

### IMPROVEMENT OF STUDENTS' TECHNICAL SKILLS IN THE PROCESS OF INSTRUMENTAL TRAINING

Piano technique is the sum of skills, abilities, and methods of playing the piano, by means of which the pianist achieves the desired artistic and sonic result. Technique cannot exist outside of the musical task. Some people understand technique to be only about speed, strength, and endurance in piano playing. Such a view is extremely limited. Technique is an immeasurably broader concept. It encompasses everything that a pianist seeking a meaningful performance should possess. Piano literature places a wide variety of demands on the pianist: he must be able to play both very loudly and very quietly, softly and sharply, to achieve a light, 'fluttering' sound and a deep, rumbling sound. He must be able to play all gradations of piano sound in a wide variety of textures.

The ability to move the fingers quickly, which nature endows sometimes to few musical men, will never give their listeners aesthetic satisfaction. This is because the demonstrated speed, or strength, or endurance are used inappropriately, do not reveal the content of the music, its beauty, and replace it with itself. Contentless playing is usually also technically imperfect. Satisfying primitive requirements, it abounds in technical errors of a more subtle nature. If technique is the sum of the means of conveying musical content, then all technical work must be preceded by work on understanding that content.

The pianist must visualise with his inner ear what he will strive to achieve, as if to 'see' the work as a whole and in detail, to feel and understand its stylistic features, character, tempo and so on. From the very beginning, the contours of the performing idea indicate the main direction of technical work. No matter how far away from music the pianist is led by the necessity to teach slowly and firmly, he must always have a musical ideal before him. It is necessary to strive for it, regardless of the thorns that meet him on the way. And then the work on its technical realisation will be successful. If there is no musical idea, the pianist's technical work is like an artist's drawing made blindly. Seeing what is to be achieved is the basis of the technical work of the writer, the artist, the composer, the actor, and the pianist. Purpose of the article: to explore the main aspects of piano technique formation.

**The main part.** The concept of 'pianist's technique' is practised very broadly, including not only motor skills but also the ability to play the instrument freely and naturally. Accurate natural phrasing helps to overcome difficulties; bad phrasing hinders the development of fluency because it entails incorrect and unnecessary movements. The development of technique is broad and multifaceted. Versatile training in a speciality involves constant work on technique. It should not be assumed, however, that everyday technical work has no influence on the technical concept. It, for its part, helps to deepen the understanding of the work under study, concretises, improves and clarifies the initial idea of it. And so, the correlation of musical and technical tasks in the pianist's work and their sequence can be formulated in this way: from understanding music to technical work - to a higher understanding of music. When the piece being studied 'comes out', these two sides of the pianist's work, so clearly distinguishable at the beginning, merge into a single performing process. The acquisition of movement technique is always connected with the development of both physical (muscular) and mental (volitional) properties.

Work on pianistic technique also requires such necessary components of musical development as vividness of imagery, depth of experience, auditory development, and a sense of pulse (rhythm). Underdevelopment of these aspects is often the cause of imperfect technique, its limitations, stiffness, unevenness, as well as 'not musicality', which includes the shortcomings of sound production. In pedagogical practice one can find many examples when insufficient feeling of the character of music, insufficient experience is the reason not only for the pallor of the sound image, but also for technical limitations. There are even more examples when the unevenness of technical passages is caused by not listening to the sounds, especially in the extreme points of the constructions, in underlaying and transfers of fingers and registers. Technical heaviness, weak mobility, static and metricality often come from the lack of a sense of horizontal movement of the music, its development. The performance in this case is fragmented into small elements. Motor sluggishness, inaccuracy of hitting, uncollected and vague, as a rule, is explained by slow reaction, insufficient concentration of attention, retarded

reflexes [1]. There is nothing to say in this case about the sound side, as sounds taken at random, at the last moment, unprepared (even if they are correct) get a colouring that has nothing to do with the idea. However, there are other cases of failure, when all the factors of musical and technical development are present, but the development of the motor system goes its own, special way, detached from the tasks of expressing music. In this case, the student acquires skills and techniques that develop his technique in a certain direction; however, these techniques do not create the conditions for achieving musical and technical completeness and are often even the main obstacles on the way to a full-fledged performance. It is known that among the main drawbacks in the technical development of a pianist is the tightness and stiffness of the apparatus. One of the reasons for this stiffness is the artificiality of playing techniques that are not linked to musical tasks. For example, in scales, arpeggios, etudes, a narrow goal is set (to achieve finger clarity and fluency), and the issues of sound, phrasing, breathing, flexibility and plasticity are ignored. In these cases, although students play the instructional material quite well, they are awkward, angular, and sloppy when performing art works.

'Isolated fingers', of course, must be developed independence of the fingers; but when the basis of technical development "especially in the initial period" is put alternately raising and lowering the isolated fingers at a frozen position of the hands, and more attention is paid to gymnastics than to the sound result – this later becomes a major obstacle to both the expression of music and the free mastery of technique. The cantilena is performed with separate sweeps of the fingers and hand, resulting in a disjointed musical phrase and static. 'Free Brush'. Often, in an attempt to relieve the student of stiffness, he begins to 'free the hand'. In doing so, they achieve great mobility of the hand, as a rule, isolated from the fingers, and, most importantly, out of connection with the musical and sound task. Thus, the hand moves on its own, for its own freedom; the activity of the fingers is reduced, the technique becomes superficial and the sound dull. It must be remembered that true pianistic freedom (freedom of mastery of the instrument) comes as a result of the harmonious coherence of all parts of the apparatus; it cannot be achieved through the passive rest of some parts and the slackness of others [1].

