AMY FAY AND HER TEACHERS IN GERMANY

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Musical Arts

Degree

The University of Memphis

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May 2008

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I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Judith Pfeiffer entitled "Amy Fay and her Teachers in Germany." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts with a major in Music.

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ABSTRACT

Pfeiffer, Judith. DMA. The University of Memphis. May 2008. Amy Fay and her Teachers in Germany. Major Professor: Joan Gilbert, M.M.

The American pianist Amy Fay, born 1844 in Bayou Goula, Louisiana, studied from 1869 to 1875 in Germany with the most celebrated pianists and teachers of the time. Based mainly on the letters that Fay wrote to her family during her stay in Germany, that were published in 1880 as *Music-Study in Germany in the Nineteenth Century*, this document explores her experiences with her teachers as well as their methods in terms of teaching and technique.

Attracted by Carl Tausig's fame, Fay studied with him from January 1870 until he closed down his conservatory in August 1870. This short time-period was marked by Fay's frustration over Tausig's self-centered teaching style; the discouragement she felt as she worked on exercises like Muzio Clementi's *Gradus ad Parnassum*; and her sadness over Tausig's premature death. She stayed three years with her next teacher, Theodor Kullak. After a time of dedicated practicing and training in octaves, she became dissatisfied with his lack of further technical guidance and his musical approach, which did not leave much room for her own interpretations. Her lessons with Franz Liszt, with whom she studied in the summer of 1873, were most inspiring musically, but left unfulfilled her need for thorough technical instruction. Ludwig Deppe, her next teacher, finally gave her the guidance she craved and introduced her to his method, developed by observing great artists (especially Liszt). She studied with him from 1873 until she returned to the United States in 1875, where she

published his exercises and passed her knowledge on to her students. Besides running a private teaching studio, she also was a successful performer. In 1883, she started giving "Piano Conversations," in which she gave a short introduction before each piece she played. She also was a dedicated clubwoman and helped found several music clubs as well as the Women's Philharmonic Society of New York, of which she was president from1903 through 1914. In addition, she gave lectures, wrote articles on teaching, music, and the issue of women's role in music.

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Chapter One

Introduction

The American pianist Amy Fay (1844–1928) undertook a journey to Germany, where she studied from 1869 to 1875 with the most celebrated pianists and teachers of the time: Carl Tausig, Theodor Kullak, Franz Liszt, and Ludwig Deppe. The purpose of this doctoral document is to explore Fay's experiences with her teachers while studying in Germany and to present their different approaches to teaching, technique, and music, approaches that were prevalent in the third quarter of the 19th century. What kind of person, teacher, and performer was each of Amy's teachers? What concepts about music, practicing, or technique did they try to convey?

The 19th century displays a significant development in approaches to piano technique. Linde Großmann calls the first third of the 19th century a time of collecting and refers to numerous compendia of exercises, which aimed at developing power, speed, and independence of the fingers.[1] According to Großmann, a radical change took place in Berlin at the end of the 19th century. The ideal of equal fingers was abandoned in favor of an anatomical-physiological approach towards technique. Fay's teachers represent those different approaches, and she had the chance to experience different schools of teaching: Carl Tausig followed one of the most prevalent teaching methods in the 19th century, which was based on developing facility by working on independence and

[1] Linde Großmann, "Berlins Beitrag zur Entwicklung des Klavierspiels und der Klaviermethodik," in *Pianisten in Berlin: Klavierspiel und Klavierausbildung seit dem 19. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Hochschule der Künste, 1999), 13.

strength of fingers through exercises. He used Clementi's *Gradus ad Parnassum* and separated technical issues from musical content. Theodor Kullak taught high-finger action and a rigid arm. Although Franz Liszt wrote twelve volumes of exercises, in his teaching he focused on musical ideas. Ludwig Deppe analyzed the great pianists of his time and formed his observations into a method based on natural body movement, including the free movement of the arm. Deppe's method changed Fay's playing the most and helped her bloom into a finished pianist. Back in the United States, she developed his method and taught his principles. This document focuses on Fay's most famous piano teachers and only briefly mentions her other teachers Louis Ehrlich, Anna Steiniger, and Fräulein Timm.

During her stay in Germany, Amy Fay corresponded with her family in America (with Zina, her older sister who served as her surrogate mother, with her brother Norman Fay, and with her sisters Rose Fay Thomas and Laura Fay Smith), giving a vivid description of her experiences. Her letters are a very important testimony of the time, describing the prevalent teaching methods and providing an animated description of the teachers she studied with. This document is based primarily on those letters.

It is very fascinating to me that Fay had the courage to leave her home country in 1869 to go to Germany, a young woman traveling by herself. I relate to her on a personal level, sharing the same experience, only moving in the opposite direction, from Germany to the United States and 135 years later. Many

undertones in her letters sound familiar: the expectation, the excitement, and also the disappointments.

A Biography of Amy Fay

Amy Fay (Figure 1) was born in 1844 in Bayou Goula, Louisiana, as a daughter of Reverend Charles and Charlotte Emily (Hopkins) Fay.[2] Amy came from a prominent New England family. In 1848 the family moved to St. Alban, Vermont. Her father, an Episcopal clergyman, was a Harvard graduate, a scholar, and a linguist, who supervised the teaching of languages to his family. Amy learned to converse, read, and write in Latin, Greek, German,[3] and French. Her mother, a self-taught pianist, tutored Amy in piano playing. Amy's mother died at age thirty-nine, when Amy was twelve years old. From then on she was taught piano by her sister Laura. In 1866, Amy moved to Cambridge to live with her older sister Zina, where she began to study the piano privately with John Knowles Paine, since she was prohibited from registering at Harvard. Paine was a friend of the Fay family and the first music instructor at Harvard University.

Many elements led to Fay's decision to go to Germany: the lack of opportunities for women to obtain higher education in the United States, her musical success, her teacher's excitement about his own studies in Germany, and her sister's tense and unhappy marriage.

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[2] Unless otherwise noted, all biographical information is derived from S. Margaret William McCarthy, *Amy Fay, America's Notable Woman of Music* (Warren, MI: Harmonie Park Press, 1995).

[3] Interestingly enough, she considered herself not able to speak the language: "And as I don't speak the language," in Amy Fay, *Music-Study in Germany* (New York: Dover Publications, 1965), 35.

Fig. 1: Amy Fay, ca. 1875, printed in Margaret William McCarthy, *More Letters of Amy Fay: The American Years 1870–1916* (Detroit, MI: Information Coordinators, 1986), frontispiece.

The Fay family had many connections, strong family ties, and an expectation of its members "to achieve, to develop talents, and to make a difference in the world."[4] Fay had the opportunity to take advantage of this support system, which introduced her to acclaimed artists, politicians, and society people, and covered the expenses of her traveling. She undertook a journey to Germany at the age of twenty-five and stayed from November 1869 to September 1875 in Berlin and Weimar. Attracted by Carl Tausig's fame as a

[4] S. Margaret William McCarthy, *More Letters of Amy Fay: The American Years, 1870–1916* (Detroit, MI: Information Coordinators, 1986), 3.

pianist (Paine was very impressed with him and had recommended him), she went to Berlin to study with him, but had most of her lessons with Louis Ehlert, a substitute teacher for Tausig, as Tausig was frequently absent for concerts. Besides piano lessons, she took lessons in ensemble playing with W. J. Otto Leßmann (1844–1918) and theory with Carl Friedrich Weitzmann (1808–1880). After Tausig closed his conservatory in 1870, she studied from 1870 to 1873 with Theodor Kullak, at first taking private lessons, then entering his class at Kullak's conservatory (*Konservatorium der Musik*) in 1871. In 1873, discouraged and disappointed with her experiences at the conservatory, she decided to go to Weimar to study with Franz Liszt. After studying with him for six months, from May to October 1873, she went back to Berlin to take private lessons with Kullak. Dissatisfied with his pedantic teaching, she finally found the teacher who suited her best and who developed her technique and musicality the most— Ludwig Deppe. She studied with him until September 1885, when she returned to the United States. Living first in Chicago, then New York, Fay maintained a private teaching studio, was active as a performer, gave lectures, and was also a dynamic force in developing the musical culture in both cities through her club work. She died in a nursing home in Watertown, Massachusetts, in 1928.

Chapter Two

Carl Tausig

Biography

Carl Tausig, born of German parents in Warsaw in 1841, impressed at an early age as a child prodigy.[1] After being taught by his father, he studied from 1855 to 1859 with Franz Liszt, who usually refused to teach prodigies. In fact, Carl's father had tricked Liszt into listening to his wonder child.[2] In 1858 Liszt became angry with Tausig, his favorite pupil, for selling one of his unpublished manuscripts without his knowledge. He therefore sent him off to Richard Wagner for further studies.[3] Tausig made his public début in 1858 at a concert in Berlin conducted by Hans von Bülow. Critics of his early performances complained of his failing to develop artistry, which he had sacrificed in his single-minded pursuit of technical capability. His colleague Louis Ehlert called Tausig's playing around that time "a sort of piracy that snatched effects when and how they were to be found."[4] Starting in 1862, when he moved to Vienna, Tausig took a break from public concerts to study thoroughly on his own for the first time. His critics then recognized him as an astonishing pianist with an impeccable technique. In 1866

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[1] Unless otherwise noted, all information is derived from *Grove Online*, s.v. "Carl Tausig," by Edward Dannreuther (accessed February 5, 2008).

[2] Fay, *Music-Study*, 250.

[3] Ernst Burger, *Franz Liszt, A Chronicle of his Life in Pictures and Documents* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 208.

[4] Louis Ehlert, *From the Tone World* (New York: C. F. Tretbar, 1885), 16. Ehlert (1825–1884) studied at the Leipzig Conservatory under Mendelssohn and Schumann. He was a pianist, conductor, composer, and author, and taught at Tausig's conservatory. His book on Tausig gives an insightful picture of Tausig's complex personality.

he opened a "School of Advanced Piano Playing"[5] (*Akademie für höheres Klavierspiel*) in Berlin, which, however, he closed shortly afterwards. He died in 1871 of typhoid at the age of 29.

Tausig as a person

Pictures of Tausig show a short man with dark hair, dark eyes, and a mustache (Figure 2). He looks very serious, slightly melancholic, and somewhat distant, with a sense of pride.

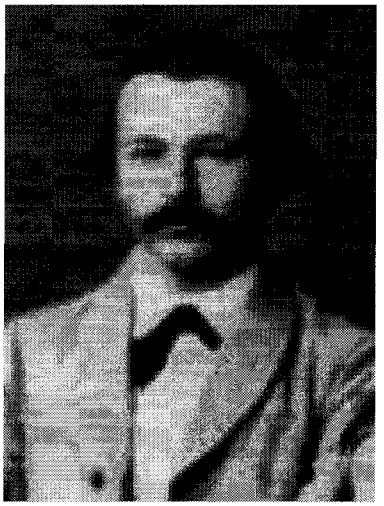

Fig. 2. Carl Tausig, Photograph by Joseph Albert, Munich, 1865, printed in Ernst Burger, *Franz Liszt, A Chronicle of his Life in Pictures and Documents* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 208.

One can imagine that he could lean toward either side: sympathetically caring for his students or demanding almost impossible results, with an impatient and despotic temper. This was exactly the picture that Fay drew in her letters, which mention Tausig's expressive eyes, his humor, his winning way, and how

[5] Burger, *Franz Liszt*, 208.

he looked "as haughty and despotic as Lucifer."[6] According to Fay, getting along with Tausig and taking lessons from him was a major challenge. She admired him very much, especially for his talent and pianistic achievements, but felt disappointment and anger because of the irregularity of lessons and the sudden closing of the conservatory before she had had the chance to study seriously with him: "The fact is, he is a capricious genius, entirely spoiled and unregulated and the conservatory is a mere plaything to him."[7] Ehlert explained Tausig's motive for founding a conservatory and hinted at the underlying reason for its failure, which reflects the complexity of Tausig's personality:

> It was, perhaps, an indication of premature old age, that the thought of founding a school should have rooted itself so deeply in one so young in years. . . . He desired simply to found a tradition for his personal art and for his style of playing. The talent for teaching, that he strangely possessed in an extraordinary degree, rendered him eminently qualified, and made him competent, as was, perhaps, no other, to direct a band of disciples in a truly artistic path. The splendor of his fame soon assembled about him talents from all zones and all nations, but the experience of a few years wearied him in his efforts; the very success of his school disgusted him in the most paradoxical manner.[8]

Tausig's early death affected the whole music world.[9] Liszt expressed his sadness and his appreciation for Tausig in a letter to Carolyne von Sayn-Wittgenstein:

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[6] Fay, *Music-Study*, 36.

[7] Ibid., 84.

[8] Ehlert, *Tone World*, 23.

[9] Wilhelm von Lenz, *The Great Piano Virtuosos of our Time from Personal Acquaintance* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1973), 77.

> Tausig's loss affects me deeply. He possessed the nerve, the intelligence, the uniqueness, the consistency, the talent, and the perseverance of a great artist! He was, moreover, a highly cultured person of great practical skill, well suited to fill a leading position in the world of music.[10]

In her letters Fay returned many times to the subject of his early death and how deeply it affected her.[11] She remembered him as "a strange little soul—a perfect misanthrope. Nobody knew him intimately. He lived all the last part of his life in the strictest retirement, a prey to deep melancholy."[12] Confirming Fay's impression of Tausig's melancholic tendency, Ehlert called it an inner discord, which was "enhanced and raised far above the usual artistic depression of spirits by an ever increasing irritability."[13] Fay's and Ehlert's observations of their colleague seem to indicate that Tausig suffered from depression.

Tausig as a performer

Tausig's critics, and even his rivals, praised his phenomenal technique. "Anton Rubinstein named him infallible; Bülow [called him] unsurpassable, and superb."[14] Fay found his playing impressive, but cold.

> I think that he had more virtuosity, and yet more delicacy of feeling, than either Rubinstein or Bülow. His finish, perfection, and above all his touch, were above anything. But, except in Chopin, he was cold, at least in the

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[10] Letter to Carolyne von Sayn-Wittgenstein, July 23, 1871, cited in Burger, *Franz Liszt*, 208.

[11] According to McCarthy, Fay had vowed in 1871 never to marry. One might wonder whether this was connected with the impact of Tausig's death as well as the death of one of her former suitors, Benjamin Mills Peirce in 1870. See McCarthy, *Amy Fay*, xv.

[12] Fay, *Music-Study*, 155.

[13] Ehlert, *Tone World*, 19.

[14] Burger, *Franz Liszt*, 208.

> concert room. In the conservatory he seemed to be a very passionate player; but, somehow, in public that was not the case. . . . He was Liszt's favourite, and Liszt said, "He will be the inheritor of my playing;" but I doubt if this would have been, for the winter before Tausig died, Kullak remarked to me that his playing became more and more "dry" every year, probably on account of his morbid aversion to "Spectakel," as he called it; whereas Liszt gives the reins to the emotions always.[15]

Her detailed description of his playing shows a great reverence for his performance but also a recognition of the lack of passion and conviction in it. Interestingly, Tausig seems to have shown much more passion when he played for his class.

> Tausig . . . is extremely restrained, and has not quite enthusiasm enough, but he is absolutely perfect, and plays with the greatest expression. He is pre-eminent in grace and delicacy of execution, but seems to hold back his power in a concert room, which is very singular, for when he plays to his classes in the conservatory he seems all passion. His conception is so very refined that sometimes it is a little too much so. . . . Tausig's octave playing is the most extraordinary I ever heard. . . . It seems as if he played with velvet fingers, his touch is so very soft. He played the great C major Sonata by Beethoven. . . . His conception of it was not brilliant, as I expected it would be, but very calm and dreamy, and the first movement especially he took very piano. He did it most beautifully, but I was not quite satisfied with the last movement. . . . Chopin he plays divinely, and that little Bourrée of Bach's . . . was magical. He played it like lightning, and made it perfectly bewitching. Altogether, he is a great man.[16]

Ehlert, on the other hand, saw "highest objectivity"[17] in Tausig's playing, which led, in his opinion, to "the almost infallible certainty of receiving at Tausig's hands a perfectly finished work of art." He mentioned Tausig's contempt for "despotism

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[15] Fay, *Music-Study*, 276.

