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A COMPARISON OF THE LESCHETIZKY AND WHITESIDE
METHODS OF PIANO TECHNIQUE

THESIS

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By

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PREFACE

Although technique is one of the most important phases of any applied music study, methods of piano technique represent somewhat an enigma. Teachers who are uninformed concerning different technical approaches to piano instruction are likely to produce students who will never reach their full potential. If we as teachers could come to regard technique as a means to a musical end, instead of regarding it as an end in itself, then perhaps we would become more objective in our teaching.

Technique is usually understood in a limited sense as physical agility, but the troubled query of which exercises yield the best result is still of importance to students, teachers, and performers. The fact that there are points of contention among teachers and professional artists as to just how the piano should be played should stimulate all amateur or professional musicians to become more enlightened concerning various methods.

It is easy to ascertain many basic laws governing the art of pianism because a great deal has been systematically organized and written concerning ideas on piano technique. Methods devised by Theodore Leschetizky, a Romanticist, and Abby Whiteside, a contemporary, are examples.

The idea for this investigation was inspired by the writer's attempt to acquire a more complete knowledge of piano teaching techniques. It is hoped that this report will challenge musicians of all ranks to delve further into the subject and investigate other methods of technique not included in this report.

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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Purpose

The purpose of this study was to compare the identifying features of the Theodore Leschetizky and Abby Whiteside methods of piano technique.

The Sub-Problems

In order to present a systematic comparison of the two methods of piano technique, it was necessary to divide the problem into the following sub-problems:

1. What are the features of the Leschetizky method of piano technique?
2. What are the features of the Whiteside method of piano technique?
3. What similarities and differences are found between these two methods?

Definition of Terms

The following terms were found to be key in this research and are defined as follows:

The term "identifying features" refers to individual characteristics associated with the Leschetizky and Whiteside methods.

The term "Leschetizky method" refers to the particular theories of piano technique advanced by Theodore Leschetizky, 1830 to 1915, and taught by his school of followers.

The term "Whiteside method" refers to the unique ideas on piano technique advanced by Abby Whiteside, 1881 to 1956.

The term "piano technique" refers to (1) facility in executing rhythms, scales, arpeggios, and octaves and to (2) facility required in the production of tone and the use of the pedal. The term "rhythm" may be defined as the "systematic grouping of notes with regard to duration" (2, Vol. IV, p. 86). The term "scale" denotes the "melodic material of music arranged in ascending or descending order for theoretical purposes" (3, p. 603). The term "diatonic scale" refers to a scale consisting of whole-tones and semitones in the following arrangement: tone, tone, semitone, tone, tone, tone, semitone (1, p. 662). The term "chromatic scale" refers to a "scale which consists of twelve semitones (1, p. 663). The term "arpeggio" is applied to the notes of a chord when they are played one after another instead of simultaneously (1, p. 52). The term "octave" means the eighth tone of the diatonic scale (1, p. 502). This report is concerned with the striking of the eighth tone of the diatonic scale simultaneously with the tonic.

The term "production of tone" is concerned with the manner or style in which the keys are struck or pressed in order to produce a desired sound.

The term "use of the pedal" refers to the depressing and releasing of a certain pedal.

Delimitations

In this report it is mandatory that the following delimitations be imposed:

1. This study will not include a scientific explanation of the physiological make-up of the fingers, hands, forearm, and shoulder. A practical explanation of the various parts of the playing mechanism is given.

2. This report will not be concerned with phrasing as a separate technique, but only as it is related to the production of tone and the use of the pedal.

Basic Hypothesis

The basic hypothesis of this study is that there should be a systematic comparison of the piano technique methods advanced by two foremost pedagogues.

Basic Assumption

The basic assumption for this study is that Theodore Leschetizky and Abby Whiteside are two of the foremost pedagogues and that their methods are among the most prevalent taught today.

Need For The Study

Explicit methods of piano technique are not generally understood by a majority of pianists. A study is needed as

an aid to acquaint teachers and students with what has been written and is available concerning piano technique, and to eliminate vague and generalized impressions.

It is necessary for earlier methods such as that of Leschetizky to be well understood; also, the more recent and unique principles of Whiteside, a contemporary pedagogue, deserve more consideration.

Students should be informed of certain technical difficulties and given plausible solutions for them. When the teacher becomes better informed, he can then make the students more aware of specific techniques. It is hoped that this study will present information about the Leschetizky and Whiteside methods that should benefit both teachers and students.

Plan For The Report

The historical background material is presented in Chapter II in the following manner: (1) the history of the piano is traced from its ancestors, the clavichord and harpsichord, to the present; (2) a description of the major contributions of important pedagogues from Clementi through Liszt is presented; and finally, (3) biographical studies of the lives of Leschetizky and Whiteside are included. Information for the historical background was obtained from dictionaries, history books, encyclopedia articles, biographies, technic books, and periodical articles.

The third chapter is a presentation and comparison of the Leschetizky and Whiteside methods. The chapter is divided into

the following sections: rhythms, scales, arpeggios, octaves, production of tone, and the use of the pedals. At the conclusion of each section comparisons are drawn between the two methods.

The fundamental principles of the Leschetizky method were collected from technique books, methods books, periodical articles, dictionaries, history books, and encyclopedia articles. Collection of Whiteside's perspectives of piano technique came primarily from the Abby Whiteside Foundation in New York; also from interviews and correspondence with former pupils and friends, and from method books.

The final chapter is a summary of the total report. The history of the piano is traced briefly from the clavichord and the harpsichord. Contributions of important pedagogues from Clementi through Liszt are stated. Biographical sketches of Leschetizky and Whiteside are included. After the summary and conclusions, recommendations are presented.

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CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR THE STUDY

The Evolution of the Piano from Earlier Instruments

The Clavichord

The early history of the clavichord prior to the fifteenth century rests, for the most part, in profound obscurity (4, Vol. I, p. 550). The clavichord was the earliest type of stringed keyboard instrument (3, p. 156). As early as 1325, Johannes de Muris, in his Musica Speculative, describes an instrument, called a monocordum which was doubtless a clavichord (3, p. 157). The earliest record of the name is found in Eberhard Cersne's poem, Der Numme Regel. Mention is made here of the clavicembalum, monocordium, and clavichordium. Other names associated with this instrument were manichord, manicordion, and monochord. In 1477 William Horwood taught "clavychord" at Lincoln Cathedral (3, p. 157). The first clear description of the so-called clavichord is found in Virdung's Musica Getutscht published in 1511 (3, p. 157). The oldest existing specimen known of the tangent clavichord is dated A. D. 1537, and is in the Metropolitan Museum, New York (4, Vol. I, p. 548). It is said to be Italian, but has German attributes.

The case of the clavichord consisted of a wooden, oblong box, varying from two to five feet in length, and rested upon a stand or legs (3, p. 158). The breadth of the case was less than two feet; the depth five to seven inches. The keys were in front extended beneath the sound-board to the back of the case. Each key was balanced upon a wire pin. A small piece of whalebone projecting from the key and sheathed in a groove behind prevented each key from rattling against its neighbor. The lower or natural keys were usually black, and the upper or chromatic, white (4, Vol. I, p. 549). This arrangement was reversed in Italy and the Netherlands.

The strings of finely drawn brass wire, as well as the keyboard, ran parallel to the long side of the instrument (3, p. 158). Nearly at the back of each key, in an upright position, were placed small brass wedges called tangents. These tangents put the strings in vibration by pressing them upwards. By a sort of pressure stroke from below, the tangents not only caused the strings to vibrate, but also terminated their vibrating length by dividing them into two parts, the smaller of which is damped by a piece of cloth woven through the strings (3, p. 156). The production of sound was similar to that of a violinist "fingering" on a string as the tangent also served to terminate its vibrating length. Thus, it was possible to use one and the same string for several tangents and keys, though only for those which would never be used simultaneously.

Around 1720 clavichords were built which had a different string to each key. G. Silbermann in 1721 began to construct clavichords, sometimes called clavecin d'amour, cembal d'amour, or cembalo d'amore, in which the strings were doubled in length. They were plucked in the middle so that both sections sounded the same tone, with the desired volume increased. In contrast to the ordinary clavichords, these had no damping cloth woven between the strings (3, p. 157). In spite of various advantages, they did not gain popularity. Virgung and Reynvaan in 1795 mentioned clavichords with pedals (4, Vol. I, p. 551).

There is no doubt that clavichord players preserved a very tranquil position of the hand in order to preserve truth of intonation. The notes could be measured in force and emphasis by the pressure of the fingers. The parts of a fugue could be clearly differentiated and deep expression conveyed (4, Vol. I, p. 550).

The tone of the clavichord has often been compared to a "disembodied" spirit because it was incapable of speaking to more than two or three hearers at once. The tone, very soft, with a pianissimo quality, subtleness, and tenderness of sound, was somewhat disappointing at the first hearing (3, p. 156).

In the earliest days of technique when only the three long fingers were usually employed, a gliding touch was aimed at, and this gentle pressure suited the clavichord perfectly. Although it had fallen into oblivion, the clavichord held an

important position in the Baroque period as a domestic instrument of intimate charm (3, p. 157).

