

Oregon Music Teachers Association Conference

Four Well-known Pieces, and How I Teach Them

Dr. Peter Mack

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Well-known Works, and How I Teach Them

This is a workshop on Bach's first Two-Part-Invention, Beethoven's "Für Elise", Mozart's Sonata in C, KV 545, Chopin's Nocturne, Op. 9 No. 2, and how we can use these standards to teach basic fundamental concepts. **Bring your scores!**

When beginning to teach a student who can already play: I ask them to learn some simple diagnostic pieces. The way they prepare these shows me both strengths to celebrate, and areas to improve.

Bach: Two-Part Invention No.1 in C

- A. Conversation: speaking and waiting?
- B. Significant structural events: cadences. Predict the future! To keep the piece interesting be aware of what is coming. Is it wallpaper?
- C. Ornaments; attract or distract? (useful preface to Palmer edition actual Bach table; pub. Alfred)
- D. Baroque phrasing: join scales/ detach skips/ detach changes of direction
- E. Melody goes over the bar: "My poodle frolicked in the **park!**"

Beethoven: "Für Elise"

- A. Commit to learning the whole thing!
- B. Is it a Waltz? three ONE two? Helps with "How many?" in 13-15!
Is there 1 2 **3** 4 in bars 9 -12?
- C. Were the sections at the same speed? Contrasted in mood?
- D. Does the 'home' harmony differ from the 'away' harmony?
- E. Do they hear dissonance vs. Consonance in 60/61? 24? 25?
- F. In the 32nd notes (bar 30/32), is there rotation?
- G. How do they go to the fifth finger in the first phrase? Wrist over/behind it, or arm down?
- H. Thumb in chromatic scale in 80-82 without arm down?
- I. Arpeggios in 77-79; French or Russian transfer?

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Mozart: Sonata in C Major, KV 545

The most difficult music to play well. Exposed, beautiful, seemingly effortless...

1st Mvt.

- A: Is there awareness of consonance vs. dissonance?
- B: Is there imbalance? Do long melody notes fade?
- C: Does each phrase have a focus? Technique; does wrist help? End of phrase: lifted thumb or thump? (edge of thumb, not dropped arm)
- D. Scales: one TWO **THREEEEEEE!** four? Or harmonic awareness (AWAY > home) Scale technique -- angle of hand/elbow?
- E. Trills like the angry wasp?
- F. LH releases; crispy release or romantic "Magic Bubble"?
- G. Bony tips of fingers for classical striking sound, or romantic pads?

2nd Mvt.

- A: Sound Quality?
- B: Is there awareness of the need for forward motion?
YouTube videos for Mozartean line: Popp/Pamina; Roschmann/
Marriage of Figaro; Janowitz/Pamina Breathing between phrases?
- C: Does each phrase have a focus? Do long melody notes fade?
- D. Phrasing as in urtexts?
- E. Do they linger on each and every lovely note? Can they hear them?
- F. Do they approach high notes like a singer? Operatically?
- G. L.H. Alberti bass; do they finger pedal? (hold the 5th finger note)

Chopin: Nocturne in E flat major, Op. 9 No. 2

- A. Bony tips of fingers for classical striking sound, or romantic pads?
- B. Is there imbalance? Do long melody notes fade?
- C. Does each phrase have a focus? Body motion help? Rubato help?
- D. Are phrase endings graceful? Is the shaping physically aided w/wrist?
- E. Could they take all the time in the world in between phrases/ sections?
- F. Three tries? Or is it "Happy Birthday" phrasing "1 2 **3** 4"?
- G. How is Chopin like Dick Cheney? (Dissonance > consonance. Last section)
- H. Were the sections at the same speed? Contrasted in mood? Restful ends?
- I. Jan Ekier edition (National edition Series A, Vol. 5, pub. PWM) variants!

If anything is unclear, please do not hesitate to email me: mackpeter@earthlink.net

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