[16] Ibid., 37–39.

[17] Ehlert, *Tone World*, 17.

of freedom of time,"[18] which might indicate the performer's exact performance of the notated pitches, rhythm, and markings, and respect for the composition. According to Wilhelm von Lenz, Tausig "never played for the *effect*, but was always absorbed in the piece itself and its artistic interpretation."[19]
He also pointed out that it was this objectivity that the general public never understood.[20] The term objectivity refers in general to a colder, less emotional, or less spectacular style of performance and remains dependent on personal perception. Tausig himself said: "I do not care to expose my inmost self to the public. . . . I play for the sake of Art, and I believe that when I have satisfied *her*, I have also satisfied mankind!"[21]

Tausig's ability, especially his technical capacity, seems to have been unquestionably high. The different opinions on his playing appear to reflect the varying tastes of the reviewers: Fay seems to have preferred a more emotional and outgoing performance, whereas Ehlert and Lenz appreciated Tausig's coolly rational playing.

Virtuosity. It is interesting to notice that Tausig, one of the most acclaimed pianists and virtuosos of his time, avoided any exploitation of his technical capacity or the showing-off of his virtuosity.[22] "Tausig's nature rejected with

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[18] Ibid., 18.

[19] Lenz, *Virtuosos*, 97.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid., 85.

[22] Ibid., 97.

contempt anything that might be called a striving after effect. He frequently carried his puritanism so far that in *Cantilene*, especially in compositions of lesser import, he appeared cold and indifferent."[23] Fay confirmed this statement by describing one of her lessons, in which he performed for her but avoided exposing his virtuosity:

> After I had finished, he sat down and played the whole piece for me, a thing he rarely does, introducing a magnificent trill in double thirds, and ending up with some peculiar turn in which he allowed his virtuosity to peep out at me for a moment. Only for a moment though, for he is too proud and has too much contempt for *Spectakel* to "show off," so he suppressed himself immediately. It was as if his fingers broke into the trill in spite of him, and he had to pull them up with a severe check. Strange, inscrutable being that he is![24]

Perhaps Tausig was reacting to his early years as a child prodigy and protégée of Liszt[25] by moving away from the extroverted style of playing. Or maybe he chose the path of the pure and sublime interpreter because it was truly a part of his personality. In any case, the idea of the "virtuoso" must have had the negative connotation for him of leaning toward "show," as opposed to cultivating serious and artistic performance.

Tausig as a teacher

Tausig exhibited high ideals in his playing as well as in his teaching. According to Ehlert, who thought highly of Tausig's teaching ability, Tausig

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[23] Ehlert, *Tone World*, 18.

[24] Fay, *Music-Study,* 104.

[25] Ehlert, *Tone World*, 19.

possessed one of the most important attributes of a teacher: the ability to diagnose problems.

> What made Tausig invaluable as a teacher was the certainty of his diagnosis. He recognized, in an instant, the disease from which a performance was suffering. And with what an unyielding persistency did he combat all self-applauding deficiency, all sickly sentimentality! With what crushing witticisms demolish all false virtuosity![26]

Understanding even the most remote details with "lightning rapidity,"[27] Tausig created great frustration for his students by expecting them to be able to do the same. Tausig's disappointment with teaching, however, was mainly due to the fact that he found too few talents worthy of his attention.[28] This frustration certainly had an impact on his approach to teaching and his students. The whole complexity of Tausig's personality seems to be reflected in Fay's description of one of her lessons: his high ideals and expectations, his demands and impatient temper, and—at the same time—his care for her.

> But he is the most trying and exasperating master you can possibly imagine. It is his principle to rough you and snub you as much as he can, even when there is no occasion for it, and you can think yourself fortunate if he does not hold you up to the ridicule of the whole class. . . . You can imagine what an ordeal my first lesson was to me. I brought him a long and difficult Scherzo, by Chopin. . . . He stood over me and kept calling out all through it in German, "Terrible! Shocking! Dreadful! O Gott! O Gott!". . . He gave me my music, and said, "Not at all bad" (very complimentary for him), I rushed out of the room and burst out crying. He followed me immediately, and coolly said, "What are you crying for, child? Your playing was not at all bad." I told him that it was "impossible for me to

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[26] Ibid., 25.

[27] Ibid., 24.

[28] Ibid.

> help it when he talked in such a way," but he did not seem to be aware that he had said anything.[29]

Fay's description of a lesson that one of her classmates had with Tausig reveals his short temper and impatience, his striving for purity in music, and his sense of futility at the same time.

> He kept stopping her every moment in the most tantalizing and exasperating manner. If it had been I, I should have cried. . . . Tausig grew more and more savage, and made her skip whole pages in his impatience. "Play here!" he would say, in the most imperative tone, pointing to a half or whole page farther on. "This I cannot hear! Go on farther! It is too bad to be listened to!" Finally, he struck the music with the back of his hand, and exclaimed, in a despairing way, "*Kind, es liegt eine Seele darin. Weißt du nicht, es liegt eine* Seele *darin*? (Child, there's a soul in the piece. Don't you know there is a soul in it?)[30]

Even though Ehlert attested to Tausig's excellent teaching abilities, it seems clear that he had not developed the ability to transmit his ideas to the students. Clarence G. Hamilton, a contemporary piano pedagogue, recommended piano teachers to "put utterly aside your personal affairs and feelings"[31]—this might have been good advice for Tausig. But bearing in mind his youth, it is possible that his teaching and communication skills might have developed with time.

Fay stayed only a short time with Tausig, due to his active concert career and the sudden shutting down of his conservatory. She had her first lesson on January 10,1870, and gained full admittance to Tausig's class shortly before

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[29] Fay, *Music-Study*, 83.

[30] Fay, *Music-Study*, 41.

[31] Clarence G. Hamilton, *Piano Teaching. Its Principles and Problems* (Philadelphia: Oliver Ditson Company, 1910), 28.

August 6, when he announced that he was closing the conservatory and not giving lessons anymore. The end result for Fay was that she took only a few lessons with him and observed his teaching of other students.

Technique. According to Amy Fay, Tausig focused on the technical development of his students, so that in performance, they would have no physical obstacles to prevent them from achieving his high musical ideals. He favored Clementi's *Gradus ad Parnassum*, and published his own version of it around 1850: his edition contained twenty-nine exercises (selected from one hundred) that were more etude-like in character and less musical in content.[32] Like Clementi, Tausig seems to have "believed that the playing habits acquired with [Clementi's] exercises could be transferred to compositions of the masters."[33] According to Roger Boardman, Clementi not only expanded interest in developing a finger technique, but also wrote in a much more explicit manner than any other teacher before him.[34]

All students at Tausig's conservatory had to go through a certain order of exercises and etudes.

> First we had to go through Cramer, then through the Gradus ad Parnassum, then through Moscheles, then Chopin, Henselt, Liszt and Rubinstein.[35] The grand thing is to have each of your five fingers go "dum, dum," an equal number of times. . . . Tausig was for Gradus, you know,

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[32] Reginald R. Gerig, *Famous Pianists and Their Technique* (Washington-New York: Robert B. Luce, 1974), 60.

[33] Roger Crager Boardman, "A History of Theories of Teaching Piano Technic," (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1954), 52.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Fay, *Music-Study*, 264.

> and practiced it himself every day. He used to transpose the studies in different keys, and play just the same in the left hand as in the right, and enhance their difficulties in every way, but I always found them hard enough as they were written! . . . Gradus is not only good for finger technique—it trains the arm and wrist also, and gives a much more powerful execution.[36]

The reason for working on exercises and etudes is to strengthen and improve the independence of the fingers to enable the student/performer to focus on the music in "real" pieces, as opposed to being absorbed by the technical difficulty. This is achieved by working on preparatory exercises— for example, repeating the same note several times and paying close attention to the stretch and bend of the finger. The wrist was not to be moved, and arm and elbow were to be held very close to the body. The finger was to be lifted as high as possible and dropped down with full force.[37] Tausig believed in the separation of technical challenge from the musical content. He suggested isolating the mechanical difficulties first, followed by short pieces with similar difficulties to be played in different tone colors. He would give his students preparatory exercises with a similar kind of difficulty but in different octaves and keys. The Austrian pianist and teacher Heinrich Ehrlich (1822-1899), described Tausig's philosophy:

> Tausig followed the idea that after a pupil had worked through the purely mechanical exercises, he should be given some small difficult pieces, in which one and the same passage has to be played in different octaves and in different shadings; different tone colors are to be applied to this

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[36] Ibid., 266.

[37] Fay, *Music-Study*, with a foreword by Frances Dillon, xi.

> passage, so that the high degree of difficulty is connected with varied touch and style of performance.[38]

This philosophy sounds highly practical. It addresses the issue of technical obstacles and considers the musical element, for example by applying different shadings. However, it is primarily concerned with solving technical issues and not with the musical content of complete pieces, which can make this practicing style unsatisfying. Nonetheless, Fay felt left alone with her technical issues. She did not understand why Tausig did not show her specifically how to play a scale, for example.

> The only thing he said was, "Put the fifth finger on the top note of the scale, instead of turning the thumb under and ending on the second," which was what I had been doing. He also said, "Curve your finger," and indeed, he made me curve them so much that it seemed to me I was playing upon my finger nails. Not a word more did I get out of him, who could play scales with a velvety smoothness and velocity which seemed like a zephyr blowing over the keys.[39]

Fay worked very hard and practiced five or six hours a day to strengthen and equalize her fingers. It is not clear whether she applied the above-mentioned method or if she just played through the different studies without any special

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[38] Heinrich Ehrlich, *Wie übt man am Klavier? Betrachtungen und Rathschläge nebst genauer Anweisung für den richtigen Gebrauch der Tausig-Ehrlich'schen "Täglichen Studien"* (Berlin: M. Bahn Verlag, 1900), 44: "Tausig ging von dem Gedanken aus, dass, nachdem der Lernende die rein mechanischen Übungen durchgearbeitet hatte, ihm einige kleinere schwere Stücke geboten werden sollten, in welchen ein und dieselbe Passage in verschiedenen Lagen und mit verschiedenartiger Färbung wiederzugeben war; es sollten in derselben Passage alle Tonschattierungen angebracht werden, also mit der grossen mechanischen Schwierigkeit auch die Aufgabe des verschiedenartigen Anschlages und Vortrages verbunden sein." Ehrlich, Austrian pianist, teacher, composer, and poet, wrote the Tausig-Ehrlich'schen daily studies by himself and was apparently not connected with Tausig, but followed the same principles in his teaching.

[39] Amy Fay, "How to Practice" from *Etude* 2, nos. 11–12 (November, December 1884), cited in McCarthy, *Amy Fay*, 139–40.

concept. In any case, her spirit of enthusiasm about the new method and her hope of achieving technical proficiency apparently disappeared, most likely, because there was no musical content. The results were not as convincing as she hoped, her high expectations were not fulfilled, and she did not feel supported or encouraged by Tausig. Her letters display a growing sense of frustration.

> Don't think I am making extraordinary progress because I practice so much. I find that the strengthening and equalizing of the fingers is a terribly slow process, and that it takes much more time to make a step forward than I expected. You may know how a thing *ought* to be played, but it is another matter to get your hands into such a training that they obey your will. Sometimes I am very much encouraged, and feel as if I should be an artist "immediately, if not sooner," and at others I fall into the blackest despair.[40]

Even though strengthening the fingers is certainly useful, modern piano pedagogy has moved away from the focus on finger dexterity toward a more holistic approach "with a unified physical and mental coordination,"[41] as promoted by Ludwig Deppe.

Humiliation method. Tausig seems to have used the humiliation method, in which the teacher tries to bring out the best in the student by putting a lot of pressure on him or her. "I don't believe he (Kullak) will equal our little Tausig, capricious and ill-regulated though he is. Never shall I forget the *iron* way he used to stand over those girls, his hand clenched, determined to *make* them do it!

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[40] Fay, *Music-Study*, 79–80.

[41] Boardman, "History," 115.

No wonder they played so! They didn't dare not to."[42] The humiliation method seems to work for many students, whereas for others encouragement might be the more successful way. The discouragement Fay expressed in this letter suggests that this method was not a good one for her.

> But Tausig keeps rating you and telling you, what you feel only too deeply, that your playing *is* "awful." When Tausig used to sit down in his impatient way and play a few bars, and then tell me to do it just so, I used always to feel as if some one wished me to copy a streak of forked lightning with the end of a wetted match.[43]

An additional challenge was the fact that he liked to make fun of Americans, especially American girls, "and made some little joke about these '*empfindliche Amerikanerinnen*' (sensitive [female] Americans)."[44] Furthermore, he did not think very highly of women and he favored men: "The fair sex, that constitutes the greater portion of all conservatories, as is well known, was but a slightly valued element for him, who felt himself naturally more drawn towards men."[45]

Impact on her playing. One would think that entering a new conservatory, studying with a teacher who was highly respected and feared, and practicing five to six hours a day, would have had a significant impact on her technique as well as on her musical performance. Although she did not write explicitly about

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[42] Fay, *Music-Study*, 89.

[43] Ibid., 103.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ehlert, *Tone World*, 24.

Tausig's impact on her playing and her technique, she probably benefited from the intense practicing and the opportunity to perform in front of him as well as his other students.

Conclusion. Amy Fay had the bad luck to take lessons from Tausig when he was in the last stage of teaching at his conservatory. At this point, he was disappointed and bitter, and probably even more short tempered and impatient than before. Even though Fay was strongly affected and discouraged by his temperament and teaching style, she suffered a great loss when he left. It sounds almost contradictory when she writes about her awful disappointment and, in spite of having suffered such an ordeal, her yearning for lessons with him. "So my last hope of lessons from him again is at an end, you see!"[46] is in contrast to a statement like: "He is such a whimsical creature that one can't rely on him much,"[47] or "Kullak is not nearly so terrible a teacher as Tausig."[48] Perhaps she saw the fault in herself and her undeveloped playing when she wrote in 1871, after his death: "If I had only been at the point in music two years ago that I am now, I could have gone at once into his class."[49] Also, it could be that his tragic death changed her perspective and made everything she went through seem less horrible. In her letters she was much more critical of Tausig while he was still alive than after he was dead.

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[46] Fay, *Music-Study*, 155.

[47] Ibid., 70.

[48] Ibid., 103.

[49] Ibid., 156.

Chapter Three

Theodor Kullak

Biography

Theodor Kullak was born on September 12, 1818 in Krotoschin, Germany, [now Krotoszyn, Poland].[1] Prince Radzuwill sponsored his education and arranged his début as a pianist at the age of 11 before the Prussian king in Berlin. In 1837, he went to Berlin to study medicine and philosophy, and he continued his studies in music under Carl Gottfried Wilhelm Taubert (1811–1891) for piano and Siegfried Wilhelm Dehn (1799–1885) for theory. A stipend from the king made piano lessons with Carl Czerny (1791–1857) in Vienna possible. From 1843 on, he taught Princess Anna and other members of the royal family in Berlin, and in 1846 he was appointed pianist to the Prussian court. In the same year, he co-founded the *Tonkünstler Verein*, an important and still existing German association for musicians. Together with Julius Stern (1820–1883) and Adolf Bernhard Marx (1796–1866), Kullak founded a conservatory (*Konservatorium der Musik*), but he withdrew from the conservatory administration (Direktion) in 1855 to establish his *Neue Akademie der Tonkunst.* He also founded the *Kullak-Stiftung*, which supported the female teachers at his conservatory.[2] By 1882, the *Neue Akademie* was the largest institution for

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[1] Unless otherwise noted, all information is derived from *Grove Online,* s.v. "Theodor Kullak," by Horst Leuchtmann, (accessed February 5, 2008).

[2] *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart,* 2nd ed., s.v. "Kullak, Theodor," by Ingeborg Allihn, The article is unchanged from the first edition, where the author is identified as Reinhold Sietz.

musical education in Germany, with 100 teachers and 1020 students. Kullak wrote a vast number of piano compositions, mainly salon pieces and pedagogical material, the most outstanding work being the *School of Octave-Playing*. He died in 1882 in Berlin.

