

Study of Dalcroze' Eurhythmics Concept on Hanon Fingering Etude in Developing Piano Core Skill

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ABSTRACT

In piano learning process, the problem that to be reflected on and solved is about how to strengthen the practical teaching of music education, cultivate students practical ability, and construct a very distinctive training system for developing higher normal college students music education specialized in their practical ability (Jiang, 2019 p. 628). This study is arranged accordance to those thoughts, which in piano learning process, tone balancing becomes one of the main concerns, because the ultimate goal of accuracy and aesthetics in piano play depends on the ability of a pianist to control the tone of each fingers. Therefore, tone quality development in piano playing has always been the main focus in the learning process, especially in the early stages of learning. This paper used a literature review analysis that produces a conceptual explanations about Hanon Fingering Etude to develop piano core skill based on Dalcroze' Eurhythmics concept. The analysis showed that Hanon Etude is very necessary in shaping the finger and hand posture to conform the standard proportions of the hand when playing a piano, and also needed in shaping and accustoming the finger-muscles of the right hand and left hand to move simultaneously, with certain notations and beats. Thus, it can be said that the Dalcroze' Eurhythmics concept contained in the Hanon Fingering Etude has an important role to improve the ability comprehensively (starting from the ability to listen to tones, the ability to coordinate the movement of right hand and left hand muscles, as well as the ability to improvise articulation movements in accordance with what is indicated in the piano partiture).

Keywords: Piano Etude, Dalcroze' Eurhythmics, Core Skill

1. INTRODUCTION

The piano course is a compulsory course for music education majors in comprehensive art colleges [4]. Piano is a musical instrument whose beam notation reading system rests on 2 staves that line up and down, where the top staff is played with the right hand, and the lower staff is played with the left hand. Each finger, both right hand and left hand, has a function to press the piano according to what is written on the music sheet. In carrying out this function, each finger is expected to have the same neatness and muscle strength, thus, each tone produced by each finger can have a balanced tone quality. In piano learning process, the problem that to be reflected on and solved is about how to strengthen the practical teaching of music education, cultivate students practical ability, and construct a very distinctive training system for developing higher normal college students music education specialized in their practical ability [6]. In the piano learning process, the tone balancing becomes one of the main concerns because the ultimate goal of the realm of accuracy and aesthetics of piano playing, will depend on the ability of a piano player to control the tone of each of his fingers.

Therefore, the formation of tone quality in piano playing has always been the main focus in the learning process, especially in the early stages of learning. The formation of piano tone quality is certainly also a concern in piano learning in the Piano Department, Music Study Program, Faculty of Language and Art, Universitas Negeri Surabaya.

Learning piano in several countries have gone through several developments in method, strategy, and learning approach, which means that in every colleges have their own methods and material to develop a comprehensive piano learning process [10]. The Piano Major Course is one of the tiered practice subjects, in the Music Study Program, Faculty of Language and Art, Universitas Negeri Surabaya which has learning outcomes so that students are able to play the piano, as well as mastery of skills in playing it, using etude and repertoire levels certain according to the level of the course taken. Piano Major courses consist of 6 (six) levels, namely: (1) Indria Level Piano Major, (2) Pra-Muda Level Piano Major, (3) Muda Level Piano Major, (4) Pra-Madya Level Piano Major, (5) Madya Level Piano Major, and (6) Utama Level Piano Major. Concern on the tone quality of piano playing is always at every level of the Piano Major course. However, the

most important urgency is at the Indria Level Piano Major, because at this level, it is the initial level of students starting to learn how to read 2 music sheets and practice forming fingering muscles on the piano.

Piano playing is an art of combining theory and practice [7]. The material provided in the Indria Level Piano Major course includes several things, which are the scale material, warming-up etude, technical etude, melodic etude, and also repertoire material. Tone formation exercises are applied in a warming-up etude session. The learning resource used in this session is Hanon The Virtuoso Pianist, in which this book contains 60 types of exercises aimed at the flexibility and strength of each finger to move independently. When examined from the context and substance of the material, Hanon's book refers to the Dalcroze Eurhythmics learning method.

