

A Brief Look at the Origins of the Etude

By Emily Stoll

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When did etudes emerge as their own genre and where did they come from?

- Etudes arose in the 1800s, they evolved from educational pieces and exercises written by pedagogues for their students.
- The terms “exercise” and “study” were used loosely and interchangeably before the 19th Century.¹ These instructional pieces were typically short and did not focus on a specific technical or musical problem but rather resembled much of the standard performance music of the time.²
- Composers such as Domenico Scarlatti and C.P.E Bach both wrote studies and exercises which are pedagogical but do not focus on a sole technical issue.³ (*Examples 1a & 1b*). Many instructional pieces at this time were called sonatas, such as C.P.E Bach Six Keyboard Sonatas Wq.63
- The etude of the 19th century became a didactic piece that focused on a specific musical issue and was intended for improving one’s technical skill.

Why did composers begin writing technical study pieces?

- The etude genre was influenced by the development of the piano.⁴
- The new expressive capabilities of the instrument resulted in a rise in its popularity. The desire for piano music and its increasingly difficult repertoire created a need for pieces that focused on technical development.
- Etudes became a way to enable the musician to focus on musicality by removing technical insufficiencies.

Who were the pioneers of the genre and how have etudes changed over time?

- Czerny, Clementi, and Moscheles composed numerous collections of studies and exercises that focused on technical skills that inspired their contemporaries to create their own collections of technical studies. (*Examples 2a-2c*)
- Chopin and Liszt established concert etudes as a branch of the genre. These concert etudes still focus on specific musical skills but also have musical substance and are appropriate for public performance.
- In the early 19th century etudes were strictly technical, as time went on composers such as Clementi and Moscheles began to explore ways to make the studies more musically palatable.
- Towards the end of the 19th century composers began to create etudes with character piece titles for all levels of pianists that were musically interesting, such as those by Burgmuller, Gobbarts, Gurlitt, and Heller. (*Examples 3a-3c*)
- Composers of the in 20th century explored with the potential subject matter for etudes. Composers such as Debussy created etudes based on sonorities and Ligeti created etudes on rhythms.

¹ “Study (Fr. étude; Ger. Etüde, Studie; It. studio) “ by Howard Ferguson , revised by Kenneth L. Hamilton

² “The Etude of the 19th Century.” Nourou, Sevastiana. Retrieved August 13, 2019.

<https://thesalonmusicblog.wordpress.com/2017/09/19/the-etude-in-the-19th-century/>

³ “Study (Fr. étude; Ger. Etüde, Studie; It. studio) “ by Howard Ferguson , revised by Kenneth L. Hamilton

⁴ “The Etude of the 19th Century.” Nourou, Sevastiana. Retrieved August 13, 2019.

<https://thesalonmusicblog.wordpress.com/2017/09/19/the-etude-in-the-19th-century/>

Essercizio 1

Domenico SCARLATTI
(1685-1757)
Restituito a : F. Goswin

Allegro

This musical score consists of three systems of two staves each. The first system starts with a treble clef and a common time signature. The right hand plays a series of eighth notes, while the left hand has a whole rest. The second system continues the right-hand melody with trills and the left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The third system shows the right hand playing a more complex rhythmic pattern with trills, and the left hand continues its accompaniment.

1.