Kullak as a person

Fay's way of describing Kullak in her letters is more neutral and restrained than her otherwise inspired writing (her sister Zina, who edited the letters, might have taken out some parts). The only time she mentioned his appearance in her letters, she writes: "He looks about fifty, and is charming. I am enchanted with him."[3] Much later, in her article on practicing (1884), Fay describes Kullak (Figure 3) as an interesting and artistic person:

> In a moment Kullak stood before me. His personality was extremely interesting and artistic. His deep-set eyes looked penetratingly at me through his spectacles, and his strong and passionate mouth at once impressed me. I said to myself: "Here is an artist, and no mere pedagogue."[4]

The introduction to Kullak's *School of Octave-Playing* gives the following description of him:

> A tall, spare, erect figure, nervously abrupt in manner and gesture, of a certain military rigidity . . . . Strongly marked features, with deep lines and furrows; deep-set, piercing eyes under bushy brows; iron-gray hair, somewhat à la Schumann, and a thick, short-clipped moustache; all in all, the type of a veteran thinker and worker—a master of art and of men, well deserving a niche in the Pantheon of the "nation of schoolmasters."[5]

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[3] Fay, *Music-Study*, 100.

[4] Amy Fay, "Practice," cited in McCarthy, *Amy Fay,* 140.

[5] Theodor Kullak, *The School of Octave-Playing* (Melville, NY: Belwin Mills Publishing Corp., n.d.), Introduction, no author named.

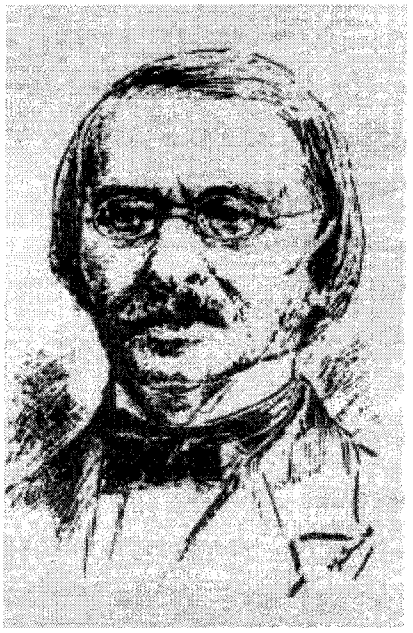

Fig. 3. Theodor Kullak, printed in *The School of Octave-Playing* (Melville, NY: Belwin Mills, n.d.)

In terms of his character, Fay noticed mood swings and attributed those to Kullak's artistic side: "Like all artists, he is as capricious and exasperating as he can be, and, as the Germans say, he is '*ein Mal im Himmel und das nächste Mal im Keller* (one time in heaven and the next time in the cellar!)'"[6] She mentioned his capricious side more than once, writing: "Like all artists, he is fascinating, and full of his whims and caprices."[7]

Kullak as a performer

According to Reinhold Sietz, Kullak was an exceptional pianist: "His contemporaries praised his precise technique and exemplary hand positioning,

[6] Fay, *Music-Study*, 170.

[7] Ibid., 103.

the rhythmical power of his playing and his art of phrasing."[8] One can assume that he was a polished pianist on the grounds that he was appointed as a court pianist. Based on his playing in lessons, Fay called Kullak's playing splendid and magnificent. By the time Fay studied with him, he had given up performing and had dedicated himself purely to teaching. Whether he had followed his inner calling to teach or whether he did not feel comfortable with performing, remains speculation. According to Fay, he gave up performing because of stage fright.

> Kullak himself is a truly splendid artist, which I had not expected. He used to have great fame here as a pianist, but I supposed that as he had given up his concert playing he did not keep it up. I found, however, that I was mistaken. His playing does not suffer in comparison with Tausig's even, whom I have so often heard. Why in the world he has not continued playing in public I can't imagine, but I am told that he was too nervous.[9]

She even compared his playing to Thalberg's: "He has this excessively finished and elegant fantasia style of playing, like Thalberg or De Meyer."[10]

Kullak as a teacher

Liszt considered Kullak "to be one of the best of the conservatory piano teachers."[11] Kullak was, after Liszt, one of the outstanding piano teachers of the 19th century: "He was gifted to an unusually high degree in his ability to find the suitably powerful image or poetically interpreting words to inspire dry natures,

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[8] Sietz, "Kullak, Theodor," in *MGG*: "Die Zeitgenossen lobten seine präzise Technik und musterhafte Handhaltung, die rhythmische Kraft seines Spiels und seine Phrasierungskunst."

[9] Fay, *Music-Study*, 102–103.

[10] Ibid., 105.

[11] Gerig, *Famous Pianists*, 248.

and to deepen the thoughts as well as emotions."[12] Frances Dillon gives a picture of a rigid technician and claims that Kullak was an advocate of the "Czerny-Reineke school, in which a quiet arm, a fixed wrist and exaggeratedly highly raised fingers were typical."[13] His famous pupils included Moritz Moszkowski and Xaver Scharwenka.

Fay took her first private lesson with Kullak in September 1870. She received one private lesson a week and was accepted into the highest class of Kullak's lady pupils[14] at his conservatory in August 1871: "Since my return I have gone into the first class in Kullak's conservatory, instead of taking private lessons of him. I think it will be of use for me to hear his best pupils play."[15] She remained in Kullak's class for almost three years, until April 1873. She later took some more private lessons with Kullak in the winter of 1873, after she had studied with Liszt and before she studied with Deppe.

Fay had great hopes when she came to Kullak. He was a highly respected teacher, which was very important to her. She mentioned Kullak's fame as a teacher and that he might even be more celebrated as a teacher than Tausig.[16] In addition, Kullak could be counted on to teach on a regular basis—as opposed

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[12] Hans Bischoff, cited in Sietz, "Kullak, Theodor," in *MGG*: "Ihm war es in ungewöhnlich hohem Grade gegeben, durch ein passend gewähltes Bild, durch poetisch interpretierende Worte trockene Naturen anzuregen, auf die Vertiefung des Nachdenkens, wie der Empfindung hinzuwirken."

[13] Fay, *Music-Study*, with a foreword by Frances Dillon, xi.

[14] Fay, "Practice," cited in McCarthy, *Amy Fay*, 140.

[15] Fay, *Music-Study*, 156.

[16] Ibid., 105.

to Tausig: "One cannot rely on these great geniuses, but I hope that, as Kullak makes a business of teaching, and not of playing, more is to be gained from him [than from Tausig]."[17] Her first lesson must have been a very inspiring one. Kullak gave her "some additional beautiful ideas"[18] and called her a born artist. She was very content to be his student and called him "a wonderfully finished teacher."[19] She was also pleased with his way of treating her. "He has the greatest patience and gentleness, and helps you on. . . ."[20] Fay was impressed with his general knowledge in the field of music and the fact that he knew most pieces by memory:

> He knows everything in the way of music, and when I take my lessons he has two grand pianos side by side, and he sits at one and I at the other. He knows by heart everything that he teaches, and he plays sometimes with me, sometimes before me, and shows me all sorts of ways of playing passages. I am getting no end of ideas from him. I have enjoyed playing my Beethoven Concerto so much, for he has played all the orchestral parts. Just think how exciting to have a great artist like that play second piano with you![21]

After one year of lessons with him, she wrote happily to Zina:

> I am entirely absorbed by my Music, and am working very hard at it. Oh! I am getting to play so beautifully. If you could only hear me play that Fantasia of Schumann's in E-flat major, you would open your little eyes and ears! Kullak was enchanted the other day, and says I am a born artist, and I think I am myself. My touch is getting so delicious, and as I get more power I am also acquiring that pianissimo, which make such an effect.[22]

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[17] Fay, *Music-Study*, 89.

[18] Fay, "Practice," cited in McCarthy, *Amy Fay,* 141.

[19] Fay, *Music-Study*, 159.

[20] Ibid., 103.

[21] Ibid.

[22] McCarty, *Amy Fay*, 38.

Imitation. Kullak's teaching was based on imitation and he usually played with or before her: "Sometimes he will repeat a passage over and over, and I after him, like a parrot, until I get it *exactly* right."[23] Even though imitation can be a very instructive and helpful tool for teaching, after a while Fay perceived it as discouraging. "But as he plays continually before and with you, with him you see how things *ought* to be done, and the perception of your own deficiencies stands out before you mercilessly. . . . All this gives a heavy heart."[24] Feelings of self-doubt started to develop. In a letter of April 22 she writes: "Kullak has been praising my playing lately, but I cannot believe in it myself."[25] And after having practiced Beethoven's G major Concerto for a whole month, she exclaimed: "I can't play it any more than I can fly."[26] Surely an exaggeration, her remark shows how discouraged she had become. In the same letter, she describes how Kullak mentioned to her a seemingly unachievable list of all things an artist needs to know—"until my heart died within me."[27]

Many years later, in 1884, she considered Kullak's use of imitation his strong point, since it gave the students a standard of how a piece should sound—played by a great artist. On the other hand, she mentioned the

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[23] Fay, *Music-Study*, 105.

[24] Ibid., 123–24.

[25] Ibid., 116.

[26] Ibid., 123.

[27] Ibid.

disadvantage of becoming unaccustomed to playing alone.[28] This comment by Fay points toward the question of the student's own artistic development and independence from the teacher. Boardman states in his "History of Theories of Teaching Piano Technic" that "theories of creative, not imitative activity were not too popular with piano teachers of the nineteenth century. . . ."[29] In this regard, Tausig as well as Kullak were typical representatives of the 19th century. Neither employed exploring, analyzing, or using trial and error methods[30] as a general principle in his teaching. And both seem to have been somewhat exclusive: Tausig by favoring a technical approach to pieces, and Kullak by emphasizing the musical side through imitation, at least in Fay's case. Clara Schumann, on the other hand, seems to have had a more holistic approach to teaching. To her, working on technique was important, but only as a means to express the composers' intention. In addition, she was said to be very flexible in her teaching, depending on the needs of her students. Mathilde Verne, one of her students at the Conservatory in Frankfurt, wrote: "To her, each pupil represented a sacred trust, not only in music, but as a character, and she influenced us for good in every way."[31]

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[28] Fay, "Practice," cited in McCarthy, *Amy Fay,* 141.

[29] Boardman, "History," 220.

[30] According to Boardman, the full employment of those ideas—even though Deppe started using them, belongs to the 20th century. In Boardman, "History," 221.

[31] Mathilde Verne, *Chords of Remembrance* (London: Hutchinson, 1936), 4: 647, cited in Nancy B. Reich, *Clara Schumann, The Artist and the Woman* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 286.

Frustration. Toward the end of her studies with Kullak, Fay's personal disappointment had grown. One gets the impression of a general sense of discouragement and lack of confidence in her letters from that period. In 1872, she wrote in low spirits: "Please don't form any exalted ideas of *my* playing! I'm a pretty stupid girl, and go forward slowly. You wouldn't believe how long it takes to get to be a virtuoso unless you tried it."[32] Despite her feelings of self-doubt, she still looked up to Kullak and measured the mastery of his teaching by taking into account the number of artists he turned out. "In the two years that I have studied with him he has formed six or eight artists to my knowledge, beside no end of pupils who play extremely well."[33] Even though this is surely a valid consideration, one might wonder about her feelings of doubt and frustration. Since she did not feel she was making progress, and also missed inspiration and guidance, why did she try to justify her staying? Was she trying to avoid facing the personal challenge of finding a new teacher?

The fact that Kullak had a very negative opinion about Americans surely contributed to her feelings of low self esteem: "He has a deep rooted prejudice against Americans, and never loses an opportunity to make a mean remark about them, and though he has some remarkably gifted ones among his scholars, he always insists upon it that the Americans have no real talent."[34] She described how she revenged herself upon him by not playing his pieces: "He said

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[32] Fay, *Music-Study*, 169.

[33] Ibid., 186.

[34] Ibid., 170.

to me, 'Fräulein, you can take Schumann's concerto or my concerto.' I immediately got Schumann's."[35]

Furthermore, the lack of performance opportunities added to her sense of frustration. She was scheduled to play Rubinstein's Concerto in D minor with the conservatory orchestra and was bitterly disappointed and discouraged when someone else played instead of her and she was sent away to play another time.[36] "But oh, the difficulty of doing *anything* at all in this world!"[37] On April 14, she complained with resentment about the lack of support and inspiration.

> Colonel B. told me some weeks ago, that Kullak had told him I was ready for the concert room, and that he would like to have me play at court. If this is his real opinion *I* have no evidence of it, for he knows I am anxious to play in concert before I leave Germany, and yet he does nothing whatever to bring me forward. It is very discouraging. In this conservatory there is no stimulus whatever. One might as well be a machine.[38]

In fact, Kullak had invited her to play,[39] but she declined: "With my nervousness, I thought I better not attempt such a thing, until I had some experience in public playing."[40] Like many artists, she seems to have been torn between the desire to perform and the fear of not being sufficiently prepared. Her struggle with nervousness came to an end when, combining her musical talent for language

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[35] Ibid., 171.

[36] She played it later with great success. Fay, *Music-Study*, 185.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid., 197.

[39] McCarthy mentions two separate occasions early in 1873 (one of them a concerto with orchestra, which is not specified), where Fay withdrew from scheduled public appearances because of nervous illness. In McCarthy, *Amy Fay*, 39.

[40] Ibid.

with her writing and speaking abilities, she began to give short talks before each piece she performed (see Chapter Six).

Technique. Kullak was an expert at octaves and gave Fay a thorough instruction in how to play them. His *School of Octave-Playing* is a very systematic and useful compendium for studying octaves. In his instructions, "Kullak employed alternate rise and fall of the wrist in playing chromatic octave passages. . . ."[41] According to Boardman, the use of the wrist "marked the beginning of using the arm."[42]

> I am now studying octaves systematically. Kullak has written three books of them, and it is an exhaustive work on the subject, and as famous in its way as the Gradus ad Parnassum. The first volume is only the preparation, and the exercises are for each hand separately. There are a lot of them for the thumb alone, for instance. Then there are others for the fourth and fifth fingers, turning over and under each other in every conceivable way. Then there are the wrist exercises, and, in short, it is the most minute and complete work. Kullak himself is celebrated for his octave playing.[43]

Kullak is described by Gerig as "thorough and conscientious" and as a "dry technician,"[44] which indicates a leaning toward a technical approach in teaching.[45] Nonetheless, Fay claimed never to have received a thorough

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[41] Boardman, "History," 208.

[42] Boardman refers to Friedrich Kalkbrenner (1788–1849) as the first one who employed the wrist in playing octaves. Ibid.

[43] Fay, *Music-Study*, 117.

[44] Gerig, *Famous Pianists*, 248.

[45] Kullak's brother Adolph wrote *The Aesthetics of Pianoforte-Playing*, an exhaustive and meticulous work on piano technique, advocating both finger and arm activity. Theodor contributed the Preface to the second edition, explaining that he did not revise the new edition himself due to his other

technical instruction from Kullak: "I had never been given any particular rule for holding my hand, further than the general one of curving the fingers and lifting them very high."[46] In Fay's eyes, he did not help her with any clear advice, whereas Kullak's intention might have been to give her freedom to explore and to find the best and easiest way of playing—which is always personal.

> In my study with Kullak when I had any special difficulties, he only said, "Practice always, Fräulein. *Time* will do it for you some day. Hold your hand any way that is easiest for you. You can do it in *this* way—or in *this* way"—showing me different positions of the hand in playing the troublesome passage—"or you can play it with the *back* of the hand if that will help you any!"[47]

Musically, Kullak seems to have believed that it is most beneficial if the student compares his own playing with the performance of a master (in this case Kullak himself)—by playing along. The idea of thought-stimulation,[48] where the teacher stimulates the student to develop independent ideas, was not part of Kullak's teaching philosophy, according to Fay. Technically, though, he seems to have given the student the freedom to develop his or her own physical approach to piano playing. Fay's complaints imply that she had wished for the opposite: more guidance on the technical level and less direction in the artistic aspects of performance.

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demanding duties. His complimentary attitude toward his brother's book must indicate a shared belief in at least some of the technical principles presented in the book.

[46] Fay, *Music-Study*, 288.

