ALBERTO JONAS’ MASTER SCHOOL AND ITS ROLE IN EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY PIANO VIRTUOSITY

by

ROSS EDILLOR SALVOSA

B.Mus., Conservatory of Music at Lynn University, 2002
M.Mus., Conservatory of Music at Lynn University, 2009

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The following individuals certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for acceptance, the dissertation entitled:

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in Piano Performance

**Examing Committee:**

Prof. L. Mark Anderson, Piano Performance
Supervisor

Dr. Alexander Fisher, Musicology
Supervisory Committee Member

Dr. Terence Dawson, Piano Performance
Supervisory Committee Member

Dr. Scott Goble, Music Education
University Examiner

Prof. Rena Sharon, Piano Performance
University Examiner

**Additional Supervisory Committee Members:**

Supervisory Committee Member

Supervisory Committee Member
Abstract

First published in 1922 by Carl Fischer Music in New York, Alberto Jonas’ monumental seven-volume *Master School of Modern Piano Playing and Virtuosity* is the most comprehensive early twentieth-century treatise on piano playing. The present study provides a survey of the rise of the piano’s popularity, evolution of piano construction, and development of piano playing technique during the nineteenth century, as well as comparative studies of preparatory exercises found in commonly used volumes during Jonas’ lifetime, namely Franz Liszt’s *Technical Studies* (1873), Carl Tausig’s *Daily Studies* (1873), and Rafael Joseffy’s *School of Advanced Piano Playing* (1910). This thesis illustrates how the *Master School’s* scope and content surpassed those found in these pre-existing works. In comparison to the aforementioned works, the distinctive qualities of the *Master School* include its wider range of technical exercises; its inclusion of novel skills previously unexplored in the piano repertoire; its wealth of preparatory exercises for specific repertoire, accompanied by citations of specific examples that can be employed to practice specific technique; and its inclusion of essays on more refined aspects of piano playing such as pedaling, phrasing, and rhythm. This study posits that the *Master School* filled the need for a single comprehensive treatise on piano playing in the early twentieth century.
Lay Summary

First published in 1922, Alberto Jonas’ monumental pedagogical work *Master School of Modern Piano Playing and Virtuosity* is the most complete early twentieth-century treatise on piano playing. This thesis examines the factors that made Jonas’ *Master School* unique and superior for its time. Through a survey of the piano’s constructional evolution, the development of piano playing technique during the nineteenth century, and comparative studies, this thesis demonstrates how pre-existing works on piano playing fell short in comparison to the *Master School*. Its unique qualities include its wider range of exercises; its practice of skills previously unexplored in the piano repertoire at the time; and its inclusion of essays on finer aspects of virtuosic piano playing such as pedaling, phrasing, and rhythm. This dissertation demonstrates how the *Master School* filled the early twentieth-century need for a single comprehensive resource on piano playing.
Preface

This dissertation, written under the guidance of Professors L. Mark Anderson and Alexander Fisher, is an original, unpublished work, which stands as intellectual property of its author, Ross Edillor Salvosa. All musical examples from the Master School are reprinted with permission of Dover Publications; other musical examples exist in the public domain. This study was inspired by my own search for virtuosic exercises years ago in preparation for a performance of Chopin’s twelve Études Op. 10 and Liszt’s six Paganini Études, which led me to the Technical Studies, Daily Studies, School of Advanced Piano Playing, and Master School.
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To my parents, Imelda and Domingo Salvosa

&

To my husband, Joseph Stanislaus Regelbrugge
Introduction

In the nineteenth century, as the piano developed, and pianists grew in popularity, a corresponding increase of virtuosity found in the piano repertoire quickly superseded the technical demands of earlier piano music. Likewise, the rapid mechanical evolution of the piano itself, particularly during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, deeply impacted piano technique. By the early twentieth century, the lack of a single comprehensive work on piano playing that encompassed the growing demands of the piano repertoire created a significant gap in the pedagogical literature. This thesis demonstrates how Alberto Jonas’ *Master School of Modern Piano Playing and Virtuosity* (1929) successfully filled that gap and why it was distinctive for its time. Further, this thesis surveys the development of nineteenth-century piano technique as well as comparative studies of technical exercises in widespread use during Jonas’ lifetime in order to illuminate how the *Master School* surpassed them in both content and scope.

Chapter 1 discusses the evolution of the piano, the rise of the piano’s popularity, and the development of nineteenth-century piano technique that resulted from that evolution, as well as technical innovations set forth by virtuosi pianists like Frédéric Chopin and Franz Liszt. Chapter 2 contains comparative studies of technical exercises written by Franz Liszt, Carl Tausig, Rafael Joseffy, and Alberto Jonas that illustrate how Jonas’ *Master School* was a better resource for preparatory exercises. Chapter 3 includes a biography of Jonas as a pianist, pedagogue, and author, as well as a brief history of his seven-volume pedagogical work. It then highlights, volume by volume, the work’s unique contributions in comparison to previous aforementioned works, thereby demonstrating how *Master School* successfully filled the early-twentieth-century need for a single more current and comprehensive resource for the development and refinement of pianistic and musical skill.
Chapter 1

The Evolution of the Piano, Piano Technique and Piano Teaching

The Evolution of the Piano

It is important to trace the evolution of piano construction from the early eighteenth century all the way to the late nineteenth century in order to trace the development of modern virtuosic piano technique. The evolution of the piano and the development of virtuosic technique influenced each other symbiotically. The rapid changes in piano construction during the early nineteenth-century led composers to offer more virtuosic works suited for instruments made at the time. Likewise, the demand for a more responsive instrument from pianists and composers precipitated these rapid changes, thereby surpassing the mechanical and acoustical capabilities of instruments manufactured previously. As a result, virtuosic works in the early nineteenth century outstripped the technical demands of those written previously. These parallel developments gave rise to the need for more comprehensive resources on piano playing, which is where the Master School comes into play.

The combination of the more manageable and inflectable tone (including subtle dynamic changes) of the clavichord and the relative power of the harpsichord seemed to be an unattainable ideal to musicians and instrument builders in the early eighteenth-century.¹ Because of this, many builders attempted to replace the harpsichord mechanism with that of a hammer action. The dulcimer (otherwise known as the German Hackbrett), an instrument played with hammers held in both hands akin to a xylophone, was the model that most likely led to the development of the pianoforte. Bartolomeo Cristofori, considered to be the father of the fortepiano, published a sketch of his hammer-action model in 1711 (Figure 1), which

he named “gravicembalo col piano e forte” (Harpsichord with soft and loud). In 1720, Cristofori finished the first prototype of his pianoforte. According to Dolge:

He added the escapement device, a back check, regulating the fall of the hammer, and connected an individual damper for each note direct with the hammer action, thus giving the performer a mechanism with which he could, through his touch, produce a delicate pianissimo and also a strong fortissimo, impossible on either clavichord or harpsichord.

Figure 1. Bartolomeo Cristofori’s hammer-action model

The escapement device enables the hammer to move towards the strings on its own inertia without being connected to the rest of the action, which allows the hammer to rebound immediately from the string while the key is still depressed. Cristofori’s hammer-action mechanism was so well designed that it remained the standard for at least seventy-five years. In fact, the highly complex hammer-action mechanism of the modern piano still bears much resemblance to Cristofori’s. The demand for greater sonority at the time could be achieved only by using heavier strings, the use of which was limited by the relative weakness of the wooden frame. Cristofori apparently reinforced the casing of the harpsichord on his first fortepiano to withstand the increased strain of heavier strings.

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2 Ibid., 46.
3 Ibid., 47.
6 The wooden frame or “harp” is the big distinction between the early fortepiano and mid eighteenth-century instruments equipped with a cast-iron frame.
7 Dolge, Pianos and their Maker, 47.
In 1808, Sebastian Erard patented the first repetition action for the pianoforte, which was later improved by his nephew Pierre Erard, who patented the double-escapement action in 1821. Another important Erard innovation was a device known as the agraffe, which pushed down the strings to prevent undesirable upward motion after being struck by the hammer. This innovation led to the invention of the pressure bar, otherwise known as the capo tasto.

In 1825, the American piano maker Alpheus Babcock invented the first cast iron frame, which was later improved by Jonas Chickering and Steinway & Sons. Babcock’s invention paved the way for crossed stringing, which enabled builders to install longer bass strings without increasing the length of the instrument. Although it yielded a more powerful sonority, the first fortepianos equipped with solid iron frames were not favored due to their metallic sound. In 1855, Steinway & Sons patented an overstrung system combined with a solid iron frame, which produced a much more desirable tone quality due to its diaphragmatic soundboard. This new system became the standard for piano makers worldwide and is still in use today.

Due to this innovative multiplicity, heavier and denser hammers were employed to provide more powerful blows to the strings: see the comparison of fortepiano hammers (Figure 2) and modern piano hammers (Figure 3). This rendered the keyboard mechanism heavier and less evenly weighted than that of fortepianos, thereby necessitating a drastic shift in piano technique. Prior to the early nineteenth century, pianoforte hammers were smaller

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8 Ibid., 61.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid., 71.
12 Ibid., 72. Steinway & Sons’ patented diaphragmatic soundboard is designed to have the greatest thickness in the middle which then tapers continuously towards the outer edges. This designed optimizes the amount of energy needed to vibrate the soundboard resulting in greater variances in tone, colour and richness.
and more uniform in size due to the lighter strings. However, from about 1825, Broadwood, Pleyel and others employed a hammer size graded from heavier to lighter as one moves from the bass to treble, in order to compensate for the use of much thicker strings on the lower registers. This arrangement creates inequality in power and volume between registers, thereby rendering the treble register much weaker tonally than the bass. This resulted in the loss of tonal transparency between registers – a quality that is unique to fortепianos. This loss affected piano playing especially in the area of voicing, such that achieving a balanced cantabile effect on modern pianos requires pianists to vary dynamic contrasts between registers greatly in order to compensate for its uneven sonority.

Figure 2. Pianoforte hammers

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Advances in the double escapement action using springs and moving levers, achieved by Erard and further improved by Pleyel and Company in the early nineteenth century (Figure 4), allowed the keys to be repeated at greater speed when properly regulated. When playing on fortepianos prior to 1780, higher finger articulation and individual finger strength, otherwise known as the “Fingerschule” technique, is necessary due to its more primitive repetition action (Figure 5), a mechanism equipped with smaller and much lighter hammers that takes more time to reset and requires a vastly lighter touch, allowing the use of isolated finger mobility without needing much arm weight. The “Fingerschule” technique gives time for the mechanism to reset – enabling the key to return to its resting point – before the hammer can be set in motion again with the following keystroke. Conversely, the double escapement action permits pianists to repeat a note without the entire mechanism returning to its resting point, which means that the key does not have to return to its resting point before being played again. This also allows pianists’ fingers to stay closer to the keys without the

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need for high finger articulation in addition to the ability to play more rapid repeated notes. The double-escapement mechanism offered new pianistic possibilities and led to virtuosic technical innovations such as those found in the works of Chopin and Liszt. It also prompted the development of new forms of piano playing using the entire hand, forearm, and upper arm.\textsuperscript{15} Regarding Pleyel pianos from the first half of the nineteenth-century, Jim Samson writes:

Anyone who has tried playing Chopin on a Pleyel from the early to mid-nineteenth century (the oldest Pleyel surviving today dates, I believe, from 1828) will have felt the excitement of recovering something of the sound-world the composer had in mind. After the initial adjustment, all sorts of things begin to make sense: the weighted immediacy of the touch paradoxically makes rapid figurations easier and allows them to resonate as a delicately nuanced wash of colour; the harmonies gain transparency, which not only enhances (and surrounds) the melody but reveals inherent contrapuntal qualities; the different tonal quality of the registers adds a new dimension to layered or stratified textures; and, not least, Chopin’s pedal indications and metronome marks (or some of them) come into their own.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{15} Alan Davidson, “Franz Liszt and the Development of 19\textsuperscript{th} Century Pianism,” \textit{The Musical Times} 147 (2006): 33-34.
Figure 4. Cross-section diagrams of Erard’s double escapement action compared to today’s grand piano action\textsuperscript{17}

Figure 5. Earlier versions of systems enabling repetition of notes\textsuperscript{18}


The rapid evolution of the fortepiano gave rise to the arm-weight technique that rendered obsolete the “Fingerschule” approach associated with the harpsichord. These developments, alongside the greater technical demands composers made in their works during this period, created a need for more relevant resources on piano playing, especially in the late nineteenth century.

