in passing under or over, but foremostly on the perfectly smooth and constant sideways movement of the hand (not *step* by *step*), letting the elbow hang down freely and loosely at all times. This movement he exemplified by a *glissando* across the keys.¹⁰

This “sideways movement of the hands” and *glissando* suggested the use of the whole arm. As Chopin commented, “one cannot try to play everything from the wrist, as Kalkbrenner claims,”¹¹ this lateral arm technique enabled Chopin to fluently play brilliant scales free of tension. His metaphor of *glissando* to describe a flowing scale is also an indication of his predilection for rich *legato* scale playing. These findings were surprisingly new for his contemporaries.

One cannot criticize Czerny for carrying over the outdated tradition in piano technique because his education derived from earlier pianoforte technique. It was Chopin who had the most original, unique, and intuitive view of piano playing because he did not come into contact with the traditional school of piano technique during his early education. Chopin’s approach is quite

⁸ Mikuli. Introductory notes to his Chopin editions.

⁹ Jean Jacques Eigeldinger. *Chopin: Pianist and teacher as seen by his pupils*. Translated by Naomi Shohet with Krycia Osostowicz and Roy Howat, ed. Roy Howat. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 27. “In complete opposition to Chopin, Liszt maintains that the fingers should be strengthened by working on an instrument with a heavy, resistant touch, continually repeating the required exercises until one is completely exhausted and incapable of going on. Chopin wanted absolutely nothing to do with such a gymnastic treatment of the piano. Mikuli/Bischoff/Federhofer, p. 85”

¹⁰ Mikuli. Introductory notes to his Chopin editions.

¹¹ Eigeldinger, p. 41. Quoted from Chopin’s unfinished method book, *Projet de Méthode*.

exceptional in view of the fact that Leschetizky, Liszt, and Thalberg were all rooted in the mainstream of piano technique, namely the lineage of Clementi, Beethoven, Cramer, Hummel, Czerny, and Moscheles. Chopin's originality of technique may well have been influenced by the fact that his only two teachers were not traditional pianists; Wojciech Żywny (1756-1842) being a violinist-pianist-composer, and Józef Elsner (1769-1854) a composer-theoretician.¹² As a result, his pianistic style and language were most probably self-created, influenced by hearing other pianists of the time such as Hummel and John Field (1782-1837). The *Bel canto* school of Italian singing is also widely regarded as his main impact. Unquestionably, Czerny noticed and predicted the advent of a new school in his treatise:

Out of all these schools, a new style is just now beginning to be developed, which may be called a mixture of an improvement on all those which preceded it. It is chiefly represented by Thalberg, Chopin, Liszt, and other young artists; and it is distinguished by the invention of new passages and difficulties, and consequently the introduction of new effects — as also by an extremely improved application of all the mechanical means, which the Piano-forte offers in its present greatly improved state, and which, like all former improvements in their day, will give a new impulse to the art of playing on this much cultivated instrument.¹³

During the early nineteenth century, there gradually arose a movement away from mere finger training. Since the instrument evolved to a heavier action mechanism than before, playing with fixed hands, wrists, and arms caused many serious problems for pianists. As part of a more enlightened approach to the keyboard, an emphasis began to be placed on relaxation of the arms and hands, and most significantly, on pairing old-fashioned finger technique with an exploration of the musical message behind the note. Ultimately, the intellectual and spiritual dimension began to fuse into the realm of technique.

¹² Donna Ruth Bashaw, *The Evolution of Philosophies and Techniques of Piano Pedagogy from 1750 to 1900 Traced through the Teachings of C. P. E. Bach, Clementi, Czerny, Chopin, and Leschetizky* (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1980). pp. 64-65.

¹³ Gerig, p. 118.

While Chopin's most fundamental teaching principal was the concept of the singing expressive line on the keyboard, technical training was regarded as only a means to an end, and it could never be the priority in practice. If "technique" is considered as a means to musical expression, "style" can also be included under the sub-folder of technique in a broader sense since it is an essential ingredient in music making. Accordingly, Chopin realized and taught the connection between technique and musical aspects; the musical motive and intention always reflected his innovative ideas on technique. As a rule of thumb, naturalness and suppleness are the keystones in Chopin's piano playing both musically and technically:

Suppleness was his great object. He repeated, without ceasing, during the lessons: 'easily, easily' [*facilement, facilement*]. Stiffness exasperated him.¹⁴

On beginning with a pupil, Chopin was chiefly anxious to do away with any stiffness in, or cramped, convulsive movement of, the hand, thereby obtaining the first requisite of a fine technique, "souplesse" (suppleness), and at the same time independence in the motion of the fingers.¹⁵

Naturalness, naturalness, no forcing, and a taut and balanced rhythm, characteristic of the beloved teacher's country; all this, in conjunction with an extreme poetic sense - *without any exaggeration*, above all in the tempo - goes to make up that unparalleled beauty characteristic of the true pupils of this exquisite school, one so often misunderstood... No noises, no 'effects', just simplicity, as in all that is beautiful.¹⁶

Chopin was far from being a partisan to metric rigour and frequently used *rubato* in his playing, accelerating or slowing down this or that theme. But Chopin's *rubato* possessed an unshakeable emotional logic. It always justified itself by a strengthening or weakening of the melodic line, by harmonic details, by the figurative structure. It was fluid, natural; it never degenerated into exaggeration or affectation.¹⁷

A common failing with many young pianists is the idea that Chopin *rubato* means liberty at one's discretion. In fact, the ideal realization of his *rubato* sounds totally natural, but the

¹⁴ Frederick Niecks, *Frederick Chopin as a Man and Musician*, 2nd ed., 2nd vols., (New York: Novello, 1890), p. 182.

¹⁵ Mikuli. Introductory notes to his Chopin editions.

¹⁶ Eigeldinger, p. 54.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

performer is always in total technical control. Students frequently need to be reminded of what the composer originally intended and to be discouraged from extremely exaggerated *rubato*, tempo and dynamics.

The best way to attain naturalness in performance, in Chopin's view, was to listen frequently to Italian singers, among whom there were some very remarkable artists in Paris at the time. He always held up as an example to pianists their broad and simple style, the ease with which they used their voices and the remarkable sustaining powers which this ease gave them.¹⁸

By imitating the *bel canto* style of singing on the keyboard, Chopin sought to promote *rubato*, *cantabile* and *legato* in piano playing.

Today Chopin showed me another new, simple way of obtaining a marvelous result. I had felt in what respect my playing was lacking, but without knowing the solution. True to his principle of imitating great singers in one's playing, Chopin drew from the instrument the secret of how to express breathing. At every point where a singer would take a breath, the accomplished pianist [. . .] should take care to raise the wrist so as to let it fall again on the singing note with the greatest suppleness imaginable.¹⁹ The wrist: respiration in the voice.²⁰

Instead of setting a strict rule on how to use the wrist, Chopin assisted his students in realizing the natural way of using their body according to the flow of the music. By making them take voice lessons and insisting that they “sing with fingers,”²¹ he attempted to suppress mechanical training that is unrelated to music. He believed that one’s musical sense would resolve any technical issues by itself.

To assist in utilizing the natural shape of hand and finger, he first had his students learn the B major scale very slowly at the beginning of their training, rather than the traditional C major scale.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 44.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 45.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 45.

²¹ Ibid., p. 45. “To Madame Rubio he said: 'You must sing if you wish to play'; and he made her take lessons in singing... During lessons Chopin would repeat indefatigably: 'Il faut chanter avec les doigts!'”

It is useless to start learning scales on the piano with C major, the easiest to read, and the most difficult for the hand, as it has no pivot. Begin with one that places the hand at ease, with the longer fingers on the black keys, like B major for instance.²²

Chopin discovered that scales with many black keys best suit the shape of the human hand. From the students' earliest training, he taught them that playing piano does not require much tension, and therefore, students learned how to relax at the piano and not to employ a stiff hand. Along with flexible fingers, hand and wrist, he also taught them about the use of natural weight, which can be seen as the early harbinger of "weight technique" which became widespread in the late nineteenth century.²³

I had not played many bars before he said: 'Laissez tomber les mains' [Let your hands fall]. Hitherto I had been accustomed to hear 'Put down your hands', or 'Strike' such a note. This letting fall was not mechanical only: it was to me a new idea, and in a moment I felt the difference.²⁴

An anatomic-physiological approach to piano technique is not surprising to pianists in the twenty-first century, but in Chopin's day, this was a revolutionary concept. His intuitive musical aestheticism and pianistic experiences enabled him to foreshadow the direction of future piano technique. Here is his different view towards the independence of fingers in detail:

For a long time we have been acting against nature by training our fingers to be all equally powerful. As each finger is differently formed, it's better not to attempt to destroy the particular charm of each one's touch but on the contrary to develop it. Each finger's power is determined by its shape: the thumb having the most power, being the broadest, shortest and freest; the fifth [finger] as the other extremity of the hand; the third as the middle and the pivot; then the second [illegible], and then the fourth, the weakest one, the Siamese twin of the third, bound to it by a common ligament, and which people insist on trying to separate from the third - which is impossible, and, fortunately, unnecessary. As many different sounds as there are fingers.²⁵

²² Ibid., p. 34.

²³ Gerig, p. 329.

²⁴ Eigeldinger, p. 30.

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 32-33.

He was definitely opposed to the contemporary custom of forcefully training the fingers.

Intuitively, he grasped the individual characteristics of each finger; how the five fingers looked unlike and therefore, functioned differently in nature. His extraordinary view transformed the disadvantage of dissimilar fingers into the advantage of projecting diverse tones and touches.

The basis therefore of this method of teaching consisted in refinement of touch; and this alone would suffice to distinguish it from all others. Everyone, it is true, recognized the utility of a good touch, but often spoilt it by an abuse of exercises badly comprehended [. . .] Thus the first few lessons [with Chopin] were a perfect martyrdom; the touch of the pupil always appeared too hard and rough.²⁶

The fingers should sink, immerse themselves somehow in the depths of the piano—in *piano* as well as in *forte* playing—drawing from it that sustained, melancholy sound which—the fingers reluctant to leave the keys—is able to bring out from even the least melodious instrument a singing quality close to that of the Italian singers whom Chopin recommended as models.²⁷

He made me practise first of all constantly varying the attack of one single note, and showed me how he could obtain diverse sonorities from the same key, by striking it in twenty different ways.²⁸

Contrary to the custom of practicing every note loudly by striking the keys fast, he proposed to be sensitive in both finger and ear by playing slowly and softly. Here again, his approach to full tone *legato* touch was through slow attack and release of finger and through an awareness of the vocal process. Once students learned to combine listening with tactile sensation, they could avoid producing unattractive and monotonous sounds. The physical act of touch, thus, fused with aural awareness.

Finally, he emphasized the importance of the perceptive attitude to practicing. He was never tired of inculcating that such technical exercises are not merely mechanical, but claim the intelligence and entire will-power of the pupil; and, consequently, that a twentyfold or fortyfold repetition (still the lauded Arcanum of so many schools) does no good whatever—not to mention the kind of practicing advocated by Kalkbrenner, during

²⁶ Ibid., p. 31.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 31.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 32.

which one may also occupy oneself with reading!²⁹

Chopin invented a completely new method of piano playing that permitted him to reduce technical exercises to a minimum.³⁰

Unlike Kalkbrenner and Liszt, Chopin forbade practicing too many hours without a break since one can easily lose purpose and concentration after a certain period of time. His teaching method encouraged as little mechanical training as possible. Instead, by advocating to “read a good book, look at masterpieces of art, or take an invigorating walk”³¹ in between practice sessions, he stimulated his students to seek inspiration both intellectually and emotionally.

²⁹ Mikuli. Introductory notes to his Chopin editions.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 27.

³¹ Ibid., p. 27.

CHAPTER II

THE EVOLUTION OF THE ETUDE AS A GENRE

The etude (French for “study”) has various definitions in music depending on the time period and composer as well as whether the emphasis is on technical or musical aspects. In modern usage the term “etude” has come to mean a concert piece that has some elements of technical difficulty and has musical value. The term “study” in English is equated with the word “exercise” such as Czerny or Hanon exercises. Interestingly, Scarlatti’s early sonatas were called *essercizi*. This may have been the composer’s own word for sketching and experimenting with a new form of study materials. In that period, composers did not have a specific word for early training pieces for young students so they lumped these pieces under the term, “study.”

It is interesting to observe the definitions of “etude” from 1) *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 2) *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, 3) *The Oxford Companion to Music*, and 4) *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. It is especially interesting to note that 5) *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* has a different definition for the term, “study.” In terms of performance practice today, we see the word “etude,” and we expect a piece.

- 1) A composition designed to improve the technique of an instrumental performer by isolating specific difficulties and concentrating his or her efforts on their mastery. A single etude usually focuses on one technical problem; etudes are usually published in groups more or less systematically covering a range of such problems in a range of keys. In present-day usage, the etude falls between the exercises, a short formula not worked out as a formal composition, and the concert etude, which can stand as a self-sufficient piece of music.³²
- 2) Study.³³ Comp. intended as a basis for the improvement of the performer's technique. In pf. mus. the term is especially applied to a short piece restricted to the exploitation

³² Don Michael Randel, ed., *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 4th ed. (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003); s. v. “Etude.”

³³ The word, “study,” here is used indirect translation from “etude” in French. (Author’s footnote)

of one kind of passage. Masterpieces of this kind suitable for public performance as well as private practice were written by Chopin and Debussy.³⁴

- 3) The essence of the genre is revealed in the title of one of J. B. Cramer's sets, 'Dulce et utile' ('sweet and useful'), as distinct from an 'exercise' which is merely useful. The study was above all designed to encourage amateurs by wrapping up the necessary technical practice in a piece that was interesting to play and tolerable to listen to, whereas a would-be professional might prefer to work on purely mechanical exercises such as those of Czerny, Dohnányi, or C. -L. Hanon.³⁵
- 4) The French equivalent of 'study', widely adopted for fairly short pieces whose principal aim is the development or exploitation of a particular aspect of performing technique, such as Chopin's Etudes op.25. The term *étude* was also used as a title by some 20th-century composers, usually to indicate a piece exploring a specific aspect of the composer's craft (e.g. Stravinsky's Four Etudes for Orchestra, 1928–9).³⁶
- 5) An instrumental piece, usually of some difficulty and most often for a stringed keyboard instrument, designed primarily to exploit and perfect a chosen facet of performing technique, but the better for having some musical interest. Although a study was at one time the same as an exercise (Fr. *exercice*; Ger. *Übung*; It. *esercizio*), the latter term now usually implies a short figure or passage to be repeated ad lib, whether unaltered, on different degrees of the scale or in various keys.³⁷

Study pieces have been evolving for the last 300 years with the development of the instrument and its literature as well as the evolution of pedagogical methods. The fundamental purpose of writing an etude is to teach the musical language, whether technically and/or musically. In that sense, a composer-musician's pedagogical intention, consciously or unconsciously, had always been present in his/her works even before the actual term came into being. In tracing back to the early keyboard composers who were not restricted in nomenclature, one finds that they liberally utilized different musical structures such as toccatas, fantasias,

³⁴ Michael Kennedy, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, 2nd ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); s. v. "Etude," p. 280.

³⁵ Alison Latham, *The Oxford Companion to Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); s. v. "Etude," p. 434.

³⁶ Stanley Sadie, ed., *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., vol. 8 (New York: Grove's Dictionaries Inc., 2001); s. v. "Etude," p. 414.

³⁷ Stanley Sadie, ed., *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., vol. 24 (New York: Grove's Dictionaries Inc., 2001); s. v. "Study," p. 622.

preludes, suites, sonatas, and variations for the sake of teaching others. Among these choices, the toccata probably has the greatest similarity to a nineteenth century etude. According to *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*,

After 1750, the term toccata fell into disuse. The continuous drive of the late Italian harpsichord toccata was transferred to virtuoso etudes, some subtitled toccata, e.g., Czerny's *Toccata ou exercice pour le piano forte* op. 92 (1826?), a few of Johann Baptist Cramer's studies (1804-10), and Francesco Pollini's *32 esercizi in forma di toccata* (1820).³⁸

The term toccata progressed from J. S. Bach through Clementi's Toccata in B^b op. 11 (1784), Czerny's *Toccata ou exercice pour le piano forte* op. 92 and to Schumann's Toccata in C op. 7 (composed 1829-32). The brilliant passages in a toccata were basically meant for the display of virtuosity along with some improvisatory passages, and its features often resembled the technique in an etude such as fast scales, arpeggios, and the double notes.

Example II-1. J. S. Bach Toccata in C Minor, BWV 911



Example II-2. Clementi Toccata in Bb Major



³⁸ Randel, ed., p. 896.

Example II-3. Schumann Toccata Op. 7



II.1. Study Pieces of Early Keyboard Composers

Regarded as the first real “pianoforte tutor,”³⁹ *L'Art de Toucher le Clavecin* (The Art of Harpsichord Playing, published in 1716) by François Couperin (1668-1733), became the prominent “must-study” work in the eighteenth century, one which J. S. Bach also incorporated in his teaching. The treatise thoroughly covered Couperin’s understanding of posture at the keyboard, harpsichord touches, fingerings, ornamentations and stylistic performances of the day. While giving much emphasis to the mental side of technique, his insight into contemporary keyboard playing is well documented. He put his own detailed fingerings into many passages of his works in order to clarify his musical objective. He occasionally incorporated the thumb in a scale, but still employed the older tradition of crossing the third finger over the fourth or the second over the third. His fingering “is a means of revealing as clearly as possible the musical sense of a composition.”⁴⁰ Another important finding is his adaptation of *legato* touch; “Couperin’s fingering clearly establishes the principle of finger-substitution to secure a *legato*.”⁴¹ He included eight preludes and an allemande which were intended as study pieces. They provide ample opportunities to utilize the instructions from his treatise, including the opportunity to train

³⁹ Gerig, p. 14.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 17

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 17

one's fingers. Also, they were intended to prepare fingers before playing his suites, which he himself called *ordres*.

Example II-4. Couperin *L'Art de toucher le clavecin*

29

progrès de Septièmes

progrès d'Octaves

Manière plus commode pour Les tous diésés, et bémolisés,

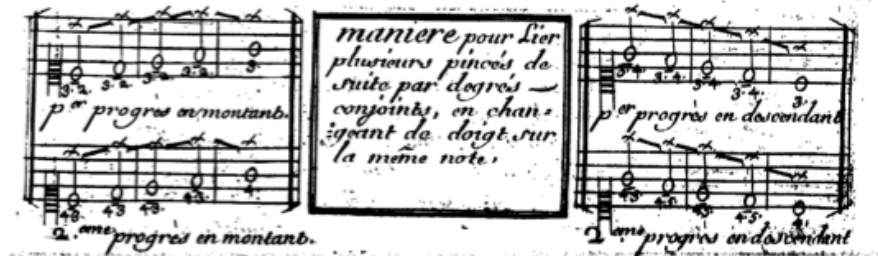
Manière ancienne de faire plusieurs trilles de suite

façon moderne pour couler ces mêmes trilles.

Je suis persuadé que peu de personnes dans paris restent entêtés des Vieilles maximes; paris étant le centre du bon: Mais comme il n'a encor paru jusqu'ici aucune méthode de clavecin; et que celle cy pourra passer ailleurs, j'ay cru ny devoir rien omettre.

Example II-5. Couperin *L'Art de Toucher le Clavecin*

Le pincé-double, dans le Toucher de L'orgue, et du Clavecin, tient lieu du martèlement dans les instruments à Archet.



