

# Czerny's Approach to the Teaching of Posture and Touch

Ki Tak Katherine Wong

*Curriculum Development Institute, Education Bureau, Hong Kong*

## **Abstract**

*Posture and touch are generally recognised as fundamental aspects of learning to play the piano. This paper explores Czerny's main concerns about posture and touch in relation to the musical effects required in pieces for the piano. Starting with finger movements alone, Czerny extends his attention to the level of the elbow above the keyboard and to the requirements and effect of arm movements in piano playing. Study of Czerny's explanation concerning the teaching of posture and touch and the related physical movements in piano playing provided in his Op. 500, demonstrates that the criticism of his pedagogical works as finger gymnastics is unjust. The discussion thus aims to show that Czerny actually provides a full range of pedagogic training for competent piano playing with regard to posture and touch.*

## Introduction

Posture and touch are generally recognised as fundamental aspects of learning to play the piano. Study of Czerny's explanation concerning the teaching of posture and touch and the related physical movements in piano playing provided in his *Op. 500*, demonstrates that the criticism of his pedagogical works as finger gymnastics<sup>1</sup> is unjust. This paper explores Czerny's main concerns about posture and touch in relation to the musical effects required in pieces for the piano. Starting with finger movements alone, Czerny extends his attention to the level of the elbow above the keyboard and to the requirements and effect of arm movements in piano playing. The discussion thus aims to show that Czerny actually provides a full range of pedagogic training for competent piano playing with regard to posture and touch.

## A brief review on the teaching of posture and touch

It is well known that correct posture and touch are crucial factors in good piano playing, and it is important for teachers to help their pupils to acquire the correct posture and touch right at their beginning of their study. However, the significance of posture and touch did not receive much attention during the eighteenth century, though C.P.E. Bach points out in his *Essay* that besides the three essential factors in the true art of playing keyboard instruments (correct fingering, good embellishments, and good performance), the position of the hand is also very important. Throughout his *Essay* the emphasis is on fingering, and there is no mention of either the posture of the body or the position of the hand. This can be explained by the audience the author is addressing in his work, for in the 'Forward to Part One' C.P.E. Bach' states:

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<sup>1</sup> George Kochevitsky, *The Art of Piano Playing: A Scientific Approach*, (Illinois: Summy-Birchard, 1967), 4,8. Similar comments can be found in Simon Finlow, "The Twenty-seven Etudes and Their Antecedents" in Jim Samson, ed., *Chopin*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 60.

It is my aim to show the performer how he may play solos correctly and thereby gain the approbation of connoisseurs.<sup>2</sup>

Clearly the performers that Bach had in mind were already experienced. The first topic in the *Essay* is on fingering, so not intended for beginners, and it would be inappropriate for Bach's readers for him to explain "the first lesson topics", such as where to sit, how to hold the hands, and other rudiments in such a work. Türk's target users, though, are quite different to those of C.P.E. Bach, and in the "Introduction" to his *School*, following the discussion of the history of Klavier, the qualities of a good keyboard teacher and the choice of repertoire for beginners, he provides in paragraphs 41, 42, and 43, general rules of posture. These rules include where to sit, the level of the elbows, and the shape of the fingers.<sup>3</sup> All these rules are essentials for beginners and helpful for teachers.

Similarly, Czerny in his *Op. 500* provides helpful advice to teachers of beginners of every age, and starts with the rudiments of keyboard playing, an approach no doubt shaped by his experience as a successful teacher for over 30 years.<sup>4</sup> Czerny states the rules on correct posture right at the beginning of the first lesson under the heading, "Position of the Body, and of the Hand", divided into the following subsections: (i) where to sit; (ii) the height of the stool; (iii) the position of the head; (iv) the position of the feet; (v) the forearm; (vi) the fingers; (vii) an oblique position of the hands and fingers; (viii) where to strike on the keys; and (ix) the nails. The rules suggested by Czerny not only reflect the playing style of his time but are still the basis of correct piano posture today, and both the rules and their order can be found in many present-day piano pedagogical works, such as Kendall Taylor's *Principles of Piano Technique and Interpretation*<sup>5</sup> and Joan Last's *The Young*

