Chapter VIII

Master Teacher: The Ecole Normale Years (ca. 1920-1962)

Artist-teachers can generate fervor. They can transform routine work into a passionate search. They can lead us to revel in realms infinitely more spacious than anything they or we have within us. They can catapult us into the imaginative life and quicken us to experience art as an ecstasy to be treasured and loved. With them we live in eloquence without syntax, in music itself.

Abraham Chasins

Returning to France in February 1919 with glowing American reviews in hand, Cortot could not resist the temptation to build on the momentum of his trans-Atlantic triumphs. He set off almost immediately to tour Britain, then made his way across the South of France in April. His initial few months' leave from the Conservatoire stretched into a year, as he played eighty concerts in all during the 1918-1919 season.

In May of 1919 Cortot penned a brief overview of the American musical scene for a French magazine. He had been duly impressed by the number of large concert halls, by the size and prosperity of musical instrument and record player manufacturers, and by the princely salaries of American conductors and orchestral players (who, he reported, earned about four times as much as their French counterparts). He regretted that native composers had produced little of
consequence and seemed unable to develop an distinctly American musical idiom (apparently jazz did not qualify in his eyes as music). "Des musiciens, oui. De la musique, point encore" ("Musicians, yes. Music--none at all yet"), he wrote. 3

What Cortot found most intriguing was the accessibility of music and music training to the common people:

Music is everywhere in America. In the concert halls, of course, but likewise in the street, at home..., in meetings, in big department stores, at university functions, in hotels, not to mention countless conservatories and specialized schools.

It is rare to find an American student who is not learning an instrument, or at least singing in a choir.

Music is not reserved over there for the privileged few, as is the case in Western Europe. It is produced for everyone, and everyone takes advantage of it. It is subsidized by associations and individual patrons... everywhere.... [I]t is comical to see certain French artists depart for a tour of America believing in good faith that they are going off to convert savages or reveal music to illiterates! Do you think that America needs missionaries? Let's look at ourselves in the mirror before spouting such idiocies with a straight face. 4

With Cortot's grueling schedule of performances (forty concerts, six long recording sessions for Victor, and additional sessions to make piano rolls between October 20, 1918 and January 28, 1919), he could not have investigated American music education very thoroughly. He did not realize how inadequate and parochial much of the piano teaching outside major conservatories was, nor how little success public school music programs had had in turning the average citizen into a cultivated classical music lover. His was an idealized picture of American music: what excited him was the idea of a
democratized music education in which high quality, affordable music instruction was available to any and all.

A New School of Music.

The idea of establishing an Ecole Normale de Musique—a "normal school" of music that would offer students a comprehensive musical education—in Paris does not seem to have been inspired by any institution Cortot saw in the States. In fact, to give credit where it is due, the plan in all likelihood was the brainchild of Auguste Mangeot. Mangeot, like his father Edouard before him, had always shown a keen interest in music education. As editor-in-chief of the popular Monde Musical, he developed this music journal into a forum for ideas and debate on pedagogical methods, institutional reform, curriculum, etc. It was Mangeot, perhaps with Cortot's artistic advice, who worked out the specifics of the proposed school's philosophy and curriculum while the two men were working at the cultural office in 1918.

From the earliest reports it is clear that the project originated at Action Artistique headquarters and was shepherded through official channels by Mangeot. The Ecole Normale was originally intended—or at least presented to the Beaux-Arts ministry—as a powerful propaganda tool. The Monde Musical announced in January of 1919 that

in its December [1918] meeting the Advisory Committee of Action Artistique of the Beaux-Arts approved M. Mangeot's project for the founding of the Ecole Normale de Musique in Paris.
The Minister [of Beaux-Arts], M. Lafferre, had previously asked M. Henry Expert to study this project and report on its feasibility. He did so, in terms so glowing and enthusiastic that modesty forbids us from reporting them. We will confine ourselves to indicating... the goal and artistic principles behind this creation.

Before the war, Germany was the great center of musical training, not only for its own citizens but for foreigners as well. Its private and state Conservatories, its Academies and Hochschulen attracted large numbers of music students from all over the world to Leipzig, Frankfurt, Berlin, Munich, etc.

These musicians, once having completed their studies, returned to their home countries strongly marked--often to the detriment of their creative powers--by German methods and tastes.... Both in their teaching and in their personal creative work they became, knowingly or not, propagandists for German music, editions and instruments.

After the war are we going to allow these thousands of students to return to Germany, or wouldn't we like to attract them to France? The answer is obvious.... But by the start of the new school year following the signing of the peace treaty we must have a musical institution prepared to receive all the foreign students who wish to avail themselves of French music teaching.

The Conservatoire is not suited to these purposes. It admits only a tiny number of pupils, under very restrictive conditions of age, subject choice and length of study. It leaves room for a school which, possessing a certain artistic and administrative independence, could complement it without either competing with it or copying it....

Auguste Mangeot intended his new school to be much more than a propaganda tool, but he realized that unless he could secure the backing of the official powers his project was unlikely to succeed. His arguments were cleverly calculated to appeal to the Clemenceau government, which was bent on humiliating Germany and reducing it to economic servitude. At the same time he took pains to allay the fears of the Conservatoire administration, which would oppose any potential rival. Mangeot must have been a very shrewd diplomat. He not
only won approval for the founding of the Ecole Normale, he even convinced Saint-Saëns, Widor and Fauré to serve as its honorary patrons.⁶

Mangeot persuaded many prominent musicians, including a number of Conservatoire professors, to accept an appointment at the Ecole Normale in addition to whatever positions they already held. Several who initially agreed to join the faculty--Ravel, d'Indy, Risler, and Emile Jaques-Dalcroze--reneged before classes got underway. Still, when the fledgling school announced its fall course offerings in 1919, it could boast a keyboard faculty that included Isidor Philipp, Lucien Wurmser, Marguerite Long, Blanche Selva, Joseph Morpain, Cortot (all piano), Wanda Landowska (harpsichord), Nadia Boulanger and Marcel Dupré (organ).

Most of these celebrities did not actually teach regular classes. Rather, they served as "chefs d'école," which meant that they were entitled to select delegate-instructors to teach their methods in classes which they were to inspect personally at least once a month. Each "chef d'école" was expected to teach four to six master classes ("cours supérieurs") a year, and each was granted a voice in artistic/academic decisions via a Comité d'Études, a steering committee which also included several distinguished musicians not teaching at the school. The business administration of the Ecole Normale was delegated to a société anonyme and an Administrative Council composed of Mangeot, M. René-Godet, Marc Laberte, the Marquis de Polignac,
A. Rateau, Serge Sandberg (a film impresario who revived the Pasdeloup Concerts), Maurice de Wendel and a lawyer, Maitre Schaffauser.

Cortot's First Public Interpretation Course.

Surprising as it may seem in light of his later role at the Ecole Normale, Cortot did not participate in the academic or administrative affairs of the Ecole Normale during its inaugural year (1919-20). Nor does he appear to have named delegate-teachers to his "école". He was on official leave from the Conservatoire. He toured constantly, returning to France only in June 1920 to give his first "cours supérieur d'interprétation," devoted to works of Schubert, Weber, Mendelssohn, Chopin, Schumann and Liszt.

The participants in Cortot's master classes that summer made up in quality what they lacked in quantity. They were for the most part not "students" but young concert pianists about to embark on a career. By chance we have a first-hand account of the classes from A. M. Henderson, who assisted Cortot, perhaps as a translator, in 1920 and 1921. Henderson recalls that from the beginning Cortot conducted his course in such a way that it benefited not only the performers who played but also the large contingent of auditors:

At first, the artist group numbered around twenty, and the teachers and students about double that number. In one season, the course had become so popular with teachers, and so helpful generally that the auditor group increased to about 100, and a move had to be made... in order to accommodate all who wished to attend....
The classes opened at 2 o'clock and ended at five, but the time passed too quickly, it was so interesting, so stimulating, and even exciting. The standard of performance was astonishingly high... I question if anything finer in this way could have been heard since the Weimar days of Franz Liszt, or at the best classes of Leschetizky in Vienna.

Cortot opened the class each day with a short talk on the life and works of the composer to be studied, drawing special attention to the qualities necessary in technique and interpretation for the successful performance of the composer. These short talks were models of their kind in their conciseness, clarity and helpfulness. His criticisms of each performer were of the same encouraging and helpful order, and as he concluded by playing the work himself, his precepts were crowned in the light of example. As an artist, his comments were always practical... [H]e constantly reminded students of the importance of muscular freedom and flexibility in the whole playing apparatus, from shoulder to fingertip.

On the side of technique, his ideas on the rhythmic treatment of scales, arpeggios and other technical forms, especially the combining of different rhythms at the same time, were most useful... Carrying these principles a stage further, Cortot recommended that all technically difficult passages, in actual art music, be practiced with varied rhythms.

A feature of Cortot's teaching was his continual insistence on clarity, rhythm and articulation. These were ever characteristic qualities of his own playing. 9

Cortot, who reportedly "talked almost as much as he played" in that first course, proved to be brilliant in the public master class setting. Whether by his perceptive observations or his galvanizing presence, he managed to draw from performers their best artistic efforts. He had a rare gift, moreover, for "bringing his audience into sympathetic resonance" with his thinking10 so that even the amateurs and non-pianists in attendance found his lessons fascinating.11
Making the Commitment.

During the summer of 1920 Cortot had a chance to observe first hand how the Ecole Normale was progressing with its study programs, enrollment and artistic goals. He apparently decided that its prospects for becoming one of the top educational institutions in France, perhaps in all of Europe, were bright and that it was in his interests to influence its orientation. That, of course, would necessitate his becoming much more actively involved with the school--and soon, while policies and curricula were still in the formative stages. At the same time, he was not willing to renounce the many invitations to tour that were coming his way.

After designating Mmes. Giraud-Latarse and Kastler-Galanti as his representatives at the Ecole Normale, Cortot proceeded to put some distance between himself and the Conservatoire. His first move was to request a three-year leave of absence without pay from the school, citing the favorable publicity that the école française would reap if he were allowed to concertize abroad extensively. Around the same time Cortot fired off an article which, if it did not attack the Conservatoire directly, certainly made it clear that he felt it was high time for some changes in the music education system. "De l'enseignement du piano au Conservatoire" ("Piano Teaching at the Conservatoire") appeared on the front page of the July 1920 issue of the popular Courrier Musical. It read in part as follows:
Recent debates in the Chamber over the budget for Public Education have shown that our legislators are concerned not only that children receive an education, but that what they learn will prepare them to adapt to the world and circumstances in which they will ultimately find themselves. I would think that the Government should have the same concern for the future of the specialists formed [in our artistic schools].

But if we take the Conservatoire...as an example, what we find is an education admirable for the excellence of the maîtres who dispense it, but the system of which does not appear to have been adjusted to suit present-day needs of earning a living.

Examining... the piano teaching, we find the same methods as those that sufficed fifty years ago for the musical and technical training of several dozen students. Back then,... more demanding competition juries... enforced a rigorous selection that weeded out all but the truly talented. For those deemed worthy of it, the premier prix represented an insurance for the future, opening the door to concerts... and guaranteeing to some extent fame and financial security.

Now nine classes are barely enough to accommodate the hundreds of pupils who request admission each year. Almost every annual competition brings a proportional increase in the number of first prize winners... swelling the imposing ranks of their predecessors.

Among this inflated number who graduate each year, leaving--too soon, in my opinion--the teaching of the Conservatoire on the strength of an extremely narrow examination where they can show at most some virtuosic and interpretive qualities: how many will have the good fortune, determination in work or exceptionally rare gifts... that will allow them to reasonably hope to make a living from their art as concert performers? I wouldn't dare make an exact count,... since it would be disastrous and demoralizing for these youngsters who are sustained in their intense work by the hope of an easy and glorious life. But we have only to glance at the list of laureates for the last twenty-five years to realize that out of three hundred or three hundred and fifty first prizes which could have aspired to such a future, five or six at most have managed to see their youthful dreams come true. What has become of the rest?

They have been forced, at the end of several years of struggling, of dashed artistic ambitions..., to do for a living what their virtuoso training and their aspirations entitle them to consider a sort of moral setback--that is, to take up a modest teaching position. And instead of tackling it with the enthusiasm which is indispensable to withstand the inconveniences and frustrations of what can be a difficult and thankless job, they see themselves
stuck in it, with a sort of bitterness that surely
doesn't predispose them to exercise the art with the
fervor and generosity of spirit desirable. Moreover,
nothing, or almost nothing, unfortunately, in this lofty
but hasty Conservatoire training has prepared them for
the moral and pedagogical role which most of them will
have to exercise later. Their ambition, sparked by the
success and fame of their maitre, is frequently nurtured
by parents harboring illusions....

In addition, the special atmosphere of the
Conservatoire, this sort of feverish excitement fanned by
the very preparation for the concours... breeds an amour-
propre conducive to intensive work but certainly
incompatible with being satisfied to do such a useful and
modest task.

Wouldn't it be advisable to seek a way out of this
dilemma, and wouldn't it be wise of a government to
create at the Conservatoire the courses necessary to
prepare the majority of the pupils for what they will
later do in life, rather than stimulating--irresponsibly
--appetites which it does not have the power to satisfy!

It seems to me that it is time to establish two or
three pure pedagogy courses,... which, while requiring a
sufficient command of the instrument to interpret the
great masterpieces, would focus essentially on applying
knowledge of the repertoire in the art of teaching.
There are ground rules for this art, and they have been
expertly formulated in numerous books. It would be
advisable to extract the general concepts and examine in
what situations each might be effectively applied and
when, on the contrary, it might be better to modify the
rule. Different compositions and styles should be
considered, since one doesn't play Bach like Schumann..., and it is by discovering what special conditions and
didactic strategies apply in the music of each major
composer that an aspiring teacher could enrich his
storehouse of knowledge and practical experience.

Likewise, one should study what practice methods are
best suited to the particular temperament and ways of
learning of each individual pupil. One should learn how
to identify pupils' deficiencies, their qualities, their
mind sets, their different physical attributes. This
would entail analyzing such factors on a case by case
basis, applying one's ingenuity to finding the most
efficient means of reinforcing the positive quality or
overcoming the deficiency as need be, with each class
member in turn making observations and suggestions under
the supervision of the professor.

If we could establish a certificate (brevet) of
pedagogical aptitude for those successfully completing
the courses I've just described, this would give the
recipients not only a well-deserved reward for their
efforts but also the certitude that they could profit concretely from the knowledge they will have acquired. Naturally, the Conservatoire would still single out for special [performance] training those youngsters who appear to be particularly gifted for the interpretive art. This group would continue to cultivate their exceptional talents and would form, as in the past, the brilliant contingent of virtuosi upon which the school prides itself. As for those who wisely want to provide for their immediate future, exposure to a quasi-scientific [pedagogical] training will equip them with work habits and analytical skills that will be of invaluable help to them in their later teaching practice. Instead of having to accumulate the necessary know-how little by little, empirically,... groping their way by trial and error experimentation which turns their first students into research subjects, they will be able to draw upon a schooling (culture) designed to address their professional needs.

In expressing the hope that instruction in piano pedagogy will be instituted as soon as possible at the Conservatoire, I think that while I may not be saying what some young people who may have ventured into music without much serious reflection... would like to hear right now, I'm at least voicing my real apprehension for the future which experience tells us awaits most of them --a future that will be less prosperous and less glamorous than the hothouse years of the Conservatoire might lead them to suspect.

How Cortot's article was received by his colleagues and at the Conservatoire one can only conjecture. Publicly, the administration maintained an icy silence, neither defending the existing system nor proposing any reforms. Mangeot, on the other hand, was quick to answer on behalf of the Ecole Normale. "The cause has been heard," he wrote in a Monde Musical editorial. "Now we must consider how to implement the [pedagogy] course in practical terms."¹⁴ As it happened, no action was taken on the proposed class until Cortot assumed the artistic directorship of the Ecole Normale around 1923, leaving
little doubt that he was the moving force behind a specialized teacher training.15

By 1925 the Ecole Normale had undergone some important changes in personnel and was rapidly outgrowing its quarters at 64, rue Jouffroy (17e). Mangeot was now administrative director, and Cortot, apart from his position as artistic director, was head of by far the largest "school" in the piano division.16 Marguerite Long, who succeeded Diémer at the Conservatoire in 1920, had resigned. In 1925 she founded her own rival "cours supérieur de virtuosité" at the Maison Erard. Dupré, Wurmser, Morpain and Blanche Selva had moved on, though the first three would later rejoin the faculty.17 In the strings department Maurice Hayot and Thibaud continued to supervise "schools" but Capet, Firmin Touche and André Hekking had left. Casals was titular head of a 'cello "school," but in reality he had delegated all teaching to his representative Diran Alexanian.18 The voice department boasted some distinguished singers of the day (Jane Bathori, Hélène Guillou, Charles Panzéra) and offered summer master classes with two highly admired artists, Ninon Vallin and Claire Croiza. Nadia Boulanger, barely mentioned in the early publicity for the school, had by 1925 become a much sought-after professor of harmony, counterpoint, organ and music history. She played an increasingly important role at the Ecole Normale through the thirties,19 as did Alexanian.
Cortot's artistic prestige and drawing power were exactly what the Ecole Normale needed. Once he was at its helm, he managed in a few years to raise the school's reputation and enrollment to a remarkably high level—and this, in spite of his being away on tour for weeks, sometimes months on end. He and Mangeot moved the school into new, larger facilities and expanded its course offerings to include numerous pedagogy workshops for in-service teachers. No doubt Mangeot deserves much more credit for the Ecole Normale's success than he has received. He managed the day to day affairs of the school with great competence, and as editor of the Monde Musical he made sure that its every activity was written up in enthusiastic terms. But it was Cortot, with his brilliant organizational gifts, who enticed top-notch teachers onto the faculty and more often than not persuaded them to stay despite the relatively low salaries. It was Cortot who brought in some of the most famous musicians of the day to give master classes or lectures, and who founded support groups (e.g., the Association Amicale de l'Ecole Normale) to provide material and moral aid to pupils who came alone to Paris from the provinces or abroad. It was Cortot who secured scholarship monies from all sorts of foundations and private donors, as well as cultural exchanges with foreign schools and performance opportunities for the most talented students. It was Cortot who founded an orchestra at the Ecole Normale in 1928 and shortly thereafter a subscription series featuring unknown and
contemporary works—Les Concerts Privés de l'Ecole Normale—that soon became the talk of Paris.24

A Place of Honor for Pedagogy.

Most importantly for the long-term welfare of the school, Cortot and Mangeot managed to rally faculty to a common philosophy and educational ideal, and imbue them with a real esprit de corps—something only the Schola Cantorum under d'Indy had thus far achieved. The goal of the Ecole Normale, in Cortot's words, was "to do everything possible to dignify the idea of the teaching vocation in the overall scale of musical values. It was no longer to be looked upon as a nearly inevitable stop-gap job, but rather as the high aim and fruitful expression of a noble artistic career."25 More specifically, the Ecole Normale strove to form complete musicians equipped with a broad humanistic and musical culture, as well as sound reasoning and learning skills.

In one of Cortot's early didactic writings for in-house use, a brochure from ca. 1925 entitled "Esprit de l'Enseignement,"26 the focus is clearly on cultivating intelligent and efficient study methods. It opens with a quote from Anatole France which expresses very well Cortot's teaching philosophy:

'The art of teaching is only the art of awakening the curiosity of young minds in order to then satisfy it, and curiosity is alive and well only in happy spirits. The knowledge one hammers forcibly into minds blocks them up and stifles them. To digest knowledge, one has to have swallowed it hungrily."27
After a brief preface justifying the inclusion of general music courses in all the Ecole Normale's instrumental and vocal programs of study, there are sections on "How to Practice a Work" and "How to Communicate it to Listeners"---or so the subheadings read. In reality, the whole pamphlet consists of general guidelines for practicing a musical work. The first section ("Comment travailler...") deals with the mental phase of score learning and interpretation, the second ("Comment communiquer...") with the actual work of realization at the instrument. Significantly, Cortot devotes three times as much commentary to the mental aspects, drawing analogies with the process by which one learns a poem for recitation. With the musical as with the literary text, he writes, the first step is to "make the work one's own ("mettre l'oeuvre en soi")... , to com-prehend it, in the etymological sense of the word."  

To achieve comprehension, Cortot recommends multiple mental readings (general, harmonic, stylistic, "conductorial") and structural analysis. The pupil who cannot hear in his inner ear what he sees on the page must sing all the important lines on solfege syllables. This preliminary work, Cortot says, "must be done with the greatest thoroughness, and without fear of spending too much time on it.... The pupil will know that he has done the first phase well when he can hear the work sing fully within him, i.e., when he knows the piece rather well already by heart." It would be desirable, he adds, "for
the pupil to get used to writing the piece out by memory on staff paper,\textsuperscript{31} or at the very least, copying it.\textsuperscript{32}

The second part of the pamphlet contains a few time-honored suggestions for keyboard practice (e.g., play through the piece once up to tempo, practice in detail and with varied approaches, knit the fragments together). On memorizing, Cortot writes:

> The fingers have no ability to memorize, only a capacity to automatize through repetition. One should not push the sort of instrumental drill that works to promote this [muscular] automatization, which is entirely destroyed as soon as one implements another. Memory work should be entirely intellectual and should be reinforced by remarks on... aspects of the music's structure and expressive character.\textsuperscript{33}

It is not very clear to whom this brochure was addressed. At times Cortot seems to be advising pupils who are musically unschooled and have not developed their critical faculties,\textsuperscript{34} while other comments seem aimed at the instructors who could be dealing with such pupils. In his remarks on memorizing, he clearly errs in believing all automatic reflexes to be transitory and easily "re-programmable."\textsuperscript{35} Many would also question his notion that memorization should be entirely intellectual (the moreso since in concert he was not a very good advertisement for his theory).

Rightly or wrongly, the message that emerges from this booklet is that one should barely touch the keys at all until the mental phase of learning is well advanced or even complete. If Cortot had said that there can be no mastery of the music unless there is mastery of the mental skills, one could agree
wholeheartedly, but his insistence that the cerebral work must all \textit{precede} the practical rather than taking place concomitantly is extreme and methodologically unsound. One can only hope that Cortot exaggerated, knowing that many students, if left to their own devices, will postpone the intellectual work indefinitely. Otherwise, one must question whether bogging the pupil down in cogitation and analysis before he has played the music at least a few times and been gripped by it can possibly make him love the work—which is the essential thing, since from the love will spring the desire to inquire more deeply and the will to master. I suspect not, particularly if the student is a child or an adolescent.

The rigidly sequential approach only fosters a dichotomization of the conceptual and the physiological/technical sides of the music-making process, when ultimately we are striving desperately for a synthesis. Furthermore, over-intellectualization in the preliminary stage of learning can also be psychologically detrimental to a free, creative performance. Assuming that one has a decent technique, the actual hands-on experiencing of the music when it is fresh and exciting can prompt the imagination, suggest ideas, feelings, energy flows and nuances that might be excluded a priori if the performer has his interpretation already set when he arrives at the keyboard. "Problems can result," writes Seymour Bernstein,
when you anticipate an interpretation before allowing the emotional content of the music to express itself through you. Focusing prematurely on interpretive details can rob you of spontaneity and foster additional [emotional and physical] obstacles. This is not to suggest that you should sit at the piano in a trancelike state with a come-what-may attitude..., [but] you may complicate your response to music during the first stage of learning by overanalyzing.... In general, your grasp of the true meaning of a composition and your ability to articulate that meaning will be furthered by reading through the music freely and daringly.38

Surely Cortot himself played "freely and daringly" sometimes when learning new repertoire. Presumably he did not practice only in slow tempi, as recommended in the pamphlet.39 These self-contradictions may well be more apparent than real and perhaps arise from his tendency to state his precepts in extreme, categorical terms.

In 1925-26 the Ecole Normale established its first pure pedagogy classes, taught that year by Yvonne Lefébure and Raymond Thiberge. Required only of candidates for the Licence d'enseignement at first, music pedagogy was split up into three distinct subjects that were taught and tested separately:40

1) Pédagogie du mécanisme intellectuel
2) Pédagogie du mécanisme musculaire instrumental ou vocal
3) Pédagogie de l'interprétation

This curriculum may represent the first time any French music school offered formal pedagogy courses. Over the following decades there were many changes in the class organization, content and faculty, but the discipline remained an essential
component of teaching track (diplôme and licence) study programs as long as Cortot was director of the Ecole Normale.⁴¹

**In the Seat of Power.**

The departure of Isidor Philipp in 1927 brought to a close the era of rivalries between respected, highly dissimilar piano "schools" within the Ecole Normale. From this point on, Cortot and his representatives dominated the piano department. Not that all diversity of approach was eliminated. Lazare-Lévy stayed on for a while, as did four of Philipp's appointees: Léon Conus, Jean Manuel, Fernand Motte-Lacroix and Mme. Bachelot-Alaroze. Also teaching at the Ecole Normale for varying periods between 1927-1939 were Lucien Wurmsser and Camille Decress (de Bériot disciples), Pierre Maire and Vlado Perlemuter (from the Cortot/Lortat class), Janine Weill (a Long/Cortot pupil who later became Marguerite Long's assistant and biographer), Henri Gil-Marchex and Marcel Ciampi (both Diémer products), Mmes. Piltan de St. Germain and Liénard (both Delaborde), Céliney Chailley-Richez (Pugno) and the independent Thiberge.⁴² The technical precepts and performance values of these teachers differed—in some cases markedly—from those of Cortot's close circle. It appears, however, that none amassed enough stature and following to build up a bona fide "school" of his/her own.⁴³

Cortot, by contrast, had organized his growing entourage into an impressive operation over the late 'twenties that
worked a bit like the farm system of a professional athletic club. On the bottom rung, under the supervision of Mme. Giraud-Latarse, were instructors (nearly all students of his or students of students) whose classes consisted largely of elementary and intermediate level pupils working toward the brevet. As these pupils progressed, the better ones were fed into high-level classes taught by Cortot's closest and most competent associates (notably Mmes. Giraud-Latarse, Lefebure, Bascourret and Kastler-Galanti), who groomed them for participation in his cours d'interprétation. The distinction between elementary and advanced-level professors was not strict. Many teachers other than those just named had diplôme and licence candidates in their classes from time to time. There was, however, a definite hierarchy: "It was a complex and quite efficient organization," said Reine Gianoli. "Cortot had a very keen sense for how to use the strengths of his associates to best advantage. Each teacher had his/her responsibilities. For instance, pupils who had technical shortcomings were sent for fifteen or twenty minutes a week to Mme. Blancard, who specialized in teaching the excercises in Cortot's Principes rationnels."

The fact that "piano" became practically synonymous with "Cortot" at the Ecole Normale enabled pupils to benefit from a certain consistency of musical and pedagogical outlook from the preparatory to the advanced level of study, and it was
certainly no deterrent to enrollment growth in the piano department. On the contrary, Cortot's name drew pupils in record numbers—not only major talents from abroad, but also increasing numbers of French (aspiring teachers, children, gifted amateurs). Although the Licence de Concert was no match yet for a premier prix as a status symbol, the Ecole Normale was slowly but surely gaining on the Conservatoire, a situation that caused considerable anxiety at the older institution and even provoked several policy changes.47 By 1932, the number of piano classes at the Ecole Normale had risen to twenty-seven. That fall the school had 640 pupils enrolled in lessons or professional study programs, despite the fact that France was in the midst of a severe economic crisis that hit private schools especially hard.48

Cortot was the decisive factor that enabled the Ecole Normale to wax strong while other institutions waned. His prestige at home and abroad grew with every tour (between 1925–1935 he gave about a thousand concerts on three continents) and was further enhanced in those years by the appearance of his study editions of the Chopin Préludes (1926), Ballades (1929–1931), Sonatas Nos. 2 and 3 (1930), his important Principes rationnels (1928) and essays on French piano music, and most of all perhaps by his famous master classes in interpretation.49 Then there were his sixty lecture-recitals, his conducting appearances, the forty-odd recordings he made between 1929–1935
alone, and countless smaller projects. The man was a phenomenon, and his interpretation courses drew young pianists to Paris by the droves. From the mid 'twenties, one finds talents of the first order coming to the Ecole Normale: Igor Markévitch ('26), Gina Bachauer ('28), Reine Gianoli ('31), Ruth Slencyznksa ('32), Halina Czerny-Stefanska ('33), Dinu Lipatti ('34), Samson François ('36). Some, like Slencyzska and Czerny-Stefanska, were child prodigies that Cortot met while touring. Others, like Bachauer and Lipatti, were adolescents on the threshold of important careers who came to the master for finishing studies.

