

The Great Pianists Study Guide

The Great Pianists by Harold C. Schonberg

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Plot Summary

This work of historical non-fiction was published in 1963, and updated in 1987. The historical period covered runs from 1709 when the piano was invented and first played in the 1770s by Clementi and Mozart over three centuries to the late 1980s. Author Harold C. Schonberg presents a thoroughly researched introductory panorama of piano-playing and its great pianists. Schonberg sifted through letters, notes, memoranda, tales, old recordings, and discussions with aging musicians who once heard a great pianist. He filtered a huge amount of memorabilia to separate the tales from the truth of these great pianists' lives. In the beginning there was no recording equipment to keep a pianist's music alive. The author recouped an idea of their sound from letters and notes pianists and their audience or peers wrote. Until 1889 when a primitive cylinder recording was made there was no way to hear what the early pianists sounded like.

Schonberg wrote this book to "give an idea of the mainstream of piano playing" from Mozart to the present. The author of this historical title has accomplished the virtually insurmountable task of blending his rigorous objective research through centuries of ambiguous written data with his colorful, friendly, popular tone and style that can be appreciated by a casual reader. Schonberg writes as if he knew, listened to and spoke casually to Mozart, Liszt, Horowitz and Gould about piano music and their quirks despite only two of them being alive at first writing in 1963. Schonberg brings each pianist, dead or alive, to life in the pages of this book. A Boston Sunday Herald critic notes Schonberg wrote as if "direct from a concert...with the experience still fresh in his mind." He makes the story of these old and mostly dead pianists come alive and a pleasure to read.

The dry, confusing and centuries-old objective research evidence supporting Mozart and others life and times are fresh and enjoyable. Schonberg's encyclopedic presentation of musical piano and pianist development provides information over three centuries from the 1700s to the 1900s. Thirty-eight chronological chapters describe what, where and when great pianists lived. Descriptive Chapter titles offer an "at a glance" idea of what happened then and there. For example, a chapter titled "In the Beginning" describes when it began and another titled "From Ireland to Bohemia" denotes where, but the chapter titled "String-Snapper, Hands on High" piques the curious mind. Thirty-eight chapters are not many compared to the one thousand named pianists that Schonberg admits does not include everybody. This study guide condenses thirty-eight chapters into twelve sections by topic and pianist for easier comprehension. Schonberg's delightful writing style and the interesting lives of these pianists mitigates the challenging nature of this book about great pianists for the casual reader.



Preface through Chapter V

Preface through Chapter V Summary and Analysis

Preface through Chapter V discusses the background, history and overview of keyboard instruments, the piano, early players, times, and their tools.

The Preface describes the background history and overview of keyboard instruments. This work of historical non-fiction was published in 1963, and updated in 1987. The historical period covered runs from 1709 when the piano was invented and first played in the 1770s by Clementi and Mozart over three centuries to the late 1980s. Author Harold C. Schonberg presents a thoroughly researched introductory panorama of piano-playing and its great pianists. Piano playing began with Clementi initially and then Mozart in mid-1770. They both played harpsichord, clavichord, and organ through 1800 when the piano became most popular along with the organ. There are few studies of early piano players. No recordings exist of Mozart, Clementi and their contemporaries. They were researched by physical and documentary evidence of biographies, criticisms, anecdotes, letters, written music and reliable hearsay. Early pianists wrote music that had clues to their personal characteristics. For example, pianist Henselt wrote music that took "remarkable stretch" and "peculiar hand formation" to reach his left-hand extensions. By the twentieth century, recording was available and a primitive cylinder recording of Brahms was found dated 1889. Several pianists lived in the late 1800s or nineteenth century and recorded in the twentieth, like de Pachmann and Bauer.

Chapter I In the Beginning notes an era after Bach's death in 1750 when the contrapuntal style with its several simultaneous melodies that he fostered evolved into the homophonic or single melody style. The new style was a singing, nuanced, fluffy, polite and melodic sonata rather than the heavy, tempestuous fugues played on church organs. This "style galant" was perfect for piano invented in 1709, by Italian harpsichord-maker Bartolommeo Cristofori to play in salons. German organist, clavierist and composer Johann Sebastian Bach played one by Gottfried Silbermann in 1736, but said the treble was too weak and action too stiff. Silbermann altered it to get "complete approval from him." Pianos were manufactured with different Viennese and English characteristics.

Chapter II It Should Flow Like Oil profiles Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, the child prodigy who at three played harmonies on harpsichord, wrote minuets at five, and performed on tour at six with his father. He played any keyboard or string instrument without training and achieved fame on piano in 1778, at twenty-one. He was a virtuoso and composer well-known in Europe who made a lot of money before he died in 1791 at thirty-six. Mozart was first a musician and pianist second but demonstrated the classic ideal with temperate, regulated dynamics and legato, or connected consecutive notes, that "flowed like oil." He played notes exactly as written and amplified them with expression and taste. Mozart was adept at sight-reading and improvisation, which means



composing and performing at the same time. He did not play his own compositions the same way twice.

Chapter III Thirds, Sixths, and Octaves describes an explosive meeting of Mozart and Clementi in a 1781 Viennese competition between them arranged by Emperor Joseph II. Mozart played a Stein piano for his solos, but used an out of tune palace instrument for two-piano playing with Clementi. Mozart's concern with three sticky keys was ignored by the Emperor believing Clementi was no match but no winner was determined. Clementi was called the father of technique and the modern piano school whose playing thrilled audiences unlike Mozart whose playing created respect. Muzio Clementi was a piano manufacturer who traveled after 1802 to European cities with his music publishing and piano business. Clementi played with a quiet, low hand position and practiced with a coin on the back of his hand to control hand position. He wrote twenty symphonies, one hundred sonatas and taught three great pianists including Cramer, Kalkbrenner and Field. Mozart is considered the first great pianist and Clementi the first great virtuoso.

Chapter IV In Profile and on the Road describes the challenges pianists had when they changed venue from salon to concert hall. The salon was an elegant drawing room used in formal receptions much different in layout and size than a public hall or auditorium for concerts. Jan Ladislav Dussek was the first concert hall pianist. He sat at the piano with his right side profile displayed to an audience. The piano's raised lid served as sounding board to throw its sound out to the concert hall. Dussek was the first touring virtuoso to perform through Europe and Russia as a celebrity, showman and great pianist at twenty. He used piano pedals liberally and instructed their use in his written music. His style was played with pure legato by shifting his fingers on the key without striking "to hold the vibration and to tie one passage to another." Dussek was born in 1760 Bohemia and used his charm and romanticism to captivate fans. Another great pianist, John Baptist Cramer, was born in 1771 Germany and taken to London by his parents as a child prodigy. He debuted at ten and worked two years with Clementi playing his classicist style with purity and accuracy. Beethoven competed with Cramer once and called him the only pianist of his time, and the "rest count for nothing." Later his playing was "dry, wooden and harsh" compared to Daniel Steibelt's "tremolo," i.e. up and down a keyboard fast with one hand.

Chapter V String-Snapper, Hands on High profiles Beethoven as the first romantic pianist to replace eighteenth century taste with nineteenth century expression. Beethoven was first a musician and secondly a pianist. He made his initial impact in Vienna 1792 as a pianist playing with elemental force and conception, like a shellburst. Beethoven spent little time in practice and his improvisation was better than performance of his published pieces. He was lively at piano and popped many strings pounding on the keys that broke the hammers. Steibelt challenged him in Vienna. Their meeting was inconsequential but a week later Steibelt insulted him by copying a previous theme. Beethoven retaliated by sight reading Steibelt's work upside down before an unleashed improvisation that made Steibelt slink out of the room never to appear in Beethoven's presence again. Beethoven played like a composer and was a direct link to romanticist pianists from Mozart and Cramer's classic disciplined style. By



1805, Beethoven began to go deaf and curtailed his professional performances. Beethoven played his own free style on Viennese pianos but taught classicist ideals to his pupils. He died in 1827, deaf since 1810.



Chapters VI and VII

Chapters VI and VII Summary and Analysis

Chapters VI and VII covers the bridge period from classicism to romanticism.

Chapter VI In the Interim describes the last two decades of the eighteenth century when a number of pianists performed in a manner that bridged classicism to romanticism. This transition began with Johann Hummel, followed by John Field, Kalkbrenner, von Weber, Czerny and Ignaz Moscheles by 1794. At the same time, pianos manufactured annually increased from twenty or so high quality, pricey English or Viennese units per producer to a smaller, less resonant and lower priced four hundred by 1802, and fifteen hundred by Broadwood alone in 1825 as manufacturing tools and techniques improved. From 1750 to 1824, London music shops grew from 12 to 150. Piano-playing techniques changed from Clementi's classic horizontal hand and arm level to outward-turned hands and wrists by Hummel and others. Devices and mechanisms were invented to help young pupils learn and practice like the dactylion that suspended fingers on springs and a pocket hand exerciser that promised perfection with less work. Other pianists like Carl Czerny never played in public but stayed in Vienna to teach pupils and compose over a thousand published works. Czerny taught many great pianists including Liszt, Dohler, Kullak, and Leschetizky who in turn taught many other great pianists.

Chapter VII From Ireland to Bohemia profiles four great pianists that appeared just before the romanticists. Most poetic was John Field from Dublin, while Friedrich Kalkbrenner, born en route between Cassel and Berlin played with most superficial brilliance. Johann Hummel from Bohemia was a classicist and Ignaz Moscheles from Prague was a bravura pianist who became classicist and was considered the best musician of the group. After basic training with his father and others in Dublin, Field was sent to London as an apprentice to demonstrate the Clementi piano. Field's compulsive practice turned him into a powerful pianist who made an overwhelming impression on tour in 1802 Paris. Hummel was born November 14, 1778, in Bohemia. Mozart taught him in his own house for two years and at ten Hummel's father took him on a four-year European tour. Subsequently, Hummel focused on teaching, composing and conducting but was unpleasant with ungainly, slovenly dress, pock-marked face and "monstrously stout." Despite being a refined musician among the greatest classic pianists, he "puffed, blew and perspired" as he played. Friedrich Kalkbrenner played close to the keys in the classicist style of Cramer. Kalkbrenner played from the age of five and lived in London for ten years as pianist and teacher till he moved to Paris in 1824 where he died in 1849. His playing was distinct, clear and astonishingly neat because his fingers stayed so close to the keys. Ignaz Moscheles was a bravura pianist in the Clementi tradition with a quiet hand position, no excess motion and little pedal use. Born in 1794 in Prague, Moscheles was the first virtuoso to bring music to the people. He was well-connected, friendly with the Rothschilds, Prince Albert, and other nobles that brought respectability to artists.



