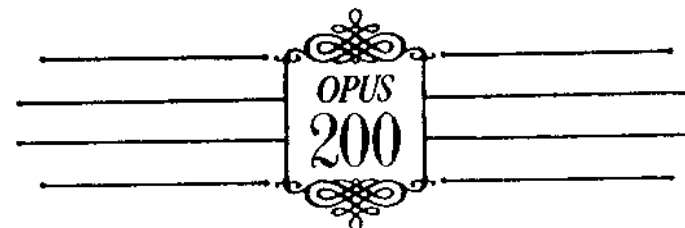




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A SYSTEMATIC INTRODUCTION TO IMPROVISATION ON THE PIANOFORTE

(Systematische Anleitung zum Fantasieren auf dem Pianoforte)



CARL CZERNY
Translated and Edited by
Alice L. Mitchell


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A Systematic Introduction to Improvisation on the Pianoforte
Opus 200

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Carl Czerny (1791–1857)

Carl Czerny was born in Vienna and died there; he lived all but a few months of his life in that city during a time when it was the unquestioned musical capital of the Western world. Until somewhat recently, Czerny was known primarily as the composer of thousands of pianoforte etudes that both crystallized and codified the critical technical components of the romantic age of virtuosity in pianism. However, his contributions as the exacting "specialist" in the appropriate performance of Beethoven's compositions and as the musical pedagogue whose panoramic treatises mirror and caricature the shifting tastes and styles of the first half of the nineteenth century have evoked for him a new respect and interest among modern musicians and scholars.

As pupil of Beethoven and teacher of Liszt, Czerny occupies a position of strategic importance in the history of music. Through his etudes and pedagogical works, he was transmitter, as well as translator, of the newest musical and technical practices from classic to romantic generations. Although remarkably precocious as a pianist, and entrusted by Beethoven himself with the first public performances of a number of the latter's compositions, Czerny enjoyed a formidable reputation during most of his life as a teacher of the pianoforte. Indeed, he should probably be designated the first full-

fledged modern piano teacher, a role superseding that of the more general music teacher of former times.¹

Czerny's genius in the systematic building of the then-novel virtuoso technique and his capacity for preparing students for all challenges inherent in the glamorous but hazardous profession of virtuoso performer secured for him a position as a principal figure in that leading musical center. Indeed, he was referred to jokingly by Chopin as "the oracle of Vienna."

His compositions are for all media except opera² (the opus numbers reaching well over one thousand). He himself maintained that his earlier works, written before so much of his time and energy began to be devoted to teaching, represented more serious and successful attempts than the later ones although today the majority by far still remain in virtual oblivion.

The current renewed interest in Czerny's pedagogy as a rich primary source of pianistic developments and of performance practices has engendered parallel efforts to rediscover and reevaluate many of his compositions. While the defense of Czerny as composer cannot yet rest, there is little question that musicians of today are eager to discern whatever elements in his music might have contributed to his notable fame during his lifetime. In the meantime, modern researchers into that period continue to be attracted to Czerny and to the mosaic of nineteenth-century culture that emerges from a study of his pedagogical treatises.

1. Czerny was far from myopic, however, in his commitment to teaching all matters with which pianists had to be concerned. For example, he himself designated his *Letters on Thorough-Bass* (trans. by J. A. Hamilton, London: Cocks, ca. 1840) as "forming the second part" of his *Letters on Teaching the Pianoforte*.

2. However, in an autobiographical sketch of 1824 for the then-updated edition of Ernst Ludwig Gerber's *Tonkünstler-Lexikon*, Czerny reveals that he wrote many pieces, "including operas, symphonies, and concertos, etc." during the hiatus between op. 1 (1806) and op. 2 (1819), but that none of these became known because he was still "an immature product." See Friedrich Schnapp, "Ein autobiographischer Brief Carl Czernys aus dem Jahr 1824," *Zeitschrift für Musik Jahrg.* 103 (Jan.-June 1941), pp. 89-96.

Translator's Foreword

The noteworthy paucity of treatises on improvisation for keyboardists (other than organists) during the first half of the nineteenth century presents a puzzling circumstance in view of the overwhelming evidence of a continuing and enthusiastic interest in improvisation during that very period. In fact, the only attempt at formal instruction other than Czerny's Op. 200 was a manual on preludizing by A. E. M. Grétry that appeared around 1800.¹ Grétry's treatise is a transitional thorough-bass manual, however, dealing with principles of chord succession and voice-leading but employing no figures; and so far as improvisation is concerned, it must be regarded as essentially retrospective.

This decline in the formal teaching of improvisation can be explained in part by the vanishing role of the improvising keyboard accompanist of the eighteenth century, without whose services C. P. E. Bach maintained that "no piece can be well performed."² Although the nineteenth century still preserved thorough-bass as a quasi-catechism for musical grammar and syntax, improvising of realizations as a critical component of the keyboardist's performance technique had virtually disappeared well before 1836, the publication date³ of Czerny's Op. 200.

It was primarily during the late decades of the eighteenth century that the transfer of responsibility for the precise details of accompaniments from improvising performer to composer took place. In fact, the increasing diversity of accompaniments in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century keyboard writing, whether in pianoforte sonatas, in chamber works including pianoforte, or pianoforte accompaniments for art songs, parallels the increasing attention to these very details by composers, and heralds their "accession to power" in this domain. Moreover, it was increasingly and ultimately the composer of keyboard music, and not the improvising keyboardist, who determined the density or sparseness of texture in any given passage, the scope and details of dynamics, tempo, expressive range, articulation, embellishments, and the like. Only

1. A. E. M. Grétry, *Méthode simple pour apprendre à préluder*.

2. C. P. E. Bach, *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, trans. and ed. by W. J. Mitchell (New York: W. W. Norton, 1949) p. 173.

3. There is no publication date in the edition (Cassel) used for this translation. 1836 is the date cited by Ernst Ferand in *Die Improvisation in Beispielen* (Köln: Arno Volk Verlag, 1936) p. 22.

these circumstances can explain the altogether novel and unique facet of the reputation Czerny enjoyed during his lifetime (and enjoys even today), namely, as a "specialist" in the proper performance of the pianoforte works of another composer, of his teacher, Beethoven.

Except for Czerny's treatise, it is entirely possible that the conspicuous absence of essays on improvisation during the very period when it reigned, along with *Fingerfertigkeit*, as the *sine qua non* for the virtuoso performer was born of the notion that improvisation in fantasy style was tied in with a special gift and could perhaps not be taught. This doubt was already hinted at by C. P. E. Bach,⁴ was evidently increasingly entertained during the nineteenth century, and has hovered over scholarly inquiry even in recent times.⁵ Although "natural aptitude" is designated by Czerny as first among the necessary attributes for learning to improvise, he nevertheless maintains in his introductory chapter that the "... innate propensities for this art can be systematically built up and perfected through diligence and study," the hallmark of his pedagogical credo. Thus, Op. 200 attempts to teach and illustrate the new improvisatory liberties taken by nineteenth-century pianists.

The Vienna in which Carl Czerny lived for all but a few months of his life was a locus of explosive growth in public concerts to which the establishment in 1812 of the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* contributed as a catalyst. The city was the European musical capital to whose large public concert halls and lavish intimate salons the gifted composers and performers from various parts of the continent gravitated to take the first significant step in professional pursuits. Czerny's Vienna was also a bustling center for the manufacture of instruments, particularly the pianoforte (by houses such as Stein, Streicher, and Graf, for example), as well as for music publishing.⁶

The comparatively recent invention of the double escapement action, improvements in the damper mechanism, and enlargement of keyboard range⁷ had contributed to the supremacy of the pianoforte above all other instruments and, as a result, to the strategic superiority of pianists above all other instrumentalists. Its new capabilities with regard to legato playing, quick repeated notes, graded dynamics, and its gradually developing sensitivity—permitting greater margins of tempo, dynamics, and expressiveness, and freer wanderings into remote tonal regions—all served to enhance its status as the favorite solo concert instrument of the new romantic era. Indeed, without these new attributes of the pianoforte, the rise of the acrobatic brand of virtuosity witnessed around the turn of the century would have been unthinkable.

4. C. P. E. Bach, op. cit., p. 430.

5. Ernst Ferand, *Die Improvisation in der Musik* (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1938) p. 18.

6. For a more detailed discussion, see Erich Schenk, *Kleine Wiener Musikgeschichte* (Wien: Paul Neff Verlag, 1946), especially pp. 131–148. Also see Eduard Hanslick, *Geschichte des Concertwesens in Wien* (Wien: Braumüller, 1869–70) pp. 221–7.

7. For details of main trends in pianofortes around the turn of the nineteenth century, see William S. Newman, *Sonata in the Classic Era* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina, 1963) pp. 86–87.

The cultural atmosphere surrounding Czerny from earliest youth was marked by the hullabaloo of pianistic duels and contests, the focal points of which were pyrotechnical virtuosity and inspired originality in improvisation. In fact, the generally familiar accounts of Beethoven's triumphs in these pianistic battles with such contemporaries as Daniel Steibelt and Josef Wölfl, for example, were based primarily on his genius as improviser, which Czerny recalls variously as "magnificent," "unsurpassed," and "brilliant and astonishing in the extreme."

There are nineteenth century sources galore—concert programs of Beethoven, Hummel, Chopin, and Liszt; diaries of Moscheles; memoirs of Czerny, Ferdinand Ries, Anton Schindler, and others in Beethoven's musical circle; letters of Mendelssohn, Chopin, and Liszt; criticisms by Schumann and Hanslick—to document the fact that improvisation, before large audiences as well as in elite private circles, had now become a crucial vehicle for the display of the virtuoso's special gifts. The free improvisation was usually placed at the end of each program to leave the sweet aftertaste in the public's memory. It seems also to have assumed a noteworthy measure of responsibility in the public debuts of young artists and, in some cases, even replaced the hitherto traditional presentation of one's own sonata for this purpose.⁸

Virtuosity aside, it is altogether possible that a performer playing his own composed work could thus exhibit "only" his disciplined talent and schooled technique; however, a pianist improvising before the public could not only display courage in the face of indisputable danger but could also bid for recognition of his spontaneous originality, an attribute accorded a high priority by romantic audiences. In brief, a pianist with a flair for improvising in public could guarantee for himself a comfortable place on the pedestal reserved for the nineteenth-century virtuoso. Incidentally but not insignificantly, this programming practice highlights the beginnings of the ever-increasing separation between the role of composer and that of performer, notwithstanding the circumstance that both were still frequently assumed by single individuals. In fact, the very rise of the "musical specialist," whether composer, performer, or pedagogue, marks the simultaneous decline of the comprehensive or "complete" musician of former eras.

The thrust of renewed nineteenth century interest in improvisation was toward soloistic display rather than accompanimental propriety. Improvised performance was consequently highlighted rather than discreetly and tastefully blended, focused on the pianoforte specifically rather than on keyboard instruments generally, and inextricably entwined with both the serious enticements as well as the superficial faddishness of this age of virtuosity.

There is no substantial evidence that Czerny himself was particularly original as an improviser although the astonishing number as well as the fashionable quality of his compositions strongly suggest that his improvising was facile at the very least. He is

8. See *ibid.*, Chapter 3 particularly, "The Sonata in Classic Society."

perfectly candid in his memoirs about his musical talents other than as pianist, however: his ease as sight reader and proofreader; his excellent musical memory; his ability to notate his own ideas at a tender age and his subsequent speedy writing technique; his ability to reduce and arrange scores for piano; but he never even hints at excellence with regard to his improvising ability.

It whets the appetite, however, to study a systematic introduction to improvising in fantasy style (*Fantasieren*)⁹ from one who studied with Beethoven and later taught Liszt. Moreover, Czerny's real genius lay in his uncanny ability to crystallize the musical and technical problems of his time and to formulate not only etudes (by the thousands) but also procedures for practice that help pianists rise above even the most formidable difficulties. In fact, the justice that has kept his name and memory alive until even today triumphs through the study of his monuments of musical pedagogy. They exhibit a singular nimbleness of mentality capable of keeping pace with the mind-boggling diversity and swift changes in styles and tastes that characterize his time. Although his writing style is dry, his pedagogical ideas are sound, to which fact the thousands of piano teachers over the next century and a half who have used his materials bear witness. His musical illustrations are more interesting and diverse than the text by itself implies, and, for researchers into these decades of upheaval in pianism, there is much more to be learned from the examples, from the matters that Czerny addresses, and (remarkably) from those that he takes for granted, than he himself could probably ever have fathomed. Moreover, his liberal citations of further illustrations of each technique in the works of other composers brand him as a product of more modern times, steeped as he may have been in older musical traditions.

