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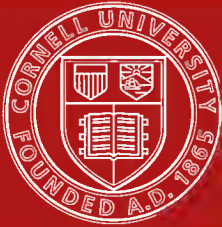
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# THE ART OF MUSIC



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THE ART OF MUSIC: VOLUME SEVEN

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# Pianoforte and Chamber Music

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Introduction by

HAROLD BAUER



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## PREFATORY NOTE

THE editor has not attempted to give within the limits of this single volume a detailed history of the development of both pianoforte and chamber music. He has emphasized but very little the historical development of either branch of music, and he has not pretended to discuss exhaustively all the music which might be comprehended under the two broad titles.

The chapters on pianoforte music are intended to show how the great masters adapted themselves to the exigencies of the instrument, and in what manner they furthered the development of the difficult technique of writing for it. Also, because the piano may be successfully treated in various ways, and because it lends itself to the expression of widely diverse moods, there is in these chapters some discussion of the great masterpieces of pianoforte literature in detail.

The arrangement of material is perhaps not usual. What little has been said about the development of the piano, for example, has been said in connection with Beethoven, who was the first to avail himself fully of the advantages the piano offered over the harpsichord. A discussion, or rather an analysis, of the pianoforte style has been put in the chapter on Chopin, who is even to-day the one outstanding master of it.

In the part of the book dealing with chamber music the material has been somewhat arbitrarily arranged according to combinations of instruments. The string quartets, the pianoforte trios, quartets, and quintets, the sonatas for violin and piano, and other combina-

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tions have been treated separately. The selection of some works for a more or less detailed discussion, and the omission of even the mention of others, will undoubtedly seem unjustifiable to some; but the editor trusts at least that those he has chosen for discussion may illumine somewhat the general progress of chamber music from the time of Haydn to the present day.

For the chapters on violin music before Corelli and the beginnings of chamber music we are indebted to Mr. Edward Kilenyi, whose initials appear at the end of these chapters.

LELAND HALL.



## INTRODUCTION

THE term Chamber Music, in its modern sense, cannot perhaps be strictly defined. In general it is music which is fine rather than broad, or in which, at any rate, there is a wealth of detail which can be followed and appreciated only in a relatively small room. It is not, on the whole, brilliantly colored like orchestral music. The string quartet, for example, is conspicuously monochrome. Nor is chamber music associated with the drama, with ritual, pageantry, or display, as are the opera and the mass. It is—to use a well worn term—very nearly always absolute music, and, as such, must be not only perfect in detail, but beautiful in proportion and line, if it is to be effective.

As far as externals are concerned, chamber music is made up of music for a solo instrument, with or without accompaniment (excluding, of course, concertos and other like forms, which require the orchestra, and music for the organ, which can hardly be dissociated from cathedrals and other large places), and music for small groups of instruments, such as the string trio and the string quartet, and combinations of diverse instruments with the piano. Many songs, too, sound best in intimate surroundings; but one thinks of them as in a class by themselves, not as a part of the literature of chamber music.

With very few exceptions, all the great composers have sought expression in chamber music at one time or another; and their compositions in this branch seem often to be the finest and the most intimate presentation of their genius. Haydn is commonly supposed to

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have found himself first in his string quartets. Mozart's great quartets are almost unique among his compositions as an expression of his genius absolutely uninfluenced by external circumstances and occasion. None of Beethoven's music is more profound nor more personal than his last quartets. Even among the works of the later composers, who might well have been seduced altogether away from these fine and exacting forms by the intoxicating glory of the orchestra, one finds chamber music of a rich and special value.

This special value consists in part in the refined and unflinching musical skill with which the composers have handled their slender material; but more in the quality of the music itself. The great works of chamber music, no matter how profound, speak in the language of intimacy. They show no signs of the need to impress or overwhelm an audience. Perhaps no truly great music does. But operas and even symphonies must be written with more or less consideration for external circumstances, whereas in the smaller forms, composers seem to be concerned only with the musical inspiration which they feel the desire to express. They speak to an audience of understanding friends, as it were, before whom they may reveal themselves without thought of the effectiveness of their speech. They seem in them to have consulted only their ideals. They have taken for granted the sympathetic attention of their audience.

The piano has always played a commanding rôle in the history of chamber music. From the early days when the harpsichord with its figured bass was the foundation for almost all music, both vocal and instrumental, few forms in chamber music have developed independently of it, or of the piano, its successor. The string quartet and a few combinations of wind instruments offer the only conspicuous exceptions. The mass

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of chamber music is made up of pianoforte trios, quartets, and quintets, of sonatas for pianoforte and various other instruments; and, indeed, the great part of pianoforte music is essentially chamber music.

It may perhaps seem strange to characterize as remarkably fine and intimate the music which has been written for an instrument often stigmatized as essentially unmusical. But the piano has attracted nearly all the great composers, many of whom were excellent pianists; and the music which they have written for it is indisputably of the highest and most lasting worth. There are many pianoforte sonatas which are all but symphonies, not only in breadth of form, but in depth of meaning. Some composers, notably Beethoven and Liszt, demanded of the piano the power of the orchestra. Yet on the whole the mass of pianoforte music remains chamber music.

The pianoforte style is an intricate style, and to be effective must be perfectly finished. The instrument sounds at its best in a small hall. In a large one its worst characteristics are likely to come all too clearly to the surface. And though it is in many ways the most powerful of all the instruments, truly beautiful playing does not call upon its limits of sound, but makes it a medium of fine and delicately shaded musical thought. To regard it as an instrument suited primarily to big and grandiose effects is grievously to misunderstand it, and is likely, furthermore, to make one overlook the possibilities of tone color which, though often denied it, it none the less possesses.

In order to study intelligently the mechanics, or, if you will, the art of touch upon the piano, and in order to comprehend the variety of tone-color which can be produced from it, one must recognize at the outset the fact that the piano is an instrument of percussion. Its sounds result from the blows of hammers upon taut

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metal strings. With the musical sound given out by these vibrating strings must inevitably be mixed the dull and unmusical sound of the blow that set them vibrating. The trained ear will detect not only the thud of the hammer against the string, but that of the finger against the key, and that of the key itself upon its base. The study of touch and tone upon the piano is the study of the combination and the control of these two elements of sound, the one musical, the other unmusical.

The pianist can acquire but relatively little control over the musical sounds of his instrument. He can make them soft and loud, but he cannot, as the violinist can, make a single tone grow from soft to loud and die away to soft again. The violinist or the singer both makes and controls tone, the one by his bow, the other by his breath; the pianist, in comparison with them, but makes tone. Having caused a string to vibrate by striking it through a key, he cannot even sustain these vibrations. They begin at once to weaken; the sound at once grows fainter. Therefore he has to make his effects with a volume of sounds which has been aptly said to be ever vanishing.

On the other hand, these sounds have more endurance than those of the xylophone, for example; and in their brief span of failing life the skillful pianist may work somewhat upon them according to his will. He may cut them exceedingly short by allowing the dampers to fall instantaneously upon the strings, thus stopping all vibrations. He may even prolong a few sounds, a chord let us say, by using the sustaining pedal. This lifts the dampers from all the strings, so that all vibrate in sympathy with the tones of the chord and reënforce them, so to speak. This may be done either at the moment the notes of the chord are struck, or considerably later, after they have begun appreciably to weaken. In

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the latter case the ear can detect the actual reinforcement of the failing sounds.

Moreover, the use of the pedal serves to affect somewhat the color of the sounds of the instrument. All differences in timbre depend on overtones; and if the pianist lifts all dampers from the strings by the pedals, he will hear the natural overtones of his chord brought into prominence by means of the sympathetic vibrations of other strings he has not struck. He can easily produce a mass of sound which strongly suggests the organ, in the tone color of which the shades of overtones are markably evident.

The study of such effects will lead him beyond the use of the pedal into some of the niceties of pianoforte touch. He will find himself able to suppress some overtones and bring out others by emphasizing a note here and there in a chord of many notes, especially in an arpeggio, and by slighting others. Such an emphasis, it is true, may give to a series of chords an internal polyphonic significance; but if not made too prominent, will tend rather to color the general sound than to make an effect of distinct drawing.

It will be observed that in the matter of so handling the volume of musical sound, prolonging it and slightly coloring it by the use of the pedal or by skillful emphasis of touch, the pianist's attention is directed ever to the after-sounds, so to speak, of his instrument. He is interested, not in the sharp, clear beginning of the sound, but in what follows it. He finds in the very deficiencies of the instrument possibilities of great musical beauty. It is hardly too much to say, then, that the secret of a beautiful or sympathetic touch, which has long been considered to be hidden in the method of striking the keys, may be found quite as much in the treatment of sounds after the keys have been struck. It is a mystery which can by no means be wholly solved

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by a muscular training of the hands; for a great part of such training is concerned only with the actual striking of the keys.

We have already said that striking the keys must produce more or less unmusical sounds. These sounds are not without great value. They emphasize rhythm, for example, and by virtue of them the piano is second to no instrument in effects of pronounced, stimulating rhythm. The pianist wields in this regard almost the power of the drummer to stir men to frenzy, a power which is by no means to be despised. In martial music and in other kinds of vigorous music the piano is almost without shortcomings. But inasmuch as a great part of pianoforte music is not in this vigorous vein, but rather in a vein of softer, more imaginative beauty, the pianist must constantly study how to subject these unmusical sounds to the after-sounds which follow them. In this study he will come upon the secret of the legato style of playing.

If the violinist wishes to play a phrase in a smooth legato style, he does not use a new stroke of his bow for each note. If he did so, he would virtually be attacking the separate notes, consequently emphasizing them, and punctuating each from the other. Fortunately for him, he need not do so; but the pianist cannot do otherwise. Each note he plays must be struck from the strings of his instrument by a hammer. He can only approximate a legato style—by concealing, in one way or another, the sounds which accompany this blow.

The so-called legato touch on the keyboard is one in which the fingers cling closely to the keys, and by which, therefore, the keys are pressed down rather than struck. In this way the player actually eliminates one of the three sounds of attack, namely, that of the finger hitting the key. To a certain extent he

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also minimizes the sound of the key hitting its base, a sound which, moreover, the felt cushion of the base does much to lessen. At the risk of throwing all preconceived theories of legato touch into question, it may be said that this unpleasant sound can be wholly eliminated by a sort of light, quick, lifting touch, which, without driving the key down even to its base, will yet cause the hammer to spring up and hit the string above it.

By such means as these the pianist can at least subdue, if he cannot silence, the noises which in some measure must inevitably accompany his playing. The more he can do so, the smoother and pleasanter his playing will become. In so far as the tone of the pianoforte can be sensuous and warm, he can make it so in the measure in which he avoids giving prominence to the blows and thuds which ever threaten it perilously. The player who pounds is the player whose ear has not taken into account this harsh and unmusical accompaniment of noises. The player who can make the piano sing is he who, in listening to the mysterious vibrations of its after-sounds, has come to recognize and subdue those noises which too often interrupt and obscure them.

The value of the piano as an instrument of musical expression will always be the subject of discussion. It has undoubtedly two great shortcomings, which place the pianist under serious disadvantages. It cannot sustain tone, and the tones which can be produced on it will ever be more or less marred by unmusical noises which cannot often be avoided. But these very shortcomings make possible some peculiar beauties and a peculiar vitality which characterize pianoforte music alone. And, apart from these, in its great power, its possibilities of dynamic nuances, and its unlimited

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scope of harmonic effects, it is not excelled, if, indeed, it is equalled, by any other single instrument.

Finally, let it be remembered that there is in a great deal of pianoforte music—in that of Mozart, Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, Brahms and Debussy—almost unfailingly an intimacy of mood. It is for this quality of intimacy that pianoforte music will long be cherished as chamber music. It is a quality of which the player who wishes not only to interpret great music, but also to win what there is of genuine musical beauty from his instrument, should ever be mindful.

HAROLD BAUER.

November, 1915.



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**PIANOFORTE AND CHAMBER MUSIC**



## CHAPTER I

### KEYBOARD INSTRUMENTS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF KEYBOARD TECHNIQUE

Keyboard instruments and their derivation; the clavichord and its mechanism; the harpsichord and its relatives, virginal, *cembalo*, etc.; technique and use of the harpsichord—The beginnings of harpsichord music; the Gabriellis and Merulo; early forms; the influence of harmony and the crystallization of form—Frescobaldi and other organist-composers for harpsichord; early English virginal collections; John Bull, etc.—Genesis of the suite; influence of lute-music; Froberger, Denis Gaultier, etc.; Kuhnau—Development of the harpsichord 'style'; great players: Chambonnières, etc.

#### I

THE foundations of pianoforte music were laid during the second half of the sixteenth century and throughout the seventeenth, with the foundations of instrumental music in general. Though there were at this time no pianofortes, there were three keyboard instruments, all of which not only took their part in the development of instrumental music, but more especially prepared the way for the great instrument of their kind which was yet unborn. These were the organ, the harpsichord, and the clavichord.

The organ was then, as now, primarily an instrument of the church, though there were small, portable organs called *regals*, which were often used for chamber music and even as a part of accompaniment, together with other instruments, in the early operas. With the history of its construction we shall not concern ourselves here (see Vol. VI, Chap. XIV). From the middle of the fourteenth century Venice had been famous for her organists, because the organs in St. Mark's cathe-

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dral were probably the best in Europe. Up to the end of the seventeenth century they were very imperfect. Improvements were slow. Great as was the rôle taken by the organ all over Europe, from the basilica of St. Peter's in Rome to the northern town of Lübeck in Germany, the action was hard and uneven, the tuning beset with difficulties. But the organ was the prototype of all keyboard instruments. Upon the imperfect organs of those days composers built up the keyboard style of music.

The harpsichords and the clavichords were what one might call the domestic substitutes for the organ. Of these the clavichord was perhaps slightly the older instrument. Its origin is somewhat obscure, though it is easy to see in it the union of the organ keyboard with strings, on the principle of that ancient darling of the theorists, the monochord, the great and undisputed ruler over intervals of musical pitch, from the days of Pythagoras down throughout the Middle Ages. This monochord was hardly an instrument. It was a single string stretched over a movable bridge. By shifting the bridge the string could be stopped off into different lengths, which gave out, when plucked, different pitches of sound. The relative lengths of the stopped string offered a simple mathematical basis for the classification of musical intervals.

The clavichord worked on the same principle. At the back end of each key lever was an upright tangent, at first of wood, later of metal, which, when the key was depressed, sprang up against the wire string stretched above it. The blow of this tangent caused the wire to vibrate and produce sound; and at the same time the tangent determined the length of the string which was to vibrate, just as the finger determines the length of a violin string by stopping it at some point on the finger-board. The strings of the clavichord were so stretched that of the two lengths into which the tangent might

## THE CLAVICHORD AND ITS MECHANISM

divide them, the longer lay to the left. It was this longer length which was allowed to vibrate, giving the desired pitch; the shorter length to the right being muffled or silenced by strips of felt laid or woven across the strings. Thus the little tangents at the back end of the keys performed the double function of sounding the string by hitting it and determining its pitch by stopping it. Thus, too, one string served several keys. By the middle of the sixteenth century the normal range was four full octaves, from C to c<sup>3</sup>. There were many more keys than strings, which was a serious restriction upon music for the instrument; for notes which lay as closely together as, let us say, C-sharp and E could not be sounded at once, since both must be played upon the same string. Not until practically the beginning of the eighteenth century were clavichords made with a string for each key. They were then called *bunfrei*, in distinction from the older clavichords, which had been called *gebunden*.

The clavichord always remained square or oblong in shape, and for many years had no legs of its own, but was set upon a table like a box—hence one of its old names, *Schachbrett*, chess-board. The case was often of beautiful wood, sometimes inlaid and adorned with scrolls, and the under side of the cover was often painted with allegorical pictures and pious or sententious mottoes. The keys were small, the touch extremely light. The tone, though faint, had a genuine sweetness and an unusual warmth; and, by a trembling up and down movement of the wrist while the finger still pressed the key, the skilled player could give to it a palpitating quality, allied to the vibrato of the human voice or the violin, which went by the name of *Bebung*. This lifelike pulsing of tone was its most precious peculiarity, one which unhappily is lacking to the pianoforte, in most ways immeasurably superior. Hardly less prized by players who esteemed fineness of

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expression above clearness and brilliance, was the responsiveness of its tone to delicate gradations of touch. This made possible fine shading and intimate nuances. On this account it was highly valued, especially in Germany, as a practice instrument, upon which the student could cultivate a discriminating sensitive touch, and by which his ear could be trained to refinement of perception.

The tone of the clavichord was extremely delicate. Its subtle carrying quality could not secure it a place in the rising orchestras, nor in the concert hall. It belonged in the study, or by the fireside, and in such intimate places was enshrined and beloved by those who had ears for the finer whisperings of music. But not at once was it so beloved in the course of the early development of our instrumental music. Frail and restricted, it was but a makeshift to bring within the circle of the family the growing music of its powerful overshadowing prototype—the organ.

The harpsichord was quite different and shared with its weaker sister only the keyboard and the wire strings. It was in essence a harp or a psalter played by means of a keyboard. The strings were tuned as in a harp and were plucked by means of quills attached to the key-levers. The tone was sharp and dry and could not be influenced by the player's touch. Instruments of this nature seem first to have been made in England. At any rate it was in England that a considerable literature was first written for them. The English virginals are small harpsichords. The origin of the quaint name is no longer carried back to the love of the Virgin Queen Elizabeth for such music as the instrument could produce. Nor is it likely that it was so named on account of its size (it could be held on the lap), whereby it recommended itself to the convenience of young ladies with a musical turn. Most likely its name is due to its range, which was the high range of a young woman's

## THE HARPSICHORD

voice, an octave higher than the centre octave of the organ.

The harpsichord, or, more exactly, instruments which were plucked by quills attached to key-levers, went by many names besides virginals. In Italy it was called the *clavicembalo*, later the *gravicembalo*, or merely *cembalo*; in France the *clavecin*; in Germany the *Kiel-flügel*. The more or less general name of spinet seems to be derived from the name of a famous Italian maker working at the beginning of the sixteenth century, Giovanni Spineta, of Venice.

These instruments developed side by side with the clavichord but to much greater proportions. In the course of time several strings were strung for one note, one or all of which might be used, at the discretion of the player, by means of stops similar in appearance and use to organ stops. Sometimes the extra strings of a note would be tuned at the octave or upper fifth, permitting the player to produce the mixture effects common to the organ. Many instruments were fitted with two and even three banks of keys, which operated upon distinct sets of strings, or might bring some special sort of quill into play; and these keyboards could be used independently for contrast, or coupled for volume, or the music might be divided upon them. There were also pedals for special effects.

There was great need of these numerous sets of strings, these various sorts of quills, these keyboards and devices for coupling them, because the mechanism of the harpsichord action was unsusceptible to the fine gradations of touch. It was essentially a mechanical instrument; its range of what we may call tone-shading was defined by the number of purely mechanical adjuncts with which it happened to be furnished. Variety depended upon the ingenuity of the player in bringing these means into play. This does not, of course, imply that there was no skill in 'touching' the harpsichord.

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The player had to practice hours then as now, to make his touch light and, above all, regular and even. The slightest clumsiness was perhaps even more evident to the ear of the listener in the frosty tones of the harpsichord than it would be to-day in the warmer and less distinct tone of the pianoforte. But once this evenness and lightness attained, the science of 'touch' was mastered and the player proceeded to search out musical effects in other directions.

In the course of these years from 1500 to 1750 it was made more and more to impress the ear by means of added strings and stops and sets of quills, till it became the musical keystone of chamber music, of growing orchestra and flowering opera. At the same time it was made ever more beautiful to the eye. It grew fine in line and graceful in shape; its wood was exquisitely finished and varnished; it was inlaid with mother-of-pearl, and was beautifully decorated and enscrolled. The keys were small and usually of box-wood, the diatonic keys often black, the chromatic keys white with mother-of-pearl or ivory. Artisan and artist lavished their skill upon it. What a centre it became! How did it sound under the fingers of Count Corsi, behind the scenes of his private theatre in the Palazzo Corsi at Florence, while noble men and gentle ladies sang out the story of Orpheus and Eurydice to a great king of France and Maria de Medici his bride, when the first Italian opera was sung in public?

The great Monteverdi's antique orchestra clustered about two harpsichords, only a few years later in Mantua, when 'Ariadne' brought tears to the eyes of princes. How was it in Venice when Cavalli was of all musicians the most famous, in the public theatre of San Cassiano? It supported the oratorios of Carissimi in Rome, and his cantatas as well. And in 1679 the great Bernardo Pasquini, organist of the people and the senate of Rome, presided at the harpsichord when the new theatre of



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Capranica was opened, and the amiable Corelli led the violins. And so they all presided at the harpsichord, these brilliant writers of operas now of all music the most discarded, down to the days of the great Scarlatti in Naples, of Handel in London, of Keiser and Graun in Hamburg, and Hasse, the beloved Saxon, in Dresden. Lully the iron-willed, he who watched alertly the eyebrow of great King Louis XIV of France, sat at his harpsichord in his lair and spilled snuff on the keys while he wrought his operas out of them. Then there was Mattheson, who would sing Antony, and die in the part, yet would come back and play the harpsichord in the Hamburg opera house orchestra after all the house had seen him die. He was determined to sit at the harpsichord, in the centre of the orchestra, and accompany his Egyptian queen to death, when all knew he should rightfully be waiting for her in Heaven with a lyre!

The harpsichord was indeed the centre of public music of orchestra and opera. Even after a race of virtuosi had pulled it to the fore as a brilliant solo instrument it still held its serviceable place in the orchestra. When in the course of time overtures became symphonies, it was still from the harpsichord that the conductor, usually the composer, led the performance of them. Gluck wished to banish it from the orchestra of the opera house; but, when Haydn came to London in 1790 and again in 1794 to lead a performance of his specially composed symphonies, he sat at the instrument which, more than any other, had assisted at the growth of independent instrumental music—at the harpsichord, now slowly but surely withdrawing into the background before the victorious pianoforte.

It is easy to pick flaws in it, now that we can thunder it to silence with our powerful concert grands. It is natural to smile at its thin and none too certain sounds. It is difficult to imagine that the hottest soul of a musi-

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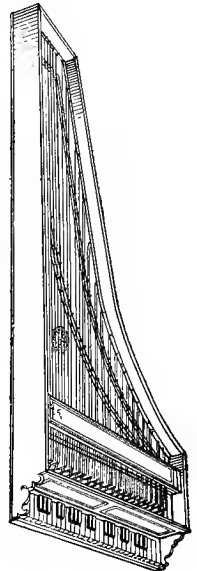
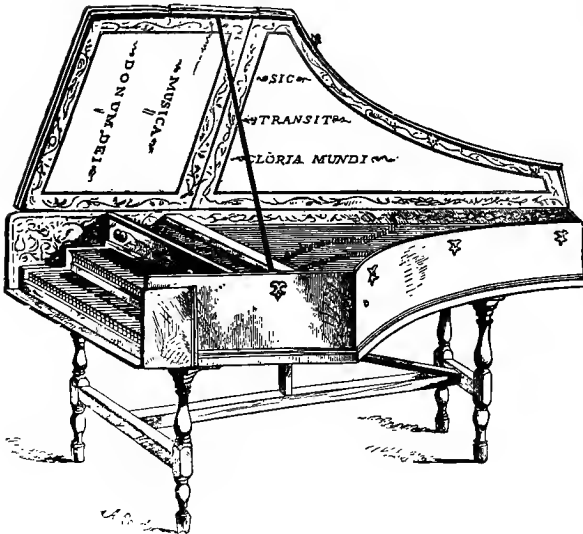
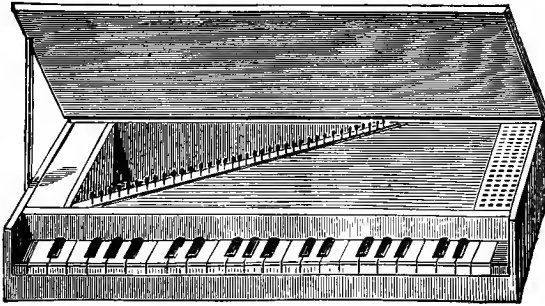
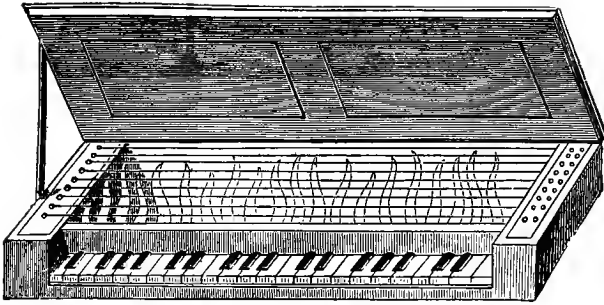
cian-poet could warm away the chill of it. But what a place it held, and how inextricably is it woven with the development of nearly all the music that now seems the freest speech of passion and imagination! What men gave service to it: Domenico Scarlatti, François Couperin, and Rameau; great Bach and Handel; the sons of Bach, some of them more famous once than their father; and the child Mozart, with a dozen courts at worship of him! The music they wrote for it has come down to us; we hear it daily in our concert halls. Few will deny that it gains in beauty and speaks with richer voice through our pianoforte; but they who wrote it never heard it so; and we who hear it, hear it not as they. Even when by the efforts of some devoted student it is brought to performance upon the instrument which saw its birth, we cannot truly hear it as it sounded once. We listen, as it were, to an intruder hailing from the past, whose usurpation of our modern ears we tolerate because we are curious and because he is winning. With the wigs and powder, the breeches and slippers, the bows and elegancies, it has faded into the past. Its sound is dumb and its spirit is gone.

## II

The clavichord and the harpsichord were the instruments upon which music was first shaped for the pianoforte during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Looming behind them and quite dominating them until the last quarter of the seventeenth, until even much later in Germany, was the organ. Instrumental music had a long road to travel before either of the two smaller instruments received the special attention of composers. The organ led this uncertain way, setting out milestones which mark the successive stages in the development of the great forms of instrumental music. Later bands of strings took this leadership away from









## BEGINNINGS OF HARPSICHORD MUSIC

her. Always the clavichord and the harpsichord followed submissively in the trail of the organ, or carried the *impedimenta* for the strings, until late in the seventeenth century. Considering the wilderness through which composers had to make their way, their progress was rapid. In the course of the seventeenth century they found forms and styles of music quite unknown when the march began.

In the year 1600 there was no pure-blooded instrumental music. The sets of pieces for organ, lute, or groups of instruments which had appeared up to that time, and such sets had appeared as early as 1502, were almost strict copies of vocal forms, in which the vocal style was scarcely altered. Frequently they were simply arrangements of famous madrigals and *chansons* of the day. The reason is obvious. For well over a century and a half, the best energy of musicians had gone into the perfecting of unaccompanied choral music, into masses and motets for the church, and into madrigals, the secular counterparts of the motets. Long years of labor had amassed a truly astonishing technique in writing this sort of music. The only art of music was the special art of vocal polyphony. Instruments were denied a style and almost a music of their own.\* But improvements in sonority and mechanism brought instruments into prominence, and the spirit of the Renaissance stimulated composers to experiment with music for them. This was the beginning of a new art, fraught with difficulties and problems, to meet which composers had only the skill acquired in the old.

By far the most serious of these was the problem of form. The new music was independent of words, and,

\* It should be noted in passing that during the early stages of the growth of polyphonic music, roughly from the eleventh to the fifteenth century, composers had brought over into their vocal music a great deal of instrumental technique or style, which had been developed on the crude organs, and on the accompanying instruments of the troubadours. In the period which we are about to treat the reverse is very plainly the case.

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in order to enjoy freedom from words of any sort and at the same time to exist and to walk abroad, it had to become articulate of itself; had, so to speak, to build a frame or a skeleton out of its proper stuff. It had to be firmly knit and well balanced.

The music of the masses of Palestrina, woven about a well-known text, like that of the madrigals and *chansons* of Arcadelt and Jannequin, which depended upon popular love-poems, was vague and formless. Such inner coherence as it had of itself was the result of continuous and skillful repetition of short phrases or motives in the course of the various voice-parts. In religious music these motives were for the most part fragments of the plain-song chant, nearly as old as the church itself; and masses frequently went by the name of the plain-song formula out of which they were thus built. Over and over again these bits of melody appeared, now in one part, now in another, the voices imitating each other so constantly that the style has been aptly called the imitative style. It was this style in which the great organists of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century first shaped music for the organ. It was the one principle of musical form upon which they knew how to build.

Thus were constructed the *ricercars* of the famous Andrea Gabrieli (d. 1586), Claudio Merulo (d. 1604), and Giovanni Gabrieli (d. 1612), the great pioneers. The name *ricercar* is itself significant. It came from *ricercare* (*rechercher*), to seek out over and over again. Such were the pieces, a constant seeking after the fleeing fragment of a theme. Older names, originally applied to vocal music, were *fuga* and *caccia*—flight and chase. Always there was the idea of pursuit. A little motive of a few notes was announced by one part. The other parts entered one by one upon the hunt of this leader, following, as best the composer could make them, in its very footsteps.



## THE GABRIELIS AND MERULO

There was a unity in this singleness of purpose, a very logical coherence, so long as the leader was not lost sight of. Little counter-themes might join in the chase and give a spice of variety within the unity. But unhappily for the musical form of these early works, the theme which began was run to earth long before the end of the piece; another took its place and was off on a new trail, again to be run down and to give way to yet a third leader. Unity and coherence were lost, the piece ambled on without definite aim or limit. There is, however, a piece by Giovanni Gabrieli in which the opening theme and a definite counter-theme are adhered to throughout. This is a rather brilliant exception, becoming as the century grows older more and more the rule until, other principles mastered and applied, composers have built up one of the great forms, the true *fugue*. Toward the end of the sixteenth century the name *fantasia* is applied to this same incoherent form and in the seventeenth that of *capriccio* appears. Later, at the time of Bach, the word *ricercar* signified a fugue worked with unusual technical skill.\*

The *ricercar* was the most important of the early instrumental forms, if form it may be called which was at first but a style. The *canzona*, another form at first equally favored by composers, was destined to have but little effect upon the development of keyboard music. There was no real principle of construction underlying it. It was merely the instrumental counterpart of the famous French *chansons* of the day. These were part-songs divided into several contrasting sections according to the stanzas of the poems to which they were set. Some of the sections were in simple chord style, like hymns of the present day; others in more or less elaborate polyphonic style. The instrumental *canzona* fol-

\* At the head of Sebastian Bach's *Musikalisches Opfer* stands the Latin superscription: *Regis Iussu Cantio et Reliqua Canonica Arte Resoluta*. The initial letters form the word *ricercar*.

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lowed the same plan. The sections were irregular in length, in number and in metre; and the piece as a whole lacked unity and balance. After the middle of the seventeenth century it was generally abandoned by organists. Other composers, however, took it up, and by regulating the length and number of the various sections, by expanding them, and, finally, by bringing each to a definite close, laid the foundations for the famous Italian *sonata da chiesa*, cousin germain to the better known Suite.

Other names appear in the old collections, such as Toccata and Prelude, which even to-day have more or less vague meaning and then were vaguer still. Toccata was at first a general name for any keyboard music. All instrumental music was originally *sonata* (from *sonare*, to sound), in distinction from *cantata* (from *cantare*, to sing); and from *sonata* keyboard music was specially distinguished by the appellation *toccata* (from *toccare*, to touch). When a characteristic keyboard style had at last worked itself free of the old vocal style, the word toccata signified a piece of music which need have no particular form but must display the particular brilliance of the new style.

The Prelude, too, was at first equally free of the limits of form. As the name plainly tells, it was a short bit of music preparatory to the greater piece to come. Not long ago it was still the fashion for concert pianists to preludize before beginning their programs, running scales and arpeggios over an improvised series of harmonies. The old preludes were essentially the same, very seriously limited, of course, by the childish condition of instrumental technique, and more or less aimless because harmonies were then undefined and unstable. Toward the middle of the seventeenth century organists built up definite schemes, if not forms, of preludizing before the singing of chorales in the Lutheran Church; but this art was naturally restricted to

## EARLY FORMS

the organ. Preludes for the harpsichord and clavi-chord took on definite form only when the relatively modern system of major and minor keys had grown up out of the ruin of the ancient system of ecclesiastical modes.

Indeed, it is not an exaggeration to say that all forms of instrumental music had to attend the definite shaping and establishment of the harmonic idea of music. This was a slow process, and nearly all instrumental music written before 1650, no matter how skillfully the thematic material is woven, lacks to our ears logical form, because of the vagueness or the monotony of its harmony. The system of harmony upon which our great instrumental music rests is so clear and familiar that it is hard for us to imagine another art of music in which it did not constitute a groundwork, in the structure of which, indeed, it held no firm place. Yet in the magnificent vocal music in the style of which Palestrina has left imperishable models, harmony, as we understand it to-day, did not enter. He and his great predecessors were guided seldom, it is easy to say they were guided not at all, by the beauties of chord progressions. They did not aim at modulations. Rather, by the rules of the art of their day, modulation was forbidden them. No composer might lead his music out of the *mode* in which it began, to bewilder his hearer in a vague ecstasy of unrest, later to soothe him, gently shifting the harmonies back again home. Before his mind was the ideal of weaving many voice-parts, and to his pen the skill of countless imitations and independent melodies. The beauty of consonance after dissonance could not be appreciated by him, since to him each dissonance was a blemish. His was a music of flowing concord. Such harmonic discord as was inevitable was so smoothly prepared, so gently touched, that it now passes all but unobserved. This was essentially religious music.

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Many causes brought about the awakening of musicians to the beauty of harmony and its expressive power. The most effectual was the growing opera. The aim of the first writers of opera was the combination of dramatic recitation and music, from the union of which they shaped a style of music we now call *recitative*. The singing or reciting voice was accompanied by a few scattered chords upon the harpsichord, these chords serving at first mainly to mark cadences, later little by little to intensify the emotion of the play. It was then but a step to dramatic effects of harmony, to harsh, unprepared discords. The player at the harpsichord, always the nucleus about which the operatic orchestra grouped itself, began to appreciate chords as a power in music. The organist, under the influence of the dramatic style, thought of chords now and then in his slow-moving *ricercars*. The modes were broken down. A new system of scales, our own, grew up, which was adaptable to the new need of composers, to the sequence and contrast of chords. Harmony grew into music, became more than themes, than imitation and pursuit, the balance of its form.

Until music had thus knit itself anew upon harmony, it was fundamentally unstable. Toccatas, *ricercars*, canzonas, preludes, even fugues, all wandered unevenly, without proper aim, until harmony came to lay the contrast and balance of chords and keys as the great principle of form. Especially was instrumental music dependent upon this logical principle, for, as we have noted, music without words stands in vital need of self-sufficing form, and without it totters and falls in scattered pieces.

The best skill at knitting themes together was of no avail without harmony. It left but a texture of music flapping to the caprice of the wind of invention. Or, to change the figure, composers laid block by block along the ground; but, without harmony, had not the art to

## FRESCOBALDI—OTHER ORGANIST-COMPOSERS

build them up one upon the other into lasting temples. And so the music of the Gabriellis, of Merulo, and of many another man from many a wide corner of Europe lies hidden in the past. It is tentative, not perfect. And the music of later and perhaps greater men lies similarly hidden.

### III

The construction of instrumental music on the basis of one central key with excursions or modulations into other keys for the sake of development and variety began to be understood about the middle of the seventeenth century. A very noticeable advance in this direction shows in the music of Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583-1644), one of the most brilliant organists before the time of Bach. Much of his music has an archaic sound to our ears. He is by no means wholly free of the old modal restrictions. But he stands as one of the pioneers in the relatively new art of organ music—a bold innovator, guided by the unerring taste of a great artist.

A romantic glory is about his name. As a player he was probably unmatched in his day, and his fame was widespread. It is said that when he played in St. Peter's at Rome, where for many years he held the position of organist, the vast cathedral was filled with people come to hear him. One of the great masters of the next generation, the German Froberger, was granted four years of absence from his duties at the court of Vienna, that he might go to study with Frescobaldi in Rome. His compositions were published in several sets, which included *ricercars*, *toccatas*, *preludes*, *canzonas*, *capriccios*, and so forth. All these, not excepting even the preludes, are in the contrapuntal style which is the outgrowth of the old vocal polyphony. But they are greatly enlivened by rapid figures, scales and *arpeggios* as well as trills and ornamental devices.

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Such figures, being not at all suitable to voices but only to a keyboard instrument, mark the progress of the keyboard style toward a distinct individuality if not independence from the ancient past of vocal masses and motets, an independence which no great music has ever quite achieved.

All these sets of pieces were written in good faith for the harpsichord as well as for the organ. But in reality, except in so far as certain principles of form are valuable to all music, and a few figures of musical ornamentation are common to all keyboard music, harpsichord music profits but vicariously from Frescobaldi. His music is essentially organ music, and the development it marks as accomplished, and that toward which it points, are proper to the organ and not to the harpsichord. To the one instrument breadth and power are fitting, to the other lightness and fleetness. Inasmuch as the same distinction exists between the organ and the pianoforte at the present day, with some allowances made for improvements in the mechanism of the organ and for the great sonority of the pianoforte, which allowances affect only the degree but not the kind of differences, Frescobaldi can be said to have influenced the development of pianoforte music only by what he contributed toward the solution of very general problems of form and structure.

The same must be said of many other great organists of his and of later days, such as Zweelinck, Samuel Scheidt, Buxtehude, Bohm, Pachelbel, and others. It may be noted that after the death of Frescobaldi the art of organ-playing passed from Italy, the land of its birth and first considerable growth, to Germany. Here a great line of virtuosi added more and more to the splendor and dignity of organ music, perfecting and embellishing style, inventing new forms and making them firm. They remained loyal to the polyphonic style, partly because this is almost essentially proper

## ENGLISH VIRGINAL COLLECTIONS

to the organ with its unlimited power to sustain tone; partly because it is the impressive and noble style of music most in keeping with the spirit of the church, from which the organ will apparently never be wholly dissociated.\*

It cannot be said that this style is in any measure so fitting to the harpsichord and the clavichord or to the pianoforte. For these, a markedly different sort of polyphony has been devised. But so long as organists alone walked in music with the power of assurance—and they were well in command of the problems of their special art while other instrumentalists and writers of operas were floundering about—so long did their influence keep instrumental music in sway.

How, then, did the great organists of the sixteenth and the seventeenth century affect the growth of pianoforte music? By establishing certain forms, notably the fugue, which have been adapted to every kind of serious instrumental music and to the pianoforte with only less propriety than to the organ; by helping to lay the harmonic foundation of music which, as we have said, is the basis for all music down to the present day and is but now being forsaken; by discovering the effectiveness of certain styles of ornamentation and runs which are essentially common to all keyboard instruments. They helped to give music a form made of its own stuff, and a beauty and permanence which is the result of such form perfected. In their workshops two of such forms were rough-hewn which proved of later service to pianoforte music—the harmonic prelude and the fugue.

We must look elsewhere for the development of other forms, less perfect perhaps, but no less important in the history of pianoforte music. Such are the rondo and the variation form. The rondo may be mentioned here because of its great antiquity. Like the ballade,

\* Cf. Vol. VI, Chap. XV.

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it was originally a dance song, really a song with a burden and varying couplets. No form could be simpler. The burden recurring regularly gives an impression of unity, which, only in case of too many recurrences, has the fault of monotony. The varying couplets, constituting the episodes between the reiterations of the burden or main theme, offer variety and contrast. Yet, in spite of the merits of this scheme of musical structure, the form was little used by composers down to the beginning of the eighteenth century. Relatively long pieces of music, in which the rondo form could be used, were generally written in the style of fugues. Furthermore, until the harmonic art was developed and the contrast of keys appreciated, the episodes, being restricted by the old modal laws to the tonality of the main theme, would be in a great measure without the virtue of contrast.

The variation form, on the other hand, was greatly used, conspicuously so by a number of writers for the virginal in England, whose works, surviving in several ancient collections, form a unique and practically isolated monument in the history of pianoforte music. These collections have often been described in detail and carefully analyzed. The most comprehensive is that long known as the Queen Elizabeth Virginal Book, now called merely the Fitzwilliam Collection, a beautifully worked manuscript preserved in the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge. Others are Benjamin Cosyn's Virginal Book and Will Foster's, both of which are at Buckingham Palace; a smaller book, known as Lady Nevile's Book, and the *Parthenia*, famous as the first collection of virginal music printed in England.

The *Parthenia* was printed in 1611. But an old manuscript collection, the Mulliner Collection, contains music that can hardly be later than 1565. The activity of the English composers, therefore, during the years between 1565 and 1611 produced an extraordinary



## ENGLISH VIRGINAL COLLECTIONS

amount of music designed expressly for the virginal or harpsichord. Among the composers three stand out prominently: John Bull, William Byrd, and Orlando Gibbons; Byrd by reason of his fine artistic sense, Bull by his instinct for instrumental effect. Indeed, Bull, though a great organist, was a virtuoso for the harpsichord quite as remarkable in a limited sphere as Liszt was to be in a much broader one. In much of his virginal music there is a variety of figuration far more in keeping with the peculiar nature of the instrument for which it was written than that which is to be found in the work of his successors of any land, nearly to the time of Domenico Scarlatti.

Of all forms of musical structure, the most frequently employed in the works which make up these collections is the variation form. It is to be understood, of course, that these variations are not the variations of Bach, of Beethoven, Schumann, and Brahms. These great masters subjected their chosen themes to the influences of diverse moods, as it were, from which the themes took on new rhythm, new form, even new harmony. They were born with a great instrumental technique to hand, from which to select a thousand devices wherewith to adorn and color their themes. Byrd, Bull, and Gibbons, for all their conspicuous genius, could not expand to great proportion the art of writing for domestic keyboard instruments. It was still in a weak infancy. Nor was the emotional power of music at all appreciated at that time, nor the treatment of the same theme as the expression of various emotions in turn likely to occur to the mind of the most gifted of musicians.

The variation form, then, was merely a means to spin out a piece of considerable length, which should yet have consistency and coherence. The theme itself was scarcely if at all altered in its various repetitions, but went on over and over again, while the composer added above it an ever more complicated or a more

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animated counterpoint. The counterpoint was for the most part conjunct; that is to say, that it progressed by short steps, not by skips. Scales are therefore far more frequent than arpeggios. The shade of the old vocal art is deep even over these composers. John Bull alone is, as we have said, at times astonishingly modern. His brilliant imagination devised arpeggio figures which to-day have by no means lost their effectiveness, and he could split up the theme itself into a series of lively, skipping figures.

Any theme, from the ancient plain-song or from the treasure of folk-music, was suitable to serve as a 'ground' to these variations, or divisions, as they were called. One comes across delightful old dance-tunes and songs popular in that day. These in themselves are full of the charm of English melody, but when harnessed, as it were, to the slow-moving counterpoint of the variation style, with its archaic harmony and lifeless rhythm, they are robbed of their spirit and their life. We have saved to us again a dead music.

Most lifeless of all, and almost laughably pompous in their rigor, are the variations on the first six notes of the scale, the so-called *Fantasias on ut re mi fa sol la*. Every composer tried a hand at this sort of composition. The six notes usually marched up and down the scale, with no intermission. A great deal of modulation was attempted. Sometimes the formula was gone through upon the successive notes of the scale. It was set upon its way in various rhythms, sometimes in long, steady notes, again in rapid notes, yet again in dotted rhythms. At the best the result was a display of some cleverness on the part of the composer, a bit of daring in chromatic alterations, some novelty in combinations of rhythms. It can hardly be supposed that they expressed any æsthetic aspiration. They stand in relation to the development of pianoforte music only as technical exercises of a sort.

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The same may be said in some instances of the variations upon songs, but is not in the main true. Here is distinctly a groping toward beauty, largely in the dark, to be sure, but tending, on the one hand, toward the development of a fitness of style and, on the other, of a broad and varied form, the noble possibilities of which have become manifest through the genius of all the great instrumental composers since the time of Bach.

The influence of these gifted Englishmen and their extraordinary work upon the development of harpsichord music in general was probably relatively slight. A piece by Sweelinck, the famous Dutch organist, is in the Fitzwilliam collection; a fact which points to the intimacy between Holland and England in matters musical. The presence of famous English organists in Holland throughout the first half of the seventeenth century points in the same direction. But the course of harpsichord music in Holland and Germany was, down to the time of Emanuel Bach, guided by organ music. Inasmuch as perhaps the most remarkable feature of this English virginal music is the occasional flashes of instrumental skill and of intuition for harpsichordal effects from the pen of John Bull, and as these stirred to no emulation in Germany, the effect of the English virginal music as such upon the history of the special art may be set down as practically negligible. The famous collections endure, quite like Purcell's music a whole century later, as an isolated monument of a sudden national development.

The toccata, prelude, fugue, and variations are the results of the labor of musicians during the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth centuries to invent and improve forms of music which, as independent compositions, might impress the hearer with their organic unity, so to speak, and serve as dignified expression of their own skill and their own ideals of beauty.

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Of these the prelude alone, with its basis of chord sequences, is wholly a product of the new time. The others rest heavily upon the vocal skill of the past. None of them, however, is perfect. Skill in laying a harmonic groundwork of wide proportions is still to be acquired; and, so far as the harpsichord and clavichord are concerned, a sense for instrumental style and special instrumental effects has to be cultivated much further. We shall have to wait another half-century before that sense has become keen enough to influence development of harpsichord music.

### IV

Meanwhile the growth and relative perfection of another form is to be observed, namely, the suite.\* This is a conventional group of four short pieces in dance forms and rhythms. A great amount of dance music had been published for the lute in Italy as early as 1502. Of the twenty-one pieces published in the *Parthenia* more than a hundred years later, five were pavans and ten were galliards. In all these early dance pieces the rhythm is more or less disguised under a heavy polyphonic style; so we may presume that they were not intended to be played in the ballroom, but rather that the short and symmetrical forms of good dance music were regarded by composers as serviceable molds into which to cast their musical inspirations. Indeed, they must have made a strong appeal to composers at a time when they were baffled in their instrumental music by ignorance of the elementary principles of musical structure.

The early Italian lute collections already reveal a tendency on the part of composers to group at least two of these dances together. The two chosen are the

\* Suites were known in England as 'lessons,' in France as *ordres*, in Germany as *Partien*, and in Italy as *sonate da camera*.

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pavan and the galliard, the one a slow and stately dance in double time, the other a livelier dance in triple time. Often, it is true, these two are not grouped together in the printed collections; but it seems likely that the lutenists of the sixteenth century were fond of such a selection in performance. In 1597 Thomas Morley, an English musician, published in the form of dialogues his 'Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke.' In this he treated of dance music at some length, and made special note of the pleasing effect to be got by alternating pavans and galliards.

This group of two pieces is the nucleus about which the suite developed during the first half of the seventeenth century. The several steps in its growth are rather obscure; and, as they are to be observed more in music for groups of strings than in harpsichord music, it will serve us merely to mention them. The pavan and the galliard gave way early to the *allemande* and the *courante*. The origin of the former is doubtful. There were two kinds of courantes—one evidently native to France, the other to Italy. Both were in triple time, but were in many other ways clearly differentiated. To the *allemande* and *courante* was later added a slow dance from Spain—the *sarabande*; and before the middle of the century the *gigue*, or *giga*, from Italy, made secure its place as the last of the standard group of four. These four pieces so combined were invariably in the same key. Apart from this they had no relationship.\* The tie which held them together was wholly one of convention.

Such is the stereotype of the suite when it becomes firmly established in music for the harpsichord, as we

\* There was a form of suite akin to the variation form. In this the same melody or theme served for the various dance movements, being treated in the style of the *allemande*, *courante*, or other dances chosen. Cf. Peurl's Pavan, Intrada, Dantz, and Gaillarde (1611); and Schein's Pavan, Gaillarde, Courante, Allemande, and Tripla (1617). This variation suite is rare in harpsichord music. Froberger's suite on the old air, *Die Mayerin*, is a conspicuous exception.

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find it in the works of the German J. J. Froberger. Froberger died in 1667, but his suites for harpsichord, twenty-eight in all, were written earlier; some in 1649, others in 1656, according to autograph copies. He had been a wanderer over the face of Europe. After studying with Frescobaldi in Rome he had spent some years in Paris, where he had come into contact with French composers for the harpsichord, whose work we shall discuss later on. Thence he had gone to London, where his skill in playing the organ and harpsichord seems to have lifted him from the mean position of pumping air into the organ at Westminster (he had been robbed on his journey and had reached London friendless and poverty-stricken) to that of court favorite. Later he returned to Europe, evidently pursued by ill luck, and he died at Héricourt, near Montbelliard, at the home of Sibylla, Duchess of Würtemberg, a pupil who had offered him refuge.

By far the majority of his suites for the harpsichord, and be it noted they are for harpsichord and not for organ, are in the orthodox order of *Allemande*, *Courante*, *Sarabande*, and *Gigue*. The dances are all constructed upon the same plan, a plan at the basis of which the new idea of harmony has at last been solidly established. Each piece is divided neatly into two sections of about equal length, each of which is repeated. The harmonic groundwork is simple and clear. The dance opens in the tonic key. If the piece is major it modulates to the dominant, if minor to the relative major; and in that key the first section ends. This section having been repeated, the second section begins in the key in which the first section left off, and modulates back again, usually through one or two keys, to end in the tonic. The whole makes a compact little piece, very neatly balanced. It would seem to be quite sealed in perfection and to contain no possibilities of new growth; but the short passages of free modulation

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through which the second section pursues its way from dominant or relative major back to tonic contained germs of harmonic unrest which were to swell the whole to proportions undreamed of.

The change from tonic to dominant and back, with the few timid modulations in the second section, offered practically all the contrast and variety there was within the limits of a single piece. Except in the *sarabande*, the musical texture was woven in a flowing style. The effect is one of constant motion. A figure, not a theme, predominated. The opening figure, it is true, was modified, often gave way to quite a different figure in the dominant key; but the style remained always the same, and there was but the slightest suggestion of contrast in the way one figure glided into another.

In the suite as a whole, the uniformity of key which ruled over all four movements precluded in the main all contrast but the contrast of rhythm. Yet a few peculiarities of style became associated with each of the dances and thus gave more than rhythmical variety to the whole. The counterpoint of the *allemande*, for example, was more open and more dignified, so to speak, than that of the fleet, sparkling Italian *courante*. In the French *courante* a counterpoint of dotted quarters and eighths prevailed, and a shifting between  $6/4$  and  $3/2$  rhythm stamped the movement with a rhythmic complexity not at all present in the other movements. The second section of the *gigue* was almost invariably built upon an inversion of the figures of the first section, and the solid chord style of the *sarabande* not only contrasted radically with the style of *allemande*, *courante*, and *gigue*, but, moreover, beguiled composers into the expression of personal emotion now noble, now tender, which put *sarabandes* in general in a class by themselves amid the music of that time.

Though the normal suite was constituted of these four dances in the order we have named, other dances

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came to find a place therein. Of these the favorites were *gavottes*, *minuets*, *bourrées*, *loures*, *passepieds*, and others; and they were inserted in any variety or sequence between the sarabande and the gigue. Sometimes in place of extra dances, or among them, is to be found an *air* or *aria*, the salient quality of which is not rhythm, but melody, usually highly ornamented in the style made universally welcome by the Italian opera. More rarely the air was simple and was followed by several variations. The best known of these airs and variations which were incorporated into suites is probably Handel's famous set upon a melody, not his own, which has long gone by the name of 'The Harmonious Blacksmith.' By the beginning of the eighteenth century many composers were accustomed to begin their suites with a prelude, usually in harmonic style.

In the music of the great French lutenists and clavecinists of the seventeenth century the suite never crystallized into a stereotyped sequence. The principle of setting together several short pieces in the same key was none the less clearly at work, though nothing but the fancy of the composer seems to have limited the number of pieces which might be so united. On the other hand, the idea of emphasizing rhythm as the chief element of contrast within the suite was often secondary to the idea of contrasting mood. How much of this contrast of mood was actually effective it is hard to say, but the great number of little pieces composed either for lute or clavecin in France of the seventeenth century, were given picturesque or fanciful names by their composers.

This custom was firmly established by the great lutenist, Denis Gaultier, whose collection of pieces, *La rhétorique des dieux*, comprises some of the most exquisite and most beautifully worked music of the century. The pieces in the collection are grouped together by modes; but the modes by this time have become keys,



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and differ from each other in little except pitch. The greater part of the pieces are given names, borrowed for the most part from Greek mythology. *Phaëton foudroyé*, and *Juno, ou la jalouse* are indicative of the general tone of them.

Close upon Gaultier's pieces for lute came the harpsichord pieces of Jacques Champion, son of a family of organists, who took upon himself the name of Chambonnières. Two books of his pieces were published in 1670. Here again the pieces are grouped in keys, in, however, no definite number; and, though most have still only dance names to distinguish them, many are labelled with a title.

In spite of these titles, the tendency to call upon an external idea to aid in the construction of a piece of music is not evident in this early harpsichord music. There is little attempt at picture drawing in music. The names are at the most suggestive of a mood, indicative of the humor which in the composer gave birth to the music, hints to the listener upon the humor in which he was to take it. The structure of the music is independent of the titles, and is of a piece with the structure of the dance tunes which make up the German suite. The influence of this music was not important upon the growth of form, but upon the molding and refinement of style.

To be sure, a tendency toward realistic music crops out from time to time all through the seventeenth century. The twitter of birds no less than the roar of battle was attempted by many a composer, resulting, in the case of the latter especially, in hardly more than laughably childish imitations. Further than this composers did not often go until, just before Bach entered upon his professional career, J. F. Kuhnau, of Leipzig, published his extraordinary Biblical sonatas. Besides these, the 'Rhetoric of Gods,' the 'Hundred Varieties of Musical Fruit,' the 'jealous ladies' and the 'rare

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ladies,' even the battles and the gossips, all of which have been imitated in music, appear conventional and absolute. Here is narrative in music and a flimsiness of structure which is meaningless without a program. There are six of these strange compositions, upon the stories of David and Goliath, of David and Saul, of Jacob and Leah, and others. Some years later they undoubtedly suggested to Sebastian Bach the delicate little capriccio which he wrote upon the departure of his brother for the wars. Apart from this they are of slight importance except as indications of the experimental frame of mind of their composer. Indeed, beyond imitation and to a small extent description, neither harpsichord nor pianoforte music has been able to make much progress in the direction of program music.

Kuhnau's musical narratives were published in August, 1700. Earlier than this he had published his famous *Sonata aus dem B.* The work so named was appended to Kuhnau's second series of suites or *Partien*. It has little to recommend it to posterity save its name, which here appears in the history of clavier music for the first time. Nor does this name designate a form of music akin to the sonatas of the age of Mozart and Beethoven, a form most particularly associated with the pianoforte. Kuhnau merely appropriated it from music for string instruments. There it stood in the main for a work which was made up of several movements like the suite, but which differed from the suite in depending less upon rhythm and in having a style more dignified than that which had grown out of experiments with dance tunes. In addition, the various movements which constituted a sonata were not necessarily in the same key. Here alone it possessed a possible advantage over the suite. Yet though in other respects it cannot compare favorably to our ears with the suite, Kuhnau cherished the dignity of style and

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name with which tradition had endowed it. These he attempted to bestow upon music for the clavier.\*

The various movements lack definite form and balance. The first is in rather heavy chord style, the chords being supported by a dignified counterpoint in eighth notes. This leads without pause into a fugue on a figure of lively sixteenth notes. The key is B-flat major. There follows a short adagio in E-flat major, modulating to end in C minor, in which key the last movement, a short allegro in triple time, is taken up. The whole is rounded off by a return to the opening movement, signified by the sign *Da Capo*.

Evidently pleased with this innovation, Kuhnau published in 1696 a set of seven more sonatas called *Frische Clavier Früchte*. These show no advance over the *Sonata aus dem B* in mastery of musical structure. Still they are evidence of the efforts of one man among many to give clavier music a life of its own and to bring it in seriousness and dignity into line with the best instrumental music of the day, namely, with the works of such men as Corelli, Purcell, and Vivaldi. That he was unable to do this the verdict of future years seems to show. The attempt was none the less genuine and influential.

In the matter of structure, then, the seventeenth century worked out and tested but a few principles which were to serve as foundation for the masterpieces of keyboard music in the years to come. But these, though few, were of vast importance. Chief among them was the new principle of harmony. This we now, in the year 1700, find at the basis of fugue, of prelude and toccata, and of dance form, not always perfectly grasped but always in evidence. Musical form now and henceforth is founded upon the relation and contrast of keys.

\* 'Denn warum sollte man auf dem Clavier nicht eben wie auf anderen Instrumenten dergleichen Sachen tractieren können?' he writes in his preface to the 'Seven New Partien,' 1692.

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Consistently to hold to one thematic subject throughout a piece in polyphonic style, skillfully to contrast or weave with that secondary subjects, mark another stage of development passed. The fugue is the result, now articulate, though awaiting its final glory from the hand of J. S. Bach. To write little dance pieces in neat and precise form is an art likewise well mastered; and to combine several of these, written in the same key, in an order which, by affording contrast of rhythms, can stir the listener's interest and hold his attention, is the established rule for the first of the so-called cyclic forms, prototype of the symphony and sonata of later days. Such were the great accomplishments of the musicians of the seventeenth century in the matter of form.

### V

In the matter of style, likewise, much was accomplished. We have had occasion frequently to point out that in the main the harpsichord remained throughout the first half of the seventeenth century under the influence of the organ. For this instrument a conjunct or *legato* style has proved to be most fitting. Sudden wide stretches, capricious leaps, and detached runs seldom find a place in the texture of great organ music. The organist strives for a smoothness of style compatible with the dignity of the instrument, and this smoothness may be taken as corollary to the fundamental relationship between organ music and the vocal polyphony of the sixteenth century.

On the other hand, by comparison with the vocal style, the organ style is free. Where the composer of masses was restricted by the limited ability of the human voice to sing wide intervals accurately, the organist was limited only by the span of the hand. Where Palestrina could count only upon the ear of his singers

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to assure accurate intonation, the organist wrote for a keyboard which, supposing the organ to be in tune, was a mechanism that of itself could not go wrong. Given, as it were, a physical guarantee of accuracy as a basis for experiment, the organist was free to devise effects of sheer speed or velocity of which voices would be utterly incapable. He had a huge gamut of sounds equally at his command, a power that could be mechanically bridled or let loose. His instrument could not be fatigued while boys could be hired to pump the bellows. So long as his finger held down a key, or his foot a pedal, so long would the answering note resound, diminishing, increasing, increasing, diminishing, according to his desire, never exhausted.

Therefore we find in organ music, rapid scales, arpeggios rising from depths, falling from heights, new figures especially suited to the organ, such as the 'rocking' figure upon which Bach built his well-known organ fugue in D minor; deep pedal notes, which endure immutably while above them the artist builds a castle of sounds; interlinked chords marching up and down the keyboard, strong with dissonance. There are trills and ornamental turns, rapid thirds and sixths. And in all these things organ music displays what is its own, not what it has inherited from choral music.

Yet, notwithstanding the magnificent chord passages so in keeping with the spirit of the instrument, in which only the beauty of harmonic sequence is considered, the treatment of musical material by the organists is prevailingly polyphonic. The sound of a given piece is the sound of many quasi-independent parts moving along together, in which definite phrases or motives constantly reappear. The harmony on which the whole rests is not supplied by an accompaniment, but by the movement of the several voice-parts themselves in their appointed courses. And it may be said as a generality that these parts progress by steps not wider

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than that distance the hand can stretch upon the keyboard.

During the first half of the seventeenth century the harpsichord was but the echo of the organ. Even the collections of early English virginal music, which in some ways seem to offer a brilliant exception, are the work of men who as instrumentalists were primarily organists. In so far as they achieved an instrumental style at all it was usually a style fitting to a small organ. The few cases where John Bull's cleverness displayed itself in almost a true virtuoso style are exceptions which prove the rule. Not until the time of Chambonnières and Froberger do we enter upon a second stage.

About the middle of the seventeenth century Chambonnières was famous over Europe as a performer upon the harpsichord. As first clavicinist at the court of France, his manner of playing may be taken to represent the standard of excellence at that time. Constantine Huygens, a Dutch amateur exceedingly well-known in his day, mentions him many times in his letters with unqualified admiration, always as a player of the harpsichord, or as a composer for that instrument. Whatever skill he may have had as an organist did not contribute to his fame; and his two sets of pieces for harpsichord, published after his death in 1670, show the beginnings of a distinct differentiation between harpsichord and organ style.

The harpsichord possesses in common with the organ its keyboard or keyboards, which render the playing of solid chords possible. The lighter action of the harpsichord gives it the advantage over the organ in the playing of rapid passages, particularly of those light ornamental figures used as graces or embellishments, such as trills, mordents, and turns. A further comparison with the organ, however, reveals in the harpsichord only negative qualities. It has no volume of











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sound, no power to sustain tones, no deep pedal notes. Consequently the smooth polyphonic style which sounds rich and flowing on the organ, sounds dry and thin upon the weaker instrument. The composer who would utilize to advantage what little sonority there is in the harpsichord must be free to scatter notes here and there which have no name or place in the logic of polyphony, but which make his music sound well. Voice parts must be interrupted, notes taken from nowhere and added to chords. The polyphonic web becomes disrupted, but the harpsichord profits by the change. It is Chambonnières who probably first wrote in such a style for the harpsichord.

He learned little of it from what had been written for the organ, but much from music for the lute, which, quite as late as the middle of the century, was interchangeable with the harpsichord in accompaniments, and was held to be equal if not superior as a solo instrument. It was vastly more difficult to play, and largely for this reason fell into disuse. The harpsichord is by nature far nearer akin to it than to the organ. The free style which lutenists were driven to invent by the almost insuperable difficulties of their instrument, is nearly as suitable to the harpsichord as it is to the lute. Without doubt the little pieces of Denis Gaultier were played upon the harpsichord by many an amateur who had not been able to master the lute. The skilled lutenist would find little to give him pause in the harpsichord music of Chambonnières. The quality of tone of both instruments is very similar. For neither is the strict polyphony of organ music appropriate; for the lute it is impossible. Therefore it fell to the lutenists first to invent the peculiar instrumental style in which lie the germs of the pianoforte style; and to point to their cousins, players of the harpsichord, the way towards independence from organ music.

Froberger came under the influence of Denis Gaultier

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and Chambonnières during the years he spent in Paris, and he adopted their style and made it his own. He wrote, it is true, several sets of *ricercars*, *capriccios*, *canzonas*, etc., for organ or harpsichord, and in these the strict polyphonic style prevails, according to the conventionally more serious nature of the compositions. But his fame rests upon the twenty-eight suites and fragments of suites which he wrote expressly for the harpsichord. These are closely akin to lute music, and from the point of view of style are quite as effective as the music of Chambonnières. In harmony they are surprisingly rich. Be it noted, too, in passing, that they are not lacking in emotional warmth. Here is perhaps the first harpsichord music which demands beyond the player's nimble fingers his quick sympathy and imagination—qualities which charmed in Froberger's own playing.

Kuhnau as a stylist is far less interesting than Froberger, upon whose style, however, his *clavier suites* are founded. His importance rests in the attempts he made to adapt the sonata to the clavier, in his experiments with descriptive music, and in the influence he had upon his contemporaries and predecessors, notably Bach and Handel. Froberger is the real founder of pianoforte music in Germany, and beyond him there is but slight advance either in style or matter until the time of Sebastian Bach.

What we may now call the harpsichord style, as exemplified in the suites of Chambonnières and Froberger, is relatively free. Both composers had a fondness for writing in four parts, but these parts are not related to each other, nor woven together unbrokenly as in the polyphonic style of the organ. They cannot often be clearly followed throughout a given piece. The upper voice carries the music along, the others accompany. The arrangement is not wholly an inheritance from the lute, but is in keeping with the general ten-

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dency in all music, even at times in organ music, toward the monodic style, of which the growing opera daily set the model.

But the harpsichord style of this time is by no means a simple system of melody and accompaniment. Though the three voice parts which support the fourth dwell together often in chords, they are not without considerable independent movement. They constitute the harmonic background, as it were, which, though serving as background, does not lack animation and character in itself. In other words, we have a contrapuntal, not a polyphonic, style.

A marked feature of the music is the profuse number of graces and embellishments. These rapid little figures may be akin to the vocal embellishments which even at the beginning of the seventeenth century were discussed in theoretical books; but they seem to flower from the very nature of the harpsichord, the light tone and action of which made them at once desirable and possible. They are but vaguely indicated in the manuscripts, and there can be no certainty as to what was the composer's intention or his manner of performance. Doubtless they were left to the discretion of the player. At any rate for a century more the player took upon himself the liberty of ornamenting any composer's music to suit his own whim. These *agrémens* \* were held to be and doubtless were of great importance. Kuhnau, in the preface to his *Frische Clavier Früchte*, speaks of them as the sugar to sweeten the fruit, even though he left them much to the taste of players; and Emanuel Bach in the second half of the eighteenth century devoted a large part of his famous book on playing the clavier to an analysis and minute explanation of the host of them that had by then become stereotyped. They have not, however, come down into piano-

\* So they were called in France, which until the time of Beethoven set the model for harpsichord style. In Germany they were called *Manieren*.

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forte music. It is questionable if they can be reproduced on the pianoforte, the heavy tone of which obscures the delicacy which was their charm. They must ever present difficulty to the pianist who attempts to make harpsichord music sound again on the instrument which has inherited it.

The freedom from polyphonic restraint, inherited from the lute, and the profusion of graces which have sprouted from the nature of the harpsichord, mark the diversion between music for the harpsichord and music for the organ. In other respects they are still much the same; that is to say, the texture of harpsichord music is still close—restricted by the span of the hand. This is not necessarily a sign of dependence on the organ, but points rather to the young condition of the art. It is not to be expected that the full possibilities of an instrument will be revealed to the first composers who write for it expressly. They lie hidden along the way which time has to travel. But Chambonnières, in France, and Froberger, in Germany, opened up the special road for harpsichord music, took the first step which others had but to follow.

Neither in France nor in Germany did the next generation penetrate beyond. Le Gallois, a contemporary of Chambonnières, has remarked that of the great player's pupils only one, Hardelle, was able to approach his master's skill. Among those who carried on his style, however, must be mentioned d'Anglebert,\* Le Begue,† and Louis and François Couperin, relatives of the great Couperin to come.

In Germany Georg and Gottlieb Muffat stand nearly alone with Kuhnau in the progress of harpsichord music between Froberger and Sebastian Bach. Georg Muffat spent six years in Paris and came under French

\* D'Anglebert published in 1689 a set of pieces, for the harpsichord, containing twenty variations on a melody known as *Folies d'Espagne*, later immortalized by Corelli.

† Le Begue (1630-1702) published *Pièces de clavecin* in 1677.

## PASQUINI AND A. SCARLATTI

influence as Froberger had come, but his chief keyboard works (*Apparatus Musico Organisticus* (1690)) are twelve toccatas more suited to organ than to harpsichord. In 1727 his son Gottlieb had printed in Vienna *Componimenti musicali per il cembalo*, which show distinctly the French influence. Kuhnau looms up large chiefly on account of his sonatas, which are in form and extent the biggest works yet attempted for clavier. By these he pointed toward a great expansion of the art; but as a matter of fact little came of it. In France, Italy, and Germany the small forms were destined to remain the most popular in harpsichord music; and the sonatas and concertos of Bach are immediately influenced by study of the Italian masters, Corelli and Vivaldi.

In Italy, the birthplace of organ music and so of a part of harpsichord music, interest in keyboard music of any kind declined after the death of Frescobaldi in 1644, and was replaced by interest in opera and in music for the violin. Only one name stands out in the second half of the century, Bernardo Pasquini, of whose work, unhappily, little remains. He was famous over the world as an organist, and the epitaph on his tombstone gives him the proud title of organist to the Senate and People of Rome. Also he was a skillful performer on the harpsichord; but he is more nearly allied to the old polyphonic school than to the new. A number of works for one and for two harpsichords are preserved in manuscript in the British Museum, and these are named sonatas. Some are actually suites, but those for two harpsichords have little trace of dance music or form and may be considered as much sonatas as those works which Kuhnau published under the same title. All of Kuhnau's sonatas appeared before 1700 and the date on the manuscript in the British Museum is 1704. Pasquini was then an old man, and it is very probable that these sonatas were written some years earlier; in

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which case he and not Kuhnau may claim the distinction of first having written music for the harpsichord on the larger plan of the violin concerto and the sonatas of Corelli.\*

Two books of toccatas by Alessandro Scarlatti give that facile composer the right to be numbered among the great pioneers in the history of harpsichord music. These toccatas are in distinct movements, usually in the same key, but sharply contrasted in content. The seventh is a theme and variations, in which Scarlatti shows an appreciation of tonal effects and an inventiveness which are astonishingly in advance of the time. He foreshadows unmistakably the brilliant style of his son Domenico; indeed, he accounts in part for what has seemed the marvellous instinct of Domenico. If, as is most natural, Domenico approached the mysteries of the harpsichord through his father, he began his career with advantages denied to all others contemporary with him, save those who, like Grieco, received that father's training. Alessandro Scarlatti was one of the most greatly endowed of all musicians. The trend of the Italian opera during the eighteenth century toward utter senselessness has been often laid partly to his influence; but in the history of harpsichord music that influence makes a brilliant showing in the work of his son, who contributed perhaps more than any other one man to the technique of writing not only for harpsichord but for pianoforte.

Little of the harpsichord and clavichord music of the seventeenth century is heard to-day. It has in the main only an historical interest. The student who looks into it will be amazed at some of its beauties; but as a whole it lacks the variety and emotional strength which claim a general attention. Nevertheless it is owing to the labor and talent of the composers of these years that the splendid masterpieces of a succeeding era were pos-

\* See J. S. Shedlock: 'The Pianoforte Sonata,' London, 1895.



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sible. They helped establish the harmonic foundation of music; they molded the fugue, the prelude, the toccata, and the suite; they developed a general keyboard style. After the middle of the century such men as Froberger and Kuhnau in Germany, Chambonnières, d'Anglebert, and Louis and François Couperin in France, and Alessandro Scarlatti in Italy, finally gave to harpsichord music a special style of its own, and to the instrument an independent and brilliant place among the solo instruments of that day. Out of all the confusion and uncertainty attendant upon the breaking up of the old art of vocal polyphony, the enthusiasm of the new opera, the creation of a new harmonic system, the rise of an instrumental music independent of words, these men slowly and steadily secured for the harpsichord a kingdom peculiarly its own.

## CHAPTER II

### THE GOLDEN AGE OF HARPSICHORD MUSIC

The period and the masters of the 'Golden Age'—Domenico Scarlatti; his virtuosity; Scarlatti's 'sonatas'; Scarlatti's technical effects; his style and form; æsthetic value of his music; his contemporaries—François Couperin, *le Grand*; Couperin's clavecin compositions; the 'musical portraits'; 'program music'—The quality and style of his music; his contemporaries, Daquin and Rameau—John Sebastian Bach; Bach as virtuoso; as teacher; his technical reform; his style—Bach's fugues and their structure—The suites of Bach: the French suites, the English suites, the Partitas—The preludes, toccatas and fantasies; concertos; the 'Goldberg Variations'—Bach's importance; his contemporary Handel.

IN round figures the years between 1700 and 1750 are the Golden Age of harpsichord music. In that half century not only did the technique, both of writing for and performing on the harpsichord, expand to its uttermost possibilities, but there was written for it music of such beauty and such emotional warmth as to challenge the best efforts of the modern pianist and to call forth the finest and deepest qualities of the modern piano-forte.

It was an age primarily of opera, of the Italian opera with its senseless, threadbare plots, its artificial singers idolized in every court, its incredible, extravagant splendor. The number of operas written is astonishing, the wild enthusiasm of their reception hardly paralleled elsewhere in the history of music. Yet of these many works but an air or two has lived in the public ear down to the present day; whereas the harpsichord music still is heard, though the instrument for which it was written has long since vanished from our general musical life.

## DOMENICO SCARLATTI

Practically the whole seventeenth century has been required to lay down a firm foundation for the development of instrumental music in all its branches. This being well done, the music of the next epoch is not unaccountably surprising. As soon as principles of form had become established, composers trod, so to speak, upon solid ground; and, sure of their foothold, were free to make rapid progress in all directions. In harpsichord music few new forms appeared. The toccata, prelude, fugue, and suite offered room enough for all the expansion which even great genius might need. Within these limits the growth was twofold: in the way of virtuosity and refinement of style, and in the way of emotional expression. That music which expands at once in both directions, or in which, rather, the two growths are one and the same, is truly great music. Such we shall now find written for the harpsichord.

Each of the three men whose work is the chief subject of this chapter is conspicuous in the history of music by a particular feature. Domenico Scarlatti is first and foremost a great virtuoso, Couperin an artist unequalled in a very special refinement of style, Sebastian Bach the instrument of profound emotion. In these features they stand sharply differentiated one from the other. These are the essential marks of their genius. None, of course, can be comprehended in such a simple characterization. Many of Scarlatti's short pieces have the warmth of genuine emotion, and Couperin's little works are almost invariably the repository of tender and naïve sentiment. Bach is perhaps the supreme master in music and should not be characterized at all except to remind that his vast skill is but the tool of his deeply-feeling poetic soul.

## PIANOFORTE MUSIC

### I

It will be noticed that each of these great men speaks of a different race. We may consider Scarlatti first as spokesman in harpsichord music of the Italians, who at that time had made their mark so deep upon music that even now it has not been effaced, nor is likely to be. His father, Alessandro, was the most famous and the most gifted musician in Europe. From Naples he set the standard for the opera of the world, and in Naples his son Domenico was born on October 26, 1685, a few months only after the birth of Sebastian Bach in Eisenach. Domenico lived with his father and under his father's guidance until 1705, when he set forth to try his fame. He lived a few years in Venice and there met Handel in 1708, with whom he came back to Rome. Here in Rome, at the residence of Corelli's patron, Cardinal Ottoboni, took place the famous contest on organ and harpsichord between him and Handel. For Handel he ever professed a warm friendship and the most profound admiration.

He remained for some years in Rome, at first in the service of Marie Casimire, queen of Poland, later as *maestro di capella* at St. Peter's. In 1719 came a journey to London in order to superintend performances of his operas. From 1721 to 1725 he seems to have been installed at the court of Lisbon; and then, after four years in Naples, he accepted a position at the Spanish court in Madrid. Just how long he stayed there is not known. In 1754 he was back again in Naples, and in Naples he died in 1757, seven years after the death of Bach.

Scarlatti wrote many operas in the style of his father, and these were frequently performed, with success, in Italy, England, Spain, and elsewhere. During his years at St. Peter's he also wrote sacred music; but his fame

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now rests wholly upon his compositions for the harpsichord and upon the memory of the extraordinary skill with which he played them.

We have dwelt thus briefly upon a few events of his life to show how widely he had travelled and in how many places his skill as a player must have been admired. That in the matter of virtuosity he was unexcelled can hardly be doubted. It is true that in the famous contest with Handel he came off the loser on the organ, and even his harpsichord playing was doubted to excel that of his Saxon friend. But these contests were a test of wits more than of fingers, a trial of *extempore* skill in improvising fugues and double fugues, not of virtuosity in playing.

Two famous German musicians, J. J. Quantz and J. A. Hasse, both heard him and both marvelled at his skill. Monsieur L'Augier, a gifted amateur whom Dr. Burney visited in Vienna, told a story of Scarlatti and Thomas Roseingrave,\* in which he related that when Roseingrave first heard Scarlatti play, he was so astonished that he would have cut off his own fingers then and there, had there been an instrument at hand wherewith to perform the operation; and, as it was, he went months without touching the harpsichord again.

Whom he had to thank for instruction is not known. There is nothing in his music to suggest that he was ever a pupil of Bernardo Pasquini, who, however, was long held to have been his master. J. S. Shedlock, in his 'History of the Pianoforte Sonata,' suggests that he learned from Gaëtano Greco or Grieco, a man a few years his senior and a student under his father; but it would seem far more likely that Domenico profited immediately from his father, who, we may see from a

\* An Englishman, organist at St. George's, Hanover Square, from 1725 to 1737, when he became insane. He died about 1750. He had made the acquaintance of both Scarlattis during a stay in Italy, and was instrumental in bringing D. Scarlatti's operas and harpsichord pieces before the British public.

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letter to Ferdinand de' Medici, dated May 30, 1705, had watched over his son's development with great care. It must not be forgotten that Alessandro Scarlatti's harpsichord toccatas, described in the previous chapter, are, in spite of a general heaviness, often enlivened by astonishing devices of virtuosity.

Scarlatti wrote between three and four hundred pieces for the harpsichord. The Abbé Santini \* possessed three hundred and forty-nine. Scarlatti himself published in his lifetime only one set of thirty pieces. These he called exercises (*esercizii*) for the harpsichord. The title is significant. Before 1733 two volumes, *Pièces pour le clavecin*, were published in Paris; and some time between 1730 and 1737 forty-two 'Suites of Lessons' were published in London under the supervision of Roseingrave. More were printed in London in 1752. Then came Czerny's edition, which includes two hundred pieces; and throughout the nineteenth century various selections and arrangements have appeared from time to time, von Bülow having arranged several pieces in the order of suites, Tausig having elaborated several in accordance with the modern pianoforte. A complete and authoritative edition has at last been prepared by Sig. Alessandro Longo and has been printed in Italy by Ricordi and Company.

By far the greater part of these many pieces are independent of each other. Except in a few cases where Scarlatti, probably in his youth, followed the model of his father's toccatas, he keeps quite clear of the suite cycle. The pieces have been called sonatas, but they are not for the most part in the form called the sonata form. This form (which is the form in which one piece or movement may be cast and is not to be confused with the sequence or arrangement of movements in the

\* A learned Roman collector, born in 1778, died in 1862. Mendelssohn had the free use of his library and wrote that as regards old Italian music it was most complete.

## SCARLATTI'S 'SONATAS'

classical sonata) is, as we shall later have ample opportunity to observe, a tri-partite or ternary form; whereas the so-called sonatas of Scarlatti are in the two-part or binary form, which is, as we have seen, the form of the separate dance movements in the suite.

Each 'sonata' is, like the dance movements, divided into two sections, usually of about equal length, both of which are to be repeated in their turn. In general, too, the harmonic plan is the same or nearly the same as that which underlies the suite movement, the first section modulating from tonic to dominant, the second back from dominant to tonic. But within these limits Scarlatti allows himself great freedom of modulation. It is, in fact, this harmonic expansion within the binary form which makes one pause to give Scarlatti an important place in the development of the sonata form proper.

The harmonic variety of the Scarlatti sonatas is closely related to the virtuosity of their composer. He spins a piece out of, usually, but not always, two or three striking figures, by repeating them over and over again in different places of the scale or in different keys. His very evident fondness for technical formulæ is thus gratified and the piece is saved from monotony by its shifting harmonies.

A favorite and simple shift is from major to minor. This he employs very frequently. For example, in a sonata in G major, No. 2 of the Breitkopf and Härtel collection of twenty sonatas \* measures 13, 14, 15, and 16, in D major, are repeated immediately in A major. In 20, 21, 22, and 23, the same style of figure and rhythm appears in D major and is at once answered in D minor. Toward the end of the second part of the piece the

\* This collection is available to students in America. The sonatas contained in it are representative of Scarlatti's style, though, of course, they represent but a small portion of his work. The collection can be far more easily used for reference than the cumbersome Czerny. Unfortunately the complete Italian edition is still rare in this country.

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process is duplicated in the tonic key. In the following sonata at the top of page seven occurs another similar instance. It is one of the most frequent of his mannerisms.

The repetition of favorite figures is by no means always accompanied by a change of key. The two-measure phrase beginning in the fifteenth measure of the third sonata is repeated three times note for note; a few measures later another figure is treated in the same fashion; and in yet a third place, all in the first section of this sonata, the trick is turned again. Indeed, there are very few of Scarlatti's sonatas in which he does not play with his figures in this manner.

We have said that often he varies his key when thus repeating himself, and that such variety saves from monotony. But it must be added that even where there is no change of key he escapes being tedious to the listener. The reason must be sought in the sprightly nature of the figures he chooses, and in the extremely rapid speed at which they are intended to fly before our ears. He is oftenest a dazzling virtuoso whose music appeals to our bump of wonder, and, when well played, leaves us breathless and excited.

The pieces are for the most part extremely difficult; and this, together with his ever-present reiteration of special harpsichord figures, may well incline us to look upon them as fledgling études. The thirty which Scarlatti himself chose to publish he called *esercizii*, or exercises. We may not take the title too literally, bearing in mind that Bach's 'Well-Tempered Clavichord' was intended for practice, as were many of Kuhnau's suites. But that Scarlatti's sonatas are almost invariably built up upon a few striking, difficult and oft-repeated figures, makes their possible use as technical practice pieces far more evident than it is in the 'Well-Tempered Clavichord' or even the 'Inventions' of Bach. He undoubtedly offers the player enormous opportunity to



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exercise his arms and his fingers in the production of brilliant, astonishing effects.

Of these effects two will always be associated with his name: the one obtained by the crossing of the hands, the other by the rapid repetition of one note. Both devices will be found freely used in the works of his father, and it is absurd to suppose that the son invented them. Yet it is hardly an exaggeration to say that he made more use of them than any man down to the time of Liszt. The crossing of the hands is not employed to interweave two qualities of sound, as it oftenest is in music for the organ or for the German and French harpsichords which have two or more manuals that work independently of each other. The Italian harpsichords had but one bank of keys, and Scarlatti's crossing of the hands, if it be not intended merely for display, succeeds in making notes wide apart sound relatively simultaneous, and thus produces qualities of resonance which hitherto had rested silent in the instrument.

It has been suggested that the device of repeated notes was borrowed from the mandolin, on which, as is well known, a *cantabile* is approximated by rapid repetition of the notes of the melody. Scarlatti, however, rarely employs it to sustain the various notes of his tune. In his sonatas it is usually, if not intentionally, effective rhythmically; as it is, unflinchingly, in more modern pianoforte music. On the harpsichord, moreover, as on the pianoforte, it can make a string twang with a sort of barbaric sound that still has the power to stir us as shrieking pipes and whistles stirred our savage ancestors.

Still another mannerism of his technique or style is the wide leap of many of his figures. A plunge from high to low notes was much practised in contemporary violin music and was considered very effective, and probably suggested a similar effect upon the harpsi-

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chord. Into this matter again Scarlatti may well have been initiated by his father, by whom it was not left untried. In the son's sonatas it succeeds in extending the range of sonority of the harpsichord, and thus points unmistakably to developments in the true pianoforte style.

It is, in fact, by this extension of figures, by sudden leaps, by crossing of hands, that Scarlatti frees harpsichord music from all trace of slavery to the conjunct style of organ music; and he may therefore be judged the founder of the brilliant free style which reached its extreme development in the music of Liszt. Though we may not fail to mention occasionally his indebtedness to his father and to instrumental music of his time, we cannot deny that he is a great inventor, the creator of a new art. He was admitted by composers of his day to have not only wonderful hands, but a wonderful fecundity of invention.

What guided him was chiefly instinct. He had, no doubt, considerable strict training in the science of counterpoint and composition. He wrote, as we know, not only harpsichord pieces, but operas and sacred music as well. In the sonatas there is a great deal of neat two-part writing, and an occasional flash of skill in imitations; but musical science is almost the last thing we should think of in connection with them. Rules are not exemplified therein. Burney relates, through L'Augier, that Scarlatti knew he had broken established rules of composition, but reasoned that 'there was scarce any other rule worth the attention of a man of genius than that of not displeasing the only sense of which music is the object.' And, further, that he complained of the music of Alberti and other 'modern' composers because it did not in execution demand a harpsichord, but might be equally well or perhaps better expressed by other instruments. But, 'as Nature had given him [Scarlatti] ten fingers, and, as his instru-

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ment had employment for them all, he saw no reason why he should not use them.' He might have included his two arms among his natural gifts. Certainly the free use he made of them in most of his sonatas marks a new and extraordinary advance in the history of keyboard music.

In the matter of form Scarlatti is not so strikingly an innovator as he is in that of style. He is in the main content to cast his pieces in the binary mold common to most short instrumental pieces of his day. Yet, as has already been suggested, the harmonic freedom which he enjoys within these relatively narrow limits is significant in the development of the sonata form; and even more significant is his distribution of musical material within them.

The binary form, such as we find it in the suites of Froberger and even in those of J. S. Bach, is essentially a harmonic structure. The balance and contrast which is the effect of any serviceable shape of music is here one of harmony, principally of tonic and dominant and dominant and tonic, with only a few measures of modulation for variety. There is, in addition, some contrast between that musical material which is presented first in the tonic key and that which appears later in the dominant. But, while we may speak of these materials as first and second themes or subjects, their individuality is hardly distinct and is, in effect, obliterated by the regularity and smoothness of style in which these short pieces are conventionally written. The composer makes no attempt to set them off clearly, one against the other. The entrance into the dominant key is almost never devised in such a way as to prepare the listener for a new musical thought, quite separate and different from that which he has already heard. The transitional passage from tonic to dominant emerges from the one and merges into the other, without break or distinctions.

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In the matter of setting his themes in their frame, Scarlatti hardly differs from his contemporaries. His style, though free and varied, is in constant motion. But his genius was especially fertile in clean-cut figures; and when, as he often does, he combines two or three distinct types of these in one short piece, the music is full of thematic variety and sparkles with an animation which at times is almost dramatic.

Scarlatti is, indeed, hovering close to the sonata form in a great many of his pieces, and in one actually strikes it.\* We shall, however, postpone a more detailed discussion of Scarlatti's pieces in relation to the sonata form to the next chapter. The distribution of his musical material is quite whimsical and irregular, always more instinctive than experimental. It is chiefly by the quality of this material that he stands apart from his contemporaries, and as the founder of the free and brilliant pianoforte style.

There remains little to be said of the æsthetic worth of his music. During the years of his most vigorous manhood he was almost invariably a virtuoso. Sheer delight in tonal effects rather than more sober need of self-expression stimulated him. The prevalence of trumpet figures such as those which constitute the opening phrases of the eleventh and fourteenth sonatas in the Breitkopf and Härtel edition already referred to, suggests that he took a good deal of material ready-made from the operas of the day. Burney says there are many passages in which he imitated the melody of tunes sung by carriers, muleteers, and common people. But what he added to these was his own. A number of pieces are conspicuous by especially free modula-

\* J. S. Shedlock writes in 'The Pianoforte Sonata': 'The return to the opening theme in the second section, which divides binary from sonata form, is, in Scarlatti, non-existent.' Out of some two hundred sonatas which I have examined, I have found but one to disprove the statement. This one exception, No. 11 in the Breitkopf and Härtel edition of twenty, is so perfectly in sonata form that one cannot but wonder Scarlatti did not employ the form oftener. [EDITOR.]

## FRANÇOIS COUPERIN LE GRAND

tion and expansion of form; and in these, technical effects are not predominant, but rather a more serious interest in composition. It has therefore been suggested that these pieces are the work of later years.\* Though it is said that while in Spain he grew too fat to cross his hands at the harpsichord as was his wont in his youth, this physical restriction is not alone responsible for the mellowness and warmth of such pieces as the so-called Pastoral in D minor, familiar to audiences in Tausig's elaborated transcription. A great number of his pieces are rich in pure musical beauty; and the freshness which exhales from all true musical utterance is and probably always will be theirs.

None of his contemporaries in Italy approached him in the peculiar skill which has made him conspicuous in the history of pianoforte music. Francesco Durante (1684-1755) and Nicolo Porpora (1686-1767), the great singing master, both wrote pieces for the harpsichord; the one, 'sonatas' in several movements, the other fugues; but their music lacks charm and can hardly be considered at all influential in the development of the art of writing for keyboard instruments. Domenico Alberti and P. D. Paradies will be considered in the following chapter.

## II

The art of Couperin is flawless, the charm of his music not to be described. It has that quality of perfection with which Nature marks her smallest flowers. It is the miniature counterpart in music of a perfected system of living, of the court life of France under Louis XIV.

Scarlatti was a rover. He tried his fortune in Italy, in England, in Portugal and Spain. He won it by the

\* See articles by Edward J. Dent in *Monthly Musical Record* for September and October, 1906.

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exhibition of his extraordinary and startling powers. He was on the alert to startle, his tribute the bravas and mad applause of his excited hearers. He was the virtuoso in an old sense of the word, the man with his powers consciously developed to the uttermost. Bach, on the other hand, was an introspective, mighty man, immeasurably greater than his surroundings, fathomless, personal, suggestive. Between them stands Couperin, for the greater part of his life in the intimate service of the most brilliant court the world has ever seen, delicate in health, perfect in etiquette, wise and tender.

Of his life little need be said. He was born in Paris on November 10, 1668, the son of Charles Couperin, himself a musician and brother to Louis and François Couperin, disciples of the great Chambonnières. The father died about a year after his son was born, and the musical education of the young François seems to have been undertaken by his uncle, François, and later by Jacques Thomelin, organist in the king's private chapel in Versailles. Practically nothing is known of his youth, and, though it is certain that he was for many years organist at the church of St. Gervais in Paris, as his uncle and even his grandfather had been before him, the time at which he took up his duties there has not been exactly determined. There is on record, however, the account of a meeting held on the twenty-sixth of December, 1693, at Versailles, at which Louis XIV heard Couperin play and chose him from other competitors to succeed Thomelin as his private organist. Thenceforth he passed his life in service of the king and later of the regent. He died in Paris in 1733, after several years of ill health.

The great François was, no doubt, an unusually skillful organist, but his fame rests upon his work for the clavecin, the French harpsichord, and his book of instruction for that instrument. His duties at court were

## COUPERIN'S CLAVECIN COMPOSITIONS

various. He says himself that for twenty years he had the honor to be with the king, and to teach, almost at the same time, Monseigneur le Dauphin, the Duke of Burgundy, and six princes or princesses of the royal house.

In his preface to the *Concerts royaux* he informs us that chamber concerts were given in the king's presence on Sunday afternoons at Versailles, and that he was commanded to write music for them and that he himself played the clavecin at them. His book on the art of playing the clavecin, written in 1716, was dedicated to the king. By all accounts he was a beloved and highly prized teacher and performer. And neither his pupils nor his fame were confined solely to the court.

There is no doubt that he was a public favorite and that he published his pieces for the clavecin to satisfy a general demand. Also in a measure to safeguard his music. For at that time instrumental pieces were not often published, but were circulated in manuscript copies in which gross errors grew rapidly as weeds; and which, moreover, were common booty to piratical publishers, especially in the Netherlands. So Couperin took minute care in preparing his music for his public. Each set of pieces was furnished with a long preface, nothing in the engraving was left to chance, the books were beautifully bound so that all might be in keeping with the dainty and exquisite art of the music itself. Since his day his pieces were never published again until Madame Farrenc included the four great sets in her famous *Trésor des Pianistes* (1861-72). This edition was, according to Chrysander,\* very carelessly prepared and is full of inaccuracies. Chrysander planned a new, accurate and complete edition, to be edited by Brahms, of which unhappily only one volume, containing Couperin's first two books, ever came to print.

\* See Chrysander's articles prefatory to his own edition (*Denkmäler*), edited by Brahms, in the *Monthly Musical Record* for February, 1889, *et seq.*

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The original editions being now rare and priceless, and hardly serviceable to the average student on account of the confusing obsolete clef signs, it is to be hoped that before long Chrysander's plan will be carried out and the almost forgotten treasures of Couperin's *clavecin* music be revealed in their great beauty to the lover of music.

Couperin published in all five books of *pièces de clavecin*. Of these the first appeared early in the century and is not commonly reckoned among his best works. The other four sets appeared respectively in 1713, 1716, 1722, and 1730.

Each book contains several sets of pieces grouped together in *ordres*, according to key.\* The canon of the suite is wholly disregarded and there is very little of the spirit of it. The first *ordre*, it is true, has as the first six pieces an *allemande*, two *courantes*, a *sarabande*, a *gavotte*, and a *gigue*; but there are twelve pieces in addition, of which only three are named dances. The second *ordre*, too, has an *allemande*, two *courantes*, and a *sarabande* at the beginning; but there follow eighteen more pieces of which only four are strictly dances. The fourth *ordre* is without true dance forms; so are the sixth, the seventh, the tenth, and others. Even the orthodox dances are given secondary titles, or the dance name is itself secondary. In fact, not only by including within one *ordre* many more pieces than ever found place within the suite, but by the very character of the pieces themselves, Couperin is dissociated from the suite writers.

He wrote in the preface to his first book of pieces,† that in composing he always had a particular subject before his eyes. This accounts for the titles affixed to

\* The pieces in one *ordre* may be in major or minor. The first *ordre* is in G, that is the pieces in it are either in G minor or G major. The second is in D, minor and major, the third in C, etc.

† That which appeared in 1713. The earlier set is not commonly reckoned among his publications.



## MUSICAL PORTRAITS

most of his pieces. We have already referred to 'battle' pieces of earlier composers, and to Kuhnau's narratives in music. Couperin's music is not of the same sort. The majority of his titled pieces are pure music, admirable and charming in themselves. They are seldom copies. They make their appeal, or they are intelligible, not by what they delineate, but by what they express or suggest. The piece as a whole gives an impression, not the special figures or traits of which it is composed.

Let us consider a few of many types. Take what have been often called the portraits of court ladies. In these we cannot by any effort of the imagination find likenesses. It would be ludicrous to try. As ladies may differ in temperament from each other, so do these little pieces differ. There is the allemande *L'Auguste*, which is a dignified, somewhat austere dance piece in G minor; another, *La Laborieuse*, in a complicated contrapuntal style unusual with him. There are three sarabandes called *La Majestueuse*, *La Prude*, and *La Lugubre*, impressive, meagre, and profound in turn. These pieces are hardly personal, nor have they peculiar characteristics apart from the spirit which is clear in each of them.

Another type of portrait fits its title a little more tangibly. There is *La Mylordine*, in the style of an English jig; *La Diane*, which is built up on the fanfare figure always associated with the hunt; *La Diligente*, full of bustling finger work. *Les Nonnettes* are blonde and dark, the blondes, oddly enough, in minor, the dark in major.

Many others are so purely music, delicate and tender, that the titles seem more to be a gallant tribute to so and so, rather than the names of prototypes in the flesh. *La Manon*, *La Babet*, *La fleurie*, *ou la tendre Nanette*, *L'Enchanteresse*, *La tendre Fanchon*, and many others are in no way program music; nor can they ever be

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interpreted as such, since no man can say what charming girl, two centuries dead, may have suggested their illusive features.

It is these 'portraits' particularly which are Couperin's own new contribution to the art of music. So individual is the musical life in each one, so special and complete its character, so full of sentiment and poetry, that, small as it is, it may stand alone as a perfect and enduring work of art. It has nothing to do with the suite or with any of the cyclic forms. Here are the first flowers from that branch of music from which later were to grow the nocturnes of Field, the *Moments musicaux* of Schubert, the preludes of Chopin.

Between these and the few pieces which are frankly almost wholly dependent upon a program are a great number of others lightly suggestive of their titles. Sometimes it is only in general character. *Les vendangeuses* and *Les moissonneurs* do not seem so particularly related to wine-gathering or harvesting that the titles might not be interchanged; but both have something of a peasant character. In *Les abeilles* and in *Le moucheron* the characterization is finer. The pleasant humming of the bees is reproduced in one, the monotonous whirring of the gnat in the other. *Les bergeries* is simply pastoral, *Les matelots Provençales* is a lively march, followed by a horn-pipe. *Les papillons* is not unlike the little piece so named in the Schumann *Carnaval*, though here it means but butterflies. There are some imitative pieces which are in themselves charming music, such as *Les petits moulins à vent*, *Le réveille-matin*, *Le carillon de Cythère*, and *Les ondes*, with its undulating figures and fluid ornamentation.

Finally the program music is in various degrees programmatic. A little group of pieces called *Les Pèlerines* (Pilgrims) begins with a march, to be played gaily. Then comes a little movement to represent the

## COUPERIN'S PROGRAM MUSIC

spirit of alms-giving, in a minor key, to be played tenderly; and this is followed by a cheerful little movement of thanks, to which is added a lively coda. The whole is rather an expression of moods than a picture of actions. *Les petits ages* is in some respects more literal. The first movement, *La muse naissante*, is written in a syncopated style, the right hand always following the left, which may well express weakness and hesitation. *L'adolescente*, the third movement, is a lively rondo in vigorous gavotte rhythm.

Two sets are entirely program music. One of these, *Les Bacchanales*, has a march (*pésament, sans lenteur*) of the gray-clad ones; then three movements expressive of the delights of wine, the tenderness to which it warms and the madness to which it enflames. The music is not of itself interesting. More remarkable, though devoid of musical worth save a good bit of the comical, is *Les fastes de la grande et ancienne Mxnstrxndxsx*. These records or tales are divided into five acts, which represent the notables and judges of the kingdom, the old men and the beggars (over a drone bass), the jugglers, tumblers and mountebanks, with their bears and monkeys, the cripples (those with one arm or leg played by the right hand, those who limp played by the left), and, finally, the confusion and flight of all, brought about by the drunkards and the bears and monkeys.

### III

The last of these compositions are in no way representative of Couperin the artist. They might have been written by any one who had a love for nonsense, and they are not meant to be taken seriously. The quality of Couperin's contribution to music must be tested in such pieces as *Le bavolet-flottant*, *La fleurie*, *Les moissonneurs*, *Le carillon de Cythère*, and *La lugubre*. His

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harmony is delicate, suggesting that of Mozart and even Chopin, to whom he is in many ways akin. He does not, like Scarlatti, wander far in the harmonic field; but in a relatively small compass glides about by semi-tones. There is, of course, a great deal of tonic and dominant, such as will always be associated with a certain clear-cut style of French dance music; but the grace of his melody and his style is too subtle to permit monotony. The harmonies of the sarabande *La lugubre* are profound.

In form he is precise. His use of the rondo deserves special attention. In this form he cast many of his loveliest pieces, and it is one which never found a place in the suite. It is very simple, yet in his hands full of charm. The groundwork of one main theme recurring regularly after several episodes or contrasting themes was analyzed in the previous chapter. Couperin called his episodes couplets, and his rondos are usually composed of the principal theme and three couplets. He does not invariably repeat the whole theme after each couplet, but sometimes, as in *Les bergeries*, only a characteristic phrase of it. The couplets are generally closely related to the main theme, from which they differ not in nature, but chiefly in ornamentation and harmony. Much of the charm of his music is due to the neat proportions of this hitherto neglected form. It was native to him as a son of France, where, from the early days of the singers of Provence, the song in stanzas with its dancing refrain had been beloved of the people. Through him it found a place in the great instrumental music of the world.

Couperin's style is too delicate to be caught in words. To call it the *style galant* merely catalogues it as a free style, highly adorned with *agrémens*. The freedom is of course the freedom from all trace of polyphony in the old sense, of strict leading of voices from beginning to end. Couperin adds notes to his harmonic back-

## COUPERIN'S PROGRAM MUSIC

ground when and where he will; so that it is impossible to say whether a piece is in two, or three, or four parts, because it is in no fixed number of parts at all.

The countless *agrémens* are more than an external feature of his music, and of other music of his time. The analogies which have often been drawn between them and the formal superficialities of court life under the great Louis are in the main false. Both Couperin and Emanuel Bach, a man of perhaps less sensitive, certainly of less elegant, taste, regarded them as of vital importance. Even the learned Kuhnau, who can hardly be called a stylist at all, considered them the sugar of his fruit. It would seem as if only by means of these flourishes harpsichord music could take on some grace of line and warmth of color. Whatever subtlety of expression the dry-toned instrument was capable of found life only in the *agrémens*. We cannot judge of the need of them nor of their peculiar beauties by the sound of them on the modern piano-forte, even under the lightest fingers. It is open to question whether any but a few of them should be retained in the performance of Couperin's works, now that the instrument, the short-comings of which they were intended to supplement, has been banished in general from the concert stage.

This is not only because the peculiarities of the piano-forte call for a different kind of ornamentation, but also because the playing of harpsichord flourishes is practically a lost art. Couperin and Emanuel Bach left minute directions and explanations in regard to them; but in their treatises we have only the letter of the law, not the spirit which inspired it. Even in their day, in spite of all laws, the *agrémens* were subject to the caprice of the player; and they remained so down to the time of Chopin.

Neither the freedom from polyphonic strictness nor the profusion of ornaments are the special peculiarities

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of Couperin's style. They were more or less common to a great deal of the harpsichord music of his day. But he had a way, all his own at that time, of accompanying his melodies with a sort of singing bass or a melodious inner voice that moved with the melody in thirds or sixths, or in smooth contrary motion. This may be studied in such pieces as *La fleurie*, *Le bavolet-flottant*, *Les moissonneurs*, *Les abeilles*, and many others. It has little to do with polyphony. The accompanying voices are only suggested. They never claim attention by their own movement. They seem a sort of spirit or tinted shadow of the melody, hardly more than whispering.

This accounts in part for what we may call the tenderness of Couperin's music, a quality which makes itself felt no matter how elusive it may be. He marked most of his pieces to be played with a special expressiveness, and frequently used the word *tendrement*. This, he admitted in one of his prefaces, was likely to surprise those who were aware of the limitations of the clavecin. He knew that the 'clavecin was perfect as regards scope and brilliance, but that one could not increase or diminish the tone on it.' His thanks would be forthcoming to one who through taste and skill would be able to improve its expression in this respect. He was not above all else a virtuoso. '*J'ayme beaucoup mieux ce qui me touche que ce qui me surprend,*' he wrote in 1713. There is no doubt that he desired the greatest refinement of touch and shading in the expression of his music, and that he suffered under the limitations of the instrument for which he wrote. For the texture of his music is soft and delicate, its loveliness has a secret quality, hardly more than suggested by the shadowy inner voices. We cannot but be reminded of Chopin, in whose music alone the spirits of music whispered again so softly together.

Among the contemporaries of Couperin, Marchand,

## DAQUIN AND RAMEAU

Claude Daquin (1694-1772), and J. P. Rameau (1683-1764) are best known, at least by name, to-day. Marchand is remembered chiefly by reason of the episode with Bach in Dresden. Daquin enjoyed a brilliant reputation as an organist in his day. One of his pieces for clavecin—'The Cuckoo'—is still heard to-day. J. B. Weckerlin quoted an amusing bird-story \* about Daquin, the burden of which is that one Christmas eve Daquin imitated the song of a nightingale so perfectly on the organ in church that the treasurer of the parish dispatched beadles throughout the edifice in search of a live songster.

Rameau is a greater figure in the general history of music than Couperin himself; yet, though his harpsichord pieces are, perhaps therefore, better known than those of the somewhat earlier man, they lack the most unusual charm and perfection of Couperin's. There are fifty-three of these in all. Ten were published in 1706, of which a gavotte in rondo form in A minor is best known. A second set of twenty-one pieces appeared in 1724, containing the still famous *Rappel des oiseaux*, the *Tambourin*, *Les niais de Sologne*, *La poule*, the Gavotte with variations, in A minor, and many others. Sixteen more followed, written between 1727 and 1731. In 1747 a single piece—*La Dauphine*—was published. Besides these, all written originally for harpsichord, he published five arrangements of his *Pièces de concert*, written in the first place for a group of three or more instruments.

Rameau's style is less delicate than Couperin's. It is not only that there are fewer *agrémens*. The workmanship is more vigorous, more dramatic; the music itself less intimate. The first gavotte in A minor, the doubles in the Rigaudon and in *Les niais de Sologne*, the variations in the second gavotte in A minor, and *La Dauphine*, all speak of a technical enlargement. Yet

\* *Musciana*, Paris, 1877.

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a certain fineness is lacking. It will be noticed that he showed hardly more allegiance to the canon of the suite than Couperin had shown; and there is a large portion of titles such as *Les tendres plaintes*, *Les soupirs*, *L'entretien des muses*, and there are also many portraits: *La joyeuse*, *La triomphante*, *L'Egyptienne*, *L'agaçante*, and others.

In the preface to the new edition of his works published under the supervision of Camille Saint-Saëns, there is the following quotation from Amadée Méreaux's *Les clavecinistes de 1637-1790*, which summarizes his position in the history of harpsichord music. 'If there is lacking in his melodies the smoothness of Couperin, the distinction, the delicacy, the purity of style which give to the music of that clavecin composer to Louis XIV its so precious quality of charm, Rameau has at least a boldness of spirit, an animation, a power of harmony and a richness of modulation. The reflection of his operatic style, lively, expressive, always precise and strongly rhythmical, is to be found in his instrumental style. In treatment of the keyboard Rameau went far ahead of his predecessors. His technical forms, his instrumental designs, his variety and brilliance in executive resources, and his new runs and figures are all conquests which he won to the domain of the harpsichord.' Rameau is primarily a dramatic composer. It may be added that several of his harpsichord pieces later found a place in his operas, usually as ballet music.

### IV

A glance over the many pieces of Scarlatti and Couperin discovers a vast field of unfamiliar music. If one looks deep enough to perceive the charm, the beauty, the perfection of these forgotten masterpieces, one cannot but wonder what more than a trick of time has



## JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

condemned them to oblivion. For no astonished enthusiasm of student or amateur whose eye can hear, renders back glory to music that lies year after year silent on dusty shelves. The general ear has not heard it. The general eye cannot hear it as it can scan the ancient picture, the drama, the poetry of a time a thousand or two thousand years ago. Music that is silent is music quite forgotten if not dead.

And, what is more, the few pieces of Couperin which are still heard seem almost to live on sufferance, as if the life they have were not of their own, but lent them by the listener disposed to imagine a courtier's life long ago washed out in blood. 'Sweet and delicate,' one hears of the music of Couperin, as one hears of some bit of old lace or old brocade, that has lain long in a chest of lavender. Yet the music of Couperin is far more than a matter of fashion. It is by all tokens great art. The lack is in the race of musicians and of men who have lost the art of playing it and the simplicity of attentive listening.

To a certain extent the music of Sebastian Bach suffers from the same lack. On the other hand, the spirit of his music is perennial and it holds a rank in the modern ear far above that held by any other harpsichord music. Apart from indefinable reasons of æsthetic worth there are other reasons why Bach's music, at any rate a considerable part of it, is still with us.

In the first place, the style of its texture is solid. Instead of being crushed, as Couperin's music is, by the heavy, rich tone of the modern pianoforte, it seems to grow stronger by speaking through the stronger instrument. Bach's style is nearly always an organ style, whether he is writing for clavichord, for chorus, for bands or strings. It is very possible that a certain mystical, intimate sentiment which is innate in most of his clavichord music cannot find expression through the heavy strings of the pianoforte. This may be far dearer

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than the added depth and richness which the pianoforte has, as it were, hauled up from the great reservoirs of music he has left us. But it is none the less true that the high-tensioned heavy strings on their gaunt frame of cast iron need not call in vain on the music of Bach to set the heart of them vibrating.

In the second place, the two- and three-part 'Inventions,' and the preludes and fugues in the 'Well-Tempered Clavichord' have proved themselves to be, as Bach himself hoped, the very best of teaching or practice pieces. It is not that your conventional Mr. Dry-as-dust teacher has power to inflict Bach upon every tender, rebellious generation. It is rather that the pieces themselves cannot be excelled as exercises, not only for the fingers but for the brain. One need not delve here into the matter of their musical beauty, but one must pause in amazement before their sturdiness, which can stand up, still resilient, under the ceaseless hammering of ten million sets of fingers. Clementi and Czerny are being pounded into insensibility; Cramer, despite the recommendations of Beethoven, is breathing his last; Moscheles, Dohler, Kalkbrenner, and a host of others are laid to rest. But here comes Bach bobbing up in our midst seeming to say: 'Hit me! Hit me as hard as you like and still I'll sing. And when you know me as well as I know you, you'll know how to play the piano.' So Bach has been, is, and will be introduced to young people. He inspires love, or hate, or fear—a triple claim to remembrance.

In the third place, there is an intellectual complexity in his music which, as a triumph of human skill over the masses of sound, deserves and has won an altar with perpetual flame. And the marvel is that this skill is rarely used as an end in itself, but as a means of expressing very genuine and frank emotion. Here we come upon perhaps the great reason of Bach's immortality—the warmth of his music. It is almost uniquely

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personal and subjective. In it he poured forth his whole soul with a lack of self-consciousness and a complete concentration. His was a powerful soul, always afire with enthusiasm; and his emotion seems to have clarified and crystallized his music as heat and pressure have made diamonds out of carbon.

Bach was a lovable man, but a stern and somewhat bellicose one as well. He was shrewd enough to respect social rank quite in the manner of his day, as the dedication of the Brandenburg concertos plainly shows; but the records of his various quarrels with the municipal authorities of Leipzig prove how quick he was to unrestrained wrath whenever his rights either as man or artist were infringed upon. A great deal of independence marked him. The same can hardly be said either of Scarlatti or of Couperin, the one of whom was lazy and good-natured, the other gently romantic and extremely polite. Scarlatti rather enjoyed his indifference to accepted rules of composition; and there was nothing either of self-abasement or of self-depreciation in Couperin; but both lacked the stalwart vigor of Bach. Scarlatti aimed, confessedly, to startle and to amuse by his harpsichord pieces. He cautioned his friends not to look for anything particularly serious in them. It is hard to dissociate an ideal of pure and only faintly colored beauty from Couperin. But in the music of Bach one seldom misses the ring of a strong and even an impetuous need of self-expression. In the mighty organ works, and in the vocal works, one may believe with him that he sang his soul out to the glory of his Maker; but in the smaller keyboard pieces sheer delight in expressing himself is unmistakable.

It is this that makes Bach a romanticist, while Couperin, with all his fanciful titles, is classic. It is this that made Bach write in nearly the same style for all instruments, drawing upon his personal inspiration without consideration of the instrument for which he

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wrote; while Couperin, exquisitely sensitive to all external impressions, forced his fine art to conformity with the special and limited qualities of the instrument for which he wrote the great part of his music. And, finally, it is this which produced utterance of so many varied moods and emotions in the music of Bach; while in the music of Couperin we find all moods and emotions tempered to one distinctly normal cast of thought.

Bach has been the subject of so much profound and special study that there is little to be added to the explanation of his character or of his works. In considering him as a composer for the harpsichord or clavichord, one has to bear two facts in mind: that he was a great player and a great teacher.

There is much evidence from his son and from prominent musicians who knew him, that the technical dexterity of his fingers was amazing. He played with great spirit and, when the music called for it, at a great speed. Perhaps the oft-repeated story of his triumph over the famous French player, Marchand, who, it will be remembered, defaulted at the appointed hour of contest, has been given undue significance. As we have had occasion to remark, in speaking of the contest between Handel and D. Scarlatti, such tourneys at the harpsichord were tests of wits, not of fingers. Bach was first of all an organist and it may be suggested, with no disloyalty to the great man among musicians, that he played the harpsichord with more warmth than glitter. We find little evidence in his harpsichord music of the sort of virtuosity which makes D. Scarlatti's music astonish even to-day; or, it may be added, of the special flexible charm which gives Couperin's its inimitable grace.

