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Piano Pedagogy in New York in the Late Twentieth Century: Interviews with Four Master Teachers

by

Diane L. Goldberg

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4/22/99
Date

Chair of Examining Committee

4/27/99
Date

Executive Officer

Peter Basquin

Alison Deane

L. Michael Griffel

Jon Klibonoff

Ronald Roseman

Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Preface

Musicians come to New York from all over the world to study with renowned music teachers. This thesis investigates the pedagogical ideas and backgrounds of four of today's successful New York piano teachers. Through interviews, attendance at lessons, and discussions with pupils and teachers, I will explore the various methodologies and pedagogical techniques of Arkady Aronov, Martin Canin, Gilbert Kalish, and Herbert Stessin. These four are current representatives of New York City's preeminent piano teachers. Their ideas and teaching styles will be documented, including their opinions on issues such as repertoire, recordings, competitions, talent, and life in music in the late twentieth century.

My research began with the selection of four great piano teachers. Stessin, Canin, Kalish, and Aronov were chosen for various reasons.

a) At the age of fifteen, I began studying with Stessin. It seemed important to me to record his ideas for future piano students. I was also interested in speaking with other Stessin students, to learn from their ideas and experiences with him.

b) Since I had many friends who had studied with Canin, I was excited to learn about his teaching approach and ideas on music.

c) When applying to graduate schools, I played for both Canin and Kalish for entry to the D.M.A. program at Stony Brook. I enjoyed the audition and the interaction with these two teachers. Having heard Kalish in many chamber music concerts and knowing of his interest in contemporary music, I was

extremely interested in learning about his musical ideas and teaching approach.

d) I had met Aronov at a meeting at the Abraham Goodman House, where he was discussing the idea of a new elementary school focused on music and based on the Russian Special School that he had attended. I spoke with Aronov, and immediately became interested in his teaching ideas and approach.

e) I asked five other teachers to be a part of my dissertation project, too, but they were not interested.

f) I wanted to represent schools other than Juilliard, as well as that famed conservatory.

Stessin and Canin teach at the Juilliard School, Aronov teaches at both the Manhattan School of Music and the Mannes College of Music, and Kalish teaches in the graduate division of SUNY-Stony Brook while also maintaining an established performing career. These four agreed to let me interview them and their students and to audit lessons. All four teachers were enthusiastic about participation in this project. Each was interviewed for two to three hours and recorded on tape. I chose three students from each studio, looking for students who had been with their teacher for various lengths of time and were enrolled in different programs within their school. I interviewed each student for forty-five to sixty minutes, and recorded the interviews on tape. Thereafter, I attended the students' piano lessons, except for those of Martin Canin, who preferred that I have his students describe their lessons instead of having an observer at the lesson. All the tapes

were then transcribed. This paper presents material drawn from these interviews, and provides a view of the musical lives and pedagogical principles of four esteemed and inspirational piano teachers. The order of the material is placed in the actual order of my interviews. I first spent time with Stessin and his students, then Canin, then Aronov, then Kalish.

To place this material in historical context, I will also examine the history of piano pedagogy and the relationship of the four interviewed piano teachers to their predecessors. Chapter 1 will review pedagogic principles; Chapter 2 will explain the relationship between these principles and current practices. I will show that a common historical practice informs current New York pedagogy.

I have chosen to leave a substantial part of the interview material in the teacher's own words. From this approach, I believe that the reader is able to actually sense the essence of each teacher's personality. Though the responses vary in length, each teacher was given an equal opportunity to comment on all questions.

This document gives insight to the personalities, experiences, and teaching of these four master teachers, with information gathered in the late 1990's. I made the decision to portray these teachers in a positive light. I did not change or alter any of the material within this document, and student viewpoints are recreated with exact words, as well. Though these teachers are acknowledged as great teachers, each teacher is not, and cannot be, the perfect fit for every student.

The interviewed teachers suggested a number of students for me to contact, and I met with and interviewed three from each studio, as previously explained. These students did not describe negative experiences with their teachers, nor did I include the search for negativism or problematic issues. At the time of the interviews, these students were studying with their prospective teacher, and it was in their best interest to focus on the positive aspects to their lessons. Each teacher has been teaching for over forty years, and if I had interviewed some students from the past ten or twenty years, perhaps the information gathered would describe a somewhat different picture, including variations in both lesson format and teaching approach. Each teaching style has continued to grow, change, and develop through time and experience. The information contained in this document portrays the opinions and ideas of the four interviewed teachers and the twelve interviewed students of today.

I would like to thank the following members of the Graduate Center of the City University of New York: Peter Basquin, Alison Deane, L. Michael Griffel, Jon Klibonoff, Phil Lambert, and Ronald Roseman. I appreciate all of their time, advice, insight, assistance, interest, and enthusiasm for this project.

I wish to publicly thank the four teachers – Arkady Aronov, Martin Canin, Gilbert Kalish, and Herbert Stessin – and their students. I trust that their words and insights will be valuable for teachers and performers alike.

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Chapter 1: History of Pedagogy

This thesis explores the pedagogical methods and ideas of four distinguished New York City piano teachers. In order to relate these ideas to those of previous teachers, one needs to identify and describe briefly the written pedagogical material of the past, specifically from the early eighteenth century to the late twentieth century. This groundwork will put the interviewed teachers' ideas into perspective, thus examining a sample of current educational thinking in New York City. Pertinent issues include the function and role of keyboard music, the physical characteristics of the keyboard instrument, and research interests from a given period of time. This document will eventually focus on another critical issue, that is, the philosophical ideas within piano pedagogy.

In the early eighteenth century, keyboard music was utilitarian in function, often used to serve or enhance the church. In this perfunctory role, there was little need for explanation or clarification through pedagogical writings. By the early nineteenth century, music had itself become the focus. Music was brought to the concert hall and listening to music became a priority. Musical compositions were becoming more technically demanding. Instructional writings (explanations and exercises) began to appear, as a necessary method to deal with the changes and challenges of the music. Music was composed with complex and expressive goals. Teaching methods tried to aid in achieving these goals. Most educational writings of the twentieth century still apply to music of the nineteenth century, a fact which reflects the state of current concert life, in which the nineteenth century repertoire remains central.

In the mid-eighteenth century, keyboard instruments began to change, developing from the harpsichord to the fortepiano. As mentioned above, the instrument's physical properties are an important detail in studying pedagogy. J. S. Bach composed music for the harpsichord and clavichord, not the modern piano. The use of the pedal (an issue discussed greatly by many methodology books) was developed after today's pedal became standard. And the practice of rapid repeated notes could be discussed only after the double-escapement mechanism was invented and perfected. When studying pedagogical material, one needs to realize the historical viewpoint with regard to the development of the instrument.

During the end of the eighteenth century, emphasis was placed on the physics of playing. Pedagogues began describing "scientific" approaches to playing keyboard instruments.[1] This anatomical approach supposedly explains the "natural" way to utilize the hands and fingers, with the mechanics of physics explaining how to use technique most efficiently.[2] The psychological aspect teaches performers to control their minds, conquering problems such as stage fright, memorization, and tempo control. Neurophysiology explains how the brain and central nervous system work together to create the desired muscular response needed to play the piano. There are, however, problems regarding these scientific approaches. Musicians seldom pursue one approach and most of them resist subjecting their ideas to scrutiny and analysis. Concepts such as "talent" and "profound"

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[1] George Kochevitsky, The Art of Piano Playing: A Scientific Approach (Evanston, Ill.: Summy-Birch and Company, 1967), p.4.

[2] József Gát, Zongorajáték technikája (The Technique of Piano Playing), 4th ed., trans. István Kleszky (London: Collet's Publishers Ltd, 1974), p.97.

defy reduction to a nonsubjective view. This "scientific" approach was developed by musicians and teachers during the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth.[3] While helpful, these methods were often unscientific, not based on a real physiology.

During the mid-nineteenth century and the twentieth, the concept of "the quickest solution" became a factor in pedagogical material. Even today, students search for the simplest solution in the shortest amount of time. Methods, like Hanon's,[4] which suggest studying all the published exercises for hours each day, seem unrealistic and somewhat irrelevant. To completely understand pedagogical beliefs, explanations, and guidelines, one must consider the time period of the specific treatise and instrumentation.

Three basic philosophical principles can be observed throughout the pedagogical material:

1. Ideas, methods, techniques which work for one pianist may not work for another, for the uniqueness of the individual must be considered.
2. Technical skills and artistic goals are interconnected, though each is discussed as a separate issue.
3. As people accept and understand that playing a keyboard instrument is extremely difficult and demanding, they must carefully analyze any system or method in order to determine that it is worthwhile for study.[5]

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[3] George Kochevitsky, The Art of Piano Playing: A Scientific Approach (Evanston, Ill.: Summy-Birch and Company, 1967), p.9.
[4] Charles Louis Hanon (1820-1900), The Virtuoso Pianist, trans. Theodore Baker (New York: G. Schirmer, 1900). Hanon believed that all fingers should be trained equally.
[5] Marienne Uszler, Stewart Gordon, and Elyse Mach, The Well-Tempered Keyboard Teacher (New York: Schirmer Books, 1991), p.297.

The above pedagogical principles evolved over two centuries and are easily recognized through the approaches of the four teachers interviewed in this study. All four believe in the individualization of teaching, describing their ideas as the "no method" approach, which supports these basic principles of pedagogy. Also, these four teachers learned from their predecessors, and their notions can be linked to the ideas of the great teacher Leschetizky, which will be examined below.

Though many teachers state that they disregard pedagogical treatises, they actually utilize the principles found in them. Since the seventeenth century, many such treatises have been written describing how to play the piano, how to teach piano, and how to be a successful teacher. In 1716 François Couperin (1668-1733) completed The Art of Playing the Harpsichord,[6] describing technical issues, such as details on elbow, wrist, and hand placement, explanations on fingerings, and the execution of ornaments. In the 1750's, the German theorist, journalist, music critic, and composer Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg (1718-1795) wrote The Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments and Introduction to Playing Keyboard Instruments.[7] Though these writings seem to have been overshadowed by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach's (1714-1788) writings, Marpurg describes the "correct" method of piano playing, explaining that the "player's nerves be kept

[6] L'art de toucher le clavecin (Paris, 1716). The Art of Playing the Harpsichord, English edition trans. Mevanwy Roberts (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1933).

[7] Die Kunst das Klavier zu spielen (Berlin: Haude & Spencer, 1751), Anleitung zum Klavierspielen, der schönen Ausübung der heutigen Zeit gemäss (Berlin: Haude & Spencer, 1755).

entirely passive and the fingers feel perfectly free, as if they had nothing at all to do with the playing."[8]

Probably the most influential method book of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was C.P.E. Bach's two-part Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments[9] (1753, 1762). Part One deals with technique, describing the importance of left-hand flexibility and independence. The Essay, however, is best known for its detailed descriptions and explanations of keyboard embellishments and other performance practices of the period. C.P.E. Bach suggests slow practice, careful attention to fingering, and learning music first without ornaments. Regarding ornamentation, he describes, with examples, the definition and use of appoggiaturas, trills, turns, mordents, compound appoggiaturas, snaps, and the decoration of fermati. Part Two focuses on the theory and composition of music, dealing with intervals, thorough bass, accompaniment procedures, and improvisation. When discussing performance, "Bach tries to place the value of technique in perspective with the values of musical sensibility and emotional expression."[10] Bach states, "A musician cannot move others unless he too is moved. He must of necessity feel all of the affects that he hopes to arouse in his audience, for the revealing of his own humor will stimulate a like humor in the listener. In languishing, sad passages, the performer must languish and grow sad.

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[8]Marienne Uszler, Stewart Gordon, and Elyse Mach, The Well-Tempered Keyboard Teacher (New York: Schirmer Books, 1991), p.299.

[9] Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen.

[10]Marienne Uszler, Stewart Gordon, and Elyse Mach, The Well-Tempered Keyboard Teacher (New York: Schirmer Books, 1991), p.303.

Thus will the expression of the piece be more clearly perceived by the audience."[11] These ideas chronicle one of the earliest statements of the importance of artistry, individuality, and the performer's responsibility to assume the emotion of the composer – foreshadowing the work and ideas of the great teachers of the late twentieth century.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, pedagogical material continued to place emphasis on issues of technique. In 1802 Johann Nicolaus Forkel[12] (1749-1818) described J. S. Bach's (1685-1750) pedagogy, emphasizing the importance of tone production and a bent-fingers hand position, while keeping each finger on the surface of the key.[13] Muzio Clementi (1752-1832) highlights the importance, and necessity, of playing legato in his Introduction to the Art of Playing the Pianoforte[14] (1801). In 1828 Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778-1837) included more than 2,000 short exercises and musical examples in his A Complete Theoretical and Practical Course of Instructions on the Art of Playing the Pianoforte.[15] In its third volume, Hummel discusses musical interpretation, and suggests that all trills should begin on the principal note, one of the earliest written statements of this idea.[16] Hummel believes that pianists should watch the

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[11] Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments, trans. William J. Mitchell (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1949), p.152.
[12] Johann Nicolaus Forkel, Über Johann Sebastian Bachs Leben, Kunst, und Kunstwerke (1802). Music historian, bibliographer, and biographer of J. S. Bach.
[13] Marienne Uszler, Stewart Gordon, and Elyse Mach, The Well-Tempered Keyboard Teacher (New York: Schirmer Books, 1991), p.299.
[14] Muzio Clementi, Introduction to the Art of Playing the Pianoforte (London: Clementi, Banger, Hyde, Collard & Davis, 1801).
[15] Johann Nepomuk Hummel, Ausführlich theoretisch-practische Anweisung zum Piano-forte Spiel, trans. unknown (London: T. Boosey & Co., 1829). Reprint (Boston: T. Boosey & Co., 1850).
[16] Marienne Uszler, Stewart Gordon, and Elyse Mach, The Well-Tempered Keyboard Teacher (New York: Schirmer Books, 1991), p.306.

music and not their fingers. He also cautions against the use of excessive rubato and embellishments.

Carl Czerny (1791-1857), a student of Beethoven's, wrote four volumes of pedagogical material in 1839, titled The Complete Theoretical and Practical Pianoforte School, from the First Rudiments of Playing to the Highest and Most Refined State of Cultivation; with the Requisite Numerous Examples, Newly and Expressly Composed for the Occasion. Volume Three is devoted to questions of tempo, musical expression, memorizing, transposition, improvisation, and piano tuning. Volume Four describes Czerny's viewpoints on how to play the music of Beethoven. Czerny's work is particularly interesting because of his own piano lessons with Beethoven. Using his personal experience to share Beethoven's ideas on playing the great composer's music, Czerny lets his personal experience guide the approach of his treatise. Czerny's fourth volume foreshadows the approach of pedagogical literature of the twentieth century. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, these authors, usually musicians and teachers, emphasized technical aspects of playing the piano. Pedagogical material of the middle-to-late twentieth century has moved from a technical focus to a more personal approach: the philosophical approach has changed from the recommending of technical solutions to the passing down of a specific pianist's or teacher's ideas and viewpoints; this transformation has created verbal lineage and a pedagogical tree. The four teachers interviewed all indicate that their pedagogical approach is a direct result of their years of study with various teachers, along with their own personal experiences. Today's interest in the specific ideas of master pianists and master teachers forms the basis of this study.

In 1840 Ignaz Moscheles (1794-1870) and François-Joseph Fétis (1784-1871) published a method book entitled Methode des Methodes, to which Chopin contributed three small etudes. This treatise was concerned with technique only as a tool to create art. Moscheles and Fétis state their belief that "technical principles are born of great art and should constantly be altered or updated in response to musical demands."[17] They also state that pianists should be focused on sound. Most piano teachers of advanced pianists also agree with this pedagogy – technique should not be studied for technique's sake, but to solve problems as they arise in the student's repertoire for the larger goals of artistic exploration.

In Amy Fay's Music Study in Germany (1880), the American piano student recounts the thrilling experience of studying piano with such great teachers as Franz Liszt,[18] Carl Tausig,[19] Theodor Kullak,[20] and Ludwig Deppe.[21] Fay focuses on her studies with Deppe, describing his strong opinions on weight technique, explaining Deppe's recommendation of "sitting very low – that is – not higher than a common chair.... In a low seat the fingers have to work a great deal more, because you can't assist them by

[17] Ibid., p.311.
[18] Franz Liszt (1811-1886). Student of Czerny, composer, teacher, and virtuoso pianist.
[19] Carl Tausig (1841-1871). Polish pianist and composer, known for technical dexterity and endurance. Born Warsaw, died Leipzig.
[20] Theodor Kullak (1818-1882). Student of Czerny, friend of Liszt. Pianist and teacher. Born Poland, died Berlin.
[21] Ludwig Deppe (1828-1890). Noted German conductor and piano teacher. Author of Armleiden der Klavierspieler (Arm Ailments of the Pianist).

bringing the weight of your arm to bear."[22] Deppe also believed that the fingers must be as curved as possible. "He turns the hand very much out, so as to make the knuckles of the third and fourth fingers higher than those of the first and second, and as he does not permit you to throw out the elbow in doing this, the turn must be made from the wrist. The thumb must also be slightly curved, and quite free from the hand."[23] Fay's book is one of the earliest written accounts of this technical hand position. Pianists of today generally have adopted this technique.

One of the most prestigious piano teachers of all time was Theodor Leschetizky (1830-1915). As mentioned before, Leschetizky did not believe in a rigid pedagogical method. He had a special rapport with each of his students: "He was able to make students listen to themselves accurately, to drive them, to change them through his authority, and ultimately to enhance to the fullest every bit of artistic potential each possessed."[24] Among Leschetizky's students were Artur Schnabel, Isabelle Vengerova, Vassily Safonov, Ignace Paderewski, Mark Hambourg, Fanny Bloomfield-Zeisler, Ignaz Friedman, and Benno Moisewitsch.

Though Leschetizky did not write about his "method," he understood the instrument and the anatomy of playing. Several of Leschetizky's students wrote about their teacher,

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[22] Amy Fay, Music Study in Germany (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1965), p.293. Originally published in Chicago in 1880 by A. C. McClurg & Company.
[23] Ibid., p.289.
[24] Marienne Uszler, Stewart Gordon, and Elyse Mach, The Well-Tempered Keyboard Teacher (New York: Schirmer Books, 1991), p.324.

describing in detail their experiences. Leschetizky was aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the hands of each of his students. During lessons he focused on sound, tone, rhythm, and musicality. He consistently encouraged his students to listen to themselves. He believed in a "three-fold process of mind, eye, and ear; the lack of one of those essentials of talent was a serious matter in the development of an artist. Some had a good memory, but the ear was either naturally deficient, or was not trained to listen; others had, perhaps, great powers of expression in tones, but with no 'keyboard sense' whatsoever, and this he attributed to a lack of training of the eye.... Getting to the bottom of the keys in playing was a question of eye as much as of touch."[25] His pedagogical ideas were based on the individualization of teaching: his method was to have no method.[26]

During lessons, Leschetizky often played the piano himself. His students would then try to imitate his sound, musicality, and phrasing. He did, however, encourage each student to find his or her own way, his or her own sound. He suggested that his students study away from the piano. Leschetizky believed in:

i) first practicing slowly, and then up to tempo,[27]

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[25] Ethel Newcomb, Leschetizky, As I Knew Him (New York: Da Capo Press, 1967), p.11.
[26] Malwine Brée, Grundlage der Methode Leschetizky (The Groundwork of the Leschetizky Method) (Vienna, 1902). Reprint trans. Dr. Th. Baker (New York: Haskell House Publishers Ltd., 1969), in Foreword, letter from Leschetizky to Brée: "As you know, I am from principle no friend of theoretical piano-methods."
[27] Ibid., p.75.

ii) visualization of the music, and

iii) theoretical understanding of every chord.[28]

Leschetizky also strongly stressed interpretive experimentation, a continuation of individual expression and artistry.

Technique, musicality, and the emphasis on the individual were the trademarks of Leschetizky's teaching. This "no method" approach has been passed down to current master teachers as seen in this study. Leschetizky recognized the importance of teachers, stating, "Every pianist should have pupils. People forget the artists who have only played, but pupils carry on the teachers' memory."[29] Similarly, Leon Fleisher believes that "teaching is one step beyond performing. Teaching entails more responsibility.... A teacher is far more serious and responsible because it's something that is passed on to the next generation, which will itself pass it on, and so forth."[30] Pedagogical material written in the late twentieth century describes pianists' ideas in terms of their experiences: knowledge they gained from their personal interactions with various teachers. In the course of this study and these interviews, the importance of master teachers has become even clearer.

In the early twentieth century, discussion of technique remained the primary pedagogical issue. Rudolf Maria Breithaupt (1873-1945), one of the most recognized authors on the

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[28] Ethel Newcomb, Leschetizky, As I Knew Him (New York: Da Capo Press, 1967), pp.96-99.
[29] Ibid., p.91.
[30] Marienne Uszler, Stewart Gordon, and Elyse Mach, The Well-Tempered Keyboard Teacher (New York: Schirmer Books, 1991), p.385.

concept of arm weight at the keyboard, published The Natural Piano Technique[31] (in three parts from 1905 to 1907), in which he described his concepts of freedom of motion and relaxation through arm weight. He believed that focus should initially be on the arm, then wrist, then finger action – the reverse order of prevailing pedagogical doctrines of the early twentieth century.[32]

Tobias Matthay (1858-1945) took a more middleground approach, combining tradition and newer concepts in his The Act of Touch (1903). Discussing technique, Matthay presents his ideas on touch (preferring the flat-finger technique approach to the bent-finger position),[33]phrasing, and rhythm.[34] Matthay's success as a teacher is due to his "no-method" approach, developing a unique rapport with each student. Matthay's belief in the importance of artistry is later described in his Musical Interpretation (1913), where he describes the necessity for cultivating and increasing musical imagination.[35]

During the first few decades of the twentieth century, writers on piano pedagogy continued to stress technique. In 1930 Maria Levinskaya published The Levinskaya System of Pianoforte Technique and Tone-Colour through Mental and Muscular Control. Levinskaya tried to combine older finger methods with the modern arm weight

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[31] Rudolph Maria Breithaupt, Die natürliche Klaviertechnik, 2 vols., trans. John Bernhoff (Leipzig: C. Kahnt Nachfolger, 1905-1907).
[32] George Kochevitsky, The Art of Piano Playing: A Scientific Approach (Evanston, Ill.: Summy-Birch and Company, 1967), p.9.
[33] Tobias Matthay, The First Principles of Pianoforte Playing, extract from The Act of Touch (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1905), p.63.
[34] Ibid., p.36.
[35] Tobias Matthay, Musical Interpretation (Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1913; reprint 1970), p.10.

techniques of Breithaupt.[36] In 1925 Otto Rudolf Ortmann (1899-1979) completed The Physical Basis of Piano Touch and Tone, and in 1929 he wrote The Physiological Mechanics of Piano Technique, using a scientific process to examine pianistic problems.[37] This approach was widely debated, since most pedagogical approaches dealt with the tone color, weight, relaxation, and wrist rotation of Matthay, Breithaupt, and Leschetizky. Arnold Schultz (1903-1972) gave another physiological viewpoint to piano playing in his The Riddle of the Pianist's Finger (1936), agreeing with many of Ortmann's concepts, while disregarding the ideas of Matthay, Breithaupt, and Leschetizky.[38]

Abby Whiteside (1881-1956) developed nontraditional ideas in The Pianist's Mechanism (1929) and Indispensibles of Piano Playing (1955). She explains that she does not believe in stressing fingering, slow practicing, developing hand positions, or using any technical materials such as Hanon or Czerny exercises for younger students.[39] Whiteside believes that the entire playing mechanism should be driven by rhythm. "Rhythm is the simplest and by far the most efficient of all tools for getting results."[40] Whiteside stresses the talents of jazz pianists, who have high improvisational and hearing skills and a high instinctual rhythmic capacity.

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[36] Maria Levinskaya, The Levinskaya System of Pianoforte Technique and Tone-Colour through Mental and Muscular Control (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1930), p.54.
[37] Marienne Uszler, Stewart Gordon, and Elyse Mach, The Well-Tempered Keyboard Teacher (New York: Schirmer Books, 1991), p.334.
[38] Ibid., p.340.
[39] George Kochevitsky, The Art of Piano Playing: A Scientific Approach (Evanston, Ill: Summy-Birch and Company, 1967), p.50.
[40] Ibid., p.126.

Pedagogical focus was transformed with the realization of the importance of personal experience with various teachers. The Soviet pianist and teacher Heinrich Neuhaus (1888-1964) was the piano teacher of Radu Lupu, Emil Gilels, and Sviatoslav Richter, to name a few. Neuhaus's father studied with Ferdinand Hiller, who had been a student of Beethoven, and his uncle, Felix Blumenfeld, trained Vladimir Horowitz. Besides his father and uncle, Neuhaus was influenced by his own piano teacher, Leopold Godowsky. Neuhaus describes his belief in "no methodology" in The Art of Piano Playing[41] (trans. 1973), emphasizing that the best approach to teaching is "both personal and eclectic."[42]

In the late twentieth century, most writers on pianists have been primarily concerned with personalities – the ideas and opinions of well-known artists, with much less focus on pedagogical methods and solutions. Elyse Mach compiled two books based on an interview format. Volume One of Great Pianists Speak for Themselves (1980) interviews such pianists as Claudio Arrau, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Alfred Brendel, Misha Dichter, and André Watts. Volume Two (1988) includes interviews with Paul Badura-Skoda, Jorge Bolet, Leon Fleisher, Garrick Ohlsson, and Ivo Pogorelich, among others. Within each chapter, Mach describes the surroundings of an apartment or home, the general atmosphere, or the busy life and schedule of the performing artist. Though the conversations move in various directions, depending on the individual pianist, they

[41] Russian translation: Ob iskusstve fortepiannoy igrī, Moscow, 1958.

[42] Marienne Uszler, Stewart Gordon, and Elyse Mach, The Well-Tempered Keyboard Teacher (New York: Schirmer Books, 1991), p.349.

provide many examples of the pedagogical ideas previously mentioned.

Many of the pianists in Mach's books discuss the importance of technique as a vehicle to achieve artistic expression. Claudio Arrau says, "Technique is, to put it another way, the means to the art of interpretation."[43] Leon Fleisher explains that "the technical area is important, but it's only one aspect of pianism, and it doesn't include or account for the fact that whatever one does physically is motivated by your musical intention and monitored and controlled by your ear."[44] Alicia de Larrocha states that "technique in the musical sense will do nothing for you. You must see what technique you must apply at this moment in this particular piece you are playing...whatever the artist does with the music must ultimately come from his musical conception."[45] Among many discussions on pedagogical issues, Alicia de Larrocha mentions the importance of considering the period in which the music was played and the instrumentation for which it was composed. "We hear that the Romantic period," says de Larrocha, "was the period of virtuosity, of emphasis on technique. But we don't know what they meant by technique. If we mean sheer mechanics, then we must judge solely on the basis of the instrument of that time. The pianos of Liszt and Chopin were so light to the touch that just blowing on the keys would almost produce the sound. Then again, the sound was smaller, and that's how it should have been because the concert halls accommodated only several hundred

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[43] Elyse Mach, Great Contemporary Pianists Speak for Themselves, vol.1 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1980), p.4.
[44] Elyse Mach, Great Pianists Speak for Themselves, vol.2 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1988), p.104.
[45] Mach, Great Contemporary, vol.1, p.61.

people, and many recitals were given in private homes or fashionable salons. But if Liszt and Chopin had to play on a modern piano, no one knows how they would fare."[46]

Another theme mentioned in these two volumes of interviews is the critical role of the teacher. Paul Badura-Skoda states that "the main part of teaching is to listen and to make a good diagnosis, like a good surgeon. And after that, you try, using your own experience as a touchstone, to help him or her overcome problems and to lead the way towards richer fulfillment. So it's much more than just teaching an instrument; it's teaching each one, a little portion of how to do better in life."[47] Garrick Ohlsson explains that "the legacy a teacher leaves is so important: It's a creative outlet which is ongoing because the people you teach can go out and teach better as a result of your influence.... Teachers change people's lives, and if they're good, that change will be for the better."[48]

By presenting the text as a conversation with the interviewed pianists, I give the reader an opportunity to feel present of the conversation. Pedagogical themes and concepts are discussed in a personal setting. The structure of Elyse Mach's book, and the following book, written by Adele Marcus, directly relate to this study – letting the musicians (or teachers, in my case) speak for themselves.

Adele Marcus uses the interview format in Great Pianists Speak with Adele Marcus (1979). The pianist's last name is printed in bold type, followed by the answer to a

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[46] Ibid.
[47] Elyse Mach, Great Pianists Speak, vol.2, p.3.
[48] Ibid., pp.196-197.

question. Marcus interviews Gina Bachauer, Claude Frank, Alicia de Larrocha, Garrick Ohlsson, and others. Although Adele Marcus is interviewing other pianists, she openly shares her own experiences and beliefs.

