

POSSIBILITIES OF TONE COLOR BY ARTISTIC USE OF PEDALS

THE MECHANISM
AND ACTION
OF THE PEDALS
OF THE PIANO

BY
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by Teresa Carreño

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FOREWORD

The name of the author of this little book is magical—Teresa Carreño—how the mere sound of that name—sweet and musical in itself—instantly rouses the interest and stirs one's pulses—quickenning all one's enthusiasm and admiration! Not alone is this true of the fortunate ones of her own circle of friends and disciples—but of the innumerable company the world over who have seen and heard the gloriously beautiful woman—the incomparable artist.

To have once had this privilege was enough to become enthralled for life by her charm. Therefore, by this great circle of admirers all over the world, ANY work bearing this magical name will be received with delight. But those who did not know her personally may not know that, unlike many great artists who seldom trouble themselves to dissect their own work for the benefit of others—Madame Carreño was a marvelous **TEACHER**. She was absolutely original in her ideas and her power of imparting them was one of her great gifts. No pupil could fail to be lifted out of themselves and to marvel at her breadth of vision and the depth of her knowledge and insight. Years ago, when glowing with life and health, she told me that she felt impelled to give her ideas to as many as she could—so that when she was no longer here, her pupils might spread them throughout the world. With her large-hearted unselfishness she wished always to give freely of her best. Now, these words come back, as a sacred trust, and the time to which the great Master looked forward has come, when we must gather together everything we can that she has left us to use for her art.

Here, in one specific branch of that great art, at least, in which she was incomparable, we have in this particular volume, her directions for **ALL** teachers and students. The purely technical nature of the work, will be no drawback to its interest—even to amateurs who cannot **FULLY** benefit by it—for nothing that Teresa Carreño ever wrote or spoke could be “dry”—nothing can escape her touches of humor—her fascinating way of putting things—her pure, lucid manner of explanation.

To those who have ever had the wonderful privilege of studying with Madame Carreño—this work must come as a revelation of what can be imparted even on paper (a most difficult task for the pianistic art) by such a **MASTER** of her subject as Carreño—and how eagerly will those who have sat spellbound under the exquisitely beautiful tonal effects she produced, grasp at this chance to find out what seemed her impenetrable secrets—as she graciously lifts the curtain for them and seeks, with noble generosity, which was one of her loveliest qualities, to give the secrets to others.

To those of us who belong to the circle of her own disciples—her “children”—how this little book brings back those wonderful lessons—when every moment was of inestimable value—full of inspiration, practical use and illuminating thought, the elevation of spirit that comes only from contact with a great genius, stooping to uplift and guide the soul under her care, which she always regarded as her sacred trust.

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Here, in this little book, she comes to us again—here we find the same clarity of thought and expression of points which, on the **SURFACE**, may appear simple enough—but when **WORKED OUT**, produce unique and unexpectedly beautiful results. What a mine of wealth has come to light for **ALL** pianists, in this posthumous work of one of the greatest—if not **THE** greatest authority on the use of the pedals and their great part in the secrets of the pianist’s art. There are so many amateur and even professional pianists, whose playing is marred by an indiscriminate use of the pedals—to say nothing of the many beautiful effects they **MIGHT PRODUCE** if they only **KNEW HOW** to use them. Unfortunately, there is no department of piano playing so **MUCH** neglected as the **ARTISTIC** use of the pedals. Teachers, even of high standing, all too frequently give their pupils a few general rules and avoid glaringly discordant combinations, but fail to initiate their pupils into the combinations and possibilities which make the playing of a great artist the despair of these initiated ones—who frequently never even guess how many seemingly impossible beautiful effects are due to artistic pedaling.

Students and teachers everywhere can here learn for themselves, secrets, which if carefully studied, with—as the artist herself writes—“the musical **FEELING** of the performer”—produce novel and beautiful results. Of course, **WITHOUT** this “musical feeling” **ALL** “rules” are useless. I recall, that Madame Carreño once said to me, “If a pupil does not work out the pedal effects **FOR HERSELF**, after all I show her on the subject, she is hopeless!” And now, we have before us, the minutely careful directions of this great Master of tone production and coloring. Let us take the legacy she has left us, reverently, from her hands, as her last gift from the riches of her wide experience and use it—as she would wish us to do, to make the art, to which she devoted her life, richer and more beautiful in its exposition—giving more color and effect to the immortal works of which her glorious interpretation still sound in our ears—and be thankful that some of the secrets of their exquisite beauty are now in our possession.

ADELAIDE C. OKELL.

POSSIBILITIES OF TONE COLOR BY ARTISTIC USE OF PEDALS

CHAPTER I.

General Observations on the Mechanism and Action of the Pedals.

The chief purpose of the pedals is the production of **tone-effects**, and therefore the performer must bring them into action only when they are required to fulfill his intentions.

Two operations govern the mechanism of the pedals: **pressure and release**.

The mechanism of the pedals has so often been explained that I think it superfluous to enter into any detailed description of it. Every one who has studied the piano knows that the right pedal operates the mechanism which serves to increase the resonance of the strings of the instrument, while the left pedal is the one which muffles the sound.

