

SELECTED EARLY-ADVANCED SOLO PIANO MUSIC FROM THE ETUDES, OP. 39,  
AND *WOODLAND SKETCHES*, OP. 51, OF EDWARD MACDOWELL: A PEDAGOGICAL  
ANALYSIS

by

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(Under the Direction of Evgeny Rivkin and Peter Jutras)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation is to identify musical and technical challenges found in Edward MacDowell's Etudes, Op. 39, and *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, to provide pedagogical suggestions for teachers and students, and to increase exposure for these works. This study will offer pedagogical and performance suggestions, addressing both technical and musical issues. The analysis will feature a discussion of piano technique, musical expression and style, and pedagogical usefulness. The information of this study will also provide early-advanced students a transition to the next level, help piano teachers have more variety in repertoire selection for students' auditions and competitions, and present an American composer and American piano literature.

INDEX WORDS: Edward MacDowell, Etudes, *Woodland Sketches*, Piano Pedagogy, Early  
Advanced, American Piano Literature

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## DEDICATION

To my husband Gordon, for your patience, love, friendship, encouragement, and support.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to identify musical and technical challenges found in selected early-advanced solo piano literature of Edward MacDowell, to provide pedagogical suggestions for teachers and students, and to increase exposure for these works. Piano music by American composers of the late 19th century is an area underrepresented in the repertoire typically taught to early-advanced piano students.

When it comes to American piano music, the importance of Edward MacDowell (1860<sup>1</sup>-1909) should not be ignored. His large numbers of compositions include a variety of genres: solo songs, operas and other works for the stage, chamber music, and orchestral music. However, MacDowell contributes to the repertory mainly through his favorite instrument, the piano. Major traits of MacDowell's piano works include his folk-like melodies and modal harmonies. Some of his most successful works in this category include the *Etudes*, Op. 39, *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, *Sea Pieces*, Op. 55, *Fireside Tales*, Op. 61, and *New England Idyls*, Op. 62. This study focuses on the *Etudes*, Op. 39, *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, which are closely related and have great pedagogical value.

These two collections are suitable for early-advanced piano students, share some similar technical and musical requirements. For example, "Shadow Dance" of *Etudes*, Op. 39, can be compared with "Will O' the Wisp" of *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51.<sup>2</sup> They both share fast movement and light syncopation. The twelve *Etudes*, Op. 39, help develop a breadth of styles,

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<sup>1</sup> Arnold T Schwad. "Edward Macdowell's Birthdate: A Correction." *Musical Quarterly* 61.2 (1975): 233-239.

<sup>2</sup> Francis Paul Brancaleone. "The Short Piano Works of Edward Macdowell." Ph.D. Diss. (City University of New York, 1982.), p. 213.

while *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, has poetic and musical characteristics that require great musical ability.

### Rationale

Edward MacDowell was an important and influential musician, composer, and pedagogue. For Americans of his generation, European training was necessary to become a professional musician. Edward MacDowell was one of the first recognized American pianists and composers in Europe, but his works were gradually forgotten after his sudden death in 1908. This might be because there were so many other well-known master composers in the Romantic period, such as Brahms, Liszt, Debussy, and other musical giants.<sup>3</sup> MacDowell's beautiful piano works were written mainly in European genres (such as etudes and character pieces) based on American themes. Moreover, MacDowell's musical language was not as modern sounding as his fellow American composers, such as Charles Ives. Therefore, MacDowell's many works are rarely performed.<sup>4</sup>

In the article "Edward MacDowell as Pianist," Bobo refers to MacDowell as a significant pianist, composer, poet, and teacher.<sup>5</sup> In MacDowell's music, poetry and American related material are frequently used; for example, he often employs Native American components.<sup>6</sup> As a composer pianist, his piano compositions provide different technical, musical, and poetic insights and have great value for study and exploration.<sup>7</sup>

Among his works, the Etudes, Op. 39, and *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, have particular value for early-advanced students. Magrath writes, "Etudes, Op. 39, is one of MacDowell's best

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<sup>3</sup> Richard Daniel Fountain. "Edward MacDowell and the Formation of an American Musical Culture." (The University of Nebraska - Lincoln, 2008.), p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> W.H. Halverson. "Grieg and MacDowell: A Tale of Two Edwards." *The Sonneck Society for American Music Bulletin* 23(1) (Spring 1997): p. 5-6.

<sup>5</sup> Richard Bobo. "Edward MacDowell as Pianist." *American Music Teacher*. 75 (1997): 25-28.

<sup>6</sup> Francis Paul Brancaleone. "Edward Macdowell And Indian Motives." *American Music* 7.4 (1989): 359-381.

<sup>7</sup> Bobo, p. 25.

known teaching collections for early-advanced students. Several pieces from the Etudes, Op. 39, including “Shadow Dance,” “Alla Tarantella,” and “Hungarian,” have made their way into the modern repertoire,” and they are suitable for auditions and competitions.<sup>8</sup> *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, is clearly structured and contains tone colors in which MacDowell tried to reflect and interpret the natural beauty surrounding his summer home in Peterborough, New Hampshire. Several of the delightful and imaginative miniatures from *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, such as “To A Wild Rose” and “To A Water Lily,” brought immediate fame to MacDowell.<sup>9</sup>

After extensive review of accessible literature, no similar research that focuses on the pedagogical analysis of these two piano works was found. This topic deserves exploration.

### Purpose of Study

Enriching the piano repertory of early-advanced students is a daunting task for piano teachers. Achievement at this level opens the door to the world of concert repertoire, which requires musicianship, a higher level of technical skills, and artistic development. But the transition from early-advanced to advanced can be quite frustrating for both students and their teachers. Most early-advanced piano students are only required to learn standard repertoire, which comes primarily from major European composers. In addition to this standard repertoire, learning a variety of piano compositions from other composers and genres is beneficial for the musical, technical, and analytical development of younger pianists.

The purpose of this dissertation is to identify musical and technical challenges found in Edward MacDowell’s Etudes, Op. 39, and *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, to provide pedagogical suggestions for teachers and students, and to increase exposure for these works. Furthermore, this study will offer pedagogical and performance suggestions, addressing both technical and

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<sup>8</sup> Jane Magrath. *The Pianist’s Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature*. (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred., 1995.)

<sup>9</sup> Constance Keene. Liner notes. “Constance Keene Plays MacDowell.” 1998. CD.

musical issues. The analysis will feature a discussion of piano technique, musical expression and style, and pedagogical usefulness based on existing critical studies and my own opinion.

The information in this study will also provide early-advanced students a transition to the next level, help piano teachers have more variety in repertoire selection for students' auditions and competitions, and introduce an American composer and American piano literature to students along with effective musical opportunities to assist students. It is hoped that this investigation will provide an informative source for teachers who wish to assign accessible American late nineteenth-century Romantic music to their students.

### Delimitations

As stated above, the scope of this dissertation is limited primarily a pedagogical analysis (the interpretive and technical challenges) of selected early-advanced solo piano literature from the Etudes, Op. 39, and *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, of Edward MacDowell. This dissertation will examine pieces that provide important technical practice or engaging characteristics from both collections as well as effective practice for students' transition to the next level. For instance, "To A Water Lily" (No. 6) from *Woodland Sketches* is a piece that can prepare a student for the works of Ravel and Debussy. While a general description of the form and character of selected pieces will be provided, this study will not include a complete harmonic or formal analysis. This document will explore specific passages of the selected pieces; however, it will not include a full measure-by-measure commentary.

### Methodology

In this paper, selections of compositions by Edward MacDowell, chosen based on their musical and pedagogical appeal and accessibility, will be discussed from a pedagogical point of view. The particular challenges of MacDowell's pieces will be compared with those found in

works from more familiar piano repertoire to determine how the former can help illustrate the technical, musical, and analytical development of the piano student.

The goal of the analysis is to identify musical and technical challenges found in selected early-advanced solo piano literature of Edward MacDowell, and to provide pedagogical suggestions for teachers and students. The document will categorize techniques and provide practice suggestions and steps including physical approach, wrist motion, and fingering. In addition, it will provide suggestions for interpretation, musical expression, and proper treatment of such style elements as a piano teacher's perspective, including areas such as pedaling, phrasing, tone color, harmony, and character. Moreover, preparatory and advanced pieces of standard repertoire that are related to the forms, textures, and techniques of MacDowell will be provided.

This study draws on books and articles by respected performers and authors on performance practices and stylistic characteristics, on MacDowell's own suggestions for understanding his repertoire, and on the author's own experiences and education in the field of piano performance and piano pedagogy.

### Literature Review

The research reviewed included books, dissertations, theses and articles. The literature related to this study has been placed into two main categories: I. Biography and Musical Style of Edward MacDowell, and II. MacDowell's Piano Works.

For the first main category, there are three sub-categories.

1. Edward MacDowell's Biography
2. Edward MacDowell's Musical Style and works
3. Letters, correspondences, and reminiscences related to Edward MacDowell

## I. Biography and Musical Style of Edward MacDowell

### 1. Edward MacDowell's Biography

Edward MacDowell has been studied by many authors and researchers over the past century. Some authors (e.g., Rollo Walter Brown, Aaron Copland, Richard Crawford, Wynne Tabitha Heavner, William H. Humiston, Joseph Machlis, Grace Overmyer, Percy Alfred Scholes, Harold Charles Schonberg, John Warthen Struble) have mentioned MacDowell's biography briefly and provided very general descriptions in their articles and books. Other authors (e.g., Lawrence Gilman, Alan Howard Levy) have focused primarily on the details of MacDowell's biography (mostly significant events in his life) and have provided more in-depth perspectives explaining how MacDowell grew into a successful American pianist and composer. Some authors (e.g., Abbie Farwell Brown, Margery Morgan Lowens, Arnold T. Schwad) have centered their attention on specific periods from MacDowell's life, such as the New York years. Among these works, only two authors, Lawrence Gilman and Alan Howard Levy, have covered Edward MacDowell's life in great depth and detail. The most recent book, written by E. Douglas Bomberger, was published in 2013. Drawing on extensive research and new sources into MacDowell's German years, Bomberger chronicles the life and work of MacDowell and offers a new theory on the cause of his death.<sup>10</sup>

### 2. Edward MacDowell's Musical Style and Works

This literature includes Edward MacDowell's essays, which were edited and compiled by W.J. Baltzell.<sup>11</sup> Seven other studies were also reviewed that outline Edward MacDowell's musical style, his role as a pianist, and some of his works. Lawrence Gilman referred to MacDowell as a Romantic poet, discussed the sonata works of MacDowell, and praised them as

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<sup>10</sup> E. Douglas Bomberger, *MacDowell*, (Oxford University Press, USA, 2013.)

<sup>11</sup> Edward MacDowell. *Critical and Historical Essays*. Edited by W.J. Baltzell. (New York: Da Capo Press, 1969.)

the work of a master of imaginative expression.<sup>12</sup> John Fielder Porte's book, *Edward MacDowell, A Great American Tone Poet: His Life and Music*, contains a biographical sketch of Edward MacDowell, including his role as a composer, the MacDowell Colony, his letters, and analysis of his works. Porte mentioned that the main object of each piece in the Etudes, Op. 39, is the development of technique, but that each is also quite interesting as poetical music.<sup>13</sup> Neil Leonard described MacDowell's attempts to stop imitating European composers and write American music instead. In a study by Irving Lowens, the author went through MacDowell's articles and essays, and evaluated the value of his works.<sup>14</sup> Uttamlal Thomas Shah focused on the solo pieces of Edward MacDowell.<sup>15</sup> Shah divided MacDowell's works into three stylistic groupings based on MacDowell's selection of texts rather than on chronology. And finally, Richard Bobo's journal article discussed how well Edward MacDowell was perceived as a pianist; Bobo compiled the repertoire that MacDowell played between 1888 and 1903.<sup>16</sup>

The latest study was written in 2008, and is the dissertation of Richard Daniel Fountain, which begins with a survey of MacDowell's life as a composer, pianist and educator. Subsequent chapters outline what Fountain called MacDowell's "organic philosophy of music," examining his piano works with special emphasis on his aesthetic and artistic goals.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Lawrence Gilman. "The Music of Edward MacDowell." *The North American Review*. Vol. 178, No. 571 (Jun., 1904): 927-932.

<sup>13</sup> John Fielder Porte. *Edward MacDowell, A Great American Tone Poet: His Life and Music*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1922.

<sup>14</sup> Irving Lowens. Edward MacDowell's "Critical and Historical Essays" (1912). *Journal of Research in Music Education*. Vol. 19, No. 1 (1971): 17-34. (Sage Publications, Inc.)

<sup>15</sup> Uttamlal Thomas Shah. "The Solo Songs of Edward Macdowell: An Examination of Style and Literary Influence." D.M.A. diss. (Ball State University, 1987.)

<sup>16</sup> Richard Bobo. "Edward MacDowell as Pianist." *American Music Teacher*. 75 (1997): 25-28.

<sup>17</sup> Richard Daniel Fountain. "Edward MacDowell and the Formation of an American Musical Culture." D.M.A. diss. (The University of Nebraska – Lincoln, 2008.)

### 3. Letters, Correspondences, and Reminiscences Related to Edward MacDowell

Six studies were reviewed which related to MacDowell's relationships, drawing primarily on letters, correspondences, and reminiscences. Natalie Alden Putnam<sup>18</sup> and John Erskine<sup>19</sup> have mentioned their personal relationships with MacDowell in their books. Edwin Carty Ranck<sup>20</sup> and Marian MacDowell<sup>21</sup> wrote about the MacDowell Colony and how it was built. Regarding the relationship between Joachim Raff and MacDowell, E. Douglas Bomberger's study focused on the relationship between MacDowell and his teacher, Raff. After Raff's death, MacDowell still helped Mrs. Raff to publish Raff's works to ease her financial burden.<sup>22</sup> W.H. Halverson discussed the correspondence between Edward Grieg and MacDowell.<sup>23</sup> Actually two of MacDowell's sonata pieces are dedicated to Grieg. In the end, Halverson also concluded that MacDowell's works should not be forgotten.

### II. MacDowell's Piano Works

Eleven studies were reviewed which outlined MacDowell's piano works, including piano sonatas, concertos, and short pieces. Only three authors (e.g., Carole D. Bruton, Lee Min-Ju, Harold C. Schonberg) have concentrated on MacDowell's piano etudes.

Juliette Adam explored the piano teaching philosophy of MacDowell, who gave his students a broad view of piano playing.<sup>24</sup> Francis Paul Brancaleone's dissertation analyzes the style development of MacDowell's short piano pieces between Op. 10 and Op. 62, and the

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<sup>18</sup> Natalie Alden Putnam, *Edward MacDowell, reminiscences and romance*, (Los Angeles : United Printing Co. 1919.)

<sup>19</sup> John Erskine. "Macdowell at Columbia: Some Recollections." *The Musical Quarterly*. Vol. 28, No. 4 (Oct., 1942): 395-405. (Oxford University Press.)

<sup>20</sup> Edwin Carty Ranck. "The Macdowell Colony at Peterborough." *The Musical Quarterly*. Vol. 6, No. 1 (Jan., 1920): 24-28. (Oxford University Press.)

<sup>21</sup> Marian MacDowell. MacDowell's "Peterborough Idea." *The Musical Quarterly*. Vol. 18, No. 1 (Jan., 1932): 33-38. Oxford University Press.

<sup>22</sup> E. Douglas Bomberger. "Edward Macdowell, Arthur P. Schmidt, And The Shakespeare Overtures Of Joachim Raff: A Case Study." *Notes* 54.1 (1997): 11.

<sup>23</sup> W.H. Halverson. "Grieg and MacDowell: A Tale of Two Edwards." *The Sonneck Society for American Music Bulletin* 23(1) (1997):5-6.

<sup>24</sup> Juliette Adam. *What the Piano Writings of Edward MacDowell Mean to the Piano Student*. (Montreat, N.C.: Linden Press, 1913.)



dissertation divides MacDowell's works into five periods. The first mature period (1887-96) of MacDowell's composition includes Op. 28 to Op. 49.<sup>25</sup> The *Woodland Sketches* were composed in MacDowell's second period.

Christine Bane Kefferstan's dissertation describes the early education of MacDowell and the composers and works that influenced him. Kefferstan then disusses the concertos and provides some ideas on MacDowell's studying in Europe and the influence of the piano teachers there.<sup>26</sup> Dolores Pesce's article, "The Other Sea In Macdowell's '*Sea Pieces*'," thoroughly analyzes MacDowell's *Sea Pieces*, Op. 55, a cycle of eight works for piano, each with title and epigraph.<sup>27</sup> Lynn Bridget LeClair's thesis discusses the non-musical and musical influences of Grieg and Schumann on MacDowell.<sup>28</sup> The nonmusical portion includes biography, and historical and personal influences. LeClair also mentioned the relations with Liszt, which will be discussed in this dissertation. The musical influences include programmatic titles, structure, texture, harmony, and rhythm.

