

AN EXAMINATION OF THE COMPOSER/PERFORMER RELATIONSHIP

IN THE PIANO STYLE OF J. N. HUMMEL

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VOLUME I: TEXT

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PREFACE

Our age sees in Hummel the "transitional" figure par excellence. A pupil of Mozart, Haydn, Clementi, Albrechtsberger and Salieri, he carried the Classical piano style to its limits, frequently trespassing on the Romantic, and his importance for the subsequent development of music in that era was considerable.

His piano style was the result of the reciprocal influence of the composer and the performer in his make-up and these, in turn, were shaped to a great extent by external factors in the period. I have examined the general background to the period in Section I, and the second Section is devoted to Hummel's own compositional and performance styles.

Creator and executant fuse in improvisation, and its prevalence during the period of Hummel's life is well-known. He himself was possibly the greatest improviser of his time, and this extempore facility affected him both as composer and as performer, and I consider it to be the most important single musical factor in his piano style. Section III deals with improvisation generally and the final Section (IV) seeks to draw attention to the traces it has left in particular genres of his work.


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EDITORIAL NOTES and

ABBREVIATIONS

Notes appear at the end of the relevant Chapter, and musical examples make up the first Section of Vol.II, the second Section of which consists of a performing edition of Hummel's Piano Concerto in F major, Op. posth. no.1.

Musical references take the following form, in which the components are separated by oblique strokes: Opus number/movement number (upper-case Roman numerals) or section titles ("Introduction" etc.,)/ bar number(s) (Arabic numerals) / particular notes (the note-symbol, followed by its numerical position in the bar, Arabic numerals). Thus: Op.2(a)/3/II/9/4 would represent the fourth quaver of bar nine in the second movement of Op.2(a), no. 3.

The symbol "+" is used on occasion to signify "and" in a numerical context (e.g., bb.5+7 is "bars five and seven") and the hyphen in a numerical context implies a sequence of bars (e.g., bb.5-7 is "bars five through seven"). All numbers of this kind are inclusive.

Upper-case Letters and Roman numerals represent major keys and chords respectively, and lower-case, minors. The sign "°" after a chord-symbol denotes the diminished chord on that scale-degree, and when the diminished chord is referent to a dominant(minor ninth) (V^{b9}) without the presence of the root, the symbol is scored through (\cancel{V}^{b9}).

Bibliographical references follow the usage of W. S. Newman in "A History of the Sonata Idea". The author's name is followed by an identifying word or words from the

title of the work, separated by an oblique stroke; these are expanded, in alphabetical order, in the Bibliography, in which abbreviated titles of periodicals and articles are also included. The suffix "-m" in the references indicate a source which consists primarily of music.

Apart from the most obvious ones, the following abbreviations are used:

aux.	auxiliary	tpt.	trumpet
b. (bb.)	bar(s)	unpub.	unpublished
bn.	bassoon	v.	violin
cl.	clarinet	va.	viola
conc.	concerto	var.(s)	variation(s)
db.	double bass	vc.	violoncello
dim.	diminished	8ve	octave
dom.	dominant		
d-s-quaver	demisemiquavers		
fl.	flute		
intro.	introduction		
inv.	inversion		
l.h.	left hand		
l.n.	leading note		
maj.	major		
med.	mediant		
min.	minor		
movt.	movement		
orch.	orchestra		
pf.	pianoforte		
pub.	published		
rel.	relative		
r.h.	right hand		
s-dom.	subdominant		
s-med.	submediant		
son.	sonata		
s-quaver	semiquaver		
s-ton.	supertonic		
sub.	subject		
ton.	tonic		

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SECTION I - BACKGROUND

CHAPTER 1 - CONCERTS AND AUDIENCES

The Concert

For the virtuoso-composer of the early nineteenth century, the concert, and especially the concert-tour was of primary importance as a source of direct and indirect revenue. Apart from its emotional and social rewards, and in spite of the high costs and the inevitable element of speculation involved, the financial gain provided a valuable supplement to an individual's salary (or teaching fees if he were not in regular employment) and to his royalties from published works. Indirectly, by keeping his name and fame in the minds of his public, sales of his music would be stimulated, not least because those members of the audiences who could play on his instrument would feel some measure of identification with the virtuoso in playing the easier works of the composer.

"The name of a virtuoso is a good label for selling even easy works: and those who play them have, do they not, the glorious feeling of accomplishing feats which bring them close to the masters they admire." (1)

The identification of a performer with his own compositions was possibly the most important element in the cult of the virtuoso in this period. (2)

Of the two main areas of performance-opportunity, in public and in private, information on the latter is extremely limited. In this category are included amateur gatherings and "closed sessions" such as performance at courts or salons, and the "réunions" of the musicians

themselves. The "closed sessions" are heavily overlaid with a veneer of social discretion, and there are very few references to them; in the case of the "réunions" one fares little better.

With respect to public occasions, one is on firmer ground. Critics do report on concerts in periodicals and newspapers, but their main function was to cover selections from the vast amount of music published during the period, most of it involving the piano: for the most part their concert critiques are of a more general nature. They do, however, allow us to form a fairly clear idea of the concert scene in the broader sense.

The word "public" itself as used in this period is in need of some qualification. If we take it to mean that entry to a concert was open to any person who could afford a ticket, we miss an important aspect of the musical life of the time. Ticket prices were notoriously high, especially in London, and this immediately restricted access to the upper, and wealthy middle, classes. The average cost of a ticket for one of Hummel's London concerts in 1830 was half-a-guinea (10s. 6d.);⁽³⁾ the average wage of cotton-mill operatives in Manchester in 1833 was less than 12s. per week,⁽⁴⁾ (and this was the industry of maximum economic growth at the time) though it is true that a large proportion of these were children. Labourers in English cities in the period earned 16s.-18s. per week⁽⁵⁾ and we can therefore conclude that the working class would hardly represent a significant proportion of concert audiences in 1790-1840. Matters were little better in France: expensive tickets in Paris in 1825 were ten francs,⁽⁶⁾ about 8s. 0d.

The other main body of public concerts, however, were cheaper and more "open". These were organised by a particular musician for his own "benefit" in the pecuniary sense, and since this was their sole aim, the musically lowest common denominator of the audience was catered for in terms of programme make-up. It was usual for resident and visiting musicians to give their services free of charge on a reciprocal basis in these Benefit Concerts, though singers were often the exception.

The most socially important of these Benefits were generally "noticed" in the press but very few details are given. The other large concert occasions in London were those arranged by the Concerts of Ancient Music (which, being choral and comprising earlier music, do not concern us here) and the Philharmonic Concerts. These latter were not public in our modern sense, being subscription series, and usually very expensive and exclusive. Both of these bodies were run as limited companies, and it is surprising that a more liberal series, which would have appeared to be set fair for success, could not get off the ground for reasons which, though not stated, had without doubt something to do with lack of aristocratic patronage. The situation is described in an article entitled "Public Establishments in London" in the Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review (hereafter QMMR) of 1824:

"The only permanent establishments....now in London are the Ancient and Philharmonic Concerts, classical schools for the preservation of ancient and the reproduction of modern compositions, seeking to keep in recollection the memory of the old, or to introduce the excellences of modern style, in vocal and instrumental music.....It was however deemed by some of the profession, that a concert of general resort seemed wanting to the gratification of the

public at large, for under the restrictions which are laid upon the admission to the subscription list of both the Ancient and the Philharmonic, neither of them can be said to be open to the public; indeed the one has a large number of supernumerary candidates, and the other has this year, for the accommodation of the subscribers, contracted their plan. It might therefore naturally enough be thought, that performances more readily accessible, would be desirable to the inhabitants of a metropolis hourly increasing its affluent and luxurious population. Accordingly, proposals for nine Subscription Concerts at the Argyll Rooms, under the joint auspices of Messrs. Bellamy, Braham, Hawes, Mori, and Welsh, were issued, but so ill were they received that the plan was abandoned. The Oratorios, therefore, (now called "grand performances") were the only places, until the Benefit Concerts should commence, that could be said to be open to the body of the public." (7)

In a footnote in the Harmonicon, the editor, William Ayrton, himself a long-standing member of the Philharmonic Society, admits that their concerts were "of a private nature"⁽⁸⁾. Indeed, a scandal regarding the distribution of funds and profits blew up in 1830⁽⁹⁾. Nevertheless, to be approached by the Society with a proposal to appear in their concerts was a mark of the highest respect in spite of the fact that, as we shall see, it reneged upon most of its original high musical principles. The programmes of its eight concerts in each season did not significantly differ in kind from the average Benefit, though it did in quality and quantity.

In another way also, concerts were commercial events. Many of the most important concert-venues were owned or leased by publishers or piano-manufacturers, or both. One has only to think of the Salles of Erard, Pape and Pleyel in Paris. Wangermée describes the situation thus:

"These very commercialised relations had to have consequences on the artistic level: did not the demonstrators of instruments for sale have to seduce, astonish, dazzle by their playing, yet to avoid boring /the audience/ by the performance of works /which were/ too heavy, or shocking by pieces /which were/ too daring? These relations must have contributed to keeping many virtuosos in

a conformity likely to satisfy their bourgeois public." (10)

Concert-giving bodies usually had one or more music-publishers on their boards of directors, so, the Philharmonic Society, for example, had Mori (of Mori and Lavenu) and Vincent Novello.

Publishers were also an important point of contact for a virtuoso in the time leading up to a concert-visit. The arrival and performances of a foreign virtuoso-composer would give a boost to sales, and the presses of various countries would carry "notices" of impending arrival which were often tantamount to publishers' advertisements. Sachs considers that a "news item" in the "Journal des Débats" "curiously resembles advertising" (11). Other "announcements" in the non-musical press are less obvious. Writing of Hummel's Paris tour of 1825, Sachs says:

"Major newspapers, which did not ordinarily carry extensive concert announcements, printed many "news items" about his series. One wonders who was responsible for their insertion — Erard, Hummel, or others. These bulletins, appearing a few days before each concert, or even on the same day, were carefully phrased to avoid seeming like advertisements and even omitted the subscription price. But they were crass enough to reveal the information that before the first concert, subscriptions (apparently costing forty francs) and remaining single tickets would be available at Erard's, Pleyel's, and Schlesinger's music shops. (Hummel later placed tickets at Lemoine's and Richault's, and thereby completed a comprehensive list of distributors.)" (12)

Since many such "notices" were appropriated by foreign newspapers, their value for both publisher and composer was enhanced. The European tours of virtuosos were noted by foreign correspondents and such "lifting" of indigenous reports was useful in providing advance publicity. One such report of Hummel's concert of 23rd. May 1825 was given

in the Harmonicon of September 1825 ("from a Paris Journal") and included the text of a letter from Hummel to the editors of the Paris journals, thanking everyone for his reception and for the medal struck in his honour, and in which he makes a particular point of thanking Erard.

"It is also particularly my duty to give well-deserved praise to the Messieurs Erard, for the clear and beautiful sound of their instruments, which has obtained them a most distinguished reputation for more than forty years." (13)

In fact, "Erard, whose sales of pianos would surely have profited from Hummel's endorsement, did far more than simply rent his concert hall to him — he provided the pianist with his finest instruments, full use of his facilities, and even an apartment in his own home." (14)

We are also told that when Hummel would arrive in London from Paris, he would bring with him "a portfolio well stored with MSS. /sic/ for the London music-publishers" (15).

A public concert was also, of course, an important social event, an occasion upon which to be seen for the members of the audience. There are frequent references to "elegant and fashionable society". In the monthly "Extracts from the Diary of a Dilettante" which appeared in the Harmonicon from 1828 onwards, the unnamed writer complains of the ladies' large hats obstructing the view at the opera, and in the review of Mori's Benefit at the Opera Concert Room, the writer in the same periodical says that

"There must have been a thousand persons collected, all of whom, however, might have found convenient seats, but for the present state of ladies /sic/ evening hats and wide-spreading dresses, which just enable two to occupy a space sufficient for three." (16)

This prevailing attitude to concerts as fashionable

gatherings even extended to the provision of refreshments. Louis Spohr tells of this "strange practice" during the 1820s.

"...it was required that the party giving the concert should provide the auditory with refreshments during the pause between the first and second parts of the concert. These were accordingly supplied at a buffet in an adjoining room, and one was obliged to agree beforehand with the confectioner upon the sum for their purveyance, which at my concert was undertaken for ten pounds sterling. If the company consisted for the most part of persons of rank and fashion, with whom it was not usual to take any refreshments, the confectioner used to make a good thing of it, but if it was a very numerous and mixed company, and the heat very great, he might frequently be a loser." (17)

Not even veritable perils were a deterrent to London society during the concert season. A "raging epidemic" of influenza was not sufficient⁽¹⁸⁾, and the audience at one of L. Spohr's concerts had worse to contend with. This took place at the Argyll Rooms in London on Thursday, June 18th. 1820 — the day that Queen Charlotte arrived in the city to be tried for infidelity to her husband, the Prince Regent. Trouble was expected from the "middle and lower classes" who sided with the Queen, and they demanded that the windows of every house on her route through London should be illuminated.

"Silent expectation pervaded the whole auditory, and our first tones were eagerly awaited, when suddenly a fearful noise was heard in the street, which was immediately followed by a volley of paving stones against the unilluminated windows of the adjoining room. Terrified at the noise of the breaking glass of the windows and chandeliers, the ladies sprang up from their seats, and a scene of indescribable confusion and alarm ensued. In order to prevent a second, /sic/ volley /sic/ of missiles, the gas lights in the adjoining apartment were speedily lighted, and we were not a little gratified to find that the mob after giving another uproarious cheer at the success of their demonstration went on their way, and thus by degrees the previous quiet was restored. But it was

some time before the public resumed their places in the room and became so far tranquillized that we could at length begin." (19)

The Audience

The general make-up of audiences naturally affected programmes and, ultimately, styles of composition. Entertainment, rather than elevation, was the principal raison d'être of the public, and, indeed, most of the private concerts. In the public concerts, the audience included more than the rich and fashionable. An increasingly large proportion was made up of the middle-class bourgeoisie, tradespeople and non-noble — or recently ennobled — landowners who, rich from industrial speculation, sought to emulate their "social betters" originally, in leisure as in other matters.

"The great revolution of 1789-1848 was the triumph not of 'industry' as such, but of capitalist industry; not of liberty and equality in general but of middle class or 'bourgeois' liberal society....." (20)

There was, however, a seriousness born of practicality in the "new class", and this can be seen in the different attitude to the artist and his music. It is to this class that, with a few exceptions, the composers and virtuosos of the period themselves belonged — if not by birth, then at least by aspiration and adoption. The same applies to the "tradesmen" of music, instrument manufacturers, publishers, etc., and the market for piano and chamber music in the early nineteenth century was less the salon than the Victorian or Biedermeier parlour, with its implication of the happy urban family — more nuclear and less extended than its rural predecessor — symbolised by the togetherness of home music-making.

The "lower classes" formed a strong element in the audiences at the Benefit Concerts, especially in London, and they occasionally "took over". Moscheles describes such an occasion shortly before Weber's death, when both composers assisted the singer Braham at his Benefit. Braham,

"the most popular of English singers, used always on this occasion to please the 'gods' by singing sailors' songs, so we had to endure a similar state of things to-night. Madame Vestris, the popular singer, who appeared in the operetta "The Slave", found willing listeners among the occupants of the galleries, who ruled the house, and were delighted with such nursery ditties as 'Goosie Goosie Gander', &c. So far so well, but Braham had calculated without his host in setting before such an audience as this good music"/overtures to "the Freyschütz" and Oberon"/for the second part of the concert, which he called 'Apollo's Festival', and which, after the poor stuff that had been played and sung, began with the overture to the 'Ruler of the Spirits'. Could no one see that Weber himself was conducting? I'm sure I don't know, but the screams and hubbub in the gallery while the overture was played, without a note being heard from beginning to end, made my blood boil; in a state of high indignation, I sat down to my piano on the stage, and gave a sign to the band beneath me to begin my 'Recollections of Ireland'. At the opening bar of the introduction, the roughs in the gallery made themselves heard by whistling, hissing, shouting, and calling out 'Are you comfortable, Jack?' accompanying the question with volleys of orange peel. I heard the alternate crescendos and decrescendos; and fancied that in this chaos all the elements had been let loose, and would overpower me; but, thank heaven, they did not, for in this new and unexpected situation I resolved not to come to any sudden stoppage, but to show the better part of my audience that I was ready to fulfil my engagement, I stooped down to the leading violinist, and said, 'I shall continue to move my hands on the keyboard, as though really playing. Make your band pretend to be playing also; after a short time I will give you a signal and we will leave off together.' No sooner said than done. On making my bow as I retired, I was overwhelmed with a hurricane of applause. The gods cheered me, being glad to get rid of me. Next came Miss Paton, with a scena for the concert room. She met with a similar fate. Three times she stopped singing, but came forward again, in answer to the calls of the well-behaved portion of the audience, who shouted 'silence'. At last the poor lady went away, burst into tears, and gave it up. Thunders of applause followed her exit, and when

common ballads and songs began afresh, the gods were once more all attention and good behaviour." (21)

The gallery, however, was not always at fault in the low standard of taste, and critics had no great opinion of the "genteel mob"⁽²²⁾. Reviewing one of Hummel's 1833 concerts in London, a critic wrote that "there is a high as well as a low mob, and the taste of both is much alike."⁽²³⁾ Indeed, there is an interesting description of audience reaction in this very concert by a "D.G." in the Neue Zeitschrift für Musik. Hummel played his Concerto in F, Op. posth. no.1, but

"Spirit, life and performance were lost on the hearer one saw it in every expression, they raised themselves up in their seats, saw and wondered at the beautiful playing of the fingers and now, as soon as the double trills began, everybody worked away with hands, feet and walking-sticks until it seemed as if the lightly-constructed music-hall were celebrating its destruction! Don't wonder at such applause — the Englishman loves these massive proofs of appreciation /Beifallsbezeugungen/" (24)

Later in the concert some Weber was played, and

"One saw that here the true element of this select society was moved; here all was comprehensible, here one could go right through to the spirit of the composer, and since now a cackling and clucking chicken-run with cows' bellowing followed the pigs' grunting, there was a da capo racket without end, and everyone was delighted right to their very souls." (25)

Audience participation, though not to this extent, is another feature of concert life in the period for which we have to allow. Applause during the course of a piece was common, and not surprising with an audience reared upon Italian Opera. In the concert on the day of Queen Charlotte's return to London referred to earlier, Spohr and his wife played a duet for piano and harp and the composer reports that "the applause.....increased with every theme of the duet"⁽²⁶⁾,

and at Moscheles' concert in Leipzig on the 8th October 1816,

"The public, feeling more and more interested, came nearer to me, and ended by regularly hemming me in, so that I became the centre of a great and admiring circle." (27)

It was not unheard-of to give free tickets to the "low mob" in order to buy applause. Spohr disdains to use these "clacquers" in Paris in 1821⁽²⁸⁾, and he also describes how a solo violinist ensured his applause by having "a small party of his personal friends " in the audience to "carry away the public by an uproarious clapping of hands, and a vigorous shouting of bravo."⁽²⁹⁾

Success was even more elusive then than now, and even royal patronage did not guarantee a full house. The reviewer of a Benefit for the Messrs. Bohrer makes this point.

"Though under the patronage of four members of the Royal Family, with other persons of high distinction, the Messrs. Bohrer could only assemble a scanty audience"

and even though both programme and performers were good,

"such is musical taste among the genteel mob in London /that/ were Apollo and his choir of Muses to descend, they would find only Midases, unless a certain circle had previously decided that they were to be considered as Lions." (30)

"D.G." in his NZfM article referred to above leaves his countrymen in no doubt about the matter:

"Here I would like to make an observation for /the benefit of/ German artists, that all who think of making an artistic visit to the British capital should consider. Reputation, the highest training in art, recommendations — even of the best — do not help one to succeed. The example of my friend Knoop from Meinigen shows this. He, who came here at the Queen's command, could not undertake a public concert without losing several hundred pounds. He had already played fourteen times at Court and had received no notice in any public newspaper from these, simply because he was too honourable to engage a eulogiser in the newspapers!" (31)

This last remark raises another difficult question,

that of soliciting critical approbation, whether through payment in money or in kind. This would be unlikely in the case of the more respectable periodicals, such as the Harmonicon, and the NZfM, in which the spread from adverse to favourable criticism is too wide in general to allow for excessive partisanship in the case of individuals, and furthermore, there is evidence of a detachment which would not suggest a great deal of interference. However, the daily press was not, it would seem, entirely immune. "Dilettante", in his "Diary", writing of February 28th 1828, notes that

"The Post says that the oratorio of the Messiah last night, collected a "numerous and respectable audience". But on the 29th. The Times states, that it was attended by "a remarkably thin audience". I was not present, but judging by the general practice of both papers, I am inclined to believe the latter. The present organised system of puffing will soon destroy what little confidence the public may still be disposed to place in the musical reports of the daily press." (32)

Spohr is quite categorical on the subject of Parisian critics. In his "Letter from Paris" he gives a description of the situation:

"Previous to every first appearance in public, whether of a foreigner or a native, these gentlemen of the press are accustomed to receive a visit from him, to solicit a favourable judgment, and to present them most obsequiously with a few free admission tickets. Foreign artists, to escape these unpleasant visits, sometimes forward their solicitations in writing only, and the free admissions at the same time; or, as is of frequent occurrence, induce some family to whom they have brought letters of introduction, to invite the gentlemen of the press to dinner, when a more convenient opportunity is offered to give them to understand what is desirable to have said of them both before and after the concert. This may perhaps occur now and then in Germany; but I do not think, that newspaper critics can be anywhere so venal as here." (33)

One may find here, perhaps, a parallel, though a less sinister one, with the Cénacle, the circle of young poets in Paris in

the late 1820s and early 1830s, especially of the relationship between Victor Hugo and the critic-poet Sainte-Beuve. It was the latter's criticisms in Le Globe which initiated, and were later an important element in ending, the association.

A critic in La Gazette de France (GdF), in attempting to exonerate "l'administration" from being the cause of the most popular opera singers leaving Paris, appears to agree with Spohr when he writes of the "complaints of some newspapers which are too often only the echoes of discontent of pride or of greed."⁽³⁴⁾ This, as it happens, is something of a double-take, and the beginning of the article, with its unmistakable references to Louis XVIII's illustrious predecessor, Le Roi Soleil, leaves one in no doubt that its purpose is to extol the administration. Although criticism in the Austro-German world was occasionally on a higher plane, the impression given throughout by French, German and English critics is of reportage of a primarily social occasion ornamented by the presence of a distinguished and brilliant visiting virtuoso.

Audience taste

On one matter, most commentators seemed to be in broad agreement at most times: the taste of audiences in their love of the element of display, instrumental or vocal. This is, of course, not surprising in public performance, especially in the age of the Romantic virtuoso, and no performer was unaware of its importance. But it often became the sole reason for the audience's attendance throughout Europe. An obvious case is the Paris of the Bourbon Restoration, the playground of Europe. "While the Parisians press eagerly forward to every sensual enjoyment, they must be almost

dragged to intellectual ones." (35) It is no accident that the later brilliant school of piano-playing should have centred on Paris and that many of its exponents — Liszt, Kalkbrenner, Herz, etc. — should have chosen to live there, at least for a time. Audiences in London, however, proved just as receptive, if not more so, to the more obvious aspects of display. Herz's first appearance in the city caused a sensation and, after praising the technical brilliance, a reviewer made his own position quite clear:

"...his style is quite his own and original: and his playing altogether is exactly the thing for an English audience 'a la mode de paris' /sic/, no inconsiderable number in the present day. But as we do not happen to belong to the audience 'a la mode de paris', we cannot help informing Monsieur Herz that he will never excite our admiration....." (36)

The critic in the Harmonicon of April 1827 was also unhappy about the newer trends in piano-playing.

"Of one thing we are quite sure — that the cultivation of the instrument is tending towards a decline, owing, we are thoroughly persuaded, to the discouraging difficulties, unaccompanied by any effect, which some of the ultra-moderns introduce into their compositions." (37)

A correspondent in distant St. Petersburg also bewailed the fact that newer fashions were gaining ground.

"...in Russia particularly, music is under the influence of this capricious goddess. Those concerts only are frequented which are by artists now in fashion; that music only is played which proceeds from the pen of composers who are now in vogue; for example, Field, Hummel, /! and Rossini...." (38)

This is an interesting comment on Hummel, considering that in a report of two months earlier, the correspondent had praised the composer-performer, though he did not neglect to mention that several critics found fault with a number of aspects of both his compositions and his playing. (39) Pixis received short shrift from a Harmonicon reviewer in 1828 in the

following terms:

"The velocity with which he executes his passages, and the accuracy also, are surprising enough. But, alas! the pleasure, if any, that attends this kind of astonishment, is very short-lived.....When we are stimulated by the desire of enjoying the wonderful, we will go to Astley's, and there see marvellous horsemanship; or to Vauxhall, and witness the still more miraculous skill of Madame Saqui on the rope: but mechanism is the lowest department of fine art, and is always a mere accessory where true genius exists."(40)

In spite of the St. Petersburg correspondent's disapproval of Hummel, this was never the critical view taken of him as a performer, with very few exceptions. One of these occurs in The Athenaeum, a London periodical, in a review of Hummel's performance of his Fantasia for piano and orchestra, "Oberons Zauberhorn", which "did not by any means delight" the critic.

"...we suspect, from the difference between that and Hummel's compositions in general, that it was written for the express purpose of exhibiting some of those tricks and difficulties, which his good taste deemed it unnecessary to display in the Concerto." (41)

Audiences were best pleased by singers, those among performers who, by general critical consent, were the arch-perpetrators of bad taste and the worst excesses. Opera, especially Italian opera, dominated public music, and the singers dominated opera. At the same time no concert would be complete — indeed was bound to fail — without them. It is true that, as I shall examine later, composers and instrumentalists looked on the purity of the voice and of vocal music as something to be aspired to. Hummel himself makes this point in his Piano School⁽⁴²⁾, and a criticism of Spohr's concert in Rome goes farther.

"The Roman critics remarked the pre-eminent beauty with which Spohr enriched his playing by a strict imitation of vocal effects. They said he was the finest singer on the violin that ever appeared. This perhaps is the highest praise that can be bestowed,

for although instrumental music certainly raises emotions and passions, yet they are very faint and vague when compared with the full, deep, and definite affection awakened by the human voice. The nearer an instrument approaches the voice, the nearer is art to the attainment of its object, and the reverse of the proposition equally applies to singers; the more they wander through the mazes of execution towards instrumental effect, the further they stray from the seat of their own proper dominion — the heart." (43)

Increasingly throughout the period, the presence of singers in concerts was considered by critics, commentators and musicians to be at the very least a nuisance, and a costly one at that. Though Spohr gained financially by his London concert of 18th June 1820 — not least because several of the orchestral musicians refused their pay, and because the Philharmonic Society allowed him free use of the New Argyll Rooms which they leased — the singers reduced his profit considerably.

"...I had to pay all the singers, and I yet well remember that I was obliged to pay Mrs. Salmon, the then most popular female vocalist in London, and without whose presence my concert would have been considered not sufficiently attractive, the sum of thirty pounds sterling for a single song; and she made it a further condition of agreement, that she should not sing until towards the end of the concert, as she had first to sing at a concert in the city, six miles off." (44)

Moscheles' wife, Charlotte, gives first-hand evidence of a crisis averted in the composer's annual concert in London in 1827, the arrangement of which was attended by "a regular fatality":

"One singer was hoarse, another was unavoidably absent, and all this at the eleventh hour. When we consider that the programme still contained the names of Caradori, Stockhausen, Galli, and de Begnis as singers, and that not only De Bériot, but also Cramer and Moscheles were to play, one would suppose that the omission of a few vocal pieces would do no harm; but your regular concert-goer is tenacious of his rights, and this made Moscheles apply to the

Rainers./[45)] "I hurried off to them. 'Can you do me the favour to slip away for a little time from your soirée at Lady —? Will you sing twice for me? I am in a difficulty.' 'Of course we will,' said the whole quartet, unisono. They came and sang, and the gaps in the programme were filled up capitally." " (46)

A concert given by the Polish pianist Marie Szymanowska in Paris (1824) causes the critic in GdF to launch into a rather unstable tirade against Parisian singers and their public.

"For these people, music is only a fanaticism which is overcome by roulades, by aria/s7, by the finals of Ausonie. Of these sorts of people, do not ask for good reason, or politeness: they are dilettanti. That must suffice. You are not of my opinion? Well, you are an ass." etc., etc. (47)

Halfway through the article, he pulls himself to a halt. "We've come a long way, without thinking of it, from the concert of M^{me} Szymanowska: we are attacking bad music and hers, in general, has only deserved.....unanimous praises..." (48)

Indeed, in the GdF article alluded to above (p.13) l'administration is exonerated on the grounds that it did its best to please the public by engaging, and trying to retain, the most important opera-singers. A rather lukewarm critique in Le Globe of another Szymanowska concert gives most of its space to the singers and their presence is one of the few points in the pianist's favour. "Madame Szymmanowska [sic] had the good idea of giving song the prominent place in her concert, and, what is more, to choose excellent singers." (49)

The problem was generally one of excess: too many singers singing too many of the same kind of songs in the same way. In Mori's Benefit (18th May 1829)

"The number of pieces amounted to twenty-one; and most, if not all, the vocal compositions had been sung over and over again during the present season. Who can wonder, therefore, that the public are at length beginning to be content with hearing one

benefit concert in a season, or two at the utmost?"(50)

At a Signor T. Rovedino's Benefit "Most of the usual singers attended, who sang most of the usual things." (51) Even the Philharmonic Society succumbed. Founded in 1813, its ideals are shown in its "Rule Second":

"That the chief object of the society is the performance, in the best style possible, of the most approved instrumental music; consisting of full pieces, concertantes for not less than three principal instruments, sestetts, quintetts, quartetts, and trios; that no concerto, solo, or duetto, shall ever be performed at any of the society's concerts..."(52)

A commentator in QMMR in 1818 continues:

"The last two seasons have witnessed a material deviation from the original plan in the introduction of single songs. The argument for this innovation, not to call it an absolute departure from the main design, was the difficulty of drawing together a sufficient number of equally great performers to sustain concerted pieces. This season (for the first time) the singers are, as we understand, regularly engaged and paid. If therefore concerted pieces are displaced by songs, it can only be upon some ground of preference which perhaps will hardly be thought to consist with the nature of the establishment. It may be dangerous to dilute the grand purpose of supporting instrumental music in its excellence." (53)

The singers, however, had been well and truly installed, and were still there in 1827, when strong criticism was voiced by the Harmonicon:

"If in private concerts they /singers/ are allowed to perform the same vapid thing twenty times in a season, the lady of the house has only herself to blame, or the person she deposes to select her music, and the company cannot complain for they are visitors /sic/; but the subscribers of a public concert place a confidence in the directors of it, and have a right to call them to some account for mismanagement, whether arising from negligence, or want of better information." (54)

The lionisation of singers by the upper classes is shown by the report of Madame Castelli's Benefit at the Berkeley Square

house of a Mrs. Granville where the singer "was assisted by the entire vocal strength of the Italian Opera. A numerous and fashionable audience was assembled on this occasion, and between the two parts of the concert the company partook of an excellent supper, with a profusion of choice wines." (55)

A favourite bone of contention was the payment to singers, and one is reminded of the kettle calling the pot black by a "Foreign Musical Report" from Paris which appeared in the Harmonicon in July 1828:

"It is said that Madameoiselle Sontag has eclipsed Madame Pasta in London. The English are ruled by fashion, not by taste: but they pay singers like princes; while they are content to let their labouring classes subsist on charity." (56)

The opening of the second Covent Garden theatre in 1809 was greeted by public riots because of the rise in admission prices, and these went down in history as the Old Price Riots. The public

"believed the increases were made so that foreign singers could be engaged at exorbitant fees, the management having engaged Catalani (probably the highest-paid prima donna in opera history) for a series of concerts. At the opening Macbeth, every sound from the stage was drowned with continued hissing, groaning, yelling, braying, barking and hooting noises, accompanied by the exclamations "Old Prices! No rise! No Catalani! No private boxes! No seven shilling prices!" After two months of such demonstrations the prices were reduced." (57)

The Harmonicon informs us that

"Maddle. Sontag's third /sic/ benefit this evening was a complete failure, though the performance, take it altogether, was interesting. The expense could scarcely have been covered.— Is the bubble burst?" (58)

It was not. The same lady was engaged at the Cambridge Music Festival of 1828

"at the enormous sum of 300l for two evening concerts

/sic/and 501. for Mr. Pixis. We cannot but condemn this as an act of wanton extravagance, and a precedent replete with mischief. The evil is a growing one, and calls loudly for redress..." (59)

The Memento of Madame Catalani in the London magazine the Flutonica in 1844 shows what Sachs has rightly called "a favorite preoccupation of English writers on foreign musicians" (60):

"This celebrated singer has just paid the debt of nature.....She died worth £350,000." (61)

As well as their exorbitant fees and limited repertory, singers were also castigated for their sameness of delivery, and especially for the addition of too many embellishments and cadenzas. Though it took place in an opera performance, where such additions were much more acceptable, the well-known story of Braham being heckled by an admittedly old-fashioned member of his audience illustrates this perfectly.

"Braham was one evening performing Carlos in The Duenna, at (we believe) Covent Garden Theatre, when, finding himself in one of those discursive moods, so common with fine singers, he proceeded to decorate with extraordinary flights of embellishment the well-known air of "Had I a heart for falsehood framed." A staid and elderly remain of the old school unexpectedly arose from his seat in the Pit, and with a voice that seemed accustomed to command, said — "The plain song!" The attention of the audience was seized, the singer embarrassed, and the speaker not to be trifled with. "The plain song!" was again deliberately called for, and the vocalist stopped. "The Plain Song!" was a third time authoritatively demanded, and the well-rebuked son of Apollo had the good sense to obey. He began anew, and never sang better in his life. He gave the ballad in all its native simplicity, and was rewarded by showers of deserved applause. Upon this occasion the auditors were treated with the unusual display of the Variation first, and the subject afterwards." (62)

In a review of performers of the season just over in the Flutist's Magazine, the writer, having praised Madame Pasta, nevertheless adds:

"....we yet think her in some qualities indispensably deficient. We produce proofs of this assertion in her singing almost continually out of tune, and, in the ridiculous shakes and cadences, which she is constantly labouring to introduce." (63)

And, showing the other side of the coin, the Musical Magazine, in praising the "Styrians of the Alps", one of several travelling folk-troupes to visit London, says that "their simple touching melodies have only to be heard (by those who have any soul), to be appreciated " but a footnote tells us that "their sweet melodies had, unadorned, no charms for English ears." (64)

Concert programmes

From the foregoing examination, the picture of wide variety in concerts is beginning to emerge. This can be seen in a Spohr concert-programme of 1820.

PART I.

Grand Sinfonia (M.S.).	Spohr.
Air, Mr. T. Welch, "Revenge, revenge, Timotheus cries"	Haendel.
Grand Duetto (M.S.), Harp and Violin, Mad. Spohr and Mr. Spohr	Spohr.
Aria, Miss Goodall, "Una voce al cor mi parla." Clarinet obligato, Mr. Willman .	Pær.
Sestetto for Pianoforte, two Violins, Viola, Violincello and Contrabasso, Messrs: Ries, Watts, Wagstaff, R. Ashley, Lindley and Dragonetti.	Ries.
Irish Melodies (M.S.), with Variations for the Violin, Mr. Spohr (composed expressly for this occasion)	Spohr.

PART II.

Nonotto for Violin, Viola, Violincello, Contrabasso, Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Horn and Bassoon, Messrs. Spohr, Lindley, Dra- gonetti, Ireland, Griesbach, Willman, Arnull and Holmes	Spohr.
Scena, Mrs. Salmon "Fellon, la pena avrai"	Rossini.
Rondo for the Violin, Mr. Spohr	Spohr.

Aria, Mr. Vaughan "Rendi'l sereno" . . . Haendel.
 Overture Spohr.

* , * * *

Leader of the Band. . . Mr. Spohr.
 At the Pianoforte . . . Sir George Smart. (65)

This contains the usual mixture of orchestral and chamber music, the obligatory vocal items and the very popular "folk" department which, in the form of glees, invaded even the austere Concerts of Ancient Music, often sandwiched between parts of oratorios. Hummel's concert on 19th. April 1816 at the Redoutensaal in Vienna was even more varied; it contained (1) an overture of his, (2) a piano concerto and (4) the d minor Septet, (3) an aria by Paer, (5) a recitation /I7 and (6) an improvisation, with which he, in common with many virtuosos of the period, finished his concerts.

There are other aspects also, which we may question today, but which do not seem to have concerned audiences or musicians of that time, and they have a strong bearing upon our attitude to the concert-life and to the music it called forth. Thus, the extreme length of concerts in London, for example, did not appear to be a stumbling-block to their patronage. Here again, we must bear in mind the conscious popularity of the programmes, the contemporary feeling of social occasion in a sense different to our own generally, and the differing expectations on the parts of audiences and musicians. The "incredible length" of one of the harpist Bochsa's concerts in London, containing twenty nine items, caused Moscheles to copy the programme out "as a curiosity", (66) and he complained of the less outré occasions also:

"It is a mistake to give at every Philharmonic Concert two symphonies and two overtures, besides two grand instrumental and four vocal pieces. I never can enjoy more than half." (67)

On occasion, however, the finer points of what was acceptable or unacceptable in concerts become puzzling.

In a review of "Concerts at the Two Universities" (Oxford), we are told that the "former Miss Stephens"

"...sang "Parto! ma tu ben mio", in her best style, and was admirably accompanied by Willman. Such composers are worthy her; but we heartily wish that, in spite of the charms of an encore, she would abandon such things as "Hurrah! for the bonnets of blue." Ballads of this class may do very well at the theatres, but in a concert room, particularly at Oxford and Cambridge, we look for something more refined. "Haste my Nanette," — a charming production of the Old English School, was exceedingly well sung, and much applauded." (68)

Pastiche works were also quite acceptable. Moscheles, returning to London after the Paris season of 1822

"..found J.B.Cramer on the point of giving his yearly concert. He showed me two movements of a Sonata which he wished to play with me, and expressed a desire that I should compose a third movement as a finale; only I was not to put any of my octave passages into his part, which he pretended he could not play. I can refuse him nothing. I shall therefore be obliged to strive and write something analogous for him, the disciple of Mozart and Handel." (69)

This kind of procedure was sanctioned by no less than Weber, who conducted a Philharmonic Concert in March 1826, in which Ludwig Schuncke played a concerto made up as follows:

- "1st Movement — Concerto C minor. Ries.
- 2 " Part of Beethoven's E flat major Concerto.
- 3 " Hungarian Rondo by Pixis." (70)

Not long after, this same pianist played a piece made up of "a movement in A sharp minor [sic], by Hummel, and an adagio,

by Beethoven, and a finale by Pixis. His efforts deserved, and met with corresponding applause." (71)

This should not surprise us in an age when Liszt could perform Beethoven's Op.27/2 with an orchestra taking over the first movement, and the pianist the remaining movements, solo. (72)

Problems in concert-arranging

The arrangements for concerts, especially in cities foreign to the virtuoso-composer, were subject to many vicissitudes other than those mentioned. Factors such as lack of the right kind of patronage, rival factions, and the ill-will of theatre and concert-hall lessees or owners could turn a concert into a financial and social disaster. An account of such pressures in London is given by Moscheles' wife with quotations from the composer himself.

"The state of things was this. Those artists who had annual concerts were anxious to let their patrons hear the best dramatic singers, and accordingly often engaged them with a view of enhancing the attractions of their programme.

Laporte, who had become in 1828 the lessee of Her Majesty's Theatre, was peremptory in his dealings with concert-givers, his dictum being: "Hire my opera concert-hall, or you must do without my singers," and the high price he put upon this arrangement made the acceptance a very difficult matter. The pill of course was sugared over with many honeyed French conversational terms and phrases." (73)

Spohr was also thwarted in his quest for a hall in which to perform the cantata he had composed for the return of the Empress to Vienna after Napoleon's defeat at Leipzig in October 1813. Arrangements for the hiring of the larger Redouten-Saal were well under way when Herr Van Tost, a local amateur who had taken Spohr "under his wing" brought the bad news:

".....one morning Herr Von Tost rushed into my room and exclaimed in despair: "I have just now had the great Redouten-Saal refused to me for our performance, under the idle pretence that it cannot be spared on account of the preparation for the Court-festivals! It is from sheer jealousy alone of the Musical Society, who will not allow any other grand performance in the Riding-school but their own. What is to be done? Since the destruction of the Apollo Saloon, there is no locale in Vienna except the "Great Redouten-Saal" for such a musical performance." (74)

In fact, the entire project failed. Spohr reports that Beethoven often criticised the (aristocratic) management of the Viennese theatres (75), and gives a clear picture of the problems in Paris also.

"It is at all times a tedious business to make arrangements for a concert in any town, but in Paris, which is so extensive, where so many theatres are daily open, where there is so much competition and so many obstacles to overcome, it is indeed a Herculean task. I think also that this is the reason why so many artists who come to Paris, decline giving a public concert, which, besides being attended with the enormous expense of nearly 3000 francs, is always an undertaking of great risk. If these matters have been extremely unpleasant to me in other places, you may readily imagine how I feared to attempt them here. In order to get over the difficulty, I bethought myself of making a proposition to the directors of the grand opera, to divide with me the expenses and the receipts of an evening entertainment of which the first half should consist of a concert and the second of a ballet. Contrary to the expectation of all those to whom I had spoken on the subject, this proposition was acceded to. The consent of the minister was however so long delayed, that the concert could not be announced till three days before it took place, and although the house was well filled, yet I ascribe to this delay that it was not so crowded as I had expected so novel and, from its novelty, so attractive an arrangement would have been for the Parisians. The half which came to my share, after deduction of the expenses, was therefore, as you may imagine, not very considerable: but as I had not calculated upon making much pecuniary gain in Paris, I do not regret this arrangement at all, as it saved me an immense deal of trouble, and yet gave me an opportunity of making my appearance in public." (76)

In France and in areas under its dominion, it was a legal requirement that any concert at which an entry fee was charged

and which was advertised by bills should have a fifth of its receipts payable to the Directors of the town's theatre,⁽⁷⁷⁾ and in England those who wished to tax performances and the printing of music were not heeded by Pitt because of his lack of interest in music.⁽⁷⁸⁾ On one occasion in London, however, a singer, it would appear, helped to alleviate the situation. The singers Blume and Sontag had been forbidden to sing in Moscheles' concert by their theatre-manager, but both rallied to the composer's flag.

"Fräulein Sontag, who was not allowed to help me positively, did so negatively, by giving out that she was hoarse. Instead of singing....she went with my wife to the concert, and escaped observation by hiding in the back of the box. When I thanked the famous artiste, she said with her peculiarly sweet smile, 'But, dear Moscheles, should not an old Viennese friend help to frustrate the cabals of a theatrical director?' S'Jettl is immer noch's Jettl." (79)

Another problem which bedevilled virtuosos was the generally low standard of orchestras. This may be one of the reasons why works for piano and orchestra, for example, were published in single-piano format "with accompaniments" for string quartet and winds "ad lib." Spohr's accompaniment at Basel, particularly by the winds, was "fearful"⁽⁸⁰⁾, and Moscheles' at Elberfeld was by a "set of fiddlers calling themselves an orchestra", the composer playing his E major concerto "with every possible precaution, that the band may not lag behind." (81) His concert at Liverpool in 1825 was worse.

"On the 8th of November, at noon, we had the rehearsal in the Concert Room; but what a rehearsal! Wretched is too tame an expression for it. Mori, the London artist, did all that possibly could be done, but what was to be made out of a band consisting of a double quartet and four halting wind-instruments. The director of the theatre played the entrepreneur

of the concert, Mr. Wilson, the trick of keeping away the orchestral performers, so that I was obliged to play the first movement of the E flat concerto and the Alexander Variations with a bare quartet accompaniment." (82)

The musical traveller, Holmes, writes, in 1828 that

"The musicians in London, particularly the wind-instrument players, often exasperate a composer by omitting the solos which are set down for them, and from the lenience of the leader towards these mistakes, the poor author frequently receives the most unjust misrepresentation." (83)

This is hardly surprising, when one considers that rehearsals were viewed as almost an unnecessary evil. Sachs pieces together the situation with respect to Hummel's concert of 22nd. April 1825 in London:

"The elaborateness of ~~the~~ programs suggests extensive preparations before Hummel's arrival. Actually, little seems to have been done until the last moment. For example, the violinist Baillot agreed to play at the third concert only a week and a half before it took place. Hummel wrote to the bass Levasseur on the 20th(Wednesday) asking him to rehearse the following day for the concert of the 22nd, enclosing the music (to a trio from Paer's Sargino) and assuring him that the rehearsal would consume no more than a quarter of an hour.....Yet if the rehearsal time seems miniscule for a large Hummel Trio, it may not have necessarily produced the result that one might fearfully anticipate. Luckily, the traditional concept of chamber music with piano, in which the keyboard dominated, made it possible for such concerts to be assembled rapidly. In fact, this style of "Trio for pianoforte with accompaniment of..." may have persisted precisely because travelling virtuosi often had to cope with restricted rehearsal time or inexperienced accompanists." (84)

Private gatherings

I have already mentioned the difficulty of access to information in this area, particularly private functions of the upper and aristocratic classes, which tended to be the private counterparts of their public appearances in most localities. The Germanic and Austro-Hungarian aristocracy

were noted for being lovers of music and encouraging the art in general and were often no mean performers or composers themselves. Czerny describes the Baroness Ertmann as the best interpreter of Beethoven's piano compositions among lady virtuosos during the early years of the nineteenth century, and private aristocratic performances of his chamber music were also of a very high standard. (85)

At musicians' réunions a slightly different kind of pecking-order obtained very often. Spohr describes such meetings in Vienna in 1813:

"On these occasions there was at first always a dispute who should begin, for each desired to be the last, in order to eclipse his predecessor. But, I, who always preferred playing a well combined Quartett to a Solo piece, never refused to make the beginning, and invariable /sic/ succeeded in gaining the attention and sympathy of the company by my own peculiar style of reading and executing the classical quartetts. Then when the others had each paraded his hobby-horse, and I observed that the company had more liking for that sort of thing than for classical music, I brought out one of my difficult and brilliant Pot-Pourri's, and invariably succeeded in eclipsing the success of my predecessors." (86)

In Lille, on the other hand,

"Private musical parties....took place almost daily, and I had thus an opportunity of performing all my quartets, quintets, and compositions for the harp to this circle of enthusiastic lovers of music. I found on these occasions a very sympathetic and graceful auditory, and therefore still recall with infinite pleasure the remembrance of those musical soirées." (87)

The comparatively few references to the many private aristocratic musical parties hardly proclaim them as occasions of great joy or fulfilment, at least for the musicians. "How different," exclaims Moscheles,

"is music-making in these hot, overcrowded rooms, compared with our quiet reunions amongst musicians! Heaven be thanked, I did not fare as badly as poor

Lafont, who in the middle of a piece was tapped on the shoulder by the Duke of —, with 'C'est assez, mon cher'." (88)

Spohr, who was determined not to be treated in such a manner, gives a fascinating insight into the social position of musicians at private music-parties in London in 1820:

"..I could never make up my mind to play for remuneration at private parties, for the manner in which musicians were then treated there, was to me most unbecoming and degrading. They were not admitted to join the company, but were shewn into an adjoining room, where they had to wait until the moment arrived when they were summoned to the apartments where the company was assembled before whom they were to play; their performance over, they had to leave the room again immediately. My wife and I were ourselves once eyewitnesses of this contemptuous treatment of the first and most eminent artists in London. We had received letters of introduction to the king's brothers the Dukes of Sussex and Clarence, and as the latter was married to a German, a Princess of Meiningen, I paid them a visit accompanied by my wife. The Ducal couple received us in a very kind manner and invited us to a musical party they were to give in a few days and at which we were also asked to assist. I then thought in what way I could best extricate myself from this disgusting exclusion from the company, and resolved if I could not succeed to return home immediately. When therefore we entered the palace, and a lacquey was on the point of opening the door where the other musicians were assembled, I told Johanning /*7 to deliver my violin case to him, and with my wife on my arm, immediately ascended the staircase before the lacquey had time to recover from his astonishment. Arrived at the door of the apartments where the company were assembled, I announced my name to the footman in waiting, and as he hesitated to open the door I evinced an intention of opening it myself. Upon this the lacquey instantly threw open the door and called out the names of the newcomers. The Duchess, alive to German usages, rose immediately from her seat, advanced a few steps to meet my wife, and led her into the circle of ladies. The Duke welcomed me also with a few friendly words and introduced me to the gentlemen around him. I now thought I had successfully achieved all; but I soon observed that the servants notwithstanding did not consider me as properly belonging to the company, for they always passed me by with the tea-tray and other refreshments, without offering me any. At length the Duke may also have remarked this; for I

* Johanning, a German emigré living in London, was Spohr's butler and general factotum during his stay there.

saw him whisper a few words in the ear of the steward of the household. After this the refreshments were also presented to me. When the concert was to commence the steward of the household sent a servant to summon the invited artists in the order in which their names appeared on the programme. They hereupon entered the apartment with their sheet of music or instrument in hand, saluted the company with a profound bow, and began their performances. They were the élite of the most distinguished singers and musicians in London, and the execution of their respective pieces was almost without exception charmingly beautiful. This, however, did not appear to be felt by the noble and fashionable auditory; for they did not cease their conversation one moment. Once only when a very favorite female singer entered the room they became somewhat more silent, and a few subdued bravas were heard, for which she immediately returned thanks with profound curtsies. I was exceedingly annoyed by this derogation of art and still more so with the artists who submitted to be so treated, and I had a great mind not to play at all. When the turn came to me, therefore, I purposely hesitated so long till the Duke, probably at a sign made to him by his wife, invited me himself to play. I then requested one of the servants to bring up my violin case, and I then began to play the piece I had proposed to myself without making the customary bows to the company. All these circumstances excited no doubt the attention of the company, for during the whole time of my performance the greatest stillness pervaded the apartment. When I had concluded the ducal pair and their guests applauded. Now also I first expressed my thanks by making a bow. Shortly afterwards the concert terminated, and the musicians retired. If our having constituted ourselves part of the company had furnished matter of surprise, this was still more increased when they saw that we stopped there also to supper, and during the supper were treated with great attention by the ducal hosts. The circumstance to which we doubtless owed this distinction — one so unheard-of and repugnant to all English notions of that day — was the fact that the Duchess had known us while yet living in her paternal house, and had there witnessed the friendly reception which, at the time when we lived at Gotha, we had frequently met with at the court of Meiningen."

(89)

I have quoted this description at full length because it is the clearest and most detailed picture of which I am aware of the performers' predicament at private parties, related by one of those same performers. We have also an interesting vignette from an aristocratic, non-musical source, given by

Madame de La Tour du Pin, a young French noblewoman who had fled from the Terror in Paris, and it shows that little had changed since the turn of the century, at least in England.

"I was....taken to a large gathering in the house of a lady whom I scarcely saw. People overflowed on to the stairs and no one even dreamed of trying to sit down. By chance, I was crowded into a corner of the salon where someone was playing the piano, though no one was paying the slightest attention to the music. The pianist was a man and I listened in some surprise, for I could not recall ever having heard anything so agreeable, in such excellent taste and expressing so much feeling and delicacy. After a quarter of an hour, the pianist realised no one was listening, so he got up and left. I asked his name...it was Cramer!" (90)

The German dramatic soprano, Schröder-Devrient tells of "the horror of a stiff English soirée, where the ladies stare at me, and quiz my behaviour." (91)

Tedious as these were, however, composer-performers were well aware of the ancillary benefits of patronage.

Referring to Hummel's Paris tour of 1825, Sachs writes:

"All things considered, the private appearances, rather than the subscription series, may have proved the most profitable for the visiting musician. It was these events that brought Hummel into close contact with his admirers, and particularly with wealthy patrons. Perhaps it was at such an evening that Hummel met Caroline, Duchess of Berry, who became one of his important French sponsors." (92)

To summarise, then, the performance venue in the early nineteenth century was divided between the "fashionable" — public and aristocratic private concerts— and the "réunions" the "get-togethers" of musicians, amateur and professional, for the purpose of playing music of high quality, and it is this dichotomy which primarily conditioned the composer's response in his particular compositions and in the "public" and "private" manners in which every contemporary virtuoso-composer couched these particular works.

NOTES to CHAPTER I

- (1) Wangermée/VIRTUOSITÉ, p.21.

"Le nom d'un virtuose est une bonne étiquette pour vendre même des œuvres faciles: et ceux qui les jouent n'ont-ils pas le sentiment glorieux d'accomplir des exploits qui les rapprochent de maîtres qu'ils admirent."

- (2) Op. cit.

- (3) Sachs/KAPELLMEISTER, p.46.

- (4) Hobsbawm/REVOLUTION, p.56, from several sources.

- (5) Clapham/ECONOMIC, I, p.246.

- (6) Sachs/KAPELLMEISTER, footnote on p.26.

- (7) QMMR, 1824, pp.45-6.

- (8) The Harmonicon, December 1827, "Provincial Music Festivals and Foreign Singers".

- (9) Sachs/KAPELLMEISTER, pp.58-60.

- (10) Wangermée/VIRTUOSITÉ, p.15.

Ces relations très commercialisées ont dû avoir des conséquences sur le plan artistique; les démonstrateurs d'instruments à vendre ne devaient-ils pas séduire, étonner, éblouir par leur jeu, mais éviter d'ennuyer par l'exécution d'œuvres trop sévères, de choquer par des pièces trop audacieuses. Ces relations ont dû contribuer à maintenir beaucoup de virtuoses dans un conformisme propre à satisfaire leur public de bourgeois."

- (11) Sachs/KAPELLMEISTER, p.20.

- (12) Op. cit., p.21.

- (13) Harmonicon, September 1825, p.150.

- (14) WZ, 9th April 1827. (Quoted in Sachs/KAPELLMEISTER, p.21.)

- (15) MMLM, 1830, p.88.

- (16) Harmonicon, June 1831, "Extracts from the Diary of a Dilettante."

- (17) Spohr/AUTOBIOGRAPHY, II, p.92.

- (18) The Philharmonicon, June 1833, p.1.

- (19) Spohr/AUTOBIOGRAPHY, II, p.95.

- (20) Hobsbawm/REVOLUTION, p.13.

- (21) Moschelos/LIFE, I, p.124-6.

- (22) Harmonicon, July, 1828, p.168.

- (23) Op. cit., June 1831, p.155.

- (24) NZfM, 7th April, 1834, pp.7-8.

"Geist, Leben, Vortrag blieb für die Zuhörer — man sah es auf allen Gesichtern — verloren, sie erhoben sich von ihren Sitzen, sahen dem hübschen

Fingerspiel zu, bewunderten es, und als nun gar die Doppeltriller angingen — da arbeitete Alles mit Händen, Füßen und Stöcken, als sollte der leichtgebaute Musiksaal seinen Untergang feiern! Wundere Dich nicht über einen solchen Beifall — der Engländer liebt diese massiven Beifallsbezeugungen."

(25) NZfM, 10th April, 1834, p.12.

"Man sah, dass hier das wahre Element dieser ausgesuchten Gesellschaft berührt wurde; hier war alles verständlich, man konnte in den Geist des Componisten eindringen — und als nun noch ein gackernder und schnatternder Hühnerhof mit Kühegebrülle Säuegegrunze folgte, da war des Dacapo-klatschens kein Ende und Jedermann war so recht bis in die Seele vergnügt."

(26) Spohr/AUTOBIOGRAPHY, II, p.95.

(27) Moscheles/LIFE, I, p.32.

(28) Spohr/AUTOBIOGRAPHY, II, p.120.

(29) Op. cit., I, p.215.

(30) Harmonicon, July 1828, p.168.

(31) NZfM, 10th April 1834, p.12.

"Für deutsche Künstler füge ich hier eine Bemerkung bei, die Jeder beherzigen möge, der einstens einen Kunstbesuch in der brittischen Hauptstadt zu machen gedenkt. — Ruf, die höchste Kunstbildung, Empfehlungen, auch die besten, helfen zu keinem Fortkommen. Das Beispiel meines Freundes, des trefflichen Knoop aus Meiningen, beweist dieses. Er, der auf Geheiss der Königin hieher kam, konnte zu keinem öffentlichen Concert gelangen, ohne mehrere hundert Pfund zu verlieren. Er hatte schon vierzehnmal bei Hof gespielt, und nie hatte ein öffentliches Blatt Notiz davon genommen, deshalb, weil er zu ehrenhaft war, um sich in den Zeitungen einen Lobredner zu dingen!"

(32) Harmonicon, April 1828, p.78.

(33) Spohr/AUTOBIOGRAPHY, II, pp.121-2.

(34) GdF, 6th May 1824, p.2.

".....les plaintes de quelques gazettes qui ne sont trop souvent que les échos du mécontentement de l'amour-propre ou de l'avidité."

(35) Spohr/AUTOBIOGRAPHY, II, p.131.

(36) Philharmonicon, August 1833, p.18.

(37) Harmonicon, April 1827, p.89.

(38) Op. cit., February 1824, p.31.

(39) Op. cit., December 1823, p.201.

(40) Op. cit., July 1828, p.167.

(41) The Athenaeum, 1st May 1830, p.270.

- (42) Hummel/SCHOOL, Pt.III, Section 2nd., Ch.1, p.39.
- (43) QMMR, 1821, p.325.
- (44) Spohr/AUTOBIOGRAPHY, II, pp.91-2.
- (45) The Rainer family, known as the "Tyrolese Minstrels" were one of a number of such "folk"-troupes who travelled around Europe performing national music in their appropriate costumes.
- (46) Moscheles/LIFE, I, p.142-3.
- (47) GdF, 13th. April 1824, p.1
 "Pour ceux-ci, la musique n'est qu'un fanatisme, qui se pâme aux roulades, aux aria, et surtout aux finals de l'Ausonie. À ces sortes de gens, ne demandez ni bonne raison, ni politesse: ils sont dilettanti. Cela doit suffire. Vous n'êtes pas de mon avis? Donc, vous êtes un âne."
- (48) Ibid.
 "Nous voilà conduits, sans y songer, bien loin du concert de M^{me} Szymanowska: nous attaquons la mauvaise musique, et la sienne, en général, n'a mérité.....que des éloges unanimes....."
- (49) Le Globe, 1st. December 1825, p.996.
 "Madame Szymanowska /sic/ avait eu le bon esprit de faire dominer le chant dans son concert, et, qui plus est, de choi/sir d'excellents chanteurs."
- (50) The Harmonicon, June 1829, p.147.
- (51) Op. cit., June 1829, p.143.
- (52) QMMR, 1818, p.343.
- (53) Op. cit., 1818, p.344.
- (54) Harmonicon, July 1827, p.146.
- (55) Op. cit., p.148.
- (56) Op. cit., July 1828, p.172.
- (57) The New Grove, vol.11, p.163.
- (58) Harmonicon, July 1828, p.156.
- (59) Op. cit., August 1828, p.178.
- (60) Sachs/KAPELLMEISTER, p.38.
- (61) The Flutonic, February 1844, p.9.
- (62) MM, March 1835, pp.46-7.
- (63) FM, 1827, p.124.
- (64) MM, May 1835, p.80.
- (65) Spohr/AUTOBIOGRAPHY, II, p.94.
- (66) Moscheles/LIFE, I. p.66.
- (67) Op. cit., I, p.244.
- (68) Harmonicon, January 1828, p.20.

- (69) Moscheles/LIFE, I, p.64.
- (70) Op. cit., I, p.123.
- (71) Harmonicon, May 1826, pp.105-6.
- (72) (Prod'homme/BEETHOVEN), quoted in Newman/SCE, p.518.
- (73) Moscheles/LIFE, I, p.228.
- (74) Spohr/AUTOBIOGRAPHY, I, p.183.
- (75) Op. cit., I, p.185.
- (76) Op. cit., II, pp.120-1.
- (77) Op. cit., I, p.228.
- (78) Harmonicon, February 1828, p.36.
- (79) Moscheles/LIFE, I, p.135.
- (80) Spohr/AUTOBIOGRAPHY, I, p.234.
- (81) Moscheles/LIFE, I, pp.139-40. Moscheles is in a
jocular mood in this letter, but he is obviously well
used to the situation he purports to describe.
- (82) Op. cit., I, p.112.
- (83) Holmes/RAMBLE, p.38-9.
- (84) Sachs/KAPELLMEISTER, pp.22-3.
- (85) Czerny/ERINNERUNGEN, p.14.
- (86) Spohr/AUTOBIOGRAPHY, I, p.167.
- (87) Op. cit., II, p.71.
- (88) Moscheles/LIFE, I, pp.67-8.
- (89) Spohr/AUTOBIOGRAPHY, II, pp.88-90.
- (90) de La Tour du Pin, Madame Henrietta-Lucy, Escape
from the Terror, ed. and trans. F. Harcourt,
London, 1979, p.265.
- (91) Moscheles/LIFE, I, p.263.
- (92) Sachs/KAPELLMEISTER, p.23.

CHAPTER 2 - COMPOSITIONAL STYLE

Introduction

An overview of the prevalent instrumental style in composition during our period poses many problems. This is to a great extent the result of the "private" and "public" manners of composers, partly the sheer amount of music produced, much of which we neither see nor hear today, and particularly because the music and personalities of the great masters (notably Beethoven and Schubert) dominate our present-day assessment of every musical aspect of the time. Nowhere is this more striking than in the critical attitude to Beethoven who, for the more musical of the time, as indeed for posterity, was paramount in the era. This attitude is a mixture of love, respect, bewilderment at his late second and third period works, and a genuine regret that he had withdrawn himself from the mainstream of composition. A few quotations must suffice as examples of what was a general critical view. A review of one of his trios prompted the following:

"Nearly all the new compositions of Beethoven which it has been our lot to notice, in this part of our work, have been of so elaborate and difficult a kind, so full of harsh and unaccountable combinations, and strange notation, that we have found it an arduous task to escape from mentioning them in terms of downright censure, and have struggled hard with duty, out of respect and gratitude to a genius of the first magnitude, whose former productions have afforded, and must always afford, us so much pleasure." (1)

Holmes gives his particular view in similar terms.

"In his younger days Beethoven consented to the jurisdiction of musical laws, and obeyed them; his earlier pianoforte works, and his first and second instrumental sinfonias, are pure with respect to

progressions, classical in their episodes and general construction; but in advanced life he set the pedants too heartily at defiance, as he grew older he became more tenacious of the merit of those productions in which he had, as it were, trodden on the confines of forbidden ground, hovering between genius and extravagance. When his friends praised the regularity of his early writings, he preferred the wildness of his later ones; and there never yet was, I believe, a writer who did not reserve the weight of his own liking for the sickliest and ugliest bantlings of his imagination; for what all the world agrees to call beautiful is in no want of patronage." (2)

And in the "Memoir" of Hummel in the Harmonicon of 1824, the writer states that Goethe and Beethoven "no longer shine with meridian brilliancy." (3)

It is perhaps in the late Classical/early Romantic period that the basic dichotomy in all art-periods between the public artist and his private musical convictions becomes most obvious, and elevates itself into a stylistic consideration. This dichotomy can be (and has been) described in various ways: personal and impersonal, craft and art, Schiller's "naive and reflecting" (4), "learned" and "brilliant", and others. Amster, in her examination of the early nineteenth virtuoso-concerto, also recognises this, putting it slightly differently:

"Virtuosity on the one hand, and the direction towards Beethoven's art on the other, results in the necessity for two style-types:
 A. The personal "style of Beethoven", especially the so-called "heroic" style of the 'pathetic' Beethoven of the early and middle periods.
 B. The "brilliant style", which recruits from all the styles of the time, characterised by its increased external effect." (5)

I propose to use the terms "private manner" and "public manner" since they are largely true in the literal sense, and because their metaphoric usage will not unduly strain the epithets' basic meaning.

The age of the breakdown of aristocratic patronage, of a large and increasingly affluent and powerful bourgeoisie, of public concerts, and of the musical uomo universale (composer, performer, pedagogue, instrument-maker, publisher, and combinations of all or several of these), was one in which to ignore the prevailing public taste was to court financial ruin and social oblivion as a composer. Did not composers have the examples of Mozart and, more recently, Beethoven before them, both of whom to a greater or lesser extent perished in financial terms on the rock of emotional artistic integrity?

Indeed, the combination of popularity — whether during one's own lifetime or after — and high art was considered the summum bonum of artistic endeavour. In a letter to Goethe, Schiller is clear on this point:

"Popularity, far from alleviating the artist's labors, or from covering mediocrities, constitutes an additional difficulty. The achievement of popularity is in truth so difficult a task, that its successful accomplishment may be called the highest triumph of genius. What an undertaking, to satisfy the refined taste of the connoisseur, without becoming tasteless to the mob — to accommodate oneself to the artistic sense of the people without compromising in the least the dignity of art!" (6)

The words have a particular poignancy in our own time.

