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Organização da paginação: topo da página, entre parêntesis retos.

Notas de rodapé numeradas sequencialmente e no final do texto.

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Chapter V – Teacher And Pupil

As I have already said, hundreds of pupils have passed through my hands, representing every degree of talent, from the musically almost deficient to the genius, with every intermediate stage. Such regrettable wealth of experience makes it very difficult for the teacher to sum up briefly his attitude to his pupils and to teaching in general. There are so many experiences, feelings and thoughts, at times so contradictory (as is life itself) that any blueprint, any formula is but a helpless attempt to indicate the most important. All the same, I promise that at the end of this short chapter something will crystallize.

When a teacher is also a performer, and this, happily, is a very widespread occurrence these days, it is natural that his teaching work should be carried on differently from that of "pure" teachers who never appear on the concert platform.

It frequently occurred to me that, though the teacher- performer offers a number of undoubted advantages compared to one who is a teacher only—and first of all the advantage of being a living example—yet, to a certain extent, one who is purely a teacher appears in a way to be more of a piece. His life and profession seem unwaveringly directed at a single aim merely because, to put it bluntly, he has never had to sit on two chairs. He devotes himself entirely to his pupils, and only to his pupils, demanding nothing for himself. If a performer is overloaded with teaching work he is conscious at every moment of the harm which this excessive workload causes to his favourite occupation, that of performing.

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And even if this awareness does not have a negative effect on his teaching, it inevitably affects his morale. Even before he realizes it, dark minor tonalities creep into his heart. (Chopin referred to the lessons he gave as the labour of a hireling.) Happily these vague feelings do not disturb the heart of a pure teacher. A psychologist said that a real teacher assesses himself seriously only from the point of view of his pupils. For a performer this is unthinkable. I know from personal experience that as soon as my teaching workload is such that I have not sufficient time to practise myself, the quality of my teaching immediately suffers. I lack temperament and breadth of vision because of the bleak and nagging feeling in my heart. And the bleak and nagging feeling is

there because I am marking time, I do not go forward, I do not improve, I am not being creative.

I have more than once observed the tremendous "material force" of purely psychological experience; for instance, you may be playing at home, you play, you get carried away, elated, excitement overcomes you and it may be that from sheer joy you break into some exotic dance between pieces or burst into song and then there is a knock on the door and a pupil comes in (and one who is below average, on top of it all) and you have to sit down and struggle with her and worm your way through the "Moonlight" Sonata or a Chopin Ballade already so much picked to bits as to have lost all meaning, and repeat the same thing for the thousandth time. ... If the state I was in before the lesson was like a sunny day in May, after the lesson it was like a November puddle.

True, that sort of experience is a thing of the past; it is a long time now since I had any pupils who could affect me that way. But in general one can say: a talented teacher and an ungifted pupil are just as unproductive as an ungifted teacher and a talented pupil. Like unto like is one of the wisest principles in solving the teacher-pupil problem. The wise Latin saying *similis simili gaudet* stresses the fact that like rejoices in like, and its antithesis is that unlike do not rejoice in each other. The fullest possible understanding between teacher and pupil is one of the most important conditions for fruitful teaching. All this is well known and accepted. No one makes a prominent academician teach in a secondary school, just as secondary school teachers are not requested to lecture to the Academy sitting in plenary session. I have often sinned against the Latin saying in the past; that is why I mentioned it.

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But I said at the very beginning of these notes that I do not for an instant regret either the efforts, or the suffering, since they bring knowledge and also because the "road of perfect well-being and success" is not my road, and the people who constantly strive to obtain the best out of life for themselves, at any cost, leaving the work for others, are not my sort of people. I find them repulsive and doubly repulsive because I have seen so many of them.

One of the most depressing experiences for a teacher is to realize how little he can do, relatively, in spite of all his honest efforts, if his pupil is not gifted. The impresario-like enthusiasm, the conviction that he can achieve all he intends is gradually whittled away. It is soon replaced by the humiliating realization of how much more important it is for a good pianist to have good parents than good teachers. Am I describing childish feelings? Yes, of course, but which of us, overcome by the mania of teaching, education, "making" an artist, has not been tortured by them? For it is painful to see the sum of labour, knowledge and suffering yield such a tiny result, whereas sometimes a couple of words, a fleeting remark, give such a rich harvest. Man's age-old imperative urge to take nature into his own hands and fashion it according to his will plays a tremendous part even here, in our modest task. All these quixotic ups and downs between elation and dejection finally lead to an optimistic formula: one cannot create talent, but one can create culture, which is the soil on which talent prospers and flourishes Nota 1. The circle is closed; our labour is justified. Nota 2

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I consider that one of the main tasks of a teacher is to ensure as quickly and as thoroughly as possible that he is no longer necessary to the pupil; to eliminate himself, to leave the stage in time, in other words to inculcate in the pupil that independent thinking, that method of work, that knowledge of self and ability to reach his goal which we term maturity, the threshold beyond which begins mastery. While consciously striving to achieve this I do not wish to reduce to a minimum myself as a person, as an individual; I merely wish to cease being a policeman, a trainer, and want to remain one of the many vital forces of the pupil, one of the impressions in his existence, one among many, be they stronger or weaker. This awareness increased as I got to know the work of my colleagues (particularly those who were "pure" teachers and not performers), who simply could not admit that a pupil, however clever, could ever cease to need them; for them pupils were perpetually children. [Nota 3](#)

When Emil Gilels came to study with me at the Moscow State Conservatoire I was once forced to say to him: "You are already a grown man, you can eat steak and drink beer, but so far you have been fed with a baby's bottle". His teacher, B. M. Reingbald, an excellent teacher who had trained many talented youngsters, studied with him, at the lessons, the left hand separately from the right, etc., instead of making him do this himself at home, and did not develop his musical thinking sufficiently; nor did she acquaint him with music in general, in spite of his tremendous receptivity and talent. Yet the greater the talent, the more legitimate is the demand for early independence and responsibility. Busoni used to say that if a man is meant to be a pianist, he must be able to give a good performance of a Liszt sonata at the age of seventeen or eighteen. This was said half a century ago, and we are, after all, moving forward.

Hofmann's recollections of his studies with Anton Rubinstein provide us with an example of the best teaching method and the way in which the most important problems are pinpointed, and show us the shortest road to the main task of performance.

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Hofmann relates how, after listening to a piece, Rubinstein would ask him: What is the nature of that music, is it lyrical, dramatic, sarcastic, solemn, joyful, sorrowful, etc.? It seems to me that the right answers to these questions, given not merely verbally but embodied in performance, are the highest achievement of pedagogical thinking and practice, and the most gratifying result of the joint efforts of teacher and pupil. Some might say: yes, but this was Hofmann! To which I could add: yes, but first of all it was Rubinstein! But does this change anything essential? The work of a teacher of genius with a wonderful pupil can always serve as the highest example and guidance in our work; the work of a bad teacher and a bad pupil can in the best of cases only serve as a proof to the contrary. However far from a truly artistic performance a pupil may be, because of his weakness or inability, however bogged down he may be in the morass of overcoming elementary handwork, he must still be aware of and remember the "stratosphere" into which he must penetrate some time or other; he must divine the remote guiding star—though it be still hidden by mist and cloud—which he will ceaselessly strive to reach. All the more must the teacher remember it.

Teachers who for years have been relentlessly working with very mediocre pupils frequently lose their faith in "stars" and "stratosphere"; they believe much more in the etudes of Czerny and Clementi, and you cannot really hold it against them. But even Clementi called his collection of études *Gradus ad Parnassum* and not *Parnassus*.

I already said that a teacher of any instrument (let us consider the human voice also as an instrument) must first and foremost be a teacher of music, in other words an expounder and interpreter of *music*. This is particularly necessary with pupils at the lowest level of development. In such a case it is absolutely essential to use the comprehensive method, i.e. the teacher must make the pupil grasp not only the so-called "content" of a composition, he must not only instil into him its poetic image, but also give him an extremely detailed analysis of the form, the structure—as a whole and in its every detail—harmony, melody, polyphony, pianistic texture; in short he must be at one and the same time a historian and theoretician of music, a teacher of theory, harmony, counterpoint [Nota 4](#) and pianoforte playing.

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I think that the eternal troubles that plague schools of singing, the insoluble problems of teaching singing are due mainly to the fact that teachers will not (or cannot) use a comprehensive method; they do not teach the art of music but are concerned mainly with voice production. The advantage of instrumentalists compared to singers is that they usually begin their studies in childhood and by the time they come to the conservatoire they have already a fair knowledge of music and of their instrument. But vocalists frequently come to the conservatoire as adults with merely a good voice (the rest being *tabula rasa*), in other words as the possessors of a good instrument without any knowledge of music, any musical culture, frequently without any "musicality". [Nota 5](#) But it is clear that in their case education and training must be comprehensive and should not be split into component parts by the name of theory, harmony, etc., including voice production, which a musically undeveloped person simply cannot grasp as a single whole. I am not trying to say, God forbid! that a student of singing should not take all these subjects in a separate class, but a singing teacher must merge all these into a whole *during the lesson*, and keep on explaining and showing to the pupil until the latter has learned to listen and think as a musician and an artist. For the simplest Lied or operatic air can serve to give the pupil a multitude of information concerning harmony, theory, part writing musical form. In the case of a vocalist who finds it difficult to master not only the meaning of harmony or theory but also their terminology it is specially important to tell him what I so frequently repeat at my public lectures for pupils and teachers. I tell them: we humans do not twitter like birds or moo like cows; we use words and concepts, in other words we name every phenomenon of the inner or outer world that we perceive, we give them names regardless of whether it is a distant star or a tiny insect, a mood or a physical action.

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To name a thing is to begin to understand it. Is it then admissible that a professional musician should not know what to call, what name to give to what

he hears, what he creates? The deeper this simple truth will sink into the minds of learners, the easier it will be to teach them music and art and to teach them the technique of a particular kind of art, for instance voice production. [Nota 6](#)

With very gifted pupils I hardly ever analyse the harmony or form of the composition we study; they understand and know all this themselves. But there have been pupils with whom during a year or two I constantly used the pieces we were studying for a brief course of harmony, melody construction, form analysis, etc., until they learned to think like musicians.

Nota de revisor: a seguir apresenta-se uma imagem de uma partitura musical que corresponde ao **Ex. 90**.

Nota de revisor: a seguir apresentam-se cinco compassos, na clave de sol e na clave de fá na quarta linha, tonalidade lá bemol maior ou fá menor, sem indicação de compasso, alguns compassos são compostos por duas vozes.