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<sup>2</sup> C.P.E. Bach, *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, 2 vols. 1753, 1762, William J. Mitchell, trans. & ed., (London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1949), 28.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Gottlob Türk, *School of Clavier Playing*, 1789, Raymond H. Haggh, trans., (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), Preface, 6. Türk's words are: "one should sit in front of one-line C with the body being approximately ten to fourteen inches away from the keyboard; the elbow is noticeably higher than the hand; the three long middle fingers must always be curved a little but the thumb and the little finger must be held out straight; the fingers should be held a little apart from each other, so that any stretches can be executed without motion from the hands."

<sup>4</sup> Three sources: (i) Carl Czerny, "Recollections From My Life", (1842). Ernest Sanders, trans., W. Kolneder, ed. *The Musical Quarterly*, XL11, No. 3, July 1956, 312-313 "I was fifteen when in 1806 my own teaching began ... I gave up teaching entirely in 1836"; (ii) Carl Czerny, *Op. 500 Complete Theoretical and Practical Piano Forte School*, 1789, Raymond H. Haggh, trans., 1839, J.A. Hamilton, trans., (London: Mess<sup>RS</sup> R. Cocks & C<sup>O</sup>., 1839), Vol. I, Preface "... this Treatise, ... (are) the views and principles which I had collected during 30 years practical experience in teaching"; and (iii) John Bishop in, "A Brief Memoir of Carl Czerny", in Carl Czerny's *Op. 600 School of Practical Composition*, 1848, John Bishop, trans., (London: Mess<sup>RS</sup> R. Cocks & C<sup>O</sup>., 1848), v-vi, points out that Czerny "became one of the most favoured and highly esteemed teachers in Vienna, and gave daily from ten to twelve hours' instruction, chiefly in the noblest and best families. To this occupation he devoted himself for thirty years - from 1805 to 1835; and among his numerous pupils who have become known to the public, are Mademoiselle Belleville, Liszt, Döhler, Pirkert, etc."

<sup>5</sup> Kendall Taylor, *Principles of Piano Technique and Interpretation*, (Kent, Novello Company Ltd., 1981), Contents page. After Chapter I, entitled "Preliminary survey: from Bach to Beethoven", Taylor discusses "Posture" as the first topic in Chapter II under the title "Principles of piano

*Pianist*.<sup>6</sup>

### Czerny's ideal posture for hands and elbows

Czerny shows his concern for providing sufficient space for the hands to work across the keyboard by placing it as the first rule:

The seat of the player must be placed at such a distance from the [keyboard], that the elbows, when hanging down freely, shall be about four inches nearer the keys than the shoulders; so that the movement of the arms and hands over the whole length of the key-board may not be impeded in any way by the chest.<sup>7</sup>

Significantly, the placing of the elbows before the shoulders had not been mentioned in C.P.E. Bach's *Essay*, D.G. Türk's *School*, or J.N. Hummel's *School*. This posture enables the playing of piano works which involve wide lateral movements such as long passages ranging from the low to high registers or vice versa; wide leaps between the two hands, playing in extreme registers, the crossing of hands, as well as vertical movements for thick block chords in "ff". Czerny comments on the importance of this position:

A more than usual elevation of the hand and even of the arm...is generally employed only in Octaves, Chords, and passages in which the notes do not follow one another very quickly; and the Player, to enhance the effect, is obliged to exert a good deal of force. As in the pointed manner of detaching the notes, employed in the *Molto Staccato*, the entire hand and even the forearm must be lifted up ...with the necessary movements of the arm.<sup>8</sup>

Another significant principle regarding posture which differentiates Czerny from his predecessors can be seen in the following quotation:

The surface of the forearm, from the elbow to the knuckles of the bended fingers, must form an absolutely straight and horizontal line; and the wrists must neither be bent downwards, nor upwards, so as to resemble a ball. The preserving an exactly straight line with the knuckles and the upper surface of the hands is one of the principal requisites towards acquiring a fine style of playing.<sup>9</sup>

This posture was unknown in the eighteenth century. For example C.P.E. Bach comments on posture:

When the performer is in the correct position with respect to height

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technique."

