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The Application of Tobias Matthay's Teachings to the Playing of York Bowen's Twelve Studies: A Practitioner's Perspective

Oliver She

This article involves the examination of English composer York Bowen's (1884–1961) Twelve Studies for the Pianoforte (1919) contextualised through the teachings of the renowned English piano pedagogue Tobias Matthay (1858–1945).¹ The material presented here consists of findings that I arrived at through my preparation of Bowen's studies for performance, as part of my doctorate project at the Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University.² As such, the main content in this article is of a personal nature, taken from my perspective as an artist-researcher, although it may also provide pedagogical guidance for performers and teachers more generally. As these studies are not very well known in pianistic circles at present and literature on this repertoire is almost non-existent, this article will also serve to instigate the scholarly study of this repertoire.

York Bowen and the Twelve Studies

Hailing from the English Musical Renaissance of the late nineteenth century, York Bowen was one of the foremost English composers of his time. Born in the London suburb of Crouch Hill, Bowen was the youngest of three sons in his family. His musical gifts became apparent at an early age, and soon thereafter he joined the North Metropolitan College of Music, before

¹ York Bowen, *Twelve Studies for the Pianoforte* (London: Ascherberg, Hopwood and Crew, 1919).

² For my research, a live performance of the Twelve Studies was recorded on video and can be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R5ieJ0uAUB0>. The Twelve Studies begin at 17:59.

transferring to the Blackheath Conservatoire to study with Alfred Izard.³ In 1898, as a teenager, Bowen was accepted into the Royal Academy of Music on scholarship to study under Tobias Matthay.⁴ In the ensuing decades, Bowen would lead a productive musical life, primarily as a composer but also as a concert pianist, teacher, and examiner.

In terms of his compositional output, Bowen wrote for a range of instruments across many genres. However, it was the piano that occupied a central position: his output for the instrument amounted to over one hundred solo, chamber, concerto, four-hand, and two-piano works.⁵ Among these is a set of pedagogical works, collectively titled as *Twelve Studies for the Pianoforte*, completed in 1916.⁶ These studies were dedicated to Matthay, a reflection of Bowen's admiration for his former mentor.⁷ More importantly, they are perhaps the most vivid representation of Bowen's remarkable proficiency as a pianist, one that carried the legacy and influence of Matthay's tutelage and pedagogical teachings. As reflected in the title, the set contains twelve pieces, each of which focuses on a different pianistic aspect.

Differentiating these studies from many étude cycles in the common piano repertoire—for instance, those of Chopin, Liszt, Rachmaninoff, and Scriabin—are the specific technical titles that Bowen appended to each, which makes it evident that he intended these works to serve a pedagogical purpose in part. It is a feature that reminds one of the Czerny studies, although a more appropriate analogy would perhaps be Debussy's *Douze Études* (1915), since the artistic qualities of the Bowen studies arguably transcend those of Czerny's. In fact, Bowen's use of the preposition 'For' at the beginning of many of these titles closely resemble the 'Pour les ...' format of the titles that Debussy gave to his études. Given that Bowen completed his studies a year after Debussy wrote his, it is likely that Bowen was aware of Debussy's études and drew inspiration from them, hence the similarity in title format. Besides the titles themselves, what makes these studies unique in their genre is their inherent link to a particular body of pedagogical literature: the teachings of Matthay.

Tobias Matthay

Born in Clapham, London, Matthay's early studies took place at the Royal Academy of Music, and his teachers included Arthur Sullivan, William Dorrell, and the renowned William Sterndale Bennett.⁸ Although he excelled as a pianist and composer in his earlier years, his focus gradually turned towards pedagogy, with particular attention to piano technique. In her memoir titled *The Life and Works of Tobias Matthay*, Matthay's wife Jessie recalled that the technical training he received at the Royal Academy was somewhat lacking, forcing him to experiment on his own.⁹ Jessie also wrote that Matthay 'always had the spirit of the true scientist,' and this motivated his ambition towards expanding his understanding of piano technique.¹⁰

³ Monica Watson, *York Bowen: A Centenary Tribute* (London: Thames, 1984), 9.

⁴ Watson, *York Bowen*, 10.

⁵ James Helton, 'The Piano Music of York Bowen: An Introduction' (DMA thesis, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2001), x.

⁶ Helton, 'The Piano Music of York Bowen,' 132.

⁷ Watson, *York Bowen*, 25.