Bach is overwhelming as a virtuoso in his organ music, especially in passages for the pedals. In his harpsichord music he achieves a rushing, vigorous style. It must not be overlooked that Bach wrote also for the

## BACH'S TECHNICAL REFORM

clavichord, quite explicitly, too. Most of the Forty-eight Preludes and Fugues are distinctly clavichord, not harpsichord, music. That is to say, they require a fine shading which is impossible on the harpsichord. When he wrote for the harpsichord he had other effects in mind. The prelude of the English suite in G minor or the last movement of the Italian concerto may be taken as representative of his most vigorous and effective harpsichord style. They are different not only in range and breadth, but in spirit as well, from practically all of the 'Well-Tempered Clavichord.' Nevertheless, though these may be taken fairly as examples of his harpsichord style at its best and strongest, they are not especially effective as virtuoso music. There is sheer virtuosity only in the Goldberg Variations.

To Bach as a teacher we owe the Inventions and the 'Well-Tempered Clavichord,' both written expressly for the use and practice of young people who wished to learn about music and to acquire a taste for the best music. Volumes might well be filled with praise of them. It will suffice us only to note, however, that to master the technical difficulties of the keyboard was always for Bach only a step toward the art of playing, which is the art of expressing emotion in music. These two sets of pieces are all-powerful evidence of this—his creed—in accordance with which he always nobly lived and worked. They have but one parallel in piano-forte music: the *Études* of Chopin. The 'Well-Tempered Clavichord' is, and always will be, essentially a study in expression.

His system of tempering or tuning the clavichord, by reason of which he has often been granted a historical immortality, was the relatively simple one of dividing the octave into twelve equal intervals. Only the octave itself was strictly in tune, but the imperfections of the other intervals were so slight as to escape detection by the most practised ear. By paying the nominal toll of

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theoretical inaccuracy, Bach opened the roads of harmonic modulation on every hand. It must not be forgotten, however, that most of the pieces of Couperin or Scarlatti, not to mention many an outlandish chromatic *tour de force* in the works of the early English composers, would have been intolerable on a harpsichord strictly in tune. Other men than Bach had their systems of temperament. We may take Bach's only to be the simplest.

Furthermore, that he created a new development of pianoforte technique by certain innovations in the manner of fingering passages, is open to question. It is well known that up to the beginning of the eighteenth century the use of the thumb on the keyboard was generally discountenanced. Bach himself had seen organists play who avoided using the thumb even in playing wide stretches. Scales were regularly played by the fingers, which, without the complement of the thumb, passed sideways over each other in a crawling motion which is said to have been inherited from the lutenists. Couperin advocated the use of the thumb in scales, but *over*, and not under, the fingers. Bach seems the first to have openly advised and practised passing the thumb under the fingers in the manner of to-day. Yet even he did not give up entirely the older method of gliding the fingers over each other in passages up and down the keyboard.

His system passed on through the facile hands of his son Emanuel, the greatest teacher of the next generation; and if it is not the crest of the wave of new styles of playing which was to break over Europe and flood a new and special pianoforte literature, is at any rate a considerable part of its force. Yet it must be borne in mind that Scarlatti founded by his own peculiar gifts a tradition of playing the piano and composing for it, in which Clementi was to grow up; and that, influential as Emanuel Bach was, Clementi was the teacher

## BACH'S STYLE

of the great virtuosi who paved the way to Chopin, the composer for the piano *par excellence*.

The foundation of all Bach's music is the organ. Even in his works for violin alone, or in those for double chorus and instruments, the conjunct, contrapuntal style of organ music is unmistakable. His general technique was acquired by study of the organ works of his great predecessors, Frescobaldi, Sweelinck, Pachelbel, Buxtehude, Bohm, and others. He was first and always an organist. So it is not surprising to find by far the greater part of his harpsichord and clavichord music shaped to a polyphonic ideal; and, what is more, written in the close, smooth style which is primarily fitting to the organ.

His intelligence, however, was no less alert than it was acute. There is evidence in abundance that he not only knew well the work of most of his contemporaries, but that he appropriated what he found best in their style. He seems to have found the violin concertos of Vivaldi particularly worthy of study. He was indebted to him for the form of his own concertos; and, furthermore, he adapted certain features of Vivaldi's technique of writing for the violin to the harpsichord. Of the influence of Couperin there is far less than was once supposed. The 'French Suites' were not so named by Bach and are, moreover, far more in his own contrapuntal style than in the tender style of Couperin. Kuhnau's Bible sonatas are always cited as the model for Bach's little Capriccio on the departure of his brother; but elsewhere it is hard to find evidence of indebtedness to Kuhnau.

But he even profited by an acquaintance with the trivial though enormously successful Italian opera of his day, and used the *da capo* aria as frankly as A. Scarlatti or J. A. Hasse. Still, whatever he acquired from his contemporaries was but imposed upon the great groundwork of his art, his organ technique. He

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never let himself go upon the stream of music of his day, but held steadfast to the ideal he had inherited from a century of great German organists, of whom he was to be the last and the greatest.

So, for the most part, the forms which had evolved during the seventeenth century were the forms in which he chose to express himself. Of these, two will be for ever associated with him, because he so expanded them and filled them with his poetry and emotion that no further growth was possible to them. These are the fugue and the suite.

### V

Most of Bach's predecessors and many of his contemporaries regarded the fugue as the highest form of instrumental music. It was the form in which they put their most serious endeavor. The harmonic basis of music was generally accepted and skill in weaving a contrapuntal or a polyphonic piece out of a principal motive or theme, and two or three subsidiary ones, was more or less common to all musicians. Yet fugues up to the time of Bach lacked a logical unity of construction. Excellent as the craftsmanship displayed in them might be, the effect was not satisfactory. There seemed, for instance, to be no very clear reason why a fugue should end except that the composer chose to end it. There was no principle of balance governing the work as a whole. It was architecturally out of proportion, or it failed to impress its proportions upon the listener. Bach alone seems to have given the fugue a perfectly balanced form, to have endowed it not only with life but with organization as well.

The secret of this is that at the bottom of his fugues lies a broadly conceived, well-balanced and firmly constructed harmonic plan. It must be granted, besides, that the subjects out of which he builds them have a



## BACH'S FUGUES AND THEIR STRUCTURE

singular vitality and are full of suggestion. But Bach, with his fertility in highly charged musical ideas and his apparently unlimited power to weave and ravel and weave musical material in endless variety of effects, rarely let his skill or his enthusiasm betray his sense of proportion. There is a compactness in nearly all his fugues which results from the compression of expressive ideas within the well-defined limits of a logical, harmonic plan.

Doubtless, the definiteness of this harmonic plan is more or less concealed from our modern ears by the uninterrupted movement of the voice parts, which was part of the conventional ideal of polyphonic writing. We are used to the pauses or stereotyped repetitions of the more modern style, which throw harmonic goals into prominence whereon the mind may perch and rest for a moment. Such perches are for the most part lacking in the Bach fugues. The subject takes flight and flies without rest until the end. Moreover, the art of playing Bach which brings out more than the regular and mechanical march of the voice-parts is unhappily extremely rare. Evenness of execution, that unhappy *bête-noire* of the striving student, is exalted far above any really more difficult, subtle variation of touch which may veil the flow of the various independent melodies in order to bring out the beautiful changing harmonies, arising from them like colored mist. But a simple analysis of any fugue will reveal the clear, well-balanced plan underneath it.

Pause for a moment at one or two of those that are better known. Take, for example, the fugue in C-sharp major from the first book of the 'Well-tempered Clavichord.' There is the conventional opening section, in which the theme and secondary themes are announced. We have tonic, dominant, and a clear cadence again in the tonic. Then begins the strong pull toward the dominant, so nearly inevitable in most kinds of musical

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form, and finally the dominant triumphant with the main theme strong and clear, and a solid cadence.

Here, on the basis of harmony, the first broad part ends, and the music goes on to explore and develop through other keys. The harmonies are rich, the counterpoint melodious, the theme whispered as a recollection from the first land of familiar tonic and dominant. Then clearly we are held for a moment to enjoy E-sharp minor before we play back again, with fragments of the theme, to our well-known dominant and tonic. Off again on motives we cannot fail to recognize, as if we were again to wander afield in harmonies. But, no; we sink firmly upon a swelling G-sharp, our dominant again, the best known note of our theme. The captive harmonies rise and fall. Movement they have, but escape is impossible. The return home is inevitable, it is imminent, it is done. Cheerfully our theme traces its old ground. It pauses a moment as if contemplating further flight, but the tonic key is all-powerful and the flight is ended and with it our fugue.

It is all lucid and logical: the first broad section with its twice-told tonic and its accustomed urge to the dominant; the many measures of wandering that yet pause to make harmonies clear; the long struggle against the anchoring G-sharp that pulls ultimately home.

Or take, for example, the more complicated fugue in G minor (Book I). We find, with few exceptions, the same plan. There are four voices to enter, and the exposition of the theme and counter-subjects is consequently longer. But they come in regularly, one after the other, tonic, dominant, tonic, dominant; and then the irresistible sway of the whole fabric to the relative major, made clear by an unusually obvious cadence. There follows the development section and the various episodic modulations, all held intimately together by recurrences of the main theme. The keys are well-defined. Then, instead of a firm anchoring of all this

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variety on a pedal point, we have a descending, regular sequence which inevitably suggests an objective point to be reached—the return of the music at last to the keys in which it was first made known to us. And now in this final restatement, instead of retracing step by step the opening measures, we hear the entrances of the theme pressed close together, overlapping, a persistent leading F-sharp from which there is but one escape, the final chords settling majestically into G minor.

Both these fugues are built upon a well-balanced and yet varied harmonic groundwork. The art of Bach shows especially in the middle or developing section in the clearness with which he brings out the various harmonic stages through which he leads his music, and in the manner in which, by the unmistakable method of a persistent pedal point or a regular sequence, he brings back the final restatement of his material in a section balancing the opening section.

Other fugues in the same collection, such as those in C-sharp minor and in B-flat minor, are more architectural. But, though the marvellous building up of themes and counter-themes, as in the C-sharp minor fugue, seems to outline a very cathedral of sound, we shall find none the less the same tri-partite harmonic base underneath the work as a whole.

In longer fugues, such as the great one in C minor coupled with a toccata and that in D minor which is associated with the 'Chromatic Fantasy,' the balance between the opening and closing sections is somewhat obscured by the long free section in between. But even here a unity is maintained by the skillful repetition of striking passages and the return to the final section is always magnificently prepared.

Bach did not bind himself to rules in writing his fugues. He handled his material with great freedom. Witness many fugues like that in F minor in the second

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part of the 'Well-tempered Clavichord,' in which he often subdued the main theme to a capricious, obvious second theme. Such a treatment of the fugue approaches the dramatic; and this, together with the division, quite clear in so many, into three sections of exposition, development and restatement, cannot but suggest some sort of kinship between the fugue as Bach conceived it and the movement in so-called sonata form which grew to such splendid proportions in the half-century after his death. At any rate, we are compelled to recognize that in spite of the contrapuntal style, inherited from an age in which harmonic sequence was a secondary element in music, the Bach fugues owe their imperishable form to the same principles of harmonic foundation as those upon which the sonata-form of Mozart and Beethoven is known to rest.

### VI

Though in the matter of musical form the name of Bach at once suggests the fugue, he brought the suite to no less perfection and significance. It must, however, be granted that the suite suffers by comparison with the fugue as a great form in music. First, the convention that all its movements be in the same key is more than likely to make the work as a whole monotonous. Secondly, the more or less obligatory dependence upon dance rhythms tends to restrict emotional vivacity and subtlety. Thirdly, since there can be but little contrast and variety among the separate movements, the suite lacks organic or internal life.

On the other hand, the emphasis laid upon rhythm may give the individual movements more obvious charm than the fugue is likely to exert. Furthermore, though the scope of the movements is more restricted than that of the fugue, the form is freer. And the neat

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balance of structure, with its two repeated sections, is undoubtedly more sympathetic to our modern ear than the involved architecture of the fugue. Lastly, though the sequence of *allemande*, *courante*, *bourrée*, *gigue* and other conventional movements may give us too much of a good thing, the *sarabande* does afford that striking point of contrast which is the precious asset of the great cyclic forms, whether *sonata*, *string quartet*, or *symphony*.

Bach wrote three complete sets of suites: the so-called French suites, which seem to have been written for his second wife during the time of his stay at Cöthen; the English suites,\* and the 'Partitas,' which we may call the German suites. Both the English suites and the Partitas were written at Leipzig, and the latter were among the few works engraved and printed during his lifetime.

Inasmuch as the form of the suite, its sequence and normal number of movements, had been clearly defined both by Froberger and Kuhnau some time before Bach began to write, he cannot be said to have assisted in its creation, as he did in the creation of the fugue. From the point of view of form he neither added anything nor, strictly speaking, improved upon what he inherited. What he did do was to expand the limits of the various movements to great and noble proportions, and to fill them with a wealth of musical vigor and imagination hardly suggested before his day in any instrumental music except Corelli's.

The French suites are the simplest and the most conventional. The style of them is unquestionably lighter than that of the later suites; but this may well be due less to an attempt to write in the *style galant* of Couperin, than to a desire to compose music technically

\* The origin of the title is rather doubtful. On the first page of the manuscript copy, which was in the hands of Christian Bach, of London, were written the words: *Fait pour les anglais*. The first prelude is on a theme by Dieupart, a composer then popular in England.

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within the grasp of his young and charming second wife. The sequence of the movements is conventional. All six have as their first three movements the normal *allemande*, *courante* and *sarabande*. All close with a *gigue*. Between the *sarabande* and the *gigue* he placed a number of extra dances, two minuetts in the first suite, an air and minuet in the second, two minuetts and an *Anglaise* in the third. The fourth and fifth have each three of these *intermezzi*, including *gavottes*, a *bourrée* and a *loure*; and the last has an odd group of four, consisting of a *gavotte*, a *polonaise*, a *bourrée* and a minuet. Only two of the *courantes* follow the French model with its complicated shifting rhythm. The others are of the more rapid Italian style.

The movements are all short and in the now familiar binary form, with its first section modulating from tonic to dominant, and repeated; and its second section going by way of a few more complicated modulations back again from dominant to tonic. There is little trace of a marked differentiation between the musical material given first in the tonic, and that given later in the dominant.

The hand of Bach is, however, not to be mistaken even here in these relatively simple pieces. The style is firm and for the most part close upon the organ style; the melodies—and there are melodies—are surprisingly sweet and fresh; the rhythm, delightfully crisp and vivacious. It is to be regretted that these early suites have generally dropped from the concert stage.

In looking over the English suites, which are undoubtedly the greatest works of their kind, one is first struck by the magnificent preludes. Each of the six suites has its prelude, longer by far and more powerful than any of the subsequent movements. In breadth of plan, in all-compelling vigor and vitality, in a magnificent, healthy emotion, these preludes may hold their

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places beside any single movements which have since been written. It cannot be denied that their style is more the style of organ than pianoforte music. A certain severity must also be admitted, which may leave something lacking to the modern ear that in a relatively long movement craves something of sensuous warmth. But their power is truly immense.

The style is highly contrapuntal and with few exceptions follows the convention of uninterrupted movement. This tends, as in many of the fugues, to hide the formal outline. The listener hears the music flowing on page after page and may be pardoned if, being able to recognize in the torrent of sound only one distinctly recurring theme, he thinks he is hearing music akin to the fugue. As a matter of fact, however, with the exception of only the first, the structure of these preludes is astonishingly formal and astonishingly simple. The second, fourth, fifth and sixth are fundamentally arias, on a huge scale.

The aria form is one of the simplest in music, one of the most effective as well, and was the first to develop under the influence of the Italian opera of the seventeenth century. It has frequently been called the A-B-A form. This is because it is made up of three distinct sections of which the first and last, predominantly in the tonic key, are identical, and the middle in some contrasting key or keys and of contrasting musical material. To spare themselves the trouble of writing out the last section, composers adopted the convention of merely writing the Italian words *da capo* (from the beginning) at the end of the second section, and of placing a double bar at the end of the first, over which the singer or player was not to pass upon his second performance of this section. Bach could have adopted this economical device, had he so desired, in the four preludes just mentioned; for each of them proves, upon examination, to be composed of three distinct sections,

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the middle more or less the longest, the first and last note for note the same.

We have already remarked how most of Bach's fugues, especially the shorter ones, can be divided into three sections based upon harmony. In the preludes to the English suites the question of musical material enters into the division. Take for analysis the prelude in A minor to the second suite. The first section ends at the beginning of the fifty-fifth measure. It will be seen to open with a bold figure, the first notes of which are at once imitated in the left-hand part. There follows then a constant flow of figure work over a relatively simple harmonic foundation and through orderly sequences, the hands frequently imitating each other. Fragments of the opening phrase are heard five times. In the thirty-first measure a very distinct phrase is introduced, still in the tonic key, it will be observed, though in dominant harmony; and this is repeated in purely conventional manner in three registers, giving way to formal passage work which, falling and rising, leads to a good stout reiteration of the opening motive. With this the first section ends, in a full tonic cadence.

The second section begins at once with a wholly new figure which dominates the music from now on up to the one hundred and tenth measure. At this measure the second section ends, and here Bach might have written the words *da capo*; for what follows is but a repetition of the first fifty-five measures.

It must be noticed that, although the middle section is decidedly dominated by a figure which does not appear in the first, still the first theme is not allowed to be forgotten. It may be found five times in the course of the middle section, dividing, as it were, the new material into distinct clauses, and serving as well to impress upon our ears the unity of the piece as a whole.

This device is not truly germane to the aria form. It is suggestive of the rondo in general; and in particu-





















## BACH'S 'GOLDBERG VARIATIONS'

Bach's. The bass repeats a certain form or ground over and over again, above which the treble spins an ever varied, rhapsodical melody, highly ornate in character. The plan is an exceedingly simple and a very old one. It may be traced in the old motets of the mensuralists of the thirteenth century, with their droning *ordines*; and in the favorite 'divisions' of the early English composers. The Chaconne and the Passacaglia are but variants from the same root. It is, of course, a simple form of variations.

This leads us, at last, to a brief consideration of what is perhaps from the point of view of the pianist, if not indeed from that of the musician, the most astonishing of Bach's harpsichord music,—the Goldberg Variations. The story of their origin will bear repetition for the light it throws on the mood in which they were written.

A certain Count Kaiserling, at one time Russian ambassador to the court of Saxony, supposedly suffered from insomnia and nervous depression. He had in attendance a clavecinist named Goldberg, a pupil of Bach's, who, among other duties, had by his playing to wile away the miserable night hours of his unhappy patron. Hearing of the great Bach through Goldberg, Kaiserling requested him to write some harpsichord music of pleasant, cheerful character especially for these weary vigils. Bach composed and sent back a theme and thirty variations, which so pleased the count that he presented Bach with a goblet filled with one hundred Louis d'or.

One cannot but smile; the mere thought of thirty variations is soporific. Yet an examination of them will convince one that Kaiserling must have rewarded Bach for sheer delight in the music, not for the blessed forgetfulness in sleep to which it may have been expected to seduce him. The quality of these variations is inexpressibly vivacious and charming. Bach shows him-

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self, it is true, always the master of sounds and the science of music; but this may be taken as the secure foundation on which he allows himself for once to be the brilliant and even dazzling virtuoso.

With the object in view of enchanting an amateur who must have been, *ex officio*, very much a man of the world at large, Bach composed objectively. That is to say he wrote not so much to express himself as to please another. The same might be said of two other of the latest harpsichord works, the *Musikalisches Opfer* and the *Kunst der Fuge*; except that in both of these masterpieces his aim was more technical. In the Goldberg Variations he is, so to speak, off duty.

Consequently, there is in them little trace of the stern, albeit tender idealist, or of the teacher, or of the man sunk in the mystery of religious devotion. There are nine canons, at every interval from the unison to the ninth, some in contrary motion. But even in these learned processes there is a social suavity and charm. Witness especially the canon at the third (the ninth variation), and that at the sixth (the eighteenth variation). Only the twenty-fifth variation seems to show Bach entirely submerged within himself. Elsewhere he is for the most part primarily a virtuoso. In the matter of wide skips, of crossing the hands, and of sparkling velocity, he outruns Scarlatti. In fact the virtuosity of the variations as a whole is far beyond Scarlatti.

To begin with, he wrote for a harpsichord with two manuals; and in many of the variations, conspicuously in the eighth, the eleventh, the twentieth, and the twenty-third, he availed himself to the uttermost of the advantages of such an instrument. The hands constantly pass by each other on their way from one extremity of the keyboard to the other, or cross and recross. The parts which they play are interwoven in complications which, unhappily, must forever be the despair of the pianist. In such cases, of course, he may

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not justly be compared with Scarlatti, who wrote always for one manual.

But take for example the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth variations, which may be played on either one or two manuals. The trills and double trills in the former, together with the wide and sudden crossing of the hands, savor of Paganini and Liszt. So do the interlocked chord trills in the latter, and the airy, whirring triplets which follow them. Indeed, leaving aside a few effects in double notes, and certain others of the thunder and lightning variety which were wholly beyond the possibilities of the harpsichord, the modern pianoforte virtuoso style has little to show in advance upon the style of the Goldberg Variations.

Furthermore, if the Goldberg Variations are thus amazing from the point of view of the pianist, they are none the less so to the musician regarding their general form. There is in them positively no trace of the stereotyped form of variations of that day, which consisted either of a repetition of the theme with more and more elaborate ornament, or at best of a series of arabesques over the more or less bare harmonic foundation of the theme. The theme is for Bach but the simple germ of an idea, which, throughout the whole elaborate series, undergoes change, transformation, metamorphosis, hardly to be recognized in any of its varied forms, scarcely suggesting a unity to the work as a whole. Mood and rhythm change. New ideas sprout, seemingly quite independent of their origin. Even the harmonic foundation is veiled and altered. Bach speaks, as it were, in beautiful metaphors.

This conception and treatment of the variation form render it true greatness; endow it, indeed, as a form, with immortal life. External figurations will grow old-fashioned, or the ear will become satiated with them. But the Goldberg Variations have an inner life that cannot wither or decay. Bach's warm imagination inspired

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them, gave them poetry as well as brilliance. No more modern variations are quite comparable with them except Brahms' great series on a theme of Handel, in which, however, there is less warmth than severity, less imagination than art.

### VIII

How shall Bach be placed in the history of music, in particular of pianoforte music? What part may he be said to play in the development of the art? The paternity which most composers of the nineteenth century rejoiced to fasten upon him, is hardly fitting. Bach was the father of twenty-two children in this life, but musically he died without heir. His sons Emanuel and Christian were two of the most influential composers of the next generation; but both discarded their father's inheritance as of little service to them in the forward march of music.

Even before his death Bach knew that the forms and style of music which he had given his life to perfect and ennoble were already of the past. That he invented a simple system of temperament in order to afford himself the harmonic freedom necessary to his expression, or that he devised a system of fingering which considerably facilitated the playing of his difficult music, does not constitute him the progenitor of the new style of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The composers who followed him knew little or nothing of his music. They were far less likely to appropriate what they might have found useful in his old-fashioned art, than to meet the problems inherent in the new, which they served, with their own ingenuity. Accept, if you like, Scarlatti as the founder of the modern pianoforte style; Couperin as the creator of the salon piece. The fugue had had its great day, and so had the suite. The flawless counterpoint of Bach, with its involutions and

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its smoothness, was of too compact a substance to serve the adolescent, transparent sonata. His harmonies were too rich and fluent. And Bach had been but once the Bach of the Goldberg Variations.

No; Bach's harpsichord music attained perfection. A river flowed into the sea. Further than this no art can go. Where a parallel excellence seems since to have been achieved, the growth of which it was the ultimate perfection was from another root. Bach is hardly more the father of Beethoven, Schumann and Chopin, than Praxiteles is the father of Michelangelo, or Sophocles of Shakespeare. But he left a standard in music of the complete mastery and welding of all the elements which make an art everlasting,—of form, of texture, of noble and impassioned emotion. And by virtue of this standard which he fixed, he has exercised over the development of music down to the present day a greater spiritual influence than that of any other single composer.

The harpsichord works of his great contemporary Handel are far less significant. Several sets of suites were published in London between 1720 and 1735, also six fugues for organ or harpsichord. In the third suite of the first set (1720) there is an air and variations. In the fifth of the same series is the so-called 'Harmonious Blacksmith,' the best known of his works for the harpsichord. It is a theme and variations. The air and variations in B-flat major which has served as the groundwork of a great cycle of variations by Brahms constitutes the first number of the second series (1733). There are in other suites a *Passacaglia* and two *Chaconnes*, all of which are monotonous series of variations. One *Chaconne* has no less than sixty-two varied repeats. In these works Handel shows little ingenuity. His technical formulas are conventional and in general uninteresting. The dance movements of the suites are worthier of a great composer.

Scarlatti, Couperin, and Bach are the great names of

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harpsichord music; great because each stands for a supreme achievement in the history of the art. It may be questioned whether, if the pianoforte had not come to supplant the harpsichord, composers would have been able to progress beyond the high marks of these three men, either in style or in expressiveness. New forms had made their appearance, it is true, before the death of Bach. These would have run their course upon the harpsichord without doubt; but it is not so certain that they could have brought to light any new resources of the instrument. These had been not only fully appreciated by the three great men, Scarlatti, Couperin, and Bach, but had been developed to their fullest extent. And, indeed, it may be asked whether any music has more faithfully expressed the emotions and the aspirations of humanity than the harpsichord music of Bach.

## CHAPTER III

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SONATA FORM

Vienna as the home of the sonata; definition of 'sonata'—Origin and history of the standard sonata cycle; relationship of sonata movements—Evolution of the 'triplex' form: Pergolesi's 'singing allegro'; the union of aria and binary forms; Padre Martini's sonatas, Scarlatti's true sonata in C; Domenico Alberti; the Alberti bass; the transitional period of the sonata—Sonata writers before Haydn and Mozart: J. C. Bach; Muzio Clementi—Schobert and Wagenseil; C. P. E. Bach; F. W. Rust.

TURNING our backs upon Bach and looking over the musical marches, we shall observe many roads in the second half of the eighteenth century making their way even from the remotest confines towards Vienna. There they converge towards the end of the century. Thither comes pouring music from England, from France, volumes of music from Italy; music from Prussia, from Saxony, from Russia; from all the provinces, from Poland, from Bohemia and from Croatia. There is a hodge-podge and a *pêle-mêle* of music, of types and nationalities. There are the pompous oratorios from the west, light operas and tuneful trios and sonatas from the south, dry-as-dust fugues from the north, folk-songs gay and sad from the east. All whirling and churning before Maria Theresa, or her lovable son, or the intelligent courtiers about them. France will grow sick before the Revolution, Italy will become frivolous, Germany cold. Only Vienna loves music better than life. Presently up will come Haydn from Croatia, and Mozart from Salzburg, and Beethoven from Bonn. Then young Schubert will sing a swan-song at the feast from which the honored guests have one by one departed; and waltzes will whirl in to

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gobble up all save what fat Rossini can grab for himself.

And what is the pianoforte's share in this profusion of music? Something of all, variations, pot-pourris from the operas, rondos and bagatelles and waltzes; but chiefly sonatas, and again sonatas.

Now sonatas did not grow in Vienna. Vienna laid before her honored guests the great confusion of music which had poured into her for fifty years from foreign lands, and in that confusion were sonatas. They were but babes, frail and starved for lack of many things, little more than skin and bones. But they had bright eyes which caught Haydn's fatherly glance. He dragged them forth from the rubbish and fed them a good diet of hearty folk-songs, so that they grew. Mozart came from many wanderings and trained them in elegance and dressed them with his lovely fancies. And at last when they were quite full-grown, Beethoven took charge of them and made them mighty. What manner of babe was this that could so grow, and whence came it to Vienna?

The word sonata slips easily over the tongues of most people, great musicians, amateurs, dilettanti and laymen alike; but it is not a word, nor yet a type, easily defined. The form is very properly associated with the composers of the Viennese period. Earlier sonatas, such as those of the seventeenth century composers, like Kuhnau and Pasquini, are sonatas only in name, and not in the generally accepted sense of the word. The rock which bars their entrance into the happy kingdom of sonatas is the internal form of the movements. For a sonata is not only a group of pieces or movements in an arbitrary whole. At least *one* of the separate movements within the whole must be in the special form dubbed by generations with an unfortunate blindness to ambiguity, the *sonata form*. Attempts have been made from time to time to rename this form.



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It has been called the *first movement* form; because usually the first movements of sonatas, symphonies and other like works, are found to have it. Unhappily it is scarcely less frequently to be found in the last movements. Let us simply cut the Gordian knot, and for no other reason than that it may help in this book to render a difficult subject a little less confusing, call this special form arbitrarily the *triplex* form.

### I

To trace the development of the pianoforte sonata, then, is a twofold task: to trace the tendency towards a standard group of pieces or movements in one whole; and to trace the development of the triplex form of movement, the presence of which in the group gives us the somewhat despotic right to label that group a sonata.

The first task leads upon something of a wild-goose chase. The number of movements which a sonata might contain never became rigidly fixed. A single movement, however, is not a sonata in the generally accepted meaning of the word. It is true that the separate pieces of D. Scarlatti are still called sonatas; but this is only one of the few cases where the original natural use of the word has persisted beside the arbitrarily restricted one. We are, as a matter of fact, almost forced to this continued free use of the term by the lack of a more specific one to cover the circumstance, or even of a suitable abstract one. As we have seen, the few pieces Scarlatti published himself he called *esercizii*. Even in his day the word sonata was applied mostly to compositions made up of two or more movements. His pieces were not fugues; neither were they dances. They were too regular and too compact to be called fantasies or toccatas. They were not rondos, and

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his imagination was sterile in fanciful titles such as Couperin gave to his pieces. Our modern minds reject his own title as utterly unmusical. In abstract terms we have 'piece,' which may do for the historian but not for the program. 'Movement' has been chained up in the sonata and symphony. 'Gems' and 'jewels' are too often in music a paste of musk and tears. So we hold to sonata, for the lack of anything better.

Though the word originally signified any music sounded or played on instruments, thus differentiating instrumental music from vocal, its use was limited early in the seventeenth century to music written for groups of strings or wind. At that time, it will be remembered, harpsichord and clavichord music was still essentially organ music, to which the word sonata was rarely applied.

The string sonatas had developed chiefly from the old *chanson*, the setting of a poem in stanzas to polyphonic vocal music. The composer attempted in this old form to reflect in his music the varied meaning of the stanzas of his poem. Thus the music, taken from its words and given to groups of strings to play, was more or less clearly divided into varied sections, showing, as it were, the shape or skeleton upon which it had originally been moulded. At first the instrumentalists, even the organists, as we have seen, were content merely to play upon their instruments what had been thus written for voices. Such had long been their custom with popular madrigals and with other simpler forms.

Soon the organists broke ground in a wholly different direction. But the other instrumentalists, chiefly the violinists, on the contrary, though they began to compose their own music with an ever-growing regard to the special qualities of their instruments, still retained the well-known form. Hence the many fledgling sonatas in the last quarter of the sixteenth century and even

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the first quarter of the seventeenth, with their title of *canzon a suonare*. This title was soon cut down to *sonata*. The form was enormously expanded by the enthusiasm and rapidly soaring skill of the instrumental composers. The many more or less vague sections, fossil outlines, as it were, of the poem in stanzas, swelled out to broad and clear proportions. The number of them was consequently cut down to four or even three, the selection and sequence of which had been almost unconsciously determined by principles of contrast. Finally the influence of the growing suite combined with the breadth and formal perfection of the several sections to cut them off distinctly, each from the other. The word *sonata*, then, it will be observed, was applied almost from the beginning to a piece of music divided into several more or less clearly differentiated sections or movements.

The growth of the suite was, as we have seen, of quite a different nature. The *sonata* developed rapidly from a seed. The suite was a synthesis of various dance pieces, held together by a convention, without any inherited internal relationship. In spite of the number of suites written during the seventeenth century for string band and even other combinations of instruments, it is practically a special development of keyboard music. The lighter character of the music itself, depending largely upon dance rhythms for its vitality, encouraged the free style suitable to the harpsichord. Its influence upon the string *sonata* is, however, unmistakable.

Thus, though harpsichord music and the suite were more or less neglected in Italy during the second and third quarters of the seventeenth century, we find Corelli publishing between 1683 and 1700 his epoch-making works for violin and other instruments in alternate sets of *suonate* (sometimes called *suonate da chiesa*), and suites, which he called *suonate da camera*.

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In the former the movements had no titles but the Italian words which marked their character, such as *grave*, *allegro*, *vivace*, and other like words. In the latter most of the movements conformed to dance rhythms and were given dance names.

The normal number of movements in both sonatas and suites is four, and normally these four are in the order of slow, fast, slow, fast. The movements of the suite are all normally in the same key; but among the sonatas the middle adagio is often in a different key from the other movements. This variety of key is nearly always present as a distinctive feature of the sonata.

Corelli's works are, leaving aside his personal genius, indicative of the state of the sonata at the end of the seventeenth century. That the sonatas with suite movements were called chamber sonatas and the others church sonatas gives us some hint of the relative dignity of the two forms in the minds of composers of that day. In 1695 J. Kuhnau published in Leipzig his sonata in B-flat for the harpsichord, with the prefatory remarks that he saw no reason why the harpsichord, with its range of harmony and its possibilities in contrapuntal music, should be restricted to the lighter forms of music (such as the suite). He therefore offered to the public a piece for harpsichord written in the more dignified form of the violin music of the day, which he called the *Sonate aus dem B.*

Here, as we remarked in chapter I, the word sonata comes into pianoforte music, bringing with it a dignity, if not a charm, which was felt to be lacking in the suite. Kuhnau's sonata is in four movements, none of which is very clearly articulated. The *adagio* comes between the second and fourth and is in the key of E-flat major. This sonata was followed by seven more, published the next year under the title of *Frische Clavier Früchte*. The tone of all is experimental and somewhat bom-

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bastie. But at any rate we have at last keyboard sonatas.

During the lifetime of Corelli two other Italian violinists rose to shining prominence, Locatelli \* and Vivaldi.† To them is owing a certain development in the internal structure of a new form of the sonata called the concerto, of which we shall say more later on. Here we have to note, however, the tendency of both these composers to make their concertos and sonatas in three movements: two long rapid movements with a slow movement between. Corelli left *sonate da camera* and *sonate da chiesa* of the same description; but the procedure seems to have recommended itself to Sebastian Bach mainly by the works of Vivaldi, of which, as we have seen, he made a most careful study. Hence we have from Bach not only the beautiful sonatas for violin and harpsichord in three movements, but harpsichord concertos,—many of which were transcriptions of Vivaldi's works, but some, like the exquisite one in D minor cited in the last chapter, all his own,—likewise on the same plan. So, too, were written many of the Brandenburg concertos, notably the one in G major, No. 5. Finally we have the magnificent concerto in the Italian style for cembalo alone, which is more truly a sonata, leaving for all time a splendid example of the symmetry of a well-wrought piece in three movements.

Of this perfect masterpiece we have already spoken. It is well to recall attention to the fact, however, that the first and last movements are of about equal length and significance. Both are in rapid tempo and of careful and more or less close-knit workmanship; and both are in the key of F major. The movement between

\* Pietro Locatelli, b. Bergamo, 1693; d. Amsterdam, 1764; famous violinist, pupil of Corelli. His works, *Concerti*, trio sonatas, etc., are important in the development of the sonata form.

† Antonio Vivaldi, b. Venice, ca. 1680; d. 1743; completed Torelli's and Albinoni's work in the creation of the violin concerto.

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them is in a different key (D minor) and of slow tempo and wholly contrasting character.

Here, then, as regards the number and grouping of movements in the sonata, we have in the work of the father, the model for the son Emanuel. For so far as Emanuel Bach contributed at all to the external structure of the pianoforte sonata, it was by adhering consistently to this three-movement type which was later adopted by Haydn, Mozart, and, to a great extent, Beethoven.

His consistency in this regard is indeed well worth noticing. For between the years 1740 and 1786, when he composed and published his numerous sets of sonatas, there was much variety of procedure among musicians. Bach, however, rarely varied; and this, together with the models his father left, justifies us in calling the sonata in three movements distinctly the German type of this period.

Meanwhile composers who were more in the current of Italian music fought shy of committing themselves to a fixed grouping of movements. Italian instrumental music was taking a tremendous swing towards melody and lightness. This was especially influential in shaping the triplex form of movement; but was also affecting the general grouping. Padre Martini (1706-84) of Bologna alone adhered to a regular, or nearly regular, number and sequence of movements in harpsichord sonatas. His twelve harpsichord sonatas, published in Amsterdam in 1742, but written some years earlier, seem strangely out of place in their surroundings.

To begin with, even at this late date they are written either for organ or for harpsichord. This alone prepares us for the general contrapuntal style of them all. Then, though named sonatas, they are far more nearly suites. Each is composed of five movements. The first is regularly in sonorous prelude style, suitable to the organ. The second is regularly an allegro in fugal

## HISTORY OF THE CYCLICAL FORM

style, the third usually an *adagio*. The fourth and fifth are in most cases dances,—gavottes, courantes or giges, with sometimes an aria or a theme and variations. All the movements in one sonata are in the same key. Only one feature resembles those of the growing Italian harpsichord sonata: the generally light dance character of the last or the last two movements. For what is very noticeable in the sonatas of E. Bach is that the last movements, though cheerful in character, are usually of equal musical significance with the first.

Far more in the growing Italian style are the eight sonatas of Domenico Alberti, the amateur thorn in the professional side. Just when they were written is not known. The young man was born in 1717 and died probably in 1740 if not before. None of them has more than two movements. Both are in the same key and the second is usually the livelier of the two, often a minuet.

A group of the Italians preferred the sonata in two movements, Francisco Durante (1684-1755), for example, and later Domenico Paradies (1710-92). Later still, some sonatas of Johann Christian Bach, youngest son of Sebastian, who submitted quite to the Italian influence, have but two movements; and the first of Clementi's sonatas also. Other Italians, like Baldassare Galuppi (1706-85), seem never to have decided upon any definite number, nor any definite order of movements.

What is, however, due particularly to the Italian influence is the persistent intrusion of a dance form in the cycle—usually a minuet. We find it in Alberti, in Christian Bach, and especially in the clavecin works of Jean Schobert, a young Silesian, resident in Paris from about 1750 to 1766, one of the most brilliant clavecinists of his day, one of the most charming, and one who brought a very decided influence upon the development of the young Mozart.

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The Italian tendency was invariably to put at the end of the sonata a movement of which the lightness and gaiety of the contents were to bring refreshment or even relief after the more serious divulgements of the earlier movements,—a rondo or even a dance. To this impulse Haydn and Mozart both yielded, retaining from Emanuel Bach only the standard number of three movements.

It must be added here that something is due to Slavic influences in the ultimate general triumph of the objectively gay over the subjectively profound in the last movement or movements of the sonata and the symphony. Not only did Haydn incorporate in the scheme the lively expressive melodies and the crisp rhythms so native to the Slavic peoples among whom he grew to manhood. Earlier than he the Bohemian, Johann Stamitz, had thus enlivened and clarified the symphony, and given it the great impetus to future development which bore so splendidly in Vienna. And Schobert, whom we have but now mentioned, was from a Polish land. What such men brought was essentially of spiritual significance; but in music, as in other arts, the new spirit brings the new form.

As we have already said, the number and sequence of movements in the pianoforte sonata has never been rigidly fixed. But an average combination is clear. The majority of sonatas by Haydn and by Mozart, as well as by lesser men like Clementi, Dussek and Rust, and many of the sonatas by Beethoven, are in three movements. Of these the first and last are invariably in the same key (major and minor). The first movement is normally of a dignified, formal, and more or less involved character, though such a generalization may be quickly stoned to death by numbers of conspicuous and great exceptions. The second movement is normally in a key contrasting with the first movement, usually of slow and lyrical character, usually also sim-



## RELATIONSHIP OF SONATA MOVEMENTS

ple, at least as regards form. The last movement is, in perhaps the majority of cases, more brilliant, more obvious and more rapid than the others, calculated to amuse and astonish the listener rather than to stir his emotions, to send him away laughing and delighted, rather than sad and thoughtful.

The number three was established by Emanuel Bach. The character of the last movement, however, was determined by Italian and Slavic influences, and is somewhat reminiscent of the suite. If one more sign is necessary of the complex crossing and recrossing of various lines of development before the pianoforte sonata rose up clear on its foundations, we have but to note the curious facts that the suite was neglected in Italy during the seventeenth century in favor of the string sonata; that the suite reached its finest proportions in Germany, chiefly at the hands of Sebastian Bach; that through Sebastian Bach the three-movement sonata group passed from the Italian Vivaldi to Emanuel Bach, who established it as a norm; finally that the Italians, who neglected the suite in the seventeenth century, conceived an enthusiasm for it in the eighteenth and brought their love of it to bear on the German sonata group, introducing the minuet and giving to the last movement the lively care-free form of a dance or a rondo.

Before proceeding to outline the development of the triplex form in which at least one movement of this sonata group was written and which is one of the most distinctive features of the sonata, it is not out of place to stop to consider what relationship, if any, existed between the movements. Was the sonata as a whole an indissoluble unit? Rather decidedly no. The grouping of several movements together came to be as conventional and as arbitrary, if not so regular, as the grouping of the suites. There is about the sonatas of Emanuel Bach a certain seriousness and an emotional

## PIANOFORTE MUSIC

genuineness which might prevail upon the pianist to-day, if ever he should think of playing them in concert, to respect the grouping in which the composer chose to present them to the world. But there is no organic life in the sonatas as a whole. Occasionally in his sonatas and in those of Clementi and Haydn the slow middle movement leads without pause into the rapid finale. In these cases, however, the slow movement is introductory to the last, to which it is attached though not related.

Haydn, Mozart and even Beethoven took movements from one work and incorporated them in another. Moreover, it was the custom even as late as the time that Chopin played in Vienna, to play the first movement of a symphony, a concerto or a sonata early in a program and the last movements considerably later, after other works in other styles had been performed. The sonatas and symphonies of the last quarter of the eighteenth and the first quarter of the nineteenth centuries in the main lacked any logical principle of unity. We say in the main, because Emanuel Bach, F. W. Rust, and Beethoven succeeded, in some of their greatest sonatas, in welding the movements inseparably together. Clementi, too, in the course of his long life acquired such a mastery of the form. But these developments are special, and signalize in a way the passing on of the sonata. As a form the sonata proper was doomed by the lack of a unity which composers in the nineteenth century felt to be necessary in any long work of music.

The day will come, if indeed it has not already come, when most sonatas will have been broken up by Time into the various distinct parts of which they were pieced together. Out of the fragments future years will choose what they will to preserve. Already the Bach suites have been so broken. It makes no difference that their separate numbers are for the most part of imperishable

## EVOLUTION OF THE 'TRIPLEX' FORM

stuff. Movements of Haydn and Mozart will endure after their sonatas as wholes are dead. So, too, with many of the Beethoven sonatas. The links which hold their movements together are often but convention; and there is evidently no convention which Time will not corrode.

### II

In looking over the vast number of sonatas written between 1750 and 1800 one is impressed, if one is kindly, not so much by their careless structure and triviality as by their gaiety. In the adagios the composers sometimes doff their hats, somewhat perfunctorily, to the muse of tragedy; but for the most part their sonatas are light-hearted. They had a butterfly existence. They were born one day but to die the next. Yet there was a charm about them. The people of that day loved them. A run and a trill do, it is true, but tickle the ear; but that is, after all, a pleasant tickling. And simple harmonies may shirk often enough the weight of souls in tragic conflict, to bear which many would make the duty of music; yet their lucidity is something akin to sunlight. The frivolities of these countless sonatas are the frivolities of youth. There is no high seriousness in most of them. And our triplex form came sliding into music on a burst of youth. A star danced and it was born.

What gave definite shape to this fundamentally simple form is the Italian love of melody. So far as it may be traced to the influence of one man, it may be traced to Giovanni Pergolesi, whose trio-sonatas first gave to the world as a prototype of the classical triplex form what is now known as the 'singing allegro.' Pergolesi was born in 1704 and lived to be only thirty-three years old; but in that brief life, gaily and recklessly squan-

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dered as it seems to have been, he exerted an influence upon the growth of music which apparently started it upon a new stage. He was all but worshipped by his countrymen. His opera, *La serva padrona* (1733), won instant success, not only in Italy, but well over all Europe; and had an influence comparable to that of but few other single works in the history of music. On the ground of instrumental music his trio-sonatas have, as it seems now, accomplished scarcely less.

We must here restrict ourselves to the harpsichord music of the time in Italy, in which the 'singing allegro' found place almost at once. Let us first consider what lay at the bottom of the new form.

We may plunge at once to the very foundation, the harmonic groundwork. As we have seen, perhaps the most important accomplishment in music of the seventeenth century was the discovery and establishment of key relationships in that harmonic conception of music which has endured almost to the present day. Instrumental forms developed upon this re-organization of musical material. Subsequently, however polyphonic the texture of a piece of music—a fugue of Bach's, for instance—might be, its shape was moulded upon a frame of harmony. The piece was in a certain key, clearly affirmed at the beginning and at the end, points in the structure which in a piece of music as in a paragraph are naturally the most emphatic. Within these limits there was the life and variety of a harmonic development, which, departing from the tonic key, must return thence. Long before the year 1700 the regulation of such harmonic procedures had definitely fixed the symmetrical plan of two forms: the so-called aria form and the binary form. Neither was in itself capable of much development; and it was in a sort of fusion of both that the harmonic plan of the triplex form was created.

## EVOLUTION OF THE 'TRIPLEX' FORM

The aria form was in three sections which we have elsewhere represented by the letters A, B, A. A, the opening section, was all in the tonic key, and was practically complete in itself. B, the second section, was in a contrasting key or was harmonically unstable. A, the third section, was but an exact repetition of the first, to give balance and unity to the whole. The limitations of the form were essentially harmonic. The first section offered little or no chance for modulation. Its tonality must be unmistakably and impressively tonic. Therefore it did not develop into the second section by means of harmonic unrest. The second was simply a block of contrasting harmonies, like a block of porphyry set beside a block of marble. Frequently, however, the second section was incomplete without the third. In such cases a hyphen between the B and the second A in our lettered scheme would represent the relations between the three sections more nearly, thus: A, B-A.

The binary form, in which most of the dance movements of the suite were composed, was usually shorter than the aria form; but though apparently simpler, it was, from the point of view of harmony, more highly organized. It consisted, as we have seen, of two sections, each of which was repeated in turn. The first modulated from the tonic key to the dominant or relative major; the second from that key back to the tonic again. It will be observed that the first section really grew into the second by harmonic impulse; for the first section, ending as it did in a key that was not the key of the piece, was incomplete. The two sections together not only established a perfect balance of form and harmony, but had an organic harmonic life which was lacking in the aria.

However, the tendency of most forms was towards the triple division typified by the aria, with a clearly defined first section, a second section of contrasting and

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uncertain character, and a third section which, being a restatement of the first, reestablished the tonic key and gave to the piece as a whole a positive order. In the binary forms of Froberger and Chambonnières there is the harmonic embryo of a distinct middle section; namely, the few modulations through which the music passes on its way from dominant back to tonic in the second section. It can be easily understood that composers would make the most of this chance for modulation as they became more and more aware of the beauty of harmony; likewise, that the bolder their harmonic ventures in these measures, the greater was their need to emphasize the final re-establishment of the tonic key. Ultimately a distinct triple division was inevitable, with an opening section modulating from tonic to dominant, a second section of contrasting keys and few modulations; finally a restatement of the first section, as in the aria, but necessarily somewhat changed so that the whole section might be in the tonic key. Such is the harmonic foundation of the triplex form.

Such a form makes its appearance in music very shortly after the beginning of the eighteenth century. It seems akin now to the aria, now to the binary form. One may suspect the latter relationship if the first section is repeated, and the second and third sections (as one) likewise. These repetitions are obviously inherited from the binary form. On the other hand, if these sections are not thus repeated, the piece resembles more nearly the aria.

Take, for example, an adagio from the second sonata in a set of twelve published by Padre Martini in 1742, written probably many years earlier. These sonatas were republished by Madame Farrenc in the third volume of her *Trésor des pianistes*. The adagio in question is clearly in three sections very like an aria, with the difference that the first section ends in the dominant (in the eighth measure), and the last is consequently

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changed from the first so that it may end in the tonic. There are no repeats.

Far more remarkable is a sonata in C major by D. Scarlatti. It is the eleventh in the Breitkopf and Härtel collection of twenty to which reference has already been made. Here we find a first section modulating from tonic to dominant. This is repeated. Then follows the second section, full of free modulations, and this section comes to a very obvious half-close. The last section very nearly repeats the first, except for the necessary changes in harmony so that all may be in the tonic key. Scarlatti nowhere else wrote in this form so clearly. Did he merely chance upon it? The wide crossing of the hands marks an early stage in his composing, yet the form is clearly triplex and astonishingly orthodox.

The most striking aspect of this little piece is the obvious, clear divisions of the sections. The first section is marked off from the second by the double bar for the repeat. There is a pause before the third section, or restatement, begins. But clearest of all is the arrangement of musical material. By this we know positively that the triplex form has become firmly fixed, that the old binary form has expanded to a ternary form, submitting to the same influences that had made the perfect aria and the perfect fugue.

It will be remembered that in the old binary form, composers made little effort to differentiate the material proper to the dominant part of the first section from that which had already been given out in the tonic. Such pieces dealt not in clear themes but in one or two running figures which lent themselves to more or less contrapuntal treatment. The opening figure was usually the most definite. The second section began with this figure in the dominant key; but in the final restoration of the tonic key the figure played no part. In other words, the chief figure of the whole

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piece almost never appeared in the second section in the tonic. It was not until the embryonic middle section, which, as we have seen, consisted of but one or two modulations, had developed to something of the proportions of the contrasting section of the aria, that composers realized that in order fully to re-establish the tonic key at the end, the chief figure should again make its appearance and usher in the final section, which thus became a restatement of the first.

Scarlatti's treatment of the binary form was always brilliant and clear. He was, as we know, fertile in sparkling figures. His sonatas are always made up of two or more of these, which, unlike the figures in the suites of most of his contemporaries, are distinct from each other. But in most of his pieces, long as the middle section might be, the tonic key was never re-introduced by the return of the opening figure of the first section. It is precisely this that he has done in the sonata in C major now in question. The first section presents two distinct figures or subjects, one in the tonic, the other in the dominant. The first, or opening figure, is in the nature of a trumpet call. The second is conspicuous by the wide crossing of the hands. The second section begins immediately after the double bar in the proper manner of the binary form; that is, with a modification of the first subject in the key of the dominant. Then follow many interesting modulations, leading to the unmistakable half close, prefatory to the third section. And the third section begins at once with the *first* figure in the *tonic* key, and proceeds to the second, now likewise in the tonic. This, more than all else, marks the passing of the binary form into the triplex. The Padre Martini adagio presents the same feature, but less clearly because the second figure is hardly articulate.

These two little pieces, which are but two out of many now known and others yet to be discovered, seem to re-



## PERGOLESÌ'S 'SINGING ALLEGRO'

veal to us a stage at which the aria form and the binary form merged into the form of movement generally known as the sonata form, which we have chosen arbitrarily to call the triplex. The three distinct sections, the last repeating the first, seem modelled on the aria. The highly organized harmonic life seems inherited from the binary form of the dance movements of the suite. Finally the arrangement and development of two distinct figures or subjects on this plan are proper to the new form alone.

Upon this hybrid foundation Pergolesi built up his 'singing allegro.' Where Scarlatti had employed figures, Pergolesi employed melodies. Therefore we find a melody in the tonic key, a melody in the dominant, these two constituting with the measures which accomplish the modulation between them, the first section, which is repeated. Then follows a section of free modulation, in which fragments of either melody, but chiefly of the first, play their parts; and lastly the return of both melodies in the tonic key.

It is the Italian love of melody which gives it its final stamp. To this love Scarlatti hardly felt free to abandon himself in his harpsichord music; partly, probably, because of the ancient polyphonic tradition which still demanded of organ and of harpsichord music the constant movement we find in the preludes of Bach's English suites; also because as a virtuoso he was interested in making his instrument speak brilliantly, and because he realized that the harpsichord was really unfitted to melody.

But the singing allegro of Pergolesi won the world at a stroke, and almost at once we find it applied to the harpsichord by the young amateur, Domenico Alberti. One should give the devil his due. Poor Alberti, hardly more than a youth, for having supposedly seduced the world of composers to bite the juicy apple of what is called the Alberti bass, has been excoriated by all sober-

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minded critics and treated with unveiled contempt. Let us look into his life and works for a moment.

Little enough is known of him, and that little smacks of faëry. He was probably born in Venice in 1717. He died about 1740, probably in Rome. Only twenty-three, masters, but he tied his bass to the tail of music and there it swings to this day. But more of the bass anon. He was an amateur, according to Laborde,\* a pupil of Biffi and Lotti. He was a beautiful singer. At least we read that he went to Madrid in the train of the Venetian ambassador, and astonished Farinelli, one of the greatest and most idolized singers of the day, who was then living in high favor at the Spanish court. Later he came back to Rome, where he recommended himself to the patronage of a certain Marquis Molinari. About 1737 he set two of Metastasio's libretti, *Endymion* and *Galatea*, to music, which was, according to Laborde, highly esteemed. All his teachers recalled him with great enthusiasm. He could so play on the harpsichord, so improvise, that he charmed large assemblies during whole nights. And sometimes he would go abroad at night through the streets of Rome with his lute, singing, followed by a crowd of delighted amateurs. He died young and much regretted. Laborde closes his article by saying that Alberti wrote thirty-six sonatas which are said to be superb, and of a new kind (*d'un genre neuf*). Laborde's article, though pleasing, is a bit highly colored. From it we have a right only to infer that Alberti was lovable, a good singer and a good player. That he speaks of the sonatas as being of a new sort, however, should not be forgotten.

Dr. Burney mentions Alberti twice in his 'Present State of Music in Germany,' both times in connection with his stay in Vienna in the autumn of 1772, more than thirty years after Alberti's death. Once it is to

\* Jean Benjamin de Laborde: *Essai sur la musique ancienne et moderne*, 1780.

## DOMENICO ALBERTI

give his name among the seven men who were at that time considered to be the greatest composers for harpsichord and for organ. Other names were Handel, Scarlatti, and Bach (either Emanuel or Christian: the father was not then generally appreciated). High company for poor Alberti, from which he since has fallen most low. But that he should have been reckoned with such men thirty years after his death, speaks irrefutably for the influence his works must have had, for a time, at any rate, upon the development of pianoforte music.

Reference was made in the second chapter to the other mention of Alberti in Dr. Burney's book. It occurred in connection with Dr. L'Augier's reminiscences of D. Scarlatti. Scarlatti had told the eminent physician that he had always borne in mind, while writing his pieces for the harpsichord, the special qualities of that instrument, whereas other 'modern' composers, like Alberti, were now writing in a style that would be more fitting to other instruments. In the case of Alberti, Scarlatti must have had the voice in mind, for Alberti's harpsichord sonatas are hardly more than strings of melodies.

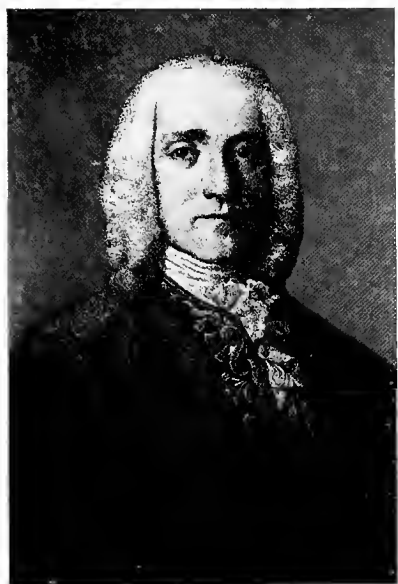
Considering then that Alberti was held in such high esteem as late as 1772, and that D. Scarlatti complained of him that he wrote in a manner less fitting to the harpsichord than to some other instrument, it seems likely that to him in part is due the appearance of the singing allegro in harpsichord music, which was to be characteristic of Christian Bach, of Mozart, of Haydn, of Clementi and in some part of Beethoven.

The sonatas themselves bear this out. The eight which we have been able to study, are light stuff, indisputably. But the triplex form is clear in most of the movements. He uses two separate distinct melodies as themes. The first appears at once in the tonic, the second later in the dominant. The first section, which is













## THE ALBERTI BASS

tally by other instruments, which, unlike the harpsichord, had power to sustain tone.

When a man like Alberti at last endeavored to write purely melodic music on the harpsichord alone, which by the way was wholly unfitted to sing, three methods of accompaniment were open to him. One of these was to give to the left hand, as accompanist, a countermelody or countermelodies, which, interweaving with the upper melody, would create harmonic progressions. Allowing him to have had the skill to do this, as Couperin or Bach had been able to do, it would not have recommended itself to him as the best way to set off the chief melody. Such a procedure inevitably tangled melody with accompaniment. Secondly, he could give to the left hand a series of chords. But owing to the nature of the harpsichord, these would sound dry and detached, with cold harmonic vacancies between; unless he chose to repeat the chords rapidly, which process was decidedly clumsy. Finally he could break up the chords into their separate notes, combine these in groups easily within the grasp of the hand, and by playing these groups rapidly over and over again, produce a constantly moving harmonic current on which his melody might float along. This is in fact what Alberti did, and this is the legitimate function of the Alberti bass, one which can no more be dispensed with from pianoforte music than the tremolo from the orchestra.

It is hardly possible to believe that he invented the particular formula which plays such a part in his music. Bach had devised many methods of breaking chords so that their component parts might be kept in rapid and constant vibration. Witness alone the first and second preludes in the first book of the 'Well-tempered Clavichord.' In the ninth toccata of the elder Scarlatti there is an eight-measure passage of chords broken exactly in the Alberti manner. But such devices were employed by Bach and likewise by A. Scarlatti



## TRANSITIONAL PERIOD OF THE SONATA

the middle of the century, the best in Europe. The two great composers who were associated with it, Franz Xaver Richter (1709-89) and Stamitz (1717-57) himself, did perhaps more than any other composers of the time to strengthen the new form and give it use as a vehicle of lively feeling. Their energy and their success left an indelible impression upon the symphony, and upon the string-quartet. And they made themselves felt upon the pianoforte sonata; in Vienna through the famous pianist-composer, G. C. Wagenseil (1715-1777); in Paris through the young and popular Jean Schobert (d. 1767) already mentioned; and even in London through Christian Bach.

Emanuel Bach, who was frequently publishing sets of sonatas in Berlin from 1740 to 1786, rather gradually adopted the new form than contributed to its development. He never quite shook off a conception of music inherited from his father, which was at the time a little too serious to submit wholly to the new influences. Hence, for example, the triplex form is always a little vague in his music. The themes which he employed, though often beautiful and poetic, were not of the distinct and melodious type which was characteristic of the form. The first and second themes were not often clearly differentiated. In fact he frequently inclined towards constructing his movements out of one theme, which dominated them as the opening figure dominated the old binary form. And he very rarely made use of the stereotyped formulas of the harmonic accompaniment, born of the universal tendency towards a melodic or homophonic style.

He cannot be closely associated with the developments which took place within the 'singing allegro,' preparing it for use in the great sonatas of the Viennese period. These took the form of setting the two themes out of which the movement was constructed distinctly apart from each other, in strong *relief*, so to speak; and

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of similarly giving the three sections a clear outline, and the movement as a whole a stable balance.

The processes by which this was accomplished in harpsichord music may be briefly touched upon. The first theme tended towards simplicity. Already in sonatas of Christian Bach and Jean Schobert a dignified and somewhat declamatory type of melody is favored for the opening. This was usually repeated, that it might be impressed upon the mind of the listener. Often it came to an end squarely in a full tonic cadence.

The transitional passage which was then to accomplish the modulation to the dominant or relative major key in which the second theme was to be announced, tended to become highly conventional, a sort of service music with little more than formal significance. Usually a figure of some technical brilliance carried the music along in repetitions that could not fail to attract the attention of the listener and arouse his curiosity as to what was coming next. These figures might or might not be fragments of the opening theme. The modulation to the desired key having been accomplished, the passage came to an end in a flourish or in a pause of a beat or two. No feature of the triplex form is more distinctive than these conventional transitional passages which seem to carry on the double function of porter and herald.

After the claim to attention had been thereby established the second theme was allowed to sing. The general tendency was to give to this second theme a gentler and more truly melodious character than the first. Here was the great domain of the Alberti bass, for instance. And following the second theme came another busy little passage, service music again, of which the duty was to bring the first section of the movement to an orderly close in the key of the dominant.

The treatment of the middle section varied. It re-

## TRANSITIONAL PERIOD OF THE SONATA

mained always the part in which the composer exercised the most freedom. It might be long or short, in the manner of a fantasia; it might merely present fragments of the first or second themes or both in a series of modulations or sequences. It may be said that the tendency towards a more or less dramatic development made an appearance before the end of the century, as if the composer was submitting his will to the suggestions of the themes themselves. The greater the inherent vitality of these themes the more likely were they to assert themselves in this middle section and to reveal, as it were, the germinating power within them and color the section with their nature. The end of the section was more and more contrived to lead up to the last section in an obvious manner, either with a long run, a series of flourishes reaching a climax, or a pause, or anticipations of the coming theme.

The last section differed little from the first except that the second theme now appeared in the tonic key. The transitional passage was taken, along with the themes themselves, from the first section; but, relieved of one half its duty—that of bringing to pass a modulation from tonic to dominant—was likely to be considerably shortened. The closing measures, however, were usually an exact reduplication in the tonic key of those which had closed the first section in the dominant. The first section was always repeated, and so were the second and third, *en bloc*.

Such was the sonata form of movement which we have chosen to call the triplex form; a movement in three clear sections, made up of two themes appearing variously in each of them. The three sections are generally known in English as the exposition, the development, and the recapitulation or restatement; and what distinguishes them is the conventional figure or passage work which was used to mark them off, one from the other, and to stand as dividing line between the first

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and second themes. In the sonatas of Christian Bach all these things are clear and *en règle*; in Emanuel Bach they are obscure. They are clear in the works of the Mannheim group, and in those of the Viennese and Parisian composers who responded to their influence. They are clear in the sonatas and symphonies of Haydn and Mozart and can still be traced in most of those of Beethoven. Hence it would seem that in many ways Emanuel Bach, instead of being the source of the pianoforte sonata, stands very nearly outside the current of influences to which it really owes its most distinctive feature.

We may again define the sonata as a piece of music which is a conventional group of several pieces or movements, usually three, more rarely four. The movements are not internally related to each other. The bond which holds them together is only traditional. One of these movements, most often the first, is written in a form sprung of the love of Italians and Slavs for melody, known generally as the *sonata form*. The presence of a movement in this form in a group of pieces will give an unchallenged right to call that group a sonata.\*

### III

The pianoforte sonata was a sufficiently clearly defined product of musical craftsmanship, if not art, before Haydn and Mozart began seriously to express themselves in it. It is right then to summarize briefly the musical value of the chief sonatas before their day.

The many writers may be divided according to the countries in which they practised their art. In London are to be found P. D. Paradies (1710-1792) and Baldas-

\* It seems hardly worth while to add that there are well-known sonatas in which no movement is in the triplex form. Cf. the Mozart sonata in A major (K. 331) and the Beethoven sonata in A-flat major, op. 26.

## SONATA WRITERS BEFORE HAYDN AND MOZART

sare Galuppi (1706-1785), both Italians, and Johann Christian Bach, submitting almost unconditionally to Italian influence. In the London group too must be reckoned one of the most important men in the development of pianoforte music, Muzio Clementi. In Vienna the chief figure is G. C. Wagenseil; in Paris, Jean Schobert; in Berlin, Emanuel Bach, with whom may be reckoned Friedrich Wilhelm Rust, who, through his brother Johann Ludwig Anton, a pupil of Sebastian Bach, was clearly influenced by the works of the great masters.

Both Galuppi and Paradies rather continue the tradition of Scarlatti than contribute to the development of the new style. Both, however, published sets of sonatas, that is sets of pieces in more than one movement; though the triplex form is practically unfamiliar to them. Their music has great sprightliness and charm. It should be mentioned because the work of Paradies especially was admired and recommended by Clementi.

Christian Bach, on the other hand, is full of the new idea. His life itself may well claim attention. It is sufficiently remarkable that he almost alone of the great Bach family which had for generations played a part in the development of music in Germany, and was to play such a part there for many years to come, broke the traditions of his fathers, went to Italy for eight years, even became a Catholic, and finally decided to pass the last twenty years of his life in London. Though the many stories of his extravagances and dissipations have been most unrighteously exaggerated, he was none the less of a gay, lighthearted and pleasure-loving nature which is in sharp contrast to the graver and more pious dispositions of his ancestors.

His father died when he was but fifteen years old. He had already shown marked ability as a player of the harpsichord, and his brother Emanuel took him to Berlin after the father's death and trained him further

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in the art for four years. Then followed the eight years in Italy where he was beloved and admired by all with whom he came in contact, not the least by the great Padre Martini in Bologna, with whom he studied for many years. In 1762 he went to London, chiefly to write operas. He was enormously popular and successful. He was court clavecinist to Queen Anne and in 1780 a Bath paper spoke of him as the greatest player of his time.

At some time not long after his arrival in England he published a set of six sonatas for the harpsichord, dedicated to the amusement of 'His Serene Highness, Monseigneur le duc Ernst, duc de Mecklenburg.' Of these the second, in D major, offers a particularly excellent example of clear, lucid writing in the sonata form. The first movement is admirable. The first theme is composed of vigorous chords. It is given twice, then followed by a transitional passage full of fire; the right hand keeping a continuous flow of broken chord figures, over the rising and falling powerful motives in the left. The preparation for the announcement of the second theme is in remarkably mature classical manner, and the lovely melodious second theme, with its gentle Albertian accompaniment, is clearly a promise of Mozart to come. There is a fine free closing passage. The development section is long and varied, astonishingly modern; and the return to the first theme, prepared by a long pedal point and a crescendo, is not a little fiery and dramatic. The second movement, an andante in G major, and the quick final movement in D again, round off a work which for clearness of form, for balance in proportions, and for a certain fine and healthy charm, is wholly admirable. Above all there is about all his work a real grace which, superficial as it may be, is a precious and perhaps a rare quality in pianoforte music, a quality both of elegance and amiability. It is a reflection of his own



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amiable nature, so conspicuous in all his dealings with the little Mozart during the spring of 1765.

Christian Bach is no careless musician. His work is done with a sure and unfailing hand. No man could have lived fifteen years in the house of his father, Sebastian, and four more in that of his brother Emanuel, and yet again eight under the strong personal influence of Padre Martini, the most learned contrapuntist of his day, without acquiring a mastery of the science of music. Such Christian Bach had at his command; such he chose to conceal under a lightness and gaiety of thought and style.

As regards instrumental music in particular his influence upon Mozart, though in some ways ineradicable, was largely supplanted by the influence of Josef and Michael Haydn. What Mozart received from him in the domain of opera, however, as summarized by Messrs. de Wyzewa and Saint-Foix in their 'W. A. Mozart' (Paris, 1912), was characteristic of all of Bach's music: 'A mixture of discrete elegance and melodic purity, a sweetness sometimes a little too soft [*un peu molle*] but always charming, a preference of beauty above intensity of dramatic expression, or rather a constant preoccupation to keep expression within the limits of beauty.'

Muzio Clementi was born in Rome in 1752, but when hardly more than a lad of fourteen was brought to London by an English gentleman, and London was henceforth his home until he died in 1832. He was a brilliant virtuoso, though he travelled but little to exhibit his powers; an excellent pedagogue; a very shrewd business man. Among his many compositions of all kinds, about sixty are sonatas for pianoforte. The first series of three was published in 1770 and is usually taken to determine the date at which the pianoforte began really to supplant the harpsichord.

Concerning Clementi's relation to the development of

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a new pianoforte technique we shall speak further on. Here we have to do with the musical worth of his sonatas. Clementi was born before Mozart and Beethoven. He outlived them both, not to mention Haydn, Weber and Schubert. Mozart, after a test of skill with him in Vienna, had little to say of him save that he had an excellent, clear technique. He remained primarily a virtuoso in all his composition; but on the one hand he undoubtedly influenced Mozart and Beethoven,—and not only in the matter of pianoforte effects,—while on the other he no less obviously held himself open to influence from them, particularly from Beethoven.

His pianoforte sonatas show a steady development towards the curtailing of sheer virtuosity and the supremacy of emotional seriousness. In the early works, op. 2, op. 7, and op. 12, for example, he is obviously writing for display. The sonatas in op. 2 have but two movements. After that he generally composes them of three. The spirit of Scarlatti prevails, though it is almost impossible to point to any close relationship between the two men. The last movement of the second sonata in op. 26 perhaps resembles Scarlatti as definitely as any. But the fundamental difference between them, which may well obliterate all traces of the indebtedness of the one to the other, is that Clementi writes in the new melodic style. That he was a skilled contrapuntist did not restrain his use of the Alberti bass and other formulas of accompaniment.

He composed with absolute clearness. The classical triplex form, with its conventional transitional passages, its clear-cut sections, and, above all, its well-defined thematic melodies, can nowhere else be better exemplified. What perhaps mars his music, or at any rate makes a great part of it tiresome to modern ears, is the employment of long scale passages in many of his transitional passages. They cannot but suggest the exercise book and the hours of practice which are back

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of them. The concise figures of Schobert, of Haydn and Mozart may sound thin, but, though they suggest sometimes the schoolboy, they spare us the school.

On the other hand, Clementi was wonderfully fertile in figures that sound well on the piano, and many of his sonatas, empty enough of genuine feeling, are still pleasant and vivacious to the listener. Yet they seem to have sunk down into the tomb. They are perhaps never heard in concerts at the present day. Those which are only show music may willingly be let go. They lack the diamond sparkle of Scarlatti. But there are others, even among the earlier ones, which are musically too worthy and still too interesting to be so ruthlessly consigned to the grave as the modern temper has consigned them. Have we after all too much piano-forte music as it is? It seems to be more than a change of fashion that keeps Clementi dead. Perhaps it is the shade of the admirable but awful *Gradus ad Parnassum* over all his other work. Perhaps a man has the right to live immortally by the virtue of but one of his excellencies. In the case of Clementi posterity has chosen to remember only the success of a teacher. The great series of studies or exercises published in 1817 under the usual pompous title of *Gradus ad Parnassum* alone of all his work still retains some general attention.

And this in spite of many beauties in his sonatas. Even among the early ones there are some distinguished by a fineness of feeling and a true if not great gift of musical expression. Take, for example, the sonata in G minor, number three of the seventh opus. The first movement, *allegro con spirito*, has more to recommend it than unusual formal compactness and perfection. The opening theme has a color not in the power of the mere music-maker. It is true that there is the almost ever-present scale passage in the transition to the second theme; but the second theme itself has a grace of movement and even a certain sinuousness of

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harmony that cannot but suggest Mozart. There are sudden accents and rough chords that foreshadow a mannerism of Beethoven; and the full measure of silence before the restatement begins is a true romantic touch.

The spirit of the slow movement is perhaps a trifle perfunctory. There is little hint of Mozart, who, alone of the classical composers, could somehow always keep the wings of his music gently fluttering through the leaden *tempo adagio*. The sharp—one may well say shocking—sudden fortissimos herald Beethoven again. The movement is, however, blessedly short; and the final *presto* is full of fire and dark, flaring and subsiding by turns.

Of the later sonatas that in B minor, op. 40, No. 2, and that in G minor, op. 50, No. 3, have been justly admired. Yet excellent as they are, one can hardly pretend to do more than lay a tribute on their graves. Only some unforeseen trump can rouse them from what seems to be their eternal sleep. One feature of the former may be noted: the return of a part of the slow movement in the midst of the rapid last movement. Such a process unites at least the last two movements very firmly together, tends to make of the sonata as a whole something more than a series of independent movements put in line according to the rule of convention.

The sonata in G minor also seems to have an organic life as a whole. Clementi gave it a title, *Didone abbandonata*, and called the whole a *scena tragica*. This is treating the whole sonata as a drama based upon a single idea; but inasmuch as it was written probably between 1820 and 1821, this conception of the sonata probably came to him from Beethoven rather than from his own idealism.\*

\* It is worthy of note that a sonata in G minor for violin by Tartini was at one time known by the name *Didone abbandonata*. Cf. Wasielewski: *Die Violine und ihre Meister*.

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It is hard to turn our thumbs down on Clementi. It may be unjust as well. He entered the arena of the sonata and in many ways no man excelled him there. Mozart's impulsive condemnation has gone hard with him. We are like sheep, and even the wisest will listen all but unquestioning to a man who had, if ever man had, the voice of an angel. And so Clementi is all but forgotten as a sonatorial gladiator and remembered only as a trainer. That the greatest of the fighters profited by his teaching cannot be doubted. That they despoiled him of many ideas and even of his finery before his flesh was cold is also true. They made better use of them.

A glance over Clementi's sonatas can hardly astonish more than by what it reveals of the great commonness of musical idioms during the Viennese period. Phrase after phrase and endless numbers of fragments bob up with the features we had thought were only Haydn's, or Mozart's, or Beethoven's. Mozart quite openly appropriated a theme from one of Clementi's sonatas \* as the basis of his overture to the 'Magic Flute.' Such a fact is, however, far less suggestive than the intangible similarity between the stuff Clementi used and that which his greater contemporaries in Vienna built with. Compare, for instance, the first movement of Clementi's sonata in B-flat, op. 34, No. 2, with the first movement of Beethoven's symphony in C minor. Likeness of treatment, likeness of skill, likeness of mood there are not; but the juxtaposition of the two movements creates a whisper that Clementi passed through music side by side with some of the greatest of all composers.

### IV

Both Schobert in Paris and Wagenseil in Vienna are more than straws which show the way the wind blew

\* Opus 43, No. 2.

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through the classical sonata. They are streaks in the wind itself. On the one came the seeds of the new works in Mannheim to the clavecins in Paris; and on the other such seeds were blown to harpsichords in Vienna. Both men wrote great quantities of music for the harpsichord, but oftenest with a part for violin added. This part was, however, usually *ad libitum*.

Concerning Schobert we may quote once more from the 'Life of Mozart' by Messrs. de Wyzewa and de Saint-Foix. 'From 1763 up to the general upheaval caused by the Revolution, he was the most played and the most loved of all the composers of French sonatas. \* \* \* Outside France, moreover, his works were equally highly prized; we find testimony to it in every sort of German, English and Italian treatise on the history or on the *esthétique* of the piano.'

Concerning Wagenseil we may recall the anecdote of little Mozart who one evening, on the occasion of his first visit to Vienna, refused to play unless Wagenseil, the greatest of players and composers for harpsichord in Vienna, were present. Dr. Burney visited him some years later and heard him play, old and ailing, with great fire and majesty.

Schobert was, as we have said, of Silesian origin. He came to Paris as a young man, probably by way of Mannheim, some time between 1755 and 1760; and from then on to the time of his death in 1767 adapted his music more and more to the French taste. Hence we find in it a simple but strong expression, an elegant clearness and a touch of that *sensibilité larmoyante* made fashionable by Rousseau, showing itself in the frequent use of minor keys, evidently at the root of the very personal emotional life of his music.\* Mozart came very strongly under his influence.

Wagenseil, on the other hand, shows yet more of the Italian influence, so strong even at that day in Vienna,

\* *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 65, *et seq.*

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to which Haydn was to owe much. His work lacks emotion and poetry, is facile and brilliant and clear, without much personal color.

In the matter of emotional warmth the sonatas of Emanuel Bach, however vague they may be in form by contrast with those of Schobert and his brother Christian, are distinguished above those of his contemporaries. Emanuel—his full name was Carl Philipp Emanuel—was born in Weimar in March, 1714. An early intent to devote himself to the practice of law was given up because of his marked aptitude for music. In 1740 he entered the service of Frederick the Great as court cembalist. In 1757 he gave up this post and went to Hamburg, where he worked as organist, teacher, and composer until his death there on the fourteenth of December, 1788.

The works by which he is best known are the six sets of sonatas, with rondos and fantasies too, which he published between 1779 and 1787 in Leipzig under the title of *Sonaten für Kenner und Liebhaber* ('Sonatas for Connoisseurs and Amateurs'). Many of the sonatas, however, had been composed before 1779.

An earlier set, dedicated to the Princess Amelia of Prussia and published in 1760, bears the interesting title, *Sechs Sonaten fürs Clavier mit veränderten Reprisen* ('Six Sonatas for Clavier with Varied Repeats'). This title, together with Bach's preface to the set, shows conclusively that in repeating the sections of movements of sonatas, players added some free ornamentation of their own to the music as the composer published it. The practice seems to have been an ancient one, applied to the suite before the sonata came into being. Thus some of the *doubles* of Couperin and Sebastian Bach may be taken as special efforts on the part of the composers to safeguard their music from the carelessness and lack of knowledge and taste of dilettanti. To what an extent such variation in repeat

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might go and how much it might add to the richness of the music are shown, for example, by the double of the sarabande in Sebastian Bach's sixth English suite.

Emanuel Bach's sonatas are of very unequal merit. The sonata in F minor,\* published in the third set for *Kenner und Liebhaber* in 1781, but written nearly twenty years earlier, has little either of extrinsic or intrinsic beauty to recommend it. Not only does the inchoate nature of the second theme in the first movement fail to save the movement from monotony; the first theme itself is stark and devoid of life. There is a lack of smoothness, a constant hitching. The *andante* is not spontaneous for all its sentimentality, and the final movement is fragmentary.

A sonata in A major, on the other hand, written not long after, and published in 1779, is charming throughout. The first theme in the first movement is conventional enough, but it has sparkle; and though the second theme is not very distinctly different from the first, the movement is full of variety and life. Particularly charming are the measures constituting an unusually long epilogue to the first section. The harmonies are richly colored, if not striking; and the use of the epilogue in the development section is most effective. So is the full measure pause before the cascade of sound which flows into the restatement. The *andante* is over-ornamented, but the harmonic groundwork is solid and interesting. The last movement suggests Scarlatti, and has the animated and varied flow which characterizes the first.

A sonata in A minor, written about 1780 and published in the second series for *Kenner und Liebhaber*, is in many ways typical of Emanuel Bach at his best. There is still in the first movement that vagueness of structure which may usually be attributed to the lack of distinctness of his second theme. But the first theme

\* See Musical Examples (Vol. XIII).



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has a fine declamatory vigor, in the spirit of the theme out of which his father built the fifth fugue in the first book of the 'Well-tempered Clavichord'; and the movement as a whole has the broad sweep of a brilliant fantasy.

The andante, with its delicate imitations, foreshadowing Schumann, is full of poetic sentiment. It leads without break into the rapid final movement. Here the declamatory spirit of the first movement reigns again, but in lighter mood. There is in fact an unmistakable kinship between the first and last movements, which must be felt though it cannot be traced to actual thematic relationship. Here is a sonata, then, which, though divided into three movements, seems sprung of one fundamental idea.

Such a conception of the sonata is by no means always so clear in his work; yet it must be said that he, more than any composer down to Beethoven, was inclined to make of the sonata a poetic whole. His aim was rather furthered than hindered by the vagueness of form of the separate movements. His sonatas are all the more fantasies for being less clearly sonatas; and they are often rich in that very quality in which the regular classical sonata was so poor—imagination.

Most of what has been said regarding his creation or establishing of the sonata, particularly of the triplex form, must be very largely discounted. Haydn and Mozart learned little from him in the arrangement of their ideas, which is form; much in the treatment of them, which is expression. That quality of poetry which we may still admire in his music to-day, vague or obscure as its form may be, was the quality in his playing most admired by those contemporaries who heard him.

His excellent book on how to play the clavier counsels clearness and exactness, but it is a heartfelt appeal for beauty and expressiveness as well. What is the

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long, detailed analysis of *agrémens* but the explanation of practically the only means of subtle expression which the cembalist could acquire? His love for the clavichord, which, for all the frailty of its tone, was capable of fine shadings of sound, never waned. He commended it to all as the best instrument upon which to practise, for the clumsy hand had no power to call forth the charm which was its only quality. Indeed, he received the pianoforte coldly. His keyboard music was probably conceived, the brilliant for the harpsichord, the more intimate for the clavichord. And towards the end of his life he gave utterance to his belief that the only function of music was to stir the emotions and that the player who could not do that might as well not play.

In turning to the best of his sonatas one turns to profoundly beautiful music, music that unquestionably has the power to stir the heart. The great spirit of the father has breathed upon it and given it life. The turns of his melodies and their ineffably tender cadences, and, above all, the chromatic richness of his harmonies are the voice of his father. One may be constantly startled and bewildered. There is something ghostly abroad in them. We hear and do not hear, we almost see and do not see, the all-powerful Sebastian. But it is the voice of the father in a new language, his face in shadow, in the mist before dawn. One is tempted to cry with Hamlet: 'Well said, old mole! Canst work i' the ground so fast?' It is easy to understand that Haydn, worn out with his daily fight against starvation, could come back to his cracked clavichord and play away half the night with the sonatas of Emanuel Bach; that Mozart could call him father of them all. But in spirit, not in flesh. And it is, after all, the spirit of Sebastian that thus attends the succeeding births and rebirths of music.

The harpsichord works by W. Friedemann Bach, the

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oldest and, according to some accounts, the favorite son of Johann Sebastian, have had probably far less influence upon the development of pianoforte music. But they contain many measures of great beauty. Madame Farrenc included twelve polonaises, a sonata (in E-flat major), several fugues, and four superb fantasias in the *Trésor des pianistes*. The sonata is regular in form, and a few of the polonaises are in the triplex form. Thus Friedemann Bach shows that he, too, like his brother Emanuel, allied himself to the new movement in music. His mastery of musical science, however, is evident; and that he knew the keyboard well is proved by the unusual brilliance of his fantasias. In the main it may be said that the greatest beauty of his music whispers of his father.

Something of the spirit shows itself in the pianoforte sonatas of Friedrich Wilhelm Rust, a composer now little known, whose work deserves study. He died at Dessau, where most of his life had been spent, in 1796, just on the eve of Beethoven's rise to prominence. Twelve of his sonatas have recently been published in Paris under the supervision of M. Vincent D'Indy. They show a blending of two styles: the German style which he acquired from Emanuel Bach in Berlin, and the Scarlatti style, of which he made a study during two years spent in Italy. Three sonatas, in E minor, in F-sharp minor, and in D major, written near the close of his life, are in two movements, both of which seem welded together in the manner of the later sonatas of Beethoven. The treatment of the pianoforte or harpsichord is modern, particularly in the major section of the Rondo of the sonata in E minor, and in the passage work contrasted with the beautiful first theme of the sonata in F-sharp minor. In a sonata in C major, belonging to this period, a fugue is introduced as an episode in the final rondo. Haydn had already used the fugue as the last movement of the string quartet, Mo-

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zart as the last movement of a symphony. Rust, in applying it to the pianoforte sonata, foreshadowed Beethoven.\*

\* The sonatas of Rust as printed by his grandson showed many extraordinary modern features which have since been proved forgeries. The fiery discussions to which they gave rise have been summarized by M. D. Calvocoressi in two articles in the *Musical Times* (London) for January and February, 1914.

## CHAPTER IV

### HAYDN, MOZART, AND BEETHOVEN

The 'Viennese period' and the three great classics—Joseph Haydn; Haydn's clavier sonatas; the Variations in F minor—W. A. Mozart; Mozart as pianist and improvisator; Mozart's sonatas; his piano concertos—Ludwig van Beethoven; evolution of the modern pianoforte—Musical qualities of Beethoven's piano music; Beethoven's technical demands; his pianoforte sonatas; his piano concertos; conclusion.

THE association of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven with Vienna affords historians a welcome license to give to a conspicuous epoch in the development of music a local habitation and a name. Their work is commonly granted to constitute a more or less definite era known as the Viennese period. All three speak, as it were, a common idiom. There is a distinct family likeness between their separate accomplishments. They were personally acquainted. Haydn and Mozart were warm friends, despite the difference in years between them. Mozart was among the first in Vienna to recognize the greatness latent in Beethoven, who later was for a while even the pupil of Haydn. Moreover, all three reckoned among their friends the same families, even the same men and women. The three great men now sit on golden chairs, enshrined in the same niche, Beethoven considerably to the fore.

The insulation which circumstances of time and space may seem to have woven about them proves upon investigation to be quite imperfect. To begin with, Bach was but a year dead, D. Scarlatti still alive, and Rameau with more than a decade yet to live when Haydn was writing his first mass and along with it clavier sonatas for the benefit of his few pupils. Mozart had

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written his three immortal symphonies in 1786, before Emanuel Bach had ceased publishing his sonatas for *Kenner und Liebhaber*. On the other end, Moscheles was a famous though very young pianist before Beethoven had half done writing sonatas; and Carl von Weber's *Freischütz* had begun to act upon the precocious Richard Wagner before Beethoven had completed his ninth symphony, his last sonata, his great mass and his great quartets.

Merely as regards pianoforte technique the period was a transitional one. Even the Beethoven sonatas as late as opus 27 were published for either harpsichord or pianoforte. Both Mozart and Beethoven were influenced by men who, in a narrow sense, seem far more than they to belong to a modern development. Clementi, for example, deliberately burned his harpsichords and clavichords behind him in the very year Beethoven was born, and from then on gave up his life to the discovery of new possibilities and effects upon the pianoforte, by which his pupils Cramer and Field paved the way for Chopin.

Yet, all signs to the contrary, the Viennese period remains a period of full fruition, and this because of the extraordinary genius of the men whose works have defined it. Each was highly and specially gifted and poured into forms already made ready for him a musical substance of rare and precious quality. In considering keyboard music we have to deal mostly with this substance, in fact with the musical expression of three unusual and powerful personalities.

It is to be regretted that Haydn and even Mozart have been in no small measure eclipsed by Beethoven. This is especially true of their keyboard music. It may be questioned whether this be any more just for being seemingly natural. There are many reasons to account for it. The most obvious is the more violent and fiery nature of Beethoven, his explicit and unusual trials.

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These, wholly apart from his music, will for ever make the study and recollection of him as a man of profound interest. Haydn can urge but a few young years of hardship for the human sympathy of generations to come. Mozart's disappointments, so sickening to the heart that puts itself in tune with him, have after all but the ring of hard luck and merit disregarded, to which the weary world lends only a passing ear. But Beethoven's passionate nature, his self-inflicted labor of self-discipline, his desperate unhappiness and the tragic curse of his deafness, are the stuff out of which heroes are made.

So his music, reflecting the man, is heroic in calibre. Even its humor is titanic. It will impress by its hugeness and its force many an ear deaf to more engaging and more subtle language. Its poignancy is unmistakable, nearly infallible in its appeal; so that Beethoven is a name with which to lay even the clod under a spell.

But another reason why Mozart and Haydn lie hidden or but partly perceived in the shade of Beethoven, is more recondite, is, in fact, paradoxical. This is no other than the extreme difficulty of their music. Clara Schumann, writing in her diary of the music of Richard Wagner, which she rejected in spite of the world's acclaim, conceived that either she or the world at large had gone mad. To one who writes of the difficulties of Haydn's and Mozart's sonatas a similar idea is likely to occur. At the present day they are put into the hands of babes and sucklings, in whose touch, however, there is no wisdom. Yet if ever music needed a wise hand, it is these simple pieces; and a lack of wisdom has made them trivial to the world.

The art of the pianist should be, as Emanuel Bach declared, that of drawing from his instrument sounds of moving beauty, beautiful in quality, in line and in shading. His tools are his ten fingers which he must train to flexibility, strength and security. It is right

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that as soon as he can play a scale or shake a trill, he should put his skill to test upon a piece of music. So the teacher lays Haydn and Mozart under the clumsy little fingers of boy and girl. 'Stumble along there on your way to great Beethoven, whom you must approach with firm and tested stride.' That is the burden of the pædagogic lay. It echoes in the mind of riper age, Haydn and Mozart have been put aside, like the perambulator, the bib and the high table chair; or, like toys, are brought out rarely, to be smiled upon.

If they are toys, then maturity should bring a sense of their exquisite beauty and meaning, and may well shudder at the destruction youth made imminent upon them. This it all too rarely does, because only ten fingers in ten thousand can reveal the loveliness of these sonatas, and because, also, ears are rare that now delight in such a revelation. You must give to fingers the skill to spin sound from the keyboard that is like the song of birds, or, if more vocal, is more like the voice of fairies than the voice of man. It is easier to make thunder; and even mock thunder intimidates. So your player will pound Beethoven, and lightning will flash about his head as the sarcastic Heine fancied it about Liszt's. Some will scent sacrilege and cover their ears from the noise. But let the soulless man play Mozart and his hearers will cover their mouths, as all well-bred people are trained to do when boredom seeks an outlet.

Technically Haydn and Mozart may be held to have condemned their music to the sort of galley-service it now performs. Both wrote perhaps the majority of their sonatas for the use of their pupils. Bach wrote the 'Well-tempered Clavichord' with what seems to be the same purpose; but Bach's aim was constantly to educate and to expand the power of the students under his care; whereas both Haydn and Mozart may be often suspected of wishing rather to simplify their music than to tax and strengthen the abilities of their high-



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born amateurs. There is something comical in the fact that even with this most gracious of intentions both were occasionally accused of writing music that was troublesome, i. e., too difficult. Haydn may have been grieved to be found thus disagreeable. Mozart's letters sometimes show a delicate malice in enjoyment of it. But one can hear Beethoven snort and rage under a similar reproach.

Yet the wonder is that sonatas so written should be to-day full of freshness and beauty. This they undoubtedly are. Composed perfunctorily they may have been, but the spirit of music is held fast in most of them, no less appealing for being oftener in smiles than tears. And if to evoke this spirit in all her loveliness from a box of strings chance to be the ideal of some player, let him take care to bring to the sonatas of Haydn and Mozart the most precious resources of his art and he will not call in vain.

#### I

The prevalent mood in Haydn's music is one of frank cheerfulness. His native happy disposition, his kindness and his ever-ready, good-natured humor, won him friends on every hand. These qualities in his music recommended it to the public. For the public wanted light-hearted music. Italian melody had won the world. Haydn's happy, almost jovial melodies and his lively, obvious rhythms spread over the world almost as soon as he began to write.

From the start, however, he treated his art seriously. He was never a careless writer, though he had the benefit of little regular instruction. Clavier sonatas he had composed for his pupils were so much copied and circulated in manuscript that a piratical publisher finally decided money could be made from them. He had

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written quartets for strings, which were received with favor at soirées given by Porpora and men of rank. He won the approval of men like Wagenseil, Gluck, and Dittersdorf. All his work, though simple, is beautifully and clearly done.

He was not, like Mozart and Beethoven, a great player on the harpsichord or piano. In this respect, and, indeed, in many others, he is a little like Schubert. Both men wrote extremely well for the keyboard. The music of both has an unusual stamp of spontaneous originality. In Haydn's music as in Schubert's the quality of folk-melodies and folk-rhythms is very distinct. In spite of most obvious differences in temperament and in circumstances, they speak of the same race unconsciously influenced by Slavic elements.

The collection of thirty-four sonatas for pianoforte published by Peters includes, with perhaps one exception, the best of his work for that instrument alone. On looking over them one cannot but be struck by the general similarity of any one to the others. Some are more frankly gay, more boyish, than others; some tempered by seriousness. It may be added, however, that those of a later period do not seem generally more profound than those of an earlier one. The later ones are more elaborate, sometimes musically more complicated, but a single mood is on the whole common to them all.

The same is in part true of Mozart's sonatas. Except as these show distinct traces of the various influences under which he came from time to time, they do not differ strikingly from each other. There is over both Haydn's and Mozart's keyboard music a normal cast of thought, as there is over the music of Couperin. In this they suffer by comparison with Beethoven, as Couperin suffers by comparison with Bach. One would have no difficulty in choosing ten Beethoven sonatas, each one of which is entirely distinct from the others,

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not by reason of form or style or content, but by reason of a very special emotional significance. One could not choose ten Haydn sonatas of such varied character. One does not, in other words, sit down to the piano with a volume of Haydn sonatas, expecting to confront a wholly new problem in each one, to meet a wholly new range of thought and feeling, passing from one to the other. One looks for the same sort of thing in each one, and with few exceptions one finds it.

To what is this due? To the nature of the man or to the circumstances under which most of the sonatas were written? Or is it due to public taste of the day and the consequent attitude of the man towards the function of music? To answer these questions would lead us far afield. But it is doubtless in large measure owing to this fact that Haydn, and Mozart too, have been thought to concern themselves primarily with form in music. And Beethoven has again and again been described as the man who overthrew the supremacy of the formal element in music, to which his predecessors are imagined to have sworn prime allegiance.

It is a great injustice so to stigmatize Haydn and Mozart. The beauty of their music is far more one of spirit than one of form. In his own day Haydn was thought to be an innovator, not in the matter of form, but in the spirit with which he filled forms already familiar. This may be said to be the spirit of humor. Weitzmann \* cites an interesting passage in the *Musikalisches Handbuch* for the year 1782 which speaks of Haydn as 'A musical joke-maker, but like Yorick, not for pathos but for high comic; and this in music most exasperating (*verzweifelt sehr*). Even his adagios, where the man should properly weep, have the stamp of high comedy.' And a most joyous humor fills the Haydn sonatas full to overflowing. That is the secret of the charm they will exert on any one who takes

\* *Geschichte des Klavierspiels und der Klavierliteratur.*

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the time to study them to-day, a charm which has little to do with formal perfection.

Let us look into a few of the sonatas. Most of them were written between 1760 and 1790. The few written earlier than 1760 are so obviously teaching pieces that, though they won him fame, we need not trouble to study them. Take, however, a sonata from the set published in 1774, known as opus 13, in C major (Peters No. 15). The whole first movement is built upon two rhythmical phrases which by their lilt and flow cannot fail to delight the dullest ear. There is the dotted sixteenth figure of the first theme, a theme frankly melodious for all its rhythmical vivacity; and later the same opening notes, with playful triplets added. Nothing profound or serious about it, but yet a wealth of vitality; and nearly all accomplished with but two voices.

The adagio seems not at all conspicuous, yet compare it with an adagio of Clementi to see how much genuine life it has. Then the rapid little last movement, with its rocking, tilting figures, all as sparkling as sunlight. Here again, only two voices in most of the movement.

Another sonata in the same set in F major (Pet. 20) is a little more developed. The quick falling arpeggio figures following the first theme are a favorite, comical device of Haydn's. The second theme, if so it may be called, is only a series of scampering notes, with a saucy octave skip at the end; the whole full of smiles and laughter. The fine harp-like runs in the development section are reminiscent of Emanuel Bach. Haydn is noticeably fond of sudden and abrupt changes of harmony. There is one in the first section of this movement. But often he is surprisingly chromatic, more subtle in harmony than the naïve character of his music would lead one to expect him.

In the opus 14, published in 1776 by Artaria, there are some joyous sonatas. The first theme of one in G major (Pet. 11) suggests Schubert by its sweetness. There

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is a minuet instead of a slow movement, and the final presto is a theme with lively variations. The Alberti bass on which the fourth variation floats is irresistibly naïve. Another sonata in E-flat seems richer. It is hardly less naïve and less humorous than the others in the set, but there is a warmer coloring. The overlapping imitations in the fourth, fifth, and sixth measures are strangely poignant, especially as they appear later in the restatement. There is a minuet instead of a slow movement, of which the trio is especially beautiful. The way in which the first phrase seems to be prolonged into five measures, once more suggests Schubert.

It is, of course, nearly impossible to characterize the sonatas in words, or to distinguish any striking feature in one which may not be found in another. There are two sonatas in E-flat (Pet. 1 and 3) among the last he wrote. These appear at first sight more profound than the earlier ones, but it is hard in studying them to find them so. They are more fully scored, more fully developed, perhaps more moderately gay. But it is still the Haydn which spoke in the earlier ones. Premonitions of Schubert are again evident in the second of these sonatas (Pet. 3), in the second section of the slow movement, and in the brief passage in E-flat minor in the minuet. There are very fine moments in the first movement, too. It will be observed that the second theme is very like the first. This is frequently the case with Haydn, a feature which points to his dependence on Emanuel Bach. Even in his symphonies it shows itself, conspicuously in the great symphony in D major, No. 7, in Breitkopf and Härtel's edition. In the sonata in question, however, there is no lack of secondary material of varied and decided character; for example, the transitional section between the first and second themes; the broad closing theme of the first section, with its alternate deep phrases and high

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answers; and the carefully wrought measures which open the development section.

The effect of the measures which bring this section almost to a close and then lead on into the recapitulation is almost magical. We approach the romantic. The strange power of silence in music is nowhere better employed, a power which the old convention of constant movement had kept concealed, at least in instrumental music. Mention has been made of the pauses in Emanuel Bach's music and in Clementi's; but here in Haydn's sonata is a passage of more than twenty measures in which silence seems to reign. Something calls on high and there is silence. Then from some deep down range there is a faint answer. And so the high calls across silence to the deep, again and again, as if one without the other might not prevail against some spirit of silence.

Such a passage as this, and many another in Haydn's music, suggest Beethoven. One is quick to exclaim, 'Ah! this foreshadows the great man to come!' Almost as if the music had no merit but by comparison. Yet Haydn's music should be taken at its own value. Only in that way may the charm of it, and the genuine beauty as well, be fully appreciated. Surely it has a life and a spirit all its own, without which music would be poorer.

Only one clavier work of special significance, apart from the sonatas, remains to be mentioned. This is a very beautiful series of variations on a theme in F minor. They present, of course, the familiar features of Haydn's style, clear and 'economic' part-writing, perfect balance and lucidity in form, abrupt, unprepared chords, furnishing what Hadow has aptly called 'points of color'; and still, smooth, chromatic progressions which are somehow naïve. The theme itself is in two sections, with a 'trio' section in F major, full of ascending and descending arpeggio figures which seem

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in Haydn's music like the warble of a bird's song, odd little darts and flurries of sound. There is over the whole a changing light of plaintive and gay which is rather different from the perpetual sunshine of the sonatas.

It is needless to say that the theme undergoes no such metamorphosis in the course of the variations as Bach's theme in his Goldberg Variations. The accompaniment may be said to remain practically the same throughout the set. The first variation leads the melody through half-steps, in syncopation, and numerous trills are brought in to beautify the almost too ingenuous major section. In the second variation the melody is dissolved, so to speak, into a clear stream of rapid counterpoint which curves and frets above and below the familiar accompaniment. The final restatement of the theme leads by abrupt soft modulations into a long coda in which traces of the theme still linger. The whole set makes up a masterpiece in pianoforte literature, and may be ranked as one of the most beautiful pieces of music in the variation form.

## II

Mozart's keyboard music is astonishingly different from Haydn's. Because both men have fallen into the obscurity of the same shadow, one is likely to speak of them as if both were but a part of one whole. The differences between them are not merely matters of detail. In fact they may resemble each other more in detail than in general qualities. The spirit of Mozart's music is wholly different from the spirit of Haydn's. If with Haydn we may associate a frank good nature and something of the peasant's sturdiness, in Mozart's music we have to do with something far more subtle, far more graceful, and almost wholly elusive. It has

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been said of Mozart's music that its inherent vitality is all-sufficient to a listener. In other words, there is neither any need nor any desire to interpret it, either in terms of another art or as an expression or a symbol of human emotion. It is perhaps unique in being sheer sound and nothing else. It is the thinnest gossamer spun between our ears and stillness. It is of all music the most ethereal, the most spiritual, one might almost say the least audible.

His life was utterly different from Haydn's. To begin with, he was twenty-four years younger. He was most carefully and rigorously trained in his art, from infancy, by his father and by the greatest musicians in the world, whom he met on his triumphant tours over Europe. As a child he was all but adored in Vienna, in all the great cities of Italy, in London, in Paris, and in Brussels. As a youth fortune began to forsake him. He was not so much neglected as unappreciated. He was underpaid, harassed by debt. He was without an established position, chiefly apparently because in the nature of things he could not be but young. He died at last in Vienna, in more or less miserable circumstances, at the age of thirty-five. Thus a life could end that in early years had been the marvellous delight of nearly a whole world.

He was always a virtuoso as well as a composer. He played the violin excellently; he played the piano as no man in his time could play it and as perhaps no man has played it since. His playing was not so much distinguished by brilliance as by beauty. The quality of his tone was of that kind which once heard can never be forgotten. It haunted the minds of men long after he was dead. Even the memory of it brought tears.

His compositions give only a slight idea of what the range of his playing was. He seems to have moved people most at times when he improvised. This he would often do in public, according to the custom of



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the day; but in private, too, he would often go to his piano and pour his soul out hour after hour through the night in improvised music of strange and unusual power. Something of the quality of these outpourings seems to have been preserved in the fantasia in C minor. The sonatas and rondos have little of it. Neither have the concertos. Franz Niemetschek, one of his most devoted friends and author of the first of his biographies, said, as an old man, that if he dared ask the Almighty for one more earthly joy, it would be that he might once again before he died hear Mozart improvise. The improvisations of Beethoven, marvellous as they were, never took just the place of Mozart's in the minds of those who had been privileged to hear the younger man as well.

Mozart did not compose his piano music at the piano, as Schumann and Chopin did. The improvisations were not remembered later and put down in form upon paper. They seem to have been something apart from his composing. He wrote music away from the piano, at his desk, as most people write letters—in the words of his wife. Most of the sonatas, too, were written for the benefit of pupils. Few of them make actually trying demands upon technical brilliance. Their great difficulty is more than technical, or than what is commonly regarded as technical—strength, velocity, and endurance. Yet no music more instantly lays bare any lack of evenness or any stiffness in the fingers. Mozart cared little for a brilliant style. His opinion of Clementi has already been mentioned. He preferred rather a moderate than an extremely rapid tempo, condemned severely any inaccuracy or carelessness, likewise any lack of clearness in rhythm. But, above all, he laid emphasis on a beautiful and singing quality of tone.

His avoidance rather than cultivation of brilliancy alone makes his music often suggest the harpsichord.

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There is an absence of the technical devices then new, which have since become thoroughly associated with the pianoforte style. Yet from 1777 Mozart devoted himself to the pianoforte. An instrument made especially for him, which he invariably used in his many concerts in Vienna, has been preserved. The keyboard has a range of five octaves, from the F below the bass staff to the f above the treble staff. The action is very light, the tone rather sharp and strong. It can be damped, or softened, by means of a stop which pulls a strip of felt into position between the strings and the hammers.

Concerning the pianoforte sonatas it may be said again that few depart from a normal, prevailing mood. Some are exceptional. Knowing his great gift of improvising and how rich and varied his improvisations were, it is perhaps a temptation to read into them more definite emotions than are really implied. Yet it is easy to pick from the later sonatas at least three which not only differ considerably from the earlier sonatas, but differ likewise from each other. Nevertheless, two or three traits are common to them all. They mark Mozart's sonatas distinctly from Haydn's and, indeed, from all other sonatas.

First, there is rare melodiousness about them all. The quality of the melodies is hard to analyze. There is little savor of the folk-song, as there is in many of Haydn's melodies. They are not so clearly cut, not, in a way, of such solid stuff. Neither, on the other hand, have they a peculiar germinating vigor which we associate with Beethoven. They seem to spin themselves as the music moves along. The movements seem to flow rather than grow. Mozart was none the less a great contrapuntist, one of the greatest among composers. But his music seems strangely to *pass through* counterpoint, not to be built up of it. It has therefore a quality of liteness or supple flexibility which distinguishes it

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from that of other composers and gives it a preëminent grace. In this regard it is akin only to the music of Couperin and Chopin.

In the second place, the harmonic coloring is subtle and suggestive. His music seems to play about harmonies rather than with them. The simplest chords and modulations have a sort of shimmer. An instance in orchestral music comes to mind—the second themes in both the first and last movements of the inspired symphony in G minor, particularly the treatment of the second theme in the restatement section of the last movement. The effect is due largely to the chromatic half-steps through which his melodies glide, noticeably into cadences, and to the same chromatic hovering about tonic, dominant and subdominant chords. Oftener than not the fine thread of his melody only grazes the notes proper to its harmony, touching just above or below them in swift, light dissonances. Frequently the harmonic foundation is of the simplest kind. Modulations to remote keys or vague drifting of the whole harmonic fabric, such as one finds, for instance, in the first pages of the Fantasia in C minor, are rare. Usually the harmonic foundation is astonishingly simple. It is the wholly charming unwillingness of the melodies to be flatly chained to it that gives the whole such an elusive color.

There is a wealth of passing notes, of anticipations and suspensions, of every device which may aid melody to belie its unavoidable relations to harmony. These take from most of his pianoforte music all trace of commonplaceness. Most of it has a graceful distinction which we may call style. Take even the opening theme of the great sonata in A minor. The nature of the theme is bold and declamatory; yet the very first note avoids an unequivocal allegiance to the harmony by a D-sharp. Or observe in the last movement of the sonata in C minor (K. 457) how the short phrases of

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the melody not only anticipate the harmony in beginning, but delay acknowledging it again and again.

In the third place, the scoring of Mozart's sonatas is usually lighter than that of Haydn's. We have to do with a finer set of fingers, for one thing, which are unexcelled in lightness and sweetness of touch, fingers which prefer to suggest oftener than to declaim. The treatment of inner voices is more airy. One thinks again of Couperin and even more of Chopin. There is a better understanding of pianoforte effects, not effects of brilliance but of delicate sonority combined with grace. The last movement of the sonata in A minor just mentioned, is a masterpiece of style, and yet for the most part is hardly more than a whisper of sound. The passage work in the last movement of a beautiful sonata in F major (K. 332), the chord figures of the *Piu allegro* section of the Fantasia, even the F-sharp minor section of the familiar *Alla Turca* are the work of a man with an unusually fine sense of what fitted the pianoforte. Mozart also expected more of the left hand than Haydn expected. In all his pianoforte music there is more delicacy than there is in Haydn's, more sophistication, too, if you will. It is more difficult to play.

Of the many sonatas, rondos and fantasias only a few may be discussed in detail. Three sonatas written before Mozart settled in Vienna, in 1781, are very fine. These are in A minor (K. 310), in A major (K. 331) and in F major (K. 332). That in A minor was written in 1778. The first movement is more stentorian than Mozart's music usually is. It is dominated by a strong rhythmical motive throughout, used with fiery effect in the development section over a series of rumbling pedal points. There is something assertive and martial about it, like the ring of trumpets over a great confusion. The second theme seems to be but an expression of energy in more civilian strain. It is perilously near virtuoso

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stuff; but the movement as a whole is splendid by reason of its force. It is Mozart in a very unusual mood, however.

The second movement is a picture in music, according to Mozart himself, of a charming little girl, who has 'a staid manner and a great deal of sense for her age.' Yet something of the boldness of the first movement still lingers. The mood is beautifully lyrical and poetic, the style, however, very free and broad. It lacks the intimate tenderness of most of Mozart's slow movements. The last movement is magical. The fine, delicate scoring, the short phrases, as it were breathless, the beautiful shifting of harmonies, the constantly restless unvaried movement, weave a texture of music that must make us ever wonder at the nature of the mysterious, elusive spirit that whispers all but unheard behind so much of Mozart's music.

The sonata in F major and that in A major were written the following year, and are of strikingly different character, both speaking of the Mozart whose playing was long remembered for its quality of heart-melting tenderness. Unlike the first movement of the A minor sonata, the first movement of the F major is full of a variety of themes and motives. It is rather lyrical in character. The first theme has a song-like nature; and a beautiful measure or two of folk-song melody makes itself heard in the transition to the second theme, which is again lyrical. The development section opens with still another melody. There is an oft-repeated shifting from high register to low. The whole is wrapped in a veil of poetry. The slow middle movement is unexcelled among all slow movements for purity of style, for perfection of form, for refinement, but also tenderness of sentiment; and the last movement flows like a brook through Rondo Field. One cannot choose one movement from the others as being more beautiful either in spirit or workmanship;

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and the three together compose one of the flawless sonatas of pianoforte literature.

The more familiar sonata in A major is more irregular. It has, by the way, no movement in the triplex form. The first is an air and variations. It has long been a favorite with amateur and connoisseur alike. The naïve beauty of the air is irresistible. The variations throw many traits of Mozart's style into prominence, particularly in the first and fifth, his love of entwining his harmonies, so to speak, with shadows and passing notes. The scoring of the fourth is wonderfully beautiful. The sixth is perhaps unworthy to follow the fifth. After the almost inevitable monotony of the variation form, it is perhaps to be regretted that the second movement, a minuet, continues the key of the first. The movement itself is of great charm. The trio is happily in D major. One would be glad to have it in any key, so exquisite and perfect is its beauty. The last movement, a rondo *alla Turca*, takes up the key of A again. That it is in minor, not major, hardly suffices to break the monotony of tonality which may threaten the interest of the sonata as a whole. The rondo is engagingly jocund, but more ordinary than Mozart is elsewhere likely to allow himself to be.

Two later sonatas have a more serious *allure* than these earlier ones. That in C minor (K. 457), composed in 1784, is commonly considered his greatest sonata. Why such a distinction should be insisted upon, it is difficult to see. The C minor sonata is more weighty than the others, but is it for that reason greater? Must music to be great, hint of the tragic struggles of the soul? Such is the merit often ascribed to this sonata, as if there were no true greatness in a smile. Without setting up a standard of the great and the trivial in music, we may grant that the work has a compelling force. Let us not liken it to Beethoven. It still has the charm of which only Mozart was the master, that

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charm which remains one of the intangible, inexplicable things in music.

A sonata in F major (K. 533) was composed in 1788. The whole work is characterized by a possibly too prominent contrapuntal ingenuity. There is besides a boldness in harmonies, especially in the slow movement, which makes one wonder into what strange lands Mozart strayed when he sat improvising at the keyboard.

The sonatas as a whole rest, as we have said, upon a harmonic foundation which is relatively simple. The great Fantasia in C minor differs from them in this regard more than in any other. If, as Otto Jahn suggested in his 'Life of Mozart,' this fantasia may offer us some suggestion of what Mozart's improvisations were like, we may be sure that such outpourings wandered into harmonies rich and strange.

The fantasia was composed in 1785, the year after the C minor sonata, to which it was at one time thought to have been intended as an introductory movement. An earlier fantasia in D minor is fragmentary. It ends abruptly and leaves an impression of incompleteness on the mind of the listener. The C minor fantasia is without definite form, but the return of the opening motive at the end gives it a logical balance. It divides itself into five or six sections. The tempo is not very fast in any one of them, but there is an uneasy current of unrest running under the whole.

It would be foolish to attempt an analysis of what may be its emotional content. It calls for no such analysis, but stands as another instance of the strange power Mozart's music has to satisfy of itself alone. It must remain, like his other work, mysterious and of secret origin. Only one section is given a key-signature. The others are without harmonic limitation. Perhaps the opening section, and the brief part of it repeated at the end, are the most impressive. The motive

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out of which they are built is of unfathomable significance; their harmonies rise and fall as slowly and mysteriously as the tide. Of the quality of other more melodious sections, of the occasional charm and grace that here and there rise, as it were, on the wings of light; of the passionate harmonies that die away into silence before the slow opening motive returns inexorably, nothing can be said. There comes over it in memory the light that never was on land or sea. It is a poet's dream.