The Harpsichord

References are made to an instrument of what may possibly have been a harpsichord-like instrument as early as the fourteenth century (23, p. 306). The earliest accurate information about the instrument is preserved in Virgung's Getutscht of 1511 (3, p. 328). As early as 1511 there was in existence a lautenclavicymbel. This instrument was a harpsichord with gut strings, instead of metal strings, with a tone like the lute (3, p. 395). From 1500 to 1800 there appeared a variety of shapes and constructions under different names which cannot always be identified with a given type (3, p. 328). Some of the shapes of instruments found were: long wing, rectangular box, pentagonal box, and upright box.

Unlike the clavichord, the strings on the harpsichord are plucked mechanically by a quill or plectrum instead of being struck by a hammer when the key is depressed (16, p. 89). There are several strings to each key, thus making the instrument capable of producing higher or lower octaves (3, p. 327). The characteristic part of the action is the jack, which is a long piece of wood which at the upper end bears a plectrum made from crow quills or from leather. The jack rests on the rear end of the prolonged lever of the key which, on being depressed, causes it to jump up so that the quill plucks the

string (3, p. 327). There are several jacks to each key which produce a slightly different timbre, owing to the different material used for the plectrum.

This most important instrument of the Baroque period usually had two manuals (16, p. 91). Several stops were present, by which various jacks and strings could be brought into play. Ranges were possible in registration from pianissimo to forte. There was a possibility of as many as four stops for eight and four foot pitches. Special effects, such as the tone of the lute, were possible to produce (24, p. 306). In 1901 there were reportedly harpsichords of Italian make which had three keyboards, but these were the exception rather than the rule (24, p. 227).

The harpsichord was superior for the contrapuntal music of the Baroque period because the middle and lower parts of compositions could be made to stand out with amazing clarity (3, p. 327). This instrument was used as a solo instrument in all forms of chamber music and to accompany the voice in opera, cantata, and oratorio (22, p. 306). It was the chief instrument for the realization of harmonies indicated in thorough-bass accompaniment (3, p. 328). The harpsichord proved to be an excellent accompanying instrument for violins. "In fact, the combination of a violin and a harpsichord in a sonata by Bach is acoustically much more satisfactory than that of a pianoforte and a violin in a sonata by Beethoven" (3, p. 328).

With the development of the harpsichord, it became necessary to acquire a crisper touch. All notes had to be taken up sharply so that the quill would be in position to pluck the string again. A perfect staccato was easily obtained and touch was unalterable with absolute evenness of tone (4, Vol. II, p. 732). Dynamic changes were made by application of some mechanical device, never by the fingers. From a modern viewpoint, the inability to produce gradation of sound by a lighter or stronger touch is a great deficiency. However, considering the style of Baroque music, this is no objection. The harpsichord was just as perfect for Baroque music as is the piano of today for our music (3, p. 327).

The Pianoforte

The pianoforte is a stringed instrument whose strings are struck by hammers which are put into motion from keys by means of a connecting mechanism called action. The evolution of our modern day piano began in Italy in 1709. Bartolommeo Cristofori of Florence invented a hammer mechanism which had a hopper* and escapement** similar to the repetition*** of the modern piano.

*The hopper is a little stick, sometimes called a "jack", by which the hammer is actually propelled (9, p.50).

**The escapement is the mechanism which enables the hammer to "escape" after the string has been struck, leaving the string free to vibrate (24, p. 227).

***The repetition is the mechanism which makes it possible to strike the hammer two or more times before the key has returned to its original position (3, p. 375).

This was abandoned by the later German makers until Johan Andreas Stein reintroduced it in 1770, giving a separate escaper to each key. This was known as German action or Viennese action. Elegant in appearance and sound, with very light action, the Viennese action was typical of the Hummel and Clementi period (3, p. 575).

John Broadwood, 1732 to 1812, from England gets the credit for the development of the piano which finally separated it from its ancestor, the harpsichord. This instrument was of a much heavier structure, allowing for greater tension of the strings which thus became more sonorous. Broadwood is also accredited with the introduction of two pedals which received the patent in 1783. The action used by Broadwood was known as English action (3, p. 575). The piano was first used as a solo instrument in England in 1768 by J. C. Bach (24, p. 500).

In 1821 double escapement was invented. This caused the hammer to fall back immediately to an intermediate position, and to its final resting position only after the key is released. In 1825 A. Babcock of Boston used the first full cast iron frame. In 1830 the use of cross-stringing was introduced. This cross-stringing was the arrangement of the higher strings in the form of a fan, spreading over the largest part of the soundboard, with the bass strings crossing them at a higher level. This was generally adopted by Steinway and Sons of New York, who gave it its definite form in 1855 (3, p. 575).

The components of a piano are the keyboard, the action, the hammers, the dampers, the strings, and the pedals (2, p. 500). What is found beneath the lid does not immediately suggest music. There is a great array of strings, enough so that there are for the most part three to every note. Beneath them is the action, or a row of felt hammers on sticks, which when the keys are depressed rise, strike their appropriate strings, and instantly rebound (9, p. 4).

The action is the most interesting and complicated part of the piano. Its complexity is caused by the repetition mechanism. This device makes possible the rapid iteration of one and the same note (3, p. 575). The hammer travels in its one appointed plane and moves faster or slower, accordingly as the force of the stroke on the key is greater or lesser. It is necessary for the hammer to travel farther than it can be pushed by the key. That is to say, "it must be thrown" (9, p. 4).

The dampers are small lengthy pieces of wood covered with felt which lie above the strings. By means of the connecting wires, the dampers move up and down together with the action, making the string free for vibration in the moment in which the hammer strikes and checking it when the key is released (3, p. 575). There are two means for lifting the dampers: the individual key, which when it propels the hammer, at the same time lifts the damper from its string; and the use of the damper pedal (9, p. 5).

Three pedals are found on most modern grand pianos. The pedal on the right, the damper pedal, raises the dampers, thus allowing the strings to vibrate after the keys have been released (3, p. 575). Releasing this pedal causes the dampers to fall back onto the strings. The soft pedal causes the entire keyboard, action and hammers, to shift slightly to the right so that the hammers strike only two of the three unison strings assigned to them (9, p. 5). In the lower registers the hammers would strike only one string instead of two. The volume of the tone is thus lessened.

The sostenuto, middle pedal, is simply a modification of the damper pedal. It raises the dampers, not from all the strings, but from only that note or chord which is held in the moment in which it is put into action, leaving other notes free for playing with or without dampers. The sostenuto pedal also permits sustaining of single notes, a pedalpoint in the bass, and numerous coloristic effects (3, p. 575). Neither pedal has any effect upon the essential behavior of the hammer, nor consequently upon the act of touch. The tone of the piano with the damper pedal depressed is perceptibly different from its tone without the pedal (9, p. 6).

The first piano with five and a half octaves was made by John Broadwood in 1790. In 1794, the range was increased to six octaves (4, p. 732). Today, pianos have seven octaves when the highest note is A, or seven octaves and a minor third when the highest note is C (24, p. 500).

Pedagogues

Clementi

During the period ending with 1770, the first division to be observed in the history of the pianoforte, there had been no composition devoted to the instrument, and there could have been little or no real pianoforte-playing (4, Vol. I, p. 723). The first real pianoforte music was published in London in 1773. This was the famous Opus Two of Muzio Clementi containing three sonatas, composed three years previously when he was only eighteen years old. These sonatas, displaying the distinctive powers of the piano, led to the more advanced sonata style of Beethoven (16, p. 125). Clementi may be regarded as the originator of the proper treatment of the pianoforte, as distinguished from the harpsichord (4, Vol. I, p. 557). Clementi's works are indispensable to pianists to this day. These compositions, as well as his excellent example as a player and teacher, have left an indelible mark upon everything that pertains to the piano.

Muzio Clementi, 1752 to 1832, was well taught and progressed rapidly. At the young age of nine years, Clementi passed an examination and obtained a position as organist in Rome (23, p. 1). At a concert in 1766, an Englishman, Peter Backford, was so delighted with Clementi's talent that the father's permission was obtained to educate him in England. Thus until 1770 Clementi lived in England and quietly pursued his studies, living at the house of his protector in Dorsetshire

(21, p. 300). By this time, at only eighteen years of age, Clementi excelled all the pianists of his time by his spirited, virile, and brilliant performances. In the year of 1781, young Clementi began his travels, and thus, a definite Clementi piano-style was popularized by his artistic tours over the greater part of Europe (23, p. 1). At the age of twenty-nine, Clementi was invited by the Emperor to compete with Mozart in a contest in piano playing and improvisation.

The skill of a great performer was still evident in old age. At the age of eighty, Clementi was still capable of evoking the warmest enthusiasm in an assembly of pupils and admirers by a free fantasia on the pianoforte. Although Handel was alive when Clementi was born and although Beethoven died before him, Clementi preserved throughout his life his own artistic individuality (5, p. 1).

Clementi, originator of the brilliant piano-style of composition and of virtuosity in piano playing, was also the head of a school, the excellence of whose principles is still attested and exemplified by its disciples and following (23, p. 1). Clementi, who started a system of strengthening the weak fingers by holding down some of the fingers while playing repeated notes with the others, changed from a mechanically brilliant to a more suave and melodious piano style (4, Vol. III, p. 733). Clementi proposed that the upper part of the hand, from the knuckles to the wrist, should present such a surface that a piece of money might be placed there to prove that the fingers alone are

engaged in execution. According to Hale, Clementi's "hands were quiet, the wonderfully agile and independent fingers doing all the work" (5, p. 1). His general rule was that the elbows be slightly in advance of the body and that from the elbow to the second joint of the fingers should be horizontally level.