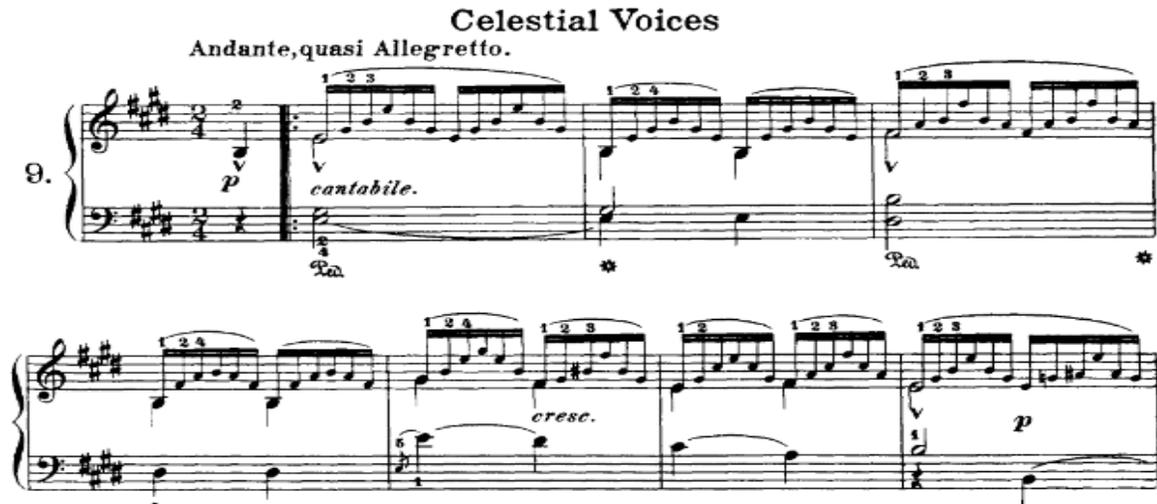
Sonata I.

Allegretto.
tranquillamente.

This musical score is for the first movement of Bach's Sonata No. 1. It features a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The right hand has a melodic line with many slurs and ornaments, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. The score includes various performance markings such as accents, slurs, and dynamic indications like 'f' and 'p'.

Example 1a excerpt from Domenico Scarlatti's 30 Exercises for Harpsichord.

Example 1b from Bach's short three movement Keyboard Sonata No.1 Wq.63



Example 3c from Stephen Heller's 25 Melodious Studies Op.45, No.9

The Piano in Societal History in Europe:

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It is important to note that the terms “pianoforte” and “fortepiano” were used interchangeably in the 18th century and early 19th century. In recent times the term fortepiano has come to refer to the predecessors and permutations of the modern pianoforte or piano for short.

In Berlin the term Piano-forte and Forte-piano were interchangeable and familiar. In Vienna where the first known fortepiano concert (Burgtheater 1763) was held the term fortepiano was prevalent.⁵

After about the middle of the 18th century Germans and later the Russians took to calling the predecessors of the modern piano the forte-piano.⁶

Below are some examples of the ambiguity in the use of terms for the predecessors of the modern piano:

“The poet and journalist Scipione Maffei, in his enthusiastic 1711 description, named Cristofori’s instrument a “gravicembalo col piano, e forte” (harpsichord with soft and loud), the first time it was called by its eventual name, pianoforte. A contemporary inscription by a Florentine court musician, Federigo Meccoli, notes that the “arpi cimbalo del piano e’ forte” was first made by Cristofori in 1700, giving us a precise birthdate for the piano.”

“The earliest music definitely written and published specifically for the piano were twelve *Sonate da cimbalo di piano e forte detto volgarmente di martelletti* (Florence, 1732) by Lodovico Giustini (1685–1743)”⁷

⁵ Music in Eighteenth-Century Austria edited by David Wyn Jones. Cambridge University Press. (p 257)

⁶ Loesser, Arthur. (1954). Men, Women And Pianos A Social History. New York. Dover Publications, INC (pg.45)

The pianoforte shifted from an exclusive instrument for only the wealthy to a popular instrument for both the middle and upper classes.