Discussing the process of learning unfamiliar music, Marcus says, "One of the most fascinating things in this series of interviews has been the revelation that the approaches to this initial phase of studying a piece are tremendously varied. You can't just say to a student, 'It must be done this way.' It is and must be a personal and creative process. How you read through, absorb, and begin to assimilate a piece of music, whether it is structurally, harmonically, or melodically, is intensely personal."[49] This idea refers to the basic principles seen throughout pedagogical material. Gina Bachauer explains her personal method to learning new music. "I have never actually started to work on a new piece of music at the piano," says Bachauer. "Perhaps this is very peculiar, but I never begin that way. I try to read it for fifteen or twenty days in bed in the evening before I ever touch a note."[50] Claude Frank has a different approach. "The most important thing, to me," says Frank, "is not to be rigid about anything. I believe neither that one has to work away from the piano nor that one must always work at the piano. I personally prefer to study at the piano for the simple reason that the sound is there. Music is composed of sound, so why eliminate the most important aspect of the music which is ever-present."[51]

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[49] Adele Marcus, Great Pianists Speak with Adele Marcus (Neptune, N.J.: Paganiniana Publications, Inc., 1979), p.27.
[50] Ibid., p.11.
[51] Ibid., pp.42-43.

Technique, as a process of expressing artistic goals instead of a means unto itself, is another pedagogical issue that is discussed by Marcus and each of the interviewed pianists. "It is extremely important to become not only a pianist, but also a *musician* who can illuminate a score. This certainly forms the basis for their future lives,"[52] says Marcus. Claude Frank believes, "Music will more often than not produce technique; it nearly always does. Technique, on the other hand, may not produce music, but a fine technique in someone who is already very musical can only serve to enhance the musical message – this can be very illuminating."[53] When discussing technique and hand position, Marcus continues to reinforce her ideas of individuality and artistry. "There are so many ways of doing things with the fingers, wrist, and the entire playing mechanism," says Marcus. "Whatever we do, however, is motivated by an interpretive sense and by the ear." [54] Frank agrees, saying, "In piano, the ear must be the final judge. The motion of the hand will follow what the ear dictates."[55] Garrick Ohlsson shares his approach to music: "There are several sides to this from which I work," says Ohlsson. "One is technical, which is the least satisfactory for something expressive. The other side is totally human. I sincerely believe that the pianist must *create* tone; the sound is already there, and is relatively pleasant, but you must draw it out of the piano, and you must free it."[56] Marcus concludes, "Creating the music within yourself means there is an inner singing, pulse, and momentum where the emotions are immediately involved and set free. At this point, what you are expressing is your chief concern and the piano becomes

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[52] Ibid., p.21.
[53] Ibid., p.45.
[54] Ibid., p.63.
[55] Ibid., p.64.
[56] Ibid., p.126.

malleable – not to play at but to use as an adjunct." Ohlsson adds, "You don't play at the piano, you make the piano your collaborator. The piano sits there, a formidable challenge, but it's what you do with it that's most important."[57] Once again, the interview approach allows Adele Marcus and the interviewed pianists to express themselves with clarity on various subjects.

Linda J. Noyle's Pianists on Playing: Interviews with Twelve Concert Pianists (1987) includes chapters on Vladimir Ashkenazy, Jorge Bolet, John Browning, Bella Davidovich, Misha Dichter, Leon Fleisher, Abbey Simon, and others. The material contained in each chapter is organized by subject. The subject title is underlined to separate and highlight information. Each chapter focuses on only one pianist, whose thoughts and ideas are expressed in his or her own words. Topics include learning new music, practicing methods, the use of the metronome, memorization, and technique. When discussing learning unfamiliar repertoire, Jorge Bolet says, "I'm a firm believer in practicing hands separately, and slowly." He also explains that a "peculiar feature of my practicing is that I have never, never, and I use the word advisedly, solved either a major mechanical problem or a musical problem at the keyboard."[58] John Browning explains how he uses the metronome. "You can use it to develop speed, you can use it to check yourself to make sure you're not getting too distorted.... You take a very difficult passage and you start it very low on the metronome, and then you just go over, increasing the speed."[59] On memorizing, Leon Fleisher says, "Memorizing depends on the

[57] Ibid., p.129.
[58] Linda J. Noyle, Pianists on Playing (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1987), p.17.
[59] Ibid., p.30.

circumstances. Ideally speaking it should be some kind of combination of aural, visual, and tactile.... I think probably the least reliable, in terms of public performance, is finger memory, because it's the finger that deserts one first. So I would think in terms of structural memory, a structure memory in terms of bar periods, how long the phrase is."[60] Regarding technique, Fleisher believes, "You must have a certain intention, and the ability to do that is the index of your technique."[61] Noyle's book contains an exceptional amount of pedagogical material which is easily accessible through this outline format.

Mademoiselle: Conversations with Nadia Boulanger (1985) by Bruno Monsaingeon is dedicated to a dialogue with the legendary pedagogue Nadia Boulanger. Subject headings outline each chapter, with Monsaingeon's questions printed in italics. This book, unlike the others, focuses on a teacher instead of performers. Boulanger's opinions and ideas are documented in her own words, with ending comments by students. With similar ideas as Leschetizky's, Boulanger stresses the idea of individuality. "You need an established language and then, within that established language, the liberty to be yourself," says Boulanger. "It's always necessary to be yourself – that is a mark of genius in itself."[62] Discussing the role of the teacher, Boulanger says, "The essential thing with gifted children is to induce them to be themselves, to give them a vocabulary and not to stand in their way.... You can squash people. One remark made in a certain way, on the other hand, can encourage and give confidence. One must tell the truth, but

[60] Ibid., p.97.
[61] Ibid., p.100.
[62] Bruno Monsaingeon, Mademoiselle. Conversations with Nadia Boulanger (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), pp.53-54.

with a view to inspiring confidence and liberating the inner self."[63] Lennox Berkeley, one of Boulanger's students, describes working with the renowned teacher. "It was in fact the force of her personality and the example of her dedicated life that had so striking an effect on her pupils," explains Berkeley. "She positively inspired one to acquire the technique that a composer needs, making one feel that no effort was too great that would enable one to overcome the initial difficulties."[64] Throughout the pedagogical writings of the late twentieth century, much emphasis has been placed on the professional pianist's viewpoints and musical "answers" as well as on the ideas and concepts of the teachers with whom they have worked. This dissertation focuses on four prominent New York piano teachers who are active today, continuing in the direction of Monsaingeon's book.

David Dubal has written many books using a conversation format, including his Reflections from the Keyboard (1984). In this book, he speaks with thirty-five pianists, utilizing a question-and-answer organizational format. Dubal's name, printed in capitals, is followed by his question. The interviewed pianist's last name is then printed in capitals, again followed by his or her answer. Dubal discusses various issues depending on each pianist's experiences and background.

Many pedagogical issues are discussed in Dubal's interviews. On technique, Claudio Arrau says, "I would say if you need strength in a certain passage, practice with more force than you will actually need in performance.... One should not only overcome a

[63] Ibid., p.59.
[64] Ibid., p.120.

technical problem, but one must surpass it."[65] Discussing artistry, Emanuel Ax says, "For me, a great performing artist must bring you into his world, into his vision."[66] Alfred Brendel discusses the importance of the silence between notes, a significant concept that refers to Leschetizky's teaching. "It is a subject which fascinates me," says Brendel. "When you go to a hall and see that the public is not able to concentrate, you start to understand immediately how important silence is. It generates attention; it makes music possible; it remains the basis of great music.... Understanding these silences is as important for the performer as the playing of sound itself."[67] Vladimir Horowitz discusses the issue of over-practicing by young pianists and how this would relate to performance. "They practice and practice, and repeat passages and parts a hundred times over. Then they go on the stage, and repeat them for the hundred-and-first time. And you hear it that way. You feel it. But," Horowitz continues, "performance must be more than just the next repetition; it must live and breathe. Too often the pianist thinks, 'Oh, I must not miss one passage.' They think it is so important to play all the notes. Maybe that attitude comes from recordings, or radio – from some machine – because that microphone hears things you can't hear on stage; it's more powerful than our ear drums. But, on stage, you have to take chances to make the music really live."[68] Peter Serkin continues with this idea, saying, "There isn't enough risk-taking among performers today. Maybe that has to do with the fear of offending anyone and the great desire to be accepted. But if you're motivated by that, then you're caught in a real bind, because

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[65] David Dubal, Reflections from the Keyboard (New York: Summit Books, 1984), p.31.
[66] Ibid., p.46.
[67] Ibid., p.91.
[68] Ibid., pp.205-206.

anything that's really bold or audacious about the original conception of these composers – and the great ones were very audacious – will be lost."[69] Dubal's informative and exciting conversations are full of insight on a multitude of pedagogical issues.

Most recently, Dubal compiled the second edition of The Art of the Piano: Its Performers, Literature, and Recordings (1995). Part One gives brief descriptions of almost every well-known pianist. Part Two lists a multitude of piano compositions, as well as specific recording suggestions. Dubal's vast musical knowledge and well-organized information make this book an important reference for any pianist.

Over the period of time surveyed, the approach to pedagogical information has apparently changed from describing solutions of technical problems to the question-and-answer interview format of well-known pianists. From the interviews that follow, we will learn about the actual pedagogical principles of four currently successful piano teachers, their ideas on issues such as technique, repertoire, talent, and musical life in the late twentieth century. Also, we will learn about their own individual approaches to teaching, their "no method" approach, following the lineage of Leschetizky. From the interviews, it becomes evident that these teachers discuss technique, musicality, and the importance of individuality: the creativity and sensitivity of the individual musician.

[69] Ibid., p.299.

Chapter 2: The Four Interviewed Teachers' Place in the History of Piano Pedagogy

Through my research, it was exciting to learn that the four piano teachers whom I interviewed share a common pedagogical background. All of them explain that they do not believe in a "method approach," but rather in the "no-method approach," in the manner of Leschetizky.

The four teachers interviewed share a common historical background. To my surprise, they all have a direct tie to Theodor Leschetizky (see Appendix no.1). Stessin, Canin, and Aronov are pedagogically related to Leschetizky through the Russian pedagogue Vasilly Safonov, whose students include Josef and Rosina Lhevinne, and Leonid Nikolayev. Artur Schnabel, teacher of Leonard Shure and Isabelle Vengerova, two of Kalish's teachers, was also a student of Leschetizky. Born in Austrian Poland in 1830, Leschetizky studied with Carl Czerny in Vienna, and at the age of twenty-two moved to St. Petersburg to join the faculty of the St. Petersburg Conservatory, thus creating a Russian school of piano from the roots of the German/Austrian school. In 1878 Leschetizky returned to Vienna, remaining there until his death in 1915. It is fascinating that all four teachers interviewed connect, through Leschetizky's studies with Czerny, back to Ludwig van Beethoven!

Based on my own experience in private piano study with well-known piano teachers, I had hypothesized that the teaching styles of the four teachers would be somewhat similar. In fact, I was surprised to find four distinct approaches to teaching piano. This

distinction actually demonstrates Leschetizky's belief that all piano teachers should be open and flexible with each student, without the burden of a rigid pedagogical method.

There is, however, much common ground in the ideologies of the four teachers. They all believe in the three pedagogical principles described in the previous chapter (see pp.3-4), and, perhaps unknowingly, they all exemplify many ideas of Leschetizky. Like him, the four teachers stress the importance of listening, quality of sound, understanding the music, technically mastering the material, extreme attention to detail, and finding one's individual voice at the piano. Similar to Carl Czerny's ideas and teaching philosophies, the lessons I observed included discussions on finger, hand, and wrist technique; fingering; musical problems such as tempo and phrasing; memorization techniques; and the study of how to play music by Beethoven. Information has been passed down by experience and word of mouth, from teacher to student through the generations, with the aim to express musicality and cultivate individuality. In this way, pedagogical tradition follows its natural lineage.

Though many issues still remain the focal point of the lesson – such as phrasing, musicality, technique – the teachers of today must deal with new and different music-related circumstances. In the mid-nineteenth century, Leschetizky often spent hours with a student discussing just one piece. In today's music schools, however, teachers must accept a specific number of students. As a result, lessons are frequently only an hour long and usually adhere to a strict schedule. Teachers today must prepare their students for competitions, concerts in large halls, performances with large orchestras. Student

performances and juries are expected to be technically flawless and the demand to learn a prolific amount of repertoire continues to increase. To deal with these increased challenges, piano teachers must be highly knowledgeable about a great deal of repertoire. The manner in which the four teachers deal with all of these issues is interesting and varied.

As in Leschetizky, and even the mid-eighteenth-century writings of C.P.E. Bach, musicianship and individuality remain the essence of the lesson. Each pianist is unique and each teacher must have the ability to understand the music, translate their ideas, diagnose problems, and have the ability to motivate. Probably the most important commonality among Leschetizky and the four interviewed piano teachers is their deep love of music and teaching, and their complete dedication to their students.

When asked if the great piano teachers of today have ever studied any one of the pedagogical treatises outlined in Chapter 1, or if they have ever suggested that their students read, study, or compare the ideas of Marpurg, C.P.E. Bach, Czerny, Deppe, Leschetizky, Breithaupt, or Matthay, the answer is unanimously "no." They teach from their own experience, continually adjusting and developing a unique rapport with each student. They try to nurture the student's strengths while helping to improve the weaknesses. By examining the "pedagogical tree" diagrams in Appendix 1, one finds that the pedagogical background of all four of the teachers connects through Leschetizky, whose teaching approach was quite similar to the approach of the teachers interviewed. Fannie Bloomfield-Zeisler (1863-1927), a Leschetizky student, observed, "Leschetizky

made it very plain that he had no fixed method in the ordinary sense of the word. Like every good teacher, he studied the individuality of each pupil and taught him according to that individuality. It might almost be said that he had a different method for each pupil, and I have often said that Leschetizky's method is to have no fixed method."[70]

As mentioned above, the four teachers answered questions from a formal questionnaire that I developed after studying the literature on pedagogy. The information that follows below and information in the following chapters is arranged by teacher. This format, including sentences in their exact words, highlights the teacher's response and gives the reader a sense of each man's personality, approach to his students, and views regarding various other music-related questions. This organizational style is similar to the format in Elyse Mach's Great Pianists Speak for Themselves (vol.1: 1980, vol.2: 1988), Adele Marcus's Great Pianists Speak with Adele Marcus (1979), and many of David Dubal's books, including his Reflections from the Keyboard (1984).

[70] Marienne Uszler, Stewart Gordon, and Elyse Mach, The Well-Tempered Keyboard Teacher (New York: Schirmer Books, 1991), p.321.

The Teacher's Viewpoints on the Study of Pedagogy:

Herbert Stessin

Stessin admits that he "had a good technical foundation" from years of study with [Sascha] Gorodnitzki (1904-1986). Stessin seems to be a magician at solving technical problems. He states, "In a humble way, I am fortunate. I am good at diagnosing a problem."[71] His students agree that Stessin has developed his own way of helping them, his own "non-method."[72]

Martin Canin

"I feel that there is only so much that you can learn from a book," says Canin. "It's a practical matter, and each student is so different. I feel that as each student is a different person with a different set of problems and assets and liabilities, I try to deal with that individual and use whatever expertise I have to help that person solve that person's problems." Canin solves his student's musical and technical questions and problems from his own personal experience as a student, teacher, and pianist.

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[71] Elyse Mach, Great Pianists Speak for Themselves, vol.2 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1988), p.3. Paul Badura-Skoda: "I conclude that music is a very deep experience, one which must be drawn from each student to the best of his or her ability. That means that the main part in teaching is to listen and to make a good diagnosis, like a good surgeon. And after that, you try, using your own experience as a touchstone, to help him or her overcome problems and to lead the way towards rich fulfillment."

[72] Marienne Uszler, Stewart Gordon, and Elyse Mach, The Well-Tempered Keyboard Teacher (New York: Schirmer Books, 1991), p.320. "Leschetizky had a phenomenal instinct for diagnosis and... his procedure varied considerably from student to student, dependent on what weaknesses he perceived."

Arkady Aronov

"The real needs of every student cannot be calculated by a book. No," says Aronov. "I do not follow any method. I can tell you, I read so many books about piano playing and I have had so many students through my life and I have had so many meetings with wonderful musicians in piano. Everything is boiled in my head. It's soup! I cannot just show that this is an ingredient from this person." Aronov, like the other teachers, has developed his own musical and technical pedagogical ideas from his own music teachers and music experiences.

Gilbert Kalish

"I don't believe in it," says Kalish, regarding the subject of a pedagogical method. "You derive your pedagogy from the student. You work with the student. You try to suit that student. I'm not a book person." Kalish does not suggest any books on pedagogy to his students. He does not follow any particular method. Teaching is derived from the student-teacher relationship, built on the idea that both are learners. The teacher enhances and develops the student's learning process through complete involvement and commitment to the lesson. If the teacher inspires the student with both musical and technical ideas, the student can begin to find their own musical concepts and unique musical voice.

The four teachers have developed an understanding of musical interpretation from their own experience and past training. Carl Czerny described his ideas on the appropriate

manner to interpret Beethoven, learning his ideas from Beethoven, his teacher. C.P.E. Bach explained his viewpoints on the importance of personal interpretation and musicianship – a characteristic that all of these teachers work on throughout each of their students' lessons. Leschetizky often demonstrated at the piano during his lessons, which describes another trait seen throughout the lessons of the four interviewed teachers. The importance of listening has been emphasized throughout the history of pedagogy. Canin is unique with his use of the tape recorder (see Chapter 3); yet all of the teachers believe in the importance of the trained ear. Though the interviewed teachers' viewpoints on issues such as practicing, memorization, competitions, editions, and recordings, vary greatly, they all continue to pass along a consistent and exciting aural and verbal musical tradition.

Chapter 3: The Piano Lesson

In the world of advanced musical training, New York City piano teachers typically work with each of their students for one hour each week. Aronov is actually quite unusual in giving forty-five minute lessons to his students. Kalish is also unusual, giving many extended (or two-hour) lessons each week. Teachers use the lesson format differently, according to their own musical background and training, their goals for each individual student, their years of teaching experience, and their overall schedule.

The organizational format of the weekly music lesson varies widely. The greeting at the lesson can be long or short. Pieces may be performed in a concert format or may be halted every few notes for commentary. New repertoire may be required each week or only once a semester. The hour may be filled with study of only one piece or up to six. Emphasis may be placed on musical expression and imagination or on technical difficulties. Even the length of a lesson can become a problematic issue, depending on the teacher. One or more references to theoretical analysis, music history, performance practice issues, and the great teachers of the past may or may not be made within the hour.

The master teachers interviewed are able to focus energetically on the student's precise sound and creative ideas. Their interest and support allows the students to challenge themselves and take musical risks. The lesson, a new experience each week, discovers and rediscovers the insights of musical traditions, technical precision, and the student's

pianistic potential, while reaching for the composer's musical stylistic ideas and ideal sound.

Herbert Stessin

Herbert Stessin warmly welcomes his students, his "kids," to their lessons. Throughout his years of teaching, Stessin has remained completely focused on his students, giving them his full attention and energy, musically and emotionally. Supportive and truly interested in his students on a personal level, Stessin constantly encourages them to be creative and use their imagination at the keyboard.

At the beginning of a lesson, Stessin asks the student how he/she is and how his/her week has been. From this dialogue, Stessin is able to get a sense of how the lesson might proceed. Stessin believes that a good teacher has to begin wherever the student is emotionally at that particular moment. If the student had a great week, Stessin gets right to the music. If he/she had a difficult week, he lets him/her share concerns. Realizing that many of his students are far from home and often have no one to confide in, Stessin remains open and supportive on an emotional as well as musical level.

When the student is ready to play, Stessin asks him/her what he/she has prepared for the lesson. Whether the student has prepared a movement of a work, or a complete work, Stessin will listen to the entire prepared selection before commenting. When the playing has been completed, he gives overall suggestions and then has the student begin again.

Together they continue to work in a start-and-stop approach, to go over specific technical and musical details.

Stessin is concerned with musical imagination and what, specifically, the student can bring to the music while creating something new – this is what he is teaching. Stessin often works on a musical phrase over and over to diversify the student's tone and timing range, to create a particular sound or mood, or to stretch the student's musical imagination. Stessin often demonstrates a particular sound, hand position, or hand and wrist motion, either by playing in the upper register at the student's piano or by sitting at the second piano, at the student's left. Even without music, Stessin is able to demonstrate the passage with a clear and remarkably beautiful image and tone. Stessin brings his students to a higher musical plane, pushing their ears to imagine and create new sounds and sensations.

Stessin seems to know the inner workings of every piece from the Baroque era to the early twentieth-century Impressionists. He has distinct and creative ideas for every phrase, while giving his students interpretive freedom with their ideas on musical line and direction. While the student is playing, Stessin listens closely. An active listener, Stessin concentrates on imagination, musical ideas, sound, timing, details, and how these all fit into the whole.

After one of Stessin's Master's students plays a Chopin nocturne, Stessin says, "Good...let's try it again." He then explains that he would like the opening softer, and

that there needs to be a closer relationship of melody to accompaniment. The student begins again, eager to challenge Stessin's ear and ideas. The atmosphere in the studio is energetic and impassioned. "It doesn't shimmer," says Stessin, referring to another passage. "Shake it out of your wrist." The student tries again, saying, "I'm staying closer also, that seems to help." He looks up at Stessin with a pleasing glance, happier with the sound. "Pedal, pedal," says Stessin, which all of his students quickly learn to recognize as, "Use less pedal; careful of too much pedal."

After hearing his student play Beethoven's Sonata op.31 no.2, Stessin offers the following comments: "Shorter pedals, less accents...think of design." Stessin demonstrates a particular passage on the piano to the left. He also begins singing the rhythm and musical direction, to help explain his ideas on the musical character. Even when his students come to their lesson with solid, well-thought-out ideas, Stessin always has a great deal to explain, discuss, and suggest.

Somehow Stessin consistently knows exactly what to say to improve the performance of a piece. Working with a College student on the second movement of Beethoven's op.110, Stessin says, "Don't punch, cushion it." He sings along as the student plays, and then suggests that she imagine herself singing like Pavarotti – to sing out. Not completely prepared for the lesson, the student makes mistakes with some of the notes. Stessin understands the situation. Instead of reprimanding the student, he ignores the mistakes and concentrates on tone, sound, pulse, rhythm, musical direction, dynamics, and pedaling. Stessin realizes how much pressure his students put on themselves, so he

works with the music from its present state while creating a unique, supportive rapport with the student. From his incredibly impassioned musical ideas, his ethereal and luscious tone quality, his technical "wizardry," and his honest love for his students (in the Pre-College, College, Master's, and Doctoral programs at Juilliard), Herbert Stessin is a supportive and inspirational teacher.

Though Stessin understands and accepts the financial practicality of the weekly one-hour piano-lesson format, he would prefer another option. "The ideal situation that I feel that I would love to have in a place like Juilliard would be maybe ten students, two or three hours a week. For some maybe two hours in a row. Gustavo (a Master's student) is very easy to see for two hours in a row. I have someone doing the Schumann Fantasie. We spent an hour on the second movement. We didn't come close to the whole piece. They do that in Russia, incidentally. They get two lessons a week."

Martin Canin

Canin is quite satisfied with the hour-per-week format. "Sometimes you could spend two or three [hours], it depends on the student and what they have got," says Canin. "Today, I gave two lessons and they both finished on time because one student brought the second and third movements of the Ravel Concerto [in G Major]. I listened to it all, it was about fifteen minutes of music we're talking about, so we finished, we said everything, and assigned some pieces, well within the hour. I have a student who played the Liszt Sonata the other day. It was the last student in the day. We spent an hour and a half and only got through half of it, because the sonata takes half an hour just to play. We could spend

more time, but at a certain point, I think, you run out of steam with each student, so I think the hour is generally okay. I find that you can't overload a student with advice, too much to think about. It loses its effectiveness."

Martin Canin also has an unusual approach to the lesson format, using the hour in a notably different way from most piano teachers. "I use the tape recorder a lot when I teach. I play back to them what they do," says Canin. A lesson begins, according to a Canin student, with "the usual 'hellos' and what happened during the week, but then I get right to the music." The student continues by saying, "...and then I would play. If I have the piece memorized, he would sit a distance away, on the sofa, and look at the score, and I would play. He would let me play through it. And he usually tapes it." Canin believes that using the tape recorder at many lessons is "a superb method for making clear every issue that comes out."[73] Canin continues, "We hear it together. Sometimes [the students] don't hear it the first time. And I'll replay the tape! And then they say, 'Oh, yes, now I hear it.' And, of course, that is extremely valuable.[74] Just this morning I was teaching a first-year student a piece by Chopin, a piece that doesn't show up very much, a rondo. She's a very talented girl, and she played it, but it was very straight. It was very straight and she's very young. And I got the tape, and with the tape I wanted to show her the possibilities of playing with more freedom and more rubato and more charm, so to speak.

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[73] Linda J. Noyle, Pianists on Playing (New York: Summit Books, 1984), p.72. Janine Fialkowska: "The tape recorder is my conscience.... It gives a picture of what I'm looking for, if I'm faking accents or doing sudden acceleration or retards that I'm not aware of. That's why I use it."

[74] Adele Marcus, Great Pianists Speak (Neptune, N.J.: Paganiniana Publications, Inc., 1979), p.9. Speaking about the importance of listening to one's self, Marcus explains: "Tone can change during various stages in one's musical development and can be altered enormously through proper studying processes. Listening to ourselves with the utmost concentration is the requisite for producing a singing tone."

And it took a while, because at first she didn't hear it, she didn't hear that she was square."

Like the other professors interviewed, Canin discusses technique as it arises within the student's pieces. Canin also demonstrates musical and technical issues during the lesson hour. "Yes, I demonstrate," Canin says. "I play a lot of the top hand, and I also sit at the piano. I demonstrate. Sometimes I think it inspires them when they hear something when somebody else does it. And they kind of catch on. But, I think the tape is extremely helpful." By using the tape recorder, Canin has developed a unique approach to teaching. "I don't think anybody does it except me," says Canin. "I don't know why; it is a great idea, and it would open up [the student's] ears. Absolutely. All my students bring their tapes with them. Then they listen to it and they hear where they are rushing. And a piece, maybe, sounds a little bit tense, and you are not even aware that it does, but the tape helps pick up all the facts. These are the facts. No baloney. I'm not adding anything, I'm not taking anything away. The tape is undoctored. I say, 'here it is, this is what you are doing,' and they understand that. This is what is coming out, and the tape is tough. You don't see the person, which can sometimes mislead you. Somebody 'looks' musical, and they think they are musical, but if you listen, just listen, like to a recording, you can hear the defects, and this is the point."

"By and large, I like to spend the whole lesson on one piece," says Canin. According to his students, Canin usually listens to a piece once or twice. "What would usually happen," says a Canin student, "is he would give me a piece, and maybe several pieces at

the beginning of the year, and I would get about two lessons on those pieces. By the time I would bring it in, it would be pretty much learned. And he would work with that, and after two weeks I would be working on another piece." Another student points out that Canin "talks about the tempo, how the piece should go. That's why, I think, he records us. And we listen to it together, and if the tempo is dragging, then he says it is dragging." The same student continues, "Canin is very concerned with deciding on a tempo and keeping the overall whole united." Yet another student says that Canin "likes to put the structure in, the pulse.[75] Some pianists get very emotional. I used to love to just play what I felt, but even if I put rubato in, you might need to pick up the pulse. Even within the rubato, the pulse doesn't disappear. I think that is basically what he wants you to do: to have structure within the piece. I think he wants to emphasize that the most."

Canin believes in using the lesson time to focus on the student's prepared repertoire. He does realize, however, that "you cannot divorce the personal relationship totally. There have been lessons when I have done nothing but talk about their personal problems. Students go through different phases. That is one of the things that you find in teaching – it is very unpredictable. You expect to give a lesson, and a student comes in in tears over some problem, and so that takes precedence. Of course, you can't just say, 'Well, forget that. Now, just play for me.' They are not going to be able to."

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[75] Bruno Monsaingeon, Mademoiselle, Conversations with Nadia Boulanger (Boston: Northeastern University. Press, 1988), p.99. "It is the underlying pulse, which must be respected even when other liberties are taken and one uses what is called 'rubato.' The rubato of a really serious musician doesn't break the unity of the beat."

Canin's students learn a great deal from their weekly lessons. One of them said, "I feel like his emphasis on the pulse really made me focus and listen to a piece from a totally different angle. His consistency is also very important. You have a lesson once a week, and not being scared about what kind of mood he is going to be in when you entered your lesson is very comforting. And not flowering you with compliments every week makes whatever he says have weight." Canin is a powerful teacher with a warm personality. He continues to inspire and intellectually challenge his College, Master's, and Doctoral students at Juilliard.