⁸ Jessie Matthay, *The Life and Works of Tobias Matthay* (London: Boosey and Hawkes, 1945), 7–8.

⁹ Matthay, *Life and Works of Tobias Matthay*, 13.

¹⁰ Matthay, *Life and Works of Tobias Matthay*, 17.

On the broader front, developments in piano construction and general thought towards piano technique in the closing decades of the nineteenth century also had an impact on Matthay. Upon experiencing the heavier key action of Anton Rubinstein's Érard piano, Matthay became aware of the need to adjust his technical approach so as to cope effectively with the heavier resistance of the keys.¹¹ Through this, Matthay established one of his most important pedagogical principles: attention to key resistance. At the same time, the German-derived 'finger school' characteristic of English piano teaching and playing up until the late nineteenth century was being increasingly rejected, both in England and continental Europe, in favour of a more complete technical approach involving the arm and body elements, and the concept of weight.¹² Matthay became one of the leading proponents of this new pedagogical approach, the fundamental principles of which formed the basis for the concepts he espoused in his teachings, and which remain available to us through his key treatise *The Act of Touch* (1903).

The Application of Matthay's Teachings to Bowen's Twelve Studies

Bowen's Twelve Studies have titles (and, where they appear, subtitles) that mirror terminology in Matthay's teachings; some make what I construe to be oblique references to certain Matthay concepts. For instance, the fourth study, titled 'For forearm rotation,' refers directly to one of Matthay's concepts, while the eleventh study, titled 'For the "Five Fingers": Light Finger Agility,' may be implicitly referring to Matthay's concept of 'finger touch'. These references make it obvious that Bowen wrote these studies with Matthay's teachings in mind. Besides the primary technical aspect that is explicitly mentioned in the title or subtitle of each study, there are secondary technical aspects in some. In the following section, I will examine the studies in relation to Matthay's teachings and offer my own reflections as an artist-researcher regarding suitable approaches towards navigating the technical aspects in these studies.¹³

The first study, 'Chords of Heavy Quality: Upper Arm Weight Touch,' focuses on the playing of large chords spanning the entire range of the keyboard (see Ex. 1).¹⁴ On closer

Example 1. Study No. 1, 'Chords of Heavy Quality,' bb. 1–8

The image shows a musical score for Study No. 1, 'Chords of Heavy Quality,' measures 1-8. The score is in 3/4 time, marked 'Molto maestoso' and 'ff'. It features large chords spanning the entire range of the keyboard, with dynamic markings ranging from 'ff' to 'f'. The score is written for piano and includes fingerings and accents.

¹¹ Matthay, *Life and Works of Tobias Matthay*, 17.

¹² Reginald R. Gerig, *Famous Pianists and Their Technique* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 236.

¹³ See the Appendix for a summary of Matthay's pedagogical concepts and their applicability to the Bowen studies.

¹⁴ Bowen, *Twelve Studies*, 2.

examination, one may identify a resemblance between the chordal patterns in this study and those in Debussy's 'Pour les accords' (the final étude from *Douze Études*). However, unlike in the Debussy étude where precision and rhythm are of paramount importance, this study is less concerned with technical accuracy than with the production of a rich and sonorous chordal texture, as evident from the title, tempo marking (*maestoso*), and overall dynamic level. This draws upon two of Matthey's concepts, which Bowen has explicitly referenced in the subtitle: 'arm touch' and 'weight touch'.

According to Matthey, 'arm touch' falls under his umbrella concept of 'movement', which refers to the phenomenon where 'a movement of some portion of the super-imposed limb [that is, the fingers, hand, and arm as a whole] is ... bound to ensue, the moment the key gives way under the energy thus brought to bear upon its surface.'¹⁵ According to Matthey's categorisation, 'arm touch' is one of three 'movements', the others being 'hand touch' and 'finger touch'. Matthey defines 'arm touch' as occurring when the release of arm weight outbalances activity in the fingers and hand, and he advises that it is most appropriately employed to play 'a slow succession of chords or detached notes,' which matches the configuration that appears in this study.¹⁶

