

# V<sup>TH</sup> STUDY

(Op. 25)

Fr. CHOPIN

In spite of the apparent technical uniformity of this study, the diversity of its rhythmic and expressive qualities and of the sonorities employed, the alternation of wrist and finger staccato and of portamento and legato, or their simultaneous use, will give the student a chance of specially valuable pianistic work.

Analyse separately the essential difficulties of touch and, by amplifying them make them into exercises which, though they may seem to have but a distant relation to work will, nevertheless, help its ultimate execution more efficiently than tiresome repetitions of Chopin's text.

Thus will be based upon the light, brief, incisive, almost pizzicato sonority that suits the chords of the first eight bars of the right hand, the analysis and improvement of the action of the wrist and fingers characteristic of such manner of execution, and this by means of the following exercises :

A. 

play on chromatically.

Practise *f* and *p*. Strike from raised position and briskly, instantaneously leaving the depressed key in order to lead the hand back to its starting position. Avoid any motion of the finger ; on the contrary, keep it somewhat stiffly bent and in contrast to the extreme looseness of the wrist.

After that, practise according to the above figure, but always transposing in all keys, the following groups of chord notes :

B. 

Fingerings to be employed successively :

Seconds and thirds	2	3	4	5	3	4	5	4	5	5
	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	3	3	4
Fourths	2	3	4	5		4	5		5	
	1	1	1	1		2	2		3	
Fifths, sixths and sevenths		3	4	5			5			
		1	1	1			2			
Octaves			4	5						
			1	1						

Further, practise in the following way, the combinations of three notes :

C. 

play on chromatically in all keys.

And of four notes :

D. 

These forms of exercises may, of course, be varied in many ways by changing the position of chords. But the principles of practice will remain unchanged ; the position of the fingers suited to each chord should be prepared strictly before attacking the keys, the hand and fingers should keep steadily in position in the act of playing as well as between the chords ; the wrist and forearm, on the contrary, should be perfectly loose equally in the act of striking as during the act of shifting.

Care should be taken to secure equality of the fingers and also absolutely simultaneous depression and release of the keys both in *piano* as well as in *forte*.

To finish the practice of the staccato we should advise playing the right hand part of this study several times throughout, using the following variants :

Accent successively the variant N<sup>o</sup> 2 as follows :

In order to effect the change between the strict staccato and the combination of held and detached notes in the same hand which will be the subject of a further analysis of this study, the exercises C and D should be played with the following rhythmical modifications :

Be careful precisely to articulate the semiquavers by means of the fingers only ; the quavers should be detached as exactly as in the preceding exercise.

After this, practise firmness of attack of the 5th finger and the briskness of finger staccato :

And, further, varying the positions of the chords in order to ensure the steadiness of the 5th finger :

Again keeping the higher note down by substitution of the fingers.

And, lastly, in order to connect and equalize the alternate attacks of the 4th and 5th fingers :

Although only these two fingers (4th and 5th) have to play an expressive and melodic part, in this study the above practice may be profitably applied to the other fingers of the right hand :

The entire right hand part having been practised staccato as directed, the study of combining the legato and staccato in the same hand should be completed by means of the three following variants :

holding of the upper note, holding of the lower note, holding of the intermediate note.



In all the work comprising the combination of held notes and finger staccato, endeavour, in spite of the technical difference, to blend as much as possible the tones of detached notes with the chords of the first eight bars. This effect will be obtained by striking the keys briskly and resolutely even in the *piano* passages and by swiftly lifting the fingers for the immediate preparation of the position of the next chord, the weight of the hand and wrist resting entirely on the finger that plays the held note.

A few bars of this study are to be played « louré » staccato, for the practice of which it seems unnecessary to prescribe any special figure.

It will be sufficient to apply to their execution the following principles : instead of keeping the hand and fingers steadily in position during the attack and after it, as for the staccato, it is, contrariwise, necessary to relax them a little at the very moment the keys are being depressed and to replace the quick rebounding of the fingers and wrist by giving the forearm a slight weightiness well tempered according to the required shade. Practise in this same way the whole of the right hand part (1).

The differences in touch relative to the execution by the right hand having thus been analysed, practise the left hand, less complicated, if not easier, in point of mechanism.

The following exercises should first be practised in all keys, attacking each quaver from as high as possible :



In the course of the performance, the bass note will always be a little more emphasized than the chord that follows it, so that the rhythmic arrangement of the piece be kept up and not altered by too great accentuation of the weak beats which accompany the melodic line of the right hand, and, likewise, in order to procure as securely as possible the perfect clearness of the harmonies.

It will be expedient, therefore, to strengthen the action of the finger which plays that note by a double emphasis and to increase the flexibility, independence and surety of motion of the wrist by playing all the chords one octave higher :



Practise, likewise, striking from a very high position, alternately *f* and *p* :



After which, practise the left hand part as it is written, by more and more comprehensive fragments, and by degrees quicken the tempo up to *presto*, so as gradually to get accustomed to the strain that might be caused by the continuous motions of the wrist.

ALFRED CORTOT

(1) Don't mistake this manner of playing « quasi portando » for the portamento mentioned in Study. Op.10, N° 2.

# STUDY IV

(Op. 25)

Fr. CHOPIN

PIANO

*Agitato*

*p*

*p staccato*

*legato*

*pp*

*f*

Red. \* Red. \* Red. \*

First system of a piano score. The right hand features a melodic line with triplets and slurs. The left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment with triplets and slurs. The key signature has one flat. The system concludes with the instruction *Red. \* Red. \* Red. \**.

Second system of the piano score. It includes the word *scen* above the right hand. The melodic line continues with slurs and triplets. The left hand accompaniment remains consistent. The system ends with the instruction *do*.

Third system of the piano score. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and triplets. The left hand accompaniment features slurs and triplets. The system includes the instruction *pp Poco riten.* and ends with *Red. Red. Red. Red.*

Fourth system of the piano score. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and triplets. The left hand accompaniment features slurs and triplets. The system includes the instruction *f* and ends with *p* and *Red. \* Red. \* Red. \* Red. \**.

Fifth system of the piano score. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and triplets. The left hand accompaniment features slurs and triplets. The system includes the instruction *p* and ends with *Red. Red. \**.

Sixth system of the piano score. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and triplets. The left hand accompaniment features slurs and triplets. The system includes the instruction *Red. \**.

