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Summy Birchard Company.
The Piano Teacher.
Evanston, Ill.
60204.

In the "Piano Teacher" of last January you printed an article which I had sent you in August of last year.

Here is a new one. If it should interest you, I would appreciate if you would make some changes and also maybe my clumsy "German-English" if necessary.

Looking forward to hear from you.

Cordially

[Signature]
E.T.A. Hoffmann, who is known today mainly as the central figure of Offenbach's opera, "The tales of Hoffmann," even in his native Germany, was one of the most gifted and versatile early romantic artists and a very remarkable man. He studied law and music and was a high official in the Prussian administration of Warsaw, when the sweeping victories of the Napoleonic armies in 1806 deprived Prussia of this part of her Polish territories and Hoffmann of his comfortable position, which had left him time to pursue his different interests in other fields. At the age of 30 he had already some Church music, one symphony, several piano sonatas, four "singspiele" and three Operas to his credit. -- Hoffmann was one of the first to recognise the superior genius of Beethoven, and while in Warsaw he conducted one of the early Beethoven Symphonies with an amateur-orchestra, shortly after it was written, but it took several more decades for other musicians and the public to recognise, what Hoffmann had seen right away. Beethoven thanked him for his efforts in a letter of March 23, 1820.

During the long period of wars, which followed the French victories, Hoffmann turned to music as his main source of income. He became a music-critic, an opera conductor and opera composer (Undine), besides writing his famous, phantastic novels and short-stories. After the end of the war he returned to his law career and became a judge in the supreme Prussian court of law.

Here are, in my own free translation, excerpts from his article "Beethoven's Instrumental Music." (Allgemeine Musikzeitung, Leipzig, 1810.)

"Mozart and Haydn, the creators of present-day instrumental music show us for the first time this art in its full glory. Beethoven recognised this and entered into its innermost spirit with deep love."
"The compositions for orchestra of these three masters breathe the same romantic atmosphere, revealing their concern for the true values of music. Yet the character of their compositions is very different.

In Haydn, the expression of a childlike, cheerful temperament is predominant. His symphonies lead us into wide, green meadows with carefree, colorful crowds of happy people. Boys and girls are country-dancing, children hiding behind trees and rosebushes, throwing flowers at each other. A life full of love and bliss, innocent in eternal youth.

Mozart takes us into the land of mystery. We are awed, but never hurt by the superhuman glances into eternity. Love and sorrow resound in sweet harmonies, darkness is lit with purple light, and friendly spirits wave us to join them in their flight into the eternal dance of the spheres. (Symphony in e - minor.)

Beethoven's instrumental music also opens the realm of the superhuman and immeasurable. In the darkness of night flashes of lightning reveal huge, menacing shadows, moving up and down as if closing in on us. But we survive, and in exhilarating expectation we follow the short-lived joyful episodes, which soon give way to the full chords of all human passions, leaving us elated as by a supernatural experience."

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"The seriousness of Beethoven's piano compositions excludes all acrobatic passages, up and down with both hands, all the queer jumps and caprices, with notes high in the air, posted on structures of 5 to 6 leger-lines, in which our present-day piano music excels.- As to fingertechnic alone, the piano works of the master are not extremely difficult and every well-trained pianist should be familiar with the few runs, triplets and so on. And yet the performance is very difficult. Many a so-called virtuoso rejects these piano compositions with the complaint: "Very hard," and he adds-"and very unrewarding!"

As to the difficulties, they ask for nothing less than true understanding in the masters language and insight into his personality. The confidence, which devotion gives should enable the performing musician to enter the magic circle, which has been opened with a mighty wand. The real artist lives in the work he is interpreting in the spirit of the composer. He does not try to put his own person into the foreground, and all his effort is directed to bring to life the beautiful pictures and appearances, which the master has looked up in his score, so that the listener is drawn into the glowing light and his imagination stirred to join the flight into distant and nobler realms."

Summy-Birchard Company.
Evanston/Illinois.

c/o Mrs. Roberta Savler.

Dear Mrs. Savler:

I received your letter and the extra-copy of the "Piano Teacher". I was not only pleased with the appearance of my little article, I was thrilled. What a lovely setting you have given to it!

The picture of the Radziwill party fits exactly and gives you such a lively idea of the Paris musical gatherings of the time, which did so much to stimulate Chopin and his contemporaries.

Thank you very much!

Cordially
February 5, 1965

Miss Rosetta Hirsch
7008 Horsepen Road
Richmond 26, Virginia

Dear Miss Hirsch:

We hope you will be pleased with the appearance of your article.

Cordially,

THE PIANO TEACHER

[Signature]

Roberta Savler
Editor

RS:w1
enclosure
August 21, 1964

Miss Rosetta Hirsch
7008 Horsepen Road
Richmond 26, Virginia

Dear Miss Hirsch:

Thank you for your contribution of the quotation from Heine about Chopin. We'll be happy to print it and are enclosing a small check in appreciation.

Since you suggested that we make some changes, I've done some editing, but not having your original source and not knowing German, I may have distorted the meaning in some places. Please look over the enclosed copy and let me know whether it is correctly expressed.

Cordially,

THE PIANO TEACHER

Roberta Savler
Editor
"...On this occasion it would be unfair not to mention a pianist, who, next to Liszt, has been honored most. He is Chopin, who not only is outstanding as a virtuoso of perfect technical qualities, but also has achieved the highest standards as a composer. He is an outstanding person. He is the idol of that elite which is looking for supreme spiritual enchantment through music. His fame is of an aristocratic nature, raised by the praise of high society of refinement, as is his personality.