Clave de Sol: Primeiro compasso: voz superior: composto por seis colcheias, todas ligadas por uma ligadura: mi no quarto espaço, fá bemol na quinta linha, lá na primeira linha superior, sol no primeiro espaço superior, ré na quarta linha, fá na quinta linha: voz inferior: composto por seis colcheias, todas ligadas por uma ligadura: sol na segunda linha, lá no segundo espaço, dó bemol no terceiro espaço, si na terceira linha, si bemol duplo na terceira linha, lá no segundo espaço. Segundo compasso: voz superior: semicolcheia mi no quarto espaço, semicolcheia fá bemol na quinta linha, semicolcheia mi no quarto espaço, semicolcheia fá na quinta linha, colcheia sol bemol no primeiro espaço superior, colcheia sol bemol no primeiro espaço superior, colcheia sol bemol no primeiro espaço superior, todo o compasso se encontra com ligadura até à quarta semicolcheia do compasso seguinte; voz inferior: pausa de colcheia, colcheia ré na quarta linha, ligada para a colcheia seguinte, colcheia sol bemol na segunda linha, colcheia dó bemol no terceiro espaço, colcheia si na terceira linha; todo o compasso apresenta um sinal de crescendo. Terceiro compasso: voz superior: colcheia sol bemol no primeiro espaço superior, semicolcheia fá natural na quinta linha, semicolcheia dó natural no terceiro espaço, semicolcheia mi no quarto espaço, semicolcheia ré na quarta linha (termina a ligadura), colcheia si na terceira linha, pausa de colcheia, pausa de colcheia; voz inferior: semínima com ponto lá no segundo espaço, colcheia si na terceira linha, pausa de colcheia, pausa de colcheia, todas as notas deste compasso apresentam um sinal de decrescendo. Quarto compasso: apresenta apenas uma voz: pausa de colcheia, semicolcheia ré na quarta linha, semicolcheia mi no quarto espaço, semicolcheia ré na quarta linha, semicolcheia mi no quarto espaço, estas quatro semicolcheias encontram-se ligadas por uma ligadura para a colcheia seguinte, colcheia fá na quinta linha, colcheia fá na quinta linha, colcheia fá na quinta linha, estas últimas duas colcheias encontram-se ligadas por uma ligadura até ao final do quinto compasso, apresenta ainda um sinal de crescendo ao longo do compasso. Quinto compasso: apresenta apenas uma voz: colcheia fá na quinta linha, semicolcheia mi no quarto espaço, semicolcheia si na terceira linha, semicolcheia ré na quarta linha, semicolcheia dó no terceiro espaço, estas quatro semicolcheias apresentam o sinal de diminuição, colcheia lá natural no segundo espaço.

Clave de Fá na quarta linha: Primeiro compasso: apresenta apenas uma voz: colcheia mi, pausa de colcheia, muda para a clave de sol, colcheia ré natural no primeiro espaço inferior, colcheia mi na primeira linha, colcheia fá bemol no

primeiro espaço, colcheia lá no segundo espaço, a partir da mudança para a clave de sol todas as notas se encontram ligadas por ligadura até voltar a mudar para a clave de fá no terceiro compasso. Segundo compasso: colcheia sol natural na segunda linha, colcheia sol bemol na segunda linha, fá bemol no primeiro espaço, colcheia mi na primeira linha, colcheia mi bemol duplo na primeira linha e sol na segunda linha, colcheia ré no primeiro espaço inferior e fá bemol no primeiro espaço. Terceiro compasso: colcheia dó natural na primeira linha inferior e mi bemol na primeira linha, colcheia fá natural na terceira linha inferior, colcheia fá natural no primeiro espaço, termina a ligadura e muda para a clave de fá na quarta linha, colcheia si, colcheia fá e ré, colcheia lá bemol. Quarto compasso: colcheia sol bemol, colcheia ré, sol bemol, si, colcheia sol, si, ré, colcheia ré, colcheia ré, lá, ré, colcheia fá, ré, fá. Quinto compasso: colcheia mi, colcheia mi, si, dó, colcheia si, dó, sol bemol, colcheia fá.

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With highly developed and gifted pupils I need only draw their attention from time to time to some particularly significant place, some "turning point" such as so frequently occurs in the piano works of great composers. For instance, I cannot remember a single occasion when we have not dwelt at length and amply discussed the Fugato from Chopin's Fourth Ballade, when polyphony gives way to the homophonic writing of the beginning.

While this amazing transition from polyphonic "reflection" to the initial simple flow of song—the threshold of the recapitulation—is accomplished by

means of a wonderful modulation and as we seem to witness the birth of the melody the germ of which was present in the polyphony: one is so overcome with joy, with such emotion, that it is impossible not to share it with a pupil, it is impossible not to draw his attention to this marvel of musical art, and hence we analyse the whole Fugato and try to understand why this is so beautiful, why this passage is so moving.

Nota de revisor: a seguir apresenta-se uma imagem de uma partitura musical que corresponde ao **Ex. 91**.

Nota de revisor: a seguir apresentam-se um trecho musical do exemplo anterior, na clave de sol e na clave de fá na quarta linha, tonalidade lá bemol maior ou fá menor, sem indicação de compasso, alguns compassos são compostos por duas vezes.

Clave de Sol: Primeiro compasso: voz superior: colcheia sol bemol no primeiro espaço superior, colcheia sol bemol no primeiro espaço superior, colcheia sol bemol no primeiro espaço superior, todo o compasso se encontra com ligadura até ao final do compasso seguinte; voz inferior: colcheia sol bemol na segunda linha, colcheia dó bemol no terceiro espaço, colcheia si na terceira linha.

Segundo compasso: voz superior: colcheia sol bemol no primeiro espaço superior, semicolcheia fá natural na quinta linha, semicolcheia dó natural no terceiro espaço, semicolcheia mi no quarto espaço, semicolcheia ré na quarta linha, colcheia si na terceira linha, pausa de colcheia; voz inferior: semínima com ponto lá no segundo espaço, colcheia si na terceira linha, pausa de colcheia.

Clave de Fá na quarta linha: Primeiro compasso: colcheia mi na primeira linha, colcheia mi bemol duplo na primeira linha e sol na segunda linha, colcheia ré no primeiro espaço inferior e fá bemol no primeiro espaço. Segundo compasso: colcheia dó natural na primeira linha inferior e mi bemol na primeira linha, colcheia fá natural na terceira linha inferior, colcheia fá natural no primeiro espaço, termina a ligadura e muda para a clave de fá na quarta linha, colcheia si, colcheia fá e ré.



We attempt to find in the very substance of which music is made a confirmation and an explanation of our undoubted and intense musical experience. This cannot fail to affect performance; when one delves deep into one's perception of what is beautiful, and attempts to understand its origin, how it arose and what was its objective cause, only then does one grasp the infinite order of art and one experiences a new joy because intellect throws its own light on what was perceived directly by the senses. In justification of these lines I am prompted to

recall Pushkin's laconic and masterly definition: "Inspiration is a disposition of the soul toward an acute perception of impressions and their reasoned understanding". Anyone who merely feels art remains for ever an amateur, anyone who only thinks about it will be a research musicologist; a performer needs the synthesis of the thesis and antithesis: he needs an acute perception and reasoning.

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It goes without saying that such "specially beautiful" passages as the Fugato in the Fourth Ballade are to be found in music by the hundred, thousand and tens of thousands; they are as numerous as beautiful landscapes which captivate the wanderer and make him return again and again. Sometimes I am amazed at myself, and I expect those present in class must also have been amazed that, when studying with a pupil the Chopin Barcarolle, for instance (which I have taught hundreds of times), when going deeper into its incredible beauty (specially in the transition to the recapitulation—again the recapitulation!—after the second subject in A major beginning with the trill in the right hand and until the dominant of F sharp major— C sharp major) I frequently experience quite childish delight doing this purely analytical, explanatory work and find it hard to hold back my tears because of my joy that this marvel should exist. And there is nothing surprising here. One cannot get "used" to the beauty of art, just as one cannot become used to, or be indifferent to the beauty of a May morning, of a moonless summer night with myriads of stars and, even more, to the spiritual beauty of man which is the cause and the source of everything great in art.

In such conversations about music with talented and intellectually mature pupils the teacher ceases to be a teacher in the narrow sense of the word and becomes a senior colleague endowed with greater experience and knowledge, talking to his younger brothers-in-art of their favourite subject. It is precisely this aspect of teaching that is most attractive, most engrossing and satisfying. Not only because here professional teaching is gradually turning into real education, but mainly because this is a pure form of communication, of bringing people together on the basis of their common devotion to art and the ability to create something in the field of art. This latter is particularly important. Without this ability to strengthen and develop, which is the purpose of such talks, everything would boil down to conversations that are pleasant only for amateurs but useless and uninteresting for artists.

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Anyone can see how far removed such teaching is from the original, mainly dictatorial type based on obedience, on command and its execution, on discipline, the best example of which is the relationship between the army commander and the private. The usefulness of this dictatorial principle and its application is so well known that I shall not dwell on it. Every experienced teacher knows the extent to which it is possible to depart from "military" discipline depending on the pupil and his character. There are many cases when it really cannot be applied; even the strictest teacher would have hardly applied it to the child Mozart. With pupils devoid of artistry and initiative I

naturally resorted to the original, imperative method. When the pupil fails to show any intentions or ideas, the teacher works for him and instead of him in the hope that he may show some personality in the future. With highly gifted pupils I was usually much more liberal. Emil Gilels later even reproached me; he claimed that I did not show him or tell him enough, that I did not impose my will as a teacher sufficiently, in fact that I did not pay sufficient attention to him. [Nota 7](#) True, later still he thanked me for having, by my teaching, helped him to become independent.

When Arthur Schnabel visited Moscow he said, in a conversation with teachers and pupils at the Conservatoire, something paradoxical. He said that for a man who was fated to become an artist it was almost immaterial whether he was taught well or badly at the beginning; whatever the case, when he reaches the age of fifteen to seventeen he will change everything according to his own lights, he will acquire his own habits, his own technique, he will go his own way which is the way of the true artist. I do not believe that for such a man the initial teaching is immaterial (good teaching is in all cases better than bad) but without a doubt there is a grain of truth in what Schnabel said. That is why, in the presence of a great talent, I have frequently refrained from the imperative attitude that I used with weaker pupils and which some other teachers might adopt even with exceptionally gifted pupils.

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Sometimes, with pupils who lacked all creative initiative, I would try, by all means at my disposal, to show them all the hidden treasures of a composition, to tell them in every detail what I felt and thought in connection with the piece in question. The result would sometimes be a fairly good copy of my interpretation. My instinct made me shy away from this method with a very talented, creatively gifted pupil. I would say to myself: let Gilels (when he was still a student of the Moscow State Conservatoire) go on playing this piece (for instance, a Chopin Ballade or a Beethoven Sonata) with insufficient inspiration, his mind and heart have not yet perceived all its depth and beauty, but still I will refrain from meddling too much. What I can tell him now, he will be able to do himself, his own way, not my way, and for a real artist, as I already said, this is the decisive moment in work and in development.