[47] Ibid., 319.

[48] Hamilton, *Teaching*, 36.

Impact on her playing. The last months of her studies with Kullak seem to have been quite an ordeal. She lacked inspiration, encouragement, and support, as well as performance opportunities. Still enthusiastic about being overseas and excited about the possibility of discovering the secrets of piano playing, she made an effort to look at her experiences from a positive angle. Her admirable efforts to find the best in Kullak and her situation caused her to stay with Kullak too long for her own good, perhaps. Fay seems to have been in low spirits over a long period of time. Although some of her depression might be attributed to her own personal issues,[49] certainly a large portion must have been connected with her present situation.

Conclusion. Overall, it seems that Kullak was not the best match for Fay. Even though she was contented and even inspired in the beginning of her studies with him, she eventually began to look for more guidance and support. Especially in terms of technique, she felt the need for a more thorough instruction.

[49] McCarthy points out that "like so many nineteenth-century women of intelligence and sensitivity, Amy Fay was vulnerable to 'nerves' or 'nervousness.' The condition which in some circumstances led to nervous illness in her contemporaries . . . was present in her own [Fay's] life." In McCarthy, *Amy Fay,* xv.

Chapter Four

Franz Liszt

Biography

Franz Liszt was a brilliant and innovative composer and a musical pioneer of his time. It was nevertheless as a performer that his notoriety with the public was unsurpassed, for his mastery of the piano knew no equal. He was one of the most revered musical personalities of all time.

Liszt's father, Adam Liszt, was born in 1776 in Edelstal (a village in the neighborhood of Preβburg, modern Bratislava) and had a varied education.[1] As a boy, Adam studied several instruments and theory with Joseph Haydn.[2] After joining the Order of St. Francis (the same order that Franz entered in 1857), he was a novice in the monastery of Malacka (Slovakia) for two years. He then briefly studied philosophy and worked as a secretary for Prince Nicholas Esterházy at Forchtenau. Besides his duties for the Prince, he composed and wrote a Te Deum for Chorus and Sixteen Instruments. In 1805, the Prince transferred him to Eisenstadt, where he played the cello in the local orchestra. In 1811, he married Anna Lager, who gave birth to Franz Liszt on October 22, 1811 in Raiding.[3] In 1817, Adam began giving his six-year-old son piano lessons, and, after Franz's very successful début as a pianist in 1820, the family moved to

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[1] Unless otherwise noted, all information is derived from Burger, *Franz Liszt* and Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Man and his Music* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1970).

[2] Ralph Hill, *Liszt* (New York: A. A. Wyn, 1949), 9.

[3] Raiding is situated in Hungary, but Liszt's father was of German extraction and the family spoke German.

Vienna, where the boy studied figured bass, score reading, composition, and singing with Anton Salieri. Franz obtained a short but thorough technical education in piano playing from Carl Czerny, who "drilled him in every branch of piano technique"[4] by giving him endurance exercises which included Muzio Clementi's *Gradus ad Parnassum*. In 1823, he received the "kiss of consecration" that Beethoven is said to have planted on Liszt's forehead, and his father gave up his secure appointment to devote himself entirely to his son's education and career. After Franz' application to the Paris Conservatoire was refused on the grounds that the boy was a foreigner, the family moved to Paris, where Franz studied composition with Ferdinando Paër (1771–1839), Director of the Théâtre Italien, and theory and counterpoint with Joseph Reicha (1752–1795), professor at the Paris Conservatoire. Liszt's mother Anna, who had left Paris to stay with her sister in Graz for three years, moved back to Paris to be with her son in 1826 when her husband died. (She later devoted herself to bringing up Liszt's children.)

Liszt's wonder-child years were filled with staggering success and extensive traveling throughout Europe. These years were followed by "Years of Pilgrimage" (1828–37),[5] triggered by his father's death in 1826 and his failed relationship for Caroline de Saint-Cricq in 1828. This period produced no important concert appearances or significant compositions; Liszt turned inward, lived a secluded life, and even lost interest in music. At age nineteen, Liszt heard

[4] Walker, *Franz Liszt*, 37.

[5] Burger, *Franz Liszt*, 53.

a performance by Nicolo Paganini and regained his enthusiasm for the piano. Paganini, with his unheard-of technique and musicianship, inspired him to understand and solve any technical issues and bring piano technique to a new height. He became obsessed with the piano and practiced furiously, up to fourteen hours a day.[6]

> My mind and my fingers are working like two convicts. Homer, the Bible . . . Beethoven, Bach, Hummel, Mozart and Weber are all around me. I study them, meditate on them, devour them avidly. And I do four to five hours practice as well–thirds, sixths, octaves, tremolos, repeated notes, cadenzas etc. If I don't go mad you will find in me an ARTIST, yes, an artist such as is needed today.[7]

The reward for his quest to understand the piano and piano playing fully was a growing together of the instrument and the performer and a most intimate connection. As Liszt expressed in a letter of September 1837 to Adolphe Pictet: (the piano) "has been my very self, my speech, my life!"[8] Most likely, this obsession was triggered not only by Paganini, who inspired him, but also by the pianist Thalberg, who was said to be Liszt's equal. The rivalry between them produced a lively debate in the press, leading up to an encounter (duel) between the two in Princess Belgioso's salon on March 31, 1837. Afterwards, Marie d'Agoult commented: "Thalberg is the first pianist in the world, Liszt is the only one."[9]

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[6] Walker, *Franz Liszt*, 47.

[7] Ibid., 27.

[8] Burger, *Franz Liszt,* 99.

[9] Ibid., 89.

Between 1840 and 1847, Liszt spent the greater part of his time on concert tours. In 1848, when he began to perform only for charitable causes, he accepted an appointment as Court Kapellmeister in Weimar, where he avoided the traditional repertory and supported contemporaries like Richard Wagner. He conducted forty-three operas, half of them being contemporary works (not always well received). After a particularly poorly received performance of Peter Cornelius's *Der Barbier von Bagdad* in 1858, Liszt resigned and moved to Rome. He had felt the desire to become a priest since his father's death. By 1865, he had received four of seven degrees of priesthood, which made him a cleric, but not a priest. After 1869, he began spending the summer months each year in Weimar at the Hofgärtnerei, while staying in Budapest from January to April, and the rest of the time in Rome, the so-called "vie trifurquée."[10]

Liszt as a person

Liszt was "the most famous man in Europe"[11] and "one of the most widely caricatured of nineteenth-century personalities."[12] The key to Liszt's startling and unequaled success as a performer and teacher lies probably in his astonishing personality. According to Fay: "He is a many-sided prism, and reflects back the light in all colours, no matter how you look at him."[13] The different aspects of his personality created a highly unusual and outstanding person, who radiated a

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[10] Humphrey Searle, *The Music of Liszt* (London: Williams and Norgate Limited, 1954), 98.

[11] Burger, *Franz Liszt*, with a foreword by Alfred Brendel, 7.

[12] Burger, *Franz Liszt*, 275.

[13] Amy Fay, *Music-Study*, 222.

magnetism that was capable of touching and transforming the inner being of those who came into close contact with him. He was described as: a person of amazing musical and personal powers; an ingenious inventor; a highly spiritual being; a sympathetic supporter of other musicians and talents; and as a capricious, self-centered despot.

Liszt's amazing musical and personal powers. All the facets of Liszt's personality, when combined with his life experiences, resulted in a person with a strong magnetism. His rich life included great success from his early years on, the death of his son and daughter, deep love for and from two women (Marie D'Agoult and Carolyne von Sayn-Wittgenstein), artistic struggle, intense friendships with artists and musicians, life in different countries (Hungary, Germany, France, Italy, and Austria), and the glory and burden of being a famous person. Living through the highs and lows of life developed and transformed his being and gave him maturity. The result was a complex person with a radiant personality. As Felix Weingarnter said: "Once you have seen him, you will have a memory for life."[14] Edvard Grieg perceived Liszt's words as a blessing and confirmed the strong impact that even a short meeting with Liszt could have.[15]

Amy Fay was impressed with his inspiring force: "Liszt looks as if he had been through everything, and has a face *seamed* with experience. . . . He made

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[14] Robert Lorenz trans., "Extracts from the Reminiscences of Felix Weingartner," *The Musical Times* 74, no. 1081 (March 1933): 227.

[15] Burger, *Franz Liszt,* 249.

me think of an old time magician more than anything, and I felt that with a touch of his wand he could transform us all."[16] It seems significant that she used the word "transform" where she could have used improved. The latter implies a gradual change, the first one an instantaneous one, triggered by an experience or a person.

Due to his personality, artists, students, the audience, and women alike were deeply impressed and charmed by him. Not only his recitals, but also his rehearsals were sold out. In a review of Liszt's recital on March 16, 1877, Eduard Hanslick mentioned the packed rehearsals and added in a mocking tone that even a fourth rehearsal, with Liszt simply being placed on public display, would have been sold out. His conclusion: "What supreme good fortune to be able to exercise such power of attraction and fascination over one's fellows."[17] According to Fay, Liszt was very well aware of the power over people that he possessed, used, and played with:

> Liszt is a complete actor who intends to carry away the public. . . . [He] subdues the people to him by the very way he walks on to the stage. He gives his proud head a toss, throws an electric look out of his eagle eye, and seats himself with an air as much as to say, "Now I am going to do just what I please with you, and you are nothing but puppets subject to my will."[18]

Liszt, the ingenious inventor. Liszt's creativity and inventiveness continue to have an effect on today's musical world. He was one of the first teachers to hold

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[16] Fay, *Music-Study*, 207.

[17] Burger, *Franz Liszt,* 271.

[18] Fay, *Music-Study*, 269–70.

master classes,[19] and he set up today's concept of piano recitals.[20] That includes not only the placement of the piano on a stage, so that the performer's face is seen in profile, but also the fact that he was the first to play entire programs from memory, encompassing the whole keyboard repertory from Bach to Chopin.[21] As a composer, he was the inventor of the symphonic poem,[22] which was to influence the development of the symphony as well as flourish as a genre in its own right. As a conductor, he avoided the traditional repertoire and conducted mostly contemporary pieces. As a writer, he founded, in 1834, the *Gazette musicale*, the most important musical journal in France at that time.

Liszt's spiritual being. Throughout his life, Liszt had always had a deep interest in philosophy and religion. Around 1830, he joined the movement of the Saint-Simonians,[23] and in 1865, he received four of seven degrees of priesthood within the Order of St. Francis and later commented: "Convinced, as I was, that this act would fortify me on the path of righteousness, I performed it without compulsion, in all simplicity and honesty of intention. It is consistent, moreover, with the early intentions of my youth."[24]

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[19] Brian Marks, "Review of the Piano Master Classes of Franz Liszt," *Notes*, 2nd ser., vol. 54, no. 2 (December 1997): 485.

[20] Burger, *Franz Liszt,* 148.

[21] Alan Walker, "Liszt and the Keyboard," *The Musical Times* 118, no. 1615 (September 1977): 721.

[22] Walker, *Franz Liszt,* 11.

[23] Claude-Henri de Saint-Simon "interpreted Christianity in the spirit of early socialism and insisted on the brotherhood of all men." In Burger, *Franz Liszt,* 66.

[24] Ibid., 230.

His urge for freedom and creativity, in combination with his desire to help all artistic striving, made him take the step of ending his solo career,except for the performance of charity concerts: "My higher calling is to be free to feel and create, not to play and beg for success."[25] Ernst Burger points to Liszt's striving for a higher goal as an ideal, which included self-sacrifice and going beyond the usual concern about success, money, or appearance: "His willing self-sacrifice in pursuit of an ideal forms the worthy keystone of his whole existence."[26]

Brent-Smith gave a different perspective in his critical article on Liszt:

> It was not so much that he was a hypocrite, but that he never, all through his life, quite made up his mind whether to be a great saint or a great sinner. He nibbled at the idea of a religious life for many years, what time he was enjoying to the full the sweets of the secular world.[27]

Liszt, the sympathetic supporter. In multiple accounts, Liszt is referred to as a compassionate, modest, sincere, good, and "noble and kindhearted man. Envy and resentment were unknown to him."[28] He gave a lesson or two to any pianist who asked him (but was more particular about whom he chose for long term lessons), and he never charged anything. His famous pupil Eugen d'Albert described him as "the very embodiment of kindness, modesty, and selflessness,

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[25] Ibid., 229.

[26] Ibid., 329.

[27] A. Brent-Smith, "A Study of Franz Liszt," *The Musical Times* 70, no. 1035 (May 1, 1929): 401.

[28] Count Albert Appony, quoted in Burger, *Franz Liszt,* 261.

and it was these qualities, combined with brilliant intellectual gifts, which gave his character its transfigured fascination."[29]

Liszt's generosity was well known. He gave to charity half the fortune of his virtuoso years. To artists such as Richard Wagner and Robert Schumann, he gave emotional as well as financial support and conducted performances of their compositions. In 1834, he donated money for flood-relief in Pest, Hungary; in 1841, he supported the Cologne Cathedral building fund; in 1845, he donated money toward the construction of the Beethoven monument in Bonn, Germany and gave to other causes.[30] He also was said to have slipped a gold-filled purse into the pocket of a student who did not have the means to stay in Weimar for more lessons.[31]

Liszt, the capricious, self-centered despot. As generous and giving as he was as a person, Liszt's character showed a few peculiarities. For example, he did not allow anybody to ask him to play, may it be a student, a visitor, or a princess. Also, his students were not supposed to suggest the pieces they wanted to perform for him. They had to lay down their music on a table so that he could choose from it. Fay said: "Never was a man so courted and spoiled as he!"[32] She also described him as a monarch who addressed one first, since no

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[29] Burger, *Franz Liszt,* 222.

[30] Ibid., 66.

[31] Arthur Friedheim, *Life and Liszt: The Recollections of a Concert Pianist* (New York: Taplinger Publishing Co., 1961), 51.

[32] Fay, *Music-Study*, 235.

one dared to speak to him. The fact that the female sex was very much drawn to him gave rise to mockery and speculations and certainly added to Liszt's feelings of being the center of attention and attraction. He even disliked applause, but, according to Brent-Smith, this was because he did not want to be treated like other artists: "Even in the days when no one was allowed to applaud his performances or to thank him for playing, it was not that he did not love admiration, but that he desired a reception different from that accorded to all other players."[33] Ernest Newman was convinced that "play-acting was second nature"[34] to Liszt.

Liszt as a composer and performer

Composer. Alan Walker calls Liszt "the true father of modern music,"[35] who composed "music which anticipated the twentieth century."[36] Even though "he could have written a symphony or sonata in the classical style as capably as any of his contemporaries had he wished to, . . . from the very beginning he endeavored to get away from tradition and exploit new paths."[37] A very prolific composer, his astonishing output covers seven hundred works, half of them piano pieces.[38] In his early pieces, Liszt displayed competent and brilliant writing,

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[33] Brent-Smith, "Study," 401.

[34] Burger, *Franz Liszt,* 330.

[35] Walker, *Franz Liszt,* 364.

[36] Ibid., 357.

[37] Hill, *Liszt,* 112.

[38] Searle, *Liszt,* 1.

which does not yet "indicate the experimental and revolutionary composer that Liszt was later to become."[39] Especially in his later pieces, he questioned the traditional use of chords, harmony, form, and rhythm. In "Les Jeux d'Eaux à la Villa d'Este," for example, "he paved the way almost single-handed for the French Impressionists."[40] Hinting at the hostile reception of his compositions by his contemporaries, Walker comments on Liszt's solitary path of challenging tradition: "It says much for his artistic integrity that he remained inflexibly committed in his search for the new, even though he knew this meant he was virtually alienated from all but a close circle of his admirers."[41]

Performer. Wherever Liszt played, he caused a sensation and aroused enthusiasm. Newspapers throughout Europe even reported the outbreak of a "Lisztomania" in Berlin in 1842: "The hero-worship in Berlin bordered on hysteria."[42] Whoever heard his playing had strong feelings about both the performer and the performance. In the myriad of enthusiastic comments on his performances, his playing is referred to as magical, fantastic, extraordinary, daring, frantic, delicate, fragrant, free, poetic, and imaginative. Admirers and critics alike mentioned his ability to charm people and his demonic passion: the former in an appreciative way, the latter in a judgmental fashion and usually referring either to his impressive technical skills or to his mannerisms—"Facial

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[39] Ibid., 3.

