

TECHNICAL SKILLS

COMPILED AND EDITED BY JANE MAGRATH

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A complete piano method based on the classics
(All loosely correlated with Alfred's Basic Piano Library—with corresponding levels)
Masterwork Classics
Levels 1-6
Practice and Performance
Levels 1-6
Technical Skills
Levels 1-6

TO THE TEACHER

BUILDING TECHNIQUE

This volume does not attempt to teach someone how to teach or build technique. This volume simply provides activities that, when played correctly, assist teachers by providing material with which they may help students develop technique. The material here is provided as a basis with which each teacher may develop a technical philosophy.

SEVERAL CONSIDERATIONS

All technical work must be completed in as musical a fashion as possible. The performer should be aware of sitting correctly, and arm, wrist, hand, and other movements while playing the studies. All movements should be choreographed to achieve the desired sound. Most, if not all, of the studies should be transposed to as many keys as the student can handle. Crawling versions are warm-ups that are based on the previous example and “crawl” upward on the keyboard.

WAYS TO USE THIS VOLUME

As many sections of this book as necessary may be used for each student. Some teachers may want to emphasize solely the *Etudes* and *Technical Studies*, while others may want to focus on the *Warm-Ups* and *Technical Studies* while using the *Etudes* primarily for sight-reading. Still others may wish to stress the *Warm-Ups*, and simply to touch upon the *Etudes*. The variety of materials found here makes it possible for a teacher to develop a plan of instruction tailored for each student.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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This volume is
dedicated to
Anna Norris

PURPOSE

These exercises will help students develop fluent fingers and flexibility in moving about the keyboard. The degree of flexibility developed in the warm-ups exceeds that demanded in the repertoire at this point in order to keep the students' technique ahead of the demands of the music.

MAY BE LEARNED BY ROTE

It is suggested that these warm-ups be presented by rote. They are based on easy-to-learn patterns that the student should be able to remember. Although many of them were written on the white keys, students should transpose the warm-ups to all major and minor keys and positions. Students who know many or all of the five-finger patterns should modify the warm-ups to fit these patterns. The warm-ups derive value from the careful work of studying them, rather than quickly playing them once and moving to the next exercise.

HOW TO PRACTICE

In order to develop fluency and flexibility, each warm-up should be played over an extended period of time, not just for one or two weeks. Students should learn to play these exercises with dynamic inflection and nuance, with the right hand voiced above the left hand and alternately with the left hand voiced above the right hand, matching tones in sequence and with evenness of technique. These practices may be extended to such exercises as playing the right hand staccato while the left hand is legato, and so on. The goals can provide guidance for teacher and student in working out the examples. Teachers are encouraged to make modifications in the exercises, either temporarily or permanently. For instance, an example with dotted rhythms might be played for several weeks with even rhythms before dotted rhythms are used.

HOW MANY EXERCISES AT ONCE?

A student should be playing two or three (perhaps even four) of the warm-ups at different levels of mastery as part of daily practice. The student should learn to listen for evenness in technique, phrasing and nuance.

WHAT IF...

An exercise is too hard for a student at first? Have the student practice only one or two repetitions of the pattern until that is mastered. Then assign more of the pattern to be played.

The student cannot play in a steady tempo? The student should play the example much slower with a steady beat and strong pulse. All of the warm-ups should sound like mini-pieces and should display musical inflection and shaping. Students should count all examples carefully.

The student has been introduced to several of the five-finger patterns? He/she should transpose the examples to the major (or minor) five-finger patterns.

The quantity of the material seems overwhelming? The teacher can select the activities so that the student is given variety while striving to build technique. This volume presents materials flexible enough to fit different teaching philosophies of technical study.

Warm-Up No. 1
A Cheerful Routine

The first system of music is in 4/4 time. The right hand (treble clef) starts on a G5, with a '5' above the first note. It features a series of eighth-note triplets, each marked with a '3' and a slur. The left hand (bass clef) starts on a C4, with a '1' below the first note. It features a series of eighth-note triplets, each marked with a '3' and a slur. The system consists of two measures.

The second system of music is in 4/4 time. The right hand (treble clef) starts on a G5, with a '5' above the first note. It features a series of eighth-note triplets, each marked with a '3' and a slur. The left hand (bass clef) starts on a C4, with a '1' below the first note. It features a series of eighth-note triplets, each marked with a '3' and a slur. The system consists of two measures. The word *simile* is written below the first measure of the right hand. The text *Continue upward on white keys until...* is written above the right hand.

The third system of music is in 4/4 time. The right hand (treble clef) starts on a G5, with a '5' above the first note. It features a series of eighth-note triplets, each marked with a '3' and a slur. The left hand (bass clef) starts on a C4, with a '1' below the first note. It features a series of eighth-note triplets, each marked with a '3' and a slur. The system consists of two measures.

If you have learned all of the major five-finger patterns, play "A Cheerful Routine" in all major five-finger patterns, ascending chromatically.

Etude

(Not a Worry!)

Hermann Berens (1826–1880)
Op. 70, No. 14

Allegretto

5

p

5

2

5

3

5

5

9

mf

4

5

13

mp

17

f