The integration of the popular style of elements from opera and lighter chamber-music is well-known in the Classical style, with magnificent result in, for example the "London" symphonies of Joseph Haydn, and the latter was certainly blessed by less capricious gods than most of the composers in the period with which this dissertation is concerned.

Stylistically speaking, the terms I have chosen are, of course, neither in opposition nor mutually exclusive, but the

distinction was sufficiently recognised and affirmed in the period to warrant their separate treatment.

The Public Manner

The most important aspect of the compositional public manner of a composer was the extent of his concession to popular taste. This was primarily, but not entirely, a financial consideration and applied both to his concerts and to his published works, the latter becoming increasingly important as a source of revenue throughout the period.

(a) Publishing

Printing and publishing of music had already become an area of high growth and productivity in the latter half of the eighteenth century.

"From the 1750s concertos and symphonies, church music and operas were being composed in ever-increasing quantities, and the numbers needed for their performance were also expanding continually. The large quantity of separate parts required had to be supplied in multiple copies more quickly than was usually possible by the use of movable type or by the employment of hand-copyists. A rapid growth of smaller forms, such as chamber music and keyboard solo (where the all-conquering pianoforte rapidly replaced the harpsichord), reflected the rise of a new middle-class public of music-lovers, who required a mass of new music for domestic performance. All these factors produced an unprecedented demand for plate-printed music. Throughout Europe, the old-established centres increased their production, and new ones competed with them." (7)

The two main processes for printing music before 1800 were those using type (whether movable or not) and engraving.

Movable type was ideal for such works as theoretical treatises and tutors, in which text was interspersed with musical examples. Publications of this kind sold very well among the music-conscious middle classes. Lithography was invented and perfected in the last years of the eighteenth century, at

first becoming known as "chemical printing". The process was very cheap, less than a quarter of the cost of engraving,⁽⁸⁾ and it spread throughout Europe. Engraving, however, retained its supremacy, at least until the early 1850s⁽⁹⁾.

The almost insatiable demands of middle-class and, to a lesser extent, upper-class music-lovers for parlour-pieces involving the fashionable piano provided a thriving market for publisher and composer, and a system of communication becoming increasingly efficient in terms of speed and regularity ensured that supplies were quickly available. A correspondent in Le Globe (1825)⁽¹⁰⁾ writes of 120,000 scores of operas being sold in France which, in 1836 had a population of 33,000,000, of which about 1½ million were concentrated in the larger cities. Although the Editor, in his reply, points out with withering condescension the "scores" meant piano reductions, he does not quarrel with the figures.⁽¹¹⁾ An extra "bonus" for publishers was the possibility of "pirate" editions (those which were not authorised by the composer or copyright holder) which could also indirectly benefit the composer by keeping his name before the public. The Parisian publisher Maurice Schlesinger, whose business was closely connected with that of his father in Berlin, had very neatly timed a large pirate edition of "21 volumes of 60 to 100 plates each, engraved by MM. Richomme and Marquerie, and printed on Annonay paper. [The price of subscription, 7 franca. Eight volumes are on sale.]"⁽¹²⁾, to coincide with Hummel's arrival in Paris in 1825. Another publisher, Richault, also brought out a collection of his piano music.

"These editions would have exercised a detrimental financial effect on Hummel's German publishers, had

not the majority of the major works already appeared at least once in French pirated editions." (13)

On the occasion of this visit, Hummel arranged for future publications with Erard (with whom, as we have seen, he lodged and whose salon and instruments he used) and Farrenc, whose wife, Louise was a fine pianist, a good composer, (14) and a former pupil of Hummel.

Considering the great vogue of the piano, the importance of playing as a social attainment, and the successive waves of increasingly more brilliant piano virtuosos, it is not surprising that the output of publishers, and therefore composers, should be stereotyped. A contemporary writer refers to this:

"But as we may judge of the nature of the demand by the nature of the supply, easy and brilliant lessons upon popular themes, or adaptations and variations, are most in request. Such productions, as they accord with mediocrity of acquirement and with the general pleasure which attaches to light and striking melodies sustained by glittering accompaniments, should seem to be well suited to such a degree of acquirement in art as may be naturally supposed to be attainable with common talents and common assiduity. Hence the apparently insatiable appetite for such things is borne out by the reason of the case." (15)

(b) Melody

In the Harmonicon's "Memoir of Hummel", referred to already, the writer generalises that

"The makers of verses and the composers of passages, have as much increased, as the inventors of poetical ideas, and of melodies, have diminished." (16),

showing himself to be in tune, so to speak, with the contemporary emphasis on attractive melody. He places Hummel among "the few living musicians of Germany who form an exception to this assertion." (17) A critic in the Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung (AMZ) noted that a slow movement of Hummel's

had "...a pleasant, singable subject, in a very attractive and and characteristic way — somewhat in J. Haydn's manner..."⁽¹⁸⁾

A general review of Moscholes as a composer in QMMR is more critical. "There is hardly a bar of melody, properly so called, from beginning to end.....he obviously disdains flow and sweetness..."⁽¹⁹⁾ It may surprise us to know that Field's Nocturnes "want air"⁽²⁰⁾ and a reviewer in 1827 found, with obvious reluctance, that Hummel's flute sonata in G (Op.2(a)no.2) "is deficient in melody"⁽²¹⁾. The Harmonicon, however, praises what may well be the same work:

"It possesses....a quality now getting scarce, — air, a thing nearly as necessary to the existence of music, as atmospheric air is to the body."⁽²²⁾

A German critic found "the melodies and the finish..... equally exquisite and attractive" in the E^b trio Op.93⁽²³⁾ and the 'cello's "herrlich Gesang" in the trio Op.83 is also mentioned ⁽²⁴⁾. "It cannot be too often repeated that melody is music" intones the QMMR⁽²⁵⁾ and even in Pot-pourris, the melodies must not be detracted from:

"...if spun out, as is too usual, to an unreasonable length, and ill managed, it is the most hopeless and mischievous thing imaginable; hopeless, because air may be added to air ad infinitum; and mischievous, because it gives us a distaste for melodies, in themselves good, but damaged by association."⁽²⁶⁾

A Harmonicon reviewer sums up the situation generally:

"Nearly all the publications for the piano-forte now are adaptations of opera and other airs, or dance-tunes, in various shapes. In the dearth of originality by which the majority of living writers for this instrument seem to be afflicted they cannot, perhaps, do better than resort to melodies that have stood the test of public approbation; which, if managed with a little address, bear the names of the arrangers harmless, at least, into the world, and keep the trade of music going. That there is an appetite and demand for such rifacciamenti — that the taste for them is all-prevailing, is distinctly

shown when composers ranking as Moscheles does, men whose inventive powers are active, employ their time in the production of works which they do not expect will add to their fame, but are sure will give increase to their garnerers. We must, then, bend to the irresistible fashion of the day, and comfort ourselves by reflecting, that so many good melodies are to be found; and, also, some excellent musicians to adapt them." (27)

(c) Melodic basis of works

(i) Opera

The majority of pieces — variations, pot-pourris, fantasias, divertimenti, etc. — were based upon popular tunes in current vogue, either operatic airs or folk-song imitations, or, occasionally, true folk-songs. I have already remarked on the popularity of opera and how it pervaded the musical life of a period in which "success in opera was the yardstick of a composer's stature."⁽²⁸⁾ We are told that "Pour Tant d'Amour" from Donizetti's La Favorite is "the celebrated tune played on the street Organs"⁽²⁹⁾, and a reviewer finds in Hummel's Rondolettos en Valse a "glaring imitation of the waltz in the Freischütz"⁽³⁰⁾. He goes on:

"The second /Rondoletto/ is much like a composition of the same species that we know by heart, but cannot recall the author. Hummel is not thought fastidious in the use he makes of other people's ideas, but he very often improves them we willingly allow."⁽³¹⁾

Here, it is the fact that the "originals" are not credited which worries the reviewer. Indeed, plagiarism was a sensitive point, and the reviewer in, for example, QMMR of 1821 indulges in much detailed comparison of pieces with a view to detecting plagiarisms. Of Hummel's fifty pieces⁽³²⁾ for solo piano of the kind which might have used non-original melodic material as their subject-matter, only twelve draw on the operatic repertory. A further nineteen, however, come into

the category of those using folk or popular subject-material.

(ii) Folk music or folk-music based

Many of the operatic airs used were themselves based on folk-models. This is clear enough in German and French opera, but in Italian opera also, the simplicity of the basic melodies can often be traced to a Mediterranean musical tributary of that more northern and western literary spring which had such an effect on the young poets in late eighteenth-century Germany. Thomas Percy's "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry" (1765) and the spurious, though stylistically excellent "Ballads of Ossian" (1763) by George MacPherson have long been recognised as a seminal influence on the Austro-Germanic Sturm und Drang movement, and were equally important to the forms as well as the spirit of the English Romantic poets.

The age was one in which national and even local feeling was running high. Radical changes in political, social and mercantile spheres were altering the fabric of society and the geography of the demographic and physical landscape. Factors such as the Enclosures and the drift (often because of direct economic pressure and enticement) from the country to the industrial centres helped to strengthen the feeling of a person's, a community's, or a people's "roots", and of "the past" as being something elsewhere and other, and invariably better. (33) The emigration from the Celtic regions, of long history but particularly marked during the early nineteenth century, lent a particular colouring to the prevalent nostalgia, and the rich fund of native music became something of a musical symbol for it. Neither publishers nor composers were slow to capitalise on this. Indeed, the

great fashion for, and love of, Celtic folk or folk-based music of certain types — particularly Irish — was an important element in composers' music-productions. Also, several piano tutors of the period included sections giving the melodies of a number of the better-known national airs (34).

The influence of folk music on art music — and one is forced here to use the terms with a rigidity which is alien to reality in many periods — is well-known and has penetrated into the highest reaches, the obvious and immediate example being Joseph Haydn⁽³⁵⁾. Szabolcsi puts down the simple chordal melodies of Classicism to the influence of folk music.

"....folk-music was....the principal influence. Whether or not they were aware of it, it taught composers the meaning of bright, major sound, and matching, symmetrical phrases: it made them aware of the polyphony latent in melody, of the common chord, and the harmonic structure in thirds between tonic and dominant. The new types of German and Italian folk-music were generally well-supplied with all these elements...."(36)

Also of interest is the immediate response of Beethoven, Haydn, Weber, Pleyel and Hummel to the request of George Thomson, a service clerk in Edinburgh who, between 1790 and 1820 collected many English, Welsh, Scots and Irish ballads (the last two categories often called simply "Schottische" or "Ecossaise"). He approached the composers named for "Ritornelles or Symphs, /sic/ & Accompaniments for the pianoforte, & for the violin, Flute and Violoncello — The Piano Forte to be of itself complete, because it is very often the only Accompt^t. we can have...."(37) Hummel himself often noted down folk tunes in the areas in which he travelled, and the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna has some autograph sheets of short pieces set, as the catalogue describes

"für ein unbekanntes Instrument".⁽³⁸⁾ Among these is a "Schottisches Lied" which is in fact the Irish song "Eibhlín a Rún", also known as "Robin Adair". Spohr describes an evening spent with the Duke of Sussex:

"During a conversation we had upon the subject of English national songs, the Duke even sent for his guitar and sang to me some English and Irish national songs, which afterwards suggested to me the idea of working up some of the most popular of these as a pot-pourri for my instrument, and of introducing the same at my concert." (39)

A footnote informs us that "This is the Op. 59, the second of my works written in London." (40)

Moscheles, living in London from 1826 to 1846, was probably the greatest opportunist amongst the better composers in this area. On a visit to Sir Walter Scott in 1828, he was given some Scottish airs by his literary host, and immediately improvised on these to the delight of the group⁽⁴¹⁾. In June 1829, "Sir Walter Scott's favourite strains of the Scottish Bards" by "J. Moscheles" was reviewed in the Harmonicon and the circumstances of its birth given. The writer presumed it to be "M. Moscheles's recollections of his extemporaneous effusion when on a visit to Sir Walter Scott, who on that occasion produced two or three of his favourite Caledonian airs, and asked the pianist to play them..." (42) Moscheles' business sense, however, was stimulated in advance of his Scottish visit, and this is gently lampooned by the author of the "Diary of a Dilettante" who throws some light on an aspect of contemporary music-production; the fictional part is by no means as caricatured as it may appear.

"Moscheles gave a concert at the Assembly Rooms this evening, but the company scarcely filled one-fourth of the seats. He played many things, and amongst these, "Anticipations of Scotland," a new composition,

in which he, perhaps, introduced the old song, "I dreamt a golden dream". He will, doubtless, publish this, and most probably write another under the title of Le Retour de l'Écosse, wherein he may give us the beautiful Scottish /sic/ air, "There's nae luck", followed by another almost as good, "Todlen hame". But, seriously, I did expect that an artist with such very rare talents a man so justly celebrated all over Europe, would have met with a kindlier welcome. The plague of fashion has, I fear, spread even to the intellectual city, the modern Athens." (43)

Similarly, in 1826, a trip to Ireland produced the later "Recollections of Ireland" which, when he played the piece at a musical soirée in Paris in 1830, called forth the following comment:

"The "Recollections of Ireland" are among the most perfect productions of their kind. They are truly Souvenirs, displaying everywhere local character; and, if the expression may be used, indigenous melody...." (44)

(d) Technical level of works

A further consideration on the composer's part was that the pieces published should not, in the main, be too difficult for the amateurs, many of whom were young ladies. The widely-held view of the ability to play the piano and sing as so much extra icing on the cake of marriageability is brought home here, as it is in a review of Hummel's arrangement of Beethoven's fifth symphony for piano with the accompaniment of flute, violin and 'cello:

"In all the arrangements by Hummel that have passed under our notice, it has appeared to us that he might have rendered them more practicable to the great majority of amateurs, by thinning some of the passages where a multiplicity of notes demand a larger and more powerful hand than most female performers possess." (45)

The Harmonicon summarises:

"Musical composers in most cases write for the

public, and therefore, study ease, or at least general practicability, in their publications."(46)

Some variations of Hummel's were criticised because they "involve and smother the melody, which is lost amidst a succession of elaborate difficulties that offer no adequate reward for the industry which they exact", while his "Six Easy Pieces" "may be made useful, particularly in schools"(47). Difficulty was indeed a stumbling-block in the way of wider dissemination of otherwise good music, as with, in one reviewer's view, the Three Waltz-Rondos Op.103:

"That they are difficult to execute, we are sorry to be obliged to state, for it is impossible not to wish that compositions possessing so much merit should not be calculated for a wider range of performers." (48)

Commentators were quick to point out that, on occasion, appearances could be deceptive. A Harmonicon reviewer says of Hummel's Introduction and Air with Variations, Op. 102⁽⁴⁹⁾ :

"It opens with an adagio in F. minor, that looks formidable, but proves very manageable. The credit of playing the music of this generally elaborate composer, may be acquired without much labour for the Flutist and with scarcely any for the Pianist."(50)

A rare bonus indeed! However, another review took a different attitude:

"M. Hummel composes with extraordinary facility, and gets a good price for his labours, therefore writes abundantly. The majority of his latest productions /1825/ are addressed to the many, and do not alarm by an appearance of discouraging difficulties, whether of rapidity or unusual combinations of notes. Of the latter we have not recently had much reason to speak — on behalf of those who love their ease — for M. H. seems at this moment in a state of exhaustion, arising from over-production, and not very fertile in invention; of which fact the present variations bear evidence." (51)

Hummel was also credited with a more positive sensitivity towards the less-able; his "Four Recreations for the

Pianoforte" was described as

"...one of those useful publications that we are always glad to see, and most willing to commend: it will assist materially in smoothing the rugged path that learners have to beat, and is sanctioned by a name of the highest musical celebrity... converting the toil of practice into the enjoyment of a pleasure." (52)

It is conceded at times that the value of the music itself is worth the mastering of the difficulties. Hummel's Variations on the march from Cendrillon was praised thus:

"We have been uncommonly gratified by M. Hummel's variations to the fine march in Cendrillon; the great master appears in every line, and the difficulties presented throughout are worth overcoming, because the passages involved cannot be rendered more easy without a loss, and a considerable one, of effect." (53)

The view taken of difficulty in the case of arrangements was more tolerant. Hummel's arrangement of Beethoven's fifth symphony referred to above was considered one of his best.

"The composition is difficult, and cannot be rendered easy upon any terms: but he has been as lenient to the performer as justice to the author would allow; and we strongly recommend the study of the present Symphony to all who wish to acquire, or to confirm, a taste for the sublime in instrumental music." (54)

A similar point is made in the case of Overtures (in this instance that to La Clemenza di Tito) arranged by Hummel and "J. Mosches"/sic7 :

"It is impossible not to observe a marked difference between the present and all former adaptations of the same, so many more notes, and important ones, are here taken in. But this of course could only be accomplished by throwing more on the performer, who is now called upon for greater extension. He is, however, rewarded by a proportionate effect." (55)

The pre-eminence of Hummel and Moscheles as arrangers is testified to in an unlikely place: the Foreign Musical

Report from Vienna in the Harmonicon of August 1826:

"Our age has been called proverbially the arranging age, and much has been said pro and con against this mode of so adapting everything. But it must be allowed that there is a wide difference between arranging the overtures of Die Zauberflöte, Il Don Giovanni, Der Freischütz, Olympia, and Jessonda, for a couple of flutes, guitars, or horns, and one of the gigantic symphonies of Beethoven arranged for four hands on the piano by a Hummel or a Moscheles. In the former instance, little else than mere abortions can be produced; but in the latter, an acknowledged masterpiece can, by the power of an enlightened artist, be formed into a work of which we may justly say, that it is another and yet the same; not a mere meagre translation, but an adaptation to a single instrument of the united powers of many, without its losing anything of its individual character." (56)

Much of a composer's output during this time would, of course, be for his own use in concerts, with the possibility that other performers of similar attainments would also play them. This was alluded to with respect to a fantasia by Kalkbrenner.

"Now and then they [composers] give to the world what they produce either for their own performance, or for a very few select pupils." (57)

Similarly,

"Some of our concerto players are indeed in the habit of producing pieces suited to the display of their own style and acquirements, but scarcely one has yet been known in a printed form, except for the common instruments in daily use." (58)

Hummel's a (minor) piano concerto was one of the most popular works of the age, and seemed indispensable to generations of aspiring performers who wished to make their personal mark on a well-known, difficult work by a highly-respected virtuoso-composer. Among these were Louise David who, at ten years of age, surprised the public with a performance of this work. Younger by two years, Joseph Krogulski "astonished"

with not only this work, but also Kalkbrenner's concerto in d(minor) in the same concert,⁽⁵⁹⁾ and Liszt; at the age of twelve, played the Hummel piece in one of his earliest public concerts (Vienna, 1823), though he also played the concerto in b — "one of the most masterly, original, and, at the same time, most pleasing of Hummel's compositions"⁽⁶⁰⁾. Both of these, and several other Hummel works, remained in his repertoire until he retired from public concert life.

It could, however, be unwise to publish this kind of work because its difficulty would render it virtually unplayable, and therefore unplayed. The reviewer of Pixis' piano concerto Op.100 makes just this point.

"...the composer has contrived so to envelope /sic/ all that would otherwise have reflected honour on him as an artist, in a cloud of passages that scarcely one — and of this one we have some doubt — except the inventor, will be able to make any way through, that his concerto will be likely to prove little better than a dead letter; to the majority certainly, and to the minority also, we shrewdly suspect."

He goes on to make another point of interest, which may explain the often large gaps between the composition and publication of such large-scale brilliant pieces:

"In saying this, we do not intend to imply that M. Pixis excels in point of execution some other public performers here and abroad; he has written passages to which, accidentally most probably, he has devoted a great deal of practice, and passages which are as peculiar to him as impracticable to others. Nearly every master possesses some exclusive dexterity of the kind, and by habit can do with ease a few things that are almost impossible to every one else. But a master of judgment keeps them for his own particular use, and takes especial care that his shall be the only booth in the fair where they are to be met with. They astonish while unexplained, though the moment the mystery is stripped off them by the process of printing, that moment the difficulties are discovered to be mere sleight-of-hand accomplishments."⁽⁶¹⁾

The publisher's side is also taken into account, and he is damned with very faint praise indeed.

"The music trade must every now and then submit to publish that which cannot be expected to make a quick return, if any at all, for the sake of keeping up their catalogues, as well as for the purpose of supplying the demands of those, however few in number, who might complain of their want of enterprise and liberality, were they only to bring out what was sure of a general and rapid sale. Unless actuated by such motives, it is not to be supposed that any house would have courage enough to print a work like the present, which has no great chance of being purchased, except by performers of the very highest class, and by a small number of professors, who feel it a duty to become acquainted with whatever appears under a well-known name; together with a still smaller number of amateurs who play, or at least always make a point of attempting to play, everything new that appears.

Such being the case, some little credit is due to publishers who encounter considerable risks in buying copyrights, and engraving plates, with the certainty before them of deriving no profit from their undertaking, but, on the other hand, with a prospect, and by no means a dim one, of losing to a considerable amount." (62)

(e) Originality

When one considers the pressures towards conformity under which composers laboured, it seems mildly surprising that a concept such as originality should be a consideration, especially in an age in which styles were much more homogeneous than our own. Yet it was a consideration and in its most obvious sense applied to pieces which were wholly the composer's own, i.e. not based on, or making use of, material from external sources as in the case of variations, etc. There is also a sense in which the word implied a composer's better works, in which he had something "original" and more personal to say. There is an interesting sidelight on composers' attitudes to their published music in a review of pieces by Bochsá, which adverts to originality in this sense,

with perhaps a veiled reference to Beethoven's early practice of giving opus numbers only to what he considered his better works.

"Great composers have disdained to name as operas, works of comparatively minor importance, even though original. We will confine our view to the productions of a few living masters, and shall find that Beethoven has numbered 130; Clementi about 45; Cramer 73; Ries 125; Moscheles 71; and Hummel, perhaps 100; yet most of these eminent men have published half as many more, which they are too delicate to rank as operas."
(63)

Very often the word originality was taken to imply the use of the basic melodic, harmonic and rhythmic material of music in a way that was "new" in the sense of being enshrined in a composer's personal style of writing: to have developed one's own style was to be thus original. So, the concerto of young Schoberlechner, "a favorite /sic/ scholar of the famed Hummel" , "breathes all the freshness and spirit of Hummel, without being deficient in original character." (64)

However, when Ries is described in QMMR as losing

"himself, or rather the sympathy of his hearers, in his aim to be original"

because

"he overstrains this certainly desirable quality," (65)

we find the word used in a pejorative sense. Harmony is usually the culprit here, and Czerny defends Beethoven in this area:

"The so-called harmonic irregularities which can be found in some of Beethoven's compositions have their explanation and justification in reasons of aesthetics and effect, but fit perfectly in the place where Beethoven has put them. It would be extremely foolish to extract new rules from them for other composers. There are certainly not many of these parts in Beethoven's compositions, and they make no difference to his greatness." (66)

For Moscheles, such "originality" of harmony would long remain a bar to his complete acceptance of Chopin's compositions.

"I am charmed with their originality, and the national colouring of his subjects. My thoughts, however, and through them my fingers, stumble at certain hard, inartistic, and to me inconceivable modulations. On the whole I find his music often too sweet, not manly enough, and hardly the work of a profound musician." (67)

On another occasion he writes:

"I am a sincere admirer of his originality....he has given pianoforte-players all that is newest and most attractive. Personally, I dislike his artificial and forced modulation. My fingers struggle and tumble over such passages; practise them as I will, I can never do them smoothly." (68)

Some of the composer's passages in the 'cello sonata were found by Moscheles to sound

"like some one preluding on the piano, the player knocking at the door of every key and clef to find if any melodious sounds are at home." (69)

The reviewer in the chauvinist Musical Magazine (MM) of 1835 goes much further. He finds the first movement of Chopin's e concerto to contain "ludicrous and extravagant passages", and in his final outburst, calls it "foreign trash" and "a farrago of nonsense" (70).

In one area, however, originality was not generally expected, neither was it generally found. This was in form.

"Most of the genres practised arise from tradition and respect the forms bequeathed by it through following the examples furnished by Mozart or Beethoven. One will content oneself with straining those forms in order to allow technical prowess to expand easily; it is only gradually that the old frameworks will yield profitably to freer forms, with, for less sound musicians, the danger of then allowing a mediocrity to be seen which is no longer camouflaged by the academicism of forms." (71)

(f) Public pressures

Composers themselves were, of course, well aware of the pressures which the desire for popularity put upon their freedom of creativity. Spohr speaks of the admonitions of the manager of the Frankfurt theatre, Leers, to bring out more of Rossini's very popular operas while he held the post of music-director there.

"Little as I was an admirer of Rossini's music, as the severe criticism thereof in the diary of the Italian journey shews, yet the applause which "Tancred" had met with in Frankfort was not wholly without influence on the style of my new opera."(72)

Moscheles, as we have seen, responded with alacrity to such pressures, and so did Hummel to a lesser extent.

In the first ("On Romanticism") of two very interesting articles in Le Globe with the general title "Concerning independence in the matter of taste", the writer, Lüdovic7 Vitet7 examines such pressures in the case of French artists. Though many of his remarks refer to literature and drama, it is clear that he intends all the arts to be included.

"When one casts an eye over the last half of the eighteenth century, one sees rising up everywhere eloquent pleas in favour of independence in the matter of religion, of commerce, of taxation, and of government; but for independence in the matter of taste, no-one speaks out, no-one dreams of asking for it." (73)

Stirring the memories of many of his readers, he ends his exposition with: "le goût en France attend son 14 juillet". Anticipating the objections of "certain people", he puts the following words into their mouths:

"If you leave authors no other guide than their own taste, with no other rules than those they impose upon themselves, you will see the birth of literary

monstrosities, the 'Solitaires', the 'Hand Island' and by what right are you going to castigate such writings, — you who would have proclaimed absolute independence of taste?" (74)

The writer's reply is "easy" and he suggests an arbiter, the government,

"source of all light and all truth, mobile like society, stable like reason, safeguard equally surely of order and liberty, provided however that it is loyally performed, in a word, representative government." (75)

He also includes the following interesting view of the situation as he would like to see it:

"To the author will belong initiative, but to the public the veto. There will thus be no absolute independence on either side; the artist will fall under the jurisdiction of the public, the public under that of the artist who will be master in obeying or resisting its whims. And from this dual dependence, this double liberty, will be born the least imperfect laws of taste, the least arbitrary ones that one could expect in this world. We will escape, at least for the most part, infatuations, unjust prejudices; for the whole public never has bad taste, nor does it conspire to form a coterie ..." (76)

The article is heady stuff for the most part, and the sentiments are, perhaps, understandable in view of France's recent history. In the second article, "Concerning the intervention of the government in literature and the arts", he shows a fictional young opera-composer and a playwright running the gauntlet of establishment opposition, with ultimate rejection in both cases. Both articles form an interesting declaration of faith in public opinion and enlightened government as opposed to the vested interests of middlemen. It is as far from being realised today as it was when the articles were written in 1825.

The Private Manner

On the face of it, the "private" manner would seem to apply almost exclusively to chamber and solo music, as, to a great extent, it did in the Classical period. But further problems arise here. First, chamber music, and particularly that involving the piano, (which made up the vast bulk of the genre in this period) began to lose its feeling of having been intended for musical connoisseurs. The general cut of the form betrays this: its capitulation to popularity in its easy, attractive tunes, the loosening of the basic structures, and the preponderance of variation movements, some works being entirely a set of these with an introduction and an extended final variation, such as Hummel's Op.78, for piano, flute and 'cello. Secondly, chamber music with piano featured more and more in public concerts and thus become more subject to "public" considerations. Thirdly, the dominance of the keyboard instrument in terms of carrying the main harmonic burden, and also the high degree of brilliance present in many works, suggests that the "market" considerations affecting solo piano pieces were making inroads on the chamber form. This is further supported by the corollary (fourthly), that, to increase sales, the other instruments were rendered simple enough in their parts to allow for potential performers of low technical level and, in most cases of the "pianoforte with the accompaniment of...." kind, very often dispensable. It will be recalled that George Thomson made this point in one of his letters to Hummel (quoted above, p.45), and says in a later letter that, although he found Hummel's violin, flute and 'cello parts "truly delightful",

"Sorry am I however to say that there are not in this large city above 3 or 4 families, who ever think of, know, or care for any thing but the Piano Forte part of my Songs!"(77)

Also, instruments are frequently interchangeable:- violin with flute, viola with clarinet, etc.

Nevertheless, it is in the solo and chamber music, especially in pieces written for particular performers, including the composer himself, or for particular occasions, that a composer's private manner tends to be seen in its least adulterated form. Its chief characteristics are: a greater emphasis on the more conscious, intellectual aspects of music, the integration of the more-or-less fixed general forms with the particular content, thematische Arbeit of a more crafted, rather than creative kind, a higher proportion than in the public works of "science" or "learnedness" — contrapuntal and polyphonic textures occasionally crystallising into the stricter forms of fugue or canon, the absence, or curtailment, of "showy" virtuosity, greater care in the blending of instrumental sonorities so that no single member of the ensemble will dominate to any great extent, but that each will contribute meaningfully to the whole with a part that is interesting to play. There is also to be noticed in the private manner, a general air of conscious, personal statement on the part of the composer, aimed less at a public or a section of that public, than at, perhaps, some wider body less restricted in time and place.

It is not surprising that much of the best solo and chamber music in this period was produced by composers of Austro-German lineage: among many other reasons, the proliferation of music-societies of many kinds encouraged

a higher standard, technically and musically, than elsewhere. Spohr, anxious for Cherubini's opinion of his quartets and quintets when he visited Paris in 1820-1, relates the following:

"...when Cherubini had heard the first quartet (it was Nr. 1 of the Op. 45 written at Frankfort), and I was on the point of producing a second, he protested against it, and said: "Your music, and indeed the form and style of this kind of music, is yet so foreign to me, that I cannot find myself immediately at home with it, nor follow it properly; I would therefore much prefer that you repeated the quartet you have just played!" I was very much astonished at this remark, and did not understand it until I afterwards ascertained that Cherubini was quite unacquainted with the German master-pieces of this kind of Mozart and Beethoven /sic/— and at the utmost had once heard a quartet by Haydn at Baillet's soirées." (78)

Even allowing for exaggeration, this is surprising, but, since this writer is generally accurate as well as honest, one should allow him at least some of the benefit of the doubt here.

Interaction of private and public manners

In practice, the reciprocal influence of the two manners blurs, but rarely obliterates, the dividing line, and a tendency towards coalescence of the manners is a feature of the best works of the better composers, without, perhaps, allowing these to have reached the heights of Schiller's ideal.

Beethoven was not credited with having reached it by contemporary commentators, even if our own time would disagree. His concerto in c: "is a very masterly production, full of learning and elaboration, and not without effect for the many, for it has some passages that are intelligible to all hearers." (79) The very word *moneta*

seems to epitomise this coalescence of public and private features for the reviewer of a Cramer piano sonata, and provides an opportunity for a little self-indulgent nostalgia:

"A SONATA is indeed a rarity! — The title has lain dormant many a long year, and with it comes a numerous train of delightful reminiscences; recollections of music now as little known to the fashionable performer as the writings of Chaucer and Butler (we might safely add Dryden and Pope) are to the fashionable reader. It recalls /sic/ the best productions of Clementi, wherein science and beauty are so happily united; — the original and masterly works of Dussek, as well as that of Steibelt, so distinguished for their fancy and taste: it revives in the memory some of the most captivating, though not the grandest, of Haydn's and Mozart's conceptions, and many of the earliest and finest specimens of Beethoven's genius; while it brings back a remembrance of those hours passed pleasantly and profitably with Mr. Cramer's own peculiarly elegant and expressive compositions..."(80)

Works such as Spohr's fourth clarinet concerto, Moscheles' Concerto Patetico and Hummel's in a — all obviously intended for public performance — show the particularly stereotyped concerto form imbued with "private" feeling. Interesting borderline cases also exist in the larger chamber works, many of which were intended for public use, such as the septets of Hummel (Opp.74 and 114), Spohr (Op.147) and Moscheles (Op.88). Indeed, the Hummel septet in d, "a piano concerto in all but name"⁽⁸¹⁾, is probably the finest example among the popular composers of the period, of a work which successfully combines the public with the private manner.

- (1) Harmonicon, June 1824, p.112.
- (2) Holmes/RAMBLE, pp.149-50.
- (3) Harmonicon, June 1824, "Memoir of J.N. Hummel".
- (4) Schiller, Friedrich. Ueber naive und sentimentalische Dichtung. 1795.
- (5) Amster/VIRTUOSENKONZERT, p.55.

"Virtuosität einerseits und die Richtung auf die Kunst Beethovens andererseits ergeben mit Notwendigkeit zwei Stiltypen:
A. den persönlichen "Stil Beethovens" selbst, und zwar bezeichnenderweise den sogenannten "heroischen" Stil des Pathetikers Beethoven der frühen und mittleren Schaffenszeit,
B. den "brillanten Stil", der sich aus all den Stilarten der Zeit rekrutiert, deren Wesensbestimmung in gesteigerter äußerer Wirkung liegt."
- (6) Schiller, in a letter to Goethe, quoted in Werner/INSTRUMENTAL, p.60.
- (7) King/PRINTING, p.24.
- (8) Op. cit., p.26.
- (9) Op. cit., p.28.
- (10) Le Globe, 5th April, 1825, p.452.
- (11) Op. cit., 9th April, 1825, p.462.
- (12) JdD, 21st March 1825, p.4.

"La collection des Œuvres de M. Hummel formera 21 livraisons de 60 à 100 planches chaque, gravées par MM. Richomme et Marquerie, et tirées sur papier d'Annonay. Le prix de souscription, 7 fr. Huit livraisons sont en vente."
- (13) Sachs/KAPELLMEISTER, p.27.
- (14) See Friedland/FARRENC; see also Schumann's review of her Op.17 in NZfM, 1836.
- (15) QMMR, 1822, p.94.
- (16) Harmonicon, June 1824, "Memoir of J.N. Hummel".
- (17) Loc. cit.
- (18) AMZ, 17th September 1823, Col. 627.

"....ein angenehmes, singbares Thema, auf sehr anziehende und auch eigenthümliche Weise — ohngefähr in J. Haydn's Art...."
- (19) QMMR, 1821, p.513.
- (20) Harmonicon, March 1826, p.58.
- (21) FM, 1827, p.34.
- (22) Harmonicon, June 1827, p.115.
- (23) AMZ, 7th May 1823, Col. 307.

"Die Melodien und die Ausarbeitung sind im gleichen Grade auserlesen und anziehend.."

- (24) AMZ, 27th September 1820, Col. 663.
- (25) QMMR, 1822, p.111.
- (26) Harmonicon, March 1824, p.47.
- (27) Harmonicon, March 1831, p.67.
- (28) Werner/INSTRUMENTAL, p.59.
- (29) Flutonica, December 1843, p.93.
- (30) Harmonicon, September 1825, p.158.
- (31) Loc. cit.
- (32) See Sachs/CHECKLIST.
- (33) At a later date in the New World, the nostalgia inherent in national and racial roots formed the basis of the budding popular music industry and can be seen, for example, in the work of Stephen Foster, whose life and death would not be out of place in a popular song of his time.
- (34) For example, Auber, A. "Complete family pianoforte tutor in which the first rudiments of music are clearly simplified, with appropriate examples & exercises, illustrated with a copperplate keyboard, to which are added thirty two progressive and national airs in the principal major and minor keys properly fingered with a prelude to each key." London: Wybrow, /c.1835/.
- (35) See Landon/HAYDN, II, pp.280ff.
- (36) Szabolcsi/MELODY, p.135.
- (37) Letter from George Thomson to Hummel, dated 3rd April 1826, in Lbl, Add. 35,268, fols.161'-64.
- (38) This "unbekanntes instrument" is fascinating; it is a two-hand instrument played with the fingers, of range AA-f" at least (on the basis of the pieces in the MS), and is written on two staves, treble and bass. The fingering much of the time suggests the harp.
- (39) Spohr/AUTOBIOGRAPHY, II, pp.90-1.
- (40) Op. cit., II, p.91.
- (41) Moscheles/LIFE, I, pp.203-4.
- (42) Harmonicon, June 1829, p.136.
- (43) Op. cit., February 1828, p.135.
- (44) Op. cit., February 1830, p.115.
- (45) Op. cit., August 1825, p.136.
- (46) Op. cit., December 1823, p.195.
- (47) Op. cit., February 1824, p.24.
- (48) Op. cit., November 1824, p.208.
- (49) This appears to be an arrangement for fl. and pf. of the variations in F for ob. and orch., which is in turn an arrangement of the Op.99 Nocturne for pf., 4h. It is almost certainly a piracy, since it does not appear under the authorised publications heading in Sachs/AUTHENTIC.

- (50) Harmonicon, September 1825, p.161.
- (51) Op. cit., December 1825, p.229.
- (52) Op. cit., April 1825, p.62.
- (53) Op. cit., September 1825, p.158.
- (54) Op. cit., April 1827, p.91.
- (55) Op. cit., May 1829, p.112.
- (56) Op. cit., August 1826, p.170.
- (57) Op. cit., December 1823, p.195.
- (58) QMMR, 1821, p.278.
- (59) Harmonicon, July 1827, p.141.
- (60) Op. cit., April 1827, p.122.
- (61) Op. cit., August 1828, p.202.
- (62) Loc. cit.
- (63) Op. cit., February, p.33.
- (64) Op. cit., April 1827, p.93.
- (65) QMMR, 1822, p.111.
- (66) Czerny/ERINNERUNGEN, p.22.

"Die sogenannten harmonischen Unregelmäßigkeiten, die man in einigen Werken Beethovens findet, finden ihre Erklärung und Berechtigung in ästhetischen und in Effektgründen, passen aber nur gerade für die Stelle, wo Beeth./sic/ sie anbrachte. Es wäre höchst thöricht, daraus neue Regeln für andere Tonsetzer abstrahieren zu wollen. Übrigens sind solche Stellen bey Beethoven keineswegs zahlreich, und tragen auch größtentheils nichts zu seiner Größe bey."

- (67) Moscheles/LIFE, I, p.295.
- (68) Op. cit., I, 316.
- (69) Op. cit., II, p.172.
- (70) MM, July 1835, p.111.
- (71) Wangermée/VIRTUOSITÉ, p.22.

"La plupart des genres pratiqués relèvent de la tradition et respectent les formes léguées par elle en suivant les exemples fournis par Mozart ou Beethoven. On se bornera à distendre ces formes pour que les prouesses techniques puissent s'y étaler à l'aise; ce n'est que peu à peu que les cadres anciens céderont au profit de formes plus libres, avec le danger pour les musiciens les moins solides de laisser voir alors une médiocrité qui n'est plus camouflée par l'académisme des formes."

- (72) Spohr/AUTOBIOGRAPHY, II, p.58.
- (73) Le Globe, 24th March 1825, "De l'indépendance en matière de goût. (1^{er} article.) Du Romantisme.", p.443.
 "Quand on jette les yeux sur la dernière moitié du dix-huitième siècle, on voit s'élever de toutes

parts d'éloquents plaidoyers en faveur de l'indépendance en matière de religion, en matière de commerce, en matière d'impôt et de gouvernement: mais pour l'indépendance en matière de goût, personne n'en parle, personne ne songe à la réclamer."

(74) Op. cit., p.444.

"Si vous laissez les auteurs sans autre guide que leur propre goût, sans autres règles que celles qu'ils s'imposeront eux-mêmes, vous verrez naître des monstruosités littéraires, des Solitaires, des Hand Island, et de quel droit irez-vous châtier de pareils écrits, vous qui aurez proclamé l'indépendance absolue des goûts?"

(75) Loc. cit.

"Ne pouvons-nous donc choisir le gouvernement source de toutes lumières et de toute vérité, mobile comme la société, stable comme la raison, sauvegarde également sûre de l'ordre et de la liberté, pourvu toutefois qu'il soit exécuté loyalement, le gouvernement représentatif en un mot."

(76) Loc. cit.

"A l'artiste appartiendra l'initiative, mais au public le veto. Il n'y aura donc d'indépendance absolue ni d'un côté ni de l'autre; l'artiste tombera sous la juridiction du public, le public sous celle de l'artiste qui sera maître d'obéir ou de résister à ses caprices; et de cette double dépendance, de cette double liberté, naîtront les lois de goût les moins imparfaites, les moins arbitraires qu'on puisse attendre en ce monde. Nous échapperons, presque toujours du moins, aux engouements, aux préventions injustes; car jamais le public tout entier n'a mauvais goût et ne se fait complice d'une coterie...."

(77) Letter from George Thomson to Hummel, dated 29th October 1831, in Lb1, Add. 32,188, fols. 1-2'.

(78) Spohr/AUTOBIOGRAPHY, II, p.133.

(79) Harmonicon, April 1824, p.77.

(80) Op. cit., November 1827, p.228.

(81) Brock/INSTRUMENTAL, p.181.

CHAPTER 3 - THE PIANO

In dealing with a composer at the centre of whose private and public life was the piano, and most of whose compositions included or featured that instrument, and dealing with a period in which the piano was ubiquitous and all-important, it is necessary to examine the instruments with which Hummel was familiar.

An outline of the main stages of the earlier development of the piano is all that is necessary here: the most thorough treatment of this subject still remains that of Rosamond Harding⁽¹⁾ to which the reader is referred for further details.

The development of the pianoforte represents, in art-music, a unique collaboration between interested parties to produce the optimum instrument in their own terms. The composer required that, in an atmosphere of increasing emphasis on emotional expression, the new instrument was capable of conveying the nuances of his thought and feeling, bearing in mind that the clavichord had proved itself excellent in this respect, in spite of its lack of compass and comparative lack of volume.

The performer, for his part, shared the composer's need for an expressive instrument - indeed, composer and performer were almost invariably one and the same person in this period. But the performer required additionally

that it should have a brilliance, and loudness and compass comparable to the harpsichord in order to hold its own in an age in which public concerts were becoming more common, orchestras and audiences increasing in size, and the individual orchestral instruments themselves were being altered and extended in dynamic range and compass.

The piano maker's interests were concerned with making a mechanically reliable and musically acceptable instrument which was cheap enough to appeal to a large market⁽²⁾ and also to be an attractive piece of furniture - particularly in the days of Sheraton and Adam.⁽³⁾ In view of these complementary demands, it is no surprise to find that several composer-performers were also either themselves piano manufacturers (Clementi, Pleyel), or closely involved in the trade (Dusseck, etc.).

The first pianos were invented between the last decade of the 17th century and the 1720's by Bartolomeo Cristofori, a harpsichord maker in the Court of Florence. Potentially, the new instrument combined the expressive possibilities of the clavichord (in which the strings were struck by brass tangents with which they remained in contact as long as the key remained depressed, so allowing for the possibility of Bebung, a vibrato produced by vibrating the finger on the key) with the brilliance and volume of the harpsichord (in which the strings were plucked, and in which

the tone and dynamic were susceptible of limited variations in "steps" or "terraces", true gradation being impossible). Indeed, many "improvements" were applied to the harpsichord throughout the 18th century which were aimed at remedying these deficiencies in the instrument. Among these, which particularly points to the piano, is the "Venetian Swell", patented by the London harpsichord maker Tschudi (or Shudi) in 1769, though it may have been in use earlier.⁽⁴⁾ This was an arrangement of hinged wooden slats inside the lid of the instrument, running perpendicular to the keyboard, which could be raised or lowered gradually by a pedal, allowing more or less of the sound to emerge. The principle is more familiar in its later adaptation as the Swell Box on the organ. The piano itself was at first called "Gravicembalo col piano e forte" ("Harpsichord with soft and loud"), and many pianos throughout the 18th century were harpsichords in which the original mechanism had been replaced by pianoforte action.⁽⁵⁾ There is evidence⁽⁶⁾ that clavichords were similarly adapted. Thus, from its very beginnings, the piano was an effort to combine the "private" and "inner" world of the personal and expressive clavichord with the "public" glitter and volume of the harpsichord, even to the extent that the two forms of the piano (square and grand) corresponded to those of the "parent" instruments in general physical shape.

The "chicken-and-egg" question of whether the piano was developed because of composers' demands for expression, or whether this increased because of the possibilities of the new instrument, is almost an irrelevant one. Ideas of the "supremacy" of one instrument over another cannot be entertained - unless they refer to real improvements within an instrument, and, even then, this kind of almost quantitative judgement must be treated with the utmost caution: a good deal of, for example, Beethoven's early piano music - particularly the more "pianistic" bravura passages (e.g., Op.2, No.3, bb.13ff.) - sound as effective on a concert harpsichord or clavichord of the late 18th century as they do on a piano of the same period. Clutton writes that

"The remarkable qualities of the large German clavichords of the second half of the eighteenth century, as exemplified at their best by Hass ... are very little known in England today, and this is a great pity, because they have a musical range - both in compass and general capability - far beyond the miniaturist approach to clavichord-making and playing which is now fashionable in England. Even Beethoven sonatas by no means come amiss to a Hass clavichord. This is clearly the sort of tone at which Stein was aiming. The similarity of tone quality between a Hass clavichord and a Stein pianoforte is most striking, and the Stein is perhaps only twice as loud as the Hass." (7)

In the case of Clementi's "revolutionary" Op.2 sonatas for keyboard, Plantinga calls for a radical re-adjustment of commonly-held views:

"These sonatas have traditionally been singled out as very early and very clear examples of piano music. Those famous runs in double notes and other of their novel figurations, it has often been assumed, mark these pieces as among the first intended specifically for the new instrument ..."(8)

"The London public first heard the audacious novelties of Opus 2 played by the composer on the harpsichord." (9)

The new instrument suffered much abuse in certain quarters. Voltaire, in 1774, called it a "cauldron-maker's instrument",⁽¹⁰⁾ and Canon Trouflant wrote that "if the treble is charming, the bass, hard, muffled, and false, sickens our French ears." (11)

By the early 1770's there were two main kinds of piano: the Viennese and the "English". The differences are based on several aspects of the instrument - frame, strings, hammers, etc. and action - but it is the last of these which is of the greatest importance.⁽¹²⁾ The "English"⁽¹³⁾ action itself was of two kinds: the single action, with which Cristofori began, was almost exclusively used in the English square piano, though this was a German invention brought to London by Johannes Zumpe about 1760. Its popularity in England was great, but it was very much a domestic and amateur instrument and needs no further discussion here. The other English action is the double-action and it, too, stems from Cristofori, but from his improved action of 1726.

The English piano was heavily built, the frame taking most of the strain of the stretched strings; it was trichord (three strings to a note), and with thicker strings than the Viennese; it had heavier hammers and a convex (outward) soundboard. The Viennese was constructed on a thick solid base with braces, the function of the case being mostly decorative; it was bichord with thinner strings, a straight soundboard (thinner than the English) and lighter hammers, "scarcely larger than peas".⁽¹⁴⁾ The actions were different, the hammer in the Viennese instrument being mounted directly onto the key, so giving more direct control over the percussion of the string. Also, the English damping system was a good deal less efficient than the Viennese, though this was almost certainly a matter of choice on the part of English builders.⁽¹⁵⁾ Frequent references to the "flutiness" and clarity of speech of the Viennese piano (to the detriment of the English model) are found in commentators of the period, and it was generally agreed that the overall balance of tone and volume throughout the whole compass was more even in the Viennese than in the English piano.⁽¹⁶⁾ Nevertheless, because of relative thickness and tension of strings and the materials used in their manufacture, as well as the lack of overstringing, the early piano in both English and Viennese forms had three more or less distinct registers giving a slight but quite perceptibly different sound-quality. These naturally corresponded to the upper middle

and bass registers and the actual transition-points varied from maker to maker. Composers frequently exploited these differences in their piano music, and I shall be examining this in later chapters.

The French, as we have seen, were at first disdainful about the new instrument, but in the 1770's the square pianos anglais, as they were called, were very popular in France. Mention has been made supra of the comments of Canon Trouflant et al, and when the piano was introduced from England in or before 1768 ("the year in which a Paris audience first heard the instrument in a concert hall"),⁽¹⁷⁾ it was subject to further lampooning. The Avant-courier of 1771 had:

"Quoi, cher ami, tu me viens d'Angleterre?
Hélas! comment peut-on lui déclarer la guerre?"
(18)

Chevalier de Piis, a vaudevillist wrote as follows:

"Proud of its marrowy sounds, to which
it gives a laborless birth,
The piano drags along like the phlegmatic
English,
And, like an ungrateful child, jeers at the
frail harpsichord." (19)

The piano may have been introduced to France as early as 1759⁽²⁰⁾, but it was in the English form, and it was to a large extent this form which was copied by native makers.

However, to describe the piano as being simply in two forms at this stage, without further comment, is to

belittle the achievements of the German and Austrian piano makers on their home ground. In fact, a further important difference between the English and Viennese pianos was that the former was capable of - indeed in the eyes of composers and performers, requiring of, - further "development" and "improvement", whereas the latter was already a fully-developed instrument in the 1770's and achieved a high level of refinement in the work of piano makers such as Stein, Walter and Streicher. In the view of Hugh Gough,

"... this Stein type of piano represents the peak of eighteenth-century achievement in piano making: it is a complete and perfect work of art, as the harpsichord itself is in its developed form. It is interesting to note that no development was made in this type of pianoforte; though they were made larger and heavier in the nineteenth century the absolute perfection of the early model was never surpassed, and hardly equalled." (21)

Mozart was certainly in favour of Stein's instruments, as the famous letter of 1777 to his father shows:

"This time I must start at once by telling you about Stein's pianofortes. Before having seen these it was Spath's pianofortes which I liked best. But now I must give my preference to those of Stein, for they damp the resonance much better than those in Ratisbon. When I strike hard I can leave my finger on the key, but on taking it away the sound dies away almost immediately. I can do with the keys what I like; the tone is always equal; it does not tinkle disagreeably; it has neither the fault of being too loud nor too soft, nor does it fail entirely. In a word, the tone is perfectly equal throughout ... His instruments, above all, have this advantage over others, that they are made with escapement mechanism. Now, not one in a hundred makers bothers with escapement, and yet without it, it is absolutely impossible for a note not to jingle or to continue vibrating

after being struck. Stein's hammers, when the keys have been depressed, fall back at the instant they strike the strings above, whether one continues to hold down the key or let it go." (22)

It is worth mentioning that Cecil Clutton, having played the 1720 Cristofori piano in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, considers that it will "stand comparison with anything made up to the end of the [eighteenth] century", and that "while the treble is not as good as, for example, a 1770 Stein, its relationship to the bass is better than in the eighteenth-century British grand pianofortes." "It can safely be said", concludes Clutton, "that the Cristofori model was not surpassed, as a balanced instrument, for a century after its introduction." (23)

This hints at a further point made by Hugh Gough that "early pianos varied greatly in tone quality," and that "in 1770 ... hardly any two makers' instruments would be alike." (24) Indeed, with some English instruments, the tone could change "substantially" by the hardening of the buckskin on the hammers with playing.

"It is therefore difficult to know just what was regarded as the ideal tone quality. When new, it is round and flute-like, almost to the point of dullness; when really worn, the tone becomes brilliant, almost to the point of harshness. But there is a middle range between the two extremes where leather gives an entirely characteristic quality and excellent attack and definition." (25)

Derek Melville goes further than Gough; in an article on Beethoven's pianos he says:

"It should be remembered that piano tone as we know it has existed only for eighty or ninety years and that in Beethoven's day it could vary quite considerably from maker to maker and also in different countries. This fact was accepted, and no doubt enjoyed as a virtue." (26)

This is, of course, as one would expect in any instrument of any period, and a comparison of the tone qualities of instruments by the great piano makers of today will bear this out. Performers will show preference for, and composers work at, a particular maker's instrument, but I am not aware of a case where a composer stipulates such an instrument. True, there may occasionally be a clue in the music itself. I would quote the end of Bartok's "Six Dances in Bulgarian Rhythm" (from Vol. VI of the "Mikrokosmos"), the last three bars of which suggest a piano with a third ("sostenuto") pedal, now found only on some of the pianos of Steinway. This was invented by Montal in 1862 and Steinway patented an improved version for upright and grand pianos in 1875. It allows the player to sustain any combination of notes which are already held down, without affecting subsequent notes. However, the use of this pedal is by no means indispensable (even in the Bartok example), and it would

appear that composers and publishers are aware of this in piano music in general. This applies even more forcefully when the domestic market (either in music or instruments) is taken into consideration, which is, after all, the main source of revenue.

I am therefore less interested in the subtle differences between the instruments of various late 18th and early 19th century piano makers, than in the wide gulf between the modern piano and the earlier models up to c1840, because it is only an appreciation of this last difference that can illuminate the style of keyboard writing of composers such as Mozart, Clementi, Dussek, Hummel, Field, and Beethoven. And it is in matters of our appreciation and interpretation of the music of this period - which is, in the end, what should lie behind any academic enquiry - that most can be gained from an awareness of the difference between the modern and "period" instruments.

Having said that, one cannot, of course, ignore the general differences between the English and Viennese instruments, and the "schools" of composers and performers to which these have given rise, though the latter are often not based simply on the instrumental differences. This will be discussed in a later section.

It was in the formation of a composer's piano style that the basic allegiance to one or other type of piano was originally built up - either directly, through the more-or-less exclusive use of one type (as in Clementi), or indirectly, through teachers (as in Hummel and Field). A point worth noting here is that the formation of a composer's piano style may not necessarily coincide with his formative years as a composer - or even as a keyboard (as opposed to "piano") performer. A good example here is Clementi, again, whose virtuoso keyboard style would appear to have been developed on the harpsichord at the country home of Peter Beckford, in Dorset.⁽²⁷⁾

Many of the composers of the period have shown preference - either explicit or implicit - for a particular kind of instrument. Explicitly, a composer may state his preference in writings, or the reports of others may indicate such a preference. We have already seen the letter of Mozart on such a matter, but the case of a composer such as Beethoven is more confusing. At different stages in his life he seems to favour different pianos - none of which he himself actually bought. The evidence is summarised by Newman⁽²⁸⁾, and his conclusion is that the composer preferred the Viennese piano - this,

in spite of the fact that much of Beethoven's music shows an interest in sonority which would suggest the fuller tone of the English piano. Newman does add, however, than in 1826, a year before his death, Beethoven found all pianos inadequate to his needs, and that he wanted "a heavier action, a sturdier instrument, and a bigger tone." (29) I am bound to say that, in assessing the tone-qualities of pianos, the quotation of a composer, however great, who was deaf for the better part of his adult life, seems at best irrelevant, and at worst misleading. Furthermore, in the earlier piano works (up to, say, Op.28 inc.), at a time when he was noted as a virtuoso, there seems little to distinguish Beethoven's writing from that of many of his virtuoso contemporaries from the point of view of keyboard technique, except, perhaps, a comparative lack of adventurousness in this field.

Implicitly, a composer may show his preference for a particular type of instrument by his patronage of an individual maker, firm, or "school" of makers, or, in extreme cases, by actually becoming involved in the business himself. Thus, we are told that Thalberg, living in Paris, used an Erard grand, when he played at Blackheath, outside London. (30)

But in a period when a concert tour could stretch from Dublin to St. Petersburg, and in which a composer/

performer would often include maestri of various countries and "schools" in his artistic pedigree, not to mention influences from other virtuosos, to play on, and explicitly declare oneself to be composing for, a particular type of instrument would be financially imprudent in a climate in which dependence on the sale of published music was increasing, and this is particularly apt in Hummel's case. Too much can be made of a difference in the two forms of the same instrument, a sin of which the composers themselves may not have been guilty.

The subsequent development of the grand piano was bound up with improvements of existing features and changes for convenience. Of the latter type was the application of the pedals to the piano. Previously the functions of una corda and sustaining were accomplished by means of stops near the keyboard and, later, by genouillères, or knee-pedals. The pedal mechanism was, of course, present in the harpsichord - indeed, "in 1766 in Paris, Virbès fitted to the harpsichord knee-pedals which drew back the jacks, like the una corda, due corde pedal of the piano."⁽³¹⁾ As early as 1720, in his general improvement of his original action, Cristofori invented the keyboard shift, giving the una corda or due corde, though this shift was worked by knobs at either end of the keyboard, not by pedals. The substitution of pedals for genouillères and stops, or levers, was by Stein

in 1789, for both una corda and sustaining pedals. John Broadwood had accomplished this on the square piano in England when, by 1780, he had reconstructed Zumpe's design, the improvements to which he had patented in 1783. It is unnecessary to deal here with other devices, such as the Erard lute-stop, the splitting of the pedals to allow the bass and treble registers to be treated independently, and the various "effect" pedals, such as drum and triangle pedals for "Turkish" music. Henri Pape introduced all-felt hammers in 1826 (he also, it seems, originated the system of cross-stringing in 1828), but an important new action was invented by another Frenchman, Sebastien Erard, which he patented in 1821. This was the double escapement, which allowed a note to be repeated quicker than ever before and yet at any chosen volume and tone.

As string tension increased, because of the upward extension of the piano's compass, where tension is greatest; because of general raising of pitch in the early 19th century,⁽³²⁾ and because of increased volume for bigger concert-halls, audiences and orchestras, wooden frames were no longer sufficient to take the strain. It seems that, "in 1788, or perhaps even earlier"⁽³³⁾ William Stodart of London had used metal to strengthen his instruments, and that Broadwood braced the trebles with metal in 1808. In 1820, a patent⁽³⁴⁾

was taken out in the names of Thom and Allen, two employees in the firm of William Stodart, which the latter immediately bought from them. This was a system of parallel metal tubes intended to compensate for the different coefficients of expansion of the iron and brass strings (which difference would cause the instrument to go out of tune easily) - hence its name: "compensated frame". This extra strength also allowed for greater string tension.

The cast-iron frame was first applied to square pianos, by Alpheus Babcock of Boston, U.S.A., in 1825. Broadwood and Erard both experimented with metal in the frames during the second and third decades of the 19th century, and the former exhibited his first iron framed grand at the Great Exhibition in London in 1851. Four years later came Steinway's version, and by 1859, the firm had perfected the system of overstringing.

NOTES to CHAPTER 3

- (1) Harding, Rosamond E. M. The Pianoforte, its history traced to the Great Exhibition of 1851.
Cambridge, 1933.
- (2) It is interesting that the piano-making industry resisted the more modern manufacturing methods of its time for longer than many others. See Ehrlich/PIANO, pp. 18 9.
- (3) Each of these is known to have designed a piano-case. The designs are reproduced in James/EARLY, Plates LIII and LXII.
- (4) "Patent No. 947, 1769. A Salzburger Zeitung, dated 6 August 1765, alludes to Shudi's Venetian swell, together with his use of the machine stop, which, from a London report concerning the child Mozart's last concert there, it also attributes to him.... The patent for the Venetian swell was therefore taken out some years after the invention."
(Footnote on p.90 of Hipkins/DESCRIPTION.)
- (5) According to Closson, "of eight old pianos in the museums in Berlin, five are so converted."
(Closson/PIANO, p.59)
- (6) "...just as the harpsichord was the basis of the grand piano shape adopted by Cristofori and Silbermann, so the clavichord was the model for the square piano....there are indications of....the conversion of clavichords into pianos as early as 1750."
(James/EARLY, p.51.)
- (7) Clutton/PIANOFORTE, p.91.
- (8) Plantinga/CLEMENTI,
- (9) Op. cit., p.289.
- (10) Voltaire, in a letter to the Marquise du Deffand, dated 8th December 1774, quoted in Closson/PIANO, p.59, and Parrish/CRITICISMS, p.433.
- (11) Written also in 1774, quoted in Closson/PIANO, p.59. As will be apparent, this would have been either an English model, or a copy.
- (12) Harding/PIANOFORTE, and Hipkins/DESCRIPTION give detailed accounts, with illustrations, of the various actions.
- (13) Piano technology was brought to England by a group of Saxons, known afterwards as the "Twelve Apostles."
- (14) This is how Closson describes the Stein piano in the Musée du Conservatoire in Brussels. (Closson/PIANO,p.80).
- (15) See Gough/PIANOFORTE, p.49.
- (16) But Melville has: "/The Viennese piano⁷ has a more neutral tone-colour, but with distinctive timbres in the bass, middle and treble registers, while the English piano has a full and colourful tone evenly distributed throughout the compass."
Melville/BEETHOVEN, p.46.

- (17) Broder/'CLAVIER', pp.422-3. Closson writes: "In 1768, Madameoiselle Lechantre played the piano for the first time at the "Concert spirituel"." Closson/PIANO, p.90.
- (18) "What, dear friend, you come to me from England? Alas, how can one declare war on her?" Quoted in Closson/PIANO, p.86.
- (19) Quoted in Parrish/CRITICISMS, p.432.
- (20) "According to de Bricqueville (in The Harpsichord of Madame du Barry and the Piano of Marie-Antoinette) the piano is supposed to have first appeared in Paris in 1759." (Closson/PIANO, p.90.)
- (21) Gough/PIANOFORTE, pp.46-7.
- (22) Mozart, letter of 17th-18th October 1777, from Anderson/MOZART, II, pp.478ff.
- (23) Clutton/PIANOFORTE, p.90.
- (24) Gough/PIANOFORTE, p.44.
- (25) Clutton/PIANOFORTE, p.96.
- (26) Melville/BEETHOVEN, p.41.
- (27) See Plantinga/CLEMENTI.
- (28) Newman/IDEALS.
- (29) Op. cit., p.497.
- (30) Ehrlich/PIANOFORTE, p.21.
- (31) Closson/PIANOFORTE, p.57.
- (32) Loesser/PIANOS, p.301.
- (33) Clutton/PIANOFORTE, p.101.
- (34) See Hipkins/DESCRIPTION, p.16.

CHAPTER 4 - PERFORMANCE STYLE

As with an attempt to abstract an overall compositional style from the music of the period, a similar exercise with respect to piano-performance style runs the risk of generality to the point of summary. Yet the attempt must be made, if only to sketch in the background against which, in the eyes of most contemporaries, Hummel's particular style stood in varying degrees of relief.

Wangermée takes a refreshingly different attitude to the virtuosos in our period, making the important point that

"Virtuosity is essentially a manifestation of individualism which allows an artist to establish himself above his rivals, which also permits him to authenticate his genius by the recognition of those who listen to, and admire him."(1)

This point is a general one, and he particularises later in the case of the early nineteenth century practitioner:

"His individuality is in his performance technique, which he is ambitious to render triumphant. In all his works, this technique dominates, moreover, in an obvious manner. (de manière apparente)". (2)

The public/private problem is not quite so acute here, because the listening and playing public in the Age of the Piano demanded a literature which showed the instrument at its most characteristic, and, since the virtuoso performer was also a composer, it is natural that the private craft of composition in pieces for and including the instrument should be influenced to a large extent by the public considerations.

Influences on performance style

There is, however, a sense in which the public/private polarity does figure in the style and is reflected in what might be termed the "brilliant" and "cantabile" schools. These arise ultimately from the different characteristics of the two main types of piano in the period, the Viennese and the English which I have discussed in the last chapter. To generalise: the light-toned, light-actioned, well-damped Viennese instrument favoured the brilliant style of rapid execution, and its heavier, deeper-toned, less effectively damped English counterpart encouraged a more legato, cantabile style. While it is, of course, likely that virtuosos trained in these schools should show a predilection for the style of playing most effective on their particular instrument, one must resist the temptation to "compartment" too much.

"It is evidently not possible to classify with perfect clarity the different piano virtuosos into three schools which would correspond to the technical evolution of the instrument. By and large, the division illustrates nevertheless the reality which was felt as such by contemporaries. One can symbolise them by uniting, for example, the name of Mozart with the pianos of Viennese mechanism, Clementi and his disciples Cramer, Dussek, Field, Kalkbrenner, with the pianos of English mechanism, and with London, where they all lived, and Liszt and Thalberg with the pianos of Erard and with Paris. But many pianists present ambiguous characteristics: if Hummel wished to pursue the Mozartean ideal of grace and lyrical expression, he did it with a technique clearly more developed; if Henri Herz hails from the English school, he gives proof of diverse innovations which make of him a more modern pianist; if the art of Chopin could only express itself truly on a Pleyel piano, even though it was altered in imitation of Erard (pour des aménagements imités d'Erard), he did it with profound originality."(3)

Other factors militating against an inflexible two- or three-school view are: the fact that composers came into contact with a large number of different pianos; the instruments of different makers had their own characteristics — subtly different, to be sure, but sufficient for definite preferences to be established and declared — and the influences of makers upon one another, pianos at the end of Hummel's life, for example, being more standardised than they were before that. Performers also studied with, and/or were influenced by, others of different allegiance, Hummel with Mozart and Clementi, for instance.

Performers, of course, also changed as they grew older. A good example here is Moscheles, who was raised in the brilliant Viennese school, but on whose playing, after he moved to London in 1822, Fétis commented: "a new tendency was noticed in his playing; his style became grander, more masculine..."⁽⁴⁾ As in the case of so many other foreign musicians, he immediately became adopted by his new countrymen and eschewed much of his former style as well as inveighing against and resisting the newer waves of brilliant players. Like Potter, Bennett, Neate and, especially, Mrs. Anderson, he also played Hummel's music, as well as that of earlier masters.

