



Advice to Young Musicians. Musikalische by Robert Schumann

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*** START OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ADVICE TO YOUNG MUSICIANS ***

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ADVICE

TO YOUNG MUSICIANS,

TRANSLATED BY

HENRY HUGO PIERSON.

LEIPSIC & NEW-YORK.

J. SCHUBERTH & CO.

LONDON,

ENT. ST. HALL. EWER & CO.

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The cultivation of the Ear is of the greatest importance.--Endeavour early to distinguish each several tone and key. Find out the exact notes sounded by the bell, the glass, the cuckoo, etc.

* * * * *

Practise frequently the scale and other finger exercises; but this alone is not sufficient. There are many people who think to obtain grand results in this way, and who up to a mature age spend many hours daily in mechanical labour. That is about the same, as if we tried every day to pronounce the alphabet with greater volubility! You can employ your time more usefully.

* * * * *

There are such things as mute pianoforte-keyboards; try them for a while, and you will discover that they are useless. Dumb people cannot teach us to speak.

* * * * *

Play *strictly in time!* The playing of many a virtuoso resembles the walk of an intoxicated person. Do not take such as your model.

* * * * *

Learn betimes the fundamental principles of Harmony.

* * * * *

Do not be afraid of the words Theory, Thoroughbass, Counterpoint, etc.; you will understand their full meaning in due time.

* * * * *

Never jingle! Play always with energy and do not leave a piece unfinished.

* * * * *

You may play too slow or too fast; both are faults.

* * * * *

Endeavour to play easy pieces well and with elegance; that is better than to play difficult pieces badly.

* * * * *

Take care always to have your instrument well tuned.

* * * * *

It is not only necessary that you should be able to play your pieces on the instrument, but you should also be able to hum the air without the piano. Strengthen your imagination so, that you may not only retain the melody of a composition, but even the harmony which belongs to it.

* * * * *

Endeavour, even with a poor voice, to sing at first sight without the aid of the instrument; by these means your ear for music will constantly improve: but in case you are endowed with a good voice, do not hesitate a moment to cultivate it; considering it at the same time as the most valuable gift which heaven has granted you!

* * * * *

You must be able to understand a piece of music upon paper.

* * * * *

When you play, never mind who listens to you.

* * * * *

Play always as if in the presence of a master.

* * * * *

If any one should place before you a composition to play at sight, read it over before you play it.

* * * * *

When you have done your musical day's work and feel tired, do not exert yourself further. It is better to rest than to work without pleasure and vigour.

* * * * *

In maturer years play no fashionable trifles. Time is precious. We should need to live a hundred lives, only to become acquainted with all the good works that exist.

* * * * *

With sweetmeats, pastry and confectionary we cannot bring up children in sound health. The mental food must be as simple and nourishing as the bodily. Great composers have sufficiently provided for the former; keep to their works.

* * * * *

All bravura-music soon grows antiquated. Rapid execution is valuable only when used to perfect the performance of real music.

* * * * *

Never help to circulate bad compositions; on the contrary, help to suppress them with earnestness.

* * * * *

You should neither play bad compositions, nor, unless compelled, listen to them.

* * * * *

Do not think velocity, or passage-playing, your highest aim. Try to produce such an impression with a piece of music as was intended by the composer; all further exertions are caricatures.

* * * * *

Think it a vile habit to alter works of good composers, to omit parts of them, or to insert new-fashioned ornaments. This is the greatest insult you can offer to Art.

* * * * *

As to choice in the study of your pieces, ask the advice of more experienced persons than yourself; by so doing, you will save much time.

* * * * *

You must become acquainted by degrees with all the principal works of the more celebrated masters.

* * * * *

Do not be elated by the applause of the multitude; that of artists is of greater value.

* * * * *

All that is merely modish will soon go out of fashion, and if you practise it in age, you will appear a fop whom nobody esteems.

* * * * *

Much playing in society is more injurious than useful. Suit the taste and capacity of your audience; but never play anything which you know is trashy and worthless.

* * * * *

Do not miss an opportunity of practising music in company with others; as for example in Duets, Trios, etc.; this gives you a flowing and elevated style of playing, and self-possession.--Frequently accompany singers.