A celebrated pianist, composer, and businessman, Clementi also amassed quite a fortune as a teacher and trained many distinguished musicians (21, p. 300). These pupils expressed themselves enthusiastically concerning the animated playing and the stimulating instructive method of their master. So industrious a teacher was Clementi that often fifteen hour lessons a day were taught.

Clementi's last work, Gradus ad Parnassum, published in 1817 is a living reminder of one of the world's greatest piano teachers (21, p. 300). The Gradus ad Parnassum, subtitled "The Art of Piano Playing Taught in One Hundred Examples", is considered the foundation of modern piano technique and is the collection which has assured the name of Muzio Clementi, for all time, a prominent place in the history of the literature of his art. This masterpiece is founded on the wide experience of a thorough, conscientious, and stimulating teacher. No contribution has since appeared which surpasses it in many-sidedness and practical value (23, p. 1). In this work, the following points are emphasized: attaining complete equality of tone with a combination of velocity and power, and giving importance

to the melody as distinguished from the accompaniment. Attention was devoted to the attainment of perfect evenness in all fingers (4, Vol. III, p. 733).

Regarding the Gradus ad Parnassum, Marmontel states:

It offers to serious pupils, to all artists devoted to the highest art, the most beautiful models of taste, the choicest examples of all styles, the noble, the severe, the graceful, the expressive, the pathetic. The studies devoted especially to mechanism, rhythm, and ornamentation are as admirably conceived for acquiring independence of the fingers and freedom of pace; and the rules are laid down by Clementi with unerring precision (5, p. i).

A student who has thoroughly practiced the pieces in the Gradus ad Parnassum, and can play them confidently and fluently, has thereby acquired the ability to execute the piano works of all the masters from C. P. Bach down to Beethoven, without meeting with further substantial impediments. However, many pupils have been disheartened by the great numbers of studies in the collection, devoted not only to the repetition of similar passages, but to styles of technique and embellishments as well. Another fault is that it includes some pieces not in accord with the expectations of modern taste (16, p. ii).

Cramer

Johann Baptist Cramer, 1771 to 1858, was a famous German pianist and pedagogue who was brought to London as an infant and regarded it as his home. Cramer's first musical education was received from his father, then from Clementi for two years from 1779 to 1781. In the year 1788 Cramer began traveling as a concert pianist and enjoyed a world-wide reputation. During

the later years of life, considerable time was spent teaching in Munich and Paris, finally returning to London (21, p. 330).

The playing of Johann Baptist Cramer was distinguished by an astonishingly even cultivation of the two hands, which enabled him, while playing legato, to give an entirely distinct character to florid inner parts, and thus attain a remarkable perfection of execution. Cramer was noted among the artists of that day for an expressive adagio touch and for facility in playing at sight (4, Vol. I, p. 632).

The greatest and most representative work of Cramer is the piano method Grosse Praktische Pianoforte Schule published in 1815. This work was in five parts, the last of which Eighty-Four Studies, Opus Fifty, was later revised and published as Opus Eighty-One (21, p. 330). The collection, Eighty-Four Studies, is of classical value for its intimate combination of significant musical ideas, with very instructive mechanical passages. The truth is that Cramer stops considerably short of Clementi regarding the technical treatment of the pianoforte. Cramer's most valuable studies are technically easier than those found in Clementi's Gradus ad Parnassum. Though not of the first authority, Cramer's pedagogic collections have maintained their value for more than a century, and this pedagogue must be considered as one of the fathers of the school of pianoforte playing and worthy of consultation at all times (4, Vol. I, p. 633).

Czerny

Karl Czerny, 1791 to 1857, was an excellent pianoforte teacher and a prolific composer. At the early age of ten, the boy could play by heart the principal compositions of the best masters. Czerny profited much from the acquaintance with Muzio Clementi, whose method of teaching he studied (4, Vol. I, p. 650). At the early age of fifteen, Czerny was an eminent teacher and was soon besieged by pupils to whom instructions were communicated (14, p. 473). Only those pupils who showed special talent were taken. One of Czerny's first pupils was Beethoven's nephew and among other celebrated pupils was Franz Liszt (21, p. 340). As an enthusiastic teacher, Czerny taught from ten to twelve hours a day (8, p. i) and from 1816 to 1823 musical performances were given by his best pupils at his parents' home every Sunday (4, Vol. I, p. 650). Instead of making a name as a virtuoso, Czerny preferred to teach (24, p. 174). Had this great artist been devoted solely to concert work, the world would have listed him as one of the first of virtuosos (8, p. i).

Music was to Czerny "his only joy, his only occupation, his daily duty, and his highest ideal" (8, p. i). In 1810, Czerny began to publish studies for the benefit of his students. This pedagogue had the special gift of leading pupils step by step. Generations of students all over the world are familiar with the Czerny studies, Opus 299 and Opus 740 (21, p. 340). Opus 740 contains fifty studies in six volumes.

Czerny insisted on a "well-exercised touch and correct execution in moderate time. He taught, in his usual systematic manner, artistic technique, and correctness of rendering" (8, p. i). Brahms declared, "we cannot today estimate Czerny's value too highly" (8, p.i).

Liszt

The most famous pupil of Karl Czerny was Franz Liszt, 1811 to 1886, a Hungarian by birth, who really belongs to the school of German romantic composers (17, p. 165). In the words of Hubbard: "No fine-spun theory of pedagogics or heredity can account for the marvelous talent of Franz Liszt, he was one sent from God" (13, p. 189). Liszt, the creator of transcendental style of piano playing, was without question the greatest piano virtuoso of the nineteenth century (21, p. 963). According to Hill, "There are not many composers whose names are familiar as household words but owe some of their popularity and most of their technique to the explorations and discoveries of the champion of modern music, Franz Liszt" (11, p. 113). "In mere technical skill, after everyone else has ended, Liszt had still something to add--he could exhibit it in new forms..." (11, p. 75). Liszt's public career continued for seventy years. "No man of the century gave the science of music such an impulse for good as this man" (13, p. 190).

Liszt's first musical instruction was from his father (21, p. 963). From 1821 to 1823, Liszt studied with Czerny in

Vienna. Czerny took the prodigy at a mere nominal fee, finally refusing to accept any remuneration whatever (10, p. 2). After 1823, Liszt took no more piano lessons. In 1827, Liszt's father died and young Liszt settled in Paris to support his mother and himself. In this same year, Liszt then only sixteen years of age, published a set of twelve studies for the piano. These contained in germ some of the subject matter which he was later on to develop and give to the world as the Douze Études d'Exécution Transcendante (10, p. 5).

Paganini's advent in 1831 inspired Liszt to heretofore unheard-of feats in piano technique and expression (21, p. 393). Liszt's own career proved to be somewhat a parallel to that of Paganini (4, Vol. II, p. 741). "Paganini's performance of the Twenty-Four Caprices for Violin inspired Liszt's wonderful genius to completely revolutionize pianism; and thus a new era in modern piano technics was ushered in" (19, p. i). Liszt began the adaptation of the Paganini Caprices for the piano in 1832 to 1833, but the work was left unfinished for several years being completed in 1838 after his having met success as a virtuoso in Vienna. This adaptation was absolutely true to the spirit of the original. These Etudes had the reputation of being of insurmountable difficulty, and twelve years later Liszt revised them and published a second edition.

The career of Liszt was interrupted for a time by the liaison with the Countess d'Agoult, but in the year 1839, he began a triumphal tour through Europe. Liszt first visited

Weimar in 1841, and remained there for a period of about twelve years (10, p. 14). In 1848, the position of court Kapellmeister at Weimar was granted Liszt with the understanding that the progress of modern musical art was to be furthered by any means at his command. Weimar became a center of attraction for artists of progressive tendency, reinforced by a multitude of Liszt's pupils (21, p. 965). "Liszt was swarmed round and followed by a host of excellent pupils like a comet by its tail" (23, p. 35). It is no wonder that the music-room which the generous artist had thrown open to all was thronged by a number of more or less gifted young people in search of inspiration. No other word so well describes the ideal character of the instruction they were privileged to receive. Liszt held his classes in the afternoon and at this time several of the pupils would play in the presence of the rest (4, Vol. II, p. 744).

From about 1850 onward Liszt appeared as a pianist only at rare intervals. From 1859 to 1870 the virtuoso lived for the most part in Rome. Liszt, in 1875, was made president of the New Hungarian Academy of Music at Budapest. Between Weimar, Budapest, and Rome, the last years of his life were spent always with a throng of pupils and admirers following him from place to place (21, p. 964).

Liszt has rightly been called the "Paganini of the piano" for his fabulous technique. The spectacular accoutrements of his calling were not disdained by Liszt. White gloves were

worn, as was the custom of the day, and taken off with a grand gesture in front of the public. A new conception of harmony and melody that presaged the development of modern music in the twentieth century was introduced by Liszt. It was this over-whelming volume of sound that outraged the music critics of Liszt's day and moved them to denounce Liszt as a purveyor of infernal noise (21, p. 965). Liszt was the father of sonorities that require the cooperation of the two hands and often ingenious figurations requiring the quick interchange of positions and functions of the hands were devised (2, p. 48).