Chopin was born in Poland of French parents, and he received part of his education in Germany. The influence of three nationalities combined to produce an extraordinary personality, since he absorbed the best in which those nations excel. From Poland he got his aristocratic mind and the grief over its history. France gave him his delightful charm and grace; Germany gave him romantic profundity. Nature gave him a gentle, slender, somewhat feeble body, the noblest heart, and genius. Truly, one has to speak here of genius in the full meaning of this word. He can bring to life the poetry which lives in his soul. He is a poet of music, and nothing can be compared to the
delight that one feels when he improvises at the piano. Then he is neither Pole, Frenchman, or German, but shows that he came from a far higher heritage. Then we feel that he came from the homeland of Mozart, Raphael, and Goethe, his real home, the dreamland of poetry.

When he sits at the piano improvising, I feel as though a friend from my beloved homeland came to see me and is telling me of the strange events which took place there while I was away. Sometimes I feel like interrupting to ask some questions: And how is the beautiful mermaid who used to wind her silvery veil so coquettishly around her green locks? Is the old Triton with his white beard still after her with his persistent foolish wooing? Are the roses still so fiery and proud? Do the trees still sing so sweetly in the moonlight? ".....
Rosetta Hirsch.
7008 Horsepen Rd.
Richmond 26/Va.

August 10, 1964.

The Piano Teacher.
Summy Birch Company.
1834 Ridge Ave.
Evanston, Ill. 60204.

I am sending you a translation of a critic by the famous German poet and writer Heinrich Heine, who was living in Paris, when Liszt and Chopin had their great successes there, and where he knew them both personally.

The translation is my own, and if you like to print it, I would appreciate if any shortcomings could be corrected.

Heinrich Heine from "Concerning the French Stage". 1837.

"... On this occasion it would be unfair not to mention a pianist, who besides Liszt has been honored most. It is Chopin, who not only is outstanding as a virtuoso of perfect technical qualities, but also achieved the highest standards as a composer. He is an outstanding person. He is the idol of an elite, which is looking for supreme spiritual enchantment through music. His fame is of an aristocratic nature, raised by the praise of high society, which is refined, as is his personality.

Chopin was born in Poland, his parents being French, and he received part of his education in Germany. The influence of three nationalities was combines to produce an extraordinary personality, since he absorbed the best in which those nations excel. From Poland he got his aristocratic mind and the grief over its history. From France he got his delightful charm and grace, Germany gave him romantic depth. Nature gave him a gentle, slender, somewhat feeble body, the noblest heart and genius. Truly, one has to speak here of genius in the full meaning of this word. He is not merely a virtuoso, he is a poet as well. He can bring to life the poetry, which lives in his soul. He is a poet of music and nothing can be compared to the delight, which one feels when he improvises at the piano. Then he is neither Pole, Frenchman or German. He then shows, that he came from a far higher heritage. We then feel, that he came from the homeland of Mozart, Raphael and Goethe, his real home, the dreamland of poetry.

When he sits at the piano improvising, I feel as if a friend from my beloved homeland came to see me and is telling me the strangest things, which happened there while I was away. Sometimes I feel like interrupting to ask some questions: And how is the beautiful mermaid, who used to wind her silvery veil so coquetish around her green looks? Is the old Triton with his white beard still after her with his stale, foolish wooing? Are the roses still so fiery and proud? Do the trees still sing so sweet in the moonlight? ".....

Yours truly
A matter for discussion among Piano Teachers.

If we want to teach the young piano students of today, we have to think first what we hope for them to get out of it for their grown-up life. There is a growing tendency to let children learn to play this instrument, which is very encouraging for us teachers, but if we look around to find out how many of the young adults, who had lessons, are still playing and enjoying it, we have to admit, that for most of them it was finished soon after they stopped taking lessons. Is it then a waste of money and energy to study the piano, or is there something wrong with our approach to the whole matter?

When in the 19th century piano playing by amateur-musicians was at its height, the situation was very different from what it is today. There were no gramophones, radios and T.V.'s and if you wanted some music for dancing, singing or enjoyment of the new popular tunes or classical music, it had to be played by somebody right there and then. Today for most people "Music" means recordings and this is the reason, why the question of playing has to be looked at from a different angle. Push-button-music can be enjoyed easily by everybody and the quality of performance by the professional players is mostly very high.

What then is the answer to the question, whether there is still a point in learning to play?

To be quite honest, I believe that there is little value in amateur-performing for an audience. There is some satisfaction to be gained by young students, when they play well at recitals. It also builds up self-confidence, but on the other hand it can be a depressing experience for a nervous child, doing not so well, and not always through lack of effort.

When I came to the United States from Europe, I found, that memorising is much more stressed here than in Germany and England, where I had studied.
Pieces are studied here much longer and in smaller sections, which may be mainly for the benefit of memorizing. When the student has memorized the sections and put them together, he can look down on his hands and has not to read or play by touch any more. For this reason only very few students learn to read music so well, that after they have stopped taking lessons they can enjoy playing something at sight. They mostly cannot teach themselves new pieces without the help of a teacher, nor enjoy browsing through some music, play duets with a friend, or accompany group-singing. I think that this can only be achieved by putting reading first, memorizing second and performing third.

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Rosetta Hirsch.