<sup>6</sup> Joan Last, *The Young Pianist*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), Contents page. Last's explanation about sitting posture and the position of hand and arm appears in her First Lesson.

<sup>7</sup> Carl Czerny, *Op. 500 Complete Theoretical and Practical Piano Forte School*, 1839, J.A. Hamilton, trans., (London: Mess<sup>RS</sup> R. Cocks & C<sup>O</sup>., 1839), Vol. I, 1.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. III, 28-29.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I & II.

his forearms are suspended slightly above the fingerboard.<sup>10</sup>

While Türk notes:

One must sit neither too high nor too low, but in such a way that the elbow is noticeably higher – that is, by several inches – than the hand. For if the hands are held as high or higher than the elbow while playing, it is very tiring, and inhibits the use of necessary strength.<sup>11</sup>

Czerny's ideal posture is obviously one appropriate to modern piano playing while that of C.P.E. Bach and Türk suits the style of *fortepiano* and harpsichord playing of the eighteenth century. Czerny's ideas on the posture of the hands and elbows are shared by Chopin, but not by his pupil Leschetizky. In Chopin's "*Sketch for a Method*", he recommends an "elbow level with the white keys",<sup>12</sup> while Leschetizky states that "The wrist must be held somewhat lower than the knuckles".<sup>13</sup> In general, the lowered wrist results in a softer dynamic range, since the weight of the forearm and arm cannot be carried through the wrist to the fingers, and thus it restricts the player from producing a *forte* dynamic level with ease, as well as restricting the dexterity of the fingers. A further disadvantage of the lowered wrist position is that it causes difficulties in crossing finger(s) over the thumb, or turning the thumb under the fingers, because the space between the fingers and the keyboard is reduced. Therefore, it is undesirable to teach players, especially beginners, to form the habit of a lowered wrist. It may, though, suit some people, especially those who are already competent in their playing. On the other hand, with the elbows level with the keyboard, which is the most common playing position, players are able to achieve flexibility in hand and arm movements as well as a wide range of dynamic levels. Czerny's explanations of such a position, quoted above, give a clear and precise guideline which has become an accepted norm in piano playing.

#### Czerny's explanation of arm movements and touch

Similarly, the movements of the arm were rarely discussed in keyboard pedagogical works before the nineteenth century as the focus of those works was

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<sup>10</sup> C.P.E. Bach, *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, 2 vols. 1753, 1762, William J. Mitchell, trans. & ed., (London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1949), 42.

<sup>11</sup> Daniel Gottlob Türk, *School of Clavier Playing*, 1789, Raymond H. Hagg trans., (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 32.

<sup>12</sup> Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, *Chopin: pianist and teacher as seen by his pupils*, 1970, Naomi Shohet, Krysia Osostowicz and Roy Howat, trans., Roy Howat, eds., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), Appendix 1, 190.

<sup>13</sup> Malwine Brée, *Leschetizky Method*, T.H. Baker, trans., (New York: Haskell House Publisher Ltd., 1902), 3. This book was issued with Leschetizky's approval by his assistant Malwine Brée. In the discussion of "The Hand and Its Posture", Leschetizky writes that "the wrist must be held somewhat lower than the knuckles", but he does not comment on how low the wrist should be. He also uses two figures for illustrating the positions for the right hand and left hand. The figure for the right hand, shows that the wrist is lower than the knuckle; but the figure for the left hand shows the wrist is more or less level with the white keys.