Liszt's technique seemed to embrace every characteristic of his predecessors and in his hands tone was never sacrificed to power, nor was it ever possible to say that the limits of musical beauty were exploited even in the loudest passages. Methods of obtaining great tone were instituted by Liszt; the principle of turning inherent weakness of the hand into beauty was carried further, and passages were made to sound far harder than they actually were. Liszt was quick to grasp the properties of the piano and devised ways for a pianist to play more notes than ever (2, p. 48). Keyboard possibilities were exhausted in many directions and some devices carried to the extreme point. In rapid, ornamental passages in the higher octaves of the piano, the fingers were held almost stiffly, not allowed to move with much independence (4, Vol. II, p. 735).

For the virtuoso pianist, Liszt wrote the Études d'Exécution Transcendante, the Mephisto Waltz, two piano concertos,

and the brilliant Hungarian Rhapsodies (21, p. 965). The twelve études, wonderfully adapted to display the highest development of piano technique, have a yet nobler claim to consideration, inasmuch as they are poetically conceived, imaginative and essentially musical in their structure (10, p. 51). The enormous difficulties which abound in these études naturally prevent them from appealing to any but first-rate executants (10, p. 52).

The pupils of Liszt were magnetized by his genius. These pupils were composed of rare asteroids of the most contrasting backgrounds, temperaments, and preferences, not to mention artistic magnitudes (12, p. 45). Liszt gave no paid lessons. Hervey quotes a pupil of Liszt: "Never was there such a delightful teacher and he is the first sympathetic one I've had. You feel so free with him, and he develops the very spirit of music in you!" (10, p. 145). Liszt's pupils used a far higher seat than generations had used before. As a result, the forearm, instead of being held horizontally, is sloped toward the hand (4, Vol. II, p. 765). According to Corder, "He doesn't tell you anything about the technique; that you must work out for yourself" (7, p. 130). In dealings with his pupils, there was a trace of the actor unwilling to do anything contrary to the noble rule thrust upon him (17, p. 242).

From time to time, he will sit down and himself play where a passage does not suit him, and when he is in good spirits he makes little jests all the time. Liszt is not at all like a master, and cannot be treated as one. He is a monarch, and when he extends his royal scepter you

can sit down and play to him. You lay your notes on the table, so he can see that you want to play, and sit down. He makes a turn up and down the room, looks at the music, and if the piece interests him, he will call upon you. We bring the same piece to him but once, and but once play it through (13, p. 221).

A Study of the Lives and Ambitions of
Leschetizky and Whiteside

Leschetizky

Theodore Leschetizky, 1830 to 1915, was born in Austrian Poland on the Potocka estate where his father was music master to the family of Potocka. The childhood years of the boy were passed seeing life as a delightful thing, full of grace and ease, which might have been quite perfect had there been no music lessons (15, p. 1). Josef Leschetizky, the father, was a musician by natural gifts and inclination, but in order to keep his young son away from music, the father locked the piano and carried the key. The son, however, soon discovered that it was possible to work the hammers from below and make the strings respond. The mother finally persuaded the father to give the boy lessons (20, p. 10). Young Leschetizky loved piano playing, but lessons were extremely severe (15, p. 2). A sensitive, caressing disposition, full of poetic sentiment and natural amiability, and a precocious intelligence resented discipline. Except for the mother's gentle help, the lessons might have ended with Leschetizky hating the instrument altogether. For a year the boy continued to study at home with his father. Later, at the age of eleven, he began to study

with the great Karl Czerny in Vienna, whose school was so famous in those days, and to which many of the great artists such as Liszt belonged (15, p. 3). Leschetizky attained mastery of the piano in an amazingly short time (21, p. 942), and at the age of fourteen, he began to take pupils himself, and seems to have been a prodigy in teaching as well as in playing for his studio was soon quite filled (15, p. 4).

In 1852, Leschetizky went to Russia and while there he was reunited with his boyhood friend, Anton Rubinstein. While Rubinstein went on tour, Leschetizky took his place as the Concert-Master at the Court of the Grand Duchess Helen (15, p. 9). Leschetizky was appointed as musical inspector at Smola, Institution for the Education of the Daughters of the Higher Nobility, in 1858. Duties here were comprised of the examination of all new students of music, a general supervision of the department, and private lessons to such as might be deemed especially gifted (20, p. 40). So many pupils flocked to his studio that it became necessary to have preparatory teachers. In 1862, when the St. Petersburg Conservatoire was opened with Anton Rubinstein as director, Leschetizky transferred his class there where it was possible to devote himself heart and soul to watching and tending the unfolding of any young talent, but not to the education of the masses; and it is well that it was so, for otherwise a specialist would have been lost to the world (15, p. 10). The chief duty of Leschetizky there was to see that each pupil entrusted to

him should develop to the best of his ability. It was entirely incidental whether or not pianism in general benefited by the system of study the pedagogue had built up.

The period around 1870 may be considered the most brilliant of Leschetizky's career. From 1852 to 1878 the famous Leschetizky school of piano playing was developed and pupils came from all over the world to his studio. The now famous pedagogue decided to leave Russia in 1878 and settle permanently in Vienna. Living up to his fine reputation, Leschetizky was almost immediately hard at work again teaching.

Becoming more and more absorbed in his pupils, the ambition to play gradually died out for Leschetizky whose last appearance in public was in Frankfurt in 1887. The pupils of Leschetizky first had to go through the necessary training to develop their hands and to apply them to the best result upon their instruments. Then came the musical part of the work. Paderewski went to Leschetizky and was put on nothing but Czerny for a year (18, p. 36). "Concentrated thought" is the corner stone of Leschetizky's method (15, p. 57). Early lessons with Leschetizky were at once a revelation and an ordeal. Students were expected to make all corrections on the spot; therefore, it was necessary to have nerve, quick observation, retentive memory, and presence of mind (15, p. 60). Leschetizky enjoyed inventing special fingerings or special exercises for unusual cases. It is said that Leschetizky could not endure the strain of attending a concert in which his

pupils participated, but remained at home sending his wife who faithfully reported on every detail of the performance.

Abby Whiteside

Abby Whiteside was born August 27, 1881, in Vermillion, South Dakota, and died December 10, 1956, at Menlo Park, California. Whiteside was graduated from the University of South Dakota in 1900, receiving top honors there in the Music Department. Her teacher was Professor F. Brueschweiler. In 1905, Whiteside was on the faculty of the University of Oregon. During 1908 and 1909 she studied with Rudolph Ganz in Germany, then returned to teach in her studio in Portland, Oregon. The year 1922 brought Whiteside to New York for a season's visit. In 1923 her studio was closed in Portland and one was opened in New York. There Whiteside taught until her death in 1956.

The summers of Abby Whiteside between 1922 to 1956 were always filled with teaching in such places as Portland, Los Angeles, Chicago, and the San Francisco Bay region. In 1929 Whiteside taught two classes in piano in the Music Education School of New York University. She also taught advanced students from New York University, and Teachers College, Columbia University, accredited her teaching for advanced work.

Whiteside's first book, The Pianist's Mechanism, was published in 1929 by G. Schirmer, but is now out of print and not available. When a student of hers, Joseph Prostackoff, went to her in 1931, Whiteside advised him not to buy the book because it was out of date. A second book, Indispensables of Piano Playing, was published in 1955 by Coleman-Ross Company (1).

Conclusion

It is necessary to understand that piano technique as it is known today has gradually evolved from the techniques employed in playing the clavichord and harpsichord. The clavichord, a very subtle speaking instrument, required only a delicate touch to apply the gentle pressure necessary for technical mastery. Because the strings of the harpsichord were plucked, a crisper touch was necessary for playing this instrument. This quicker, more definite touch allowed the notes to be taken up sharply; thus, putting the quill in position to pluck the string again. With the advent of the piano, which was of a much heavier structure, possibilities for expanding technical feats were greatly multiplied because of the greater tension of the strings.

The possibilities of the piano were quickly realized by such musicians as Clementi, Cramer, Czerny, and Liszt, who in chronological succession, composed technical exercises exclusively for the piano. Each of these pedagogues initiated his own school of piano technique.

Around the turn of the nineteenth century, much emphasis was being placed on piano technique including minute details given for preparing the various exercises. Theodore Leschetizky gained fame and recognition for himself as a result of his famous method of piano technique.

Changes in technical ideas came from various pedagogues later in the century. Especially unique were the ideas of

Abby Whiteside who advanced her ideas across America. Both Leschetizky and Whiteside offer specific methods and it is believed that a thorough study of these methods in Chapter III will prove most profitable to pianists, amateur or advanced, and to piano teachers.

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CHAPTER III

THE LESCHETIZKY AND WHITESIDE

METHODS OF PIANO TECHNIQUE

COMPARED

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the physical structure of the piano was so much improved that it had developed into a responsive medium worthy of serious study. Until this time, quantity of notes, not quality, was the chief concern; fluency, not beauty of tone, the aim of a good player (1, p. 30). In eighty years both players and instruments had developed beyond recognition and virtuosity had become an art in itself (1, p. 31).

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the Leschetizky method had gained in popularity. His method conveyed to most people the idea of a technical system by which pianists could be taught to play the piano well. His system emphasized rhythm, clearness, and brilliance in staccato passages (1, p. 41).

Approximately fifty years later a different approach to solving technical problems was advanced in America by Whiteside. Her system was basically founded upon a rhythmical approach for acquiring technical skill (4, p. 4). Various facets of the Leschetizky and Whiteside methods will be compared in this chapter.