A further consideration is that most music would, of course, include movements or sections in both the cantabile and brilliant styles, and critics and commentators appear to be unanimous in their views on performers and on the qualities of a good performance, for the most part. Their common denunciation was reserved for the later brilliant waves of players such as Pixis, Dreyschock, Herz, and Czerny to some extent.

Requirements of good performance

The traits most admired were a high level of precision in technical execution, beauty of tone in slower parts, evenness of touch and, in the case of a performer playing the music of another composer, an understanding of the latter's individual compositional and performing style.

(a) Technique

"...all German teachers of the early nineteenth century....regarded a distinct and controlled touch as the most essential requirement of a good keyboard technique." (5)

In spite of the reviewer's reservation about Herz's playing being more appropriate to an audience "a la mode de paris" /sic/, he is forced to admire "the peculiar style of his playing" and

"His fairy-like rapidity of touch — his splendid execution of great difficulties, together with his ease and unerring precision, even surprised /sic/ professors of the highest distinction."(6)

But,

"we cannot help informing Monsieur Herz that he will never excite our admiration, unless he improves his Adagio playing."(7)

And even though the playing of "M. Holmes" was

"of the ultra-sentimental school, imbued /sic/ with an excess of feeling, or, rather it is too elaborate and romantic,"

this was still "a fault certainly on the right side."

A compromise style is suggested:

"Were it possible for M. Holmes to present M. Herz, with the surplus of his sentiment, both gentlemen would undoubtedly be benefited by the change." (8)

Liszt, at the age of twelve, possessed these qualities to the extent that

"one is inclined to doubt its physical possibility. Nothing could exceed our wonder in listening to the effect with which the boy gave Hummel's difficult, and, in the latter parts, very laborious production. He even shewed a refinement of feeling which few adult performers possess; and his adagio was full of passion and expression."
(9)

We have it on Moscheles' authority that

"Clementi's pianoforte playing, when he was young, was famed for the exquisite legato, pearliness of touch in rapid passages, and unerring certainty of execution." (10)

A general feeling is summed up by a Harmonicon reviewer in 1828, describing the playing of Pixis.

"M. Pixis is a most rapid player, with an extremely neat, brilliant finger, and a powerful hand. The velocity with which he executes his passages, and the accuracy also, are surprising enough. But, alas! the pleasure, if any, that attends this kind of astonishment, is very short-lived: after hearing a few things of the sort, curiosity is satisfied, ennui supervenes, and we ask, with Fontenelle, que me veux-tu, sonate? — Give us a few notes that shew feeling in the performer, and excite a similar emotion in the hearer: let us in music find passion, taste or, what is comprehended in one word, expression. When we are stimulated by the desire of enjoying the wonderful, we will go to Astley's, and there see marvellous horsemanship; or to Vauxhall, and witness the still more miraculous skill of Madame Saqui on the rope: but mechanism is the lowest department of fine art, and is always a mere accessory where true genius exists." (11)

Holmes agreed, asking that instead of Wunderkinder, the

"superannuated have a chance; because, if we did not there get rapidity we might get sentiment, which is a better thing.....the mind of the performer should show itself in the light in which he understands a passage, and then, instead of being a mere automaton, with a number of ready-made graces bestowed upon his mechanism, we should have the emanation of his feeling and sensibility struck out in a momentary impulse." (12)

Field also combined the desirable qualities but without showiness.

"To look at his hands, which scarcely seem to move; to contemplate the calmness of his countenance while playing, one would be tempted to suppose he was performing nothing but the easiest music in the world; while the fact is, that the greatest, the most complicated difficulties, are really no difficulties at all to him. Under Mr. Field's fingers the piano is no longer a mere piece of mechanism; it sings, and seems as competent to produce sustained tones, as though it were played with a bow. Touched by this exquisite performer, it is a real musical instrument, and no longer a mere theatre for the exhibition of tours de force, the use to which the kind of talent possessed by a majority of what are called the greatest artists of the present day nearly confines it." (13)

The Harmonicon writes of "that union of taste, delicacy, and yet decision of touch, which mark the true master." (14)

(b) Cantabile playing

It is clear from many of these commentaries that the second requirement figured possibly even more prominently.

"To play an adagio requires more knowledge, taste, strong feeling and judgment, than such giddy galloping performers, — such ephemeral favourites — usually possess." (15)

This echoes Hummel in his Piano School:

"That an adagio is much more difficult to perform with propriety than an allegro, is a fact acknowledged by every one." (16)

The adagio, from the point of view of the performer, is called "that true touchstone of an artist's capabilities," (17) and in the flute-playing of Guillou in Paris, "we miss that true test of a perfect master, the tender and affecting adagio..." (18) Similarly, "one single adagio movement, played with soul and feeling, is worth all the laborious

ingenuity.....in the world."(19)

There is more to this than meets the eye. With reference to the piano, informed critics and commentators were aware that it remained

"a fundamentally inexpressive instrument. As on the clavichord and harpsichord, it was not easy to slur notes together smoothly in the instrumental or vocal sense of the term. The fresh attack given to each note, together with a certain loss of sound, imparted an unavoidable dryness to the tone of the instrument, which, as Zimmerman remarked in his Encyclopédie du Pianiste of 1840 (dedicated to his teacher, J. B. Cramer), could only be concealed by the skill of the performer. A strict legato touch, with the frequent substitution of fingers, was absolutely essential in this respect, though without such supplementary means as the use of the sustaining pedal or the spreading of chords, it was not sufficient in itself to produce the allusion /sic/ of a true singing style. The difficulties of playing in a smooth, cantabile manner evidently remained.."(20)

Although the various Pianoforte "Schools" and "Methods" dealt with both brilliance and good tone production, the bulk of the space in each was devoted to the former. However, it was clearly one of those aspects of performance which was considered easier to teach face-to-face than to write about.

The need for the performer to approach the ideal of the human voice, especially in slower movements or pieces, is constantly alluded to. Kalkbrenner states that

"Those who desire to become great instrumentalists, should apply themselves to imitate good singers. Garat, Crescentini, Madame Pasta and Madame Malibran, have given me more pianoforte lessons than any pianist." (21)

If Hummel is not quite so emphatic, he is equally clear:

"What relates to beauty and taste in performance, will be best cultivated, and perhaps ultimately most easily obtained, by hearing music finely performed, and by listening to highly distinguished musicians, particularly Singers gifted with great powers of expression. — Indeed, among

those musicians and Composers who in their youth have received instructions on singing, there will generally be found more pure, correct, and critical musical feeling, than among such as have only a general and extrinsic idea of melody and good singing." (22)

That Thalberg wrote a treatise entitled "L'Art du Chant appliqué au Piano" bears witness to his allegiance in this matter. Indeed the developments in the piano itself during the first half of the nineteenth century — in terms of increased resonance and duration of tone, and the sustaining pedal, paralleling modified performance techniques in tone-production, fingering and pedalling — were primarily aimed at increasing the singing power of the instrument. In the end, however, the fault lay with the performer rather than the instrument, as Kalkbrenner observes.

"...once and for all, let us not speak of the dryness of the piano, which only means the dryness of pianists. The grand pianos of seven octaves sing out in a delightful way, when one knows how to sing." (23)

When describing performers, critics and commentators, especially English and French, frequently refer to this in terms of "expression" and "taste", though the latter obviously includes more in its meaning. Although Marie Szymanowska's playing had "neither the nimbleness of Lysth [sic] nor the clarity and power of Moscheles", she "possesses an easy and graceful talent"⁽²⁴⁾, and "her playing is always elegant, and furthermore she has all the expression one could demand of a pianist." ⁽²⁵⁾ The critic of the AMZ praises Moscheles in 1832 for, among other things, "the imposing dignity of his style, and an expression of lyrical feeling peculiar to himself..."⁽²⁶⁾, and Field was "perhaps

the sweetest and most beautiful performer on the pianoforte .
now in existence." (27)

(c) Embellishment

The relationship between the performed music and the written notation in the early nineteenth century is a fascinating one. The prevalence of improvisation and of improvisatory treatment by performers of the given music seems at first sight to run counter to the increasing accuracy with which composers notated their music. I see a connection between the written and the played, or realised, in this period, which borders on the causal, and I shall develop this idea in Sections III and IV of this dissertation.

It was expected that a virtuoso — and let us not forget that he was invariably a composer as well at this time — would lend something of his own individuality and creativity to any piece he played. Wangermée expresses it thus:

"The work did not yet exist, rather it rested in its written text; it only lived in performance. Even if, by chance, it was not the composer himself who played it, the music underwent a new re-creation without injury, for a sufficiently broad stylistic identity impregnated the artists of the same period." (28)

Even though he refers to periods prior to that with which I am dealing, he makes the same point with reference to this later:

"For a virtuoso of the eighteenth century, whether he performed his own works or those of others, it was normal to intervene in a creative manner in the course of performance by ornamenting the written text. The virtuosos of the nineteenth century continued quite naturally to act thus." (29)

He then describes Hummel's practice of adding to Mozart.

"When he performed the concertos of Mozart, Hummel, who wished to be his disciple, did not content himself with adding cadenzas and improvising /at/ the pauses, he sometimes larded the melody with ornamentation which, for him, had the merit — conforming to tradition — of rejuvenating a work /which was/ beautiful, but dated, of investing it with the taste of the day (de la mettre au goût du jour), by inserting improvisatory passages and technical difficulties which modernised it. This practice was in every case held to be normal by the public of 1830..."(30)

Wangermée quotes a review of a performance of a Mozart concerto by Hiller, in which the writer says:

"We would have wished that Hiller had re-heated the last part of it with some ornamentations in good taste." (31)

Liszt wrote a short essay to accompany the first collection of Field's Nocturnes which he (Liszt) revised, and which were published in 1859 by Schuberth of Leipzig. Having stressed the impossibility of emulating Field's artistry in composing them, he continues:

"No one has dared attempt them; no one, especially, who had heard Field himself play, or rather dream, his pieces, wrapt in inspiration, not limiting himself to the written notes, but incessantly inventing new groups wherewith to engarland his melodies; at each repetition he would adorn them diversely with a flowery rain, yet they never wholly disappeared beneath an ornamentation which veiled, without hiding, their languishing undulations and ravishing outlines. What an inexhaustible wealth of variations did he lavish on the embellishment of his thought! With what rare taste would he intertwine around it, without smothering it, the most subtle weft of arabesques!"
(32)

(d) Composers' styles

Although it was comparatively rare for a virtuoso-performer to play works other than his own, it was, on those occasions, considered important that he take cognisance of the style of the composer whose pieces he played. Czerny alludes to this in "Über den richtigen Vortrag der sämtlichen beethoven'schen Klavierwerke":

"We have already mentioned.....that every important composer should be performed in his own characteristic way — Beethoven possibly more so than anyone else. His compositions must be played differently to those of Mozart, Clementi, Hummel, etc. Where this difference lies is difficult to describe in words. Every thinking player can develop the right attitude by assiduous study of the complete works." (33)

It was noteworthy that, in the concert of the eight-year-old George Aspull,

"The specimens given of his proficiency were selected from composers of every style, and of every variety of difficulty, over which he exhibited a perfect mastery. The more elaborate pieces of Beethoven, Mozart, Hummel, Kalkbrenner, Moscheles, Kreutzer, and Clementi, were played in succession, with a force and precision that drew repeated exclamations of surprise from his hearers." (34)

In a general review of music by such composers as Gelinek, Mayseder and Carulli, also including three volumes of a series entitled "The Beauties of Hummel", the reviewer compares a knowledge of composers' styles by a pianist to that of a devotee of painting with respect to great artists.

"An acquaintance with French, Italian, and even German literature, is now considered almost as necessary in education as a knowledge of that of our own country. It is considered disgraceful for an amateur of painting to be ignorant of the peculiar distinctions between the styles of Raphael, Titian, Guido, Claude, &c. Why then is it not equally desirable for a musical virtuoso to be acquainted with the manner of Hummel, Von Weber,

Mayseder, Gallemborg, &c.&c. Very little time and attention will procure this information, pre-supposing an acquaintance with the styles of the best English masters, and of those naturalized, as it were, amongst us." (35)

In his Piano Method of 1804, Louis Adam had already referred to this matter:

"We have already said that every author has his own particular style; he who would wish to play the music of Clementi, Mozart, Dussek, Haydn, in the same way, would destroy all its effect." (36)

One critic turns this into a rather subtle insult to Moscheles:

"As far as the mere notes are concerned there is nothing very difficult, but we are satisfied all the effects intended by the author will evaporate, unless they are performed by a person thoroughly acquainted with his manner. There is hardly a bar of melody, properly so called, from beginning to end. The apprehension must be trained in the school of the author to receive such music with pleasure." (37)

On the other hand, in what was reported as the first piano recital consisting of solo pieces, Moscheles himself, this time as a performer, playing works by J.S. Bach, Weber and Beethoven, was complimented thus:

"The style in which he executed a fugue of Bach, and a florid finale of Weber or Beethoven, was as perfectly according with the genius, and we should suppose the intention of each composer, as if he had studied in his school alone." (38)

Generally, then, the prevalent performing style was one in which brilliance and a high level of technical achievement and display in fast sections was allied to beauty of tone in slower ones. An appreciation and

knowledge of the styles of the composers whose works were played was considered not merely desirable, but necessary, especially as the performer made, as a matter of course, additions to the music, which had to be both up-to-date and in style. A further desideratum, if not a requirement, was the ability to improvise and, since this is of particular importance in Hummel's case, it will be, as I have said, the subject of special and extended treatment in the last two sections of this dissertation.

NOTES to CHAPTER 4

- (1) Wangermée/VIRTUOSITÉ, p.6.

"La virtuosité est essentiellement une manifestation d'individualisme qui permet à un artiste de s'affirmer au-dessus de ceux avec lesquels il rivalise, qui lui permet aussi d'authentifier son génie par la reconnaissance de ceux qui l'écoutent et qui l'admirent."

- (2) Op. cit., p.22.

"Son individualisme c'est dans sa technique d'exécution qu'il a l'ambition de le faire triompher. Dans toutes ses œuvres, cette technique domine, du reste, de manière apparente."

- (3) Op. cit., p.15.

"Il n'est évidemment pas possible de classer, avec une parfaite netteté, les différents virtuoses du piano dans trois écoles qui correspondraient à l'évolution technique de l'instrument. En gros, la division illustre pourtant des réalités qui ont été ressenties comme telles par les contemporains. On peut les symboliser en unissant, par exemple, le nom de Mozart aux pianos de mécanique viennoise, Clementi et ses disciples, Cramer, Dussek, Field, Kalkbrenner, aux pianos de mécanique anglaise, et à Londres où ils ont tous vécu, Liszt et Thalberg aux pianos Erard et à Paris. Mais beaucoup de pianistes présentent des caractéristiques ambiguës: si Hummel a voulu poursuivre l'idéal mozartien de grâce et d'expression lyrique, il l'a fait avec une technique nettement plus développée; si Henri Herz part de l'école anglaise, il fait preuve d'innovations diverses qui font de lui un pianiste plus moderne; si l'art de Chopin n'a pu s'exprimer véritablement que sur un piano Pleyel pour des aménagements imités d'Erard, il l'a fait avec une originalité profonde."

- (4) Fétis/BIOGRAPHIE, VI, p.212.

"...une tendance nouvelle se faisait apercevoir dans son jeu; son style devenait plus grand, plus mâle...."

- (5) Jenkins/LEGATO, I, p.149.

- (6) Philharmonicon, August 1833, p.18.

- (7) Loc. cit.

- (8) Loc. cit.

- (9) Harmonicon, November 1823, p.175.

- (10) Moscheles/LIFE, I, p.192.

- (11) Harmonicon, July 1828, p.167.

- (12) Holmes/RAMBLE, p.158.

- (13) Harmonicon, February 1833, p.42.
- (14) Op. cit., April 1827, p.93.
- (15) Op. cit., November 1823, footnote to p.177.
- (16) Hummel/SCHOOL, Pt.III, Section 2nd., Ch.1, p.40.
- (17) Harmonicon, June 1827, p.119.
- (18) Op. cit., July 1827, p.141.
- (19) Loc. cit.
- (20) Jenkins/LEGATO, I, p.93.
- (21) Kalkbrenner/METHOD, p.9.
- (22) Hummel/SCHOOL, Pt.III, Section 2nd., Ch.1, p.39.
- (23) Kalkbrenner/TRAITÉ, p.31.

"Ainsi une fois pour toutes, qu'on ne parle plus de la sécheresse du Piano, qui ne provient que de la sécheresse des pianistes. Les grands pianos à sept octaves chantent d'une manière ravissante, quand on sait chanter."

- (24) Le Globe, 1st December 1825, p.996.

"Madame Szymmanowska /sic/ possède un talent facile et gracieux: ce n'est ni la prestesse de Lysth /sic/ ni la netteté et la puissance de Moscheles; mais son jeu est toujours élégant, et de plus elle a toute l'expression qu'on peut exiger des pianistes."

- (25) See Note (24) above.
- (26) Trans. and quoted in The Harmonicon, January 1833, p.9.
- (27) Harmonicon, February 1833, p.42.
- (28) Wangermée/VIRTUOSITÉ, p.10.

"L'œuvre n'existait pas encore tant qu'elle reposait dans son texte écrit; elle ne vivait que dans l'exécution. Même si, d'aventure, ce n'était pas le compositeur lui-même qui la jouait, la musique subissait sans dommage une recreation nouvelle car une communauté de style suffisamment large imprégnait les artistes d'une même époque."

- (29) Op. cit., p.19.

"Pour un virtuose du XVIIIe siècle — qu'il exécutât ses propres œuvres ou celles des autres — il était normal d'intervenir de manière créatrice en cours d'exécution en ornementant le texte écrit. Les virtuoses du XIXe siècle ont continué tout naturellement à agir ainsi."

- (30) Loc. cit.

"Lorsqu'il exécutait les concertos de Mozart, Hummel, qui se voulait son disciple, ne se contentait pas d'ajouter des cadences et d'improviser des points d'orgue, il plaquait parfois sur la mélodie des ornements qui, pour lui, avaient le mérite — conformément à la tradition — de

rajeunir une œuvre belle mais passée, de la mettre au goût du jour, en y insérant en particulier des traits et des difficultés techniques qui l'actualisaient. Cette pratique était toujours tenue pour normale par le public de 1830....."

(31) Op. cit., p.20.

"Nous aurions désiré que Hiller en réchauffât la dernière partie par quelques ornements de bon goût."

(32) Liszt, Franz. On John Field's Nocturnes, trans. Th. Baker

(33) Czerny/VORTRAG, p.26.

"Wir haben schon.....angedeutet, dass jeder bedeutende Tonsetzer auf eine, ihm besonders eigenthümliche Weise vorzutragen sei. Beethoven aber vielleicht, mehr als jeder and're. Seine Compositionen müssen anders gespielt werden, als jene von Mozart, Clementi, Hummel, etc. Worin dieser Unterschied besteht, ist nicht leicht durch Worte auszudrücken. Die richtige Ansicht entwickelt sich bei jedem denkenden Spieler durch ein genaues Studium seiner sämtlichen Werke."

(34) Harmonicon, March 1824, p.43.

(35) QMMR, 1824, p.117.

(36) Adam/MÉTHODE, Article douze, p.233.

"Nous avons déjà dit que chaque auteur a son style particulier; celui qui voudroit exécuter la musique de Clementi, Mozart, Dussek, Haydn, de la même manière, en détruiroit tout l'effet."

(37) QMMR, 1821, p.513.

(38) "Mr. Moscheles' Soirée" in The Musical World, Vol.IV, London: 1837, p.155. (Quoted in Harding/PIANOFORTE, pp.88-9.)

SECTION II - HUMMEL

CHAPTER 5 - COMPOSITIONAL STYLE

Style periods

Soon after his death, commentators began to periodise Hummel's creative life into the usual tripartite sections. The first of these ends c1814, the second from c1814 to c1820, and the last from then until his death in 1837.

(a) The first period, to c1814

The main influence on Hummel's early style was that of Mozart, in whose house he lived free of charge, according to his father⁽¹⁾, for two years, after which, in 1788, Mozart advised his father to take the boy on a concert-tour. It is difficult to ascertain how often he was given lessons by the master, or of what these might have consisted. In an autobiographical letter to Sonnleithner dated 22nd May 1826, Hummel writes that his first compositions dated from his eleventh and twelfth years

"and though they bear the stamp of the current taste and my youthfulness, nevertheless they show character, order, and a feeling for harmony, without my ever having been trained in composition."
(2)

A critic in the AMZ of 1812 comments on Hummel's piano trio Op.35 in the following terms:

"Those who like the taste in which Mozart has written his beautiful, light and pleasant trios for the same instruments are here given a composition which will provide them with no little pleasure, and which need be described in no greater detail when it is said that it comes close to them in every respect." (3)

The influence of Mozart's "Jupiter" finale can be clearly seen in the last movement of Hummel's third piano sonata in f, Op.20 (Ex.1), and also in his sets of variations, though this is by no means restricted to the first period in the case of this genre. An obvious instance is the Adagio/allegro pairing in, for example, the Variations in A, S1⁽⁴⁾, composed in 1789(?)⁽⁵⁾, in Op.2/2, pub. 1791, the "Malborouck" vars. in C, composed c1789-93⁽⁶⁾, and the variations on a theme from Gluck's "Armide", Op.57, pub. c1811-15⁽⁷⁾.

Another

"favourite Mozartean device, that of accompanying a modified version of the theme with a sustained trill, usually on the dominant, (as in Variation 4 of both 'Lison dormait', K.264 and 'Dieu d'amour', K.352) also finds frequent expression in early Hummel, though barely at all in the mature works." (8)

Examples of this are: S1/ var.4, S2/var.2 (Ex.2) and Op.2/2/ var.2. Mozart's general influence is seen throughout the whole of the Double Concerto for pf. and v. in G Op.17, pub. c1805.

We are also informed, however, that the boy played the newest piano compositions to Mozart, and certainly the Op.2/3 pf. son. shows the influence of several composers, though these could hardly refer to very recent works. In his Introduction to the 1975 Musica Rara edition of the complete pf. sons., Harold Truscott finds passages which he places beside some of Dussek's, and concludes that Hummel knew the older composer's music.⁽⁹⁾ Truscott sees traces of Clementi also, ⁽¹⁰⁾ and this is not surprising since it appears that the boy had lessons from him in London between 1790 and 1792. Hummel also met Haydn in London and had organ lessons from him when he later returned to Vienna (1795)⁽¹¹⁾.

There is little evidence of Haydn's influence on Hummel's piano music, but Kershaw does point out a possible example of the older man's wit in Hummel⁽¹²⁾ (Ex.3). Zimmerschied, dealing with the chamber music, finds, however, that

"the attempts in form show Haydn's influence.... This occurs in the development sections which are seen as conscious motivic working-out, and, especially, in the manner of deriving the second subject from the first part of the main subject by a sequence, or by the dissolution of a sequence."
(13)

Hummel, in common with most Viennese composers of the time, did not escape the impact of Beethoven, whose "emergence in Vienna...nearly destroyed Hummel's self-confidence." (14) Davis notices "a strong leaning towards Beethoven"... "in the first years of the new century"⁽¹⁵⁾ and the Op.13 pf. son. in E^b

"influenced, both in spirit and substance, by Beethoven's two C minor sonatas, op.10, no.1 and op. 13, and in turn communicated one of its opening figures to Wölfl in his Sonata in E, op.34,no.1."⁽¹⁶⁾

There is a strong feeling of Beethoven in parts of the slow movement (in B^b) of this fine E^b sonata and one may be forgiven for thinking that the "touchstone of finely controlled beauty"⁽¹⁷⁾ belongs to a later date than "before January 1805", which is implied by Kershaw⁽¹⁸⁾ (Ex.4).

Two other important teachers of Hummel's youth are Albrechtsberger, with whom he studied counterpoint, and Mozart's bête noir, Salieri, with whom he studied vocal composition, aesthetics and the philosophy of music⁽¹⁹⁾. The former's influence, in particular, is seen throughout Hummel's life, notably in the "inevitable fugato that rescues so many flagging development sections "⁽²⁰⁾,

but also in the Op.20 finale already mentioned, and especially in the accomplished three fugues of Op.7 (after 1793).

(b) The second period, c1814-c1820

This period produced some of Hummel's greatest works. The f[#] pf. son. Op.81, the A^b duet-son. (composed November 1820), the d septet Op.74, and the a and b pf. concs. all appear during these years of change in Hummel's circumstances. His contract as Kapellmeister at Eilenstadt had been terminated in 1811 and he had returned to Vienna, marrying the well-known singer Elisabeth Röckl in 1813. Their first of two sons, Eduard, was born in the following year, and it was also at this time that Elisabeth prevailed upon her husband to appear in public again to "give concerts and show his talents as an improviser"⁽²¹⁾. Vienna during the Congress years provided many opportunities for performers of all kinds and they could be sure that any good impressions they made would be carried to the four corners of Europe when the noblemen and politicians returned home. Hummel was highly successful and consolidated that success with a tour of Germany in 1816, which made him a celebrity. The same year he accepted the post of Kapellmeister at Stuttgart but was unhappy and unfulfilled, resigning in 1818. From January 1819 until his death in 1837, he was grand-ducal Kapellmeister at Weimar, with a contract which allowed him three months of annual leave for concert-tours. At last Hummel had found the security which had so far eluded him. He had a post with no small measure of kudos, a good salary, a wide range of musical duties, time to compose and to give concerts, the friendship of Goethe and the acquaintance of

leading intellectuals, and a comfortable bürgerlich existence. It was a disaster for his creative life, as we shall see.

Beethoven's influence is more marked during the early part of this period. A sense of musical purpose pervades the works mentioned, with less account taken of public taste, a more conscious appreciation of formal considerations, and a closer interaction of thematic/harmonic construction, instrumental colour, and texture. The works are certainly dramatic, but the drama is more subtle, less dependent on external factors, such as, in the concertos, for example, solo/orchestra opposition and contrast, than on controlled synthesis of the musical elements within the general ethos of the movements. Nowhere is this more clearly seen than in Hummel's refusal either to sectionalise the first tutti and piano entry by separating them, as Mozart usually does — and as Hummel himself had up to then — or to overtly dramatise the entry, as he does in the F pf. conc.

In both of the minor-key concertos, the piano entry seems to grow out of the tutti and Hummel uses particular means to integrate it into the whole and minimise the intrusion. In the a conc. the soloist appears to enter ahead of his time, in mid-thought, so to speak. The tutti weaves its way towards a $\begin{smallmatrix} 6 & 5 \\ 4 & 3 \end{smallmatrix}$ cadence in the codetta, and the piano enters with its own $\begin{smallmatrix} 6 \\ 4 \end{smallmatrix}$ bass chord, piano, holding the resolution in suspense. The r.h. $\begin{smallmatrix} 6 \\ 4 \end{smallmatrix}$ arpeggio, containing two foreign notes (D[#] and G[#]) has its first point of "repose" on the D[#] in b.2 of Ex.5 in the form of a long appoggiatura to the E. This note is denied the feeling of resolution by being, at the same time, the rhythmic anacrusis to a higher repeat of the arpeggio. The next E, in b.3, being on the main

beat of the bar, has, nevertheless, its quality of resolution taken from it, as the harmony changes to make it temporarily dissonant and gives it the function of a long lower appoggiatura to the F. For the situation in the case of this E, where a note is in all respects a consonance but is given the quality and function of a dissonance by other factors in the music, I am obliged to coin the term "melodic dysfunction", since similar cases on different musical levels will occur later. The minim F in b.3/d² is itself dissonant to the V chord in the next bar — the resolution of the bass $\frac{6}{4}$ — and is further held in suspense by its reiteration two octaves lower in a figure strongly reminiscent of that which ends the introduction to Beethoven's Op.13 son., 1st movt. In terms of both melody and harmony, extremely simple though they are, Hummel's logic is impeccable, a dissipation of tension carried out with a subtlety and a calm conviction which is quite foreign to the bulk of the virtuoso piano concertos of the period. The reaching of the "wrong note" D[#] in b.2 betrays the true improviser and his innate ability to use almost any eventuality to musical advantage. Instead of following this solo entry with the main theme proper, Hummel gives a figural sublimation of its basic I-V-I harmony, substituting a Neapolitan chord (N⁶) for the original's dim., and the plaintive melody (Ex.6) becomes the first direct reference to the melodic material of the opening tutti.

The entry in the b conc. is less subtle harmonically and melodically, but no less telling. Here, also, the soloist elongates the end of the tutti, ending in ton. parallel mode and continues (Ex.7) with four bb. of B maj.

arpeggio (piano), to which the timpani lends characteristic colouration and rhythm as it did in the opening bars, with lower strings pizzicati on the main beat. When the r.h. enters with its bare octave "melody" in b.5, the l.h. changes to the original b min., and the first solo is under way. (22)

In their general form, both first movements are based on that used by Beethoven in his c conc., with second subs. in rel. maj. and with, in the a conc., references to the 1st sub. at the end of the tutti. The influence of the older composer is also in evidence in the greater participation of the orchestra in the general scheme of the movements, as opposed to being more strictly accompanimental, though it is fair to say, with Brock, that generally,

"when the piano is given thematic material and the scoring is much thinner it never becomes as uninteresting as do the accompaniments in the concertos of Chopin and Field." (23)

Both movements also have tuttis of a symphonic character and, like the 1st movt. of Beethoven's 5th conc., curtailed and rather restrained cadenzas which are accompanied, and the b conc., the most "Beethovenian" of all Hummel's, has much more of the feeling of a true working-out in the development than his customary tossing-about of motivic fragments.

It is during this second period that Hummel comes closest to developing a more personal compositional style, in which the blending of private and public manners, while not being entirely in equilibrium, let alone fusing with each other, gives rise at least to a small number of works with some individuality and homogeneity of style, and not without the occasional emergence of personal utterance which allows these works now and then to transcend their limitation of confinement to

particularities of time, place and occasion. Writing in the NZfM in 1883, Carl Richter says of the b conc.:

"Without doubt this is the most spirited, inventive, and original of Hummel's concertos, and seems to come closest to the manner of thought and feeling of the present day, and thus it would be the most entitled to be once more brought into the limelight."
(24)

(c) The final period c1820-1837

The final period shows in general, something of a retrogression. It appears that his settled security, pleasant domestic and ~~social conditions~~ and his predominant aura of respectability began to sap his creative energy. There were, however, other distractions. An interpretative role in his musical life becomes more evident, in that much of his time was taken up with opera conducting, both at Weimar, and during his last London visit in 1833, when his main position was that of conductor of the visiting German Opera. Also, his long preoccupation with the Piano School took up much of his time and attention, a fact to which he refers on several occasions. In 1823 he writes to Peters in Leipzig:

"I am now of a mind to enjoy my pretty house, and will therefore undertake no journeys next year, but will remain in Weimar and completely finish my School..."
(25)

And in 1825:

"At the moment I am working incessantly on the Method...." (26)

This bears out Sachs' assertion that

"Whereas he had composed prolifically as a young man, during the 1820's the only major project that could sustain his enthusiasm was the Piano Method. In his Viennese days he had produced Singspiele, operas, chamber music, piano music, and dances of all varieties; now even the prestige-laden opera for

Paris died in infancy." (27)

Much of his creative energy was channelled into arranging at this time. In this period, knowledge of, and familiarity with, the larger works of the masters was largely through such re-vampings as they underwent for the parlour, and Hummel's were particularly admired as among the best examples of the art. Here is one reviewer's opinion of his arrangement of Beethoven's second symphony:

".....we have only to speak of the manner in which M. Hummel has executed his task; and this is deserving of every praise. We thought the first of his series overloaded with notes; a fault that cannot be imputed to the present, which is the most masterly adaptation of a score that has ever fallen under our notice. The spirit of the original is finely preserved, and by means of the accompaniments the essential parts are retained; excluding, of course, those which depend on a mass of sound — on drums, trombones, &c."(28)

One must also take into account Hummel's ill-health, which began during the Stuttgart years and became progressively worse throughout this period. His liver complaint and dropsy caused him many visits to spas in the 1820s and 30s.

Hummel's playing, however, did not abate, in fact, he was on tour almost every year, as the following table shows.

1820	Prague, Vienna, Munich.
1821	Berlin, Dessau.
1822	Riga, St.Petersburg, Moscow, Dorpart, Königsberg.
1823	Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam, Utrecht, Halberstadt.
1825	Paris.
1826	Dresden, Berlin.
1827	Vienna.
1828	Warsaw.
1829	Karlsbad.
1830	Paris, London.
1831	Strasbourg, London, Manchester, Liverpool, Rotterdam.

1833 London.

1834 Vienna, Pressburg, Eisenstadt.

This activity is reflected in his compositions, most of which are in the public manner. In the second period, out of five works for pf. and orch., three are concertos, with the inclusion of those in a and b; after 1820, there are two concertos — that in F was published after his death — and the titles of the remaining four pieces of this kind testify to their popular intent: Rondo Brillant, Variations, Fantasy, "Gesellschaftsrondo". Similarly, apart from one solo pf. son. (that in D, Op.106), the set of Études Op.125, and the single one in B^b (which are special cases, being largely intended as didactic material), his piano pieces also fall decidedly into the public domain. Even the private form of chamber music — by now only relatively private — is represented by the pf. trio Op.96, a reworking of an early trio (Op.93), the "Military" Septet in C (for pf., fl., v., cl., vc., tpt., and db.), and the fine 'cello sonata. It was in this period (1822) that the pf. quintet, Op.87, was first published, some twenty years after its composition. I shall deal with this work in some detail in the next chapter; at the moment I wish to examine Hummel's general compositional style from the point of view of its various aspects of thematic, harmonic, rhythmic, formal and textural content, and to give a brief survey of contemporary critical opinion.

Style characteristics

(a) Themes

(i) Melodic features

From a melodic point of view, Hummel's public-manner themes correspond in general with the categories of the compositional style of the period outlined in Chapter 2, i.e., they are either folk or popular melodies, or based on them. It must be borne in mind here that popular and operatic items were themselves to a large extent based on or influenced by the vogue for folk music which had increased during the latter part of the eighteenth century. Many of Hummel's original themes have this character, and even in the case of the chamber music, which genre has the strongest claim to be taken as a representative of the private manner, Zimmerschied writes of "volkstümliche Thema", "Volkslied" and "Volkstanz" as well as "Kinderlied", though he does not develop the idea. (29)

In general, the themes are either immediately simple, based on stepwise motion or the notes of a chord, or they are "filled-out" versions of these, less obviously related to their basis. These two types approximate to Szabolcsi's characterisation of Classical and Romantic melodies, respectively.

"Is it possible to conceive of anything clearer and more organic than these common-chord melodies with their even, regular flow? They seem to have been created for a classical art.....Most of the broad melodies by Gluck, Mozart and Beethoven — let alone Sammartini, Clementi, Paisiello and Cimarosa — open out spontaneously with the help of written-out ornaments and broken chords....The many different forms of common-chord melody do in fact provide an elementary introduction to the various styles of classical melodies." (30)

Examples of this class are legion in Hummel, especially in the opening themes of faster movements.

In his remarks on Romantic melody, Szabolcsi moves on from the same standpoint:

"How, and in what ways, is it possible for a balanced entity of this sort — expressive, polished, and vitally articulated in its minutest part — to be 'broken up' and re-shaped? The ways are numerous. Certain elements, e.g. rhythm, can be emphasised and exaggerated, others can be omitted, the climax can be displaced, and most important of all, a new factor — that of tone-colour — can be introduced. If the melody is imagined in a different tempo, with different rhythm, in another register, and in a minor instead of a major key, it at once changes its character, and becomes one of the favourite melody-types of Romanticism. The chief difference is that the sunny tranquillity has disappeared." (31)

This melody-type appears more in Hummel's second period than in any other, and in even the most public works of all periods, it occasionally makes its appearance, for example in slow movements, or in the subsidiary sections of fast movements. In the piano concertos, transition themes or passages are often of this type. The "tone-colouring" is also frequently found, primarily, but by no means exclusively, where the piano is concerned. Zimmerschied also comments on this:

"Again and again, we find in Hummel this cultivation of tone-colour in the pianistic colouration of certain themes; we find examples of this in almost all categories of his output." (32)

Though the composer leans more to the Classic than the Romantic, this is one of many aspects of his Janus-headed position in early nineteenth-century music.

Although one agrees with Marmontel that "Hummel did not possess the genius for great lyrical conceptions" (33) his melodies were occasionally thought worthy of mention. When one of his concertos was played by Madame Szymanowska

in 1824, a London reviewer finds that "the details abound in invention, in fine modulation, and beautiful melody "(34), and a eulogistic commentator on the 'cello sonata, Op.104 praises the Romanza as being "a sweet melody, floating on a stream of delicious harmony..." (35) The Trio, Op.12 also had "sehr schöne Melodie" (36).

(ii) Harmony

The harmonic aspect of themes is equally simple, being in general confined to primary triads, and very often only I and V. Various means, however, are used to compensate for this — with varying degrees of success. The orchestral colouring at the opening of both the a and b concertos detracts from the four and six bars (respectively) of tonic harmony on a tonic pedal, and from the squareness of the themes. Several of the better works in the private manner begin with short epigrammatic unharmonised themes, where the stark, forte statement in octaves is immediately compelling. Examples occur in the openings of the e^b pf. quintet (see the following chapter), the f^\sharp pf. son., the pf. son. in C, Op.2(a)/3 (this Ch., Ex.8), and the pf. son. Op.13 in E^b , (Ex.9).

Paralleling this is Hummel's use of similarly "bare" statements of themes in some public-manner works, in which the functions of introduction and first statement are combined. This can be effective, as in the A^b conc./I, where the rhythm and dim.7th of b.3 (Ex.10) momentarily casts a slight shadow over the music, which is not entirely dispelled by the diatonic filling-in of the min.7th in bb.7-8. When the piano enters directly with this theme later, the shadow and light effect is reversed, the dim.7th being

transmuted to a dim.5th with dominant harmony in b.91, with the dim.7th coming in b.96 on a ton. ped. Though less successful, the opening of the F conc.⁽³⁷⁾ is saved not by the presentation of the theme's relentlessly triadic head-motif in octaves, but by the unexpected harmony in b.11, and, to a lesser extent, by the trills and the filling-out, and brightening of the sound by the successive entries. The cantabile line and gentle harmonies of bb.4-6 also help to compensate for the weakness of the first three bars.

(iii) Rhythm

Hummel's use of rhythm is notoriously stilted, and the four-square phrasing of the lesser Classics seems to have dogged him throughout his works. Certainly, Szabolcsi's "matching symmetrical phrases"⁽³⁸⁾ of folk music has much to do with the case, especially given the selection of the more regular and "acceptable" examples from the literature available, which was itself selected and adapted. One has only to compare Moore's versions of traditional Irish melodies with those of a folk-singer to see the distance between the re-creative (perhaps even recreative) and the creative, though it is not my purpose to decry the poet-musician's valuable work in this field. Haydn reigns supreme here, in his ability to integrate genuine folk music subject to minimum alteration with one of the most intellectual manifestations of Western art-music, cyclic form, and in his unwillingness to "rationalise" for example the modal inflections of his imported melodies in terms of Western Classical harmony.⁽³⁹⁾

Zimmerschied suggests that Hummel's simplicity of rhythm is the result of his courting of popularity⁽⁴⁰⁾.

If this is true of the chamber music, it is obviously even more so of the public music. He also mentions a "triplet-mania" (Triolenmanie)(41). This is not a feature of his thematic material (except, of course, in the comparatively small number of compound-time movements), but it is of his passage-work, where it is very often incidental, and especially of his accompanimental figuration. Its presence in much of the pf. quintet, Op.87/I is not distracting, because of the usually high degree of interest on other levels, but in the F conc./III, long stretches of pf. writing in triplets against melodic lines of very regular rhythm in the orch. only serve to accentuate general squareness. Yet it was of this movement that the NZfM wrote, to the detriment of the rest of the work: "only the Rondo might remind one more of his heyday." (42)

Hummel's liking for march-rhythm, though hardly exclusive in this epoch, may well be due to his father having been a military band-master before the family moved to Vienna in 1786(43). It must, however, have been a sadly common presence in this era of "wars and rumours of wars".(44)

Rhythmic deviation usually takes the most obvious form of opposing the basic pulse with syncopation, often no more than a slight displacement of the melodic line, as in Op.2(a)/3/II/24 (Ex.11), coming more under the heading of a rhythmic decoration (to be dealt with in Section III). Frequently, the effect is mitigated, if not lost, through repetition. Zimmerschied writes of "long disturbing rhythmic sequences which can trample even the most distinctive rhythms to death"(45).

(iv) Harmony

Several commentators, including Mitchell⁽⁴⁶⁾, Broer⁽⁴⁷⁾ and Brock⁽⁴⁸⁾ see a widening in Hummel's harmonic vocabulary throughout his creative life. His choice of basic keys corresponds closely to Classical usage: a preference for major tonalities with rarely more than three or four sharps or flats. Even the pf. quintet, which is almost entirely in e^b , is given throughout the key-signature of E^b . Like the Classic masters and the Kleinmeister of his own period, his best and most personal works are largely in the minor mode but, unlike them, this tends to predominate to the end of the works, especially those in the private manner. Thus, the keys of the movements in the e^b quintet are: $e^b/e^b/E^b/e^b$; the d septet: d/d/F/d; the f[#] son.: f[#]/b/f[#]; the a conc.: a/F/a; the b conc.: b/G/b; and even the vc. son. has: A/C/a. With the exception of the b conc. finale, all the minor movements cadence firmly in the minor.

Hummel's penchant for Terzverwandtschaft can be seen clearly in his choice of keys for inner movements. It can also be seen within movements, especially in development sections. The slow movement (in B^b) of the E^b son., Op.13, has a central section (bb.49/♩4-b.69) which approximates to a sonata-form development section; much of this is in D^b , including a statement of the subsidiary theme. Similarly, the development of pf. son. Op.38/I in C spends much of its time in A^b . A good deal of the transition of the septet in d Op.74/I is in f[#], and the development changes key-signature to F[#] for almost a third of its not inconsiderable length. Though this composer is, as a rule, conventional in

his choice of second-subject key, a kind of "double-Terz-verwandtschaft" in the pf. quintet/I where, after a first sub. in e^b , the 2nd sub. appears in A (through $G^b - g^b = f^\sharp - A$).

Apart from common ton.-dom. modulation such as occur in sonata-form movements, Hummel favours either abrupt transitions into more-or-less remote keys, or, transitions pivoting on a common note or notes, whether enharmonic or not. These usages are loosely formal. For example, the pivotal cases have the function of connecting sections for the most part, particularly if there is a change of pace or rhythm, as in pf. son. Op.81/IV/225-31, where the F^\sharp of the parallel tonic becomes the 3rd of the fugato's D, and in Op. 87/I/130-4, where the same relationship occurs.

Transition passages between first and second subjects (which are in their expected key-relationships) in sonata-form movements occasionally renege upon their function by becoming harmonic digressions often using note-pivots. A case in point is the preparation for the transition of Op.81/I. Here, the l.h. D in b.34 prepares for the V and V^7 of C in the following bar. In the F conc./I, the digressive transition (by tonal confrontation) in bb.33/4ff., serves as a temporary foil to the diatonicism of both the 1st and 2nd sub. sections, and the corresponding section in the A^b pf. conc. (by pivotal usage) has the added function of detracting from the fact that the 2nd sub. is in the ton. key. In both cases it is also an area of rhythmic and melodic repose.

Confrontation of different tonalities occurs less often than pivotal connections, but there are examples throughout Hummel's work. One of the earliest can be seen

near the end of Op.20/II (Ex.12), where a \bar{v}^7 in A^b is followed by a German 6th in the same key, the effect being emphasised by a r.h. leap; and in the d septet Op.74/I/bb.144a-151 a cadential phrase in F at the beginning of the development is confronted by the same phrase in F^\sharp without the F/E^\sharp being allowed to sound alone.

This tonal confrontation by a pivot-note (whether the note(s) is/are isolated or not) is also used as a colouristic device to which Hummel has frequent recourse in slow movements, very often associated with Terzverwandtschaft. In the A^b conc./II (in E) the ton. and min.3rd are used as pivots between the ton. min.(e) and C for a brief excursion based on $I_4^6 \ 5_3$ harmonies in the latter key (Ex.13), and a similar effect involving the same two keys occurs in the F conc., Op. posth.1/II/38ff., though here the new key persists for much longer. Despite its being a personal cliché, it is always effective in context.

Hummel's use of the parallel mode has already been referred to in connection with the b conc., and this often takes the form of rapid alternation between maj. and min. versions of a chord. This occurs most often in piano passagework, as in Op.113/I/189-93 (Ex.14), and commonly involves maj./min. 6th alternation. Kershaw refers to this as "one of the few stylistic elements which merits the epithet 'Hummelian'..." (49). He quotes bb.75-6 from Op. 81/III — a passage very similar to that in Op.posth. 1/I/156-8. The min.6th is also much-used in maj. keys (without its accompanying maj.6th) as a "shadow" effect, and is more telling when, over dom.7th harmonies, it suggests the dim. chord component, v^{9b} . A few from many hundreds

of examples will suffice here: Ex.15, (from the Rondo Brilliant Op.56), and Op.113/I/137-8.

Even in his more general use of chromatic harmony, Hummel's interest seems to be more in the colour it imparts to an already extant linear progression. In Op. posth.1/I/160-64, both the melodic and harmonic chromaticism can be seen to have been added, colouring the basic melody and bass line (in contrary motion), and this also applies in the case of Ex.4 of this chapter. This, as we shall see, is more the presence of the improviser than the deliberating composer.

(b) Form

That symbiosis of form and content — hardly perceived at a conscious level of listening — which is a characteristic of the art of all great masters of all periods, is an elusive trait in Hummel. It does exist to an extent in the better private works and very occasionally in the most successful of the public ones also. He is content for the most part to accept the received Classical traditions in formal matters. (See quotation from Wangermée/VIRTUOSITÉ, in Ch.2, p.63, note (71) of this dissertation.) Nowhere is this more clearly perceived than in the first and last movements of the concertos, where the predictable and occasionally tedious form sets the pattern for the bulk of the virtuoso piano concertos as late as those of Rakhmaninov. However, the lack of apparent originality is more a consequence of consideration for the listener or amateur player — a feature of the public manner — than a lack of ability on Hummel's part. Referring to the formally unadventurous music of the

virtuosos (continuing from the quotation referred to),

Wangermée writes:

"This music of the virtuoso had to strive to satisfy the public for which it was destined to the extent that all functional art has always done. The constant widening of the public was a risk, however, drawing the virtuoso into greater concessions...." (50)

Concert works on a large scale of the length of the average virtuoso concerto of this period would be required to be easy to listen to above all, and easy to watch, also, in terms of pianistic pyrotechnics, and these criteria of the popular manner are largely fulfilled even in the a and b concertos. A composer who could handle form as Hummel does in, say, the pf. quintet or the f[#] son., is certainly capable of much more than the structures of the more obviously public-oriented works would suggest. Indeed, the increasing number of concert rondos with slow introductions points to further compromise with audience taste, and it is no accident that, especially in the third period, the slow movements and finales of Hummel's concertos have the form of a slow section of indeterminate structure linked to a rondo. In the increasing sectionalisation of the outer movements — especially the first — based upon differences or contrasts in Tempo, texture and key or mode, the embryonic Konzertstück may be seen. Although it is likely, as Brock suggests ⁽⁵¹⁾ that Hummel's fantasy for pf. and orch. "Oberons Zauberhorn" Op.116, is "based on" Weber's Konzertstück in f, Op.79 (1819, as compared with Hummel's work of 1834), in form, content and intent, it does seem the logical outcome of the concertos and of the interaction of private and public considerations.

The real key to Hummel's more deviant and creative formal usage is his blending of the basic received structures with his improvisational procedures, and further discussion of these belongs properly to later sections.

(c) Counterpoint

Hummel's predominantly linear mode of musical thinking allows for a strong element of counterpoint in his music, as it does in that of Mozart. The stricter legacy of his teacher, Albrechtsberger, is evident even in late works, such as the Septet Militaire Op.114 (last movement), and the fugal no.6 (in d) and no.24(in f) of the Études, Op. 125, and often makes its appearance in the years separating these works from the Op.7 fugues, the latter being a remarkable testimony to the adolescent composer's grasp of counterpoint confined by piano technique. Newman mentions the "dexterous contrapuntal exploits" of the Op.13 pf. son.⁽⁵²⁾, and of a "distinctive trait, related to Hummel's high polyphonic skill, [which] is his effective, intermittent reiteration of a kind of roving cantus firmus or freer ostinato."⁽⁵³⁾ This freer type of counterpoint also belongs elsewhere in this dissertation.

(d) Comment on Hummel's compositional style

Generally speaking, the high respect for, and popularity of, Hummel's works rested on his ability to be "scientific" or "learned" while at the same time remaining "pleasing", or, to put it another way, to combine effectively elements of the public and private manners, as far as commentators were aware of all of these. These qualities were noticed even in the light no.3 of "Three Brilliant

Waltz-Rondos", Op.103:

"This is a very charming rondo, full of melody, with a distinct and forcible rhythm, that leaves an impress on the organ of hearing. These are properties that all understand and feel: but it is not without other qualities that will recommend it to the learned in music; the modulations are scientific, but not forced, as pleasing as ingenious, and are blended with the lighter parts with so much taste and judgment, that we shall be much deceived if it do not become a very general favourite."(54)

The d septet was found to be

"..masterly and charming.....This composition is Hummel's best work, and gives him a very exalted place amongst the great musicians of the German school." (55)

Its Military counterpart was seen as a

"very happy medium between the lightness of the old concertante, and the severe style of most of the modern quintets, &c." (56)

An AMZ reviewer credited the pf. trio, Op.12 with

"...original ideas with thorough finish, novelty without strangeness, intelligence without pomp, very beautiful melody with often radiant harmony, such good order and roundness of the whole, and finally, such experienced use of the most effective peculiarities of all three instruments.."(57)

J.B. Cramer, in the preface to his Studies for Piano which appeared in The Musical Library of 1835, puts Hummel in the best company recommending musicians who

"have a desire to exalt their art, and to procure for it the protection and esteem of a learned and enlightened public.." [to] ".:promote, by every means in their power, the cultivation of the works of the great masters, — Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Weber, Hummel, &c. — composers who have not thought it sufficient, merely to captivate the ear, but have endeavoured to elevate the mind and satisfy the judgment, by grandeur of sentiment and dignity of expression." (58)

The garrulous Lenz, referring to c1828 says:"In those days,

Beethoven was called J.N.Hummel!" : the ultimate compliment (59)

NOTES to CHAPTER 5

- (1) Benyovszky/HUMMEL, p.28.
- (2) Hummel, letter to Sonnleithner, dated 22nd May 1826.
 "Meine ersten Kompositions Versuche stammen von meinen 11ten und 12ten Jahre her, und obwohl sie das Gespür des damaligen Geschmacks und meiner Kindheit an sich tragen, so verriethen sie dennoch Charakter, Ordnung und Sinn für Harmonie, ohne damals noch Unterricht in der Composition erhalten zu haben." In Benyovszky/HUMMEL, p.199-200.
- (3) AMZ, January 1812, Col.14.
 "Diejenigen, welche den Geschmack lieben, in welchem Mozart seine schönen, leichten und gefälligen Trios für dieselben Instrumente geschrieben hat, erhalten hier ein Werk, das ihnen nicht wenig Freude machen wird, und das Ref. nicht näher zu beschreiben braucht, wenn er gesagt hat, es komme jenen in jedem Betracht sehr nahe."
- (4) This is the "Supplementary" number given by Sachs to unpublished compositions of Hummel in Sachs/CHECKLIST.
- (5) Suggested date in op. cit.
- (6) Suggested date in Kershaw/KEYBOARD.
- (7) This was published in a series entitled "Répertoire de musique pour les dames...", a serial publication of Hummel's music issued in Vienna c1810-15. The date is that suggested by Sachs/CHECKLIST.
- (8) Kershaw/KEYBOARD, I, p.174-5.
- (9) Hummel/SONATAS-m, /Introduction7, pp.(ii)-(iii).
- (10) Loc.cit.
- (11) Benyovszky/HUMMEL, p.49.
- (12) Kershaw/KEYBOARD, I, p.177.
- (13) Zimmerschied/KAMMERMUSIK, p.233.
 "...wohingegen die formalen Bemühungen mehr Haydns Einfluß erkennen lassen. So in den als gewissenhafte motivische Arbeit verstandenen Durchführungen und besonders in der Art, das Seitenthema durch Reihung oder Auflösung einer Reihung aus dem Vordersatz des Hauptthemas abzuleiten."
- (14) Sachs/GROVE, vol.8, p.781
- (15) Davis/HUMMEL, p.169.
- (16) Op. cit., p.170.
- (17) Hummel/SONATAS-m, /Introduction7, p.(iv).
- (18) Kershaw/KEYBOARD, II, p.4.

- (19) Hummel, letter to Sonnleithner, in Benyovszky/HUMMEL, p.200.
- (20) Sachs/GROVE, vol.8, p.785
- (21) Benyovszky/HUMMEL, p.65.
- (22) In the NZfM of 5th October 1883, Carl Richter describes the opening of the tutti very graphically:
 "Etwas der Waldromantik des Freischütz verwandtes, pulsirt in diesem Werke. Gleichsam im Ton einer Ballade beginnt das Orchestervorspiel des ersten Satzes, Allegro moderato, Hmoll $\frac{3}{4}$." p.458
- (23) Brock/INSTRUMENTAL, p.251.
- (24) NZfM, 5th October 1883, p.458.
 "Es ist dieses ohne Zweifel das schwungvollste, an Erfindung reichste und originellste der Hummel'schen Concerte, und dürfte am hervorragendsten Berührungspunkte mit der heutigen Empfindungs- und Anschauungsweise, also auch am meisten Berechtigung haben, in seinem vollen Glanze wieder an die Öffentlichkeit gebracht zu werden."
- (25) Hummel, letter to Peters dated 29th November 1823.
 "Ich bin auch gesonnen nun mein hübsches Haus zu genießen, und will daher nächstes Jahr keine Reise machen sondern in Weimar bleiben, und meine Schule ganz vollenden." in Benyovszky/HUMMEL, p.229.
- (26) Hummel, letter to Farrenc, dated 24th July 1825.
 "Je travail a cet heure incessament a la Méthode".
 Quoted in Zimmerschied/KAMMERMUSIK, p.429.
- (27) Sachs/KAPELLMEISTER, p.94.
- (28) Harmonicon, March 1826, p.57.
- (29) Zimmerschied/KAMMERMUSIK, p.180.
- (30) Szabolcsi/MELODY, p.135.
- (31) Op. cit., p.160.
- (32) Zimmerschied/KAMMERMUSIK, p.190.
 "Diese Kultivierung der Klangfarbe finden wir bei Hummel immer wieder in der pianistischen Auskolorierung einmal gegebener Themen. Beispiele dafür finden sich bei ihm in fast allen Gattungen seines Gesamtwerkes...."
- (33) Marmontel/PIANISTES, p.181.
 "Hummel ne possédait pas le génie des grandes conceptions lyriques...."
- (34) Harmonicon, June 1824, p.122.
- (35) Op. cit., December 1827, p.244.
- (36) AMZ, 19th December 1804, Col.188.

- (37) See the performing edition of the complete concerto in Vol.II of this dissertation.
- (38) See quotation and note 36, pp.45 and 62 respectively.
- (39) See, for example his "Drumroll" Symphony, no.103/II, opening, and the Trio of Op.76,no.4's Minuet.
- (40) Zimmerschied/KAMMERMUSIK, p.203.
- (41) Loc. cit.
- (42) NZfM, 7th April 1834, pp.7-8.

"...nur das Rondo dürfte mehr an seine frühere Glanzperiode erinnern."

- (43) Benyovszky/HUMMEL, p.27.
- (44) I do not entirely agree with Mitchell in Mitchell/CONCERTOS, when he writes (p.73):

"The world-shaking events of the Napoleonic era went past him /Hummel/without leaving the slightest trace in his works."

Such passages as the Sanctus of the E^b Mass, with its ominous solo timpani roll show at least awareness of the "world-shattering events". There is, however, a grain of truth in the over-statement.

- (45) Zimmerschied/KAMMERMUSIK, p.203.
- (46) Mitchell/CONCERTOS, p.234.
- (47) Broer/SONATAS, p.21.
- (48) Brock/INSTRUMENTAL, pp.297 and 307.
- (49) Kershaw/KEYBOARD, I, p.60.
- (50) Wangermée/VIRTUOSITÉ, p.22.

"Cette musique de virtuose devait s'efforcer de satisfaire le public auquel elle était destinée, autant que l'avait toujours fait tout art fonctionnel. L'élargissement incessant du public risquait cependant d'entraîner le virtuose à des concessions plus grandes...."

- (51) Brock/INSTRUMENTAL, p.276.
- (52) Newman/SSB, p.234.
- (53) Op. cit., p.238.
- (54) Harmonicon, February 1825, p.32.
- (55) Op. cit., April 1827, p.77.
- (56) Op. cit., March 1831, p.71.
- (57) AMZ, 19th December 1804, Col.188.

".....originelle Ideen mit gründlicher Ausführung, Neuheit ohne Bizarrierie, Gelehrsamkeit ohne Prunk, sehr schöne Melodie mit oft glänzender Harmonie, eine so gute Ordnung und Rundung des Ganzen, und endlich eine so erfahrene Benutzung der effektsvollsten Eigenheiten aller drey Instrumente..."

(58) Quoted in Sachs/KAPELLMEISTER, p.44.

(59) Lenz/VIRTUOSOS, p.7.

CHAPTER 6 - A CASE STUDY IN THE PRIVATE MANNER:

THE PIANO QUINTET OP.87

In the previous chapter I examined the general features of Hummel's compositional style; since this will later be to an extent set against what I am able to reconstruct from various sources of his improvisational style, it is appropriate that the former style should be seen within the context of a complete piece largely in the private manner.

I have chosen a chamber work for various reasons.

(a) As a great virtuoso public performer, Hummel's piano style would not suggest a chamber music context in the private manner, and I am interested in the adaptation it undergoes, especially in the face of the added difficulty of combining piano with strings.

(b) When the piece was written (October 1802) the public performance of chamber music was still, with the exception of England, in the future, and the audience, apart from the participants, would be made up of family, a small circle of friends, or musicians. The composer's main technical consideration would be that the parts should be difficult enough to be interesting, and not difficult enough to discourage sales. Of course, the situation in which a composer wrote for a particular person (as may, indeed, have been the case here), would condition to a great extent his technical level; as against that, there would be no reason why he should not re-issue the work on the open

market at a later date with the part or parts simplified. This kind of attention paid to accessibility was an important aspect of the early nineteenth century composer's attitude: not only was it good business sense in an expanding market, but made the classics available to the masses - very much a post-Revolution sentiment. Also, the piano was to be found in most homes, even the only mildly music-conscious. In any case, soloistic display would be almost certain to threaten the musical intimacy of the ensemble and the integrity of the medium.

(c) There are features about this work which make it particularly interesting: its key, instrumentation, tightness of construction, high quality, and the fact that Hummel was only in his very early twenties when he wrote it.

The Quintet shows much evidence of control - not simply a conscious curbing of Hummel's more obvious pianistic exuberance, but also a control of the emotional conditions which would facilitate such exuberance. There is a dark and at times tragic quality about this work which, at this intensity, is unusual in Hummel, and which is expressed in many ways in the work:

1) the tautness of the motivic material and its presentation (e.g. I/1-2, I/96ff.; II/0-2, II/23-50 II 53-4 (pf.), T/35-40, even III/1-7 and 20-23; also IV/0-8, 40-54; even IV/158ff., though new material in a new mood, still has no new rhythmic features).

2) The "pools" of introspective rumination alternating with more dramatic passages (e.g. I/4-8, 46-50, 88-95, and variously, 109-124, 131-153, 173-181, 231-2, especially

320-end; II/12-19, 45-52; T/24-6; III is itself such an interlude; IV/74-80, though this is developed into something a little more dramatic, 98-101, 158ff. until the piano l.h. trills, 174 vc., 194-5(v. overlay.)

Even in these, Hummel often manages to hint at more obvious tension - either by devices such as suspensions, pedal-notes, or by syncopation.

3) The fact that three of the strings are 'dark' (va. vc. db.) and are used for the most part unusually low, or else a low instrument is given material in a high register more appropriate to a higher instrument. For most of I, v. must be played in 1st position, or else, when possible in a higher position, bowing or phrasing demands 1st position. Leger lines above the stave are surprisingly rare - except for solos and effects of contrast, e.g. I/35ff, 68-75; II/7-8 avoids high C^b.

Va. uses higher register for (a) climactic effect

(I/186-206, 222-5; II/7-8, 59-69; Trio; III/6-8; IV/25-8, 33-6, alternating with v. 258-89);

(b) for melodic reasons, or "second violin" effect,

e.g. I/3-4, 62-8, 124-7, 163-4, 168-9, 299-301, 388ff., 328-35; T/8-12, 54-8; III/21-3; IV/40-2, 158-164,

183-8, 223-9, 237-9. Examples of high vc., giving 'dark' effects are: I/35-44, with v. in 64-8, 285-6, 318-9, and with telling effect at the end, 346-350; T/18-20; III/5 (above va.), also 24-38; IV/174-81, 258-64, 269-90.

Db. occasionally receives effective melodic usage:

I/1-2, 116, 124-7, 294-7, 308-11; T/28-31; III/1-2, 5-6; IV/40-54, and 252-4.

Except for "solo" melodies, very high registers in all strings are mostly used for climactic and dramatic effect - often having the added element of strong contrast, e.g.

I/34-64 and its repeat in the reprise 154-9; 62-76, 222-4, 315-20; T/18-20; II/0-3, 34-7, 55-63, 16-20; IV/40-54, 158-88, 258-64 and at the end.

4) The choice of key. E^b maj. has long been associated with strong and confident works, such as the "Emperor" concerto and the "Eroica" symphony of Beethoven, Mozart's K.271 and his symphony no. 39, and Haydn's "Drum-roll" symphony; e^b min. is dark with the strength of its major counterpart. It is also not the easiest key for string intonation. Its relative major (and it is significant in the light of the strings that Hummel chooses to notate it as $F^\#$ instead of G^b) is more lyrical, as is its tonic minor, though this has produced some of the most unusual music in the Classical Period, vide Mozart's K.488, 2nd movt, and Haydn's "Farewell" symphony. The key of Hummel's first movement's second subject is the very lyrical A maj, so that a dramatic contrast is built into his choice of main key and choice of second sub. key. All the movements are in, and end in, e^b min. with the exception of III, but that movement in itself is no more than a combination of momentary relief and introduction to IV. Indeed, whether the mode is major or minor, is not clear until b.8, and it is further upset at b.21, where it can be said to be more minor than major. The choice of key makes certain points of keyboard technique very difficult:

a "straight" arpeggio on either c^b or $f^\#$ never occurs in the work, and this kind of arpeggio is so often used by Hummel for dramatic effect. What arpeggios there are are mitigated by (a) being within the compass of the hand without pivotal turns, e.g. I/34ff.; (b) having a white note as a physical point of reference (e.g. I/96ff.) or (c) doubling back on itself so that the pivotal turn is unnecessary (e.g. I/128ff.).

(5) The proliferation of dynamic markings and strong contrasts, together with the tempo indications of the various movements: Allegro e risoluto assai; Allegro con fuoco for the Minuet (so-called); Allegro agitato; even Largo contains within itself a qualification well beyond an indication of speed.

I mention this control particularly because Hummel's sense of control is always in evidence, often to the detriment of many of his works - the squareness of the almost continual four-bar phrases, the occasionally too-carefully contrived "surprises" of key, or dynamic change. An example of such a key change is at I/b.41; the interrupted cadence in $F^\# / G^b$ settles down to a long dominant pedal in $F^\#$ bb.46-60, then rapidly leaps into A. In itself this is effective, but one feels that the length of the pedal was harmonically unnecessary and served to create the expectation of $f^\#$ for the sole purpose of giving more effect to the perfunctory modulation to A. In the main the digression in bb.42-62 justifies itself, because its function is to slow down the pace of the music in time for the more lyrical second


subject. At bar 34ff., the configuration of the triplets rhythmically outlines the half-bar (thus in keeping with the Alla Breve time-signature), whereas the violin part (| ♯ ♯ ♯ |) and the piano l.h. (| ♯ ♯ ♯ |) underline the crotchet unit, while the harmonic rhythm is in two-bar phrases, 34-5, 36-7, 38-9, 40-41. At b.42 this slows down to 4 bars and at bb.44-5 the crotchets disappear to give a minim beat, re-inforced by the fact that the first quaver of the triplet group is replaced by a rest. When the crotchets reappear they are legato and outline the C[#] chord (both facts robbing them of true rhythmic status), and are also against quavers, these in turn being denied rhythmic or harmonic identity by being in the form of a chromatic scale, while the pedal on C[#], the dom., further slows the harmonic rhythm almost to a standstill. Any sense of small-scale rhythm is destroyed by the irregularity of the piano r.h. in bb.50-4, while the accompanying crotchet movement, bb.50-52, vc., simply becomes a melodic decoration (upper aux.), giving the merest hint of thematic reference.