- The piano was expensive and labor intensive to make in the early 18th century and was usually only owned by royalty.
- Playing a musical instrument was an important pastime for ladies in aristocratic families from the Renaissance onward and keyboard instruments were deemed the most suitable. The piano overtook the harpsichord in popularity in the late 1770's⁸
- Ability play the piano became the popular status symbol for young women and a sought-after skill for marriage eligibility during the Victorian Era (1837 - 1901).
- The success of the piano is largely because of the affluent middle class that emerged during the 2nd industrial revolution. It was influenced by the Victorian Era societal trend of being able to afford for one's family to have leisure time for hobbies such as playing an instrument to be available to the middle class not just royalty.⁹
- Several writers and music critics noted or complained about the piano rage that overtook Europe during the 19th century. Heinrich Heine (1797-1856) wrote about... "that inescapable pianoforte that one hears tinkling in every house, in every company day and night." The piano had become the middle-classes instrument by the mid-century. Eduard Hanslick, (1825- 1904) a music critic called it "Piano Fever."¹⁰
- According to the figures in the output of keyboard factories such as the Broadwood, the piano not only out paced the harpsichord, it became a societal staple. Broadwood manufactured just under 1,200 harpsichords in 64 years. In the years 1782-1802 the company manufactured 7,000 square pianos and 1,000 grand pianos, about 400 yearly. Broadwood went on to make about 45,000 pianos by 1824 averaging 1,680 a year.¹¹

⁷ Powers, Wendy. "The Piano: The Pianofortes of Bartolomeo Cristofori (1655–1731)." In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/cris/hd_cris.htm (October 2003)

⁸ Ehrlich, C. (1976). *The Piano, A History*. (Revised Ed.). Oxford: Clarendon Press. (p14)

⁹ Burkholder, J. P., Grout, Donald J. Palisca, Claude V. (2006). *A History of Western Music*. (Seventh edition Ed.). New York: W.W. Norton and Company. (p 597)

¹⁰ Hildebrandt, D. (1988). *Piano Forte A social history of the piano*. (H.Goodman, Trans.). London: Hutchinson (pg.2-3)

¹¹ Loesser, Arthur. (1954). *Men, Women And Pianos A Social History*. New York. Dover Publications, INC (pgs. 234-235)

- An estimated 23,000 pianofortes were manufactured in the year 1850 and by 1910 production peaked around 75,000 (ibid.). London alone had 175 pianoforte factories with 500 shops selling musical instruments at the start of the twentieth century.¹²
- Towards the close of the nineteenth century pianofortes were being able to be manufactured more and more inexpensively, allowing for less affluent families to own their own piano.¹³
- In 1768 Zumpe's square pianofortes cost £50 while the cheapest harpsichord was £36 by 1815 Broadwood's improved square pianoforte cost £18 3s. The "elegant" version sold at £26 and even a grand six octave piano sold for £46.¹⁴

Etudes by Instrument

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Bassoon

- Elementary
 - Practical Studies for Bassoon, Book I by D. McDowells /ed. Nilo W. Hovey
- Intermediate
 - *20 Studies for Bassoon* by Albert Vaulet revised by Himie Voxman
 - *Recreation Studies* for Trombone or Bassoon by Jerome Naulais
 - *Easy Etudes for Bassoon* by Claude-Henry Joubert
- Late intermediate-early advanced
 - *12 Caprices for Bassoon* by Eugène Bozza
- Advanced
 - *12 Studies for Bassoon* by Pierre Max Dubois
 - *15 Études Journalières for Bassoon* by Eugène Bozza

Clarinet

- Elementary
 - *Step by Step Clarinet* by James Rae
- Elementary- early intermediate
 - *10 Progressive Pedagogical Pieces Volume 1 & 2* for Clarinet and Piano by Vincent Guyot
- Early intermediate
 - *Melodic Etudes* by Ted Hegvik
- Intermediate

¹² Hildebrandt, D. (1988). *Piano Forte A social history of the piano.* (H.Goodman, Trans.). London: Hutchinson.

¹³ Hildebrandt, D. (1988). *Piano Forte A social history of the piano.* (H.Goodman, Trans.). London: Hutchinson. (p124)

¹⁴ Loesser, Arthur. (1954). *Men, Women And Pianos A Social History.* New York. Dover Publications, INC (pgs. 235-236)

- *Six Steps to Success* for Clarinet compiled or composed by Larry Clark
- *Intermediate Phrasing Etudes for Clarinet* edited by William R. Robinson
- *Small Exercises for Clarinet and Piano* by Rudolf Jettel
- Intermediate-advanced
 - *Great Studies for Melodic Technique (Huit Grandes Etudes de Technique Melodique)* by Giacomo Miluccio
 - *Concert Etudes for Clarinet* by Harold Owen
- Advanced
 - *Advanced Etudes for Clarinet* by Randall Cunningham
 - *16 Etudes (Études Modernes)* by Paul Jeanjean edited by Jean & David Hite