2. METHODS

2.1. Eurhythmics Dalcroze Method

This method was compiled by Emile Jaques-Dalcroze. His parents are from Switzerland. Dalcroze completed his music education at the Conservatory of Music in Geneva. After he graduated, Dalcroze worked in Paris with Delibes and in Vienna, along with Fuchs and Bruckner. Dalcroze's Eurhythmics method basically covers 2 (two) main aspects that have existed in the past, namely *solfeggio* (aural training) and improvisation aspects. Dalcroze's Eurhythmics method is unique and becomes one of the most influential methods in music learning because by combining these 2 (two) aspects, it can stimulate the ability of students to move rhythmically during the musical process [11]. In the aspect of *Solfeggio* or Aural Training, the indicators to be achieved are to train sensitivity to tone, linearity relationships between tones, and variations in relationships between tones. Aural Training is a suggestion to train the musical sensitivity of students so that later it is expected to support the ability to read music scores (Sight Reading) that are more responsive.

In the aspect of improvisation, Dalcroze defines it as a combination of the principles of motion and hearing training, a stage of processing before it is implemented through bodily movements (Eurhythmics). Achievement from the aspect of improvisation is the ability to do musical variations, expressively in playing musical instruments (in this case, piano), responsive to time and tempo, and being able to be communicative to other players in the musical process.

The next stage in Dalcroze's Eurhythmics method is regarding eurhythmic. Eurhythmic refers to rhythmic, proportional and symmetrical motion. The rhythmic

refers to the speed with which notation is played based on each notation beats. Symmetry leads to balance and accuracy in body movements. Proportional in question refers to the suitability between the form of body movements and the music played [11].

Dalcroze's Eurhythmics method in piano learning requires vertical intonation capabilities (executing ascending and descending melody contours), and horizontal intonation (controlling the application of *legato* or smoothly and *staccato* or detached articulation).

According to Dalcroze, in order to achieve good results in *Solfeggio* learning, he instructed his students to make steps metrically (regular steps). In addition, to adjust the musical rhythm, body movements are used. From this arises a method called rhythmic training, which is famous throughout the world. Initially, he opened a private school to practice his scientific arguments, meanwhile, Dalcroze also held seminars or lectures. The Dalcroze method is officially recognized and established in schools or courses in several countries for rhythmic training [1].

In 1910, Heleran in Dresden, Germany opened an institute using the Dalcroze method. Many science experts and music experts visited it. During the period of 1915-1934, the course had 7,253 students. More than 30 countries attend rhythmic based music education. By this method, Dalcroze changed the paradigm of music lessons. The basics of the method are as follows: (1) All rhythm is movement; (2) All movements are material; (3) All movements require space and time; (4) Space and time are related in an eternal rhythm; (5) The movements of children are in the soul and not realized. Physical experience is a human being; (6) Perfecting body parts will produce clarity in intellectual experience; and (7) Managing movements is the development of our spiritual rhythmic state.

In Dalcroze's opinion, the rhythmic method basically has 4 (four) goals, including: (1) Developing and perfecting the formation of nerves and flesh to create our 'spiritual rhythmic state' by the close relationship between spiritual and physical with musicians; (2) Producing a harmonious relationship between dynamic physical movements and various comparisons of 'time' to create a 'rhythmic musical sense'; (3) Relates physical dynamism in time to the 'space', which is to create a 'rhythmic musical sense based on imitation'; and also (4) Although music is the basis for the rhythm, Dalcroze does not direct his methods to educate music experts, nor is he a dance experts in physical movements. However, all of that must be considered as a general educational tool, which

prepares children in the art of movement (dynamic rhythmic art), the Dalcroze method is intended for kindergarten and elementary school children, and can connect music in harmony with body movements. The Dalcroze method in fact also provides benefits for the education of children with special needs.



Figure 1 Hanon *Exercise Fingering* Number 1 (as example).

Some examples of exercises that can be applied, including: (1) The teacher plays the piano, while children line up or move to the rhythm in accordance with the rhythm of the song; and (2) There are also auditory exercises (Solfeggio) with the aim of explaining and emphasizing musical abilities. Physical education is intended for motoric training, for example: dressing up by themselves, stringing various objects, dexterity training, weighing exercises above the line, and so on. Conversations are needed to be done between teacher and student before learning activities begin. To teach music notations, use of body movements, develop a sense of beauty, rules, and so on.