Chapters VIII through X

Chapters VIII through X Summary and Analysis

Chapters VIII through X introduces the first group of five pianists that began nineteenth century romanticism.

Chapter VIII Romanticism and its Rules describes piano and performance changes that began with a nineteenth century style called romanticism. The notable romantic pianists Mendelssohn, Chopin, Liszt, Thalberg and Henselt were all born within five years from 1809 to 1814. The romantic upheaval itself occurred in 1830 Paris and coincided with increased popularity of the piano in most European homes. Pianos grew as popular and available at home as twentieth century records or DVDs today. The popularity of piano music created demand for live music. Great pianists evolved into showmen to entertain audiences. Solo concerts were held by Franz Liszt in 1839 Rome. Initially he promoted "soliloquies" but by 1841 advertised "piano recitals." They were long informal concerts where laughing, talking, eating, drinking and coming and going was acceptable audience behavior. The piano virtuoso wandered among and chatted with the audience between selections. Private schools and conservatories of music were founded to meet increased demand.

Chapter IX Tubercular, Romantic, Poetic profiles Friedrich Chopin, the first great pianist who made a clear break with classicism to set romantic pianism on its course. He was a slight, refined-looking and fastidious, little man with a big nose and pale complexion. He introduced changes in fingering and pedaling that remained stylish into the next century. Chopin became the most popular early romantic pianist who considered Bach and Mozart the only two great composers. Chopin liked his contemporaries but disliked their music and paradoxically hated romanticism. He was revolutionary and his music was critiqued as exotic or even insane for its "bold dissonance and strange harmonies." The precocious prodigy Chopin left Warsaw, Poland in 1831 for Paris at twenty-one as a fully-developed pianist and composer. Chopin met Liszt in Paris where he admired the matinee idol's strength and appearance. They had an uneasy friendship for years despite Chopin's jealousy and spite. For example, when Liszt embellished a Chopin nocturne, Chopin told him to play it as he wrote it or not at all. Ironically, Liszt apologized for modifying Chopin's work.

Chapter X Thunder, Lightning, Mesmerism, Sex notes the hysterical behavior of female audiences Liszt attracted. For example, two Hungarian countesses wrestled to the ground over his snuffbox. The egomaniac Liszt enjoyed the effect dramatic performances had on his audiences. Able to perform like the best of the classicists Liszt preferred romanticism to exhibit his showmanship. Liszt was complicated with a mix of genius, vanity, generosity, lust and vision whose life was conflicted with art, religion and the flesh. He became a priest in 1865, but without orders to celebrate mass or hear confession and had rooms in the Vatican where he traveled from there to Weimar and Budapest. He gave many charity concerts, taught and was musical director of the

Weimar court, which he made headquarters for "Music of the Future." Liszt was one of two great sight-readers and could perfectly play back a piece just heard without the manuscript. Liszt sparked "bravura" playing, which was a brilliant musical style that transcended technique.



Chapters XI through XIII

Chapters XI through XIII Summary and Analysis

Chapters XI through XIII covers the period that ends nineteenth century romanticism.

Chapter XI Old Arpeggio, Other Salonists, and the American Penetration notes the significant presentation differences between Liszt and his rival Sigismond Thalberg. Liszt wildly gesticulated back and forth all over the keyboard when he played whereas Thalberg sat erect and formal with minimal movement. He developed a specialty in the 1830s that earned him the nickname "Old Arpeggio." (Arpeggio is a musical term that refers to playing notes of a chord one after another rather than at one time.) Thalberg played the melody with his thumbs in the middle of the keyboard while his fingers played arpeggios up and down the keyboard. This technique created an impression of playing with a third hand. Old Arpeggio recommended pressing the keys with energy and vigor rather than striking them and kneading tender passages with "fingers of velvet." Thalberg fully retired from playing with not even a piano at home in 1863 with all the money he could spend and died in 1871. He traveled through Europe and was one of the first great pianists in 1856 to debut in New York and played fifty-six concerts. His first American performance was preceded by the German Leopold de Meyer in 1845, followed by the Austrians Henri Herz, Alfred Jaell and later New Orleans native Louis Moreau Gottschalk. They raised American standards of piano playing.

Chapter XII More Salonists, and the Revolutionary in Octaves notes evolution of salon pianists that thrived in the days of early romanticism like modern "cocktail pianists" and subsequently disappeared unless they transitioned to the concert hall. Some of them were Englishman William Sterndale Bennett, Austrian prodigy Theodore Dohler and Stephen Heller who satisfied the desire by a wealthy society for paid entertainers. Many eccentric showmen of diminished skill toured Europe displeasing audiences. For example, Polish piano-player Antoine de Kontski could not play two correct notes in a row and always played fortissimo, which means very loud. Among piano players that made a career and then disappeared was Alexander Dreyschock who could perform spectacular technical execution. Several knowledgeable commentators praised his skill playing octaves, which are a group of eight interrelated notes, as fast and smoothly as single-note passages.

Chapter XIII Two Sensitive Ones describes two virtuosos who don't fit any specific classification in traditional piano playing because they played little in public. They are Charles Henri Valentin Morhange, called Alkan and Adolf Henselt, both of whom lived from 1813 to 1889. Alkan was a recluse who gave no concerts for twenty-five years after 1845, to focus on teaching and composition. He was considered an exciting virtuoso who used the pedal imaginatively with his predominant legato. Henselt was terrified by the public and gave no more than three concerts in the last thirty-three years of life despite many lucrative offers. He was compulsive at practice and developed thick, fleshy hands with short fingers to stretch enough to be characterized as leather. He was

a relentless teacher who made his pupils practice repeatedly. His compositions were virtually unplayable by anyone else because he wrote them for his own hand stretch.



Chapters XIV through XIX

Chapters XIV through XIX Summary and Analysis

Chapters XIV through XIX describes the period that ends nineteenth century romanticism.

Chapter XIV The First American notes 1840s America discouraged pupils away from European schools like Paris Conservatoire that rejected thirteen-year old Louis Moreau Gottschalk for being "too savage." Ironically, at sixteen the perfectly-mannered New Orleans native was acclaimed one of Europe's greatest pianists. Gottschalk returned to give a New York concert in 1853 and became an American society favorite. Gottschalk traveled to Cuba, Peru and Brazil but died unexpectedly at forty in 1869. Chapter XV The Virtuous profiles piano idealists dedicated to performance in concert halls that focused on quality rather than performing. One of these romantic pianists was Felix Mendelssohn who performed at four and memorized and played all the Beethoven symphonies at eight on piano. The most important classicist pianist of this group was Clara Schumann. She married composer Robert Schumann who later suffered a mental breakdown and died. She wore black in his memory and was the authority on his music.

Chapter XVI Tyrant and Intellectual describes a group of musicians faithful to the interpretation of their music. Major schools in different national styles were established. Pianist and conductor Hans von Bulow helped establish the German school. Von Bulow played clearly, analytically, and precisely with authority. He studied at Leipzig Conservatory until he met Liszt in 1849. Liszt freed von Bulow from a lack of spontaneity to become his first great pupil. Liszt students subsequently began a revival of the romantic age.

Chapter XVII The Children of the Abbe notes Liszt pupils and schools they formed to prepare beginning students for Liszt. Pupils from Europe, Russia, Scandinavia and America sought out Liszt for his finishing touch. Carl Tausig was considered Liszt's equal and a "living impersonation of Chopin." Liszt's favorite female student was Sophie Mentor, who won acclaim for her electrifying style. She was "showy" and at fifty dressed like a bejeweled sixteen. Other Liszt ladies were Adele aus der Ohe, whose touch was "soft as velvet and as strong as a man's" and Amy Fay whose musical skill was mostly telling tales published in "Music Study in Germany."

Chapter XVIII Thunder from the East profiles Russian Anton Rubinstein who played and looked like Beethoven with thick, ugly hands and sloppy dress. He debuted at nine and auditioned in 1846 for Liszt who paradoxically rejected his brilliant talent. In 1872, he played an American tour of two hundred concerts for two hundred dollars each that he insisted be paid in gold. Anton formed St. Petersburg Conservatory of Music in Russia and his most famous pupil was Josef Hofmann.



Chapter XIX French Neatness, Precision, Elegance profiles Saint-Saens born in 1835 who became the earliest-born pianist to be recorded. At two he had absolute pitch and at eleven he debuted playing two concertos, sonatas and several other pieces from memory. Saint-Saens studied literature, poetry, astronomy and occult sciences but was primarily a composer. Mid-nineteenth century pianist Francis Plante lived from 1839 to 1934 and received acclaim as an elegant, precise and most important French pianist in 1872.



Chapters XX through XXIII

Chapters XX through XXIII Summary and Analysis

Chapters XX through XXIII describes the influence of Liszt and Leschetizky on their students

Chapter XX The Lisztianers and Leschetizkianers Take Over notes the late nineteenth and early twentieth century pianists were predominantly romanticists dominated by the pupils of Liszt and Leschetizky. These pianists focused on playing Beethoven and later literature with tempo rubato, which was an ill-defined method of balanced playing where stronger emphasized notes were offset by lesser emphasized notes. Theodor Leschetizky was a Polish pianist born in 1830 and lived in Vienna. He developed the "Leschetizky system" that assigned pupils who needed more training to an assistant for a year or until they met his standards. Like Liszt, Leschetizky inspired his students, but unlike Liszt he demonstrated the effects he demanded. Leschetizky identified three elements of being a great pianist that included being a child prodigy of Slavic descent and Jewish.

Chapter XXI An Archangel Come Down to Earth describes Leschetizky's most famous pupil and legendary pianist Ignacy Jan Paderewski, who was called "an archangel come down to earth." He was not popular with fellow pianists but was idolized by the public. He was a backstage terror, vain, spoiled and a bully. Paderewski played with a noble tone, style and public image. He toured like royalty with chef, butler, masseur, physician and wife in a private railroad car. Women worshipped his hands and he earned three hundred thousand dollars for three months playing in the United States. Paderewski did not receive systematic instruction until twelve at the Warsaw Conservatory, and with Leschetizky at twenty-four where he debuted in 1887 Vienna. His reviews got negative in 1900 but he was an unexcelled showman counting dollars as critics counted bad notes.

