

The Pianist-Composer as Mediator

Performance, Pedagogy and the Work-Concept in the Nineteenth Century

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A Thesis submitted in fulfilment
of requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Musicology

Sydney Conservatorium of Music

The University of Sydney

2026

Declaration

I, Andrei Kelly Hadap, hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that it contains no material previously published or written by another person except for the co-authored publication submitted and acknowledged in the text. This thesis contains no material that has been accepted for the award of a higher degree.

Signed:

Date:

Acknowledgments

I want to express my deepest gratitude to my primary supervisor, Dr Erin Helyard, for his invaluable guidance, insightful feedback, and constant encouragement throughout the preparation of this thesis. I am also grateful to my secondary supervisor, Prof. Stephanie McCallum, for her constructive comments, copyediting and continuous support.

Special thanks go to the staff at the University of Sydney Library, whose assistance in accessing papers, books and archival materials was indispensable. I am also grateful to the Bibliothèque Nationale de France for providing access to an extensive collection of primary sources, which are of great value to researchers worldwide. I would also like to thank the University of Sydney for its financial support, which enabled my research trips to Italy and Belgium in 2023 through the Henderson Travellers Program and the Postgraduate Research Support Scheme (PRSS).

I wish to thank my mum, Olga, and my friends for their unwavering support, encouragement, and patience throughout this journey.

During the preparation of this thesis, I have used OpenAI's ChatGPT (GPT-4 and GPT-5 series), Microsoft Copilot, Google Translate, and Grammarly as research support tools. Generative AI was employed for a range of research-support, moderate copyediting, OCR and translation across multiple sections of text. Full details of the use of generative AI are provided in Appendix A. I can confirm that where text was modified by generative AI, the content was reviewed for possible errors, inaccuracies, and bias. I take full responsibility for the submitted thesis, ensure that the work is my own, and have used generative AI in accordance with University guidelines and policies ([refer to the University of Sydney generative AI guide for researchers](#)).

This research was supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship.

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Research Interests

Nineteenth-century pianism · Harmony and counterpoint pedagogy · Piano pedagogy · Historical composition and improvisation · Work-concept studies

Biography

Andrei Hadap is a pianist, composer, scholar, and teacher based in Sydney. He completed his Bachelor of Music (Piano Performance) in 2021 at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, where he received First-Class Honours and several academic awards, studying under Stephanie McCallum and Erin Helyard.

As a pianist, Andrei made his orchestral debut performing Brahms' First Piano Concerto with the Penrith Symphony Orchestra, later performing Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto in 2023. He was the inaugural Continuo Fellow for Pinchgut Opera from 2021 to 2023, performing regularly with the Orchestra of the Antipodes.

Andrei is also an emerging scholar with diverse research interests, including historical performance and pedagogy. In 2025, Andrei was appointed as a Postgraduate Fellow at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and completed his PhD in musicology at the same institution a year

later. He shares his knowledge and passion as a piano and composition teacher, basing his pedagogy on these historical methods.

Andrei is also an organist, having been appointed the Organ Scholar for St. Stephen's Uniting Church, where he plays for Sunday services and performs his own compositions and improvisations on the instrument. He is frequently invited to perform the organ with choirs around Sydney. He was also the recipient of the 2025 2MBS Stefan Kruger Scholarship, proposing a project to perform, record and publish several of his compositions. Andrei won the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra 2025 Young Composer Award with his piece for orchestra titled *Charon's Barcarolle*.

As a multi-skilled musician, Andrei aims to push the boundaries of musical versatility. He is driven to blend these disciplines in his work to navigate today's rapidly evolving musical landscape.

(Correct as of April 2026)

Abstract

The nineteenth century witnessed a profound transformation in the musical landscape, marked by the concurrent rise of the *work-concept* and the *pianist-composer*. In Western art music, the work-concept, in which a composition is conceived as a “fixed,” self-contained entity written by a composer and faithfully reproduced by performers, was a relatively new construct that redefined the latter’s role.

