

Enrique Granados: Celebrating 150 years

The teaching of Enrique Granados

by Donald Alfano

In addition to being a great composer, Enrique Granados was also a dedicated and innovative teacher whose pedagogical approach has been explored only recently. Many of his ideas were not published during his lifetime, but rather entered into his diaries, passed on to his pupils verbally, and annotated on scores. Many of his pedagogical works were, in fact, published for the first time in 2001 by Editorial de Música Boileau in Barcelona under the direction of Granados's "grand pupil," Alicia de Larrocha, with documentation by Douglas Riva. Prior to this publication, Granados's published music contained numerous inaccuracies.

In 1901, Granados founded an academy in Barcelona. The academy still exists, is a center for teaching, and contributes immensely to the city's artistic community. Many notable musicians such as Alfred Cortot, Artur Schnabel, Emil von Sauer, Manuel de Falla, and Wanda Landowska visited and performed there. In order to create well-rounded musicians, the academy offered not only piano, but also other subjects such as solfège, music history, and other literature courses. In terms of piano technique, Granados's teaching is said to be revolutionary in that his approach was more holistic and because he incorporated the entire mechanism where the fingers, hand, and arm worked as a unit. Like Deppe and Matthay, he rejected the finger isolation practices that were popular with many pedagogues, believing that they were counterproductive and potentially injurious. Moreover, the straining of the fingers in execution could often lead to a brittle tone, which was the opposite effect the Catalán School wished to cultivate and not appropriate for this repertoire.

Granados believed that, regardless of talent, all students could learn to play the piano if they submitted to his method. He stated, "I cannot be responsible for

the talent of my students, but if they work as they should, I am responsible for their technique."¹ It is interesting to note that Granados did not necessarily assign the most demanding works of the literature to illustrate his principles. These principles included variety and beauty of tone, adherence to rhythm, and subtle pedaling, and Granados felt that works such as the Schubert Impromptus and other shorter works yielded the best results.

Although Granados did promote the use of the entire mechanism in piano playing, it would be a mistake to assume that he neglected the role the fingers had in piano playing. In his 1905 treatise *The Piano*, the five-finger patterns he assigned move sequentially from the most basic to the more complex. The five-finger patterns were done under supervision so that the student did them with ease and without stiffness. Granados indicates that they should be played hands alone first and loudly with the metronome, quarter note=80, and then hands together, also loudly, with the metronome at the same speed. He then gives a more complicated pattern in sixteenth notes to be



played very softly with the metronome also at the same rate.

Example 1: Five-finger pattern exercise by Enrique Granados.



The patterns were preparatory to scale study, which he also believed should be learned hands separately at first. These, in turn, were essential to playing a perfect *legato*, a priority of the great composer. In addition to the five-finger patterns, Granados devoted a section to developing the fourth and fifth fingers, progressing from simple to more complex patterns. Example 2 is to be played in all keys and loudly. These were also to be done in sixteenth notes like the five-finger patterns above.

Example 2: Five-finger exercise for the fourth and fifth fingers, by Enrique Granados.



Granados's work as a pedagogue was all encompassing, and he presented lectures on various aspects of music. In a 1913 lecture, Granados spoke about the relationship of rhythm to other movements of nature: "There are numerous examples of rhythm in nature; the uniform pattern of a swan swimming also displays a case of rhythm with two movements. The flight of birds with its uniformity. The movements of oars on a rowing boat. The series of columns in a line and the oscillations of a pendulum."²

In his lecture on expressive technique he indicates: "The building blocks of correct expression are energy, gentleness, grace, fluency, etc... To achieve energy we will need the effects of rhythm, *staccato* (withdrawal *staccato* which is short, taking away the hand quickly, and hammer *staccato* which requires force, applied quickly). To achieve gentleness, we will use *legato* and gradations of sound, and to achieve grace and fluency we will use combinations of *piano*, *staccato*, and *legato*."³ Granados also supplemented his lectures with drawings and visual images.

The most significant feature of Granados's artistry as a pianist and teacher is the emphasis he placed on pedaling. As Ernest Schelling (1876-1939), the American pianist and conductor, observed while trying to play

"Coloquio en la Reja" from Granados's *Goyescas*: "I heard him [Granados] play it many times and tried to reproduce the effects he achieved. After many failures, I discovered that his ravishing results at the keyboard were all a matter of the pedal."⁴

Pedaling was a branch of piano technique that was left to instinct, not regularly examined, and often included only basic up and down movements. As Alicia de Larrocha expressed, "The pedaling of the Catalán school itself was not so unusual, but that Granados and his followers were the first to put so much emphasis on the pedal, its sound potential, and its pedagogical aspects."⁵

In *Theoretical-Practical Method for the use of The Pedals* (1905), Granados offers a systematic approach to the proper use and understanding of the pedals. He begins by dividing notation into real and imaginary values to coordinate the application and release of the pedal.