In pressing the right pedal, the dampers, which rest on the strings, are lifted, producing a greater resonance. This augmentation of sonority is a great help to the player, when used in a careful and artistic way, but it can also produce the greatest detrimental effects, when not used correctly.

The right pedal (as well as the left) is intended to produce **tone effects** and must only be applied when this object is the one which the player desires to achieve.

It is a general mistake to use the right pedal as an exclusive means toward achieving an **FF** effect, or the left pedal to produce a **PP** one; because both the **FF** and the **PP** depend upon the **touch** of the player, and not upon the pedals.

It has been my experience, when teaching, that, when asking a pupil to play **FF**, the foot was immediately pressed hard on the right pedal, but the touch was not sufficiently altered to help the **FF** effect which was desired. The same happened with the left pedal if I asked my pupil to play **PP**. It is therefore very necessary to fully understand that the pedals are to be used **only** to enhance the beauty of tone and vary its character according to the desired artistic purpose.

Above all, the student must bear in mind the **musical meaning** of the work which he is interpreting and its **harmonic combinations** as well as the relationship existing between the chords. Without this study, the use of the right pedal becomes a most dangerous element as, instead of producing an artistic effect, a confusion of tones takes place which would spoil even the most beautiful rendering, or the greatest piano playing.

Upon the occurrence of a momentary failure of the memory or a refusal of the technic to obey, some players immediately press the foot hard upon the pedal, in the illusion that by so doing and through the resulting tone confusion the "mistake" will not be noticed by the listeners.

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Like many illusions, this is a most threadbare one! If such a player would only stop to think that the more sound he makes the more noticeable will be the fault. If there is a mistake made while performing on the piano, the less “sound” the player produces, the less the listeners notice the mistake. When a fault in the playing has been made, leave the right pedal entirely untouched!

The pianist cannot be careful enough in avoiding the blurring which can arise from an “abuse” of the right pedal. It becomes indeed a fatal habit if, from the beginning of his work, he is not exceedingly attentive and critical.

The mechanism of the left pedal when brought into action by the pressure of the foot, slides the hammers in such a manner that only two of the three strings are struck by them, thus diminishing the instrument’s normal sonority, and producing a muffled tone. (I refer, of course, to our modern instruments and especially to the so-called “concert grand” piano.) This diminishing, or muffling, of the tone produces an effect which can be very beautiful in the light and PP shade and through which the artist finds great resource toward achieving a variety of “tone coloring” or tone shading.

Although, fortunately, by the nature of the left pedal, no confusion of tone can arise from it, yet an excessive use of the left pedal can also be detrimental to the artistic and pianistic effect, because of its muffling the resonance and making the tone of too thin a quality.

In order to avoid this and to achieve certain effects of tone which can be very beautiful—specially in wishing to obtain a singing quality of tone—the touch of the player must be such as to help the effect of the left pedal, as well as that of the right; as I will explain further on.

CHAPTER II.

The Use of the Right Pedal in Chords.

In beginning this chapter of this little work, the words of that great master, Hans von Bülow, come to my mind, speaking on this most important factor of good (or evil)—the right pedal. Von Bülow said, “The pedal covers a multitude of sins.”

These words are aimed especially at the lack of “legato”—the very important feature of piano playing.

The “legato” must be produced with the fingers, the hands, and the arms, and the right pedal must be brought to act as a help, not as the chief medium.

In chords which must be played “legato,” the pedal acts as a most important means toward achieving this effect, but it must be used with

THE USE OF THE RIGHT PEDAL IN CHORDS

the greatest care and skillfulness, so as to avoid all possible blurring or confusion of sound.

In a passage of chords following each other closely, as in the following example,

Legato

Ex. 1

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped.

the pedals must be pressed down on the chords 1, 2, 3 and kept down for the entire duration of the chords. It should be lifted with a quick motion, and pressed down again after the hands have struck the chord (as marked by the sign *) on each of the chords which follow. The skillfulness in the management of the pedal in passages of chords consists in the rapidity in lifting and pressing the pedal at the very moment needed. Be particularly careful that the foot, in pressing or releasing the pedal, does not make the slightest noise: this would mar the effect and greatly disturb the listener.

Therefore, the points of the feet (both the right and the left) should be immediately placed on the pedals, on sitting at the piano (exactly as the hands are placed on the keyboard before striking the keys, when the performer sits at the piano in order to be ready to use them), and left resting on the pedals.

Some of our modern instruments have pedals, the mechanism of which is more or less hard (unyielding), and often, through this hardness, a noise is produced when pressing the foot on the pedal or lifting it.

It is necessary, therefore, to study the mechanism of the pedals of the instrument used in order to know how to use the motion of the foot to obtain the effects which the pianist wishes, without causing the slightest noise.

The feet must rest on the pedals, so as to be in constant contact with them from the moment of sitting down at the piano, and not brought to the pedals when occasion arises for using them. In this manner, the noisy quality which a pedal may have, is avoided, unless the mechanism is a specially hard one.

