

## A SURVEY AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SELECTED PIANO METHOD BOOKS

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**SUMMARY.** The first several years of instrumental study are crucial in the formation of one's fundamental attitude toward music. The manner in which a child is taught and the goals set by the teacher during this period can shape his/her relationship to music for a lifetime. So-called piano method books are widely used in the earliest stages of study. The increased popularity of piano lessons has made this activity an important venue for learning about music in general, not only for the musically gifted, but also for children of average ability. In this sense, the chosen pedagogical approach and teaching tools – including method books – greatly influence students, piano teachers, and parents. Thus, an examination and comparison of the developmental strategies found in various piano method books is paramount. The results of this exploratory research, a comparative analysis of six different Hungarian piano method books, may bear potentially significant implications from a wider, international perspective. Moreover, the selected analytical criteria used here offer a basis for further research of piano method books and pedagogical styles.

**Keywords:** piano method book, skill/talent development, piano pedagogy

### **The Concept of the Piano Method Book: Its Role and Significance in Pedagogy**

Piano method books are systematically compiled scores containing the basic elements of music literacy for beginners, exercises for the development of technique, and short pieces.

*“An abundance of pedagogical experience has accumulated over the course of centuries of musical instrument education, and as a result many different methods came into use. Eventually the need arose to organize and*

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document this knowledge systematically. Pedagogically oriented works – method books – were written for the purpose of providing music teachers with practical guidelines for teaching.”<sup>2</sup>

“Trends in piano pedagogical literature are influenced by societal changes, the development of the instrument, evolving musical styles, and the individual contributions of great teachers.”<sup>3</sup>

A reflection of the era in which it was written, François Couperin’s *L’art de toucher le clavecin* [The Art of Playing the Harpsichord] (Paris 1716) can be considered the first actual keyboard method. Its significance lies in that it paved the way for “the modern age, in which performing artistry was elevated to equal ranks with the creative arts”, according to Lili Veszprémi’s reference book on the history of piano pedagogy in Hungary.<sup>4</sup> The essential problem for performers at the time was the proper realization of ornamentation. This topic was also addressed by, among others, [Daniel Gottlob] Türk in his comprehensive piano methodology (1789), another landmark piano method.<sup>5</sup> The theoretical part of Türk’s treatise attained an artistic level through his inclusion of such topics as improvisation, figured bass realization, and the fundamentals of composition. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that his method also highlighted two important aspects of performance: phrasing and good tone production.<sup>6</sup>

The first Hungarian virginal book that can be considered a keyboard method is the collection by János Wohlmuth, which until 2008 survived only in manuscript form.<sup>7</sup> Wohlmuth compiled this score for one of his students. An examination of the volume’s contents provides an accurate picture of the instrumental skills expected of a successful pupil at that time. Wohlmuth’s tutorial consists of an overview of fundamental music notation followed by fifty-six short pieces based on various popular 17th century tunes which were passed from one city to another. The melodies are characterized by motivic

<sup>2</sup> Pukánszky, Béla, *Metodikai áttekintés az utóbbi száz év kiemelkedő gordonkaskoláiról* [A Methodological Review of the Foremost Cello Methods of the Last 100 Years] in: *Parlando* 1978/9, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Szabolcsi, Bence & Tóth, Aladár (Ed. Dénes Bartha), *Zenei lexikon* [Encyclopedia of Music] III. (O–Z), Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, 1965, p. 715.

<sup>4</sup> Veszprémi, Lili, *Zongoraoktatásunk története* [A History of Our Piano Pedagogy], Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, 1976, p. 41.

<sup>5</sup> Türk, Daniel Gottlob, *Klavierschule oder Anweisung zum Klavierspielen* [Piano School or Instruction for Piano Playing], Leipzig, 1789.

<sup>6</sup> Türk’s opus as described in Veszprémi, op. cit.

