



Check-list

5 necessary steps before you start learning a new piece

Almost all students who first come to my Weimar Intensive Piano Courses, make the same mistakes in working on new works. Therefore, I decided to write a short note for everyone who is interested in faster and more efficiently go through the first phases of mastering new works.

The sequence of steps is preferably not changed so that the result is higher.

1. **Before start working on a piece, answer for yourself:**

- a) why do you want to play this particular work,
- b) what is special in it for you,
- c) when the composer lived, in which century and in which country he worked,
- d) do you know other works by this composer and which ones maybe you like?

2. **Once you have answered these questions, you can proceed to the work itself:**

- a) what is the general mood of the work,
- b) what atmosphere, the main feeling the author laid down in this work,
- c) which tempo the author set and whether he wrote auxiliary, suggestive words to clear the character (e.g. Allegro agitato - fast and excitedly, or con fuoco - with fire),
- d) what durations does the composer use in the accompaniment?

3. **The most important is to hear all the melodies truly filled with feelings, as they should sound in the original**, not being distracted by the developed accompaniment, where there are often many more small notes than in the melody, but they all fulfill the function of supporting the melody and identifying its internal feelings and sensations, its internal vibration. To do this, you can sing all the melodies at the original tempo and dance, feeling with your whole body the right movement and flow of music. This is a very important point that most musicians do not include in the preparation plan and then significantly lengthen the process of practicing!

4. After the melody is sung and felt, **mark the phrase in your score (where you want to take a breath and where your breath ends and you need to take a new one), according with cadences**. Maybe in the beginning you will have mistakes, and your teacher will correct them, but you need to learn to find the right phrasing yourself from the very beginning.

5. The last important point before the concrete learning of a new work, find out:

- a) what vibrations does the composer use to simulate the flow (for example, continuous eighths in his left hand, or sixteenths, or quarters ...),
- b) which notes belong to the same harmony in the accompaniment (playing them together - this is important for training harmonious hearing),
- c) when the character changes, how the composer changes the vibrations of the accompaniment (accelerates, slows down, how he changes)

After this, you can start learning the work, but immediately from fragments including whole phrases, not by measures (usually phrases are built at 2-4 measures depending on the tempo). If the texture is saturated, then first play the main melody with a simple harmonic accompaniment without filling the wave flow, almost like a body skeleton or a building frame.



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