'Weight touch' is categorised by Matthey as one of two ways of employing the muscular components comprising the fingers, hand, and arm weight, the other being 'muscular touch'. As defined by Matthey, the distinction between these two approaches lies in 'the locality of the initiatory-act': in other words, the location on the playing limb from which the initial impetus arises. In 'weight touch', the arm-supporting muscles initiate the action by relaxing, relegating responsibility to the fingers and hand to support the released weight of the arm; the opposite happens in 'muscular touch' where the fingers and hand initiate the action through exertion, which then prompts the release of the arm in response.¹⁷ Matthey explains that while 'muscular touch' tends to produce a more 'percussive' and 'brilliant' tonal quality, 'weight touch' generally results in a more round, full, and 'sympathetic quality [with greater] carrying power.'¹⁸

Using a combination of 'arm touch' and 'weight touch' enabled me to produce the sonority required for this study. I found that employing 'arm touch' ensured that the volume of sound I produced was adequate, while implementing 'weight touch' helped me to maximise the carrying power and fullness of the chords and prevented the undesirable harsh sound that resulted when I used 'muscular touch'. Additionally, Bowen has placed accent markings on certain chords across the opening bars of the study, which indicated to me that Bowen wanted the chordal texture to be layered. Making subtle adjustments to the employment of 'arm touch', namely by relaxing the arm more fully on the accented chords and less on the unaccented chords, helped me to make the two layers of the texture more distinct.

Besides the two Matthey concepts discussed above, there is another that comes into play in this study. In order to allow enough time for me to prepare the arm relaxation action on each chord, and therefore to render them as sonorously as possible, navigating the leaps between chords in a timely manner became a paramount issue for me. I found that an appropriate way

¹⁵ Tobias Matthey, *The Act of Touch in All Its Diversity: An Analysis and Synthesis of Pianoforte Tone Production* (London: Longman, 1903), 104.

¹⁶ Matthey, *Act of Touch*, 104, 175–76.

¹⁷ Matthey, *Act of Touch*, 108.

¹⁸ Matthey, *Act of Touch*, 163.

to facilitate this would be to employ Matthay's concept of 'forearm and upper arm skips'. As Matthay explains, 'forearm skips' are generally used to negotiate leaps 'within the compass of about two octaves' and involve a fan-like lateral movement of the forearm with the elbow as axis; 'upper arm skips', involving a lateral movement of the upper arm, are helpful when executing leaps that exceed the convenient range afforded by a lateral forearm movement.¹⁹ As leaps of various intervals appear in this study, including those within and exceeding two octaves, I concluded that both 'forearm and upper arm skips' were relevant here.

The second study, 'Light Staccato Chords: Hand Touch,' is centred around playing light and rapid staccato chords, which appear mostly in the right hand (see Ex. 2).²⁰ The challenge in this study is that the right hand is required to sustain a fast and buoyant staccato touch from the wrist over extended sections of the work. This study involves the use of Matthay's concept of 'hand touch', which Bowen has expressly indicated in the subtitle. Similar to 'arm touch', 'hand touch' also comes under what Matthay terms the 'movement' umbrella, and occurs when hand activity predominates over that of the arm and fingers.²¹ By limiting activity to my hand by way of 'hand touch' and keeping my arm suspended, I discovered that I was able to attain more agility and lightness in my touch and to better sustain this touch throughout the study.

Example 2. Study No. 2, 'Light Staccato Chords,' bb. 1–12

Allegro vivo

mp staccato sempre

Another one of Matthay's concepts that is pertinent in this study is the concept of 'resting', which he defines as 'a continuous act of light resting on the keys' that accompanies all playing.²² According to Matthay, there are two forms of such 'resting': 'staccato resting', where the 'resting' occurs at the surface level of the keys, and 'legato resting', where it occurs at the keybed level.²³ As staccato touch is an important element in this study, strict observance of

¹⁹ Matthay, *Act of Touch*, 193.

²⁰ Bowen, *Twelve Studies*, 4.

²¹ Matthay, *Act of Touch*, 104.

²² Matthay, *Act of Touch*, 138–39.

²³ Matthay, *Act of Touch*, 184–85.

the ‘staccato resting’ principle enabled me to more adequately maintain a consistent staccato across the material in both hands.

The tenth study, ‘For Octave Playing: Hand Movement with a Loose “Resting” Arm of Varying Weight,’ is also concerned with ‘hand touch’. Containing excerpts reminiscent of passages in Chopin’s ‘Octave’ étude (op. 25, no. 10) and the repetitions in Liszt’s transcription of Schubert’s *Erkönig*, this is arguably among the more difficult of the Twelve Studies. This study is focused on the playing of fast octaves in a range of configurations and contains passages where variations in articulation occur and where chords are interspersed with open octaves (see Ex. 3).²⁴ Overall, the work places significant demands on physical stamina, seeing how it is necessary to maintain a generally high dynamic level and strong rhythmic drive in order to express the fiery character of the work.