A *Systematic Introduction to Improvisation on the Pianoforte*, Op. 200, is Czerny's first "school" in the form of a treatise. Although published in 1836, it must have been written seven or eight years earlier, judging from other of his opus numbers with documentable dates.¹⁰ The subtle little signal that Czerny considered this work to be of some significance (other than that surrounding the subject matter discussed) is that he may very well have saved the number 200 for the opus. It cannot be accidental, particularly in view of Czerny's prolificacy,¹¹ that his theoretical "schools" should just happen to follow so neat a numbering scheme: Opus 200, on Improvisation; Opus 300, on preluding; Opus 400, on fugue-playing; Opus 500, *Complete Theoretical and Practical Pianoforte School*; Opus 600, *School of Practical Composition*. Incidentally, this pattern is arrested by Opus 700 (12 *Easy Rondos*) and completely shattered by Opus 800 (*The Two Sisters*). Czerny himself designated Opus 300, 120 *Examples of Preludes, Modulations,*

Cadenzes, and Fantasies, as "forming the Second Part of Opus 200." The remarkable brevity of the eighth chapter on contrapuntal and fugal improvisation, is puzzling, in view of the obvious difficulties inherent in that subject matter, to which researchers might have hoped for some subsequent work as continuation. Opus 400, however, despite its title, hardly fulfills that need, for it is comprised of only preludes and fugues in which Czerny addresses the two chief pianistic problems in this style, namely, fingering and the appropriate division of inner voices between the hands.¹²

One might understandably wonder why Czerny, who had no reputation at all as improviser, inspired or otherwise, would rush in to write this treatise where other great improvisers of his time had feared to tread. After all, the thrust of his effort in Opus 200 was to teach improvisation of the sort that nineteenth century audiences thirsted for, namely that with a freeness of style, a sense of abandon to musical inspiration, the execution of musical flights of fancy. Why, with his well-earned reputation for precision and accuracy as pianist and teacher, would he begin his pedagogical career in writing with the single subject that is one of the most elusive in music. The answer is found in part in what we recognize to be his propensity for pedagogical codification, no matter how rarified the atmosphere of the subject matter. More revealing, however, are his comments dispersed throughout the treatise to the effect that themes enter into the fingers¹³ or that the fingers must be reconciled with musical ideas.¹⁴ And Czerny was entirely in his own element whenever the fingers played a significant musical role. His text, in fact, implies at times that the fingers themselves not only catch the musical idea but even perhaps beget it. Certainly the filigree work in many of his cadenza-like illustrations lend credence to this notion, as do a number of excerpts of passage work. Whether actual thematic motives are finger-oriented, rather than merely executed, must remain a moot point. However, Czerny's own description of fantasy-like improvisation as consisting "... frequently ... in an almost subconscious and dream-like playing motion of the fingers ..." ¹⁵ surely confirms this focus of his attention.

If Czerny's Opus 200 does not actually teach us inspired improvisation, it does accomplish wonders to clarify how vastly extended the domain of improvisation and how diversified the vocabulary of the improvisatory style really were during his time. Incidentally, it also appears to hold the secret of his remarkable prolificacy, for hundreds of his piano pieces align themselves with notable ease alongside of the musical illustrations in this treatise. It is safe to assume that many of them were hastily written down improvisations in the styles illustrated here (long held suspicions perhaps

9. See footnote 1, Introduction, on *Fantasieren*.

10. Czerny's op. 146, for example, *Funeral March on the Death of Beethoven* (solo and duet), is dated March 26, 1827. In view of Czerny's astonishing work-pace, Op. 200 could not have been written much later.

11. Czerny's works go beyond one thousand opus numbers, in addition to many compositions still in manuscript, arrangements, editions, translations of plays, and so on.

12. Czerny designates Opus 400 as the concluding studies necessary for building a pianoforte technique and leading to virtuosity. In his "systematic" scheme, Opus 400 follows Opus 299 (*The School of Velocity*), Opus 335 (*The School of Legato and Staccato*), Opus 355 (*The School of Embellishment*), and Opus 399 (*The School for Development of the Left Hand*).

13. See fifth chapter, section 4.

14. See fourth chapter, section 7.

15. See fourth chapter, section 1.

confirmed by the substance of Opus 200). Of course, to improvise in fantasy style, giving free rein to one's flow of ideas, and before the public to boot, demanded a musical mentality of a whole order of magnitude other than Czerny's, whose exacting musicianship both necessitated and gave birth to a degree of caution that was simply too weighty to throw to the winds. One is tempted, furthermore, to speculate on the real possibility that the price paid also by pianists of future generations for acquiring the virtuoso techniques that Czerny's etudes and practice procedures virtually ensure was the diminishing ability to perform "on the spur of the moment" and "without special immediate preparation."

This *Systematic Introduction* may very well have been translated into English previously, but I have been unable to find either a translation or a reference to one.¹⁶ In fact, of all Czerny's pedagogical works, Opus 200 has always had the lowest "profile." It was the confluence of my own interests in Czerny and in improvisation generally that led me to the document in the first place. Aside from the usual problems encountered in translating, certain critically important terms, foremost among them *Fantasieren*, have no single English equivalents, and they are explained in footnotes as they occur in various chapters. Whenever possible, I have adhered to a literal translation in the hope of saving the reader the trouble of returning to the original German for further clarification. Whenever I have departed from these safeguarding guidelines, such as in my translation of *Schlussfermata* (third chapter) or *gebunden* (first chapter), it was because I considered the literal translation to be more obfuscating than clarifying; but, in any event, these departures are explained in appropriate footnotes as they occur. Moreover, I have made every effort to preserve Czerny's individuality as it is made manifest in the text itself, which meant, among other things, resisting the temptation to make cosmetic repairs, particularly in those paragraphs that deal with practice techniques "in all keys," "in all forms," "with diligence," "etc., etc."

I take this opportunity to express my gratitude for all sorts of helpful suggestions to two scholars of distinction who are luckily also my old friends, namely Dr. Boris Schwarz of the City University of New York and Dr. Alfred Mann of the Eastman School of Music. Most special thanks are extended to Dr. John Rothgeb, a newer friend and colleague at the State University of New York at Binghamton, under whose watchful eye the manuscript was prevented from assuming the character of a German treatise "Englished."

Alice L. Mitchell

Introduction

I

When the practicing musician possesses the capability not only of executing at his instrument the ideas that his inventive power, inspiration, or mood have evoked in him at the instant of their conception but of so combining them that the coherence can have the effect on the listener of an actual composition — this is what is called: Improvising or Extemporizing.¹ — Accordingly, the talent and the art of improvising consist in the spinning out, during the very performance, on the spur of the moment and without special immediate preparation, of each original or even borrowed idea into a sort of musical composition which, albeit in much freer form than a written work, nevertheless must be fashioned into an organized totality as far as is necessary to remain comprehensible and interesting.

2

Although this capability can be practiced on diverse instruments up to a certain degree, yet the pianoforte remains the only one, by virtue of its completeness and versatility, on which it can best be elevated to an independent branch of art founded on certain basic rules; and the attainment of this art is thus a special obligation and crown of distinction for the keyboard virtuoso.

1. *Fantasieren*: Czerny uses this term much more frequently than the two clarifying synonyms, *Improvisieren* and *Extemporieren*, that he adds parenthetically to the text. Having no single English equivalent, it is translated here simply as "improvising" or at times as "improvisation." Whenever the context implies a higher level of inspired endeavor, the translation of *Fantasieren* is "improvising in fantasy style" or "fantasy-like improvisation." In those instances, Czerny usually inserts a phrase to distinguish this higher level, such as *das wirklich selbständige Fantasieren* (genuine full-fledged fantasy-like improvisation,) as in section 5, paragraph 3 of the Introduction, for example.

16. There is a French edition, however, of ca. 1840 (Paris: M. Schlesinger), possibly translated by Czerny himself.

3

Improvising is also enticing to the listener, for there can prevail therein a sense of freedom and ease in the connection of ideas, a spontaneity of execution that one does not find in works that are composed, (even when they are designated as fantasies). If a well-written composition can be compared with a noble architectural edifice in which symmetry must predominate, then a fantasy well done is akin to a beautiful English garden, seemingly irregular, but full of surprising variety, and executed rationally, meaningfully, and according to plan.

4

There appertains to Improvising, as to composing:

First, natural aptitude, that is already revealed in early youth for the most part, and consists of inventive power, lively imagination, ample musical memory, quick flow of thoughts, well formed fingers, etc.

Second, thorough training in all branches of harmony, so that the adroitness for proper modulating would already have become second nature for the performer.

Third, finally, a completely perfected technique of playing (virtuosity), thus the highest degree of dexterity of the fingers in all difficulties, in all keys, as well as in everything that pertains to beautiful, pleasing and graceful performance. For only in vain does imagination provide the best ideas if the fingers are incapable of executing them with all artistic facility and assurance.

By the way, although all these skills must be presumed herewith by anyone who wishes to devote himself to artistically sound improvising in public, still any other qualified performer can study the treatise placed before the reader to good and varied profit.

5

Improvisation can be categorized into several types and gradations, which follow here in the order in which the student must assimilate them.

*First, Preludes*¹, before the beginning of a piece.

1. Czerny's text adds *Vorspiel* after the term *Preludien*, as though they were interchangeable. Throughout the discussion, however, he employs *Vorpiel* quite consistently as the general designation for

*Second, Cadenzas, Fermatas*², in the midst of a piece, such as at pauses, transitions into a theme, etc.; furthermore, to apply as the closing cadenzas⁴ in concertos.

Nota Bene: These two types, aside from their own limited necessity, should also be regarded as initial preparation for and components of genuine fantasy-like improvisation.

Third, genuine, full-fledged fantasy-like improvisation, which breaks down further into the following types:

- a. In the working out⁵ of a single theme in all the familiar forms of composition.
- b. In the development and combination of several themes into a total work.
- c. In genuine *potpourri*, or the intertwining of favorite motives⁶ through modulations, passage-work, cadenzas, without particular development of any single one.
- d. In variations in all customary forms.
- e. In Improvising in strict⁷ and fugal style.
- f. In capriccios of the most free and unrestrained type.

Naturally, all these types can be combined with one another and employed in one and the same fantasy.

this category of Improvising. *Prelude* is usually reserved as a proper noun for titles, as in his citations at the end of the first chapter, for example, but also serves as the root of the verb form, *preludieren*, (to preludize). Since *Vorpiel* has no other equivalent, they are both translated as "prelude."

3. For the most part, Czerny uses *Cadenza* and *Fermata* in their modern senses, namely as the interpolated elaboration at a pause (*Cadenza*), and as the sign designating the pause (*Fermata*). In those cases, the translation is literal. Because of Czerny's predominantly modern usage, the occasional exceptions can be confusing, as in *Schlussfermata* (see footnote 4).

4. "Closing cadenzas" is more interpretation than translation of Czerny's term, *Schlussfermaten*, which is reminiscent of eighteenth century tradition. (See Czerny's first manual of instruction as pupil of Beethoven: C.F.E. Bach's *Essay*, op. cit., pp. 143-147 and pp. 379-386.) The consistent differentiation between *Cadenza* and *Fermata* is more recent in origin than Czerny's Op. 300, with the result that he interchanges these terms occasionally. The translation, however, consistently uses these terms in their more modern sense.

5. *Durchführung* is translated here as "working out" and elsewhere as "development" for the reason that Czerny himself often mentions, namely "to avoid monotony."

6. *Motiv* is translated variously as "motive," "subject," or "theme" since Czerny's meanings seemed interchangeable in this way. Whenever he refers to a "figure," he employs the term, *Figur*. He is consistent in his use of *Thema*, however, to designate the theme of a set of variations.

7. *Gebunden* here refers to "strict" style, which is often the case when it occurs in proximity to "fugal style." (Also see footnote 2, first chapter, and footnote 1, eighth chapter). Alternate translations are explained in subsequent footnotes.

A systematic Introduction
to Improvisation on the
Pianoforte. op 200 1836

Carl Czerny 1791-1857

Al. Mitchell

Longman 1983

FIRST CHAPTER

Concerning Preludes

*(Preludes and Short Fantasies before the
Beginning of a Piece to Be Performed)*¹

I

These can be twofold:

First, quite short, as though through only a few chords,² runs, passagework and transitional materials,³ one were trying out the instrument, warming up the fingers, or arousing the attention of the listeners. These must conclude with the complete chord of the principal key of the work to be performed.