Stephen Paul Burnaman's dissertation focuses on cultural environment, MacDowell's biography, compositional style, and piano works.<sup>29</sup> Hyunjung Cho's dissertation concentrates on the analysis of MacDowell's influences and inspirations, which are reflected in his sonatas. In chapter one, Cho mentioned MacDowell's other piano works which include a brief discussion of MacDowell's etudes.<sup>30</sup> Chien Chieh's dissertation provides a collection of short piano pieces by

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<sup>25</sup> Francis Paul Brancaleone. "The Short Piano Works of Edward Macdowell." Ph.D. Diss. (City University of New York, 1982.)

<sup>26</sup> Christine Bane Kefferstan. "The Piano Concertos of Edward Macdowell." D.M.A diss. (University of Cincinnati, 1984.)

<sup>27</sup> Dolores Pesce. "The Other Sea In Macdowell's '*Sea Pieces*.'" *American Music* 10.4 (1992): 411-440.

<sup>28</sup> Lynn Bridget LeClair. "An Historical and Comparative Study of the Influences of Edvard Grieg and Robert Schumann on the Piano Studies of Edward MacDowell." Master's thesis. (University of Cincinnati, 1994.)

<sup>29</sup> Stephen Paul Burnaman. "The Solo Piano Music of Edward MacDowell and Mrs. H. H. A. Beach: A Historical Analysis." D.M.A diss. (The University of Texas at Austin, 1997.)

<sup>30</sup> Hyunjung Cho. "The Four Piano Sonatas of Edward MacDowell." D.M.A diss. (Boston University, 2001.)

nine lesser-known European and American composers who were influenced by impressionistic aesthetics, including Edward MacDowell.<sup>31</sup>

Finally, there are three dissertations that focus on MacDowell's piano etudes. Carole D. Bruton's dissertation includes an overview of the development of pianoforte etudes to 1896, pedagogical and performing analyses of the etudes, and application of the techniques of Op. 46 to advanced repertoire.<sup>32</sup> Harold C Schonberg's study, "Guide To Records: MacDowell," is a short description of MacDowell's Etudes Op. 46.<sup>33</sup> The last study, Min-Ju Lee's dissertation, "A Study of Edward MacDowell's "Twelve Etudes, Op. 39," is written in Mandarin. Lee mainly focuses on discussing the techniques and interpretation, and does not include suggestions on how to teach these pieces.<sup>34</sup>

### Organization of Chapters

This study consists of four chapters. Chapter I contains an introduction, rationale, purpose of study, delimitations, methodology, chapter organization, and related literature review. Chapter II presents Edward MacDowell's biography, discusses his music style in different periods, and outlines his contributions and innovations to piano music. Chapter III discusses teaching strategies for the Etudes, Op. 39, and *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51. These strategies will offer practice steps and suggestions, interpretive suggestions, and ideas on musical expression and style from a piano teacher's perspective. The detail will include pedaling, phrasing, tone color, harmony, and characteristics. Furthermore, related preparatory and advanced pieces will be provided. Finally, Chapter IV provides a summary and conclusions and offers recommendations for further research.

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<sup>31</sup> Chien Chieh. "Beyond Debussy and Ravel: Impressionism in the Early Advanced Short Piano Works of Selected European and American Composers." D.M.A diss. (Arizona State University, 2011.)

<sup>32</sup> Carole D Bruton. "A Pedagogical and Performing Analysis of Edward MacDowell's Zwölf Virtuosen-Etuden, Op. 46." (Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1996.)

<sup>33</sup> Harold C Schonberg. "Guide To Records: Macdowell." *American Record Guide* 61.6 (1998): 166.

<sup>34</sup> Min-Ju Lee. *A study of Edward MacDowell's "Twelve Etudes, op. 39."* Master diss. (National University of Tainan. 2008.)

CHAPTER 2

THE LIFE AND MUSICAL WORKS OF EDWARD MACDOWELL

The Birth Year of Macdowell

Edward Alexander MacDowell was born on December 18, 1860, rather than in 1861, which has been generally accepted as his birth year. Most twentieth century writings on MacDowell, including those by Lawrence Gilman, John Porte, and Abbie Fareware Brown, cited 1861 as MacDowell's birth year. Oxford Music Online (Grove Music Online), E. Douglas Bomberger, and the Library of Congress, on the other hand, listed the birth year as 1860. Based on Schwab's study, this mistake can be traced back to music journals in the 1880s that perpetuated incorrect information written by a music critic.<sup>1</sup> Mr. and Mrs. MacDowell did not attempt to correct this mistake. Therefore, MacDowell's birth year was not corrected until 1975 when Schwab's paper was published. According to New York City birth records, a confirmation letter directly from the Paris Conservatoire, and MacDowell's two unpublished letters, all show evidence that MacDowell personally stated that he was born on December 18, 1860.<sup>2</sup>

MacDowell's father was a businessman, and his mother was a public school teacher. As a child in New York, MacDowell was a dreamer, full of imagination.<sup>3</sup> He liked fairy-tale books, such as "Irish Fairy Tales."<sup>4</sup> His interests began with drawing and later evolved to music. Unlike some other composers, MacDowell did not come from a musical or wealthy family. He had his first piano lesson at age nine. MacDowell's piano teachers were all Latin Americans, including

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<sup>1</sup> Arnold T. Schwad. "Edward Macdowell's Birthdate: A Correction." *Musical Quarterly* 61.2 (1975): p. 233.

<sup>2</sup> One to Freeman & Gillies, May 28, 1886 and one to Carl V. Lachmund, May 29, 1886.

<sup>3</sup> Lawrence Gilman. *Edward MacDowell: A Study*. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1931, p. 16.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

Juan Buitrago and Teresa Carreño.<sup>5</sup> Carreño was once a student of Louis Moreau Gottschalk and later became an international concert pianist. Not a musical prodigy, MacDowell loved music but hated practicing, like many children.<sup>6</sup> He even paid his brother, Walter, to make sounds on the piano while he pretended to be practicing.<sup>7</sup> Carreño started teaching MacDowell when she was eighteen years old and MacDowell was ten years old. She developed a unique method of discipline. If MacDowell did not work hard and learn his lessons well, she would threaten to kiss him. However, MacDowell always ran faster than she did.<sup>8</sup>

### Early Life in Europe

In 1876, MacDowell went to Paris and studied to be a pianist, and at that time he had no thoughts of being a composer.<sup>9</sup> He won a scholarship and settled down to the hard work of becoming a musician in the Paris Conservatoire, where Claude Debussy was a fellow pupil.<sup>10</sup>

After a few years in Paris, MacDowell moved to Wiesbaden, Germany, in 1878, and he entered Frankfurt Conservatory in the following year.<sup>11</sup> His composition teacher, Joachim Raff, encouraged him to start composing. In 1881, MacDowell took a position as the head piano teacher at Darmstadt Conservatory.<sup>12</sup>

Raff had a great influence on MacDowell and changed MacDowell's life. One day at Darmstadt, MacDowell was improvising instead of practicing and was caught by Raff. MacDowell was embarrassed to be caught not working. He explained that he was composing his first piano concerto. Raff was delighted and asked to see the work once it was finished. MacDowell was forced to finish the composition in two weeks. That piece was better than Raff

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<sup>5</sup> E. Douglas Bomberger. *MacDowell*. Oxford University Press, USA, 2013, p. 16-17.

<sup>6</sup> Gilman, p. 44.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>9</sup> Alan Howard Levy. *Edward MacDowell, an American Master*. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 1998. p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> Gilman, p. 4.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

expected. Raff encouraged MacDowell to take the work to Liszt at Weimar. Raff said to MacDowell, “Your music will be played when mine is forgotten.”<sup>13</sup> This work ended up as the Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 15.

Liszt, in his later years, had great influence as an artist at that time. MacDowell was nervous when presenting his first piano concerto, but things turned out well. Liszt told his student Eugen D’Albert that he must be more diligent, or one day he will be outdone by this young American.<sup>14</sup> Meeting a world-famous musician like Liszt greatly influenced MacDowell. Many of MacDowell's Etudes, Op. 39, share their names with those of Liszt's compositions, paying homage to Liszt.

MacDowell's wife, Marian Griswold Nevins, was an American who was one of his piano students in Frankfurt for three years. They didn't like each other at first. Nevins didn't want to come all the way to Germany and learn from an American, and MacDowell wanted to focus on composing, not on teaching piano. But they eventually became interested in each other and returned to the United States to get married three years later. After their marriage, the couple lived in Germany.<sup>15</sup>

In 1888, MacDowell finally went back to the United States,<sup>16</sup> and his Second Piano Concerto in D minor, Op. 23, made him famous. He had many piano students, at times even more than he could handle, and he did not have time to compose. With so many students, he even rejected an opera commission opportunity from a friend who thought MacDowell was wasting his time with teaching.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>15</sup> Levy, p. 27.

<sup>16</sup> Gilman, p. 31.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

### Columbia Years

In the middle of 1896, the president of Columbia University, Seth Low, invited MacDowell to teach at Columbia after attending a concert at which MacDowell played his Piano Concerto in D Minor.<sup>18</sup> MacDowell was excited to take the position at Columbia, and he turned down several other offers, as he liked the idea of teaching music in the context of other fields of learning at Columbia.<sup>19</sup> MacDowell became the Director of the music department at Columbia University, but the workload was overwhelming. He worked enthusiastically at the task of building Columbia's music department, in which he was the only teacher for two years, teaching seven classes each term, with each class meeting 2-3 hours a week. He also ran a student orchestra, a student singing society, and a community singing group, called the Mendelssohn Glee Club. He maintained a private studio and also provided some talented students with free classes. His last years at Columbia finally became a disaster for MacDowell. As an idealist, he tried to reform the music program and had a fight with the new president Nicholas Murray Butler. MacDowell challenged Butler's word to the public in newspapers.<sup>20</sup> The disagreement between MacDowell and the board of the trustees was reported in the major newspapers as "the Columbia Wars."<sup>21</sup> MacDowell resigned from Columbia with disappointment in 1904, and he began to have health problems in 1905.<sup>22</sup>

Percy Scholes states, "MacDowell's life was a happy one with a sad ending."<sup>23</sup> In his last years, MacDowell experienced unexpected brain failure, and the actual cause of his death remains a mystery. Bomberger offers a controversial new theory on the cause of MacDowell's death, proposing that it could be bromide poisoning resulting from self-medication with sleeping

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<sup>18</sup> Levy, p. 187.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Bomberger, p. 264.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 216.

<sup>22</sup> Gilman, p. 54.

<sup>23</sup> Percy Alfred Scholes. *Everyman and His Music: Simple Papers On Varied Subjects*. Jepson Press, 2008., p. 200.

aids.<sup>24</sup> After his death, his property, the MacDowell Colony, continued to honor his memory and worked as his fairyland by supporting the work of other artists in many different areas.<sup>25</sup>

In Abbie Brown's poem that remembers MacDowell, she writes, "Life was a fairy-tale to which he yearned" and she describes him as "a boy who never grew up." MacDowell had a fairyland in his dreams full of gnomes and elves.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, a childlike joy has been discovered in MacDowell's music. Observations of his pieces reveal the simplicity and naivety in his personality.

### MacDowell's Connection to Liszt

The life and works of Liszt are central to MacDowell's development as a pianist and composer, particularly as one considers MacDowell's earlier works. MacDowell acknowledged that he owed the greater part of what he was as a musician to Liszt, and he strove to emulate Liszt as a pianist and a composer. MacDowell credited his works to the expanded harmonic language that he inherited from Liszt.

The following facts highlight the importance of Liszt and his music to MacDowell's compositions. In 1880, MacDowell played the Schumann Quintet in E flat, Op. 44 for Liszt at conservatory concerts, and he was highly complimented by Liszt. MacDowell also played his own first piano concerto (Op. 15) for Liszt in 1881.<sup>27</sup>

MacDowell sent his *Erste moderne Suite*, Op. 10, to Liszt upon its completion in 1881; Liszt recommended the work for performance at a meeting of the Allgemeiner Deutscher Musikverein in 1882 and for publication by Breitkopf & Härtel,<sup>28</sup> which helped launch MacDowell's career as a composer.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Bomberger, p. 282.

<sup>25</sup> Scholes, p. 157.

<sup>26</sup> Abbie Farwell Brown, *The Boyhood of Edward MacDowell*. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1924., p. 36.

<sup>27</sup> Gilman, p. 16.

<sup>28</sup> Dolores Pesce and Margery Morgan Lowens. "MacDowell, Edward." *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online. Oxford

MacDowell's symphonic poems (Op. 22, Op. 23, and Op. 29) employ Liszt's chromatic style. While on his honeymoon in London, MacDowell attended many performances of Shakespeare's plays.<sup>30</sup> Liszt's symphonic poem *Hamlet* (No. 10, S. 104) also served as an inspirational source for MacDowell. It is no wonder that these experiences provoked profound musical expression in his own *Hamlet Ophelia*, Op. 22 (1884–5), and *Hamlet Benedick and Othello*, Op. 23. Dolores Pesce said, "MacDowell's approach was like Liszt's in his *Hamlet*: a character's inner conflicts are brought to life by dramatic juxtaposition of diatonic and chromatic materials. In *Lamia*, Op. 29, MacDowell adopted a different Lisztian technique to convey various aspects of the character's emotional constitution – thematic transformation – and changes of musical character represented a direct response to the detailed programme printed in the score."<sup>31</sup>

In the piano concerto No. 2, Op. 23, MacDowell divided the piano cadenza into three segments over the course of the first movement, as Liszt had done in his Eb piano concerto.<sup>32</sup> In addition, MacDowell seemed to pay homage to Liszt by following Liszt's approach to compose Etudes. MacDowell composed his *Etude de Concert*, Op. 36, (1888) and Etudes, Op. 39, (1889) first, and later progressed to virtuoso Etudes, Op. 46, in 1894. In fact, Liszt published his less technically demanding exercises "Etude en douze exercices" (Study in twelve exercises) S. 136 in 1826. Liszt elaborated on these pieces considerably in the far more technically difficult piece, the *Douze Grandes Études* (Twelve Large Studies), S. 137, in 1837. Those pieces formed the basis of the Transcendental Études, S. 139, in 1852.<sup>33</sup>

A strong reflection of Liszt clearly repeats itself continually in MacDowell's compositional inspirations. MacDowell also acknowledges this Lisztian influence in his music

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University Press.

<sup>29</sup> Levy, p. 19.

<sup>30</sup> Levy, p. 38.

<sup>31</sup> Dolores Pesce and Margery Morgan Lowens. "MacDowell, Edward." *Grove Music Online*. Oxford University Press.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Alan Walker, et al. "Liszt, Franz." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press.



and life events. Like Liszt, MacDowell was regarded by many as an iconic figure of nationalism. In so many areas of musical activity and experience, MacDowell mirrored his illustrious role-model Liszt. In the perspectives of music history, discovering Liszt's influence on MacDowell provides an opportunity to acknowledge an important source of this American composer's musical development.

### Other Context for MacDowell's Music

Liszt was certainly not the only influence on MacDowell's music. MacDowell's music was also highly influenced by literature and the Romantic imagination, including medieval legends, landscapes (especially forests), seascapes, and fairy tales.<sup>34</sup>

MacDowell studied in Europe in his early life, so his early pieces were influenced by European culture and European musical language. After MacDowell settled in the United States, he gradually adapted American materials in his later sets of piano pieces. MacDowell drew on his own language and culture to create the titles of his pieces, such as "At an old Trysting-place," "From an Indian Lodge," and "Told at Sunset" from *Woodland Sketches*. He also depicted the American landscape, particularly that of New England, through his music. Pesce writes, "In 1896 he became a close friend of the American writer Hamlin Garland, who promoted a similar response in literature; Garland devoted some of his writings to the American Indian, a subject that interested MacDowell as well."<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Dolores Pesce and Margery Morgan Lowens. "MacDowell, Edward." *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

### The Three Periods of MacDowell's Piano Music

According to Pesce, MacDowell's piano music can be divided into three periods: early piano music (1876-1890), sonatas (1891-1900), and late piano sets (1896-1902).<sup>36</sup>

MacDowell's early piano music was inspired by the poetry of Goethe, Heine, Hugo, Tennyson, Shelley, D.G. Rossetti, Hans Christian Andersen, and Bulwer-Lytton.<sup>37</sup> MacDowell composed his Etudes, Op. 39, during this period, which contain European genres, forms, and idioms and have titles such as "Hunting Song," "Alla Tarantella," "Romance," "Arabesque," "Intermezzo," "Melody," "Scherzo," and "Hungarian." From 1891 to 1900, MacDowell composed his four piano sonatas, which are mood pieces. The intentions of the composer in these pieces are largely related to private letters and correspondence.<sup>38</sup>

MacDowell composed four of his best-known sets of piano pieces during his late period (1896-1902): *Woodland Sketches*, *Sea Pieces*, *Fireside Tales*, and *New England Idyls*. Every piece in these sets has its own unique title, which is closer to program music.<sup>39</sup> MacDowell also adopted American idioms into his music. Pesce enumerates the influences of the American materials in his article:

The titles show the importance of the American landscape to MacDowell's musical imagination at this time: To a Wild Rose, A Deserted Farm, A Haunted House, In Deep Woods, From a Log Cabin. Other American references are to Indian motives (From an Indian Lodge of *Woodland Sketches* and Indian Idyl from *New England Idyls*), to the Uncle Remus tales of Joel Chandler Harris (Of Br'er Rabbit from *Fireside Tales* and From Uncle Remus of *Woodland Sketches*).<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

MacDowell combined his imagination with nature and also adapted American materials (Indian motives) and tales in his late piano pieces.<sup>41</sup>

### Piano Playing

MacDowell was not only a composer but also an active pianist. He was not an extreme emotionalist in his piano playing.<sup>42</sup> He believed that human Love was always noble and delicate; this was expressed in his piano playing and compositions. MacDowell's piano performance always had moderate tone coloring and appropriate highlights.<sup>43</sup> The piano was an agent for MacDowell to express his personal observations and feelings in melodies and harmonies. MacDowell loved the piano and he explored all the possibilities suited for piano sonority.<sup>44</sup> Regarding his piano techniques, MacDowell was capable of playing virtuosic passages, and his tone production introduced many contrasts and varieties.<sup>45</sup>

### Poetry

MacDowell frequently used tone poetry in his music, and his inspirations primarily came from the poetry and literature that he loved. The titles, as is the nature of program music, are suggestive of and appeal to the poetic imagination.<sup>46</sup> Porte writes, "Most of MacDowell's finest pianoforte pieces bear verses in addition to titles, thus definitely indicating what the music is intended to suggest."<sup>47</sup> MacDowell composed many of his early works using the words of German poets Heinrich Heine and Johann Goethe. MacDowell's *6 Poems after Heine*, Op. 31, composed in 1887, were dedicated to Heine. Later, he began to set texts by Shakespeare, Burns,

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Bomberger, p. 157.