[40] Walker, *Franz Liszt,* 352.

[41] Ibid., 358.

[42] Burger, *Franz Liszt,* 142.

expressions of disdain, a lofty sentiment of selfless aspiration, and so on, may have irritated one part of his audience as much as they elevated the other."[43] Some critics disliked Liszt's behavior on stage. Hanslick wrote a very complimentary review about Liszt's poetic, noble and clear playing on January 11,1874, but sounded almost envious of his captivating effect on women when he described Liszt's movements and how he put on and took off his spectacles: "All this has the utmost fascination for his listeners—particularly feminine listeners. It has always been one of Liszt's unique qualities to create an effect in his great art by means of all kind of lesser art."[44]

Accounts of his playing. Whereas most listeners agreed on the superior quality of Liszt's interpretations and performances, there were also a few critical voices.

Fay gave an inspired account of Liszt's playing in which she pointed to the magical side of his performance:

> There is such a vividness about everything he plays that it does not seem as if it were mere music you were listening to, but it is as if he had called up a real, living *form*, and you saw it breathing before your face and eyes. It gives *me* almost a ghostly feeling to hear him, and it seems as if the air were peopled with spirits. Oh, he is a perfect wizard![45]

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[43] Walker, *Franz Liszt*, 10.

[44] Burger, *Franz Liszt,* 262.

[45] Fay, *Music-Study*, 214.

Fay wrote: "When Liszt plays anything pathetic, it sounds as if he had been through everything, and opens all one's wounds afresh. All that one has ever suffered comes before one again."[46]

Berlioz admired the faithfulness to the text of Liszt's performance and considered his playing the piano playing of the future. He wrote in the *Gazette musicale* in 1836: "Not a note was omitted, not a note was added, . . . not an inflection was blurred, not a single change was made to the tempo. This is the great new school of piano playing!"[47] On the other hand, Mendelssohn was disturbed and disappointed after listening to one of Liszt's recitals. He wrote in 1842:

> He performed works by Beethoven, Bach, Handel, Mozart, and Weber in such a lamentably imperfect style, so uncleanly, so ignorantly that I could have listened to many an average pianist with more pleasure. Here six bars were added, there seven left out: now he played wrong harmonies, which were subsequently cancelled out by others equally false. Then we had horrible fortissimo employed in passages marked pianissimo-and so on, all kinds of deplorable misdeeds.[48]

This is one of the few accounts of Liszt's "messy" playing, opposed by a multitude of articles, which stress the accuracy of his playing. Walker calls those instances of Liszt's poor playing "early indiscretions"[49] and suggests that they were a result of Liszt's demanding life: "It was inevitable that, leading the life he did in 1838–47, constantly on the move, playing to all and sundry and often in

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[46] Ibid., 227.

[47] Burger, *Franz Liszt,* 86.

[48] Walker, *Franz Liszt*, 28.

[49] Ibid.

quite degrading circumstances, Liszt should not have maintained the high standards he had set himself. . . ."[50]

Sometimes, Liszt "embellished" pieces, e.g. by playing single runs written in the score as thirds, sixths, or octaves. The violinist Joachim complained about the "fiddle-faddle"[51] which Liszt added when performing a chamber work for the second or third time. Berlioz was disgusted when Liszt played the first movement of the Sonata opus 27, no. 2 by Beethoven (the "Moonlight Sonata") to a circle of friends where he

> embroidered both the melody and the accompaniment with trills and *tremolos*. . . . Yet, on another similar occasion . . . rose in its sublime simplicity the noble elegy he had once so strangely disfigured; not a note, not an accent was added to the original idea of the composer. It was the shade of Beethoven, conjured up by the virtuoso, to whose voice we were listening. We all trembled in silence, and, when the last chord had sounded, no one spoke—we were in tears.[52]

Brent-Smith explains these discrepancies by calling Liszt's phenomenal technique "difficult to control, being, as it were, a highly horse-powered motor engine, itching for three-figure speeds, and consequently moving with difficulty through ordinary lanes and country villages."[53]

Artistic struggle and contempt for audiences. "A darling of the gods, indeed!"[54] wrote Hanslick in 1874 about Franz Liszt. But that is just one side of a

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[50] Ibid., 27.

[51] Ibid., 10.

[52] Hill, *Liszt*, 33.

[53] Brent-Smith, "Study," 402.

[54] Burger, *Franz Liszt,* 262.

double-edged sword, with which Liszt struggled all his life. He felt misunderstood and, although uncomfortable in his role as an entertainer, yet he enjoyed it all the same. Liszt himself complained about an audience that was not interested in truth and beauty but was impressed and dazzled by names. He used to trick the listener by performing the same piece but attributing it to different composers.

> On the day when I presented it as my own, I earned the most encouraging applause: 'It's not at all bad for a boy of his age!' people said; on the day when I played it under Czerny's name, people barely listened; if I played it under Beethoven's authority, I knew I was certain of universal acclaim.[55]

In a letter to Lamennais of December 18, 1837, he wrote: "Will my life always be ruled by this sense of otiose futility which so oppresses me? Will the hour of surrender and man's work never come? Am I then mercilessly condemned to ply the trade of a clown whose task it is to amuse people in their salons?"[56] Neither charlatan nor magician, but a genuine, vulnerable and soulful human being speaks through those words and shows clearly the downside of having an extraordinary gift and being a celebrity. Richard Wagner wrote in the Dresden *Abend-Zeitung* of May 5, 1841:

> What could and would Liszt not be . . . if people had not made him famous! He could and would be a free artist, a minor god, instead of which he is now the slave of a most insipid audience which craves to hear only virtuosos. This audience demands at all costs to hear marvels and foolish nonsense.[57]

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[55] Ibid., 95.

[56] Ibid., 169.

[57] Ibid., 134.

Judging from the multitude of articles and letters on his playing, the fact of his oneness with the instrument seems to be the most significant aspect of Liszt's extraordinary success. The combination of his innate, prodigious and developed technique, his fire for music and performing, and his true search for genuine artistry, made it inevitable that Liszt would have a great impact on the whole musical world and that he would become the leading pianist of his time.

Liszt as a teacher

More than four hundred pianists claimed to be students of Liszt;[58] some took lessons for years, others played for him just once. His most famous students were Carl Tausig, Hans von Bülow, Eugen d'Albert, Emil Sauer, and Alexander Siloti. Many of his students pursued performing careers; others just played for themselves or taught the piano. But all of them found inspiration in Liszt's teaching. According to Walker, the most trustworthy account of Liszt's teaching comes from Amy Fay.[59] Frances Dillon considered Fay's description of her lessons with Liszt "a miniature classic. Sentences, paragraphs and pages have been reprinted in all languages by bibliographers, historians and biographers."[60]

Fay studied from May to September 1873 with Liszt (until he left for Rome). Baroness S.[61] had given her a recommendation letter, which Fay considered very influential on Liszt. Fay's assessment that without this letter she

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[58] Walker, *Franz Liszt*, 32.

[59] Ibid., 33.

[60] Fay, *Music-Study*, with a foreword by Frances Dillon, xii.

[61] Fay did not give any further detail.

would have been sent away is probably not accurate, since Liszt was willing to teach her over an extended period of time (whereas he dismissed others after one lesson) and also invited her to perform in one of his matinees, which was considered a great compliment. In addition, he included her on his list of "principal scholars,"[62] which contained forty-eight students. She felt elevated by the fact that Liszt accepted her, and it seemed to her that her whole life had been leading up to lessons with him. "The more I see and hear Liszt, the more I am lost in amazement! I can neither eat nor sleep on those days that I go to him. All my musical studies till now have been a mere going to school, a preparation for him."[63]

Master classes. Liszt taught primarily in a group setting. The advantages of these master classes were various: observing other students' playing, familiarizing oneself with new music, learning from other lessons, and gaining performance experience. The master classes were held three times a week between four and six o'clock. Liszt chose the pieces he was inclined to listen to from a stack of music. Any piece could be played, but just once.

> The ritual was precise. It was an established custom for Liszt to attend in his music-room . . . at four o'clock. Everyone must be there before he arrived and each person who wanted to play left a copy of the music he prepared upon a side table. When the master entered, all stood up. Liszt greeted everyone affably.[64]

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[62] Louis Nohl, *Life of Liszt*, trans. George P. Upton (Detroit: Gale research Company, 1970), 198.

[63] Fay, *Music-Study*, 225.

[64] Walter Becket, *Liszt* (London: Methuen and Co., 1956), 62.

These master classes projected an almost concert atmosphere, since the audience consisted of acclaimed pianists. Fay confirmed how nervous she was to play in front of Liszt and his students: "It has been a fearful ordeal, truly, to play there, for not only was Liszt himself present, but such a crowd of artists, all ready to pick flaws in your playing. . . ."[65] and later exclaimed happily and relieved: "This week is the first time that I have been able to play to him without being nervous. . . ." Fay perceived those master classes as a challenge and a chance at the same time; while it is easier to play for one's teacher in a one-on-one setting, this does not provide the environment to grow and mature as a musician and performer as the master class does, where one is forced to play in front of an audience—no matter how prepared one feels. "You never know before whom you must play there, for it is the musical headquarters of the world. Directors of conservatories, composers, artists, aristocrats, all come in, and you have to bear the brunt of it as best you can."[66] In addition, to be able to listen to other developing pianists broadens one's musical horizon.

Teaching philosophy. Liszt did not follow a rigid curriculum or a specific teaching philosophy. His teaching was of the moment, based on his inspiration and the students' need, and based on praise and encouragement. Since he was such an astonishing personality and great artist, even a few words had the greatest impact on his students: "And with a few words [he gives] you enough to

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[65] Fay, *Music-Study*, 248.

[66] Ibid., 232.

think of all the rest of your life."[67] Auguste Boissier, who took notes on her daughter Valerie's lessons, wrote in 1832: "He said things that appear to reveal the whole world of knowledge. . . ."[68] Another Liszt-student, Frederic Lamond, stated: "Liszt's teaching was a revelation."[69]

If one looks for insight into Liszt's teaching in the written accounts of his teaching, one might be disappointed. His remarks or comments do not always seem to justify the extreme enthusiasm. An explanation of the immense influence Liszt had on his students is found in the whole of his personality rather than in his actual words. As Harold Bernard stated: "Study after study confirms the fact that pupils learn what the teacher is. They absorb his attitudes, they reflect his convictions, they imitate his behavior. . . ."[70] Thus, students absorb the whole of a teacher's personality.

The most outstanding feature of Liszt's teaching was the use of images or symbols. Fay emphasized his use of ideas: "He presents an *idea* to you, and it takes fast hold of your mind and sticks there. Music is such a real, visible thing to him, that he always has a symbol, instantly, in the material world to express his idea."[71] An idea can hold much more information and carry more meaning and depth than a note-to-note approach. Carl Lachmund, a student of Liszt,

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[67] Ibid., 213.

[68] Burger, *Franz Liszt,* 62.

[69] Ibid., 294.

[70] Harold Bernard, *Psychology of Learning and Teaching* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1954), 49.

[71] Fay, *Music-Study*, 223.

compared his teaching to Jesus' way of using parables: "Liszt's teaching cannot be codified, he strove for the spirit of the work; and music, like religion, has no language; he taught as Christ taught religion, in an allegorical way, or by metaphor."[72] Instead of correcting musical mistakes directly, he would give a symbol or an idea, thus stimulating the students' imagination in an effective way. For example, instead of correcting dynamics and asking a student to play louder or with more energy, he would say: "Be more like a lion; show your teeth as if you could bite."[73] Of course, such an image can help the student to grasp the spirit of the music and change his or her whole attitude toward the piece and to performing in general. Another time, he corrected the way a student from Berlin ended phrases by saying: "'That should not pop up like Berliner *Weisz-bier*' (an exceptionally frothy beverage of which the native Berliner is very fond)."[74] Such a humorous and graphic example certainly speaks more deeply and more longlastingly to the pupil than any mere discussion of musical details.

Fay described how Liszt worked on a feebly played melody. He would not just comment on the melody and correct the balance but would embed his criticism in an image. In this case, he claimed that he would play always for the people in the gallery and demonstrated it. "When he had finished, he raised one hand in the air, and you seemed to see all the people in the gallery drinking in the

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[72] Carl Lachmund, *Living with Liszt from the Diary of Carl Lachmund, an American Pupil of Liszt* (Stuyvesant and New York: Pendragon Press, 1995), 14.

[73] Ibid., 247.

[74] Ibid., 56.

sound."[75] An image like this was able to establish a different connection between the student and the music and bring out a new dimension of playing. Another example of his gift for "hitting the spot" in a humorous way is his comparison of Fay's arm movements to making an omelette, which made her laugh and understand immediately. This style of teaching was not only very well suited to the master class format but also harmonized with Liszt's charismatic personality.

In addition, he had the ability to bring out the best in every student, a sign of a true and outstanding teacher: "He has the power of turning the best side of everyone outward, and also the most marvelous and instant appreciation of what that side is. If there is *anything* in you, you may be sure that Liszt will know it."[76] Fay felt empowered by the freedom Liszt gave to his students: "And when you play to him, you feel like a Pegasus caracoling about in the air."[77] She was aware of how unusual his teaching style was, and felt liberated.

As friendly as he could be and usually was, Liszt had an impatient side, which came through on occasions. Afterwards he was usually apologetic and regretted having been impatient or angry. Sometimes he tried to "make up" for it, e.g. by offering three lessons to a student whom he had earlier rejected. Fay had seen him "snub and entirely neglect young artists of the most remarkable talent

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[75] Fay, *Music-Study*, 223.

[76] Ibid., 231.

[77] Ibid., 273.

and virtuosity, merely because they did not please him personally."[78] Carl Lachmund reported an instance when Liszt became angry at a female student for playing the ending notes of Chopin's A flat Ballade staccato, and on her insisting on it, he cut her off with "Halten Sie's Maul, ich habe genug naseweise Bemerkungen! (Hold your tongue, I have had enough of your smart remarks!)"[79]

Technique. Liszt, the most acclaimed virtuoso of his time, did not believe that teaching technique was of foremost importance.[80] His intention was to develop the artistic side in each student, so that the technique could fall in place or could be worked out by the student on his or her own. Music and creativity were the highest goals, technique just a means. "He doesn't tell you anything about the technique. That you must work out for yourself,"[81] said Fay. He probably expected his students to already have a solid technique. In addition, since he had solved the problems of piano technique by himself, "he was a great believer in experimentation."[82]

He inspired his students by playing for them, so that one could watch his movements, his posture, the way he used his body in connection with his hands, while also observing his pedaling and his fingering. Through his playing, he

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[78] Ibid., 268.

[79] Lachmund, *Living with Liszt*, 135.

[80] Liszt gave a much more detailed technical instruction in his youth when he taught Valerie Boissier. In Hilda Gervers, "Franz Liszt as Pedagogue," *Journal of Research in Music Education*, vol. 18, no. 4 (Winter 1970): 385.

[81] Fay, *Music-Study*, 213.

[82] Gervers, "Franz Liszt," 385.

taught music and technique nonverbally: "His playing was a complete revelation to me, and has given me an entirely new insight into music,"[83] commented Fay. Besides that, most of his remarks dealt with the music itself. He would correct the tempo, talk about the form and phrasing, or point out the connection to other pieces by the composer.[84]

Liszt believed that every technical difficulty could be broken down into small elements such as scales, five-finger patterns, octaves, and broken chords. Thus the difficulty could be singled out and could now be worked on. According to Boissier, Liszt explained his approach as follows: "When one encounters difficulties in a passage, analyze it and practice the difficulties in all keys."[85] He preferred short exercises intended to develop specific skills over extensive etudes,[86] and condemned all meaningless playing. Referring to Clementi's *Gradus ad Parnassum*, Liszt commented on the methodical and theoretical aspect: "But all theory only has meaning when one also knows how to apply it, and this 'theoretical' study [first and second etudes from Clementi's *Gradus ad Parnassum*] is never found in practical application."[87]

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[83] *Fay, Music-Study*, 219.