Arkady Aronov

Arkady Aronov has developed yet another teaching method. Focused, alert, and energetically involved in every minute of the lesson, Aronov discusses only the music. His students, in both the College and Master's program at the Manhattan School of Music and at the Mannes College of Music, have a forty-five minute lesson each week, lessons which begin and end precisely on time.

The forty-five minute lesson is unique to Aronov. In place of the last fifteen minutes of each lesson, once a month an extra one-hour lesson is given by one of his three Doctoral students. "I want to keep weekly control of student progress, so I don't give a lesson one week, and then my assistant the next," says Aronov. "Every single week I give a forty-five minute lesson for every student. All other fifteen minutes combined, my assistant gives, totalling seven other hours. So we have for the entire year twenty-eight hours. I give twenty-one hours and my assistant seven hours. But I have all twenty-eight weeks

contact with my students. Every week I see every student. Doctoral students I teach for the full hour." Comparing the length of music lessons in Russia, Aronov says, "In Russia, they work with student as many hours as possible. But here we only have one hour. But I decided that in forty-five minutes I can do the same work as in sixty. My lesson is very concentrated," Aronov explains. "We are going immediately, directly to work. First, I listen to the student. Of course, if it is Liszt Sonata, which takes half an hour, I will not listen to the whole thing in the beginning. But in the second semester, I can hear. Just hear. It's a review. Very concrete. What and the way you should do." A second year Master's student feels that Aronov's forty-five-minute lesson schedule is "quite good." She explains that her "friend has an hour lesson from another teacher and they spend about ten minutes talking, so it doesn't make a difference. [The forty-five-minute lesson] is not too long and not too short. It's comfortable." Aronov's forty-five-minute lesson approach is unique, yet remarkably effective.

Extremely professional, Aronov welcomes the student at the beginning of each lesson. The student will then tell Aronov what he/she has prepared. If a piece, or movement of a piece, is relatively new to the student, then Aronov will sit at the second piano to the right of the student, and watch the score (the student brings an extra copy of the music for Aronov), taking occasional glances at the student. After the student completes the piece, Aronov gives a quick "good" and then offers suggestions. He begins by playing specific passages while explaining his ideas.[76] Then he asks the student to begin again.

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[76] Marienne Uszler, Stewart Gordon, and Elyse Mach, The Well-Tempered Keyboard Teacher (New York: Schirmer Books, 1991), p.69. "Modeling as part of the piano lesson or class may be used to good effect in several ways. First, it is important that the teacher be a model pianist. The student must hear beautiful

The student starts playing from the beginning, but this time Aronov plays along with the student. Instinctually, one might think that the student's playing might not be heard, or that the student is not given the opportunity to express his/her ideas, but the student is there to hear Aronov's ideas, to learn from a master. Aronov's students don't have to follow all of his suggestions, but during the lesson they are there to hear and learn from his point of view. Aronov stops the student after every few measures, softly and quickly saying, "Stop, stop. Look: More attention to articulation." Then he repeats the few measures so the student can see and hear what he is trying to express. "Emphasize this, it is a very dynamic move. I am talking about the music."

Aronov knows what he wants from every note, every measure, every phrase. His sound is unique, full, strong, rich. He plays exactly what he hears inside himself and then the student tries to imitate. Sound, musical direction, balance, voicing, pulse, timing, and pedaling are all precise and completely thought out. Aronov discusses intervals and harmonic resolutions. To help his students understand the music, Aronov demonstrates phrases from other works by the same composer to emphasize similar character traits and the composer's musical conception. "The inner texture should be brought out more," says Aronov. Again, Aronov demonstrates. Then the student plays, with Aronov still playing along. Stopping every few measures, Aronov is still able to keep a clear vision of

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sounds, lucid phrasing, nuance, and sensitivity. The student must also see how a pianist looks, how gestures are made, how motor skills are negotiated."

the piece's tempo, pulse, and overall unification.

If the student brings in a piece that he/she has been studying for a month or two, Aronov sits in a chair behind the pianos and listens to the whole piece. Afterwards he will give both overall and specific comments, and then move to the piano on the right to demonstrate his ideas.

Though a general mood or character is important in every piece, attention to and understanding of details allows the student to achieve his/her desired goals. Aronov believes in imitation. His knowledge of repertoire from all style periods is vast and he is able to play the music. Aronov's students learn through imitation and precise musical understanding of the musical structure, harmonic direction, tempo, sound, and character.

Aronov notices that time has run out. He smiles at his student, shakes his/her hand, and offers some positive words of reinforcement. The student gathers his/her music together as the next student sits down at the keyboard, ready to play, eager to learn.

Gilbert Kalish

Gilbert Kalish teaches two days a week at SUNY-Stony Brook. As a rule, he will not accept any private students because of his rigorous performing schedule. The atmosphere at Stony Brook is supportive and more relaxed than at either the Manhattan School of Music or the Juilliard School. Kalish's spacious teaching studio feels comfortable and welcoming, with plants lining the window ledge, which spans one entire wall, and posters

push-pinned into the many bulletin boards. Kalish's mood is friendly yet serious as he opens the door for his next student.

Usually teachers arrange their teaching schedule by assigning each student a specific lesson time, but Kalish's organizational system is different. Each week a new lesson schedule is posted on Kalish's studio door. Kalish's students contact his assistant, who actually arranges Kalish's Monday and Tuesday teaching schedule since Kalish lives in Manhattan. Each student chooses a new piano lesson time each week. A student might have a lesson at 10:00 a.m. on a Monday and the next week choose a Tuesday 4:00 p.m. lesson. Kalish also allows his students to skip a lesson if they feel it beneficial, or they can choose an hour and a half or a two-hour block if they would like more time. "Very often I give two-hour lessons," says Kalish. "It's not just occasional, it's very often." This approach to the hour format is similar to Leschetizky's, who often gave lessons lasting two or three hours. Uniquely, Kalish mentions and suggests to his students that they sit in on each other's lessons. "I encourage my students to try that," Kalish explains. "Let's try that once a month, or let's make open lessons once a month. Anybody can come in and sit in on anybody's lesson. The idea of an open class! I mean, you can learn a lot of repertoire that you're not playing yourself."

A clock with a moveable hand is placed adjacent to the piano lesson schedule on Kalish's studio door. If he runs over into the next lesson, Kalish will move the minute hand so that the next student can see if his/her lesson begins precisely on time, ten minutes past, twenty, thirty, or even forty minutes after the hour. Interested in helping his students

with their own schedule and time frame, Kalish explains that "by the end of the day, I'm usually an hour over."

At the beginning of the lesson Kalish asks the student how he/she is and then asks what repertoire he/she would like to work on that day. Whether a piece is in a polished form or at a relatively new stage, Kalish develops the student's musical ideas and aids in technical problems. The student plays through however much he/she has prepared. Kalish then inquires about any musical or technical questions, concerns, or opinions that the student may have. After the student shares some of his/her ideas, Kalish consistently replies with a positive comment.

"It's awfully good," Kalish would say, and then add, "but perhaps you could be less uniform in the sound." With each student he focuses on different issues and assorted ideas depending on the student or the piece. Surprisingly, Kalish stands throughout the lesson. If the student has the music memorized (an issue that Kalish does not emphasize), he stands next to the second piano with the score on the piano stand. If the student needs the score, Kalish walks slowly around the room, completely focused on the music.

Kalish is modest and unassuming and he seems to qualify his comments with "according to me," or "to my hearing it would be like this," or "I think I would try it this way." Kalish explores new ideas on sound, phrasing, and musical direction with every piece, with every student. He does not believe there is only one way to play or interpret a piece.

Kalish is concerned with improvement and goals. The student then begins the piece again. This time Kalish is outwardly involved: waving his arms, talking while the student is playing, bowing his head, stamping his foot, all to help guide the line and musical phrase and to increase the musical intensity. When the student makes tremendous progress with sound and timing, Kalish verbally recognizes the transformation: "I think the communication between us is really there," he says with a smile. "That is fantastic, what you are doing now. For me, it is fantastic."

Kalish is supportive and positive. He enjoys working on details, spending even thirty minutes on the understanding of a single phrase. Kalish discusses tempo, rhythmic interpretations in different editions, balance of hands, balance within the hand, sound, image, mood, musical direction. He pats his students on their backs and consistently encourages them with their work and progress. He entices them to exciting dialogues on musical ideas: clarity of line, dynamic steadiness, rhythmic subtleties, technical difficulties, and overall musical design. He tries to be as helpful as possible with any musical question or music-oriented situation, spending time with one student discussing her nerves before a recital and competition.

During lessons, Kalish is very energetic, verbal, and involved. He is lively and animated, moving and bouncing around the studio in order to express a specific idea or mood. While turning pages for a student, he energetically flips the pages. When someone knocks at his door, he walks quickly and lightly to the door. For a few minutes of every

lesson, he demonstrates a passage at the piano. He plays at the second piano, or in the upper register of the student's piano, to explain a particular sound, mood, or texture.

Kalish has a warm and supportive rapport with his students. As a current performing musician, Kalish is open to new ideas and perceptions – as if he wants to learn along with his students. He motivates and inspires his students, yet allows them to choose their repertoire, their lesson time, decide if they will have a one-hour lesson or an extended lesson, and even decide how long they will work on a piece. Within a supportive environment, Kalish gives his students the opportunity to learn about themselves, to develop their own musical ideas, and to discover their own musical voice.

Though the lessons, personalities, and style of each of the four interviewed teachers are surprisingly different, the basic pedagogical ideas are quite similar, connecting today's music education to the history of pedagogy. Each teacher emphasizes sound, tempo, and technique as it is applied to the music, musical understanding, and creative music-making. A great deal of information is exchanged throughout the lesson. Each teacher works with students, the music, and the lesson format on an individual basis.

Chapter 4: Repertoire

Choosing repertoire for a student must be done in accordance with both the student's and the teacher's goals. Some teachers believe it is important for each student to study various style periods concurrently, while others support a student's desire to focus on only one composer at a time. Student choice is one method of organizing material, but more often the student requests the teacher's input. For specific auditions, recitals, or competitions, the four interviewed teachers give suggestions within the designated guidelines. Building on their years of experience, these teachers try to find the most appropriate program for each student. Opinions are also expressed concerning how long a piece should be studied and how many times a student should bring a piece to his/her lesson.

One of the issues in modern piano teaching is the importance and necessity of studying late twentieth-century music. Each of the teachers has a different idea; yet they all work within the tradition that believes that the essential repertoire is music composed during the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries. Prokofiev's remark, as cited by Harold C. Schonberg, is characteristic of the music profession's attitude not to delve deeply into earlier or later repertoire.

> I wandered through the enormous park in the middle of New York and, looking up at the skyscrapers bordering it, I thought with a cold fury of the wonderful American orchestras that cared nothing for my music; of the critics who were repeating for the hundredth time, 'Beethoven is a great composer,' while balking violently at new works; of the managers who arranged long tours for artists playing the same hackneyed programs fifty times over."[77]

[77] Harold C. Schonberg, The Great Pianists (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1963), p.392.

Even as we approach the beginning of the twenty-first century, the interviewed teachers focus primarily on the works of composers of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries. How central is late twentieth-century music to a student's education? Is it as important to learn the Barber Piano Sonata or Webern's op.27 as it is to study a Beethoven sonata or Chopin etude? By and large, most would answer in the negative.

Herbert Stessin

Stessin believes that "the order of repertoire is basically not that important. If there is anything that you learn," he continues, "that you want to learn at a particular time, it is like putting money into the bank. You have it. The piano repertoire is vast. If you want to learn two Beethoven sonatas – people are performing them now, two on a concert – if that's what turns you on at a particular moment, and you don't have anything in mind like a competition, or a jury, where there is a required program, and I feel it is within your emotional range, even more so than technical, though that is important too, then you can. There is a tendency to give material based on technical capacity rather than emotional capacity," Stessin points out. "There are a lot of youngsters that are playing music that they don't have the slightest idea about. Teachers who have studied the Liszt Sonata find a kid of fourteen who can play it, and assign the Liszt Sonata. You don't have to be completely into the piece from an emotional point of view, but there has to be some kind of correlation, some feeling that you can project, something that's a part of you. Just getting through the notes is a waste of time."

Stessin cautions against assigning a piece of music if it is beyond a student's technical capabilities, even if the student has a particular interest. "What usually happens," says Stessin, "is the interest wanes, so it is a thing that never gets finished, and a piece that they don't want to go back to. So, I feel that it is very important that you work on material that you are enthusiastic about. Because the more enthusiastic you are about a piece, the harder you are going to work at it. You know, if it is assigned, that you have to work on a particular piece, and you hate it, like, 'you have to learn the Waldstein.' I think that anybody involved in piano music should know the Waldstein, but in good time. I find that students hate it at a certain age, and later on somehow, suddenly, 'ooh, I heard it, and I like that piece.' Suddenly, there is an involvement with it that wasn't there before." Stessin explains that he does not emphasize the study of late twentieth-century music. "It depends upon the piece and the composer," says Stessin. "I think an awful lot of it isn't worth the effort. It isn't going to last."

Stessin does not have a precise or 'usual' number of pieces for a student to be studying at one time. "Three or four, depending on the length [of the piece], is a good healthy chunk, depending on how much time you have for practicing," he says. Also, Stessin does not believe in giving specific deadlines for completing and memorizing a piece of music. "If they are at Juilliard, some learn overnight – literally."

Martin Canin

Canin helps his students choose their repertoire. "I try to give them a balanced diet," Canin says. "I keep a list. I have my student lists, so when I assign a piece, or when we

talk about a piece, I see what they have done." Many of Canin's students ask for his guidance on choice of repertoire. After Canin gives a few suggestions, the student will experiment with the pieces and then make a decision. Canin feels that choosing repertoire "is one of those things that requires a sense of balance. If somebody has a particular bent, a certain direction, I think that I would let them follow their bent. Everybody, certainly at some point, has to deal with all styles as part of their education. I had a student years ago, who played great Beethoven and not very good Chopin. He didn't really like Chopin. I saw no reason to push him into playing a lot of Chopin. We did one Chopin piece once, and somehow he made it sound like Beethoven. It just came out that way.[78] I tried to discuss with him what makes Chopin playing sound like Chopin playing and he understood, but it wasn't in him, so I felt, what's the point in hassling him."

Canin encourages his students to choose less familiar works, "to get off the beaten path. Definitely," says Canin. "It is an interesting problem," explains Canin, "because there are many students whose background is more limited, I find, and those students generally hate music that is dissonant, that is abstruse to them, or abstract, and they don't like to play it.[79] The question is, can you force somebody to love what they don't love. Well, I don't take a strong stand on that. I don't necessarily force a student to play a piece that

[78] Ibid., p.419. "It is hard to think of a German pianist who has ever been considered a great Chopinist."
[79] Linda J. Noyle, Pianists on Playing (Metuchen, N.J.: the Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1987), p.87. Rudolf Firkusny: "I am interested in everything that is new, and I always welcome everything that is new. But, personally, I don't play today's avant-garde music because I just don't quite understand it."

he or she absolutely can't stand doing, because I don't think they would benefit from it. I haven't found that a student suddenly awakens and says, 'Oh, I love Webern after all!' Either students seem to come with an open mind, or they don't. I try to pry them open a little bit, but I don't force it open with a crowbar," says Canin.

Canin expects his students to go through a great deal of music and he prefers new repertoire to be brought into most lessons. Students vary in their capacity, however. "Some students just eat up material," says Canin. "I can show you lists of repertoire. One student will have a page, a long list of pieces that they have done during the year, and another student will have a short list, because that student takes longer." According to a Canin student, the music "doesn't have to be memorized, but it has to be at tempo." Also, because of Canin's preference for working on different repertoire, his students "have to keep reading and reading" more music each week. For some students it might be difficult to learn repertoire at this suggested pace, but as one student says, "Last year it really helped because if I wanted to do a recital, I had all this repertoire."

Arkady Aronov

Like the other teachers interviewed, Aronov explains that he "doesn't have a system of repertoire. The [Manhattan] School requires different styles but inside these styles I have a lot of choice. Of course," continues Aronov, "also very important is what the student wants to play. Now my choice depends on two aspects. One: what student wants, and two: what he can, from my point of view, play well."

Regarding the study of late twentieth-century music, Aronov believes "it is a necessary aspect. But," continues Aronov, "students must play everything well. I imagine that the personality of every student can be a little bit underdeveloped because they play all styles of music." Aronov emphasizes the importance of studying all styles of repertoire, including twentieth-century works, but at the same time, he wonders if it would be better to allow students to specialize or focus on one or two composers or styles of music.

Aronov wants his students to be working on at least four pieces at one time, "plus concerto. Four at least," says Aronov. "But the more the better." Though he encourages his students to work on a large amount of repertoire, Aronov is most concerned that his students reach their "maximum accomplished level."

Aronov assumes that his students will bring the same repertoire into their lessons throughout the school year. He will listen to a piece throughout a "semester and the whole year. Of course, much more pieces than four, five, or six. Because I know the student can increase his level when they really will reach a very accomplished level. I prefer that every piece a student plays be prepared at a good level. I do not believe that quantity without quality can bring worth." Aronov expects his students to continue to develop the musical ideas highlighted during the lesson. He wants his students to live with the repertoire, to make it their own.

Gilbert Kalish

"First of all," explains Kalish, "I deal with very mature people. They are all about twenty-one and over (Kalish teaches only Master's and Doctoral students). They've gone through things. They are all tremendously motivated. I don't have to acquaint them with repertoire, and, of course, when I start somebody, I want to find out what their background is, how much repertoire they've covered, what their interests are. And then I try to find out where they feel they have gaps that they'd like to close, or what interests they really have. If I happen to have a student who is, either way, either totally interested in twentieth-century [music], or totally uninterested in twentieth-century [music], or basically wants to do all of the sonatas of Beethoven, or something, I don't really feel so bad about that. In a way, I don't try to make sure that everybody has a totally rounded perspective. It's a school where there's a lot of contemporary music. I obviously have done a lot and I believe very much, philosophically, in the virtue of being somebody who plays the music of your time. I just believe in it – the art cannot progress unless the performers are willing to do that." This resembles Garrick Ohlsson's ideas, as quoted in Elyse Mach's book, Great Pianists Speak for Themselves, vol.2: "I think exposure to music, especially the contemporaries, means a lot. I think I am very lucky to have grown up in the New York metropolitan area, because I was right in the New York standard."[80]

"It's been such a tremendous benefit to me both career-wise and in terms of expanding my sense of piano music," explains Kalish. "The demands of the twentieth-century

[80] Elyse Mach, Great Pianists Speak for Themselves, vol.2 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1988), p.191.

[repertoire], on the instrument and on the player, are, in a sense, different. Every composer, every age makes a different demand, and I feel that the opportunity to work on new things, to meet composers, to work with composers, gives one an insight into the whole creative process and what it must have been like for any great composer who composed, and I feel tremendously enriched by that despite the fact that it takes a lot of time and a lot of work."

Though Kalish does not pressure his students into making any particular repertoire choice, he does suggest and encourage his students to play and perform twentieth-century music. "I have found that when my students explore [contemporary music], none of them regrets it. Also," Kalish continues, "it removes a certain stress that we have in playing older music, where there is such a tradition, where we have to live up to a certain performance. I don't mean a performance standard, but a kind of accepted performance practice to do a piece a certain way. I really want to approach every piece in a fresh way," he explains. "You should reinvent it. That's good talk. It's hard to do that. People do hear the performances of the great works and they feel that they have to live up to that in some way, that they can't deviate from that. There is a certain freedom in doing works of our time. Musicians don't have that pressure to conform to tradition. They can truly invent the performance."

Besides choosing their repertoire, Kalish's students organize their own recital programs. Whether a student is studying four or six pieces, all twentieth-century music or a diverse program of music from the Baroque, Classical, and Romantic periods, Kalish focuses on

progress and musical understanding. A Kalish Doctoral student says, "I've always been the type to guide my own repertoire, rebelliously so. I've always just taken it upon myself to play what I wanted to and I've always been allowed to do so. During a lesson, I usually tell [Kalish] what I want to play that day and he organizes the hour to cover those things."

Kalish encourages and expects his students to bring in the same repertoire to many lessons throughout a semester or year, to work on the process of learning, to create and develop new and personal interpretative ideas within the music over time. "I don't mind however [my students] bring the piece in to me, what state of preparedness," says Kalish, "because they know they can come in with whatever they bring me, even one page, and we'll spend the hour on one page. I always ask at the beginning of the lesson, 'What do you want to cover today?' If they say, 'I want to play the whole four movements,' then I try to do that. If they say, 'I have only up to the development,' fine, that's fine. So I depend, I have to depend, on their maturity."

Chapter 5: Technique and Practicing Methods

Technique and musical imagination are the foundations of good piano playing. As Adele Marcus observes, "Technique, or the HOW of playing, not only covers a wide territory, but requires a searching intelligence for the complete utilization of mechanics and an unlimited imagination for the accurate projection of a musical idea."[81] When students begin playing the piano, the piano teacher typically assigns exercises from technical methods such as Pišchna,[82] Hanon, and Czerny,[83] as well as repertoire. Teachers who work with more advanced students also believe in solving and improving technical problems through the study of repertoire.

Pianists' concern for a proper technical approach clearly has a long history. Chopin, for example, detailed some of his ideas in notes that, according to former New York Times critic Harold C. Schonberg, were intended for a book on pedagogy:

> Everything depends on good fingering.
> Forearm and upper arm should be used in addition to the wrist, hand and fingers.
> Suppleness is of extreme importance. (During Chopin's first lessons with a pupil his most-used words were "Easily...easily.")
> Do not use a flat hand. Ease of movement is impossible if the fingers are outstretched.
> Practicing demands intensity and concentration. It is not purely technical.
> Avoid muscular fatigue. (He recommended no more than three hours of practicing daily.)
> The correct use of the pedal remains a study for life.
> Concentrate on legato. Hear great singers.[84]

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[81] Adele Marcus, Great Pianists Speak (Neptune, N.J.: Paganiniana Publications, Inc., 1979), p.7.
[82] Joseph Pišchna (1826-1896). Famous Bohemian pianist and pedagogue. His pedagogical work for piano became a standard method, reprinted in many editions.
[83] Carl Czerny (1791-1857). Austrian pianist-composer, pupil of Beethoven, and eminent teacher. Composer of hundreds of etudes that have become the scholastic basics for generations of piano students. Teacher of Liszt and Leschetizky.
[84] Harold C. Schonberg, The Great Pianists (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1963), p.149.

Students accepted for study with teachers such as Stessin, Canin, Aronov, and Kalish have already developed practice methods that seem to suit them. These teachers do, however, give new suggestions and ideas for practicing.

Herbert Stessin

Stessin explains that he has "a kid in the Pre-College doing the Saint-Saëns G Minor Concerto" and that there are "enough technical problems in that." From years of experimentation and of study with Gorodnitzki, Stessin has developed his own answers, ideas, and "tricks" to solve technical problems.

Stessin believes that many hand and arm positions can work well depending on the individual student. "If you don't have a problem and you don't use your hands the way I would advocate, I don't touch it," says Stessin. "If it ain't broke, don't fix it. Some people play octaves with higher wrists, some play with lower wrists. If there is a problem, then I make suggestions. And then there are alternate suggestions that will work. I am very much opposed to the curled finger," Stessin continues, "because curled fingers tighten the hand. All you have to do is do it." Stessin emphasizes using the fingers as a unit from the knuckles, an idea that refers back to the theories of Josef Lhévinne[85] and his book on technique. Lhévinne makes derogatory remarks on the curled finger technique, known as "the hook." Stessin's preferred hand position helps the

[85] Josef Lhévinne (1874-1944). Russian-born pianist. Joined faculty of the new Juilliard School in 1922. Author of Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing (Philadelphia, Pa., 1924).

hands and fingers to remain in a very relaxed position.

"Nothing moves faster than the fingers," says Stessin. "So in technique, there's no part of the body, when you stop and think about it, even the eyelids, I don't think, that moves as fast as the fingers. When you trill, you trill with the fingers. So it is not only how fast you get on the keys, but how fast you get off them. Now, that doesn't mean you can't involve other parts besides the fingers. You can involve weight, you can involve wrist motion, to help shape a phrase. But if you need speed, then the fingers are the thing that has to move. And on the tips. Because the larger the area of contact, the longer it takes you to get off the keys, so it's a pure physics problem. A smaller area of contact creates a faster release. However, when you are playing legato, the meaty part of the finger gets much better sound. There you don't need the tips."

Stessin has specific ideas on how students can practice most beneficially and believes it is important to give practice suggestions even to his College students. "Practice, generally, at a moderate tempo. I think that if it is too slow you lose continuity. Your brain doesn't carry you from one phrase or from one note to the next, if it is too slow. Generally, practice from the music because you'd be surprised what you missed the last time. And if you practice constantly without it, things creep in and things creep out that have nothing to do with the piece. Also, to play it from memory to see if you have it memorized, and to try it up to tempo. But generally, like a good singer, stay mezzo voce. If something is marked 'ff,' I wouldn't practice it 'ff' all the time. I'd proportion it. It's a good chance to get tendonitis that way." Stessin's advice is echoed by Leon Fleisher's,

as cited by Linda J. Noyle: "Playing pieces gently, could be slowly, could be if you play quickly, lightly, in other words, not really exerting any stress...there's a natural flexibility, facility, speed, as long as you don't put the extra responsibility of weight on them.[86]

Stessin also believes that mental practice away from the keyboard "is very good for memory, and for some people it is excellent. For some it doesn't work. I think it could be something that is very helpful. To be able to play a piece away [from the keyboard], just sitting in a chair. It is terrific if you can do it. It takes tremendous concentration."

Martin Canin

Canin works with technical problems as they arise through the repertoire. He approaches questions on technique "whenever it surfaces. I tend to feel," says Canin, "that the student has to do what is comfortable for them. If they ask or if they feel it is a problem, I would analyze it as best I can. I think it is wrong to extrapolate – to put your ideas onto everybody else. Each person has their own best way."

"Pedaling," says a Canin student, "is a big emphasis. Either changing the pedal for a different color, the degree of pedal that you use for different things, use quarter pedal, use half pedal, don't pedal." As quoted by Linda J. Noyle, John Browning also emphasizes the importance of pedaling: "I believe in very subtle pedaling but always keeping the piano sound a little bit 'wet.' I try not to over-pedal....The pedal gives it color, and you

[86] Linda J. Noyle, Pianists on Playing (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1987), p.90.

have to use the pedal even in fast passage work, a little teeny bit of pedal. You really would be wise to keep your foot on that top layer of pedal."[87]

Fingering is also an important issue to Canin. "He wants to make sure it is comfortable," continues the same student. "There was this passage today – I was playing Liszt – there is this one place that I had a memory slip and [Canin] said, 'make sure you know the fingering.' Before we went through it, he said, 'what fingering do you use,' and I told him. We were going through it and we passed that point and he stopped me and said, 'you were using another fingering.' And I had noticed that that was creating problems because by using that 'wrong' fingering, I was in danger of going back to the previous chord, so I needed to be consistent with the fingering."

When discussing technical issues, Canin tries to be helpful to the students, to help them see possibilities. "I would suggest something, perhaps an exercise, or fingering, which is a big issue." Canin does not suggest a specific hand position, but rather he "listens for results. If there is a question of something not coming out," explains Canin, "then I try to understand what is wrong. Usually I deal with it by what I hear, rather than by what I see. I feel that looking, in terms of trying to analyze problems, is a very difficult thing to do. I'm not sure it can be done. I've seen some famous pianists, and some make movements and some make faces and some sing and some don't. If somebody is comfortable doing whatever, I feel it is better not to make them self-conscious. I feel it is hard enough to make music, to be inspired, to feel deeply what you are doing in the

[87] Ibid., pp.29-30.

moment, and to make it come out, we all know how it is. It is not easy to be an artist. And so to make [the students] shrink back is not good. And I think that whatever they do naturally, if it's an effort to make the music – sometimes people start to sing when they play, I don't tell them 'don't sing.' I guess that if it reached a point where it was drowning out the music, I'd say something. If that's the price that they pay, so be it, if it helps them to be more expressive."

According to Canin, "practicing is solving problems. If I see there are no problems," he continues, "then they practiced correctly or there was nothing to challenge them. If I hear defects, then I will discuss the defects, of course. Sometimes they are not aware of their defects, but with the tape, they are. Then I will explain, discuss with them how to approach the problem." Canin doesn't put much emphasis on mental practicing away from the keyboard. Canin adds, "There are times when I would say, 'Just look at the music and try to conduct yourself and feel what you are doing.' Perhaps some people can do that. It is a little bit of a vague area. Some people do better at the piano with the sounds."

Arkady Aronov

Aronov believes that each individual pianist develops his or her own personal technical style. Generally speaking, however, Aronov is "convinced that the best position is sort of a dome position, when your fingers are not very curled."

