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Old and New: The Revolution of French School of Piano Playing from the Eighteenth to Twentieth Century

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Abstract

The so-called "French piano school" in the twenty-first century is rarely discussed and pointed out specifically. This goes the same way as Russian schools or German schools, for they have been mixed and influenced by one another as artists were easily and internationally connected in the twentieth century. As Jean-Philippe Collard (1948, France) said in his 1986 interview: "*Today all the so-called schools have combined--the Russian, the French, the German, the Japanese, or what have you.*" (Timbrell, 225). However, it is important to know about their existence, for we would find out versatile techniques, artistry, and sound of the repertoires we learn. Based on qualitative research through books, journals, and articles, the author will discuss about the French school: how it began from the time of Rameau and Couperin, enjoyed its celebrated *jeu perlé* technique, and then slowly renewed itself toward the new international way of piano playing. The purpose of this writing is to have a new insight into applying various ways of practicing to find the perfect sound to our ears, with respect to French composers and their music.

Keywords: French school; pianism; piano technique

Old and New: Mengupas Revolusi Pendidikan Piano Perancis sepanjang Abad Delapan Belas hingga Abad Dua Puluh

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Abstrak

Teknik permainan piano Perancis kini tidak lagi banyak disebut dan dipelajari secara spesifik, begitu pula dengan teknik Rusia atau teknik Jerman. Hal ini dikarenakan pendidikan piano klasik dari masing-masing negara telah mempengaruhi dan melengkapi satu sama lain, akibat dari terbukanya hubungan internasional di abad ke-20 yang memudahkan pertukaran tradisi. Seperti dikutip oleh pianis Perancis Jean-Philippe Collard (1948): "*Today all the so-called schools have combined--the Russian, the French, the German, the Japanese, or what have you.*" (Timbrell, 225). Namun demikian, penting bagi kita untuk mengetahui keberadaan mereka serta menemukan pengaruhnya dalam teknik dan interpretasi akan karya-karya musik yang kita mainkan. Melalui studi literatur, penulis akan mengupas tentang tradisi pendidikan piano di Perancis: dari teknik *harpsichord* ajaran Rameau dan Couperin, pengaplikasian *jeu perlé* yang menjadi keunikan pianisme Perancis, hingga akhirnya berubah menjadi pendidikan piano internasional yang membaur dengan negara lain. Para pianis diharapkan untuk mendapat wawasan dan juga cara-cara baru dalam memahami serta mempelajari karya musik Perancis.

Kata Kunci: pianisme, pendidikan piano, musik Perancis

Introduction: French Characteristics and Preference

The French school of piano playing has a long history, arguably starting from 1795 when Paris Conservatory was first established. French pianists in the twenty-first century call the type of playing from then until around the 1960s as 'the Old School', where renowned pianists practiced the art of finger technique to their pupils, promoting lightness, precision, and articulated sound as the characteristics of French music. How it differed from the other schools has been written in other writings, to show how the French pianists produce clarity and transparency of sound by focusing on finger technique, compared to Russian pianists whose playing emphasizes the use of arms to produce dramatic, orchestral sound (Wilson, 2018).

Before we enter the discussion about the technical aspect of piano playing, it is important to know the musical characteristic, of how the ideal sound would be, especially in the ears of its native musicians. An important characteristic is a conciseness, which is to describe how clear, direct, and moderate use of expression in playing French piano music. According to Pierre Bernac (1899-1979), a baritone and close associate of Francis Poulenc, French composers never give way to sentimentality. They avoid any emphasis and overstatement of emotion and suggest the interpreters to have a sense of moderation in expression as well. Composer Claude Debussy (1862-1918) quoted about this characteristic:

> "For too long French music has been following paths that led away from the clarity of expression and conciseness and precision of form that are the very particular qualities of French genius." (Timbrell, p. 252)

This clarity of expression quoted by Debussy is supported by pianist E. Robert Schmitz (1889-1949) who stated that French love for exactness differs from the German: it is more logical, clearer, and easier to understand. Another supporting statement comes from a prominent figure in the Old French School, pianist Marguerite Long (1874-1966) who described French music as "*lucid, precise, and slender. It concentrates above all on grace rather than force.*"(Timbrell, 251). The clarity and precision found in French compositions influenced the technical aspect of its piano playing. If the Germans and Russians use more weight and arms, it is because their music demands it. The French can avoid heaviness in physical movement because of the concise nature of the music.