Example 3. Study No. 10, ‘For Octave Playing,’ bb. 1–6

Allegro moderato, ma con fuoco
non legato

The musical score for Example 3, Study No. 10, 'For Octave Playing,' measures 1-6. It is written in 8/8 time and B-flat major. The tempo is 'Allegro moderato, ma con fuoco' and the articulation is 'non legato'. The score consists of two systems. The first system shows measures 1-3, and the second system shows measures 4-6. The piano part (left hand) features chords with a dynamic marking of *mf* and slurs. The right-hand part features octaves with accents and slurs. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat).

The context in which ‘hand touch’ is involved in this study differs slightly from that in the second. Owing to the fact that the overall dynamic level is considerably higher in this study compared to the second, the use of ‘hand touch’ alone becomes insufficient in generating enough sonority across the octave texture. Rather, I found that it was necessary to involve the arm, using its weight to provide support to the ‘hand touch’ action, although hand activity remains predominant relative to arm activity. The subtitle that Bowen has given here instructs the arm to assume a ‘resting’ attitude of ‘varying weight’, which is quite evidently making reference to the ‘staccato resting’ and ‘legato resting’ approaches. This is because in the opening bars of the study Bowen indicates for the chords to be accentuated while the open octaves are marked with *staccati*, suggesting to me that employing a heavier ‘legato resting’ arm on the former and a lighter ‘staccato resting’ arm on the latter would be appropriate, highlighting the difference in articulation. Similar flexible implementation of the ‘resting’ concept throughout the study helped me to bring articulatory and tonal variation where needed.

Three of the twelve studies in the cycle are based on finger technique, with each of them focusing on a different type of fingerwork. The third study, ‘For the “Five Fingers”: Light Finger Agility,’ focuses on the playing of running passagework in five-finger patterns. Bowen has written this study in such a way that a seamless passagework texture is maintained without the involvement of any thumb-under or over-thumb turns; this is achieved by writing in

²⁴ Bowen, *Twelve Studies*, 40.

quintuplet groups that can be played with a five-finger sequence within a single hand position, with some groups alternating between the hands (see Ex. 4).²⁵

Example 4. Study No. 3, 'For the "Five Fingers",' bb. 1–4

Although Bowen does not make any direct reference to Matthay's teachings in the title and subtitle of this study, there is an implicit suggestion towards two of Matthay's concepts. Given that this is a finger-based study, the more obvious of these is 'finger touch', where finger activity predominates over hand and arm activity.²⁶ A high degree of agility is required throughout the passagework, and this calls for the implementation of 'finger touch' as Matthay explains that elimination of arm weight and hand activity is crucial in order to achieve sufficient speed in such passagework.²⁷ The other concept is 'legato resting', and pertains to Bowen's *leggiero e legato* indication in the opening bar of the study. Maintaining a 'legato resting' attitude in the arm balances the *leggiero* touch in the fingers, allowing the texture to assume a filigree lightness without tending towards a non-legato sound.

The eighth study, 'For Finger Staccato,' concerns the playing of fast staccato finger passagework, mostly in the right hand (see Ex. 5).²⁸ Similar to the third study, 'finger touch'

Example 5. Study No. 8, 'For Finger Staccato,' bb. 1–6

²⁵ Bowen, *Twelve Studies*, 8.

²⁶ Matthay, *Act of Touch*, 104.

²⁷ Matthay, *Act of Touch*, 225.

²⁸ Bowen, *Twelve Studies*, 28.

is an essential element in the eighth study for the purpose of agility, along with the ‘staccato resting’ concept, which quite obviously enabled me to sustain the staccato texture throughout the passagework. While the rapid staccato passages in this study seemed difficult to me at first, strict observance of the ‘staccato resting’ concept enabled me to maintain a staccato quality across the running passages with relative ease and to do so with the required lightness and agility.

