

# THE METHODOLOGY OF ASSIGNING A PIANO REPERTOIRE

## METODOLOGIA ATRIBUIRII UNUI REPERTORIU PIANISTIC

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*Repertoriul constituie elementul fundamental al educației muzicale pe care o primește un interpret, pe parcursul perioadei de școlarizare. Alegerea și interpretarea ideală a unui repertoriu trebuie temeinic gândită și simțită, însușită în așa măsură încât lucrările care îl compun să poată deveni la un moment dat un bun personal al interpretului. În general, în stabilirea pieselor care alcătuiesc repertoriul pianistic se aplică normele unor programe didactice specificului fiecărui student în parte.*

*O frecventă greșeală care apare la unii profesori este aceea de a transforma literatura pianistică în literatură didactică, inversând astfel raportul normal de ridicare a studentului la nivelul operei. Este bine ca studenților să li se încredințeze spre studiu repertorii care să-i avantajeze dar și care să necesite învingerea unor dificultăți puse pe mai slabă dezvoltare a unor aptitudini. Piesele care alcătuiesc un anumit repertoriu trebuie să asigure o continuitate perfectă a evoluției instrumentale în timp.*

**Cuvinte cheie:** Repertoriu, profesor, interpret, evoluție, măiestrie

*The repertoire represents the fundamental element of the musical education which an interpreter receives, during the school period. The choice and the ideal interpretation of a repertoire must be thoroughly thought and felt, acquired in such a way that the works that are a part of it may become at a certain point a personal good of the interpreter. Generally speaking, given the assignation of the works that altogether compile the piano repertoire, there are certain rules of the didactic programs that apply to the singularity of each and every student, according to his particularities. A frequent error that appears to certain teachers is that they have the tendency to transform the piano literature in some sort of didactic literature, reversing therefore the natural level rising balance of the student's work. It is a good thing that the students receive repertoires to study to their advantage but also repertoires that require the overcoming of certain difficulties attributed to the weak development of certain aptitudes. The works that compose a certain repertoire must assure a perfect continuity of instrumental evolution in time.*

**Keywords:** Repertoire, teacher, interpreter, evolution, mastery

***The choice and the ideal interpretation of a repertoire must be thoroughly thought and felt, acquired in such a way that the works that are a part of it may become at a certain point a personal good of the interpreter. This requires an absolute sincerity of moves and emotional states indicated by the composer and this is possible only by the personification of each note with naturalness and warmth, tenderness and vigor, by the depth and sobriety of thinking, which leads to the combination of the most suggestive spots of light and shadow.***

The repertoire represents the fundamental element of the musical education which an interpreter receives, during the school period. The results of the educational work and the development of the future interpreter depend on the reschedule and gradation of the repertoire in relation with the capacities and the perspectives of the pupil or student. This is how the making of the plan of an individual repertoire represents a serious and difficult problem, implying a great deal of psychological depth, guidance spirit, intuition and a special pedagogical tact from he who guides the young musicians to the great performance.

***Generally speaking, given the assignation of the works that altogether compile the piano repertoire, there are certain rules of the didactic programs that apply to the singularity of each and every student, according to his particularities and level. Concerning this last aspect, a greater importance is given to the previous knowledge of technical and expressive possibilities of the student, also to the quality level to which the works will be raised in a certain period of time. A frequent error that appears to certain teachers is that they have the tendency to transform the piano literature in some sort of didactic literature, reversing therefore the natural level rising balance of the student's work. The composition is not adaptable to the different phases of the student's development, given that the esthetic values are incompatible to the planned didactic gradation. Therefore, the program must not be respected ad litteram but to be seen as only a point of departure and guidance in the considerable difficult work the teacher provides, more or less experimented.***

It is a good thing that the students receive repertoires to study in their advantage but also repertoires that require the overcome of certain difficulties attributed to the weak development of certain aptitudes. If, for example, a student proves that he disposes of a good agility of his fingers and in general he does not have difficulties in the technical approach of a material but he is tense and rough in his sonorities, the teacher will introduce in his repertoire chart slower cantabile works, in an ambient mood, which will require a special care of the touch and a more exacting control of the student's hearing.

Likewise, the works that compose a certain repertoire must assure a perfect continuity of instrumental evolution in time. This aspect is often neglected and therefore this leads to the situation in which, at a certain point, the requirement of approaching a concert work composed by Robert

Schumann, Frederic Chopin or Johannes Brahms becomes acute, the teacher discovering that in the previous repertoires the student did not approach enough romantic works, which will lead inevitably to the welcome of certain great difficulties concerning the utilization of the pedal, the musical phrases, the cantilena legato, the support etc. Of course, it is obviously that a student will not be given one of the latest sonatas composed by Ludwig van Beethoven without previously having learned other fundamental works of the same composer, which will prepare technically and stylistically speaking the capacity of comprehension and realization of an important opus.