As the pianist's technique adapts to the physiology of the instrument he uses, we need to take into consideration what instruments were used by French pianists. In the eighteenth century, when early pianoforte was popular in other countries in Europe, the euphoria was not

the same in France. People were still in favor for *clavecin* (French for harpsichord) compared to the pianofortes used in the public concerts, which were German and English imports. The harpsichord was a "kettle-maker's instrument" according to notable writer Voltaire (1694-1778), whereas composer and harpsichordist Claude Balbastre (1724-1799) mentioned that the new pianos would never dethrone the majestic harpsichord.

Only in 1777, when harpsichord maker Sébastien Érard decided to make a really oblong or square piano for the Duchesse de Villeroy. It was played during her evening gathering, and people acclaimed it as the finest piano of its time. Érard reached success, who then opened a London branch then returned to Paris in 1796 to build his first grand piano. Entering the nineteenth century, the Érard's pianos were famous for their double escapement action, where the struck hammer remained close to the string until the finger released the key completely. This resulted in lighter touch compared to earlier grand pianos, moreover, it also gave the player great control for dynamics.

The other big name, a competitor of Érard, was the Pleyel family: father Ignace Pleyel who opened the store in 1807 and passed it on to his son Camille. The Pleyel's pianos have a more delicate, subtle, and mellow sound compared to Érards' with their bright treble and warm bass. The description of both pianos is best quoted by Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849):

> "When I feel out of sorts, I play on an Érard piano, when I easily find a ready-made tone. But when I feel in good form and strong enough to find my own individual sound, then I need a Pleyel piano." (Timbrell, 25).

Both companies had their own concert halls, namely Salle Érard and Salle Pleyel where they could show how great their instruments sounded when played by famous pianists. Performers and composers naturally developed a preference toward one of the competitors. Louise Farrenc (1804-1875), Henri Bertini (1798-1876), and Franz Liszt (1811-1886) were among others who preferred the Érard's pianos, while Chopin, Ferdinand Hiller (1811-1885) and Friedrich Kalkbrenner (1785-1849) preferred the subtler sound of the Pleyel's pianos. The connection between piano manufacturers and important musicians at that time affected the public taste, compositions, and the development of the French piano technique. Apart from their difference in the term of sound production, both Érard's and Pleyel's pianos have light and fast actions which make them effective in playing rapid notes. They also make excellent clarity in the articulation because of the rapid disappearance of sound, especially in large bass chords. These

characteristics: clarity for lively tempos, precision, and delicacy in sound have been the fondness of French composers and performers for centuries and are in line with conciseness which was discussed earlier. It is not surprising that French instruments are in greater favor than pianos from other countries. The exclusive, *made-in-France* sound was reflected as well in the educational situation, even in the repertoires they played. With this, the history of French piano playing started to nurture itself in the hands of teachers and their students, at Paris Conservatory.

Approach of Discussion

This journal is written using a qualitative method, through literature study. Three main books used are *French Pianism: A Historical Approach* by Charless Timbrell, *The Great Pianists* by Harold C. Schonberg, and *The History of Western Music* by J. Peter Burkholder, Donald J. Grout, and Claude V Palisca. Through these books, the writer focuses on the historical investigation of piano education in France, musical styles and characteristics, as well as the life of pianists in France from the eighteenth to twentieth century.

Furthermore, articles and journals are used to support information about the comparison of national schools of piano playing; also interviews with French renowned performers and teachers throughout the nineteenth to the twentieth century.