<sup>7</sup> Wohlmuth, János, *Starck Virginal Book*, Sopron, MS, 1689, as described in Veszprémi, op. cit. See also the first, critical edition in: *Musicalia Danubiana 22. Starck Virginal Book (1689) Compiled by Johann Wohlmuth; Johann Wohlmuth: Miserere (1696)*. Ed. Ilona Ferenczi, Budapest: MTA Zenetudományi Intézet, 2008.

development and periodic structure in small two- and three-part forms *“which potentially provide model examples for the practical application of elementary harmony. The exercises feature harmonic progressions beginning with the tonic-dominant, followed by the subdominant, and eventually including secondary dominant relationships, and finally culminating in a harmonized chorale which encompasses all of the presented progressions.”*<sup>8</sup>

*“As an important part of Hungarian culture, arts, and education, and in correspondence with other intellectual fields, Hungarian piano pedagogy changes according to societal expectations, and the repository of accumulated experience continually expands from generation to generation. Needless to say, the idea of music, its language, forms of manifestation, and set of tools are ever-changing, and successive generations of piano teachers also differ from one another. The potential danger in this may be that the desire to experiment could obscure those fundamental truths whose validity is not dependent on time but on continuous confirmation from authentic experience.”*<sup>9</sup>

Music life began to flourish in Hungary in the early nineteenth century, as music societies were formed and a burgeoning in music teaching, concert life, chamber music, and music journalism was experienced. The Musicians’ Society of Pest-Buda founded a vocal school in 1840, which gradually expanded to include instrumental studies and finally in 1867 became the National Conservatory.

*“A long list of outstanding teachers (Mátyás Engeszer, Lajos Menner, Károly Them, Károly Hubert, Imre Székely, József Bloch, Károly Aggházy, etc.) and the high-quality concerts they organized proved the institution’s cultural importance. The culmination of these communal efforts was the establishment in 1875 of the National Hungarian Royal Academy of Music. The fact that Ferenc Liszt became the institution’s first president and Ferenc Erkel its first director was of great symbolic significance and a sure guaranty of effective results at the turn of the century.”*<sup>10</sup>

The newly-formed music schools in turn generated the birth of an independent Hungarian literature for music pedagogy. The piano method books produced in nineteenth-century Hungary were patterned after their foreign counterparts. They primarily mirrored the practice of German methods, which were designed to lead students progressively through the rudiments of music, ornamentation, fingering, and figured bass to the artistic

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<sup>8</sup> Veszprémi, op. cit., p. 46.

<sup>9</sup> Duffek, Mihály, *Zongora szakmódszertan személyes hangolásban* [Piano Methodology – Personally Tuned], Debrecen, Egyetemi Kiadó, 2015, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> Dobszay, László, *Magyar zenetörténet* [Hungarian Music History], Budapest Gondolat Kiadó, 1984, p.159.

level.<sup>11</sup> During this period the Hungarian piano methods of István Gáti and Sándor Dömény were published, which were summaries of their pedagogical experience. They sought to habituate both teachers and their students to the use of Hungarian-language sheet music, writing theoretical and practical textbooks in Hungarian and attempting to lay the foundation for Hungarian music terminology.<sup>12</sup> István Gáti's *A kótából való klavírozás mestersége, melyet készített az abban gyönyörködők kedvéért* [The Art of Keyboard Playing from Sheet Music, created for the Delight of Music Lovers] (1802) was the first piano method written in Hungarian. The work contains the necessary basics for instrumental playing, although Gáti's goal was primarily to promote the understanding of music. In his preface he describes *“the edifying value of music and the full range of its beneficial effects on thought and concentration. He [Gáti] was the first to attempt to devise a Hungarian music terminology.”*<sup>13</sup>

In his outstanding textbook, *Módszer a zongora helyes játszására* [Proper Method for Playing the Piano] (1860) István Bartalus summarized his teaching experience at the State Teachers' Training Institute in Buda. His *Énektanítási zenei és kézikönyv* [Handbook and Music for Vocal Teaching] and *Vezérkönyv a zongora játszására* [Reference Manual for Playing the Piano] were published to provide guidelines for curriculum development when *“the Eötvös mandates for the reform of public education declared that singing and music should become required subjects of study in elementary and upper, public and middle schools.”*<sup>14</sup> Bartalus departed from the practice of his predecessors by providing material only for the first years of study, and by including arrangements of Hungarian and other nations' folk songs.

