

**REVISED AND ENLARGED
EDITION OF A NEW
THOROUGH SYSTEM FOR THE
PIANO-FORTE, IN FOUR PARTS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649693030

Revised and Enlarged Edition of a New Thorough System for the Piano-Forte, in Four Parts by
Franz Petersilea

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

FRANZ PETERSILEA

**REVISED AND ENLARGED
EDITION OF A NEW
THOROUGH SYSTEM FOR THE
PIANO-FORTE, IN FOUR PARTS**

REVISED AND ENLARGED EDITION OF A NEW AND THOROUGH

SYSTEM

FOR THE

PIANO-FORTE,

IN FOUR PARTS.

Part 1st. Melodious Five Finger Studies.

Part 2d. Scales and Exercises on the Chords of the Tonica.

Part 3d. Pieces for acquiring a Correct Technical Action of Fingers, Wrists, and Arms, and the Art of Phrasing.

Part 4th. On Melodious Touch and Musical Expression.

BY

Franz Petersilea.

Price, \$8.

BOSTON.

WHITE, SMITH & PERRY, 298 AND 300 WASHINGTON STREET.

Phila.: Lee & Walker.

New York: J. L. Peters.

Cleveland: S. Brainard Sons.


Entered according to Act of Congress, A.D. 1879, by Franz Petersilea, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

Giles & Gould, Music Printers, 87 Washington Street, Boston.


EXPLANTORY REMARKS.

This new edition of Petersilea's Piano Forte System, has been enlarged and made more serviceable to the pupil by having scale and octave exercises written out in full, instead of trusting to the ability of the pupil by mere hints; many of the lessons are furnished with explanatory remarks now, which were omitted in the former edition, and additional pieces have been added, in order to make the ascent more gradual, the progress less abrupt.

The plan of this book is original, and the result of forty years' experience. It will be seen that it differs entirely from other Methods and Instruction Books, and owes its existence to the author's conviction that it *was wanted*. The most glaring inconsistencies are often seen in the first lessons, by which pupils acquire faults which years of care and labor can never entirely remove. Take, for instance, the following exercise

from Beyer:  etc. Here you cannot possibly expect that a beginner will properly connect with a correct finger-stroke the upper notes for the right hand, while the left hand has these single notes, which need a different action,—a stroke from the wrist. But is it reasonable to demand two opposite movements before having learned each one separately? Both hands will move alike, in such a manner that neither finger nor wrist-action is used, but the keys are pounded in a stiff manner by the arms.

An evil of extraordinary magnitude is the false use of the slur. Even composers of the greatest celebrity, Chopin, for instance, make use of it in such a manner, that one might suppose the thing was intended only for an ornament or flourish of penmanship. It is a positive fact, that writers of genius bestow little or no attention upon the accuracy, plainness and beauty of their manuscripts; their creations live in their minds, and if they have their own music written or printed before them, faults innumerable will escape their eyes, because they see only with their mind. Engravers are rarely musical critics, but mechanics who endeavor, to the best of their ability, to decipher the unreadable scrawl, who are satisfied if they can read the notes, and do not trouble themselves about the correct pointing of slurs, whether they are an inch too long or only half an inch too short. How much such negligence helps to confuse the understanding about correct phrasing and accentuation, every intelligent and conscientious teacher must be aware. Great composers are not necessarily good performers, but rarely, only exceptionally *good teachers*.

One of the chief objects of this book is to teach correct phrasing and accentuation, to make the scholar aware of the true meaning and use of every written sign in music, and ultimately produce good readers and correct performers. Lines like these , (unused in music,) are frequently employed here, to make the phrasing conspicuous. When the mind has been properly instructed in this branch of knowledge from the *outset*, it will not fail to analyze the compositions which are presented at a later time.

Many of my most valuable ideas have been neighborly borrowed and appropriated in the manufacture of new Instruction Books, but so strangely are they mixed up with the faults and inconsistencies of old standing, that but little benefit can be derived from them.