It is at this point that, in my opinion, Hummel's error of judgement occurs in bb.54-6. A conventional bass figuration hammers out V-I in f[#] bringing with it a clear crotchet rhythm with triplets reinforcing this, and the strings marking time. It renders the passage less effective to say the least, and what jars is the gratuitous underlining of the tonality at bb.54-7 with no other apparent purpose than to have it destroyed by the key-shift at b.61, and to allow the pianist some r.h. pyrotechnics. How much more effectively handled

is the modulation - even though it is a common one in Hummel - at the beginning of the Development (I/131-3) the re-appearance of the Transition passage in d (I/154ff.); and the long pedal (I/186-206) which heralds the reprise and in which a similar sense of slowing down is achieved without being mishandled.

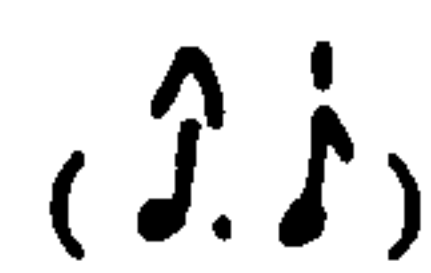
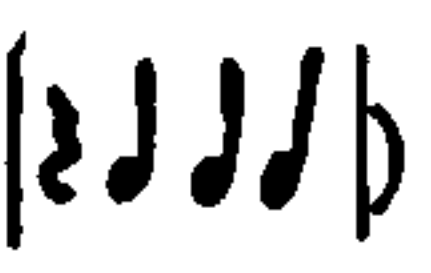

Another aspect of Hummel's conscious control in this work is the unusual care taken with motivic development. This is in contrast to the kind of free associative motivic work which is a feature of improvisatory thinking - also in evidence in this work, but to a much lesser degree than is usual in Hummel. The first subject, which I will show to be basic to the whole work, (A1s) (Ex.1) has all the appearances of being honed down to its bare essentials. It is itself a motif, full of developmental possibilities. It outlines the tonic chord of e^b , but in its least stable position, $\frac{6}{4}$, ending on the most ambiguous note (dom.), and further compromising the stability by inflecting the tonic with an appoggiatura 7th. There is also harmonic ambiguity in that the harmony is either all I or I-V, or I-V-I-V, i.e., the D can be either a melodic decoration or a harmony-note. The use of Alla Breve time would favour the melodic function. The motif is made up of a diminished 4th (very unstable) and a perfect 4th (stable), and encompasses a minor 6th, the weakest and most ambiguous of the consonant intervals. The rhythm is stark and uncomplicated, and it is no accident that, in the face of all the

ambiguities and instabilities, Hummel should have chosen to present the motif in a way that would emphasise the rhythm - a statement fortissimo in octaves, v. and db. doubling pf., with the phrasing clearly chosen to highlight this rhythm, the whole being followed by a silence after which a lyrical echo of the motif is given on the remaining strings. This forms the strophe of the subject and, after a shorter silence, the piano, solo, gives out the anti-strophe, an augmented, inverted and sweetly harmonised version, (piano), the rhythm of which is carefully adjusted to counteract the starkness of the first statement (I/4-8) finally slowing to unmeasured arpeggio and unmeasured silence (pause), in b.8. These eight bars are a major achievement in terms of introductory function, balance (motif plunging downward, piano meandering upward), contrast (dynamics ff/p, general melodic direction, rhythm, pace, harmony, phrasing, instrumental colour), and the fact that it is a microcosm of the whole work, introducing, albeit weakly, (because of its appearance in a higher octave) the basic I, IV, V of the key, and including the principal harmonic inflection on the dom., I/7/♯4, used by Hummel (an Italian sixth), analogous to the melodic inflection of the tonic in I/1/♯3). It also illustrates the predominantly contrapuntal character of the work - not unusual in a chamber work, it is true, but unusual when used to such an extent as a principle of composition in Hummel's style. The passage is made up of four dove-tailed melodies (Ex.2). The 1st, 3rd, and 4th

of these are close variants of the main subject (A1s); the 2nd is a falling scale in quavers from B^b to D with a C^b upper aux. on the B^b. This is an important sub-motive, to be called m(x)*. The whole passage (bb.1-8) combines the functions of an introduction - the feeling of "getting down to business" in b.9 is strong - and the first subject statement of a sonata principle movement. Even though technically b.9ff. is an extension of the first subject, Hummel here is developing it harmonically and by intervallic augmentation. It can also be said to be developed rhythmically in that, while the rhythmic integrity is only slightly impaired by the piano phrasing () it is cut across by the syncopated v. and va. figuration and attention is beginning to be diverted by the contrasting vc. rhythm and direction of melody. The further build-up of tension here is helped by the outlining of the diminished triad in the minims of the piano part (B^b D^b F^b). So successfully is the strength and epigrammatic quality of the motif used to "further the action" that when it finally appears very close to its original form (pf., b.17, l.h.), it goes unnoticed, while the other rhythm comes into its own, to be joined to a close variant of m(x) in b.19, the main subject taking on a "supporting role" in vc., b.20/1 and 22/3. M(x) is itself developed by syncopation and rhythmic augmentation (bb.23-25 and 30-33), and when the subject reappears (very much as it did in b.9) at the Transition passage, b.34, there is no feeling of déjà vu; r(b)* adds interest in v. while its melodic contour is that of bb.5/6, pf., r.h. This is itself developed, though

*The prefixes m and r denote 'melodic motif' and 'rhythmic motif'.

its anacrusis is lost as soon as the point has been made, except for a brief appearance in its less definite form at b.43 in v. The cooling down process in the passage bb.34-53 has already been discussed; I would recall here that the melodic contour of the subject has been reduced to the upper auxiliary (bb.50 and 52, vc.), while the 2nd sub. uses the inversion as its main idea in b.62, va. This presents an interesting compromise: the basic rhythm of the first subject is kept, but robbed of its tension and starkness by (a) the $\text{♩} \text{♩}$ as opposed to two crotchets; (b) the softening effect of the grace-notes, and (c) the loss of the $\frac{6}{4}$ feeling, all ambiguity being removed by the ton. harmony. In fact, the second sub. is an ingratiating version of the first. The fact that the pf. l.h. figure in b.66/ ♩ 3-68 (and even bb.60/ ♩ 3-62/ ♩ 3 by inversion) is a stock bass figure does not invalidate its reference to the main subject, while the r.h. rhythm ($\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$ bb.62ff.⁽¹⁾), occurs in the same relationship to the second sub. as it did in the beginning of the Transition. The "filling-in" is in evidence also: v. bb.68-9 and pf. bb.76-7. At b.78 the piano's own subsidiary second sub. does not cling to the previous rhythmic features, but outlines the $\frac{6}{4}$ chord (E-A-C \sharp) as does the first sub. and follows it with m(x) adding (b.81/ ♩ 2) a lower auxiliary in place of the original held note. In b.86,pf.,r.h., the upper aux.analogous to b.81/ ♩ 3 becomes an appoggiatura and is further enhanced by being ornamented, and by being repeated with a different ornament and melodic function in b.87. An excellent and

beautiful synthesis occurs in bb.88-96 . Melodically, each pf., r.h. bar is an inversion of the first sub. while the initial notes in bb.88-91 (A, G[#], F[#], E[#]) outline the dim.4th of A1s. The appoggiatura is highlighted first by stress marks (^), then by robbing the ensuing note of half its value (), while the rhythm (r(b): ) is superimposed on itself, as it were, and is diminished in bb.92-5 (), while the addition of a lower auxiliary balances the appoggiatura. A further compression occurs in b.102 v., where the rhythm of the first sub (r(a)) is allied to a falling 4th outlined melodically, echoing the pf., l.h.

Two of the reasons why this work is more successful than most of Hummel's, are, the less four-square than usual phrasing, and the adventurous use of keys; in the first movement Development both are seen to advantage. The Exposition finishes in the rel.maj. with pf., l.h. holding F[#], which becomes the 3rd of D, and the Development begins in that key with the first sub. in octaves on the pf. Two points of interest here are, first that Hummel begins with the same note (F[#]/G^b) and the same shape as the opening bars and b.9, and with a very similar accompaniment figure. The other point is that the D tonality has already been hinted at in the form of a chromatic 6th (bb.42-5) and there is a "paving of the way" in the sense that the second sub. is in A - rel.maj. of f[#] (parallel min. of the work's rel.maj) and dom. of D. The mood of the Development's opening is one of relaxation - the longest stretch in any one key so far, D(bb.133-39), followed by

its dom. (bb.140-5), followed by a subjective pf. comment (bb.146-9) the repeat of which, though similar in outline, involves an increase in tension leading to the Transition passage in d. Though the pf. is here a semitone lower than the original Transition key, the v. is a maj.7th above (one of the few examples of extreme register) adding to the tension. This is increased by a series of modulations: b.159, d descending stepwise to the dom. of F in b.163, where the strings play another version of the first sub., root to 3rd, with the chromatic inflexion this time on the dominant. The modulation proceeds F to dom. of a and, beginning a cycle of 5ths, from e to b tonic (b.173) then in rapid succession through f[#], c[#], g[#], a^b, finally to e^b dom. pedal, preceded by a chromatic 6th (bb.182-5). This pedal (bb.186-206) ends the Development.

The other interesting aspect of the Development is the phrasing; the 2+2 bars phrasing which mars much of Hummel's more "public" works is skilfully developed here. The last bar of the exposition is the beginning of a new phrase, the other three bars of which are the start of the development.⁽²⁾ The piano enters at the start of another phrase. To lower the temperature, Hummel prepares for the surprise of D maj. introducing the D in the weakest bar of the 4-bar phrase (the last, b.133) and, of course, by the un-harmonised F[#] bb.131-2. The phrases become longer, bb.134-7 answered by bb.138-41, but the last two bars (represented by the C[#] and rests in pf., r.h.) are dove-tailed with the beginning of a 2nd phrase-group, bb.140-3, answered by bb.144-5; this robs the subject (b.140) of some of its epigrammatic force.

The unassuming pair of four-bar phrases in bb.146-53 hardly prepare the listener for one of the most original and successful uses of "unsquare" phrasing in Hummel. The passage in question begins in b.154 with a pair of complementary 2-bar phrases using material almost unchanged from the Transition, now in d instead of the original e^b. It appears as if a third 2-bar unit is commencing, but its second half-bar forms the beginning of a further phrase (bb.159/♩3-161/♩3), itself answered by bb.161/♩3-163/♩1. The strings, however, interject angrily with the main sub., cutting off the last bar of the answering phrase, causing bb.160-2 to appear as a 3-bar phrase. The piano begins its new phrase (similar to the cut off one), overlapping that of the strings by half a bar (b.164/♩2) and the strings retaliate as before. At b.173, the piano takes the law into its own hands by dovetailing its own phrases, the l.h. in b.173/♩1 being the end of a phrase, with a new one superimposed in r.h. and strings accompanying. Indeed, this new phrase is anticipated by the va., with its tied minims, giving a 3½-bar motif (itself an interesting mixture of 1st and 2nd subs.), which is woven polyphonically in the three upper strings, though pf. and db. keep the phrasing clear. (Bb.173-4 answered by 175-6 and bb.177-8 answered by 179-80, the pf. motif here being that of the 2nd sub. rhythmically.) At b.181 the last main dovetailing occurs: before bb.181-2 can be answered, the 3½-bar unit has imposed itself in syncopation at b.182/♩2. A long dom. ped. follows with two 6-bar phrases in strings, leading to two of four bars in pf., and the Development is brought to an end with a single bar including a pause (b.206).

The Reprise is an ingenious re-presentation of the material; A1s and bb.4-8 appear as before, but the ensuing section is a truncated version of bb.9ff. and Transition combined, three 2-bar phrases followed by two of 2 bars, leading to two of 4 bars — the first of which is the key-establishing figuration which I criticised supra. Here, at least, it fulfils its function. In place of the second sub. (B1s) there appears an accompanied fugato (bb.233ff.) with free diminution and inversion in the pf. followed by a melody on that instrument with further variants of A15 (see Ex.1).

The rest of the Reprise follows the pattern of the Exposition until the Coda. Just before this section, the phrasing again seems to be pushing the music forward, and dovetailing with that of the Coda: bb.308-9 310-11 and bb.312-3 answered by 314-5, these last two marking the beginning of the Coda. This features the common "overshooting" of the ton. to the s-dom., ending (b.319) with a dramatic dim. chord, including a high vc. (strings, soli). With real poetry, Hummel brings back the poignant second half of the pf.'s subsidiary 2nd sub. (B2s) and ends on a ton. ped. with auxiliaries with yet more variants of A15 combined with r(b). The fine moody pp close is reminiscent of that of the first movement of Mozart's d pf. conc., K.466.

The misnamed Menuetto (Allegro con fuoco, $\frac{3}{4}$ also in e^b) is again in sonata form — in miniature, but complete. Its First Subject is a derivative of the main theme of the first movement (A15, see Ex.1). In this case the

auxiliary becomes an upper and lower appoggiatura (C^b above and D below), given further status by being made a harmonic appoggiatura also (vii^7 in e^b), and awarded a full bar unharmonised (b.7). The fact that the anacrusis in b.0 is a ton. chord highlights the dim. chord on the main beat even more. In b.8/3 the Transition section begins, with its enharmonic key-change ($G^b = F^\sharp$), and its long chain of appoggiaturas, both melodic and harmonic ($dom.^9$ in b.15 and German 6th in b.18). In the 2nd sub. in F^\sharp , beginning in b.22/3 and the appoggiatura feature is shown in a new light by being made into a harmony note. Attention is drawn to this in a number of ways: (a) the "ten." marking at b.23; (b) the addition of a mordent in the repeat of the phrase (bb.22ff.); and (c) the unusual harmony supporting the note, which can be rationalised as a vii^{b7}_c resolving on Ia, since the other possibility (V^9_d) would properly require resolution of the 7th in the bass onto an A^\sharp ($V^{b9}_d - Ib$); also, the V feeling is all but destroyed by the relegation of the $dom.$ note to the status of a lower aux. (C^\sharp). It is interesting that Hummel uses similar means for contrasting the main subs. in both this and the previous movement — maj. mode as opposed to min., and softening the outline of the 2nd sub. by (a) dotted rhythms, (b) repetition, (c) use of melodic auxiliaries, (d) a slower rate of harmonic rhythm and (e) a squarer metric structure. The accompanimental figurations are also similar.

The short Development section begins at b.34/3, like the movement's opening, except for the key (now $dom.$ of A^b) and the fact that the strings now answer in arpeggios, which are taken up in syncopation by pf., using, in l.h. at b.41/3, the strings' opening material. The scales in bb.44-7 are

variants of $m(x)$, approaching the latter even closer when the rhythm changes to crotchets (bb.48ff.) and a syncopation is included (bb.50-1).

The Reprise begins at b.52/ $\text{♩}3$, with a reversal of the instrumental roles of the Exposition, the pf. varying the strings' original contribution in a close approach to A1s, and the chords and textures of b.4/ $\text{♩}3$ - b.6 are extended and altered in bb.59/ $\text{♩}3$ - 72, substituting for the original Transition. The 2nd sub. follows in the expected ton., with the off-beat chords of the accompaniment played by pf. solo (bb.73ff.), and the Menuetto closes in e^b .


In the Trio, scales and scalar passages figure prominently, even the section from b.35 to 41/ $\text{♩}1$ being a decorated scale. Again it is a miniature Sonata Form, the 1st sub. (bb.0-8/ $\text{♩}1$) being followed by the 2nd (bb.8/ $\text{♩}3$ -16/ $\text{♩}1$) without transition, i.e., ton. (E^b) directly confronted directly by dom. of V. Bb.3-4 in the 1st sub. contains a pointed reference to the pf. opening of the Menuetto, and the 2nd sub. is presented in two parts, the sub. proper in quavers in va. (marked "solo") and an 8ves counter-sub. in pf. which, in rhythm and outline, comes from bb.35-6 (v., va. + vc.) in the Development of the Menuetto, thus linking it with the main theme A1s. The Development in this Trio, which is longer than its counterpart in the Menuetto, confines itself to "question-and-answer" formulae and suspensions, out of which crystallises a short figure (pf. bb.28-31). This gives the impression of a halfway stage between A1s and its versions in the thematic material of the succeeding two movements. The piano's syncopated figure in bb.22-6 could be a

free variation of bb.4-8 of the first movement. The Reprise begins in b.42/ ♩ 3 with subs. and textures slightly modified, especially the 2nd sub. Hummel asks for both parts of the Menuetto to be repeated, the second time piano throughout.

The slow movement (Largo in E^b/e^b , C time) fulfils its function both as a foil to the Menuetto and as an introduction to the Finale, in spite of its lasting only two pages. Although the form is free, the whole is tautened by motivic reference. It has affinities with the first movement in that both open with their themes in unharmonised 8ves followed by a harmonised pf. solo version with the outlines softened — in this case by the smoothness of line and harmonic progression. The theme is a more distant relation of the main theme, having a step upwards followed by a downward leap, implying I and V, and the rhythm $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$, which is part of A1s augmented. There is also the contrast on all levels between the first statement of the theme and the piano's version, and this is followed by another statement in the strings which sounds as if it will cadence back into I, but $\frac{V}{vi}$ is substituted, moving back to I through vi.

The pf., lightly supported by strings and its own very few l.h. chords, now meditates in a gentle decorative melody the general tendency of which is downwards from b'^b to b^b with most of the main notes underlined by appoggiaturas. These main notes, as shown in E.x.1, bear evidence of their kinship with the main theme, and a short "coda" figure in bb.16/ ♩ 4-18/ ♩ 1, decorated in bb.18/ ♩ 4-20/ ♩ 1, is reminiscent of m(x).

Now the colour darkens, with db. and pf. sharing a reiterated dom. ped., db. with r(b) and pf. with a variant.

The mode changes to ton. min., the rhythm tightens () , and even the method of articulation is different from before: v. has slurred pairs of notes, while va. has detached wedges. Also, the vii⁷ chord which had been featured in the "coda" just previous to this, becomes a dim. chord in the min. key and is further accentuated by the pf.'s arpeggios (bb.22ff.). The violin's reference to the main theme is unmistakable.

By using the simplest possible means, Hummel creates a harmonic climax, lowers the tension, and prepares the ground for the Finale. The harmonic scheme in bb.22-8 is:

$$\left| \frac{v^{b9}}{v} - i \text{ (twice)} \right| \left| \frac{v^{b9}}{v} - I \right| \left| iv - \frac{v^7}{v} \right| \left| v^{4-3} - v^{b9} \right| \left| v^7 \right| \text{ all over the}$$

dom. ped. V. and vc. have syncopated rhythms and the note-values in pf. r.h. progress from semiquavers to triplet s-quavers to d-s-quavers (b.26); in b.27 the number of notes per beat increases from 9 to 10 to 12, culminating in smaller unmeasured notes in b.28.


The Finale is a substantial and robust Rondo (Allegro agitato in $e^b, \frac{2}{4}$), in which the dark mood of tension is magnificently sustained throughout, except for a gentler episode. The need for the respite of the Largo here becomes more apparent. It is possible to superimpose a Sonata Form structure on this rondo; there are two distinct themes in the appropriate keys, much development takes place, and the end section does have the feel of a real Reprise in that the conflicts are resolved both tonally and thematically. However, these features are usually present to an extent in any successful Rondo form, and what finally makes the stricter form less likely is the proportion of the movement's sections.


The plan of the movement is as follows:

SECTION:	Sub.	Ep.1	Trans	Sub.	Ep.2	Sub.
BARS:	0-28	28-74	74-133	134-57	158-89	190-7
KEYS:	e ^b -G ^b -e ^b	e ^b -b ^b	b ^b -e ^b	e ^b	E ^b	e ^b
SCHEME:	A	B	codetta	A	C	A


SECTION:	Ep.1	Trans(inc. pt. of Ep.1)	Coda
BARS:	197-248	248-77	278-end.
KEYS:	e ^b	e ^b	e ^b
SCHEME:	codetta	(B)	Coda


The thematic material is as close to the basic Main Theme as one would expect at this stage, and in the 1st sub. there is a synthesis of hitherto disparate elements, with a diminution of m(x) and the leap incorporated from the same section (I/4ff.). Formalised melodic decorations are also prominent (the sub.'s C^b etc.), as they were in m(x), and the D-C^b leap is exactly the compass and boundary notes of m(x), the two most important "non-essential" notes in the whole work.








Rhythmically, the theme is also a synthesis. It combines the main rhythm (r(a) in diminution) with r(b) (also in diminution). The "new" rhythm in bb.3-4 () is an inversion of r(a) in diminution, coupled to r(b), and the amalgam is to be made a minor feature of this movement, and forms the second half of what approaches a rhythmic


palindrome: 

The section is confronted with the rel. maj., this time notated as such (G^b), using a rising scale from dom. to med., using the new rhythm (r(c)), and the return of the opening in bb.17ff. includes much dovetailing of rhythms, and the

addition of an extra decoration to the sub., in the form of an aux. (the small notes in b.17). Whether intentionally or not, v. plays what is virtually the Main Theme in bb.19-20. The decorated scale shared between v. and pf. in b.24 becomes the basis of the striking theme in the middle of the first Episode (bb.40/4ff., v.).

This episode begins in b.28/, and the outlines of some of the melodic cells in the sub. are given to pf. in a brilliant form with the original I-V harmony reversed, and a reference to the rhythm of the sub. (r(c)) in the upper voice of the pf.'s l.h., while v. and va. toss around the essential notes of the sub. (and, therefore, the Main Theme), particularly the flat 6th.

The striking melody mentioned (bb.40/) appears in dom. min., amalgamating the filling-in figure from b.24 and an extension of the scale idea from bb.5-6. Here, unlike the sub. of this movement itself, the anacrusis is rhythmically very important. A glance at the "rarefird" version of the melody in db. will show that this theme is still within the main theme's brief, while the scale idea is also hidden within it. This surfaces at bb.56/4-58/3 (pf. l.h. + va.) in contrary motion with s-quavers in pf. r.h., after which a vigorous sequence of the cycle-of-fifths kind leads to the Transition. The phrase structure of the sequence (bb.60/2-61-62-63-64/1 dovetailing bb.64-65-66/1) and the canonic figure in v. and va. added in the repeat (bb.66/2ff., va.) make this passage sound rather un-Western (cf. Beethoven's Op.130/Presto — also in b^b).

This Transition, based at first on a short rising scale (bb.74/4-80, v.), is the start of what seems at first

sight to be a cooling-off passage, introducing a more homophonic texture and more regular rhythms. We are still well within the province of the sub. and of Als, and the scale idea still holds sway, even though the pf.'s rhythm in bb. 79 and 85 minimises it. The tension begins to rise again in b.98, with the reintroduction of r(c) in pf.

The passage in bb.112/♩4ff. shows a further interesting (and amusing) synthesis: v. plays the rearranged notes 4-7 of the sub. with ♩|♩. ♩|♩ rhythm, and this is answered by pf. with a s-quaver scale of an 8ve with lower and upper auxiliaries to ton. note (bb.114/♩4-116). The intervallic analogy between the two instruments is preserved when the pf. l.h. plays A^b-D answered by v. playing E^b-D, the second time an 8ve below. A descending unharmonised staccato scale leads to the sub. without repeats, and a cheeky reference to the rhythm of the Ep.1 tune is built into the second half (bb.145 + 147) and into the scales (bb.149 + 152).

The binary Ep.2 ("cantabile e dolce", bb.158ff.) is introduced by va. playing a melody in E^b accompanied by pf., which is a close relative of the first movement's 2nd sub. V. takes up this melody, cadencing at the double bar. After the repeated second half, modulating dom. of ii-ii-V at the outset, the pf. plays the first half of the 1st sub. without repeats supported by a counter-phrase in v., another reference to theme Als. A repeat of the first Episode follows, leaving out the characteristic s-quaver b^b melody and cadencing (b.223) in e^b. A variant of the passage in bb.74ff. ensues with the pf. taking up the strings' original chordal accompaniment (including the bass figure) and va. taking the melody. The passage is repeated in a simplified form in C^b. When it turns

back into e^b , the ascending quavers are treated imitatively in v., va. and vc., and a passage based on dim. chords follows the general shape of Als. With a fine sense of occasion, the first figure from the b^b s-quaver section in Ep.1 thrusts in (e^b now) on pf. l.h. and db. This is answered by pf. r.h. (bb.249/♩4-250) with what appears to be an interesting comment on the opening of the Menuetto. After a rise in tension over a dom. ped., a series of dim. chord arpeggios in pf. are supported by syncopations in the strings, and a kind of cadence-theme (beginning b.278, pf.) combines two versions of the main theme: one in pf., and the other in v. A falling chromatic scale against a ton. ped. comes to rest (b.293) on a reiteration of E^b and D alternation, ff, and one might be forgiven for seeing a reference to Als (in which, of course, these notes figured), in the combination of these and the last two chords, giving D, E^b , B^b and E^b with tonic harmony.

NOTES to CHAPTER 6

- (1) This rhythm is, of course, a common one in Baroque and Classical music, especially, in the latter case, those works which rely primarily on counterpoint for their development (such as J. Haydn's symphony no. 103/IV). The off-beat entry and the pointing towards the fourth note (strong beat) aids recognition in a contrapuntal texture.
- (2) On the face of it there seems to be a phraseological problem here if the repeat of the Exposition is played. This would commence after the single F[#] bar at the end of the section, thus upsetting the established phrase-pattern at this crucial point. A repeat, I think, should be avoided, for this reason, and also because the material is concentrated, and is already worked-out in several ways so that repeat, rather than further development, would lessen its impact. Any sense of similar curtailment is avoided at the end of the movement by the progressive curtailment of the phrase-lengths from 4, to two, to single bars respectively.

CHAPTER 7 - HUMMEL'S PERFORMANCE STYLE

For information on Hummel's performance style, there are four sources on which to draw: (1) the general performance style of the period, which is not only the background to, but represents the greater part of, the individual virtuoso's styles; (2) the texts of pieces he is known to have played and others that are representative of this type; (3) his Piano School; and (4) eye-witness accounts. The first of these has already been dealt with in Section I, Chapter 4. The sources under (2) certainly give some indication of how he wrote for piano, but are less informative on the matter of performing style; also, since many of these are imbued with the spirit of his improvisation, and since that particular aspect of his performance is to be dealt with in later Sections, these sources do not concern us much at this stage. Our recourse to the Piano School, that "compendium of the pianistic styles and practices of its day and...veritable dictionary of Hummel's own pianistic style" ⁽¹⁾ of which Fétis wrote that, with some changes, "one might have made it the best that existed" ⁽²⁾, must also be qualified. First of all, much of it is devoted to teaching pupils the rudiments of music and the mechanics of piano-playing; secondly, it represents what the respected teacher Hummel felt that a pupil should know and need not be any guide to the writer's own style of performance. Also, the work is so much couched in the language and tradition of the prevailing style of piano instruction-manual, that one should not expect it to be in any sense a record of an individual style. However, the emphasis given to certain aspects of the materi-

al included, does suggest some bearing on the author's own aspirations in performance, and therefore must shed some light on his practice. Eye-witness accounts also prove somewhat disappointing, as they rarely include technical descriptions and in most cases could be applied to any one of several players of the period, such is the generality of their tone.

Drawing with caution, therefore, on the last three of these sources, I shall attempt to show some of the more idiomatic traits of Hummel's own piano-performing style.

This was generally recognised as representing the Viennese school at its greatest and most advanced. Czerny described Hummel as having brought the style of his teacher Mozart to "exquisite perfection" ⁽³⁾, and I have quoted Wangermée on the matter already ⁽⁴⁾. Hummel's technique was a source of wonder for audiences from the very beginning. as is attested by Czerny in an oft-quoted description.

"Once, at a social evening— it was at the home of Mozart's widow — the company was much larger and numerous than customary, and among the many elegant gentlemen and ladies present I noticed a young man whose appearance challenged my attention. He had an ordinary, unpleasant face which twitched continually, and his clothing, in the height of poor taste, suggested that he might be some sort of country schoolteacher. In curious contrast to his clothes were a number of valuable, glittering rings which he wore on nearly all his fingers. As usual there was music, and at length this young man — he may have been a little over twenty — was asked to play. What a master he showed himself to be! Although by that time I already had enjoyed so many opportunities of hearing Gelinek, Lipowsky, Wölffl and Beethoven himself, the playing of this insignificant looking individual seemed to open up a new world. Never before had I listened to such novel, brilliant feats of difficulty, to such clarity, elegance and delicacy of interpretation, and a fantasy coordinated with such excellent good taste. When later he interpreted some of Mozart's violin sonatas (Krommer accompanying him), these compositions which I knew so well became

filled with new meaning. And then I learned that this was young Hummel, formerly Mozart's pupil, who had just returned from London where he had been taking lessons of Clementi. Hummel's playing already at that time — in so far as the instruments then existing made possible — had reached that high plane which later made him so famous."

Czerny continues, comparing the playing of Hummel and the rival Beethoven:

"If Beethoven's playing was notable for its tremendous power, character, unheard-of bravura and facility, Hummel's performance, on the other hand, was a model of all that is clean and distinct, of the most charming elegance and delicacy, and its difficulties were invariably calculated to produce the greatest, most astonishing effect, since he combined Mozart's manner with the Clementi school so wisely adapted to the instrument. It was therefore quite natural that in the world at large he should have been reputed the better player, and that soon the adherents of the two masters formed two factions which assailed each other with all their might and main. Hummel's followers reproached Beethoven with maltreating the fortepiano, said his playing was devoid of purity and distinctness, that his employ of the pedal produced only a confused noise, and that his compositions were labored, artificial, unmelodious, and in addition irregular in form. Beethoven's partisans, on the other hand, asserted that Hummel lacked all real imagination, declared his playing was as monotonous as that of a hurdy-gurdy, that he held his fingers clawed in, spider-fashion, and that his compositions were mere elaborations of Mozart and Haydn themes. Hummel's playing did not fail to influence me, since it spurred me on to play with greater purity and distinctness." (5)

Although in the extant published music these "feats of difficulty" may appear less "novel" to us today, the very high technical level is apparent. Brilliant passages made up of scales, arpeggios and all combinations of both, chords and difficult leaps abound in his works, meticulously written out and belying, in performance, the impression of monotony and turgidity to which the scores can give rise. Both in his notation and in his use of markings — expression and dynamics — Hummel goes as far as is reasonable in guiding

the pianist.

His performance technique was admired for its evenness, clarity and accuracy. "...his running passages /were/ perfect as a string of pearls" according to contemporaries⁽⁶⁾, and writing in 1873, Moritz Müller notes that

"In strength and dazzling glitter he has been overtaken. But where, at present, would you find them more beautiful — the strings of purest pearls...as he allows them to roll up and down the piano?" (7)

Fétis asserts that "no-one went farther than he did in power, regularity, /and/ correctness of playing" (8), and Marmontel, who heard Hummel in Paris in 1829, writes of his "authoritative vigour which left the hearer marvelling, but always peaceful, at the daring of the virtuoso." (9)

Certainly the enormous section on fingering in the Piano School shows that Hummel was intent on developing evenness, dexterity and ease, "...as without a correct and convenient method of fingering, no person can become a good and ready performer." (10) A footnote underlines this: "I consider this subject, therefore, as one of THE MOST IMPORTANT of my treatise, and have endeavoured to elucidate it in every possible case, rather by numerous examples than by words." (11) Many of these examples are taken from extant works of his.

But commentators rarely mentioned the virtuosity in isolation, and a critic in the Athenaeum is unusually detailed in his comments:

"We had on Thursday the gratification of hearing, for the first time, the pianist who has long been spoken of as the greatest of his time. Hummel's style of playing appears to us decidedly that of Cramer; there is the same perfection of finish — the same classical attention to time — the same

delicacy and elegance of ornament, always appropriate — never superfluous. With all these attributes of excellence, there is, in addition, so much more force and energy, that on the whole we certainly regard it as the most sensible and best, consequently the most effective, pianoforte performance we have ever heard. There are professors, both here and in Paris, who perform, or at least attempt, much greater difficulties than did Hummel on Thursday; and there might be some of his hearers (admirers of the very new and extravagant school) who would say there was not a sufficient display of mechanical power, or in other words, not enough tours de force. The impression which his performance left on us, however, is, that he could execute as much as anybody, but that his good sense has taught him that the majority of his audience will be better satisfied with the perfect accomplishment of as much as can possibly be desired or understood, than if their ears and understandings are taxed beyond their comprehension, and their fears of a failure excited by exertions that are evidently over-strained and laborious, and consequently painful instead of pleasurable in their effect.

To this we may add, that, with as much execution as is desirable, or perhaps endurable, there is in Hummel's playing a delightful ease, an unaffected precision, which conveys to his auditors a certainty of his complete success, and a conviction that the artist is quite equal to much more than he chooses to attempt." (12)

The pianist Charles Salaman wrote that Hummel played

"with ease and tranquil, concentrated power; un-deviating accuracy, richness of tone and delicacy of touch; he executed passages of single and double notes and in octaves of enormous technical difficulty. Above all, his playing possesses the indefinable quality of charm." (13)

Hummel's touch, "soft as velvet" (14), is mentioned by Fétis as something which was integrated with the whole musical conception:

"..no-one went further than he did....in softness of touch, in expression, and in colouring. His performance was less the product of a desire to use a prodigious skill, than to express constantly a musical idea. This thought, always complete, showed itself under his hands with all the advantages which could be added by grace, finesse, depth and expression." (15)

Müller, remembering, as we have seen, in 1873, asks:

"where /nowadays would you find/ more complete, the graceful roundness and the charming smoothness of sound which flattered the ear pleasingly and reached the heart irresistibly? — where more characteristically the elastic touch ...so suitable for the design of the instrument...?" (16)

Holmes eulogises Hummel's

"gliding, smooth, and expressive style; the beauty of his touch, which combines force, crispness, and delicacy..."(17),

and in 1831, the AMZ exclaims:

"what roundness and neatness of touch.... the pedals are used only little or not at all, and yet there is strength and weakness, waxing and waning of the sound in every nuance simply by touch.." (18)

Another English musical traveller, Chorley, writing in 1854 remembers Hummel's "unimpeachable beauty of tone and execution" (19), and Weitzmann praises the "precision of his touch" and the "finish of his passages" adding that

"in later years he attained to the high position of the perfecter of the euphonious, lyrical piano-forte style, both as a player and composer." (20)

The highest compliment is implied when we are told that, during the 1830 London tour, "England, proud of Cramer, discovered that his legato was equal to Hummel's"(21), and the value of the compliment is shown by the Athenaeum:

"His style of playing is remarkably good, and very elegant; but, for tone and expression, he is as decidedly inferior to John Cramer, as he is superior to every other piano-forte player." (22)

There is, however, a large measure of English chauvinism here, which "preferred native to foreign talent"(23), even if "native" were stretched to include resident foreigners. In the view of Oscar Bie, "what our amateurs, from the days

of Chopin, know so well, that full and satisfying tone, that blazing colouration, is all in Hummel" (24), and, though he is discussing composition rather than performance, Zimmer-schied identifies

"a group around Hummel and Field, who.....have devoted themselves to the cultivation of sound-quality." (25)

Indeed, Fétis finds it noteworthy that, in spite of his admiration for the "Methods" or "Schools" of Clementi and Kalkbrenner,

"they do not admit there what I will call THE PROCESS OF SOUND-PRODUCTION, which I find in the School of Hummel and even more so in that of Moscheles." (26)

In his chapter, "Some leading observations respecting beauty of performance", Hummel writes:

"To arrive at a correct and beautiful style of performance, it is requisite that the player should be perfectly master of his fingers, that is, that they should be capable of every possible gradation of touch.

This can be effected only by the finest internal sensibility in the fingers themselves, extending to their very tips, by which they are rendered capable of increasing their pressure on the keys, from the most delicate contact, to the utmost degree of power." (27)

Touch played a very large part in the different manner of performance of the "allegro" and the "adagio", a distinction in which Hummel follows eighteenth-century didactic tradition and its perpetuation in his own time, as did critics and commentators also. (28)

"The Allegro requires brilliancy, power, precision in the delivery, and sparkling elasticity in the fingers. Singing passages which occur in it, as we have already said, may be played with some little relaxation as to time, in order to give them the necessary effect; but we must not deviate too

strikingly from the predominating movement, because, by so doing, the unity of the whole will suffer, and the piece degenerate into a mere rhapsody."(29)

In contrast to this,

"The Adagio requires expression, a singing style, tenderness, and repose. Its delivery is therefore in a manner opposed to that of the Allegro; for here, the notes must be much more sustained, more closely connected, and, as it were, rendered vocal, by a well-directed pressure.....In general, in the adagio every thing depends upon the nicely calculated weaker or stronger pressure of the fingers; upon a smooth and well connected style of playing; occasionally, upon the most delicate withdrawing of the fingers from the keys, and upon the nice sensibility of the fingers themselves."(30)

The impression that Hummel was more than a fine performer alone when he played comes through a number of criticisms. The reviewer of The Spectator asserts that

"His playing is precisely what we expected to find it, the result of a genius alive to all the powers of his art, trained in the best of all possible schools — the school in which mind and thought are brought to bear upon every passage, and in which the heart is appealed to through the medium of the senses."(31)

Holmes, who visited Weimar ("redolent of music and poetry, for here Hummel and Göthe /sic/ reside" ⁽³²⁾), and spent some time with Hummel, giving as warm an impression of the man as of the musician, describes his playing thus:

"In such playing as Hummel's one may hear the orchestral writer and deep thinker, as well as the mere pianist; passages of difficult execution do not arise to show what he can do with his fingers, but because his hand performs what his head conceives, and that sometimes chooses the crooked instead of the straight path."(33)


Many critics considered him the finest pianist of his time, and the Athenaeum's remarks above (p.152) are a pointer in that direction. "Mr. Hummel showed himself

everywhere to be complete master and unlimited ruler of his instruments" writes the AMZ, "and caused the listeners to applaud enthusiastically..."⁽³⁴⁾ Even in the French provinces, his identification with the best in piano playing was attested to by a correspondent in Le Globe: "our 12,000 pianists are not Hummels"⁽³⁵⁾, and Chorley calls him "almost a patriarch in his art"⁽³⁶⁾. The Harmonicon, with reference to the young Liszt in 1825, observes that "...some have gone so far as to say, that he yields the palm to Hummel only..."⁽³⁷⁾, while its Dresden correspondent is content to appeal to what was, in his opinion, accepted fact: "Of the artist himself we can say nothing, but what all the world knows already."⁽³⁸⁾ Perhaps the most important tribute of all was that of Zelter, who, in a letter to Goethe, sums up his view of Hummel as a performer:

"In my judgment, he is an epitome of contemporary pianoforte playing, for he combines what is genuine and new with feeling and skill. One hears music, one forgets fingers and keys; everything sounds as sure and easy, as it is really difficult."⁽³⁹⁾

One of the more idiomatic traits which can be isolated in Hummel's works with relevance to his style of performance is his use of elaborate ornamentation and of all kinds of melodic figurations. Embellishments are subject to very thorough and systematised treatment in the Piano School, even though traditional ornaments appear in his music comparatively rarely, when viewed in the light of his generally elaborate style. However, embellishments and ornamental melody are a special aspect of performance style in this period in general and in Hummel in particular, as will be made clearer in the next Section.

This also applies to another characteristic of his written compositions, this time rooted in the more purely physical, performance aspect of improvisation, and therefore entitled to some discussion under the heading of the present chapter, though not, of course, confined to it. It concerns the three registers of the piano of the period which are "applied to surprising effects"⁽⁴⁰⁾ by Hummel. Many examples of his awareness of the impact of contrasting these can be seen in his œuvre. In Op.2(a)/3/I, the placing of the first sub. towards the bottom of the middle register, and the second sub. in the middle of the treble provides a contrast which is made more obvious because the similarity of the themes in other ways throws this into a measure of relief: the rhythms of both the opening-bar melodies and the accompaniments are similar as is the general contour of both, terraced rise followed by stepward fall. (See Exx.1 & 2). In Op.20/III a more extreme example can be seen in the opening bars where, after sweeping through the registers, the low arpeggios in l.h. are contrasted with a sf chord in the upper register (Ex.3).

A particularly striking effect is found at the end of the exposition of the F conc., Op.posth.1/I, where registers are contrasted simultaneously and in succession, in bb.203-207/5, also 212-5. Op.81/I also exploits the feature to an unusual degree at the opening, though even here it is one contrast among many. Use of registral contrast appears to take on a quasi-developmental guise in Op.106/I, when the relative widths of the leaps in b.1 (a and b in Ex.4(a)) are later reversed (Ex.4(b)), as indeed is the direction of the following group (c) with the registral difference en-

Hummel's penchant for harmonic pedals can be seen throughout his music, but there are examples on a smaller scale also on what might be called a melodic level, and these also involve the more physical, keyboard aspect of performance approaching the level of figuration. An instance occurs in Op.106/I/170-6(l.h.), and in Op.posth.1/II/54&55, in which the registral difference can be clearly heard even against the accompaniment and at the speed indicated.

Similarly, the introduction of technically difficult passages in an otherwise easy context is another trait which finds its way into Hummel's written pieces from the performance side of his improvisation. The last example given (Op.posth.1/II/54&55) is a case in point, where the alternation of notes of up to an octave and a half apart at high speed occurs between arpeggios which lie easily under the hand. This kind of divine technical madness bespeaks the extemporiser, and many instances can be found — often, surprisingly enough, in a context where an audience might well miss them. Thus, in Op.posth.1/I/373-5, the implied crescendo in the orchestra detracts from the pf. r.h. figuration, especially on a period piano, and the player's fatigue in the section in general (bb.350ff.) makes the run in b.376 and the crescendo trills in b.377 all the more difficult, with the risk of "muffing" the climax. Another case occurs in II/60-3, the performer being in this instance very exposed. Occasionally, the l.h. is pressed into unexpected service, often after pages of uninspired chordal accompaniment, as in Op.113/I/205-13, l.h., where even the broken octaves at bb.202-4 are comparatively easy (Ex.5).

NOTES to CHAPTER 7

- (1) Barnum/HUMMEL, p.48.
- (2) Fétis/BIOGRAPHIE, IV, p.388.
 "En élaguant une grande partie des traits qui sont surabondants, et en rangeant les divers objets qui composent l'ouvrage dans un ordre plus méthodique, on aurait pu faire de la méthode de Hummel la meilleure qui existât."
- (3) Czerny/SCHOOL, III, Ch.15, P.3, p.99.
- (4) See above, Ch.4, p.84, and Note (3), p.96.
- (5) /Sonneck/BEETHOVEN, pp.28-9.
- (6) Moscheles/LIFE, I. p.22.
- (7) Müller/MUSIKMEISTER, quoted in Zimmerschied/KAMMER-MUSIK, p.280.
 "An Kraft und blendendem Glanze des Spiels ist er übertroffen worden. Wo aber wären sie gegenwärtig schöner zu finden, die Schnüre reinsten Perlen, wie er sie auf dem Piano.....auf- und abrollen lieb?"
- (8) Fétis/BIOGRAPHIE, IV, p.386.
 "...mais nul n'a été plus loin que lui dans la pureté, la régularité, la correction du jeu..."
- (9) Marmontel/PIANISTES, p.182.
 "...je me rappelle.....ce brio magistral qui laissait l'auditeur émerveillé, mais toujours tranquille sur les audaces du virtuose."
- (10) Hummel/SCHOOL, Pt.II, Introduction, p.1.
- (11) Loc. cit.
- (12) Athenaeum, 1st May 1830, pp.269-70.
- (13) Quoted in Barnum/HUMMEL, p.40
- (14) Moscheles/LIFE, I, p.22.
- (15) Fétis/BIOGRAPHIE, IV, p.386.
 "...mais nul n'a été plus loin que lui..... dans le moelleux du toucher, dans l'expression et dans le coloris. Son exécution était moins le produit du desir de déployer une habileté prodigieuse, que d'exprimer une pensée constamment musicale. Cette pensée, toujours complète, se manifestait sous ses mains avec tous les avantages qui pouvaient y être ajoutés de grâce, de finesse, de profondeur et d'expression."
- (16) Müller/MUSIKMEISTER, (Zimmerschied/KAMMERMUSIK, p.280).
 "Wo aber wären sie gegenwärtig schöner zu finden ...vollendeter die zierliche Rundung und die reizvolle Glätte des Tons, der dem Ohre lieblich

schmeichelte und dabei so unwiderstehlich ins Herz drang? wo charakteristischer der der Bauart des Instruments so v"öllig angemessene, alles Harte und Scharfe von sich streifende, elastische Anschlag.....?"

(17) Holmes/RAMBLE, p.262.

(18) AMZ, 26th May 1831, Col.332.

"Welche Rundung und Nettigkeit des Anschlages...
...die Pedale werden wenig oder gar nicht angewandt und dennoch ist Stärke und Schwäche, Anwachsen und Abnehmen des Tones in allen Abstufungen durch den blossen Anschlag n"uanciert!"

(19) Chorley/MODERN, II, p.9.

(20) Weitzmann/PLAYERS, p.111.

(21) Moscheles/LIFE, I, p.242.

(22) Athenaeum, 28th May 1831, p.349.

(23) Moscheles/LIFE, I, p.242.

(24) Bie/PIANOFORTE, p.211.

(25) Zimmerschied/KAMMERMUSIK, p.240.

"Da sind zunächst die Komponisten, deren Leistungen vorwiegend auf dem Gebiet der Klaviertechnik zu finden sind, wie Clementi, Ries und Czerny, dann eine Gruppe um Hummel und Field, die, auf dieser Technik aufbauend, sich der Kultivierung des Klanges verschrieben hat."

(26) Fétis/MÉTHODE, p.3.

"On n'y admet pas ce que j'appellerai LES PROCEDES DE LA PRODUCTION DES SONS, procédés que je trouve dans l'école de Hummel, et plus encore dans celle de Moscheles."

(27) Hummel/SCHOOL, Pt. III, Section 2nd., Ch.2, pp.40-1.

(28) See Ch. 4, above.

(29) Hummel/SCHOOL, loc. cit.

(30) Op. cit., Pt. III, Section 2nd., Ch.2, p.42.

(31) Spectator, 15th May 1830, p.310.

(32) Holmes/RAMBLE, p.260.

(33) Op. cit., p.262.

(34) AMZ, 20th May 1820, Col.325.

"Herr Hummel zeigte sich überall als vollendeten Meister und unumschränkten Beherrscher auf seinem Instrumente, und riss die Zuhörer zu enthusiastischem Beyfalle hin..."

(35) Le Globe, 5th April 1825, p.452.

(36) Chorley/MODERN, II, p.10.

- (37) Harmonicon, December 1825, p.234.
- (38) Op. cit., November 1826, p.228.
- (39) Zelter, letter to Goethe, dated 23rd May 1826,
in Goethe/ZELTER, p.263.
- (40) Bie/PIANOFORTE, p.214.

SECTION III - IMPROVISATION - GENERAL

CHAPTER 8 - CHARACTERISTICS OF IMPROVISATION

Improvisation, that is, the near-simultaneous creation and realisation of an art-product, is usually considered as the direct opposite of the compositional process as it is enshrined in Western art music, treated, in the words of Bruno Nettl, as "a minor art or craft of musicianship"⁽¹⁾. Nettl goes on to argue, using almost exclusively, evidence from non-Western cultures, that the distinction must not be supported; "...it is only the suddenness of inspiration in certain cases that allows us to make the distinction," and he compares "the painstaking and often protracted method of Beethoven with Schubert's quick, spontaneous creation of lieder." To compare the composition of Lieder in Schubert with Beethoven's general method seems to be over-simplifying the case somewhat, and when he continues immediately to say that "broadly viewed, the styles are not substantially different", he appears to dismiss the question of the presence and function of improvisation in the Western art music tradition. Again, when Nettl speaks of the two processes as "rapid and slow composition rather than of composition juxtaposed to improvisation", ⁽²⁾ he minimises a difference in attitude to musical composition and a difference in musical outcome, differences of which composers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were well aware. However, the Western tradition is not primarily Nettl's concern, and his remarks must be viewed within the context of the wealth

of cultures from which he draws his examples, and his exhortation to view composition and improvisation "as opposite ends of a continuum" is equally valid in Western and in non-Western cultures. I hope to show that there is, nevertheless, a distinction between music resulting from one or other process.

Improvisation depends upon the following factors:

(a) the exponent's inherent creativity, (b) his technical proficiency on an instrument (or voice), (c) his knowledge of, and broad adherence to, the particular style in which he is improvising, and (d) his awareness of, and receptivity to, factors which may be internal or external to himself, and which may be musical or non-musical.

(a) Creativity

Improvisation is the spontaneous result of a creative reaction to a stimulus or stimuli, though these are usually encapsulated in the first place (in Western art music) in the form of a theme or themes, motifs, etc. The whole process implies a particularly high level of creativity which is capable of immediate and effective stimulation in the performer.

"Specifically or implicitly accepted in all the general discussions is the suddenness of the creative impulse. The improviser makes unpremeditated spur-of-the-moment decisions, and because they are not thought out, their individual importance, if not of their collective significance, is sometimes denied,"(3)

Holmes talks of "a real musician-like inspiration"⁽⁴⁾, and of "readiness and flow of....ideas"⁽⁵⁾, and of Hummel he writes:

"The most exquisite peculiarity of Hummel's mind is its lovely flow of melody, the elegant phrases which constantly start up, which, though not to be

anticipated by the hearer, are never far-fetched or extravagant." (6)

Fétis mentions "sudden inspirations...of more or less happy ideas"⁽⁷⁾ and "a certain audacity of creation....which draws its power....from....uncommon speed."⁽⁸⁾

(b) Technique

The composer normally writes for a public performance at a future date, often with a particular player or group of players in mind, and this kind of collaboration is well-known in all periods. His writing may be based on no more than the general knowledge of what is possible and effective on particular instruments. There is, usually, sufficient time between composition and performance for a player to acquire any necessary specialised techniques in response to a particular composer's requirements in a particular work. Indeed, the Western art-music tradition contains a high proportion of works subsequently very popular, which were considered technically impossible on first reading.

The improviser's position, however, is very different. In fact the single most important factor affecting (and even, in many cases, inhibiting) the quality of an improvisation is his level of technical skill on the instrument, and I am concerned only with piano from here on. Not only must the interaction between mind and fingers be close and immediate, but there must also be a sufficiently wide range of technique at the player's command to allow for choice in response to changing stimuli, and for a generally more relaxed and receptive state of mind and body.

(c) Style

This is all-important, since it is the only musical link between the improviser and his hearers, and though the style may be extended and some of its elements distorted, yet its main features must be adhered to.

The question of style gives rise to a problem of terms and their application. The first of these is "freedom", the notion in all cases being relative, and I am happy to appeal to the "beyond the scope of this dissertation" clause to justify my not treating of it in a general sense here.

The most important freedom in improvisation is that of choice of procedure, which is relative to the general musical style of the time as accepted and understood by improviser and listener. The improviser can, within reason, choose to accept or reject the syntactical succession in harmony or melody, which is the main determinant of stylistic integrity in any period. Thus, the model, in the broadest sense, for improvisation is the accepted period style, and the extent to which the improviser justifies, by his immediate and localised musical logic, his departure from this macro-model, is the main criterion of his improvisation from the hearer's point of view. An extempore performance which consistently rejected this macro-model would be incomprehensible. What is more important, perhaps, in this period, is that it would lack "taste". The performer has therefore to be capable of stretching or suspending the stylistic grammar, so to speak, without offending good taste.

This, however, is nothing like as restrictive as it might appear to be. Mme. de Staël expresses a common attitude towards artistic "rules" and good taste, though not without a hint of her customary overstatement:

"One cannot mistake what is bad, whereas it is impossible to place limits on the diverse combinations of a man of genius; he can follow entirely new routes without, however, losing sight of his goal. The rules of art are a calculation of the probabilities of the means of succeeding; and if success is obtained, it matters little to have submitted to them. But it is not the same with taste; for to put oneself above it is to distance oneself from the actual beauty of nature, and there is nothing above her." (9)

Within the general style, there are more discrete "styles" or model-types, upon which the improviser may draw, indeed, with which he is tacitly required to show familiarity, and these, and the quality of their usage, form a constantly-recurring theme in descriptions of the period. These model-types include the "strict style" — polyphonic or contrapuntal procedure, either crystallising into the more intellectual forms of fugue or canon, or in the more general sense of imitative part-management; variation-forms, and the cantabile melodic-decorative style common in slow movements. (10)

Another model-type provides an example of freedom which is relative within the field of improvisation itself, and this is the Preamble, or Prelude. This, both in history and in our period, is an instrumental, largely motoric, form of improvisation — physically-oriented, as opposed to intellectually-oriented, and the translation "foreplay" is particularly apt. "Improvised preludes are an old inheritance of instrumental music-making," and "the Preamble (Intonation, etc.) and the generically-related Toccata emerge for the first time.....and present a form derived directly from

instrumental "play"...." (11)

The most obvious form of preluding in this original and slightly restricted sense is a player trying out a new instrument, "getting the feel" of it, "warming up" before a performance, and this also includes the orchestral player's tuning up and the singer "singing himself in". That the basic characteristics of this eminently practical and unassuming procedure can be elevated to high art is shown by the works of that name by, for example, Bach, Chopin and Shostakovich, and by performances of rags in Indian Classical music.

There is something of an analogy between the prelude and the main body of the improvisation, and the improvisatory slow introduction and its succeeding, more obviously structured piece. Even in as highly-developed and "composed" a form as the Classical Symphony the distinction obtains, and in his treatise on the slow introduction in Classical and Romantic instrumental music, Klinkhammer writes of the slow introduction that

"Its freedom, especially in speed, pulse /Takt and harmony, and its abundance of ideas move it near to the point of improvisation."(12)

As well as the macro-model and the various model-types, a third kind of model, the micro-model, can arise during the course of an improvisation, or can act as a pre-condition, a datum. Under this heading come the theme or themes — whether given or freely chosen — upon which the improvisation is based. In this case, the given harmonic and/or melodic framework of the melody or melodies generates much of the whole performance, the most obvious example of

this being the inclusion of variations on the subject(s). An analogy to jazz improvisation can be seen here, since the chordal framework ("the changes") of the piece, most often a popular song, forms the model, but in which references to the melody are also usual. (13) As we shall see later, the improviser in art music also abstracts smaller units from the given material with which to work.

A further instance of freedom is the performer/creator's licence to choose which of the model-types and micro-models he will use at any given time and in which order he will use them, and he is also free to allow interaction and outside influences to determine the structure or direction of his improvisation, this latter being a characteristic, and the subject of the next point.

(d) Receptivity

Since improvisation involves an intimacy amounting almost to identity between the functions of composer and performer, and since the results are immediate and cannot be "taken back" once they are given, the improviser in public must be unusually aware of, and receptive to, the feelings of his audience. The deliberating composer can alter, calculate his effects in the musical long-term, and revise; with improvisation, in the end, all effect is immediate and audience reaction may well decide whether the performer uses a particular idea as a point of new departure or whether he abandons it. Hummel, for one, was very aware of such matters; he tells us that, in his youth, when he first began to improvise in public, or semi-public,

"...I ventured to extemporize before a few persons only, some connoisseurs, others unacquainted with the science, and while so doing, observed quietly how they received it, and what effect my Fantasia produced on both portions of my little, assembled, and mixed public." (14)

The more specific traits of, and influences on, musical improvisation will be dealt with in Chapter 10.

NOTES to CHAPTER 8

- (1) Nettl/IMPROVISATION, p.3.
- (2) Op. cit., p.6.
- (3) Op. cit., p.3.
- (4) Holmes/RAMBLE, p.196, writing of the pianist John Schneider.
- (5) Op. cit., p.94, writing of the organist Seytl.
- (6) Op. cit., p.262.
- (7) Fétis/MÉTHODE, p.73.

"Improviser, c'est à dire, composer sans rature, et sans avoir pris le temps de régler par la réflexion ce que de soudaines inspirations apportent d'idées plus ou moins heureuses....."
- (8) Loc. cit.

"...une certaine audace de création....qui tire précisément sa puissance de son allure inusitée. Cette audace est précisément le signe caractéristique de l'improvisation...."
- (9) Staël, Madame Anne-Louise-Germaine de. De la littérature considérée dans ses rapports avec les institutions sociales, ed. Paul van Tieghem, Geneva and Paris, 1959, Vol.I, p.192.

"L'on ne peut se tromper sur ce qui est mauvais, tandis qu'il est impossible de tracer des limites aux diverses combinaisons d'un homme de génie; il peut suivre des routes entièrement nouvelles, sans manquer cependant son but. Les règles de l'art sont un calcul de probabilités sur les moyens de réussir; et si le succès est obtenu, il importe peu de s'y être soumis. Mais il n'en est pas de même du goût; car se mettre au-dessus de lui, c'est s'écarter de la beauté même de la nature; et il n'y a rien au-dessus d'elle."
- (10) There are analogies here to the model-types of non-Western cultures, such as the Indian rag, the Arabian maqam and the Persian dastgah.
- (11) Ferand/IMPROVISATION,

"...sind doch improvisierte Vorspiele altes Erbgut des instrumentalen Musizierens..."(p.332).
 "...tritt mit der Präambel (Intonation usw.) und der mit ihr artverwandten Tokkata zum ersten Male eine unmittelbar aus dem instrumentalen "Spiel"....." (loc. cit.)
- (12) Klinkhammer/EINLEITUNG, p.2.

"Ihre Freiheit besonders in Tempo, Takt und Harmonie und ihr Einfallsreichtum rücken sie in die Nähe der Improvisation."
- (13) See Tirro/JAZZ, pp.286-7.
- (14) Hummel/SCHOOL, Pt. III, Sect. 2nd, Ch.7, p.74.

CHAPTER 9 - IMPROVISATION IN GENERAL IN THE PERIOD

One of the main aspirations enshrined in the ethos of Romanticism — and we recognise the regular manifestation of that movement in literature and the pictorial arts earlier than in music⁽¹⁾ — was the preservation, or at least the re-capture, of the initial intuitive response in the completed artwork. Wordsworth's formula of "emotion recollected in tranquillity", and his assertion that "all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings"⁽²⁾ illustrate this point, and Shelley, in his essay, "A Defence of Poetry" (1821) is quite explicit:

"...the mind in creation is as a fading coal, which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness: this power arises from within, like the colour of a flower which fades and changes as it is developed, and the conscious portions of our natures are unprophetic either of its approach or its departure. Could this influence be durable in its original purity and force, it is impossible to predict the greatness of the results; but when composition begins, inspiration is already on the decline, and the most glorious poetry that has ever been communicated to the world is probably a feeble shadow of the original conception of the Poet." (3)

Although truly improvisational painting had to wait until the twentieth century for its full flowering, artists of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries tried in various ways to narrow the gap between the inspiration and the final product. Thus, the group of landscape painters around Théodore Rousseau (1812-67)

"...are best remembered today for extending the habit of painting directly out of doors, blurring the distinction between 'sketch' and 'finished picture' in a way that Constable had never done, and becoming a direct inspiration for the Impressionists." (4)

In this respect, Turner was remarkable, with a prodigious visual and emotional memory, remembering — reliving — impressions and inspirations of, in some cases, years before, as is evidenced by his watercolour, "Venice, Storm at Sunset" at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. The collection of "private" paintings done for himself only, which was discovered in the National Gallery in 1939, were at first referred to as sketches, though, in fact, they were "the result of prolonged labour"⁽⁵⁾. Sir Kenneth Clark describes Turner working in a state of dream-like ecstasy, and the artist's practice of making "colour beginnings" both in oils and in watercolours. These were, in effect, immediate — or at least very early — compositional studies which would later be worked up within a short space of time.

There is also in the Romantic impulse an improvisatory drive which, if it does not seek to eschew the forming and crafting of the original impression of which I spoke, at least it seeks to minimise the loss of immediacy and freshness. Shelley talks of

"...language, gesture, and the imitative arts, /which/ become at once the representation and the medium, the pencil and the picture, the chisel and the statue, the chord and the harmony." (6)

and it is in improvisation that this identity is most clearly seen to exist. Similarly, in a private letter, Keats gives as one of his "Axioms in Poetry" :

"That if Poetry comes not as naturally as the Leaves to a tree it had better not come at all." (7),

and Lamartine, in his "Avertissement" to his Harmonies poétiques et religieuses, specifically plays down the

conscious artist-craftsman in favour of the unfettered utterance:

"Here are four books of poetry written as they were felt, without connection, without sequence, without apparent transitions: nature has these, but does not show them; real poetry, without pose, which reveals less the poet than the man himself, the disclosure, intimate and involuntary, of his everyday impressions, pages from his inner life, inspired at times by sadness, at times by joy, by solitude and by the world, by despair or hope, in his hours of sterility or enthusiasm, of fervour or of aridity." (8)

As well as a general tendency towards freedom, references to actual improvisation in areas other than music are common enough. The author of the Musical Athenaeum, Joseph Mainzer, on the eve of his departure for a musical "Grand Tour" of Europe, tells how the poet Theodor von Haupt improvised a poem "from bouts rimés to be given to him" by the assembled friends⁽⁹⁾, and Alexandre Dumas wrote of the storytelling of Charles Nodier at the gatherings of the group of young Romantic poets (the "Cénacle") in Nodier's salon, noting that it was

"like a mixture of Walter Scott and Perrault, the savant grappling with the poet, memory battling with imagination." (10)

When Nodier had finished,

"he would turn with a smile to one of the poets there — Hugo perhaps, or Vigny, more rarely Lamartine — who without moving from his place, shoulders propped against the wall, would launch on some poetic flight." (11)

The poet Wolff was called the "Improvisatore", and a notice of his death informs readers that "he possessed, in a superior degree, the gift of improvisation, a talent rare in Germany". (12) The latter remark refers to the fact that,

apparently, poetic improvisation was "chiefly confined to warm climates, and Italy, in later times, has been the scene of its greatest triumphs." (13)

Moscheles describes an occasion upon which he "listened with delight" to another famous "Improvvisatore", Pistrucci,

"as he enlarged, in well-sounding harmonious verses, on a chance theme suggested by the public." (14)

and the composer goes on to exhibit a familiar Romantic pre-occupation:

"It gives me food for thought in my own improvisations," he adds. "I must constantly make comparisons between the sister arts: they are all closely allied." (15)

Indeed, the Harmonicon considered a public "concert" by Pistrucci "entitled to some notice in our work" because

"This art is so much connected with music,—indeed, music almost invariably constitutes a part of it...." (16)

The description is worth quoting from.

"On Friday....this artist gave a public proof of his wonderful ability, at the Argyll Rooms, to a large company of fashionable and literary people. In order to remove any doubt as to his productions being bona fide, without any premeditation, the purchasers of tickets had been previously invited to furnish Signor Pistrucci with subjects; and, in consequence, several were communicated to him during the evening, upon many of which he recited without the slightest hesitation, or the least apparent effort. His first topic was Orestes; on this he declaimed, in a succession of smooth stanzas, for upwards of ten minutes. He described the first self condemnation of the parricide, his flight, the vision of the furies, their aspects, the despair and final madness of "the son of Clytemnestra", and depicted all, in the most glowing colours, amid frequent interruptions of applause. The next subjects were the Battle of Waterloo, and Count Ugolino. Orestes and Ugolino he delivered in a chant,

accompanied by a few simple chords on the piano-forte; Waterloo he recited. Besides these, and two or three other minor pieces, he gave a pastoral interlude of two shepherdesses and a shepherd, with songs, duets, and chorusses; a dialogue which he managed with great adroitness.

In order to vary the performance, and to relieve both the poet and his auditors, several favourite pieces of music by Mozart and Rossini, were charmingly sung by Mesdames Camporese and Vestris, Signors Curioni, Reina, and Placci. The time which the whole performance occupied, did not exceed two hours and a half; and every body retired pleased, astonished, and without any of that weariness which our long performances are too apt to produce." (17)

It is not surprising that public art-music improvisation should have its final heyday in such a general climate.

NOTES to CHAPTER 9

- (1) Sturm und Drang, the movement which marks the effective beginnings of Romanticism in other arts, was absorbed and sublimated by the great composers of the period.
- (2) Wordsworth, in the Preface to the "Lyrical Ballads".
- (3) Shelley, in "A Defence of Poetry".
- (4) Vaughan, William. Romantic Art, London, 1978, pp.208-9.
- (5) Clark/REBELLION, p.245.
- (6) Shelley, in "A Defence of Poetry".
- (7) Keats, in a letter to John Taylor, dated 27th February, 1818.
- (8) Lamartine, in the "Avertissement" to "Harmonies poétiques et religieuses".

"Voici quatre livres de poésies écrites comme elles ont été senties, sans liaison, sans suite, sans transition apparente: la nature en a, mais n'en montre pas; poésies réelles et non feintes, qui sentent moins le poète que l'homme même, révélation intime et involontaire de ses impressions de chaque jour, pages de sa vie intérieure inspirées tantôt par la tristesse, tantôt par la joie, par la solitude et par le monde, par le désespoir ou l'espérance, dans ses heures de sécheresse ou d'enthousiasme, de prière ou d'aridité."
- (9) Musical Athenaeum, No. 1, 1842, p.2.
- (10) Kelly, Linda. The Young Romantics, London, 1976, p.6.
- (11) Loc cit.
- (12) Harmonicon, January 1829, p.22.
- (13) Op. cit., June 1823, p.87.
- (14) Moscheles/LIFE, I, p.75.
- (15) Loc. cit.
- (16) Harmonicon, June 1823, p.87.
- (17) Loc. cit.