In passages of Bravoura, "FF," a motion of the body of the pianist

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from the lower to the upper part of the keyboard is necessary. For example, in the introduction of Tschaikowski's B flat minor Concerto, Op. 23 (No. 1)



When playing these chords, the upper part of the body must be moved from left to right in order to place the arms and hands in the position at the instrument in which the chords are written, and also to have the power to produce the *ff* and large tone effect which this Concerto absolutely demands. The right pedal must be pressed down as far as its mechanism allows, and, in order to obtain the necessary balance to the body, the left foot must abandon its position on the left pedal and placed in such a manner on the floor as to help the performer to keep his balance at the instrument. Without this help of the left foot, the above mentioned passage would be almost impossible to play (as it should be played) and the pianist would not be able to keep his sitting position at the piano, which he must do at all costs.

The motion of placing the left foot in such a manner as to bring about the necessary looked-for assistance can be done in a very discreet way by placing it either under the chair (as some great pianists do) or by the side of the chair so that the motion is almost imperceptible.

The most important matter is to have a firm hold on the chair, and the player must feel that he can move his body in perfect safety and without the danger of finding himself on the floor—a mishap which, beside being fatal, would not be without causing inconvenience to his physical comfort.

We all know that effect caused by pressing down the foot on the right pedal brings about a greater vibration of the strings, producing therefore a larger volume of tone. In freeing the strings from the pressure brought upon them by the dampers, when the pedal is down, they are allowed a wider scope to vibrate and thus we can obtain the greater volume of sound, which in "*ff*" passages gives us the desired effect. This larger amount of tone, caused by the augmentation of the vibration of the strings, is the great danger of the right pedal, and must be constantly kept in mind.

THE USE OF THE RIGHT PEDAL IN CHORDS

If the pedal is not artistically and musically managed there arises that most unpleasant confusion of sound which cannot be sufficiently condemned.

It is absolutely necessary to study the **tonal** relation of the harmonies, and in using the pedal, the knowledge of the harmonic combination helps the performer to achieve the “coloring” effect which he wishes to produce with the help of the pedal. In loud passages—marked either “FF” or often “FFF,” the tone enlarged and intensified by the pressing down of the right pedal, is the strong “light” which the pianist wishes to throw upon his “tone picture.”

There are many shades of “light” thrown upon the tone pictures which depend upon the pressure used by the foot. On this important subject I will speak in detail further on.

In binding chords—as in Example 1—when the **tempo** of the work in which such passages occur is of a quick nature, as, for instance, **Allegro**, it is advisable to leave the pedal off in the chords which do not belong to the same harmony, so as to avoid any possible confusion of tone. In this case the pedaling of the same chord sequence would be:

Ex. 3 **Allegro legato**

Ped. ~~~~~ * Ped. * Ped. * Ped.

supplying by the quality of tone the momentary absence of the pedal. This touch is obtained by holding the hands and the fingers as close to the keyboard as possible, lifting them only the absolutely necessary distance needed to move them into the next chord, with more of **gliding** motion than that of a striking one.

The resonance produced by the touch and pedal combined, and, as I mentioned before, the pedal being pressed immediately after striking the chords, as in Example 1, chords numbered 5, 7 and 9 respectively; the legato can thus be best obtained on chord passages.

This immediate motion of the foot, after striking a chord, must follow so closely the motion of the fingers and hands on the keyboard that it must be almost a simultaneous motion between the hands and the point of the foot.

The point (toes) of the foot should rest continually on the pedal, and

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must only be lifted sufficiently to bring the dampers back on the strings, without the point of the foot lifting itself from the metal part which governs and acts upon the mechanism of the pedal. This quick motion of the foot can easily be done and requires no very great dexterity, nor has it any technical difficulties. With a little practice, and keenly listening to the absolute clearness of the chords, it can easily be accomplished. It seems perfectly superfluous and unnecessary to speak in any detailed manner about the position which the foot should take for the use of the pedals; but in order to be still more explicit and also to avoid any misunderstanding, I will speak about it, though it may sound like "carrying coals to Newcastle."

The heels must be placed firmly on the floor and only the extremities of the feet placed on the point of the pedals, constantly kept resting on them. The motion of pressing and lifting the foot being made by an elastic movement of the extreme part of the foot without losing the firm hold of the heels on the floor, or lifting them in the slightest manner. After this slight degression, I will resume my observations on pedal effects.

When the pedal is pressed down the dampers, caps which have an underlining of felt and which lie on the strings, are raised.

When the pedal is released the dampers come back and rest on the strings again, thus deafening the resonance and the extra amount of vibration which was caused by the pedal action.

If, instead of an almost simultaneous pressure of the pedal on striking the chord, this pressure takes place later, the effect obtained is a faint repetition of the chord, be it ever so faint, which would disturb the tone effect. Let us say, for instance, the chords struck are these:



the effect produced by pressing the pedal after the rest of an eighth, the tone effect or sound would be to a fine ear:



giving a faint (may it be ever so faint) repetition, or greater intensity of tone which must only be used when such tone effect is intended by the performer.

By making the pressure of the foot almost simultaneous, as the striking of the chord with the hands, as, for instance:

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making the duration of the rest, of the value of a thirty-second note, this repetition or faint echo of the chord, is avoided.