Many piano students believe there is a "Russian School of technique." This "Russian School" represents large arm and elbow motion, exaggerated wrist motion, and dramatic lifts from the arms as notes release. Aronov describes his feelings on the myth of "The Russian School." "When I came here," says Aronov, "people were talking about 'The Russian School,' but in Russia there are at least three or four different directions which didn't recognize each other. Different physical directions. Different pianistic directions. I belong to the school of Professor [Leonid] Nikolayev, who was the teacher of my teacher, Professor Savshinsky. Professor Nikolayev understood how important is the motion of the whole arm, from the shoulders. Not only finger playing. He diminished the importance of finger playing. Professor Savshinsky combined new ideas which came in the beginning of our century with the Old School." As the chain of teaching continues, Aronov points out that he is "like Nikolayev's grandson."

When discussing the correct seat height, Aronov points out that, again, it is different for every musician. "It depends," says Aronov. "Sometimes very short students have pretty long hands, or very tall students have pretty short hands. Only Christian Dior models have wonderful proportions," he added with a smile. "Real people have real features, so you have to find that position, position of elbow, position of distance from the piano, everything. Not any question we should neglect. Every aspect should be discussed."

Aronov discusses practicing methods with his students, often developing a specific practice schedule with them. "I taught [a student] when and how much she should practice in the morning, how long should be rest between practices," says Aronov. He

works with each student to develop his or her best practice schedule. Aronov strongly believes that music students should practice at two separate times during the day to reap the beneficial aspects of practicing. He tells his students to practice five or six hours each day, "to practice in the morning for one and a half hours and then to take an hour rest," says Aronov. "Then another one and a half hours. Three hours is enough. Then to start practicing maybe another hour from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. And then one and a half hours in the evening, repeating what they did in the morning and the afternoon. It is very important to practice twice a day – in the morning and in the evening just before sleep, because if you practice before sleep, your brain continues to work. I tell this to my students repeatedly, because I know that sometimes I practice in the morning with no good results. In the evening with no good results. But in the evening and in the morning the next day – very good results, if I practice correctly. So, physiologically, I think it is the most effective way: morning and evening. For everybody." Bella Davidovich, quoted by David Dubal, describes her practicing methods, also incorporating the idea of small breaks: "I usually play around three hours a day, though sometimes I end up playing one or two hours more than that. And after each hour I make sure to take a little break, even a little ten-minute one, in order not to lose my level of concentration."[88]

Within each lesson, Aronov also discusses how to practice. "Every lesson is directed to their homework, for their practicing. Every lesson is directed to improve and direct their practice. I think it is major aspect of lesson. Every lesson should provide correct practice afterwards."

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[88] David Dubal, Reflections from the Keyboard (New York: Summit Books, 1984), p.126.

Gilbert Kalish

"I was a person, as a student, who always felt that what I really lacked was technical command," says Kalish. "After studying with Leonard Shure for three years, from the ages of twenty-two to twenty-five, I found," says Kalish, "for the first time, that I was getting real specific help on how to play the piano. What it evolved to mean to me is that you have to make a technical approach that will suit the musical ability. It isn't that you don't have to worry about the technique, it's that you sort of have to invent your technique all the time. There isn't one way of making sound, there isn't one way of playing a scale, there isn't one way of playing staccato or legato. It has to evolve according to the demands of the music." Similarly, Leon Fleisher, cited by Linda J. Noyle, says: "My recommendation is to have a very clear idea of what the musical intent, what the emotional intent of the music is at this point of difficulty, and work with that very much in mind. Then you are building a house out of materials that are stable because you're building the intention into the physical work so that it is part of it. It's like adding the element of concrete to your building. It will be stable; it won't collapse."[89]

According to Kalish, "Shure demystified the area of technique. He put it in sort of simple terms. The idea that the fingers were part of a larger mechanism had never occurred to me. Where I had problems was particularly in the fingers, strength and agility. I've always considered that there are certain people who have natural facility. We're built

[89] Linda J. Noyle, Pianists on Playing (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1987), p.93.

differently, with different kinds of finger strength, different kinds of agility. My hands are kind of stiff. I can't put two fingers together and two fingers apart. I can't do all these kinds of manipulations with my hands. Where I was helped," Kalish continues, "was seeing [the hand] as part of a larger mechanism, from the forearm to the wrist to the fingers. Those are the areas that I'm concerned with."

According to a first-year Doctoral student, Kalish discusses some aspect of technique at every lesson. "He does talk in every lesson about some physical aspect, but it's always linked to what we want musically. Going into the piano [leaning your forearm and hand into the piano] is a basic belief [of Kalish's] when you want a good sound. I would say," she continues, "that if there's any one physical thing that he's focused on, it is that. Not being afraid to [move] inward, even if you're going in slowly to create a quiet sound."

Kalish does not specifically discuss practice methods with his students. Since Kalish teaches students who have already completed their Bachelor's degree in music, he feels that his students have already developed their own beneficial practice methods; otherwise, they would not be able to play at such an accomplished level, performing technically demanding repertoire.

Chapter 6: Preparing for a Performance

Different kinds of piano performances involve different skills. For the soloist, memorization and performance in competitions are key; master classes help to hone the soloist's stage presence. Ensemble players, who may accompany or play chamber music, have greater need for "functional" piano skills.

I. A) Competitions

Though piano competitions are a fact of life in the music business of today, their value remains in question. Will the competitions help to create better pianists and better performers? Is the winner necessarily the best pianist of those entered in the competition?

Most often technique is valued over musicality. Jorge Bolet, as cited by Elyse Mach, expresses his feelings on competitions: "As for competitions, I think they are dreadful, just dreadful.... And as much as I despise the system, were I a young man on my way up today, I probably would have to enter the competitions. And now that would be a disaster for me! If in a competition I as a contestant were seated behind a screen, I would be eliminated in the first round! My style of playing would be against me. My kind of piano playing is not the kind of playing that wins competitions, and for that reason alone I am dead set against competitions."[90]

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[90] Elyse Mach, Great Pianists Speak for Themselves, vol.2 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1988), pp.32-33.

The winner is not necessarily an artist. And though the winner may be awarded concert dates in various-sized halls, does that mean the pianist is emotionally ready for a performing career with a full schedule? Perhaps competitions have less importance today than fifty years ago, for now there are hundreds. Quoted by Elyse Mach, Leon Fleisher reiterates this point:

> It used to be that there was a small handful of important international competitions; they were very relevant, very consequential, then. It meant something to win one of these competitions, especially in terms of management. If you won an international competition in the thirties or forties, you'd find management and managers at your every door. Then in the sixties came more and more competitions, and managers figured out some excuse to avoid all of these young players. At one time, the young would-be artist heard, 'Well, go win an international competition, and we'll take you on.' But now every other street corner has its own competition, with the result that management is becoming evermore cavalier.[91]

Perhaps it is better for musicians to build a career without competitions, allowing freedom to express themselves and create music without the emotional and physical burden that a newly launched career entails, or having to experience the doubts and critical rejection of not claiming a prize at even a small competition.

The four interviewed teachers hold different viewpoints on competitions. "I'm not for them," says Stessin, though he is able to point out a positive aspect to competitions. "They can form a focal point," he explains. "Something for the student to prepare for, but much more preferable is a concert than a competition. Because, in a concert, you are giving pleasure. You perform. You have an audience and that is what you are really

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[91] Ibid., pp.110-111.

practicing for. In a competition, you get chopped off. A whole bunch of judges are sitting there and each one disagrees with the next, and you are trying to please each one, which you don't succeed in doing at all. It is not even a matter of being dishonest. As far as I'm concerned, they don't come out right." Yet, if one of his students is interested in entering a competition, Stessin will support his or her decision. According to Stessin, the reaction to losing a competition, or not making it to the second round, "depends upon the individual. Some people take it in stride. They go out for competitions on a regular basis, just to keep trying. But some get totally demoralized. It depends on individual strength of character." Stessin also warns that though judges claim that they prefer to hear a great artist who plays a few wrong notes, the focus remains on technical precision and accuracy.

Conversely, Canin states, "Competitions are a fact of life, and I hope they don't go away. I think it is a good thing for students who are ready to benefit from it. It is not good," he also points out, "for students whose sole aim is to try to win a competition, because sometimes it is the tail-wagging-the-dog syndrome. They are so concerned with the repertoire for a particular competition," Canin explains, "they are so concerned with mastering the few pieces for that competition that they may lose out on the chance to really develop themselves as musicians by playing more music and having a broader understanding of what they are doing."

Aronov accepts the reality that competitions are often part of a pianist's life. "I can tell you, they cannot avoid competitions because contemporary life dictates this industry."

Paralleling Stessin's ideas, Aronov says, "In general, it is a very bad influence on some students. First of all," Aronov continues, "every participant in serious competitions must play almost the same program for every competition. Standard requirements are so high that they are an influence on students to make more effort for stability, for correctness, forgetting about imagination, which sometimes can bring damage onstage. And they will get to be, for every new competition, very precise, to exclude any possibility to make a mistake. This is a very bad situation. Competitions usually destroy personalities."

Aronov supports his students who are interested in entering competitions, though he does not think competitions are artistically beneficial. Claiming a first-place prize at a competition, though, gives a pianist the opportunity for a potential performing concert career. "Everybody thinks the same way," Aronov continues. "Everybody does it because such is life. In our life, not everything is very good also, but we should live with this."

Kalish's ideas reflect Canin's, when he says, "I have no problem with competitions. Competitions are particularly useful for getting people motivated, like a concert or recital. I always hope that my students don't have unrealistic expectations about it and realize what it is and don't get too discouraged." Kalish points out that "those students who might get too discouraged, I don't encourage. But otherwise, if they want to do it, they do it."

B) Need for Memorization

Memorization is also a highly debated topic these days.[92] Many prestigious pianists are beginning to give public performances with the printed score in front of them. Though all of the four teachers stress the importance for advanced students to continue to memorize a large quantity of repertoire for auditions, recitals, and competitions, they all have strong opinions on the issue of memorization.

Emphasizing the reality of the memorization issue, John Browning, quoted by Linda J. Noyle, discusses his ideas:

> Memorizing is an issue with everybody because we have to play from memory. And I don't care what anybody says, every performer, no matter how secure, always thinks about the possibility of memory slips.... Everybody has to work at memorizing.... There are a thousand ways of memorizing. Again, I think it depends on the work. Now my teacher, Rosina Lhevinne, was a stickler and she would first bring this up with her students when we were sixteen or seventeen. She would say, 'You know, dear, you must do the mental practice.'... What she meant was, you must be able away from the keyboard to call out every note whether it's E flat or D sharp, every dynamic, every phrasing, and every finger.... Certainly I think to learn music away from the keyboard before you even touched the board itself would be ideal. That's really what we all would like to be able to do. Not very many of us are really successfully able to do that in complicated music. Certainly one should be able to study a score away from the keyboard. But I think mental practice is crucial for performers. You're not likely to have problems with memory if you can sit in a chair or lie in bed and go through the entire work, no matter how complicated, and call it out in your mind. I really don't feel I'm ready to play a work in public until I can do this.[93]

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[92] Linda J. Noyle, Pianists on Playing (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1987), p.134. Ralph Votapek: "I don't like to think about memorizing because I think it's the bane of many performers and if they don't admit it, it's because they put it in their subconscious. These seminars on stage fright make me very uncomfortable because I don't like to think about it. I like to think if I do my homework and a little praying that it'll come out right."

[93] Ibid., p.32.

In the experience not only of these teachers, but of the students I have spoken to, it is clear that a pianist who decided to enter a major international competition and then put his music up on the rack would fail. Therefore, memorization is an essential skill for a soloist, even if some of these teachers feel otherwise.

Stessin believes it is both necessary and important, but does not feel that the length of time needed to memorize a piece is as critical an issue. According to Stessin, memorization "goes on a professional level. If it takes you too long, or you can't memorize, or you get nervous in performing, then it cuts down on your professional life considerably. But it doesn't cut down on your talent," believes Stessin. "There is many a great talent that never makes it to the foreground. Nerves and memory. Some go into chamber music, where you don't have to memorize. And it is interesting, that more and more performers are getting to use music. [Leon] Fleisher came out to Aspen [this past summer] and did the Ravel Concerto with the music and he did it stunningly."

Uniquely, Canin says that he "encourages people to use the music when they perform" instead of memorizing the piece. Canin tells the story of when he was a student at Juilliard, turning pages in a concert for Myra Hess. She used music while performing in her late years because "she found that she didn't have the memory that she had had when she was young. I remember her saying," continues Canin, "that if people are offended, they don't have to come. What you are coming for is to hear the music. You are not coming there to see someone show their memory." Canin explains that "some people have a great memory and some people don't. And it has nothing to do with musical

artistry. I played a few years ago with an oboe player at Bowdoin," says Canin. "And he played three Schumann Romances for oboe and piano, and he took out the music. I asked, 'you play these simple things with the music?' And he said that he was used to having music, that he would always play with the music. And because he is an oboe player, because oboists don't give recitals, everyone expects to see music. But pianists are expected to memorize the most complex music. And I really feel it should be a non-issue. Now, I do understand when Mr. [Evgeny] Kissin gets up on television to play the Tchaikovsky Concerto, of course he is not going to use the music because he is Mr. Kissin, he is a star! But why should everybody be a star like Mr. Kissin? I think that someone who is beyond school age and has a memory problem, should be able to perform with the music. I'm a radical in this respect," Canin admits. "If people have a problem with memorization and the memory issue becomes the overriding issue and ruins the concert, I really wish they would use the music. And I think I would enjoy the concert much more, as a listener, knowing that they felt secure and knowing that that wasn't an issue. I'm sure every teacher who has had many students has had that situation, where a student just...they freeze, or they are not used to playing that much, and their nerves do them in. And part of the nervousness is the memory."

To aid in the confidence in performing by memory, Canin suggests consistency with fingering. "I think a lot of memory," says Canin, "is just a matter of the fingers just knowing what to do, where to go. If you change fingers, do it one way one time and another way another time without realizing, the pattern is less strong. So I think that is one of the things that can help."

Similar to Stessin, Aronov does not believe in giving time limits or time suggestions for when a student's piece should be memorized. "Every student has different abilities and a different sense of security," says Aronov. "I don't want to terrorize the student who I know cannot learn a piece by memory by a certain date. I don't tell him. I wait. And also, it is a very dangerous question to force memorizing because if I force memorizing, they will learn mostly notes. They will not pay attention to the music. They can learn it but it will not be a good performance. So I prefer to hear them playing by memory in good time, three weeks, four weeks, or two months. It depends on the student."

Though Aronov does not require his students to memorize a piece within a specific time frame, he strongly believes that pianists should always perform with the music memorized. He believes that pianists should not use the music in performance, "because I can tell you," says Aronov, "my teacher (Savshinksy) said, 'If you play with the music, that is why you don't know the piece.'" This belief has been carried down to Aronov, and is directly related to the attitudes of judges at all major piano competitions.

Again, mirroring Canin's ideas, Kalish believes that "memorization should not be a requirement. It is an artificial requirement." Yet, Kalish admits that he is dissatisfied with his own weak memorization skills. He would prefer to perform by memory with confidence and ease. "I wish I did, but I don't. And I don't encourage my students to use the music. I absolutely don't, and almost none of them does. On the other hand, if somebody is a fine artist, and they have a [memorization] problem, I don't see any reason

why that should disqualify them from having a career or getting a degree. It didn't disqualify me, and I would feel very bad if it had disqualified me. I played solo recitals and I played concerti with the music."

When discussing memorization within weekly lessons, Kalish says, "I feel it's artificial to insist that [my students] memorize their music every week, because that isn't the point of it. The point is, again, the work, the process." And, in terms of any memorization techniques, Kalish admits, "I don't have such techniques. I don't have any way of discussing that with [my students] because I don't have any confidence about it."

C) Master Classes

Master classes and studio (or performance) classes are two different performing arenas. Students perform for each other in a studio class, primarily and distinctly for the performance opportunity. Master classes involve an audience that watches and listens to the 'master teacher' who comments on the student's performance. This teacher then works with the student in front of the audience, to improve and alter musical ideas, phrasing, articulation, tempo, pedaling, or other technical problems.

Though he does not highly value the master-class situation, Garrick Ohlsson, as quoted by Elyse Mach, explains his feelings on master classes and his master-class method: "I don't go much for master classes. I've done a lot of them, and I can be fairly good at them, but what you can impart is usually only very general ideas, because the group is too heterogeneous. Yet in master-class situations, I have an absolute formula, in the sense

that I try to go from the specific to the general as much as possible.... What I have to say is not only for that individual privately, but for all of those in attendance as well."[94] Both the studio and master class settings are important and helpful experiences for music students. Stessin, Canin, Aronov, and Kalish have strong ideas about these two separate performance situations.

Stessin believes that "performance classes are better than master classes." He explains that "in the Pre-College, there is an hour that I pick, that is put aside for me, so that my kids will have [the same hour available each week]. They are all here on Saturday, and at four o'clock they are all free. You can't do that in the College." He believes it is important for both the Pre-College and College students to have weekly studio classes, "but more important for the younger ones, so they can get used to playing. When they are older, hopefully, they will find their own opportunities." Regarding master classes, Stessin believes that "master classes are for teachers, not for students. I do them in Aspen and other places. Their function is really to make the teacher shine."

Canin also agrees with Stessin on the issue of master classes. "Master classes," says Canin, "are kind of like public entertainment. Really, to kind of amuse the audience, to keep the audience interested." During the summer, Canin gives "a [studio] class every week," at the Bowdoin Summer Music Festival in Maine. "It is my students, so we've discussed everything. I give them a chance to play and I may touch on something. But, I

[94] Elyse Mach, Great Pianists Speak for Tehmselves, vol.2 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1988), p.194.

find it much more effective to teach them in their lessons than to go through it all with an audience." Canin likes the idea of studio classes for his College students, but realizes that "it is a little hard to arrange because of scheduling."

Similarly, Aronov believes performance classes are important for his College students. Uniquely, he has his College students perform for each other in several studio classes each semester. "I arrange six, seven, sometimes eight piano-playing classes every year," says Aronov. He feels that his performance classes are extremely beneficial for his students. Because of his time constraints and full schedule, Aronov is unable to attend these classes. Instead, he places his assistant in charge. "When students play for each other," says Aronov, "I have very strict rules. I tell everybody that they can miss the piano-playing class if I find that the reason is good. My assistant cannot allow students not to come; only I can. If you are my student and do not come to piano-playing class without my permission, I punish you: next time you do not play. One absence, one cut from your program." Aronov's students find it helpful to perform for each other in these classes. "They know that playing classes are not concerts. Of course, first semester piano-playing class, students are not always prepared. But second semester, mostly it looks like concert."

To Kalish, master classes are definitely beneficial. "I learned a tremendous amount from my own teacher's master class," says Kalish, who gives master classes at universities other than Stony Brook. "When you give a master class as an outsider," he explains, "you're coming in and you're saying, 'Look, I'm another set of ears that hasn't heard you

before.' I have an impression of something. I try not to talk about the whole piece, but focus on one thing: their particular sound, the intensity of the melodic line, technical difficulties, balance, sense of musical direction, stylistic [awareness], tempo decisions. I try to open up ideas. But," continues Kalish, "I don't know [if it works] with your own students. They are performing for each other all the time, and for you. They are a little bit on the spot. I think I have a wrong attitude toward it, but I do have an attitude. So, I don't do a class." To benefit from both the performance opportunities and another teacher's musical opinions, Kalish's students attend the master class of one of his Stony Brook colleagues.

II A) Accompaniment and Functional Skills

Many music schools stress the pianistic functional skills of sight-reading, transposition, accompanying, ear-training, theory, orchestral score reading, and improvisation. The piano teachers I interviewed have varied responses to the necessity and importance of these keyboard skills.

Discussing his opinion on various keyboard skills, Stessin says, "I think they are all helpful. Depending what your intentions are," he continues. "If you are going to be an accompanist, then sight-reading is very important. I don't know how important transposing is today, if you are doing the classical literature. Theory and ear-training can add to the security of memorization. Improvisation is also helpful if you get lost in a piece. I don't think [functional skills] are essential. Orchestral score reading will be helpful; if you are studying a Beethoven sonata, you can read a Beethoven symphony. It is important if you are doing a concerto to know the instrumentation. I have my kids get pocket scores for concerti," says Stessin. In terms of theoretically analyzing a piece, Stessin does not feel it is "especially important to understanding a piece. I am unique in that observation," he admits. But he does "think that if you are musically gifted, you will feel that you are going from V to I. If you have to analyze that you are going V-I, me-thinks you've got another problem, if you can't hear that kind of resolution." Ruth Laredo, as cited by David Dubal, agrees with Stessin's ideas, saying: "I think that logic can only go a certain distance in music. I find that the most inspired performances are

always those which are inexplicable from a logical point of view. If I try too hard to understand any piece of music intellectually, I find that it thwarts my musicality."[95]

Regarding performance-practice issues, Stessin ironically says, "I think it is wonderful for discussion. It eats up a lot of time, and especially if you love music and you're not gifted, this is a perfect outlet for you." He continues in a serious manner, explaining, "First of all, we don't know what Bach did. And if he had a piano, we don't know. You know the piano can imitate any instrument except for the harpsichord. You can get timpani effects, oboe effects, you can get strings, but you can't make it sound like a harpsichord. And the other interesting thing is, like in Bach, you are always taught that Bach has to be straight, it is Baroque, strict, but the only way you can do anything expressive on the harpsichord was by altering the rhythm. You had to use rubato, so that, in itself, is a contradiction."

"Ornamentation is a matter of taste," continues Stessin. "We don't know what Bach did, and I don't know if he did it twice the same way." Stessin thinks that it is fine for students to add ornamentation in Bach, but he does not have his students study ornaments or read Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach's Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments (1753). He does not suggest this "because, again, what you can do on the harpsichord, you can't do on the piano. The harpsichord was a lot more ornamented than the piano can be because the quality of sound remains constant. You throw too many ornaments into a piano performance and you have distortion of the melodic line, you

[95] David Dubal, Reflections from the Keyboard (New York: Summit Books, 1984), p.245.

have ups and downs, you have intrusions, you have things that are bumping into each other because the ornaments don't always come out tonally even or rhythmically even, and you really have three trains coming into the same station on the same track. So, I think it is important to know, but things change. If you listen to performances – I have two tapes, one by Schnabel doing the C Minor Bach Toccata, and Harold Samuel, who was a great Bach expert in the early part of the twentieth century. I have a recording of him doing the C Minor Partita. It is just beautiful. No double dotting, no French overture style. So, things change, and they change because people who really want to be in music and don't feel it too well, get involved in books and books on ornamentation and they analyze it. When you stop and think about some of the things that Glenn Gould did, it is fascinating. He became the God of Bach. Yet, in the Goldberg Variations, he picked tempi for some of the fast movements that no harpsichord can duplicate. So, how authentic is he when he is playing a tempo that a harpsichord can't play? Yet he captured something of the essence of the music, of the style, and the voicing, the balance, the concept, and this is, I think, what made him so spectacular. Murray Perahia is a wonderful artist. Sometimes he starts a [trill in] Mozart on the principal note, sometimes he starts it on the upper note. If it is a beautifully conceived performance, I don't think it makes a difference. Unless you are, 'oops, upper note, oops, lower note.' If it is a melody note, he will start probably on the principal note, so you can make the melody. If it is an ornament that leads itself to starting on the upper note, then start. Even in Bach, in the so-called inverted mordent, which is four notes, sometimes you don't have time on the piano, with the speed and such, so you use three notes. You know, to be an idiot, I could say, 'oops, only three notes.'"

According to Canin, "sight-reading is very important, though it is very difficult to make a person who is not a good sight-reader into a good sight-reader." He also believes that "it is important, at some level, to understand performance practice issues. If one read early pedagogical treatises or doctrines or studied the ornamentation ideas of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, they would be taking the intellectually rigorous approach to performance practice issues. The question is," continues Canin, "is the intellectually rigorous approach truly more beneficial in a given performance. I do teach what I believe as far as ornamentation. If a student plays a three-note trill in Bach, I suggest a four-note trill, because I think it is correct stylistically, according to my own understanding of what I have learned. Mozart's trills start generally on the upper note. I find that these issues are, in a way, less important than questions of original instruments. It is good to know about original instruments. It is good to know what the fortepiano was, and so on. However, we are playing on a modern grand, and I think the important things to understand are the role of pedaling and balance because that is where one can really hear the difference. If someone overpedals in Mozart, I would discourage that, of course, because I think that [careful and precise pedaling] is an essential part of the Mozart sound. We cannot imitate the fortepiano on this, because it is a different instrument."

Concerning harmonic analysis, Canin says, "I doubt whether I get into that very much. To be quite honest, I find that performing a piece is very different from analyzing a piece. Of course, I feel that a student should have some [theoretical] understanding," says Canin. "If it is a sonata, you should know what you are playing. But some music which can be complex, the Berg Sonata, for example, if you start to analyze that harmonically, it

could take a year just to figure out what the chords are. And I don't know what good it would really do!" Canin's observations are somewhat similar to those of Alfred Brendel, who points out: "I prefer not to memorize harmonic progressions, because I want to feel them as freshly as possible while I play. Perhaps I am a little bit afraid that knowing them too well intellectually may detract from the spontaneity of my playing." [96]

Canin explains, "You could still have a memory slip even if you could name every chord, because I think that things that happen in performance are not related to what you intellectually know. It is a physical thing, not an intellectual process. It is neurological and physical. So, I don't see any great need for students to analyze music as a part of their piano performance. I think it is a good thing for them to be doing in the L&M (Literature and Materials) courses – they deal with that and certainly students should do it. They should have some understanding, but I don't think it is my function, as their piano teacher, to spend time doing that. There is too much detail, there is too much to do, as far as playing the piece."

Alternatively, Aronov believes that keyboard skills or functional skills are "very important. All of these things, but it depends on how the teacher teaches," says Aronov. "Very often music theory is discussed [and analyzed separately from] performing problem. But of course, the student must not just know abstract things. No question. How are you going to talk to him without his understanding of intervals, triads, harmony." It is very important to be able to read an orchestral score, but, as Aronov

[96] Ibid., p.91.

explains, there is "no time for this during the lesson." The question then arises, when should students learn these skills?

According to Aronov, improvisation is also very important. "I can improvise in every style," he continues. "I can tell you, a real professional must have skill for everything that is connected to the keyboard." Regarding performance-practice issues and questions on Baroque ornamentation, Aronov says, "We have some rules regarding different styles. Every time I show students. First of all, I explain to students what rules are. I explain what every sign means, every mark means. But when I change it, in most cases, I explain why, because it can be connected with interval intonation. I explain to students many things, why I show this way or another, especially if this way does not completely correspond to standard books."

Though Kalish admits that he does not deal with functional skills within the lesson, he is aware of the importance of a solid, well-rounded, pianistic background. "I neglect [functional skills]," says Kalish, "but they're great skills and I wish I had them." Understanding a piece from a theoretical perspective can be "helpful," but Kalish believes that "basic things can be derived intuitively. You don't need a tremendous amount of theoretical knowledge," says Kalish, "although the more you know the better off you are."

According to Kalish, performance-practice issues and "the whole early music area is tremendously important and positive. I think," explains Kalish, "that we all play Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven differently from what we heard in the last twenty years. I think

we should. I won't go so far as to obviously say that we shouldn't play on a modern piano, but we should be influenced by what a fortepiano was. But certainly," he continues, "we'd be stupid not to be decently informed by what the composer might have heard and certain stylistic elements such as dynamics, phrasing, articulation, and tempo."

B) Chamber Music Skills

Chamber music is becoming more and more important, for pianists are consistently sought out as instrumental and vocal accompanists. The repertoire is vast, varied, and exciting, and many musicians who find memorization difficult choose the chamber-music route. Each of the piano teachers explains his viewpoints on the necessity and benefit of chamber music for today's pianist.

Stessin believes chamber music is "very important. Chamber music gives a lot of pleasure," says Stessin. "Unfortunately, I, myself, had very little exposure to it, because Gorodnitzki felt that it diminished you as a soloist to play with someone else. So I had little exposure to it. But," continues Stessin, "I think it is terrific. I watch my kids do it and enjoy it. It gives them the feeling of doing something together. It gives them the ability to listen to a balance, to hear another rhythm against their own. It is all positive. Especially if you are a pianist, you are a most lonesome individual."

Canin is also "a great believer in chamber music. All music is music," Canin continues. "And to limit yourself to solo playing, you are just cutting yourself off from the total

musical experience. It is unrealistic to think that one is only going to play solo recitals. It is much more likely that one will be playing with others. First of all, the chamber music literature is a great literature, and second of all, you learn from everything that you do. Chamber music is an essential thing that I think should be taught. It should be a part of the school curriculum."

Aronov also believes in the importance and necessity of the chamber-music experience. "It is terribly important," says Aronov. "It is absolutely necessary. Especially now, because chamber music is a huge field in contemporary music life. I think everything that comes from chamber music is good. There is no negative influence. It is all very good: for balance, self-control, sense of rhythm, ability to be different for every image. It's all very important."