**The Development of Nineteenth-Century Piano Playing**

To quote Alan Davidson, the pivotal factors in the evolution of piano playing were the “symbiotic relationship between playing, advances in the construction of the instrument itself, and the changing role of the piano in the nineteenth century.”\(^\text{19}\) As previously discussed, the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries marked a departure from the non-legato touch generally associated with the Classical era and a move towards a bravura style of playing. The emergence of a more singing approach (*cantabile*) in the nineteenth century stemmed from advances in piano construction, primarily through the invention of the cast-iron frame, resulting in dramatically longer sustain and fullness of tone. According to Alan Davidson, “this [design] was achieved by, and largely through, a close touch with the keyboard, as opposed to a non-legato and high-fingered approach characteristic of earlier schools”—a technical innovation that would have been impossible prior to the invention of the double escapement action, as explained earlier.\(^\text{20}\) Among the early proponents of the *bel canto* style of playing were Friedrich Kalkbrenner (1785-1849) and John Field (1782–1837), whose quality of touch made an indelible impression on those who witnessed their performances. The *bel canto* style of singing influenced instrumentalists in the late eighteenth-century who then emulated it in their playing. Chopin and Liszt were among the

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\(^{20}\) Ibid., 35.
pianists who later advocated this style.\textsuperscript{21} Describing Kalkbrenner’s performances, Charles Hallé wrote:

He has a special mode of handling the piano, particularly in melodious passages, which made a great impression, but which I cannot describe to you; the reason of it lies mostly in that he keeps his fingers so closely over the keys.\textsuperscript{22}

Franz Liszt’s rival, Sigismund Thalberg (1812–1871), was also known for his clear singing tone and skillful pedaling.\textsuperscript{23}

The rapid development of the pianoforte completely changed the manner in which the instrument was played.\textsuperscript{24} According to Kochevitsky:

Control and speed of the key’s downward movement is a point of first importance in piano playing. Therefore, fine work of arm muscles is needed for the regulation of weight and impetus, and is one of the basic problems of piano technique. This problem is absent in harpsichord technique were preciseness of attack of finger on key (articulation) is of first importance […] The problem of the legato effect on the piano is also completely different from that on the older instruments.\textsuperscript{25}

Innovations in piano playing established by Chopin and his contemporaries in the first half of the 1800s marked the turning point that established new forms of piano technique.\textsuperscript{26} Liszt and Chopin were at the center of the “paradigmatic divide marked by the development of a zealous arm-weight pedagogy.”\textsuperscript{27} They are widely considered the leading figures in nineteenth-century piano technique, as both revolutionized piano playing and demanded new forms of technique through their revolutionary compositions.

\textsuperscript{21} Davidson, “Franz Liszt and the Development of 19th-Century Pianism,” 35.
\textsuperscript{22} Reginald Gerig, \textit{Famous Pianists and Their Technique}, 2nd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 131.
\textsuperscript{24} Davidson, “Franz Liszt and the Development of 19th-Century Pianism,” 37.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 34.
Frédéric Chopin

Chopin, who was mostly self-taught (his only piano teacher, Wojciech Zwyny, was primarily a violinist), was considered an outsider to the conventional school of pianism at the time and offered a novel conception of piano technique. According to Eigeldinger, “One can hardly overstress that in Chopin’s definition of technique, sound production, or the art of touch comes before the acquisition of virtuosity.” Chopin himself stated that:

One needs only to study a certain positioning of the hand in relation to the keys to obtain with ease the most beautiful quality of sound, to know how to play long notes and short notes and [to attain] unlimited dexterity[…]. A well-formed technique, it seems to me, [is one] that can control and vary [bien nuancer] a beautiful sound quality.

This summary of Chopin’s concept of piano technique perfectly coincides with a statement of Liszt’s: “All technique originates in the art of touch and returns to it.”

Chopin insisted that his pupils begin with the scales of B Major, F-sharp Major, and D-flat Major to achieve a clear understanding of a natural, more comfortable position of the hand; the longer index, middle, and ring fingers on top of the black keys. This notion contradicted well-established schools of pianism, particularly from pianists who sought to even out the strength of fingers by means of exercises intended purely for finger strengthening. He strongly advocated maximum suppleness of the wrists, which surpassed the “Fingerschule” technique promoted by Carl Czerny (1791–1857). In his treatise, Complete Theoretical and Practical Pianoforte School, Czerny wrote that: “The forearm to the knuckle must be absolutely straight with the wrists neither bent downward nor upward.”

Regarding the “Fingerschule,” Kochevitsky states:

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29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
32 Ibid, 17.
33 Carl Czerny, Complete Theoretical and Practical Fortepiano School (London: R. Cocks, 1839), 1-2.
Piano Pedagogy within the first hundred years of the piano’s existence was built on three commonly recognized principles: (1) Only fingers should be used; consequently, the upper parts of the arm should be fixated. (2) Technical training is purely mechanical procedure, requiring many hours of daily practicing. (3) The teacher is the absolute authority. Since such teaching concentrated on the action of the fingers, this trend in piano pedagogy has been called the finger school. All instruction of this school was empirically based on the personal experience of the teacher and on the belief in his infallibility.34

To the contrary, Chopin stated that: “Everything is a matter of knowing good fingering […] Just as we need to use the conformation of the fingers, we need no less to use the rest of the hand, the wrist, the forearm and the upper arm. One cannot try to play everything from the wrist, as Kalkbrenner claims.”35 He was by no means a slave to tradition, perhaps due to his independent, self-acquired, and unique musical training. He adopted the easiest fingerings even if they violated conventional rules established by his predecessors.36 According to Eigeldinger,

In Chopin’s playing, the fingers activate the whole arm: all his technical innovations rest upon the feeling of perfect continuity from the shoulder to the tips of the fingers. Naturally these innovations are reflected in his piano writing being substantially richer than that of his immediate predecessors, such as Hummel, Field, and Weber, and of his contemporaries.37

Largely disseminated through his pupils, Chopin’s approach had a powerful and lasting impact on the development of nineteenth-century pianism, particularly in more finer aspects such as tone production and arm-weight technique.38 According to Eigeldinger, “by making his students study his own compositions, Chopin communicated to them something of the secret of the innovations in which he had enriched the pianistic art.”39

35 Eigeldinger, Chopin, 18.
36 Ibid, 19.
37 Ibid.
38 Among Chopin’s students were piano virtuosi Karol Mikuli (1819–1897) and Julius Schulhoff (1825–1898). Mikuli eventually became Chopin’s teaching assistant and was the teacher of Moriz Rosenthal (1862–1946), one of the renowned piano virtuosi of the early twentieth century.
39 Eigeldinger, Chopin, 17.
Franz Liszt

Liszt left no account in his own words of his technical approach to piano playing. His approach has been characterized as intuitive. This has created ambiguities in understanding Liszt’s approach to piano technique. Kochevitsky states, “While Liszt in his young days subscribed somewhat to commonly accepted views on developing piano technique, basically he held different views and gradually formed his own ideas, compatible with the most advanced ideas of the twentieth century.” According to Bohemian piano virtuoso August Stradal (1860–1930), a pupil of Liszt, the famed composer-pianist did not promote arm-weight technique. Stradal, who studied with Liszt towards the end of his life, wrote that “as new theories about arm movement are being advanced nowadays, it must be stressed that, were [Liszt] still alive, he would eschew them, as after finger technique, his whole technique was a wrist technique.” Given the nature of his virtuosic piano works, many of which he performed himself, it is obvious that Liszt employed the use of arm-weight in order to play works such as the Dante Sonata, as well as many other compositions, including Chopin’s Étude Op. 10 No. 1. A letter Chopin wrote to Ferdinand Hiller on June 1833 reads: “I write you this without knowing what my pen is writing down. Because at this very moment, Liszt is playing my études, and he is taking me away from my own conscious thoughts. I wish I could steal from him the manner in which he plays my own études.” In Chopin’s Étude Op.10, No.1, for example, careful management of arm-weight as well as flexibility of hand and wrist is the primary technical requirement necessary to execute this

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41 Ibid.
44 Ibid.
study, which suggests that Liszt did in fact subscribe to arm-weight technique as early as 1833. Even though pianos in the 1830s still had considerably lighter touch and unstandardized key width making octaves and larger intervals less of a stretch, arm-weight technique is still needed to successfully execute Chopin’s Étude Op. 10, No. 1, on period instruments. Accounts of Liszt’s method found in the diaries of Madame Auguste Boissier (1786–1836), whose daughter Valerie studied with him in 1831–1832, supports this argument. Boissier stated that “Liszt did not keep his hands in a rounded position nor were they altogether flat, but rather his fingers were so flexible as to possess no fixed position.”

She reported having received the following explanation of his hand and wrist position from him:

> He had played the piano for years, and was brilliant in concert, and so believed that he was quite marvelous. Then one day, being unable to express with his fingers all the feelings which weighed upon him, he re-examined himself point by point and found that he could not perform trills or octaves very well, or even certain chords. Since then, he studied his scales again, and little by little completely changed his touch. Formerly, when attempting to express certain tones energetically, his hands stiffened, but now he has banished all stiffness from his playing; from the wrist, he tosses his fingers upon the keys, at times with force and at times with softness, but always with complete suppleness.

The expression “with complete suppleness” clearly suggests Liszt’s departure from Czerny’s “Fingerschule” method of keeping the wrist in a stiff and stationary position. By mobilizing the wrist in a supple manner, Liszt would have inadvertently used his forearm and upper arm naturally. This “souplesse,” according to Karl Mikuli, was also one of Chopin’s primary concerns when teaching. “On beginning a lesson,” Mikuli writes, “Chopin’s main concern was to do away with every stiffness and convulsive or cramped movement of the hand, in order to obtain the primary requisite of good playing: souplesse [suppleness] and with it,

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47 Ibid., xix.
independence of fingers.” These accounts from Bossier and Mikuli suggest that Chopin and Liszt had very similar approaches to piano technique.

**Carl Tausig and Rafael Joseffy**

Carl Tausig (1841–1871) and Rafael Joseffy (1852–1915), two of Liszt’s famed pupils, were also key figures in the development of nineteenth-century piano technique laid down by Chopin and Liszt. The legendary Russian piano virtuoso Anton Rubinstein (1829–1894) revered Tausig for his infallible technical abilities, which he said surpassed those of Liszt. Tausig had small hands, for which he compensated with extreme flexibility.

Regarding Tausig, Walker states:

Evidently, he could just span an octave, yet his listeners were bowled over by his rendering of such pieces as Liszt’s Hungarian Rhapsody No.6 in D-flat Major, whose famously repeated octaves in the Friska, first in the right and then in the left hand, have been the downfall of many a pianist with a far larger span. In concert Tausig’s powerful delivery of this passage appeared all the more spectacular because these great waves of sound came from a man possessed of such a small frame which barely moved.

In keeping with Liszt and Chopin’s approach, Tausig’s “souplesse” approach enabled him to execute challenging passages with ease and comfort even with his small hands. Like Liszt, Tausig did not leave any accounts in his own words of his personal approach to piano technique. According to Hans von Bülow, another celebrated Liszt student, Tausig was a reluctant teacher who limited himself to three or four students. He is said to have never taught technique and to have had a short temper, even with his better students. He did, however, write a set of advanced exercises entitled *Daily Studies*, which according to Walker “represent the golden doors through which those with ambition are invited to pass en route to

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48 Eigeldinger, Chopin, 29.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid., 68.
53 Ibid., 68-69.
These exercises are aimed to increase dexterity and flexibility. However, explanations in the *Daily Studies* regarding manner of execution are scarce.