The method of "cramming" is, in general, a fairly bad method, but to "cram" a talented person is plain sinful. An attempt to make a talented pupil produce a carbon copy of what the teacher thinks and does is worthy of neither of them. My teacher, Godowsky, said at my third lesson when, in a piece of Chopin, I simply could not (because I did not want to) achieve a certain nuance which I thought too precious: "All right, you have your own individual personality and I am not going to interfere with it". Wise words!

With such as Gilels the best method would be—in addition to learning the set repertoire—daily sight-reading, preferably four-hands, and getting to know the inexhaustible wealth of chamber and orchestral music, in fact all of the non-pianistic literature. With such an elemental virtuoso gift as that of Gilels, a broad knowledge of music is the surest and fastest way of developing talent, quite apart from the fact that it is the duty of every good musician, as well as his delight.

An endless chewing over of the same pieces, as some teachers and even some pupils are fond of doing, this endless repetition with the addition of new, small details of interpretation and even more, the repetitious drumming in of the same thing—this is the wrong approach with a truly talented person.

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When Menuhin as a young man (but already famous) began studying with Georges Enesco, his new teacher constantly played with him sonatas, trios, quartets, quintets, and did not inflict on him an endless repetition of the same few solo pieces, apparently leaving it to Menuhin to study them at home when necessary. I would also recall that Anton Rubinstein did not allow Josef Hofmann to play for the second time a piece they had already gone through together. And when, on one occasion, Hofmann asked somewhat timidly whether he would agree to hear him once more in order to see whether he had done everything the maestro had said, Rubinstein refused, saying that a second time he might tell him "something quite different". A memorable example! On the one hand it immediately brings to mind the infinitude of art (it is always possible to play better and also to play differently), on the other, it shows that Rubinstein was an amazing pedagogue and psychologist. He was obviously afraid of confusing the youth, however talented he might be, by his own excessively broad and rich musical conception; he deliberately restrained himself as a teacher; he did not give every advice possible, but only some advice—the most necessary.

These sincere words, that seem to be a confession of inconsistency, clearly show the immeasurable, even contradictory, nature of art thanks to which a performer can render the same composition in several different ways and cannot confine himself to one standard rendering; and this is so very understandable with such an elemental and inspired pianist as Rubinstein, who recognized the value of improvisation and the significance of the moment, so important for the performer.

I would also add that it is precisely here, in questions relating to the freedom and diversity of interpretation, that it is so important to observe the principle of "beginnings and endings" of which I have been constantly speaking. It is essential, so as to avoid falling into the trap of pernicious relativism—"there is no truth, everything is permitted". What Rubinstein did might perhaps be better expressed by the formula: "there is only one truth, but much is permitted to him who has the ability".

Some might say to me: you have only just told us that sometimes you bare your whole soul before a pupil, in an attempt to open for him all those innermost treasures of music that you have managed to perceive, yet you are full of admiration for Rubinstein and see his method of work as a deliberate limitation of communicable matter, as a strict selection from all the possible advice he could give, and see it as great wisdom. This is inconsistent!

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No, friends, it is not inconsistent, but if you think it is, you did not understand what I wrote. May I, for the sake of clarity, use a rather primitive metaphor. Imagine that an ardent lover of flowers has a little plot of land

consisting of sand and stones on which nothing can grow, specially since there is no water in the vicinity. But his passion for flowers is stronger than stone and sand and he will patiently carry earth from afar, plant flowers and carry water daily from a distant stream until he finally has his longed-for garden.

What I sometimes did with pupils who resembled that rocky plot of land was similar to the efforts of the garden lover. When I "poke around" in music ("look how the melody curves here", "listen to this marvellous modulation", when I use metaphors, allegory, quote poetry, etc.) I am merely trying to create fertile ground for the perception of music, that same topsoil on which, with good care beautiful flowers may perhaps be made to grow. But why carry topsoil and water when there is enough earth and moisture? Here the problem is quite different: weed the flower beds, prevent the weeds from choking the flowers, destroy parasites, if any. This is much easier!

But enough allegory! I need hardly add that these semi- conversations, semi-instructions which take place between a teacher and such talented and comprehending pupils as those I have just mentioned, are not a bit like what I have been trying to describe in my oversimple simile, because their motivations are entirely different.

By way of criticism and self-criticism I could add that music- making, playing four hands, etc., which I considered the best way of developing the talent of such a pianist as Gilels (and of course other young pianists too), is something I did with him very seldom, mainly when we were evacuated to Sverdlovsk during the war, and even then not for long, since very soon we parted. In so-called "musical life" there is absolutely no time for this essential work at home; the generally excessive load of work, the excessive curriculum, preclude any possibility of finding time for this very important work. I hope that the time will come when those bodies which draw up our curricula and plan our work will understand how much bureaucratic thoughtlessness there is in their work and will amend the mistakes that cause so much harm to our young musicians.

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I have already said that in working with Richter I mostly followed the policy of "friendly (but by no means passive) neutrality". From his early youth he showed such an excellent understanding of music, he could carry so much of it in his head and was endowed with such marvellous natural pianistic gifts, that I had to follow the proverb which says: "to teach the learned is to spoil him". [Nota 8](#) I have probably helped him a little in his development, but most of all he helped himself, and first and foremost he was helped by music, to which he devoted himself with passion. I will merely recall that he was one of the moving spirits behind the Music Circle set up in the Moscow Conservatoire and which held ninety-nine meetings. All the best pupils of the Conservatoire took part in the work of the Circle [Nota 9](#) which only stopped on account of the war. That was precisely the kind of music-making (the performances were always of a very high standard and carefully prepared) of which I dream and speak and which is stubbornly ignored by those who ought to encourage it.

I shall now describe very briefly two lessons which show with particular clarity how different is the work of a teacher, depending on the person he is teaching. Two pupils followed each other with the same work, the Liszt B minor

Sonata. The first to play was Richter the second was a young girl with excellent pianistic gifts, musical, but with very moderate artistic gifts and initiative. Richter knew the sonata perfectly and both technically and musically his playing of it was excellent. Obviously I did not interrupt him a single time before he finished. The discussion that followed took thirty to forty minutes. I gave him some advice on a few minor points, some passages were repeated, I argued with him about the interpretation of a certain episode which, as I tried to convince him, did not appear to me sufficiently dramatic after what preceded it, and that was all.

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When the girl who came after Richter sat down to play the same sonata, discussions, corrections, examples, repetitions, began with the very first note. Literally every bar had to be examined, "edited" so to speak; sometimes we dwelt at length on one note, one chord, a small bit of a phrase. To say nothing of a brief "lecture" I gave her on the meaning and content of the sonata. We worked for over three hours and only managed to get through one-third of the Sonata. Thus this sonata, which held no technical difficulties for her turned out to be that "chink" or "pipe" through which I tried to drag her into awareness of the realm of music, of art and of spiritual culture in general, without for an instant ceasing—in so doing—to deal with piano playing. Subsequently she played this sonata at an examination and gave an excellent performance of it, getting top marks.

Had an ardent partisan of a "single method" of teaching been present, he would probably have begun to doubt his theory.

And now a few "intimate" thoughts. Am I not guilty of the error so well expressed in the French saying: *fais ce que je dis et non ce que je fais?* (do as I say and not as I do). When Gilels studied Liszt's "Spanish Rhapsody" with me it always occurred to me that I could not play octaves as fast, as brilliantly and with such strength as he could and, consequently, wondered whether he should really be studying with me and not with a pianist who could play such things even better than he could (alas, not so easy to find!)? My professional integrity, the sober thinking of a performer and not only of a teacher, prompted these thoughts. But since apart from octaves and a great deal else [Nota 10](#) there was much that I wanted to tell Gilels about the interpretation and content of this rhapsody, my desire resulted in real musical and pianistic advice, and I found sufficient justification for continuing to work with him.

I mention this with a purpose in mind.

The ideal teacher is one who, in every case, from all points of view, knows and can do more than the pupil, even if the pupil is a genius.

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But even with such an exceptional combination as Rubinstein-Hofmann the teacher's superiority over the pupil was not absolute, since it is well known that, as Rubinstein himself put it, "half his recital would fall under the piano", whereas it was extremely rare for Hofmann to hit a wrong note [Nota 11](#). If the requirement that the teacher should always and in every respect be superior to any of his pupils were to be applied, all teaching would go by the board. I would recall what I said earlier about the great contribution of "pure" teachers who do not

appear in public as soloists. As the pupil grows stronger and more mature the influence of such a "pure" teacher diminishes whereas the influence of a teacher who is a performing artist usually lasts much longer. The critic-counsellor and the performing artist are usually entirely different people in real life; when these conflicting qualities are present in the person of a true performer-teacher, they represent a combination which is not only rare but also particularly valuable. (I know a number of excellent performers who could not force themselves to be good teachers although life seemed to impose this occupation upon them. Teaching they found irksome and boring while performing was interesting and a source of joy. On the other hand, how many good teachers are there in the world, who are of no interest whatsoever as performers—but we have said enough on the subject.)

Even a brief description of the basic teaching methods, or rather let us call them "themes", used in my class would make this small book too bulky. But I have to say a few words at least about two of these "themes".

One of my favourite ways of teaching I described fairly accurately in the first chapter when I related how I went through the second movement of the "Moonlight" Sonata (C sharp minor, op. 27) with a pupil. What I described is perhaps one of the main, fundamental themes of my talks with pupils: from the image to its embodiment, from poetry (poetry as the innermost essence of all art)—through music—to artistic pianoforte playing.

But here is another "theme". I visualize music, the sum total of all music created through the ages, as some gigantic "genealogical tree" with its numberless ramifications, ruled by the laws of heredity, somewhat inaccurately termed "tradition", as well as the laws of struggle against these traditions.

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The evolutionary and the revolutionary principle impregnate all music and are in complete harmony with life. And that is why during a lesson when, for instance, we are studying Scriabin and his harmonic language I cannot fail to recall the genealogical tree of his harmony and give examples from the harmonic usage of his predecessors, which clearly show the origins of Scriabin's harmony. Here are a few examples at random.