Another prominent French composer and theorist, Jean Philippe Rameau (1683-1764) wrote three books of *Pièces de Clavecin* with an educational purpose. He published his *Premier Livre de Clavecin* in 1706, *Pièces de Clavecin* in 1724, and *Nouvelles Suites de Pièces de Clavecin* in 1726/27. The Prelude in the first book is an example of the unmeasured prelude. These pieces deal with elements of technical issues such as arpeggios and scales, but technical issues are clearly only serving the musical purpose. Rameau's study pieces are obviously different from the study pieces of the nineteenth century which mainly focus on technical training.

Example II-6. Rameau *Premier Livre de Clavecin* in 1706, Prelude



For the second book, he starts with *Menuet en Rondeau* which works as a five-finger warm up introduction to the following suite.

Example II-7. Rameau *Pièces de Clavecin* in 1724, Rondeau



Rameau used the collections as study material along with the two treatises, the *Méthode sur le Mécanique des doigts sur le Clavessin* (1724) and *Code de Musique Pratique* (1760). He was primarily devoted to discovering various touches in harpsichord playing, and accordingly, his endeavor contributed to the development of keyboard technique in a very focused manner.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) composed some keyboard music for his sons and for his second wife, Anna Magdalena. He used two/three part *Inventions and Sinfonias* (1723) as teaching materials, as well as the Suites, introducing them to his pupils after they had mastered *Klavierbüchlein (Little Clavier Book, 1720)*, which was composed for his eldest son Wilhelm Friedemann Bach (1710-1784). He is known to have made “[his students] practice, for months together, nothing but isolated exercises for all the fingers of both hands.”⁴² Then, he would assign “little connected pieces” such as six *Little Preludes for Beginners* or two- part *Inventions* when students lose patience.⁴³ He left us three collections of keyboard suites (1731-1742), all in groups of six pieces: *English Suites, French Suites, and Partitas*. One of the most influential compositions of all time, his two sets of *Well-Tempered Clavier* are great examples of study pieces for his students in terms of improving the independence of fingers.

⁴² Ibid., p. 23.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 23.

Example II-8. J. S. Bach WTC Bk. 1 Prelude No. 2 in C Minor, BWV 847



Bach's works range from the most fundamental and theoretical pieces to the highest artistic level of difficulty. Four volumes of a collection, titled *Clavier-Übung* (Study for the Clavier), which he adopted the same title from Johann Krieger (1651-1735) and Johann Kuhnau (1660-1722), are a monumental work which includes six *Partitas*, *Italian Concerto*, and *Goldberg Variations*.⁴⁴ Today, these are regarded as concert pieces. However, Bach intended to include educational elements in all of his compositions regardless of whether or not they were intended for the public.

The father and son, Alessandro Scarlatti (1660-1725) and Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757), greatly contributed to the brilliant keyboard writing. A leading opera composer, Alessandro Scarlatti wrote ten toccatas for the cembalo in 1723, whose didactic purpose is obvious, especially with his distinctive fingering markings.

Greatly celebrated as a virtuoso keyboard player, Domenico Scarlatti was more of an instrumental composer, especially devoted to keyboard works. In addition to more than 520 keyboard sonatas, he also composed a collection of thirty study pieces called *Essercizi per Gravicembalo* (Exercises for Harpsichord) in 1738. These were early works which he used to teach the children of the king of Portugal. The *essercizi* include a variety of levels from elementary to advanced with his idiosyncratic technique of crossed hands, sudden leaps, repeated notes, double notes, and arpeggios.

⁴⁴ Stanley Sadie, ed., "Study," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., vol. 24 (New York: Grove's Dictionaries Inc., 2001), p. 622.

Example II-9. A. Scarlatti Toccata No. 1



(These are very likely drawings from Scarlatti's own hands.)

TOCCATA PRIMO.

(Allegro.)

Example II-10. D. Scarlatti Essercizi K. 27 mm. 11-16 (Cross hands)⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Reproduced with permission from Pierre Guoin

Example II-11. D. Scarlatti Essercizi K. 24 mm. 7-12 (Repeated notes)⁴⁶

Example II-12. D. Scarlatti Essercizi K. 29, mm. 34-49 (Arpeggios and thirds)⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Reproduced with permission from Pierre Guoin

⁴⁷ Reproduced with permission from Pierre Guoin

Chopin once wrote:

Those of my dear colleagues who teach the piano are unhappy that I make my own pupils work on Scarlatti. But I am surprised that they are so blinkered. His music contains finger-exercises aplenty and more than a touch of the most elevated spirituality. Sometimes he is even a match for Mozart. If I were not afraid of incurring the disapprobation of numerous fools, I would play Scarlatti at my concerts. I maintain that the day will come when Scarlatti's music will often be played at concerts and that audiences will appreciate and enjoy it".⁴⁸

One can assume from the quote that Scarlatti had been neglected for a long period of time. He only published about thirty sonatas during his lifetime. The remainder—more than 550 works—were published posthumously. As Chopin predicted, the works of Scarlatti have entered the standard concert repertoire in the same manner as J. S. Bach's *Partitas* from *Klavier-Übung*, although some of his sonatas and *essercizi* were primarily written for educational purposes.

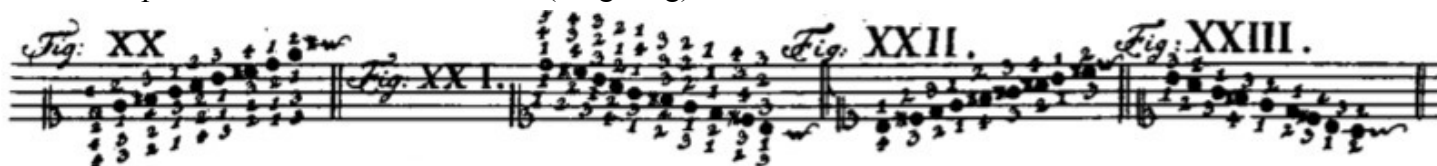
The most influential instructional books in the later part of the eighteenth century are *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen* (Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments) by C. P. E. Bach (1714-1788), published in two parts respectively in 1753 and 1762, and *Klavierschule* (School of Clavier Playing, 1789) by Daniel Gottlob Türk (1756-1813). In addition to explanations on fundamentals of fingering, ornament, figured bass, refinement of accompaniment, and performance issues, *Versuch* is a more practical manual than earlier method books. He applies his methods in detail to eighteen pieces, called *Probestücke*. They are actually six three-movement sonatas. Suitable for its compositional purpose to educate students, his *Probestücke* has the composer's own detailed fingering notation.

⁴⁸ Domenico Scarlatti. *Sonatas*, Anne Queffelec, pianist; digital disc (Apex, 0927443532, 2006), liner note.

Example II-13. C.P.E. Bach *Versuch, Fantasia* (Scale and arpeggio)



Example II-14. C.P.E. Bach *Versuch* (Fingering)



He was among the first pedagogues to recognize the use of the thumbs in a scale that “he related good finger and thumb action to good fingering.”⁴⁹ However, his rules and methods still carried the tradition of the “finger technique” that would not be adaptable for later keyboard technique. “The fingers should be arched,... Those who play with flat, extended fingers suffer from one principal disadvantage in addition to awkwardness; the fingers... should always remain as close as possible to the hand.” Yet, his teaching offered the most reliable guide to the performance practices of his day, and has remained as an indispensable source in keyboard history as it was also used by Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) and Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) in training their students.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Gerig, p. 27.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 25.

In *Klavierschule*, a dedicated pedagogue, Türk attempted to cover all types of keyboard techniques as well as the treatment of the instrument, its literature, musical structure, and interpretations in approaching them. As in *Probestück in Versuch*, Türk included twelve *Handstücke* as teaching pieces, which he notated with articulation and dynamic indications and fingerings.

Example II-15. Türk *Klavierschule*, Handstücke No.1



While continuing the tradition of C.P.E. Bach's *Versuch*, it exceeds older method books in its range, especially with its detailed examination of various touches and characteristic expressions.

Towards the nineteenth century, composer-pianist-teachers began the serious move towards the genre of teaching technique and the necessity of writing distinctive pieces to help students work on their technical facility. The various descriptive terms began to be standardized as an "etude," following the example of Türk's treatise. According to Grove's Dictionary, "in the early 19th century, the term [*Handstück*] was superseded by the French word, "etude"."⁵¹ One major impetus in the move to a concert etude was the instrument's evolution to the heavier and larger sized piano that made it possible for much more powerful tone and greater endurance of

⁵¹ Stanley Sadie, ed., *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., vol. 10 (New York: Grove's Dictionaries Inc., 2001); s. v. "Handstücke," p. 817.

the strings. As the instrument gained a new mechanical capability, pianist-composers were motivated to write a new style of literature to experiment with the advanced device.⁵²

Meanwhile, music limited exclusively to aristocrats in earlier centuries now became widely available for the middle class as well, due to the rise of the bourgeoisie, and a growing population able to afford a piano. Accordingly, numbers of professional pianists increased, and musical society became competitive. Teachers were eager to design and build their own methods and “schools” of piano playing, while becoming more interested in writing practice pieces or “etudes” for their students to improve their playing skills on the recently developed piano.

As a result of the heavier action and wider range of the keyboard, composers were eager to fully exploit the new mechanism by writing virtuoso etudes, and pianists gradually started to realize the necessity of using other parts of the body: arm and shoulder weight. While piano technique was evolving enormously, concert pianists started to perform etudes on stage as a means to show their virtuosity, and eventually, they started to seek the musical value in such technical pieces. This etude, which originally carried the purpose of training one’s fingers, once again had developed into a newer form, “concert etude,” that also served as concert repertoire. Another strong motivation was provided by the breathtaking violinist, Nicolô Paganini (1782-1840). His reputation and career not only inspired the pianist-composers to write technically appealing pieces on their instrument for performance purpose, but also inspired them to reproduce violin-like effects, touch, sonority, expressiveness, and technique at the piano. Many prominent romantic composers such as Chopin, Robert Schumann (1810-1856), Franz Liszt (1811-1886), Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) and the their successors were inspired to write their own versions of Paganini’s *Caprices* in the form of etudes.

⁵² Gerig, p. 100, 116-119

Example II-16. Paganini *Caprice* No. 1 for violin

Andante.



simile

Example II-17. Liszt *Six Grandes Études de Paganini* No. 4, first version

Andante quasi Allegretto.



p

sempre staccato

Example II-18. Paganini *Caprice* No. 9 for violin

Allegretto.

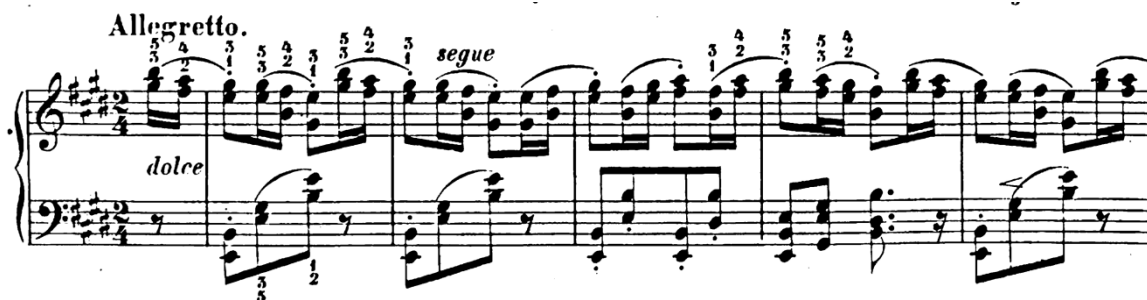
Sulla tastiera imitando il Flauto.....



dolce

Example II-19. R. Schumann *Etudes after Paganini Caprices* Op. 3 No. 2

Allegretto.



dolce

segue

Example II-20. Chopin *Souvenir de Paganini*, mm. 31-37



II.2. Early Etudes

Music in earlier centuries was primarily centered around the Catholic church. Later, secular music found a home in the great courts of Europe. Beginning from the early nineteenth century, musical society began to be more democratized with the emergence of both professional and amateur composers, performers, and teachers. Generally, Cramer is known as the first composer to publish a collection of etudes although some scholars disagree and believe that Cramer took the idea from his teacher, Clementi. The latter insisted that Cramer got the motivation of writing such collections from himself,

I have just finished the second volume of my "Gradus" of which I'll send you a copy as soon as it is ready, We'll publish it on the same day at London, Paris, and Leipsic. I was not much flattered, I must own, with the first notice of my "Gradus" which appeared in *Musikalische Zeitung* about five months ago, where my work was represented to be somewhat in Cramer's style. For in the first place, mine is quite in a different manner, being calculated to form the head and heart, as well as the fingers; and in the next, he took the title as well as manner of executing the work from what I had imprudently said to Erard in London, about the year 1801; for as he was soliciting me to give him some works for his nieces at Paris, I told him I had long meditated on a collection of exercises to form a complete pianoforte performer to which I should give the title of "Studio," and which we should publish at the same time. Now, as Cramer and he were very intimate, he divulged the secret to him; and as I went out of England the year after, Cramer took

advantage of my absence to be beforehand with me, and published his "Studio." If, therefore, there be any similarity in our works, it is owing to his having partly followed the plan I had traced out and explained to Erard.⁵³

Accordingly, Clementi was reluctant to use the same title and changed it to *Gradus ad Parnassum* to differentiate his gigantic works from others. This collection of study pieces served as an important link between the earlier concept of study pieces and the new style of exercises; Unlike composers of younger generations who limited an etude to a mere technical study, Clementi not only included exercises, but also various genres such as preludes, fugues, variations, canons, sonata allegro movements, character pieces, and suites. [Example II-21] is a technical exercise and [Example II-23] is a study of different genres.

His earlier treatise, *Introduction to the Art of Playing on the Pianoforte* (1801), was created under the direct influence of C. P. E. Bach's *Versuch*, with an explanation of beginner's theory, performance issues, and the practical application of his method in the included works, called *Preludes and Exercises*. As a means to introduce different styles, he also included works by other composers such as Couperin, Rameau, J. S. Bach, Handel, D. Scarlatti, C. P. E. Bach, Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756- 1791), Beethoven, and Cramer.

Whether or not Cramer took the idea of writing a collection of etudes from his teacher, his eighty-four etudes, *Etude pour le pianoforte*, op. 39 (1803) and *Suite de l'étude pour le pianoforte*, op. 40 (1810), were most acclaimed by his contemporaries because of their musical value: "The etudes are of highly intrinsic value and merit due to their musical inventiveness and taste, and by virtue of their formal execution and design—spiritual, intellectual, and mechanical."⁵⁴

⁵³ S. L., Sister Alice Eugene Tighe, *Muzio Clementi and His Sonatas Surviving as Solo Piano Works*. (Ann Arbor, MI: 1964), p. 91.

⁵⁴ Peter Felix Ganz, *The Development of the Etude for Pianoforte*, (Ann Arbor, MI:1960), p. 78.

Example II-21. Clementi *Gradus ad Parnassum* No. 30 and his exercise suggestions

30. *Veloce.* ($\text{♩} = 84$)
f molto articolato

I. *etc.* II. *etc.* III. *etc.* IV. *etc.*

V. $\begin{matrix} 145454135353145454 \\ 145354135453145354 \\ 125252125252 \\ 125152125152 \end{matrix}$ VI. $\begin{matrix} 5414145531313541314 \\ 541314531413541314 \\ 521312521212 \\ 521312521312 \end{matrix}$

VII. VIII. *etc.* IX. X. $\begin{matrix} 45443534 \\ 22112211 \\ 1111 \end{matrix}$

XI. *L.H. m.s. m.g.* XII.

Example II-22. Clementi *Gradus ad Parnassum* No. 33 Canon

33. *Canone.*
Moderato. ($\text{♩} = 60$)
mf

mf *sempre* *mf*

In his day, many editions, re-editions, and even arrangements for two pianos were issued. His attempt to focus on technical proficiency through the polyphonic style of etude writing is the key characteristic in them, although technically speaking, they are not extremely difficult. For example, Etude No. 41 is a study of a melody with accompaniments similar to the writing of Chopin's Etude op. 10 No. 3 and many *Songs without Words* by Mendelssohn. Beethoven was very fond of Cramer's etudes, valuing them as the best preparation pieces for his own works, and using them when teaching Czerny and his nephew, Karl.⁵⁵

Example II-23. Cramer Etude No. 41



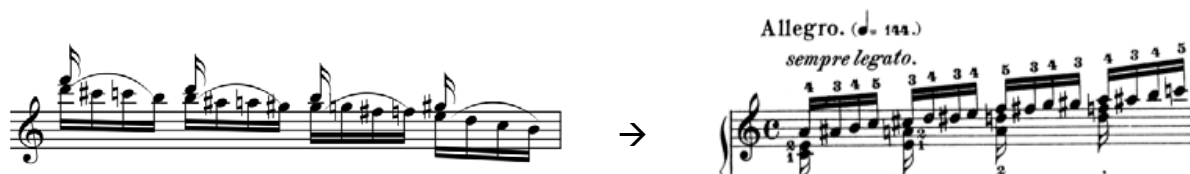
Etudes by Clementi and Cramer became the starting point for almost all composers of the nineteenth centuries when writing their own distinctive etudes. Countless etudes were composed, and yet many are now forgotten. Among the etude writers, Hummel, Czerny, and Moscheles are worth mentioning since they were in the forefront of virtuoso pianist-composer-teachers in their day.

Taught by historical figures such as Haydn, Mozart and Clementi, Hummel was regarded as an exceptional pianist, composer and teacher in his time, though he is now very much

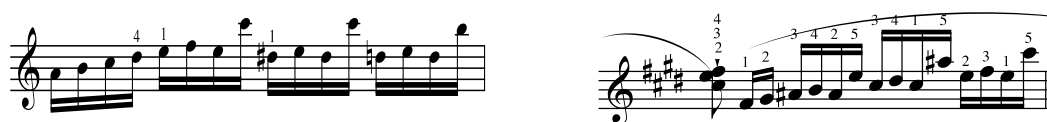
⁵⁵ Gerig, p. 61.

neglected. Hummel's concertos were greatly appreciated by his followers. Even Chopin learned some technical devices from Hummel, and there are surprisingly many compositional similarities between their works.⁵⁶ In the following examples, Hummel's favorite writing devices can be often found in Chopin's music. The well-known resemblance is Hummel's A Minor Concerto and Chopin's E Minor Concerto. In [Example II-25], Hummel wrote one voice playing a chromatic scale down, and the upper voice has short notes above each beat. Chopin adopted this design and reversed it in his Etude op. 10 No. 2. The figure in [Example II-26] is the one that Hummel used very often and Chopin likewise.⁵⁷ [See Example II-27]□

Example II-24. Hummel Concerto in A Minor, coda in third movement, RH and Chopin Etude op. 10 No. 2, RH



Example II-25. Hummel Concerto in A Minor, coda in third movement, RH and Hummel Etude Op.125 No.1, RH m. 11



Example II-26. Chopin Etude Op. 10 No. 4, RH m. 22

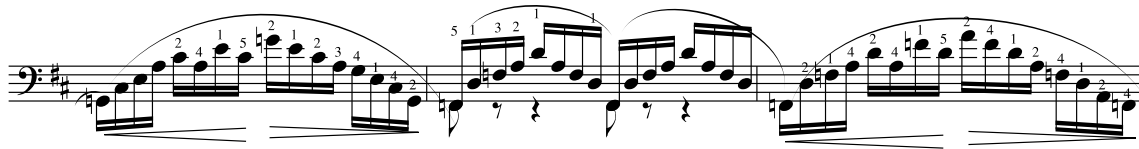


⁵⁶ David Branson, *John Field and Chopin*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1972), p. 146-167.