Example 3: Real and imaginary note values coordinated with the pedal, by Enrique Granados.



Granados labeled groups of notes as real, imaginary, or mixed. Mixed groups are those that are made up of notes of different rhythmic values. Real note values are simply notated with the conventional pedal signs [*] below the first note indicating that the foot is to be lifted; followed by the *Ped.* marking, indicating the pedal is to be depressed. Imaginary groups are assigned subdivided values below the staff. This visual representation by Granados was intended to develop a precise timing of the application and release of the pedal. This eventually leads to a correct understanding of syncopated pedaling and quick pedal motions in various tempi.

In the following example, the foot is lifted on the first note of the group and the pedal is depressed on the second note.

Example 4: Pedaling exercise, by Enrique Granados



Even in the most basic examples, Granados also coordinates the movement of the foot with the metronome in order to obtain a timed release. This results in applying the pedal before a note, with a

note, and after a note—all basic movements even the younger student should learn to coordinate. In his treatise, Granados also speaks about the use of the pedal in jumps and melodies, and its use in various tempi. An interesting example is how he applies the pedal to the same melody in different registers of the piano, taking into consideration the inherent features of the instrument. The lowest register would require the most frequent changes and the highest the least frequent. Example 5 indicates the proper application of the pedal from the lowest to highest registers.

Example 5: Pedaling for various pianistic registers, by Enrique Granados.

Years later, Granados revised *The Theoretical-Practical Method for the Use of the Pedals*, which he felt was not concise and lacked clarity. His new treatise, *Rules for the Use of the Pedals of the Piano* was published for the first time in 2001. (It is not certain the exact date Granados created this new version.) This offers an introduction and five lessons on the pedal. In the first lesson, the author gives examples of pedaling groups of notes, indicating poor and good results in reference to the timing of the pedal's application. The second lesson focuses on pedaling conjunct, disjunct, and mixed (both conjunct and disjunct) groups. Lesson number three is devoted to pedaling groups of chords and gives examples of

how to achieve clarity in various tempi, since slower tempi require more frequent pedal changes.

Example 6: Pedaling for various tempi, by Enrique Granados.

Lesson number four examines pedaling of jumps, and the fifth lesson explores the use of the pedal in melodies separated by a distance, the use of pedal on repeated notes, the use of pedal with dotted notes, and applying the pedal in relation to various note values. Example 7 gives Granados's suggestion for pedaling dotted notes saying, "Dotted notes are connected with the pedal in almost every case. Depress the pedal on the second half of the dotted note, and lifting the pedal on the note which comes after the dotted note."⁶

Example 7: Pedaling for dotted notes, by Enrique Granados.

Although *Rules for the Use of the Pedals of the Piano* is certainly more succinct than Granados's original method, it would behoove a teacher to examine the first version in order to see how detailed and innovative the composer was in his approach to pedaling.

Following Granados's tragic death in 1916, his stellar pupil, Frank Marshall, assumed the directorship of the academy, and in 1920 the name was changed to the Marshall Academy.

Born in 1883 in Mataró, Frank Marshall was the son of an English family who moved to Catalonia to work in the textile industry. Marshall was a child of great musical ability, and, after studying in his native city and receiving his diploma, he moved to Barcelona to study with Enrique Granados. He studied with Granados from 1901–1916 and was not merely a pupil, but, as Marshall stated, "My friendship with Enrique Granados was deep. I was at his side from the age of 17 to 32, to the time he died. So I consider myself his

spiritual son. I was deputy director of the academy and substituted for him during his absences. I was present when he was composing, I was the first to perform his pieces, and Granados gave me verbal indications that were impossible to transcribe onto music paper.”⁷

Marshall began his career as a concert pianist traveling through Europe and America, receiving accolades as stated in a September 1906 review from the Milan *Cronaca dei teatri*: “A splendid success! We are pleased to confirm that as a pianist, Frank Marshall has demonstrated that he has wonderful qualities in execution and technique. In the quick passages, he achieves the sobriety characteristic of great pianists.”⁸

In addition to performing and teaching, Marshall won a prize in composition in 1907 for his *Suite Catalonia*, still performed today. However, Marshall curtailed his performing career and realized his true calling was to teach. Granados needed to spend more time composing, and Marshall assumed more responsibilities at the Academy. A dedicated teacher, Marshall, like Granados, kept handwritten records of his students’ progress—even indicating the metronome marks they arrived at in their practice. Marshall was the only teacher of Alicia de Larrocha, who began studying with Marshall in 1926 when she was three years old. Like his mentor, Marshall also focused on the use of the pedals, writing *Practical Study on the Pedals of the Piano*, published in 1919 by Union Musical Editions.

Marshall opens *Practical Study* with exercises in the same manner as does Granados, with timed applications and releases, yet with more conventional notation rather than subdivisions.