mainly on the fingers. For instance, there is no discussion on the arms in C.P.E. Bach's *Essay*, D.G. Türk's *School*, or even J.N. Hummel's *Instructions* which was published only ten years before Czerny's *Op. 500*. This reflects the fact that "teachers before the nineteenth century generally agreed that the action of the fingers should be entirely independent of the hands and arms".<sup>14</sup> Czerny's provision of explanations on the movements of the arm again clearly separates him from his predecessors. He does not devote a chapter in *Op. 500* to the movement of the arm, but instead scatters points about arm movements throughout the work. From his explanations, it is clear that Czerny was attempting to distinguish the use of varied movements according to the context, such as the dynamics of a passage. In the chapter on "Changing the fingering on the same key when re-struck", he points out:

Changing the fingers on the same key when re-struck in a quick movement, the arm and the hand must be kept strictly at rest, and particularly (the) thumb; neither the arm (nor) the elbow must be allowed to make the least movement.<sup>15</sup>

The movement involved in playing repeated notes in fast *tempi* should come from the fingers because any other movements from the hands or arm would only reduce the fluency of such playing.

Arm movement is also a major focus of the chapter entitled the "Fingering of wide skips" in Volume II. Passages that contain wide skips must involve the lateral movement from the arms. Frequent lateral movement across the keyboard for wide skips became one of the characteristics of piano repertoire from Beethoven onwards; thus players since that time are expected to acquire the appropriate skills. To prepare pupils for these wide skips, Czerny points out that "to hit wide skips with equal certainty, mere dexterity of fingers is not alone sufficient, for this is rather the business of the arm" and he also stresses that "the arm must meanwhile be held so lightly".<sup>16</sup> Czerny recommends this light arm especially for the passages with wide skips in fast *tempi*. If arm weight were involved, the muscles of the arm would be stiff and tense, and thus the lateral movement would become clumsy rather than flexible. As with the elevation movement of the arms, Czerny supports his comment with four musical examples, of which the first is shown below:

A more than usual elevation of the hand and even of the arm,

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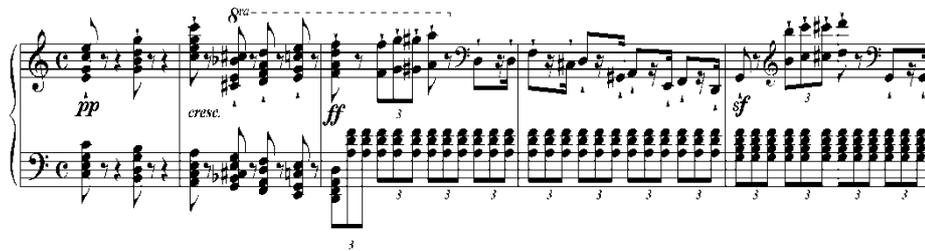
<sup>14</sup> Glyn Jenkins/Mark Lindley, "Fingering" in Stanley Sadie, ed., *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, (London: Macmillan, 2001), Vol. 8, 839-840. The authors add: "The rules given by early 19<sup>th</sup>-century teachers were intended primarily to secure a quiet and steady hand position. It was generally agreed that the arms should merely serve to convey the fingers laterally from one part of the keyboard to another".

<sup>15</sup> Carl Czerny, *Op. 500 Complete Theoretical and Practical Piano Forte School*, 1839, J.A. Hamilton, trans., (London: Mess<sup>RS</sup> R. Cocks & C<sup>O</sup>., 1839), Vol. II, 113-4.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II, 161.

particularly in skips, is allowed here, as the *Marcato* is generally employed only in octaves, chords...and as the player (has) to enhance the effect, (he) is often obliged to exert a good deal of force, (and) be most particularly careful to preserve a fine tone, even in the greatest *ff*, so that the *Martellato* may not degenerate into a mere thump or crash.<sup>17</sup>