<sup>46</sup> Elizabeth Fry Page. *Edward MacDowell, His Work and Ideals*. New York. 1910. p. 1.

<sup>47</sup> Porte, John Fielder. *Edward MacDowell, A Great American Tone Poet: His Life and Music*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1922. p. 50

Gardner, and Howells, as well as his own poetry.<sup>48</sup> Elizabeth Fry Page wrote “MacDowell’s music is full of poetry and his poetry ran over with music.”<sup>49</sup> Page also writes many poetical interpretations which match MacDowell’s poetic music and title. For example, the following was written to go with “*To a Water-lily*”

This is her bed!  
Dip the oars lightly,  
Guide the craft rightly,  
Where her sweet head  
Nestles so calmly.

What says her heart,  
Fragrant and golden?  
In its depths holden,  
With maiden art,  
Whose image hath she?

Dare I disturb  
Fancies so tender,  
E'en to surrender?  
Better to curb  
Self for her peace.  
Dream on, my flow'r!  
Eyes have caressed thee,  
I have confessed me,  
In this still hour.  
Will she requite me?<sup>50</sup>

MacDowell’s well-known suite *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, was highly influenced by poetry.<sup>51</sup> MacDowell’s capability to capture the atmosphere of nature makes him musically unique and unsurpassed at his time in the United States. Porte explains, “Probably his greatest achievement was his remarkable, unerring ability to create atmospheres of widely varied kinds in his music, and in this respect there is no composer quite his equal.” His love of poems and literature brought a refreshing effect to his music.

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<sup>48</sup> Page, p. 6.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

### Short Pieces

MacDowell had a passion for capturing images that amazed him, and he often achieved this in his short compositions. Porte depicted that MacDowell loved to seize a passing impression before it faded from his mind. "Sketches and impressions had become his major compositional forms. Nearly all his small pieces are musical photographs of his impressions and imaginations."<sup>52</sup> MacDowell's interest in poetry was also a vital source for his music, especially his short pieces. *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, was one of the most famous collections and includes short pieces inspired by poetry. MacDowell's short pieces may be more often played than his other works because of their charming and delicate conception.

Porte explains that besides his miniature pieces, MacDowell's larger works have great value in American classical music, such as his two concertos, four piano sonatas, and "Indian suites" for orchestra. Porte admires MacDowell's large works: "They are notable for their passion, breadth of style, massive momentum, dramatic power, and eloquence of expression."<sup>53</sup> Regarding MacDowell's sonatas, Horton acclaimed his works, saying they captured the intensity and breadth of tone-painting with emotional and programmatic tone poem techniques.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Porte, p. 83

<sup>53</sup> Page, p. 15.

<sup>54</sup> Horton, Charles Allison. "Serious Art and Concert Music for Piano in America in the 100 Years from Alexander Reinagle to Edward Macdowell." Ph.D. diss. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1966, p. 83.

## CHAPTER 3

### PEDAGOGICAL ANALYSIS OF SELECTED WORKS FROM ETUDES, OP. 39, AND *WOODLAND SKETCHES*, OP. 51

The Etudes, Op. 39, and *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, of Edward MacDowell are very accessible to early advanced students. Many of the individual pieces are programmatic in nature, particularly in their depictions of nature. The style of MacDowell's compositions include elements of Romanticism, Impressionism, and Nationalism. This chapter will begin with covering the basic techniques found in these works including trills, scales, polyphony, double notes, and chords. It will then look at representative pieces from each collection and present a suggested teaching order.

The publications of Etudes, Op. 39 are listed as follows: Boston: Arthur P. Schmidt (1889-1890), Boston Music Co. (1890), Kalmus (1985), Elkin, International Music Corp., FJH Music (2007), G. Schirmer (2009), Nabu Press (2010), University Reprints (2012), OnlineSheetMusic.com (2013.)

The publications of *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51 are listed as follows: New York: P. L. Jung (1896), G. Schirmer (1986), Boston Music Co., E. B. Marks, Schott, Elkin, International Music Corp., Kalmus, FJH Music (2006), Dover (2013.)

This study uses the first published edition of Etudes, Op. 39 (Boston: Arthur P. Schmidt), and *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51 (New York: P. L. Jung) for analysis.

## General and Overall Performing Skills for The Romantic Period

Before discussing MacDowell's Etudes, Op. 39, and *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, the general performing skills for playing romantic pieces should be explored. From highly respected pre-college pedagogue Ingrid Jacobson Clarfield's workshop "The Road to Chopin" and her book "Keys to artistic Performance," many useful teaching methods can be applied for students who are preparing to play romantic pieces.<sup>1</sup>

Clarfield indicates five things students should learn before they play romantic pieces: beautiful singing tone, balancing left-hand accompaniment, tasteful rubato, clear pedal, and harmonies.<sup>2</sup> These valuable suggestions can also apply to MacDowell's 12 Etudes, Op. 39, and *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51. The details are provided below:

### 1. Beautiful Singing Tone

Clarfield recommends practice methods including slow scales, pinky scales with arm weight, and bringing out the top or bottom melody, all of which help develop a singing tone appropriate for romantic playing.<sup>3</sup>

### 2. Balancing Left-hand Accompaniment

Clarfield mentions that students should use different dynamic markings for every voice. For example, if the melody is marked *forte*, students should play the bass line *mezzo forte*. Then, they should play the chord-accompaniment *mezzo piano*.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ingrid Jacobson Clarfield's workshop "the Road to Chopin" in 2012. University of Georgia, Athens, GA

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ingrid Jacobson Clarfield, "Keys to Artistic Performance: 24 Early Intermediate to Intermediate Piece to Inspire Imaginative Performance Book 1", Alfred publication, p. 4

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

### 3. Tasteful Rubato

Clarfield remarks that the left hand should play the role of conductor. Also, she recommends in her book that students might be able to consistently play with *rubato* in some places. Those are:

- I. At the end of a phrase or section of music.
- II. Before large melodic leaps or leaps to low bass notes.
- III. At the return of a principal theme.<sup>5</sup>

### 4. Clear Pedal

Clarfield suggests that students should change the pedal in accordance with the bass line and ignore most pedal markings on the scores.<sup>6</sup> She writes, “While some composers have provided pedal markings, in many cases the indicated pedaling might sound incorrect on today’s pianos. Some of the factors to consider when marking pedaling decisions are: texture, articulation, phrasing, dynamics, and color.”<sup>7</sup> The use of the pedals depends on the character of the music and the style of the composer.

### 5. Harmonies

Clarfield emphasizes the importance of harmonies as they impact shaping, timing, and color.

These five suggestions are crucial for playing romantic pieces and can all be applied to McDowell Etudes, Op. 39, and *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.



## Technical Skills

This section will analyze MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, and *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, from a pedagogical perspective, listing technical requirements for these pieces and offering practice suggestions. Based on Liszt's Technical Exercises, Alfred Cortot's "Rational Principles of Piano Forte Technique," the ideas of famous pianists and pedagogues, and my own opinions, the techniques of the Etudes, Op. 39, and *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, will be divided into five main sections: trills, scales, polyphony, double notes, and chords. Each of these sections will also be divided into several parts. Moreover, the descriptions of the practice steps in every technique will be provided. This section only focuses on the common/main techniques found in these works. Not every single technique used in the Etudes, Op. 39, and *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, is mentioned here.

Walter Giesecking writes, "To acquire good technique is also mental work."<sup>8</sup> Concentration is more important than practicing unconsciously for a long time. Sándor also mentions learning by conscious effort: "Mechanical practice obviously produces some results, but they are achieved in a time-consuming and inefficient way."<sup>9</sup>

Giesecking also writes, "All unnecessary movements should be avoided...Once the key has been struck, nothing can be done to change the quality of the tone, nor can a motion of the arm, hand or body have the slightest influence on it"<sup>10</sup> He further indicates, "One can relax the muscles without motion..."<sup>11</sup> Students should avoid any kind of showy movements that do not help their playing to save energy for later.

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<sup>8</sup> Leimer, Karl, *Piano Technique Consisting of the Two Complete Books The Shortest Way to Pianistic Perfection and Rhythmics, Dynamics, Pedal and Other Problems of Piano Playing*. New York: Dover Publications, 1972, p. 58.

<sup>9</sup> Sándor, György. *On Piano Playing, Motion, Sound And Expression*. Wadsworth, 1981, p. 184.

<sup>10</sup> Leimer, p. 58.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

## A. Trills

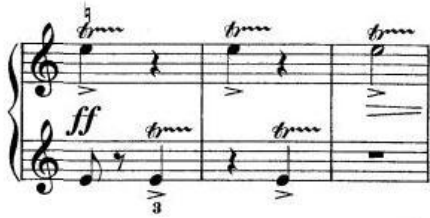
MacDowell frequently used trills and their extensions in his Etudes, Op. 39. Almost every piece in this collection includes trills, with the exception of the first three pieces. Gieseeking suggests, “The acquiring of a round and even trill is to a very great extent dependent on the ear and on the relaxation of the muscles.”<sup>12</sup> The trills found in MacDowell’s Etudes, Op. 39, and *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, can be divided into nine categories.

1. Basic Trill: No. 4 “Arabesque” mm. 59-62, No. 7 “Idyl” mm. 21-24, and No. 12 “Hungarian” mm. 53-56 in Etudes, Op. 39
2. Trill played by alternate hands: No. 6 “Dance of the Gnomes” in Etudes, Op. 39
3. Trill with an extra note: No. 8 “Shadow Dance” mm. 25-52 in Etudes, Op. 39; No. 2 “Will o’ the Wisp” mm. 7-10 in *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51
4. Double trill: No. 7 “Idyl” mm. 25-40 in Etudes, Op. 39; No. 2 “Will o’ the Wisp” mm. 11-12 in *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51
5. Trill in double notes: No. 4 “Arabesque,” and No. 11 “Scherzino” mm. 3-4 and mm. 13-22 in Etudes, Op. 39
6. Trill alternating between chord and single note: No. 4 “Arabesque” mm. 29-30 in Etudes, Op. 39
7. Trill in double notes played by alternate hands: No. 11 “Scherzino” mm. 77-80 in Etudes, Op. 39
8. Trill with a held octave No. 9 “Intermezzo” mm. 9-13 in Etudes, Op. 39
9. Trill alternating between double note and a single note, and with a held octave: No. 10 “Melody” in Etudes, Op. 39

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

1. Basic Trill Etudes, Op. 39, No. 12 “Hungarian” mm. 53-56 (see Ex. 3.1)



Ex. 3.1 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 12 “Hungarian” mm. 53-56

When practicing trills, students should begin by only playing the notes which are on the downbeat first. For example, this trill alternates between E and F. Students should practice only the repeated E first to establish a steady tempo. When they add F afterward, they should still try to only listen to the E. This will make the trill extremely even, which makes it easier to coordinate with another hand (see Ex. 3.2). In addition, students should not lift their fingers high. The fingers should always touch or contact the keyboard in order to play fast.



Ex. 3.2

## 2. Trill Played by Alternate Hands Etudes, Op. 39, No. 6 “Dance of the Gnomes”



Ex. 3.3 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 6 “Dance of the Gnomes” mm. 1-6

For the alternate-hand trill in Etudes, Op. 39, No. 6 “Dance of the Gnomes”(as shown in Ex. 3.3) students can both hands block the intervals at the same time first (Step 1, see Ex. 3.4). After they are familiar with all the notes, then they can play alternate-hand double notes to feel the tempo and speed between two hands (Step 2, see Ex. 3.5). After they get the steady alternation, students can start to play the normal trill.



Ex. 3.4: Step 1



Ex. 3.5: Step 2

### 3. Add an Extra Note in Trill Etudes, Op. 39, No. 8 “Shadow Dance” mm. 25-44 (see Ex. 3.6)



Ex. 3.6 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 8 “Shadow Dance” mm. 25-44

Instead of playing from the beginning F#, students can start practicing from the higher C# because it is always easier to play from the outside fingers. Also, it is more straightforward to count from C# instead of F#. I would encourage students to pretend C# is on the downbeat and play (see Ex. 3.7).



Ex. 3.7

#### 4. Double Trill Etudes, Op. 39, No. 7 “Idyl” mm. 25-26



Ex. 3.8 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 7 “Idyl” mm. 25-26

Students should pretend the pattern starts from B before playing the original score  
(see Ex. 3.8).

#### 5. Trill in Double Notes

All Etudes, Op. 39, No. 11 “Scherzino” mm. 7-8, mm. 13-22, and Etudes, Op. 39, No. 4 “Arabesque” provide examples for trill in double notes, including trill in thirds, trill alternating between sixth and fifth, and trill in octaves.

Trill in double notes: Interval of a third



Ex. 3.9 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 11 “Scherzino” mm. 7-8

For the double third trill skill (see Ex. 3.9), students should use the same practice steps as they use for the normal trill. However, they should add one more practice step: eliminating the thumb. So they should play 3-24-3-24-3-24, and then alternate it: 24-3-24-3-24-3... The student should eliminate the thumb because the second, third, and fourth fingers play a very important role in balancing the hand (see Ex. 3.10). If the second, third, and fourth fingers can be steady, it will not be difficult to add the thumb later.



Ex. 3.10

Trill in double notes: Alternating between sixth and fifth: (see Ex. 3.11)



Ex. 3.11 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 11 “Scherzino” mm. 13-22

Students can use the same practice steps as they used for practicing the double third trill, and then eliminate both the thumb and the 5th finger. Students can begin by practicing fingers 4242424242. (see Ex. 3.12)



Ex. 3.12

Trill in double notes: Alternating between sixth and fifth



Ex.3.13 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 4 “Arabesque” mm. 1-2

Students can knock the rhythm on the piano cover hands together, making sure that the knocking is from the wrist instead of the forearm. After they get the speed of knocking right, students can start to play the original score. (see Ex. 3.13)

Trill in double notes: Trill in octaves: Etudes, Op. 39, No. 4 “Arabesque” mm. 21-22 (see Ex. 3.14)

Trill in double notes: octaves



Ex. 3.14 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 4 “Arabesque” mm. 21-22



For this section, students can also knock on the piano cover first. Then, they can practice with only the thumb to measure the distance between every note. After they have the right movement of the thumb, they should keep the hands in the same position and play octaves.

6. Trill Alternating between Chord and Single Note (see Ex. 3.15)



Ex. 3.15 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 4 “Arabesque” mm. 29-30

Students should neglect the thumb and fifth finger first (Step 1, see Ex. 3.16) so they can build a balanced palm. Then, they can add the fifth finger and play 24-5-24-5-24-5 (Step 2, see Ex. 3.17). Afterwards, they can add the thumb.



Ex. 3.16: Step 1



Ex. 3.17: Step 2

## 7. Trill in Double Notes Played by Alternate Hands



Ex. 3.18 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 11 “Scherzino” mm. 77-80

First, students need to block the chords, so they can see the big picture (see Ex. 3.19). Then, they should knock lightly on the piano cover to become accustomed to the tempo and speed of the alternation. Finally, they can play the written score (see Ex. 3.18).



Ex. 3.19

8. Trill with a Held Octave (see Ex. 3.20)



Ex. 3.20 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 9 "Intermezzo" m. 11

The first step is to ignore the E natural (as mentioned before). Students should keep the octave and play the repeated F on the beat (Step 1, see Ex. 3.21). After adding the offbeat E, they should still listen to the F to make the trill even (Step 2, see Ex. 3.22).



Ex. 3.21: Step 1



Ex. 3.22: Step 2

9. Trill Alternating between Double Note and a Single Note, and with a Held Octave (see Ex. 3.23)



Ex. 3.23 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 10 “Melody” m. 1

Initially, students can ignore the octave and practice Ab and G first (Step 1, see Ex. 3.24). Secondly, they can practice Eb and G (Step 2, see Ex. 3.25) and begin to alternate double notes and single notes (Step 3, see Ex. 3.26). The most crucial point here is to pretend to start from the single note instead of the double note because single notes here are more difficult to project (see Ex. 3.27). Alternatively students can add an accent on every single note – G – to ensure that the note is played firmly.