[84] Gervers, "Franz Liszt," 390.

[85] Auguste Boissier: *Liszt Pedagogue, A Diary of Franz Liszt as Teacher*, trans. in Elyse Mach: *The Liszt Studies* (New York: Associated Music Publishers, 1973), xxvi.

[86] Gervers, "Franz Liszt," 386.

[87] August Göllerich, *The Piano Master Classes of Franz Liszt, Diary Notes* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996), 21.

Even though Liszt wrote twelve volumes of exercises (completed in 1879 and published in 1886), he seemed not to have given them to all of his students. Fay did not mention those studies in her letters, and neither did August Göllerich in his *Diary Notes*. The exercises are short studies in finger strength, scales, arpeggios, and octaves, to be played in all keys in combination with different shadings. One of his exercises, for example, aims to develop strength and volume by pushing down silently four fingers, while the free finger repeats a single note in different rhythms.

Based on what is known about Liszt's own playing, one can draw some conclusions concerning his principles of technique. He played with a high and flexible wrist, the forearms sloping down from the arm,[88] his fingers flexible, touching the key with the fleshy part (as opposed to the finger tip). "He finds that rounded fingers give out a certain affectation which he detests. . . ."[89] He advocated an upright posture, the body bent slightly towards the piano, with the head upright (or even slightly thrown back)[90] and not looking down at the keys (Figure 4). "Look up and away from the keys, and you will play with greater inspiration. . . . Sit still—as though you were having your photograph taken. Do not look at the ivory; show yourself superior to that."[91]

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[88] As can be observed from many pictures, e.g. Jean Gabriel Scheffer: *Franz Liszt,* pencil drawing, Geneva, 1836, reproduced in Burger, *Franz Liszt,* 84.

[89] Boissier, *Liszt Pedagogue*, xix.

[90] Gervers, "Franz Liszt," 388.

[91] Lachmund, *Living with Liszt*, 51.

Fig. 4. Jean Gabriel Scheffer: *Franz Liszt,* pencil drawing, Geneva, 1836 reproduced in Burger, *Franz Liszt,* 84.

He was against the high lift of the finger,[92] which was promoted by most of his colleagues.[93] Liszt seemed to have favored a technique from the wrist, maybe in opposition to the high-finger-lift school. In fact, he directed Valerie Boissier to practice octaves by repeating them up to forty times from the wrist with a

[92] Fay, *Music-Study*, 288.

[93] Such as Sigismund Lebert and Ludwig Stark, the principal founders of the Royal Conservatory at Stuttgart, who were prominent teachers of the school of finger action, in which the fingers are held "one inch over the keys . . . strike rapidly . . . and just as rapidly return to their first position." Cited in Gerig, *Famous Pianists*, 232.

motionless forearm: "All should be played with a single wrist action, on the brace[94] (to keep the forearm motionless)."[95] Hilda Gervers mentioned Liszt's flexible fall of the hand from the wrist.

In terms of five-finger passages, "he wants one to study the thumb, the third finger and the little finger with great care, for they are the fundamental ones, as well as the pivots of the hand."[96] The consideration of pivot points seems to indicate the use of rotation. Even though Liszt himself never used the term in his teaching, his compositions clearly require a free technique with an involved arm.

In summary, the above-mentioned aspects aim for the ideal of strong fingers connected with a free wrist and support with weight from the arm.

Conclusion. According to her letters, Fay was very much impressed by Liszt as a person, performer, and teacher. She benefited musically and had the chance to grow as a musician and performer. She had wished for a more thorough and detailed instruction in piano technique but remained very grateful for the chance to have studied with Liszt. Even though she appreciated Liszt so much, she did not seem to have considered following him to Rome, as other students did. She emphasized how painful it was to leave Liszt, but she seemed to have known that she was not technically proficient enough to gain more from further study

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[94] "Liszt devised a brace made from mahogany, and its purpose was to keep the forearm motionless; this brace was attached to the piano and was nothing other than a device invented by Logier and perfected by Kalkbrenner." In Boissier, *Liszt Pedagogue*, xx.

[95] Ibid.

[96] Ibid., xxiii.

and felt the need for a thorough instruction. When she learned about Deppe and his systematic technical training, she said: "he must be the man for me."[97]

[97] Fay, *Music-Study*, 247.

Chapter Five

Ludwig Deppe

Biography

Born in Alverdissen, on November 7, 1828, Ludwig Deppe was a well-known conductor, composer, pianist, and teacher.[1] He studied violin and piano in Detmold at the Musikhochschule and later theory and counterpoint in Hamburg with Eduard Marxsen (1806–1887), also the teacher of Johannes Brahms. He also studied in Leipzig with Johann Christian Lobe (1797–1881). He moved to Hamburg in 1857, where he founded a musical society (*Gesang-Akademie*) in 1862, which he conducted until 1868. He distinguished himself as such a competent conductor that he was put in charge of larger projects such as oratorios by Handel. During this same period, he began teaching piano. From 1870 on, he conducted the *Königliche Kapelle* and Royal Opera performances in Berlin. From 1876 on, he rendered great service to the Silesian music festival founded by Bolko Graf von Hochberg in 1876. Held every two years, the festival featured artists from Germany, Poland, and the Czech Republic.[2] From 1886 to 1888 Deppe was Kapellmeister of the Berlin Royal Opera. According to *The Musical Times*, his short appointment at the Opera "became the source of an unpleasant controversy which embittered, to some extent, the remaining days of

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[1] Mathias Matuschka, *Die Erneuerung der Klaviertechnik nach Liszt* (Munich: Musikverlag Emil Katzbichler, 1987) and Elgin Roth, *Die Wiederentdeckung der Einfachheit* (Augsburg: Wißner-Verlag, 2004).

[2] Wikipedia, die freie Enzyklopedia, s.v. "Schlesisches Musikfest," (accessed February 15, 2008), <http://de.wikipedia>

his career."[3] Using his book *Zwei Jahre Kapellmeister an der Königlichen Oper zu Berlin* as a public justification, Deppe tried to correct the false accusations made against him (that he needed endless rehearsing time, for example), which had been made by influential musicians, critics, and the press.

Inspired by the free and graceful arm movements of violin players,[4] he observed and analyzed the most famous pianists of his day (especially Franz Liszt),[5] which led to the development of his method, in which the "true beginnings of the modern era of piano technique"[6] can be found. Reginald Gerig believes that the fact "that he was first a highly respected operatic and orchestral conductor and second a piano teacher no doubt aided him in gaining a much deeper insight than many a conservatory recluse had."[7] Deppe died in 1890 in Bad Pyrmont.

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[3] *The Musical Times* 31, no. 572 (October 1, 1890): 601.

[4] Boardman, "History," 96.

[5] Thomas Fielden, "The History of the Evolution of Pianoforte Technique," *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, 59th Sess. (1932–33): 48.

[6] Gerig, *Famous Pianists*, 252.

[7] Ibid., 254.

Deppe as a person

Deppe's photograph shows a thoughtful man with a serious expression. His posture is very upright and one can sense a strong mind. He projects the thoroughness and diligence needed for developing a detailed piano method.

Fig. 5. August Weger: *Ludwig Deppe*, Engraving, (accessed February 5, 2008), http://edocs.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/volltexte/2003/7900709/

Fay's impression of him seems to contradict Deppe's stern appearance. She described him as "a man of medium height, with a great big brain, keen blue eyes and delicate little mouth, and . . . a most cheery and sunny expression."[8] She compared him to Mozart and wrote that Deppe "has the most childlike nature, and I think Mozart is so peculiarly sympathetic to him because he has

[8] Fay, *Music-Study*, 285.

such a simple and sunny temperament himself."[9] Fay mentioned that he liked to go to a beer-garden or a "Kneipe" (bar) at night, "for he is far too sociable to go to bed without having taken a friendly glass of beer with some one."[10] It may be that the stern photograph was taken toward the end of his life, or perhaps he wanted to display his competent side in the picture.[11] Also, photos do not necessarily give a complete and accurate impression of character.

In a conversation with Fay about pianists, Deppe was very critical of all pianists and showed great pride in his own method—he even claimed to be the only one who knew how to develop a good technique. "'*Sie haben*, Alle, *keine Finger*[12] (None of them have any fingers).' He then winds up by saying he is the only man in Germany who knows how to give them 'fingers.' '*Ich weiss worauf es ankommt* (I know what it depends on)!'"[13] Deppe was very convinced of his method and the quality of his teaching: "'Gifted people,' he says, 'play by the grace of God; but *everybody* could master the technique on *my* system!!'"[14] These criticisms of other teachers and his strong convictions about the superiority of his method seem to run counter to Fay's description of his sunny simplicity, but it may be that he was a more complex person than Fay supposed

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[9] Ibid., 325.

[10] Fay, *Music-Study*, 304.

[11] Because of the length of time it took, a person posing for a photograph had to remain absolutely still, and photographs from this period usually look rather stiff.

[12] This expression, which is still being used, refers to a weak technique, especially an undeveloped finger technique which does not produce evenness, clarity, and brilliance in rapid passages.

[13] Fay, *Music-Study*, 296.

[14] Ibid., 301.

and that his strong, and perhaps arrogant statements express a different side of his personality—an aspect of himself that he generally preferred not to show to his students.

Deppe as a performer

Drawn to the classical period and its composers, Deppe admired the ideals of clarity and purity, which were thought to be the hallmark of that era. Fay called him "the severe, the chaste and the classic! Extreme purity of style is Deppe's characteristic, and not the passionate or the emotional."[15] Deppe's connection with Mozart came into play again when Fay listened to a performance of a Mozart piano concerto by Anna Steiniger, his assistant,[16] and expressed her admiration for his musical instinct.

> I love to see Deppe direct the orchestra when Steiniger plays a concerto of Mozart. His clear blue eyes dance in his head and look so sunny, and he stands so light on his feet that it seems as if he would dance off himself on the tips of his toes, with his bâton in his hand! He is the incarnation of Mozart, just as Liszt and Joachim are of Beethoven, and Tausig was of Chopin. He has a marvelously delicate musical organization, and an instinct how things ought to be played which amounts to second sight.[17]

She respected him as a musician and was particularly impressed with his interpretation of Beethoven: "Deppe is an accomplished conductor and I have

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[15] Ibid., 324.

[16] Anna Steiniger was born in Magdeburg, Germany. Studying first with Louis Ehrlich and Theodor Kullak, she became one of Ludwig Deppe's favorite students and later his assistant. She also performed extensively throughout Germany and Europe and was known for her exquisite interpretations and perfect technique. She married the pianist Frederic Clark, and developed together with him the *Clark-Steiniger System for Piano-Forte Playing*, which moved away from Deppe's principles. In John Storer Cobb, *Anna Steiniger, A Biographical Sketch* (Boston: Schirmer, 1886).

[17] Fay, *Music-Study*, 324–25.

never heard Beethoven's second Overture to Leonora sound as I have under his bâton."[18] Even though Deppe was primarily a conductor, his piano playing was very convincing to Fay and even reminded her of Liszt's playing:

> You may not believe it, but it is true, that though Deppe is no pianist himself, and has the funniest little red paws in the world, that don't look as if they could do anything, he's got that same touch and quality of tone that Liszt has—that indescribable *something* that, when he plays a few chords, merely, makes the tears rush to your eyes.[19]

Deppe as a teacher

According to Thomas Fielden, "pianoforte teaching was suffering badly from the tyranny of the German professor school," referring to the emphasis many teachers in Germany had laid on developing finger technique (cf Chapter 4, fn. 99). Fielden further stated that "this great man's [Deppe's] ideas on playing have revolutionised modern technique."[20] Elisabeth Caland, a student of Deppe's who edited and published the *Deppe Method*, was also convinced that he was the founder of a new school. She believed that his method moved away from the old mechanical approach (developing technique by going through finger studies and etudes such as those by Cramer, Czerny, and Clementi) to a new connection between mental and physical qualities: "Thus, Deppe would be viewed as the founder of this new comprehensive intellectual movement, in

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[18] Ibid., 283.

[19] Ibid., 298.

[20] Fielden, "Evolution," 51.

contrast to the mechanical older way of teaching, and also no doubt as the reformer of piano pedagogy."[21]

Deppe is said to be the first teacher who not only included but also described in detail the involvement of the arm in piano technique.[22] Maria Levinskaya regarded Deppe's approach "closest to exploring the concept of weight combined with the necessary muscular tension and fixation."[23] Even though Deppe is widely described as the "first recorded pedagogue to teach the use of the weight of the hand and arm in piano playing,"[24] Kaestner D. Robertson concludes in his 1991 dissertation that the technique of weight-transference was known and used by virtuosi such as Jean Philippe Rameau and Johann Sebastian Bach.[25] Nonetheless, Fielden is convinced that

> it was not until Deppe came on the scene that any real analysis of Liszt's methods was successfully attempted, and pianists of to-day and for all time ought to acknowledge the debt they owe to this great master-teacher who anticipated and taught all that the modern protagonists of relaxation and weight have advocated.[26]

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[21] Elisabeth Caland, "Mitteilung," *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 70, (Wien, 1903): 315, cited in Roth, *Wiederentdeckung*, 30: "Somit wäre Ludwig Deppe der Gründer der neuen durchgeistigten Richtung ein Gegensatz zu der mechanischen ältern Art des Lehrens and zweifellos als Reformator der Klavierpädagogik zu betrachten."

[22] Patricia Ann Tate, "An Analysis of the Development of Piano Touch Technique to Ludwig Deppe," (MM thesis, Midwestern State University, Wichita Falls, TX, 1982), 50.

[23] Maria Levinskaya, *The Levinskaya System of Pianoforte Technique*, cited in Kaestner D. Robertson, "Arm-Weight and Weight-Transference Technique: Its Systematic Use as a Technical and Artistic Vehicle in Piano Playing," (DMA diss., Boston University, 1991), 9.

[24] Ibid., 4.

[25] Ibid., iv.

[26] Fielden, "Evolution," 48.

Mathias Matuschka states that the huge amount of literature, which arose since Deppe founded his method, dealing with the use of the arm, the weight, and the fall of the arm/hand, is proof of the importance and inspiration of Deppe's method.[27] According to Patricia Ann Tate, Deppe influenced a number of teachers (Theodore Leschetizky[28] and Rudolph M. Breithaupt), who developed important theories on technique.[29] Breithaupt, as well as Deppe, made the transmission of weight part of his method.[30] Although differing in many respects, all of these methods integrate movement and a free arm, whereas the "old school" tended to focus on finger development with a rigid arm.

Deppe's most famous and accomplished student was Emil Sauer, but the student in his class who created his international reputation was Amy Fay. Through her enthusiastic description of Deppe's technical approach in her book *Music-Study in Germany*, she brought him into the American public eye and awakened the curiosity of many students and pianists. She called him the "most satisfactory teacher I've had yet"[31] and concluded, "there never *was* such a teacher!"[32]

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[27] Matuschka, *Klaviertechnik*, 19.

[28] Fielden stated that Leschetizky arose out of the Deppe school. Fielden, "Evolution," 54.

[29] Tate, "An Analysis," 64.

[30] Gerig, *Famous Pianists*, 342.

[31] Fay, *Music-Study*, 283.

[32] Ibid., 346.

Brought to Fay's attention by William Sherwood, her American colleague, Fay met Deppe at a musical party in December 1873. She began to study with him the following week and knew after only two lessons how she "'ought' to have been studying for the last four years."[33] She became aware of many bad habits in her playing and also felt as if her ears had been opened for the first time.[34]This newly awakened awareness contained a painful element, since Fay lamented in a letter that she felt dreadful and "cried and cried" because "if I had known Deppe four years ago, what might I not have been now?"[35] She took three lessons a week from Anna Steiniger, Deppe's assistant, and one lesson from Deppe himself, which usually lasted three hours. She continued to study with him until April 1875.

Fay appreciated very much that Deppe showed and explained to her how to master a piece, as opposed to merely sending her away to the practice room.