### III

We have now to consider the pianoforte concertos which as a whole may be taken to be the finest of his works for the instrument. They were written primarily for his own use, seventeen of them in Vienna between 1783 and 1786, some earlier, however, and a few later. They are concertos in the modern sense, not like the concertos of Sebastian Bach. In the latter we find the *clavier* treated in much the same style as the orchestra or the *tutti*, as it was, and still is, generally called. In the Mozart concertos, on the other hand, the solo instrument is given a rôle which will show off to the best its peculiar qualities. The Vivaldi form of concerto, such as Bach used, was a modified rondo; that is to say, there was one chief subject, usually announced at the beginning by the *tutti*. This subject properly belonged to the *tutti*, and the solo instrument was given various episodes of contrasting material, between which the orchestra usually was introduced with *ritornelles* based upon the chief subject. The whole was a sort of dialogue between soloist and orchestra.

The form of the concerto which Mozart used was clearly as follows: an expanded triplex form for the first movement, a slow movement in song form, and a rondo of the French type for the finale. Moreover, he



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used the solo instrument not only alone, but with the orchestra; in such cases writing a brilliant sort of *floritura* for it, which added a special and distinct color to the ensemble. Such a form of concerto was apparently first employed by Christian Bach in London. From him Mozart learned the use of it. He was not, therefore, as has often been stated, the true 'father' of the modern concerto. Nevertheless it was he who first used the form with enduring success, and it may be considered as his special contribution to the standard musical forms.

A brief outline of the first movement of one of his concertos will illustrate the manner in which the triplex form was used in all of them, and in which, with few modifications, it has continued to be used by most composers. Let us take the wonderfully delightful concerto in A major (K. 488). The movement opens with a long section for the orchestra. The first theme is announced at once. Later comes the lovely second theme, in the *tonic* key, be it noted. There is then a short coda, and the orchestra comes to a full tonic cadence and allows the piano to take up the music. The function of this orchestral introduction is to introduce the two themes out of which the movement now proceeds to build itself, conforming pretty closely to the triplex model.

The piano has the first theme practically alone, the orchestra merely suggesting an inner voice in the harmony from time to time. In the transitional passage to the dominant key which follows, the piano serves chiefly to spin a few figures over the chords carried by the orchestra. Then the piano has the second theme, now in the dominant, alone; after which it is repeated by the orchestra, the piano adding a touch of ornamental color here and there. Pianoforte and orchestra now play together, the piano taking the rôle of soloist in a series of scales and figures. A full cadence in E major ends the first section.

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The development section is not long. It will be noticed that the pianist is really soloist through it all, the delicate figure work which he has to perform being always evident above the harmonies or themes of the orchestra.

The long opening section for orchestra at the beginning of the concerto is cut down to a few measures in the restatement. The transitional passage between first and second themes is very much shortened likewise. Finally, after the music has progressed duly according to the conventions governing the restatement section in the triplex form, the orchestra makes a pause. Here the pianist is supposed to play what is known as a *cadenza*—a long passage usually testing both him and his instrument to the limit of their abilities. These cadenzas were commonly improvised, and in them Mozart must have displayed the greatness of his power both as a musician and as a player. The *cadenza* came to an end with a long trill, after which the orchestra, usually without the piano, added the completing coda.

The second and third movements were usually in some simpler form. The second was most frequently an aria, the third a rondo. The whole was primarily a piece for the virtuoso, while the orchestra, save when announcing themes or playing ritornelles, served mainly as an accompaniment to the brilliant soloist. It might well, be it understood, carry on the thematic development of the music, thus leaving the pianist free to weave every sort of arabesque; but from now on the concerto was a form of music which was deliberately planned to show off the special qualities of a solo instrument.

It was almost inevitable that in most concertos the genuinely musical element should be regarded as of less and less importance. The public expected, and indeed still expects, to hear or even to see a virtuoso display the uttermost limits of his skill in such pieces.

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The improvised cadenzas were in the hands of most players a nuisance which marred the work as a whole beyond repair. But the Mozart concertos, written as they were for occasions of his public appearance, have a true musical value. We know enough of his improvising to be sure that his cadenzas added and did not subtract from this.

Their chief beauty is here, as in his other music, the melodious freshness of his themes, the delightful subtlety of his harmony. The constant stream of arabesque which the piano adds to this intrinsically beautiful foundation is in the main simple. It is surprising how little Mozart added to the virtuoso style of pianoforte literature, even how little he made use of what, through Clementi and Dussek, was already common property. There are practically no octave passages, and no passages in double notes. He uses only scales, arpeggios and trills.

But his art of combining these with the orchestra has never been excelled. In this regard his concertos stand far above those of the virtuosi like Hummel, Dussek, and John Field. Their tone-color is not only that which the essentially colorless pianoforte can afford; it is a beautiful interweaving of many colors. His treatment of the orchestra is always distinguished, never haphazard or indifferent. Delicate as the coloring may be to ears now accustomed to heavier and more sensuous blendings, it is not watery and faded. It is still exquisitely clear and suggestive. As the first of composers to make such effective use of the cold yet brilliant tone of the pianoforte in combination with the various warmer tones of the orchestra, he may be said to have set a standard of excellence which subsequent concertos have oftener fallen short of than attained. Hundreds have been written. The fingers of one hand might perhaps count the number of those which as works of art are comparable to Mozart's.

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It must be admitted that Mozart was not equally inspired in all his concertos. That in D major (K. 537), composed in 1788 and known as the 'Coronation Concerto,' savors unpleasantly of the *pièce d'occasion*. The themes of the first movement are almost ludicrously commonplace. Those of the *Larghetto* are hardly more distinguished, and the last movement can be recommended for little more than brilliance. The concertos in D minor (K. 466) and in C minor (K. 491) are, on the contrary, inspired throughout. That in A major (K. 488) one might well be tempted to call the most charming of Mozart's pianoforte compositions, but that such distinctions are gratuitous and unpleasant. The second theme of the first movement is surely one of the loveliest in all music. The last movement is irresistibly charming, with the sparkle of sunshine on laughing water. The andante between the first and last is of that sort of music which words cannot describe. Indeed there is in all of Mozart's music, as we have said, a self-sufficient vitality which makes it a perfect satisfaction for the ear. One does not feel stirred to seek a meaning beneath it. It is almost natural music. There is nothing labored, nothing symbolic; and it is almost uniquely beautiful. Surely, as far as pianoforte music is concerned we shall wait nearly half a century before that abstract grace again appears, this time in the works of Frédéric Chopin.

### IV

The pianoforte sonatas of Beethoven hold an undisputed place in the literature for that instrument. Whatever the future of music may be, they can hardly be dethroned. They must always, it would seem, represent the broadest, deepest and highest dimensions to which the sonata can develop. Music which has since been written under the name of sonata has been and

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will be compared with the sonatas of Beethoven, has been and will be found wanting either in form, in content or in the union of the two, by comparison with those of the great master of Bonn. In the matter of musical value they may be equalled, in many matters concerning the treatment of the pianoforte they have been excelled; but as sonatas they will probably hold their high place for ever, scarcely approached.

Improvements in the structure of the instrument itself have something to do with their massiveness. The growth of the pianoforte to serviceable maturity was a slow process, and not until Beethoven was well advanced in years was he able to secure one which could carry the burden that his powerful imagination would put upon it.

In the year 1711 Bartolomeo Cristofori, a Florentine, made the first piano, that is to say, an instrument the strings of which were struck by hammers operated by means of a keyboard. That the volume of sound so produced would be soft or loud in accordance with the pressure brought to bear on the keys by the player gave the instrument its name—*Piano* (soft)-*forte* (loud). The harpsichord, it will be remembered, did not offer the player such a chance for expression and for the gradation of sound. The clavichord was inferior to the new instrument in volume and resonance. However, sixty years of experiment and invention were required to bring the pianoforte to the point at which it began wholly to displace its predecessors in the favor of composers and virtuosi.

Of the many difficulties which manufacturers had to overcome, only a few need be mentioned. The most serious was the problem of making a frame strong enough to resist the tension of the heavier wire strings. This was met by tension bars, by metal braces, and finally by the invention of a cast-iron frame, not, however, until after Beethoven had ceased writing for the

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pianoforte. The problem of the action was complicated by the necessity for the hammers to fall back instantly from the strings as soon as they had struck them. This falling back is known as the escapement, and it was chiefly by devices of escapement that two great pianoforte actions came to be differentiated from each other by the end of the eighteenth century. These actions are known as the Viennese and the English.

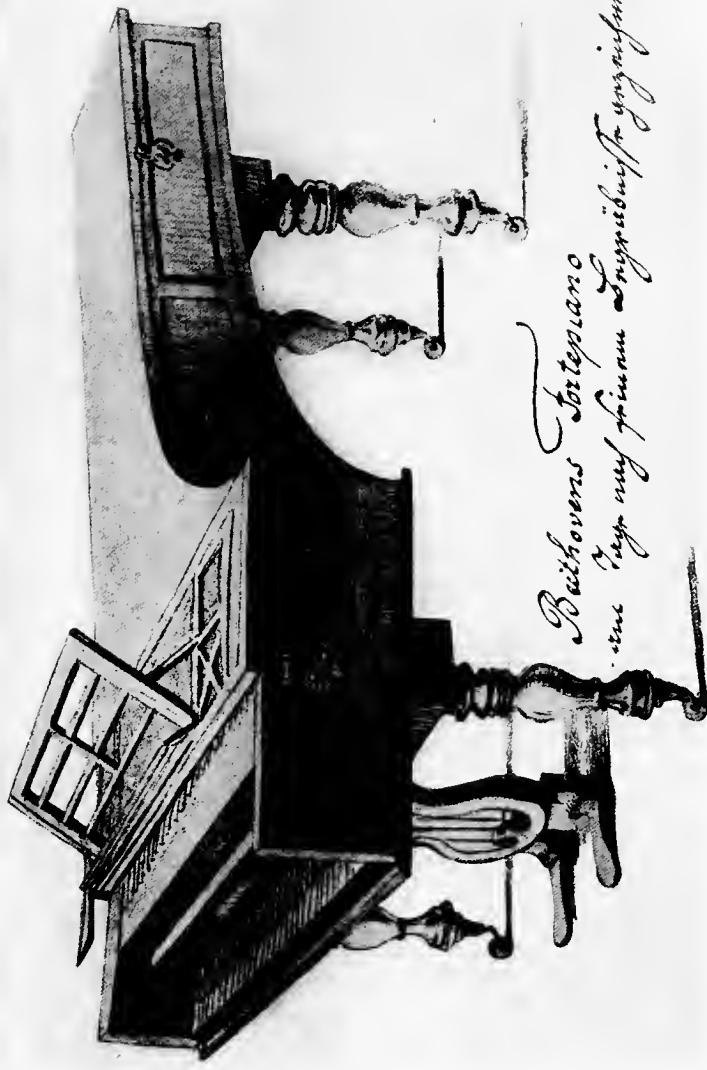
With the former are associated the names of Stein and Streicher. It was a light action and the tone of the Viennese pianos was correspondingly light and fine. It had little volume and in melodies was sweet and clear but not full. It was for such pianos that Haydn and Mozart wrote their sonatas. Both men first acquired their keyboard technique on the harpsichord, and later both naturally adopted a piano the light action of which demanded approximately the same sort of touch as that which they had already mastered. A style of music developed from the nature of the instrument which was little different from harpsichord music. Effects of fleetness and delicacy marked it.

In 1777 Mozart had visited the Stein factories, then in Augsburg, and had been much pleased by a device with which Stein's pianos were equipped: a lever, worked by the knee, which lifted the dampers from all the strings at once, allowing them a fuller and richer vibration in loud passages than was necessary in softer ones. This *genouillère* soon gave way to the *pedal* which had been invented for the same purpose by the English manufacturers. Pedal effects distinguish pianoforte music from harpsichord music perhaps more than any other feature. These are chiefly effects of sonority, of combining in one relatively sustained mass of sound notes which lie far apart on the keyboard, outside the span of the hand. These notes, of course, cannot be struck together, but, when struck one after the other, can be blended and sustained by means of

Beethoven's Broadwood Pianoforte  
*From a drawing made on the day after his funeral*







*Beitragens Tortepiano  
eine sehr sehr feine Orgelbühne ganz neu*



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the pedal. There must be supposed in the pianoforte a tone which unaided will vibrate longer after its string has been struck than the dry, short tone of the harpsichord. Such a sustained, rich tone the Viennese pianos did not have. They suggested but few possibilities in pedal effects to Haydn and Mozart. For them the close spacing of harpsichord music was natural. They ventured little in wide combinations, in sonorous masses of sound.

The English action, on the other hand, was more resilient and more powerful, the tone of the English pianos correspondingly fuller and richer. The instruments at once suggested a range of effects quite different from the harpsichord. Thus Clementi begins as early as 1770 to build up a new keyboard technique, demanding strength as well as fleetness and lightness, using octaves, double notes, heavy chords and wider and wider spacing. This becomes the new idea of playing the piano. Mozart is judged by contemporaries who have heard Clementi and his pupils, to have little technique, i. e., in the new style. He is still a cembalist. Composers have a new power within their control, the power to stir now by mere volume of sound, to do more than please or amuse, to impress by power and breadth of style. The piano becomes second in volume, in quick changing variety and multiplicity of effects only to the orchestra. Sonatas approach the symphony in depth and meaning. The ideas of the new style are spread over Europe by Clementi and his disciples. The great maker of pianofortes in Paris, Sebastian Érard, copies the English action.

Beethoven grew up with the new idea of pianoforte music. The pianoforte presented to him in Bonn by Graf Waldstein was probably of the light-toned Viennese make; but as early as 1796 he came in touch with English pianos on a concert trip to Berlin and other cities. In 1803 he came into possession of an Érard,

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through the generosity of one of his Viennese patrons, Prince Lichnowsky. It never wholly pleased him. His wish was for one of the heavy sonorous English pianos. In 1817 it was fulfilled. Thomas Broadwood sent him an exceptionally powerful and fine one from his establishment in London, in token of admiration. The Érard was given away, the last colossal sonatas were composed. Even after this piano had outworn its usefulness Beethoven kept it by him. Even after he received a piano especially made for him by a Viennese maker named Graf, strung with four strings to a note in consideration of his deafness, he retained his Broadwood. Both were side by side in his room at the Schwarzspanierhaus when he died.

### III

Beethoven developed his technique with the aim of drawing the utmost sonority and variety from the pianoforte. His demands on the instrument were far beyond the capabilities of the Viennese pianos. Streicher, who married Stein's daughter and carried on the business of the firm in Vienna, exerted his ingenuity constantly to improve his pianos according to the demands of Beethoven, finally gave over the ideal of lightness of action and of tone, largely through Beethoven's influence. Beethoven left the harpsichord far behind him. He conceived his sonatas for an instrument of vastly greater possibilities. He filled them with passages of chords, of double notes, of powerful arpeggio figures surging from low registers to high, all combined by the pedal, in the use of which he was a great innovator. He refused allegiance to the old ideal of distinctness to which Hummel, Mozart's pupil, was still loyal, that he might be free when he chose to deal with great masses of sound. The quality of his genius has,

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of course, much to do with this; but the massiveness which, among other things, distinguishes his pianoforte sonatas from those of Mozart and Haydn is in no little measure due to a new idea of the instrument, which had been born of the possibilities of the English pianofortes, not inherited from the harpsichord. He concerned himself with a new range of effects beyond the powers of his two great predecessors. He found in the pianoforte an instrument fit to express huge ideas and powerful emotions. Of such, therefore, he was free to compose his sonatas.

Such works were not, we may be sure, written for the practice of his pupils, as so many of Haydn's and Mozart's sonatas had been. Most of them contained some measure of the outpouring of his own heart and soul, sometimes not less tremendous than the content of his symphonies. Each was to him in the nature of a great poem, an epic; most have a distinct life and spirit of their own. Into this poetic life must one plunge who would understand. There is a great mood to be caught, an emotion, sometimes an idea. Beethoven thought deeply about the meaning of his art. Colors of sound, intervals, rhythms, qualities of melody, keys, all had for him a symbolism, sometimes mysterious, sometimes definite. He regarded himself as a poet, speaking a language more suggestive than words. In those who listened to his music he expected an imagination quick to feel the life in it, to respond to it, to interpret it. Countless anecdotes reveal the close association Beethoven felt to exist between his music and the world of nature, of human life, of the spirit rising in spite of fate. Most are perhaps not to be relied upon. But scarcely less numerous are the 'interpretations' of his music, written down for us by students, by historians, by philosophic musicians; and all these, welcome or unwelcome, must be taken as reactions to a poetic chemistry at work in the music itself. The thing is

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there, and Beethoven was conscious of having put it there.

He was intensely conscious of his individuality. He was proud of his skill to reveal in music his emotions or his ideals. Little of such aristocracy, in a broad sense, is evident in Haydn or Mozart. They may seem to have taken themselves far less seriously. Beethoven knew himself the high priest of a great art. He demanded from others the respect due to such an one. His spirit rises majestic from his music, or from a great part of it. It speaks in an unmistakable voice. One listens to great stories, great epics, great tragedies, all part of the life of a man of enormous vitality, enormous force. One hardly listens as to music, rather as to a poet and a prophet.

Correspondingly, his music undergoes a development noticeably parallel to the course of his life. The pianoforte sonatas alone are nearly a complete record of the various phases through which his character passed from young manhood almost to the time of his death. They compose, as it were, a great book in many chapters. At times one might regard them as a diary. Beethoven confided himself to his piano.

He was a very great and an unusual player. His style was, as we have inferred, wholly different from Mozart's. To begin with, it was much more varied. In the matter of runs alone one finds a deeper appreciation of legato and staccato, and the shades between. Mozart's runs are oftenest of the 'pearly' variety, detached and sparkling. Beethoven much more frequently than Mozart requires a close, legato manner of playing. This, in the matter of scales, will give them a sweep and curve, rather than a ripple, make them a rush of sound, rather than a series of distinct notes; as, for example, the short scale passages in the first movement of the sonata opus 7, those for the left hand in the first movement of opus 78, and the long scale

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passages at the end of the first movement of opus 53. In other sorts of runs the legato execution which is required makes of them almost a series of broken chords; as in the final movement of opus 26, in the first movement of the concerto in G major. Even where the playing may be slightly staccato in style the pedal is employed to give the runs more significance as harmonies than as series of separated notes; as in the third variation of the middle movement in the sonata opus 57, or the figures which build up the transitional sections of the first movement of opus 110.

It is hardly to be denied, paradoxical as it may seem, that in many ways Mozart seems to demand a careful legato touch even more than Beethoven. That is perhaps because of the lighter texture of the fabric. The pedal is of less help, the fingers must do more of themselves. But the light runs which add so much to the charm of his music stand apart from this. They are intended to stand out distinctly in their separate notes. So, of course, are many in the sonatas of Beethoven, and the use of the pedal itself is an art of expression, not a makeshift to hide the clumsiness of fingers. The point of difference is that Beethoven often writes series of notes which are effective as a series; Mozart more often runs, the separate notes of which each must sparkle with its own light.

With Beethoven, too, legato series of chords are frequent; in Haydn and Mozart they hardly exist. Beethoven's use of double notes and chords is ahead of his time. Take the finale of the sonata in C major, opus 3, No. 3, as a simple example. The staccato chord motive in the last movement of opus 27, No. 2, the first movement of the G major concerto, the first movement of opus 81, are but few examples out of many that might be chosen.

But, above all, it is by the use of the pedal that Beethoven goes ahead of his predecessors. The building

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up of great harmonies, either by wide-ranging, rapid figures, or by massive chords piled one on top of the other, was from the start characteristic of him. The trio of the scherzo in the sonata in C major, number three of the first published sonatas, offers a magnificent example, foreshadowing the colossal effects of passages in the sonatas opus 53 and opus 57 and at the beginning of the huge concerto in E-flat major.

The extent to which he mastered the difficulties of the keyboard in nearly all directions and his truly great inventiveness in pianistic effects, have filled his works with sheer technical difficulties which must ever task the skill of even the most remarkable virtuosi. He demands velocity and strength in the fingers, great endurance and power, flexibility of the wrist both in its usual up and down movement and in its movement from side to side, a sure free use of the arm. Skill in thirds and sixths, in octaves, in trills, double trills and even triple trills, in wide skips, in repeated notes, all this and more he demands of the player. It is ludicrous to think that certain contemporaries denied him distinction as a pianist, largely because he played according to no recognized method. As if any method of that day or even this could be expected to limit hands that could play, to say nothing of devise, such music as his!

He practically exhausted the resources of the pianoforte of his day. Of this he was aware, and his ear, growing ever finer in its appreciation of orchestral color, was at times tired of the limited tones of this single instrument. He is reported to have said of it that it is and remains an unsatisfactory instrument. At times he seems to have written for it as he would write for the orchestra. In the first movement of the 'Waldstein' sonata (opus 53) he actually wrote the names of instruments over phrases which they might be fancied playing. This one instance, together with passages



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which do not seem quite suited to the nature of the piano, must not mislead us, however, to judge the sonatas as orchestral rather than pianistic music.

Beethoven was thoroughly familiar with his piano. The instrument has been further improved since his day. Particularly the lower registers have been given greater sonority, and the instrument as a whole has gained much in sustaining power. Therefore it is inevitable that certain passages which he conceived upon the Broadwood or the Érard of 1820 or earlier are not wholly fitting to the modern piano. This is especially true of passages in the lower registers. The accompaniment to the noble second theme in the first movement of the sonata opus 57 is, for example, unquestionably thick. It is too low and muddy for the present-day piano. Many similar instances might be mentioned, most of which, however, prove only that pianos have changed. His frequent use of close accompaniment figures is perhaps intrinsically old-fashioned; but, on the other hand, wider figures would have been less sonorous on the piano he wrote for than those he used. It is, however, in such matters that Beethoven's pianoforte music is, from one point of view, not entirely satisfactory to the pianist of to-day. If in other respects it is at times seemingly orchestral, if successive repetitions of the same phrase seem to tax the pianoforte too far, that does not take from it all as a whole the honor of being one of the greatest contributions to pure pianoforte literature.

It was natural that Beethoven's conception of music as an art akin to poetry, conveying a more or less definite expression, should have great influence upon the forms in which he wrote. The sonata filled up enormously from his inspiration. To begin with, the triplex form took on more and more dramatic life. The development is to be noticed in several ways, some slower to make their appearance than others. Almost

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at once the contrasting natures of the first and second themes become apparent. Haydn, it will be remembered, often used but a variant of the first theme for the second, much as Emanuel Bach had done; but making his setting of the second theme far clearer. Mozart used distinctly different themes, but both were, as a rule, melodious, different in line but not in nature. On the other hand, the first three sonatas of Beethoven show a complete differentiation of the themes. The second and third are conspicuous and show a procedure in the matter of themes from which Beethoven rarely departed.

The first theme in the first movement of the sonata in A major, opus 2, No. 2, is positive in character, not lyric, not subtle, though in this case humorous. It is assertive and not likely to undergo radical change or development in the movement. That the first two measures are squarely on notes of the tonic chord should not be unobserved. The second theme is lyric, subtle, likely to change color and form as it passes through the various phases in store for it. The first and second themes of the next sonata may be characterized in almost the same words. And this is likely to be the case in nearly all movements in the triplex form which Beethoven will write. The first theme is likely to be assertive and strong, the second to offer a fundamental contrast in mood and style.

Both themes tend more and more to have a dramatic independence and significance. The movement grows, as it were, out of the conflict or the union of the two ideas which they express. A great vitality spreads into the connecting passages between them. These passages may develop from the nature of the first theme, as, for instance, in the sonatas opus 13, opus 31, No. 2, and opus 53, or they may present wholly new ideas often not less significant than the themes themselves, as in opus 10, No. 3, and in opus 57. Similarly the closing

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measures of the exposition take on a new meaning, as in the last movement of opus 27, No. 2, and opus 31, No. 2.

In the early sonatas, where Beethoven is somewhat preoccupied with the piano itself as a vehicle for the display of the pianist's power, these intermediate measures have little musical merit. Such passages will be found in the first movements of opus 10, No. 3, and opus 22, both rather ostensibly virtuoso music. In the later sonatas such objective effectiveness is rare.

The development sections fill up with enormous vitality; and, finally, there grows a coda at the end of the movement in which in many cases the movement reaches its topmost height. In fact, Beethoven's treatment of the coda makes of the triplex form something almost new. Where in classical form the movement might be expected to cease, in the sonatas of Beethoven it will be found often to flow on into a wholly fresh stanza, seeming at times the key or the fruition of the movement as a whole. The wonderfully beautiful and long coda at the end of the first movement of the sonata opus 81 is a superb case in point.

The remaining movements of the sonatas expanded under the same powerful imagination. Let one compare the variations which form the slow movement of opus 10, No. 2, with those in the slow movement of opus 106, or those which constitute the second and last movement of the last sonata. In these later variations we find something of the same change of the theme into various metaphors as that found in the Goldberg Variations of Bach. It is not so much an idea adorned as an idea expanded into countless new ideas. The variations written for the publisher Diabelli on a waltz theme are indeed exactly comparable to those of Bach.

To slow movements in song form or in triplex form he appended the codas in the nature of an epilogue which added so much to the first movements. The

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adagio of opus 10, No. 3, offers a fine example. Frequently the slow movement led without pause into the next, more frequently than in the sonatas of his predecessors.

The rondo took on a weight and significance to which it was scarcely considered sufficient by the older masters. The rondo which is the last movement of opus 53 is of huge proportions.

Beethoven frequently composed his sonatas in four movements, following in this the model offered by the symphonies of his predecessors. The added movement was descended from the minuet. In some of the sonatas it still bears the name and occupies its traditional place between the slow movement and the last movement, notably in the sonatas opus 2, No. 1, and opus 10, No. 3. In opus 2, No. 2, and opus 2, No. 3, the movement is called a scherzo and has lost not its dance rhythm but its dance character. In opus 31, No. 3, the scherzo has not even the triple rhythm which usually distinguished it. It follows the first movement and is itself followed by a minuet and a final rondo. In 106 it is again the second movement, and in 110 can be recognized in spirit, without a name, likewise as second movement. The scherzos introduce into the later sonatas, as into the symphonies, a note of something between irony and mystery, a strange development from the sunny dances of Haydn; a sort of harsh echo of life in dense valleys from which Beethoven has long since ascended.

And finally the fugue finds place in the scheme, sounding invariably a note of triumph, as of the power of man's will and the immutable law of order in the universe.

Thus by extending the length of the various movements, by adding distinct and significant themes in transitional and closing sections of the triplex form, by incorporating additional movements in the sonata

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group, by introducing forms like the scherzo and the fugue, which, though they had been found in the suite, had been almost never employed by the composers of sonatas, Beethoven enormously expanded the sonata as a whole. But even more remarkable was the tendency which showed itself relatively early to give a unity and coherence to the group.

This was an inevitable result of Beethoven's attitude towards music. He felt himself, as we have said, a poet. His music was consciously the expression of almost definite emotions, definite ideals. These by reason of the nature of the man were of heroic proportions, finding an adequate vehicle of expression only in music of broad and varied design. The sonata offered in pianoforte music the possibilities of such expression. The various movements afforded a chance for the play, the contrast and change of moods great in themselves. The length of the work as a whole predicated the widest possible limits. It needed but ideas strong enough to dominate and fill these limits to give to the group an organic life, to establish a close connection, even a fundamental interdependence between the erstwhile independent and separate movements.

Such ideas Beethoven did not at once bring to the sonata. Only the last sonatas, beginning with opus 101, are truly so firmly knit or welded that the individual movements are incomplete apart from the whole, that the demarcation between them fades or does not exist at all. In the first sonatas he is clearly preoccupied with expanding the power of expression of the instrument, with technical problems, with problems of form in the separate movements. The organic life which is to mark the last sonatas is not a matter of external structure, of thematic relationship. M. Vincent d'Indy points to the resemblance between the first notes of the first theme of the final movement in opus 13 and the second theme in the first movement of the same sonata,

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as an indication of the tendency thus early evident in Beethoven to give to the sonata group a consolidation more real than a mere conventionally accepted arrangement. Even earlier instances may be found of such resemblances in the thematic material of the various movements. The theme of the rondo of opus 10, No. 3, may well have come from the second theme of the first movement. Indeed, it is not hard to believe that in the very first of the published sonatas, opus 2, No. 1, Beethoven employed a modification of the opening theme of the first movement as basis for a contrasting episode in the last.

But do such devices succeed in giving to a whole sonata an indissoluble unity? Hardly. They may make of one movement a sequel to a previous movement. Analogies may be found in the work of the great novelists. Beatrice Esmond plays a part in 'The Virginians,' but that does not necessarily mean that 'Henry Esmond' is incomplete as a work of art without the later novel. Brahms, it will be remembered, worked studiously to construct a sequence of movements from somewhat the same thematic material, notably in the F-sharp minor pianoforte sonata and in his first symphony. But more than such reminiscences or such recrudescences is necessary to give to a group of movements the closely interdependent organic life that we find in the later Beethoven sonatas. The movements of the popular *Sonata Pathétique* have an independent and a complete life of themselves. It is familiarity with the sequence in which Beethoven arranged them that truly holds them together, the still accepted ideal of a purely conventional arrangement.

Somewhat later Beethoven tried experiments which are more significant. There are the two sonatas published as opus 27. Each is a sonata *quasi una fantasia*,—in the manner of a fantasy. The first is conspicuous by diversity or irregularity of form. It is not easy to

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decide upon the limits of the various movements. A beautiful, long, slow section is, as it were, engulfed by an impassioned short allegro in C major, from which it emerges again almost unvaried. It comes to a definite close, but the flash of the C major section across the progress of the music has left an impression of incompleteness, has destroyed, as it were, the equilibrium of the whole so far. The piece is obviously still fragmentary, still indeterminate. More must come to give us a satisfying sense of completeness. So we are propelled by restlessness into another allegro, this time a much longer section, more or less developed, in C minor, clearly a scherzo in character. It is wild. We have been plunged into music that, far from fulfilling the need of more that we felt after the opening sections, leaves us more than ever unsatisfied. There follows a brief adagio, promising an ultimate solution of all the mystery and uncertainty, seeming, by the long trills and slowly descending single notes at the end, really to introduce the satisfying order which must follow out of such chaos. The final rondo is orderly and stable from the beginning. At the end comes a repetition of phrases from the adagio, as to remind us of a promise now fulfilled, and a lively little coda sends us away cheerful and refreshed.

The nature of this music is such that up to the final rondo its various sections must, if taken from the whole, affect us as being fragmentary and unsatisfying. The work is more a fantasy than a sonata. The triplex form is not to be found in it. But it is accepted as a sonata, as is the previous one, opus 26, or Mozart's sonata in A major, beginning with a theme and variations; and the close interdependence of its various sections, æsthetic if not thematic, points unmistakably to the method of the last sonatas.

The movements of the sonata in C-sharp minor, opus 27, No. 2, are from the point of view of form complete

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in themselves. Moreover, the first and last movements are perfectly in triplex form. But this sonata, too, is to be regarded, according to Beethoven himself, as in the nature of a fantasy. This is because of the quality of improvisation which pervades it all, which cannot be hidden even by the perfect finish of the form. And the entire improvisation seems to be sprung of one mood, the whole music related to one fundamental idea. Whether or not it was inspired by the beautiful lady to whom it is dedicated, for whom Beethoven had an apparently lasting though vain passion, need not concern us. The music as it stands is full of the deepest and most passionate feeling. The slow movement has a great deal the nature of a prelude. Its lyric quality is passive; but it sings of emotions which must assert themselves in active and more violent self-expression. And so, passing under, as it were, the shadowy ephemeral second movement which may veil but not suppress them, they burst out in the last movement with the power of a great storm.

Is the unity here merely one which great familiarity with the work as a whole may account for? One can point to no logical incompleteness in any one of the movements. Is their union in our mind essentially one of association? It is more than that. There is a single emotion underlying the work as a whole, which must seek further and different utterance than the first movement affords it; which the second movement may belie but not extinguish; to which only the fantastic coda of the last movement gives ultimate release.

In both these sonatas there is a unity which cannot be destroyed. In both, however, it is artistic rather than organic; and this may be said of the subsequent sonatas up to opus 101. This, and the three succeeding sonatas, seem almost to be musical dramas, more than tone poems. They are huge allegories in music. The form which they take is one which is built up note



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by note out of the conflict of vast forces, natural or spiritual powers, rather than human emotions. Three of them work up to great fugues. The other two, opus 109 and opus 111, to towering series of variations.

One may take the sonata in A-flat, opus 110, for analysis. The first movement, in very simple triplex form, is seemingly complete in itself. Yet there is something mystical and visionary about it. The two themes out of which it is constructed seem to float in the air; but there is suggestion in the transitional sections and in the development sections of inchoate forces in the deep. The whole movement rather whispers than speaks. It is a mystery. There follows immediately an allegro in F minor, a harsh presentment, as it were, of human energy spent for naught. There are snatches of a trivial, popular song; there is a trio made up of one long, down-hill run, repeated over and over again, coming down only to be tossed high again by a sharply accented chord; a restless agitation throughout, ironical, even cynical. The end comes suddenly with crashing chords out of time, and, finally, a quick breathing out, as if the whole vanished in air. It is an extraordinary movement, seeming instantaneous. One is amazed and bewildered after it.

Then comes a passage in the character of recitative. The whole mood becomes intensely sorrowful, grief-stricken, tragic. A melody full of anguish mounts up, the cry of bitter hopelessness, endless suffering. It ceases and is followed by a silence. Out of this rises in single notes, *pianissimo*, a voice, as it were, of hope and strength. It is woven into a fugue as if in only such discipline were there promise of victory, not for Beethoven alone, but for the human race.

The fugue rises to a climax, but only to be broken off by an abrupt and boding modulation. Once again the anguished voice is heard, now broken with weariness (*ermattend*, in Beethoven's own expression). The sec-

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tion is in G minor. When the melody ceases the music seems to beat faintly on in single notes. Suddenly there is a soft chord of G major. The effect is one of the most beautiful Beethoven ever conceived. And then the chords follow each other, swelling to great force. Hushed at first, the fugue speaks again. This time the melody is inverted. Extraordinary mastery of the science of music is now brought to bear upon weaving a fitting and glorious ending to the great work. The fugue subject in its original intervals is employed in diminution as a background of counterpoint against which the same subject, in augmentation, rises into greater and greater prominence. The music gains in strength. It mounts higher and higher; at last it seems to blaze in triumph.

Here is a sonata which seems to have an organic life. The whole work is not only expressive of varied and powerful emotions, it seems to build itself out of the conflict that goes on between them. One is hardly conscious in listening that it may be divided into movements. One hears the unfolding of a single mighty work. And in this case, be it noted, the effect has little to do with thematic relationships between the various movements.

By thus filling a conventional group of movements with one and the same life, Beethoven brought the sonata to a height beyond which it can never go. It may, indeed, be asked whether these last works are sonatas, whether they be not some new form. Yet the steps by which they evolved are clear, and in them all there are manifold traces of their origin. There is no other literature for the pianoforte comparable to them in scope and power. The special quality of their inspiration each must judge for himself, whether it move him, appeal to him, suit his taste in beauty of sound. But to that inspiration no one can deny a grandeur and nobility, a heroic proportion unique in pianoforte music.

## BEETHOVEN'S CONCERTOS

### V

The sonatas, from first to last, are Beethoven's chief contribution to this special branch of music. Two of the five concertos have held their place beside these, the fourth in G major and the fifth in E-flat major. The huge proportions of the latter will probably not impress so much as they have in years past. It is commonly called the 'Emperor' concerto. In the first movement there are many measures which give an impression of more or less perfunctory, intellectual working-out. The middle movement is inspired throughout, and the modulation from B major to the dominant harmony of E-flat major just before the final rondo is wonderfully beautiful. The subject of the rondo has a gigantic vigor. The G major concerto is of much more delicate workmanship and, from the point of view of sheer beauty of sound, is more effective to modern ears. The treatment of the solo instrument is more consistently pianistic, adds more in special color, therefore, to the beauty of the whole. The slow movement fulfills an ideal of the concerto which up to that time and even later has been almost ignored. It is a dialogue, a dramatic conversation between the orchestra and the piano, the one seeming to typify some dark power of fate, the other man. Its beauty is matchless. It is worthy of remark that both the G major and the E-flat major concertos begin with passages for the solo instrument.

Besides the sonatas and the concertos Beethoven published several sets of shorter pieces, rondos, dances, variations, and 'Bagatelles.' They are hardly conspicuous, and, in comparison with the longer works, are insignificant. The thirty-three variations on a waltz theme of A. Diabelli, published in 1823 as opus 120, are marvellous as a *tour de force* of musical skill; sec-

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ond, however, to the Goldberg Variations of Bach, to which they seem to owe several features. Is it possible that a variation like the twenty-eighth owes something to Weber as well?

The pianoforte works of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven represent a fairly distinct epoch in the development of music for the instrument. At the beginning men belonging to a rather different period were still living, some were still at work. At the end a new era was forming itself. The insulation which seems to surround the three great composers proves, as we have said, on close inspection to be imperfect. Still, their work represents one phase of development. As such, it is easy to trace the evolution of one definite form, the sonata, under the influences which each brought to bear on it. Similarly one can trace the constant expansion of the pianoforte technique from the time when, adapted to instruments of light action and tone, it differed but little from the harpsichord technique, to the time when, formed upon the massive Broadwood pianos with their resonant tone, it brought from the instrument powerful and varied effects second only to the orchestra.

The epoch has, on the other hand, more than an historical significance. It brought into music the expression of three geniuses of the highest order. Each has its own special charm, its own character, its own power. One should not be valued by comparison with the others. What Haydn gave, what Mozart gave, and what Beethoven gave, all are of lasting beauty and of lasting worth. From Haydn the common joys and a touch of the common sorrows of people here under the sun; from Mozart a grace that is more of the fairies, a voice from other stars singing a divine melody; from Beethoven the great emotions, great depths of despair, great heights of exaltation, half man, half god, of that heroic stuff of which Titans were made.

## CHAPTER V

### PIANOFORTE MUSIC AT THE TIME OF BEETHOVEN

The broadening of technical possibilities and its consequences—Minor disciples of Mozart and Beethoven: J. N. Hummel; J. B. Cramer; John Field; other contemporaries—The pioneers in new forms: Weber and Schubert; technical characteristics of Weber's style; Weber's sonatas, etc.; the *Conzertstück*; qualities of Weber's pianoforte music—Franz Schubert as pianoforte composer; his sonatas; miscellaneous works; the impromptus; the *Moments musicaux*—The Weber-Schubert era and the dawn of the Romantic spirit.

BEETHOVEN developed his own pianoforte technique to respond to his own great need of self-expression. He not so much consulted the qualities of the piano as demanded that it conform to his ideas. These ideas were, in many cases, as grand as those which have later called upon the full resources of the orchestra; and, therefore, as we have said, he called upon the piano to do the full service of the orchestra. As a result the instrument was taxed to its uttermost limits; but within those limits lay many effects which were of no service to Beethoven. Out of these effects a new race of musicians was to build a new style of music. There grew up a technique, slave to the instrument, which with well-nigh countless composers was an end in itself. With most of these composers there was a dearth of ideas, but they rendered a service to the art which must be acknowledged.

#### I

Among the most meritorious and the most influential of these musicians was Johann Nepomuk Hummel

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(1778-1837). Hummel attracted the attention of Mozart as a boy, and the latter took him as a pupil into his house for two years. By the time he was eleven he was winning fame as a virtuoso. The course of concert tours brought him to London, where he settled for several years, to absorb what he could from the greatly renowned Clementi. From then on he enjoyed a brilliant fame, not only as a player, but as a composer as well. And for what was his playing admired? For the remarkable clearness and evenness of his touch, for one thing. So was the playing of Dussek, of Cramer, of Field, of Moscheles, of Kalkbrenner, of Ferdinand Hiller, of any number of others. Clearness and evenness of touch did not distinguish one great player from another then, more than it does now. Yet they are qualities endlessly bespoken by all biographers for their favorite pianists.

Hummel seems to have had in addition a grace of style not so common. This may well have become part of him through the influence of Mozart. And a certain grace characterizes his compositions. These comprise caprices, dances, rondos, sets of variations, all manner of show pieces, brilliant and graceful in their day, sonatas and concertos. These pieces were popular, they were famous, they were in a way more influential in shaping the growth of pianoforte technique than were the sonatas of Beethoven. As a matter of fact, they present little in the way of brilliance but scales and arpeggios. Yet even now they make the piano sound with a captivating fluency.

One work may be signalized as marking a keen instinct for pianistic effects, as really pointing to some such treatment of the keyboard as Chopin, by reason of his immortal fancy, made unsurpassable, perfect. This is the concerto in A minor. Here, as we should expect, he indulged himself in weaving elaborate show-figures over an orchestral groundwork of little or no

## JOHANN NEPOMUK HUMMEL

musical value. But the show-figures are often brilliantly effective. For example, after the piano has played the second theme in the first movement, there follows a long quasi-solo passage of mixed double and single notes, which, trivial as it may be as music, gives what one might call a lot of jolly good fun. Notice the wide spacing here and there, the frequent expeditions into the highest registers, the marches from bottom to top and the oily trickling back to middle again. Then in the development section there is good fun too; and there is a coda which demands the wrist of a virtuoso such as Chopin or Liszt, instantaneous skips of the arm, runs for both hands in thirds, all remarkably fluent and all sprung right from the nature if not the soul of the instrument.

The adagio is, of course, flaccid worthlessness; but the final rondo has no little musical charm, and, as far as treatment of the pianoforte goes, is not at all unworthy of Liszt. The triplet rhythm is in itself brilliantly maintained; there are series of fourths and sixths, triplet figures very widely spaced, and again single and double notes mixed in the same group, runs in thirds, chromatic thirds, double trills, a profusion, in fact, of most of the virtuoso's stock in trade, all gracefully and brilliantly displayed.

It will be noticed that the best of it is sheer figure work, without pianoforte accompaniment, or lightly supported by the orchestra. And this may point to one of the marks of its mediocrity as a whole, one of the reasons why it sounds, after all, laughably old-fashioned in many measures. This is no other than the lack of variety, of skill, and of taste in accompaniment figures. In one of the unquestionably effective passages already referred to—the first solo passages for the piano in the first movement, after the second theme—the right-hand work is modern; but the left hand has only the vapid, commonplace tum-tum scheme of single

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note and chord. Not only is this formula repeated flatly, without attempt at variety, in blissful ignorance of its unworthiness; even the very notes are repeated as far as it is possible to go without changing the harmony.

Here the question may arise as to whether this monotonous device is more contemptible than the Alberti bass. The answer is that the Alberti bass is essentially a harmonic formula. Its use makes a certain series of harmonies vibrate under a melody. Its outline need not, should not, be clear-cut, its notes must not be played evenly and unvaryingly. Here, over this tum-tum figure, we have no melody, but a series of effects; and the tum-tum figure does not serve primarily to furnish harmony, but to keep up a commonplace rhythm to which the figures add no diversion. And, whereas the Alberti bass is a flexible device, this is rigid. It can be lightly played, but, even if unobtrusive, is necessarily commonplace.

But Hummel on the whole contributed considerably to the technique that belongs specially to the pianoforte, and most of his contributions have a grace that makes them pleasant even while his inspiration is perhaps often lower than mediocre. He was by many regarded as the equal of Beethoven, a delightful proof of the power of pleasant, lively sound to intoxicate.

A contemporary of Hummel highly praised by Beethoven was J. B. Cramer, son of a well-known German musical family. He was another of Clementi's pupils. He, too, had the clear and even touch; but his compositions are less effective than Hummel's, probably because he had a more serious ideal of music. Both as a pianist and as a composer he was famous in his day; now he has but little fame left him except what still hangs over the Studies he wrote. In the words of A. Marmontel,\* we salute in him the eldest son of Cle-

\* *Les pianistes célèbres*. 2d edition, Paris, 1878.



menti, the direct representative, the authorized furtherer of his school. He wrote, among other things, one hundred and five sonatas. They are of the past; but the studies, particularly the first sixteen, are still useful, not only in training the fingers, but in inculcating some sense of good style into the brain of the student.

John Field is still another pupil of Clementi, the favorite pupil according to well-founded tradition. He was born in Dublin in 1782 and died in Moscow in 1837. His addiction to good wines and whiskey, and a consequent corpulence, broke down his health and his art. But he was at one time one of the most beloved of pianists. With him it was not only clearness and evenness of touch; there was poetry, tenderness, and warmth as well. He was, of course, of the sentimental school, the foremost of the professional pianists of that day in power of expression. On a concert tour to Italy, undertaken toward the end of his life and culminating in a long, miserable illness, he met with little success; but elsewhere in Europe he exerted a charm upon audiences which was almost hypnotic. His playing was wholly unperturbed by signs of violent emotion, dreamy and indolent, yet of most unusual sweetness and delicacy. He had enormous success as a teacher, especially in Russia, where a great part of his life was spent; and the mark he left upon the art of playing and of composing for the pianoforte has never been wholly obliterated.

Most of his compositions have been neglected, or forgotten. They include seven concertos, four sonatas, numerous rondos, sets of variations, dances, and twenty or more little pieces to which he gave the title of Nocturnes. These nocturnes are a new and a conspicuous appearance in music. By them he is still remembered, by them a fairly distinct style and form of pianoforte music were introduced. They were indolently composed, negligently published, scattered here

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and there over Europe; but they made an indelible impression upon men and women of that day, especially upon those who had heard him play them himself, and must be recognized as the prototype of the countless 'nocturnes,' 'songs without words,' 'reveries,' 'eclogues,' and 'idylls' which have since been written.

Just what distinguishes them from earlier works for the pianoforte it is not easy to say exactly. The form, for one thing, seems new. They are for the most part short, often not more than two pages long. They consist of three sections, a long flowing melody, a contrasting section which is for the most part melodious too, and a return to the opening melody, commonly elaborated. There is in most of them a little coda as well. Most short pieces of the day, and even of an earlier time, were in the well-known forms of rondos or simple dances, from which these are obviously quite distinct. But as far as form goes they are not very different from the aria, except in that the middle section generally maintains the accompaniment figures of the first section and essentially the same mood as well, so that there is little appreciable sense of demarcation. Other short pieces to which one looks for a possible origin, such as those of Couperin and the preludes of Bach, are far more articulate and far less lyrical. The sonatas of D. Scarlatti and the Bagatelles of Beethoven are mostly pieces in two sections, each repeated. The same is true of the *Moments musicaux* of Schubert. In the nocturnes of Field no distinct feature of form is obtrusive. The intellectual element is wanting. There is no attempt at crispness of outline, or antithesis or balance. They seem to be an emanation of mood or sentiment, not a presentation of them. Hence they represent a new type in music, one which has little to do with emotions or ideas, with their arrangement or development, but lets itself flow idly upon a mood.

In style they are wholly lyrical. The accompaniment

## FIELD'S NOCTURNES

is usually monotonous and unvaried, but always flexible. Here, then, one looks to find the Alberti bass; and here it presents itself most clearly in the second stage of its development. The harmonic stream on which the melody floats along is a series of chords broken into their constituent parts so that they may be kept in a constant and gentle vibration. But, whereas the Alberti bass in its first stage was a device applied to the harpsichord and for that reason was always close within the span of the hand, here in its second stage, now adapted to the pianoforte, it has been expanded. The pedal can now be counted upon to blend the relatively wide figures into one harmonic whole. Therefore, instead of the original close grouping, we now find this wider one:



This is no original invention of Field's. Beethoven, in the sonata opus 90, wrote figures like this:



But this figure, as will be seen, is sustained by a powerful, quick-changing harmony. The bass part has a rhythmical significance as important as its harmonic. With Field the function of such figures is purely harmonic, and in the appreciation of such wide spacing, and in a gentle gracefulness in the arrangement of the notes, he stands beyond all his early contemporaries and, of course, beyond his predecessors. He is the first to give to his accompaniment the flowing, undulating line which touches with nearly unfailing instinct upon those notes that will give his harmony most richness.

A similar instinct for what sounds well on the piano marks the ornamentation with which he adorned his melodies, or those figures into which he allowed the melodies to dissolve. In this most clearly he is the

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predecessor of Chopin. It is perhaps worthy of note that he was accustomed to add such ornaments *ex tempore* when playing before audiences. Only a few are written out in the published editions of his works. We may have occasion to refer to this in speaking later of Chopin.

As for the nature of the simple melodies themselves, they are sweet and graceful, sometimes lovely. They are, of course, sentimental. One may hesitate to call them mawkish, for a certain naïve freshness and spontaneity despite a touch of something that is not wholly healthy. It is easy to understand the charm they exerted upon those who heard him play them. The complete lack of any harshness, of any passion or poignancy, of any ecstasy, is delightfully soothing. But beyond this gentle charm they have little to reveal. Liszt's preface to a German edition of a few of the nocturnes, published in 1859, suggests the rose that died in aromatic pain. It is more unhealthy than the nocturnes themselves, be it added in justice to Field.

Other composers and virtuosi of the time of Beethoven need scarcely more than mention. Gelinek (d. 1825) and Steibelt (d. 1823) are remembered for their encounters with Beethoven. Ignaz Moscheles (1794-1870) came into close touch with Beethoven, but, like Cramer, is chiefly of note as a teacher. He was, however, more than Cramer a virtuoso, and less than he of profound musical worth. Chopin was fond of playing his duets. Beethoven's pupil Carl Czerny (1791-1857) is well-known for his *Études*. Another pupil of Beethoven's, Ferdinand Ries, was successful as a virtuoso; and a pupil of Hummel's, Ferdinand Hiller, became an intimate friend of Chopin. The assiduousness with which most of these men cultivated the possibilities of the pianoforte is equalled only by the vacuousness of their compositions. But it is not what these men produced that is significant; rather what they

**Pianoforte Classics:**

<b>Czerny</b>	<b>Moscheles</b>
<b>Hummel</b>	<b>Field</b>









## OTHER CONTEMPORARIES OF BEETHOVEN

represent of the tendencies of the time. Their music furnishes the background of musical taste against which a better and more significant art, both of playing and composing for the piano, built itself. Only Hummel and Field are distinct in their musical gifts; the one in the matter of sheer brilliant and graceful effectiveness, the other in the appreciation of veiled and shadowy accompaniments and lyric sentiment. The best of their accomplishments served to prepare the way for the true poet and artist of the piano, Chopin. They, in a way, mined the metals with which he was to work.

### II

Meanwhile two truly great musicians availed themselves of what was being everywhere around them brought to light. These are Carl Maria von Weber and Franz Peter Schubert. Both are perhaps most closely associated with developments outside the sphere of the pianoforte; the one with the growth of the national, romantic German opera, the other with the first glorious burst of artistic song. Yet the pianoforte works of both were destined to exert a powerful influence upon the subsequent work of the great German composers of later generations, upon Mendelssohn, Schumann and Brahms; and besides these upon Franz Liszt as well.

Weber died in London, whither he had gone to superintend the first performances of his opera *Oberon*, in 1826, about forty years of age. Schubert died in Vienna in 1828, only thirty-one years old. Both were much younger than Beethoven, but both were his contemporaries, and both, moreover, owed much to his influence. The expanded form and warm feeling of their sonatas show this unmistakably. On the other hand, neither was truly at his best in this long form. The cast of their genius led them to new paths, put them

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in sympathy with other forms, affiliated them more with the new than with the old. Their sonatas are a breaking down, a crumbling; measures and pages in them, however, stand out amid the ruins like foundation stones for the music to come. Their shorter pieces seem not at all related to the classical music of the Viennese period, to have nothing in common with the music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven.

Of the two, Weber is far more the virtuoso. There are many pages of his music which are little more than effect. Furthermore, in his combination of pianistic effect and genuine musical feeling, he composed pieces which even to-day are in the repertory of most pianists, and which this permanence of their worth has led historians and critics to judge as the prototype of much of the pianoforte music of the nineteenth century, chiefly of concert music. Yet in the expansion of pianoforte technique Weber invented little. To him belongs the credit of employing what was generally common property in his day for the expression of fanciful and delightful ideas.

The list of his pianoforte works is not very long. It includes several sets of variations, some dances, four big sonatas, two concertos, and the still renowned *Concertstück* in F minor, and several pieces in brilliant style, of which the *Polacca* in E major, the *Polonaise* in E flat, and the famous 'Invitation to the Dance' are the best known.

Let us look over the variations. In such a form composers have usually shown the limits and the variety of their technique. The resources which Weber can call upon to vary his theme are not very numerous, not very original. His plan is almost invariably to announce his theme simply and then dress it up in a number of figures. The theme itself undergoes no metamorphosis, as we have seen it do in the variations of Bach and of Beethoven. It is unmistakable in all the

## WEBER'S TECHNICAL CHARACTERISTICS

variations. It is always clearly a groundwork upon which garlands are hung, which is never for long concealed.

Of the nature of these figures and garlands little need be said. Opus 6 is a set of variations on a theme from the opera 'Castor and Pollux,' written by his friend and teacher, the famous Abbé Vogler. The first five variations are hardly in advance of the work of Handel. The sixth, however, presents an interesting use of broken octaves and is very difficult. The seventh presents the theme in octaves in the bass, and the eighth is the theme unmistakable, in the form of a mazurka.

Opus 7 is a set of seven variations on a theme in C major. The fourth of these presents some difficulties in wide chords for the left hand. Weber's fingers were very long and slender and broad stretches were easy for him. The fifth is built up of sweeping figures that mount from the low registers to the high in brilliant effect. This sort of climbing *crescendo* is to be found again and again in Weber's work. It is undoubtedly effective, but points to no intensive development of pianoforte technique. The sixth variation presents the theme in form of a chorale, a presentation which may still delight those who ever, conversely, find something marvellous in the rendering of 'Nearer, My God, to Thee' in rag-time. The seventh is a *Polacca*, very brilliant and full of thirds and arpeggios in contrary motion.

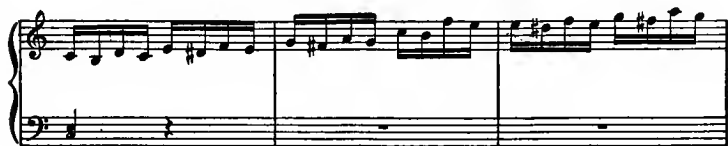
Seven variations on a popular Romanza were published as opus 28. The fifth has some interesting passages of broken sixths which are modern enough in sound, but which can be found in other music of the time. Then there is a Funeral March, in which upper and lower registers of the instrument are contrasted in a series of imaginary orchestral effects. The seventh demands a light, active wrist. It is a series of rapid double notes, sometimes for both hands, in an

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excellent 'étude' manner, of which Weber had already made use in the delightful *Caprice*, opus 12. In such work we have perhaps the model for most studies in the special technique of the wrist, perhaps also of the fifth number of Schumann's 'Symphonic Variations.'

There is, in addition, a set of variations on a Bohemian melody, opus 55, equally ordinary. A set published as opus 40 is perhaps the most pretentious and likewise the most varied. Here we have in the first variation some open, flowing counterpoint in which the theme is pretty well disguised; in the second some effective whirring figures for the left hand; in the third some brilliant broken octaves and double notes. The fourth is in the style of a fugue, *pianissimo*. The fifth furnishes sharp contrast. The eighth is very brilliant and the last is in Spanish style, which seems to depend upon a lavish use of triplet turns.

What one can hardly fail to observe is the great similarity in all his passage work. Two styles of runs he uses in nearly all his pieces. One is as follows:



The other is what one might call an over-reaching figure, in this manner:



## WEBER'S TECHNICAL CHARACTERISTICS



With such and similar figures, with scant variety, page after page of his music is filled. His passage work seldom makes demands upon more than the simplest harmonies. Long runs are generally clearly founded on the simple scale. In rhythms he shows little subtlety.

This general stock in trade of pianoforte technique has become hopelessly old-fashioned. Thus the once blindingly brilliant *Polacca* in E major, the grand polonaise, the rondo, and such pieces, now sound almost laughable. In the *Polacca* one hears the thumping tum-tum figures, this time heavy chords monotonously repeated, that we have spoken of in the concerto of Hummel. However, the brief section in B major must give us pause. There the genius Weber speaks, the composer of *Der Freischütz*, the man who prepared the orchestra for Mendelssohn and Wagner. The long *crescendo* leading back to the main theme foreshadows Schumann.

In the sonatas there is a great deal of very good mu-

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sic. The quality of the ideas in them is often golden. Moreover, there are many passages of startlingly good writing for the pianoforte. The first, in C major, was published in 1812, as opus 42. The first theme is announced *mezza voce*, after two preliminary measures of highly dramatic character. The theme itself has something of the quality of a folk-song, a touch of the martial, as well, a theme that at once endears itself to the hearer as the melodies of *Der Freischütz* endeared themselves to all Germany. But, then, note the over-reaching figure which now appears in the transitional section, and later, clamped to a definite harmonic sequence, does for the second theme in G major. One cannot but enjoy it, yet Hummel is not more mediocre. The theme and variations which constitute the slow movement are not conspicuous; but the syncopations in the minuet, the perverse avoidance of the measure accent, cast a shadow forward upon Schumann and Brahms. The effect of the hushed triplets in the trio is orchestral. The famous rondo, in perpetual motion, scarcely calls for comment.

The second sonata, in A-flat major, must become precious to one who troubles, in these days, to study it. The quality of the themes in the first movement is rare and beautiful. The mysterious tremolo which alone accompanies the announcement of the first theme, points to that imagination in Weber which later developed the orchestra so richly. There is something orchestral about the whole work, not only about this sonata either. But his orchestral treatment of the piano is as different from Beethoven's as the scoring of his overtures is different from that of Beethoven's symphonies. There is a sensuous element in the beauty of sounds which is lacking in Beethoven; a quality which stirs the imagination to picture strange lands and countries, dim, mysterious forests, strange moods of moonlight. It is romantic music, it is picture music. The

## WEBER'S SONATAS

passage work at the end of the first section, which really serves in place of a second theme, is superb. It is in the main nothing but a series of arpeggios, sometimes with anticipatory notes in his conventional and elsewhere often tiresome manner, sometimes over-reaching; but the full chords in the left hand, a sort of rich strumming, gives it all a buoyancy, an *essor*, which can hardly be paralleled. The return to the first theme at the end of the development is again orchestral. So is the whole treatment of the andante and variations; orchestral in the sense that it suggests instruments of various tone-colors, or rather that it almost brings the colors out of the piano itself. The minuet is wonderfully gay, suggesting Schumann again. The sonata may be taken as a whole as the best of Weber's works for the piano.

The last two sonatas, published in 1816 and 1822, contain very beautiful passages. The final rondo of the former, in D major, is astonishingly modern. The wide spacing of the figure work which constitutes the main theme, its sharp accents, the broad sweep of its plunges and soarings, the happy waltz swing of the second episode, the irresistible charm with which two melodies are combined, above all, the unflagging vigor of the whole movement, these must give joy to all pianists and all listeners. The minuet of the last sonata must have been well known to Brahms.

The four sonatas are all very long works. They all consist of four movements, all but the last in the conventional order of allegro, andante, minuet, and rondo. In the last the minuet follows the opening allegro. It might well have been called a scherzo. The breadth of plan suggests Beethoven. There have not been lacking critics who judged the sonatas greater than those of Beethoven. No one to-day would be likely to make such a misjudgment. They lack the splendid compactness, the logical balance of the sonatas

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of Beethoven. The treatment of the triplex form is rambling and loose. There is hardly a suggestion of organic unity in the group. But there is splendid music in them, a fine healthy vigor, an infusion of spontaneous, genuine folk-spirit. And what they possess that is almost unique in pianoforte music is a sort of narrative quality, difficult if not impossible to analyze. They suggest romantic tales of chivalry, of love and adventure. To say they are dramatic implies an organic life which they have not. They are perhaps histrionic. They suggest the illusions of the stage. Yet there is withal a free, out-of-doors spirit in them, something wholly objective and healthy. They are not the outpourings of perfervid emotions. They are not the lyrical outburst of a mood. They are like brilliant tapestries, like ancient chronicles and cycles of romantic legends.

For at least two of his most famous works in another field we have been furnished tales. To be sure, there is not much to be said of the popular 'Invitation to the Dance.' The introduction and the end alone are program music; but they put the waltz into a frame which adds much to its charm. Here is a romanticist at work, a teller of stories in music. No composer for the pianoforte has had just his skill. The old narrative stories of Kuhnau, Bach's lively little *Capriccio*, Beethoven's sonata opus 81, afford no prototype. Neither do the little pieces of Couperin. What Weber gives us is something different. It is not a picture, not a representation, it is somehow the thing itself.

As for the waltz, it is too well known to need comment. The technical art of which it makes use is surprisingly small. A few runs, a few skips, a few variations in the steady waltz-accompaniment, these are all. But the work has always been and always will be captivating, from the charming, delicate conversational interchange between the gallant and his selected partner,



## WEBER'S KONZERTSTÜCK

which forms the introduction, to the same polite dialogue which tells us we have come to the end.

The *Konzertstück* in F minor is a much bigger work. We quote from Grove's Dictionary the translation of the story which it tells: "The Châtelaine sits all alone on her balcony, gazing far away into the distance. Her knight has gone to the Holy Land. Years have passed by, battles have been fought. Is he still alive—will she see him again? Her excited imagination calls up a vision of her husband lying wounded and forsaken on the battlefield. Can she not fly to him and die by his side? She falls back unconscious. But Hark! what notes are those in the distance? Over there in the forest, something flashes in the sunlight; nearer and nearer, Knights and Squires with the cross of the Crusaders, banners waving, acclamations of the people, and there—it is he! She sinks into his arms. Love is triumphant. Happiness without end. The very woods and waves sing the song of love. A thousand voices proclaim his victory."

Probably the music which Weber wrote to this story of olden days has had as great a measure of popular admiration and acclaim as any piece that has ever been written for the pianoforte. Much of it is beautiful. The opening measures for the orchestra are equal to any of the pages from *Der Freischütz* or from *Euryanthe*; the solo passages for the pianoforte which follow have a fine breadth; the march theme, which, *pianissimo*, announces the return of the Crusaders is effective, rather in the manner of Meyerbeer, a fellow-student with Weber at the feet of the Abbé Vogler. On the other hand, much of the display work given to the pianoforte is hopelessly old-fashioned. We have the Weber staples again, the tum-tum bass, the close-rolling arpeggios repeated endlessly, the busy little figure before mentioned, which here, as in the famous Rondo in C, scampers from low to high. The final motives,

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which represent universal joy, are trivial, banal. Even the *glissando* octaves have now only the shine of tinsel, and much is sadly tarnished. But on the whole there is a fresh spirit in the work, an enjoyment, frank and manly, in the brilliancy of the pianoforte; an abandonment to the story, that still may carry a listener along.

Weber's pianoforte works have astonishing individuality in spite of the commonplaceness of the stuff which he often brings in, either to fill them up or to add brilliancy. There is an effusion in most of them of manly vigor that never becomes weakened into sentimentality, and there is a great deal of romance in the chivalric strain. His harmonies are simple, though often richly scored, and he is a master of the art of suggestion by silence. His melodies have the stamp of the Teutonic folk-song. Though some years of his youth and manhood were spent in Prague and in Vienna, he assimilated practically nothing of the Slavic characteristics which can be found in the music of Haydn and Schubert, even in that of Brahms. He made use of the entire keyboard in relatively huge dynamic effects, and he had, as we have said, an almost unique power to bring forth suggestions of orchestral coloring.

His compositions are not architectural as Beethoven's are. They suggest great canvases, full of color and movement. Thus the pianoforte sonatas seem to manifest the same quality of imagination which was able to make of the overtures to his operas brilliantly colored fantasies, after which Mendelsson and Wagner shaped their art. And it is worthy of note that the same stereotyped figure work which plays such a part in his keyboard music is abundantly evident in these overtures. The figures out of which the allegro sections of the overture to *Oberon* are made are just such figures as one will find in the pianoforte sonatas, variations and concertos.

## FRANZ SCHUBERT

No subsequent composer down to the present day has procured from the pianoforte the special kind of mysterious, colorful effects which Weber was able to procure therefrom; but both Schumann and Brahms are clearly indebted to him for more general and more technical procedures. In connection with this it may be mentioned that by comparison with Chopin, the perfect, the pianoforte music of both Schumann and Brahms often appears orchestral. And it may be added that Chopin was not especially familiar with Weber's work.

### III

If the certain chivalric romanticism of Weber's music is hard to analyze, the special charm of Schubert's is wholly elusive. We have to do with an utterly different nature. Weber was an aristocrat, a rover among wild companions, a hanger-on at the theatre for a while, if you will, but none the less of distinguished birth, of polished manners and of fine wit. Schubert was more than any other of the composers, even more than Haydn, a man of the people. He was happy to mingle with the peasants, happy to play hours at a time for their dancing. Beethoven is said to have modelled the music of the country people's dance in the 'Pastoral Symphony' upon the music he heard played in a certain country tavern to which at one time he delighted to go. Brahms in his impoverished boyhood used to earn a few pence by playing for the sailors' dancing in the taverns along the waterfront of Hamburg. But Beethoven regarded himself, as we have said, as the high priest of an exalted art; and Brahms was hardly less imperious. Yet Schubert, for all his ideals which rose ever and ever higher, for all the fact that he numbered acquaintances in the same aristocratic families which had seen Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven come

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and go, remained a man of the people, a singer in the sway of his art, a loveable, reckless, sentimental and affectionate boy.

All his music is lyrical. The song is never absent from his pianoforte works, no matter how instrumental parts of them may be. He is essentially a melodist. His rhythms have the lilt of a dance. These two elements are not disguised. They undergo no intellectual transformations. They are as obvious as in the folk-songs and dances of the country people with whom he loved to associate. Hence the almost complete lack of sophistication in his music, the naturalness which distinguishes it from all other music.

His harmonies are strange and warm. They lack the subtlety of Mozart on the one hand, the frankness of Weber on the other. They have not the expressive significance of Beethoven. They seem rather to go beside his music than to go under it. One listens through them, so to speak, as one might look upon a procession through a colored mist that now conceals, now discloses, that always plays magic tricks with the sight. Two harmonic procedures appear more or less regularly in his music. One is the interchange of major and minor, the other the bodily shifting of the harmonic fabric up and down the scale. The latter are changes rather than modulations. By reason of these unexpected, unaccountable harmonies, his music sounds now near, now far. One moment it is with us and familiar, the next it is aloof and strange.

Schubert's hands were thick, his fingers short and fat. Though he was not an elegant or a polished player, he had great beauty of touch and a natural, easy fluency, especially in the rapid passages of his own works. Richard Heuberger, in his excellent book on Schubert, points to the fact that most of Schubert's pianoforte music is written in keys that require the use of many black notes on the keyboard; and sug-

## SCHUBERT'S SONATAS

gests, as one reason for this, that Schubert found it easier to play in such keys. It is generally admitted that the key of C major is the most difficult for the pianist.

Schubert's pianoforte music comprises many long sonatas, two sets of impromptus, a set of short pieces called 'Musical Moments' and a number of waltzes and other dances. The sonatas are for the most part unsatisfactory as such. In such extended forms there is need of an intellectual command of the science of music, and a sense of great proportions, both of which Schubert lacked. Hence the separate movements, the first and even more often the last, are loose and rambling in structure, and too long for the work as a whole. There is so little cohesion in the group that one may in most cases take the individual movements quite out of it and play them with perfect satisfaction.

Not all the movements are over-long, and some of the sonatas can be enjoyed in their entirety. Perhaps the most satisfactory from the point of view of structure is that in A minor, opus 42. In this the first movement is admirably constructed, firmly knit, full of distinct contrast, and in the middle section well developed. The andante and variations is undeniably long, but the formal preciseness of the following movement and of the rondo succeeds in giving to the group a definiteness and balance which will pass muster.

A sonata in D major, opus 120, is considerably shorter, but is even from the point of view of form less satisfactory. The first movement reveals one of Schubert's great weaknesses. It happens here to be almost inconsiderable, but it is none the less evident. This is the lack of ideas in the treatment of the development section. There are nine measures which give the impression that Schubert was content to keep his music going with makeshifts. We have nothing of any significance, a series of octaves in the left hand answered

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by a series in the right, and a full chord at the beginning of each measure, whereby a desired modulation from the key of C-sharp minor to that of A major is accomplished.

This is bare music. The passage is so short that it hardly mars the movement seriously, but unhappily other movements are nearly destroyed by the weakness at which this one hints. For example, the first movement of a sonata in A minor, opus 143, which contains themes that are truly inspired, breaks hopelessly adrift in the development section. The section is fatally long, too. And what does it offer to hold our interest? Only measure after measure of an unvaried dotted rhythm, for the most part in the right hand over chords which may be beautiful but are seemingly without any aim. Schubert either does not know what to do or he is utterly lost in dreaming.

This is real tragedy in music, the ruin of most beautiful ideas by a fatal weakness. The opening theme promises even more than that of the earlier sonata in the same key. It is most mysterious, most suggestive, the very best of Schubert. And the second theme is of unearthly beauty. But in this weak movement both are lost, both thrown away. The whole sonata suffers in consequence. The andante is not especially noteworthy, but the scherzo is a masterpiece, not only of expression, but of workmanship; and so is the final rondo.

Similarly, the sonata in B-flat major, written not long before he died, falls into a heap of ruins. The first theme of the first movement is matchless in beauty. Schubert is loth to leave it, we are loth to have it go. A strange melody in F-sharp minor does for a second theme, and this simply rambles on through sudden changes of harmony until it reaches the key of F major, only to give way to measure after measure of equally aimless wandering, with only figures to save the music

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from amorphousness. Note then a closing theme of perfect beauty! Play it with all tenderness, with all the delicate suggestion you can put into it, and still even this first section of the music is long and over-balanced. There is a wealth of poetry in it, even a great depth of feeling and a heart-moving sadness. It seems a sacrilege to decry it; yet there it stands, frustrate.

The development section is what one would expect, weak in structure. Yet the second part of it is strangely moving, from the establishment of the key of D minor to the return of the first theme. The life of the music seems held in suspense. There is only a steady hushed tapping of triads, measure after measure, swaying from D minor to F major and ever back again, with reminiscences of the rambling measures in F major of the first section, floating here and there like mist in a dull rain. Strains of the first theme drift by, there are low muffled trills on D. Finally, the tapping ceases, as rain might cease; a quiet scale, like drops from the branches of some wet tree, falls to a low trill, and, after a silence, the first theme comes back into the music.

One can hardly find sadder or more beautiful music than these measures, or than the lovely first theme; and yet the movement is strangely without form and void. The andante which follows it is overdrawn. The repetitions of the sections in A major might have been omitted to better effect; but there is no looseness of structure. The music is unspeakably sad, with the sadness of the songs of the *Winterreise*. The scherzo is flawless, the final rondo long but well sustained. Yet, by reason of the aimlessness of long measures in the first movement, the sonata as a whole is like a condemned building. And in this sonata, too, there is an intensity of mood that, except for the last movement, should succeed in welding the whole group together. Even the last movement is not entirely independent.

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What is most lamentable in all this is that Schubert poured much of his most inspired music into the sonatas. Little of his music presents more intrinsically beautiful material. In no other of his pianoforte pieces did he show such a wide and varied control of the technical possibilities of the instrument. Yet all would seem to be of little or no avail. Many of the most precious of his poetic fancies lie buried in these imperfect works.

Though Schubert was not a virtuoso, he displayed instinct for and ingenuity in devising pianoforte effects. In the huge 'Wanderer Fantasy,' opus 15, he seems to have set himself the task of awakening the greatest possible resonance of the instrument. The big chords and arpeggios in the first movement are not, however, overpoweringly effective. The variations in the second are more successful. They certainly look impressive on the printed page, and the sound of the climax is gigantic. But the stupendous is not natural to Schubert on the whole. He is more of a poet than a virtuoso. The first movement and the scherzo of the sonata in D major, opus 53, are big in effect. The spacing and rhythm in the *piu lento* section of the first movement has been pointed out by Heuberger as significant. The vigorous first subject of the scherzo can make the piano ring. But in general Schubert shows at his best as regards pianoforte writing in more delicate measures, and in brilliant rather than massive and sonorous effects. The last movement of the sonata in A major, opus 120, is a good example of a piquant style of which he was master. Here the long scales terminating in chords high up on the keyboard are quite dazzling.

He was not especially original in accompaniment figures. One finds a great deal of mediocre Alberti-bass stuff. On the other hand, he is a master in weaving a more subtle sort of arabesque about his melodies, or over or below them. One sees this not far from the



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beginning of the adagio movement of the big fantasy opus 15, in the ornamentation of the Fantasia, opus 27, and in the Trio of the Scherzo in opus 147. The closing measures of the first section of the first movement of this sonata are very like Chopin. There are many passages of excellent free writing for the instrument, such as the C major section of the allegretto in opus 164. This, and, in another way, the second section of the minuet in opus 122, are very like passages in the Schumann *Carnaval*. On the whole his treatment of the pianoforte is more delicate and more distinguished than Weber's.

Dr. Oskar Bic has remarked wisely in his history of pianoforte music that to one who has not a soft touch the beauties of Schubert's music will not be revealed. It is particularly in lovely, veiled passages that he excels. Except for the final rondo almost all of the sonata in B-flat major to which we have referred is to be played very nearly *pianissimo*. The poetic and generous Schumann felt that in certain parts of the andante of the great C major symphony, a spirit from heaven might be walking through the orchestra, to which the instruments would seem to be listening. There are many passages in the pianoforte music which suggest such ghostly visitations, which whisper far more than speak. And in such places Schubert's scoring will be found to be matchless, as delicate as Chopin's, though less complicated.

In spite of the many inspired themes in the sonatas, and of the variety and richness of pianoforte effects with which they are often presented, the works are, as we have already said, too faulty or too weak in structure to hold a secure and honored place in pianoforte literature. It is vain to speculate on what Schubert might have done with the form had he lived longer. The last sonata is discouraging.

But in shorter forms there is no doubt that he was a

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supreme and perfect artist. The two sets of impromptus and the set of shorter pieces called the *Moments Musicaux* are masterpieces. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that in them lie concealed the root and flower of the finest pianoforte literature produced during the next half century or more in Germany. Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Brahms owe immensely to them.

Each set of Impromptus consists of four pieces. The title was not given to them by Schubert, but was added by the publishers of the first editions, the Haslingers of Vienna. Schumann suggested that the first, second, and fourth of the second set might be taken as three movements of a sonata in F minor. The first of these is very much after the manner of the first movements of Schubert's sonatas; but the first section is not repeated, and the section which at first might suggest a real development section is repeated entirely at the end of the piece.

The first impromptu of the first set is built on a single phrase. The quality of the music is legendary. A sharp preliminary G claims our attention, and then the story begins, *pianissimo*, a single voice, answered, as it were, by a chorus; and what this voice sings, or rather chants, is the burden of the rest. One might fancy the piece a series of variations but that there seems to be some story progressing with it. At times the theme is smooth and serene, as in the A-flat major section near the beginning, where it floats along over a rolling accompaniment. Later on it is passing through dark, wild forests. The agitated triplet octaves, inexorably on G, suggest the 'Erl King.' And so ever on, the same phrase, as if it were a lone soldier on his way through a land now wild and dreary, now sunny. During the last two pages the restless triplet figures are never still, and always they come back to beat on G. Just before the end the agitation stops, but still the G persists, in long octaves, and still the tramp of the

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soldier keeps on. What it may mean no one can tell. The impression is that the strange music continues on, long after our ears have heard it die away.

The second impromptu is for the most part in a light and happy vein. There is a constant flow of triplet figures, wonderfully graceful and sinuous, over the simplest of accompaniments. A sudden change of mood, an abrupt modulation, usher in a section in the nature of a trio. There is a bold melody, greatly impassioned, very much after the manner of Schumann; a breadth of style and a power wholly different from the light figure-work which has preceded it. But back to the lighter mood the music comes again, back to the flow of exquisite, light sound, only to be brought once more to a sudden check. There is a short coda of greatest vehemence and brilliance.

Here is salon music of a wholly new variety. It has nothing in common with the showy polonaises and rondos of Weber, nor yet with the sentimental nocturnes of Field. In fact, one would find it difficult to find its parallel elsewhere in the literature of piano-forte music, its strange combination of ingenuousness and grace and wild passion.

The third is in G-flat major, though it is perhaps better known in the key of G, to which Haslinger took the liberty of transposing it, much to the harm of its effect. It is in the nature of a reverie, akin to the nocturnes of Field in spirit, but far broader in plan and more healthy in sentiment.

Something of the airiness of the second impromptu is to be found in the fourth; but here the runs have an harmonic significance rather than a melodic. They are flowing chords, successive light showers of harmonies. The very sameness of the figuration adds to the charm, and does not, it may be added, take away from the difficulty. Only twice is the gentle vibration so produced interrupted for long; once to give way to a short mel-

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ody, once during the long, impassioned middle-section in C-sharp minor.

What stands out in this group of pieces as a whole is the restraint in form, so lacking in the sonatas, and the fineness of pianoforte style. There is a great economy of writing. The piano is left to speak for itself; it is not often taxed to make music grand enough for the orchestra. In the second and fourth of the series an accompaniment is hardly more than suggested, except in the impassioned middle sections; yet the passage work is in no way of the virtuoso type. It has a refinement that is, apart from Bach, Mozart, and Chopin, unusual in pianoforte music. And what is ever worthy of notice in all the work of Schubert is the prevalent *pianissimo*. The spiritual visitor is ever present. One feels that Schubert was wholly lost in his music, that he surrendered himself utterly to the delight of sound, of softest sound. The four works are equally inspired. They are full of ecstasy, full of rapture.

The impromptus of the second set are not so invariably fine, yet as a whole they are a momentous contribution. The first and the fourth are longer and more elaborate than any in the first set, and consequently one feels in them the lack of proportion and control which weakened the sonatas. The third is, as a matter of fact, a series of variations; and they can hardly be said to suffer from any weakness. Rather they are exceedingly well done. However, better variations have been written—not, it may be remarked, by Weber—and the form is dangerously likely to prove stupid except in the hands of a man who has a special skill in it. There is necessarily lacking a chance for that spontaneity and freedom which one associates more with Schubert than with any other composer.

The last impromptu is conspicuous for a gay brilliance, perhaps a better brilliance than Weber revealed,

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but a less effective one. It suggests Liszt. Passages remind one of the *Gnomenreigen*. There can be no mistaking the Hungarian quality of the melodies, the mad, rhapsodical, Gypsy style.

The first impromptu contains more of the quality of the extraordinary Schubert; is perhaps too long, but is full of fine inspiration and romantic fancy. The opening theme is in ballade style, with a rather incongruous touch of conventionality here and there. The second theme is purely lyrical, though the persistent eighth-note rhythm in which it is presented gives it a spirit of restlessness. It is thrice repeated, and the figure-work in the high registers which adorns the third statement of it is effective and beautiful. The theme itself is silenced unexpectedly and the figure work leads down again into the deep registers, where it flows in a hushed arpeggio figure. Over this a third theme is suggested, which, with its answer woven in the accompaniment, constitutes a distinct second section of the piece, releases a different mood. It is for the most part soft, yet it is strangely impassioned. It leads back again to the first theme and the whole is repeated, with a change only of key. At the end, the first theme once more adds a touch of the ballade. The two measures before the final chords have all the strange power of suggestion which one associates with Schubert, leaving one with the impression that the music has rather passed on than ended, as if the song, like that of the 'Solitary Reaper,' could have no ending.

There is no contemporary music with which one may compare these impromptus. They are not sentimental idylls like the nocturnes of Field, nor show pieces like the shorter works of Weber. They have nothing in common with the music of the contemporary virtuosi, nor with that of any virtuosi. They are extraordinarily rich in genuine musical worth, and, like all of Schubert's music, in form or out of form, inspired. Even

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more remarkable are the six short pieces called 'Musical Moments.' Three of these are but two pages long; only one more than four. Each is wholly different from the others in mood. In all of them the *pianissimo* prevails. Schubert is whispering, not speaking. They are essentially pianoforte music, too. Though there is nothing elaborate in the style of them, not the slightest trace of a striving for new effects, yet it may be questioned if any German pianoforte music shows greater understanding of what one might call the secret and intimate qualities of the instrument.

There is practically no thickness of scoring. Only the trio sections of the first and last are open to even suspicion in this regard. There is no commonplaceness or makeshift in the accompaniments. The monotonous tum-tum of the third is necessary in the expression of the mood of dance and song which the piece embodies, of wild dancing and intensely emotional song, more than half sad. The workmanship of all is delicate, whether it be deliberate or instinctive. There is in all a great appreciation of effects of contrast, of loud and soft, which are the very first of the peculiarities of the instrument; an appreciation of the sonority, rich but not noisy, which the pedal allows; of the charm of soft and distinct passage notes, of vigorous, percussive rhythm. All is perhaps in miniature; but the six pieces are the essence of German pianoforte music, both in quality and style; the very root and stock of the short pieces of Schumann and Brahms by which they are distinguished.

As to the nature of the separate pieces, little need be said. They are pure music, perfect art. In the sound of them are their completeness and their justification. The first may suggest dreams. The figure out of which it is made is of the woodland. It suggests the horns of elf-land faintly blowing. It is now near, now far. As the notes of the bugle will blend in echoes till the air is

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full of a soft chord, so does this phrase weave a harmony out of its own echo that, like the sounds of a harp blown by the wind, is more of spirit than of flesh. Even in the trio something of this echo persists.

The remaining five keep us closer to earth, are of more substantial and more human stuff. Yet note in the second, in the second statement of the first theme after the first episode, how a persistent E-flat suggests again the ghostly visitor to which the music itself seems to listen. The third is, as has been suggested, a dance, soft yet half barbaric. Is the melody sad or gay? It is blended of both, like the folk-songs of the Slavs and the Celts, the character of which it breathes. One is tempted to ask if there ever was *softer* music than Schubert's. The music enters its coda here thrice *piano*, and twice on its way to the end it grows still softer.

The fourth suggests a prelude of Bach, except for the trio, which again has the character of a folk-song and again is softer than soft. The fifth is a study in grotesque. Even here there are fine effects, such as the echo of the first phrases; but the general impression is of almost savage accents and harsh dissonances. The last has a touch of Beethoven, though the melodies are of the kind that Schubert alone has ever heard, and the harmonies here and there rise, as it were, like shifting, colored mist across the line of the music.

It cannot be said that the melodies and harmonies of either the Impromptus or the 'Musical Moments' are more inspired than those of the sonatas. Indeed, there are passages in the latter of more profound and more intense emotion than finds expression in the shorter pieces. But most of the sonatas are in ruins. Their beauties are fragmentary and isolated; whereas nearly all the Impromptus and all the 'Musical Moments' have a beauty and firmness of line and design as well as of content. For this reason they stand as the best of his

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pianoforte works; and of their kind they are unexcelled in music. They are genuinely beautiful music; they are perfectly suited to the piano, drawing upon its various qualities without showing them off; they are finished in detail, balanced and well-knit in structure. A new epoch in the art begins with them.

It should be mentioned that Schubert's waltzes and other dances bear very clearly the stamp of his great genius. They are not elaborate. Much of their beauty is in their naïve simplicity. They gain nothing by being dressed up in the gaudy raiment which Liszt chose to hang upon many of them. They should be known and played as Schubert wrote them, not as profound or as brilliant music, but as spontaneous melodies in undisguised dance rhythms. They are, in fact, dance music, full of the spirit of merry-making, not in the least elegant or sophisticated. To our knowledge there is no other music of equal merit and charm composed in this spirit expressly for the piano. Schubert is unique among the great composers in having treated dance forms and rhythms thus strictly as dances.

## V

All the work of Weber and most of that of Schubert fall within the lifetime of Beethoven. The three great men constitute the foundation of the pianoforte music of the great German composers of the next generation. But Beethoven's influence is largely spiritual, as Bach's. There was nothing more to be done with the sonata after he finished, and long before his death the progress of pianoforte music had taken a new turn. It is not inconceivable that before very long Beethoven's sonatas will be regarded as the culmination and end of a period of growth, just as the music of Bach is already regarded; that he will appear materially related only



## THE SPIRIT OF THE ROMANTIC PERIOD

to what came before him, and to have died without musical heir. The last sonatas rested many years generally unknown. His peculiar and varied treatment of the pianoforte in them found few or no imitators. The technique of the instrument that Schumann and Chopin employed was not descended from him; rather from Weber on the one hand and from Mozart and Hummel on the other.

Even in the matter of form he exercised hardly more than a spiritual influence, as regards pianoforte music alone. Schumann and Chopin both wrote sonatas, but the sonatas of neither show kinship to those of Beethoven. The Brahms sonatas are more closely related to Weber than to Beethoven. The Liszt sonata in B minor and the Liszt concertos are constructed on a wholly new plan that was suggested by Berlioz; and the two long works of César Franck are not even called sonatas. The sonata in pianoforte music alone had had its day. The form remained but the spirit had fled. If music came back to it at all, it came back to sit as it were among ruins.

The change which came over music was but the counterpart of the change which came over men and over society. It was evident in literature long before it affected music. It might in many ways be said to have reached music through literature. The whole movement of change and reformation has been given the name Romantic. It was accompanied in society by violent revolutions, prolonged restlessness, the awakening of national and popular feeling. It is marked in literature and in music by intensely self-conscious emotion, by an appeal to the senses rather than to the intellect, by a proud and undisguised assertion of individuality.

Most great music is romantic music. The preludes of Bach, the little pieces of Couperin, a great deal of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven have a personal warmth

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which is essentially romantic. Music draws its life more directly from emotions than the other arts. But there are signs in the music of these men of an objective, an external ideal, to which they have conformed the expression of their emotions. They do not work upon the spur of emotional excitement alone. That is but the germ from which their music starts. They have a power to sustain. They work with music; and the ideas which they choose to work with are chosen from a thousand others for the possibilities they contain of expansion, of alteration, of adaptability to the need of the work as a whole. Within the limits of this work emotional inspiration plays its part, adding here and there a bit of harmony, a new phrase. These are romantic touches. These reveal the quick or the inert nature back of the music. But back of it all the architectural brain presides, building a structure of broad design, or of exquisite proportions. The ideal is commonly known as classical; and these composers are properly called classical.

The Romantic composers, on the other hand, treasure their moods. They enshrine their separate inspirations. It is the manner of their time. They are, as we have said, emotionally self-conscious. This is one of the marks by which we may know them. The architectural ideal loses their devotion. They lack, in the first place, the prime desire to sustain, in the second place, the power. The change shows itself distinctly in the works of Weber and Schubert, both of whom are recognized as the first of the Romantic composers.

Take, for example, the sonatas of Weber. The movements are, as we have ventured to suggest, like broad pictures. They are a series of figures, of colors and shadows, like tapestries. They conform to the rules of form, but they have little or nothing of the spirit of it. They seem to cover the outlines of a story. They suggest the theatre. So little is their form all-sufficing

## THE SPIRIT OF THE ROMANTIC PERIOD

that we are tempted to fit each with a chronicle taken from olden days of knighthood. At last Weber does so himself—gives us stories for two of his compositions.

And the sonatas of Schubert, what a ruin are they! Moments of hot inspiration, of matchless beauty; well-nigh hours of fatal indifference and ignorance. On the other hand, he has left us short pieces which the publishers must needs call *impromptus* for lack of any other name; 'Musical Moments,' each the full and perfect expression of a single, swift inspiration. His muse whispers in his ear and before she has flown-away he has written down what she prompted. She makes short visits, this muse. So much the worse for him if she starts him upon a sonata. He is soon left with nothing but a pen in his hand.

Weber with his stories, Schubert with his short forms, are the prototypes of most of the Romantic composers to come. We shall find everywhere signs of the supremacy of the transient mood. Stories will be lacking, at least in pianoforte music; but there will be titles, both vague and specific, labelling the mood so that the music may exert an added charm. There will be something feverish, something not entirely healthy in it all. As we shall see, composers will expend their all in a single page. Yet there will come a warmth and a now sad, now wild poetry.

The virtuosi, and Weber among them with his showy polaccas and rondos, speak of the change. They appeal to the general public. They are sensationalists. The aristocratic amateurs will no longer hold musicians in dependence. There is a mass of people waking into life. The crowd makes money, it buys pianos; it will pay to hear a man, or a woman, perform on the household instrument. It will submit to the intoxicating, swift fingers, to the display of technique. Not that the aristocratic amateurs were always less open to such oratorical persuasion; but the public now holds the

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money bags, and it will pay to hear fingers, to see flying arms and streaming hair. Who will care to hear a man improvise a fugue in five parts? How will they judge virtue but by virtuosity?

On the other hand, men will begin to write about their art, to defend their new ideals, to criticize and appreciate the outpourings of each genius as he comes along, to denounce the virtuosi who have nothing to show but empty show. A musician holds a place now as a man, a man of the world and of affairs. He makes a name for himself as a poet, a critic, a satirist. And on the verge of all this new development stand Weber and Schubert; the brilliant, witty patriot, the man who spent his energy that a national opera might be established in the land of his birth; and the man who had no thoughts but the joy of his art, the warmth of music, no love but the love of song, the singer of his race and his companions.

## CHAPTER VI

### MENDELSSOHN, SCHUMAN AND BRAHMS

Influence of musical romanticism on pianoforte literature—Mendelssohn's pianoforte music, its merits and demerits; the 'Songs without Words'; Prelude and Fugue in D minor; *Variations Sérieuses*; Mendelssohn's influence, Bennett, Henselt—Robert Schumann, ultra-romanticist and pioneer; peculiarities of his style; miscellaneous series of piano pieces; the 'cycles': *Carnaval*, etc.—The *Papillons*, *Davidsbündler*, and *Faschingsschwank*; the Symphonic études; *Kreisleriana*, etc., the Sonatas, Fantasy and Concerto—Johannes Brahms; qualities of his piano music; his style; the sonatas, 'Paganini Variations,' 'Handel Variations,' Capriccios, Rhapsodies, Intermezzi; the Concertos; conclusion.

THE progress of German pianoforte music is consistent and unbroken from the death of Schubert down to the end of the nineteenth century. All composers, both great and small, with the exception of a few who would have had music remain in the forms of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, even at the price of stagnation little better than death, submitted themselves and their art to the influences of the Romantic movement which had placed so distinct a mark on the music of Weber and Schubert. We meet with relatively few long works. The best of these are frankly called Fantasies, claiming little relation to the sonata. Hundreds of sets of short pieces make their appearance. Rarely have the separate pieces in a set any conventional or any structural relation. The set as a whole is given a name, simple and generic, or fantastical. We meet 'Songs Without Words,' 'Fantasy Pieces,' 'Melodies for Piano,' 'Nocturnes,' 'Ballads,' 'Novelettes,' 'Romances,' 'Night Poems,' 'Love Dreams,' 'Rhapsodies,' 'Diaries,' and 'Sketch-books.' There are Flower, Fruit, and Thorn pieces, Flying Leaves, Autumn Leaves, and Album

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Leaves, even the 'Walks of a Lonely Man' and *Nuits Blanches*.

Most of these short pieces conform to one of three types. Either they are moods in music, in which case they have no distinctive features; or they are *genre* pieces, a diluted, watery (usually watery) picture music; or, by reason of the constant employment of a definite technical figure, they are *études* or studies. Most of them are mild and inoffensive. Few of them show marked originality, genuine fervor or intensity of feeling. They are evaporations rather than outpourings; and as such most of them have been blown from memory. A cry against this vigorous wind of Time, harsh and indiscriminating as in many cases it may appear to be, is hopeless. Not refinement of style nor careful workmanship can alone save music from the obliterating cyclone. One may as well face the fact that only a few men's moods and reveries are of interest to the world, that sentimentality must ever dress in a new fashion to win fresh tears and sighs.

### I

The sweetest singer of songs without words was Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy. He sang the sweetest stories ever told. He was thoroughly prosperous in his day; he was even more than that, he was admirable and worshipful. The whole of his life reads much like the accounts of Mozart's early tours. He was the glass of fashion and the mold of form in music; not only in pianoforte music, but in orchestral and vocal music as well. One might continue the quotation, and remark how the observed of all observers is now quite, quite down; but one may never say that his music is out of tune and harsh. Its very mellifluousness is what has condemned it. It is all honey, without spice. For this

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reason it has become the fashion now to slight Mendelssohn, as it once was to revere him.

This is unjust. His pianoforte music is such an easy mark for epigrams that truth has been sacrificed to wit. There is much in it that is admirable. Some of it will probably come to life again. Indeed, it has not all the appearance of death now, choked as it may seem to be in its own honey. A few of the 'Songs Without Words,' the Prelude and Fugue in E minor, opus 35, some of the short capriccios and the *Variations sérieuses* still hold a high place in pianoforte literature.

The mass of his music, however, has fallen into disgrace. This is not wholly because the world ate too much of it and sickened. One does not look askance at it as one looks at sweets once immoderately devoured and henceforth distressful even to the eye. One sees weakness and defects to which its fate may be attributed.

[ At the basis lies a monotony. His melodies and harmonies are too unvaryingly alike. He is a slave to milky mannerisms. The curves of his melodies are endlessly alike; there is a profusion of feminine endings, dwellings in commonplaceness, suspensions that have no weight. His harmonies are seldom poignant. His agitation leads no further in most cases than the diminished seventh. To this he comes again and again, as regularly or as inevitably as most Romanticists went to tombstones for their heroics. The sameness of melody, the threadbare scheme of his harmonies, these mark a composer with little great creative force.

In the pianoforte music one finds even a lack of ingenuity. He has nothing to add to the resources of the instrument. He knew himself to be sterile in pianoforte figures. The 'Songs without Words' show but two or three types of accompaniment, and these are flat and monotonous. There are the unbroken chords, usually without a trace of subtlety in line,] such as we

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find in the first, the fifteenth, the twenty-first, the thirty-seventh, and numerous others. (There are plain chords, usually triads, monotonously repeated,) as in the tenth, twentieth, twenty-second, and thirty-ninth, flat with the melody, or in syncopation) as in the fourteenth and seventeenth. (There are the rocking figures such as one finds in all the 'Gondola' songs, in the so-called 'Spring Song,') and in the thirty-sixth. Only rarely does he give to these figures some contrapuntal flexibility, as in the fifth and in the thirty-fourth, known as the 'Spinning Song,' and in the eleventh.

There are many songs which have no running accompaniment, which are in the simple harmonic style of the hymn tune. These are usually extremely saccharine. The few measures of preludizing with which they begin are monotonously alike—an arpeggio or two, as if he were sweeping the strings of his harp, as in the ninth and the sixteenth. Some, however, are vigorous and exciting, like the 'Hunting Song' (the third), and the twenty-third, in style of a folk-song.

It is the lack of variety, of ingenuity and surprise which makes the 'Songs without Words' so extraordinarily sentimental and inanimate as a whole, both to the musician and to the pianist. The workmanship is always flawless, but there is little strain to pull it out of perfect line. Mendelssohn had considerable skill in picture music. The overture to 'Midsummer Night's Dream' and the overture suggested to him by his visit to Fingal's Cave are successful in this direction. It is worthy of note that at least two of the best of the 'Songs without Words' are in the nature of picture music—the so-called 'Hunting' and 'Spinning' songs. The gondolier songs likewise stand out a little from the rest in something like active charm. These offer him an external idea to work on and he brings to his task a very neat and sensitive, though unvaried, technique.

(He had also a gift, rather special, for light and trip-



## MENDELSSOHN: VARIATIONS SÉRIEUSES

ping effects. ) It does not often show itself in the 'Songs without Words.' There is one in C major, published after his death, which shows him to advantage in this vein, and the light 'Spring Song' has a touch of it. Among his other pieces the *Rondo Capriccioso* in E major and the little scherzo in E minor stand out by virtue of it.

Of the longer pieces we need touch upon only two. These are the Prelude and Fugue in E minor and the *Variations sérieuses*. The former is the first of six such works published in 1837 as opus 35. The prelude is the best part of it. Though here as elsewhere he seems to have no new or interesting means to set the piano in vibration, though he holds without change to close arpeggio figures throughout, yet there is a breadth of style and a sweep which approaches real power of utterance. The fugue is excellently put together. The theme itself recalls Bach, for whom, be it mentioned, Mendelssohn had profound and constant admiration, and whose works his untiring labor resurrected and brought to public performance. Still it need hardly be added that this fugue is a work of art, more than of expression. The inversion of the theme is clever, and there is a certain pompous grandeur in the sound of the chorale just before the end. The other preludes and fugues in the set are relatively uninteresting.

The Variations are worthy of study and are by no means lacking in musical value. The theme itself was happily chosen. There is a respectable sadness and melancholy in it far more dignified and genuine than the sentimentalities of the 'Songs without Words.' The harmonies which underlie it are hardly bold enough to dash beyond the diminished seventh; but a number of chromatic passing notes give the whole something like poignancy and considerable warmth. Moreover, it suggests chromatic treatment in the subsequent variations.

The variations themselves are full of change and

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offer a range of contrast of which Mendelssohn was not often master. The effect of the series as a whole is therefore stimulating and rather brilliant.

The first variation adds a counterpoint to the theme in groups of four sixteenths. The counterpoint in the second is of groups of six sixteenths. The first two variations thus seem to set the piece gradually into a free motion, which throughout the next two grows more vigorous and more nervous. The fifth is typical of Mendelssohnian agitation; but it serves as an excellent introduction to the chords of the sixth and seventh. The eighth and ninth work up to a frenzy of quick motion. Then follow two in a suppressed and quiet style, the first a little fugue, the second a brief and exquisite *cantilena*. The twelfth is the most vigorous of the lot, a movement as near the virtuoso style as Mendelssohn ever was able to produce. The thirteenth is interesting by reason of the contrast between the legato melody in the left hand and the excellent staccato counterpoint. A short adagio, rather superior to most of the songs in a similar style, forms the fourteenth. The fifteenth is transitional, the sixteenth and seventeenth merely lead up to the presto at the end. The entire group presents nothing in the treatment of the piano in advance of Weber, if, indeed, it anywhere equals him; but it is both in quality and in style a very fine piece of pianoforte music, which can hardly fall under the censure to which most of his music for the instrument is open.

There are two concertos and a concert piece for piano and orchestra. The latter owes its form and style very clearly to Weber's concert piece in F minor. Both the concertos are fluent and plausible enough; the orchestra is handled with Mendelssohn's customary good taste and sensitiveness; but the writing for the pianoforte is wholly commonplace and the themes themselves of little or no distinction.

## STERNDALE BENNETT; A. HENSELT

The 'Songs without Words' were published in six groups of six pieces each during his life. After his death in 1847 two more sets appeared. The influence of all these was widely felt, particularly among composers of mediocre gifts. Chopin had no liking for them. In fact, Mendelssohn's music was more than ordinarily distasteful to him; and he is said to have declared that Mendelssohn never wrote anything better than the first song without words. In some respects this is true. Schumann had a great admiration for Mendelssohn; admired his orderly style and manner. But Schumann's individuality was far too pronounced, especially in pianoforte predilections, to submit to the milky sway of Mendelssohn.

In pianoforte music, William Sterndale Bennett (1816-1875) carried on the Mendelssohn tradition quite undefiled. Bennett was more than a pupil of Mendelssohn; he was a devoted and unqualified admirer. His own pianoforte works are numerous, but they have suffered something of the same malice of Fate that still preserves the 'Songs without Words' chiefly for fun. They include four concertos, and many short pieces, studies, diversions, *impromptus*. They have the merits of their prototypes, clear, faultless writing and melodiousness.

A contemporary of Mendelssohn whose life led him finally to Petrograd, is still remembered by one or two of his studies. This is Adolf Henselt (b. 1814-89). Henselt's work is really independent of Mendelssohn. His style was founded upon a close acquaintance with Weber's. In 1836 he gave private recitals in Berlin and was especially prized for his playing of the Weber sonatas. Two sets of concert studies were published as opus 2; and in them is the still famous and delightful *Si oiseau j'étais*. Besides these he composed numbers of Rhapsodies, Ballades, and other short pieces in the romantic style; all of which together show distinctly

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more originality in the treatment of the piano than Mendelssohn showed.

### II

Meanwhile Robert Schumann was composing sets of pieces which have been and long will be regarded as one of the most precious contributions of the Romantic movement to pianoforte literature. Schumann was an enthusiast and an innovator. He was a poet and a warm-hearted critic. He was the champion of the new and the fresh, of self-expression and noble sentiment. In his early manhood a strained finger resulted from over-enthusiastic and unwise efforts to make his hand limber, and cut short his career as a concert pianist, for which he had given up his study of the law, not without some opposition. He turned, therefore, with all fervor to composing music for the pianoforte, and before his long-delayed marriage with Clara Wieck, daughter of his teacher, had published the sets of pieces on which a great part of his fame now rests.

Schumann was steeped in romantic literature, particularly in the works of Jean Paul Richter and E. T. A. Hoffmann; and most of his works show the influence of these favorite writers upon him. One finds symbolical sequences of notes, acrostics in music, expressions of double and even triple personalities; but these things are of minor importance in his music. The music itself is remarkably warm and poetic, remarkably sincere and vigorous whatever the inspiration may have been. It is happily sufficiently beautiful in itself without explanation of the cryptograms which oftener than not lie underneath it.

He was, as we have said, an explorer and an innovator by nature; and his music is full of signs of it. Though his treatment of the piano lacks the unfailing and unique instinct of Chopin, nevertheless his compo-

## ROBERT SCHUMANN

sitions opened up a new field of effects. Not all of these are successful. Experiments with overtones such as one finds, for instance, at the end of the Paganini piece in the *Carnaval* can hardly be said to be worth while. The result is too palpably an isolated effect and nothing more. It is too self-conscious. But he was of great significance in expanding the sonority of the instrument, in the use of the pedal, in the blending of harmonies, in several finer touches of technique. The combination of two distinct themes in the last movement of the *Papillons*, the fluent and sonorous use of double notes in the *Toccata*, the wide skips in the 'Arlequin' and the 'Paganini' numbers of the *Carnaval*, the latter with its cross-accents; the *Reconnaissance* in the same series, with its repeated notes; the rolling figures in the first movement of the *Kreisteriana*; these, among other signs of his originality, are new in piano-forte music.

His compositions demand from the pianist an unlimited and a powerful technique, yet it cannot be said of any that it is virtuoso music. He employed his skill not so much to display as to express his ideas. Nowhere does the pianoforte seem more the instrument of intimate and highly romantic sentiment. Of figure work and ornamentation there is very little. His music is not at all dazzling. Much of it is veiled. At the most he is boisterous, as in parts of the *Faschingschwank* and the last movements of the *Études Symphoniques*. He rather avoids the high, brilliant registers of the keyboard, stays nearly constantly in the middle of things, deals in solid stuff, not tracery.

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of his style is his frequent use of syncopated rhythms. This becomes at times an obsession with him; and there are many passages in his music so continuously off the beat, that the original measure is quite lost, and the syncopation is to all practical purpose without effect. In such pas-

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sages it seems hardly possible that Schumann intended the original beat to be kept in mind by the accentuation of notes that are of secondary importance; unless, of course, the interest of the music is chiefly rhythmical. Yet in some passages of purely melodic significance this may be done without awkwardness, producing an effect of dissociation of melody and harmony which may be what Schumann heard in his mind.

These are problems for the pianist, but a few of them may be suggested here. The last movement of the very beautiful concerto is in  $3/4$  time. There is no change of time signature for the second theme. This, as first announced by the orchestra in E major and later taken up by the piano solo in B major, is none the less in  $3/2$  time. Such must be the effect of it, because the passage is long and distinct enough to force the  $3/4$  beat out of the mind, since no note falls in such a way as to accent it. But when the orchestra takes up this theme, again in E major, the piano contributes a steadily flowing stream of counterpoint. In this it is possible to bring out the original measure beat, throwing the whole piano part into a rhythm counter to the rhythm of the orchestra. Such an accentuation is likewise out of line with the natural flow of the counterpoint; yet it may be what Schumann desired here, as well as in the following section, where, though the orchestra is playing in  $3/2$  time, the pianist may go against the natural line of his own part and bring out a measure of three-quarter notes.

The middle section of the second movement of the great Fantasy in C major presents the same problem. Here we have a melody in long phrases. The notes of it are off the beat, the chords which furnish its harmony are *on* the beat. Every eight measures the natural rhythm asserts itself; yet even these periodic reminiscences of the measure cannot serve to throw the whole melody into syncopation. The melody is too

## SCHUMANN'S CYCLES

strong and its phrases too long. More than the occasional measures, it must, if allowed fully to sing, determine the rhythm of the passage. So it is usually played; so, without special effort to the contrary, it will impress the ear. Now is it possible that Schumann intended the accompanying chords to be distinctly accented? Such an accent, delicately applied, with the skillful use of the pedal, will create a wholly new effect, which can be drawn from all the succeeding passages as well.

Other passages offer no alternative. There is no way to suggest the original beat except by movement of the body, or by grunting; both of which are properly discountenanced. Examples may be found in the first movement of the *Faschingsschwank* and elsewhere.

Most of Schumann's pianoforte music is made up of short pieces. Such are the *Papillons*, the *Carnaval*, the *Davidsbündler* Dances, the *Faschingsschwank*, the 'Symphonic Studies,' and the *Kreisleriana*. Each of these is a cycle of pieces, and is at best only loosely held together by one device or another. The *Papillons* are scenes at a fancy dress ball. The return of the first piece at the end gives a definite boundary, as it were, to the whole. The *Faschingsschwank* are pictures of a fête in Vienna. There is no structural unity to the work as a whole. The fanciful idea upon which it rests alone holds the pieces loosely together.

The *Carnaval*, likewise a scene at a fair, representations in music of various people, sights, and sounds, is built on three series of notes which Schumann called 'Sphinxes' and which he had published with the music. It is very doubtful whether the employment of these sequences in one form or another gives to the whole series an organic interdependence. Only with care can the student himself trace them, in such varied guises do they appear; and to be left in entire ignorance of them would hardly interfere in the least with an emotional

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appreciation of the music. The return at the end of some of the movements and passages heard at the beginning, however, rounds off the work and makes an impression of proportions. Moreover, within the work many of the pieces lead without pause into the next, or are without an end at all, like the *Florestan*, which is left fulminating in the air.

In the *Davidsbündler* there is again the return at the end of familiar phrases, but the *Kreisleriana* is like the *Faschingsschwank* without structural unity. Yet perhaps none of the Schumann cycles is less friable than the *Kreisleriana*. It is long and it is varied; but here, perhaps more than in any other similar works of the composer, there is a continuous excellence of workmanship and intensity of expression.

Besides these cycles there are sets of short pieces which are independent of each other. Such are the 'Fantasy Pieces,' the *Novelettes*, the 'Romances,' and the *Bunte Blätter*, among others. These may be fairly compared with the 'Songs without Words' of Mendelssohn. How utterly different they prove to be, how virile and how genuinely romantic! They are not only the work of a creative genius of the highest order, they show an ever venturesome spirit at work on the keyboard. Take, for example, the 'Fantasy Pieces.' The first, called *Des Abends*, is as properly a song as any of Mendelssohn's short pieces which are so designated. The very melody is inspired and new, rising and falling in the long smooth phrases which are the gift of the great artist, not the mere music-maker. The accompaniment appears simple enough; but the wide spacing, the interlocking of the hands, above all, its rhythm, which is not the rhythm of the melody, these are all signs of fresh life in music. The interweaving of answering phrases of the melody in the accompaniment figures, the contrast of registers, the exquisite points of harmonic color which the accompaniment touches in the



## SCHUMANN: MISCELLANEOUS SERIES

short coda, these are signs of the great artist. It is remarkable how little Mendelssohn's skill prompted him to such beautiful involutions; how, master as he was of the technique of sound, he could amble for ever in the commonplace. And Schumann, with far less grasp of the science, could venture far, far beyond him.

The second of the 'Fantasy Pieces,' *Aufschwung*, calls imperiously upon the great resources of the pianoforte. There is power and breadth of style, passion and fancy at work. It is a wholly different and greater art than Mendelssohn's. It is effective, it speaks, it proclaims with the voice of genius. And in the little *Warum?* which follows it, skill is used for expression. There is perhaps more appreciation of the pianoforte in this piece, which by nature is not pianistic, than there is in all the 'Songs without Words,' an appreciation of the contrasting qualities of high and low sounds, of the entwining of two melodies, of the suggestive possibilities of harmony.

Take them piece by piece, the *Grillen* with its brusque rhythms, its syncopations, its rapidly changing moods; the *In der Nacht*, with its agitated accompaniment, its broken melodies, and the soaring melody of the middle section, not to mention the brief canonic passages which lead from this section back to the wild first mood; the delicate *Fabel*, the *Traumes Wirren* with its fantastic, restless, vaporish figures and the strange, hushed, shadows of the middle section; and the *Ende vom Lied*, so full for the most part of good humor and at the end so soft and mysteriously sad; these are all visions, all prophecies, all treasure brought back from strange and distant beautiful lands in which a fervid imagination has been wandering. Into such a land as this Mendelssohn never ventured, never even glanced. For Schumann it was all but more real than the earth upon which he trod, such was the force of his imagination.

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The imagination is nowhere more finely used than in the short pieces called the *Kinderscenen*. Each of these pieces gives proof of Schumann's power to become a part, as it were, of the essence of things, to make himself the thing he thought or even the thing he saw. They are not picture music, nor wholly program music. They are more a music of the imagination than of fact. Schumann has himself become a child in spirit and has expressed in music something of the unbound rapture of the child's mind. So, even in a little piece like the 'Rocking Horse,' we have less the picture of the 'galumphing' wooden beast, than the ecstasy of the child astride it. In the *Curiose Geschichte* there is less of a story than of the reaction of the child who hears it. In the *Bittendes Kind* and the *Fürchtenmachen* this quality of imagination shows itself with almost unparalleled intensity. The latter is not the agency of fear, it is the fear itself, suspense, breathless agitation. The former does not beg a piece of cake; it is the anguished mood of desire. Only in the last two pieces does Schumann dissociate himself from the moods which he has been expressing. The former, if it is not the picture of the child falling asleep, is the process itself; the latter is, as it were, the poet's benediction, tender and heartfelt.

The whole set presents an epitome of that imagination which gave to Schumann's music its peculiar, intimate, and absorbing charm. His might well be considered the most subjective of all pianoforte music. It is for that reason dull to practice. The separate notes of which it is composed give little objective satisfaction. The labor of mastering them routs utterly in most cases the spirit which inspired them. Fine as the craftsman's skill may prove to be in many of the pieces, it is peculiarly without significance, without vitality, until the whole is set in motion, or set afire by the imagination.

The most imaginative and the most fantastic of the

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works as a whole is the series of twenty short pieces which make up the *Carnaval*, opus 9. Here there is a kaleidoscopic mixture of pictures, characters, moods, ideas, and personalities; the blazonry of spectacle, the noise and tumult, the quiet absorption that may come over one in the midst of such animation, the cool shadows beyond the edge of it wherein lovers may wander and converse; strange flashes of thought, sudden darting figures, apparitions and reminiscences. All is presented with unrelaxing intensity. One cannot pick out a piece from the twenty which does not show Schumann's imagination at fever heat. There is a wealth of symbolism; the Sphinxes, mysterious sequences of notes that are common to all the pieces, and dancing letters which spell the birthplace of one of Schumann's early loves.

As to the Sphinxes it may be said, as before, that the coherence which they may add can hardly exist outside the mind of the player, or of the student who has made himself thoroughly familiar with the work. The average listener may hear the whole work a hundred times, learn to know it and to love it, without ever realizing that the first intervals of the *Arlequin*, the *Florestan*, of the *Papillons* and others are the same; those of the *Chiarina*, the *Reconnaisances*, and the *Aveux* likewise, note for note identical. Such hidden relationships in music are vaguely felt if felt at all. Just as two words spelled the same may have different meanings, so may two musical phrases made up of the same intervals be radically different in effect.