Ex. 3.24: Step 1



Ex. 3.25: Step 2



Ex. 3.26: Step 3



Ex. 3.27: Step 4

## B. Scales

Scales are one of the basic techniques in piano playing. György Sándor suggests the following practice tips for playing scales;

The upper arm also aids in shifting levels from white to black keys and from black keys to white. .... the in-and-out dimension. When we play scales, we should avoid placing the thumb under the palm; instead we should place it alongside the hand. There is nothing wrong with a slight motion of the body in the direction of the scale: it accommodates and reduces the elbow motion.<sup>13</sup>

Gieseking indicates, “The most important thing when training the fingers is to be able to judge correctly the dynamic value of the tones, by means of the ear. One must, therefore, bear in mind that the tones of a scale must be played with equality of strength.”<sup>14</sup> Students should be trained to listen carefully to every single note in the scales and ensure that no extra accents interrupt the smoothness of the scales.

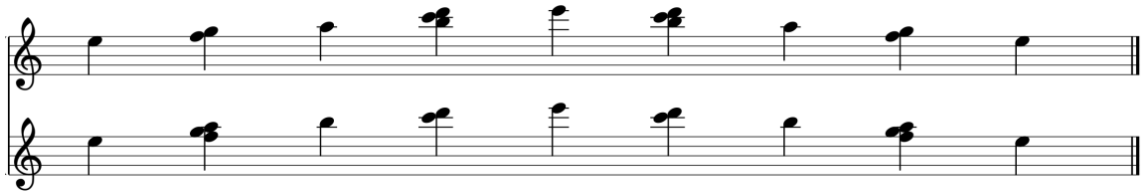
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<sup>13</sup> Sándor, p. 16.

<sup>14</sup> Leimer, p. 52.



find their position on the keyboard (see Ex. 3.29). Next, they can add the thumb and fifth finger. Students should also practice the connections between the thumb and other fingers.



Ex. 3.29

## 2. Chromatic Scales



Ex. 3.30 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 2 “Alla Tarantella” mm. 61-68

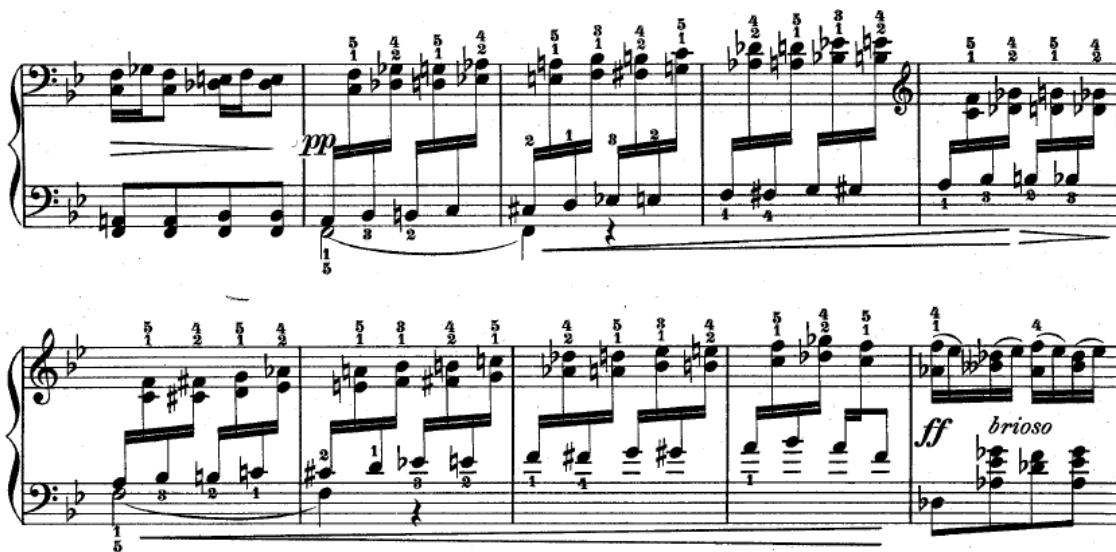
For chromatic scales (see Ex. 3.30), students should always ensure that their fingers stand firmly on the black keys, not just the white keys that they typically focus on. When

practicing, students should pretend that the scale begins from the black key because students seldom miss the starting key.(see Ex. 3.31).



Ex. 3.31

### 3. Chromatic Scale Alternating between Single Notes and Double Notes



Ex. 3.32 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 4 “Arabesque” mm. 33-40

For chromatic scales that alternate between double notes and single notes (No. 4 “Arabesque” mm. 33-40, see Ex. 3.32), students should practice hands separately first and still pretend that the scale begins from the black keys (Db and Bb), so their fingers solidly press down on the black keys. Then, students can block chords with hands together (See Ex.



3.33) to find the hand positions. For the last step, students will play with their hands alternating.



Ex. 3.33

#### 4. Chromatic Scales in Double Thirds (see Ex. 3.34)



Ex. 3.34 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 11 “Scherzino” m. 50

First, students can ignore the thumb and the fifth finger as I mentioned for diatonic scales. Then, they can play two voices separately, and teachers can ensure that the students play both lines smoothly. In addition, students can add accents on the notes for which they don't feel confident.

### C. Polyphony (Finger Independence and Voicing)

Giesecking writes, “Polyphony (plurality of voices) is a musical setting in which a number of independent voices (parts) are carried out in the course of a musical composition.”<sup>15</sup> Clarfield also said, “Different layers of sound require different dynamics or colors”<sup>16</sup> Playing polyphonic passages trains finger-independent technique and voicing. This section will consider two categories of polyphony from MacDowell’s Etudes, Op. 39, and *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51: finger independence and voicing.

#### 1. Finger Independence

Etudes, Op. 39:

No. 6 “Dance of the Gnomes” mm. 49-52

No. 10 “Melody” mm. 1-4

No. 5 “In the Forest” mm. 3-5, 25-27, 41-43

No. 5 “In the Forest” mm. 48-50

No. 8 “Shadow Dance” mm. 25-44

*Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51:

No. 5 “From an Indian Lodge” mm. 10-33

#### 2. Voicing

Etudes, Op. 39:

No. 7 “Idyl” mm. 1-14, mm. 65-70

No. 3 “Romance” mm. 1-12, 29-50

No. 9 “Intermezzo” mm. 5-8, mm. 1-4

*Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51:

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<sup>15</sup> Leimer, p. 118-119.

<sup>16</sup> Clarfield, p. 4.



ii. (see Ex. 3.37)



Ex. 3.37 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 10 "Melody" mm. 1-4

The practice steps are almost the same as the description for the trill in technique section. However, students should first play just octaves. (see Ex. 3.38) They can then add the inner trills.



Ex. 3.38

iii. (see Ex. 3.39)



Ex. 3.39 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 5 "In the forest" mm. 3-5, 25-27, 41-43

First, students should play without the lower long notes to ensure that they play the articulation accurately (see Ex. 3.39 & Ex. 3.40). Then, they should shape the lower voice (see Ex. 3.41). Afterwards, students can add the lower long notes and use another hand to keep the thumb fixed. (see Ex. 3.42).



Ex. 3.40: Step 1



Ex. 3.41: Step 2



Ex. 3.42: Step 3

iv. (see Ex. 3.43)



Ex. 3.43 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 5 "In the Forest" mm. 48-50

Here students can practice chords first and listen to the harmony. Then, students can add the long note D-sharp. If needed, they can use their left hand to hold the finger that plays D-sharp.(see Ex. 3.43 & Ex. 3.44).



Ex. 3.44

v. (see Ex. 3.43)

The practice steps will be the same as the description for the trill on technique section, but students can use their left hand to hold the finger playing C-sharp (the long note).(see Ex. 3.45).



Ex. 3.45 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 8 “Shadow Dance” mm. 25-44

## 2. Voicing

No. 7 “Idyl” mm. 1-14, mm. 65-70; No. 3 “Romance” mm. 1-12, 29-50; No. 9



Ex. 3.46 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 9 “Intermezzo” mm. 5-8, mm. 1-4

First, students can play two voices with two hands, while teachers ensure that students perfectly shape every voice, especially the upper one (see Ex. 3.46). Secondly, students can use the right hand to play all voices in the treble clef. Teachers should check to see if students’ palms are firm enough to bring out the upper melody. Bringing out the upper voice with a good tone will also add to students' enjoyment in playing.

## D. Double Notes

The double notes found in MacDowell's Etudes, Op. 39, and *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, can be divided into four categories:

1. Double thirds: No. 11 "Scherzino" mm. 1-2 in Etudes, Op. 39
2. Mixture: No. 11 "Scherzino" mm. 27-46 in Etudes, Op. 39
3. Octaves in one hand: No. 11 "Scherzino" mm. 13-22 in Etudes, Op. 39; No. 10 "Told at Sunset", No. 5 "From an Indian Lodge" in *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51
4. Octaves in alternating hands: No. 12 "Hungarian" mm. 39-40, 47-48 in Etudes, Op. 39

### 1. Double Thirds (in five finger pattern)



Ex. 3.47 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 11 "Scherzino" mm. 1-2

Students can ignore the thumb and fifth finger first and ensure that the second, the third, and fourth fingers are stable (Step 1, see Ex. 3.48). Then, they can just play the upper voice with the original finger numbers (Step 2, see Ex. 3.49) and apply the same process to the lower voice. Finally, they can play two voices as one hand (see Ex. 3.47).





Ex. 3.48: Step 1



Ex. 3.49: Step 2

## 2. Mixture (out of five finger pattern)



Ex. 3.50 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 11 "Scherzino": mm. 27-46

First, students can practice shifting the wrist horizontally. Next, they can practice the upper voice with the original finger numbers (Step 1, see Ex. 3.51) and apply the same step with the lower voice (Step 2, see Ex. 3.52). Afterwards, they can play both voices in one hand (see Ex. 3.50). The teacher should require the student to shift his or her wrist and palm.



Ex. 3.51: Step 1



Ex. 3.52: Step 2

### 3. Octaves (see Ex. 3.53)



Ex. 3.53 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 11 "Scherzino" mm. 13-22

Kendall Taylor suggests that legato octaves "are best learnt through the practice and playing of the chromatic octave scale, when the fourth finger will be taken on the black keys."<sup>17</sup> If students' hands are large enough, they should connect all the octaves to shape the phrases (see Ex. 3.54).

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<sup>17</sup> Taylor, p. 37.



Ex. 3.54

If students' hands are not big enough, they can always use their thumbs and fifth fingers. Then, they can play only the thumb first to ensure that their thumbs can discern the distance between every note (Step 1, see Ex. 3.55). Teachers should make sure students' hands do not change when they move from one octave to the next. Keep the frame of an octave between their thumb and fourth finger at all times (Step 2, see Ex. 3.56). Most importantly, students should learn how to use the pedal to connect the octaves.



Ex. 3.55: Step 1



Ex. 3.56: Step 2

#### 4. Octaves in Alternating Hands



Ex. 3.57 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 12 "Hungarian" mm. 39-40, 47-48

First, students can tap on the piano cover until they become accustomed to coordinating alternating hands. Then, they can block the octaves to become familiar with notes and distances (see Ex. 3.58). Afterwards, they can play the score as written (see Ex. 3.57).



Ex. 3.58

#### E. Chords

Generally speaking, students should always play chords with firm palms, so they can project their sound and play for a long time. Gieseeking mentions the challenge for students in playing chords: "Both hands must strike the keys precisely at the same moment."<sup>18</sup>

The chords found in MacDowell's Etudes, Op. 39, and *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, fall into three categories.

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<sup>18</sup> Leimer, p. 56

## 1. Basic Chords

Etudes, Op. 39

No. 7 “Idyl” mm. 49-64

No. 8 “Shadow Dance” mm. 29-44

*Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51

No. 1 “To a Wild Rose” mm. 25-28

No. 6 “To a Water-lily”

No. 10 “Told at Sunset”

No. 9 “By a Meadow Brook” mm. 5-7

## 2. Rolled Chords

Etudes, Op. 39

No. 9 “Intermezzo” mm. 19-20; No. 10 “Melody” mm. 9-16

*Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51

No. 3 “At an old Trying-place”

## 3. Broken Chords and Arpeggios

Etudes, Op. 39

No. 7 “Idyl” mm. 35-40 (broken chords: out of five finger pattern)

No. 8 “Shadow Dance” mm. 49-52, 11-18 (broken chords)

No. 8 “Shadow Dance” mm. 45-48 (broken chords: out of five finger pattern)

No. 7 “Idyl” mm. 27-28 (broken chords: cross over)

Woodland Sketches, Op. 51

No. 7 “From Uncle Remus” m. 23, m. 50, mm. 63-64;

No. 9 “By a Meadow Brook” m. 22, m. 53

1. Basic Chords

i. Ex. 3.59



Ex. 3.59 MacDowell Etudes No. 7 “Idyl” mm. 49-56, 57-64

First, students can practice the middle voices with the original finger numbers, so they won't miss the notes in the inner voices (see Ex. 3.60). Then, they can play the chords and ensure their fingers and palms are firm enough to bring out the upper melody (see Ex. 3.59).



Ex. 3.60

A musical score for a piece titled "poco marcato giocoso". The score is written for piano (p) and features a treble and bass staff. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The tempo/mood is indicated by the text "poco marcato giocoso". The music consists of a series of chords and single notes, with a 4/2 time signature and a 3/4 time signature indicated by the notes. The score is divided into two measures by a double bar line.

Students can make a fist and knock on the piano cover first. Teachers should ensure that students knock leading from their wrists instead of their elbows. Then, they can ignore the thumb and fifth finger and play the original finger numbers (see Ex. 3.62). Afterwards, students can play what is written on the score (see Ex. 3.61).



## 2. Rolled Chords (see Ex. 3.63)

55



Ex. 3.63 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 9 “Intermezzo” mm. 19-20

Students should practice palm shifting horizontally (lateral movement) and verify that they play with their fingers instead of their arms. Here are some suggestions for practicing lateral freedom provided by Kendall Taylor:

In cultivating this action it is recommended to begin with a three-note figure. The third finger will be used as a pivot; the upper-arm will remain largely relaxed, moving very little, whilst the fore-arm moves freely left and right, and in so doing it pulls the wrist left and right also. Meanwhile the pivot finger remains firmly in contact with the key. The fifth finger and thumb stretch in turn from the pivot finger to the outer notes, which may be beyond their direct stretch.<sup>19</sup>

### 3. Broken Chords/Arpeggios: Out of Five Finger Pattern

- i. MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 7 “Idyl”: mm. 35-40, and No. 8 “Shadow Dance” mm. 49-52, 11-18 provide examples for broken chords. (See Ex. 3.64)



Ex. 3.64 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 8 “Shadow Dance” mm. 49-52, 11-15

Students should practice shifting the wrist horizontally (lateral movement) as is mentioned in the above section. This helps them play the range out of a five finger pattern.

<sup>19</sup> Kendall Taylor. *Principles Of Piano Technique And Interpretation*, Novello & Company, 1981, p. 22.



Then, they can play the notes that are written on the score (see Ex. 3.64). Teachers should ensure that students' elbows move in and out to shift between the white and black keys.

- ii. MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 8 “Shadow Dance” mm. 45-48, and No. 12 “Hungarian” mm. 23-24, 49-52 provide examples for broken chords. (see Ex. 3.65)



Ex. 3.65 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 12 “Hungarian” mm. 23-24, 49-52

First, students should practice wrist shifting as well. Then, students can start from the weak beat— G-sharp and A—to ensure that they don't miss the second finger and the connections between the two chords (see Ex. 3.66). Afterwards, students can play what is written on the score (see Ex. 3.65).



Ex. 3.66

#### 4. Broken Chords: Cross Over (see Ex. 3.67)



involve some particular exploitation and demonstration of virtuoso technique.”<sup>22</sup> Each etude typically focuses on one aspect of technique and often evolves from a single musical genre.<sup>23</sup> Etudes have long been considered as the ways in which musical and technical qualities are intertwined mentally and physically.<sup>24</sup> Hence, the good use of piano etudes could improve a student’s piano study and progress.

### Etudes, Op. 39

In terms of piano technique, the focus of all etudes should not fall simply on finger training. Historically, many teachers have advocated the development of technique through repetition and arduous drill, but in more recent times many pedagogues now believe this method is not only ineffective and counterproductive but can also create injury. In other words, the dexterity of fingers cannot be achieved by mechanical practice alone, which often results in boredom and injury. Choosing the right repertoire, which involves both technical and musical skills, is a priority for piano teachers. The admired Hungarian-born American pianist and teacher, György Sándor, opposed drab finger practices:

We recommend eliminating most studies that feature technique and not music (Hanon, Pischna, Czerny). Exercises and technical studies that employ certain technical patterns repetitiously tend to lead us to mechanical practicing....The piano repertoire is so immense – there is so much to learn – that it is foolish to spend time with inferior music when the same technical development can be achieved by working on great music.... Great works of music in which the various motions should be applied. The literature is filled with technical formulas.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Simon Finlow, “The Twenty-Seven Etudes and Their Antecedents,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 53.