Discussion

Paris was becoming the center of the artistic life of the world after Napoleon's renunciation of the throne in 1815. Foreign artists, musicians, and writers went to the city searching for creativity and individuality. Numerous orchestras, concert halls, theaters, and societies were established and the greatest pianists who were active in the nineteenth century had performed, studied, or became teachers there including Frédéric Chopin, Franz Liszt, Henri Bertini, Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847), Clara Schumann (1819-1896), Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921), Arthur Rubinstein (1887-1982) among others. Among French pianists, a style of pianism was developed at the Paris Conservatory, one of the oldest music conservatories in the world. It opened in 1795 for piano and harpsichord instruments, but three years later the harpsichord professors switched to piano teaching. The harpsichord technique was sufficient and still widely used, at least until 1821 when the double escapement was patented by Érard.

This method of keyboard playing had been written in various books and writings. François Couperin (1668-1733) wrote *L'art de toucher le clavecin* in 1717, emphasizing players to hold the fingers as close to the keys as possible, and always maintain the suppleness and great freedom of the fingers. Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764) was more explicit in saying:

> "The wrist must always be supple. This suppleness, which spread to fingers, give them freedom; and the **hand, lifeless, only serving to guide the fingers**.. A large gesture of the hand must occur only when a smaller one is not sufficient." (Timbrell, 36)

From the time of Rameau and Couperin in the eighteenth century until the teaching of Marguerite Long (1874-1966) in the Conservatory, the French pianists had been practicing the pure finger technique more than in any other country. We will look further into the playing and teaching of important names in the French musical world through its leading figures.

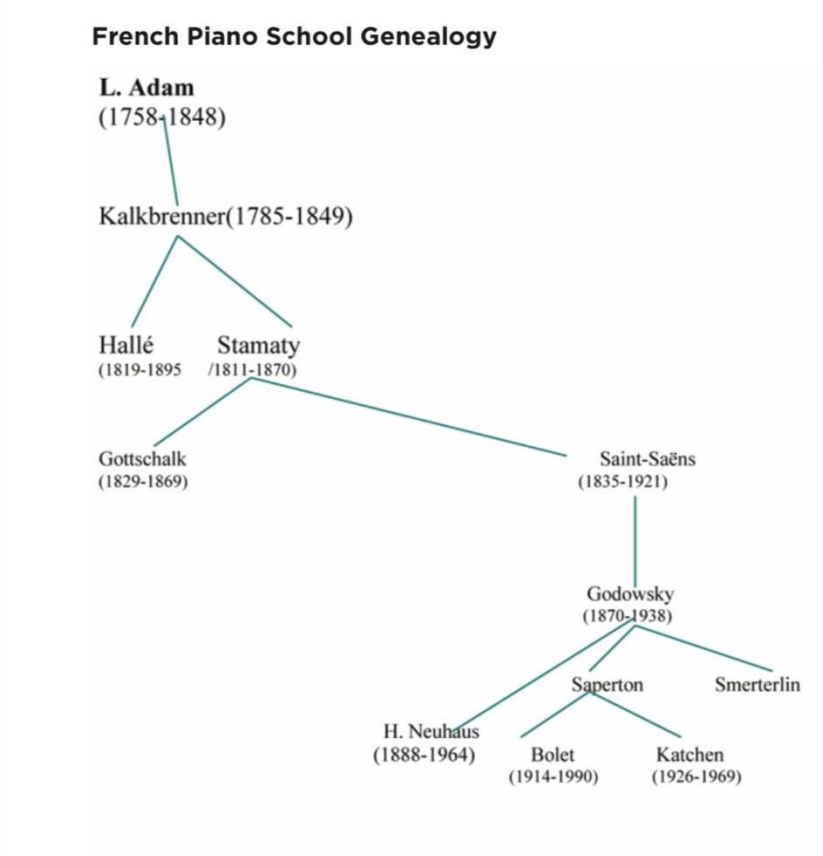


Fig.1 Louis Adam and his contemporaries (Lourenço, 2010)

It started with **Louis Adam** (1758-1848, France). Adam was one of the first professors at the Conservatory with notable students Friedrich Kalkbrenner and Henri Lemoine. Largely self-taught, he wrote a piano method in 1798 with the main goals of good finger habits, and the development of strength, precision, and lightness. These would be achieved by practicing scales in single and double notes, study in octaves, chords, and exercises using held notes. The tone should be drawn out by finger pressure only, while the arm remains motionless. His second method written in 1804 went further about different exercises using fingers only and was used in the Conservatoires for some years.