Music, in its highest development, is the language of feeling and passion; but in wishing to become a good performer the *education of the musical sentiment must be postponed until a correct technic is acquired*. There may be many other teachers who hold this opinion, but alas, what means have they to reach this end! The popular Instruction Books furnish no means for such a purpose; for they are a jumble of sense and nonsense, meritorious compositions and insignificant twaddle; studies and recreations so absurdly joined together that they must necessarily defeat each other. There are certainly enough exercises and studies in existence to answer any purpose; but the difficulty is this, that a great many teachers have not the knowledge or

proper opportunities to make a suitable selection. Besides, some finger exercises, like those of Aloys Schmidt and Henry Herz, will destroy by their dry and repulsive character all interest for practice in a young beginner; and nothing is left to the poor, well-meaning teacher but to hunt up the most pleasing little recreations and popular tunes to take off the bitter taste of that odious pill.

The plan of this book is to lead the scholar consistently from absolute technical to emotional or expressive playing, yet avoiding anything which is monotonous and tiresome.

As soon as the scholar has learned to distinguish the notes, one from another, and find them on the keyboard, he should establish order and connection among them. This can be accomplished in two ways, — *mechanically or melodically*; (either by a technical process, or by means of emotion and expression). The first manner is *simple*, and therefore naturally and absolutely the only one for the beginner. The second is *complex*, and therefore adapted to a more advanced period of instruction. Each must, however, remain separate until the former shall have attained a certain grade of advancement. The relationship between the two is similar to that existing between body and mind; the health and vigorous growth of the body must be in advance of the culture of the intellect, since the former furnishes the condition for the future state of the latter. *It is therefore injudicious to awaken a feeling for melodious expression too early in a beginner.* The correct performance of an *Andante con espressione* or *Adagio cantabile* requires a touch and delivery directly opposite to a healthy technical playing, which is based upon strict time and clearly marked, regular accentuation. In a correct and absolute technical performance, the notes stand in the same relationship to one another as do the soldiers of an army. Every step up or down, each sudden halt, in short, every movement must be most decisive. What officers are to an army, accents are to music; the subordinate "common soldiers" represent the light unaccented notes.

Executency, lofty and spiritual, melodic and expressive, is always rounded off by delicately graduated *crescendos* and *diminuendos*. Arched and wave-like — one note rising above another in intensity of sound, or sinking beneath it, mutually supporting each other — the heaving tones carry the melodic burthen, thus freely united among themselves, as if sympathetically drawn together like a society of refined and intellectually cultivated human beings. *But it is an axiom, that when the material is yet raw and unfashioned, nothing but military or despotic rule can prepare the way for a higher development.*

Such works, for instance, as SCHUMANN'S "*Kinder Scenen*," Op. 15, Piano-forte Sonatas, "*Fuer die Jugend*," Op. 118, also the "*Album fuer die Jugend*," Op. 68, are, with few exceptions, not only useless, but positively *injurious* to the young student during the first two years of his career; but in the highest degree admirable for teaching, at the proper time, expressive and melodic executency. It is a law of nature, that fruit, during the period of its growth, is hard and acerb; all which ripens early soon decays. Nature forbids that the bloom of life should be too soon developed: the growing body must not anticipate its maturity, or ruin and death will be the natural consequence.

It is an *axiom*, that people must learn to play *in time* before they can be allowed to play *out of time*; for only one who knows the laws of measure and rhythm in the narrower and wider sense, (the construction of phrases, sentences and periods,) can safely depart under certain circumstances from the *rule* without becoming unintelligible or falling into caricature.

To this indispensable knowledge, the *Metronome* is recommended as the *only sure guide*; it teaches in the shortest period, with unerring certainty, (especially with the bell,) *time, measure, accentuation and rhythm*; it prevents hurrying, unsteadiness, and insures precision and repose. It accurately fixes the various *tempi*, without knowledge of which scarcely one out of a hundred will bestow sufficient labor on an exercise, study or piece to make the practice available for further progress; and lastly, it advances the student imperceptibly, but with firm and certain steps, from the slowest to the quickest time.

Since the age and capacity of beginners varies so much, it is impossible to write an Instruction Book perfectly suitable in all cases, viz: *progressive* without being unnecessarily expanded, or too much condensed. A good Piano-forte School is constructed like a grammar, on strictly scientific principles; but who would think of teaching an infant according to the rules of grammar? All things which are beyond the comprehension of a child must be deferred to a riper age, as well as exercises in octaves and larger chords, until they can be conveniently reached.

It is premature and decidedly hurtful to allow the practice of the *scales* until the fingers have become perfectly free and loose by a judicious use of the five-finger studies, otherwise, the touch will become heavy and stiff, the performance clumsy and disjointed, an evil very difficult to correct.