<sup>23</sup> Tracy D. Lipke-Perry. Integrating Piano Technique, Physiology, and Motor Learning: Strategies for performing the Chopin Etudes. D.M.A diss. (University of Arizona, 2008.)

<sup>24</sup> Lipke-Perry, p. 16.

<sup>25</sup> Sándor, p. 183.

The distinguished piano pedagogue, Abby Whiteside, also disagreed with a mechanical approach to practicing the scales or Hanon and Czerny exercises. Regarding the latter, Whiteside wrote:

Czerny has been responsible for untold boredom, and that is exactly why his exercises should be discarded. Creativeness in ideas is fostered by response to beauty, not to boredom. It is time we learned to use beautiful music for achieving results if we are interested in producing beautiful playing. Hanon is used for developing independent fingers with equal hitting power. Obviously this cannot be accomplished. Each finger may gain more power, but there will still be inequality in the fingers. Fingers need to be expert only in transmitting the power of the arm. That is a different and far simpler problem, which does not demand mechanical and uninteresting patterns.<sup>26</sup>

For piano students, studying etudes is an essential step in the process of building a solid and reliable technique for advancement. However, standard concert etudes (for example those of Chopin and Liszt) are intended for the recital hall and require great virtuosity. The early advanced student needs a solid technical and musical foundation before starting them so as not to be overwhelmed. Beginning these advanced studies too soon may lead to more confusion or frustration than progress.

After returning to composition in 1889, MacDowell composed the Etudes, Op. 39, which were affected by his piano performances and teaching.<sup>27</sup> In MacDowell's piano teaching, he disliked repetitive piano exercises, so he often developed simplified technique studies directly from difficult passages that were encountered in students' repertoire, thus meeting their individual needs.<sup>28</sup> MacDowell was interested in exploring not only technique but also sonority and touch.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, MacDowell's Etudes, Op. 39, serve as the perfect collection for early advanced students. As they combines essential technical exercise with great music, this is helpful

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<sup>26</sup> Abby Whiteside. *on Piano Playing : Indispensables of Piano Playing - Mastering the Chopin Etudes and Other Essays*, Amadeus Press, 2003 p. 177-178.

<sup>27</sup> Bomberger, p. 158.

<sup>28</sup> Margery Morgan Lowens. "The New York Years of Edward Macdowell." Ph.D. diss. University of Michigan, 1971, p. 119.

<sup>29</sup> Bomberger, p. 159.

for students in developing the many important musical and technical facets that are encountered in the repertoire at this level.

### Individual Listing

Composition Year     1889-90

First Publication     1890 – Boston: Arthur P. Schmidt

1.     “Jagdlied” (Hunting Song) – Accent, grace
2.     “Alla tarantella” – Speed, lightness of touch
3.     “Romanze” (Romance) – Singing touch
4.     “Arabeske” (Arabesque) – Wrist
5.     “Waldfahrt” (In the Forest) – Delicate, rhythmical
6.     “Gnomentanz” (Dance of the Gnomes) – Mordente
7.     “Idylle” (Idyl) – Delicacy, singing tone, grace
8.     “Schattentanz” (Shadow Dance) – lightness, speed
9.     “Intermezzo” – Independence of the third and fourth fingers
10.    “Melodie” (Melody) – 2,3,4 fingers
11.    “Scherzino” – Double notes
12.    “Ungarisch” (Hungarian) – Dash, speed, virtuoso playing

Other publications: Boston Music Co.(1890), Kalmus(1985), Elkin, International Music Corp.,  
FJH Music(2007), G. Schirmer(2009), Nabu Press(2010), University Reprints (2012),  
OnlineSheetMusic.com(2013)

Pedagogical suggestions – technical and musical requirements and preparatory and advanced pieces – will be provided for “Jagdlied” (Hunting Song), “Alla tarantella”, “Scherzino”, and “Ungarisch” (Hungarian). The background and the characteristics of these pieces will also be mentioned.

“Jagdlied” (Hunting Song) Etudes, Op. 39, No. 1

Tempo: Allegretto

Key: F Major

Form: ABA'

Section A: mm. 1-28; Section B: mm. 29-44; Section A': 45-69; Coda: mm. 69-77

Background and characteristics:

“Hunting Song” can be traced back to the early musical genre “Caccia”<sup>30</sup> which translates from the Italian as a chase, hunt, or pursuit. The Caccia flourished between 1345 and 1375 and was canonic in nature at the unison, often incorporating a slower moving bass line by a third instrument.<sup>31</sup> The German term for “hunting song,” “Jagdlied,” indicates hunting music and often relates specifically to the horn, which has been exploited for its symbolism of the outdoors by composers from the mid-18th century to the present day.<sup>32</sup> MacDowell’s “Hunting Song” is a vivid work and contains a horn-like theme.<sup>33</sup>

The main technical requirements are as follows:

- Graceful accents
- Unison playing

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<sup>30</sup> Kurt von Fischer and Gianluca D’Agostino. “Caccia.” Grove Music Online. Oxford University Press.

<sup>31</sup> Donald Jay Grout, *A History of Western Music* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1973), 130.

<sup>32</sup> Helen Marlais, “A Teacher’s Guide to Early Advanced Piano Works of the American Twentieth Century,” *American Music Teacher*, 46, no. 5 (1997): 34.

<sup>33</sup> Jane Magrath. *The Pianist’s Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature*. Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Pub. Co., 1995., p. 209.

- Frequent shifting hand positions
- Balance between left-hand melody and right-hand accompanying chords (B section)<sup>34</sup>

MacDowell wrote “Accents, grace” under the title. Students should avoid banging the accents on the keyboard. They should carefully control the accents with their fingers and shape the phrases.

Normally, contrary motion is more natural and balanced for hands to play than parallel motion. Unison playing seems easy for reading but requires more balance from the body. Students can practice moving their hands in the same direction away from the keyboard first. When they feel how to balance their body with parallel motion, they can attempt the skill on the piano.

Frequently shifting hand positions sometimes causes inaccuracy. Students can circle groups of hand positions in the score to help them clearly know where to change position. Also, firm hands help improve accuracy when shifting. Too much relaxation in this case may cause inaccuracy.

In mm. 29-32 and mm. 37-40 (Ex.3.68 and Ex. 3.69), the melody switches to the left-hand, and the right-hand plays accompanying chords on the offbeat. Compared to the single melody in the left hand, the right hand’s texture is thicker. Students should purposely soften the accompanying chords and bring out the melody.

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<sup>34</sup> Francis Paul Brancalone. "The Short Piano Works of Edward Macdowell." Ph.D. Diss. City University of New York, 1982., p. 178.



Ex. 3.68 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 1 “Hunting Song” mm. 28-34



Ex. 3.69 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 1 “Hunting Song” mm. 35-41

The main musical requirements are as follows:

- Rapid changes of articulations and rhythm
- Imaginary story

Rapid changes of articulations and rhythm sometimes disturb students’ attention to shaping the phrase. Students can practice the phrase by playing all the notes legato or staccato first. When students become accustomed to the phrase and dynamic markings, they can begin playing the articulations written in the score.

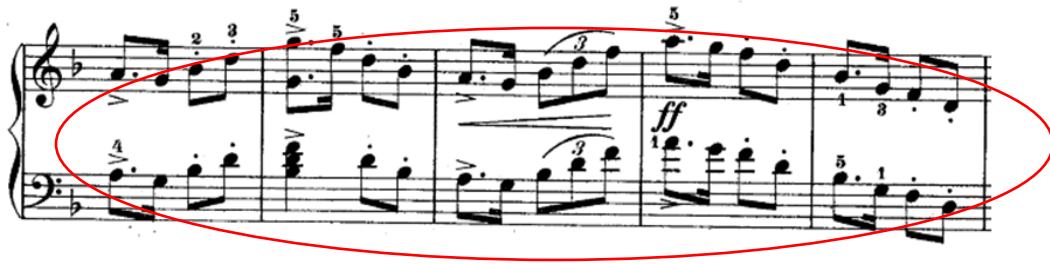
Since the hunting song brings to mind an animated scene complete with horn calls, shouts, laughter, and battle, the student can easily create an imaginary story. This imaginary hunt comes to its full excitement toward the end of the work. It is helpful to encourage the student to "set the stage" for a medieval tribute. A teacher could ask a student to visit the library and find a troubadour song in order to introduce medieval history.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 34.



Preparatory piece: Turk “*Hunting Horns and Echo*” Book. I No. 24 from *Handstücke für angehende Klavierspieler*

Turk’s “*Hunting Horns and Echo*” also includes many dotted eighth-note rhythms and parallel motion (unison playing). Moreover, this piece has a horn-like theme as well. Students should experience the rhythm, technique, and character in this piece first (see Ex. 3.70 & Ex. 3.71).



Ex. 3.70 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 1 “Hunting Song” mm. 15-19

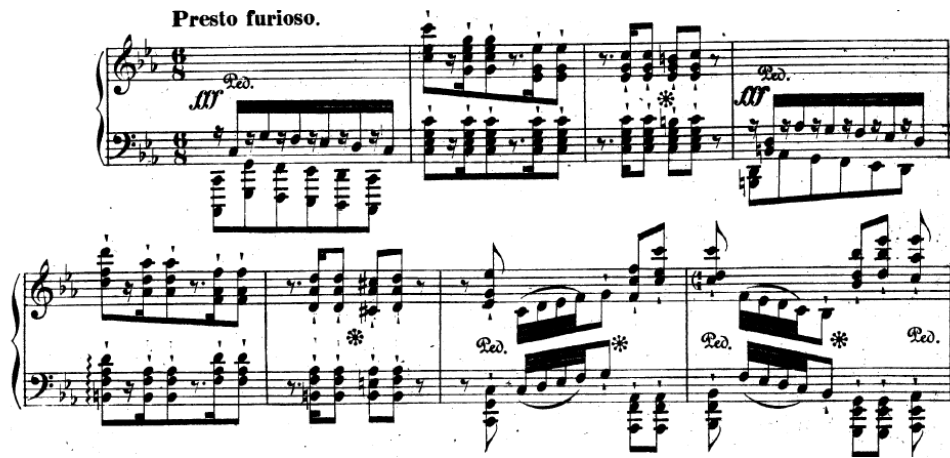


Ex. 3.71 Turk “Hunting Horns and Echo” mm. 6-10 (Book. I No. 24 from *Handstücke für angehende Klavierspieler*)

Advanced piece: Liszt Transcendental Etude No 8, “*Wilde Jagd*”; MacDowell Op. 46 No. 3

“*Wilde Jagd*” (Wild Chase); Schumann “*Waldszenen*” Op. 82 No. 8 “*Jagdlied*”<sup>36</sup>

Liszt’s “*Wilde Jagd*” shares similar rhythmic materials with MacDowell’s such as dotted eighth notes and detached style, but it includes more chords and scale passages, creating a more complex and rich texture and a tense atmosphere (see Ex. 3.72).



Ex. 3.72 Liszt Transcendental Etude No. 8 “*Wilde Jagd*” mm. 1-8

MacDowell “*Wilde Jagd*” (Wild Chase) Op. 46 no. 3 Ex. 3.20

MacDowell composed another hunting song in his Etudes, Op. 46, which provides more tension and excitement (see Ex. 3.73). The piece depicts the chasing moment of the hunt. The technical requirements are more demanding, including double trills and repeated chords. Students can experience a different style of MacDowell’s hunting song through this piece.

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<sup>36</sup> Brancaleone, p. 178.



Ex. 3.73 MacDowell Op. 46 No. 3 “Wilde Jagd” mm. 1-10

### “Alla tarantella” Etudes, Op. 39, No. 2

Tempo: *Prestissimo*

Key: C minor

Form: ABA'

Section A: mm. 1-24; Section B: mm. 25-68; Section A': mm. 69-92; Codetta: mm. 93-97

Background and characteristics:

Tarantella dance music, which originated in southern Italy, is one of the most popular styles in the Italian folk song tradition. It derives its name from the town of Taranto.<sup>37</sup> The dance is performed by participants in a large circle that moves clockwise until the music becomes faster. Then the dancers quickly change the direction to counterclockwise, and this process continues several times.<sup>38</sup>

Another reason why the style is called *Tarantella* comes from the bite of the wolf spider, named "tarantula," which was believed to be highly poisonous with a bite that could lead to a

<sup>37</sup> "Tarantella." (n.d.): Funk & Wagnalls New World Encyclopedia.

<sup>38</sup> Erich Schwandt. "Tarantella." *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press.

hysterical condition known as tarantism. In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, it was believed that victims of the wolf spiders needed to engage in crazy dancing to prevent their death.<sup>39</sup> This kind of music usually has a rapid 6–8 meter with an increasing tempo.

The main technical requirements are as follows:

- Speed and lightness of touch: *leggero* touch
- Right hand against left hand's blocked chords<sup>40</sup>
- Often uses weaker fingers<sup>41</sup>
- Crossing hands mm. 29-40
- Chromatic scale: mm. 61-68 (mentioned in technique category, see technique section.)
- Rapid finger movement.<sup>42</sup> (mentioned in technique category, see technique section.)

MacDowell wrote “Speed, Lightness of Touch” as the subtitle of this piece. This piece is a study in *leggero* finger work and dynamic contrasts.<sup>43</sup> Teachers can mention the word *leggier*, which means light and delicate to give students a better understanding of the piece's characteristics and the finger touch required. Students should minimize arm weight to create a light touch.

Magrath writes that “Right hand plays rapid eighth notes in triplets against a blocked-chord accompaniment.”<sup>44</sup> (see Ex. 3.74) Students practice by playing only the downbeats of the right hand to match the left hand's chord. Even if only playing the downbeats, students should follow the finger numbers on the score, so they know which fingers are on the downbeats.

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<sup>39</sup> "Tarantula." *Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia*, 6th Edition (February 2013): 1.

<sup>40</sup> Magrath, p. 209.

<sup>41</sup> Brancalone, p. 179.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Bomberger, p. 159.

<sup>44</sup> Magrath, p. 209.



Ex. 3.74 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 2 “Alla Tarantella” mm. 1-4

This piece demands the fourth finger, the weakest finger, to play on the down beats. (Ex. 3.75) Students can add an accent on every downbeat when practicing to ensure that the fourth finger is firm and strong enough.



Ex. 3.75 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 2 “Alla Tarantella” mm. 7-8

Mm. 29-40 requires the crossing of hands. (Ex. 3.76) The right hand should jump over the left hand in this passage. In addition, students should prepare to cross over one measure before. The right hand should arrive at this position before playing.



Ex. 3.76 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 2 “Alla Tarantella” mm. 29-40

The main musical requirements are as follows:

- Communicating the dance concept
- Exciting characteristics<sup>45</sup>
- Short slur groups
- Sudden dynamic changes
- Two typical rhythms: Eighth notes in triplet; eighth notes in triplet with a rest

The teaching process should always begin with an awareness of every piece’s title and possible impacts. Therefore, if students were assigned “Alla Tarantella,” a first step would be to discuss the title. Showing the dance history and stories can help students to use their imagination with this piece. Finding YouTube videos of the dance can provide students with a vivid impression that combines music and images. For children, teachers can show them a video clip of *Bibbidi-Bobbidi-Boo* from the Disney movie *Cinderella*. For adults, one can show tarantellas from *Godfather*. Step two is hearing the music. The piano teacher can play “Alla Tarantella” for a student and ask him or her to listen and follow the score. Next, the teacher can further discuss with students how the music might describe the dance.

Schwandt writes that “Tarantellas for piano, normally in 6/8, are marked *Presto*, *Prestissimo* or *Vivace*, and are often virtuoso showpieces.”<sup>46</sup> MacDowell used *Prestissimo* for

<sup>45</sup> Brancaleone, p. 178.

this piece. Students should count two beats in a measure instead of six to increase the speed.

Moreover, teachers can ask students to count in one if they want to further speed up.

Three-note slurs comprise most of the piece. Students should not interrupt the big phrase because of the short slur groups. Also, they should not exaggerate arm movements for the three-note slur. Students can practice the whole phrase without short slurs first to help shape the phrase.

This piece requires sudden dynamic changes. The biggest contrast changes from *ff* to *ppp*. (see Ex. 3.77) For sudden dynamic changes, students need not only physical preparation but also mental preparation. Students' hands should be in position before playing to prepare for the sudden dynamic changes. Also, students should read ahead and consciously anticipate the dynamic changes.



Ex. 3.77 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 2 "Alla Tarantella" mm. 21-25

The tarantella has two typical rhythms. The first one is eighth notes in triplets, which were mentioned before (see Ex. 3.78); the second one is eighth notes in triplets with a rest. Students can ignore the right hand's upbeat and match the downbeat with the left hand's chords. (see Ex. 3.79)

<sup>46</sup> Erich Schwandt. "Tarantella." *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press.



Ex. 3.78 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 2 “Alla Tarantella” mm. 1-3



Ex. 3.79 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 2 “Alla Tarantella” mm. 30-32

Preparatory piece: Burgmüller Op. 100, No. 20

A preparatory piece which students already know can help them recall the character and rhythms. Students can experience these rhythms easily and correctly with the preparatory piece (a less technically demanding piece). Burgmüller’s Op. 100, No. 20 contains the tarantella’s characteristics, including the typical rhythms (Ex. 3.80 & 3.81).