Second, longer and more elaborate, just like an introduction belonging to the following piece; therefore, even thematic materials from the latter can be introduced therein. A prelude such as this, which already allows for some modulation, must conclude with a cadence on the seventh-chord of the dominant⁴ of the following piece and, by that token, become connected with it.⁵

1. That is, a composed work "to be performed" rather than an improvised one.

2. As in the examples (unnumbered) under section 1 of this chapter.

3. See examples 1-11. Also, examples 12-20.

4. That is, the dominant-seventh chord, which expression Czerny uses elsewhere occasionally (as in the second chapter, section 2). The translation is literal here to indicate his thorough bass orientation.

5. As at the end of examples 21 and 22, second chapter.

CONCERNING THE FIRST TYPE

2

It is akin to a crown of distinction for a keyboardist, particularly in private circles at the performance of solo works, if he does not begin directly with the composition itself but is capable by means of a suitable prelude of preparing the listeners, setting the mood, and also thereby ascertaining the qualities of the pianoforte, perhaps unfamiliar to him, in an appropriate fashion. But it is also necessary to observe the limits of propriety at the same time. With the accompaniment of other instruments, one must cut it very short and accomplish the thing with a few chords and a brilliant run. In a public performance of a solo piece with orchestra,⁶ (especially if it begins with a *Tutti*), preluding of any sort is unsuitable.

3

Merely a few chords are sufficient as prelude (in the briefest case).

for
example

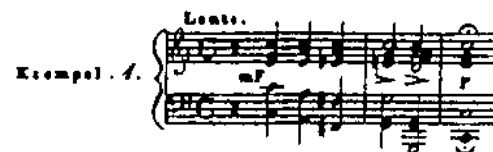


4

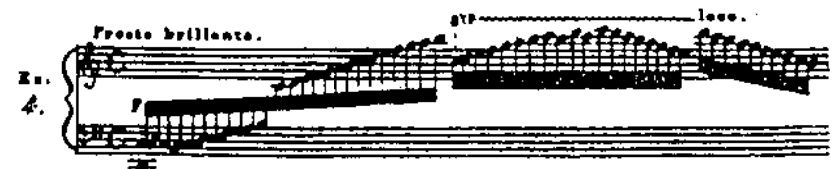
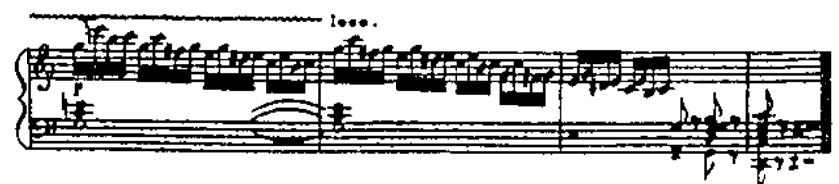
Since each chord can engender the greatest variety of passagework, then even the simplest modulation can be spun out into innumerable preludes, both melodious and brilliant. I select the very common progression as illustration (ex. 1).

6. *Konzertstück* (modern spelling, *Konzertstück*), when employed as a title, need not be translated. In this context, however, *Czerny* is referring generally to pieces with orchestra that feature a soloist.

6

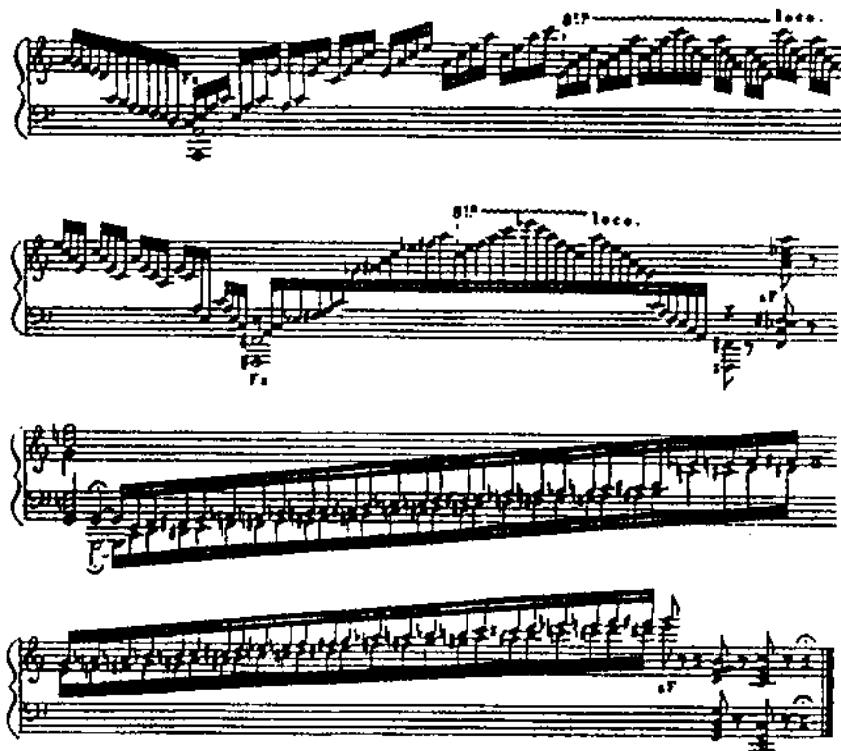


And now one may see what can be made out of this (ex. 2-6).



7

IMPROVISATION ON THE PIANOFORTE



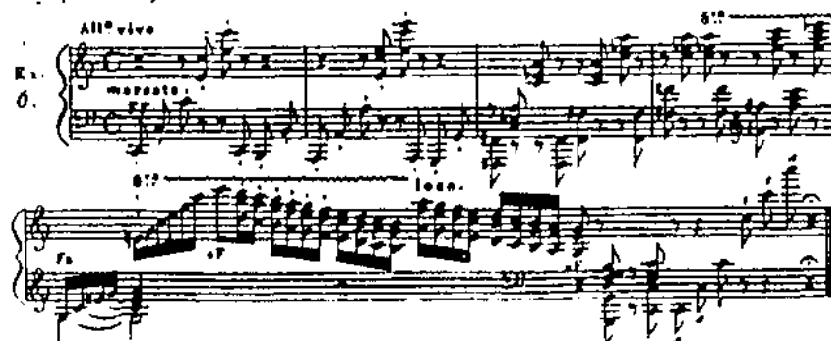
In connected⁷ chords (ex. 5).



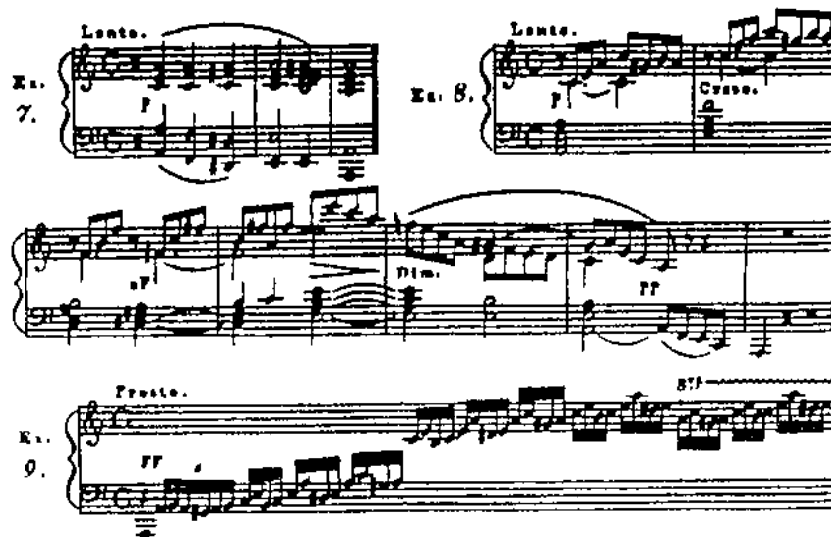
7. *Gebunden* is translated here as "connected", based on the context of the musical illustration (Ex. 5) that follows. *Legato* is also implicit in this example, although Czerny is usually explicit with his use of that designation (see footnotes 2 and 3, seventh chapter.) Neither "sustained-note" nor "strict", more common translations for the style designated as *gebunden*, are appropriate here.

Concerning Preludes

In capriccio style (ex. 6).



Here are several in minor also (ex. 7-11).⁸



8. Of some interest here is the fact that, of the five examples in minor, three are marked *lento* and four of the five are to be played *piano*, expressive associations that have become somewhat stereotyped. By way of contrast, of the six preceding examples illustrating the use of the major mode, four of the six are in fast tempi, three of the six are marked *forte* or *fortissimo* while the first one begins with *mezzo-forte*, surely also stereotypical.

Examples 10 and 11 are musical exercises for improvisation on the pianoforte. Example 10 consists of three staves, each showing a different melodic line with a 'lento.' marking. Example 11 consists of two staves, each showing a different melodic line with a 'lento.' marking. Example 12 is a single staff with a 'lento.' marking and a 'p. Leggiere.' marking. Example 13 is a single staff with a 'lento.' marking and a 'p. Leggiere.' marking. Example 14 is a single staff with a 'lento.' marking and a 'p. Leggiere.' marking. Example 15 is a single staff with a 'lento.' marking and a 'p. Leggiere.' marking.

This musical example shows a prelude with a 'lento.' marking and a 'p. Leggiere.' marking. It features a single staff with a melodic line and a 'p. Leggiere.' marking.

Naturally, one must transpose these and similar examples into all keys, alternate the passagework with other suitable sections, and know how to execute everything with such ease and lack of restraint that the preludes maintain the character of the momentary fancy. For nothing is more disturbing to the effect than the recognition that it has been drilled into the performer.

5

For the rest, it is not necessary to begin in the same key in which one must conclude.⁹ Furthermore, even daring, remote modulations are appropriate in these preludes, and whoever possesses a thorough knowledge of harmony can easily indulge in the most interesting ventures in this respect (ex. 12-19).

Examples 12 through 19 are musical exercises for preludes. Examples 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 are single staves with various markings including 'lento.', 'p. Leggiere.', 'p. Legato.', 'Cresc.', and 'Dim.'. Example 12 is marked 'lento.' and 'p. Leggiere.'. Example 13 is marked 'lento.' and 'p. Leggiere.'. Example 14 is marked 'lento.' and 'p. Leggiere.'. Example 15 is marked 'lento.' and 'p. Leggiere.'. Example 16 is marked 'lento.' and 'p. Leggiere.'. Example 17 is marked 'lento.' and 'p. Leggiere.'. Example 18 is marked 'lento.' and 'p. Leggiere.'. Example 19 is marked 'lento.' and 'p. Leggiere.'.

9. See examples 13, 14, and 15.

IMPROVISATION ON THE PIANOFORTE:

1. *All^o* *8^{va}* *leg.*

5. *pp. Leggiero.*

Dim.

6. *All^o* *pp. Leggiero e veloce.*

Dim.

sempre pp.

Concerning Preludes

leg. *Andante. Sma.*

All^o

Ex. 17. *ff*

Con moto.

Ex. 18. *f* *Dim.* *f* *Cresc.*

Dim. *f* *Cresc.*

IMPROVISATION ON THE PIANOFORTE

Dim.

pp

Smozz.

Lento.

pp

Cresc.

Dim.

Cresc.

pp

smpressant.

ff

Dim.

p

ff

Smozz.

Adagio

Concerning Preludes

Enharmonic chords are remarkably well suited for a great variety of closing formulas. Here is an example with its two variants at A and at B respectively (ex. 20):

Allegro

pp. Leggiero, non legato.

(A.)

(B.)

variant at A

variant at B

The following observations conclude this chapter:

The performer should become accustomed to improvising a prelude each time and before each piece that he studies or plays, and to introducing all possible

modifications. There are performers around who have become so very used to a single preludizing formula that one is forced to hear the same one just about every time.

For that very reason, one should be careful to add a prelude that is compatible with the character of each piece. Thus a jolly prelude, for example, preceding a serious sonata would be very ill advised, and vice versa.

For Further Reference: Among the many very useful preludes that have appeared particularly more recently and can serve as models, the best are:

Moscheles, *50 Preludes*, op. 73 (Leipzig, Probst)

My Cadenzas and Preludes,¹⁰ op. 61 (Vienna, Ant. Diabelli & Co.) (and from these, especially nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10 and 14)¹¹

Further, my *48 Preludes in All Keys* (op. 161, Leipzig, Probst) also belong here.

10. Czerny cites his Opus 61 as reference material for the first, second, and third chapters. Published in 1824, its full title is: *Präludien, Cadenzen und kleine Fantasiaen*.