CHAPTER 10 - MUSICAL IMPROVISATION IN THE PERIOD

General

Although the nineteenth century was the one in which the art of improvisation in general fell out of favour, it was an accepted and necessary part of any performer's attainments, and references to its inclusion in concerts are frequent in advertisements and programmes. Thus, in a notice in The Times of a Benefit for the violinist Bériot, what was evidently the main attraction was announced first:

"Mr. Hummel (his last appearance in this country) will give an EXTEMPORANEOUS PERFORMANCE at Mr. de BÉRIOT'S MORNING CONCERT on Monday, the 5th of July...." (1)

(a) Subjects for improvisations

A virtuoso could himself provide the subject or subjects for his own "extemporaneous performance" though in many cases the audience suggested them. An advertisement in John Bull of one of Hummel's concerts in London in 1830 gives the prospective listeners advance warning:

"Mr. Hummel requests any of the Company to give him a written theme to perform on." (2)

According to Zimmerschied, "it can be considered certain that Hummel was the first ever to improvise on subjects given in the concert hall"⁽³⁾. There were various advantages in this, and one of the most obvious is that of audience participation and the strengthening of the bond — at that time, much closer than today — between hearer and player, a factor which could not but help the improviser. Liszt elaborates on this (in 1838):

"This method of improvisation established between the public and the artist a more direct rapprochement. Those who have proposed motifs have risked engage their self-esteem, up to a point; the adoption or rejection of his motifs becomes a matter of triumph for one, of vexation for another, of curiosity for all. Each is desirous of hearing what the musician will do with the idea imposed upon him. Each time he presents it under a new guise, the "donor" is thrilled at the good effect it produces as if it were something to which he has contributed. This becomes a work in common, a work of engraving ciselure performed by the artist from the gems which have been entrusted to him. At my last session, a charming little silver chalice, of exquisite workmanship, attributed to one of Cellini's best pupils, had been placed at the entrance to the room, to receive the thematic bulletins." (4)

Chopin describes, in a letter, a domestic scene at the castle of Prince Clary at Teplitz, where a subject for his improvisation provided the ladies with a momentary respite from their interminable embroidery; the gentle irony is best conveyed in the original language:

"Lorsque le thé fût servi et que j'eus longuement causé avec le prince Clary, sa mère vint me prier de daigner me mettre au piano; je daignai m'y mettre après avoir demandé qu'on daignât me désigner un sujet d'improvisation. Un conciliabule eut aussitôt lieu à la table ronde autour de laquelle ces dames brodaient. 'Un thème, un thème', se répétait-on. Les trois jeunes princesses chuchotaient entre elles, et enfin, un M. Fritsche, qui paraît être le maître de musique du prince, choisit avec l'assentiment général, un motif du Moïse de Rossini. J'ai donc improvisé sur ce sujet, et j'ai eu le bonheur de plaire." (5)

Another advantage of taking themes from the audience was that the performer could not be accused of preparing his "extempore effusion" beforehand. On occasion, this did happen, and commentators, certainly, were quick to notice. However, the critic in the Harmonicon goes rather too far when he asserts that

"...of all improvisations we must remark, that he

who is in the habit of extemporizing, lays up, at length, a stock of subjects, passages, and modulations, in his mind, upon which, by habit, he can draw with certainty whenever necessary; after a time, therefore, extempore performance becomes little more than playing from memory." (6)

It is, of course, likely that certain passages will recur — scales, arpeggios of like configuration, a particular kind of harmonic twist — but in the context of a good improvisation by one of the better practitioners of the art, they are no more nor less noticeable (or detrimental) than the cadential trills in Mozart. The (same?) critic shows his true feelings on improvisation in general when, in 1833, referring to a Herz concert, he writes:

"His extemporaneous performance need hardly be noticed. It was as good, and made up of pretty much the same materials, as such things generally are. And we will take this opportunity of observing, that such exhibitions are, in our opinion, as derogatory to a great musician, as improvisation would be to a great poet." (7)

There were also disadvantages, however, in throwing oneself on the mercy of an audience in this way, and one was the risk of being proffered unpromising material. Hummel suffered in this way in London in 1830.

"In compliance with the request in the bill, which was read by Sir George Smart, and seconded, in very tolerable English, by Mr. Hummel, two themes were offered by some of the audience; — the first, a ranz des Vaches, or Swiss air, (which, by the way, we are rather tired of); — the second, a few bars of something, we could not exactly understand of what description, but certainly not melody — an extract, we suspect, from some very inferior German production. Mr. Hummel appeared somewhat discouraged by the unprofitableness of the materials presented to him, but, of course, did not reject them. We wish he had done so." (8)

As we shall see later, he succeeded admirably; in fact, this

kind of eventuality was no problem to Hummel, nor would it have been to any good improviser.

There was also another risk, as described by Moscheles after a private court recital in Vienna in 1844:

"I nearly came to grief with my extempore performance, for, on asking their Majesties for a theme, they chose something out of Donizetti's 'Linda di Chamouni' /sic/. Of course I was forced to confess my ignorance of that 'most glorious of all operas,' so they proposed to me 'the old-fashioned perruque,' out of Mozart's operas. I took 'Batti, batti' and the 'Champagne' song, and afterwards, with an eye to the heroic, Archduke Carl wound up with 'See, the conquering Hero.' In answer to the Emperor's question, 'Wasn't the last the march from the 'Vestalin?' ' I said, 'Something similar, your Majesty,' and the Empress quickly interposed a question, 'Had I studied in Vienna or Prague?' At 10:30 the Court withdrew, ices were handed round, and I put some sweetmeats in my pocket for the children." (9)

Doubtless, it was to avoid such possible embarrassment that performers usually asked for their themes in writing, though, of course, Their Imperial Majesties could not be so troubled.

Occasionally a virtuoso would take some of the music from the earlier part of the same concert as his subject, perhaps, like Moscheles in the 1826 London season, "choosing generally.....the motivo of some piece which had particularly pleased the audience that evening." (10) Very often this was a mark of respect for the composer, when present. At the farewell dinner given to J. B. Cramer before his final departure from London in 1835, "Mr. Moschelles /sic/ delighted" the hearers

"by an extemporaneous performance, in which he introduced, with judicious taste and exquisite feeling, several well-known passages from Cramer's works." (11)

Cramer was "delighted and affected" (12).

Poor Weber was probably affected by his terminal illness when, in what was to be his last concert,

"Moscheles took his subject for improvisation from the Cantata 'Festival of Peace,' interwoven with 'motives' from the 'Freyschütz.'" (13)

Czerny describes a visit of "old Pleyel" to Vienna ("it might have been around 1808 or 1810"), when he "brought his latest violin quartetts" to Prince Lobkowitz' residence, and where Beethoven displayed his customary arrogance, bad manners, and genius.

"At the end, Beethoven, who was also present, was asked to play something. As usual, he had to be entreated for a long time, and had almost to be dragged to the piano by the ladies. Reluctantly he snatches the still-open book with the second violin part of the Pleyel quartet, throws it onto the piano-desk and begins to phantasise. Never had he been seen to improvise more brilliantly, originally, or splendidly, than on this evening. But through his whole improvisation, like a thread, or cantus firmus, run the very insignificant notes from the page of the quartet-score which was open by chance, on which he constructed the boldest melodies and harmonies in the most brilliant concert style. Old Pleyel was so amazed that he kissed Beethoven's hands." (14)

However, bearing in mind the general concert-programmes and audience taste, the subjects, whether given or chosen, were of exactly the same type as those forming the basis of the most frequently performed, and the bulk of published, pieces — viz. operatic airs and folk tunes, or their imitations. References to the first category have been made in passing, and Moscheles' improvising on Scottish airs for Sir Walter Scott has been mentioned above (p.46); even in Denmark, he writes,

"I was a Dane, and worked up some national melodies. The shouts of applause made me desperately confident,

and I wound up with the Danish 'God save the King' ('Kong Christian'). When I had finished — I leave you to imagine the rest, only it certainly was a novelty to see a King running about amongst the musical veterans present, to express his astonishment and hear them confirm it." (15)

(b) Other factors

As well as subjects or motifs as such, a composer's general style, or a particular mood, could at times become the basis for an extempore performance, infecting the whole. In his Danish tour of 1829 (referred to in the last quotation), Moscheles "would try to be [as] learned as Kuhlau and Weyse, interesting in harmony, plaintive and sentimental" (16), and he also "Rossinified a little, for I knew that the Rossini fever rages at the Court here." (17) At St. Cloud in 1845, he "improvised à la Grétry, the King's favourite 'genre'. Our Royal listeners were evidently gratified." (18) At a dinner and concert in Greenwich, outside London, at which Spohr was present, Moscheles "endeavoured to be completely 'Spohrish', and worked up themes out of his Symphony, 'The Consecration of Sound.'" (19) In a letter to his immediate superior at Weimar, Baron von Spiegel, Hummel describes his visit to the royal family at Windsor in 1833 where, on the castle organ, he played a "requiemartigs" improvisation in memory of Princess Luise who died there. (20)

Exceptions to the operatic or folk/popular basis of improvisation did occur on occasion. These include Clementi's impromptu performance on a theme from "Handel's first concerto" at the dinner given in his (Clementi's) honour in London in 1822, after the chairman had proposed

a toast to "The immortal memory of Handel" (21), and Moscheles choosing the Chorale "O filii et filiae" for his Easter Sunday extempore performance in Paris in 1822 (22).

Characterisation of musical improvisation in the period

Although detailed comments, especially in the Press, are rare in the period, it is clear that the qualities expected and appreciated in improvisation were mostly concerned with a high and varied emotional content, much virtuosity, a freedom of musical syntax (especially harmonic) which went beyond the accepted conventions of composed music, and contrapuntal skill.

(a) Emotional content

There are many allusions to this, mostly in more-or-less private documents, such as letters. We hear that, according to Czerny, old Krumpholz (the brother of the pedal-harp inventor) fell into "unfeigned ecstasies" (23) at Beethoven's daily improvising for his benefit, and that, in the well-known passage,

"no matter in what company he /Beethoven/ might be, he knew how to make such an impression on every listener that frequently there was not a single dry eye, while many broke out into loud sobs, for there was a certain magic in his expression.." (24)

A musical English diplomat, Sir John Russell, heard him improvise in 1821, when he "...ran on during half an hour in a fantasy, in a style extremely varied, and marked, above all, by the most abrupt transitions", adding what he considered to be of more interest to "the uninitiated" present:

"...The muscles of the face swell, and its veins start out; the wild eye rolls doubly wild, the mouth quivers, and Beethoven looks like a wizard, over-powered by the demons whom he himself has called up."
(25)

A slightly more coloured (!) version of this description (uncredited) appears in MM in 1835⁽²⁶⁾ and both are reminiscent of Burney's account of C.P.E. Bach improvising⁽²⁷⁾. In comparing Hummel's improvising with the playing of the beautiful Marie Szymanowska, Goethe writes:

"When Hummel ceases playing, there rises up a Gnome before us, who, by the help of powerful demons, has performed such wonders, that one scarcely dares thank him for them..." (28)

In an item publicising this composer's impending first concert in his Paris visit of 1830, the writer in Le Globe pays him a very generous compliment indeed:

"...a simple piece without accompaniment /i.e. a piano solo / often produces impressions of the same kind as those which a grand symphony of Beethoven make one feel. This entirely poetic manner of feeling and of making his art speak reveals itself above all in his improvisation: it is here that Hummel is prodigious, and perhaps without rivals." (29)

Moscheles "let.../himself/ go like a racehorse" at the Danish court — "fire, passion, even coquettishness — I tried everything to act on the royal nerves " (30) and we are told that Hummel, the

"great master /, knows how to mingle with such admirable art the gay and the serious, the playful and the severe; at one moment he lets us hear what he is capable of effecting in the church style; then in that of the chamber and theatre. He appears equally great both in the grand and the simple. So varied are his powers that even those who had the least pretension as connoisseurs, were charmed they knew not why, while the cognoscenti applauded with unfeigned admiration. He was everywhere called the celebrated Improvvisatore." (31)

A good indication of wide emotional range in Beethoven's impromptu playing is given by Ignaz von Seyfried:

"In his improvisations even then /1799/ Beethoven did not deny his tendency toward the mysterious and gloomy. When once he began to revel in the infinite world of tones, he was transported also above all earthly things; — his spirit had burst all restricting bonds, shaken off the yokes of servitude, and soared triumphantly and jubilantly into the luminous spaces of the higher æther. Now his playing tore along like a wildly foaming cataract, and the conjurer constrained his instrument to an utterance so forceful that the stoutest structure was scarcely able to withstand it; and anon he sank down, exhausted, exhaling gentle complaints, dissolving in melancholy." (32)

(b) Virtuosity

The virtuoso element is usually mentioned: "brilliant and astonishing in the extreme"⁽³³⁾, "unheard-of bravura and facility"⁽³⁴⁾ and "...Never before had I listened to such novel, brilliant feats of difficulty." Thus Czerny, who had both the pianistic acumen and the social advantages to make such judgements, having been a pupil of Beethoven and a good friend of Hummel. I have already quoted a comparison he has drawn between Beethoven and Hummel (pp.149-50 supra) and he also mentions that, when improvising,

"...In the speeds of the scales, double trills, leaps, etc., nobody matched his skill, not even Hummel " (35)

and he makes the interesting observation that in extempore performance,

"...the allegro tempo...was made livelier by passages of bravour, which were for the most part more difficult than those which can be found in his compositions." (36).

This heightening of "normal" technical brilliance was a feature of improvisation generally.

(c) Stretching musical convention

More important than either of these factors, as mentioned in contemporary reports, is the idea of stretching of the musical conventions in a way which would have been less acceptable (if at all so) in composition. Johann Schenk, who taught Beethoven academic counterpoint before he studied with Albrechtsberger, describes one of the young composer's improvisations, mentioning harmony and tonality in particular:

"....anon, leaving the field of mere tonal charm, he boldly stormed the most distant keys in order to give expression to violent passions." (37)

Tomaschek's impressions on first hearing Beethoven improvise were even stronger. In his autobiography, published in 1845, he remembers a concert in 1798 when

"Beethoven's magnificent playing and particularly the daring flights in his improvisation stirred me strangely to the depths of my soul; indeed I found myself so profoundly bowed down that I did not touch my pianoforte for several days...." (38)

He recovered, however:

"I heard Beethoven at his second concert, which neither in performance nor in composition renewed again the first powerful impression." (39)

Holmes quotes a "good judge" who heard Mozart improvise:

"Mozart was inspired in modulation, all the profound and mysterious affinities of chords were touched upon as his hand wandered over the keys, there was magic in his fingers..." (40)

and referring to the "dilletanti of Germany" he observes:

"I have had much pleasure in hearing the improvisation of some of this class, who understood the art of modulation surprisingly well for amateurs....."

.....the knowledge of harmony which is shown in stringing chords well together, and the intimacy with the bearings of remote keys, make them the best possible of critics /of improvisation/." (41)

That Hummel "modulated through a variety of keys..and revelled in the mazes of melody and harmony" (42), and that Moscheles blended "the most striking modulations....with the most brilliant traits" (43), only serves to underline the kind of diversity and contrast which also existed in the other arts. Novalis describes "truly Romantic prose" in similar terms:

"varied in the highest /degree/, wonderful — peculiar turns; rapid leaps — dramatic through and through." (44)

(Indeed, it is an excellent description of his own prose style!)

(d) Improvisatory training

The vital attribute of spontaneity implied in these quotations, and so often mentioned elsewhere, must not, however, be allowed to mislead us into assuming that improvisation could not, to an extent, be practised and perfected. Calling improvisation a "musical reflex action" (musikalische Reflexbewegung), Ernst Ferand, in his book "Die Improvisation in der Musik" (45) writes:

"This manner of musical creation — as opposed to physiological reflex actions which simply have to be discharged in certain situations — naturally requires some practice, and on higher levels of artistic improvisation, this training has to be extremely rigorous and enduring." (46)

Several tutors appeared during the period dealing with improvisation, such as Grétry's "Méthode simple pour apprendre à préluder" and Czerny/ANLEITUNG, and most of the general

Piano Schools included sections or chapters devoted to it.

Even singers had their manual, as is shown by the recent discovery of a book and seven MS notebooks by Mme. Cinti-Damoreau, the leading operatic soprano in Paris between 1825-50.⁽⁴⁷⁾

In Kalkbrenner/TRAITÉ, the author gives a succession of modulations "leading from the diminished seventh, which I recommend particularly for the attention of those who wish to improvise..."⁽⁴⁸⁾, and Fétis, in his "Méthode des Méthodes" says that the improviser must be "learned in the resources of harmony"⁽⁴⁹⁾. However, despite a need for some kind of practice and training, Ferand concludes that

"...This does not refute the fact, however, that in the products of improvisation — highly developed and perfect in form — the intellectual activity (as opposed to the immediate, spontaneous and intuitive fundamental approach) almost disappears into the background." ⁽⁵⁰⁾

Hummel's remarks in the final chapter of his Piano School ("On Extemporaneous Performance") are of particular interest here. Having begun by stating that "particular instructions on this point can neither be given nor received", and outlining the qualities the player must possess, he continues:

"To elucidate all this, I do not believe that I can do better than point out the way by which I acquired the power of playing extemporaneously. After I had so far made myself master of playing on the instrument, of harmony with all its applications, of the art of modulating correctly and agreeably /sic/, of enharmonic transition, of counterpoint, &c.: that I was able to reduce them to practice; and that, by a diligent study of the best ancient and modern compositions, I had already acquired taste, invention of melody, ideas, together with the art of arranging, connecting, and combining them; as I was employed throughout the day with giving lessons and composing, in the evening, during the hours of twilight, I occupied myself with extemporizing on the Piano-forte,

sometimes in the free, and at other times in the strict or fugue style; giving myself up entirely to my own feelings and invention. " (51)

This bears out Ferand's "extremely rigorous and enduring" training, and shows that Hummel's macro-model for improvisation was indeed the literature of music (with its various styles) as it was accepted and practised in his day by composers and teachers. Nettl confirms this approach using evidence from non-Western art and folk ("primitive") traditions:

"In each of the improvisatory styles that we have considered, the student must in some way learn the model before he can improvise upon it, though the formality of his instruction varies." (52)

Hummel seems to be saying that the macro-model must be learnt, and learnt well, but that the art of improvisation itself is a gift. He would, however, be unlikely to "give away" any "secrets" in so personal an art, and one upon which he himself was so dependent as a performer and as a composer.

Certainly, a high degree of general musicianship was accepted as being the most basic requirement for being a good improviser, as one might imagine. Charlotte Moscheles, the wife of the composer, writes of young lady pupils who "wished in a few lessons to acquire some of the qualities which they admired in Moscheles' playing", adding, proprietorially, that

"of course they could not learn to improvise in a few finishing lessons, for this presupposed vast musical erudition, besides his inborn talent of treating a musical subject brilliantly and elaborately." (53)

Moscheles himself is spoken of as showing "his great knowledge of harmony" (54), and a critique of Hummel's improvisation at his concert on May 11th 1830 tells us that he

"displayed all the enthusiasm of powerful genius, with the consummate art and refinement of the most profound musical science." (55)

The very greatest improvisers are, of course, special cases—Hummel, Beethoven, Liszt, Moscheles, etc. — in whom the basic gift is improved and enhanced by study and practice. There is what appears to be an exception in the instance of the remarkable seven-and-a-half-year-old Frederic Arthur Gore Ouseley who, "on the authority of a gentleman, in whose report we place the most implicit confidence..",

"has received no instruction in music, and though taught by himself to play with considerable skill on the piano-forte, does not know his notes on paper, and trusts to his sisters for writing down what he composes. He improvises entire scenes, singing to his own accompaniment, the latter often exhibiting harmony the most *recherché*, chords that an experienced musician only uses with caution; but these are always introduced and resolved in a strictly regular manner, not by rule, for he has learnt no rules, but by the aid of a very surprising ear, and of some faculty, which, for want of a better term, we will call intuition." (56)

(e) The strict style

Hummel's remarks in the quotation from the Piano School above also throw into relief a contrast between the "free" and the "strict or fugue" styles, the latter also called the "learned" style. Fugal improvisation has long been associated with organists, as indeed, has improvisation in general, and still is in our own day. (57) The author of the Musical Athenaeum, Joseph Mainzer, describes the abilities of C.H. Rinck in this area.

"His plastic fingers fashioned any suggested theme into fugue, which he worked out through combinations the most varied, till the whole merged into one gigantic improvisation." (58)

Liszt, at thirteen, improvised

"...Upon any subject....proposed to him....., with the fancy and method of a deliberating composer, and the correctness of an experienced contrapuntist." (59)

The organist Seytl was "highly famed for the readiness and flow of his ideas in extempore fugue.." (60), and Mozart

"could involve his subject in all the subtleties of canon, and arrive on the spot at /sic/ the result of a mathematical problem.." (61) ,

while

"the poet predominated in ../Beethoven/ too much over the musician to lead him into the display of that learned and scholastic treatment of it in which Mozart indulged." (62)

Mozart himself describes an extempore fugue of his own in a letter to his father Leopold, which he played on a clavichord at the Monastery at Heiligkreuz.

"...the others /present/ whispered in the Dean's ear that he should hear me play something in the organ style. I told him to give me a theme. He did not want to, but one of the monks gave me one. I took it for a stroll, and in the middle (the fugue was in G minor) I went into major with something quite jocular, but in the same tempo, reverting to the theme again, but backwards. Finally I wondered, could I not also use the jocular subject as the theme of a fugue? — I did not ask for long, but did it at once, and it fitted as neatly as if Daser had measured it. The Dean was beside himself /with joy/." (63)

The strict style, of course, demanded the most thorough training of all, and the Athenaeum made the following point about Rinck, he of the "plastic fingers" above:

"As a teacher of the theory of music, Rinck deservedly occupies the highest place throughout Germany. Hummel, in committing pupils to his care, wrote thus: 'Since Albrechtsberger's /sic/ death, I know of no one to whom my pupils could be more worthily directed.'" (64)

The importance which composers, and the musical world in general, attached to study with the best (often the most pedagogical) teachers of counterpoint is an indication of the high value placed on the "learned" or strict style. It is also, of course, an indication of the regard for academic pedigree from which even Beethoven was not immune. This is at first mildly surprising, especially as some of the textbooks used were often of some age (the best known, J.J. Fux's famous "Gradus ad Parnassam", was first published in 1725), and also because "early music" did not feature to any great extent in public concerts of the time⁽⁶⁵⁾. It is almost as if, faced with the popularity of the Classical style and the freedom of the improvisatory style, composers took it upon themselves to become acquainted with the strictures of a "dead" style. The results in the music are interesting: apart from the absorption of the strict style and its general tendency to permeate the musical language, there are also many passages and sections in which it is, so to speak, externalised, and they have been dealt with in chapters 2 and 5 of this dissertation.

(f) Motivische Arbeit

An aspect of the strict style, less rigid and "scholastic", was free contrapuntal play with themes and motifs, analogous to thematische Arbeit in composition, and an important attribute of a good improviser was his ability

to discover and realise latent possibilities in this area. Indeed, all the techniques of improvisation come together here, variation treatment, harmony, embellishment, counterpoint and instrumental technique.

As we have seen with other extempore features, this also was not confined to music. "Poetry", writes Shelley,

"...awakens and enlarges the mind itself by rendering it the receptacle of a thousand unapprehended combinations of thought. Poetry lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar.." (66)

and Novalis exclaims:

"What an inexhaustible quantity of materials for new individual combinations lies at hand! He who has guessed this secret needs only the decision to renounce the endless diversity and make a start somewhere...." (67)

Both he and Coleridge⁽⁶⁸⁾ write of seeing the familiar in a new or different light — also a preoccupation, in the literal sense, of the painters — and Wordsworth confirms his general awareness of this aspect of creativity:

"Fancy /i.e. imagination/ depends upon the rapidity and profusion with which she scatters her thoughts and images; trusting that their number, and the felicity with which they are linked together, will make amends for the want of individual value: or she prides herself upon the curious subtilty /sic/ and the successful elaboration with which she can detect their lurking affinities." (69)

In Shelley's view, "...Reason respects the differences, and imagination the similitudes of things.." (70), and Novalis asserts: "Der Dichter betet den Zufall an." (71)

Combinatorial practices of all kinds are basic to musical improvisation in this period. About a concert in Prague in 1826, Moscheles writes:

"During my improvisation, I interwove the melody in Cherubini's 'Wasserträger,'



with the Bohemian National Air:



a combination which was received with rounds of applause." (72)

A Harmonicon reviewer remarks on the practice in 1833 as "that happy union and reunion of....subjects, in which Hummel also excels..." (73), and Fétis, in an account of a Moscheles improvisation in Brussels (1846) writes of the virtuoso's themes being

"..re-united and used as mutual accompaniment with infinite art, although in appearance, there was no connection between them " (74)

— which is more than one can say for the examples Moscheles gives above. Kalkbrenner recommends practice in imitation as being "the most necessary study for the pianist who wishes to become an improviser." (75)

(g) Extraneous thematic association

Connected with this ability to perceive possible combinations is the impromptu player's capacity to "link in" extraneous matter in his performance. This might take the form of including references to, or the whole of, another subject or tune. Thus, Hummel introduced "the old English song, "the Flaxen-headed Cow-boy" ", in an improvisation for which he had already been given subjects by the audience⁽⁷⁶⁾, and Moscheles, in spite of his efforts,

could not resist the temptation:

"I had intended to-day.....to introduce no extraneous subject into my Improvisation, when coming to a pause, the melody, 'Das klinget so herrlich' (Zauberflöte) involuntarily forced itself upon me. Two rounds of applause rewarded my treatment of this subject." (77)

He and Mendelssohn, improvising together, used to

"dart quick as lightning on the suggestions implied by each other's harmonies, and to construct others upon them. Then Felix, whenever I introduce any motive out of his own works, breaks in and cuts me short by playing a subject from one of my compositions, on which I retort, and then he, and so on ad infinitum. It's a sort of musical blindman's-buff, where the blindfolded now and then run against each other's heads." (78)

Fétis, in the article on Hummel in his "Biographie Universelle" mentions the composer's "unexpected passages, happy accidents of a beautiful genius" (79), and indeed, these accidents could be as fertile for the improviser as the themes themselves. Many of them were physical accidents, related to performance on the piano and some examples will be discussed shortly.

(h) Non-musical stimuli

The spurs to the extemporiser's imagination were not confined to the realm of music. Ferand writes of the desirability of teaching an improviser

"to make use of the raw material provided by nature, not by imitating it, but transforming it into absolute musical works..." (80)

The American virtuoso/composer Gottschalk describes Hummel's expertise in this area:

"So exceptional was Hummel as an extemporizor /sic/ that during a concert in the Érard Hall, Paris,

when bells from a nearby church began ringing, he was able to switch immediately from his Polonaise "La bella capricciosa", Opus 55, into a harmonization of the peal, which he then combined with motifs from the Larghetto Introduzione, capping the whole with a fugue improvised on the main theme of the polacca." (81)

On one occasion a storm during an unplanned private performance so stimulated Moscheles, that he improvised,

"in conjunction with the elements; for with every flash of lightning I brought my playing to a pause, which allowed the thunder to make itself heard independently." (82)

Czerny informs us, with reference to Beethoven's Op.31/2 sonata in d (finale), that he

"improvised the theme for this piece of music when he saw a rider gallop past his window (in 1803)*. Many of his most beautiful compositions originated through similar coincidences. With him, every sound and every movement became music and rhythm." (83)

All such influences, however, must be fully integrated into the fabric of the music, and techniques such as the strict style must not obtrude like the proverbial sore thumb. Seyfried, describing Wölffl's improvisation, wrote:

"He used art only as a means to an end, never to exhibit his acquirements. He always enlisted the interest of his hearers and inevitably compelled them to follow the progression of his well-ordered ideas."

He adds, significantly:

"Whoever has heard Hummel will know what is meant by this...." (84)

*Czerny's date is incorrect; the Op.31 set was written 1801-2.

NOTES to CHAPTER 10

(1) The Times, 29th June 1830, p.2.

(2) John Bull, 9th May, 1830, p.1.

(3) Zimmerschied/KAMMERMUSIK, p.281.

"Es ist als gesichert anzusehen, daß Hummel der erste war, der jemals im Konzertsaal nach aufgegebenen Themen improvisierte..."

(4) Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris, 2nd September 1838.

"Cette façon d'improvisation établit entre le public et l'artiste un rapport plus direct. Ceux qui ont proposé des motifs ont engagé jusqu'à un certain point leur amour-propre; l'adoption ou le rejet de ses motifs devient un sujet de triomphe pour l'un, de dépit pour l'autre, de curiosité pour tous. Chacun est désireux d'entendre ce que le musicien fera de l'idée qu'on lui a imposée. Chaque fois qu'il la présente sous une forme nouvelle, le "donataire" se réjouit du bon effet qu'elle produit comme d'une chose à laquelle il a contribué. Cela devient une œuvre en commun, un travail de ciselure exécuté par l'artiste autour de bijoux qui lui ont été confiés. À ma dernière séance, un charmant petit calice d'argent, d'un ouvrage exquis, attribué à l'un des meilleurs élèves de Cellini, avait été placé à l'entrée de la salle pour recevoir les bulletins thématiques."

(5) In ed. Ganche, Frédéric Chopin, sa vie et ses œuvres, Paris, 1925; quoted in Wangermée/VIRTUOSITÉ, p.18.

(6) Harmonicon, June 1830, p.264.

(7) Op. cit., July 1833, p.157.

(8) Athenaeum, 15th May 1830, p.301.

(9) Moscheles/LIFE, II, p.128.

(10) Op. cit., I, p.131.

(11) MM, August 1835, p.123.

(12) Moscheles/LIFE, I, p.318.

(13) Op. cit., I, p.127.

(14) Czerny/ERINNERUNGEN, p.21.

"Zum Schluß wurde der auch anwesende Beethoven ersucht, etwas zu spielen. Wie gewöhnlich, ließ er sich unendlich lange bitten und wurde endlich fast mit Gewalt von den Damen zum Clavier gezogen. Unwillig reißt er vom Violinpult die noch aufgeschlagene 2te Violinstimme des Pleyelschen Quartetts, wirft sie auf das Pult des

Fortepianos und beginnt zu fantasieren. Noch nie hatte man ihn glänzender, origineller und großartiger improvisieren gehört als an jenem Abend. Aber durch die ganze Improvisation gingen in den Mittelstimmen, wie ein Faden oder Cantus firmus, die an sich ganz unbedeutenden Noten durch, welche auf der zufällig aufgeschlagenen Seite jenes Quartetts standen, während er die kühnsten Melodien und Harmonien im brilliantesten Concertstile darauf baute. Der alte Pleyel konnte sein Staunen nur dadurch zeigen, daß er ihm die Hände klüßte."

(15) Moscheles/LIFE, I, pp.232-3.

(16) Op. cit., I, p.231.

(17) Op. cit., I, p.232.

(18) Op. cit., II, p.149.

(19) Op. cit., II, pp.111-2.

(20) Hummel, in a letter to Baron von Spiegel, dated 23rd March 1833.

"Vor 14 Tagen wurde ich von der Königin nach Windsor gerufen; ich mußte nach den Nachmittags Gottesdienst die Schloßorgel probieren und zur Gedächtniß der hier verstorb. Prinzess Luise etwas requiemartiges fantasieren, dem die Königin beiwohnte....."

(21) Harmonicon, January 1828, p.19.

(22) Moscheles/LIFE, I, p.63.

(23) /Sonneck//BEETHOVEN, p.25.

(24) Op. cit., p.31. (Czerny).

(25) Op. cit., p.116.

(26) MM, January 1835, p.15.

(27) Burney, Charles. Dr. Burney's Musical Tours in Europe, ed. Percy A. Scholes, 2 vols., London, 1959, II, p.219.

(28) Goethe, letter to Zelter dated 24th August 1823, in Goethe/ZELTER, p.221.

(29) Globe, 21st March 1830, p.139.

"....un simple morceau sans accompagnement produit souvent des impressions du même genre que celles que fait éprouver une grande symphonie de Beethoven. Cette manière toute poétique de sentir et de faire parler son art se révèle surtout dans l'improvisation: c'est là que Hummel est prodigieux et peut-être sans rivaux."

(30) Moscheles/LIFE, I, p.232.

(31) Harmonicon, December 1823, p.201.

(32) /Sonneck//BEETHOVEN, p.36. In his comments on this section, Sonneck writes that, although Seyfried could be unreliable, "his personal reminiscences and

impressions of Beethoven.....are accepted as authentic, though savoring somewhat of exaggerated self-esteem." (p.35).

(33) Czerny in /Sonneck7/BEETHOVEN, p.31.

(34) Op. cit., p.29.

(35) Czerny/ERINNERUNGEN, p.22.

"In der Geschwindigkeit der Scalen Doppeltriller, Sprünge, etc kam ihm keiner gleich auch Hummel nicht."

(36) Op. cit., p.21.

"Im Allegrotempo wurde das ganze durch Bravourpassagen belebter, die meist noch schwieriger waren, als jene die man in seinen Werken findet."

(37) /Sonneck7/BEETHOVEN, p.15.

(38) Op. cit., p.22.

(39) Loc. cit.

(40) Holmes/RAMBLE, p.149.

(41) Op. cit., pp.236-7.

(42) Athenaeum, 15th May 1830, p.301.

(43) Harmonicon, January 1833, p.9.

(44) Novalis, in Fragmente aus den letzten Jahren 1799-1800.

"Eigentliche romantische Prosa, höchst abwechselnd, wunderbar — sonderliche Wendungen; rasche Sprünge — durchaus dramatisch."

(45) In spite of its early date of publication (1938), this book remains the only scholarly, full-length treatment of the subject.

(46) Ferand/IMPROVISATION, pp.14-5.

"Freilich setzt diese Art des musikalischen Schaffens, im Gegensatz zu den physiologischen Reflexbewegungen, die nur einer Auslösung in einer bestimmten Situation bedürfen, eine kürzere oder längere Übung voraus, auf den höheren Stufen künstlerischer Improvisation sogar eine äußerst strenge und langandauernde.."

(47) See Caswell, Austin. Mme Cinti-Damoreau and the Embellishment of Italian Opera in Paris: 1820-1845, in JAMS

(48) Kalkbrenner/TRAITÉ, p.39.

"Voici une suite de modulations partant de la septième diminuée, que je recommande particulièrement à l'attention de ceux qui veulent improviser et moduler."

(49) Fétis/MÉTHODE, p.73.

- (50) Ferand/IMPROVISATION, p.15.

"...das besagt jedoch nichts gegen die Tatsache, daß auch in den Produkten einer hochentwickelten und formvollendeten Improvisation die gedankliche Tätigkeit gegenüber der unmittelbaren, spontanen, gefühlsmäßigen Grundhaltung weitgehend in den Hintergrund tritt."

- (51) Hummel/SCHOOL, Pt.III, Sect.2nd, Ch.7, pp.73-4.
 (52) Nettl/IMPROVISATION, p.15.
 (53) Moscheles/LIFE, I, p.71.
 (54) Harmonicon, June 1829, p.146.
 (55) Athenaeum, 15th May 1830, p.301.
 (56) Harmonicon, May 1833, p.102.
 (57) Hummel also played the organ, but was dissuaded from too much of this by Haydn in 1795, because of the detrimental effect on his piano touch. See Benyovszky/HUMMEL, p.49.
 (58) Musical Athenaeum, 1842, p.13.
 (59) Harmonicon, June 1824, p.110.
 (60) Holmes/RAMBLE, p.94.
 (61) Op. cit., p.149.
 (62) Loc. cit.
 (63) Mozart, letter to his father, dated 23rd/4th October 1777; quoted in Rowen, Ruth Halle. Music through sources and documents, New Jersey, 1979, p.228.
 (64) Musical Athenaeum, 1842, p.14.
 (65) I do not include liturgical music here, nor the concert-parties of such figures as Baron van Swieten, whose passion for early music was an important influence upon the composers with whom he came into contact and, through them, eventually, on musical taste generally. For further information on van Swieten, see Landon/HAYDN, IV, pp.27ff..
 (66) Shelley, in "A Defence of Poetry."
 (67) Novalis, Fragmente des Jahres 1798.

"Welche unerschöpfliche Menge von Materialien zu neuen individuellen Kombinationen liegt nicht umher! Wer einmal dieses Geheimnis erraten hat, der hat nichts mehr nötig als den Entschluss, der unendlichen Mannigfaltigkeit und ihrem blossen Genusse zu entsagen und irgendwo anzufangen...."

- (68) For example, in Biographia Literaria, Vol.II.
 (69) Wordsworth, Preface to the "Lyrical Ballads".
 (70) Shelley, in "A Defence of Poetry."

- (71) Novalis, in Das allgemeine Brouillon 1798-9.
("The Poet worships coincidence.")
- (72) Moscheles/LIFE, I, pp.133-4.
- (73) Harmonicon, January 1833, p.9.
- (74) Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris, 24th January 1836.
"....puis ils ont été réunis et se sont servis mutuellement d'accompagnement avec un art infini, bien qu'en apparence, il n'y ait aucun rapport entre eux."
- (75) Kalkbrenner/TRAITÉ, p.8.
"C'est l'étude la plus nécessaire pour le pianiste qui veut devenir improvisateur."
- (76) Athenaeum, 15th May 1830, p.301. This was the occasion upon which Hummel received "unprofitable" subjects for improvisation from his audience.
- (77) Moscheles/LIFE, I, p.32.
- (78) Op. cit., I, p.274.
- (79) Fétis/BIOGRAPHIE, IV, p.387.
"...certains traits inattendus, hasards heureux d'un beau génie..."
- (80) Ferand/IMPROVISATION, p.26.
"...und das von der Natur gelieferte Rohmaterial, nicht etwa äußerlich nachahmend, sondern in absolut-musikalische Gebilde transformiert, zu verwerten...."
- (81) Louis Moreau Gottschalk; quoted in Barnum/HUMMEL, p.42.
- (82) Moscheles/LIFE, I, p.20.
- (83) Czerny/VORTRAG, p.48 (footnote).
"Das Thema zu diesem Tonstücke improvisierte Beethoven, als er einst (1803) einen Reiter an seinem Fenster vorbeigaloppieren sah. Viele seiner schönsten Werke entstanden durch ähnliche Zufälle. Bei ihm wurde jeder Schall, jede Bewegung Musik und Rhythmus."
- (84) /Sonneck/BEETHOVEN, p.37.

CHAPTER 11 - THE INFLUENCE OF IMPROVISATION

(1) Improvisation and Performance

There is always an element of chance in performance, however detailed and faithful the following of the score: the extreme unlikelihood of identity of tempi in different performances of the same work even by the same performer is one of the more obvious cases. But in improvisation, even the element of chance, brought about not only by momentary decisions but by the very fact of physical performance in the sense of mechanical contact with an instrument, can be turned to good effect on the spur of the moment. (Here I must take up the case of the "happy accident" dealt with to an extent at the end of the last chapter.)

"Constantly new sources of inspiration are created from the individual stages of the act of realisation and in direct contact with the material /Material/ (voice or instrument). Even faults, technical slips, or an accidental touch can give rise to artistic creations. Every experienced improviser can tell us how an unintentional, accidentally struck harmony or note, "alien to the melody" /"melodiefremde"/ — if I may say so — can be significantly and positively formed by means of spontaneous and interesting resolution or development, especially if it is further displayed by way of additional repetition and accentuation. In this respect Franz Liszt, that masterly representative of ingenious improvisation, appears to have been particularly outstanding. One of his lady pupils tells us that he knew how to make the best of these gross "blunders" — which, significantly, occurred quite frequently — with a superior smile and a perplexingly witty phrase.... a successful study of improvisation has to make use of such productive mistakes by consistently practising the continuation and development of even the most absurd harmonies and melodic creations...."(1)

The "lady pupil" in question was the American pianist Amy Fay, and her description, to which Ferand refers, is of

particular interest here.

"Liszt sometimes strikes wrong notes when he plays, but it does not trouble him in the least. On the contrary, he rather enjoys it. He reminds me of one of the cabinet ministers in Berlin, of whom it is said that he has an amazing talent for making blunders, but a still more amazing one for getting out of them and covering them up. Of Liszt the first part of this is not true, for if he strikes a wrong note it is simply because he chooses to be careless. /!7 But the last part of it applies to him eminently. It always amuses him instead of disconcerting him when he comes down squarely wrong, as it affords him an opportunity of displaying his ingenuity and giving things such a turn that the false note will appear simply a key leading to new and unexpected beauties. An accident of this kind happened to him in one of the Saturday matinees, when the room was full of distinguished people and of his pupils. He was rolling up the piano in arpeggios in a very grand manner indeed, when he struck a semi-tone short of the high note upon which he had intended to end. I caught my breath and wondered whether he was going to leave us like that, in mid-air, as it were, and the harmony unresolved, or whether he would be reduced to the humiliation of correcting himself like ordinary mortals, and taking the right chord. A half smile came over his face, as much as to say — "Don't fancy that this little thing disturbs me," — and he instantly went meandering down the piano in harmony with the false note he had struck, and then rolled deliberately up in a second grand sweep, this time striking true. I never saw a more delicious piece of cleverness. It was so quick-witted and so exactly characteristic of Liszt. Instead of giving you a chance to say, "He has made a mistake," he forced you to say, "He has shown how to get out of a mistake." " (2)

Whether Liszt was improvising or performing a composition is not clear in this instance; his tactic in repeating an arpeggio is obviously outside his brief, however, and is in itself improvisatory.

We have no information on such accidents in the case of Hummel — in fact, it seems that ease and accuracy were hallmarks of his improvisation and performance, as we have seen in Chapter 7. However, I am more concerned with the conscious application of features born of improvisation,

and I hope to show that these can be discerned at all levels in the music.

It is obvious that many of these features — manner of playing, expression, etc. — can be seen as matters of performance practice, both in general and within the period in question. It is, after all, the prerogative of the performer to interpret the music, to breathe life into it, and so to communicate to the audience the "message" of the composer, tempered by his or her own humanity and personal experience, and, in the case of music from an earlier time, by the prevailing style and the spirit of the age.

However, in the early part of the nineteenth century, in which improvisation was still an accepted and expected part of the performer's accomplishments, and since that latter was also usually a composer, the improvisatory style, from the addition of minor embellishments to the production of cadenzas and beyond, was, as we have seen, very much bound up with the performer's art .

(2) Improvisation and Composition

Many of the great and not-so-great Classical and Romantic composers were, if not famous for improvisation, known to have improvised either for pleasure, as a means of practice, or to stimulate composition. Even Joseph Haydn, whose sophisticated masterpieces seem far removed from anything remotely extempore, used this method according to contemporary reports.

"At eight Haydn had his breakfast. Straight after that he sat down at the piano and phantasised until he had found the ideas to serve his purpose, which he then wrote down immediately. In this way the first sketches of his compositions were created." (3)

Ries reports that the finale of Beethoven's "Appassionata" sonata was conceived through what appears to be improvisation.

"I sat in the corner and soon he had forgotten me. Then he raged on the keys for at least an hour, developing the new Finale of this Sonata (which appeared in 1807) in the beautiful form we know." (4)

Harold Truscott, referring to the same incident, says that Ries "heard Beethoven improvise practically the whole of the finale of this sonata 'in the beautiful form we know'". He adds (rightly):

"How much credence one can give this is difficult to assess; certainly it could not have been 'in the beautiful form we know', for Beethoven's sketches contradict this. But that Ries heard a version very nearly as impressive as the final one may very well be true." (5)

Schenk, whom I have alluded to earlier as Beethoven's teacher of counterpoint before Albrechtsberger, "surrendered his heart to the impressions made upon it" while Beethoven improvised, continues, surprisingly:

"The first thing that I did the next day was to visit the still unknown artist who had so brilliantly disclosed his mastership. On his writing-desk I found a few passages from his first lesson in counterpoint. A cursory glance disclosed the fact that, brief as it was, there were mistakes in every key." (6)

Nigel Fortune states that Beethoven's

"skill as a pianist and in particular as an improviser appears to have determined for him his early development as a composer." (7)

These extempore performances of his influenced other composers as well, for Beethoven writes in 1794:

"...I had already noticed fairly often how some people in Vienna after hearing me extemporize of an evening would note down on the following day

several peculiarities of my style and palm them off with pride as their own." (8)

Indeed, Kerman has suggested that the patches of unconnected piano-figuration in the Kafka miscellany were "improvisations on paper" (9) possibly for use in later extemporising, thus throwing an interesting light on the composer/performer in reverse, so to speak, but still underlining the connection between the two processes, even in the case of the conscious craftsman par excellence among geniuses. So, it is a little surprising, perhaps, in view of our present disregard for improvisation and our view of Beethoven the composer, that the article devoted to him in a series of "Lives of Celebrated Musicians" in MM of December 1835 should state:

"It was unanimously agreed that his triumph was in the execution of a fantasia, and in the art of varying any given theme without the least pre-meditation." (10)

The mutual influence of improvisation and composition is also referred to by Ferand, quoting G.F. Wehle: (11)

" "Theoretical knowledge can gradually be extended in the course of further improvisatory exercises" and can be gained "alongside improvisation"." (12)

Following through his ideas towards a prescription for a (student's) study of the subject, he writes:

"If more is needed than just a tasty ingredient to general or specialised /speziellen/ music-lessons, all improvisation must be aimed at the command of certain techniques (alongside the development of natural inclinations and creative powers), which, irrespective of the essential requirements in playing-techniques, include all components of modern compositional techniques, and, therefore, have regard for the means of forming melodies, for harmony, including modulation, for part-writing /Stimmführung/, for form, but also for the

possibilities of timbre, the "orchestration" /"Instrumentation" / on the piano (if this instrument is concerned). To the command of this general musical knowledge, the particular improvisatory and psychological talents and abilities must be added: for example the "inner hearing", the awareness of, and imagination with, notes /TonbewuBtsein, Tonvorstellung /, the ability to transpose quickly, and alertness, inventiveness, and phantasy." (13)

Although this may seem to be expecting rather a lot of improvisation, many of these desiderata were noted by commentators in the period as being present to a high degree in impromptu performances, and much more so than in composed works. Baron de Trémont, writing of Beethoven, says:

"I maintain that unless one has heard him improvise well and quite at ease, one can but imperfectly appreciate the vast scope of his genius..." (14),

and the reviewer of a concert given by Dussek in 1802 makes a similar point:

"In the Concerto in G minor, his own composition, and full of character, he mastered great difficulties apparently quite without effort, exhibiting in addition to his extraordinary execution a precision and delicacy, not often found so combined. These excellencies he manifested in a still higher degree in an extemporaneous fantasia." (15)

In Hummel's case, I refer again to the point made by the reviewer in Le Globe (16):

"This entirely poetic manner of feeling and of making his art speak reveals itself above all in his improvisation: it is here that Hummel is prodigious, and perhaps without rivals." (17)

As I have noted, the influence between improvisation and performance was reciprocal, and the two drew closer together during this period. Towards the end of the eighteenth century what was expected of an improvisation and a

composition was different.

"This distinction between the main corpus of the standard genres and the "breakaway" genre of the free fantasia began to disappear at the turn of the century, the "connoisseur" art began to infiltrate into sonatas and symphonies." (18)

The reactionary Gerber deplores this in 1817.

"Finally, it appears to me as if the fantasia, like a despot, has seized absolute power over music. Music without fantasy is inconceivable, of course; but it must be governed judiciously by taste and reason. At present, however, one can no longer perceive either any definite musical forms or any limits to the influence of the fantasia. Everything goes in all directions but to no fixed destination; the madder, the better! the wilder and stranger, all the more novel and effective; this is an endless straining after distant keys and modulations, enharmonic deviations, ear-splitting dissonances and chromatic progressions, an incessant process and without respite for the listener. In such a way we hear and play nothing but fantasias. Our sonatas are fantasias, our overtures are fantasias and even our symphonies, at least those of Beethoven and his like, are fantasias." (19)

Improvisation represented an immediate creative heightening of all the factors of its written counterpart expressed in and through a performance of remarkable quality. The hearer was prepared to be inveigled into suspending his judgement, if not entirely, then the most critical part of it. Tomaschek, like Gerber, but some twenty years earlier, had his doubts about Beethoven when he began to notice aspects of the latter's improvisational style appearing in his works:

"...he played...an improvisation on the theme: 'Ah! vous dirai-je, Maman'. This time I listened to Beethoven's artistic work with more composure. I admired his powerful and brilliant playing, but his frequent daring deviations from one motive to another, whereby the organic connection, the gradual development of idea was put aside, did not escape me. Evils of this nature frequently weaken his greatest compositions, those which sprang from a too exuberant conception. It is not seldom that the unbiased listener is rudely awakened from his transport. The singular and original seemed to be his chief aim in composition...." (20)

Though obviously reflecting Tomaschek's own views and preferences, the dichotomy between what was acceptable in composition and improvisation is expressed clearly here.

While on a diplomatic mission to Vienna in 1809, the musical enthusiast Baron de Trémont heard Beethoven improvise, and makes the interesting comment that

"...His tempestuous inspiration poured forth lovely melodies, and harmonies unsought because, mastered by musical emotion, he gave no thought to the search after effects that might have occurred to him with pen in hand; they were produced spontaneously without divagation." (21)

Another indication of reciprocity is the need for some kind of overall shape to the extemporisation, a lack of which is noted on occasion in less good examples.

"Eternal motivos, resumed and laid aside at pleasure, can have no other effect than to weary and disgust; there can be little or no title to praise in the execution, when there is neither unity nor design in the thing executed." (22)

Fétis advises calmness in the improviser

"in order to draw up in haste a plan in which his ideas may be arranged according to a certain progression of interest." (23)

He justifies this:

"Perhaps it will appear that a plan traced out must be an obstacle to the richness of the imagination; but it is nothing of the kind; it is with certain parts of the improvisation as with written music: for example, the return of certain principal ideas is as necessary for the effect there, as in a composition meditated on at leisure. If different ideas succeed each other without interruption, from the start to the finish, only a confused idea of what they have heard remains in the memory of the listeners, and, brilliant as may be the thoughts of the improviser, they only leave behind them a vague impression of pleasure.

The art of drawing up a plan without warning and of regulating the return of principal ideas is the result of experience. The result of this is that

the most skilful improvisers have vowed that their talent is as much the fruit of labour as of inspiration." (24)

What Fétis has in mind is not a rigid framework, but a general scheme whereby themes or subjects will return in some form at some points to give shape to the whole; the details, the when and how, are a consequence of the ebb and flow of the creative urge, so that form and content are indissoluble. This is not altered by the fact that the form, such as it is, may approximate to, or even be at times identical with, the formalised structures of composed music. Czerny, in his Systematische Anleitung zum Fantasieren auf dem Pianoforte (c 1829)*, considers improvisation in sonata form with freer types (25) and, elsewhere, places Beethoven's improvisations in three categories, depending on whether the themes were given to him, or freely chosen.

"Firstly: In the form of the first movement or the Rondo-finale of a sonata, in which he regularly concluded the first part, and in which he began a middle melody in a related key; and the second part in which he gave way freely to his enthusiasm, but with every possible use of the motif.....

Secondly: In the free variation form similar to his Choral Fantasy Op.80, or the choral finale of the ninth symphony, both of which give a true picture of his improvisations of this kind.

Thirdly: The mixed kinds, where, pot-pourri-like, one thought follows another, like his solo-fantasy, Op.77." (26)

Czerny's second and third categories are familiar enough, but is he saying that Beethoven improvised on occasion in sonata form? If so, the description he gives of the form is woefully inadequate, the more so when one considers his strong pedagogic interest in form; his School of Practical Composition, Op.600, which appeared probably two years

*(Czerny/ANLEITUNG).

before the source of the above quotation (c.1840⁽²⁷⁾), certainly shows no wooliness in formal definition. Indeed, his near-equation of first- and last-movement forms is sufficient to warrant the conclusion that he is approximating here. The quotation does show, however, that some kind of structural ordering was a feature of the better extemporisations. Holmes describes similar planning in the case of the organist J. Schneider.

"During my visit Mr. Schneider sat down and extemporized on his pianoforte in a very masterly manner, preluding in C minor, introducing an air with variations in the same key, and concluding with a fugue in the major, all which movements grew out of one another, with a real musician-like inspiration." (28)

A pleasing, satisfying shape was one of the distinguishing features of Hummel's improvisations, and this is mentioned in the very few descriptions containing what might be allowed to pass for detail. Marmontel writes that Hummel

"has never been equalled by anyone in the marvelous art of instantaneously fixing ideas, of giving them life and form...." ,

and, referring to him as "improvisateur incomparable", continues:

"...he knew how to conduct and regulate inspirations with matchless perfection. There was as much order and skill in his improvisations, knowledge and spontaneity united so happily in them, that on hearing them, charmed and dazzled, one would take for the result of meditated work, those pieces so rich in detail and ingenious combinations, bound together with so much art, balanced with such felicity." (29)

Describing a concert in Brussels in 1846, in which Moscheles improvised on themes from Weber given him by the audience, Fétis is more detailed:

"The plan of his improvisation was not established in successive variations of different themes. After an introduction, Moscheles, taking possession of his three motifs as before, to form a single whole, let us hear first a free fantasy from his imagination, where light indications of the themes were thrown here and there to prepare the ear for hearing them developed. Then these themes appeared in succession, were worked upon one by one..., connected one to the other by the most happy transitions; then they were re-united and used as mutual accompaniment with infinite art, although, in appearance, there was no connection between them. And in all that, no hesitation, no gropings; everywhere clear thought, rich in imagination, but admirably well controlled." (30)

Basically, the plan was a prelude, free play with thematic reference, development of the themes in succession (almost certainly including variation treatment), and contrapuntal combination of themes.

The "Berliner allgemeine musikalische Zeitung" gives a less detailed outline of a Hummel improvisation of 1826:

".....the promised fantasy followed
/an_7 Introduction, five themes, one
of which was played without further commentary
/Ausführung/, one with seven or eight variations,
the other three after various modulations into bass,
the middle part, and the treble, finally the finale
of the first act of Don Juan as we know it from the
piano-arrangements....." (31)

It is likely that the Don Juan extract was suggested by something earlier in the extemporisation, and that Hummel "paved the way" musically. Spohr's description of Hummel's improvisation for dancers at a private gathering in Vienna during the Congress is one of the clearest we have:

"I especially remember with great pleasure one evening when he improvised in so splendid a manner as I never since heard him whether in public or in private. The company were about to break up, when some ladies, who thought it too early, entreated Hummel to play a few more waltzes for them. Obliging

and galant as he was to the ladies, he seated himself at the piano, and played the wished for waltzes, to which the young folks in the adjoining room began to dance. I, and some other artists, attracted by his play, grouped ourselves round the instrument with our hats already in our hands, and listened attentively. Hummel no sooner observed this, than he converted his play into a free phantasia of improvisation, but which constantly preserved the waltz-rhythm, so that the dancers were not disturbed. He then took from me and others who had executed their own compositions during the evening a few easily combined themes and figures, which he interwove into his waltzes and varied them at every recurrence with a constantly increasing richness and piquancy of expression. Indeed, at length, he even made them serve as fugue-themes, and let loose all his science in counterpoint without disturbing the waltzers in their pleasures. Then he returned to the galant style, and in conclusion passed into a bravura, such as from him even has seldom been heard. In this finale, the themes taken up were still constantly heard, so that the whole rounded off and terminated in real artistic style. The hearers were enraptured, and praised the young ladies' love of dancing, that had conduced to so rich a feast of artistic excellence." (32)

Again the pattern is preserved: the free play, the variations of "themes and figures", the strict fugue, and the free contrapuntal finale.

Holmes visited Hummel at Weimar in, or just before, 1828, and his description of the composer's impromptu playing is more general. The traveller was obviously very taken with him, and gives us a rare description of Hummel the man also:

"But to leave rhapsodies on garden pleasures, and to speak of the still more attractive union of amiability and genius in the person of a human being, I must turn to Hummel, the Apollo of this sacred spot. This musician, who might be surnamed the good, with as much justice as any person who ever earned that appellation, shows how much unaffected simplicity and friendly and caressing manners become one who is the musical idol of his countrymen; and upon whom "blushing honours" sit as easily, and are worn as carelessly as his morning robe. It is delightful to meet a great musician in his mental undress, when

he sits down to his pianoforte, and is liberal of what comes uppermost, lavishing thoughts and beauties with a noble prodigality. Hummel is, I think, the most charming and original extemporiser on the pianoforte that exists, for the fertility of his mind and the volition of his ideas, which seem in their endless ramifications quite inexhaustible, I have never heard his equal. It was my good fortune to spend some hours with Hummel, and while he played, to trace with eager interest the treatment of every new idea and melodious passage, and never have I employed time with greater satisfaction. In such playing as Hummel's one may hear the orchestral writer and deep thinker, as well as the mere pianist; passages of difficult execution do not arise to show what he can do with his fingers, but because his hand performs what his head conceives, and that sometimes chooses the crooked instead of the straight path. The most exquisite peculiarity of Hummel's mind is its lovely flow of melody, the elegant phrases which constantly start up, which, though not to be anticipated by the hearer, are never far-fetched or extravagant. His gliding, smooth, and expressive style; the beauty of his touch, which combines force, crispness, and delicacy; the soul of his appoggiature /sic/, and his refined modulation, are all true inheritances from Mozart. Hummel's performance is full and rich, and in the midst of all the modern polish of his melody those organic features with which his compositions abound, the imitations, fugued points, and sequences which enrich extempore playing, are not neglected. He is never lost in a fool's paradise in following a subject; but his eye, when I happened to catch it, showed an utter absence of sensation to external things in communing with the spirit of Beauty. Hummel told me, that he was so much engaged in composition, and in the superintendence of his opera, that he had little time for the pianoforte, and that he seldom played except when travelling; and in proof of what he said, showed me, laughing, his finger nails, which were grown into a very Nebuchadnezzar-like kind of longitude. This fact made his execution still more wonderful, as if a mere effort of the will were to ensure the hitting of distances, and the overcoming of mechanical difficulties." (33)

The Athenaeum also gives an account of Hummel's extemporising which, though it accords generally with the scheme given above, implies that the whole was neither rigid enough nor loose enough to cause any boredom. Like the previous quotation, parts of this have been used already.

"Mr. Hummel appeared somewhat discouraged by the unprofitableness of the.../subjects/which the audience/ presented to him, but, of course, did not reject them. We wish he had done so. He commenced with an introductory adagio, followed by some light and playful variations on the Swiss air, he modulated through a variety of keys into an elaborate fugue, in the progress of which he displayed all the enthusiasm of powerful genius, with the consummate art and refinement of the most profound musical science. Having submitted to the temporary restraint of the second theme, which he dismissed as soon as possible, he gave the reins to his imagination, and revelled in the mazes of melody and harmony, to the exquisite delight of his audience, and, we should suppose, to his entire satisfaction. During this most happy inspiration of talent and genius, he occasionally introduced a few bars of an old English song, "the flaxen-headed cow-boy," which he played and sported with in a manner at once so masterly and fascinating, that it might have been listened to for hours without a feeling of satiety." (34)

The critic in Le Globe also stresses both the spontaneity and the organic, integrated aspect of the general shape.

"Improvising for.../Hummel/ is not the work of mechanism and memory; he does not content himself with taking a theme, modulating and embellishing it for a few minutes, then leaving it aside to recommence the same operation on a second theme, or even a third; no, he seeks out a thought, and develops it in all its facets without formulae, without patchiness / pièces de rapports / by an effort totally spontaneous and daring. Moreover, these improvisations of sterling quality, if one may designate them so, enjoy a fame without equal in Germany." (35)

Fétis' biographical article on Hummel underlines this.

"In improvisation, Hummel carried so far the art of fixing fugitive ideas, of regularising them, and of giving order to the spontaneity of inspiration, that with the exception of certain unexpected features — happy accidents of a beautiful genius giving itself over to its inspirations — he seemed to perform thought-out compositions rather than true improvisations. And yet, one must not think that things so well managed, ideas so regularly developed, resulted in coldness; no, there was so much joy in the production of the ideas, so much charm in the manner in which they were linked together, so much elegance in the details, that the listener was continually seized by a feeling of admiration in hearing these beautiful improvisations." (36)

Another view is given by Chorley, still bearing out those already quoted, and it carries a sting in its tail, referring to a criticism of Hummel's music which had already been levelled against him during his lifetime, and which has persisted until very recently.

"By none who have heard Hummel's improvisation can it ever be forgotten. It was graceful, spontaneous, fantastic. The admirable self-control of his style as a player (displayed in a measurement and management of tempo unequalled by any contemporary or successor that I have heard), so far from leading him to hamper his fancy or humour, enabled him to give both the fullest scope — inasmuch as he felt sure that he could never ramble away into a chaos, under pretext of a flight across Dream-land. The subjects he originated in improvisation were the freshest, brightest, most various conceivable: his treatment of them could be either strict or freakish, as the moment pleased; — or he would take the commonest tune, and so grace, and enhance, and alter it, as to present it in the liveliest forms of a new pleasure. I remember once to have heard Hummel thus treat the popular airs in Auber's "Massaniello:" — for an hour and a half, throwing off a Neapolitan fantasia with a felicity in which his unimpeachable beauty of tone and execution were animated by the bright spirit of the south, as he wrought together the Chapel Hymn, and the Fisherman's Chorus, and the Tarantella, and Massaniello's air by the side of the sleeping Fenella. It is well known that the gift of musical improvisation can be cultivated, so far as readiness, order, and even climax, are concerned; — that the fancy, too, can be set free by exercise; but it is hard to conceive, that he who was the most various and the most masterly of modern improvisatori, should have been a mere machine into which so much learning had been crammed; and thus it is with regret that I have always fancied him undervalued and disparaged among those very persons of taste and philosophy whose boast it was to penetrate through forms and incrustations to the innermost heart of Nature." (37)

In the light of this "sting", it is difficult to decide whether one of Hummel's contemporaries is being general or particular when he says

"...when he.....fantasised, he unfolded a richness of forms and harmonic combinations; yes, he got so much into his swing, that one was often forced to

regret how much the idea lost its original warmth on the long dusty road from head to paper." (38)

A desire, in which contemporary critics and present-day scholars of the period would surely be united, is expressed by a critic in the Athenaeum in a review of a Hummel concert of 29th April 1830 in London:

"The concluding performance was extemporaneous, introducing "Là ci darem la mano," and "Fin ch'han dal vino," from Mozart's "Don Giovanni." We will not attempt to express our perfect satisfaction at this spontaneous and extraordinary combination of sound and sense, of which every evanescent note left a regret on our minds, that we had not the means of perpetuating its delightful impression."
(39)

Ironically, plans were already in progress to facilitate a "perpetuation". Stenographical pianos were invented to record improvisations, the first of which, by Eisenmonger, was patented in France in 1836. There is, apparently, a stenographical harpsichord in working order on exhibition at the Deutsches Museum in Munich (40).

With Hummel, particularly, we are allowed a glimpse of his lost improvisations in his extant compositions, as I hope to show in the next Section. I leave it to Ferand to sum up in the wider sphere of the general connection between improvisation and composition.

"Psychologically it is very interesting that even today we regard those compositions as the greatest revelations of musical genius which, along with methodical construction, most perfect form, compelling logic and utmost consistency, still arouse the impression of the immediate, accidental, unreflecting element which (organically grown) is the impression of improvisation. This is what we find again and again in the immortal masterpieces of composers like Bach, Mozart or Beethoven. Perhaps this "as if", the pretence of uniqueness of an instantaneous creation (where, however, utmost thought and method dominate)is the last aesthetic secret of all great art."
(41)

NOTES to CHAPTER 11

- (1) Ferand/IMPROVISATION, pp.17-8.

"Aus den einzelnen Phasen des Realisationsaktes, in unmittelbarem Kontakt mit dem Material (der Stimme oder des Instruments), entstehen immerwährend neue Quellen der Inspiration. Selbst Fehlleistungen, technische Entgleisungen, Zufallsgriffe können zu schöpferischen Anlässen werden. Jeder gewiegte Improvisator weiß davon ein Lied zu singen, wie eine zunächst gar nicht beabsichtigte, zufällig gegriffene Harmonie, eine "melodiefremde" Note (wenn dieser Ausdruck gestattet ist) durch spontane, interessante Auflösung bzw. Weiterführung — und erst recht, wenn sie durch nachträgliche Wiederholung und Betonung noch hervorgehoben wird — bedeutungsvoll und positiv gestaltet werden kann. In dieser Hinsicht scheint Franz Liszt, dieser Vollvertreter virtuosen Improvisatorentums, besonders hervorragend gewesen zu sein. Eine seiner Schülerinnen berichtet, daß er sich in den bei ihm bezeichnenderweise nicht allzu seltenen Fällen, heftigen "Danebengreifens" mit überlegenem Lächeln durch eine verblüffend geistreiche Wendung aus der Affäre zu ziehen verstand. Solche produktive Fehlleistungen muß sich eine fruchtbare Improvisationslehre durch konsequente Übung im Fortführen und Weiterentwickeln selbst der absurdesten Zusammenklänge und melodischen Bildungen zunutze machen; gerade an diesen spezifischen Improvisationsübungen aber ließen es alle bisherigen Lehrbücher fehlen."