By the early twentieth century, the need for systematic organization of methodological doctrines for the piano pedagogy curriculum at the Royal Music Academy had become indispensable. Kálmán Chován's book, *A zongorajáték módszertana mint nevelési eszköz* [Piano Methodology as a Means of Education] (1904) served this purpose. The physiological research of the day as well as the latest discoveries in general psychology opened new perspectives in music teaching. *“The former helped the study of anatomical functionality and through this the automatization of the mechanical aspects of playing, while the latter contributed to auditive teaching methodology, or*

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<sup>11</sup> Szabolcsi, Bence & Tóth, Aladár, op. cit.,

<sup>12</sup> Szávai, Magda, Előszó helyett - Zeneiskoláink történetének vázlatja [In Lieu of a Preface – An Outline of the History of Our Music Schools], in: Veszprémi, op. cit.

<sup>13</sup> Szabolcsi, Bence & Tóth, Aladár, op. cit., p. 716.

<sup>14</sup> Szávai, Magda, op. cit., p. 16.

*development of the conscious intellectual role.*<sup>15</sup> After 1945 “the new structure of society allowed for the expansion of music education and the systemization of piano pedagogical materials and methods to such a degree that the quality of music education was elevated to a very high level throughout the entire country.”<sup>16</sup> Formal early skill development (preparatory music education), use of the actual music repertoire as a starting point in study, and a greater demand for artistry in pianism became standard practice; all of these approaches emphasized the primary importance of musical understanding.

### **Criteria for the Present Research**

Development was the foremost consideration for Erna Czövek in compiling her piano method, which is divided into three main areas of study: aural skills, music literacy, and technical training.<sup>17</sup> However, according to the present research more than three areas must be addressed for a complete analysis. During preliminary studies for the present project, eleven categories of characteristic skill/talent development were defined covering the intrinsic elements of elementary piano pedagogy and the corresponding process of early music education.

### **Concept and Definition of Talent and Skill Development**

*“Sándor Nagy defines skill as the automated component of a conscious activity the virtual automatization of certain phases of an activity enables the mind to concentrate on more crucial matters; one can thus transfer full focus to the higher processes involved in achieving the desired results and on overseeing those results.”*<sup>18</sup>

The entire spectrum of skills should be methodically addressed in music lessons. Musical skills involve the use of both intellectual and manual facilities.

*“By virtue of a simple comparison, it can be claimed that [] skills can be taught and learned, whereas talent can be developed. The process of helping talent to unfold requires a long-range time investment, but once it has evolved... it is retained permanently. In contrast, [] skills may be*

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<sup>15</sup> Szabolcsi, Bence & Tóth, Aladár, op. cit., p. 724.

<sup>16</sup> Szabolcsi, Bence & Tóth, Aladár, op. cit., 716

<sup>17</sup> Czövek, Erna, *Korszerű zongoraiskola tervezete* [Outline of an Innovative Piano Method] in: *Parlando* 1963/3, p. 7-10; 1963/4, p. 9-12

<sup>18</sup> Zakárné Horváth, Ida, *Készségek, képességek, kompetenciák fejlesztése* [The Development of Skills, Talents, and Competencies], Budapest: MODINFO Kft, 2003, p. 6. See also Nagy, Sándor. *Az oktatás folyamata és módszerei* [The Process and Methods of Education] Mogyoród: Volos Kiadó, 1997.