11. Czerny designates "especially numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, and 14" because these are in the more "abstract" virtuoso preludizing style. They feature, among other things, some distinctive uneven figuration patterns that are so frequently associated with improvisatory vocabulary: patterns carefully fingered and divided between the hands, sounding much more difficult to perform than they actually are; running thirds (divided between the hands), high-speed octaves (divided between the hands), and swiftly moving sixth chords (as in the last movement of the Beethoven Sonata in C Major, op. 2, no. 3). These are preludes in "one style that fits all." (Also see footnote 2, second chapter.)

SECOND CHAPTER

Concerning Preludes of a Longer and More Elaborate Type

1

When the performer has to play a solo piece for which the composer himself has written no introduction, as, for example, in rondos or variations that begin directly with the theme, then it is not inappropriate if¹ the improvised prelude is proportionately longer and more elaborate, and if materials from the following theme are included, whereupon the aggregate amounts to a suitable introduction.

2

A prelude of this kind can indeed have a regular coherence; passagework must alternate with lyric sections and the introduction must end with a cadence on the dominant-seventh chord¹, leading directly into the theme.

3

It is not necessary to begin in the key of the piece. Moreover, the modulations can be quite free. However, the prelude must remain in keeping with the character of the

1. As in examples 21 and 22.

IMPROVISATION ON THE PIANOFORTE

following composition. It is self-evident that no such longer preludes would generally be suitable before more serious works (for example, before Beethoven's Sonata in F Minor, op. 57, and the like).

4

Every well-written introduction by a good composer can serve in its way as model for the performer in this manner of improvising.

Even so, I am including an example for reference here as introduction to my *Variations on God Save the King* (op. 77, Vienna, Ant. Diabelli & Co.). Since the theme is serious and noble, then an introduction of an analogous, somewhat grandiose nature can be considered not unsuitable (ex. 21).

Ex. 21.

Maestoso.

loco.

loco.

Cresc.

PP Legato.

loco.

poco a'

18

Concerning Preludes of a Longer and More Elaborate Type

loco.

poco accelerando. cresc.

loco.

Cresc.

loco.

Cresc.

loco.

Cresc.

loco.

Cresc.

loco.

Cresc.

19

P. Ritard. ff Vivo. Cresc.

6va loco.

ff Cresc.

8va

ff

8va loco.

8va

Dim. Ritard.

Lento.

molto tenuto. Segue Rondine.

Finally, there is another very interesting style of preluding which the performer has to assimilate, namely, completely unmeasured, almost like a recitative, with some sections in chords sounding simultaneously and others with broken chords, seemingly without a conscious plan, resembling wanderings into unknown regions. This distinctive style, especially of the older masters (Bach —, Johann Sebastian and Carl Philipp Emanuel, etc.), leaves room for a great deal of expressiveness and striking harmonic changes, and can be extremely effective if introduced at the right time and performed properly. But this kind of prelude should not be drawn out too long without interweaving a rhythmically defined melody. Here is just a brief example. (ex. 23)²

Lento.

P. Legato. Cresc.

8va loco.

Vivo.

Allo. veloce.

Cresc. F.

2. In this example, Czerny reverts to the originally Baroque tradition of a quasi-recitative transferred to the keyboard to convey the deepest expressiveness. This technique had gained renewed popularity with Beethoven and later romanticists and became a critical component of improvisatory vocabulary. Czerny undoubtedly has the *Chromatic Fantasy* by J. S. Bach in mind as a model when he suggests "interweaving a rhythmically defined melody" to break up the recitative.

IMPROVISATION ON THE PIANOFORTE



7

Everything about practicing that was stated at the end of the first chapter applies here too, as it does generally. Diligence, experience, and refined taste must then dictate the correct application.

Concerning Preludes of a Longer and More Elaborate Type

For Further Reference. As further examples of the categories dealt with in this chapter, numbers 6, 7, 8, 11 and 13 of my above-mentioned prelude collection, op. 61, can serve as models since the pieces to which they were written as introductions are also designated.³

3. Of the preludes cited here, number 6 is not based clearly on any single work or movement, nor is the designated reference offered, despite Czerny's statement to the contrary. (Perhaps he intended to cite number 5 instead, a prelude obviously related to the last movement of Beethoven's *Waldem Sonata*, op. 33, although the reference is omitted here also.) That he would include such illustrations in his op. 61 collection is indication enough, in view of his well known practicality, that introductions like these were indeed improvised during performances. How number 5 described above would have been interpolated is especially perplexing. Number 7 is a prelude to Moscheles' variations *au der Elbe*. Number 8 is a prelude to Moscheles' *Alexander Variations*. Number 11 is called *Introduction to the Finale of Riel's Concerto in F-flat*, and number 13 is an introduction to Czerny's variations, op. 14. Also see footnote 10, first chapter.

THIRD CHAPTER

Concerning Cadenzas, Fermatas,¹ and More Extended Elaborations

1

Prolonged pauses² appear very frequently in the midst of a piece over the six-four or seventh chord³ (over the latter, especially, as transition into another subject or tempo as well as into the principal theme), where either the composer has actually inscribed above, "Cadenza ad libitum"—or at least a fermata, which would not be superfluous—, or finally where a cadenza that has actually been written out but is much too brief can be nicely extended.

2

These elaborations in music, just as in other arts, are a measure of good taste; they arouse the attention of the listeners and direct it towards the following material. Moreover, through these the performer can display the refinement of his feelings just as much as his strength and prowess when necessary.

3

Naturally, only the more cultivated taste and broad experience of the performer can determine their suitable application. In works of profound content and serious charac-

1. See footnote 3, Introduction.

2. *Anhaltungen*.

3. These are figured bass designations (that is, $\frac{6}{4}$ and 7).

Concerning Cadenzas, Fermatas, and More Extended Elaborations

ter (for example, Beethoven's Sonata, D Minor, op. 29),⁴ employing any kind of additional material would be very ill advised. On the other hand, preferably in compositions intended for a glittering, delicate, or sentimental manner of playing,—in variations, potpourris, arrangements of vocal works, or whatever products of popular taste, there are abundant opportunities where just such little impromptus are appropriate, indeed are often a necessity, in order to adorn a possibly rather dull and dragging passage.

4

Apropos of these, the performer has to observe the following:

- A. The cadenza must be fully compatible with the content and spirit of the piece in general, as with the preceding and subsequent material in particular. Therefore, following an energetic delivery, similarly brilliant passagework should be introduced;⁵ on the other hand, gentle material should be followed by correspondingly light and delicate elaborations.⁶
- B. The cadenza must be neither too long nor too rhapsodic so as not to impede the continuity and momentum of the whole.
- C. The performer may modulate neither into other keys nor into remote harmonies, but must always retain the chord of prolongation (which is the dominant seventh most of the time) as the underlying harmony.
- D. He must enter into the following subject with melodic propriety⁷ and in a manner that is pleasing and suitable which, for the most part, occurs by means of diminuendo, and rallentando into the *tempo di adagio*.⁸ Should the subsequent theme be of a lively and dynamic nature, then the transition can also at times be accomplished through a lively passage, crescendo, and accelerando.⁹

5

Here are several examples for practice which must be executed similarly or imitated in all keys (ex. 24—36)

4. That is, op. 31, no. 2.

5. Especially as in examples 29, 30, 32, and 36.

6. Especially as in examples 14, 15, 20, 31, 33, and 34.

7. *geschmackvolle*.

8. As in examples 24, 25, 32, 34, and 35.

9. As in examples 26 and 30.

IMPROVISATION ON THE PIANOFORTE

Ex. 24.

All.^o 8^{va} loco.

Leggier. Dim. = Rall.

Adagio until the theme

Ex. 25.

Lento. 8^{va} P. dol. cantabile Cresc.

loco. Dim. = Rall. Express. ad lib.

Ex. 26.

valoco.

Accelerando. Cresc.

loco.

Rall. pp

Concerning Cadenzas, Fermatas, and More Extended Elaborations

Ex. 27.

Andante. Dim.

Ex. 28.

All.^o 8^{va} loco.

8^{va} Presto leggier. 8^{va} loco.

Dim.

loco.

Dim.

cresc.

pp

8^{va} f

poco a

poco rall. Lento. Rit. pp

The theme follows here immediately afterwards without any introductory notes.

Ex. 29.

All.^o

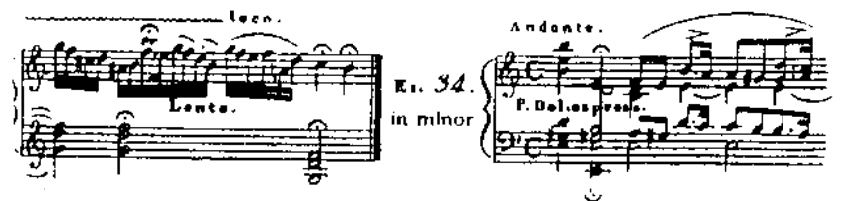
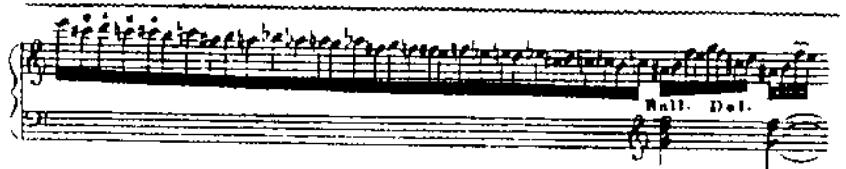
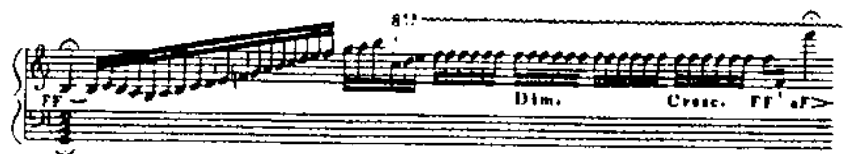
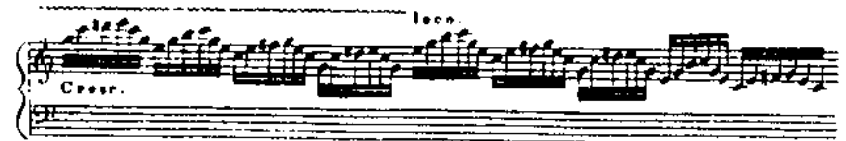
IMPROVISATION ON THE PIANOFORTE

Musical score for improvisation on the piano, page 30. The score consists of six systems of music. The first system features a treble and bass staff with a key signature of one flat and a common time signature. It includes dynamic markings *f* and *pp*. The second system continues the melody with *Cresc.* and *Dim.* markings. The third system includes *loco.* markings and a key signature change to two flats. The fourth system is marked *All.^o* and includes *f*, *pp*, and *Cresc.* markings. The fifth system is marked *Andante espressivo.* and includes *f*, *pp*, and *Cresc.* markings. The sixth system includes *f*, *ff*, *pp*, and *Perdendo.* markings.

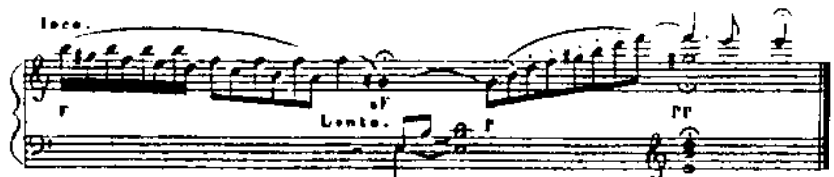
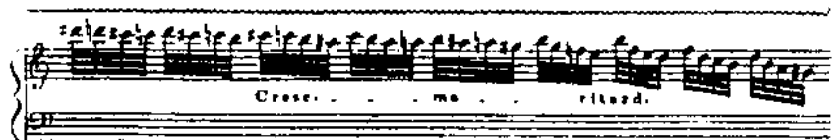
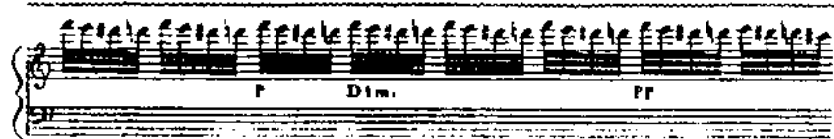
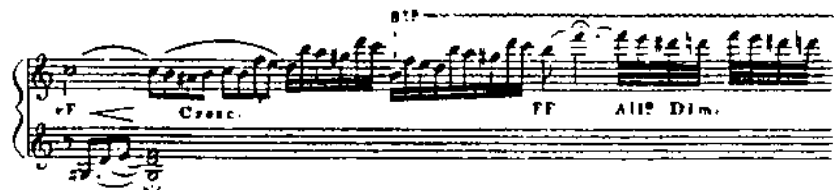
Concerning Cadenzas, Fermatas, and More Extended Elaborations

Musical score for improvisation on the piano, page 31. The score consists of six systems of music. The first system is marked *All.^o brillante.* and includes *ff* and *moderate.* markings. The second system includes *loco.* and *Al.^o* markings. The third system includes *loco.* markings. The fourth system includes *ff* and *f* markings. The fifth system includes *loco.*, *Rit.*, *Dim.*, *Espress.*, *pp*, and *Adagio.* markings. The sixth system includes *ff*, *pp*, and *pp* markings.