Chapter XXII The Little Giant, and Other Liszt-Made Giants describes Eugene d'Albert, a Liszt student called "The Little Giant" who was considered the greatest virtuoso of his time. He was a Scotsman who considered Germany his spiritual home. Another pupil of Liszt was a Pole Moriz Rosenthal, who amazed fellow pianists with his speed, power and endurance. As he aged Rosenthal played with finesse focusing on tone and phrasing. He recorded over forty discs after he was sixty. Another Liszt pupil Emil von Sauer credited Nicholas Rubinstein as his chief teacher and said Liszt was too old to teach him. Von Sauer died in 1942, and was called "a truly great virtuoso" by his colleagues. Many more pupils became great pianists with little in common but Liszt romanticism concentrated on tone, bravura, free phrasing, and rhythm that made the pianist more important than the music.

Chapter XXIII Some of the Leschetizky Group profiles Leschetizky's famous male pupils like the Russians Mark Hambourg, a stylist but technically inaccurate and Ossip



Gabrilowitsch, who was polished and refined. Hambourg's style was volcanic without regard for technical accuracy, full of wrong notes, changes and halting passages. His rival Gabrilowitsch was called "The Poet of the Piano" who sat quietly at the piano coaxing it with nuance and elegance rather than pounding it. Two other Leschetizky pupils were the Poles, Josef Slivinski and Martinus Sieveking.



Chapters XXIV and XXV

Chapters XXIV and XXV Summary and Analysis

Chapters XXIV and XXV describes the influence of others like Chopin, Saint-Saens, Liszt, Leschetizky and Schumann on their students

Chapter XXIV The Chopinzee, the Buddha, and Others describes the little man Vladimir de Pachmann as the greatest expert on Chopin, who was nicknamed "Chopinzee." The author attributes his fame to onstage behavior not musical skill. For example, he talked, muttered, made faces and lectured during recitals claiming it expressed his artistic soul. The Chopinzee dressed in a smelly, old gown he claimed was Chopin's and made other pianists fear he would disrupt their performance. He was not taken seriously by them like the Polish Leopold Godowsky was. Godowsky was short and round like "Buddha" and was nicknamed "Brahma of the Keyboard." He had no formal training and was virtually self-taught except for three years with Saint-Saens. Godowsky had a stroke in 1930 while recording and never played again. Other pianists included popular composer-pianists like Alfred Grunfeld who played like a skilled de Pachmann. Grunfeld played in salons where he charmed audiences like a "super-cocktail pianist" with stylized playing. Several Poles were piano charmers and Russian Vassily Sapellnikoff played Chopin's Polonaise for an amazed critic, George Bernard Shaw. Australian Ernest Hutcheson played the classicist style and became president of Juilliard School of Music while Australian Percy Grainger hiked to concerts with a knapsack and was one of the most gifted pianists of the century.

Chapter XXV The Ladies profiles several female pianists that shared honors after Sophie Mentor, like Annette Essipoff and Teresa Carreno with overpowering technique and Amazonian beauty unlike the mousy Essipoff. Carreno was offered lessons by Liszt but she would not follow him to Rome. She sang in a beautiful mezzo-soprano voice and was desirable as a singer as well. Claudio Arrau was a contemporary pianist of Carreno and called her a "goddess" while von Bulow called her a "phenomenon" despite her lack of discipline. From 1873 through 1902 she married several times and appeared as pianist, opera singer, conductor and mother of two daughters before she found marital happiness with a brother of her second husband. Her hands were like Rubinstein's and she was known to play like a man. Her Russian rival Essipoff studied with and married Leschetizky in 1880. Essipoff's style was efficient and organized with beautiful movement worth watching. Many other Liszt and Leschetizky ladies traveled America and Europe promoting their masters' charm and style. Polish Paula Szalit was considered a child wonder at thirteen but after training with Leschetizky was unheard of again unlike Fannie Bloomfield Zeisler who began with him at four and five years later was called the greatest American pianist. Other female pianists were taught by Claire Schumann and included Natalie Janotha, who would not perform without her dog Prince White Heather, Fannie Davies and Ilona Eibenschutz. Fannie played in a neat, controlled, and tasteful style that contrasted with Ilona's fiery temperament and speed. Ilona was a respected pianist who made three or four recordings in 1903, and died in



1967. A notable female pianist named Helen Hopekirk advised checking a new pupil's nose to determine their musical talent by whether their nose is broad at the base. Hopekirk had a broad-based nose.



Chapters XXVI and XXVII

Chapters XXVI and XXVII Summary and Analysis

Chapters XXVI and XXVII describes influential composer-pianists in the history of the great pianists.

Chapter XXVI Composers at the Keyboard notes the fact that most great pianists were also composers, but not to the same degree. Greatness in either realm after Liszt was mutually exclusive with specific exceptions. Composers practice their composing skills to become great as do pianists practice their playing skill. Most great composers were pianists and despite their piano-playing greatness Mozart, Beethoven and Chopin were also great composers according to the author. Isaac Albeniz is remembered for his composition but was also a great pianist who debuted in 1864 Spain at four years-old and seven as a composer. He was dressed up as a French musketeer and made to appear onstage until the child ran away from home. At nine he caught a train to a casino where he played piano for guests and gamblers. He was sent home but caught a train going in the opposite direction to give concerts at other cities. At twelve he hid on a ship crossing the Atlantic to Puerto Rico and played in his French musketeer costume for passengers. When the ship docked he went to Buenos Aires, South America, and Cuba where he was caught by his father and released at thirteen to go to New York. He carried baggage, played in saloons and went to San Francisco in 1874 before returning to Europe. At fifteen he entered Brussels Conservatory and later ran away to America again. He returned to win first prize at the conservatory and went to Budapest where he auditioned for Liszt and followed him to Weimar and Rome for formal study with him. Another great pianist was Alexander Scriabin who performed spontaneously without playing anything the same way twice. Claude Debussy was an incomparable pianist who added new theories and ideas about pedaling and sonority with new ideas of figuration and layout.

Chapter XXVII Dr. Faust at the Keyboard compares pianist perfectionists Busoni and Godowsky who both shared many qualities but differed in their focus in which Busoni was personification of the idea and Godowsky was personification of the piano. Busoni sought ideal music he could play and compose and eventually settled on Mozart's twelve piano concertos at farewell concerts in 1922. He was a romantic who discarded excess technique to focus on the idea with extraordinary force and concentration. Busoni played Chopin and Liszt in 1911 New York and was thought by those who identified with his vision to be the greatest living pianist. German critic and musicologist Hugo Leichtentritt claimed Busoni had most powerful individuality and technical mastery since Rubinstein and Liszt. Busoni hated record making because of the hours required in studio for results accomplished. For example, he complained to his wife about thirty minutes of recorded music after three and a half hours studio time. He was a brilliant, large-scaled, and controlled pianist.



Chapters XXVIII and XXIX

Chapters XXVIII and XXIX Summary and Analysis

Chapters XXVIII and XXIX describes the trend of modern pianism that began late in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Chapter XXVIII Perfection Plus describes modernist pianism that began with Busoni, followed by Sergei Rachmaninoff and Josef Hofmann. The significant difference from romantic pianists was that Hofmann, Rachmaninoff and other modernists were guided by the printed note rather than virtuoso improvisation and embellishment. This historical change clearly defined the composer as more important than the virtuoso. The split was clear between Anton Rubinstein and his greatest pupil Hofmann who replied "no" to his teacher's "permission" to add or change parts to a piece played otherwise just as written. Hofmann's principle was that understanding the composer's meaning depended upon the exact textual reading and scrupulous playing of the piece as written. Hofmann made his American debut at ten in November 1887 and followed with a series of Metropolitan Opera appearances from December to February of the next year. His many appearances caused the boy to grow pale and suffer "mental derangement" before he sailed to Europe in March to rest. They settled in Berlin and then Dresden where he studied with Rubinstein until his Hamburg debut in 1894. He began touring and in 1912 played 255 different works in twenty-one concerts without repeating any. He was a headliner and played his last New York concert in 1948.

Chapter XXIX The Puritan notes Sergei Rachmaninoff's austere Russian appearance that produced organized, impeccably delivered serious sonorities with musical elegance and exquisitely finished phrases. His aristocratic style ennobled any music he played to aim at its culminating moment called "the point," which was intrinsic to the piece itself. He left his colleagues full of respect and envy at the accuracy and deft skill with which he skimmed through complicated passages. Rachmaninoff sat quietly at the piano playing the printed note without eccentricity or sentimentality, avoiding any exaggeration. Rachmaninoff was born in 1873 and became Moscow Conservatory's medal-winning composer when he graduated in 1892. He sight-read, remembered, and could play back anything he ever heard, which he never forgot. He began taking piano lessons at his own request when he was four but did not develop a concert repertoire until after the Russian revolution in 1917. He made his New York debut in 1909 but complained about Americans and their business which he found boring and all around him. The Boston Symphony Orchestra offered him a post as conductor, which he refused to become an idol in his homeland Russia. Ten years later Boston made another offer as did the Cincinnati Symphony that he turned down. He returned to America to become an established pianist by 1918. He was called "The Puritan of Pianists" for his looks and sober interpretation. Rachmaninoff left a large number of recordings when he died of cancer in 1942.



Chapters XXX through XXXII

Chapters XXX through XXXII Summary and Analysis

Chapters XXX through XXXII describes the influence of other great pianists who influenced the historical development of piano playing.

Chapter XXX Some Headliners of the Day profiles Harold Bauer who was one of the few great pianists that was not a child piano prodigy. Born in 1873, he learned to read music and play piano without a teacher. He played violin as a child prodigy when Paderewski discovered him at twenty playing piano. Bauer credited his piano interest to the dancer Isadora Duncan who translated music into motion with dance. Bauer translated motion with piano technique into music and became an accomplished pianist by 1900 at his American debut. He considered composer marking "superficially related to the music" and after consulting with composers found it of little benefit. He was fully a modernist as shown by his sensitive interpretations devoid of musical egocentricity and exaggeration. Another contemporary headliner was Josef Lhevinne who debuted in 1906 America and amazed other pianists with his "quasi-glissando" that seemed impossible. American born Russian Mischa Levitzki was an elegant pianist who died in 1941 at forty-five, as did Russian Simon Barrere who played difficult music fast and accurately but died in 1951 at the piano in Carnegie Hall.