Example 4.1: *Op. 500*, Vol. III, p.28



The example illustrates Czerny's keen awareness of the contemporary piano repertoire as well as the varied possibilities of sound quality produced by the employment of different physical movements. Moreover, in response to the growing popularity of public performances in big halls from the early nineteenth century onwards, and the need for greater volume and a more brilliant style of playing, pianists had to acquire the character of *bravura* playing which must involve that weight and elevation of the arm referred to by Czerny. As mentioned above, Czerny aimed to develop virtuoso players, and these four examples, which consist of *Marcato* octaves, chords jumping across different registers of the piano, dramatic changes of dynamic from “*pp*” to “*ff*”, all require elevation movements of the arms to bring out the weight of the chords and the spirit of the music.

#### Czerny's discussion on the tranquil position of the hands

In addition to vertical arm movement, Czerny also discusses tranquil arm movement. In the “Second Lesson” of Volume I, on playing repeated notes in 5-finger exercises, Czerny points out that “the hand must here be as tranquilly(sic) as possible over the 5 keys, so that the re-iterated percussion may be produced by the quiet movement of the single finger.”<sup>18</sup> With regard to the movement of passing the thumb under the fingers, Czerny stresses, “it is the first duty of the player to keep the hands tranquil.”<sup>19</sup> In addition, Czerny reminds the reader that “all three-part chords, which are to be played *legato*, must always be executed with changes of fingers and a tranquil position of the hand”,<sup>20</sup> and emphasizes the importance of keeping the hand perfectly tranquil in playing a Fugue.<sup>21</sup> All these instructions

<sup>17</sup> Carl Czerny, *Op. 500 Complete Theoretical and Practical Piano Forte School*, 1839, J.A. Hamilton, trans., (London: Mess<sup>RS</sup> R. Cocks & C<sup>O</sup>., 1839), Vol. III, 28.

<sup>18</sup> Carl Czerny, *Op. 500 Complete Theoretical and Practical Piano Forte School*, 1839, J.A. Hamilton, trans., (London: Mess<sup>RS</sup> R. Cocks & C<sup>O</sup>., 1839), Vol. I, 7.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II, 5.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II, 148.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. III, 89.

signify Czerny's emphasis on *Legato* playing which gradually became the norm of piano playing in the early nineteenth century. To keep the hands tranquil not only helps to maintain the easy control of tone colour but also reduces unnecessary movements and conserves energy. Significantly, this tranquil position of the hands was also supported and taught by Chopin.<sup>22</sup>

### Czerny's refinement on finger position and touch

The position of the fingers is an issue that has been discussed by all great masters in their writings on keyboard playing. Ever since the frequent employment of the thumb became the norm in keyboard playing, as opposed to "the early fingerings [that] oblige the player to orientate the right hand with some finger other than the thumb",<sup>23</sup> the natural curved position of the fingers has become a common practice. This position had also been recommended by C.P.E. Bach,<sup>24</sup> D.G. Türk,<sup>25</sup> and J.N. Hummel.<sup>26</sup>

What Czerny added to the existing guidelines was a refinement. In applying his instructions, beginners are encouraged to maintain the same part of the fingertips when playing in different keys, so as to secure the production of tone colours and dynamics in an easily controlled way. In addition, to maintain the position of the fingers that forms a line with the keys while playing across different registers of the piano, lateral movement of the arms must be employed. This enables the hands to play freely across the keyboard and reduces the chance of stiffness in the hand and forearm.