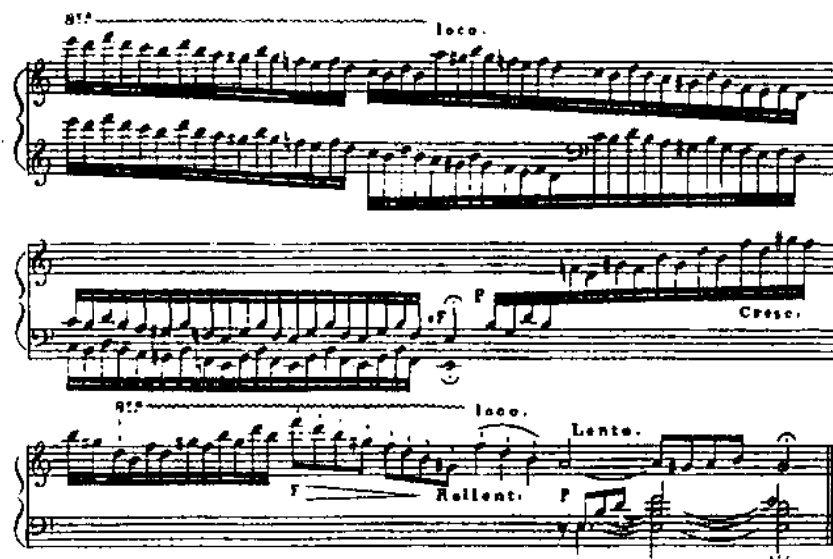
IMPROVISATION ON THE PIANOFORTE



Concerning Codenzos, Fermatas, and More Extended Elaborations



IMPROVISATION ON THE PIANOFORTE



Although all these examples have illustrated $\frac{4}{4}$ meter, they can still be used in all meters.

For Further Reference. The greatest variety of models of this style can be found in most of the more modern brilliant compositions of good composers.

6

Concerning the Closing Cadenza¹⁰ for Concertos

The older concertos (for example, all of Mozart's, most of Beethoven's, etc.) have a prolonged pause towards the close of the last Tutti, after which the performer has to improvise a grand cadenza. These concerto cadenzas, by virtue of their necessary structure, are akin to a particularly distinctive form of fantasy. They can be extended considerably and the performer can indulge in all conceivable modulations therein. But all interesting subjects from the concerto as well as its most brilliant passages must make their appearance here, although one can tone them down or build them up, according to one's discretion. Since these cadenzas can be regarded to some extent as

¹⁰ See footnote 4 of Introduction.

Concerning Cadenzas, Fermatas, and More Extended Elaborations

independent fantasies, and since the performer can display his artistry here a good deal more than in the concerto itself, it is thus to his great advantage to assimilate this style with particular diligence and to learn to improvise such cadenzas for all concertos of this type. The following is an illustration for the first movement of Beethoven's First Concerto (C Major, op. 15, Vienna, Mollo), with which the performer can compare the cadenza (ex. 37).



IMPROVISATION ON THE PIANOFORTE

8^{va} loco. *f* *Cresc.* *Dim.*

P. Dol. espress. a un poco ritardato. 8^{va} loco. *Dol.*

Cresc. e stringendo.

8^{va} *FF. sempre più All.* *Presto dim.*

FF

Cresc.

Concerning Cadenzas, Fermatas, and More Extended Elaborations

più Cresc. *f*

8^{va} loco. *FF*

8^{va} *Dim.*

all. *f* *poco a poco*

all. *FP. Ritard.* *Moderato.*

Cresc. *f*

IMPROVISATION ON THE PIANOFORTE

sf *pp. Smorz.* *Cresc. a stringendo.*
Molto All.^o
FF con fuoco
loco.
sf ben marcato.
sf
Dim. e poco riten. *pp* *espress.* *Cresc.*

Concerning Cadenzas, Fermatas, and More Extended Elaborations

loco. *più cresc. e molto ritard.* *FF*
loco. *FF* *FF Presto.*
loco. *sf p* *Cresc.*
F *Cresc. sempre.*
loco. *FF*

IMPROVISATION ON THE PIANOFORTE

Tempo 4^{mo}

The musical score consists of three systems of staves. The first system is marked 'Tempo 4^{mo}' and 'ff'. The second system is marked 'fz'. The third system includes markings for 'ff', 'fz', and 'Adagio. loco.'.

Through comparison of this cadenza with the concerto, it can be observed that most of the latter's thematic material and passagework reappear here but are interwoven differently.

For Further Reference. In my above-mentioned Cadenzas, op. 61,¹¹ number 12 is a cadenza to Beethoven's Third Concerto (C Minor) which can likewise serve as supplement to this chapter.¹²

7

Now, before we proceed into the next chapter on true, full-fledged fantasy-like improvisation, it must be mentioned once again that the student has to familiarize

Concerning Cadenzas, Fermatas, and More Extended Elaborations

himself to the greatest possible degree of perfection with all subject materials dealt with hitherto, in all types of keys, figurations, and modulations. For these skills, aside from their partial application as indicated thus far, along with the most essential preparatory exercises, are to a certain extent the very components of improvisation itself, without which the performer would never attain the capability of combining the diverse ideas and motives with each other.

11. See footnote 10, first chapter.

12. The comparison suggested by Czerny also highlights dramatically the remarkably changing pianistic style from the classically oriented concertos to the new virtuoso-oriented cadenzas. Both ex. 17 in this treatise as well as number 12 of op. 61, cited for further reference, are virtually unknown by performers and scholars alike.

FOURTH CHAPTER

Concerning Improvisation on a Single Theme'

(First Category of Fantasy-Like Improvisation)

I

As soon as the performer sits down before a larger gathering and generally to improvise in front of an audience, he can be compared with an orator who strives to develop a subject as clearly and exhaustively as possible on the spur of the moment. In point of fact, so many principles of oratory correspond with those of musical improvisation that it is not inappropriate to venture the comparison.

Just as the orator must be completely accomplished as much with his tongue as with his speech in order never to be at a loss for a word or turn of expression, the performer's fingers must likewise have the instrument completely in their power and be at the disposal of every difficulty and mechanical skill.

Just as the orator must combine extensive reading of a general nature and fundamental knowledge in all branches of his field of scholarship, it is similarly the responsibility of the keyboardist, in addition to studying basic principles of harmony and becoming acquainted with many works of varying degrees of value by the masters of all periods, to have memorized a large assortment of interesting ideas from that literature and also to have at his command the current musical novelties, the favorite themes from operatic melodies, and so on.

And just as the orator has to avoid dullness and boredom through elegance and grace, clarity, refined images, and flowery language, so also must the performer seek to

1. Cf. chapter on the Free Fantasia, C. P. E. Bach, *Essay*, op. cit. pp. 430-445.

gain a special appeal for his playing through beautiful and tasteful turns of expression, through presence of mind and consideration of his listeners' powers of comprehension, through elegance, and through appropriate embellishments.

Indeed, especially when great natural ability and much skill are involved, fantasy-like improvisation frequently consists in an almost subconscious and dream-like playing motion of the fingers, which makes it only so much the better, — just as the orator does not think through each word and phrase in advance. Nevertheless, the performer must always just have the presence of mind (especially when he has to develop a given theme) to adhere constantly to his plan, and to surrender neither to rhapsodic incomprehensible tediousness nor to an overabundantly broad spinning out.

2

The art of extemporaneously spinning out a theme into an entire piece in an interesting and orderly fashion appears to be more difficult than it actually is, if one observes the following:

Every theme, without exception, and even if it were to last for only two arbitrary tones, can serve by means of several modifications in meter and rhythm as the opening of all species of compositions that exist in the realm of music. For the present, let us take the following familiar genres for the pianoforte:

- a. Allegro (probably as the first movement of a sonata)
- b. Adagio (in the serious style)
- c. Allegretto grazioso (unadorned, or with embellishments in the gallant style)
- d. Scherzo presto (à capriccio)
- e. Rondo vivace
- f. Polacca
- g. Theme for variations
- h. Fugue (also Canon frequently)
- i. Waltz, Ecossaise, March, and the like

Not every theme works equally as well in all these forms, to be sure; but it suffices to demonstrate the possibilities, and the rest depends on circumstances.

3

I present here, without any forethought, the following completely arbitrary theme to indicate the possibilities of the aforementioned styles (ex. 38).



IMPROVISATION ON THE PIANOFORTE

con brio.

A. as Allegro

B. as Adagio serio

C. as Allegretto grazioso

8^{va}

Presto.

D. as Scherzo

Vivace.

E. as Rondo

Moderato.

F. as Polacca

Concerning Improvisation on a Single Theme

All.^{mo} con moto.

G. as Theme for variations

Dal. Legato.

Moderato.

H. as Fugue

All.^{mo}

or

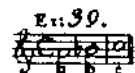
Vivace.

I. as Waltz

This shows what infinite varieties of forms are at the disposal of the performer. Although the prescribed principal theme is not of the most flexible nature, each of these beginnings nevertheless lends itself quite well to realization in its style.

For the rest, the more simple the subject, the more free, indeed more interesting the development, since the inventiveness of the artist will be guaranteed greater latitude.

If, for example, it should occur to someone to fashion A, B-flat, C, namely the three notes (ex 39)



into a subject, then approximately the following examples could stand for the themes evolved from these:

as
legro
rillante

Molto vivace. *8va*

as
legro
rillante

8va

as
Andantino
or
Allegretto

B. as
Adagio

Molto.

D. as
Scherzo

Presto.

pp

crusc.

perusc.

dim.

pp

E. as
Rondo

Vivace.

8va

loca

p

Scherzo

F. as
Theme for
variations

All.gretto.

p

etc.

G. as
Fugue

Modérato.

H. as
March

Masfoso.

f

p

f

etc.

IMPROVISATION ON THE PIANOFORTE

Furthermore, one should certainly not believe that a theme of this sort might already be drained of possibilities. Every performer will be able to construct something different from it according to the degree of his inventiveness, experience, and his mood of the moment.

5

When a theme that consists of only a figure without melodic profile is presented to a performer, then it is incumbent upon him to invent a suitable melody and rhythm for it and to introduce the figure in all guises (even reversed later on) as often as feasible without being monotonous. For example, if the subject were (ex. 40):



then the beginning of the Allegro could be approximately:

A. Allegro vivo

B. as Andante

Concerning Improvisation on a Single Theme

Allegro.

C. as Fugue

and so forth in all styles.

6

If the performer has an entirely regular melody for development, after he has determined the form that seems the most suitable for improvising in fantasy style, he must then not adhere only to this melody as strictly as possible but must interweave several striking tones from it as a principal figure throughout the whole according to all rules of imitation. For example: (Ex. 41)

Andante.

Ex. 41. Dol. Legato.

The figure in the second bar  is the most suitable in this case for the purpose indicated, since it lends itself to inversion and imitation in many more ways. Like this, for example:

This technique also contributes to the unity of the remaining melodic material.

7

Thus the performer must devote time and practice to achieve the capability of transforming each motive that comes his way into all these styles with ease and adroitness. Moreover, he must not be satisfied with a single attempt of this sort in connection with every theme, since the modifications inherent in every such subject are infinite in number. Finally, even the most remote and recalcitrant material of his imagination must be reconciled with his fingers.

8

From this point, he may begin to work out each movement in its entirety. It facilitates the task to start by selecting suitable models for this purpose. Thus for the first type (Allegro), the first movement of a good sonata (by Clementi, Beethoven, Hummel, etc.) can serve as a model. (Especially good are those examples in which the theme is worked out quite consistently.)

For Further Reference: Among the most excellent models where entire magnificent compositions can be evolved from the simplest motive, indeed from a few notes:

First Movement of Beethoven's C Minor Symphony

First Movement of his A Major Symphony

The Finale of his solo Sonata in D Minor, op. 29²

First Movement of his Trio in D Major, op. 71³

Also Mozart's Symphony in G Minor, first movement⁴

Several movements from his violin quartets⁵ and quintets

Cherubini's Overture to *Anacreon* and the like.

Among shorter works:

Hummel's Rondo in E-Flat, op. 11

Beethoven, Andante favori in F Major, no. 33⁶

Etc., etc.