*acquired in a shorter period of time, but if they are not used, they can be lost quickly. Effective development of talent occurs through the mastery of specific study material. A mature talent eventually becomes independent of the study material, and continues to function dynamically even while comprehending and mastering completely new information.*"<sup>19</sup>

*"Occasionally it can take years of practical application of the obtained knowledge to develop into relatively solid talent. According to József Nagy, the optimum amount of time required for the acquisition of rudimentary skills and abilities is at least two to four years for simple elementary-level training, and five to ten years for more complex learning.*"<sup>20</sup>

As stated in the *Encyclopaedia of Pedagogy*: "...talent is developed over the course of human activity. There are the so-called general types of talents (intelligence, creativity) which can be expressed via a wide spectrum of activities; and there are the designated specialized talents (manual dexterity, musical ability, vivid imagination, capability to achieve results in sports)." <sup>21</sup>

Many researchers have dealt with the examination of talents and skills. Despite this fact, the established results of such research on instrumental skill/talent development in applied pedagogy are most clearly demonstrated in the curriculum used in music school education. The fact that piano method books – the topic of this paper – are accessed by the greatest number of people through their use in music schools further confirms the importance of studying the music school curriculum. Moreover, music school education relies on piano methods. In light of this, a review of the general developmental tasks outlined in the music school curriculum can provide direction for the research of skill/talent development in applied teaching.

The Hungarian music school piano curriculum (2011) lists the following general objectives of piano pedagogy: familiarization with the instrument; mastery of the necessary basic kinaesthetic skills, including: appropriate sitting position at the instrument in accordance with respective body proportions to ensure natural handling of the instrument; correct hand position; freely-functioning playing apparatus with independence of the fingers, arm, and hands; flexible, unfixed joints (shoulders, elbows, wrists, and fingertips); balanced piano technique according to individual ability (smooth changes of position, nimble crossing of the hands); differentiated touch and fingertip sense.

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<sup>19</sup> Zakárné, *ibid.*, 10

<sup>20</sup> Zakárné, *ibid.*, 7. See also Nagy, József, Krisztián Józsa, Tibor Vidákovich and Margit Fazekasné Fenyvesi. *Az alapkészségek fejlődése 4-8 éves életkorban* [Development of Rudimentary Skills from Ages 4-8], Budapest: OKÉV, KÁOKSZI, 2002.

<sup>21</sup> Báthory, Zoltán & Falus, Iván, *Pedagógiai Lexikon* [Encyclopedia of Pedagogy] *Vol. II.*, Budapest: Keraban Könyvkiadó, 1997, p.89.

The fundamental instrumental skills encompass a combination of technical and performance facility: orientation and ability to play on the entire range of the keyboard; ability to utilize basic pianistic techniques and types of articulation according to the specific musical material; knowledge and proper handling of the pedals; capability to play the instrument with an appropriately expressive tone, nuances, and dynamic variety depending on the character and essence of the music.

The curriculum then outlines the specific areas of musical ability and skill development as related to piano playing: for example, musicality (supple, dynamically expressive shaping of phrases; effective management of the balance between melody and accompaniment; refined articulation); aural skills (accurate intonation; melodic, polyphonic, and functional sense of hearing); sense of meter and rhythm (ability to maintain a steady tempo); musical literacy (sight-reading); and memory.<sup>22</sup>

Considering these guidelines, the present research is based on the following analytical perspectives:

1. The order of musical pitches and presentation of rudiments

This topic covers the application of musical fundamentals to piano study, including familiarization with the order of musical pitches, distances between pitches, relationships between pitches (e.g. neighbouring note, half-step, distance of a third), and such concepts as intervals, chords, and musical patterns.

2. Orientation on the keyboard

This topic focuses on the multiple ways of finding pitches in different registers on the instrument. The piano methods differ in how they present the necessary sets of pitches for musical pieces and in the pace of expansion of the ambitus of learned notes.

3. Rhythmic competence

Introduction to rhythmic skill development in each piano method

4. Technical skills

This area includes the teaching of the basic kinaesthetic forms, the pace of conscious note-learning, the methods of activating the fingers, the importance of position-sense, and the introduction to the elements of contemporary music.

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<sup>22</sup> Excerpted from the curriculum guidelines for elementary arts education, "Zongora" [Piano], *Magyar Közlöny* 2011/8., p. 1168.

5. Music literacy

Introduction to the reading of music, playing from written music, and the use of modern scores are examined in this topic.

6. Performance facility

A survey of dynamics, modes of expression, tempi, methods of shading, and the use of musical expression markings constitute this subject.