Paradoxically, this shift coincided with the flourishing of the pianist-composer. They excelled in performance, improvisation and composition, making them an invaluable case study. This was enabled by the evolution of the piano’s mechanism, its centrality in domestic and concert music-making, its capacity to imitate orchestral sonorities, and its tactile/aural role in harmony pedagogy. However, their ethos was split between the fidelity to the “fixed” score and improvisatory traditions associated with a more “fluid” approach inherited from their teachers. Thus, they functioned as a mediating figure between these approaches.

This thesis asks how the work-concept shaped the ethos and training of the pianist-composer, and what the figure reveals about performance and compositional aesthetics within an institutionalised classical music culture. Chapter 1 traces their emergence, focusing on the Paris Conservatoire’s role in nurturing them, and on the piano/organ’s increasing versatility. Chapters 2 and 3 examine the period 1800–1870, exploring how evolving notions of the musical work shaped composition and performance aesthetics. Chapter 4 shows how harmony pedagogy, especially the *Chant Donné* and *Basse Donnée*, linked harmony to keyboard practice, shaping their ethos. Based on these historical models, the final chapter proposes a theory of performance that navigates the tension between the “fixed” and “fluid” score.

By reassessing the nineteenth-century pianist-composer, the thesis proposes a post-work-concept paradigm that expands performer agency in the twenty-first century.

Keywords: Work-concept, Pianist-composer, Aesthetics, Pedagogy, Harmony, Conservatoire.

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Hadap, Andrei. The Pianist-Composer as Mediator.

1 The Pianist-Composer: A Nineteenth-Century Musician Archetype

The nineteenth century witnessed a profound transformation in the musical landscape, marked by two interrelated phenomena: the concurrent rise of the *work-concept* and a new artistic figure, the *pianist-composer*. In Western art music, the work-concept, in which the musical composition is conceived as a “fixed,” self-contained entity written by a composer and faithfully reproduced by performers, was a relatively new construct at the time. This redefined the performer’s role from a collaborator to a servant of the musical text, creating and enforcing a divide between performers and composers.

In this chapter, we investigate the pianist-composer’s emergence in the early nineteenth century and why they make for a fascinating case study. They emerged during a time when the roles of composer and performer were becoming more distinct, acting as *mediators* between older improvisatory traditions, which viewed the work as “fluid”, and the emerging ideal of the “fixed” musical work.

1.1 Situating the Research

1.1.1 Current Research and Gap

The concept of the musical work as a “fixed” and autonomous object has been central to musicological discourse since the late twentieth century. Carl Dahlhaus (1928-1989) was one of the first musicologists to study the evolving relationship among the performer, composer, and listener, particularly the critical turning point around 1800. In his book *Nineteenth-Century Music*, he elucidates these relationships, allowing future musicologists to examine Western music history through a new lens, paving the way for “New Musicology.”¹

Richard Taruskin argues the centrality of the musical text in music discourse, “divined either directly from explicit notation or indirectly through study of contemporary conventions...and the *Werk-treue* performer (and scholar, and editor, and critic)...there to serve it.”² In his *Text and Act: Essays on Music and Performance* (1995), he is also cautious about the effects of “postmodernist performance values... that have stifled musical creativity and recreativity alike,” particularly in the realm of historical performance practice.³

Lydia Goehr further examines this turning point with her seminal work *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* (1992), whose core argument addresses the impact of the work-concept at the turn of the nineteenth century. She argued that before 1800, music was treated more “pragmatically” with no

¹ “New Musicology” was a fresh approach to the study of music that emerged in the 1980s and 1990s. It analysed music not in terms of the specific work, but its personal, societal and political context. This interdisciplinary approach paved the way for new ways of defining the musical “work” and of approaching performance and composition. See Joseph Kerman, “How We Got into Analysis, and How to Get Out,” *Critical Inquiry* 7, no. 2 (1980): 311–31, <https://doi.org/10.1086/448101>.

