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Etudes Matter: Etudes from Different Periods for Early Advanced Pianists

Obtaining a complete technique is an indispensable part of becoming an excellent pianist. Having a complete technique allows a performer to maintain freedom of interpretation, keep their quality of performance consistent, and present music without obstacles.

The history of etudes and exercises can be traced back to the eighteenth century. Many composers composed etudes or piano exercises for pianists to develop their technique, but many of these works are more appropriate for advanced performers. It goes without stating that the establishing a technical foundation at the beginning stages of learning is essential. Consequently, it is important for teachers to identify appropriate exercise to improve and develop a student's technique at any level.

My poster will compare technical exercises and etudes from different generations, which can be used for students in the early advanced level. The etudes I chose include 24 Etudes, Op. 29 by Henri Bertini (1798-1876), 25 Melodious Studies, Op. 45 by Stephen Heller (1813-1888), 12 Etudes, Op. 39 by Edward MacDowell (1860-1908), and the Easy Etudes by David Rakowski (1958). In order to suggest the level for each technical exercise, I have used the repertoire requirement in the Royal Conservatory of Music Certificate Program (2015) as guidance.

I hope to provide teachers with more selections for their students in order to set a strong foundation for their technique as it develops.

Henri Bertini (1798-1876)	Stephen Heller (1813-1888)	Edward MacDowell (1860-1908)	David Rakowski (1958)
24 etudes, Op. 29	25 Melodious Studies, Op. 45	12 Etudes, Op. 39	The Easy Etudes (selected from Etude Books I-X)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scale ▪ Coordination between hands ▪ Transposition ▪ Triplet ▪ Big leap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Equal sixteenth notes ▪ Changes in dynamics, touch, and phrasing ▪ Coordination between hands ▪ Balance between hands ▪ Technical training: Repeated notes, double notes ▪ Pedal changes ▪ Massive chord ▪ Trill study ▪ Hand crossing ▪ Play with relax hands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lightness of touch ▪ Singing touch ▪ Wrist ▪ Delicate rhythmical playing ▪ Independence of the third and fourth fingers ▪ Double notes ▪ Hand crossing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Melody & thick chord ▪ Third ▪ Rolled chords ▪ Embedded melody ▪ Chorale-etude on half-diminished seventh chords ▪ Slow octave ▪ Chorale-etude on major triads ▪ Slow mirror etude ▪ Five-finger etude ▪ Dominant seventh chords
<p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Similar pattern in different region ▪ Simple form ▪ Standard harmonic progression ▪ Clear dynamic and tempo marking 	<p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have a title for each study, which can increase student's imaginary ▪ Simple rhythm and pattern 	<p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clear purpose of the etudes ▪ Simple rhythmic pattern ▪ Key changes between sections ▪ Varieties of different dances 	<p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clear instruction of purpose of the etudes, tempo & expression marking ▪ Many meter's changes ▪ Introduction

			<p>for contemporary harmonic acoustic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, the tempo is on the slower side
<p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of melody More focus on right hand studies 	<p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not have many key changes More focus on right hand studies 	<p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not have many exercises for running passages 	<p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chord's range is too big Rhythm is complicated
Level 6 or 7	Level 7 or 8	Level 5 or 6	Level 9 or 10