Rhythm

The first phase of piano technique to be compared is rhythm.

Leschetizky

According to Leschetizky, an indispensable attribute of good piano playing is rhythm, and the most successful means for combating rhythmical defects is counting aloud (3, p. 73). In order to prevent precipitation in reaching the first beat of the following measure, one can successfully counteract the disturbance in time by holding back at the last part of a bar. If this is exercised with deliberation, one will gradually develop the solidity necessary to the time sense (3, p. 73). The help of the metronome is also of value. An accelerando or ritenuto must be brought back to time in such an artistic manner that neither is conspicuous. Pauses, like notes, demand equal care and consideration, being given their full value. Leschetizky contended that the various dance rhythms, such as the waltz, polonaise, mazurka, gavotte, and minuet, must also be considered. Their peculiarities should be investigated thoroughly, including the social characteristics of people with which they are associated and the periods of time to which the different musical forms belong.

Whiteside

As declared by Whiteside, "rhythm deserves being dealt with as a factor which creates magic, for it can dissolve all

technical problems until they lose their identity in its current" (4, p. 8). Rhythm is the most potent of all the forces which influence listening habits. It channels the emotional surge which the music creates if the piano is beautifully played, and is the core of the entire playing mechanism (4, p. 7).

Because various parts of the playing mechanism are referred to quite frequently, it is necessary at this point to define the components of the playing mechanism. All action involves bones and muscles, the bony structure making the action of the muscles effective (4, p. 23). The torso functions as a part of the fundamental rhythm and as a fulcrum for the full arm (4, p. 23). The forearm acting as a hinge joint at the elbow, possesses two bones which twist and untwist to produce rotary action. The hand operates through the complicated wrist joint and can move with limitations in all directions (4, p. 24). The fingers move through three joints. The pianist is concerned with the action at the third joint, the center of the radius of activity for the finger. At its third joint the thumb, master mechanic of the hand, moves in all directions with easy freedom (4, p. 24). "Nothing less than the entire body can furnish the control for a real rhythm, and only a basic rhythm can coordinate the body as a whole" (4, p. 6).

The most important problem in mastering the piano is making a rhythm the primary factor. Whiteside states: "Put a rhythm in your body and keep it going" (4, p. 14). If it be

understood that the activity of the top arm, augmented by the activity against the chair seat, creates the swaying, the follow-through, the feeling of rhythm in the body, then this previous statement would neither be vague nor complicated. The difficulty in realizing the magic of this rhythm is created by the listening habits conditioned by and related to a finger technique (4, p. 16). This difficulty, however, will disappear as the follow-through of a rhythm appears with greater and greater persistence. Without a fundamental rhythm, it is impossible to have expert timing; thus, counting aloud is virtually useless.

An integral factor in a rhythm is that it is going forward: its essence is destination (4, p. 127). One must lose any inhibitions and feel the music with every fibre of his being and the top arm plus its fulcrum will pick up the emotional response to the music. Mathematics is no solution to any complication in meter. It simply must be heard and felt (4, p. 131). "Technical problems will succumb when a simple rhythmic pattern is superimposed upon them--problems that hours of routine drill cannot dislodge" (4, p. 136). "If the music really glows there are no unsolved technical difficulties" (4, p. 141). Here is a simple review of the attributes of a rhythm:

1. A basic rhythm stems from top arm plus its fulcrum.
2. It has its continuity in action in fulcrums--top arm and torso.
3. The top arm is the dominating lever in the playing mechanism for gauging distance and for the application of power to the key.
4. A rhythm proceeds by important tones--never note-wise.

5. A rhythm means a follow-through in the playing mechanism (4, p. 136).

It is perfectly possible to transfer the sensation of rhythm from teacher to pupil. The success in this kind of teaching hinges on the skill of the teacher in manipulating this transfer of sensation, and the rightness of his own body in using a rhythm (4, p. 139).

Whiteside uses the term "pulsing" as one of the means of practicing a going rhythm. This is an outlining or a means of approaching a composition that intensifies the musically important tones. It is a feeling of the music. Passing tones and modifiers are left out, thus highlighting the tones left in. Pulsing must instinctively go to the important tones and must involve the emotional reaction of the music (4, p. 146). Exploring with a rhythm is an endless delight and there is no final cadence to the theme of learning with a rhythm (4, p. 147).

A Comparison

The basic ideas of Leschetizky and Whiteside concerning rhythm seem to be completely opposite.

Leschetizky's formula for achieving good rhythm is actually a mathematical one which stresses the necessity of counting aloud. Leschetizky believed that counting aloud was the primary solution to any rhythmical problem, suggesting the proper use of the metronome as a secondary or additional solution. Not only are notes considered important in the Leschetizky method, but

pauses receive equal consideration. In addition, importance is placed on the peculiarities of the various dance rhythms.

On the other hand, as a clear contrast to this mathematical idea of rhythm, stands Whiteside who emphatically believes there is nothing to the idea of mathematics as a solution to any complication in meter. This pedagogue believes rhythm should be dealt with as a magical factor; thus, counting aloud is of little value. Exploration of the idea of simply putting a rhythm in the body and keeping it going supposedly solves all problems and brings the student only delightful experiences.

As an aid to practicing a going rhythm, Whiteside advocates outlining a composition so as to intensify the musically important tones. The pianist must lose all inhibitions because rhythm must first be felt with the entire body and can then go forward.

Scales, Arpeggios, and Octaves

Next to be considered as a part of piano technique are scales, arpeggios, and octaves.

Leschetizky

In accordance with the Leschetizky method, one of the principle difficulties in scale-playing is the correct passing under of the thumb (3, p. 15). "To acquire the smoothness necessary for velocity in scale-playing, one must begin by drilling the second and fourth fingers, which otherwise would

be unequal in strength to the other" (3, p. 23). Leschetizky recommends mastering in slow time the chromatic scale first. The preparing of the fingers is very important. By prepared is meant the placing of the fingers in contact with their keys ready for their audible sounding, and not depressed (3, p. 12). (See Fig. 1).

In these preparatory exercises for scale-playing, the knuckles must be held high, fingers well curved, the first and second joints inflexible, the wrist light and the arm in a horizontal position (3, p. 16).

In the preliminary study for the descending scale, the fingers must remain as close as possible to the keys during the passing over motion. (See Fig. 2). "As a matter of course, everything is to be practiced in all keys, styles of touch and degrees of strength as well as in slow time" (3, p. 23). When these scales are played three or four octaves, one should keep time by counting, and not by vigorous accentuation (3, p. 33).

Concerning the chromatic scale, the position of the hand and arm is the same as for the diatonic scale: the wrist slightly raised; the knuckles held particularly high (3, p. 34). The chromatic scale must be practiced like the diatonic scale with both hands in octaves, thirds, tenths, sixths, parallel and contrary motion, and in all degrees of strength, rapidity, and variations of time (3, p. 37).

In scale playing the fingers are as curved on the black keys as on the white. This is different in arpeggio playing

Right HAND

Left HAND

Right HAND

Left HAND

Fig. 1--Preparatory exercises for ascending diatonic scale-playing.



Fig. 2--Preliminary studies for the descending scale

where the fingers must be decidedly flatter when striking the black keys to further insure safety against slipping (3, p.33). As in the scale, passing the thumb under the hand constitutes the main difficulty in arpeggio playing (3, p. 49). The following is an example of a suggested exercise:



Fig. 3--Exercises for passing the thumb under the hand in arpeggio playing.

The following exercise forms the foundation of arpeggio playing (See Fig. 4). The third finger and the thumb passed



Fig. 4--Exercises for connecting the arpeggio parts

under are prepared on G and C, the third finger strikes and remains upon its key until the thumb strikes C; simultaneously with this the third finger releases G, and with a rapid turn of the hand to the right, accompanied by a forward movement of the arm and the shifting of the thumb upon its key, the second and third fingers are prepared upon the keys E and G (3, p. 50). In passing over, the fingers must keep as close as possible to the keys. "It is useful to extend the arpeggio practice through three octaves" (3, p. 51). Both ascending and descending arpeggios are to be practiced in all keys, styles of touch, and degrees of strength, slowly at first (3, p. 54).

According to Leschetizky, to impress the feel of an octave stretch and the form it necessitates in the hand is

the most important point in octave playing (3, p. 68). With the hand stretched as wide as possible, the thumb and fifth finger should be prepared on the extreme outer edges of the keys and the middle knuckles raised as high as possible. The unemployed fingers should be lifted high above the keyboard to avoid having any other note sound.

In order to do octave exercises, the octave must be struck distinctly with the hand raised and bent back as far as possible from the wrist. Then, it will be necessary to drop the wrist quickly on the keyboard and keep it there for a moment's rest (3, p. 68).

In quick soft passages, octaves should be played from the wrist. On the other hand, quick and loud octave passages should be played with a high wrist with the slightest possible raising of the hand from the keys by a close gliding over them (3, p. 69).

Either the fourth or fifth fingers may be used on the black keys in octave playing (3, p. 71) depending on the size of the hand. Single fingers may be strengthened in the following manner: raise the finger, the thumb stationary, so high that it at last stands with the whole hand perpendicular above the thumb while counting slowly from one to four. Then drop it rapidly and strongly back on the key without bending it at the joints (3, p. 71). Broken octaves should be played with a slight motion of the arm instead of entirely with the fingers. After doing the exercises prescribed, Leschetizky recommends Kullak's School of Octave Playing.