The *Carnaval* opens with a magnificent prelude. The first section of it suggests trumpeters and banners, the splendid announcement and regalia of a great fête. After this we are plunged at once into the whirr of merry-making. Schumann's cross-accent and syncopations create a fine confusion; there is hurly-burly and din, a press of figures, measures of dance, light and

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tripping, an ever-onward rush, *animato, vivo, presto!* There is a splendid effect in the last section, the *presto*. The measure beat is highly syncopated. It will be observed that in the first eight measures the first notes of every other measure, which are in all dance music the strongest, are single notes. These alone keep up a semblance of order in the rhythm. By the extension of one measure to four beats, the sequence of notes is so changed that in the repetition of this first phrase the strong accent falls upon a full chord, thus greatly reinforcing the intended *crescendo*.

The next two numbers in the scene are pictures of two figures common to nearly every fair, the Pierrot and the Harlequin. The distinction between them is exquisite. In Pierrot we have the clown, now mock-mournful and pathetic, only to change in a second and startle with some abrupt antic. Harlequin, on the other hand, is nimble and quick, full of hops and leaps. At the end of the *Pierrot*, by the way, there is the chance to experiment with the pedal in overtones. The sharp *fortissimo* dominant seventh, just before the end, will set the notes of the following chord, all but the fundamental E-flat, in vibration if the pedal is pressed down; so that the keys of this second chord need hardly to be struck but only to be pressed. And when the pedal is lifted, this second chord will be left still sounding, by reason of the sympathetic vibration which was set about in its strings by the loud chord preceding.

Pierrot and Arlequin are professional functionaries at the fair. We are next introduced to a few of the visitors. There is a *Valse noble* and then *Eusebius*. Schumann imagined within himself at least three distinct personalities of which two often play a rôle in his music. One is active and assertive. He is Florestan. The other is Eusebius, reflective and dreamy. Here, then, is Eusebius at the fair, wrapped about in a mantle of gentle musing. His page of music in the *Carnaval*

## SCHUMANN'S CARNAVAL

is one of the loveliest Schumann ever wrote. Elsewhere, too, the contemplative young fellow speaks always in gentlest and most appealing tones; as in the second, seventh, and fourteenth of the *Davidsbündler* Dances, all three of which are subscribed with a letter E.

In the *Carnaval*, as in the Dances, Florestan breaks roughly into the meditations of Eusebius. He works himself into a very whirlwind of energy; and then Schumann, by a delicious sense of humor, lets the artful *Coquette* slide into his eye and put an end to his vociferations. To her there is no reply but the gentle, short *Replique*. Are the *Papillons* which follow masqueraders? The horn figures of the accompaniment bring in a new group to the fair, fresh from the outer world. They are gone in a flash, and their place is taken by three dancing letters, 'As,' C, and H; As being German for A-flat, and H for B. And these letters spell the birthplace, as we have said, of one of Schumann's early loves.

The love of his whole life follows—*Chiarina*, his beloved Clara; and, as if with her were associated the loveliest and most poetic of pianoforte music, he calls Chopin to mind. Chopin at this fair! It is a fantastic touch. More than when Eusebius speaks, the background of gay dancers and masqueraders fades from sight. For a moment Chopin is in our midst. Then he has vanished. And at once another thought of Clara, this time as *Estrella*; then an acquaintance in the throng. He has seen a face he knew, it is a friend. It is the Sphinx of *Chiarina* in the music. Is it she he recognized? Are the lovely interchanges in the middle section conversations with her? If so, their mood is light. They have met at a fair. They are in the merry-making.

Two more professionals, masquers this time—the world-favorites, *Pantalon* and *Colombine*; and at the

## PIANOFORTE MUSIC

end of their piece an exquisite thought of Schumann's. Then the German waltz, simplicity itself; and in the midst of it none other than the wizard, *Paganini!* Surely, there was never a stranger trick of thought than that which thus placed Paganini in the midst of a simple, tender German waltz. He vanishes in a puff of smoke, as conjured devils are supposed to do; and the waltz goes on, as if all this intermission had been but a flash in the air above the heads of dancers too absorbed in their pastime to note such infernal phenomena.

After the waltz, a lover's confession, hesitating but enraptured; and then a *Promenade*. There is full feeling, there is delight and ecstasy. Our lover whirls his maiden from the fair. Farther and farther they go, hand in hand, into the shadowy, calm night. Fainter and fainter the sounds of revelry, till all is silence.

There is a pause. The lovers are dispatched. Away with dreaming, away with sentiment! Back into the hurly-burly and the din. Here comes the band of David down the plaisance, hats in air, banners flying, loudly cheering. These are the sons of the new music. These are the champions of the new era of freedom, these the singers of young blood. More and more reckless, madder and more gay! Spread consternation abroad among the Philistines, put the learned doctors to rout, send them flying with their stale old tunes and laws! So the *Carnaval* ends, with the flight of the old and dusty, and the triumph of the enthusiasm of youth.

Here is a phantasmagoria unmatched elsewhere in music. It is very long. It is too long; and, judged as a whole, the work suffers in consequence. It is overcrowded with figures, too full of symbolism; and the ear tires, the attention wearies. Yet there is not a piece in it which one would be willing to discard. All are beautiful and new and full of life. Many present some-

## DAVIDSBÜNDLER DANCES

thing peculiar to Schumann, the fruit of his imagination, which is in advance of most of the music of his time. It must occupy an important place in the history of pianoforte music, as representing one of the finest accomplishments directly due to the influence of the Romantic movement.

### III

The other cycles of Schumann comparable to it are the *Papillons*, opus 2, the *Davidsbündler Tänze*, opus 6, and the *Faschingsschwank aus Wien*, opus 26. The first of these is short and slight, but of singularly faultless workmanship and rare charm. The last must be cherished for the *Romanza*, the *Scherzo*, and the splendid *Intermezzo*; but the first movement is rather out of proportion, and parts of the last are perfunctory and uninteresting.

Most of the Dances of the *Davidsbündler* are beautiful. The series is, however, much too long and too loose to be regarded as a whole. There are passages of unsuccessful workmanship, notably in the third; some of the dances are rambling, some rather commonplace. On the other hand, many may be ranked among the best of Schumann's compositions. The second, seventh, and fourteenth have been mentioned as among the beautiful utterances of Eusebius; the fifth is less distinguished but is delightful pianoforte music. Florestan does not make quite such a good impression, except possibly in the fourth and the twelfth. The fifteenth speaks for both Florestan and Eusebius; and the E-flat major section is splendidly rich and full-throated music. The last dance of all is like a happy, wayward elf waltzing along in the wake of more substantial dancers. The series may properly end with the seventeenth; but, as Schumann said, though Eusebius knew well that the eighteenth was quite superfluous,

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yet one could see by his eyes that he was blissful over it.\*

Both the 'Symphonic Studies' and the *Kreisleriana* stand apart from the works previously discussed. The former, opus 13, was written in 1834, the latter, opus 16, in 1838. A brief glance at opus 1, the 'Abegg' variations, written in 1830, will serve to make clear the immense progress Schumann made in the art of composition in the brief space of four years. The early work is by no means lacking in interest. Schumann reveals himself in nearly every page. The theme itself is made up of the notes a, b, e, g, g, spelling the name of the honorable lady to whom the variations were dedicated. In the middle of the last movement he experiments with a new style of diminuendo, allowing a chord to die away by separate notes, till only one note of it is left sounding. He tried the same effect again at the end of the *Papillons*. But the workmanship, though clever, is for the most part conventional. The statement of the theme is laughably simple, particularly the 'echoes,' *pianissimo*, in broken octaves. Such a device recalls the 'Maiden's Prayer' and fountain curls. The variations show a fine ear for pianoforte effects. The first especially is in virtuoso style and makes more use of the upper registers of the keyboard than is common in the later works. But the harmonies, though richly altered, are conventional, and so are the figures. The third, fourth, and fifth might have been written by Hummel.

The 'Symphonic Études' are immeasurably broader and more original. They are written as variations; but Schumann confines himself very little to the conventional scheme; and the third and ninth are not variations at all, but études made up of wholly extraneous

\* The following remark is prefixed to the eighteenth dance: *Ganz zum Überfluss meinte Eusebius noch Folgendes; dabei sprach aber viel Seligkeit aus seinen Augen.*



## SYMPHONIC ÉTUDES; KREISLERIANA

ideas. The theme itself is dignified and rich, and its statement in the sonorous middle registers of the piano is impressive. In the first measures of the first variation there is little or no suggestion of the theme save in harmony. The opening phrase is given low down, repeated in higher registers, till the music has climbed nearly four octaves; at which point a phrase of the theme makes its appearance. Toward the end of the variation the same phrase is heard again; but the whole is distinctly dominated by the figure announced in the first measure.

In the second variation the theme is carried throughout in the bass; but a beautiful new melody is imposed upon it which carries the burden of the music. The third of the series is unrelated to the theme except in key. It is a study in light, wide, staccato figures for the right hand; under which the left hand carries a suave and expressive melody. In the next movement, the theme is treated consistently as a canon at the octave. The next is at once a study in a capricious dotted rhythm and a subtle variation of the theme. And in the following, the sixth, the theme is wholly prominent in both hands, the left anticipating the right by the fraction of a beat. The seventh is a magnificent study for the movement of the arm from one group of notes to another. It is in E major, and the theme makes but an occasional and fragmentary appearance. The eighth is a study in sharp cross-accents, the theme again wholly concealed, except for its harmonies; the ninth a study in double notes and octaves for the wrist. The tenth, eleventh, and twelfth are high-water marks in Schumann's treatment of the pianoforte, both in brilliant and poetic effects. Particularly worthy of study are the accompaniment figure in the latter, with its rich shimmering of harmony, and the skillful interweaving of two melodies in the fashion not long before employed in the short *Warum?* The finale, which, with

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the repeats Schumann incorporated into it, is far too long, practically exhausts the power of the piano in big chordal effects.

There is but little trace of the composer of the Abegg variations in these imposing and wholly beautiful studies. Schumann shows himself in them such a master of the pianoforte as has no need to display his wares, but may let their intrinsic richness and splendor speak for them. Only in the last of them does he lay himself open to the criticism of having treated the piano in a style too nearly orchestral, which expects from the instrument a little more than it can furnish. Elsewhere in the series the very spirit of the piano speaks, a noble and moving language, full of imagery and of color. The obvious virtuoso trappings of Weber are left far behind. We are on one of the great heights of pianoforte literature.

Schumann considered the *Kreisleriana* to be his best work for the piano alone. It was inspired by the character of Johannes Kreisler, an eccentric, highly gifted kapellmeister who figured in the tales and musical papers of E. T. A. Hoffmann.\* Just what it means few will venture to suggest. The last movement may recall the account of the last appearance of Kreisler on this earth, as he was seen hopping along the road beyond the town, with a red hat on the side of his head and a wooden sword by his side. Dr. Oskar Bie quotes from Hoffmann in connection with the second movement, the tale of the young girl who was lured to a magic oak by the sound of a lute, and there killed; whose heart grew into a twining rose-bush.† In the main, however, the music eludes analysis. It is eccentric. Though full of the mannerisms of Schumann, much of it presents an unfamiliar mood of the composer. The moods of

\* According to C. F. Weitzmann, the original of Johannes Kreisler was Ludwig Böhner (1787-1860), a wandering, half-mad pianist.

† Part of the quotation is given in our 'Narrative History,' II, pp. 308f.

## SYMPHONIC ÉTUDES; KREISLERIANA

it are different from the moods of the 'Carnival,' the 'Symphonic Études,' the 'Fantasy,' the 'Scenes of Childhood.' On the whole, it lacks the warmth of his other works. It is fantastic, and not unfrequently grotesque; parts of it strangely deliberate. Many pages of it are out of the usual and consequently baffling. It is more involved, too, in workmanship, and the separate movements full of contrasts that seem to be vagaries. Schumann has, of course, here as elsewhere put himself into the person of his inspiration; and the result is a tribute to the power of his imagination. Never was music more fantastic, less consequential.

It is, on the other hand, superb. The opening movement alone, with its figures like short waves in a windy sea, its sharp cross-accent, its filmy, elusive trio, is a masterpiece. The second movement is unbalanced, yet at times most wondrously beautiful. The opening theme in itself is inspired, though it is perhaps overworked. But what is the meaning of the harsh chords which interrupt it and shatter the mood which it might else instill? The style is polyphonic in places; there are inner melodies that slide long distances up and down the keyboard, oftenest in tenths. The two intermezzi furnish a welcome contrast to the intense subjectivity of most of this second movement. After the second there comes one of the loveliest pages in all Schumann's pianoforte music.

The third movement is built on a restless, jerky figure, in ceaseless movement. There are strong accents and unusual harmonies. A middle section offers yet another happy instance of Schumann's skill in dialogue between two melodies, such as we have already noticed in *Warum?* and the eleventh of the 'Symphonic Études.' The movement is somewhat slower than the main body of the piece, but a strange sort of half-accompaniment does not allow the restlessness to subside altogether.

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The fourth and sixth movements are slow. In both there is some thickness of scoring, a sinking too deep into the lower registers. Both are about the same length and both are constructed on the same plan; consisting of an incompleting, or broken, melody of the most intimately expressive character, a few measures of recitative, the melodious phrases again—in the one wandering down alone into the bass, disappearing rather than ending, in the other not completing itself, but developing into a contrasting section. In both there are these contrasting sections of more articulate and more animated music; and in both there is a return of the opening melody. There is wonderful music in these two short movements; but it is mysterious, fragmentary and incomplete, visionary, as it were, and without definite line.

The remaining movements escape language. The fifth is full of changing moods; the seventh more than the others, consistent, this time in a vein of something like fury. The eighth and last is delicate and whimsical. The right hand keeps to a light, hopping figure most of the time; the left hand has little more than long single notes, which pursue a course of their own, without regular rhythm.

There is a lack of titles, there is no motto, there is even no mark of Florestan and Eusebius. This most whimsical, most subjective, and, in many ways, most beautiful and most complicated of Schumann's creations, stands before us, then, with no clue to its meaning except its title. This, as we have said, refers us to a half-crazy, fantastical musician. There is more in the music than lunacy, full of vagaries as it is. There is much poetry, a clearness and sanity in diction, inconsequential as the thought may be, a mastery of the science of music. Yet it is not surprising if some, bearing in mind the preternatural activity of Schumann's imagination even in early manhood, and the breaking-

## SCHUMANN: SONATAS; FANTASY IN C

down of his mind toward the end of his life, will hear in this music a note of something more tragic than whimsical fancies, will feel that Schumann has strayed perilously far afield from the world of orderly nature and warm blood.

A few short pieces that Schumann published, like the *Novelletten*, are not held together in a cycle. In these the humor is prevailingly happy and active, the workmanship clear, and the form well-balanced. Fine as they are, in listening to them separately one misses something of Schumann. The man was a dreamer. He sank himself deep into moods. He lived in complete worlds, created by his fancy. A single piece like one of the 'Novelettes' hardly initiates the listener into these wide domains. Fully to put ourselves in touch with Schumann we must wander with him, and in the course of our wandering, drift farther and farther into his land of phantoms.

Four works in broad form must be reckoned among his greatest compositions. These are two sonatas: one in F-sharp minor, opus 11, one in G minor, opus 22; the great 'Fantasy' in C major, opus 17; and the concerto for pianoforte and orchestra in A minor, opus 54. It is hard to estimate the worth of the sonatas. That in F-sharp minor is rambling in structure, and too long; yet there are pages of splendid music in it. The introduction is full of a noble passion and strength; the first theme of the first movement has a vitality which, better ordered, would have made of the whole movement a great masterpiece; and the second theme is undeniably beautiful. But transitional sections and the development are monotonous and too little restrained. The second movement, making fuller use of the themes hinted at in the introduction, is wholly satisfying; the scherzo, likewise, with its grotesque *Intermezzo* and mock-heroic recitatives. But in the last movement again there is far too much music, far too little art;

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and, despite the healthy vigor of the chief theme, the piece staggers rather than walks.

The sonata in G minor is more concise, is, indeed, perfect and clear-cut in form. All of it is lovely, particularly so the *Andantino* and the *Rondo*. There is perhaps too much restlessness in the first movement and, consequently, too little variety. It is all flame and no embers.

The Fantasy is colossal. It is said that Schumann intended the first movement to represent ruins, the second a triumphal arch, the last a starry crown. Subsequently he changed his intention; but something of these original characteristics still remains. The first movement is a strange mixture of stark power, tenderness, and romantic legend. It is not hard to find in it the groundwork of the triplex form. There is a first theme, the dominant theme of the movement, strangely gaunt and bare; and a contrasting theme beautifully melodious which Schumann associated with his beloved Clara. These two themes are presented fairly regularly in the first section of the movement; and the last section brings them back again, as in the triplex form. But there is a broad middle section, in legendary character, which presents a wealth of different material, some of which has been freely used between the first and second themes in the first section. The whole is greatly expanded, full of pauses, passages of unrestrained modulation. The effect is truly magnificent.

The second movement exceeds the finale of the 'Symphonic Études' in triumphant vigor. The last movement is long, richly scored, exalted in sentiment. The endings of the three movements, especially of the first and last, are inspired, wholly without trace of the commonplace. It is one of the truly big works for the piano, lacking perhaps in subtlety and refinement of technique, sometimes a little awkward and out of pro-

## SCHUMANN: PIANO CONCERTO

portion, but full of such a richness of harmony and melody, of such passion, strength, and romance, of such poetry and inspiration, as to defy criticism. It is, as we have said, colossal.

The concerto stands as a flawless masterpiece. The themes are inspired. There is no trace of sentimentality or morbidity. The form is ruled by an unerring and fine sense of proportion and line. It is neither too long nor too short. There is no awkwardness, no tentativeness, no striving for effect. No note is unwisely placed. The treatment of both pianoforte and orchestra leaves nothing to be desired, either when the one is set against the other or when both are intimately blended. Though it in no way suggests the virtuoso, it is perfectly suited to the piano, bringing out unfailingly the very best the instrument is capable of. Thus it stands unique among Schumann's compositions. There must be many to whom it stands for an ideal realized. To them it will be unique among concertos, the most excellent, the perfect type.

With this masterpiece we may take leave of Robert Schumann, for whom most pianists will ever have a special love. The first movement was composed in 1841, the Intermezzo and Finale in 1845, all after his marriage in the fall of 1840. After this happy termination to long and troubled years, his attention turned to other branches of music, to songs, to oratorios and symphonies; and, though he never forsook the piano entirely, the best of his work for it, with few exceptions, was left behind him. The ten years between 1830 and 1840 saw its creation. In this relatively brief period all the works we have mentioned, except the concerto, were composed. They were the flower of his early manhood, and they bear witness in every page to the romantic eagerness and fire of youth. In many a measure they show a lack of skill, an excess of zeal, an over-reaching that is awkward; but what are these in the

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fire of his poetic imagination? The spirit of Schumann rises far, far above them, one of the most ardent, soaring spirits that ever sought expression in music. It was destined to fall back, ruined, charred, and blackened by its own fire; but happily we have left to us in pianoforte music its song at the height of its flight.

### IV

The only worthy successor to Schumann in the realm of German pianoforte music is Johannes Brahms. Into the hands of Brahms Schumann may be said to have given over the standard which he had carried so staunchly forward. In September, 1853, Brahms came with a letter from the great violinist Joachim, to visit Schumann and his family at Düsseldorf on the Rhine. He was at that time little over twenty years of age, but he brought with him two sonatas for the piano and a set of songs, in which Schumann at once recognized the touch of great genius. There followed the now famous article in Schumann's paper, to which he had lately contributed little or nothing at all; an article hailing the advent of the successor of Beethoven, the man fit to carry German music yet another stage forward on its way. This prophecy roused skeptical opposition, made enemies for Brahms, reacted upon the young man himself, perhaps not wholly for the best. He found himself put into a place before he was free to choose it; and a strain of obstinacy in the man kept him there for the rest of his life, almost like a pillar of stone in the midst of a tumultuous river.

He was a man of powerful intellect and deep emotions, exceptional among composers in technical mastery of his art, of iron will. He was conservative, perhaps more by choice than by nature. All this is inevitably reflected in his music; which, therefore, speaks



**Johannes Brahms on his way to the 'Red Porcupine'**  
*Silhouette (contemporary) by Dr. Otto Böhler*







## JOHANNES BRAHMS

a language very different for the most part from Schumann's. Schumann was open, enthusiastic, and free; Brahms was suspicious, outwardly hard and despotic. Schumann's fancies were brilliantly colored, his music full of spontaneous warmth; Brahms inclined more and more to be gloomy and taciturn, his music came forth in sober colors.

But Brahms' pianoforte music is still none the less romantic music. By far the great part of his works for pianoforte are short pieces, expressive of a mood. Few have the intensity of Schumann's; there are but one or two descriptive titles, no bindings together in a round of fantastic thought. The enthusiasm of the younger romantics has cooled. Reason has come with calm step. Yet the quality of these short pieces is intensely romantic, suggestive of the north, of northern legends, of moorlands and the sea. There is not a whirr of many persons from strange lands, of sad and gay personalities, of Pierrot and Harlequin; the music is of lonely and wide places. It is, moreover, essentially masculine music. If it seems to wander into the life of towns, it seeks out groups of men. There is little feminine tenderness. There is little of sentiment in the pianoforte music, such as we associate with the romance of love. It has more of the heroic quality. It all demands profound thought and study; partly because of its intellectual complexity, partly because of its lack of superficial charm. One must make oneself familiar with it; one must learn its peculiar idiom; one must go far beneath the surface.

There is little to be said of it in words. The moods it expresses and the moods which it conveys are not of the kind that seek a quick and enraptured utterance. It is impersonal; it suggests the nature of sea and space, not human nature. Thus, though we can throw ourselves with delight into the music of Schumann and come forth from it with a thousand pictures.

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and fancies in our minds, from the music of Brahms we more often come away thoughtful and silent.

Brahms' style is very distinct. His pianoforte music calls for a special technique, quite outside the ordinary. Nothing of the style of Chopin or Liszt is evident, even in a work like the Paganini variations, which is essentially virtuoso music. These peculiarities are already evident in the first two sonatas, the works in which Schumann saw such great promise. The sonatas are worth study, not only from the historical point of view, but as unusual and beautiful music.

There are three sonatas, the first in C major, opus 1; the second in F-sharp minor, opus 2; the third in F minor, opus 5. The Scherzo in E-flat minor, opus 4, belongs to the same period. In the very first Brahms reveals himself; by the bare statement of the first part of the second theme; by the double thirds of the second part which conceal the sixths of which he was so fond; by the strangely hollow effect of the chromatic scale, not long before the end of the first section, with the sustained A below and the thin spacing of the whole; by the wide accompaniment figures at the end of the first movement. The octaves and sixths at the beginning of the Scherzo, the hollowness later on in the movement, the extraordinary distance between the hands in the thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh measures of the second part, these are characteristic of Brahms' way of writing for the pianoforte. The trio of this Scherzo, by the way, might alone have accounted for Schumann's enthusiasm. The broad sweep of its melody, the intense harmonies, the magnificent climax, have the unmistakable ring of great genius. At the end of it may be noted a procedure Brahms often employed: the gradual cessation of the movement of the music by changing the value of the notes, more than by retard. The last movement is splendidly vigorous. The chief theme may have been taken from the theme of the

## BRAHMS' PIANOFORTE STYLE

first movement. It gallops on over mountain and hill, full of exultation and sheer physical spirits. The coda is a very whirlwind. Brahms told Albert Dietrich that he had the Scotch song 'My Heart's in the Highlands' in his head while he was writing this finale; and the spirit of the song is there.

The second sonata is as a whole less interesting than the first. The first theme is not particularly well suited to the sonata form; there is a great deal of conventionality about the passages which follow it. Yet the transitional passage is interesting, and the deep, bass phrases, so isolated from their high counterpoint, are very typical. One theme serves for *andante* and *Scherzo*. In the latter movement the trio is especially beautiful. It might easily be mistaken for Schubert.

The third sonata shows a great advance over the first and second. The passage beginning in the eighth measure of the first movement is in a favorite rhythmical style of Brahms. The right hand is playing in  $3/4$  time, the left hand seems to be rather in  $2/4$ . This is because the figure of which it consists proceeds independently of the measure beat. So later on one finds groups of six notes in  $3/4$  time arranged very frequently in figures of three notes. In fact, the mixture of double and triple rhythm is a favorite device of Brahms throughout all his work. Two of the Paganini Variations are distinctly studies in this rhythmical complexity—the fifth in the first set, the seventh in the second set, in both cases the complexity being made all the more confusing by odd phrasing.

The *Andante*, especially the last part of it, and the *Scherzo* of the third sonata are among the most beautiful of Brahms' compositions. What the sonatas chiefly lack is not ideas nor skill to handle them, but success in many parts in the treatment of the instrument. The scoring is often far too thin. No relaxation is offered by passages of any sensuous charm. One follows with

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the mind an ingenious contrapuntal working-out that sounds itself empty, or leads to hollow spaces.

Except in the last movement of the second concerto, Brahms showed himself unwilling to make use of those subtle and delicate figures which succeed in giving to pianoforte music a certain warmth and blending of color. There is little or no passage work in his music. The Alberti bass which Schumann and Chopin varied and expanded, he intellectualized more and more, till it lost all semblance to the serviceable original and took on almost a polyphonic significance. There is an attendant sacrifice of delicacy for which only the nobility and strength of his ideas offer some recompense.

The Ballades, opus 10, for example, tread heavily on the keyboard. The first B major section of the second, with its appoggiaturas, its widely separated outer parts now in contrary motion, now moving together, and the mysterious single long notes between them, is marred by the low, thick registration of the whole. There is a similar thickness in the second section of the last ballade; an opposite thinness in the middle section of the little intermezzo. Yet it would be hard to find more romantic music than these Ballades, anything more grim and awful than the first, more legendary in character than the second, more gloomily sad than the last. There is a touch of sun in the first melody of the second. Elsewhere we are in a gray twilight.

‘The sedge has withered from the lake  
And no birds sing.’

After all, a delicate warmth, a subtle grace of movement are not in place in such music. The style is fitting to the thought.

The variations on a theme of Paganini are, on the other hand, remarkably brilliant as a whole. They show the uttermost limits of the Brahms pianoforte technique and style, and are, of course, extremely dif-



## PAGANINI VARIATIONS; HANDEL VARIATIONS

ficult. The first two are studies in thirds and sixths, and in the second especially the upper registers of the piano are used with striking effect. In the fourth there are brilliant trills over wide figures in violin style. The eighth in the second set is in imitation of the passages in harmonies in the Paganini *Caprice* from which the theme is taken. Particularly effective on the pianoforte are the eleventh and thirteenth in the first set, the former with its shadowy over-tones in the right hand, the latter with the sparkling *glissando* octaves. The twelfth in this set is like others that have been mentioned, a study in complex rhythms, but is remarkably clear and bell-like in sound as well. The sixth, ninth, and tenth are less effective and less interesting. The second, fourth, and twelfth in the second set are conspicuous for a less scintillating but more expressive beauty. The sets as a whole are more in the style of Paganini than the études of Schumann and Liszt, which owe their being to the same source. There is more of wizardry in them, more variety and more that is wholly unusual. They give proof of enormous thought and ingenuity applied to the task of producing effects from the piano that have the quality of eeriness, which, in the playing of Paganini, suggested to the superstitious the coöperation of infernal powers.

In the 'Variations on a Theme of Handel,' opus 24, the same powerful intellect may be seen at work in more orthodox efforts. The results are often of more scientific than musical interest. The set is extremely long in performance, and the cumbersome fugue at the end is hardly welcome. Some of the movements are heavily or thickly scored, like the mournful thirteenth and the twentieth. Others are intellectual or uninspired, like the sixth and the ninth. But others, like the second, the fifth, the eleventh, and the nineteenth, are truly beautiful, and many are brilliant or vivacious.

There are three earlier sets of variations, opus 9,

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opus 21, Nos. 1 and 2, which are small beside the two later sets just discussed. As far as pianoforte music is concerned, the variations on a theme of Handel, and the subsequent variations on a theme of Paganini, represent the culmination of Brahms' conscious technical development, the one in the direction of intellectual mastery, the other in the direction of keyboard effects. Behind them lie the sonatas, the scherzo, and the ballades, all in a measure inspired, yet all likewise tentative. After them come numerous sets of short pieces which constitute one of the most beautiful and one of the perfect contributions to pianoforte music.

These sets are opus 76, Nos. 1 and 2; the two Rhapsodies, opus 79, and the last works for the instrument, opus 117, opus 118, and opus 119. There are few pieces among them which are unworthy of the highest genius matched with consummate mastery of the science of music. The two earlier collections, opus 76 and 79, differ from the later in something the same way that Beethoven's opus 57 differs from his opus 110. They are impassioned, fully scored, dramatic, and warm. The two Capriccios, Nos. 1 and 5 in opus 76, are distinguished from his other pieces by a fiery agitation. The keys of F-sharp minor and C-sharp minor on the pianoforte lend themselves to intense and restless expression. In the former of these two pieces more is suggested than fully revealed.

The introduction, beginning in deep and ominous gloom, mounts up like waves tossed high in a storm. But the rush of the great C-sharps up from the depths is broken, as it were, upon the sharpest dissonance; the storm dies away suddenly, and over the wild confusion, now suppressed, a voice sings out a sad yet impassioned melody. This melody dominates the piece. The wild introduction returns in the middle part, but only to be suppressed once more.

The second of these Capriccios, No. 5, is more varied,

## BRAHMS: CAPRICCIOS, RHAPSODIES, ETC.

more agitated, yet perhaps less intense. There is an almost constant complexity of rhythm, uniquely typical of Brahms, the combination of two with three beats; and at the end most complicated syncopations, the left hand, by reason of definite phrasing, seeming to play nearly four measures in  $5/8$  time. The Capriccio No. 8 and the Intermezzo No. 6 are similarly involved. The scoring of both is rich and full; and, though neither is agitated in mood, both have a quality of intensity. The Capriccio in B minor in the first set is justly a favorite with pianist and concert-goer alike. The two intermezzi which follow it are rather in the later style, and the former is conspicuous in Brahms' music by a light grace. Even here, however, the composer cannot give himself over utterly to airy fancy. There are measures of involved workmanship and profound meaning.

The two 'Rhapsodies,' opus 79, are among the best known of Brahms' pianoforte works. Both are involved and difficult; but the form and the ideas are broad and consequently more easily grasped than in the shorter pieces. Moreover, they are frankly vigorous and passionate; and the B major section of the former, with its bell-like effects, and the broad middle section of the latter, like the gallop of a regiment across the steppes, are relatively conventional.

In most of the pieces of the three last sets there is a touch of mysticism, often of asceticism. The style is transparent; the accompaniments, if one may speak of accompaniment in music that is so polyphonic, are lightly touched upon, barely sketched. They have no fixed line, but seem like flowing draperies about a figure in free, calm movement. Witness particularly the second piece in opus 117 and the sixth in opus 118. The latter is surely one of the most romantic of all Brahms' pieces. Does it speak of some ancient ruin in the northern twilight? Is it some vision in a bleak,

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windswept place? Is not the opening phrase like the voice of the spirit of Time and Mortality? How the winds sweep it up, how it echoes and reëchoes through the night. And there comes a strain of martial music. The splendors that were rise like mist out of the ground. The shades of strong heroes pass by. Through the vision still rings the inexorable cry, till the spirits have vanished and the wind once more blows over a deserted place. It is all a strange, wailing invocation to the past.

All are unusual music, all masterpieces. There is the utmost skill, as in the canonic figures in the first intermezzo of opus 117, in the middle section of opus 118, No. 2, and all through opus 118, No. 4. There is a legendary quality in both opus 117, No. 1, and opus 117, No. 3. In the latter the A major section is extraordinarily beautiful and without a parallel in music. The last set is perhaps as a whole the most remarkable. There are three intermezzos and one rhapsody. In many measures of the first intermezzo the harmonies seem to unfold from a single note, to be shed downward like light from a star. The music drifts to a melody full of human yearning, rises again in floating harmonies, drifts slowly downward, too heavy with sadness. In the second and third the mood is happier, cool in the second, smiling in the third. The final rhapsody is without a trace of sentiment, healthy, sane, and enormously vigorous. Something stands in the way of its effectiveness, however. It is coldly triumphant. If there is any phase in human feeling which is wholly strange to music, it is the sense of perfect physical condition, entailing an unruffled mind and the flawless working of the muscles, without excess, with only the enthusiasm of physical well-being, and this entirely equable. The rhapsody in E-flat, opus 119, No. 4, is thus normal.

The features of Brahms' style are clearly marked.

## BRAHMS: CONCERTOS

There are the wide spacing of accompaniment figures demanding a large hand and the free movement of the arm, the complicated rhythms, the frequent use of octaves with the sixth included, the generally deliberate treatment of material, the employment of low and high registers at once with little or nothing between, the lack of passage work to relieve the usual sombre coloring. The enthusiast will have little difficulty in imitating him. Yet it is doubtful if Brahms will have a successor in pianoforte music. What makes his work tolerable is the greatness of his ideas, and this greatness makes them sublime. His procedures in the employment of another will be cold and dull. It is safer to imitate the virtuoso style of Liszt, for that has an intrinsic charm.

There are two concertos, one in D minor, opus 15, and one in B-flat major, opus 83. Brahms performed the first himself in Leipzig and was actually hissed from the stage. Yet it is a very great work, one of the few great concertos written for the pianoforte. A certain gloomy seriousness in the character of the themes stands in the way of its popular acceptance, and there are passages, notably in the middle movement, the ungainliness of which not even the most impassioned fancy or the deepest seriousness can disguise. The second concerto is longer and more brilliant. This, too, must be ranked with the earlier one, as one of the few great concertos, but chiefly by reason of the noble quality of the ideas, the mastery of art and form. Brahms' treatment of the piano is nowhere conventionally pianistic. This second concerto is more than exceedingly difficult; but those qualities in the instrument which add a variety of color and light to the ensemble are for the most part not revealed in it. There is consequently a monotony that in so long a work is likely to prove tedious. A few figures and a few effects are peculiar to the pianoforte. These should rightfully

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be brought into prominence in a concerto. Mozart, Beethoven, and Schumann were able to do this, not in the least subtracting from the genuine value of their work, but rather adding to it. Brahms was less able to combine beauty and conventionality. Yet such a passage as the return to the first theme in the first movement of the second concerto shows a great appreciation of color; and there is a grandeur and dignity in both concertos, a wealth of romance in the first and of vitality in the second, as well, in the presence of which criticism may well be silent.

It is a long way in music from the simple *Moments musicaux* of Schubert to the B minor and E-flat minor *Intermezzi* of Brahms. One sings of the dawn of the new era of enthusiasm, one is of the twilight at the end. Midway, in the full flush of noonday, stands Schumann. Yet all are manifestations of the same growth. In the department of pianoforte music Brahms is of the romantic. It is not only that his best work was in short pieces; it is the nature of these pieces themselves. They are the sound in music of moods, they are fantastical and lyrical. Furthermore, more than the music of Schubert or Schumann, Brahms is national; not so much German as northern. Strains of Hungarian melodies and echoes of Schubert are not sufficient to dispel the gloom which is characteristic of his race. He speaks a profound language that will claim universal attention, but it is unmistakably colored and thoroughly permeated with the ideals and the imaginings of a northern, seacoast people. It has not the perennial warmth of Schubert and Schumann. There are no quick-changing moods, no interchanges of smiles and tears, no flashes of merriment and wit. It is cold, it is still and serious. And who will say that it is not the more romantic for being so? Deep underneath there is mysterious fervor and passion.

To one of two ends the Romantic movement was

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bound to come from its confident stage of self-conscious emotionalism: on the one hand, to the glorification of the senses, on the other, to the distrust of them. In the music of Liszt the one goal is reached; unmistakably in this music of Brahms the other. The sober coloring of his pianoforte music, its intellectual complexity, its moderation, all speak of that development which in the world of philosophy and society was year by year intensifying the struggle between individualism and its arch-enemy, the natural sciences. In the music of Brahms the power of Reason has asserted itself. His music conforms first and always to law. And it is one of the paradoxes in the history of music that this composer, who, more than any other in modern times, acquired an objective mastery of his art, remained the slave of his intense personality.

## CHAPTER VII

### CHOPIN

Chopin's music and its relative value in musical value; racial and personal characteristics; influences and preferences; Chopin's playing—His instinct for form; the form of his sonatas and concertos; the *Polonaise-Fantaisie*; the preludes—Chopin as a harmonist; Chopin's style analyzed: accompaniment figures, inner melodies, polyphonic suggestions, passages, melodies and ornaments—His works in general: salon music; waltzes; nocturnes; mazurkas; polonaises; conclusion.

#### I

No music for the pianoforte is more widely known than that of Chopin. None has been more generally accepted. None has been exposed so mercilessly to the mauling of sentimentality and ignorance; nor has any other suffered to such an extent the ignominy of an affable patronage. Yet it has not faded nor shown signs of decay. Rather year by year the question rises clearer: is any music more irreproachably beautiful? Less and less timidly, thoughtful men and women now demand that Chopin be recognized truly as equal of the greatest, even of Bach, of Mozart, of Beethoven. There are no fixed standards by which to measure the greatness of music. We adore the sacredness of forms and names. At the best we have a sort of tenacity of faith, supported by a wholly personal enthusiasm. To many this demand on behalf of Chopin will appear to be based on an enthusiasm that is not justifiable; but by what shall enthusiasm be justified? It is an emotion, something more powerful in music than reason. One must grant that no pianoforte music has shown a



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greater force than Chopin's to rouse the emotions of the general world. That it moves the callow heart to sighs or that the ignorant will fawn upon it is no proof of weakness in it. Your ignoramus will dote on Beethoven almost as much. Chopin's music has depth upon depth of beauty into which the student and the artist may penetrate. It can never be fully comprehended and then thrown aside. To study it year after year is to come ever upon new wonders.

It is urged against Chopin that he wrote only for the pianoforte. But this cannot have any weight in estimating the value of his music. It is generally acknowledged that the pianoforte is of all instruments the most difficult to write for. Chopin was absolute master of these difficulties, just as Wagner was master of the orchestra. He was therefore in a position to give perfect expression to his ideas, as far as color of sound is concerned. Mr. Edgar Stillman Kelley in his recent book on Chopin \* brings forward the interesting point that at the time Chopin was composing—roughly between 1830 and 1845—the orchestra would have been quite inadequate to the expression of his ideas; both because of the imperfections of many of the instruments and because of the lack of virtuoso skill among the players. For Chopin's music is above all things intricate. There is a ceaseless interweaving of countless strands of harmony, a subtle chromaticism of which the brass instruments would have been incapable, and elaborate figures and passages which violinists would not have been able to play. The pianoforte on the other hand was relatively perfect. To it Chopin turned, as to a medium that would not restrict his expression. And so accurately and minutely did he shape his music in accordance with the instrument, that the many attempts by clever and skillful men to arrange it for the orchestra have almost entirely failed.

\* 'Chopin the Composer.' New York, 1914.

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At any rate we have Chopin's ideas perfectly expressed, almost without a blemish, thanks to the piano. It is by the nature and quality of these ideas that he must be judged. In beauty of melody, in wealth of harmony, in variety, force, and delicacy of rhythm, he has not been excelled. As to the quality of emotion back of these ideas, it has been said that it is perfervid, sickly or effeminate; but such a statement would hardly be borne out by the facts that his music remains fresh in expressiveness and that it is generally acceptable. Delicate most of it is, and it is all marked by a perhaps unique fineness of taste. This, however, rarely if ever belittles the genuine and lasting emotion which it modifies. Chopin's character was undoubtedly one that wins the love and sympathy of some men, and wholly antagonizes others. The last years of his life he was weak and ailing and he was never robust. Still it cannot be fairly said that his physical weakness has affected his music. It should be remembered that Beethoven and Schumann were sick men, the one sick in body, the other sick in mind. The wonder is but greater when we think that such works as the Ballade in F minor and the Barcarolle were written by a man so feeble that he had always to be carried up flights of stairs.

Several points in Chopin's character are more than usually interesting in connection with his music. To begin with he was half Polish in blood and wholly Polish in sympathies. It was his ambition to be for Poland in music what the poet Uhland had been for Germany in literature.\* This does not by any means signify that many of the startling originalities in his music are due to racial influences. Only in the Polonaises and in the Mazurkas, both national dances of

\* Professor Frederick Niecks in his 'Frederic Chopin' (1888) has presented practically all that is known of Chopin to the public, in a manner that is no less accurate than it is wholly just and impartial. Needless to say that we are greatly indebted for this chapter to that excellent and wise book, especially in the matter of biographical and personal details.

## CHOPIN: PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Poland, does Chopin make use of Polish forms. Even in the Polonaises there is more of universal than of national spirit, though in the Mazurkas, rhythms, melodies, and harmonies have for the most part a distinctly Polish stamp. Elsewhere in his music there are but rarely suggestions of a tonality not common to the music of Western Europe, or of melodies more Slavic than Latin or Teutonic.

It is in spirit that his music hints of another race, by its passionate intensity, by its glowing color, and perhaps most of all by its restraint. This may seem strange when we think of the almost barbaric abandon of other Slavic composers. But Liszt in his book on Chopin speaks at length of the peculiar reserve, not to say secretiveness, of the Polish people in general and of Chopin in particular. He is emphatic in his statement that only Poles came near the inner nature of this musician; that others felt themselves delicately but surely held at a distance. So in no small measure the meaning of his music, its true beauty, eludes the player. There is a secret in it which perhaps no player has the skill fully to reveal. It is not often explicit; it is nearly always suggestive. We need not think that only a Pole can penetrate the mystery. Perhaps only Poles can play the Polonaises and the Mazurkas with full sympathy; but the Preludes, the Ballades and études and Scherzos, to speak of but a few of his works, are music for the whole world. That they elude the efforts of most players is due to no peculiar tricks of rhythm or of melody; but to the quality of secretiveness which has somehow been transfused from the composer into his music. Even in the most splendid of his compositions, as in the most intimate, there is a touch of personal aristocracy, of reserve.

He was by nature the most selective of all musicians. In matters of music he accepted only what was pleasing to his fine taste. Therefore the music of Beethoven

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seemed to him often rough and noisy; that of Schubert a mixture of sublime and commonplace; for that of Schumann he seems to have had little or no appreciation. This has often been held to signalize a fault in his musical understanding; and those who so regard it have been pleased to take his love of Italian opera, particularly of Bellini, as further proof of their point. One must not forget, however, that a group of some of the greatest singers the world has ever known were engaged at the Italian opera in Paris, among them Malibran-Garcia, Pasta, Rubini, Lablache; and that such performances as they gave must have been distinguished by consummate artistry. Chopin often advised his pupils to hear great singers, that they might give to their playing something of the grace of song. At the Italian opera there was perfect singing; and there, very likely more than elsewhere, Chopin's exquisite, artistic nature found satisfaction.

His delight in the music of Hummel, like his pleasure in that of Field, is easy to understand. In neither is there distortion of line, nor harshness. More than any other music of that time it was intimately suited to the piano. As delicate, fluent sound it must even to-day be granted excellent; and for Chopin no fury or power of emotion could justify sound that was unpleasant. His understanding of and love for the piano were so perfect and exacting that one can easily imagine him more willing to forgive triviality of emotion, for the sake of a delicate expression, than to tolerate a harsh or clumsy treatment of the instrument, for the sake of any emotional stress whatsoever.

But neither the Italian opera nor the music of Hummel and Field was the favorite music of Chopin. The two composers whose works he accepted unqualifiedly were Sebastian Bach and Mozart. Here he found a rich emotion and a flawless beauty of style. Here there was no distortion, no struggle of ideas, no harshness. Here

## CHOPIN'S PLAYING

was for him perfection of form and, what is perhaps rarest in any art, a just proportion between form and content, an unblemished union of all the elements which make music not only great but wholly beautiful.

As a player he aimed first and always for beauty of tone and fineness of shading. He was not often successful before a large public. This was due in part to the weakness of his body, but probably more to the nature of his temperament. On account of the first he was unable to 'thunder,' and therefore, in his own words, to overwhelm his audience if he could not win them. But on account of his extremely sensitive nature a large audience, full of strange faces, was frightful to him. He shrank from displaying his art before a crowd. This was no doubt bitter to him. The triumphant general fame of a Liszt or a Thalberg was denied him. Yet in many respects he was the most remarkable pianist the world has been privileged to enjoy. Among friends in his rooms his playing had more than an earthly charm. It seems to have been distinguished not only by rare delicacy of touch, but by a skill with the pedal, with both the sustaining pedal and the soft pedal. He was master of blending his harmonies in a way that raised those who heard him at his best into a veritable ecstasy. Under his fingers the piano seemed to breathe out a music that floated in air. Though he was not, as we have implied, a powerful player, he was capable of flashes of extraordinary vigor; but it was less by sharp contrasts and extremes that he got his effects, than by infinite nuances. And he was above all else a poet of sound, a man of swift fancies, of infinite moods and changes.

Chopin spent the years of his boyhood and youth in Warsaw. In the summer of 1829 he spent some weeks in Vienna, and played there twice in public. In the list of those who were present at these concerts—which, by the way, were wholly successful—one reads the

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names of men and women who had known Beethoven and Schubert, even friends of Mozart. He went again to Vienna in the fall of 1830 and remained there, more or less idling, until uncertain political conditions and an outbreak of cholera drove him in July, 1831, to seek Paris. Here he arrived about the end of September, and here with few exceptions he lived the rest of his life.

He found himself at once in the midst of a society made up of people who were enthusiasts, and were in favor of, or actually apostles of, some radical reform in society or in the arts. Thus at their gatherings there was a great deal of animated and even polemical conversation. It was largely self-conscious. Each talker felt himself the oracle of a new doctrine. But Chopin was silent at most of these reunions. He talked little or not at all about himself and his work. His conduct seems an advocacy of conservatism; but as a matter of fact his music proves him to have been one of the great innovators in the art.

## II

It is evident that in many respects Chopin's innovations sprang from instinct. They are not the conscious putting to test of a theory of reform, as are, in a small way, the *Carnaval of Schumann*, and in a more grandiose one, the B minor sonata of Liszt. As regards form, for example, he was in many cases not in the least dependent upon past or contemporary standards. Such pieces as the *Ballades* and the *Barcarolle* are without precedent. But they are the spontaneous growth of his genius; not the product of an experimental intelligence. The intellectually formal element which Berlioz, Schumann, and Liszt made bold with, Chopin quite ignored.

The theories of those of his contemporaries just mentioned have been made convenient apologies by many of their subsequent critics. Though the present day is

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beginning to show a wisdom free of controversy, it is still difficult to judge Liszt's sonata solely from the standpoint of musical vitality. If one is left by it cold or suspicious, one cannot wholly disregard, in estimating its worth, the scheme upon which it is devised. In perhaps no music is there less need of such an intellectual justification than in Chopin's. The man's instinct was his only guide, and in most cases the results of it were singularly faultless.

Therefore, attempts to reduce such pieces as the *Ballades* and the *Barcarolles* to one of the few orthodox formal schemes are gratuitous. In the first place the music is positively in no need of such a justification as many still believe the respectable names of sonata or fugue or rondo provide. In the second place, though a work like the *Ballade in F minor* can be forced into the mold of the triplex or sonata-form, it can be so forced only by distorting the lovely features which make it the thing of beauty that it is. It is only fair to recognize that Chopin has created something new, in forms of a graceful and subtle proportion that speaks of a higher force than theory. The mind of man has yet to understand the logic of their beauty. Chopin is still unique.

The very elusiveness of the formal element in Chopin's music persistently raises a question as to the extent of his mental grasp on the materials of his art. It is foolish to discuss how much of great genius is intellectual, how much emotional. It would seem as if the great emotion gave the spark of life to any work of art, that the powerful mind gave it shape. But in the music of Chopin an instinct rather than a thought gives shape. It is interesting to observe the working of this instinct in forms to the grasp of which an intellectual power has generally been considered essential; namely, in the sonatas. Of these there are three: an early one in C minor, published posthumously; one in

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B-flat minor, opus 35; and one in B minor, opus 58.

The first of these is almost in no way representative of the composer. It was completed by 1828 and sent to Vienna for publication; but it did not appear in print until two years after Chopin's death. Neither in melodiousness nor in harmonic richness does it show the mark of his genius. It is ordinary in treatment of the piano. One can hardly attach even an historical significance to it, since works composed at or about the same time give more than a suggestion of his future greatness. For example, it was in connection with the contemporary variations on Mozart's aria, *La ci darem la mano*, that Schumann wrote, 'Hats off, gentlemen: a genius!' It is true that the return of the first theme, at the beginning of the last section of the first movement, in B-flat minor instead of C minor, is at variance with conventional usage; but this was by no means unprecedented. The 5/4 rhythm of the Largo is evidently an attempt at originality; but it is self-conscious, not spontaneous. In spite of these features the work goes to prove only one thing: that in such a familiar and well-established form as the sonata, Chopin at that time either dared not or felt he should not trust to his own instinct, even as to the treatment of the instrument.

But the other two sonatas are worthy of his full maturity, and they show, like the *Études*, the *Scherzi* and the *Ballades*, the perfection and sureness of his art of self-expression. And in thus revealing himself he could not but be an innovator. He brought something new to the sonata. Consequently the opinion that he is ill at ease in the form, which may be interpreted to mean (or generally is so interpreted) that he had not the intellectual grasp of music necessary to the composing of a great sonata. This, it is to be feared, is one of the ready-made opinions in music. There are many such at hand. A few great critics have given the hint. Liszt, in writing of the concertos, ventured to say that they



## CHOPIN'S SONATAS

showed *plus de volonté que d'inspiration*. The remark has been applied to explain the uneasiness of the two great sonatas. Mr. J. S. Shedlock in his book on the pianoforte sonata wrote that 'the real Chopin is to be found in his nocturnes, mazurkas, and ballads, not in his sonatas.' But, though it is nearly absurd to pick from many supremely great works one that is superior to the others, and we do not in the least wish to infer that Chopin's B-flat minor sonata is his masterpiece, we think it may be fairly questioned whether he ever wrote anything greater. It is thoroughly impregnated with his unique spirit. There is not a note of it that is not of the 'real' Chopin. Furthermore, the B minor sonata is not less thoroughly Chopin.

It may be reserved to the trained critical mind to decide what is great art of any kind; but the decision as to what is great music must ultimately rest with time and its changing voice of expression—the general world. Upon no sonatas, except some of those of Beethoven, does the public set such store as upon these two of Chopin. The sonatas of Weber, Schubert, Schumann and Brahms hold no such place in the general favor. In the case of the first three of these men a looseness in the grasp of form is responsible for the gradual degradation of their long works. It is logical to infer, then, that a similar looseness is not evident in the sonatas of Chopin. At any rate it has not yet become palpable to the public, whatever critics may have said. And the sonatas have undergone and are still undergoing a tremendous test. Therefore, however much men may declare the intellectual weakness in Chopin's music, one must conclude that his instinct gave sufficient vitality even to his sonatas to enable them, alone among sonatas, to hold their public place with those of Beethoven. And it would seem that the undisputed intellectual power of Brahms failed where the instinct of Chopin succeeded.

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Of course it will be urged in explanation of the popular acceptance of the sonatas of Chopin, that they are eminently gratifying to the pianist, suitable to the instrument, and consequently delicious to the public. At the most this is but a grace which no other sonatas have in so great measure. It is not a virtue by which alone music endures. Music cannot last without a positive strength of form; and this, no matter what the source of it, the Chopin sonatas have.

So then, what do men mean when they state, in the face of the enduring strength and beauty of these works, that Chopin has shown himself ill at ease in them? Chiefly that these sonatas are different from those of Beethoven. For the most part they choose to condemn the difference, rather than to understand and appreciate it. But if the verdict of time is worthy of consideration, this difference is not condemnable, and an analysis of it will bring us face to face with Chopin the innovator, not Chopin the insufficient.

It is usually in the first movement of a sonata that a composer either proves his skill or discloses his weakness. It is the first movements of these two sonatas that are brought into question before the courts of theory. They will be found to differ in at least two distinct if not radical features from movements of similar form by Beethoven. First, in the self-sufficient breadth and splendor of the second themes. Through these themes the composer speaks with his most intense meaning; on them the music soars to its highest, flaming pinnacle of beauty. This is obviously at variance with what we may call the classical procedure. Early in the evolution of the triplex form, a powerful tendency became evident to give to the first theme a vigorous, declarative character, and to the second a softer, more songful one. The first theme usually dominated the movement, and the development of its significance was the life and flow of the music. Generally

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the second theme, by reason of its contrasting character, served to accentuate the meanings of the first. Chopin handled his material otherwise. Though he preserved in a measure the conventional character of the two themes, the first undergoes no logical development, but whirls here and there in a sort of tempestuous chaos for which the second theme offers sublime justification. Except in the opening measures, the first theme is given no definite shape. Neither in the B-flat minor sonata nor in the B minor sonata does it reappear at the beginning of the third section. In the development section of both sonatas it is but a fragment tossed here and there on stormy harmonies.

The result is of course a lack of logical coherence. But one may well ask if the hot intensity of utterance has not welded the notes and parts of these movements into a complete fusion, if there is need of logic in such molten music.

In the second place, the Chopin sonatas owe not a little of their unique appearance to the composer's great gift of harmony. The foundation of the classical sonata form was harmonic, and, be it said with due regard to exceptions, was rigid. Nothing was more characteristic of it, both in the early and late stages of its use, than the harmonic clearness of what one may call the approach to themes, episodes, or sections, and the sharp definition of these sections by what were fundamentally conventional cadences. Chopin in his sonatas obliterated at least one of these sectional lines. It is impossible to decide in the first movements where the middle section ends and the last section begins. It is not only that the first theme fails to make its reappearance. The harmonies surge on from the development section into the last section with no trace of break in their current. Even the cadences at the end of the first sections are incomplete, and the modulations by which they progress sudden and remote. Such procedures

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foretell unmistakably the endless harmonies of Wagner. So does the treatment of the development section in both sonatas, with the scattering of motives over never-ending progressions of chords.

No sonatas, not even those of Beethoven, present such radical variations from the accepted form; and naturally the question arises whether such movements as these of Chopin's are properly in sonata form at all. One can only answer that Chopin named them sonatas, and that they represent at least what he felt a sonata should be. Mr. Shedlock has said of Beethoven that in aiming at a higher organization, he actually became a disorganizer. One cannot attribute such a conscious aim to Chopin; yet it is plain that his instinct led him to the complete demolition of one or two of the conventional restrictions of the sonata form.

Before leaving the sonatas there is a word to be said of Chopin's comprehension of the group of four movements as a whole. It is such a comprehension on the part of a Beethoven that makes many of his later sonatas and a few of his earlier ones indisputably grand. In his case the successive dependence of the various movements on each other is often made plain either by the actual merging of one into the other, or by the employment of the same or cognate thematic materials in all. Of such structural unity there is no trace in the two great sonatas of Chopin. The separate movements are formally complete in themselves, and not materially related. Any other union between the separate movements of suite, sonata, or symphony, if, indeed, it is not a matter of familiarity with the whole work, or of respect for the composer, exists only in the mind of the hearer according to his or her sensibilities. Of the Chopin sonatas that in B-flat minor will probably impress most people as an impassioned and powerful whole; that in B minor as less unified.

The Funeral March of the former has a double ex-

## CHOPIN: POLONAISE-FANTAISIE

istence, one within and one without the sonata. It is known that it was completed perhaps before the sonata was thought of; and that certainly the other movements were written in some sort of relation to it. The finale which follows it cannot possibly be dissociated from the sonata; and the first and second movements share a common intensity of passion. Organic unity the series may not have, but its phases of emotion lead, and almost blend, one into the other.

The two concertos, written as Chopin was on the verge of manhood, have evidently not held, if ever they won, so high a place in pianoforte literature as the two great sonatas. For one thing, Chopin's treatment of the orchestra is, according to most critics, uninspired and unsatisfactory. But for another thing, their form is conventional, and in submitting to a conventional ideal Chopin is unquestionably ill at ease. Ten years later when he wrote the B-flat minor sonata he was all past his age of submission, and made of the form something new, shaped it fearlessly to his need of self-expression. The *Fantasia* in F minor, written about this time (1840), is longer than any single movements in the sonatas. Though unconventional in structure it is none the less faultless.

There still remains a profoundly moving work of Chopin's, which, from the point of view of form, is astonishing. This is the *Polonaise-Fantaisie*, opus 61, seemingly his last work for the piano in large proportions. The *Barcarolle*, opus 60, was written probably about the same time; and it is worthy of note that this perfect piece escapes the grasp of most who would play it—i.e., interpret it in the only way that music can be truly interpreted. The difficulty is usually ascribed to its apparently rambling structure. But here, as in most cases where the composer may seem to be at fault, the imperfection exists in the player, not in the music. The right touch and the right quality of fervid yet deli-

## PIANOFORTE MUSIC

cate poetic imagination will reveal in the *Barcarolle* a poem in music of the most exquisite proportions. It is a work of matchless beauty. But the *Polonaise-Fantaisie* is not lyrical; it is intensely dramatic. It builds itself out of the strength, the weakness, the despair of unnamed forces in conflict. It is the cry of Poland in her agony, the pride of her people, crushed and tormented, in a broken voice.

The clashing moods of the piece are not of the sort that can be regulated and made orderly within even the expanded forms of conventional art. The grief and despair, the wrath, the pity, the unconquerable pride and hope of Chopin, shuddering like a great harp in the wind of destruction that has swept over his country, here demand and take on unfettered freedom of expression. The result is a work which reaches over Liszt to the symphonic poems of modern writers. It is probably not of historical importance; but it is of great significance as testimony to Chopin's constructive originality. Liszt said of it that because of its 'pathological contents,' it must be excluded from the realm of art. If Chopin had chosen to supplement the piece with a few words as to its meaning, a program, as the phrase goes, Liszt would have had to judge differently, or else by the same token exclude other great works from the hallowed aristocracy to which he denied this one entrance.

At the other extreme of Chopin's achievements stand the twenty-four *Préludes*. Some of these, like the eighth, fifteenth, sixteenth, nineteenth, for example, are well-rounded and completed pieces, which have not more of the spirit of improvisation which one associates with the term 'prelude' than his longer works. But many others are hardly more than fragments, or sketches, or instantaneous impressions. In pieces of such length, form is of no importance. What is perhaps unparalleled is their vividness. They seem now

## CHOPIN AS HARMONIST

like a veiled glow, fading into darkness, now like a momentary flash from that region of secret fire in the light of which Chopin ever lived.

So Chopin's power of expression showed itself new, fine, and broad. He is a master of presentation. There are but three or four of his considerable works of which one may say that they show uncertainty in judgment, an awkwardness in line, a clumsiness in balance. The vast majority of his compositions are perfect in shape and form, and flawlessly put together. If only we at this day might hear them unfold through his magic fingers! For, no doubt, what seems weak or unstable to the cautious judgment that relies upon standards of more rational genius, seems so only because the key is lost that will open to view the delicate machinery in all its perfect assemblage.

### III

Chopin is second to no composer as a harmonist. In this respect, it now seems he stands directly in line with Bach and Mozart. The fabric of the music of all three is chromatic; but it is usually so delicately woven that its richness is accepted almost unconsciously by the listener. Like Bach, Chopin wanders where he will in the harmonic field. Like Mozart, he is ineffably graceful and subtle. The foundation of his music is a series of widely varied, yet blending chords. He is rarely startling. His modulations are swift and flashing; but they seldom if ever seem abrupt.

On the whole his music has few conspicuously unusual chords. The crashing dissonances just before the end of the Scherzo in B minor are exceptional. So are the wild bursts in the prelude in D minor. But there are sequences of chords which, when analyzed, show an amazing boldness. For example, the opening measures

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of the scherzo in the B-flat minor sonata; the middle section of the study in C minor; the swirl of chords before the coda in the F minor Ballade; the long modulating passage between the A major and E-flat major portions of the G minor Ballade; the whole of the study in broken chords; and countless others.

He is fond of shifting the harmony down through chromatic steps, as in the prelude in E minor and the mazurka, opus 17, No. 4. Rushes of chromatic sixths and fourths, such as are in the E minor concerto, at the beginning of the great polonaise in A-flat major, and the scherzo of the B-flat minor sonata, are effects of color more than of harmony. But he gets magnificent harmonic effects by sending wide, whirring chords through half-steps down or up the scale, as in the first *meno mosso* section of the scherzo in C-sharp minor, or in the cadenza-style passage of the study, opus 10, No. 3. Yet again, before the return of the first motives in the study, opus 25, No. 6, there is a long cascade of diminished seventh chords. Sometimes he leads his music through broader progressions, which are in effect diatonic. The dropping of the music from its dramatic height in the C-sharp minor portion of the ballade in A-flat major, the long descending play with the triplet motive in the middle section of the second scherzo, and all the second part of the scherzo in the B-flat minor sonata offer examples of this bold harmonic stride.

One may take up a handful of Chopin's music almost at random and find signs of his harmonic boldness, and there is hardly a line of it which does not reveal his ever subtle power over chromatic alterations. This is so fine and really so ever present as almost to defy analysis. Yet one or two pages in which it is unusually suggestive may be cited. All the first part of the scherzo in B minor, particularly the second section of it, is but a play with chords which, but for the unpleasant connotation of the word, might almost be said to writhe,



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so are they twisted and interwoven by a ceaseless alteration of their fundamental notes. By reason of this same chromatic litheness, both the study in C major, opus 10, No. 7, and the coda of the second ballade take on a shimmer of harmonic light.

The chromatic scale has often been used for a sort of windy or surging effectiveness in pianoforte music. Witness the first movement of Beethoven's concerto in G major, Weber's Rondo in C major. But rarely in any music has it been used so melodiously as in Chopin's. Sometimes it is but a strand over which other strands are woven, as in the colossal *Étude* in A minor; but even more remarkable are those cases in which he contented himself with the unadorned scale. The studies in A minor, opus 10, No. 2, and G-sharp minor, opus 25, No. 6, rest upon the ordinary familiar chromatic scale, perhaps the gaudiest of the virtuoso trappings; yet even the first of these, in its frankly *étude* manner, has an uncommon beauty, and the second has more than an earthly charm. Neither study depends upon a vague, windy effect. Both demand rather a distinct touch. We have then a chromatic scale in which the separate notes are constantly audible throughout the entire piece, a chromatic scale, turned by some alchemy of which Chopin alone possessed the secret, into graceful melody.

It is in a sense this power in Chopin to turn every note to melody that is the secret of the perfection of his style. We may pass over his characteristics in the broader melody. These, like the qualities of Bach's, Mozart's and Schubert's melodies, are of an essence that escapes words. The metaphor is perhaps sickly—but one may as well attempt to catch firmly in words the fragrance of flowers. But the power over a more subtle melody, what one might call an inner melodiousness, is so striking in Chopin that it may not be passed at least without special comment. Bach and Couperin

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possessed the same kind of skill; and this, though manifested in almost radically different forms, and applied upon a wholly different instrument, makes their music unqualifiedly welcome upon the modern pianoforte. In the case of Chopin, it was brought to bear upon our own instrument, and wrought the perfect style for pianoforte music, a style which conforms to the special qualities in the instrument of which we have elsewhere spoken at length. (See Introduction.)

In Chopin accompaniment figures for the piano are brought to their highest perfection. It may be fundamentally his choice of harmonies that gives them a richness not to be found so generally in any other music for the instrument. Here must lie the secret of the beauty of certain passages, like that of the melodious second theme in the scherzo in B-flat minor, where the accompaniment is only a series of chords, the movement or rolling of which is not at all unusual. But in the formation of figures there is often a distinction peculiar to Chopin alone.

First one notices the wide spacing of the notes, the avoidance of all thickness such as often makes the pianoforte music of Brahms unsatisfactory from the point of view of the pianist. By means of these widely spaced figures he obtains a sonority of after-sounds from the piano in which the over-tones and sympathetic vibrations play a great part. It is never muddy or thick. There are many pages of his music which show group after group of these figures employed to give only a shimmering, not a distinct harmonic background to the melody which he wishes to set forth. One remembers the nocturnes in C-sharp minor and D-flat major, the study in A-flat major, opus 25, No. 1, and countless passages in other works.

These undulating figures are no more than the Alberti bass, developed to suit the piano. To the student they offer little more than an example of wholly

**Frédéric Chopin**  
*After the portrait by Ary Scheffler*







## CHOPIN'S STYLE

satisfactory spacing of notes on the keyboard. But Chopin is rarely so simple. In almost all his accompaniments based on broken chords he introduces something of an independent spirit. This shows itself either in the suggestion of an inner melody which here and there joins richly with the chief subject; or in the accentuation of certain notes of harmonic significance. In neither case does the accompaniment take on a definite line, as it so often does in the music of Brahms. Particularly in the latter case, the accompaniment is still vaguely sonorous, the separate notes not more distinct than they must be to preserve a sense of gentle or vigorous movement.

It must not be supposed that these notes, which accentuate harmonic coloring, are literally to be emphasized. They are rarely marked with accent signs. But Chopin has so placed them at the height of the figure that they must stand out, even if played more lightly than the notes with which they are associated. The accompaniment of the second theme in the sonata in B minor, especially the later portions of it where it is broken into groups of sixteenth notes, offers proof of a subtlety in awakening a sensuous volume of sound out of the piano which is at once vague and distinct, that can hardly be matched.

As for the flashes of counter-melodies, of hidden strands of music which enrich his accompaniments, we approach here into one of the mysteries of Chopin's genius. It is in suggesting these that the technique of the pianist frequently fails. There is need of a touch at once pointed and yet often as gentle as a breath. Sometimes these magical notes are at the extremity of a wide space. Chopin has written a study—opus 10, No. 9—which deals almost wholly with this difficulty. Again they are concealed in the very middle of the figure, as in parts of the accompaniment of the nocturne in D-flat major. Finally there are accompaniments which

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are all elusive melody. How many melodies are there, for example, within the accompaniment, if so it may be called, of the nineteenth prelude; in the magnificent passages of the fourth ballade, before the coda; in the first E-flat major section of the first ballade? Even where figures have given way in passages of utmost sonority to chords, there is a full melodic life here and there. The accompanying chords in the big passages of the Barcarolle, just before the end, have indeed almost a polyphonic significance.

Here then is that inner melodiousness of Chopin's music which goes far towards making it the great work of art that it is. It is so little explicit, often hardly more than suggested, so delicate and so infinitely varied that one must for ever question just what the nature of it is. Yet if one tries to analyze Chopin's style, his treatment of the keyboard, his unmatched grace and elegance and fervor, it is precisely against this inner musical life that one must ultimately come to pause. There are conceptions of emotion expressed in pianoforte music which are perhaps grander than his because less personal; there are other works for the piano that are more abstract and seemingly therefore less capricious; but there is perhaps no music which quite like his has called forth the full spirit of the most mechanical of the string instruments.

Is it essentially polyphonic music? The first canon of the pianoforte style is *movement*. That is a mechanical necessity. The strings must be kept in vibration, constantly touched. In music so fine as Chopin's this movement must be found to have a beauty in itself. It must be ever varied. It must take on an independent character of its own. So far, in studying accompaniment figures, one finds in them an almost never-absent suggestion of such a life. Perhaps one of the greatest proofs of Chopin's skill is that he rarely attempted more than to suggest it. For he knew above



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all things his piano. He knew its great power over chords and harmony, that music for it must first of all bring out this richness of vibration of which it was capable. He knew that the logical, consecutive movement of the polyphonic style left his piano more than half dumb. Polyphony was no outlandish book to him. Many an anecdote testifies to his worship of the 'Well-Tempered Clavichord'; many to his ability to reveal as few, perhaps no others, have been able to do, the beauty of the preludes and fugues in it. But in his own music he submerged polyphony, so to speak, just beneath the sea of moving harmonies. Over and through the fine silver network his harmonies swirl and flow like waters. Only now and then a strand of it shines clear; but always its presence may be seen, though its lines quiver and break.

Now and again one comes across measures in his music which do more than hint at the sterling imitative style of the old masters, or that show a grasp of that sort of logical technique which is able to weave a single motive or two into various shapes, a highly concentrated sort of music. These are neither more nor less beautiful than other measures, and surely their value is the value of all his music, not enhanced by the evidence of a highly respected technical skill. The fourth ballade gives surprising examples of this intensive art. The few measures in canonic style which bring back the principal subject are worthy of study; but even more remarkable is the page of music which precedes them. Here, following an episode in which the steady rhythm of the whole great work takes on almost the gaiety of a dance, we come upon music of the most profound character, fully and sonorously scored, rich in harmony, expressive of passion. The bass part is one variant of the chief subject, the treble part is another. Here is skill of the sort that brings praise to Brahms; but in the music of Chopin to men-

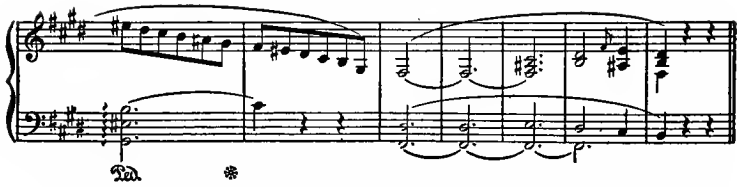
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tion it is hardly worth while, so little, rather so entirely not at all, is it an end in itself.

Finally there are pages of his music in which the movement of his accompaniment are so free and extended, or so interwoven with what seems the chief idea, that one is at loss to classify them as to style. These it seems to us are the result of his finest art of writing for the piano. In some cases it is easy to speak of the accompaniment as an arabesque, with the implied meaning that, delicately and carefully as it has been shaped and perfected, it remains of secondary importance. So, for instance, with the little prelude in G major, and, to a somewhat greater extent, the study in C minor, opus 10, No. 12. But the prelude in D major is a net of sounds from which nothing but shimmering harmony shines out, though there are two voices for ever entwining about each other. Which is melody and which accompaniment in the prelude in F major? What is going on within the prelude in F-sharp minor, that outwardly seems but a broad melody with whirring accompaniment? At last, in the later works, one comes across accompaniments running from top to bottom of the keyboard, every note of which is but part of a melody. Take as examples of this art the following passages from the fourth scherzo:

The image displays two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system is marked *cantanda* and the second system is marked *Pia.*. Both systems consist of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The first system features a melodic line in the treble clef with a long slur over it, and a bass line with chords and some melodic fragments. The second system continues the melodic line in the treble clef with a slur, and the bass line provides harmonic support with chords and some melodic movement. The page number 272 is centered at the bottom.

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These few measures are typical of the essence of the keyboard, rather the pianoforte, style of Chopin, a style showing a grace and flexibility highly characteristic of his music in general. One finds such art only very rarely in the works of other composers since the time of Bach and Couperin, as, for example, in the second Intermezzo in the second number of the *Kreisleriana* and at the end of Brahms' Caprice in F-sharp minor, opus 76, No. 1. It is the sort of music which sounds best on the pianoforte, which cannot give the same effect on any other instrument nor by any combination of instruments. There are the constant movement which is necessary to keep the piano vibrating, and the richness of harmony which belongs to no other single instrument except the organ. The homogeneous nature of the scale gives to the runs a continuity of line and of color that is almost uniquely proper to the piano. The single notes of the runs drop with the bell-like quality which likewise belongs only to this instrument. At last it must be noted how the sound of it all floats and changes. This is strikingly a sonority of after-sounds.

In the case of the above selection from the Scherzo this is obtained by the arrangement of chords with the broad melody of the left hand. Of the six chords that are struck four are left to vibrate during two measures; that is to say, that five-sixths of their value is given only in after-sounds. Against this tonal background are arranged the rapidly moving notes of the right hand, which a careful study will show accentuates in varying fashion the floating harmonies of the left. So that

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the whole passage has not only a vague shimmer but a sparkling radiance as well.

In the following selection from the same piece it will be noticed that this sonority is built up by the movement of the accompanying figures which at the same time sprinkle their own mist with sparks. It is like the

The image displays four staves of piano music, likely from a single piece, arranged vertically. Each staff consists of a treble and bass clef system. The music is in G major, indicated by two sharps (F# and C#) in the key signature. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a bass clef, featuring a melodic line in the treble and a rhythmic accompaniment in the bass. The second staff continues the melodic development in the treble and the accompaniment in the bass. The third staff shows a more complex melodic line in the treble with a prominent eighth-note pattern, while the bass clef provides harmonic support. The fourth staff concludes the passage with a final melodic flourish in the treble and a sustained accompaniment in the bass. The notation includes various musical symbols such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings like 'p' (piano) and 'f' (forte).

passage of a faint comet through the sky, leaving a trail of apparently substantial light. And here this drifting light of sound resolves itself into definite harmonies, in the third, fifth, seventh, ninth, fourteenth and

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fifteenth measures. The substantial harmonies of the passage are very obviously established by the chords in the left hand part; but it is the movement of the right hand that makes them glow and darken as it were. In those measures not mentioned above, this movement seems to weave a mist about these harmonies, which, in the measures we have numbered, clears for an instant and lets the light through. And that the notes in this movement which have such an harmonic clarity may be not so much emphasized as retained is one of the fine points in the playing of Chopin which the unskilled player is likely wholly to miss, and with it the elusive subtlety of Chopin.

The ordinary pianoforte style of running figuration generally is made up of simple arpeggios or scales. Liszt does not often show himself master of more than such. It is only Chopin who envelopes his harmonies in such an exquisitely spun thread of melody. The last measures of the Barcarolle show such a thread of pure gold, woven and twisted as no other composer for the piano has been able to spin.

In such passages as these three we find a movement

The image displays two systems of musical notation for Chopin's Barcarolle. Each system consists of a grand staff with a piano (p) part in the left hand and a right-hand part in the right hand. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system includes the markings *dolce e cantando* and *rit.* The right-hand part features a complex, flowing melodic line with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. The piano part provides harmonic support with chords and occasional single notes. The second system continues the same musical texture, with the right-hand part showing a slight increase in rhythmic density towards the end of the system. The page number 275 is centered at the bottom.

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The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is in treble clef and contains a rapid, ascending melodic line of eighth notes, starting on a note marked with a fermata and the number '8'. Below this staff is the instruction *accelerando e cresc.* The bottom staff is in bass clef and contains a bass line with several rests and some notes. A dynamic marking *ff* is visible in the second measure of the bottom staff.

which entered the pianoforte style as a necessity (to keep harmonies in vibration) metamorphosed into a line of melody which still retains the power to suggest harmonies. It demands the virtuoso but is in no sense virtuoso music. For virtuoso music is a music in listening to which one hardly knows whether it is sound itself or the rapid movement of sound that thrills. Figures have little musical significance in it. Notice how in the music of the two greatest virtuoso composers for the piano, D. Scarlatti and Liszt, a few figures are repeated endlessly with no variation. The necessity of movement has become a luxury, oftenest not truly beautiful, nor of any but a gymnastic worth.

It was Chopin who entirely appreciated the true value of movement on the keyboard; who where it was necessary made it beautiful, and never made it an end in itself. Hence it may be questioned if there is figure work, mere display, in Chopin's music. There is hardly a passage of rapid notes in his music which has not a pure melodic significance and which does not weave itself about harmonies that are constantly varied. He

## CHOPIN'S STYLE

delighted in rapid notes. The coda of the waltz in A-flat major, op. 34, No. 2, the study in F minor, op. 25, No. 2, the scherzo of the sonata in B minor, the variation of the chief subject in the third part of the fourth ballade, these come to mind among a host of other examples of his inimitable grace and musical worth in such music. And when he combined such a fleet melodiousness with broader themes and harmonies did he not prove himself a master of the science of music in a new light? Not without a reason are the preludes and fugues of the 'Well-Tempered Clavichord' a masterpiece of everlasting and inimitable worth. We may call it concentration, intensity, economy of musical means which gives them their enduring firmness. And much of this firmness is in the music of Chopin, because there are no empty notes, none without two and even threefold significance. This complication of movement with melody, this ever-whispering inner melodiousness, these spring from Bach, the greatest of masters.

Other essentials of the pianoforte style may be found in the work of other masters as well as in that of Chopin. Such are the contrast of registers and the variety of rhythm. One more feature of his style, however, is pronounced enough to demand attention. This will be observed in his treatment of many melodies. Here any composer will find himself face to face with one of the most difficult problems the piano presents; for, as we have said, he must if possible arrange his melody in such a way that one will not feel it would have been more suitable to the voice or the violin. Movement is again necessary. Without belittling the value of an accepted masterpiece one may call attention to the long pause of the melody at the end of the first phrase of Schumann's *Warum?*, which barely escapes destroying the piece as a work for the piano. There must be not only a pronounced but a secondary melodic movement in such pauses in pianoforte music, as Schu-

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mann himself introduced subsequently in *Warum?* In many cases the composer contents himself with giving a touch of melodic life to the accompaniment, as Chopin does, for example, in the pauses of the second theme in the first movement of the B-flat minor sonata. But most remarkable in Chopin's treatment of melodies, noticeably in his later and broader style, is his fondness for secondary melodies that have almost the consecutive movement of an obbligato part. This is one step in organization beyond the inner melodiousness of his accompaniments. Without selecting examples from a number of his works, one may call attention to the study in C-sharp minor, opus 25, No. 7, to the various treatments of the melodic material in the fourth ballade, to the whole Barcarolle, especially to the imitations in the middle section and in the coda. By means of this the piano speaks with a voice made sonorous by its own peculiar abilities, and Chopin's melodies stand apart from melodies for violin or voice.

What has been said of his ability to give to rapid notes a genuinely musical significance applies in general to the ornaments which now and again are brought into his music. Of the older standardized ornaments which were thickly sprinkled through the music of Couperin and Emanuel Bach, only a few survived the harpsichord, to which they were appropriate. The turn, the trill and the grace-note are the chief of these, all of which, it will be noted, are used as frequently in music for other instruments as in music for the pianoforte. The others were expanded into much greater form or gave way entirely to a new sort of ornament which covered wide intervals and a wide range, and was intended less to add grace to the melodic line than to introduce a variety of sonority into the music.

These more pretentious frills were added *ex tempore* by men like Hummel, Field, and even Liszt, not only to their own music but to that of other composers.



## CLASSIFICATION OF CHOPIN'S WORKS

Liszt, in his remarks prefatory to an edition of Field's 'Nocturnes,' said that the little pieces as they appeared on the engraved page hardly gave more than a suggestion of the richness which their composer gave to them by means of his improvised adornments. Whatever may have been the practice of Chopin in playing, he angrily resented the addition of extemporized ornaments to his own music by any player whatsoever, even one so brilliant as Liszt. It seems likely that such ornaments *d'occasion* were pretty conventional stuff. Liszt has filled up his music with a great deal of them, laboriously written out. Chopin's ornaments rarely lack the distinction which is characteristic of his style in general; that is to say they are rarely a series of figures, oftenest a tracery of melody. Those such as we find in the nocturne in F-sharp major, the impromptu in the same key, and even in the first polonaise, are finely and carefully drawn, and their effect in the piece, like the effect of the piece as a whole, calculated down to the smallest note. Even in this regard Chopin's music is perfected, and the addition of extra notes, especially of the breathless, virtuoso kind, cannot, as Chopin himself well knew, but distort its proportions. There is practically none of these passages which is massive, which has not a value in detail that the pianist must reveal.

Excepting always the music of Bach, there is almost no keyboard music save Chopin's in which every note is thus fraught with meaning and delight. Therein lies the secret of his style, its clearness, flexibility and charm. As a work of art it is flawless, and in that may well rest its best assurance of an immortal life.

### IV

There is little to be said of the quality of Chopin's music in general, and that little has often been fervidly

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spoken, now in praise, now in blame. His music may be variously classified. There are works of his young manhood, works of more mature stamp, finally works written in the last years of his relatively short life which are very noticeably more profound and more involved than earlier ones. To study his music in the order of its creation is to trace the deepening and the sobering of his emotional life. An intensity is common to it all, a fervor which a long and painful illness had not the power to assuage. Neither the *Ballade in F minor* nor the *Polonaise-Fantaisie* is less impassioned than the study in C minor, opus 10, No. 12. Outwardly they all show the same restlessness and tumultuousness. But the passion of the later works is deeper if not more calm than that of the earlier, and the expression of it is more varied and full of contrasts. Works like the fourth Scherzo, the fourth Ballade, and the Barcarolle have an under meaning so hard to grasp that perhaps the majority of those who study them or hear them find fault with the structure and say they are rambling. There is in all his music a reserve which puts it beyond the touch of most who would play it. In these last great pieces one discerns vaguely something of the holiness of that inner life of his which no one ever heard him speak of, of the intense, yearning idealism that tortured him. His was a spirit that underwent the chastening brought upon us by suffering in body and mind in silence, this fastidious, dainty, malicious, little man, for ever suffering, for ever unconquerable in pride.

But the compositions may be more definitely classified than by the signs they show of Chopin's general development. There are, for example, three distinct groups: salon pieces, such as the Waltzes and Nocturnes; pieces in which he speaks as it were his native Polish language, such as the Mazurkas and the Polonaises, and finally works which seem the unrestricted

## NOCTURNES; MAZURKAS; POLONAISES

expression of his emotions: the Ballades, Scherzos, Sonatas, Preludes, and Études.

All the salon pieces are characterized by elegance. In addition, the Waltzes have in most cases a sparkle, the Nocturnes a discrete melancholy. Yet Chopin is full of surprises, and there are waltzes like that in A minor and that in C-sharp minor which pass out of the category of elegant salon music based on dance rhythms, and may be treated as among the most thoughtful and the sad expressions of his experience. The first two waltzes, and the great waltz in A-flat major, opus 42, reveal him delighting in poignant and lively rhythms, in a grace from which a certain chivalric gallantry is not lacking, and above all in the captivating qualities of his instrument.

Perhaps the majority of the Nocturnes show a sentiment a little too much perfumed for the salon. They are commonly considered the weakest of his compositions; and it can hardly be denied that some of them lack virility and health. On the other hand, one like that in C minor is fit to stand among the most impassioned and noble of his compositions; and those in G major and in D-flat major must long be redeemed from commonplaceness by the perfection of their style as pianoforte music.

In the Mazurkas, harmonies, rhythm, and melodies have a distinctly Polish character. In the Polonaises only the rhythm is national; and this has been so long in the favor of the international world of music that it carries with it little of Polish spirit. Most of the Mazurkas and the Polonaises never shake off an under mood of deep sadness, and there is none of them, however gracious, which does not sing of a national pride. Pride and sorrow are the keynote to them, sorrow that is often hopeless, pride that rises to anger and defiance. There are among the Mazurkas many which have an elegiac sadness, which are poems of meditation and

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lamentation, as if by the ruins of his beloved country he, like the great prophet, sat down and wept. They are often as short as the short preludes, but share with them a vividness and intensesness that place them among the most remarkable of compositions for the instrument.

The Polonaises are in broad form. Those in A major, A-flat major, and F-sharp minor are truly colossal works, ringing, clashing, marching music, without a touch of bombast. It is astonishing how all polonaises, polaccas, and even marches by other composers lose their light beside them. Those in C minor and in E-flat minor are sombre and gloomy, the former full of heaviness, the latter of mysterious agitation as of a band of conspirators, in the apt phrase of Professor Niecks. That in C-sharp minor lacks the dignity of its companion pieces. The first part is fretful and nervous. The Trio section, in D-flat has, however, a more measured, though an effeminate speech.

Of his other great works one would be glad to say nothing. We have already attempted to analyze the perfection of their style, the richness of their harmonies, the firm proportions of their form. To the discovery of their particular beauties each lover must be led by his own enthusiasm. The rapture they may charm him to is his own joy. Chopin the artist may be held up to the critical inspection of the whole world, and in such an inspection few will pass with higher praise than his.

But Chopin the musician speaks to each ear apart. His music is a fervid, aristocratic, essentially noble soul made audible, if so we may translate Balzac's remark that he was *une âme qui se rendait sensible*. Illness held him in an inexorable grip during those years of his life when he wrote many of his greatest works. His pride, which no one may measure, made his life one agony with that of his broken country. Yet there was the saving streak of iron in him, and that is in his mu-

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sic behind all the vehemence, the fever, and the passion.

And what may not be overlooked is his love of gaiety. His wit was malicious and keen, but he had a pleasing humor as well, one that overflowed in mimicry and an almost childish love of fun. This too is constantly coming to the surface in his music. It would be wholly mistaken to think of Chopin as a composer of only sad or turbulent music. A whole list of masterpieces could be chosen from those of his compositions which are gay without *arrière-pensée*, which are witty and vivacious, and clear as happy laughter. It is perhaps this very spirit which saves his music always from heaviness, which makes it in the last analysis more healthy and more sane than much of that of Schumann or Brahms. Never are his moods heavy, stagnant, or inert. Intense as they may be they are swift-changing and vivid.

Are they not thus in their nature suited to the piano more than to all other instruments? To the piano, the sounds of which are no sooner struck than they float away, the very breath of whose being is in constant movement?

The mass of Chopin's compositions remains unique in the literature of pianoforte music as an expression of emotion that is without alloy. There is no trace in it of experiment, of theory, or of symbolism. Its idealism is the idealism of beauty of sound, both in form and detail. If we call it poetical it is because it seems a fire of the imagination. Yet here is a faculty in Chopin which deals only with sound. His music is most decidedly abstract and absolute. Poetical as it may be, there is no meaning in it but the meaning of sound. Not only does it not call for supplementary explanations in terms of another art or of definite, emotional activities in life; it defies the effort that would so relate it to a world of perceptions. Like fire it burns the thought that would frame it.

## CHAPTER VIII

### HERZ, THALBERG, AND LISZT

The career of Henri Herz, his compositions and his style; virtuosity and sensationalism; means of effect—Sigismund Thalberg: his playing; the 'Moses' fantasia, etc.; relation of Herz and Thalberg to the public—Franz Liszt: his personality and its influence; his playing; his expansion of pianoforte technique; difficulties of his music estimated—Liszt's compositions: transcriptions; fantasia on *Don Giovanni*—Realistic pieces, *Années de pèlerinage*—Absolute music: sonata in B minor; Hungarian Rhapsodies; Conclusion.

THERE is no doubt that Chopin was one of the greatest players of his day. In some respects he was probably the greatest, for it is hard to believe that he could have been matched in delicacy, in beauties of veiled harmony and melody, and in poetry. Yet as far as playing was concerned his life was spent virtually in retirement; and this was, as we have hinted in the preceding chapter, bitter to him. It was not easy for him, we may be sure, to hear from the outer world the echoes of uproarious applause raised to greet one battling virtuoso after another. These men strode like conquering heroes over the earth. The years Chopin spent in Paris were the very hey-day of the virtuosi. He was excluded from such public triumphs as they enjoyed, partly because he was too nervous and too sensitive to endure contact with great audiences, partly because he lacked physical strength, and partly, also, because to the general taste at that time his style of playing and his music were too fine to be palatable. Mendelssohn wondered whether or not Herz was prejudiced when he said that the Parisians could understand and appreciate nothing but variations.

## HENRI HERZ

### I

This Henri Herz was, between the years 1830 and 1835, the most celebrated pianist in Europe. He was Austrian by birth but in his youth was taken to Paris to study at the Conservatoire, and thereafter made Paris his home, and himself a Parisian.

Everywhere he played he was tremendously successful, whether in France, Germany, or playing duets with Moscheles or Cramer in London, or wandering over the continent of North America, and the islands near it. He had *terriblement voyagé*, as he himself said in the introduction to his most amusing book on his travels in America, *Mes voyages*. His technique was, of course, quite out of the ordinary; but so far as we may judge by his programs and by his compositions, he put it to no exalted purpose. It was the day of variations and of fantasias. Any time might serve for the former, and the virtuoso who was also a keen man of business, with an eye on the public before which he displayed himself and another on the publishers, generally made use of airs popular in whatever land he might chance to be making a present success. For example, among the publications of Henri Herz one finds variations on the favorite air, *Le petit tambour*, on the famous Irish air, 'The Last Rose of Summer,' on the Scotch air, 'We're a' noddin',' on the old song beloved of our grandmothers in this country, 'Gaily the Troubadour'; and *La Parisienne, marche nationale, avec variations caractéristiques*. He published an arrangement of the Marseillaise, an Austrian march, General Harrison's quick-step, Empress Henrietta's waltz, numerous sets of quadrilles and other dances. Perhaps we may never be sure how many of these publications he would have acknowledged. In *Mes voyages* he recounted how he found upon a piano in a music shop a

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certain 'Mlle. Sontag's Waltz' published as one of his compositions. This was in the United States. The dealer in the shop told Herz that this of all his compositions had made him famous in the new country. Herz was about to protest that the music was none of his, but was prevented by the counsel of his manager Ulmann, a man very nearly as wily as the immortal P. T. Barnum, of whom, perhaps at bottom a congenial soul, Herz had much to tell.

Fantasias were usually constructed on airs from the favorite operas of the day. These, in the case of Herz, rarely amounted to more than a series of variations, preceded by an introduction, and concluded with a finale. Few showed much thought in structure, and indeed, such men as Herz, Thalberg, and Liszt, could, and were expected to, improvise such fantasias before the public.

But it would be a mistake to suppose that Herz's elaborate fantasias and variations lack cleverness and a very genuine brilliance. An examination of many of them will prove to one even at this day, when all are nearly or quite forgotten, that Herz knew his piano astonishingly well. Let us look for a moment at the *Variations brillantes*, opus 105, on a favorite motive from Bellini's *Sonnambula*. There is first an introduction. This is withal desperately commonplace. It suggests posturings, meaningless formalities, a whole technique of specious oratory. Yet it is a technique. The weakness in such music is that it is ready-made. There is no originality in it, nor any vitality. The eye discerns the stock figures of the virtuoso laid one after the other across the page. First, there are three measures of the chromatic scale, each measure running through the octave, so that the second repeats the first, and the third the second, with only the change of register. Moreover, each measure is phrased by itself, and at the beginning of each there is placed a mark of



## HERZ'S FANTASIAS, VARIATIONS

emphasis; so that there is not even an effect of rushing or roaring from bottom to top, but only one of movement from one point to another, like the leaping of the frog up the steep sides of the well of our algebra problems. The final leap to the pinnacle of high F, is worthy of the mountain goat.

This figure jumps its stages across our ears and out of sound. Then follows a welling up of emotion. The orator condescends. He is affably sentimental, will take us into his confidence, not without dignity, however. Listen to the strains of this immortal melody! Here a heart sings. What if it were Bellini's heart, we now add upon our instrument a long tremulous sigh of our own.

Once more the opening phrases. Here again the directions read, *capriccioso*; and again the goat leaps up the scale from low F to high. But here follows a passage of trills, long trills on F, on G, on A, on B-flat, and so on, up and up to the highest of all F's on the keyboard; while the left hand surges and falls back in broken chords of changing harmonies. Nothing could be more brilliantly effective. The concluding measures of the introduction play with long, light scales over a phrase or two of melody; and a long-drawn half-cadence, and a fermata, announce at last that the piece is about to begin.

The statement of the theme itself is perfectly simple. One notices the practically unvaried bass, the tum-tum of Hummel and Weber, and of the lesser virtuosi. The first variation is, however, a masterpiece in pianoforte style as far as the right hand is concerned. The mixture of double and single notes is technically almost worthy of Chopin. But the tum-tum bass perseveres and blights the whole. Still this variation has a bright sparkle, the line of the upper part has a flowing grace, and there is necessarily little of that repetition of one or two stereotyped figures which in longer works al-

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most strangles the life in most music of the virtuoso type.

The second variation is hopelessly commonplace. The melody, scarcely varied, is in octaves for the right hand, and the tum-tum for the left is changed to a rat-a-tat-tat-a-ta-tat. The *raison d'être* of the variation is the crossing of the right hand over the left in the second half of the first beat of *every* measure, in order to dive, as it were, into the deep accented note of the second beat. One cannot but think of the leap of children from some upper loft to a hay-filled mow beneath. Herz makes the right hand take such a flight here, over and over again. One laughs with the delight of a child, yet wherein lies the joy? Is it in the taking flight? The movement through the air? The ultimate shock of landing?

The virtuoso is not a child. He is a clever man who plays upon what is and ever will be the child in man,—his bump of wonder. And he does not strike it with music, but with movement. It is not the notes of his scales or of his runs, but the speed with which he accomplishes them. Here in this second variation is proof of the case in point. If in every measure the right hand, instead of taking its bold flight, were to glide only one half as far and quietly relieve the left hand of its accompanying chords of the second beat; and if the left hand, so set free, were to play that resounding low note which was the hay-mow to the right; but to the left is only a step downstairs, the musical effect and the musical value of the piece would remain quite unchanged. But Herz would not have played it so; for the reason that he wrote this variation merely to show his right hand and arm in free, sweeping movement through the air. Mark you, then: the great effect of this second variation is wholly one of movement. Not only is there no question of music; there is not even one of sound.

## PIANISTIC SENSATIONALISM

The third variation gives the theme to the left hand, and the right flies up the keyboard in arpeggios and down in scales, at a high rate of speed. From here the music expands freely into a sort of fantasia. Fundamentally there are still variations, but they are not cut off definitely from each other. Notice from here on, likewise, some excellent writing for the keyboard, something of an independent and melodious part for the left hand, brilliant chromatics, trills, and runs that drop in whirling circles, tremolos, filigree scales over smooth basses *à la* John Field. Then there is a *Final* in which the theme is broken up into a lilting, extremely rapid waltz, and in which the pianist is called upon to surmount difficulties of no trivial kind. The series comes to an end in a coda, which, like many a classical coda, swells big as the frog in the fable till it bursts.

These variations and all other variations of Herz are dead as the facile hand that wrote them. There is nothing of musical life in them, and consequently they never had a chance to prove themselves immortal. But the point is not the lack of musical value in these pieces, but the very striking presence of high technical skill. This, as found not only here but in his concertos and other compositions, is the gauge of his skill as a player, which by these signs was extraordinary. As a musician he may very well have been a charlatan, but as a virtuoso he was an adept. His universal success is, finally, proof that such a man was the man that the public most wanted to hear.

Another indication of the public taste at that time, which, be it remembered, was the time of Schumann and Chopin, is the fact that such variations and fantasias as Herz now composed on familiar airs from operas or household songs were, perhaps above all else, acceptable. This again must mean that the general audience was interested not in what we know as

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music, but in a movement of hands, arms, fingers, and incidentally sounds, upon a musical structure with which they had not to bother themselves. In other words one went to hear or to see what the player could do, not to listen to what he could express of his own emotion, or reveal of the emotional content of pianoforte music.

The pianoforte was, after all, a relatively new instrument. Though Clementi, Mozart and Beethoven had written for it, they had not forgotten that in the houses whither their music would find its way, there were likelier to be harpsichords than pianofortes. It was not until the time of Herz that the pianoforte had become familiar to the household touch of prosperous tradesmen and artisans. Here was created a new public, one which wished to relish its new possession, to prune itself beside the blazing glory in which it might now boast part-ownership.

There is an amusing passage in Von Lenz's book \* on the great virtuosos. It was written in connection with Tausig, almost twenty years after the death of Chopin. 'His [Tausig's] distinguishing characteristic was,' he wrote, 'that he never played for *effect*, but was always absorbed in the piece itself and its artistic interpretation. This objectivity the general public never understood; whenever serpents are strangled, it always wants to know just how big and dangerous they are, and judges of this by the performer's behavior. The general public thinks that whatever appears easily surmounted, is not really difficult, and that son or daughter at home might do it just as well!' The opera fantasias and variations of Herz, of Thalberg, and even of Liszt had the advantage, from the manager's point of view, of making self-evident the bigness and dangerousness of the serpent; for, that which was added

\* W. von Lenz: 'The Great Piano Virtuosos of Our Time.' Translated from the German by Madeline R. Baker, New York, 1899.

## SIGISMUND THALBERG

to the familiar tune was no less than fangs, coils, and fiery breath of the beast itself, which the knight of the piano both created and destroyed.

### II

As there were soldiers of fortune who, like Herz, made up by an abundance of shrewd and witty sense, what they lacked in refinement, there were others, like Sigismund Thalberg, whose outstanding quality was elegance. Von Lenz called Thalberg the 'only correct "gentleman rider" of the piano.' This may be taken to refer to his playing rather than to his compositions. It was most beautiful playing, according to all testimony, perfectly smooth, clear, sonorous, liquid, singing, enriched by every quality, in fact, which may be derived from a perfect and delicate mechanism governed by a fine ear. As a player he was by many preferred to Liszt. This was a purely sensuous preference, based entirely upon the qualities of sound which the two men were able to win from the piano. In this regard Liszt and Thalberg may be considered rivals of an equal endowment.

We must, however, limit ourselves to the quality of Thalberg's compositions, for astride of these he rode into the general pianistic fray. He published eighty-three pieces or sets of pieces. Three-quarters of these are variations or fantasias. As in the list of Herz's compositions, we find in that of Thalberg's variations on popular songs of many nations: on 'God Save the King' and 'Rule Britannia,' on Viennese airs, and Styrian melodies, on 'Home, Sweet Home,' 'The Last Rose of Summer,' and 'Lily Dale.' Then there are fantasias and grand fantasias on two dozen or more operas: *Norma*, *Sonnambula*, *La Muette de Portici*, *Oberon*, *Der Freischütz*, *Guillaume Tell*, *Robert le Diable*, *Don*

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*Pasquale, La Fille du régiment, Un Ballo in Maschero* and many others. The original works are of no particular merit except that of being amiable and pleasingly written for the piano. The most successful of the grand fantasias seems to have been that on airs from Rossini's *Moïse*, over which we may pause to find evidence of his purposes and his style.

This was indeed one of the grand pieces of the century. A glance through the pages is enough to show that Thalberg was a master of the stupendous. Herz had nothing to show like the colossal climax and close of this fantasia on 'Moses.' On the other hand, it seems that nowhere in this grandiose composition is there any writing so fine as that of the first variation of Herz's we have just discussed.

But Thalberg is much more of a musician, or is more willing to show himself one, than Herz. There are touches of good part-writing, of skillful imitation, and of the combining of two melodies. There is an introduction, beginning as quietly as Moses slept in the rushes, which Thalberg builds up more solidly, if not more effectively, than Herz built up his. The accompaniment to the first theme, simple enough as it is, shows a touch of flesh—is not the skin and bones of the 'tum-tum.' On the whole the left hand part is more varied throughout. There is an episode in D-minor in which the left hand figures are flexible, and upon the taking up again of reminiscences of the first broad theme in the right hand, the left hand plays with phrases of the theme of the section to come.

There is little unity in the piece, hardly a perceptible architecture. We have now a section in B-flat minor, and here we have many a tum-tum-tum in the left hand. Rossini's melody in the right, however, is interesting enough in itself to carry the music along. This section is extended by variants of the theme and a great deal of rapid finger work—single notes for the most

## THALBERG'S FANTASIA ON 'MOSES'

part. The last section begins after a *fermata* with a few ponderous introductory measures in broken chords, rather thickly scored, but portentous. The stalwart melody is played by the right hand, crossed over the left or mixed in with it. And now watch Thalberg, and see how the man can ride.

This is a march theme, simply started at first, then played with the thumb of the right hand, which has time between its separate notes to scamper up and down the keyboard. Notice, too, that when the right hand is soaring too high to be brought back in time for the thumb to perch again on its melody, the thumb of the left hand jumps into the breach and saves the line. Right thumb, left thumb, left thumb, right thumb, either will do. And so the hands are free to jump and run and fly. This emancipation was said to be Thalberg's accomplishment; but instances of dividing the melody between the two hands may be found in the work of Beethoven, Schubert, and Weber. It were needless to mention Bach in this connection. However, it is just the sort of thing Thalberg needs, and he uses it skillfully and successfully.

Meanwhile, the accompaniment grows apace. There are runs of thirds for the right hand, which can thus indulge itself, knowing it need not be home before dark, so to speak, that the left hand thumb can wind the clock and keep the fire burning. There is next a suggestion of pounding chords, but this gives way to a strange shivering run of repeated notes—one remembers how Kuhnau told the story of the frightened Israelites two hundred and fifty years before, there are growing agitation, shrieks of the rising wind, dreadfully raucous repeated octaves, now on E and, with a flash, on F, and a pounding left hand that marches and rushes. It is like the shriek of the approaching locomotive above the roar of its thundering speed. And just as it should crash into view, or into something,

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there is the sudden stillness of infinite night, and then our march theme, spun like a thread of silver through flying runs. From thumb to thumb it winds, and always pianissimo. The effect must have been one to make a listener breathless with amazement. Little by little crescendo, a change from B-flat major to G-major, a substitution of full chords or octaves for the single thumb notes, and an extension of the runs into the clouds, these bring about the close, a last page where left and right hand together pound out the theme in repeated solid chords, with *tutta la forza*. Sheer noise it is, here; and with all this overpowering bombast the fantasia on 'Moses' comes to an end.

Such a work is well worth considering. We may not flatter ourselves that even at this day we could resist its power under the hands of a virtuoso. It would not by any means sound flat. But the instinctive response to such sonority would perhaps be a cause for shame to those who were conscious of even a little musical learning. The word trash comes quickly to the lips, and the more readily when we know our sensational heart has beat a trifle faster in spite of our better reason. It is not, then, that the music is feeble or unsuccessful, but that we distrust sensationalism and cherish a professional shame of it.

The paraphernalia of the sensationalist composer is necessarily limited, and Thalberg's fantasias and variations suffer principally because of these limitations. He has a great knowledge and control of the pianoforte, but can find only scant variety of use for them. He must depend most upon speed and upon noise, and both are what we may call cumulative effects. In other and less elegant words, he must use lots of speed and lots of noise. His runs are masses of notes, very frequently no more than arpeggios or chromatic scales. He throws a run up from a melody note as you throw a ball into the air. It covers its distance and drops.



## THALBERG'S LIMITATIONS

It is no more the style of Chopin than your ball is like the flight of a bird. But the very fact that it goes up and down with no more freedom of movement than the ball that is thrown in the air, is what makes it purely sensational, purely a matter of speed in a mass of sound. If it went otherwise than upon its automatic way, your ears would be pricked from feeling into listening.

In the matter of noise the effect must still be massive. The sensationalist composer must always write for the feeling, not the listening ear, and he can best overpower the former by repeating chords rapidly; for in doing this he not only makes a very mountain of noise but adds the mountain of movement upon it. Of all the tricks of the pianist this is the most vulgarly sensational; and yet, when it comes to a matter of noise how else can he accomplish his purpose? In no other way can he make such a din, and if he tries any other he shocks the ear into listening.

So in many a way Thalberg is a slave to his purpose. The ear that has been trained to listen cannot but be wearied or outraged; but forget our recently acquired habit of listening (for even among many of the exalted it is only half acquired) and Thalberg may still to-day become what Schumann called him more than half a century ago,—a god—at the piano. Rubinstein, by the way, was hardly the man to call him a grocer, even though he dealt, as we have had to admit, with masses of notes. There was a splendor about him, something fine and grand as well; but like gods in general he was not to be, or may not now be approached, else he loses his godhead, which resolves into an agitation of the ear. There is no splendor in his music but the splendor of sensation.

If we examine the fabric of his music with a more technical eye we shall find that he makes relatively little use of double notes, relatively little demand upon

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the left hand as far as broad figures are concerned, but much upon the lightness and freedom of the wrist in both hands. There is, besides, the dividing of the melody between the thumbs of both hands, already mentioned.

He had a very unusual power over melody on the piano. For this we have the word of his none too amiable rival, Liszt, that Thalberg alone could make the piano sing like the violin. He was invited to publish an instruction book on *L'art du chant, appliqué au piano*. This is composed of a few introductory paragraphs, and a dozen transcriptions of melodies upon which the student was expected to work out the precepts he had just read. The remarks may still be of some interest to the pianist, but surely the transcriptions will be more so. The day for that sort of music has gone by, but one may still delight in the skill with which Thalberg was able to write melody, originally conceived for voices or violin, with orchestral accompaniment, upon the piano. None of these is so pretentious as some of the big transcriptions of symphonies and overtures made by Liszt; but from the point of view of workmanship all are quite equal to Liszt. The eighth—on a scene from Meyerbeer's *Il Crociato*—is tremendously effective in places. The ninth—on a ballade from *Preciosa*—is exceedingly well done. The tenth is a wholly charming transcription of one of the *Müller-Lieder*.

We may speak, in passing, of a nocturne in E major, opus 28, as representative of the best of his original compositions. It is by no means great music either in the sense of inspired emotion or of richly varied workmanship; but it is well adapted to the piano, sweet in melody, and not too sweet in mood. The obligato treatment of the left hand in the middle section is worthy of note as a sign of considerable technical ability, the development of which probably atrophied

## VIRTUOSITY: HERZ AND THALBERG

under the close pressure of a constant adulation. This Nocturne seems on the whole rather above the average of Mendelssohn's 'Songs without Words,' by virtue of the treatment of the piano in it; and may, with other of his original works, be gently slid into the company of Liszt's 'Consolations' and 'Love Dreams.'

Most of the music of Herz and Thalberg has been forgotten, and that which might still be successfully played, is now banished from the concert stage as trash. It is true not only that one finds a great sameness in it, but also that in the light of a longer familiarity with the instrument and of strides in executive skill on the keyboard little of it presents what may seem to us to-day even ingenuity. Yet to estimate its value as well as its significance in the world of pianoforte music one must not forget the purpose for which it was written; namely, to display the composer's skill as a performer, and the brilliant and powerful resources of the instrument, and at the same time to win a livelihood from the world by stirring its inhabitants to a frenzied delight. The aim to succeed with the public, no matter what the means, has something of the heroic in it, and in music which has been the means of such success there must be some element of bigness. This bears no relation to the greatness of service to an ideal which is sacred. It is in every way profane. Yet it is at the same time a force always to be reckoned with, the more so as the development of society gives the power to the mass of people to assert its own tastes and demand its own enjoyments. To such a development the universal success of Herz and Thalberg is related. It is because of still further development that their wonders have become commonplaces, not because either their purpose or their music is intrinsically contemptible. Both these are respectable as manifestations of energy and great labor; and that the two great players achieved a victory which won the applause of the whole

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world, indicates a streak of the hero in the cosmos of both.

### III

We may conceive Herz and Thalberg each to be an infant Hercules, strangling serpents in his cradle, if we compare them with Franz Liszt, who, above all else, represents virtuosity grown to fully heroic proportions. He was the great and universal hero in the history of music. He cannot be dissociated from the public, the general world over which he established his supremacy by feats of sheer muscular or technical skill. Even the activity of his mind was essentially empirical. Especially in the realm of pianoforte music he won his unique place by colossal energy put to test or to experiment upon the public through the instrument. The majority of his compositions in this branch of music are *tours de force*.

His manifold activities in music all reveal the truly great virtuoso, whom we may here define as an agent of highest efficiency between a created art and the public to which it must be related. We will presently analyze some of his compositions for the pianoforte, but without presuming to draw from features of them so discovered any conclusions as to their musical vitality or their æsthetic value. These conclusions must be left to the wisdom and sense of posterity; whatever they may prove to be, one cannot at present but recognize in Liszt first and foremost the intermediary. He so conducted himself in all his musical activities, which, taken in the inverse order of their importance, show him as a writer upon subjects related to music, as a conductor, as a composer, and as a pianist. He worked in an indissoluble relation with the public, and by virtue of this relation appears to us a hero of human and comprehensible shape, though enormous, whose feet

## LISZT'S PLAYING

walked in the paths of men and women, and whose head was not above the clouds in a hidden and secret communion which we can neither define nor understand.

Many qualities in his character and in his person, which, of course, are of no importance in estimating the value of his compositions, made his peculiar relation with the public secure. His face was very handsome, brilliantly so; he had a social charm which won for him a host of friends in all the capitals of Europe; he was fascinating to men and women in private, and in public exercised a seemingly irresistible personal magnetism over his audiences. He was, moreover, exceedingly generous and charitable, quick to befriend all musicians, especially men younger than he, and to lend his aid in movements of public benefaction. He was an accomplished linguist, and cosmopolitan, indeed international in his sympathies. As a teacher he inspired his many pupils with an almost passionate affection and feeling of loyal devotion. All these qualities set him quite apart from the wizard Paganini, with whom alone his technical mastery of his instrument was comparable. Paganini was wrapped in mystery, whether he wove the veil himself or not; Liszt was thoroughly a man of the world.

Liszt's playing was stupendous. At least two influences fired him not only to develop a technique which was limited only by the physically impossible, but to establish himself as the unequalled player of the age. Already as a youth when he first came to Paris this technique was extraordinary, though probably not unmatched. It was the wizardry of Paganini, whom he heard in Paris, that determined him to seek an attainment hitherto undreamed of in skill with the keyboard. This he achieved before he left Paris to journey away from the world in Switzerland and Italy. During his absence Thalberg came to Paris and took it by storm.

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Back came Liszt post-haste to vanquish his rival and establish more firmly his threatened position. The struggle was long and hotly fought, but the victory remained with Liszt, who, though he had not that skill in a kind of melody playing which was peculiar to Thalberg, towered far above his rival in virility, in fire, and in variety.

We may thus imagine him established by force of arms as king of all pianists. He never relinquished his royal prerogatives nor could he tolerate a challenge of his power; but he proved himself most a hero in the use to which he put this enormous power. He chose the master's highest privilege and made himself a public benefactor. It is true that he never wholly discarded the outward trappings of royal splendor. He played operatic fantasias like the rest; made, of his own, fabrics which were of a splendor that was blinding. But the true glory of his reign was the tribute he paid to men who had been greater than kings in music and the service he rendered to his own subjects in making known to them the masterpieces of these men, the fugues of Bach, the last sonatas of Beethoven, the works of Chopin. It was largely owing to Liszt that the general public was educated to an appreciation of these treasures, even that it became aware of its possession of them. It may be added that the pupils of this man, who was the most outstanding and overpowering of all the pianoforte virtuosi, made wholly familiar to the world a nobler practice of virtuosity in service to great music. Here, however, must be mentioned one great contemporary of Liszt's, Clara Schumann, who, possessed of greatest skill, made her playing, in even greater degree than Liszt, the interpreter of great music. It is one of the richest tributes to Liszt as a pianist that he may in some respects be compared with that noble woman.

It seems to have been above all else the fire in Liszt's

**Theodor Leschetitzky**  
*After a photograph from life*









## LISZT'S PLAYING

playing which made it what it was, a fire which showed itself in great flames of sound, spreading with incredible rapidity up and down the keyboard, which, like lightning, was followed by a prodigious thunder. Yet it was a playing which might rival all the elements, furious winds, tumultuous waters, very phenomena of sounds. Caricatures show him in all sorts of amazing attitudes, and many draw him with more than two hands, or more than five fingers to a hand. At the piano he was like Jupiter with the thunder-bolts, Æolus with the winds of heaven, Neptune with the oceans of the earth in his control. And at the piano he made his way to the throne which perhaps no other will ever occupy again.

Just what was the effect of Liszt's accomplishments upon pianoforte technique must be carefully considered, and such a consideration will bring us to problems which we may venture to assert are of profound interest to the pianist and to the musician. Broadly speaking he expanded the range of technique enormously, which is to say that he discovered many new effects and developed others which had previously been but partially understood. The *Douze Études d'exécution transcendante* may be taken to constitute a registry of his technical innovations.