² Richard Taruskin, “The Pastness of the Present and the Presence of the Past,” in *Authenticity and Early Music*, ed. Nicholas Kenyon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 207, quoted in Bruce Haynes, *The End of Early Music: A Period Performer’s History of Music for the 21st Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 92, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195189872.001.0001>. *Werktreue* (literally “true to the work”) is a German term used to describe the performer’s fidelity to the musical text written by the composer.

³ Richard Taruskin, *Text and Act: Essays on Music and Performance*, 1st ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 47, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780195094374.001.0001>.

conception of a “correct” method of performance.⁴ Music afterwards, on the other hand, “began to be marketed in the same way as works of fine art,” to preserve its “temporal” form.⁵ The work-concept and the composers who adopted it meant that music now had some form of “permanent” state, just like a sculpture, painting, or piece of writing.⁶ It altered the perception of music among composers, performers and listeners, turning what was once a fluid musical tradition based on improvisation into fixed musical works based on written compositions. The latter had the effect of preserving the artwork, which is why Goehr used the “imaginary museum” metaphor. Years after Goehr’s publication, many scholars have contributed to the discourse and nuanced her argument.

Christopher Small, in 1998, coined the term *musicking* to describe all events that contribute to the preparation and execution of a musical performance, and to highlight the critical role of the active listener at the centre of musical discourse.⁷ He argues that “music is not a thing at all but an activity” and warns of the “dangers” of our “habit of thinking in abstractions” as a result of the work-concept.⁸ The term “music” is descriptive; “musik” (or “musiking”) is prescriptive; the latter is ideally where discourse should occur.⁹

At a symposium in 2000, Michael Talbot and contributors extended Goehr’s point about the work-concept by questioning the existence of the musical work. Various authors have linked its significance to popular music, the recording industry, and nineteenth-century pianism, and have evaluated its role in musicology.¹⁰ Talbot provides a complementary view to Goehr’s work-concept, arguing that

⁴ Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994 [1992]), 187-88, <https://doi.org/10.1093/0198235410.001.0001>. Goehr clarifies that the term “1800” is just a placeholder and that such events occurred more gradually over time.

⁵ Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*, 174.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 111.

⁷ Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1998), 9.

⁸ Small, *Musicking*, 2.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁰ Michael Talbot, ed., *The Musical Work: Reality or Invention?*, NED-New edition, 1, 1, vol. 1, Liverpool Music Symposium (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), <https://doi.org/10.5949/upo9781846313615>.

“between 1780 and 1820, approximately, a genre-centred and performer-centred practice became a composer-centred one.”¹¹

Jim Samson takes the idea of the musical work and applies it to a more specific case: The monumental *Études d'exécution transcendante* of Franz Liszt (1811-1886)—beginning as didactic exercises modelled after his teacher, Carl Czerny (1791-1857), to works that push the limits of virtuosity, rendering them unplayable for his contemporaries. The study of the evolution of such works from Liszt's youth to his maturity—traced through “contextually and temporally separated utterances” in the years 1826, 1837 and 1852—raises questions about the authorship of a work that is constantly transforming, even as it reveals how an “authorial voice can formulate and sustain its identity.”¹² Liszt's quest for virtuosity—a “Romantic aesthetic” in these *Études* (and also other parts of his oeuvre featuring arrangements, transcriptions and his own compositions), “generated a dialectical relationship with a strengthening sense of the autonomous musical work, involving taste and ideology as well as form and closure.”¹³

Bruce Haynes, in 2011, is more provocative in his approach, questioning what he calls a list of “Romantic habits” that have persisted in the twenty-first century because of the work-concept, in relation to performance, composition, musicology, and pedagogy.¹⁴

Parallel to this scholarly interest in the work-concept, there has also been a growing investigation into the historical role of performers as creative agents. Interestingly, while the musical work itself is “fixed” by the score, the performance practices surrounding it remained “fluid” until the early twentieth century. Nicholas Cook provides a metaphysical approach to the discourse in his work *Beyond the Score* (2014). He argues for “theorising music as performance—as a social event in which meaning is

¹¹ Michael Talbot, “The Work-Concept and Composer-Centredness,” in *The Musical Work: Reality or Invention?*, ed. Michael Talbot (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 172, <https://doi.org/10.5949/UPO9781846313615>.