Among Tausig’s revolutionary contributions was the introduction of the chromatic glissando in music notation, a dazzling technical effect which can be found in the climactic section of his *Das Geisterschiff* (The Ghost Ship). Unfortunately, Tausig died at the age of twenty-nine from typhoid fever while still at the peak of his performing career. However, he left behind numerous virtuosic works as well as the *Daily Studies*, which give us a glimpse of the inner working of his technical approach.

In contrast, Joseffy retired early from performing and dedicated the remainder of his life to teaching. He is renowned for his tremendous contributions to the art of piano pedagogy, especially in the area of technique. Both Liszt and Tausig disliked teaching technique, whereas Joseffy dedicated his teaching years to its study and dissemination.

Edwin Hughes writes,

> He was an indefatigable worker at his technical studies and his editions of piano compositions […] His most important legacy to the pianistic world is the work which he accomplished towards making the thorny path of technique more practicable and placing keyboard fluency and freedom a little nearer within reach of the aspiring students.

As I will demonstrate in Chapter 2, Joseffy’s *School of Advanced Piano Playing* surpassed both the *Technical Studies* of Liszt and the *Daily Studies* of Tausig in terms of its comprehensiveness. Regarding technique, Joseffy states, “I have always held that great technique does not come from the finger; it is the intellectual spirit that gives the power for

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54 Ibid.
55 Ibid., 69.
56 Ibid., 71. Liszt himself was taken aback by this passage.
57 Ibid., 70.
58 Ibid., 69.
60 Ibid.
62 Hughes, "Rafael Joseffy's Contribution to Piano Technic,” 350.
Joseffy advocated intelligent forms of practicing and, like Chopin, the employment of unorthodox fingerings. According to Hughes,

> He emphasized most strongly the importance of combining technical practice with the study of pieces, his idea being to take the most difficult passages and construct even more difficult technical studies from them… His ideas on fingering were illuminating and his methods of practice for overcoming specific technical difficulties in the study matter were quite invaluable[...]. There are probably few modern pianists who have gone into the matter of fingering with such minute detail as Joseffy. With him fingering was almost an art in itself. At the lessons, in his books of technical studies, and in his editions of pianoforte works this matter was always uppermost in his mind. Fingering and tone quality he considered inseparable, the latter depending almost entirely on the former.

While Chopin and Liszt’s influence on Joseffy is obvious, he asserted that it was Tausig to whom he owed more than to anyone else. He considered Tausig his ideal pianist: Joseffy regarded him even more highly than Liszt in this respect.

**Ludwig Deppe and Theodor Leschetizky**

Ludwig Deppe, one of the important pianist-pedagogues in the latter half of the nineteenth century, believed in the use of arm weight and in the proper balance and alignment of fingers and wrists – as opposed to finger strengthening – to facilitate the execution of technically challenging passages and the production of a rich, *cantabile* tone. Deppe was a proponent of curvilinear arm movements, fine legato playing, and intelligent forms of practicing. In fact, his pedagogical approach was reliant upon the achievements of Chopin and Liszt. According to Kochevitsky:

> In liberating the hand and arm of the pianist, Deppe refused to consider isolated finger technique, though he realized very well what an important part the fingers have in piano playing. He taught that when the hand and fingers are supported and reinforced by free movements of the arm, effort is distributed over every part of the playing apparatus from...
shoulder to fingertips. His system insured that arm, wrist and fingers would work in natural cooperation as one complete set of machinery.\(^70\)

Deppe was also the teacher of famed virtuoso pianist, teacher, and composer Theodor Leschetizky (1830–1915), who was among most the influential piano pedagogues of the late nineteenth century. Leschetizky was also the co-founder and head of the piano department of the St. Peters burg Conservatory of Music, which was established in 1862.\(^71\) One of the key tenets in Leschetizky’s approach was the importance of the wrist, which according to him serves as a spring.\(^72\) According to Christina Reitz, “A defining moment of Leschetizky’s career as both performer and an instructor was hearing Bohemian pianist and Chopin pupil, Julius Schulhoff, perform in the 1840s.”\(^73\) Leschetizky was particularly impressed with Schulhoff’s beautiful tone production and elegant phrasing, which I argue followed from principles of piano technique advocated by Chopin. Leschetizky noted:

> Under his hands the piano seems like a different instrument. Seated in a corner, my heart overflowed with indescribable emotions as I listened. Not a note escaped me. I began to foresee a new style of playing. That melody standing out in bold relief, that wonderful sonority—all this must be due to a new and entirely different touch. And that *cantabile*, a legato such as I had not dreamed possible on the piano, a human voice rising above the sustaining harmonies! Schulhoff’s playing was a revelation to me. From that day I tried to find that touch. I thought of it constantly and studied the five-finger [motions] diligently to learn the method of production. I practiced incessantly [...] I kept that beautiful sound well in my mind, and it made the driest work interesting.\(^74\)

Leschetizky was not the only person deeply affected by Schulhoff’s playing. The Russian virtuoso Anton Rubinstein (1829–1894) was so impressed with Schulhoff’s touch at the keyboard that he altered his manner of playing to emulate him. Leschetizky explained, “Now it was very interesting to me to notice the next time I heard Anton Rubinstein play, that he

\(^70\) Ibid.
too altered his touch in the very same way as I had [...] as without doubt his inspiration came from the same source.”

Leschetizky was the teacher of several renowned virtuosi, including Ignacy Jan Paderewski (1860–1941), who became an iconic figure in the classical music world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as Ignaz Friedman (1882–1948) and Ossip Gabrilowitsch (1878–1936). Both of the latter were major contributors to the *Master School of Modern Piano Playing and Virtuosity*, the focus of the present study.

The rise of piano teaching as a lucrative profession played a huge role in the dissemination of new approaches on piano technique. Chopin taught his students his own compositions and in doing so shared with them his unique technical approach. Chopin himself earned a large portion of his living from teaching wealthy aristocrats. In his earlier years, Liszt also supplemented his income through teaching. His pupil Joseffy virtually retired from concertizing to dedicate the rest of his career to teaching. Leschetizky made his mark in history not only as a pianist but also as a piano teacher who mentored the next generation of legendary pianists.

**Piano Teaching as a Lucrative Profession**

The changing role of the pianist, as well as the instrument’s meteoric ascent through the drawing rooms of European upper classes during the first half of the nineteenth century, played a tremendous role in the evolution of piano teaching as a lucrative profession. According to Janet Ritterman, “The shift of emphasis from the pianist as composer to the pianist as interpreter [did the most] to alter the attitudes of performers and audiences to piano

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76 Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 17.
77 Ibid., 16.
music presented in concerts.”

Being a pianist-composer was no longer a prerequisite for being a famous virtuoso pianist in the nineteenth century. The increase in the number of women pianists during the first half of the nineteenth century also drastically expanded piano teaching as a lucrative profession.

The rise of virtuoso pianists added to the growing popularity of piano recitals and piano lessons. Both performers and performances became increasingly spectacular, and these so-called virtuosi came to resemble what we know today as super-star celebrities. The rise of piano virtuosity, which James Parakilas describes as causing the performer to become “a cult object [for] so long that it almost lost its susceptibility to mockery,” led to new works that far exceeded the technical demands imposed by composers prior to about 1830. To illustrate the new expectations placed on pianists, a wide array of paintings, caricatures, and sketches depicted nineteenth-century performers, often with exaggerated features (Figure 6).

![Figure 6. Nineteenth-century caricature of Franz Liszt](http://www.artsjournal.com/pianomorphosis/2010/09/large_capable_hands.html)

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Whether deliberately or coincidentally, these depictions suggest the virtuoso’s iconic and at times even mythical stature. A Viennese designer apparently stated that Liszt “might sit to every painter for a Grecian god.” A sketch of Liszt from a report submitted by the Viennese correspondent of the leading German musical journal, the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, portrays him with extremely long, slender fingers and adored by a predominantly female audience throwing flowers to him in admiration. Such exaggerated depictions were not uncommon in the nineteenth century. For example, sculptor Jean-Pierre Dantan (1800-1869) created a representation of Sigismund Thalberg that portrays him with four hands, six fingers on each. Many virtuosi, including Liszt, were portrayed as savage warriors conquering their instruments with excessive force and brutality (Figure 6).

Liszt also played an important role in elevating the social status of musicians, who prior to him tended to be socially subservient. Alan Walker writes:

> No artist before Liszt, not even Paganini, succeeded so completely in breaking down the barriers that traditionally separated performing artists from who were then grandly called “social superiors.” After Liszt, all performers began to enjoy a higher status in society. Haydn and Mozart had been treated like servants; whenever they visited the homes of nobility they had entered by the back door. Beethoven, by dint of his unique genius and his uncompromising nature, had forced the Viennese aristocracy at least to regard him as their equal. But it was left to Liszt to foster the view that an artist is a superior being, because divinely gifted, and that the rests of mankind, of whatever social class, owed him respect and even homage. This view of the artist who walks with God and brings fire down from heaven with which to kindle the hearts of mankind became so deeply entrenched in the Romantic consciousness that today we regard it as a cliché.

Liszt’s career was the model for pianists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He was one of the first to play entire recitals by memory, to perform works apart from his own from the entire keyboard repertory (as it then existed) ranging from Bach to Chopin, and

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84 Anonymous, “Liszt, the All-Conquering Pianist,” in ibid., 309.
to consistently position the piano with its open lid facing the audience. Liszt also apparently invented the term “piano recital.”

Because of the elevated social status of piano virtuosi such as Chopin, Liszt, Thalberg, and Tausig, the piano quickly became a symbol of affluence and the instrument of choice for household music-making for the rising nineteenth-century middle class. This phenomenon elevated piano teaching as a highly profitable occupation. Arthur Loesser states, “The golden glow that Liszt, Thalberg, and others exalted about themselves naturally fired many young people to emulate them. Any youth of above-average musical aptitude might easily be persuaded to dream of fame and money as the reward of assiduous labor at the piano.” As he rarely performed in public, Frédéric Chopin, for example, heavily relied on income from piano lessons, often for wealthy patrons, in addition to the remuneration he received as a composer. According to Carl Halle – an aspiring young pianist who moved to Paris in 1836 in search for a piano professor whose price he could afford – Chopin charged twenty francs a lesson, which is equivalent to roughly about one hundred and thirty-eight dollars in 2015 based on the Labor Statistics’ annual Consumer Price Index (CPI). In a letter to his parents dated October 1836, Halle wrote:

There remains one hope for me, that of giving lessons. Here in Paris the most second-rate lessons are paid 5 francs an hour and good teachers easily get from 8 to 12 francs a lesson. Should I succeed in finding a few pupils, I could manage very well […] Supposing I should succeed in a month or two, to give one lesson a day even at 6 francs, it would make 150 francs a month that would already be a great help […] If later on I should get four pupils a day at 10 francs each, we get a monthly income of 1040 francs […] The result is grand, but

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88 Ibid., 285.
89 Ibid.
93 Ibid., 305.
not at all impossible. You can calculate what a man like Chopin must earn who gives eight or nine lessons a day at 20 francs […] tell me any town in Germany, or anywhere else, where it would be possible to earn so much at the same time have such opportunities of perfecting oneself in musical, and almost all other respects, as Paris.  

It was well known that Chopin made a good living from teaching. This is partly due to the kind of students he taught – primarily women of aristocracy who equated the high price to their own social significance. According to music critic Henri Blanchard in an article he wrote for the Revue et Gazette Musicale in 1843: “Among the profession most in fashion, we must cite in the front rank that of professor of the piano. The professor of the piano belongs to all classes of society in France; he is officer of the Legion of Honor, battalion chief of the National Guard, industrialist, elector, and eligible for office.”