Chapter XXXI New Philosophies, New Styles notes advances in piano technique that developed after Chopin's codified two-book "Etudes" one hundred years earlier. Claude Debussy codified twentieth century theory of technique beyond Chopin's ideas. Debussy examined each aspect like Chopin but on a piano ideally without hammers. Others noted a piano is percussive. (Piano keys connect to hammers that strike piano wire to make it percussive.) Russian Serge Prokofieff revolutionized piano playing by attacking music with "controlled fury." Ironically, he was taught by gentle Annette Essipoff. Prokofieff reversed piano tone and technique to the old-fashioned style and tone of a harpsichord. This anti-romantic trend evolved into 1920s and '30s avant-garde by American Leo Ornstein's hammerlike attack and Percy Grainger's near-tone clusters further echoed by Henry Cowell's actual clusters played with fists, elbows and forearms on the keyboard. During the 1950s and '60s pianist David Tudor was world exponent of ultra-avant-garde pianism because he could read the new printed notes that required playing simultaneously piano keyboard, sounding board and strings, tape recorder and kazoo or as indicated in Cage's composition titled "4'33'" that required "playing" silence and a stop watch.

Chapter XXXII The Man Who Invented Beethoven profiles Artur Schnabel as a Beethoven specialist who became synonymous with him. Beethoven's music was Schnabel's forte. He did not look like a pianist with his short stocky form, stubby fingers and big head. He played piano with a distinct lack of showmanship. His concerts brought silence to the auditorium like communion in a cathedral. Schnabel was a child prodigy who studied with Annette Essipoff before her husband Leschetizky who said he

would never be a pianist because he was already a musician. Schnabel was analytical and one of the few fully unromantic and modernist pianists from the Leschetizky group. His fierce integrity and brilliant intellect enabled him to become leader of the German school of piano and a respected musician of the century.



Chapters XXXIII through XXXV

Chapters XXXIII through XXXV Summary and Analysis

Chapters XXXIII through XXXV describes the influence of great pianists and schools of music during the middle to second half of the twentieth century.

Chapter XXXIII Romanticism Still Burns describes the last two great pianists, Arthur Rubinstein and Vladimir Horowitz who remained loyal to the romanticist tradition after World War II. They shared an uneasy friendship but recognized each other's strengths. Rubinstein was a better musician and admitted Horowitz was a better pianist. Horowitz was legendary but Rubinstein was not although both sold out audiences. Horowitz first played as a substitute pianist. His powerful opening made orchestra conductor Eugen Pabst leave the podium to watch his hands and the "audience went wild." Horowitz' American debut was with the New York Philharmonic but the conductor directed a tempo slower than usual. Horowitz felt the audience lose interest and accelerated to the tempo he wanted leaving the conductor and orchestra to catch up. Critics acclaimed Horowitz a whirlwind as he launched his long, brilliant career. His friend and rival Rubinstein made an American debut in 1906 and began making records in 1926. He was a natural pianist whose hands had broad palms, long fingers and a wide stretch. He practiced little and memorized quickly to develop into a showman who always pleased audiences.

Chapter XXXIV Twentieth-Century Schools notes Schnabel's German/Austrian legacy was represented by Wilhelm Backhaus, Rudolf Serkin, Claudio Arrau and other pianists of the twentieth century. The German school promoted musicianship, severity, strength and solidity rather than charm and sensuality. An atypical German school pianist was Walter Gieseking who played piano at four, could read and write at five, and decided he didn't need to learn anything after that. He was famous for mastery of composers like Debussy, Mozart and Ravel but lost public acclaim after World War II. Serkin was born in Vienna and performed at six. He debuted in 1936 America where he became a citizen. Arrau taught himself to read music before he knew the alphabet and played in public at five. British pianists took an eclectic approach to combine German intellectualism and British civilization but were rarely dramatic. The French style used elegance, shallow tone and fast tempos played by Henri Herz, Pierre Zimmerman, and Antoine Marmontel. French pianists play the top of keys with fingers and wrists in a near-percussive style. Latin and South American as well as Central European pianists trained in the West as did pianists from Japan, China and Korea in European and American conservatories.

Chapter XXXV After the Thaw notes Prokofieff, Rachmaninoff and Horowitz emigrated after the Russian Revolution of 1917 when Stalin took control. Decades later Russian pianists Emil Gilels, David Oistrakh and Mstislav Rostropovich toured the West and several others followed. Russia was the remaining frontier of romanticism in the 1960s. Russian romanticists were provincial and did not play Copland, Stravinsky and Bartok or

other "decadent bourgeois composers." Examples included Vladimir Ashkenazy who began playing piano and reading music at six, but not until he was eighteen did he enter the Moscow Conservatory to study and in 1958 toured American. Russian pianist Lazar Berman began playing at two and debuted in 1976 America, but was not taken seriously in Russia since he was seen primarily as a technician not a virtuoso.



Chapters XXXVI through XXXVIII

Chapters XXXVI through XXXVIII Summary and Analysis

Chapters XXXVI through XXXVIII describes the resurgence of Bach and other masters' influence on contemporary great pianists.

Chapter XXXVI Bach a la Mode comments on a trend that was unfashionable to play Bach on piano since Landowska's resurgent harpsichord playing. Ironically she used a Pleyel-made instrument similar to a concert grand piano, played in a romantic style but had audiences convinced she played like Bach. The Canadian, Glenn Gould brought a new approach to playing Bach in 1955. His recorded "Goldberg Variations" combined personality, ideas, bouncing rhythm and fast tempos. Gould became a legend by revolting against authority to become "the most stimulating musician of his time." Gould was born in 1932, began playing at three and was taught by his mother until he entered Toronto's Royal Conservatory. He was a concert pianist for nine years playing in Europe, Israel, Russia and the United States. He retired at thirty-two in 1964 and died in 1982 at fifty. He would not shake hands because he feared contamination and was eccentric, reclusive and a hypochondriac who attracted a lot of publicity.

Chapter XXXVII Two Cult Figures profiles two archetypical contemporary pianists of the 1970s modern style, Alfred Brendel and Maurizio Pollini, who became cult figures. Their style was objective and literal, dedicated to an accurate, severe and impersonal playing of the music. They did not embellish their performance with color, charm or emotion. Brendel and Pollini claimed to not interpret but simply play the notes as written. Brendel was born in 1931 Austria and played mostly Austro-German classics like Bach, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. Pollini was Italian born in 1942 and played a far-ranging repertoire that included most piano literature. Brendel began playing at six and composed at seven but paradoxically never called himself a prodigy. He debuted at seventeen and entered a competition where he placed third. Subsequently he recorded Beethoven and Liszt before his American tour in 1963. Both were intellectual but not entertaining pianists. Pollini began playing at five and debuted at eleven. At eighteen in 1960 he won the Chopin Competition in Warsaw to launch his career years later as an immediate success.

Chapter XXXVIII Made in America describes the relatively new phenomenon of pianism in America. A few early pianists appeared before World War II like Leonard Shure and Sidney Foster but a virtual swell developed after 1946. Van Cliburn won the Leventritt competition in 1954, but his victory at the Moscow Tchaikovsky Competition in 1958 made his name and musical competition well-known. For a time Van Cliburn was the highest-paid musician and a hot personality in show business. Paradoxically, his playing lost its brilliance and Van Cliburn retired in the mid-1970s. Other postwar American pianists include Jorge Bolet and Earl Wild. Bolet claims a musician's job turns a printed note into a living experience and a musical score can be considered the Bible. Earl Wild



began as a Gershwin specialist that harmed his reputation. American pianists respond well to modern music but lack emotional depth for romanticism. Vladimir Horowitz is the last living virtuoso as showman. Regardless, the past impinges on the present with increased interest of research scholars on the past to understand the present and future.



Characters

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is the name of a child prodigy who was exploited as a child accomplished on the organ, harpsichord, and clavichord. He achieved fame on piano in 1778 at twenty-one. Mozart liked the tone, construction and durability of pianos made by Johann Andreas Stein but their high cost limited him to play a piano made by Vienna's Anton Walter. Mozart wrote many letters that described his own piano playing as a virtuoso and composer throughout Europe. He made a lot of money before he died in 1791 at thirty-six but spent more than he made and was buried in a pauper's grave. Mozart was the "greatest natural genius music has produced" according to research. He demonstrated the classic ideal with temperate and regulated dynamics and legato playing that "flowed like oil." Mozart played notes exactly as written by the composer and embellished them with expression and taste. He was skilled at sight-reading and improvising. Recent research consensus opinion is that Mozart was the first great pianist.

Muzio Clementi

Muzio Clementi is the name of an Italian-born English piano virtuoso who was considered no match to Mozart in a competition sponsored by the Emperor. Ironically, there was no winner. Clementi's technical skill was overcome by Mozart's art, taste and feeling. Mozart disliked Clementi's stronger technical skills and was offended by his unconventional romantic modulations. Muzio Clementi was born in 1752 Italy and raised by an English Member of Parliament. Peter Beckford saw musical genius in the fourteen year old and brought him to Wiltshire, England. He practiced harpsichord at least eight hours daily in the Beckford house. After 1773 he gave concerts on an English piano that shaped his style with its resonant sound and carrying power. He was called the father of technique and modern piano school. Clementi also manufactured pianos and did not have to play since sales made him rich. He had a scientific talent that led him to improve the action of pianos he made. He traveled for his music business and met Beethoven in Vienna after 1807. Clementi was a miserly but socially popular mentor. He played with a quiet and low hand position and practiced with a coin on the back of the hand to control position. Clementi wrote twenty symphonies, a hundred sonatas and taught three great pianists of the 1800s including Cramer, Kalkbrenner and Field. Research concurs Clementi was the first great virtuoso.

John Baptist Cramer

John Baptist Cramer is the name of a Clementi pupil called "Glorious John." He was born in 1771 in Germany and taken to London by his parents as a child prodigy. He debuted at ten and toured two years with Clementi playing his stringent classicism with



purity and accuracy. Beethoven and Cramer played once in competition and Beethoven said Cramer was the only pianist of his time, and the "rest count for nothing." Cramer's piano playing got "dry, wooden and harsh" as he aged.