Kalish is an advocate for both solo and chamber-music opportunities, emphasizing that neither one should be mutually exclusive. "I'm a chamber-music player," says Kalish, who performs regularly with the Boston Chamber Players and with cellist Joel Krosnick of the Juilliard Quartet. "Ninety percent of what I do is chamber music and has always been, since I'm sixteen...since I'm twelve. That's what I love to do." But Kalish also believes in the solo piano recital and the importance of studying the solo repertoire. "I think it's wrong to take a young pianist and not have them test their mettle on the solo repertoire. First of all," Kalish explains, "it's great repertoire. Second of all, it makes the most demands on you. You have to do it. I also don't encourage [my students] to bring

chamber music to their lessons, even though I realize that when they play, when they get out [of school], that they'll be doing mostly chamber music."

"I cannot overemphasize the importance of chamber music for listening for balance, for understanding texture, color, for listening for rhythms – that whole development of sensitivity – balance with others as well as within yourself," says Kalish. "But all of that, you have to do when you play solo. It's unthinkable to have a [music school] program with serious pianists not having chamber music. On the other hand, I really oppose [music school] programs that don't demand solo playing."

Chapter 7: Survey of Literature: Editions and Recordings

Choosing an edition for a particular volume of music can be confusing and somewhat unsatisfying. Editors add dynamics, fingerings, and ornaments, alter notes, articulation markings, and pedaling. There is no one satisfactory or perfect edition for any particular piece. Also, the editions that teachers prefer are at times difficult to locate, with some editors and publishers going out of business. The teachers interviewed have specific preferences, which can help pianists to question the score instead of haphazardly accepting that their edition reflects the composer's intentions.

The idea of listening to recordings also brings out varying opinions. Some teachers emphasize the importance of listening to a wide variety of recordings. Many teachers, though, strongly believe that listening to recordings can only negatively influence the student, producing a detrimental effect on the student's unique musical ideas. What might seem to be a straightforward issue is complex, and opinions are divided.

Herbert Stessin

Stessin's preference for Bach's music is the Bischoff edition, choosing not to use the Henle, though he does prefer the Henle for Beethoven. For Chopin, Stessin likes "a combination of Paderewski, Joseffy, Mikuli." For the music of Robert Schumann, Stessin prefers the edition by Schumann's pianist wife, Clara. "I know a lot of people object, but she was close to the source. And even stuff that he didn't so-called dedicate to her, she was usually the first one to play it. So she had real contact with the notes, fingering, phrasing."

According to Stessin, listening to recordings is "very important. The bigger the cross section, the better. And then, obviously, not to copy any. To see what they like and why. That's important." Stessin's suggestions: "For sound I always recommend Gilels. Any of the old timers: Lhevinne, Hofmann, if you can get it. Cortot is fascinating. You can't imitate him – he played more wrong notes than right, but he had great imagination."

Martin Canin

"There are editions that I would like to avoid," says Canin, "like the Czerny edition of Bach, which is just horrible because it is all doctored up with things that are irrelevant." For Bach, Canin agrees with Stessin, saying, "I like Bischoff. Editions are a very difficult story now, because," continues Canin, "a lot of editions have been disappearing. The Bischoff for Bach is harder to get now, because it no longer exists. Kids bring in Henle Bach and I don't particularly like that. It's not a major issue. We can still teach from that, but there are notes that are different. You can assume that it is correct, but it's not. For Chopin," says Canin, "kids usually bring in Paderewski or Dover. I find Chopin a little less of a problem in a sense because there is so much freedom, I feel, in Chopin, that it doesn't require as much consistency as Bach, Beethoven, or Brahms. I really like the Urtext for those. I think there are problems with every Chopin edition. There is no one edition. I use the Paderewski because that's about as good as there is, but I'm not sure that is the right answer to the problem."

Canin does not stress listening to recordings. Canin feels it is important for his piano students to listen to themselves. "Recordings, like competitions, are a fact of life, and you are never going to have students who are never going to listen to a piece that they are playing. I feel," says Canin, "there is a danger in that, in that students whose judgment is not yet formed, who are less musically sophisticated, will assume that whatever is being recorded is the right way to play it, and they will be unduly influenced by that, simply because it is a recording, and they make it their first order of business. In fact, I have many students who say to me, 'I'm at a loss as to what to do here because I haven't been able to listen to a recording.' Often students go out to Tower Records and they buy the recording, not even knowing who is playing it. Just last week," Canin continues, "I had an amusing situation with a Haydn sonata. The student had heard a recording and then when he started playing it, it was twice too fast! He said, 'I went out and bought the [Ivo] Pogorelich recording. It was the only one they had.' Well, Pogorelich, of course, is a very eccentric figure. He certainly plays the piano, no question about that, but whether he is the one to copy is a very open question. And here was a student who had heard Pogorelich, and he assumed that was the tempo. He was intelligent enough that I could explain to him that Pogorelich was, in fact, kind of eccentric, and that the piece was twice too fast for what the music was saying. That it was marked 'Moderato' in four, which gives a certain sense of what Haydn must have wanted, and I was able to convince him. But, sometimes you have the feeling like, 'Who am I to contradict Glenn Gould, who is world famous and has made all of these recordings of Bach pieces that no one else has recorded.' As great as he was, he was very eccentric as far as tempi. He played things sixteen times too fast, and fifteen times too slow. And tempo is a very important issue in

playing a piece of music! And, of course, I am their teacher, and feel very strongly and can explain a tempo, and you have to first fight against the influence of somebody on a recording. It is difficult." Listening to recordings can be "a danger. You can be influenced too much, and without enough of your own thinking. It becomes too much a question of copying, instead of trying to understand," says Canin.

Arkady Aronov

Aronov also prefers Urtext, but realizes that "we can put three different editions on the music stand and every one of them is good, all are Urtext, yet there will still be many variants. But," says Aronov, "I know a little bit about who is who among the editors. For example, if I see Martinsen, I know if he published Beethoven, I can believe him, that it is corresponding to the manuscript. But if he publishes Haydn, I know he edits many wrong things. Now, Henle is very popular. Even the Peters edition has different Urtexts. Students often ask me why it is so different [among editions]. I explain, first of all, because every composer can have different manuscripts. When I was a student in composition class, I rewrote my music many times, and all of them were Urtexts. If I did it, Beethoven did much more because he worked a lot on his compositions. It's a whole science of Beethoven textology." Aronov wants his students to look at many editions. "Of course you must know everything as much as possible about the text," says Aronov. "For example, my respect for Artur Schnabel is very high, but I don't want to use his edition. Or I can use his edition, having one goal: I would like to find out Schnabel's opinion about how to play this. Schnabel is an interesting object of research. I prefer Urtext, not Schnabel edition. I especially use this name because Schnabel is very well

known and he did a lot of things there. So it means that Schnabel is thought about, but not for studio work and not for my own work either, because, in general, I would like to have Urtext. Sometimes it is very difficult to find Urtext for some composers. For Chopin, the problem of text is very difficult because there are so many different kinds of Urtexts: Mikuli, Paderewski, Peters, Oxford. So many differences. Students usually trust me in this case. When I tell them this one note is wrong, then it is wrong. I rely on my experience, of course. I have my convictions on what is correct among many differences."

Aronov agrees with Canin, explaining that he is "not very much interested in recordings. For pleasure, I like, but for work, I prefer to work with text of composition. Sometimes," says Aronov, "I ask my students to listen to recordings because it can help me because sometimes students don't understand many things. Especially if the student is not very strong, I settle for the recording. The stronger the student, the less I want him or her to be involved with recordings." Aronov does not want his students to imitate a recording, but, rather, he encourages them to develop their own ideas away from records, tapes, and CD's. "Many of my students, by the way, record the lesson," explains Aronov. "In some aspects I think it's good. But if you try to fight with your own tape, trying to reach the best performance, it will not be a good result."

Gilbert Kalish

"I'm not so knowledgeable about editions," explains Kalish. "Of course, people should use the best [edition], an edition that is faithful to what the composer wrote, not an [edition] that is overly superimposed with an editor's ideas. Sometimes, students do not understand which are the editor's [markings] and which are the composer's," says Kalish. During lessons, there is often discussion on the imperfections of most editions. Questions arise regarding embellishments, rhythmic gestures, rhythmic notation between sections, tempi differentiation, articulation, phrase design. Working together, Kalish and the student find, or accept, a "solution," an interpretation that will express specific musical and stylistic characteristics.

Studying different editions is both worthwhile and rewarding. "To deal with an illuminating edition, like Schnabel's on Beethoven's sonatas, is very interesting," says Kalish. "As long as you know what's Schnabel and what's not. [The Schnabel edition] is a very interesting edition by a great musician."

Kalish feels strongly regarding the issue of listening to recordings. "I don't encourage my students to ever listen to records," states Kalish. "I understand the benefit, of course, but who are they, or who am I, to talk about inventing a performance when this or that and the other great performer has done it. That's not what it's all about. It's about the process. It's about really thinking about a piece in a fresh way," explains Kalish. "It's not about living up to somebody's performance or doing it the way somebody does it. Now, fortunately, we have so many performances that we realize that there is not a way,

that there are many, many ways, but it's the process of learning that is really hurt by being overly influenced by other people's versions of a piece. Sometimes I even resist hearing other versions of a work that I'm working on myself until I have some sense of my own understanding of it. Sure, it's tremendously interesting to hear other people, but it's not what it's about. Absolutely, it's not what it's about."

Chapter 8: Performance Potential, Auditions, and Ideas on Talent

Many students are able to play superbly during their piano lessons, but achieving poise in public performances is neither simple nor straightforward. "The distance from the practice studio to the hall equals that between the earth and the stars."[97] It is important for students at the advanced level to strive for and reach their performance potential, working through technical difficulties, memorization issues, and nerves. There is no quick solution. These New York piano teachers understand the difficulties of onstage fears and nerves, and offer their ideas and opinions on performance poise.

Auditioning for a master piano teacher involves varied formats. Some teachers give a student a private audition at their home, often in the form of a lesson experience, including a lesson fee. If the teacher is interested in working with the student, they often suggest starting lessons immediately, to prepare for specific school auditions. Some teachers, on the other hand, never meet the student prior to a school audition, an audition which usually lasts between ten and fifteen minutes. Whatever the format, each teacher looks for and listens for specific qualities during the student's audition.

Talent is difficult to define. The four piano teachers have differing opinions on the issue of recognizing and defining talent. On a first hearing, a student's talent is not always obvious. Recognizing talent involves subjective judgment from the teacher. Once the student's talent is recognized, it needs to be nurtured. For teachers, it is rewarding to guide students' progress, seeing them grow as musicians and reach their performance

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[97] David Dubal, Reflections from the Keyboard (New York: Summit Books, 1984), p.12.

potential. Perfect pitch and the ability to easily memorize are in dispute as measures of talent. Focussing on such issues as tone, timing, imagination, and expression, teachers try to create a unique musical experience with every piece, with the goal of developing their students' talent. According to Claudio Arrau: "There are so many different types of talents. I always say that even a small talent has a little musical message which is invaluable if there is sincerity."[98]

Herbert Stessin

The best way to improve performance potential is through "experience," says Stessin. "If you have the personality of a performer, the more you do it, the better you are going to get at it. If you are a nervous wreck, the more you do it, the worse it gets, because it becomes more frightening each time."

During auditions, Stessin looks for "imagination, primarily, and the ability to get around the keyboard. But if I see the inability to get around the keyboard, and if it is something that I think I can help, then that will become secondary." The ability to go beyond the written note is an important criterion. For example, Adele Marcus writes, "When someone says that we should play only what is written in the music, I am often amused. In fact, I have often said to students, 'Please play what is not written in the music and convey to me what your imagination has dictated.'"[99] Through phrasing, musical line, and understanding, musical expression and imagination can be conveyed.

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[98] Ibid., p.33.
[99] Adele Marcus, Great Pianists Speak (Neptune, N.J.: Paganiniana Publications, Inc., 1979), p.10.

Stessin hears students for the first time both at auditions and prior to the audition. Students "will come to prepare for a Juilliard audition," says Stessin. "For example, at Aspen, I get some kids who would love to come to Juilliard, so, if I feel that they have the potential for getting in, I suggest repertoire. If they are outside of New York, they'll make several trips during the year so I can get an idea of what is going on. I do very little actual private teaching, because there isn't any time."

Describing talent, Stessin believes that "a talented student is one who can create. One who can take the music and create an atmosphere, a mood. Make you listen. Make you be interested in what they are doing." According to Stessin, perfect pitch has no correlation with talent. "Perfect pitch is something you have, but not an indication of talent, per se. Some people have perfect pitch, but have absolutely no feeling. I find very little correlation between talent and perfect pitch. I get telephone calls, 'Oh, have I got a talented kid, she's got perfect pitch.' (Stessin laughs.) It doesn't impress me at all. It is one of those phenomena that you are born with, but it doesn't make you feel music," says Stessin.

Martin Canin

Canin agrees with Stessin when discussing his ideas on performance potential. "Of course, students always want experience and it is very difficult to have enough performance experience," says Canin. "When is 'enough'? You will never have enough unless you are a successful concert artist. If you have one hundred concerts a year, then you get into the routine of playing. But it is very difficult to achieve that status. I think

maybe the school [Juilliard] is trying to address that now by having performance classes. They never really did before, so that everybody has to play a few times a year for peers in a class situation. That is, I think, good."

Canin feels that it is quite difficult to decipher if a student has great talent or potential just from listening to the audition. "In an audition," says Canin, "you can't tell how long [the student] has studied the piece. You can only hear the results." Canin asks himself if "the work is clear. Do they have a good rhythm? Do they have a sense of musical meaning in what they are doing? Sometimes you can make a mistake," Canin explains. "Somebody can be just very well taught, very well prepared, and have just that one piece, and it might take them a year to learn that piece, and that's not good, but you don't know that at the audition."

Canin states the obvious when he says, "Everybody prefers a talented student, but," he continues, "sometimes you find that you get a student who is actually disappointing when you first start to work with that person.[100] We are called 'teacher' because we are supposed to teach. I take that seriously. That's what we do! I've had students that have had good fingers, let's say, but are musically stiff and unimaginative. Well," continues Canin, "I would love for them to be more musically imaginative, but they are not. I can not change the inner workings of their mind. I can only try, over a period of time, to

[100] Marienne Uszler, Stewart Gordon, and Elyse Mach, The Well-Tempered Keyboard Teacher (New York: Schirmer Books, 1991), p.321. Theodor Leschetizky: "One learns from every new pupil, the untalented as well as the talented. Sometimes the pupil who seems stupid in the beginning becomes an interesting student under good training."

make them more aware, to begin to see something they had not seen before, and to help them develop that."

To Canin, a student who learns music at a relatively faster pace is a more talented musician. "There is some correlation," says Canin. "I think so. Realistically, there is some correlation. I mean, if a student has to struggle to learn a piece, that's an indication of less ability."

Arkady Aronov

"Inside school walls, you consider everybody as a performer," says Aronov. "All our work is directed to prepare their performances in the best way. So every year we make a contribution to their skills. How they will use these skills in the future, we cannot follow because most of them go to their countries. But, of course," Aronov continues, "every year we try to prepare them more skillfully, deeper thinking, stronger security – all work towards increased potential as a performer. But, in real life, how many will have concert careers? But during school years, we are trying to give them as much self-understanding as possible."

During the audition, Aronov looks for "personality," says Aronov. "It is very important that the student have personality, because every imagination has very personal character. Then technical level. Of course, that's the major thing: abilities. And level of preparation. When a student plays very simple pieces and plays them well, I will accept him because he shows potential. Or if a student plays very difficult pieces, it's not

necessary that I will accept him if I don't feel there is enough potential. There is another aspect of teaching," states Aronov. "It is our business, so we should have enough students to make a living. So sometimes it is necessary to accept students who would be better not to teach." Aronov hears many students at the school auditions but does not "accept any student without listening at a personal meeting or audition." Most students who study with Aronov contacted him prior to the formal school audition.

Discussing talent, Aronov says, "First of all, the word 'talented' has many meanings. Sometimes it can be very musical personality, very refined imagination with not so great technical abilities. It's very difficult to give absolutely one definition, 'what is talent,' because talent has many faces. It is musical talent. But sometimes," Aronov continues, "I don't want to be hypercritical. If a student has wonderful technical abilities but not so great or interesting personality, I can be attracted by his use of technical abilities, hoping that I can give him something else. Sometimes I am successful, sometimes not."

Aronov believes that perfect pitch is a reflection, not a definition, of talent. He also believes that the ability to memorize quickly relates both to talent and career possibilities. "Imagine," says Aronov, "that you ask one manager or several managers to work with you. They all refuse until, suddenly, something happens and they need to find someone who will replace one pianist, and you tell them, 'Please wait until I have this concerto memorized.' Second time, your manager will not ask you to play."

Gilbert Kalish

Kalish agrees that experience helps performance potential, but he also acknowledges that "there isn't any kind of magic bullet." Performance opportunities can help musicians reach their performance potential, but there are no guarantees. "I'm sixty years old," says Kalish, "and I've performed for however many years, and I still get anxious! It can be totally unpredictable. It could be the fiftieth time I've played the piece or it could be the first time. I can be very relaxed the first time I'm playing it and ten times later I can be totally distracted and not myself. I have no way of predicting that. There is no magic."

Though short-term and long-term performance goals interrelate, musicians should focus on one concert, one performance opportunity, at a time. "For the long term," says Kalish, "you [should try] to listen to yourself, the internal rhythm of the piece, and to be enough outside yourself in order to listen as [the music] goes by. The best thing in a particular performance, for me," Kalish shares, "is when I'm so involved with the music, chamber music or not, that I have time to express, to recreate the music, free from the anxiety of the situation. When I know what I want out of the music and I'm able to hear it at the same time – that's the best."

In the short term, the process begins with "some decent preparation. Not a thousand times rote preparation," explains Kalish, "but preparation that leaves me free enough to respond to the music and the moment. When you're involved in the music, and not your anxiety, you have the freedom to create a particularly magical atmosphere within an important event." Vladimir Horowitz, as quoted by David Dubal, describes similar

ideas, when he says: "Performance must be more than just the next repetition; it must live and breathe. Too often the pianist thinks, 'Oh, I must not miss one passage.' They think it is so important to play all the notes.... But, on stage, you have to take chances to make the music really live."[101]

In the following citation, Leon Fleisher describes his ideas and methods for improving performance potential and decreasing nervousness. As quoted by Linda J. Noyle, Fleisher has specific suggestions for overcoming performance anxiety, including musical understanding, visualization, and positive thinking.

> Nerves, I think, comes to a large extent from being self-conscious, from being afraid to make a fool of oneself in front of people. And I think that if one is concerned about one's goals in the music, if you have intentions, purposes, goals, in every phrase in the music, this takes away that self-consciousness. The self-consciousness comes when one feels only, or generally, that, "My heavens, I have to play beautifully." But if you're aware that the phrase goes from here to here with this kind of intensity, that there's an over-all kind of sonority that takes care of these bars that leads to there, one is too busy to be self-conscious. One is too busy to have nerves...Another possibility that I think can be very helpful to many people, and I believe in quite strongly, is to visualize the whole scene as you anticipate it. Visualize it a certain number of days or even weeks before a performance, either before you go to sleep, as you're falling asleep at night, or when you've first attained consciousness in the morning. If it's something that you've done before, all the better because then you know what it looks like back-stage, what the feeling is as you walk out on stage, how far you have to go to the piano, what the look of the hall is, sitting down, going through the piece. Experience that and hear. Experience playing the piece as you want it to be heard, as you want to do it. I guess this all comes under the category of positive thinking. The fact that you experience it in your imagination beforehand, the way you want it to happen, will make it that much easier when it actually does happen.[102]

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[101] David Dubal, Reflections from the Keyboard (New York: Summit Books, 1984), pp.205-206.
[102] Linda J. Noyle, Pianists on Playing (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1987), pp.99-100.

Unlike many New York piano teachers, Kalish does not meet, listen to, or work with students prior to their ten- or fifteen-minute Stony Brook audition. "I make a policy, just for myself, of not hearing [students] before [the audition]," explains Kalish. "I don't give them a lesson. That's good or bad for both of us. It's bad because I don't really know who [the students] are at all, and I make this kind of judgment (Kalish snaps his fingers). I make an impression," says Kalish. "I have an impression and I don't know them personally. I pick my students like that. Basically because I don't have time and because if I have fifty applicants and I'm going to take four students, and I'm going to hear twenty-five people whom I'm not going to take, that's a lot of time and I don't have that kind of time to give, so I don't give it. So I say to everybody, 'I'm sorry, I don't give lessons in advance. If you want to see what I'm like, please feel free to come and spend a day observing.'" Many prospective students do actually sit in on Stony Brook lessons. Kalish also suggests that prospective students speak with his present students. "You'll find out a lot more about me than if you have one lesson with me," says Kalish.

"At the audition," says Kalish, "I look for a musical impulse and a sense of empathy with the musical line or phrase that I respond to, rather than somebody with tremendous facility to which I don't respond." He also leans towards or against particular characteristics. "I don't tend to like people who play conventional repertoire. I'm suspicious," says Kalish. "Why are you doing the 'Appassionata' again, and why are you doing the Haydn E-flat Sonata? That's not very adventurous, and I have a little prejudice. Now, if they play, in a way, that I'm, 'Wow!' Then, of course, [the issue of repertoire choice] gets modified. And," continues Kalish, "you can't help but make

physical impressions of somebody who comes in: how they look, how they dress, how they say hello, how they smile. So, I try to [choose] people that I'm going to like."

Kalish is primarily concerned with a pianist's musical inclination. "If I see that their technique is so different from what I believe in, then I think that that's not going to work very well. They play beautifully, and they have a command of what they do, but it's different from or opposite to the way I think about things. I don't want to be in battle with someone," says Kalish. "That's not fair to them. You know, all those things being said, the long and the short of it is that when somebody's playing appeals to you, you take them. When somebody plays with a mastery and is eloquent – hey, you want that person in your life."

For over fifteen years, Kalish and Martin Canin would listen to the Stony Brook applicants together. "We used to be at [Canin's] house, then [the auditions] moved to my house," explains Kalish. "Marty and I had very interesting discussions during [the auditions]. My usual comment to [Canin] would be, 'they play the instrument well, but I don't think they have anything to say.' And then he would say, 'they can play and I can help them to find new ways to express the music.' That would sort of be my attitude, and his attitude the opposite. When somebody is trying to come to study with me, I would ask [Canin], 'What do you think?' It would be somebody very sensitive and very musical, but awkward on the instrument. [Canin] would say, 'He can't play the piano!' Perhaps this is an extreme example. [Canin and I] weren't looking for different things;

we just had different senses of how we would interact with people and what we could give to them and what they could take from us. That was always interesting."

After an audition day, while Kalish was in a somewhat devious mood, Kalish, half-jokingly, said to Canin, "You know, Marty. Let me tell you something. If I came to [audition for] you when I was twenty years old, you wouldn't have taken me and you would have made a mistake!" According to Kalish, Canin looked at his friend and colleague with a smile, and said, "Gil, that's ridiculous!"

Kalish believes that different people have a different degree of talent in various areas. There is not one definition of talent, but, rather, varied aspects to a talented musician. "I think that there are so many different kinds of talents," says Kalish. "Talent isn't like a single strand. For instance, there is the gift to memorize, the gift to learn quickly, the gift to have a natural facility at the instrument, the gift to have power with the instrument, the gift to make a particular sound, the gift to have rhythmic vitality. I don't think that they're all the same gift. I think they're very, very different gifts." Most importantly, Kalish is excited by and interested in a pianist "who has something to say."

Chapter 9: Personal Perspectives

A) Personal Goals and the Inspirational Teacher

What makes a teacher a mentor? As Garrick Ohlsson says, "The legacy a teacher leaves is so important: It's a creative outlet which is ongoing, because the people you teach can go out and teach better as a result of your influence. That, to me, is the contribution that I deem so important. Teachers change people's lives, and if they're good, that change will be for the better."[103] What characteristics are needed for a teacher to be inspirational? Leon Fleisher recalls moments with his teacher:

> Schnabel was incredible. He taught in a very special way. He rarely heard a piece two weeks in a row, because at each lesson he told the student everything he knew about the piece.... I like to cite the example of the first time I played Beethoven's Opus 81a, the 'Les Adieux': we stayed on the opening Adagio for three and a half hours. That's only three lines of music. And he didn't repeat himself. Remember, we didn't have tape recorders in those days to help us retain what's transpired. We used to stagger out of his apartment, literally stagger, like drunks, as we left his rooms. I would reel with the excitement, with the information, with the inspiration. My head and emotions were so filled with all of this, that I felt transported out of myself. It was what I would imagine it to be if one were on some kind of chemical substance – a high, a transformation. It was truly incredible.[104]

Stessin's response illustrates his warm and caring attitude towards his students. His personal goal as a teacher is "to help a student. First of all, to keep them pumped up about their music, their pieces. To stimulate their imagination, and keep them enjoying what they are doing, because without enjoying it, it's hard work, obviously. It is not the kind of enjoyment of 'ha, ha, ha, having a great time,' but the pleasure and satisfaction of achieving and making the music some way their own through either visual pictures or

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[103] Elyse Mach, Great Pianists Speak for Themselves, vol.2 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1988), pp.196-197.
[104] Ibid., p.102.

experiences or something that they can translate. It is funny," continues Stessin. "You say to a student who is doing a Beethoven sonata, 'if you orchestrated this, what instrument would be here?' Then there is silence. It is an obvious horn, or obvious timpani, in Beethoven particularly, or a lyrical melody – it is strings. They look at you like you asked them a question on atomic energy. And sometimes the answers are funny, too."

Stessin's students emphasize his continual concern and support. To this, Stessin replies, "I'm a nosey teacher. Nosey in a sense that I may pick up that the work isn't going well, or that there is a problem, and sometimes there is nobody to share it with. Even if your parents are here, it is difficult. I will sometimes take the entire lesson discussing someone's personal problems, if I feel that I can help, not to be gossipy about it. I don't think you can separate the student from the person," continues Stessin. "If the person is having problems, then the student is going to suffer. When a student walks in for a lesson, I always ask, 'How are you?' Right away it gives me an insight. If they have had a lousy week, then we are in for a different kind of lesson. If they come in and they are all gung-ho, it is a different kind of lesson." Ruth Laredo feels strongly about the kind of concern reflected in Stessin's approach, saying: "I would have loved to have a teacher or conductor take an interest in me, someone who might have made the way easier for me, in music or in life, but sadly there has been no such person in my life."[105] Stessin tries to help students in this manner.

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[105] David Dubal, Reflections from the Keyboard (New York: Summit Books, 1984), p.240.

According to Stessin, the most important quality for a successful and inspirational piano teacher is, "...like a performer, enjoying it." Stessin teaches a full load of students, six days a week, and he truly enjoys it. "Sometimes I get tired," he admits, "but I'm not going to let some student suffer because I feel tired. My job is, you know, like a surgeon. (Stessin animates his dialogue) 'I don't feel so good today, I think I'll make a couple of stitches less!' No! You've got to give your best." Professionalism and complete concern for every student and their music study, combined with a positive and humorous personality, make Stessin a master teacher, with many eager students hoping to be accepted into his studio.

Canin is also a professor with a long waiting list of students who are hoping to work with him. Canin explains his viewpoint about being a teacher: "I think a teacher is, well, you are different things to different people. For people who have studied a great many pieces and are at the Doctoral level, you are a guide. A mentor. For somebody coming with less background, you are a real teacher. You teach them what you can about style. You try to teach them to hear themselves better, to understand music better."

At times, piano students may arrive at a piano lesson upset about issues not related to music. "I have that occasionally," explains Canin. "I have a student now who is having a difficult time. I try to be parental, in that case. I feel they are suffering for whatever reason, and I try to be helpful, sympathetic." Canin understands that the emotional support "is part of the relationship. You know," says Canin, "it's like you see a person every week for several years during an important time in their life. They are still

growing, developing, they are young. So I think it would be strange to never get into any kind of personal rapport or relationship where you can ask them something and they can tell you something. There is no reason for that to dominate our relationship, but if something does come up, I try to be helpful."

According to Canin, successful teachers should "know their stuff. However," continues Canin, "that isn't necessarily what makes a successful teacher. I'd like to feel that that is what counts, but unfortunately, or fortunately, however you want to phrase it, you have to have the ability to somehow reach people as a person. You have to create an atmosphere where you can be what the student needs you to be. Now, I think there are a lot of people who can have the personal thing very well. They may not be great musicians, but they are very successful teachers because students do not really know. The doctor treats you, but you are in no position to say this is what's wrong. If the doctor says, 'I think you have thus and such,' you can say, 'no, doctor, no. I know that I have this!' But, it doesn't work that way. You trust your doctor. You trust your piano teacher. You trust your doctor, [but] it doesn't mean that you always have the best. You may love your doctor, but he may, in fact, be giving you the wrong medication. You would have no way of knowing! I really feel that this is life; you cannot really have a guaranty. So, I feel that I do know the piano as an instrument and the piano literature because I have been living with it my whole life and I've always loved it, and I was always involved in it, and I played a lot of it. So I feel I have that background, and then the rest is dependent on personal issues." Pianists study with Canin to learn from his musical knowledge, and to benefit from his teaching techniques. His positive and consistent attitude creates a

welcoming atmosphere which enables his students to focus, explore, and take risks with their music and their musical ideas.