Friedrich Kalkbrenner (1785-1849, Germany) who was considered as most important pianist in Paris before Liszt and Chopin, was concerned with all finger technique like his teacher Adam. The widest variety of expression, touch, and tone production must be achieved by fingers only. He developed a *carezzando* touch or 'caressing the keys'. Chopin was known for admiring the playing of Kalkbrenner, and Debussy was an admirer of Chopin. Later on, Debussy was known for his *carezzando* touch in which the fingers are drawn softly from the middle to the edge of keys, producing a delicate 'from far away' sound. From Kalkbrenner we can trace the typical French style of rapid, bright, clean, even notes like pearls on a necklace, known as *jeu perlé*. This style was widely used by later pianists like Marguerite Long, Isidor Philipp, Camille Saint-Saëns, and their students.

Camille Stamaty (1811-1870, France) was the protégé of Kalkbrenner and became a popular teacher in Paris, in which one of his students was Camille Saint-Saëns who was immensely celebrated as a pianist and composer in France. Stamaty believed in the work of finger exercise, with various rhythm exercises, the use of the metronome, and fixed position of the hand and arm. His student, Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921) was an influential performer and composer of French late nineteenth century, despite having only a few numbers of students. His works require the Old French's finger and wrist technique, as seen in his Études op.111, piano concertos, and African fantasy. His own live performances and recordings reflected clean, precise, rapid notes in minimal pedaling, and a rather thin-sounding (Timbrell, 53).

Ignaz Moscheles (1794-1870, Prague) was one of the first foreign composers who came to Paris. In 1820 he impressed the public in Paris, who remembered his pearly touch, thin pedaling, and restricted arm movement. As a composer, his music was played and taught by Chopin and Liszt for two decades and his Études are still played widely today. His playing and composition reflected the focus on finger technique, making him closer to the older tradition of

French piano playing. One of his students became a popular teacher and performer: **Henri Herz** (1803-1888, Austria). Known as a composer, pianist, and popular teacher, Herz graduated from Conservatory at age fifteen. His playing style was full pearly finger technique, rapid tempo, highly developed wrist, and a shallow tone. A critic wrote that he played perfection of grace, delicacy, lightness, equality, rapid and precise, yet not any of it seems to arouse the heart of his listeners. Nevertheless, he had a long list of students, sometimes had to schedule his lessons from six in the morning, and some of his students became important pedagogues and performers. His obsession with finger technique included the use of *Dactylion*, a device in which each finger is inserted into rings attached to springs that lifted them high. This will result in strengthening the fingers.

In the next figure, we are going to see a wider branch of teachers and students who passed on their traditions for almost 100 years. A few major names will be discussed, such as the ones who had big numbers of students like Pierre Zimmermann and Louis Diémer. We will see that from the class of Diémer, some of them began to have other ideals of technique and sound which was turning away from the Old French School.