As the lessons become more and more complicated, and rather difficult for some young scholars, it is advisable to intersperse from time to time compositions of a light and pleasing character; for instance, the Sonatinas of Kuhlau and Clementi; avoiding only flimsy tunes which do not benefit the hands and fingers, employ the left hand too little, and spoil the taste for *genuine* Piano-forte music. On the other hand, it is equally injurious to attempt pieces too difficult, for instead of developing the powers of conception, they become confused and crushed.

Do not hurry from one piece to another, always desirous of learning new pieces, without caring further for the old ones. One may learn to read notes fluently by doing so, but the rendering will always be coarse and unripe.

Very important is the earliest cultivation of the *memory*: without the power of retaining musical ideas, a correct conception of a whole piece (and, of course, a correct performance,) is impossible.

It is absolutely necessary that something should be understood of harmony, even if only the first elements, viz: the three-and-fourchords of the tonica in their different positions and inversions. Never play a sentence without knowing in what key you are playing, and make yourself particularly well acquainted with the dominant septimenchord.

There is no better mode of cultivating a *good ear* and musical sentiment, than by learning to sing, even if the voice does not amount to much; for poetry is a great auxiliary to music as well as to the other arts.

The five-finger exercises generally employed have the disadvantage of causing the player's attention to be fixed only on *one staff*; a bad habit, very difficult to correct; they are, moreover, dry and repulsive, and altogether injurious to the development of a musical ear and feeling. I have avoided these objections by writing all the five-finger Studies in two parts, requiring the scholar's attention continually and equally for both staves; thus the hands become independent and equally trained. These studies also possess the attraction of agreeable melody and varied forms of rhythm, by which a correct Accentuation and Phrasing is learned. The object of this book is to advance the scholar so far, that he can undertake to study for further progress the Sonatas of Mozart and Haydn, and the easier works of Beethoven, Hummel and others. There will be then a vast amount of good classical music and Studies accessible to him, which, if judiciously used, may lead to the desired end.

The most ignorant mechanic has sense enough to secure good tools and put them in the best order before going to work; the fingers are the tools of the piano player, and must be seen to as the first thing.

FIRST PART.

FIRST CHAPTER. FIRST EXERCISE.

FINGER ACTION.

Place one hand and part of the arm upon the *table*, extend it to the utmost. Now draw the fingers towards you, so that each one rests upon the tip. Do not bend the finger so much as to bring the nail in contact with the table, or the finger will slip when set in motion; nor place the extreme finger joint slanting outwards, or it will sink in and cause a motion in that part of the finger at every stroke.

The first finger joint must rest perpendicular, for the same reason that a builder will place pillars in no other position. You will see the necessity of keeping the finger nails short enough, so as not to come in contact with the table.

Move the thumb (which is marked here as the first finger,) nearer to the second finger, hold it straight, keep the other fingers well apart, the palm firmly down; *by no means raise the knuckles*, rather depress that of the second finger, but do not let the knuckle of the fifth finger sink down.

Lift the second finger as high as you can, keep it well bent and draw it towards you — *now let it fall*; be sure that you do not press it down; the finger must fall like a hammer on a loose hinge, exactly like the hammer of the *Piano action*.

After having learned to uplift this finger, moving it *only* in that joint by which it is attached to the hand, it is necessary that there should be *no more interruption* between the lifting and falling. Let the strokes be given regularly, but not in too quick succession. If the finger falls correctly, you can hear a peculiar tap; if you do not hear it, the movement is surely wrong. Thus each finger is tried. Should the fourth finger, the most troublesome one, prove obstinate, prop it up, and keep it so while practising with the other hand.

Stiff fingers are decidedly objectionable. A well disciplined finger can easily be held back far enough to form a right angle with the hand. If you begin with *stiff* fingers, and expect that they will become flexible by merely coming for a couple of years in daily contact with the Piano keys, your chance for a good touch is very small. The stiffest fingers, if not made so by *age* and hard labor, can be made pliable in a very few days by bending them back.

SECOND EXERCISE.

Move two fingers alternately many times, while all the others rest in the aforesaid position. Let there be at first a little pause between each stroke; while one finger is uplifted the others rest *lightly* upon their tips. The thumb (first finger,) is kept straight and level, striking with its side.