Ex. 3.80 Burgmüller Op. 100, No. 20 mm. 1-4



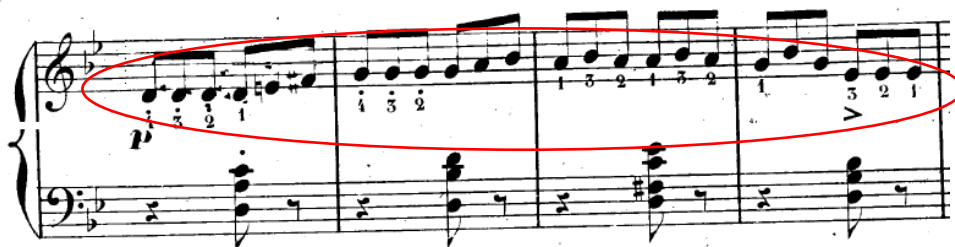
Ex. 3.81 Burgmüller Op. 100, No. 20 mm. 18-20

Advanced piece: Liszt *Venezia e Napoli*, No. 3 “Tarantella”

The teacher can also introduce some advanced repertoire that shares the same characteristics to give students goals as well as motivation to continue practicing (see Ex. 3.82).

Liszt has an advanced piece which uses the same rhythm pattern: eighth notes in triplets.

Students can compare how the Tarantella dance pieces change at different levels.



Ex. 3.82 Liszt *Venezia e Napoli* S. 162 III “Tarantella” mm. 38-41

“Scherzino” Etudes, Op. 39, No. 11

Tempo: Allegro

Key: D Major

Form: ABA'

Section A: mm. 1-26; Section B: mm. 27-50; Section A': mm. 51-76; Coda: mm. 77 -83

Background and characteristics:

The Italian word ‘Scherzo’ has the literal meaning of ‘joke’ in English. In classical music, this word was first used as a musical term in Gabriello Puliti’s composition collection “*Scherzi capricci et fantasie per cantar à due voci*” in Italy in 1605.<sup>47</sup> After Beethoven’s time, it was generally referred to as the minuet in a sonata cycle, whether the minuet was called a Scherzo or not. The distinguishing features of Scherzo are humor and a fast-moving tempo.<sup>48</sup>

In the nineteenth century, composers started writing independent pieces titled Scherzo. The numerous examples include the four scherzos of Chopin, and one by Brahms. Tilden A. Russell writes, “Piano scherzos are usually either virtuoso display pieces (such as those by Sigismond Thalberg, Edward Wolff, and Stephen Heller, from around 1840) or character-pieces or a combination of those.”<sup>49</sup> MacDowell’s “Scherzino” is a combination of a virtuosic piece and a character piece. It combines tuneful and lyrical melody and the study of double notes.<sup>50</sup>

The main technical requirements are as follows:

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<sup>47</sup> Paolo Fabbri, *Monteverdi*, Cambridge University Press, 2007, 73.

<sup>48</sup> Tilden A. Russell and Hugh Macdonald. "Scherzo." *Grove Music Online*. Oxford University Press.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Magrath, p. 209.

- Double-note study including scales and trills. (see Technique section): Find finger pattern
- The left hand plays octaves in *legato* mm. 63-71 (see Technique section)
- The Left hand accompaniment in large leaps ex. mm. 1-7 (See Ex.3.83)



Ex. 3.83 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 11 “Scherzino” mm. 1-7



Ex. 3.84 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 11 “Scherzino” mm. 63-71

“Scherzino” is an effective etude for students to practice double notes including trills and scales (see Ex. 3.84). Detailed practice steps for this technique are mentioned in the technique section. Students should remember to bring out the top melody.

Before playing the piece, the teacher should analyze it with the student. Trying to find the finger pattern is a top priority for playing double notes. For a double third (see Ex. 3.85), fingers number one and three are a group. Two and four are also a group. The last group is three and five. That means basic fingerings work for double thirds in this case. Teachers should also help students determine when to shift the position and ask them to circle it.

For double trills in mm. 13-22, the fingers remain in two groups. Fingers number one and four are a group. Two and five are a group. No position shifting is required (see Ex. 3.86).

The image displays a musical score for MacDowell's Etudes, Op. 39, No. 11, "Scherzino", measures 1 through 9. The score is written for piano in 2/4 time, with a key signature of two sharps (D major). It is organized into three systems. The first system (measures 1-3) begins with a piano (p) dynamic marking. The treble staff contains a melodic line of eighth notes, often beamed in pairs, while the bass staff provides a simple accompaniment of quarter notes. The second system (measures 4-6) continues this pattern. The third system (measures 7-9) introduces more complex melodic textures in the treble staff, including trills and double notes, with fingerings (1-5) indicated above the notes. The bass staff continues with a steady accompaniment. The score concludes with a final chord in measure 9.

Ex. 3.85 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 11 “Scherzino” mm. 1-9



Ex. 3.86 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 11 “Scherzino” mm. 14-21

In mm. 30-32, double notes include thirds, fourths, and fifths (see Ex. 3.87). Since the position is out of the five-finger pattern and doesn't include finger crossing, students should move their wrists horizontally; that is, their wrists should move left and right (see technique section) to release the tension on the palm. Even students who have large hands should perform this motion when playing.



Ex. 3.87 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 11 “Scherzino” mm. 30-32

The main musical requirements are as follows:

- Phrasing the melody
- Comparison between section A and A'

When playing double notes, students sometimes mainly focus on finger patterns, which can cause a lack of phrasing. Students can play the upper melody only with the written fingerings and should try to play these notes as legato as possible. Then, they can add the lower line and use some pedal to help. Teachers should remind students to shape the phrase and avoid any unintended accents.

Sections A and A' are basically the same, except MacDowell adds more accidental markings in section A'. When the music returns to the A' section (m. 51, see Ex.3.89), the B-natural at section A (see Ex. 3.88) becomes a B-flat, which gives the listeners a surprise. Students should consciously be aware of that surprise.



Ex.3.88 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 11 “Scherzino” mm. 1



Ex. 3.89 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 11 “Scherzino” mm. 51

Preparatory Piece: Burgmüller Op. 100, No. 4 “Petite Reunion”

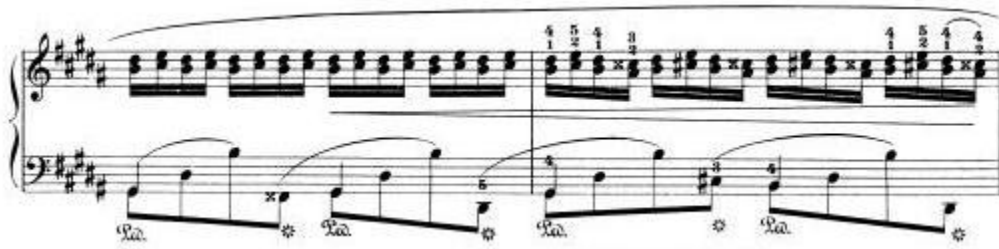
Before playing MacDowell's “Scherzino,” Burgmüller's Op. 100, No. 4 is a useful preparatory piece to help students practice double thirds and sixths (see Ex. 3.90). The finger pattern for descending thirds is the same as the one in MacDowell's work.



Ex. 3.90 Burgmüller Op. 100, No. 4 mm. 1-4

Advanced Piece: Chopin Etude, Op. 25, No. 6

If students want a challenge, Chopin's Etude, Op. 25, No. 6 is one of the best choices (see Ex. 3.91). This is a famous double third etude that includes trills, chromatic scales, and leaps. The finger patterns are different from Burgmüller's and MacDowell's.



Ex. 3.91 Chopin Etude, Op. 25, No. 6 mm. 3-4

“Ungarisch” (Hungarian) Etudes, Op. 39, No. 12

Tempo: Presto con fuoco

Key: A Minor

Form: AA'

Introduction: mm. 1-2; Section A: mm. 3-56; Section A': 57-121

Background and characteristics:

Gypsy music, including Hungarian national feelings and anti-Habsburg movements, began representing the Hungarian music style in the 1700s. Loparits explains the stereotypical features of gypsy music: “The use of the gypsy scale (augmented seconds between the 3rd-4th and 6th-7th scale degrees); the so-called bokazo [heel-clacking dance], which is a brief cambiata-like cadential figure; a wide melodic tessitura with flamboyant decoration; and the alternation between *lassu* (slow) and *friss* (fast, lively) sections.”<sup>51</sup> Loparits also mentions that one of the most distinguishing elements of Hungarian gypsy performers is improvisation.<sup>52</sup> In nineteenth century piano music, Hungarian gypsy music was combined with western music elements.

Matthew writes,

Formally, the *style hongrois* in the 19th century appears to borrow from the multi-sectional *verbunkos* literature, but such works as Brahms's Hungarian Dances and Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsodies owe much to contemporary styles of western European improvisation and are ultimately indebted to the 18th-century free fantasia.<sup>53</sup>

MacDowell's “Hungarian” represents a typical contemporary nineteenth century Hungarian style that lacks the original Gypsy music idioms. Although the characteristics of MacDowell's “Hungarian” are closer to Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsodies in terms of the brilliant ending, his piece doesn't include Liszt's improvisation-like passages. From Brancalone's view, “The “Hungarian,” from Etudes, Op. 39, No. 12, furnishes a strong bravura conclusion to the

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<sup>51</sup> Elizabeth Loparits, “Hungarian Gypsy Style in the Lisztian Spirit: Georges Cziffra's Two Transcriptions of Brahms' Fifth Hungarian Dance”, D.M.A diss. (The University of North Carolina at Greensboro School of Music, 2008.), p. 18.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>53</sup> Oxford Online: Matthew Head.



twelve etudes.”<sup>54</sup> MacDowell composed his “Hungarian” with strong rhythmic patterns that suggest the folk dance.<sup>55</sup>

The main technical requirements are as follows:

- Rapid scale figuration (see technique section)
- Leaps (see technique section)
- Trills (see technique section)
- Cross-rhythms<sup>56</sup>: two against three mm. 50-53; three against five m. 69

The passages in this piece change frequently. Students should keep changing technique and move their hands and arms quickly to adapt to the large leaps and frequently changing passages.

Cross-rhythms are often difficult for students. Two against three is the simplest one (mm. 52-53, see Ex. 3.93). Students can practice triplets with the right hand and the eighth notes with the left hand separately first. When they can play each rhythm mechanically without thinking, they should play with one hand first. Next, students should add the other hand. Teachers should remind students that the second eighth should be played exactly in between the second and third notes of the triplet. Making both hands play the different rhythms mechanically is the goal with this method. If this approach does not work, teachers should try to explain the rhythms in time signature  $\frac{6}{8}$  and ask students to tap the rhythms on the piano cover with both hands first (see Ex.3.92). By understanding how cross-rhythms work between both hands, students should be

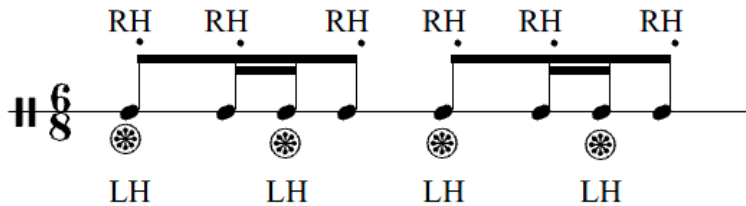
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<sup>54</sup> Brancaleone, p. 186.

<sup>55</sup> Magrath, p. 209.

<sup>56</sup> Clarence G Hamilton. *Piano Teaching: Its Principles and Problems*. O. Ditson, 1910, p. 76.

able to play the rhythms correctly and slowly. But when the rhythm becomes *Presto*, students can still rely on their ear.



Ex. 3.92



Ex. 3.93 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39, No. 12 "Hungarian" mm. 52-53

The main musical requirements are as follows:

- Tempo changes at climax: mm. 98-110
- Enharmonic modulation mm. 85-86
- Chromatic scales in different shapes: mm. 50-54, mm. 86-98, mm. 104-105

Hamilton describes the change of tempo when facing a climax: "The climaxes of a song melody, the quick alternation of the grave and the serious, the pompous and dignified cadence, and the emotional whirl of a *finale* may be excuses for elasticity of tempo. Err, however, on the

safe side, if at all, and discourage your pupil from finicky and spasmodic distortions.”<sup>57</sup> Teachers should discuss with students where the climax of this piece is. Students can take time at climaxes, but every *rubato* should be different and should be limited. In order to prevent overdoing the *rubato* at climaxes, students should listen to the pulse, and find tension and resolution in the harmony. Mm. 98-110 is the climax to the entire piece (see Ex. 3.94). During these measures, the dynamics reach *fff* twice. Students can subdivide the rhythm which appear a half measure before *fff* to prepare for the climax.



Ex. 3.94 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39 No. 12 “Hungarian” mm. 99-109 Climax

Teaching theory through the piece that students are working on is more understandable for students than teaching it through pieces they have never played before or teaching it abstractly. Teachers can explain enharmonic modulations through “Hungarian.” In mm. 78-85, the most important note is E-flat (see Ex. 3.95). In m. 86, MacDowell enharmonies the F-flat to E natural and E-flat to D-sharp (Ex. 3.95). In mm. 86-98 (see Ex. 3.96), D-sharp is the leading note and the neighbor note to E, that is, E becomes the most important note in this passage.

<sup>57</sup> Hamilton, p. 86.



Ex. 3.95 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39 No. 12 “Hungarian” mm. 77-87



Ex. 3.96 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39 No. 12 “Hungarian” mm. 88-98

MacDowell uses chromatic scales in several places in this piece. Teachers can analyze these sections with students. In mm. 50-54 (see Ex. 3.97,) the downbeats of both hands comprise the chromatic scales. The right hand’s downbeats are C, C-sharp, D, D-sharp, and E. The left hand’s downbeats are A (C), B-flat (C-sharp), B (D), B (D-sharp), and (E). Another place that uses chromatic scales is right before the climax (mm. 86-98). Students can find E, F, F-sharp, G, G-sharp, A, A-sharp, B, C, C-sharp, D, D-sharp, and E (see Ex. 3.96) in the right hand. Teachers

can remind students that the destination of both chromatic scales is E, which is the tonic of this piece.



Ex. 3.97 MacDowell Etudes, Op. 39 No. 12 “Hungarian” mm. 48-56

### Advanced Piece

Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsodies suggest the Hungarian folk culture and share similar characteristics with MacDowell's “Hungarian”, such as frequently changing passages and texture. However, unlike MacDowell's “Hungarian”, Liszt provides improvisation-like passages and includes more advanced and skill-required virtuosity. Students can further develop their techniques and experience one of the most important Gypsy music elements –improvisation—through Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsodies.

### Individual Analyses of the *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51

*Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, was composed in 1896 at the Peterborough farm, just before McDowell left for New York.<sup>58</sup> MacDowell's fame reached a new level with *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51.<sup>59</sup> Porte writes, "They are, as a whole, mature nature poems of an exquisite and charming order, beautiful not only for their outward manifestations, but for the deeper significance they give to their source of inspiration"<sup>60</sup> Unlike the Etudes, Op. 39, MacDowell created every title with inspiration from his personal experiences and nature in the New England countryside. Every piece describes its own story, image, and atmosphere. In some pieces, MacDowell masterfully captured the essence of an image: the quickly fading delicacy of a wild rose through abundance of short motives with delicately placed dissonances, or the cathedral-like expanse of the deep woods through soaring materials spaced over six octaves.<sup>61</sup> Brancalone explains, "The change in character in *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, is reflected in the title of pieces, which are no longer foreign-language titles or translations of foreign titles, and also in the omission of pieces sampling ethnic and national types."<sup>62</sup> Moreover, the final piece "Told at Sunset" uses some passages from No. 3, 5 and 8 in *Woodland Sketches*, as MacDowell apparently tries to recollect certain memories.<sup>63</sup>

The pieces in the *Woodland Sketches* are elegant and short, but they allow for a great deal of musicality. In each piece, MacDowell has provided many learning opportunities for voicing, pedaling, and dynamics that can be explored by piano students. MacDowell has only included pedal markings for the piece "To a Water-lily;" otherwise, he encouraged the player to use the pedal interpretation as needed for other pieces in the *Woodland Sketches*.

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<sup>58</sup> Bomberger, p. 199.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. p. 204.

<sup>60</sup> Porte, p. 118.

<sup>61</sup> Brancalone, p. 210.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Oxford, Edward MacDowell.

Located at the top of each piece is a description and helpful expression suggestions. MacDowell specified the exact tempo of each piece in *Woodland Sketches*. For example, in a piece called "From An Indian Lodge," MacDowell instructs the player to play at "♩ = 66."

*Woodland Sketches* will appeal to those students who are looking for original works that encourage imagination and creative exploration. The selected pieces – No. 2 "Will o' the Wisp," No. 6 "To a Water-lily," No. 7 "From Uncle Remus," and No. 10 "Told at Sunset" – from *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, will be discussed from a pedagogical view, and the basic background and characteristics of each will be provided.

