

SCALES

I. Philipp

Before proceeding with the scale studies, careful attention to the preparatory exercises below is advised. Here, the hand position and the thumb movements also are extremely important.

While practicing the preparatory exercises, the hands point in and the wrists are rounded out and about level. The knuckles are raised, and the fingers full-curved. The thumb tips are bent inward. When passing under, the movement comes equally from the ball of the thumb and its joints. The ball moves well toward the palm as the thumb goes under, and is kept loose and flexible. As the second finger is played, the thumb moves instantly under, its tip covering the next note it is to strike. As the thumb strikes, the hand glides quickly sidewise across the thumb, and the second, third, and fourth fingers immediately cover the next notes they are to play. They also retain their full curve, without straightening, or moving in a high semi-circle over the keys. The second finger requires especial watching, as it is the most likely to straighten. In moving along the keyboard the thumb does the

work of shifting the hand from position to position, the fingers thereby being relieved from the necessity of reaching and consequently straightening. A finger playing a white key, preceding one which is about to play a black key, (as from E to F#) strike close to the black, and the following finger strikes on the end of the black. In and out movements on the keys are thus avoided. In accomplishing these positions and movements, a close, light touch, without accents or rhythms, is at first most helpful. High finger movements are more safely employed later.

To insure a quiet hand and a good legato, the fingers often sustain their notes until the thumb passes under and strikes its note, the hand remaining in its inward, pointing position. Turning the hand from the wrist, first in, then out, seriously affects the evenness of the scale touch.

These positions and movements, and the rhythms of page 18 are applied to the following scale exercises, and to general scale practice.

M M ♩ = 50-80. ♩ = 60-120

Preparatory Exercises

THUMB AND SCALE

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(pp. p. mf. f.)

1