Aronov has a different way of describing his ideas on personal goals and the inspirational teacher. "Teaching is a chain of goals," says Aronov. "For example, my goal is to teach students to play a program as well as possible. I'm sure if he plays his pieces very well, his love for music will be increased. So it can be the goal. I'm talking about giving a maximum of improvement for performance. But at the same time, [there is an] ethical problem. Music reflects many wonderful characteristics of the human psyche: nobility, dignity, humor. An understanding of great compositions indirectly educates the student in the spirit of the highest intellectual integrity. The teacher should never lose this aspect of his work."

Aronov strongly believes that, "as a musician, the piano teacher should have three loves: a love of composition, a love of the instrument, and a love of the student. I can tell you," says Aronov, "that I love every one of my students. When I accept him, I already love him. Don't forget, three loves in one hat: music, instrument, and student. That's very important."

Similar to both Stessin and Canin, Aronov believes that a successful teacher should inspire his or her students. "I try to do my best for every student," says Aronov. "My lesson should be very interesting for them. This is the best motivation from me. If I am unable to provide the student with enthusiasm for music after my lesson, then it is my

fault. First of all, I should inspire them by my work with them and my attitude to them. I support my students psychologically very much. I support their achievement and express my confidence that it will be much better soon. I never humiliate students. I remember that my teacher yelled at me a lot. But, he told me one very important sentence which I remember: that the teacher who is angry and yells at students feels he cannot help the students. So it ends not against his students but against himself." Aronov continues to uphold the highest standards for himself and for his students. He believes in hard work, focused concentration, consistent practice, and intellectual musical understanding.

Similarly to the other three teachers, Kalish gives his students both encouragement and support. He tries to bring out their full potential while helping his students develop their musical gifts as best they can. "In terms of my personal philosophy," says Kalish, "I think it's almost as important to be encouraging and positive to people as to give information. It's easy to destroy somebody. The students are fragile, and it's such a difficult field. You never feel adequate." As Nadia Boulanger once said, "You can squash people. One remark made in a certain way, on the other hand, can encourage and give confidence. One must tell the truth, but with a view to inspiring confidence and liberating the inner self."[106]

"I deeply believe," says Kalish, "that my students are at their lesson with good will, trying to do their best for themselves and for the art. Assuming that they're doing the

[106] Bruno Monsaingeon, Mademoiselle, Conversations with Nadia Boulanger, trans. Robyn Marsack (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), p.59.

best they can, I think it's terribly important to encourage them. Not to lie to them. Not to be unrealistic, but to encourage them. I think that helps to bring out the best in themselves."

Kalish disagrees with a domineering teaching approach. "I hate authoritarianism in my life," says Kalish. "I hate it in dealing with other people, in dealing with your family, in dealing with your students. It certainly is a way of teaching: a master to a student. You dictate, and in extreme cases, you rule by terror. I hate all of that. My idea," Kalish continues, "is that students come to me to take from me what I can give them. They are there for a certain purpose and if what I have to give is important to them, that's good. It's like a consumer. They have a right to be skeptical and they should be skeptical. They should be questioning. It should be a dialogue between thinking people."

Kalish lets his students choose their repertoire even if the music appears to be too technically challenging. Kalish understands that the piece may be difficult and a somewhat unrealistic challenge, but he believes that his students benefit a tremendous amount from the study and practicing process. According to Kalish, a colleague told him to be more truthful with his students, suggesting that he tell his students not to work on a particular piece because "they're not going to succeed." Kalish disagrees with this attitude. He believes that his students will "find out on their own if they're not going to succeed, and that they will succeed in whatever way they succeed. If they succeed in being the best that they can be, they've succeeded," says Kalish. "A lot of hot shots are one-dimensional and they'll never find a place for themselves in the world. They don't

have anything to give, whereas [a pianist] who may have less of a gift for the instrument, may still have tremendous breadth. Perhaps they won't be playing Rachmaninoff's Third [Piano Concerto]. So what? I think," continues Kalish, "it's positive to encourage a person and to make them feel that they're doing something that is really valuable. You help them to flower."

"I work with people in a very wonderful time in their life, after they are twenty-one, and when they're sort of becoming adults," explains Kalish. "If you can help them with a sense of belief in themselves and confidence, as well as, of course, the skills on the instrument, and musical issues, and they feel that they did the best that they could and that they have something to offer, that's what it's about. That will do them good for the rest of their lives." As Paul Badura-Skoda says, "It's much more than just teaching an instrument; it's teaching each one a little portion of how to do better in life."[107] Kalish's strong belief in dialogue and an equal exchange of ideas, and his devotion to personal encouragement, creates independent musicians who are able to take risks, meet challenges, and succeed.

[107] Elyse Mach, Great Pianists Speak for Themselves, vol.2 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1988), p.3.

B) Attitudes towards a Career in Music

Though musicians and music teachers realize that a career in music may be emotionally and financially difficult, the teachers interviewed strongly believe that if somebody feels passionately about music, then he/she should have the opportunity to reach for his/her dreams. As Stephen Hough says, "The life of a traveling musician is often completely unknown to the general public. They see it as something of glamour and excitement, but it's more like living as a monk without any of the advantages or benefits associated with the monastic life (the community, the tranquility); instead you're totally alone, travelling from town to town and the life and the work can become very self-absorbing, especially as a pianist."[108]

Herbert Stessin

"Life in music has never been easy," says Stessin. "It is particularly difficult because of the cutback in funding for the arts and education, both musical and otherwise. However, I do feel that if a youngster has a dream, and they are going to work for it, he or she should have the opportunity to pursue it."

Martin Canin

"My feeling always is," says Canin, "if there is something else for which you are equally gifted, you should pursue another career. You should go into music only if that's what you really want and love. Music should be a consuming passion for the person who does it," Canin continues. "Something that you are willing to make sacrifices for. Because

[108] Ibid., p.138.

you could have an easier life doing other things. With the amount of practicing, the amount of involvement that it takes to be a good musician, I think that you could be successful at other things provided you liked what you were doing. Music is like the priesthood. You have to really want it in order to pay the price." Canin realizes that classical music is "for a few of the population," and that "you can't expect to fill Yankee Stadium for a piano recital. There are those of us who love it. There are young students now who love it, and these are the audiences of the future. I hope there will always be a market for classical music," says Canin.

Arkady Aronov

Aronov points out the realistic viewpoint. "First of all," says Aronov, "music business is very difficult because music market is so competitive, so difficult. So, everybody who starts, who decides to start College level in classical music, must understand totally one thing – that he cannot live without music! Because nobody can promise him a good career, good money. Their own motivation and feelings is that without music, it is not life. So music, for me," says Aronov, "it is my life."

Gilbert Kalish

"It is unthinkable to discourage people of talent from doing what they have the most powerful impulse toward," says Kalish. "I find that most of my students are out there in the field. They're working. They're succeeding. They're doing things and if they don't [find work within the music field], they'll find out about it. They're bright people. It can only have been good for them to have the discipline of doing this," Kalish continues.

"It'll be to their benefit, no matter what they do, that they've gone on this path. If they get so discouraged and go into another area, so be it. But to discourage people from entering this profession because it's a hard profession? I can't see that."

Chapter 10: Student Viewpoints: Reflections on Years of Study

To gain some further insight into these teachers, I decided to interview three students from each teacher's studio. Except for Canin's students, I also audited their piano lessons. The students spoke about their pianistic backgrounds and the many aspects of piano study that they have learned from their present piano teacher. Though these students range in age and have worked with their respective teachers for varying lengths of time, their description of their teacher's approach, style, and musical emphasis are expressed in surprisingly similar terms, opening yet another glimpse into the pedagogical approach of the four interviewed teachers.

The interviews of the twelve students took place in the spring of 1996. Though time has passed, the reader should accept the transcripts and tenses accordingly. The ideas, feelings, and facts reflect the time of the interviews. These students' reactions follow.

Herbert Stessin

1. Orli Shaham

Originally from Israel, Orli Shaham is a twenty-year-old junior at Columbia University, majoring in history. She continues her piano lessons with Stessin at Juilliard, having begun studying with Nancy Stessin, Stessin's wife, at the age of six. At the age of eight, Orli began working with Stessin and entered Juilliard's Pre-College program. Orli did not take the competition route, but has been performing regularly under ICM management, with and without her violinist brother, Gil Shaham. Orli is presently working on Mozart Sonata K.330; Beethoven Pastoral Sonata, op.28; two Brahms

Rhapsodies, op.79; and Chopin's Sonata no.3, op.58 in b minor. Orli explains that Stessin lets her choose what she wants to work on in each lesson. Commenting on her recently learned Chopin sonata, Orli says, "We've spent entire lessons on the first movement."

Orli has always enjoyed working with Stessin. "We have a rapport," Orli explains. "He knows when I'm uncomfortable with something and then he'll really concentrate on that. But if something sounds good, or I'm obviously comfortable with it, he'll let me play through it. What I like about him," Orli continues, "no matter what he's going to end up doing, he lets you play it through. He knows my whole conception of it. I like that feeling."

In terms of memorizing a piece, Orli feels that Stessin is demanding, yet kind. "Sometimes he says, 'maybe it is about time to have this memorized.' He'll make it really subtle. What he'll do is, I'll sit at the lesson and he'll take the music from me and put it on his stand. And I'll have to say, 'I don't have it memorized.'" Orli also feels that Stessin is always interested to work on any piece that Orli is studying, in detail and for more than just one lesson. "He lets me decide what I feel needs to happen. He never really dictated."

Technically, Orli says, "the two biggest things [that Stessin works on] are the wrists and fingerings. For me," Orli continues, "the most magical, unbelievable thing he has is that he can give me fingerings for anything! It always works! It's unreal. He's always

talking about keeping the wrist loose and the fingers firm. I remember there were years when every lesson we would discuss this. Fingering in terms of technique for getting the notes right, and wrist in terms of making them sound right. He has this unbelievable sound," says Orli. "It's unreal. It's like butter. I asked him to test this new piano out before I bought it," she explains. "I thought the piano had a really nice sound, and all of a sudden [when Stessin played it] it had this sound that was suspended in mid-air. Really! It's amazing."

More than just a great teacher, Orli feels that Stessin "is just a great person. He's someone I can talk to," she explains. "I can talk to him about things other than music and when you trust a person altogether, it really helps you trust them in terms of musical things. If you don't trust your teacher, it can become difficult to believe anything they say. That's probably the fundamental thing that makes [Stessin] so great. He's a mentor. He's a friend. He's like a member of the family. He's always been a role model. He's a friend of the whole family, and over the years, it really became a close knit relationship. You know, he's like my grandfather."

In February 1996, Orli performed Mozart's K.488 Piano Concerto with the Philharmonia Virtuosi at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. To convey the emotional quality of this experience, Orli says, "It just happened [last month] when I played at the Met. It was one of those pieces where we've been struggling for several lessons. [Stessin] had this very specific idea in mind and we had been struggling to communicate it, to get it through. And it never really happened in the lesson, but it happened in the concert. I figured it out

and it came out in the concert! Stessin came backstage with tears in his eyes. Those are the amazing moments: when Stessin comes back and he can't say anything. Everybody else comes backstage and maybe they thought it sounded really good," Orli continues. "But it's not the same thing because Stessin knows. And it is something that he tried to communicate and I tried to understand, and it was something that we achieved together. Even though I was the one who played it, it's all because of him."

Discussing the future, Orli plans to continue studying with Stessin. "I think that even if I'm not officially a student [in a few years], I think it would be very difficult for me not to rely on his judgment," says Orli. "I trust him as a musician. I trust his ear more than anybody else's ear. If I ever feel uncomfortable with anything, I can't imagine not bringing it to him first."

2. Sakiko Ohashi

Sakiko Ohashi is a senior in the College division of Juilliard. She first began lessons with Stessin when she was eight and studied with Stessin for three years in the Juilliard Pre-College program. When she was twelve years old, Sakiko went back to Japan with her family, until her freshman year in College, when she returned to New York City.

Sakiko feels close to Stessin. "He's really involved in my life," Sakiko says. "When I have a crisis, he really listens. He really cares about his students." As to technique, Sakiko says Stessin is concerned with "the wrist. He's excellent with sound and using the wrist." She also feels that Stessin lets her interpret the music her way, developing her

own ideas. He does set limits, but "he's basically open to anything. He lets you do it your way if you're convincing. That's what I like about him." Stessin prepares his students for concerts, helping them deal with their own doubts and performance anxiety. "His method of doing that is to be supportive," says Sakiko. "I think that's his way of making you mentally prepared. It's in an encouraging way. Whenever I get paranoid, and I tell myself that I'm not ready, he's always there for me. He says, 'It's going to be fine,' and somehow, when he says it, you believe it."

Discussing the amount of repertoire that Stessin would like his students to work on and learn, Sakiko says, "It depends. I don't think he has any specific demands, but probably about three pieces at a time. Some people are good at learning fast and some people are not, and he understands." Stessin encourages Sakiko to listen to "specific recordings. He makes tapes and brings them in. He has recordings and he might tape them for you and give them to you so you can listen to them." Also, Stessin emphasizes "fingering, and sound. I think it's basically sound, his sound," explains Sakiko. "He has a very distinct sound, and he teaches the technique to get that kind of sound."

Sakiko greatly appreciates the time she has with Stessin. "I'm actually thankful that he's there for me," says Sakiko. "One time, when I was a freshman, I was on my own for the first time and my parents were back in Japan. I was in the dorm and having all these crises, all these new things happening to me and I had been very sheltered. So everything was just really shocking. But he was really there for me. He listened to me. I really love him. He's like part of my family, like a grandfather. He's kind of God, in a way. He's

amazing, you know. He's approachable and as a teacher he's always very encouraging and I think it's really positive. That's the thing I really like about him – he's very positive." Sakiko smiles. She has learned a great deal about music and technique while studying with Stessin, but clearly she has gained even more.

3. Gustavo Romero

Gustavo Romero is a thirty-year-old pianist who has toured the United States, Europe, and the Far East, performing as soloist with major orchestras as well as giving solo recitals. He has recorded a Chopin CD and a CD set of all of Beethoven's piano concertos with the English Chamber Orchestra. He decided to return to Juilliard in the Master's program while continuing to concertize. Originally from San Diego, Gustavo moved to New York City at the age of fourteen to study with Stessin and attend Juilliard's Pre-College. Gustavo continued with Stessin for eight years, graduating from Juilliard with his Bachelor of Music degree in 1987. A recent recital program consisted of three Scarlatti Sonatas; Beethoven's Sonata in E-flat Major, op.31 no.3; a twentieth-century work by Krystof Maratka, dedicated to Gustavo; Debussy's Images; a Chopin mazurka, nocturne, and the Scherzo no.2, op.31; one of the Liszt Paganini Etudes; and Chopin's Berceuse.

Stessin has always allowed Gustavo interpretive freedom. "He seems to work with everyone as an individual," explains Gustavo. "He sees what their needs are. I do think that he has a basic approach to composers because he is very much aware, always, about style. When you're going to bring in something classical or baroque, he's going to be

very attuned to clarity and to clear textures and less pedal and things that are stylistic and not too romantic. However, he's very attuned to the unique qualities of each piece. He's also attuned to the student's personality."

According to Gustavo, technique is "a very big area" for Stessin. "I was very interested in what he had to say about technique. He helped me tremendously when I came to him at fourteen. He made me more aware of what I was doing. He has basic ideas about piano playing and the use of the hand, physically," says Gustavo. "For example, he's enormously conscious of the use of the wrist, which I never was. Nobody spoke to me about using the wrist and that's something he believes in, in terms of control of the finger, control of the hand. Not only just for control but for keeping yourself relaxed. He also has very clear ideas of how to use the fingers and from where in the hand to use them – from the metacarpal joints. He's very conscious of the thumb being like a fulcrum. And the position of the hand – angle – what I later began to understand as 'alignment.' But for me, specifically, the wrist. It's not so much flapping your wrist, but actually it has more to do with transferring weight. So when he was saying 'wrist' a lot, it sometimes meant more transferring of weight and also rotation sometimes. I think his technical concepts are very valuable because they've helped me tremendously for pure equipment. Stessin," Gustavo continues, "was aware of the importance of good fingerings. And for memorization, something he says, which I've never heard anyone else say, is to practice from the printed score. Now that's for several reasons. Not just to notice something you didn't notice before, but also to reinforce. A combination of kinesthetic and visual memory."

Gustavo is always "curious and interested to know Stessin's musical reactions" to the repertoire that he brings to the lesson. During his earlier years with Stessin, Gustavo says, "I learned a greater awareness and understanding of how to physically play the piano, which later gave me the ability to solve problems on my own, technically challenging problems. So I can learn the Rachmaninoff Third [Piano Concerto no.3, op.30 in d minor] and know how to practice it and play it well. But," says Gustavo, "I would say that Stessin has given me, more than anything else, an awareness of the power of the beauty of sound and the importance of sound. Over the years, I've really come to appreciate how bewitching sound can be. I mean, when you come to think of it, it sounds so stupid, but it's just sounds we're making and the more beautifully they are shaped and combined and varied and molded and punctuated, the more beautiful they are, and the more creatively they're dealt with, the more interesting your playing is going to be, and he is very sensitive to this. As a kid I used to admire, joke about, how he really had supersonic ears, but only because I was always taken with the types of sounds that he was needing to hear from a specific passage. And some people find this too obsessive. They get into things about the architecture (and he's very aware of architecture), structure, and tempo relationships and things like this, but more than anything, he's always concerned that you are speaking in the most arresting ways so that the ear, and whoever is listening, is always taken in. Now some people say that sounds shouldn't always be beautiful. There are passages in Beethoven that should sound ugly. Well, Stessin's theory is that the writing may be ugly but the sound doesn't have to be. The writing itself is discordant or granite-like or aggressive, but no matter how sarcastic a mood there may be in music,

the sound has to have a certain honesty and goodness." The quality of sound is "much more important than somebody who is playing stylistically correctly and with all the latest pedagogical and ornamental research but whose sound is bad. For me," Gustavo continues, "Stessin – it's almost his middle name is 'sound!'"

Gustavo also enjoys Stessin's personality and his unique way of creating an image. "I like all the vignettes, the little statements," says Gustavo with a smile. "I've always enjoyed them. This type of tarantella stuff," referring to Stessin's comment: "Think of it as a tarantella. It's a tarantella that bit you with a sense of humor." "I was always very eager to emote and unleash so much, sometimes it wasn't appropriate," says Gustavo. "So he would always say, 'It's great, but don't overdo it, don't put salt on bacon.' I like that one a lot."

While discussing recordings, Gustavo says that Stessin is "naturally partial and very much a fan of Emil Gilels. I would say," continues Gustavo, "that of all pianists in the world besides the great old ones, Horowitz, Rubinstein, Friedman, Stessin always had a particular fascination with Gilels." According to Gustavo, though, Stessin does not frequently mention or suggest listening to specific recordings or recordings in general.

For the past seven summers Gustavo has been on the faculty of the North Carolina Summer Music Festival. "It was only in the early '90's," explains Gustavo, "that I began to understand what Stessin has done for me because I began to see what teaching was all about. [Stessin] is very warm and very human and always very professional. It's always

everything he's got. He's never, in all the years, he's never been so caught up in himself and whatever he was experiencing in his life. He never allowed that to come between you and that lesson you were going to have. I must say, that was the most generous thing he's ever given all of us. That he, for that hour you spent with him, he was a guide for whatever you brought in. I'm only appreciating the longevity and the history of this now. When you start teaching, then you can appreciate your teacher. He was, and is, very much a pedagogical mentor to me."

Martin Canin

1. Hyun-Mee Lee

Hyun-Mee Lee is a senior in Juilliard's College division studying piano with Martin Canin. When Hyun-Mee was in ninth grade, her parents moved to the United States from Korea (the Lee family had also spent time in Germany, Finland, Iraq, and the Philippines), and she began lessons with Catherine Parker in Juilliard's Pre-College division. Hyun-Mee finished the Pre-College high school program in three years, graduating a year early. She then decided to continue her piano studies with Canin. "I had heard about Canin since I was in Germany," says Hyun-Mee. "My teacher from Finland recommended him to me. I had been hearing his name all the time." After her graduation in May 1996, Hyun-Mee hopes to continue with Canin in Juilliard's Master of Music program.

Discussing choice of repertoire, Hyun-Mee says, "I was very much dependent on what others thought in terms of repertoire because when I was a freshman, I didn't know much

repertoire myself. I wasn't sure how my playing really was. I knew that I loved piano, but I didn't really know what was good for me. Plus, I didn't want to stick with what I knew, I wanted to experiment. So, I left it all up to Canin. I said, 'Mr. Canin, will you assign me pieces.' Many of them are by the usual composers like Schumann, Chopin, Beethoven, but some are pieces that are not played much. Usually what happens is he would give me several pieces at the beginning of the year and I would get about two lessons on those pieces. By the time I would bring it in, it would be pretty much learned. And he would work with that, and after two weeks I would be working on another piece. He suggested a lot more pieces than the ones that I chose. I would look through those and then choose from them. I always thought that he had a good idea of what I could play, what he thought I could play."

Canin focuses on the pulse or tempo of the music. "After four years, you kind of analyze what you have learned," says Hyun-Mee. "Canin likes to put the structure in, like the pulse. Some people can get very emotional. I used to love to just play what I felt, rubato or too rigid. But even if I put rubato in, you might need to pick up the pulse. Even within the rubato, the pulse doesn't disappear. I think that is basically what he wants you to do: to have structure within the piece. I think he wants to emphasize that the most. Pedaling, is also a big emphasis," continues Hyun-Mee. "Changing the pedal to create a different color. Also, the degree of pedal that you use for different things. And fingering. He wants to make sure it is comfortable."

Hyun-Mee enjoys working with Canin, though she explains, "When I was a freshman, I was very nervous going into my lesson, thinking 'this is a College professor!' I was sixteen when I entered College." Now Hyun-Mee feels much more comfortable. "I had eight teachers before I went to Canin," says Hyun-Mee. "So I didn't know what to expect. I wondered what he was going to teach me that other teachers hadn't. I feel like his emphasis on the pulse really made me focus and listen to a piece from a totally different angle. Also, he gets very detailed. He would go measure by measure, or section by section. Sometimes I get frustrated because I am stopping after each measure, but I guess when you are practicing, after your lesson, it helps to stop yourself, too." Hyun-Mee has learned a great deal from her four years with Canin and looks forward to studying with him for two more years. Hyun-Mee also appreciates Canin's professionalism and positive disposition. "His consistency is also very important," she says. "You have a lesson once a week and not being scared about what kind of mood he was going to be in when you entered your lesson is very comforting. And not flowering you with compliments every week makes whatever he says have weight."

2. Carol Kechulius

Carol Kechulius studied with Canin for six years in the Bachelor's and Master's programs at Juilliard, graduating in 1990. Presently, Carol teaches private piano lessons and also concertizes throughout the United States in collaboration with her husband, Stephen, a well-known baritone.

Discussing her years with Canin, Carol admits that she "was a pretty slow learner," and at times "it was a huge struggle to learn repertoire at the pace that [Canin] expected." Explaining repertoire choice, Carol says, "Canin had specific ideas at first. He was very specific about doing something from all of the musical periods. He wanted to do baroque, classical, romantic, and twentieth-century, and he started me off with a Bach toccata, a Beethoven sonata, or a Schubert sonata. At first, he assigned me things, but as time went on, there was flexibility and he talked about a few possibilities and I would choose." Carol tried to do her best to learn new repertoire on a consistent basis. "He told me early on," Carol explains, "that he couldn't help me with a piece unless it was playable and performable." During the lesson time, Canin discusses musical issues. "It was usually about musical ideas," says Carol. "There would be tempo things. He's into strict tempos. He gets out the tape recorder and tapes the music so that you can hear if you are rushing. It was musically oriented. Definitely."

According to Carol, Canin always let her have a great deal of input. "He absolutely did," she recalls, "and much more so as I progressed through the years with him. At first, he wanted me to do specific things musically, but it seemed that as my musical maturity grew, he loosened that whole structure." Technically speaking, Canin emphasized the importance of fingering. "He had great ideas on how to finger passages to make them easier," says Carol. "He was very into figuring out how fingering could make a difficult passage easier."

Carol credits her confidence in teaching from her years of study with Canin. "He told me," says Carol, "that I would be a really good teacher because I understood what was going on in the music. He definitely supported me in what I did and gave me the freedom and flexibility when it came to the Master's work that I did. He gave me the flexibility to do what I needed to do and loosened up the reigns and restrictions of things. He came to my recitals and he had a smile on his face when I came into his room. He was always in a good mood. That was really great. His manner was wonderful. He is kind and he is warm. He is a wonderful teacher." Thankful for his guidance and years of support and positive comments, Carol confidently passes on Canin's ideas and high standards to the many students she teaches every week.

3. Sakura Iwata

Sakura Iwata is presently a second-year Master's student at Juilliard. Having completed her undergraduate work in Japan, Sakura has been studying with Canin for approximately two years. She is working on a prelude and fugue by Bach, the Schubert Sonata in A minor, Chopin Barcarolle, and a work by a contemporary Japanese composer.

Sakura also agrees that Canin encourages his students to learn a large amount of repertoire. "We get to choose any piece," says Sakura. "Canin hears one piece at a time. It doesn't have to be memorized, but it has to be at tempo. [In the lesson,] he'll ask me if I can play a whole piece through," says Sakura. "If I say 'yes,' then he'll say, 'okay, let's record it,' and then I get to play the whole piece and then we'll listen to it together. He talks about the tempo, how the piece should go. That's why I think he records us,"

Sakura explains. "We listen to it together and if the tempo is dragging then he says it is dragging." She has studied "a great deal of music" during these past two years. "He gives us a really definite way to interpret, so if you are really suffering on your own, he'd say, 'wait here, and take a rubato,' and it really works. All of a sudden, 'click, oh wow!'"

Most of all, Sakura has felt his support and encouragement. "He is nice to everybody," says Sakura. "I don't feel nervous because he never gets mad. You never get frightened in front of him. Some teachers are staring at you, and you get really afraid of missing notes. That never happens." Sakura hopes to continue her studies with Canin in Juilliard's Professional Studies program.

Arkady Aronov

1. Ariel Dechosa

Originally from the Philippines, Ariel, now twenty-three, came to New York at the age of fifteen, specifically to study with Aronov. Ariel enrolled in a New York high school and began lessons with Aronov in the Preparatory Division of the Manhattan School of Music. He continued his studies with Aronov in the College division, receiving his Bachelor's degree in 1994. Presently, Ariel is in his last year of the Master of Music program.

During his first few years of study, Aronov carefully guided Ariel's pianistic progress. Now that Ariel is a second-year Master's student, and has been studying with Aronov for eight years, Ariel is given the option of biweekly lessons instead of the usual lesson every

week. "He gives me the liberty to really figure the music out for myself," says Ariel, who is one of the few Master's students who does not have a forty-five minute lesson, nor does he work with one of Aronov's assistants. Ariel also appreciates that Aronov lets him play for other prestigious piano teachers. "The great thing about Aronov," says Ariel, "is that he allows me to work with anyone I want to. I play for Leon Fleisher, and when on the West Coast, I play for (John) Perry and Pat McCray. Most teachers do not allow you to play for anybody else. But," continues Ariel, "I always have to make [Aronov] listen to my playing, because he's like my inner ear. Other teachers seem to talk in general, but if you listen to Russian pianists, they know the score to the dot. Aronov teaches in detail."

Ariel's repertoire choice is often determined by competition requirements. "Aronov doesn't push us [into competitions]. He encourages us to try out competitions." Currently, Ariel is working on Bach's Toccata in G minor, Beethoven's Sonata op.110, three Debussy preludes, a Debussy etude, Brahms' Sonata in F-sharp minor, and a Liszt etude. During lessons "we get right down to business," says Ariel. "The lesson is for music, down through the last second." After initially playing through a piece, Ariel begins the music again. At the same time, Aronov begins playing at the second piano. This is an extremely effective teaching technique. Through this method, Aronov's students actively experience his interpretive ideas (this approach is mainly used with newer, less polished repertoire). "He wants you to try out his ideas," says Ariel, "but I don't feel obligated to follow [them]. It's very important for me to listen to his idea, his opinion, his concept. So, from a lesson, he'll try to inject you with his ideas. That's a

lesson. That's what makes him different. You don't need approval, you don't need 'that's very good.' I don't need a lesson where a teacher will say, 'I like that part, you do that part very well.' I want their opinion. I want to see how they conceive this work apart from me. In a lesson, it is his turn to give suggestions, but ultimately, it's still up to me because you're the one who's performing."