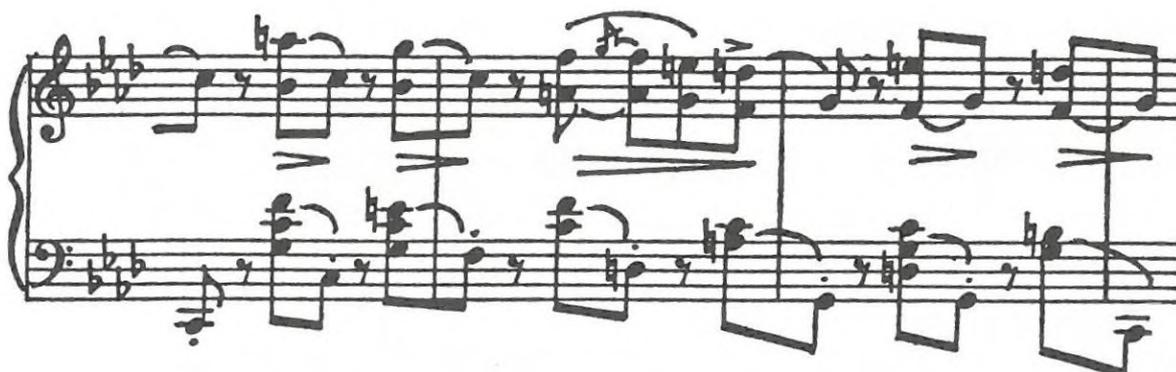
Chopin's Third Ballade:

Nota de revisor: a seguir apresenta-se uma imagem de uma partitura musical que corresponde ao **Ex. 92**.

Nota de revisor: a seguir apresentam-se um trecho musical, na clave de sol e na clave de fá na quarta linha, tonalidade lá bemol maior ou fá menor, sem indicação de compasso.

Clave de Sol: Primeiro compasso: colcheia ligada anteriormente a uma nota inexistente dó no terceiro espaço, pausa de colcheia, colcheia si na terceira linha e lá natural na primeira linha superior, ligada para colcheia dó no terceiro espaço, estas duas colcheias apresentam um sinal de diminuição, pausa de colcheia si na terceira linha e sol no primeiro espaço superior, ligada para a colcheia do segundo compasso. Segundo compasso: colcheia dó no terceiro espaço, estas duas colcheias apresentam um sinal de diminuição, pausa de colcheia, colcheia lá natural, ligada para a colcheia seguinte (lá), e fá na quinta linha, colcheia lá no segundo espaço, e fá na quinta linha (este fá apresenta uma apogiatura sol), colcheia sol na segunda linha e mi natural no quarto

espaço, estas três colcheias superiores encontram-se ligadas por uma ligadura, colcheia fá no primeiro espaço e ré natural na quarta linha, esta encontra-se ligada para a colcheia do compasso seguinte. Todas as quatro colcheias se encontram com o sinal de indicação de diminuição. Terceiro compasso: colcheia sol na segunda linha, pausa de colcheia, colcheia fá no primeiro espaço e mi natural no quarto espaço, ligada para a colcheia sol na segunda linha, estas duas colcheias apresentam um sinal de diminuição, pausa de colcheia, colcheia fá no primeiro espaço e ré natural na quarta linha, ligada para a colcheia do compasso seguinte. Quarto compasso: colcheia sol na segunda linha, estas duas colcheias apresentam um sinal de diminuição. **Clave de Fá na quarta linha**: Primeiro compasso: colcheia dó em stacatto, pausa de colcheia, colcheia sol, dó, fá, ligada para a colcheia seguinte, colcheia dó, com indicação de stacatto, pausa de colcheia, colcheia sol, dó, sol natural, ligada para colcheia do compasso seguinte. Segundo compasso: colcheia fá, com indicação de stacatto, pausa de colcheia, colcheia dó e fá, ligada para a colcheia seguinte, colcheia ré natural com a indicação de stacatto, pausa de colcheia, colcheia lá natural e dó, ligada para a colcheia do compasso seguinte. Terceiro compasso: colcheia sol, com indicação de stacatto, pausa de colcheia, colcheia ré natural, sol dó, ligadas para a colcheia seguinte, colcheia sol, com indicação de stacatto, pausa de colcheia, colcheia sol e si natural, ligadas para a colcheia do compasso seguinte. Quarto compasso: colcheia dó.



The combination of three intervals of a fourth with a seventh —that is almost Scriabin. This find of Chopin's genius Scriabin "inherited"; he inherited it lawfully, developed it and enriched it.

And here is another, no less striking, example of heredity, or rather of inheritance (in Liszt's "Mephisto" Waltz):

Nota de revisor: a seguir apresenta-se uma imagem de uma partitura musical que corresponde ao **Ex. 93**.

Nota de revisor: a seguir apresentam-se oito compassos, na clave de sol e na clave de fá na quarta linha, tonalidade ré bemol maior ou si bemol menor, compasso três por oito.

Clave de Sol: Apresenta uma voz.

Primeiro compasso: pausa de colcheia, pausa de colcheia, colcheia mi natural, ligada para a colcheia do compasso seguinte. Segundo compasso: colcheia mi na primeira linha, com indicação de stacatto, pausa de colcheia, colcheia fá no primeiro espaço, ligada para a colcheia do compasso seguinte. Terceiro compasso: colcheia fá na primeira linha, com indicação de stacatto, pausa de colcheia, colcheia si na terceira linha, ligada para a colcheia do compasso

seguinte. Quarto compasso: colcheia si na terceira linha, com indicação de stacatto, pausa de colcheia, colcheia mi natural na primeira linha, ligada para a colcheia do compasso seguinte. Quinto compasso: colcheia mi na primeira linha, com indicação de stacatto, pausa de colcheia, colcheia fá no primeiro espaço, ligada até ao final do compasso sexto. Sexto compasso: colcheia lá natural na segunda linha inferior, com indicação de stacatto, pausa de colcheia, colcheia lá na terceira linha inferior. Sétimo compasso: semínima lá natural na segunda linha inferior, colcheia lá bemol na segunda linha inferior, todo o compasso se encontra ligado até ao final do oitavo compasso. Oitavo compasso: apogiatura lá na segunda linha inferior para semínima com ponto fá no primeiro espaço.

Clave de Fá na quarta linha: Apresenta duas vezes em alguns compassos.

Primeiro compasso: voz superior: pausa de colcheia, colcheia sol, lá dó, colcheia sol, lá dó; voz inferior: semínima com ponto lá.

Segundo compasso: colcheia sol, lá dó, colcheia sol, lá dó, colcheia sol, lá dó.

Terceiro compasso: voz superior: pausa de colcheia, colcheia sol, lá dó, colcheia sol, lá dó; voz inferior: semínima com ponto lá.

Quarto compasso: colcheia sol, lá dó, colcheia sol, lá dó, colcheia sol, lá dó.

Quinto compasso: voz superior: pausa de colcheia, colcheia fá, lá, ré, colcheia fá, lá, ré; voz inferior: semínima com ponto ré.

Sexto compasso: pausa de colcheia, colcheia fá, ré, colcheia fá, ré.

Sétimo compasso: pausa de colcheia, colcheia fá, ré, colcheia fá, ré.

Oitavo compasso: voz superior: pausa de colcheia, colcheia fá, lá, ré, colcheia fá, lá, ré; voz inferior: semínima com ponto ré.

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The harmonic combination (altered chord of the ninth): is one of the fundamental chords in Scriabin's work.

Nota de revisor: a seguir apresenta-se uma imagem de uma partitura musical que corresponde ao **Ex. 93a**.

Nota de revisor: Apresentam-se dois acordes na clave de sol e na clave de fá na quarta linha com as seguintes notas:

Clave de sol: semínima: dó na primeira linha, mi natural na primeira linha e encontra-se entre aspas, fá no primeiro espaço, si bemol na terceira linha.

Clave de fá na quarta linha: lá bemol, sol bemol



When a pupil plays Scriabin's Fourth Sonata (seventh bar from the beginning):

Nota de revisor: a seguir apresenta-se uma imagem de uma partitura musical que corresponde ao **Ex. 94**.

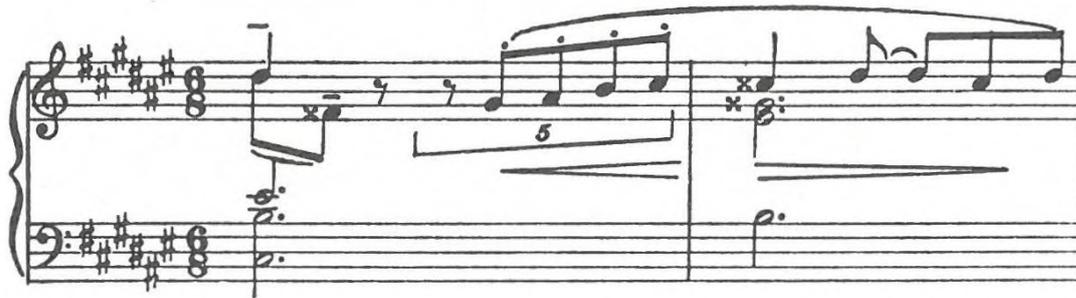
Nota de revisor: a seguir apresentam-se dois compassos, na clave de sol e na clave de fá na quarta linha, tonalidade fá sustenido maior ou ré sustenido menor, compasso seis por oito.

Clave de Sol: Apresenta mais do que uma voz.

Primeiro compasso: voz superior: semínima ré na quarta linha, com indicação de nota longa, pausa de colcheia, quintina: pausa de colcheia, colcheia sol na segunda linha, colcheia, lá no segundo espaço, colcheia si na terceira linha, colcheia dó no terceiro espaço; a quintinha apresenta uma ligadura até ao final do segundo compasso, apresenta indicação de stacatto em todas as colcheias e um sinal de crescendo; voz inferior: colcheia ré na quarta linha, ligada para a colcheia fá sustenido duplo no primeiro espaço, pausa de colcheia, quintina: pausa de colcheia, colcheia sol na segunda linha, colcheia, lá no segundo espaço, colcheia si na terceira linha, colcheia dó no terceiro espaço; a quintinha um sinal de crescendo. Segundo compasso: voz superior: semínima dó sustenido duplo no terceiro espaço, colcheia ré na quarta linha ligada para a colcheia seguinte, colcheia ré na quarta linha, dó sustenido duplo no terceiro espaço, ré na quarta linha; voz inferior: mínima com ponto mi na primeira linha e sol sustenido duplo na segunda linha. Todo o compasso apresenta um sinal de diminuição.

Clave de Fá na quarta linha:

Primeiro compasso: mínima com ponto dó, si e mi. Segundo compasso: mínima com ponto si



one is compelled to remind him of *Tristan*:

Nota de revisor: a seguir apresenta-se uma imagem de uma partitura musical que corresponde ao **Ex. 95**.