As piano teaching became more lucrative, books on how to play the piano – methods, albums, finger exercises, essays – grew abundant, with every prominent piano pedagogue promoting his own. Likewise, the demand for such literature grew in proportion with the increasing number of music conservatories and piano teachers. In 1840, music educator François-Joseph Fétis, together with Ignaz Moscheles, compiled the Méthodes des Méthodes in which they solicited Europe’s leading pianists, Chopin included, to contribute one or more Étude de Perfection. Schumann wrote the Album for the Young, Op. 68 to capitalize on the growing middle-class demand for pedagogical works to be played by young children in their homes. Regarding this collection, Lora Deahl writes, “Schumann regretfully conceded that

95 Ibid., 379-380.
96 Ibid., 380.
98 Ibid., 381.
99 Ibid.
100 Ibid., 381. François-Joseph Fétis and Ignaz Moscheles, Méthodes des Méthodes (Paris: Schlesinger, 1840). The Méthodes des Méthodes’ popularity was short lived. However, it contains three short études written by Chopin that are still commonly played today.
the financial responsibilities of supporting a wife and family had forced him to consider not only artistic fruits of his labor but also the prosaic ones."  

As previously mentioned, Liszt wrote twelve volumes of finger exercises that were published in 1868, which he titled *Technical Studies*. His student Carl Tausig followed suit and wrote the *Daily Studies*, which was published in 1873. Johannes Brahms’ *Fifty-one Finger Exercises* was published in 1893, which was intended as preparatory for his virtuosic piano works. Shortly thereafter, Rafael Joseffy completed his collection of exercises known as the *School of Advanced Piano Playing*, which was published in 1902. Elizabeth Caland (1862–1929), one of Deppe’s pupils, carefully laid out her teacher’s approach in her book *Artistic Piano Playing as Taught by Ludwig Deppe*, which was published a year later. Each of these authors attempted to address specific aspects of piano playing separately – whether in terms of technical exercises or essays regarding various concepts of virtuosic piano playing. For example, the works of Liszt, Tausig, Brahms, and Joseffy do not include essays regarding finer aspects of touch and tone production, whereas Caland’s work was devoid of virtuosic technical exercises.

The lack of a single comprehensive pedagogical resource on piano playing in the early twentieth century that encompassed the technical developments achieved by nineteenth-century pianism left a significant void waiting to be filled. Piano virtuoso Ignacy Paderewski wrote:

> A great many Methods of Piano Playing have been published since the patriarchal days of Carl Czerny, to whom we are all so indebted. Some of those Methods have served the purpose, assisting the students of former generations in their struggle with technical difficulties, helping them sometimes to solve the so often perplexing problems of fingering.

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102 Ibid.
From a historical point of view, they still deserve attention and command respect. But the marvelous evolution of the literature of the piano, the numerous and noteworthy compositions following the immortal masterworks of the past, have created new difficulties, new problems. The progress in the building of the instrument itself, originated by the genius of Erard and carried by that of Steinway to the summit of perfection, has exercised on the piano technique an influence that has not hitherto received the deserved consideration. The field of piano playing has become not only wider, but much more complex. Under the circumstances the necessity for a truly modern treatise on piano playing has been keenly felt.\(^{108}\)

In the first decades of the twentieth century, a race to produce such a work ensued, resulting in the publication of numerous books on piano playing by such virtuosi as Ferruccio Busoni (1866–1924) and Alberto Jonas, both of whom attempted to address the ever-increasing advancements in pianistic challenges.\(^{109}\) Busoni’s work, entitled *Klavierübung*, first published by Breitkopf & Härtel in 1918, is a compilation of exercises and practice pieces including his own works as well as transcriptions of works by others, reminiscent of Rafael Joseffy’s *School of Advanced Piano Playing*. However, Busoni’s work lacked important topics such as pedaling and touch. Jonas’ *Master School of Modern Piano Playing and Virtuosity*, first published in 1922 by Carl Fischer, went further by including not only exercises and practice pieces but also an abundance of essays pertaining to pedaling, phrasing, rhythm, voicing, and touch, to name just a few.

To better illustrate this need, this document presents a comparative study of Liszt’s *Technical Studies*, Tausig’s *Daily Studies*, Joseffy’s *School of Advanced Piano Playing* and Jonas’ *The Master School* as sources of preparatory exercises for nineteenth century virtuosic repertoire in the following chapter. Samples of specific technical challenges from virtuosic works of Chopin and Liszt, especially those requiring greater reach, are chosen to demonstrate how volumes prior to the *Master School* fell short of providing adequate preparatory exercises. However, examples from composers other than Chopin and Liszt are

presented in the later chapter to further illustrate how the *Master School* was a more suitable resource, not only for preparatory exercises but also for essays pertaining to finer aspects of virtuosic technique such as rhythm, accents, and phrasing. The finer aspects of virtuosic technique I refer to here pertain to the successful marriage of technique, virtuosity, and artistry as opposed to just digital (or mechanical) technique.
Chapter 2

Preparatory Exercises for Chopin and Liszt’s Virtuosic Works: A Comparative Study

Chopin and Liszt’s virtuosic masterpieces, especially their études, are excellent examples of nineteenth-century virtuosic piano works that revolutionized piano technique. Chopin’s Étude Op.10, No.1, for example, demands arpeggio execution often exceeding the span of a tenth (Figure 7). As mentioned in Chapter 1, it shows a departure from the early “Fingerschule” approach and an understanding of the need for suppleness in order to utilize the entire arm in piano playing. Exercises based on arpeggios found in Liszt’s Technical Studies (Figure 8), Tausig’s Daily Studies (Figure 8), and Joseffy’s School of Advanced Piano Playing (Figure 10) do not exceed a span of a tenth: to be specific, broken chord exercises in Technical Studies and Daily Studies are all contained in an octave span, while few in the School of Advanced Piano Playing reach up to a tenth. The Master School, on the other hand, includes several exercises tailored specifically for Op.10, No.1 (Figure 11).\(^{110}\)

Figure 7. Excerpt from Chopin’s Étude Op.10, No.1

\(^{110}\) Jonas, Master School, Book 2, 101-102.
Figure 8. Exercises on broken chords from Liszt’s *Technical Studies*, Vol. 3.

Figure 9. Exercises on broken chords from Tausig’s *Daily Studies*, Vol. 2.

Figure 10. Exercises in broken chords from Joseffy’s *School of Advanced Piano Playing*, Vol. 5.

Figure 11. Preparatory exercises for Chopin’s Étude Op.10, No.1 from the *Master School*, Book 2.
Liszt’s *La Campanella* requires broken octave stretches in a two-octave span using 1-3-5 fingering on the right hand (Figure 12). Though only reaching less than a two-octave span, a similar passage in his first version of *Au Bord d’une Source* exhibits a similar skill in the left hand (Figure 13). These works, like Chopin’s Op.10, No.1, undoubtedly imply a more holistic technique involving the entire forearm and upper arm. Unfortunately, none of the three books of exercises by Liszt, Tausig, or Joseffy include exercises that resemble the aforementioned skill. The only exercise that is remotely comparable can be found in Joseffy’s book, and it pertains to octave leaps in which he specified the use of 1-5 fingering (Figure 14). The *Master School*, however, provides appropriate preparatory exercises involving 1-2-3-5 fingering that reaches beyond a two-octave span (Figure 15). These specific exercises promote greater stretch and flexibility between the thumb and index finger, which in turn facilitates the execution of passages involving wider extensions using the thumb and middle fingers such as those found in *La Campanella* and *Au Bord d’une Source*.

![Figure 12. Excerpt from Liszt’s La Campanella](image)
Figure 13. Excerpt from Liszt’s first version of *Au Bord d’une Source*

Figure 14. Octave exercises from Joseffy’s *School of Advanced Piano Playing*, Vol. 3

Figure 15. Exercises with wide stretches from Jonas’ *Master School*, Book 6
Another example of Chopin’s technical innovation can be found in his Étude Op.10, No.11, in which broken chords are presented in extended positions exceeding the span of a tenth (Figure 16). To be able to play such passages with ease and accuracy, the pianist must learn to utilize lateral rotations of the forearm; the Master School includes exercises specifically dedicated to the acquisition of this technique (Figure 17). These exercises utilize a held index finger as a pivot while other fingers alternate in an average span of a tenth, which naturally forces the hand to naturally rotate laterally from side to side using the index finger as a fulcrum in a much wider extended position. It also promotes a more solid yet flexible hand position, which is necessary for acquiring rich cantabile tone and more dynamic control. This specific exercise is also applicable to Chopin’s Étude Op.10, No.1 (Figure 7), in which rapid lateral forearm rotation in wider extended positions is required. There are no comparable preparatory exercises found in the technical volumes of Liszt, Tausig, or Joseffy.

Figure 16. Excerpt from Chopin’s Étude Op. 10, No.11

Figure 17. Lateral rotation exercises from the Master School, Book 1
Chopin’s array of technical innovations also includes double chromatic scales in fourths. Conversely, the aforementioned volumes of exercises prior to the *Master School* lack exercises pertaining to scales in chromatic double fourths, which appear in Chopin’s Polonaise in A-flat major, Op.53 (Figure 18). The *Master School* offers exercises for chromatic double notes ranging from intervals of seconds all the way to sevenths, as well as various fingerings for chromatic double notes derived from numerous virtuoso pianists (Figure 19) ranging from Hummel all the way to Jonas himself.

![Figure 18. Excerpt from Chopin’s Polonaise in A-flat major, Op.53](image)

Another important technical innovation that is common in Chopin and Liszt’s virtuosic works is the so-called thumb/fifth finger passing over technique. Conventional eighteenth-century pedagogy advocated the passage of the thumb under, which was made obsolete by nineteenth-century virtuosic works such as Chopin’s Sonata in C minor (Figure
20) and Liszt’s *Mephisto Waltz* (Figure 21), in both of which pianists are required to pass the thumb over the fifth finger and vice-versa using lateral arm rotation. This method of execution can also be applied to Chopin’s Étude Op.10, No.8 (Figure 22). A thorough survey of Liszt’s *Technical Studies*, Tausig’s *Daily Studies*, and Joseffy’s *School of Advanced Piano Playing* reveals no preparatory exercises of this nature. All of the arpeggio and scale exercises present in these volumes are rooted in the eighteenth-century principle of passing the thumb under, whereas the *Master School* includes numerous exercises relating to this particular means of execution (Figure 23).\textsuperscript{111}

\textsuperscript{111} Jonas, *Master School*, Book 3, 95
The lack of adequate preparatory exercises from Liszt, Tausig, and Joseffy for the specific technical challenges above supports Paderewski’s claim regarding the need for a more modern and comprehensive resource on piano playing in the early twentieth century.\textsuperscript{112}

To better understand the significance of Jonas and the \textit{Master School}, the next chapter will begin by presenting a biography of Jonas as pianist-pedagogue and a brief history of his treatise, also exploring his links to other famous virtuoso pianists in order to demonstrate his relevance in the world of piano playing at the time. The chapter will conclude by proceeding volume by volume through the \textit{Master School}, illustrating its unique qualities and comprehensive nature.

Chapter 3

Alberto Jonas and the *Master School of Modern Piano Playing and Virtuosity*

Alberto Jonas, the Pianist-Pedagogue

Alberto Jonas (1868–1943) was born in Madrid to German parents, Julius Jonas and Doris Sachse.\(^\text{113}\) Hailed as a child prodigy after he performed for King Alfonso XII of Spain at the Royal Palace of Madrid in 1878, Jonas completed his musical studies at age twelve at the Madrid Royal Conservatory, under the guidance of Manuel Mendizábal in piano and Ciriaco Olave in organ.\(^\text{114}\) From then until the age of eighteen, he pursued business studies in Belgium, England, Germany, and France while still actively giving public piano performances.\(^\text{115}\) However, no sources indicate whether Jonas received instruction from renowned pianists during these years. Over the course of this period, Jonas became fluent in French, Russian, and English, in addition to the two mother tongues of his family and home country, German and Spanish.

Against his parents’ wishes, Jonas entered the Brussels Conservatory in 1886, graduating four years later with the highest distinction. While there, he studied piano with Arthur De Greef (one of Franz Liszt’s famous pupils) and composition with Françoise-Auguste Gevaert. After his studies in Brussels, he caught the attention of legendary Russian pianist Anton Rubinstein while participating in the first International Anton Rubinstein Piano Competition in 1890. Shortly thereafter, Jonas became one of Rubinstein’s pupils in St. Petersburg, where he befriended fellow Rubinstein pupils Nikolay Dubasov (who had won


\(^{114}\) Among Mendizábal’s famous pupils was Isaac Albeniz. See ibid., 328.