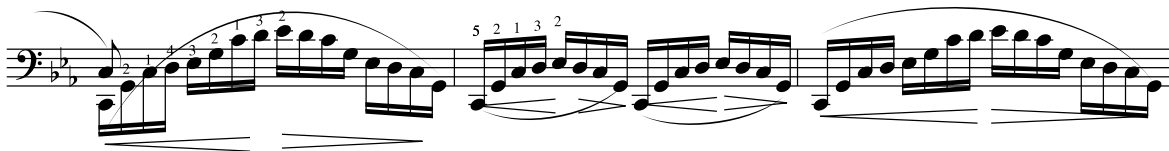
⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 156.

While Hummel wrote various genres of music such as operas, ballets, masses, a quintet, trios, rondos, and concertos, he only left us one etude collection, 24 etudes, op. 125, published in 1833. As one takes a close look at Hummel's etudes, they are unexpectedly imaginative with the use of brilliant technique, and once again, there are moments which recall Chopin's etudes.

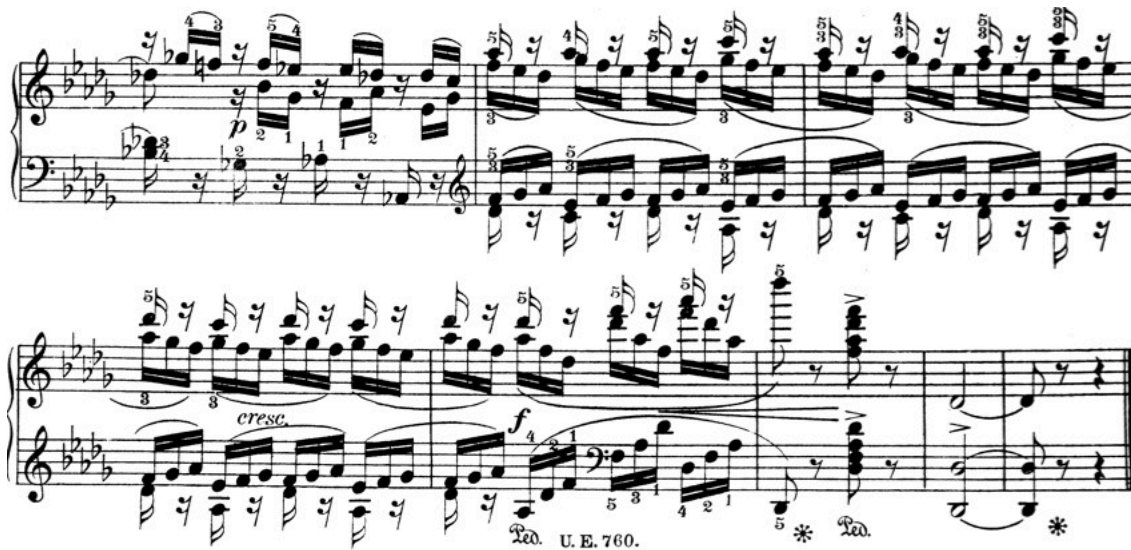
Example II-27. Hummel Etude Op.125 No.6, LH mm. 18-20



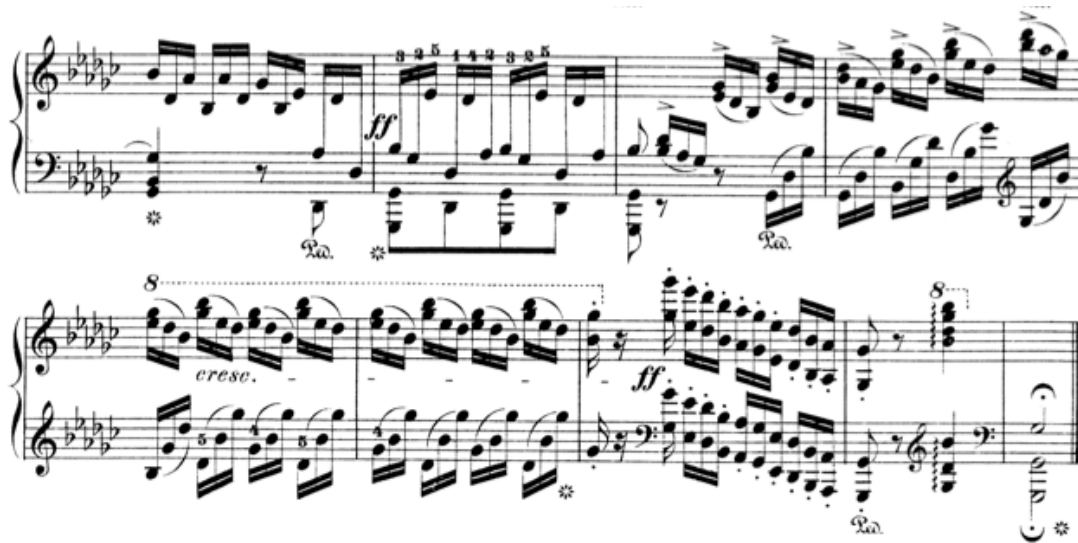
Example II-28. Chopin Etude Op. 10 No. 12, LH mm. 9-11



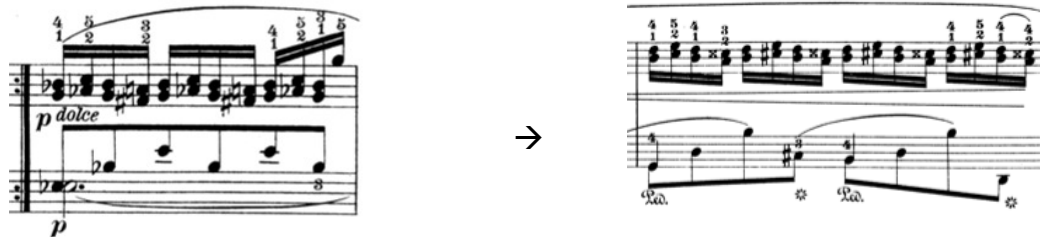
Example II-29. Hummel Etude Op. 125 No. 13, Ending



Example II-30. Chopin Etude Op. 10 No. 5, Ending



Example II-31. Hummel Etude Op.125 No. 15, m. 17 and Chopin Etude Op. 25 No. 6, m. 4



A prominent teacher, Hummel taught many virtuoso pianists of the next generation such as Czerny, Ferdinand Hiller (1811-1885), Henselt, Sigismund Thalberg (1812-1871), and Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847). He used his extremely extensive treatise—*A Complete Theoretical and Practical Course of Instruction, on the Art of Playing the Pianoforte* (1828)—to teach them. It is also known to have been used by Schumann as a young student. Following the design and content of C. P. E. Bach’s *Versuch*, Hummel contributed a considerable amount of time to completing and covering all issues related to piano playing with more than 2,000 musical examples. In particular, he tried to list endless possible patterns of exercises. From the following ten examples out of thousands of patterns, one can anticipate the variations of technical patterns

in Hanon's exercises. In addition to mere exercises, it also includes pieces of different genres which are more interesting than his etudes op. 125.

Example II-32. Hummel *The Art of Playing the Pianoforte* p. 28



As a child prodigy, Carl Czerny (1791-1857) was taught by three historical figures, directly and/or indirectly: Clementi, Beethoven, and Hummel.⁵⁸ Since he became the most requested teacher of the nineteenth century, one starts to see a fascinating pianistic genealogy evolve, since he taught two of the most celebrated pianists and teachers of next generation, Franz Liszt (1811-1886) and Theodore Leschetizky (1830-1915), who themselves taught hundreds of extraordinary pianists for years to come. Czerny was a most prolific composer; with more than eight thousand etudes besides other genres of music, he established a record of unsurpassed number of piano etudes and exercises that treated every possible aspect of technical issues at all level. *School of Legato and Staccato* op.335, *The School of Embellishments* op. 355, *The School of Virtuosity* op. 365, *Grand Studies for the Improvement of the Left Hand* op. 399, *Art of Execution* op. 740, *The School of Velocity* op. 299 are some of Czerny's most important collections. His exercises are pure technical training pieces to acquire mechanical facility rather

⁵⁸ Sandra Soderlund, *How Did They Play? How Did They Teach? A History of Keyboard Technique*, (Chapel Hill, NC: Hinshaw Music, Inc., 2006), pp. 283-284.

than having any musical importance. His harmonic language is simple without any unexpected dissonances or any special treatment of modulation.

Example II-33. Czerny *The School of Velocity* Op. 299 Bk. 1 No.1



In his treatise, Opus 500 (1839), Czerny covers every issue present in his day having to do with both learning and performing the piano. Needless to say, it covers everything from the fundamental beginning technique to melodic playing, memorization, improvisation, and even tuning the instrument. Importantly, as a pupil of Beethoven, he also explores how to interpret his master's works. Considering his thousands of mere exercises, it is surprising to encounter his musical insight in depth and his thorough understanding in the development of the instrument and the various styles of different composers and pianists.⁵⁹

Ignaz Moscheles (1794-1870) was more of a pianist than a composer, being a connection between Cramer/Hummel and Chopin. His technique was characterized by intense finger work, typical of an eighteenth century keyboard player, but has musical inclinations which point towards the romantic era.⁶⁰ In his two important studies, 24 Characteristic Studies, op. 70 (1825-1826) and 12 Characteristic Studies for the Higher Development of Execution and Bravura op.

⁵⁹ Gerig, p. 116-119.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 137.

95 (1836-1837), he foreshadowed the romantic etudes by putting a layer of characteristic expression over mere physical training. Some etudes have descriptive titles such as *Wrath*, *A Nursery Tale*, *Affection*, *Moonlight on the Seashore*, *A Dream* and so on. These works retain the seed of concert etudes with extensive indications of dramatic feeling. For instance, Moscheles uses *staccatissimo*, *sf* and *ff* almost every measure from the beginning to the end in op. 95 No. 1 “*Wrath*” to emphasize the extreme emotion in music whereas he indicated *sempre legato*, *cantando*, *innocente*, *come un zeffiretto*, *amabile*, and *lusingando* in op. 95 No. 11 “*A Dream*.” These performance instructions well describe the required touches to express “dream.” His effort to convey the imaginative atmosphere and emotion in etudes is a harbinger of the romantic etudes that are communicative with the audience.

Example II-34. Moscheles Characteristic Studies Op. 95 No. 1 “*Wrath*” Ending



Another notable work is *Méthode des Méthodes de Piano* which Moscheles assembled with François-Joseph Fétis (1784-1871) in 1840; it is an anthology of compositions by celebrated composers such as J. S. Bach, Clementi, Jan Ladislav Dussek (1760-1812), Cramer, Czerny, Mendelssohn, Henselt, Chopin, Liszt, and his own two etudes. Chopin’s *Trois Nouvelles Études* were written for this collection in 1839.

II.3. Etudes of Chopin and His Colleagues

Chopin is the second generation of etude writer to be discussed. The monumental works of earlier composers and pedagogues remained as a foundation for their successors and more or

less played some role in influencing Chopin in terms of musical writing and teaching. Some insist that Chopin's music stands alone, as if he created a new music by himself. However, there are hints of influences from his predecessors which will be examined throughout the course of this document.

He composed twenty-seven piano etudes: 12 *Études* op. 10, 12 *Études* op. 25, and *Trois Nouvelles Études* (without opus numbers), published respectively in 1833, 1837, and 1840; the first collection was dedicated to Franz Liszt and the second to Liszt's mistress, Marie d'Agoult. His genius is obvious. op. 10 is the work of a teenager before arriving Paris in 1831; and op. 25 was produced in his twenties. At such a young age, he lifted the genre of etude to the highest level which even today is unparalleled in artistry, in balance of musical organization and technical challenges. Unlike his contemporaries, Chopin was apparently never interested in showmanship, and instead, he sought more poetic expression and imaginative and coloristic playing in such training pieces, eventually finishing them as character pieces. In a well-known quote about Chopin's playing of his op. 25 No. 1, Schumann stated,

Imagine an Aeolian harp that had all the scales, and that these were jumbled together by the hand of an artist into sorts of fantastic ornaments, but in such a manner that a deeper fundamental tone and a softly-singing higher part were always audible,... the first one in A flat major, which is rather a poem than an 'etude'.⁶¹

It is remarkable that this reaction was to an etude, not a large concert work. The etudes, while satisfying the requirements of fundamental technical study, are ultimately pieces of music. In addition, the two sets mirror Chopin's pianistic essence in that they contain any technical devices which he uses in his other works. As Beethoven strived to experiment with the keyboard to its maximum, Chopin also took full advantage of the developed instrument by employing the more

⁶¹ Andreas Klein, *The Chopin Etudes: An Indispensable Pedagogical Tool for Developing Piano Technique* (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1989), p. 13.

sensitive pedal mechanism, subtler dynamics, and a wider register. In particular, the last three etudes of Opus 25 go beyond the normal boundaries of Chopin's dynamic and drama. Their grandiose atmosphere, almost in the spirit of the Liszt etudes, is surprisingly contrary to the image of the poet, Chopin.

As *Characteristic Studies* by Moscheles is known to have been used by Chopin as the "finishing touch" in developing the technique of his pupils,⁶² it is tempting to conclude that the etudes of Chopin may have been influenced by Moscheles in terms of musical character. The characteristic impression of twenty-four etudes are all very distinctive; some in fact have been given individual nicknames, although not necessarily by Chopin: *Tristesse* (op. 10 No. 3), *Revolutionary* (op. 10 No. 12), *Aeolian harp* (op. 25 No. 1), *Butterfly* (op. 25 No. 9), *Winter Wind* (op. 25 No. 11), and *Ocean* (op. 25 No. 12). Chopin may not be the first composer who coated his etudes with musical elements, nor were his etudes the first to be written with performance intention. However, they stand uniquely as the complete representative of the genre. The two educational dimensions of musical expression and technique are perfectly balanced. Although his etudes are not easy by any means, they are not as difficult as the later etudes of Liszt or Godowsky's re-arrangements on Chopin etudes to the extent that the performer becomes a servant to the mechanism.

Technically, compared to some earlier etudes which often cover several pianistic tasks in one etude like some of *Gradus*, most of Chopin's etudes target one particular technique. For instance, the following simplified categorizations list the primary targeted study in each etude.

⁶² Mikuli. Introductory notes to his Chopin editions.

| | Main Study | Op. 10 | Op. 25 |
|---|----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Arpeggios | Nos. 1, 5, 11 | Nos. 1 and 12 |
| 2 | Scales | Nos. 8 12 | No. 2 |
| 3 | Double notes | Nos. 7, 10 | Nos. 3, 5, 6, 8 |
| 4 | Chromaticism | Nos. 2, 4 | No. 11 |
| 5 | Lyricism | Nos. 3, 6, 9 | No. 7 |
| 6 | Chords/Octaves | | Nos. 4, 9, 10 |

These diverse elements of mechanical exercises are absorbed into the musical expression, and the two do not seem to be separate things. In other words, the technical difficulty is hidden and does not appear in the foreground as a prime concern of the work. For instance, some of the Chopin etudes such as op. 10 Nos. 3, 6, 9, op. 25 No. 7 and *Trois Nouvelles Études* are rather character pieces, nocturnes, and preludes. They are studies of emotional expression, lyrical *legato cantabile* playing, and balancing the voices. On the page, they look totally different from conventional etudes of the era. Even when listening to op. 25 No. 12, the tragic drama of melody and the patriotic atmosphere is so captivating that one forgets about the difficulty in its arpeggios; the technical device is only a carrier to deliver the musical message. As Chopin's teaching method must have been reflected in his etudes, his pedagogical priority towards musicality is most obvious in including those lyrical, heroic and epic etudes in his collection of study pieces.

Two of Chopin's contemporaries who wrote a remarkable body of concert etudes were Schumann and Liszt. As a beginner's venture into composing, Schumann started writing etudes at an early stage of his career: *Etudes After Paganini Caprices* op. 3(1832), *Toccata in C major* op. 7 (1832), *6 Concert Studies on Caprices by Paganini* op. 10 (1833) and *Études Symphoniques* op. 13 (1834). In the transcriptions of Paganini's *Caprices*, Schumann tried to

mimic the bowing effect on the piano, and Toccata has definite etude-like elements with its intensive double notes study. [See Examples II-20 and II-3] One of his outstanding concert pieces, *Études Symphoniques* is a theme and twelve variations, with five posthumously supplemented variations, whose title suggests the complex and rich textures of the orchestra on the piano. While No. 3, 9 and 12 do not specifically incorporate the same theme as other variations, the work is a variation of different techniques on the same theme.

Example II-35. Schumann Symphonic Etudes, Theme and Variations 3 & 5

Schumann also wrote some pedagogical works for children: *Album für die Jugend* op. 68 (Album for the Young, 1848), *12 Klavierstücke für kleine und große Kinder* op. 85 (12 Piano Pieces for Young and Older Children, piano 4 hands, 1849), *Drei Sonaten für die Jugend* op. 118 (Three Piano Sonatas for the Young, 1853), and *Kinderball* op. 130 (Children's Ball, four hands, 1853). Lastly, although unpublished, *Studies in the Form of Free Variations on a Theme by Beethoven* (1831–32) WoO 31 is another work with educational purpose in which Schumann used the second movement of Beethoven's seventh symphony to employ variation technique in an etude.⁶³

The best-known virtuoso in the history of piano performance, Franz Liszt revised *Douze Études D'Exécution Transcendante* three times in 1837, 1840, and 1852 after its first appearance in 1826, and it was finally dedicated to his teacher, Czerny. Through the revisions, Liszt

⁶³ Maurice Hinson, *Guide to the Pianist's Repertoire*, 3rd ed., (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), p. 705-713.

transformed the modest earlier pieces into dramatic concert pieces of exceptional power and technical difficulty with rich harmony and texture.

Example II-36. Liszt *Transcendental Etude* No. 4 “Mazzepe” mm. 7-10

After hearing Paganini’s diabolical violin playing as a young man, Liszt wanted to become the “Paganini” of the piano and started to imitate the violinistic effects on piano which can mainly be found in *Grandes Études de Paganini* with its final version in 1851.

Besides the lesser known *Ab Irato*, the other three collections of etudes are; *Trois Études de Concert* consisting of *Il lament*, *La leggierezza* and *Un sospiro*; *Zwei Konzertetüden* consisting of *Waldesrauschen* and *Gnomensreigen*; and 68 pieces of *Technische Studien* in written 1868-80. These sets are technically more accessible than the *Transcendental Etudes* and *Paganini Etudes*. Most etudes by Liszt are distinguished by the brilliant display of technique, usually in the form of technical variations. Interestingly in *Technische Studien*, which is not very

well-known today, Liszt collected all kinds of exercises in three parts. It was published a year after Liszt's death, and there had been some debate about whether it was actually written by him. According to Liszt's letters to Princess Wittgenstein and La Para, he indeed wrote an extensive exercise book, and most scholars now believe it to be the "studies" by Liszt.

I started writing the Technical Studies for the Pianist three days ago. This will keep me occupied for five or six weeks... I wrote in Grottamare some twenty pages of the technical studies. Unfortunately, a fearful mess of correspondence is now keeping me from continuing the work I have begun, and which I have already finished in my head.⁶⁴ My studies in piano technique... require a few months more for revision, and fingering etc., but could appear next year if I do not meet with difficulties.⁶⁵

The work follows the traditional etudes of the time which incorporate mechanical practice of five-finger exercises, arpeggios, chords, double notes, trills, and octaves in an exhaustive organization of technical matters. However, he named the work "studies" rather than "etudes" like *Études D'Exécution Transcendante* or *Grandes Études de Paganini*. One assumes he meant to distinguish a concert etude from a mere exercise, since he used the expression, "the dirty linen should be washed at home," and he is actually known to have practiced exercises daily for four to five hours.