Nota de revisor: a seguir apresentam-se três compassos, na clave de sol e na clave de fá na quarta linha, sem indicação de tonalidade, compasso seis por oito.

Clave de Sol: Apresenta mais do que uma voz.

Primeiro compasso: Pausa de semínima, colcheia lá na segunda linha inferior, semínima fá no primeiro espaço, colcheia mi na primeira linha. Segundo compasso: voz superior: semínima com ponto sol suspenso na segunda linha, ligada por uma ligadura para a semínima sol na segunda linha, colcheia lá no segundo espaço. Voz inferior: mínima com ponto ré suspenso no primeiro espaço inferior. Terceiro compasso: voz superior: colcheia lá suspenso no segundo espaço, semínima si na terceira linha, ligada por ligadura para semínima com ponto si na terceira linha, col indicação de ligadura para o compasso seguinte.

Clave de Fá na quarta linha: Apresenta mais do que uma voz.

Primeiro compasso: pausa de semibreve.

Segundo compasso: voz superior: mínima com ponto fá e si; voz inferior pausa de semibreve.

Terceiro compasso: mínima com ponto mi e sol suspenso, ligadas para o compasso seguinte.



Scriabin was particularly fond of Beethoven's Sonata in D major op. 28 ("Pastorale") and the reason is obvious: the opening bars with their gently discordant harmonies on the strong beat: have something in common with Scriabin's harmonic thinking.

Nota de revisor: a seguir apresenta-se uma imagem de uma partitura musical que corresponde ao **Ex. 96**.

Nota de revisor: a seguir apresentam-se seis compassos, na clave de sol e na clave de fá na quarta linha, tonalidade ré maior, compasso três por quatro.

Clave de Sol: Apresenta mais do que uma voz.

Primeiro compasso: pausa de semibreve.

Segundo compasso: voz superior: mínima com ponto lá no segundo espaço; voz inferior: mínima com ponto dó natural na primeira linha inferior e fá no primeiro espaço.

Terceiro compasso: voz superior: semínima lá no segundo espaço, ligado até à semínima do compasso seguinte, mínima sol na segunda linha, ligada para a semínima do compasso seguinte; voz inferior: mínima com ponto si no segundo espaço inferior e ré no primeiro espaço inferior, ligadas para a mínima do compasso seguinte.

Quarto compasso: voz superior: mínima sol na segunda linha, colcheia fá no primeiro espaço e colcheia mi na primeira linha; voz inferior: mínima si no segundo espaço inferior e ré no primeiro espaço inferior, semínima sol no terceiro espaço inferior e si no segundo espaço inferior.

Quinto compasso: voz superior: mínima ré no primeiro espaço inferior, ligada para a semínima dó sustenido na primeira linha inferior; voz inferior: mínima com ponto sol no terceiro espaço inferior.

Sexto compasso: voz superior: mínima si no segundo espaço inferior, ligada para a semínima lá na segunda linha inferior; voz inferior: mínima com ponto sol no terceiro espaço inferior.

Clave de Fá na quarta linha: Apresenta mais do que uma voz.

Primeiro compasso: semínima ré, semínima ré, semínima ré, todas têm indicação de stacatto e encontram-se ligadas por uma ligadura.

Segundo compasso: semínima ré, semínima ré, semínima ré, todas têm indicação de stacatto e encontram-se ligadas por uma ligadura.

Terceiro compasso: semínima ré, semínima ré, semínima ré, todas têm indicação de stacatto e encontram-se ligadas por uma ligadura.

Quarto compasso: semínima ré, semínima ré, semínima ré, todas têm indicação de stacatto e encontram-se ligadas por uma ligadura.

Quinto compasso: voz superior: mínima com ponto mi; voz inferior: semínima ré, semínima ré, semínima ré.

Sexto compasso: voz superior: mínima com ponto dó; voz inferior: semínima ré, semínima ré, semínima ré.

[187]

Beethoven's work contains a particular wealth of such "prophecies" of future music. I always show my pupils the bits (and not only those "bits") where he foretells Schumann, Brahms, Wagner, Chopin, Tchaikovsky (and there are lots of them!). The Twenty-first Variation (from the "Diabelli" Variations op. 120) is almost Prokofiev, while the scherzo from the last Quartet in F major op. 135 has something of Shostakovich in it.

And in this same connection we also discuss the phenomenon of "genetics" in other arts, for instance the descriptions of the Caucasus in Pushkin, Lermontov, the Georgian poets.

One may find in the work of composers who are completely different in spirit, melodic and harmonic expressions of remarkable similarity, inspired by the spirit of the time and the historic evolution of music. The phrase from *Tristan* quoted above can be found in almost identical form in Chopin (end of the Largo from the Sonata in B minor):

Nota de revisor: a seguir apresenta-se uma imagem de uma partitura musical que corresponde ao **Ex. 97**.

Nota de revisor: a seguir apresentam-se dois compassos mais um incompleto, na clave de sol e na clave de fá na quarta linha, tonalidade si maior ou sol sustenido menor, compasso quaternário (C).

Clave de Sol: Apresenta mais do que uma voz.

Primeiro compasso: voz superior: mínima sol na segunda linha, semínima fá no primeiro espaço, colcheia com ponto lá no segundo espaço, semicolcheia si na terceira linha; a partir da colcheia com ponto apresenta-se uma ligadura reta até ao final do terceiro tempo do compasso seguinte; voz inferior: semibreve lá na segunda linha inferior e mi na primeira linha.

Segundo compasso: voz superior: semínima si sustenido na terceira linha, mínima dó no terceiro espaço, colcheia com ponto ré na quarta linha, semicolcheia mi no quarto espaço; voz inferior: mínima com ponto lá na segunda linha inferior e mi na primeira linha, pausa de semínima. No início do compasso apresenta um glissando.

Terceiro compasso (incompleto): mínima mi no quarto espaço com uma ligadura, semibreve lá no segundo espaço, mínima na primeira linha inferior com uma ligadura.

Clave de Fá na quarta linha: Apresenta mais do que uma voz.

Primeiro compasso: voz superior: mínima fá; voz inferior: composto por doze colcheias: dó, si sustenido, ré, dó, sol, fá, dó, si, ré, dó, sol, fá.

Segundo compasso: composto por doze colcheias: fá, sol, fá, mi sustenido, fá, dó, mi natural, fá, mi, sol, dó lá.

Terceiro compasso (incompleto): composto por seis colcheias: sol natural, fá, sol sustenido, fá, sol natural, fá.



Such "coincidence" between great composers of completely different temperament (it is difficult to imagine two personalities more diametrically opposed than Chopin and Wagner) remind us of what frequently happens in the field of science.

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It is well known, for instance, that Newton and Leibnitz both discovered integral and differential calculus at the same time, though entirely unaware of each other.

Of course I know that I need not have mentioned any of this in class, since it is dealt with in much greater detail by good teachers of history and theory of music. But the whole point is that such considerations acquire an entirely different meaning when they are directly related to performance, and put into practice. That is why I cannot abandon my "complex method" and use it frequently.

To the considerations which follow from my conception of a musical genealogical tree I should add the following: I believe that the key in which a composition is written is far from accidental; I believe that it has a historic basis, that it is the result of a natural development, obeying secret aesthetic laws, that each key has its symbolism, its meaning, its expression, its significance, and its intent. Schumann wrote (in *Charakteristik der Tonarten*) of the definite expressive meaning of each key, referring in turn to what was said on the subject by Schubart (1739-1791, Ed.), the poet, musician and dramatist. For me, too, a tonality is related to a definite range of moods.

My feeling can be easily explained by examples: is not the key of E flat minor the house of grief and elegiac moods, funereal memories and utter sadness? One need only recall a number of marvellous compositions in that key to be convinced that I am not just giving rein to my fancy: the Prelude in E flat minor out of the First Book of Bach's *Forty-Eight* (and the Fugue also), Chopin's Sixth Etude in E flat minor from op. 10, Brahms' Intermezzo No. 6 in E flat minor from op. 118, his Trio op. 40 (for piano, violin and horn, third movement),

Rachmaninov's "Elegies", the Introduction to Glazunov's Fourth Symphony. ... I took these examples at random, but they could be continued *ad libitum*. Every musician knows and remembers that Beethoven almost always used C minor when he wanted to express a dramatic image: Sonata No. 8 ("Pathétique"), the Thirty-two Variations, the Fifth Symphony, Sonata No. 32 op. 111, etc. It is not by accident that Brahms' First Symphony is written in C minor, just as it is no accident that Chopin's Twelfth and Twenty-Fourth Etudes are also in C minor.

[189]

They are all of them children of the same country, they have the same fatherland. F minor I would call the tonality of passion, and not only because it is the key in which Beethoven wrote the "Appassionata". Bach used the key of F minor to express intense religious fervour: think of the Three-part Invention in F minor, for instance, the F minor Prelude and Fugue out of the First Book, the first movement of the F minor Sonata for violin and piano, the last aria *Oh, zerfliess* from the *Passion according to St. John*. Subsequently F minor became the best vehicle for expressing more earthly, human passion. To name but a few examples: Beethoven: Sonata No. 1, *Egmont* Overture, "Appassionata"; Brahms: first and third movements from the Third Sonata op. 5; Chopin: Etude No. 9, op. 10 in F minor, the whole of the Fantaisie in F minor, Prelude No. 18 op. 28, everything, from the recapitulation to the end, in the Fourth Ballade in F minor, including the Coda which could be called "passion as a catastrophe"; Liszt: Etude in F minor from the Transcendental Studies; a great deal in his symphonic poems; Rachmaninov: Prelude in F minor from op. 32 (even marked: "appassionato") etc., etc.

I know that some may object, saying: "in each of the keys you have mentioned numerous compositions have been written which do not fit into the narrow content you have attributed to the key in question. Is your theory not far-fetched?"

There is no need to argue. Of course there are many passionate compositions in other keys than F minor, many of an elegiac character in other keys than E flat minor (but very often in related keys: B flat minor, A flat minor; remember Bach and Beethoven, to name but these two). On the other hand, numerous compositions have been written in F minor which cannot be considered as mainly passionate; for instance Chopin's Nocturne in F minor and Etude op. 25 No. 2 etc., etc. Yet, in spite of this, it must be admitted that certain emotions and moods have a certain "selective right" with respect to the key and that it is not by chance that a composition is born in the composer's mind in one key rather than another. To my mind there is absolutely nothing accidental in the fact that the Twenty-Fourth Prelude and Fugue from the First Book of Bach's *Forty-Eight*, Chopin's Sixth Prelude and Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony were all written in B minor.

