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CRAMER

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P R E F A C E .

To mention in detail, and with a mere repetition of encomiums, what is universally recognized and has often been said concerning the inestimable value and enduring importance of J. B. Cramer's pianoforte-studies, as a cultural means for the pianist's execution and delivery, (a means not only unexcelled, but also—with the exception of Muzio Clementi's "Gradus ad Parnassum", for which they serve as the most suitable preparation—one as yet but approximately equalled by any other collection of studies,) can not, of course, be the purpose of these lines. If Fétis, the Romanic musical authority of the present, designates them as "éminemment classiques", and if, of his German colleagues, Franz Brendel and C. F. Weitzmann, the former, in his history of music, terms them "a foundation marking a new epoch for all solid study"; and the latter, in his history of pianoforte-playing,* [Engl. translation, New York, 1893], numbers them among the classics of pianoforte-literature in respect alike to contents and form, these consonant opinions of the most renowned æstheticians and theorists really but state a fact, the great consequence of which speaks to us most loudly in the universal dissemination and popularity of the work here newly issued to the public in a specifically *instructive* edition. Perhaps it will not be superfluous to say a few words in justification of the new edition (or elaboration), although only through careful inspection of the work itself will the purpose of the editor become perfectly clear. The need of such an instructive edition has been often felt already. Louis Berger (born 1777, and Clementi's pupil from 1804–10) deemed it necessary to edit the first twelve studies with additional directions for the fingering; the entire work was afterward similarly edited by Julius Knorr; while, quite recently, Mr. Louis Köhler has issued, as the opening book of his "Classical High School for Pianists", a selection of thirty studies, with glosses in part highly useful. It is idle critically to review the editions named, since the new one here submitted originated solely in their criticism. The old need has simply remained unsatisfied, and the attentive observer of the doings of the pianoforte-playing world can not escape the perception of how seldom it is—in proportion to their universal dissemination—that the cultural material proffered in Cramer's studies is exhaustively utilized; while their well-considered and methodic employment must have for its result the gain of a firm foundation for virtuoso-discipline in the good sense, nay, the gain of an already comparatively developed degree of mechanical and intellectual ripeness on the part of the player. But with what want of thoroughness, with what unthinking routine both pupils and teachers proceed through them! Either the instruction consists, all told, in more or less pedantically "ploughing through" the first book, and perhaps the second also, which naturally is then, as a rule, more quickly finished; or else the whole number, eighty-four, are really—in turn—hurriedly quitted; on accomplishing which, in nine cases out of ten, the but slight positive result appears, that the player who has reached No. 84, on being suddenly again confronted with No. 1, shows himself incapable of striking the first *arpeggiato* C major

* A copy of which, with manuscript revisions and additions, has been intrusted by the author to the present translator for the preparation of an English version.

triad in an artistically correct manner, not to mention other surprises for the examiner. Now, the practical ill-success so frequently attendant upon the study of Cramer's *Etudes* is owing to causes which it is the aim of this edition to obviate. First among these is the *non-observance of a systematic succession*. Such an one was not, at least consistently, carried out by the author. Moreover, in the English edition, the succession of the numbers differs from that in the German. The first-named edition, which lay before us in our work, and, indeed, as represented by a revisional copy provided with corrections in Cramer's own handwriting (this copy, belonging to Mr. Spitzweg, at that time at the head of the publishing house of Aibl, served as the standard for determining exactly all signs of time and expression), also contains the sixteen studies supplementally issued in Vienna (surreptitiously in Hamburg), which have been comparatively but little disseminated, and the chief purpose of which, evidently, was only to make up the ceremonial number of 100. Accordingly, their non-consideration in the present edition was not prompted solely by their character of a private domain. For our attempt to remedy this evil, no claim is laid to *absolute* approval, since individual considerations will always play a certain rôle in instruction, if the teacher's conception of his task be not bureaucratic. A second chief cause of the qualitative resultlessness of the study of Cramer's *Etudes* is to be found in their over-great quantity. The same consideration in the case of Clementi's "Gradus ad Parnassum" has recently induced the Court-pianist to the King of Prussia, Mr. Carl Tausig, to edit an anthology of that work, accompanied with valuable directions for their correct practice, which is published in Berlin by Bahn (Trautwein's), and the adoption of which, on the part of all intelligent pianoforte-teachers, is to be recommended. With correct tact, Mr. Tausig has eliminated the intrinsically very valuable pieces in the severe contrapuntal style; for the pianoforte-fugues and canons of Clementi, far from offering a fit means of preparation for the Well-tempered Clavichord of Bach, are more likely to hinder the player by leading to bad habits. For "Bach-playing" demands preliminary studies which must be sought only in other compositions by that master himself—with, perhaps, the anticipation of pieces by Handel.* In preparing this edition of Cramer, all pieces for practice in which no perfectly definite mechanical end was pursued have been similarly culled and disposed of. Perhaps we may even