First, in these, and in all his music, he makes a free and almost constant use of all the registers of the keyboard, the very low and the very high more than they had been used before, and the middle with somewhat more powerful scoring than was usual with any other composers excepting Schumann. Particularly his use of the low registers spread through the piano an orchestral thunder.

The ceaseless and rapid weaving together of the deepest and the highest notes made necessary a wide, free movement of both arms, and more remarkably of the left arm, because such rapid flights had hardly been

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demanded of it before. The fourth étude, a musical reproduction of the ride of Mazeppa, is almost entirely a study in the movement of the arms, demanding of them, especially in the playing of the inner accompaniment, an activity and control hardly less rapid or less accurate than what a great part of pianoforte music had demanded of the fingers.

It is in fact by recognizing the possibilities of movement in the arm that Liszt did most to expand pianoforte technique. One finds not only such an interplaying of the arms as that in 'Mazeppa' and other of his compositions, but a playing of the arms together in octave passages which leap over broadest distances at lightning speed. Sometimes these passages are centred, or rather based, so to speak, on a fixed point, from and to which the arms shoot out and back, touching a series of notes even more remote from the base, often being expected to cover the distance of nearly two octaves, as in the beginning of the first concerto. There are samples of this difficulty in 'Mazeppa'; and also of other runs in octaves for both hands, which are full of irregular and wide skips.

In the long and extremely rapid tremolos with which his music is filled, it is again the arm which is exerted to new efforts. The last of the études is a study in tremolo for the arm, and so is the first of the Paganini transcriptions. The tremolo, it need hardly be said, is no invention of Liszt's, but no composer before him demanded either such rapidity in executing it, or such a flexibility of the arm. The tremolo divided between the two hands, as here in this last study, and the rapid alternation of the two hands in the second study, depend still further on the freedom of the arm. It is the arm that is called upon almost ceaselessly in the tenth study; and the famous *Campanella* in the Paganini series is only a *tour de force* in a lateral movement of the arm, swinging on the wrist.

## LISZT'S EXPANSION OF TECHNIQUE

The series, usually chromatic, of free chords which one finds surging up and down the keyboard, often for both hands, may well paralyze the unpracticed arm; the somewhat bombastic climaxes, in which, *à la* Thalberg, he makes a huge noise by pounding chords, are a task for the arm. All of the last part of the eleventh étude, *Harmonies du soir*, is a study for the arm. Indeed even the wide arpeggios, running from top to bottom of the keyboard in bolder flight than Thalberg often ventured upon, the rushing scales, in double or single notes, the countless cadenzas and runs for both hands, all of these, which depend upon velocity for their effect, are possible only through the unmodified liberation of the arm.

All this movement of the arm over wide distances and at high speed makes possible the broad and sonorous effects which may be said to distinguish his music from that of his predecessors and his contemporaries. It makes possible his thunders and his winds, his lightnings and his rains. Thus he created a sort of grand style which every one must admit to be imposing.

Beyond these effects it is difficult to discover anything further so uniquely and so generally characteristic in his pianoforte style. He demands an absolutely equal skill in both hands, frequently throughout an entire piece. He calls for the most extreme velocity in runs of great length, sometimes in whole pages; and for as great speed in executing runs of double notes as in those of single. A study like the *Feux-Follets* deals with a complex mixture of single and double notes. All these things, however, can be found in the works of Schumann, or Chopin, or even Beethoven. Yet it must be said that no composer ever made such an extended use of them, nor exacted from the player quite so much physical endurance and sustained effort. Moreover, against the background of his effects

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of the arm, they take on a new light, no matter how often they had a share in the works of other composers.

It can hardly be denied, furthermore, that this new light which they seem to give his music, by which it appears so different from that of Schumann and even more from that of Chopin, is also due to the use to which he puts them. With Liszt these things are indisputably used wholly as effects. Liszt follows Thalberg, or represents a further development of the idea of pianoforte music which Thalberg represents. He deals with effects,—with, as we have said elsewhere of Thalberg, masses of sound. Very few of his compositions for the pianoforte offer a considerable exception, and with these we shall have to do presently. The great mass of études, concert or salon pieces, and transcriptions, those works in which he displays this technique, are virtuoso music. He shows himself in them a sensationalist composer. Therefore the music suffers by the necessary limitations mentioned in connection with Herz and Thalberg, with the difference that within these limitations Liszt has crowded the utmost possible to the human hand.

His great resources still remain speed and noise. He can do no more than electrify or stupefy. It must not be forgotten that in these limitations lies the glory of his music, its quality that is heroic because it wins its battles in the world of men and women. It is superb in its physical accomplishment. It shows the mighty Hercules in a struggle with no ordinary serpent, but with the hundred-headed Hydra. Yet if he will electrify he must do so with speed that is reckless, and if he will overpower with noise he must be brutal. Hence the great sameness in his material, trills, arpeggios, scales, and chromatic scales, which are no more than these trills, arpeggios, scales, etc., even if they be filled up with all the notes the hand can grasp. Hence

## DIFFICULTIES OF LISZT'S MUSIC

also the passages of rapidly repeated chords in places where he wishes to be imposing to the uttermost.

It would be an interesting experiment to take from Liszt's pianoforte music all these numerous effects and put them together in a volume; then to classify them, and, having mastered three or four of the formulas, to try to find any further difficulties. It is doubtful if, having so mastered the few types, one would need to make great effort to play the whole volume from cover to cover. And these effects constitute the great substance of Liszt's music. He fills piece after piece with solid blocks of them. The page on which they are printed terrifies the eye, yet they demand of the player only speed and strength. Inasmuch as these may be presupposed in a theoretical technique, the music is, theoretically, not technically difficult. The higher difficulties of pianoforte playing are not to be met in music that conforms to technical types, but in music the notes of which appear in ever changing combinations and yet are of separate and individual importance. Such music presents a new difficulty almost in every measure. In playing it the mind must control each finger in its every move, and may not attend in general but must attend in particular. The player who can play the twelve études of Liszt will find the Well-tempered Clavichord and the Preludes of Chopin more difficult to play. In the *tours de force* of Liszt his technique is of itself effective; in the music of Bach or Chopin it must be effectual. Having a colossal technique he can play Liszt, but he must ever practise Bach and Chopin.

### IV

Liszt wrote a vast amount of music for the pianoforte. There is not space to discuss it in detail, and, in view of the nature of it and the great sameness

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of his procedures, such a discussion is not profitable. For a study of its general characteristics it may be conveniently and properly divided into three groups. These are made up respectively of transcriptions, of a sort of realistic music heavily overlaid with titles, and of a small amount of music which we may call absolute, including a sonata and two concertos.

The transcriptions are well-nigh innumerable. Some he seems to have made with the idea of introducing great orchestral masterpieces into the family circle by means of the pianoforte. So we may consider the transcriptions, or rather the reductions of the nine symphonies of Beethoven, of the septet by the same composer, and of the *Symphonie Fantastique* and the 'Harold in Italy' of Berlioz. He has succeeded in making these works playable by ten fingers; but he did not pretend to make them pianoforte music. He had an astonishing skill in reading from full score at sight, and in these reductions he put this skill at the service of the public.

In rearranging smaller works for the piano, such as songs of Schumann, Chopin, Schubert, Mendelssohn, and Franz, he worked far more for the pianist. He saw clearly the great problem which such a rearrangement involved, that qualities in the human voice for which these songs were conceived were wholly lacking in the pianoforte, and that he must make up for this lack by an infusion of new material which brought out qualities peculiar to the instrument. In so far as possible he took the clue to these infusions from the accompaniment to the songs he worked on. In some songs the accompaniment was the most characteristic feature, or the most predominant element. There his task was light. The transcription of the Erl King, for example, meant hardly more than a division of the accompaniment as Schubert wrote it between the two



## LISZT'S TRANSCRIPTIONS

hands in such a way that the right would be able to add the melody. There is practically nothing of Liszt in the result. Schubert's accompaniment was a pianoforte piece in itself. Again, the accompaniment of 'Hark, Hark, the Lark' was originally highly pianistic. But here the piano could sing but a dry imitation of the melody; and Liszt therefore enriched the accompaniment, preserving always its characteristic motive, but expanding its range and adding little runs here and there, which by awakening the harmonious sonority of the piano concealed its lack of expressive power in singing melody. The result was a masterpiece of pianoforte style in which the melody and graceful spirit of the song were held fast.

Those songs the accompaniments of which were effective on the pianoforte seemed to blossom again under his hand into a new freshness. His skill was delicate and sure. Even in the case where the accompaniment was without distinction he was often able so to add arabesques in pianoforte style as to make the transcription wholly pleasing to the ear. The arrangement of Chopin's song, 'The Maiden's Wish,' offers an excellent example. Here, having little but a charming melody and varied harmonies to work on, he made a little piece of the whole by adding variations in piquant style. But often where he had no accompaniment to suggest ideas to him, he was either unsuccessful, as in the transcription of Wolfram's air from *Tannhäuser*, or overshot the mark in adding pianistic figuration, as in that of Mendelssohn's *Auf Flügeln des Gesanges*. He touched the Schumann and Franz songs, too, only to mar their beauty.

It may be that these transcriptions served a good end by making at least the names and the melodies of a number of immortal songs familiar to the public, but there can be no doubt that these masterpieces have proved more acceptable in their original form. Most

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of Liszt's transcriptions have fallen from the public stage. Amateurs who have the skill to play them have the knowledge that, for all their cleverness, they are not the songs themselves. And those which have been kept alive owe their present state of being to the favor of the pianist, who conceives them to be only pieces for his own instrument.

The number of Liszt's transcriptions in the style of fantasias is very great. Like his predecessors and his contemporaries he made use of any and every tune, and the airs or scenes from most of the favorite operas. There are fantasias on 'God Save the King' and *Le Carnaval de Venise*, on *Rigoletto*, *Trovatore*, and *Don Giovanni*. The name of the rest is legion. The frequency with which a few of them are still heard, would seem to prove that they at least have some virtue above those compositions of Herz and Thalberg in a similar vein; but most of them are essentially neither a better nor a worthier addition to the literature of the instrument and have been discarded from it. Those who admire Liszt unqualifiedly have said of these fantasias that they are great in having reproduced the spirit of the original works on which they were founded, that Liszt not only took a certain melody upon which to work, but that he so worked upon it as to intensify the original meaning which it took from its setting in the opera. The *Don Giovanni* fantasia is considered a masterpiece in thus expanding and intensifying at once.

But what, after all, is this long fantasia but a show piece of the showiest and the emptiest kind? How is it more respectable than Thalberg's fantasia on themes from 'Moses,' except that it contains fifty times as many notes and is perhaps fifty times louder and faster? It is a grand, a superb *tour de force*; but the pianist who plays it—and he must wield the power of the elements—reveals only what he can do, and what

## FANTASIA ON 'DON GIOVANNI'

Liszt could do. It can be only sensational. There is no true fineness in it. It is massive, almost orchestral. The only originality there is in it is in making a cyclone roar from the strings, or thunder rumble in the distance and crash overhead. On the whole the meretricious fantasia on *Rigoletto* is more admirable, because it is more naïve and less pretentious.

This *Reminiscences de Don Juan par Franz Liszt*, dedicated to his Majesty Christian Frederick VIII of Denmark with *respectueux et reconnaissant hommage*, begins with a long and stormy introduction, the predominant characteristic of which is the chromatic scale. This one finds blowing a hurricane; and there are tremolos like thunder and sharp accents like lightning. The storm, however, having accomplished its purpose of awe, is allowed to die away, and in its calm wake comes the duet *La ci darem la mano*, which, if it needed more beauty than that which Mozart gave it, may here claim that of being excellently scored for the keyboard. Liszt has interpolated long passages of pianistic fiorituri between the sections of it, at which one cannot but smile. Then follow two variations of these themes, amid which there is a sort of cadenza loosing the furious winds again, and at the end of which there is a veritable typhoon of chromatic scales, here divided between the two hands in octaves, there in thirds for the right hand. The variations are rich in sound, but commonplace in texture. Finally there is a *Presto*, which may be taken as a coda, founded upon Don Giovanni's air, *Finch' han dal vino*, an exuberant drinking song. The scoring of this is so lacking in ingenuity as well as in any imposing feature as to be something of an anti-climax. It trips along in an almost trivial manner, with a lot of tum-tum and a lot of speed. Toward the end there is many a word of hair-raising import: *sotto voce*, *martellato*, *rinforzando*, *velocissimo precipitato*, *appassionato energico*,

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*marcatissimo, strepitoso*, and a few others, all within the space of little over three pages. There is also another blast or two of wind. In the very last measures there is nothing left but to pound out heavy, full chords with a last exertion of a battle-scarred but victorious gladiator. And in spite of all this the last section of the work is wanting in weight to balance the whole, and it seems like a skeleton of virtuosity with all its flesh gone. It must be granted that the recurrence of the opening motives at moments in the middle of the fray, and at the end, gives a theoretical unity of structure which similar fantasias by Herz and Thalberg did not have; but on the whole it might well be dispensed with from the work, which, in spite of such a sop to the dogs of form, remains nothing but a pot-pourri from a favorite opera.

This huge transcription, as well as the delicate arrangements of songs, the transcriptions of the overtures to 'William Tell' and *Tannhäuser*, and of Mendelssohn's 'Midsummer Night's Dream' music, as well as the elaborations of Schubert's Waltzes and other short pieces may, if you will, be taken as an instance of a professional courtesy or public benefaction on the part of Liszt; but they stand out none the less most conspicuously as virtuoso music. What Liszt really did in them was to exploit the piano. They effect but one purpose: that of showing what the piano can do. At the present day, when the possibilities of the instrument are commonly better known, they are a sort of punching bag for the pianist. Surely no one hears a pianist play Liszt's arrangement of the overture to *Tannhäuser* with any sense of gratitude for a concert presentation of Wagner's music. Nor does one feel that the winds and thunders in the *Don Giovanni* fantasia may cause Mozart to turn in his grave with gratitude. One sees the pianist gather his forces, figuratively hitch up his sleeves, and if one is not wholly

## LISZT'S REALISTIC PIECES

wearily of admiring the prowess of man, one wets one's lips and attends with bated breath. Something is to be butchered to make a holiday in many ways quite Roman.

### V

The second group of music to be observed consists of original pieces of a more or less realistic type. Nearly all have titles. There are *Impressions et Poésies*, *Fleurs mélodiques des Alpes*, *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, *Apparitions*, *Consolations*, *Légendes* and *Années de pèlerinage*. There are even portraits in music of the national heroes of Hungary. In the case of some the title is an after-thought. It indicates not what suggested the music but what the music suggested. There are two charming studies, for example, called *Waldesrauschen* and *Gnomenreigen*, which are pure music of captivating character. They are no more program music than Schumann's 'Fantasy Pieces,' nor do they suffer in the slightest from the limitations which a certain sort of program is held to impose upon music. First of all one notices an admirable treatment of the instrument. There is no forcing, no reckless speed nor brutal pounding. Then the quality of the music is fresh and pleasing, quite spontaneous; and both are delightful in detail.

Others are decidedly more realistic than most good music for the pianoforte which had been written up to that time. Take, for example, the two Legends, 'The Sermon of the Birds to St. Francis of Assisi,' and 'St. Francis of Paule Walking on the Waves.' These are picture music. In the one there is the constant twitter and flight of birds, in the other the surging of waters. Both are highly acceptable to the ear, but perhaps more as sound than as music. They depend upon effects, and the effects are those of imitation and representa-

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tion. The pieces lose half their charm if one does not know what they are about.

There seems to be no end of the discussion which has raged over the relative merits of so-called program music and absolute music. It has little relation to the beauty of sound in both kinds; else the triumphant beauty of much program music would have long since put an end to it. The Liszt Legends are as delightful to the ear as any other of his pieces which have no relation to external things. What we have to observe is that they deal with effects, that is with masses of sound—trills, scales and other cumulative figures; that, finely as these may be wrought, they have no beauty of detail nor any detailed significance. Here is no trace of that art of music which Chopin practised, an art of weaving many strands of sound in such a way that every minute twist of them had a special beauty, a music in which every note had an individual and a relative significance. The texture of the 'Legends' is perhaps brilliantly colored, but it is solid or even coarse in substance, relatively unvaried, and only generally significant. But it serves its purpose admirably.

In the *Années de pèlerinage* one finds a great deal of Liszt in a nut-shell. The three years of wandering through Switzerland and Italy netted twenty-three relatively short pieces, to which were later added three more, of Venetian and Neapolitan coloring, a *gondoliera*, a *canzona*, and a *tarantella*. All these pieces bear titles which are of greater or lesser importance to the music itself. It must be admitted that only a title may explain such poor music as *Orage*, *Vallée d'Obermann* and *Marche funèbre* (in memory of Emperor Maximilian of Mexico). These pieces are inexcusable bombast. The *Vallée d'Obermann*, which may claim to be the most respectable of them, is not only dank, saturated with sentimentality, but lacks spontaneous harmony and melody, and toward the

## LISZT: SONATA IN B MINOR

end becomes a mountain of commonplace noise to which one can find a parallel only in such songs as 'Palm Branches' (*Les Rameaux*). The 'Chapel of William Tell,' the 'Fantasia written after a reading of Dante,' the three pieces which claim a relation to three sonnets of Petrarch, and the two *Aux cyprès de la villa d'Este*, are hardly better. There is an *Éclogue*, a piece on homesickness, one on the Bells of Geneva, an 'Angelus' and a *Sursum Corda* as well. Three, however, that deal with water in which there is no trace of tears—*Au lac du Wallenstedt*, *Au bord d'une source*, and *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*—are wholly pleasing and even delightful pianoforte music. Especially the second of these is a valuable addition to the literature of the instrument. The suggested melody is spontaneous, the harmonies richly though not subtly colored, the scoring exquisite.

Yet, though in looking over the *Années de pèlerinage* one may find but a very few pieces of genuine worth, though most are pretentious, there is in all a certain sort of fire which one cannot approach without being warmed. It is the glorious spirit of Byron in music. There is the facility of Byron, the posturing of Byron, the oratory of Byron; but there is his superb self-confidence too, showing him tricking himself as well as the public, yet at times a hero, and Byron's unquenchable enthusiasm and irrepressible passionate-ness.

Finally we come to the small group of big pieces in which we find the sonata in B minor, the two concertos, several études, polonaises and concert pieces. Among the études, the great twelve have been already touched upon. Besides these the two best known are those in D-flat major and in F minor. The former is wholly satisfactory. The latter is at once more difficult and less spontaneous. The two polonaises, one in C minor and one in E major, have the virtues which be-

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long to concert pieces in the style of Weber's *Polacca*, the chief of which is enormous brilliance. In addition to this that in C minor is not lacking in a certain nobility; but that in E major is all of outward show.

The two concertos are perfect works of their kind, unexcelled in brilliancy of treatment of both the orchestra and the piano, and that in E-flat major full of musical beauty. Both are free in form and rhapsodical in character, effusions of music at once passionate and poetical. That in A major loses by somewhat too free a looseness of form. Even after careful study it cannot but seem rambling.

The sonata in B minor is perhaps Liszt's boldest experiment in original music for the pianoforte alone. One says experiment quite intentionally, because the work shows as a whole more ingenuity than inspiration, is rather an invention than a creation. There are measures of great beauty, pages of factitious development. At times one finds a nobility of utterance, at others a paucity of ideas.

As to the themes, most of them are cleverly devised from three motives, given in the introduction. One of these is a heavy, descending scale (*lento assai*); another a sort of volplane of declamatory octaves which plunge downward the distance of a diminished seventh, rise a third, and down a minor seventh again through a triplet; the third a sort of drum figure (*forte marcato*). The initial statement of these motives is impressive; but it is followed by a sort of uninteresting music building which is, unhappily, to be found in great quantity throughout the whole piece. This is no more than a meaningless repetition of a short phrase or figure, on successive degrees of the scale or on successive notes of harmonic importance. Here in the introduction, for example, is a figure which consists of a chord of the diminished seventh on an off beat of the measure, followed by the downward arpeggio of a



## THE SONATA IN B MINOR

triad. This figure is repeated five times without any change but one of pitch; and it is so short and the repetitions so palpable that one feels something of the irritation stirred by the reiterated boasting of the man who is always about to do something.

The long work spins itself out page after page with the motives of the introduction in various forms and this sort of sparring for time. There is no division into separate movements, yet there are clear sections. These may be briefly touched upon. Immediately after the introduction there is a fine-sounding phrase in which one notices the volplane motive (right hand) and the drum motive (left hand). It is only two measures long, yet is at once repeated three times, once in B minor, twice in E minor. Then follow measures of the most trite music building. The phrases are short and without the slightest distinction, and the ceaseless repetition is continued so inexorably that one may almost hear in the music a desperate asthmatic struggle for breath. One is relieved of it after two or three pages by a page of the falling scale motive under repeated octaves and chords.

There is next a new theme, which seems to be handled like the second theme in the classical sonata form, but leads into a long section of recitative character, in which the second and third motives carry the music along to a singing theme, literally an augmentation of the drum motive. This is later hung with garlands of the ready-made variety, and then gives way to a treatment of the volplane motive in another passage of short breathing. The succeeding pages continue with this motive, brilliantly but by no means unusually varied, and there is a sort of stamping towards a climax, beginning *incalzando*. But this growth of noise is coarse-grained, even though the admirer may rightly say that it springs from one of the chief motives of the piece. It leads to a passage made

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up of the pompous second theme and a deal of recitative; but after this there comes a section in F-sharp major of very great beauty, and the *quasi adagio* is hauntingly tender and intimate. These two pages in the midst of all the noise and so much that must be judged commonplace will surely seem to many the only ones worthy of a great creative musician.

After them comes more grandiose material, with that pounding of chords for noise one remembers at the end of Thalberg's fantasia on 'Moses,' then a sort of dying away of the music which again has beauty. A double fugue brings us back to a sort of restatement of the first sections after the introduction, with a great deal of repetition, scantness of breath, pompousness, and brilliant scoring. Just before the end there is another mention of the lovely measures in F-sharp major. There is a short epilogue, built on the three motives of the introduction.

This sonata is a big work. It is broadly planned, sonorous and heavy. It has the fire of Byron, too, and there is something indisputably imposing about it. But like a big sailing vessel with little cargo it carries a heavy ballast; and though this ballast is necessary to the balance and safety of the ship, it is without intrinsic value.

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In view of Liszt's great personal influence, of his service rendered to the public both as player and conductor, of his vast musical knowledge, his enthusiasms and his prodigious skill with the keyboard, one must respect his compositions, especially those for the pianoforte with which we have been dealing. Therefore, though when measured by the standards of Bach, Mozart and Chopin they cannot but fall grievously short, one must admit that such a standard is only one of many, and furthermore that perhaps Liszt's music may have itself set a new standard. Certainly in many ways

## LISZT'S HUNGARIAN RHAPSODIES

it is superlative. It is in part the loudest and the fastest music that has been written for the piano, and as such stands as an achievement in virtuosity which was not before, and has not since been, paralleled. Also it is in part the most fiery and the most overpowering of pianoforte music. It is the most sensational, as well, with all the virtues that sensationalism may hold.

These are, indeed, its proved greatness, and chief of them is a direct and forceful appeal to the general public. It needs no training of the ear to enjoy or to appreciate Liszt's music. Merely to hear it is to undergo its forceful attraction. Back of it there stands Liszt, the pianist and the virtuoso, asserting his power in the world of men and women. However much or little he may be an artist, he is ever the hero of pianoforte music. So it seems fitting to regard him last as composer of nineteen Hungarian Rhapsodies, veritably epics in music from the life of a fiery, impetuous people. Rhythms, melodies, and even harmonies are the growth of the soil of Hungary. They belonged to the peasant before Liszt took them and made them thunderous by his own power. What he added to them, like what he added to airs from favorite operas, may well seem of stuff as elemental as the old folk-songs themselves: torrents and hurricanes of sound, phenomena of noise. The results are stupendous, and in a way majestic.

As far as pianoforte music is concerned Liszt revealed a new power of sound in the instrument by means of the free movement of the arms, and created and exhausted effects due to the utmost possible speed. These are the chief contributions of his many compositions to the literature of the piano. His music is more distinguished by them than by any other qualities. In melody he is inventive rather than inspired. His rhythms lack subtlety and variety. Of this there can be no better proof than the endless short-windedness

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already observed in the sonata in B minor, which is to be observed, moreover, in the Symphonic Poems for orchestra. As a harmonist he lacks not so much originality as spontaneity. He is oftener bold than convincing. One finds on nearly every page signs of the experimentalist of heroic calibre. He is the inventor rather than the prophet, the man of action rather than the inspired rhapsodist. He is a converter into music oftener than a creator of music.

Hence we find him translating caprices of Paganini into caprices for the pianoforte; and when by so doing he has, so to speak, enlarged his vocabulary enormously, he gives us, in the *Douze Études*, a sort of translation of the pianoforte itself into a cycle of actions. Again he translates a great part of the literature of his day into terms of music: *Consolations, Harmonies poétiques et religieuses, Légendes, Eclogues* and other things. Even Dante and Petrarch are so converted, not to mention Sénancourt, Lamartine, Victor Hugo, Byron, and Lenau, with other contemporaries. The Chapel of William Tell, the Lake of Wallenstadt, the cypresses and fountains at the Villa d'Este, even the very Alps themselves pass through his mind and out his fingers. In this process details are necessarily obscured if not obliterated, and the result is a sort of general reproduction in sound that is not characterized by the detailed specialities of the art of music, that is, of the art of Bach, Mozart, and Chopin. And even of Schumann, it may be added, for Schumann's music runs independently beside poetry, not with it, so closely associated, as Liszt's runs.

The question arises as to how this generalization of music will appear to the world fifty years hence. Is Liszt a radical or a reactionary, after all? Did he open a new life to music, a further development of the pianoforte, or did he, having mastered utterly all the technical difficulties of the pianoforte, throw music back

## QUALITIES OF LISZT'S MUSIC

a stage? Internally his music has far less independent and highly organized life than Chopin's. But by being less delicate is it perhaps more robust, more procreative? At present such hardly seems to be the case. A great part of the pianoforte music of Liszt is sinking out of sight in company with that of Herz and Thalberg—evidently for the same reason; namely, that it is sensationalist music. Its relations to poetry, romanticism, nature or landscape will not preserve it in the favor of a public whose ear little by little prefers rather to listen than to be overpowered. Yet, be his music what it may, he himself will always remain one of the great, outstanding figures in the history of music, the revealer of great treasures long ignored. Whatever the value of his compositions, he himself, the greatest of all pianoforte virtuosi, set the standard of the new virtuosity which, thanks to his abiding example, becomes less and less a skill of display, more and more an art of revelation.

## CHAPTER IX

### IMITATORS AND NATIONALISTS

Inevitable results of Schumann, Chopin and Liszt—Heller, Raff, Jensen, Scharwenka, Moszkowski, and other German composers—The influence of national characteristics: Grieg, his style and his compositions; Christian Sinding—The Russians: Balakireff, Rubinstein, Tschaikowsky, Arensky, Glazounoff, Rachmaninoff, Scriabin, and others—Spanish traits; I. Albeniz; pianoforte composers in England and the United States.

It is scarcely to be wondered at that the work of Chopin, Schumann, and Liszt has eclipsed that of most of their contemporaries, nor that three such remarkable composers should have left a standard for pianoforte music by which little else for the piano since that day can afford to be measured. One feels that the German Romantic spirit could find no expression more complete than that which Schumann gave it; that the beauties of sound in the pianoforte could not be again put into such emotional form as Chopin put them; that the instrument itself could not be made to do more than Liszt had made it do. These things are nearly true. One cannot therefore expect to find in the music of their obscure contemporaries such superlative greatness as has made theirs known to the whole world. One expects to find, and does find, in the music of their successors imitations of their method, style, or technique. The literature for the piano has been stuffed to overflowing with music of this kind. Only now and then may a little of it be distinguished by a touch of originality, either of personal, or, more frequently, of national or local idiom.

## STEPHEN HELLER AND JOACHIM RAFF

### I

In Germany the romanticism of Schumann, combined with the technique of Liszt, has about run its course. With the exception of Brahms, no composer of high order has there given his attention to the pianoforte. Starting with Stephen Heller (1814-88), the most lovable contemporary and friend of Chopin, the list of composers for the pianoforte touches upon Joachim Raff (1822-82), Adolf Jensen (1837-79), Philipp and Xaver Scharwenka, Maurice Moszkowski, Friedrich Gernsheim, for an instant on Richard Strauss and longer upon Max Reger.

One protests against the obscurity into which Stephen Heller's music is rapidly falling. It is too charming to be let go. Yet it has too little strength to stand much longer against the fate that has already pushed Mendelssohn aside. Heller published over one hundred and fifty pieces or rather sets of pieces for the piano. Nearly all of these are in short forms; many of them are not more than a page long. Many of the sets are given fanciful titles. One finds several sets—opus 86, opus 128, and opus 136—of Woodland Sketches (*Im Walde*); two *Promenades d'un solitaire*, *Nuits Blanches*, *Reise um mein Zimmer*, and Thorn, Fruit and Flower pieces, after Jean Paul Richter. Besides these there are many sets of short studies, the most melodious simple studies that have ever been written, for which both student and teacher should still feel grateful; and there are numerous Preludes, Tarantelles and Dances.

Heller's thoughts are fresh and winning, his style is remarkably clear and well adapted to the keyboard. Among the preludes in all keys, opus 81, the second, third, fifteenth, eighteenth, and twenty-second are far more effective than the majority of Mendelssohn's 'Songs Without Words.' The Tarantelles, and one or

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two of the *Promenades*, are even brilliant. We mention these because they are before us. But on the whole Heller's pianoforte style is not distinguished by anything except clearness. The parts for the left hand are monotonous, the accompaniment figures rarely more than commonplace. Perhaps these things are evident only by comparison of his music with Chopin or Schumann.

Unhappily there is another weakness besides these. His rhythms are unvaried, and his structures of phrases desperately regular. Here, we think, lies the secret of its softness, its lack of virility and power to stand against time. Heller repeats himself. He cannot take one step without (in most cases) going back to take it over again. The process is all the more distressing to the listener because Heller's steps, or his strides, are so invariably of the same length, and so inexorably deliberate. His harmonies are very like Mendelssohn's, and his melodies are often sweet.

In a way the world has dealt more hardly with Joachim Raff than with Heller; because not more than twenty-five years ago Raff was one of the most played of all composers. Not only his pianoforte works. His symphonies, especially *Im Walde* and *Leonore*, held quite as high and strong a place in the public favor as the symphonies of Tschaikowsky do at the present day. And now even his pianoforte works are discarded.

There is a great number of them, including all sorts of salon music, a concerto, and numberless transcriptions. His style is exceedingly brilliant, showing markedly the influence of Liszt, with whom Raff was on various occasions closely associated; but his ideas are almost never more than commonplace. Oskar Bie speaks of the unfortunate *Polka de la reine*. It is perhaps typical of Raff at his worst, yet there is elsewhere in his music suggestion enough of what this worst can



## STEPHEN HELLER AND JOACHIM RAFF

be. It is hard to believe that the man who wrote eleven symphonies could have written the romance opus 126, No. 2.

On the other hand, a piece like that called *La fileuse* is in every way acceptable. It is beautifully scored for the piano, worthy of Liszt himself in that regard; and the treatment of the short motive which lies at the base of it all, like the harmonies and modulations, is all fresh and welcome to the ear. Among the shorter pieces there are many that are clean-cut in style and that have a sort of sturdy charm even to-day. Parts of a minuet in opus 126, and the gavotte in opus 125, prove that he could write rhythmical music much better than the *Polka de la reine*. On the whole one thinks of Raff as writing too easily for his own good. Of this sort of vain facility Heller's music is quite free, and also of the false shine which in Raff's music is so often the result.

Adolf Jensen was a man of far more sensitive cast than Raff. His music is finer, especially his songs. As a melodist he stands between Schumann and Robert Franz, and indeed must be considered as one of the best results of German romanticism in music. The influence of Schumann is perhaps strongest in his work; but that of Chopin, and even more that of Wagner in the later songs, can be detected. His style is not distinctive, but it is expressive. It is strange to read in the dedication prefixed to the *Romantische Studien*, a plea for fantastic, emotional and mysterious life in pianoforte music. The best of his keyboard music is the Wedding Music, opus 45, written for four hands. Other works are the *Wanderbilder*, opus 17, the *Idyllen*, opus 43, and the *Eroticon*, opus 44. There are besides these a sonata, opus 25, and a German suite, opus 36.

Xaver Scharwenka and Maurice Moszkowski are among the successful composers for the pianoforte of

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the last fifteen years or more. Scharwenka's first concerto, opus 35, in B-flat minor has been highly praised. The second, third, and fourth have not made quite so good an impression. Moszkowski is master of a most brilliant and facile style on the keyboard. His waltzes, especially those in E major and that in A major, his concert-studies, especially the *Etincelles*, and the finished and brilliant Barcarolle have been played far and wide with delight to both pianist and audience. Yet neither Scharwenka nor Moszkowski has advanced pianoforte technique, nor has either of them been the discoverer of new effects. There are some charming pieces by Friedrich Gernsheim. One series, called *Symbole*, has just a touch of that impressionism which has given the music of the French composers its great charm.

The celebrated pianist Eugen d'Albert has composed pieces in almost severely classic style, which have a manly, vigorous ring. A few early works of Richard Strauss for the piano are hardly sufficient to suggest that he might have done for that instrument what he came to do for the orchestra. One looks in vain through the many pianoforte works of Max Reger for any new treatment of the instrument. His pieces are descended from Bach and Brahms, descended thence and passed through the shaping medium of a remarkable mathematical mind.

Here, perhaps, among the Germans mention may be made of Arnold Schönberg. He has written two sets of pianoforte pieces, the second of which is the more remarkable. His genius is polyphonic, therefore his music of this kind does not bring out the subtle qualities of the piano which appealed to Chopin and which Debussy has further revealed. His pianoforte compositions may be considered as a household arrangement and presentation of his extraordinary theories, hardly as music suggested by the instrument itself.

## NATIONALIST COMPOSERS

Evidently the Romantic movement in Germany, having expressed itself almost thoroughly in pianoforte music through Schumann, passed on to a new expression through Wagner, whose powerful genius, flying wide of the keyboard, has since presided over and shaped the future of German music. Only with Brahms, then, has the piano spoken a new word in its own tongue.

### II

After the middle of the nineteenth century an effort becomes noticeable in many nations to inject some freshness or newness into music by employing harmonies, turns of melodies and odd rhythms of a distinctly local or national flavor. Awaiting the advent of a new genius of international significance who should revolutionize music, or resurrect it from a stagnation little better than death, such an effort toward national expression was the most successful safeguard against imitation and subservience. Moreover, it was productive of enthusiasm, which is a quality of youth in music. Accepting forms and technique as matters of course, composers threw themselves with joy into the expression of the spirit of their beloved land.

Naturally in those countries which had inherited from the ages a store of folk-music the new movement was the most striking. Scandinavia and Russia were especially rich in such an endowment. Their folk-songs were strongly marked and individual, and in so far as their composers drew upon them the new music was differentiated from music founded upon the classical German examples. In both Scandinavia and Russia composers were divided. Some regarded this folk-material with disdain and adhered to a faith in the inexhaustibleness of traditional inspiration. Others threw themselves heart and soul into the music of their

## PIANOFORTE MUSIC

nation, with a flaming ambition to reveal its unique beauties and power to the world.

Among the Scandinavians Niels Gade (1817-1890) first claims attention as a composer for the pianoforte. And yet only for a moment. His pianoforte pieces, including several sets of short pieces—*Frühlingsblumen*, opus 2, *Aquarellen*, opus 19, and *Volkstänze*, opus 31, one *Arabesque*, opus 27, and a sonata, opus 28—have but the faintest touch of the music of Denmark. Even the *Volkstänze* are urbane and refined. It was against this subservience to Mendelssohn that Edvard Grieg rebelled. Grieg, therefore, who had no more skill than Gade, and perhaps was fundamentally no more richly gifted, stands out somewhat brilliantly among the composers for the pianoforte since the time of Schumann, Chopin, and Liszt. His music is sharply defined by national idioms. Whatever the value of his own personality may be, his music is thus given a definite shape and an independence, those signs of character which are unfortunately but very feebly displayed in the music of most of the German post-romanticists.

The proof that this definiteness was acceptable to the world is to be found in the persistent popularity of Grieg's pianoforte compositions. Most of these are in short forms and are relatively easy to play; which facts must also be held in some measure responsible for their popularity. There are several sets of 'Lyrical Pieces,' the best of which are *opera* 12, 38, 43, and 47. The later sets, *opera* 54, 57, 62, 65, and 68, show a falling off which is noticeable in all of Grieg's work after middle life. There is a set of 'Humoresques,' some Northern Dances, and some 'Album Leaves.'

It may be said of these in general that they are neatly composed, clearly phrased and balanced, sometimes polished; and that they are well-written for the keyboard. The spice of all is in the national idiosyncra-

## EDVARD GRIEG

sies of Norwegian music: the peculiar melodic avoidance of the sixth and second notes of the scale and the harmonies which result from such omissions; persistent rhythms emphasized by empty fifths in the bass, or by repetitions of short phrases with almost a barbaric effect; an interchanging of groups of two and three notes; finally a general harmonic boldness in which the bodily shifting of the music from one degree of the scale to another is prominent, and a host of odd accents.

There are several longer works in which these national characteristics are not less obvious, but in which they are so expanded and interwoven as to make less strikingly folk-music. Among these must be mentioned the sonata in E minor, opus 7, the concerto in A minor, opus 16, the Ballade, opus 24, and the suite, *Aus Holberg's Zeit*, opus 40. The sonata is well written, and the classical form is well sustained in the first movement. One does not find organic development, but, on the other hand, one finds no empty service music. The themes and the transitional passages are full of life, and strongly Norwegian. There is, unhappily, a dreary passage in 6/8 time in the development section which makes a dull use in the bass of the second phrase of the first theme. The coda is in brilliant pianoforte style. The poetic slow movement is also well-scored. The minuet is a Norwegian dance and the finale is stormy.

The concerto may be taken as the finest of Grieg's pianoforte works. It is a treasured addition to the stock of concertos, valued not only for the piquancy of Norwegian rhythms and harmonies, but for a successful handling of the form, a brilliant and yet a poetical treatment of both pianoforte and orchestra. Norway speaks in all the themes and in very nearly all the figures as well, but she speaks through a man who shows himself here a sensitive poet and a skillful

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artist. There seems to be a touch of Schumann in the first part of the first movement.

The Ballade is in the form of variations on a Norwegian theme. It is in many respects the best of his works for the piano, though the treatment of the keyboard nowhere shows originality. The influence of the *Variations sérieuses* of Mendelssohn is strikingly evident. The theme itself, for all its plaintive Norwegian character, is so near the type of the theme in the Mendelssohn variations as perhaps to suggest to Grieg the same treatment of it. The sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth variations are especially *à la* Mendelssohn, as far as treatment is concerned. After these, however, he seems to have forsaken the *Variations sérieuses* for Schumann's 'Symphonic Variations.' Nevertheless, the work as a whole is Grieg, and only the external features suggest the home from which some of its glory may have trailed. The last variations are broad in style and fiery, hardly suggestive of the miniature perfection of the earlier shorter pieces.

From the Holberg suite one picks out the prelude as a fine piece of pianoforte music. The other movements are effective and pleasing, but the prelude is worthiest of Holberg. The suite as a whole reminds one of a classic temple, flying the flag of Norway.

No other Norwegian composer has been so widely popular as Grieg. It is true that already amateur and professional alike have discovered the sameness of his mannerisms and his procedure; but such compositions as the concerto and the ballade are strong enough to bear the music above these heavy shackles. They are fairly to be considered as contributions to the literature of the instrument of unusual worth.

Christian Sinding enjoys a popularity second among Norwegian composers only to that of Grieg. He has more cosmopolitan predilections, and he has worked in broader forms. Perhaps for those reasons he is less

## CHRISTIAN SINDING

distinctive. However, most of his pianoforte music has been cast in short forms—usually a little more developed than those of Grieg. There are numerous sets of three or of six pieces, of studies, of interludes, of odd little caprices, dances and scherzos. The set opus 32 contains the *Marche grotesque* and the *Frühlingsrauschen*, among the best known of his compositions. All the *Mélodies mignonnes*, opus 52, and several of the caprices among the fifteen published as opus 54, are interesting. He shows an understanding of keyboard effects, usually in the broad style, with sharp accents, wide-flowing runs, and chords; but there is a sameness about his music which seems to spring from a lack of ingenuity in rhythm and in phrase building. He is technically far more skillful than Grieg, but his pianoforte music lacks the individuality which Grieg's invariably has. Sinding's concerto in D-flat, opus 6, is a big and brilliant work, ingeniously wrought upon a single idea, but it lacks the highly colored spirit and life of Grieg's.

### III

The Russian composers of the last half century have almost without exception written something for the pianoforte; but their national characteristics have found a more vivid expression in orchestral music and music for the theatre than in keyboard music. Their technique has been the technique of Liszt and Chopin, and a great part of them have written in the style of Schumann. The national fervor did not kindle all to the same intensity. Rubinstein and Tschaikowsky represent almost two nationalities, and yet even Tschaikowsky held himself aloof from the enthusiasms of the great Five.

From the pen of Glinka, the leader of the Russians, their first pioneer, there was no pianoforte music.

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But his friend, the equally famous Dargomijsky, wrote a Tarantella, for three hands,\* which Liszt transcribed. Thus enter the Russians into the history of pianoforte music, at a time when Schumann, Chopin, and Liszt had about exhausted the possibilities of expression on the keyboard in terms of music as it was then, and was for fifty years more to be understood.

Nevertheless each of the great five, Balakireff, Borodine, Moussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakoff, and César Cui, has contributed more or less to the keyboard. The 'Islamey Fantasy' of Balakireff is perhaps the most brilliant and the most significant work of the lot. The themes are original, but they have the strong Oriental coloring which has given to much of Russian music its splendor. This fantasy has a sort of barbaric power. The first section is built up out of countless repetitions of a short motive, most brilliantly scored, which whirls and whirls like the dervishes until we are mad as they. And this is resumed again, after a somewhat more tranquil section, and whirled more and more madly, until the time seems to break, and give way to a stamping. It is the work of a lover of folk-music as well as a man who knew the piano almost as well as Liszt did.

Balakireff's pianoforte transcription of Glinka's 'A Life for the Czar' is a masterpiece of its kind, and there are transcriptions of Glinka's songs as well. There are two scherzos, of which the second—in B-flat minor—is remarkable; a Concert Waltz dedicated to d'Albert, and a wonderful 'Dumka.'

The others of this group were far less able pianists, and their contribution to the literature of the instrument was small. There is a set of variations by Rimsky-Korsakoff, and also a group of short pieces, opus

\* The third hand part was written for one who did not know how to play the piano, and has but one and the same note throughout the piece.



## RUBINSTEIN AND TSCHAIKOWSKY

11, in the style of Schumann; and Moussorgsky wrote a *Kinderschmerz* and an *Intermezzo*. There is a touch of Russian in these. The works of César Cui are even more cosmopolitan. They include a set of preludes, two suites, one dedicated to Liszt, the other to Leschetizsky, and a number of simple pieces, among them twelve *Miniatures*. But the *Dumka* and the *Islamey* of Balakireff stand far above all the other pianoforte music written by the five, not only from the point of view of style, but as an expression of national spirit.

Anton Rubinstein (1830-1894) desired to be known as a composer rather than as a virtuoso, but his once often-heard compositions, works for the pianoforte, overtures, symphonies, and operas, are rapidly losing their hold on the public, and it seems likely that they will not be remembered even so long as his playing will. The distinctively Russian element in them is well-nigh concealed beneath the many strands of western influence, and indeed he was himself so much in doubt and so easily influenced that hardly his own personality finds a consistent or thorough expression in his music. Some of the études in opus 23 may continue to be cherished by the pianist as excellent practice pieces. The concert music of other kinds, even the once greatly popular suite of dance pieces, *Le Bal*, with its brilliant polka, mazurka, waltz, and galop, is already less and less performed. The two Barcarolles, opus 30, No. 1, and opus 50, No. 3, still enjoy some favor. The *Kammenoi-Ostrow* and the Melody in F will keep his memory green in many a family circle so long as they are included in family music books. Of the five concertos, that in D minor, No. 4, is by general consent by far the best, and seems at present the only one of his works, excepting one or two of the songs, that will be able to retain much longer the respect of musicians or pianists.

It is far different with Tschaikowsky. He wrote only

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moderately well for the keyboard, but the emotional fire of his music is of the kind that burns long. The short pieces, of which there are some half dozen sets, are not of any great significance, though many of them, specifically the vigorous *Troïka*, op. 37, No. 11, and the *Humoresque* in G, op. 10, No. 2, are full of charm. The sonata in G major, opus 37, is a difficult and a fiery work. There are three concertos for pianoforte and orchestra: one in B-flat minor, opus 23, one in G major, opus 44, and one in E-flat major, opus 75. Of these the first is by far the best, and is indeed the most significant of all his compositions for the instrument.

The form of the concerto is classical, but the spirit is Russian in spite of it. One feels it in the character of the themes, particularly of the chief theme of the last movement, with its barbaric rhythm and its savage repetitions of short motives. The piano is handled in a more or less grandiose way, yet never in some respects was it handled more grandly. The chords of the introduction are almost unique in their splendor. There are bold and difficult passages in octaves, and great climaxes which demand unusual physical endurance. On the other hand, there are passages of extremely effective finger work, even though the figuration as a whole can hardly be called original or distinguished. The cadenza in the first movement, the variations and trills in the slow movement, and, most of all perhaps, the fleet runs just before the coda of the last movement, these are all remarkable accomplishments for a composer who called himself no pianist. The whole was a favorite of von Bülow's, who played it for the first time in public, by the way, at a concert in Boston. Among other of Tschaikowsky's pianoforte compositions von Bülow had also an admiration for the Theme and Variations, which is the sixth of the six pieces, opus 19. The second and third concertos are weakly constructed and ineffective; but

**Anton Rubinstein's Hand**

*Photographed from a plaster cast*







## YOUNGER RUSSIAN COMPOSERS

by reason of the first, Tschaikowsky's name will live for long in pianoforte music.

The compositions of the younger school of Russian composers are far too numerous to be passed in review. In no country has there been a more active or a more fruitful musical life; and nearly all of the many composers have written sometimes much, sometimes little, for the pianoforte. In general these composers may be divided into two groups, one of which is clearly still guided by the musical ideals of Western Europe, still more or less dependent on Schumann and Chopin; the other drawing its enthusiasm and its inspiration from the great Five.

The most prominent in the former group is Anton Arensky (b. 1861), who is master of a smooth, flowing pianoforte style, and who has the art of writing melody for the pianoforte. Among his short pieces Walter Niemann \* mentions three published as opus 42, the *Esquisses*, opus 24, twenty-four pieces, opus 36, and the well-known *Basso ostinato* in which he finds no trace of German influence. To these may be added the little piece, *Près de la mer*, from opus 52, and the effect concert study, opus 36, No. 13. With Arensky Niemann also reckons Genari Karganoff and Paul Juon.

Alexander Glazounoff (b. 1865) has more fire than Arensky, but in spite of his pronounced loyalty to Russian ideals in music, the influences of Schumann and Chopin are evident in his pianoforte style. Apart from several short pieces, he has written a Theme and Variations, opus 72, and two sonatas, one in B-flat, opus 74, and one in E, opus 75, both of which are more distinguished by fluent writing than by characteristically Russian ideas. The Prelude and Fugue, opus 62, is the most unusual and the most profound of his works for pianoforte.

\* *Die Neurussische Klaviermusik*. In *Die Musik*, 1903, No. 8.

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The pianoforte works of Serge Rachmaninoff are essentially Russian, in many ways a fulfillment of the promise given by Balakireff's. The style is brilliant and always effective. Melodies, harmonies are unusual, and his rhythms are bold and full of at times a savage life. He may be said to have won attention as a composer for the pianoforte by the Prelude in C-sharp minor; of which it must be said that endlessly as it has been played it still remains a piece of profound meaning and effect. He has published at least twenty-three preludes, of which this still remains the best-known, with the possible exception of that in G minor. Here again there is a spirit not common to Western Europe; one hears it in the steady powerful rhythm, the outbursts of sound, the strange intensity of the melody of the middle section.

The two sonatas, opus 28 in D minor, and opus 36 in B-flat minor, seem on the whole less powerful and vigorous than the three concertos, of which the third, opus 30, in D minor, is truly a gorgeous work. There are, besides these big works and the preludes, some études, opus 33, some variations on a theme of Chopin, opus 22, and a few salon pieces, mostly in brilliant style.

Anatole Liadoff (b. 1855) and Nicholas de Stcherbatcheff (b. 1853) also draw generously upon their native music. The former is more of a painter in music, fond of color; the latter is fond of short forms and is master of a dainty style. More intensely national than these, though, strictly speaking, not Russian, is the Lett Joseph Wihtol (b. 1863). He has interested himself deeply in the folk-songs of his own province, which are more like Swedish than Russian folk-songs; and his most considerable work is a set of variations, opus 6, on a Lettish theme. Niemann \* likens them to the Ballade of Grieg.

\* *Op. cit.*



## ALEXANDER SCRIBINE

Finally, among the most interesting of all the Russian composers, although in some respects the least Russian among them, is to be reckoned the late Alexander Scriabine. His works for the pianoforte comprise a great many sets of short pieces, some études, a concerto, and ten sonatas. On the whole they give a very distinct impression that Scriabine is not a creative genius of the highest order; and he has given over the fresh, albeit humble, life of the music of his native land only at first to imitate Chopin, Schumann, and Brahms; and later to devise a sort of music which is unusual without wholly justifying itself.

Most of these works are brilliantly written for the keyboard, but until in the later works he has begun to develop a new harmonic system they offer no difficulties but those of Chopin and Liszt. The études, opus 12 and opus 42, are an epitome of his technical equipment. His many experiments in rhythms and in harmonies never seem to ring quite true; and almost instinctively one takes them to be a substitute for musical expression. The first set—opus 12—is not very startling. Already in these pieces he shows the influence of Brahms. The second deals with triplet groups of octaves and single notes for both hands, one group containing two octaves with a single note between, the next two single notes with an octave between, thus progressing alternately through the piece. The complexity is in many ways a rhythmical one, for two groups in sequence will seem to be divided into three beats, each accented by an octave. The third is a study in the movement of the arm such as is required in many of Brahms' pieces. The sixth, a study in sixths, is perhaps more after the manner of Chopin, though it lacks entirely the grace and inner melodiousness which is above all else characteristic of Chopin's music. The tenth is by all means the most difficult, a truly brilliant study in double notes for the right hand.

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One finds in several of the studies of this set that the initial direction of the left hand accompaniment figures is downward. This is a characteristic feature in Scriabine's style, and in part accounts for a strange ethereal, not to say pale, quality in his pianoforte music. His harmonies instead of being solidly founded in the bass, seem to drift downward from the upper part.

The difficulties of the second set of studies, opus 42, are almost exclusively rhythmical, and may be taken as a further development or an expansion of the rhythmical processes to be found in many of the Brahms variations on a theme of Paganini. In the first study the left hand is phrased into five groups against triplets in the right, and in the eighth there is a combination of a rhythm of five beats with one of nine. There is no doubt that the rhythmical systems of European music are restricted and unvaried, and that there is a vast field in the future of music for the development of more subtle and complex systems. Therefore Scriabine's experiments point forward. If only he had a little more spontaneous sense of melody and harmony to make of these rhythmical studies something more than experiments! In this series the falling of the accompaniment figures is even more noticeable than in the earlier one.

The harmonies in both series tend to be most unusual without being self-sufficient. They run parallel to the system of earlier masters without seeming related to it. The meaning of this statement will perhaps be clear by a reference to two of the short studies in opus 65. In the first of these the right hand plays continuously in ninths, in the second it plays in sevenths—major, not minor. The effect of both is presumably melodic; that is, we are to listen to a melody, played not in octaves, but in ninths or sevenths, the latter of which may be said to be almost the harshest interval in music. Now this is not so much an expansion of

## SCRIABINE'S HARMONIC SYSTEM

harmony as it is a concentration on a particular interval, which is, as it were, extracted from all relation to our harmonic system and given an isolated independence. Then it is made to stalk alongside the general progression of the music. This is no hour to speak of forced effects in music. Music is expanding about us and touching notes we never dreamed of, and we may hardly venture to criticize without running the risk of finding in the end that we had a cloddish ear, insensitive to a nascent beauty since grown resplendent. Yet in all open-mindedness it is hard not to find Scriabine's harmonic procedures arbitrary and often dry as dust.

Few of his short pieces are genial. There is a sort of stiffness in them and they are strangely barren. Leaving aside the early ones which are close to Schumann and Chopin, one comes upon a *Satanische Dichtung*, opus 36, which is lineally descended from Liszt's Mephisto waltz, then upon two short pieces, opus 57, the one called *Désir*, the other *Caresse dansée*; a Poem and a Prelude, opus 59; and Two Poems, opus 63, the first called *Masque*, the second *Etrangeté*. These last seem to us the best.

There are ten sonatas, of which we have examined the fifth, seventh, ninth, and tenth. The fifth seems to owe its origin to that *Poëme de l'extase* which inspired one of his orchestral pieces. There is enormous dramatic fire, but it is a fire that has little heat. The seventh shows throughout that arbitrary selection of the harsh seventh we have noted in the study opus 65, No. 2; but the second theme has a rich beauty. Scriabine has directed that it be played now with a celestial voluptuousness, now very purely, with profound tenderness (*douceur*). The ninth and tenth seem very fine music. The former is touched with morbidity. Scriabine intended it to be expressive of some most extraordinary shades of mood or feeling, if we may

## PIANOFORTE MUSIC

judge by his indications here and there. We may well ask what is a *languueur naissante*, or again how we may express in music *une douceur de plus en plus caressante et empoisonée*. In the tenth we have to do with a *volupté douloureuse*, and many other remarkable phrases of intellectualized emotion; but the sonata is a powerful and a moving work, suggesting kinship with the symphonic poems of Richard Strauss. Scriabine's style is always finished. In general he demands more of the pianist than the piano, that is he has not called forth the intimate and finest qualities of the instrument but has treated it as an orchestra. There are pronounced mannerisms, such as a fondness for descending chromatic motives, and that downward dropping of accompaniment figures before noticed. All in all, his pianoforte music is likely to shine more and more brilliantly, as a highly specialized but isolated achievement.

### IV

The Russian and Scandinavian composers, especially Balakireff and Rachmaninoff, and Edvard Grieg, have been the most successful in introducing some freshness and youth into pianoforte music by means of national idioms of melody, harmony, and rhythm. Among the Poles, Ignace Paderewski has shown himself, on the whole, too cosmopolitan in manner, though many of his works, especially the brilliant concerto in A minor, contain Polish matter. Dvořák was too little a pianist to enrich the literature of pianoforte music with more than a few slight dances and Humoresques of Bohemian character. Recently Ernst von Dohnányi, a most brilliant pianist, has done more. Two concertos in splendidly brilliant style and two sonatas are among the most significant of his publications. The Italian Giovanni Sgambati (b. 1843) has shown himself wholly

## EDWARD MAC DOWELL

classical in his interests and natural tendencies, drawing his technique, however, considerably from Chopin. From Spain, however, a breath of freshness has come into pianoforte music. The works of Isaac Albeniz are among the most brilliant and most effective of all compositions for the instrument. The most considerable are the four sets of pieces called *Iberia*, and of these the second and third contain the best. All are so thoroughly saturated with Spanish harmonies, rhythms and melodies that taken as a whole this brilliant collection suffers from too much sameness. Yet there is some variety of mood. There is melancholy in the lovely melodies of the *Almeria*, a certain fineness in both the *Triana* and the *El Albaicin*, an incredible coarseness in *Lavapies*. Albeniz's treatment of the piano is astonishing, considering the directness with which his music appeals to the senses. One would not believe, to hear the music played, into what desperate intricacies the pianist has had to cut his way. And all to hang a garland on a tune, but a tune that beats with the very heart of Spain, and a garland that is a cloak of all the colors ever seen at a bull-fight. Grieg is an expatriate beside Albeniz. Never has such intensity of national life, joy, passion, pride, and melancholy threatened to burst the very limits of sound.

Composers in England have not written a great deal for the pianoforte. Sir A. C. Mackenzie's Scottish Concerto is an outstanding work, and recently Cyril Scott and Percy Grainger have added works to piano literature which have charm and interest. Scott experiments with modern systems of harmony, but Grainger has chosen to make use of the uniquely beautiful songs and dances of England, Scotland, and Ireland. His arrangements of many of these are effective; and as music they have the perennial freshness of the melodies about which they are woven.

In the United States but one name stands out promi-

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nently among the composers for the pianoforte. This is Edward MacDowell, who wrote numerous short pieces, études and concert pieces, as well as three big sonatas and two concertos. MacDowell's treatment of the keyboard can hardly be said to be original, but the concertos, and among the shorter pieces the *Hexentanz* prove to be highly effective. Many of the short pieces, which are grouped together in sets, are charming. On the whole there is little suggestion of a new spirit in the work of this composer of a new land. Now and then he uses negro rhythms, as in the 'Uncle Remus,' sometimes he uses Indian motives, as in the 'Indian Lodge' of the 'Woodland Sketches.' His forms and his style are perhaps more akin to those of Grieg, with whom, indeed, his music will be often compared, than to the earlier Romantics. Unfortunately, however, instead of in a national idiom, he speaks in an intensely personal one. Short phrases and rhythms which are seldom varied seem almost to hamper his music, almost to clog its movement. On the other hand, as in some of the 'Sea Pieces,' he writes sometimes in a broad and open style, seeming to shake off the fetters of too intense a mannerism.

Ethelbert Nevin wrote several sets of short pieces, 'In Arcady,' 'Venezia,' and others, which have at least the charm of simple, sweet melody.

Mr. Arthur Foote and Mrs. H. H. A. Beach have shown themselves masters of an effective pianoforte style, a mastery that has on the whole been rare in this country.\*

\* For a detailed discussion of American composers the reader is referred to Volume IV of this series.

## CHAPTER X

### MODERN FRENCH PIANOFORTE MUSIC

Classical traditions: Saint-Saëns, and others; C. V. Alkan—César Franck: his compositions and his style—Vincent d'Indy—Fauré—The new movement: Debussy and Ravel—Debussy's innovations: new harmonies, scales, overtones, pianoforte technique; his compositions—Ravel differentiated; his compositions; Florent Schmitt and Eric Satie—Conclusion.

#### I

By far the most interesting and generally the most significant developments in pianoforte music since the time of Schumann, Chopin, and Liszt are those which have taken place in France. Not only have the French composers greatly enriched the literature for the instrument with compositions that have a value beyond that which fashion temporarily lends them; they have refreshed it as well with new ideas of harmony, and effects, which if they are not essentially new, are newly extended and applied.

There is still to be observed in France, it is true, a very considerable loyalty in a group of composers to the style of Chopin, or even more, to that of Liszt, and a general dependence upon German ideas of music which have for a century past been so preponderant in the world as to be considered international. The admirable works of Camille Saint-Saëns are the result of such a loyalty. He is a great master of the pianoforte style, endowed, moreover, with a fine sense of form and a fine imagination. Everything he has written is finished with care, clear-cut and indisputably effective. There is no piece of music more grateful from the point

## PIANOFORTE MUSIC

of view of the pianist than the second of his five concertos, that in G minor. This is not only because the treatment of the solo instrument is clear and brilliant, but because the themes are worthy of the treatment and of the broad form which they are made to fill. The writing for the orchestra, moreover, is not less perfect than that for the pianoforte. But inasmuch as the harmonies are a familiar inheritance from the past, and the style an adaptation of an inherited technique, the work signalizes not an advance in music, but the successful maintenance of an already high standard. The spirit of it is less emotional and sentimental than that of other concertos, and more witty and epigrammatic. Hence it holds a special place as well as a high one, from which it is hard to think that any change of fashion will ever remove it.

The short pieces of Cécile Chaminade, Paul Lacombe, François Thomé, Benjamin Godard, and Paul Wachs may be mentioned in passing as having won a measure of success.

But the works of another group or two of French composers show an originality that was at first so startling as to enrage conservative critics. It is owing to them that pianoforte music seems to have entered upon a new course of life. One finds the stirring of new movements in Paris even before the time of Chopin's arrival there, due very clearly to the French spirit. Berlioz is growing more and more to a huge stature in the eyes of historians. The figure of his countryman and acquaintance, Charles-Valentin Alkan, is more obscure, but he represents the same spirit at work in the special branch of pianoforte music. If his compositions have not had great influence, they none the less give an early example of the working towards independence of a French pianoforte music.

Alkan (1813-88) was admired as a player and as a composer by both Chopin and Liszt, and Bülow still



## CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS; C. V. ALKAN

later held him in high esteem. An effort is now under way, encouraged by Isadore Philip, and others, to draw his compositions from the obscurity into which they have fallen. They are surprisingly numerous and in many ways astonishing. They include a great number of transcriptions, of études and of pieces of extraordinary realism. His harmonies and melodies suggest Berlioz, with whom he is being more and more compared. They have often a quality that is in a sense bare. They are unusual without connoting a rich world of the unexplored. They hint rather at a deliberate attack upon the old than at the youth of a new system. The general flow of his harmonies, for example, is familiar. Only now and then does something unusual obtrude itself with a sort of harshness. Notice, for example, the chromatic movement of the doubled inner voice in the *cantabile* section of the short piece '*Le tambour bat aux champs*.' Notice, too, the strange starkness of harmonies in the paraphrase *Super flumina Babylonis*.

Technically Alkan stands between Chopin and Liszt, and in this regard his music is very exacting. He demands an equal skill in both hands. Of the three studies published as opus 76, the first is for the left hand alone, with long passages of rapid tremolo like that one finds in the first of Liszt's Paganini transcriptions. The second is for the right hand alone, demanding an unrestricted movement of the arm in long arpeggios and extremely wide chords. Finally the third is a long piece in unison from beginning to end, far more awkward and more difficult than the last movement of Chopin's sonata in B-flat minor. The three studies opus 15, *Dans le genre pathétique*, are veritably huge works. Of these the second, *Le vent*, is already well known as one of the effective concert pieces of the new era. The first and last have the strange titles of *Aime-moi* and *Morte*. Twelve études in minor keys

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were published as opus 39. One finds again extraordinary titles, such as *Rythme molossique*, *Scherzo diabolico*, and *Le festin d'Europe*. All are exceedingly difficult. Some, like the first, are both startling and interesting as music. There is a more or less famous study in perpetual motion for the right hand which was given the title *Le chemin de fer*, extremely rapid, difficult, and effective.

The titles throughout all his music are original. Some are easily understood. 'The Wind' and the 'Railroad' for instance are fully explained by the music. In fact the realism of the latter does not stop with movement. There is to be heard even the pounding of wheels, the puffing and the whistle of the engine. But what is the meaning of others, of *Neige et lave*, *Ma chère liberté* and *Ma chère servitude*, *Salut, cendre du pauvre*, *Fais dodo* and *J'étais endormie, mais mon cœur reveillait?* On the whole these fantastic titles suggest less the union of music with poetry or self-conscious sentiment than a sort of rational, positive realism. There is little in the music that is vague or sensuous. Most of it is objective rather than imaginative. He has neither the fire of Liszt, nor the emotion of Chopin, and his compositions are both spiritually and technically independent of theirs. He was a terrific worker and he lived apart from men. Marmontel wrote of him with great respect and some affection. Oskar Bie thinks of him as a misanthrope. One can hardly speak of misanthropic music; yet the quality which distinguishes Alkan's music is something the quality of an implacable irony. It is strong stuff, and is likely to prove more logical in itself than any appreciation or disparagement of it can be made.

## CÉSAR FRANCK

### II

But Alkan's music must be taken as the manifestation of an independent spirit, French in its directness, rather than as a source of stimulation or strength to a further development of a distinctly French school of pianoforte music. Such a school first centres about César Franck, who, though he, too, lived in retirement and in an obscurity which the general public did not attempt to penetrate, exercised a powerful influence on music in Paris. His compositions are relatively few in number. There are but two considerable works for pianoforte alone, and only three more for pianoforte and orchestra. These, however, are of great beauty and two at least are masterpieces in music. These are the 'Prelude, Chorale and Fugue' for pianoforte alone, and the *Variations Symphoniques* for pianoforte and orchestra. The other three, which have elements of greatness but seem to fall short of absolute perfection, are the 'Prelude, Aria, and Finale' for pianoforte alone, and two symphonic poems for pianoforte and orchestra suggested by poems of Victor Hugo, *Les Eloïdes* and *Les Djinns*.

The 'Prelude, Chorale and Fugue,' and the 'Symphonic Variations' may be ranked with the symphony, the violin sonata, the string quartet and the pianoforte quintet, and are no less a perfect and in some respects a complete expression of his genius than they. One finds in them the same ceaseless chromatic shiftings and involutions of harmony, the same polyphonic treatment of short phrases, the same structural unity, the same exalted and mystical spirit. In fact this spiritual quality is perhaps nowhere so gloriously expressed as in the Chorale movement for the pianoforte.

As a whole the 'Prelude, Chorale and Fugue' is flawless in structure. There is the greatest economy in the use of musical material. The unusual scoring of the

## PIANOFORTE MUSIC

opening measures, with the melody note slightly off the beat and the harp-like ornamentation, is the scoring which characterizes the final, tremendous pages of the Fugue. The sections of the Prelude which offer contrast to this opening melody are based upon the subject which later forms the basis of the Fugue. And the magnificent theme and spirit of the following movement, the Chorale, is projected, as it were, into the whole last section of the Fugue. Never, perhaps, was a fugue more splendidly and more fully developed, nor was the force of a work ever so made to grow and to culminate in pages of such majestic and triumphant music.

There is a similar use of material in the 'Prelude, Aria, and Finale,' but the result is not quite so flawless. The Prelude, here, in spite of the suave beauty of its chief theme, is loose and episodic in effect. And it cannot be said that the scoring for the pianoforte is distinguished or animated. The style is either massive or awkward. The most beautiful part of the whole work is perhaps the concluding section of the Aria. The earlier parts of the Aria are skillfully devised, but the scoring is rather heavy and seems more suited to the organ than to the piano. But the melody of this concluding section is of inspired beauty; and as if Franck himself were well aware of its rare and significant worth, the last pages of the stormy Finale bring it back, woven with the chief theme of the Prelude.

Technically both works are extremely difficult. The general breadth of effect, the demand for power and for freedom of the arm, and the use of octaves—these as well as the use of the very high and very low registers of the keyboard—all make evident the rather orchestral idea of the pianoforte which Liszt introduced. Liszt, by the way, was one of the first to recognize the greatness of Franck. But, though Franck was at one time a brilliant pianist and was intended by his father

## FRANCK'S SYMPHONIC VARIATIONS

to electrify Europe from the concert stage, he was above all else an organist. His pianoforte style is most evidently very closely allied to the organ style. This is particularly noticeable in the treatment of bass parts, which not only suggest the pedals of the organ but are often impossible for the small hand to play. The octaves for the left hand in the Aria, and even more remarkably those in the Chorale, need not only the independent movement which the organ pedals can add in polyphony, but seem to call for the tone color of the low notes on the organ. Frequently, moreover, as in the second section of the Prelude in the 'Prelude, Aria, and Finale,' such wide stretches as the music demands of the hands, as well as the general freedom of polyphonic movement, almost require an instrument with two keyboards.

On the other hand, there are many effects which are brilliantly pianistic. The flowing figures in the Prelude of the 'Prelude, Chorale and Fugue' are purely pianistic. The tremendous octave passages in the Finale need the distinct, percussive sound of the pianoforte. And the upper notes of the Chorale melody, both when it is given alone and when it is combined with the fugue theme, must have a ringing, bell-like quality which only the pianoforte can produce.

The treatment of the pianoforte in those works in which it is supported by the orchestra shows less the influence of the organ style. Generally Franck had in mind the sonority of the organ and the movement of music proper to that instrument. In these works the function of the organ, so to speak, is given to the orchestra; and hence the pianoforte is free of all responsibility but that of adding its own special effects to the mass of sound. These are essentially simple. In the *Djinns* there is some brilliant rapid work, a few solo passages of agitated character with wide rolling but not elaborate accompaniment figures. In the 'Sym-

## PIANOFORTE MUSIC

phonic Variations,' very noticeably a bigger and a finer work, there are solo passages of great breadth, and nearly all the variations make the piano prominent by means of its own effects. There are the passages of detached chords and double notes which seem to tinkle over the first variation, the remarkably wide spacing in the passage which follows, with the suggested movement of inner voices and the occasional touch upon high notes; the flowing figures, with again a suggested richness of inner voices, which pursue their smooth course over the 'cello solo; finally the more brilliant effects towards the end, especially those of the tossing chords, and of the difficult, leaping triplet figures. The pianoforte and orchestra were never more ingeniously combined than in those passages which the pianoforte introduces with a sort of double waltz movement and in which the orchestra subsequently joins with the theme in a decidedly cross rhythm, leaving the solo instrument free to add delicately melodious runs.

The structure of the whole work, moreover, is musically interesting. Though the theme in F-sharp minor, announced simply by the pianoforte after several pages that are more or less introductory, may be regarded as the chief theme, there is another distinct and highly characterized theme—first given fully by the pianoforte in the magnificent solo passage (C-sharp minor) so prominent in these introductory pages. This, as well as the chief theme, is elaborately varied, and is ever and again throughout the work so cleverly combined with the chief theme, that one must regard the whole ultimately as a series of double variations.

These few works of César Franck are architecturally the most imposing for the pianoforte since the last sonatas of Beethoven; and the 'Prelude, Chorale and Fugue' and the 'Symphonic Variations' are surely to be numbered among the most valuable compositions from which the pianist may draw his delight. They

## VINCENT D'INDY

are very nearly unique in plan and style. The ceaseless shifting of harmonies and interweaving of short phrases will doubtless seem to many manneristic and a little irritating. Then, too, they are, in spite of their breadth and power, mystical, and in that sense, elusive or even baffling. The weight of the organ style rests on them, and they are awkwardly difficult and taxing. Yet in spite of these peculiarities they remain pianoforte music of great dignity, beauty, and nobility.

### III

At the basis of the two greatest pianoforte works of César Franck, one discerns a classical foundation. The harmonies, it is true, are Romantic and strange; but the ideals are traditional. In the matter of form there is less a departure from old principles than a further development of them. They present a few new complications of structure; but as far as the pianoforte is concerned they have little new to show in the matter of effect. Their peculiar sonority is that of the organ, and remains not wholly proper to the pianoforte. On the whole, then, the music is easily related to that of Beethoven, of Liszt, and of Wagner. There is no striking departure from that road to which Beethoven may be said to have pointed.

Nor does one find, on the whole, less traditional loyalty in the pianoforte compositions of Franck's pupil, Vincent d'Indy. These are not numerous. There are only a few sets of short pieces, and but two works of length. The little sonata, opus 9, is in classical form. There are three short waltzes in a set called *Helvetia*, opus 9; a *Serenade*, *Choral grave*, *Scherzetto*, and *Agitato*, opus 16, one or two pieces in classical dance forms, and three little romances in the style of Schumann, opus 30. Of the last the third is a most successful imi-

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tation of Schumann, resembling passages from the *Kreisleriana* in spirit and in technique. None of these short pieces, however, calls for more than mention, except as they all show a clear but not distinguished traditional and simple treatment of the keyboard. There is hardly the harmonic freedom of either Wagner or Franck in them.

The two long pieces are far more distinctly original. The first of these is a set of three fanciful pieces called *Poèmes des Montagnes*. The first of these—*Le chant des bruyères*—is divided into five parts: the song of the heather, or the heath, mists, a touch of Weber, a theme which is to be found in all three movements called *La bien-aimée*, and finally the song of the heath again, this time in the distance. The second movement is again subdivided, this time into dances amid which *la bien-aimée* makes a momentary appearance; and in the last movement—*Plein-air*—one finds a promenade, thoughts of great trees (*hêtres et pins*) on the side of the mountain, *la bien-aimée*, a bit of calm before a burst of wind, finally a pair of lovers united. At the beginning and at the end of the series there are a few broken chords, vaguely styled *Harmonies*, and at the very end again there is a reminiscence of the theme of *la bien-aimée*.

One cannot but find the whole series closely akin to Schumann. The romanticism is the romanticism of Schumann, carried a step into the open air and among the mountains, of his devotion to which d'Indy has left many a proof in music. The fleeting touch of Weber, and especially that d'Indy should have written Weber's name over the measure in which it falls, is again characteristic of the composer who introduced Paganini and Chopin into his *Carnaval*. The identification of a theme with a beloved one is another instance. But even more definite than these tokens of a certain romanticism is the treatment of the piano, and even the nature of



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much of the thematic material. *Le chant des bruyères* and *La bien-aimée* are in the mold of Schumann. The *Valse grotesque* recalls in rhythm some of the *Dauids-bündler* and the first of these *Danses rythmiques* is like parts of the *Pantolon* and *Colombine* of the *Car-naval*.

On the other hand, there is something original and new in the section called *Brœuillard*. The general mistiness of the harmonies, the long holding of the pedals with consequent vague obscurity of sound, and the irregular line of clear points in a sort of melody that is drawn against this inarticulate accompanying murmur, these indicate new ventures in pianoforte style. The rhythmical irregularity of the first of the dances and the irregularity in the form and recurrence of sections are further signs of the advent of something rich and strange. In fact the whole work loses somewhat by the frequent suggestion of bold experiment, and is hardly to be considered equal to the traditional standard of music, as represented by Schumann, nor sufficiently successful to establish a new one. Barring the *Brœuillard*, the treatment of the keyboard lacks distinction.

Far, far different must be the verdict on the Sonata in E, opus 63. Here, though one still finds a classical ideal of form, there are bold, clashing harmonies, and endless complexities of rhythm. The scoring is tremendous, the effect big as an orchestra. The sonata is in three movements, all of which represent the development of one central idea. The first movement, which is preceded by a long and fiery introduction, is made up of a series of variations on this central idea. A subsidiary idea, which, as in the 'Symphonic Variations' of Franck, was suggested in the introduction, is woven into the music here and there. The complicated second movement, in 5/4 time, constantly suggests the subsidiary motives of the first; and in the last, which shows the broad plan of the classical sonata form, the

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theme of the first movement finds a full and glorious expression.

Technically the sonata is extremely difficult. Some of the variations of the first movement, with their trills, recall the pianoforte style of the last Beethoven sonatas, however. The interlocking of the hands in the second movement is in a measure new in effect, though not new in principle. The scoring of the last movement is not free of commonplaces.

On the whole, the sonata may be considered modern in harmonies, melodies, and rhythms, though a more or less classical harmonic foundation may be detected. The form is obviously a further development of the principles so clearly exemplified in the works of César Franck, which were drawn from Bach and Beethoven. It does not seem unfair to say that the scoring is rather orchestral than distinctively pianistic; so that the sonata may be considered more significant as a contribution to music in general than as one to pianoforte music in particular.

### IV

None of the French composers has written more for the pianoforte than Gabriel Fauré. In his music, too, there is a strong element of tradition, though as a harmonist he is perhaps more spontaneously original than d'Indy. He prefers to work in short forms, and he avoids titles of detailed significance. He has written eleven Barcarolles, ten or more Nocturnes, nearly as many Impromptus, a set of eight Preludes, published as opus 103, and a few pieces of nondescript character including dances and romances. The impression made by a glance over the pages of this considerable amount of music is one of great sameness. Fauré's style is delicate and well adjusted to the keyboard but there is little to observe in it that is strikingly original. Nor do the

## GABRIEL FAURÉ

pieces give proof of much development in technique or in means of expression. There is little trace of the exquisite impressionism of the songs. The pianoforte music is hardly more than pleasing, and is only rarely brilliant.

The well-known second impromptu, in F minor, is perhaps the most interesting and the most original of all his pianoforte pieces. Here is genuine vivacity, piquancy of style, originality of harmony. But the other impromptus and the nocturnes have, in spite of certain modern touches of harmony, a style that is now Mendelssohn, now Schumann. The eleven *Barcarolles* rock gently over the keyboard, the *Valses caprices* dance lightly along. All is facile and pleasing salon music, one piece much like the others. The Theme and Variations, opus 73, is interesting and is well known at the Conservatoire, and the second of the preludes, opus 103, is decidedly effective. The fourth Nocturne is full of poetry. In fact there is poetry in much of his music, but it is on the whole too much in the same vein.

Finally, after mentioning Pierné, for the sake of a set of short pieces in delicate style, *Pour mes petits amis*, and Emanuel Chabrier for the sake of the *Bourrée fantastique*, we come to the two men whose work for the piano has enchanted the world: Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel. So far as the pianoforte is concerned, theirs is the music which has created a new epoch since the time of Liszt and Chopin, which has signalized the leadership of France in the art of music.

## V

For a discussion of the general musical art of Debussy the reader is referred to the third volume of this series. His system of harmony and scales has

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there been explained. Here we will regard him as a composer for the pianoforte and attempt only a brief analysis of his pianoforte style and an appreciation of a few of his compositions. His pianoforte style has been no little influenced by his conception of harmony which admits chords of the seventh and ninth among the consonances. The pianoforte being essentially a harmonic instrument, composers have spent a great part of their skill in devising rapidly moving figures which would keep its harmonies in vibration. Such harmonies have either constituted a music in themselves, or have furnished a vibrant background behind a melody or an interweaving of several melodies. The shape of the figures has been determined by harmony and the figures have been blended into a general effect by the use of the pedal. One of the most prominent characteristics of Chopin's style was the intrinsically melodious conformation of many of such figures. Hence there is a suggestion of polyphony in his music; and hence, too, the pedalling of his music must be most delicately and skillfully done.

With Liszt, on the other hand, such figures rarely had this melodious significance. They were founded rather flatly on the notes of chords or on the scale. Hence a mass of notes with little or no individuality. Such we shall find many of Debussy's figures to be, and it is indeed easy to say that there would have been no Debussy had there been no Liszt. Not only this density, which in the case of Debussy may be more properly called opaqueness, of figures; but also the free use of the arms over the keyboard point to a relation of the style of the one to that of the other. But Debussy's style is in two features at least sharply differentiated from that of Liszt.

The first of these is owing to his different conception of harmony. Liszt's harmonies are clearly defined, Debussy's, by contrast, vague. There are few instances

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of harmonies in Liszt's music which are not related to a tonic scale; Debussy's whole-tone scale has destroyed the relation of major and minor keys, even their definitions. With Liszt the various degrees of the scale suggest their proper harmonies; and as his melody or his bass moves from one to the other of them, the harmonies must change to follow it. The harmonic figures must be constantly moved here and there. Sometimes, as in the first phrase of the *Waldesrauschen*, they do not change to follow the melody, it is true; but in such a case the melody is so conceived as really to accentuate the notes of the chord on which the accompaniment figure plays. But with Debussy the progress of the melody entails no such change of harmony, or at least no such frequent change. Even if he chooses to conceive a passage as in a clearly defined key, his fondness for the chord of the ninth plays him in good stead. He can keep a ninth chord running up and down the keyboard and still enjoy the proper use of five notes of the scale in melody. And in the case where he is using the whole-tone scale and has consequently thrown his music out of all relation to the traditional system of keys, he is even more free. Therefore, the fingers, not having to find a new position every measure or so, or even twice in a measure, are let free, without hindrance, over a wide range of the keyboard. Furthermore, since having once struck the desired notes within this range the use of the pedal will sustain the vibration a long time, they have not to repeat them over and over again with the distinctness necessary to establish a new harmony, but touch them lightly, or graze them unevenly. With the result that the sparkle which even in the dense runs of Liszt was created by the more or less distinct sound of indispensable notes, is veiled, and the general effect is one of fluid color.

A second feature which distinguishes the style of De-

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bussy from that of Liszt is the relative absence in it of the sensationalism of speed. The sort of run we have been discussing, which may be studied in the *Reflets dans l'eau*, or in *Pagodes*, is as rapid as Liszt's runs. But the monotony of it, the lack of change and therefore of emphasized points, reduces the effect of speed. For speed is chiefly appreciable between definite points. In fact the background of Debussy's music may be compared to mist, while that of Liszt's is, we might say, more like a curtain of chain mail.

The effect of this prolongation of harmonies by means of the pedal, lightly aided by the fingers, and of this lack of sharp contours is to take from a great part of his music a certain hard substantiality. In other words, recalling what we said of the qualities of sound in the pianoforte in the chapter on Chopin, the sonority of his music is one of after-sounds. Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel, more than any composers before them, have consciously made use of this peculiar quality of the pianoforte.

It is not only their treatment of runs which makes it audible, nor do they depend only upon the after-sounds of notes which have been struck. Holding the dampers off the strings for relatively long spaces allows an almost distinct vibration of over-tones or of sympathetic tones to enter into the mass of sound. Both Debussy and Ravel count upon this. The notes they write upon the page are but the starting point of their effects. It is what floats up and away from them that constitutes the background of their music. One finds in the later pieces of Debussy not the old-fashioned indication of the pedal, but such directions as *quittez, en laissant vibrer*, or *laissez vibrer* (let the vibrations continue), which must be intended to attract the ear to after-sounds. He has even invented a notation of such unsubstantial sound. Here is an example, from *Les collines d'Anacapri*:

## DEBUSSY: NEW EFFECTS

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 3/4 time signature. It contains a melodic line with a 's' marking above it, indicating a specific articulation or phrasing. The bottom staff is a bass clef with the same key signature and time signature, featuring a complex harmonic accompaniment with chords and a 'p' dynamic marking.

He will fill up a whole measure with notes that find their reason only in the vague sound of the next measure, as here in *La cathédrale engloutie*:

The image shows a single staff of musical notation in a treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 3/4 time signature. It features a complex harmonic structure with chords and a 'pp' dynamic marking. The notation includes various chordal textures and melodic fragments.

Note also that his spacing of chords, and particularly his strange doubling of parts, brings overtones into prominence. One hears not so much a doubling of parts on the keyboard as an accompanying shadow of sound which is, as it were, cast by them. Witness the choral passages in *La cathédrale engloutie*, and the treatment of chords in *Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut*. Here, at the beginning, one notices too the inclusion within the chord itself of notes which may properly be considered over-tones.

It is true that Schumann experimented with sympathetic vibrations and over-tones, that the player who would give to Chopin its special charm must have an ear tuned to after-sounds, and that Liszt experimented

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with many similar effects and really opened the way for a treatment of the pianoforte such as that Debussy and Ravel have perfected. But all earlier experiments were limited by a clear perception of certain harmonic proprieties. A chord was defined by the notes struck in it. But in this music of Debussy and Ravel a chord is not such a restricted thing. It is a potentiality rather than an actuality. It spreads and grows in after-sounds so that its boundaries become vague and merge with other boundaries or cross them. So they have created a pianoforte music that seems almost to have no dependence upon the mechanical levers and hammers, a sort of music liberated from the box, and yet the most subtly and intimately related to the instrument that has been written.

Debussy's music is by no means all compact of these vague effects. It is often as clear-cut as crystal, having a *netteté* hard to match in other music for the instrument. Witness for example *Les jardins sous la pluie* and *La sérénade interrompue*. In these cases it is plain to see that he is no less aware of the charm latent in the percussive quality of tone in the pianoforte than of that in its peculiar after-sounds. He can be incisive, also, and sharply rhythmical as in *La puerta del Vino*, or sparkling as in the *Feux d'artifice*.

Technically, then, Debussy's pianoforte style seems to have been influenced by a clear perception of the two qualities of sound of which the instrument is capable, and so remarkable has been his revelation of them that one cannot but feel that they come to our ears as fresh discoveries. His ingenuity seems inexhaustible and always successful. He can be rapid without being sensational, forceful without pounding. Except that an occasional use of chords suggests the organ or some new mysterious wind instrument, his music never departs from the piano, to the spirit of which it gives a new expression. It is extremely difficult to play. It requires



## DEBUSSY: NEW EFFECTS

the utmost fleetness and lightness of fingers; and also a perfect freedom of the arm, for he seems at times to ask the player to touch all parts of the piano at once. In a measure, however, it may be said of some of his music that it conforms to types as Liszt's does, and that consequently, compared with Bach and Chopin, it is not so difficult. Nevertheless, by all tokens the music of Debussy, though technically it springs from Liszt, is going to elude the grasp of most fingers even as that of Chopin does. Perhaps it is a spiritual rather than a technical difficulty that stands in the way.

His compositions show signs of a very great development both in his ideals and his means of expression. An early group comprises a Nocturne, a *Suite Bergamasque*, and another suite called *Pour le piano* which consists of a Prelude, Sarabande and Toccata. There are signs in nearly all these pieces of originality and some attempted departure from traditional common-places. The nocturne is hardly distinguished either in sentiment or in treatment of the piano. Only the section in 7/8 time is interesting. But in the *Suite Bergamasque* one finds a Passepied and the well-known *Clair de lune* which hint at the works to come, the former in its piquant scoring and rhythm, the latter in its harmonies and its employment of the lower and higher registers. The Toccata is original in harmony also, and well-scored for the pianoforte. But except in the *Clair de lune* there is no trace of the delicate impressionism which has made his better known music unique.

This comes out strongly in a second group of pieces in which one may include the *L'isle joyeuse*, the *Estampes* and the first series of *Images* including the *Reflets dans l'eau* in which he seems to us to reach the height of this middle achievement. *L'isle joyeuse* is a strange, wild piece, full of his characteristic harmonies, especially those founded upon the whole-tone scale. It is the longest of his pieces for the pianoforte, and is

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rather unsatisfactory in structure. Perhaps the monotony of key is to blame—for in spite of passages in whole-tone scales, the whole is very clearly in A major. Yet it must be said that this very sameness of key intensifies the early languor and the later Bacchanalian fury—is intoxicating in itself.

The *Estampes* ('Engravings') are among the best of these middle pieces. A comparison of them with works of an early period, with the two arabesques or even the *Suite Bergamasque*, shows an extraordinary development in Debussy's art and a change or a more marked independence in his ideals. There is hardly a trace in the earlier works of the new expansion in pianoforte technique which marks the *Pagodes*, *La soirée dans Grenade*, and *Jardins sous la pluie*. Especially in the first of these pieces the whole range of the keyboard is blended into effects of a new sonority of sevenths and ninths. The second is a study in impressionism, in the combination of a few fragments of melody, harmony and rhythm into a whole of new poetic intensity. In the former his technique, in the latter his procedure, are strange and unfamiliar in pianoforte music, yet wholly successful. Their effectiveness is no doubt largely due to the nature of his material. The motives of the *Pagodes* are Oriental, those in *La soirée* both Spanish and Moorish. Perhaps for this reason they sound more exotic than the *Jardins sous la pluie*, which, in spite of odd blendings of harmony, is essentially more conventional than its two companions in the set. Certainly the *Jardins* is a wholly poetic and effective piece of keyboard music; but it lacks the originality and the elusive suggestiveness of the *Pagodes* and of *La soirée*.

The *Reflets dans l'eau* is superior to the *Hommage à Romeau* and the *Mouvement*, with which it is combined in the first series of *Images*. Technically it is a masterpiece, and both by the quality of its themes

## DEBUSSY'S DEVELOPMENT

and its perfection of form is fitted to stand as a piece of absolute music of rare beauty. The plan of it is logical rather than impressionistic. It is the development of a single idea, not the combination of suggestive fragments. Hence it seems to stand as the most complete result of the art of which the *Pagodes* and *Les Jardins* are representative. In the second series of *Images* the strange piece, *Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut*, is a further experiment in the kind of music of which *La soirée* is an example. Here as there the music is fragmentary. Here as there there is but an occasional touch of vividness against a background of misty night. In both pieces pictures, words, almost sounds are only suggested to the ear, not completely represented.

On the other hand, the *Cloches à travers les feuilles*, and the *Poissons d'or*, respectively the first and last pieces in this second set of *Images*, are what we might call consistently motivated throughout, in the manner of the *Reflets dans l'eau*. There is always the rustling of leaves and the faint jangle of bells in the former, always a quiver of water and a darting, irregular movement in the latter; whereas in neither *La soirée* nor in *Et la lune* is there the persistence of an idea that is thus predominant and more or less clearly presented.

The last two series of *Préludes* show us his art yet more finely polished and concentrated. In general these twenty-four pieces are shorter and more concise than the *Estampes* and the *Images*, certainly than the representative pieces in them—*Pagodes*, *Les jardins*, and *Reflets dans l'eau*. Most of them, moreover, are in his suggestive rather than his explicit manner. He accomplishes his end with a few strokes, and usually in a short space. The placing of the titles at the end rather than at the beginning of the pieces is an interesting point, too; for one cannot believe that such a finished artist as Debussy shows himself in these pieces

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to be would have sent his work before the public without a consciousness of the significance of such an arrangement. He does not, as it were, announce to his auditors his purpose, saying, imagine now this sound which you are about to hear as representing in music a picture of gardens through a steadily falling rain. He rather draws a line here upon his canvas and adds a point of color there, all in a moment, and then, having shown you first this strange beauty of combinations, says at the end you may now imagine a meaning in the west wind, a church sunk beneath the surface of the sea, a tribute to Mr. Pickwick, dead leaves, or what not in the way of exquisite and incomplete ideas.

Many of these postscripts are significantly vague: *Voiles, Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir, Des pas sur la neige* (Alkan called a piece of his *Neige et lave*), *La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune*, etc.

Yet, however vague the subject or the suggestion, there is a sort of epigrammatic clearness in the music. The rhythms are especially lithe and endlessly varied, the phrase-building concise yet never commonplace. There is a glitter of wit in nearly all, an unflinching sense of light and proportion. This, not the strange harmonies nor the imagery, seems to us the quality of his music that is typically French. There is infinite grace and subtlety; sensuousness in color, too, though it is spiritualized; but there is little that is sentimental.

The delicacy and yet the sharpness with which he has reproduced qualities in outlandish music must be noticed. In earlier music he gave proof of his insight into the essentials of other systems of music than the French, or the German which has been considered the international. The *Suite Bergamasque* has a local color. There is Oriental stuff in *Pagodes*, Spanish and Moorish in *La soirée dans Grenade*, Egyptian in *Et la lune*. Traces of Greek or of ecclesiastical modes are

## MAURICE RAVEL

abundant. Here, in the *Préludes* all this and more too has he caught. Greece in *Danseuses de Delphes*, Italy in *Les collines d'Anacapri*, the old church in *La cathédrale*, Spain in *La puerta del Vino*, cake-walks in *General Lavine*, England in *Pickwick*, and Egypt in *Canope*. There seems a touch of the North, too, in the exquisite little pieces, *La fille aux cheveux de lin*. In this way alone Debussy has rejuvenated music, doing more than others had done.

Finally, it would be hard to find more essence of comedy and wit in music than one finds in Debussy's *Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum* in the 'Children's Corner,' with its ludicrous play on the erstwhile sacred formulas of technical study. This alone should place him among the wits of a century. The *Sérénade interrompue* and 'Puck's Dance' are both full of mockery. Then there is the eccentric General Lavine, and, perhaps most laughable of all, the merry homage to Pickwick, made up of 'God Save the King' and a jig in the English style.

No one can say what the future of his music will be, nor how it will be related to the general development in music by students a hundred years hence. Yet it is certain that it recommends itself to pianists at present because it has expanded the technique of the instrument. It is made up in part of effects which, as we have said, if they are not new in principle, are newly applied and expanded. He has developed resources in the instrument which had not before been more than suggested. His pieces bring into striking prominence the qualities of after-sound and sympathetic vibrations or over-tones in the piano, which are as much its possession and as uniquely so as the bell-like qualities it had before been chiefly called upon to produce. Therefore though his accomplishments in harmony and form, in the possibilities of music in general, may be regarded with a changed eye in the years to come, and

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though he may even some day appear in many ways reactionary, because he has once more associated music with ideas and weakened the independence of its life; yet as far as the pianoforte is concerned he is the greatest innovator since Chopin and Liszt.

### VI

The pianoforte music of Maurice Ravel is in many ways similar to that of his great contemporary. His conception of harmony is, like Debussy's, expanded. Sevenths and ninths are used as consonances in his music as well; and consequently one finds there the free use of the sustaining pedal, the playing with after-sounds and over-tones.

His works are not so numerous. The most representative are the *Miroirs*, containing five pieces: *Noc-tuelles*, *Oiseaux tristes*, *Une barque sur l'océan*, *Al-borado del gracioso* and *La vallée des cloches*; and a recent set, *Gaspard de la nuit*, containing *Ondine*, *Scar-bo*, and *Le Gibet*, three poems for the piano after Aloy-sius Bertrand. A set of *Valses nobles et sentimentales* are only moderately interesting on account of the har-monies. The rhythms are not unusually varied, and the treatment of the pianoforte is relatively simple. There is a well-known *Pavane pour une infante défunte* of great charm, and a concert piece of great brilliance called *Jeux d'eau*.

Though Ravel, like Debussy, makes use of a misty background, his music is on the whole more brilliant and more clear-cut. One is likelier to find in it pas-sages that are sensational as well as effective. His ef-fects, too, are more broadly planned, more salient and less suggestive. The *Jeux d'eaux* is a very good exam-ple, with its regular progressions and unvaried style, its sustained use of high registers rather than an occa-

**Famous Pianists:**

**Ferruccio Busoni  
Ossip Gabrilowitch**

— **Ignace Paderewski  
Eugen d'Albert**









## DEBUSSY AND RAVEL DIFFERENTIATED

sional flash into them, its repetitions of rather conventional figures.

Yet it is not in technical treatment of the piano that Ravel is most clearly to be differentiated from Debussy, but rather in the matter of structure. Most of his pieces are relatively long, and few of them are written in the fragmentary, suggestive way characteristic of Debussy, but are consistently sustained and developed. This in general. In particular one will notice not only a regularity in the structure of phrases but a frequent repetition of phrases in the well-balanced manner we associate with his predecessors, sequences that except in harmony are quite classical. The *Jeux d'eau* will offer numerous examples; and the same regularity is noticeable in the *Ondine* and *Le Gibet*. The phrases are long and smooth. They have not the epigrammatic terseness of Debussy, who, even in passages of melodious character, always avoids an obvious symmetry. Nor is Ravel's music so parti-colored as Debussy's. It does not touch upon such exotic or such foreign scales and harmonies. Ravel shows himself a lover of the Oriental in his string quartet, especially of the Oriental mannerism of repetition; but one does not find in his pianoforte music, as in Debussy's, hints of ancient Greece, of Italy, of North America, of England. Even the *Alborada del gracioso*, for all its length and brilliance, is not Spanish as Debussy's *Soirée dans Grenade* or *Puerta del Vino*. The impressions one receives from hearing works of the two men performed one after the other are really not similar. Debussy's music is subtle and instantaneous, so to speak; Ravel's is rather deliberate and prolonged.

Other French composers have hardly made themselves felt with such distinctness as these two men. The most prominent of them is Florent Schmitt whose *Pièces romantiques*, *Humoresques*, and *Nuits romaines* are worthy of study. Within the last year or two sev-

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eral sets of pieces by Eric Satie have appeared which must give one pause. These are almost as simple as Mozart; indeed many of them are written in but two parts. They are not lacking in charm, whether or not one may take them seriously. Satie shows himself in many of them a parodist. He plays strains from the Funeral March in Chopin's sonata, twisting them out of shape, and writes slyly over the music that they are from a well-known mazurka of Schubert's. He parodies Chabrier's *España* and Puccini's operas.

Finally he writes directions and indications over measures in the score which cannot but be a malicious though delightful mockery of modern music in general. Remembering Scriabine's *Avec une céleste volupté*, or *une volupté radieuse, extatique* or *douloureuse*, one is not surprised to find Satie telling one to play *sur du velours jaunie, sec comme un coucou, léger comme un œuf*, though at this last one may well suspect a tongue in the cheek. But Satie goes much further than this. There is among the *Descriptions automatiques* one on a lantern, in which we are here told to withhold from lighting it, there to light, there to blow it out, next to put our hands in our pockets. And throughout the absurd, unless they be wholly ironical, pieces inspired by *Embryons désechés*, there is almost a running text which cannot but stir to hearty laughter. Think of being directed to play a certain passage like a nightingale with the toothache—*comme un rossignol qui aurait mal aux dents*; or of being reminded as you play that the sun has gone out in the rain and may not come back again, or that you have no tobacco but happily you do not smoke. Such are the remarks which Satie intends shall illumine your comprehension of his music; and his humor is the more delightful because as a matter of fact Mozart's first minuet is hardly more simple than this music to dried-up sea-urchins. Such naughty playfulness may well offend the conservatories;

## CONCLUSION

but even if it is only nonsense, surely it is a felicitous sign in these days, when high foreheads and bald pates ponderously try to further the gestation of a new art of music.

\* \* \*

If we leave our study of pianoforte music with a laugh it is only because we may be supremely happy in the possession of so much music that need not be hidden before the raillery of any wit, no matter how sacrilegious. Into the hands of Claude Debussy we give the art of writing for the pianoforte. His is the wisest and most sensitive touch to mold it since the day of Chopin. Whatever the music he writes may be, it has conferred upon the instrument once more the infinite blessing of a proper speech. He has once more saved it from a confusion of thumps and roars.

Bach, Chopin, Debussy: it is a strange trio, set apart from other composers because to them the pianoforte made audible its secret voice, a voice of fading after-sounds. Let us not take Bach from among them. It was after all the same voice that spoke to him from his clavichord, more faint perhaps yet even more sensitive. Music whispered to Mozart that she would sing sweetly for him through his light pianoforte. The powers of destiny made themselves music at the call of Beethoven, and they swept up the piano in their force. Through Schubert the hand of a spirit touched the keys. For Weber the keys danced together and made strange pantomimes of sound. Schumann, as it were, spoke to his pianoforte apart, and it opened a door for him into a fanciful world. To Brahms the keys were colleagues, not friends, and Liszt drove them in a chariot race, worthy of Rome and the emperors, or converted them like a magician into a thousand shapes with a thousand spells. But to Bach, Chopin and Debussy this instrument revealed itself and showed a secret beauty that is all its own.

## CHAPTER XI

### EARLY VIOLIN MUSIC AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF VIOLIN TECHNIQUE

The origin of stringed instruments; ancestors of the violin—Perfection of the violin and advance in violin technique; use of the violin in the sixteenth century; early violin compositions in the vocal style; Florentino Maschera and Monteverdi—Beginnings of violin music: Biagio Marini; Quagliati; Farina; Fontana and Mont' Albano; Merula; Ucellino and Neri; Legrenzi; Walther and his advance in technique, experiments in tone painting—Giov. Battista Vitali; Tommaso Vitali and Torelli; Bassani; Veracini and others—Biber and other Germans; English and French composers for the violin; early publications of text-books and collections.

#### I

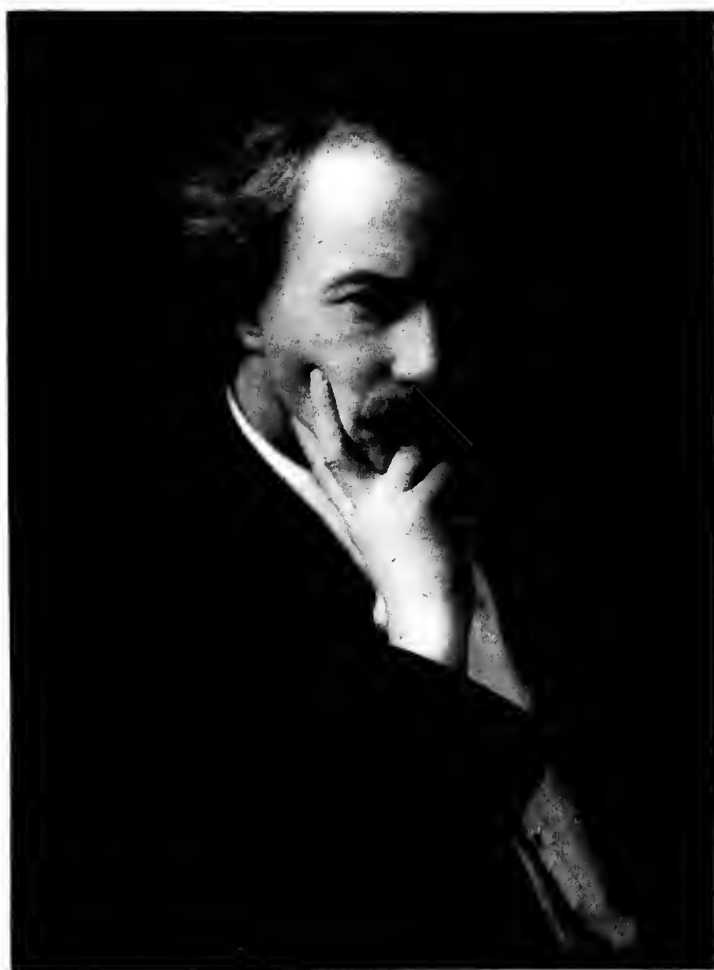
THE origin of string instruments of the violin family is involved in much obscurity and it would be impossible to discuss here the various theories concerning it which have been stated with more or less plausibility by musical historians.\* A preponderance of authoritative opinion seems to favor the theory that the direct ancestor of the violin was the Welsh *crwth*, a sort of harp, which seems to have been played with a bow. Venantius Fortunatus (570 A.D.) mentions this instrument in the much quoted lines: *Romanusque lyra plaudit tibi, barbara harpa, Græcus Achillaica, chrotta Britana canat.* ('The Roman praises thee with the lyre, the barbarian sings to thee with the harp, the Greek with the cither, the Briton with the *crwth*.) The fact that the old English name for the fiddle was *crowd* furnishes an etymological argument in favor of the *crwth*. It is, of course, possible that the idea of using

\* Cf. Vol. VIII, Chap. I.

**Ignace Paderewski**  
*After a photo from life (1915)*










## ANCESTORS OF THE VIOLIN

a bow with the small harp was first suggested by some instrument already in existence. The Arabs and other peoples had instruments roughly approximating the violin type. One is inclined, however, to the assumption that the violin was not developed directly from any particular instrument, but came into being rather through the evolution of an idea with which various races experimented independently and simultaneously.

The immediate forerunner of the violin seems to have been the rebec, of which there is a drawing in an extant manuscript of the ninth century. The Benedictine monk Ofried, in his *Liber Evangeliorum* of about the same period, mentions the fidula as one of the two bowed instruments then in use, though to what extent the fidula differed from the rebec we are unable to ascertain. In the psalm-book of Notker (d. 1022) there is also a figure of a rebec and a bow. Drawings, written references and bas-reliefs enable us to follow the development of the violin clearly enough from this time on. In the abbey of St. Georges de Boscherville, Normandy, there is preserved a bas-relief which shows a girl dancing on her head to the accompaniment of a band which includes two instruments of the violin type, played with the bow. The *Nibelungen Lied* speaks of a fiddler who 'wielded a fiddle-bow, broad and long like a sword,' and although this epic was completed in the twelfth century it is probably safe to antedate the reference considerably. There is in the cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris a crowned figure with a four-stringed violin, and in the Abbey of St. Germain des Près there is a similar relic showing a man with a five-stringed violin and a bow. Both date from the eleventh century. From these and similar evidences it is plain that a violin of a rudimentary type was used extensively in the eleventh century. Its musical possibilities must have been very slight, and probably it was used chiefly to accompany the song or the dance.

## VIOLIN MUSIC

As we may deduce from many contemporary references, the troubadours, jongleurs, and minnesingers \* of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries played a very important part in the development of the violin type of instrument. There is extant, for instance, a manuscript of the period, containing an illustration of a *jongleur* playing upon a three-stringed instrument very nearly resembling the modern violin. Jerome of Moravia, a Dominican monk of Paris in the thirteenth century, informs us in his *Speculum Musices* that the two strings of the violin then in use were tuned as follows:

. His *Speculum*, which is probably the earliest approach to an instruction book for the violin, also contains this very definite indication of the fingering:



Under the influence of the troubadours and minnesingers the popularity of the violin spread rapidly both among professionals and amateur musicians. It was especially popular as an accompaniment to dances. In the *Brunswick Chronicle* (1203) we read of a clergyman who had his arm struck by lightning while playing for dancers. We may infer from this that it was considered quite a respectable recreation. The *Chronicle* has the words *veddette* (fiddled) and *Veddelbogen* (fiddle-bow) without any comment, so that they must have been quite familiar terms. A stained glass window, a Parisian manuscript and a miniature painting from a manuscript called *Mater Verborum* (1202-12) show that the instrument then in use resembled in shape the modern violin. In Ulrich von Lichtenstein's *Frauentienst* we read of an orchestra which included two

\* See Vol. I, Chap. VII.

## ANCESTORS OF THE VIOLIN

fiddles and which played a lively walking-tune or march for the purpose of charming away the fatigues of the journey. We may gather some idea of the vogue of violin playing during this period from the character of a decree, issued in the year 1261 and now in the archives of Bologna, which forbade the playing of the viol at night in the streets of that city. Despite its great popularity it held a place beside the harp as an instrument worthy of the dignity of a minstrel, as we may gather from an allusion of a French poet about the year 1230:

‘When the cloth was ta’en away  
Minstrels strait began to play,  
And while harps and viols join  
Raptured bards in strains divine,  
Loud the trembling arches rung  
With the noble deed we sung.’

By this time professional instrumentalists had become a strong class and in various cities had begun the formation of fraternities which did not differ much in essence from our modern musical unions. The first of these, as far as we can discover, was the St. Nicholas Brüderschaft which existed in Vienna as early as 1288.

The many and varied forms and sizes of viols illustrated in manuscripts and elsewhere suggest that the instrument was used in the music of the church. Certainly instruments of some kind (apart from the organ) must have been taken into the church service, else Thomas Aquinas would not have argued against their employment. The church was not very sympathetic toward musicians and its attitude was reflected to a great extent by the world at large. Synods and councils frequently issued decrees against wandering minstrels and in the city of Worms they were even refused the privilege of lodging in or frequenting public houses.

The fourteenth century brought much greater recog-

## VIOLIN MUSIC

dition for instrumental art, which grew in popularity and in the favor and patronage of those in high places. When the French *jongleurs* united in 1321 into the *Confrérie de St. Julien des Ménestriers* they obtained a charter which called their leaders *Rois des ménestriers* (later *Rois des violins*). The same charter alludes to 'high and low' instruments, apparently treble and bass rebecs or viols which were played in octaves to each other or perhaps in a primitive sort of counterpoint. Technique must have been very inferior, for musicians in Alsace were required to study only one or two years before taking up music as a profession. Their incomes, on the other hand, were probably substantial, as it is recorded that they were obliged to pay taxes. It is interesting to note at this early period that the city of Basle employed a violinist to play in a public place for the entertainment of the citizens.

So far we have endeavored to trace the progress of violin music through paintings, monuments and fugitive references in manuscripts, decrees and other documents. These references are not on the whole very clear and the nomenclature of early instruments of the violin family is very loose and confused. We know practically nothing about the music composed for these instruments. Their imperfect shape does not suggest music of an advanced kind, nor does it mean that the technique of the time was equal to very exacting demands. The famous blind organist, Conrad Paumann (1410-73), who could play on every instrument, including the violin, has left us in his *Orgelbuch* several transcriptions of songs which he may have played on the violin as well as on other instruments, and the dances and other pieces of free invention composed for other instruments may also have served as musical material for violinists. But all this is mere surmise.

Regarding the combination of the violin with other instruments we know that at the end of the fifteenth

**Relatives of the Violin:**

Viola da braccio

Viola da gamba

Poehette

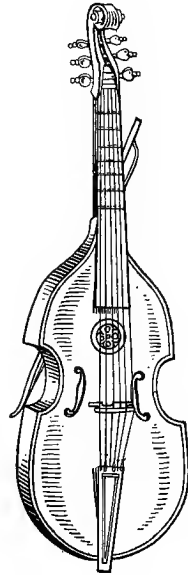
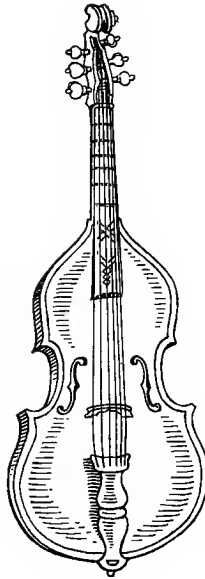
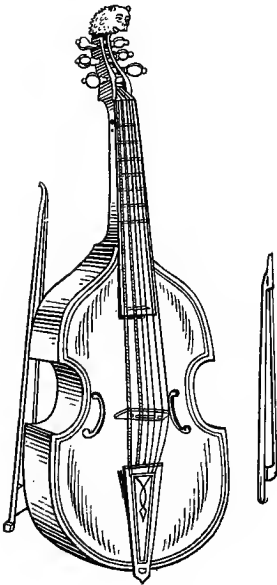
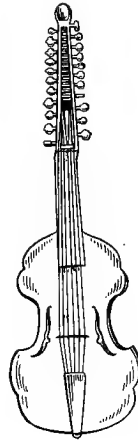
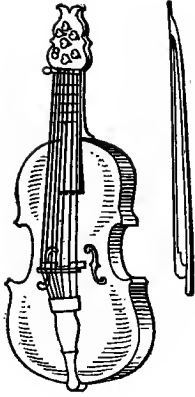
Violone

Viola bastarda

Viola d'amore









## PERFECTION OF THE VIOLIN

century there existed in Louvain an 'orchestra' composed of a harp, a flute, a *viol*, and a trumpet. There is recorded an account of another 'orchestra' belonging to Duke Hercules in Ferrara, who employed a great number of musicians. It included flutes, trumpets, lutes, trombones, harps, viols and rebecs. We should not assume, however, that all of these instruments were played simultaneously. Each class of instrument had its own part and if all of them played together they must have made noise rather than music. We are also informed that previous to the year 1450 popes and princes employed 'orchestras' which combined 'the voices, organ, and *other* instruments into the loveliest harmony.' In spite of the almost entire lack of music for the violin we know that it was a favorite instrument and consequently that the players must have produced on it pleasing music of some kind. Indication of its popularity is found in the works of Fra Angelico (1387-1455), whose famous angel holds a viol in her hands, and in Boccaccio's novels, where we learn that violin music formed a considerable part of the entertainment of all classes.

## II

The sixteenth century brought the violin to a perfection that was still far in advance of the technique of the players. At the same time there was a distinct advancement in the recognition of instrumental music, although vocal music continued to maintain its pre-eminence. This was due partly to the limited technique of the instrumentalists and partly to the greater appeal of music wedded to words. Violin players then knew nothing about changing of positions and therefore could play only in the first position.\* Thus the tone

\* The various 'positions' in violin playing indicate the positions which the left hand occupies in reaching the different parts of the fingerboard. The first position is that in which the thumb and first finger are at the

## VIOLIN MUSIC

register of the violin was small. Some players, however, attempted to reach higher tones on the first string through the stretching of the fourth finger. Simple melodic phrases or figures were lacking in even quality of tone, in smoothness and in fluency. The art of legato playing was unknown and violinists could not play two or more notes with 'one bow.' Neither did they endeavor to conquer the technical difficulties of playing on the G string. They made practically no use of the fourth string until the end of the century. In addition, the instruments were badly constructed, equipped with strings of inferior quality and tuned in a low pitch, all of which militated strongly against purity and accuracy of intonation. Hans Gerle (a flute player of Nuremberg), in his '*Musica Teutsch, auf die Instrument der grossen und kleinen Geigen*' (1532), advised that intonation marks be placed on the finger-board, and this naïve advice was in use as late as the middle of the eighteenth century.\*

The same writer points out that instrumentalists in improvising their parts were prone to vie with each other in demonstrating their ability as contrapuntists, a perfectly comprehensible habit, which must have affected instrumental music in the sixteenth century as badly as the vagaries of coloratura singers affected operatic music in the eighteenth.