Jan Ladislav Dussek

Jan Ladislav Dussek was the first pianist to perform in a public hall or auditorium for concerts. Earlier pianists performed only in salons. Dussek sat at the piano with his right side profile facing the audience and the piano's lid lifted up like a sounding board to throw sound to the audience. He was the first virtuoso to tour Europe and Russia as a celebrity, showman and pianist. Dussek used the piano pedals liberally and instructed their use in his written music. His pure legato was achieved by shifting his fingers on the key without striking "to hold the vibration and to tie one passage to another." Dussek was born in 1760 Bohemia and died in 1812, an alcoholic and bedridden because he got too fat to get around

Ludwig von Beethoven

Ludwig von Beethoven was the first romanticist pianist. He replaced eighteenth century taste with nineteenth century expression. Beethoven was first a musician and then a pianist, who made his initial impact in 1792 Vienna where he played with elemental force and conception. He practiced little and his improvisation was considered better than performance of his published pieces. He was lively while playing the piano and popped many strings pounding on the keys that broke the hammers. Beethoven played like a composer and linked to romanticism from the classicist's disciplined style. Beethoven used a free style of playing piano but taught classic ideals to his students. He died in 1827, but was deaf since 1810.

Johann Hummel

Johann Hummel was born November 14, 1778, in Bohemia and was taught by Mozart in his own house for two years. Hummel's father took him on a four-year European tour at ten. Hummel served as Kapellmeister to Prince Eszterhazy from 1804 to 1811, and again in Weimar as Kapellmeister from 1820 to his death in 1837. He played a Viennese piano and was acknowledged for playing with a clear, even and steady rhythm. Hummel was an unpleasant appearing man with coarse, ungainly, slovenly dress, pock-marked face and diamond-ringed fingers. Despite being a refined musician among great classic pianists and improvisers, he "puffed, blew and perspired" as he played. Hummel represented a high point of the Vienna school, brilliant and powerful but classic and lacking passion.



Carl Czerny

Carl Czerny was one of the greatest pianists who never played in public. Because he disliked travel he stayed in Vienna teaching pupils and composed a thousand published works. Born in 1791 Vienna, he worked with Beethoven and got a letter of recommendation from him in 1805. Czerny taught many great pianists including Liszt, Dohler, Kullak and Leschetizky who also taught many students of their own, which multiplied Czerny's importance and influence. Towards the end of his career he played with Chopin who called him a good fellow but not more.

Friedrich Chopin

Friedrich Chopin was the first great pianist who broke with classicism to play in the style of romanticism. Chopin was a slight, refined-looking and fastidious, snobbish little man with a big nose and pale complexion. He made changes in fingering and pedaling that remained in style for many years. Chopin was the most popular early romantic pianist. Although he got along well with his peers, he did not like their music and hated romanticism. His music was called exotic or insane for its "bold dissonance and strange harmonies." Chopin left Warsaw, Poland for Paris at twenty-one as a fully-developed pianist and composer. His techniques and skills did not change but grew deeper as he got older. Chopin met Liszt in Paris and admired his strength and appearance. They were friends for years despite Chopin telling Liszt to play a piece the way he wrote it or not at all.

Franz Liszt

Franz Liszt was born the son of a Hungarian official in 1811 and lived until 1886. Technique, showmanship and poetry combined as one in his genius piano and music skill. Liszt was a complicated man fraught with vanity, generosity, lust and vision in conflict with art, religion and the flesh. For example, he became a priest in 1865 but had no authority to celebrate mass or hear confession. He had rooms in the Vatican but traveled to Weimar and Budapest. He stopped playing for money in 1847, but gave charity concerts, taught and was musical director of the Weimar court. Liszt was one of two great sight-readers who could perform a complicated musical score at first sight and perfectly play back a piece just heard without any manuscript. Liszt initiated "bravura" playing as a brilliant musical style that rose above technique. Franz Liszt taught from the 1820s. Listing his pupils takes many pages since his style inspired musicians all over the world.

Sigismond Thalberg

Sigismond Thalberg was a great pianist who played piano as he sat erect and formal with minimal movement. He developed a specialty new in the 1830s that earned him the nickname "Old Arpeggio." Thalberg played the melody with his thumbs in the middle of



the keyboard while his fingers played chords up and down the keyboard. This technique created the impression of playing with a third hand. Thalberg was aristocratic, talented and popular with ladies like Liszt but was genteel and did not cause hysterical behavior. Old Arpeggio recommended pressing the keys with energy and vigor rather than striking them and kneading tender passages with "fingers of velvet." Thalberg retired from playing without even a piano at home in 1863. He died in 1871.

Louis Moreau Gottschalk

Louis Moreau Gottschalk was a New Orleans native acclaimed one of Europe's greatest pianists. Gottschalk called himself "one of the old Chopinists" and was America's first important pianist and composer despite spending much time touring Europe and Spain. He gave his first New York concert at Niblo's Saloon in 1853 and became an American society favorite. Gottschalk was criticized for selections he played by Boston music critic Dwight who founded "Journal of Music." Gottschalk avenged himself by substituting a piece on a subsequent Boston concert that Dwight didn't notice. Gottschalk traveled extensively to Cuba, Peru and Brazil where he died unexpectedly at forty in 1869.

Anton Rubinstein

Anton Rubinstein was a Russian who played and looked like Beethoven with his thick, ugly hands and sloppy dress. He studied in Moscow and made his debut at nine in 1839. He played for Liszt in 1846 to become a pupil but paradoxically his brilliant talent was rejected. Rubenstein's three-hour programs were too long and after fifty he had memory lapses. In 1872, he played an American tour of two hundred concerts for two hundred dollars each that he insisted be paid in gold, but refused a second tour. He helped found the St. Petersburg Conservatory of Music in Russia and his brother Nicholas founded the Moscow Conservatory in 1866. Anton's most famous pupil was Josef Hofmann and his last concert was in 1894.

Theodor Leschetizky

Theodor Leschetizky was a romantic Polish pianist born in 1830 who spent most of his life after 1878 in Vienna. He was known for his "Leschetizky system" that required pupils who needed more development to work with assistants playing preparatory drill for at least a year to meet his standards. Ironically his "system" was based on the individual and was not a fixed method. Like Liszt, Leschetizky inspired his students, but unlike Liszt he demonstrated how to produce the effects he demanded. Leschetizky identified three elements to pianist greatness that included being a child prodigy, of Slavic descent and Jewish, plus fat hands.



Ignacy Jan Paderewski

Ignacy Jan Paderewski was the name of Leschetizky's most famous pupil and legendary pianist, who was said to be "an archangel come down to earth." His popularity as the greatest pianist was not shared by fellow pianists who did not take him seriously. He was idolized by the public but considered a backstage terror, vain spoiled and a bully. Paderewski was not thought a legend by his peers and his 1911 and later recordings show he was not a great technician. He did play with a noble tone, style and awesome public image. He toured like royalty with chef, butler, masseur, physician and wife with her aides in a private railroad car. Like Liszt, he affected women who worshipped his hands insured for an amount comparable to ten million today. He earned three hundred thousand dollars for three months playing in the United States. His business manager Hugo Gorlitz gave free concert tickets to students who would stampede down the aisles to see him. Paderewski did not receive systematic instruction until twelve at Warsaw Conservatory, and with Leschetizky at twenty-four in Vienna, where he debuted in 1887. He made a Carnegie Hall debut in 1891 on a tour for the Steinway piano company and three more tours by 1896 made him the greatest American musical draw to date. His musical reviews became negative in 1900 and he kept getting worse through 1917, despite continuing tours. He played and recorded through 1923, unexcelled as a showman counting dollars as critics counted his bad notes

Vladimir de Pachmann

Vladimir de Pachmann was a little man acknowledged as greatest expert on Chopin, or Chopinist, alive and nicknamed the "Chopinzee." The author attributes his fame to onstage behavior more than musical skill. For example, he muttered, made faces and lectured during recitals saying that was necessary to express his artistic soul. He saw visitors dressed in a smelly, old gown and other garments he claimed were Chopin's. He made other pianists squirm for fear he would disrupt their performance and was not taken seriously by his colleagues.

Josef Hofmann

Josef Hofmann is the name of a pianist who refused his teacher's "permission" to add to or change a piece played otherwise just as written. Hofmann's principle was that understanding the composer's meaning depended upon the exact textual reading and scrupulous playing of the piece as written. Hofmann played with classic purity and romantic elegance, which set him apart as flawless and greatest pianist of the century. Hofmann made his American debut at ten in November 1887 that he followed with a series of Metropolitan Opera appearances from December to February of the next year. His many appearances made the boy grow pale and suffer from "mental derangement" before he sailed to Europe in March to rest. His family settled in Berlin and then Dresden where he studied with Rubinstein until his Hamburg debut in 1894. He began



touring and in 1912 played 255 different works in twenty-one concerts without repeating any. He was a legend for craftsmanship and polish and played his last concert in 1948.

Sergei Rachmaninoff'

Sergei Rachmaninoff' is the name of a great pianist who's austere Russian appearance produced organized, impeccably delivered serious sonorities with musical elegance and exquisitely finished phrases. His aristocratic style ennobled any music he played to aim at its culminating moment called "the point," which was intrinsic to the piece itself. He left his colleagues full of respect and envy at the accuracy and deft skill with which he skimmed through complicated passages. Rachmaninoff sat quietly at the piano playing printed notes without eccentricity or sentimentality, avoiding exaggeration.

Rachmaninoff was born in 1873 and became Moscow Conservatory's medal-winning composer when he graduated in 1892. He sight-read, remembered, and could play back anything he ever heard, which he never forgot. He began taking piano lessons at his own request when he was four but did not develop a concert repertoire until after the Russian revolution in 1917. He made his New York debut in 1909 but complained about Americans and their business which he found boring and all around. The Boston Symphony Orchestra offered him a post as conductor, which he refused to become an idol in his homeland Russia. He returned to America as an established pianist by 1918. He was called "The Puritan of Pianists" for his looks and sober interpretation. Rachmaninoff left a large number of recordings when he died of cancer in 1942

Harold Bauer

Harold Bauer was one of the few great pianists that did not begin as a piano prodigy. Born in 1873, he played violin as a child prodigy on that instrument until Paderewski discovered him at the age of twenty playing piano. As a child he learned to read music and play piano without a teacher. Bauer attributed his piano interest to contemporary dancer Isadora Duncan. Her translation of music into motion with dance motivated him to translate motion with his piano technique into music. Bauer was an accomplished pianist by 1900 when he debuted in America where he eventually settled. The Englishman Bauer combined old and new playing style in the modern school that interested him. He called composer marking "superficially related to the music" and even after consulting with composers found it of little benefit. He was thoroughly a modernist pianist shown by his sensitive interpretations devoid of musical egocentricity and exaggeration.