Cortot seemed to have a miraculous ability to squeeze additional activities into his overloaded schedule. From ca. 1929 he began giving monthly master classes to the candidates for the Licence de Concert. The final programs of the three students who were awarded a Licence in 1931 give an idea of the standard of repertoire/playing expected:

1) O. Vondrovic (Czech). Principal teacher: Lefébure

**Bach-Busoni** - Chaconne
**Beethoven** - Sonata, Op. 109 in E major
**Chopin** - Sonata in b minor
**Liszt** - Funérailles
**Franck** - Prélude, choral et fugue
**Ravel** - Jeux d'eau
**Brahms** - Variations on a Theme by Händel (required piece, given to all candidates six weeks before the exam)
**Chamber music** - one important sonata, trio or piano quartet
2) Radu Mihail (Rumanian). Principal teacher: Bascourret de Guéraldi

Bach-Liszt - Fantasy and Fugue in g minor
Bach-Busoni - Chaconne
Beethoven - Sonata, Op. 111 in c minor
Chopin - Ballade No. 2
Liszt-Paganini - Etude in a minor
Enesco - Suite in D major
Brahms - Händel Variations
Chamber music - as above

3) André Collard (French?). Principal teacher: Lefébure

Bach-Liszt - Fantasy and Fugue in g minor
Beethoven - 32 Variations in c minor
Chopin - Fantasie in f minor
Chopin - Etudes in c minor, G^b major
Schumann - Etudes symphoniques
Liszt - Mephisto Waltz
Debussy - Prelude: Ce qu'a vu le vent d'ouest
Brahms - Händel Variations
Chamber music - as above

The final examination took the form of a closed hearing before a jury composed of prestigious musicians not affiliated with the school. In addition to playing significant portions of their program, Licence candidates had to furnish analytical/historical/stylistic reports on each piece prepared and had to sight-read and analyze an unknown work. From ca. 1926 the repertoire requirements for final programs had been eased slightly by allowing major sonatas to count as the equivalent of two works. To put things in perspective, however, consider the requirements for pianists competing for prizes at the Conservatoire in the same year, 1931:
Advanced piano, men:

Chopin - Prélude No. 13 in F# major
Saint-Saëns - Toccata Op. 111, No. 6 (d'après le Concerto No. 5)

Sightreading - one piece, composed especially for the competition (judged at the eliminatorily May examinations)

Advanced piano, women:

Chopin - Sonata No. 2 in b♭ minor, Mvts. I and IV
Sightreading - as above

Reine Gianoli (1917?-1978), the first "defector" from the Conservatoire piano classes, entered the Ecole Normale's Licence de Concert course in October 1931 and participated in Cortot's monthly class:

In the years between the wars Cortot generally taught only those pianists who were, as we say, already "formed." The way to be heard by him was through the Ecole Normale cours d'interprétation, which were very important. One had to be fairly advanced to be accepted; not all pupils studying at the school were eligible.

The classes Cortot held for the Licence candidates were an exception to the norm in many ways. Cortot discontinued them only a few years after I graduated. I was fortunate to be there at the right time. We met as a group and listened to each others' lessons, and each of us had a rather long session with Cortot.

In the public master classes Cortot dealt almost exclusively with mature pianists, many of whom had been trained to his way of thinking by his associates. He didn't concern himself with the "nuts and bolts" of piano playing. He said: "This should be more palpitating, more intense, warmer..." and they reacted immediately to this sort of suggestion. In the Licence classes, on the other hand, he had to teach all sorts of pupils (n'importe qui), pianists of very diverse backgrounds and levels of accomplishment. There were even a few ignoramuses (inconscients) who had only the vaguest notion of what they were about.... Try as he might to rise above technical matters, if the students didn't know how to play the piano well.... Suffice it to say that Cortot didn't find that very enjoyable!
For the Licence classes, as well as in the main cours d'interprétation, Cortot made the students prepare analytical reports—"notices," as they were termed—on the pieces they were going to perform. What he expected above all was an imaginative and interpretive commentary. Some arrived with harmonic analyses, formal analyses.... He asked for a little of that in order to ascertain whether students had the requisite knowledge of music. But what he wanted above all... were insights into the poetic context, the character, the meaning the work had for one's personal imagination and sensibility. For Cortot there was always a deep correspondance between music, and the universe, and the human soul and... the inexpressible.

In my lessons with Cortot, he came up with countless poetic images to describe the music, much like those in his editions. All those words, I must confess,... didn't help me a great deal. But then there were his illustrations at the piano. And somehow the whole created... an atmosphere that little by little permeated me, to the point where people began discovering a kernel of Cortot's playing in mine.... It developed over time--and not because he told me "You have to play this passage in such and such a way," or "you should take this tempo here." He wanted pupils to have ideas of their own, and as long as they were convincing, he didn't like to dictate how to interpret a work and didn't press them to imitate. It was rather because he surrounded one with a kind of magical ambience that sprang above all from his insistence on the musical expression, which could never be ardent enough, thrilling (frémissant) enough, pulsating (palpitante) enough to suit him. Cortot always found [students' playing] a little lifeless--it wasn't, of course, but compared to his delivery....! Afterwards he would sit down at the piano--those moments... are emblazoned on my memory---and what came out of the instrument was extraordinary.

The records don't quite capture the quality of his sonority. You can hear the ample vibration of the tone in melodies,... but the quality of the touch, the "voice" or rather the "voices," the way his hands danced instead of just moving like other pianists', the left hand which uttered so many things... that one doesn't hear in the interpretations of other artists, the incredible charm (in the sense of a magical spell) that his playing radiated--something of all this is lost....

It is curious: when I was young, I gravitated--by affinity of feeling, character--more toward the other great artist teacher with whom I studied, Edwin Fischer. Fischer was kindness personified,... the bon maitre who invited you to his home, who lavished affection on you. Later, I came to realize little by little that from the
musical standpoint it was Cortot who had exerted the greater influence, and who had indelibly marked my playing.53

Cortot's Major Didactic Writings: The Commented Editions and the Principes Rationnels.

Just after the Ecole Normale instituted the pedagogy courses in 1926, Cortot published his edition of Chopin's 24 Préludes, probably the most famous and popular of his éditions de travail. The volume opens with a brief historical study by Laurent Ceillier,54 written for the program of Cortot's 1924 interpretation courses. The musical text of each prélude is preceded by a page or two of commentary containing exercises similar to those Cortot designed for the Etudes and a poetic explication of the character of the prélude.55

Editions with exegetical commentary or performance advice have been around a long time, but they did not really proliferate until the Romantic era. Even in the latter nineteenth century they were produced and consumed mainly by musicians steeped in the Austro-Germanic musical tradition, though a few (notably, von Bülow's annotated edition of the Beethoven Sonatas) were in wide usage in France in Cortot's youth. Commented editions, and literary interpretations of music of the type popularized by Liszt and his disciples, not only confirm the extent to which it was taken for granted that a work had a poetic (extra-musical) content, tacit or explicit. They also reflect the realization, on the part of interpreters or music writers, that the broad mass of practitioners were not
very cultured and musically literate, and they needed to have
the music rendered more accessible.

The first efforts by French pianists to produce didactic
editions containing performance and practice suggestions date
from just before World War I. In 1909 there appeared Les
Leçons écrites de Raoul Pugno: Chopin (Paris: Librarie des
Annales, 1909), which contained a selection of popular works by
Chopin annotated with very practical advice on
interpretation. This was followed shortly by Les leçons
écrites de Raoul Pugno: Schumann (1911) and Les leçons écrites
de Raoul Pugno: Chopin, Les Quatorze Valses (1912). The format
of Pugno's "written lessons" was apparently a commercial
success: a year after his first volume was published, Isidor
Philipp came out with Quatre-vingts problèmes techniques et
leur solutions: Leçons écrites (Paris: Heugel, 1910), which
offered preparatory exercises and practice suggestions for
mastering thorny passages from works by Beethoven, Chopin,
Schumann, Mendelssohn, Weber, etc. Most of Pugno's commentary
can best be described as performance tips; he includes no
exercises and little advice on how to practice. Philipp, on
the other hand, is intent on fostering a systematic, purposeful
approach to technical difficulties through greater
concentration, thought and variety of practice methods. He
hardly touches on stylistic and interpretive questions.

Cortot's editions, although short on specific
physiological advice, at least represent a serious effort to
relate work on the technical obstacles to musical and poetic ends. Cortot, like Pugno, communicates details of his own interpretation (e.g., specifying an appropriate sonority or balance between voices, proposing a tempo, phrasing, dynamic nuance, pedalling, fingering or a redistribution of notes between the hands), and calls attention to common errors and miscalculations. But Cortot's remarks are as a rule much more exegetical in character than Pugno's. Cortot is always bent on proposing an aesthetic image of the whole work that sparks the imagination and gives a vivid idea of what one is working towards, so that the student never practices in a void. When he makes a specific interpretive suggestion, he alludes to the musical/expressive rationale behind it in the same breath—which Pugno does not.

To find a precedent for Cortot's endeavors to correlate performance aims to a work's poetic essence (content, character/spirit), one has to go back to the editions and writings of Busoni, d'Albert and von Bülow which appeared around 1880-1900. Von Bülow sought to shed light on Beethoven's spiritual world and thinking processes in his edition of the piano sonatas, the annotations to which are full of references to the philosophical and poetic significance of the music. "Unfortunately," notes Brendel, "his intellectual method was not equal to his purpose...." When von Bülow turned from Beethoven's music, for which he undoubtedly had a special affinity, to Chopin's, he
abandoned even the semblance of critical reasoning and indulged in extravagant poeticizing. Here is his "explication" of Chopin's Prélude No. 9 in E major, which he subtitled "Vision":

[In the Ninth Prélude,] Chopin has the conviction that he has lost his power of expression. With the determination to discover whether his brain can still originate ideas, he strikes his head with a hammer (here, the sixteenths and thirty-seconds are to be carried out in exact time, indicating a double stroke of the hammer [mm.2-3, l.h.]). In the third and fourth measures one can hear the blood trickle (trills in the left hand). He is desperate at finding no inspiration (fifth measure); he strikes again with the hammer and with greater force (thirty-second notes twice in succession during the crescendo). In the key of A flat [m.8] he finds his powers again. Appeased, he seeks his former key and closes contentedly.60

Compared to von Bülow's Kafkaesque program, Cortot's commentary on the same Prélude, which he entitled "Voix prophétiques" ("Prophetic Voices"), sounds logical and almost objective:

These are voices of bronze, prophetic and solemn, whose rhythm dominates the powerful harmonies of this Prélude. They should be set apart from the supportive tonal fabric by the tragic nobility of their timbre: strong without being brutal, weighty without becoming heavy. This is the crux of the technical problem facing the interpreter, a problem that is all the more imposing considering that the right hand must meet these tonal requirements using almost exclusively its weakest fingers, the fourth and fifth, to declaim the most important line. We've already discussed this way of playing (see the notes on Op. 10, No. 3 in the study edition of Chopin's Études), but in that context it was a matter of the weak fingers playing espressivo cantabile, rather than projecting the imperious character [called for in this Prélude].... [Cortot reviews the conditions for polyphonic voicing in one hand]. Here the difficulty is compounded by the fact that the accompaniment itself must be full and sonorous, even in passages marked piano.

[Here follow exercises for firming up the weak fingers, taking care to articulate each as a single unit;
then Cortot gives five preparatory variants constructed on parts of the texture]....

Differentiate very precisely the rhythms \( \frac{1}{4} \) or \( \frac{3}{4} \), either when opposed to each other in the two hands, or when both voices adopt the latter in unison, injecting the majestic character of this Prélude with a touch of the heroic.\(^{61}\)

Throughout Cortot's commentary the pupil is constantly being reminded of the musical imperatives—character, structure—that dictate his work on sonority, tonal balance, touch and rhythmic incisiveness. It might be argued by critics of poetic imagery that much of the value of Cortot's counsel depends on whether one accepts his definition of the character of the work. Since he does not go into the reasons which led him to deduce that the music evokes "bronze voices" (in his master classes he recommended giving the melodies the timbre of trombones) and is "prophetic," "solemn," "tragic," etc., his description is not likely to convince skeptics who consider music a "self-contained... language characterized by abstract motion, events and dynamic processes,"\(^{62}\) i.e., incapable of expressing extrinsic ideas and feelings.

Two points should be made in answer to this argument. First, Cortot's characterization is in reality neither fanciful nor arbitrary, but springs rather from a deep familiarity with traditional expressive semes\(^{63}\) and associations. Second, Cortot was not out to prove the "rightness" of his interpretation, but simply to keep the pupil focussed on the essential—the meaning or message of the music—at the time when he is most likely to become preoccupied with the mechanics
of execution. "One of the most important dimensions of Cortot's teaching," noted Pierre Petit,

was this aspect which obliged the pupil to study compositions from within, i.e., in a profoundly musical manner and never from the external aspect (de l'extérieur). It was with this objective in mind that he required all the performers in his interpretation courses to write stylistic/poetic analyses of the works they were going to play. He compelled them to reflect on the music. (I was only twelve when I wrote my first, on one of Mendelssohn's Songs Without Words.) He didn't want a traditional, dry analysis; that dismayed him. That the first theme returned here, or there... he didn't care a whit to hear. What interested him was the feeling that emanated from the work, the affective side.

Evidently, today we have a tendency to look at music much more from a strictly technical perspective, to consider how it is constructed. But Cortot insisted on its emotional content.... To his credit, he forced students to... think about what the music meant to them personally. Granted, he was occasionally led to exaggerate when he attached subtitles to pieces, when he drew certain analogies. But in the main he was not wrong, because his approach enables the pupil to invest the music with a definite character, to have clear ideas rather than practicing aimlessly.64

Not all of Cortot's commentaries are as well-crafted and to the point as those he penned for certain of the Préludes. In his later editions, those of the 1940s in particular, he is often long-winded and needlessly complicated in his manner of expression.65 But as David Barnett points out, even "if in some instances the mixture is very rich and the adjectives and nouns seem to overflow the sentences, that very profusion, when they are well chosen, will stimulate the performer to search more deeply for the appropriate sonority and for exactly the right adjustment of tempo.... [Under] the influence of relevant, evocative words [he] will achieve greater selectivity within the ranges of the tolerance."66
To Cortot's way of thinking, a professor who does not try to explain the musical and expressive rationales behind his performance advice to the pupil is simply derelict in his responsibilities. Addressing the teachers attending his master classes, he asked:

Is contemporary music instruction doing all it can to get to the very heart of the art it claims to elucidate? To discover the composer's hidden sources of inspiration? Doesn't it focus too much on developing pianistic facility per se, at the expense of opening the pupil to an understanding of feelings?

Externally correct playing... is nothing, if it doesn't serve to communicate the controlling idea (principe générant) behind the artwork. Ours is an art whose roots reach down into the very depths of our hearts..., and yet we scarcely dare to urge pupils to look into the abysses it reveals in the human soul.

All too frequently, out of some inexplicable modesty if not out of negligence, we are content to say: "Play louder, play softer, pay attention to this fingering; don't forget this accent, it's essential." Essential...to what?

As a result, there where the music is crying the composer's despair, pouring out the torment of his passionate love, confiding his resignation or his hope, we end up too often giving our pupils nothing to think about except some dull clichés....

With all the fervor of an evangelist, Cortot explained to the prospective teachers in the Ecole Normale pedagogy classes why he believed it was imperative to "try to form not additional pianists, but more real musicians:

What is a musician? Has any one of you given serious thought to the reasons why you were drawn to music? Or to what the social role not only of the music teacher but of the musician... is, in life?.... To commit yourself to a profession that is as difficult and competitive as ours, you'd better have awfully strong reasons... for preferring it above all others....

I consider... the profession of musician to be the noblest of all. Its only equals, it seems to me, are the
exercise of a high calling by a good priest or the revelation of human wisdom by a great philosopher.

Music is a bond between human beings. A bond, also, between nations. A part of the musician's role is to foster an intimate understanding of the most obscure impulses of peoples of all nationalities; this is the true path towards a higher brotherhood. When we have succeeded in discerning what is most distinctive in the soul of a nation, in its poetic responses, its striving for beauty, its feelings of enthusiasm or sorrow, and when we communicate that to others, we awaken and liberate in our listeners that which is most noble in them, and we ourselves are enriched and take a step forward in our personal development.

Through music we liberate human consciousness. We release, in the imagination or in the memory of those who hear us, that which makes humanity worthy of itself. When you listen to a musical work, what is involved is not only its appeal to your ears but also the revelation of your innermost being. Our duty, therefore, is to develop the possibilities of drawing from ourselves these sensations, of refining our antennas, of sensitizing everything which allows us to transmit a feeling of beauty into the souls of others. And not what is termed disinterested beauty, but a beauty which is beneficial, almost in the medical sense.

We no longer have in daily life so many reasons to be moved, exalted, impassioned, that we can afford to disdain one of the rare elements of emotion remaining at mankind's service.

When you envisage a sublime, splendid career like ours that is worth every sacrifice, every gift of oneself, get it into your head now and forever that it must not be a question for you of being either virtuosi or professors. It's a matter of passing on the torch, of contributing to the perpetuation of one of the rare phenomena which can make humanity better, give it higher aspirations, reveal man to himself.

Reading this, one cannot help but perceive how far our world view has shifted from that which fired the minds of artists of Cortot's era. How many musicians today look upon their art not only as a personal "religion" (Cortot's term), but likewise as mankind's hope of salvation from his own worst instincts?
While most of Cortot's teachings were permeated with this flaming idealism, there was also a practical side to his pedagogy. This is represented by his study editions and more particularly by his *Principes rationnels de la technique pianistique*, which despite its title was not an abstract treatise but an anthology of exercises addressing the gamut of pianistic difficulties. The *Principes rationnels* was published in 1928. Part, if not all of it was tested on the students of the Ecole Normale during the 1926-27 school year. This trial run suggests that, notwithstanding assertions by Mme. Tagliaferro and Jean Cortot that Cortot composed the exercises for his own use, he probably devised a good number of them expressly to remedy shortcomings he observed in the pupils studying at the Ecole Normale in the 1920s.

Cortot divides his exercise formulae into five basic categories, according to the nature of the difficulty addressed:

1) Finger training (*Egalité, indépendence et mobilité des doigts*) without thumb passage
2) Thumb passage, scales, arpeggii (includes some broken chords and figuration with thumb passage using different sequences of conjunct/disjunct notes)
3) Double notes and polyphonic playing in one hand (includes scales in double thirds, fourths, fifths, etc., diatonic and chromatic, plus two-voice counterpoint with 2, 3 and 4 notes against one and cross rhythms)
4) Extensions (includes stretches between adjacent fingers and over the whole hand span, extensions in double notes)
5) Wrist and chord techniques (includes jumps, hand crossings, glissandi, repeated notes between the hands, alternating hands in seconds through octaves, conjunct or disjunct patterns played with repeated
Within each of the five chapters there are three subheadings (Series A, B, and C). Each series is to be practiced twelve consecutive days, one day being reserved for each major key and its parallel minor. Thus, all the exercises in Series A of Chapter I should be practiced in C major and c minor on the first day, in C#/D♭ major and c# minor the second day, and so on chromatically through the keys. If one follows his advice conscientiously and neither shirks the transpositions nor skips around in various chapters, it takes thirty-six days to complete a chapter, or about half a year to go once through the book.

Preceding the main body of the text there is a preliminary chapter ("Gymnastique Quotidienne du Clavier") containing nine warm-up exercises designed to foster the flexibility of the fingers, hand, wrist and forearm, the better to prepare the apparatus for proper muscular conditioning and reflex control. In the "Repertoire" section at the end of the book, Cortot lists a great many pieces which he believes should be learned by anyone wishing to become a professional pianist. He indicates for each the most relevant chapters of exercises and the grade of difficulty posed by the piece in that technical area (not very difficult, rather difficult, difficult, very difficult). At the end of each chapter, Cortot
includes two pages of lined music paper on which the student can write additional exercises, whether recommended by his professor or of his own devising.

In the *Principes rationnels*, Cortot synthesized much of the best from a whole line of traditional exercise methods, while at the same time adding new elements and emphases of his own. He managed, moreover, to squeeze the whole into about a hundred very dense pages. The density arises mainly from the fact that he does not fill page after page with written-out transpositions of exercises or fixed sequential patterns within exercises. Instead, he gives the original form of the exercise--complete if it is "through-composed," the first two or three units if it is sequential--only, and supplies a "Transposing Table" with the book that illustrates chromatic, harmonic, rhythmic and fingering variants of all sorts. A simple letter key (H for harmonic, C for chromatic, etc.) informs the student at the head of the exercise which type of variant(s) can be applied. A number of exercises are designated specifically "for hands with long fingers" or "for hands with short fingers," notably those involving held notes and/or extensions.

As the reader will hardly fail to have realized, the *Principes rationnels* is systematized to the ultimate degree. In some ways it might be considered more systematic than rational. Rattalino, for instance, complains that:

the principle of daily repetition of exercises in a progression by half step is not implemented in a
rational, but in a geometric manner.... It is hard to see rationally why the exercises on five notes should be practiced in the keys of G, A\textsuperscript{b} and A, which in terms of the positioning of the piano keys are identical to the keys of C, D\textsuperscript{b} and D. After twelve days of transposing, the pupil has really practiced not twelve different positions, but six positions once each and three positions twice. Hardly a rational principle.\textsuperscript{73}

Rattalino could have found a better example of irrational thinking on Cortot's part. While strictly speaking there is a certain redundancy in practicing all positions, the real purpose of this genre of five-finger exercise is to foster control, ease and fluency with common patterns in all keys, not just familiarity with the various keyboard groupings of black/white notes. Even from the latter standpoint, there are subtle differences between seemingly identical positions that arise from the proximity of the fingers to different configurations of adjacent, non-played keys, not to mention the difference to the ear and to the eye. The real question with Cortot's five-finger exercises is not whether some transpositions involve similar keyboard positions, but rather whether the basic patterns presented are relevant to the standard literature. Certainly many of the measure-long patterns in his exercises are common enough figures to merit practice in all keys.

Cortot's transposition principle, judiciously applied, can be productive. But several other principles advanced by him strike this author as impractical, if not irrational. For instance, in his introductory remarks ("Plan of Study..."), he writes:
During this first [six months'] period of study, one must absolutely refrain from practicing the chapters out of sequence or skipping over any chapter to reach later ones, all modification of the established order being in radical opposition to the essential objective of this work, which is the complete assimilation of each difficulty taken in isolation.74

Now it is obvious from the moment one opens the Principes rationnels that it is a book for pianists of intermediate to advanced levels. It does not even include the most basic elements of technique, such as fingerings for ordinary scales in octaves (major and three forms of minor) or exercises on simple blocked and broken chords with their inversions. The pianists who could reasonably be expected to take up Cortot's book are playing literature and études that simultaneously pose technical challenges covered in two, three, perhaps all of the chapters. Is it reasonable of him to insist that the performer who is studying the exercises in Chapter II not touch for four more months the exercises in Chapters IV and V which might help him with his Beethoven sonata and Chopin études scheduled for performance in recital three months hence?

This is not to imply that it would not be better in general to study the chapters and their individual subsections in the order given, both for the sake of thoroughness and because mastery of the skills treated in the earlier chapters considerably facilitates assimilation of those presented in later ones. There must be some latitude for choice, however, if only because the student who sees tangible results from work
on some section will be more motivated to persevere to the end of what is, after all, a long and arduous project.

In this same vein of practicality, Cortot sometimes gets carried away with the ideal of completeness and falls into contradictions. For instance, most of the time he advocates some lateral shifting of the arm when passing the thumb under (as opposed to the older practice of twisting the thumb hard under the palm to prepare the new position), since this allows the hand to trace a smoother, more streamlined path up and down the keyboard. Yet the first exercise he gives in Chapter II requires a contortionist's thumb shifts, which are to be executed "with the hand immobile" (my emphasis), holding one finger down.

Example 19. Cortot, *Principes rationnels*, Ch.II, Série A, Exercises No. 1a and 1c

1a

1c

\[ C = \text{suitable for transposition by chromatic half steps} \]

Is there anyone who can perform Exercise 1a or 1c without displacing the hand? Even were this possible, is there any place in the literature where it would be essential to pass the thumb over such distances with a static hand? Here the degree
of abstraction and difficulty perhaps exceeds the limits of the reasonable, unless one is practicing Cortot's exercises in a spirit of pure research (i.e., to see how far a pianist's thumb can reach if it is stretched to the maximum).

In fairness to Cortot, most of the exercises in the *Principes rationnels* have obvious applications in the standard repertoire. Some, however (e.g., Chapter II/A Nos. 3b and 4 for thumb passage and II/C for thumb passage in composite patterns; IV/B No. 1, the portion for scales in chromatic double seconds and sevenths; IV/C No. 1 for extensions with fingerings that shift the thumb passage to improbable points in the pattern), impose a strain on the pupil's muscles and patience that is disproportionate to their practical utility--the more so if he is obliged to practice them in all the chromatic and harmonic variants. Other exercises are extremely difficult, and for the rare occasions when something similar might be encountered in a piece, it would seem wiser to attack the problem directly in the musical context:


No. 3d r.h.

No. 5b r.h.
These are minor flaws, for the most part, and they do not detract from the real value of the work as a whole. The *Principes rationnels* remains one of the best and most comprehensive of technical "methods." The work is constructed throughout so that the exercises require concentration, and often cogitation, to master and are not easily turned into mindless drills. How much easier it is to automatize the motions required for this Hanon exercise:


than for this five-finger exercise by Cortot:

Example 22. Cortot, *Principes rationnels*, Chapter I, Série B Exercise No. 1a (lb, lc, ld and le cover patterns beginning with the second, third, fourth and fifth finger respectively)

No. 1a

*continues for 15 more permutations*

Rafael Joseffy in his *School of Advanced Piano Playing* (New York: Schirmer, 1902), employs a different strategy for focussing the pupil's attention. In his five-finger exercises
the sequenced pattern remains the basic unit, but one must play
the series of five fingers in the same order while accenting
every sixth note, which displaces the accent to each finger
successively.

Example 23. Joseffy, School of Advanced Piano Playing, Pt.
1/a, Nos. II and III.

The stemmed quarter notes in the above exercise lead one
to wonder: do they simply indicate the beginnings of finger
groupings (they are missing on the next page, where the
exercises are written out in c minor)? Or did Joseffy expect
the performer to hold each quarter note for its full value?
One cannot be certain, and this is one of the shortcomings of
Joseffy's volume: there are almost no verbal indications of
any sort to the pupil, not even the usual advice on practicing
slowly with a supple wrist and arm. This is tantamount to
negligence in a method that is full of exercises with two,
three or four notes held down, very large stretches, and
extended series of four- and five-note chords (one hand) played
forte, all of which carry the risk of a potentially injurious
excess of tension. Cortot's text, by contrast, is profusely
annotated. He offers a brief historical-analytical overview of each major technical element, identifies the nature or purpose of most exercises (e.g., "examples of arpeggiated chords to be played with hand rotation") and gives many useful suggestions on practicing. He includes everything except that which one would most like to have: specific advice on motions and "choreography." To paraphrase Reine Gianoli, students would derive still greater benefit from the *Principes rationnels...* if it included a *mode d'emploi*: a "user's manual."

While the Cortot and Joseffy books are about equally comprehensive in scope, they differ noticeably in the relative emphasis placed on various aspects of technique. Cortot is more thorough in his treatment of double note scales, wide jumps, broken octaves and tremolos. Joseffy, a Liszt student, devotes more attention to arpeggios, broken chord (zig-zag) patterns, full chords and rhythm studies. He also includes a few exercises for touch and dynamics. It is interesting to note that while both authors devise exercises for practicing trills, generally regarded as one of the "acid tests" of a pianist's technical proficiency, they approach this element in diametrically opposite ways. In the *School of Advanced Piano Playing*, trills are presented right after a relatively undemanding section on two-hand scales in thirds, sixths and contrary motion. Moreover, they appear immediately in one of their most difficult contexts: in parallel octaves between the hands, with two or three held notes.

4/Ia

\[
\begin{align*}
&\begin{array}{c}
4/IIa
\end{array}
\end{align*}
\]

Cortot, on the other hand, approaches trills from exercises on mordents (single and double) and turns, which didactically would seem to make much more sense. Trills with multiple held notes are not included in Chapter I with the simpler trills, but are dealt with in Chapter III ("Polyphonic technique").

Example 25. Cortot, Principes rationnels, Chapter I, Série C Ex. 7-8, excerpts.

No. 7a

\[
\begin{align*}
&\begin{array}{c}
7b
\end{array}
\end{align*}
\]
This sequence of progressively more advanced exercises illustrates very clearly Cortot's fundamental precept that a difficulty must be studied initially in its most elementary form.

There is one final feature of the *Principes rationnels* that merits mention here, and should perhaps have been discussed first rather than last, since Cortot and many of the professors he formed considered it of extreme importance. This is the prefatory "Gymnastique du Clavier." The nine exercises which comprise the "Gymnastique" appear at a glance to be very easy, yet in reality they are among the most difficult to grasp and perform exactly as Cortot intended. The challenge they pose is primarily cerebral: it is a matter of reinforcing neural reflex pathways and concentration, not of muscle building.

Each exercise requires the student to activate individually the fingers or one of the larger playing levers,
while keeping the rest of the apparatus utterly passive and eliminating all non-essential motions. Lest anyone get the wrong idea (as many apparently have despite Cortot's explanatory comments), the aim of these exercises is not primarily to develop strong independent playing levers. It is: 1) to cultivate maximum flexibility in each unit of the mechanism; 2) to heighten consciousness of what individual vs. intercoordinated motions feel like, and enhance tactile and kinaesthetic sensitivity; 3) to foster the ability to voluntarily control the smallest degrees and muscular distinctions of movement with exactitude. Cortot deemed the "Gymnastique" so vital that he insisted that pupils devote one quarter of the prescribed daily technical practice (i.e., fifteen minutes) to this chapter—permanently.

The first exercise is notated as follows:


![Example 26](image)

*the fingers should be placed on the keys, but should not depress them.

The exercise has four steps, corresponding to the four sixteenth-note values. On the first 16th, the playing finger depresses the note just far enough to make it speak. On the second 16th, the finger is lowered to the keybed without contracting or tensing the other fingers.
On the third 16th, the finger lightens the pressure keeping the key all the way down. On the last, the playing finger allows the key to rise to surface level. Practice in four harmonic variants; transpose in each case to all keys [my summary of Cortot's explanation].

What this exercise promotes, first of all, is tactile sensitivity. "One becomes aware not only of one's fingers and the exact movement one commands them to make," writes Denise Bidal, "but one also develops the capacity to really feel the weight and the two escapements of the key. This finger training is essential to a great deal of experimentation with tone quality."

While researching this paper in Paris, I had the pleasure of interviewing Mme. Cécile de Brunhoff, Professor of piano at the Ecole Normale. She kindly agreed to give me a lesson on the "Gymnastique" as it was taught during Cortot's lifetime to pupils attending the Ecole Normale. For well over half an hour Mme. de Brunhoff explained, demonstrated and patiently corrected my efforts, clarifying points that I had not understood well from Cortot's directions in the text. During that session, it became evident that to have performed the exercises in a fully satisfactory manner would have taken considerable practice on my part, and perhaps several more coaching sessions as well.