Furthermore, the player has to transfer the required weight from the appropriate parts of the body to vary the touches on the keys so as to produce the required sounds. Thus it is important to develop players' abilities to produce different effects and dynamic shadings by various touches. To this end, Czerny provides examples of exercises ranging from five-finger exercises, simple double-note exercises, scallic exercises, broken chords and arpeggios in Volume I of his *Op. 500* Volume I. In Volumes II and III, which are for more advanced players, he also gives progressive exercises with chordal textures and a mixture of different intervals in various dynamics. The following are his examples for developing varied touches:

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<sup>22</sup> Jean-Jacques Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, *Chopin: pianist and teacher as seen by his pupils*, 1970, Naomi Shohet, Krysia Osostowicz and Roy Howat, trans., Roy Howat, ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 37-8. In the chapter on "Basic Technique" Kleczyński points out that the fingering that Chopin recommends is for the purpose of preserving the even and tranquil position of the hand during the passage of the thumb in scales and arpeggios.

<sup>23</sup> Mark Lindley, "Fingering" in Stanley Sadie, ed., *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, (London: Macmillan, 2001), Vol. 8, 834.

<sup>24</sup> C.P.E. Bach, *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, 2 vols. 1753, 1762, William J. Mitchell, trans. & ed., (London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1949), 42-3.

<sup>25</sup> Daniel Gottlob Türk, *School of Clavier Playing*, 1789, Raymond H. Hagg, trans., (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 32.

<sup>26</sup> Johann N. Hummel, *A Complete Theoretical and Practical Course of Instructions on the Art of Playing the Piano Forte*, 1828, anon., trans., (London: T. Boosey Co., 1829), Part III, 3.

Example 4.2: *Op. 500*, Vol. I, p. 19



Example 4.3: *Op. 500*, Vol. I, p.33, No. 22



Example 4.4: *Op. 500*, Vol. I, p.45



Example 4.5: *Op. 500*, Vol. III, p.4



Example 4.6: *Op. 500*, Vol. III, p.121, No. 6



This progression of content, from five-finger exercises to those passages which consist of wide ranges, is also the sequence which can be found in most of Czerny's pedagogical exercises and studies, such as Opuses 299, 599, 821. Czerny's underlying principle is to start with movements from single fingers followed by movements for more than one finger, and gradually to add the involvement of the wrist, forearm and whole arm.

In discussing *legato* playing, Czerny points out in the "Second Lesson" of Volume I of his *Op. 500* that "Each finger must be lifted up exactly at the same moment in which the next finger strikes its key."<sup>27</sup> This approach to articulation and touch distinguishes Czerny's playing from the old paired fingering system of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, as cited in Lindley and Boxall (1992) *Early Keyboard Fingering*:

'the finger which has just played should be lifted before the next one plays' (Santa María, 1565), and that a teacher should tell his pupil 'never to apply the next finger until he has lifted the previous one' (Mattheson, 1735).<sup>28</sup>

The effects produced by these two different ways of playing are obviously quite distinct, with a true *legato* being achieved only by Czerny's approach. Throughout his pedagogical exercises and studies, Czerny aims to develop *legato* playing before the different types of *staccato*. It is quite interesting to see that Czerny's approach in this respect is contrary to that of his contemporary, Chopin, as noted by Chopin's student:

Chopin almost instructs the pupils to commence the five-finger exercises playing the notes in staccato, after that a second set of exercises consists of legato staccato, or heavy staccato, then the accented legato, raised finger legato and finally the *legato*. Chopin prefers that the notes should first be disconnected, rather than that the hand should alter its normal position. He also at the commencement causes all exercises and scales to be played staccato.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Carl Czerny, *Op. 500 Complete Theoretical and Practical Piano Forte School*, 1839, J.A. Hamilton, trans., (London: Mess<sup>RS</sup> R. Cocks & C<sup>O</sup>., 1839), Vol. I, 7.

<sup>28</sup> Mark Lindley, and Maria Boxall, eds., *Early Keyboard Fingerings*, (Mainz: Schott, 1992), xiv.

<sup>29</sup> Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, *Chopin: pianist and teacher as seen by his pupils*, 1970, Naomi Shohet, Krystia Osostowicz and Roy Howat, trans., Roy Howat, eds., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 33 & 37.