- (2) Fay/MUSIC-STUDY, pp.242-3.

- (3) A. Chr. Dies. Biographische Nachrichten von Joseph Haydn. Nach mündlichen Erzählungen desselben, Vienna, 1810, pp.211ff.

"Um 8 Uhr nahm Haydn sein Frühstück. Gleich nachher setzte er sich ans Klavier und phantasierete solange, bis er zu seiner Absicht dienende Gedanken fand, die er sogleich zu Papier brachte: so entstanden die ersten Skizzen von seinen Kompositionen."

(Quoted in Ferand/IMPROVISATION, p.30.)

- (4) /Sonneck/BEETHOVEN, p.53.
 (5) Arnold & Fortune/BEETHOVEN, p.121.
 (6) /Sonneck/BEETHOVEN, p.15.
 (7) Arnold & Fortune/BEETHOVEN, p.197.
 (8) Beethoven/LETTERS, Post Scriptum in Letter 9.
 (9) Kerman, Joseph. 'Kafka' Miscellany, London, 1970, from the Introduction to Vol. I.

- (10) MM, December 1835, p.179.
- (11) Wehle, G. Fr. Die Kunst der Improvisation, Münster, 1925-6, p.XXV.
- (12) Loc. cit., quoted in Ferand/IMPROVISATION, p.24.
 " "...im Verlaufe der weiteren improvisatorischen Übungen....die theoretischen Kenntnisse allmählich ausgebaut....immer neben der Improvisation einherlaufend" erworben werden können."
- (13) Ferand/IMPROVISATION, pp.24-5.
 "Das Ziel jeder Improvisation, sofern sie mehr sein will als lediglich eine schmackhafte Beigabe zum allgemeinen oder speziellen Musikunterricht, muß neben dem Ziele der Entwicklung der schöpferischen Anlagen und Kräfte auch auf die Beherrschung ganz bestimmter Fertigkeiten gerichtet sein, die, abgesehen von den notwendigen spieltechnischen Voraussetzungen, alle Bausteine einer zeitgemäßen Kompositionstechnik beinhalten, also die Mittel der Melodiebildung, der Harmonik einschließlich der Modulation, der Stimmführung, der Form, aber auch die Möglichkeiten der Klangfarbe, der "Instrumentation" am Klavier (wenn es sich um dieses Instrument handelt) berücksichtig. Zur Beherrschung dieser allgemeinen musikalischen Kenntnisse treten die besonderen improvisatorischen, psychologischen Voraussetzungen und Fähigkeiten, wie die des "inneren Hörens", Tonbewußtsein, Tonvorstellung, die Fähigkeit der raschen Übertragung, Geistesgegenwart und schließlich Erfindungsgabe, Phantasie."
- (14) /Sonneck//BEETHOVEN, p.72.
- (15) Leipziger allgemeine musikalische Zeitung, Dec.1, 1802, quoted in Alexander/ Wheelock/ T/hayer/. Dussik, Dussek, Duschek, in Dwight's Journal of Music, Boston, 12th October 1861, p.219.
- (16) Le Globe, 21st March 1830, p.139.
 "Cette manière toute poétique de sentir et de faire parler son art se révèle surtout dans l'improvisation: c'est là que Hummel est prodigieux et peut-être sans rivaux."
- (17) Already quoted in Ch.10, Note 29 of this dissertation.
- (18) Schleuning/FANTASIA, II, p.15.
- (19) Ernst Ludwig Gerber, in a letter to Chr. H. Rinck, quoted in Schleuning/FANTASIA, p.15.
- (20) /Sonneck//BEETHOVEN, p.22.
- (21) Op. cit., p.73.
- (22) Harmonicon, May 1828, p.119.
- (23) Fétis/MÉTHODE, p.73.
 "Enfin, il est nécessaire qu'il conserve assez de calme, au milieu de ses émotions, pour ne pas

se laisser égarer, et pour tracer à la hâte un plan où ses idées soient disposées suivant une certaine progression d'intérêt."

(24) Loc cit.

"Peut être /sic/ semblera-t-il qu'un plan tracé doit être un obstacle au développement de la richesse de l'imagination; mais il n'en est rien; il en est de certaines parties de l'improvisation comme de la musique écrite: par exemple le retour de certaines idées principales y est aussi nécessaire pour l'effet que dans une composition /sic/ méditée à loisir. Que si des idées différentes s'y succédaient sans interruption, depuis le commencement jusqu'à la fin, il ne resterait dans la mémoire des auditeurs qu'une idée confuse de ce qu'ils auraient entendu, et si brillantes que fussent les pensées de l'improvisateur, elles ne laisseraient après elles qu'une impression vague de plaisir.

L'art de tracer un plan à l'improviste et de régler le retour des idées principales est le résultat de l'expérience. De là vient que les improvisateurs les plus habiles ont avoué que leur talent était autant le fruit du travail que de l'inspiration."

(25) This work is rather too "systematisch" to be of use in this dissertation, while Grétry's "Méthode simple pour apprendre à préluder" (1802) is too basic.

(26) Czerny/ERINNERUNGEN, p.21.

"1tens. In der Form des ersten Satzes oder des Final-Rondo einer Sonate, wobey er den ersten Theil regelmä^ßig abschloß, und in demselben auch in der verwandten Tonart eine Mittelmelodie etc. anbrachte, sich aber dann im 2ten Theile ganz frey, jedoch stets mit allen möglichen Benüt^zungen des Motivs, seiner Begeisterung überlie^b....
2tens in der freyen Variations-form ungefähr wie seine Chorfantasie op. 80 oder das Chorfinale der 9ten Sinfonie, welche beyde ein treues Bild seiner Improvisation dieser Art geben.

3tens. In der gemischten Gattung, wo potpourri-artig ein Gedanke dem andern folgte, wie in seiner Solo-Fantasie op. 77."

(27) Churgin/GALEAZZI and Newman/ CZERNY argue for this date.

(28) Holmes/RAMBLE, p.196.

(29) Marmontel/PIANISTES, p.182-3.

"...il n'a été égalé par personne dans l'art merveilleux de fixer les idées instantanées, de leur donner la vie et la forme....

.....Improvisateur merveilleux, il savait conduire et régler l'inspiration avec une perfection sans pareille. Il y avait tant d'ordre,

d'habileté dans ses improvisations, la science et la spontanéité s'y unissaient avec tant de bonheur, qu'en l'écoutant charmé, ébloui, on prenait pour le fruit d'un travail médité ces oeuvres si riches de détails, de combinaisons ingénieuses, enchaînées avec tant d'art, équilibrées avec tant de bonheur."

- (30) Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris, 24th January 1836, quoted in Wangermée/VIRTUOSITÉ, pp.17-8.

"Le plan de son improvisation n'était pas établi sur des variations successives des différents thèmes. Après une introduction, Moscheles s'emparant de ses trois motifs comme devant former un seul tout, a fait entendre d'abord une fantaisie libre de son imagination où de légères indications des thèmes étaient jetées ça et là pour préparer l'oreille à les entendre développer. Puis ces thèmes ont apparu successivement, ont été travaillés seul à seul..., se liant l'un à l'autre par les transitions les plus heureuses, puis ils ont été réunis et se sont servis mutuellement d'accompagnement avec un art infini, bien qu'en apparence, il n'y ait aucun rapport entre eux. Et dans tout cela point d'hésitation, point de tâtonnements; partout une pensée nette, riche d'imagination, mais admirablement bien réglée."

- (31) BAmZ, 3rd May 1826, p.142.

"...folgte die versprochene Fantasie. Introduction, fünf Themate, davon eins ohne weitere Ausführung nur vorgespielt, eins mit sieben oder acht Variationen, die andern drei nach mannigfaltigen Modulationen bald in den BaB, bald in die Mittelstimme, bald in den Diskant gelegt, endlich das Finale des ersten Aktes aus Don Juan wie wir es aus den Klavierauszügen kennen..."

- (32) Spohr/AUTOBIOGRAPHY, I, pp.191-2.

- (33) Holmes/RAMBLE, pp.261-3.

- (34) Athenaeum, 15th May 1830, p.301.

- (35) Le Globe, 21st March 1830, p.139.

"Improviser pour lui n'est pas une œuvre de mécanisme et de mémoire; il ne se contente pas de prendre un thème, de le moduler et de le broder pendant quelques minutes, puis de se laisser là pour recommencer la même opération sur un second thème, voir même sur un troisième; non, il cherche une pensée, et la développe sous toutes ses faces sans formules, sans pièces de rapports, par un effort tout spontané et tout hasardeux. Aussi ces improvisations de bon aloi, si l'on peut les designer ainsi, ont en Allemagne une célébrité sans égale."

- (36) Fétis/BIOGRAPHIE, IV, pp.386-7.

"Dans l'improvisation, Hummel a porté si loin l'art de fixer des idées fugitives, de les régulariser, et de donner de l'ordre à la spontanéité de l'inspiration, qu'à l'exception de certains traits inattendus, hasards heureux d'un beau génie se livrant à ses inspirations, il semblait exécuter des compositions méditées, plutôt que de véritables improvisations. Et pourtant il ne faut pas croire que de choses si bien conduites, d'idées si régulièrement développées, il résultât de la froideur; non, il y avait tant de bonheur dans la production des pensées, tant de charme dans la manière dont elles s'enchaînaient, tant d'élégance dans les détails, que l'auditoire était toujours saisi d'un sentiment d'admiration en écoutant ces belles improvisations."

- (37) Chorley/MODERN, II, pp.8-9.

- (38) Quoted in Zimmerschied/KAMMERMUSIK, p.281.

"...wenn er...phantasierte..., entfaltete er einen Reichtum von Formen und harmonischen Kombinationen, ja kam in solch einen Schwung, daß man oft bedauern mußte, wieviel der Gedanke auf dem langen dünnen Wege aus dem Kopfe aufs Papier von seiner ursprünglichen Wärme verliert."

- (39) Athenaeum, 1st May, 1830, p.270.

- (40) Harding/PIANOFORTE, p.87, footnote 1).

- (41) Ferand/IMPROVISATION, p.12.



"Es ist psychologisch ungemein interessant, daß wir auch heute noch gerade diejenigen Schöpfungen als höchste Offenbarungen des musikalischen Genius empfinden, die bei allem planmäßigen Aufbau, bei höchster Formvollendung, zwingender Logik und letzter Konsequenz doch den Eindruck des Unmittelbaren, Ungewollten, Reflexionslosen, organisch Gewachsenen, also eben — Improvisatorischen erwecken, wie wir dies bei unvergänglichen Meisterwerken etwa eines J.S. Bach, Mozart oder Beethoven immer wieder erleben. Vielleicht ist gerade dieses "Als ob", dieses Vortäuschen der Einmaligkeit, einer Augenblicksschöpfung, wo doch höchste Planmäßigkeit und Überlegung herrschen....., das letzte ästhetische Grundgeheimnis aller ganz großen Kunst überhaupt."

SECTION IV - IMPROVISATION - HUMMEL

CHAPTER 12 - THE INFLUENCE OF IMPROVISATORY PRACTICE

ON THE WRITTEN SCORE

PREAMBLE: Notation

The history of musical notation in the West is one of a series of attempts towards increasing accuracy in the representation of musical events as they are intended to happen, or have happened, in performance.⁽¹⁾ As such, it is recognised as being, at best, very approximate⁽²⁾, and, at worst, misleading — as in, for example, notes inégales, triplets ( = ), and others to be dealt with under the heading "Manner of performance" below. The would-be performer must therefore acquire a detailed knowledge of performance practice for a period, a school of composers, an instrument, and even a particular kind or genre of music. We have already seen that this was a very real consideration in early nineteenth-century music, and at this stage, some of Hummel's more general remarks on the matter will suffice.

"Let the player study the character of the composition, as otherwise he cannot possibly awaken in his audience the same emotions, as the composer has endeavoured to excite by his music. Let him also keep in mind steadily, whether he is performing an adagio or an allegro, for each requires a particular style, and that which is proper for the one, is injurious to the other." (3)

It is only by application of the "extra" knowledge to the written music that the anomalies referred to can be faithfully reconciled.

Hummel's notation was, by the standards of his time, extremely meticulous, as seen in his autographs and in his published works. This is shown, for example, in matters such as phrasing and articulation, which he will often suggest by unusual grouping of notes, such as the A^b pf. conc./I/356ff. (Ex.1) and /II/34 (Ex.2) — both, interestingly enough, from "freer" parts of the work. His sense of responsibility to the performer and to himself (as composer rather than Composer/performer) is borne out in this, in the great care and wealth of detail — to the point of fussiness, many would argue — in his Piano School, and in his efforts to secure for composers the copyrights of their own works⁽⁴⁾, to this end canvassing Beethoven on his death-bed. This concern was, of course, not entirely disinterested, in view of Hummel's excellent business sense and the huge revenue he received from his printed works, but it did go far beyond self-interest; the overwhelming consensus of opinion of him was that he was sincere, modest and fair in his dealings in all areas.

Mistakes and inexactitudes are seldom to be found in his fair copies, and this care often extends to his calligraphy, which is faithfully represented in general in at least the early editions of his published works. Similarly, ambiguities rarely occur, and his position generally on notational matters is shown in the Piano School in, for instance, his section on embellishments, with which he deals in great detail:

"As the number of these characters /i.e. embellishment signs/ formerly in use, and the slight shades of difference existing between them, often caused them to be neglected or misapplied, and, as in the

modern style of writing, many are become altogether unnecessary, and others are indicated to the Player by notes, in order to ensure the correct performance of them; it will not be superfluous to endeavour to introduce here, some more precise definition and limitation of them." (5)

He practises what he preaches to a great extent.

We must beware, however, of a blinkered view of interpretation in a period in which it was notoriously free, and often excessively so. Also, as I have remarked earlier, a piano tutor is a reference book of "perfect" solutions to clear problems and need not represent a virtuoso's performance practice with absolute fidelity.

In the following discussion, dealing with evidence for the improvisatory style in composition in the written scores, none of the headings is water-tight, but simply represent a focussing-in on particular aspects and momentarily treating them as separate entities for the sake of convenience.

EXPANSION OF THE GIVEN NOTATION

(a) Embellishments

(i) Decoration Signs


As Zimmerschied remarks ⁽⁶⁾, Hummel rarely uses either decorations or their signs in a traditional manner. However, because of its prevalence and its obvious usefulness as a shorthand symbol, the trill is an exception.

His use of the trill is interesting. As one would expect of Mozart's greatest pupil, he shows a Classical usage in early works, for instance, as a means of drawing attention to the end of a section, e.g., Op.2(a)/3/I/42-3



and 50-1; Rondo in E^b Op.11, bb.23-4 and 85-7. But, even later this continues, not surprisingly in the formally unadventurous concertos. A rather extreme case occurs in the pf. conc. in E/III/301-13, where a series of hand-breaking trills, many of them being associated with rapid leaps, lead into the final return of the rondo-theme, act as local decorations on the notes of the chord they outline (a decorated dom.), and generate a good deal of musical and physical tension before dissipating this at the end ("sempre più decres: e più lento il trillo.").

Even at these points of stylistic cliché, however, the impromptu originality of the improviser occasionally breaks through, as in Op.posth.1/I/214-5 and Op.81/II/43-4. In the later solo pf. works the trill becomes rarer, especially in faster movts: the f[#]son. (Op.81) contains no trills, either signified or written-out in either of the outer movts., unless one considers Ex.3 and similar passages — a very moot point — and the possibility of added trills in Op.81/III/168 +170 (Exx.4(a) and 4(b)). In both these cases, however, the trill would destroy the effect of the small notes at the ends of the bars, making them redundant.

In slow movements, as one might expect, trills abound, and their use is expressive rather than signifying formal divisions. To an extent, the comparative lack of sustaining power on Hummel's preferred Viennese piano lies behind much of his use of trills in slow movements, but it also represents his wish to provide points of largely harmonic repose, yet without cessation of melodic, or melodic-rhythmic movement, as, for example, in the pf. son. in D, Op.106/III/23, in Op.81/II/34 and in the Fantasy in E^b/g, bb. 396-7 and 401-3.

At times, the use is purely dramatic, as in Op.81/II/50/3 and ff. There is also very original use of trills on occasion as in Op.18/347-8 (Ex.5) and 401+2 (Ex.6), foreshadowing Beethoven's usage in the late period, though we look in vain for the latter's thematic use of the trill.

The incidence of mordent and turn signs also lessens in Hummel's later works. Their earlier use was often to underline galant phrasing as in Op.2(a)/3/I/40-1 (Ex.7). The lower mordent sign does not occur in the piano music, though the decoration is occasionally written out (Op.81/II/60). The turn sign is almost always used between notes, and is never inverted.

The sign for the grace-note ()⁽⁷⁾ appears with great frequency at all periods, and is always played on the beat, like a very short appoggiatura⁽⁸⁾. Its use in Hummel is very varied. It can be an acciacatura for percussive edge (see Ch.5, Ex.8, opening of Op.2(a)/3, and the opening of Op.81/I), or to articulate phrasing: see Op.2(a)/3/I/34-5/1, analogous to *ibid.*/bb.40+1, suggesting a harpsichord style but also appropriate to the Viennese piano; this use in phraseology is very rare. More subtle usage is shown in, for instance, the pf. son. in E^b, Op.13/II/72-3 (Ex.8(a)) where it adds to the sonority, momentarily completes the harmony on the first of each half-beat (marked *), and also adds an inner part. (Cf. the first appearance of this passage, *ibid.*/bb.3-4 (Ex.8(b)), which is more solid, in keeping with its "gran espressione"). The grace-note still reserves its usage in denoting the desired pitch for the beginning of a trill, and its purely decorative function in Hummel is not often found, one of the few examples being in Op.106/I/53, 54 +



56. It is interesting that in the F conc., many of the uncrossed grace-notes (♯) of the printed edition occur as ♯ in the autograph.

(ii) Written-out Decorations

True to his remarks on the "modern style of writing", Hummel tends to write out his decorations in general, again, increasingly so in his later works. Obviously, this happens in particular when the decorations do not fit into the categories of the accepted signs, as in the Polonaise "La Bella Capricciosa" in B^b, Op.55/Intro./2+4 (Ex.9) and Op.posth.1/I/175(pf.); when they are variants of the accepted signs, as in Op.11/23-4, the "Das Fest der Handwerker" variations for pf. and orch., Op.115/var.1/7 (Ex.10)⁽⁹⁾, Op.18/32 ; or to allow for greater accuracy than the signs imply, as in Op.posth.1/II/10-11, conc. in E/II/44 (Ex.11), Op.2(a)/3/II/32ff.(Ex.12) and Op.81/II/8+24. There are, of course, many instances of written-out decorations which occur within longer passages of notes such as those which can be seen in almost every slow movement or section, and these occupy a kind of "grey area" between this section and "Melodic Expansion" below. I have chosen to treat these under that heading, as they are usually difficult to extricate from their florid surroundings.

(iii) Harmonic Decorations

All embellishments and decorations affect harmony, however transiently, but this section deals with those which affect harmony primarily, rather than just melody. I have already referred to Hummel's use of the grace-note for predominantly harmonic purposes, and the only sign he uses

for harmonic decoration apart from this, is the spread chord () , distinguishing between this sign and the written spread (). The first of these is played on the beat, though, in effect, the lowest note will be very slightly before this, and it is implied, by contrast with the written spread, that the notes should be of equal volume. It is used when the melody is unusually simple, or contains a simple phrase, e.g., Op.13/II/1-2, and the septet in d, Op.74/I/133-4 (Ex.13).

The written-out spread is utilised to "point" the top note, which is on the beat. This is hardly ever found as a "pure" decoration: a musical ulterior motive can usually be discerned, as in Ex.14 (Op.81/II/11), where it has the functions of (a) a decoration, (b) the traditional recitative chord of punctuation, (c) throwing the high F[#] into relief, (d) helping to bridge the wide gap in registers (the distinctness of which was referred to in Ch.3 above), and there is an added function in the analogous passage in b.13, (e), where rhythmic abruptness is avoided in that the spread chord there carries on the movement created by the measured s-quavers in b.12⁽¹⁰⁾.

Equally interesting in these respects is the passage in Ex.15 (Op.81/I/235-42). This is typical of the improviser's "moment of repose" after a vigorous and difficult passage including, in this case, broken octaves against r.h. 3rds and quick r.h. position changes, and coming before the final brilliant cadential figuration. In fact, an aspect of the improvisatory creative process can be seen on the very page. The measured chord-spreading in b.236 occurs off the beat, but allows the root of the chord (F[#]) to be percussed on the beat (marked *) and continues the s-quaver movement

with gradual change of harmony. Then a written-out, dissonant, measured appoggiatura (G^b) to the spread chord in b.237 (for such it is, though displaced by this appoggiatura) strengthens its position in b.238, by becoming a kind of upper pedal in a notional II^7d chord ⁽¹¹⁾, and the idea is extended in the ensuing bars. This G^b becomes $G^\#$ and progresses by whole-tone steps ($G^\# A^\# B^\# D$) with dim. chords over a tremolando ton. ped., arriving at the dom.7th in b.241/ ♩ 3+ 4. The basic shape and pace of the figuration is continued in bb.242ff.

Very occasionally, Hummel will make use of a chord as a decoration, as in Ex.16 from Op.81/II/10. Here, the resolution of the dissonance in the upper octave (marked *) becomes a chordal decoration of the lower octave. At their reappearance later in the movement (b.65), the two r.h. chords in b.10 are fuller.

(iv) Textural Decorations

Ex.8(a) above contains an instance of textural decoration, where the grace-notes momentarily create a counter-melody, extremely brief though it is. Another example occurs in the E pf. conc./III/70-1 (Ex.17), this time involving an upper reiterated pedal-note. There is a passage in Op.posth. 1/III/85-97 where this principle appears to be in operation, and it is clear that Hummel is thinking in terms of two separate lines which might approximate to one or other of my rationalisations as shown in Ex.18. Each of the lines in my upper and lower staves could be seen as decorative to the other. This particular kind of style brisé figuration (and it is interesting in this connection, that the composer was also a good guitarist⁽¹²⁾) reminds one that, although Hummel

was undistinguished as a melodist in the usual sense, his basically melodic gifts were a source of comment when he improvised, as was his facility in combining melodies. This has already been noted in general, and examples in the stricter style include the early Op.7 three fugues, the fugual sections in the masses and the fugato passages in various works, such as Op.81/III/47-64. This last is an effective piece of musical emotional blackmail, where he proceeds from strict though sensitively-handled counterpoint on a well-worn "tag" to pomp worthy of Signor Contrappunto himself (bb.58-62), in which not even the expected trill is allowed to compromise the austerity of b.62. This is, however, shattered by the mocking flightiness of bb.63-4.

(b) Melodic Expansion

When one examines Hummel's expansions of melodic or harmonic basic material — which is very often difficult to isolate — one is plunged into the "ornament-as-opposed-to-variation" dilemma which Neumann outlines in his article "Ornament and Structure".

"The two notions, ornament and variation, are related as a narrower to a wider concept. Any ornamental addition is a variation, but of course not every variation is an ornament. Whether a change is to be classed as ornament or nonornamental variation will depend chiefly on whether or not most of the structural notes remain in place while a number of intervening tones are added. If they do remain, it is an ornament. If, on the other hand, many structural notes are changed, or if no increase in the number of notes has taken place, we have to do with a nonornamental variation. There are, of course, the inevitable borderline cases which will arise, for instance, when an extended ornamental melisma takes too free a flight and loses temporarily its close rapport with the basic melody." (13)

Much of Hummel's music, especially the slow movements of

his cyclic works and his freer works (fantasies, etc.) occupies this borderline area. Even here, however, the task of distinguishing the two components is made a little easier by his general clarity of structure and by the means he uses to make the listener aware of it. I mean "listener" in this case, as opposed to "reader" because, like all music, this needs to be heard to be fully appreciated. But the truism has a particular relevance in Hummel's case because the element of realisation in performance is so much in the forefront of his mind, and the instrument and its attendant techniques are such a determining factor in the composition and notation of the music, that the written score bears less relationship to our conception of the performed music than is usual. What appears on paper as a series of meandering hemi-demi-semiquaver chains can, in **performance**, make a high degree of artistic and musical sense, even though the work as a whole may not be a masterpiece in the great Western tradition of such works. The performer — and, in his own particular field, the improviser — must seek out and emphasise, however subtly, the points of structural reference, so that meandering for its own sake does not occur, and so that the listeners do not "lose the thread" and hence their interest. In improvisation, of course, this is of even greater importance than in performing a pre-composed piece, however free, though, by points of structural reference I do not mean a detailed preconceived plan in the sense of an established compositional form, however the great composers modify this.

"The typical improviser.....will find it difficult to act according to a preconceived plan, and in a

case where he does this, his improvisatory fantasy and temperament very quickly want to be freed from the fetters of preconceived reasoning in order to follow the natural organic laws of his inner creative instinct — which does not necessarily mean relapsing into formlessness." (14)

These points of reference will be seen in action, so to speak, in the later discussions of Op.posth.1/II and Op. 81/II. They include notes to which the composer will return either at pitch or in different octaves, or particular degrees of the scale, motivic references (melodic and melodic-rhythmic) — what Ferand calls "Urzelle" (15), and Nettl "building-blocks" (16) — harmonic references, either specific chords, or chord-relationships, and even textural references, as in the Op.18 Fantasy, where Hummel uses treble-bass alternations to introduce different sections of the piece, as indeed does Chopin in his f Fantasy, Op.49 (bb.52-3, 153-4, 197-8, and 233-4).

Difficult and inappropriate as working to a preconceived plan may be for the improviser, it is precisely what the composer must do to a great extent and, in his better works, Hummel compensates for his generally unoriginal and unimaginative adherence to the letter of the Classical framework by pouring improvisational liquor into the fusty wineskins of the received forms. In the more obviously "composed" ("serious") works, his music is at its best when these two elements, more-or-less "fixed" form and improvisatory creativity, fuse together, as for example, in Op. 81 (f[#]).

"....this, by general consent his most outstanding work in the field of the sonata, shows by its less rigid, yet equally firmly controlled form that he has given free rein to his creativity, which is now

mingled with true artistry. To the listener there is no obvious or conscious formal experiment here: each section seems to progress naturally to the next, with the result that, while not noticeably linked, the various sections exhibit an underlying unity." (17)

A particular case of the use of a kind of preconceived plan might be seen in the use of a micro-model in the improvisation on a "given" theme, and for our purposes here the theme is "given" by Hummel himself. Because they are less tied to a particular predetermined form and because of their inherent expressivity, it is in the slow movements within cyclic form that this type of improvisatory working-out is most often found in the more composed works, and where the greater freedom and spontaneity acts as a foil to, and a respite from, the comparative stricture of the outer movements.

Although slow-movement themes do not usually fall into the general categories of folk, folk-based or popular types of melody, they do share with these a simplicity, whether obvious or underlying, which is an important factor in giving the improviser and improviser/composer his points of reference. It is by returning to these or their substitutes that he can allow himself to indulge in flights of fancy, minimising the risk of pointless meandering.

An example of such referential usage can be seen in Op.81/II. The first movement finishes, as one would expect, on the tonic, F[#], and the opening of II presents this note in its new rôle of dom. of b at the outset (Ex.19); the theme itself also hangs around this note (same Ex.). Attention is drawn to this note,, especially in the upper octave, in various ways: the diversity of appoggiaturas on it,

its own usage in this manner (b.4), the percussive grace-note and tying-over in b.5/ $\text{♩}4$ and $\text{♩}4-5$ respectively, etc. Examples of its use as a point of reference are: (a) its appearance in a new harmonic guise at the beginning of the new section in b.11, after its harmonic decoration in b.10; (b) as the 3rd of the temporary D section as that key begins to establish itself (b.25), and also, when it does become established (b.30, where the 1st inv. causes the F^\sharp to appear in the bass); (c) it highlights the incidental modulation in b.37, and (d) begins the melody of the beautiful cadence-theme in b.45/ $\text{♩}4$. The F^\sharp is further in evidence (e) at the beginning of the central section of the movt. in bb.47-8, (f) appears as a dom. ped. (bb.54-6) before finally (g) causing the movement's opening gambit to become altered so that this F^\sharp can feature even more prominently (new version in Ex.20), to herald the return of the decorated theme, in which it makes its presence felt to an even greater degree than in the original, less-decorated version.

In general, Hummel's improvisatory expansions of melodies or motifs are either longer versions of note-embellishments, as in Ex.21, from Op.81/II, or accumulations of these, as in pf. conc. in E Op.110/II/87-90, and Ex.22 shows the basic and decorated versions of the theme in the intro. to the Capriccio in F, Op.49, which combines these usages. Expansion may also take the form of the enhancing of a note by repetition at pitch, or in other octaves, often with filling-in material (Op.posth.1/II/30-1, Op.81/II/34, and 44, given in Ex.23), or of filling-in to minimise the occasionally wide gaps between the piano's registers ("Oberons Zauberhorn" fantasia/22-7(pf.), Op.18/324-5, and Op.13/II/46-8 (Ex.24),

the latter combining these usages)⁽¹⁸⁾. Occurring on their own without filling-in material, the notes within which the gaps appear would in many cases be joined in performance by some kind of interpolated figuration during this and earlier periods. A well-known instance of this kind of gap occurs in Mozart's pf. conc. in A K. 488/II (Ex.25)⁽¹⁹⁾.

For the most part these expansions or filling-in passages are harmonically conceived in that they outline a chord whether in straight arpeggios or decorated and at times highly convoluted arpeggios. Plain arpeggios are most likely to be found at cadenza-points, as in the pf. rondo "La Galante" /Intro./37, and Op.81/II/43, or in the links between sections of a piece, which are also cadenza-like. This can be seen in the passages joining the last two movements of the pf. conc. in A^b and the Op.87 pf. quintet, and also in the introduction-main section links. Straight arpeggios also occur in initial or terminal flourishes, especially in large-scale public works, often taking the form of extended anacruses. Ex.26(b) shows an instance in which the basic version of the theme (Ex. 26(a)) has no counterpart to the new "anacrusis to the anacrusis".

Plain scalar additions are also comparatively rare and also tend to be found mostly as extended anacruses — again, whether the original melody has an anacrusis or not. Examples of this occur in Op.81/II/29-30, Op.13/II/45-6, and in the link from the introduction to the Rondo of the "Rondo de Société" (Gesellschaftsrondo).

In the main, the majority of Hummel's expansions and additions of this kind are more complicated, combining arpeggios, scales and decorations of all sorts with true

improvisatory skill and frequently with great subtlety. On paper these often look daunting, which, indeed, many of them are, and give the impression of mere note-spinning, which they rarely are. But, in the hands of a skilled and sensitive performer with a knowledge of and, perhaps above all, a sympathy with, this elusive style, they become utterances of true musical poetry and great delicacy, the last flowering of a great tradition which art-music would very soon banish as a poor relation, having been supported by it for centuries. (20)

"The neglect of improvisation, starting in the nineteenth century, is just one of the consequences of the consistently-increasing gulf between productive and reproductive musical practice." (21)

(c) Expression

Another aspect of the influence of improvisation can be seen in the increase in the use of terms and signs to do with the expressive side of the music, and the finer shades of meaning which these imply. There are various reasons for the increase and the detail: (1) the ever-growing awareness on the part of the composer — and the progressively stronger tendency towards its affirmation by society — that he was an artist rather than an artisan and wished to exercise control over his art-production in a more personal and proprietorial way; (2) in an age in which more and more of a composer's income would be earned from the sale of printed music — a particular consideration in Hummel's case — it was important that as much as possible of the original conception should be conveyed in the "frozen" form of published score so that the maximum justice would be done to music and composer; (3) the great increase in the middle-class, largely amateur, market,

the members of which could not but benefit from greater detail and clarity in markings and directions; (4) the stylistic transition from Classical to Romantic was characterised by a much greater interest in the colour of the music, so to speak, and it would be surprising if this were not reflected in the composers' attitude to the written score; (5) the awareness during the period of different schools and styles both of composing and performing, meant that such detail was necessary for a composer's own allegiances to be expressed, and for the performer to express this faithfully; (6) the general increase in specialisation: the idea of non-composing performers, and the inclusion of a much greater amount of the music of other composers in the performer's repertory, began to take effect during this period, and it was important that the intermediaries were in a position to transmit the composers' intentions as faithfully as possible⁽²²⁾; another aspect of specialisation was that, since most of the composers were still piano-virtuosos, and showed their interest in, and knowledge of, their chosen instrument in such detailed markings; (8) the technological advances applied to this instrument were to a great extent connected with the composers' ideal of increased expressivity, and their exploitation of this is shown in the greater lengths to which they went in order to specify their intentions in this matter in as accurate a manner as possible; (9) as has been mentioned, the trend in musical notation in general was towards increasing exactitude.

But a further reason, the influence of improvisation, must also be considered. Freedom in matters of phrasing, dynamics, expression, tempi, etc., were — and still are to a great extent — almost synonymous with improvisation or an

impromptu style, and the detail and great amount of the markings qualifying such matters suggests a public aware of — in fact very involved in — the creating/performing syndrome. Furthermore, far from being simply "expressive" in the sense of something added to a precomposed piece which is already complete in all its essentials, expressive directions and other "additions" to pieces in a more-or-less Romantic style and to the freer type of work within this style are often used to bring into focus important points in the self-generating structure which is the improvisational equivalent of the, to a greater or lesser extent, a priori form of the composed piece. A common instance of this is the slowing-down towards the ends of many sections, whether indicated in the music or not, and a good example of this being "written-in" at the compositional (or, in this case, "improvisational", perhaps) stage of a piece occurs in Hummel's pf. son. in f/I (c.1806)⁽²³⁾, "interesting as one of.../his/ experiments in form"⁽²⁴⁾.

"It is at once warmer and more poetic in its speech, freer and more irregular in its design, and less disposed to brilliance than his Op.13"/its immediate predecessor in the sonatas/. "Its improvisatory characteristics in with Hummel's reputation as one of the greatest improvisers alongside Beethoven." (25)

Here Hummel uses passages of freer tempo with wider and more contrasting dynamics to join together the sections of the first movement. Unlike free improvisation, where such passages often provide "pointers" to beginnings and ends of sections, more or less necessary for the audience's grasp of the shape, and give the extemporiser musical time and space in which to "take stock" of his situation, here, for the most part, the interpolations are emotional and expressive in an otherwise generally "regular" sonata-form movement. Thus,

the flourish in b.8 (Ex.27(b)) is an expansion of the opening anacrusis (Ex.27(a)), and introduces a decorated repeat of the first subject. It also makes a convincing bridge from the largely crotchet rhythm — in spite of the syncopations — to the increased activity of the s-quavers, and softens the forte/piano confrontation. Harmonically and phraseologically, it is important as well: the opening three-quaver anacrusis is dom. in function, although from the notation (C A^b E⁴), it hangs between ton. and dom., and to have repeated it unchanged after such a strong dom. as that directly before it (beginning of b.8) would have been weak. At the same time, the four-bar phrasing — often so tedious in this composer's works — must be preserved here, as it contributes much to the atmosphere of controlled melancholy ⁽²⁶⁾ by acting as a kind of rhythmic grid on the underlying emotion. Yet, it would not do to play it in strict tempo as written, and the clue is given in the "ten." marking on the first note (D^b), itself a very expressive dom. decoration. And so Hummel, with the unfailing emotional instinct of the great improviser, achieves in a handful of notes what a lesser composer would have taken longer to do, with consequent loss to the music in the present case.

The second of such interpolations, bb.25-39 (Ex.28) is more extended, and could easily be imagined as having been lifted directly from a free improvisation once the motives, or Urzelle had been established. The freedom of tempo (Allegro moderato — rallentando assai — Adagio — — Allegro agitato, and the unmarked, though implied, resumption of tempo primo, with frequent pauses), the comparative density of expressive markings, including ff and pp — the first of

the very few appearances of either in the movement; the number of stress-marks, sforzati and staccati, and phrase-marks, the unmeasured addition at b.31, the multifarious guises in which the Urzelle appears (marked x in Ex.28), — all are indicative of improvisatory tactics. Indeed, the Urzelle or its derivatives is rarely absent for long even in the more "composed" sections of the movement. My point here is not to "prove" a derivation from an improvisation, but to suggest that within the context of the whole work, Hummel's choice of this or that stock figure may not be entirely free.

As previously mentioned, Hummel was particularly careful about accuracy and expression marks, especially in the case of works about to be published. Yet this greater profusion of expression marks and playing directions occurs in pieces, movements or sections in which the improvisatory style is particularly in evidence, and even more so in sections or movements within a more obviously "Classical" design, such as sonatas and concertos. Significantly, it is these very works, in which the received structures are softened, or even altered, by improvisatory content so that together they synthesise a more-or-less new formal entity, which are considered his most successful musical achievements.

DEVIATIONS FROM THE GIVEN NOTATION

This area of discussion brings composer, performer and instrument into immediate contact, and concerns the manner of performance of notes and passages which appear unequivocal at first sight. That significant divergence from the written notes could, and did, take place in performance, was taken for

granted, we have already seen, and it is borne out in many Piano Schools of the period. In his exhaustive and interesting dissertation dealing with various manners of keyboard performance in this period (and just before), Jenkins quotes several examples in this connection, one of which is from Louis Adam; Jenkins writes:

"A straight forward passage such as the following presents no problems to the modern player; the contrast between the staccato notes of the right hand and the legato accompaniment of the left is a very simple and commonplace device.



But to Louis Adam and other teachers of the early nineteenth century, these articulation signs were indicative of a much more subtle style of playing. As we noted earlier, the slurs in the left hand presupposed the closest possible legatissimo touch. The staccato notes of the melody, furthermore, could be emphasised by playing them very gently after the beat, as shown by Adam in the following illustration.



....." (27)

Even more interesting is Hummel's own view on these written/played anomalies. In dealing with such arpeggio figures as Alberti basses in his Piano School, he counsels holding down certain notes, not only to "keep the hand more steady", but to give the performance a "richer and more harmonious effect" (28), and illustrates this as in my Ex.29. Though he refers to this as a "licence" (29), there are many examples of this kind of notation in his piano music, e.g., Exx.15 (illustrating an earlier point also), 30, and 31.






Some of these achieve a high degree of subtlety, such as the beautiful transition passage from Op.81/I/40ff. (see extract in Ex.32.)

The held notes are of local melodic, and often of thematic, significance: their use in, for example, the passage in bb.182ff. of Op.posth.1/III not only refers to a derivative of the main motif from the main theme of the movement, but also outlines the "subject" of the contrapuntal episode in which it occurs, first appearing in vc. and db., bb.180ff. On occasion Hummel resorts to the technique as a kind of aural "beacon" giving articulation to a passage in which they might have been missed because of their speed, and/or the presence of accompanying instruments, as in Op.posth.1/III/118-21 and 180ff. Here they also function as a guide to performer and conductor.

They are also used for harmonic reasons, especially at cadences (Op.posth.1/II/50-3, pf. r.h.), but, most often, as an aid to fuller sonority particularly in pf. l.h. (I/303-7 of the same work).

It is clear, moreover, that apart from the places where he indicates held notes, there are many similar passages which Hummel expects to be similarly treated, even though he does not indicate this by held notes or alternative stems or superimposed notes of longer value. This happens in repetitions of sections (such as the return of material in the reprise), or in sections and passages which are similar to each other. Much of this kind of notation is due to the comparative lack of sustaining power on the Viennese piano and his reluctance to over-employ the sustaining pedal. (30)

NOTES to CHAPTER 12

- (1) An interesting development in our own time was the successful attempt by the American Performing Rights Society to amend the Copyright Law, so that a recording of, for example, an electronic work, is accepted as a score, implying a recognition of the extreme difficulty (if not, in many cases, impossibility) of representing these works in notational form.
- (2) This not only refers to obvious matters such as dynamics, but even that parameter which notation purports to represent most faithfully, that of pitch. This being outside the scope of the present dissertation, it will be sufficient to mention such matters as the fluctuations in pitch standards, vibrato, the various kinds of temperament, and enharmonics on, for example, strings and winds.
- (3) Hummel/SCHOOL, Pt.III, Sect. 2nd, Ch. 2 , p.41.
- (4) An interesting account of this is given in Sachs/PIRATES.
- (5) Hummel/SCHOOL, Pt.III, Sect. 1st, Ch.1, p.1.
- (6) Zimmerschied/KAMMERMUSIK, pp.190-1.
- (7) Although this is a pitched notation, I prefer to treat it as an embellishment, since it is unmeasured.
- (8) At first sight, there appears to be ambiguity between Hummel's use of  and  . It would seem that the small notes are to be played on the beat since, in the Piano School (Pt.III, Sect.1st, Ch.4, p.9), he gives the mordent as  and in the "as played" section:  . When embellishments are to be played on the beat, he writes them out in unmeasured small notes, in the same bar as, and immediately preceding, the main note:  . In general, the main note gives the small notes part of its value. (See also Pt.III, Sect.1st, pp.12+13.)
- (9) This is an example of possible ambiguity, where the stress mark on the principal notes suggest that they should occur on the beat, rather than the small notes. The difficulties in fingering caused by the leap would seem to bear this out in this particular case.
- (10) This passage is curiously prophetic of a similar one in Beethoven's Op.109 in E/I. The Hummel work was published in 1819, and the Beethoven in 1820.
- (11) "Notional" because the tonic pull of the F[#] ped. is so great.
- (12) See Bone/GUITAR, pp.173-80.
- (13) Neumann/ORNAMENT, footnote 4 on pp.156-7.
- (14) Ferand/IMPROVISATION, p.15.

"Dem typischen Improvisator.....wird es schwer fallen, nach einem vorgefaBten Plane vorzugehen;

und selbst in den Fällen, in denen er dies tut, wird sich seine improvisatorische Phantasie, sein improvisatorisches Temperament nur allzu leicht von den Fesseln eines im voraus festgelegten Gedankenganges befreien wollen, um den inneren organischen Gesetzen seines Gestaltungstriebes zu folgen, ohne deswegen in Formlosigkeit verfallen zu müssen."

- (15) Op. cit., p.11.
- (16) Nettl/IMPROVISATION, pp.13ff.
- (17) Brock/INSTRUMENTAL, p.26.
- (18) One is aware, of course, that Hummel often creates these gaps simply to fill them in, and it is very difficult in many cases to categorise a particular passage of expansion wholly as either "linkage of enhanced notes" or as "filling-in between registers."
- (19) In Mishkin/INCOMPLETE, the author, referring to Mozart's crossings-out in the autograph of the pf. part of K.491, writes:

"Often Mozart has written in the crossed-out measures only the lowest and highest notes of ascending or descending passages of sixteenth-notes, presumably to remind himself of the outside limits of the runs or broken chord figurations which could be filled in various ways during actual performance. Sometimes he relies on disparate quarter-notes to remind himself what notes will appear "on the beat," the connective notes not being written but improvised anew for each reading." p.352.
- (20) However, having pursued a vigorous life in various areas, the improvisatory impulse has been enshrined in the counter-culture of jazz and jazz-rock music and has been re-instated in other forms of twentieth-century art music, such as aleatory, electronic and cerebral musics, etc.
- (21) Ferand/IMPROVISATION, p.18.

"Die im 19. Jh. einsetzende MiBachtung der Improvisation ist nur eine der Folgeerscheinungen der immer breiter werdenden Kluft zwischen produktiver und reproduktiver Musikübung."
- (22) Liszt, in whom were combined in the highest degree the functions of composer, virtuoso, improviser and performer of the works of others, was well aware of this duty to be as faithful as possible to the composer whose works he was playing, and expresses his feelings on the matter in his "Lettres d'un bachelier ès musique" (Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris, 12th February 1837) in the not entirely convincing spirit of the repentant sinner (though one agrees with the basic sentiments):

"J'exécutais alors fréquemment, soit en public, soit en des salons...les œuvres de Beethoven, Weber et Hummel, et, je l'avoue à ma honte, afin d'arracher les bravos d'un public toujours lent à concevoir les belles choses, je ne me faisais nul

scrupule d'en altérer le mouvement et les intentions; j'allais même jusqu'à y ajouter insolemment une foule de traits et de points d'orgue, qui, en me valant des applaudissements ignares, faillirent m'entraîner dans une fausse voie, dont heureusement je sus me dégager bientôt. Vous ne sauriez croire, combien je déplore ces concessions au mauvais goût, ces violations sacrilèges de l'esprit et de la lettre, car le respect le plus absolu pour les chefs-d'œuvre des grands maîtres a remplacé chez moi le besoin de nouveauté et de personnalité d'une jeunesse encore voisine de l'enfance. A cette heure, je ne sais plus séparer une composition quelconque du temps où elle a été écrite, et la prétention d'orner ou de rajeunir les œuvres des écoles antérieures me semble aussi absurde chez le musicien qu'il le serait par exemple à un architecte de poser un chapiteau corinthien sur les colonnes d'un temple d'Egypte."

- (23) Brock/INSTRUMENTAL gives 1807 (p.23). Sachs/CHECKLIST has "ca.1807" and Newman/SSB, "by 1807" (p.233). Kershaw/KEYBOARD, II, p.6 gives the first press report date: "WZ, 21.1.1807".
- (24) Brock/INSTRUMENTAL, p.23.
- (25) Newman/SSB, p.234.
- (26) Truscott in Hummel/SONATAS-m, /Introduction7 writes of an "elegiac quality" and of a "noble first theme" (p.iv).
- (27) Jenkins/LEGATO, pp.317-8.
- (28) Hummel/SCHOOL, Pt.II, Ch.2, p.67.
- (29) Op. cit., Pt.III, Sect. 2nd, Ch.2, p.60.
- (30) See his remarks in Hummel/SCHOOL, Pt.III, Sect. 2nd, Ch.3, pp.62ff.

CHAPTER 13 - SLOW MOVEMENTS

Improvisation represents the most complete and immediate fusion of composer, in the sense of creative artist, and performer, and I wish to show its influence on five genres of Hummel's extant composed works. These genres range from the least to the most free, for reasons which will be clear from their titles, and are types in which the improvisatory influence would be expected to be, and in fact is, more obviously in evidence.

The slow movement is "unfree" ("tied") in the sense that it must take its place within a larger cyclic form, usually, and therefore considerations such as key, mode, tempo, time-signature, and balance within the whole work take on an added significance. Unlike more-or-less public improvisation and, to an extent, variations, the composer is not dependent upon his audience in the sense of accepting an unexpected theme, or in the sense of having to choose one or several of a popular nature himself. On the other hand, however, thematic likenesses or even derivations tend to go across the component movements and sections of the cyclic forms in this period, and this may limit choice somewhat. Yet this in itself might be seen as evidence of a less conscious, more creative, or even improvisatory influence. Furthermore, the comparative relaxation of formal restraints in these movements, and the lessening of the qualitative and quantitative functional aspects of the themes, coupled with slow tempo, encourages more freedom than in movements of tighter structure, and allows for improvisational digression and decoration on various levels.

Hummel's general lack of the gift for writing simple beautiful melodies is clearly a disadvantage in slow movements, since it cannot easily be compensated for by a more intellectual bias which tends to obtain in other movements, and, indeed, from which slow movements usually give respite. This is partly the reason for his "dodging the issue" of a genuine slow movement, opting for less demanding solutions. Thus, in the d septet, he chooses a set of variations, andante, on a theme which, at its first presentation, is so difficult to isolate, that it seems to be itself a variant (Ex.1). However, it must in justice be said that, between a long and fiery first movement and a "Menuetto o Scherzo" which is tightly rhythmic and slightly sinister, partaking at times of the opening movement's predominantly passionate character, a fully-fledged lyrical slow movement might have been out of place.

There are also other movements of slower tempi which, though not variation-sets as such, are freely variative of their main, and often only, theme or melody. The theme/melody distinction is pertinent here, because the basis of movements of this kind, such as that in the f pf. son. Op.20, is frequently more motivic than purely melodic (Ex.2). Its bare octave statement is varied harmonically (bb.8/♩4ff.), contrapuntally in two (bb.20ff.) and three (bb.49ff.) parts, melodically (bb.36ff.) and with various combinations of these. Though it could hardly be called a free movement, the simplicity and naturalness of the structure and features such as the harmonic surprise in bb.105-6 (see Ch.5, Ex.12) suggest a largely improvisatory attitude, and accord with the descriptions of variation techniques in

extempore performance, as we have seen. This feeling is enhanced by the coda (bb.108ff.), which, by modulating from the ton. of the movement, A^b, to the dom. of the succeeding one, in f/F and ending on the half-close, leads naturally to the Presto finale.

A similar technique is employed in the slow "movement" of the Fantasy in E^b/g, Op.18, where the Mozartean, and in this case, very attractive, melody deceives the hearer by implying that the continuation will be in the galant vein. Its immediate repetition (bb.319ff.) is embellished melodically, and it is further decorated in b.321 with the melodic-contrapuntal figuration so common in Hummel (Ex.3) and very similar to that in Beethoven's Op.2/1/II (Ex.4). Free variations follow and though the "movement" ends in its ton. E^b, with a full close, a sense of anticipation is created by a darkening of the E^b chord with a χ^{b9} chord over the pulsating ton. ped. which is juxtaposed with the ensuing g section.

The Andante con moto movement in e of the Op.110 pf. conc. (in E) runs along similar lines, and although it has a second sub. in the rel. maj., this only provides harmonic and, to a lesser extent, rhythmic, relief, since it shares its anacrusis with the main sub. rhythmically (Ex. 5(a)+(b)). This movement is also linked to its finale, but the effect is seriously weakened by its ending in the parallel mode of the 3rd movt.'s E. Such is the amount of variative decoration in the pf. conc. Op.34(a) (in C)/II, that the themes are simply not discernible from the piano part alone.

In the A^b pf. conc. Op.113/II, a successful fusion of slow movement, free variation and finale-introduction

occurs. The orchestra opens with a declamatory premonition of the theme and the pf. solo states it simply and lyrically (bb.4/♩3-12/♩3). A comparison of this theme with its single varied return shows the melodic creativity and delicacy of Hummel's improvisatory embellishment (Ex.6). Again, the






"ending" is inconclusive, and an enharmonic change,
$$\begin{array}{cc} G^\sharp & A^b \\ E^b & = F^b \\ B^b & C^b \end{array}$$
 produces a Neapolitan chord leading to $\begin{array}{c} V \\ - \\ V \end{array}$ of A^b , and a short

cadenza prepares for the "Rondo, Alla Spagniola" (Allegro moderato) in the work's ton., A^b .

Of the more regular slow movements, one of the most successful is that of Op.81. It commences (Ex.9) with a declamatory statement also, and in this case it is not only a close reference to the whole work's basic motifs (Ex.7), but also a very clear — and typically improvisatory — reminiscence of J.S. Bach's fugue-subject in no. 5 of "Das Wohltemperirte Clavier", Pt.1, in D (Ex.8). The theme itself (dolente) (see. Ex.19, Ch.12) also bears the stamp of the Urmotiv, which permeates this movement, even to the extent of underpinning the lovely cadence-theme in bb.45-7.

This fine movement is in sonata-form, although the 2nd sub., in the rel maj., (bb.29/♩9ff.) exists in its basic form in Hummel's mind only, so decorated and extended melodically is its presentation. Similarly, in its final statement in the pf. son. in D Op.106, the slow movement's theme is not discernible, being suggested only by the harmony and the l.h. configuration (bb.46ff.).

Slow Movement of Op. posth. no. 1

An outstanding example of the fusion of the composer and the performer in Hummel is seen in the slow movement of the concerto for pf. and orch. in F, Op. posth.1, which shows many of the signs of being close to a written-out improvisation. The orchestra's rôle, apart from first presenting the theme upon which the movement is based, is entirely supportive. This theme, which is unusual for Hummel in that it does not contain the repetitive sequences normally found in his melodies, consists of two 4-bar phrases (see score, bb.0-8), is harmonically very simple, and is presented with subtle scoring - even the double basses' imitation of the bassoon at the opening does not obtrude. The solo bassoon gives the first phrase, and the second is entrusted to solo 'cello. The basic melodic elements of the theme, easily discernible, are the arpeggiation of the triads I ii and V, a rising filled-in octave, and a falling 4th scale. The basic rhythmic ideas are as simple as one would expect in Hummel: the  motif (x) which played such a prominent part in the concerto's first movement, the quadruple group  or  (y), and the idea of a held note followed by a run (very often in equal notes) (z), e.g.  in bb.2-3, and its diminution  in b.6. The general idea of the appoggiatura is present (b.4 and b.6) and forms the springboard for many of the subsequent improvisational flights of fancy, as well as being an important musical punctuation mark. In its particular form

as a 4-3 appoggiatura it is very prevalent, though its resolution may be delayed, as in bb.13-5, where the D at the top of the first run in b.13 finally resolves to C[#] in b.15/♩ 2. Very often the 4-3 appoggiatura implies a V⁷-1 harmony and the 7th (simple or compound) also occurs melodically.

The soloist's first appearance is in a recitative-like cadenza in seven strophes.

(1) bb.10-2, outlining the chord of A major decorated at first with turns. It has affinities with the principal subjects of the first movement in that it begins with a decorated dominant anacrusis moving straight to the tonic and then outlining the tonic chord. It settles on c''[#] and the note is repeated 17 times before falling a 7th by step to D (b.12): its progress of this fall is interrupted at the last minute by a decorated E, used as an appoggiatura to the final D, and made dissonant by being superimposed on a dim. chord based on the dom. of A.



(2) bb.13-15. This dim. chord is "resolved" onto a more stable (but not completely stable) V⁷_b at the beginning of the next strophe⁽¹⁾. This opens with the same note D, now as the 7th of V⁷ which falls rapidly by diatonic steps (except for a slight chromatic "framing" of each dom. note) to the dom. E., where, after a moment's rest, it rises by a chromatic scale in broken 3rds to F[#], making the chord an implied V⁹. The I of the V - I progression in b.15 is

delayed until the last beat with, again, an elongated and decorated appoggiatura, this time D to C[#].

(3) bb.16-19ff. With the sure instinct of the true improviser, Hummel speeds up the harmonic rhythm and spices the texture by a V-I punctuating cadence on the rel.min. using the same sort of contrary motion that he used in the very effective passages at bb.205+6 in the first movement (and similarly in b.102, b.106, bb.114-5, bb.118-9, b.212 l.h., bb.376-7). Harmonically, this VI chord is given in the temporary guise of ii of the dominant, and, after an octave passage (b.18) built of fourths incorporating a chromatic underlining of the temporary dom., it comes to rest on V⁷ of V, this last chord being also the final of strophe 4. In b.18 the immediacy of performance is conveyed in the notation of the 8ves for l.h. alone. Hummel is well aware that the easier method of using both hands robs the passage not only of its visual impact, but also of the tension in the tone caused by playing with one hand.

(4) bb.19-21. As in strophe (2) above, the "resolves" to V in a very similar way. This time the descent is by arpeggio with a similar chromatic underlining of the (temporary) dom. note B, and the rise is a diatonic scale in 3rds. Again the V⁹ is present and the

final V at b.21 is extended by an arpeggio.



(5) in two parts: (5a), bb.21/  last-23/  3;

The D[#] is contradicted by D^b, thus destroying the temporary feeling of being on the key of the dominant. This is further underlined by having a ivb harmony - the first harmony

outside I or V so far - and again the 7th is present:

F^b down to G[#] (the upper G^b being a decorative appoggiatura).

This half-strophe ends with the familiar V⁷a with a 4-3 decorated suspension again. This melodic interruption

(like the harmonic one in strophe (3)) is measured, as is strophe (5b) also, (bb.23/  4-25/  5) though tempo rubato

is desirable. This half-strophe introduces a further



harmonic extension, the Neapolitan chord (bIIc) in the unusual 2nd inversion. The orchestral strings join in this and the

succeeding chord, a resolution to V⁷a, playing an 8ve F^b


slurred onto the following E, while the soloist plays a rising arpeggio of B^b followed by a descending one with each note

decorated by its lower (usually chromatic) auxiliary. The

last chord is again a V⁷, again including the 4-3 appoggiatura, but unexpectedly rising to d'', the 7th of the V⁷.



(6) Again a measured double-strophe; (6a) (bb.25/  last -27/  2) rising a 7th by diatonic step from c''[#] - b'' and

falling again to the same c''[#] (the upper c'''[#] again being a melodic decoration, the lower c''[#] preceded by a harmonised

appoggiatura (D, V⁷b-Ia). (6b) (bb.28-29/  2): for the

first beat of b.28 the melody "marks time" while the harmonies

imply the progression $IV-II^7b-\frac{V^7b}{V}$ leading to V on the second beat. The progression in bb.28/♩ 2 - 29/♩ 1 is that of an interrupted cadence V-vi with our familiar D-C[#] approached by E-D[#]. By sharpening the E in the bass at b.29/♩ 1, Hummel changes the progression from V-vi to $\frac{v^9}{vi} - \frac{i}{vi}$ and anticipates the dim. chord on the last semi-quaver of b.28.

(7) (bb.29/♩ 12-34) The basis for this strophe is the solo vc. melody of bb.4-8, because of its general upward motion by scale to e''' (b.31/♩ 2), by the rhythmic shape of the figure which that e''' begins, but above all by the addition of the "alto" and "bass" parts which are those of the original phrase at b.6/♩ 2. It is interesting to compare Hummel's original phrase in the melody with the later version in the middle of a flight of improvisation. The original is characterised by (a) the upward scalar motion of 1½ octaves; (b) the different pace of the first part of the run (b4/♩ 4-5 and b.6 to ♩ 3) with (c) its halt on e'; (d) the added D[#],; (e) the ambiguous relationship between the two Ds on either side of the barline bb.6-7; (f) the appearance of the rhythm  or . Each of these features has an analogue in the solo piano version: (a) the scale is extended to three 8ves, e-e'', and a scale, A²-F[#] appears in the bass; (b) the difference in pace is kept by measuring the first half (bb.29-30) and making the second half free (the pause and unmeasured notes), with (c) prominence given to the E in b.30 by the trill, and by the pause and trill in b.31; (d) the

D[#] prefaces both Es (b.30 and 31); (e) the relationship between the two Ds is preserved both harmonically and melodically except that they are tied across the barline; (f) the dotted rhythm appears, b.30/♩ 1 and b.31/♩ 2 and b.33/♩ 3.

This strophe is a masterpiece of subtle melodic and harmonic shades and half-lights. Hummel has interrupted the V-I cadence at the end of strophe (6) (b.29/♩ 1): this implies that (a) the V will cadence to I, and that (b) material will follow which will justify the interruption. In the cadence, the vi was approached by its ~~v~~^{b9} b. Hummel wished to follow this with a phrase which was analogous to strophe 6 but with a full-close at the end to finish the whole solo section. Like 6, 7 begins with an anacrusis E leaping up a 6th to C[#]. The harmony of the previous chord b.25 was obviously V⁷ but the dominant function of the anacrusis note E is weakened by (a) the fact that it had the trappings of a tonic (however temporary) in strophe 4; (b) the Neapolitan chord and the flourish it gave rise to in b.24; (c) the soft dynamic of b.25 and the leggiero, also the tailing-off of the arpeggio into the piano's weakest register; (d) the pause and rests in b.25; (e) the brevity of the anacrusis. At the beginning of strophe 7 the problem is exacerbated by the fact that a V-I cadence is the very factor needed to counteract and "resolve" the interrupted cadence - but, at the end of the strophe, not, above all, at the beginning. So it becomes necessary in the previous strophe, 6b, to further erode the dominant-harmonic implication of the E rising a 6th to C[#] which opens strophe 6b. Hummel achieves this by (a) an

implied harmonic dysfunction ⁽²⁾ allowing the vi in the interrupted cadence to be approached, not by V, but by $\cancel{V}^{b9}b/vi$, so that the E which begins the implied V-I bb.29/♩ 2-30) is denied association with the E that would have been in the V-I cadence at b.29/♩ 1 had the full close not been interrupted.

(b) an implied rallentando at the interrupted cadence which would continue through the semiquaver rest;

(c) the change in dynamics - p to pp;

(d) the change in register; (e) the short time-value of the E, a demisemiquaver - and even that is mezzo-

staccato; (f) the filling-in of the sixth E-C[#] by mezzo-staccato notes which are rhythmically irregular;

and (g) the inclusion of the foreign note (B[#]):

(h) the fact that (again) the E is unharmonised, nor can it be wholly referential to the dominantly-harmonised E in b.28/♩ 3, since that is almost immediately cancelled by the E[#]. The main notes in this strophe are the Es and, beginning with the E just discussed, all are treated differently. The second one (b.30) is harmonised V⁷c, prefaced by a D[#] appoggiatura, trilled, and quitted by a fast rising scale. This leads to the third E on the main beat harmonised Ic, trilled with another D[#] appoggiatura and given a pause with the dynamic $\text{p} \text{---} \text{p}$. This is also quitted by a rising scale, alternating with the E itself. Finally, e^{'''} is reached as the second beat of b.31 with a sf marking and the harmony Ib (on the percussed E) then V⁷a on the last semiquaver going to vi, the D

being suspended over to begin the ensuing run. The basis of this run is illustrated in Ex. 10, with reference to its harmonies, vi-ii. The second beat of this bar is particularly interesting. The chord of ii (b min) is reinforced by its scale, and when the music arrives at the final high b " a few notes from the end of the bar, Hummel creates a melodic dysfunction making it sound like a discordant appoggiatura which must resolve onto the A of the ii⁷b, instead of the concord which it technically is. This is accomplished by avoiding references to A, first by sharpening it, then by leaping over it altogether in the figure:










whose angular shape also cancels any b minor feeling which the outlining of its scale might have set up. The ii⁷b resolves onto Ic with a scale and arpeggio flourish - and again the D[#] - D^b occurs. Hummel then outlines the notes of the Ic chord melodically an octave lower, holding it until the last possible moment. When it finally succumbs to dominant harmony (on the last demisemiquaver of b.33) it is percussed at the beginning of b.34 over a tonic, to finally resolve on a quaver on the second beat of the bar.

This whole solo passage is, I think, a particularly good example of the improviser's art, and of the difference between it and the craft of composition. Only a composer so fluent technically and so aware and confident of the effect on the audience would take the chance of building a passage of this length on decoration and accretion to basic


material which is in itself comprised of snippets derived almost at random from the main theme, treated in a manner dictated, it seems, purely by the emotional whim of the moment, and yet clear as to its direction, and arriving at its end convincingly and relaxedly by its own curious logic.

The next main section of the movement is again for solo pf. supported by orchestral accompaniment, and shifts straight into the key of the dominant at "tempo 1^o". Spread over four bars, the basic "melody" is



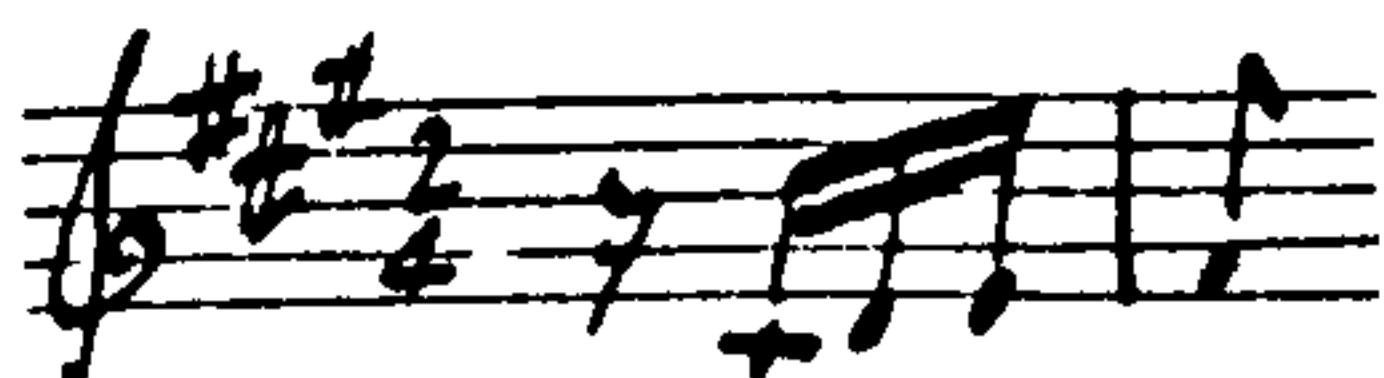
The first E major arpeggio (b.35) has the extraneous note D[#], and the second (b.37) has the D[#] as part of the $\sqrt[9]{b}$ chord. The four bars have a bass pedal E. Then follows a direct shift to bIII with the second main melody on the movement (bb.39-46+). It is, especially in the second half, a much-decorated melody, and I suggest a possible basis in Ex.11. It consists of three sections, the first of which has two phrases, both cadencing weakly V-I, both containing the "thumbprints" noted before: the dotted rhythm (occasionally varied to double-dotted , or with a rest , or in an inner part, as in b.40/  2 l.h.), the prominent D[#] (b.42/  1), and the penchant for chord ii approached by its dom. These also occur in the second section (bb.42/  4-44/  7) which is very decorative and carefully marked for the performer, though its outline is simple, akin to b.3 -4 and 6/  2-7. The third section has a miniature cadenza heralded by a $\frac{6}{4}$

chord, containing gruppetti of 128th notes (!) rising by arpeggio to e''' and falling by scale, each main note flanked by its upper and lower auxiliaries. A trill and an octave run conclude this section.