2. Op. 31, no. 2

3. That is, op. 70, no. 1.

4. Based on the context, the reference is undoubtedly to the Symphony no. 40, K. 550.

5. String quartets.

6. That is, WoO 57.

9

The performer must then become accustomed to finding a suitable subsidiary melody for the first section (a theme which may frequently evolve even from the principal theme, or at least be compatible with it.) Models will teach him that in major keys, this subsidiary section must be in the dominant; on the other hand, in minor keys, this subsidiary section must be in the most closely related major key or even in the dominant minor. The first section of this Allegro can have a conclusive ending, as in the sonata; by way of contrast, one can surrender fully to the freest inventiveness and fulfillment of ideas and to all sorts of modulations, imitations, etc. in the second section.⁷ However, one must also reintroduce the subsidiary melody, and conclude finally in the principal key. Lyric materials must be alternated with passagework and other figuration, since each by itself, in excess, is wearisome.

10

One should proceed in the same way with the remaining styles (Adagio, Scherzo, Rondo, Variations, etc.) for which there are sufficient models to be found by the writers mentioned earlier.

11

Constructing fugues in the stricter sense requires a knowledge of thorough bass, to be sure, along with all the techniques of counterpoint. But one must furthermore have a great many good fugues completely at one's fingertips and memorized if possible (among which J. S. Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* and his other works, as well as Handel's fugues are of the highest order.) On the other hand, for a fugal development in the freer modern style, the models to take advantage of are, for example, Mozart's Overture to *The Magic Flute*, or his Finale of the C Major Symphony.⁸

12

Once the player has finally acquired the knack of working out each theme extemporaneously in all styles, then it will be easy for him to combine several styles into one and the same fantasy. One might begin with Allegro, for example, develop it for some length of time, then proceed into an Adagio or Andantino, interweave it with a fugal

7. That is, the "development" section, as in the sonata-allegro.

8. Symphony no. 41, K. 551 (Jupiter).

section and with the kind of modulatory section discussed in the first chapter,⁹ and conclude with a lively rondo. With this procedure, there already exists a complete fantasy on a single theme constituting an orderly totality, one in which unity and a distinct character can prevail.

13

For the rest, it is no secret that this kind of fantasy-like improvisation is the most difficult of all. One will already have been able to gather from all that has been discussed hitherto that an eternal, wearisome, continuous repetition of the theme through all octave ranges and an irrational journeying back and forth among the keys are still a far cry from an effective fantasy. Only the combination of a remarkable talent and a great deal of study can completely fulfill such a mission, as much for the pleasure of the general listener as for the satisfaction of the connoisseur (for which this style is perfectly well suited).

For Further Reference: Beethoven was unsurpassed in this style of fantasy-like improvisation. He himself could hardly reconstruct in writing the wealth of his ideas and harmonies as well as the nobility and consistency of his most highly artistic development. Nevertheless, he has left a legacy of two glorious monuments of this style among his works: namely, the Fantasy with Orchestra and Chorus, op. 80, and the Finale of his last symphony (the Chorus to Joy, op. 125). In both of these, a single idea is exploited through the greatest variety of procedures. Further, J. S. Bach's *Art of the Fugue* can also serve as a very remarkable example of its kind in this style.

14

Since I am offering a few examples for reference here, it cannot be my intention to present completely worked out models. Only the rudiments, only the approximate progression of ideas lend themselves to written demonstration in this case, and as such, can always act as guide for the performer. I indicate here and there the places where an extended development might be necessary, in which the student has to put himself to the test also.

I take the following notes as a theme:



⁹ See sections 4 and 5.

which, after a brief prelude, enters immediately and efficaciously to make the subject distinctive to the listener.

First Fantasy on a Theme¹⁰

Prælium, Lento, quasi Andante.

E. 11.
42.

pp

un poco più di moto.

dim. a unil.

Adagio.

molto tenuto.

Allargo con hrio.

pp

M.M. (p. 144.)

¹⁰ All lettered footnotes in this and subsequent musical examples are by Czerny.

IMPROVISATION ON THE PIANOFORTE:

A. This transition into E-flat Major can be spun out still more extensively. (See the second chapter concerning the fermata.)

Concerning Improvisation on a Single Theme

B. This subsidiary melody is derived from the principal theme (inverted)

C. At this point, both thematic material as well as passage work could still be extended much more in E-flat Major, and the first section could be formally concluded in this key.

Agitato. (♩. 152:)

8va

FF

8va

loco

dim.

8va

loco

8va

pp

poco rallent.

8va

tempo pp

8va

pp

tempo pp

D. Here also, still lengthier development and modulatory material as well as thematic material

8va

Schmerz

8va

Rall.

Adagio espressivo. (♩. 88:)

Inco.

Del.

8va

loco

8va

cresc.

IMPROVISATION ON THE PIANOFORTE

E. At this point, the subject along with several variations could be interpolated in A Major.

Concerning Improvisation on a Single Theme

IMPROVISATION ON THE PIANOFORTE

Allegro

loco

P dol. (0.72)

pp dol. (0.84)

poco rall. a cresc.

FP a Tempo Leggiero

piu cresc.

F. Here, another cantabile section in G Major (or E-flat Major).

Concerning Improvisation on a Single Theme

Allegro

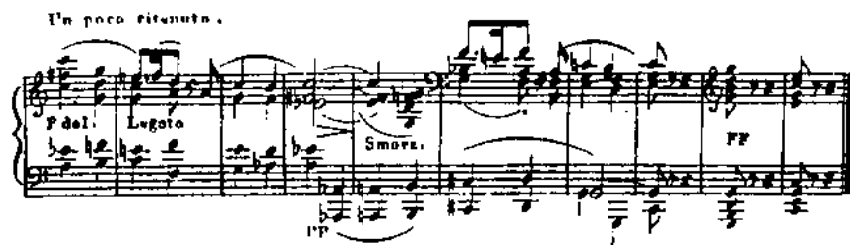
loco

Più mosso. (1.01)

Cresc.

piu cresc.

G. At this point, another extension by means of brilliant passage-work of a concluding nature.

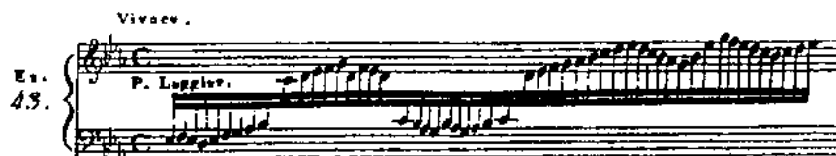


Note: If, as a result of the capsulated nature of this example, the theme returns too frequently, then the brilliant passagework of the thematic development interwoven at the designated points would naturally mitigate the monotony and could round off the effect of totality much better. Furthermore, it is not always desirable to introduce a *ritenuto* again towards the end after brilliant passagework (as it occurs here). A dynamic forward-moving conclusion is frequently more effective.

The following example is built on a song-theme whose similarity to the previous theme¹¹ (when played in inversion), is also intentional.

Although a prelude is unnecessary, I am beginning with one here even so (ex. 43).¹²

Second Fantasy on One Theme



11. Theme of example 41.

12. The substance of examples 42 and 43, and particularly Czerny's footnotes, reveal his remarkably fluid concept of the nature of the fantasy. Moreover, what appears to be a noteworthy casualness with regard to balance and proportion in these (as well as subsequent) illustrations crystallizes one of the very earmarks of the improvisatory style of his time, despite Czerny's own reminders about the significance of the totality.



A. A longer development here.

IMPROVISATION ON THE PIANOFORTE

B. Lengthier development is necessary at this point.

C. Repetitions are not particularly feasible when improvising in fantasy style, for seldom is the precise material that has been played previously remembered for that length of time.

Concerning Improvisation on a Single Theme

D. This melodic section would be extended still more.

IMPROVISATION ON THE PIANOFORTE



E. During such passages (which practiced fingers can execute easily without any particular attention), the performer has to concentrate on the type of style he should have in the following section.

Concerning Improvisation on a Single Theme

Musical score for the first system of "Lento" by Franz Liszt. The score is written for piano (piano) and right hand (RH). The tempo is marked "Lento". The key signature is one sharp (F#). The score includes various dynamics such as *pp*, *ff*, *f*, *sf*, and *p*. It also features markings like "P. Ritornello" and "Lento". The score is divided into measures by bar lines.

IMPROVISATION ON THE PIANOFORTE

Musical score for page 68, featuring piano and forte dynamics and tempo markings like "loco" and "Dolente". The score is written for piano and includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Concerning Improvisation on a Single Theme

Musical score for page 69, featuring piano and forte dynamics and tempo markings like "Allegretto grazioso ed animato". The score is written for piano and includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

F. The theme in the bass with a countertheme in the right hand to avoid monotony.

IMPROVISATION ON THE PIANOFORTE

Cresc.

8va

loco

loco

8va

8va

loco

dim.

sempre p

cresc.

G. The theme in augmentation in the bass.

Concerning Improvisation on a Single Theme

F Cresc.

8va

loco

loco

loco

(III) p dim.

Più lento

dol.

allentando

H. Here also it would be concluded too abruptly



These examples will be sufficient to make the student aware of the variety of inversions and manipulations latent in the basic subject.

FIFTH CHAPTER

Concerning Freer Improvisation on Several Themes

(Second Category of Fantasy-Like Improvisation)

1

If the performer is not limited to a single subject, he then has the option of combining several of greater variety with each other, by which means there arises not only a more interesting juxtaposition of ideas but also provides greater leeway for his power of imagination and creativity. The styles of development remain just as diverse as was shown in the fourth chapter.

2

The first subject selected for the opening, however, must recur frequently between the remaining themes (especially if it is comprised of only a short figure), and it must be heard again at the end also, for it is the pillar on which all else is constructed.

3

The various themes must not stand out too much from each other in character. Thus a jolly waltz, for example¹, following a funeral march is inappropriate here in as much as a combination like this surely belongs in the actual potpourri¹ or even the capriccio².

1. See sixth chapter.

2. See ninth chapter.

This style of improvising can be spun out at great length if the performer permits the succession of ever more meaningful ideas, develops his technique ever more brilliantly, and adds zest to the total effect through a variety of developmental procedures. For here he can give free rein to his flights of fancy (albeit in rational form); and unexpected, interesting motives that are both arresting as well as useful frequently enter the fingers while playing. Moreover, in this realm of improvisation the performer's momentary mood (be it now cheerful, now serene, serious or melancholy) can be expressed in the most abandoned manner; and there is perhaps no form more capable of placing together and expanding the image of the inner life and the esthetic disposition into a magnificent whole. For here, both the fully whimsical caprice as well as the discipline of a regular composition must be avoided.

For the rest, it is self-evident that one can even make use of a given theme as a principal subject in this style and subsequently combine both³, as long as one does not become particularly bound up with any single theme through development.

A great many compositions of fine masters can serve (more or less) as models here, of which I will cite only:

- Mozart's Fantasy in C Minor (Vienna, Joseph Czerny)
- His Fantasy (four-hands) in F Minor (Vienna, Ant. Diabelli & Co.)
- Clementi's Caprices in A and F-Flat (Vienna, Artaria & Co.)
- Hummel's excellent Fantasy in E-Flat (Vienna, Haslinger)
- Kalkbrenner's *Effusio Musica* (Vienna, Ant. Diabelli & Co.)
- Beethoven's Sonata, Quasi una Fantasia in E-Flat (op. 27, no. 1 Vienna, Jos. Czerny)
- Dussek's Fantasie and Fugue in F Minor (op. 55, Leipzig, Breitkopf & Härtel)

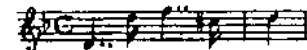
Among my compositions, as useful examples of this type:

- Fantasia (op. 27, Vienna, Haslinger)
- Fantasia brillante sur divers thèmes suisses et tiroliens, (op. 162, Vienna, Ant. Diabelli & Co.)
- and Gran Capriccio (op. 172, Leipzig, Hofmeister)

3. That is, both "given" theme and original.

From the following brief example, the pupil will be able to gather the approximate structure of such a fantasy.

I select the following theme:



which suggests development in a serious character that will also be retained throughout (ex. 44).

Fantasia

Moderato. (♩. 120)

Ex. 44.

IMPROVISATION ON THE PIANOFORTE

Concerning Freer Improvisation on Several Themes

Un poco vivo. (♩. 132 :)

pp cresc.

pp

pp con fuoco

loco

A. Here a still longer development in A minor could take place.

Andante. (♩. 76 :)

del. espress.

pp

pp cresc.

loco cresc.

ritard.

cresc.

dim.