¹² Jim Samson, *Virtuosity and the Musical Work: The Transcendental Studies of Liszt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 7, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511481963>.

¹³ Samson, *Virtuosity and the Musical Work*, 4.

¹⁴ Bruce Haynes, *The End of Early Music: A Period Performer's History of Music for the 21st Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 68.

produced, rather than as sounded writing that reproduces pre-existing meaning.”¹⁵ Until the dichotomy of the “performer-centred” and “composer-centred”¹⁶ approach to the work-concept is resolved, Cook and Goehr acknowledge that “it is the norm for musicology to emphasise the one at the expense of the other.”¹⁷

The scholars, as mentioned earlier, have shown how the work-concept emerged alongside Romantic ideals and the institutionalisation of music-making. Yet, its practical implications for performers and composers have remained elusive. It is critical that research also investigates the methods used by trained musicians before and after the onset of the work-concept, as they may question our current anachronistic pedagogical and analytical methods. This changed in the late 2000s with the rediscovery of the Neapolitan *partimento* tradition through the works of Robert Gjerdingen, Giorgio Sanguinetti and Rosa Cafiero. It was what added another dimension to the composer-centred vs. performer-centred dichotomy.¹⁸ By the nature of the pedagogy, its training focused on the development of the composer-performer, rather than as separate disciplines. In 2018, Dana Gooley’s work on “free playing” investigates various forms of improvisatory practice and their connection to the pianist-composer’s identity.¹⁹ Robert Doran et al. were more specific, publishing several articles in 2020 on Liszt’s role and the virtuosity required to form an artist of his calibre.²⁰ Erin Helyard has also published a monograph in 2022 on the pianist-composer Muzio Clementi (1752-1832), not just as a “genius” composer, but also as an entrepreneur, with the piano’s increasing prominence in domestic settings among female piano students in

¹⁵ Nicholas Cook, *Beyond the Score: Music as Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 7, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199357406.001.0001>.

¹⁶ See Talbot, “The Work-Concept and Composer-Centredness.”

¹⁷ Lydia Goehr, “The Perfect Performance of Music and The Perfect Musical Performance,” *New Formations* 27 (1995), 1, quoted in Cook, *Beyond the Score*, 136-37.

¹⁸ See their respective works: Robert O. Gjerdingen, *Music in the Galant Style* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780195313710.001.0001>; Giorgio Sanguinetti, *The Art of Partimento: History, Theory, and Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Rosa Cafiero, “The Early Reception of Neapolitan Partimento Theory in France,” *Journal of Music Theory* 51, no. 1 (2007): 137–59, <https://doi.org/10.1215/00222909-2008-025>.

¹⁹ Dana Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation: Free Playing in Nineteenth-Century Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 7-8, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190633585.001.0001>.

²⁰ See Robert Doran ed., *Liszt and Virtuosity*, Eastman Studies in Music; 168 (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2020).

London.²¹ More recently, 2023 saw a conference proceeding centred around the pianist-composer, Johann-Baptist Cramer (1771-1858) and his contemporaries’ “interactions between different areas of musical life, between instrumental technology, human dexterity, and musical aesthetics, between entrepreneurship, canon formation, and popular culture.”²² Research reveals that pianist-composers were versatile figures that “straddled the worlds of industry and art, of connoisseurs and amateurs.”²³

Pianist-composers, however, were not trained in a vacuum but were nurtured by the conservatory system, which was integral to nineteenth-century music education and offers a key perspective on their emergence. Research led by Tom Beghin in the early 2020s examined the training of pianist-composers at the Paris Conservatoire and their relationship to the institution.²⁴ Upon its establishment in 1795, the institution adopted the methods of the Schools of Italy, thereby demonstrating the critical link between research on the partimento tradition and the development of the pianist-composer. Lydia Carlisi’s book examines the reception of these methods at the Paris Conservatoire between 1790 and 1840.²⁵

To further complicate this relationship, the institutions that nurtured pianist-composers were also responsible for propagating the work-concept and its ideals. For example, Navon has criticised the rigidity and theoretical focus of the Leipzig Conservatory (founded in 1843 by pianist-composer Felix Mendelssohn [1809-1847]), which was largely emulated in the Anglo-speaking countries, separating “performance and composition as abstracted forms of musical production.”²⁶

²¹ Erin Helyard, *Clementi and the Woman at the Piano: Virtuosity and the Marketing of Music in Eighteenth-Century London*, Oxford University Studies in the Enlightenment, 2022:06 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2022).