Unlike in the third study, the passagework in the eighth study contains many instances where thumb turns occur. I found that an effective way to facilitate these was to employ one of Matthey’s chief concepts, ‘forearm rotation’. According to Matthey, there are two ways in which ‘forearm rotation’ may be implemented. The first, involving visible oscillating movements of the hand, will be explained in more detail later. The other type of ‘forearm rotation’ is described by Matthey as the ‘proper condition of the forearm in its rotary aspect [and] their influence upon the hand in a tilting direction.’²⁹ In other words, it concerns the invisible rotary sensations felt in the hand as the forearm muscles adjust to the playing of each finger. In relation to instances where the thumb turns under the hand or where the hand turns over the thumb, Matthey instructs that the direction of this rotary sensation should always correspond with the direction of the new finger.³⁰ Hence, a rotary sensation towards the thumb side of the hand occurs when turning the thumb under, while the opposite occurs when a finger turns over the thumb. Using this approach in this study helped me to enhance the evenness of the thumb turns.

The other finger study is the eleventh study, ‘For Brilliancy in Passage Work,’ which is based around the playing of passagework with a brilliant quality (see Ex. 6).³¹ Once again, ‘finger touch’ is implicitly involved here; however, owing to the heightened dynamic level through much of the study, I found that applying weight support from the hand and arm helped me to attain sufficient sonority in the passagework. Similar to the eighth study, Matthey’s concept of ‘forearm rotation’ in the form of invisible rotary adjustments of the forearm is relevant here, as the passagework contains many instances of thumb turning.

Example 6. Study No. 11, ‘For Brilliancy in Passage Work,’ bb. 1–6

The musical score for Example 6, Study No. 11, 'For Brilliancy in Passage Work,' measures 1-6, is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 1-3) is marked 'Allegro con fuoco' and 'f ben articolato'. The right hand plays a melodic line with slurs, while the left hand provides harmonic support with chords and rests. The second system (measures 4-6) is marked 'cresc.'. The right hand continues the melodic line, and the left hand features a crescendo in the bass line. The score is in 3/4 time and the key signature has two flats (B-flat major).

Bowen’s use of the term ‘brilliancy’ in the title makes an indirect reference to Matthey’s concept of finger attitude. According to Matthey, to create different qualities of tone, the finger

²⁹ Matthey, *Act of Touch*, 188.

³⁰ Tobias Matthey, *The Visible and Invisible in Pianoforte Technique* (London: OUP, 1932), 57.

³¹ Bowen, *Twelve Studies*, 46.

may be used 'in two diametrically opposite ways': 'bent' or 'flat'.³² In the 'bent' attitude, the finger assumes a curved position, resulting in a more brilliant tone, while in the 'flat' attitude, the finger makes contact with the key in a flatter position, creating a more singing tone.³³ In line with the title, the passagework in this study calls for the use of a more 'bent' finger attitude to produce a more brilliant sound.

Two of the studies in the cycle explore the other form of Matthay's 'forearm rotation' concept mentioned earlier. The title of the fourth study, 'For Forearm Rotation,' makes explicit reference to Matthay's concept. The configuration of the piano writing makes it clear that the focus is on 'rotation touch', the visible type of 'forearm rotation' that involves oscillating movements of the hand driven by the partial rotation of the forearm (see Ex. 7).³⁴ Matthay further explains that 'rotation touch' may be implemented through muscular initiative (by making a rotary exertion towards the playing side of the hand) or through weight initiative (by inducing a rotary lifting action on the side of the hand opposite the playing side, which sets free weight onto the playing side).³⁵ Both variants of 'rotation touch' are relevant in this study as the texture ranges from light, Mendelssohn-like figurations to furious broken-octave passages, with the former requiring more passive weight-initiated 'rotation touch', while the latter demands more active muscular-initiated 'rotation touch'.

Example 7. Study No. 4, 'For Forearm Rotation,' bb. 1–8

Allegro moderato

The twelfth study, 'For Trills and Tremolos' (see Ex. 8), evokes an ethereal atmosphere reminiscent of that in Liszt's *Chasse-neige* (Transcendental Étude No. 12).³⁶ Although there is no explicit reference to Matthay's teachings, the execution of trills and especially tremolos involve the employment of his 'rotation touch' concept. In keeping with the delicate texture of this study, using weight-initiated 'rotation touch' instead of finger activity on the trills helped me to prevent them from becoming too articulated, hence compromising the ethereal texture. Similarly, applying such rotary action to the playing of the tremolos enabled them to sound as smooth as possible, preserving the texture.

³² Matthay, *Act of Touch*, 109.

³³ Matthay, *Act of Touch*, 109–10.

³⁴ Bowen, *Twelve Studies*, 13; Matthay, *Act of Touch*, 189.