2.2. Hanon The Virtuoso Pianist (Fingering Warming-up Session)

Wiles and Bondi in Simanjutak, Simatupang, and Ganap [9] said that the curriculum is a process in which the choice of designing learning experiences for

students is made and the activated through a series of coordinated activities. One of the curriculum components is learning material. Material or learning source is one of the various components in learning [2]. Hanon The Virtuoso Pianist [3] is a form of preparation training to achieve agility, endurance, coordination of independence, and perfect evenness of motion, on the right and left hand. Hanon The Virtuoso Pianist contains 60 numbers of variations of the coordination of fingers, along two octaves of upward direction and two octaves of downward direction, with a range of notations ranging from C2 (the lowest notation pressed by the left hand finger) to reach the G6 notation (the highest notation pressed by the right hand finger).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Implementation of Hanon the Virtuoso Pianist in The Formation of Tone Quality Placement of Piano Playing

Fingering Warming-up Session in the book Hanon The Virtuoso Pianist in context and substance refers to Dalcroze's Eurhythmics method. This method always appears in every etude number in Hanon's book, where mastery of vertical intonation and horizontal intonation are the main goals. As in the example of Hanon etude material number 1.

The Virtuoso Pianist - Part I. Exercise N°1 in C C. L. HANON.



Figure 2 A few bars of Hanon *Exercise Fingering* Number 1.

As a common art form, piano performance needs to cultivate the students' artistic skills in the process of education, which can also improve the quality of piano performances [14]. It was believed that cultivating students' artistic ability in piano education is the focus of the piano teaching process in colleges and universities [13]. Looking at the example of Hanon Fingering Session number 1, the implementation of the Dalcroze Eurhythmics method is clearly visible, including:

3.1.1 Intonation Mastery

The great piano composer, Kabalevsky said that in the initial stage of music learning, students not only to emphasize learning symbols, nor require students to memorise a lot of music symbols, but Kabalevsky suggested that musical features and music styles or even the tones can be used as the starting point to guide children to feel the music color of the music itself [5]. In addition, in order to seek for the beauty of aesthetic music in higher levels, students shall attentively understand the philosophy of nature and the significance of life, so that they can deliver and experience the meaning beyond the shape reflected in piano music [12]. It was also said that piano education should emphasize the development of specialization to high quality and high ability. Those all requirements and goals in piano education, it started from the basic skills development [8].

3.1.1.1. Vertical Intonation

In the example of Hanon The Virtuoso Pianist number 1, mastery of vertical intonation appears in the application of the motives of each bar. Hanon has one of the characteristics in the form of repetition motive exercises on each ascending order and also on descending orders. The motif includes certain melodic contours that utilize five-finger activity (both right hand and left hand). Starting with the first bar (shown on the red box), there are notes C, E, F, G, A, G, F, E. The motif of the melody contour is then repeated on the second bar (shown on the green box), which contains notes D, F, G, A, B, A, G, F. The ascending order motif is carried out along two octaves, then entered on the descending order motif. The first bar of the descending order contains notes G, E, D, C, B, C, D, E; then the descending order motif repeats in the next bar (containing notes F, D, C, B, A, B, C, D, and so on as well as two octaves). The application of melodic contour motives like this requires students to be able to coordinate their piano playing, execute melodic contours in repeated motives in the upward and downward directions, as appropriate.

3.1.1.2. Horizontal intonation

Horizontal intonation that meant here is the implementation of articulation (articulation of *legato*, *staccato*, or *portato*) as long as students play the notation in Hanon The Virtuoso Pianist. The ability to balance the tone and volume quality of each fingers, becomes an achievement in the aspect of horizontal intonation. Students can apply several types of variations in this horizontal intonation, by processing the type of articulation that he will practice, such as: the first round of practice applying *legato* articulation, then

entering the second round applying *staccato* articulation exercises; or vice versa. What can be applied during practice are variations such as in the upward direction applying *legato* articulation, then in the downward direction applying *staccato* articulation, and vice versa. This kind of horizontal intonation training process requires students to be able to produce accurate and precise tone quality through their fingers.

3.1.2 Achievements of 3 (Three) Competencies in the Dalcroze Eurhythmic Method

3.1.2.1. Aural Training

A music player is expected to be able to listen to his own music, in the sense that a music player must know every notation that he plays in detail. In Hanon The Virtuoso Pianist, there is a uniform motive between the right hand and the left hand. Based on this, a music player in this case, students is required to be able to maintain neat coordination of the fingers, the balance of tone and volume produced by each finger. With the habit of listening to the training process itself, students are indirectly formed sensitivity in listening to the accuracy of the notes and execution of precision fingering.