\(^{115}\) Jonas pursued business studies to appease his parents’ desire for him to have a career in finance. See ibid., 328.
the first Rubinstein competition), Józef Hofmann, Felix Blumenfeld, and Teresa Carreño, all of whom regarded him highly as a pianist.\footnote{116 Ibid.}

In 1891, Jonas made his Berlin debut as soloist with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Hans von Bülow, performing Paderewski’s Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 17.\footnote{117 Amanda Judith Alba Gonzales, *Escuela magistral de la virtuosidad pianística de Alberto Jonas y sus ejercicios originales convergencia de la ejecución pianística y el estudio teórico de la técnica* (Madrid: Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 2007), 107–9.} Like fellow émigrés Leopold Godowsky, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Josef Lhévinne, and Moriz Rosenthal, Jonas moved to America and established residence in New York City in 1893. Shortly thereafter, he was appointed to the faculty of the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, where he served as head of the piano department. In 1895, Jonas reprised his performance of the Paderewski Piano Concerto as soloist with the Symphony Society of New York at Carnegie Hall, with Walter Damrosch conducting. In that same year, he married his pupil Elsa von Grave, whom he later divorced.\footnote{118 Jonas later married Henrietta Gremmel (also one of his pupils) in 1921.} Following a successful performance of the Paderewski Piano Concerto, he received an invitation to perform the same work with the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1897, under the baton of Emil Paur.\footnote{119 Saleski, *Famous Musicians of a Wandering Race*, 329.}

Alberto Jonas’ career as a pianist-pedagogue spanned several decades. Apart from his teaching and performance obligations, he also served as president and director of the Michigan Conservatory until 1904, at which time he decided to move back to Germany.\footnote{120 Ibid., 330.} Upon his return to Berlin, he was appointed professor at the Klindworth-Scharwenka Conservatory, where he befriended fellow professors Leopold Godowsky, Karl Klindworth, James Kwast, and Moritz Moszkowski. Jonas was a teacher and mentor to numerous renowned musicians, including Pepito Arriola, Reah Sadowsky, Vincent Persichetti, and
David Earl Moyer. The most prominent of his pupils after his return to Berlin was the child prodigy Pepito Arriola (1896–1954), whose published interviews include significant biographical material concerning Jonas. In an interview conducted by Étude magazine in 1910, Arriola reminisced about his experiences with Jonas:

At the age of seven it was my good fortune to come under the instruction of Alberto Jonas, the Spanish virtuoso, who for many years was at the head of a large music school in America. I can never be grateful enough to him, for he taught me without remuneration and not even a father could be kinder to me. When I left Berlin for my present tour, tears came to our eyes, because I knew I was leaving my best friend. Most of my present repertory has been acquired under Jonas and he has been so, so exacting. He also saw to it that my training was broad, and not confined to those composers whose works appealed to me. The result is that I now appreciate the works of all the composers for the piano. Beethoven, I found very absorbing. I learned the Appassionata Sonata in one week’s time and longed for more. My teacher, however, insisted upon my going slowly, and mastering all the little details.

Jonas and the Master School

World War I forced Jonas to leave Germany, so he moved back to New York in 1914. Shortly after his return, Jonas began corresponding with musicians and pianists whom he had met during his travels, requesting collaboration in his proposed endeavor to write a treatise on pianism. Pianists of immense stature submitted original exercises, as well as their own ideas on technique, fingering, pedaling, memorization, and so forth. Jonas already started compiling the Master School of Modern Piano Playing and Virtuosity in 1913 with the intention of producing a treatise that would cover the entire development of pianism from its

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124 Saleski, *Famous Musicians of a Wandering Race*, 329

125 Ibid.
inception in the early eighteenth century through its state at the time the work was published in the twentieth century.\footnote{Jonas, *Master School*, Book 1, ii.}

It took Jonas sixteen years to complete the work, which was published in its entirety by Carl Fischer in New York in 1929. The list of acknowledged contributors included the legendary pianists Arthur Friedheim, Ignaz Friedman, Ferruccio Busoni, Katharine Goodson, Leopold Godowsky, Alfred Cortot, Rudolf Ganz, Wilhelm Backhaus, Fannie Bloomfield-Zeisler, Ernst von Dohnányi, Ossip Gabrilowitsch, Josef Lhevinne, Isidor Philipp, Moriz Rosenthal, Emil von Sauer, Leopold Schmidt, and Zygmunt Stojowski. François-Joseph Fétis and Ignaz Moscheles accomplished a collaboration of a similar kind in their book, *Méthodes de Méthodes* (1840), but on a much smaller scale, including only eighteen *Études de Perfection*.\footnote{Fétis and Moscheles, *Méthodes de Méthodes*.} The exact number of musical contributions Jonas received, and the pianists with whom he corresponded, remain unknown. Given Jonas’ international reputation and his relationships with renowned musicians, he most likely amassed numerous materials from many sources beyond the named contributors included in the *Master School*. Unfortunately, none of the contributions excluded from the work have survived.

The exercises in the *Master School* are grouped progressively, based on specific technical challenges such as flexibility, finger strength, scales, arpeggios, double notes, and so on. One can easily browse through and locate specific technical issues in the index to be guided to numerous exercises, selected repertoire, essays, and commentaries on a specific topic. Ignace Jan Paderewski himself took note of its ingenious grouping of materials, which were combined with numerous carefully selected examples from piano literature, ranging
from Baroque to early twentieth-century music, along with salutary fingerings and precise explanatory remarks.\textsuperscript{128}

The *Master School*’s integration of detailed explanations and commentaries was also a novelty in the early twentieth century. The *Technical Studies, Daily Studies*, and *School of Advanced Piano Playing* contain only very basic instructions, whereas the *Master School* includes an abundance of essays discussing technical challenges, as well as various devices indispensable to pianists of today, such as the art of pedaling. This combination of depth and breadth demonstrates Jonas’ intention of encompassing the development of piano playing as comprehensively and completely as possible within the framework of a single publication.

The previous chapter illustrates to some extent how preparatory technical exercises from the *Master School* broke new ground in addressing the pianistic demands of the time in comparison to Liszt, Tausig, and Joseffy’s works. This chapter will discuss each volume of the *Master School* and highlight the skills and topics that have no equivalent in the aforementioned works. I have not included similar comparisons with Josef Lhévinne’s *Basic Principles of Piano Playing*, Ernst von Dohnanyi’s *Essential Finger Exercises*, Isidor Philipp’s *Complete School of Technic for the Piano*, Ferruccio Busoni’s *Klavierübung*, or Alfred Cortot’s *Principes Rationnels de la Technique Pianistique*, because all of these pedagogical experts were also major contributors to Jonas’ own work, their approaches being amply represented in the seven volumes of the *Master School*.\textsuperscript{129}

Book 1, entitled “Finger Exercises,” includes exercises promoting strength, flexibility, and dexterity. In this volume, Jonas addresses novel skills, including the thumb

passing over, chromatic scales using all five fingers, side-to-side motion of the fingers, and forearm and upper arm movements. Also presented in this volume are essays pertaining to one’s mental attitude towards practicing and suggestions regarding time management of daily practice sessions.

Book 2, entitled “School of Scales,” focuses on scales, different varieties of touch (legato, staccato, portato), singing tone, and accuracy in playing. Among the novel skills introduced in this volume are chromatic glissandos, scales with thumb passing over, scales in rhythmic models, rapid scales with alternating hand configurations, and exercises in accuracy. Along with the exercises, Book 2 contains in-depth essays covering various approaches to legato touch, different means to accomplish staccato playing, and special treatment of portato playing.

Book 3, entitled “School of Arpeggios,” discusses arpeggios, finger repetition, and turns and trills, additionally including essays on different historical treatments of trills and on how to practice and perform. Novel skills such as new forms of common-chord arpeggios, mixed arpeggios, and various forms of trills with chains are presented in this volume as well.

Book 4, entitled “The Complete School of Double Notes,” focuses on technical challenges related to double-note playing. In this volume, Jonas provides numerous fingering tables for chromatic thirds, fourths, fifths, and sixths derived from various piano virtuosi as well as from his own experience. Among the novel skills introduced in this volume are new fingerings for scales in thirds, chromatic scales in minor sevenths, and diatonic scales in seconds. The last of these scales was a technique otherwise unknown to piano literature of the time, but which Sergei Prokofiev would later use, for example, in the last movement of his Piano Concerto No. 3 in C major (1921).
Book 5, entitled “The Complete School of Octave, Staccato and Chords,” also includes essays dedicated to the discussion of fingering, rhythm, measures, and accents. This volume finds Jonas comparing the outmoded octave wrist technique to the arm vibration technique advocated by Deppe and Leschetizky as well as by other late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century virtuosi. Novel skills such as partially interlocked octaves, a pianistic device used by twentieth-century composers (including Prokofiev), are also introduced.

Book 6, entitled “Dynamics, Agogics, Pedal, and Memory,” contains essays regarding the employment of dynamics and agogic accents, use of pedals, and the art of memorization. These aspects of piano playing are absent from the other works in comparison, as well as from the earlier classical treatises of Carl Czerny and Johann Baptist Cramer.

Finally, Book 7, entitled “Embellishments, Expression, and Style,” discusses the art of phrasing, different ways of practicing away from the piano, embellishments, sight reading, musical declamation, style, and how to perform successfully in public. These topics are excluded in the pedagogical works of Liszt, Tausig and Joseffy, which mainly focus on virtuosic finger exercises. Conversely, these last two volumes bear some similarities to Elizabeth Caland’s Artistic Piano Playing as Taught by Ludwig Deppe and Tobias Matthay’s The Act of Touch in All Its Diversity and Musical Interpretation. However, both Caland and Matthay’s works lack the virtuosic finger exercises present in all the other publications.

Many of the novel skills introduced in the Master School can be found in important late-nineteenth- and twentieth-century compositions, such as double-note glissandos in Percy Grainger’s Colonial Song and Leopold Godowsky’s Die Fledermaus paraphrase (Figure 61),

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rapid scales using alternating hands in different finger configurations in Ronn Yedida’s Piano Sonata No. 3 (“Outcries”), thumbs passing over in Theodor Leschetizky’s Étude Héroïque, Op. 48, No. 3, new forms of scales and arpeggios in Franz Liszt’s Transcendental Études, blind double thirds in Heitor Villa-Lobos’ “Canto do Sertao” from Bachianas Brasileiras, interlocking octaves and interlocking chords in Guido Agosti’s transcription of Stravinsky’s Danse Infernale, scales in seconds in Prokofiev’s Piano Concerto in C major, Op. 26, No. 3, mixed double notes in Claude Vivier’s Shiraz pour piano, and large leaps in Alberto Ginastera’s Piano Sonata, Op. 20, No. 1. These instances demonstrate how thoroughly the Master School kept up with advanced trends in twentieth-century pianism. The inclusion of skills otherwise unknown to piano repertoire of previous times (and rarely used at the time of publication) and the abundance of essays pertaining to more finer aspects of piano playing (such as subtleties of pedaling, phrasing, touch, rhythm, agogic accents, dynamics, and so on) separate the Master School from earlier pedagogical works in comparison. The remainder of this chapter will explore the contents of each of the seven books, respectively, in greater depth.

**Book 1**

Book 1 contains exercises and essays that cover extensions, fixed hand position, flexibility and dexterity of the thumbs, finger strengthening, flexibility of the hand, different touches in one hand, evenness of the hand, various rhythms in one hand, one’s mental attitude in practicing, and how to manage one’s practice sessions. Apart from the usual finger exercises, this volume also contains essays with detailed instructions on how to use the Master School curriculum. The consolidation of different categories of technical exercises found in volumes written by Liszt, Tausig, and Joseffy is one of the merits of this work. Additionally, it includes then-novel exercises pertaining to the thumb-passing-over technique
that contradicted the well-established eighteenth-century thumb-passing-under technique—this newer technique is absent in the aforementioned volumes. As discussed in the previous chapter, the passage of the thumb over requires use of the arm-weight technique (particularly lateral arm rotations) to achieve smooth execution without any perceptible gap or interruption, making it useful for rapid scales, arpeggios, and broken chords.