³⁵ Matthay, *Act of Touch*, 189.

³⁶ Bowen, *Twelve Studies*, 53.

Example 8. Study No. 12, 'For Trills and Tremolos,' bb. 1–7

The musical score for Example 8, Study No. 12, 'For Trills and Tremolos,' measures 1-7. It is written for piano in 3/4 time and B-flat major. The score consists of two systems. The first system (measures 1-4) begins with a *Lento* marking. The right hand features trills on G4 and F4, while the left hand has a tremolo on G3. Dynamics include *p delicato* and *pp*. A *(trem.)* marking is present above the right hand in measure 4. The second system (measures 5-7) starts with a *dolce* marking and a slur over the right hand. The left hand has a *poco cresc.* marking. The piece concludes with a final tremolo in the left hand.

Another concept of Matthey's that is relevant in this study is 'ppp touch', which he defines as a touch comprised of a light resting on the keybed level without any weight release of the arm or muscular activity in the fingers or hand.³⁷ This allows one to attain the softest possible sound and to sustain that sound as required. In the context of this study, employing 'ppp touch' in the softer sections helped me to create an atmospheric effect by way of the trills and tremolos, and assisted my smooth execution of them.

The subtitle of the sixth study, 'For Pianissimo Legato: "Passing On" Touch and Melody,' contains a term, 'passing on' touch, which according to Matthey is analogous to the 'legato resting' concept.³⁸ This is one of two Matthey concepts that are involved in this study, the other being 'ppp touch'; together, they make up the focus of this study which is the playing of soft legato textures (see Ex. 9).³⁹ Matthey's 'ppp touch' concept is also involved in the fifth study, 'For the Glissando,' which focuses on a rather novel technical aspect in the form of the glissando (see Ex. 10),⁴⁰ seldom found in other studies or études. According to Matthey, the approach to the playing of *glissandi* is identical with 'ppp touch', where only the slightest weight resting on the keybed is sufficient to allow the finger or fingers playing the *glissandi* runs to depress each successive key and to do so with a high degree of fluency.⁴¹

Example 9. Study No. 6, 'For Pianissimo Legato,' bb. 9–12

The musical score for Example 9, Study No. 6, 'For Pianissimo Legato,' measures 9-12. It is written for piano in 3/4 time and B-flat major. The score consists of two systems. The first system (measures 9-10) begins with a *mp ben cantando e espress.* marking. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs, while the left hand has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The second system (measures 11-12) starts with a *pp legatissimo sempre.* marking. The right hand continues with a melodic line, and the left hand maintains the eighth-note accompaniment. The piece concludes with a final chord in the left hand.

³⁷ Matthey, *Act of Touch*, 116.

³⁸ Matthey, *Act of Touch*, 244.

³⁹ Bowen, *Twelve Studies*, 22.

⁴⁰ Bowen, *Twelve Studies*, 20–21.

⁴¹ Matthey, *Act of Touch*, 219.

Example 10. Study No. 5, 'For the Glissando,' bb. 26–27

The seventh study, 'To Induce Lateral Freedom of Hand and Arm,' focuses on playing rapid arpeggiated figures of varying extensions. The title makes reference to Matthay's concept of 'lateral wrist adjustments', the utility of which is 'to help the thumb turn under the fingers as well as the fingers pass over the thumb ... and to assist the arpeggiated playing of widely-spaced chords.'⁴² Matthay explains that there are two ways in which 'lateral wrist adjustments' may be implemented: one, when the fingers turn back and forth over the thumb, the wrist-end of the hand remains largely stationary while the finger-end of the hand moves; and two, when the thumb turns under the hand back and forth, or when the fingers are compelled to stretch beyond a comfortable hand position in arpeggiated figures, then the wrist-end moves instead of the finger-end.⁴³

In this study, both ways of employing 'lateral wrist adjustments' are applicable. The arpeggiated figures at the beginning of the study require the fingers to turn back and forth over the thumb (see Ex. 11); hence, keeping the wrist largely still and moving the finger-end of the hand makes the most sense.⁴⁴ Conversely, to play the arpeggiated figures in the middle section of the study (see Ex. 12), which may recall the arpeggios in Chopin's 'Aeolian Harp' étude (op. 25, no. 1), moving the wrist-end of the hand becomes imperative in order to position each finger onto their respective keys and to facilitate fluent execution.⁴⁵ Furthermore, the incorporation of Matthay's 'forearm skips' concept helps the playing of arpeggiated figures that contain large intervals between certain notes, such as between the G-sharp and the D played with the right-hand third finger and thumb in bar 27 (see Ex. 13).⁴⁶ The lateral movement of

Example 11. Study No. 7, 'To Induce Lateral Freedom of Hand and Arm,' bb. 1–2

⁴² Matthay, *Act of Touch*, 189–90.