Artur Schnabel

Artur Schnabel is the name of a pianist who stood out above all other Beethoven specialists and became synonymous with him. Despite his skills with Mozart, Schubert and Brahms, Beethoven's music was his forte. Schnabel did not look like a pianist. He was short and stocky, smoked cigars had stubby fingers, a big head and played piano



with a distinct lack of showmanship. His concerts brought a sacred silence to the auditorium like communion in a cathedral. Schnabel was a child prodigy who studied with Annette Essipoff before her husband Leschetizky who said he would never be a pianist because he was already a musician. He was analytical and one of few fully unromantic, modern pianists from the Leschetizky group. His fierce integrity and brilliant intellect enabled him to become leader of the German school of piano playing and a respected musician of the century.

Vladimir Horowitz

Vladimir Horowitz is the name of one of the last two pianists who remained loyal to the romanticist tradition after World War II. Horowitz was a legend in his own time and regularly sold out audiences. Horowitz appeared in Hamburg as a stand in pianist. His opening cadenza made such an impact that orchestra conductor Eugen Pabst left the podium to watch Horowitz' hands and the "audience went wild." Horowitz made his American debut with the New York Philharmonic in 1928, but the conductor Sir Thomas Beecham was inattentive to Horowitz and directed a tempo slower than he wanted. Horowitz felt the audience lose interest at the slow tempo and sped up in the last movement to play the tempo he wanted. In a burst Horowitz left conductor Beecham and the orchestra to catch up. Critics acclaimed Horowitz a whirlwind as he launched his long, brilliant career.

Walter Giesecking

Walter Giesecking was a pianist who played piano at four, could read and write at five, and decided he never needed to learn any more after that. He had one of the fastest musical minds that could memorize a work overnight and never practiced more than four hours a day. He was famous for mastery of composers Debussy, Mozart, and Ravel. Giesecking lost much public acclaim after World War II when his German heritage stirred crowds to protest his concerts in the United States.

Glenn Gould

Glenn Gould was a Canadian pianist who brought a new approach to playing Bach in 1955. His recorded "Goldberg Variations" combined personality, ideas, bouncing rhythm, and fast tempos. Gould became a legend because he revolted against authority and showed contempt for the Establishment to become "the most stimulating musician of his time." Gould was born in 1932, began playing at three, was taught by his mother till ten, when he attended Toronto's Royal Conservatory, and never finished high school. He was a concert pianist for nine years and a superstar playing in Europe, Israel, Russia, and the United States. He retired at thirty-two in 1964 and died in 1982 at fifty. He would not shake hands because he feared contamination and wore a sweater even on the hottest days. He was eccentric, reclusive and a hypochondriac, which made him



a publicity target. Gould's style of Bach interpretations breathed life and spirit into his history.

Alfred Brendel

Alfred Brendel was born in 1931 Austria and played primarily Austro-German classics like Bach, Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. Brendel began playing at six and composing at seven but paradoxically never considered himself a prodigy. He debuted at seventeen and entered one competition in which he placed third. Thereafter he concentrated on recording Beethoven and Liszt before his American tour in 1963. He became well-known but was not particularly admired because he was an intellectual and was not entertaining while he played. Brendel's style was objective and literal, dedicated to an accurate, severe, and impersonal playing of the music. He did not embellish his performance with color, charm, or emotion.

Maurizio Pollini

Maurizio Pollini began playing at five and debuted at eleven. Pollini was an Italian born in 1942 and played a far-ranging repertoire that included most piano literature. At eighteen in 1960 he won the Chopin Competition in Warsaw that launched his career years later as an immediate success. Pollini performed with "computerlike total control" and became an ideal to young pianists as the greatest living pianist. His was objective and literal, dedicated to an accurate, severe, and impersonal playing of the music that he did not interpret but played as written.

Van Cliburn

Van Cliburn won the Leventritt competition in 1954, but his victory at the Moscow Tchaikovsky Competition in 1958 made his name and musical skills well-known. For a time Van Cliburn was the highest-paid musician and a hot personality in show business. Cliburn was taught by Rosina Lhevinne to produce the rich and sensuous sounds that recalled the great romantic pianists. Paradoxically, his playing lost its brilliance and Van Cliburn retired in the mid-1970s.



Objects/Places

Sonata

Sonata is the term used to identify a type of music that is a singing, nuanced, fluffy, polite, and melodic approach developed after Bach's death when the heavy contrapuntal style used in the tempestuous fugue fell into disfavor.

Contrapuntal style

Contrapuntal style is the term used for a form of music also called counterpoint in which several simultaneous melodies are woven together into a harmonious whole that was fostered by Johann Sebastian Bach.

Style galant

"Style galant" is the French term used to describe the musical technique used with the sonata.

Fugue

Fugue is the name of a term used to describe a form of music in which themes successively repeat.

Piano

Piano is the name of the instrument that eventually replaced the harpsichord and clavichord as the primary keyboard instrument of choice. The piano was invented by Bartolommeo Cristofori to play soft and loud that enabled the "style galant" to become popular. Viennese and English pianos had different characteristics with a lighter Viennese and a heavier English piano.

Legato

Legato is the term used to describe a form of playing that means connected consecutive notes without audible separation compared to staccato playing with distinct breaks between consecutive notes.



Improvisation

Improvisation is the term used to describe composing and performing music at the same time.

Salon

Salon is the term used to describe an elegant drawing room used in formal receptions that is different in layout and size than a public hall or auditorium used for concerts.

Classicism

Classicism is a term used to describe the mid-eighteenth century disciplined style of piano playing in which the pianist plays notes written by a composer with some flexibility for tasteful improvisation and embellishment. Some classicist pianists include Mozart, Clementi and Cramer. In the last twenty years of the eighteenth century, pianists began to play in a way that bridged classicism to romanticism.

Romanticism

Romanticism is a term used to describe the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century virtuoso style of piano playing in which a pianist plays with expanded flexibility. The pianist plays with virtuosity beyond classic adherence to rigorous discipline and the written musical note. Beethoven played like a composer and was a direct link to romanticist pianists that include Liszt, Chopin, Leschetizky, and Paderewski.

Modernism

Modernism is a term used to describe the late nineteenth and twentieth century disciplined style of piano playing in which the pianist reverts back to playing with strict adherence to composers' written musical notes. Some modernist pianists include Hoffman, Rubinstein, Brendel and Pollini. Modernism subsequently spun off experimental sub-styles like avant-garde and ultra avant-garde.

Devices and mechanisms

Devices and mechanisms is a term used to describe various tools invented to help young piano students learn and practice that included a chioplast, "guide-mains," and dactylion to suspend fingers on springs, pocket hand exerciser and technicon among others that promised perfection with less work.



Bravura

"Bravura" is the name of a term used to describe a piano playing style that was a brilliant romanticist musical approach that transcended technique and was made famous by Franz Liszt and others.

Arpeggio

Arpeggio is the name used to describe a musical method of keyboard fingering that refers to playing notes that comprise a chord one after another rather than all at the same time. Sigismond Thalberg developed this specialty in the 1830s that earned him the nickname "Old Arpeggio." Thalberg played the melody with his thumbs in the middle of the keyboard while his fingers played up and down the keyboard to create the impression of playing with a third hand.

Leschetizky system

"Leschetizky system" is the name used to describe a piano teaching method that required pupils who need more development work with an assistant in preparatory drills for at least a year to meet his standards. Leschetizky devised the system.

Carnegie Hall

Carnegie Hall is the name of a performance hall in New York City where several famous pianists performed. For example, Paderewski made a Carnegie Hall debut in 1891 on his tour for the Steinway piano company and Russian Simon Barrere died in 1951 while playing a performance at the piano in Carnegie Hall.

Steinway piano company

Steinway piano company is the name of a piano manufacturing and sales company that sponsored several great pianists on tours through the United States.

Chopinzee

"Chopinzee" is the nickname of Vladimir de Pachmann who was acknowledged as the greatest expert on Chopin, or Chopinist, alive. The author attributes his fame and nickname to onstage behavior not skill. For example, he muttered, made faces and lectured during recitals saying it expressed his artistic soul.



Metropolitan Opera

Metropolitan Opera is the name of a performance hall where Josef Hofmann made a series of appearances from December to February of the year after his debut at ten in November 1887. His many appearances made the boy grow pale and suffer from "mental derangement" before he sailed to Europe in March to rest.

Moscow Conservatory

Moscow Conservatory is the name of a piano and music school in Moscow, Russia founded by Nicholas Rubinstein in 1866. He was Anton Rubinstein's brother who also helped form the St. Petersburg Conservatory of Music in Russia. Rachmaninoff became Moscow Conservatory's medal-winning composer when he graduated in 1892, and Vladimir Ashkenazy was eighteen when he entered the Moscow Conservatory to study and in 1958 toured American.

Russian revolution of 1917

Russian revolution of 1917 is the name of a turning point in Russian history that caused Prokofieff, Rachmaninoff and Horowitz to emigrate when the Russian dictator Stalin took control. Not until decades later were Russian pianists allowed travel to the West. Consequently, Russia remained a frontier of romanticism in the 1960s. Russian pianists had limited musical opportunities because they were not exposed to "decadent bourgeois composers" until recent years in Russian history.

New York Philharmonic

The New York Philharmonic was the orchestra with which Horowitz made his American debut in 1928. The debut was notable because conductor Sir Thomas Beecham ignored Horowitz and directed a slow tempo. Horowitz felt the audience lose interest at the slow tempo and sped up in the last movement to play the tempo he wanted. In a burst he left Beecham and the orchestra to catch up and critics acclaimed Horowitz a whirlwind as he launched his long and brilliant career.

Themes

Comparative piano styles changing over time

There were no great pianists during the days of Bach in early eighteenth century because the piano had not been invented. Musical keyboard instruments included the organ, clavichord and harpsichord. Bach first saw a piano in 1736 and said the new keyboard instrument had a pleasant tone but the treble was too weak and the action too stiff. After Bach's death in 1750, his contrapuntal style that wove several simultaneous melodies into a harmonious whole evolved along with a venue change from church to salon. This new single melody style was a singing, nuanced, fluffy, polite and melodic sonata different from Bach's heavy, tempestuous fugue with its repetitive themes. The sonata seemed made for the piano to be played in the salon or elegant drawing room.