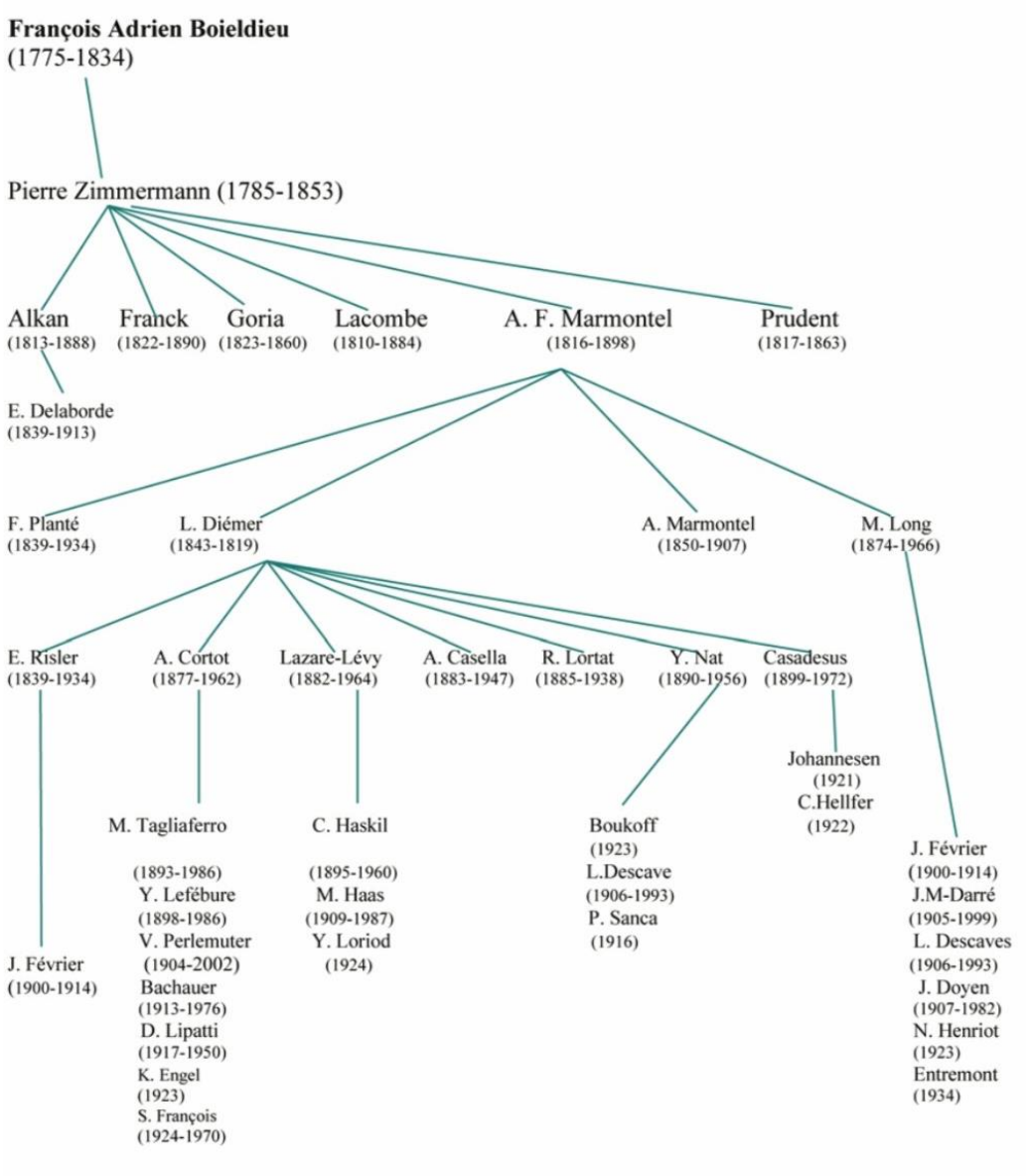


Fig 2. Boieldieu and his contemporaries (Lourenço, 2010)

As a student of Françoise-Adrien Boieldieu, **Pierre Zimmermann** (1785-1853, France) was one of the first professors at the Conservatory. Zimmermann was considered as the great-grandfather of the French school. His teaching reached a bigger circle than Louis Adam, thus he was successful in preserving the old school for the next two generations: from his graduation year in 1800, through his student Antoine-Françoise Marmontel (1816-1898) who passed on to Louis Diémer and Marguerite Long, each of whom had a big number of students.

As we can see from the figure above, Zimmermann was like the great-grandfather, Antoine Marmontel was the grandfather, and **Louis Diémer** (1843-1919, France) was the father. Being a teacher at the Conservatory for more than 30 years, he had a distinguished class including Robert and Gaby Casadesus, Alfredo Casella, Alfred Cortot, Lazare-Lévy, Yves Nat, Édouard Risler, Élie Robert Schmitz among others. Diémer was a champion in piano and harpsichord as a performer, with a dry tone, light and rapid passages, and octaves from the wrist similar to the approach of Saint-Saëns. Unfortunately, as a teacher, he did not offer interesting new horizons, nor solutions or advice on problems. Most of the students' names above turned out to be pianists welcoming the new French school with the use of a broader repertoire and much more than just finger technique.