Book 1 also includes exercises not previously published, such as those pertaining to unison executed with crossed hands. This skill is exceptionally useful in training left- and right-hand coordination when playing passages in unison, such as those in the third movement of Tchaikovsky’s Piano Concerto No. 1 in B-flat minor, Op. 23 (Figure 24).

![Figure 24. Passages in unison from Tchaikovsky’s Piano Concerto No. 1 in B-flat minor, Op. 23](image)

The inclusion of excerpts from the piano repertoire in connection with the exercises, allowing readers to recognize their practical applications, is a distinguishing characteristic of the Master School compared to the other three. The third volume of Kullak’s School of Octave Playing also contains excerpts from the literature, but noticeably only dedicated to octaves. In contrast, the Master School includes excerpts for every category of exercises presented. Book 1 alone includes more than a dozen musical examples and preparatory exercises specific to particular repertoire (Figure 25). It also provides detailed instruction on how certain passages can be transformed into technical studies. Jonas writes, “An average

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student would not be inclined to practice passages of compositions not included in his or her repertoire.”"\textsuperscript{132} Johannes Brahms shared the same sentiments. Florence May, for example, wrote as follows about her piano lessons with Brahms in Baden-Baden in 1871: “Beginning that very day, he gradually put me through an entire course of technical training, showing me how I should best work, for the attainment of my end, at scales, arpeggi, trills, double notes and octaves. […] He did not believe in the utility for me of the daily practice of the ordinary five-finger exercises, preferring to form exercises from any piece or study upon which I might be engaged.”\textsuperscript{133}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure25.png}
\caption{Excerpt from the preparatory exercise for Beethoven’s Sonata in F minor, Op.57 included in the \textit{Master School}}
\end{figure}

In general, exercises found in Book 1 simultaneously combine finger strengthening and arm-weight technique. Jonas accomplished this combination through exercises that require greater stretching and mobility of the arms while building finger strength by using

\textsuperscript{132} Jonas, \textit{Master School}, Book 1, 5.
\textsuperscript{133} Florence May, \textit{The Life of Johannes Brahms}, Vol. 1 (London: Edward Arnold, 1905), 10f.
certain fingers (often the index finger) to support the hand structure, serving as a pivot point or fulcrum (Figure 26). These exercises cause the hand to rotate laterally, thus naturally promoting the use of lateral forearm rotation while keeping the index finger on the same note. These are exceptionally useful preparatory exercises for extended broken chord passages found in Chopin’s Étude Op. 25, No. 1 (Figure 27), in which the second finger on the right hand stays on the same note, necessitating greater flexibility of wrists, lateral arm rotation technique, and greater mobility of the thumb to effectively reach outer notes of the broken chords.

Figure 26. Finger strengthening exercises from the Master School with the index finger supporting the hand structure, which promotes natural lateral rotation while strengthening the individual fingers

Figure 27. Excerpt from Chopin’s Étude Op.25, No.1, in which the second finger stays on the same note

As mentioned earlier, none of the previous pedagogical works include the thumb-passing-over technique, which was a novelty at the time, although it is commonly applied today. The Master School incorporates this skill as a means to increase flexibility and agility
of the hands (Figure 28).\textsuperscript{134} This technique can also be utilized to bring out top notes in fortissimo broken-chord passages using the thumb instead of the fifth finger, such as the one found in the right hand in the last measure of Chopin’s Étude in F major Op.10, No.8 (Figure 29), thereby providing a much fuller resonance. Further, this technique is also applicable to the arpeggios found two measures prior, in which the fifth finger can be used on E instead of the fourth finger, requiring the thumb to pass over (Figure 29). Such a technique can also be used in the fortissimo broken chord passage in Tchaikovsky’s Piano Concerto No.1 in B-flat minor Op. 23 (Figure 30). This alternative execution enables greater projection of the top notes while reducing stretch and strain, which is a skill valuable to pianists with smaller hands. Book 1 includes, as an example, the Étude Héroïque, Op. 48, No.3 by Theodor Leschetizky, which requires the passage of the thumb above the fifth finger (Figure 31). Passages such as these demonstrate how the development of arm-weight technique changed the field of piano playing to demand new sets of skills that were not possible using conventional technique.\textsuperscript{135}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure28.png}
\caption{Thumb-passing-over exercises from the Master School}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., 103.
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., 209.
Figure 29. Excerpt from Chopin’s Étude Op.10, No.8 in which the thumb can be used to highlight the top notes of the last broken chord using the thumb-passing-over technique

Figure 30. Excerpt from Tchaikovsky’s Piano Concerto No.1 in B-flat minor Op.23, in which the thumb can be used to highlight top notes of broken chords using the thumb-passing-over technique

Figure 31. Excerpt from Theodor Leschetizky’s Étude Humoresque, Op.48, No.2, which requires the thumb to pass over the fifth finger

In summary, Book 1 consolidates finger exercises and skills found in previous publications while adding finger-strengthening exercises that simultaneously incorporate
arm-weight technique using wider stretches which are far more advanced than those from prior pedagogical volumes. The presentation of novel exercises pertaining to the thumb-passing-over technique that were absent in the volumes of Liszt, Tausig, and Joseffy further supports Paderewski’s call for a more up-to-date resource on piano playing being met by Jonas’ publication.

**Book 2**

Book 2 of the *Master School* comprises exercises in scales (diatonic, whole tone, pentatonic, modal, and chromatic) and essays on different legato and staccato touches, touch and tone quality, singing tone, and accuracy. The chapter “Touch and Tone Quality” presents significant new possibilities for sonority that could be achieved on the pianos of the early twentieth century. For example, Ferruccio Busoni’s transcription of Bach’s Prelude and Fugue in D major BWV 532 (Figure 32) requires pianists to emulate the sound of an organ, an impossible technique on older fortepianos due to their limited sonority. Busoni accomplished this by doubling or often tripling melodies in higher and lower registers. The invention of the winged-formed case, the cast-iron frame, the use of two and three strings for one note, cross-stringing, copper-wound bass strings, and the use of thicker hammers on modern pianos all allow pianists to emulate the sound of an organ and other instruments due to their greater sonority (Figure 33). Another example is Ravel’s *Jeux d’eau* (Figure 34), which calls for different varieties of touch, including very fluid yet sparkly legato sonorities that emulate the sound of water, as well as sudden bursts from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo* (Figure 35). These sounds can be achieved on today’s pianos by employing an array of touch

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techniques and manipulating dampers with the use of both right and left pedals. Modern piano hammers are constructed with graded density from within their actual structure, with the felt cushions getting softer and less compact as one moves outward.\textsuperscript{138} This construction allows pianists to control tone and timbre by varying the speed of attack and changing the rate at which the hammer hits the string (Figure 36). Such effects are unachievable on fortepianos due to their different hammer construction. The inclusion of such topics highlights the \textit{Master School’s} success and relevance in addressing the changing needs of piano technique.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure32.png}
\caption{Excerpt from Ferruccio Busoni’s transcription of Bach’s Prelude and Fugue in D major, BWV 532}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure33.png}
\caption{Copper-wound bass strings on today’s pianos}
\end{figure}

\\textsuperscript{138} Ibid., 121-123.
The chapter “Legato-Staccato-Portato” is also representative of finer technique that can be achieved on today’s pianos. The Master School enumerates five types of legato.

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(overlapping, clinging, simple, light, and non-legato), as well as four types of staccato (poco, simple, staccatissimo, and pizzicato), including clear instructions on how to achieve each of them alongside musical examples corresponding to each specific type. For example, a simple legato touch is more appropriate for classical repertoire such as Mozart’s Sonata in B-flat major K333 (Figure 37), whereas a clinging legato is more applicable for romantic works such as Chopin’s Nocturne Op. 9, No. 2 (Figure 38). Moreover, a simple staccato touch may be more apt for Chopin’s Étude Op. 10, No. 10 (Figure 39), whereas a staccatissimo is more fitting for Prokofiev’s Piano Sonata No. 6, Op. 82 (Figure 40).

![Figure 37. Excerpt from Mozart’s Sonata in B-flat major K333 in which a simple legato touch can be used](image)

![Figure 38. Excerpt from Chopin’s Nocturne Op.9, No.2 in which a clinging legato is most applicable](image)

![Figure 39. Simple-staccato passage from Chopin’s Étude Op.10, No.10](image)
Specific exercises unique to the Master School at the time include those pertaining to whole-tone scales, pentatonic scales, scales with different accents, scales with rhythmic models, diatonic and chromatic scales with unconventional fingerings (using fingers 1-2-3, 1-2-3-4, or 1-2-3-4-5), chromatic glissandos, and accuracy. Whole-tone and pentatonic scales are not common in nineteenth-century works, although they occur frequently in early twentieth-century pieces by Debussy, such as *Reflets dans l’eau* (Figure 41) and the Étude No. 8 from Book 2 (Figure 42).
Scale exercises with rhythmic models contain intricate underlying rhythmic figurations in which the pianist is required to accentuate specific notes in order to highlight specific rhythmic patterns (Figure 43).\textsuperscript{140} The variations of rhythmic models are practically limitless. Scales with rhythmic models do not appear in works prior to the twentieth century, further demonstrating the Master School’s anticipation of technique not yet explored in the piano repertoire at the time (in fact, this particular technique is unusual to this day).

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure43}
\caption{Original exercises with rhythmic models by Alberto Jonas from the Master School}
\end{figure}

Diatonic and chromatic scales with unconventional fingerings were also novel at the time and remain uncommon today. These unconventional fingerings enable pianists to exploit the natural tendency of producing accents with stronger fingers (i.e. the thumb, index and third fingers) by employing them on stronger beats. These fingerings are by no means intended to replace conventional ones but are presented as alternatives to give pianists additional options to play particular scale passages with greater ease and fluency.\textsuperscript{141} These unconventional fingerings can be applied to rapid unison scale passages in Prokofiev’s Piano Concerto No. 3, Op. 26, in which the right-hand thumb can be used on the downbeats of each

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., 22.
\item\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., 17.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
four sixteenth-note group instead of the fourth finger. This technique also helps with hand coordination by having both thumbs play at the same time (Figure 44). In addition, it facilitates the natural upward and downward motion of the wrists, thereby resulting in a more relaxed execution of the passage.

![Figure 44. Rapid unison scale passage in Prokofiev’s Piano Concerto No.3, Op.26, in which unconventional fingerings can be used](image)

Book 2 presents exercises in chromatic glissandos to be executed with one hand, a technique addressed for the first time in the Master School and one that remains rare even today. Jonas’ one-handed chromatic glissandos (using the thumb and index fingers when descending or the index and third fingers if ascending) provide an ingenious alternative to the conventional two-handed execution (Figure 45). We can find such two-handed chromatic glissandos in Leopold Godowsky’s Die Fledermaus paraphrase (Figure 46) and Tausig’s Das Geisterschiff (Figure 47).

![Figure 45. Chromatic glissando exercises for one hand from the Master School](image)
Another valuable feature of the *Master School* is the chapter “Accuracy: How to Play Without Striking Wrong Notes.” Accuracy in playing is one of the markers of true virtuosity, and it can be acquired through careful, rigorous, methodical, and patient practice. Accuracy is directly related to the pianist’s ability to efficiently calculate, discern, and choreograph movements. According to Jonas:

Playing wrong notes can be due to lack of preparation or feeling of the keys in advance, where such preparation or feeling is possible; lack of the required unconscious sense of distance or range, in order to execute correct motions without the aid of the eyes; failing to realize whether these motions executed without the aid of the eyes are done smoothly and easily, and not in a jerky, spasmodic fashion; lack of care whenever the hand changes position, so as to observe whether the direction of the hand is still the same or if it points in a different direction, e.g. towards the bass, parallel to the keys, or towards the treble; lack of quiet, steady nerves; inability to relax and stiffen the muscles at will and lack of correct fingerings.\(^{142}\)

Jonas’ exercises are designed to enable aspiring virtuosi to execute leaps across multiple registers with precision (Figure 48). We can find such leaps in Busoni’s transcription of Bach’s Chaconne (Figure 49) as well as in Liszt’s *Liebestraum* No.3 (Figure 50). These

\(^{142}\) Ibid., 216.
exercises are also particularly useful in preparing pianists for twentieth-century works such as Alberto Ginastera’s Piano Sonata, Op. 20 (Figure 51), which requires leaps of more than two octaves across the keyboard.