The rapidity of the “pressure motion” must be governed by the Tempo in which the chords have to be played. In an *Allegro* the “pressure motion” must naturally be much more rapid. In cases of “*Allegro Molto*,” or “*Presto*,” even the rest, of a thirty-second note would be too long to wait before the pressure of the pedal takes place.

In chords which are to be struck at the beginning of a phrase, the pressure of the pedal then takes place simultaneously with the striking of the chord, and kept down until the tonality of the chord changes.

A general mistake is made by lifting the fingers or the hands *before* the full value of the written notes of the chord has expired, leaving to the pedal the continuation of the tone.

The keys must be kept down the entire value of the written notes and lifted to strike the next chord with a quick motion so as to avoid, as far as possible, the interruption of the tone which arises through the rebounding motion of the keys.

There is a difference in the tone effect (even though a small one) which arises by shortening the value of the notes. A momentary suspension in the volume of the sonority takes place and to a fine musical ear this lapse in the tone is perceptible and therefore it is best to avoid it as far as the limitations of the instrument permit.

As the tonal nature or quality of the piano is of a dry character, the pianist must use all his art, skill and knowledge of his instrument to conceal this lacking element in it.

The advantage which is gained for the greater sonority and for the legato, by keeping the fingers on the chords the entire value of the notes written, only abandoning the chord when imperatively necessary to move into the next chord, is otherwise lost.

The hands and the fingers must act in common accord with the pedal and thus lend each other mutual help for the prolongation of the tone.

In chords in which the melody is carried by one of the notes which form the chord, the finger to which this melody is entrusted must be particularly careful to hold the note as long as possible, so as to bind the melodic tones to the utmost; as, for instance, in Brahms’ *D minor Concerto Op. 15* (when the second subject is presented):

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Ex. 7 *Maestoso*

Ped. * Ped. ✓ Ped. ✓ Ped. * Ped. ✓ Ped. ✓ Ped. ✓

the melody of this phrase is, in the right hand:

Ex. 8

The finger which has the playing of this melody must keep the key down as long as it is to be held, so as to produce the necessary legato which the composer desires.

The other fingers holding the other notes of the chord must only abandon their position when absolutely necessary, so as to help in the tonal effect, but the performer must be very careful that the notes forming the melody should follow each other with the least possible interruption of tone.

In this phrase of Brahms' Concerto—Example 7—there is a melodic meaning in the left hand which the performer must also bring out according to the indention of the composer, as it is, in its form and construction, an imitation of the melody in the right—what I should call a reply to it—and which must also be played with the greatest legato, lifting the fingers as little as possible between each octave so as to avoid the “break” in the tone:

Ex. 9

The manner in which I have marked the pedal in Example 7 is, in my opinion, the one most conducive to help the tonal effect and the legato without blurring or confusion of sound.

In passages of chords following each other (or octaves also coming closely one after another) the fingering plays a very important part both for the chords as well as for the octaves. The fingering which I have found most helpful is the one marked in Examples 7 and 9 and which I hope may prove as helpful to my kind readers.

THE USE OF THE RIGHT PEDAL IN CHORDS

In fingering any passage on the piano, the performer must, first of all, consider the nature and form of his (or her) hands.

In many cases fingering which would be easy for one hand and would facilitate the achievement of the desired legato or tone effect would not be suitable to another hand differently formed.

Small hands must learn to help themselves, not only through the use of the pedal, but also by adopting fingering which will lead them toward the accomplishment of the effect which they wish to obtain, be it a tonal or technical one.

If fingering is employed which is not absolutely against all the established rules, and it does not distort the position of the hands and arms, nor does it look awkward or extravagant (carefully avoiding all motions which might fall into ridicule), the performer is perfectly justified in selecting his own fingering, provided that through it the best artistic and pianistic results crown his efforts.

Our modern technique (or virtuosity) makes more demands on the dexterity, elasticity of the hand, and on the highest degree of skill on the part of the pianist, than that of olden times and therefore much of the old-time method of fingering has been greatly altered or altogether abandoned.

How "antiquated," for instance, seems to our way of thinking of today, the old established rule in fingering that "the thumb must not be used in playing on the black keys."


To the greatest pianists of modern times, among them I will mention two giants of our instrument, Anton Rubinstein and Eugen d'Albert; the thumb plays as great a part in the fingering as any other fingers of the hand (*).

(*) The above paragraph on fingering does not pertain to the ground of this little work. Intrinsically, it is out of place here; but I could not resist the temptation of writing what I did in regard to such an important matter. As my only object in giving these hints on fingering is to help the student, and trust that, in view of my intention, I will be excused by my indulgent readers.