IMPROVISATION ON THE PIANOFORTE

78

Handwritten musical score for piano improvisation. The score consists of seven systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The music is written in a single key signature (one flat) and 2/4 time. Dynamics include *f*, *dim.*, *sf*, *pp*, *ppp*, *lento*, and *Prellentando*. Articulations include *tr.* (trill), *acc.* (accents), and *sfz.* (sforzando). The piece concludes with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

Concerning Freer Improvisation on Several Themes

79

Handwritten musical score for freer improvisation on several themes. The score consists of seven systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The music is written in a single key signature (one flat) and 2/4 time. Dynamics include *f*, *dim.*, *sf*, *pp*, *ppp*, *lento*, and *Prellentando*. Articulations include *tr.* (trill), *acc.* (accents), and *sfz.* (sforzando). The piece concludes with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

IMPROVISATION ON THE PIANOFORTE

8va
pp
loco
cresc. f
pp smorz. e rallent.
f
cresc.
pp
legato
cresc.
8va
pp

Concerning Freer Improvisation on Several Themes

8va
dim.
dol.
dim.
f
pp più Adagio
Allo vivace ed affettuoso. (♩ 84)
cresc.
cresc.
8va

B. For the purpose of extending, at this point a tender theme and variations in D major, afterwards a scherzo in D minor, then the recitative-like material after the principal theme, etc.

IMPROVISATION ON THE PIANOFORTE

8^{va} *lento*
8^{va} *lento*
8^{va}
8^{va} *lento*
8^{va} *lento*
8^{va} *lento*

The score on page 82 consists of six systems of music. Each system is written for piano and forte. The first system begins with a piano (p) dynamic and a tempo marking of *lento*. The second system features a forte (f) dynamic. The third system includes a piano (p) dynamic. The fourth system has a forte (f) dynamic. The fifth system includes a piano (p) dynamic. The sixth system includes a forte (f) dynamic. The score is characterized by complex, flowing lines with many accidentals and dynamic markings.

Concerning Freer Improvisation on Several Themes

cresc. 8^{va}
8^{va} *lento*
sempre FF con fuoco
8^{va} *lento*
8^{va} *lento*
8^{va} *lento*

The score on page 83 consists of six systems of music. Each system is written for piano and forte. The first system begins with a piano (p) dynamic and a tempo marking of *lento*. The second system features a forte (f) dynamic. The third system includes a piano (p) dynamic. The fourth system has a forte (f) dynamic. The fifth system includes a piano (p) dynamic. The sixth system includes a forte (f) dynamic. The score is characterized by complex, flowing lines with many accidentals and dynamic markings.

C. Here a longer development would be useful as a second section, whereby the *andantino sostenuto* (appears) once again, but in D major.

IMPROVISATION ON THE PIANOFORTE

8^{va} loco 8^{va} loco

ff del.

cresc.

8^{va} loco ff cresc.

8^{va} più cresc.

8^{va} loco 8^{va} loco

Detailed description: This page contains six systems of musical notation for piano. The first system has two staves with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It includes markings for '8^{va} loco' and 'ff del.'. The second system continues the piece with 'cresc.' and 'ff'. The third system has '8^{va} loco' and 'cresc.'. The fourth system has '8^{va} loco' and 'ff'. The fifth system has '8^{va} più cresc.'. The sixth system has '8^{va} loco' and 'ff'.

Concerning Free Improvisation on Several Themes

Più mosso.

8^{va} loco

ff

ff

ff

ff

ff

Detailed description: This page contains six systems of musical notation for piano. The first system has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat, with a 'Più mosso.' marking. The second system has a bass clef and a key signature of one flat, with a 'ff' marking. The third system has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat, with a 'ff' marking. The fourth system has a bass clef and a key signature of one flat, with a 'ff' marking. The fifth system has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat, with a 'ff' marking. The sixth system has a bass clef and a key signature of one flat, with a 'ff' marking.

SIXTH CHAPTER

Concerning the Potpourri

(Third Category)

1

Apropos of improvising before a large audience, as in the theater for example, the first two styles discussed hitherto are not always felicitous and present the performer with twofold difficulties. First, the natural embarrassment inherent in a public performance and particularly the very destructive fear of boring the audience can have a detrimental effect on the artist's concentration, inventiveness, inspiration and good spirits; then also, in dealing with a largely heterogeneous public, surely the majority by far will be entertained only by pleasant, familiar tunes and will be sustained in spirit by piquant and glittering performances.

Under these circumstances, the true potpourri, namely, an ingenious and interesting combination of such themes that are already favorites of the public, is indeed in place.

2

A player who has already become fluent in the previous styles can surely exhibit great artistry and therefore twice the interest in this style also. Melodies of songs whose words are generally familiar can be fashioned into a pleasing or meaningful work through ingenious combinations. The unanticipated entrance into a new theme can reawaken flagging attentiveness. By continual alteration of new images, as in the visual domain, an improvisation of this kind can be spun out into a length that would

otherwise be unsuccessful and tiresome in every other kind of artistic performance. And finally, in no manner of improvisation other than this can the artist display with greater intensity the brilliant style of performing as well as refinement and grace.

3

In this connection, it is of primary importance that the performer assemble and store up in memory (as had already been observed previously)¹ a large assortment of favorite motives and melodies from operas, ballets, folksongs, and all such material that has attained general popularity. Since he takes advantage of the art of development, he can evoke a greater refinement from even the frivolous products of popular taste and from even the most artless folk melodies.

4

With regard to the grouping, the performer must be guided by refined taste, an accurate sense for what fits together suitably, an awareness of the public for whom he is performing, and particularly that fine discretion by means of which he can discern whether and how soon the attention of the listeners must again be stimulated through a new motive, in order never to allow it to cool down. Indeed, only vast experience and practice can bestow these latter.

5

The themes succeeding each other must vary as much as possible in meter and tempo to avoid monotony; and if it is opportune to begin with a really pretty or very popular one, then a similar one must be reserved towards the end also, thus leading to a splendid conclusion.

6

Slow tempos are most successful in the middle, least suitable towards the end however, since a rousing, dazzling conclusion becomes a necessity, particularly after long fantasies.

¹ c. in fourth chapter, section c.

7

For the working out of each theme, all the categories studied in the fourth chapter are intermittently at the disposal of the performer, but in abbreviated proportions. With appropriate themes, variations particularly (about which more will be discussed in the next chapter) are one of the most rewarding forms that can be introduced with great success within the fantasy. In these the player can reveal art and bravura.

8

Although the highly experienced player can surrender to whim and happenstance as themes might enter into his fingers, it is nevertheless more advisable, before improvising in public, to keep in mind at least a few themes to avoid falling into a dilemma or the commonplace.

9

If the performer discovers two or more themes that can be executed simultaneously (for example, one in the right hand, the other in the left), this is a very interesting nuance that can also turn out quite ingeniously on occasion, but only after the working out of each individual theme according to the techniques discussed previously. For such combinations, the performer must train himself ahead of time at length and in various ways. One can sometimes blend the most unrelated ideas with this technique. I take as illustration here the following familiar march (ex. 45):



This theme lends itself to use in various ways.



Numerous experiments with each theme will ultimately provide the capacity to perceive immediately in the case of each new theme whether and how it can be employed canonically.

The same theme follows here combined with Mozart's *Bacchuslied*.



Individual notes can be altered if necessary.





And thus one finds innumerable counterthemes for each subject. Incidentally, one should introduce such combinations only occasionally and when they occur naturally, for as a rule they sound stiff and affected.

An interesting example of this technique is found towards the end of Moscheles' fantasy: *Erinnerungen an Irland*.

10

For this category of improvisation, there are currently a great many models, of which I shall cite only:

Ries, many fantasies on themes from operas.
Many also by Moscheles, Kalkbrenner and Pixis.
The potpourris by Hummel.
Mine:

Fantasie dans le style moderne (Vienna, Mechetti, op. 64).

Fantasy on the themes from *Dame Blanche*, 2 parts, (Vienna, Haslinger, op. 131).

Fantasy (Paris, Schott, op. 171).

Two potpourris on two pianofortes for six hands (Vienna, Aot, Diabelli & Co., op. 38 and 84).

Fantasy or Potpourri for four hands on themes from all the Mozart operas (Premier Decameron à 4 mains, op. 111, book 7, Leipzig, Probst).

And many others of this kind.

11

In the following example, I have posed the problem for myself of interweaving a motive from each of the following masters: J. S. Bach, Händel, Gluck, Haydn, Mozart,

Cherubini and Beethoven.² Although space does not permit the requisite development, the example can nevertheless serve as an approximate model for the student, particularly if he himself attempts further development according to the guiding comments.

Fantasy as Potpourri

Ex. 46.

Very slow. Andante.

(: S. Bach:) All^o moderato. (: ♩ . 96 :)

2. Sources of thematic materials in Ex. 46 are as follows: J.S. Bach, Fugue No. 22 in B flat minor from Book II of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*; Händel, fourth movement of Suite No. 5 in E flat major for harpsichord; Haydn, Symphony No. 99 in E flat major (the first section from the second movement, the second section from the first movement); Mozart, the aria "Non più andrai" from *The Marriage of Figaro*; Beethoven, *Fidelio Overture*, Op. 72b. The segments by Gluck and Cherubini were undoubtedly more easily recognized in Czerny's time but remain unidentified here.

IMPROVISATION ON THE PIANOFORTE

cresc.
più cresc.
P cresc. e stringendo.
Vivo FF
F
ff

A. The development could be extended here somewhat.

Concerning the Potpourri

8va *loco*
(Händel:) Andantino. (♩. 116)
P dol.
P brillante
8va *loco*
P cresc. *F*
ritard. e dimin.

IMPROVISATION ON THE PIANOFORTE

B. At this point, two more variations would be in place, one in sustained-note style and one brilliant style with the left hand, or with both hands.

Concerning the Potpourri

IMPROVISATION ON THE PIANOFORTE

Musical score for page 96, featuring six systems of piano improvisation. The notation includes various dynamics such as *crusc.*, *dim.*, *f*, *ff*, and *mol. legger.*. The piece concludes with a *crusc.* marking.

Concerning the Potpourri

Musical score for page 97, titled "Concerning the Potpourri". The notation includes various dynamics such as *dim.*, *crusc.*, *f*, *ff*, *mol. legger.*, and *crusc. e stringendo*. The piece concludes with a *crusc.* marking.

più cresc.
 8^{va}
 loco
 FF₂ con fuoco
 sf
 FP
 dim.
 PP
 ritard.
 (C)

(Hydra) Andante, (♩ = 112)

PP
 dol. legato

C. Extended fermata (about which one should observe that the various calenzas would not need to be similar to each other).

cresc.
 8^{va}
 loco
 8^{va}
 Adagio a rall. (D)
 8^{va}
 F dol. All^o vivace (♩ = 110)
 cresc.
 8^{va}
 F
 cresc.
 8^{va}
 dim.
 rall.
 PP
 cresc. a tempo

D. A variation on the preceding theme in sustained-note or ornamental style.

IMPROVISATION ON THE PIANOFORTE

8^{va} *loco* 8^{va}

PF molto vivo.

8^{va} *loco* 8^{va}

FP *cresc.* F

8^{va} *loco* 8^{va}

loco *sempre FF Presto.* F

F₁ PP

8^{va} *loco*

FP *dol. r. li.* PP *viv. r. d.*

Concerning the Potpourri

(Mozart) All^o con anima. (♩. 126.)

FP *P dol.*

PP *cresc.* P *dol.*

8^{va} *loco* 8^{va} *loco*

FP molto brillante

8^{va}

IMPROVISATION ON THE PIANOFORTE

Concerning the Potpourri

The image displays a page of a musical score for a piece titled "Lento". The score is written for piano (p) and violin (v). The piano part is in the lower register, and the violin part is in the upper register. The tempo is marked "Lento". The score includes various dynamics such as *pp* (pianissimo), *f* (forte), and *pp* (pianissimo). There are also markings for "Cherubini" and "Allegretto grazioso". The score is in 3/4 time. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The score is in Italian. The score is for a piece by Franz Liszt.

5. further continuation of the passage-work here, but diminishing.

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F. This theme can be developed still further before the entrance of the countertheme.
G. Further intertwining of all the preceding themes.

Concerning the Polpourri



44. The last theme lends itself to further continuation in the form of a little rondo, during which an earlier motive can shape the middle section; and the brilliant concluding passage-work can be prolonged also.



Nota Bene: There are additional places in this example that would need extending to prevent the themes from following each other too closely. The performer can discover these things easily if he understands how to perceive the effect of the whole.