* As there was once, in Florence and at other Italian universities, a Dante faculty (Boccaccio was the first occupant of this chair of instruction), the members of which confined their philological labors simply to the enigma of this mighty sphinx, so there might be in place, in high schools of music, a similar specialization of the study of the German intellectual giant in tones, Bach, who is comparable to a Dante only. To play Bach beautifully and with finish is a task which—the necessary cerebral conditions abstracted—is only to be demanded from those pianists who have attained complete mastery over the material, and who also, for example, no longer brokenly stumble through Beethoven's last pianoforte-sonatas. Whither attempts to assimilate the works of Bach from the standpoint of the pianoforte-chair specifically tend, is most alarmingly shown by Czerny's celebrated edition of them, the transitory merit of which we would not question, but against an uncritical use of which an emphatic warning must be given in the interest of a true understanding of Bach. Moreover, with the above remark, it is not intended to say that the introduction to the playing of Bach (preludes and inventions) may not, according to individual data, begin even simultaneously with the study of Cramer's *Etudes*.

be reproached for not having proceeded radically enough, and for having given too much space to repeated representations of that which is homogeneous. To this it might be replied, that practical experience demonstrates the advantage of such readings. Precisely in connection with the necessity of acquiring by perseverance any special kind of mechanical expertness, the charm of a certain variety in homogeneity tends to refresh and stimulate, on the one hand, and on the other to promote and determine, and also, occasionally, as a counter-experiment, to instruct. After several homogeneous exercises only, the player should always revert, in recapitulation, to the first of them. Respecting a few other studies, of which the mechanical end is perhaps still more systematically developed in Clementi's *Gradus*—coupled, to be sure, with greater difficulties—it may be remarked, that in a regularly graded succession of those collections of studies which are to be employed for complete cultivation in pianoforte-playing, J. B. Cramer is the forerunner of Clementi. In this connection, perhaps, it may not be unwelcome to pianoforte-teachers to see indicated the course of mechanical study which the undersigned has found approved in his practice as a teacher. The course in question comprises all the studies, from those of the beginner to those of the *virtuoso*.

After the first rudiments have been mastered, for which purpose the first part of the pianoforte-method of LEBERT-STARK is most to be recommended as, to the best of our knowledge, the most substantial help, the following are in place:

I. a. The studies of ALOYS SCHMITT, Op. 16, together with the "Exercices Préparatoires",—always to be practised in all twelve keys—which form the introduction to the first book. It is worthy of mention that FELIX MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY, who was an eminent master as pianist also, laid with this work the foundation of his classical technique.

b. In contrast to the relative dryness of Schmitt, a collateral use of STEPHEN HELLER, Op. 45.

II. a. J. B. CRAMER'S studies.

b. ST. HELLER: Op. 46 and 47.

c. C. CZERNY: Daily Exercises; likewise his collection of studies, entitled the "Method of Legato and Staccato" (*Die Schule des Legato und Staccato*), which, strangely enough, has not hitherto received that notice which it merits.