* * * * *

If all would play first violin, we could not obtain an orchestra. Therefore esteem every musician in his place.

* * * * *

Love your peculiar instrument, but be not vain enough to consider it the greatest and only one. Remember that there are others as fine as yours. Remember also that singers exist, and that numbers, both in Chorus and Orchestra, produce the most sublime music; therefore do not overrate any Solo.

* * * * *

As you grow up, become more intimate with scores (or partitions) than with virtuosi.

* * * * *

Frequently play the fugues of good masters, above all, those by J. Seb. Bach. Let his "Well-tempered Harpsichord" be your daily bread. By these means you will certainly become a proficient.

* * * * *

Let your intimate friends be chosen from such as are better informed than yourself.

* * * * *

Relieve the severity of your musical studies by reading poetry. Take many a walk in the fields and woods!

* * * * *

From vocalists you may learn much, but do not believe all that they say.

* * * * *

Remember, there are more people in the world than yourself. Be modest! You have not yet invented nor thought anything which others have not thought or invented before. And should you really have done so, consider it a gift of heaven which you are to share with others.

* * * * *

You will be most readily cured of vanity or presumption by studying the history of music, and by hearing the master pieces which have been produced at different periods.

* * * * *

A very valuable book you will find that: On Purity in Music, by Thibaut, a German Professor. Read it often, when you have come to years of greater maturity.

* * * * *

If you pass a church and hear an organ, go in and listen. If allowed to sit on the organ bench, try your inexperienced fingers and marvel at the supreme power of music.

* * * * *

Do not miss an opportunity of practising on the organ; for there is no instrument that can so effectually correct errors or impurity of style and touch as that.

* * * * *

Frequently sing in choruses, especially the middle parts, this will help to make you a real *musician*.

* * * * *

What is it to be *musical*? You will not be so, if your eyes are fixed on the notes with anxiety and you play your piece laboriously through; you will not be so, if (supposing that somebody should turn over two pages at once) you stop short and cannot proceed. But you will be so if you can almost foresee in a new piece what is to follow, or remember it in an old one,--in a word, if you have not only music in your fingers, but also in your head and heart.

* * * * *

But how do we become *musical*? This, my young friend, is a gift from above; it consists chiefly of a fine ear and quick conception. And these gifts may be cultivated and enhanced. You will not become musical by confining yourself to your room and to mere mechanical studies, but by an extensive intercourse with the musical world, especially with the Chorus and the Orchestra.

* * * * *

Become in early years well informed as to the extent of the human voice in its four modifications. Attend to it especially in the Chorus, examine in what tones its highest power lies, in what others it can be employed to affect the soft and tender passions.

* * * * *

Pay attention to national airs and songs of the people; they contain a vast assemblage of the finest melodies,

and open to you a glimpse of the character of the different nations.

* * * * *

Fail not to practise the reading of old clefs, otherwise many treasures of past times will remain a closed fountain to you.

* * * * *

Attend early to the tone and character of the various instruments; try to impress their peculiar sound on your ear.

* * * * *

Do not neglect to attend good Operas.

* * * * *

Highly esteem the Old, but take also a warm interest in the New. Be not prejudiced against names unknown to you.

* * * * *

Do not judge a composition from the first time of hearing; that which pleases you at the first moment, is not always the best. Masters need to be studied. Many things will not become clear to you till you have reached a more advanced age.

* * * * *

In judging of compositions, discriminate between works of real art and those merely calculated to amuse amateurs. Cherish those of the former description, and do not get angry with the others.

* * * * *

Melody is the battle-cry of amateurs, and certainly music without melody is nothing. Understand, however, what these persons mean by it: a simple, flowing and pleasing rhythmical tune; this is enough to satisfy them. There are, however, others of a different sort, and whenever you open Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, or any real master, their melodies meet you in a thousand different shapes. I trust you will soon be tired of the inferior melodies, especially those out of the new Italian operas; and of all vulgar ones.

* * * * *

If, while at the piano, you attempt to form little melodies, that is very well; but if they come into your mind of themselves, when you are not practising, you may be still more pleased; for the internal organ of music is then roused in you. The fingers must do what the head desires; not the contrary.