Example II-37. Liszt Technical Exercises Bk. 4, p. 14



One of the most distinguished composer-pianists of the Romantic period, Brahms was not very enthusiastic about writing etudes. Although his early sonatas show traces of Liszt's

⁶⁴ Franz Liszt, *Technical Studies for Piano* (Budapest: Editio Musica Budapest, 1983), preface.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

technical influence, his main output in piano literature are later works which are less technically complicated. However, he still recognized the importance of a pianist's craft when he wrote fifty-one exercises and named them *Übungen*, published in 1893. The genre of nineteenth century concert etudes seems to have reached its pinnacle with Chopin, Schumann, and Liszt.

Example II-38. Brahms 51 Exercise No. 1



Although in its simplest terms, an etude represents a piece to aid one's mechanical and/or musical technique, many scholars have attempted to group etudes into categories in order to clarify the specific objectives of the composers.⁶⁶ In her article "History of the Piano Etude," Edyth Wagner divides etudes into two groups: "the mechanical exercise" and the "characteristic piece".⁶⁷ The former includes etudes by Clementi, Cramer and Czerny that focus mainly on technical practice, whereas the latter indicates the etudes with musical value such as Moscheles' *Characteristische Studien* and works by Chopin and Liszt.

Simon Finlow puts etudes into three categories: exercises, etudes, and concert studies. The "exercises" have a purely mechanical purpose; both musical and mechanical learning coincide in the "etudes"; and the primary concern of the "concert studies" is either their musical

⁶⁶ Ching-Ling Yang, *The Development of the Piano Etude from Muzio Clementi to Anton Rubinstein: A Study of Selected Works from 1801 to 1870* (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1998), p. 50-54. In his dissertation, Yang discusses different views on categorizations of the piano etudes, especially the methods by Wagner, Finlow, Ganz and himself.

⁶⁷ Edyth Wagner, "History of the Piano Etude I," *American Music Teacher* 9/2 (September-October 1959): 12.

communication, or on the other hand, their display of technical brilliance rather than a musical study in depth. To be specific, the beginner's repetitive short fragment of technique exercises by Czerny would go into the first group, etudes by Moscheles and Chopin in the second group as Finlow explains, "systematize and consolidate existing techniques within coherent and self-sufficient musical structures— to get to the heart of the issues of keyboard performance and composition."⁶⁸ He further comments on Chopin's etudes, "this criterion is both real and essential while we appraise the stylistic features that distinguish Chopin's etudes."⁶⁹ Lastly, etudes by Liszt and Schumann are included in the third group because of their emphasis on virtuosic presentation on the stage.

While a variety of interpretations and classifications exist, one must be aware that these are all subjective views. Some composers such as Clementi and Czerny wrote different styles of etudes throughout their lives, and therefore, a composer should not be restricted to one particular category. However, a study on classifications of etudes certainly helps one to recognize the placement and value of the Chopin etudes. In addition, an educational piece for a composer stands for an individual document of a systematic approach to their ideal musical aestheticism. Obviously, every composer has their own identifying technical color and musical priority, and for that reason, working on as many didactic pieces of various composers as possible will help develop a multicolored palette that one can draw on for an unlimited variety of musical color and technique.

⁶⁸ Simon Finlow, "The Twenty-Seven Etudes and Their Antecedents," *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 54.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

CHAPTER III

AN OVERVIEW OF REPERTOIRE THAT CHOPIN ASSIGNED TO HIS PUPILS

Fortunately, there exists a vast amount of information on how Chopin taught his pupils. His diaries and letters provide a wealth of information, as do the writings of his pupils and contemporaries as seen in the documents of Kleczynski,⁷⁰ Karasowski,⁷¹ Niecks,⁷² Eigeldinger,⁷³ Holland⁷⁴ and so on. Also, comments made by Chopin at lessons, as well as his sketches on teaching methods which unfortunately he was unable to finish, function as indispensable sources in dealing with his pedagogical approach to the keyboard. Much has been written about Chopin's pedagogical philosophy. Carl Mikuli's introductory notes to his editions of Chopin's works are critical to any studies related to Chopin.⁷⁵ From Mikuli's introduction, one can learn a great deal about Chopin as both a pianist and a teacher. In particular, Mikuli conveys the essence of what Chopin loved to play and liked to utilize as teaching materials. Chopin assigned his etudes, op. 10 and op. 25 "only to significantly advanced students,"⁷⁶ and they unquestionably needed to be

⁷⁰ Jean Kleczyński. *Frederic Chopin: An Interpretation of His Works*. trans. W Kirkbride (Palma de Mallorca: Mossèn Alcover, 1970).

⁷¹ Maurycy Karasowski. *Frederic Chopin: Lift and Letters*. 3rd ed., trans. Emily Hill (London: W. Reeves, 1938).

⁷² Frederick Niecks. *Frederick Chopin as a Man and Musician*. 2nd ed. (New York: Novello, 1890).

⁷³ Eigeldinger, p. 2. Conveying various Chopin's musical insights in depth, this book "may be seen as a critical synthesis of Kleczyński's two books with those written by Karasowski, Niecks, and Hoesick." Especially, one can gather very objective findings on the composer by reading a section of the quotations of Chopin, pupils, and others; and a section of the author's own comments on each subject. Eigeldinger's richly annotated notes provide detailed information gathered from the noteworthy representatives of Chopin scholars and authoritative sources, and therefore, give a clear idea of Chopin's musical and pedagogical philosophy and his way of treating the instrument.

⁷⁴ Jeanne Holland. "Chopin's Teaching and His Students" (Ph.D. dissertation, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1972). While Eigeldinger does not attempt to identify any of Chopin's students apart from quoting their words and notes, Holland delves into every possible bit of information that is related to Chopin's teaching, including the evaluation of authenticity of Chopin's pupils, and gathers them in her dissertation. Her thorough study remains one of the most revealing documents on the subject. Particularly, she lists the repertoire that each of Chopin's pupils learned while studying with him. Although there were some variations between the pieces Chopin assigned to each student, it is surprising to see that he chose a rather limited group of study pieces.

⁷⁵ Mikuli. Introductory notes to his Chopin editions.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

at a certain level before attempting these works. As learning pieces, the works that Chopin valued the most were the ones by J. S. Bach, Clementi, and Field.

According to Mathias,

Chopin showed a preference for Clementi (*Gradus ad Parnassum*), Bach, Field (of him much was played, notably his Concertos), and naturally Beethoven and Weber. Clementi, Bach and Field being always the composers most laid under contribution in the case of *debutants*.⁷⁷

Gutmann says,

Chopin held that Clementi's *Gradus ad Parnassum*, Bach's pianoforte Fugues, and Hummel's compositions were the key to pianoforte-playing, and he considered a training in these composers a fit preparation for his own works.⁷⁸

Mikuli states,

As studies, he assigned a selection from Cramer's Etudes, Clementi's *Gradus ad Parnassum*, the finishing Studies in Style by Moscheles (which he was very fond of), and Bach's suites, and individual fugues from the Well-tempered Clavier.⁷⁹

Chopin's approach to teaching was influenced not only by Bach, but also by Clementi, while Chopin used various technical aspects that came from Clementi and Chopin's essence, the *cantabile* quality, came from Field. Meanwhile, he unexpectedly employed his own Nocturnes as well as those by John Field as important study materials, though this genre of music is not typically regarded as a technical study. He meant to treat the nocturnes as an exercise to enhance a warm singing tone. Chopin's music was very much influenced by Italian opera; and among the pieces he assigned his students, Field's nocturnes are indeed also operatic in nature and full of singing *cantilena* on the piano. The works by these three composers are at the core of the learning repertoire to develop basic pianistic ability for an intermediate student, which is the main purpose of this dissertation. Unlike the famous professional students of Liszt, a majority of

⁷⁷ Niecks, p.189

⁷⁸ Ibid., p.189

⁷⁹ Mikuli. Introductory notes to his Chopin editions.

Chopin's pupils were amateur pianists, and most of them were not yet furnished with sufficient faculties to play Chopin's own works and were in need of supplements. Therefore, Chopin's own teaching repertoire can be a logical starting point for students in transition to virtuosity.

There seems to be quite a difference between Chopin etudes and the works of Bach and Field with their different technical vocabularies. Nevertheless, the two composers are always present in Chopin's music and one is recommended to study them as "daily Bible,"⁸⁰ and to take them as "daily bread,"⁸¹ although they do not often appear in the study pieces of the next chapter. One also needs to do a musical warm up, in addition to a technical warm up. The pieces that Chopin used for teaching reflect his taste, and at the same time, one can say that they had traits in common with Chopin's compositional skills. In other words, if one finds the similarities between those study pieces and Chopin's works, one is naturally able to comprehend why Chopin recommended such works. Therefore, practice will be more effective if one makes a connection between the study pieces and the characteristics of Chopin's works.

Most students look only to the piece itself when seeking solutions to difficulties, but more intuitive comprehension, awareness, and insight can be brought to bear after experiencing the various pieces that Chopin recommended his pupils to study. As Branson states, "Painstaking pianists of today who aspire to reputations as Chopin players would do well to become proficient in Fields Nocturnes and his Concerto. In these works we have the essential germ of the Chopin style."⁸² By examining the pieces which influenced Chopin, one can respond in a more detailed and sensitive way when eventually approaching Chopin's works.

⁸⁰ Eric Frederick Jensen, *Schumann* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 144.

⁸¹ Eigeldinger, p. 135.

⁸² Branson, p. 14

III.1. *Well-Tempered Clavier* by Johann Sebastian Bach

In terms of required assignments by Chopin as a teacher, Bach's music was a priority. Particularly, the forty-eight Preludes and Fugues of *Well-Tempered Clavier* by J. S. Bach were part of the foundations and keystone of his own piano practice.

In his piano practice Chopin regarded the '48' as his daily bread. It was the only score he took with him to Majorca; several months later in Nohant... His answer to Lenz, when the latter asked him how he prepared for concerts, speaks for itself: 'For a fortnight I shut myself up and play Bach. That's my preparation, I don't practise my own compositions' ...⁸³

For Chopin, Emilie von Gretsck played mostly Bach, Beethoven, and the Master's own works; he gave absolute priority to Bach.⁸⁴

Of his high opinion of the teaching qualities of Bach's compositions we may form an idea from the recommendation to her [Dubois] at their last meeting [1848] to '*toujours travailler Bach — ce sera votre meilleur moyen de progresser*' (practise Bach constantly — this will be your best means to make progress).⁸⁵

As Bach was clearly one of the most influential composers in all of music history, one may be curious to know which musical aspects in Bach might have been used as study material by Chopin.

Chopin was a great admirer of Bach's music; His 24 Preludes op. 28 were written as homage to Bach's own Preludes. As seen in [Examples III-1 and III-2], Preludes by both composers are based on one particular motive, the arpeggiated broken chord, with "pedal-point" in bass throughout the piece. Similarly, the first C Major Etude of Chopin in [Example III-3] is also built with the same arpeggio species of chord and pedal-point, but in a much more expanded register. Another of Bach's influence is the melodic phrasing on top of the arpeggios in both Chopin's Prelude and etude.

⁸³ Eigeldinger, pp. 135-136.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 61.

⁸⁵ Ibid., pp. 60-61.

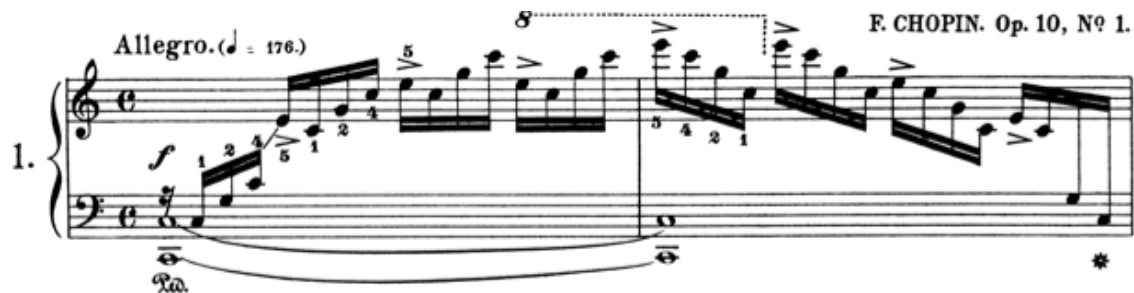
Example III-1. J. S. Bach WTC Bk. 1 Prelude No. 1 in C Major, BWV 846



Example III-2. Chopin Prelude in C Major, Op. 28 No. 1



Example III-3. Chopin Etude in C Major, Op. 10 No. 1



Consciously or unconsciously, Chopin started the first pieces of two collections in C Major arpeggios, and the harmonic reduction in [Example IV-2] illustrates the direct allusion to Bach's C Major Prelude in the C Major Etude. The abstract character of the chorale-like harmonic progression suggests the polyphonic writing of Chopin. From a technical point of view, the preludes of Chopin can also be seen as etudes since Chopin exploits one or two chosen technical elements in each one. Conversely, some of his etudes appear to be preludes such as op. 10 No. 6 and op. 25 No. 7. In a way, one can regard the Chopin etudes as having undergone a complete transformation from the preludes of Bach by extracting and/or expanding the essential materials.

Above all, the task to overcome in Bach's music is to manage the complex contrapuntal style of writing. One must be able to comprehend the complicated texture analytically, musically, technically, and aurally. What drives his multiple voice structure is the treatment of motive, whether its pattern is a rhythm, melody, scale or arpeggio. This use of motive is actually the main ingredient in making a nineteenth century etude similar to a prelude or a fugue. To be specific, the motive in Bach is treated contrapuntally, and the motive in Chopin etudes is treated technically along with characteristic expression. For the sake of technical benefit through studying multi-voiced music, first and foremost, one can gain independence of the fingers as well as independence of the hands because of the required equality in all voices. Complete control is required for an even tone, accurate rhythm and integrated articulations in voices. Stylistic articulation and various touches can present a difficulty when learning any Baroque music. As a common practice of the day, Bach did not include much instruction on how to phrase or articulate certain passages; it was all left to the performers. Nevertheless, it was common custom to play certain scales and leaps by selecting appropriate touches of either *legato*, *staccato*, *non-legato*, or *portamento*. One can easily find a passage which requires two kinds of articulation in each hand as in [Example III-4]. Though the articulations in this Czerny edition are the editor's choice, a performer will employ his/her own choice of interpretation in a similar fashion.

Regarding the study of various articulations in Chopin etudes, op. 10 No. 10 is a great example.

Example III-4. J. S. Bach WTC Bk. 1 Fugue No. 20 in A Minor, BWV 865, mm.23-28⁸⁶

Example III-5. Chopin Etude op. 10 No. 10 mm. 1, 3, 5, 9, 13, and 41 (Different articulations)

Similarly, written in the Romantic language, Chopin's music is multi-layered music, and therefore, often demands different touches in one hand as in the etudes op. 25 No. 4. A more

⁸⁶ J. S. Bach, *Well-Tempered Clavier* Bk. 1, edited by Carl Czerny (New York: G. Schirmer, 1893).

elaborate example would be op. 10 No. 3 where there are definitely four voices: the melody in soprano, one or two inner voices, and the bass.

Example III-6. Chopin Etude Op. 10 No. 3 in E Major



Each line has its own role, and yet there is a hierarchy in the voicing. Taking control over multiple voices in one hand requires independence of fingers and sensitive ears to simultaneously express the different contours of each musical line. Acute attention to each individual voice should then proceed to the harmonic balance of all voices. While each layer of voices in Baroque music moves in a linear direction, one should not overlook its vertical harmonic language and phrasing as a whole. In the same context, Chopin's eminent singing melody may tempt a student to mainly focus on the horizontal line, but the vertical harmonic concept should also be considered to have equal significance. The endeavor to hear harmonized voices will eventually lead a student to a more sophisticated level of pianism.

As Beethoven strived to recreate orchestral colors on the piano, Chopin in the spirit of Bach was more keen on bringing out the different vocal colors on the keyboard. Training with Bach's contrapuntal music clearly helps a student to better prepare and understand a complex musical texture.

III.2. *Preludes and Exercises* and *Gradus ad Parnassum* by Muzio Clementi

Chopin's pupils attest to the importance he placed on studying Clementi:

[Chopin] first assigned Clementi's *Preludes and Exercises*, a work that he valued very highly for its usefulness.⁸⁷

Chopin knew [Clementi's monumental *Gradus ad Parnassum*] intimately and used them as the basis of his own teaching. They contain in embryo much of the expanded technique of Chopin.⁸⁸

Kleczynski writes that all of Chopin's students, however advanced they might be, began with the second book of Clementi's *Preludes and Exercises*. Kleczynski, as we have seen, received his information from Mmes. Czartoryska, Zaleska, and Dubois. Mikuli and Dubois remember starting with those Clementi studies.⁸⁹

Chopin assigned Clementi's *Preludes and Exercises* in the same order that he assigned the scales—that is, he started with the exercises having many black keys and ended with the ones in C Major... Kleczyfiski says Chopin ... considered the exercise in A-flat particularly valuable.⁹⁰

Known as the first to outline a collection of study pieces, Clementi's early educational book, *Introduction to the Art of Playing the Pianoforte*, op.42 (published 1801) includes *Preludes and Exercises* that target beginners, mostly with scales. Chopin frequently adopted it as a daily warm-up exercise for his pupils at every stage of learning. Each exercise in all twenty-four major and minor keys is designed to open with a prelude as an introduction to each key. At the end of the collection, he added a *Grand Exercise* which goes through all twenty-four scales in a short modulated version.

Gradus ad Parnassum op. 44,⁹¹ published in 1817, 1819, and 1826, consists of three volumes of the hundred studies, and from the title, one can assume that the composer's primary compositional intention was to include complete study pieces to elevate one's musicianship to

⁸⁷ Mikuli. Introductory notes to his Chopin editions.

⁸⁸ Alan Walker, ed. *The Chopin Companion: Profiles of the Man and the Musician*. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company Inc., 1973), p. 117.

⁸⁹ Holland, p. 218

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 229

⁹¹ James Bruce Williams, *The "Gradus ad Parnassum" of Muzio Clementi*. (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1982), p. 38. "The name *Gradus ad Parnassum* or "steps to Parnassus," was taken from the title of the famous treatise on counterpoint in 1725 by Johann Joseph Fux."

the highest level of artistry. He spent nearly forty-five years on this work and covered both musical and technical aspects in a broad spectrum of piano playing; fifty-three pieces are pure technical exercises and forty-seven pieces are in the forms of prelude, fugue, variation, canon, sonata allegro movement, character piece, and suite. Educated in the Baroque style of writing, Clementi's compositions were rooted in the old tradition. Yet, some of them were given descriptive tempo markings as *Allegro con energia, passion e fuoco* (No. 42), *Andante malinconico* (No. 45), and *Adagio Patetico* (No. 56); and given titles as *Scena patetica* (No. 39), *Stravaganze* (No. 94) and *Bizzarria* (No. 95) which imply the early signs of characteristic etudes of a later period. In technical aspects, he goes from the simple five finger drills to various touches of double-notes, ornament, tremolo, trill, virtuoso passages of diatonic, chromatic scale and arpeggio, repeated notes and octaves; in musical aspects, he assembles diverse musical styles from bravura to lyrical style such as in multiple textures of polyphony, slow *cantabile* movements and improvisatory passages with abrupt changes of mood in a piece. Unfortunately, many perceive Clementi's etudes as mechanical since Liszt's favorite student, Carl Tausig's (1841-1871), collected twenty-nine studies from *Gradus*, which only consisted of the exercises. This set became widely popular towards the twentieth century, and those valuable suites and pieces started to be neglected. Example III-7 is the contrasting second theme of No. 38 in Sonata Allegro form, and the melody is beautifully written with the hint of romantic shadow.