In Cortot's time the students of the Ecole Normale rarely worked on their own in the Principes rationnels. They studied the "Gymnastique" and the other exercises under the vigilant
eye of Jeanne Blancard, who "taught them with a zealot's enthusiasm and conviction." In her technique class, noted Mme. de Brunhoff,

Mme. Blancard constantly emphasized how important it was to hold and position the hand properly. And although Cortot did not like to talk about technique, he too was very insistent on this point when he taught my son. Naturally, for Cortot, the choice of means and of practice strategies ultimately depended on what one was aiming for, musically and expressively, in each passage of a composition. On a different level, however, an artist's sound ideals also have a bearing on the technical approach adopted. If one is intent, as Cortot was, on a projecting a big, penetrating cantabile tone, this calls for a precise articulation from close to the keys (pressing the keys intensively, but never hitting). At the same time, it presupposes a certain amount of arm/hand participation. To put it another way, there has to be freedom of movement in the wrist, elbow and shoulder joints and there has to be the possibility for weight to pass naturally to the keys when needed. The back and shoulders must be completely relaxed, and the arm very, very supple (that's the foremost condition), the wrist always flexible....

These last considerations prompted Cortot to devise the "Gymnastique," which is the most important and distinctive part of the Principes rationnels. Incidentally, when Cortot demonstrated the exercises in the "Gymnastique" he did so away from the piano, placing his fingers on the edge of a table top and making all the various wrist motions.

Cortot's exercises are not practiced as much any more at the Ecole Normale as they were when Mme. Blancard's technique class existed. Still, in my own teaching I always try to go over a good portion of them—the "Gymnastique" and the first chapter or two, at the very least.

I am not certain that a student could pick up the essential from the Principes rationnels working on his own. Some parts, yes. But other aspects need to be supervised by someone really familiar with Cortot's approach. He doesn't always tell how to do the exercises in sufficient detail. Perhaps this is inevitable when one writes a book and is very close to the subject, especially if one has former students teaching it who know it from the source, as Cortot did. You think that you are saying quite enough to prevent misinterpretations, and it isn't always the case.
The importance of the "Gymnastique" would seem to come down to this: for the professor the exercises are an occasion to work on forming the pupil's hand and cultivating tactile sensitivity, flexibility and minimal tension. Concurrently, one can check on, and adjust if necessary, the pupil's whole physical bearing at the keyboard. For the student, the "Gymnastique" provides a controlled context in which he can attend to a limited number of fundamental principles, and really assimilate them to perfection. Moreover, there is probably a psychological benefit in beginning the day's practice with the preliminary "Gymnastique" exercises which persists long after the physical challenges have been mastered. Conceivably, they function a little like the centering exercises practiced by students of Zen: to do them correctly, the pupil must learn to relax his muscles and to calm and focus his mind. By achieving this state, he ensures that all his subsequent practicing will be more effective.

In summary, the Principes rationnels is without a doubt one of the most significant elements of Cortot's pedagogical legacy—still in wide use and meriting consultation by those who are unfamiliar with it. It is a work on which a student can make immense progress technically, provided that it is studied under the careful supervision of a teacher who can explain how the exercises should be practiced and who knows when the individual student is physiologically and pianistically ready to profit from them. As Giuseppe Piccioli, translator of the Italian edition of the Principes, rightfully
points out, "This is not a work to entrust to a debutant, nor even to a pupil who lacks a general [culture] and specific [pianistic] schooling. The professor must constantly watch how the pupil progresses and assimilates the material and make sure he understands the various movements.... To run through the exercises at the piano without taking the trouble to read the texts or do a thorough preparatory work before playing them can be more harmful than useful."\[^{82}\]

**Cortot's teaching in the cours d'interprétation.**

Many of those who were privileged to attend Cortot's master classes in the years between the wars count them among the most cherished musical experiences of their lifetime. In the 'thirties, when Cortot was at the zenith of his powers, the cours d'interprétation were major events on the Paris pianistic scene. For three weeks each June or July the diminutive concert hall of the Ecole Normale\[^{83}\] would be packed with 50-70 performers from a dozen countries and almost five hundred auditors, all anxious to hear Cortot's ideas on the Romantic or French piano literature. Often the participants were seated on the stage itself, behind Cortot and the two Pleyel concert grands--not just to give them a good view of the proceedings but also to admit still more auditors.\[^{84}\]

"There were some who criticized the form of Cortot's courses," writes Antoine Golea, "and even the content, which was essentially poetic--and the poetry, let's admit, was sometimes a little rhetorical."
Cortot allowed certain of the courses to be published; they are extant, and one can get an impression from them [of what transpired]. But it's not the same thing, of course. Those who didn't hear them, who didn't live them, can have only a very vague notion of what they were like. He had a deep, resonant, singing bass-voice which he exploited in the same way he exploited the timbres he drew... from the keyboard. He spoke at length, he explained technical points, but most of all he explained the essential spirit (l'âme) of the music which he sought to communicate to an impassioned, fascinated audience. Fascination is the word that springs to mind when one thinks of Cortot the pianist or the professor. Every pianist in Paris and a great many other musicians as well squeezed into this hall; [Cortot's] detractors came too, to collect the ammunition with which to attack him outright afterwards. But when Cortot invited a student... to play, then took him through the piece, teaching as he went, the audience to the last listener seemed spellbound.85

Each year Cortot organized his course around a particular theme or repertoire. For instance, over three years he considered "Forms..., and the Aesthetic Reasons for their Development," dividing his subject into "Established Forms: Fugue, Suite, Sonata, Concerto and Variation" (1926); "Free Forms," such as preludes, nocturnes, impromptus, etudes, ballades, rhapsodies and sets of character pieces (1927); and "Free Forms (continued) and Works of Essentially Rhythmic Character," such as stylized dance movements from suites, waltzes, polonaises, mazurkas, works inspired by Spanish dance rhythms, etc. (1928). Other favorite topics included "Chopin" (1929, 1949, 1960), "French Piano Music" (1930), "Building a Concert Repertoire Rationally" (1924, 1933-34), "Beethoven's Piano Sonatas" (1932, 1943, 1950, 1961), "Sonatas and Concertos that were Famous in the 19th Century" (1931) and "Schumann" (1951).86
Cortot firmly believed in the master class system of teaching. Like Liszt, who may have originated the class lesson, he appreciated being spared the wearisome task of having to repeat again and again the same recommendations for fingerings, phrasing, etc. He was convinced, moreover, that class teaching generated an atmosphere more conducive to learning: "It is rare that a student truly understands an observation which is made to him," he told a pedagogy class. "What makes the collective lesson so effective is that the student profits from the teaching directed at another. He is always less insightful (clairvoyant) when he himself is on the hot seat."87

While many present-day teachers would concur with Cortot's arguments for the group format, there are those who believe that the effectiveness of master class teaching is compromised when one opens the class to the lay public. Whether this is so would seem to depend very much on the approach of the individual teacher. Pedagogues who are more concerned with helping the pupil to become a technically accomplished instrumentalist than with leading him to think and feel interpretively along specific lines tend to find the presence of the general public very inhibiting. Whereas in camera they will expend much effort explaining physiological principles and correcting individual technical faults, they will be reluctant to delve into these matters in a public audition—not merely out of fear of bruising the student's ego
or losing the audience's interest, but also out of awareness that time limitations may force them into hasty, partial explanations that can confuse or even mislead.

Cortot was not a teacher of this breed. The presence of the general public imposed few if any constraints on the style or substance of his instruction. He concentrated on teaching his vision of the piece and the art of communicating through music, and his approach was much the same whether he was addressing a class of ten or an audience of four hundred. His comments were always aimed at raising the performer to the music: deepening his ideas and feelings about the work, refining his manner of expression. The pupil's human qualities, pianistic problems and personal development beyond the immediate context of the composition under discussion were of lesser concern to Cortot. In the final analysis, the public master class was probably the optimal format for his teaching, since it enabled him to share the best of what he had to give with the largest number of people.

Among those who profited most from Cortot's courses were the teachers--current and future--in attendance. His opening lectures and his discussions of performers' written essays on pieces were highly informative. He had amassed a vast storehouse of knowledge, and he dispensed it liberally. His remarks on composers' aims and attitudes toward life were peppered with relevant quotes from their writings. Between performances he was liable to treat the audience to a brief
discourse on any topic from music's debt to the other arts, to
the evolution of the piano and piano writing or the difference
between Chopin's and Schumann's use of rubato. "A teaching is
not enlivening unless it provides nourishment for the mind," he insisted.

Observing Cortot's manner of working with students was a
valuable learning experience in its own right. "Cortot
listened sympathetically and very intently to each [performer]
in his courses," wrote Denise Bidal.

He remembered exactly the details of many successive
performances grasped immediately and completely the qualities and shortcomings of a pianist. He always went straight to the heart of the matter and hit on a striking word to characterize the performance, evoking an image that is indelibly etched on the memory.... Each of his observations was a stimulant, so it often happened that the interpretation which had been presented was transformed before one's eyes.... Fired with fresh enthusiasm, the performer came away with the feeling he had touched on the truth. 

Needless to say, certain of the qualities that contributed to Cortot's effectiveness--his artistic authority, eloquence and charismatic charm, his genius for awakening the idealist in every performer--were traits of his personality that were impossible to pass on to another. Discerning observers, however, could pick up much in the way of teaching strategies, musical insights and "interpretive vocabulary" that was of practical use in their own work.

Ruth Slencyznska relates a little experience that had far-reaching consequences for her own approach to teaching:

Once as a child I played a Chopin nocturne for Alfred Cortot. He said: "This was no good, and you know it.
Play it again as if you were the teacher showing me how to play." I played it again and he was satisfied. This taught me a most important lesson. It was the beginning of my campaign for what I call "exercises in imagination." 95

Having to sit down with cold hands and play for an artist whom one holds in awe can be a nerve-racking experience, as well Cortot knew. He employed many ingenious tactics for easing the performer's anxiety and helping him to give his maximum. Cortot, according to John Philips, "frequently showed immense patience and understanding with students who were experiencing difficulty with a certain composition, but whose qualities of musicianship aroused his sympathetic interest.

To one very young man who had just given a somewhat nervous interpretation of Chopin's Etude, Opus 10 No. 6, Cortot said, "Now, then, once again. And this time, play it just for me." To another, regarding the opening of Chopin's F major Ballade: "Instead of playing it, I would rather you dreamed it." Such perceptive and gentle direction repeatedly produced miracles, to the amazed and delighted edification of the hundreds... who packed the hall. 96

Cortot constantly urged performers to have the courage to project a sincere personal vision of the piece: "Music must be contagious---dangerously, sublimely contagious," he exhorted. 97

"When I was already a mature artist making a career for myself," recalled Mme. Gianoli,

I played a Beethoven Concerto for Cortot. "You know," he told me afterward, "sometimes respect kills love." He meant by this that he thought I was becoming overly conscientious..., in a way that threatened to make my performances academic-sounding. 98

"Play impertinently!" Cortot often advised pupils who seemed inhibited by an excessive regard for convention or the letter.
As a rule, performers who made a sincere effort to communicate could expect to be taken seriously by Cortot. Immobile and concentrated, he sat at his little table on stage and listened to the whole piece, neither interrupting nor flinching at obvious flaws or immaturity. During the ensuing discussion he often took the pupil's place at the piano, underscoring his criticism with musical examples. On many occasions, wrote Ruth Fermoy, "He [made] his strongest points by imitating the pupil's manner of playing. It is easy to imagine the poor pupil's state of mind during those sessions, although Cortot is far too polite to make one look the fool one probably is, and certainly feels."

A pretentious, cavalier attitude toward the music was sure to provoke an ironic or angry response from Cortot. Gavoty recounts one such incident:

One evening, a foreign student whose turn it is to play comes toward the piano.
"What have you prepared, Mademoiselle?"
"Oh... the 'Appassionata' Sonata, Maître," retorts the young English girl offhandedly....
"The 'Appassionata,' is that all? That's no minor matter, you know."
"It didn't give me much trouble," replies this smug daughter of Albion....
"Hmmm!" mutters Cortot, "we'll see. Above all, give us the impression, from the opening measures, of a tiger coming out of the bush. Do-la-fa: this should be menacing, rumbling, should conjure up a vision, you understand...?"

The student nods... and attacks the alarming phrase. Her tone is thin and feeble.... The redhead trills away aimlessly in the upper register and Cortot can't restrain himself from mimicking her reproachfully:
"See here, Mademoiselle, we were expecting a big cat--and what jumps out? A gazelle...."
The pupil starts over with the same puny sonority. Hearing no growl, Cortot, tight-lipped, imitates the tiger in spite of himself. The pupil swivels on her bench:
"What did you say, Maitre?"
"I said nothing, Mademoiselle: I snarled!" 101

Cortot's lessons were frequently enlivened by such flashes of wit. To a student performing Schumann's **Carnaval**, reports Dean Elder, "he pointed out that "Chiarina" represented the ardent side of Clara Wieck and should be **ravissante**. 'Your Chiarina is forty years too old!'" 102 On another occasion he explained that from the first notes of Chopin's **Ballade No. 3** in A♭, the interpreter "should evoke a mood of innocent bliss, serious and tender. Give us the feeling that marriage is right around the corner." The pupil tried her best, but before she had played two phrases, Cortot stopped her: "An **innocent** happiness, Mademoiselle; I didn't say 'rustic' (**villageois**)." 103

Cortot's irony-tinged humor was all the more effective for being delivered with a poker face. After a rather prosaic rendering of the yearning, evocative D♭ major section of Liszt's **Mephisto Waltz**, he solemnly informed an embarrassed young man: "The seducer you conjured up in the middle section would not cause any girl's mother sleepless nights" ("Dans cette épisode médian, vous seriez un séducteur qui ne ferait pas peur aux mères de familles"). 104

Many of Cortot's students have commented on his remarkable gift for summing up the character of a theme or work in a memorable epithet or poetic image. A few examples will suffice:
Example 27. Beethoven, Sonata Op. 57 in f minor ("Apassionata"), Mvt. II: Andante con moto, mm. 1-4 and fol.

"A cortège of philosophers."\textsuperscript{105}


"A metaphysical reverie, not a concerto for piano."\textsuperscript{106}

Example 29. Chopin, Prélude No. 15 in D\textsuperscript{b} major, middle section (mm. 28-29 and fol.).

"A phantom in c\# enters, comes toward you, and takes possession of your personality; only gradually do you become conscious of what is happening. A crescendo of terror."\textsuperscript{107}
Example 30. Schumann, "Einsame Blumen" ("Solitary Flowers"), from Waldszenen, Op. 82, mm. 1-2 and fol.

Semplice $d=66$

"Pansies, not orchids."108


Andante

"Here the variations do not serve to break the monotony. The static quality is intentional, and an integral element of the work. This is a reverie: not an 'infant's lullaby' but rather a poet who cradles his dream."109

Example 32. Ravel, "Scarbo" from Gaspard de la nuit, mm. 1-2 and fol.

"The nightmarish imp that makes your blood run cold with his terrifying irony. 'Scarbo'?... it's whatever makes you take sleeping potions (du veronale)."110
Denise Bidal wrote:

There were times when some of the young pianists were quite at a loss as to how to realize in pianistic terms one of the many expressive subtleties suggested by Cortot. "What exactly am I to do?" one of them asked me. "Cortot said to me: 'No, this is not an arpeggio, it's an efflorescence.'"

And it was perhaps expecting a bit much of a young man who had just played Franck's Prelude, choral et fugue with all his heart, to tell him: "This piece does not require personal feeling, individual human passion. It's above all that. What it needs is Pascalian exaltation."

That's asking a great deal....

On other occasions, however, Cortot went out of his way to adapt his suggestions to the pupil's level of understanding, explaining a complex mood or shade of feeling in a way that brought it within the emotional ken of a youngster. Jeanne Thieffry relates an encounter between Cortot and a talented child who had already won praise from him for an excellent performance of a Bourée and several Menuets by Bach:

Now Mlle. Boschi plays [Chopin's] Valse in c# minor... and the spirit is not right... because Mlle. Boschi is only nine. Cortot wants, somehow, to make her understand why "that's not the idea."

Cortot brings his chair up closer. Goodness gracious! this is going to be difficult. And how I sympathize both with the little one, who looks up inquiringly, and with Cortot, who looks back at her, concerned, compassionate....

"This waltz seems gay, n'est pas?" Cortot says after a long pause. "Eh bien! it's not.... Imagine that a good friend of yours has hurt your feelings, made you sad, and you don't want to let on. You act as though it doesn't matter, but deep down... it really gets to you nonetheless.... Do you understand?"

--"Yes," Mlle. Boschi indicates with an affirmative nod of her head.

"Yes"... but Mlle. Boschi is more troubled than one might think. Perhaps more keenly than ever before she feels surrounded, assailed with the mysterious side of life that is hidden from children....

This confrontation is quite touching.
A great many of Cortot's comments to performers concerned aspects of rhythm and timing, especially as these affect the projection of musical character. Rhythm—as quite distinct from meter—is the sovereign element in many Baroque works (e.g., the Bach Partitas and Suites), he maintained. Only by becoming deeply aware of the rhythmic figures and the modifications of rhythmic structure that characterize successive pieces (Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, etc.) "can the interpreter manage to enter into the composer's way of thinking and imbue his music with this... elemental feeling of delight in movement which is the very essence of the dance, the suite and by extension, the symphony."¹¹³ The kind of rhythmic vitality and firmness of touch that Cortot asked of his pupils had nothing in common with the dry, inexpressive and overly "beaty" style of playing that many adopted in Bach's music. "You must play flexibly and without 'angles'; all the notes are important, not just some of them," Cortot stressed again and again. "Everything is melody in this music."¹¹⁴

Often Cortot had to remind performers that while artistic interpretation may entail modifying of the written note values slightly, such liberties must always be in concord with the style of the work. They must enhance, rather than deform, the essential character of a theme or passage. In music of a highly spirited, proud or emphatic nature—marches, polonaises and other dance-inspired works of a vivacious character, much Spanish and Hungarian music—the pianist can frequently
heighten the character by tightening dotted-note figures \( \frac{3}{8} \), i.e., by stretching the dotted eighth-note a bit and condensing the sixteenth, playing the rhythm closer to \( \frac{3}{4} \).

The basic pulse, however, must not wobble. Thus, Cortot sharpened the rhythmic figures in the introductory theme of the Chopin Fantaisie:

and in the central episode of the Chopin Mazurka, Op. 50, No. 2:

while maintaining the tempo rock-steady.

When similar dotted figures \( \frac{3}{8} \) occur in cantabile or sostenuto writing, one may need to broaden the little notes imperceptibly in order to maintain the tension of the line and allow these shorter values their full lyrical quality.\(^{115}\) A famous example which gives many a student trouble occurs in the principal theme of the first movement of Beethoven's Sonata, Op. 27, No. 2 ("Moonlight"), where the dotted figure is superimposed on a triplet accompaniment:
The performer must be very sensitive to the expressive intent of the sixteenth notes here. Any sharpening of the rhythm destroys the poignant character of the theme. A mechanically exact rendering of every note value, however, is almost as detrimental to the spirit of the music. The best course is to stretch the melodic sixteenths and certain notes in the triplet figures—but so infinitesimally that the effect is more felt than heard.

Chopin's music is full of expressive dotted rhythms which invite a discrete broadening of the short notes, sometimes without a compensatory condensing of the longer dotted notes. For instance, Cortot played measure two of the Etude Op. 25, No. 7 thus:

In the theme of the Nocturne, Op. 15, No. 2: he liked to draw out the thirty-second note slightly, allowing it to sing with intensity.

Cortot did not teach agogic inflection systematically. Nor did he oblige pupils to mimic his rubato and declamation. This was just as well, since performers of less refined musical tastes who tried to imitate his style generally produced an oversentimentalized caricature of his "poetic liberties."

Cortot was always willing to illustrate at the piano how
certain phrases of a work might be played, but he was more concerned with getting across the basic principles governing expressive melody playing than with drilling a pupil on the particulars of one interpretation. For instance, he tried to impress on his classes that in Chopin's music the decorative tones and filigree "are not extraneous to the melody but rather are an integral part of it. It is impossible to detach them from the line. In the _Nocturnes_ every detail is significant: not one note is superfluous." To grasp the implications of this advice for projection and timing was much more valuable to the performer than to learn that in a certain theme Cortot pushed forward here or held back there.

One performance detail about which Cortot was usually quite fussy was the rendering of the first phrase of a piece. Chopin, he pointed out, frequently begins his themes with an anacrusis or prefaced them with several measures that served to establish the mood. "The character of the whole melody depends on what you make of this one, or these few 'preliminary' notes," he stressed. A case in point is the piano's first entrance in the Finale of the Concerto in e minor, Op. 11:

![Musical notation](image)

The upbeat B which begins the theme must be "brimming with character. You need to stretch it a bit and connect it with
pedal to the following note in the manner of a portamento," he advised.119

In teaching melodic declamation, Cortot often ended up dispensing technical hints. "I remember him saying that 'the pianist's fingers should be like the violinist's bow on the strings,'" remarked Guthrie Luke. "This image is good for understanding the idea that the fingers don't 'shock' the keys, but rather they leave a 'digital impression' on them."120 Cortot also spoke of "kneading" the keys or of sinking deeply into them as if they were malleable dough, images which Rachmaninoff also liked to employ. With respect to Chopin's Nocturnes, he urged performers to play the melody "not with the fingers but with the wrist, and, attached to the wrist,... the heart."121

Students who displayed exaggerated gestures of any sort were often the butt of Cortot's sarcasm.122 Maurice Dumesnil attended a class in which "a brunette proudly display[ing] an enormous crop of hair" bounced about so exuberantly during her performance that "as she played, [her hair] became all rumpled and the long locks covered her face entirely. At the end she threw her hair back, turned to Cortot, and smiled. 'Ah, Mademoiselle, so you are still here,' he said."123 A young man with a percussive, hyper-articulated finger touch was asked by Cortot:

- "Monsieur, when you play the keys on your piano, do they go down in the direction of the floor, or up towards the ceiling?"
"They go downwards, of course, Maître" (the boy's look suggests that he is wondering if Cortot has taken leave of his senses).

"Then why in Heaven's name are you expending all your energy lifting your fingers towards the ceiling?"124

To obtain effects of great power in declamatory passages, Cortot recommended dropping from a distance with free, full arm strokes. His efforts to induce a girl to apply this approach in Saint-Saëns' Concerto No. 2 in g minor injected a moment of comic relief into one master class, Mme. Thieffry reported:

"These chords (at the end of the introduction) must fall with full weight from high above the keys," Cortot tells the performer. "Try." The girl, willing but terribly apprehensive, lifts two tense forearms which, if they have lost all their value as weighty masses, have acquired in return the force of two sledgehammers...--"No good," says Cortot.-- "But Maître," the pupil remarks timidly, "I haven't played yet." The whole audience bursts into laughter. Meanwhile Cortot, unfazed, explains why a chord prepared in such a way cannot help but sound bad and... is therefore wrong even before it is played.125

Cortot, noted Denise Bidal, "was opposed to exaggerated tempi, whether on the fast side or on the slow side, and to overly violent dynamic contrasts."126 The reason why is obvious: the closer one approaches the upper and lower limits of sound or of tempo, the harder it becomes to draw eloquent singing lines from the instrument and to make the audience forget the physical aspects of piano playing. The ability to find a tempo appropriate to the musical substance and to re-establish the basic pulse after any agogic modifications was a sine qua non of artistic performance, in Cortot's eyes. He was not kind to pupils whose instincts in this area were weak.127

According to Louis Goupy,
Performers who accented beats unneccessarily or pounded aggressively and performers who had great fingers but a poor sense of rhythm infuriated Cortot to no end. When he had endured four or five measures, he would start tapping on their shoulder. "Begin again, sing!" he would say, or "one, two, three, four" if the pulse and rhythm were not steady. After two or three starts, Cortot had managed to disconcert the pupil to the point where he didn't know whether he was coming or going.128

Cortot warned students not to impose romantic ebb-and-flow dynamic shadings on Stravinsky's music. What gives Petrouchka its distinctive character is the mechanical effect of "marionettes gesturing" evoked by the music. "This 'wooden' aspect must be brought out, and the performer can enhance it by abruptly juxtaposing dynamic extremes."

"It was Stravinsky himself who really gave me the key... to interpreting his music," Cortot told a master class.

One day we were talking about someone who plays the Petrouchka transcription, and who I thought performed it admirably. Stravinsky answered: "He plays it wretchedly!.... He puts in pedal." Then he added: "One mustn't play nuances in my music. Turn the knobs and give me 2,000 volts or 200."

Therefore, do not make gradual [dynamic] changes here. Split the levels sharply, and play with slices of light and shadow.129

A Cortot lesson could be an unsettling experience, especially for students who came looking for easy recipes. His reactions were unpredictable, and he frequently contradicted himself. Sometimes he admitted: "That's what I said but actually I do this." On other occasions, however, he seemed to suggest new ways of playing in order to discourage uncritical imitation or simply out of sheer contrariness, recalled Goupy:

Cortot was an extraordinary artist, but very authoritarian. He had a strong argumentative streak.
(esprit de contradiction) that at times turned the lesson into a sort of confrontation of wills with the student. In later years he did not tolerate much discussion or argument in the class: the maître talked, and the pupil listened. Cortot's reaction when students tried to make a point with him was very amusing. Either he would begin talking about another subject entirely, or he would give an answer that was quite beside the question—on purpose, for he had understood very well what was being asked. Or he would propose a different approach just to play the devil's advocate. For instance, he might say: "That's not how you should play such and such a passage." If you had the audacity to reply "But Maître, that is what you recommended in your edition," Cortot would cup his hand to his ear and say: "S'il vous plaît?" This took the wind right out of your sails. It had taken a lot of courage to tell him once what you thought; twice was too much.... At that point Cortot would sit down and play the passage in a completely different way. This happened quite often in the classes, and in my view it rarely signified that Cortot had changed his basic conception of a piece.

After the Second World War, Cortot began giving master classes in Lausanne (Switzerland) and Siena (Italy) each summer in addition to his interpretation courses at the Ecole Normale de Musique. Louis Goupy, who participated in both the Paris and Siena classes, recalled that "the Siena course took place in a much more relaxed atmosphere":

Although there were some auditors at Siena, the audience was considerably smaller. The ambience at the Ecole Normale was formal: for the performer, it was almost like playing a little recital. At Siena the same "regulars" always played, and the instructional format was more flexible—a bit like private lessons extended to a group of students.

In general, the level of playing was much lower at Siena, and pupils did not work as seriously. Cortot himself was more lenient and easy-going in those sessions because he didn't have to contend with all the responsibilities that weighed on him as President of the Ecole Normale. He came to Siena as an honored guest and a friend of the Count Chigi.
Other Class and Private Teaching.

Only twice in his years at the Ecole Normale did Cortot accept to teach pupils on a regular basis during the school term. The monthly class for Licence candidates given from 1930-33 was the first such occasion. The second was when he took over Mme. Bascourtret's piano class for a year. The circumstances, she related, were these:

In 1939 we went to war. My husband, who was a doctor and an army captain, was appointed consulting cardiologist for the seventh region at Besançon. I went to Cortot and told him, "What's happened, Maître, is this: my husband needs me to help him at the hospital, but I have commitments at the Ecole Normale. What should I do?" Cortot answered: "Blanche, between your obligation to the Ecole Normale on the one hand, and to France on the other, there is no doubt which one takes precedence. You should leave with your husband, and I will take charge of your students."

That is how Cortot came to teach my class in 1939-1940. He was very demanding on those students: he was their principal teacher for the time being, and as such he felt entitled to ask more of them than of those pupils who came through his interpretation courses. You would not believe the study programs he assigned. They were enormous. Pupils studying at the Ecole Normale and comparable schools today do not usually learn anywhere near as much repertoire in one year as that class did.133

With the war imminent, Cortot cancelled his concert engagements abroad. In September 1939 he began looking for a way to put his administrative talents to use in government service, as he had done so successfully during the previous war. On November 19, 1939 he was appointed to the post of representative-at-large (délégué général) in the Office of Arts and Entertainment for the Armed Forces, where he worked alongside author Georges Duhamel. The ensuing events left him precious little time to organize projects in that capacity,
however. The Germans launched their blitzkrieg on May 10, 1940. Within six weeks the French army had collapsed, and much of the country had fallen into enemy hands. Marshal Pétain, deeming the situation hopeless, requested an armistice on June 17th. From London Charles de Gaulle urged the French to resist, but to no avail; the armistice was signed on June 22, 1940. France was divided into two zones: the occupied northern zone was ruled directly by the Germans from Paris, while the "free" southern zone was made into a satellite state governed from Vichy by a French régime, with Pétain as acting premier.134

The years 1940-44 represent the dark chapter of Cortot's career. His conduct during the occupation was sufficiently ambiguous to raise questions about his judgment and political leanings, to say the least. He maintained a position of high visibility, playing recitals in France (and occasionally abroad), conducting live and broadcast concerts, directing the Ecole Normale and even recording new versions of Chopin's Etudes and Waltzes for HMV-France. As president of a sort of federated musician's council (Comité d'Organisation Professionelle de la Musique) formed in 1942, Cortot initiated a number of important service projects and pushed for professional reforms.135 According to Gavoty, he also served in the Department of Youth/Sports and the Ministry of Education as an artistic advisor.136
At the liberation, Cortot came under fire almost immediately for alleged misdeeds ranging from administrative improprieties to outright collaboration. Arrested and questioned in September 1944, he was released after a few days when none of the preliminary charges could be substantiated, but unofficial accusations and ugly rumors continued to circulate unabated. Almost a year later, on October 17, 1945, he was summoned before a French purge committee (Comité d'épuration) which investigated his case with due thoroughness. Cortot was able to establish that he had committed no serious wrong-doing. After weighing the evidence, the commissioners opted to hand down a mild reprimand: he was ordered to suspend all professional activities for one year, commencing retroactively from April 1, 1945.137

The years 1944-46 gave Cortot a respite from his usual frenetic pace of life. In a certain sense, they were the most painful of times. After having succeeded at everything he had put hand to, risen to the top of the French music world, he had fallen from grace. It did not matter that the judicial censure was minimal. The damage to his reputation and personal relationships was severe—irreparable, in the eyes of some. In another sense, however, he adapted very well to a reclusive existence. Cortot had a lot of inner strength and resiliency, and he was not a man who depended on the opinions of others for his sense of identity and worth.138 He was approaching seventy, moreover, and did not mind being spared temporarily
the rigors of constant international touring. Indeed, some have asserted that they never saw him more serene and less "driven" than in the immediate post-war period, when he had time to enjoy the companionship of his family (his second wife, Renée Chaine, whom he married in December of 1946, and her son Jean, whom he adopted as his own) and the comforts of a real home life.