Gerle's book, incidentally, contained a number of German, Welsh, and French songs, and a fugue for four violins. Among other early books on the violin mention may be made of these:

S. Virdung: *Musica getuscht*, 1511.

Judenkönig: A truly artistic instruction \* \* \* of learning upon the lute and violin, 1523. (Contains 25 numbers for violin and flute.)

extreme end of the instrument's 'neck.' With the usual tuning the compass controlled by the first position is from a to b".

\* Leopold Mozart (father of Wolfgang Amadeus) referred to it in his method for the violin (1758) and sharply condemned it. 'Some teachers,'

## THE VIOLIN IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

Agricola: *Musica Instrumentalis*, 1528. (Here the author refers to the vibrato as a device that 'makes the playing more sweet.')

La Franco: *Scintille di Musica*, 1533.

Silvestro Ganassi: *Regola Rubertina che insegna suon di Viola d'arco*, 1543.

Ludovico Zacconi: *Prattica di Musica*, 1592 (Zacconi stated here that the compass of the violin was g—ciii).

M. Prätorius: *Syntagma Musicum*, 1619.

Touching upon the use of the violin in the sixteenth century there is extant a wealth of historical references. From one of these, for example, we gather that at a public festival in 1520 viols were used to accompany songs. We may assume their popularity in England from the fact that they were used in the family of Sir Thomas More (1530), an ardent music lover, and that during the reign of Edward VI the royal musical establishment increased the number of its viols to eight. Violins were used at public performances in Rouen in 1558; at a fête in Bayonne for dance music in 1565, and in a performance of a Mass at Verona in 1580. In the year 1572 Charles XI of France purchased violins from Cremona and a little later ordered the famous twenty-four violins from Andrea Amati. In 1579, at the marriage of the Duke of Joyeuse, violins were used to play for dances, and Montaigne in his *Journal* (1580) refers to a marriage ceremony in Bavaria, where 'as a newly married couple went out of church, the violinists accompanied them.' From this passage of Montaigne we may infer that, in Germany at least, the popularity of violin music was not confined to the upper classes. It must be remembered, however, that the terms 'viola,' 'violin,' 'viol,' etc., were often applied indifferently to stringed instruments of various kinds, and in view of

he remarked, "in their desire to help pupils, label the names of tones upon the fingerboard or make marks upon it by scratching. All these devices are useless, because the pupil who is musically talented finds the notes without such aid, and persons who are not thus inclined should learn how to handle the ax instead of the bow."

## VIOLIN MUSIC

this inaccurate nomenclature historical references must be accepted with a certain amount of reserve.

We know little of the music that was played on the violin before the last decade of the sixteenth century. Violins, we are aware, were employed in ensembles, in orchestras, and in unison with voices, and in looking for violin music we have not necessarily to consider compositions written especially for violin. By way of illustration we may cite a collection of French Dances (1617), published for 'instruments,' presumably for all kinds of instruments, and a collection of 'Songs' edited in Venice (1539) bearing the remark 'to sing and play,' and indicating no special instruments. Probably much of this sort of music was played by violin. Among examples of specific writing for the violin there has come down to us previous to 1539 a *Fugue* (Fugato rather) for four violins, composed by Gerle. It is in four parts: Discant (first violin), Alto (second violin), Tenor (viola) and Bass ('cello), perhaps the earliest specimen of a composition for string quartet. The style is purely vocal, as we may see from the theme:



There is no suggestion of the violin idiom in the piece and it throws no light on the development of violin music. Cortecchi and Striggio in 1565 scored their intermezzi for two gravecembali, *violins*, flutes, cornets, trombones, and several other instruments. D'Etrée, an oboe player, wrote down the common lively tunes which had been previously learned by ear and published them in 1564. As a practical musician he undoubtedly considered also the violin. In the performance of Beau-lieu's *Circe* (1581) ten bands were used and in the first act ten violin players in costumes appeared. The famous violinist, Beaujoyeaulx (an Italian in the service of Henry III whose real name was Baltasarini), wrote

## MONTEVERDI

ballets (1584), dances, festival music, and other compositions, which were very successful at the court. Doubtless he played them himself. Castiglione in his *Cortigiano* mentions a composition as being written for 'quattro viole da arco' which almost seems to indicate another specimen of early string quartet. Toward the end of the century we meet with the *Balletti* of Gastoldi and of Thomas Morley, some of which are printed without words and may have been intended for instrumental performances. Still, they are vocal in character and do not exceed the compass of the human voice. Besides these, there are other compositions and collections of dances, etc., that may be considered musical material for violinists of the time. Most of them, however, deserve no detailed notice.

Up to 1587 the leading instrument of the orchestra was the Cornetto (German 'Zinke,' an instrument of wood, not of metal). The earliest instance where the Cornetto alternates with the violins in taking the lead and where a part was inserted especially for *violino* is to be found in *Concerto di Andrea e Giovanni Gabrieli—per voci e strumenti musicali*, 1587. Some of G. Gabrieli's compositions, however, are still in vocal style, but some are decidedly instrumental in character, as we may see from the following illustrations.



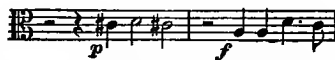
and



From a Sonata à 3 (1615)



and



(Note the last example, where the intentional contrast between *piano* and *forte* is distinctly indicated.)

## VIOLIN MUSIC

In 1593 Florentino Maschera, one of the celebrated organists of his time, published a book of 'Songs to play' (*Canzoni a sonar*). The work consisted of seventy-one pieces which had family names for their titles, a custom that was often repeated in the first half of the sixteenth century. It is important to note that these pieces were printed in separate parts, so that they may be considered as the first specimens of independent though not direct writing for the violin. These *canzoni* were vocal in character and there was little that suggested instrumental technique. The style was that of the vocal compositions of the time—contrapuntal.

A genuine and daring innovator in the field of violin music was Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643), who in some violin passages went up as high as the fifth position. Besides broadening the technique of the left hand, he demanded tremolos for dramatic effects in accompanying recitative:



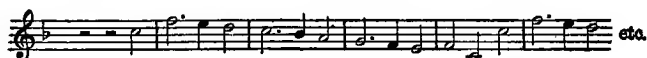


## BIAGIO MARINI

the fashion of the French, but in place of accompanying a dance, the character indicated in the opera was accompanied by two violins in a particular part of its music.' \* In other violin pieces by Monteverdi, as in his *Scherzi musicali* and *Ritornelle* (1607), we see his superiority to his contemporaries, just as in his *Sonata sopra Sancta Maria detratta*, etc. (1610), he showed plainly his desire to improve violin music.

### III

The first attempt at independent violin composition was made by Biagio Marini (1590-1660), *maestro di cappella* in Santa Eufemia in Brescia and a court concertmaster in Germany, who may be regarded as the first professional composer-violinist. In his early compositions the violin parts were not difficult for the players. There were mostly half and quarter notes in slow tempi, displaying the quality of vocal compositions, and without much use of the G string. Witness the following example from his *Martinenga Corrente* (1622) :



## VIOLIN MUSIC

Marini's dance compositions are characteristic of all dance music at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Among them, however, is one that possesses particular interest for us from the fact that it is the first extant composition marked distinctly 'for violin solo.' It is entitled *La Romanesca per Violino Solo e Basso* (ad libitum), and has four sections, each consisting of two parts. The first section, *Parte prima*, has six measures in the first and second part; the second section has five measures in the first part and six in the second. The form of the third section is not so clear as that of the previous ones, although, as we may see from the basses, the composer endeavored to give clear-cut melodies. The same may be said of the fourth section, where the figures are in the bass. The third section—*terza parte in altro modo*—with new melodic and rhythmic material, has the character of a dance. The violin part moves in figures of eight, and there are sustained notes in the bass. The first few measures of each section will serve as illustration.

The image displays four staves of musical notation, each labeled with a section number. Section I is a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat, containing six measures of music. Section II is a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat, containing five measures of music, with some notes marked with a trill symbol (tr). Section III is a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat, containing six measures of music, with some notes marked with a trill symbol (tr). Section IV is a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat, containing six measures of music, with some notes marked with a trill symbol (tr). The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests.

In his technique Marini does not go beyond the first position; consequently the fluency of the melody suffers many a break, for when he reaches the limit of the first position, he continues the melody an octave lower.

## BIAGIO MARINI

Yet he is responsible for several technical innovations for the violin. He was the first to mark the bowing (legato playing) and to introduce—seven years before Monteverdi's *Combattimento*—the coloring effect of the tremolo, thus:



Other innovations are to be found in his *Sonate e Sinfonie Canzoni* (1629) where in a Capriccio 'two violins play four parts' (*due violini sonano quattro parti*), thus:



and a 'Capriccio to be played on the violin solo with three strings after the manner of a lyre' (*Capriccio per sonare il Violino solo con tre corde a modo di Lyra*).



Besides Marini there were others who seriously endeavored to write in a distinctive violin idiom. Before considering them we may mention here Paolo Quagliati, who in his *Sfera armoniosa* (1623) made the violin accompany the voices and used it also as a solo instrument with the accompaniment of the theorbo in a *tocata* of the same opus. The violin part usually consisted of sustained tones that were to be embellished by the players according to the custom of the time. Quagliati himself was not a violinist and this fact serves to explain the simple technique of his violin parts.



## G. B. FONTANA

The fact that he found it necessary to give instruction for the execution of double stops and tremolos, and the production of the required effects in his imitations indicates that these devices were entirely new in violin playing.

According to Gerber he published besides the *Capriccio*, a collection of '*Sonatas*' and '*Pavanes*' (1628), which, if they existed at all, are entirely lost. Of his other compositions (*Dances*, *Arias*) we possess the first violin parts containing the melody. He used the G clef and the term '*violino*.'

The compositions of Marini, Quagliati and Farina represent the beginnings of independent violin solo music. The first to write sonatas for violin solo was the violinist-composer Giovanni Battista Fontana (1630). His works, compared with the sonatas of Gabrieli, show a marked improvement in violin technique; they are characterized by the same polyphonic style, but they are not so conclusively vocal in character. The following selections will show the great improvement in violin technique; they virtually comprise the first '*runs*' composed for the violin:

From a Sonata for Violin Solo

The image displays four musical staves in G-clef, illustrating violin techniques. The first staff shows a simple melodic line with the text 'etc.' at the end. The second staff is preceded by 'or' and features a series of sixteenth-note runs. The third staff, also preceded by 'or', shows a more complex run with double stops and a trill-like figure. The fourth staff, preceded by 'or', shows a tremolo-like run with the text 'etc.' at the end.

## VIOLIN MUSIC

Fontana strove toward a broader form and in doing so he took a part in the evolution of the later sonata. But he was not capable of fluent and even expression, hence the effect of his works on the whole is stiff and dry. We should not forget, however, that he lived during the period of transition from the old tonal systems to the new, and that, while he endeavored to write in the new style, the old one had not lost its hold upon him. The result was awkwardness in modulation and a general vagueness and uncertainty.

About the same time (1629) another composer, Bartolomeo Mont' Albano, published his *Sinfonie* for one and two violins (and trombones, with the accompaniment of the organ). These pieces are incoherent and lack inspiration and power. Their value is far below that of Fontana's compositions. Mont' Albano is only worthy of mention as showing that Fontana was not absolutely alone in his attempts to improve violin music. It may be noticed that he called his compositions *Sinfonie*, meaning nothing more nor less than Fontana meant in his sonatas—a proof that the technical terms at that time were not yet strictly defined.

Great improvement in technique is obvious in the works of Tarquinno Merula (1633). He used the G string freely, demanded skips from the G to the E string, also tremolos, changes of position:



and octave passages:



Mont' Albano's music was thought out rather than invented and it would give little pleasure to the modern ear. In the history of the development of violin music

## MONT' ALBANO, T. MERULA, AND M. NERI

these early compositions should be considered simply as efforts or studies to advance violin technique and musical form.


While Merula helped the progress of left hand technique, Marco Ucellini (1669) made more demands on the bow, writing rapid thirty-second notes for certain tremolo effects in his *sinfonia* entitled *La gran Bataglia*.

A more pleasing musical quality is to be found in the sonatas of Massimiliano Neri, who was the first to make a distinction between the *Sonata da chiesa* and the *Sonata da camera*. In his *Sonate e Canzoni a quattro* and in his *Sonate da suonarsi con vari strumenti*, Neri followed the path of Gabrieli in writing for as many as twelve instruments. The frequent change of time and the restless rhythm are also reminiscent of Gabrieli's peculiarities. Although Neri's structure of phrases and periods is more normal, his modulation more fluent, and his music on the whole more agreeable to the modern ear than that of Fontana and Merula, his works still belong to the practical experiments of violin music, and are without great intrinsic merits. The same may be said of the sonatas of Biagio Marini whom we have already discussed. He may be termed one of the originators of the cyclical form of the modern sonata, since his sonatas were in four movements. The first, usually in slow tempo, was followed by an Allegro, this by a longer or shorter piece that led to the last movement (Allegro). While his style was still distinctly polyphonic, the development of his motives was considerably more pleasing. Improvement in harmony and modulation is found in the *Sonate da chiesa* and *Sonate da camera* of Giovanni Legrenzi (1655), who did not otherwise accomplish much in forwarding solo violin music.

Turning to Germany, it is to be regretted that the works, which, to judge by their titles, might have shed some light on the development of early violin music,

## VIOLIN MUSIC

are irretrievably lost to us. They are *Auserlesene Violinen Exercitium aus verschiedener Sonaten nebst ihre Arien, Balladen, Sarabanden, etc.*, and *Musicalische Tafelbedienung von fünf Instrumenten, als zwei Violinen, zwei Violen, nebst den General Bass*, by Wilhelm Furcheim (1674), concert-master at Dresden. The most important figure, among the earliest German composers for the violin from the standpoint of technical advance, is evidently Jacob Walter. His twelve *Scherzi da violino solo* are in the style of the *Sonate da Camera* (Suite) or in the form of variations. Eight of them are called sonatas, and contain three or four movements, mostly in the same key but in a variety of tempi. From a musical point of view most of Walter's compositions are unattractive, as the form is stiff, the rhythm awkward, modulation poor, and the melody heavy and clumsy. His importance lies exclusively in the advanced claims his writings make upon execution,

for he ascends as far as  and writes many

difficult double stops, chords, and arpeggios. Walter was also fond of imitating other instruments, birds, echoes, and so forth. In a set of variations we meet with imitations of the guitar by playing pizzicato, of the pipes by going up high on the E string, of fanfares by playing on the G string. In another composition the imitation of the call of the cuckoo was his chief purpose; but we would hardly recognize the cuckoo's call, had he not in every case taken the pains to mark the imitation. In another instance, in *Hortulus Chelicus*, he endeavored to imitate the voice of some other bird. This work as a piece of art is more valuable, since here he attempted to write a duet for one violin. Another composition that is characteristic of Walter's musical ideas is a *Capriccio*, where the C major scale is used as basso ostinato in forty-nine variations, as though the



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ANTONIO STRADIVARI





## G. B. VITALI AND T. A. VITALI

composer wanted to give as many kinds of motions and figures as he could.

Walter was not an innovator in the art of tone painting, for Farina had tried the same devices seventy years before. Still he cannot be dubbed a mere imitator of Farina, though he was without doubt strongly influenced by the latter. Walter's technique is much more advanced than that of Farina, but at the same time he shows little improvement in a purely musical way.

### IV

There is an obvious advance in musical value in the *Correnti e balletti da camera a due violini*, 1666; *Balletti, Sonate*, 1667, 1669; *Correnti e capricci per camera a due violini e violone*, 1683, and other instrumental pieces by Giovanni Battista Vitali, 'sonatore di Violino di braccio' in the orchestra of Bologna. Vitali's melodies contain much more pleasing qualities than those of his contemporaries. In regard to form, his sonatas, in which rapid changes from quick to slow movements mark the various sections, show the transition from the suite to the *sonata da camera*. Vitali was one of those early inspired composers, whose greatest merit lies in their striving toward invention and toward the ideal of pure absolute music. In technique Vitali does not show any material progress.

Of particular importance is Tommaso Antonio Vitali, a famous violinist of his time. Of his works, *Sonate a tre, due violini e violoncello*, 1693; *Sonate a due violini, col basso per l'organo*, 1693, and *Concerto di sonate a violino, violoncello e cembalo*, 1701, the most famous and most valuable is his *Ciaccona*, which is very often played on the concert stage by present-day violinists. The *Ciaccona* is full of poetic moods and its short, pregnant theme shows deep feeling and genuine inspiration, qualities which we find here for the first

## VIOLIN MUSIC

time. The whole is a set of variations upon a short theme, constituting a series of contrasting pictures. Noteworthy are the harmony and the advanced treatment of modulation. The ornamental figures, too, are derived from the logical development of the theme, hence do not serve the sole purpose of providing the virtuoso with an opportunity to display his technical skill.

The first representative virtuoso-composer was Giuseppe Torelli (1658-1708), to whom is ascribed the invention of the concerto, that is, the application of the sonata form of his time to concerted music. In Torelli's concertos the solo-violins were accompanied not only by a bass as in the sonatas, but by a stringed band, to which sometimes a lute or organ was added. The solo-violins in his 'Concerti grossi' (1686) usually played together, though not always. That he had the virtuoso in mind when he wrote may be gathered from the following examples:

The image displays six staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp). The notation includes various violin techniques:

- Staff 1: A sixteenth-note scale-like run, ending with "etc.)."
- Staff 2: A sixteenth-note run with a trill-like flourish at the end, ending with "etc."
- Staff 3: A sixteenth-note run with a slur over the final notes, ending with "etc."
- Staff 4: A sixteenth-note run with a sharp sign above the final notes, ending with "etc."
- Staff 5: A sixteenth-note run with a slur and a trill-like flourish, ending with "etc."
- Staff 6: A sixteenth-note run with a slur and a trill-like flourish, ending with "etc."

## G. B. BASSANI

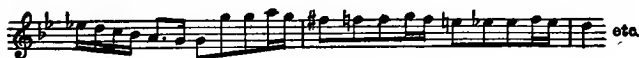
In his concertos Torelli was the direct precursor of Corelli, Vivaldi, and Handel. His influence, however, was not so intense as that of Giovanni Battista Bassani (1657-1716), whose music had more unity and definiteness and on the whole ranked very much higher artistically. This, added to the fact that he was Corelli's teacher, gives him a prominent place in the history of violin music. While the single movements of Bassani's sonatas on the whole show little improvement in form, the composer established a higher standard in the evenness and uniformity of his figures, in the smoothness of his modulation and chromatics, in rhythms that were far superior to those of earlier composers, in phrasing that was clear, especially in slow movements, and in the almost complete abandonment of the 'fugal' treatment. His influence upon Corelli is so evident that one could hardly distinguish one of his later compositions from an early sonata of his famous pupil.

A few examples of Bassani's writing may be of interest:

From a Sonata for two Violins and Bass  
Grave



Largo (from a Baletto e Corrente)



## VIOLIN MUSIC



Before closing our account of the seventeenth century, reference should be made to the prominent Antonio Veracini, the uncle and teacher of Francesco Maria Veracini, whose sonatas are still played by violinists today. Antonio Veracini's sonatas, composed in the form of the *sonata da chiesa*, do not lack a certain amount of beauty, inspiration, and repose; they show, moreover, clearness, fluency and roundness. His melodies are original, his modulations and contrapuntal combinations good. While his Allegro movements show no improvement in comparison with Bassani's works, the Adagios and Largos are of more independent finish.

There were numerous contemporaries, followers, and pupils of the composers already discussed. Their works, however, were academic, lacked individuality, and contained little that was worthy of special consideration. The list of these minor composers includes Laurenti, Borri, Mazzolini, Bononcini, Buoni, Bernardi, d'Albergati, Mazzaferrata, Tonini, Grossi, Ruggeri, Vinacesi, Zanata, and others.




## V

The first German composer of violin music of æsthetic value was Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber (born 1638), a very prominent violinist and composer of his time. Although frequently his form is vague and his ideas often dry, some of his sonatas contain movements that not only exhibit well-defined forms, but also contain fine and deeply felt ideas and a style which, though closely related to that of the best Italians of his time, has something characteristically German in its grave and pathetic severity. His sonatas on the whole are



## FRANZ VON BIBER

of a much higher artistic quality than those of his contemporaries. His sixth sonata, in C minor, published in 1687, is a genuinely artistic piece of work. 'It consists of five movements in alternately slow and quick time. The first is an introductory *largo* of contrapuntal character, with clear and consistent treatment in the fugally imitative manner. The second is a *passacaglia*, which answers roughly to a continuous string of variations on a short, well-marked period; the third is a rhapsodical movement consisting of interspersed portions of *poco lento*, *presto*, and *adagio*, leading into a *Gavotte*; and the last is a further rhapsodical movement alternating *adagio* and *allegro*. The work is essentially a violin sonata with accompaniment and the violin parts point to the extraordinary rapid advances toward mastery. The writing for the instrument is decidedly elaborate and difficult, especially in the double stops and contrapuntal passages. In the structure of the movements the fugal influences are most apparent and there are very few signs of the systematic repetition of keys which in later times became indispensable.' \* It was characteristic of Biber that his ambition was to create something original and that his works always showed individuality. He was fond of variations and this form was not lacking in any of his eight sonatas. Besides the variation form he frequently used the form of *gavotte* and *giga*, which he began and ended with an organ point. In his eighth sonata he attempted to write a duo in polyphonic style for one violin, writing it out on two staves. This work is of little importance to us, aside from the fact that he sought original-

ity in changing the tuning of the violin from  to  and sometimes to . This kind of

\* Parry in 'Grove's Dictionary,' Vol. 4.

## VIOLIN MUSIC

modified tuning, however, was not his invention, for we know that Johann Fischer, a composer and violinist in the same century, also attempted to write for differently tuned violins.

One of the best violinists of the seventeenth century was Nicholas Adam Strungk. He was also a good cembalist and once accompanied Corelli. It was Strungk to whom Corelli said upon hearing him play on the violin: 'My name is Archangelo, but you should be called Archidiavolo.' Strungk published *Exercises pour le violon* (1691), besides sonatas, chacones, etc.

Our review of the violin music of the seventeenth century would not be complete without mention of the compositions for violin by non-violinist composers, such as, for instance, Henry Purcell (1658-1695). Purcell imitated G. B. Vitali, and perhaps also other contemporary Italian composers, to whom, however, he was superior in originality, in vigor, in genuine inspiration and in a certain emotional quality. His violin compositions did not accentuate technique, since he himself was not a violinist. Concerning the sonatas of John Jenkins (1600), Dr. Burney remarks: 'Though written professedly in the Italian style, he could hardly have been familiar with the early Italian compositions of the same order, and though he had been, he would not be deprived of praise on the score of originality, his musical knowledge being quite equal if not superior to the composers for the violin at that time in Italy.' Among French composers we may single out Jean-Baptiste Lully (1633-1687), leader of the famous band of petit violins at the court of Louis XIV—the first large stringed orchestra. Lully studied the capacity of the instrument and tried to write in an idiomatic style, but on the whole he did not contribute much to the progress of violin music.

The appearance of a great number of violinist-composers in the seventeenth century indicates that the use

## EARLY INSTRUCTION BOOKS

of the violin was almost general at musical affairs of the time. In Coriat's 'Crudities' the author speaks of hearing an ensemble in which 'the music of a treble viol was so excellent that no one could surpass it.' He continues: 'Sometimes sixteen played together, sometimes ten, or different instruments, a cornet and a treble viol. Of these treble viols I heard three whereof each was so good, especially one that I observed above the rest, that I never heard the like before.' Pepys (1660) made references to the viol in his Diary: 'I have played on my viol and I took much pleasure to have the neighbors come forth into the yard to hear me.' Many other references in literary works of the time attest the increasing popularity and the appealing qualities of the instrument.

There was no dearth of publications of collections for string instruments, which gradually became more discriminating in the *kind* of instruments to be used. The appearance of works designed to instruct the amateur indicate the spread of the art of violin playing and gave way toward the systemizing technique. A few of these publications appearing at different periods of the seventeenth century may be enumerated: Early in the century Dowland (1603-1609) printed a work in five parts for lute and viols, named 'Lacrimæ, or Seven Tears figured in passionate Pavans, with divers other Pavans, Galliards, etc.' In 1614 Sir William Leighton published 'The Tears or Lamentations of a sorrowful soule; composed with the Musical Ayres and songs both for voyces and divers instruments.' In this he included published vocal music of different composers with the accompaniment of the lute, and appended to the titles the remark: 'Cantus with the Treble Viol.' Orlando Gibbons (about 1620-1630) composed nine Fantasies, four for treble viols. These fantasies are in fugal style. He also published Madrigals, Motets, etc., 'apt for viols and voices.' From 1654 we have reference to a work,

## VIOLIN MUSIC

which, if correctly described, would be the earliest string quartet by an English author. It is a 'Set of Ayre for two violins, Tenor and Bass,' by Dr. Benjamin Rogers. According to Burney these pieces were never printed. In 1657 Matthew Lock published the 'Little Consort of three parts containing Pavans, Courants, Sarabandes, for viols and violins.' In 1659 Chr. Simpson published 'The Division violinist or an introduction to the Playing upon the Ground. Divided into two parts, the first directing the hand, with other preparative instructions, the second laying open the manner and method of playing extempore, or composing division to a ground. To which are added some divisions made upon grounds for the Practise of learner.' This title clearly shows the content of the work. Roger L'Estrange, the licenser of that time, addressed the reader in a second edition with the following words: 'the book certainly answers the pretense of the title, both for matter and method, to the highest point of reasonable expectation.'

John Lentor, a member of William and Mary's state band, published 'The Gentleman's Diversion, or the Violin explained.' A second edition was issued in 1702 with the title 'The useful Instructor on the Violin.' In 1676 Thomas Mace published 'Musick's Monument, or a Remembrance of the best practical music,' etc., where we find many interesting particulars relative to viols.

In 1669 John Playford published 'Apollo's Banquet.' It contained 'Short Rules and Directions for Practitioners of the Treble Violin with a collection of old Century Dances.' In a preface, that Playford calls 'Advertisement,' we read: 'Several persons coming often to my Shop for Books of tunes for the Treble-Violin, to accommodate each I have made public this collection of Choice Tunes; and also of tunes of the newest French Dances: All which are very useful to those who use the Treble-Violin. Some will object, many of these

## EARLY INSTRUCTION BOOKS

tunes were formerly printed at the end of the Book, Entitled, the Dancing Master: I grant they were, but some which were choice I would not omit in this collection.'

E. K.

## CHAPTER XII

### VIOLIN COMPOSERS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Corelli, Vivaldi, Albinoni—Their successors, Locatelli, F. M. Veracini, and others; Tartini, and his pupils; pupils of Somis: Giardini and Pugnani—French violinists and composers: Rébel, Francoeur, Baptiste Anet, Senaillé and Leclair; French contemporaries of Viotti: Pagan, Lahoussaye, Gaviniès; Viotti—Violinists in Germany and Austria during the eighteenth century: Pisendel, J. G. Graun, Franz Benda; Leopold Mozart—The Mannheim school: J. Stamitz, Cannabich and others; Dittersdorf, Wranitzky and Schuppanzigh—Non-violinist composers: Handel, Bach, Haydn, Mozart—Conclusion.

#### I

CORELLI'S opus 5 was published in Rome in 1700. The four earlier *opera* and the *concerti grossi* of 1712 occupy a place in the development of chamber and symphonic music. The opus 5 may be taken as the solid foundation of violin music, that is music for a single violin with accompaniment. It consists of twelve solo sonatas, with figured bass for harpsichord, 'cello, or theorbo. The first six of these are similar in spirit to the *sonate da chiesa*. They are generally serious in treatment. The other six correspond to the *sonate da camera*. Five of them are made up of dance movements in the style of a suite, though the order is irregular, and here and there the dance name is not written in the score. The last consists of variations on a melody known as *La folia*. The melody is very old. The sarabande rhythm suggests an origin in connection with some sort of Spanish dance; and in a series of Spanish dances published in 1623 there is a *Follie*. Also the French clavecinist d'Anglebert wrote a series

## CORELLI

of variations which he published in his set of clavecin pieces (1689) as *Folies d'Espagne*. It is very doubtful that this melody, of which Corelli and Vivaldi as well made use, was composed by G. B. Farinelli, though in England it was known as 'Farinelli's Ground.' Rather it is one of the old popular songs, such as *La romanesca*, which composers employed as a *basso ostinato* in sets of divisions or variations, very much like a Chaconne or a Passacaglia.

The treatment of the violin in these twelve sonatas has, and well may have, served as a model during the years which have passed since they were written. Music cannot be conceived more fitting to the instrument. It is true that none calls for brilliant virtuosity. Corelli never goes beyond the third position; but within this limit no effect in sonority or delicacy has been neglected.

The polyphonic style of the first six is worth mentioning. It will be observed that in all the first allegros, and in the last as well, the violin is given a certain amount of two-part music to play. Usually there is a strong suggestion of fugal style. The violin announces the subject, and continues with the answer. Then the figured bass takes it up. The first allegro in the fourth sonata offers a clear example. Throughout the entire movement the instrument is called upon to play more or less in polyphonic style—carrying *two* parts. It is, however, a graceful and flowing style. There is no suggestion of learning too heavy for sound. The short, slow preludes at the beginning of each sonata are all beautifully wrought. The smooth imitations in No. 2, the use of a rhythmical figure in the bass of No. 3, and in all the free independent movement of the two parts, speak of a composer of finest instinct and true skill.

In the second six, on the other hand, the violin is not called upon to carry more than one part. The

## VIOLIN MUSIC

style is consequently lighter, and on the whole more brilliant. The rhythmical elements of the dances are brought out prominently, and here Corelli shows himself no less a master. Take for example the allemande in the eighth sonata (E minor), or the gavotte in the tenth (F major).

The variations on *La folia* present Corelli's technical resources in a nut-shell, so to speak. Such variations as the first, second, and third show a command of counterpoint; but the fifth begins to reveal his instinct for effects upon the violin, which is given freer and freer play in the eleventh, thirteenth, and fourteenth. The contrast between upper and lower strings is brought out in those mentioned. In the twelfth and sixteenth he uses the rich thirds and sixths destined in the course of the century to displace the polyphonic style altogether. Finally the twenty-third brings an astonishing effect of vibration and resonance.

It is neatness of form, surety of technique, and perfection of style which give these sonatas their historical importance, which have made them a foundation for further development. Their beauty, however, is not a matter of history. We know of no music that speaks of an age that is passed with more gentleness, more sweetness, or more dignity. There is none that is more admirable. It is gratifying to note that such music as this was in its own day beloved. The *Apothèse de l'admirable Corelli* written by the great French clavecinist, François Couperin, is among the few whole-souled and disinterested tributes of one contemporary to another. It describes in quaint music the entrance of Corelli into the company of Lully in the Elysian Fields. Couperin held that the combination of what was best in Italian music with what was best in French would produce an ideal music; and obviously he prized Corelli as representative of the best that there was in Italy.

It would be hard to-day to point to the music of any



**Early Masters of the Violin:**

Archangelo Corelli  
Antonio Vivaldi      Giuseppe Tartini







## CORELLI'S CONTEMPORARIES

other Italian master which has endured through radical changes of style and taste and has lost nothing; or indeed to that of the masters of any nation. Yet no subsequent developments have made a single quality of these sonatas dim or stale. The reason may be found in the just proportion in them of all the elements of music. The forms are slight; but they are graceful and secure, and there is not in the emotional quality of Corelli's music that which calls for wider expression than they afford. The treatment of the violin shows a knowledge of it and a love of its qualities, tempered always by a respect and love for music as an art of expression. Therefore there is no phrase which is not in accord with the spirit and the law of the piece in which it is written, nothing which, written then for the sake of display, may make a feeble show in the light of modern technique. There is no abandonment to melody at the cost of other qualities; nor even a momentary forgetfulness of the pleasure of the ear in the exercise of the mind. Nothing has come into music in the course of two hundred years which can stand between us and a full appreciation of their beauty.

This can hardly be said of the music of his contemporaries, three of whom, however, have lived to the present day, and one in more than name. Tommaso Albinoni (1674-1745) and Giuseppe Torelli (d. 1708) were both important in the establishment of the form of solo concerto which J. S. Bach acquired from Vivaldi.\* Albinoni was a Venetian dilettante and spent most of his life in Venice in connection with the opera. Besides the fifty-one operas which he wrote, there are several instrumental works, from some of which Bach appropriated themes. A beautiful sonata in D minor has been edited by Alfred Moffat and published in a *Kammer-Sonaten* series (B. Schott's Söhne, Mainz). Notice the cadenza at the end of the slow movement. Torelli

\* See A. Schering: *Geschichte des Instrumentalkonzerts*.

## VIOLIN MUSIC

was a native of Bologna, but he spent at one time a few years in Vienna and also a year or two in Ansbach.

Antonio Vivaldi, likewise a Venetian, is one of the most significant composers in the history of musical form, and was second only to Corelli as a composer for the violin and a player, if indeed he was not fully Corelli's equal. Among his works are eighteen sonatas for solo violin and bass, opus 2 and opus 5, and a great number of concertos for a single violin and a varying number of accompanying instruments. Commonly it is said that much of Vivaldi's music is touched with the falseness of virtuosity; and to this is laid the fact that his work has been forgotten while Corelli's has lived. The fact itself cannot be denied. Yet there is a fine breadth and dignity in some of the concertos and in the sonatas, and warmth in the slow movements. He died in 1743 as director of a school for girls in Venice. On account of his red hair and his rank as priest he was known as *il preto rosso*.

## II

From the time of Corelli to the time of Paganini there was an unbroken line of Italian violinists most of whom were composers. The violin was second only to the voice in the love of the Italians, which, it must not be forgotten, was, during the eighteenth century, the love of all Europe. The violinists rose to highest favor much as the great opera singers, but unlike the singers, composed their own music. This under their hands might move thousands to rapture, and still may work upon a crowd through a great player. Such is the power of the violin. But as a matter of fact most of this music has been allowed to sink out of sight, and the names of most of these composers have remained

## FRANCESCO GEMINIANI

but the names of performers. With only a few are definite characteristics associated.

Among these whose activities fell within the first half of the century are two pupils of Corelli, Francesco Geminiani (1667-1762) and Pietro Locatelli (1693-1764). From 1714 Geminiani lived, with the exception of five or six years in Paris, in London and Ireland. He was highly respected as a teacher, and his book, 'The Art of Playing on the Violin,' is the first complete violin method. This was published first anonymously in 1731, but later went through many editions and was translated into French and German, and established Geminiani's fame as the greatest of teachers. Besides this he wrote other works, on harmony, memory, good taste, and other subjects, founded a school for the guitar, and composed sonatas and concertos for violin, trios, quartets, and even clavecin pieces.

Locatelli was a brilliant virtuoso and seems to have travelled widely over Europe. To him is owing an extension of the violin style, and a few effects in virtuosity, especially in chromatics. And he is said to have raised the pitch of the first string to bring new effects within his grasp. One notes in both his and Geminiani's music the frequent use of thirds and sixths, the employment of high registers and of wide chords.

Another especially famous and influential in the development of violin music was Francesco Maria Veracini (1685-1750). He, too, was a wanderer and an astonishing virtuoso. In 1714 the young Tartini heard him play in Venice and was so struck by his brilliance that he himself decided to retire and practise in order to be able to compete with him.

Some time before 1717 Veracini was for two years in London, where he played violin solos between the acts at the Italian opera, as was the custom not only in England but in the continental countries as well. After this he was for some years in Dresden and in Prague.

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In 1736 he came back to London, but Geminiani was then at the height of his fame. Veracini could make little of his gifts there and consequently went to Pisa, near where he died. During his lifetime he published twelve sonatas for violin and figured bass. After his death symphonies and concertos were found in manuscript. One of the sonatas was republished by David, and one in B minor is included in the series of *Kammer-Sonaten* previously mentioned. The final rondo of this is exceedingly lively and brilliant, with a cadenza in modern style.

Other names of this period are Somis (1676-1763), Ruggeri and Giuseppe Valentini. Somis was a pupil of Corelli's, and in turn the teacher of Pugnani, who was the teacher of Viotti, the founder of the modern school of violin playing.

The most brilliant name of the century is Giuseppe Tartini (1692-1770). He was intended by his parents for the church, but opposed their wishes and went in 1710 to the university at Padua to study law. Evidently music was more attractive to him than law, and even more attractive than music was the art of fencing. In this he became a great master. A secret marriage and elopement with the daughter of Cardinal Carnaro involved him in serious troubles. He was forced to flee from the wrath of the churchly father-in-law, and took refuge in a cloister at Assisi. Here he lived in secret for two years, until the anger against him in Padua had cooled down. During these two years he worked constantly at his fiddle, and at composition as well. Later he chanced to hear Veracini at Venice. Whereupon, full of enthusiasm, he sent his wife back to his relatives in Pirano for the time being, and went himself again into retirement at Ancona. Finally in 1721 he acquired the position of solo violinist and leader of the orchestra in the cathedral of St. Anthony in Padua; and this place he held to the end of his life, refusing, with



## THE PADUAN SCHOOL

one exception, numerous invitations to other towns and countries. In 1728 he founded a school for violinists at Padua, of which Nardini was for many years a pupil.

Tartini was a man of brilliant though sometimes erratic mind. His book on bowing (*L'arte del arco*) laid down practically all the principles upon which the modern art of bowing rests. But his investigations into the theories of sounds and harmonies are sometimes ill-founded and without importance. Throughout his life he published sets of six sonatas for violin and bass or harpsichord, and concertos. Probably he is generally best known to-day by his sonata in G minor, called the 'Devil's Trill,' which, however, was not published during his lifetime. The story that he dreamed the Devil appeared to him and played a piece of bewitching beauty, that he rose from his bed to play what he heard, and could not, that with these unearthly sounds still haunting him several days later he wrote this sonata, is well known.

Tartini's playing was brilliant, but he played little in public, seeming to have an aversion for that sort of display similar to that felt later by the great Viotti. More than his contemporaries he had the power to make his violin sing.

Pietro Nardini is the most famous of Tartini's pupils. He was a Tuscan by birth. During the years 1753-67 he was employed in the court chapel at Stuttgart. After this he returned to Tartini, and after 1770 was court chapel-master in Florence. His publications included solo sonatas, concertos and various other forms of chamber music. His playing was distinguished by softness and tenderness. In the words of a critic who heard him: Ice-cold princes and ladies of the court have been seen to weep when he played an adagio.

Other violinists associated with the school at Padua founded by Tartini are Pasqualini Bini (b. 1720),

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Emanuele Barbella (d. 1773), G. M. Lucchesi, Thomas Linley, Filippo Manfredi, a friend and associate of Boccherini's, and Domenico Ferrari. Finally mention should be made of the Signora Maddalena Lombardini, among the first of the women violinists, who was a pupil of Tartini's and won brilliant success at the *Concerts Spirituels* in Paris. She was, moreover, famous as a singer in the Paris opera and later in the court opera at Dresden.

Two of the most famous violinists of the latter half of the century, Felice Giardini and Gaetano Pugnani, received their training in Turin under Somis, the pupil of Corelli, who is commonly accepted as the founder of a distinct Piedmont school. Giardini settled in London about the middle of the century, after wanderings in Italy and Germany; and here endured a changing fortune as player, teacher, composer, conductor and even impresario. Luck was against him in almost every venture. In 1791 he left London forever, with an opera troupe which he led into Russia. He died at Moscow in 1796.

Pugnani's life was happier. He was a pupil not only of Somis but of Tartini as well, and though between 1750 and 1770 he gave himself up to concert tours and made himself famous in London and Paris as a player, he was greatest and most influential as a teacher in Turin between 1770 and 1803, the year of his death. Only a few of his compositions, which included operas and church music as well as music for the violin, were published. A great part of the money won by these and his teaching was given over to the poor, and he was not only one of the greatest violinists of his age but one of the most beloved of men. His compositions are noteworthy for a soft charm, rather than for fervor or strength.

Giambattista Viotti, the greatest of his pupils, stands with Corelli and Tartini as one of the three violinists

## THE TURIN SCHOOL

of Italy who have had the greatest influence upon the development of violin music. Through Pugnani he received directly the traditions of the two great men whom he was destined so worthily to follow.

Though it is nearly impossible sharply to differentiate the styles of the host of violinists Italy gave to the world in the eighteenth century, two tendencies show in the total of their work. One of these was towards a noble and restrained style, the model for which Corelli gave to all his successors. The other was towards the surface brilliance of pure virtuosity, which comes out astonishingly in the works of Locatelli. Viotti was a musician of highest ideals, and chiefly through him the traditions that had been inherited from Corelli were brought over into the violin music of a new era.

The time of Viotti is the time of the symphony and the sonata. He is the contemporary of Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven, and of (among his own people) Clementi and Cherubini. As a composer he gave up writing what had so long been the chief work of the violinist-composers—the sonata with figured bass or simple accompaniment. Only a few sonatas are numbered among his compositions; but he wrote no less than twenty-nine violin concertos with full orchestral accompaniment, all of which show the breadth of the new form of sonata and symphony, which had come out of Italy, through Mannheim to Paris.

### III

Before considering Viotti's work in detail something must be said about the condition of violin music in France during the eighteenth century, and the violinists in Paris, with the assistance of whom he was able to found a school of violin playing the traditions of which

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still endure. With but one or two conspicuous exceptions, the most significant violinists of the eighteenth century in France came directly under the influence of the Italian masters. This did not always contribute to their material successes; for throughout the century there was a well-organized hostility to Italian influences in one branch and another of music. Nevertheless most of what is good in French violin music of the time owes a great deal to the Italians.

Such men as Rébel and Francoeur (d. 1787), who were closely connected with the *Académie* founded by Lully, may be passed with only slight mention. Both were significant in the field of opera rather than in that of violin music. Their training was wholly French and their activities were joined in writing for the stage. The latter composed little without the former, except two sets of sonatas for violin, which belong to an early period in his life. Francoeur advised the use of the thumb on the fingerboard in certain chords, a manner which, according to Wasieliwski,\* is without another example in violin music.

On the other hand, Batiste Anet, J. B. Senaillé and Jean Marie Leclair, all trained in Italy, are important precursors of the great violinists at the end of the century who gathered about Viotti and the *Conservatoire*. Anet, who is also known merely by his Christian name, was a pupil of Corelli's for four years. Upon his return to Paris, about 1700, he made a profound impression upon the public; but the great King Louis refused him his favor, and he was forced to seek occupation in Poland. It was largely owing to his influence that Senaillé (d. 1730), after having studied in Paris with one of the famous twenty-four violins of the king, betook himself to Italy. He returned to Paris about 1719 and passed the remainder of his life in the service of the Duc d'Orleans. Five sets of his sonatas were

\* *Die Violine und ihre Meister.*

## FRENCH VIOLINISTS

published in Paris, and one of them was included in J. B. Cartier's famous collection, *L'art du violon*.

Jean Marie Leclair is more conspicuous than either Batiste or Senaillé. He was for some time a pupil of Somis in Turin. After troubles in Paris on his return, he retired from public life and gave himself up to teaching. Towards the end of his life he sought lessons of Locatelli in Amsterdam. He was murdered in the streets of Paris one night in October, 1764. After his death his wife had his compositions engraved and printed. Among them are sonatas for violin and figured bass, concertos with string accompaniment, trios, and even one opera, *Glaucus et Scylla*, which had been performed in Paris on October 4, 1747.

In spite of the Italian influences evident in his work, Leclair may be taken as one of the main founders of the French school of violinists. Form and style of his works for the instrument are Italian; but the spirit of them, their piquant rhythms, their preciseness, their sparkling grace, is wholly French. The best known of his compositions to-day is probably a sonata in C minor (from opus 5), which, on account of a seriousness not usual with him, has been called *Le tombeau*.

None of his pupils was more famous than Le Chevalier de St. Georges, the events of whose life, however, are more startling than his music. He was the son of a certain de Boulogne and a negress, born on Christmas day, 1745, in Guadaloupe. He came as a child to Paris, and was trained by Leclair to be one of the most famous violinists in France. For several years he was associated with Gossec in conducting the *Concerts des amateurs*; but subsequently misfortune overtook him. He was a soldier of fortune in the wars accompanying the Revolution; and he escaped the guillotine only to drag on a miserable existence until he died on the 12th of June, 1799.

Following Leclair the list of violinists in France

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grows steadily greater and more brilliant. A. N. Pagan and Pierre Lahoussaye were of great influence. The former was born in 1721 in Paris, and went as a young man to study with Tartini. The prejudice against Italian music destroyed his public career on his return to Paris, so that he retired from the concert stage and like Leclair gave himself up to teaching. Burney heard him in private in 1770, and was struck by his technique and the sweetness of his tone. He often played at the house of a Count Senneterre in Paris, where such men as Giardini and Pugnani were heard. It was here that he heard Lahoussaye, still a boy, play the 'Devil's Trill' by Tartini, which he had learned only by ear. He promptly took the young fellow under his care and thus his influence passed on into the foundation of the violin school in the Paris *Conservatoire de Musique* in 1795.

For Lahoussaye proved to be one of the greatest violinists France has produced, and was appointed, together with Gaviniès, Guènin, and Kreutzer, to be one of the original professors of the violin at the *Conservatoire*. Owing largely to the influence of Pagan he was filled as a young man with the longing to study with Tartini himself, and this longing came in time to be gratified. So that Lahoussaye forms one of the most direct links between the classical Italian school, represented by Corelli and Tartini, and the new French school soon to be founded after the model of the Italian under the powerful influence of Viotti.

The most brilliant of the French violinists toward the end of the century was Pierre Gaviniès. Neither the exact date of his birth (1726 or 1728) nor his birthplace (Bordeaux or Paris) is known. From whom he received instruction remains wholly in the dark. But when Viotti came to Paris in 1782 Gaviniès was considered one of the greatest of living violinists. The great Italian is said to have called him the French Tar-

## FRENCH VIOLINISTS: PIERRE GAVINIÉS

tini; from which one may infer that in his playing he had copied somewhat the manner of the Italian players who, one after the other, made themselves heard in all the great cities of Europe. But, judging from his compositions, he was more given to brilliancy and effectiveness than Tartini; and though he may not be ranked among violinists like Lolli who had nothing but astonishing technique at their command, he was undoubtedly influential in giving to the French school its shining brilliance whereby it passed beyond the older classical traditions.

His compositions are numerous, and they exerted no little influence upon the development of the art. Besides two sets of sonatas for violin and figured bass he published six concertos, three sonatas for violin alone (among them that known as *Le tombeau de Gaviniés*), the once famous *Romance de Gaviniés*, written while he was serving a sentence in prison after a more or less scandalous escapade, and finally the best known of his works, *Les vingt-quatre Matinées*.

There were twenty-four studies, written after he was seventy years old, as if to show to what an extent the mastery of technical difficulties of fingering could be developed. Consequently they lack very deep feeling and meaning, and unhappily the difficulties in them are presented so irregularly that they are hardly of use as studies to any but the most advanced students. They have been re-edited by David since his death and published once again. The sonatas and concertos have failed to survive.

Leclair, Pagin, Lahoussaye, and Gaviniés represent together the best accomplishment of the French violinists before the arrival of Viotti. Among others neither so famous nor so influential may be mentioned Joseph Touchemoulin (d. 1801), Guillemain (d. 1770), Antoine Dauvergne (d. 1797), L'Abbé Robineau, who published several pieces for violin about 1770, Marie Alexandre

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Guénin (d. 1819), François Hippolite Barthélemon (d. 1808), Leblanc (b. ca. 1750), and Isidore Berthoume (d. 1820).

Little by little the French had developed the art of playing the violin and composing for it. The time was ripe in the last quarter of the eighteenth century for the founding of that great school of French art which was to exert a powerful and lasting influence upon the growth of violin music. And now the influence of Viotti comes into play.

Viotti was by all tokens one of the greatest of the world's violinists. He was born May 23, 1753, at Fontanetto, in Piedmont, and when hardly more than a boy, came under the care of Pugnani. In 1780 he started out with his master on an extended concert tour, which took him through Germany, Poland, Russia and England. Everywhere he met with brilliant success. Finally he came to Paris and made his first appearance at the *Concerts Spirituels* in 1782. His success was enormous, not only as a player but as a composer. Unhappily subsequent appearances were not so successful, and Viotti determined to withdraw from the concert stage. Except for a short visit to his home in 1783, he remained in Paris until the outbreak of the Revolution, variously occupied in teaching, composing, leading private orchestras, and managing in part the Italian opera. The Revolution ruined his fortunes and he went to London. Here he renewed his public playing, appearing at the famous Salomon concerts, in connection with which he saw something of Haydn. But, suspected of political intrigues, he was sent away from London. He lived a year or two in retirement in Hamburg and then returned to London. He was conductor in some of the Haydn benefit concerts in 1794 and 1795, and he was a director in other series of concerts until his success once more waned. Then like Clementi he entered into commerce. The remainder of his life



## GIAMBATTISTA VIOTTI

was spent between London and Paris, and he died in London on March 10, 1824.

The most famous of his compositions are the twenty-nine concertos previously referred to; and of these the twenty-second, in A minor, is commonly acceded to be the best. The treatment of the violin is free and brilliant, and some of his themes are happily conceived. Yet on the whole his music now sounds old-fashioned, probably because we have come to associate a more positive and a richer sort of music with the broad symphonic forms which he was among the first to employ in the violin concertos. It was rumored at one time and another that the orchestral parts of these concertos were arranged by Cherubini, with whom Viotti was associated during his first years at the Italian opera in Paris; but the only foundation for such a report seems to be that it was not uncommon for violinist composers of that period to enlist the aid of their friends in writing for the orchestra. Viotti was a broadly educated musician, whose experience with orchestras was wide.

Second in importance to the concertos are the duets for two violins written during his stay in Hamburg. These are considered second in musical charm only to Spohr's pieces in the same manner. That Viotti was somewhat low in spirit when he was at work on them, exiled as he was from London and Paris, is shown by the few words prefixed to one of the sets, 'This work is fruit of the leisure which misfortune has brought me. Some pieces came to me in grief, others in hope.'

Viotti had a brilliant and unrestricted technique. He was among the greatest of virtuosi. But little of this appears in his music. That is distinguished by a dignity and a relative simplicity, well in keeping with the noble traditions inherited from a country great in more ways than one in the musical history of the eighteenth century. But as far as form and style go he is modern.

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He undoubtedly owes something to Haydn. Moreover, Wasielewski makes the point that there is no trace in his music of the somewhat churchly dignity one feels in the sonatas of Corelli and Tartini. Viotti's is a thoroughly worldly style, in melody and in the fiery but always musical passage work. He is at once the last of the classic Italians and the first of the moderns, standing between Corelli and Tartini on the one hand and Spohr, David, and Vieuxtemps on the other.

The list of the men who came to him for instruction while he was in Paris contains names that even to-day have an imposing ring. Most prominent among them are Rode, Cartier, and Durand. And among those who were not actually his pupils but who accepted him as their ideal and modelled themselves after him were Rodolphe Kreutzer and Pierre Baillot. These men are the very fountain head of most violin music and playing of the nineteenth century. They set the standard of excellence in style and technique by which Spohr and later Vieuxtemps ruled themselves.

### IV

Before considering their work, the development of violin music in Germany during the eighteenth century must be noticed. The influence of the Italians was not less strong here than in France. Both Biber and Strungk had come under it in the late seventeenth century, Strungk being, as we know, personally acquainted with Corelli and at one time associating closely with him in Rome. The German violinists of the eighteenth century either went to Italy to study, or came under the influence of various Italians who passed through the chief German cities on concert tours.

The most conspicuous of them are associated with courts or cities here and there. For instance, early

## GERMAN VIOLINISTS

in the century there is Telemann in Hamburg; a little later Pisendel in Dresden; J. G. Graun in Berlin; Leopold Mozart in Salzburg; the gifted Stamitz and his associates Richter, Cannabich and Fränzl in Mannheim; and the most amiable if not the most gifted of all, Franz Benda, here and there in Bohemia, Austria and Saxony. Though these and many more were widely famous in their day as players, and Mozart was influential as a teacher, little of their music has survived the centuries that have passed since they wrote it. The eighteenth century was in violin music and likewise in opera, the era of Italian supremacy; and in violin music we meet with little except copies outside of Italy.

Georg Philipp Telemann, it is true, wrote that he followed the French model in his music; but as Wasielewski says, this applies evidently only to his vocal works and overtures, for his violin compositions are very clearly imitations of Corelli's. All his music, and he wrote enormous quantities in various branches, is essentially commonplace. Between 1708 and 1721 Telemann occupied a position at the court of Eisenach. It was chiefly during these years that he gave himself to the violin and violin music. Afterwards he went to Hamburg and there worked until his death in 1767.

Johann Georg Pisendel is a far more distinguished figure. He was born on the twenty-sixth of December, 1687, at Carlsburg in Franconia, and died in Dresden, after many years' service there, in November, 1755. While still a boy the Marquis of Anspach attached him to his chapel, on account of his beautiful voice. In the service of the same prince at that time was Torelli, the great Italian composer for the violin; and Pisendel was his pupil for a considerable period. Later in life he was able to journey in Italy and France, and was apparently at one time a pupil of Vivaldi's in Venice. From 1728 to the time of his death he was first violin

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in the royal opera house at Dresden. His playing was distinguished by care in shading, and in his conducting he was said to have laid great importance upon 'loud and soft.' As a composer he is without significance, though some of his works—concertos and sonatas—have been preserved. But his influence served to educate violinists in that part of Germany, so that little by little Germans came to supplant the Italians in that branch of music, and to find occupation in connection with the opera house orchestra, which had been up to that time almost entirely made up of Italians.

Most conspicuous among those who were actually his pupils was Johann Gottlieb Graun, brother of the still familiar Carl Heinrich. But Graun was not content with instruction in Germany alone, and betook himself to Tartini in Padua. After his return to his native land, he eventually found his place at the court of Frederick the Great, who was still crown prince. With him at this time were Quantz, the flute player, and Franz Benda. After the accession of Frederick to the throne of Prussia, Graun was made first violin and concert master in the royal orchestra; and he held this place until his death in 1771. His compositions, like all others for the violin at this period, are hardly more than imitations of the Italian masterpieces. And like Pisen-del, his importance is in the improvement of the state of instrumental music in Germany, and especially of the orchestra at Berlin.

His successor in this royal orchestra was Franz Benda, who, not only by reason of the romantic wanderings of his life, is one of the most interesting figures in the history of music in Germany during the eighteenth century. His father, Hans Georg, had been a sort of wandering player, as well as a weaver; and his brothers, Johann, Georg, and Joseph, were all musicians who won a high place in their day. Georg was perhaps the most distinguished of the family, but in

## FRANZ BENDA AND HIS PUPILS

the history of violin-music Franz occupies a more important place.

The Bendas were Bohemians, but most of them settled in Germany and accepted German ideals and training. Franz Benda, after a changing career as a boy singer in various places, finally came under the influence of Graun and Quantz in the crown prince's orchestra, at Rheinsberg. The principal instruction he received upon the violin came from Graun, who was himself a pupil of Tartini's; so, although Benda shows the marks of an independent and self-sufficient development, not a little of Italian influence came close to him. He remained in the service of the Prussian court from 1733, when Quantz befriended him, until his death as an old man in 1786.

His playing was admired for its warm, singing quality, which showed to such advantages in all slow movements that musicians would come long distances to hear him play an *adagio*. Burney heard him in 1772 and was impressed by the true feeling in his playing. Burney, too, mentioned that in all Benda's compositions for the violin there were no passages which should not be played in a singing and expressive manner. He went on to say that Benda's playing was distinguished in this quality from that of Tartini, Somis, and Veracini, and that it was something all his own which he had acquired in his early association with singers.

He had indeed been a great singer, and he gave up public singing only because after singing he was subject to violent headache. He trained his two daughters to be distinguished singers of the next generation.

His works for the violin are numerous, but only a small part of them was published, and this posthumously. In spite of the often lovely melodies in the slow movements they have not been able to outlive their own day. Wasielewski calls attention to the general use of conventional arpeggio figures in the long

## VIOLIN MUSIC

movements, which, characteristic of a great deal of contemporary music for the violin, may have been written with the idea of offering good technical exercise in the art of bowing.

Among Benda's many pupils the two most significant are his own son, Carl, and Friedrich Wilhelm Rust. The former seems to have inherited a great part of his father's skill and style. The sonatas of the latter are among the best compositions written in Germany for the violin in the second half of the eighteenth century. Rust died in February, 1798. His name is remembered as much for his sonatas for pianoforte as for his violin compositions. Another pupil, Carl Haack, lived until September, 1819, and thus was able to carry the Benda tradition over into the nineteenth century. On the whole Franz Benda may be said to have founded a school of violin playing in Berlin which has influenced the growth of music for that instrument in Germany. Its chief characteristic was the care given to simplicity and straightforwardness, especially in the playing of slow movements and melodies, which stands out quite distinctly against the current of more or less specious virtuosity running across the century.

Johann Peter Salomon (1745-1815) has been associated with the Berlin group, though his youth was spent in and about Bonn, and his greatest activity was displayed as an orchestral conductor in London. It was he who engaged Haydn to come to London and to compose symphonies specially for a London audience; and he occupies an important place in the history of music in England as one of the founders (1813) of the Philharmonic Society. He published but little music, and that is without significance.

One of the outstanding figures in the history of violin music in Germany is Leopold Mozart, the father of Wolfgang. He is hardly important as a composer, though many of his works were fairly well known in

## THE MANNHEIM SCHOOL

and about Salzburg where the greatest part of his life was spent; but his instruction book on playing the violin marks the beginning of a new epoch in his own country. This was first published in Augsburg in 1756, was reprinted again in 1770, 1785, and in Vienna in 1791 and 1804. It was for many years the only book on the subject in Germany.

Much of it is now old-fashioned, but it still makes interesting reading, partly because he was far-seeing enough to seize upon fundamental principles that have remained unchanged in playing any instrument, partly because the style is concise and the method clear, partly because of the numerous examples it contains of both good and bad music. Evidently his standard of excellence is Tartini, so that we still find violin music in Germany strongly under the influence of the Italians. But the great emphasis he lays upon simplicity and expressiveness recalls Benda and his ideals, so that it would appear that some wise men in Germany were at least shrewd enough to choose only what was best in the Italian art. Among the many interesting points he makes is that it takes a better-trained and a more skillful violinist to play in an orchestra than to make a success as a soloist. Evidently many of the German musicians distrusted the virtuoso. Emanuel Bach, it will be remembered, cared nothing for show music on the keyboard. C. F. D. Schubart, author of the words of Schubert's *Die Forelle*, said that an orchestra made up of virtuosos was like a world of queens without a ruler. He had the orchestra at Stuttgart in mind.

## V

Meanwhile about the orchestra at Mannheim there was a band of gifted young men whose importance in the development of the symphony and other allied

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forms has been but recently recognized, and now, it seems, can hardly be overestimated. The most remarkable of these was J. C. Stamitz, a Bohemian born in 1719, who died when less than forty years old. His great accomplishments in the domains of orchestral music have been explained elsewhere in this series. In the matter of violin music he can hardly be said to show any unusual independence of the Italians, but in the meagre accounts of his life there is enough to show that he was a great violinist. He was the teacher of his two sons, Carl (1746-1801) and Anton (b. 1753), the latter of whom apparently grew up in Paris, where the father, by the way, had been well known at the house of La Pouplinière. Anton, as we shall see, was the teacher of Rodolphe Krentzer, already mentioned as one of the great teachers at the Paris Conservatory in the first of the nineteenth century.

Christian Cannabich, a disciple if not a pupil of Stamitz, was likewise a famous violinist, but again like his master, was more influential in what he accomplished with the famous orchestra at Mannheim than in his playing or composing for the violin. He seems to have spent some years in Naples to study with Jommelli, and the Italian influence is evident in all he wrote for the violin. Wilhelm Cramer, the father of the now more famous J. B. Cramer, was another violinist associated with the Mannheim school, until in 1773 he went to London on the advice of Christian Bach. Here he lost one place after another as conductor, owing now to the arrival of Salomon, now to that of Viotti. He died in 1799 in great poverty.

Others connected with the orchestra at Mannheim are Ignaz Fränzl, whose pupil, F. W. Pixis, became the teacher of Kalliwoda and Laub, and whose son Ferdinand (1770-1833) was a distinguished violinist in the next century; and Johann Friedrich Eck (b. 1766) and his brother Franz. Their father was, like Stamitz, a



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Bohemian. Indeed Stamitz seems to have induced Eck the elder to leave Bohemia and come to Mannheim. Franz Eck is most famous to-day as one of the teachers of Ludwig Spohr.

In Vienna the Italian influence was supreme down to nearly the end of the century. The first of the Viennese violinists to win an international and a lasting renown was Karl Ditters von Dittersdorf (b. 1739), the friend of Haydn and Gluck. Though two of his teachers, König and Ziegler, were Austrians, a third, who perfected him, was an Italian, Trani. Through Trani Dittersdorf became familiar with the works of Corelli, Tartini, and Ferrari, after which he formed his own style. Practically the first German to draw a circle of pupils about him was Anton Wranitzky (b. 1761). Among his pupils the most distinguished was Ignaz Schuppanzigh, who, as the leader of the Schuppanzigh quartet, won for himself an immortal fame, and really set the model for most quartet playing throughout the nineteenth century. He was the son of a professor at the Realschule in Vienna. From boyhood he showed a zeal for music, at first making himself a master of the viola. At the time Beethoven was studying counterpoint with Albrechtsberger he was taking lessons on the viola with Schuppanzigh. Later, however, Schuppanzigh gave up the viola for the violin. His most distinguished work was as a quartet leader, but he won fame as a solo player as well; and when the palace of Prince Rasoumowsky was burned in 1815, he went off on a concert tour through Germany, Poland and Russia which lasted many years. He was a friend not only of Beethoven, but of Haydn, Mozart, and of Schubert as well; and was the principal means of bringing the quartet music of these masters to the knowledge of the Viennese public. He died of paralysis, March 2, 1830. Among his pupils the most famous was Mayseder, at one time a member of the quartet.

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What is noteworthy about the German violinist-composers of the eighteenth century is not so much the commonness with which they submitted to the influence of the Italians, but the direction their art as players took as soon as they began to show signs of a national independence. Few were the match of the Italians or even the French players in solo work. None was a phenomenal virtuoso. The greatest were most successful as orchestral or quartet players; and their most influential work was that done in connection with some orchestra. This is most evident in the case of the Mannheim composers. Both Stamitz and Cannabich were primarily conductors, who had a special gift in organizing and developing the orchestra. Their most significant compositions were their symphonies, in the new style, in which they not only gave a strong impetus to the development of symphonic forms, but brought about new effects in the combination of wood-wind and brass instruments with the strings. Leopold Mozart's opinion that a man who could play well in an orchestra was a better player and a better musician than he who could make a success playing solos, is indicative of the purely German idea of violin music during the century. And it cannot be denied that great as Franz Benda and Johann Graun may have been as players, they contributed little of lasting worth to the literature of the violin, and made practically no advance in the art of playing it. But both were great organizers and concert masters, and as such left an indelible impression on the development of music, especially orchestral music, in Germany.

## VI

Before concluding this chapter and passing on to a discussion of the development of violin music in the nineteenth century a few words must be said of the

## THE GREAT GERMAN CLASSICS

compositions for the violin by those great masters who were not first and foremost violinists. Among these, four may claim our attention: Handel, Bach, Haydn, and Mozart.

Handel is not known to have given much time to the violin, but it is said that when he chose to play on it, his tone was both strong and beautiful. He wrote relatively little music for it. Twelve so-called solo sonatas with figured bass (harpsichord or viol) were published in 1732 as opus 1. Of these only three are for the violin: the third, tenth, and twelfth. The others are for flute. Apart from a few characteristic violin figures, chiefly of the rocking variety, these solo sonatas might very well do for clavier with equal effect. There is the sane, broad mood in them all which one associates with Handel. In the edition of Handel's works by the German Handel Society, there are three additional sonatas for violin—in D major, A major, and E major. These seem to be of somewhat later origin than the others, but they are in the same form, beginning with a slow movement, followed by allegro, largo, and final allegro, as in most of the cyclical compositions of that time. One cannot deny to these sonatas a manly dignity and charm. They are in every way plausible as only Handel knows how to be; yet they have neither the grace of Corelli, nor the deep feeling of Bach. One may suspect them of being, like the pieces for clavier, tossed off easily from his pen to make a little money. What is remarkable is that sure as one might be of this, one would yet pay to hear them.

There are besides these solo sonatas for violin or flute and figured bass, nine sonatas for two violins, or violin and flute with figured bass, and seven sonatas, opus 5, for two instruments, probably intended for two violins.

Among the most remarkable of J. S. Bach's composi-

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tions are the six sonatas for violin without any accompaniment, written in Cöthen, about 1720. These works remain, and probably always will remain, unique in musical literature, not only because of their form, but because of the profound beauty of the music in them. Just how much of a violinist Bach himself was, no one knows. He was fond of playing the viola in the court band at Cöthen. It can hardly be pretended that these sonatas for violin alone are perfectly adapted to the violin. They resemble in style the organ music which was truly the whole foundation of Bach's technique. In that same organ style, he wrote for groups of instruments, for groups of voices, for clavier and for all other combinations.

On the other hand no activity of Bach's is more interesting, and perhaps none is more significant, than his assiduous copying and transcribing again and again of the violin works of Vivaldi, Torelli, and Albinoni. Especially his study of Vivaldi is striking. He used themes of the Italian violinists as themes for organ fugues; he transcribed the concertos of Vivaldi into concertos for one, two, three, or four harpsichords. And not only that, practically all his concertos for a solo clavier are transcriptions of his own concertos for violin.

But the polyphonic style of the sonatas for violin alone is peculiarly a German inheritance. Walter and Biber were conspicuous for the use of double stops and an approach to polyphonic style. Most remarkable of all was a pupil of the old Danish organist, Buxtehude, Nikolaus Bruhns (1665-1697), who was able to play two parts on his violin and at the same time add one or two more with his feet on the organ pedals. Though Corelli touched gently upon the polyphonic style in the movements of the first six of his solo sonatas, the polyphonic style was maintained mostly by the Germans. As Bach would write chorus,

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fugue, or concerto in this style, so did he write for the violin alone.

Of the six works the first three are sonatas, in the sense of the *sonate da chiesa* of Corelli, serious and not conspicuously rhythmical. The last three are properly suites, for they consist of dance movements. The most astonishing of all the pieces is the *Chaconne*, at the end of the second suite. Here Bach has woven a series of variations over a simple, yet beautiful, ground, which finds an equal only in the great *Pas-sacaglia* for the organ.

The three sonatas of this set can be found transcribed, at least in part, by Bach into various other forms. The fugue from the first, in G minor, was transposed into D minor and arranged for the organ. The whole of the second sonata, in A minor, was re-arranged for the harpsichord. The fugue in the third sonata for violin alone exists also as a fugue for the organ.

There are besides these sonatas for violin alone, six sonatas for harpsichord and violin, which are among the most beautiful of his compositions; and a sonata in E minor and a fugue in G minor for violin with figured bass. It is interesting to note that the six sonatas for harpsichord and violin differ from similar works by Corelli and by Handel. Here there is no affair with the figured bass; but the part for the harpsichord is elaborately constructed, and truly, from the point of view of texture, more important than that for the violin.

Bach wrote at least five concertos for one or two violins during his stay at Cöthen. One of these is included among the six concertos dedicated to the Margrave of Brandenburg. All of these have been rearranged for harpsichord, and apparently among the harpsichord concertos there are three which were originally for violin but have not survived in that shape.

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The concertos, even more than the sonatas, are not essentially violin music, but are really organ music. The style is constantly polyphonic and the violin solos hardly stand out sufficiently to add a contrasting spot of color to the whole. Bach's great work for the violin was the set of six solo sonatas. These must indeed be reckoned, wholly apart from the instrument, as among the great masterpieces in the musical literature of the world.

Haydn's compositions for violin, including concertos and sonatas, are hardly of considerable importance. His associations with violinists in the band at Esterhazy, and later in Vienna with amateurs such as Tost and professionals like Schuppanzigh, gave him a complete idea of the nature and the possibilities of the instrument. But the knowledge so acquired shows to best advantage in his treatment of the first and second violin parts in his string quartets, in many of which the first violin is given almost the importance of a solo instrument. Eight sonatas for harpsichord and violin have been published, but of these only four were originally conceived in the form.

The young Mozart was hardly less proficient on the violin than he was on the harpsichord, a fact not surprising in view of his father's recognized skill as a teacher in this special branch of music. But he seems to have treated his violin with indifference and after his departure from Salzburg for Paris to have quite neglected his practice, much to his father's concern. The most important of his compositions for the violin are the five concertos written in Salzburg in 1775. They were probably written for his own use, but just how closely in conjunction with the visit of the Archduke Maximilian to Salzburg in April of that year cannot be stated positively. Several serenades and the little opera, *Il re pastore*, were written for the fêtes given in honor of the same young prince. The concertos

## HAYDN AND MOZART

belong to the same period. In Köchel's Index they are numbers 207, 211, 216, 218, and 219. A sixth, belonging to a somewhat later date, bears the number 268. Of these the first in B-flat was completed on April 14, 1775, the second, in D, June 14, the third, in G, September 12, the fourth, in D, in October, and the fifth, in A, quite at the end of the year.

The sixth concerto, in E-flat, is considered both by Jahn and Köchel to belong to the Salzburg period. It was not published, however, until long after Mozart's death; and recently the scholarly writers, Messrs. de Wyzewa and de St. Foix, have thrown considerable doubt upon the authenticity of large parts of it. According to their theory \* the opening *tutti* and the orchestral portion at the beginning of the development section are undoubtedly the work of Mozart, but of the mature Mozart of 1783 and 1784. Likewise the solo passages in all the movements seem to bear the stamp of his genius. But apart from these measures, the development of the solo ideas and the orchestral accompaniment were completed either by André, who published the work, or by Süßmayer, who was also said by Mozart's widow to be the composer of a mass in B-flat, published by C. F. Peters as a composition of Mozart's.

In addition mention should be made of the concertos introduced between the first and second movements of various serenades, according to the custom of the day. Most of these are of small proportions; but one, in G major (K. 250), written in Salzburg some time in July, 1776, has the plan of an independent composition.

It was the custom for a master like Schobert in Paris, or Mozart in Vienna, to 'accompany' the young ladies who played pianoforte or harpsichord sonatas of his

\* See 'W. A. Mozart,' by T. de Wyzewa and G. de St. Foix, Paris, 1912. Appendix II, Vol. II, p. 428.

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composition and under his instruction with music on the violin. There are many sonatas for harpsichord published by Schobert, with a violin part *ad libitum*. This in the main but reinforces the chief melodic lines of the part for harpsichord or pianoforte; and works with such a violin part, *ad libitum*, are not at all violin sonatas in the sense of the term accepted to-day, i.e., sonatas in which violin and piano are woven inextricably together. They are frankly pianoforte or harpsichord sonatas with the 'accompaniment' of a violin.

On the other hand, we have found the violin masters like Corelli and Tartini writing sonatas for violin, with figured bass for harpsichord, lute, or even viol. Such sonatas were often called solo sonatas, as in the case of those of Handel, recently mentioned. The accompanying instrument had no function but to add harmonies, and a touch of imitation in the written bass part, here and there.

Between these two extremes lies the sonata with harpsichord *obbligato*, that is to say, with a harpsichord part which was not an accompaniment but an essential part of the whole. In these cases the music was generally polyphonic in character. The violin might carry one or two parts of the music, the harpsichord two or three. Very frequently, if the instruments played together no more than three parts, the composition was called a Trio. The sonatas by J. S. Bach for harpsichord and violin are of this character. Though the harpsichord carries on more of the music than the violin, both instruments are necessary to the complete rendering of the music.

Mozart must have frequently added improvised parts for the violin to many of his sonatas written expressly for the keyboard instrument. Among his earliest works one finds sonatas for clavecin with a free part for violin, for violin or flute, for violin or flute and



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'cello. Oftenest the added part does little more than duplicate the melody of the part for clavecin, with here and there an imitation or a progression of thirds or sixths. But among his later works are sonatas for pianoforte with added accompaniment for violin in which the two instruments contribute something like an equal share to the music, which are the ancestors of the sonatas for violin and piano by Beethoven, Brahms, and César Franck. Among the most important of these are six published in November, 1781, as opus 2. In Köchel's Index they bear the numbers 376, 296, 377, 378, 379, and 380. The greatest of them is that in C major, K. 296, with its serious and rich opening adagio, its first allegro in Mozart's favorite G minor, and the beautiful variations forming the last movement. Four more sonatas, of equal musical value, were published respectively in 1784, 1785, 1787, and 1788.

## VII

Looking back over the eighteenth century one cannot but be impressed by the independent growth of violin music. The Italians contributed far more than all the other nationalities to this steady growth, partly because of their native love for melody and for sheer, simple beauty of sound. The intellectual broadening of forms, the intensifying of emotional expressiveness by means of rich and poignant harmonies, concerned them far less than the perfecting of a suave and wholly beautiful style which might give to the most singing of all instruments a chance to reveal its precious and almost unique qualities. This accounts for the calm, classic beauty of their music, which especially in the case of Corelli and Tartini does not suffer by changes that have since come in style and the technique of structure.

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The success of the Italian violinists in every court of Europe, both as performers and as composers, was second only to the success of the great singers and the popular opera composers of the day. Their progress in their art was so steadfast and secure that other nations could hardly do more than follow their example. Hence in France and Germany one finds with few exceptions an imitation of Italian styles and forms, with a slight admixture of national characteristics, as in the piquancy of Cartier's, the warm sentiment of Benda's music. What one might call the pure art of violin playing and violin music, abstract in a large measure from all other branches of music, was developed to perfection by the Italian violinist-composers of the eighteenth century. Its noble traditions were brought over into more modern forms by Viotti, henceforth to blend and undergo change in a more general course of development.

Perhaps only in the case of Chopin can one point to such a pure and in a sense isolated ideal in the development of music for a single instrument, unless the organ works of Bach offer another exception. And already in the course of the eighteenth century one finds here and there violin music that has more than a special significance. The sonatas for unaccompanied violin by Bach must be regarded first as music, then as music for the violin. The style in which they were written is not a style which has grown out of the nature of the instrument. They have not served and perhaps cannot serve as a model for perfect adaptation of means to an end. Bach himself was willing to regard the ideas in them as fit for expression through other instruments. But the works of Corelli, Tartini, Nardini and Viotti are works which no other instrument than that for which they were written may pretend to present. And so beautiful is the line of melody in them, so warm the tones which they call upon, that

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there is scarcely need of even the harmonies of the figured bass to make them complete.

In turning to the nineteenth century we shall find little or no more of this sort of pure music. Apart from a few brilliant concert or salon pieces which have little beyond brilliance or charm to recommend them, the considerable literature for the violin consists of sonatas and concertos in which the accompaniment is like the traditional half, almost greater than the whole. In other words we have no longer to do with music for which the violin is the supreme justification, but with music which represents a combination of the violin with other instruments. Glorious and unmatched as is its contribution in this combination, it remains incomplete of itself.

## CHAPTER XIII

### VIOLIN MUSIC IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The perfection of the bow and of the classical technique—The French school: Kreutzer, Rode, and Baillot—Paganini: his predecessors, his life and fame, his playing, and his compositions—Ludwig Spohr: his style and his compositions; his pupils—Viennese violinists: Franz Clement, Mayseder, Boehm, Ernst and others—The Belgian school: De Bériot and Vieuxtemps—Other violinist composers: Wieniawski, Molique, Joachim, Sarasate, Ole Bull; music of the violinist-composers in general—Violin music of the great masters.

THE art of violin music in the nineteenth century had its head in Paris. Few violinists with the exception of Paganini developed their powers without the model set them by the great French violinists at the beginning of the century. Most of them owed more than can be determined to the influence of Viotti. Even Spohr, who with more or less controversial spirit, wrote of the French violinists as old-fashioned, modelled himself pretty closely upon Rode; and therefore even Spohr is but a descendant of the old classical Italian school.

The technique of playing the violin was thoroughly understood by the end of the eighteenth century. Viotti himself was a brilliant virtuoso; but, trained in the classic style, he laid less emphasis upon external brilliance than upon expressiveness. The matters of double stops, trills, runs, skips and other such effects of dexterity were largely dependent upon the fingers of the left hand; and this part of technique, though somewhat hampered by holding the violin with the chin upon the right side of the tailpiece, was clearly mastered within reasonable limits by the violinists of the middle of the century, Tartini, Veracini, Nardini, Gemi-

## RODOLPHE KREUTZER; PIERRE RODE

niani, and others. Indeed Geminiani in his instruction book recommended that the violin be held on the left side; and in range of fingering gave directions for playing as high as in the seventh position. Leopold Mozart, however, naturally conservative, held to the old-fashioned holding of the instrument.

The technique of bowing, upon which depends the art of expression in violin playing, awaited the perfection of a satisfactory bow. Tartini's playing, it will be remembered, was especially admired for its expressiveness; and this, together with certain of his remarks on bowing which have been preserved in letters, leads one to think that he may have had a bow far better than those in the hands of most of his contemporaries. Whether or not he made it himself, and indeed just what it may have been, are not known. Certainly it must have been better than the bows with which Leopold Mozart was familiar. The clumsy nature of these may be judged by the illustrations in his instruction book.

The final perfection of the bow awaited the skill of a Frenchman, François Tourte (1747-1835), who has properly been called the Stradivari of the bow. It was wholly owing to his improvements that many modern effects in staccato, as well as in fine shading, particularly in the upper notes, became possible. He is supposed not to have hit upon these epoch-making innovations until after 1775; and there is much likelihood that he was stimulated by the presence of Viotti in Paris after 1782. No better testimony to the service he rendered to the art of violin playing can be found than the new broadening of violin technique and style accomplished by men like Viotti, Kreutzer, Baillot, Rode, and Lafont, who availed themselves immediately of the results of his skill.

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### I

Something may now be said of these men, whose activities have without exception the glaring background of the horrors of the French Revolution. Though Kreutzer was of German descent, he was born in Versailles (1766) and spent the greater part of his life in and about Paris, intimately associated with French styles and institutions. Apart from early lessons received from his father, he seems to have been for a time under the care of Anton Stamitz, son of Johann Stamitz. At the Chapelle du Roi, to which organization he obtained admittance through the influence of Marie Antoinette, he had the occasion of hearing Viotti. The great Italian influenced him no less than he influenced his young contemporaries in Paris. Concerning his activities as a composer of operas little need be said, though one or two of his ballets, especially *Paul et Virginie* and *Le Carnaval de Venise*, held the stage for some years. As a player he ranks among the most famous of the era. His duets with Rode roused the public to great enthusiasm. In 1798 he was in Vienna in the suite of General Bernadotte, and here made the acquaintance of Beethoven. Subsequently Beethoven dedicated the sonata for violin and piano (opus 47) to Kreutzer.

By reason of this and his book of forty *Études ou caprices pour le violon*, he is now chiefly remembered. His other compositions for the violin, including nineteen concertos and several airs and variations, have now been allowed to sink into oblivion. To say that the concertos are 'more brilliant than Rode's, less modern than Baillot's' distinguishes them as much as they may be distinguished from the compositions of his contemporaries. They are dry music, good as practice pieces for the student, but without musical life. But

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Kreutzer was a great teacher. He was one of the original professors of the violin at the Conservatoire, and with Baillot and Rode prepared the still famous *Méthode* which, carrying the authority of that sterling institution, has remained, almost to the present day, the standard book of instruction for the young violinist. His own collection of forty studies likewise holds still a place high among those 'steps to Parnassus' by which the student may climb to the company of finished artists.

Pierre Rode (1774-1830) was the greatest of the players of this period. He was for two years a pupil of Viotti, and when he made his initial public appearance in 1790 at the Théâtre de Monsieur he played Viotti's thirteenth concerto in such a way as to win instantly the admiration of all musical Paris. Considering that he was then but a boy of sixteen, and that Paris was accustomed to the playing of Kreutzer, Viotti, Gaviniés and other violinists of undisputed greatness, one can have little doubt that Rode had the power of true genius. This is further borne out by the fact that when he passed through Brunswick on a concert tour to Poland in 1803, Spohr heard him and was so struck with admiration for his style that he determined to train himself with the ideal of Rode in his mind. Later his playing fell off sadly and even in Paris he finally ceased to hold the favor of the public.

Like Kreutzer he came into contact with Beethoven. Beethoven's sonata for violin in G major (opus 96) was completed for Rode, and was apparently performed for the first time (1812) by Rode and Beethoven's pupil, the Archduke Rudolph. Even then, however, Rode's playing was faulty, and, according to Thayer, Beethoven sent a copy of the violin part to him that he might study it before attempting a second performance.

Like Kreutzer's, Rode's compositions, with the ex-

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ception of twenty-five caprices written as exercises, have been nearly forgotten. And yet, though Rode was without conspicuous musicianship, he had a gift for melody which made his compositions widely popular in their day. Of his thirteen concertos two, the first, in D minor, the eleventh, in A minor, were in the repertory of Paganini, who, moreover, professed a high admiration for Rode. And among the earliest of his compositions was a theme in G major, with variations, which won such broad success that it was transposed and arranged for the voice, and sung again and again on the stages of Paris.\* Perhaps only Paganini's variations on the 'Carnival of Venice' have been so popular.

Pierre Marie François de Sales Baillot (1771-1842) was the last of the great French violinists of this time. Though as a mere boy he was an accomplished player, and though he spent some years in Italy as a pupil of Pollani (who was a disciple of Nardini's), he seems not to have decided to take up the profession of music until 1795. At this time, according to Fétis, he first became thoroughly acquainted with the masterpieces of the Italian classical composers, Corelli, Tartini, and others, and the enthusiasm they stirred in him settled the future course of his career. Upon the founding of the Conservatoire he was appointed professor of violin playing, with Kreutzer and Gaviniés. Subsequently he was active as a teacher, and not only as a solo player but as a quartet leader. His was the greatest share in the preparation of the *Méthode* which has already been mentioned. He was a friend of Mendelssohn and of Ferdinand Hiller, and was much admired

\* This famous arrangement was published by the Maison Richault in Paris as *Thème de Rode, chanté avec variations dans le Barbier de Séville en Italien par Mmes. Sontag, Alboni, Trebelli; en français par Mlle. Maria Bailly; paroles françaises d'Adolph Larmande, avec accompagnement de piano par L. Moreau. See Notice sur Rode, by F. A. A. Paroisse-Pougin (Paris, 1874).*



## FRANÇOIS DE SALES BAILLOT

by them for his qualities both as a player and as a leader. His compositions, including fifteen trios for two violins and bass, various studies, nine concertos, and a series of twenty-four preludes for violin in all keys, have suffered the fate that has overtaken the music of his friends and colleagues, Kreutzer and Rode. But his instruction book, *L'art du violon*, is still worthy of most careful study, not only for the technical advantages of its many exercises, but for his own remarks on the condition of violin music in his day. These offer to the student the best analysis of the qualities of the Paris school of violin music, and of the relations of that school to the past.

## II

The French school of classic violin music, represented by Rode and Baillot, may be said to have come to an end at least partly by the influence of Paganini. This greatest of all virtuosos made his first appearance in Paris on March 9, 1831, after having astonished Austria and Germany. His success was here as elsewhere instantaneous and practically unbounded; and the examples his playing offered of extraordinary technical effects became the model for subsequent French violinists.

There are three virtuosos of the violin whose names stand out conspicuously in the history of violin music: Locatelli, Lolli, and Paganini. Each of these men is noted for special and in many ways overstretched efforts to bring out of the instrument sounds and combinations of sounds which, in that they can have little true musical significance and are indeed often of questionable beauty, are considered rather a sign of charlatanism than of true genius. This really means that the men are not geniuses as musicians, but as perform-

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ers. Their intelligence is concentrated upon a discovery of the unusual. They adopt any means to the end of astonishing the multitude, such as altering the conventional tuning of the instrument, and employing kinds of strings which are serviceable only in the production of certain effects.

Of Locatelli some mention has already been made. He was a pupil of Corelli and the serious traditions of his master have found a worthy expression in many of his own works. On the other hand, his twenty-four caprices, in the *L'arte del Violino* (1733), and the *Caprices enigmatiques* in the *L'arte di nuova modulazione*, are sheer virtuoso music and little more. They are the prototypes for many of the studies and caprices of Paganini, who apparently devoted himself almost with frenzy to the study of these caprices during the year 1804.

But Locatelli was a thorough musician as well as an astonishing virtuoso. The type of empty-headed virtuoso who has apparently nothing in his musical equipment but tricks, is represented by Antonio Lolli (1730-1802). Here was a man who won unprecedented success in most of the capitals of Europe, yet who, by all accounts, knew little or nothing about music. Indeed, there is something pathetic in his frank admission that he was an ass. 'How can I play anything serious?' he is reported to have asked when requested to play a simple adagio. Apparently he could neither keep time nor read even easy music at sight. Yet he could so fiddle that many a man believed he heard, not the violin, but voices, oboes, and flutes. And some cried out that he must have ten fingers on the left hand and five bows in the right. And at least two of his pupils, Woldemar (1750-1816) and Jarnowick (1745-1804), were famous for no greater accomplishments. But in the main the 'tone' of violin playing was set, at the end of the century, by the great Italian, Viotti, and his followers.

## NICCOLÒ PAGANINI

This endured, as we have said, until the advent of Paganini in the world of music.

Paganini's early life in Italy (1784-1828) was at first not free from hardship, but after 1805, at least, it was brilliantly successful. The only lessons of importance in his training were received from Alessandro Rolla (1757-1804). His prodigious skill was almost wholly due to his own ingenuity, and to his indefatigable industry. There is every reason to believe that he practiced hour after hour until he was so exhausted that he fell upon the ground.

During the years between 1801 and 1804 he lived in retirement under the protection of a lady of high rank, and during these years gave up his violin and devoted himself almost wholly to the guitar. This is among the first of his eccentricities, which every now and then during his triumphant career cropped out to the amazement of the public of all Europe. He was in fact so unaccountable in many ways that a whole cycle of fables grew up about him, through which he loomed up, now as a murderer who had acquired his skill during long years of imprisonment, now as a man more than half spectre, who had bought at some hideous price the intimate, and it must be said wholly serviceable, coöperation of the devil. How many of these stories were originated and purposely circulated by Paganini himself, who knew how to cast a spell over the public in more ways than one, cannot be definitely answered. On more than one occasion he openly denied them and complained of them not without bitterness, all with the greatest of plausibleness; and yet one cannot but suspect that he knew the value of them in attracting the crowd out of a fearsome curiosity.

After his extended tour over Europe (1827-1834), which brought him a fame and a fortune hardly achieved since by any performer, he retired into a semi-private life at his Villa Gaiona, not far from Par-

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ma. From time to time he came again before the public. The more or less scandalous affair of the 'Casino Paganini' in Paris (1836) took a slice out of his fortune and perhaps seriously impaired his health. He died on May 27, 1840.

There can be no doubt that whatever the so-called serious musical value of his playing may have been, it took hold of the whole world and left a mark upon it. His technique was at once colossal and special. He built it up with the idea of playing before huge audiences, and Spohr has remarked that in small surroundings he did not show to good advantage. He had, of course, an incredible swiftness of fingering, an amazing skill with the bow, particularly in staccato passages, which he played, not in the classic manner of Rode, with a movement of the wrist for each separate note, but by allowing the bow to spring upon the strings. His intonation was faultless, in runs, in double-stops and in octaves. Though he used oftenest light strings in order to secure special effects in harmonics, and these precluded a full, rich tone in the playing of melodies, yet he could play simple passages with great sweetness and charm.

So far, however, his technique could hardly have exceeded that of Rode. It was in the realm of special effects that he proved himself little less than a wizard. Of these at least three are now within the command of all the great players of the present day. One was the combination of the left-hand pizzicato with notes played by the bow; another the playing of 'harmonics,' particularly double-harmonics; the third the playing of long and difficult movements upon a single string. Musicians were in that day so baffled by these amazing sounds, of which Paganini alone seemed to be master, that for years they attributed to him a special secret power. There was no end of speculation about Paganini's secret, which, by the way, he was said to have

**Caricature of Paganini**  
*Statuette by J. P. Dantan (1832)*









## NICCOLÒ PAGANINI

imparted to but one man, his pupil Sivori. Now, however, it is all revealed. In playing pieces upon a single string he was accustomed to raise the pitch of the string, and to go into the highest registers by means of harmonics. He changed the tuning of his violin also in playing his concertos and some of his caprices, and he made a frequent practice of sliding his fingers, and was not above imitating sobs, cries, laughter, and on one occasion, of which he has left an account, somewhat maliciously the braying of donkeys in Ferrara!

Still, though the secrets of his mechanism are now clear as day, and within the control of many even mediocre players, his music, wherewith he literally set half Europe crazy, has fully responded to no fingers but his own. This may be because his tricks have become known and familiar; but more likely his success drew from more than these tricks, and the secret of it was in his astounding appearance and uncanny personal magnetism. Tall, lank, gaunt, dark, with blazing eyes and fingers like a skeleton, he may well have brought with him a sulphurous halo when he glided like a spectre upon the stage. He was indeed more a magician than a musician, a sorcerer too inspired to be called a charlatan.

The effect of his playing upon all branches of music was instantaneous. His name became the synonym for the highest perfection in playing and singing of all kinds. In the opinion of Chopin, Mlle. Sontag is as perfect as Paganini; and in that of Mendelssohn Chopin upon the piano rivals Paganini upon the violin. Schumann sets about transcribing the caprices of Paganini for the piano. Liszt makes of himself a second wonder of the world by imitating Paganini; and not only that, but expands the technique of his own instrument to unheard of dimensions.

Paganini's compositions are for the most part without conspicuous value, except for the purely technical

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extravagances which they display. Relatively few were published during his lifetime. These include the universally famous twenty-four caprices for solo violin, opus 1, two sets of sonatas for violin and guitar, and three quartets for violin, viola, guitar and 'cello. After his death a host of spurious works appeared; but Fétis gives as genuine two concertos, one in E-flat, one in B minor, the latter of which contains the *Rondo à la clochette*, which was one of his most successful pieces; two sets of variations, one on an air by S. Mayer, known as *Le Stregghe* ('Witch's Dance'), one on the immortal air *Le carnaval de Venise*, both of which were almost invariably on his programs; and the *Allegro de concert* in perpetual motion.

### III

Paganini's success was hardly less brilliant in Germany than it was elsewhere in Europe. At least Schumann and Mendelssohn submitted to the fascination of his incomparable skill. Yet on the whole violin playing in Germany remained less influenced by Paganini than it proved to be in France, Belgium and England. This was not only because of the influence of the great German classics, nor because the tendency of the German violinists was rather away from solo virtuosity and toward orchestral and quartet playing; but largely also because of the firm leadership of Ludwig Spohr, practically the one man about whom a definite German school of violin playing of international importance centres.

Spohr was born in the same year as Paganini (1784). His training on the violin was received from Franz Eck, a descendant of the famous Mannheim school. But according to his own account, the example of Rode, whom he heard in 1803, was of great importance in

## LUDWIG SPOHR

finally determining his style of playing. His numerous activities took him considerably beyond the field of playing and composing for the violin. He was famous as a conductor in Vienna, in Dresden and Berlin, and in London, whither he was frequently called to undertake the conducting of his own works. As a composer he was famous for his symphonies, his oratorios, and his operas. Yet he was not, in a sense, a great musician; and the only part of his great number of works which now seems at all likely to endure much longer in anything but name is made up of the compositions, chiefly the concertos, for violin.

Of these concertos there are seventeen in all. Among them the seventh, eighth, and ninth are often singled out as the best; and indeed these may be said to be the best of all his works. The eighth was written on the way to a concert tour in Italy, and was intended especially to please the Italians, and written in a confessedly dramatic style, *in modo d'una scena cantante*. None of the concertos is, strictly speaking, virtuoso music. Naturally all reveal an intimate knowledge of the peculiarities of the violin; but these hardly over-rule the claim of the music itself. He calls for a sort of solid playing, for a particularly broad, deep tone in the *cantilena* passages, for a heavy, rather than a light and piquant, bow. He was a big man in stature, and his hands were powerful and broad. Evidently he was more than usually confined within the limits of his own individuality; and his treatment of the violin in the concertos is peculiar to him in its demand for strength and for unusually wide stretches. Even the passage work, which, it must be said, is far more original than that with which even Rode and Viotti were willing to be content, hardly ever exhibits the quality of grace. He is at times sweet and pure, but he is almost never bewitching.

A great many will say of him that he deliberately

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avoids brilliant display, and they will say it with contentment and pride. But it may be asked if the avoidance of brilliancy for its own sake is a virtue in a great musician. This sort of musical chastity becomes perilously like a convenient apology in the hands of the prejudiced admirer. In the case of Brahms, for example, it daily becomes more so. And now we read of Spohr's unlimited skill as a player and of the dignified restraint manifested in his compositions for the violin. But by all tokens the concertos are being reluctantly left behind.

Among his other works for violin the duets have enjoyed a wide popularity, greater probably than that once enjoyed by Viotti's. His *Violinschule*, published in 1831, has remained one of the standard books on violin playing. Its remarks and historical comments are, however, now of greater significance than the exercises and examples for practice. These, indeed, are like everything Spohr touched, only a reflection of his own personality; so much so that the entire series hardly serves as more than a preparation for playing Spohr's own works.

Spohr was typically German in his fondness for conducting, and for the string quartet. As quite a young man he was the very first to bring out Beethoven's quartets opus 18, in Leipzig and Berlin. Paganini is said to have made a favorite of Beethoven's quartet in F, the first of opus 59; but Spohr was positively dissatisfied with Beethoven's work of this period. Yet Paganini was in no way a great quartet player, and Spohr was. We cannot but wonder which of these two great fiddlers will in fifty years be judged the more significant in the history of the art.

Certainly Spohr was hard and fast conservative, in spite of the fact that he recognized the greatness of Wagner, and brought out the 'Flying Dutchman' and *Tannhäuser* at the court of Cassel. And what can we

## INFLUENCE OF SPOHR

point to now that has sprung from him? On the other hand, Paganini was a wizard in his day, half-charlatan, perhaps, but never found out. With the exception of Corelli and Vivaldi he is the only violinist who, specialist as he was, exerted a powerful influence upon the whole course of music. For he was like a charge of dynamite set off under an art that was in need of expanding, and his influence ran like a flame across the prairie, kindling on every hand. Look at Schumann and Liszt, at Chopin and even at Brahms. Stop for a moment to think of what Berlioz demanded of the orchestra, and then of what Liszt and Wagner demanded. All of music became virtuoso music, in a sense. It all sprang into life with a new glory of color. And who but Paganini let loose the foxes to run in the corn of the Philistines?

Among Spohr's pupils Ferdinand David (1810-1873) was undoubtedly the greatest. He was an excellent performer, uniting with the solidity of Spohr's style something of the more occasional fervor of the modern school, following the example of Paganini. His friendship with Mendelssohn has been perpetuated in music by the latter's concerto for the violin, in E minor, which David not only performed for the first time in March, 1845, but every measure of which was submitted to his inspection and correction while the work was in process of being composed.

David has also won a place for himself in the esteem and gratitude of future generations by his painstaking editing of the works of the old Italian masters. Few of the great works for the violin but have passed through his discriminating touch for the benefit of the student and the public. And as a teacher his fame will live long in that of his two most famous pupils: Joseph Joachim (1831-1907) and August Wilhelmj (1845-1908).

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### IV

How great an influence the group of French violinists exercised upon violin music and playing in the first quarter of the nineteenth century is revealed in the training and the characteristics of the famous Viennese players of the time. Vienna had always proved fertile ground for the growth of Italian ideas, and the French style recommended itself to the Viennese not only by the prevalence of French ideas in the city, owing to political conditions, but also because this style was in no small measure a continuance of the Italian style of Viotti.

Among the Viennese violinists may be mentioned Franz Clement (1780-1842), who, even as a boy of eleven, was making successful concert tours over Europe. In the years 1791 and 1792 he played in London in concerts directed by Haydn and Salomon. Here as elsewhere his playing was admired for its delicacy as well as for its sureness and clarity, qualities which ever recalled to the public of that day the playing of Viotti and Rode. He was not above the tricks of the virtuoso; yet there can be no better proof that he knew how to use his great technique with the worthiest aim than that Beethoven dedicated to him his concerto for violin. He was a thorough musician. They told a story in Vienna, according to Spohr, of how, after hearing Haydn's 'Creation' only a few times, he was able, using only the text-book alone, to arrange all the music for the pianoforte so completely and so accurately that when he showed his copy to old Haydn the master thought his score must have been stolen and copied. Another proof of his musicianship is that he was appointed the first konzertmeister at the Theater an der Wien.

Schuppanzigh's pupil, Joseph Mayseder (1789-1864),

## BOEHM AND ERNST

was among the brilliant and pleasing players of the time. In spite of the fact that he was at one time a member of his master's famous quartet, his tastes seem to have run to a light and more or less frivolous style of music. The tendency showed itself not only in his playing, but in his compositions. These included concertos and brilliant salon pieces; and also string quartets and quintets and other pieces of chamber music, all now quite out of date.

Perhaps the two most influential of the Viennese violinists were Joseph Boehm and Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst. Boehm (1798-1867) was a pupil of Rode, whose acquaintance he made in Poland. Later he visited Italy, and afterwards was appointed a teacher of the violin in the Conservatory at Vienna. Though he was famous in his day as a player who possessed the necessary skill in fingering and bowing, he was above all a teacher. The list of his pupils includes Ernst, G. Hellmesberger (b. 1800), Joachim, Ludwig Strauss (b. 1835), Rappoldi (b. 1831) and Grün. Also Remenyi, at one time an associate with Brahms on concert tours, belongs among them.

Ernst was less a teacher than a virtuoso, whose skill was so extraordinary as to pique Paganini. It is even said that he used to follow the astounding Italian on his concert tours that he might discover some of the secrets of his playing. His own variations on the 'Carnival of Venice' are a brilliant imitation of the style of Paganini. He spent most of his life in concert tours; and, though he was known to be a fine, if not a deep, musician, the virtuoso shows in most of his compositions, which are of little more than secondary merit. He died on October 8, 1865, having enjoyed a fame as a player second only to that of Paganini and de Bériot.

The Bohemians Johann Wenzelaus Kalliwoda (1801-1866) and Joseph Slawjk (1806-1833), both achieved considerable fame. Chopin spoke of Slawjk with great-

## VIOLIN MUSIC

est admiration, wrote that with the exception of Paganini he had never heard a violinist like him. The two became friends and conceived the project of writing together a work for piano and violin. If Slawjck had lived longer he might well have rivalled Paganini, whose playing he, like Ernst, strove to match.

The star of Paganini exercised over every nation of musicians its irresistible attraction. Besides famous players of Austria and Bohemia mention must be made of C. J. Lipinski, the Pole. Lipinski remained in Poland up to the time (1817) when rumors came out of Italy of the astonishing performances of the Genoese. Then he went to Italy determined to hear the wonder himself. In Piacenza he heard him, and later became his friend and associate. It is even said that Paganini proposed to him a joint concert trip through the large Italian cities; but Lipinski had been too long away from his native land and felt unable to remain away longer. His playing was characterized by an especially strong stroke of the bow, an art he possibly acquired from a year's hard work on the 'cello. His compositions, few of which are generally heard to-day, are said by Wasielewski to show fine musicianship and considerable subjective warmth. The best of them is the so-called 'Military' concerto in D major. His ability as an editor is proved by his work with Klengel on an edition of Bach's sonatas for violin and harpsichord, published by Peters. Lipinski died at Urlow, near Lemberg, in December, 1861.

## V

The most brilliant offshoots of the French school, to the formation of whose style the influence of Paganini contributed, were the Belgians de Bériot and Henri Vieuxtemps, who stand together as representative of a



## CHARLES AUGUSTE DE BÉRIOT

Belgian school of violin playing. But before considering them a few names in the long and distinguished list of the pupils of Kreutzer, Rode, and Baillot may be touched upon. Among those of Kreutzer Joseph Massart was perhaps the most influential. He was born in Belgium in 1811, but went early in life to Paris to complete with Kreutzer the work begun with his countryman Lambert. Here he remained, and from 1843 was a professor of the violin at the Conservatoire. At least one of his pupils, Henri Wieniawski, won a world-wide fame as a virtuoso.

Among Rode's pupils Charles Philippi Lafont (1781-1839) stands out prominently. Lafont had also been a pupil of Kreutzer's. His playing was, according to Spohr, full of energy and grace, perfect in intonation, and fine of tone, but rather mannered. His compositions, including duos written with Kalkbrenner, Henri Herz and other virtuoso pianists, and more than two hundred Romances, are of no genuine value. The seven concertos are quite forgotten.

F. H. Habeneck (1781-1841), one of the most influential of French musicians, was a pupil of Baillot. He and his two brothers, Joseph and Corentin, were excellent violinists. But though he held a place of honor among virtuosi of that day, and though he wrote a number of works for the violin, he is remembered to-day chiefly as the founder of the *Société des concerts du Conservatoire*. These were instituted by his energy in 1828, and for twenty years he remained conductor of them. By him the symphonies of Beethoven were introduced into France. He was for many years teacher of the violin at the Conservatoire. Alard (b. 1815), the teacher of Sarasate, was his most famous pupil.

Massart, Alard, and Léonard (b. 1819), another pupil of Habeneck, were all Belgians; but all remained in Paris as teachers in the Conservatoire. Hence they are considered as representative of a Franco-Belgian school

## VIOLIN MUSIC

of violin playing. Charles Auguste de Bériot (1802-1870), though studying for many years in Paris under the advice at least of Viotti and Baillot, and though familiar to all Europe as one of the most brilliant of the world's virtuosos, was for nine years (1843-52) professor of violin playing at the Brussels Conservatory, and may therefore be considered to have brought to Brussels that fame as a centre of brilliant violinists which she has enjoyed without interruption down to the present day.

In de Bériot's playing as well as in his numerous compositions the influence of Paganini rises clearly into sight above that of the older classical traditions of which Paris was the guardian during the first quarter of the century. He was a master of the Paganini effects, of the mysterious harmonics, the dazzling runs and arpeggios, the sparkling pizzicatos; and they are thickly sown over his music. Yet there was in both his playing and his compositions a genuine musical charm. Especially in melodiousness. His wife was Maria Malibran, and through her inimitable singing he heard at their best the graceful melodies of the Italians Bellini and Donizetti, and of the Frenchman Auber, which undoubtedly greatly affected his own compositions. These, once widely popular, included seven concertos, several *airs variés*, and duos for piano and violin, written in conjunction with such virtuosos as Thalberg.

Among his pupils the most famous was Henri Vieuxtemps (1820-1881), one of the few great virtuosos of the violin whose fame as a player has not outlasted in memory his compositions. Vieuxtemps' five concertos, his *Ballade et Polonaise*, and even his *Fantaisie-Caprice* are still in the repertory of most violinists and have not yet lost their favor with the public.

His life is a series of long and enormously successful tours, which took him not only over most of Europe, even Russia, but thrice to the United States.

**Great Violinists:**

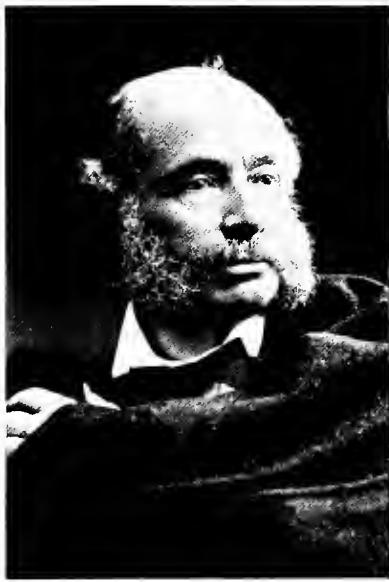
**Charles Auguste de Bériot**

**Joseph Joachim**

**Henri Wieniawski (his brother  
Joseph at the Piano)**

**Henri Vieuxtemps**







## VIEUXTEMPS

These tours were undertaken now alone, now in the company of some other virtuoso such as Thalberg. He made the acquaintance of almost all the distinguished musicians of his age, among them Robert Schumann and Richard Wagner; his repertory was wide and varied, including even Beethoven's concerto, which was not during the early years of his life frequently performed by any but the German violinists.

As to his playing Paul David wrote in an article for Grove's Dictionary: 'He had all the great qualities of technique so characteristic of the modern French school. His intonation was perfect; his command of the bow unsurpassed. An astonishing staccato—in up and down bow—was a specialty of his; and in addition he had a tone of such breadth and power as is not generally found with French violinists. His style of playing (*Vortrag*) was characteristically French. He was fond of strong dramatic accents and contrasts, and generally speaking his style was better adapted to his own compositions and those of other French composers than to the works of the great classical masters. At the same time it should be said that he gained some of his greatest successes in the concertos of Beethoven and Mendelssohn, and was by no means unsuccessful as a quartet player, even in Germany.'

## VI

Excepting Spohr, there are few of the violinist-composers of the second half of the century with whom fate has dealt so kindly as with Vieuxtemps. Most have been forgotten as composers, a fact which may be taken to prove that their compositions had little musical vitality except that which their own playing infused into them. Those few who have been remembered in fact as well as in name owe the perma-

## VIOLIN MUSIC

nence of their reputations to one or two pieces in the nature of successful salon music. Among these should be mentioned Henri Wieniawski (1835-1880), undoubtedly one of the finest players of the century. In the early part of his life he wandered from land to land, coming in company with his friend Anton Rubinstein, the great pianist, even as far as the United States. He was after this (1874) for a few years professor of the violin at the Conservatory in Brussels, filling the place left vacant by Vieuxtemps; and then once more resumed his life of wandering. His compositions were numerous, including two concertos as well as a number of studies and transcriptions, or fantasias, of opera airs. Now perhaps only the *Légende* is still familiar to a general public, though the Fantasia on airs from 'Faust,' empty as it is of all save brilliance, holds a place on the programs of the virtuosi of the present day.

Bernhard Molique (1803-69), a violinist of considerable repute about the middle of the century, composed five concertos, as well as numerous smaller pieces, an acquaintance with which to-day is a privilege in the main reserved to the student. The concertos are without genuine musical vitality. Most of his life, after 1849, was spent in England, where he surrounded himself with many pupils.

Joseph Joachim, one of the most admired violinists and musicians to be found in the history of the art, was a thoughtful composer. His relations with Brahms have elsewhere been mentioned in this series. But Joachim's compositions are for the most part likely to be forgotten, with the possible exception of the Hungarian Concerto, opus 11, the second of his three compositions in this form. However, few if any other virtuosi have ever so united in themselves the highest qualities of man and musician, and probably no other player ever exerted just the sort of mod-



## JOSEPH JOACHIM

erate and wholly salutary influence which sprang from Joachim. Among the many signs of the high esteem in which he was held may be mentioned only the four honorary degrees conferred upon him by the universities of Cambridge, Glasgow, Oxford and Göttingen.

In the course of his long life (1831-1907) Joachim became intimately associated with various circles of musical activity. During the six years between 1843 and 1849 he was in Leipzig, then enjoying the enthusiastic efforts of Mendelssohn and Schumann. Again we find him for four years holding the place of konzertmeister in Liszt's orchestra at Weimar. Then he is konzertmeister in Hannover, where he married Amalie Weiss, a singer of unrivalled art. Still later he went to Berlin, where, as teacher and quartet leader, he stood for the very highest ideals of his art. The famous Joachim quartet, which his spirit may be said almost to have created, consisted of Joachim, De Ahna (1835-1892), once a pupil of Mayseder, Emanuel Wirth, violist, who succeeded Rappoldi in 1877, and Robert Hausmann (1852-1909). De Ahna was succeeded by J. C. Kruse (b. 1859), and Kruse in 1897 by Karl Halir. Joachim gave himself with deepest devotion to the study of Beethoven's works; and probably his performances of the last quartets of Beethoven have established a standard of excellence in chamber music which may never be exalted further. Brahms wrote his violin concerto especially for Joachim, who alone for many years was able to play it. Here is but another case where the great virtuoso stands behind the great composer. Kreutzer, Clement, and Rode all have entered in spirit into the immortality of great music through Beethoven. David stands behind the concerto of Mendelssohn, Joachim behind that of Brahms.

So, too, there is a great virtuoso just behind three of the most successful of modern concertos: Sarasate behind the first concerto of Lalo, the very substance of

## VIOLIN MUSIC

Bruch's second concerto and his Scottish Fantasia. Pablo de Sarasate (1844-1908) came from his native land of Spain to Paris in 1856. Already as a boy of ten he had astonished the Spanish court. Into his small hands had already come a priceless Stradivari, gift of the queen of Spain. After three years' study under Alard in Paris he entered upon his career of virtuoso, which took him well over the face of the world, from the Orient to the United States. The numerous short pieces which he has composed are tinged with Spanish color. There are gypsy dances, Spanish dances, the *Jota Aragonesa*, romances and fantasias, all of which are brilliant and many of which are at present among the favorite solos of all violinists.

The Norwegian violinist, Ole Bull (1810-1880), who achieved an international fame, should be mentioned in this connection. His compositions, in slight forms or transcriptions, enjoyed considerable popularity.

On the whole the technique of violin playing has hardly advanced beyond Paganini. Practically little or no advance has been possible. But undoubtedly this once miraculous technique is now within the grasp of all the great virtuosi of the present day. To mention these would go beyond the purpose of this chapter, which has been, in so far as possible, to select from the list of hundreds a few men that have united, so to speak, the technique of the violin to the general progress of music, through their influence as players, as teachers, as composers, or as mentors, so far as violin music is concerned, to greater composers.

The mass of music composed by the great violinists of the nineteenth century is immense. The works of large proportions as well as those of small were composed with perhaps the chief aim of revealing the scope of the instrument; and as for the concertos it is hardly unfair to say that they were composed with

## INFLUENCE OF VIRTUOSI

the additional purpose of offering to the composer the best chance to display his individual style as a player. Certainly of these many composers Spohr and Vieuxtemps were the most capable as musicians in a general way; and as it must be granted that both were at their best in the performance of their own concertos, so it may be said that their concertos rose to their highest value under the fingers of their creators. To that same value they have not otherwise risen.

The concerto is, after all, a long piece of music in symphonic proportions, and time seems to have proved that it must justify itself by more than display of the special qualities of a certain instrument. There must be in addition to this something of genuine musical value. The thoughts which it expresses—for so we must name the outpourings of a musical inspiration which have no substance but sound—must be first worthy of expression. There must be melody and harmony of distinct and vivid character. These the concertos of the violin-composers oftenest lack; and therefore from the point of view of pure music, one finds in them a lack not only of originality but of strength.

Their short pieces stand a better chance of a longer life, because in them a slender idea is not stretched to fill a broad form, and because for a short time sheer beauty of sound, such as the violin is capable of, and dexterity of fingers are a sufficient delight to the ear.