²² Felix Diergarten, ed., *Johann Baptist Cramer und die Welt der Pianisten-Compositeurs: Rekonstruktionen einer versunkenen Kultur* (Baden-Baden: Georg Olms Verlag, 2023), 7, <https://doi.org/10.5771/9783487423685>.

²³ Erin Helyard, “Clementi: The Father (Also) of French Pianism,” *Keyboard Perspectives: Yearbook of the Westfield Center for Historical Keyboard Studies* XIII, no. 2 (2021): 46.

²⁴ See Tom Beghin, ed., *Keyboard Perspectives XIII (2021) The Lure of Paris, 1795–1810*, <https://westfield.org/publications/keyboard-perspectives-xiii-2021.html>.

²⁵ See Lydia Carlisi, *From Naples to Paris: The Reception of the Neapolitan Partimento Tradition at the Paris Conservatoire in the Early Nineteenth Century*, Schriften Der Hochschule Für Musik Freiburg (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft mbH & Co. KG, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.5771/9783487423654>.

²⁶ Joshua Navon, “Pedagogies of Performance: The Leipzig Conservatory and the Production of Werktreue,” *Journal of Musicology* 37, no. 1 (2020): 66, <https://doi.org/10.1525/jm.2020.37.1.63>.

While the work-concept has been extensively theorised, and the Paris Conservatoire (and its nineteenth-century successors) examined as a site of musical standardisation, little research has explored how they might relate more specifically to the complex relationship between pianist-composer and the evolving work-concept.

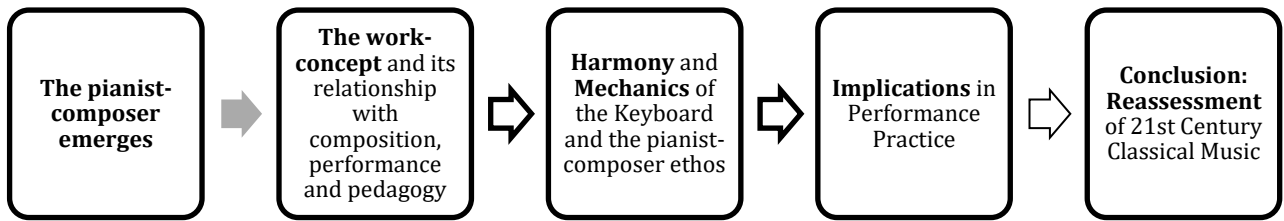
1.1.2 Methodology

The thesis lies at a critical intersection of the aforementioned research areas by examining nineteenth-century pianist-composers and their relationship to the work-concept across the fields of composition, performance, and pedagogy. As embracers and challengers of the idea, they navigated through the newly formed and “regulative” work-concept in the early nineteenth century, which had been “delimited, articulated, and specified from every conceivable point of interest... beyond musical and aesthetic theory [and] extended far into the depths of musical practice.”²⁷ Their emergence at such a critical turning point in Western music history makes them a fascinating case study, as their careers spanned an era before and after the work-concept’s inception.

This thesis is structured around two central questions: how did the nineteenth-century work-concept shape the identity and training of the pianist-composer, and what can a historical analysis of this figure reveal about the possibilities of creative performance and composition within an institutionalised classical music culture? In addressing these questions, the thesis unfolds over five chapters, moving from historical analysis to theoretical case studies, and finally to a critical reassessment of contemporary musical practice. In addition, the inclusion of the organist-composer tradition here reveals a complementary aspect of the pianist-composer’s musical life. Even though their professional lives were parallel, pianists and organists shared many similarities in their training and its applications—in many instances, the same person. Figure 1 outlines the structure of the thesis:

²⁷ Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*, 176.