* * * * *

If you begin to compose, work it out in your head. Do not try a piece on your instrument, except when you have fully conceived it. If your music came from your heart and soul, and did you feel it yourself,--it will operate on others in the same manner.

* * * * *

If Heaven has bestowed on you a fine imagination, you will often be seated at your piano in solitary hours, as if attached to it; you will desire to express the feelings of your heart in harmony, and the more clouded the sphere of harmony may perhaps be to you, the more mysteriously you will feel as if drawn into magic circles. In youth these may be your happiest hours. Beware, however, of abandoning yourself too often to the influence of a talent that induces you to lavish powers and time, as it were, upon phantoms. Mastery over the forms of composition and a clear expression of your ideas can only be attained by constant writing. Write, therefore, more than you improvise.

* * * * *

Acquire an early knowledge of the art of conducting music. Observe often the best conductors, and conduct along with them in your mind. This will give you clearness of perception and make you accurate.

* * * * *

Look deeply into life, and study it as diligently as the other arts and sciences.

* * * * *

The laws of morals are those of art.

* * * * *

By means of industry and perseverance you will rise higher and higher.

* * * * *

From a pound of iron, that costs little, a thousand watch-springs can be made, whose value becomes prodigious. The pound you have received from the Lord,--use it faithfully.

* * * * *

Without enthusiasm nothing great can be effected in art.

* * * * *

The object of art is not to produce riches. Become a great artist, and all other desirable accessories will fall to your lot.

* * * * *

The Spirit will not become clear to you, before you understand the Forms of composition.

* * * * *

Perhaps genius alone understands genius fully.

* * * * *

It has been thought that a perfect musician must be able to see, in his mind's eye, any new, and even

complicated, piece of orchestral music as if in full score lying before him! This is indeed the greatest triumph of musical intellect that can be imagined.

* * * * *

There is no end of learning.

Musikalische

Haus- und Lebens-Regeln,

verfaßt von

Robert Schumann.

Eigenthum der Verleger

J. Schuberth & Co.

Leipzig & New-York.

Die Bildung des Gehörs ist das Wichtigste. Bemühe dich frühzeitig, Tonart und Ton zu erkennen. Die Glocke, die Fensterscheibe, der Kuckuk -- forsche nach, welche Töne sie angeben.

* * * * *

Du sollst Tonleitern und andere Fingerübungen fleißig spielen. Es giebt aber viele Leute, die meinen, damit Alles zu erreichen, die bis in ihr hohes Alter täglich viele Stunden mit mechanischem Ueben hinbringen. Das ist ungefähr ebenso, als bemühte man sich täglich das A-B-C möglichst schnell und immer schneller auszusprechen. Wende die Zeit besser an.

* * * * *

Man hat sogenannte »stumme Claviaturen« erfunden; versuche sie eine Weile lang, um zu sehen, daß sie zu nichts taugen. Von Stummen kann man nicht sprechen lernen.

* * * * *

Spiele *im Takte!* Das Spiel mancher Virtuosen ist wie der Gang eines Betrunkenen. Solche nimm dir nicht zum Muster.

* * * * *

Lerne frühzeitig die Grundgesetze der Harmonie.

* * * * *

Fürchte dich nicht vor den Worten: Theorie, Generalbaß, Contrapunkt &c.; sie kommen dir freundlich entgegen, wenn du dasselbe thust.

* * * * *

Klimpere nie! Spiele immer frisch zu, und *nie* ein Stück halb!

* * * * *

Schleppen und eilen sind gleich große Fehler.

* * * * *

Bemühe dich, leichte Stücke gut und schön zu spielen; es ist besser, als schwere mittelmäßig vorzutragen.

* * * * *

Du hast immer auf ein rein gestimmtes Instrument zu halten.

* * * * *

Nicht allein mit den Fingern mußt du deine Stückchen können, du mußt sie dir auch ohne Clavier vorträllern können. Schärfe deine Einbildungskraft so, daß du nicht allein die Melodie einer Composition, sondern auch die dazu gehörige Harmonie im Gedächtniß festzuhalten vermagst.