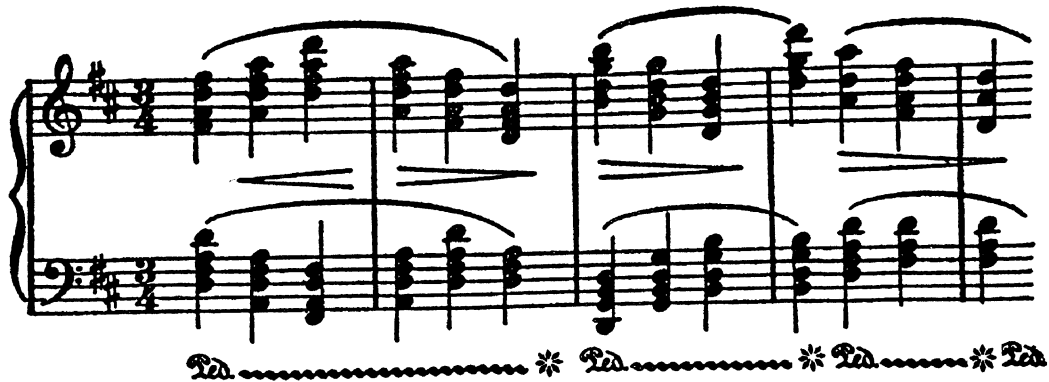
CHAPTER III.

The Pedal and Its Use in Phrasing.

The employment of the pedal, in phrasing a passage or a musical sentence, must be carefully studied so as to follow the intention of the composer in regard to the augmentation of tone which is brought into action by the freer vibration of the strings, and which must agree with the phrase.

By following the adopted signature-termed Slur  always used by the composer to indicate the manner in which he wishes the passages or musical sentences phrased, we can guide ourselves as to the manner of using the pedal. By so doing we follow the composer's intentions as to the augmentation of sonority, and with the effect of the pedal we beautify the tone colour and intensify its significance, in the following succession of chords:

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Ex. 10

the pedal should be employed as marked above. Following the phrase indicated by the slur (—) both, in the right hand and in the left.

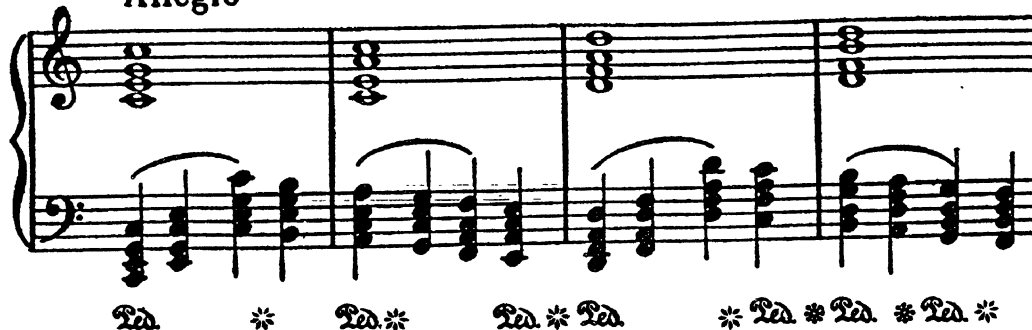
We often find passages in which the composer has marked the phrasing in a different manner for each hand. In such instances, the pianist must study where the tonality is mostly represented by the chords and use the pedal in such a manner that it suffers no disturbance.

If dissonant tones (passing suspension tones, etc.) take place in one of the two hands, while the other hand holds out the chord, the hand for which this longer sounding chord is written supplies the effect of the pedal, whilst by changing the pedal on each of the tones which are foreign to the main chords, or, if the pianist so wishes it, leaving it off altogether in some chords, the confusion or blurring of sound is avoided as shown in the following examples:

Allegro

Ex. 11**Ex. 12**

Allegro



We must also pay attention in playing chord passages to using the pedal on those chords in which the composer has intended an emphasis or greater accentuation and where the larger volume of tone adds to the rhythmic character of the phrase.

THE PEDAL AND ITS USE IN PHRASING

In pedaling such passages it is best to leave the chord of the weaker character without the pedal or pressing slightly on it. (Of this slight pressure by the foot on the right pedal, I will speak at length later on.)

A very good instance of this pedal accentuation occurs in the last of the Twelve Symphonic Studies by Schumann, Op. 13, No. 12 (Finale),

Allegro brillante

Ex. 13

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. * Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

Ped. * Ped. Ped. Ped. * Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. *

where the pedal is only used on those harmonies in which the musical accent is stronger. The swelling of the tone produced through the use of the pedal beautifies and enhances the richness of the tone colour, helping also the rhythmical emphasis. The composer begins this phrase with a Mezzo Forte sign, carrying the augmentation of tone with the sign

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(swelling) to the D flat chord of the third beat, marked *Sforzato*. The performer must therefore bring the larger volume of sound on this D flat harmony, which represents (in the chord progression) the culminating point—or also we might say the resting one—as it consists of the tonic chord. The pedal must, therefore, be brought to produce its effect on this chord of the key to its full extent. Another lesson can be drawn from the above quoted example, concerning the “*staccato*” and the use of it on

a chord or notes marked thus



“*Staccato*” should, in reality, indicate a **short or prickly tone** and therefore it seems a contradiction to lengthen the tone by means of the pedal. In such cases (as in many others) the composer leaves it to the artistic feeling of his interpreter to use the pedal or not. The pianist, by carefully considering the tone colour which will best suit the character of the composition, will have to use the pedal to better achieve the tonal effect required.