[190]

The more passion there is in a man, the more purity, too, and chastity. Depravity and cynicism are born of weakness and impassivity. At the risk of being taken for a sentimental school-marm I admit that I am happy to feel that so many compositions, the innermost meaning of which is perfect chastity, were written in the relative major of the "passionate" F minor—in A flat major. I hear it

in the subject of the A flat major Fugue from the Second Book of the *Forty-Eight*, in the first subject and indeed in the whole of the first movement of Beethoven's Sonata op. no. 10, in Chopin's Seventeenth Prelude, in his Third Mazurka from op. 59, the second of the Three Etudes written for the School of Moscheles; in the first subject of Medtner's Sonata in A flat major (from the triad); and especially strongly do I feel it in the Allegretto in A flat major from Brahms' First Symphony ("an innocent girl at the dawn of life") [Nota 12](#)... I think that as Venus arose from the foam, the sea greeted her birth by murmuring a song in A flat major.

Sometimes there can be a certain similarity between compositions written by a composer in the same key, and that similarity is not so much a matter of poetic feeling or of meaning, but is simply textual. I have in mind a certain resemblance in theme, melody, figurations, etc. In this connection it is interesting to compare both Books of Bach's *Wohltemperiertes Klavier*. Busoni already referred to it when he compared the two Preludes and Fugues in A major (from both Books). For this same reason he takes the liberty on two occasions of "pairing off" preludes and fugues from different books (E flat major and G major) as if indicating their "elective affinity". This transposition seems to me far from essential, [Nota 13](#) but the observation that inspired him is perfectly correct.

[191]

When we study Brahms' Second Concerto in B flat major in class I feel I must draw the pupils' attention to the amazing strength and expressiveness in the simple modulation from A major to B flat major in the transition to the recapitulation in the first movement. This is the plan of the modulation minus piano part:

Nota de revisor: a seguir apresenta-se uma imagem de uma partitura musical que corresponde ao **Ex. 98**.

Nota de revisor: a seguir apresentam-se seis compassos, ambas as pautas na clave de fá na quarta linha, tonalidade si bemol maior, compasso quaternário (C).

Clave de fá na quarta linha: o sexto compasso apresenta um ritmo e vozes diferentes.

Primeiro compasso: o compasso inicia com três p "ppp"; semibreve mi natural ligada para o compasso seguinte, lá ligada para o compasso seguinte, dó suspenso ligada para o compasso seguinte.

Segundo compasso: semibreve mi natural, lá, dó natural.

Terceiro compasso: mínima fá, lá ligada para o compasso seguinte, dó ligada para o compasso seguinte, mínima mi bemol ligada para o compasso seguinte.

Quarto compasso: o compasso inicia com um "p" e com a indicação de "dolce", mínima com ponto mi, lá e dó, semínima ré, fá e si ligadas para o primeiro tempo do compasso seguinte.

Quinto compasso: semínima ré, fá e si, semínima mi, sol e dó, semínima fá, si e ré, estas três semínimas têm a indicação do sinal de crescendo; tercina de três colcheias; sol, si, sol; fá, si, ré; mi, sol dó, a tercina têm a indicação de sinal de diminuição.

Sexto compasso: voz superior: mínima com ponto fá, mínima ré, semínima dó; voz inferior: semínima fá, semínima fá, mínima lá.

Clave de Fá na quarta linha:

Primeiro compasso: semibreve lá e lá ligadas para o compasso seguinte.

Segundo compasso: semibreve lá e lá.

Terceiro compasso: semibreve lá e lá.

Quarto compasso: semibreve fá e fá.

Quinto compasso: mínima com ponto si, semínima si e si ligadas para o primeiro tempo do compasso seguinte.

Sexto compasso: semínima si e si, semínima lá e lá, semínima ré e ré, semínima fá e fá.



Smoothly, majestically, the first subject glides like a swan into recapitulation. This miracle is achieved with the simplest, the most "permitted", classically proved harmonies [Nota 14](#) —A major, then A minor, then the first inversion of F major, then the syncopated appearance of the seventh of the dominant of B flat major, followed by its root position with F in the bass, then in the upper part the first subject (in sixths) with a slightly retarded bass which at first gives a second inversion and only later goes on to the tonic B flat: that is all there is to it. I have already mentioned Chopin's marvellous recapitulations. This recapitulation, too, is a marvel of the composer's art. The impression of something natural, majestic, I would say unobtrusive and unpremeditated, given by the appearance of the long expected first subject is mainly due not only to the beautiful and simple modulation from A major to B flat major, but also to that lazily noble retarded appearance of the root position of the B flat major triad, because the bass, giving the indefinite flexible chord of the 6/4 does not immediately move from the fifth to the tonic. Of course one should, when speaking of this, also say that the transition from A major to B flat major (recapitulation) is superb because it was preceded by superb moments in the development.

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Nota de revisor: a seguir apresenta-se uma imagem de uma partitura musical que corresponde ao **Ex. 99**.

Nota de revisor: a seguir apresentam-se dois compassos, uma pauta na clave de sol e outra na clave de fá na quarta linha, tonalidade si bemol maior ou sol menor, compasso quaternário (C).

Clave de Sol: o compasso inicia com dois ff e no segundo compasso apresenta dois ritmos diferentes.

Primeiro compasso: semínima ré bemol na quarta linha inferior e ré bemol no primeiro espaço inferior com indicação de nota longa; semínima mi no quarto espaço inferior e mi na primeira linha com indicação de nota longa; mínima fá

na terceira linha inferior, lá na segunda linha inferior, ré no primeiro espaço inferior, fá no primeiro espaço com indicação de nota longa.

Segundo compasso: apresenta dois ritmos; voz superior: semínima fá na terceira linha inferior e fá no primeiro espaço, semínima sol no terceiro espaço inferior e sol na segunda linha, mínima lá natural na segunda linha inferior, dó na primeira linha inferior, fá no primeiro espaço, lá no segundo espaço; voz inferior: mínima si no segundo espaço inferior e ré bemol no primeiro espaço inferior, mínima lá natural na segunda linha inferior, dó na primeira linha inferior, fá no primeiro espaço, lá no segundo espaço.

Clave de Fá na quarta linha:

Primeiro compasso: mínima sol bemol, sol bemol, sol bemol e si; mínima ré bemol e ré bemol.

Segundo compasso: mínima si e si; mínima fá e fá



These harmonic progressions (orchestra): foretell the appearance of the first subject and already imply the dominant of the recapitulation. [Nota 15](#) But in the bars that follow the music evades it (apparently these are not yet the doors through which we may enter the parental home), modulating still to A major, and only after resting on the A major triad it gradually moves on to its own key of B flat major. And it is precisely through this gradual, this unhurried, uncanonical, unscholastic transition, this "homecoming", that I am made particularly aware of the genius of Brahms. I cannot refrain from drawing a parallel between two such different composers—Chopin and Brahms, recalling how on other occasions they solved problems of composition, creative problems, in an identical manner. I mentioned earlier the transition to the recapitulation in Chopin's Barcarolle, one of the most marvellous moments of revelation in music. Is it not obvious how similar the writing of these two composers is in this case? The recapitulation has long been expected and sensed, the modulations are coming closer and closer to it, but now they once more lead the music away from the goal (in epos this is called "retardation"; this is constantly used in drama, generally in the fourth act). In Chopin's Barcarolle it takes place here (and earlier): in Brahms it occurs in the modulation mentioned earlier, the dominant of the recapitulation (from A major to B flat major).

Nota de revisor: a seguir apresenta-se uma imagem de uma partitura musical que corresponde ao **Ex. 100**.

Nota de revisor: a seguir apresenta-se um compasso completo e um incompleto, uma pauta na clave de sol e outra na clave de fá na quarta linha, tonalidade lá maior ou fá sustenido menor, compasso doze por oito.

Clave de Sol:

Primeiro compasso: colcheia sol no terceiro espaço inferior, dó na primeira linha inferior, mi sustenido na primeira linha; pausa de colcheia; colcheia sol no terceiro espaço inferior, dó na primeira linha inferior, sol na segunda linha; semínima lá natural na segunda linha inferior, dó na primeira linha inferior, sol natural na segunda linha; colcheia lá na segunda linha inferior, ré natural no primeiro espaço inferior, fá no primeiro espaço; semínima lá na segunda linha inferior, mi natural na primeira linha, fá natural no primeiro espaço; colcheia sol sustenido no terceiro espaço inferior, ré no primeiro espaço inferior, mi sustenido na primeira linha; semínima fá sustenido na terceira linha inferior, dó na primeira linha inferior, fá sustenido no primeiro espaço; muda para a clave de fá na quarta linha: colcheia fá e si sustenido.

Segundo compasso (incompleto): colcheia mi sustenido e dó.

Clave de Fá na quarta linha:

Primeiro compasso: colcheia dó, pausa de colcheia, colcheia mi sustenido, semínima mi natural, colcheia ré natural, semínima dó natural, colcheia si, semínima lá, colcheia sol sustenido.

Segundo compasso (incompleto): colcheia dó.



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I have dwelt at length on these two approaches to the recapitulation by two such different, such profoundly dissimilar composers, because I am fond of finding in the most different, even in the contradictory, something in common. It brings one closer to understanding the laws of music. Moreover, I wanted to give an example of the manner in which I sometimes try to analyse a composition with my pupils. It is useful not only for a composer but also for a performer—an obvious truth.

Very frequently when analysing some passage or other, some fragment of a great composition, one finds it impossible not to go back to what went before, what led to this place (and so one usually comes back to the very beginning) and also to think ahead, where this fragment leads to (and so one usually gets to the end of the composition).

In such cases it becomes particularly clear that musical composition is a single indivisible process, and the clearer this conviction, the more understandable music becomes (I would bring to mind Mozart's story of how he composed, which I gave in the chapter on rhythm).

The reader will remember: I said earlier that I frequently use my considerations on tonality and my analyses of such harmonic and form-moulding marvels as the ones just described for polemical purposes. With the help of such examples I polemicize about the musical currents that led to such harmonic phenomena as tonal, polytonal, atonal and "mono"-tonal music. I understand perfectly the historic and aesthetic laws which gave rise to these

phenomena, as well as the stylistic finds related to them, but I must frankly confess that my sympathies lie with what went before them and not with what came after them. Polytonality and atonality destroyed the structural order of harmony and its forces with their attractions and repulsions; they turned harmony into a diffuse, porridge-like mass, while monotonicity, because of the excessive enthusiasm it aroused, was inevitably transformed into monotony which is so clearly detectable even in the later works of Scriabin.

In spite of his undoubted genius Scriabin obviously got into a blind alley. The vertical triumphed over the horizontal, the instant over the process, the particular over the general. Music of that kind was reduced to a state of petrification.