7. Creative talent/proficiency

Actual arranging/compositional assignments, rhythmic improvisation, activities involving free improvisation, four-hand improvisation, and improvisation according to specific guidelines are compared in this topic.

8. Musical sensibility and formal understanding

This category includes those factors which influence and shape the student's perception of music, such as: aural imaging as derived from the printed score (for example pentatonic, chromatic notes, dissonance); musical forms (e.g. da capo); compositional techniques (e.g. variation, sequencing); styles (e.g. classical) and their corresponding characteristic features; genres (e.g. minuet); expressive aspects of music (e.g. mood-improvisation); and associations with nature, music, the visual arts, literature, and architecture.

9. Ability to cooperate and participate in group activities

Many miscellaneous exercises, assignments, and pieces can belong to this area. These activities help students to integrate and develop specialized musical skills in conjunction with other kinds of skills, such as the ability to cooperate with others musically and verbally.

10. Capacity for working independently

The theme of this topic is preparation for independent study and practice.

11. Transposition facility

Here assorted tactics for the development of transposition skills are observed in the selected method books.

**Brief Introduction to and Description of the Selected Piano Method Books**

As the first step of this project, a wide-ranging survey was conducted to assess which piano method books are most commonly used in elementary music schools – which in this case proved to be primarily



Hungarian method books. Two foreign piano methods were also considered because of their popularity abroad and since their use has recently spread to Hungary.<sup>23</sup> Based on this preliminary poll, six Hungarian method books were then selected for detailed analysis. Important criteria for selection were that the method be systematically structured and comprehensive in dealing with the full spectrum of developmental areas. It was also imperative that the chosen piano schools be from different time periods and represent a variety of pedagogical concepts. Thus the sample group includes two piano methods written in the 1960's which continue to maintain a significant role in music education. The first of these is the *Zongoraiskola I. kezdőknek* [Piano Method for Beginners] which was compiled by a panel of experts but is commonly referred to as the "Komjáthy method book", referring to the name of the president of the editorial board. The other method book dating from the same year (1966) is that written by Erna Czövek. Since the scope of study material for purposes of this research was limited to the point of reaching the level of scale-playing, only the first volume of each of these two methods was examined here. The second volumes of both schools contain pieces of far greater complexity and thus require more advanced pianistic technique.

Two other method books from the sample group date from the 1990's. These schools opened new perspectives in the teaching of beginners through their detailed approach to the earliest stages of study. One of these, Lajos Papp's work entitled *Zongora ABC* [The ABC's of the Piano], was published in two volumes in 1995 and is still widely used in music schools. Papp focuses on the use of pentachords as the primary vehicle for development. He presents numerous variations of the five-finger position utilizing diverse playing techniques in a highly systematic arrangement. The other piano school from this subgroup is *A zongorázó gyermek* [Child Playing the Piano] by Tünde Aszalós (1992) in two volumes. Aszalós professed that her purpose in writing the first volume of this work was to contribute to the early training of young children. She postpones the introduction of music reading until a later stage, and instead concentrates her efforts with beginners on the teaching of basic kinaesthetic forms, the development of technical facility, and the activation of expressive potential. The first volume of her work is comprised of rote-playing exercises and arrangements of Hungarian children's songs. Music reading is introduced in the second volume, which features pieces by contemporary composers written specifically for this piano method.

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<sup>23</sup> 1) Thompson, John, *John Thompson's Easiest Piano Course, Part One*, London: Chappell & Co. Ltd, 1955. and 2) Schaum, John W., *Wir musizieren am Klavier*, Berlin: Bosworth Verlag, 2002.

In the early years of the twenty-first century creativity increasingly became the focal point in education. The demand for the integration of spontaneous compositional activity into piano teaching became more and more frequent. Mária Apagyi began exploring this subject intensively in the 1970's, publishing the results of her research in the comprehensive work, *Zongoráalom* [Piano Dream] in 2008. This is not a piano method in the literal sense. The three volumes are organized according to the logical principles of improvisation, which are equally valid for even the most advanced levels of instrumental playing. Certain aspects of pedagogy for beginners are presented in detail, including exercises and short pieces. Other parts of the work can be interpreted as a methodological guide for teachers with supplementary music examples. Pertinent aspects of the first two volumes have been considered in the present study.