Figure 1: Diagram of the Thesis Methodology



The first chapter provides a historical narrative of the emergence of the work-concept from philosophical trends, and of the pianist-composer’s formation, particularly within the Paris Conservatoire, and of the piano/organ’s evolving roles as a performing and practical instrument.

The second and third chapters provide an historical overview of the pianist-composer between 1800 and 1870, examining how their professional activities paralleled and, paradoxically, coexisted with the evolving nature of musical works, both as composers and as pianists/organists.

Central to this thesis’ argument is the fourth chapter, which demonstrates the critical link between the study of harmony and the mechanics of the keyboard, as fostered by the methods employed at the Conservatoire. We examine the use of the *Basse Donnée* and *Chant Donnée* exercises, their realisations in harmony and counterpoint pedagogy, and their role in shaping the pianist-composer ethos.

The fifth chapter assesses how aspects of the pianist-composer dichotomy might inform the interconnected skills of sight-reading, textural modifications, and the aesthetics surrounding *taste* in the twenty-first century.

Drawing on both historical and theoretical approaches, the thesis centres on the pianist-composer—a figure that warrants the intersection of performance, composition and musicology research. The thesis aims to encourage a more fluid, creative model of performance and composition within an institutionalised classical music culture in the twenty-first century.

1.2 The Pianist-Composer Emerges

At the turn of the nineteenth century, the pianist-composer sat at the intersection of composition, performance, and pedagogy.²⁸ Though keyboard composers date back centuries to the invention of the first keyboard instruments, the first pianist-composers became prominent in the early nineteenth century, coinciding with the rapid development of the piano[forte] as an instrument that served many musical roles.²⁹ More than a virtuoso or teacher, this figure embodied a fluid musicianship grounded in improvisation and the adaptation of musical material from others and from their own, to evolving instruments and audiences. Doran attributes the pianist-composer's success to the following "interrelated historical phenomena:"³⁰

- "The rise of the middle-class consumer of concerts and lessons
- The emerging centrality of the piano in musical culture
- The popularity of opera
- Political shifts that led to a decline in aristocratic influence over music-making
- The concomitant valorisation of the individual artist-genius."³¹

The pianist-composer is unique among other musicians with their ability to combine the disciplines more insightfully and apply these skill sets to a broader range of musical contexts. They underwent not only rigorous training in piano technique, with fluency in the mechanics of the rapidly evolving instrument, but also in harmony and accompaniment (and their equivalents), as exemplified in numerous

²⁸ The terms "pianist-composer" or "composer-pianist" will be regarded as synonymous terms in this thesis, even though some texts differentiate between the two depending on the musician's primary area of speciality. The former label will be used, consistent with Zimmerman's *Encyclopédie du Pianiste Compositeur* (1840), which will be later discussed in this thesis.

²⁹ The category of the pianist-composer only truly emerges with the pianoforte's unique sound profile and mechanics, since earlier keyboard music could often be performed more effectively on other instruments.

³⁰ Robert Doran, "Introduction: Virtuosity and Liszt," in *Liszt and Virtuosity*, ed. Robert Doran, Eastman Studies in Music; 168 (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2020), 1, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781787448667>.

³¹ Ibid. Another reason is the improvement of printing technology, which has created a "printing and publishing revolution." Derek Carew, *The Mechanical Muse: The Piano, Pianism, and Piano Music, c. 1760-1850* (New York: Routledge, 2016 [2007]), 534, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315085968>.

treatises on keyboard playing.³² This thesis begins by examining the emergence of the pianist-composer within historical phenomena before delving into their evolving relationship with the work-concept.