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The great historic merit of Prokofiev and Shostakovich is, in my opinion, that while continuing always to innovate, [Nota 16](#) looking always ahead, they (not only they, of course, but mainly they) helped music to get out of the morass into which it had been driven by atonality and monotonicity; they gave back to harmony its structural force and wealth, to melody its breath, to form its dimension and shape, and to the whole musical process its significance: continuity and unity.

Talks on this and similar subjects play a great part in my relations with my pupils; they broaden the outlook of the young musician, increasing his awareness, and develop in him the true professional artist.

Now about something quite different

One of the things that most grieve me in my present teaching work is this:

I cannot require of my pupils what I am entitled to demand of them as a musician and a pianist, because of their excessive workload and the appalling lack of time for the most important work of all, work at home. I am well aware that this is also one of the things that most upset pupils during their time at the conservatoire. Can we never get out of this dead-end? It is absolutely no exaggeration to say that even the most talented pupils in all their time at the conservatoire only get through one-third of the repertoire they ought to have mastered by the time they graduate. I shall never depart from my firm conviction that a pupil must have at least six hours a day to work alone at his instrument: about four hours for working at the repertoire and technique, and two hours for getting acquainted with music in general (and that too is work). It is on the basis of this minimum professional work that the study timetable should be drawn up.

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But with us it is just the opposite: the work which helps a pupil to acquire most of his knowledge and skill is considered the least important. Twice a year all instrumental teachers witness the same phenomenon: pupils cease to attend their classes, they are embarrassed to come to their lessons unprepared and they cannot prepare themselves because all their time is taken up in preparation for their examinations, and once again the student's profession, his speciality, is left to trail behind. When will there be an end to this disgraceful state of affairs? Of course in some relatively rare cases it is the fault of the pupils themselves because they are incapable of organizing their time rationally

but, in general, it is our fault, and by "us" I mean the authorities in charge of teaching establishments, the administration of the conservatoire, and the teachers.

Previously, when I had to cope frequently with very difficult pupils, I would sometimes lose patience; I would shout, throw the score on the floor, and, in general, lose my temper. I knew that it was quite wrong and reproached myself, but I found it very difficult to keep myself in check. For instance, I once had a pupil who was gifted musically and technically but was so completely devoid of any inner fire, so indolent and indifferent to things that I bore with her as long as I could and then would have a real row, rebuking her, screaming, etc. After this she would show much more interest in and love of music for a couple of weeks, the lessons would be calm and pleasant until her vitality would once again sink to normal, i.e. to a state of utter and disgraceful indifference; then there would be the usual row and so on at intervals of a month or six weeks. I despised myself for these rows, but what could I do when they were quite obviously good for her and I had no other means at my disposal to get anything worth while out of her?

In that fairly distant time—for nowadays I have an excellent class all of whom can bear witness to the fact that I hardly ever raise my voice—I soon managed to detect in my teaching makeup a certain "scale of irritability". It then transpired that the ones who most annoyed and irritated me were not the least-gifted pupils ("you can't get blood out of a stone") but pupils like the girl I mentioned earlier, who were endowed with quite good gifts but did not bother to use them; in other words, that I was irritated by flippancy, indifference, and weakness of will and temperament.

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I sometimes had pupils with very average gifts, for whom piano playing meant a great deal of effort, who were devoid of what is known as the divine spark, but who thought, reasoned and strove with assiduity; with such pupils I never once in my life raised my voice or became irritated; on the contrary, I respected them most sincerely, as one respects honest striving and the achievements of sheer will-power, and I found lessons with them pleasant and even interesting. [Nota 17](#)

My many years of work with pupils convinced me that sometimes there is a very sharp predominance of one particular aspect of musical talent over all the others and that in general a musical artistic gift is an extremely complex "conglomerate" and that only in very rare cases all the elements and components of this conglomerate are equally perfect, whole and unimpaired.

One excellent pupil was the cause of much grief and I sometimes found myself at a dead-end when pondering over the problem of his talent. He was endowed with amazing physiological musicality (hearing, pitch, etc.), he could sight-read perfectly, his memory was almost photographic, he had "golden" hands and could perform without any effort the most bafflingly difficult virtuoso compositions; one might think that everything was perfect his was a gift of the highest order. But it required incredible effort to make his playing "contagious", to give it impetus, artistic subtlety, depth and unity, and make it convincing. If we did sometimes achieve it such achievements were surprisingly short-lived and with the very next piece we had once more to tackle the same Sisyphean

labour; and so it went on. I felt like a cook faced with a mountain of magnificent foods and quite incapable of producing a tasty dinner. The playing of this pupil could be described as follows: when he played solo, he seemed to be accompanying magnificently a non-existent soloist. The main thing was lacking, namely, creative will, artistic imagination, fire and understanding. All the rest, all the component parts of piano playing were present in perfect form. Sometimes the heart of a pedagogue is particularly grieved at seeing such a first-class gift, deprived of the most important element (creative will), slip out of his grasp like an eel and elude all efforts to refine it.

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A few more words about some of my disagreements with certain teachers.

I. One well-known professor—a piano teacher—used to say sometimes, not without modest pride, but apparently bestowing on his words the significance of a thesis: "I do not teach music; I teach piano playing". I recall this case for the second time because this attitude is still to be found among teachers.

I cannot imagine anything more mistaken. Even if he were a teacher of percussion instruments, he should at the same time also teach *music*. The more so in the case of the piano, which, as I have more than once pointed out and as everyone knows, is a unique and irreplaceable instrument for teaching music, for the simple reason that it is possible to play and hear on the piano absolutely everything. If the piano teacher and piano pupil study together, not music but only piano playing (how that is done I don't quite see), then they both ought to study music with a third person and namely with a music teacher. Unfortunately such a need really does arise in some classes. Perhaps such a teacher—a "pure piano teacher"—relies on the musical education which the pupil acquires in the harmony class, polyphony class, form analysis class, etc., but surely each practician of piano teaching realizes that questions arise in his class that are never referred to by a teacher of harmony, or form analysis, questions connected with the particular work, the particular moment, the particular pupil, questions which arise out of a factual situation. I have already said that in the case of performers any teaching of music comes to life and becomes action only when we play, and particularly if we play very well (obviously the better we play, the more clearly will we make apparent the inner structure of music and the order which govern it).

I recall Goethe's words: "I hate all knowledge which does not immediately prompt me to action and does not enrich my activity". A piano lesson with a good teacher, i.e. with a pianist who is an artist, is the junction at which knowledge leads to action and action is supported by knowledge. But how can this be achieved if the teacher declares in all seriousness that he teaches only piano and not music?

II. Some very honest and very keen piano teachers, anxious that the pupils should derive the utmost benefit from their lessons, are sometimes inclined, without being aware of the fact, to turn the sum total of artistic piano literature into training material.

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They look at the "Appassionata" only from the point of view: is it "useful" to the pupil at that particular moment or not. Such a relegation of the "Appassionata" to the status of a mere teaching aid prompts me to protest and ask: and is the pupil in question useful to the "Appassionata"? (It also happens that a pupil who has been working at the "Appassionata" for a long time, and is still not "ready", finally declares—as a justification of his imperfection—"I am fed up with the 'Appassionata'!" In such a case I reply mercilessly: "You are mistaken, it is not you who are fed up with the 'Appassionata', but the 'Appassionata' that is fed up with you".)

As I study some beautiful musical composition with my pupils, I mentally draw up a work graph in accordance with their abilities; in one case the pupil needs merely stretch out his hand, in the other—he would have to walk a hundred miles. But this does not alter my attitude to the music (a distant star does not cease to shine brightly for me). I merely change my teaching method. Teachers who are too preoccupied with "usefulness" ("the use of usefulness is not clear" I sometimes say), inevitably develop performance criteria to which I playfully refer as: "school-Beethoven", "third-year Beethoven", "graduate Beethoven". ... In other words they adapt the composer to the pupil instead of raising the pupil to the composer. But the truth is somewhere in between: the inter-reaction between composer and pupil through the influence of a good teacher striving to help the pupil penetrate as far as possible the composer's intention, makes for the best possible solution of the problem.

III. But this is an objection not to the teachers but to their way of life, for which they are not really to blame. I consider it a great mistake, a serious failure, extremely damaging to the whole teaching profession, that the great majority of teachers in our schools and teaching establishments do not even attempt to become acceptable performers. I know full well how many talented people there are among them who, without pretending to be concert pianists could still give their pupils good, convincing samples of performance, if only of those pieces which they teach in class. How wonderful it would be if this ardent wish of mine could become a law for all schools and teaching establishments!

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There is hardly any need to say how much higher the general standard of teaching would be. Yet this is a rewarding task for a performer, to say nothing of its usefulness for the pupils: to play in an accomplished manner such compositions as Tchaikovsky's *Album d'Enfants*, Schumann's *Album für die Jugend*, the easier sonatas of Mozart and Haydn, the Beethoven sonatas, Tchaikovsky's *Seasons*, etc., up to and including our own Soviet children's literature.

But as a matter of fact, the situation has improved slightly recently: teachers in schools and teaching establishments have been performing in public more and more frequently.

I consider it a great failing of our conservatoire system that owing to the multiplicity of subjects they have to study and their overloaded schedule, pupils can only rarely listen to each other and hear the teacher's comments in class. After all, work in class can be compared to work in any laboratory: if one student is engaged in a chemical experiment, twenty of his fellow students who carefully

watch him and listen to the instructions of their teacher will derive just as much advantage and gain as much knowledge as he himself.

I remember a successful experiment concerned with the organization of study in my class—an experiment which completely answered my requirements—when I was working in the Sverdlovsk Conservatoire during the Second World War. This is what we did: those who were interested in my lessons came to an agreement with the director and the teachers of other subjects that during the times I taught in class they should be free, so as to be able to attend my lessons. Those present included not only my pupils but also pupils from other classes and even other departments: in this way work which in essence was individual, became collective. This naturally encouraged me to generalize and comment on theoretical subjects much more than during strictly individual lessons, and the practical lesson acquired a profoundly methodical character. And anybody will understand how much more interesting it is for a teacher when what he wants to communicate is not limited to just one pupil but reaches immediately some twenty or thirty listeners. It is astounding that in spite of the efforts of the administration and the professional staff to improve the quality of teaching, this simple and most useful measure cannot be implemented.