Zsuzsanna Hunyadi completed her piano method in 2010-11. Its inclusion in this sample group is justified by the fact that the main emphasis is placed on creative musical activities for beginners through a simple, purposeful arrangement. Improvisational tasks are integrated into the musical material as a model for further thought and development. This school resembles a workbook by virtue of its numerous compositional and improvisatory exercises. The first two volumes have been included in this comparative analysis.

### **Piano Method Books Examined in the Present Study (Sample Group)**

Apagyi, Mária. *Zongoráalom – Kreatív zongoratanulás* [Piano Dream – Creative Piano Study] Vols. I-II. Responsible ed. Attila Garamvölgyi. (Pécs: Duplex Rota, 2008)

Aszalós, Tünde. *A zongorázó gyermek: kezdők zongoraiskolája* [Child Playing the Piano: Music Book for Beginners], Vols. I-II. (Budapest: Aszalós, Tünde, 1992)

Czövek, Erna. *Zongoraiskola I.* [Piano Method, Volume I]. Participating ed. László Dobszay. (Budapest: Editio Musica, 1966)

Hunyadi, Zsuzsanna. *A zeneértés alapjai – Zongoraiskola* [The Basics of Understanding Music – Piano Method] Vols. I-II. (Budapest: Aposztróf Kiadó, 2010-11)

Papp, Lajos. *Zongora ABC* [The ABC's of the Piano], Vols. I-II. (Budapest: Editio Musica, 1995)

*Zongoraiskola I. kezdőknek* [Piano Method for Beginners, Volume I]. Ed. Fantóné Kassai, Mária; Lajosné Hernádi; Aladárné Komjáthy; Kató Vásárhelyiné Insetl; Miklósné Máthé (Budapest: Editio Musica, 1966). Referred to in this study as the “Komjáthy piano method”

### **Concise Summary of the Analysis**

Concerning the order of musical pitches and presentation of rudiments (first analytical perspective), significant differences exist between the six methods of the sample group in terms of how the fundamentals are introduced. Certain methods begin with teaching the pitch classes (Papp, Komjáthy), others with rote-playing exercises using solfeggio notation (Czövek, Hunyadi), another with playing on the black keys as demonstrated by the teacher (Aszalós), and yet another with activities involving aural discovery (Apagyí). Three of the methods emphasize the learning of intervals (Aszalós, Hunyadi, Apagyí). They contain exercises for learning the names of the intervals and the corresponding distances between pitches, theoretical and notational practice of building intervals from a specific note, and recognition of intervals within the score. Knowledge of basic concepts, such as the major and minor forms of chords and scales, is necessary to master these elementary techniques in piano-playing, and all of the six methods deal with this subject matter. However, only certain of the schools delve into theoretical topics such as: functions and simple chord progressions (Hunyadi, Papp, Apagyí); the phenomenon of overtones (Aszalós, Apagyí); and patterns, whole-tone scales, and chromaticism (Aszalós, Hunyadi, Apagyí).

Regarding the topic of orientation on the keyboard (second analytical perspective) through the playing of pentachords – a primary cornerstone of learning to play the piano –, two different trends can be observed within the sample group: 1) concentration on several basic pentachords, or 2) introduction of a wide variety of types of pentachords in multiple registers. Some of the authors devote special attention to the study of intervals, as this subject comprises the basis for the student’s understanding of melodies and chords (Aszalós, Apagyí, Hunyadi). Certain schools place particular emphasis on mapping out the pitches needed in a specific piece of music (Aszalós), or on extemporizing with a given set of pitches (Hunyadi, Apagyí, Papp, Czövek, Aszalós), as these activities are highly effective in developing a sense of orientation on the keyboard.

Significant conceptual differences exist between the various methods in their approach to the fundamentals of rhythmic skill development. Some schools presume an existing level of rudimentary rhythmic knowledge and the ongoing, simultaneous study of solfeggio, thus building on this foundation.