* * * * *

Bemühe dich, und wenn du auch nur wenig Stimme hast, ohne Hülfe des Instrumentes vom Blatt zu singen; die Schärfe deines Gehörs wird dadurch immer zunehmen. Hast du aber eine klangvolle Stimme, so säume keinen Augenblick sie auszubilden, betrachte sie als das schönste Geschenk, das dir der Himmel verliehen!

* * * * *

Du mußt es so weit bringen, daß du eine Musik auf dem Papier verstehst.

* * * * *

Wenn du spielst, kümmere dich nicht darum, wer dir zuhört.

* * * * *

Spiele immer, als hörte dir ein Meister zu.

* * * * *

Legt dir jemand eine Composition zum ersten Mal vor, daß du sie spielen sollst, so überlies sie erst.

* * * * *

Hast du dein musikalisches Tagewerk gethan und fühlst dich ermüdet, so strenge dich nicht zu weiterer Arbeit an. Besser rasten, als ohne Lust und Frische arbeiten.

* * * * *

Spiele, wenn du älter wirst, nichts Modisches. Die Zeit ist kostbar. Man müßte hundert Menschenleben haben, wenn man nur alles Gute, was da ist, kennen lernen wollte.

* * * * *

Mit Süßigkeiten, Back- und Zuckerwerk zieht man keine Kinder zu gesunden Menschen. Wie die leibliche, so muß die geistige Kost einfach und kräftig sein. Die Meister haben hinlänglich für die letztere gesorgt; haltet euch an diese.

* * * * *

Aller Passagenkram ändert sich mit der Zeit; nur wo die Fertigkeit höheren Zwecken dient, hat sie Werth.

* * * * *

Schlechte Compositionen muß du nicht verbreiten, im Gegentheil sie mit aller Kraft unterdrücken helfen.

* * * * *

Du sollst schlechte Compositionen weder spielen, noch, wenn du nicht dazu gezwungen bist, sie anhören.

* * * * *

Such' es nie in der Fertigkeit, der sogenannten Bravour. Suche mit einer Composition den Eindruck hervorzubringen, den der Componist im Sinne hatte; mehr soll man nicht; was darüber ist, ist Zerrbild.

* * * * *

Betrachte es als etwas Abscheuliches, in Stücken guter Tonsetzer etwas zu ändern, wegzulassen, oder gar neumodische Verzierungen anzubringen. Dies ist die größte Schmach, die du der Kunst anthust.

* * * * *

Wegen der Wahl im Studium deiner Stücke befrage Aeltere, du ersparst dir dadurch viel Zeit.

* * * * *

Du muß nach und nach alle bedeutenderen Werke aller bedeutenden Meister kennen lernen.

* * * * *

Laß dich durch den Beifall, den sogenannte große Virtuosen oft erringen, nicht irre machen. Der Beifall der Künstler sei dir mehr werth, als der des großen Haufens.

* * * * *

Alles Modische wird wieder unmodisch, und treibst du's bis in das Alter, so wirst du ein Geck, den Niemand achtet.

* * * * *

Viel Spielen in Gesellschaften bringt mehr Schaden, als Nutzen. Sieh dir die Leute an; aber spiele nie Etwas, dessen du dich in deinem Innern zu schämen hättest.

* * * * *

Versäume aber keine Gelegenheit, wo du mit Anderen zusammen musiciren kannst, in Duo's, Trio's &c. Dies macht dein Spiel fließend, schwungvoll. Auch Sängern accompagnire oft.

* * * * *

Wenn Alle erste Violine spielen wollten, würden wir kein Orchester zusammen bekommen. Achte daher jeden Musiker an seiner Stelle.

* * * * *

Liebe dein Instrument, halte es aber nicht in Eitelkeit für das höchste und einzige. Bedenke, daß es noch andere und ebenso schöne giebt. Bedenke auch, daß es Sänger giebt, daß im Chor und Orchester das Höchste der Musik zur Aussprache kommt.

* * * * *

Wenn du größer wirst, verkehre mehr mit Partituren, als mit Virtuosen.

* * * * *

Spiele fleißig Fugen guter Meister, vor Allen von Joh. Seb. Bach. Das »wohltemperirte Clavier« sei dein täglich Brod. Dann wirst du gewiß ein tüchtiger Musiker.

* * * * *

Suche unter deinen Kameraden die auf, die mehr als du wissen.