1.2.1 The Church as Patron: *The Kapellmeister and Organiste Titulaire*

It is well known that the most sought-after positions for musicians up until the nineteenth century were either as a Court composer or a *Kapellmeister*—well-recognised positions that provided musicians with stable employment.³³ These positions gave them the freedom to compose, access to high-calibre performers, performance opportunities, and teaching work. Setting a model of practical musicianship, they displayed a wide array of skills, and it is no surprise that many of these positions were held by composer-performers. While they also relied on patronage from royalty and other high-ranking officials, they forged their own paths as musicians by seeking independence from court or *Kapellmeister* positions. They promoted themselves through concerts (usually of their own works), commissions from publishers who “got them bidding against each other,” and private teaching—paving a new career path for the next generation of pianist-composers.³⁴ The piano had become an essential asset for many musicians due to its versatility and rapid evolution in the early nineteenth century.

As the more generic composer-performers gradually dwindled, pianist-composers emerged as a distinct and influential category.³⁵ Gooley recounts that many of the *Kapellmeister* positions in the nineteenth century were held by pianist-composers, requiring them to “fulfil a variety of functions as instrumentalist, composer, conductor, teacher, administrator, pedagogue, and sometimes theorist.”³⁶ These positions were held “at some point, if not their entire professional lives [whose] education revolved

³² In fact, keyboard playing before the eighteenth century was synonymous with proficiency in all, as documented by the notable keyboard treatises in the eighteenth century by C. P. E. Bach, Türk, Pasquali, and Gasparini. Some of these will be discussed later in the thesis.

³³ Donald Jay Grout, J. Peter Burkholder, and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 9th ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2014), 565; Carew, *The Mechanical Muse*, 531.

³⁴ Grout, Burkholder, and Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 568.

³⁵ Examples from the eighteenth century include Corelli and Vivaldi on the violin, and Quantz on the flute.

³⁶ Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation*, 13. These include Vogler, Meyerbeer, Weber, Hummel, Moscheles, Loewe, Liszt, R. Schumann and Hiller (examples provided by Gooley).

around ideals of rigorous theoretical training, pragmatic skill, and stylistic flexibility.”³⁷ In effect, the *Kapellmeister* model preserved a broad, multi-skilled form of musicianship at a time when musical culture was beginning to move toward greater specialisation—a hallmark trait of the pianist-composer.

In nineteenth-century France, the role of *organiste titulaire* (titular organist) often served as the assistant to the *Kapellmeister*. Though organists and pianists led very different musical lives, there are several instances in which they were the same person. For example, many pianist-composers such as Liszt, Felix Mendelssohn, Franck, Alkan, R. Schumann, Brahms, Saint-Saëns, and Fauré were organists themselves, writing several works for organ and holding titular posts in churches across Europe.³⁸ The reverse was also true for organists such as Lefébure-Wély, Guilmant, Gigout, Widor, and Reger, who wrote and arranged several works for the piano.³⁹ Schumann earnestly recommended the study of the organ for young musicians as “there is no instrument that can so effectually correct errors or impurity of style and touch as that.”⁴⁰ In the highly competitive musical environment of the nineteenth century, organist posts were a way for solo pianists to secure stable employment.⁴¹

The term “organist,” even in the twenty-first century, still implies a musician with a wide array of skills that pianist-composers once practised. The organ, which Pierre remarks as an instrument “which exists principally for improvisation,” remains a living art form in the twenty-first century.⁴² Generally, there is a cultural expectation among organists that improvisation is a core skill. In liturgical playing, organists often had to fill time during services, which frequently varied in length depending on the time

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Alkan was also known for his compositions for the piano-pédalier, a piano with a pedalboard for the feet to play bass notes. See Orpha Ochse, *Organists and Organ Playing in Nineteenth-Century France and Belgium* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 67.

³⁹ Ochse recounts that Chopin played organ at “a funeral service for the celebrated French tenor Adolphe Nourrit (1802-39). Chopin played ‘one of those improvisations of which the sad and melancholy character awakened in the soul quite grievous memories.’” Ochse, *Organists and Organ Playing in Nineteenth-Century France and Belgium*, 34.

⁴⁰ Robert Schumann, *Advice to Young Musicians*, trans. Hugo Henry Pierson (Leipzig and New York: J. Schuberth & Co., 1860), 22.

⁴¹ Brian Rees, *Camille Saint-Saëns: A Life* (London: Faber & Faber, 2012), 41.