These methods begin by teaching children's songs on the piano (Komjáthy, Hunyadi, Czövek, Aszalós). In contrast, other schools take a step-by-step approach to the building of complex musical knowledge, teaching the simplest elements of rhythm first and laying rhythmic foundations with the help of counting and accompaniment by the teacher (Papp). Three of the methods emphasize the use of triple meter from the outset (Papp, Aszalós, Apagyi).

In the area of technical skill development, variances were noted in perspectives on playing by ear (Aszalós, Hunyadi, Czövek) and concerning the functional training of the fingers (Aszalós, Apagyi). Some authors tend to remain within the boundaries of several pentachords for a relatively long period, so as to ensure that students 1) acquire the ability to play children's songs with ease, 2) develop a solid sense of position fingering, and 3) become proficient in the basics of reading music (Hunyadi, Papp, Czövek, Apagyi). Four of the methods provide accompaniment patterns for the children's songs (Komjáthy, Aszalós, Hunyadi, Czövek). Aszalós devotes attention to the study of finger exercises, offering ideas for variation. Some of the methods place importance on becoming familiar with contemporary music, introducing such basic elements as clusters, glissandi, and other, more open forms of expression (Aszalós, Apagyi, Hunyadi). Several authors assert that the development of both theoretical understanding and instrumental technique requires the intense practicing of typical musical formulas (Papp, Hunyadi, Apagyi).

The authors begin the teaching of music reading in diverse ways. The use of preliminary, simplified scores (Papp), rhythm-notation (Apagyi), and solfeggio notational systems (Hunyadi, Czövek) is characteristic. Some of the methods treat the development of kinesthetic skills and simple rote-playing first, postponing the reading of music to a later stage (Hunyadi, Czövek, Aszalós, Apagyi). Others use music literacy as the primary foundation and closely integrate each step of technical development with it (Papp, Komjáthy). An assortment of didactic approaches to music reading is represented in the sample group. These methods include those which: use "C" as the starting point and central pitch (Papp), designate main notes as points of reference (Aszalós), begin with C and then expand with main notes (Czövek, Komjáthy, Apagyi), and use "D" as the starting point (Hunyadi). Certain schools place a priority on the mastery of basic pentachords (Papp, Hunyadi, Apagyi, Czövek) as a means of achieving greater security in music reading. Three of the scores feature modern sonorities and the corresponding manners in which these are notated (Hunyadi, Aszalós, Apagyi).

The piano schools display a variety of methods for the development of performing and expressive capacities. Several of the scores limit the introduction of musical terminology to basic dynamics, such as *forte*, *piano*,

*mezzoforte*, *crescendo*, *decrescendo*, and directions pertaining to emotions and moods, e.g. happy, sad, dance-like, etc. (Czövek, Hunyadi). Others present a wider spectrum of dynamic and expressive instructions along with the demand for greater differentiation in tonal gradation and character from the very beginning (Komjáthy, Papp, Aszalós). Certain methods provide attractive or humorous titles to the pieces (Papp, Aszalós), while others request extemporization on descriptive character titles (Hunyadi, Apagyi). Performance or improvisation along a particular storyline can contribute significantly to the development of expressive potential (Aszalós, Hunyadi). Three of the authors deemed it important to include pieces that depart from traditional styles, representing modern tonalities and concepts and demanding more freedom in performance (Aszalós, Hunyadi, Apagyi).