As the manufacturer of the "English" action piano, Clementi's use of the instrument was more advanced than his contemporaries. For instance in *Gradus* No. 9 Prelude in A Major, he utilized the wider register of the keyboard for a more brilliant and technically demanding effect. Different from harpsichord skills, the new pianistic skill requires of more than finger-technique and demanded more arm involvement.

Example III-7. Clementi *Gradus ad Parnassum* No. 38, second theme

The musical score for Example III-7, Clementi's *Gradus ad Parnassum* No. 38, second theme, is presented in two systems. The first system begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a tempo marking of *Andante*. The right hand features a series of arpeggiated chords, with fingerings 1 3 2 3 1 and 3 2 3 1 indicated. The left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The second system is marked *p ad libitum* and *dolce ed espress.*, featuring a more melodic right hand line with slurs and ornaments, and a left hand accompaniment. The score includes various performance markings such as *Red.* and asterisks.

A study of both hands in a whole range of arpeggios and scales as well as a study of two voices in the right hand are included in this study [Examples III-8 and III-9]. By alternating the scale and arpeggio of each hand in every measure, one is given equal opportunity to practice both hands. Some studies in *Gradus* might be viewed as presenting too many ideas in one study by combining multiple technical issues, but one can benefit from various aspects at once.

Example III-8. Clementi *Gradus ad Parnassum* No. 9 Prelude in A Major

Suite de trois pieces.

9. **Preludio.**
Vivace, ma non troppo. ($\text{♩} = 60$)

ten. *f* *ten.* *ten.* *(sopra)* *cresc.*

Example III-9. Clementi *Gradus ad Parnassum* No. 9 Prelude in A Major mm. 13-16

The image shows a musical score for measures 13-16 of Clementi's *Gradus ad Parnassum* No. 9. It is written for piano in A major. The score consists of two systems. The first system shows measures 13 and 14. The right hand has a melodic line with a slur over measures 13-14, and the left hand has a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The second system shows measures 15 and 16. The right hand continues the melodic line, and the left hand has a more complex rhythmic pattern with triplets and sixteenth notes. Dynamics include *p* and *cresc.* in the first system, and *f* in the second system. Fingering numbers are provided for many notes.

This Prelude resembles the combined technical devices of Chopin Etudes op. 10 Nos. 8 and 12 in terms of utilizing the wide range of the keyboard.

Example III-10. Chopin Etude Op. 10 No. 8 in F Major

The image shows a musical score for measures 8-11 of Chopin's Etude Op. 10 No. 8. It is written for piano in F major. The tempo is marked *Allegro* with a quarter note equal to 88 (♩ = 88). The score consists of two systems. The first system shows measures 8 and 9. The right hand has a melodic line with a slur over measures 8-9, and the left hand has a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The second system shows measures 10 and 11. The right hand continues the melodic line, and the left hand has a more complex rhythmic pattern with triplets and sixteenth notes. Dynamics include *f* and *veloce*. Fingering numbers are provided for many notes.

Example III-11. Chopin Etude Op. 10 No. 12 in C Minor

The image shows a musical score for measures 12-15 of Chopin's Etude Op. 10 No. 12. It is written for piano in C minor. The tempo is marked *Allegro con fuoco* with a quarter note equal to 160 (♩ = 160). The score consists of two systems. The first system shows measures 12 and 13. The right hand has a melodic line with a slur over measures 12-13, and the left hand has a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The second system shows measures 14 and 15. The right hand continues the melodic line, and the left hand has a more complex rhythmic pattern with triplets and sixteenth notes. Dynamics include *f* and *legatiss.*. Fingering numbers are provided for many notes.

In *Gradus* No. 8, Theme and Variation in D Major, he starts with combined studies of melodic phrasing in the right hand and countermelodies in the left hand. This writing would be a good preparatory piece for the right hand in Chopin Etude op. 10 No. 3 with its accompaniment in the left hand.

Example III-12. Clementi *Gradus ad Parnassum* No. 8, Theme

Allegretto moderato e con grazia. (♩ = 76)
 (Tema con variazioni)
 semplice ma espr.

8.

mf sempre legatiss. p

f legatiss.

Example III-13. Chopin Etude Op. 10 No. 3 in E Major

Lento ma non troppo. (♩ = 100.)
 legato.

3.

F. CHOPIN. Op. 10, N° 3.

p

cresc.

stretto.

ritenuto.

ten.

Then, in Variation I, Clementi changes the mood of the opening theme and presents a study of octaves while accommodating various touches such as *portamento*, *legato*, and *staccato*: A good study section for Chopin Etude op. 25 No. 10.

Example III-14. Clementi *Gradus ad Parnassum* No. 8, Variation 1



Example III-15. Chopin Etude Op. 25 No. 10 in B Minor



In the second variation, [see Example IV-36], it now becomes a study of the soft, light, and fast inner voices in both hands just like the recommended practice of the Chopin Etude op. 10 No. 3 in the next chapter. Especially known as an expert in playing thirds, Clementi included pieces with double notes as in *Gradus* No. 65, 68, 78, and 99. Additionally, these double notes very often appear in other studies of different technique.

In conclusion, especially in *Gradus*, Clementi attempted to address all technical and musical issues; one can find any needed technical study from this collection of various styles, genres, and forms. In a broad point of view, one continues to see the lineage from J. S. Bach through Clementi and to Chopin. It is known that Clementi was greatly impacted not only by Bach's contrapuntal writing, but also by his educational use of Preludes from the *Well-Tempered Clavier*,⁹² which Chopin valued enormously.

III.3. *Nocturnes* by John Field

Although works by John Field, particularly the nocturnes, do not seem to have a direct link to the etudes of Chopin, there are many compositional traits that connect one work to another, and Field's works are always recommended as the groundwork for approaching Chopin's compositions. Field as a pianist was known for a smooth and *legato* style with warm singing quality, and Chopin was very fond of Field's playing. Chopin found Field's works so appealing that he continually assigned them to his students.

[...] It looks so simple! Chopin used to say of these ornaments that 'they should sound as though improvised,' the result not of studying exercises but of your sheer mastery of the instrument'. He himself provided the perfect example of this: like Field playing in Paradise!⁹³

Under Chopin's hands the piano needed to envy neither the violin for its bow nor wind instruments for their living breath. The tones melted into one another as wonderfully as in the most beautiful singing [. . .] The tone he could *draw* from the instrument, especially in *cantabile*, was immense [*riesengross*]; in this regard John Field alone could be compared with him.⁹⁴

Field's and his own Nocturnes also figured to some extent as Etudes, for through them the pupil would learn—partly from Chopin's explanations, partly from observing and

⁹² Peter D'Elia, *Clementi's Bach: The Well-Tempered Clavier, Gradus ad Parnassum, and the Prelude* (MA diss., Tufts University, 2009), p. 37.

⁹³ Eigeldinger, p. 52.

⁹⁴ Mikuli. Introductory notes to his Chopin editions.

imitating Chopin, who played them indefatigably to the pupil to recognize, love and produce the beautiful 'bound' [gebunden] vocal tone and the legato.⁹⁵

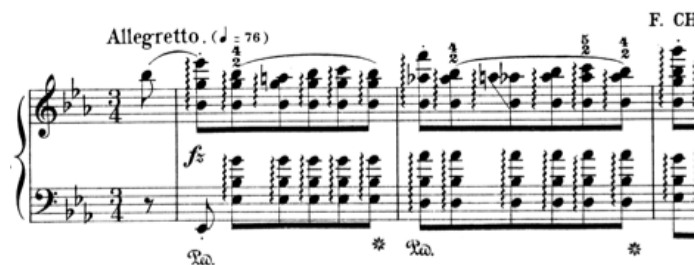
When Kalkbrenner first heard Chopin playing, he asked if Chopin was the pupil of Field because of the Field-like touch that Chopin had. “[Chopin] was terribly pleased to hear that,”⁹⁶ and he also wrote that "complete artists have lessons from me and set my name next to Field's."⁹⁷

The cultivator of nocturnes, Field indeed developed a new genre of the character piece which expresses atmosphere and mood without words or descriptive titles. The *cantabile* quality of his melody over left hand accompaniment is the key characteristic in his nocturnes and it had a huge impact on Chopin’s twenty-one nocturnes. In his book, *John Field and Chopin*, Branson fully describes the extensive influences of Field and Hummel on Chopin. He identifies the compositional idea of op. 10 No. 11 [Example III-17] as deriving from Nos. 3 and 13 of Field’s nocturnes⁹⁸ [Example III-16]: The melodic idea from No. 3 and the arpeggio idea from No. 13.

Example III-16. Field Nocturne No. 3 and No. 13. LH mm. 1-2



Example III-17. Chopin Etude Op. 10 No. 11 in E^b Major



⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Holland, p. 25.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 25.

⁹⁸ Branson, pp. 39 and 42.

The nostalgic melodic contour and the left hand accompaniment of Chopin's Nocturne op. 9 No. 2 E^b Major [Example III-19] clearly reflect Field's compositional gestures,⁹⁹ and both the Field and Chopin's Nocturnes are in the same key. Surely, this is not a coincidence.

Example III-18. Field Nocturne No. 8 in E^b Major, Opening



Example III-19. Chopin Nocturne Op. 9 No. 2 in E^b Major, Opening



Similarly, Chopin also adapted the ending of Field's Nocturne No. 1 to finish his E^b Major Nocturne.¹⁰⁰

Example III-20. Field Nocturne No.1 in E^b Major, Ending



⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 33.

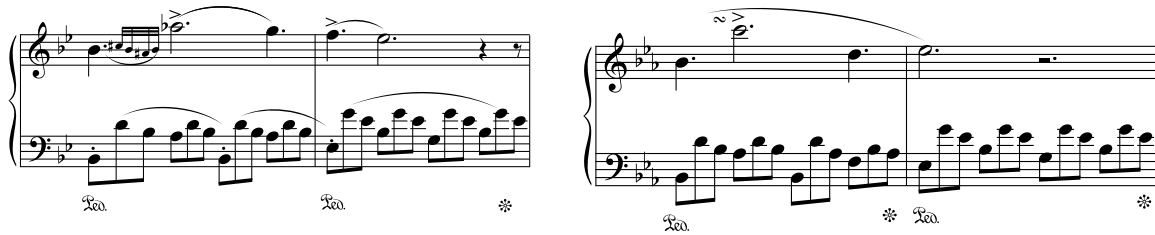
¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 32.

Example III-21. Chopin Nocturne Op. 9 No. 2 in E^b Major, Ending

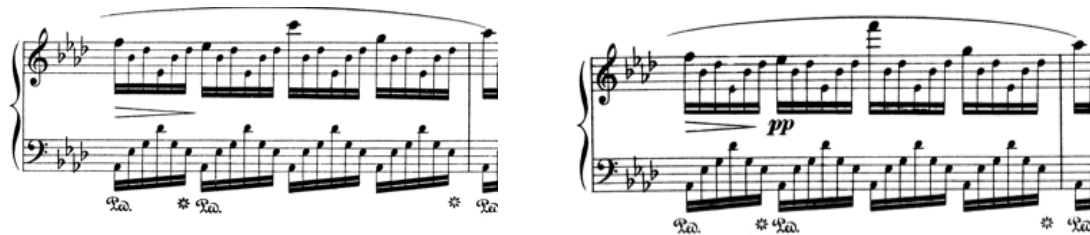


The last comparison is the repetition of cadence in a phrase as pointed out by Branson.¹⁰¹

Example III-22. Field Nocturne No. 1, mm. 52-53 and mm. 56-57



Example III-23. Chopin Etude Op. 25 No. 1, m. 37 and m. 39



¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 32.

CHAPTER IV

STUDY-PIECES FOR SELECTED ETUDES

The following seven etudes of Chopin were chosen because they are among the most popular and difficult ones of his piano studies. It is assumed that students who can manage these etudes can manage almost all of Chopin's works at least in terms of technique. These selected seven etudes will also provide an opportunity to study Chopin's musical language. Since the study pieces aim primarily to help the intermediate students technically, those works are not as difficult as the Chopin etudes themselves. Therefore, advanced students may not need to learn the study pieces and exercises separately from the actual etudes, but they can definitely use the exercises as daily warm up. Balanced with musical pieces, students can acquire the independence and strength of fingers and fluent arm movement with the help of exercises. Liszt, the sublime pianist and teacher, wrote his collection of exercises in the later part of life (1868-1880)¹⁰², long after composing his concert etudes. He must have felt the need of auxiliary material for his intermediate students to use before learning the concert etudes and other compositions. One can easily picture Liszt assigning his octave exercises to the pupil who is about to learn his *Eroica* etude or the exercise of double notes for learning *Mazepa*. Chopin did not write any exercises, but he indeed used the ones written by other composers. The study pieces proposed by the author can be seen as assigning related exercises for each etude on behalf of the composer.

¹⁰² Franz Liszt, edited by by Julio Esteban, *Technical Studies for Piano* Edited (New York: Alfred Music Co., Inc., 1971), preface.

IV.1. Etude Op. 10 No. 1 in C Major

Example IV-1. Chopin Etude Op. 10 No. 1 in C Major

The image displays the first three systems of the musical score for Chopin's Etude Op. 10 No. 1 in C Major. The score is written for piano and includes the following details:

- Tempo and Meter:** Allegro, 4/4 time, with a metronome marking of quarter note = 176.
- Handwriting:** The score is in the original manuscript style, featuring slurs, accents, and fingering numbers (1-5) for both hands.
- First System:** Shows the initial arpeggiated figures in both hands. The right hand features a continuous upward and downward arpeggio, while the left hand plays an octave bass line. A first ending bracket is indicated by a '1.' and a star symbol.
- Second System:** Continues the arpeggiated patterns with various fingering techniques and dynamic markings.
- Third System:** Further develops the arpeggiated textures, including a wide-intervallic arpeggio in the right hand and a corresponding octave bass line in the left hand.

The starting figurations in the first measure of op. 10 No. 1 are kept throughout the piece with continuous upward and downward arpeggios in the right hand and the octave bass in the left hand throughout. As a starter-piece to prepare for Etude op. 10 No.1, a student is encouraged to learn the C Major Prelude from Book I, *Well-Tempered Clavier* by J.S. Bach [See Example III-1]. The thread between Bach and Chopin is most obvious in this piece: The task at hand is to understand the functions of each hand and the chorale-style harmonic progression. The opening of the C major Bach Prelude presents a C major triad broken up into very comfortable arpeggiated hand position. In op. 10 No. 1, the same C major arpeggio is stretched out over a multi-octave span. Although the practice of the wide-intervallic arpeggios and the development of muscular endurance in the C Major etude are difficult tasks to achieve, the blocks of harmonic progression should be the first objective. A Chopin etude would not differ from a dry Czerny

exercise without its rich harmonic life. With Hugo Leichtentritt and Simon Finlow’s harmonic reductions, Chopin’s connection to Bach’s *Prelude* is obvious.¹⁰³

Example IV-2. C-major *Prelude* and *Etude*, after Finlow 1992

(a) Chopin’s harmonies with Bach’s figuration

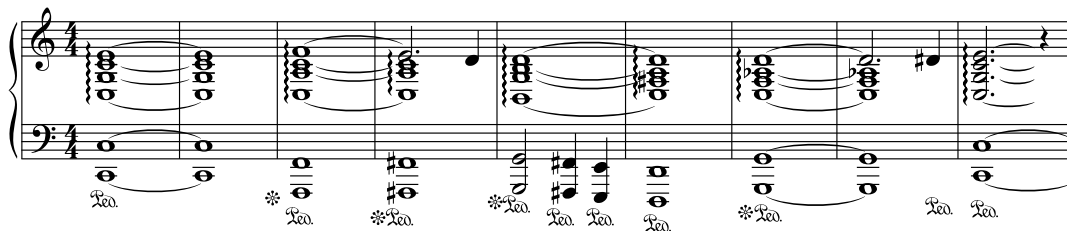


(b) Bach’s harmonies with Chopin’s figuration



While learning the Bach C Major Prelude, realizing the harmonies in Chopin can be done by arpeggiating each chord along with the melody on top and the pedal. This practice is also effective in achieving a relaxed wrist when expanding to the tenths.

Example IV-3. Harmonic exercise suggested by the author



Besides Chopin, Bach also influenced Mendelssohn’s writing; Mendelssohn was highly instrumental in the revival of J. S. Bach in the early nineteenth century. His compositional output definitely reflects Bach’s influence, especially in his use of counterpoint. *Songs without Words* op. 102 No. 4 [Example Iv-4] is also a direct response to Bach’s first Prelude, more conservative than Chopin’s etude. One can learn this piece as a bridge between Bach’s C Major Prelude and

¹⁰³ Robert W. Wason, “Two Bach Preludes/Two Chopin Etudes,” *Music Theory Spectrum*. Vol. 24, No. 1 (Spring 2002), p. 104.

Chopin's C Major Etude. Also, Chopin's op. 10 No. 3 and op. 25 No. 1 can benefit from studying some of the *Songs Without Words*, which stress *legato* touch, different voicing, dulcet lyricism, and sensitive harmonic movement with a pedal point. In addition, since the arpeggio study in op. 25 No. 1 requires simpler tasks, it can be used as preparation piece in order to learn the extended arpeggios in op. 10 No. 1. In all these etudes, one needs to be aware of the color changes related to a sensitive use of the pedal.

Example IV-4. Mendelssohn *Songs without Words* Op. 102 No. 4



Moving to technical training, since op. 10 No. 1 uses all five fingers in arpeggio figuration, various exercises of different fingerings at different intervals will prepare one's fingers for the stretched arpeggios upward and downward. Contrary to the conventional octave fingering of 1-5, Chopin asks for 1-4 for the octave, ultimately playing the tenth with 1-5; Practicing the octave in the fingering of 1-4 instead of 1-5 can be trained with Brahms Exercise No. 5. Although Brahms originally wrote 1-5, a student can modify it to 1-4.

Example IV-5. Brahms 51 Exercises No. 5



While many different editions of the Chopin etudes exist, there is no single perfect edition. Among the most interesting is that of Alfred Cortot (1877-1962), because he suggests a

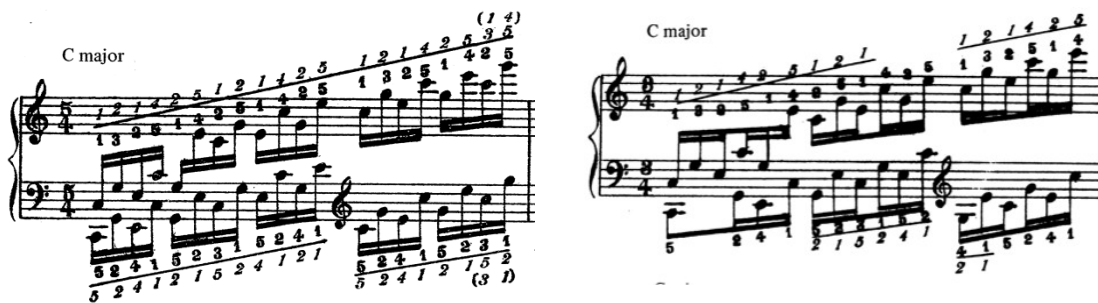
diverse and detailed number of ways to practice each etude. For the sake of practicing the fingerings of 5-1 and 4-5, one can use the exercise No. 6 in Cortot's edition. It is an exercise of contracting and stretching the hand.