## VII

In turning to the violin pieces of the great masters of music one finds first and foremost ideas, great or charming, which are wholly worthy of expression. As these find their outlet in music in melody, harmony, and rhythm, and take their shape in form, melody becomes intensified and suggests as well as sings, har-

## VIOLIN MUSIC

mony is enriched, form developed and sustained. Only the solo sonatas of Bach have demanded such manifold activity from the violin alone. Other composers have called to the aid of their ideas some other instrument—pianoforte, organ, or orchestra. The great masters have indeed placed no small burden of the frame and substance of such compositions on the shoulders of this second instrument, usually the pianoforte. Hence we have music which is no longer solo music for the violin, but duets in which both instruments play an obbligato part. Such are the violin sonatas of Beethoven, Brahms, César Franck and others, thoroughly developed, well-articulated and often truly great music.

Beethoven wrote ten sonatas for pianoforte and violin, all but one between the years 1798 and 1803. This was a time when his own fame as a virtuoso was at its height, and the pianoforte part in all the sonatas calls for technical skill and musicianship from the pianist. Upon the violinist, too, they make no less claim. In fact Beethoven's idea of this duet sonata as revealed in all but the last, that in G major, opus 96, is the idea of a double concerto, both performers displaying the best qualities and the most brilliant of their instruments, the pianist at the same time adding the harmonic background and structural coherence which may well be conceived as orchestral. It is not surprising then to find in these works something less of the 'poetic idea' than may be discovered, or has been, in the sonatas for pianoforte alone, the string quartets, and the symphonies. Beethoven is not concerned solely with poetic expression in music. And not only many of the violin sonatas, but the horn sonata and the 'cello sonatas, were written for a certain player, and even for a special occasion.

Of the three sonatas, opus 12, written not later than 1798 and dedicated to the famous Italian Salieri, then resident in Vienna, little need be said. On the whole

## THE KREUTZER SONATA

they are without conspicuous distinction in style, treatment, or material; though certain movements, especially the slow movements of the second and third sonatas, are full of deep feeling. Likewise the next two sonatas, that in A minor, opus 23, and that in F major, opus 24, are not of great significance in the list of Beethoven's works, though the former speaks in a highly impassioned vein, and the latter is so frankly charming as to have won for itself something of the favor of the springtime.

Shortly after these Beethoven composed the three sonatas, opus 30, dedicated to the Czar of Russia, in which there is at once a more pronounced element of virtuosity and likewise a more definite poetic significance. The first and last of this set are in A major and G major, and show very clearly the characteristics which are generally associated with these keys. The former is vigorous, the latter cheerful. Both works are finely developed and carefully finished in style, and the *Tempo di minuetto* in the latter is one of the most charming of Beethoven's compositions. The sonata in C minor which stands between these two is at once more rough-hewn and emotionally more powerful.

The sonata in A, opus 47, is the ninth of the violin sonatas of Beethoven. It was written especially for the English violinist, George Bridgetower, with whom Beethoven played it for the first time on the 17th or 24th of May, 1803: According to the violinist himself, who was, by the way, a mulatto and exceedingly mannered, he altered a passage in this performance of the work which greatly pleased Beethoven. However this may be, Beethoven later fell out with him, and subsequently dedicated the sonata to the great violinist Rodolphe Kreutzer, who came to Vienna in the suite of General Bernadotte. It has since been known as the Kreutzer Sonata. It is an imposing and brilliant work, but it may be fairly said that it owes its general popu-

## VIOLIN MUSIC

larity to the favor of virtuosi to whom it offers a grateful test of technical ability. Emotionally the first movement alone is of sustained and impressive meaning. The theme of the Andante is of great sweetness, but the variations are hardly more than a series of more and more elaborate ornamentations, designed for the benefit of the players. The brilliant last movement seems to have been first conceived for the preceding sonata in A major, opus 30, No. 1.

Toward the end of 1812 the French violinist, Pierre Rode, came to Vienna, and to this event alone is probably due the last of Beethoven's sonatas for pianoforte and violin. If he had set out to exhaust the possibilities of brilliant effect in the combination of the two instruments, he achieved his goal, as far as it was attainable within the limits of technique at that time, in the Kreutzer Sonata. Then for a period of nine years he lost interest in the combination. When he turned to it again, for this sonata in G, opus 96, it was with far deeper purpose. The result is a work of a fineness and reserve, of a pointed style, and cool meaning. It recalls in some measure the Eighth Symphony, and like that symphony has been somewhat eclipsed by fellow works of more obvious and striking character. Yet from the point of view of pure and finely-wrought music it is the best of the sonatas for pianoforte and violin. Mention has already been made of the first performance of the work, given on the 29th of December, 1812, by Rode and Beethoven's pupil, the Archduke Rudolph.

The concerto for violin and orchestra, opus 61, must be given a place among his masterpieces. It belongs in point of time between the two great pianoforte concertos, in G major and E-flat major; and was first performed by the violinist Franz Clement, to whom it was dedicated, at a concert in the *Theater an der Wien*, on December 23, 1806. Difficult as the concerto is for the violinist, Beethoven has actually drawn upon only

## SCHUMANN: VIOLIN SONATAS

a few of the characteristics of the instrument, and chiefly upon its power over broad, soaring melody. He had written a few years earlier two Romances, opus 40 and opus 50, for violin and orchestra, which may be taken as preliminary experiments in weaving a solo-violin melody with the many strands of the orchestra. The violin part in the concerto is of noble and exalted character, and yet at the same time gives to the instrument the chance to express the best that lies within it.

The plan of the work is suggestively different from the plan of the last two concertos for pianoforte. In these Beethoven treats the solo instrument as a partner or at times as an opponent of the orchestra, realizing its wholly different and independent individuality. At the very beginning of both the G major and the E-flat major concertos, the piano asserts itself with weight and power equal to the orchestra's, and the ensuing music results as it were from the conflict or the union of these two naturally contrasting forces. The violin has no such independence from the orchestra, of which, in fact, it is an organic member. The violin concerto begins with a long orchestral prelude, out of which the solo instrument later frees itself, as it were, and rises, to pursue its course often as leader, but never as opponent.\*

The few works by Schubert for pianoforte and violin belong to the winter of 1816 and 1817, and, though they have a charm of melody, they are of relatively slight importance either in his own work or in the literature for the instrument. There are a concerto in D major; three sonatinas, in D, A minor, and G minor, opus 137, Nos. 1, 2, 3; and a sonata in A, opus 162.

There are two violin sonatas by Schumann, in A minor, opus 105, and in D minor, opus 121. Both are works belonging to the last years of his life, and both reflect a sad and gloomy spirit; but both contain much

\* See Paul Bekker: 'Beethoven.' Berlin, 1913.

## VIOLIN MUSIC

that is rarely beautiful. They will strike the ear at once as more modern than those of Beethoven, mostly of course because of the treatment of the pianoforte. Here it may well be mentioned that improvements in the pianoforte rather changed the problem of writing duet sonatas such as these. The new power of the instrument might easily threaten the violin with extinction. On the whole Schumann's handling of the combination is remarkably successful. He is inclined now and then to treat the pair of instruments in unison—as in the first movement of the sonata in A minor—which is a rank waste of the beauties which the diversity in the natures of pianoforte and violin makes possible. On the other hand, such a movement as that in G major in the second sonata, its unusual beginning with a melody given by the violin in pizzicato chords, and its third statement of the melody in rich double-stops, is a masterpiece.\*

The only considerable contribution by Mendelssohn to the literature of the violin is the concerto written for and first performed by Ferdinand David. A sonata in F minor, opus 4, is without distinction. But the concerto must be reckoned as one of Mendelssohn's greatest works. Certainly, standing as it does between the concerto of Beethoven, on the one hand, and that of Brahms, on the other, it cannot but appear small in size and slight in content. But the themes, especially the chief theme of the first movement, are well chosen, the orchestral part exquisitely and thoroughly finished, and the treatment of the violin, thanks to David, smoothly effective. The cadenza—is it Mendelssohn or David?—is of sterling worth, and it is happily arranged in the movement as a whole before the third section, so that the hearer has not the shock which accompanies the enforced dragging in of virtuoso stuff in most ca-

\* Joachim had in his possession a concerto for violin by Schumann, written likewise near the end of his life.



## BRAHMS: VIOLIN SONATAS

denzas. It glides naturally out of what came before, and slowly flows back into the course of the movement.

There are three violin sonatas by Brahms which hold a very high place in music. The first, opus 78, in G major, was written after the first and second symphonies and even the violin concerto had been made public (Jan. 1, 1879). It has, perhaps, more than any of his earlier works, something of grace and pleasant warmth, of those qualities which made the second symphony acceptable to more than his prejudiced friends. Certainly this sonata, which was played with enthusiasm by Joachim all over Europe, made Brahms' circle of admirers vastly broader than it had been before.

The workmanship is, of course, highly involved and recondite. There is a thematic relationship between the first and last movements,\* and the themes and even the accompaniment are put to learned uses. But the style is gracious and charming, the treatment of the violin wholly satisfactory, and the combination of the two instruments close and interesting.

The second sonata, opus 100, did not appear until seven years after the first. Here again there is warmth and grace of style, though the impression the work makes as a whole is rather more serious than that made by the earlier sonata. Of course at a time when Brahms and Wagner were being almost driven at each other by their ardent friends and backers the resemblance between the first theme of this sonata in A major and the melody of the Prize Song in the *Meistersinger* did not pass unnoticed. The resemblance is for an instant startling, but ceases to exist after the first four notes.

The third sonata, that in D minor, opus 108, appeared two years later. On the whole it has more of the sternness one cannot but associate with Brahms than either of those which precede it. There are grotesque accents

\* The theme of the last movement can be found in two songs, *Regenlied* and *Nachklang*, opus 59, published seven years earlier.

## VIOLIN MUSIC

in the first movement, and also a passage of forty-six measures over a dominant pedal point, and even the delightful movement in F-sharp minor (*un poco presto e con sentimento*) has a touch of deliberateness. The slow movement on the other hand is direct, and the last movement has a strong, broad swing.

No violin sonatas show more ingenuity in the combining of the two instruments than those of Brahms. Mr. Thomas F. Dunhill in his book on Chamber Music,\* chooses from each of them a passage which really represents a new effect in this field of which one would have thought all the effects discovered.

The concerto for violin and orchestra stands among Brahms' supreme achievements, a giant among concertos matched only by that of Beethoven. It is not a matter for surprise that Brahms, who in many ways deliberately tried to follow Beethoven, and who even here chose the same key (D major) that Beethoven chose for his concerto, chose likewise the old-fashioned form of concerto. The work gains ponderance by reason of the long orchestral introduction in both the first and second movements. There is, likewise, as in the pianoforte concertos, too conscious a suppression of superficial brilliance. But what is this slight heaviness compared to the soaring power of its glorious themes? Truly the violin rises high above the orchestra as on wings of light.

The treatment of the violin relates the concerto to Joachim even more definitely than the dedication. It is full of the most exacting difficulties, some of which in the last movement gave even Joachim pause. The double-stops, however, and the frequent passages in two voices were, after all, effects in which Joachim was especially successful. Some of the close co-operation of the two great masters on this single great masterpiece is revealed in the correspondence which passed

\* 'Chamber Music.' London, 1913.

## FRENCH VIOLIN MUSIC

between Joachim and Brahms and happily has been preserved.

### VIII

Turning now to music in its more recent developments, we shall find that each nation has contributed something of enduring worth to the literature of the violin. Certainly, high above all modern sonatas, and perhaps above all sonatas for pianoforte and violin, stands that by César Franck, dedicated to M. Eugène Ysaye. By all the standards we have, this work is immortally great. From the point of view of style it presents at their best all the qualities for which Franck's music is valued. There are the fineness in detail and the seemingly spontaneous polyphonic skill, the experiments, or rather the achievements in binding the four movements into a unified whole by employing the same or cognate thematic material in all, the chromatic alterations of harmonies and the almost unlimited modulations. Besides these more or less general qualities, the pianoforte and the violin are most sympathetically combined, and the treatment of both instruments is varied and interesting. Franck's habit of short phrases here seems wholly proper, and never suggests as it does in some of his other works a too intensive development of musical substance. In short this sonata, full of mystical poetry, is a flawless masterpiece, from the opening movement that seems like a dreamy improvisation, to the sunny canon at the end of the work.

This is by no means the only brilliant accomplishment of the French composers in violin music. Lalo's Concerto in F minor, opus 20, and his Spanish Symphony for violin and orchestra, opus 21, must be given a place among the most successful of modern compositions. They were both composed between 1873 and the

## VIOLIN MUSIC

beginning of 1875. Both were dedicated to Sarasate, whose influence contributed not a little to their perfection of style, and who was the first to play them in public. The 'Spanish Symphony' was greatly admired by Tchaikowsky and apparently put the thought of writing his own concerto into his head. In a letter to Mme. von Meck, written in March, 1878, he showed a positive enthusiasm for Lalo's work which had recently become known to him through the performance by the 'very modern' violinist Sarasate. And of Lalo he wrote that, like Léo Delibes and Bizet, he shunned studiously all routine commonplaces, sought new forms without wishing to appear profound, and, unlike the Germans, cared more for *musical beauty* than for mere respect of the old traditions. Besides these two concertos Lalo wrote within the next few years a 'Romance-Serenade,' a 'Norwegian Fantasia,' and a *Concerto Russe*, for violin and orchestra.

Sarasate seems to have stimulated almost all of the composers with whom he came in contact. Saint-Saëns wrote three concertos for violin and orchestra, opus 20, in A major, opus 58, in C major, and opus 61, in B minor, and dedicated all to Sarasate. Of these the third is the broadest in form and the most impressive, and is a favorite among its fellows as the second concerto for pianoforte, opus 22, is among the five works in that form. It was composed in 1880 and played for the first time by Sarasate. Saint-Saëns wrote besides these three concertos an 'Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso,' opus 28, a 'Romanze,' opus 48, and a 'Concert Piece,' opus 62, for violin and orchestra, and two sonatas—opus 75, in D minor, and opus 102, in E-flat major—for violin and pianoforte. There is also a brilliant *Havanaise*, opus 83, for violin and orchestra.

There is a sonata for violin and piano by Gabriel Fauré, opus 13, which has won favor, and which Saint-Saëns characterized as *géniale*. The year 1905 heard

## GRIEG AND TSCHAIKOWSKY

the first performance of the admirable violin sonata in C major of M. Vincent d'Indy.

Among the Scandinavian composers Grieg holds the highest rank, and his three sonatas for violin and piano-forte are among the favorite compositions for this combination. Their charm is like that of his other works, and consists not a little in the presence of a distinct national idiom which, until one becomes thoroughly used to it, strikes the ear with delightful freshness. The three sonatas are respectively opus 8, in F major, opus 13, in G major, and opus 45, in C minor. The last is a fiery, dramatic work. The two earlier ones are characterized by grace and charm. With the exception of the pianoforte concerto in A minor, Grieg showed himself nowhere more successful than in these sonatas in the treatment of form. His ideas are generally slight, and his workmanship delicate and refined. Hence he is at his best in short pieces. But the violin sonatas are on the whole well sustained, and the themes in the last of them, and particularly the chief theme of the first movement, have a breadth quite unusual in the great part of his music.

Of far broader conception, however, than the sonatas, are the two brilliant concertos by Christian Sinding, the first in A major, opus 45, the second in D major, opus 60. Concerning his music in general M. Henry Marteau, the eminent French violinist who introduced the first concerto to the public and who is a close friend of Sinding, has written: 'He is very Norwegian in his music, but less so than Grieg, because his works are of far broader conception and would find themselves cramped in the forms that are so dear to Grieg.' \*

Among the Russians, Tschaikowsky's concerto for violin in D major, opus 35, is one of the greatest written for the instrument. Of Tschaikowsky's admiration for the Spanish Symphony of Lalo, mention has

\* See *Song Journal*, November 10, 1895.

## VIOLIN MUSIC

already been made. After this had prompted him to write a concerto of his own, the work went on with astonishing rapidity; was, in fact, roughly on paper within the space of a month. It was first performed on December 4, 1884, at a Philharmonic concert in Vienna by Adolf Brodsky (b. 1851). It was originally dedicated to Leopold Auer (b. 1845), but Tschaikowsky later re-dedicated it to Brodsky, having heard that Auer had dissuaded Émile Sauret from playing it in Petrograd. As to the difficulties of the work much may be gleaned from a letter written by Brodsky to Tschaikowsky after the first performance. Among other things he wrote: 'I had the wish to play the concerto in public ever since I first looked it through. \* \* \* I often took it up and often put it down, because my laziness was stronger than my wish to reach the goal. You have, indeed, crammed too many difficulties into it. \* \* \* One can play it again and again and never be bored; and this is a most important circumstance for the conquering of its difficulties.' \*

Of the three movements only the last (*allegro vivacissimo*, 2-4, D major) has a distinctly Russian flavor. This comes to it not only from the nature of the two chief themes, which are in the character of Russian folk-songs, but from the gorgeous coloring, both harmonic and orchestral, the wildness of climaxes, and the Slavic idiom of repeating a single phrase over and over again. It is a riotous piece of music, this last movement, full of an animation, almost a madness which is intoxicating. Hanslick heard in it only the brutal and wretched jollity of a Russian Kermesse; but his fierce judgment has not been supported by the public or by the profession.

There is a concerto for violin in A minor, opus 82, by Alexander Glazounoff, composed in 1904 and first performed at a Queen's Hall concert in London, by Mischa

\* See Modest Tschaikowsky: 'Life of Peter Ilyitch Tschaikowsky.'

**Modern Violinists:**

**Pablo Sarasate**  
**Eugène Ysaye**

**Fritz Kreisler**  
**Jacques Thihaud**









## SIBELIUS, BRÜCH, REGER

Elman, on October 17, 1905. The work is dedicated to Leopold Auer, to whom, as has just been mentioned, Tschaikowsky originally dedicated his concerto for violin. It is a work without distinction.

The violin concerto of Sibelius in D minor, opus 47, was composed in 1905 and first played by Karl Halir in Berlin, October 19, 1905. It is a work of far greater power than that of Glazounoff. Mrs. Rosa Newmarch in her monograph on Sibelius,\* likens the difficulties in it to those of the Tschaikowsky concerto, which were for a while considered insurmountable. The concerto is in three movements of which the first is gloomy and forbidding, though poignant in the extreme, the second noble and more classic, the last—the coda of which was added by Pietro Florida—savagely effective.

In Germany we meet with Sarasate again in the second concerto and Scottish Fantasy by Max Bruch. These are the best known of Bruch's works for violin and orchestra, among which may be mentioned a first concerto, opus 26, in G minor, a Romance, opus 42, an Adagio Appassionato, opus 57, and a Serenade, opus 75. The second concerto, opus 44, was, according to Bruch, inspired by stories of the Carlist wars in Spain, told by Sarasate. It was composed in Bonn in 1877, ten years after the first, and was first publicly performed by Sarasate, in London, during the fall of that year. In form it is free and rhapsodical, consisting of an adagio movement, then a movement in recitative style, and a final rondo. All through the work the solo violin predominates. The Scottish Fantasia, composed a year or two later, was dedicated to Sarasate. The use of Scotch songs in the five movements is so free that English critics could hardly recognize them, and were angry.

Among more recent works for the violin by German composers the sonata by Richard Strauss stands conspicuous. This is an early work—opus 18—and its pop-

\* 'Jean Sibelius, a Finnish Composer.'

## VIOLIN MUSIC

ularity is already on the wane. There is a concerto in A major, opus 101, by Max Reger, and a *Suite im alten Stil* for violin and piano, opus 93. There are concertos by Gernsheim, as well: but on the whole there has been no remarkable output of music for the violin in Germany since that of Brahms and of Max Bruch.

Karl Goldmark, the Bohemian composer, has written two concertos, of which the first, opus 28, in A minor, offers an excellent example of the composer's finished and highly pleasing style. The second concerto, without opus number, is among his later works. Two suites for piano and violin, opus 11 and opus 43, were made familiar by Sarasate. Dvořák's concerto, opus 53, has been frequently played. He composed as well a Romance, opus 11, for violin and orchestra, and a sonatina, opus 100, for violin and pianoforte. The works of Jenő Hubay are of distinctly virtuoso character.

The Italian Leone Sinigaglia became known to the world by his concerto for violin, opus 20, in A major, played in Berlin in 1901 by his countryman, Arrigo Serrato. Later works include a *Rapsodia piemontese* for violin and orchestra, and a Romance for the same combination, opus 29. The violin music of Emanuel Moor, including a concerto and a remarkably fine suite for violin unaccompanied, has yet to be better known. Georges Enescu first attracted attention by compositions for the violin. On the whole, however, it may be said that the violin is awaiting a new contribution to its literature. This contribution is doubtless delayed by the great attention given at the present day to the piano, the orchestra, or other combinations of instruments, by which the modern growth in harmony and the change in ideas of polyphony may be given a full expression. Until these various ideas have become firmly rooted and well-grown, the violin will profit but vicariously by them.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE BEGINNINGS OF CHAMBER MUSIC

The term 'chamber music'; fifteenth-century dances; lute music, early suites; vocal 'chamber music'—Early 'sonatas': Gabrieli; Rossi; Marini; etc.—Vitali, Veracini, Bassani and Corelli; Corelli's pupils; Vivaldi; Bach and Handel.

#### I

IN giving an account of early chamber music we may confine ourselves to the consideration of early instrumental music of certain kinds, although the term at first did not apply to pure instrumental music alone. Chamber music in the sixteenth century meant instrumental or vocal music for social and private purposes as distinguished from public musical performances in churches or in theatres. In its modern sense chamber music applies, of course, only to instrumental ensembles, and it is therefore not necessary to dwell upon the vocal side of chamber music beginnings, except where, as in its incipient stages, music was written for both kinds of performances.\* In searching for examples of early chamber music, therefore, we must above all consider all such music, vocal or instrumental, as was not composed for the use of the church

\* Distinction between church music and chamber music, as far as can be ascertained, was first made by Nic. Vicentino in 1555 in a work entitled *L'antica musica ridotta alla moderna*. The term chamber music had its origin in the practice of rich citizens and princes who regularly kept in their service musicians to provide private concerts in their chambers (*camera*) for the delectation of their friends. The musicians thus employed were given the title of chamber musicians, or chamber singers. The official title of chamber musician—*suonatore di violino da camera*—was probably used for the first time by Carlo Farina (1627) in the service of the court at Dresden.

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or theatre. Properly speaking the accompanied art-songs of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, which were discussed in Vol. I, Chapter IX, of our narrative history, represent the very beginnings of artistic instrumental music that during the following three centuries developed into pure instrumental chamber music. In forwarding this development the dance music of the period and other instrumental compositions of the fifteenth century were important factors.

The fifteenth century dances such as the *Pawirschwanz*, the *Fochsschwanz*, and others, employed the polyphonic style peculiar to the vocal compositions of the time. They lacked inspiration and were of a restless character because of frequent changes of rhythm. There was little to distinguish them from each other; they were in fact, in the words of Michael Prætorius, 'as like as eggs,' and their general character was not different from that of the vocal compositions of the same period. Probably no modern ear could listen to them with enjoyment.

Presumably this music was to be played on any instrument, without differentiation. No single instrument was especially favored until the following century, when the perfection and the popularity of the lute helped to bring chamber music into existence. This instrument was indeed so highly perfected and the players so skilled that they were able to perform upon it even difficult polyphonic works. This gave an opportunity to the people to become acquainted, through private performances, with a great number of musical compositions. To satisfy the demands of their friends lutenists arranged and transcribed for their instruments all kinds of compositions, including even entire six-part masses. While these arrangements served their purpose they were probably not more satisfactory than the pianoforte arrangement of orchestral scores to-day. Pieces of polyphonic character were

## EARLY LUTE MUSIC

also composed directly for the lute, and bore such names as *Ricercar*, *Fantasia*, *Præludium*, *Preambel*, *Trio*, *Trium*, *Toccata*, *Tartar le corde*, etc. Besides this the lutenists produced a large amount of music in a more popular vein, popular tunes, dances, and descriptive pieces including 'battles,' 'echoes,' 'bird-songs,' in which the composer's intention was often not self-evident.

This lute music must have been usually played in rooms of limited size, for the delicate tone quality of the lute would scarcely render it practical for accompaniments to dances. Hence we may conclude that this early lute music was played for its own sake. It is the earliest form of true chamber music and represents the beginning of absolute instrumental music in general.

We find already in this early chamber music the elements of artistic form. It is evident from the examination of numerous collections from the sixteenth century that composers for the lute applied the principle of contrast, being impelled thereto by a natural artistic sense. In Petrucci's lute collection (1507-08), for example, a *Ricercar* is preceded by a sort of prelude-like *Tartar le corde* that in its rapid passages forms an evident contrast to the even and more simple style of the *Ricercar*. It is this tendency toward artistic contrast that helped to build up the cyclical forms of the suite and of the sonata.

Lutenists, in fact, preferred to combine their favorite songs and dances in groups of two, three, or more, which thus constituted the earliest suites. A suite of three dances is to be found in Petrucci's collection. It contains a *Pavane*, a *Saltarello*, and a *Piva*. The *Pavane* (in common time) gives the melodic material for the two other movements (in triple time), a crude example of the use of a leading theme in the different movements. Attaignat's French collection (1529) also

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contains a suite of three dances: *Bassedance*, *Recoupe*, and *Tordion*. Some German suites consisted of a slow movement (in triple time), and a second, more rapid, on the melody of the first. The individual pieces sometimes had no names, but frequently the slow movement was called *Hoftanz*, while the fast movement bore the designation *Hupfauff*. Other combinations of movements were *Ein guter Hoftanz* (in common time), *Proportz darauf* (in triple time), and *Pavana*, or *Ein kunstreicher Gassenhauer*, *Ander Thyl*, *Proportz dritt Thyl*. Toward the middle of the century, when movements increased in number, the suites ended with a postlude, such as a *Toccata*. The relation between the movements was evident not only in the common thematic material, but also in the use of the same key throughout. Later the dances were grouped under their different titles—all the Pavanes and Allemandes, for instance, being brought together. Not every kind of dance was regarded as suitable for combination with others. Such dances as *Caluta a la Spagnola* or *a la Italiana*, the *Branle*, the *Morino*, the *Balletti*, the Polish, 'Welsh,' French, Swiss, Hungarian, Bavarian, and Swabian dances are always found alone. The contrasted tempi of the better suites lent them a certain variety and lightness.

Lute music gradually 'went out of fashion,' as Thomas Mace, himself a composer for the lute, remarked, because it was 'a very chargeable instrument' and 'the hardest instrument in the world.' In the meantime certain composers were writing chamber music for which no special instrument was indicated. Of this class of instrumental compositions we may mention especially a *Canzon da sonare a 4*, by Florentino Maschera from his *Libro primo de canzoni da sonare a 4* (1593). It is called *La Capriola* and is written for basso, tenore, alto, e canto. Maschera's canzonas are among the earliest printed specimens of











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independent instrumental compositions. Their phrase structure is very irregular. One canzona, for instance, has an introduction of twenty-one measures, followed by a longer piece of six periods of 22, 21, 18, 19, and 23 measures. On the whole, Maschera's instrumental compositions are vocal in character and polyphonic in style. Almost the same may be said of the *Canzoni* and *Sacræ Symphonix* of Giov. Gabrieli (1597), although his *Sonata con tre violini* and *canzoni a 6* (two violins, *cornetto*, *tenore*, *trombone* and bass) (1615) show an advance in instrumental writing. In Gabrieli's *Sonata piano e forte*, we meet for the first time the term 'Sonata.' This composition is scored for a double choir of instruments, the first consisting of a cornet and three trombones, and the second of a violin and three trombones. These two choirs are employed antiphonally. Gabrieli usually preferred to score his sonatas and canzonas for eight instruments in two choirs, but not infrequently he wrote from four to twenty-two parts in one or three choirs.

In comparing Gabrieli with Maschera we get the impression that while Maschera's canzonas are song-like, Gabrieli's polyphonic style represents rudimentary symphonic music.

A link in the evolution of chamber music form is to be found in the *Fantasia overo Canzoni alla Francese per sonare nell'organo ed altri stromenti musicali a 4*, by Adriano Banchieri (1603). In some of these pieces the first part corresponds with the third, the second part appearing as a kind of middle movement, an arrangement that shows the elements of the three-part form of the modern sonata.

We have seen that chamber music included dances (single and in suites) and compositions of free invention. The names of the former class of pieces clearly expressed and described the character of the music. The terms applied to compositions of free invention,



## VOCAL 'CHAMBER MUSIC'

Similar to Schein's suites in the character of their variations are those by Paul Bäuerl, edited six years earlier. Variations in suites were so popular that in a work by Andreas Hammerschmidt (1639) the author gave instructions for playing 'Gaillarde on the 1, 2, 7, Pavane.' Change in the order and in the number of the single movements is to be found in the suites of Johann Neubauer (1649). They contain only four movements, Pavane, Gaillarde, Balletto, and Courante. The Balletto stands for the Allemanda and Tripla, having two parts, the first in common, the second in triple, time.

The four movement form of suite was adopted by Froberger (1649), and by K. Briegel (1652). After the middle of the century composers began to include in their suites movements that were not dances, such as Canzonas, Symphonias, Sonatas, Sonatinas or Præ-ludia. The earliest examples of those are by I. R. Ahle (1650), Martin Rubert, Joh. Jak. Löwe (1658), Diedrich Becker (*Musikalische Frühlingsfrüchte*, 1668), Joh. Rosenmüller (*Sonata da camera*, 1667), Joh. Petzolds (*Leipzigerische Abendmusik*, 1669), Esajas Reusser (Suites for two violins with continuo, containing the following movements: Allemande, Courante, Sarabande or Gavotte, Gigue, with an Adagio—called Sonata—as introduction, 1670). Thus through the mixture of 'suites' with 'sonatas' the way was prepared for the classical chamber-sonata.

## II

It must not be forgotten that an important part of early chamber music consisted of various compositions in the form of vocal pieces—madrigals, canons, rounds, and catches. As far as we know the earliest printed collection of such music extant is a volume entitled *Pammelia* (o) *Musicks Misscellane* (1609). The mixed

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variety of these 'pleasant and delightful Roundelays' shows skillful counterpoint and good harmony. The names of the composers are not mentioned in the book, but since the style of the compositions suggests great antiquity, this collection may represent the oldest printed vocal chamber music. With the striking progress of instrumental music, purely vocal compositions were less and less used as chamber music, since instruments were being used to play in unison with the voices. Such performances were called *concertati*. Significant vocal compositions with instrumental accompaniments were produced by Peri (1561-1633) and Caccini (d. 1618), whose *Cantate da camera* or *Madrigali da camera* were mostly pieces for a single voice accompanied by a single instrument. On the whole, however, it is not necessary to emphasize the vocal music here, since chamber music as we know it to-day represents a purely instrumental development.

We have already referred to Gabrieli's use of the term sonata and to the first specimens of canzonas. Besides these we may mention a *Canzon francese a risposta* by Viadana (1602) for 'violino, cornetto, two tromboni, and basso continuo.' The parts of the instruments that lead the melodies are handled here as in a dialogue. The treatment of the melody is monodic rather than contrapuntal.

Of much more interest and value are a *Sonata in dialogo* for violin, with basso continuo, and a *Sonata detto la moderna*, from the *Varie Sonate* (1613) of Salomone Rossi. Rossi's sonatas contain good examples of variations on a basso ostinato (*Sopra l'Aria della Romanesca* and *Sopra l'Aria di Ruggiero*). The basses, however, are not always strictly carried out. Rossi also cultivated variations on melodies not in the bass. He is noted for his first attempts in the form of the trio sonata (two violins with *basso continuo*), where, as in his simpler and shorter 'Sinfonias,' the





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rhythm with the first. This new second theme is announced simultaneously with the first when the latter appears for the second time thus:



Marini is also notable for the use of chromatics in his later works (1651) and his effective instrumental writing. He did not, however, lay special stress upon developing the idea of the new theme nor upon giving more independence to the two leading instruments. Frescobaldi also failed to recognize the possibilities of the second motive in his trio sonatas (1628). The idea, however, was well developed by Tarquinio Merula (especially in a sonata called *La Pedrina*, 1637), whose works (*Canzoni da sonar*, 1615, *Canzoni overo Sonate concertate da chiesa e camera a 2 e 3*, 1637, etc.) show not only more proficiency in instrumental writing, but also greater independence in the single parts and more individuality in the bass parts. Merula's compositions have a sort of jovial humor, and on the whole they produce a more satisfactory general effect than those of his predecessors.

Of minor importance are the *Sinfonie ad uno e duoi violini, a duoi trombone, con il partimento per l'organo con alcune quattro viole*, 1629, by Mont'Albano, and the few chamber music compositions (besides solo sonatas) by Fontana (1630, 1641), whose graceful melodies are suggestive of the coming era. In further developing the forms of chamber music (mostly in trio sonatas) an important place belongs to Maurizio Cazati (d. 1677), who is distinguished especially for his clear-cut melodies. The following from his sonata, *La Lucilla* (1648), is a good example:











## TRIO SONATAS

Here the contrasting second theme is brought in before the exposition of the first is completed. *La Lucilla* has repose and thoughtfulness instead of the restlessness usual in similar compositions. It is in four parts and ends with the first theme without the contrasting second motive.

Among other chamber music composers of the middle of the seventeenth century, we may point out Mas-similiano Neri, who first used the terms sonata and canzona without any distinction. After his time the term canzona was less and less used and the name sonata finally became general for all instrumental chamber music compositions. Neri's works are characteristic products of the century. His scoring for three to twelve instruments, his restless changing of rhythm and tempo, his lack of unity and 'development,' are the ever-present signs of the age in which he wrote. Still, his construction of phrase, his modulations, his more graceful figures show an improvement upon the writing of his predecessors. The following analysis of his Sonata in nine movements (1651) for two violins, viola and bass—another ancestor of the modern string quartet—shows the looseness of form which was characteristic of all contemporary instrumental music:

Movement I:	in 4/4—46 measures	
Movement II:	Adagio in 3/2—20 measures	
Movement III:	Allegro in 4/4—26 measures	
Movement IV:	Adagio in 4/4—8 measures	
Movement V:	Allegro in 6/4—22 measures	
Movement VI:	Adagio in 4/4—6 measures	
Movement VII:	Allegro in 3/4—24	} 56 measures
	Adagio in 3/4—32	
Movement VIII:	Allegro in 4/4—5 measures	
Movement IX:	Presto in 4/4—9 measures	

Among writers of sonatas who varied less the number of movements we may notice Nicolaus Kempf (Sonatas and 'Symphonies' for 1-3 violins, 1-5 instruments,

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1644, 1647, 1669), who employed the four movements of the modern cyclical sonata form, thus:

- I. A pathetic movement (in the style of the Pavane).
- II. An Allegro movement (imitative).
- III. Gaillarde or Courante.
- IV: Similar to the first movement (with figurative elements).

Although Kempfi's compositions show some improvement in fluency, they are otherwise of little interest.

Of far more eminence is Giovanni Legrenzi, the first composer of chamber music who abandoned entirely the term canzone. He is rightly called a 'master of first rank,' and his harmonies, chromatics (in the Sonata *La Cornava*, 1655), and modulations are noteworthy. In his trio sonatas (*La Rosetta*, 1671) and in his *Sonata a 5: La Fugazza*, he demonstrated that a few instruments could be made to express musical ideas of genuine value.

Among the minor sonata writers of this period we may mention Mazzolini (*Sonate per camera a 3*, containing preludes and dances), Mazzaferrata (*Sonate a due violini: con un basetto viola*, 1674, all in four movements), Bononcini (*Sonate da chiesa* and 'Symphonie' for two to eight instruments 1666, 1678), Tonini, C. A. Marini, Grossi, Taglietti, Rugieri, Vinacesi, Zanata, Charelli, and Gighi.

Practically all the compositions we have noticed possess for us little interest apart from their significance in the evolution of chamber music. To a modern ear their appeal is very slight. Historically, however, they are of importance, constituting as it were the substructure upon which the edifice of chamber music has been reared. Between them and the music which has a genuine artistic appeal and an emotional content lies a sort of transition stage in which the most notable names are Giovanni Battista Vitali, Antonio Veracini, and Giovanni Bassani.



## VITALI AND BASSANI

### III

Vitali is the dance composer *par excellence* of the seventeenth century. His *Correnti e balletti da camera a 2 violini col suo basso continuo* (1666) have melodic value and clarity of structure and form. In his *Balletti correnti, e capricci per camera* for two violins and bass (1683), in his *Sonate da camera* for two violins and bass (1667), and in sonatas for two to five instruments (1669) we find inspiration, expression, and a dignified style. Vitali's sonatas consist of three movements. The first and the last are in fast 4/4 time, and in fugal style; the middle, in 3/4 or 3/2 time, is more tranquil in character. Sometimes a short *largo* precedes the first movement, sometimes a *largo* is inserted before or after the middle movement. The two allegros are thematically connected. In one sonata Vitali uses the same theme through all three movements with a dexterity that suggests the influence of his teacher, Cazzati.

Antonio Veracini (1690) was not a fertile composer, and he is important rather for his personal influence than for the volume of his work. His *Sonate a 3, Sonate da chiesa a violino e violoncello* and *Sonate da camera a 2*, possess nobility and individuality of style, with a certain melodic originality. His forms are clear, his contrapuntal combinations not unattractive, and all his details with a few exceptions show careful workmanship. His adagios are especially fine.\*

Giovanni Battista Bassani, too, derives his importance largely from his personal influence, especially as the teacher of Arcangelo Corelli. Bassani's chamber

\* It was G. B. Vitali whom Henry Purcell (1658-1695) 'faithfully endeavored to imitate' in his 'Sonatas of three parts: two violins and bass: to the Organ or Harpsicord.' Purcell's twelve sonatas show power, originality, and inspiration, and are not lacking in emotional content of considerable warmth.



## ARCANGELO CORELLI

toward the end of the seventeenth century is eloquent of the popularity of this class of composition. In fact chamber music was so much favored that a certain Thomas Britton (in London) formed a chamber music club (1678) and gave weekly concerts for thirty-six years, at first free of charge but afterwards at a subscription fee of ten shillings. Later, similar and stronger organizations came to play an important part in the development of music.

### IV

We now arrive at an epoch in chamber music where for the first time we meet with works that are to-day deemed worthy of performance for their purely musical value. The beginning of this era is marked by the name of Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713). Corelli's music is simple and expressive in style and is distinguished by a peculiarly ascetic and spiritual quality suggestive of the church. It is plastic and concise in thought and dignified and noble in utterance. Corelli was not a pioneer. It was his mission to synthesize into a more logical and graceful whole the musical effects discovered by his many predecessors, and his highly individual genius enabled him to do this with a distinction which makes his name a landmark in the progress of the art of music. In analyzing Corelli's compositions we find grateful harmonies, fluent modulations and pleasingly regular, well-balanced phrase structures. His musical ideas, especially in the *adagio* movements, have dignity, grace and lucidity. His *allegros*, although not lacking in dignity, do not stand on the high artistic level of his slow movements.

Corelli's earliest chamber works are included in a collection of *XII Sonate a tre, due violini e violone col Basso per l'organo*, op. 1 (1683). In these church-

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sonatas his strong individuality is already apparent, although Bassani's influence is clearly recognizable. Some passages lack beauty and are not very pleasing to the ear. The sonatas consist of four movements, as follows: adagio, allegro, adagio, allegro. Sometimes the first slow movement is replaced by an allegro, and the second movement is in a related key. The seventh sonata has only three movements: allegro, adagio and allegro.

The next series, *XII Sonate a camera a tre, due violini e violone e cembalo*, op. 2 (1685), consists of idealized dances with a prelude (largo or adagio). The third sonata of this collection has the following movements: Prelude (largo), Allemande (allegro), adagio (of free invention), and Allemande. The twelfth sonata has a *Ciaccona* and a longer allegro movement. Corelli's talent appears to better advantage in his *Sonate da chiesa a 3* (1689) and in *Sonate da camera a 3* (1694) which in form are similar to his previous sonatas. Most of them are in the suite form; some consist of movements of abstract nature, some show a combination of different forms.

The period of chamber music composition inaugurated by Corelli lasted until about the middle of the eighteenth century. It is characterized by a mixture of contemporary and older monodic and polyphonic styles, with a strong tendency toward independent, individual part writing. In this period Corelli's pupils and imitators produced valuable works, though they could not surpass their master. Among his more prominent pupils may be mentioned F. Geminiani (1680-1782) and P. A. Locatelli (1690-1764). Geminiani's works (sonatas for two violins and 'cello, and sonatas for two violins and bass) possess neither individuality nor enduring merit, but they claim attention for the careful marking of dynamic nuances. In Locatelli's sonatas for two violins and cembalo, the virtuoso element is

## CORELLI'S SUCCESSORS

too strong to make them good examples of pure ensemble writing. The same may be said of Torelli's (d. 1708) *Conzerti da camera* for two violins and bass, *Sinfonie* for two, three and four instruments, *Balletti da camera* for three violins and bass, *Sinfonie a 3*, *Conzerti a 4*, *Conzerti musicali a 4*, and *Caprici musicali per camera*, for violin, viola and archlute. Torelli helped to fuse the *Sonata da camera* with the *Sonata da chiesa* and is notable as the first to use the term concerto. In general the violinist-composers of the period preferred to cultivate solo sonatas and concertos which would demonstrate the virtuosity of the performers. The elevation of chamber music through serious and pure ensemble writing was not at all their aim. This was notably the case with F. M. Veracini (1685-1750), a pupil and cousin of Antonio Veracini, and with T. Antonio Vitali—*Sonate da chiesa* for violin and 'cello (1693), *Sonate* for two violins and bass, *Conzerto di Sonate a violino e violoncello e cembalo* (1701).

The most prominent and gifted of Corelli's immediate successors was Antonio Vivaldi (died 1743). His early compositions were 'wild and irregular,' but later, under the influence of Corelli's pure style, he acquired an 'elegant manner of writing' that was often entirely free from contrapuntal phraseology. His works (*Sinfonie*, *Sonate*, etc.) became the models of his time and exercised a strong influence even upon Bach. On the whole, however, he pandered chiefly to the prevailing passion for virtuosity. His sonatas are written in three movements. The opening movement still lacks the 'song-like' second theme of the modern sonata-movement, and its first theme is long, consisting of several brief, slightly-developed motives. His second movements closely resemble the preludes of his fellow-composers.

Up to the time of Haydn and Boccherini we find very

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few important works in ensemble chamber music. The solo sonata was chiefly cultivated and from it the sonata form really was developed. So we find that the instrumental compositions of Alessandro Scarlatti (1659-1725) are not of much value (sonata for two flutes, two violins and *continuo*, sonatas for flute, sonatas for three flutes and *continuo*). His *Sonate a quattro* (string-quartets of archaic style) in which tediously developed figures are the principal movements and only the little 'brisk minuettos' have a certain modernity, are below the artistic standard established by Corelli. Much the same may be said of François Couperin's (1668-1733) trio sonatas entitled *La Parnasse ou l'apothéose de Corelli*, and other trios for two violins and bass, and *Pièces de viole*, published in 1724-26.

The two great composers, John Sebastian Bach and George Frederick Handel, also produced more valuable works in the form of solo sonatas, suites, and concertos than in ensembles. Bach's concertos are often classified as chamber music and indeed the grouping of the solo instruments of his Brandenburg concertos resembles chamber music combinations. In his trio sonatas for two violins and thorough-bass, or for flute, violin and thorough-bass, Bach employed the three movement form of Vivaldi. Handel\* cultivated the four and five movement form of Corelli.

Much of Handel's chamber music is in point of view of form strikingly in advance of his time. Many of his sonatas contain movements which, within a comparatively brief compass, follow strictly the general outlines of the sonata form. The second movements of two of his solo sonatas, in A and D, and of the sonata in C minor for flute and violin, are good instances.

In tracing the evolution of modern principles in

\* Trio sonatas for two oboes and bassoons (1693), Chamber duets (1711), Trio sonatas for two violins (or two oboes or two flutes) and bassoon (1732), Sonatas or Trios (1737), four Chamber Duets (1741), two Chamber Duos, Chamber Duets (1745).

## BACH AND HANDEL

chamber music we have mentioned only those composers who were of striking importance in the development of the genre. It did not seem practical to divide the field to be covered into periods, since up to Corelli no works were sufficiently original or individual to establish a new school or new style. In the works between Gabrieli's first attempts in the field of chamber music and those of Corelli, Bach and Handel, we recognize the elementary principles of modern form, harmony, thematic development and instrumentation. It is this phase of the development of chamber music that prepared the way for Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, the greatest masters of pure instrumental music.

E. K.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE FIRST PERIOD OF THE STRING QUARTET

The four-part habit of writing in instrumental forms—Pioneers of the string quartet proper: Richter, Boccherini and Haydn; Haydn's early quartets—The Viennese era of the string quartet; Haydn's *Sonnen* quartets; his 'Russian' quartets; his later quartets—W. A. Mozart; Sammartini's influence; Mozart's early (Italian) quartets; Viennese influences; Mozart's Viennese quartets—His last quartets and their harmonic innovations.

THE greater part of the vocal music of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries was written in four parts, masses and motets as well as *chansons*. Only the madrigal was normally in five. After the middle of the sixteenth century, however, composers inclined to increase the number of parts, until four-part writing became rare.

During the seventeenth century, while the art of instrumental music was growing rapidly, composers centred their attention either on groups of several instruments, which we may call primitive orchestras, or on one or two solo instruments supported by the figured bass of the harpsichord. Therefore, about the middle of the eighteenth century, when sonatas and symphonies took on their modern form, instrumental compositions were usually for orchestra, or for a trio, or for a solo instrument with harpsichord accompaniment. But besides these there were many works of indistinct form and name; and not a few of these were written in four parts. Hardly before 1750 can such sonatas or symphonies *a quattro* be considered string quartets in the present meaning of the word. They are planned and executed in an orchestral manner.



## PIONEERS OF THE STRING QUARTET

### I

Franz Xaver Richter (1709-1789), Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809), and Luigi Boccherini (1743-1804) brought the string quartet into popular favor. Richter was, next to Johann Stamitz, the most significant of the composers at one time or another associated with the orchestra at Mannheim, who may properly be called the founders of the classical symphony. Six of his string quartets were published in London between 1767 and 1771. These were probably written much earlier. One finds in them the now clearly defined sonata-form; a careful writing for each of the four instruments (two violins, viola, and 'cello), which, of course, marks the disappearance of the figured bass from music of this kind; finally an intimacy of sentiment rather distinct from the hearty music of the young Mannheim symphonies.

Luigi Boccherini, for many years supposed to have created the string quartet out of his head, is now generally recognized as a disciple of the Mannheim reformers. He was himself a brilliant 'cellist. In 1768 his performances at the *Concerts spirituels* brought him and his compositions into fame. He held court positions at Madrid, later was chamber-composer to Frederick Wilhelm II, of Prussia; and after the death of this king in 1797 went back again to Spain, where, unhappily, in spite of the friendly patronage of Lucien Buonaparte, the French ambassador, he was overtaken by poverty and misery.

As a composer of chamber music he was unusually prolific. He wrote no less than one hundred and twenty-five string *quintets*, one hundred and thirteen of which are for two violins, viola, and two 'celli; and there were at least ninety-one string quartets from his easy pen. The first six of these were composed about

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1761, and were published in Paris in 1768, while Boccherini was in that city. They appeared as *Sei Sinfonie*, or *Sei Quartetti*, for two violins, alto, and violoncello, dedicated to amateurs and connoisseurs of music.

A sympathetic writer on Boccherini's life and work \* said of these first quartets that in them the composer revealed himself entirely. 'His taste, his style, his easy touch, his genius show themselves suddenly with a superiority, an understanding of the art, which leave similar works by his predecessors far behind. He thus becomes creator of this *genre*, of which he fixes the true character forever. Other great masters who have come since have doubtless modified and extended the domain of the Trio, the Quartet, and the Quintet, but following the road which he had the glory first to trace. When one approaches the works of his immediate predecessors and of his contemporaries, and compares them with his, one cannot but admire the complete revolution, ahead of the time and yet sure, accomplished at the first shot, and without hesitation, by a young artist of twenty-one years!'

This is extravagant. Boccherini is not now considered the creator of a new style. Indeed, there is no musician to whom alone the invention of any musical form may be ascribed. But his writing is clear and fluent, and intimately adapted to the string instruments for which it was conceived. These first quartets are said to have been especially admired by the great violinist Viotti.

It is unhappily true that Boccherini does reveal himself entirely in the first six of his published works. Subsequent works show little sign of advance or development. In his work as a whole there is a fatal sameness. Too much gentle elegance has driven out humor and genuine vigorous life. For this reason a

\* L. Piquot: *Notice sur la vie et les ouvrages de Luigi Boccherini*; Paris, 1851.

**Pioneers of the String Quartet:**

**Luigi Boccherini**  
**Joseph Haydn**

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**  
**Franz Xaver Richter**







## HAYDN'S EARLY QUARTETS

great part of it has fallen into oblivion. Yet it does not lack charm, and is, indeed, conspicuous for excellent treatment of the slender tone-material.

Haydn's string quartets are immensely more vigorous. Three sets of six were published in Paris between 1764 and 1769.\* These first eighteen of his numerous works in this form had been written some ten years earlier, while Haydn was at the house of Joseph von Fürnberg in Weinzirl, near Melk, not far from Vienna. The young nobleman was an enthusiastic amateur of music and was accustomed to invite friends to his house to practise and play with him all sorts of chamber music. He suggested to Haydn, who had in some way become known to him, possibly by some early trios, that he write a string quartet. This Haydn did, and his music made such a favorable impression that the fame of it spread rapidly abroad. There followed seventeen more quartets, all written for the group of musicians whom Fürnberg had gathered round him. In this group were men who played the horn, the oboe, and the flute; and some of these first eighteen quartets were originally composed for strings and wind. The wind players were, however, unskillful, and Haydn contented himself for the most part in writing for only the four strings.

It is interesting to note that Haydn wrote these quartets as *Cassations*, *Divertimenti*, and *Notturni*;† a fact which goes far to show how loose was the terminology of instrumental music even as late as 1755. Cassation, divertimento, serenade, notturno, all meant about the same thing: a piece of music in several movements of light character, usually arranged for a band of both wind and string instruments. They differed from the

\* These are Nos. 1-18, inclusive, in Pohl's index. The opus numbers by which Haydn's quartets are usually designated are taken from the thematic index prefixed to the complete Trautwein Edition of 1844. These first quartets are: Opus 1, Nos. 1-6; opus 2, Nos. 1-6; and opus 3, Nos. 1-6.

† C. F. Pohl: 'Joseph Haydn,' Vol. I, p. 331.

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sonata and from the growing symphony in number of movements. There were usually at least five. These early quartets of Haydn's were printed in Paris as symphonies, symphony still being applicable to any piece of music written for more than three instruments.

It would seem, then, that Haydn wrote his quartets just to suit the requirements of a happy circumstance; that he had no idea of creating a new art form; that he applied to music for four instruments the principles of form with which he was already familiar through the works of Emanuel Bach, and which, moreover, were becoming more and more familiar to the world by reason of the popular fame of the Mannheim symphonies. But by this happy circumstance he came upon the special branch of music which to the end remained wholly fitting to his genius.

As to the special form of these first quartets there is little to say. The first twelve, with one exception, have five movements apiece. Of these, two are usually minuets. The first is usually in the sonata-form. The fifth quartet has three movements. It was undoubtedly not only originally conceived as a symphony, but was actually so played, and may, therefore, be called Haydn's first symphony. Of the last six quartets four have four movements; the fourteenth has three and the sixteenth is the only one of Haydn's quartets with but two movements. In this very first series, written for the pleasure of a music-loving young nobleman, Haydn found himself. They show each after the other a steady progress in the treatment of instruments, in the management of form; and, finally, seem to show a decision, henceforth maintained almost without exception, to limit the number of movements to four.

All are full of that spirit of joy and healthiness which has ever been associated with Haydn's music in general. They introduced a new spirit into the art of music—the spirit of humor, sunny and naïve. On account



## HAYDN'S EARLY QUARTETS

of this they were welcomed in all the countries of Europe, and spread such general delight that before the middle of the 'sixties Haydn was among the best known of all musicians. A Parisian publisher named Vénier included the first six of Haydn's quartets in a series of works *di varii autori* which were published in Paris about 1764 with the motto: *Les noms inconnus bons à connaître*. In this series there were forty-six numbers, of which Haydn's quartets formed the sixth. Other composers represented were Jomelli, Stamitz, Christian Bach and Boccherini.\* By 1765 editions had appeared in Amsterdam and in London as well.

### II

During the years Haydn lived at Esterhazy he composed between forty and fifty string quartets. These were published usually in groups of six, after 1781 by Artaria; and the appearance of a fresh set of Haydn's quartets was announced in the papers of Vienna and Berlin, and was occasion for enthusiasm among the amateurs of most of the great capitals of Europe. It was the age of the string quartet, a time when amateurs and dilettanti, men of wealth and influence, often of culture, met at least once a week to play together. Musicians were everywhere in demand.

Haydn wrote six quartets (opus 9, Nos. 1-6) in the year 1769, numbers 21-26, inclusive, in Pohl's index, and six more before 1771, numbers 27-32. In both these series the treatment of the first violin is conspicuous, and it is noteworthy that during these years he wrote most of his concertos for the violin. The first and last movements of the quartet in C major, No. 21 (opus 9, No. 1), seem to be almost solo music for the first violin, which not only introduces all the principal themes, but

\* Eugène Sauzay: *Étude sur le quatuor*. Paris, 1861.

## CHAMBER MUSIC

which in many pages adds brilliant ornament. In the first movement of No. 24 (opus 9, No. 4), in D minor, again one is reminded of a violin concerto. Likewise in the first movement of No. 22 (opus 9, No. 2), in E-flat major; and before the end of the slow movement in this quartet, which here, as in most of these two series, is the third movement, following the minuet, an elaborate cadenza is written out for the first violin. In the quartets Nos. 27-32 (opus 17, Nos. 1-6), such a brilliant treatment of the first violin is even more conspicuous. The other instruments play for the most part the rôle of accompaniment. The quartets are all in four movements and in the majority, as has been said, the minuet is the second movement and the slow movement is the third.

Over all there is the delightful play of Haydn's humor. Perhaps the best known and loved of the series is that in G major, No. 31 (opus 17, No. 5).

The next series of six quartets, Nos. 33-38 (opus 20, Nos. 1-6), were written about 1774 and were known in Berlin as the *Sonnen* quartets. In 1800 they were published by Artaria in Vienna and dedicated by Haydn to Nicolaus Zmeskall von Domanowecz, one of the earliest admirers of Beethoven, to whom, by the way, the latter dedicated his own quartet in F minor, opus 95. The earlier quartets, for all they were generally hailed with praise and admiration, had not gone wholly scatheless. There were conservatives, especially in the north of Germany, who looked askance at the entrance of humor into music, who felt the art was in danger thereby of degradation, who regarded Haydn as a musical joke-maker. These quartets, Nos. 33-38, may have been written by Haydn to prove his command of what was considered the indisputably serious and dignified art of composition. All are contrapuntal in style, intricate and serious in manner if not in mood. In the first movement of the first (opus 20, No. 1), in E-flat

## HAYDN'S RUSSIAN QUARTETS

major, the style is compact and full of imitations. The minuet is short; the slow movement, *affettuoso et sostenuto*, closely and richly woven, distinctly polyphonic music.

The second of the series in C major (opus 20, No. 2) has for its final movement a fugue with four subjects, and the last movements of the fifth and sixth are both fugues, the former on two, the latter on three subjects. The entire series at once became currently known as the 'great' quartets.

In 1781 another series of six (opus 33, Nos. 1-6) was published by Artaria in Vienna. A female figure on the carefully engraved title-page gave to the set for some time the name of *Jungfern Quartette*; but they are now more generally known as the Russian quartets. They were dedicated to Archduke Paul of Russia, and had been played at the apartments of the Archduchess during a visit to Vienna. They have also gone by the name of *Gli Scherzi*, for the reason that in each the place of the minuet is taken by a scherzo.\* They bear the numbers 39-44 in Pohl's index. No. 41 (opus 33, No. 3) is perhaps the best known; and has often been called the 'Bird Quartet.' The first movement suggests the twitter and song of birds, partly by the nature of the principal theme, with its four long notes and their graces, and the descending turning figures which follow them; and partly by the nature of the accompaniment, which is staccato or half staccato throughout, now in naïvely repeated thirds shared by second violin and viola, now in figures that imitate the chirping of the principal theme. The trio of the second movement suggests birds again. It is a dialogue between first and second violins, staccato and chirping throughout, in effective contrast with the main body of the movement, which is legato, and *sotto voce* as well. The Adagio is wonderfully calm and hushed. The last movement, to

\* Cf. C. F. Pohl: *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 293.

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quote Pohl, brings the cuckoo with fresh life and all the forest folk answer him. 'The merry figures fly from voice to voice, after each other, against each other, in twos and threes, all with the "springing" bow.'

In the *Musikalisches Kunstmagazin* for 1782 there is a criticism of these quartets and of six symphonies which appeared about the same time, by J. F. Reichardt, part of which may be quoted. 'Both these works are full of the most original humor, the liveliest and pleasantest wit. No composer has so united individuality and variety with pleasantness and popularity as Haydn; and few of the agreeable and favorite composers have such a good command of form as Haydn shows himself for the most part to have. It is especially interesting to observe with critical eye the progress of Haydn's work. In his very first works, which were well known among us some twenty years ago, there were signs of his peculiar good-natured humor; rather for the most part youthful spirits and unrestrained jollity, with a superficial treatment of harmonies. Then little by little his humor grew more manly, his work more thoughtful, until now the mature originality, the firm artist, show in all his work.' Haydn sent a copy of these quartets to Frederick William II of Prussia, who acknowledged the gift with pleasure and sent as a token of his esteem for the now universally admired musician a gold medal and his picture.

These six quartets published in 1781 show Haydn in full command of the art of the quartet. They must have served in a way as foundations for all subsequent writing for a similar group of four instruments, surely so for Mozart and Beethoven. The earlier quartets showed now an experimental mood, particularly as regards the treatment of the first violin, now serious endeavor to disprove the critics who cried out that he had no genuine skill. In these Russian quartets there is perfect treatment of each of the instruments, an even

## HAYDN'S LATER QUARTETS

disposition of the music between them all. His mastery shows in the movement of the two inner voices, whereby a constant and at the same time varied sonority is procured. The balance of form is secure, the sequence and length of the movements as well. Only in one particular does he seem unwilling to decide. This is the place of the minuet, which even now he most often makes second in the group. With all this development of skill he has lost nothing of his prevailing cheerfulness, nothing of his spontaneous humor, nothing of his gift of melody. The quartets are perfect as the expression of his own individuality, till now practically uninfluenced by other musicians.

Immediately after, Mozart settled in Vienna. In 1785 he published the famous six quartets written as proof of his admiration for Haydn, his friend even more than his master. Haydn's excellent opinion, indeed his unqualified admiration, of Mozart is well known. The two men acted favorably upon each other and the work of the older man was hardly less influenced by that of the younger than that of the younger by the older. However, the individuality of both was strong. To compare their compositions is always to find in what ways they are dissimilar rather than in what ways they copied each other. Haydn never wrote with the inexplicable grace of Mozart; nor did Mozart put into his music the wholly naïve and spontaneous gaiety of Haydn. Mozart gained from Haydn in conciseness of form, Haydn from Mozart in refinement of style.

Such a gain shows in the six quartets (opus 50, Nos. 1-6) published in 1787 and dedicated by Haydn to the king of Prussia. These are in Pohl's index, Nos. 45 to 50. The first movements are all distinctly Haydn in treatment, though a touch of seriousness in No. 48 (opus 50, No. 4) suggests Mozart. The second movements are all slow; and in all six quartets the minuet has come back to its regular place as third in the group.

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The last movement of No. 48 is in the form of a fugue. The last movements of Nos. 45, 46, 47, and 49 (opus 50, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 5), however, are in Haydn's inimitable manner. In the last movement of No. 46 (opus 50, No. 2) there is a suggestion of a theme from Mozart's 'Magic Flute.' No. 50 (opus 50, No. 6) has the nickname 'Frog Quartet.'

In 1789 and in 1790, respectively, two more sets appeared, both dedicated to Monsieur Jean Tost. These are opus 54, Nos. 1-3, and opus 55, Nos. 1-3; and opus 64, Nos. 1-6. In Pohl's index they are Nos. 51-62, inclusive. Johann Tost was a rich merchant in Vienna who was not only a patron of music but an excellent performer on the violin himself, and later closely associated with Spohr. As if wishing to give Tost full chance in these quartets to display his skill on the first violin, Haydn has consistently given to that instrument an unusually conspicuous part. He not only writes for it in the highest registers, as, for instance, in the Trio of opus 55, No. 1; but frequently allots to the other instruments the rôle of simplest accompaniment, as in the first movement of opus 54, No. 2. The favorite of the series is perhaps that in D major, opus 64, No. 5, the last movement of which is in perpetual, rapid motion, the first violin being the most active.

Prince Esterhazy, Haydn's patron, died in September, 1790. Shortly after, Haydn went upon his first visit to London. His life was full of occupation with the last symphonies, written for Salomon, the London manager, and with his two great oratorios, 'The Creation' and the 'Seasons.' Only a few more quartets are to be mentioned. Opus 71 and opus 73 both consist of three quartets. Opus 76 contains six, and the whole set was dedicated to Count Erdödy. In this series two are conspicuous. The first movement of that in D minor, opus 76, No. 2, is built on a simple, impressive motive of four notes. The adagio of opus 76, No. 3, is a set of

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variations on the hymn, *Gott erhalte Franz der Kaiser*, which Haydn had composed in January, 1797, and which has since become, as Haydn hoped it would, the national hymn of Austria. The variations are justly admired; and the quartet has been called on account of them the 'Kaiser quartet.' Finally there are two quartets, published as opus 77 and dedicated to Prince Lobkowitz. The minuet and andante of the second are given special mention by Sauzay.\* The last quartet of all, published posthumously as opus 103, is unfinished. It consists of but two movements, the second of which is a minuet. Evidently without hope of completing it, Haydn wrote at the end of the minuet a few bars of melody from a vocal quartet, composed a few years before, called *Der Greis*. The words are: *Hin ist alle meine Kraft, Alt und schwach bin ich*. The same melody and words he had printed on a visiting card, to be given to those who came to enquire after his failing health.

There are in all eighty-three quartets. Instrumental music composed to accompany the recitation in church of the seven last words of Christ are no longer reckoned among the quartets. To Haydn more than to any other single man belongs the honor of having established the string quartet as a work of art and as the vehicle for noble musical feeling. Over all the eighty-three sparkles the sun of his peculiar and inimitable humor; yet none the less they show from start to finish an ever-growing skill in handling the slender materials of sound, an appreciation of the separate instruments, a knowledge of how to dispose the parts so as to preserve a rich and varied sonority. They recommended themselves at once to the affection as well as the admiration of amateurs and musicians alike, and indubitably paved the way for the quartets of Mozart and Beethoven. Through Haydn the delicate beauty of

\* *Étude sur le quatuor.*

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such a combination of instruments was first made clear to the world, and with it no little of its power to express the finest ideals which have inspired musicians.

### III

Mozart and Haydn are in no regard more different than in their approaches to mastery of their art. Haydn received almost no training. He developed his powers unaided and without direction. The circumstances of his life at Esterhazy cut him off from general musical intercourse and he was, as he himself said, practically forced to be original. The string quartet offered him one of the happiest means of self-expression; and to that end in general he used it, putting his kindly humor and fun freely into music.

Mozart, on the other hand, was carefully guided, even from infancy, in the way which custom has approved of as the proper way for a musician to travel. Surely before he was ten years old he was no mean master of the science of harmony and counterpoint, thanks to the strict attentions of his father; and he was hardly out of his mother's arms before he was carried about Europe, to display his marvellous genius before crowned heads of all nations, and, what is even more significant, before the greatest musicians of his age.

One by one the influences of the men with whom he came in contact make their appearance in his youthful music. In London there was Christian Bach, in Paris, Jean Schobert, in Vienna, old Wagenseil; and at the time he wrote his first string quartet—in March, 1770—he was almost completely under the influence of Giovanni Battista Sammartini, organist at Milan, once teacher of Gluck, and always one of the most gifted of Italian musicians.

Haydn had no appreciation, of Sammartini. He



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seems likewise to have looked upon Boccherini with a cold regard. But in Italy, where Mozart stayed from December, 1769, to March, 1771, these were both names to conjure with; and the music of both was likely to be heard every day. Sammartini had composed a series of *concertinos a quattro istromenti soli* in 1766 and 1767; and, though Mozart was surely acquainted with the quartets of Michael Haydn, Stamitz, and Gossec, it is after those of Sammartini that he modelled his own first quartet. Two external features point to this: the fact that the first quartet has but three movements,\* which was the number customary among the Italians, especially with Sammartini; and the treatment of the second violin, which plays quite as great a part in the quartet as the first violin. In addition to this there is a certain melodic elegance which was not characteristic of German music at that time, and which seems very closely akin to the charming nature of the works of Sammartini. The three movements are in the same key, a fact which we may attribute to the influence of a set of quartets by Florian Gassmann.†

Mozart's next ventures with this form are the three *divertimenti* written at Salzburg early in 1772 (K. 136, 137, 138). In these there are traces of the influence of Michael Haydn at work on the Italian style of which Mozart had become master. The first is distinctly in the style of Haydn. The second is again predominantly Italian, notably in the equal importance given to the two violins, as in the quartets of Sammartini. The third, the most effective of the three, seems to represent a good combination of the two other styles. The final

\* Adagio, allegro, minuetto. The finale rondo was added some years later. Cf. 'W. A. Mozart,' by de Wyzewa and de Saint-Foix: Paris, 1912.

† Cf. Wyzewa and Saint-Foix: *op cit.* Gassmann was born in Bohemia in 1723 and died in Vienna in 1774. A great many of his works in manuscript are in the libraries at Milan. He had been appointed to a place in Vienna in 1762, and was hardly likely, therefore, to be in Milan when Mozart was; but he had lived at one time in Milan and came back there occasionally from Vienna to superintend performances of his operas.

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rondo is especially charming and brilliant. These three quartets were probably of a set of six. The remaining three have disappeared. In Köchel's Index they are numbers 211, 212, and 213, in the appendix.

In the fall of the same year Mozart was again in Italy, and to this period in his life belong six quartets (K. 155-160, inclusive). The first seems to have been written, according to a letter from Leopold Mozart, to pass away a weary time at an inn in Botzen. The very first quartet of all had been written at Lodi, with much the same purpose, two years before. This quartet in D major is, on the whole, inferior to the five others which follow in the same series and which were probably written within the next few months at Milan. The quartet in G major, K. 156, was probably written in November or December, 1772. It is strongly Italian in character. Notice in the first movement a multiplicity of themes or subjects, instead of the development of one or two, which was the German manner. Notice, also, that among the thematic subjects the second has the greatest importance; not, as in German quartets of this time, the first. The second movement, an *adagio* in E minor, has a serious and sad beauty.

The two quartets which follow in the series (K. 157, 158) are masterpieces in pure Italian style. The slow movements of both, like the slow movement in the preceding quartet, are worthy of the fully mature Mozart. An enthusiasm for, or even an appreciation of, this style which lends itself so admirably to the string quartet is now unhappily rare. These early quartets of Mozart are passed by too often with little mention, and that in apologetic vein. We may quote a passage from the 'Life of Mozart,' previously referred to. 'This (K. 157), we say, is the purest, the most perfect, of the series; also the most Italian, that which is brilliant with a certain intoxication of light and poetry. Of the influence of Haydn there is but a trace here and there in

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the scoring. The coda, with new material, at the end of the andante may likewise be regarded as an echo of the recent Salzburg style. But for the rest, for the invention of the ideas and the treatment of them, there is not a measure in this quartet which does not come straight from the spirit of Italy (*génie italien*), such as we see transformed in the quartets of a Tartini, and yet again in the lighter and easier works of a Sacchini or a Sammartini. Numerous little, short, melodious subjects, the second of which is always the most developed, an extreme care in the melodic design of the ritornelles, a free counterpoint rarely studied (*peu poussé*), consisting especially of rapid imitations of one voice in another; and all this marvellously young, and at the same time so full of emotion that we seem to hear the echo of a whole century of noble traditions.

\* \* \* Incomparable blending of gaiety and tears, a poem in music, much less vast and deep, indeed, than the great quartets of the last period in Vienna, but perhaps more perfectly revealing the very essence of the genius of Mozart.' And of the quartet in F major (K. 158): 'This quartet is distinguished from the preceding one by something in the rhythm, more curt and more marked, which makes us see even more clearly to what an extent Mozart underwent the influence, not only of Italian music of his own time, but of older music belonging to the venerable school issued from Coulli. \* \* \*

From the point of view of workmanship, the later quartets of Mozart will surpass immeasurably those of this period; but, let it be said once more, we shall never again find the youthful, ardent, lovely flame, the inspiration purely Latin but none the less impassioned, of works like the quartet in C and in F of this period. Let no one be astonished at the warmth of our praise of these works, the beauty of which no one hitherto seems to have taken the pains to appreciate. Soon enough, alas! we shall have to temper our en-

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thusiasm in the study of Mozart's work, and regret bitterly that the obligation to follow the "galant" style of the time led the young master to forget his great sources of inspiration in years passed.'

The remaining two quartets in the series (K. 159, 160) were written, one in Milan in February, 1773, the other probably begun in Milan about this time but finished a few months later in Salzburg.

On the first of July, 1773, Mozart arrived in Vienna. He remained there three months, and during this time wrote six quartets (K. 168-173, inclusive), the first four probably in August, the last two in September. The fact of his writing six quartets in such haste might suggest that he had received a commission from some nobleman or rich amateur. There is no document, however, mentioning such a circumstance; and it may well be that Mozart composed them, as he had composed quartets in Italy, at once to occupy spare moments and to satisfy that craving for expression which seems ever to have seized him when he came in contact with any active and special musical surroundings. Vienna was full of quartets and of amateurs and artists who played them often together. Haydn was brilliantly famous, his quartets were constantly performed. Dr. Burney heard some of them exquisitely played at the house of the English emissary, Lord Stormont, in this very September. Michael Kelly, in his 'Memoirs,' mentions an evening when, to fill up an hour or two, a band of musicians played quartets; and among these musicians Mozart himself was one. Therefore, being so surrounded by quartets, Mozart probably could not, so to speak, keep his hands off the form.

Naturally enough, he wrote as nearly as he could in the Viennese style which now, just on the eve of the *style galant*, still breathed of Emanuel Bach and the seriousness of musical learning. Haydn's *Sonnen Quartette*, those in which he replied to the charges of

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hostile critics by an exhibition of excellent contrapuntal skill, were probably already composed, though they were not printed until the following year. Very likely Mozart had become familiar with some if not all of them. Gassmann, too, had composed a series of quartets in 1772, each of which had four movements, two of them fugues. But probably the fugues which Mozart wrote as finales to the first and sixth of these quartets owe their place to the influence of Haydn.

Indeed, the entire series shows Mozart in a process of assimilating a serious style of music to which he had hitherto, through force of circumstances, remained indifferent. Without question the recent quartets of Haydn stirred in him a fever of emulation. That the six quartets were written in the space of a month, or very little more, is evidence of his impatience to make Haydn's style his own. Other influences than Haydn's are present, but less obvious; such as the influence of Gluck, at least in spirit, in one or two of the slow movements. Consequently the series as a whole is not satisfying. It does not reveal Mozart at ease. He has abandoned for the moment the pure grace of the Italian style, of which he was consummate master, in an effort, too sudden and hasty for success, to make his music all German. He is consistently neither one thing nor the other, neither graceful nor expressive. The last, in D minor, is naturally the best. The first movement and the final fugue are proof that he had already accomplished what he set out to do.

These first Viennese quartets stand alone between Mozart's Italian quartets and the great quartets written ten years and more later, which were dedicated to Joseph Haydn, as the tribute of a son to a father. Here Mozart has fully expressed his genius. There are six in all, written at various times; the first three between December, 1782, and the summer of 1783, the last three in the winter of 1784-85. Haydn heard them before

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they were published, and praised them highly. It was perhaps this warm appreciation which led Mozart to dedicate the series to his old friend and teacher when he published it in the autumn of 1785. The dedication is hearty, long, and naïve. In Köchel's Index the quartets are listed as Nos. 387, 421, 428, 458, 464, and 465.

### IV

These quartets are much more broadly planned than earlier works by Mozart in the same form. Not only are the separate movements generally longer; the middle section of the first movements is intricate and extended, and the minuets are not less seriously treated than the other movements. The treatment of the separate instrumental parts is, of course, distinguished and fine.

It would be difficult to characterize each one distinctly. The first, in G major (K. 387), is marked by a certain decisive clearness throughout. The two themes of the first movement are especially clearly differentiated. The development section is long and rather severe. It will be noticed that the minuet takes the second place in the cycle, as in many of Haydn's quartets. The final movement is in fugal style and not unrelated in spirit to the final movement of the great Jupiter symphony.

The second quartet, in D minor (K. 421), takes both from its tonality and from the nature of its themes a thin veil of melancholy. The opening theme is poignantly expressive, but the fire of it is often covered. The characteristic width of its intervals is used throughout the entire movement, with a strange effect of yearning, now resigned, now passionately outspoken. The andante, in F major, is tinged with the same melancholy. The trio of the minuet is one of the few places

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where Mozart made use of pizzicato effects. The last movement is a series of variations on a melancholy little theme cast in the rhythm of the *Siciliana*, one of the Italian rhythms already made use of by Handel and Gluck, among others.

The third quartet, in E-flat major (K. 428), is on the whole reserved and classical in spirit. The opening theme, given in unison, has a gentle dignity which marks the whole first movement. The measures following the second theme are especially smooth and lovely in their slowly falling harmonies. In the second movement, *andante con moto*, there is a constant shifting of harmonies, and a somewhat restless interchange of parts among the instruments. The trio of the minuet, in C minor, is subtly woven over a drone bass. The final movement is a lively rondo.

The fourth, in B-flat major (K. 458), is, in the first movement, very like Haydn, light-hearted and wholly gay. The following minuet, adagio, and rondo need hardly be specially mentioned. The A major quartet (K. 464), the next in the series, is in a similar vein. The slow movement, again the third in the cycle, is in the form of variations; and the last is full of imitations and other contrapuntal devices.

The last of these quartets, in C major (K. 465), is the most profound and the most impassioned. The boldness of Mozart's imagination in harmonies is in most of his work likely to fail to impress the modern ear. One hears but half-consciously the subtlety of his modulations. But here and there in his work the daring of the innovator still has power to claim our attention; as in the *andante* of the last pianoforte sonata in F major (K. 533), and still more in the introduction of this quartet. The sharp harmonies of the first few measures roused hostility; and the discussion as to their grammatical propriety was continued for more than half a century after Mozart's death.

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The whole quartet is full of an intensity of feeling. The andante has that quality of heart-melting tenderness which sprang only from Mozart's genius. One cannot but place the four movements with the three great symphonies, as something not only immortal, but precious and inimitable in the world's treasure of instrumental music.

This series of six quartets did not make a decidedly favorable impression upon the general public. The next quartet from his pen was in a much more conventional manner, as if Mozart had tried to suppress the genius in him which prompted him ever to new discoveries in his art. The quartet in D major (K. 499) was composed on the 19th of August, 1786. It is beautifully worked in detail, light in character. No special reason is known why he should have written and published a single quartet like this; and it has been thought that he hoped by it to rouse the public to enthusiasm for his instrumental works.

There remain three more quartets to mention. These were written for Frederick William II of Prussia, at whose court Mozart had been a frequent attendant during the early spring of 1789. The first quartet was completed in Vienna, in June, 1789. The other two were written about a year later. In Köchel's index the three are Nos. 575, in D major, 589, in B-flat major, and 590, in F major.

All are very plainly written with a king in mind who played the violoncello. In most of the movements the 'cello is given a very prominent part, frequently playing in unusually high registers as in the announcement of the second theme in the first movement of the first of these quartets; in the trio and the finale as well. In many places the viola plays the bass part, leaving the 'cellist free to be soloist, as in the opening measures of the *Larghetto* in the second sonata. Thus these quartets, fine and free in style as they are, are not the fullest



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expression of Mozart's genius, as the series of six dedicated to Haydn may be taken to be.

There are, as we have said, twenty-three quartets in all. The majority of the early ones were written under the influence of a certain mode or style, as experiments or as test pieces; and the last four were written with the purpose of pleasing the public or of suiting the special abilities of a king of Prussia. Only the six quartets dedicated to Haydn may be taken as what Mozart felt to be his best effort in the form, the expression, perfect as far as he could make it, of his highest ideals. As such they are almost unique in his music.

With the quartets may be mentioned the four great quintets for strings, written, two in the spring of 1787, one in December, 1790, and one in April, 1791. Of the combination of five string parts Haydn made little use. Boccherini, however, had written at least one hundred and twenty-five quintets. He was himself a 'cellist and, as might be expected, the added instrument in his quintets was a 'cello.

Mozart added another viola to the group. Though this added no new strand of color to the whole, it rather complicated the problems offered by the quartet. As Otto Jahn has carefully explained, with the volume of sound thus thickened, there came a need for even more active movement of the separate parts. Since the additional part was among the middle voices, the outer voices must be spread as far apart as possible so as to allow sufficient freedom of movement to the inner. The extra viola might be treated as a bass part to the first and second violins, or as the upper part above the other viola and the 'cello. Mozart made use of this possibility of contrast nowhere more clearly than in the opening pages of the quintet in G minor.

The four quintets are respectively in C major (K. 515), G minor (K. 516), D major (K. 593), and E-flat major (K. 614). Of these that in G minor is clearly

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the most remarkable; and it is indeed conspicuous above almost all his instrumental music, for the passionate intensity of the moods which it voices. Needless to say it still holds its place as one of the supreme master-works in chamber music. More than a similarity of key unites it to the symphony in G minor. The themes in both works seem much alike, and both are equally broad in form and full of harmonic color.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE STRING QUARTET: BEETHOVEN

Beethoven's approach to the string quartet; incentives; the six quartets opus 18—The Rasumowsky quartets; *opera* 74 and 95—The great development period; the later quartets, op. 127 *et seq.*: The E-flat major (op. 127)—The A minor (op. 132); the B-flat major (op. 130); the C-sharp minor (op. 131); the F major (op. 135).

#### I

BEETHOVEN'S six quartets, opus 18, were first published in 1800. He had already experimented in other forms of chamber music, not only for strings alone. The sextet for two clarinets, two bassoons, and two horns; the quintet, opus 16, for piano, oboe, clarinet, horn, and bassoon; the string quintet, opus 4; three trios for violin, viola, and violoncello; the trio, opus 11, for piano, clarinet, and violoncello; and sonatas for violin and piano, and violoncello and piano, had already been written. The pianoforte sonatas up to that in B-flat, opus 22, and the first symphony had likewise been completed. Beethoven thus turned to the composition of string quartets after an experience with almost all other branches of music had made him master of the art of composition.

Apart from any inner development in the man which waited thus long before attempting expression in that form in which the very last and in some ways the most remarkable of his thoughts were to find utterance, one or two external circumstances probably turned his attention to the string quartet. One was undoubtedly the morning *musicales* at the house of his friend and

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patron, Prince Lichnowsky, where such music was especially in demand, and where Beethoven must constantly have heard the quartets of Haydn and Mozart.\* Another was his personal acquaintance with Emanuel Aloys Förster,† a composer of quartets for whom Beethoven had a high regard.

These first quartets appeared in two groups of three. They are not arranged in the order of their composition. For example, that in D major, the third in the first set, is probably the oldest of the six. But the series presents little evidence of development within its limits, and there is hardly reason to attach serious importance to the order in which the various quartets were created. Besides, with the exception of the quartet in C minor, No. 4, the entire series is expressive of much the same mood and intention. If one quartet is at all distinguished from the others, it is only by a few minor details, usually of biographical or otherwise extrinsic significance. The technique is that of Haydn and Mozart, lacking, perhaps, the assured grace of the earlier masters; the character, one of cheerfulness, with only here and there a flash of the emotional imperiousness with which Beethoven took hold of music.

No. 1, in F major, is known as the 'Amenda' quartet. Beethoven had sent an earlier form of it (completed in 1799) to his friend Karl Amenda. A year later he wrote Amenda, saying that he had greatly altered it, knowing now for the first time how truly to write a quartet. The later arrangement differs from the original in details of workmanship, not in spirit. There are four movements, in conventional form and sequence:

\* The famous Schuppanzigh quartet met every Friday morning at the house of Prince Lichnowsky. Ignaz Schuppanzigh (b. 1776) was leader. Lichnowsky himself frequently played the second violin. Franz Weiss (b. 1788), the youngest member, hardly more than a boy, played the viola. Later he became the most famous of the viola players in Vienna. The 'cellist was Nikolaus Kraft (born 1778).

† Förster (1748-1823) forms an important link between Haydn and Beethoven.

## BEETHOVEN'S QUARTETS OPUS 18

an *allegro con brio*, 3:4; an *adagio affettuoso ed appassionato*, in D minor; a scherzo and a final rondo. Amenda had a story to tell of the *adagio*, to the effect that when Beethoven had completed the quartet he played this movement to a friend and asked him afterward of what it made him think. It seemed to the friend to have represented the parting of two lovers. Beethoven is reported then to have said that in composing it he had had in mind the scene in the tomb from 'Romeo and Juliet.'

The second quartet of the series, in G major, is known as the *Komplimentier* quartet, because of the graceful character of the opening theme, and, indeed, of the whole first movement. The third, in D major, is not less cheerful. The final movement is a virtuoso piece for all the instruments. The triplet rhythm is akin to the last movement of the Kreutzer sonata, and to that of the sonata for pianoforte, opus 31, No. 3; both of which originated not later than in 1801. Similarly the whole of the fifth quartet—in A major—is in brilliant concert style. There is a minuet instead of a scherzo, standing as second, not third movement, as was frequently the case in the works of Haydn and Mozart, and, indeed, in later works of Beethoven. The third movement is an andante and five variations in D major. Finally the first movement of the sixth and last of the series—in B-flat major—cannot but suggest a comparison with the first movement of the pianoforte sonata, opus 22, in the same key, which originated about the same time. Both are very frankly virtuoso music. The last movement of the quartet is preceded by a short *adagio*, to which Beethoven gave the title, *La malinconia*. This whispers once again for a moment not long before the end of the lively finale in waltz rhythm.

The fourth quartet of the series is alone in a minor key. It is of more serious nature than those among

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which it was placed, and may be related in spirit, at least, to the many works in the same key (C minor) which seem like successive steps in a special development. Paul Bekker suggests in his 'Beethoven' \* that we may consider a C minor problem in Beethoven's work; and points to sonatas, opus 10 and 13, the piano-forte trio, opus 1, the string trio, opus 9, the piano-forte concerto, opus 37, the duet for piano and violin, opus 30, and finally the fifth symphony and the overture to *Coriolanus*, all of which are in C minor, and all of which follow closely one after the other. Whether or not the quartet in question may be thus allied with other works, there is evidence that it is closely connected with an early duet for viola and violoncello (with two obbligato *Augenläser*) which originated in 1795 or 1796. Riemann † is of the opinion that both the duet and the quartet are rearrangements of some still earlier work. The first movement is weakened by the similarity of the first and second themes. The second is a delightful *Andante scherzoso, quasi allegretto*, in C major, 3:8. The third movement is a little minuet and the last a rondo.

## II

The year after the publication of these first quartets appeared the quintet for strings, in C major, opus 29. This is the only original string quintet of Beethoven's, except the fugue written for a similar group of instruments in 1817, probably as a study. The quintet, opus 4, is a rearrangement of the octet for wind instruments, written in 1792, before coming to Vienna. The quintet, opus 104, is an arrangement of the trio in C minor, opus 1, which Beethoven made in 1817, following an

\* 2d edition, Berlin, 1913, pp. 482, *et seq.*

† *Beethoven's Stretchquartette.*

## THE RASUMOWSKY QUARTETS

anonymous request, and which he regarded humorously.

In 1808 were printed the three great quartets opus 59, dedicated to Count (later Prince) Rasumowsky. Beethoven's earlier patron, Prince Lichnowsky, had left Vienna, and the famous quartet under the leadership of Schuppanzigh, which had played such a part in his Friday morning musicales, was now engaged by Rasumowsky, Russian Ambassador to the court at Vienna. Rasumowsky commissioned Beethoven to write three quartets in which there was to be some use of Russian melodies.

Between the quartets, opus 18, and these so-called Russian quartets, Beethoven had written, among other things, a number of his great pianoforte sonatas, including opus 27, opus 31, opus 53, and most of opus 57, the Kreutzer sonata for violin and piano, the second and third symphonies, and *Fidelio*. These are the great works of the second period of his creative activity; and the qualities which are essential in them are, as it were, condensed, refined and assembled in the three quartets, opus 59. They may be taken as the abstract of his genius at that time.

Nothing gives more striking evidence of the phenomenal power of self-development within Beethoven than a comparison of opus 18 with opus 59, or, again, of the latter with the five last quartets. Of course, to compare the early with the late sonatas, or the first two symphonies with the ninth, will astonish in a like measure. But there are intermediate sonatas and symphonies by which many steps between the extremes can be clearly traced. The quartets stand like isolated tablets of stone upon which, at three distinct epochs in his life, Beethoven engraved the sum total of his musicianship. The quartets opus 74 and opus 95 hardly serve to unite the Russian quartets with opus 127.

The Russian quartets are regular in structure, but

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they are as broad as symphonies by comparison with opus 18. The style is bold, though the details are carefully finished, and the instruments are treated polyphonically, each being as prominent and as important as the others. This in particular marks an advance over the earlier works in the same form. There is in them, moreover, an emotional vigor, which, expressed in broad sweeps and striking, often strident, harmonies, worked in the opinion of many contemporaries a barbarous distortion of the hitherto essentially delicate form. To interpret them is but to repeat what has been already made familiar by the sonatas of the period, by the *Eroica*, and by *Fidelio*. It is the same Beethoven who speaks here with no less vigor, though with necessarily finer point.

The first quartet begins at once with a melody for violoncello, unusually long and broad even for Beethoven. It has in itself no Russian quality; but the monotonous accompaniment of chords, repeated with but the harmonic change from tonic to dominant for eighteen measures, suggests a primitive sort of art, a strumming such as may well be practised by Russian peasants in their singing. The harsh dissonances created by the long F's in the melody, and a little later by the whole-note D, against dominant seventh harmony will not pass unnoticed. Such clashes between melody and harmony can be found in other works of about the same period; for example, at the return of the first theme in the third section of the first movement of the *Eroica*; and the much-discussed, prolonged D-flat of the oboe against the entrance of the A-flat melody in the second movement of the fifth symphony. Elsewhere in this quartet the same procedure makes a striking effect; namely, in the approach to the second theme, where, however, the long G's—sharply accented—are in the nature of a pedal point. The second theme—in C major—is cognate with the first. The interweav-



## THE RASUMOWSKY QUARTETS

ing of the instruments in its statement is noteworthy. The first phrase is anticipated by the first violin, and then sung out broadly by the viola; from which the first violin immediately takes away the second phrase. The second violin and 'cello, and even the viola, after its first phrase, interchange with each other the broad C's which lie at the foundation of the whole. The line of the melody itself and the suave flow of polyphony will suggest certain passages in Richard Wagner's *Die Meistersinger*.

The second movement (*allegretto vivace e sempre scherzando*, B-flat major, 3:8) has in rhythm at least a strong Russian flavor. Here again there are repeated chords in the accompaniment even more barbaric in effect than those in the first movement. The 'cello alone gives in the opening measures the rhythmical key to the whole; and in the next measures the solo violin (2d) announces, staccato and pianissimo, the chief melodic motive. The effect of the whole movement is at once fantastical and witty. The following Adagio in F minor, in essence and in adornment one of the full expressions of a side of Beethoven's genius, dies away in a long cadenza for the first violin which, without ending, merges into a long trill. Softly under this trill the 'cello announces the Russian melody upon which the following wholly good-humored and almost boisterous *finale* is built.

The second quartet of the series is less forceful, and far more sensitive and complicated. The key is E minor. Two incisive, staccato chords, tonic and dominant, open the movement. One remembers the opening of the *Eroica*. There follows a full measure of silence and then the melodic kernel of the first movement, pianissimo in unison—a rising figure upon the tonic triad (which will again recall for an instant the *Eroica*) and a hushed falling back upon the dominant seventh. Again the full measure of silence, and again the rising

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and falling, questioning, motive, this time in F major. After an agitated transitional passage, the first violin gives out the second theme, a singing melody in G major. But the threefold first theme—the incisive chords, the measure of silence, and the questioning figure—carry the burden of the work, one of mystery to which the second theme is evidently stranger. At the beginning of the middle section, and again at the beginning of the long coda, the chords and the breathless silences assume a threatening character, now hushed, then suddenly angry, to which the figure reluctantly responds with its unanswered question.

The second movement (Adagio, E major) must, in Beethoven's own words, be played with much feeling. The chief melody is like a chorale. It is played first by the first violin, the other instruments adding a note-for-note, polyphonic accompaniment. It is then repeated by second violin and viola, in unison, while the first violin adds above it a serious, gently melodious counterpoint. Other more vigorous episodes appear later, but the spirit of the movement is swayed by the sad and prayerful opening theme.

In the trio of the following scherzo another Russian theme is used as the subject of a fugue. The last movement is unrestrainedly joyful and vigorous, beginning oddly in C major, but turning presently to the tonic key (E minor), from which the rondo unfolds in more and more brilliant power.

The last of this series of quartets—in C major—is for the most part wholly outspoken. There is little obscurity in meaning, none in form. At the basis of the slow introduction lies a series of falling half-tones, given to the 'cello. The first allegro is almost martial in character. The second movement—*andante con moto quasi allegretto*, in A minor—is in the nature of a *Romanza*; and the frequent *pizzicato* of the 'cello suggests the lutenist of days long gone by. There follows

## BEETHOVEN: QUARTETS OPERA 74 AND 95

a Minuet instead of a Scherzo; and at the end there is a vigorous fugue.

Between these three quartets and the final series beginning with opus 127, stand two isolated quartets: opus 74, in E-flat major, and opus 95, in F minor. Neither indicates a considerable change in Beethoven's method, or in his attitude towards his art. The former, composed in 1809 and dedicated to Prince Lobkowitz, is in the spirit of the last of the Rasumowsky quartets; that is, outspoken, vigorous, and clear. The relatively long, slow introduction alone hints at a tragic seriousness; but it serves rather to show from what the composer had freed himself, than to expose the riddle of the piece. The first theme of the first movement is stalwart and well-built; the second, of rather conventional character, chiefly made up of whirring scale groups. In the development section there are many measures of arpeggio figures, at first *pizzicato*, later growing into *arco*; by reason of which the quartet has been given the name of *Harfenquartett* (Harp-quartet). In connection with this passage Dr. Riemann has remarked that all such experiments in sound effects [such as *pizzicato*, harmonics and playing on special strings] serve only to reveal the actual lack of different tone-colors in the quartet; and, indeed, distract the attention from the 'drawing' [i. e., the pure lines of the various parts] which is peculiarly the affair of the quartet.

The second movement is an adagio in rondo form; the third a scherzo, with an astonishing trio in 6/8 time; and the last consists of a theme, oddly syncopated so that the groundwork of the harmonic progressions may be traced only on the unaccented beats of the measures, together with five variations.

The quartet in F minor, opus 95, was completed in October, 1810. In the autograph copy Beethoven gave the work the title *Quartett serio*, omitted in the engraved editions. Theresa Malfatti is supposed to have

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refused Beethoven's offer of marriage in April of this year. He confided himself rather freely in his friend Zmeskall von Domanowecz, during these months. The fact that the quartet, opus 95, was held to be *serioso* by Beethoven, and furthermore that he dedicated it to Zmeskall, are at least some sort of evidence that the work sprang from his recent disappointment in love. However, the first movement is rather spiteful than mournful. It is remarkable for conciseness. It is, indeed, only one hundred and fifty measures long, and there are no repetitions. The dominant motive is announced at once by all four instruments in unison, and is repeated again and again throughout the movement, like an irritating thought that will not be banished. There is a second theme, in D-flat major, which undergoes little development.

The second movement, an *allegretto* in D major, 2/4, is highly developed and unusual. It opens with a four-measure phrase of detached, descending notes, for 'cello alone, which may be taken as a motto for the movement. This is followed by a strange yet lovely melody for first violin which is extended by a long-delayed cadence. After this the viola announces a new theme, suggestive of the opening motive, which is taken up by the other instruments one after the other and woven into a complete little fugue, with a *stretto*. Once again, then, the 'cello gives out the lovely, and somewhat mysterious, opening phrase, this time thrice repeated on descending steps of the scale, and punctuated by mournful harmonies of the other instruments. The viola announces the fugue theme again, in F minor; and the fugue is resumed with elaborate counterpoint. And at the end of this, again the 'cello motive, once more in the tonic key, and the strange melody sung early by the first violin.

The movement is not completed, but goes without pause into the next, a strangely built scherzo, *allegro*

## BEETHOVEN: PERIOD OF DEVELOPMENT

*assai vivace, ma serioso*. The *vivace* evidently applies to the main body of the movement, which is in a constantly active, dotted rhythm. The *serioso* is explained by the part of the movement in G-flat major, which one may regard as the trio. This is merely a chorale melody, first given by the second violin. The lower instruments follow the melody with note-for-note harmonies; the first violin adds to each note of the melody an unvarying formula of ornamentation. All this is done first in the key of G-flat major, then in D major. The opening section is then repeated, and after it comes the chorale melody, a little differently scored; and a coda, *piu allegro*, brings the movement to an end.

The last movement is preceded by a few introductory measures, which are in character very like the *Lebewohl* motive in the sonata, opus 81. And the progression from the introduction into the *allegro agitato* is not unlike the beginning of the last movement of the same sonata. The *allegro* itself is most obviously in hunting-song style, suggesting in the first melody Mendelssohn, in parts of the accompaniment the horns at the beginning of the second act of *Tristan und Isolde*. The second theme is a horn-call. Just before the end the galloping huntsmen pass far off into the distance, their horns sound fainter and fainter, finally cease. Then there is a mad coda, in *alla breve* time.

### III

There follows between this quartet and the quartet, opus 127, a period of fourteen years, in which time Beethoven composed the seventh, eighth, and ninth symphonies, the last pianoforte sonatas, the *Liederkreis*, and the Mass in D. He turned to the quartet for the last expression in music of what life had finally come to mean to him, stone-deaf, miserable in health, weary

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and unhappy. There is not one of the last five quartets which does not proclaim the ultimate victory of his soul over every evil force that had beset his earthly path.

In November, 1822, Prince Nikolaus Galitzin, a man who held Beethoven's genius in highest esteem, asked him if he would undertake the composition of three quartets. In the spring of the following year Ignaz Schuppanzigh returned to Vienna after a seven-years' absence and resumed his series of quartet concerts. Whether these two facts account for Beethoven's concentration upon the composition of quartets alone during the last two years of his life is not known. Before the receipt of Prince Galitzin's invitation Beethoven had written to Peters in Leipzig that he expected soon to have a quartet to send him. But no traces of quartet composition are to be found before 1824. Probably, then, the quartet in E-flat major, opus 127, was composed in the spring of 1824. In 1825 the quartet in A minor, opus 132, and later that in B-flat major, opus 130, were composed. These three quartets were dedicated to Prince Galitzin. The final rondo of the quartet in B-flat major was written considerably later (was, indeed, the last of Beethoven's compositions). Originally the last movement of this quartet was the fugue, now published separately as opus 133, which the publishers felt made the work too long and too obscure. Beethoven therefore wrote the final rondo to take its place.

There is much internal evidence that while Beethoven was at work on the last two of the quartets dedicated to Prince Galitzin he was likewise at work on the quartet in C-sharp minor, opus 131, dedicated to Baron von Stutterheim. The quartet in F major, opus 135, was written later in 1826. It was dedicated to Johann Wolfmeier.

The first performance of opus 127 was given by the

## BEETHOVEN: QUARTET OPUS 127

Schuppanzigh quartet \* on March 7, 1825. On September 9th of the same year, Schuppanzigh led the first private performance of opus 132 at the inn *Zum Wilden Mann*. It was first publicly performed at a concert given by Linke on November 6, and was well received. Opus 132 was publicly performed first (in its original form, i. e., with the fugue finale) on March 21, 1826. The second and fourth movements were encored.

Of the five last quartets the first and last are formally the most clear; the intermediate three, especially those in A minor and C-sharp minor, are perhaps the most intricate and difficult music to follow and to comprehend that has been written. All but the last are very long, and thus tax the powers of attention of the average listener often beyond endurance. Their full significance is discerned only by those who not only have made themselves intimately familiar with every note and line of them, but who have penetrated deep into the most secret mysteries of the whole art of music.

Opus 127 begins with a few measures—*maestoso*—which, as Dr. Riemann has suggested, play something of the same rôle in the first movement as the *Grave* of the *Sonata Pathétique* plays there. The passing over from the introduction to the allegro is only a trill, growing softer over subdominant harmony. The allegro is in 3/4 time, and the first theme, played by the first violin, is obvious and simple, almost in the manner of a folk-song. Yet there is something sensuous in its full curves and in the close, rich scoring. The transitional passage is regularly built, and the second theme—in G minor—pure melody that cannot pass unnoticed. Everything is simple and clear. The first section ends in G major, and the development section begins with

\* Only Schuppanzigh himself, and Weiss, the violist, remained of the original four who first played Beethoven's quartets opus 18 at the palace of Prince Lichnowsky. The second violinist was now Karl Holz, and the cellist Joseph Linke.

## CHAMBER MUSIC

the *maestoso* motive in the same key, followed, just as at the opening of the movement, with the trill and the melting into the first theme. This theme is developed, leading to the *maestoso* in C major. It is then taken up in that key. The *maestoso* does not reappear as the beginning of the restatement section, the first theme coming back in the original key without introduction. Instead of the simple note-for-note scoring with which it was first presented, it is now accompanied by a steadily moving counterpoint. The second theme is brought back in E-flat major. The coda is short and simple, dying away *pianissimo*.

The following movement is an *adagio*, to be played not too slowly and in a wholly singing manner. The time is 12/8, the key, A-flat major. The opening notes, which build up slowly a chord of the dominant seventh, are all syncopated. The first violin gives only a measure or two of the melody, which, thus prepared, is then taken up by the violoncello. The second strophe is sung by the violin. There is a full cadence.

The first variation opens with the melody for violoncello, only slightly altered from its original form. The violins add a counterpoint in dialogue. This variation comes to a full stop. The second brings a change in time signature (*C, andante con moto*). The theme, now highly animated, is divided between the first and second violins. In the fourth variation (E major, 2/2, *adagio molto espressivo*) only the general outline of the theme is recognizable, cut down and much compressed. The fifth variation brings back the original tempo and the original key. The violoncello has the theme, only slightly varied in rhythm, and the first violin a well-defined counter-melody. The sixth and last variation (in this movement) grows strangely out of the fifth, in D-flat major, *sotto voce*, leads to C-sharp minor, and thence to A-flat major. There is a short epilogue.

The main themes of the Scherzo and Trio which fol-



## BEETHOVEN: QUARTET OPUS 132 (A MINOR)

low are so closely akin to the theme of the adagio, that the movements may be taken as further variations. The main body of the Scherzo is in that dotted rhythm of which Beethoven made frequent use in most of his last works; and is fairly regular in structure, except for the intrusion, at the end of the second part, of measures in 2/4 time, in unison, which may be taken as suggestions of still another fragmentary variation of the adagio theme. The Trio is a presto in E-flat minor.

The *Finale* is entirely in a vigorous, jovial and even homely vein. The themes are all clear-cut and regular; the spirit almost boisterous, suggesting parts of the 'Academic Festival Overture' or the *Passacaglia* from the fourth symphony of Brahms.

### III

This E-flat major quartet was completed at the latest in January, 1825. Work on the following three quartets—in A minor, B-flat major, and C-sharp minor—began at once, but was interrupted by serious illness. About the sixth of May Beethoven moved to Gutenbrunn, near Baden; and here took up the work again. The A minor was completed not later than August, the B-flat in September or October, the C-sharp minor some months later, after his return to Vienna.

The three quartets are closely related. In the first place all show a tendency on the part of Beethoven to depart from the regular four-movement type. There are five movements in the A minor, six in the B-flat major, seven in the C-sharp minor; though in the last, two of the movements are hardly more than introductory in character. The *Danza Tedesca* in G major in opus 130, was written originally in A major and intended for the A minor quartet. Finally the chromatic motive, clearly stated in the introduction to the A minor

## CHAMBER MUSIC

quartet, and lying at the basis of the whole first movement, may be traced in the fugue theme in opus 130, and in the opening fugal movement of opus 131.

The A minor quartet is fundamentally regular in structure. The opening allegro is clearly in sonata-form; there follows a Scherzo and Trio. The Adagio consists of a chorale melody, thrice repeated in higher registers, with regular interludes. A short march and a final Allegro in A minor conclude the work. But the movements are all strangley sustained and at the same time intense; and there is a constant whisper of inner and hidden meanings, which cannot be grasped without deep study and which leave but a vague and mysterious impression. The chromatic motive of the introduction has a more or less cryptic significance; the chorale melody is in an unfamiliar mode; and there are reminiscences of earlier and even youthful works. So that the whole proves intricate and even in the last analysis baffling.

There are eight introductory measures (*Assai sostenuto*) which are in close polyphonic style out of a single motive. This motive is announced by the violoncello; immediately taken up, transposed, by the first violin; given again, inverted, by the violoncello; and in this form answered by the violin. The Allegro begins upon a diminished seventh chord in which all the instruments take part, and from which the first violin breaks with a descending and ascending run of sixteenth notes, founded upon the chord. The first theme is at once announced by the first violin, a theme which, distinct and full of character in itself, really rests upon the opening motive, or upon the harmonies implied in it. A single measure of adagio prepares for another start with the same material. The violin has another run, founded upon the diminished seventh chord, rising thereby to F. Under this the violoncello takes up the first theme, which is completed by the

## BEETHOVEN: QUARTET OPUS 132 (A MINOR)

viola; while, it will be observed, the first violin, followed by the second, give out the opening motive, inverted, in augmentation. Later a transitional theme is announced in D minor by the first violin, closely imitated by the violoncello and the second violin. The true second theme follows shortly after, in F major, a peaceful melody, sung by the second violin over an accompaniment in triplets shared by viola and violoncello.

The movement is fairly regular in structure. The development is short and is based chiefly upon the opening chromatic motive, with which indeed the 'cello begins it. The restatement begins in E minor, with the familiar diminished seventh run for the first violin. The second theme appears in C major, and is given to the 'cello. There is a long coda, which, toward the end, swells over a mysterious low trill to a brilliant climax.

The next movement is really a Scherzo in A major. The instruments have four measures in unison, each measure beginning with a half-step which cannot but suggest some relationship to the chromatic motive of the first movement. But the short phrase of the first violin, begun in the fifth measure, is the real kernel of the main body of the movement. The Trio, in E major, is of magical beauty. The first section is over a droning A, shared by both violins, at first, to which the viola and 'cello soon join themselves. The melody is decidedly in folk-song manner, and is played by the first violin in high registers, and faithfully followed by the second a tenth below, both instruments maintaining at the same time their droning A.

This melody is supplanted by a lilting dance movement. The short phrases begin always on the third beat of the measure, and their accompanying harmonies are likewise syncopated, in the manner which is frequent with Brahms. The short phrases are arranged at first in dialogue fashion between first violin

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and viola. Later the viola converses, as it were, with itself. Only the 'cello is limited throughout the section to accompaniment. A few measures in unison between the 'cello and viola appear twice before the end of the section, the notes of which may be intended dimly to recall the chromatic motive of the first movement. A more positive phrase in *alla breve* time, played by second violin, viola, and 'cello in unison, brings back an epilogue echoing the opening phrases of the Trio; after which the main body of the movement is repeated.

Beethoven entitled the next movement 'a devout song of praise, offered by a convalescent to God, in the Lydian mode.' It probably owes its origin to the fact that Beethoven was taken seriously ill while at work on this and the B-flat major quartet. It seems likely that before this illness he had other plans for the quartet, and that the *Danza tedesca* before mentioned was to find a place in it.

The movement is long in performance but relatively simple in structure. The chorale melody, simply harmonized, is preceded by a short, preludizing phrase; and its strophes are set apart from each other by short interludes in the same manner. After the chorale has been once given, there is an episode in D major (*Neue Kraft fühlend*) of blissful, gently animated character. The chorale is then repeated, the melody an octave higher than before, the interludes and the accompaniment complicated by syncopations. Once again the D major episode, highly elaborated. Following this, the chorale is introduced once more; but the introductory phrase is greatly lengthened and developed, and there are suggested entrances of the theme in all the instruments; nor does the complete theme make itself heard, but only the first phrase of it seems ultimately to soar aloft, in yet a higher register than before. So that this last section may be taken as a coda, or as an apotheosis.

## BEETHOVEN: QUARTET OP. 130 (B-FLAT MAJOR)

The short march which follows calls for no comment. The final allegro is introduced by recitative passages for the first violin, gaining in passion, culminating in a dramatic run over the diminished seventh chord which bears some resemblance to the opening of the allegro of the first movement. There is a passing sigh before the last movement begins, *Allegro appassionato*.

Compared with the quartet in A minor, that in B-flat major is simple. It is more in the nature of a suite than in that of a sonata, though the first movement presents beneath an apparently irregular outline the basis of the classical sonata-form. At first glance the frequent changes of not only key signature but time signature as well are confusing. The key signatures are now two flats, six flats, two sharps and one sharp; and at the beginning, the middle and the end of the movement the time is now triple, now duple, now slow, now fast.

The slow measures are related to the introduction, which here as in other works of Beethoven is recalled at times in the main body of the movement. The allegro makes a false start, in which the main outlines of the first theme are suggested. From the second start, however, the movement follows a relatively normal course. The first theme is compound. On the one hand, there are rapid groups of sixteenths, which play an important part in the whole movement; on the other, a rhythmical motive, rather than a theme, first announced by the second violin, which is the motto of the piece. The second theme is first presented in G-flat major by the second violin and immediately taken up by the first. At the beginning of the development section and again in the coda use is made of the motive of the introduction.

The second movement, a Presto in B-flat minor in *alla breve* time, with a Trio in 6/4 time, is short and in the manner of a folk-song or dance. It has no inner

## CHAMBER MUSIC

relation with the first movement; but it may be said to breathe something of its spirit into the following *andante* (D-flat major, common time). The kernel of the melody of this movement may be found in the first measure, given by viola and 'cello; and this kernel was sown, so to speak, by the previous movement. The viola develops it in the second measure and the phrase is immediately after taken up by the first violin.

For the fourth movement there is a rapid German waltz—*Alla danza tedesca*—in G major. The fifth is a simple cavatina. Karl Holz, one of the members of the Schuppanzigh quartet, has reported that Beethoven could not read over the score of this short movement without tears in his eyes. As the sixth movement there is the fugue, published as opus 133, with a new dedication to Archduke Rudolph, which was, as we have said, written for this quartet, and one of the themes of which seems related to the chromatic motives of the A minor quartet, on the one hand, and of the C-sharp minor quartet, on the other; or there is the brilliant rondo with which Beethoven replaced it at the behest of the publishers, and which is the last of Beethoven's compositions.

The fourth of the last quartets, in C-sharp minor, is dedicated to Field Marshal Baron von Sutterheim, who interested himself deeply in the affairs of Beethoven's family. It is in some respects the most elusive, in others the most unusual of all. Its various movements are designated by numbers; yet two of them are so short that they need not be regarded as separate movements, but only as transitional or introductory sections. These are the third and the sixth. Furthermore, a definite pause is justifiable only between the fourth and fifth. Thus, in spite of the numbers, the work is closely blended into a whole, of which the separate parts are not only æsthetically united, but thematically complementary.

## BEETHOVEN: QUARTET OP. 130 (B-FLAT MAJOR)

The first movement is a slow fugue, on a chromatic motive that makes us once again remember that Beethoven was working on this and the two preceding quartets at the same time. The fugue unfolds itself with greatest smoothness and seeming simplicity. The texture of the music is extremely close until near the end, where wide skips appear in the various parts, like the movement of a more vigorous life soon to break free in subsequent sections from such strict restraint of form. One will find a perfect skill in technical details, such as the diminution of the theme which appears in the first violin at the change of signature, and the augmentation in the 'cello part in the stretto not far before the end.

The fugue ends on a C-sharp unison, following a chord of C-sharp major in seven parts. Then, as if this single C-sharp bore within itself a secret harmonic significance, i. e., as the leading note in the scale of D major, the whole fabric slips up half a tone in the opening notes of the following movement, *allegro molto vivace*, D major—in 6/8 time. One cannot but feel the relationship between the delicate convolutions of this new theme and the fugue theme. The whole second movement hardly moves away from the motives of the opening measures. A sort of complement to them may be found in the successions of fourths which begin to rise up in the twenty-fifth measure; and much farther on a sequence of chords beginning in F-sharp major suggests some variety. But on the whole the movement plays upon one theme, which recurs at intervals as in a rondo, but after episodes that offer only in the main an harmonic contrast.

The third movement, *allegro moderato*, in common time, is a recitative, begun in F minor and leading to a half-cadence in the dominant seventh harmonies of A major, in which key the following movement opens. We have here an andante and seven variations, varia-

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tions so involved and recondite that, though they may be clearly perceived in the score, they will strike the unfamiliar ear as aimless and inexplicable music.

The theme itself is in the form of a dialogue between first and second violins. It merges into the first variation without perceptible break in the music. Here the theme is carried by the second violin, the first filling the pauses with a descending figure. This clause of the theme is then repeated by the viola, the 'cello taking the rôle of the first violin. The second clause of the theme is similarly treated.

The remaining six variations are clearly set apart from each other by changes in the time signature. There is a variation marked *piu mosso*, really *alla breve*, which is a dialogue between first violin and 'cello, accompanied at first monotonously by the other two instruments, later with more variety and animation. The next is an *andante moderato e lusinghiero*, in which the theme is arranged as a canon at the second, first between the two lower instruments, later between the two higher. This leads to an *adagio* in 6/8 time, in which the theme is broken up into passage work. The next and fifth variation (*allegretto*, 2/4) is the most hidden of all. The notes of the theme are separated and scattered here and there among the four parts. But the sixth, an *adagio* in 9/4 time, is simpler. The seventh, and last, is a sort of epilogue, a series of different statements of the theme, at first hidden in triplet runs; then emerging after a long trill, in its simplest form, in the key of C major; then in A major with an elaborated accompaniment; in F major, simple again; and finally brilliantly in A major.

The following Presto in E major, *alla breve*, is very long, but is none the less symmetrical and regular in structure. It is in effect a scherzo and trio. The scherzo is in the conventional two sections, both of which are built upon the same subject. The second section is



## BEETHOVEN: QUARTET OPUS 135 (F MAJOR)

broken by four measures (*molto poco adagio!*); and there is a false start of the theme, following these, in G-sharp minor, suddenly broken by a hold. This recalls the effect of the very opening of the movement, a single measure, *forte*, by the 'cello, as if the instrument were starting off boldly with the principal subject. But a full measure of silence follows, giving the impression that the 'cello had been too precipitate.