3.1.2.2. Improvisation

As in the previous section's explanation of the mastery of horizontal intonation, this improvisation stage refers to the ability of students to process the diversity of piano articulation, including *legato* articulation, *staccato* articulation, or *portato* articulation. How can he execute each type of articulation (on the right hand and left hand) accurately, with a balanced quality, the students are said to be able to carry out the improvisation stage optimally.

3.1.2.3. Eurhythmic

3.1.2.3.1. Rhythmic

Artur Schnabel, a piano player once said, "The notes I handle are no better than many pianists, but the pauses between the notes - that's where the art resides". In playing a music instrument (for this matter, a piano), accuracy and beauty are not only interpreted as accuracy and beauty in executing the notation with the precise fingers, but also the accuracy and beauty in feeling and applying rhythmic beats resulting from the combination of beam notations and rest signs. This rhythmic competence arises in Hanon The Virtuoso Pianist's practice, where students are expected to be able to play the notation (with both hands, right and left) at a certain tempo, starting from the slow tempo (*andante*) to the fast tempo (*vivace*), in neat and accurate.

3.1.2.3.2. *Symmetrically.*

In the Hanon The Virtuoso Pianist practice, right hand and left hand play the same notation. As in the example below:



Figure 3 A few bars of Hanon Exercise Fingering Number 2.

The example in the first bar shows that both right hand and left hand play the same notation and beat, namely C with C, E with E, A with A, G with G. F with F, and so on. This requires neat and balanced motion coordination; no any fingers can overtake each other, each note is played simultaneously. Through this kind of training, the symmetrical competence which becomes one of the indicators in Dalcroze' Eurhythmics method, can be fulfilled.

3.1.2.3.3. *Proportional*

As in the mastery of horizontal intonation, in proportional competence, students are expected to be able to adjust between finger gestures and articulations specified in the Hanon The Virtuoso Pianist training session. An example can be taken in the following picture:

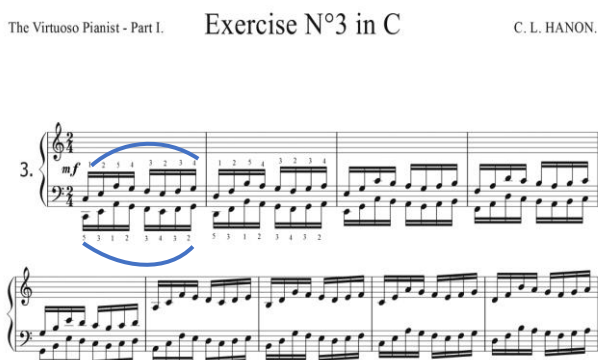


Figure 4 A few bars of Hanon Exercise Fingering Number 3.

In the example of the fragment of Hanon Fingering Exercise number 3, the first bar, students play the *legato* articulation, while in the second bar the students play the *staccato* articulation. This requires accurate and precise motion adjustments when the fingers press the piano, following specified articulation instructions. Thus, proportional competencies in the Eurhythmics Dalcroze method can be fulfilled.

4. CONCLUSION

The Hanon exercise, which refers to the Dalcroze' Eurhythmics method, is practiced by students who take the Piano Major course in the Music Study Program, Faculty of Language and Art, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, starting from Indria Level (1st), Pra Muda Level (2nd), Muda Level (3rd), Pra Madya Level (4th), Madya Level (5th), until the Utama Level (6th). This exercise is very important as an initial warming-up session, to maintain flexibility, strength, and endurance of the running muscles before entering the etude or repertoire. Especially for students who take Indria Level Piano Major course, which is the first step they learn to play the piano, Hanon material is very necessary in shaping the finger posture and hand posture to conform to the standard proportions of the hand when playing a piano, and also required in forming and accustoming the muscles of the fingers of the right hand and left hand to move simultaneously, with certain notations and beats.

Thus, it can be said that the Dalcroze' Eurhythmics method contained in the Hanon Fingering Session material has an important role for a music player (especially piano) in order to have the ability or competency comprehensively (starting from the ability to listen to tones, the ability to coordinate the movement of fingers, as well as the ability to improvise articulation movements in accordance with what is indicated in the beam notation music sheets).

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