

Preface

The online video, *Piano Technique Basics*, (<http://www.youtube.com/marchandmusic>) and the book, *An Introduction to Piano Technique*, were designed primarily for intermediate piano students. To clarify what we mean by “intermediate piano students,” let us say that a piano student ceases to be a beginner and becomes an intermediate piano student when he or she can play, for instance, a Clementi Sonatina and a few two-octave scales in simpler keys. A pupil who is studying Chopin *Etudes*--or pieces of similar difficulty-- is no longer an intermediate student: such a pupil is advanced. Everything from the first Clementi Sonatina to the first Chopin *Etude* we could term “the intermediate levels of piano study.” It is to these students that the material in this book and online video are primarily aimed.

While it is certainly possible (and necessary) to teach some technical rudiments to less advanced students, it is with intermediate students that the teaching of technical basics comes into its own. The intermediate student needs a firm foundation in technical basics to successfully progress to advanced levels. We hope that this book and online video will assist these students to acquire a secure grasp of technical fundamentals and inspire them to develop their technique so that they may play more advanced repertoire competently.

The online video and book are meant to be used in conjunction: the book and online video each play their own part in presenting the material herein. Read the book. Watch the online video. Do the drills (exercises). Read the book again, etc. The teacher should be apprised that some movements shown in the online video are exaggerated for clarity. An example of this would be the section on “The Thumb.” The thumb movements shown in the online video are obviously exaggerated in an attempt to make the basic motion--the thumb moving up and down--as clear as possible for someone trying to learn the material newly. This is not the way we play; it is merely shown in this manner to make it easier for pupils to grasp the fundamental motion. The knowing teacher can simply curb any exaggeration of movement once the student has understood the basics of that motion.

It is also appreciated that not all teachers agree on various points of technique. To that end, please see the section on “Notes for Teachers” for further discussion on various technical matters.

A bibliography is supplied with the text and in the online video extras. Unfortunately, some immensely valuable references listed in the bibliography are now out of print and not easily located. For example, you are not likely to find Arnold Schultz’s *The Riddle of the Pianist’s Finger and Its Relationship to a Touch-Scheme* (Carl Fischer, Inc., New York) on the shelves of your local bookstore. Yet this volume contains a wealth of technical material an enterprising pianist cannot afford to be without. I found my copy by employing on-line (internet) search engines which locate used and rare books. If your local library does not have certain books, this may be a way to procure them. Publications by Dover are usually easy to find in local stores and can even be ordered directly from the Dover.

In making the online video and in writing this booklet, each draft was given to the

intermediate students in my studio to see if these pupils readily assimilated the material and to see their reactions to the presentation of the material. Many thanks to all these students for their valuable suggestions and the insights they gave us. Special thanks to Daniel Barnett for his guidance and support. Thanks to Brian Sorbo for the fantastic sound and lighting. A big thank you to Alvin for acting the part of the student and for his piano performances on the online video. Without our “clapper girl,” Claire Marchand, who did double-duty as caterer, we would have been adrift and hungry! Above all, heartfelt thanks to Rebecca Underwood for coming up with the idea of making a video in the first place, and for all the many patient hours spent in front of the computer to turn footage into a splendid online video.

James Marchand
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