In Example No. 1 of his book, Marshall indicates, “If the note or chord is of binary value, divide it into two halves, depress the pedal on the second half, and lift it on the first half of the following division and so on.”⁹

Marshall also gives similar examples to those of Granados in terms of pedaling groups of notes, leaps, and so on. Marshall’s section on *Rhythmical Accentuation of The Pedal* is noteworthy. According to Marshall: “This pedal will be applied simultaneously by striking the note or chord that must be accentuated and lifting it at the sign (+).”

Example 8: Pedaling exercise, by Frank Marshall.



The note or chord to the one that corresponds to the ‘rhythmic pedal or accentuation pedal’ must be preceded by a chord or pause. In order to distinguish more easily this pedal, a line underneath the “p” is indicated.”¹⁰

Example 9: Pedaling exercise, by Frank Marshall.



Marshall also includes an example from the literature describing the proper use of the pedal in melodies. “There are cases, especially in melodies and in polyphonic music where in order to avoid dissonance, one must avoid the repeated application of the pedal.”¹¹

Excerpt 10: Pedal markings by Frank Marshall for Ludwig van Beethoven’s Sonata Op, 31, No. 2, first movement, mm. 144-148.



Frank Marshall with his student Alicia de Larrocha.

Marshall's second book on pedaling, *The Sonority of the Piano*, was published by Boileau in 1940. It consists of short pieces in their entirety, most of which are from the nineteenth century and many by Robert Schumann, a favored composer of the Catalán School. In addition to providing pedal indications, Marshall includes fingerings and illustrates many levels of contrapuntal interest through larger and smaller note values. This, too, is most instructive for the student (see Excerpt 11).

Excerpt 11: Pedal markings by Frank Marshall for Robert Schumann's *A Little Romance*, Op. 68, No. 10.



Like Granados, Marshall's teaching was comprehensive. One of Marshall's last surviving pupils, Professor Carlota Garriga, began studying with Marshall in 1944 when she was seven. She indicated that Marshall was a caring teacher who also had her work with an assistant, Mercedes Roldós.

Garriga would work on technique in detail with Roldós, and she would see the "Maestro" every two weeks. In addition to basic technical exercises, he would assign Clementi, Czerny, and Cramer exercises. Marshall would demonstrate on the student's arm the correct touch in order for the pupil to better understand his approach. Professor Carriga goes on to say that the classes with Marshall were long and intensive, and that the Maestro never looked at the clock.

She especially enjoyed his teaching of the Brahms Intermezzi. Marshall also gave great importance to fingering, and his observations were notated. He would be sensitive to a particular student's needs and felt that the same fingering for a large hand would not work well for a smaller one. Garriga teaches at the currently-named Granados-Marshall Academy, and indicated that Marshall's books on the pedal are still used at the Academy and are mandatory in the exams.

Although it would be daunting for both teacher and student to utilize Granados's and Marshall's methods in their entirety, the discriminating instructor could extract relevant examples of pedaling that would address the needs of both aural and visual learners.



The works of both Granados and Marshall feature the often overlooked aspect of pedaling in piano study, and give insight to the unique sound world of this important school of piano pedagogy. ▲



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Endnotes:

1. Granados, Enrique. (2001). *Complete Works for Piano*, Vol. 9. Barcelona: Editorial de Música Boileau, p. 20.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
4. McGrigor, Albert. (1979). "The Catalán Piano School." Liner notes from *The Catalán Piano Tradition*. New York: International Piano Archives recording.
5. Hansen, Mark. (1985). "The Catalán School of Pedaling in the Teaching of Enrique Granados and Frank Marshall" in *The Pianist's Guide to Pedaling*. Joseph Banowetz (Ed.). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, pp. 227-228.
6. Granados, Enrique. (2001). *Complete Works for Piano*, Vol. 9. Barcelona: Editorial de Música Boileau, p. 111.
7. Monica Pagès Santacana. (2000). *The Granados-Marshall Academy: 100 Years of Piano Teaching in Barcelona*. Barcelona: Taller Editorial Mateu, p.155.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 156.
9. Marshall, Frank. (1919/1992). *Practical Study on the Pedals of the Piano*. Madrid: Union Musical Editions S.L., p. 2.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

Additional source:

Correspondence with Prof. Carlota Garriga, November 2016.

Further reading:

Hess, Carol A. (1993). "Enrique Granados and Modern Piano Technique." *Performance Practice Review*: Vol. 6: No. 1, Article 5.

Sources for examples:

Examples 1 - 7: Granados, Enrique. (2001). *Complete Works for Piano*, Vol. 9. Barcelona: Editorial de Música Boileau.
 Examples 8-10: Marshall, Frank. (1919/1992). *Practical Study on the Pedals of the Piano*. Madrid: Union Musical Editions S.L.
 Example 11: Marshall, Frank. (1940). *The Sonority of the Piano*. Barcelona: Editorial de Música Boileau.