Mozart demonstrated the classicist ideal with temperate and regulated dynamics and legato playing that "flowed like oil." He played notes exactly as written that he enhanced with expression and taste since he was adept at improvisation. After 1773, Clementi played concerts on an English piano that shaped his style with its resonant sound and carrying power and a quiet, low hand position. Cramer worked two years with Clementi touring Europe playing his stringent classicism with purity and accuracy. In the last two decades of the eighteenth century pianists began bridging classicism to romanticism. Beethoven was the first romantic pianist to replace eighteenth century taste with nineteenth century expression. Beethoven played with bursting force and conception like a composer and was a direct link to romanticism from classicism's discipline. Friedrich Chopin was the first great pianist who broke with classicism to be the most popular early romanticist. His music was called exotic or insane for its "bold dissonance and strange harmonies." Franz Liszt initiated a brilliant style called "bravura." Theodor Leschetizky was a romanticist pianist and Ignacy Jan Paderewski was his most famous pupil. Horowitz and Rubinstein were the last two pianists after World War II who stayed loyal to a romanticist tradition.

Modern pianism began with Busoni, followed by Rachmaninoff, Hofmann and other modernists who were guided by the printed note rather than virtuoso improvisation and embellishment. The composer regained importance over the virtuoso. Hofmann refused to add or change a piece under his principle that understanding the composer's meaning required exact textual reading and scrupulous playing of the piece as written. Schnabel studied with Leschetizky and was one of the few unromantic and modern pianists from the Leschetizky group. Brendel and Pollini played in a style that was objective and literal, dedicated to an accurate, severe, and impersonal playing of musical architecture that they did not interpret but simply played as written. The Russian Prokofieff revolutionized piano playing by attacking music with "controlled fury." He reversed piano tone and technique back to the old-fashioned style and tone of a harpsichord. This anti-romantic trend evolved into avant-garde with hammerlike attack and near-tone clusters ultimately played with fists, elbows and forearms on the keyboard. In the 1950s and 1960s, David Tudor expanded playing style to ultra-avant-



garde pianism that played at the same time music notes written for piano keyboard, sounding board and strings, tape recorder, and kazoo.

Piano prodigies and prodigal pianists

There were a number of highly talented, young piano-playing individuals apparently born with skills few other mortals possess at any age. Many of those same individuals also seemed to lessen the value of their innate skill by wasteful behavior that turned the child prodigy into a youthful prodigal within an apparent short period of time. For example, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was a keyboard-playing child prodigy. At three years old Mozart played harmonies on the harpsichord, wrote minuets at five, and at six performed on tours with his father. This child prodigy played any keyboard or string instrument without training and could compose and improvise music at will. He was accomplished as a child on organ, harpsichord and clavichord and achieved fame on piano in 1778, after its invention. Mozart was well-known as a virtuoso and composer in Europe. He made a lot of money before he died in 1791 at the age of thirty-six. However, his prodigal life cost more than the prodigious child produced. Mozart was buried poor in a pauper's grave.

Another child prodigy whose life avoided Mozart's prodigal choices was contemporary rival Muzio Clementi. The fourteen year old boy was a musical genius adopted by a British MP. Clementi was trained in Wiltshire, England where he practiced harpsichord eight hours daily in the Beckford house. He was educated with a scientific interest that led him to improve the action of pianos he made and promoted as a piano manufacturer. Clementi's piano sales made him rich and he was the acknowledged father of technique and modern piano school. Unlike the prodigal Mozart, Clementi was a miser and his piano style was copied by younger virtuosos. John Baptist Cramer was called "Glorious John" by Englishmen in 1771 London where his parents brought him as a child prodigy. He debuted at ten and toured Europe with Clementi. Cramer also played with Beethoven in competition and duets with Franz Liszt in 1841 London. Felix Mendelssohn was a child prodigy who played at four and memorized Beethoven symphonies at eight. Harold Bauer was a great pianist who did not begin playing piano. Born in 1873, he became a child prodigy on violin until Paderewski found him at the age of twenty playing piano.

Walter Gieseking was a child prodigy who played piano at four, could read and write at five, and then decided he didn't need to learn any more. Gieseking memorized work overnight and did not practice more than three or four hours a day. Despite mastery of composers like Debussy, Mozart and Ravel he was prodigal in wasting his innate skills to learn and practice to the extent of his time and ability. Glenn Gould was born in 1932, began playing at three and was taught by his mother till ten when he attended Toronto's Royal Conservatory and never finished high school. Gould was a concert pianist for nine years playing in Europe, Israel, Russia and the United States. He retired at thirty-two in 1964 and died in 1982 at fifty. He would not shake hands from fear of contamination and wore a sweater even on hottest days. He was eccentric, reclusive and a hypochondriac that made him a target for publicity. Gould was a prodigy who



became prodigal by not using his talent and fame from his apparent psychological imbalances that affected his ability to enjoy and capitalize on his fame.

Superstars

Jan Ladislav Dussek was the first concert hall pianist. He developed the stage posture that let pianists become popular with their fans. He sat at the piano with his right side profile displayed to audiences. The piano's upraised lid served as a sounding board that directed the piano sound toward the audience. Dussek also was the first touring virtuoso of importance to perform through Europe and Russia as a celebrity, showman and great pianist at the age of twenty. Dussek used piano pedals liberally and instructed their use in his compositions. Dussek died in 1812 after becoming an alcoholic and bedridden.

Franz Liszt was born in 1811 and lived until 1886. Liszt successfully integrated technique, showmanship and poetry in his piano music. He was a complicated man fraught with a mixture of genius, vanity, generosity, lust and vision that spent his life conflicted with art, religion and the flesh. Stories are told about the hysterical behavior of female audiences he attracted. For example, two Hungarian countesses wrestled each other to the ground over his snuffbox. The egomaniac Liszt enjoyed the effect dramatic performances had on his audiences. Paradoxically, he became a priest in 1865, but was not ordained to celebrate mass or hear confession. He had rooms in the Vatican where he traveled back and forth to Weimar and Budapest. He stopped playing for money in 1847.

Ignacy Jan Paderewski was Leschetizky's most famous pupil and the legendary pianist, called "an archangel come down to earth." He was not popular with fellow pianists but was idolized by the public. He was a backstage terror, vain, spoiled and bullying. He played with a noble tone, style and public image. He toured like royalty with chef, butler, masseur, physician, and wife in a private railroad car. Women worshipped his hands that were insured for the equivalent of ten million dollars today. He earned three hundred thousand dollars for three months piano-playing in the United States. Paderewski did not get formal instruction until twelve at the Warsaw Conservatory and with Leschetizky at twenty-four where he debuted in 1887 Vienna. His reviews grew negative in 1900 but he remained the showman who kept counting his dollars as reviewers counted his bad notes.

Composer and pianist, Isaac Albeniz was an enterprising superstar born to entertain. He debuted in 1864 Spain at four years-old and seven as a composer. He was made to dress up as a French musketeer onstage. At nine, Isaac took a train to a casino where he played piano for guests and gamblers. He was sent home but caught a train going the opposite way to perform in other cities. At twelve crossing the Atlantic Ocean to Puerto Rico he donned his French musketeer costume to perform for passengers. After docking, he went to Buenos Aires, South America, and Cuba before his father caught up with the thirteen year-old. Isaac convinced his father to let him go to New York alone where he played in saloons and then went to San Francisco in 1874 before returning to Europe. At fifteen, he entered Brussels Conservatory and won first prize in a contest

before going to Budapest where he auditioned for Liszt and followed him to Weimar and Rome. Finally, after all these youthful celebrity escapades, Albeniz finished his formal training and settled down to a relatively quiet life composing and playing piano in Paris.



Style

Perspective

Harold C. Schonberg is the author of "The Great Pianists" from Mozart to the Present. He was previously senior music critic for the "New York Times" and won the Pulitzer Prize for Criticism in 1971. He was employed by the Times from 1950 as music critic, advanced to senior music critic in 1960 and was promoted to cultural correspondent in 1980. Schonberg also authored several other titles in music including "The Lives of the Great Composers" and "The Great Conductors" before his death in 2003.

"The Great Pianists" first copyright is dated 1963 and was updated in 1987. Schonberg comments in the Preface that there are "very few studies of pianos and pianists." This well-researched five-hundred page title substantially fulfills that need. The author sifted through letters, notes, memoranda, tales, old recordings, and discussions with old veteran musicians who have heard the pianists play that he wrote about to accomplish that task. He filtered the great amount of memorabilia to scrupulously separate the tales from the truth about these great pianists. Schonberg wrote this book to, in his own words, "give an idea of the mainstream of piano playing" from Mozart to the present. Harper's Magazine claims "Even the musically uninitiated will find himself charmed..." and a critic from the Boston Sunday Herald notes Schonberg wrote as if "direct from a concert...with the experience still fresh in his mind." Intended audience for this title runs from a neophyte with no musical knowledge of these pianists to the music researcher updating his study.

Tone

The author of this historical title, Harold C. Schonberg has accomplished the virtually insurmountable task of blending the tone of rigorous objective research through centuries of notes, tales, myths, legends and other ambiguous data with a colorful, friendly, popular tone and style that can be appreciated by a casual reader. Schonberg writes as if he knew, listened to and spoke casually to Mozart, Liszt, Horowitz and Gould about piano music and their quirks despite only two being alive at first writing in 1963. Schonberg brings each pianist, dead or alive, to life in the pages of his book. As a result, the dry, confusing and centuries-old objective research evidence supporting Mozart and others life and times are made fresh and enjoyable to read by Schonberg's subjective style of writing. He makes the story of these old and mostly dead pianists come alive and a pleasure to read.

Structure

Schonberg's "The Great Pianists" from Mozart to the Present 500-page historical text is comprised of a Contents page, List of Illustrations, Preface, thirty-eight Chapters with Illustrations interspersed and an Index of names mentioned in the book. Contents page



lists chapter by Roman numeral, descriptive title and page number. List of Illustrations pages list sixty-four names and pages on which one or more pictures are shown. The twenty-two page Index of persons mentioned is listed alphabetically with birth and death dates for pianists if available and page numbers on which subject name is mentioned. Random page count has fifty-six names per page for an estimated average fifty names on each of twenty pages totaling one thousand names in the Index. Illustrations have both young and old photos of pianists to demonstrate their change of appearance over time.