* * * * *

Von deinen musikalischen Studien erhole dich fleißig durch Dichterlectüre. Ergehe dich oft im Freien!

* * * * *

Von Sängern und Sängerinnen läßt sich Manches lernen, doch glaube ihnen auch nicht Alles!

* * * * *

Hinter den Bergen wohnen auch Leute. Sei bescheiden! Du hast noch nichts erfunden und gedacht, was nicht Andere vor dir schon gedacht und erfunden. Und hättest du's, so betrachte es als ein Geschenk von Oben, das du mit Anderen zu theilen hast.

* * * * *

Das Studium der Geschichte der Musik, unterstützt vom lebendigen Hören der Meisterwerke der verschiedenen Epochen, wird dich am schnellsten von Eigendünkel und Eitelkeit curiren.

* * * * *

Ein schönes Buch über Musik ist das: »Ueber Reinheit der Tonkunst« von *Thibaut*. Lies es oft, wenn du älter wirst.

* * * * *

Gehst du an einer Kirche vorbei und hörst Orgel darin spielen, so gehe hinein und höre zu. Wird es dir gar so wohl, dich selbst auf die Orgelbank setzen zu dürfen, so versuche deine kleinen Finger und staune vor dieser Allgewalt der Musik.

* * * * *

Versäume keine Gelegenheit, dich auf der Orgel zu üben; es giebt kein Instrument, das am Unreinen und Unsauberen im Tonsatz wie im Spiel alsogleich Rache nähme, als die Orgel.

* * * * *

Singe fleißig im Chor mit, namentlich Mittelstimmen. Dies macht dich *musikalisch*.

* * * * *

Was heißt denn aber *musikalisch* sein? Du bist es nicht, wenn du, die Augen ängstlich auf die Noten gerichtet, dein Stück mühsam zu Ende spielst; du bist es nicht, wenn du (es wendet dir Jemand etwa zwei Seiten auf einmal um) stecken bleibst und nicht fort kannst. Du bist es aber, wenn du bei einem neuen Stück das, was kommt, ohngefähr ahnest, bei einem dir bekannten auswendig weißt, -- mit einem Worte, wenn du Musik nicht allein in den Fingern, sondern auch im Kopf und Herzen hast.

* * * * *

Wie wird man aber *musikalisch*? Liebes Kind, die Hauptsache, ein scharfes Ohr, schnelle Auffassungskraft, kommt, wie in allen Dingen, von Oben. Aber es läßt sich die Anlage bilden und erhöhen. Du wirst es nicht dadurch, daß du dich einsiedlerisch Tage lang absperst und mechanische Studien treibst, sondern dadurch, daß du dich in lebendigem, vielseitig-musikalischem Verkehr erhältst, namentlich dadurch, daß du viel mit Chor und Orchester verkehrst.

* * * * *

Mache dich über den Umfang der menschlichen Stimme in ihren vier Hauptarten frühzeitig klar; belausche sie namentlich im Chor, forsche nach, in welchen Intervallen ihre höchste Kraft liegt, in welchen andern sie sich zum Weichen und Zarten verwenden lassen.

* * * * *

Höre fleißig auf alle Volkslieder; sie sind eine Fundgrube der schönsten Melodien und öffnen dir den Blick in den Charakter der verschiedenen Nationen.

* * * * *

Uebe dich frühzeitig im Lesen der alten Schlüssel. Viele Schätze der Vergangenheit bleiben dir sonst verschlossen.

* * * * *

Achte schon frühzeitig auf Ton und Charakter der verschiedenen Instrumente; suche ihre eigenthümliche Klangfarbe deinem Ohr einzuprägen.

* * * * *

Gute Opern zu hören, versäume nie.

* * * * *

Ehre das Alte hoch, bringe aber auch dem Neuen ein warmes Herz entgegen. Gegen dir unbekannte Namen hege kein Vorurtheil.

* * * * *

Urtheile nicht nach dem Erstenmalhören über eine Composition; was dir im ersten Augenblick gefällt, ist nicht immer das Beste. Meister wollen studirt sein. Vieles wird dir erst im höchsten Alter klar werden.