Example IV-6. Cortot Exercise No. 6, p. 7

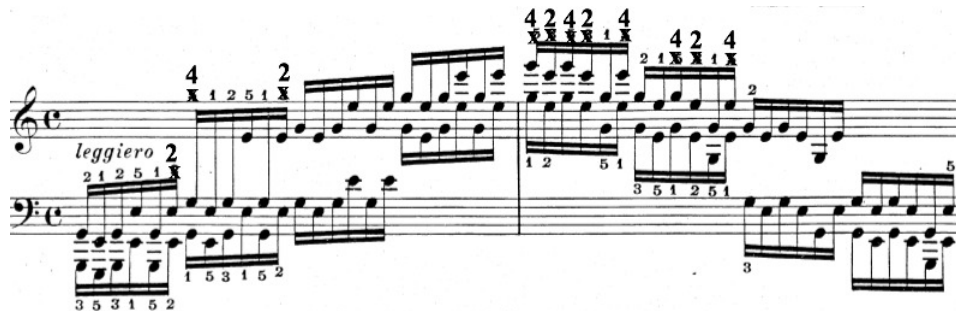


Now, exercise fingers 1-3(or 4)-2-5 in diverse patterns with Liszt and Brahms Exercises:

Example IV-7. Liszt Technical Exercises Bk. 10, pp. 3 and 15



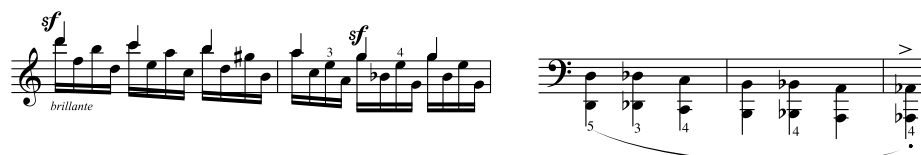
Example IV-8. Brahms 51 Exercises No. 20 (Use 4 instead of 5)



Clementi's *Gradus ad Parnassum* No. 9 [See Example III-8] employs arpeggiated chords and scales that span many octaves and involve both hands in a similar manner. Shoulders and upper arms guide the lower arms and hands since the pianist must sweep through the entire keyboard register with lateral movements as instructed by Chopin. Hands need to get accustomed to spreading out and ultimately need to learn to roll with relaxed wrists. The arpeggio passages in

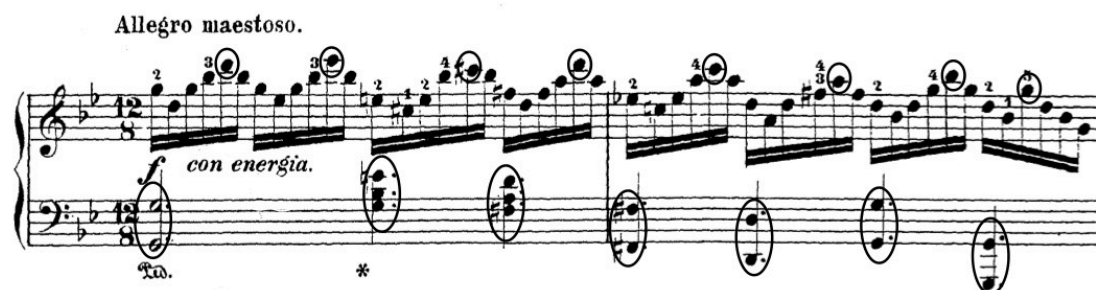
the suggested works should all be practiced with *legato* touch. *Gradus* No. 12 by Clementi will help strengthen the fifth finger needed for the top melody as well as for left hand octave *legato* playing.

Example IV-9. Clementi *Gradus ad Parnassum* No. 12, RH mm 23-24 and LH mm. 42-43



The next goal is the coordination of the melody on top of the arpeggio and the countermelody in the left hand, for which Chopin's own Etude op. 25 No. 1 can be an excellent study piece. [Refer to Chapter IV. 5] Moscheles Characteristic Studies op. 70 No. 14 can also be of great help, especially since both composers are looking for similar emotional content, *Allegro Maestoso* and *con energia*.

Example IV-10. Moscheles Characteristic Studies Op. 70 No. 14



Lastly, there are several etudes that bear a great resemblance to the compositional writing of op. 10 No. 1. The exercises by Cramer and Clara Schumann (1819-1896) not only benefit the right hand execution, but provide etudes for the left hand in the same fashion. Clara Schumann wrote seven exercises that she used every day which seem to be written under Chopin's influence as Schumann's eldest daughter states, "In the last year of her life, our mother, at our request, wrote out the exercises she played before her scales, with which she began her practice daily."

Example IV-11. Cramer Etude No. 18 for Right Hand

Allegro. (♩ = 138.)

f *sempre legato*

Example IV-12. Cramer Etude No. 56 for Left Hand

Allegro. (♩ = 138.)

f

Example IV-13. Clara Schumann Exercise No. 1 for Right Hand

No. 1

f

Example IV-14. Clara Schumann Exercise No. 2 for Left Hand

No. 2

f

The most significant advice that a teacher must give to a student in practicing this etude is to relax both wrists. Instead of playing forte in the early learning process, the student’s primary goal should be the harmonized resonance made of many soft sixteenth-notes. Especially with the left hand countermelody, an awareness of harmonic contour creates an expressive phrasing which essentially distinguishes the etude from a mere technical exercise.

IV.2. Etude Op. 10 No. 2 in A Minor

The difficulty in op. 10 No. 2 is the chromatic scale using the third, fourth, and fifth fingers with the short chord underneath the sixteenth notes on every beat. In contrast to the way the arm and wrist are used in the C Major Etude, Chopin’s second etude requires more of a finger-centered technique. Chopin’s innovative fingering flew in the face of established dictum of not passing long fingers over one another. In fact, his new fashion of fingering evolved from the early keyboard fingering of the seventeenth century when the thumb was not allowed to be used in scales, and therefore, crossing over of the fingers was inevitable [Refer to Example II-4]. While many pedagogues had already realized the need to practice chromatic scales, most of them played with the first three fingers. One can find similar chromatic exercises that use the first, second and third fingers in Moscheles’ etude. [Example IV-16] Its formation is exactly the same as Chopin’s A Minor Etude, except for the inversion of the right hand figures. The light left hand accompaniment has a similar musical character in both pieces as well.

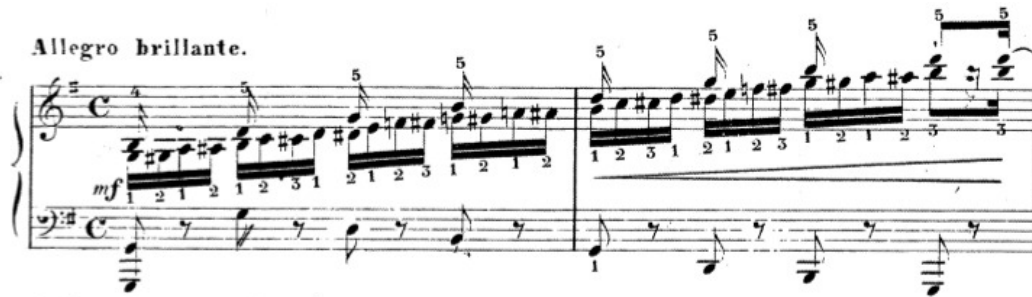
Example IV-15. Chopin Etude Op. 10 No. 2 in A Minor

F. CHOPIN. Op.10, No 2.

Allegro. (♩. 144.)
sempre legato.

2.

Example IV-16. Moscheles Characteristic Studies Op. 70 No. 3



Following along with idea of pairing Bach's first Prelude and Chopin's first etude, the embryo of Chopin's second etude can be found in Bach's Prelude No. 5 in G Major. The note values of both hands are exactly identical in both pieces, and the use of the three weak fingers in the right hand in Bach's Prelude may have signaled Chopin to develop such a technique for chromaticism.

Example IV-17. J. S. Bach WTC Bk. 1 Prelude No. 5 in D Major, BWV 850



Before tackling the chromatic scale as the etude's main target, it is necessary to train the weak third, fourth, and fifth fingers by warming up with Liszt Technical Studies. They are basically exercises of 3-4 and 4-5, but Liszt modifies them in different rhythms, accents, touches, and patterns [See Examples IV-18 and IV-19]. However, one should be careful not to over-practice to the point that any part of the arm muscle becomes tight and stiff. These exercises should only function as the preparation of the three fingers for the chromatic scales and as a means to rehearse them in a slow tempo. Importantly, it is recommended not to hold the first chords as Liszt suggests since this may create tension in the hand. One has to learn to complete the passage by relaxing the first two fingers.

Example IV-18. Liszt Technical Exercises Bk. 1, p. 12 (Fingering 3-4)

Example IV-19. Liszt Technical Exercises Bk. 1, p. 14

Etudes by Cramer and Clementi add harmonic support to finger exercises of 5-4.

Mastering them in order is favorable in terms of their different degrees of tempo: the triplet in *Moderato* and sixteenth notes in *Presto*.

Example IV-20. Cramer Etude No. 28 (Fingering 5-4)

Moderato. ($\text{♩} = 68.$)

Example IV-21. Clementi *Gradus ad Parnassum* No. 19 (Fingering 5-4)

Preceded by Liszt's various exercises of fingering 3-4-5 in Example IV-22, Example IV-23 is in a continuous upward motion of 3-4-5 while *Gradus* No. 47 is in a perpetual motion for 5-4-3-4.

Example IV-22. Liszt Technical Exercise Bk. 1, p. 11 (Fingering 3-4-5)

Example IV-23. Liszt Technical Exercise Bk. 2, p. 10 (Fingering 3-4-5 upward)

Example IV-24. Clementi *Gradus ad Parnassum* No. 47 (5-4-3-4)

At this point, one should start practicing the chromatic scales by crossing over 543-54-53 as in Brahms' Exercise No. 28. In Liszt's Exercises, change his suggestive fingerings by using the last three fingers instead while also practicing the left hand. [Example IV-26]

Example IV-25. Brahms 51 Exercises No. 28 (Downward chromatic)

Example IV-26. Liszt Technical Exercises Bk. 3, p. 12

Then, add the left hand accompaniment with the change of fingering to 3-4-5 in the Czerny exercise.

Example IV-27. Czerny *The School of Velocity* Op. 299 No. 31 (Practice with fingering 3-4-5)



Written a couple of decades later than Chopin, Liszt included a similar pattern in his exercise collection as did his teacher, Czerny, who published three years later than Chopin. It is interesting to note that Czerny was the one who used to insist on not crossing over the long fingers in his treatise. [See page 3]

Example IV-28. Liszt Technical Exercise Bk. 4, p. 12, RH (Adding a thumb)



Example IV-29. Czerny *The School of Virtuosity* Op. 365 Bk. 2 No. 19



Chopin's rapid constant motion of chromatic sixteenth notes with the sparkling pizzicato-like accompaniment creates a special effect which inspired others to emulate him, as can be seen in Paganini's *Moto Perpetuo* op. 11, written in 1835. Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's (1844-1908) *Flight of the Bumblebee* from his opera, *The Tale of Tsar Saltan* (composed in 1899-190), is also in the corresponding style.

Example IV-30. Paganini *Moto Perpetuo* Op. 11



Example IV-31. Rimsky-Korsakov *Flight of the Bumblebee*, mm. 9-12¹⁰⁴



IV.3. Etude Op. 10 No. 3 in E Major

Unlike the notion in Chopin's day that an "etude" trains the fingers, Etude op. 10 No. 3 puts the focus on lyricism and the control of various voices. Chopin indeed considered that musicality also needed to be studied. As well as bringing out the melody with a beautiful singing tone, a careful treatment of the inner voices involves a soft *legato* touch. To clearly distinguish the two voices in the right hand, the weight of the right hand must lean towards the right side of the hand in order to bring out the melodic line. This work combines "classical chasteness of contour with the fragrance of romanticism."¹⁰⁵ Beyond the romantic lyricism in the melody, the classical accompaniment in the right hand suppresses an exaggerated *rubato*, and it creates an atmosphere analogous to the second movement of Beethoven's *Pathetique* Sonata. This *Adagio*

¹⁰⁴ Reproduced with permission from Alan Chen.

¹⁰⁵ Niecks, p. 253.

cantabile movement certainly is a great study piece for learning to sing in a *cantabile* style on the instrument. [See Example IV-33]

Example IV-32. Chopin Etude Op. 10 No. 3 in E Major

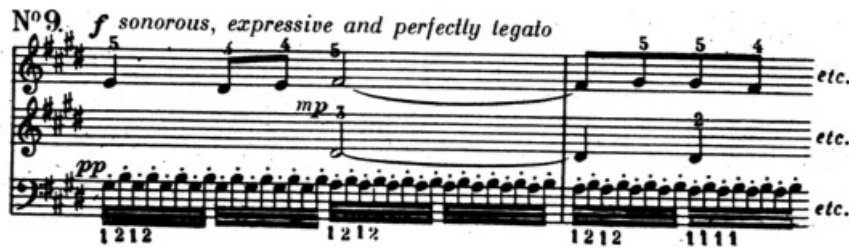


Example IV-33. Beethoven *Pathétique* Sonata, second movement, mm. 9-12



For the sake of the soft inner voice, various mere technical exercises are in fact very helpful if practiced with the proper attitude in listening to the harmonic background and tone. Cortot suggests practicing the exercise below for the right hand of the first twenty measures, and similar etudes by Czerny and Clementi add the left hand exercise as well.

Example IV-34. Cortot Exercise No. 9, p. 21



Example IV-35. Czerny *The School of Velocity* Op. 299 Bk. 3 No. 27

Example IV-36. Clementi *Gradus ad Parnassum* No. 8, Variation II

Another useful study in preparing a student for the separate voicing of each hand is that of Moscheles op. 95 No. 11.

Example IV-37. Moscheles *Characteristic Studies* Op. 95 No. 11

In order to introduce the concept of both *rubato* and *bel canto* present in op. 10 No. 3, Chopin's twenty-one nocturnes as well as John Field's eighteen nocturnes will be the essential learning material. Field's nocturnes, however, are recommended because of their simpler writing. The individual nostalgic ambiances produced by the ostinato accompaniment and the poetic melodies make them the finest study pieces in terms of learning how to play *cantabile*. Chopin's Db Major Prelude is also a great starter's piece to work on lyricism and its accompaniment. Both the Db Major Prelude and the E Major Etude are in ternary form (ABA) and have an emotional exclamation in the B section. One should be able to gradually rise up to

the passionate and dramatic B section, and seamlessly and smoothly enter back to the calm opening A section without any musical gap.

Example IV-38. Chopin Prelude No. 15 in D^b Major



Songs without Words op. 38 No. 2 by Mendelssohn naturally works as a very useful study aid for the E Major Etude—the compositional writing is similar in the polyphonic texture and in the left hand with its rhythmic accompaniment. Since the tempo is marked *Allegro non troppo* here, it is relatively easy to play a long line. This is an excellent starting point for a young student who might have a tendency to drag the tempo too much in Chopin's E Major Etude (the composer originally wrote *Vivace ma non troppo* in the manuscript).¹⁰⁶ Many pianists are inclined to play it too slowly since the composer finally changed it to *Lento ma non troppo*.

Example IV-39. Mendelssohn *Songs without Words* Op. 38 No. 2



The following pieces help to master the overall shape of the long phrases.

¹⁰⁶ Klein, p. 29.

Example IV-40. Chopin Prelude No. 9 in E Major

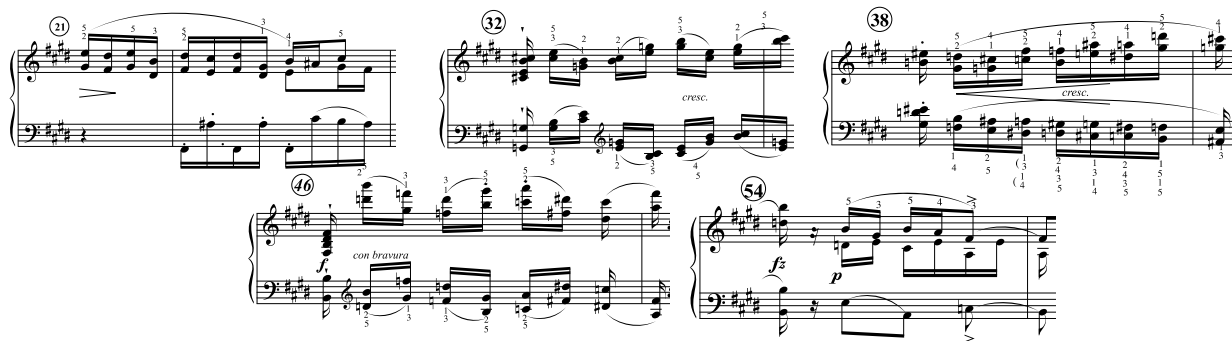


Example IV-41. Cramer Etude No. 41

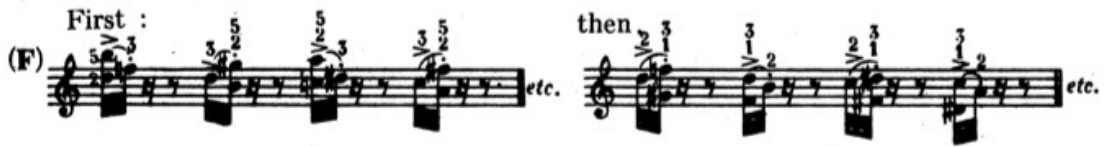


The middle section in the E Major Etude, as seen in [Example IV-42], requires the technique of various intervals of double notes, and rigid wrists will not properly project the resonant tone in this *poco più animato* section. One can benefit from Cortot's various exercises; he first recommends practicing each hand separately without the thumb, then, replacing the thumb but omitting the fifth finger [Example IV-43]. Learning to play the wrist in downward and upward motions with the rests in between the accented slurs will surely free the stiff wrists, particularly for the third and fourth pattern in the following Example.

Example IV-42. Chopin Etude Op. 10 No. 3, five double-note figures in the B section



Example IV-43. Cortot Exercise No. 10f, p. 22



[Example IV-44] is advised for the clear distinction between the top and bottom voices in the first pattern, while Cramer's Etude No. 61 is an exercise for the parallel movement of the sixths.

Example IV-44. Cortot Exercise No. 10a, p. 21



Example IV-45. Cramer Etude No. 61, mm. 6-9



For the second pattern in [Example IV-42], playing them in chords makes a student recognize the harmonies of the two double notes that are slurred, and therefore, the second notes in the slur can instinctively be played softly in order to dissolve into the first notes.

Example IV-46. Cortot Exercise No. 10c, p. 21



The following Czerny exercise is for practicing the contrary motion of double notes in the fifth pattern in [Example IV-42].

Example IV-47. Czerny *The School of Velocity* Op. 299 Bk. 4 No. 38, mm. 13-15

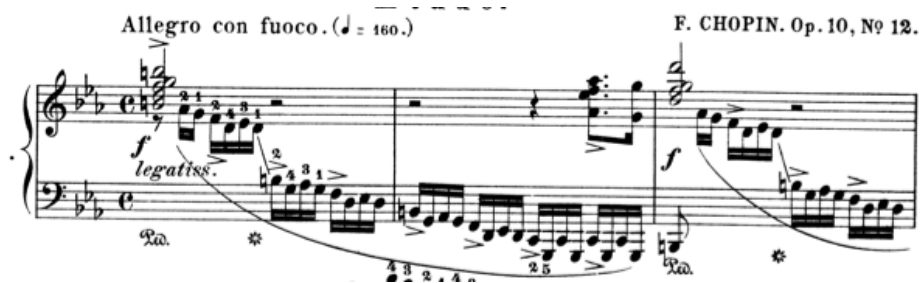


By examining the elements of the E Major Etude and the suggested study pieces, one realizes that there are two contrasting studies: the nocturne-like opening/ending section and the etude-like middle section. The double notes require a more fluent technique. Many young

students somehow attempt to mimic the *rubato* playing of professional pianists for the opening section, but generally fail to keep the musical line in the middle section, and it suddenly becomes merely a double-note exercise. Flexible agility must be present in order to readily pull up the emotional drama without harsh and rigid tones.