The Second Episode, beginning b.49 is a modulatory one and again involves the orchestra in a supporting role. The pf. arpeggios outline the chords of the modulating sequence (in C): I-ii-iii-V-IV-VI-IV (in A) bVI^{#6}-V (dom.ped) from which occasional scraps of melody emerge. Hummel actually draws attention to these (e.g.b.50) by a different set of stems in the music, but a similar melody occurs in b.49/last three  (3) . Some of these scraps bear a close relationship to some features of the opening theme and the references to it in the ensuing improvisation. For example, bb.50-1 suggests a combination of



with its accompaniment:



in bb.52-3 (orch bass).

Also, we have in the phrase b.50/1 a combination of the 4-3 and the 7-6 suspension/appoggiatura, both functions occurring simultaneously; 4-3 because of the (temporary) tonic pedal G, and 7-6 because of the V⁷ (in G) harmony. The sequence


occurs a tone higher in bb.51-2. Almost the same process happens in b.54/♩ 1 and b.55/♩ 1, since, again, the local tonic pedals are present (G and F respectively) while the chord outlined is the local V^7 resolving to I.





In bb.57-63/♩ 1, a dominant pedal in A is approached (b.56/♩ 2) and $bVI^{\#6}$, and the piano is alone for most of b.60 in which it has a difficult passage in contrary motion for both hands, though the l.h. begins a little after the r.h. in mock imitation. The figuration here is largely that of b.18, which was prefaced (bb.16-17) and succeeded (b.19) by chordal "punctuation", as is the passage under scrutiny here (cf. the chords on b.60/♩ 1 and b.62). In b.62/♩ 1, the music reaches V^7a of A, has a rapid downward scale of $4\frac{1}{2}$ octaves, and threatens an interrupted cadence with a dim. chord (VII^{b7}) in the "leaping" style of bb.16-7. This is immediately contradicted by the fl., obs. and vs. I and II (pizzicato) to V^7b , playing in a similar "leaping" style.



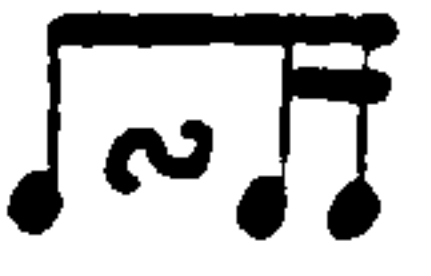




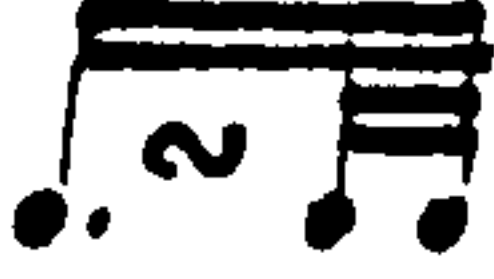
At this point in the movement, Hummel recapitulates with a decorated version of his opening theme, the first full bar of which (it will be recalled) implies dominant harmonies. Since he has finished upon a dominant harmony in b.63, he must again take "evasive action" if anti-climax is not to occur. He avoids it by means similar to those he used in this kind of situation before:- rests with pauses, changes of register, imaginative use of conventional harmonies, and by delaying the full resolution onto a strong-beat Ia chord until the end of the movement. Bar 64 begins with a ~~V^{b9}~~ d

chord which "resolves" ($\downarrow 2$) onto a $V^7 d$ with a $d^\#$ present in the turn. This further "resolves" onto Ib , from which attention is immediately deflected by the r.h. figuration, of which more shortly. The treatment of the music from $b.65/\downarrow 2-67/\uparrow 3$ is similar to the opening version of the theme, except that a rhetorical point is made of allowing the E to sound alone in $b.65/\downarrow 2$ for a quaver. A good example of Hummel's avoidance of regular resolution is found in $b.67/\downarrow 1$, where the $Ic-Va$ resolution is chromatically "muddled" by a hint of \cancel{V}^{b9}/V - lest we forget the $D^\#$! At $bb.72-3$, however, the D^{\sharp} is confirmed harmonically by a chord which seems to begin as IVc and ends as \cancel{V}^{b9} , and the d^{\sharp} is confirmed melodically by its inclusion twice as the only non-harmonic note in the staggered downward arpeggio of A maj - a very subtle touch.

The occurrence of the decorated opening melody in the solo piano is opportune here, as it affords a further insight into Hummel's improvisatory technique. Since the tune must obviously be recognisable - the more so because of the diffuseness and general lack of other melody in the movement - yet there must not be the sense of anti-climax, which a "plain" reprise of the theme would surely give, because Hummel has chosen to have it presented for the first time by the soloist, and in fact, he takes the opportunity to draw together some of the melodic and figural threads in the movement. I have given a suggested "middle stage" between the theme and Hummel's decorated version of it in Example.12, which I hope will

to an extent "externalise" this aspect of his improvisatory process. As can be seen, apart from the very end of the theme, actual distortion is minimal, and most of the extra notes are additions (filling-in of arpeggii, decorations, etc.) and that they mostly embody features which are already familiar from earlier parts of the movement. So, the dotted rhythm appears in b.65(r.h.), b.66(l.h.), b.67(r.h.), b.69, b.70, b.71, and there are hints in the following three bars as well. In b.65 there is also a reminiscence of the "cadenza" figuration of bb.46-7 which has not been used since. The figuration in b.18 occurs in the runs in b.66 and (inverted) in b.70. The eloquent last r.h. group in bb.66 and 70 is no stranger to the listener, neither is the D^\sharp/D^\flat ambiguity, and the elongated and/or decorated appoggiatura is here rationalised harmonically at each appearance:- bb.64-5, bass $D-C^\sharp$; b.65/ \downarrow 2-66/ \downarrow 1, r.h. $E-D$; b.67, r.h. $A-G^\sharp$; bb.69/70, $D-D-C^\sharp$. It is interesting, too, that Hummel uses (in 6ths, r.h. and l.h., b.64/ \downarrow 2) a figure which, in its original form, occurs in the solo vc. section of the first presentation of the principal theme () which is only to be found (and then in a related but altered form) at the corresponding place in this decorated version of the theme. Also, over and above the smaller points, Hummel has included passages from earlier: note the outline similarity between b.65/ \downarrow 2 r.h.-67/ \downarrow 3 r.h. and bb.40-42/ \downarrow 2, and between the runs in b.66 and that in bb.60-1 r.h. and also the figure at b.39/ \downarrow 2. (The similarity of both to b.18

has already been mentioned.) Most interesting of all, in the present context, is the likeness of bb.67/ - 72/ to bb.29/ - 34/, which confirms my derivation of this last passage from the theme.

A final small point concerns the short figure in b.67/ r.h. In itself, it can be seen as a composite of various elements,  (b.7, vc.), or  (b.22, pf. r.h.), and  (many examples) and  (b.39, pf. r.h.). But it occurs in its own form at various points: b.26/ (played ), for example; Hummel's autograph gives  for the last quaver of this bar. Also, he begins to introduce it, subliminally, as it were, at several places in the orchestra, e.g., bb.54+55 (ob.1), bb.57+58 (bns. and v. I+II in 3rds), and b.59 (v.I).

It is worth mentioning here that, in spite of its formless and technically horrendous appearance on paper, this movement is very effective in performance, and in four recent concerts, large and diverse public audiences were absorbed in the music⁽⁴⁾.

NOTES to CHAPTER 13

- (1) One is struck by the malleability of the concept of "stability" on the harmonic and melodic levels in improvisatory music. Various degrees of stability can be discerned here, from the very local (note to note or chord to chord), to the wider context (within passages, progressions, phrases, sections, and the whole movement). It would be pointless to attempt to classify these here, and I must ask the reader's indulgence in my use of phrases such as "more" or "less stable". Reference to the context will, I hope, clarify the particular degree of stability being described.
- (2) For an explanation and an example of melodic dysfunction see pp.104-5. Harmonic dysfunction is its analogue, in which it is the upholding of the chordal hierarchy in the harmonic (as opposed to melodic) progression which is weakened.
- (3) We have already seen (in Ch.12) that, in his Piano School, Hummel counsels the stressing of such "melodies" even when attention is not particularly drawn to them in other ways.
- (4) Performances with the present writer as soloist in London (1976), Paris (1976), Leicester (1977), and Cardiff (1978).

CHAPTER 14 - CADENZAS

Like the slow movement, the cadenza occurs within a larger unit, in this case, a particular movement, which is a restriction on its length and, to an extent, its character. It is also expected that a cadenza will refer to the thematic material of the movement, but this can be done with considerable freedom and complete lack of formal restraint. I have chosen to examine some of Hummel's cadenzas to Mozart's concertos because there are none which compare with them in terms of length or function in his own works, neither is there provision for them, and because a further restriction is evident in the fact that the themes or the works from which they come are not by Hummel himself.

The function of a cadenza-point in a piano concerto in this and in Mozart's period was to allow the performer the opportunity of showing his skill in improvisation with reference to material (melodic, harmonic and figural) provided by the composer in advance. For a player to do otherwise in these cases is contrary to the spirit of the cadenza as a genre, and to the intentions of the composer. Our own age, with very clear ideas of its likes and dislikes, has tended to relegate music of the past to the status of a museum culture, and has rejected both the fact and the craft of improvisation in art music, as a consequence of the nineteenth-century ideal of specialisation which, as we have seen, began to divide composer from reproducer. The result is that particular works have become associated with particular cadenzas, for the very good, though deplorable, reason that performers cannot, and/or will not improvise them. Composers, composer/performers and even gifted performers of the past have occasionally

composed cadenzas for certain works, and our tendency is to judge these as we would the works themselves, an attitude which, in the case of an individual who has tried, in however small a measure, to reproduce extempore features, is fundamentally wrong as well as being unfair. Fétis, one of the most musical critics of the early nineteenth century — and one of the most difficult to please — is quite clear on this matter:

"To improvise, that is to say, to compose without alteration, and without having taken the time to regulate by reflection the more -or-less happy ideas which sudden inspirations bring to the artist, would be an impossible art, if the products had to be judged with the rigour which belongs to the appreciation of written compositions." (1)

Even allowing for the comparative restriction in duration, and thematic data, etc., this applies to the improvised cadenza also.

Having said this, one cannot deny a feeling of disappointment when one is confronted with the written cadenzas, as a whole, by, for example, Mozart, Beethoven and Hummel. What dying embers they appear compared to the flame of live improvisation of a high order as this is portrayed in contemporary commentaries and as it is hinted at in extant works written under its influence. An idea of the effect of an improvised cadenza of high quality is given in a report of Mendelssohn's performance of Mozart's K.466 concerto in d, in which the admiration of the audience

"was increased almost to rapture, by his two extemporaneous cadences, in which he adverted with great address to the subjects of the concerto, and wrought up his audience almost to the same pitch of enthusiasm which he himself had arrived at." (2)

There are several points to be borne in mind when dealing with the cadenzas Hummel wrote to some of Mozart's piano concertos. Like all cadenzas in the period which were largely composed, and published ⁽³⁾, these were intended for performers who did not have the gift of improvisation or who were poor in the art ⁽⁴⁾. For obvious professional reasons, these cadenzas would be very unlikely to represent a genuine record of Hummel's full scope and ability in improvisation ⁽⁵⁾. In any case, the hand of the reflecting, correcting composer is sufficiently in evidence for the impromptu art not to be allowed to shine through to any great extent. All are obviously written in fair copy (with one exception) and one finds only rare instances of any kind of haste. The location and identity of the cadenzas are as follows:

1. Add. 32222, f. 89', Op.46 (K.537 in D)
2. do. f. 92', Op.44 (K.459 in F)
3. do. f. 94 , Op.4 no.1 (K.414 in A)
4. do. f. 97', Op.20 (K.451 in D)
5. do. f. 99', Op.17 (K.595 in B^b)
6. do. f. 101', Op.4 no.3 (K.415 in C)
7. do. f. 104', Op.4 no.2 (K.413 in F)
- 87 do. f. 131, another cadenza to K.595/III.

Examples of the haste mentioned will be commented upon in the following paragraphs.

In no.4, the cadenza to K.451/I, bb.3-6 of the last system on f.97' are crowded together for no apparent physical reason. The cadenza to K.415/I (no.6) shows evidence of haste on the fourth system of f.102 in the falling dim. chord in broken 3rds , where the r.h. notes with stems upwards contrast markedly with the dashed-off l.h. notes, which show much less regular spacing and variety of size and stem-angles.

It is true that there is always a difference between upward and downward stems and tails because of the angle of writing and the nibs of the period, but the difference here is more noticeable than usual. Also, this fourth system itself contrasts with those above and below it not only from the obvious textural and figural point of view, but also in the quality of penmanship. It is possible that Hummel may have written systems 3 and 5 of f.102 first; the general progression harmonically is a clear and common one, and the bass runs E (beginning of system 3)-F-F[#]-G etc. (at the beginning of system 5), and these are all in the same pitch-range. The fact that such runs as that in system 4 are often written in half the space taken here suggests that Hummel, knowing he would include some sort of figuration of comparatively little harmonic and melodic importance, left a whole system blank or, perhaps added the r.h. line of notes as a guide. This would be much more the province of the improviser than the composer.

The same folio is involved in another matter which may indicate haste, and therefore, possibly, a more creative, extempore approach at that stage of writing. On system 4, b.2 of f.102', the ligatures of the r.h. demisemiquavers are ruled; Hummel hardly ever does this, even in much longer passages. The last five quavers of the same bar extend well below their ligature, and the barlines on the separate staves between bb.1 and 2 are out of alignment, which suggests that the semiquaver CGB^b "spread" addition to the minim chord was an afterthought. These points, together with the difference in the handwriting between the legend identifying the passage and the "diminu:" in Hummel's "best hand" lead one to

conclude that the passage had an improvised stage and a later revising, or "composed" stage. It is not surprising that Hummel should give less time to such short passages after pauses than to a full cadenza.

Bearing in mind my general reservations with regard to these cadenzas and shorter passages, and allowing for the fact that one could not expect an extempore effusion of the scope and length of those with which, for example, Hummel terminated his concerts, there are still many elements in common between these pieces and their more flamboyant cousins. Preludial passagework proceeding from, and in some cases tied over from, the 5th of the orchestra's $\frac{6}{4}$ chord occur in most cases, either in the form of diatonic scales, as in K.414/I (no.3, f.94'), K.414/III (f.96'), K.451/I (no.4, f.97') and others, or in more convoluted scales, such as the broken 3rds and 4ths of K.413/I (no.7, f.104').

Occasionally the cadenza opens with a decorated or slightly altered version of the orchestral material immediately preceding the pause — a true improvisational touch. Thus, in K.537/II (no.1, f.90'), the soloist meditates on the tutti's cadential phrase before dismissing it with a barrage of arpeggios (Ex.1). Similarly, in K.414/I (no.3, f.94'), the orchestra's bass figure is treated sequentially in the solo, and a more striking instance occurs in K.415/III (no.6, f.103'), where the piano, in a less meditative vein, takes up the orchestral motif from the bar before the pause, and with dogged persistence makes it the basis of the entire cadenza (Ex.2).

The second cadenza for K.595/III (no.5, ff.100'-101) is somewhat subtler. After a preludial flourish, the soloist continues as in Ex.3; b.2 is a reference to the rhythm in Mozart's bb.262ff. and this is continued in the lower strings until a few bars before the $\frac{6}{4}$ chord and pause, while the layout of the two r.h. parts in the cadenza is reminiscent of Mozart's bb.217-20, whereas the actual figure in the lower r.h. part (marked (x) in Ex.3) is from the theme itself. The passage from bb.2/ $\text{♩}5$ - 5/ $\text{♩}2$ (same Ex.) anticipates two solo pf. bars of Mozart's which occur later in the movement (bb.33 (bb.332-3)). It would be interesting to know if Hummel's undoubted knowledge of his teacher's concertos extended to such detailed recall of the pf. part, if he had a score in front of him when writing this cadenza, or if (as is less likely in this case) the instance is one of genuinely quasi-improvisatory creativity. Certainly, the ensuing passage (bb.5/ $\text{♩}2$ ff.) appears to be a more spontaneous continuation and does not occur in Mozart's movement.

This kind of contrapuntal working-out is also to be seen in K.451/III (no.4, ff.98'-99)(Ex.4). In this case, he begins with an imitative figure which seems to be original with respect to Mozart's movement, though the rhythm ($\text{♩} \text{ ♩}$) is common enough both in the thematic material and elsewhere. The idea is extended for 19 bars and in b.20 the second main subject of the movement appears in the tonic (Mozart's bb. 51ff., 1st v.) and its 7th bar — bar 26 — is decorated with a triplet instead of the original duplet. This triplet generates a rising sequence which is a decorated version of that in Mozart's bb.45ff. and is followed by a falling sequence with a r.h. figure reminiscent of Mozart's

continuation (bb.49ff.) of his passage in bb.45ff, though it also derives from Mozart's bb.188ff., pf. A "cadenza-approach" formula ensues (Ex.4, bb.42/♩2 - 47/♩1) and a trill (what Hummel describes as a "false double shake"⁽⁶⁾) begins in b.48 on e' with d' reiterated beneath; the trilled e' persists with the accompanying note changed to a c' (apparently held, though this is very likely to be an omission on Hummel's part of the semiquaver ligature indication). The l.h. joins in (b.50) with a trilled g'. The trill sign is not present, but Hummel's fingering of "1 2" and the "5" fingering on the accompanying notes underneath in b.51 (l.h.) analogous to the r.h., make it clear that a trill is intended. Similarly, in b.55, the long notes, pause-mark and concluding small-note turn also imply a trill, possibly triple, but more likely with a false double shake in r.h.

Perhaps the most rigorous contrapuntal usage of all occurs in the separate cadenza for K.595/III (no. 87, ff. 131-2, which, in the occasionally hasty, nervous hand and the "on-the-spot" deletions, has the look of an improvisation "on paper", and, in its technical demands and changes of tempo, dynamics, etc., has the feel of one also. Even in the contrapuntal sections, the speed of the writing appears to have slowed down only slightly. What is particularly interesting about this section, apart from its counterpoint, vacillating between three and four parts, is the fact that the subject used is that from Mozart's E^b concerto for two pfs. K.365 which seems to have come unbidden to Hummel's mind, and he gives comparatively free rein to his fantasy.

NOTES to CHAPTER 14

- (1) Fétis/MÉTHODE, p.73.

"Improviser, c'est à dire, composer sans rature, et sans avoir pris le temps de régler par la réflexion ce que de soudaines inspirations apportent d'idées plus ou moins heureuses à l'artiste, serait un art impossible si ses produits devaient être jugés avec la rigueur qui s'attache à l'appréciation des compositions écrites."

- (2) Harmonicon, June 1833, p.135.

- (3) Although no printed copy has come to light, Kershaw, in Kershaw/KEYBOARD, opines, with good reason, that these were published.

- (4) Harmonicon, July 1827 notes a publication entitled "Trecento cadenze per Pianoforte" by a Johann Anton Frederich [sic] Jansen. (p.142).

- (5) The final chapter "On Extempore Performance" in Hummel/SCHOOL is cautious to the point of secretiveness, and the extension of the corresponding section in the second German edition is little better in this respect, confining itself almost exclusively to preluding.

- (6) Hummel/SCHOOL, Pt.III, Sect. 1st, Ch.2, p.6.

CHAPTER 15 - VARIATIONS

Hummel's variations may be seen as a special case of the influence of improvisation on his compositional style, partly because they exhibit all the features so far examined under this heading (including cadenzas), but also because of the striking freedom of some of the variations and especially of the introductions. Indeed, with the exception of the cadenza and the fantasia, the freer type of variation is the closest approach to real improvisation which is possible within the accepted musical forms, and references to variation techniques in free improvisations have been mentioned already.⁽¹⁾

The music-buying public's appetite for piano variations in the early nineteenth century was voracious, and neither Hummel, his contemporaries, nor his various publishers were slow to capitalise on this important source of revenue. Thus, although Hummel produced variation sets - mostly for piano solo - throughout his life, there is conspicuously less evidence of artistic or pianistic development in these sets in general than in other genres, for example the piano sonatas. This is largely consistent with what we have seen in the case of Hummel's "public" compositions, but is particularly true in his variation sets, which

"provide the composer with a simple, pre-determined structure within which his major formal problem simply concerns the number of

variations required, and they also supply a vehicle particularly well suited to Hummel's gifts as an extemporiser. Therefore, since such works could be produced with the minimum of effort and invariably enjoyed large sales, there was no incentive to alter his style beyond a slight expansion of keyboard technique as his command of the instrument grew." (2)

Castil-Blaze, in his Dictionnaire de Musique Moderne, gives a tongue-in-cheek outline of the prevalent variation-plan:

"First there are simple quavers and triplets, then arpeggios, syncopations and octaves, without forgetting the adagio in the relative mode and the tempo di polacca. With fingers and a little taste, an instrumentalist will fill all of the framework by following the given models." (3)

The connection between improvising and varying mentioned by Kershaw here has been referred to by other writers, among them Fischer⁽⁴⁾, Propper⁽⁵⁾, Vienez⁽⁶⁾, Schwartz⁽⁷⁾, Brock⁽⁸⁾, and Nelson⁽⁹⁾, and Nettl⁽¹⁰⁾.

On the most general level the connection can be seen in the inclusion of cadenzas, of improvisatory introductions preceding the themes, and of variations (usually in a slower tempo) in a freer style, in Nelson's sense of having

"a comparatively tenuous relationship to the theme, and where, in particular, the basic structure and harmony of the theme are substantially altered, if not actually abandoned." (11)

This connection can be seen to a lesser extent in the concordance between the more general aspects of improvisation as outlined previously and the variations both individually and as sets. Bearing in mind that

improvisation involved a palette of extremes in all musical areas and that in this period many of its characteristics began to become (and later on do become) embedded in the romantic compositional style, some caution must be observed in applying these external characteristics.

Varied emotional content is indeed a feature of the variation sets of this period, especially, though by no means exclusively, those which do not aspire to musical structuring at the deeper level. This is partly because the very nature of variation form encourages a certain element of contrast between adjacent variations or groups of variations, and partly because such emotional changes and contrasts were part and parcel of the romantic ethos.

If we add to the above the virtuosic figurative element, we closely approach Nelson's description of the nineteenth-century ornamental variation. This was

"constructed upon a relatively set and conventionalized plan. One indication of this is its uniform brevity; series with more than a dozen statements are exceptional, and many have fewer than six. Further evidence is the stylized arrangement of the separate parts. The scheme of progressive rhythmic animation found in the baroque pieces still persists, but is modified to include certain type contrasts. The first of these is afforded by a variation in the opposite mode, which, generally interrupting the rhythmic growth near the middle of the series, emphasizes harmonic subtleties rather than rhythmic movement. It is convenient to refer to this contrasting statement as the minor variation, and while the term is not completely accurate, since a few

ornamental cycles are written to minor themes and hence have major contrasting statements, its adoption will cause little confusion. Following the interruption occasioned by the minor variation, the rhythmic increase continues to a climactic allegro variation, sometimes to an adagio-allegro pair. These variations, based upon changed tempo rather than upon changed mode, constitute the other type contrasts. The allegro variation, often in changed meter, is usually enlarged by the addition of extensions, interpolated free cadenzas, or a short coda. The adagio variation, while not an inviolable rule in the ornamental species, is common in the clavier variations of Mozart and is used occasionally by other composers. Like the minor variation, the adagio variation stands as a sharp contrast to the theme, and because of its juxtaposition to the concluding allegro, its place in the cycle is conspicuous." (12)

.This description fits Hummel's mature variations better than his earlier ones (13) but cannot fully describe any one set. There is no indication that Nelson would intend that this should be so in the case of any composer, but, in his tracing of the development of variation forms, he naturally enough does this through the best works, and these are, almost by definition, exceptional. Thus, Hummel's variations also exhibit features more akin to Nelson's class of nineteenth-century character variations, not in terms of complete sets, but as individuals. These features can be summarised, after Nelson, as:

"the renewed importance / in the nineteenth century / of the keyboard as a medium for variation performance"; (14)

departures from the character and expression of the theme; and, most important, motivische Arbeit, the development of motives derived from the theme.

Looking at Hummel's variation sets for evidence of musical development, one finds in Kershaw's words, that his variation technique

"in a small way confirms the overall pattern of /his/ creative life, a gradual rise to the major works of the 1816-1820 period, followed by an equally gradual decline to the banal products of the final years .." (15)

Later, Kershaw isolates the "six sets ... which collectively represent the summit of his achievement in this genre" (16). These are the three sets of Op.34, Op.40, Op.57 and Op.75, written between c 1812 and c 1817. They belong to the sets of mature variations, of which there are 18, separated from the early 10 sets by Hummel's period of study and improvisation-practice in Vienna from c.1793 - c 1800. As we shall see, even the early sets contain hints of improvisatory features, showing that this particular aspect of his musical creativity was very much part of his artistic make-up before he began to develop it more or less consciously.

In order to demonstrate the possible influence of improvisation on compositional technique as found in the variations, one would expect to find the following: introductory preludes of a quasi-extempore kind; the linking of the individual variations by joining-passages or by the grouping of several of them to form units

displaying some kind of common feature or progression; the inclusion of variations in freer style; the identification and exploitation of motivic elements in the themes (motivische Arbeit), a high degree of virtuosity; the inclusion of sections more obviously derived from improvisation, e.g. cadenzas; indications of the improviser/performer's sense of occasion through increased attention given to codas or finale variations; and the incidence of freedom in the addition of decoration, and in dynamic, harmonic and textural contrasts or variety. Unless present to a very high degree in individual instances, none of these features alone would suffice; taken together, however, they could form the basis of a case.

Introductory preludes and the inclusion of sections more obviously derived from improvisation are dealt with elsewhere in this dissertation, since they are, in a sense, outside of the theme-and-variations sequence proper. I shall examine the variations under the following headings: grouping of variations, slow variations, motivische Arbeit, virtuosity, with short sections on melodic and harmonic decoration.

The grouping of individual variations

As we have seen, Hummel's use of forms such as sonata-form (including its particular manifestation in the first movements of concertos) is usually a matter

of rigidity, the result of his trying, in Zimmerschied's words

"to attain the musical substance which his inspiration would deny him at times by a strict method of writing and schematisation of form." (17)

His best work is either in pieces in which this rigidity is tempered by creativity born of his extempore style (as in the f[#] sonata), or in which he consciously rejects set forms (as in the Op.18 Fantasy). This is also borne out in the variation sets in which, for the most part, he is content to follow the shape, harmonic basis and phrase-structure of his themes fairly closely, so that the variations within a set could be re-arranged, with the obvious exceptions of slow-fast pairing and finale or coda-types.⁽¹⁸⁾ The incidence, then, of groups of variations whose individual components could not, without damaging the musical sense, be removed or interchanged, may be evidence of a creative flow traceable to improvisatory practice.


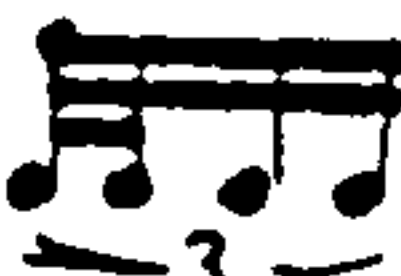

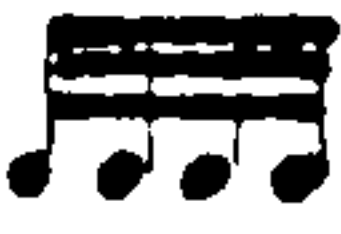

The slow-fast pairs are themselves a case in point here, and can be seen as analogues of the slow introduction/fast movement form in many of Hummel's works and sections of works, the slow introductions usually showing evidence of improvisation. The components in these pairings will be examined in succeeding paragraphs.

The grouping of variations does not, of course, always involve slower tempi, and the agents of linkage or progression are of several kinds.






(a) Recurring passages. The theme of the five variations in D on "Partant pour la Syrie", Op.34 no.2 is preceded by a short "Tempo di Marcia" introduction of four bars, and it recurs between each of the five succeeding variations, though I must agree with Kershaw that it is "of little positive value and increasingly irritating as its unmodified repetitions become less relevant to the style of the movements it links." (19) Much more imagination is shown in Hummel's treatment of the coda-like third part (Vivace assai) of the Monferina theme of Op.54⁽²⁰⁾, marked Andante. The contrast here is not only in tempo, but in mode (D as opposed to the theme proper's d) and in rhythm ($\frac{6}{8}$ as against $\frac{2}{4}$) as well as in general character. He uses it between vars. 1+2 and 2+3 unchanged, adds a melody over the first $4\frac{1}{2}$ bars between vars. 3+4, and omits it between vars. 4+5 and 5+6, presumably because the fifth sostenuto var. is in the major mode anyway. It reappears between 6+7 unchanged, between 7+8 with its previous super-imposed melody, unchanged between 8+9 and 9+10, and it gives the impression of returning unchanged after var. 10, but is extended to a coda, (Presto) of 122 bars from its original 21.

(b) Grouping by progressive rhythmic animation.⁽²¹⁾




Since this is a feature of the bulk of early nineteenth-century variation sets, one would expect to find many examples of it in Hummel's output in this genre. It is indeed well-represented in sets from both early and late periods, of which the following are a few examples.



Monferina Op.54 var.1: , 2: , 3: , 4: ; 6, 8 and 10 are also the latter followed by the Presto,  in $\frac{6}{8}$.



A major ("Pathetic Air" ⁽²²⁾) Op.107 no.5: clearly seen throughout:


theme: mostly , var.1: , 2: , 3: , 4: .




"Les Deux Journées" in E, Op.9: theme: 

var.1: , 3, 4, and 5: , 6: .


"Armide" in F, Op.57: var.7: , 8: .





Trio, Op.78, for fl,vc,pf.⁽²³⁾: theme: , var.1: .

"Thème anglais" in G, Op.119 no.1: theme ,

var.1+2: , 3: , 4 (poco Larghetto): .

and , 5 (Vivace): .

"Thème allemand" in G, Op. 119, no.2: theme: 

var.1: , 2: , 4: , 6: .

(c) Another linking device is the kind of treatment of the theme which is used in consecutive variations. The best example of this is the "Pathetic Air" set in which the theme is used throughout as a kind of cantus firmus.

In the "Les Deux Journées" set, several variations are linked by contrapuntal, mostly imitative, treatment (see Ex.1)

(d) Motivic usage: this may involve thematic or non-thematic motives.

"Thème anglais": the two-note anacrusis falling

by step




remains unchanged except in var.3, where it is

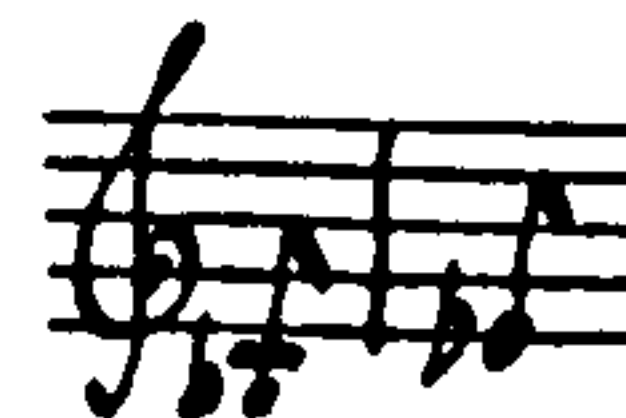
slightly varied:



while in "La Belle Cathérine" in G, Op.119 no.3, all variations have the G-C opening unchanged. In the Variations on "The Pretty Polly", Op.75, the




anacrusis  appearing in vars. 1, 2, 7, finale

(and, of course, the theme itself), becomes







in vars. 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 9.

In the "Armide" set, all variations preserve the downward direction of the anacrusis except the Adagio var.9, and all except 5 and 9 keep its interval of a 3rd.

In "Monferina" the permutations of the theme's opening D-C can be seen in Ex. 2. In the variations on a theme from Vogler's opera "Castor et Pollux" Op. 6 all seven variations have the  anacrusis either decorated or in the form . Also, in the same piece, vars. 1+2 have the use of a 6th in common and the rhythmic motif  occurs in vars. 5, 6, the second half of 7, and in the Coda.

In "Monferina", the angular shape at the end of var.1 seems to carry over into var.2, and it is present in other vars. as well.

"Armide": the appoggiatura motif in bar 2 of the theme is extensively used, and will be examined later,⁽²⁴⁾ together with similar usage in "The Pretty Polly". In the Trio Op.78, the largely scalar nature of the theme is departed from only in the penultimate bar: a dim. 7th and a 6th in the first half  and two 6ths in the second  (though the flute preserves the original in the written-out repeat); the 6th and 7th are presented harmonically in var.1, melodically (fl. and vc.) in 2, and harmonically in 3 and in the long finale (var.7).

In the "Thème anglais", Op.119, the  (= ) at the end of each part of the theme (the only place in which it occurs there) carries on into var.1, where it appears in every bar, and it can also be seen in other variations.

"Thème allemand": an off-beat stress is introduced as a feature in vars.1 and 3 and also occurs in 2, 5 and 6; it does not appear in the theme itself (Ex.3).

In "La Belle Cathérine" the syncopation in bar three of the theme behaves like a suspension, and reappears in several forms: as a suspension in var.1, a syncopation in 2 (several examples), and featured in var.6.

(d) Other linking or grouping devices include, in "Das Fest der Handwerker" variations for pf. and orch., Op.115, the rhythmically regular perpetuum mobile (virtually never departed from) either in the foreground (vars. 1, 2, 3, 5, and Finale) or the background (var. 6.); in "Monferina" the alternation between the hands featured in vars. 1, 2 and 8, and also occurring prominently in 3, 4, 7, and 9; in the Op.78 Trio, the "conversation" between the hands in the virtual piano solo of var.1 is continued by the fl. and vc. in var.2 (in which the piano also accompanies in the same way): it occurs in the canonic "doubles" of var.3, and in 6 on a larger time-scale. In "The Pretty Polly" the scalar figure introduced in var.1 and derived from the second half of the theme returns in vars. 2, 3, 4, 8, and 9.

Slow Variations

It has been noted that the slow movements in Hummel's larger works tend to be based upon improvisatory procedures, and this is also true of some of his slow variations. However, the latter are still tied to the theme, though less so than in the faster variations. The exception to this is, very often, the concluding variation, which tends to be more in the nature of a final summing-up than simply another variation. The freedom which is often found in Hummel's (and other composers') slow variations is due to the fact that the expression of the original theme is already significantly altered by the different speed. Add to this the fact that many of these movements also have a change to the minor mode⁽²⁵⁾, and we can see that the dependence on the theme is already much weakened.

An examination of Hummel's slow variations shows that they are indeed in a freer style, some verging on the quasi-improvisatory. Examples of these are the Adagio (sostenuto) from "The Pretty Polly" which includes recitatives and passages in small notes, and his earliest dated composition, the unpublished set of Variations in A, S1 (1789), in which the adagio version of the theme dissolves into unbarred arpeggios having a tenuous link with the harmonic basis of the theme, and ending with a free passage. Practically all the slow

variations in other works show some degree of freedom from thematic shackles. In the Adagio assai variation (no.6) of the Trio Op.78, the links between the variation and the original theme are felt in the harmonies, much less so in the melody, though there are links with the slow introduction. A similar state of affairs obtains in var. 2, the repeats in the "doubles" of 3, and var. 4, none of which bear tempo directions, but the characters of which imply a more leisurely pace. Var.4 departs from the theme both melodically and harmonically, while in 3, the repeated note gives a distant echo (Ex.4). In the "Monferina" set (based on a minor theme), the sostenuto var.5 (in the major) makes little attempt to "translate" the theme's modulations directly into the major: III in the min. becomes I in the maj. (b.4); i becomes vi (b.6); and V-i becomes v-ii. In the "Thème anglais" set (no.1 of Op.119), var.4 (Un poco larghetto), the theme, now in $\frac{6}{8}$ as opposed to the original $\frac{2}{4}$, is copiously decorated, and in the "La Belle Cathérine" set (no.3 of Op.119), var. 4 begins and ends in the tonic (C), but the longer middle section is in A^b , the time-signature doubled from $\frac{2}{4}$ to C, and a very fluid harmonic support provided. Perhaps the most divergent of the three Op.119 sets is the Minore (Legato assai) of no.2 ("Thème allemand"), where the second half seems to have little more than a very general harmonic connection with its counterpart in the theme, except, perhaps, for a kind of development of the leap idea. The comparison between the


Adagio espressivo var.9 of the "Armide" set and its original theme by Gluck needs no comment (Ex.5).


Motivische Arbeit

One would expect that the working-out and transformation of small motifs of a theme would be severely limited in early nineteenth-century variation-sets, the main function of these being to provide amateurs of differing levels of keyboard expertise with pleasant pieces in which to display their talents in a domestic setting, based on popular tunes or original material in the popular style. The satisfying of these criteria gave rise to the bulk of the figural-variations of the period, in which the theme could be discerned either melodically or in its usually very simple harmonies, within the welter of largely sequential passage-work. This motivic work, if there was any at all, would be most comfortably carried out within a slow variation, since part of its function was to provide relief - physically and emotionally - from the other variations, most of which paralleled the theme's melody, harmony and phrase-structure, and since also, as I have pointed out, contrast with the theme was most obviously expressed in any case in variation sets by changes in tempo and expression and, occasionally, by changes in mode and time-signature as well.

Hummel's Variations on a Theme of Count Brühl, (Sl6 in B^b) contains a particularly large number of variations showing motivic pre-occupation in spite of

their early date of composition (1791 - autograph dating). Var.5 is a churchlike chorale exploiting the consecutive movement in 2nds of the theme both on the melodic and the harmonic levels (Ex.6); var.9 is an Alla Marcia, and so independent of the theme is var.10, that the only constant concordance is the phrase-structure. Variation 7 of the "Lass of Richmond Hill" set (Op.2 no.1), has a free cantabile melody loosely based on Hook's theme, though with the same harmonic basis.

This motivic working-out becomes more prominent in Hummel's later variations. In the first variation of Op.21, in B^b based on a Dutch song, he effects what is virtually a triple variation, using a three-note motif from the theme's first two notes together with an alternative harmony-note, and decorates this in its two subsequent appearances; all three have canonic imitation of the motif in the left hand. In Op.34 no.3 (on Mozart's "Vivat Bacchus") several of the variations are of the double-variation kind, and no.4 approaches a reductio ad absurdum of motivic isolation, when Hummel reduces the theme to one note (its tonic C), while the harmonies follow Mozart's tune, providing the link. In Op.40 (on a theme from "Cendrillon"), Hummel's motivic usage is less dependent than usual on his theme. First he detaches the march-rhythm element  already seen as one of his improvisatory thumbprints, and develops it in var.6 against an outline of the theme.

When it persists in the second half of the variation, a further motif is added  and this



"so fires the composer's imagination that he modifies the standard harmonic progression in order to accommodate it more fully in the closing bars." (26)

A melodic appoggiatura, unremarkable in itself, is probably the most prominent feature in the theme from Gluck's opera "Armide" which is the basis of the 10 variations of Hummel's Op.57. Appearing as a lower chromatic appoggiatura in the theme, it is to be found at all musical levels in the succeeding variations (see Ex. 7). In var.1, the obsessively triadic outline of the theme is alluded to by the l.h. 6ths and 3rds, which return in b.4ff. as broken intervals, thus forming a miniature double-variation. Though the F[#] appoggiatura is absent from its corresponding place in bb.1-2 of var.1, it could be said to be hinted at by harmonic means: Hummel changes the V harmony in the theme's 2nd bar to a iib chord (leading-note F[#]) in the variation. In b.3 of the same var. the r.h.C has upper and lower appoggiaturas, as does the F in b.5. and the F[#] appears in its original form in b.6 with an analogous appoggiatura on the D. This usage intensifies in the 2nd half of var.1, where the l.h.D (b.9) and the C (b.11) have upper and lower appoggiaturas, both chromatic. In b.14 the idea descends to the harmonic level, where the first departure from the plain harmonies of the theme is encountered. It occurs again (in the absence of the F[#]), (var.1, b.14) through the introduction of a chromatic semitone (A^b) to form a dim. chord, and its immediate conversion to a German 6th

by the addition of a further chromatic semitone, D^b. In the written-out "double" of this half of the variation broken chords again predominate, and the r.h. figures at bb.13 and 14 are enhanced by lower appoggiaturas in bb.21 and 22. Var.2 refers to the 'x' motif again on the harmonic level, where it is utilised in bb.9 (r.h. E^b) and 11 (r.h.D^b) to cause chromatic passing chords, but it returns melodically in var.3, where it is lengthened to a crotchet (bb.2, 4, 6, 10, and 12), and supported by chromatic harmony dissonant with the held bass notes. The dissonance is enhanced in bb.10 and 12 by the Neapolitan A^b and G^b chords of the preceding bars, the top notes of which add the upper chromatic auxiliaries to the G and F respectively. Var.4 is content to preserve the original function of the F[#], with a little harmonic spice in b.6 (l.h.), but the feature returns with a very Beethovenian vengeance in var.5. Here, in b.2, the dissonance is on two melodic levels, the original rising chromatic appoggiatura in l.h. against the longer F-E suspension in r.h., while in b.4 the r.h. suspension is decorated, and in bb.6 and 7, the harmonic level is again affected. These usages are repeated in the variation's second half.


The feature is submerged in a mass of semitonal auxiliaries in var.6, and hardly appears at all in the succeeding one. In the brillante var.8 it occurs as lower dissonant appoggiaturas in the r.h. figuration of bb.1, 5, and 13, and melodically in the scales in bb.2, 6, and 14;

however, its influence is also felt in the dom. 9ths of bb.9 and 11. Var.9's first half is a double-variation (Adagio cantabile) beginning in the minor, where the theme's original F[#] becomes an upper chromatic appoggiatura A^b (also forming the minor 3rd of the chord), but in b.6 its enharmonic G^b begins the triad of the Neapolitan in F minor, and its further presence can easily be detected in bb.10, 12, 14, 18, and 20 in the melody, and in b.23 in the harmony.

In the second half of var.10 (beginning b.16), shows the influence of 'x' clearly in the figuration, but it comes into its own in the long coda (bb.31b ff.). A central section in D^b (bb.45ff.) develops Gluck's inoffensive little motif, in its original form as the lower chromatic appoggiatura (with chromatic-harmonic implications at b.55) and as an upper appoggiatura. By investing it with the characteristic rhythmic shape of  dissonance and  resolution in $\frac{3}{8}$ time, Hummel manages to suggest its influence also in bb.51 and 52, in which it does not actually appear. Finally, the F[#]-G in bb. 111 and 115 is "resolved" by the D^b-D in bb.112 and 116.

The bulk of the motivic use in "The Pretty Polly", Op.75 is confined to the long introduction, the Adagio var.9 (both of which are clearly improvisatory and to be dealt with in a later section), and the final var.10 (Rondo: Allegro vivo). In this set, as in the last with

which I have dealt, the theme is foursquare and plain, the only feature of any prominence, apart from the repetitive rhythm, being the diatonic upper appoggiaturas (see Ex. 8). Hummel refers to these harmonically during the presentation of the rondo theme (Ex. 9) and makes it the basis of the first episode (Ex. 10), and in the second episode it is enshrined in the figuration (Ex. 11). However, as we shall see, his extensive motivic usage in other parts of the work more than compensates for this lack within the variations proper.

In the Op. 10 variations on "God Save the King", Hummel's departures from the theme as he first states it are, as one would expect, minimal. However, it is one of these details which he takes as the basis of his first variation: the dotted cell  which occurs only once in the theme, in b. 1 (Ex. 12). Both an appoggiatura and a dotted rhythm are built into b. 2 of the "Austrian Air" which Hummel uses in his Op. 8 variations (Ex. 13(a)). Both are exploited several times, and in var. 4 are conflated (Ex. 13(b)). Both are present also in the minor var. 6 and are extended, the appoggiatura becoming a suspension.

In the variation set which forms no. 2 of "Trois pièces faciles", Op. 111, Hummel uses var. 3 (Ex. 14(a)) to re-interpret the theme (14(b)) in the guise of the "Pretty Polly" theme (Ex. 8). Again, appoggiaturas are developed as motives here, in the second half of var. 3, (where they become decorated suspensions) and especially in the finale, where there is much exploitation in their various forms.

Op.107 no.5 in A ("Pathetic Air") contains only four variations on the Theme (Andante con molto espressione), all of which are in the same tempo. Since there is a heavy preponderance of contrapuntal texture throughout - including the theme's presentation - and since the theme remains relatively unchanged - being treated like a cantus firmus - it would be difficult indeed to show any influence from improvisation, even in the strict style. The only hint of the lack of that reflective and corrective procedure which characterises the composed as against the improvised might be seen in the manner in which Hummel continues to articulate the phrase-structure of the theme, so that at no time does the integrity of the accompanying contrapuntal voices carry them through the phrase-divisions, though for reasons of sheer rhythmic continuity they may lead to the beginning of the next phrase. There is also, occasionally, a kind of spuriousness in the contrapuntal texture (Ex.15). Hummel's ability as a contrapuntist is not, of course, in question here, only his willingness to expend time and effort in fashioning and refining the texture to the much higher standard of which he has shown himself to be capable. This unwillingness is the result of a compositional facility which is, at bottom, the inheritance of the improviser and, indeed, passages such as those quoted suggest very much the kind of harmonic-rhythmic filling-in which could be resorted to in the less highly inspired moments of extempore performance.

Virtuosity

A high degree of pianistic virtuosity, though a feature of improvisation, is not in itself evidence of improvisatory influence on a compositional style, though keyboard facility in combination with other features may be. The amount and level of virtuosity tends to vary in different sets, which makes good commercial sense in terms of the market at which they were aimed.

"Even where the dominant element is virtuosity, as in Op.21, Hummel is careful to temper the prevailing mood with a number of less demanding movements." (27)

This also makes musical sense, from the point of view of variety, and is one of the features which raise Hummel's work above (though in some instances, perhaps not very far above) the works of composers whose works

"degenerate into a superficial tinkling, a virtuoso display of brilliant fireworks, without content. Actually, this tendency finally led to the fashionable salon variations of the nineteenth century (Herz, Hünten, Kalkbrenner, and others), to a low watermark, which scarcely bears relation to true art." (28)

However, in Hummel's case

"... the amateur pianists who flocked to his recitals found the form very congenial, especially when the theme was a popular air or song, and, moreover, when they played the variations themselves, any movement which was technically too demanding could be safely omitted." (29)

With the exception of variations for piano and orchestra, Brock's assertion that "In the main the more difficult sets were written originally for his own use"⁽³⁰⁾ may be true of his early sets (pre-1794, before Op.8), but is less likely with respect to the later ones. Few variation sets found their way into his concert programmes, few of them approach the level of virtuosity of, for example, the piano concertos, and in any case, both variation techniques and popular tunes were included in the improvisations which were, and continued to be, the highlights of his concerts. The tightrope of commercial viability between too great difficulty or simplicity had to be trodden very carefully, especially in the case of a young man seeking to make his career as pianist as well as composer, who was associated with dedicatees such as the Abbé Maximilian Stadler⁽³¹⁾ and who could, with pride, and justification, identify himself as "Eleve de Mess^s les Maitres de Chapelle MOZART, ALBRECHTSBERGER, et actuellement de Mr. SALIERI, premier Maitre de Chapelle de la Cour Imperiale." /sic/ ⁽³²⁾

It was not always as easy as it seems to omit variations: in the Op.9 set on "Les Deux Journées", it would be possible to omit Var.III with its parallel thirds associated with leaps in the r.h., but the sixth variation-and-coda has something of a finale feeling, and its steely harpsichord-like triplets would have been well worth mastering by an amateur. In the "God Save the

King" set Op.10, var.4 could be omitted by those unwilling to trust to their left-hand dexterity, though at Allegretto tempo, and with a straightforward r.h., there is little danger. The "Finale rapsodique" of Op.111 No.2 gives a large percentage in effect for small technical outlay. The whole "Armide" set (Op.57), on the other hand, while rarely attaining true virtuosity, demands more and varied skills and would only have attracted the better performers since the whole piece is more tightly held together (as we have seen), and would indeed suffer through omissions. The "Pretty Polly" variations (Op.75) look and occasionally sound more difficult than they are, and once the basic technical point in each variation is mastered, the rest follows. It is still possible to omit variations here but the last three are linked together and the few tricky passages in the final one (the Rondo) well deserve the effort. The Introduction, however, is a different matter, though an edition published in 1830 by Cocks & Co. in London shows an interesting compromise. It begins with the first edition's ⁽³³⁾ octave trill, and the arpeggio which follows is overlaid, as it were, on that which occurs in the last (cadenza) bar (b.66, "Allegro" of the Adagio section), thus omitting the entire movement, by far the best part of the piece. Hummel's last published sets, "Les Charmes de Londres" (Op.119 Nos.1-3) would likewise present few problems to the determined amateur, as, again, its technical bark is worse than its bite. Kershaw, in

comparing these with Hummel's first published set - on the same three themes - concludes that

"In terms of ingenuity of concept, variety of expression and even the degree of technical difficulty, the earlier works are the equal of the later." (34)

In the case of works for piano and orchestra, one would expect a greater degree of virtuosity, since these were not aimed at amateurs primarily, but for Hummel's own concert use. In the early (c 1798) variations on a theme from Vogler's "Castor et Pollux" the piano writing is moderately showy, though more appropriate to the harpsichord than the piano, but even here it is not very difficult, and each of the variations tends to embody only one or two points of technique which can be fairly easily mastered. It is perhaps significant that a later edition of this work was published ⁽³⁵⁾ for solo piano, omitting the orchestral interludes and concluding weakly after the Cadenza, with one of the identical halves of the preceding Var.8, omitting the original's return of the theme and the ensuing Mozartean dialogue between the piano and various sections of the orchestra, reminiscent of the end of the finale of the older composer's Piano Concerto in G, K.453.

The Larghetto and Grand Variations on the Berlin popular song "Das Fest der Handwerker" (Op.115) were written for Hummel's Paris and London tour of 1830 and comprise a large-scale concert work for piano and orchestra. It is certainly a virtuoso piece, but without the interesting range of techniques to be found in other

works of this kind. However, to an extent this is only to be expected in a piece involving a soloist with supporting orchestra based on a popular tune, and each variation exploits only one or two points of technique. One of these harks back to the early "Castor et Pollux" set of Hummel's youth. The early work has much of its Minore variation devoted to a string of syncopations between the hands (Ex.16) very similar to what occurs in the later work's second variation - this time in thirds, and less literally a "canon", and to somewhat better effect (Ex.17). Other similarities such as the use of running triplets and the presentation of the main notes of the themes in a kind of figural style brisé are less noteworthy.

The Trio Op.78 is certainly weighted in the pianist's favour, which is by no means unusual in chamber variation sets of the period, but this is not to say that the other instruments are forgotten. The piece is difficult to play and "bring off" from the pianist's point of view, and if Hummel's alternation of variations having a loud bravura piano part with soft, easier ones becomes a little predictable, the Rondo finale combines the piano's difficult, virtual perpetuum mobile, writing with telling use of fl. and vc.

Melodic decoration

It has been noted that Hummel's themes are for the greater part simple, and this also applies to his choice of themes for his variation sets whether they are original themes or not. This simplicity is often heard in stark contrast to the occasionally very florid introductions. The bathetic effect has been commented upon by, for example, Kershaw, unfavourably,⁽³⁶⁾ but this is, I think, to impose modern sensibility upon early nineteenth century audiences and players. The knowledge that the tune would eventually appear would keep the audience - whether in parlour or concert-room - in suspense, especially given the intrinsically interesting nature of these introductions, and the more so if they contained references to that tune. Neither can we completely rule out humour here, since the prime purpose of these pieces was to entertain.⁽³⁷⁾

The themes are, in the main, presented simply, with few, if any, decorations and with the simplest of harmonies. This is fitting, bearing in mind that many of them were folk songs or popular songs in a "folk" style, and, of course, that they would shortly be subjected to various harmonic and melodic treatments.

In the case of the variations themselves, there is, naturally, overwhelming evidence of decorations, since many of the individual variations arise through decorating the themes. Again, it is in slow variations that the

decorations are most easily seen to overlay the theme. It would be fruitless to catalogue these embellishments, and in most cases a brief description will suffice.

In var.1 of "Castor et Pollux", the second part of the theme becomes decorated as shown in Ex.18 and in var.3 the bass line becomes triplets incorporating auxiliary notes with occasional trills added in the r.h. to the plain notes of the theme. In var.6, the auxiliary idea becomes basic, decorating the theme in r.h., and it becomes an appoggiatura in the second part.

The "Les Deux Journées" set (Op.9) theme contains a trill and this is passed imitatively between three of the four parts in var.II, also getting an airing in the second part of var.IV, in which appoggiaturas are a feature. The addition of the "military" bass to the theme in the last bars can be seen as a rhythmic decoration. This rhythm with its martial undertones makes an unexpected appearance in var.4 of the so-called "Pathetic Air" series (no.5 of the 6 Bagatelles, Op.107), and in a slightly less warlike guise in the variations on "God Save the King", when Hummel decorates the melody itself in bb.1, 3 and 12, and spreads the accompanying chords for most of the presentation. In the final reiteration of the theme's first part at the conclusion of the work, however, the calando and unmeasured piano ending provides a surprisingly docile conclusion.

Embellishment figures largely in the variations on "Das Fest der Handwerker" (Op.115) and "Armide" (Op.54), although these, apart from the slow variations, are incorporated into the figuration for the most part. Hummel's presentation of the "Russisches Thema"⁽³⁸⁾ ("Schöne Minka") of the Trio Op.78 is a model of restraint and the few 'additives' there are seem to underline the East European folk feeling (Ch.16, Ex.9). The rest of piece shows much use of decoration - notably the textural use of the tremolando in Var.VI (reminiscent of similar usage in Beethoven's "Geister" Trio, Op.70, no.1 in D of some ten years previous). There is also much exploitation of rhythmic effects as a decorative procedure, especially in vars. 1, 2, 3, and the brilliant rondo finale in $\frac{6}{8}$ (Var.VII). The same kind of rhythmic and - to a slightly lesser extent - melodic decoration can be found in the "Pretty Polly" variations, again enhanced in the Rondo Finale (Var.X), and tremolando and "orchestral" effects are also found in the "Monferina" set for pf. and vc., especially vars. 4 to 10. On the other hand, the three late sets of "Les Charmes de Londres" show decoration mostly of the figurative kind, though there are a few examples in each of the three sets of the use of decorative counterpoint. (var.2, var.1 and var.1 respectively).

Harmony as a decorative principle

Because of Hummel's market and the entertaining rather than enlightening nature of the variation sets in the period, as well as the close relationship preserved

between variations and theme, the great bulk of harmonic changes and decorations tends to be concentrated into one or two variations - usually those in the opposite mode from the theme, and/or the slow variations. Again, the nature of the themes - almost all in the major - demand, and receive, the simplest of harmonic support, usually made up of primary triads. All of them fall into two sections, repeated in most cases, and mostly with the first half ending in the tonic; there is an excursion to a closely related key - dominant in the main - in the second section, and this frequently concludes with material directly from the opening section. The few variation sets in the minor-key themes include those on the march from "Les Deux Savoyards", those for pf. and vc. (Op.54, "Monferina"), and the Trio Op.78.

Many of the harmonic changes are decorative - secondary doms., altered chords, etc. - such as the second half of the second section of var. 2 of "Thème Anglais" (Op.119 no.1) (bb.14-22,) and this also applies to the "God Save the King" set, where the rhythmic and melodic simplicity of the theme welcomes such treatment.

As one would expect, the minor-key sets are particularly rich in harmonic decoration. This is particularly effective in the "Monferina" set (e.g. var.1) not least because the theme has a kind of coda differing in mode, texture, tempo, articulation and time-signature from the theme proper, and this functions almost as a second theme, since it separates most of the variations. In the Trio Op.78, harmonic considerations practically supersede

melodic ones in several of the variations. The theme itself is simple harmonically, though when the fl. repeats the second half of section 2 (accompanied by vc. and pf.) a chromatic 6th replaces the previous Ia chord, and this, together with the Neapolitan chord, is used in the first var. for pf. solo. Hummel, however, adds a coda which follows on naturally and has a relationship with both the variation and the original theme, though this cannot be demonstrated on either harmonic or melodic levels.⁽³⁹⁾

It is more the feel of the section, the way in which the harmonies of bb.16b - 20 seem to paraphrase the whole theme:

$a(+V)^* - C(+V) - a(ii-V-I)$, and the way in which this is turned on its head, so to speak, in the piano's reiteration in

bb.20-24 with: $a(\overset{V}{V_i} -iv- | ii^7 -V- | \#II^o -Ic -Va- | Ia)$.

The melody of this section also, with its upper and lower melodic auxiliaries to the E (bb.17-18) - even though harmonised - seems to have been inspired by such passages as bb.3-4 (r.h.) and 7 (r.h.) of var.1. The harmonisation of melodic features which are in themselves decorative is also a feature of the piece as a whole, and this can be seen by comparing the second section of the melodically and texturally simple Var.II with its counterpart in the theme:

* i.e. a (with its dominant) to C (with its dom.), etc.

THEME:	III	III	$\frac{V}{III}$	V	i	i	V	I
Var.2:	$III \frac{V}{III}$	$III \overset{\#II}{III}$	$\frac{V}{III} \frac{V}{iv}$	iv	V	I VI	$N^6 V$	I

Harmonic changes are more radical in slow variations, and in those involving change of mode or key. This is particularly true of the minor-key variations because of the greater harmonic possibilities in the minor and also because of the substitution of the relative major (III) for the major key's dominant (V). Thus in var.5 (Minore, legato assai) of the "Thème Allemand" set (No.2 of Op.119) the harmonies of almost every bar differ from those of the theme:

THEME:	I	V	I Ib IV ii	IcV	I	V	I #ib Ic V ⁷	V I	
Var. 5:	i	iv i	#ib #b iv b	V ⁷	i	iv	$\frac{Vc}{III}$ $\frac{V}{III}$	III	
Theme:	V	V ⁷	I $\frac{V}{V}$ V	I	V	I iib Ic V ⁷	I		
Var.5:	$\frac{I}{III}$	$\frac{V}{III}$	iv i v iv	III ii	I				

This can be seen as primarily harmonic variation and decoration, since its relationship to the theme is melodically or rhythmically not very close, and the melodic material itself conditioned by the use of harmonic

sequences, many of the motifs, in any case, being derived not directly from the theme itself, but from the intervening variations.

Var.4 of "La Belle Cathérine" (No.3 of Op.119), after musing for a few bars on a variant of the theme in the tonic minor (c), modulates to A^b (b VI) touching on its relative minor (f) in the second half of the first section, while the second half of the second section has a strong element of a^b . Hummel adds a 16-bar coda to modulate back with greater ease to the original dominant (V^7 in C).

NOTES to CHAPTER 15

- (1) In the chapter on "The Piano Variations", Brock/INSTRUMENTAL has the following footnote (no.1, p.43):

"In 'Die Opernbearbeitung des 19 Jahrhunderts' (Archiv für Musikwissenschaft, Vol. XII (1955), p. 321), Dieter Presser, describing the various forms of improvisation in the nineteenth century, states that Hummel loved to improvise on the plan A+++ B+++ C+++ D+++ E+++ etc., where +++ signifies completely different workings out."

I was unable to check this, and therefore, am unaware of Presser's source(s) of information. It certainly runs counter to the description of the critic in Le Globe (see Ch.11, note (35) of this dissertation) but it does support the use of variation techniques in improvisation, for which, as we have seen here, there is much corroborative evidence.

- (2) Kershaw/KEYBOARD, I, p.169.

- (3) Castil-Blaze/DICTIONNAIRE, II, pp.362-3.

"Ce sont d'abord des simples croches, des triolets, puis des arpèges, des syncopes, des octaves, sans publier l'adagio dans le mode relatif et le tempo di polacca. Avec les doigts et un peu de goût, un instrumentiste remplira tous les cadres en suivant les modèles donnés."

- (4) In Fischer/VARIATION.

- (5) In Propper/BASSO.

- (6) In Vienez/VARIATIONSKUNST.

- (7) In Schwartz/SCHUMANN.

- (8) In Brock/INSTRUMENTAL.

- (9) In Nelson/VARIATION.

- (10) In Nettl/IMPROVISATION.

- (11) Nelson/VARIATION, p.23.

- (12) Op. cit., p.81.

- (13) See Kershaw/KEYBOARD, I, p. 169 and pp.182-3.

- (14) Nelson/VARIATION, p.92.

- (15) Kershaw/KEYBOARD, I, p.184.

- (16) Op. cit., p.189.

- (17) Zimmerschied/KAMMERMUSIK, pp.255-6.

"Beides kann in keinem Falle für Hummel gelten, der im Gegenteil versuchte, durch strengere Schreibweise und Formschematismus die musikalische Substanz zu erreichen, die ihm die Inspiration bisweilen versagte."

- (18) This has distinct advantages for the amateur pianiste who could omit any variation which was too difficult without seriously compromising the set as a whole.
- (19) Kershaw/KEYBOARD, I, p.192.
- (20) The "Variazioni alla Monferina" were written for pf. and vc., but the pf. part is quite complete in itself.
- (21) This is the term used in Nelson/VARIATION.
- (22) Op.107 comprises a set of six Bagatelles for solo pf., no.5 of which is a set of vars. on an apparently original theme, in A. This was issued separately under the title "Pathetic Air, with Variations" by Chappell in London, "c. 1825", according to Kershaw/KEYBOARD, II, p.64. This is very close to the time of the first edition, by Peters in Leipzig (see Sachs/CHECKLIST). The London edition is a piracy, since it does not appear among the authorised editions in Sachs/AUTHENTIC.
- (23) The importance (though not, I think, predominance) of the pf. part in the Trio, Op.78, together with the light the work throws on Hummel's variation technique, warrants its inclusion here.
- (24) Under the heading "Motivische Arbeit".
- (25) The vast majority of early nineteenth-century variation-sets in general, and Hummel's in particular, are based on themes in the maj. mode, and, so, following the usage in Nelson/VARIATION, I take "minor" here to be inclusive also of the major vars. in the few min.-key works.
- (26) Kershaw/KEYBOARD, I, p.194.
- (27) Op. cit., I, p.180.
- (28) Nelson/VARIATION, p.18.
- (29) Brock/INSTRUMENTAL, p.43.
- (30) Loc. cit.
- (31) The pf. vars. on the march from "Les Deux Journées" (c1802).
- (32) The vars. for pf. and orch. on a theme from "Castor et Pollux" in F, Op.6, c1798.
- (33) Steiner & Co., Vienna, c1817.
- (34) Kershaw/KEYBOARD, I, p.168.
- (35) It was published as No.7 of a series entitled "Grande Bibliothèque musicale pour le Piano-Forte" and further information has not been forthcoming. The British Library (formerly British Museum) catalogue suggests "Paris?" as place, and "1835?" as date.
- (36) Kershaw/KEYBOARD, I, pp.197-8 and 168.
- (37) In any case, this is likely to represent the manner in which popular tunes would have been introduced in many improvisations.
- (38) This is how it is described in the 1st edn. of Steiner & Co., Vienna, c1818.
- (39) It is, however, related to the slow introduction, as I intend to show in the next chapter.



CHAPTER 16 - SLOW INTRODUCTIONS

Preamble

The very fact of a slow introduction prefacing a more structured piece (rondo, variations, etc.) would in itself suggest a freer, more extempore approach on the part of most composers of this period. The further implication that Hummel's works under this heading were firmly based on improvisational procedures is strengthened almost to a general assertion by the fact that most sections of this kind refer in some way to the theme of the succeeding movement, that they do so in a free manner, that they themselves show little evidence of structuring in the sense of being bound by established form-types, that they often include very free sections such as cadenzas, and that they exhibit other traits which I have already noted as features of impromptu performance, such as contrasts in dynamics, texture and piano register.



One of the strongest arguments for improvisatory influence in these instances is the extent to which, and the manner in which, the theme or themes of the succeeding section can be discerned in the introduction, analogous with the influence of a given theme in a more or less public improvisation. Important as this is, however, it is only one of the improvisatory features, and others will also be referred to. I have chosen six works in which the influence of the theme of the main piece ranges from being minimal to being all-important.



(1) Rondo: "La Galante", Op.120.