> But Deppe, instead of saying, "Oh, you'll get this after years of practice," shows me how to conquer the difficulty now. He takes a piece, and while he plays it with the most wonderful fineness of conception, he cold-bloodedly dissects the mechanical elements of it, separates them, and tells you how to use your hand so as to grasp them one after the other. In short, he makes the technique and the conception *identical*, as of course they ought to be, but I never had any other master who trained his pupils to attempt it.[36]

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[33] Ibid., 292.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid., 302.

[36] Ibid., 319.

For several months, she played only one hand at a time, very slowly. She was somewhat discouraged by the lack of rapid improvement, but was willing to go through the long process. Amy wrote to her sister: "you and I started out with wholly impracticable and ridiculous ideas. We thought that things could be done quickly. . . . It is a ten year's labour, take it how you will."[37]

In August 1874, after almost one year of lessons from Deppe, she finally played a chamber music recital in public (at the large Salle in the Hotel Bremen). Deppe was very pleased, and Fay was quite surprised herself how she mastered the difficult parts. She wished to play a recital in Berlin, but because of the time and commitment involved in studying with Deppe and Fräulein Timm (another Deppe student), it was impossible for her to prepare a whole concert program. "They have one set of ideas and I another, and I see I shall never be able to play in public until I abandon masters and start out on my own course."[38] This frustration over her limited freedom and her teachers' rigid principles (to give up all public performance during the time of intensive studies with them) was disheartening. Luckily, just before she went back to the United States, she had the chance in May 1875 to perform successfully in a recital in Frankfurt an der Oder. She received a very complimentary review in the *Frankfurter Zeitung and Allgemeiner Anzeiger*:

> For not only did the playing of the pianist, Fräulein Amy Fay, give great pleasure to all those who love and understand music, but there was also no fault to be found with the interpretations of the orchestra. With regard to

[37] Ibid., 327.

[38] Ibid., 341.

> the performance of Fräulein Fay, we were equally charmed by her clear and certain touch and by her conception of the various solo pieces she played. The concert opened with the Sonata in E flat major for violin and piano by Beethoven. The whole effect of the work was a very sympathetic and satisfactory one, and showed a thoughtful interpretation on the part of the artist. The beauty of her conception was especially evident in the Raff "Capriccio," and in Hiller's "Zur Guitarre," given as an encore. . . .[39]

The Deppe Method. Focused on the connection between the ear, the mind, and the fingers, Deppe's method integrated the whole arm and incorporated arm movement.[40] His ideal aimed at the oneness of the music and the movements used by the pianist to produce the sounds: "The movements have to be executed in such a way that they cannot be separated from the music itself, they have to be seen as the music itself."[41]

The main principles of his method are:[42]

1. using a low position of the piano bench
2. using only a moderate, not high, lifting of the fingers
3. producing a good tone through the weight of the hand, and not through the striking of the key with the finger
4. turning the wrist so that the outer outline of the arm and hand is a straight line from the elbow to the tip of the fifth finger

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[39] Ibid., 350–51.

[40] Fielden, "Evolution," 52.

[41] Elisabeth Caland, *Anhaltspunkte zur Kontrolle zweckmässiger Armbewegungen beim Künstlerischen Klavierspiel* (Magdeburg: Heinrichshofen's Verlag, 1912), cited in Roth, *Wiederentdeckung*, 37: "Die Bewegungen müssen so ausgeführt werden, daß sie als von dem musikalischen Inhalt unzertrennlich, als die Musik selbst zu betrachten sein. . . ."

[42] Gerig, *Famous Pianists*, 252–65.

5. preparing the thumb to pass under the other fingers in scales

6. in general, using motions which are curved and not angular

In addition, Deppe recommended general exercises for the shoulders and the arm away from the piano, such as exercising on the horizontal bars or working out with dumb-bells.[43]

Regarding 1: Deppe himself explained in his article that one should sit low in order to achieve a free condition of the hand. He believed that the elbows should be lower than the wrist and hand. "The pianist should sit so that the forearm from the elbow to the wrist will be slightly raised—in this way the hand will remain free from any oppressive influence of the elbow and the horizontal scale movements can be easily accomplished."[44] The low seat was thought to enable the player to make use of the upper arm, the back, and the shoulder muscles in controlling the arm weight, thus avoiding having "too much inanimate weight and muscular activity . . . focused in the fingers and the hand."[45] Furthermore, the low seat forces the player to sit erect, whereby nervous tension is avoided.[46]

Regarding 2: There are several reasons to avoid the high lift of the fingers: It breaks the unity of the wrist, the hand, the arm, and the fingers by disconnecting/isolating the fingers. "He [Deppe] says it makes a *knick* in the

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[43] Ludwig Deppe, "Die Armleiden des Klavierspielers," *Deutsche Musiker-Zeitung* (1885), cited in Gerig, *Famous Pianists*, 253.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Gerig, *Famous Pianists*, 256.

[46] Deppe, "Armleiden," cited in Gerig, *Famous Pianists*, 253.

muscle, and you get all the strength simply from the finger, whereas, when you lift the finger moderately high, the muscle from the whole arm comes to bear upon it."[47] Furthermore, a legato line is disturbed by the high finger lift: "When you lift the fingers so high you cannot bind the tones so perfectly together."[48] Interestingly, Deppe advocated playing with very curved fingers, with the last joint not completely vertical, but slightly curved in, as a result of which the stroke of the key became more precise.[49] This approach is not congruent with modern principles, which favor much flatter fingers, hardly curved at all.

Regarding 3: The isolated stroke from the finger produces quite a different sound (a sharp, quick tone)[50] from Deppe's recommended way of playing. A more satisfying and singing sound can be created not by lifting the finger high above the keys and then propelling it into the key, but "by letting the finger just fall—it [the sound] is fuller, less loud, but more penetrating."[51] Deppe's ideal was to let "the notes fall from the finger-tips like drops of water."[52] Caland later explained that the actual process of lifting up and bringing down of the finger requires the highest concentration and the most intense connection between thinking and wanting. The bringing down of the finger has to be done directly, fast, and without

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[47] Fay, *Music-Study*, 288.

[48] Ibid., 289.

[49] Emil Söchting, "Die Handhaltung beim Klavierspiel," in *Der Klavierlehrer* 27, no. 14 (1904): 215, cited in Matuschka, *Klaviertechnik,* 22.

[50] Fay, *Music-Study*, 288.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid., 336.

any effort, and should look as if the finger falls.[53] Deppe pointed out the difference between striking and falling:

> My tone production does not develop through striking, but solely through the weight of the hand, through simple movements of lifting and falling, with quiet, relaxed fingers. . . . It [the tone] forms itself much more in complete repose, without any inner or outer excitement—so to speak—"with conscious unconsciousness."[54]

Even though the sound will be very soft when one begins working on the technique, it will develop into a full sound. Remembering Liszt's resonant sound quality, Fay finally understood that this was the way he produced it.[55]

Regarding 4: To accomplish this position, the thumb-side of the hand turns inward toward the center of the body, or, in other words, the wrist turns slightly outwards. In doing so, the knuckles of the third, fourth, and fifth finger almost automatically move into a slightly higher position than before, which gives the third and fifth, but especially the fourth finger (the weakest finger) more freedom and facilitates the lift.[56]

> The object of turning the hand outward is to favour the third and fourth fingers, and give them a higher fall when they are lifted. This strengthens them very much. It also looks much prettier when the outer edge of the hand is high, and one of Deppe's grand mottoes is, "When it *looks* pretty then it is right."[57]

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[53] Matuschka, *Klaviertechnik*, 23.

[54] Deppe, "Armleiden," cited in Gerig, *Famous Pianists*, 253.

[55] Fay, *Music-Study*, 288.

[56] Amy Fay, *The Deppe Finger Exercises for Rapidly Developing an Artistic Touch in Piano Forte Playing* (Chicago, IL: Musica Obscura, 1971), Preface.

[57] Fay, *Music-Study*, 289.

Regarding 5: If a C major scale is played without any preparation of the thumb ("if the hand be left stationary whilst playing from C to E"),[58] a quick turn of the wrist is necessary to get the thumb to play F, the next note in the scale. "The consequence of this is a disturbed position of the hand, an uneven quality of tone . . . and an imperfect legato."[59] Deppe's way of playing scales requires a flexible wrist: turning it sharply out and pivoting on the fingers brings each finger in the right position.

> But to turn a little on each finger end, pressing it firmly down on the key, and screwing it round, as it were, on a pivot, till the next finger is brought over its own key. In this way he prepares for the thumb, which is kept free from the hand and slightly curved. . . . In fact, my wrist carried my finger right on to the sharp without any change in the position of the hand, thus giving the most perfect legato in the world . . .[60]

Again, she was reminded of Liszt's playing and referred to his smooth execution:

> When Deppe was explaining this to me, I suddenly remembered that when he [Liszt] was playing scales or passages, his fingers seemed to lie across the keys in a slanting sort of way, and to execute these rapid passages almost without any perceptible motion. Well, dear, *there* it was again! As Liszt is a great experimentalist, he probably does all these things by instinct, and without reasoning it out. . . . I'm sure Deppe is the only master in the world who has thought that out. . . .[61]

Regarding 6: This rule refers to the rotary movement, which originates in the back and upper-arm and carries on to the fingers. Elisabeth Caland called

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[58] C. A. Ehrenfechter, *Technical Study in the Art of Pianoforte-Playing (Deppe's Principles)* (London: William Reeves, 4th ed., n.d.), 49.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Fay, *Music-Study*, 290.

[61] Ibid., 291.

this movement the "shaking movement,"[62] which is very useful for broken octaves, sixths, thirds, and other tremolo figures. Notes, which are far apart, can even be connected in this same way: with "free, sweeping curves. Such tones . . . may be bound in perfect legato style by the simple expedient of carrying the hand, in a graceful semi-circle, over the interjacent keys."[63]

Deppe's recommended hand position, especially the straight line from the arm to the fifth finger, was revolutionary and went against the common opinion on posture. "The emphasis I so frequently place on this inward-slanting position of the hand is justified by the fact . . . that so many 'Piano Methods' prescribe an exactly opposite position. . . ."[64] Another unusual element in his teaching was the slow tempo, which he recommended for the practice of scales, exercises, and pieces. Playing with one hand at the time was an additional distinguishing feature of his method.[65]

The Deppe Finger Exercises. In 1890, Amy Fay published the *Deppe Finger Exercises for Rapidly Developing an Artistic Touch in Piano Forte Playing*, in which she included her own preface and explanations. These exercises, which Fay called a "logically developed system for forming a fine Piano technique," can

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[62] Elisabeth Caland, *Artistic Piano Playing as taught by Ludwig Deppe*, trans. Evelyn Sutherland Stevenson (Nashville, TN: The Olympian Publishing Co., 1903), 97.

[63] Ibid., 53.

[64] Ibid., 101.

[65] Fay, *Music-Study*, 292.

be used by beginners as well as by advanced pianists, and she herself used them every day to "strengthen the fingers and limber the wrist."[66]

Where other compendia of exercises and studies emphasize velocity and the facility of execution, Deppe's exercises stress the connection between the mind, ear, and fingers. For example, while the exercises by Herz contain one-thousand five-finger exercises in the key of C major,[67] notated in eighth-notes and sixteenth notes, Deppe's consist of only seven pages of exercises containing mainly half-notes, which are to be played very slowly. The mind should be fully present and engaged. Thus, the exercises are to "strengthen the will of the mind."[68]

The first exercise consists of four slowly repeated notes (such as DDDD played with the fifth, CCCC played with the fourth, BBBB played with the third finger), to "produce a firm, singing and penetrating tone by the natural power of the fingers without any forcing or jarring, and with no stiffening of the wrist or arm muscles."[69] The finger is supposed to be raised and should fall on the key. The highest attention needs to be paid to a relaxed wrist. The tone might be scarcely audible in the beginning, but "in a week's practice, the hand is entirely changed, and the ear becomes so cultivated, that the tone develops round, full and pure,

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[66] Fay, *The Deppe Finger Exercises*, Preface.

[67] Tate, "An Analysis," 47.

[68] Ibid., 63.

[69] Fay, *Deppe Finger Exercises*, 3.

and the wrist is easy."[70] Another exercise explores the movement of the wrist: while the third, fourth, and fifth finger are playing a repeating pattern of three successive keys ascending upward (B C# D#), the wrist turns outward to support each finger. All exercises are played slowly, on hand at a time.

Fay was very enthusiastic about the newly articulated principles which were described in great detail; nonetheless, it was very important to her that Deppe's main concern was music. "From my telling you so much about technicalities, you must not think Deppe only a pedagogue. He is in reality the soul of music, and all these things are only 'means to an end.'"[71]

Impact on her playing. Amy Fay was very grateful to Deppe and completely convinced of the validity of his method, which had given her the necessary technical ability to play with ease and facility and the confidence to perform convincingly. She developed into a sought-after teacher of the Deppe Method and passed it on to her students. She figured prominently in making Deppe famous in the United States: through her book *Music-Study in Germany*, the publication of Deppe's exercises, the widespread printing of her articles on Deppe's approach to technique, and through her own performances as a testament to his teaching. Through her piano students, she passed the Deppe tradition on to other generations of pianists.

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[70] Ibid.

[71] Fay, *Music-Study*, 301.

Chapter Six

Amy Fay in America

Amy Fay (Figure 6) spent the first few months after her return from Europe with her older sister Zina in New York and then moved back to Cambridge.[1] In 1878, she moved to Chicago, where her brother Norman Fay worked as the general manager of the Bell Telephone Company of Illinois. For twelve years she lived together with her three sisters in her brother's house. Soon she gained entrance to the important social circles of the city and became active in its musical life as a teacher, performer, lecturer, and clubwoman. As a pianist with the Thursby Concert Company,[2] she toured the cities of the Northwest and West. In 1890, Fay moved to New York City, "the most musically influential city in the nation,"[3] to live with Zina. Nineteen years later, in 1919, she moved once again to Cambridge, where she resided with Norman and her sister Rose. Soon after entering a nursing home in Watertown, Massachusetts, Amy Fay died in February 1928 of natural causes.

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[1] Unless otherwise noted, all information is derived from McCarthy, *Amy Fay.*

[2] McCarthy, *The American Years,* xvii.

[3] McCarthy, *Amy Fay,* 113.

Fig. 6. Amy Fay, 1910, printed in McCarthy, *Amy Fay*, 1.

Fay as a clubwoman

Around 1900, many musical institutions were established in the United States, including symphony orchestras and opera houses, conservatories and music schools, publishing houses, school bands, instrument factories, and graduate programs in music at universities.[4] Chicago provided a fertile climate for musicians: music making, especially piano playing, was on the rise; music clubs drew a large audience; a new Music Hall was built. There was a broader social

[4] Ralph P. Locke, Cyrilla Barr, *Cultivating Music in America* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 31.

acceptance of "the scope of women's place"[5] (in other words, outside the home) in Chicago than in the Northeast. One rewarding field was the music club, which provided an outlet and a support structure for female musicians in which they could discuss music, meet other musicians, present their compositions, and perform. Besides the artistic opportunities, the clubs required organizational and leadership qualities and provided educational opportunities. Furthermore, "music clubs and teachers' organizations could raise standards and educate popular taste."[6]

In 1879, Fay helped found an important organization for women, the Amateur Musical Club in Chicago, which held annual recitals and had a membership of four hundred subscribers. In 1884 she helped found the Artists' Concert Club (open to men and women alike), which was "dedicated to presenting concerts before associate members and immediate friends"[7] and "exerted an important influence on the music of Chicago."[8] In 1899, she helped her sister found the Women's Philharmonic Society of New York, and she held the presidency of this organization between 1903 and 1914. The club was divided into departments including voice, piano, choral works, and others, with bi-monthly meetings and frequent performances. Fay perceived the work as very

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[5] McCarthy, *Amy Fay*, 74.

[6] Christine Ammer, *Unsung, A History of Women in American Music* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980), 231.

[7] McCarthy, *Amy Fay*, 96.