III. a. CLEMENTI; "Gradus ad Parnassum" (selection and elaboration by C. Tausig).

b. MOSCHELES: Op. 70, 24 studies; a work more widely disseminated in North than in South Germany, which unconditionally deserves the predicate "classic".

IV. a. HENSELT: Selected studies from Op. 2 and 5.

b. Together with, and as preparatory to these, HABERBIER: "Études-Poésies"; a kind of continuation of St. Heller.

c. Selected pieces by MOSCHELES: Characteristic studies (*Charakteristische Studien*). Op. 95.

V. CHOPIN: Op. 10 and 25, with which may be associated the study of the single Preludes (of a special mechanical tendency) from his Op. 28.

VI. LISZT: Six Etudes after Paganini; three Concert-Etudes; twelve grand Etudes, "d'exécution transcendante."

VII. a. RUBINSTEIN: Selected Etudes and preludes.

b. V. C. ALKAN: Selections from his twelve grand Etudes; for the most part more difficult than any of the aforementioned.

Simultaneously with entering upon stage III., THEODOR KULLAK'S Method of Octaves (in three parts) should be attacked and prosecuted without haste, but also without interruption. This extremely meritorious special work is, in our opinion, irreplaceable, and it most justly claims

the frequently misused title, "indispensable du pianiste". To refer here to other specialties of a subordinate nature, for purely mechanical ends, would extend this preface too far.

Finally, a third circumstance might be mentioned in justification of our instructive edition, and, indeed, the one which seems to us weightiest of all. It relates to the directions for the application of the fingers, which, being doled out by the author with a sparingness only proportionate to their want of consistency, were in need alike of augmentation and alteration, in order to help the performer to attain the purposed mechanical aim. In order to prevent misinterpretation, we will elucidate more particularly this apparently irreverent reproach against J. B. Cramer. His labors fell on the boundary-line between the earlier and later periods of pianoforte-playing, of which the latter, keeping pace with the increasing perfection of the instrument, and the enhanced demands resulting from it upon the performer's powers of execution, has, in course of time, arrived at a system of fingering in many respects diametrically opposed to the former. As the chief mechanical difficulty in pianoforte-playing, we now lay stress upon the unevenness, resulting from the local relations of black and white keys, of the field forming the scene of action for the performer's fingers. Our aim, therefore, is chiefly directed to rendering the fingers independent of that unevenness, and, by means of protracted gymnastic exercise, to enable them to move about on the black keys in a manner as light, free, secure, and distinct as when on white keys, and without stumbling in any combination whatsoever of white and black. According to the perhaps somewhat venturesome opinion of the editor, that is the best fingering which permits the performer, without mechanical preparation, and without previously taking pains to deliberate, to transpose a given pianoforte-piece to any key he may choose; a modern virtuoso of the genuine calibre must be able to perform Beethoven's Op. 57, for example, as conveniently in F# minor as in F minor. In such a case, the construction of a suitable fingering, which must be based exclusively upon a correct rendering of the musical phrase—without respect either to the relations of black and white keys, or to those of longer and shorter fingers—demands, of course, the overthrow of all the rules of the old method. This old method appears, after all, to have set out with the chief purpose of circumventing all difficulties endangering the preservation of a quiet position of the hand, through varying relations of the white and black keys which come into play; just as, among other things, it ignored the necessity of different applications of the fingers in the case of different modes of touch (*i. e.*, between *legato*, *staccato*, etc.); and just as it rejected that right of the thumb to "free migration", which is indispensable in polyphonic playing and for avoiding perplexities in transposition; declaring, as a matter of course, him to be the best pianoforte-composer whose inspiration was continually guided by the external image of the twelve half-steps of the the octave on the key-board, as seven broad and flat keys, together with five narrow and elevated ones; judged by which criterion, Clementi's pianoforte-fugues might indeed have claimed an unconditional superiority over those of a J. S. Bach.