The format used by Schonberg provides an encyclopedic presentation of musical piano and pianist development over the two centuries from the 1700s to the 1900s. Thirty-eight Roman numeral Chapters are listed chronologically with descriptive titles to give readers an "at a glance" idea of the chapter's content. For example, Chapter I, In the Beginning describes exactly that as does Chapter VII, From Ireland to Bohemia, unlike Chapter V, String-Snapper, Hands on High, which makes the reader curious. Thirty-eight chapters may seem excessive but compared to the estimated one thousand named pianists in the Index thirty-eight may not be enough. Ironically, Schonberg's Preface claims "the book does not pretend to be encyclopedic" and admits it is not possible to include everybody. This study guide consolidates thirty-eight chapters into twelve sections by topic/pianist for easier comprehension. No matter how delightful the writing style and interesting the pianists, this number of chapters about pianists is challenging as a casual read. The Index listing has a quick check of pianist birth and death dates on the first line, but is unwieldy for specifics since page numbers that follow are not subject-referenced. Format generally is useful relative to the comprehensive quality of data and detail Schonberg draws upon to present the story of great pianists from the last two centuries.



Quotes

"Finally he conducted, from the clavier, one of his own symphonies. Mozart was fourteen years old at the time. A few years later he was to be instrumental in launching the piano on its decisive career. He was the first of the great pianists" (pg. 37.)

"Mozart would never have changed the harmonic or melodic sense, and he would have played the notes as they were set down. Then he would have amplified on them 'with the appropriate expression and taste,' to quote from the letter once more. No less was expected of any eighteenth-century virtuoso" (pg. 47.)

"Ries, Beethoven's pupil, quotes his master as saying that Cramer was the only pianist of his time. 'All the rest count for nothing.' Strong words indeed from the choosy Beethoven. Cramer and Beethoven had met once in competition, and the consensus was that while Beethoven had more power and energy, and was much the better improviser, Cramer's playing was more correct" (pg. 67.)

"But Moscheles, who complained of the lack of precision and clarity in Beethoven's playing, did not hear him until 1814, by which time Beethoven's hearing was all but gone. And enough evidence of Beethoven's playing until 1805, when deafness caused him to curtail the number of his professional appearances, is available to reconstruct his style with fair certainty" (pg. 83.)

"Just as C.P.E. Bach had codified clavier technique as it was known in the 1750s, so the bridge pianists from Clementi onward tried to codify piano technique. Glorious confusion and disagreement resulted, but that is the rule in piano technique to this very day. Clementi, in his 'Introduction to the Art of Playing on the Pianoforte,' commanded the student to hold the hand and arm in a horizontal position" (pg. 97.)

"Like all other successful pianists, Kalkbrenner wrote a 'Methode.' It was posthumously published in the 1850s. Some of the Kalkbrenner's remarks about interpretation are of interest as indicating how pianists of the day went about their business. Kalkbrenner recommends that rising passages be played crescendo, descending passages diminuendo" (pg. 121.)

"The romantic pianists all decided to be born at much the same time - Mendelssohn in 1809, Chopin in 1810, Liszt in 1811, Thalberg in 1812, Henselt in 1814. In recent years musicologists have done an immense amount of work in baroque and pre-baroque music and to a large extent have disdainfully ignored the nineteenth century" (pg. 127.)

"The relationship between Chopin and Liszt was love-hate. They respected and even admired each other, and certainly Liszt owed much to Chopin, but there was always a tinge of jealousy and spite on Chopin's part. Their uneasy friendship lasted, off and on, for many years. Chopin lived for some time at 38, Rue de la Chaussee d'Antin, and Liszt at the Hotel de France on the Rue Lafitte, only a few blocks away. They saw a great



deal of each other. Liszt could afford to be generous toward his frail colleague" (pg. 151.)

"Disliking public performance as much as he did, and further handicapped by his illness, Chopin made surprisingly few public appearances in his life. His reputation as a pianist rests upon about thirty concerts. He did not have to play much, for he derived a thoroughly satisfactory income from teaching; and he also made quite a bit from his music. Primarily he was a busy society teacher ('I have to give a lesson to young Mme. Rothschild, then to a lady from Marseilles, then to an Englishwoman, then to a Swedish one...') and he apparently had only one pupil of genius" (pg. 157.)

"Liszt was swept off his feet. For the first time he saw a consummate showman in action (and one of the supreme virtuosos in history). Paganini turned out to be one of the decisive influences in his life, for Liszt consciously set out to outdo Paganini; to create on the piano the equivalent effects Paganini had created on the violin" pg. 167.)

"Thalberg's specialty was to bring out the melody with both thumbs, in the middle register of the piano, and surround that melody with arpeggios from top to bottom of the keyboard. It sounded as though he had three hands." Pg 183

"The fact that Dwight fell into a trap that Gottschalk had prepared did not increase the pianist's respect for him. At a Boston concert Gottschalk, without telling anybody, played a Beethoven bagatelle instead of the piece listed on the program, one of his own works. No Boston critic, Dwight included, noticed the change." Pg 223

"In her youth she, like everybody else, had been carried away by Liszt, but as she grew older she reconsidered. 'Before Liszt,' she would say, 'people used to play; after Liszt, they pounded or whispered. He has the decline of piano playing on his conscience.' In 1856 she refused to contaminate herself by playing at the Mozart Festival in Vienna because Liszt was the conductor; nor would she appear at the unveiling of the Schumann memorial at Zwickau (her husband's birthplace) because Liszt was present" (pg. 235.)

"Recital programs began to solidify into the type of chronological program that is still entrenched; a bit of Bach and Scarlatti, Beethoven, Chopin and the other romantics, with a Liszt rhapsody topping everything off and sending the audience home happy. Of course the pianists also played the fashionable but temporary compositions of which every age has its ample supply" (pg. 243.)

"The latter half of the nineteenth century - and, indeed, the first quarter of the twentieth - was dominated by the pupils of Liszt and Leschetizky. In the last decade or so of Liszt's life there flocked to him a remarkable aviary who were to fly all over the pianistic life for years to come" (pg. 291.)

"But there was never any such thing as a Liszt school of playing. His students, having sat at his feet, rose to depart on their respective ways and play according to their



respective philosophies, as have all students of all teachers from the beginning of time" (pg. 325.)

"The seventy-six-year-old pianist said it would never do to let his fingers stiffen and claimed that milking cows was better finger exercise than anything devised by the mind of man" (pg. 333.)

"Carreno and Essipoff were two among the many ladies who charmed music-lovers around the last quarter of the century. Liszt-ladies swarmed all over Europe and America, waving their master's credentials. And there were even a greater number of Leschetizky-ladies" (pg. 353.)

"Hofmann and Rachmaninoff represented the first reflection of the modern attitude that the printed note is the all-important guide for the performer. This was something new in history, though today we take it for granted. And, as the printed note became more and more important (because of the disappearance of such traditions as improvisation and embellishment and the old idea of the virtuoso as hero), so did the 'message' of the composer. All of a sudden the composer tended to become more important than the virtuoso" (pg. 377.)

"Professionals stood in awe of Rachmaninoff's workmanship, and of his ability to accomplish with apparent ease things that were next to impossible. Unlike many of the great pianists, he had enormous hands, and the murderous figurations in his own music, with its very wide stretches, were a result of the unusual conformation of his hands" (pg. 391.)

"Bauer said, in so many words, that it was impossible to follow the printed note even if the musician wished to do so. He believed that the markings of the composers were only 'superficially related to the music . . . Experience has taught me that the average composer's written indications are sometimes, but not always, right, whereas his verbal directions for performance (supplementing those already written) are almost invariably wrong. . . . Personally, although I have sought every opportunity of consulting a composer prior to playing his music in public, it is only very rarely that I have derived any benefit from his suggestions'" (pg. 401-402.)

"The brittle, anti-romantic style was the one that attracted the most comment. It was of the avant-garde; and in the 1920s and 1930s the young composers flocked to the avant-garde. In America during those years the young Leo Ornstein, stimulated by Prokofieff, made a big (though brief) career with his uninhabited, hammer-like attack" (pg. 419.)

"It was granted that Schnabel played Mozart as none other, and that he probably was the greatest Schubert pianist of the century, and that he also had a sure way with Brahms. But it was to Beethoven that he kept coming back, and as far as the public was concerned, Schnabel was the man who invented Beethoven. The Beethoven piano music, at any rate" (pg. 425.)



"Arthur (for years his manager, Sol Hurok, billed him as 'Artur') Rubinstein and Vladimir Horowitz were the two pianistic superstars of their period. Possessed of big egos, they had an uneasy off-and-on friendship. In his autobiography, Rubinstein admitted that Horowitz was the better pianist, but he consoled himself with the belief that he was the better musician. Both pianists invariably played to sold-out houses" (pg. 433.)

"In the late 1980s the three great veterans, the Grand Old Men of the piano still in action, have been Vladimir Horowitz, Claudio Arrau and Rudolf Serkin. Of these three, Horowitz, of course, represents a throwback to nineteenth-century romanticism. Serkin is the exponent of the Austro-German tradition. Arrau, also German-trained, is more eclectic - a pianist who seems to play everything from Bach to Prokofieff (he has looked at atonal and serial music as avant-garde as Boulez but has not felt impelled to play it in public)" (pg. 451.)



Topics for Discussion

Identify, list and describe at least five elements involved in the development of piano playing when it began. What similar musical instruments preceded the piano? Who, what and where were the musicians then famous for playing?

Explain and discuss the significance of classicism compared to romanticism. How do they differ? Discuss why musicians played in one or another style?

Identify, list and describe at least five pianists that played in the Romantic style. How do they differ in approach and popularity?

Identify, describe and discuss differences between playing in a salon compared to playing in a concert hall.

Identify, list and describe the elements of a typical recital program. In your opinion would you attend a recital as a useful way to learn about composers and/or performing pianists? Why or why not?

Describe and discuss at least five distinctive differences between Liszt and Leschetizky. Name five pupils of each and characterize how they were similar or dissimilar from each other.

Describe, characterize and discuss the style of performance de Pachmann used and how it differed from other performers. Provide a specific example of his approach compared to any other performer.

Identify, list, describe and discuss at least three ways in which Busoni and Godowsky differed from each other.

Identify and describe the major significant element of difference in modernism. Do you think modernism made a positive or negative impact on the profession of piano playing? Explain your answer with specific examples.

Identify, list and characterize five Beethovenists in addition to Schnabel. How did they differ from his interpretation of Beethoven?

Compare and contrast the lives and performances of Artur Rubinstein and Vladimir Horowitz. Discuss which one you would prefer to see in concert and describe at least two reasons why or why not you prefer him.

Identify and characterize the influence Van Cliburn had on American audiences. Discuss why you would or would not listen to his recorded performances.