Differences can be noted within the sample group in the handling of creative/compositional facility. In one of the methods (Apagyi), improvisational/compositional activities based on multiple structural principles (opposites, rhythm, proportion, symmetry, asymmetry, parallelism, repetition, recapitulation, variation) form the backbone of piano instruction. More concrete examples of activities aimed at fostering musical creativity include 1) invention of the accompaniment to a melody (Hunyadi, Czövek, Aszalós); 2) question-and-answer formation within the pentachord (Czövek, Papp, Apagyi, Hunyadi); 3) extemporization using only a few notes and a simple rhythmic pattern for the duration of several measures (Hunyadi); 4) short, melody-completion exercises (Czövek, Papp); and 5) improvisation of a waltz (Hunyadi, Apagyi). Some activities that involve rhythm are 1) extemporization using a specific rhythmic pattern (Apagyi); improvisation in a particular meter (Apagyi, Hunyadi); and playing ensemble games (Aszalós). Less-structured improvisatory activities also appear in several of the methods, such as improvisation using a given set of pitches (Apagyi, Hunyadi), on a character-title (Aszalós, Apagyi, Hunyadi), or on a story (Hunyadi).

Both similarities and differences can be found between the piano schools in their approaches to the development of basic formal understanding. Musical sensibility is promoted by familiarity with the characteristics of music, the possibilities for tonal variety, structural principles, and types of form. The playing of accompaniments to children's and folk songs is a convenient way to introduce these concepts. All of the methods in the sample group contain numerous examples of this kind. Proficiency in the use of musical patterns is crucial for students to learn to comprehend the language of music (Papp, Apagyi, Hunyadi). The teaching of formal principles is accomplished through the playing of canons (Czövek, Hunyadi), the recognition of ABA forms (Czövek, Apagyi, Papp), and the construction of sequences (Hunyadi). Certain schools provide an ample supply of

contemporary-sounding folk song arrangements (Komjáthy, Czövek). The presentation of a variety of tonal concepts (Aszalós) and pieces using harmonics and other modern compositional devices (Aszalós, Apagyi) serves to expand the students' aural experience. Analogous examples taken from other disciplines and applied to music also help foster the learner's understanding (Apagyi, Aszalós, Hunyadi). All of the methods offer initiation into the dance styles of bygone eras through the study of short minuets and other old dance forms. Aszalós and Apagyi strive specifically to facilitate understanding through the explanation of musical terminology.

The topic of mutual work/playing together is addressed by all six of the piano schools through the inclusion of many duets and ensemble activities. These vary in type and developmental objective. Papp often introduces musical characteristics via the *secondo* parts, many of which can be played by the students and thus readily provide opportunities for cooperative interaction. Working together can take the form of students participating in the arrangement of and playing folk songs (Aszalós, Komjáthy, Czövek) or canons (Hunyadi) in duet format. Childrens' and other songs offered in contemporary-sounding four-hand arrangements (Aszalós) are beneficial for expanding the students' sense of style. Musical dialogues and four- or six-hand improvisations combine cooperative interaction with creative skill building (Apagyi, Hunyadi).

The promotion of competence in working independently as a developmental task is accomplished in multiple ways. For purposes of this study the following activities are classified as requiring the ability to work autonomously: searching for a specific scale or set of pitches (Komjáthy, Hunyadi), cutout and drawing activities (Aszalós, Apagyi), and performance of a story (Aszalós, Hunyadi). Aszalós encourages the conceptualization and verbal expression of musical experiences and opinions, thereby promoting the conscious development of musical sensibility. Two of the methods offer recommendations for effective practicing (Aszalós, Apagyi) and interactive exercises, such as listening to music as a group and discussion of music terminology. These activities broaden the students' perception of music and increase musical intelligence.

Several different pedagogical tactics can be observed in some of the piano schools for the introduction of transposition skills. Transposition up or down a half-step to the black keys (Papp, Komjáthy, Apagyi) as well as transposition into different keys – both predetermined or not – (Papp, Komjáthy, Hunyadi, Apagyi) are common assignments. A more difficult, challenging exercise is the transposition up a fifth of sections of two-hand pieces (Papp, Hunyadi), a convenient preparatory device for the comprehension of classical-style forms.

This comparative analysis reveals significant differences between the selected piano method books in all eleven of the analytical perspectives. For further study of these pedagogical divergences, it would be worthwhile to juxtapose these findings with the viewpoints of piano teachers, examining the nature and origins of the problems in today's music schools and the relevance of the specific methodological approaches in light of the teachers' practical experience.

*Translation from Hungarian by Deborah Kiszely-Papp*

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