

Rules for Practicing

(excerpts — 1898)

by Ferruccio Busoni

“Always join technical practice with the study of the interpretation; the difficulty often does not lie in the notes, but in the dynamic shading prescribed.”

“Never be carried away by temperament, for that dissipates strength, and where it occurs there will always be a blemish, like a dirty spot which can never be washed out of a material.”

“Don’t set your mind on overcoming the difficulties in pieces which have been unsuccessful because you have previously practiced them badly; it is generally a

useless task. But if meanwhile you have quite changed your way of playing, then begin the study of the old piece from the beginning, as if you did not know it.”

“Study everything as if there were nothing more difficult; try to interpret studies for the young from the standpoint of the virtuoso; you will be astonished to find how difficult it is to play a [simple piece].”

“Attend to your technical apparatus so that you are prepared and armed for every possible event; then, when you

study a new piece, you can turn all your power to the intellectual content; you will not be held up by the technical problems.”

“Never play carelessly, even when there is nobody listening, or the occasion seems unimportant.”

“Never leave a passage which has been unsuccessful without repeating it; if you cannot do it in the presence of others, then do it subsequently.”

“If possible, allow no day to pass without touching your [instrument].” †