* * * * *

Bei Beurtheilung von Compositionen unterscheide, ob sie dem Kunstfach angehören, oder nur dilettantische Unterhaltung bezwecken. Für die der ersten Art stehe ein; wegen der anderen erzürne dich nicht!

* * * * *

»Melodie« ist das Feldgeschrei der Dilettanten, und gewiß, eine Musik ohne Melodie ist gar keine. Verstehe aber wohl, was jene darunter meinen; eine leichtfaßliche, rhythmisch-gefällige gilt ihnen allein dafür. Es giebt aber auch andere anderen Schlages, und wo du Bach, Mozart, Beethoven aufschlägst, blicken sie dich in tausend verschiedenen Weisen an; des dürftigen Einerlei's namentlich neuerer italienischer Opernmelodien wirst du hoffentlich bald überdrüssig.

* * * * *

Suchst du dir am Clavier kleine Melodien zusammen, so ist das wohl hübsch; kommen sie dir aber einmal von selbst, nicht am Clavier, dann freue dich noch mehr, dann regt sich in dir der innere Tonsinn. -- Die Finger müssen machen, was der Kopf will, nicht umgekehrt.

* * * * *

Fängst du an zu componiren, so mache Alles im Kopf. Erst wenn du ein Stück ganz fertig hast, probire es am Instrumente. Kam dir deine Musik aus dem Innern, empfandest du sie, so wird sie auch so auf Andere wirken.

* * * * *

Verlieh dir der Himmel eine rege Phantasie, so wirst du in einsamen Stunden wohl oft wie festgebannt am Flügel sitzen, in Harmonien dein Inneres aussprechen wollen, und um so geheimnißvoller wirst du dich wie in magische Kreise gezogen fühlen, je unklarer dir vielleicht das Harmonienreich noch ist. Der Jugend glücklichste Stunden sind diese. Hüte dich indessen, dich zu oft einem Talente hinzugeben, das Kraft und Zeit gleichsam an Schattenbilder zu verschwenden dich verleitet. Die Beherrschung der Form, die Kraft klarer Gestaltung gewinnst du nur durch das feste Zeichen der Schrift. Schreibe also mehr, als du phantasirst.

* * * * *

Verschaffe dir frühzeitig Kenntniß vom Dirigiren, sieh dir gute Dirigenten oft an; selbst im Stillen mit zu dirigiren, sei dir unverwehrt. Dies bringt Klarheit in dich.

* * * * *

Sieh dich tüchtig im Leben um, wie auch in anderen Künsten und Wissenschaften.

* * * * *

Die Gesetze der Moral sind auch die der Kunst.

* * * * *

Durch Fleiß und Ausdauer wirst du es immer höher bringen.

* * * * *

Aus einem Pfund Eisen, das wenig Groschen kostet, lassen sich viele tausend Uhrfedern machen, deren Werth in die Hunderttausend geht. Das Pfund, das du von Gott erhalten, nütze es treulich.

* * * * *

Ohne Enthusiasmus wird nichts Rechtes in der Kunst zu Wege gebracht.

* * * * *

Die Kunst ist nicht da, um Reichthümer zu erwerben. Werde nur ein immer größerer Künstler; alles Andere fällt dir von selbst zu.

* * * * *

Nur erst, wenn dir die Form ganz klar ist, wird dir der Geist klar werden.

* * * * *

Vielleicht versteht nur der Genius den Genius ganz.

* * * * *

Es meinte Jemand, ein vollkommener Musiker müsse im Stande sein, ein zum ersten Mal gehörtes, auch complicirteres Orchesterwerk wie in leibhaftiger Partitur vor sich zu sehen. Das ist das Höchste, was gedacht werden kann.

* * * * *

Es ist des Lernens kein Ende.

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[The following is a list of corrections made to the original. The first line is the original line, the second the corrected one.

Im folgenden werden alle geänderten Textzeilen angeführt, wobei jeweils zuerst die Zeile wie im Original, danach die geänderte Zeile steht.

J, SCHUBERTH & CO. J. SCHUBERTH & CO.

composer; all further exertions are caricatures. composer; all further exertions are caricatures.

supreme power of music supreme power of music.

the inferior melodies, especially those out of the new italian operas; the inferior melodies, especially those out of the new Italian operas;]

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