



# Natural Fingering: A Topographical Approach to Pianism

*Jon Verbalis*

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Though incomplete at the time of his death in 1849, Chopin's *Projet de méthode* was nonetheless revolutionary in many respects. But with his Fundamental Pattern, Chopin announced the recognition, if not discovery, of the keyboard's extraordinary topographical symmetry and postulated a core formulation for a new "pianistic" pedagogy. More than a hundred years later the now-legendary Heinrich Neuhaus would passionately plead for this pedagogy and a pianism rooted in it.

*Natural Fingering* explores this remarkable symmetry, significantly as it sheds light on fingering matters for the now vast catalogue of repertoire. It also examines the revolutionary impact of equal temperament on compositional key choice as well as the liberating influence of Charles Eschmann-Dumur's unique discoveries regarding symmetrical inversion.

Author Jon Verbalis develops principles for a topographically-based fingering strategy that reflect a surprising compatibility of this fixed symmetrical organization with the most efficient biokinetic capabilities of the pianist's playing mechanism. He addresses previously neglected or overlooked technical aspects of pianism as they relate to movement in keyboard space generally as well as fingering specifically.

Symmetrical fingerings for all the fundamental forms are presented in innovative, instructive format. The reader will also find an unusually extensive, in-depth discussion of double note challenges. Answering Neuhaus's call for the reappraisal of a certain pedagogical status quo, several chapters are devoted to the relevant implications of Chopin's Fundamental Pattern. The author also advances guidelines for a progressive implementation of natural fingering principles from the very start, as well as "retooling" for teachers and students alike. Of special note are the cross-hand major and minor scales for the earliest stages, in which the necessity of thumb under/hand over pivoting actions is eliminated.

*Natural Fingering* is the first comprehensive discussion of fingering solutions for pianists since Hummel's monumental treatise of 1828. The book is complemented by a companion website, which serves as a supplement to the printed edition. The website features copious excerpts from the extant repertoire, extended discussions on relevant topics, and a comprehensive manual of the fundamental forms with symmetrically adjusted fingerings.

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