Never one to idle his time away, much less to wallow in self-pity, Cortot poured his energies into solitary work. He began writing a book (Aspects de Chopin, published in 1949 by Albin Michel), completed several commented editions of works by Chopin, and practiced. Obliged to resign for a time from the directorship of the Ecole Normale, he accepted—sought out, would be more accurate—several students for regular private coaching, among whom Reine Gianoli:

I had started making a career before the war, so I wasn't a "student" in the conventional sense any more. Around 1944-45, when Cortot wasn't allowed to concertize, he let it be known that he would be happy to work with me from time to time. I must say, if only because one so often hears that Cortot liked money, that neither then nor at any other time I studied with him did he ever take a penny from me. I'm fairly certain that I was not the only one who benefited from his generosity, moreover.

Contrary to so many professors who devise narrow systems and systematically forbid certain ways of playing, Cortot excluded nothing a priori from the pianist's resources. Take for instance his handling of the pedals. He sometimes advised applying the una corda in sections marked mf and above. Or he might have the pupil depress the una corda in soft passages but play out the melody strongly, going to the bottom of the keys. This gives the line intensity without raising the overall dynamic level too high. Of course, one must not ride the una corda to hide an inadequate technique, and one must beware of using it when the writing rises into the upper register, where the piano tone is not very resonant to
begin with. The point is that the *una corda* is not simply a "soft" pedal. It's a versatile coloristic device permitting a change or attenuation of timbre as the context requires.

Cortot also made one aware of how much the damper pedal can help give resonance to the notes of the bass line. Curiously, most pianists listen better with the right ear when practicing: they are top-oriented, that is. Cortot, on the other hand, placed great importance on the bass and all the secondary motives in the lower voices.140

After years of working almost exclusively with advanced pianists, Cortot suddenly became interested in teaching gifted children in the 'forties. He convinced Mme. de Brunhoff, then a professor at the Ecole Normale, that her son Thierry had the talent to make a professional career, and offered to take charge of his studies:

Thierry came to Cortot when he was only nine, at Cortot's suggestion. For three years during the war we went to his home twice a week, where he gave Thierry private lessons that lasted a good hour or more. I myself supervised my son's practicing between lessons, and I had to coach him very hard because Cortot gave huge assignments: a Bach Partita or Prelude and Fugue (at first [Thierry] studied the Inventions but he progressed very rapidly and soon moved on to larger works), a Beethoven Sonata, pieces of Chopin and Schumann, and so forth. Cortot had Thierry learn the *Sonate d'Etude* of Czerny at one point. And I'll never forget the time he assigned him Beethoven's "Les Adieux" Sonata [Op. 81a]. Believe me, we had more than a little trouble with that piece! Just imagine, Thierry was only ten years old, and Cortot said to him: "Come on, now, it's not hard."(1)

The focus in lessons was intensely musical: the essential was to always start from the musical work, to discover exactly what you wanted to do and adapt your means accordingly. After listening to the piece, Cortot would take it apart and explain what was inadequate in the conception or the realization of particular passages. From the pianistic standpoint, he urged flexibility of the wrist and arm, letting the weight of the shoulder carry through to the keyboard in *forte* playing, pressing the keys with weight (les doigts qui tiennent bien plombés) rather than hitting them.... Sometimes he would give technical hints (e.g., "Take the chord or passage
this way, not that"), but with basic technical
instruction his attitude was always the same. The
question was settled once and for all in his mind—it was
the oblivious "You'll work it out" or for Ecole Normale
pupils it was Mme. Blancard's class—and he didn't
discuss it any more.141

Jean-Pierre Marty (193?– ), who began studying with
Cortot privately at the age of twelve, recalled that Cortot
expected him to do quite a lot of work on technique:

I started with Cortot around 1945, and for a little
over two years I took a private lesson with him every
week. I also went once or twice a week to the Ecole
Normale to work with my répétitrice, Mlle. Causeret, who
prepared me for Cortot's lessons. His lessons were very
organized, and lasted between one and two hours. He had
me work a great deal on exercises from the Principes
Rationnels. I'm not sure that he actually listened to
them in the lesson, but he was very concerned that I do
them. He indicated which ones I should work on, and had
Mlle. Causeret go over them with me in her lessons.
That was the big difference between the private lessons
and the master classes in interpretation. In my case he
drew up a program of studies specifying repertoire and
technical work.

Cortot's approach in assigning music was this: give
the pupil a piece which is at the level of his actual
abilities, then give him at the same time one which is
much more challenging, in order to make him progress.

Personally, I am not certain that this is a wise
system. For it to be effective, you must have a very
good idea of how far apart the two pieces are in their
demands. If the harder one is too difficult, it does not
benefit the student that much. In fact, in the long run
the procedure can even be harmful to his development.
This is to some extent what happened in my case. The
more difficult pieces I was assigned were almost
unplayable. For example, when I was fourteen Cortot gave
me the "Pathétique" Sonata of Beethoven for a work suited
to my actual level; that was fine. But along with it, he
gave me Liszt's Don Juan Paraphrase! Even today I doubt
that I would play the Liszt very well. It's
exceptionally difficult. I get cold shivers when I think
that I was playing it at that age.

Of course I was highly motivated. Cortot shared his
ideas on the piece with me, explaining what he saw in it,
and I was very inspired to practice. He really believed
that good, hard work will bring every goal within reach.
I was quite gifted, musically, and caught on quickly to
what Cortot was after. He would discuss interpretive details and would tell me "your playing was a little cold here," "a little lethargic," "a bit prosaic," etc., and I intuitively adapted.

There is much to be said for this approach, especially from the psychological standpoint. The problem with assigning repertoire that is way beyond the pupil is that he or she can fall into the habit of playing badly, with a lot of inaccuracies and fudging. Or even more seriously, he can end up playing any which way—with excessive tension and inefficient motions—just to get the notes out somehow. As I grew older, I stiffened up. It began to dawn on me that I was getting by on natural facilities rather than really mastering essentials...

For me, the great value of Cortot's teaching lay first of all in his unique, inspired musical ideas. Second, one absorbed from him an abiding concern with sonority. He made me want to sing at the piano with fervor and eloquence, and made me very sensitive to the expressive value of tone and the need to control it and adapt it to the musical idea. Without taking anything away from Cortot's genius or downplaying the importance of all that I gained from him, I suspect that if I play the piano well today, it's not because of his teaching. If I can put what Cortot taught me to use, it's thanks to what I later learned from Julius Katchen. I was already very tense by the time I went to Katchen, and he pulled me out of serious technical trouble.

Cortot's Thoughts on Teaching.

Unlike many musicians of his day, Cortot professed a deep admiration for educators, and campaigned vigorously to change the prevailing image of the piano teacher as a "second class citizen" of the music world. The role of teacher deserves no less respect and prestige than that of the performer, he felt, since the two are equally essential to the communication and perpetuation of the art. The performer serves as music's advocate before the listening public, while the teacher is responsible for initiating the next generation of practitioners to the art. Each in his own way works to "pass on the
The performer-teacher, that rare individual who is truly adept at both roles, is the ideal mentor for the very talented.

Not only does the active performer have something unique to impart by virtue of his example and stage experience; he or she has much to gain personally from teaching, Cortot believed. "In the course of working with young disciples," he told Mme. Gianoli, you will become aware of certain flaws in your own playing that tend to escape notice when you get caught up exclusively in performing and lose some of your critical distance.... Our pupils mimic us—but as a rule it is our faults that they imitate. So you will see, mirrored in their playing, what it is you should not do.

Following the publication of the Principes rationnels..., teachers pleaded for a fuller exposition of Cortot's keyboard approach and didactic methods. What they really wanted was a methodology for teaching technique that explained the "how" of skill mastery and gave prescriptions for developing touch and tone control, fluency, proper muscular coordinations, and so forth. This Cortot could not provide. Having developed his own pianistic means by pragmatic, intuitive procedures, he envisioned all of technique in very subjective terms. He was full of sound practical wisdom on teaching and piano study, but quite incapable of elucidating the physiological aspects of playing. Persuaded to give a series of master classes in pedagogy (Cours de pédagogie pianistique) in 1931, he spent much of his time trying to convince student teachers to adopt a flexible, empirical approach to all teaching of technique.
For his pedagogy courses, Cortot decided that a practicum would be the best format. Faculty and students of the Ecole Normale were permitted to observe as the student teachers gave a lesson to an unknown pupil, and received in turn comments and criticisms. If the drift of the lesson was not to Cortot's liking, he would break in and lecture the "professor" or even start teaching the pupil himself. Certain basic precepts he reiterated in session after session: concentrate first on posing the musical goals so clearly and convincingly that the pupil feels compelled to try to attain them, but leave him free to discover the way of realizing them which best suits his (or her) own physical resources and natural muscular inclinations. Give practical suggestions about technique if the pupil flounders or gets on the wrong track, but do not burden him with a lot of abstract concepts and complex analyses. Do not spout vague generalities about the manner of playing or the performance. These are seldom helpful unless followed by an explanation of the nature of the problem, its effect on particular musical contexts, and possible ways of fixing it. "Above all, never make an observation without first giving the musical reason that prompts you to say it," he admonished.

Only moments after Cortot had impressed this last, cardinal principle on the class, he was astonished to see a young man begin his lesson with a string of technical remarks about attack, hand motions, etc. Already displeased with this "professor" for having failed to catch and correct mis-
Readings, 149 Cortot let him continue but a moment before
bursting in and delivering a sharp lesson to the lesson-giver.
"In all your comments thus far, there is nothing that could
give your pupil a clue as to what you're really driving at," he
exclaimed.

Come now, **what is the artistic consideration** that
motivates your remarks? That's the main thing, and you
don't say the first word about it. You tell her to play
louder, to make better use of her arm in the octave
passages.... To tell the truth, her sound is mousy
(anonyme); it lacks character and doesn't have enough of
a speaking quality. Instead of discussing theoretical
points, ask her to play with more intensity--which at the
piano means being able to color and shape (modeler) the
sound fabric--and see how she responds. Observe how she
goes about doing it, and at that point step in and
suggest the appropriate gesture, advise against
ineffective motions. **And show her yourself at the piano**
how it might be done.

Show her that to bring out the melody line, which is
right now too obscured by the harmony, the two hands must
use two different types of touch (action). Show her that
to make the octaves sing one must play one of the two
notes a little louder than the other. If the melody
notes seem to you to be too uneven in intensity, show her
that to obtain an even tone she has to employ gestures
that are all about equal in scope (ampleur), and so
forth....

Do you know what sort of technical study you should
recommend to students who have an indistinct touch and a
flabby hand, as in the present case?.... Assign them
exercises to be practiced with the fingers held very near
the keyboard, depressing the keys decisively right to the
bottom--in particular ten minutes of trill exercises each
morning to develop consistency of articulation between
various fingers.... But don't think that exercises alone
will produce a miracle. It is by continuously impressing
on your student the need to **adapt her sonority to her**
performance goals that you will make her understand
technique.

If she doesn't find a reason for playing differently
in the interpretive requirements of the music, she will
revert on her own to a vague, blurry touch, because
that's what her hand tends toward naturally....

The simpler and less distinctive a piece is, the more
difficult and delicate becomes the teacher's task. It's
easy to comment on a masterpiece. It is hard to give
interpretive suggestions for elementary and intermediate level repertoire. But keep in mind how important is the role you play in the development of the young student. You sow in him the seeds that life experience will nurture to fruition.\textsuperscript{150}

To teach effectively one needs to cultivate powers of observation and judgment as keen as those of a fine surgeon, Cortot believed. "Work to sharpen your diagnostic abilities (qualities de clairvoyance)," he advised a pedagogy class, as well as to refine your operating skills. When a pupil plays for you, ... do not become absorbed exclusively with what he is doing that very moment in the performance.... Focus still more on how he would play if he expressed the musical idea more perfectly. It is the latter consideration which should dictate your observations.

In the diagnostic phase, the acuity of your evaluation will depend on this: were you able to discern not only the purely musical gifts, but likewise the physical aptitudes, which should have been apparent at a glance? Were you able to judge how the pupil reacted, psychologically, to your suggestions? Could you detect how slowly or how quickly he caught on?

After you have assessed, it is time to "operate" or prescribe a course of treatment. And for a professor to prove himself equal to the task in this domain, it is imperative that he or she avoid becoming a slave to a "method."

It is much more important to bring out the good qualities of a pupil than to correct every shortcoming. This is a pedagogical principle which I cannot impress on you strongly enough. Think mainly of developing what you feel is good in the instinctive, spontaneous reading that the pupil brings you. How often teachers succeed in sterilizing the life out of an interpretation, because they have been obsessed only with avoiding faults or momentary exaggerations.\textsuperscript{151}

In 1929 Cortot published a short article in which he set forth his "pedagogical principles for teaching piano." These were less suggestions on how to teach piano playing than sound practical guidelines for the teacher-student relationship. The slightly evangelical tone of the introductory remarks is
vintage Cortot, and the whole reflects a deep understanding of the psychological dynamics of motivation. By and large, his recommendations have lost none of their validity and relevance to present-day teaching. It seems fitting to conclude this study with a few of them:

Always start from the premise that the student must be won over to the cause of music.

The achievements of the not-so-gifted pupils are the greatest credit to good teaching. There's no special merit in developing the talents of a very gifted student, but there is infinite joy in seeing a slow one develop a passion for music and perform with real understanding.

Conduct yourself in such a way that pupils come to love you. Remember that especially for beginners, the desire to please the teacher and earn a few words of praise is generally a more powerful incentive than their awareness of the intrinsic worth of what they are doing. Bear in mind that for debutants music study involves learning complicated rules and working hard (without much enjoyment in return) to come to grips with the instrument—all of which can seem an exercise in futility unless you take the trouble to make it clear what will ultimately be gained by the effort,... and illuminate the abstract side of elementary study... with a cheerful, enthusiastic attitude and with appealing examples or analogies that the young mind can grasp.

Treat all your pupils with absolute impartiality: show not the slightest favoritism or lack of interest. Every pupil has an equal right to the teacher's attention and concern.

Never make fun of a pupil's shortcomings in the presence of his classmates. You are there to motivate, not to discourage. Never permit pupils to play bad music.

Instill in pupils a love of music, rather than a love of the piano per se.

Do not forget that as you teach, so will your pupils eventually go on to play or teach music to others.
Chapter 8: Notes


2See Fauré's letters to the Ministry of Beaux-Arts, especially that of Sept. 22, 1918, requesting permission to name Robert Lortat interim professor for "several months," and that of June 29, 1920, requesting funds to reimburse Lortat 3000 Fr. for replacing Cortot "for the duration of his leave" (Archives Nationales Aj37 68, Dossiers des professeurs, Cortot).

3Cortot, excerpt from an article written for Théâtre et Musique, as quoted in A.C., p. 143.

4Loc. cit.


6Mangeot's original proposals even stipulated that the Director of the Conservatoire would by rights preside over the Ecole Normale's examining committees (ibid., p. 10).

7The pianists performing in Cortot's 1920 interpretation classes were: Henri Gil-Marchex (1st Prix, Diémer, made a respectable career championing French music and was one of the first French pianists to tour Japan); Madeleine La Candéla (1st Prix d'Excellence, Cortot); Alice Durand (1st Prix d'Excellence, Cortot); Hélène Lapierre (1st Prix, Cortot, later taught at the Ecole Normale); Tatiana de Sazéwitch (1st Prix d'Excellence, Cortot, and Prix d'Honneur, said to have been one of the brightest talents to have to studied with Cortot, premiered Fauré's Trio, Op. 120 in 1923); Yvonne Herr-Japy (first audited Cortot's class, later 1st Prix, Delaborde/Riera); Léla Schlépiánoff (1st Prix, Riera); Mlles. Pitot and Holmes (U.S.); Mlle. Knutsen (Norway); Mlle. Duchatelier (France); Mlle. Chilton-Griffins (England); Mlle. Brailowsky (sister of the pianist Alexander); Rose Focsaneano (Rumania); and Solomon (England), who achieved international renown as a Beethoven and Chopin player.

8Henderson, a professor at Glasgow University (Scotland), described himself as having been "privileged to enjoy the friendship of Cortot for over 30 years, and previous to this, to be his pupil and to assist him for two summer sessions at the Ecole Normale de Musique."
10Both quotes in this paragraph are from an unsigned editorial [A. Mangeot?], "L'Enseignement supérieur à l'Ecole Normale," *Monde Musical*, 31, No. 11-12 (June 30, 1920), p. 178.

11Cortot did not, as has sometimes been asserted, "invent" the public master class. As in the case of the lecture-recital, however, he did much to establish the form and features of these instructional forums as we know them today. He also carried them out on a scale and to a popular acclaim that few artists before or since have managed to achieve.

12They were joined within a year or two by Mmes. Bascourret and Lefebure, then in 1924 by Mme. Duménil.

13Such a long leave would seem to have been quite exceptional. That it was granted shows just how popular Cortot was at the Beaux-Arts and with the students. Having recently lost Diémer (d. 12/1919), the Conservatoire probably hoped that Cortot, the piano department's other major performer, could be coaxed back. Even though Fauré was retiring that summer, the new director, Henri Rabaud, made sure that Cortot would have the option of rejoining the faculty after his leave (see Appendix I, correspondence Cortot/Rabaud). Cortot resigned from the Conservatoire at the expiration of his leave in July, 1923. He was succeeded by the professor who had been taking his class on a temporary basis since 1919, Lazare-Lévy.


15This is not to imply that the Ecole Normale did not stress music education. From the outset it offered a two-track program of studies--performance or teaching--each track having three different levels: brevet (the lowest, with common requirements for both tracks), licence and doctorat. These were later changed to brevet, diplôme and licence. The teaching program did not initially include special pedagogy classes, however. For course requirements in 1920 and 1927, see Appendix II, pp. 595-97.

16By 1925 Cortot had eleven teachers in his "école," which was supervised in his absence (at least at the preparatory level) by Mme. Giraud-Latarse. In addition to those already mentioned, his representatives were: Marthe Morhange, Janine Weill, Yvonne Jean, Marcelle Julliard de Guéraldi, Hélène Lapierre, and Arpine Inayétian. All were former Conservatoire répétitrices or students of his except Mlle. Inayétian, a
recent graduate of the Ecole Normale. Representing the "school" of Isidor Philipp were: Camille Decresus, Léon Conus, Jean Manuel, Mme. Bachelot-Alaroze and (on and off) Paul-Silva Hérard. Lazare-Lévy had his own "école"; he was assisted by Mme. Bascourtet, who also taught for Cortot. Wanda Landowska, too, had her own "école."

17Dupré left in 1922 to make some long tours to the U.S.; he rejoined the faculty as head of the organ department in 1928. Wurmser, too, came back in 1929. Morpain took over as acting director of the Ecole Normale in 1944.

18Thibaud gave master classes in the summer, auditioned new students and conducted an annual review of his class (taught by Marcel Chailley). In 1930-31 he taught Licence candidates once a month. Casals appears to have been still less involved with the Ecole Normale's activities, though he supported the school by donating scholarships.

19Mlle. Boulanger (1887-1979), known in the U.S. as a great teacher of composers, taught all her prime years (1920-39) at the Ecole Normale and (during the summer) the Conservatoire Américain at Fontainebleau, not at the Conservatoire. She was finally appointed to the Conservatoire in 1946--as professor of accompagnement au piano. At her retirement in 1957, she rejoined the Ecole Normale faculty, where she taught until shortly before her death.

20In 1927 the school moved into a huge private hotel at 114 bis, Boulevard Malesherbes (17e), which it still occupies today.

21Though placed under the patronage of the ministries of Instruction Publique and (from 1928) Affaires Etrangères, the Ecole Normale, being a private school, received very little state subsidy for its operation. Faculty were paid on a commission basis from student fees, which varied greatly depending on the subject area and the stature of the individual professor.

22Among those who gave master classes at the Ecole Normale were Ravel, d'Indy, Dukas and Roussel (all in 1925), Ysaye, Enesco, Carl Flesch, Casella, Viñes and Artur Rubinstein. In 1927 the school invited Arnold Schönberg to give a lecture on his composition theories at the time of the Paris premier of Pierrot Lunaire. In 1930 Cortot gave the Paris premier of Verklärte Nacht at one of the Ecole Normale's subscription concerts. Hindemith, Falla, Honegger, Poulenc and many other composers right down to Pierre Boulez were invited by Cortot to lecture on, conduct or perform in their works at the Ecole. He believed that a serious musician has an obligation to acquaint himself with significant developments in his field.
Paderewski gave a benefit concert at the Ecole Normale in 1923, and sponsored a number of Polish students. Several Eastern European governments, the government of Quebec province (Canada), the Marquis Tokugawa Foundation (Japan), and the Walter Scott Foundation (U.S.) also established scholarships for students from their respective corners of the world. Individual faculty members and patrons from French high society such as Suzanne Deutche de la Meurthe also contributed sums for scholarships and special projects.

The Ecole Normale Chamber Orchestra, with Zino Francescatti as concert master and Alexanian as first 'cello, gave eight concerts a year between 1930-37. Cortot drew up the programs and conducted many of them. Among the works presented were unpublished scores and first Paris or French performances of compositions by Berlioz, Schubert, Mozart, Haydn, Boccherini, Couperin, Locatelli, Leo, Mendelssohn, Wagner, Purcell, Lourie, Liszt, Leoš Janáček, Stravinsky, Enesco, Ernest Bloch, Hugo Wolf, Roussel, Jacques Ibert, Frank Martin, Hindemith, Casella, Lili Boulanger, Poulenc, Casals, Arthur Hoéree, Germaine Tailleferre, Milhaud, Henri Tomasi, De Lacerda, Julien Krein, Conrad Beck, Henri Sauquet, etc.

According to Romeo Alexandrescu ("Notes et souvenirs," Muzica, 22, No. 5 [May 1972], p. 47), "for each concert Cortot took the string parts home and wrote in all the bowings and phrasing details--painstaking work, but decisive for ensemble and polish."

Cortot/Entretiens, "Le Professorat."

The six-page brochure, probably from the mid-twenties, is unsigned. Mme. Bascourret was absolutely certain that it was written by Cortot.


"The pianist who limits himself to studying piano," Cortot wrote, "is like the farmer who works a field without [adding] fertilizer. The furrows his fingers trace on the keyboard will produce only an impoverished music" (loc. cit.).

Ibid., p. 4.

Ibid., p. 5.

Writing out by memory a portion of a piece being performed was actually a required part of one of the graduation exams at the Ecole Normale for a time.

"Esprit de l'Enseignement," p. 5.
The foreign pupils, Americans included, who enrolled at the Ecole Normale in the 'twenties and 'thirties frequently arrived with a faulty or inadequate grounding in fundamentals.

Once ingrained, conditioned reflexes are not as easily erased or exchanged for new ones as Cortot implies. Almost everyone has had the experience of trying to relearn a piece or a skill assimilated in childhood with errors or inefficient gestures, only to discover to his dismay that the old habits keep creeping back in--and unpredictably, unless one does a very thorough, conscious re-programming.

In another text entitled "Esprit de l'Enseignement" that appears on the inside cover of an Ecole Normale publicity brochure, Cortot states the principle in more felicitous terms: "A good finger technique... depends on a good mental technique, i.e., on an immediate grasp of the music. All the artistic merit of the musician depends on the quality of this intellectual musical technique. Musical geniuses and child prodigies possess it instinctively. Others can acquire it progressively through the study of solfege, harmonic analysis, structure, etc." See Ecole Normale de Musique de Paris (Paris: n.p., 1968).

In later practical pedagogy sessions at the Ecole Normale, Cortot stressed that the order in which one performed the various mental steps was of paramount importance: "first put yourself in the composer's place and try to apprehend not the whole of his thought, perhaps,... but at least the gist of his feelings. Then you can do the [harmonic and structural] analysis you referred to just now." Still, Cortot's basic message was to think long and well before acting: "The mental work must be at the foundation of all serious study. I know of nothing more ridiculous than these students who sit down right away at the piano and begin to practice a work without having fully understood it beforehand. They kill all feeling, all thought. Music doesn't exist any more for them; the life has been sucked out of it." "Les Cours de pédagogie pianistique d'Alfred Cortot," ed. Thieffry, Monde Musical, 42, No. 7 (July 31, 1931), p. 238.

Bernstein, With Your Own Two Hands (New York: Schirmer, 1981), pp. 67-68

Often one cannot even determine the best fingering for difficult passages in rapid (final) tempi without playing them fast, even if this preliminary rendering must perfome be imperfect. A fingering that seems ideal at a moderate tempo may turn out to be absolutely impossible at the real performance tempo. Also, the slow tempo may engender emotional
responses, and by consequence, adaptive gestures, quite different from those called forth by the work when played up to tempo.

40 See "Examens de l'Ecole Normale, 1926," Monde Musical, 37, No. 7 (July 31, 1926), p. 299. "Mécanisme intellectuel" was not psychology of learning or educational theory, as one might surmise, but music theory—in particular, solfege, sightreading and ear training. The division of pedagogy into technique, interpretation and "theory" (as opposed to the more familiar split into materials/methods and practice, or theory/history and practice, or even elementary and advanced) strikes me as typically French. It was established by decision of the Faculty Council, and differed markedly from the original course proposed by Cortot in "L'enseignement du piano au Conservatoire" (p. 212). Cortot suggested having students analyze teaching methods comparatively, learn didactic repertoire and practice strategies, and critique each other's teaching—an eminently practical training.

41 Pedagogy assumed a great importance at the Ecole Normale in the 'thirties, not only in the degree programs but also through the special pedagogy workshops (Assises Pédagogiques) held bi-annually for in-service teachers from around the country. Cortot himself participated in a number of these last. Among the faculty teaching pedagogy between the wars were: Jeanne Blancard (pedagogy of piano technique), Jeanne Thieffry (general piano pedagogy), Nadia Boulanger (general theory pedagogy), Georges Dandelot (pedagogy of harmonic analysis and musical structure) and Anne-Marie Mangeot (pedagogy of solfege). According to Jules Gentil, the Conservatoire eventually reacted to the Ecole Normale's initiatives and established an optional pedagogy course in the 1940s, which was taught by Gentil and Marcel Ciampi. " Often we had only one or two students enrolled in the class," noted Gentil. "The vast majority just weren't able to pursue pedagogy studies and at the same time do justice to their performance studies" (interview with the author, December 1977). Unfortunately, the Ecole Normale had more or less phased out their pedagogy courses by the mid-1970s also—for the reason just stated.

42 What Thiberge's background was is not known. He is said to have devised a personal technical method based on a touch form utilizing pressure without active fingers or arm weight, and wrote several books including L'enseignement physiologique de la technique pianistique (Paris: Imprimerie Chaix, 1926) and Le Pianiste. Son habilité manuelle, son habilité cérébrale (Vire: Lecuire, 1951).

43 It may be that Cortot eased out any strong competition that might have taken hold within the Ecole Normale. From the 1930s he himself made the piano appointments. While it would not
have been easy to replace artist-teachers of the stature of Philipp or Long, there were respected French pianists (e.g., Casadesus, Nat, Lortat) residing part of the year in Paris. Moreover, Gieseking and Fischer were living near enough that Cortot could probably have enticed them to Paris for master classes had he wanted to. After all, he managed to lure name artists in other disciplines to the school: Dupré, Landowska, Capet and Boucherit (violin), Stravinsky and Honegger (composition), etc.

44 Jeanne Blancard (1884-196?), a Pugno student (1er Prix, 1899), was brought to the Ecole Normale by Cortot around 1927. Mme. Blancard, who became a fanatical enthusiast of the Principes rationnels, taught the piano technique classes which were obligatory for teaching degree candidates in addition to her regular piano class. She made an adaptation of the Principes... for children, which became fairly popular in France: Introduction à la méthode de travail d'Alfred Cortot. Principes élémentaires de la technique pianistique... (Paris: Salabert, 1938).

45 Reine Gianoli, interview with the author.

46 The ideal perhaps would be to provide this kind of vertical consistency of aesthetic/technical perspective but also to have other approaches spanning all levels represented in a music school, permitting a fruitful exchange of ideas when pupils reach the advanced level.

47 In 1929, for instance, Conservatoire policy was revised to allow a pupil of foreign nationality to audit any single class for 250 Francs per month, according to Lenie Rosenstiel (Nadia Boulanger [New York: Norton, 1982], p. 230). In the same period, one could audit Boulanger's music history course at the Ecole Normale for 150 Fr. a trimester, Dukas' composition course for 400 Fr. a trimester.

48 According to Rosenstiel (ibid., p. 232), the Conservatoire Américain went in the red and nearly had to close. The Ecole Normale thrived: by the 1950s it had around 1500 students enrolled in lessons or full study programs.