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Yet this is a well-tried method, known of old. When I was studying with Godowsky in the *Meisterklasse* of the Vienna Academy of Music, there were some ten of us who played, and about twenty to twenty-five who attended as listeners [*Hospitanten*], who never played but listened to everything. At the end of each lesson Godowsky would draw up a precise programme of the next lesson, deciding on the performers and the works to be performed; the pupils and the listeners came to the lesson with the scores, on which they followed attentively the playing of the pupil and the comments of the teacher. The advantage of this for all concerned was obviously very great. Then why cannot we have this? Of course, we, too, have in our classes non-playing pupils who listen to their friends as far as possible, but it is done in a highly unorganized manner; it often happens that when we are studying some particularly beautiful composition in which everyone is interested and which is performed by an advanced and interesting pupil, the others—just when they should be sitting and listening—suddenly all take off like so many sparrows and rush headlong to some other class for their next lesson which may be athletics or a foreign language. We must insist and ensure that this serious error in our teaching system be eradicated.

I try, just as many other teachers, to instill into my pupils a love of and a yearning for simplicity and truth (I have already mentioned this). Tolstoy used to say that an artist should have three qualities: sincerity, sincerity and again sincerity. It is much easier to say such things than to instill them into others. I have had pupils who tried at all costs to play in an "interesting" manner, somehow "specially", and it was very difficult to make them feel and render the simplicity and truth of the music. Sincerity meant for them something ordinary and "everyday". They were as if ashamed of their sincerity and perhaps they even had some reason to be. And it followed from this that all should be artificial. I most urgently advised such pupils, apart from becoming familiar with

folklore, to come closer to Mozart, Schubert, Tchaikovsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov, Gorky, Stanislavsky. I strained (an aristocrat would say: I stooped) to show them how a simple phrase of Tchaikovsky or Chopin could be played in an "interesting", "amusing" and "original" manner and how—giving free rein to conscience, yes, precisely to *conscience*[Nota 18](#)—it can be played truthfully, that is with feeling, simply, sincerely, unobtrusively and well.

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In the case of a few pupils my efforts remained fruitless; they were too much in the devil's thrall and continued on their tortuous way; with others truth and simplicity finally prevailed over the "interesting" and they found the path of sincerity.

Simplicity, according to Pasternak, is what men most need, but complexity they understand better. We ought to be quite clear about the meaning of "simplicity" and "complexity". Every artist knows that to achieve an impression of simplicity requires much more effort, labour (if it is not a heaven-sent gift) and serious intent than is necessary to create a work of art that is "interesting", "striking", "unusual". The public, audience and readers, have an impression of "simplicity" mainly when the artist expresses himself with unusual force, conviction, sincerity and passion; the listener feels it, he is carried away, he believes in what happens, he feels in art "reality", "life", something familiar, something he has himself experienced and lived through. It is then that he speaks of "simplicity" and how necessary it is to art. He is pleased that he, too, turns out to be an artist because he feels and understands art. And precisely that which we call "simplicity" because it reminds us of nature, is in actual fact most complex, just as any work of nature is much more complex than anything invented by man. The famous physicist, Rutherford, used to say that the structure of the atom was much more complex than that of a Bechstein grand.

All this is well known; I only wanted to recall that the notions of "simplicity" and "complexity" are not absolute and are subject, as all on earth—to the laws of materialistic dialectic. I can explain this dialectic with the help of an example from my own life. I love simple lyricism in music, as expressed, for instance, in the Chopin Mazurkas, the melodies of Tchaikovsky, the Schubert Lieder, etc. Sometimes it seemed to me that I would give up half of the sum total of music just for the second theme in Tchaikovsky's Overture to *Romeo and Juliet*.[Nota 19](#)

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And while enjoying that music, for which the word "simplicity" is quite particularly apt, at the same time I experience a quite special joy, that I can compare to nothing else, from the last quartets of Beethoven, his Fugue from the Sonata op. 106, etc., in other words, the most "un-simple", the most complex, most intellectual, most "inaccessible" music, almost entirely deprived of what we call "lyricism"[Nota 20](#) in music. I ask myself: is there no contradiction in the fact that I am equally drawn to the Chopin Mazurka and the driest of all Bach fugues, to *Eugene Onegin* and to the Quartet op. 133, etc., etc. Yes, there is, if you will, a contradiction, but of the type that permeates all of life, all existence and from which mankind is not exempt; on the contrary, we

are in the very thick, the very centre of these contradictions. Indeed, we are dealing here with the different facets of a single phenomenon which we call life. Why do I write of this, some may ask? Has it anything to do with our business? Yes, it has, because such thoughts and feelings occur every day during our work and particularly when such contrasting compositions as, for instance, Tchaikovsky's *Seasons* and Beethoven's op. 106 follow each other practically without a break, causing a certain emotional shock that prompts such considerations. It often happens that I have hardly finished going through Prokofiev's Fourth Sonata with a pupil, having both of us put a lot of temperament and enthusiasm into our work, and we are carried away by the music and then the very next pupil plays Scriabin's Fourth Sonata. I noticed that until about half way through I wholeheartedly hated the Scriabin; the shock had been too great, the plunge from one musical *Weltanschauung* to an entirely contradictory one was too sudden and unnatural. But all the same I would honestly go through it with my pupil, tell him what is necessary, i.e., what I know, stress its beauties with which I am so familiar and then, gradually, a metamorphosis would take place, I would begin to forget Prokofiev and the emotions he aroused in me, I would begin to be carried away by Scriabin and when we have finished the sonata I am in love with it, just as sincerely as I hated it before.

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"How unstable you are", some will say, "at your age it is time to be a little more objective and balanced." Yes, of course, I can also be objective and balanced, but then I teach my pupils less well. And again I write about this because these are facts, and facts out of my teaching career, and facts are stubborn. And I repeat, these facts prompt many very far-reaching considerations that are of interest not only to the teacher but also to the pupil who, after all, will also be a teacher one day.

It may be that I say too little about the pupil "as such". Of course in order to review the whole multitude of pupils one could divide them into groups or types just as, for instance, people are divided according to temperament into the choleric, melancholic, etc. I think that every experienced teacher considers his pupil first and foremost as a personality in spite of the many characteristics he may have in common with others. And the clearer the individual element, the clearer the general whole. And what is general in our task and from which all particular aspects and details flow, is the need to create a high level of musical culture worthy of our people and of the great times in which we live.

Since I have discussed teaching problems in all the chapters of this book, I think I shall leave off here in spite of the fact that there is still a great deal that I should like to relate from my personal experience and practice.

In conclusion, I shall add that if I have given something to my pupils, they gave me no less, if not more, and that I am infinitely grateful to them for this, for our joint striving to know and master art was the foundation of our friendship, intimacy and mutual respect, and these sentiments are among the best that one can experience on this planet.

Notas de Rodapé

Nota 1 The greater, broader and more democratic the culture, the more frequent is the appearance of talent and genius. A learned man once referred to the paintings of the Italian Renaissance as an epidemic of genius.[Voltar Nota 1](#)

Nota 2 I cannot fail to remember my father who was a music teacher in the provincial town of Elizavetgrad (now Kirovograd) for sixty-five years. It sometimes happened that he taught three generations of the same family. Once, after giving a lesson to a "granddaughter" he said, not without satisfaction: "You know, granddaughters are usually much more musical than grandmothers". I think that my father must have been, unknown to himself, one of those convinced "forerunners" of academician Lysenko. [Soviet botanist and agriculturist, sponsored by Stalin as champion of "dialectical materialism", propagated the theory that acquired qualities could become hereditary, a theory refuted by international science in that field, ed.][Voltar Nota 2](#)

Nota 3 This is a very touching, maternal but wrong, feeling. I remember that when Glazunov was about fifty his mother used to tell the washerwoman to be "careful with the child's linen". The funniest thing is that when he was seventeen, Glazunov wrote a symphony which was anything but childish.[Voltar Nota 3](#)

Nota 4 But all this of course in a concentrated, compact, "portable" form, and *ad hoc!* [Voltar Nota 4](#)

Nota 5 The possession of a good voice is frequently mistaken for natural musicality and artistic talent. Yet we do not tend to consider a young pianist musical mainly because he happens to have a good Bechstein grand at home.[Voltar Nota 5](#)

Nota 6 Hence the conclusion: "compulsory piano" should be particularly compulsory for singers.[Voltar Nota 6](#)

Nota 7 In actual fact the reason was partly outside my control. I was, at that time, director of the conservatoire and led an extremely busy life. I had twenty-five pupils and naturally had to give more time and effort to the weaker than to the better ones (a truth of which many teachers, particularly ambitious ones, seem unaware; they work really seriously with only two or three of their most gifted pupils leaving the rest to drift in their wake).[Voltar Nota 7](#)

Nota 8 Here is an example from the "higher spheres". Liszt who had recognized at once how outstandingly gifted the young Rubinstein was, refused to teach him, yet he willingly took on much less gifted pianists.[Voltar Nota 8](#)

Nota 9 The Circle performed all the Mahler symphonies, the Miaskow- ski symphonies, several Wagner operas, works by Richard Strauss, Debussy and several new works by Soviet composers.[Voltar Nota 9](#)

Nota 10 Everyone knows what this "else" is: temperament, rhythm, tremendous willpower, purposeful rendering, "penetrating" and virtuoso brilliance, beautiful tone, etc.[Voltar Nota 10](#)

Nota 11 Incidentally, if Godowsky had four to five wrong notes in a recital, they stuck in one's memory like so many nails hammered into the brain, whereas with Rubinstein the audience frequently failed to notice wrong notes.[Voltar Nota 11](#)

Nota 12 This does not mean that I do not imagine with this music sometimes something entirely different: for instance, a walk along the banks of the Rhine on a spring morning ... etc.[Voltar Nota 12](#)

Nota 13 It is markedly individual, as everything Busoni did.[Voltar Nota 13](#)

Nota 14 The feeling of well-being, of affinity and at the same time of an individual person (if one may so express oneself) is present here in every harmony.[Voltar Nota 14](#)

Nota 15 For me every good recapitulation is like a return to the homeland after a long journey.[Voltar Nota 15](#)

Nota 16 I stress this deliberately: there are composers who do not "fall into error" for the simple reason that they do not dare, they are retrograde. (In other words they are themselves an error.) Whoever does not create anything new cannot create a great work of art. [This remark clearly alludes to the attacks on Shostakovich in 1936 and in 1948 and the following years, ed.][Voltar Nota 16](#)

Nota 17 Usually such pupils subsequently became very good teachers and methodologists.[Voltar Nota 17](#)

Nota 18 I could say a great deal about this conscience which is also good taste.[Voltar Nota 18](#)

Nota 19 An amusing detail. I used to weep buckets over it when I was six years old and I can still 'not listen to it without tears.[Voltar Nota 19](#)

Nota 20 The Fugue from op. 106 or the Fugue for the String Quartet op. 133, I sometimes call *in petto* "a banquet of the mind, an intellectual orgy" and it is precisely this that gives them their emotional and musical foundation.[Voltar Nota 20](#)