#### Individual Listing

Composition Year     1896

First Publication       1896 – New York: P. L. Jung

1. "To a Wild Rose"
2. "Will o' the Wisp"
3. "At an Old Trysting-place"
4. "In Autumn"
5. "From an Indian Lodge"
6. "To a Water-lily"
7. "From Uncle Remus"
8. "A Deserted Farm"
9. "By a Meadow Brook"
10. "Told at Sunset"

Other publications: G. Schirmer(1986), Boston Music Co., E. B. Marks, Schott, Elkin, International Music Corp., Kalmus, FJH Music(2006), Dover(2013)

“Will o’ the Wisp” Woodland Sketches, Op. 51, No. 2

Tempo: Swift and light; fancifully. (♩.= 116)

Key: A Major

Form: Rondo ABA'B'A"

Section A: mm. 1-4; Section B: m. 20; Section A': mm. 21-34; Section B': m. 48; Section A": mm. 49-56

Background and characteristics:

MacDowell’s “Shadow Dance” from the Etudes, Op. 39 and the “Elfin Dance” of Op. 46 share some common materials with “Will o’ the Wisp,” including quick movement, light syncopation, and even some figuration. However, this piece’s syncopation is more exposed and varied.<sup>64</sup>

“Will-o’-the-wisp,” a strange light flickering at night, means “foolish fire.” It is known also as *ignis fatuus* in Latin and “jack-o’-lantern,” and is usually seen in swamp and marshland.<sup>65</sup> The cause of will-o’-the-wisp is not scientifically confirmed. One of the possible reasons is the gases from the bodies of dead animals. In many different cultures, such frightening lights have inspired and resulted in belief in the supernatural and superstitions.

In classic music literature, Franz Schubert’s “Irrlicht” (Will-o'-the-Wisp) in his song cycle *Winterreise* (Winter Journey) shows a traveler who is attracted to a mountain by a will-o'-the-wisp and distracted from his troubles.<sup>66</sup> Franz Liszt also has an advanced piece which bears the same title "Feux Follets" (the French term for Will-o'-the-wisp) in his Transcendental Etude

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 213.

<sup>65</sup> "Will-o'-the-wisp." *Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia, 6Th Edition* (February 2013): 1. *Literary Reference Center*, EBSCOhost .

<sup>66</sup> Daniel Brigham. "Landscape as Redemption: Schubert's "Winter Journey." *Journal of Singing - the Official Journal of the National Association of Teachers of Singing* 63, no. 2 (11, 2006): 133-149. p. 138.



No. 5. Corleonis, in a *Fanfare* magazine review, describes these pieces as having a quirky and glowing atmosphere.<sup>67</sup>

Given the characteristics of the will-o'-the-wisp, MacDowell's character piece suggests a style that is full of imagination. Piano teachers can encourage students to invent their own dreamy stories and discover the treasure waiting inside this piece after they listen to related music, such as works by Schubert, Liszt, and MacDowell.

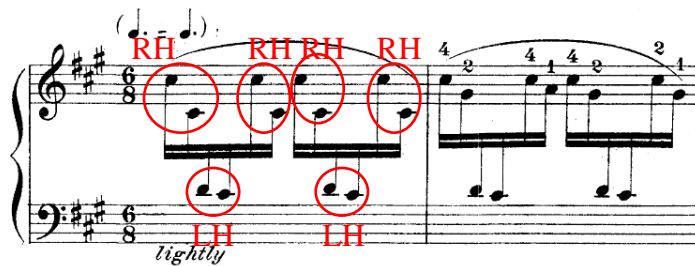
The main technical requirements are as follows:

- Connections between both hands mm. 5-6, m. 15
- Fast passage (see Technique section)
- Match both hands: use downbeat to match voicing
- Phrasing between two hands mm. 19-20
- Hands crossing: Section A' and A''

Regarding connecting technique, mm. 5-6 (transition see Ex. 3.98), the sixteenth notes are played by both hands in rapid alternation which can cause uneven playing. First, students can tap on the piano cover: right - left – right – right – left – right to become accustomed to the coordination between hands. Next, students can block the intervals to become accustomed to the notes and hand positions. Students can next play the downbeat and follow the finger numbers on the score – CDCCDC. Afterwards, they can play the written score.

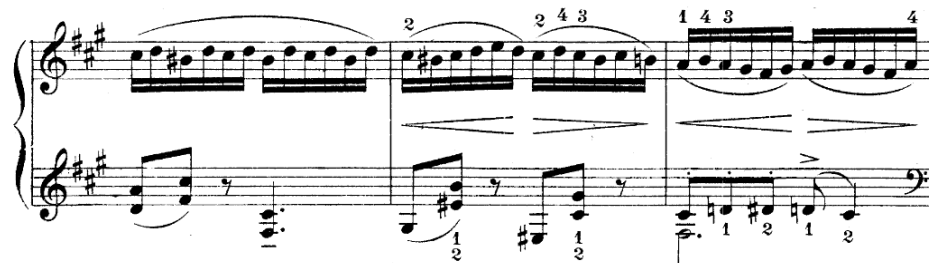
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<sup>67</sup> Adrian Corleonis. "Transcendental Études." *Fanfare - the Magazine for Serious Record Collectors* 31, no. 6 (07, 2008): 180.



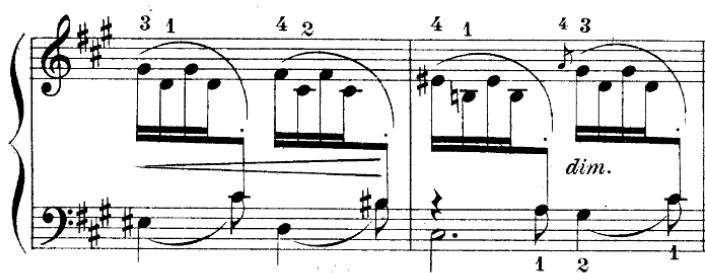
Ex. 3.98 MacDowell *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, No. 2 “Will o’ the Wisp” mm. 5-6

In section B (mm. 10-12, see Ex. 3.99), the right hand plays the fast passage, and the left hand plays in a different rhythm pattern. Matching both hands precisely is challenging. Students should play the right hand’s downbeat with the written finger number only to match the left hand’s rhythm first. MacDowell also uses this technique in “Idyll” and “Shadow Dance” in *Etudes*, Op. 39.



Ex. 3.99 MacDowell *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, No. 2 “Will o’ the Wisp” mm. 10-12

In mm. 19-20 (see Ex. 3.100), both hands share the last note of the phrase. Students can use only one hand to play the last note. Teachers should remind students to not play an accent on the last note. Instead, students should imagine a *decrescendo* at the end of the phrase to shape a phrase for both hands.



Ex. 3.100 MacDowell *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, No. 2 “Will o’ the Wisp” mm. 19-20

The main musical requirements are as follows:

- Rhythm, rest, and syncopation
- Section A: theme becomes thicker and thicker

For the syncopation and rests in section As (see Ex. 3.101), students should count every measure in three. They can use the left hand to tap the downbeat first when playing the right hand. When they feel the downbeat, they can add the left hand’s grace notes.

Section A is a single line without any chords and accompaniment (see Ex. 3.101). In section A'(see Ex. 3.102), the texture is thicker. The right hand texture is now voiced in chords with the melodic line still on top. The left hand’s accent is on the second beat, which helps performers to feel the syncopation. In section A"(see Ex.3.103), MacDowell adds the left hand on the first beat of every measure to increase the importance of the downbeat. He also creates the syncopation on the first beat. Teachers can ask students to practice all sections A, A', and A" as a group and have them analyze and compare the differences.



Ex. 3.101 MacDowell *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, No. 2 “Will o’ the Wisp” section A



Ex. 3.102 MacDowell *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, No. 2 “Will o’ the Wisp” section A'

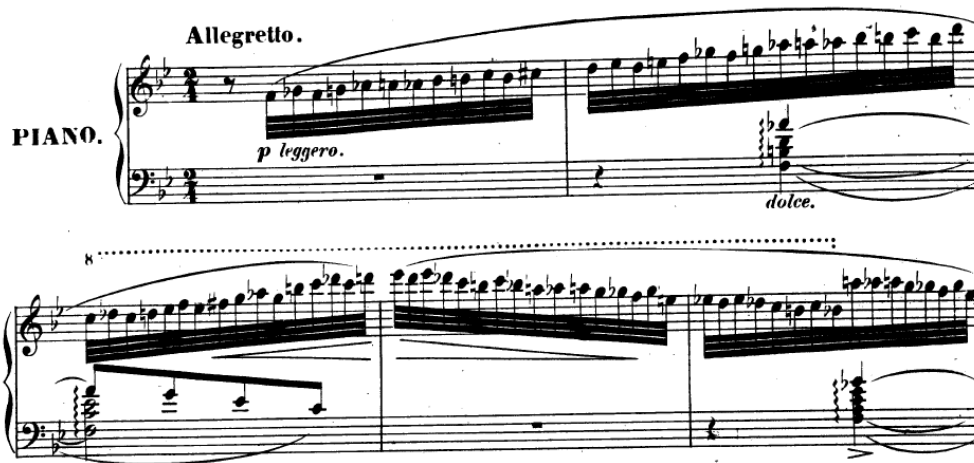


Ex. 3.103 MacDowell *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, No. 2 “Will o’ the Wisp” section A"

### Advanced Piece: Liszt Transcendental Etudes No. 5 “Feux Follets”

Students can experience another “Will o’ the Wisp” with Liszt Transcendental Etude No. 5, “Feux Follets,” which also contains the light touch of the fast passage (*leggero*) for the right hand and rhythmic chords for the left hand (see Ex. 104). The fast and light passage comprises chromatic notes, and rests are placed in between phrases which create the mysterious atmosphere.

Liszt's "Feux Follets" requires more developed technique than MacDowell's. Students might not be able to play Liszt's "Feux Follets" immediately after they finish MacDowell's; however, when students listen to Liszt's "Feux Follets" first, they will likely have more imagination for "Will o' the Wisp."



Ex. 3.104 Liszt Transcendental Etudes No. 5 "Feux Follets" mm. 1-5

"To a Water-lily" Woodland Sketches, Op. 51, No.6

Tempo: In dreamy, swaying rhythm. ( $\text{♩} = 52$ )

Key: F-sharp major

Form: ABA

Section A: mm. 1-16; Section B: mm. 17-32; Section A': mm. 33-46; Coda: mm. 47-55

Background and characteristics:

"To a Water-lily" is one of MacDowell's first compositions that leans toward an almost impressionistic sonority and mood.<sup>68</sup> Porte wrote, "This is a remarkable little piece of lyrical tone

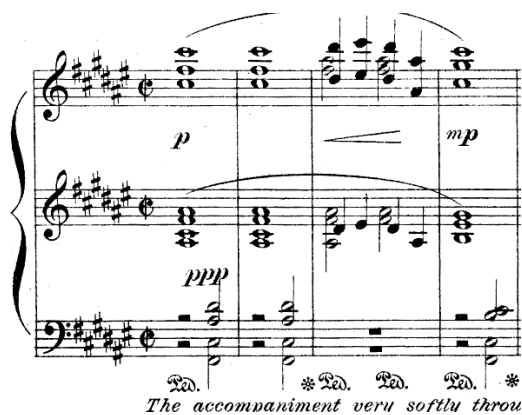
<sup>68</sup> Brancaleone, p. 218.

painting.”<sup>69</sup> The tone color, texture, and three staves setting in this piece are all typical characteristics of the Impressionist style.<sup>70</sup> This piece serves as a suitable alternative to Ravel and Debussy.

The main technique requirements are as follows:

- Both hands play large leaps over an octave: wide register (three staves)
- Play on black keys
- A succession of harmonic intervals: mm. 47-48
- Voicing (mentioned in technique category, see technique section)
- Finger independence: m. 3 (mentioned in technique category, see technique section)
- Chords (mentioned in technique category, see technique section)

Section A and A’ require students hands to play large leaps over two octaves. This piece also challenges students to play in *p* and *ppp*. (see Ex. 3.105) Students should arrive above the next chord before they play the chords. In other words, students play the chords after their hands are placed in the correct position. Also, the technique of arriving at the correct position before playing can prevent students from playing sharp and loud sounds.



Ex. 3.105 MacDowell *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, No.6 “To a Water-lily” mm. 1-4

<sup>69</sup> Porte, p. 120.

<sup>70</sup> Bomberger, p. 203.

The piece is in F-sharp major, so students mostly play on the black keys. This work presents two challenges for students. The first one is to play steadily on the black keys without the fingers falling down to white keys, since the black keys are narrower than the white keys. The second challenge relates to reading. Many sharps and flats in the score may slow down the student's reading. For the first challenge, students can play with flat fingers, keeping more in contact with the keys. This strategy can help their fingers to stand firm on the black keys. For the second challenge, teachers can ask students to memorize which notes are natural, instead of memorizing which notes are sharps.

Mm. 47-48 (see Ex. 3.106) has a succession of harmonic intervals. Students can follow the finger number stated on the score and block the first two beats together as a position, so these two measures have four positions. Students should not change position for every beat (quarter note) because this change will create difficulty in playing *legato*. For students who cannot reach four notes in a position at the same time, they can move their wrist horizontally (left- right) and play two notes together at the same time.



Ex. 3.106 MacDowell *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, No.6 “To a Water-lily” mm. 47-48

The main musical requirements are as follows:

- Dreamy tone color
- Pedal point
- Phrasing
- Harmony: hearing the harmony changing when playing
- Title: creating a story

The tone color of music in an Impressionist style is not as heavy and dramatic as that of Romantic music. The sonorities should be transparent, veiled, and sparkling. The finger touch in this piece should be different from other pieces in this collection. Students can play with a light touch and flat fingers to create the different tone colors. Furthermore, students can lightly blend the sounds with the pedal together to create the dreamy sonorities.

Teachers should also mention the importance of harmonic pedal points in the Impressionist style and ask students to determine the pedal point for this piece. When playing, students should put more weight on the left hand's fifth finger to bring out the pedal point, but the pedal point cannot be played louder than the top melody. Teachers can use the pedal point in Ravel's *La Vallée des Cloches* as an example to compare with this piece. (see Ex. 3. 109)

Students should play through the top two staves first to become accustomed to the melody and phrasing. After that, they can add the upbeat at the bottom staff, which should be played *ppp* and cannot disturb the melody and phrasing (see Ex. 3.105).

Teachers should teach students how to listen and feel the different harmonies. For example, the A-sharp in m. 3 (see Ex. 3.107) changes to A natural in m. 11 (see Ex. 3.108). The D-sharp minor chord changes to a D-sharp diminished chord. In addition, teachers do not have to



explain chords only with music theory. Instead, they can play through and exaggerate these two parts several times, after which students can compare the difference through their listening.



Ex. 3.107 MacDowell *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, No. 6 “To a Water-lily” m. 3



Ex. 3.108 MacDowell *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, No. 6 “To a Water-lily” m. 11

Porte wrote, “The piece is vividly suggestive of a water-lily floating delicately on quiet water, but in the questioning little middle section something seems to disturb the water, and for a moment the flower rocks uneasily.”<sup>71</sup> Teachers should encourage students to create their own story of a water lily. Teachers can play the passages with changing harmonic and textures for

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<sup>71</sup> Porte, p. 121.

students several times to allow them feel the different colors and mood. Instructors should discuss the climax with students, so they can plan and imagine their story in detail. Moreover, teachers can provide students with some visual images by showing them Monet's paintings "Water Lilies" and explaining how these paintings influenced musicians during the impressionist period.

Advanced piece: Ravel's *La Vallée des Cloches*

This piece demands the technique of large leaps and hands cross over. In addition, the pedal point lasts for the entire piece. Also, Ravel composed in three staves with wide registration. Students can further develop their musicianship and technique through this piece (see Ex. 3.109).



Ex. 3.109 Ravel's *Mirror* No. 5 "*La Vallée des Cloches*" mm. 26-28

"From Uncle Remus" *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, No. 7

Tempo: With much humor; joyously. (♩ = 126)

Key: F Major

Form: AB A'

Section A: mm. 1-18; Section B: mm. 19-44; Section A': mm. 45-64

Background and Characteristics:

This character piece, inspired by “Brer Rabbit,” shows MacDowell’s sense of humor in music.<sup>72</sup> MacDowell also wrote another piece called “Of Brer Rabbit” in his Op. 61 *Fireside Tales*. “Brer Rabbit,” a collection of stories, was written by Joel Chandler Harris in the late nineteenth century.<sup>73</sup> Uncle Remus, a black farmer in the southern United States, was a storyteller figure in these stories. The most famous story of Brother Rabbit, “the Tar Trap,” shows Brer Rabbit’s wits over that of Brer Fox in the animal farm. The Walt Disney Company based a film on Harris’s stories and produced the animated musical “Song of the South” in 1946.

According to Brancalone, MacDowell adapts American materials in this piece, including American popular culture, improvisatory performance style (m. 11), and barbershop folksiness (mm. 7-10, 21-22, 43-47, and 51-54).<sup>74</sup>

The main technical requirements are as follows:

- Articulation: alternation between staccato and legato
- Thirty-second notes mm. 11-12
- Syncopation: feel the downbeat m. 11
- Connections between hands m. 63

Accurate rhythm and steady tempo are two of the important issues of this piece. MacDowell frequently changes the articulation in this piece. Students will likely struggle to alternate articulation frequently and maintain a steady tempo and accurate rhythm. Abby Whiteside writes, “Legato, in slow practice, easily breeds sluggishness. On the contrary, staccato often results an unnecessarily sped-up tempo, especially when slow practice is needed.”<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Scholes, p. 172.