Chopin's purpose in training beginners to play *staccato* referred to here indicates that he wanted to develop the normal position of the hand without changing its position, so as to ensure the independence and equality of the fingers.<sup>30</sup> Since this divergence of approach focuses on the touch used for developing the skills of beginners, the degree of difficulty that may be encountered in these two different approaches is an issue. With the *staccato* touch, movements from either the wrist or the finger must be employed. But for the *legato* touch, only downward movement from the appropriate finger is needed. Therefore, it is easier for beginners to start with a *legato* touch, a view confirmed by the syllabi of many piano examinations nowadays, where participants are required to play the technical exercises *legato* in lower grades, and gradually add *staccato* in the later grades.<sup>31</sup>

### Czerny's attitude towards mechanical aids

In developing correct posture and touch, Czerny expresses his disapproval of mechanical aids. Some nineteenth century pianists tried to use such aids to "attain a well-regulated facility and flexibility of fingers".<sup>32</sup> Such a phenomenon was due to the growth of virtuoso playing and the ever-increasing popularity of public concerts. Opposing this phenomenon, Czerny stated:

In modern time several mechanical aids have been invented towards attaining a well regulated facility and flexibility of finger; to those pupils whom from the very commencement, the teacher has carefully and patiently accustomed to the observance of all the rules relating to the position of the hands, the acquirement of a good touch, and a correct mode of fingering, as those points have been explained in this School, we consider such machines as useless on the following grounds:

1<sup>st</sup> because a long use of them must necessarily be relaxing both to the mind and to the feelings.

2<sup>nd</sup> because they consume a great deal of time.

3<sup>rd</sup> because they are by no means well adapted to increase the love of the art in young pupils and amateurs.

4<sup>th</sup> lastly because they fetter by far too much, all freedom of movement, and reduce the player to a mere automation.<sup>33</sup>

Clearly, Czerny is confident that with proper training according to the rules suggested in his *Op. 500*, pupils would be able develop flexible fingers, and thus have no need of mechanical aids in their training. Significantly, he also points out that such aids would limit players from performing with feeling, and even worse

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 17, 32 & 33.

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, *Scales & Arpeggios Piano, Grade 1, Grade 2, Grade 3, Grade 4, Grade 5, Grade 6, Grade 7, Grade 8*, (London: AMRSM Publishing, 1994). Candidates for Grades 1 to 6 are required to play in *legato*; for Grade 7, they can choose to play the scales in either Group 1 or 2 in both *legato* and *staccato*; and for Grade 8, all the scales have to be played in *legato* and *staccato*.

<sup>32</sup> Carl Czerny, *Op. 500 Complete Theoretical and Practical Piano Forte School*, 1839, J.A. Hamilton, trans., (London: Mess<sup>RS</sup> R. Cocks & C<sup>O</sup>., 1839), Vol. III, 129.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

that they could cause permanent damage to the hands or fingers. The well-known case of Schumann is a chilling reminder of the danger of such devices and supports Czerny's foresight.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, Czerny's contributions to the discussion of posture and touch in piano playing not only summarize the ideas of his predecessors but also highlight the crucial factors in the development of a modern piano technique. His instructions are not only clear but also well supported with sequenced exercises. Czerny's approach is still valid today, being reflected in many current instruction books on piano playing.

### **About the Author**

Ki-tak Katherine Wong, curriculum development officer of Education Bureau of Hong Kong SAR, acquired her Ph.D. in Musicology in 2008 at the University of New South Wales (UNSW) of Australia. She specializes in the 19<sup>th</sup> century piano pedagogy with particular interest in the seminal works by Carl Czerny. Her research area also covers music analysis, music history, and music education such as the teaching and learning of creative music making.

### **Contact details**

Dr Ki Tak Katherine Wong  
Curriculum Development Officer (Music), Education Bureau, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

Personal mail box: PO Box 38138, Hing Fat Street Post Office, Tin Hau, Hong Kong  
email address: [kkitak@hotmail.com](mailto:kkitak@hotmail.com)

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