[8] William S. B. Mathews, *A Hundred Years of Music in America* (Chicago: G. L. Howe, 1889), 141, cited in McCarthy, *Amy Fay*, 97.

rewarding and wrote in 1914: "It is a great thing to belong to a musical club, too! I *always* do, wherever I may be, and it seems almost like a family tie, you get so used to your *clubities*!"[9]

Fay as a performer

Besides her club activities, Fay tried to establish a performing career. Her first recital in New York, on December 20, 1875, was organized by her sister Zina and was very well received:

> None can hear her play without predicting for her an unusually brilliant career. Her technique is faultless, her touch clear, elastic and sympathetic, and her interpretation of the most varied compositions equally successful. The ease with which she plays the most difficult works is only equaled by her extraordinary memory. . . .[10]

The concert with the renowned conductor Theodore Thomas (later husband of her sister Rose) at Sanders Hall in Cambridge on February 21, 1877 was affected by her nervousness, which was mentioned in the otherwise good review. Her reputation grew, and concert managers sought her out. Having moved to Chicago, she organized a concert series at Hershey Hall. The critic George Upton[11] stated in his review that Fay "cannot take a high place in the concert room. . . ." Yet he praised her musicianship, her exquisite taste, and her good technique, and concluded "that she cannot help but exercise a powerful influence

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[9] McCarthy, *The American Years*, 145.

[10] *Dwight's Journal of Music 35*, no. 20 (January 8, 1876): 159, cited in McCarthy, *Amy Fay*, 58.

[11] George P. Upton, author of "Woman in Music," was known for his critical opinion of women's ability to create, especially to compose. He saw a woman's inspiration or influence on the great composers and their compositions as great accomplishment.

in the field of teaching and private playing."[12] Was this judgment based on Fay's nervousness and its impact on her playing, or was it due to his personal judgment that women should not perform publicly, and if they became active at all, that their activity was supposed to be in the field of teaching? According to Christine Ammer, teaching was considered appropriate for a woman, since she could still fulfill her family obligations. Furthermore, it was "considered one of the social graces, along with embroidery and French."[13]

Fay remained determined to perform publicly. Still struggling with her nervousness and at the same time trying to interest the press in her career, Fay decided in 1883 to give "Piano Conversations," in which she spoke to her audience about a piece "just long enough to impart her own feeling, thought, and information in regard to it."[14] These short introductions calmed her nerves, and established a personal connection with the audience. Her idea proved successful. Her Piano Conversations were usually very well reviewed and attracted large audiences. W. S. B. Mathews called them an exhibition of "exquisite musical pictures, illuminated by eloquent words."[15] After a performance at Wesley's Club, Amy wrote in 1911: "and after the concert was over great pleasure was expressed by those present. People always *love* the talk I give about the pieces and they never get enough of that. No matter *how much* I say,

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[12] McCarthy, *Amy Fay*, 79.

[13] Ammer, *Unsung*, 225.

[14] McCarthy, *Amy Fay*, 87.

[15] McCarthy, *The American Years*, xvii.

they invariably say I 'don't talk *half enough*.'"[16] But although there were many complimentary reviews, the critic for the New York Times was displeased with Fay 's concert at Chickering Hall on June 3, 1891:

> Miss Fay's talk about Schumann's personal history was almost impudent in the amount of ignorance which it presupposed the audience to possess. Her remarks about his G minor sonata were ridiculous in their brevity and lack of suggestiveness. However, after hearing the lady's performance of the composition, there is no room for wonder at her inability to say much about it. In order to make the record complete, it may as well be added that Miss Fay does not speak any better than she plays.[17]

It seems that this critic expected the short introductions to be more informative and substantial. Fay's concept might have been geared toward the not so educated audience or aimed to entertain more than to educate. Nonetheless, these concerts were so successful, that in 1883 "the Chicago Amusement Bureau Company engaged Amy as a client."[18] Fay also performed her Piano Conversations in schools for the Board of Education[19] and wrote her sister Zina about her challenging but very positive experience:

> I went to this school with some trepidation, as I was told by Mr. Beers, the principal, that the crowd was a very lawless one. . . . I expected there would be talking and laughing so that I could not hear myself think. Do you know, they were as quiet as mice, all through, except when they were laughing out with amusement at my remarks! At the close, they applauded like everything, and then they crowded around me on the stage, and begged to know "when I was going to play to them again?"[20]

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[16] Ibid., 106.

[17] "Review of Miss Fay's Matinee," *The New York Times,* June 4, 1891.

[18] McCarthy, *Amy Fay*, 87.

[19] McCarthy, *The American Years*, 16.

[20] Ibid., 17.

Even though Fay was not the first pianist to give lecture recitals, she "inspired many of her colleagues to emulate her idea. . . . It was an idea, whose time had come."[21] According to McCarthy, those lecture recitals helped shape the concert life of the late 19th and early 20th century.[22] Lecture recitals continued to be very popular and are still part of today's concert life.

Fay as a teacher

Fay was determined "to break out of the restricted atmosphere of the domestic arena and work outside the home."[23] In 1880, she opened her private teaching studio in Chicago. In the same year, her book *Music-Study in Germany* was published and became a best seller among cultivated readers in America and England,[24] making Fay famous. During her lifetime the book appeared in over twenty-five editions.[25] The German translation, initiated by Liszt himself, was published in 1882[26] and, according to Frances Dillon, even personally sponsored by Liszt.[27] Through her book and her edition of *The Deppe Finger Exercises* published in 1890, she became a sought-after authority on the Deppe method. In

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[21] McCarthy, *Amy Fay*, 91.

[22] Ibid., 91.

[23] Ibid., 74.

[24] Ibid., 105.

[25] McCarthy, *The American Years*, xvi.

[26] McCarthy, *Amy Fay*, 85.

[27] Fay, *Music-Study*, with a foreword by Frances Dillon, xiv.

1914, she wrote to Zina: "My pupils are attracting a good deal of attention now, and I have a big reputation as a teacher here. . . . I am getting talked about in musical circles as a very wonderful teacher at last!"[28] Her students performed "for entertainments, schools, grand receptions, club concerts, and charity concerts."[29] Proud and very pleased with the success of her students at public performances, she wrote to her sister:

> My results from an artistic standpoint have been brilliant this season, and Lemuel Goldstein at fifteen has just played the first movement, with Hummel cadenza, of Beethoven's second concerto (B flat major) at the Morris High School, with orchestra, in a big concert, while Lucy Greenberg, in addition to her own concert, has rehearsed the difficult Mozart concerto in D minor with Volpe's orchestra, and came off with flying colors! . . . How delighted he [Deppe] would have been with the results of his method in America![30]

Some of her successful students were: Lucy Greenberg, who went to Europe to perform and study; John Alden Carpenter, who became one of the nation's distinguished composers; and Almon Kincaid, who patented his own piano method and developed a small practice clavier.

Teaching Principles. Fay herself had felt the lack of clear technical guidance in her own training.

> One would think that all artists of high rank ought to be able to impart to their pupils the principles of a fine technique. . . . Such, however, is not the case. Whether it is that they have forgotten how they have arrived at a

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[28] McCarthy, *Amy Fay*, 152.

[29] Ibid., 130.

[30] Ibid.

> given result, or whether it is laziness and indifference on their part, I cannot decide.[31]

Therefore, in her own teaching, she tried to give clear advice and practical guidelines for practicing, working on technique and studying musical scores. It was important to her to give "both technic and conception."[32] With all of her students, Fay worked on Deppe's exercises: "[They are] ten in number, and require twenty minutes to play through, ten minutes for each hand. Each one has a definite object, and I find I cannot omit one of them with my pupils without loss to them."[33] She also advocated practicing one hand at a time, slowly, with a musical tone, but without pedal or any excess of emotion. "Practicing should be an entirely different thing from performing."[34] Her recommended rule for practicing was:

> Twenty minutes for finger exercises with each hand alone. Ten minutes for a scale. Half to three-quarters of an hour for Etudes, including ten octave studies. After that pieces ad libitum, which I play through three times slowly with each hand alone, and repeatedly with both together.[35]

This type of training would certainly help to develop the advanced student's technical facility and his familiarity with the pieces studied in this manner. From a performer's perspective, however, such a routine most likely would not prepare one sufficiently to play a recital.

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[31] Fay, "Practice," cited in McCarthy, *Amy Fay*, 139–40.

[32] McCarthy, *The American Years*, 127.

[33] Fay, "Practice," cited in McCarthy, *Amy Fay*, 142.

[34] Ibid., 143.

[35] Ibid.

Fay's advice on difficult parts is particularly interesting, as she came to believe that playing through the whole piece with one hand, until the hard spots are mastered, is more beneficial than focusing on the difficulty (thus fixing the mind on it).[36] This sounds like a promising philosophy for pieces by Mozart or Schubert, but personally, I would not dare to apply this method to a complex and challenging piece or a whole recital program.

In terms of music-making, Fay felt an artistic obligation toward the composer (especially Beethoven): "My friends, when people feel interest enough to make an effort to hear us, ought we not to study in the most conscientious manner?"[37]

The strict observance of slurs was of great importance to her because of the effect it has upon expression. She advised the lift of the hand from the keyboard both before and after a slur, since "it gives a definition to playing that nothing else does, and makes the greatest difference in the accent."[38] This technique is highly practical and can be reliably used to bring out a large phrase as well as "two–note–slurs," so frequently employed in classical pieces.

Fay recommended listening to great artists to form one's own style. She stated that "expression is largely a matter of imitation,"[39] which seems to contradict Liszt's words: "Be individual, don't imitate and play as yourself. A bad

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[36] Ibid.

[37] Amy Fay, "Expression in Piano Playing" from *Etude* 5, no. 8 (August 1887) 111–12, cited in McCarthy, *Amy Fay*, 155.

[38] Ibid., 156.

[39] Ibid., 157.

original interpretation is always better than a good imitation."[40] Her recommendation was most likely intended for beginners and not advanced students, whereas Liszt certainly addresses the (almost) developed artist.

Amy Fay's statements about her students' performances reveal how important Fay considered expression and solidity in their playing: "she [a colleagues' student] did not have as much character and style as my pupils have,"[41] and "He [Lemuel Goldstein] was too cunning for anything, and as *cocksure* as my pupils *always* are, when I put them on show! They *never* fail to do their best."[42] Apparently, Fay prepared her students so well that they performed with ease and confidence—something that had not come easily to herself and was therefore of importance in her teaching.

Lectures and articles. In addition to her activities as a clubwoman, Fay was a very active member of the professional organization for teachers, the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA), where she gave lectures, and was also one of the few women on a committee for the American College of Musicians, which tried to set standards for music teachers and establish a method of

[40] P. Michel, "Franz Liszt als Lehrer und Erzieher," *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 5, no. 1–4 (1961): 224: "Seid individuell, ahmt nicht nach und spielt Euch selbst. Immer besser ist noch eine schlechte originelle Auffassung als eine gute imitierende Interpretation."

[41] McCarthy, *The American Years*, 51.

[42] Ibid., 83.

certifying them.[43] In addition, she wrote very interesting articles on music, teaching, and the issue of women in music.[44]

Even earlier, when she was in Germany, she was very aware of the issue of women's participation in music and made an interesting observation when she noticed how Deppe worked together with his two assistants:

> Deppe makes Fräulein Timm and Fräulein Steiniger his partners and associates in his ideas, and the consequence is they add all their ingenuity to impart them to others. . . . Curious that the *practicalness* of this association with women doesn't strike the masculine mind oftener![45]

In her article "The Woman Teacher in a Large City," she gave several reasons for the disadvantages faced by women teachers, as opposed to their male colleagues: Parents and children seem to prefer taking lessons from the opposite sex, and since boys are less interested in taking lessons (or are less encouraged to), the female teacher is at a disadvantage. Secondly, parents feel more obligated to pay a male instructor in advance and are more lax and inconsistent with a female teacher. Fay's often-quoted article, "Women and Music," examines the question of musical and creative power in women and the hindrance of their lack of education:

> Women have been too much taken up with helping and encouraging men to place a proper value on their own talent, which they are too prone to underestimate and to think not worth making the most of. Their whole training, from time immemorial, has tended to make them take an intense interest in the work of men and to stimulate them to their best efforts.

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[43] Ammer, *Unsung*, 229.

[44] Such as "The Amateur Musical Clubs," "Expression in Piano Playing," "How to Practice," "Women and Music," and others, cited in McCarthy, *Amy Fay*.

[45] Fay, *Music-Study*, 331.

> Ruskin was quite right when he so patronizingly said that "Woman's chief function is praise." She has praised and praised, and kept herself in abeyance. But now, all this is changed. Women are beginning to realize that they, too, have brains, and even musical ones.[46]

In general, Fay seemed to enjoy, and perhaps even prefer, working with her female colleagues. When the "Manuscript-Society" listed her as one of its directors (she speculated it might be because the Women's Philharmonic was so successful—thanks to her, and that they were hoping for a boost), she commented: "I have no mind to work for men, however, which is always a thankless task!"[47] She also complained that men tend to overpower women in the artistic field. "The men are so busy showing *themselves off*, you may depend they will not let the women in! It is ever so. Fortunately they are obliged to have women singers!"[48]

McCarthy evaluates Fay's influence on students, society, and women in particular as follows:

> Amy Fay was an important presence in the musical life of the nation. Her decision to go to Germany for music study placed her at the head of a long line of women musicians who, in going abroad for study, dramatically announced to the world that they had the courage to pursue music as a profession rather than as a genteel, female accomplishment that kept idle hands busy. Her advocacy on behalf of musical women through her club work, her writings, and her invention of a concert format uniquely shaped to maximize her gifts for both words and music entitle her to her rightful designation as one of America's notable women.[49]

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[46] Amy Fay, "Women and Music" from *Music* 18, no. 10 (October 1900): 505–7, cited in McCarthy, *Amy Fay*, 163.

[47] McCarthy, *The American Years*, 81.

[48] Ibid., 103.

[49] Margaret William McCarthy, "Amy Fay," in *American National Biography*, 773.

Conclusion. Fay certainly had a vital effect on the music world in Chicago and New York. She passed on her knowledge to her students, but also lectured, wrote articles, performed recitals, and, through her dedicated club work, unquestionably encouraged many other women to be musically active. Since Amy Fay never married, she was able to devote her undivided energy most beneficially to the field of music.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

Amy Fay showed a great deal of courage by daring to leave the security of her country, her family, her friends, and the familiarity of her culture. She had to face several challenges in her studies: her own illusions about the expected rapidity of her progress; her strong need for a thorough technical instruction, which remained unsatisfied for four years; her struggle with nervousness; a general lack of performance opportunity; and the different personalities and methods of her various teachers. She possessed the gift of making the best of any situation, which certainly carried her through the difficult times during her stay in Germany. Her unfulfilled desire for a thorough technical instruction (until she studied with Deppe), although a major source of her dissatisfaction, probably helped her become a much more dedicated and systematic teacher.

Thus, Fay's stay in Germany was very beneficial to her in many ways: she gained independence and personal maturity; broadened her horizons musically and personally; improved pianistically; and, through her letters, became famous as a sought-after teacher of the Deppe method. Her book inspired other pianists to study in Europe—over two thousand students prior to World War I, according to Frances Dillon.[1] In the United States, she developed into a devoted teacher with many successful students; a dedicated performer with numerous performances; a respected author of articles and lectures; and an inspired and

[1] Fay, *Music-Study*, with a foreword by Frances Dillon, xiv.

successful clubwoman, who shaped the concert life of Chicago and New York with her active involvement in the musical world.[2]

Her letters shed light on the customs of 19th-century Europe. Written by a student with access to the musical and society world, her book gives insight into German cities, culture, people, and habits in the second half of the 19th century. Of particular interest to musicians are her observations on German musical culture: performances, musicians, students, conservatories, and teachers. There is no book that I have found about Franz Liszt or Ludwig Deppe, which does not mention and cite Amy Fay. Her inspired accounts paint a colorful and appealing picture of Germany and its music culture.

Her book is certainly a valuable contribution for every student who goes abroad, and it could also be very beneficial reading for today's teachers. To learn in great detail about one student's struggle with different teaching styles might raise a teacher's awareness of the importance and possible impact of teaching principles, communication methods, and human relationships in general. Fay's perseverance and determination are two impressive qualities of her character. Especially in this respect, her travel to Germany as well as her whole life can provide a model, particularly for women.

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[2] Margaret William McCarthy, "Amy Fay," in *American National Biography*, 773.

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