

accordion, harpsichord or pedal harp - is equally at home writing for the piano, organ, brass band, wind band, recorder, percussion, strings or whatever medium his research, imagination and inspiration dictate. Counterpoint ("there are too many fugues amongst his compositions", p.283)) and transcription ("of which art he is surely the most accomplished practitioner alive today", p. 282, and which constitutes nearly 40% of his output, p. 101) are strong characteristics of his music. Indeed the latter, rather than being a mere re-hashing of the same material, seeks to "translate" and "transfigure" it (p. 282) in his capable hands. Consider, for example, his *pibroch* music, *Cumha na Cloinne (Lament for Children)*, which paraphrases a 17th century *úrlar* by Patrick Mór MacCrimmon who lost seven of his eight sons within a year. "I recast his melody thinking of all the child victims of Nazism", says Ronald (p. 63), who also used part of this lament in his *Passacaglia on DSCH* (with 645 repetitions of the *DSCH* motive and at 80+ minutes "probably the longest single movement in piano literature", p. 84 - a kindred spirit of Sorabji!).

"Stevenson shares Busoni's views on the importance of transcription - that it is itself an act of composition - and in Stevenson's own output a work may exist in several scorings, between which it may (or may not) have changed in detail. It is occasionally hard to judge, moreover, when a work is a transcription or paraphrase or contains so much of Stevenson himself that it must be classed as an original composition" (p. 380). His enormous *œuvre* is replete with orchestral works; choral (*a cappella*, accompanied, children's choir) and vocal works; instrumental solo works (including bagpipes) and concerti (violin; cello; two for piano); chamber music (including recorder, harp, clarsach, harpsichord, free-bass accordion, and others); works for stage and screen (ballet and television); transcriptions, arrangements, cadenzas and editions; and several incomplete works (including two operas). I only wish that a representative CD of Stevenson's music and playing had been included with the book, but I am assured by the publisher that many future CDs will soon be forthcoming, as will be the book, *Busoni - Aspects of a Genius*, Volume One of *Ronald Stevenson on Music*.

While the performing and compositional aspects of Ronald's life and career have been focused here, he is naturally - simply by being himself - a great pedagogue. It seems only befitting to close with his words: "In the arts [...] credentials don't matter. Nothing in the arts can be taught anyway. Everything has to be *learnt*. And *doing* is learning. One so often hears the question: who was his teacher? - as if teachers are the 'open sesame'! It is the *spiritual* masters who matter; the affinities that a composer discovers for himself" (p.48, from *Western Music*, p. 133).

Nancy Lee Harper

Klavierübungen - zur Heilung physiologischer Spielstörungen und zum Erlernen eines funktionell-natürlichen Klavierspiels

Notentext und Beschreibung

by Peter Feuchtwanger

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Finally, *Peter Feuchtwanger's* long-awaited written companion to the visual demonstration (available in DVD or video) of his fascinating approach to piano technique. Described as the "Zen Master of Piano Pedagogy" (Roland R. Rogers), Peter's unique way of unravelling the mysteries of virtuoso technique and solving the most complex digital problems, all the while making it easy for novices and professionals alike, is scientifically presented. Amply illustrated with musical examples and historically supported by photographic documentation and testimonies (from the likes of Shura Cherkassky, Martha Argerich, Dinorah Varsi and many others too numerous to mention here), this book should be on every pianist's piano as a manual for reflection on a supremely logical, for all that it is revolutionary, way to acquire a better piano technique.

It has been said that Feuchtwanger's practical philosophy is in line with that of the great Moshe Feldenkrais. Certainly, their principles of application contain similarities. Feuchtwanger's book is divided into three parts. The first part includes a historical overview of physiological considerations from Diruta, Couperin, Czerny, Türk, Clara Wieck amongst others, until arriving at the ultimate goal of "inner balance". In addition, Achim Clemens writes about Peter's piano exercises while Hannelies Finck adds her insights.

In the second part, 18 exercises - all with names as in the Yoga tradition - are presented with a preceding introduction that takes into consideration aspects of mechanics and technique; use of hand, arm and elbow, etc.; repetition; fingering; employing elliptical motion; inner hearing; concentration; "Quick release"; "Changing positions"; "Ricochet - 1, 2, 3"; "Trill exercise"; "Parachute"; "Scales - 1, 2 and more"; "On the flexibility of the Thumbs 1, 2 (for octaves - the "Chameleon"), 3 (combination Ricochet-Sling), 4, 5; Repetition studies 1 (hand transfer), 2 (hand suppleness) and 3 (hand position changes). Following these exercises, Birgit Nerdinger comments on some alternative possibilities.

In the third part, further aspects of the technique are dealt with (correct posture at the piano; unnatural approaches to the piano). Hans Theodor Wohlfahrt, in an interview with Feuchtwanger, speaks of matters concerning piano repertoire, Alexander Technique and finger exercises used for ornamentation and in works of Haydn, C.P.E. Bach, the "Waldstein" sonata of Beethoven, the A minor sonata of Mozart, the Chopin Ballades and

Scherzi, studies of Liszt, Debussy, Czerny and the like. Manfred Seewann speaks about exercises applied when beginning piano instruction. Stefan Blido speaks about "Zen in the Art of Piano Playing" with regard to the technique. A page of genial technical solutions from the standard piano repertoire follows: Beethoven's *Für Elise* (opening), the "Moonlight" (III, ms. 34); Mozart's Sonata, K. 576 (I, ms. 130-131); and Chopin's "Souvenir de Paganini" (ms. 36). Complementing these examples is an original composition by Feuchtwanger in manuscript, entitled *Study no 4 in Eastern Idiom (Instrumental Prelude in Arabic or Iranian Music)*, which indelibly illustrates aspects of his technique.

As I sat writing this review, I was inspired by a recording of the magnificent playing and translucency of tone of Grygory Sokolov in a live performance, whose majesty and poetry of expression is remarkable. Although Sokolov may have had no direct knowledge of this technique, the fluidity and freedom with which he plays is exactly what Peter's technique helps pianists to achieve in service to the music. It can only be hoped that the English translation of this indispensable manual will soon be available.

Nancy Lee Harper

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The German Book comprising 132 Pages, with many articles and photos of great singers and pianists which have never been published before, is available together with the video! The Book comprises the complete Piano Exercises, which are explained in detail by three assistants of Peter Feuchtwanger. It also includes instructions how to teach these exercises to children. The video and the book can not be purchased separately. The price is 65,- € + costs of shipment. The English Translation of the Book is in Preparation and will be available in Spring 2006.

To order send an Email to blido@t-online.de or visit the website www.peter-feuchtwanger.de or send a postcard to: Stefan Bildo, Gustav-Freytag-Str. 47, D-97877 Wertheim, Germany.

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