49 In addition to his annual master classes at the Ecole Normale Cortot sometimes gave classes for the students of local music schools when he was in a town for concerts. Thus Antoine Golea heard him at the Bucarest Conservatory in 1923 (see "Alfred Cortot: Souvenirs,..." preface to Cortot's Cours d'interprétation [1934; reprint ed. Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1979]). He presented classes at the Mannes School (New York) in 1925 and shortly thereafter at the private conservatory of his student Yvonne Hubert in Montreal. Over the years these classes generated good public relations and probably drew many
students to Paris. Jacques Feschotte ("Figure contemporaine: Alfred Cortot") claimed that Cortot was once offered the professorship of the prestigious Franz Liszt class at the Budapest Conservatory, but declined it. In the absence of even one corroborating source for this information, this assertion must for now be considered hearsay.

50 According to Reine Gianoli, Cortot taught the Licence pupils until about 1933.

51 Mme. Gianoli told me how this came about: "I was admitted at thirteen to Lazare-Lévy's [advanced] class at the Conservatoire. Lazare-Lévy was no genius, and toward me at least he was extremely unpleasant. After a year I began studying secretly on the side with Yves Nat.... By my third year of suffering at the Conservatoire, I had just about had all I could endure. Nat advised me to leave. 'I think it is in your interest to go to Cortot,' he said. In the fall of 1931 I auditioned for Cortot and the whole Ecole Normale faculty.... They were delighted: after all, I was a good catch, and it was the first time anyone had voluntarily left the Conservatoire for the Ecole Normale.

It took courage to make the move, I assure you, and it wasn't made easy for me. Lazare-Lévy was incensed when he heard about it. He said to Mme. Giraud-Latarse, who was his répétitrice: 'I want you to know that I will take it as a personal offense if you let that girl into your class after what she has done to me.' That put Mme. Giraud in a quandary. I had been her pupil since the age of ten, but... she was duly intimidated. We went to see Cortot, and laid out the problem. He listened, then answered in his deep, solemn voice: 'I will tell Lazare that Reine will be in Mme. Giraud's class, and that's that.' And it was. Authority has its privileges, sometimes.

I hadn't seen the last of Lazare-Lévy, however. After fleeing the Conservatoire I learned to my dismay that I had to face him again at the Ecole Normale, where he was responsible for reviewing classes (l'inspection des classes) every three months! In the end, it all turned out fine. I was awarded my Licence de Concert a year later, and created quite a stir with my performance of the Liszt Sonata."

52 The notices (written essays) on pieces played in the interpretation classes and the Licence programs had to be handed in two weeks before the performance. Cortot might refuse to hear anyone who did not submit one. They were read and corrected by Cortot himself, who often discussed them in the class. They were to include: historical data, circumstances of the work's creation and remarks of the composer, formal design (structural parts, keys), significant features (harmonic, rhythmic, stylistic influences/kinships),
character and meaning of the work in the performer's view, aesthetic/technical observations, and suggestions for study and interpretation.

53 Reine Gianoli, interview with the author, June 1978.

54 Ceillier discusses the circumstances surrounding the genesis of the Préludes, quoting from the letters of Chopin, the biography of Sand and the musical opinions of the composer's contemporaries. At the end he gives the poetic "subtitles" that the préludes suggested to Cortot, as they appeared in Cortot's recital programs of the post-1918 period (see Chapter IV, p. 139).

55 The poetic/stylistic commentary in Cortot's edition was very similar in content and tone to that offered in his interpretation classes (cf. Cours d'interprétation, pp. 42-53), and probably reflects the fruit of his teaching experiences in that setting. He seems to have concluded that most pupils needed an aesthetic and affective orientation more than pianistic advice.

56 Pugno's choice of Chopin was natural, since he was considered by many the heir to a genuine Chopin tradition, having studied with Chopin's disciple Mathias. Curiously, Philipp, the other author of "leçons écrites," was also a student of Mathias.

57 A few of Pugno's remarks from his edition of Schumann's "Vogel als Prophet" (Waldszenen, No. 7) will suffice to give an idea of his style of commentary. Annotations, numbered to correspond with numbers in the text, were interspersed between lines of music.

1. [pick-up to m. 1] The long values (e.g., c#) should have a special... muffled tone quality and be played close to the key, reducing the force of attack.... Let them last, and play the 32nd notes at the very end of the beat... like a lively, flowing glissando.

2. [m. 1] The 8th note which ends each phrase should never be clipped; the finger lets go of the note, but the pedal prolongs it.

3. [mm. 3-8] A very discrete crescendo and diminuendo each time there are six groups of 32nd notes.

4. [m. 9] The bass here is not very easy to render; the r.h. staccato notes should be very even and very independent from the 32nd note motifs of the l.h.... I've indicated a fingering I think is comfortable.

6. In view of the to-and-fro movement of the arpeggiated motifs that rise and fall [m. 13], I would not give in to the oft-heard tendency to make an accelerando.
Perhaps the volume by Albert Schweitzer, *J. S. Bach, le musicien-poète*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1905) deserves mention in this context.


Von Bülow, as quoted in Schonberg, *The Great Pianists*, p. 129. I have not been able to locate the original source of von Bülow's commentaries. An Italian translation of the complete set is given in a monograph by Edvige Calza: *Interpretazione letteraria dei Preludi di Chopin attribuita a Liszt. & Un manuscritto di Chopin. Suoi appunti per la compilazione di un Metodo... Commento all'interpretazione che ne ha dato A. Cortot...* (Bologna: Ed. Compositori, 1968). On very flimsy evidence Ms. Calza attributes them to Liszt, as transmitted by Heinrich Schenker.


"Expressive semes" is the term coined by Eero Tarasti to describe particular forms of expressive meaning that are culturally implanted and transmitted (see Rowell, pp. 163-64), such as lyric, tragic, dramatic, heroic, etc. A complex of structural qualities—in this case, tempo, register, texture, rhythm—can also suggest the character and "orchestration" by association with other musical works of similar types.


According to Yvonne Lefébure, the first Mme. Cortot (Clotilde Bréal) had a hand in the earlier editions and tightened up Cortot's texts (see Alfred Cortot, dir. Lévy). Liszt was the object of some of Cortot's more contrived glosses, such as this passage on the fugato from the Sonata in b minor (Paris: Salabert, 1949): "We have already alluded in the foreword to the satanically caustic character which this cackling parody of the main theme of the sonata takes on. It has even been suggested, pursuing the interpretive hypothesis which seems to find support in the figures and peripeteia of the Goethean drama, that the Mephistophelean spirit has insinuated itself herein." Gavoty (A.C., p. 202) reports that after reading this, Paul Valéry gently chided Cortot with a play on words (untranslatable): "Cher ami, des deux maux [mots], il faut choisir le moindre!"


*Cours d'interprétation*, pp. 15-16.
In the fall of 1926 Cortot met with all his teachers and gave them exercises to assign their pupils, explaining the manner in which he wanted them studied. It is not known whether he adjusted the book's format or content as a result of their experiences with it. See "Les Examens de l'Ecole Normale. Les Exercises de technique de M. Alfred Cortot," unsigned report in the Monde Musical, 38, No. 7 (July 31, 1927), pp. 289-90.

The Principes rationnels, one of the most important aspects of Cortot's pedagogical legacy, was the end result of all of Cortot's research on the purely technical side of piano playing," said Pierre Petit. "Obviously the exercises were created after the fact: he did not arrive at pianistic mastery by studying his Principes, he composed them after he already knew very well how to play. But he reflected a great deal on how one should play the piano, and his Principes are extremely useful and valid" (interview with the author).

As Kaemper points out (Techniques pianistiques, p. 17), the organization and "internal logic" of the Principes rationnels was not novel. It was rather a sort of summation and amplification of a time-honored system followed with greater or lesser thoroughness by Schmitt, Pischina, Philipp, et al. The traditional order could be summarized as: 1) one finger at a time, the others holding keys down; 2) two fingers: trills; 3) five fingers, without change of position; 4) passage of the thumb, scales; 5) arpeggii, regarded as extended scales; 6) thirds and sixths; 7) octaves and chords.

By harmonic variants is meant chord aggregates on which exercises of 3, 4 or 5 notes can be practiced. For instance:

3-note

4-note

Rattalino, "Un miracolo o un bluff?" p. 12.

Principes rationnels, "Plan d'étude des exercises" (Preface).

Especially interesting is Cortot's preface to Chapter II (p. 23) on the gradual shift to fingering systems making extensive use of the thumb--"multiplier of fingers and father of octave playing (père de l'octaviation)." Because of his more robust and sustained style of harpsichord writing, notes
Cortot, Bach should be credited not only with the *Well-Tempered Clavier* but also with the "well-fingered clavier."

76 The idea of the "Gymnastique" was inspired to some extent by the writings of Blanche Selva, who placed great emphasis on muscular relaxation as a precondition to weight transfer and who incorporated the results of Swedish research on physical conditioning into her books. The importance of this section of the *Principes* was stressed by Huguette Goullon in "Les Principes rationnels de la technique pianistique," *Monde Musical*, 47, No. 11 (Nov. 30, 1936), pp. 296-300.

77 Denise Bidal, *Technique du piano* (Lausanne: Ed. Poetisch Frères, 1947), p. 14. Denise Bidal studied at the Ecole Normale with Jeanne Blancard and Cortot, and was later Professor of piano at the Conservatoire of Lausanne. Judging from the preface Cortot wrote for this booklet, he endorsed its contents.

78 Mme. de Brunhoff is one of a dwindling number of Ecole Normale piano teachers formed at the Ecole itself by Cortot and his disciples in the years between the wars. The technique class at the Ecole Normale was eliminated in the 1960's, "a decision which Cortot would have disapproved of very much," according to Mme. de Brunhoff. The problem was not just finding someone to fill Mme. Blancard's shoes; it was mainly that "students more and more often arrived from abroad already possessing a 1er Prix or degree. They hadn't a great deal of time to study in France, and didn't want to start all over again with an approach that was different from what they had learned" (interview with the author, June 1978).

79 Pierre Petit, who studied with Mme. Blancard, described her as "a tiny lady who was a wonderful professor and musician. She had a marvelous artistic sensitivity and feel for the harmonic language of music, and knew the whole of the literature. She could play just about anything her small hand could reach, and had a remarkable touch. Though she lacked Cortot's power, she had something of the same "quality" of tone. She was the single individual most responsible for diffusing Cortot's technical ideas. For me, she was the ideal teacher--one of the two best (the other being Nadia Boulanger) I ever had." Interview with the author, Dec. 1977.

80 Mme. de Brunhoff, interview with the author, June 1978.

81 Ibid. Mme. de Brunhoff's remarks have been combined and rearranged for greater continuity.

Built in 1929 by Auguste Perret and his brother, the hall, known today as the Salle Cortot, has been designated a national historic monument. Manlio Miserocchi describes it as "perfect acoustically as well as harmonious in form. Built in a semicircle (a little like a sea shell) with rows rising steeply toward the back, it respects the same proportions as the Odeon in Athens." Although given a very limited space to build in, the architects succeeded in fitting nearly 500 seats into the hall, each with an unimpeded view of the stage. See Miserocchi, "Cortot nella sua scuola," La Scala, No. 97 (Dec. 1957), p. 79.

"Certain years the auditors were so numerous that some of us had to sit on the little backless seats (strapontins) attached to the aisle seats or on the aisle steps," recalled Mlle. Causeret (interview with the author, Nov. 1977). "There we perched for hours on end, notebooks on our laps, so absorbed in Cortot's lessons that we barely noticed our discomfort."

Golea, "Alfred Cortot...Souvenirs, comme ils defilent...," n. pag.

Both "French Piano Music" and "Schumann" were topics of interpretation courses more than once, but I was not able to determine the exact dates. In 1925 and 1936 Cortot was very busy touring, and the courses were given by composers and guest master teachers respectively. From 1937-39 he shared the courses with his favorite disciples, Yvonne Lefébure and Magda Tagliaferro. He suspended classes from 1944 to 1946.

"Les cours de pédagogie pianistique d'Alfred Cortot," p. 238.

Teaching, Cortot asserted, "is not about giving either piano lessons or lessons in interpretation. It's a matter of rousing in an individual the...passion for the music that invests it with the meaning it must have." Quoted in Denise Bidal, "Cortot et ses élèves," Feuilles musicales (Lausanne), No. 7 (Oct. 1962), p. 120.

According to Reine Gianoli and Louis Goupy (interviews with the author), Cortot was distant and rather impersonal even in private lessons--more interested in talking about the music than in investigating the "psychology" of the individual student or establishing a close relationship. "It would never have occurred to Cortot to tell a student: 'You would do well to explore this or that repertoire in depth, since your temperament and technique are especially well suited to it,'" noted Goupy. "It was all the same to him that Mr. X had more affinity for Mozart than for Brahms, or for Brahms than Mozart. This is fine in a public master class but annoying in a private
lesson. In a one-on-one situation, you seek a contact between teacher and student. You expect not only advice on the music, but insight into yourself. You hope that the maître will lead you to come to know more about your own nature and playing. Cortot didn't have much to offer from this standpoint, at least toward the end. Nor was he very good at helping one solve an ingrained technical problem, such as stiffness. Consequently, one could say that in his later years (he must have been different in his youthful Conservatoire days) Cortot had many disciples, but no one who could really claim to have been his student, i.e., could say that he had formed them and guided them to their career debut." "Cortot wouldn't allow himself to have a close personal relationship with students," confirmed Mme. Gianoli. "Nat, Casals and Fischer were all more spontaneous and affectionate by nature, whereas Cortot was complicated, reserved—he probably had a lot of emotional inhibitions. It may be, too, that he deliberately discouraged familiarity. One day I read some advice that General de Gaulle is said to have given Pompidou: 'No authority without prestige. No prestige without distance.' I think this was Cortot's attitude to some extent, also."

In order to impress on performers that a real interpreter should be a complete musician capable of assimilating the findings of historical and stylistic analysis, Cortot not only discussed student's reports—he read aloud from them to the class. "One doesn't invent the history of music, one learns it from source books," he told participants in one master class (Cours d'interprétation, pp. 21-22). "But at least digest your readings, and give me the impression that you've absorbed the substance. Don't copy entire pages from authors whose every expression is familiar to me. Don't put on airs, and when you cite, give the sources...." One student confessed (Cortot, dir. Lévy, unidentified speaker) that the written reports "really gave me trouble: when you are 16 or 17, and you are asked to write an essay on Chopin's Fantaisie, you freeze up a little. I even had the feeling sometimes that he listened to the playing more as it related to the report... than to the performance [per se]."

John Philips, in "Cortot Remembered: 1877-1962" (Clavier, 16, No. 11 [Nov. 1977], p. 22), recounts "being told on one embarrassing occasion, after I had performed Chopin's Bb minor Sonata: 'Your analysis has been admirably thought out. However, your performance does not correspond to your analysis.' My mind went reeling under the implications of that observation!" Not even children were exempted from preparing the notice, but Cortot was more lenient when he caught them out. Dean Elder ("Cortot on Schumann," p. 16) recalled that "after a girl of twelve had played the Arabesque, Op. 18 with technical polish and artistic sensitivity, Cortot asked her if she had written her essay herself. 'Oui, Maître, but I had a little help.' 'What does morbid mean?' asked Cortot. There
was a long silence. 'Oh, that's the word they helped you with.' 'Yes, yes,' the girl agreed with a sigh of relief.'"

91Quoted in Bidal, "Cortot et ses élèves," p. 120.

92In the 1920s especially, the repertoire lists for the interpretation courses were often quite large. Pianists who wished to enroll as participants were asked to submit a choice of anywhere from four to ten pieces (depending on the year) which they were prepared to play. Cortot and the administration made the final selections, seeing to it that as far as possible no two performers played the same work.

From the 1940s on, Cortot sometimes devoted courses to special topics such as the Beethoven Sonatas or even the Chopin Préludes; in these some duplication of repertoire was inevitable. In such courses, recalled Mme. de Brunhoff, Cortot would often group all the performances of the same work together, withholding his commentary until after all had played. This could be quite taxing on the auditors, who one year had to sit through five complete "Appassionata" Sonatas before the lesson began!

93Denise Bidal, "Cortot et ses élèves," p. 120.

94Cortot was a master at creating, in Thieffry's words (Cours d'interprétation, p. 11), "an atmosphere saturated with exaltation," and imparting to students a keen sense of the dignity and importance of their art. "I was barely 18 when I played one of the last Beethoven Sonatas for Cortot," wrote Denise Bidal ("Cortot...," pp. 119-120), "and I still remember his words, and the impression they made on me. 'You know,' he told me, 'it is the privilege of our art to feel that at certain moments we have within us the power to re-create the emotions that have welled up in the loftiest souls who have graced this earth.'"

95Slencyznska, Music at Your Fingertips, p. 24.

96Philips, "Cortot Remembered...," p. 23.

97Cours d'interprétation, p. 16.

98Reine Gianoli, interview with the author.

99According to Philips ("Cortot Remembered," p. 23), "seasoned pupils could always recognize the teacher's signal that he was discontent with a student's performance: as Cortot listened intently..., he would scratch his ear."

100Fermoy, "Cortot," p. 268-69. "I remember vividly," the author goes on to say, "one occasion when one of his female pupils, who was, to put it mildly, not one of the youngest
among us, mounted the platform dressed in bridal white in order to play the slow movement of the F minor Concerto, which Chopin wrote at the age of 19, when he was deeply in love. The slight look of surprise on Cortot's impenetrable face was the most brilliant instance I can recollect of his supreme gift for expressing his feelings with the utmost economy of means."

101 A.C., pp. 271-72.
102 Elder, "Cortot on Schumann," pp. 15-16.
103 The quotes are taken from A.C., p. 72. The French text of Cortot's last remark reads: "Un bonheur innocent, Mademoiselle: je n'ai pas dit villageois."
104 As related by Reine Gianoli, interview with the author.
105 A.C., p. 251.
106 Elder, "Cortot on Schumann," p. 17.
108 Elder, op. cit., p. 17.
109 "Les Cours d'interprétation d'Alfred Cortot," Monde Musical, 40, No. 12 (Dec. 31, 1929), p. 397. "Do you smoke?" Cortot asked the performer. "You have to smoke a sonic cigarette in this piece and watch the clouds of tone evaporate, break up, change shape in the air."
110 "Les Cours d'interprétation d'Alfred Cortot," Monde Musical, 38, No. 10 (Oct. 31, 1927), p. 351. Cortot pointed out that Ravel in his 1925 master class had given a very precise and realistic meaning to the vehement motif of m. 32 (au Mouvement), by writing the words "Quelle horreur!" under the 3 eighth-notes:

![Musical notation](attachment:image)

111 Bidal, "Cortot et ses élèves," p. 120.
112 "Les Cours d'interprétation de M. Alfred Cortot," Monde Musical, 39, No. 11 (Nov. 30, 1928), p. 363. Compare Cortot's remarks to the nine-year old with his comments to a Swiss pianist in her 'twenties, who played the same waltz immediately
"There is a swing to the rhythm, but it must be done with the elegance [of tempo and gesture, which condition the sonority] that is Chopin's hallmark.... Avoid accenting the basses too much, since that would give the rhythm a 'German' quality that is out of place here. It is dancing, but with tears in your eyes: the first two measures plaintive, the following two feigning indifference. The rapid figuration should spin, supported by the light rhythm of the basses; the eighth-notes [must be] very even."


114 Loc. cit. See also Cours d'interprétation, pp. 78-82.

115 Both modifications of dotted rhythm figures were only tendencies--never rules--of Cortot, and one finds many exceptions. In the Largo movement (III) of the Chopin B major Sonata, for instance, Cortot recommended tightening the sixteenths so that they were closer to one sixth of a beat than to one quarter, because it is too easy to fall into the opposite deformation (i.e., a triplet rhythm), which is much more disastrous for the character. In the "Funeral March" of Beethoven's Sonata Op. 26 in A♭ major and also that of Chopin's Sonata No. 2 in b♭ minor, he demanded that pupils not deviate one iota from the notated rhythmic values.


117 Pablo Casals was also extremely attentive to the manner in which a pupil delivered the first note of a composition. See Blum, Casals and the Art of Interpretation, pp. 67-68.


119 "Les Cours d'interprétation de M. Alfred Cortot," Monde Musical, 40, No. 7 (July 31, 1929), p. 256.


121 "Les Cours d'interprétation...," Monde Musical, 40, No. 7 (July 31, 1929), p. 256.

122 According to Ruth Fermoy ("Cortot," p. 267), "to have a quiet platform manner [was] one of the rules [Cortot] most strongly impressed on pupils: 'Don't sit rolling from side to side, don't throw your arms about, don't make noises, don't bang the pedal.' The kindest, most encouraging of teachers, he
can be infinitely scathing when noticing an inclination to exhibitionism...."


124As reported by Blanche Bascourret, interview with the author.

125Cours d'interprétation, pp. 226-27.

126Bidal, "Cortot et ses élèves," p. 120.

127 According to Reine Gianoli, "Cortot didn't use a metronome, and as far as I know he never advised pupils to practice with one. He wanted students to be their own conductor, and to count—but not with an external mechanical device that doesn't allow one to breathe. At the same time, he became angry if one rushed or dragged excessively" (interview with the writer, June 1978).

128Louis Goupy, interview with the author.


130Cf. Miserocchi, "Cortot...," p. 81: "This is the man who has dignified a century of French music. He is right, and one dare not amplify or contradict."

131Louis Goupy, interview with the author.

132Ibid.

133Mme. Bascourret, interview with the author, June 1978. Cortot sent Mme. Bascourret a list of the repertoire he covered with each student in her class, and the programs are indeed startling. Here are two samples:

Peggy Brown: (U.S.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prelude and Fugue in C major</th>
<th>Bach-Busoni</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fantasie in c minor</td>
<td>Mozart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonata, Op. 106</td>
<td>Beethoven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantasie, Op. 17 (complete)</td>
<td>Schumann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantasie in f minor</td>
<td>Chopin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballade No. 3</td>
<td>Chopin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scherzo No. 4</td>
<td>Chopin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonata in b minor</td>
<td>Liszt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sonata in f minor</td>
<td>Brahms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Variations Symphoniques</td>
<td>Franck</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ballade</td>
<td>Fauré</td>
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<td>Navarra</td>
<td>Albeniz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gaspard de la Nuit (complete)</td>
<td>Ravel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concertino</td>
<td>Honegger</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
José Maceda: Toccata and fugue in C
(Phillipines) Sonatas [sic]
"Appassionata" Sonata
Ballade No. 4
Scherzo No. 1
Fantasie in f minor
Carnaval
La Leggierezza
Concerto in E~
Overture to Tannhäuser
Variations on a theme of
Handel
Triana
Jeux d'eau
Toccata and Fugue

General Pétain (1856-1951) had been one of the heroes of the First World War. By 1940 he was in his mid-eighties and growing senile—no longer the man to impose an effective military or political leadership. At the liberation, his Vichy government was judged to have acquiesced far too readily to pressure from the occupying powers to enforce Nazi policies. Pétain and former premier Pierre Laval were convicted of treason and sentenced to death. Pétain's sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment.

A law of Oct. 16, 1940 opened the way for the formation of national councils in the arts. There were actually two musicians' councils: the Comité... des Auteurs dramatiques, Compositeurs et Editeurs, and the Comité... de la Musique (representing composers and performers). The second of these, which Cortot presided over, was founded March 24, 1942 by a decree of Carcopino, Secretary of the Ministry of Education. Though involved with setting professional policy and competency guidelines, Cortot's council seems to have been a self-regulating "guild" rather than an agency of the government, judging from the wide support it received (see A.C., pp. 161-62 for a list of the musicians who served on its steering committee). The Comité... de la Musique was transformed by a law of Oct. 14, 1943 into the Comité Professionel de l'Art Musical et de l'Enseignement Privé, giving it some control over independent music teachers. Cortot is often accused of having engineered this restructuring (ibid., p. 159). Whether he had that much influence is a matter of debate. He surely would not have been averse to any reorganization that might have enabled him to begin to bring some order into the private teaching sector (e.g., by establishing mandatory teacher certification).

As president of the original Comité... de la musique, notes Gavoty (p. 163), Cortot "got to work [and] during 1943 accomplished the following:
- registration of musicians, strictly from the professional standpoint (recensement des musiciens sur le seul plan professionnel).
- creation of a documentation center (indexing of musicians by region, field, type of activities; inventory of musical societies, orchestras, choirs, theaters).
- Formation of a music library and a record lending library, free to all persons of French nationality.
- establishment of a 'fund' from which all musicians taken prisoner in the war and repatriated after June 1, 1943 would receive a stipend of 3,000 Francs.
- establishment of a benevolent fund designed to aid elderly musicians in retirement."

The money needed to start these last two enterprises "was advanced by Cortot out of his pocket," Gavoty asserted.

136 According to Gavoty, Cortot was under consideration for the post of High Commissioner of Beaux-Arts at Vichy in the fall of 1940. When the appointment went to Louis Hautecoeur, "Cortot accepted... the invitation of Ibarnegaray, minister of Youth/Sports,... to be artistic director of youth services" (ibid., p. 157). During 1941-43 he gave many chamber music recitals and concerto performances (under Munch and Desormiere) in Paris, and "conducted some concerts and operas at Vichy" (p. 160). "He was appointed a national advisor in 1941... [and] in 1942 he accepted to serve as technical consultant for music to the National Education [Ministry]" (p. 159). This account of Cortot's activities appears correct, as far as it goes. At any rate, it agrees with those documents to which I had access. For instance, a report by Cortot on the role of choral singing in public education was published in 1942 by the Commissariat Général of Public Education and Sports (Vichy, Paris). Cf. also Cortot's letter of June 20, 1941 to Conservatoire director Claude Delvincourt (B. N., Dép. Mus. lettre autographe No. 138, on stationery stamped "Secrétariat d'Etat à l'Instruction Publique, Secrétariat Général à la Jeunesse, 30 rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré"), in which Cortot declines to serve on the jury for the piano competition because "I'm leaving tomorrow for Vichy, and have to conduct a Concert there the 27th which... includes your Radio-Sérénade! I hope you can catch it over the radio (par la voie et la voix des ondes)"

Finally, one learns from a letter of July 16, 1943 to Guy Ropartz (lettre autographe No. 62, on stationery of the "Comité d'Organisation Professionel de la Musique") that Cortot has just been named conductor of the newly founded chamber orchestra of the Société des Concerts du Conservatoire, scheduled to make its debut in the 1944 season.

137 Cortot's case was not clear-cut. It is conceivable that he would never have been prosecuted had he not played in Germany at Furtwangler's invitation in 1942. There were extenuating circumstances, Gavoty insists: Cortot accepted
only on condition that he also be allowed to play gratis at the French Foyer in Berlin and for the French prisoners of war in detention camps. Moreover, through his contacts with the German officials in France "he succeeded in obtaining the release of 26 French orchestral musicians," asserts his biographer. Lastly, Cortot "gave all the profits from the concerts during the occupation to service projects like the fund for musicians held prisoner" (A.C., p. 137). Still, the eight public concerts in Germany branded Cortot, justifiably or not, a collaborationist to many French.

From the vantage of an outside observer looking at the situation forty-five years after the fact, neither Cortot's ill-advised concerts nor his official roles per se fully account for the vehemence with which he was castigated, verbally and in writing, after the war. The very persistence of the polemics and nasty insinuations leads one to suspect that there were other issues involved as well. Rightly or wrongly, he was widely perceived to have enjoyed much power during the occupation and, to his critics' way of thinking, abused it (cf. Bertrand, p. 226 and also Spycket, pp. 124-27, who gives a different version than Gavoty of what prompted the ugly demonstrations at Cortot's first Paris concerts after the war). Dumesnil ("Alfred Cortot," p. 13) cites "base professional jealousy" as one factor in the bitter attacks of colleagues. Another was no doubt the consideration that however minor Cortot's official responsibilities may have been, an apparently conciliatory attitude towards Vichy from a celebrity of his stature was of considerable symbolic value to the wartime administrations in their propaganda efforts.

138 "No one," remarks Gavoty (A.C., p. 166), "ever had the slightest influence over Cortot, [who was] the most uncompromising, intransigent... person I've ever known." He was a genius "at giving his friends the feeling that each of them was indispensable, when in reality he needed no one" (p. 203).

139 Among the Chopin works edited by Cortot in this period: the Nocturnes (1945), a volume of posthumous works (1946) and the Rondos (1946).

140 Reine Gianoli, summary of her remarks to this writer. For more about Cortot's ideas on pedaling, see the comments of Guthrie Luke, Eric Heidsieck and Vlado Perlemuter in Timbrell, "Alfred Cortot," pp. 23-24.

141 Mme. Cécile be Brunhoff, interview with the author; some remarks have been combined and rearranged. Thierry de Brunhoff abandoned a burgeoning career as a concert pianist to devote himself to a life of spiritual contemplation. He is now a Benedictine monk, pledged to a vow of silence.
Jean-Pierre Marty, interview with the author.

See "Les Cours de pédagogie pianistique d'Alfred Cortot," p. 240.

Cf. Neuhaus (Fr. ed.), pp. 169, 183 and 211. The influence of a performer-teacher on a pupil tends to grow with time, Neuhaus notes, while that of a "pure" pedagogue who does not appear in concert declines as the pupil advances.

Reine Gianoli, as told to the author.

"To be candid, Cortot the pedagogue never really revealed the essential secrets of his pianistic art," wrote Roger Boss ("Alfred Cortot," p. 232). "The teaching of piano playing rests above all on a knowledge of the psycho-physiological elements that come into play, and on a deep understanding of movements. All these relations between the physical and the mental, between motions and thought, Cortot never clarified."

Instead of zeroing in on technique immediately, make the pupil understand the character of the musical phrase, and the technique will follow. If you persist in dispensing abstract theoretical speculations, you will bore the pupil, and you will not serve the cause of music" ("Cours de pédagogie...," p. 236).

Loc. cit.