Between 1900 and 1940 there were four leading artists, whose careers as performers and teachers made a big number of students sought after them. Isidor Philipp (1863-1958, Budapest) and Marguerite Long (1874-1966, France) were probably the last two major artists who strongly represented the Old French School. The other two, Alfred Cortot (1877-1962, Switzerland) and Lazare-Lévy (1882-1964, Brussel) were the ones breaking through the long tradition with their new influence. **Isidor Philipp's** teaching was a descendant of Chopin (through Georges Mathias) and Pierre Zimmermann (through Théodore Ritter). From the interview of his students, Philipp's teaching was about velocity, sobriety of expression, and *jeu perlé* style. Octaves were taught from the wrist, the arm being motionless, never a wrong note, clear articulations, careful pedaling, and finger exercises. He was in line with Marguerite Long in the old French school, although his students claimed that they had a huge amount of repertoire, sometimes assigned the whole Chopin preludes "for next week's lesson" and Tchaikovsky First Piano Concerto in two weeks.

"*One could not play with better fingers, more clarity and taste*." (Timbrell, 91) was a famous review to describe the playing of **Marguerite Long**. Madam Long, as her pupils addressed her, was a professor at Paris Conservatory for 34 years long while maintaining an active concert career. She then established her own school, École Marguerite Long-Jacques Thibaud where she took her former students as assistants. Therefore, she took a responsibility to nurture the Old French School to one generation, where in any month during the 1950s there were 500 pianists claimed to be the student of Madam Long. To her pupils and herself, she dedicated a routine of Hanon, Clementi, Pischna, and Czerny finger exercises in which everything needs to be memorized. While practicing them slowly, each finger was to be stroked highly from above, while the opposite is true: put every finger as close to the keys as possible when playing fast. From the

interview with Madam Long's pupils, some revealed that she was the perfect example of executing *jeu perlé* technique; that she emphasized on clarity of sound, which was brilliant for playing Mozart but unfortunately had no power. The teaching of Madam Long was the opposite of the Russian technique in which it has no weight and could not produce a grandiose sound. She had great respect for the score and encouraged the students to pay attention to pedal, phrasing, and dynamics, but with emphasis on clarity, thus technical refinement was essential in her lessons.

Before we discuss the teaching of Cortot and Lazare-Lévy, it is important to know that there were other figures earlier who also did not follow the old French tradition. They especially came from abroad to taste the musical life in Paris. First, we have **Franz Liszt** (1811-1886, Hungary). Despite the big talent and virtuosity shown at a young age, Liszt was rejected to enter the Paris Conservatory at age 12 because it opened its door only to French citizens. He stayed in the city anyway and achieved great success as a concert pianist, composer, and teacher through his own strive, talent, and hard work. 24 years of living in Paris brought him a large class with many faithful students, from whom we know that Liszt did not adopt the pure finger technique as mostly his fellow French colleagues.

Another major figure was **Frédéric Chopin** (1810-1849, Poland), who was 21 years old when he came to Paris and already showed maturity in his piano playing. Other than the two sets of Etudes Opus 10 and Opus 25, he intended to publish another piano method but unfortunately did not finish it. Surviving sketches were found, showing different technical exercises which involve the hand, wrist, forearm, and upper arm. He emphasized that each of the fingers has its own characteristic, therefore a pianist needs not to make them sound equal. By this, we know that Chopin's teaching did not follow the trend of pure finger technique in the French musical education system. One of his successful students was Émile Decombes, who later became a teacher to Cortot.