Another deficiency in the composition of a repertoire is the element of compensation which must be a part of all the composing works. They must have a different degree of difficulty, must be accessible and have as main goal the harmonious and balanced development of all sides that contribute to the formation of the future pianist. In this way it is preferable that the teacher does not choose only long-term works, difficult technically and emotionally speaking, but to alternate the study with miniature works which allows the student to develop all his possibilities, thanks to a so-called "pill of music".

In the moment in which the number of assigned study works is exaggerated, the student will succeed only with a great difficulty to accomplish them, which will eventually lead to a certain type of stagnation in his evolution. In this situation the students will always find themselves incapable of leading the works to an end, interrupting their study at the first movement of a sonata or at learning only some variations or worse, only at some preludes from the *Well-Tempered Clavier* by Johann Sebastian Bach, neglecting the whole that each part of those forms together with the afferent fugues. This is why in the choice of the works, you have to bear in mind as a main purpose the student's accomplishment of a certain level of technical and esthetical development, always following that the quality primes the quantity, always allowing the realization of the integral repertoire and not just in any way.

In case of a choice for a faulty repertoire plan, there will be always unfavorable consequences for the student but also for the teacher. Therefore, it is highly recommended a very profound knowledge of the whole material proposed for study, in order to avoid the unpleasant situations in which, after a certain period of time, the teacher realizes that one of the works was not suitable at that point. The comeback of the pedagogue in a decision taken not too long ago affects the student's trust and contributes to the decrease of the teacher's prestige in front of the student. Of course, it would be absurd to ask a teacher to include in the repertoire all the works that his students have to study but, in the same time, it is a must for him to have a large knowledge of the piano literature from all times, genres or styles.

The mechanical choice of the material of study and always the same for every generation of students will inevitably lead to the poverty of the musical horizon of the teacher, that of the student and last but not least, that of the educational institution. This practice has as a consequence the presence at exams, competitions or recitals of the same musical sheets, an aspect that will become more harmful due to the fact that this limitation narrows considerably the possibilities of enlargement of the musical culture that the students obtain in their years of school, knowing that they are more responsive to everything that is new in their own repertoire or that of their colleagues. The emotional reaction made by the musical content represents the central moment of the affective and emotional feeling, the attraction for a specific work being determined by the esthetical satisfaction given by it. So it is normal to use in the process of musical education a material with a large emotional content. The student who has a more pronounced musical sensibility will be more attracted by the musical content, and his affective intellectual participation in the process of interpretations will have a higher intensity.

Generally, the repertoire works which are studied in academic musical institutes belong to a certain number of classical and romantic composers preferred for their accessible works and for the liberty of interpretation which they reasonably allow. The works of the pre-classical composers are often avoided, due to their precise rhythm and their counter pointed or polyphonic composition, works which represent in fact the best educational choice in the process of developing the internal hearing. Also, the approach of the works which belong to modern or contemporary composers are neglected,

due to their new techniques of composition that discover new ways of expression, a larger ensemble of particularization and diversification of the sonorous image.

We cannot speak of the study of a repertoire neglecting the instrumental technique. The teacher is given the task to follow with the same requirement the technical accuracy of the works but also the problems with the interpretation. Lately, there is a more and more evident tendency to neglect the studies and the technical exercises and their absence is often crucial in the realization of the repertoire works. The systematic study of this musical genre will have as a consequence not only the gradual development and the perfection of dexterity and the right skills but also the solution to all the technical problems that are implied in the studied works. It is a good thing for the choice of studies to include more authors and different manuals, taking into consideration the necessary gradation after the categories of technical problems that these raise. This involves the observation that, from a methodical point of view, the repertoire works are distinguished from the exercises and in a large part from studies, due to the fact that above the technical realization of the works, they impose problems of conception, style, interpretation, all of these aspects leading to a complete and accurate expression of the content of ideas. Because we find in the studies a musical content which must be fully understood and interpreted, many principles and methodical indications for the studies are valid also in the study of the works themselves.

In conclusion, a very important aspect in the choice of the works containing a repertoire is that of their diversity at a difficulty degree, style, form, character and content, in such a way that the main goal becomes the harmonious and balanced development in all sides that establish the development of the future pianist. Also, the main goal that the teacher is due to follow in his work is that of proceeding in such a way that, at a certain point he will no longer be of such a need to the student, to teach him how to think and work properly, to form a conscience of his own possibilities and the ability to achieve his purpose. All this will lead to the maturation of the young interpreter, beyond which the mastery begins.