"If you don't know the piece, read the music along with the pupil as she plays," Cortot advised. "But I must tell you that a teacher who doesn't hear wrong notes and rhythms is a bad teacher" (loc. cit.).

Loc. cit.

Ibid., p. 235.

Originally intended as a primer for novice teachers and École Normale students, the article appeared first in the Monde Musical, 39, No. 5 (May 31, 1928), pp. 171-72 under the title "Principes pédagogiques pour l'enseignement du piano." It was revised and reissued in the early 1930's as "Les Principes essentiels de la leçon pianistique," then reprinted in booklet form with Italian, English and German translations by Curci (Milan) in 1960.

The introduction ("Advice to Young Teachers") is quoted here in full. Excerpts from the remaining sections are given in Appendix II, pp. 599-602.
Summary

Marveling at Cortot's far-ranging and immensely productive career, critic Emile Vuillermoz termed him in 1934 "a living paradox. An artist whose critical faculties have not paralyzed his creative powers. A human being whose apparent impassiveness and austerity mask a quivering sensitivity and a fervent enthusiasm.... A citizen of [our time]..., concealing a man of the Renaissance." Indeed, the closer one examines the figure and accomplishments of this imposing artist, the more one discovers paradox within paradox. An enigmatic and endlessly fascinating man was Alfred Cortot, with a personality forged out of dualities and contradictory impulses. The amazing thing is that Cortot managed to maintain a precarious balance between the disparate forces of his nature so that each activated and enriched the others. The powerful intuitions of the poet were guided and tempered by an equally powerful and probing intellect. This visionary was also a "mover and shaker" who would not relent until he had engineered a project through to successful realization.

More than a few of the projects Cortot created or promoted--the Service d'Action Artistique à l'Etranger (an office somewhat akin to our U.S. Information Agency), l'Oeuvre Fraternelle des Artistes (a charitable foundation for artists), the Jeunesses Musicales (supposedly founded at Cortot's
instigation by René Nicoly) and above all, the Ecole Normale de Musique—took hold and are today thriving institutions. Cortot's creation of a specialized training program with pedagogy classes for aspiring teachers, his plan to have open orchestral reading sessions of contemporary music, the style of public master class he originated and perfected to a high art, his practice of performing large collections (e.g., Chopin's Préludes or Etudes, Schumann's Kinderszenen or Etudes symphoniques, including the five posthumous études) as an integral set in concert: all these innovations have been widely emulated. Still other of Cortot's ideas were far ahead of their time. Two projects left unfinished at his death—his plan to issue an educational recording of the Beethoven sonatas complete with interpretive advice and instructive keyboard demonstrations, and his lifelong desire to see music educators establish a profession-wide, self-regulating "order" analogous to the legal profession's bar association—are only now being vigorously pursued by the field.

The common denominator in all of Cortot's thought and work was his unswerving devotion to his vision of the musical art. Music was his consuming passion and his religion, and although he liked to say that he came to it quite by accident, on another level he believed that he was put on earth to serve music: to play, think, teach and write about it, to preserve it from devaluation and to win new converts to its cause. A mystical idealist, he held the great composers in reverence
and would not tolerate even a hint of disrespect for them: "In my youth some of the Conservatoire students were in the habit of referring to Beethoven as 'le vieux' ('the old man')," remarked Jean de Saint-Arromain to this writer. "Cortot was infuriated and scandalized. To him, Beethoven was a god."

Capturing and communicating something of the essence of music—the transcendent that lifts it above human concerns, but also the poetry, nobility, dignity, spirituality and life of feelings which he felt received their highest expression in music—was everything to Cortot. He was convinced, moreover, that for this "message" to be received with full force it had to be delivered with the vitalizing energy, imagination and emotions of the performer or the teacher. He was, to borrow Brendel's term, a "giver": he believed that interpretation, like life, "is not made of what one finds in it, but of what one brings to it" (Entretiens, "Activités annexes"). As we move further and further from the Romantic era, Cortot's recordings and explications of its masterworks will become ever more valuable to us, drawing us close to the spirit and ideas that fired the past century's great musical minds.

It is said that Cortot in his extreme old age expressed the regret that he had not been born a composer, since the composer leaves posterity his music—ostensibly a more tangible, permanent contribution than a performer-teacher makes. What is the nature of Cortot's legacy? How lasting and how significant might it be?
It should be evident from all that has been said herein that French musical life in the first half of this century would have been noticeably less rich and aesthetically diversified had it not been for the achievements of Alfred Cortot. Cortot epitomized the "other way" in piano performance: the high Romantic style and interpretive ideals, the unorthodox technique, the bold iconoclast who took only what he pleased from the French pianistic tradition and augmented it with what suited his style from other fertile sources of inspiration.

Cortot's school, the Ecole Normale, was likewise the alternative to the "official" Conservatoire, an establishment well ensconced in its elitist teaching methods and admissions procedures, and stagnating somewhat from its unhealthy emphasis on pure instrumental technique and evaluation by narrow competitions. One could say in retrospect, not without a touch of irony, that the Ecole Normale in the 'thirties seems to have furthered the prestige and the diffusion of French music, French editions and traditional French educational goals around the globe with far greater success than the famous national Conservatoire had ever been able to. It achieved this partly on the drawing power of its ambassador Cortot, but also thanks to its open door admissions policy, dynamic faculty and learning climate, and its abiding interest in forming teachers, who upon returning home influenced a great many musicians in the course of their careers.
Beyond the still flourishing Ecole Normale, is there such a thing as the "Cortot school of piano playing," in the sense that one speaks of the Liszt or the Leschetizky school? Regrettably, one must answer in the negative. The reasons why are not hard to identify. Cortot simply did not have frequent and sustained contact with his students from their youth through to the beginnings of their careers. Even those who took the most from him--artists like Magda Tagliaferro, Yvonne Lefebure, Reine Gianoli and Samson François, pedagogues like Jeanne Blancard, Blanche Bascourret and Marthe Morhange-Motchane--were not fully the product of his instruction but were partly formed in other, more traditional "schools" (e.g., that of Marguerite Long) or were to some extent self-made. The transmission of Cortot's interpretive thought and technical teachings has slackened off or been diluted even at the Ecole Normale, as older teachers who knew it first hand pass away, and new professors from different backgrounds infuse their own ideas into the piano instruction.

Nonetheless, there is a Cortot legacy, both for performers and for teachers--and it resides not primarily in the particulars of his performance style or his pedagogical advice. These may fade or become dated in time. His most precious legacy lies rather in the spirit of inquiry and of reverence for art, in the profound desire to transcend the notes and touch at the heart of musical truth, that permeates his entire life and oeuvre. That spirit can still bear a rich harvest today for those who embrace it.
Appendix I:
Conservatoire-related Documents (1890-ca. 1920)

1. Photocopy of a letter from Léa Cortot to Edouard Risler, concerning Cortot's preparations for the advanced level entrance auditions at the Conservatoire, dated "Paris, October 29 [1892]." A translation appears on pp. 72-73.
Comme compensation, nous allons entendre M. Dümmer demain à Lavigueur et nous aimerons deux heures, car c'est la première fois que nous l'entendrons pour tant. Je n'en parle pas pour nous, mais pour vous, pas pour nous en contrain.

L'important, à mon sens, est que nous soyons vingt à l'unité, et je vais vous dire que le tirage sert de répit.

Toutefois, je ne sais pas que toutes nous aident à l'avenir. Il me semble évident que nous manquer de bonnes raisons à faire valoir...
Mon cher Risler,

Je t'assure que nous avons tous été bien touchés de ta bonne lettre et moi en particulier, je te remercie. Je tiens à t'expliquer que tu me portes... Je me réjouis... Je te suis... Je te remercie encore... Je te soumets... Je ne saurais... Je ne saurais... Je te demande... Je te demande... Je ne saurais... Je ne saurais... Je ne saurais... Je te remercie encore... Je te suis... Je te remercie encore... Je te soumets... Je ne saurais... Je ne saurais... Je ne saurais... Je te remercie encore... Je te suis... Je te remercie encore... Je te soumets... Je ne saurais... Je ne saurais... Je ne saurais... Je te remercie encore... Je te suis... Je te remercie encore... Je te soumets... Je ne saurais... Je ne saurais... Je ne saurais... Je te remercie encore... Je te suis... Je te remercie encore... Je te soumets... Je ne saurais... Je ne saurais... Je ne saurais... Je te remercie encore... Je te suis... Je te remercie encore... Je te soumets... Je ne saurais... Je ne saurais... Je ne saurais... Je te remercie encore... Je te suis... Je te remercie encore... Je te soumets... Je ne saurais... Je ne saurais... Je ne saurais... Je te remercie encore... Je te suis... Je te remercie encore... Je te soumets... Je ne saurais... Je ne saurais... Je ne saurais... Je te remercie encore... Je te suis... Je te remercie encore... Je te soumets... Je ne saurais... Je ne saurais... Je ne saurais...
3. Photocopy of a letter from Louis Diémer to Edouard Risler, reporting Cortot's victorious showing in the 1896 competition (translation appears on pp. 98-99).
J'ai été très touché et
très semblable à ta bonne
dépêche d'hier. Donne
-moi huit ans de tes nouvelles,
et en attendant crois, mon
cher étonné, à ma véritable
et sincère affection.

La Cinquième

P.S. Ci-joint une requête
qu'on me demande de t'acheter
de faire passer à Madame
Wagner, voire si la chose est possible
et fai, le si cela te cause pas
d'ennui. 

de partage à la 1re Rue,
Le 5 de cours Rive de
Rehaut, de l'an dernier,
sont restés sur le Caire.
Je suis bien heureux de leur
succès et la musique à tous
rejoins, c'est un si bon et
si loyal caractère aussi.
Et la pour ton affection
et ta décoration très grande,
Je suis un peu en l'état de ne pas aller à Bayreuth
maintenant, si on a du
moment, pour qu'on reçoive
la Célébration l'année prochaine.
Photocopy of a letter from Cortot to Edouard Risler, written soon after his first visit to Bayreuth in 1896.
classe, et de français, car tout ce que je savais, c'est que j'aimais les bateaux. Et quel besoin !

Nous avons eu, le plus bel après-midi, de la beauté de l'été. Après cela, territoriale, ou je ne sais, un peu de temps. J'ai entendu le bruit de l'eau, un bruit de vapeur, d'une interprétation à faire entendre. 

Et, malgré tout, il est le silence, une paix de profondeur. Petits mots que cela a réveillé de quoi c'est le temps, un tel étonnement, de détente et de chance, le plus beau et le plus 

Inutile que soit. Après cela, surtout, la 2e Symphonie, dirigée par Sweelinck à la recherche de l'effet, avec une 9/2 de jeunesse et de mouvement. Comme j'en avais, je me suis écrié, lui, sur le bord de la baie de Constance, où j'ai vu une communication avec Suzuki - fait un jour de

retard. Et, il fait un temps tellement obscurcie que je ne sais pas, pour la peine, le bateau. Quelle bête !

Enfin, si jamais j'arrive à finir ce rapport, je repasserais par l'automne, et je verrai enfin, sans doute, que j'ai des voix étranges, de la poésie, et qu'elle est qui elle est à laquelle, chère ma sainte ! Je t'ai fait une réponse. Et, il y a deux mois, de plus, bien sûr, bien plus ! J'ai éffrayant - Adieu, mon cher, Édouard, à l'œil, pour le temps !

C'est ce jour ?

Toujours, E. B.
My good Edouard -

Forgive me for having taken so long to write you - But Fridrich must have told you, and you know from experience, how hectic life is at Bayreuth - I assure you that if I had been free for one minute I would have come and talked with you - Anyway, I want you to know how beautiful the performances were: they surpassed all my expectations - Perhaps if one wanted to criticize, one could quibble with some of Richter's tempi, but it's such a small matter, so insignificant in light of the admirable whole.... In short, an incredible impression, and only one black spot: your absence. You know I played the St. Francois of Liszt at the last soiree at Wahnfried - Just imagine my joy, my feelings on realizing one of my cherished dreams. Mme. Wagner was delightful and I am very grateful to her for the honor, and for the warm welcome. - What an interesting woman! And how Bayreuth will go downhill when she is gone.... Speaking of her, I saw Mme. de Wolkenstein at the soiree, and she asked me to tell you that the matter you spoke to her about does not concern her; she told me that she'll write you soon, and in the meantime she sends you her best regards. - So much for that - Now let's talk about you a bit.... Have you recovered somewhat? Has your grief abated a little? My poor friend, how deeply I empathize with your sorrow.... When will you go back to Paris? Write me, at Villars par Tournus, Saöne et Loire - I won't be there for another 10 days or so, but they will forward your letter - After I left Bayreuth, I went to Nuremburg with M. Helbog (who sends his regards) and Francis Carnot, the youngest son of the President [Sadi Carnot, President of the Republic], a charming fellow. What an amazing city! And how delightful! We spent a few lovely hours there. Then on to Munich, where I stayed for three days - I heard Tristan and Isolde at the Hof-Theater; except for Lilli Lehmann the interpretation was atrocious - In spite of everything the drama is so powerful that I was profoundly moved - what a world this last act is.... Such a condensation and at the same time such an outpouring of feelings is the most fantastic and marvelous thing in existence - After that, the day before yesterday, Beethoven's 8th Symphony directed by Zempe [?], trying to impress, but youthful and agitated enough - too much so sometimes - I arrived here yesterday on the
shores of Lake Constance, where I missed my connection to Zurich - So be it, a day late! And the weather is so abominable that I doubt whether the boat will be allowed to leave - what a nuisance!!! Well, if I ever get to Zurich, I'll leave for Lausanne and Geneva - where I'll pay a visit to Decrey - who sent me a charming letter which (shame on me!) I haven't answered yet, and that was two months ago! Mein Got! Mein Got! What a time! It's frightening - Adieu, my dear Edouard, you'll write me a letter soon, n'est-ce pas?

Your

Alf. Cortot

1Gustave Fridrich, violinist in the Bayreuth Festival Orchestra and brother-in-law of Edouard Risler.

2Risler had left on the death of his favorite aunt, Minna, who had staunchly supported all his musical endeavors and helped him make important contacts in Germany.
5. Translation of a letter from Louis Diémer to Edouard Risler, mentioning Cortot's trip to Bayreuth (copy of original text courtesy of Risler family archives).

St. Malo August 20, 1896

My dear Friend

I really share your cruel grief and I was deeply distressed and surprised to learn of the death of your dear and wonderful aunt. I wanted to tell you right away, and I'm sending this letter to Fribourg on the off chance that you'll be staying there for a few more days.

The Singer/ Countess [La Ctèse Chanteuse] I spoke to you about left for Bayreuth without waiting for your answer and she'll attempt to get an audience with Mme. Wagner -- She couldn't hold off any longer. -- As for me, I've been at St. Malo with Mme. Diémer for a week now, for a Concert organized by my young friend (the violinist) Jules Boucherit, in which I will play and Boucherit will perform my Concert Stück for Violin with the Casino orchestra, which is not bad and which is directed by Giannini.

Cortot must have been heartbroken not to have found you at Bayreuth, since he only went for the last series [of performances].

Mme. Diémer and I wish to express once more our most heartfelt condolences. Looking forward to the pleasure of seeing you again soon, I send you in the meantime many affectionate thoughts.

With love,

Louis Diémer
République Française

ARRÊTÉ

Le Ministre de l'Instruction publique, des Beaux-Arts et des Cultes

Vu le décret du 8 octobre 1905 portant organisation du Conservatoire National de Musique et de Déclamation;

Vu la liste de candidats présentés par la Section des Études Musicales du Conseil Supérieur d'Enseignement du Conservatoire National de Musique et de Déclamation dans sa séance du 23 octobre 1907;

Sur la proposition du Sous-Secrétaire d'État des Beaux-Arts;

ARRÊTÉ

Article 1

M. Cortot est nommé professeur titulaire (3e Catégorie) d'une classe de piano (Élèves femmes) au Conservatoire National, en remplacement de M. Marmontel, décédé.

Il recevra, en cette qualité, un traitement annuel de quinze cents francs (1,500 F) imputable sur le crédit alloué par le loi de finances du Conservatoire National (Chapitre 15 - Personnel).

Article 2

Le Present arrêté aura son effet à partir du 17 Novembre 1907.

Fait à Paris le 8 Novembre 1907

*Aristide* Briand
6b. Translation of the preceding document (6a) confirming Cortot's appointment to the Conservatoire faculty.

Republic of France

Decree

The Minister of Public Education, Beaux-Arts and Religions

Given the decree of October 1905 concerning the organization of the National Conservatory of Music and Declamation;

In light of the list of candidates proposed by the Division of Musical Studies of the High Council of the National Conservatory of Music and Declamation in its meeting of October 23, 1907;

On the recommendation of the Under-Secretary of Beaux-Arts;

IT IS HEREBY DECREED

Article 1

That Mr. Cortot is appointed to the post of tenured professor (3rd Class) of a piano class (Women students) at the National Conservatory, succeeding Mr. Marmontel (deceased).

That he will receive in this capacity a salary of fifteen hundred (1,500) francs per year, to be drawn on the funds budgeted by treasury law for the National Conservatory (Chapter 15 - Personnel).

Article 2

The present decree will take effect as of November 17, 1907.

Enacted November 8, 1907, in Paris

A[ristide] Briand
7. Complete List of the Students taught by Cortot at the Conservatoire National (1907-ca. 1918).

Names are arranged in order of the year of admission. For first prize winners only, the date of graduation is given after the student's name. Auditors are listed for those years in which Cortot recorded their names in his professor's notebook.

For much of the 1918-19 school year Cortot was away on tour. In his absence the class was taught by Robert Lortat. Though Cortot remained titular head of the class until tendering his resignation in 1923, it was actually taught from 1919-23 by Lazare-Lévy.

1907

Ninette Chassaing* (1º Prix 1908)
Marcelle Boucheron* (1º Prix 1908)
Marthe Bouvaist* (1º Prix 1909)
Simone Guillou*
*admitted 1905, to Marmontel's class
Julia Parody**
**admitted 1906, to Marmontel's class
Jeanne Duchesne (1º Prix 1910)
Suzanne Boucher de Vernicourt
Madeleine Schulhof
Jeanne Bossus
Yvonne Dienne
Clara Haskil (1º Prix 1910)
Yvonne Davin

Georgette Gadot - auditor
Yvonne Herr-Japy - auditor, admitted 1908, Delaborde's class (1º Prix 1910)

1908

Nao Dubief
Yvonne Hubert (1º Prix 1911)
Alice (Liseron) Léon (1º Prix 1911)

[Mlle.] Arnould - auditor, admitted 1909, Delaborde's class (1º Prix 1912)
[Mlle.] Ratez - auditor
Madeleine Baillot - auditor

1909

Juliette Meerovitch (1º Prix 1911)
Madeleine Baillot (1º Prix 1912)
Cortot's Conservatoire Students (continued)

1910

Germaine Lefort (1° Prix 1911)
Georgette Gadot (1° Prix 1912)
Marcelle Creyx (1° Prix 1915)
Yvonne Ravaisse - admitted 1909 to Philipp's class, switched to Cortot's class

1911

Yvonne Lefebure (1° Prix 1912)
Jeanne Leleu (1° Prix 1913)
Marcelle Meyer (1° Prix 1913)
Madeleine Rainoird (1° Prix 1913)
Geneviève Durony (1° Prix 1915)

1912

Hélène Coffer (1° Prix 1914)
Alice Perrioud (1° Prix 1914)
Simone Plé (1° Prix 1914)
Janine Weill (1° Prix 1915)

1913

Suzanne Javault (1° Prix 1915)
Sonia Khinitz (1° Prix 1915)
Cécile Lwowsky
Blanche de Guéraldi (1° Prix 1915)
Isabel Rosalès (1° Prix 1916)
Hélène Carl (1° Prix 1917)

1914

Marthe Morhange (1° Prix 1919)
Yvonne Jean (1° Prix 1919)
Magdeleine Brard (1° Prix and Prix d'excellence 1916)
Cortot's Conservatoire students (continued)

1915

[Alice?] Durand (1º Prix and Prix d'excellence 1918)
Madeleine La Candéla (1º Prix and Prix d'excellence 1917)
[Mlle.] Contoux-Quanté (1º Prix and Prix d'excellence 1917)
Denise Lesage-Duhasay
Maurice Camot

Paulette Mayer - auditor, admitted 1917 to the class of Diémer/Risler
Gabrielle L'Hôte [later Mme. Robert Casadesus] - auditor,
   admitted 1917 to the class of Diémer/Risler (1º Prix 1918)
Hélène Lapierre - auditor
[Mlle.] Hérivaux - auditor

1916

Divna Gavrilovitch
Hélène Roger (1º Prix 1918)
Hélène Lapierre (1º Prix 1918)
Louise Regueton (1º Prix 1920)
Camille Lahaye (1º Prix 1921)
Tatiana de Sanzéwitch (1º Prix and Prix d'excellence 1918)

1917

Pierre Maire (1º Prix 1923)
Vlado Perlemuter (1º Prix 1919)
Céline (Juliette?) Durand-Texte (1º Prix 1919)
Jeanne Theis
Louise Malpas (1º Prix 1919)

1918

Georgette Blouet (1º Prix 1921)
Yvonne François (1º Prix 1919)
[M.] Lafon
8a. Photocopy of the inside cover page of Cortot's personal professor's notebook, listing his repetitrices and the first prize winners from his Conservatoire classes (unpublished autograph ms, courtesy of the Ecole Normale and Pierre Petit, Artistic Dir.).
8b. Photocopy of pages from Cortot's personal professor's notebook, indicating the students enrolled in his 1907-08 Conservatoire class, with their home addresses.
8c. Notes on the June examination and the final **concours public** of 1908, from Cortot's professor's notebook. After the pupil's name Cortot indicates the number of years in the class and the exam repertoire prepared.
Cortot lists all contestants in the concours, noting after each the years in class or the last prize awarded and the student's age in years/months. At the end he indicates the honors awarded, and tallies the total prizes for each professor.
31. Vassal 12e année 17e. 7 Delab.

32. Serrels 12e année 17e. 9 Phil.

1er prix. Pitteau (Delab.), Évrard (Phil.)
Penaquin (Phil.), Chauffe (Cont.)
Boucheron (Cont.), Kérinboeuf (Phil.)

2e Prix. Guille (Phil.), Guillaume (Cont.)
Boucard (Cont.), Wrobel (Phil.)
Boucard (Del.)

1re année. Fourguet (Phil.), Boucheron (Cont.)
Evrard (Cont.), Wrobel (Del.)
Keraudren (Del.), Schuller (Cont.)

2e année. Pascard (Cont.), Vérand (Phil.)
Haussel (Cont.), Pichard (Phil.)
Michel (Phil.), Heimann (Phil.)

Contot = 12 concours. 9 récompenses.
Phil. = 10 concours. 11 récompenses.
Delabord = 10 concours. 4 récompenses.
9. List of repertoire Jeanne Leleu studied with Cortot in his Conservatoire class, 1911-13. Recollections sent in a letter to this author, excerpts of which follow.

Jeanne Leleu
Composer
Premier Grand Prix de Rome

11, Rue des Feuillantines, Ve
August 24, 1978

Mademoiselle,

...Although I've had considerable time to reflect, I still can't give you all the information you would have liked! The problem is that in some instances, I'm no longer certain whether I worked on a piece with Cortot, or learned it afterward on my own. Bear in mind that I was in close contact with Cortot only during the two years I spent in his Conservatoire class. To be sure, those years marked me profoundly because he had a very strong personality, and perforce he exerted a great influence on the child of 12 to 14 that I was at that time.

I can, however, recall a number of the works learned under his guidance. I would list Beethoven's Sonatas Op. 101, 109 and 111 and his 32 Variations [in c minor] and 15 Variations ["Eroica", Op. 35] as well as his Concerto in G major. I learned countless works by Chopin: almost all the études [and] many of the prélüdes, waltzes and mazurkas. Several of Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsodies as well as some of his transcendental études, among which the dreadful "Campanella," which was worth studying from the technical standpoint but which I found utterly devoid of musical interest. Then, by way of contrast, Liszt's beautiful Harmonies du Soir....

I also played many fugues from the Well-Tempered Clavier, as well as [transcriptions of] fugues for organ and the Chaconne for violin in a transcription for piano by Brahms, I believe.

In those days we studied few pieces by Debussy and Ravel, who were just beginning to make a name for themselves! I played quite a bit of Fauré's music while studying with Cortot, and much more later in my career.
Jeanne Leleu - repertoire studied with Cortot (continued).

After the war interrupted my exploits at the piano, I turned to preparatory studies for composition—harmony, counterpoint, fugue, piano accompaniment—which in any case interested me much more than the instrument per se.... I won a first prize in each of these subjects in just two years of class and eventually, in 1923, was awarded the Grand Prix de Rome.

I am not at all certain that Cortot approved of the direction in which my new studies led me. When I went to see him again in the hope of perhaps teaching piano at the Ecole Normale, he was rather cool and distant. As it happened, the job that came out of this was mediocre and short-lived.*

*According to Mlle. Leleu, it was very difficult to eke out a living on the teaching salary she earned at the Ecole Normale. "For the position to have really paid decently," she said, "the students would have had to take private lessons in addition to the class."
10. The technical teaching of Mme. Giraud-Latarse, Cortot's principal répétitrice, as recollected by Reine Gianoli. Excerpts from a personal interview with this author, June 1978.

...I began studying with Mme. Giraud-Latarse on my tenth birthday. She gave me my first "professional" lesson. I played piano before that, but as an amateur. My parents thought I already played well (I made a big impression in recitals). Mme. Giraud-Latarse, however, said to me: "Look, your hand is not set" ("la main n'est pas posée"). We spent weeks just setting the hand position Cortot advocated: firming up the bridge, learning to hold the fifth and fourth fingers straight and articulate them from the base [bridge joint] while curving the others to align them all evenly on the keys, acquiring firm finger joints so that afterwards there can be complete flexibility of wrist and arm, there can be freedom of movement at the elbow and shoulder and one can achieve this relaxation of the apparatus that extends further and further down towards the fingers as one acquires playing experience.

Mme. Giraud was very happy that I was only ten when I started working with her, because I was physically still very malleable (after twelve or thirteen it is already much more difficult to form a hand or correct one that has been wrongly set). Her basic goal can be stated very simply: perfectly solid fingers, and complete mobility of all the rest [of the apparatus]. She gave reams of exercises, from Czerny and the other traditional materials to simple note clusters (C to G for example) that one was to depress simultaneously, pushing a little on the finger muscles (but never so much that the joints broke or that one became tense).

The basic premises of her approach were:

1) Absolute solidity of the finger joints. When I went to her I had a flabby hand like any child's, with final joints that buckled. She formed the joints and finger muscles so well that today my fingers won't bend backwards beyond a straight position even if I try to relax the joints and push them back, yet I have students in my Conservatoire class whose fingers are rubbery, which causes them to bang the keys in compensation in order to try to get a forceful sound. Her view was that if the fingers are very solid, then it's by arm weight that one obtains power without harshness. The hand itself should be solid below and above, which is to say that one must feel the muscles of the palm holding firm and at the same time feel the firmness of the bridge, which could support weight if necessary.
2) The fingers not raised overly high in articulation. Mme. Giraud explained that the essential is not so much to raise the finger high off the key, but rather to control the finger descent with absolute precision so that there is efficiency of gesture, i.e., so that the finger never makes unessential motions and "false starts" in depressing the key.

3) Direct and bold movements. In finger articulations as in wrist attacks, one should never reach for the notes or feel them out in advance (tater les notes). Rather, one must go straight for the note or the jump "like a ball one throws, which rebounds," she would say. "The knowledge of the keyboard [i.e., the sense of distances] is in the hand," she insisted. One should know the keyboard as though one had to play blindfolded, and should move like a juggler who can't afford to hold onto the balls or make timid, indecisive motions.

4) Sonority. Mme. Giraud-Latarse laid the foundations in her teaching for what was dearest to Cortot's heart—a singing or parlando tone in melodies. All through my youth, I heard Cortot say to students: "Don't play your melodies in a pale and colorless manner" ("ne détimbrez pas," "ne décolorez pas"). When he played a melody, it was never small; it had body and it resonated to an extraordinary degree. Today in general one hears fortes that are hard, brutal, and one hears characterless, neutral melodies.
11. Select documents from Cortot's personal file in the Conservatoire archives, Archives Nationales AJ37 68.

11a. Letter from Cortot to Gabriel Fauré, Director of the Conservatoire.

Matinées for the Benefit of the War-Wounded [letter heading]

Paris, November 29, 1915

Monsieur le Directeur,

I respectfully request permission to teach my class at the Conservatoire only one out of every two times [per week] it is scheduled, because of my military obligations. I will see to it that my pupils do not suffer from this departure from what they are accustomed to, by extending the length of my classes.

I hope that you will be disposed to take this request under advisement and thus spare me the obligation of having to designate a substitute—which would grieve me greatly, given the interest and affection I feel for my pupils.

With respectful affection,

Alf. Cortot

[permission granted by Fauré]
Monsieur le Directeur,

I beg to inform you that I have been entrusted by the Government with a mission to the United States which will require me to be absent [from Paris], very likely until the month of February.

I am writing to ask you, providing that you have no objection, to kindly grant me the leave of absence necessary to carry out this mission and to designate someone to take over for me while I am gone.

Thanking you in advance, I remain most respectfully,

Alf. Cortot

[Leave granted; Robert Lortat-Jacob was named professor pro tem of Cortot's class for the school year 1918-19.]
11c. Letter from Cortot to Henri Rabaud (Director of the Conservatoire succeeding Fauré).

Alf. Cortot
87, boulevard Saint-Michel [heading]

Sept. 20, 1920

Mon cher Directeur,

I beg to request that you grant me a leave of absence, without pay, for a period of three years beginning with the start of this school year.

During the conversation we had on this subject, you were kind enough to approve of my plans to make some tours abroad, and I know that the Minister of Public Education looks favorably on the idea of promoting French art (la propagande artistique française) in foreign countries.

