

So what do the various theories espoused in treatises, as well as the contrasting approaches of performers themselves, have to say to us as performers, students and teachers? The obvious answer is that it is not simply a scientifically ideal seat height, a certain posture, a specific amount of arm weight or even technically optimum movements of the fingers and hands that ensue from musicality, or, in other words, a good teacher. To be sure, there are certain general principles that free the playing mechanism to do its work most efficiently, and these are known and applied on by the great teachers. For example, recognizing the difference between firmness and tension is absolutely essential for fluency and ease in playing. Conversely, poor habits such as jabbing at the keys in a harsh manner from the elbows profoundly inhibit the creation of a warm, singing tone and are to be avoided. Good teachers are able to spot and correct these kinds of deficiencies early on. What, then, is the secret behind a great artistic performance? The bottom line is this: . . . No matter what kind of physical approach is utilized by a performer in the context of a musical passage, the one element that all great artists have in common is this: they know the quality of sounds they want to produce and the exact musical effects they want to achieve *before* they ever touch a key or move a muscle — and they never relinquish that mental imagery until the last note has died away True artists develop the ability to pre-hear exactly what musical results they want to produce, and it becomes such a habit that it becomes impossible for them to just play notes.

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