"We always come to the technical point of view from the musical," explains Ariel. "Aronov always encourages you to look at the passage from a technical point of view, note by note, finger by finger. If you don't understand it from here, you'll never play it well because you're fingers won't understand. He's a firm believer that your mind controls what your finger does.[109] And you should never allow your fingers to move without a complete, or at least some, awareness of the musical mind. But he never wants me to do a technical passage because he wants me to play it technically. A lot of Liszt players play over the surface [of the notes]. Even though it's a bravura passage, it's still 'dig deeper.' And it doesn't matter if it's fast or slow, he still wants to hear it. He says, 'I want to hear it, I want to hear every note. I just don't want to hear that you have fast fingers and you can play every note. Everyone can do that. But to dig deeper into the key – that's a special effect.'"

"I think the biggest influence that he gave me," says Ariel, "is to find and listen to the special sound that I have, and to develop the inner ear within myself." Ariel has learned

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[109] Linda J. Noyle, Pianists on Playing (Metachun, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1987), p.43. Bella Davidovich: "The piece is retained first in the mind and then in the fingers, but you cannot separate how you learn. Everything happens all together, the mind, the ears, the fingers, the feet."

an enormous amount from his years of study with Aronov. "He knows the details," says Ariel. "His sincerity in his approach to music is inspiring. Aronov serves only the music."

2. Yukyung Kim

Yukyung Kim is presently in her second and final year of the Master's program at the Manhattan School of Music. Originally from Korea, Yukyung moved to New York two years ago, at the age of twenty-three, to study with Aronov. "After one lesson [with Aronov], I knew he was the right teacher for me, because of the way he teaches," says Yukyung. She was searching for a teacher who would focus on the musical as well as the technical aspects of the music. "Dr. Aronov inspired many things for me," explains Yukyung. "He sings examples and tells stories about the pieces. I realized that he was great in teaching."

Pleased with Aronov's forty-five-minute-lesson format, Yukyung actually feels that she gains an extra lesson from working with one of Aronov's assistants every month. Discussing repertoire choice, Yukyung says, "Aronov makes suggestions, and after I listen or study the piece by myself, I can choose it. If one of the pieces doesn't fit me, I can reject the piece." Aronov listens to a piece "as many lessons as I want, because every time is different." Yukyung is currently working on Bach's Prelude and Fugue in F minor from Book I, Beethoven's Six Variations in F Major, Schubert's Wandererfantasie, Chopin's Ballade no.4 in F minor, and Ravel's Gaspard de la nuit.

During the lesson, Aronov often demonstrates a musical idea by playing the piano while the student is playing. This teaching approach agrees with Yukyung, because, according to her, this method of teaching was often utilized in Korea. "In Korea, we do that a lot," she explains. "Aronov plays when I play because he wants me to make a phrase like his playing. It doesn't interfere. It helps me."

Yukyung feels that Aronov has greatly changed her approach to music, helping her to learn how to express her emotions and ideas through the music. "He says all the time, 'You have to have your own ear,' and it depends on many things. On a rainy day," continues Yukyung, "your playing should be different than on a sunny day. It can depend on the weather, or my mood. It changes every time."

This spring, Yukyung plans to apply to the Doctoral Program at the Manhattan School of Music, but "even if I don't get accepted," she says, "I'm going to study with Aronov privately, because I need more lessons." Since beginning with Aronov two years ago, Yukyung has noticed a great change in her playing and her approach to music. She is working harder, practicing longer, and concentrating specifically on her musical ideas and musical expression. "He's inspiring," she says. "That's the word for him."

3. Irina Morozova

Irina Morozova, one of Aronov's two assistants, teaches Bachelor's and Master's students at both the Manhattan School of Music and the Mannes College of Music. Born in St. Petersburg, Russia, Irina began piano at the age of six and attended the Special

Music School for Gifted Children, studying with Maria Mekler. At the age of fourteen, Irina entered the Rimsky-Korsakov College of Music, working with Galina Orlovskaya, a student of Heinrich Neuhaus. Graduating four years later, Irina continued her education at the Rimsky-Korsakov State Conservatory, studying with Vladimir Shakyn, another Orlovskaya student. Five years ago, at the age of twenty-five, and four months pregnant, Irina and her violinist husband moved to America. "We left, the two of us," explains Irina. "I wasn't allowed to leave Russia even to participate in competitions, so I was very restricted in my career. My mother-in-law was already here in America, and my husband really wanted to live here and be reunited with his mother. [In Russia,] I was performing, teaching, and accompanying and playing chamber music, and my roots are there, but now we've been here five years."

In the Fall of 1993, Irina began studying with Aronov in the Master's division of the Manhattan School of Music. "Back in Russia," says Irina, "I heard about Aronov. When he left Russia, I was a little child, so we had never met. [Three years ago,] I called him and asked if he could listen to me just once and he said, 'Of course.' He was so nice. He was incredible." Irina completed her Master's program in May 1994, but still works closely with Aronov, in preparation for a "big event or competition," and as one of his three teaching assistants. In 1994, Irina received second place in the New Orleans International Competition, and third place in the Frinna Awerbuch International Piano Competition of the Piano Teachers Congress of New York. This past January (1996), Irina gave her New York debut recital in Weill Recital Hall as a winner of the 1995

Artists International Auditions competition: she will also be participating in the Alumni Winners series of the same competition in its 1996-1997 season.

Discussing repertoire, Irina explains, "With me, it was a little different than other students, because I came to him when I was twenty-seven. I played a lot of competitions and they all have [repertoire] requirements, so I was busy playing what I must learn." Aronov has been extremely encouraging with her decision to enter many big and important piano competitions. "He knows this business and it's the only way for me to go," says Irina. Acknowledging the pros and cons involved in competitions, she says, "It depends on how the student feels and thinks about competitions. I never play the same pieces and I never try to play them perfectly just for competitions. I don't think much about competitions, results, and prizes. I do what I want to do. I always learn new pieces, that's why I lose sometimes. Since it is a real problem for me to get concerts, competitions are an opportunity to get on the stage and play on a very good piano. I play big competitions at a high level, so I have a very good piano and a well-educated crowd, and I enjoy playing."

Aronov does not focus on technical issues with Irina. She learns and memorizes music at an incredibly fast pace and puts complete programs together in a matter of days. Her practically infallible technique allows Aronov to focus on subtle pianistic nuances and musical expression. "Aronov is concerned with the inner texture," says Irina. "He always looks for hidden voices, hidden motives, polyphonic voices even in homophonic music. And the sound itself," continues Irina, "is his trademark. He's very concerned

about the quality of sound, not just the beautiful sound. Sound can be appropriate for style."

During a lesson, Irina feels very comfortable when Aronov plays the piano while she is playing. "I never thought about it," she says. "It's so usual for Russians." Irina has a similar teaching approach, "because we have the same roots," she explains. "Here in New York, everyone comes from all over the world. It's not the same as Russia. In Russia, there's such a thing as a school, not a building, just 'school,' tradition. It's very different. America has a lot of immigrants. In Russia, there were never immigrants, so we always feel tradition. We could trace our roots to the beginning. So, I don't teach very differently. We have same musical language." While discussing the music, Aronov often "talks about literature and paintings," says Irina. "And there's something else between us: Russian literature. He can give me quotations and I know them. I know what he means."

For Irina, these past few years have been musically exciting, challenging, and rewarding. She feels extremely fortunate to be able to study with Aronov, and to work with advanced students as his assistant. Irina realizes that she made "the right choice" when she began lessons with Aronov three years ago. "I'm very tough on myself," she explains, "and I can't stand any pressure on me. Aronov is wonderful because he understands exactly what I need. He always makes me feel very confident. He's very talented and very educated. He's a professional," continues Irina, "and I'm very glad that I'm working with him. I'm doing a lot of things I want to do, and if I need him, he's always there!"

Gilbert Kalish

1. Kate Schaum

Kate Schaum, a twenty-six-year-old from Atlanta, Geogia, is presently in her first year of Stony Brook's Doctor of Musical Arts program. She received both her Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Indiana University. In September, Kate came to New York and began her studies with Kalish.

After completing her Master's degree from Indiana University, Kate wanted to study with, what she calls, "a real musician's musician." Kalish fits her description. "The most important thing," says Kate, "is real musical values. Not your typical competition values, but your real, solid, lifelong musical values. Kalish is open and you can talk to him, and I feel like he's very interested in me as a whole person. He understands that being a pianist is part of your life and not the only thing." Another aspect Kate finds both liberating and refreshing is Kalish's concern for, and awareness of, never superimposing his own musical interpretive ideas onto his students.[110] Instead, he allows his students to experiment and make their own musical decisions. With this special student-teacher rapport, Kate knows that she can be true to herself and her ideas. She will be given the time and opportunity to find her own musical voice.

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[110] David Dubal, Reflections from the Keyboard (New York: Summit Books, 1984), p.47. Emanuel Ax: "[Mieczyslaw Munz] was my only teacher for fourteen years. He was a great stickler for good piano playing. I loved his approach to the piano and he made me work very hard and very carefully. I think our personalities were very well suited. I had a lot of curiosity musically, and he was permissive in that way, never imposing any view of music-making on me."

When discussing repertoire, Kate says, "[Kalish] hasn't suggested a piece, simply because I've had my own ideas about what I wanted to play." Kate is currently working on Schubert's B-flat Sonata, the Berg Sonata, the Brahms D minor Concerto, Mozart C minor Sonata, and the Chopin B-flat minor Sonata. "Kalish will definitely hear [a piece] more than once," says Kate. "He said that to me at the first lesson. He said, 'This is totally up to you, this is your thing. If you want to play the first six bars, or if you want to bring something different in each week. It's up to you.' I think," she continues, "that that's the most valuable thing. You can't always be expected to bring a piece memorized to a lesson each week, and then play it once and get the most out of it."

Though having studied with Kalish for only eight months, Kate is confident in both her musical conceptions and her close rapport with Kalish. "I find it really amazing," says Kate. "I always feel that Kalish gets what I'm doing. He understands what I'm about in some intuitive way. And it's not creepy. He's not seeing through you, he just has respect for you and what you're doing and he doesn't want to mess that up. He wants to encourage you to be the best you that you can be, and not change you into something else. I know his family is really important to him," she continues. "And that whole aspect of being a father, being in that role. You see the pictures of his kids, and they always look like they're having this really wonderful time together. It's a really wonderful quality that he has, and he has that with his students, too."

"I think it's really important that he is still so actively playing," explains Kate, who, among many of Kalish's students, is inspired by his prolific and exciting performing

career. "That's really always been the main thing that he does. He's a player and he's teaching, too. But he's not one of these people," says Kate, "whose playing is more important and he's teaching just to make money. He's obviously really devoted to his teaching as well. I feel a lot more founded since beginning lessons with Kalish. I'm not a phony. I'm not just a talented person who couldn't get it together to really have a career in music. He makes me feel like what I'm doing is valid. Not just musically, but the way I'm doing things." Consistently and continually, Kalish is supportive, encouraging, and truly interested in his students, both as musicians and young adults.

2. Chadd Merrigan

Originally from Rochester, New York, Chadd, now twenty-five, received his Bachelor of Music degree from the Eastman School of Music, studying with Jeff Kahane. Chadd completed his Master's degree at Stony Brook, studying with Kalish, and is now in his second year of Stony Brook's Doctoral program.

Chadd was eager to work with Kalish because of Kalish's reputation for playing new music. "I'm an American musicophile," exclaims Chadd. His upcoming recital includes only twentieth-century works: music by Ives, Shostakovich, Carter, and Stravinsky. Though Chadd has been working on traditional music as well, he remains a twentieth-century enthusiast.

Kalish focuses on each student, each pianist, as an individual. He does not have one particular suggestion that is worthwhile for everyone. "Every student has their own

special weakness," says Chadd. "With me, it has gone through phases. It was always phrasing, phrasing, phrasing. In the beginning, it was pulse. Now, it is technique." Describing Kalish's suggested hand position, Chadd says, "Kalish is big on the freedom to go forward and back with the whole arm. When he plays, he likes to use his fingers minimally. Which is funny," adds Chadd, "because he harps on that theme for a while and then your playing will start coming out mushy and un-rhythmic and not very predictable, and he'll say, 'You need to have more active fingers.' It's interesting to watch him play because he sort of uses the velocity of the key rather than going all the way to the fingerboard. He throws the key down and in that way can get very short notes, very soft notes, and also very sharp notes. I'm trying to emulate that."

Many teachers do not want students to bring the same repertoire into a lesson more than once or twice. "I, in fact," says Chadd, "had been used to feeling guilty about bringing in anything [to a lesson] more than once. Until I came here. When I started having lessons with Kalish, he would say, 'Spend a little more time on this.' He wanted to spend more time, so he established right away, that I should bring in things certainly more than once, if not several times, especially for something uncomfortable. [Kalish] will be satisfied if you show progress. He'll be happy for you to work on [a piece] for months, if you're improving along the way."

"Kalish is the most reputable teacher that I could hope to study with," says Chadd. "First of all, he has a real world-class standard of playing. He has high expectations and he has all the artistic sense that first-rate artists have. Second of all, Kalish really does go right

to one's weaknesses. Sometimes he's a little reticent about telling people what to do. But if it's a particular problem, he'll tell you in detail what he wants you to do."

Kalish is an incredibly inspiring piano teacher, "especially when he demonstrates," says Chadd. "It's always played with a real intuition that you don't get to hear from other students or off recordings. He plays with such a remarkable sense, that you come away feeling, like, happy. It's partly the sound, but it's really the intensity of personality that comes through his fingers. You come back to the piano thinking, 'I want to make my music that compelling, interesting, and deep.'"

Sharing a light-hearted Stony Brook moment, Chadd says, "I remember one time when Kalish was inspired to race me to the door over here. We were coming from another building and he actually opened the door. He beat me! He opened the door and got his finger caught in the handle and it really bent back severely. And I thought, 'Oh, no! I'm responsible for ruining Kalish's career!' But it turned out fine because he's got these sort of earthy hands, hardy and thick hands that look like a car mechanic's hands, that play beautifully." Chadd smiles at both the outcome of the story and the reference to Kalish's somewhat comedic personality.

3. Jean Schneider

Jean Schneider is in her second year of Stony Brook's D.M.A. program. Originally from Philadelphia, Jean completed her Bachelor's degree at U.S.C. with John Perry, spent one year in Europe studying with Robert Levin, and then returned to U.S.C. for her Master's,

again studying with Perry. Jean, now thirty, has gained a great deal from all of her musical experiences, including four summers at the Sarasota Chamber Music Festival, a summer at Aspen, a chamber-music residency in Dodge City, Kansas, and a winter residency at Banff. This year, Jean served as Kalish's "assistant," contacting Kalish's students to organize his Monday and Tuesday teaching schedule.

As mentioned, Kalish lets his students choose their own repertoire. "It's my decision, it's all me," says Jean, who is currently working on Bach's Goldberg Variations and Mozart's Piano Concerto K.271. For a future recital, Jean plans to include Schubert's B-flat Sonata and the Liszt B minor Sonata. Kalish has helped her with technical issues. "He's very knowledgeable about technique," Jean says. "He feels very confident in helping people physically play the piano. With me, it's using your arm, not just your fingers. That is his main thrust." In terms of musical interpretation, Jean says, "Kalish doesn't like to tell people what to do." Kalish wants his students to learn on their own, to challenge themselves, to take chances within the musical framework.

Jean and Kalish have differing opinions regarding the issue of memorization. Though she understands why Kalish does not give memorization deadlines or boundaries, Jean would actually like Kalish to be more demanding on her, to "push a little more," she says. "I came in and said, 'I want you to expect the music memorized. It's something I want to expect of myself and I'll be more likely to meet those expectations if you share them.' But," Jean explains, "he said he wouldn't do it. He said to me, 'You just want to make a musical statement. Don't worry about memory, just make music in the recital.'" Jean

then gave a recital using the printed score. "To me it's an issue," she says. "Yes, Gil Kalish can use the music [printed score], but it's not something that's expected. It's not something I can just get used to."

Apart from this one sensitive subject, Jean feels Kalish's encouragement and concern. "I think Kalish is supportive at every lesson," says Jean. "And when he's in the lesson, he's all there. I feel very close to him personally, and I look forward to my lessons. I think he's great and he's helped me a lot. He's patient, like no other teacher I've ever had, but he's not going to let up till he has seen what he wants to see." Once Jean completes her D.M.A., she hopes to continue her connection and relationship with Kalish. She understands that he is extremely busy, "But," she says, "I would love to keep in touch. To play for him once a month or even once every six months." Kalish will always be a large and important part of Jean's musical experience and education.

Chapter 11: Personal Biographies and Backgrounds of the Interviewed Teachers

All of the teachers interviewed began piano study at a young age. After showing promise and dedication after only a few years of study, three of the interviewed teachers realized relatively early that they wanted to pursue a career in music. They progressed quickly, beginning from their early practicing years, commonly under their mother's supervision, structured discipline, and high expectations. These master teachers studied with various teachers themselves, all gaining musical and technical ideas from their teachers and from their teachers' backgrounds. For some, teaching piano started as a practical way to earn an income. Now, they are the sought-after teachers, receiving tapes and phone calls and recommendations for new students daily. They are presently teaching at the leading music schools in New York and, thus, some of the top music schools in the country. Over the years, they have developed their own styles of teaching based on their pedagogical background, their personal musical and technical ideas, and their years of teaching experience.

Herbert Stessin

Herbert Stessin (b. June 16, 1922) was born and raised in New York City. He started playing the piano when he was six years old. "My sister played [the piano]," explains Stessin. "We had a piano in the house. I guess it was the kind of family where you played the piano." Stessin focused on his playing "right away," he recalls. "My mother was serious. If she was serious, then I was serious." Stessin studied privately with Clarence Adler, then Jose Iturbi, and then with Sascha Gorodnitzki when he was in high school. Stessin attended City College of New York (CCNY), taking private lessons with

Gorodnitzki. Stessin "didn't go to Juilliard because Gorodnitzki wasn't connected with Juilliard. When [Gorodnitzki] got a position [at Juilliard], I went for a few years, as a special student, what is now called Professional Studies."

Even as a child, Stessin explains, "I was obviously interested [in music] and I showed talent. So from there I was just pushed." Stessin worked hard, entering competitions by the age of six and a half.

Stessin began teaching piano while he attended CCNY. He kept up his teaching even during years of professionally touring North America, under Columbia Artists Management. Stessin gave numerous radio broadcasts both in the U.S. and abroad, and in 1950 Stessin gave his Carnegie Hall debut.

Stessin's first teaching position was at the Henry Street Settlement in New York City. Soon after, he accepted a position at New York University, and in 1960 he began teaching in Juilliard's Preparatory division at the Old School (Juilliard's previous music building, located uptown, prior to Juilliard's Lincoln Center location), assisting Gorodnitzki. Stessin explains that the 'Old' Juilliard "had about forty piano teachers in what they call 'Pre-College,' now 'Prep'...they took about six [teachers] here." Stessin moved with the school, teaching in its Pre-College division, while also continuing his teaching at N.Y.U. He was also invited to accept a Visiting Professor of Piano position at Hunter College, where he worked with Master's and Doctoral students, but eventually narrowed his Hunter College class to only Doctoral students. Once Stessin began

teaching a full load of students, he stopped performing because "there was no time to practice." In 1973 and 1974 Stessin gave master classes at various Colleges in Japan, and in Jerusalem in 1989. In the summer of 1982, Stessin taught piano at the Bowdoin Music Festival. Since summer 1983, Stessin has been on the faculty of the Aspen Music Festival. Stessin continues to give master classes throughout Europe and the Far East.

Stessin has always had an easy rapport with his students. He found the transition from performer to teacher to be quite smooth. Stessin enjoys being a teacher, sharing his musical and technical ideas with his students while giving them encouragement and emotional support. He has a warm and open personality with a witty and lively sense of humor. Stessin has been teaching in the College, Master's, and Doctoral divisions at Juilliard since 1984. Because of time restraints, Stessin no longer teaches at either N.Y.U. or Hunter College. Stessin was chairman of the piano department at Juilliard from 1991 to 1994. Nancy Stessin, Stessin's wife, assisted him with most of his Pre-College students, until her untimely death in 1997.

Martin Canin

Martin Canin (b. March 23, 1930) grew up in Rockaway, New York. He began piano studies at the age of six at the Henry Street Settlement on Pitt Street in the Lower East Side of Manhattan. "I started at five with my mother," says Canin. "My older brother played the violin, and he was at the Henry Street Settlement." Canin began his studies with Aurelio Giorni. In 1938, Canin studied with Austrian-born Robert Scholz, whom Canin recalls as "a marvelous musician." At seventeen, Canin studied for one year with

Olga Samaroff at the Philadelphia Conservatory of Music. The next year Canin began his Bachelor's degree program at Juilliard, studying with Rosina Lhevinne. Canin explains that he was "always serious about music. I was not somebody who suddenly discovered that he loved music. I was always attracted to it." Canin decided not to compete in many competitions. "I was not made for that part of it," he explains. "I always felt that I had the ability but I didn't have the competitiveness."

After graduating from Juilliard, Canin performed numerous concerts: solo, chamber, and as soloist with orchestras in the United States, Europe, and Japan. Canin performed under the management of the National Music League.

Canin's first teaching position was as assistant to Rosina Lhevinne in 1959 (a position he held until 1976). Canin also accepted a position at Teachers College at Columbia University (1959-76) at the recommendation of Mrs. Lhevinne. In 1965, Canin accepted an Artist-in-Residence position at SUNY-Stony Brook, working with M.M. and D.M.A. candidates. "I got into teaching and that took over my life," says Canin. "I've always been a person who went with the path of least resistance. I felt that there was a message here. I felt comfortable. I enjoy teaching. I found myself just doing it easily, enjoyed it, and that was it." Over the years, Canin has also given master classes and lectures throughout the United States and in Korea, Japan, and Taiwan. After twenty-eight years of teaching at Stony Brook, Canin now chooses to teach only at Juilliard, working with students in the College, Master's, and Doctoral programs. Canin continues his summer

teaching at the Bowdoin Summer Music Festival in Maine, a position he's held since 1971.

Arkady Aronov

Born in Russia, Arkady Aronov (b. November 3, 1929) began studying piano at a later age than many, at the age of nine. He explains: "In my childhood, I always produced some music. I danced, I sang everything, and I asked my mother to give me piano lessons, so when I was nine, she brought me to one music school in St. Petersburg. I was tested, and the director of that school talked to my mother and said, 'Forget about [Aronov] because he has absolutely no abilities. Forget about music.' I began to cry, so she found for me a private piano teacher. After two years of lessons, I was accepted to a school for especially gifted children (the Lyceum at the St. Petersburg Conservatory). I was brought to the paradise of my feelings when I was accepted by this school."

Because of the outbreak of World War II, Aronov attended the special music school for only one year. His family immigrated to another city until 1944. Upon his return to St. Petersburg, Aronov re-enrolled in the special music school.

Aronov graduated with two majors, one in piano and one in composition. "I can tell you," says Aronov, "as a student, I was sort of a leader of a very avant-garde group in school. My progress in composition was very [good] and the Leningrad Conservatory was the first to accept me as a composer. Why [did] it happen that I became a pianist and not a composer? Because, I wanted to be a student of one very famous professor, Professor

Samarii Savshinsky. He took me with one condition: If I would be only a pianist." Aronov worked with Savshinsky for five years, and in 1953 graduated from the Rimsky-Korsakov State Conservatory of Music. "Five years," says Aronov, "because conservatory in Russia doesn't have four years for first degree. It is five years." Then Aronov was sent to Almatar, a Russian village close to the Chinese border. "I was sent there to teach, and I was the youngest faculty [member] of Almatar Conservatory." Aronov explains that when he went to Almatar, he went with "documents as an accompanist, but when I went there, the director recognized me as better. He immediately gave me students." This was Aronov's first teaching position, but, he says, "When I was a student at Leningrad Conservatory, I was probably the type of student who shows good pedagogical abilities because many students came to me for lessons. Maybe not in the beginning, but after third year. I helped a lot of my friends to learn music."

Aronov spent three years at Almatar. In 1956, he returned to Leningrad to begin his post-graduate degree. At the same time, Aronov became the assistant to Professor Moysei Halfin at the special high school that Aronov had attended. Halfin had been a Savshinsky student, but was quite old at this time. "When I became his assistant," says Aronov, "he was already one of [the] leading professors, and really is a wonderful teacher, a teacher from God. He was so wonderful that he could teach everybody." In 1959, Aronov completed his graduate work with a major "in history and theory of pianism and piano teaching." It was at this time that Aronov's concert career began.

Recognized as a performer of contemporary music, Aronov gave a concert in Leningrad in 1959 dedicated to American composers, performing the Aaron Copland Sonata and works by George Gershwin, among others. (Aronov has performed over fifty premieres.) "Many composers wrote especially for me," Aronov explains. "During my ten years, I was like monopolist. Everything that appeared in St. Petersburg, for sure, it would go through my hands." In 1960, Aronov was invited to teach in the Rimsky-Korsakov State Conservatory, a position he held for the next sixteen years.

Aronov continued his duo career as both teacher and solo performer. "From 1968 to 1972, I gave exactly twenty-four recitals in Leningrad: twenty-one completely different programs. Also, I had concert tours all around Russia. I gave many, many thousands of concerts." Stemming from his academic interests and pursuits, Aronov published and edited various volumes of music. "I was editor of eighteen different collections. Two of them were concert repertoire of contemporary music." Aronov also collaborated on a music book for schoolchildren based on Russian folklore. "I made, with one of my colleagues, one big collection. One hundred pieces. My portion was fifty. It was published in three different collections."

On May 1, 1977, Aronov came to New York. Like many Russian immigrants, Aronov wanted "to be as free as possible." In the summer of 1977, Aronov taught piano at community music schools in Westchester, Scarsdale, and Yonkers. On September 1, 1977, Aronov began teaching in the Preparatory Division of the Mannes College of Music. Through Aronov's case workers from NYANA (New York Association for New

Americans), Aronov was able to arrange an interview with the director of Mannes' Preparatory Division, Mr. [Paul] Wolfe. "He was very nice to me," says Aronov. "I should be grateful to him for [my] whole life because he was [the] person who made my career, because when I came, he told me it was practically impossible. 'You tell me about yourself,' he said. I began to tell him and I gave him my repertoire list. It was approximately forty programs long. He looked at it and said, 'Can you play Schubert Sonata in C Major?' He could have asked anything. 'Can you play for me?' I sat down and I played for him approximately one and a half hours. Then he told me that he could invite me to Prep Division. So I began to teach in Mannes, and at the end of the year, I had twenty-two students in Prep Division. After one year, he invited me to become teacher in the College. He left the College, and in [a few] years he became Dean of Manhattan School of Music. He invited me there. He brought me to a magic job. It is not so simple to get a job in New York. So, I try to prove that his choice was correct. I have moral obligation." Aronov is grateful for his job opportunities in New York, teaching at Mannes since 1977 and the Manhattan School of Music since 1984. Now Aronov teaches mostly College and Master's students, some Doctoral and some Preparatory. Aronov has given concerts, both solo recitals and as soloist with orchestra, in Taiwan, China, Hong Kong, England, Scotland, Italy, and throughout the United States. Presently, Aronov prefers to concentrate on his teaching, though he continues to play note-perfectly for his students during their lessons.

Gilbert Kalish

Gilbert Kalish (b. July 2, 1935) was born and brought up in Brooklyn, New York. At the age of five, he began piano lessons at the Henry Street Settlement Music School. Because of the difficult commute into Manhattan, Kalish continued his piano lessons at home with a teacher named Annie Walters. When Kalish was twelve, he switched teachers to study with Julius Herford. At the age of sixteen, however, Kalish decided to quit playing the piano.

"I stopped for a couple of years," says Kalish. "I was sort of feeling over-stressed, pressed by parents and teachers to be what they wanted me to be. And so, I stopped." Kalish attended Columbia University and received a liberal-arts education, emphasizing literature and humanities. After graduation, Kalish decided "to go back [to music] on my own terms." He had spent a few summers at Tanglewood and realized that his love for music had remained strong. For one year, he studied with Madame Isabelle Vengerova, near the end of her life. And in 1957, after spending a summer at the Marlboro Music Festival, and at the recommendation of Rudolf Serkin, Kalish began lessons with Leonard Shure. "That's who," explains Kalish, "I consider my most important influence as a pianist and musician." Kalish gained a great deal of musical knowledge, but also found a new approach to diminish technical difficulties. "[Shure] told me specific things that set my mind going a certain way, psychologically, and I found what is remarkable: that I am able to do something that I thought I couldn't do. It just took off for me. Shure was a brilliant, brilliant musician. And I guess, for some people, he was a destructive and difficult teacher. But not for me," says Kalish. "For almost everybody else, there were

negative elements, but for me, there were almost no negative elements. I think I took from him those things that were really good for me. It was a tremendous musical experience. I had all kinds of revelations from my work with [Shure], and remain forever grateful for his teaching."