The first two bars (Ex.1) contain the main ideas of the whole introduction: (a) the  rhythm; (b) the step-wise fall; (c) the contrast of register, usually involving octave leaps. Bb.3-4 consolidate (a) and (b) into the form in which they will most commonly appear, including the appoggiatura dissonance, while at the same time providing contrast on every level other than motivic. Hummel ends the answering four-bar phrase with an unadorned note (the B^b in b.8), a practice which he preserves throughout the introduction (e.g. bb.16, 24, and 44). It does not occur as expected in b.34, since the music is being pushed forward towards the freer section in bb.37ff. The weakness of the V-I cadence in bb.33-4 is achieved by the upward-resolving $\frac{6}{4}$, by the third of the chord being in the melody at b.34, and by the upward-resolving appoggiatura — the only example of this in the introduction, and, furthermore, the only chromatic one. It is also at this point that Hummel begins to vary the hitherto rather stereotyped use of the motives, so that the return of the opening at b.38 will be the more striking. The dotted motif () is displaced onto the first beat in bb.32, 33, 35 and 36, in which last bar it appears (in a variant form) on several beats. Also, the original anacrusis is elongated, almost out of recognition, in bb.32, 24 and 35.

Register contrast is a feature, whether the gaps appear filled in or as octave leaps, and with the return of the opening they are intensified. Harmonic intensification also can be seen in the use of chromatic and dim. chords

and in the juxtaposition of V of c at the end of the introduction, with I of E^b at the beginning of the Rondo. There are no dissonant appoggiaturas in the Rondo's melody, and even elsewhere in the piece, where they might have been dissonant, they are harmonised, e.g. bb.61ff. (Ex.2). There is an interesting similarity between this passage and one in Mozart's pf. conc. in c K.491/I/46ff.; it is not the only one. There are, of course, dissonances of this kind in the Rondo, whether percussed or suspended, which are not "sweetened" by harmonisation, but their use is much less frequent in this work than is usual in Hummel. It may be that the galanterie implied in the title suggests a blandness to him. On the other hand, the "feminine" rhythm, as it appears in the first two quavers of b.4, and which is so common a feature of the style galant of the middle and later eighteenth century, is rarely used here, and, for the most part when this bar is repeated. One is surprised the more, as this device is such a persistent feature in Hummel's music and in that of his revered Mozart. Yet, when this rhythm appears in the "Scherzante" section (bb.43ff., Ex.3), the effect is far from the graceful "dying fall" of the earlier period — in fact, one is reminded more of Beethoven.

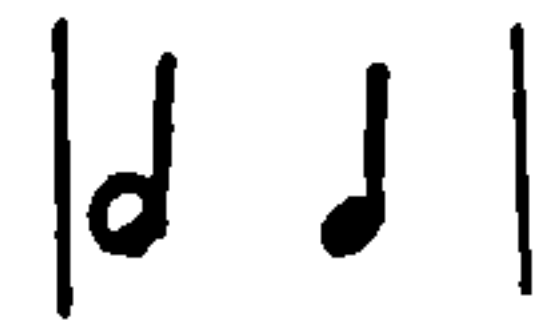

This section also includes one of the rare references to the dotted-note motif which was featured in the Introduction (here slightly varied). The occasional use of the  rhythm in $\frac{6}{8}$ does not have the effect of the Introduction's , and in the only two appearances of this figure (in bb.169+171), the dotted character is all but removed by a turn at Allegretto grazioso tempo, and the $\frac{6}{8}$ time-signature. This may also be the case in b.65 (l.h.), since the isolated

 will hardly be noticed against the r.h. triplets, if, indeed, it is not intended to be rationalised to .

The overall impression here is that the Introduction was improvised, or, at least, composed very quickly, without reference to the Rondo or its themes — more the exception than the rule in Hummel. However, it does bear many of the marks of improvisational influence, with its almost constant use of dotted rhythms, and the fluent melody, expanded and decorated: it also has its own interesting reminiscence of Mozart. The figure at bb.3-4 is repeated in a slightly modified form at bb.17-8 and followed immediately by a minimally decorated version in bb.19-20: both of these are very close to a similar passage in Mozart's pf. conc. in G K.453/III, bb.8-10 and 24-6 (Exx.4(a) and (b)), a further example of the improviser's freedom of association and the incorporation of material from his own or other composers' works.


(2) "Les Charmes de Londres", Op.119.

(a) "Thème Anglais" ("The Ploughboy"), Op.119/1.

In the Introduction (Adagio) to this set of variations there are three main motifs (Ex.5): (a) the move by downward step from the 2nd to the 7th degrees of the scale; (b) the prevailing harmonic rhythm: ; and (c) the plain quaver melodic rhythm, mostly associated with repeated notes. These can be immediately seen to be slightly reinterpreted in bb.5-6 and 7-8. They are also present in b.11, where the harmonic rhythm begins to approach the melodic rhythm of b.3 () and motif (a) becomes referential to much more local tonics. The extempore basis of this

introduction can be discerned also in the dynamic and harmonic contrasts, the melodic decoration and the cadenza with which it ends. As in the last piece, there can be said to be no connection between the theme of the variations and the Introduction. Even in the slow variation 4, the repeated notes of b.19, and their rhythm together with that of the succeeding bar, can be taken, in $\frac{6}{8}$ time, as being incidental with respect to the Introduction's motifs.

(b) "La Belle Cathérine", Op.119/3.

In this case, there may be a connection between the theme's syncopated 3rd bar and the use of the same device in the introductory Largo, and the resemblance of the theme's bb.1-2/2 to the Introduction's bb.7-8, 8-9 and, especially, 9-10. The freer var.4 (in this case not a particularly slow one) has no connection with the Introduction except for the fact that both end on the same notes at the same pitch and have the same rhythmic outline, all of which, I think, may be disregarded.

(c) "Thème Allemand" ("Blühe liebes Veilchen"), Op.119/2.

There seems to be no good reason why the second of the set should depart from the observed lack of connection between theme and introduction in the other two, but here, connections can certainly be seen. The features of the variation theme itself are (Exx.6(a) and (b)): (a) a falling scale from D to F[#]; (b) harmonisation in 3rds, and (c) the use of repeated notes of equal rhythm. In the Introduction (Allegro con brio — unlike the other two which are slow), motif (a) is miniaturised, as it were, in the last halves of bb.1 and 3, and also appears elsewhere, as, for example,

being the basis of the figuration in b.7 (Ex.7) and bb.31ff. and in the lower and inner voices in the same bars. Motif (b) is also present, whether obviously, as in bb.1, 3, 14, etc., or less so, as in bb.31ff., where it is inverted to become a compound 6th between "soprano" and "tenor". The equal-note repeats (motif(c)) is in evidence as well, in the chords in bb.2, 4, 16, 22, and 24, and in the regularly-reiterated pedal in bb.9-12. However, these features all come together in what is a much more direct reference to the actual contour of the theme. This occurs at bb.14ff. (Ex. 8). As we have seen in the last chapter, these features are very often isolated as the bases of particular variations.

(3) Trio for pf., fl. and vc., in a, Op.78.

Of all Hummel's sets of variations, this work is the one in which the departure from the theme is most noticeable, although its underlying presence is almost always felt. The theme is a Russian folk song, "Schöne Minka", as it is called here, and is very characterful while remaining very simple on most levels (Ex.9). I have already commented in the last chapter on its scalar nature (motif (a)), and the leap of a 6th (b), and the remaining important motifs are: (c) the repeated notes, and (d) the note-pitches on which the harmony changes, A, G[#], A, G[#], A. All these are seen in abundance in the cantabile Introduction. Motif (a) is the basis of each instrument's entry, the third of which (fl.) is the actual melody of this introduction, and conjunct motion does not exceed a 4th, as in the theme. The overall compass of the pf. and vc. in their opening melodies is a 6th (motif (b)), and this interval features as a harmonic and accompanimental

trait also, much of the Introduction's sweetness being due to this. The repeated notes (c), having been introduced in the transition to the repeat of the main melody (bb.26-9), remain as an important element in the accompaniment and surfacing to good effect at the end, before the theme of the variations (bb.50ff.). They also appear allied to motif (d) in bb.36 and 38, although this latter motif has had much exposure by this time. Indeed, it opens the Introduction and has a prominent place in the melody (Exx.10(a) and (b)). It can safely be asserted that Hummel had the theme in mind when the Introduction was improvised and committed to paper.

What is of extra interest is that several features of the variations themselves correspond much more obviously to the Introduction than to the theme. Thus (d), which appears only covertly in the theme as the basic harmonic notes, in the form of a shift from ton. to l.n. and back, becomes a harmonised melodic aux. in the Introduction, makes its presence felt in var.I as a decorative aux. (Ex.10(c)), and remains firmly embedded in the texture in various guises. e.g., var.I/1(l.h. pf.), and /9 (middle voices, pf.), etc. The figure descends to the bass of the pf. accompaniment in var.II, is found in the pf. l.h. of var.III (Ex.10(d)), permeates the figuration of var.V, resurfaces to become a melodic feature in var.VI, and in the Rondo Finale (var.VII), it would appear to be the basis of one of the most effective passages in the whole work, bb.41-50.

There are other aspects of the vars., however, which seem to by-pass the theme completely and come directly from the Introduction, or vice versa: note, for instance, the rhythmic, harmonic and textural similarity between var.IV

and the Introduction, in particular the reprise of the melody in Intro./32-42, where even the details — such as the likeness of the vc. part in Intro./32-3/♩1 to the pf. r.h. in var.IV/2 — hardly seem coincidental. Also, the mood, style and the version of the theme in var.VI is much closer to the Introduction than to the theme itself, as well as being, like var.IV, in the ton. maj.

My concern here is not to try to determine whether the vars. or the Introduction were written first, but to note that the improvisatory character of the latter carries over into the former, to the extent that the actual subject of these variations is more an abstraction of the theme than the theme itself — not unusual, of course, in greater, or even longer, sets of variations, but unusual to this extent in Hummel, and in a short set also. Furthermore, this "abstraction" is most evident in those variations which exploit the gentle melancholic aspect of the theme, in the Introduction, and, to a great extent, in the Finale which, in spite of its bravura nature, is much tempered by this gentleness. It is also interesting that this is achieved in a chamber work, the most private of forms, which, though prominently pianistic, contains more interest for the other instrumentalists than most chamber trios with piano of its period.

(4) Rondo Brilliant, Op.56.

The Introduction (Larghetto maestoso) to this work for pf. and orch., bears, in its keyboard style, the marks of having been largely improvised. The basis of the soloist's melodic material on entry is a chord-progression supporting

a series of basic notes, abstracted from the melody as in Ex.

11. The chord-sequence is: I | I | Ic Va | I | IV $\frac{vb9}{ii}$ | ii V | I $\frac{v7}{V}$ | IcVa ,

and the following eight bars are very similar with a full close at the end. These last eight bars show an intensification of the first eight at all levels, in terms of pianism (cf. bb.24 and 32), increased range (cf. bb.25 and 33), extra decoration (cf. bb.23-4 and 31-2), and dissonance (cf. bb. 28 and 36). A familiar feature of Hummel's decorative piano-writing is also prominently in evidence in both of these 8-bar units, namely, an "over-shooting" in both directions of the main notes on both a melodic and harmonic level. This feature is also to be seen in the orchestral material, which is very basic, the most common skeletal intervals being the perfect ones, 8ve, 5th and 4th. This is clear in all the loud tutti passages, but is also present in the interspersed melodic lyrical ones, which can be reduced to these intervals with the "overshooting" effect (Exx.12(a), (b), (c), and (d)). The abstraction from the soloist's material in Ex. 11 also shows this on a basic melodic level, as well as on a figural level (bb.23, 28, 30, 53, etc.). The same applies to the second solo (bb.46-61), and is also found on the surface in such passages as bb.55-6 (Ex.13) and elsewhere.

Both of these features — angular cells and primary intervals — occur also in the thematic material of the ensuing Rondo. The theme itself and its abstraction are given in Ex.14 and the similarity of its first full bar (b.6) to the 3rd bar of the Introduction can be seen. In the thematic material of the various episodes, this is in evidence on a

surface level (bb.120ff. and 137ff.) and in the piano's passagework as well — to a greater extent, and more sustained than is usual in Hummel — e.g., bb.31-4, 59-61, 105-7, 197, 236-8, 308ff., 333-5 and 337ff. Also of interest are the variants of some of these themes, as, for example, the "smoothing out" of the pianistic figuration in bb.7 and 8 for the oboe in bb.15 and 16 (Ex.15), the piano's own decorative variant of the opening theme (Ex.14) in bb.58-60 (Ex.16), and the humorous version of the episode theme of bb.120ff. in bb.236-44.

This whole work shows clearly the improviser's capacity for motivic unity beneath the comparative diversity of outward forms, extending even to the physical (the keyboard figurations), as there is evidence here of the influence of figural shapes, not only in the piano writing, but also in the thematic content of the work, in which many of the themes are also played by various orchestral instruments.

(5) "Gesellschaftsrondo", for pf. and orch., Op.117.

From the point of view of improvisational influence on composition, the introduction to this work is of particular interest. It was first published in October 1830, simultaneously by Haslinger (Vienna), Farrenc (Paris), and Cramer, Addison & Beale (London), and the autograph in the British Library (Add. 32227, ff.22-54') is dated September 1829. Previous commentators have not mentioned that the Rondo (in D) is a rescored and minimally altered version of the last movement of an unpublished quartet in D for keyboard, v., va. and vc. (autographs in Add.32231, ff.1-12' and Add. 32229, ff.119-139'), which Sachs/CHECKLIST dates as

"1790's" and which is assigned the number S3. Why Hummel should have chosen to rearrange a work written during his teens or early twenties is probably due to pressure of work — Op.117 dates from the middle of the third period — and this would also explain the particularly improvisational Introduction which, though perhaps a little too long, is one of his best.


In this instance, at least, one is certain that any observable connection between the two sections of the work is in terms of influence from the pre-existent Rondo, and that there can be no question of viewing the piece as an integrally-composed composition. Had this influence been discernible, the work would have afforded a valuable insight into improvisatory procedures, frozen, as it were, in a written piece and based on a known "given" theme, in this case the composer's own. Unfortunately, connections between the two parts are virtually non-existent. It is true that the basically scalar outline of the main theme (Ex.17) is matched by passages such as those in bb.11-13 and 21-3 in the introduction, and that the "springboard" effect of interspersing the scale with other notes finds occasional echo in the introduction (bb.57-9, v.I, and much of the piano figuration), but there is generally not sufficient evidence upon which to make a case.

On the other hand, the introduction itself does provide strong indications of its improvisatory origins. It is much more purely melodic than many of Hummel's introductions, by which I mean that there is less free expansion from short motifs and less long decorative chains. He is more content to allow the melody to proclaim itself as such, and when

passages containing a greater amount of embellishment do occur, they tend to preserve the phrase-lengths of the original melody. This restraint, bordering on the compositional, together with other features to be discussed, give the music a Chopinesque breadth and grace. The melodic phrases in the various sections do not become isolated with that almost parenthetical character often found in Hummel, partly because his chord-progressions here are smoother, either through the more frequent use of inversions instead of roots (e.g. bb.5-7, 8-9, 12-13, etc.), or by the use of passing notes and passing progressions in middle and lower voices. Indeed, the overall quasi-contrapuntal nature of the piano writing lends smoothness to the whole.

More particularly Chopinesque features are: the use of the échappée-note figure (bb.6, 27, and in b.11 of Ex. 18) and other variants of this, also the use of the long lower appoggiaturas (bb.18,29 + 38), many of which are not subjected to further embellishment as is more normal in Hummel. There are melodic touches which bring the Polish master to mind as well, such as those in bb.14-5 and 21-2, and especially the passage in bb.36-50. This is also true of the accompanimental figure in bb.25ff., though it must be remembered that this type occurred in Hummel's pf. conc. in a (itself a very "Chopinesque" work), and this piece was much admired by the younger composer, who used it as a teaching piece and modelled his own concertos on it to an extent.

In spite of the differences between this introduction and others examined, the same small-scale motivic references are to be seen, even in the orchestral sections. The lower

appoggiatura first appears in the unharmonised opening call to attention by the orchestra and features in many of the short orchestral links, e.g., bb.33-5 (Ex.19); it is to be seen in many of the smaller decorations (bb.23-4) and in the cadenza which joins the introduction to the Rondo. On occasion, the idea is associated with Hummel's ubiquitous dotted-rhythm motif (bb.18, 27 and many other places). Another important melodic-rhythmic motif occurs in the solo, b.5, which features prominently, both in the foreground (bb.19, 20, 32, 37, and bb.33-6, orch.etc.), and in the background (pf. l.h. in bb.9-10, 14, 45-51, 53, etc.). The angular motif involving a stepwise movement followed by a leap in the opposite direction also figures largely. It is first featured in the orchestral opening (Ex.20), and in the solo material it takes on the characteristic échappée-note form already referred to, being very effectively combined with the  motif in bb.19-21. This angular motif can occasionally be seen in the Rondo also: bb.2-3 of the main theme, and in its jagged second half (bb.17-8) and in the "scherzante" theme, bb.78ff. (orch., taken up by pf. in bb.86ff.); indeed, it permeates the pf. figuration in the Rondo, which is much more rhythmically regular than usual.

A fascinating insight into Hummel's compositional/improvisational mode of thought may be seen in f.22' of the autograph (see facsimile in Ex.18). Few passages give the composer as much reason for deletion and re-working as that in bb.11-5 of this work. Hummel's original version, written in black ink with a fine nib, is given in Ex.21. (This and subsequent similar information was obtained by the use of infra-red photography.) In the following reconstruction

, which I offer as possibly reproducing his working method in this case, the letters in parenthesis refer to the stages in Ex.21.

Hummel's first alteration to his original passage was (a) to delete the crotchet rest in b.13, adding a dotted quaver rest and pencilling in a semiquaver C[#], also adding (in pencil) the written-out decoration in the following bar. and the acciaccatura in b.15. (b) He inked in the C[#], making it a quaver and deleting the dot of the dotted rest. Then, having second thoughts about b.14 in its entirety, (c) he deleted it and added, in pencil on the vacant stave above, the melody and accompaniment which I reproduce. Having inked this in, he had another change of mind, (d) substituting a crotchet upper-octave B for the octave quavers. This, of course, required (e) revision of the last note-group in b.13, to smooth the change in register. This was left until the stage at which Hummel added his orchestral parts.

How much later he did this is impossible to tell; it is also immaterial. When he did do so, however, using brown ink and a thicker nib, he scratched out the entire pf. passage, apart from the l.h. chord in b.15. He then wrote the section given in (f) in my Ex.21 in pencil and, when he inked this in, he added the slurs and the turn-sign in b.12, at the same time (g) providing the new accompaniment on the vacant stave below. The rhythm and figuration of this accompaniment had already been suggested to him by his revised accompaniment for b.11 (here given under (a), since it belongs to the "original" black-ink stage). Hummel may well have kept his options open regarding the ultimate form of this accompaniment in the early stages, as

the deletion-marks are in the later brown ink.

There is no doubt that the original version, with its reiterated interrupted cadence, and the near-symmetry of the two melodic phrases, is much inferior to the final version, which has much more variety of rhythm, and yet flows naturally. I suggest that the whole operation represents a quasi-improvised written-down first stage, and subsequent compositional revision — in this case, to the advantage of the finished product.

In spite of his direction "attacca il Rondo" after the double bar at the end of the Introduction proper (f.30'), it seems certain that Hummel intended to link the two by a piano cadenza of some sort, since he ended on a dom. 7th in D, and a pause, and left space for one. It is clear, however, that this was added after the Rondo was written out, since the soloist's final run has caused him to delete the triplet anacrusis to the Rondo theme, preserved from the youthful chamber version, and which is present in all subsequent statements. This is a small point, to be sure, but it is an indication that Hummel was prepared in this instance to let the improvisatory logic of the cadenza supersede the established form of the theme.

(6) Adagio, Variations and Rondo on "The Pretty Polly", Op.75.

Among the slow introductions, this work is unique in terms of closeness of approach to improvisation. In Davis/HUMMEL, the author calls the "elaborate introduction" "outstanding in Hummel as a recorded example of his art in improvisation" (p.171).

The adagio itself has an introduction (Allegro con

fuoco - Moderato, and time-signatures of $\frac{3}{4}$ and C, respectively) lasting for 24 bars. It effectively combines the functions of prelude and theme-advertisement. As Hummel presents it, this theme is very simple (Ex.22), with a minimum of harmonic support and decorative addition. Yet in spite of this simplicity there are a number of motifs upon which Hummel the improviser seizes, and which he explores in the Introduction. Melodic motifs are few, the most obvious being the appoggiatura involving a fall of a 2nd (m(a)), and this is featured in almost every bar, being rhythmic rather than melodic in bb.1, 5, 9, and 11, and on the harmonic level in bb.3, 7, 12, and 14. The second important motif is the basic line of the second half of the theme, the falling scale, m(b). There are also harmonic motifs: harmonisation in 3rds ($h(\hat{a})$) and 6ths ($h(\hat{a}^v)$), and their combination in the $\frac{6}{4}$ chord ($h(b)$). Most important, however, are the rhythmic motifs, and these occur in the first two bars of the theme. Motif r(a) combines the idea of anacrusis followed by main beat (i.e., $\overset{\sim}{\text{J}} \mid \overset{\sim}{\text{J}}$), with that of identity of pitch-class, a distinctive feature of this theme. Following on from this is the very familiar r(b): the rhythm which is much in evidence in the work. The off-beat aspect of this motif gives rise to a derivative, that of syncopation, in its tied form $\text{J} \text{J} \text{J}$ or $\text{J} \text{J} \text{J}$, which I shall designate as r(b1). The third, and final, rhythmic motif is even more familiar, the dotted-note one, r(x), and this is, as we have seen, a feature of improvisation or improvisatory music with Hummel.

The Introduction to the Adagio begins with an octave

trill on the dom. of the home key, E^b , followed by a dom.⁷ arpeggio covering almost three octaves and coming to rest on the 7th (A^b). Using variants of $r(a)$ and $r(x)$, Hummel takes his harmonic bearings before settling on the A^b an 8ve below in b.7. This turns out to be the lower of two voices which fall a whole 8ve by step ($m(b)$), using the dotted rhythm of $r(x)$. The upper voice, a sixth above ($h(\overset{V}{a})$), is "staggered" with respect to the lower rhythmically, using $r(a)$. In the l.h. is a dom. ped. in syncopated 8ves, similar to the bass of the theme itself. This l.h. syncopation leads naturally into the theme, the anacrusis of which is given prominence by the two-8ve leap (Ex.23). The first half of the theme is presented in the bass with imitative phrases in the upper voice, and $r(b)$ is thrown into relief, especially when preceded by a tied note, as in bb.13-14 and 15-16. A typically extempore conflation of ideas occurs when the second half of the theme begins (bb.18ff.). The space between the theme's halves is filled by repeated notes based on $r(b)$, and this top voice continues with a kind of sublimation of the second half, while the "middle voice" of the original theme is preserved in the bass a compound 3rd below ($h(\hat{a})$). A new third voice, appearing between these, adds interest to the basic harmony, outlining a stepwise 3rd, which is shortly to come into its own. A dramatic change of key occurs at b.23, by the re-interpretation of the expected A^b (4th of E^b) as the 3rd of E in the form of a $\frac{6}{4}$ ($h(b)$), rising to a climax on $r(b)$ and changing back to the dom.⁷ of E^b . A convoluted run brings this down to the middle register of the piano, and the "Adagio e con espressione" ensues.

This section opens with a melody based on the stepwise 3rd mentioned (which can be seen as a melodic derivative of $h(a)$, though it will not be necessary to "label" it). There is an interesting amalgam here (Ex.24): The anacrusis is preserved (because of the first-beat percussion in the bass), referring to $r(a)$, and pitch-class identity is effected through the use of the ties ($r(a1)$), while the r.h. chord first appears as a 2nd inversion ($h(b)$). Contrasts in register, pace and dynamics are in evidence in b.3, when the stepwise 3rd is repeated an 8ve higher, and similar contrasts follow when the 3rd descends into the bass beneath the r.h.

Interest having been directed towards the bass, it now begins to develop a dramatic variant of the theme's first bar, and once this has been established, the r.h. plays a counter-melody based on the syncopated $r(b1)$ and the falling scale of $m(b)$, with added rhythmic interest provided by the tie over the barline and the inclusion of $r(x)$. It is notable that the first two groups in the bass entry at b.9 should feature a 6th and a 3rd, echoes, perhaps, of $h(\hat{a})$ and $h(\hat{a})$, the former later becoming an 8ve, and the latter a compound dim. 7th at the climax in b.15. The parallel mode had already been in use since b.13, darkening the whole effectively.

The trilled figure is now (bb.16ff.) alternated between the hands, centring on the dom. (B^b) and moving by 8ves to the piano's lowest register with dynamic terracing en route: p-mf-f-ff. Another dramatic change of key occurs, again to the tonal area of E, and the more basic $r(b)$ returns in an inner bass voice (Ex.25). A rising scale

represents an inversion of $m(b)$ and $r(a)$ is also in evidence combined with $m(a)$. The stepwise falling 3rd intrudes on the melody, this time with the syncopated $r(b1)$, and reiterated chords in $r(b)$ lead to the next sub-section.

I spoke of bb.21ff. as being in the "tonal area" of E, since the key-signature is four sharps, and since the B of b.21 has the feel of an extended dom. ped., and with it, the expectation of a $\frac{6}{4}$ ($h(b)$). But the subtle harmonic subterfuge at b.24(A^\sharp , r.h.), and at 25, 25 and 27 (G^\flat , G^\flat , and E^\sharp , respectively), lessens this expectation, and the German 6th in b.27, which normally would have had the feel of local colouring, and/or delaying of the expected Ic-Va⁽⁷⁾ cadence, and when this in fact happens in b.28, it has a freshness which lends a lustre to the beautiful meditation which follows in B.

Hummel's use of the falling 3rd motif, combined with $r(b1)$ in the top voice in bb.25/ $\text{♩}6$ -27/ $\text{♩}1$, as well as being a reference to the theme of this adagio (bb.0-2), a refinement of the resolution (in b.24/ $\text{♩}6$) of the figures in b.22/ $\text{♩}1$ and b.24. But it is also one of the "happy accidents" of improvisatory creativity — one which, through the skill of the practitioner, gives rise to a new departure, and, in fact, one of the most glorious in his entire output.

In this passage (bb.29-45), we find a magnificent fusion of all the basic material so far encountered. The top line (Ex.26) combines the falling scale $m(b)$ made up of smaller units of $m(a)$, with $r(a)$ (the tie againsts the bass) and $r(x)$, being texturally a reminiscence, also, of the "staggered" effect in bb.7ff. The l.h. has the stepwise 3rd

(and its inversion) allied to r(b), both in quavers and in semiquavers.

The floating, impressionistic, and astonishingly "undated" feeling of this passage is achieved not only by the minimal quality of the melody and the gently-oscillating harmonies, but also by the fact that the B tonality is very vague and not fully established as a tonic, even in the local sense. At the end, the note B is left to stand alone with r(b) beginning to assert itself once more. Indeed, it is this motif which dominates the following section rhythmically (bb.46ff.), in which the B at first becomes the 3rd of a temporary G maj., complete with key-signature change.

Again, motifs are combined: the r.h. has m(b) in triplets which traverse the piano's three registers, each of the r.h. scales ending with m(a) and an extended r(a) (Ex.27). Also to be noted is the manner in which the l.h. begins to approach the general shape of the variation-theme's characteristic leap in bb.1/♩1, 9/♩1, 11/♩1, 13/♩1, etc. The scales and reiterated notes change hands, and the increasing tension of the music finds partial temporary dissipation in the chords and arpeggios of bb.54-6, which also exploit the distinct registers of the piano of the period.

Bb.57ff. brings us yet closer to the variation-theme with recto and inverso alternations based on its opening in contrasting registers. The music is gradually narrowed down to one chord, V of g, with hints of its own dom. (bb.61-4) and, after a rest, is confronted with the dom.⁷ of E^b. A cadenza follows which includes references to m(a) (l.h.) and

the repeated-note figure $r(b)$, and the theme and variations follow.

The pity is that they do not, in general, match up to the standard of the magnificent Introduction, in which Hummel the improviser of genius shines out in every bar.

CHAPTER 17 - THE CAPRICCIO OP. 49

AND THE FANTASY OP. 18

Both commentators and composers of the early nineteenth century viewed the fantasy as the written-down equivalent of an improvisation. However, several reviews in the Harmonicon betray an uneasiness with regard to its usage on several occasions. For example, when writing of a Fantasia by a Mr H. Karr, one critic says that the piece

"in so far as it gives a very ordinary melody, will meet with admirers; but to call it a Fantasia only proves that Mr. Karr, among others, entirely mistakes the meaning of the term. It is a single movement, with an Introduction - nothing more; and this movement is much too long, considering how little variety there is in the many pages devoted to it. The subject seems to have exhausted the arranger long before he arrived at the end of his Fantasia - if so it must be called" (1)

In the QMMR of 1822, a writer goes into more detail:

"It is somewhat curious to trace the descent of musical terms, and the remote consequences to which they lead. The title Fantasie was originally adopted probably by some player after having struck off an extempore performance, for the eccentricity of which he was at some difficulty to apologise, and therefore he had recourse to this expletive. The word fantasie, as described by Rousseau, the French Encyclopaedists and the German Koch, is confined to an extempore production, which when committed to paper, ceases to be a fantasie. They decide the following to be its essential characteristics. It must have the regularity of a studied composition, while it demands an enthusiastic and fertile imagination, tempered by theoretic knowledge and fine taste. Rich in melody, harmony, and modulation, the fantasie can only be the offspring of science and genius.

In England fantasies are published every day, we must therefore admit the application of the title, although they seldom possess the characteristics above cited. And there is the strongest reason to suspect that composers have fastened upon the term as apologetical for any wild sketch of fancy, rather than that they use it in the interpretation assigned to its employment by the lexicographers of music. If such qualities are essential in an extempore production, how much more necessary are they in a printed composition."(2)

It would appear, then, that something of an onus rested upon composers to shape, if not structure, a fantasia in a more "compositional" way than would be expected of, say, a slow introduction. What is in question here is not so much an accepted, received musical form such as Sonata Form, but, like an improvisation itself, a general sense of direction and progression in the music, though it should be more obvious and more tightly-knit as well as being perceptible when the piece is viewed as a whole. Thus the fantasia occupies the dangerous quicksand between improvisation and composition and must be seen to have partaken of both.

Kershaw applies to Hummel⁽³⁾ what the QMMR commentator hinted at as a general practice, that titles such as Fantasy (Phantasy, Fantasie, Fantaisie), Potpourri, Capriccio (Caprice), etc., were interchanged willy-nilly, and our composer's output does contain a confusing succession of titles, from the early (unpublished) Fantasias in c, S20 of c 1799, and A^b, S27 of similar

date, to the Impromptu in C for two pianos dated 24 December 1836 (S205). I shall confine this chapter to an examination of the "only two" works of the rhapsodic kind which "achieve major significance",⁽⁴⁾ the Capriccio in F Op.49 and the Fantasy in E^b/g, Op. 18, both of which show that freedom born of improvisation applied to more-or-less recognised forms, so that an original fusion is created.

This fusion - between Sonata Form, Rondo Form, and free succession - can be schematised, in the case of the Capriccio, as follows:


DESIGNATION:	Introduction	A	B	Intro.	A
TEMPO	<u>Adagio ma non troppo</u>	<u>Allegro agitato</u>	<u>Allegro scherzando</u>	<u>Adagio</u>	<u>Allegro vivo</u>
KEY	F (f)	A ^b	E, e, C	F	F
TIME SIG.	2 4	6 8	2 4	2 4	3 8

All the motifs upon which the work is based, except for one, are given in the first three bars of melody (Ex.1).

Motif (a) has three aspects: the interval of a third (m(a)), its filling-in by step (m(al)), and the rhythm (r(a)).

Motif (b) is the rising scale formed by the principal notes of the harmonic changes, A, B^b, C, D, and (c) the melodic shape of: a leap down followed by leap up and falling by step - and its rhythmic shape - three notes of equal value followed by two of shorter value. Notice how, already, b.7/♩2 contains within itself a diminution of motif (a) in all its aspects, and that in b.9 its maj. 3rd has become literally diminished. What follows in b.12/♩2ff

is a very clear example of one facet of Hummel's decorative procedure in his improvisations: the steady, gently-pulsating bass of simple chords (in this case I and V for some 9bb.) allows him to concentrate on the melodic aspect. Motif (a) is taken up in bb.12-4, given a graceful anacrusis and decorations (Ex.2) and provided with a balancing phrase. In b.14, the particular form of the dotted rhythm (x) which had appeared in b.11 is adopted. The passage is repeated in bb. 16/♩ 2-20/♩ 1., with decorative passages added, and then, as so often, Hummel drops into the key of the bVI (D^b), compounding the harmonic pun on the decorated F in b.20/♩ 2 with a rhythmic/melodic one by which the dom.-ton. anacrusis leading to a med. melody-note (bb.12-3) becomes (in D^b) a med. anacrusis leading to a dom.-ton. melody. Following this widening of the original 3rd, the overall interval of the (x) figure is also widened in b.22. The change is gently stressed in other ways also: the strong constant harmonies are replaced by a first inversion with repeated notes beginning off the beat, a and chord ii (in D^b) makes a welcome change from the by now expected dom. The bass rhythm persists and appears in other parts, while also preserving the constance and the ped. idea of the accompaniment in bb.21ff. The Introduction ends on a C, implying the dom. of f, and the ensuing Allegro agitato begins immediately in A^b , with the ton. in the bass a 10th lower, and the r.h. figuration entering on the off-beat.



This section falls easily into the divisions of a sonata-form exposition, and I propose to use the terms that this implies for the moment. The first subject (Ex. 3) including its answering phrase (Ex. 4) are clearly very close derivations of motif (c), and the cadence theme bb.15-19/ 4. At this point, Hummel uses mild shock tactics to quell the movement at b.11, but manages to maintain links with the preceding by using the two principal notes of the first subject's first phrase (E^b and F, on the main beats) and the three-quaver variant of its answering version (in the middle voice bb.12+14). The cadence-theme at b.15ff. is interesting as it is also combinatory: the rhythm of motif (c) is grafted onto the melodic shape of (a), with the essential features of the first subject's first phrase slightly modified and used to accompany.

A first subject which is so successfully rounded-off could present problems of continuation for a composer, especially when he chooses to shift directly to the relative minor, but here again the improviser's aptitude for linkage of a sub-conscious nature is shown. The two keys share A^b and C in common and, in terms of the key of A^b, the weakest of them, C, provides the melodic link, followed immediately by the other. This is rendered less novel also by the fact that the reverse procedure, also involving C, was used at the end of the "Introduction" and the beginning of the Allegro agitato.

Similarly, the quaver rhythm without individual harmonic change had already been articulated in bb.16 and 18, and the harmonic rhythm on the dotted crotchet already well established. A gesture in the direction of the relative minor had been covertly made in b.18, though at that point, it - the F^b - was nothing more than a slight compromise of the prevailing key's security, rather than a close relative of the new key's dominant. It is in this transition section that we find the first exploitation of motif (b), the scale figure, which also takes from the passage's novelty, as does the anticipation of its first note C by syncopation, thus slightly robbing the first f chord of its full force, and this tied-over trait remains to be featured as a suspension in the passage's second phrase bb.23-7/♩ 1.

The second subject makes its appearance at b.36, and the use of the filled-in 3rds in bb.40-1 and 41-3 clearly link it with what has gone before. But what of bb.36-7, which sound so integral? They can be seen to derive from (a) and its following note (Ex.1), but there is also another possibility. The B^b in bb.37 and 39, since it is harmonised by I in the dominant (E^b) could be seen as an alternative harmony-note to the E^b , and further support may be afforded to this suggestion by the behaviour of the melody in bb.50-1, where, having begun to move towards A^b again, Hummel weakens the cadence by a melodic, rather than harmonic interruption, and the melodic expectation of $C-B^b-A^b$ is frustrated by becoming $C-B^b$ -upper E^b . The fact that

the second subject appears in its relative minor key (g) is a further indication that harmonic relationships of a third are as important as melodic ones in this piece.

The full notation of the decoration at b.49 is of passing interest, in that one would have expected, as in bb.28 and 30, for example, that a sign would have been used. It is a common cadential melodic formula in Hummel, and at the directed tempo  or  would have little difference, and this also applies to the similar decoration in b.54. However, I feel the meticulousness is more than fussiness; the rhythm of the written-out semiquavers is, I suggest, a preparation both rhythmic and melodic for the return of the first subject (in its ritornello guise this time) in b.55.

The injection of the first subject, rondo-like, into what was approached as being a sonata-form codetta has already begun to compromise that form, but when this first theme's figuration is again reduced to a tremolando (b.63ff.) and the second theme played over it, we begin to move outside the realm of conventional forms.

This is reinforced by a fine transition passage in which each element of the music is so carefully handled that it manages to provide surprise and inevitability at the same time and also act as a foil to the next Allegretto scherzando section. The perfect cadence with its tonic (A^b) in b.71 is confirmed by the ensuing bars of (basically) V-I on successive beats, but a jolt in the form of an interrupted cadence occurs when the music leaps from a dom 7th on E^b to a major triad on E,


the melody-note A^b (ton. of I) becoming enharmonically G^\sharp (med. of $b\ VI$). After three reiterations of this chord, the music comes to rest on lower octave D which sounds as if it is the Augmented 6th degree of the German 6th on F^b ($b\ VI$ in A^b). The full bar devoted to this D allows this impression to begin to crystallise, and when the r.h. brings in the other two notes of the Italian version of this aug 6th, it is theoretically, a matter of short time before it will resolve onto V of the tonic A^b .

However, though the notation of the chord in b.80 is "correct" in terms of its possible rôle as an aug 6th chord in A^b ($A^b-C^b-D^b$) the root, F^b does not appear, thus leaving a dim. triad, and the ambivalence of this chord is exploited on the next beat, resulting in the harmonic orientation of the bar becoming an enhanced dom of G^b in the form:

(bb.80, 2 beats-81, 1 beat): $\left[iic-ivb \mid V^7 \right]$. This is repeated in the slightly altered form of $\left[VI-ivb \mid V^7 \right]$ in E^b and again (in the latter form) in C. The V^7 of C, however, is quitted as $bVI^{\sharp 6}$ in b, resolving onto ic in b (b.86) which in turn becomes $bVI^{\sharp 6}$ in a, resolving onto ic again in a (b.89).

In the same bar, this moves through V^7b of e, the tonic of which it touches in b.90. This is enhanced by an Italian 6th in e and is followed by a long dom. ped. decorated in bb.99-100 by French 6ths. Finally, the outermost notes of the chords close inwards by step (bb.102-4) to begin the theme of the Allegretto scherzando in E at b.105.

The harmonic features of this transition just described are underlined by motivic and rhythmic factors also. In b.71 the s-quaver movement of the foregoing section is continued but is reduced to $\frac{2}{3}$ of a beat instead of the whole beat. Also it is confined to outlining a chord in each case, acting as a pointer to the beat, even when it is dissonant (as in bb.71 and 73). When it ceases to do this (b.75, second beat) the figuration of the V chord of the V-I pairs is slightly altered, now curving downwards as if to point to the l.h. ton. chord. The chord-change in b.77 is a kind of liberation, and its upward escape is curbed rhythmically and melodically by the whole-bar octave D^{\flat} in b.79. A possible explanation for the inevitability of bb.80-1, in spite of their harmonic unexpectedness, might be on the rhythmic level: that the breaking of the chords into their constituent notes in the quaver arpeggios lessens their harmonic impact.

Also, the tone-semitone movement in b.80 on the notes $A^{\flat}-G^{\flat}-F$ has already appeared with the same rhythm and on the same pitches in the cadence-theme at b.15ff, and the  harmonic rhythm of bb.80-1, 82-3 + 84-5 has already been presaged as a feature of the second subject, bb.36ff., and this second subject was repeated in bb.64-6.

Finally, the melody of bb.80-5 is that of the seminal motif (a), the falling third filled in by step, also occurring in the bass (discounting the D^{\sharp} auxiliary in b.89) and the harmonic progression is effected through shifts of a third also: (b.77) $E^{\flat} (=F^{\flat})-D^{\flat}-B^{\flat}-G-E$.

The return of the first subject's modified figuration on the melodic plane in b.91ff. is a delicate touch since it hints at the stability of the situations in which this has occurred - and it has always appeared in what has become the tonic, A^b maj. either as thematic material or in the consolidating position of codas - giving a feeling of security after the harmonic melting-pot of the transition and also preparing for the Allegretto scherzando to follow, which is in E. Underneath the first-subject figuration, however, the rhythm of the previous bars is maintained, losing its "choppiness" at b.95, while the weak-strong pairing of the beats in bb. 91/♩ 2-95/♩ 1 becomes less forceful when transferred to smaller rhythmic units (bb.95/♩ 6 - 99/♩ 1), settling firmly on an octave F[#] while the sense of a dominant is maintained by the slightly unsettling Italian 6th in the bass. By b.99 the harmonic rhythm is again two whole beats per bar, and the sense of compound time is lost in bb.101-4, so that the lead into the next section becomes natural and convincing.



Transitions between sections - especially strongly contrasting ones, as here - are among the most taxing musical problems for a composer, in the sense in which we have, to an extent, distinguished him from the improviser. The latter when presenting his own kind of art, has less difficulty here, as so much of improvisation is transitional anyway, and he can indulge in more radical methods of transition which, as we have seen, would be less acceptable


or effective in a written composition. The present work, being midway between the two kinds of approach, accrues to itself some of the compositional problems which must be solved in a similar way. So, the transitional, temporal effect of the original improvisation must be crystallised into thematically and harmonically more discrete units - as is the case here with the clear though curtailed sonata-form exposition, and this throws the problems of the bona fide transitions into relief. The facility and experience of the improviser come into play, of course, but cannot solve the problems, which go far beyond the local exigency of effective transition between pre-ordained sections, having structural implications which affect the whole work. That Hummel achieves this particular transition - and, for example, that in the Op.18 Fantasy - with such musicality and conviction leads one to wonder why such qualities are not more apparent in more of his music.

The reasons lie mostly in the circumstances of his life in that he simply had less time to compose than most. He held salaried posts for most of his life with all the routine and extra duties that these entailed, as well as the requisite Gebrauchsmusik. He published much, including the thorough and comprehensive Piano School, which took years to complete.⁽⁵⁾ His attitude towards much of his own publications became one of increasing concern for production for the widest possible audience, and these pieces tend to pianistic flashiness and prettiness with formal considerations

reduced to frameworks filled with occasionally shallow ideas aimed more at the players' impression on their admiring parlour audiences than on more solid musical content. He also published many arrangements of other composers' works for various chamber-instrumental combinations carried out with a great deal of care and thoroughness, and it is in no small part to these arrangements of, for example, the orchestral masterworks of Mozart and Beethoven, that our nineteenth-century forebears owed their knowledge of these works. Hummel's concert tours — as conductor as well as soloist — took time and effort. So, given his facility in this area, he was at his happiest when closest to his favourite improvisation and often at his best, since improvisation is for the most part transition and development' — if indeed one can completely separate these two — it is not surprising that those pieces which combine a convincing overall form, however unorthodox, with improvisational techniques, should be his most successful.


Even in the more or less discrete sections of this Capriccio this influence can be seen, as I have shown.


Thus, in the Allegretto scherzando (b.105ff) all the units of apparently fresh thematic material begin with the  rhythm of motif (a), whether varied by syncopation () as in b.168, or by decoration which does not occlude it

() as in bb.105+113, Ex.5. Even b.153

preserves the basic rhythmic element. Also improvisational is the kind of superficial canonic effect at bb.136-7 and (rhythmically) at bb.128-9 and 144-5 etc. Several combinations of this theme are workable, but Hummel chooses one which comes easily - and literally - to hand. Other features of improvisational origin are: the way in which the theme of this section returns after the little episode of bb.121-36/♩ 1 when it takes on the rhythm and general cut of the episode (Ex. 6). The introduction of s-quavers into this section is another case in point. They begin as an embellishment of the two quavers in bb.133 and 135 (Ex. 7) and appear again as an embellishment of the B in the V-I cadence (bb.143-4). This time, however, they remain to decorate the anacrusis — now occupying almost the entire bar (144) — which the theme acquired in b.136. They become integral to the cadence theme in b.153ff. and feature prominently in that beginning in b.168, remaining as a constant accompaniment in r.h. After a re-appearance of the E theme they again take on an accompanying rôle - this time in l.h. - incorporating a melodic counter-figure in the manner of the theme of the Allegro agitato in bb.1-2. A new melody appears which is an amalgam of motifs from the opening two bars of the whole work—the falling third by step, and the rhythm slightly clouded by the appoggiatura — of b.3 heralded by a 4th which is later isolated (bb.216/♩ 4ff).

There are many other examples of improvisatory reminiscence, among them: the similarity of the figuration between bb.71ff, b.152ff, b.233ff, and b.419ff, all of which have a coda function. Also, in b.244ff. the E theme having gained an anacrusis, now reduces this to a single note - under the influence, as it were, of the e theme at b.204ff - giving an upward leap of a 6th. When, immediately after (b.247ff.) this is used to modulate in a syncopated form, one is reminded of b.168, the only other place in which such a syncopation has appeared in the piece.

In the transition to the return of the opening Adagio Hummel stresses the  rhythm of motif (a) (b.288ff.) as if to prepare the listener for the "squarer" form of the rhythm. There are similarities between this transition and the earlier one discussed above, although this does not aspire to the former's high quality.

The Adagio return misses out the original central lyrical section, but uses the l.h. chords in the rhythm  to similar dramatic effect, and closes in like manner, a slight variation of one of this composer's clichés. The ensuing Allegro vivace is very much in the nature of a sonata-form reprise, though modified more than one would expect. The "first subject" is given short shrift by a transition section containing a nice re-interpretation of the "second subject" (Ex. 8) bb.375-9

Before it actually appears in b.389ff. accompanied by "first subject" figuration as earlier. This is followed by the cadence-theme in l.h. The remainder is essentially a reprise with coda which outlines, in its "horn-calls" and the melody-notes of the final chords, the basic 3rd motif.

Fantasy in E^b/g, Op.18.

In spite of its length (68 6bb., with the Lento prelude included in the scheme), and the great variety of its material and its sections, this work has a basic tightness of construction which would endear it to the Harmonicon critic quoted at the beginning of this chapter. The hand of the composer can be seen in the overall design, and also, to an extent, in the sequence of "movements", but it is the improviser who gives it life in its drive and pace, in the linkage of more-or-less discrete sections, and in the feeling of continuous development. All the traits which I have noted as being characteristic of improvisation are to be found in abundance here, and it is under headings based on these that I shall examine the piece.

Freedom of form

Even allowing for the particular manifestations of the accepted forms in a composer's individual works, Hummel's Op.18 does not cleave to any of these largely predetermined structures, although their elements are invoked on occasion. Thus, it is possible to discern the exposition and development section of a sonata-form first movement, a linked slow movement, and a finale with

rondo elements. In the end, however, the piece exhibits the formal awareness tempered by improvisatory logic which characterises the more successful of Hummel's works.

The Fantasy can be broken down into nine sections, as in the Table on the next page. While section I (SI) is undoubtedly preludial, it also contains the basic motivic material of the work, and although SII presents itself at first as being of "sterner stuff", it has a transitory feel to it, because of the shifting harmonies and the section's dissolution into measured arpeggios at the end (bb.32-41). SIII can be seen as a loose sonata-form exposition, with a "first sub." (bb.42-55/♩1), a long transition with much development (bb.55-93), a contrasting lyrical "second sub." (bb. 94ff.) and a coda (bb.158-92), this last becoming melodically freer and modulating towards its end, and its last bar is rhythmically free also.



The "development" can be located in SIV (bb.192½, the opening half-bar, to 310), largely in the key of b (bvi), and ending in B and modulating to V^{b9} of E^b , in which key the opening prelude is repeated with slight changes, leading to the "slow movement" (SVI) in E^b follows.

This Larghetto is a chain of free variations on its theme (Ex. 9). The table on p.347 (breakdown of SVI) shows how far from the conventional variation-set plan this improvisatory drawing-out of the theme departs. Since this theme is not always used as a single unit in the section, I have used the letters a and b to symbolise its two halves, beginning on bb.312 and 316 respectively; thus "var.5b" means the fifth variation of the theme's second half.

SECTION	TEMPO	KEY(S)	TIME SIG.	BAR(S)	REMARKS
I	Lento	E ^b	C	1	Prelude
II	Andante	E ^b	C	2-41	Introduction
III	Allegro con fuoco	E ^b /B ^b	♩	42-192	"Exposition"
IV	Allegro con fuoco	b/mod/B	♩	192½-310	"Development"
V	A capriccio, ma lento	E ^b	♩	311	Prelude
VI	Larghetto e cantabile	E ^b	C	312-410	Slow "movt."
VII	Allegro assai	g	♩ (= ¹² / ₈)	411-506	Contrapuntal "Rondo"
VIII	Allegro assai	E ^b	♩	507-587	
IX	Presto	g/G/g	C (+ ^{"12"} / ₈)	587-686	

TABLE showing sections of Fantasy in E^b/g Op.18

Table of Variations in the Larghetto of Op.18.

Bar nos.	<u>a</u>	<u>b</u>
312-315	Theme (1st half)	Theme (2nd half)
316-319		Theme (2nd half)
320-323	var. 1a	
324-327		var. 1b
328-333		var. 2b*
334-339		var. 3b*
340-355/  1	var. 2a*	
355ff.	var. 3a*	
366-369	var. 4a*	
370-373	var. 5a*	
374-377	var. 6a	
378-381		var. 4b
382-385	var. 7a	
386-388/  1		var. 5b
407-410	var. 8a*	

(Asterisks (*) refer to vars. including free developmental extensions of the themes.)

TABLE

Of the variations which can reasonably be identified as such (i.e. vars. 1a, 6a, and 7a, and vars. 1b, 2b, 4b, and 5b), all but one have the opening notes of their respective themes at the same pitch as the original (e^b " and b^b "). The exception occurs in var.2b, which, being on the dom., has the opening on the pitch f ", and this is in keeping with the general pitch-area of its original. The less obvious variations, are free interpretations or "developments" of the first two bars of their themes (marked * in the Table), and are usually based, however loosely, on the general melodic features and/or harmonic progressions of these bars. Thus, in var.8a, bb.407-10 may be seen as the ultimate refinement of the first phrase of a, in which the melody of bb.312-3/ \downarrow 2-3 is elongated and repeated over a ton. ped. with v^{b9} -I substituting for V-I (Ex.10). Similarly, in var.3a, bb.355-7/ \downarrow 01, the theme's iib becomes iv, and the original I is barely hinted at in b.357/ \downarrow 1.

Virtuosity

This is certainly a virtuoso work, though completely lacking in "showiness". Passages such as those in bb.75-86 and 127ff. (both at Allegro con fuoco in alla breve time), b.351 and its repeats, bb.388ff., bb.401ff., the Allegro assai (SVII) and, especially, the final Presto (SIX), would put even the best players rather on their mettle. These sections, however, are entirely integrated with the whole conception of the work, and the virtuosity adds to, rather than detracts from, the overall effect, which is considerable in this Fantasy.

Emotional range

Both within sections and in the piece as a whole, this is of considerable breadth, and contrasts abound. Juxtaposing of different harmonic and melodic rhythms is used very effectively, as in the transitional passage in SIII (bb.55-117), 134-157 in the same section, and the whole of SIV; it is also seen in the introduction of the mock-fugal episodes in SVII. The latter also point to the frequent contrasts in texture in the work, both in the homophonic-polyphonic sense and in that of different sound-densities on the piano. This is particularly effective in bb.9ff. (part of this passage is given in Ex.13), where the thick chords outline the basic rhythm, and the single-line interspersions have a linking function. This kind of contrast is also very telling in bb.94-117/♩1, where the short, fortissimo chords constantly threaten the more gentle sections with peremptory dismissal.

Contrasting dynamics are often juxtaposed also, in many cases allied to, and heightening, the other contrasts. They are used in their own right as well, however, as in bb.170ff., in which the r.h. maintains a soft legato accompaniment, while the l.h. alternates between phrases of similar character and forte 8ves.

One of the more particularly improvisatory instances of contrast in the work is that of register. This is articulated at the very outset in the low dotted minims followed by arpeggios ranging through over three, almost four, and over four 8ves respectively. It is a feature in the presentation of all the main thematic material, with the exception of the Larghetto (SVI), (where it might have

added unnecessary tension) and, possibly, of the Presto, though it might be seen as being represented in the 8ves. However, it does reappear with a vengeance in such passages as bb.643ff. and in the last four bars.

Embellishment

There is a remarkably small number of embellishment signs and written unmeasured decoration for a fantasy, and for Hummel at this stage of his career (cf. the first three pf. sons.). The embellishments that are used are either written out (and found where one would expect them to occur in some profusion, i.e. slow sections) or are employed for less than purely decorative purposes, for example, for emphasis, like the trills in bb.158ff.

However, as I shall show in the section (below) on "motivische Arbeit", many features which might, in other contexts, have been decorative, have been here incorporated into the melodic and thematic material of the piece. This is one instance among several of Hummel's serious attitude to this work, and is evidence of the control which he exerted over the more wayward tendencies of his creativity.

Free passages

Like the more "surface" type of decoration, these are also surprisingly few. Only the prelude (SI) and its repeat (SV), together with b.192, can be so designated with impunity. There are, however, other instances of freedom in contexts which are otherwise strict: the unmeasured additions in bb.392, 394 and 395 (Ex.11); the pauses in bb.210, 222, 373 and 384. Hummel's verbal directions give rise to freedom of tempo at times, such as "sempre più

affrettando il tempo..." over bb.32-3, "più lento" in bb.209-10 and 221-2, "Adagio" in b.192 and "Molto adagio" in bb.585-7, and "rallentando" in bb.40ff., 306, 373, and 627-8. Freedom of treatment is occasionally implied, as in the "espressivo" in bb.94-7/01, "ten." , in bb.392 and 394, and several others. The performer will, of course, also use his discretion along these lines in several other places. Many passages which might have been left free elsewhere, are measured in this work: the arpeggios in bb.32-41 and runs such as those in bb.189-91, 398-400, and others in the Larghetto e cantabile.

Freedom of syntax

We have seen examples of this in other genres of Hummel's output in works influenced by improvisation, and noted a particular feature of departure from harmonic syntactical procedure in his use of harmonic dysfunction. An example of this occurs in the first phrase of Op.18 (Ex.12), where, after an upward arpeggio and a falling scale, the first of the four chords is ii^7_d , becoming, by virtue of the raised A, V^7_d of the dom. in the next chord; instead, however, of effecting a temporary shift to this key, the A and C are lowered to give \cancel{V}^{b9}_b followed by V^7_b in the last two chords. This tiny shadow thrown momentarily across the music is a presage of the later storm-clouds.

A very interesting example of the improviser's stretching convention in preparation for his imminent fully unconventional usage is found in bb.13ff. (Ex.13). In very local terms, the music has reached the key of D^b in b.12 which, by the inclusion of a C^b , moves on to its "ton." G^b in

the next bar, followed by Eb^7 and its ton. a^b in b.15. The pianissimo notes trigger an enharmonic connection with E in the composer's mind ($G^\sharp A^\sharp B^\flat$) and this is actualised in the next progression. This is helped by the fact that both elements in the tonal interface at bb.15-6 (marked * in the Ex.) are articulated without accompanying harmony. The next phrase carries out a similar operation (the "stretching of convention" mentioned) but, instead of moving from G^b to a^b , it moves from E to b^b ; again the enharmonic connection is made as before, B^b-C-D^b becoming $A^\sharp-B^\sharp-C^\sharp$, and taken to be suggestive of F^\sharp . This time, however, the F^\sharp progression (bb.19/4-20/3) contains the min. 7th, making it the dom. of B and Hummel short-circuits the procedure he has so carefully set up to give, in bb.19/4-23, a harmonically unconnected local key-sequence of B, a^b , A, B^b , remaining in this last (the dom. of the home key) until the end of the section.

Several commentators have mentioned the transition passage (bb.55ff.), Davis in terms of "Wagnerian breadth"⁽⁶⁾ and Kershaw invoking the "Eroica" symphony⁽⁷⁾. It is a reversal in direction of the tonality-shifting procedure just described — over a larger time-scale, it is true, but no less tight in its motivic usage. Here the key-sequence is E^b-D^b-C-F . Kershaw also draws attention to the "highly Schubertian"⁽⁸⁾ use of harmony in bb.623-29 (Ex.14), in which the dim. chord (marked * in the Ex.) resolves differently in each case, making what is no more than a modal change from G to g appear to be a matter of greater moment.

The use of Terzverwandtschaft is what might be termed a structural "building block"⁽⁹⁾ in this piece. It can be



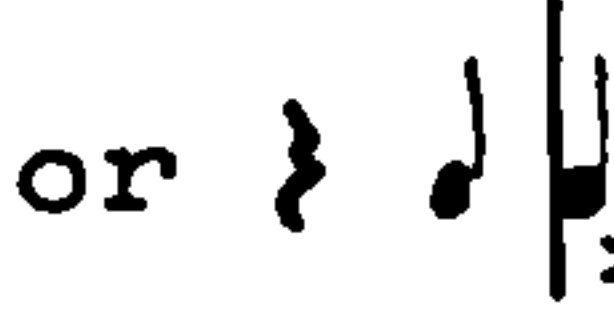

seen at its most obvious in the keys of the various sections, $E^b, e^b, E^b, b, E^b, E^b, g, E^b, g$. It is also used for a more local colour-effect, though it never approaches the almost predictable cliché of Hummel's less exalted works. I have already referred to the effect it created — and the further effect it helped to create — in bb.13ff., and it is also used to great advantage, coupled with contrasts on other levels, in the passage in bb.94-8, where the F^\sharp and its suggested g tonality are savagely dismissed by the returning B^b arpeggio (see Ex.15). A similar effect, at a necessarily lower level of tension, occurs in bb.209-12 (Ex.16.) and in bb.221-4, between the keys of b^b and F^\sharp . The device lends a particularly emotive quality to the passage in bb.391-6 (Ex.11.) where the chords shift from Ic in E^b via V^7c of dom. to f^\sharp , on to a , and back to E^b .

Motivische Arbeit

It is in the tight motivic usage of a rather unconscious kind that this work most clearly shows its improvisatory origin, and particularly in the general feeling of unity in diversity by which the basic motifs underpin each element of the thematic material.

The angular quality of all the themes is of motivic importance, and I have designated this (see Ex.17) melodic motif 'x' ($m(x)$), because of its prevalence. Since it is also a feature of much of the passagework in the purely physical sense, this can be seen to be motivic also (physical motif x : $p(x)$). It almost always includes a step ($m(a)$) — common in Hummel — and usually an aug. or dim. interval also. The angle may be acute (the step occurring within the interval — $m(\hat{x})$), or oblique (the step continuing in the direction of

the leap — $m(\overset{\vee}{x})$) and they frequently overlap (e.g. b.6 in Ex.17). Another important motif also has two forms, that of the interval of a 3rd, motif $m(b)$, and that interval filled in stepwise, motif $m(b1)$

The basic idea contained in each of these motifs also exists on other levels of the piece: the step ($m(a)$) also exists as a stepwise harmonic progression (motif (harmony) $a - h(a)$), and the 3rd ($m(b)$) as Terzverwandtschaft ($h(b)$). Rhythmically, there are analogues also: the regular rhythm (usually in crotchets, and usually associated with scalar melodic progressions) of the form  will be labelled rhythmic motif a ($r(a)$), but it will also be applied to any regular rhythmic pattern of a bar or just over it, which begins on a strong beat. A derivative of this, featuring an anacrusis, forms a second rhythmic motif, $r(b)$, of the kind  or , while the final rhythmic motif, $r(x)$, is no stranger to Hummel, or, indeed, to a great many improvisatory works by others: . All the motifs may, of course, be subjected to augmentation or diminution.


Ex.18 illustrates the way in which these motifs are combined to form the basis of the thematic material of the piece. What is not quite so apparent is the fact that the greater number of them have been subliminally advertised, so to speak, in the Lento prelude of SI (Ex.19). It is not necessary to show every appearance in each form of all the motifs, and I shall confine myself to some of the more noteworthy instances.

Motivic usage in the transition (bb.55ff.) of SIII is interesting, as it demonstrates how the improviser can permute a basic cell without allowing it to lose its

identity or its force. The motif in question is that in the l.h. of bb.43/♩4-46/♩2 (see l.h. of Ex.19(a)), and combines $m(\hat{x})$, $m(b)$ and $r(b)$, and, when augmented, $p(x)$. This last motif is intensified when it passes to the r.h., while the l.h. has a combination of $m(a)$ and $h(a)$ becoming $h(b)$. The anacrusis of the r.h. motif becomes shorter rhythmically, (b.67), approaching a version of $r(x)$ and, when it is resumed in the l.h., it undergoes augmentation on the melodic level, the second two notes becoming two 8ves in b.80, including what was to remain, generally speaking, the lowest note of the pf. of the period until c1816. By bb.87ff., the anacrusis has been lost, and the motif is given a compressed but triumphant statement (with $m(b)$ outline) in bb.92/♩4-93/♩2. Hummel ensures that this will be a dramatic moment by the ff marking and the wedge staccato, and shows, by his lack of r.h. rests and the separate stems, that he requires both hands to be used ⁽¹⁰⁾. This is followed by the piano 2nd sub., exhibiting aspects of $m(x)$ in r.h. and $h(b)$ in l.h., and is attacked by a further version of the motif, this time in straight (broken) triadic form (bb. 97-8, Ex.15). It continues to punctuate thus during the next 15 bars.

The angular motif ($m(x)$) invades much of the work's figuration. In general, this would not be particularly noteworthy, as Hummel's fioriture are mostly in the form of convoluted lines including leaps, appoggiaturas and auxiliaries. In the present work, however, there is so little of this figurational writing outside of the Larghetto and, if consciously written-in, it requires a good deal of thought and

time-consuming manipulation to incorporate such angular shapes into the accompanying figures. If unconscious, as I believe to be the case here, it is yet another indication of improvisatory influence.

Angularity is certainly present in the vast bulk of the figuration in this piece, whether it appears incidentally (e.g., in b.103/6, as the result of a reiterated upper ped., in bb.117ff., as the result of broken chords), or is a technical feature, as in bb.401ff., where it flanks a continuous trill (see. Ch.12, Ex.6), or is applied to a basically simple theme (Ex.19(c) of this Ch.), or occurs as part of a contrapuntal texture from which it subsequently gains its independence (e.g. bb.20ff.). It is preserved even in the final rush of octaves in bb.683-6.

NOTES to CHAPTER 17

- (1) Harmonicon, April 1831, p.89.
- (2) QMMR 1822, pp.111-2.
- (3) Kershaw/KEYBOARD, I, pp.134ff.
- (4) Op. cit., I, p.142.
- (5) It was begun c1822 and published in 1828.
- (6) Davis/HUMMEL, p.170.
- (7) Kershaw/KEYBOARD, I, pp.145-6.
- (8) Op. cit., I, pp.149-50.
- (9) Nettl/IMPROVISATION, pp.13ff.
- (10) There is no extant autograph for this work. It was first published by the Bureau d'Industrie in Vienna and Pesth, c1805. In the Bureau's reissue of the work (c1811), the lack of r.h. rests and the opposite stems occurs, and this is perpetuated in the Peters (Leipzig) edition of c1880 (date from Zimmerschied/VERZEICHNIS) in a publication of Hummel's works entitled "Sonaten und Stücke für Pianoforte", which I have used in conjunction with the above.

POSTLUDE

My intention in this dissertation has been to show that the keyboard style of Johann Nepomuk Hummel, as it is preserved in his written compositions, is the result of the dualities of the period, in particular the private/public one, which are reflected in the composer and performer aspects of his creative personality.

At its deeper levels it was an enigmatic personality, belied by his outwardly bürgerlich appearance, his settled life in Weimar, and his general thoroughness as shown, for instance, in his Piano School. The man who was so obviously proud of his title of Kapellmeister, and upon whom the national musical and political establishments of Europe showered their highest honours, was also the indefatigable travelling virtuoso who could still hold his own in the face of the younger, more brilliant generation — even including the youthful Liszt — until his very last years. Elevated to a position very close to Beethoven in composition and at the same time the acknowledged representative and developer of the style of Mozart, his teacher, his music in the light, popular vein was eagerly bought and played in Europe's lowliest drawing-rooms. The lion of the concert-hall was equally sought-after, and equally at home, in the réunions of the best professional musicians of the period.

These apparent personal, social and musical contradictions, and the composer and performer in Hummel, achieved a rare fusion in his improvisations, in which he was generally considered to be without rival, and it can be said that the art in its purest form died with him. Increasing

specialisation in the wake of the Industrial Revolution affected all aspects of the period, including — perhaps particularly — the performing arts, and a new generation found itself on the horns of a dilemma which demanded the separation of the production and reproduction of music, and which is approaching its ultimate and unhappy fruition in our own time. This generation continued a process which Hummel himself particularly exemplified, the amalgamation of the improvisatory and compositional styles in the written work, and, through this, the establishment of the Romantic style.

Denied its independent life in art music, however, improvisation, the worm in that particular bud, was one of the prime causes of the withering, not only of the style in the creation of which it was instrumental, but also, possibly, of the tonal era in music.

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