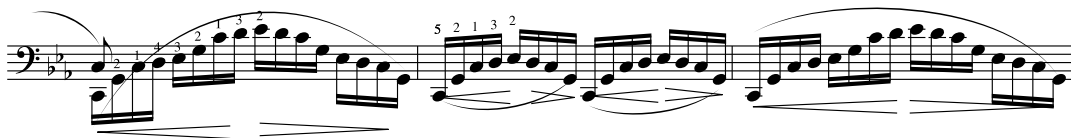
IV.4. Etude Op. 10 No. 12 in C Minor

Example IV-48. Chopin Etude Op. 10 No. 12 in C Minor



For the well-known *Revolutionary* etude, many preparatory works for the left hand can be found. Diverse exercises in various figures function as the extended studies of the fragments in the left hand passages. While there is usually a far distance between Chopin's poetic spirit and Beethoven's intense drive of passion, this C Minor Etude is among the few Chopin pieces that resemble the musical energy found in the last movement of Beethoven's *Appassionata*, op. 57 and the first movement of op. 111.¹⁰⁷ The left hand figure in measures 9-11 should be the first passage to be practiced.

Example IV-49. Chopin Etude Op. 10 No. 12, LH mm. 9-11



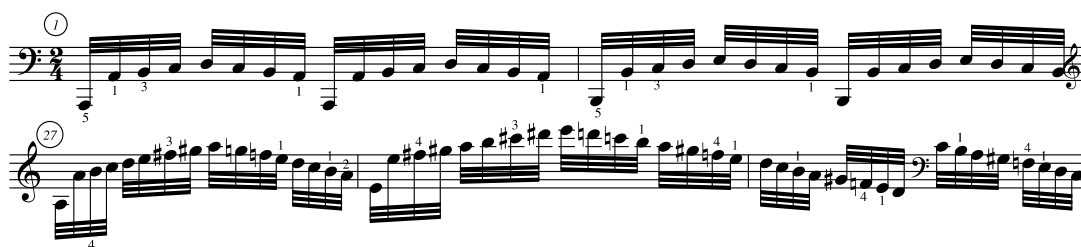
¹⁰⁷ Walker, p. 133-134.

It is a passage of arpeggios and scales combined as it goes up and down in big and small swells. One can first study the following exercises which has scales after the rise. The Czerny exercise below helps particularly to work the various expanded scales in both black and white keys.

Example IV-50. Clementi *Gradus ad Parnassum* No. 81, LH mm. 1-3



Example IV-51. Czerny *The School of Velocity* No. 4, p. 12¹⁰⁸



Obviously, the Hummel Etude op. 125 No. 6 has a very similar pattern to that of the *Revolutionary* etude, except this time there is an arpeggio coming down from the rise.

Example IV-52. Hummel Etude Op. 125 No. 6, LH mm. 18-20



The following three studies in *Gradus* offer many different ways to study the left hand. The measures 13-14 in *Gradus* No. 9 are particularly good for practicing bouncing right back to the top position in a rapid movement as in measures 28-35 in the Chopin etude.

Example IV-53. Chopin Etude Op. 10 No. 12, LH mm. 33-35



¹⁰⁸ Czerny, Carl. *Selected Studies*. Selected and edited by Louis Oesterle. Vol. 3. New York: G. Schirmer, Inc., 1907.

Example IV-54. Clementi *Gradus ad Parnassum* No. 9, LH mm. 1, 15-16, and 13-14

Note that measure 8 from the Clementi example [Example IV-56] recalls measure 36 from the Chopin etude [Example IV-55] as well as the resemblance to Chopin's measure 37 with Clementi's measure 7.

Example IV-55. Chopin Etude Op. 10 No. 12, LH mm. 36-37

Example IV-56. Clementi *Gradus ad Parnassum* No. 44, LH mm. 7-10 and 19-21

Example IV-57. Clementi *Gradus ad Parnassum* No. 87, LH mm. 1-6 and 9-10

With *Gradus* No. 17, one can practice scales on the black keys, something which Chopin used a great deal.

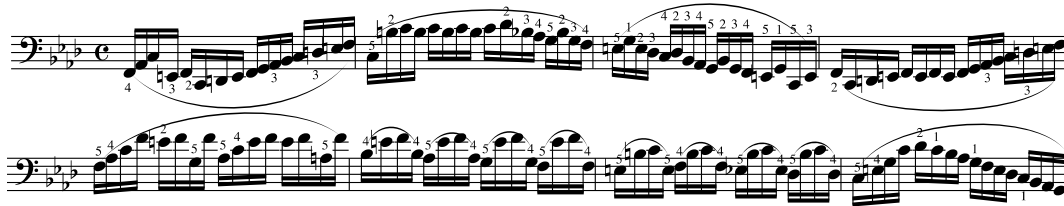
Example IV-58. Chopin Etude Op. 10 No. 12, LH mm. 65-66

Example IV-59. Clementi *Gradus ad Parnassum* No. 17, LH m. 4



The Prelude No. 3 by Chopin is also a good study for the left hand as well as the Cramer Etude No. 16.

Example IV-60. Cramer Etude No. 16, LH mm. 1-8

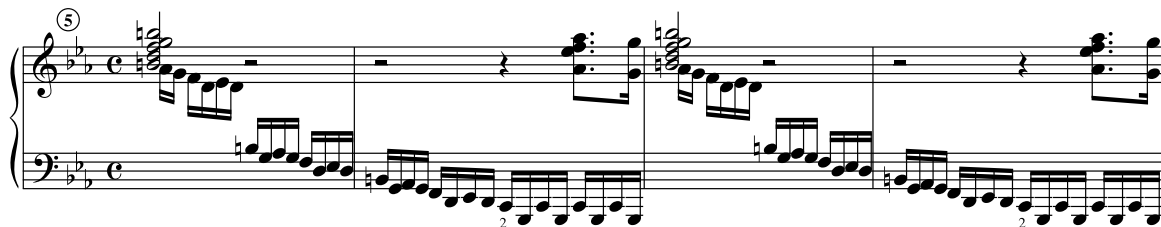


Example IV-61. Chopin Prelude No. 3 in G Major, LH mm. 1-3

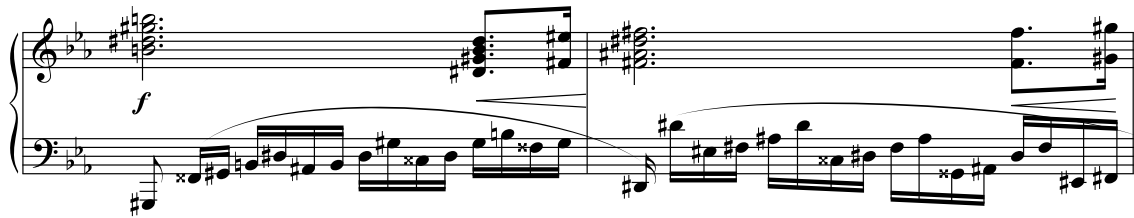


Cramer Etude No. 43 has the same octave melody and rhythmic value in the right hand as in Chopin etude [Example IV-62], and one can practice downward and upward movements of the right arm. Working the left hand in Cramer can provide a foundation for Chopin's left hand in measures 29-30.

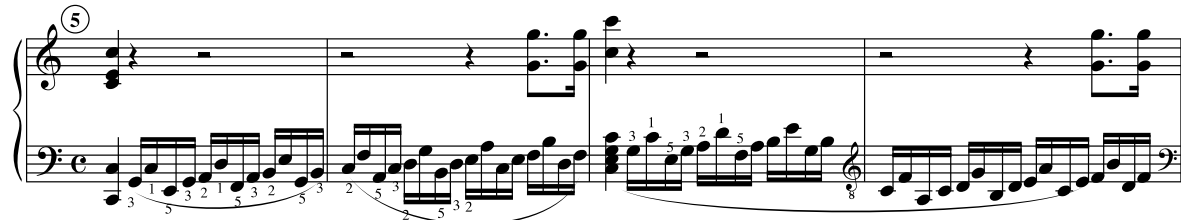
Example IV-62. Chopin Etude Op. 10 No. 12, mm. 1-4



Example IV-63. Chopin Etude Op. 10 No. 12, mm. 29-30

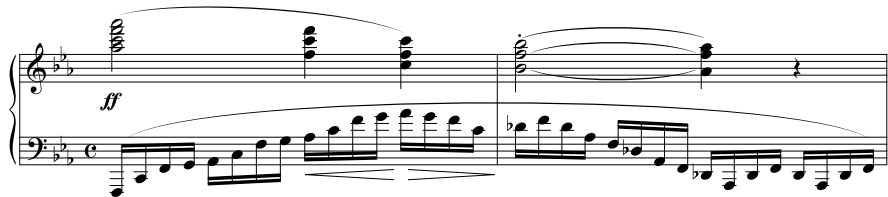


Example IV-64. Cramer Etude No. 43, mm. 5-8

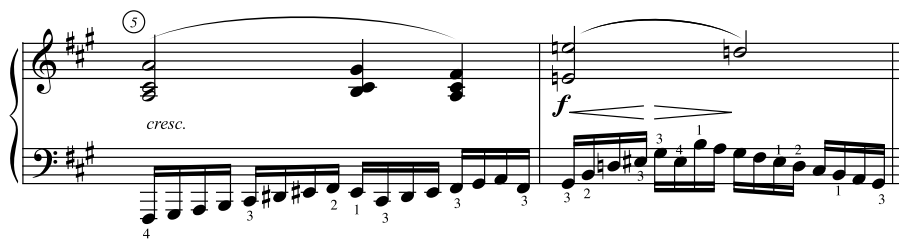


Note the similar fundamental shapes of both hands in the two following examples.

Example IV-65. Chopin Etude Op. 10 No. 12, mm. 37-38



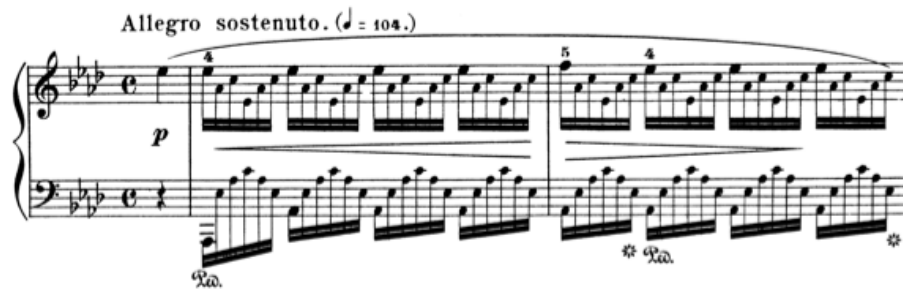
Example IV-66. Czerny *The School of Velocity* No. 14, p. 44¹⁰⁹



¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

IV.5. Etude Op. 25 No. 1 in A^b Major

Example IV-67. Chopin Etude Op. 25 No. 1 in A^b Major



The first etude in op. 25 is a relatively easy arpeggio study with gradations of touch, tone colors, phrasing, and pedal. Teachers can guide their students with as many arpeggio exercises as possible while emphasizing the wrist rotation and the lightness in touch which is the key point in this study. It is indeed the coordination of flexible fingers, wrists, and arms.

Example IV-68. Brahms 51 Exercises No. 15



Example IV-69. Brahms 51 Exercises No. 16b



The similarity with the earlier arpeggio Etude op. 10 No. 1 is primarily with the voicing: the outer *tenuto* melody with the bass and the inner *leggiere* voices. The following exercises are similar to the ones used in preparation of op. 10 No. 3 to balance the soft inner voices and the distinctive top melody. One can start to see how certain technical devices are tangled in different Chopin etude. One should always hear the inner filling notes melted into the overtones of the top and bottom notes.

Example IV-70. Cortot Exercise No. 8, p. 9



Example IV-71. Czerny *The School of Velocity* No. 299 Bk. 3 No. 27



The next three exercises are similar to the compositional design of the Ab Major Etude.

Example IV-72. Brahms 51 Exercises No. 4



Example IV-73. Brahms 51 Exercises No. 32a



Example IV-74. Chopin Prelude No. 8 in F# Minor



Cortot's exercises are particularly useful in working the fifth finger while also becoming accustomed to playing the large leaps. Note that the arpeggios are the center of gravity and that one uses weight to throw the hand up and down in order to reach the top notes. [Example IV-78] is another great practice to work melodic phrasing and to train harmonic hearing.

Example IV-75. Cortot Exercise No. 1, p. 7



Example IV-76. Cortot Exercise No. 2, p. 7



Example IV-77. Cortot Exercise No. 10, p. 9



Example IV-78. Czerny *The School of Velocity* Op. 299 Bk. 4 No. 37



With their serene and tranquil atmosphere, the three following pieces from *Songs without Words* are worth studying for *legato* touch, voicing, lyrical melody, and the harmonic bass with the pedal.

Example IV-79. Mendelssohn *Songs without Words* Op. 102 No. 4



Example IV-80. Mendelssohn *Songs without Words* Op. 19 No. 1

Andante espressivo.

Example IV-81. Mendelssohn *Songs without Words* Op. 30 No. 1

Andante con moto. *cantabile*

IV.6. Etude Op. 25 No. 6 in G[#] Minor

Example IV-82. Chopin Etude Op. 25 No. 6 in G[#] Minor

Allegro. (♩ = 69.) F. CHOPIN. Op. 25, N^o 6.

18. *sotto voce.*

On a first hearing, the G# Minor Etude is another piece which, if well-played, does not seem to be extremely difficult because of the natural flow of the music; however, it is in fact one of the most strenuous etudes. When pianists decide to perform the whole set of the etudes, they should first decide whether they can manage to play this double thirds study. It demands exceptionally delicate and light fingers and hands, which makes it even more difficult to manage. *Allegro* from the tempo marking may not seem too fast, but it is in cut time and the thirds are to be executed as trills especially in the first two measures, with the additional hurdle of playing them *sotto voce* and *legato*. This etude may take months to master and will surely bore a student to practice the same piece over and over. Therefore, the following study pieces can help to prepare the students technically while offering them a variety of choices to work the fingers. In addition, the pieces can also be utilized even for advanced pianists as a warm-up to the etude. The lightness in touch is the crucial point in playing the double notes, and independence of the fingers must accompany such lightness. Without controlling each finger, the required vibrant touches would result in dull and aggressive tones. In the measures of the upward chromatic scale with *crescendo* [Example IV-82, mm. 5-6], the practice of leading with the upper arm will assist in projecting brilliance with less muscular strain, once exercising the finger technique specifically for the thirds has been achieved. The last notes with *staccato* in every phrase are the resting places to lift up the wrist and relax the arm.

It is recommended to break the double notes into two voices with the top melody accented in *legato* and the bottom in *staccato* and soft touch [Example IV-83]. Next, reverse the order as in [Example IV-84]. Needless to say, one should start at a slow tempo and only gradually speed up. As the tempo goes up, diminish the exaggerated dynamic between the voices, but still retain the *legato* and *staccato* in the light touches while avoiding pressing down

to the bottom of the keys. Here, the opening chromatic right hand of op. 25 No. 11 can be used as an exercise by applying the concept of two voices.

Example IV-83. Broken double notes suggested by the author



Example IV-84. Broken double notes in reverse order



Example IV-85. Chopin Etude Op. 25 No. 11 mm. 5-6



To avoid tightness in the hand and arm, a student should learn to manipulate their natural arm weight. Mastering the concept of flexible wrists with elbows and upper arms naturally hanging down will help release rigidity. Liszt's exercises are introduced with as many fingering variants as possible so that one can cover every angle of the fingers. The following exercises should first be practiced in *staccato* in slow tempo. According to Kleczynski, Chopin always let his pupil begin a daily exercise with staccato for "Finishing the staccato with a free movement of the wrist has the enormous advantage of combating heaviness."¹¹⁰

Example IV-86. Liszt Technical Exercises Bk. 5, pp. 3-4



¹¹⁰ Jean Kleczyński, *Frederic Chopin: An Interpretation of His Works*, translated by W Kirkbride (Palma de Mallorca: Mossèn Alcover, 1970), p. 50-52.

Like the recommendation in double-note exercises of op. 10 No. 3 [See Example IV-43], the following Liszt exercises can be used to practice in slurs with rests in between. This two to four double-thirds in succession will gradually progress into the longer scales by increasing the numbers of grouped notes, ultimately building muscle endurance and finding breathing spots for the arm.

Example IV-87. Liszt Technical Exercises Bk. 5, p. 6¹¹¹

Wrist Down & Up

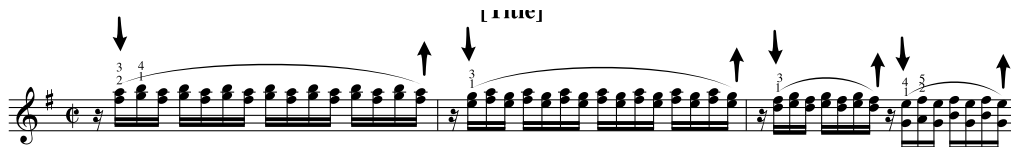


Example IV-88. Liszt Technical Exercises Bk. 5, p. 14¹¹²



Now, practice the double thirds in trills with this Czerny exercise.

Example IV-89. Czerny *The School of Velocity* op. 299 Bk. 4 No. 38, mm. 8-10



Cramer Etude No. 54 trains $\begin{matrix} 5 & 4 & 5 \\ 3 & 2 & 3 \end{matrix}$.

¹¹¹ Slurs by the author.

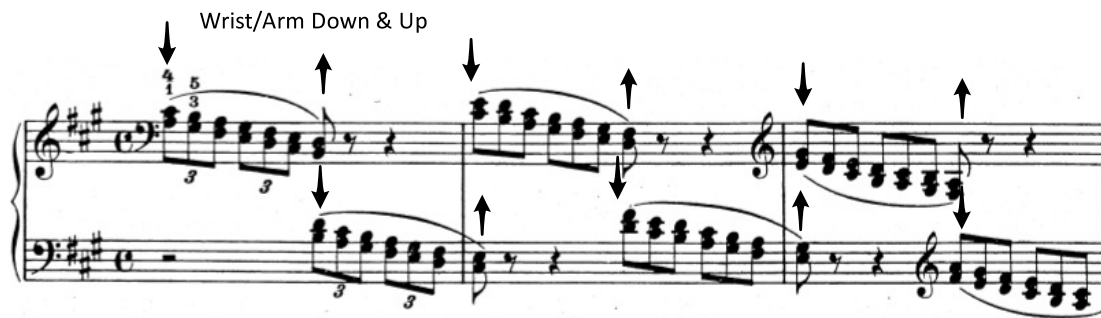
¹¹² Slurs by the author.

Example IV-90. Cramer Etude No. 54



The next task, playing thirds in a diatonic setting can be achieved with the following Brahms exercises. Arm movement must be involved by dropping the arm and its weight at the start of the slur and lifting it at the end of the slurs.