Now, J. B. Cramer (born 1771, in Mannheim; died 1858, near London) comprehended in a far greater degree than did his predecessor, representing a more important artistic individuality, Muzio Clementi (born 1752, at Rome; died 1832, in England)—whose instruction, moreover, he enjoyed only in 1783-4, at Vienna, therefore as a boy—the necessity of breaking with that method; and in his studies are to be found frequent traces of reformatory directions for the fingering—especially, too, in respect to the old limitation of the activity of the thumb, just men-

tioned. But as if, frightened by the boldness of his attacks, he feared the result of consistently carrying them out, and finally yielded to the tyranny of earlier practical usage, he forthwith and frequently shows relapses into the old ways. Now, in preparing this edition, the editor deemed himself obliged to suppress the author who looked back, in favor of the one showing intuitions of the future; still, he has never gone so far as to force another fingering upon those pieces in which the invention of the pianoforte figures appears essentially induced by the practices of the old method; just as, according to his principles, the Hummel concertos (not, on the other hand, those of Mozart—we mean in the original, not their antiquating “Hummel”-ization [Ver-“hummel”-ung]) should be played with Hummel’s own fingering—as sufficiently set forth in his method for the pianoforte—without any modernizing facilitation or aggravation whatsoever.

The instructive remarks appended to each study spare us the trouble of generalizing that in our work which, in its special place, in connection with practical use, will become self-evident. Still, we desire to mention, in passing, that, in point of the dynamic signs of delivery, we have thought it best to carry out with more exactness, and in detail, the intentions rather sketchily made known by the author. Similar revision seemed to us necessary in respect to the *legato*-slurs and *staccato*-points. Special care has been taken to display the text in a form as immediately intelligible as possible, following in this the modern principle of writing upon the upper staff all notes assigned to the right hand for performance, and all given to the left hand upon the lower staff; further, in parallel movements of two parts, of dispensing with the luxury of double “slurring”; etc.

With reference to the metronomic signs, which, as has been said already, are copied exactly from the original, we can not conceal that to us they appear excessively fast in the majority of cases—not merely in respect to the time to be taken in practising them, but also to that appropriate to their delivery simply as pieces of music. It is possible that, as happened with Beethoven, and more recently with Schumann (who is said to have metronomized after a defective Maelzel during an entire creative period), the relation of the compass of J. B. Cramer to our normal pyramid may have resembled that of a Fahrenheit to a Réaumur.

Concerning the life and labors of the composer, information is to be found in FÉTIS: Universal Biography (Biographie Universelle), first edition, 1866 [2nd ed., 1889]; Gassner’s Universal Encyclopedia of Music (Universal-Lexikon der Tonkunst), etc. The History of Pianoforte-playing (Geschichte des Klavierspiels), by C. F. Weitzmann, was referred to at the outset; we fully subscribe to what is there said on the relation of Cramer to his predecessors and successors.

Unfortunately, we have not been able, despite repeated endeavors, to ascertain with exactness any thing concerning the dates of the successive publication of Cramer’s studies, to establish which would be of more than mere historic interest. The second book appeared with Breitkopf and Härtel in 1810 (when in England?); and in the advertisement referring to it in the General Musical Gazette (Allgem. musikal. Zeitung), the first book is mentioned as having already passed through five editions, and as being one of the most excellent collections of studies that had appeared in the last “quinquennium” (1805–1810).

MUNICH, May, 1868.

HANS VON BÜLOW.

Fifty Selected Pianoforte-Studies

by

J. B. Cramer.

Allegro. ($\text{♩} = 132$.)

sempre legatiss.

1. (1)*

ff *p* *cresc.* *ff* *f* *dim.*

* The figures given in brackets are the *original numbers* of the études in the first edition of Cramer's 84 celebrated Studies.