SEVENTH CHAPTER

Concerning Variations

(Fourth Category)

1

The art of investing a theme with new attractiveness by modifications, whether through figuration and passagework or new but analogous harmonies with melodies based on them (which is actually what should be understood by variations) is one of the oldest forms in the realm of composition, and J. S. Bach had already produced a model of this kind (in his *Thirty Variations*)¹ that has not been surpassed hitherto. However, aside from the countless independent products of this type that have been furnished for more than a century, this very form also serves as an indispensable resource for almost all species of compositions. In sonatas, adagios and rondos, just as in quartets and symphonies, the return of the principal theme or subsidiary melody is customarily varied.*

2

It is no less essential in variations than in the improvisation of fantasies to acquire great dexterity. For on the one hand, opportunities arise frequently in all the preceding types of improvisation where such modifications are to be employed; on the other hand, however, the problem can actually arise for the performer to improvise a complete set of variations on a certain theme. He must accordingly be well practiced in this style also.

1. That is, the "Goldberg Variations."

* [Czerny's footnote]. When in the Funeral March of the Beethoven *Eroica* Symphony, for example, or in his Seventh Symphony, in the first Allegro, second section, the theme reappears modified in an interesting way, these are only very lovely variations. And so it is frequently in J. Haydn's and Mozart's works, and so on. Even concertos are, for the most part, only freer variations of the preceding *Tutti*.

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3

Mainly those themes are suitable for variations that have lovely melody, few modulations, two evenly proportioned sections, and a distinct rhythmic profile.

4

The techniques at the disposal of the performer at this point are infinite in number. For example:

First. In all types of passagework and figuration, in triplets, sextolets, etc., not only in the right hand but also in the left, or even with both hands simultaneously. In the course of this, however, the melody or at least the harmonic pattern of the theme is to be retained in its principal components.

Second. In all kinds of trills, embellishments, etc.

Third. In the *Cantabile*, in which a new melody can be fashioned even from the bass and the harmony of the theme.

Fourth. In sustained-note style, where along with enriched harmonic activity the theme can be retained in the top voice or in the bass.

Fifth. Even in canons, fugal movements, and the like, with themes that are suitable.

Sixth. In the change of tempo, meter, and key; thus as *Adagio*, as *Polonaise*, as *Rondo* etc., and in freer development at the finale, and so forth.

5

For practice purposes, the following is the first section of a simple theme with assorted beginnings for variations, which the student has to complete (ex. 47).

Ex. 47.

Theme. *Allegretto moderato.*

One can easily compose the second section for this.

Concerning Variations

Var. 1.
A. in triplets

Var. 2.
ditto

Var. 3.
Vivace. 8/16. 16/32. 32/64.

Var. 4.
F

Var. 5.
P. 16/32. 32/64. 64/128.

Var. 7.
B. in running passages

Var. 8.
F. brill.

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Var. 9. *pp* etc.

Var. 10. *f* etc.

Nota Bene: To avoid monotony, the same figuration need not always be retained throughout the entire variation

Var. 11. *f* etc.

Var. 12. *f* etc.

Var. 13. *ff* etc.

C. in leaps and bravura passagework

Var. 14. *f* etc.

Var. 15. *ff* etc.

Var. 16. *mf* etc.

Concerning Variations

Var. 17. *p. leggiero* *cresc.* *f* etc.

Var. 18. *ff* etc.

Andante espress.

Var. 19. *p. del.* etc.

D. in the cantabile and sustained-note style

Var. 20. *f* etc.

Var. 21. *ff* etc.

Var. 22. *f* etc.

Var. 23. *p* etc.

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Andante grazioso. 8^{va}

Var. 24. *p* etc.

Adagio.

Var. 25. E, as minore and adagio etc.

Adagio.

Var. 26. *sf* *crac.* etc.

Andante sostenuto, à la Marcia.

Var. 27. *pp* etc.

Adagio cantabile.

Var. 28. *pp* etc.

Presto. 8^{va}

Var. 29. As finale *f* *crac.* etc.

Presto. 8^{va} loco.

Var. 30. Écossaise *pp* etc.

Concerning Variations

Molto All^o

Var. 31. Waltz etc.

All^o non troppo. 8^{va} loco.

Var. 32. Polonaise *del.* etc.

And so forth ad infinitum.

6

When variations are introduced into a potpourri, then two or three are sufficient; otherwise the variety stipulated in this case would suffer. However, if one wishes to extemporize only variations by themselves, then one is certainly not limited by the number but must be concerned solely that brilliant and lively sections alternate steadily with tranquil and more serious ones, that the longer the work, the more interesting or glittering the figuration, and that the finale then be worked out appropriately.

7

The number of composed variations by excellent pianists (such as Hummel, Moscheles, Kalkbrenner, Ries, et al.) that could serve as models is now so vast that each performer has the greatest possible selection of these. The more numerous the compositions of this kind he knows and learns as thoroughly as possible, so much more will his fantasy and ingenuity for this branch of discipline be sharpened and developed.

Among those that are as rich in content and instructive as they are brilliant in their way, I cite:

Mozart Variations, 'Je suis Lindor' in E-Flat.

Clementi Variations on the same theme (as Finale of a sonata in B-Flat Major.

Beethoven Variations in various keys (op. 34).

Beethoven Eroica, Variations in E-Flat (op. 35).

Beethoven, 32 Variations in C Minor (no. 36).²

Beethoven, 33 Variations on a Waltz by Diabelli, op. 120 (Vienna, Diabelli & Co.)

Hummel Variations on the March from *Cendrillon*, op. 40 (Vienna, Haslinger).

And so forth.

EIGHTH CHAPTER

Concerning Improvisation in Strict and Fugal Style'

(Fifth Category)

1

Since matters pertaining to the requisite studies for this technique are already discussed in the fourth chapter (section 11), I will add at this point only that one can improvise in this style in three different ways:

First. Through a succession of many chords and modulations generated from these (ex. 48).

Second. Through imitations, in which one repeats some sort of figure in all voices, positions and octave ranges (ex. 49).

Third. Through fugal improvisation in free or strict style (ex. 50).

Naturally, these three procedures can be employed in combination.

2

The first type, in connection with more lengthy development, is reasonably attainable only on the organ and thus belongs in this discussion only to a limited extent. The

1. When the style designations for "sustained note" or strict (*gebunden*) and "fugal" (*fugiert*) are paired in the discussion, the text refers to the pair as the components of one style, albeit three varieties. Both context and illustrations indicate that the single style referred to is contrapuntal. Also see footnote 7, Introduction, and footnote 7, first chapter.

2. That is, WoO 30.

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second and third are of equal use on the pianoforte as well as the organ, and with regard to the fugue, the figured, flowing and jovial sort is chiefly peculiar to the pianoforte since that kind is clumsily executed on the organ and seldom effective.

Here is a brief example of each variety.

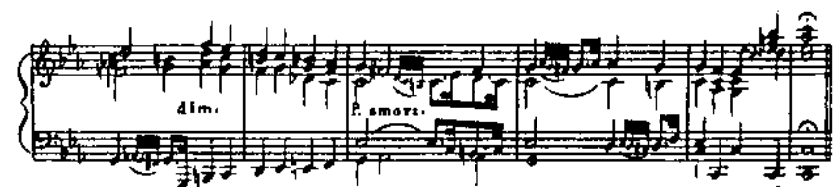
Ex. 48. *Lento. (♩ = 64.)*

Ex. 49. *Andante con moto. (♩ = 100.)*

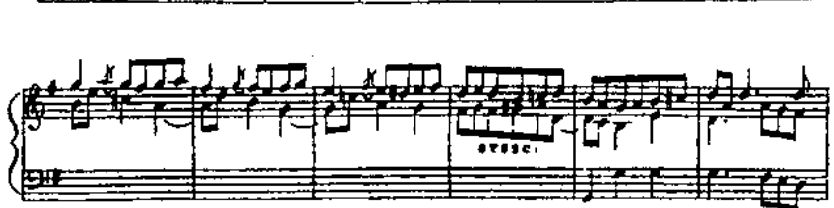
Concerning Improvisation in Strict and Fugal Style

Ex. 49. *Andante con moto. (♩ = 100.)*

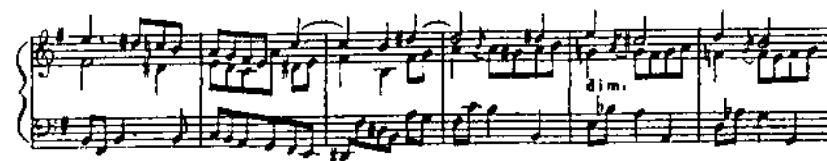
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Fughetta, Allegro scherzando. (♩ = 72.)



Concerning Improvisation in Strict and Fugal Style





NINTH CHAPTER

Concerning the Capriccio

(Sixth Category)

A capriccio is in the true sense the freest form of improvising in fantasy style, namely an arbitrary linking of individual ideas without any particular development, a whimsical and swift shifting from one motive to the other without further relationship than that bestowed by chance or, unintentionally, by the musical inclination of the performer. Thus the sense of the humorous can and must prevail therein.

Since originality, musical wit, piquant and even baroque ideas are introduced in this genre with the greatest of ease, an ingenious player can thus realize effects of inordinate interest.

The true models of this genre are not too numerous because most of the compositions that have appeared under the heading of "Caprice" actually belong in the previous categories. Then again, the Fantasy in G Minor of Beethoven, op. 77 (Leipzig, 1842) should be counted as more akin to a capriccio, and is therefore particularly recommended here.

Example of this category (ex. 51):¹

Capriccio. Allegro vivace.



¹ This example is included in Ferand, Ernst, *Die Improvisation in Beispielen*, op. cit., pp. 153-157.

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Musical score for improvisation on the piano, page 122. The score consists of six systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked "a tempo." at the beginning. The dynamics include *dim.*, *pp. riton.*, *pp.*, *sf.*, *ff.*, *poco rit. a tempo.*, *sf.*, *ritar.*, *Un poco riten. pp.*, *sf. dim. rall.*, *Andante sostenibile*, and *pp. rall.*.

Concerning the Capriccio

Musical score for "Concerning the Capriccio", page 123. The score consists of six systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked "Allegro vivo." at the beginning. The dynamics include *F*, *pp.*, *cresc.*, *f.*, *sf.*, and *p.*.

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Handwritten musical score for improvisation on the piano. The score consists of six systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system includes the instruction "f. dol. e. tenuto." above the treble staff. The second system includes "pp" below the bass staff and "calando" above the treble staff. The third system includes "Andantino sostenuto." below the bass staff and "dol." above the treble staff. The fourth system includes "8va" above the treble staff and "pp" below the bass staff. The fifth system includes "lento." above the treble staff and "cresc." above the bass staff. The sixth system includes "più cresc." below the bass staff. The music features various rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and dynamic markings such as *f*, *pp*, *cresc.*, and *Andantino sostenuto*.

Concerning the Capriccio

Handwritten musical score for "Concerning the Capriccio". The score consists of six systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system includes "Allegro." above the treble staff and "strigando." below the bass staff. The second system includes "8va" above the treble staff and "lento." above the bass staff. The third system includes "pp" below the bass staff and "p leggiero a vivo." above the treble staff. The fourth system includes "cresc." above the bass staff and "f" below the treble staff. The fifth system includes "Allegro animato." below the bass staff and "ff" above the treble staff. The sixth system includes "sempre pp" below the bass staff. The music features various rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and dynamic markings such as *Allegro*, *Andantino sostenuto*, *pp*, *cresc.*, *f*, *ff*, and *Allegro animato*.



The section in the last tempo must be carried out at somewhat greater length, since even in the capriccio an entirely amorphous conclusion would not be seemly.

Conclusion

Each manual of instruction, just like a grammar, can provide only the means to the end. Its accurate, sensible use combined with the necessary exercise and practical experience (which must be infinitely vast, particularly in view of the variegated nature of the subject placed before the reader) can lead to the consummate cultivation that dare uniquely lay claim to the name of Art.

The fact that many a hint offered here could moreover be employed in a practical way by even a novice composer lies in the nature of the thing, since fantasy and composition are so closely allied.

And so let this modest work (which should bear the name Essay so much more since a manual of instruction on this subject has never yet appeared, to the best of my knowledge) be dedicated to the young talent, with the heartfelt wish of having contributed something towards its purposeful, assiduous application.



About the Translator

Alice Levine Mitchell is Associate Professor of Music at the State University of New York at Binghamton. Besides being a pianist, she has done graduate work in musicology at Smith College with the late Alfred Einstein and at Columbia University with Paul Henry Lang. She has written articles and reviews for the *Musical Quarterly*, *Musical Heritage Review*, and for the Sixth Edition of *Grove's Dictionary*, and liner notes for Dover and Musical Heritage Society recordings.