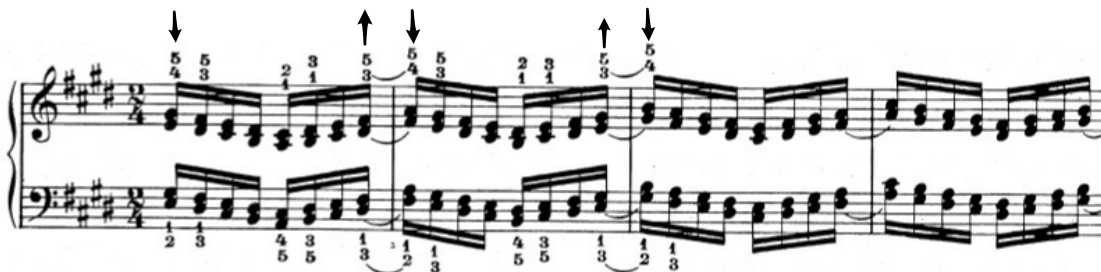
Example IV-91. Brahms 51 Exercises No. 2b



Example IV-92. Brahms 51 Exercises No. 2a



Example IV-93. Brahms 51 Exercises No. 3

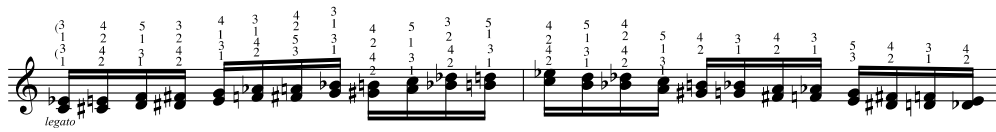


[Examples IV-94, 95, and 96] show the thirds in a diatonic as well as in a chromatic scale.

Example IV-94. Moscheles Characteristic Studies Op. 70 No. 13



Example IV-95. Liszt Technical Exercises Bk. 7, p. 18 upward direction



Example IV-96. Czerny *The School of Velocity* No. 10, p. 32 (Downward direction)¹¹³



Gradus No. 15 is the ultimate last check-up piece before advancing to op. 25 No. 6. This Clementi study contains both diatonic and chromatic scales as well as similar patterns to mm. 15, 14 and 27 of the Chopin etude.

Example IV-97. Clementi *Gradus ad Parnassum* No. 15 and Chopin Etude Op. 25 No. 6



When a student is ready to learn op. 25 No. 6, he/she should have already tried most fingering in double thirds with the numerous variants from the above exercises. The best choice among the suitable fingering should be examined for each individual. Make reference to Cortot's many suggestions.

¹¹³ Ibid.

Example IV-98. Cortot fingering suggestions, p. 39

Chopin's fingering

A. 3 4 5 3 : 4 3 4 3 : 4 5 3 4 : 3 4 5 3 : 4 3 4 3 : 4
 1 2 1 2 : 1 1 2 1 : 2 1 2 1 : 1 2 1 2 : 1 1 2 1 : 2

B(1): 3 4 5 4 : 5 3 4 3 : 4 5 4 5 : 3 4 5 4 : 5 3 4 3 : 4
 1 2 1 2 : 2 1 2 1 : 2 1 2 2 : 1 2 1 2 : 2 1 2 1 : 2

B(2): 3 4 : 3 4 : 3 4 : 3 4
 2 2 : 2 2 : 2 2 : 2 2

C. 3 4 3 4 : 3 4 5 3 : 4 3 4 3 : 4 5 3 4 : 3 4 5 3 : 4
 1 2 1 2 : 1 2 3 1 : 2 1 2 1 : 2 3 1 2 : 1 2 3 1 : 2

D. 4 5 4 3 : 5 4 5 4 : 5 4 3 5 : 4 5 4 3 : 5 4 5 4 : 5
 2 3 1 2 : 1 2 3 1 : 2 1 2 1 : 2 3 1 2 : 1 2 3 1 : 2

E. 3 4 5 4 : 5 4 5 3 : 4 5 4 5 : 4 5 4 3 : 5 4 5 3 : 4
 1 2 1 2 : 1 3 2 1 : 2 1 2 1 : 3 2 1 2 : 1 3 2 1 : 2

F. 3 4 5 3 : 4 5 4 3 : 4 5 3 4 : 5 4 5 3 : 4 5 4 3 : 4
 1 2 1 2 : 2 1 2 1 : 2 1 2 2 : 3 1 2 1 : 2 1 2 1 : 2

G. 3 4 5 4 : 5 4 5 3 : 4 5 4 5 : 4 5 3 4 : 5 4 5 4 : 5
 1 2 1 2 : 1 2 3 1 : 2 1 2 1 : 2 3 1 2 : 1 2 3 2 : 3

H. 3 4 3 4 : 5 3 4 3 : 4 3 4 5 : 3 4 3 4 : 5 3 4 3 : 4
 1 2 1 2 : 3 1 2 1 : 2 1 2 3 : 1 2 1 2 : 3 1 2 1 : 2

I. 3 4 5 4 : 5 3 4 3 : 4 5 4 5 : 3 4 5 4 : 5 3 4 3 : 4
 1 2 1 2 : 1 1 2 1 : 2 1 2 1 : 1 2 1 2 : 1 1 2 1 : 2

In terms of the countermelody, Chopin put it in the left hand but in rather unusual phrasing: the chromaticism between the fourth and the fifth note creates a tension that makes the piece even more interesting. The etude could have become a mere exercise without such treatment.

Example IV-99. Chopin Etude Op. 25 No. 6, LH

IV.7. Etude Op. 25 No. 10 in B Minor

With an almost eerie atmosphere at the opening, the energetic vigor in op. 25 No. 10 is stormier than most of Chopin's writing. The real sentimental characteristic of Chopin appears in the B section, and then the drama returns with the same passionate fire of the opening section. Obviously, the difficulty is to play the octaves in full tone *legato* and in fast tempo with accented inner voices.

Example IV-100. Chopin Etude Op. 25 No. 10 in B Minor

F. CHOPIN. Op. 25, Nº 10.

Allegro con fuoco. (♩ = 72.)

22. *poco a poco cresc.*

fz - fz - fz - fz - fz - fz - fz - fz - ff >

Chopin required that “octaves be played with the wrist, but without losing in fullness of tone thereby.”¹¹⁴ The role of the upper arms is especially crucial because of the chromatic scales with a *legato* touch: the positions of the hands are different depending on whether they are on the black or white keys. Therefore, the upper arms must actively participate in helping the hands to move up and down between the black and white keys. One must understand that it is not the hand that leads the arm, but the opposite.

¹¹⁴ Mikuli. Introductory notes to his Chopin editions.

To loosen up the hands and wrists, break the octave to instill the awareness of the forearm rotation. Liszt Exercise [Example IV-101] first warms up the hands by repeating one octave at a time, and then, it eventually moves up and down the scales.

Example IV-101. Liszt Technical Exercises Bk. 8, pp. 3-4

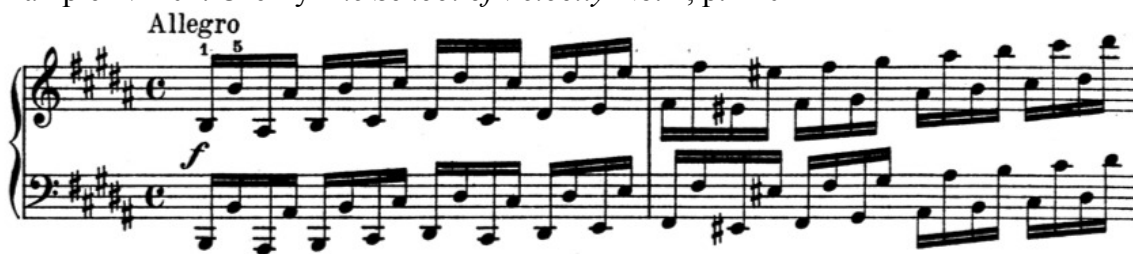
After getting used to the C major scale, now add some black notes.

Example IV-102. Czerny *The School of Velocity* No. 25, p. 128¹¹⁵

Example IV-103. Clementi *Gradus ad Parnassum* No. 21, RH

¹¹⁵ Czerny, *Selected Studies*, Schirmer Edition.

Example IV-104. Czerny *The School of Velocity* No. 4, p. 110¹¹⁶



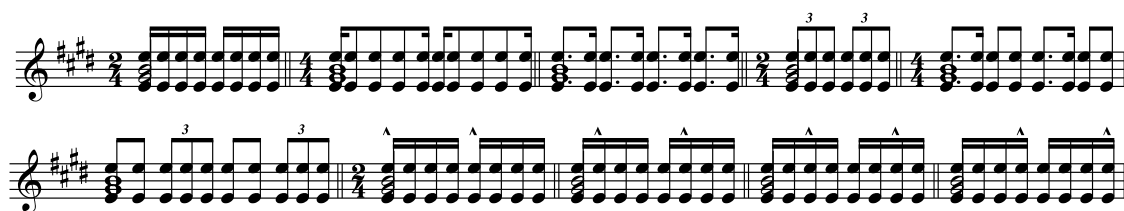
The following Czerny exercise shows the important role of practicing *legato* octaves between the fourth and the fifth fingers. In addition, the most recommended beginning exercises for op. 10 No. 2 also function for the octave etude as well in terms of the *legato* chromatic scales played by the last three fingers. [See Examples from IV-17 to IV-29]

Example IV-105. Czerny *The School of Velocity* Op. 299 Bk. 3 No. 28



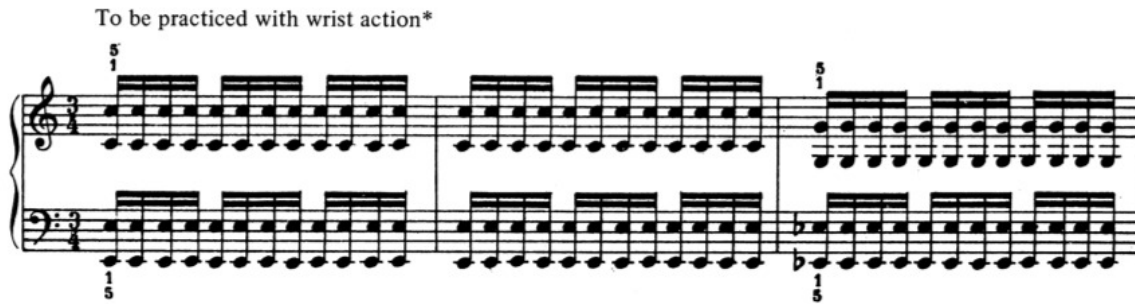
Before advancing to the actual octave scales, one should fully exercise a flexible wrists by spending sufficient time on one octave, but with different rhythms and accents as can be seen in the following example. It requires holding the two notes at the beginning of each pattern. Such exercise naturally practices the wrist movement in octave playing. In Example IV-107, Liszt reminds his students to “practice with wrist action,” and the control of the arm movement should be monitored carefully with the short *staccato* octave at the beginner’s stage.

Example IV-106. Liszt *Technical Exercises* Bk. 1, pp. 26-27



¹¹⁶ Ibid.

Example IV-107. Liszt Technical Exercises Bk. 7, p. 24 (Practice in staccato)



The exercise that is often neglected is the preparation of the thumb. While the outer melodies in both hands are to be played *legato* and in full tone, the weight of the hands are by all means inclined to the last three fingers, and therefore, the thumbs should absolutely be free of tension and as light as possible to play short *staccato* notes.

Example IV-108. Cortot Exercise, p. 65



The following octave scale is once again to be practiced in bouncing *staccato* first so that one can check the status of flexible wrists and arms. Wrists should bounce up and down instead of being rigid like a piece of wood from the hand to the elbow. After getting used to playing with the wrists, gradually increase the tempo.

Example IV-109. Liszt Technical Exercise Bk. 7, p. 25 (Practice in staccato)



One can enjoy the excitement of the *staccato* octaves in the following Czerny exercises which are fun and effective. Then, begin to practice them in *legato* when there is a scale.

Example IV-110. Czerny *The School of Velocity* No. 23, p. 22¹¹⁷ (Practice in both staccato and legato)

Example IV-111. Czerny *The School of Velocity* No. 22, p. 120¹¹⁸ (Practice in both staccato and legato)

Example IV-112. Czerny *The School of Velocity* No. 24, p. 126¹¹⁹ (Practice in both staccato and legato)

Example IV-113. Czerny *The School of Velocity* No. 28, p. 134, RH mm. 1-3, LH mm. 10-12¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

Between the practices of the octave scales, use the next exercise to loosen any tension that might have been built up through continuous octave practice.

Example IV-114. Czerny *The School of Velocity* No. 19, p. 117¹²¹



Now is a good time to practice the last three fingers in a chromatic *legato* scale using the exercises from op. 10 No. 2, especially [Example IV-26 Liszt Exercise]. Then, finally, embark on the octave *legato* scale using the Hanon exercise. Finger sliding from the black to the white keys are to be liberally adopted whenever necessary.

Example IV-115. Hanon Studies No. 51, mm. 39-44



For the sake of the B section where there are more leaps than in the opening chromatic section, one is advised to pay more attention to *legato* playing. Be reminded to handle two tasks here: 1) finger substitution for literal *legato* playing and 2) listening for equal level of tones even

¹²¹ Ibid.

when playing all top notes with the same finger for the sake of illusional *legato*. A special awareness of the tip of the third, fourth, and fifth fingers must be present for the second execution. At some point, the boundary between the literal *legato* and illusional *legato* should be obscured as the music flows. Disregard the *staccatos* in the following examples and play them in *legato*, following the two instructions above.

Example IV-116. Chopin Etude Op. 25 No. 10 B section, mm. 29-37

Example IV-117. Czerny *The School of Velocity* No. 33, p. 148¹²² (Practice in legato)

Example IV-118. Liszt Technical Exercise Bk. 12, p. 3¹²³

C major

¹²² Ibid.

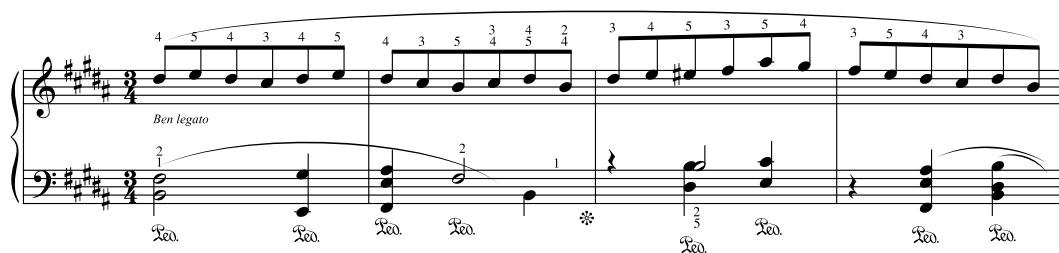
¹²³ Liszt gives us full spectrum of different keys so that one can try various hand positions.

Example IV-119. Liszt Technical Exercise Bk. 12, p. 33



To endure the constant fast octave playing for the first 28 measures, one should locate the places where the wrists can “take a breath” to occasionally relieve tension. Along with op. 25 No. 6, this requires a long practice journey; students should resist the temptation to skip steps and should not attempt to play fast immediately after learning the notes. In terms of pedal, a student is encouraged to start using it in a very slow tempo once the relaxation of wrists and arms is already established. Otherwise, a bad habit of playing with the stiff wrists might occur while paying attention to sensitive pedaling. Obviously, there cannot be a particular rule about when to put the pedal down and when to change it since every instrument, player, and atmosphere varies according to the circumstances. A hall with too much vibration is more difficult to manage than a dry hall, therefore, one is best served by practicing with less pedal while consciously monitoring the sonority. It is also advisable to practice the left hand and the pedal in the B section so that one can hear the countermelody in the left hand and the harmonic basses held by the pedal. Then, add only the top melody of the right hand to first prepare the natural flow of the *rubato* phrasing before finally playing with the octaves in the right hand.

Example IV-120. Chopin Etude op. 25 No. 10, B section, practice suggestion by the author



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The stated technical and musical challenges posed by each Chopin etude can best be introduced by the use of study pieces. As always in preparing a fundamental technique for any musical composition, detailed fragments representing numerous technical aspects of the piece should be covered first and will accordingly lead to the final architecture. Working diverse fractions of the studies will prevent the appearance of “holes” later when finishing the work. In order to avoid having the technical training turn into mere finger exercises, students always need to be reminded by their teacher why such preparation is necessary and how it leads to the actual musical goal. With reasonable awareness, the recommended exercises and pieces are excellent guides to the etudes of Chopin. In addition, one should of course apply these investigational practices when learning other musical works.

APPENDIX
STUDY REPERTOIRE

The appendix lists all the suggested works corresponding to a given Chopin etude. Simultaneously, a learning order for the Twenty-Four etudes is proposed in order to take the advanced intermediate students through the Twenty-Four etudes. This catalogue ultimately leads to the most demanding Chopin etudes in a progressive order of difficulty. The progression would also benefit intermediate students who are not yet ready to handle some of the more challenging pieces by giving them manageable choices of etudes according to their ability. This graded approach to op. 10 and op. 25 will begin with less demanding etudes such as op. 10 No. 5 and op. 25 No. 2. The final four etudes in the re-ordering will be op. 10 No. Nos. 1, 2, op. 25 Nos. 6 and 10. By this time it is assumed that the student has acquired the technique to manage all etudes without physically harming themselves.

| Targeted Study | Preparatory etudes in the order of difficulty | Most Demanding |
|----------------|---|----------------|
| Left Hand | 10/6, 25/7, 10/12 | |
| Scales | 25/2, 10/8, 10/4, 25/11 | 10/2 |
| Arpeggio | 10/9, 25/1, 10/5, 10/11, 25/5, 25/12 | 10/1 |
| Double Notes | 10/3, 10/7, 25/3, 10/10, 25/8 | 25/6 |
| Octaves | 25/4, 25/9 | 25/10 |

Op. 10 No. 1 in C Major

J. S. Bach WTC Bk. 1 Prelude No. 1 in C Major, BWV 846

Mendelssohn *Songs without Words* Op. 102 No. 4

Cortot Exercise No. 6, p. 7

Liszt Technical Exercises Nos. 79 and 78

Brahms 51 Exercises Nos. 5 and 20

Clementi Gradus ad Parnassum No. 12

Moscheles Characteristic Studies Op. 70 No. 14

Cramer Etude Nos. 18 and 56

Clara Schumann Exercise Nos. 1 and 2

Op. 10 No. 2 in A Minor

Moscheles Characteristic Studies Op. 70 No. 3

J. S. Bach WTC Bk. 1 Prelude No. 5 in D Major, BWV 850

Liszt Technical Exercises Nos. 14, 18, 15, 43, 50 and 55

Cramer Etude No. 28

Clementi *Gradus ad Parnassum* Nos. 19 and 47

Brahms 51 Exercises No. 28

Czerny *The School of Velocity* Op. 299 No. 31

Czerny *The School of Virtuosity* Op. 365 No. 19

Op. 25 No. 6 G[#] Minor

Chopin Etude Op. 25 No. 11

Liszt Technical Exercises Nos. 57, 58, 59, and 67

Czerny *The School of Velocity* Op. 299 Bk. 4 No. 38

Cramer Etude No. 54

Brahms 51 Exercises Nos. 2b, 2a, and 3

Moscheles Characteristic Studies Op. 70 No. 13

Czerny *The School of Velocity* No. 10, p. 32

Clementi Gradus ad Parnassum No. 15

Cortot fingering suggestions, p. 39

Op. 25 No. 10 in B Minor

Liszt Technical Exercises No. 71, 29, 68, 69, 84, and 86

Czerny *The School of Velocity* No. 25, p. 128

Clementi Gradus ad Parnassum No. 21

Czerny *The School of Velocity* Op. 299 No. 28

Cortot Exercise p. 65

Hanon No. 51

Czerny *The School of Velocity* Nos. 4, 23, 22, 24, 28, 19, and 33

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