To earn an income, Kalish began teaching private piano lessons. "I married early," says Kalish, "and I needed to make ends meet. I took whatever I could take in terms of private teaching." His first teaching position was at a branch of the Bronx House Settlement in Brooklyn. "Then," he says, "I was just very fortunate to be hired at Stony Brook. Those were different days. There were no searches in those days, as there are now. I knew a lot of the faculty. I did a lot of playing with the faculty. It just so happened that a number of people on the faculty were my colleagues. I played a lot of chamber music and a lot of contemporary music, and [Stony Brook] was a school that stressed contemporary music. So, when there was a possibility of a piano opening, a lot of the faculty suggested my name. At the same time," continues Kalish, "I was engaged to teach at Tanglewood. Why? I never quite knew. It might have been a combination of people knowing me from playing with me. I really had no track record as a teacher. It's very hard to have a track record as a teacher when you're thirty. I was very lucky in both circumstances. They sort of happened at the same time [and they had] nothing to do with each other. It was just two very fortuitous kinds of events, having to do with my knowing other colleagues and having very little to do with any kind of teaching experience or background," says Kalish. "At the time, you did not even give a master class. I think I was interviewed by the chairman, but there was no committee. There was no search committee set up for

this. There was no advertising for the position. This kind of personal networking was the same for orchestra positions. You didn't advertise for principal oboe," he explains. "People in the orchestra knew other people and they said, 'You should ask this one, and that one is great.' That's the way it was. In a way, it's an effective way of presenting job opportunities. Of course, in a way, it's unfair, because it freezes out people who are not known to the people at the place. It's a little bit of both. Many searches are charades," acknowledges Kalish. "Because you sort of know who you're going to hire and you have to go through a process. The process is required and then it really causes a hardship on a lot of people who think that they're being seriously considered. Not every search is like that," he explains. "There are many open searches that have been surprising, that have not led to where we expected them to lead."

Out of the four teachers interviewed, Kalish is the only one currently involved in a demanding performing career. Kalish is the resident pianist for the Boston Chamber Players and the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble. He is a frequent guest artist with renowned ensembles such as the Juilliard String Quartet, the Tokyo Quartet, the Concord Quartet, the New York Woodwind Quintet, and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. He is recognized for his twenty-year collaboration with the late mezzo-soprano Jan de Gaetani. Kalish has performed as soloist, accompanist, and chamber musician in Europe, Asia, New Zealand, Australia, and throughout the United States. Kalish has made over sixty recordings on the Nonesuch, Columbia, C.R.I., Desto, Folkways, and Acoustic Research labels. Promoter of both traditional and new music, Kalish is presently Professor of Piano at SUNY-Stony Brook.

Epilogue

Reading various pedagogical articles and books, developing teacher and student questionnaires, meeting and getting to know the four teachers and twelve of their students, auditing lessons, and organizing this study have reinforced my awareness of the value of good teaching. According to Leon Fleisher, "Teaching is one step beyond performing. Teaching entails more responsibility; there's a greater obligation in teaching than in being a very great and successful performer today, because if you are a performer and if you have something to say (teach) that is meaningful, you will have the success.... If you're a teacher, and pass on nonsense, then I think you commit a grave sin. Yes, in that sense being a teacher is far more serious and responsible because it's something that is passed on to the next generation, which will itself pass it on, and so forth."[111]

Fannie Bloomfield-Zeisler (1863-1927), a student of Leschetizky, believed that "Leschetizky, without any particular method, is a great force by virtue of his tremendously interesting personality and his great qualities as an artist. He is himself a never-ending source of inspiration."[112] The four teachers interviewed create this experience for their students, while following Leschetizky's idea of a "no fixed method"[113] teaching approach.

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[111] Elyse Mach, Great Pianists Speak for Themselves, vol.2 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1988), pp.104-105.
[112] Marienne Uszler, Stewart Gordon, and Elyse Mach, The Well-Tempered Keyboard Teacher (New York: Schirmer Books, 1991), p.321.
[113] Ibid.

Each teacher offers something unique. Evident from auditing a Kalish lesson is his complete belief in encouragement and support for his students. Aronov highlights the importance of demonstration, knowing a large amount of repertoire, and being able to play all the notes with ease. Canin's students emphasize his concern with the importance of an expansive and varied repertoire. Stessin aptly diagnoses technical problems while focusing on the creation of a particular sound.

Even though these four master teachers have been teaching for approximately forty years each, they renew energy at every lesson, with enthusiasm for the student and the music. The dedication and concern that these teachers have for their students is inspirational. Most of all, these teachers have a passion for music and a passion to teach. As Nietzsche said, "Life would be a mistake without music."[114]

[114] David Dubal, Reflections from the Keyboard (New York: Summit Books, 1984), p.260.

Appendix: Pedagogical Background

The following four diagrams illustrate the pedagogical background (or pedagogical "tree") of the four teachers interviewed. Each person studied first with the teacher on the left and then began studies with the next, and so forth.

All four teachers have a historical pedagogical connection to Leschetizky, and the German/Austrian school, leading back to Beethoven. As Harold C. Schonberg explains, "The German school of piano playing is one of scrupulous musicianship, severity, strength rather than charm, solidity rather than sensuosity, intellect rather than instinct, sobriety rather than brilliance. It is a school that stresses planning and leaves nothing to chance."[115] Three of the four teachers have a pedagogical tree linked to a Russian background. As Schonberg says, "As one listened, in the concert hall and through recordings, it began to be apparent that Russia was the last outpost of keyboard romanticism.... They all concentrated as the romantics did – on tone, on phrase, on the cantabile quality of the instrument."[116] Stessin, Canin, Aronov, and Kalish represent the American school, "an objective and eclectic one.... Americans, generally speaking, have studied with foreign-born teachers whose roots are in the nineteenth-century repertoire.... The American school of pianism is, on an all-around basis, the best trained in the world today."[117]

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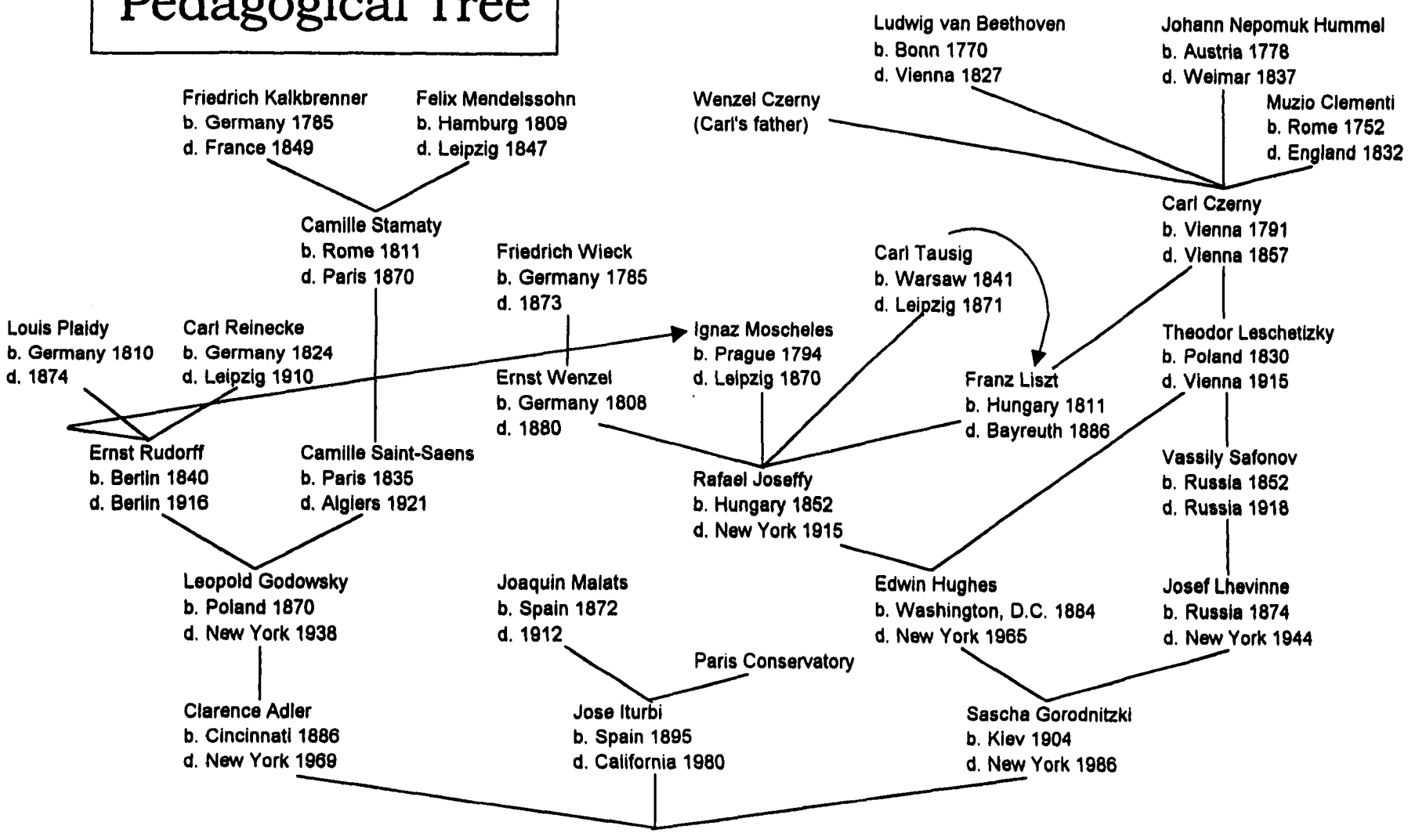
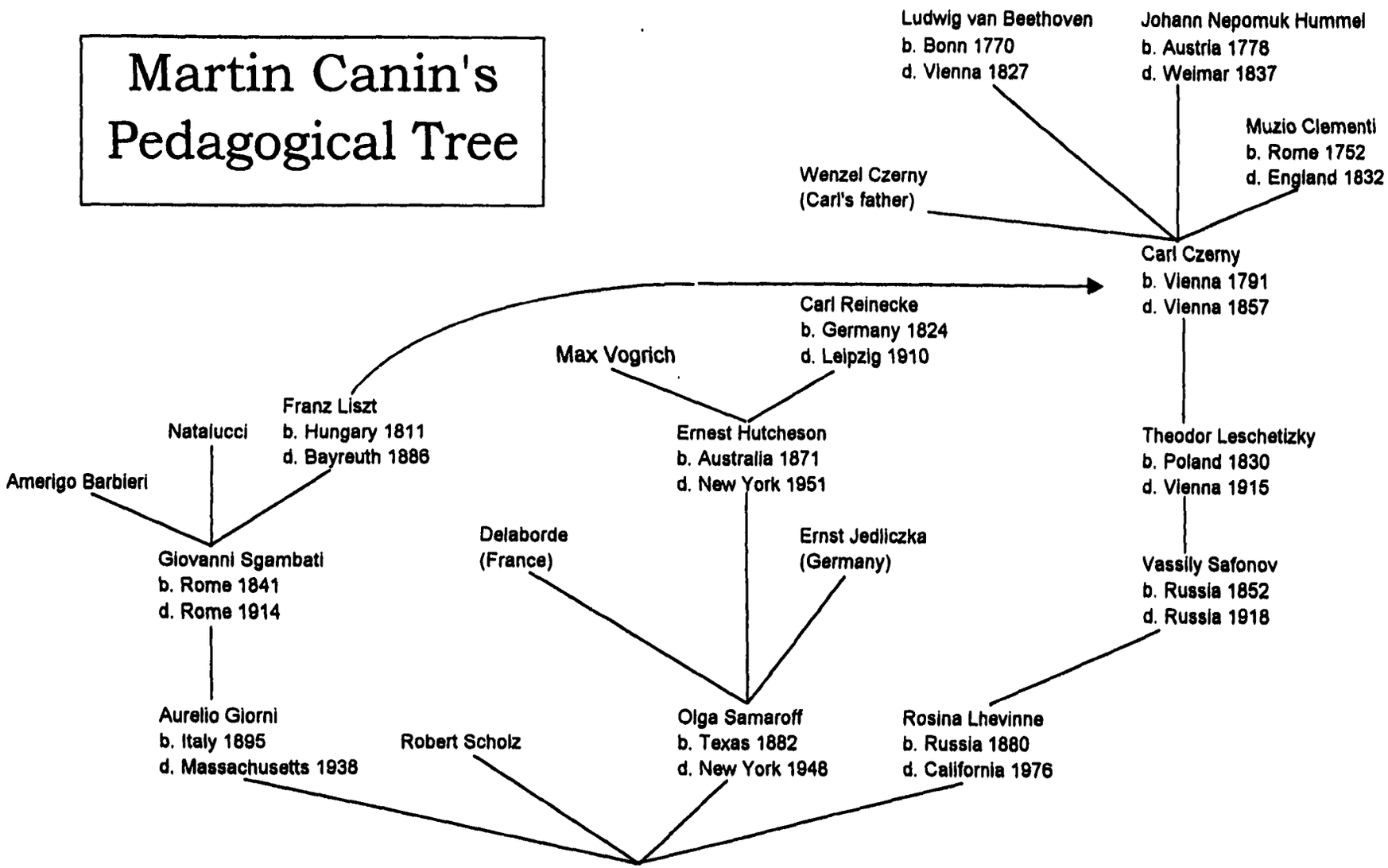
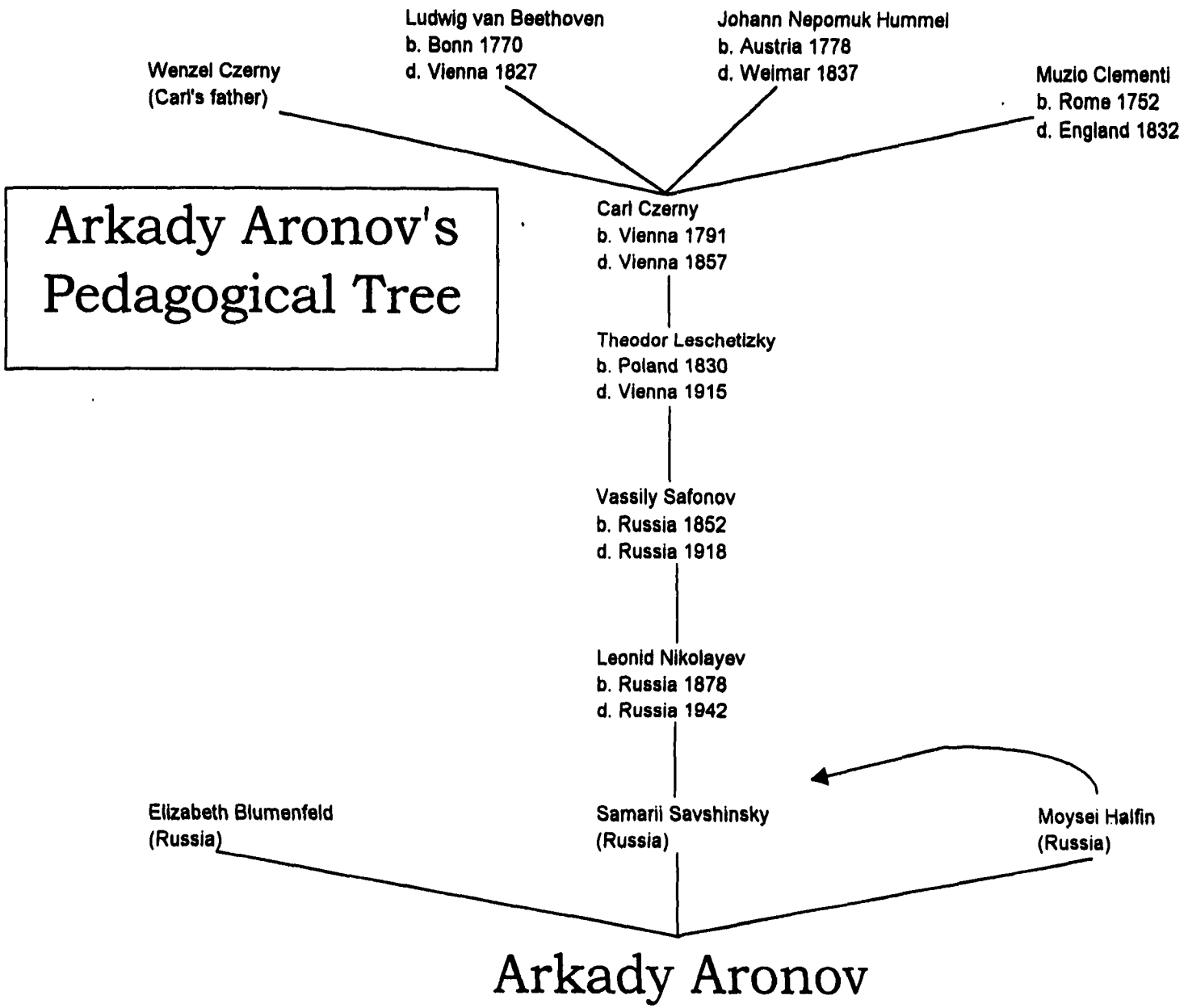
[115] Harold C. Schonberg, The Great Pianists (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1963), p.419.
[116] Ibid., p.425.
[117] Ibid., pp.428-429.

Herbert Stessin's Pedagogical Tree

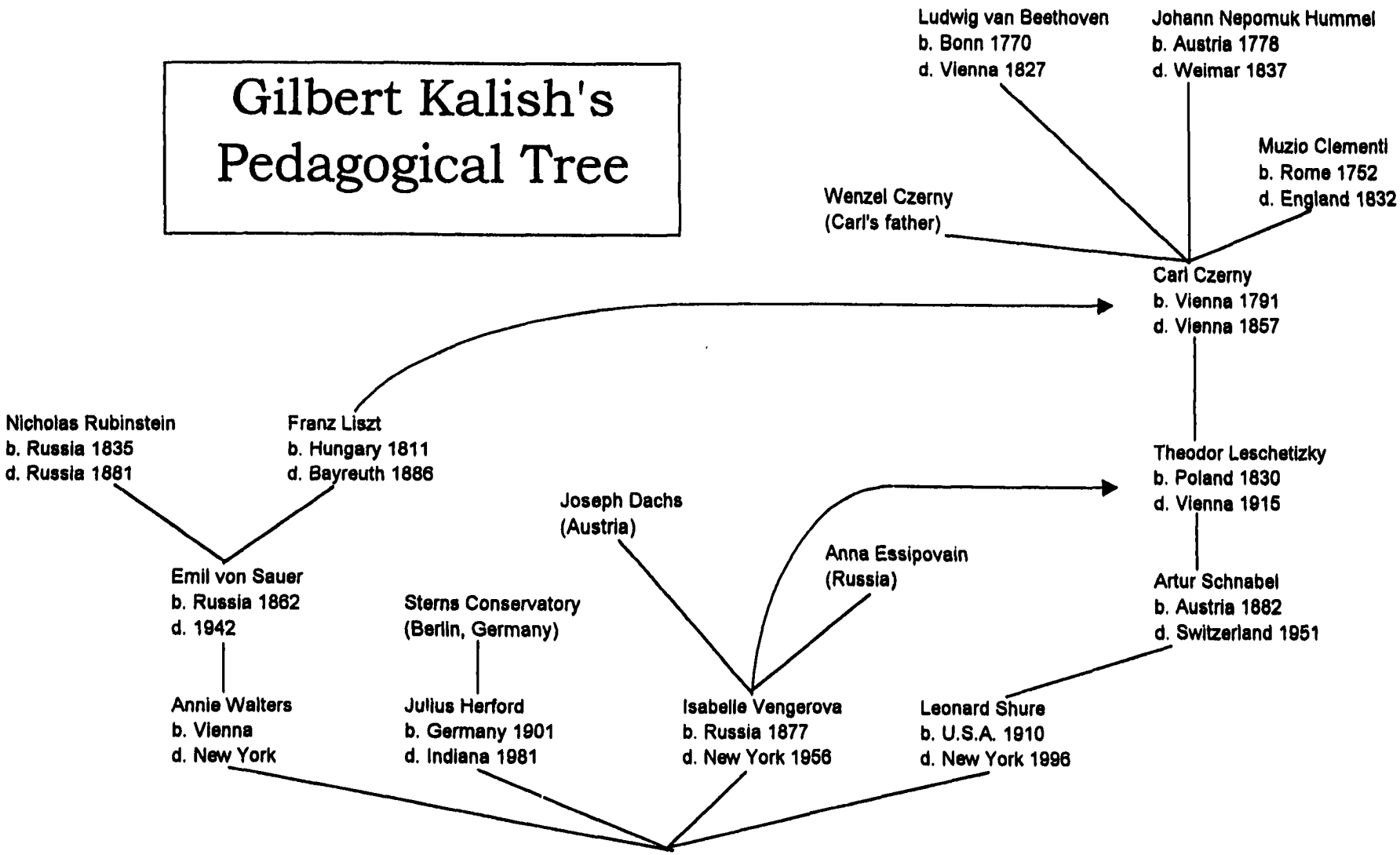


Martin Canin's Pedagogical Tree





Gilbert Kalish's Pedagogical Tree



Photographs

Plate 1: Herbert Stessin

Plate 2: Martin Canin

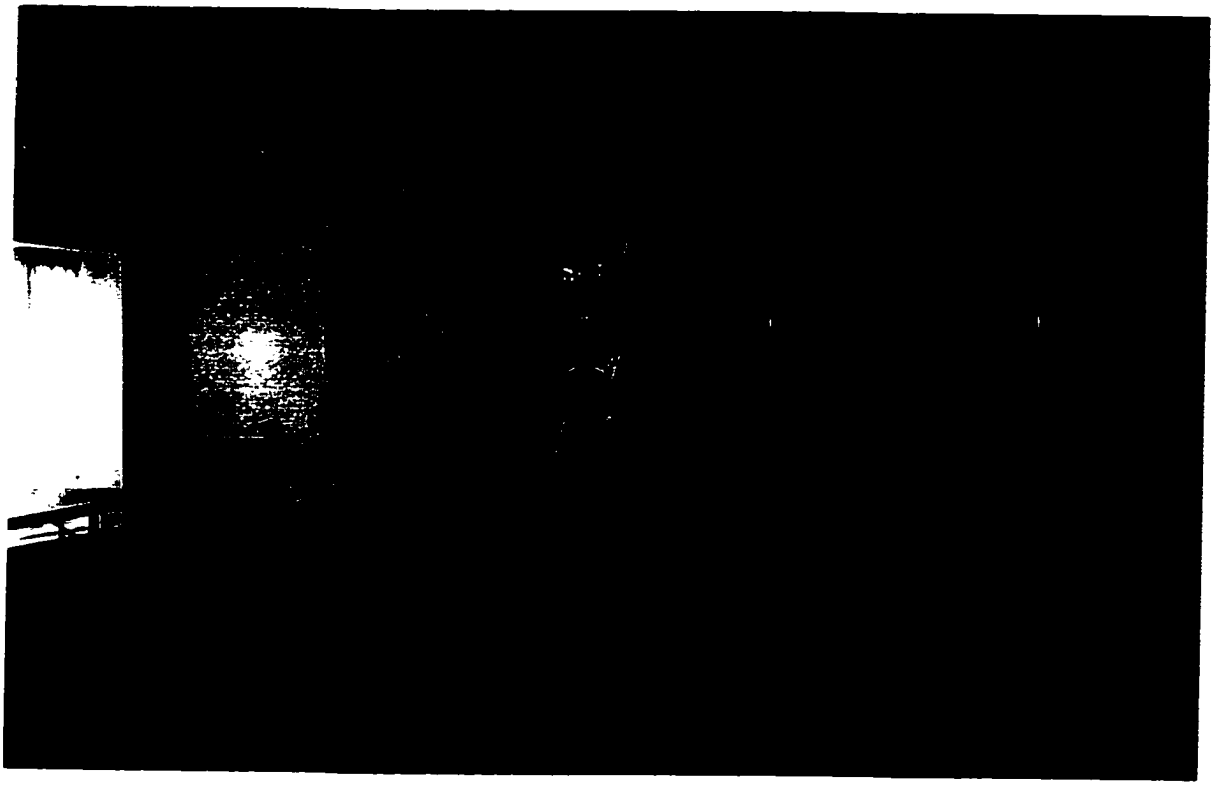


Plate 3: Arkady Aronov

Plate 4: Gilbert Kalish

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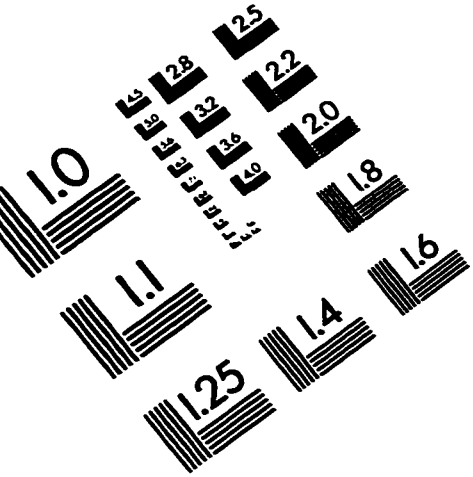

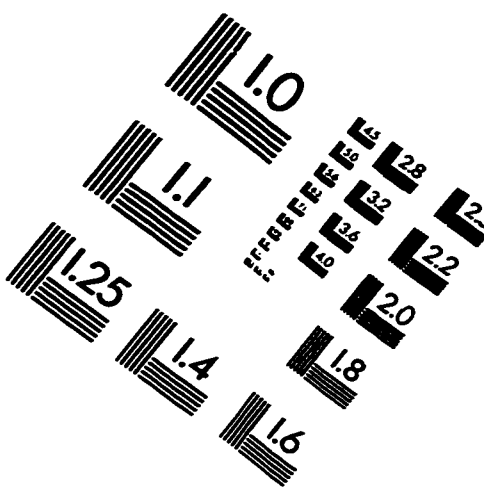

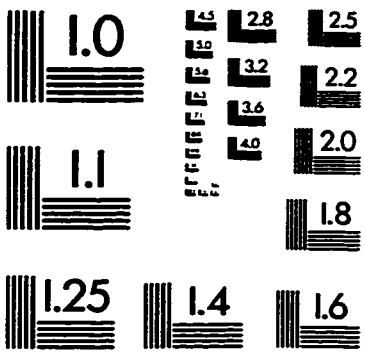

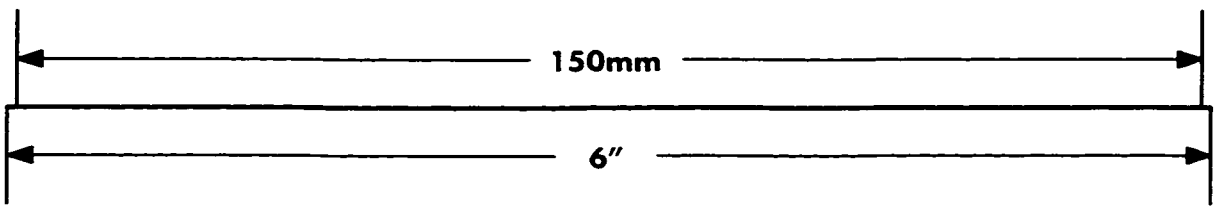

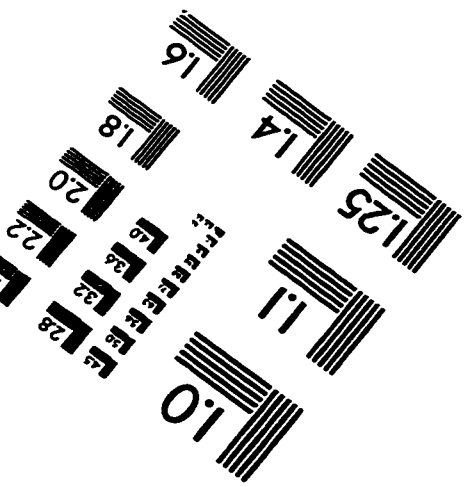

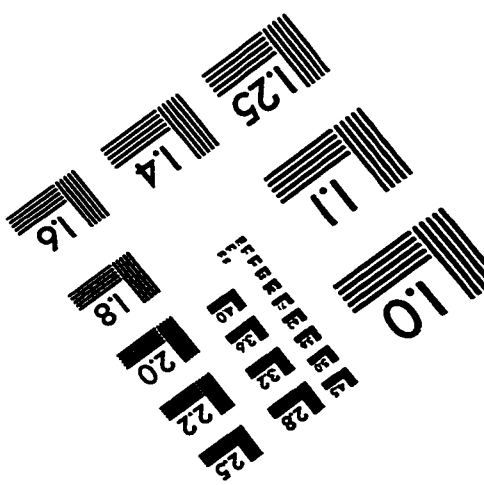

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