Alfred Cortot did not adopt the pure finger technique in his teaching despite his study with his other prominent teacher from Old School, Louis Diémer. He had a chance to train in Germany where he learned another perspective of piano playing than what he knew in his country. When he became a teacher, that was the beginning of Old French School's decline. "*Find the right gesture and the passage will play itself.*" (Timbrell, 112) was his principle to achieve a beautifully desired sound. He could not care less about using only fingers or minimal use of arm and wrist, as it would produce a transparent sound. Cortot loved to use the generous pedal for a

thicker sound, much against the typical Old French School playing with its spare pedal to focus on the clarity of articulation. According to his student Vlado Perlemuter, Cortot's playing was close to the keys, not over-articulated as some other French pianists at that time. He could play as brilliantly as Saint-Saëns with perfect technical execution, but his interest was interpretation, and he was a true poet. In fact, he did not talk much about technique, for he had more than just one kind of technique. His students were constantly asked: "What is the *character* of this piece?" (Timbrell, 104). Cortot went beyond the study of good fingers and rhythm and opened new ways of thinking to the French young generation of pianists at that time. He was a professor at the Conservatory from 1907 until 1923, then established the prestigious École Normale de Musique de Paris, a more well-rounded music institution compared to the performance-focused at the Paris Conservatory.

When Cortot resigned from the Conservatory in 1923, **Lazare-Lévy** succeeded the position until 1953. Also a student of Diémer like Cortot, his teaching did not pass on the harpsichord technique but rather used the whole body. The pearled style of playing was never discussed, but rather he implemented the use of arm weight, the fingers not too curved, expressive sound, drilled with Brahms exercises. Monique Haas, his notable student mentioned how he helped the musical life by changing the Old French School of playing.

Another graduate of Diémer's class was **Yves Nat** (1890-1956, France). He was best known for the interpretation of not French repertoire, but of Beethoven and Schumann. In fact, he was the first French pianist who recorded complete Beethoven's 32 sonatas. In his years at the Conservatory, Nat worked together with his assistant Lucette Descaves who a had different approach to teaching. The students worked on Czerny etudes, Chopin, and other finger exercises with Descaves, then polished the pieces with Nat in terms of sound and interpretation, often using orchestration for the student's imagination. According to Jean-Bernard Pommier (b.1944) who studied with Nat, the physical approach was different from the Old School. He rather preferred weight on the articulation, deep into the keys, and making a *parlando* (singing, expressive) sound.

Pierre Sancan (1916-2008, France) continued the position of Yves Nat at the Conservatory, where his students rose to be major artists in the musical world today, including Michel Béroff, Jean-Philippe Collard, Abdel Rachman El Bacha, Jacques Rouvier, and Jean-Bernard Pommier. Sancan spent the amount of time observing the physiology of pianists. He did experiments, talked with doctors, studied the diagram and function of muscles and their X-rays,

and also got insight from the Russian perspective of technique. He believed in the use of the whole body to play the instrument, not just fingers. He practiced the slow tempos and smooth movement, without high articulation nor dotted rhythm exercises as many other teachers used. When teaching, he observed that in nine out of ten students, there must be something wrong with their bodies whenever they made a wrong note. He then invented personal exercises and solutions for each student. As Jean-Philippe Collard (b.1948, France) said: *"Pierre Sancan was undoubtedly the person most responsible for killing off the old French school!"* (Timbrell, 225)

Not all names of artist-teachers between the eighteenth to twentieth centuries had the opportunity to be discussed in this chapter. The writer includes major figures with influential teaching and a long branch of students, whose articles and interviews could be taken for this journal. Younger French pianists mentioned here (Beroff, Collard, Pommier, El Bacha, Grimaud) and possibly many others today have studied under more than one name as their teachers, either having two major professors or teacher-and-assistant with two different approaches of teaching, thus what they have today is a mixture of what Boris Berman (b.1948) said as "cross-fertilization of traditions".