The vivid tone colour which this last Study in Schumann’s work should possess, could not be obtained unless the pedal be brought into action, which intensifies the power of the tone brought out by the hands and fingers. Without the pedal the sound would be too dry and thin.

In “*FF*” passages, as a general rule, the pedal should be employed even though the *staccato* may be indicated. Passages which have almost an orchestral intention (as the above example) require all the warmth and volume of tone which the instrument can bring forth, and this, without the aid of the pedal, is impossible.

Of course, every rule has its exception. If a chord is marked *staccato*, and the composer wishes a sudden break in the sound, the pedal must also be lifted at the same time as the hands, in order to achieve the sudden interruption of tone.

Such cases take place oftener in *FF* passages. We frequently meet with these effects of sudden **sound stops**, very especially in Beethoven’s compositions, and they bring forth, according to the character of the phrase, an excellent dramatic effect.

CHAPTER IV.

The Action and Effect of the Pedal on Rests or Pauses.

Composers very often, in phrases or passages written on one chord, mark a rest or pause (♩ or ♪ according to the value of the note or notes which these signs are intended to represent).

In performing phrases in which the volume of tone should be as large as the instrument can produce and without which the tonal effect would be lost, the pedal must be used and kept pressed down the entire duration of such a passage, phrase or musical sentence. A very good instance of the above is the repetition of the introductory Cadenza in Beethoven’s E flat Concerto, Op. 73 (in the first movement), which makes its triumphant re-entrance later on with a variation in the Arpeggio figures—as in Example 14.

THE PEDAL ON RESTS OR PAUSES

Ex. 14

The musical score for Ex. 14 is written for piano in B-flat major (two flats) and 4/4 time. It consists of eight measures, labeled (A) through (H), arranged in four systems. The first system contains measures (A) and (B). Measure (A) begins with a forte (*ff*) dynamic and a piano pedal marking. The second system contains measures (C), (D), and (E). Measure (D) features a forte (*ff*) dynamic and a piano pedal marking. The third system contains measures (F), (G), and (H). Measure (H) features a forte (*ff*) dynamic and a piano pedal marking. The score includes various musical notations such as eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Pedal markings are indicated by a wavy line with a star symbol. The piece concludes with the word "etc." in measure (H).

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The pedal must be pressed and kept down the entire duration of the harmony of E flat major, in the measures marked A, B and C, lifting it only, with a rapid motion, just before striking the chord of A flat major, measure D, which represents the culminating point of the Cadenza passage in E flat, and to which a strong and powerful accent must be given, helping the FF touch, by the augmented vibration of the resumption of the pedal effect.

The composer continues the Cadenza on the chord of A flat through the entire duration of which (measures marked E, F, and G) the pedal is kept pressed down and with the same rapid motion lifted before the chord of the dominant seventh (measure H) is struck and quickly pressed down once more on the chord.

From the above example it is clearly shown that in passages of such character during which the greatest amount of sonority is the chief requirement toward the accomplishment of the tonal effect, the interruption of the sound would miscarry the intentions that one feels that Beethoven must have had. The RESTS therefore must not be considered or treated in their true significance in a passage of this nature and the pedal must continue the sound through them and in spite of them.

Another example in which rests should be treated as the above rules imply is to be found in the last three measures of Liszt's "Don Juan" Reminiscences (generally called the "Don Juan" Fantasie).

Andante

Ex. 15

Similar musical phrases as the above example present themselves continually in our piano literature and it is absolutely clear to the pianist that, were he to interpret the sound by lifting the pedal as well as the hands (as the written rests would indicate) the climax of tone effect would be lost entirely, and the closing of his performance would be meaningless and the effect of it completely marred.

In all phrases of the same character as the given examples show, the treatment of the pedal is invariably the same as heretofore explained.

CHAPTER V.

The Action of the Pedal in Extended Chords.

It has come within my observation during my long experience in teaching, that a very common error is committed by students in the management of the pedal in extended chords, requiring a wide stretch of the hands (such as Tenths, Twelfths, and even greater distances between the lower note and the upper one of the chord) by pressing the pedal, either after striking the lower note or lifting it before the value of the notes written by the composer has expired.

ACTION OF THE PEDAL IN EXTENDED CHORDS

Here we find a melodic intention in the chords of the right hand, carried out by the upper notes of the chord.

Allegretto

Ex. 24

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped.

etc.

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

In these first three measures of this Chopin Study, we find the form of the entire study and the pedal can be employed in the same manner as the one I have marked, through the whole of this musical thought, the ethereal character of which gives the opportunity of producing one of the most beautiful pedal effects.

Another example of arpeggio chords, with a melodic intention in the chords of the right hand, we have in Schumann's Fantasie in C major, Op. 17, in the second movement:

Moderato

Ex. 25

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped.

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped.