⁴³ Matthay, *Act of Touch*, 191.

⁴⁴ Bowen, *Twelve Studies*, 25.

⁴⁵ Bowen, *Twelve Studies*, 26.

⁴⁶ Bowen, *Twelve Studies*, 27.

the forearm assists the smooth transition across these intervals and streamlines the overall texture of the figures.

Example 12. Study No. 7, ‘To Induce Lateral Freedom of Hand and Arm,’ bb. 15–16

Example 13. Study No. 7, ‘To Induce Lateral Freedom of Hand and Arm,’ b. 27

Conclusion

As the above discussion has revealed, the relationship between Matthey’s teachings and the Twelve Studies is an intimate one, and many of his pedagogical concepts are closely related to the pedagogical intentions of these studies as well as the playing of them, whether they are explicitly or implicitly referenced by Bowen in the titles and /or subtitles. Some of the studies also present technical aspects, not directly discernible from the titles, that draw upon certain pedagogical concepts specific to Matthey: ‘forearm skips’ in the first and seventh studies; ‘staccato’ and ‘legato resting’ respectively in the second and third studies; ‘forearm rotation’ in the invisible form in the eighth and eleventh studies; and ‘ppp touch’ in the twelfth study. One remaining study that I have not discussed is the ninth, ‘For Various Pedal Effects,’ which, as reflected in its title, is based on the production of different sonic effects through the use of the pedals in various ways. Owing to the fact that Matthey’s teachings do not encompass the subject of pedalling, it is apparent that the pedagogical intention of this particular study originated from Bowen, independent of Matthey.

Having explored the connection between Matthey’s teachings and the Twelve Studies, and shared my findings concerning the application of the former to the playing of the latter, this article has highlighted an intriguing aspect that arguably sets this cycle of studies apart from many other similar sets of works in this genre. As I mentioned at the beginning, pianists and teachers who wish to explore this repertoire might find the material in this article of interest and benefit, despite the fact that some of the observations are of a personal nature. The relationship between Matthey’s teachings and the studies is certainly an intriguing aspect, and one that I feel is intrinsic to the technical underpinnings of these studies. Familiarity with Matthey’s teachings is by no means essential to the playing of these works; however, acquaintance with his concepts would greatly enhance the understanding of how Bowen envisaged these studies being played, and lead to an arguably more ‘complete’ approach to their execution.

Appendix

Matthay's pedagogical concepts	Primary concept explored in each of Bowen's Twelve Studies
The three forms of movement: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. finger touch ii. hand touch iii. arm touch 	Study No. 1: arm touch, weight touch, forearm skips, upper arm skips Study No. 2: hand touch, staccato resting
The two ways in which playing activity is initiated: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. weight touch ii. muscular touch 	Study No. 3: finger touch, legato resting Study No. 4: rotation touch, in both weight-initiated and muscular-initiated forms
The two forms of resting: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. legato resting ii. staccato resting 	Study No. 5: ppp touch Study No. 6: legato resting, ppp touch
The two finger attitudes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. bent ii. flat 	Study No. 7: lateral wrist adjustments, forearms skips Study No. 8: finger touch, staccato resting, invisible rotary sensations
The two ways of implementing forearm rotation: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. involving invisible rotary sensations ii. rotation touch (involving visible oscillating rotary motions) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. weight-initiated b. muscular-initiated 	Study No. 9: pedalling (not Matthay-related) Study No. 10: hand touch, legato resting, staccato resting
Other miscellaneous concepts: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. forearms skips ii. upper arm skips iii. lateral wrist adjustments iv. ppp touch 	Study No. 11: finger touch, bent finger attitude, invisible rotary sensations Study No. 12: weight-initiated rotation touch, ppp touch

About the author

Oliver She is a doctoral candidate at the Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University, researching York Bowen's neglected Twelve Studies for the piano. He has performed both nationally and internationally as recitalist, soloist, and chamber musician, and has been active as a teacher for several years.