Flute

- Elementary-intermediate
 - *60 Rambles for Flute* by Leon Lester adapted by Kenton F. Terry
 - *125 Easy Studies for Flute* edited by Frans Vester
- Intermediate
 - *5 Easy Exercises Op. 33 Book 1* by Ernesto Koehler
 - *100 Classical Studies for Flute* edited by Frans Vester
- Intermediate-early advanced
 - *Exercises or Etudes for the Flute* by Benoit Tranquille Berbiguier
 - *24 Studies for Flute, Op. 33* by Joachim Andersen
 - *Melodic Exercises (Melodische Übungen)* by Walter Zachert
- Advanced
 - *18 Studies for Flute, Op. 41* by Joachim Andersen
 - *18 Exercises or Etudes for the Flute* by Benoit Tranquille Berbiguier, edited by Lamar Stringfield

Guitar

Below is a list of composers of etudes for guitar:

- [Fernando Sor](#) (1778–1839)
- [Mauro Giuliani](#) (1781–1829)
- [Dionisio Aguado y García](#) (1784–1849)
- [Matteo Carcassi](#) (1792–1853)
- [Giulio Regondi](#) (1822–1872)
- [Francisco Tárrega](#) (1852–1909)
- [Heitor Villa-Lobos](#) (1887–1959)
- [Andrés Segovia](#) (1893–1987)
- [Leo Brouwer](#) (b. 1939)

Oboe

This link has a list of etudes with some descriptions on the level and content of each collection: <https://vcisinc.com/oboemusic.htm#Studies%20and%20Exercises>

Saxophone

This website gives a list of etudes, but they are not arranged by level:
<https://vcisinc.com/saxophonemusicstudies.htm>

Violin+strings:

This website has a progression with a description of the leveling:
<http://violinmasterclass.com/en/graded-repertoire/violin-methods-and-etudes>

Progression of Etudes—Bulgaria

by Christine Nufer
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(from *Course Program for the Specialized Study of Piano in the Schools for the Arts*, Ministry of Culture, 2016)

Grade 1:

Czerny Op. 599 and Duvernoy, Op. 176

Grade 2:

Duvernoy, Op. 176; Lemoine, Op. 37; Kohler, Op. 242; Burgmuller (various)

Grade 3:

Lemoine, Op. 37; Kohler Op. 242; Bertini, Op. 100; Berens, Op. 88; Duvernoy, Op. 276; Czerny, Op. 849

Grade 4:

Czerny, Op. 849 & 636; Bertini, Op. 100; Duvernoy, Op. 276 and 120; Heller, Op. 47; Berens, Op. 88 and 61

Grade 5 (“Middle school” entrance exam):

Czerny, Op. 849, 636 & 299; Duvernoy, Op. 120; Berens, Op. 61 (first and second book); Heller, Op. 46;
Bertini, Op. 29 & 32

Grade 6:

Czerny, Op. 636, 299 & 740; Berens, Op. 61; Kramer; Heller, Op. 46 & 45

Grade 7:

Czerny, Op. 740 & 299; Kramer; Berens, Op. 61 (books three and four); Beale Octave Etudes, Op. 140

Grade 8:

Czerny, Kramer (various)

Grade 9:

Moszkowski, Op. 72, 75, and 36; Kohler, Op. 112; Kessler, Op. 20 and Op. 100; Chopin, Op. 10 and 25; Liszt Concert Etudes, Rachmaninov

Grade 10:

Kramer ("harder etudes"); Czerny, Op. 740, 4th book; Meyer, Op. 168; Jensen, Op. 32; Clementi Gradus and Parnassum; Rachmaninov; Chopin (easier etudes); Mendelssohn

Grade 11:

Chopin Op. 10 and 25, Liszt, Debussy, Prokofiev, Stravinsky

Grade 12:

Moszkowski, Op. 72, 75, 36; Kohler, Op. 112; Kessler, Op. 20 and 100; Chopin, Op. 10 and 25; Liszt concert etudes; Rachmaninov

Resources:

United States:

- Dr. Zahari Metchkov (Associate Professor, CSU-Pueblo)
Zahari.metchkov@csupueblo.edu

Bulgaria/Eastern Europe:

- Dr. Zahari Metchkov (Associate Professor, CSU-Pueblo)
zahari.metchkov@csupueblo.edu

Germany/Western Europe:

- Dr. Joachim Reinhuber (Professor, Texas A&M-Kingsville)
Joachim.reinhuber@tamuk.edu

China:

- Joanne Chen (Blog: <https://joannechenmusic.com/>)
Joannetchen@gmail.com

Example Etude Progression

By Abigail Silverberg
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Beginner etudes:

Herman Berens (1826-1880) – 50 First Piano Pieces for Beginners Op. 70
http://imslp.simssa.ca/files/imglnks/usimg/4/4e/IMSLP12906-Berens_op70_50_Piano_Pieces_for_Beginners.pdf

Bela Bartok – Mikrokosmos Volume I
http://imslp.eu/files/imglnks/euimg/2/21/IMSLP465640-PMLP3661-Bela_Bartok_-_Mikrokosmos.pdf

Beryl Rubenstein (1898-1952) – 32 Piano Studies for Young Fingers
https://www.amazon.com/O2527-Thirty-Two-Piano-Studies-Fingers/dp/0825829151/ref=sr_1_2?keywords=32+piano+studies+for+young+fingers&qid=1579275352&sr=8-2

Louis Köhler (1820-1886) – Die Allerleichtesten Übungsstücke, Op. 190
http://conquest.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/e/e9/IMSLP105780-PMLP215814-Kohler_opus_190.pdf

Edna Mae Burnam (1907-2007) – Dozen A Day
https://www.amazon.com/s?k=dozen+a+day&ref=nb_sb_noss_2

Late beginner/early intermediate etudes:

Cornelius Gurlitt (1820-1901) – Die leichtesten Geläufigkeitetuden für Anfänger
https://www.scribd.com/document/332547175/Piano-Etudes-Grading-Levels-Difficulty-Studies-Repertoire-Grade?language_settings_changed=English

Félix Le Couppey (1811-1887) – The Alphabet Op. 17
<http://imslp.simssa.ca/files/imglnks/usimg/1/18/IMSLP397106-PMLP642684-Coupey, Felix de - 17 The Alphabet - 25 Studies op 17.pdf>

Henri Bertini (1798-1876) – 25 Studies Op. 137
<http://conquest.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/d/d7/IMSLP529219-PMLP20783-137.pdf>

Carl Czerny (1791-1857) – Erster Lehrmeister
http://conquest.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/2/24/IMSLP120580-PMLP08821-czerny_599.pdf

Louis Köhler (1820-1886) – Die Leichtesten Etüden Op. 151
http://conquest.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/b/b5/IMSLP107039-PMLP216538-12_Preparatory_Lessons_Op151-Kohler.pdf

Carl Czerny (1791-1857) – The Five Fingers Op. 777

<http://petrucci.mus.auth.gr/imglnks/usimg/2/2e/IMSLP144812-PMLP09376-lescinqdoigtsop777czer.pdf>

Intermediate/early advanced etudes:

Cornelius Gurlitt (1820-1901) – School of Velocity for Beginners

http://imslp.simssa.ca/files/imglnks/usimg/4/4f/IMSLP353196-PMLP570493-gurlitt_-_school_of_velocity_op_141.pdf

Friedrich Burgmüller (1806-1874) – 25 Easy and Progressive Studies Op. 100

http://ks4.imslp.net/files/imglnks/usimg/b/bd/IMSLP253725-PMLP07983-FBurgmuller_25_Etudes_faciles,_Op.100_BNE.pdf