I would hope, therefore, that you will kindly consent to grant me this leave, which is indispensable if I am to be able to accept the engagements already offered me in Europe as well as in North America and South America.

With deepest devotion,

Alf. Cortot

I also beg to inform you that due to the request formulated herein, I will withdraw my candidature for a seat on the High Council (Conseil Supérieur) until I am once more able to take up my class.
Mr. Alfred Cortot, tenured professor of a Piano class, is asking me for an exceptional leave of absence without pay of three years' duration, in order to give concerts abroad.

Considering that it is in the very best interest of the French school (l'Ecole française) to have famous artists of our nationality appearing in the allied countries, I believe it advisable to comply with Mr. Cortot's wish.

Consequently, I beg to request, so that Mr. Cortot's administrative status can be put in order, that you kindly enact a decree granting this professor a leave of three years, from October 1st, 1920 to September 30, 1923, without pay.

[Leave granted; Lazare-Lévy, professor pro tem during Cortot's one-year absence in 1919-20, was maintained in that capacity for the 1920-23 leave of absence.]
11e. Note from Cortot to Henri Rabaud (follow-up to his official request for a leave of absence).

Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin

Cher Henri,

Je te remercie de toute la peine que tu prends pour que mon conge soit revetu des garanties necessaires.

Je pense que le Ministre n'aura pas fait d'opposition et que je recevrai bientot l'expedition de l'arrete.

Mon adresse permanente a Londres jusqu'au 10 decembre est

c/o M. Peaty
80 Baker Street
Portman Square

Je te souhaite une premiere annee de direction digne de toi et regrette de ne pas la vivre a tes cotes! Mai je prendrai ma revanche!

Crois a la sincere affection de ton

Alf. Cortot

11e. Translation of the preceding note from Cortot to Rabaud.

Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin
Sept. 27, 1920

Dear Henri,

Thanks for all the trouble you're taking to make sure that my leave is accomplished with all the necessary safeguards.

I think that the Minister will not have opposed it, and that I'll soon be receiving the decree in the mail.

My permanent address in London until the 10th of December is:

c/o M. Peaty
80 Baker Street
Portman Square

I wish you the kind of first year as Director that you deserve and I'm sorry that I won't be there beside you experiencing it! But I'll get even with you!

With sincere affection, yours,

Alf. Cortot
Appendix II

Documents from the Ecole Normale Years (ca. 1920-1962).

2. **Ecole Normale examination subjects, showing curriculum requirements: 1920.**

**Brevet** (proficiency certificate) level

I. Piano. **A) Technique:** maj./min. scales in 8ves, 3rds, 6ths, 10ths, parallel and contrary; chromatic scales in 8ves, 3rds; arpeggios in maj./min. triad, dominant/diminished 7ths; wrist, octave and held-note exercises. **B) Repertoire:** 2 Bach Inventions chosen by the jury from among 6 presented by the candidate (3 two-part, 3 three-part); 1 piece of candidate's choice, by memory; 1 étude chosen from 6 presented (Cramer, Czerny, Clementi); 1 piece chosen by the jury from a list of 6 presented 3 months before the exam. Sight-reading of an unknown work.

II. Individual lesson given to an unknown pupil.

III. Solfege: melodic and harmonic dictations; 3 theoretical questions covering intervals, values, modes, keys, rhythms, terminology; sight-reading in clefs of G, F, C¹, C², C⁴.

IV. Harmonic analysis: up to 5-note chords (excluding altered chords); all decorative figures, modulations, cadences, etc.

V. Musical forms: explain orally the structure of conventional forms (including fugue, prelude, suite [all parts], sonata [evolution and chronology], binary/ternary allegro, lied, minuet/scherzo, rondo, variations, etc.).

VI. Music history (written): brief history of music from Antiquity to our time, deeper knowledge of classical and romantic eras (3 questions).

VII. Chamber music: perform one movement of an intermediate-level sonata for piano and 1 instrument (choose from a list of 6 furnished).
Ecole Normale examination subjects: 1920 (continued).

**Licence, Teaching** (intermediate degree, later called Diplôme)

I. Piano. A) Technique: same as above. B) Repertoire: 1 Prelude and Fugue of Bach (choice); 1 piece of candidate's choice, by memory; 1 Etude (jury chooses from a list of 6 including 2 by Chopin); 1 or 2 pieces chosen by jury from a list of 6 designated 3 months before the exam. Sightreading of an unknown work (manuscript or printed).

II. Individual lesson given to an unknown (rather advanced) pupil: must cover in particular ways to overcome technical difficulties, analysis of figuration and passages, style and expression. Candidates may be requested to furnish pedagogical explanations (of touch, movements, meaning of terms in Italian, French, German).

III. Solfege: 2 dictations; sight-reading in clefs of F³, F⁴, G and four C clefs.

IV. Harmonic analysis.

V. Musical structure.

VI. Music history.

VII. Chamber music (sightreading).

VIII. A foreign language (optional).

**Doctorat, Teaching** (later called Licence), Advanced level

I. Piano: a full piano recital program of 8 works (6 of which will be designated by the administration 3 months before the exam).

II. Lesson to give: Candidate must be ready to demonstrate, with examples at the keyboard, the lesson to be given to a pupil or a class of advanced level. The lesson must show advanced teaching, i.e., guiding the student to the highest technical perfection and explaining the style and aesthetic/interpretive aspects of the music; candidate must insist on rhythmic precision, accents and dynamics, explaining the expressive reasons. Candidate must also furnish a list of works encompassing the entire piano repertoire, including modern, foreign and two-piano works, fantasies, concerti and transcriptions.

III. Transposition (at sight) up to the major 3rd above or the major 2nd below.

IV. Score-reading (orchestral scores) at the keyboard.

V. Harmony: figured bass, realized at sight.

VI. Musical structure.

VII. Ensemble or chamber music (sight-read).

VIII. Music history.
3. Ecole Normale
Examination subjects required, 1927.

Brevet d'aptitude (Proficiency certificate)

I. Piano: A) Technique as in 1920 requirements. B) Repertoire: 2 Bach Inventions; 2 études; 4 works of the candidate's choice; the first movement of Beethoven's Sonata, Op. 22 in Bb major (obligatory, designated 6 weeks before the exam).

II. Harmony: realization of a figured bass and figuration of a bass.

III. Solfege: theory, dictation, sight-reading, mental hearing*.

IV. Musical structure.

V. Music history.

Licence d'enseignement (Teaching license)**

I. Piano: A) Technique as before. B) Repertoire: 1 Prelude and Fugue of Bach; 2 Chopin Etudes; 4 works of the candidate's choice; Beethoven's 15 Variations ("Eroica"), Op. 35 (obligatory, designated 6 weeks before the exam).

II. Pedagogy: lessons to be given to an unknown student in solfege, technique and interpretation.

III. Harmony (bass or melody given, realize remainder at sight at the keyboard).


V. Music History.

VI. Chamber music.

*The "mental hearing" exam required the pupil to write, play or sing by memory an 8-12 bar melody of medium difficulty which he/she was handed ten minutes before.

**Initially the Licence was the intermediate-level degree, the Doctorat the advanced. The Doctorat, having proved too intimidating, was made slightly easier and renamed the Licence. The Diplôme became the intermediate degree.
Ecole Normale exam requirements, 1927 (continued).

**Licence de concert** (Performance license)**

I. Piano: 6 pieces of the candidate's choice; Beethoven's Sonata, Op. 111, complete (obligatory, designated 6 weeks before the exam).

II. 1 Chamber music work (an important sonata, trio or piano quartet).

III. 1 Accompaniment.

IV. Sight-reading and analysis of an unknown work.

V. The candidate will present a historical-analytical-stylistic essay (notice) on each composition performed under I (above).

First Meeting with a Pupil*

[At the initial meeting, try to put the pupil at ease, Cortot suggests. Ask the pupil—not the parent or accompanying adult—about his previous studies. Have him/her play two works of contrasting character, preferably a lyrical piece and a virtuosic one. During the audition, note his/her posture, hand position, seat height and manner of placing the feet on the pedals. As the pupil plays, try to pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses, and mentally formulate them to yourself in a few succinct, telling phrases. Have the student play several pure exercises (e.g., trills, arpeggios, double notes) to judge the real level of his technical proficiency. Check the conformation of the hand, the stretch between fingers, the finesse of the pupil's ear and his sight-reading ability.]

By now you should have a clear idea of the pupil's [capabilities]..., and should know what avenues to pursue with him in his studies.

Now we arrive at the critical psychological point in the audition—for you no less than for the pupil—when you have to win his trust in giving your opinion of his playing, which he is anxiously awaiting. Frame your conclusions in the kindest possible terms, mentioning first the good qualities and then the imperfections, letting him know that these last can be corrected.

Next take up one of the pieces previously played, and after having indicated how you would like it to have been rendered (preferably underscoring your points with examples at the keyboard), have the pupil play it again. This time it is best to stop the pupil at the unsatisfactory passages, indicating what would be desirable from an interpretive or technical standpoint, and for what reasons. This snippet of a lesson will enable you to immediately determine how good... the pupil's musical and intellectual reactions are and whether the aptness of your suggestions can convince him, can inspire the confidence which is the key to the student-teacher ...

*Bracketed material represents this writer's summary of Cortot's statements. The rest is my own translation of the French text printed in I Principi essenziali della lezione pianistica, pp. 23-30.
relationship. Taking into account how long he practices daily and whether he works alone or supervised, indicate:

- What kind of exercises he should do and for how long each day, choosing as focal point the technical flaw that is the easiest to correct and making it clear to the pupil exactly what you expect from this work.
- Assign an étude which addresses this same problem.
- Assign two or three pieces: one classical, one romantic, one modern. At least one of these works should be of a difficulty exceeding the pupil's present playing level. Indicate what kind of progress he may expect to make by studying it, and in what direction he should orient his interpretive thinking. Then require that he prepare a brief report on the character of this work for the next lesson.

The Lesson

Have the student play each piece without interruption, even encouraging him to continue if he falters.

Ask him to point out himself what he felt needed improvement in his performance—in this way you get him used to self-critical listening and thinking.

Explain what he could or should see in a composition from the imaginative angle. Do not dwell on petty details. Give a broad overview of the piece that will not stifle his personal interpretive qualities.

Circle on the pupil's score any wrong notes that need correcting; indicate useful alternate fingerings. Always point out distinctive features of form and salient modulations, making the pupil understand their important ramifications for the interpretation. Play a short segment to illustrate the final tempo of the work. Always be sure to have the pupil translate tempo and character indications that are in foreign languages.

Show the pupil that the character (couleur) of an interpretation depends on the kind of technical means used to convey it. Have him identify the nature of the technique [called for].

Demonstrate how one should practice particularly difficult passages. Make the pupil define the type of technical difficulty he is dealing with. Take one of the exercise
Cortot's "Les Principes essentiels..." (4.), continued.

formulas given in the Principes rationnels... that illustrates how to practice by keying in on basic elements comprising the problem. Make the pupil construct exercises for each difficult passage. Don't forget that to understand the reasons why a passage went badly in performance is to have the problem already half corrected.

Have students write in their own fingerings--this is one of the best ways to make them verify that their playing is musically precise and appropriate.

Never let a wrong note or rhythm go by without correcting it in writing, at the same time showing the student exactly how he erred. Be implacably demanding with regard to accuracy of execution.

Where interpretive faults are concerned, be patient and ask yourself whether the student might not have some personal conception of the piece, which in your view he is interpreting wrongly. Have him explain to you why he played it as he did.

Urge the pupil to ask you questions.

Don't think that all pupils respond similarly to observations. Figure out which tactic--reproach or encouragement--is the best way of lighting a fire under each.

In group lessons don't be afraid to ask members of the class what they think of a classmate's performance. In this way, stimulate their analytical powers.

The Student's Work

[Cortot recommends establishing a schedule for practicing, insisting that the pupil reserve the same hours each day for work: a maximum of five, preferably in the morning. The teacher should indicate how much time should be spent on the various types of practice (i.e., exercises, études, pieces, sightreading). The pupil should keep a notebook listing the pieces studied and when they were begun and finished; at each lesson the materials covered will be given a grade on a scale of 1-20.]

See to it that the pupil pursues the two types of study which, if done simultaneously, ensure the fastest progress, to wit: 1) polishing, reserved for pieces suited to his actual performance level, talent or musical knowledge; and 2) basic learning (travail de défrichement), reserved for works that
Cortot's "Principes Essentiels..." (4.), continued.

are clearly of a lower level than he is capable of. Do not insist that he perfect the latter, which should be changed as often as possible.

Indicate the best editions of classical works.

Have the pupil specify the composition he/she would like to study. Accommodate him if possible, and if not, give the reasons why you cannot approve his choice.

As a rule, when you assign a piece for study, describe briefly its basic character and tempo, whenever possible by demonstrating at the keyboard.

Accustom the student to getting to know an unfamiliar work solely through reading it mentally away from the keyboard. Make it clear to your pupils that the goal of practicing is to get the maximum results in the minimum of time—that is, by applying intelligently what is learned in technical studies to the interpretation of their pieces.

For the work of memorization, which is useful from a purely musical standpoint, accustom the pupil to replacing the empirical practice of endless mechanical drilling of passages (which only leads to muscle memory) with mnemonic devices drawing on the analysis of harmony and form.

Demand that at least one piece be memorized each month.

See to it that pieces previously learned are not forgotten. In assembling a repertoire carefully tailored to the pupil's level of studies, make certain that it consists predominately of a selection of established classics which must be familiar to anyone who aspires to effectively pass on the torch of Music to others, but which are too often bypassed in favor of pieces of lower artistic quality.
5. Photocopy of a program from Cortot's 1928 master classes at the Ecole Normale, specifying the repertoire performers should choose from, the conditions for admission and the tuition fees. The final page is an application form (demande d'inscription).
Œuvres d'Essence Rythmique

Partita en si bémol ... J.-S. BACH
Allemande, L'Auguste, 1ère ordre. COUPERIN
La Soupir en la Fa.
quez d'or ... 
Chaconne ...................................... BACH-HUSONI
... en sol .................................... HAENDEL
Bourrée (au choix) ......................... J.-S. BACH
Bourrée pour la main gauche .......... SAINT-SAËNS
Bourrée tantasque ......................... CHABRIER
Courante, 2ème ordre .................... COUPERIN
Farandole en mi majeur .................. 
Gavotte en la ................................ RAMEAU
... de la Suite Anglaise en sol min. J.-S. BACH
Gigue ........................................... HAYDELL
... de la Suite anglaise en sol ....... J.-S. BACH
... en sol .................................... MOZART
Surabanne de la Suite Anglaise en sol J.-S. BACH
... ........................................ DEBUSSY
Menuets (au choix): BACH, MOZART, HAYDN, COUPERIN, etc...
Passacaille ................................... BACH-PHILIPP
... en si mineur, 2ème ordre .......... COUPERIN
Passacaille, suite anglaise en mi min. J.-S. BACH
Pavane pour une Infante défunte .... RAVEL
Rigaudon en mi .............. RAMEAU
Tambourin en mi ...................... 
Sicilienne, concerto d'Oguel ......... VIOLAPI
Landler, op. 171 ........................ SCHUBERT
Valses, op. 18, op. 42, op. 64, no 1 et 2. CHOPIN
Invitation a la Valse ........................ WEBER
Soirées de Vienne en la, no 6, SCHUBERT-LISZT

Œuvres de Forme Libre

(Suite)

Capriccio, ré mineur .................. W. FRIEDMAN-BACH
Caprices, op. 5, op. 33, no 1 ... MENDELSSOHN
Mozart, Capricciosa .................... WEBER
Moment musical, op. 94 .............. SCHUBERT
Novelléte, op. 41 ......................... SCHUMANN
Intermezzi, op. 117, no 2 .......... BRAHMS
... op. 118, no 6 .................. 
... op. 119, no 3 .................. 
Intermezzi, op. 4 ....................... SCHUMANN
Grand Caprice ......................... CÉSAR FRANCK
Légendes — Saint François de Paule mar- 
chant sur les flots ............ LISZT
... Saint François d'Assise, Pré-
dication aux oiseaux ............

Berceuse .................................. CHOPIN
... LISZT
... GRIEG
Humoresque, op. 10 .................. SCHUMANN
Andante en la majeur ............... BEETHOVEN
Arabesque, op. 18 ................. SCHUMANN
Islancert.............................. MALAKIREF
Jeux d'eau .............................. RAVEL
Con de Cimetiére au Printemps

A cheval dans la Prairie ....

Bagatelles au soleil .............

Poèmes ................................... SCRIABINE

Vers la Flamme ........................

Au bord d'une source ............ LISZT

Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude 

Pensée des Morts ....................

Les jeux d'eau de la Villa d'Este

Soirée dans Grenade .............. DEBUSSY

Jardins sous la Pluie ..........

L'Elle joueuse .................

Trance .................................. M. BEXIZ

Navarra ................................

Les Drames .............................. CÉSAR FRANCK

Vents dans le Jardins d'Espagne 

MANUEL DU FALLA ...
Valses-Caprices, 1er et 3è

Helizetta

Schéerzo-Valse

Mazurkas, op. 17, n° 4; op. 41, n° 1

Mazurkas, op. 50, n° 2; op. 63, n° 3

Polonaises, op. 40, n° 1 et 2; op. 44, op. 53

Polonaise-Fantaisie

Polonaise en mi

— op. 72

— op. 89

Ecossaises

Boléro

Tarentelle

Venezia e Napoli

Le Tombeau de Couperin

Danse

Mouvement

Danse de Puck

Quelques Danses

Sous les Palmiers, danse espagnole

Segueidilla

Fandango de Candil

FAURE

D'INDY

CHABRIER

CHOPIN

LISZT

WEBER

BEETHOVEN

W.-F. BACH

CHOPIN

RAVEL

DEBUSSY

ALBENIZ

GRANADOS
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- Prénom
- Lieu et date de naissance
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- Nationalité

- Titre de l'œuvre
- Opus
- Date de la composition
- Lieu de la composition
- Dédicace

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Directeur

Alfred CORTOT
Président

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27, 28, 29, 30 SEPTEMBRE 1937

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RENTRÉE DES CLASSES LUNDI 4 OCTOBRE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Work Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gluck-Brahms</td>
<td>Gavotte</td>
<td>02/1923</td>
<td>(rec.) Vic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grieg</td>
<td>Sonata, Op. 36 in a minor for cello/piano (with Casals)</td>
<td>05/1909</td>
<td>Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Händel</td>
<td>Air con variazioni (Harmonious Blacksmith), Suite in E major</td>
<td>12/1922</td>
<td>(rec.) Vic. U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sonata [?], piano solo</td>
<td>05/1907</td>
<td>Nantes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sonata [?] for violin, piano (with Hayot)</td>
<td>12/1912</td>
<td>Le Havre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haydn</td>
<td>Trio, Op. 73, No. 2 in G major (with Thibaud, Casals)</td>
<td>04/1907</td>
<td>Tours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hayes (1705-71)</td>
<td>Sonata à 3 (with Thibaud, Casals)</td>
<td>05/1909</td>
<td>Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d'Indy</td>
<td>Symphonie cévenole for piano/orch.</td>
<td>04/1905</td>
<td>Paris</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Songs (selection) (with Mlle. Luquiens)</td>
<td>05/1914</td>
<td>Lille</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaques-Dalcroze</td>
<td>Lieder (selection) (with Mlle. Luquiens)</td>
<td>05/1914</td>
<td>Lille</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kreisler</td>
<td>Preludium and Allegro (with Thibaud)</td>
<td>05/1913</td>
<td>Nantes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lekeu, G.</td>
<td>Sonata in G major (with Thibaud)</td>
<td>05/1913</td>
<td>Nantes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lenormand, René</td>
<td>Songs (selection) (with Mlle. Luquiens)</td>
<td>05/1914</td>
<td>Lille</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Thierry de Brunhoff: Repertoire studied with Cortot in private lessons (mid 1940's).

(list compiled by Mme. Cécile de Brunhoff)

Bach, J. S.: Inventions (selections)
            Preludes and Fugues from the Well-Tempered Clavier (four or five)
            Partitas No. 1 and No. 6

Beethoven: Sonatas Op. 10 No. 3 and Op. 81a

Chopin:    Etudes Op. 10 Nos. 3 and 8
            Etudes Op. 25 Nos. 1, 2, 4 and 9
            Ballade No. 2
            Préludes (complete)
            Barcarolle Op. 60
            Berceuse Op. 57
            Nocturnes (selections)
            Sonata Op. 35 in b♭ minor
            Waltzes (selections)
            Fantaisie-Polonaise

Czerny:    Sonate d'Etude

Debussy:   Préludes, Bk. I (Voiles, Les Collines d'Anacapri, Des pas sur la neige)
            Children's Corner

Franck:    Prélude, choral et fugue

Liszt:     Hungarian Rhapsody No. 11
            Variations on "Weinen, Klagen..."

Ravel:     Le Tombeau de Couperin

Schumann:  Arabesque
            Davidsbündler Tänze
            Humoreske
            Etudes symphoniques
            Kinderszenen
            Concerto in a minor

Weber, C. M. V.: Concertstücke
Appendix III

Tentative Inventory of Cortot's Performance Repertoire

Below is a list of works played by Cortot in concert, together with the earliest date of performance found in the sources consulted (principally, the Monde Musical, Courrier Musical, Musical America, A.C., and for trios, the "Relevé provisoire des concerts, 1906-1933" compiled by Jean Loubier for the liner essay in EMI - France 2900583). This inventory does not pretend to be complete. Indeed, it is likely that quite a few works could be added if time restrictions did not limit the scope of source research.

For easy reference, compositions under each composer have been grouped into two major classes: 1) works for piano solo (including transcriptions) and for solo piano/orchestra; and 2) chamber and ensemble works, with or without orchestra. At times it has not been possible to identify a work with certainty due to an incomplete or erroneous original listing.

Works learned in Cortot's student years are given when these occur on at least one later program. A few pieces which he recorded are also included, although they have not been found on a program; these are identified by the abbreviation: (rec.) or in the case of a piece recorded on magnetic tape, (tp.). Performances from interpretation courses have been included only where these were announced as complete and distinct from the lessons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Earliest perf. located (mo/yr/place)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albeniz</td>
<td>Malagueña</td>
<td>11/1918 Philadelphia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seguidillas</td>
<td>03/1919 Cannes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Triana (No. 6 from Iberia)</td>
<td>03/1912 Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composer</td>
<td>Piece Description</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bach, J.S.</td>
<td>Adagio [from the Concerto in f minor?]</td>
<td>12/1917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concerto in f min. S. 1056</td>
<td>06/1928</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 (with Thibaud, Blanquart)</td>
<td>05/1913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concerto for 3 keyboard inst. (with W. Landowska, Lazare-Lévy)</td>
<td>07/1925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concerto for 4 keyboard inst. (with Risler, Pugno, Wurmser)</td>
<td>04/1898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 Sonatas for vln./keybd. (with Georges Enesco)</td>
<td>Fall/1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sonata S. 1016 in E♭ major (with Thibaud)</td>
<td>02/1912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balakirev</td>
<td>Islamey</td>
<td>05/1924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beethoven</td>
<td>Concerti for piano (complete)</td>
<td>03/1909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Choral Fantasia, Op. 80</td>
<td>03/1909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concerto No. 3 in c minor</td>
<td>11/1897</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32 Sonatas for piano (complete) (tp.)</td>
<td>ca. 1956-58</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sonata Op. 27, No. 2 in c# min. (&quot;Moonlight&quot;)</td>
<td>05/1914</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sonata Op. 53 (&quot;Waldstein&quot;) in C major</td>
<td>06/1892</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sonata Op. 57 (&quot;Appassionata&quot;) in f minor</td>
<td>06/1893</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sonata Op. 81a (&quot;Les Adieux&quot;) in E major</td>
<td>01/1898</td>
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</table>
Sonata Op. 101 in A major  
01/1898  
Berlin  

Sonata Op. 106 ("Hammerklavier") in Bb major  
04/1910  
Paris  

Sonata Op. 109 in E major  
ca. 1920  
(p.r.) U.S.  

Sonata Op. 110 in A\textsubscript{b} major  
05/1924  
Paris  

Sonata Op. 111 in c minor  
05/1924  
Paris  

32 Variations in c minor  
05/1924  
Woo 80  

* * *  

Sonatas for vln/piano (complete) with Thibaud  
11 & 12/1943  
Paris  

Sonata Op. 30, No. 2 in c min. (with Thibaud)  
03/1910  
Dijon  

Sonata Op. 47 ("Kreutzer") in A major (with Boucherit)  
03/1908  
Le Havre  

Sonatas for cello/piano (complete), with Casals  
05/1909  
Le Havre  

Sonata Op. 69 in A major (with Casals)  
01/1907  
Le Havre  

Song cycles (with Charles Panzera)  
07/1936  
Paris  

Triple Concerto for vln., 'cello, piano and orch. (with Thibaud, Casals)  
02/1908  
Paris  

Trio Op. 1, No. 1 in E\textsubscript{b} maj.  
05/1932  
Paris  

Trio Op. 1, No. 2 in G maj. (all trios with Thibaud, Casals)  
05/1932  
Paris  

Trio Op. 1, No. 3 in c minor  
04/1925  
Barcelona  

Trio Op. 11 in B\textsubscript{b} major  
05/1932  
Paris  


Borodine

Trio Op. post. 38 05/1932 Paris

Trio Op. 70, No. 1 in D major 05/1910 Paris

Trio Op. 70, No. 2 in Eb major 05/1908 Paris

Trio Op. 97 ("Archduke") in Bb major 06/1907 Paris

Trio Op. post. 154 in Bb major 05/1932 Paris

Variations on "Ich bin der Schneider Kakadu", Op. 121a (with Thibaud, Casals) 05/1909 Paris

.14 Variations in Eb major., Op. 44 (with Thibaud, Casals) 05/1910 Paris

Variations on a Theme from Judas Maccabaeus by Händel, Wo0 45

Variations on "Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen from the Magic Flute, Op. 66

Variations on "Bei Männern welche Liebe fühlen," Wo0 46 (all with Casals)

Songs (with Mlle. Luquiens) 05/1914 Lille

Brahms

Concerto No. 1, Op. 15 in d min. 05/1933? Paris

Rhapsody in g minor, Op. 79 05/1924 Paris

Variations on a theme by Händel, Op. 24 12/1907 Paris

Wiegenlied, Op. 49 No. 4, arr. 05/1925 (rec.) Vic.

Sonata [?] for violin, piano (with Hermann) 12/1907 Paris
Sonata No. 3, Op. 108 in d min. for vln./pno. (with Thibaud) 04/1913 Paris
Sonata Op. 38 in e minor for cello/pno. 02/1912 Paris
Sonata Op. 99 in F major for cello/pno. (both with Zwygberg) 02/1912 Paris
8 Songs (with Maria Philippi) 02/1912 Paris
Trio Op. 8 in B major (with Thibaud, Casals) 11/1913 London
Trio Op. 87 in C major (with Thibaud, Casals) 05/1910 Paris
Trio Op. 101 in C minor (with Thibaud, Casals) 06/1907 Paris

Chabrier
Bourée fantasque 03/1912 Paris
Feuillet d’album ca. 1919–20 (p.r.)
Idylle 03/1912 Paris
Scherzo-Valse 01/1919 (rec.) Vic.

* * *

3 Valses romantiques for 2 pnos. (with Planté) 06/1907 Paris
Espana, arr. (with Risler) 03/1914 Paris

Chevillard
Thème et variations 11/1906 Paris

Chausson
Concerto, Op. 21 in D major (with Thibaud and Quatour Touche) 06/1910
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andante Spianato and Grande Polonaise (with orch.)</td>
<td>04/1910</td>
<td>Nice</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; (solo version)</td>
<td>02/1911</td>
<td>Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Ballades (complete)</td>
<td>06/1920</td>
<td>Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballades No. 1 and No. 2</td>
<td>03/1898</td>
<td>Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballade No. 3</td>
<td>04/1898</td>
<td>Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballade No. 4</td>
<td>06/1896</td>
<td>Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barcarolle, Op. 60</td>
<td>06/1920</td>
<td>Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berceuse</td>
<td>01/1919</td>
<td>Vic. U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerto in f minor, Op. 21 (Messager re-orchestration)</td>
<td>03/1914</td>
<td>Manchester?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerto in f minor, Op. 21 (Cortot re-orchestration)</td>
<td>02/1926</td>
<td>Cannes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etudes (complete), Op. 10 and 25</td>
<td>12/1933</td>
<td>Paris</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fantaisie in f minor, Op. 49</td>
<td>05/1924</td>
<td>Paris</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impromptus (complete)</td>
<td>07/1933</td>
<td>(rec.) HMV London</td>
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<td>Impromptu Op. 29 in A♭ major</td>
<td>12/1922</td>
<td>(rec.) Vic.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impromptu Op. 36 in F♯ major</td>
<td>03/1898</td>
<td>Paris</td>
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<tr>
<td>49 Mazurkas</td>
<td>ca. 1956-57</td>
<td>(tp) Paris?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Mazurkas, selection 02/1937
Paris

Nocturne Op. 9, No. 2 in Eb maj. 03/1929
HMV London

Nocturnes Op.15, No. 1 in F maj. 1948-51
Op. 15, No. 2 in F# major, (rec.) HMV London
Op. 27, No. 1 in C# minor,
Op. 55, No. 1 in F minor,
Op. 55, No. 2 in Eb major

Nocturne in c minor, Op. 48, No. 1 06/1920
Paris

Polonaise, Op. 53 in Ab major 03/1898
Paris

Polonaises, selection 11/1939
Paris

Polonaise-Fantaisie ca. 1956-58 (tp.)