Whiteside

Whiteside declares that scales should never be used as the basis for developing a technique because they can prevent beautiful playing if they are practiced too soon (4, p. 123). Her reasoning is obvious, for all virtuosity and brilliance demand a blended, synchronized use of the total equipment of the performer and emphasis on the use of the scales would not develop a blended action of all the levers needed for fluent playing. Although scales practiced with a finger technique establish habits opposed to habits fostering virtuosity and brilliance, scales which use an established blended activity can refine and increase the beauty of the performer's output. A scale produced by the follow-through action of the top arm, with all other levers assisting can produce gratifying results in contrast to a notewise procedure. The scale should be the result of an established coordination. "Let the other forms establish the necessary blended activity for playing. Then perfect the scale" (4, p. 124).

There is no difference in the production of scales and arpeggios in regard to the need of a blended activity. Realistic listening can make one aware that the key to playing beautiful arpeggios is a power applied evenly to successive keys; thus, having no bumps in dynamics preventing a flow of smoothly graded tones. The problems involved are how to find the key and how to produce tones smoothly graded in intensity (4, p. 105). One must first adjust to the shortness of the

thumb and the difference in the distance from the body to the black and white keys. The top arm and the forearm should make this adjustment because the top arm moves in and out, and the forearm, with the hand, has an exaggerated alternating action. Whiteside defies tradition, saying that training levers for independent actions does not bring cooperative action (4, p. 107). Actually in accordance with nature, the ear asks for a desired result and the body performs to achieve it. In response to the aural image, the initiative of the top arm automatically brings the forearm, hand, and fingers into their functioning position.

The manner in which the keys are contacted poses the problem to be solved. The control of horizontal progression is related to the placement of the hand as it is passed, but the important point is that there be a consistent progression even though the rate of speed varies (4, p. 110). The control must start at the center of the radius of activity for playing to have a timed action by all the levers involved.

The factors for real concern in arpeggio playing are:

1. That the hand is thrown into position--the action which takes place at the wrist in the passing operation is the result of an action farther back in the arm. It is not a locally controlled action.
2. That while the hand is being thrown into a new position, the top arm is on its way to finding the key and is maintaining the control of the level at which tone is produced (4, p. 111).

Clarification of these two actions removes any real resistance to easy arpeggios.

The chord formation of the arpeggio is "taken in the palm" in the same manner as is the span of the octave. Since arpeggios are simply a series of opened chords, the feeling of the chord in the palm should not be relaxed between successive formations. Faulty manipulation of distance and faulty control of direction can completely balk arpeggios. If the tones were played as actual chords there would be no turning back (4, p. 114). The top arm activates the tones and the fingers transmit this action to the keys. In order to maintain this relationship, one cannot believe in a key-connection legato. This relationship can be achieved when the hand is thrown, propelled, into position by the top arm, plus forearm and rotary; thus, the solution to easy, fluent, brilliant arpeggios. The power of the top arm is available to all the fingers when the hand is passed as a unit.

Whiteside thus poses the problems in arpeggio playing:

1. To find the key without a positive control of reaching for it with the fingers; control of distance is at the center, not at the periphery of the playing mechanism.
2. To achieve articulation on the way to a rhythmic goal: the antithesis of a note-wise procedure (4, p. 116).

In conclusion, the following are salient points to remember:

1. The top arm produces the only continuous action.
2. Movements of articulation are not legato.
3. The smoothness in dynamics in passing is dependent upon this continuity of action in the top arm, and always it is a basic rhythm which provides the element necessary for a complete synchronization of all the factors involved (4, p. 122).

Failure to play fluent octaves is caused by a faulty manipulation of distance and power. "The causes for lack of results with octaves will almost surely lie in some combination of the following habits: a faulty manner of holding the span, a reaching for key position with fingers and hand, a localizing of the power for tone with action at the wrist, a bearing down in the forearm" (4, p. 98). Using the top arm and forearm for initiating the controls for distance and power will solve the problem of fluent octave playing. The span must be taken in the palm and not at the tips of the fingers.

When the hand takes over and prepares for position, there is an awareness that the playing feels fast and difficult. Thus, any solution which makes vivid the fact that all the activity between tones should be concerned with the process of finding the key position with the top arm is most valuable (4, p. 101).

In order to produce octaves which have velocity and brilliance, there is a need for powerful muscles. These powerful muscles control action in the top arm and forearm and must instigate the controls which involve the less powerful muscles of the hands and fingers.

A Comparison

In conclusion to this section on scales, arpeggios, and octaves, both Leschetizky and Whiteside agree that a principal difficulty in scale and arpeggio playing is the proper use of the thumb; however, both handle the problem differently.

Leschetizky gives various exercises to improve the passing under of the thumb, beginning first with the mastery of the chromatic scale in slow time. The importance of preparing the fingers or placing the fingers in contact with their keys ready for their audible sounding, not depressed, is stressed. The scales should be practiced in all keys, styles of touch, degrees of strength, with the fingers close to the keys and in slow time. Counting aloud is regarded as the best way to keep time.

Leschetizky contends that when playing arpeggios, the fingers should be flatter to insure safety against slipping, but still remain close to the keys. The same exercises given to improve scale-playing will also prove profitable in arpeggio playing.

Although Whiteside believes that the scale should be the result of an established coordination and should not be used as the basis for developing a technique, she does mention the problem of the thumb. It is necessary to adjust to the shortness of the thumb and the difference in the distance from the body to the black and white keys. The top arm and forearm should be able to make this adjustment.

According to Whiteside, there is no difference in the production of scales and arpeggios. Actually the ear is the key to good arpeggio playing because it asks for a desired result and the body performs to achieve it. The real problem to be solved is the manner in which the keys are contacted.

Control must start at the center of the radius of activity for playing in order to have a timed action by all the levers involved. Two factors for concern are: the action which takes place at the wrist in the passing operation when the hand is thrown into position is not a locally controlled action, but is the result of an action farther back in the arm. The top arm is on its way to finding the key and is maintaining the control of the level at which tone is produced while the hand is being thrown into a new position. Clarification of these actions will break down any resistance to easy arpeggio playing.

In octave playing, the feel of an octave stretch and the form it necessitates in the hand is the most important point of the Leschetizky method. Believing that the fingers are the most important factor in octave playing, except in soft passages, Leschetizky recommends exercises to strengthen individual fingers. In soft passages, octaves are played from the wrist. With the hand raised and bent back as far as possible from the wrist, the octave must be struck distinctly. Then the wrist should be dropped quickly on the keyboard for a short rest. Mention is made of playing broken octaves with a slight motion of the arm.

Whiteside relies completely upon the use of the top arm and forearm rather than the fingers to produce fluent octaves. A faulty manipulation of distance and power is the cause of failure to play fluent octaves. Teaching for key position

with fingers and the hand is a major cause for lack of results with octaves. The top arm must be in active control of horizontal distance.

Production of Tone

The next point under consideration is the production of tone.

Leschetizky

The subject of tone production is best classified under the following headings according to Leschetizky: legato, non-legato, finger staccato, staccato from the wrist, and portamento.* Leschetizky speaks of preparing the fingers which has previously been explained in this report. As an example: "the thumb strikes C; the soundless second pressure following. Then the second finger strikes while the third is quickly prepared on E, the thumb at the same time leaving its key, so that the continued vibration of its note may be avoided. While the third finger is striking, the preparing of the fourth finger upon F and the simultaneous raising of the second finger takes place. Proceed similarly with the fourth finger. On the fifth striking G, the fourth finger is again prepared on F, ready for playing the exercise back to C"(3, p. 12).

*The use of the term "portamento" to describe a manner of performance halfway between legato and staccato is misleading and should be avoided. The real meaning of portamento is a special manner of singing, with the voice gliding from one tone to the next. Throughout this report, the word "portato" will be substituted for portamento.

"Completed legato" means the pressing down of a key by the finger already placed in contact with it, without its having been previously raised above the note, soundless repetition of the pressure, and the raising of the finger only when the next one in order of playing has begun striking in the same manner. All the fingers are raised fairly high except the thumb in a legato five-finger exercise in slow tempo. The thumb remains close to the key in order to steady the hand.

The "non-legato" differs in effect from the legato through the unprepared striking of the fingers. The finger drops quickly from its height on to the key and strikes it.

In "finger staccato" the finger, dropping from its raised position and instantly striking the key, must be raised from the latter before the next note is struck, while the hand as well as the wrist remains perfectly still (3, p. 13). In "wrist staccato" the finger stands prepared. After giving a quick stroke down the whole hand is jerked upward from the wrist, dropping quickly back again. Another type of wrist staccato is when a single finger drops as a unit with the raised hand on to the key. It is not prepared and after striking it, is jerked up from the wrist. Tied staccato notes, portato, should be practiced in the following manner: the prepared finger strikes the key while the wrist drops slowly, the finger leaving the note with a gentle raising of the wrist.

Whiteside

Whiteside concludes that the matter of touch shows how influenced we are by an emotional reaction to a situation. "For the pianist, there is no such thing as touch influencing the quality of tone because he is not in contact with the strings" (4, p. 52). The down action of the key produces tone.