The Trio section offers at first no change of key; but a new theme is brought forward. Later the key changes to A major, and the rhythm is broadened. A series of isolated pizzicato notes in the various instruments prepares the return of the Scherzo (without repeats). The Trio follows again; and there is a coda, growing more rapid, after the Scherzo has been repeated for the second time.

A short adagio, beginning in G-sharp minor, forms the sixth movement, modulating to the dominant seventh in C-sharp minor. The last movement is in sonata form. There are clearly a first theme and a second theme, arranged according to rule. But the coda is very long; and, even more important, not only the first and second themes, but secondary themes and motives are all vaguely or definitely related to the themes of the earlier movements. The first theme, for all its somewhat barbaric character, is akin to the theme of the first allegro in D major. In the episodes which follow, the notes of the first violin and of the 'cello, in contrary motion, give a distinct impression of the opening fugue theme. The second theme itself—in E major—brings back a breath of the Trio, and Dr. Riemann finds in the accompaniment suggestions of the fourth variation. Only a detailed analysis could reveal the elaborate and intricate polyphony which is in every measure in the process of weaving.

After the C-sharp minor quartet, the last quartet—in F major, opus 135—appears outwardly simple. It

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shares with the first of the series simplicity and regularity of form; and is, like the quartet in E-flat major, calm and outspoken, rather than disturbed, gloomy, or mysterious. It is the shortest of all the last quartets.

The first movement is in perfect sonata form. The first theme (viola) has a gently questioning sound, which one may imagine mocked by the first violin. The second theme, in C major, is light, almost in the manner of Haydn. The movement builds itself logically out of the opposition of these two motives, the one a little touched with sadness and doubt, the other confidently gay. The Scherzo which follows needs no analysis. Two themes, not very different in character, are at the basis. The second is presented successively in F, G, and A, climbing thus ever higher. The climax at which it arrives is noteworthy. The first violin is almost acrobatic in the expression of wild humor, over an accompaniment which for fifty measures consists of the unvaried repetition of a single figure by the other three instruments in unison. Following this fantastical scherzo there is a short slow movement in D-flat major full of profound but not tragic sentiment. The short theme, flowing and restrained, undergoes four variations; the second in C-sharp minor, rather agitated in character; the third in the tonic key, giving the melody to the 'cello; and the fourth disguising the theme in short phrases (first violin). To the last movement Beethoven gave the title, *Der schwer gefasste Entschluss*. Two motives which occur in it are considered, the one as a question: *Muss es sein?* the other as the answer: *Es muss sein*. The former is heard only in the introduction, and in the measures before the third section of the movement. The latter is the chief theme. Whether or not these phrases are related to external circumstances in Beethoven's life, the proper interpretation of them is essentially psychological. The question represents doubt and distrust of self. The answer

## BEETHOVEN: QUARTET OPUS 135 (F MAJOR)

to such misgivings is one of deeds, not words, of strong-willed determination and vigorous action. Of such the final movement of the last quartet is expressive. Such seems the decision which Beethoven put into terms of music.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE STRING ENSEMBLE SINCE BEETHOVEN

The general trend of development: Spohr, Cherubini, Schubert—Mendelssohn, Schumann and Brahms, etc.—New developments: César Franck, D'Indy, Chausson—The characteristics of the Russian schools: Tschaikowsky, Borodine, Glazounoff and others—Other national types: Grieg, Smetana, Dvořák—The three great quartets since Schubert and what they represent; modern quartets and the new quartet style: Debussy, Ravel, Schönberg—Conclusion.

#### I

THERE is little history of the string quartet to record after the death of Beethoven in 1827. It has undergone little or no change or development in technique until nearly the present day. The last quartets of Beethoven taxed the powers of the combined four instruments to the uttermost. Such changes of form as are to be noted in recent quartets are the adaptation of new ideas already and first put to test in music for pianoforte, orchestra, or stage. The growth of so-called modern systems of harmony affect the string quartet, but did not originate in it. A tendency towards richer or fuller scoring, towards continued use of pizzicato or other special effects, and a few touches of new virtuosity here and there, reflect the general interest of the century in the orchestra and its possibilities of tone-coloring. But it is in the main true that after a study of the last quartets of Beethoven few subsequent quartets present new difficulties; and that, excepting only a few, the many with which we shall have to do are the expressions of the genius of various musicians, most of whom were more successful in other

## SPOHR'S QUARTETS

forms, or whose qualities have been made elsewhere and otherwise more familiar.

Less perhaps than any other form will the string quartet endure by the sole virtue of being well written for the instruments. Take, for example, the thirty-four quartets of Ludwig Spohr. Spohr was during the first half of the nineteenth century the most respected musician in Germany. He was renowned as a leader, and composer quite as much as he was world-famous as a virtuoso. He was especially skillful as a leader in quartet playing. He was among the first to bring out the Beethoven quartets, opus 18, in Germany. He was under a special engagement for three years to the rich amateur Tost in Vienna to furnish chamber compositions. No composer ever understood better the peculiar qualities of the string instruments; none was ever more ambitious and at the same time more serious. Yet excluding the violin concertos and an occasional performance of his opera *Jessonda*, his music is already lost in the past. Together with operas, masses, and symphonies, the quartets, quintets, and quartet concerto, are rapidly being forgotten. The reason is that Spohr was more conscientious than inspired. He stood in fear of the commonplace. His melodies and harmonies are deliberately chromatic, not spontaneous. Yet shy as he was of commonplaceness in melody and harmony, he was insensitive to a more serious commonplaceness.

When we consider what subtle systems of rhythm the semi-civilized races are masters of, we can but be astonished at the regularity of our own systems. Only occasionally does a composer diverge from the straight road of four-measure melody building. Yet is it not a little subtlety even within this rigorous system that raises the great composer above the commonplace? Certainly the ordinary in rhythm most quickly wearies and disgusts the listener even if he is not aware of it.

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Spohr's rhythmical system was so little varied that Wagner wrote of his opera *Jessonda* that it was '*alla Polacca*' almost all the way through.

The thirty-five string quartets are fundamentally commonplace, for all the chromaticism of their harmonies and melodies, and for all the skillful treatment of the instruments. The double-quartets (four, in D minor, E minor, E-flat major, and G minor) amount to compositions for small string orchestra. There are, among the quartets, six so-called 'brilliant,' which give to the first violin a *solo* rôle, and to the other instruments merely accompaniment. It is hardly surprising that the first violin is treated brilliantly in most of the quartets.

But the point is that Spohr's quartets have not lived. In neatness of form and in treatment of the instruments they do not fall below the greatest. They are in these respects superior to those of Schumann for example. The weakness of them is the weakness of the man's whole gift for composition; and they represent no change in the art of writing string quartets.

Another man whose quartets are theoretically as good as any is Cherubini. Of the six, that in E-flat major, written in 1814, is still occasionally heard.

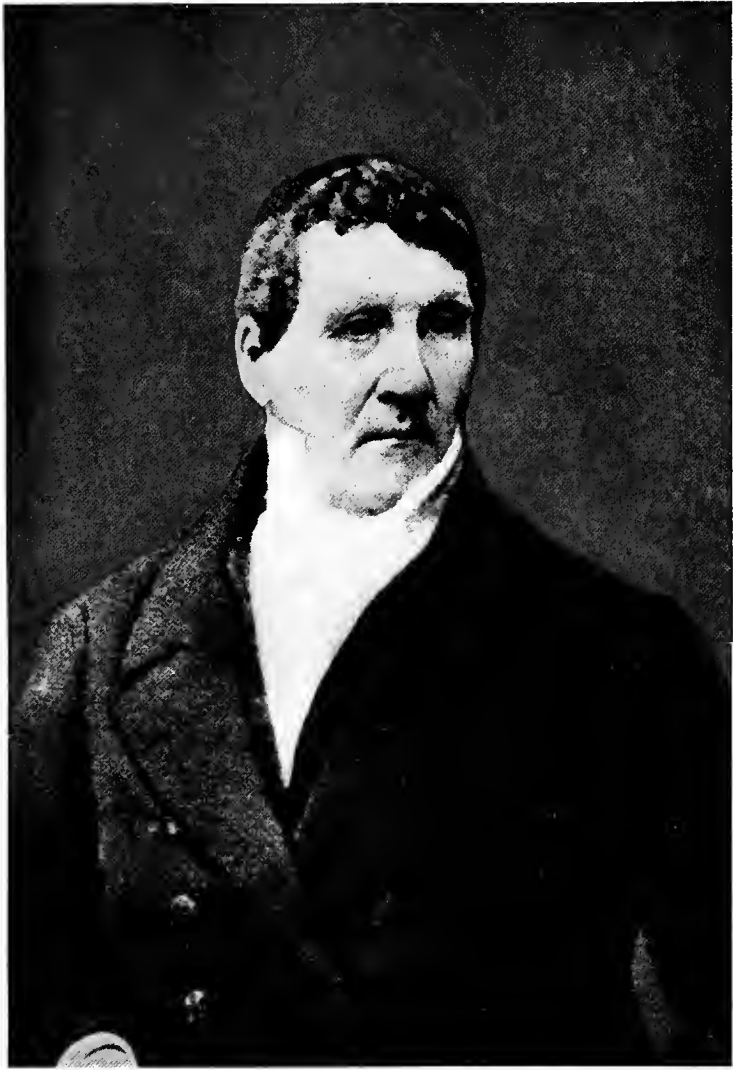
On the other hand, Schubert, a man with less skill than either Spohr or Cherubini, has written quartets which seem likely to prove immortal. Fifteen are published in the complete Breitkopf and Härtel edition of Schubert's works. Of these the first eleven may be considered preparatory to the last four. They show, however, what is frequently ignored in considering the life and art of Schubert—an unremitting effort on the part of the young composer to master the principles of musical form.

The first of the great quartets, that in C minor—written in December, 1820—is but a fragment. Schubert completed but the first movement. Why he neglected











## SCHUBERT'S QUARTETS

to add others remains unknown. But the single movement is inspired throughout. The opening measures give at once an example of the tremolo, of which Schubert made great use in all his quartets. The general triplet rhythm is familiar in all his later works. We have here the Schubert of the great songs, of the B minor symphony, of the later pianoforte sonatas; warm, intense, inspired.

Two quartets were written in 1824, that in A minor, published as opus 29, and that in D minor,\* the best known of all his quartets. The A minor is dedicated to Ignaz Schuppanzigh, with whom Schubert was on friendly terms. The second movement of the quartet in D minor is a series of variations on the song *Der Tod und das Mädchen*.

Finally there is the great quartet in G major, written in 1826, which may be taken as representative throughout of the very best of Schubert's genius as it showed itself in the form. In it are to be found all the qualities associated with Schubert especially. The opening major triad, swelling to a powerful minor chord in eleven parts, and the constant interchange of major and minor throughout the movement; the tender second theme with its delicate folk-rhythm, its unrestrained harmonies, its whispering softness in the variation after the first statement; these could have been the work of Schubert alone. Peculiar to Schubert's treatment of the quartet are the tremolo, and the general richness of scoring—the sixths for second violin in the variation of the second theme, for example; the frequent use of octaves and other double-stops, the eleven-voiced chord at the beginning, and other such effects of fullness. There is little sign of the polyphonic drawing which so distinguished the last quartets of Beethoven. The quartet is made up of rich masses

\* The date is fixed by a fragment of the autograph found in 1901. See Richard Heuberger: *Franz Schubert*.

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of sound that glow warmly, and fade and brighten. The inner voices are used measure after measure frankly to supply a richly vibrating harmony, nothing more. And an occasional dialogue between two instruments is all of polyphonic procedure one meets.

The beautiful andante in E minor begins with a melody for violoncello, a true Schubertian melody, which is carried on for two sections. Then a new spirit enters through hushed chords, and breaks forth loudly in G minor. There follows a passage full of wild passion. The agitated chords swell again and again to fortissimo. At last they die away, only the monotonous F-sharp of the cello suggests the throbbing of a despair not yet relieved. Over this the first violin and the viola sing the opening melody. Later the hushed tapping is given to other instruments and the cello takes up its melody again. Once more the despair breaks wildly forth, and yet again is hushed but not relieved. The sudden major in the ending can not take from the movement its quality of unconsolated sadness. The scherzo, in B minor, is built upon the constant imitation and play of a single merry figure. The trio is in G major, one of those seemingly naïve yet perfect movements such as Schubert alone could write. There is only the swing of a waltz, only the melody that a street gamin might carelessly whistle; but somewhere beneath it lies genius. The interchange of phrases of the melody between the different instruments, and the mellifluous counter-melodies, have something the same sort of charm as the Scherzo of the symphony in C major. The final movement is a rondo with a profusion of themes. There are the familiar marks of Schubert: the triplet rhythm (6/8), the shifting between major and minor; the full, harmonic style; the naïve swing, the spontaneous and ever fresh melodies.

Schubert worked at the string quartet with special

## MENDELSSOHN'S QUARTETS

devotion. Excepting the songs, his steady development toward perfect mastery of his expression is nowhere better revealed than in the quartets. Certainly the last two quartets are second only to the songs as proof of his genius. There is that soft, whispering, quality in Schubert's music, for the expression of which the string quartet is a perfect instrument. Much of Schubert is intimate, too, and happily suited to the chamber. Less than any of the great composers did Schubert make use of polyphonic skill. It is easy to say that he lacked it; but what is hard to understand is how without it he could have contributed to music some of its most precious possessions.

### II

We may say that Schubert applied himself to the composition of string quartets with a special devotion and ultimately with great success; that certain qualities of his genius were suited to an expression in this form. Mendelssohn applied himself to all branches of music with equal facility and with evidently little preference. Most of his chamber music for strings alone, however, belongs to the early half of his successful career. This in the case of Mendelssohn does not mean, as in the case of almost every other composer, that the quartets may not be the expression of his fully-matured genius. Mendelssohn never wrote anything better than the overture to 'Midsummer Night's Dream.' This before he was twenty! But having put his soul for once into a few quartets he passed on to other works.

There was a time when these quartets were considered a worthy sequel to Beethoven's. In the English translation of Lampadius' 'Life of Mendelssohn' occurs the sentence: 'But in fact they [his works] stand in

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need neither of approval nor defense: the most audacious critic bows before the genius of their author; the power and weight of public opinion would strike every calumniator dumb.' And yet what can now be said of Mendelssohn's quartets save that they are precise in form, elegant in detail?

There are six in all. The first, opus 12, is in E-flat major. The slow introduction and the first allegro have all the well-known and now often ridiculed marks of the 'Songs Without Words': short, regular phrases; weak curves and feminine endings; commonplace harmonies, monotonous repetitions, uninteresting accompaniment. The second movement—a canzonetta—is interesting as Mendelssohn could sometimes be in light pieces; but the andante oozes honey again, and the final allegro is very long.

Is it unfair to dwell upon these wearisome deficiencies? Is there anything substantially better in the last of the six, in the quartet in F minor, opus 80? Here we have to do with one of the composer's agitated spells. There is a rough start and measures of tremolo for all the instruments follow. This is the first theme, properly just eight measures long and as thoroughly conventional as music well may be. Then measures in recitative style, and again the first theme, and its motives endlessly repeated. Suddenly the instruments in an access of fury break into triplets; but this being calmed, the second theme appears, as it should in A-flat major, a theme that positively smirks.

But why attempt either analysis or description of works so patently urbane? There is no meaning hidden in them; there is no richness of sentiment; no harmonies out of new realms; no inspiration; nothing really to study. Between the first two quartets mentioned and the last in F minor there is a series of three (opus 44), one in D major, one in E minor, and one in E-flat major. There is an 'Andante, Scherzo,

## SCHUMANN'S QUARTETS

Capriccio and Fugue' for the four instruments, published as opus 81.

One turns to Schumann for a breath of more bracing air. Though Schumann was first and foremost a composer for the pianoforte, and though his quartets seem to be written in rather a pianoforte style, yet there are flashes of inspiration in the music which must be treasured, imperfect as the recording of them may be. There are three quartets, composed in 1842 and dedicated to Mendelssohn. As early as 1838 Schumann mentioned in letters to his sweetheart that he had a string quartet in mind; but work in this direction was seriously hindered by troubles with Wieck, which were growing daily more acute. The second summer after his marriage, however, work on the quartets was resumed; and the three were composed in the short time of eight weeks, the last indeed apparently in five days (18-22 July).

The first offers an harmonic innovation. The introduction is in A minor, which is the principal key of the whole quartet; but the first allegro is in F major. There is a Scherzo in A minor, with an *Intermezzo*, not a Trio, in C major. In these first two movements the habit of syncopation which gives much of his pianoforte music its peculiar stamp is evident: in the first theme of the allegro; in the measures which lead to the repetition of the first part; in the motive of the *Intermezzo*, which is rhythmically similar to the first movement and suggests some connection in Schumann's mind. It is perhaps the prevalence in all three quartets of the rhythmical devices which we associate mostly with the pianoforte that raises a question of propriety of style. The adagio is pure Schumann, in quality of melody and accompaniment. Measures in the latter—noticeably the viola figure which accompanies the first statement of the melody—look upon the printed page like figures in a piano piece. Such fig-

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ures are not polyphonic. They are broken chords, the effect of which is felicitous only on the pianoforte. The final presto suggests no little the spirit of the first and last movements of the pianoforte quintet, opus 44, which was composed in the following months. The whole movement, except for a charming *musette* and a few following measures of sustained chords just before the end, is built upon a single figure.

The first movement of the next quartet (in F major) likewise suggests the quintet. The style is smoothly imitative and compact; and the theme beginning in the fifty-seventh measure casts a shadow before. The *Andante quasi Variazioni* is most carefully wrought, and is rich in sentiment. The Scherzo which follows—in C minor—is syncopated throughout. The final allegro suggests the last movement of the B-flat major symphony, the joyous Spring symphony written not long before.

The last quartet (in A) may rank with the finest of his compositions. Whether or not in theory the style is pianistic, the effect is rich and sonorous. The syncopations are sometimes baffling, especially in the last movement; but on the whole this quartet presents the essence of Schumann's genius in most ingratiating and appealing form. The structure is free, reminding one in some ways of the D minor symphony. But there is no rambling. The whole work is intense. There is an economy of mood and of thematic material. One phrase dominates the first movement; the *Assai agitato* is a series of terse variations. There is a sustained Adagio in D major; and then a vigorous finale in free rondo form, the chief theme of which is undoubtedly related to the chief theme of the first movement.

It must be admitted that Schumann's quartets are beautiful by reason of their harmonies and melodies; that theirs is a fineness of sentiment, not of style; that the luminous interweaving of separate parts such as is



## BRAHMS' STRING SEXTETS

found in the quartets of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, is not to be found in his. He follows rather Schubert, but without Schubert's instinct for instrumental color. So then one feels that it happened that Schumann should seek expression thrice through the medium of the string quartet; not that a certain quality of inspiration within him demanded just that expression and none other. His quartets represent neither a refinement nor an abstract of his genius. They are of a piece with his pianoforte pieces and his songs; as are likewise his symphonies. We admire and love all for the same qualities.

Brahms, who for so many reasons we may think of as taking up German music where Schumann left it, published only three string quartets. That he had written many others which he had chosen to discard before the two quartets, opus 51, were published in 1873, is evident from the note to Dr. Billroth concerning a dedication.\* Several pianoforte quartets, and two sextets for two violins, two violas and two violoncellos, opus 18 and opus 36, are closely related to the string quartet. The sextets are especially noteworthy.

The first sextet, in B-flat major, has won more popular favor than many other works by the same composer. The addition of two instruments to the regular four brought with it the same sort of problems which were mentioned in connection with Mozart's quintets: i.e., the avoidance of thickness in the scoring. The group of six instruments is virtually a string orchestra; but the sextets of Brahms are finely drawn, quite in the manner of a string quartet. Especially in this first sextet have the various instruments a like importance and independence.

The first theme of the first movement (cello) is wholly melodious. The second theme, regularly brought forward in F major, is yet another melody,

\* See Max Kalbeck: *Johannes Brahms*, Vol. II, part 2, p. 442.

## CHAMBER MUSIC

and again is announced by the violoncello. A passage of twenty-eight measures, over a pedal point on C, follows. This closes the first section. The development is, as might be expected, full of intricacies. The return of the first theme is brilliantly prepared, beginning with announcing phrases in the low registers, swelling to a powerful and complete statement in which the two violins join. The second movement is a theme and variations in D minor. The theme is shared alternately by first viola and first violin. The variations are brilliant and daring, suggesting not a little the piano-forte variations on a theme of Paganini's. There is a Scherzo and Trio. The main motive of the Scherzo serves as an accompaniment figure in the Trio; and the Trio is noteworthy for being entirely *fortissimo*. The last movement is a Rondo.

The second sextet, in G major, is outwardly less pleasing; and like much of Brahms' music is veiled from the casual or unfamiliar listener.

The first movement (*allegro non troppo*) opens mysteriously with a trill for first viola, which continues through the next thirty-two measures. In the third the first violin announces, *mezza voce*, the main theme of the movement; of which the chief characteristic is two upward fifths (G—D—E-flat—B-flat). The second theme appears after an unexpected modulation in D major, and is given to the first violoncello. The striding fifths sound again in the closing measures of the first section. The development begins with these fifths employed as a canon, in contrary motion; and the same intervals play a prominent part in the entire section. The recapitulation is regular. The following Scherzo (*Allegro non troppo*, G minor) has a touch of Slavic folk-music. There is a Trio section in G major. The slow movement is, as in the earlier sextet, a theme and variations. The last is in sonata form. The first theme may be divided into two wholly contrasting sec-

## BRAHMS' QUARTETS

tions, of which the second is melodiously arranged in sixths. The second theme is given out regularly in D major by the violoncello. There is a long coda, *animato*, which is practically a repetition of much of the development section.

In these sextets and in the three quartets, written many years later, we have the classical model faithfully reproduced. The separate parts are handled with unflinching polyphonic skill; there is the special refinement of expression which, hard to define, is unmistakable in a work that is properly a string quartet.

Opus 51, No. 1, is in C minor. The first theme is given out at once by the first violin; a theme characteristic of Brahms, of long phrases and a certain swinging power. Within the broadly curving line there are impatient breaks; and the effect of the whole is one of restlessness and agitation. This is especially noticeable when, after a contrasting section, the theme is repeated by viola and cello under an agitated accompaniment, and leads to sharp accents. There is no little resemblance between this theme and Brahms' treatment of it, and the theme of the first movement of the C minor symphony, completed not long before. There is throughout this movement the rhythm, like the sweep of angry waves, which tosses in the first movement of the symphony; an agitation which the second theme (B-flat major, first violin) cannot calm, which only momentarily—as just after the second theme, here, and in the third section of the movement—is subdued.

The following *Romanza* is simple and direct. One cannot fail to hear the stormy motive of the first movement, however, in the accompaniment figure of the second.\* Also one may suspect the movement to have

\* Kalbeck has called attention to the resemblance between these two motives and the *Erda-motif* and the *Walhalla-motif* in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*.

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been modelled pretty closely on the *Cavatina* in the Beethoven quartet in B-flat major. The broken effects—von Bülow called them *sanglots entrecoupés* in the piano sonata, opus 110—in the Beethoven work are copied rather closely in the Brahms. The Scherzo and Trio are widely contrasted; the one being in shifting harmony and 2/4 rhythm; the other plainly in F major and true Viennese waltz rhythm. In the final allegro motives from the first movement appear, so that the entire quartet is rather closely woven into a whole.

Apart from the general traits of Brahms' style one finds little to comment upon. It is striking that Brahms, in nearly the same measure as Beethoven, was able to express symphonic material, that is material of the greatest force and dramatic power, in the form of the quartet without destroying the nature of the smaller form. But the Brahms quartets are by no means the unfathomable mysteries of the last Beethoven quartets. They are comparable in general to the Rasumowsky quartets.

There is scarcely need to speak of the quartet in A minor, opus 51, No. 2, nor of that in B-flat major, opus 67, in detail. Brahms was already master of his technique and in the short period between writing the quartets opus 51 and the quartet opus 67, his manner of expression hardly developed or changed. Kalbeck describes in detail the significance of the chief motive, A-F-A<sup>2</sup>-E, in the A minor quartet. The F-A<sup>2</sup>-E may be taken as initial letters of the motto *Frei aber einsam*, which was of deep meaning both to Brahms and Joachim, to the latter of whom Brahms would have liked to dedicate the quartet. The four movements, Allegro non troppo, Andante moderato, Quasi minuetto moderato, and Allegro non assai are vaguely related by minute motives. The quartet in B-flat major is on the whole happy in character, in noticeable contrast to the melancholy which pervades that in A-minor.

## CÉSAR FRANCK'S STRING QUARTET

There is not, either in the quartets of Schumann or those of Brahms, any radical change from the so-called classical method. One is not surprised to find in Schumann's a concentration upon lyrical moments rather than an organic development. This is the mark of the romanticists. A thoughtful ear will detect the same underlying lyricism in those of Brahms, though Brahms' power of construction passes wholly unchallenged. In the matter of harmony neither composer is so modern as Schubert. Schumann, it is true, gives us the first allegro of a quartet in A minor in the key of F major. This is what one might call an external irregularity only. There are rhythmical oddities in all Schumann's music, and ever present evidence of a complicated rhythmical system in Brahms'. These peculiarities are represented in their quartets.

The quartets of able men like Robert Volkmann and Joachim Raff are not less classical. There are three quartets of Raff's which stand a little out of the general path; one in form of a suite, one called *Die schöne Müllerin*, and one in form of a canon. But in the main it may be said that the string quartets of all German composers down to the present day adhere closely to the model of the Rasumowsky quartets, not only in form, but in general harmonic principles. We must look to other countries for changes.

### III

Among the very great quartets, that in D minor by César Franck holds a foremost place. Vincent d'Indy remarks in his life of Franck that the great quartets have been the work of mature genius. Franck waited until his fifty-sixth year before attempting to write in the form. He prepared himself specially by a year's study of the quartets of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and even

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Brahms; and in 1889 began work upon what was to prove one of his indisputable masterpieces.

The peculiarities of Franck's style are striking and have been discussed at some length elsewhere in this series. They are clearly marked in the string quartet: the constant chromatic shifting of harmonies, the intensive cultivation of short phrases, the polyphonic skill, and the singular purity of thought that fills all his music with the spirit of cathedrals. His workmanship is everywhere fine, and shows at its best in the treatment of the four parts. The analogies which have been suggested between him and the great Bach are at least a little supported by the fact that Franck, like Bach, was influenced in all his work by the organ. The great chords in the opening portions of the quartet suggest organ music. Yet on the whole the style of the quartet is perfectly adapted to the instruments for which it was written.

The form is unusual. There is an opening section in D major, *poco lento*, an indescribably full and glorious expression of the fundamental musical thought of the entire work. It is complete in itself, but is followed without pause by the first allegro, in D minor. The allegro movement is regular in structure, except for the recurrence of the theme of the introduction as foundation for the first part of the development section, and again as coda. The first theme recalls motives in the first movement of the pianoforte quintet in F minor. There is a transitional theme in D minor (violin-cello) which plays a considerable part in this movement, and which later on is metamorphosed and becomes a part of the second theme of the last movement. The second theme of the first movement appears regularly in F major (first violin).

The first part of the development section is, as already suggested, a fugal treatment of the introductory motive. The tempo becomes *piu lento*, so that we seem

## STRUCTURE OF FRANCK'S QUARTET

to be listening to a section of music independent of the allegro. At the end of this fugal process the time becomes again allegro and the development of the first and second allegro themes, together with the transitional motive of the first section, proceed regularly according to classical traditions. The restatement is likewise regular; but the coda is built upon the opening motif. Hence the movement as a whole presents the interweaving of two quasi-independent movements, each very nearly complete in itself, and each consistently developed through its own proper course. In fact the three sections marked *Piu lento* could be joined to each other with scarcely a change of note; and the sections marked allegro likewise. The double scheme is carried out perfectly to the very end of the movement, even the coda itself playing with motives from both sections.

The Scherzo is in F-sharp minor, with a Trio in D major, delicate throughout; and the Largo is in B major. Of the latter nothing can be said in words that will represent the strange, devout exaltation of its beauty.

The last movement brings us face to face with the structural principles upon which Franck worked, and which are clear in the violin sonata, the works for pianoforte solo, the pianoforte quintet, and the symphony. The fragmentary introduction is a combination of snatches of music yet to be made fully known, and reminiscences of themes that have gone before: of the melody of the Largo; the rhythmical figures of the Scherzo and the motive of the Trio; and finally, as preparation for the last movement itself the violoncello sings once more the motive of the first introduction, and is answered by the first violin.

The *Allegro molto* begins after a pause. The first theme is given to the viola, a theme that is almost note for note the theme we have just had recalled to us.

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The entrance of the second theme is prepared by many anticipations. The theme is in three broad clauses, more or less widely separated from each other. The first of these is a changed form of transitional motive from the first movement. It is given out in sustained chords, a little slowly. The second clause (violins in unison) follows shortly after the restoration of the original tempo. This is considerably developed, dying away to a series of chords on the motive of the first clause (originally from the first movement). There is a powerful crescendo, and a dramatic stamping of chords as announcement to the third clause of the second theme (*molto energico*, first violin).

The development and restatement of this material follows the regular course of the sonata form. The coda brings back the motives of the Scherzo, and these, developed with the first theme (originally from the first introduction), lead up to a sublime chant of the melody of the Largo (in augmentation). A few measures, recitative built upon phrases of the first theme, and a short Presto bring the work to full completion.

The César Franck quartet is a great work, and it is a great quartet. The material is symphonic, but it is finely divided among the four instruments. There is rich sonority but no thickness. The lines of the form are clear, and it is not surprising to find genuine polyphony in the work of a man who, like Franck, possessed a technical skill that was instinctive. One may only raise a question as to whether this quartet is really a further development of the last Beethoven quartet, if indeed it is in principle of structure akin to them. In the matter of form it is strikingly different from the quartets of Schumann and Brahms, but is it not equally different from those of Beethoven? There is a more vital organization in the C-sharp minor quartet of Beethoven than can be explained by the presence of the same thematic material in all the movements.



The Flonzaley Quartet  
*From a photograph*







## VINCENT D'INDY'S QUARTETS

The entire work is in the nature of the development of a germinal thought. This thought expresses itself in various forms; in the initial fugue subject, in the gyrating theme of the second movement, in the half-barbaric dance of the last. The quartet is, broadly speaking, a series of variations, each outgrown from one before. The music literally grows. In the quartet of Franck it progresses, and its various themes are arranged. His method is nearer akin to the symphonic poems of Liszt, or to the *Symphonie Fantastique* of Berlioz. The affinities between the various movements of the C-sharp minor quartet are subtle, indeed almost not to be proved but only felt. In the quartet of César Franck, the relationships are evident and even striking. This question of form, however, concerns all branches of music, and is not peculiar to the quartet.

Among the many devoted pupils of César Franck one is distinguished by, among other things, two excellent quartets. This is Vincent D'Indy. The quartet in D major, opus 35, was composed in 1890, the second quartet, in E major, opus 45, in 1897. The second reveals two characteristic features of D'Indy's style: a use of folk-melodies, together with a powerful intellectual command of the principles of musical form. The cycle of four movements is constructed upon a single motive which is printed as a motto at the head of the score. The procedure recalls Schumann, particularly the *Sphinxes* of the *Carnaval*. There is a slow introduction in which the motive is made clear. An animated movement in sonata form then follows, of which the opening measures (cello) are sprung from the motive, and developed into a broad melody (first violin). After a lovely second theme (G major, first violin, initiated by viola) there is a long development of the motive and this first theme. In one section—*très calme*—the motive appears augmented—now for viola, now for first violin and at the same time violoncello (synco-

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pated). In the next section it is tossed about between the violins, over a repeated B (violoncello). Suggestions of the returning theme are given in C-sharp major (first violin) and in C-sharp minor (second violin). The second theme returns, regularly, in E major (viola).

In the following movement the motive is given in a piquant dance-like style (5-4). In the adagio (*très lent*) it forms the first notes of the chief melody (first violin and viola in unison); and in the last movement is reduced to an accompanying whirr, suggestive of the beginning of the last movement of the pianoforte quintet of Franck. It is likewise in the monotonous melody of the first violin, taken up by the 'cello, by the two violins in unison and repeated with a mad sort of swing. Near the end it is given a soft, gently songful character (first violin) in long notes, while the viola continues softly the same motive on a different degree of the scale and in a different rhythm.

There is an unfinished quartet in C minor, opus 35, by Ernest Chausson, consisting of three movements. The development of the first theme of the first out of the motive of the slow introduction is worthy of notice. The scherzo is delicate, but the best of the work is in the slow middle movement, with its calm interweaving of soft voices over a drowsy figure, and its moments of enraptured song.

There is a strong classical element, however, in the quartet of César Franck and even in d'Indy's quartet in E major. Both, compared with one of the later quartets of Beethoven, will appear more richly scored and harmonically more highly colored than the older work. And yet, in spite of the introduction of new ideas of form, the old ideas still are at the basis of these works. This is because both composers have adhered to the fundamental harmonic principles of the classics, the principle of a tonic key, of a dominant

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key, of keys that are contrasted with the tonic key. They have added to the heritage which passed from Beethoven and Schubert, through Chopin and Wagner, to them; but they have discarded no part of it, nor added to it except in kind. The richness of their works, however, must signalize a further and remarkable growth upon the ancient stock of Bach and Beethoven.

### IV

In a great many Russian quartets the adherence to established forms is even more evident. The three quartets of Tschaikowsky and the two of Borodine may be taken as representative of what we must now call the older Russian school. The well-known quartet in D (opus 11) by the former follows the classical model step by step as to the arrangement of themes and even the disposition of keys. And though the later quartets, in F (opus 22) and in E-flat minor (opus 30, written in memory of Ferdinand Laub [1832-1875], a famous violinist) present wild and even harsh features, the ground plan of them is essentially the classical plan. We have but to note in them a richer and more highly colored harmony, and a few sonorous effects—the muted beginning of the first part of the second movement in opus 11; the *pizzicato basso ostinato* in the second part of the same movement; the syncopated chords, the rolling accompaniment (cello in the development section) in the first movement of opus 22; and others.

It would, of course, be absurd to claim that the Tschaikowsky quartets are classical in style, or in spirit. Their quality is most intensely romantic. Rhythm, melody, and harmony have well-nigh a barbaric guise in many places. Yet they represent but modifications and alterations of a familiar plan. We

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have a new poem in a language that has not yet developed beyond our knowledge of it. Of the haunting beauty of these poems in music there is little need to speak.

Borodine in regard to form is classical. The first movement of the quartet in A is a masterpiece in clear construction. The exposition of the principal allegro theme is as simple as Haydn. The second theme follows regularly in E major. There is a development section with a little fugato, and a restatement of the chief themes, both in the tonic key. The first movement of the later quartet—in D major—is similarly regular in structure. And there is scarcely any structural oddity or newness in any of the subsequent movements. But Borodine, like Tschaikowsky, has added a touch of new colors here and there which mark an advance—at least technical—in handling the instruments together. His style is remarkably clear throughout. Note only the opening measures of the allegro. And it loses none of its transparency when it expands to effects of great sonority, as in the treatment of the second theme at the end of the development section, and of the first theme later on in the restatement. The use of harmonics in the Trio is almost unprecedented in quartet music.

The lovely effects in the slow movement of Tschaikowsky's quartet in D major, and these effects of Borodine's, remain within the limits of the quartet style. But they point most significantly towards an orchestral treatment of the group which becomes the unconscious aim of the majority of composers. It is difficult and perhaps absurd to define a quartet style. Still a certain transparency and a fineness of movement and drawing are peculiar to this combination alone; and it may be said that when the volume of sound is thickened, and the delicacy of movement coarsened; or when special tonal effects are introduced which add



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color at the expense of line, then those peculiar possibilities of the quartet are ignored. Hence music so written may be called orchestral, though only by comparison, of course, with the traditional quartet style, the outlines of which we have chosen to fix upon the model of Mozart and Beethoven.

The later Russian composers have almost without exception aimed at effects of sonority and color. For example there are five *Novelletes* by Glazounoff, opus 15; one *Alla Spagnola*, full of pizzicató, an *Orientale*, a *Valse*, and an *All'Ungherese*, all of which are made up of effects of color and rhythm. There is a *Quatuor Slave*, opus 26, the *Mazurka* of which is again wholly 'effective.' The final movement—*Une fête Slave*—might far better be written for orchestra. The earlier quartets, opus 1 and opus 10, are inconspicuous.

Mention should be made of the quartet written in honor of the publisher Belaieff, to which Rimsky-Korsakoff, Liadoff, Borodine and Glazounoff each contributed a movement. The same men, except Borodine, joined in another quartet called *Jour de fête*.

There are six quartets by Serge Taneieff, all carefully written but in the main orchestral. The third (D minor) is perhaps best known, but the fourth and fifth seem to me more significant. There are quartets by Alexander Gretchaninoff, by A. Kopyloff, by Nikolas Sokoloff. Most of the Russian composers have written one or two. Reinhold Glière, among the more recent, has been successful. A quartet in G minor, opus 20, was published in 1906. It shows some influence of the modern French movement in the matter of harmony; but unlike the recent French quartets, this is in most pronounced orchestral style. A glance over the final movement, an *Orientale*, will serve to show how completely the traditional quartet style may be supplemented by effects of color and wild sonority. In Taneieff there is trace of the older tradition; but elsewhere

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in the modern Russian quartets the ancient style has disappeared.

### V

The same tendency has become evident in the quartets of nearly all nations. The Grieg quartet offers a striking example. Here is a work which for lovers of Grieg must always have a special charm. Nowhere does he speak more forcefully or more passionately. There is a wild, almost a savage vitality in the whole work. But there is hardly a trace of genuine quartet style in any movement. In the statement of the first theme the viola, it is true, imitates the violin; but the second violin and the cello carry on a wholly orchestral accompaniment. The climax in this statement, and the measures before the second theme almost cry aloud for the pounding force of the piano, or the blare of trumpets and the shriek of piccolos. In fact almost through the entire movement the style is solid, without transparency and without flexibility of movement. The coda is the most startlingly orchestral of all. Measure after measure of a tremolo for the three upper instruments offers a harmonic background for the cello. The tremolo by the way is to be played *sul ponticello*, yet another orchestral manner. One cannot but recall the strange ending of the E major movement in Beethoven's quartet in C-sharp minor, where, too, the instruments play *sul ponticello*, but each one pursuing a clear course, adding a distinct thread to the diaphanous network of sound. Surely in the hands of Grieg quartet music has become a thing of wholly different face and meaning.

There have been magnificent quartets written in Bohemia. One by Smetana is a great masterpiece. But here again we have the orchestral style. The quartet—*Aus meinem Leben*—proved on this account so dis-

## SMETANA'S AUS MEINEM LEBEN

tasteful to the Society of Chamber Music in Prague that the players refused to undertake it. Smetana suspected, however, that sheer technical difficulty rather than impropriety of style was at the bottom of their refusal.\* Whatever the reason may have been, the work is supremely great. It seems to me there is no question of impropriety or change of style here. Smetana set himself to tell something of his life in music, and he chose the quartet because the four instruments speak as it were intimately, as he would himself speak in a circle of his friends about things which caused him more suffering than he could bear. We have then not a quartet, which is of all music the most abstract, or, if you will, absolute; but an outpouring of emotions. This is not *l'art pour l'art*, but almost a sublime agony of musical utterance.

As a quartet it stands unique—no piece of program music has accomplished more successfully the object of its composer than this. The first movement represents 'love of music in my youth, a predominating romanticism, the inexpressible yearning for something which I could neither name nor clearly define, and also a sort of portent of my future misfortune.' The second movement brought back memories of happy days when he wrote dance music for all the countryside, and was himself an impassioned dancer. And there is a slower section which tells of associations with the aristocracy. It is of this section that the players of Prague chiefly complained. A *Polka* rhythm runs through the whole movement. And after this thoughtlessly gay passage, the third movement speaks of his love for the woman who afterwards became his wife. The last movement speaks of the recognition of the awakening national consciousness in 'our beautiful art,' and his joy in furthering this until the day of his terrible affliction (deafness). At this place the music, which has

\* See William Ritter: *Smetana*. Paris, 1907.

## CHAMBER MUSIC

been unrestrainedly lighthearted and joyful, suddenly stops. The cello attacks a low C, the second violin and viola plunge into a shuddering dark series of harmonies, and over this the first violin for more than six measures holds a high, piercing E, symbolical of the chords, the ceaseless humming of which in his ears foretold his deafness. After this harrowing passage the music sinks sadly to the end with a reminiscence of hopes of earlier years (a theme from the first movement). No thematic or formal analysis can be necessary. The work is intense with powerful emotion from the first note to the last, and speaks with a directness that does not spare the listener thus introduced into the very heart of an unhappy and desperate man. The general orchestral style is noticeable at the beginning, and in the fateful passage at the end. In the second section of the second movement there is a phrase (viola) to be played *quasi Tromba*. This is later taken up by the second violin, and still later by the first violin and viola in octaves. The form is regular and clear-cut, the technical skill of the highest order. There is a later quartet, in D minor, which is irregular, fragmentary, explosive. The writing is here, too, orchestral. There is an excess of frantic unison passages, of mad tremolo, as there is also at the beginning of the last movement.

In the quartets of Dvořák the orchestral manner is not so evident, but none of his quartets is emotionally so powerful as Smetana's great work. Dvořák brings the quartet back into its proper sphere. His instinct for effects shows itself at the very beginning. Notice in his first quartet—in D minor, opus 34, dedicated to Johannes Brahms—the presentation of the second theme in the first movement: the rolling figure for cello, the persistent figure for the viola which by holding to its shape acquires an independent significance, and over these the duet between first and second violin. The

## DVOŘÁK'S QUARTETS

varied accompaniment in the second movement is well worth study.

The whole first movement of the second quartet—E-flat major, opus 51—is perfectly adapted to the four string instruments. Every part has an independence and a delicate free motion. The second movement, a *Dumka*, is one of his masterpieces in chamber music, and the following *Romanze* is almost its equal. The final movement cannot but suggest Schumann. The third and fourth quartets, opus 61 and opus 80, lack the inspiration of the two earlier ones.

In our time we come to the famous quartet in F major, opus 96, written in Spillville, Iowa, in June, 1893. One may call it the little sister of the New World Symphony, which had been composed shortly before in New York City. Like the bigger work it is founded upon motives and themes which have characteristics common to the music of the American negro. Some say these same characteristics are common to music in Bohemia and Hungary, even to Scottish music. Hence the discussion which has raged from time to time over the New World Symphony, though the title of the symphony was of Dvořák's own choosing;\* and the quartet, and the quintet which followed it (opus 97) have likewise been made a bone of contention. However, it must be granted by all alike that the quartet is one of the most successful pieces of chamber music that has been written. Nowhere does Dvořák's style show to better advantage, and few, if any quartets, are better adapted to the nature of the instruments for which they were written.

Two later quartets, opus 105, in A-flat major, and opus 106, in G major, do not compare favorably, at least from the point of view of musical vitality, with the earlier works.

\* From the New World.

## CHAMBER MUSIC

### VI

Merely to mention the composers who have written string quartets and to enumerate their works would fill a long chapter, and to little avail. Haydn gave the quartet a considerable place among the forms of musical composition. Mozart's six quartets dedicated to Haydn are almost unique as an expression of his genius not influenced by external circumstances. The last Beethoven quartets are the final and abstract account of that great man's conclusions with life and his art. Since the day of these three masters few composers have brought to the form such a special intention. Few string quartets since that day contain a full and special expression of the genius of the men who composed them. We look to other forms for the essentials of their contribution to the art of music. Indeed, among the men who have been discussed in this chapter there are few whose quartets are of real significance or of a merit that is equal to that of their other works.

As to form there has been little radical change down to the time of the recent composers who have abandoned deliberately all that it was possible to abandon of classical tradition. Of them and their work we shall speak presently. Schumann, Brahms, Tschaikowsky and Borodine, Smetana and Dvořák, and even César Franck and Vincent D'Indy have adhered closely to the classical model, varying it and adding to it, but never discarding it.

In the matter of style and technique most of the advance has been made in the direction of special effects, already described, and of increased sonority. With the result that the ancient and traditional quartet style has given way in most cases to an orchestral style, in which effects are essentially massive and broad, which

## MODERN QUARTETS: DEBUSSY

is a tapestry, not a web of sound. Take, for example, three quartets by modern composers of yesterday: that of Tschaiakowsky in D, Smetana's *Aus meinem Leben*, and César Franck's. If these are not the greatest since Schubert they have at least few companions; and they represent more than those of Brahms, we think, the development in technique as well as the change in style that the century brought. There are few pages in any one of them which do not show fine and sensitive workmanship; but the tone of all three is unmistakably *orchestral*, in the sense that it is massive, sensuous, and richly sonorous.

It is then with some surprise that we find what at the present day we call the modern movement expressed in three quartets which are as conspicuous for delicate quartet style as for the modernness of their forms and harmonies.

Debussy's quartet was written comparatively early (1893), not more than three or four years after Franck had completed his. It is not a work of his first period, however, of the time when he was still a disciple of Wagner. Rather it belongs to the second period of which *L'isle joyeuse*, and *Estampes*, for piano, *L'après-midi d'un faune*, for orchestra, and the opera 'Pelleas and Melisande,' are, with it, representative works. It is written according to his own ideas of harmony, explained elsewhere in this series, and hence may be taken as the first quartet in which the classical tradition has been radically altered if not wholly disregarded. For the forms of sonata, symphony, and quartet were founded upon a system of harmony. Musical material, however freely disposed, rested upon a basis of key and contrasting keys common to all music of that era, the passing of which seems now before us. The Debussy quartet is constructed thematically in a way which in principle is old and familiar, but upon a basis which transforms the work beyond recognition

## CHAMBER MUSIC

of those to whom his harmonic series is not yet familiar.

There is little to be said of the plan of the work. The four movements are constructed upon a single phrase. Men wrote suites that way in the early seventeenth century. This phrase, in which there are two motives, is given out at once by the first violin, solidly supported by the other instruments. The movement is *animé et très décidé*. There is an impassioned abandon to sound. Secondary motives are given out: by the violin under which the three other instruments rise and fall in chords that whirr like the wind; by the cello, the same wind of harmony blowing high above. Then again the opening motives, growing from soft to loud; and a new motive (first violin and viola in tenths), over a monotonous twisting (second violin and cello in sixths). Then comes a retard. One would expect a second theme here. The harmony rests for a moment on F-sharp minor, and there is a snatch of melody (first violin). But for those broad harmonic sections of the sonata there is here no regard. The key flashes by. The melody was but a clever change rung upon the opening phrase. It comes again following an impetuous and agitated crescendo. Note how after this the music rushes ever up and up, and with what a whirling fall it sinks down almost to silence; how over a hushed triplet figure on an imperfect fifth (A-flat—D, cello) it gains force again, and the opening phrases recur, and something again of the secondary motives. There is perfect order of all the material, an order hardly differing from that of the classical sonata; but the harmonies melt and flow, they have no stable line, they never broaden, never rest. And so all seems new, and was, and still is new.

The second movement (*assez vif et bien rythmé*) is in the nature of a scherzo. Four pizzicato chords begin, and then the viola gives out the chief idea, an easily-



## MODERN QUARTETS: DEBUSSY

recognized variant of the fundamental idea announced at the beginning of the first movement. But this is used first as a *tenore ostinato* (if one may speak of it so). It is repeated by the viola fourteen times without variation; then five times by first violin, and twice, dying away, by cello. Meanwhile the other instruments are at something the same monotonous game. Nothing is clear. There are cross-rhythms, broken phrases, a maze of odd movements, independent of each other.

Then follows a passage of different character. The lower instruments weave a network of faint sound, and the violin has a phrase, clearly related to the fundamental motive, though greatly augmented. Then the queer rioting chatter of the first part comes back, all the instruments *pizzicato*, the time 15/8.

The third movement (*andantino, doucement expressif*) presents the motive (first violin) wrapped so to speak in a veil of melody and thus disguised. The last movement, beginning slowly and working up to frenzy, brings every sort of fragmentary suggestion of this motive. It is particularly noticeable in augmentation (first violin) about the middle of the movement; and this middle section is developed to a tremendous climax at the height of which the first violin gives out the whole phrase (*avec passion et très contenu*) in broad octaves. A short coda (*très vif*) brings yet another transformation.

The style of the whole quartet is decidedly homophonic. There are some measures, now and then passages of several measures, in which there is only an harmonic effect; but for the most part there is one instrument treated as the solo instrument; usually the first violin. Page after page presents the familiar scheme of melody and accompaniment. There is almost no trace of a polyphonic method, none of conventional counterpoint, of fugal imitations.

Such devices were essential to the older quartet style.

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Accompaniment figures were abominable in music which passed through definite and long harmonic sections. Even the tremolo was not often satisfactory, and, being indistinct, tended to make the style orchestral. But here we have to do with a fluent harmony that is almost never still, that does not settle, as it were, into well-defined lakes of sound on which a theme may start forth with all sail set. Hence the accompanying parts move with a free and wide motion. The style is flexible and animated, and thoroughly suited to the quartet.

The fineness of Debussy's conceptions offers the key to the subtlety of his technique. He handles the instruments with a touch the delicacy of which has hardly been equalled. He has new things to whisper. The whirring figures beginning in the thirteenth measure, the triplet figures (in sixth) after another statement of the principal motive, over which, or interlaced with which, there is a melody for violin, followed strangely by the viola; the wide accompanying figures for violin and cello in contrary motion, not long before the end of the first movement; all these are effects proper, though somewhat new, to the quartet style. The first section of the second movement is a masterpiece of quartet writing. Each instrument is at odds with the others. In listening one could hardly say how many different parts were at work in the music. Nowhere has the pizzicato been used with better effect. The second section of the same movement offers a contrasting effect of vagueness and quiet. The slow movement is newly beautiful, and the last movement dramatic. By the treatment of the instruments the quartet may stand as a masterpiece, the most conspicuous development properly in quartet technique since the last quartets of Beethoven.

The quartet in F major by Maurice Ravel shows an instinct for the instruments not less sensitive or deli-

## SCHÖNBERG'S SEXTET

cate, and in a few places even more bold. But the form of the work is more conventionally organized than that of Debussy. There are distinct themes, regularly constructed in four-measure phrases, and occurring regularly according to established plans. The harmonies, however, are all fluent, so that the sound of the work belies its close kinship to the past.

And Ravel is a master of the quartet style. The opening measures have a suave polyphonic movement. There is polyphony in the treatment of the second theme as it is taken up by second violin and woven with a countermelody by the first. And when he is not polyphonic he has the same subtlety of harmonic procedure that distinguishes Debussy's quartet. The beginning of the second movement (*assiz vif—très rythmé*) seems to me not so extraordinary as the beginning of the second movement in Debussy's quartet, but it offers a brilliant example of the use of pizzicato effects. The muted sections in the middle of this movement; the accompaniment figures *quasi arpa*; the same sort of figures in the following slow movement combined with pizzicato notes of the cello; and the extraordinary figures in the 5/4 section of the last movement, indeed all the last movement, are all signs of the new development in a quartet style which is not an orchestral style.

Finally the quartet, opus 7, by Arnold Schönberg. The work was composed in 1905. Among earlier works there are songs, a string sextet, *Verklärte Nacht*, the *Gurre-Lieder*, for solo voices, chorus and orchestra, and a symphonic poem, 'Pelleas and Melisande.' Later works include a second string quartet (1907-8), five pieces for orchestra, a monodrama, *Erwartung*, and a few pieces for pianoforte.

The *Verklärte Nacht* is a work of rich, sensuous beauty. At the head of the score are printed lines from a poem by Richard Dehmals, which are either utterly

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decadent or naïve. They are beautiful, too. So prefaced, the sextet proves to be a symphonic poem, in which the composer has chosen to confine himself to the limited possibilities of tone color within the range of the six instruments. There are two violins, two violas and two cellos. The harmonies are richly varied and free, but not at all unfamiliar. The form is the progressive form made possible by the system of leading or characteristic motives. All follows the poem very closely. The opening is depressed and gloomy. The repeated low D's (second cello and second viola) seem to suggest the lifeless tread of the man and woman, going unhappily through the cold barren grove. The sadly falling phrases (first viola, later with violins) are indicative of their mood. After considerable development, which clearly stands for the woman's confession of sin and woe, comes a beautiful section in E major which seems to reflect her dream that in motherhood she should find happiness. This is roughly broken off. The situation demands it. For having come with child by a strange man for whom she had no love, she finds herself now walking with one whom she would have greatly preferred. However, the man is generous, finds that his love for her has made a child of him, and that he and she and the babe unborn are to be transfigured by the strength of that love. At the end, following this amorous exaltation, the music broadens and gradually takes on an almost unearthly beauty.

Technically, as regards the treatment of the instruments, the sextet is extraordinary. The additional cello and viola make it possible to employ the pronounced color of the upper tones of these instruments and at the same time reserve the resonant lower notes as a foundation. Much use is made of harmonics, especially toward the end, where full chords are given that ethereal quality so like a flute that one may easily

## SCHÖNBERG'S FIRST QUARTET

be misled into thinking wind instruments must have joined in the ensemble.

The quartet is radically different. The sextet is emotionally rich and vital; the quartet is in the first place a vast intellectual essay. There are moments in the Adagio section, and toward the close, where music speaks in common language thoughts which are noble and inspired. For the most part, however, the quartet is in a language which whatever may be its future is incomprehensible to many to-day. One approaches it as through a new grammar. One must first seek to master the logic behind it, both in the matter of its broad form and in the idiom of its harmonies. There are many who feel this language a sort of Esperanto, artificial, not to say factitious. There are more and more who recognize naturalness and spontaneity in it.

As to the harmonic idiom and the mathematical polyphony back of it something has been written in an earlier volume. A detailed analysis of the form is not possible without many examples from the score, for which there is no space in this chapter. Only a few features of it may be touched upon here.

The work is in a single movement, within the limits of which movements which in earlier quartets were separate have been arranged and combined as sections corresponding to the triple divisions in the old-fashioned sonata-form, with a widely extended coda. Where in the classical sonata-form there are single themes, in these divisions there are many themes. Therefore one speaks of a first theme, really a chief-theme, *group*, of transitional *groups*, of episodic though broadly developed Scherzo and Adagio.

In the first theme group there are three distinct themes. The first is announced at once (D minor) by the first violin, a theme not unlike one of Richard Strauss'. In the fourteenth measure the second theme is brought in by the second violin (D-flat major). This

## CHAMBER MUSIC

is taken up by the first violin, the whole period being eight measures long. The third theme (*etwas langsamer*) is a combination of a melodic formula (first and second violins) and characteristic harmonies (viola and cello). There follow many pages of polyphonic working with this threefold material. The first theme of the group may be said to predominate. It appears in varied shape throughout the separate parts.

What may be taken as a transitional section, leading to the second theme group, is a long fugato on a new subject. This is introduced by the second violin (first violin with secondary subject) after a considerable ritard and a pause. The passage grows rapidly faster, leading to a tremendous climax; after which the first of the second theme group is announced (first violin, *zart bewegt, E-flat major*). The second follows shortly after with a change of time (6/4). Here there is beautiful scoring. The first violin is at first silent, the second bearing the melody, the viola giving soft accompaniment figures, the cello sliding down, pianissimo, in long notes. Then the melody is taken by viola, the first violin has the long sliding phrases, the cello the breaking figure. The third part of this section (*etwas bewegter*) brings out in the first violin a rhythmically varied form of the first theme of the same group.

Now follows the first broad development section (*erste Durchführung und Überleitung in Scherzo* \*), which leads to the Scherzo. The entrance of the Scherzo is prepared and easily heard, and the Scherzo itself is scored at first in note for note style. The principal theme is closely related to the subject of the transitional fugue. It works through many stages, now *kräftig*, now *sehr zart*, to a terrific climax, echoed in harmonics, and savagely terminated. A few mysterious measures, now muted and again without mutes,

\* See Schönberg's own analysis in *Die Musik*, June 2, 1907.

## SCHÖNBERG'S QUARTET

bring in the Trio (*lebhaft*, E major) the principal theme of which is of almost folk-song simplicity. The Scherzo is repeated, varied almost beyond recognition. The theme is given first to viola, between strange triplet figures (second violin and cello).

Then follows a second development section, working up again to an overpowering climax, leading to the first theme group, as to the restatement section in the sonata-form. This reëntrance of the theme is truly heroic. The second violin and viola actually dash down upon the opening notes, and the first violin and cello add a frenzy of accompaniment. Now we have the first theme group (shortened) again; and then, instead of the transitional fugue, a long and developed Adagio, page after page of muted music of unearthly, ghostly beauty. Two themes are recognizable, and the section may be divided into three parts, the first of which rests upon the first theme (first violin solo); the second upon the second theme, slower than the first (viola), and the third upon the first again, slightly modified.

After this adagio comes the second theme group, just as the second theme in the restatement section of the classical sonata form.

Finally there is a coda, in lively tempo, a rondo built upon three themes, the first two of which are taken from the adagio. The broad closing section brings back the opening theme of all, in major. The ending is very simple and quiet.

Hence we have one huge movement in sonata form, our old familiar exposition, with its first and second themes and its transitional passages; its development—in which a scherzo is incorporated; its restatement of both themes—with a new transitional passage between them in the shape of an adagio—and its broad, completing coda. The mind of a man has conceived it; and the mind of man can comprehend it.

## CHAMBER MUSIC

The harmonies are often hideous, though no note in the entire quartet is without a logical justification in the new grammar. On the other hand, there are moments of ineffable beauty. Whatever the outcome, there can be no denying that the quartet has entered here upon a new stage, far removed from all other music. Only time can tell whether this is an advance, and then only by showing new work when this shall have proved itself a foundation on which to build.

Schönberg has since written another quartet (1907-8). It is not only shorter as a whole than the earlier one, but is divided by pauses into four separate movements. There is, however, a thematic relationship between all four; and the third movement—*Litanie*—occupies in the scheme the place of a *Durchführung*, a variation and weaving together of all the previous themes.

The first movement begins and ends in F-sharp minor, and there are two distinct themes: the opening theme (first violin), and, after a broad ritard, a second theme (first violin, *sehr ausdrucksvoll*). The time is measured yet often free. After a development of the two themes there is a *fermata*, and then a restatement of them; so that on the whole the movement is not difficult to follow, though the second half is complex and long.

The second movement (*sehr rasch*) is in the nature of a wild scherzo. The rhythmical motive with which it starts (cello, *pianissimo*) recalls the now ancient style of Wagner. There is no precedent for the following figure (second violin), which is one of the chief elements in this fantastical movement. It is taken up by viola immediately, while both violins present at the same time two equally important motives, one of which is a sort of syncopated shadow of the other. Then, *etwas langsamer*, the first violin and viola give out yet a fourth motive (in octaves) and out of these four,



## SCHÖNBERG'S SECOND QUARTET

with many less audible, a cacophonous, spiteful tangle of sounds ensues. There is a Trio section (*etwas rascher*), and a return of the Scherzo. There is a short coda, *sehr rasch*, all instruments in unison (or octaves) until the last measures. Then the cello beats out the opening rhythmical figure, fortissimo, on D, the first violin shrieks G-C-sharp over and over again, the viola and second violin fall together through unheard of intervals. There is a hush, a roar, and a hush—a pizzicato note—unison—silence.

Both the third and the fourth movements bring in a soprano voice. The words are from Stephan George;\* the titles: *Litanei* and *Entrückung*. Here Schönberg has gone beyond the string quartet, and here properly we may leave him. The instruments are busy during the *Litanei* with motives from the first and second movements. The voice is independent of them. There is enormous dramatic force in the climax at the words:

*Wacht noch ein Schrei  
Töte das Sehnen . .  
Schliesse die Wunde!  
Nimm mir die Liebe  
Gieb mir dein Glück.*

In the last movement there is no appreciable form. There is no harmony, i.e., no regular sequence of keys, though the end falls on a common chord. Even the melody has gone on into a new world.

Schönberg's style is fundamentally polyphonic, and is in that regard fitting to the quartet. In the use of harmonics and pizzicato he stands a little ahead of his contemporaries. If we can follow Schönberg in his new conception of form and harmony, we should indeed be reactionary if we hesitated longer to admit harmonics and pizzicato into the category of effects proper to quartet music. Moreover, the examples of-

\* *Der siebente Ring.*

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ferred by such exquisite masterpieces as the quartets of Tschaikowsky, Debussy and Ravel must give to such procedures the sanction of good usage. That Schönberg's material is symphonic in character only goes to prove that the whole question of form and style is at the present day one which no man can definitely answer.

But having admitted the influence of modern virtuosity and of the modern love of sensuous tone coloring into the realm of the string quartet, we face a new idea of the combination of the four instruments of one type. The old idea of the quartet was given fullest expression in the quartets of Beethoven. In the expression of that idea little progress has since been possible. The changes that have come have made of the quartet something like a chamber symphony in which effects of solid sound and of brilliant and pronounced colors predominate, music that has salt for the senses as well as meaning for the spirit. Hence it has lost that traditional quality of abstractness, which was pure and unalloyed, and has become poignant, fiery, pictorial or dramatic. We hear in it now the strumming of wild zithers, now the beat of savage drums, madness and ecstasy, chords that are plucked, chords that float in air, even confusion and riot of sound. The four instruments still remain, but the old idea of the quartet has become lifeless or has passed from among the present ideals of men.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE PIANOFORTE AND OTHER INSTRUMENTS IN CHAMBER MUSIC

The trio—Pianoforte quartets and quintets—Sonatas for violoncello and piano—The piano with wind instruments—Chamber music for wind instruments by the great composers.

THE pianoforte has always played an important part in chamber music, if, indeed, the best pianoforte music may not itself be considered chamber music. Few instrumental works were written during the seventeenth century in which the harpsichord was not supposed to furnish a foundation of harmony, or was not expected to contribute more specifically to the texture of the music. The concertos and sonatas of Corelli and Vivaldi, of Bach and Handel, of Couperin and Rameau, of Purcell; all these were founded upon a figured bass, to be played by harpsichord, lute or viol, or contained a part written for the harpsichord. The figured bass gradually dropped out of music as composers gained skill to manage their combinations of instruments sonorously. Out of this skill grew up the orchestra, and, in the realm of chamber music, the string quartet. But meanwhile composers were developing a great technique in writing for the harpsichord, so that it came little by little wholly to supplant the lute, and to win a distinguished, independent place of its own as a solo instrument. There are concertos of Bach and Couperin in which the harpsichord plays almost as brilliant a part as in the modern concerto, and the violin sonatas of Bach are virtually in the style of trios, because the

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harpsichord is treated always as adding two parts to the one of the violin. Finally, the modern trio really grew up around the harpsichord or the pianoforte.

### I

The trios of the seventeenth century—the *Sonate a tre*—were written for three concertizing instruments and a figured bass, really four parts in all. During the eighteenth century the word trio took on quite a different significance and was applied to compositions written for the harpsichord with *one* other solo instrument, violin, oboe, or flute, like the violin sonatas of Bach. Vaguely at the time of the young Haydn, clearly when Mozart entered the world of music, the word took on the meaning that it still holds to-day: a composition written for three instruments, pianoforte, violin and cello. If another combination of instruments is meant, then those instruments are usually specifically designated in the title of the work.

The Haydn Trios are of little importance. There are thirty-five in all, and it has been said that the majority were written for a patron who played the cello a very little. Hence one finds the cello part in this combination to be merely a duplication of the bass part of the pianoforte, having little independent movement of its own; and the works are rather sonatas with violin than trios.

Mozart, on the other hand, treated the combination with a fine sense of the effects that could be made with it. He gave to each of the three instruments a free line of its own, and made fine use of the possibilities of tonal contrast and color. There are eight trios in all. They are not representative of Mozart's best, though there is not one in which Mozart's inimitable grace is lacking; but in spite of their slenderness they may be

## THE BEETHOVEN TRIOS

considered the first pianoforte trios in the modern sense, and to have set the model for subsequent works in that form.

These are not very numerous, if one excludes from them a great number of fantasias or popular operas such as were written by Woelfl, Nicholas Lomi and other composers of the virtuoso type. Nor does the form show much development except that which accompanies an improvement in pianofortes and a progress in technical skill on all these instruments. Only a few trios stand out conspicuously as having high musical worth, or as having been a worthy expression of genius.

There are eight trios by Beethoven. Of these three were published as opus 1, and hardly show an advance over the trios of Mozart, if indeed they do not fall considerably short of them in point of finish and style. Two were not published in his life-time, and one of these is only a fragment, a single movement in B-flat major, composed in June, 1812, for Maximilian Brentano. There are, then, but three that are representative of the mature Beethoven, two published as opus 70, and one, in B-flat major, opus 97, dedicated to his favorite pupil, the Archduke Rudolph. The writing for the three instruments is especially clear in the first allegro of opus 70, No. 1, a lively, vivacious movement in D major. The slow movement of this trio is rather remarkably scored for the pianoforte, which is almost constantly engaged in tremolos, strange broken trills, and runs. The last movement is full of Beethoven's humor, very distinctly in the swing of a folk-song. Throughout there is much brilliant work for the piano, and a ceaseless witty interchange between the other two parts. There is an extraordinary pedal point before the return to the first section, which is just touched upon at the end. The second of this pair of trios is not less brilliantly arranged for the three instruments.

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The variations in the second movement are finer than the variations in the earlier works. There is folk-song again in the third movement, a smooth *allegretto* in A-flat major. Both trios are extraordinarily clear and happy in mood.

The trio opus 97 is one of the biggest of Beethoven's works. The contents are more symphonic than those of his other trios, and recall something of the spirit of the quartets of opus 59. There is, indeed, a marked similarity between the opening theme of this trio and that of the quartet opus 59, No. 1, especially in the broad line of the melody. Yet though on the whole the effect of this great trio may be orchestral, there are not lacking measures of finest style, like those which follow the second theme in the first movement, with the touch or two of delicate imitation, then the soft melody of the cello with the dainty scale on the pianoforte, and then the cello and violin in octaves, with the scales on the pianoforte becoming more and more active and noisy. Immediately after, it is all cleverly changed about; the strings have those lively scales and the pianoforte the melody. The scoring of the whole Scherzo, too, is especially in trio style, and may well be taken as a model. The andante and variations, and even more the last movement, are, however, hardly in the style of chamber music, and the vigorous passion of the ideas in them does considerable violence to the essentially delicate combination.

The combination is without doubt one of the most difficult to treat with success, partly because the pianoforte may be very easily led to overpower its fellow instruments, partly because notes in the lower ranges of the cello have so little carrying quality that except in very soft passages they cannot be heard in the combination. It must be said that the general development in pianoforte technique did much to overthrow the balance and adjustment so charming in the trios of Mozart

## TRIO: SCHUBERT, MENDELSSOHN, SCHUMANN

and in those of opus 70 by Beethoven. Between Beethoven's last trio, opus 97, and the trios of Brahms there is hardly a single one that does not suffer from maladjustment.

The two trios of Schubert, opus 99, in B-flat, and opus 100 in E-flat, are full of inspiration, and Schubert's fancy is so delicate that on the whole he may be said to have succeeded with the combination. Certainly the little canon which forms the Scherzo in the second trio is a masterpiece of style. Also the announcement of the chief theme in the first trio and the way in which it is developed cannot be found fault with; nor is the charming D-flat section in the finale less perfect. But in the scherzo there are rather weak accompaniments scored for the strings in the orchestral manner of double stops, and there are similar passages at the beginning of the transition to the second theme in the first movement of the second trio. These are here acceptable because of the sheer beauty of the material which is thus presented; but one cannot deny that this would find even lovelier expression with a group of three strings. In the *Andante con moto* the impropriety of style is more evident; but one will forgive anything in this inspired movement, which later is to stand like a shadow behind the *Marcia* in Schumann's great pianoforte quintet.

Mendelssohn wrote two trios, one in D minor, one in C minor, which, after having for years been favorites with players and public alike, are now sinking out of sight. In these the treatment of the pianoforte is brilliant; and though it may not be said to overbalance the strings, it certainly outshines them. Mention should be made of Marschner's trio in G minor, opus 110, because it so clearly influenced Schumann in his own quartet in A minor. Five trios of Spohr's were once well known, but they represent no change or development either in style or form; and even that in E minor, opus 119,

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which has been prized almost to the present day because of its melodiousness, is fast being abandoned.

Schumann's trios—in D minor, opus 63, in F major, opus 80, and in G minor, opus 110—have at any rate a beauty of inspiration. They are romantic and poetic as his other works are, and the warmth of them is sufficient to melt a cold criticism. That in D minor is perhaps the best, and the scherzo, especially the middle section of it, with its smooth theme looking forward to the trio in Brahms' first pianoforte sonata, is admirable in style.

The three trios of Brahms are masterpieces. The first, opus 8, in B major, was an early work and was revived years later and republished in the form in which it is now generally familiar. But even in its revived shape it is inferior to the two later trios, in C major, opus 87, and in C minor, opus 101, though the opening theme is of a haunting beauty, and the scherzo, suggesting that in Beethoven's opus 97, is in piquant and effective style.

In the first movement of the C major trio the violin and cello seem like two noble and equal voices throughout. Their course is bold and free. They are never overshadowed by the pianoforte. It seems to be largely Brahms' treatment of the cello that makes these works so perfectly satisfying in sound and style. He showed always a fondness for deep low notes. Sometimes his music suffers from it. But here, in these trios, it gains immensely. For, as we have said, one of the greatest difficulties of writing in good style for this combination of instruments is to be met in handling the low notes of the cello. Brahms seems to have done it almost instinctively. From the beginning of the first movement, with its full-throated octaves, to the very end of the whole, the cello never for one measure fails to equal the violin in effectiveness. Very often they are made to play together in octaves, and in places, as in the



## BRAHMS' TRIOS

course of the second theme, they hold long notes two octaves apart, defining the sonority so to speak, within the limits of which the piano moves alone, filling the wide space with richest sound. Again, at the beginning of the *Andante con moto* violin and cello are two octaves apart. He combines them in bold chords which challenge the pianoforte, assert their own independence, as here, not long before the middle section of this *andante*, or at the beginning of the trio in C minor, opus 101. He allows one fully to support the other without the pianoforte, as in the *Andante Grazioso* of the C minor. All through these truly magnificent works one is struck by the comradeship and equality of the two strings, and this, together with the way the pianoforte is adapted to them, leads us to say that there are no trios so perfect in style as these two of Brahms. It might even be added that it would be hard to match them in nobility of content.

Mention may be made here of two other trios by Brahms in which he has shown himself no less a master of the difficult task of combining three instruments of utterly different qualities and range. One of these is the famous trio in E-flat, opus 40, for piano, violin and horn. The horn may, it is true, be interchanged with cello or viola, but only at the cost of the special tone color which makes the work such a favorite. The other is the trio for pianoforte, clarinet, and cello, a work which, together with the masterly quintet for clarinet and strings, opus 115, is proof of Brahms' admiration for the clarinet playing of Professor Mühlfeld. Both these trios are almost unique in their perfection.

One is at a loss to mention more trios which are at all comparable to those of Brahms. It is in the main true that the pianoforte finally took such complete possession of the trio that trios were no more than brilliant concert sonatas or concertos. The Russians, headed by Rubinstein, have written many trios. Rubinstein's, as

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might be expected, were far too brilliant for the pianoforte. Tschaikowsky's only trio, opus 50, written to the memory of Nicholas Rubinstein, is one of his most impassioned works. Whatever improprieties of style there may be, its emotional force cannot be resisted. He admitted a fear that, having all his life written for the orchestra, he might not have adapted the musical combination to his thoughts. Yet in spite of the general orchestral style of treatment, this trio remains one of the most moving of all chamber music compositions.

Also among Russian trios may be mentioned that by Arensky in D minor, which is wholly delightful. The swing of the first theme in the first movement is impelling, and the whole scherzo with its touch here and there of waltz rhythms, and the fleet scales on the keyboard, are effective. Paul Juon's capricious fantasia on 'Gösta Berling' is interesting.

Dvořák's trios are worthy of study. Of the three—in G minor, opus 26, in F minor, opus 65, and the Dumky, opus 90—the last two are the most interesting, and also the most Bohemian in character. The treatment of the pianoforte is brilliant. At times the cello is used a little unworthily, that is to say, merely to accentuate low notes or to add a sort of barbaric strumming; yet on the whole Dvořák's treatment of the two strings is not very unlike that of Brahms. There is a great deal of octave playing between them, notably at the very beginning of opus 65, in the second section of the allegretto, and now and then in the various sections of the Dumky. The cello is given long and impassioned solos, or takes a full part with the violin in dialogues. On the whole Dvořák makes more use of the upper registers; but again, in the manner of Brahms, he knows how to use the low without concealing it beneath the heavier tone of the piano. The whole section, *vivace non troppo*, which follows the first *poco adagio*, is excellently scored for the three instruments. Notice

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how at first the cello holds a low C-sharp, supporting the light melody of the violin and the light staccato accompaniment of the piano; how as the music grows more furious the cello adds a G-sharp above its C-sharp. When at last the piano breaks into the melody, violin and cello take equal parts in the series of sharp, detached chords which accent its rhythm. Again the melody is given to the violin, an octave higher than at first, and the cello gives an accompaniment of single notes and chords, while between the two the piano plays the whirlwind. After all this subsides, the cello rises up from the deep in a broad solo cadenza. It must be granted that the musical value of the notes allotted to the cello in this section is not high; but the point is the admirable spacing of the three instruments which allows each to display a peculiar sonority and all to join in a rich and exceedingly animated and varied whole. Elsewhere in these trios there is a fine polyphonic style. Much of the vitality of the music comes from the vivid nature of the national rhythms and melodies out of which it is constructed. These trios, then, are hardly comparable to the classic trios of Brahms. Yet they seem to be the most effective and the most successful trios that have been written since Beethoven, with the exception only of Brahms' two and Tschaikowsky's one.

The French composers have not given much attention to the trio. César Franck's first works were three short trios, but they are without conspicuous merit. Two trios by Lalo are pleasingly scored. Among the trios of Saint-Saëns that in E-flat major, opus 18, is the most effective. The pianoforte part is especially brilliant, yet does not throw the combination out of adjustment.

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### II

There are more brilliant and more distinguished works for the combination of pianoforte, violin, viola, and cello. Inasmuch as one of the difficulties in writing trios is the wide spaces between the natural registers of cello and violin, and this is here filled up by the viola, the pianoforte quartets of the last fifty years maintain a higher standard than the trios. Moreover the general effect is more satisfactory, because the three strings have naturally an independent and complete life, and are more equal to withstanding the onslaughts of the pianist.

The Schumann pianoforte quartet in E-flat, opus 47, is practically the first work in this form of importance, and it has remained unexcelled in beauty and romantic fervor. As to style, one notices in the very first measures the fullness and completeness of the parts for the strings, and throughout the entire work the effect of the three stringed instruments is very like that of a string quartet. In the scherzo and in the opening sections of the finale as well even the piano is treated as a single part in a quartet, not as a sort of foundation or a furnisher of harmonies and accompaniments to the others.

The Schumann piano quintet, opus 44, is even more famous than the quartet. Here the problem is still simpler, for the piano quintet is but a combination of two independent groups: the full string quartet and the pianoforte. The piano must still be handled with care else it will overpower its companions; but the complete resources of the four strings make possible contrasts between them and the piano, measures in which the piano may be quite silent, and others in which it less fills up the harmony than adds its own color to the sonority. The first broad section of the development in the first movement becomes, therefore, almost a pi-

## BRAHMS' QUARTETS AND QUINTET

anoforte concerto; whereas other sections like the second trio in the scherzo are in the nature of a concerto for string quartet and orchestra. In the beginning of the last movement the strings are treated too much in an orchestral manner. There is no trace of the fineness of the quartet which should never quite disappear in this big combination. Later on the strings, however, are handled with the greatest delicacy, as in the fugal parts before the last fugue. Here, where the theme of the first movement comes back into the music with splendor, there is perfection of style. But whatever may be the technical merits or faults of this quintet as a quintet, as music it is inspired from beginning to end.

From the time of Schumann, who may be said to have left the model and set the standard for all subsequent pianoforte quartets and quintets, our history will find not more than twenty such works upon which to touch with enthusiasm. Among the quartets those of Brahms and Dvořák, and that in C-minor, opus 15, by Gabriel Fauré stand out conspicuously.

Brahms wrote three pianoforte quartets, one in G minor, opus 25, one in A major, opus 26, and one in C minor, opus 70. Of these the first two are the best known and the most obviously pleasing. There is a great deal of Hungarian atmosphere here and there in both, specifically in the final movement of the first, which is a *Rondo alla Zingarese*. But both quartets were written before Brahms went to live in Vienna. Both may be taken as representative of Brahms first grown to maturity, and both are rather delicately and unusually colored. In the Intermezzo of the G minor quartet the violin is muted though the other strings are not. In the beginning of the *poco adagio* of the second quartet all the strings are muted while the piano plays *a tre corde*, not, as might be expected, *una corda*. Later in this movement there are arpeggio passages

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for the pianoforte, *una corda*, giving a strange effect like wind over a plain, one that Brahms was particularly fond of, if we may judge by the frequency with which he employed it. Here in this quartet, and in the *andante* of the earlier one, and in the slow movement of the first concerto one finds it. The scoring of the first part of the second quartet is considered admirable by Mr. Fuller-Maitland; but other places may be selected equally beautifully arranged for the combination. The scoring of a sort of secondary theme in the first movement (E major), first for strings alone, then for pianoforte, carrying the melody, and strings, adding their peculiar colors, rolling figures for the cello and pizzicato for the upper strings, is exquisite. Greater, however, than all technical arrangements is the quality of the themes themselves. This has made both works greatly beloved among amateurs and artists alike.

The third Brahms' quartet is less pleasing. The first movement was written as early as 1855. It is morbid and gloomy in character and indeed Brahms is said to have suggested to Hermann Deiters that he should imagine, while listening to it, a young man about to kill himself for lack of occupation. Of the same movement Dr. Billroth, one of Brahms' most intimate friends, said that it was an illustration in music of Goethe's Werther on his death bed, in his now famous buff and blue. The cello solo in the slow movement and the scherzo in general are more loveable.

The pianoforte quintet in F minor, opus 34, is one of Brahms' greatest compositions. It was published in 1865, but not until it had gone through a rather complicated birth. Brahms had written it first as a quintet for strings alone—with two cellos. This was unsatisfactory. The themes were so powerful that Clara Schumann suggested even that he re-write it for orchestra. He next arranged it, however, as a sonata for two pi-

## DVOŘÁK'S PIANO QUARTETS

anos; and indeed published it in this form a few years after he had published it in the form in which it is now best known, as a pianoforte quintet. The technical details are flawless, and to speak of them is almost to attract attention to an art which is greatest in concealment. It is far rather the broad themes, the massive structure, reënforced and held together by every device known to composers, the exalted sentiment of the slow movement, the powerful rhythms of the scherzo, that give this quartet its undisputed place among the masterpieces of music.

The two pianoforte quartets by Dvořák, opus 23, in D, and opus 87, in E-flat, have the same perfection of style and animation of manner that we have already noticed in the trios. The strings are handled with discriminating touch. There is something clear and transparent in the style, for all the impetuous, highly rhythmical, and impassioned material. And the effectiveness of the pianoforte in the combination is truly astonishing, considering how relatively simple it all is. In the first movement of the quartet in D, for example, the duet that is half canon between the cello and piano in the statement of the second theme, and shortly after, following a two measure trill, the almost Mozartian figuration given to the pianoforte while the strings develop the possibilities within this second theme; the magical scoring at the return of the first theme, which here, as at the beginning, is given in the middle registers of the cello, being thus made both melody and rich bass beneath the almost laughably simple figures for the pianoforte; these alone in one movement are instances of a wholly delightful style.

In the second quartet the style is more powerful but not the less clear. There is a splendid incisiveness in the first complete statement of the first theme, following the impetuous run of the pianoforte. Here are violin and viola in unison, the cello spreading richness

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through the bass with its wide swinging figures, and the piano adding a brilliance by means of commonplaces which are here delightful. Later on there is a long passage scored in a favorite way of Dvořák's. The cello is given the low foundation notes, which are complemented by the viola, both instruments playing *pizzicato*. The violin has a melody which follows the figuration of the pianoforte, here of the simplest kind, but floating as it were in mid-air over the foundation tones of the cello. There are many passages in the third movement, similarly arranged, the pianoforte part being without a bass of its own, the whole fabric supported by the low notes of the cello.

The quintet, opus 84, in A major, is not less effectively scored. The pianoforte part is perhaps a little more brilliant as a whole than in the quartets, quite properly so because of the added force in the strings. In the second movement we have another *Dumka*, with its wild, passionate changes, and for a scherzo there is a *Furiant*, another touch of Bohemia.

In French chamber music with pianoforte no work is so great as the quintet in F minor by César Franck. It is fit to stand with the symphony, the string quartet, even the *Beatitudes* of this master, as a perfect and broad expression of his remarkable genius. The very beginning makes us aware that we are to hear a work made up of two independent groups of sound. There is the string quartet, with its passionate announcement of the chief, or one of the chief, ideas of the piece. Then there is the hushed reply of the piano, offering another idea out of which much is to grow. And, so interchanging, the two groups play out the introduction. The material of all three movements is decidedly symphonic, and the resources of this combination of instruments are taxed to the extreme. In a great part of the work they maintain a decided independence, now answering each other as in the statement of the first



## FRANCK'S PIANO QUINTET

allegro motive, now asserting themselves against each other, as very clearly throughout a large part of the last movement where the figuration of the pianoforte is as distinct as a theme and the four instruments play another theme against it in unisons and octaves.

Indeed the use of unison and octave passages for the strings is conspicuous in every movement, as if only by so combining the quartet could maintain its own against the pianoforte. Notice this in the great E minor passage of the development section in the first movement.\* Here is music of greatest and stormiest force. Franck has scored the accompaniment in the heaviest registers of the pianoforte, and is yet able to bring out his theme clearly above and his desired thunder by joining all the instruments in the statement of it. Notice the unisons, too, in the climax before the return of the chief motive, how the strings make themselves heard, not only above a brilliant accompaniment, but actually against another theme, given with all the force of the piano. Only in the statement of the second theme in the third section of the movement does the piano join with the strings. Immediately after these follows another tremendous passage in which only by joining together can the strings rise above the thunderous accompaniment of the piano.

The result is, indeed, more a symphony than a pianoforte quintet, and the style is solid and massive in effect. Franck's polyphonic skill is, however, revealed at its very best, and his special art of structure, building all the movements out of a few ideas common to all, is not less striking here than it is in the 'Prelude, Chorale and Fugue' for the pianoforte alone. This quintet, with those of Schumann and Brahms, represents the uttermost it is possible to produce with the combination of string quartet and pianoforte. Schumann's is the most lucid, Brahms' the most vigorous, and Franck's

\* A few measures after L in the edition published by J. Hamelle, Paris.

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the most impassioned and dramatic of all the pianoforte quintets.

Yet there are other brilliant and successful quintets to be noticed. A quintet in D minor, opus 89, by Gabriel Fauré was performed for the first time in Paris, in 1906. Fauré had already composed two pianoforte quartets, one in C minor, opus 15, and one in G minor, opus 25. In these he had shown himself a master of style in the combination of pianoforte with strings, and such mastery is no less evident in the quintet. The latter is more modern in spirit and in harmonies. There are three movements: a *molto moderato*, an *adagio*, and an *allegro moderato*. Of these the first is gloomy in character, and the second is elegiac. The third is founded upon a single figure which is varied again and again. The treatment of the piano is in the main light, so that the instrument does not overpower the strings. Notice how the piano opens the work with a sort of curtain of sound, against which the instruments enter one by one. Most of this background is light, being arranged for the upper registers of the piano. Throughout the whole first movement the piano seldom takes part in the thematic development, but almost always contributes a lightly flowing sound. In the *adagio*, too, there is much of the same style. There is a middle section here in which all the instruments, including the piano, always in the upper registers, are lightly combined into a canonic flow which is wholly exquisite in style. The motives so treated return in a sort of apologue at the end of this movement but are not here so delicately treated. In the last movement the piano takes a much greater part in the development of the themes. It announces at once the motive which, *passacaglia*-wise, is used as the foundation for the whole movement. The odd spacing—the two hands are two octaves apart—gives a peculiarly shadowy effect in which the *pizzicatos* of the other instruments make themselves heard as

## MODERN PIANOFORTE QUARTETS

sparks may be seen in mist. The whole movement is a masterpiece of delicacy.

Other quintets have been written by composers of most of the nations of Europe, but none has made more than a local impression. There is a quintet by Goldmark, opus 30, in B-flat, hardly worth mentioning; a more brilliant one by one of the younger Bohemian composers, V. Novák (b. 1870), which in its intense nationalism is a fitting descendant of Smetana and Dvořák, but is lacking in personal inspiration; a quintet by Ernst von Dohnányi. Sgambati has written a quintet without distinction. Mr. Dunhill tells us in his book \* on chamber music that there is an excellent quintet by a young British composer, James Friskin. Moreover the sextet for piano and strings by Joseph Holbrooke, in which a double bass is added to the quartet, deserves mention. And among American composers Arthur Foote and George Chadwick should be mentioned, the one for his quintet in A minor, opus 38, the other for his quintet in E-flat major, without opus number.

Only a few piano quartets have been written since those of Brahms and Dvořák which are significant of any development or even of a freshness of life. Those of Fauré have already been mentioned as being perfect in style, but on the whole they seem less original and less interesting than the quintet by the same composer. Saint-Saëns' quartet, opus 41, is remarkable for the brilliant treatment of the pianoforte, and the fine sense of instrumental style which it reveals, but is on the whole uninteresting and is certainly insignificant compared with the quartets of Fauré or those of d'Indy and Chausson. D'Indy's quartet, opus 7, in A minor is no longer a new work, nor does it show in any striking way those qualities in French music which have more

\* 'Chamber Music, a Treatise for Students,' by Thomas F. Dunhill. London, 1913.

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recently come to splendid blooming. But it is carefully wrought and the three movements are moderately interesting. The second is perhaps the best music, the third is certainly the most spirited. There is more of the manner though perhaps less of the spirit of César Franck in Chausson's quartet in A major, opus 30.

In the North we come across an early work by Richard Strauss, opus 13, in the form of a pianoforte quartet, which is exceedingly long, but interesting to the student who wishes to trace the development of Strauss' art of self-expression. The pianoforte is not given undue prominence and the scoring is worthier of more interesting material. Still farther north one meets with Christian Sinding's quartet in E minor, which is chiefly a *tour de force* for the pianist.

Excepting sonatas for pianoforte and various other instruments, the great amount of chamber music into which the piano enters consists of trios, pianoforte quartets and pianoforte quintets. Mention must not be omitted, however, of Schubert's quintet for piano and strings in which the cello is replaced by double bass. The employment of the air of one of his songs (*Die Forelle*) as the subject for the variations in the slow movement has given the work the name *Forellen Quintet*. The treatment of the piano in the variations is exceedingly effective.

### III

As to sonatas, those for violin and piano are treated elsewhere. There are too many to be discussed in this chapter. There are fewer for the cello and the best of these may here be mentioned. Skill in playing the violoncello was slower to develop than that in playing the violin. This was probably because the *viola da gamba* with its six strings was easier to play and was more in favor as a solo instrument. The *baryton* was

## CELLO SONATAS

a kind of *viola da gamba* with sympathetic strings stretched under the fingerboard, and even as late as the maturity of Haydn this instrument was in general favor. But the tone of the *viola da gamba* was lighter than that of the violoncello, and so by the beginning of the eighteenth century the cello was preferred to the *gamba* for the bass parts of works like Corelli's in concerted style. Little by little it rose into prominence from this humble position. Meanwhile the immortal suites for the violoncello alone by Bach had been written. Bach was probably advised in the handling of the instrument by Abel, who was a famous *gamba* player; so that it seems likely that these suites were conceived for the *gamba* as much as for the cello.\* The last of them, however, was written especially for the *viola pomposa*, an instrument which Bach invented himself. This was a small cello with an extra string tuned to E, a fifth above the A of the cello.

Among composers who wrote expressly for the cello were Giorgio Antonioti, who lived in Milan about 1740, and Lanzetti, who was 'cellist to the king of Sardinia between 1730 and 1750. Later the Italians A. Canavasso and Carlo Ferrari (b. 1730) became famous as players, and Boccherini also was a brilliant cellist.

However, the cello sprang into its present importance as a solo instrument largely through the Frenchman Jean Louis Duport (1749-1819), whose understanding of the instrument led him to a discovery of those principles of fingering and bowing which have made modern virtuosity possible. His *Essai sur le doigter du violoncelle et la conduite de l'archet* was truly an epoch-making work. That a new edition was issued as recently as 1902 proves the lasting worth and stability of his theories.

Frederick William II, King of Prussia, to whom Mozart dedicated three of his string quartets, was a

\* See Spitta: 'Johann Sebastian Bach.'

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pupil of Duport's. Mozart's quartets, written with an eye to pleasing the monarch, give special prominence to the cello. Hence through Duport we approach the great masters and their works for the cello.

Beethoven wrote five sonatas for cello and piano. The first two, opus 5, were written in 1796, while Beethoven was staying in Berlin, evidently with the intention of dedicating them to Frederick William II, and for his own appearance in public with Duport. They are noticeably finer, or more expressive works, than the early sonatas for violin, opus 12; perhaps because the cello does not suggest a style which, empty of meaning, is yet beautiful and effective by reason of sheer brilliance. The violin sonatas, all of them except the last, are largely virtuoso music. The cello sonatas are more serious and on the whole more sober. This may be laid to thoroughly practical reasons. The cello has not the variety of technical possibilities that the violin has, nor even in such rapid passages as can be played upon it can it give a brilliant or carrying tone. By reason of its low register it can be all too easily overpowered by the piano. Only the high notes on the A string can make themselves heard above a solid or resonant accompaniment. Hence if the composer desires to write a brilliant, showy sonata for pianoforte and cello, he can do so only by sacrificing all but the topmost registers of the cello. Even at that the piano is more than likely to put the cello wholly in the shade.

To write effectively for the combination, therefore, and in such a way as to bring out the variety of resources of the cello, limited as they may be, one must not write brilliantly, but clearly, in a transparent and careful style. Of such a style these early sonatas of Beethoven offer an excellent example, though the music itself sounds to-day old-fashioned and formal.

The best of the first sonata, which consists of a long slow introduction, an *allegro*, and an *allegro vivace*,

## BEETHOVEN'S CELLO SONATAS

all in F major, is the last movement. This is in mood a little scherzo, in form a rondo. Particularly the chief subject is delightfully scored for the two instruments at the very opening. The second sonata, in G minor, begins like the first with a long slow introduction, in which the piano has some elaborate figuration. There follows an *allegro molto*, rather a *presto*, in  $\frac{3}{4}$  time, the opening theme of which has almost the spontaneous melodiousness of Schubert. The pianoforte has a great deal of work in triplets, which are high on the keyboard when the cello is playing in its lower registers, and only low when the cello is high enough to escape being overpowered. This constant movement in triplets will remind one of the first pianoforte sonata. The final rondo is on the whole less effective than the rondo of the first sonata. Toward the end, however, there is considerable animation in which one finds cello and piano taking equal share. The piano has for many measures groups of rapid accompaniment figures against which the cello has saucy little phrases in staccato notes. Then the cello takes up the rolling figures with great effect and the piano has a capricious and brilliant melody in high registers.

The next sonata, opus 69, in A major, was not written until twelve years later. A different Beethoven speaks in it. The first theme, announced at once by the cello alone, gives the key to the spirit of the work. It is gentle (*dolce*) in character, but full of a quiet and moving strength. After giving the first phrase of it alone the cello holds a long low E, over which the piano lightly completes it. There is a cadenza for piano, and then, after the piano has given the whole theme once again, there is a short cadenza for cello, leading to a short transition at the end of which one finds the singing second theme. This is first given out by the piano over smooth scales by the cello, and then the cello takes it up and the piano plays the scales. Nothing could be

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more exquisite than the combination of these two instruments in this altogether lovely sonata, which without effort permits each in turn or together to reveal its most musical qualities. Sometimes the cello is low and impressive, strong and independent, while the piano is lively and sparkling, as in the closing parts of the first section of the first movement. Again the cello has vigorous rolling figures that bring out the fullest sonority the instrument is capable of, while the piano adds the theme against such a vibrant background, with no fear of drowning the cello, as in the first portions of the development section.

The scherzo is the second movement, and here again each instrument is allowed a full expression of its musical powers. The style is light, the rhythm syncopated. There is fascinating play at imitations. And in the trio the cello plays in rich double-stops. There is but a short adagio before the final allegro, only a brief but telling expression of seriousness, and then the allegro brings to full flower the quiet, concealed, so to speak, and tranquil happiness of the first movement.

Finally there are two sonatas, opus 102, which are in every way representative of the Beethoven of the last pianoforte sonatas and even the last quartets. The first of these—in C major—Beethoven himself entitled a 'free sonata,' and the form is indeed free, recalling the form of the A major pianoforte sonata, opus 101, upon which Beethoven was working at the same time. In spirit, too, it is very like the A major sonata, but lacks the more obvious melodic charm. The sonata begins with an *andante*, in that singing yet mystical style which characterizes so much of Beethoven's last work, and the *andante* does not end but seems to lose itself, to become absorbed in a mist of trills, out of which there springs a vigorous *allegro vivace*, in the dotted march rhythm which one finds in the later pianoforte sonatas. After this, a short rhapsodical adagio brings us back to



## CELLO SONATAS

a bit of the opening andante, which once more trills itself away, seems to be snuffed out, as it were, by a sudden little phrase which, all unexpected, announces the beginning of the final rondo.

The second of the two, in D major, is more regular in structure. There is an *allegro con brio* in clear form, an *adagio*, and a final fugue, following the adagio without pause. In both these sonatas every trace of the virtuoso has disappeared. Both are fantasies, or poems of hidden meaning. Because of this mysteriousness, and also because the lack of all virtuoso elements seems to leave the combination a little dry, the sonatas are not quite so satisfactory as the opus 69.

Besides the sonatas Beethoven wrote three sets of variations for cello and piano, only one of which—on the air *Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen* from Mozart's 'Magic Flute'—has an opus number. These are early works and are without special interest or value.

It is remarkable how little chamber music has been written for pianoforte and cello by subsequent composers. By Schumann there is only a set of five short pieces, *in Volkston*, opus 102. Some of these are charming, but all are, of course, slight. Schumann uses the cello in very high registers, notably in the first, third, and fourth. In the second part of the third he even writes sixths for the cello in such high registers. The low registers are rather neglected, so that the set is monotonous in color.

Mendelssohn wrote some *Variations concertantes*, opus 17, for piano and cello, and two sonatas, opus 45 in B-flat, and opus 58 in D. The piano predominates in the variations. The second and fourth are hardly more than piano solos; but in others the cello is effectively handled. The third, the fifth with its pizzicato, which, by the way Mendelssohn stood in a fair way to overwhelm entirely by a noisy piano, and the eighth, with its long held note, later its wide rolling figures and pow-

## CHAMBER MUSIC

erful sixths, account in a measure for the wide popularity which this work once enjoyed among cellists. But the life has gone out of it. Of the sonatas little can be said but that they are generally well scored, and that they display the qualities of the cello in its various registers. The piano is less well treated, for Mendelssohn had, after all, little instinct for a variety of piano-forte effects. The theme in the last movement of the first sonata has something of a vigorous swing. The chief theme of the first movement of the second sonata, too, though it will irritate those to whom Mendelssohn's mannerisms have become distressing, has a breadth of line, and rises up quite manfully to its high point. But the second theme rather proves that there can be too much of a good thing. The *allegretto* is not dangerously fascinating, but it has a sort of charm. Mendelssohn's treatment of the cello is generally suited to the salon. He brings out many of its qualities, but in a way which seems to accentuate the shortcomings of the instrument. In his hands the cello is a sentimental singer with a small voice.

With Brahms the cello is more an instrument of mystery and gloom. His fondness for low notes here causes him to write constantly for the two lower strings, and his sonatas may suffer in the opinion of some by the lack of a more vehement expression which is in some measure possible to the upper strings. The first sonata, opus 38, is in E minor and is more acceptable to the unfamiliar ear than the later one in F major, opus 99. But the tone of the great part of the E minor sonata is gloomy, though the second theme of the first movement has warmth and the *allegretto quasi menuetto* a certain light movement. The F major sonata was probably written with the playing of Robert Hausmann (b. 1852) in mind. Mr. Fuller-Maitland finds in it a 'mood of wild energy such as is not frequent in Brahms' later works.' For all the gloominess of the

**Great Violoncellists:**  
**Jean Gerardi      David Popper**  
**Pablo Casals**







## BRAHMS' CELLO SONATAS

first and the sternness of the second of these sonatas there is a splendid dignity in both which must ever give them a firm place in the literature for the violoncello. It may be that they lose in grace because Brahms has so carefully shunned any brilliant display; but on the other hand what they lose in grace is more than made up by what they gain in virility. The sentimental qualities in the cello have been so much emphasized that without these sonatas of Brahms, and those of Beethoven, one might well believe that it had none other than a sugary voice.

Among more modern sonatas only two stand out with any prominence. One of these is by Grieg. It is in A minor, full of passion and swing. No doubt it owes its prominence to the charm of the Norwegian material out of which Grieg has made it. There are incisive rhythms that make one aware of the strength of the cello. The piano is a little too prominent in certain parts. Grieg has favored its brilliance. But nevertheless the sonata is a manly and refreshing work.

A sonata for cello and piano in F major, opus 6, by Richard Strauss has been gratefully adopted by cellists. Musically it is neither profound nor interesting, though there is no lack of technical skill, as in the fugal parts of the first movement, and though there are some passages of great beauty. The second theme of the first movement is what one might call luscious; there is a glorious theme in the last movement contrasting with the light motives which generally predominate; and the climax of the slow movement is passionate. The piano-forte is not well handled, and there is a sameness in rhythms; but the balance between the two instruments is remarkably well kept. In the development of second theme material in the first movement there are passages in which the cello is made boldly and passionately to sing, and the use of its very low notes in the climax of the slow movement, as well as the light figures in

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the last, leave no doubt as to the variety which is in spite of all possible to it.

There remains only to mention the sonata by Max Reger, opus 78, two sonatas by Emanuel Moór, one by Guy Ropartz in G minor, two by Camille Saint-Saëns, opus 32 and opus 123, as among those which make a partial success of the extremely difficult combination.

If excellent music for cello and piano is so rare, music for the viola and piano is almost entirely wanting. The two instruments do not go well together. Practically the only example of the combination in the works of the great masters is furnished by Schumann's *Märchen bilder*, which are but indifferent music. York Bowen, an English composer, has considered it worthy of the sonata, and has written two for it, one in C minor and one in F major. Mr. Benjamin Dale has also written some agreeable pieces, including a suite and a fantasy.

### IV

There are relatively few works also in which the piano has been combined with wind instruments. The wind instruments which have been most employed in chamber music are the flute, oboe, clarinet, and bassoon. Occasionally there is a short bit for horn, or for English horn, and rarely something for trumpet or saxophone. No special combination of these instruments either by themselves or with the piano has obtained signal favor, and we may therefore confine ourselves to mentioning with brief notice the various works of the great masters in turn. We will include likewise here their chamber works for wind instruments without pianoforte.

Of Haydn's works we will only mention the two trios for flute and violin and the octet for two oboes, two clarinets, two horns and two bassoons. Most of Mo-



## PIANO AND WIND INSTRUMENT COMBINATIONS

zart's works for wind instruments bear the mark of some occasion. There are a great many Serenades and *Divertimenti*, which can hardly be called representative of his best and can hardly be distinguished from each other. Among the interesting works are the concerto for flute and harp (K 299), the trio for clarinet, viola and piano (K 498), the quintet for pianoforte, oboe, clarinet, horn and bassoon (K 452), and the quintet for clarinet and strings (K 581). The trio was composed in Vienna in August, 1786, and is conspicuous for a fine handling of the viola. The clarinet is not used at all in the lower registers, lest it interfere with the viola. Mozart considered the quintet for piano and wind instruments at the time he wrote it the best thing he had written. It was composed in March, 1784, for a public concert and was received with great applause. Jahn wrote of it that from beginning to end it was a true triumph in the art of recognizing and adapting the peculiar euphonious quality of each instrument. Doubtless it served as a model for Beethoven's composition in the same form.

Mozart was the first among composers to recognize the beauty of the clarinet. Among his warmest friends was Anton Stadler, an excellent clarinet player, and the great clarinet quintet was composed for Stadler and is known as the Stadler quintet. The clarinet, owing to the peculiar penetrating quality, is somewhat necessarily treated as a solo instrument; but the background supplied by the strings is no mere accompaniment. The whole work shows the finest care and may well rank with the string quintets among Mozart's greatest and most pleasing works.

Beethoven's works for wind instruments in chamber music are not numerous. In the expression of his forceful and passionate ideas he demanded a medium of far greater technical ability than he could ask of the wind players of that day. There is an early trio for piano,

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flute and bassoon, written before he left Bonn; an octet in E-flat for two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, and two horns, written in 1792, but published as opus 103; and a few other early works without value; a sextet for two violins, viola, cello, and two horns, written in 1795 and not published till 1819, then as opus 81; another early sextet, opus 71, for two clarinets, two bassoons, and two horns; and finally the most considerable of his compositions for an ensemble of wind instruments, the quintet in E-flat major, opus 16, for piano, oboe, clarinet, horn, and bassoon, the septet in E-flat, opus 20, for clarinet, horn, bassoon, violin, viola, cello, and double-bass. The sonata in F, opus 17, for horn and piano was written in a night, according to a well-known story, for the horn player Punto—originally Stich—and can hardly be considered as more than a bit of pot-boiling.

Most of these early works were written for an occasion. Prince Maximilian Franz, in whose service Beethoven was for a time employed before he left Bonn and came to Vienna, was especially fond of wind instruments. His 'Table-music' was generally of this kind and he had in his employ two oboists, two clarinetists, two horn players, and two players of the bassoon. Beethoven's early works therefore may be considered to have been written with these players in mind. He was sure of having them performed. In later years he looked with no little scorn upon many of them. Even of the septet, opus 20, he is reported to have said that there was some natural feeling in it but little art. And of the early sextet which was published in 1809 as opus 70 he wrote to his publishers that it was one of his early pieces and was, moreover, written in a night, that there was little further to say about it except that it was written by a composer who had at least produced some better works—though many men might still consider this the best. Yet it is to be observed that in nearly all of them Beethoven made the best of the pos-

## BEETHOVEN'S SEPTET, OPUS 20

sibilities open to him, possibilities which were greatly restricted by the general lack of technical skill in playing wind instruments, and that all show at least a clear and logical form.

The octet, opus 103, the sextet, opus 81, the sextet, opus 71, and the quintet, opus 16, are all in the key of E-flat major, a key which is favorable to all wood-wind instruments. The octet was written, as we have said, in 1792. Beethoven rearranged it as a string quintet and in that form it was published in 1796 as opus 4. In its original form the chief rôle is taken by the oboe, especially in the slow second movement, which has the touch of a pastoral idyl. The last movement in rondo form offers the clarinets an opportunity in the first episode. A Rondino for the same combination of instruments written about the same time seems to forecast parts of *Fidelio*. The sextet for two horns and string quartet is little more than a duet for the horns with a string accompaniment.

We may pass over the trio for two oboes and English horn, published as opus 87, and the flute duet written for his friend Degenhart on the night of August 23, 1792. The sextet, opus 71, which Beethoven said was written in a night, is none the less written with great care. The prelude introduction and the cheerful style suggest some happy sort of serenade music. The melody (bassoon) in the adagio is of great beauty. There are, among its movements, a minuet and a lively rondo in march rhythm.

The quintet, opus 16, in which the piano is joined with four instruments may well have been suggested by Mozart's quintet in the same form; though Beethoven was a great pianist and had already in an earlier trio and a sonata experimented in combining the pianoforte with wind instruments. The wind instruments are here treated as an independent group and the part for the piano is brilliant. There is a richness of ideas through-

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out which raises the work above the earlier compositions for wind.

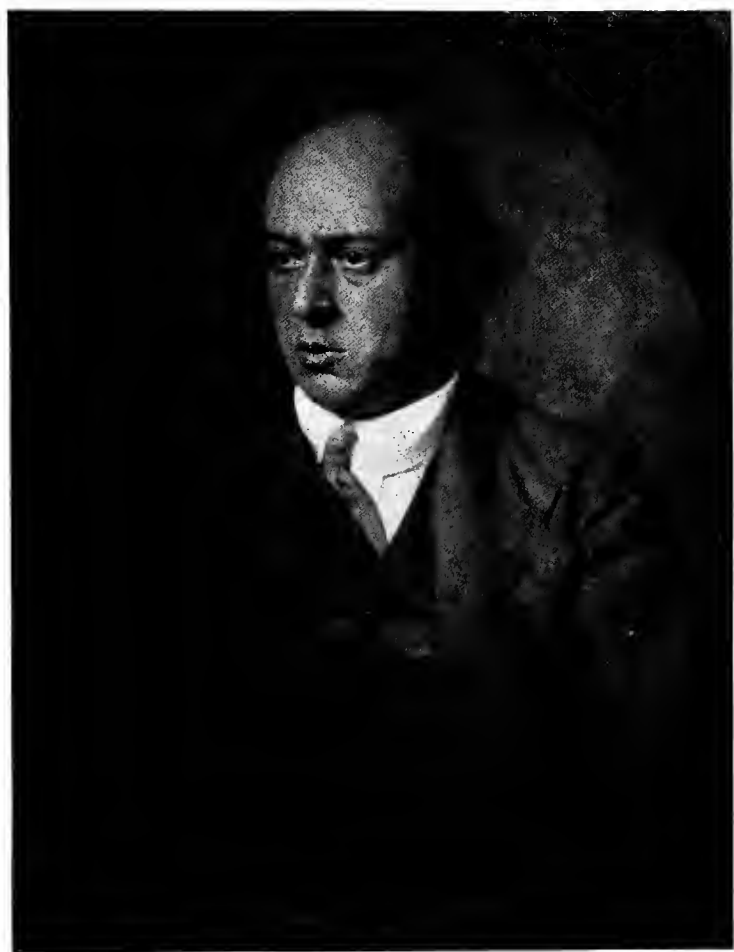
The septet in E-flat, opus 20, for clarinet, horn, bassoon, violin, viola, cello and double-bass, is undoubtedly the finest of Beethoven's works for combinations of wind instruments. It was written just before 1800 and was so full of joy and humor that those who had heard Beethoven's other works with a hostile ear were quite won over for the time being by this. Technically it may be considered the result of all his previous experiments. It is rather in the manner of a suite. There is a slow prelude, an *allegro con brio*, an *adagio cantabile*, a *tempo di menuetto*, which he later arranged for pianoforte and incorporated in the little sonata, opus 49, No. 1, a theme and variations, a scherzo, and a final presto, which is preceded by an introductory andante of great beauty and of more seriousness than is characteristic of the work as a whole. The success of the work is due first to the freshness of the ideas, then to the skill with which they are arranged for the difficult combination of instruments. For Beethoven has made something of charm out of the very shortcomings of the wind instruments. The short phrases, the straightforward character of all the themes and motives, and the general simplicity all show these necessarily restricted instruments at their very best.

Schubert's octet for two violins, viola, cello, double-bass, clarinet, horn, and bassoon is among the most beautiful pieces of chamber music for the wind instruments. It is the first of Schubert's contributions to chamber music which fully reveals his genius. Mention may also be made of the variations for flute and piano on the melody of one of his songs *Trockene Blumen*.

None of the great composers was more appreciative of the clarinet than Weber. It is made to sound beautifully in all his overtures, notably in that to 'Oberon.'

**Arnold Schönberg**  
*After a photo from life (1913)*









## WEBER'S CLARINET MUSIC

He wrote two concertos for clarinet and orchestra, and a big sonata in concerto style, opus 48, for clarinet and piano. Besides these there is an Air and Variations, opus 33, for clarinet and piano, and a quintet, opus 34, for clarinet and strings. Weber also wrote a charming trio, opus 63, for flute, cello, and piano.

Spohr, too, showed a special favor towards the clarinet and he, like Weber, wrote two concertos for it. Three of Spohr's works which were broadly famous in their day and much beloved are the nonet for strings, flute, oboe, clarinet, horn, and bassoon, opus 31; the octet for violin, two violas, cello, double-bass, clarinet, and two horns, opus 32; and the quintet for flute, clarinet, horn, bassoon, and piano. The two former are delicately scored, but the latter is marred by the piano. Some idea of the fervor with which Spohr's music was loved may be gained from the fact that Chopin, the most selective and fastidiously critical of all composers, conceived Spohr's nonet to be one of the greatest works of music. Doubtless the perfection of style delighted him, a virtue for which he was willing to forgive many a weakness. At present Spohr's music is in danger of being totally neglected.

Mendelssohn contributed nothing to this branch of chamber music, and Schumann's contributions were slight enough. There is a set of *Märchenerzählungen*, opus 132, for clarinet, viola, and pianoforte, which have some romantic charm but no distinction, and three Romances for oboe. Brahms' trio for clarinet, violoncello, and piano has already been mentioned. Besides these he wrote two excellent sonatas for clarinet and piano, and a quintet for clarinet and strings. These works are almost unique among Brahms' compositions for an unveiled tenderness and sweetness. All three were probably in a measure inspired by the playing of his friend Professor Mühlfeld, who even from the orchestra made an impression with his clarinet upon the mem-

## CHAMBER MUSIC

ories of those who gathered at the epoch-making performances at Bayreuth. The quintet, opus 115, is one of the most poetic and moving of all Brahms' compositions. The two clarinet sonatas, one in F minor and one in E-flat major, were published together in 1896 as opus 120. In these there is the same unusual tenderness which appeals so directly to the heart in the quintet.

Since the time of Brahms most composers have written something in small forms for the wind instruments with or without piano or strings. Most of these have a charm, yet perhaps none is to be distinguished. One of the most pleasing is Pierné's *Pastorale variée*, for flute, oboe, clarinet, trombone, horn, and two bassoons. But here we have in truth a small wind orchestra. D'Indy's *Chanson et Danses*, opus 50, two short pieces for flute, two clarinets, horn, and two bassoons, Fauré's *Nocturne*, opus 33, for flute, two oboes, two clarinets, two horns and two bassoons, and some of the smaller pieces of a composer little known, J. Mouquet, are representative of the best that the modern French composers have done in this kind of chamber music. Debussy's *Rhapsodie*, for clarinet and piano, is evidently a *pièce d'occasion*. It was written for the Concours at the Conservatoire. Max Reger's sonata in A-flat, opus 49, No. 1, for clarinet and piano, and a concerto for *Waldhorn* and piano by Richard Strauss stand out conspicuously among the works of the Germans. In this country Mr. Charles Martin Loeffler is to be recognized as one with an unusually keen instinct for the effects of wind instruments in chamber music. His two *Rhapsodies* for oboe, viola, and piano show a delicacy of style that cannot be matched in work for a similar combination by other composers.

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