MECHANISM AND ACTION OF THE PEDALS

In all the above given examples, it is clearly demonstrated that in order to obtain the effect of sonority which all similar phrases exact from the pianist, the observations which I have made in regard to the use of the pedal in all compositions of this style bear the same weight. Were the performer to press the pedal after he has struck the fundamental key of the chord, the effect would be (in examples 16 and 17):

Ex. 26 *right hand*

Ex. 27 *left hand*

In examples 24 and 25, the effect would be the same as above, and it naturally follows that in all the other given examples the results will be as bad for the sonority, if the pedal is omitted when striking the lower note of the chord, and pressed a short pause later. For the necessary effect of sonority, this delay would destroy it. Unfortunately our instrument does not permit any remedying or correcting when once the key has been struck. If a wrong note has been played it remains, and if the pedal is not used at the right moment the effect of it is helplessly lost.

A rule which the performer can invariably follow is never to lose an opportunity of producing an effect of sonority by the aid of the pedal, either in "FF" or in "PP" passages. In the first place, the pedal, together with a strong touch which we must employ to produce a large and full tone, brings forth a volume of sound which is almost orchestral. Secondly, again in combination with the lightness of the touch, it brings somewhat of a harp tone effect to the ear.

Let it be well understood, however, that the first and foremost condition (in order to be able to follow the above rule) is that the same harmony is of such a duration that the sonority can take place to the fullest advantage without blurring it. Rubinstein's D minor Concerto, Op. 70, offers many opportunities for sustained pedal effects, both in "FF" and "PP," as, for instance, in the Cadenza-like entrance of the piano in the first movement (see example 28):

ACTION OF THE PEDAL IN EXTENDED CHORDS

Ex. 28 *Maestoso*

The score is written for piano and includes the following details:

- Tempo:** *Maestoso*
- Time Signature:** 3/4
- Key Signature:** One sharp (F#)
- Systems:** Five systems of music.
- First System:** Right hand has a melodic line with triplets. Left hand has chords and triplets. Pedal markings are present.
- Second System:** Right hand has chords. Left hand has a complex bass line with many chords and triplets. Pedal markings are present.
- Third System:** Similar texture to the second system.
- Fourth System:** Includes a *ritard.* marking.
- Fifth System:** Concludes with a final chord and a *ritard.* marking.

MECHANISM AND ACTION OF THE PEDALS

We find, in the same movement of Rubinstein's Concerto, an instance of the harp-like effect in the Cadenza on the A major chord, which prepares the repetition of the second subject.

Ex. 29

a tempo

p

Pedal effect

dim.

sempre dim.

ppp

The musical score for Ex. 29 is presented in four systems. Each system consists of a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a separate line for the pedal. The first system is marked 'a tempo' and 'p' (piano). The pedal part shows a series of chords with a 'Pedal effect' indicated. The second system continues the melodic line in the right hand, also marked 'p'. The third system features a descending melodic line in the right hand, marked 'dim.' (diminuendo) and 'sempre dim.' (sempre diminuendo). The fourth system shows the melodic line continuing, marked 'ppp' (pianissimo). The pedal part throughout the score shows sustained chords and arpeggiated figures, illustrating the harp-like effect mentioned in the text.

ACTION OF THE PEDAL IN EXTENDED CHORDS

Before closing this chapter referring to the management of the pedals in extended chords and which, owing to their great stretch, can only be executed by the help of the pedal, I will cite another example. In Liszt's Transcription of Schubert's song, "Erl König," page 4, where we find the melody carried out by the upper note in the right hand:

Ex. 30

Du lie - bes Kind, Komm'

Presto agitato

ppp misterioso *espress.*

Pedal effect

geh' mit mir! gar schö - ne

Spie le spiel' ich mit dir; manch

MECHANISM AND ACTION OF THE PEDALS

In this most poetical musical phrase the ethereal character of it can be produced by the harp-like tone effect of which I spoke in former paragraphs.

CHAPTER VI.

The Management of the Pedals in Passages of Thirds.

The same rules (or hints) can be followed in playing passages of thirds.

As a general rule, unless in a running passage, or Cadenza, thirds contain a melodic intention, and must be treated, in using the pedal, in the same manner as chords.

In the accompaniment of the left hand lies the harmony, and this is what we have chiefly to consider, and skillfully bring the pedal effect where the harmony demands it.

A very good example of this is Chopin's Nocturne, in G major, Op. 37, No. 2.

Ex. 31

The image displays three systems of musical notation for the piano accompaniment of Chopin's Nocturne in G major, Op. 37, No. 2. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 6/8. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals. Below the bass staff of each system, there are circular pedal markings (pedals) indicating where the sustain pedal should be used. The first system has four pedal markings, the second has five, and the third has six. The markings are placed at the beginning of measures where the harmony changes or where a sustained effect is desired.

THE MANAGEMENT OF THE PEDAL IN PASSAGES OF THIRDS



CHAPTER VII.

The Different Degrees in Pressing the Right Pedal.

When the pedal is used in passages of chords or runs (of these I will speak more explicitly later on) there is a manner of pressing the pedal with a slight pressure which lifts the damper just a little, giving a less amount or intensity of resonance and yet a sufficient one to achieve the effect of binding without the blurring of the sound. The motion is somewhat similar to the effect of the pedals in the harmonium, without, of course, having the same purpose as the nature of this instrument is entirely different than that of the piano.