Muzio Clementi (1752-1832) – Preludes and Exercises

<http://ks.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/4/4f/IMSLP225742-SIBLEY1802.15916.87c6-39087009940166score.pdf>

Carl Czerny (1791-1857) – Czerny-Germer Selected Piano Studies Volume 1

https://www.amazon.com/Czerny-Selected-Studies-Alfred-Masterwork/dp/0739015974/ref=sr_1_1?crid=2OXNC1GS4RWC3&keywords=czerny+germer+selected+piano+studies&qid=1580697885&srefix=czerny+germer+%2Caps%2C483&sr=8-1

Hermann Berens (1826-1880) – 20 Children’s Studies Op. 79

http://conquest.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/3/35/IMSLP86783-PMLP177548-HBerens_20_Etudes_enfantines_Op.79.pdf

Stephen Heller (1813-1888) – 30 Progressive Studies Op. 46

http://petrucci.mus.auth.gr/imglnks/usimg/c/c8/IMSLP10212-Heller_-_Op.46_-_30_Etudes.PDF

Henri Bertini (1798-1876) – 25 Easy and Progressive Studies Op. 100

http://ks4.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/f/f1/IMSLP561608-PMLP20774-HBertini_25_Etudes_faciles_et_progressives,_Op.100_firstedition.pdf

Albert Loeschhorn (1819-1905) – 30 Melodic Etudes Op. 52

<http://www.piano.ru/scores/loeschhorn/loes-52.pdf>

Giuseppe Concone (1801-1861) – 25 Melodic Studies Op. 24

<http://www.piano.ru/scores/concone/concone-24.pdf>

Stephen Heller (1813-1888)

http://conquest.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/4/43/IMSLP253721-PMLP25002-SHeller_25_Etudes,_Op.45_BNE.pdf

Advanced etudes:

Moritz Moszkowski (1854-1925) – 15 Virtuositic Etudes Op. 72

http://ks4.imslp.net/files/imglnks/usimg/e/ee/IMSLP112168-PMLP07151-Moritz_Moszkowski_-_15_Etudes_De_Virtuosite,_Op_72.pdf

Herman Berens (1826-1880) – The School of Scales, Chords, and Embellishments Op. 88
[http://conquest.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/8/86/IMSLP86784-PMLP177551-HBerens Die Schule der Tonleitern Akkorde und Verzierungen Op.88.pdf](http://conquest.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/8/86/IMSLP86784-PMLP177551-HBerens_Die_Schule_der_Tonleitern_Akkorde_und_Verzierungen_Op.88.pdf)

Albert Loeschhorn (1819-1905) – 30 Melodic Etudes Op. 38
<http://www.piano.ru/scores/loeschhorn/loes-38.pdf>

Theodore Lack (1846-1921) – Art Studies Op. 91
<http://www.piano.ru/scores/lack/lack-91.pdf>

Muzio Clementi (1752-1832) – Gradus ad Parnassum
http://ks.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/1/10/IMSLP543270-PMLP6606-clementi_gradus_ad_parnassum_holle_1860.pdf

Theodore Lack (1846-1921) – Bravery Studies Op. 43
[http://conquest.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/2/28/IMSLP256680-PMLP95451-TLack 12 %C3%A9tudes de bravoure, Op.43.pdf](http://conquest.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/2/28/IMSLP256680-PMLP95451-TLack_12_%C3%A9tudes_de_bravoure,_Op.43.pdf)

Stephen Heller (1813-1888) – 21 Special Studies after Chopin Op. 154
[http://conquest.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/a/a7/IMSLP08531-Heller - Op.154 - 21 Etudes Speciales after Chopin.pdf](http://conquest.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/a/a7/IMSLP08531-Heller_-_Op.154_-_21_Etudes_Speciales_after_Chopin.pdf)

My source for finding and grading most of these was the following link:
https://www.scribd.com/document/332547175/Piano-Etudes-Grading-Levels-Difficulty-Studies-Repertoire-Grade?language_settings_changed=English

There is an abundance more on the that webpage, I chose to include the ones that I thought represented a wide range of technical difficulty and musical value.