The terms legato and staccato have caused difficulty rather than assistance in the pianist's phrase modeling. The term legato has been extended to include a controlled fluctuation of dynamics with the holding process. The result of the holding process is merely a pressure against the keybed which in no way influences the held tone. The pianist's legato needs to be concerned with horizontal progression. In so doing one can intensify the comprehensive rhythm and the modeling with dynamics will be so right for progression that a feeling of legato is produced even when there is no key connection (4, p. 21).

Staccato assumes a different role for the pianist also because it is far less dramatic when it does not interrupt a tone held with emotional intensity. In many cases, a staccato mark indicates emphasis and not detachment for the pianist. Because the importance of legato and staccato lies in their relation to emotional expression, there is an intensification of the long-line rhythm which deals with the phrases as a whole.

Both legato and staccato have specific pitfalls. Legato in slow practice can breed sluggishness. When slow practice is needed, staccato uses a precise delivery of power and thus furthers ultimate speed. A staccato which breeds an action for flying away from the keyboard develops a habit which opposes top speed and rhythmic continuity. "The shortest possible application of power is the formula for staccato--not a flying off the keyboard" (4, p. 22).

Various kinds of movements are not necessary for playing staccato because the tone is staccato if the key is not held down. "This need not involve any lifting away from the keyboard of the hand, forearm, or full arm--a release at the finger joint will turn the trick" (4, p. 52).

A Comparison

In conclusion, Leschetizky classifies touch under the headings of legato, non-legato, finger staccato, staccato from the wrist, and portato, while Whiteside says that such terms have caused difficulty rather than giving assistance in the pianist's phrase modeling. Leschetizky speaks many times of a completed legato which means the pressing down of a key by the finger already placed in contact with it, without its having been previously raised above the note, soundless repetition of the pressure, and the raising of the finger only when the next one in order of playing has begun striking in the same manner.

Whiteside contends that both legato and staccato have specific pitfalls. Legato in slow practice can breed sluggishness and staccato which breeds an action for flying away from the keyboard develops a habit opposing top speed and rhythmic continuity. Whiteside also reasons that the matter of touch shows how influenced we are by an emotional reaction to a situation because there is no such thing as touch influencing the quality of tone since the pianist is not in contact with the strings.

The Use of the Pedal

The use of the pedal, also considered a part of piano technique, is the final point discussed.

Leschetizky

Leschetizky's motto for studying the pedal is "Rather too little than too much" (3, p. 74). The too frequent and continuous use of the pedal undermines clearness by blurring the harmony. A discriminating use of the pedal demands a fine ear and knowledge of harmony. The pedal is advantageous in swelling a crescendo, in defining the movement of various melodies, and connecting notes which cannot be connected by the fingers.

Because of the construction of the piano, treble passages require more pedal than do those in the lower octaves. At times the pedal is applied at the same moment with the touch of the fingers, sometimes afterward (3, p. 76). For example, when a harmony is introduced the pedal is pressed simultaneously

with the first note and in a sequence of harmonies the foot is raised with the striking of a harmony, coming down directly afterward, while the harmony is still in force. Although a long-sounding bass note makes a long-held pedal, a quick-changing bass only allows a slight use of the pedal or none at all. To prevent an empty sound in passages requiring a wide stretch, it is important to hold down the bass notes with the pedals before removing the fingers.

Melody and tempo govern the use of the pedal in addition to changing harmonies. A sensitive player will follow closely and naturally the general phrasing and feel how this influences his pedaling. To help achieve this, it is wise for the player to practice in perfect quiet, making long pauses between the passages where pedal is used, letting the sound during this time repeat itself in his mind without looking at the music or playing on the instrument (3, p. 78).

Whiteside

Whiteside does not believe a lengthy discussion on pedaling to be profitable nor necessary. A few main issues are given to be kept in mind. The use of the damper pedal must never become an outlet for rhythmic expression letting the movements of the foot, in relation to pedal, become a channel for feeling the meter (4, p. 63). The damper pedal must never blur the etched outline of musical progression.

The soft pedal is of little value for merely playing softly, but should be used more as a violinist uses a mute. It is

most effective in producing a subdued passage then followed by a sparkling passage when it is released. The sustaining pedal is usually indicated by the composer and is used most effectively in holding musical organ points.

A Comparison

The ideas of Leschetizky and Whiteside on pedaling are similar. They both agree on the idea that too little pedal is better than too much.

According to Leschetizky, the ear is the key to good pedaling. A discriminating ear can hear which passages need more pedal than others such as when the harmony changes or when phrasing demands sensitive pedaling. Whiteside's main point is that the damper pedal must never blur the etched outline of musical progression; thus, agreeing with Leschetizky that a keen ear is necessary.

Leschetizky mentions only the use of the damper pedal. Whiteside does speak of the soft pedal and the sustaining pedal. She believes that the soft pedal should be used more as a violinist uses a mute and that the sustaining pedal is used most effectively in holding musical organ points.

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CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to compare the identifying features of the Theodore Leschetizky and Abby Whiteside methods of piano technique. For clarification, the problem was subdivided so that the features of each method were first identified according to rhythm, scales, arpeggios, octaves, the production of tone, and the use of the pedal. The similarities or differences found between the two methods were stated.

The basic hypothesis of the study was that there should be a systematic comparison of the piano technique methods advanced by two foremost pedagogues. It was assumed that the two most prevalent methods currently in use are those of Leschetizky and Whiteside.

The study was needed because it was felt that many pianists are unfamiliar with specific methods of piano technique. It is hoped that the findings presented will serve as an aid to acquaint both teachers and students with ideas on piano technique that have been put into writing.

Concerning Historical Background

The historical background for the study was presented in the second chapter. The history of the piano was traced from its ancestors, the clavichord and harpsichord, to the present, Virdung's Musica Getutscht, published in 1511, contained the first clear description of the so-called clavichord. The Musica Getutscht also describes a harpsichord with gut strings, called a lautenclavicymbel, which was in existence as early as 1511. Construction of these instruments was compared with that of the piano. This ancestry was given because technical mastery necessary for playing the piano today has gradually evolved from skills acquired in playing the earlier instruments.

A description of the major contributions, including compositions and teaching ideas, of early piano pedagogues was also given as historical material. The discussion began with Muzio Clementi, 1752 to 1832, who may be regarded as the first to give the pianoforte proper treatment, as distinguished from the harpsichord. Clementi was also the founder of a school whose principles are still attested today. He started a system of strengthening the weak fingers by holding down some of the fingers while playing repeated notes with the others and also proposed that the upper part of the hand, from the knuckles to the wrist, should present such a surface that a piece of money might be placed there to prove that the fingers alone are engaged in execution.

Clementi's last work, Gradus ad Parnassum, is considered the foundation of modern piano technique. The important points emphasized in this work were: attaining complete equality of tone with a combination of velocity and power, and giving importance to the melody as distinguished from the accompaniment. Attainment of perfect evenness in all fingers was also stressed.

The next pianist and teacher considered was Johann Baptist Cramer, 1771 to 1858. Noted among the artists of that day for an expressive adagio touch and for facility in playing at sight, Cramer was also distinguished by an astonishingly even cultivation of the two hands. The greatest and most representative work of Cramer was his Eighty-Four Studies, Opus Eight-One. This collection is of classical value because of its intimate combination of significant musical ideas, with very instructive mechanical passages.

A student of Clementi, Karl Czerny, 1791 to 1857, was also an eminent teacher. Although Czerny could have very well been a virtuoso, he preferred to devote his time to teaching. Studies were published by Czerny for the benefit of his students. Generations of students all over the world have become familiar with the Czerny studies, Opus 299 and Opus 740.

Franz Liszt, 1811 to 1886, was the most famous pupil of Karl Czerny. Liszt, the greatest piano virtuoso of the nineteenth century, was the creator of transcendental style of

piano playing. The great violinist, Paganini, had a decisive influence upon Liszt. His performance of the Twenty-Four Caprices for Violin inspired Liszt to completely revolutionize pianism; thus, ushering in a new era in modern piano techniques. A new conception of harmony and melody that presaged the development of modern music in the twentieth century was introduced by Liszt. Keyboard possibilities were exhausted in many directions as Liszt quickly grasped the properties of the piano and devised ways for a pianist to play more notes than ever. Playing the role of both actor and teacher, giving no paid lessons, Liszt was surrounded by students in search of inspiration as well as instruction. Among the many Liszt compositions left to posterity are the Études d'Execution Transcendante, the Mephisto Waltz, and the brilliant Hungarian Rhapsodies.

Biographical studies of the lives of Leschetizky and Whiteside were included. Biographical information about the pedagogues made the study of their methods more interesting.

Leschetizky was of a sensitive, caressing disposition, full of poetic sentiment and natural amiability. He attained

mastery of the piano in an amazingly short time, and at the age of fourteen began to take pupils himself. Leschetizky proved to be a prodigy in teaching as well as in playing.

Although he traveled a great deal, Leschetizky taught wherever he was. It was his ambition to see that each pupil entrusted to him should develop to the best of his ability and it was entirely incidental whether or not pianism in general benefited. From 1852 to 1878 the famous Leschetizky school of piano playing was developed. Pupils of Leschetizky had to go through the necessary training to develop their hands and to apply them to the best result upon their instruments before the musical part of the work was introduced. "Concentrated thought" was the corner stone of Leschetizky's method and students were expected to make all corrections on the spot.