Figure 48. Exercises in accuracy from the Master School

Figure 49. Passages with large leaps from Busoni’s transcription of Bach’s Chaconne
In summary, Book 2 of the Master School includes more subtle techniques such as varieties of legato and staccato touch that could be achieved on early twentieth-century pianos. The inclusion of pianistic skills that remain novel to this day (such as rhythmic models, unconventional scale fingerings, and one-handed chromatic glissandos) demonstrates the Master School’s merits in anticipating technical requirements beyond those found in repertoire contemporary with its publication.

**Book 3**

Book 3 of the Master School comprises exercises pertaining to arpeggios, finger repetitions, and turns and trills, along with essays on how to practice and perform. Some exercises address how to execute new forms of common chord arpeggios (Figure 52) and
how to obtain “pearliness” of touch.\textsuperscript{143} The new forms of common chord arpeggio execution discussed in Book 3 involve the use of “fifth finger to the thumb” or “thumb to the fifth finger” fingering for arpeggios. Examples include those found in Liszt’s “Transcendental” Étude No. 6 (Figure 53) and Godowsky’s Barcarolle Op. 16 (Figure 54), as opposed to conventional “third finger to the thumb” or “fourth finger to the thumb” fingering.\textsuperscript{144}

Referring to the exercises in Figure 81, Jonas writes:

> The following manner of playing common chord arpeggios is to be applied only to very rapid passages. It is especially effective when the arpeggio covers a range of at least two but preferably three or four octaves in full-chord position. This mode of execution, which, by the way is meant only for fairly advanced pianists, who have mastered the current forms of arpeggios, it is not intended to be practiced slowly. The connecting of the various positions of the hand is to be accomplished rapidly and easily. The passing of the thumb over the fifth finger and the fifth finger over the thumb is to be done in a smooth, easy manner as the hand glides over the keyboard. Any tension of the muscles of the forearm is to be avoided. The transcendental execution of arpeggios makes it possible to obtain a much greater speed and brilliancy than by usual procedure.\textsuperscript{145}

Notably, these new forms of arpeggio executions that utilize the “thumb over the fifth” and “fifth over the thumb” techniques are connected to exercises in Book 1 promoting flexibility and agility of the hand.

\textsuperscript{143} Jonas referred to producing sounds like those of a glissando as “pearliness” of touch; see \textit{Master School}, Book 3, 36. The round shimmery tone produced due to evenness in attack and weight distribution between notes while playing a glissando is what Jonas referred to as “pearly” sound. Therefore, the touch associated to that specific tone quality is what he refers to as “pearliness” of touch. The term \textit{jeu perle} was in common use in France and was a major characteristic of the French piano school.

\textsuperscript{144} Jonas also referred to this form of arpeggio execution as “Transcendental Execution of Common Chord Arpeggios,” patterned after Liszt’s \textit{Transcendental Étude} collection.

\textsuperscript{145} Jonas, \textit{Master School}, Book 3, 35.
Figure 52. Exercises on transcendental execution of common chord arpeggios from the Master School

Figure 53. Excerpt from Liszt’s “Transcendental” Étude No.1 where the fifth-over-the-thumb technique is applicable

Figure 54. “Thumb to the fifth finger” left hand passage from Godowsky’s Barcarolle Op.16
The evolution of the piano repertoire in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century demanded not only more virtuosic finger work, but also more varieties of touch. The exercises for obtaining “pearliness” of touch (Figure 55) tie in with varieties of sound and touch that could be attained on pianos made after 1870. These exercises are particularly useful in preparing to play Liszt’s *Les Jeux d’eau à la Ville d’Este* (Figure 56) and Debussy’s *Reflets dans l’eau* (Figure 57), in which the sound of trickling water is emulated. Jonas’ innovative exercises use pressed notes not belonging to the arpeggio held by one hand, followed by glissandos on the other hand, the sounds of which will then be imitated using finger action by the same hand. These exercises are unique to the *Master School* and are not found in any previous pedagogical volumes. Referring to the exercise shown in Figure 55, Jonas writes:

The square notes should be pressed down silently, the fingers laying [sic] flat on the keys and the wrist held very low. The arpeggio may then be performed, both through glissando and finger action, with ease and speed. One should try to reproduce with the fingers the pearly touch quality obtained with the glissandos.¹⁴⁶

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Book 3 also includes a chapter entitled “How to Practice, How to Perform” that discusses the difference between practicing and performing. The height of the so-called “Golden Age of the Piano” and the emergence of flocks of aspiring concert pianists, inspired by piano virtuosi such as Liszt, Chopin, Tausig, Paderewski, and others may have generated the need for such a discussion. The placement of this chapter might seem strange, given that it could have been included in Books 6 and 7, where similar essays can be found.

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Perhaps Jonas aimed to break the monotony of finger exercises in Book 3 with some more holistic material. One of Jonas’ objectives was to clarify the developmental processes of virtuosity, providing readers with insights into the inner workings that enable virtuosi pianists to perform flawlessly in public.\(^{148}\) Whereas seasoned pianists are aware of the differences between the stress experienced in public performances and its absence when practicing alone, aspiring musicians may not be. Jonas writes:

> Because of his inability to clearly perceive the difference between practice and performance many a talented pianist has found it impossible to do himself justice when playing in public or for a circle of friends. It is also one of the reasons for nervousness and lack of confidence in oneself. It makes an ordeal, not only of the performance itself, but also of the minutes, hours and even days that precedes it. It robs the player of the poise, certainty and authority, and last, not least, of the pleasure which a well-schooled performer should feel when displaying his talent, when initiating his auditors to the beauties of a musical composition. […] Practice is simply the means of acquiring good or bad habits. The foundation of practice is repetition—repetition of a passage, until it can be executed without a flaw.\(^{149}\)

Jonas’ concept of piano practicing includes the transformation of difficult passages into various technical exercises that would improve the quality of public performances similar to the approaches of Joseffy and Deppe. These exercises aim to diversify the pianist’s practice methods so as to strengthen his or her memory. According to Jonas, this increases the likelihood of success and efficiency when performing under stress.

In summary, Book 3 includes exercises dedicated to the execution of extended arpeggios such as those found in Liszt’s “Transcendental” Études that are not addressed in prior technical volumes by Liszt, Tausig, and Joseffy. It also includes previously unpublished practice methods, such as those pertaining to “pearliness” of touch, to further describe the varieties of touches and sounds that could be achieved on the modern piano. The essays found in Book 3 delve deeply into subtle aspects of piano performance, specifically the

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\(^{149}\) Ibid.
stresses involved in public performances and how to cope with them effectively. These discussions illustrate Jonas’ effort in making accessible not just the technical approach but also the mindset of virtuoso pianists that lead to effective public performances, bridging the gap between purely technical exercises and more subtle aspects of performance.

Book 4

Book 4, entitled “School of Double Notes,” presents exercises pertaining to double note playing. Among the exercises and features unique to Book 4 of the Master School, in comparison to Liszt, Tausig, and Joseffy’s works, are new fingerings for scales in double thirds. Book 4 includes tables of fingerings from various virtuosi for diatonic and chromatic major/minor scales of thirds and sixths, original chromatic major/minor third fingerings by Jonas, a table of fingerings for chromatic fourths, and diatonic scales in seconds.

Regarding the execution of double notes, Jonas writes:

A perfect command of all manner of thirds is necessary for the acquisition of real pianistic virtuosity. Thirds are of more immediate importance to the pianist than fourths or even sixths, for they must be regarded as one of the five important features of piano technique: scales, arpeggios, thirds, trills and octaves. The industrious and ambitious piano student should, therefore, not overlook any of the exercises and examples contained in this chapter, and while practicing them faithfully he/she should also—this applies to all technical work—always be mindful of the quality of his/her touch and tone. He/she will soon find out that some of the exercises exert a peculiarly beneficial action on his/her fingers, hands, and arm; he/she should practice these with especial care […] Thirds greatly strengthen the forearm, which is another reason why they should be mastered.150

The inclusion of tables for the fingering of double-note playing, derived from various virtuosi (Figures 58 to 65), allows readers to compare different historical fingerings to contemporary alternatives, including original fingering provided by Jonas himself (Figure 58).151

150 Jonas, Master School, Book 4, 2–4.
151 Ibid., 68–70.
Figure 58. Table of fingerings for chromatic minor thirds by Carl Czerny, Franz Liszt, Carl Tausig, Isidor Philipp, and Moriz Rosenthal and Ludwig Schytte from the Master School.

Figure 59. Table of fingerings for chromatic minor thirds by Leopold Godowsky from the Master School.

Figure 60. Table of fingerings for chromatic minor thirds by Johann Nepomuk Hummel, Frédéric Chopin, Moriz Rosenthal, Ludwig Schytte, Theodor Kullak, and Jonas from the Master School.
Figure 61. Table of fingerings for chromatic minor thirds by Ferruccio Busoni from the Master School.

Figure 62. Table of fingerings for chromatic minor thirds by Karl Klindworth and Hugo Riemann from the Master School.

Figure 63. Table of fingerings for chromatic minor thirds by Emil von Sauer and Jonas from Master School.
They are useful in formulating suitable fingerings for double-note chromatic execution such as those found in Godowsky’s Étude No. 33 (Figure 66), which is based on Chopin’s Étude Op. 25, No. 5.
Book 4 also includes exercises in diatonic double-note scales in seconds (Figure 67), which, as noted previously, were unknown to the piano repertoire at the time. The inclusion of this technique, though no existing repertoire at the time seems to have required it, demonstrates Jonas’ ability not only to keep up with but also to anticipate the trends of twentieth-century piano playing.\textsuperscript{152} For example, Sergei Prokofiev incorporated rapid ascending and descending diatonic scales in seconds in the third movement of his Piano Concerto in No. 3 in C major, Op. 26 (Figure 68), a few years before the Master School’s publication, which puts Jonas’ book at the leading edge of piano treatises at the time.

Chromatic scales in major seconds, on the other hand, are found in Liszt’s \textit{Chant Polonaise} No. 5 (Figure 69), which is a transcription of a work by Chopin. Regarding diatonic double-note scales, Jonas writes:

There are, to my knowledge, no examples of diatonic scales in seconds in the classical and modern repertory of the piano. The fact, however, that with an underlying harmonic accompaniment they do not sound unmelodious, prompts me to give a suitable fingering for their execution.\textsuperscript{153}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{diatonic_scales.png}
\caption{Exercises in diatonic scales in seconds from the Master School}
\end{figure}

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{152} Ibid., 252.
\item \textsuperscript{153} Jonas, \textit{Master School}, Book 4, 252.
\end{footnotes}
The presence of diatonic scales in seconds (a skill essentially unknown in the contemporary piano repertoire), like the exposition of novel chromatic double-note fingerings and the fingerings recommended by various virtuosi (a distinctive characteristic not exhibited in prior pedagogical works), further demonstrates the Master School’s more comprehensive nature.
Book 5

Book 5 of the Master School addresses skills pertaining to octaves and chords, and it also includes essays on fingering, rhythm, and accents, as well as a chapter on fingerings. The chapter “Rhythm-Measure-Accents” containing essays about the relationships between rhythm, measure, and accents, and their role in building virtuosic technique, is particularly noteworthy in its demonstration of perfect unity between technical virtuosity and the more subtle aspects of musicianship. This chapter is applicable to all musicians, not just pianists. It stresses the importance of the musical pulse in achieving the desired character and mood of a given passage, as well as the importance of using appropriate fingerings to enhance it. In the chapter, Jonas also discusses the role of rhythmic accents and proper subdivisions in enabling the contraction and relaxation of muscles, as well as how these factors affect the speed and velocity of a given passage. The chapter also addresses how the above-mentioned musical elements affect each other.