As soon as the fingers act free and easy, accelerate the movement till they rise and fall without interruption. This exercise may be indicated thus:

1. 2. :|: 2. 3. :|: 3. 4. :|: 4. 5. :|:

1. 3. :|: 2. 4. :|: 3. 5. :|: 1. 4. :|: 1. 5. :|:

THIRD EXERCISE.

The foregoing movement of two fingers, but resting only the arm and palm upon the table. The hand remains level and expanded, the four fingers bent, the thumb straight but uplifted. The finger which is going to strike must be drawn back as far as possible, but must fall like a dead weight, without the slightest sign of pressure.

Additional Exercises, viz:

1 2 3 4 | 5 4 3 2 :| 1 2 3 4 | 3 5 4 2 :| 1 3 5 3 | 2 4 5 4 :|
 1 2 1 3 | 1 4 1 5 :| 4 5 3 5 | 2 5 1 5 :| 3 5 1 5 | 2 4 1 4 :|

N. B. Name aloud the finger with which you are going to strike, but so that the word and stroke are simultaneous.

FOURTH EXERCISE.

The same movement, but with regard to a *heavy* and *light* stroke alternately. In order to produce the former, lift the finger as high as possible; for the latter a slight movement is sufficient. Do not press or strain.

In my mode of teaching I find the Bell Metronome invaluable; indeed so much so, that I use it even in the first lesson. If the scholar's ear is not good for time, it ought to be made so before a finger should be allowed to strike a key; it can be done in a very short time.

Set the bell at 2, the weight of the pendulum at 60, and let it go, accompanying it by counting *aloud*, One! Two! Speak the first number while the bell rings, loud and short, (if extravagantly, all the better,) the second word soft, like a whisper. You may also accompany the Metronome by slapping the hands together or stamping with the feet. After a while, when Metronome, voice, hands and feet move precisely together, alter the time and rhythm; let the bell ring at 3, 4 and 6, going at a faster and slower rate.

Thus you secure in a short while a correct idea of time and accentuation.

The following exercises may be done while the bell strikes at 3. Count aloud, One! Two! Three! Notice *one heavy* and *two light* strokes.

1 2 3 | 2 3 4 | 3 4 5 :| 5 4 3 | 4 3 2 | 3 2 1 :| 3 4 5 | 2 4 5 | 1 4 5 :|
 3 2 1 | 4 2 1 | 5 2 1 :| 3 1 5 | 2 1 5 | 4 1 5 :| 3 5 1 | 2 5 1 | 4 5 1 :|
 5 3 1 | 3 1 3 | 4 2 1 | 2 1 2 :| 1 3 5 | 3 5 3 | 2 4 5 | 4 5 2 :|
 5 3 5 | 1 3 5 | 2 4 2 | 5 4 2 :| 5 3 5 | 1 3 5 | 4 2 4 | 1 2 4 :|

SECOND CHAPTER.

Keys—Notes—Rhythm—Time and Accentuation.

§ 1. You notice on the key-board white and black keys; each produces a different sound, higher or lower. The extreme key to the left is called the lowest *Bass key*, the extreme one to the right, the highest *Treble key*. They are named after the first seven letters of the Alphabet, viz: A B C D E F G; which letters are repeated a number of times.

The white key between the two black keys is called D; you find C below and E above. Between the three black keys lie G and A. You may easily name the rest.

To each key there is a corresponding note. A few will answer our present purpose, and these only will be mentioned now.

§ 2. The system of lines, on which musical sounds are represented by signs called *notes*, is termed a *stave*; its five lines and four included spaces are counted upwards as follows—



Two Staves are required for the piano; the upper for the right, the lower for the left hand. A *Brace* joins them together. The figures and are called *Clefs*, and cause a distinction between *Treble* and *Bass* notes.



§ 3. The various forms of the notes determine their *value*, duration or time. They are in arithmetical proportion, and have corresponding *Rests*.



§ 4. The word *Rhythm* indicates that relation according to which successive sounds become arranged in such a manner as to form musical sentences, phrases and periods. Its object is to render music more comprehensible to the ear. In popular tunes Rhythm is very prominent, the numbers and phrases short and even; they are therefore easily understood, and please the multitude. Rhythm may be expressed without melody; in that case it means a measured division of time. The drums in marching, castanets in dancing, mark the steps by mere Rhythm without melody. The fondness for Rhythm is natural to the mind, and is founded on order and symmetry; music cannot exist without it.