Abby Whiteside, 1881 to 1956, was an American and advanced her ideas here in this country. After graduation from the University of South Dakota in 1900 where she received top honors, Whiteside joined the faculty of the University of Oregon in 1905. From 1909 to 1923 Whiteside had a piano studio in Portland, Oregon. In 1923 her studio was closed there and

one was opened in New York where she taught until her death in 1956. Her book, Indispensables of Piano Playing, is a presentation of the unique Whiteside methods of piano technique.

Comparison of Methods

The third chapter of the report was a presentation and comparison of the Leschetizky and Whiteside methods. Occasionally their ideas were similar, but for the most part their technical approaches were different.

The basic ideas of Leschetizky and Whiteside concerning rhythm seem to be completely opposite. Leschetizky believed that counting aloud was the primary solution to any rhythmical problem while Whiteside emphatically objected. She contended that there was nothing to the idea of mathematics as a solution to any complication in meter, but rather believed that rhythm should be dealt with as a magical factor. Her suggestion was for the pianist to "put a rhythm in his body and keep it going."

Regarding scales, arpeggios, and octaves, Leschetizky and Whiteside agreed that the proper use of the thumb is a

principle difficulty in scale and arpeggio playing. Each gave his own solution to the problem.

Leschetizky gave various exercises to improve the passing under of the thumb in both scales and arpeggios, beginning first with the mastery of the chromatic scale in slow time. Although Whiteside thought that scales should not be used as the basis for developing a technique, she did agree that it was necessary to adjust to the shortness of the thumb and the difference in the distance from the body to the black and white keys. She believed there was no difference in the production of scales and arpeggios and that the top arm and forearm should be able to make the necessary adjustment in the shortness of the thumb.

Leschetizky and Whiteside disagreed concerning the proper execution of octaves. Leschetizky believed that the fingers are the most important factor in octave playing, except in soft passages, and stressed the feel of the octave stretch in the hand. Whiteside relied completely upon the use of the top arm and forearm rather than the fingers to produce fluent octaves.

The ideas of Leschetizky and Whiteside differed in connection with the production of tone. Leschetizky classified touch under the following headings: legato, non-legato, finger staccato, staccato from the wrist, and portato. The proper attainment of these touches was discussed at great length. Whiteside believed that there is no such thing as touch influencing the quality of tone and accordingly that both legato and staccato have pitfalls.

Agreement was reached on proper pedaling. Both Leschetizky and Whiteside agreed on the idea that too little pedal is better than too much and that a discriminating ear is the key to good pedaling. While Leschetizky mentioned only the use of the damper pedal, Whiteside said that the soft pedal should be used as a mute and that the sustaining pedal is used most effectively in holding musical organ points.

Recommendations

The subject of piano technique is evidently very controversial. Even when comparing only two methods, much disagreement is found. The fact that the two methods under discussion were devised approximately fifty years apart is perhaps one reason for such disagreement.

Musical style is continually undergoing change as techniques of teaching and performing are invariably changing. Although certain compositions are standard and were taught by both Leschetizky and Whiteside, technical requirements of the

music played by Leschetizky's students were different from those imposed on Whiteside's students some fifty years later. Nearly a decade has passed since Whiteside's death, and it seems evident that music written since that time would involve still further technical demands.

Every researcher in the process of investigation gains insights concerning an extension of his area of interest. In view of this claim, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Teachers, rather than accepting stereotyped ideas concerning piano technique, should search for the answer to problems peculiar to the individual needs of their students.
2. Teachers who have concepts on the subject of piano technique should write or otherwise make known their ideas.
3. Future researchers should investigate methods of piano technique other than those discussed in this report.
4. There seems to be a need for a method of piano technique geared toward preparing students for the performance of contemporary music.

APPENDIX

LETTERS FROM THE
ABBY WHITESIDE
FOUNDATION

ABBY WHITESIDE FOUNDATION, INC.

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315 CENTRAL PARK WEST. APT. 3S
NEW YORK 25. N. Y.

June 30, 1964.

Miss Alice Faye Wilkinson
801 West Hickory Street
Denton, Texas

Dear Miss Wilkinson:

I read your letter with great interest and, of course, will be glad to help you in any way that is possible for me. The question is, just how I can help. This Foundation does not have much material in printed form. Your question is just too broad for me to be able to write briefly. Perhaps additional correspondence will clarify just what you wish to have and what I could do.

Since you heard of the Foundation at all, I assume that you know Abby Whiteside's book, Indispensables of Piano Playing. This is the basic statement of her principles. I am working, together with another former pupil of Miss Whiteside on all the material which she wrote after publication of this book; but this will not be available for some time. There is another book which Abby Whiteside told me in 1931, when I first came to her, was out of date. I am afraid it is out of print as well. Perhaps the library of your University has it. It would be of interest to trace the evolution of her theories. *It is "The Pianist's Mechanism" publ. F. Schirmer.*

I enclosed two small tracts; one is 1938 and very much out of date, the second appeared as an interview in Musical America and might be of interest to you. There is one more source: Roger Boardman wrote a doctoral dissertation comparing various teachers. Perhaps it was a history, I don't know because I haven't seen it. I know it included a study of Abby Whiteside's teaching - at least until about 1950. This hasn't been printed or rather published. It was done while he was also teaching piano at New York University, School of Education at Washington Square, N.Y. I don't know if you could get a copy, I doubt it very much. Perhaps if you come to New York, you could kill the proverbial two birds: see the thesis and come and see me. I am sure that in conversation I could present much material which would be useful.

One more thing. Marion Flagg, who just retired as consultant in music to the Board of Education of Dallas, Texas was a devoted friend and pupil of Abby Whiteside's. She lives in Dallas and if you should care to see her would be most likely glad to see you. I put it in this dubious form because she has not been well but I am almost sure that she would be glad to see you and talk with you. She wrote a book "Musical Learning" Publ. C.C. Birchard and Co., Boston which takes up Abby Whiteside's work.

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BEN WEBER
ARTHUR WHITTEMORE

70

over

I hope this is of some help to you. Please don't hesitate to write if you think there is something else I could do by mail.

Sincerely yours,

Joseph Proskoff

ABBY WHITESIDE FOUNDATION, INC.

315 CENTRAL PARK WEST. APT. 3S
NEW YORK 25. N. Y.

July 16, 1964.

Miss Alice Faye Wilkinson
801 West Hickory Street
Denton, Texas

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- EDNA MAHAN

Dear Miss Wilkinson:

I am sorry this letter is somewhat delayed. I had to wait for some of the enclosed details from another pupil of Abby Whiteside's who has all the records.

Abby Whiteside

Born August 27, 1881 Vermillion, South Dakota
Died December 10, 1956 Menlo Park, California
Graduated from the University of S. Dakota in Vermillion in 1900. Received top honors in the Music Department.

Studied there with Prof. F. Brueschweiler

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- MRS. ARTHUR N. PACK
- BORIS SCHWARZ
- ROGER SESSIONS
- BEN WEBER
- ARTHUR WHITTEMORE

1905 Was on the Faculty of the University of Oregon
1908-9 Studied with Rudolph Ganz in Germany
Returned to teach in her studio in Portland, Oregon
1922 A season's visit in New York
1923 Closed studio in Portland and opened her studio in New York, where she taught until 1956.

Summers - in the years between 1922 - 1956 she taught in Portland, Los Angeles (with Carolyn Alchin), Chicago and the San Francisco Bay region.

1926 Taught two classes in piano in Music Education School of N.Y.U.

1929 Her first book, The Pianists' Mechanism was published by G. Schirmer. (Now out of print) It might interest you to know that when I first came to her in October 1931, she advised that I not buy the book because "it is out of date".(J.P.)

1940 Summer teaching at Mills College in Oakland, Cal.

New York University sent their advanced students to study with her.

Teachers College, Columbia University accredited her teaching for advanced work.

1955 Her second book, Indispensables of Piano Playing was published by Coleman-Ross Co.

This is what I was given by my friend. It is difficult to amplify what you classed as "various points of interest in her teaching career and personal life. I would think that the personal life couldn't easily be expanded into anything really concrete. She had many

by interesting her records

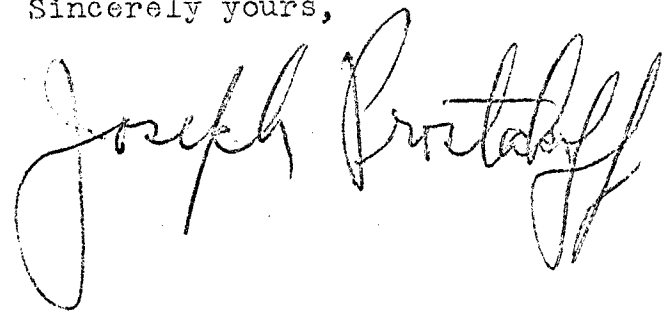
friends - an astonishing number of friends throughout the land. She really had an unusual talent for that. A great number of them were, like her, women who had established a really creative career for themselves. These women were American and of approximately the same age. It is as if there was a harvest of these sturdy and restless persons who were not content with Kitchen, Kids, etc and had gone off on their own, often against great odds.

It is difficult to give you any further detailed story. I knew her for a long time 1931-1956. If you could be more specific as to any other requests, I will try to furnish more details. But let's see what you can do with what I have given you so far.

The really interesting and important story, I would think, would be tracing the story of the evolution of her principles. If you can get a hold of her first book and compare it with the second you would have the most tangible evidence available in print of her search.

My best wishes to you on your project.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joseph Brostoff". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name "Joseph Brostoff".

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