24 Preludes (complete), Op. 28 03/1912
Paris

Prelude in F# min., Op. 28, No. 8 04/1898
Paris

Scherzo No. 2 01/1934
Paris

Scherzo No. 3 1952
(recover.) EMI Japan

Sonata No. 2 in Bb minor 06/1920
Paris

Sonata No. 3 in b minor 07/1906
Paris

Tarantelle 01/1919
(recover.) Vic.

Valses (complete) 06/1934
(recover.) HMV London
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<th>Debussy</th>
<th>Valses Op. 34, No. 1 in Ab and Op. 70 No. 1 in G♭</th>
<th>04/1898</th>
<th>Paris</th>
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<td>Valses Op. 69, No. 1 in Ab and Op. 64, No. 2 in C♯ minor</td>
<td>05/1924</td>
<td>Paris</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Valses Op. 34, No. 2 in Ab maj., and Op. 64, No. 1 in D major</td>
<td>02/1937</td>
<td>Paris</td>
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<td>Chants polonaises No. 2 (&quot;Spring&quot;) and No. 3 (&quot;The Ring&quot;)</td>
<td>03/1939</td>
<td>(rec.) HMV London</td>
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<td>Chants polonaises No. 5 (&quot;My Joys&quot;)</td>
<td>01/1919</td>
<td>(rec.) Vic. London</td>
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<td>Children's Corner</td>
<td>06/1928</td>
<td>Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pour le Piano</td>
<td>05/1924?</td>
<td>Paris</td>
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<td>Préludes, Book I (complete)</td>
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<td>Préludes, I: La Cathédrale engloutie Minstrels La Fille aux cheveux de lin Ce qu'a vu le vent d'ouest</td>
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<td>Préludes, I: Danseuses de Delphes La Sérénade interrompue</td>
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<td>Fantaisie for piano/orch.</td>
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<p>| Early Songs (with Mme. Durand-Texte) | ?:1907 | Paris |</p>
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<td>L'Apprenti sorcier (arr.)</td>
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<td>Ritual Fire Dance (from El Amor Brujo)</td>
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<td>7 Spanish Songs (with Alicita Félici)</td>
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<td>Ballade, Op. 10 for piano/orch.</td>
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**Fauré**

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Liszt

Au bord d'une source 03/1898 Paris
Concerto in Eb maj. 09/1925 London
Fantasy and Fugue on BACH 06/1920 Paris
Feux follets (from Etudes transcendentes) 06/1920 Paris
Légende de St. François de Paule marchant sur les flûts 03/1898 Paris
Légende de St. François d'Assise: La prédication aux oiseaux
Mazeppa (Etudes transcendentes) 06/1920 Paris
Mephisto Walzer 03/1898 Paris
Paganini Etudes: "La Campanella" 04/1898 Paris
La Leggierezza (Etudes de Concert No. 2) 03/1912 Paris
Polonaise in Eb 06/1920 Paris
Rêve d'Amour (Liebestrâume) 03/1898 Paris
Rhapsody No. 2 01/1908 Lille
Rhapsody No. 11 04/1898 Paris
Rhapsody No. 12 12/1908 Paris
Rhapsody No. 13 06/1924 Paris
Sonata in b minor 04/1910 Paris
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<td>Bach: Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen</td>
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| Faust symphonie, arr. for 2  | 03/1897  | Paris        |
| pianos (with Risler)         |          |              |
| Songs (selection), with Mme. | 03/1912  | Tours        |
| Speranza Calo                |          |              |

| Mannes, Leopold              | 06/1926  | Paris        |
| Suite for 2 pianos           |          |              |

| Massenet                    | 1902-03  |              |
| Songs, including "Pleurez,  |          |              |
| mes yeux," (with Litvinne)   |          |              |

| Mendelssohn                 | 02/1923  | (rec.) Vic.  |
| Scherzo, Op. 16, No. 12     |          |              |
| Rondo capriccioso, Op. 14    | 01/1919  | Boston       |
| 6 Songs Without Words       | 06/1920  | Paris        |
| from Songs Without Words    |          | U.S.         |
| Song Without Words, Op. 19  | 1937     | (rec.) HMV   |
| No. 1                       |          |              |
| Variations sérieuses        | 04/1898  | Paris        |

| Sonata No. 2 in D major,    | 05/1910  | Dijon        |
| Op. 58 for 'cello/pno.      |          |              |
| (with Casals)               |          |              |
| Trio Op. 49 in d minor (with| 06/1907  | Paris        |
| Thibaud and Casals)         |          |              |
Trio Op. 66 in c minor (with Thibaud, Casals) 05/1908 Paris

Móor, Emmanuel

Triple Concerto in d min., Op. 56 (with Thibaud, Casals, orch.) 02/1908 Paris

Trio, Op. 81 in c minor (with Thibaud, Casals) 05/1909

Mozart

Sonata A major, K. 331 06/1921? Paris

Mozart-Diémer

Overture to the Magic Flute, arr. 04/1898 Paris

*  *  *

Mozart

Concerto for 2 pianos, K. 365 (with Risler) 04/1898 Paris

Sonata in D major for 2 pianos (with Plante) 07/1907 Paris

Sonata in G maj. for vln./pno. [K. 296?], with Boucherit 12/1909 Tours

Trio, K. 542 in E major (with Thibaud, Casals) 06/1907 Paris

Trio, K. 564 in G major (with Thibaud, Casals) 05/1910 Paris

Mussorgsky

Pictures at an Exhibition 06/1926 Paris

*  *  *

Songs (selection), with Marie Olenine 1902 Paris

Song cycle: The Nursery (with Madeleine Grey) 02/1938 Paris

Song cycle: Songs and Dances of Death (with Elsa Gebranska) 11/1932 Paris
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<td>Variations en ut mineur, Op. 42</td>
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<td>Polish Songs (original Polish texts), with Maria Modrakowska</td>
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<td>Gaspard de la Nuit (acc. to A.C.)</td>
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Variations sur un thème de Beethoven for 2 pianos (with Diémer) 06/1914 Paris

Sakhnowsky
Song [?] with Marie de Wieniawska 05/1913 Paris

Samazeuilh, G.
Chant de la Mer
Naiades au Soir 05/1911 Paris

Schmitt, Florent
Quintette (with the Quatour Touche) 03/1914 Paris

Schubert
Impromptu in f minor [?], Op. 142 01/1937 Paris
Impromptu No. 3 in Bb major, Op. 142 01/1919 Boston
12 Ländler, Op. 171 06/1920 Paris
Sonata in a minor, D. 784 06/1920 Paris
"Wanderer" Fantasia in C major, D. 760 06/1920 Paris

Schubert-Liszt
Songs, transcribed (including Litanei) 03/1912 Le Havre

* * *

Schubert
Duo, Op. 162 (op. post.) in A major (with Thibaud) 04/1913 Paris
March for piano 4-hands (with Risler) 07/1897 Bayreuth
Die schöne Müllerin (with Marya Freund) 05/1914 Paris

Trio Op. 99 in B♭ major., D. 898 (with Thibaud, Casals) 06/1907 Paris
Schumann

Trio Op. 100 in $E_b$ maj., D. 929 (with Thibaud, Casals) 05/1910 Paris

Die Winterreise (with Marya Freund) 05/1914 Paris

Carnaval 01/1907 Le Havre

Concerto in a minor, Op. 54 01/1909 Paris

Davidsbündlertänze, Op. 6 05/1924 Paris

Etudes symphoniques (with études posthumes) in $C#$ minor, Op. 13 05/1913 Paris

Fantaisie in C maj., Op. 17 06/1920 Paris

Fantasiestücke, Op. 12 05/1924 Paris

Kinderszenen, Op. 15 03/1908 Lyons

Kreisleriana, Op. 16 06/1910 Paris

Papillons, Op. 2 05/1924? Paris

Vogel als prophet (from Waldszenen, Op. 82) 1948? (rec.) HMV

* * *

Andante et variations (1st version with 2 'celli and horn), with Planté 06/1907 Paris

Dichterliebe (with Marcella Pregi) 06/1898 Paris

Sonata No. 2, Op. 121 for violin/piano 12/1912 Le Havre
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<td>Trio Op. 63 din d minor (with Thibaud and Casals)</td>
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| Strauss, R.       | Etude "Pathétique", Op. 8 No. 12 (studied with composer according to A.C., p. 127) | 12/1922|(rec.)    
|                   | Burleske (studied with composer ? according to A.C., p. 127)                     |        | Vic. U.S.|
| Strauss, R.       | Lieder (with Mlle. Luquien)                                                      | 05/1914| Lille    |
| Stravinsky        | Petrouchka                                                                       | 06/1928| Paris    |
| Tailleferre, G.   | Concerto for 2 pianos/orch. (with Tailleferre)                                  | 06/1926| London   |
| Verdi-Liszt       | Rigoletto Paraphrase                                                             | 06/1920|(rec.)    
<p>|                   | La Mort d'Iseult from Tristan, transc. for piano solo                             | 04/1898| Paris    |
| Wagner            | Meistersinger Overture, arr.                                                      | 05/1913| Paris    |
|                   | La Mort d'Iseult (scene), with Litvinne                                          | 1902-03|          |</p>
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<td>Invitation à la Valse</td>
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<td>Rondo brillant in E♭ major, Op. 62</td>
<td>06/1920</td>
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<td>Sonata for violin/continuo (with Mme. Isnard)</td>
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Appendix IV

Alfred Cortot: Tentative Discography

This discography covers all the recordings of Cortot discussed in the study, plus as many others as could be located. It incorporates and in a few instances corrects information supplied in the very helpful discography compiled by Charles Timbrell (Piano Quarterly, Fall, 1984, pp. 29-31), adding details of Cortot's American recording projects compiled by a private record clearinghouse serving serious collectors, Immortal Performances (P.O. Box 8316, Austin, Texas 78712, 1977). A few pieces from the American Victor recording series (1919-1926) carry a number, plus the indication "not processed" or "not released." The prefix "B" indicates a 10" acoustic take, "C" a 12" acoustic; "BE" and "BVE" indicate 10" electric takes, "CE" and "CVE," 12" electric. In the case of pieces never issued, for which there were multiple takes, only the number of the last take is given: for example, CE 22503-23 identifies the twenty-third take of "La Campanella" Etude (12" electric, 1925). When several years are given for a work actually issued, this indicates that takes from various years were probably used in late pressings of a work that remained for a long time in the catalogue. No attempt has been made to inventory all Cortot's piano rolls. Rolls are listed only where no recorded version of the work exists, or where the recorded version has never been reissued on 33 LP. Original dates of piano rolls are approximate.

For each work, the number of the original issue is given first, then in the right-hand column, the number of one or more reissues. The records listed in the right-hand column are not necessarily currently available. In some instances they date back ten to fifteen years. The present state of the record industry is such that historical recordings are constantly being reissued, then withdrawn, sometimes after less than a year, and are often produced in very limited quantities. The listings are given mainly as a reference aid to those who have access to a record library or classical records dealer.
The following abbreviations have been used:

ac = acoustic 78 record (pre-1925)
ctp = cassette tape
pr = piano roll
tp = tape (original)
s = single-face
M = matrix was processed, but take was never issued
HMV = His Master's Voice (England), for which Cortot made the vast bulk of his recordings
VIC = Victor - United States. Victor numbers usually indicate the American issue of the HMV recording, but prior to 1925 they may identify original releases.
C = Cetra
DCRP = Discocorp
EMI-F = EMI - France, has reissued major portions of Cortot's recorded output in recent years.
EMI-G = EMI - Germany (Electrola)
EMI-I = EMI - Italy, primarily the Discoteca Classica and La Voce del Padrone Historical Archives series
EMI-J = EMI - Japan (Toshiba), especially the Great Recordings of the Century series, which contains much of Cortot's output, including some not otherwise available on 33 LP.
EV = Everest, which reissued some of the piano rolls on LP (Duo-Art collection)
FC = Fonit Cetra (Italy), Documents series
FID = Concert Artist/Fidelio Recordings (England)
G & T = Gramophone & Typewriter (Paris)
HMV-J = His Master's Voice - Japan
KLA = Klavier, which reissued piano rolls (Duo-Art and Ampico) on 33 LP.
PRL = Pearl Records (England), including Great Virtuosi of the Golden Age series
REP = Replica (Italy)
ROC = Rococo
SER = Seraphim

n.b.: full dates for recording sessions are given as follows: day/month/year (e.g., 04/03/25 is March 4, 1925). When the year only is given, it usually refers to the year issued.
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<td>No. 3 &quot;The Ring&quot; Op. 74, arr.</td>
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<td>Chants polonais No. 5 &quot;My Joys&quot;</td>
<td>28/01/19</td>
<td>VIC 64793s, VIC 562</td>
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24 Préludes, comp.

1) 1926 HMV DB 957/60, VIC M 20 (set) DCRP RR 317

*2) 4-15/07/33 HMV DB 2015/8, VIC M 282 (set) EMI-J GR 70026

3) 1943 HMV-Fr. W1541/4 FC DOC 28

4) 11/05/55 "live" in Munich EMI-J GR 70026

*Prélude, Op. 45 04/11/49 HMV DB 21018 DCRP RR 227?
Scherzo No. 2 ca. 1952 VIC SD 3110 EMI-J GR 70022
Scherzo No. 3 ca. 1952 VIC SD 3113 EMI-G C 047-01 400
Sonata No. 2

1) 1929 HMV DB 1250/1

*2) 4-15/07/33 HMV DB 2019/20

3) 1953 HMV-Fr. ALP 376

4) 1956, "live" in Munich EMI-G C 047-01 400

Sonata No. 3

1) 1931 HMV DA 1209/12

2) 4-15/07/33 HMV DA 1333/36 EMI-J GR 70022

Tarantella

1) ac 29/01/20, 1923 HMV DB 1767/8 SER 60241

27/02/23 VIC 649105, VIC 561

2) 1931 HMV DA 145

*3) 4-15/07/33 HMV DA 1213

4) ?/05/53 HMV DB 2032

14 Valses

*1) 18-21/06/34 HMV ALP 1197

2) Nos. 4, 7, 8, 9, 1943 HMV ALP 1197

11, 14 EMI-G C 047-01 400

?/05/33 HMV DA 4962/4

Nos. 1, 2, 3, 5 1943 SER 60127

6, 10, 12, 13 HMV-Fr. W 1603/5

COUPERIN-CORTOT

Concert dans le goûт théâtrale, 1933 HMV DB 1767/8
No. 8 (Cortot conducts Ecole Norm. orch.)

DEBUSSY

Children's Corner

1) ac 1923 HMV DB 678/9, 6725/6

2) 1929 HMV DB 1248/9 EMI-J GR 2155 (does)

3) 1947 HMV DB 6725/6 not identify perf.

12 Préludes, Book I

1) ?/05/31, 1947 HMV DB 1240/4 & EMI-J GR 70020

?/07/31 HMV DB 1593

12 Préludes, Book I

2) ca. 1947 HMV DB 9578/82, SER 60143 (Collines,

VIC 1920/4 6, Puck, not identify perf.)

MINstrels)
Preludes No. 8  08/01/19
(La Fille...) and 12 (Minstrels)
14 Songs (w/ Maggie Teyte)
Sonata vln/pno (w/ Thibaud)  1929
1937
HMV DB 1471/7, VIC M 322 (set)
RCA VIC LCT 1133
VIC DB 1322/3, VIC 8183/4
EMI-J GR 70010

FALLA
Ritual Fire Dance  21/03/25
VIC BVE 32135-2
not processed

FAURE
Berceuse (Dolly)  20/01/25
arr. solo pno.
Berceuse vln/pno (w/ Thibaud)  1931
VIC B 31678-2
not processed
HMV DB 1653, VIC M 165 (set)
EMI-F C 051-03719
EMI-J GR 2133

Romance sans paroles  28/12/22
Sonata vln/pno (w/ Thibaud)  1927
VIC B 27358-1
not processed
HMV DB 1080/2
EMI-F 143-5331
DCRP RR 528

FRANCK
Prélude, aria et finale
1)  1931
HMV DB 1695/7,
VIC M 163 (set)
EMI-F 2 C 061-01354
never released
VIC DB 1299/1300,
VIC 7331/2
EMI-F 2 C 061-01354

2)  1947
Prélude, choral et fugue
Variations symphoniques
(London Sym., L. Ronald, cond.)
1)  1927
HMV DB 1069/70,
VIC 6734/5
EMI-F 2 C 061-01354
VIC DB 2185/6,
VIC 8357/8
EMI-F 2 C 061-01354
HMV DB 1099/1102,
VIC M 38 (set)
DCRP (Ed. Media) RR 528

2) same  1934
Quintet (w/Mangeot 1927 & Int’l Qt.)
Sonata (vln/pno) (w/Thibaud)
1) ac  1929
HMV DB 785/8
EMI-F 143-5331
2)  1929
HMV DB 1347/50,
VIC M 81 (set)

GLUCK-BRAHMS
Gavotte  27-28/12/22
5-6/02/23
VIC B 27348-5
not released
GOUNOD

Sapho: Stances 1903  G. & T. (Red) 033000
Faust: Prière 1903  G. & T. (Red) 033001
(acc. Félicia Litvinne)

HÄNDEL

Harm. Blacksmith 27/10/26  (VIC 6752)
Var. (Suite No. 5)  HMV DB 1145

HAYDN

Trio in G maj., Op. 73 #2 (w/ Thibaud, Casals)
06/07/1927  HMV DA 895/6, EMI-F 2900583

LISZT

Au bord d'une source
1) ac 02/01/23  VIC 66213s, VIC 982 ROC 2040
2) pr ca. 1920-25  KL-110

La Campanella
09/01/19-21/03/25  not processed

La Leggierezza
Etude
1) ac 08/01/19 & 27/02/1923
2) 1931

Liebestraume No. 3 01/03/23
Hung. Rhapsody No. 2
1) ac 01/03/23  HMV DB 643
2) 27/12/26

Hung. Rhapsody No. 11
1) 27/10/26 & 27/12/26
2) pr ca. 1920-25

Légende: St. Fran- 1937
çois marchant sur
les flots
Sonata (pno.) 1929

HMV DB 1307/9, EMI-G C 047-01-148
HMV DB 13269, EMI-G C 047-01-148
MASSENET

Cid: pleurez mes yeux (acc. Félia Litvinne) 1903

G. & T. (Red) 33158
VIC 5111

MENDELSSOHN

Rondo capricc. 06/02/23 (Presto) ac
Scherzo 05/02/23 Op. 16 No. 12 ac
Song Without Words 1937 Op. 19 No. 1
Trio No. 1, d min. 18-19/11/28 & (w/Thibaud, Casals)
Variations Sérieuses
1) 1937
2) ?

EMI-J GR 70007
HMV DB 1072/5, VIC M 126 (set)
EMI-G C 049-01808
HMV DB 3266/7, VIC 15173/4
HMV DA 1994/5
HMV DB 1609, EMI-J GR 2211
HMV DB 1994/5

PURCELL

Air, Gavotte, Jig ? & Minuets

HMV DA 1609, EMI-J GR 2211

RAVEL

Concerto for l.h. 12/05/39 (Munch cond. Paris Conserv. orch.)
Jeux d'eau
1) ac 28/01/20
2) ?/05/31
Ondine (Gaspard) 06/04/25
Sonatine ?/05/31

HMV DB 3885/6, VIC M 629 (set)
HMV 74659s, VIC 6065
HMV DB 1533/4, VIC 7728/9
VIC CVE 32140-2 not processed
VIC 7728/9

EMI-J Gr 2112
SER 60143
SER 60143

RUBINSTEIN, Ant.

La nuit (acc. Félia Litvinne) 1903

G. & T. (Red) 23196

SAINT-SAËNS

Bourée for l.h. 01/03/25 Etude en forme de valse
1) 09/01/19
2) 19317
3) pr ca. 1920-25
Concerto No. 4 09/07/35 (Munch cond.)

VIC 66262s, VIC 1016
HMV DB 1535
HMV DB 2577/9
VIC M 367 (set)

VIC 74588s, VIC 6063
HMV DB 1535
EMI-J GR 2112
EV X-908
Samson et Dalila: Mon coeur s'ouvre 1903 G. & T. (Red) 33160
(acc. F. Litvinne)

**SCHUBERT**

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<td>Ländler, Op. 171</td>
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<td><strong>SCHUMANN</strong></td>
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<td>2) w/Souzay</td>
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<td>1903</td>
<td>G. &amp; T. (Red) 33182</td>
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*Papillons
Symphonic Etudes *1) 04/07/35 HMV DA 1442/43 (as above)
*2) 06/03/29 HMV DB 1325/27 EMI-J GR 70018
Trio in d, Op. 63 09/05/53 HMV ALP 1142 EMI-F C 153-03490/2
(w/Thibaud, Casals) 15,18/11/28 & HMV DB 1209/12 EMI-J GR 2128
03/12/28 VIC M 62 (set) EMI-F 2900583
*Vogel als Prophet
(Waldszenen) *1) 19/04/48 HMV DA 1901 EMI-F C 153-03490/2
*2) 08/05/53 HMV ALP 1197 EMI-J GR 2128

SCRIABIN
Etude Op. 8 No. 12 05/02/23 VIC 66214s KL-110
1) ac ca. 1920-25 VIC 982
2) ca. 1920-25

VERDI-LISZT
Rigoletto paraphrase 06/02/23 HMV DB 3261/2 EMI-J GR 2211
1) ac 01/03/23 VIC 74635s,
2) 27/12/26 VIC 6064

VIVALDI-W. F. BACH-CORTOT
Conc. in d, Op. 3 1936 HMV DB 3261/2 EMI-J GR 2211
No. 11 (fugue omitted)

WAGNER
Valkyrie: 1903 G. & T. (Red) 33163
Ho-jo-to-ho
Triistan: Mort 1903 G. & T. (Red) 33162
d'Iseult (acc. Litvinne)

WEBER
Invitation to 06/02/23 VIC 74798s, VIC 6064 Recital Records
the Dance (I grandi interpreti)
1) ac VIC 1201,
2) 28/12/26 HMV DA 855 IGI-339
Sonata in Ab 1941 VIC M 703 (set)
No. 2
Primary Sources
(includes works consulted)

Writings on Music and Teaching. Documents.


---------. "Allocation." (Address on the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Ecole Normale.) Le Monde Musical, 40, No. 7 (July 31, 1929).


---------. "Attitude de l'interprète." La Revue Internationale de Musique, No. 5-6 (April 1939), pp. 885-88.


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Elocution de M. Alfred Cortot." (Cortot's 1932 commencement address to the Ecole Normale faculty and students, stressing the school's commitment to high standards and outlining proposed changes in the examination requirements for teaching degree candidates.) Le Monde Musical, 43, No. 7 (July 31, 1932), p. 248.

"En Souvenir d'Edouard Risler." Le Monde Musical, 41, No. 6 (June 30, 1930), pp. [221]-222.


"Fauré et la Suisse." Feuilles Musicales de la Suisse Romande, No. 5 (special issue on Fauré), May-June 1954.


"Une lettre inédite de Chopin." La Revue Musicale, July 1934, pp. 81-82.


Letters to Edouard Risler. Four letters in Cortot's hand, to Risler; also one letter from Léa Cortot to Risler. All date from the period 1892-1896, and are unpublished. Risler family archives, courtesy of Antoinette Risler.
Letters to Maurice Emmanuel. Five unpublished letters written by Cortot to Emmanuel between 1919-1922. They concern mainly Cortot's prospective candidature for a seat on the Conseil Supérieur. Emmanuel family archives, courtesy of M. and Mme. Frank Emmanuel.


Personal professor's notebook. Unpublished Ms. notebook used by Cortot during his tenure at the Conservatoire. Lists répétitrices, prize winners, students/addresses for each year's class, examination repertoire for the second trimester, and participants in the year-end public competition. Covers 1907-1917, with some gaps in the war years. Courtesy of the Ecole Normale de Musique and Pierre Petit, Directeur artistique.

"Le petit piano." Le Courrier Musical, No. 11 (June 1, 1920), p. 175.


"Pour une graphologie musicale." In L'Exposition internationale de musique, Genève, mai-juin 1927 [catalogue]. Geneva: [Imprimerie S.A.D.A, 1927]. In this essay, Cortot conjectures that the autograph notation in a composer's musical drafts could tell us much about his intentions and state of mind at the time of the writing of the piece if we knew how to decipher all the subtle signs on the page.


Also: Principi razionali della tecnica pianistica, tr. Giuseppe Piccioli. This Italian edition is worth consulting for Piccioli's additional explanatory notes. Milano: Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, n.d. [ca. 1950].


"Les Suites pour violoncelle de J. S. Bach, édité par Diran Alexanian." (In his review, Cortot discusses Alexanian's commentaries, editing policies and new graphic notation.) Le Monde Musical, 41, No. 3 (March 31, 1930), p. 104.


---------..I)


Minor Writings.


---------..I)


---------..I)


Arrangements and Transcriptions.


Published separately: Arioso [Largo] from the Concerto in F minor, adapted for piano solo. Lausanne: Poetisch Frères, [1947?].


--------, transc. J. S. Bach, Toccata e fuga pour orgue en ré mineur. Transcription libre... par A. Cortot. Lausanne: Poetisch Frères; Boston: Schirmer, [ca. 1948].


--------, transc. Emmanuel Chabrier, 3 Valses romantiques for 2 pianos, 4 hands. Transcribed by A. Cortot for 1 piano, 4 hands. [Paris: 1899].

--------, arr. Frédéric Chopin, Concerto in f minor. Re-orchestration by A. Cortot. [Paris: ca. 1926?]. Score not located.


[--------, transc.?]. Maurice Ravel, Concerto pour la main gauche. Cortot asserted in 1938 that he had made an arrangement of this work for 1 piano, 2 hands (score not located).


--------, transc. Andrea Zani. Interprétation libre de la 7e Sonate pour violon et basse continuo, adapted for piano solo by A. Cortot. Milano: Ricordi, [ca. 1955].

Editions.

N. b.: Unless otherwise indicated, the Cortot editions listed below are annotated "study editions" (éditions de travail) published in Paris by Sénart-Salabert.

Cortot, Alfred, ed. Johannes Brahms, Due Rapsodie, Op. 79. Milano: Curci [ca. 1950]. Note: all Brahms works are published by Curci and are commented study editions with text in Italian, French and English.


Chopin, 3 Impromptus; Fantaisie-Impromptu. 1934.

Chopin, Mazurkas. 3 Vols. 1948.

Chopin, Nocturnes. 2 Vols. ca. 1943.


Chopin, Polonaises. 1939.


Chopin, Scherzos. 1938.

Chopin, Sonata No. 2 in b\textsuperscript{b} minor, Op. 35. 1930.

Chopin, Sonata No. 3 in b minor, Op. 58. 1930.


(Facsimile of autograph mss; interpretive commentary by A. Cortot, historical essay by Edouard Ganche.)

Paris: Dorbon ainé, [1932].

Chopin, Valses. 1938.


ed. César Franck, Preludio, aria e finale.

Milano: Curci, ca. 1950. Note: All Franck pieces are commented editions published by Curci, with text in Italian, French and English.

Franck, Preludio, corale e fuga. 1950.

Franck, Les Djinns, for piano and orchestra. Ed. A. Cortot, orchestral reduction for two pianos according to the composer's original score. [1950]. Score not located.


Liszt, Au bord d'une source. 1949.

Liszt, Ballade No. 2 in b minor. 1949.

Liszt, Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude (Harmonies poétiques et religieuses). 1949.
Liszt, 3 Caprices poetiques: 1) Il lamento. 2) La Leggierezza. 3) Un Sospiro. 1950.

Liszt, Consolations. 1949.

Liszt, 6 Etudes d'après Paganini. 1949.

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Liszt, Fantaisie et fugue [i.e., Präludium und Fuge] sur le nom de BACH. 1949.

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Liszt, Deux légendes: Légende No. 1: St. François d'Assise. La prédication aux oiseaux. Légende No. 2: St. François de Paule marchant sur les flots. 1949.

Liszt, Mephisto-Walzer. 1949.

Liszt, Deuxième Polonaise. 1949.

Liszt, Rapsodie espagnole. 1949.

Liszt, Rapsodie hongrois No. 2. 1949.

Rapsodie hongrois No. 6. 1949.

Rapsodie hongrois No. 9. 1949.

Rapsodie hongrois No. 10. 1949.

Rapsodie hongrois No. 11. 1949.

Rapsodie hongrois No. 12. 1949.

Rapsodie hongrois No. 13. 1949.

Liszt, Rêves d'amour [i.e., Liebestraüme], trois nocturnes. 1950.


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---------. "Pour une technique rationnelle." *Le Monde Musical,* 33, Nos. 1-2 (Jan. 31, 1922) and 3-4 (Feb. 28, 1922)


Conferencia. *Journal de l'Université des Annales.* Contains texts or summaries of ca. 30 lectures by Cortot from his series of commented concerts at the Université des Annales. B. N. 8° Z 17347 [No. 1, 12/15/1932 to No. 22, 11/01/39].

[Cortot, Alfred]. Dossier individuel de professeur. The Conservatoire's file on Cortot, containing official correspondence relative to his nomination, leave, resignation, etc. Archives Nationales. AJ37 68, Cortot.


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Feschotte, Jacques. "Figure contemporaine: Alfred Cortot." Article of unknown provenance [ca. 1955], courtesy of Antoinette Risler. May be consulted in the Archives écrites of the Institut National de l'Audiovisuel, Paris.


[----------]. Editorial on the repertoire prepared in the Conservatoire classes, compared to that taught in the 1890's. Le Monde Musical, 18, No. 11 (July-Aug. 1909), p. 164.


Philipp, Isidor. Complete School of Technique for the Pianoforte. Philadelphia: Presser, [ca. 1908].


[Professors' reports on their students, Conservatoire National]. Archives Nationales AJ37 301-302: Rapports des professeurs, Cortot. January 1908 - May 1913. See also the reports on Cortot by Decombes, Rougnon and Diémer (Rapports des professeurs AJ37 232-36, 245, 252, 290-95).


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