Pianists who represent the old French school	**Pianists with other ideals than the old French school**
Louis Adam (1758-1848)	
Françoise-Adrien Boieldieu (1775-1834)	
Friedrich Kalkbrenner (1785-1849)	
Pierre Zimmermann (1785-1853)	
Ignaz Moscheles (1794-1870)	Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)
Camille Stamaty (1811-1870)	Franz Liszt (1811-1886)
Henri Herz (1803-1888)	
Antoine-Françoise Marmontel (1816-1898)	
Louis Diémer (1843-1919)	
Isidor Phillip (1863-1958)	
Marguerite Long (1874-1966)	Alfred Cortot (1877-1962)
	Lazare-Lévy (1882-1964)
	Yves Nat (1890-1956)
	Pierre Sancan (1916-2008)

Table 1. Pianists active as performer and teacher from the eighteenth to twentieth century

Since the 1960s, the French school has been mixed with other national schools, as Collard said in his 1986 interview: "*Today all the so-called schools have combined--the Russian, the French, the German, the Japanese, or what have you.*" (Timbrell, 225). Pianist Grigory Sokolov (b.1950, Russia) does not even believe in such "schools" because each pianist is unique. Two Russian pianists studying with the same teacher can develop into very different personalities and therefore cannot simply belong to the 'Russian piano school'. Boris Berman pointed out the existence of the schools, in which the Russians favored the "in" approach (more *sostenuto*) while the French and German preferred the "out" approach (more *leggiero*). However, Berman went on to say that these national schools are left untouched now, and the technique we use is the result of our musical taste and ideals. Pianists who were studying in France from the second half of the nineteenth century had developed a way of playing influenced by multiple teachings, grown from their teachers and previous teachers from different generations, such as celebrated pianist Hélène Grimaud (b.1969, France) who studied with Jacqueline Courtin (quintessentially French with focused on finger technique) and Jacques Rouvier (b.1947) with his much more than just finger technique that he got from his previous teachers Vlado Perlemuter and Pierre Sancan.

Conclusion

The Old French School could be kept for a long time because of the nation's preference, from the time of Louis Adam at the beginning of the nineteenth century until Marguerite Long and her students circa the 1960s. The reasons are:

1. The limited exposure to foreign teaching influence in the educational system, by admitting only French citizens as teachers and students.
2. The dominant performance of French repertoire in the big concert hall, while other nationalities' compositions were performed in salons and private concerts.
3. Its love for keeping French musical traits such as clarity, precision, and conciseness in the way of playing, resulting in:
4. The almost exclusive use of pianos by French manufacturers with their delicate character, therefore it was natural to apply the pure finger technique. One particular event to describe this is when Arthur Rubinstein made his Paris debut in 1904, and he had trouble in finding a piano to suit his musical taste because there was not any piano that did not sound tiny or weak.

Major pianists who taught and performed in France like Liszt, Chopin, and Rubinstein also French big names Cortot, Planté, Lazare-Lévy tried to implement their knowledge to students. Their teaching was breaking away from the pure finger technique way of playing and it surely had an impact on the musical circle in France, but not until the postwar period that the Old French School finally declined. The decline does not mean that it disappeared, but rather complimented the other way of playing. The "new French school", although we do not know when it started exactly, presented a more complete, rounded, broader philosophy of playing which involve the use of fingers, forearm, upper arm, shoulder in the technique, variety of pedaling, and naturally a wider selection of piano repertoire.

From the late twentieth century until our time, the French, Russian, or German school is rarely spoken. We rather adjust the technique and sound according to the repertoire: it does not make sense to practice Rachmaninoff with the same exercise as to play Debussy, for example. For those who have a softness for French repertoire like me, it is helpful to know the taste, opinion, and history of its piano playing in order to form an ideal sound that matches out taste and tradition, and to be able to apply historically informed performance. Similar to a player of Baroque music who prefer a harpsichord, or to play Mozart in a fortepiano, we then face two

options: to play in an authentic instrument with naturally less effort in applying pure finger technique, or to play in the more commonly available pianos with various techniques adapted to match the authentic sound.

As much as the Old French School was avoided because of its limited range of techniques, I think that French pianism today would not be suitable to their taste without it. Old school, new school, versatile techniques, characteristics, and preferences are needed to gain a rich sound in our international repertoire. For that reason, exercises like Czerny, Hanon, Pischna, scales, and arpeggios are still learned today to complete our capacity as pianists in this modern time.

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