When developing technique, the main goal is 'speed', without giving due importance to clarity and depth of sound. In this case, fingers 'flutter' across the surface of the keyboard, and sometimes even whiz through the air without touching the keys. At this pace, the ear does not have time to control the sounds. Passages do not sound. Lack of attention to the sound, tenacity and support of the fingertips is very detrimental to both musical expression and technical clarity. 'Shaking of the arm (hand)' at each finger stroke in legato, which has received the contemptuous name of 'shaking.' It is most often found in small and weak pupils; however, having originated at school, it often remains unexploited in older pupils who have grown up and become physically stronger. In order to successfully combat this bad habit, it is necessary, as always, to understand the cause of its occurrence. Babies begin to shake their hands, in particular, because they do not feel the strength and independent capabilities in their still small and unstrengthened fingers. Meanwhile, this is a psychological misconception. Even the weakest hands are able to extract a deep sound from the piano. It is difficult to correct this 'skill' because its harmfulness becomes tangible and obvious to the student only when he or she grows up to difficult pieces played at a fast pace. In fact, try to play a passage quickly, shaking your hand along with the beat of each finger [1].

Consequently, when forming the pianistic apparatus, the task is to feel the possibility of independent, albeit weak at first, finger striking. This can be done using exercises that the author has used many times in his work with pupils: when performing a passage at a slow tempo with one hand, the other hand holds the playing hand in the wrist, preventing it from making any movements. Before extracting the next sound, the finger is slightly raised and quietly, very quietly, but independently strikes the key. The sound is quiet. It's not scary. In fact, a quiet strike is an indispensable condition when starting such work. After practising in this way for some time (a week or two), you will begin to feel the independence of your fingers. When you get quiet, you should first remove the support of the other hand, and then gradually increase the strength of the finger stroke. In the future, you should also increase the tempo. With attentive, calm work can get rid of this harmful 'disease' within a few. After 'healing' should move on to the game, which involves the weight of the hand [2].

'Inability to independently strike downwards and heavy weight of the 1st finger'. The 1st finger should be a subject of special concern during the student's lessons. By its nature it is designed to be a 'counterbalance' to the others. Such a structure of the 1st finger for a man is a

good fortune, which gave him the opportunity to use tools of labour. However, in the pianist's profession this happiness comes only when the disadvantages of the 1st finger specific to piano playing are overcome. And there are two of them: its inability to strike downwards independently and its heavy weight. Both of these disadvantages are closely related to each other: the heaviness of the 1st finger is due to its lack of independence, due to the fact that its action is replaced by the rotational action of the forearm. It is clear that in a fast tempo (and not only in a fast tempo) the sound extracted in this way will differ sharply from the neighbouring sounds by its 'heaviness'. The hands of pupils with a pianistically underdeveloped 1st finger 'get stuck' on it; it is impossible to achieve speed and dexterity. Unfortunately, the underdevelopment of the 1st finger is not uncommon even among advanced pupils. In order for the finger to play, it is necessary to play with the finger, not replacing its work with the actions of other muscles. This idea seems to be a truism, but nevertheless it has a profound meaning in all the technical work of the pianist, and its realisation requires attention and persistence. It is possible to work on the development of the 1st finger on any material where it is frequently encountered [2].

Very often one is faced with the inability to 'emphasise' the 5th finger in chords. At best, the upper sound differs from the others only slightly. Meanwhile, piano literature is full of examples where the upper sound should 'dominate' the rest of the sound in both piano and forte. The student is often not heard. The desire and habit for a bright upper sound in chords must be nurtured from the beginning. When the teacher draws the students' attention to this deficiency, they usually refer to the physical weakness of their 5th fingers. Sometimes this is true. But the weakness of the 5th fingers itself stems from musical and aural undemandingness during years of previous work. Proof of this is the fact that the same students do not know how to isolate the upper sound in a chord played with their left hand, i.e. 1st finger, either. Such demandingness really leads, on the one hand, to the physical underdevelopment of the 5th finger, and on the other hand, to the inability to help it by an expedient inclination of the hand. It is on the clarity of musical conceptions that the greater or lesser activity of the different fingers in a chord depends. There are cases when it is necessary to make a middle voice sound the strongest. In these cases, the corresponding finger takes on the role of the 'protagonist'. There are also cases of complete equality.

The main thing is to always pay attention to the sound of the 5th finger in the pieces being studied. As a result of such attention, the 5th finger will become stronger. This is often accompanied by swelling and soreness of the finger muscle. You should not be frightened by this. Soon the painful sensations will pass, and the strength of the finger will remain. In all the cases described above, the student, as he grows and matures musically, feels more and more the discrepancy between his conception and performance. Over time, he or she becomes accustomed to this disconnect and accepts the fact that the musical image is experienced only 'inwardly' without receiving a vivid sonic expression. The performance remains pale and technically imperfect. This unfortunate result can be caused by the disconnection of technical development from musical and sonic tasks.

**Conclusion.** Thus, in order to achieve true musical expression and technical clarity, pianists need to develop not only physical skills but also a deep understanding of music, emotional perception and aural development. Technique should be a means to serve the musical content, not an end in itself. It is important to pay attention to the development of all fingers, especially the first and fifth fingers, and to understand the proportions and nuances of sound production. By laying a solid foundation of technical skills, students will be able to more successfully convey musical images and create emotionally rich performances. Pedagogical practice should be directed towards the harmonious development of all components of piano performance, which ultimately contributes to the creation of a full and expressive sound.

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