With respect to octaves and chords, Jonas’ discussion of the use of arm vibrations is similar to Ludwig Deppe’s approach. Elizabeth Caland describes Deppe’s octave approach as follows:

In rapid playing, it (arm motion) was so reduced that through inwardly controlled rhythmic operation of the arm and shoulder muscles, the action of the hand on the keys resembled a regulated trembling or vibration. The result of each vibration was the production of a tone. The wrist was held slightly higher than the back of the hand, while the hand remained light and freely supported by the muscles of the arm.\textsuperscript{154}

Unfortunately, Deppe left no written accounts of his ideas, but some of his students did, including Elizabeth Caland, Charles Ehrenfechter, Amy Fay, and Heinreich Klose. Jonas and Deppe’s relaxed and infallible approach to octave playing is very similar to Anton Stralezki’s

\textsuperscript{154} Boardman, “Ludwig Deppe’s Piano Teaching,” 7.
description of Liszt’s performance of his own transcription of Franz Schubert’s “Erlkönig,”
which reads:

I was astonished, after hearing Liszt’s own arrangement of “Erlkönig,” he left the piano
without a single sign of perspiration or fatigue on his face or in his hand. Just a few weeks
after this, I heard the same piece being performed by Anton Rubinstein who, judging by his
physical appearance at the end of the piece had just stepped out of a shower while wearing all
his clothes. And yet the performance of Liszt was just as lively as Rubinstein’s, and his
fortissimo was just as powerful and overwhelming.\textsuperscript{155}

Jonas’ chapter on “Fingerings” is also remarkable, as his discussion closely resembles
Chopin’s approach and philosophy.\textsuperscript{156} Jonas emphasizes:

With poorly chosen fingerings the most skillful pianist courts failure […] A good fingering
enables the pianist to rely on his fingers and on the accuracy of his or her unconscious
movements […] Whenever possible, accents should be given by the stronger fingers, which
are the thumb, the third and the second finger.\textsuperscript{157}

Faulty fingering not only causes unwanted accents and distortions in rhythm, but can also
hinder the natural movement of one’s wrists and arms. This chapter emphasizes the
importance of understanding the natural construction of the human hand with its uneven
finger strength and weight distribution. For example, Jonas observes that the position and
anatomical construction of the thumbs naturally cause heavier attacks, even further
intensified by their shorter length, natural sideways directional movement, and greater bone
density relative to other fingers.\textsuperscript{158} Jonas concludes that pianists should not rely solely on
fingerings to produce natural accents on the piano. Rather, their knowledge of physical
factors that affect accents should be taken in account in making informed decisions in
choosing most appropriate fingering for a given passage.

\textsuperscript{155} Anton Stralezki, Personal Recollection of Chats with Liszt (London: E. Dojanowski, 1895), 18.
\textsuperscript{156} Mark Radice, “Joseffy, Rafael,” in Grove Music Online (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013),
www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2249933 (accessed April
20, 2017).
\textsuperscript{157} Jonas, Master School, Book 5, 164–65.
\textsuperscript{158} Ibid., 165.
In summary, Book 5 of the *Master School* departs from the usual finger exercises found in previous books. This book includes essays pertaining to rhythm, measure, and accents, as well as their role in building keener musical conceptions that are applicable to all musicians. It exemplifies perfect unity between virtuosic technical exercises and literature pertaining to more subtle elements of virtuosity, demonstrating that the two are inseparable.

**Books 6 and 7**

Book 6 and 7 consist of essays only. The topics addressed include: (1) dynamics and their relationship to symmetry, phrasing, polyphony, harmonic progression, and ensemble playing with various instruments; (2) agogic accents and tempo; (3) the use of pedals and their subtleties; (4) the art of memorization; (5) exercises when away from the piano; (6) embellishments; (7) musical prosody and declamation; (8) style; and (9) successful playing in public. These last two volumes tackle refinement of piano playing beyond virtuosic finger exercises. Jonas departs here from the nineteenth-century tradition of separating virtuosic technical exercises from the discussion of finer aspects of piano playing such as phrasing, rhythm, and pedaling.

Among the merits of Book 6 is the chapter on “The Artistic Employment of the Piano Pedals,” discussing in detail the pedaling technique that can be employed on modern pianos. This important topic is absent in the pedagogical works of Liszt, Tausig, and Joseffy. Jonas writes, “A skillful use of the pedals is one of the most artistic in piano playing, for it makes demands upon and brings forth the finer musical sensibilities and innate taste.”\(^{159}\) He provides an historical account of the evolution of the construction of dampers and pedal mechanisms from the early fortepianos to their current form. These discussions provide

insights on how to achieve fortepiano pedal effects—called for, to give one famous example, in the *fp* markings found in Beethoven’s “Pathétique” Sonata, Op. 13 (Figure 70)—which are easily attainable on fortepianos, but more challenging to produce on today’s pianos due to their more sustained and louder resonance. Today’s pianists are required to flutter the pedal and slightly lift the fingers to dampen the sound in order to produce similar effects. Additionally, they must master novel pedal technique such as “fluttering” to meet the performance requirements of twentieth-century works such as Debussy’s *Feux d’artifice* (Figure 71) and *La Cathédrale Engloutie* (Figure 72).

![Figure 70. Excerpt from the opening of Beethoven’s Piano Sonata, Op. 13, “Pathétique”](image)

![Figure 71. Passages requiring “fluttering” of the pedal from Debussy’s *Feux d’artifice*](image)
Book 6 also includes a chapter on the “Art of Memorizing.” This chapter provides insights and suggestions on how to solidify the memory and handle nerves in public performances, extremely practical topics of advice for those with aspirations of a concert career. As previously stated, Liszt was among the first to play entire recitals by memory, but because this practice is now the standard, suggestions on how to train the memory are as important to pianists as technical proficiency. Jonas’ treatise provides concrete strategies—such as creating clear mental images of the movements, melodies, fingerings, harmonies, rhythmic patterns, and agogic accents—to increase efficiency in time spent learning a work.

Book 7 includes exercises that can be performed away from the piano, similar to present-day Alexander Technique, which promote proper body alignment. Frederick Matthias Alexander (1869-1955) emphasized that the human body functions as a whole, so a more holistic approach is therefore essential in promoting healthier habits in the use of the
body while practicing and performing.\textsuperscript{160} Alexander’s methods came from his own realization of the correlation between his ailments and posture.\textsuperscript{161} According to practitioner Michael Gelb, “many of Alexander’s discoveries are things that all good teachers know,”\textsuperscript{162} his technique being described as a “systematized common sense” based on an understanding of the natural functioning of the body.\textsuperscript{163} Jonas’ chapter “Exercise for Countering Round Shoulders” mentions the relationship between torso alignment and possible ailments resulting from its misuse.\textsuperscript{164} The chapter “Weak Finger Joints” includes exercises designed to correct caved finger joints based on the same principles of proper alignment.\textsuperscript{165}

Book 7 also includes essays on general musical issues pertaining to phrasing, embellishments, sight-reading, interpretation, expression, execution, style, and successful public performance. The chapter “Appoggiaturas and Acciaccaturas” discusses the various ways of treating ornaments according to historical performance practices. Although Joseffy’s \textit{School of Advanced Piano Playing} provides exercises on various ornaments and embellishments, it does not explain their appropriate execution according to their historical origins, as the \textit{Master School} does.\textsuperscript{166}

In summary, the last two volumes address issues pertaining to finer aspects of virtuosic piano playing in the form of essays on these important topics, especially the art of memorization and refined pedal technique, both of which were unexplored in pedagogical works written before the twentieth century. These two volumes complete Jonas’s impressive

\textsuperscript{160} Ibid., 140.
\textsuperscript{161} Gelb, \textit{Body Learning}, 15.
\textsuperscript{162} Ibid., 99.
\textsuperscript{163} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{164} Jonas, \textit{Master School}, Book 7, 4.
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid., 3.
\textsuperscript{166} Joseffy, \textit{School of Advanced Piano Playing}, 91.
creation of a comprehensive work that encompasses the development of virtuosic piano playing in the early twentieth century.

As the most comprehensive treatise written in the early twentieth century, its only evident fault was the unfortunate timing of its publication. The piano industry peaked in production and sales in 1920 with 200,000 pianos sold in the United States alone, which quickly dropped to 2,000 six years later when radios inundated the market in 1925.\textsuperscript{167} The last volume of the \textit{Master School} was published during the devastating stock market crash in 1929, which also marked the beginning of the Great Depression. When Jonas first moved to New York in 1893, the state of piano pedagogy in America was still in its infancy which would have been the most opportune time for such a publication. Regardless of the \textit{Master School}'s fate, it is undoubtedly one of the most significant landmarks in the literature of piano playing and still stands as an indispensable resource for pianists today.

\textsuperscript{167} Loesser, \textit{Men, Women and Pianos}, 525-537.
Conclusion

This thesis has surveyed the evolution of piano construction, piano playing, and piano teaching as a lucrative profession that collectively led to the need for a more current and comprehensive piano treatise, which the Master School amply fulfilled. Specifically, it has compared the contents of Jonas’ Master School to other pedagogical works in common use at the time, demonstrating the Master School’s distinctive qualities and how it answered the demand for a modern resource that addressed the latest advances in piano virtuosity including novel approaches introduced in the early twentieth century. Through comparative study, I argue that the Master School was a superior resource for the time, owing to its vast scope and content.

This study highlights technical skills present in the Master School, many of which remain novel and all of which are relevant to this day, as well as numerous essays pertaining to more refined aspects of piano playing. Further, this study shows the extent to which the work not only encompassed what had already been achieved, but was in many instances ahead of its time, which cemented its relevance for pianists well after its publication. The unique characteristics of the Master School, in comparison with its predecessors, include: (1) a wider range of technical exercises; (2) novel skills previously unknown to the piano repertoire; (3) a wealth of preparatory exercises accompanied by citations of specific examples from the repertoire that can be employed to practice certain technique; (4) contributions by numerous outstanding pianists of the day; and (5) essays on finer aspects of virtuosic piano playing such as phrasing, touch, memorization and practice methods.

The Master School is slowly gaining popularity amongst pianists and pedagogues alike, as its first two volumes have been reprinted by Dover Publications in 2011 and all
seven volumes were reprinted by Forgotten Books in 2018.\textsuperscript{168} It provides excellent solutions to the challenges of the piano repertoire widely played today and serves as a significant landmark in the continuing development of virtuosic piano technique. Presently, modern piano repertoire continues to demand new skills, such as the rhythmic discontinuities and unconventional accentuations in György Ligeti’s \textit{L’escalier du diable}; the prepared piano technique in John Cage’s \textit{Music for Midsummer Nights}; the unconventional use of the entire forearm to depress a wide cluster of notes as in many of the tone-cluster works by Henry Cowell such as \textit{The Tides of Manaunaun} or Frédéric Rzewski’s \textit{Winnsboro Cotton Mill Blues}; and the superimposition of three different works in Marc-André Hamelin’s “Triple” Étude No. 1, to name a few. Likewise, the instrument itself is continuing to evolve. For instance, Yamaha has recently undertaken the manufacture of digital pianos with modern grand piano action, their “N” series. These hybrid pianos are capable of faithfully simulating the touch of a grand piano, while digitally reproducing samples from a concert grand piano as well as samples from other instruments such as the harpsichord and the pipe organ. In 2015, pianist Daniel Barenboim collaborated with Belgian piano maker Chris Maene to design a grand piano with straight parallel strings reminiscent of pianofortes in Chopin’s time, in contrast to the diagonal-crossed strings of a contemporary piano.\textsuperscript{169} Its wooden soundboard veins go in different directions and its hammers and strings have been repositioned. Barenboim stated, “It is a different relationship between the tip of the fingers and the key. And the pedaling [...] the transparency of the sound makes you rethink the use of the


pedals.”\textsuperscript{170} Although the piano continues to evolve along with new compositional techniques, the \textit{Master School} stands as a significant treatise in the history of piano playing. Furthermore, it should be regarded as an indispensable reference tool that addresses timeless factors of musical performance style and key aspects of technique that are widely transferrable to the playing of any repertoire performed today by professionals and amateurs alike.

\textsuperscript{170} Ibid.
Bibliography