In pressing the pedal of the harmonium more or less, the intensity or augmentation of the tone is achieved, enlarging or diminishing the tone by the means of the pedal which governs the wind-pipes.

At the piano, this slight degree of the pressure of the pedal gives the resonance a fainter intensity by which the means of the pianist has another resource at his command to produce a sufficient volume of tone, especially applicable in passages of an accelerated tempo.

In order to make myself more clearly understood, I will divide the pressure of the pedal into four degrees. If the resonance is required or desired in a passage in which chords follow each other in a fast tempo—Allegro, for instance—and these chords represent each one a separate harmony, the pressure of the pedal should be then a fourth part of the entire pressure which the mechanism allows, and which finds its limit or entire depth by the full pressure of the foot.

In a passage of chords, as the following example in an Allegro Tempo, this “fourth” part of the pedal pressure would be:

THE DIFFERENT DEGREES IN PRESSING THE RIGHT PEDAL

an additional volume of tone which, in these exceptional cases, helps to carry out the tonal coloring desired. In such cases, and through the great vibration of the strings, the tone, in its entirety, is of such volume that the faint or slight repetition of the chord, which the pedal otherwise would be apt to cause, is lost or hardly noticeable. The character of the passage must be the guide toward the use of this pedal effect, which might prove detrimental if not applied as an intentional effect. We see, therefore, that in this instance, as in many others, we can use the saying: "There are no rules without exceptions."

Before proceeding any further, I would like to mention that in writing down my "hints" on the use of the pedal, I greatly rely not only on the indulgence of my readers, but also on their musical feeling and artistic taste, without which my hints would not carry their purpose.

In the employment of that important factor toward beautifying tone effects at the piano—the pedal—the greatest help and the greater teacher, is the musical feeling of the performer.

I can only hint at the manner of its use, and the effects and results obtained, but the pianist himself must enlarge the ideas which I am trying to convey, and with his own musical instinct develop them and enlarge upon them.

As, in painting, rules for mixing colors in order to obtain certain other colors, or shades, it is the same with the effects produced by the use of the pedals at the piano. The established rules are well known; pressing and lifting the foot on the pedal to produce the greater resonance and to dampen it; but between this "lifting" and "pressing" there exist many shades of tone coloring which the pianist must learn to use. For this purpose his musical instinct and artistic feeling are his best and greatest help in finding them and putting them into practice.

The contrary effect which is obtained by pressing the pedal gradually and thus increasing the vibration with each degree of pressure—an effect which I have termed a "Pedal Crescendo" can be produced by gradually lifting the pedal (whilst holding the chord with the fingers and hands), thus obtaining a gradual diminution of the vibration of the strings. This I would like to term a pedal diminuendo.

By the slow lowering motion of the damper, the sonority is made to cease by degrees—dying out, so to say—and in many cases in which such an effect is justified by the desire to add another tonal effect this manner of managing the pedal gives to the pianist another tone coloring.

Chords in a slow movement—Andante—or Adagio—which are thus written:

MECHANISM AND ACTION OF THE PEDALS

Ex. 33 *Andante or Adagio*

Ex. 34

To gradually lifted

and the sound allowed to die out by the gradual lifting of the pedal, can produce a beautiful effect by the thus-produced diminution of the sonority.

Of course, these effects of crescendo or diminuendo of the sonority by the management of the pedal in the above explained manner can only have their full effect when played in the center or lower part of the piano as here, the resonance of the instrument is of a greater volume. In the so-called **TREBLE**, these pedal effects cannot be obtained owing to the weakness of the vibration due to the shortness of the strings.

This pedal diminuendo can be particularly effective at the end of a phrase in which the chord closes it (in a slow movement), as, for instance, in Chopin's *Berceuse*, Op. 57 (two closing measures):

It can also be employed at the beginning or in the middle of a phrase, provided the tempo is of a slow character and therefore gives the performer the necessary time to lift the pedal with a gradual motion.

In the beginning of Beethoven's *Sonata*, Op. 51, No. 2, this pedal diminuendo can be used with the tonal effect which adds to the beauty of the tone color.

Ex. 35

cresc. *f* *pp* *etc.*

THE DIFFERENT DEGREES IN PRESSING THE RIGHT PEDAL

The pedal must be pressed down with the entrance of the chords A-B and the hands and fingers must keep the notes down as long as possible after the "C" in the right hand has been struck (in measure "B"). The pedal is then gradually lifted in order to slowly diminish the vibration of the strings, which is the effective tone coloring, which I have termed "pedal diminuendo."

The same pedal effects can be used in measures C and D as well as in the same phrase which again presents itself later on in the first movement of this Sonata.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Use of the (Right) Pedal in Chord Passages, Chromatic and Otherwise.

The constant changes of the tones in chromatic chord passages demand a repeated pressing and releasing of the pedal, otherwise the blurring would cause a most unpleasant confusion of tones.

The rule to follow is to quickly lift the pedal after each chord of the passage, making use of the pedal only where the tone color can be beautified by greater sonority.