<sup>73</sup> Porte, p. 121.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Whiteside, p. 22.

Teachers can ask students to outline the rhythm first in order to feel the correct space between the pauses. Afterwards, students can fill in all of the notes.<sup>76</sup>

There are thirty-second notes at the end of m. 11 (Ex. 3.110). Normally, students will tend to play them faster than they are supposed to be, which can cause uneven playing. Students won't have time to prepare for the next measure. Teachers can ask students to count that measure using eighth notes first. When students become accustomed to the correct rhythm, they can count using quarter notes.

This piece contains syncopations (see Ex. 3.110). Normally, students tend to rush the syncopations. Teachers can ask students to add an accent on the left hand's downbeat to force students to have the correct rhythm. Alternatively, students can also play the right hand first, and use their left hands to tap on the downbeat.



Ex. 3.110 MacDowell *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, No. 7 “From Uncle Remus” m. 41-42

Both hands coordinate to play the melody in the last two measures of the piece (Ex. 3.111). Teachers can ask students use one hand to play the entire melody first. Afterwards, students' ears should become accustomed to the melody that is played by one hand, so they can start splitting the melody between the two hands. Students should carefully listen to the melody to prevent the unnecessary accents and interruptions.

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<sup>76</sup> Whiteside, p. 54.



Ex. 3.111 MacDowell *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, No. 7 “From Uncle Remus” mm. 63-64

The main musical requirements are as follows:

- Combine music with title
- Frequent changing passage
- Accompaniment: staccato chords; feel like plucked instrument, banjo<sup>77</sup>

The title “*From Uncle Remus*” describes the fairy tale about a rabbit and a fox. Teachers can show the Disney movie for students and ask them to be Uncle Remus and create their own rabbit-and-fox story. From Rogers’ view, knowing the background first can help students associate with various historical and cultural elements, which could inspire the musical imagination of students.<sup>78</sup> Next, using visual aids, such as slides, teachers can help students gain more insight into the music.<sup>79</sup> When teaching this character piece, teachers can start with the famous Brer Rabbit’s story with the aid of visual slides or Youtube video clips and supply relevant historical background. Students will acquire more understanding of and interest in the character of this piece. This method not only provides interesting and varied activities in class but also support students’ musical growth.

<sup>77</sup> Brancaleona, p. 221.

<sup>78</sup> Rogers, E. E. (1956, 12). “Visual Aids To The Enjoyment Of Great Music.” *Music Journal*, 14, 8. p. 24.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

This piece has frequently changing passages, including rhythm, articulations, dynamics, and left-handed accompaniment. MacDowell makes frequent use of accents and grace notes and describes the story with the specific markings on the score. Students should carefully follow every marking in order to play vivid music.

In mm. 4-5 (see Ex. 3.112,) the offbeat accompanying chords are similar to those played by a plucked instrument, such as the banjo.<sup>80</sup> Students can imagine that they are playing the plucked instrument by using little or no pedal in this passage. In addition, the top melody's articulation is different from the accompaniment. Students should take caution to hold the dotted eighth notes long enough, so they won't be heard like a staccato.



Ex. 3.112 MacDowell *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, No. 7 “From Uncle Remus” mm. 4-5

Advanced piece: Debussy Preludes, Book I “Minstrels”<sup>81</sup>

Debussy's Minstrels comprises frequently changing passage in terms of rhythm, texture, and articulation (see Ex.3.113). Also, as the title mentions, the staccato in this piece sounds like a plucked instrument. Students can further develop their skill through this piece.

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<sup>80</sup> Brancaleona, p. 221.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 222.



Ex. 3.113 Debussy Preludes, Book I “Minstrels” mm. 4-12

“Told at Sunset” *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, No. 10

Tempo: With Pathos. (♩ = 48); Faster, sturdily. (♩ = 66)

Key: F minor – C major- F minor

Form: ABA'

Section A: mm. 1-19; Section B: mm. 20-59; Section A': mm. 60-84; Coda: mm. 84-90

Characteristics:

MacDowell adapted the segments from previous pieces in the collections into this piece. He inserted part of the No. 3 “At an old Trysting-place,” No. 5 “From an Indian Lodge,” and No. 8 “A Deserted Farm.” Also, he varied and transferred the segments into this piece, which acts like a conclusion to the collections. In addition, MacDowell composed the A section and B section in contrasting styles.

The main technical requirements are as follows:

- Voicing in legato (section A and A'): see Technique section.
- Voicing in staccato (Section B)
- Octaves with fillings mm. 36-43

- Chords in legato mm. 13-19: see Technique section.
- Tremolo in m. 86

Sections A and A' are in legato style. Hinson writes, “Legato is like walking. When one walks, the weight of the body is transferred from one foot to another for each step. In playing a smooth, connected musical legato, the weight of the hand and arm must go easily from one finger to the next.”<sup>82</sup> Hinson’s analogy represents a perfect explanation for students. In addition, piano teachers should remind students not to be sluggish when they apply the technique of legato. The tonal relationships of legato at the piano are actually not through key connection, but through gradation in the energy that is used at the moment of tone production. Especially at fast or moderate speeds, the dynamics produce the sense of legato.

In contrast to section A, section B creates a staccato style. Staccato often results in some mistakes. For example, some students develop an unnecessarily sped-up tempo, especially during slow practice. On the contrary, for some students, piano teachers should remind students not to develop a habit for flying or jumping away from the keyboard, which might slow down the required speed, phrasing, and rhythm.<sup>83</sup>

When playing octaves with additional intervals inside the octave (section B: mm. 36-39, Ex. 3.114), some students might not play the middle notes firmly. If so, they should play the middle notes first with the written finger numbers. Afterwards, they can add the octaves. Also, teachers should remind students to bring out the top melody; that is, the inside should be played firmly but softer than the outer voices.

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<sup>82</sup> Hinson, p. 200.

<sup>83</sup> Whiteside, p. 22.



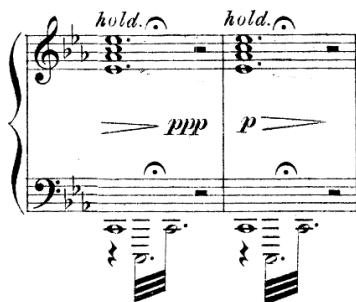


Ex. 3.114 MacDowell *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, No. 10 “Told at Sunset” mm. 36-39

The tremolo in m. 86 (see Ex. 3.115) is adapted from “From an Indian Lodge.” (see Ex. 3.116) The note F keeps the whole m. 86 which means the left hand’s thumb should keep on the note F. As a result, the tremolo below note F should be played with the second and fifth fingers, instead with the thumb and fifth finger. If students cannot hold the thumb when playing the tremolo, they can lift up the thumb and use the pedal to sustain the note F.



Ex. 3.115 MacDowell *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, No. 10 “Told at Sunset” m. 86



Ex. 3.116 MacDowell *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, No. 5 “From an Indian Lodge” mm. 7-8

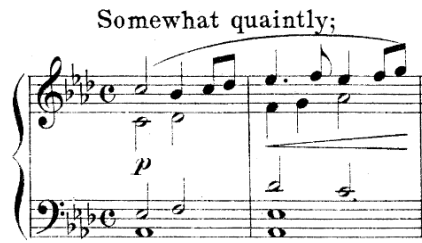
The main musical requirements are as follows:

- Analyze the piece before playing – find the materials used in previous pieces
- Dynamic and expression markings
- Contrasting styles between sections

As stated before, “Told at Sunset” comprises the materials that are used in the some of the previous pieces. In mm. 17-19 (Ex. 3.117), MacDowell adapted the melody of “At an Old Trysting-place.” (mm. 1-2, see Ex. 3.118) He also used “A Deserted Farm” (mm. 1-4, see Ex. 3.119) twice in “Told at Sunset” section A' (mm. 60-63, m. 80, see Ex. 3.120). In addition, he varied the segments of “From an Indian Lodge” at the end. Teachers can play and demonstrate the pieces for students and repeat the special parts several times to help them to learn the adapted materials.

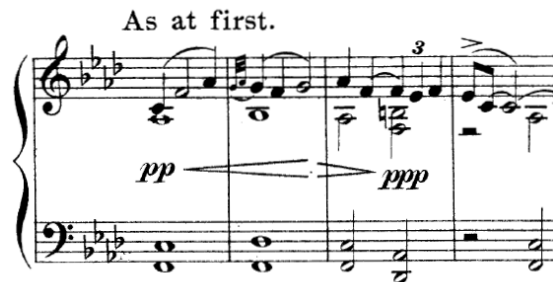


Ex. 3.117 MacDowell *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, No. 10 “Told at Sunset” mm. 17-19



Ex. 3.118 MacDowell *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, No. 3 “At an Old Trysting-place” mm.

1-2



Ex. 3.119 MacDowell *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, No. 10 “Told at Sunset” mm. 60-63



Ex. 3.120 MacDowell *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, No. 8 “A Deserted Farm” mm. 1-4

In section B, the dynamic marking on the score starts from *ppp* and gradually reaches *ff*. Then, the dynamic gradually descends back to *ppp* at the end. The detail of the dynamic process is provided here: *ppp* – *pp* – *p* – *mf* – *f* – *ff* – *f* – *mf* – *mp* – *p* – *pp* – *ppp*. In order to perform such a specific and large range of dynamics, teachers can ask students to practice as many of the

dynamic levels that they can. Students can start with just playing *pp*, *mf*, and *ff*. Next, they can add more dynamic levels. Moreover, students can try different dynamic levels in a single note first. Afterwards, they can attempt with chords and scales during their warm ups.

Students can practice playing contrasting styles from this piece. MacDowell wrote “With Pathos” and ( $\text{♩} = 48$ ) for both section A and A'. In contrast, he wrote “Faster, sturdily” and ( $\text{♩} = 66$ ) for section B. Furthermore, A and A' sections both share legato and contrapuntal style using dynamics of *p* and *pp*. However, the B section comprises chords and staccato style, and the dynamic range is also from *pp* to *ff*. To play the contrasting style, students not only require different technical skills, they also need to change their mood quickly, from mournful to energetic.

#### Advanced Piece: Ravel “Epilogue” from *Valses nobles et sentimentales*

The segments of the previous pieces appear and vary in the last piece. “Epilogue” is also a conclusion of the whole *Valses nobles et sentimentales*, just as “Told at Sunset” of *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51. This piece is another example for students to experience this kind of compositional method.

#### Suggested Teaching Order

This section will group both Etudes, Op. 39, and *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, into three categories by difficulty, labeled Group I, Group II, and Group III. Factors in determining the order include: technical challenges, musical considerations, number of difficulties within each piece, speed of the piece, and length of the piece. However, hand size and strengths and weaknesses of the student could alter this suggested order.

Group I (easier) consists of Etudes, Op. 39: “Hunting Song,” “Alla tarantella,” “Romance,” and *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51: “To a Wild Rose.” The first two pieces utilize a quicker tempo.

Group II contains “In the forest,” “Intermezzo,” *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51: “At an Old Trysting Place,” “A Deserted Farm,” “In Autumn,” and “From an Indian Lodge.” These pieces have a higher level of difficulty because they require more musical and technical skill.

The final category is Group III. This grouping level includes Etudes, Op. 39: “Arabesque,” “Dance of the Gnomes,” “Idyll,” “Shadow Dance,” “Melody,” “Scherzino,” and “Hungarian,” *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51: “Will o' the Wisp,” “To a Water Lily,” “From Uncle Remus,” “By a Meadow Brook,” and “Told at Sunset.” For students who prefer challenges and virtuosic style, “Shadow Dance” and “Hungarian” have virtuosic passages.

## CHAPTER 4

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this document has been to identify musical and technical challenges found in Edward MacDowell's Etudes, Op. 39, and *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, and provide pedagogical suggestions for teachers and students. The analysis started with key techniques to romantic music. Clarfield's thoughts of the general skills to play romantic pieces are cited: beautiful singing tone, balancing left-hand accompaniment, tasteful rubato, clear pedal, and harmonies. These helpful suggestions served as great reminder for the student to apply when learning romantic pieces. The dissertation then analyzed the technical challenges of Edward MacDowell's Etudes, Op. 39 and *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, including trills, scales, polyphony, double notes, and chords. Essential technical exercises are provided for early advanced students. For example, when practicing trills, students should begin by only playing the notes which are on the downbeat first. For the alternate-hand trills in Etudes, Op. 39 No. 6 "Dance of the Gnomes," students can block the chords first. For trill in double notes in No. 4 "Arabesque," students can knock the rhythm on the piano cover hands together, making sure that the knocking is from the wrist instead of the forearm. Instead of placing the thumb under the palm, try to have students place it alongside the hand when playing scales. Moreover, playing polyphony passages trains finger-independent technique and voicing. For example, when playing polyphony in Etudes, Op. 39 No. 9 "Intermezzo," students can play two voices with two hands first, while teachers ensure that students perfectly shape every voice, especially the upper one. Teachers should check to see if students' palms are firm enough to bring out the upper melody. In addition, this dissertation

groups both *Etudes*, Op. 39, and *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, into three categories by difficulty, labeled Group I, Group II, and Group III for piano teachers' reference. Hence, teachers can follow these practice suggestions supplied and develop their own teaching ideas to instruct their students.

This dissertation also gave practical suggestions to meet musical requirement of each piece, including visual aids and imaginary story. By using visual aids, such as slides, teachers can help students gain more insight into the music. These teaching concepts stated in Chapter 3 not only give interesting and varied activities in class but also support students' musical growth. Teachers can apply these concepts to other pieces.

It is important to provide piano teachers with more variety in repertoire selection for students' auditions and competitions, thus helping early-advanced students to build a solid technical and musical foundation for the next level. MacDowell's *Etudes*, Op. 39 not only provide essential technical exercises but also promote artistic growth, which is helpful for students to develop many important musical and technical skills. MacDowell created every title of *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, with inspiration from his personal experiences and nature in the New England countryside. Every piece describes its own story, image, and atmosphere. This collection will appeal to those students who are looking for original works that encourage imagination and creative exploration.

Teachers can help students explore different style of music by adding a variety of piano compositions from other composers and genres. The pianist Ursula Oppens commented, "You certainly don't want to be a restaurant that puts the same sauce on every plate."<sup>173</sup> In addition to some standard repertoire for early-advanced piano students, such as Debussy's *Children's Corner Suite*, Ginastera's *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, Satie's *Gnossienes*, Starer's *Sketches in Color*,

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<sup>1</sup>Brooke Wentz. "Ursula Oppens." *Ear: Magazine of New Music*, December 1988., 21.

Menotti's *Poemetti* and Ravel's *Menuet sur le nom du Haydn*,<sup>174</sup> MacDowell's *Etudes*, Op. 39 and *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, serve as excellent piano literature for students' repertoire. The *Etudes*, Op. 39, were composed in his earlier period, in which he used many European idioms. Gradually, the American spirit and idioms played an important role in his later works. The change shows MacDowell's compositional development.

It is also pedagogically important to have an early-advanced student encounter the technical, tonal, musical, rhythmical and notational factors that will later be experienced in the advanced works. MacDowell's *Etudes*, Op. 39, and *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51, explore different possibilities either in technical or musical perspectives. With the experience of learning these works, the student will be interested in and musically prepared for more progressive, *avant garde* and advanced works.

The author hopes that this study can benefit piano teachers by helping their students discover the music of MacDowell by offering teaching suggestions and inspiring them to apply these views and principles to other early advanced level teaching pieces.

#### Suggestions for Further Study

A possible topic for further study that is beyond the scope of this study includes analysis of MacDowell's *Twelve Virtuoso Studies* Op. 46 which are more technically demanding than his *Etudes*, Op. 39 and serve as additional teaching pieces of MacDowell's. Carole Bruton's "A Pedagogical and Performing Analysis of Edward MacDowell's Zwölf Virtuosen-Etuden, Op. 46." is a great resource and reference to study. Despite some stylistic and aesthetic differences, a comparison of the *Etudes*, Op. 39 and the Op. 46 collections reveal both similarities and differences in terms of musical and technical challenges.

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<sup>2</sup> Helen Marlais. "A Teacher's Guide to Early Advanced Piano Works of the American Twentieth Century." *American Music Teacher*. no. 5 (1997): 30.



Furthermore, another recommendation for further study is an examination and comparison of the musical and technical challenges that can be found in other American composer s' early advanced pieces. For example, Aaron Copland's *The Cat and The Mouse*, Charles Griffes' *Three Tone-Pictures*, Op. 5 (1. *The Lake at Evening*, 2. *The Vale of Dreams*, 3. *The Night Winds*), and Morton Gould's "Boogie Woogie Etude" and his Pavane (From "symphonette No. 2"),<sup>175</sup> these would be excellent collections for teachers and students to learn with pedagogical analysis, as they also serve as pedagogically rich repertoire.

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<sup>175</sup> Maurice Hinson. *Anthology of American piano music: intermediate to early advanced works by 31 composers*. Van Nuys, CA: Alfred, 2010.

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