⁴² Constant Pierre, *Le Conservatoire national de musique et de déclamation: documents historiques et administratifs* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1900), 358, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Sciences et techniques, 4-V-5124, <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb311086755>, quoted in Rollin Smith, *Saint-Saëns and the Organ* (Stuyvesant: Pendragon Press, 1992), 5-6.

of year or occasion and accompany choirs ad lib. The improvisation of short pieces such as preludes, interludes, and postludes became a practical necessity, leading to their composition in written form. Cadaux, in his *École d'orgue* (1844), recommends the study of harmony and to “engage in free improvisation and in the fugal style.”⁴³ In a preface to a new edition of Lemmens’s *École d'orgue* (1862), which surprisingly contains only composed works (except a small section on modulation), Eugène Gigout (1844-1925) remarks on the importance of improvisation and continuing the tradition of the learned style:

[The organist] must be well trained in harmony, counterpoint and fugue, otherwise his improvisations will be of no value and full of mistakes... Many organists, in a vain attempt to conceal the poverty of their improvisations, sacrifice style and true sentiment to material effects which may please certain hearers, but will always be disapproved by connoisseurs.⁴⁴

This expectation, in both secular and religious settings, reinforces the practice and encourages organists to develop and refine their improvisational skills.

So, with their origins in the *Kapellmeister* and organist positions, pianist-composers made a living as freelance musicians by promoting themselves through teaching, performing, composing, and publishing pedagogical material. This was made possible by the piano’s versatility and its increasing popularity at the turn of the nineteenth century. However, it was not the only factor. As will be explored in the next chapter, developing a relationship with instrument builders played a key role in their success, benefiting both parties.

⁴³ “Nous leur recommandons l’étude de l’harmonie qui est de toute rigueur, 1° pour bien traiter une partie de plain chant, 2° pour pouvoir se livrer avec succès à l’improvisation libre et dans le style fugue.” Justin Cadaux, *École d'orgue ou méthode complète* (Paris: S. Richault, 1844), i, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Musique VM8 R-77, <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb428873667>. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

⁴⁴ Jaak Nicolaas Lemmens, *École d'orgue*, rev. by Eugène Gigout (Paris: A. Durand et fils, 1920 [1862]), I, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Musique, VMA-1054, <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb431079336>. An English translation is included in the preface, though the translator is not specified.

1.2.2 Developing a Mutual Relationship with Piano and Organ Builders

The rise of the pianist-composer also led to a mutual relationship with piano builders. This accelerated the evolution of both the instrument and compositional style on the instrument—or, as Doran argues, “‘Piano’ manufacturers (who were often composers and performers themselves) were pushed to modify their products in response to creative and performance exigencies.”⁴⁵ Indeed, Beghin’s research into Beethoven’s Érard piano (which he owned during the years 1803-04) reveals how changes in instrument construction influenced compositional approaches, being used “[enthusiastically] as a tool for his own experimentation and creation.”⁴⁶ In 1802, Beethoven claimed in a letter to Zmeskall that “the entire swarm of piano makers besieges me and wants to serve me—for free; every one of them wants to make me a piano the way I want it.”⁴⁷ Being surrounded by Viennese pianos, Beethoven frequently requested that Erard make changes to his piano to feature elements from Viennese pianos—what Beghin calls “viennicization.”⁴⁸

Driven by “the lure of virtuosity,” Doran argues that nineteenth-century pianist-composers where in competition with one another to take full advantage of the evolving capabilities of the piano design such as “the double-escapement mechanism, making possible the rapid repetition of notes, the expansion of the keyboard compass permitting spectacular runs and arpeggios from one end to the other, the significant increase in volume (especially the booming bass).”⁴⁹ Chopin, for instance, gravitated toward the lighter Pleyel, which suited his “classically oriented, post-brilliant-style piano aesthetic”⁵⁰ Moreover, he praised them as having “the last word in perfection.”⁵¹ Liszt, by contrast, favoured the “more powerful and technologically advanced Érard” with its new double-escapement mechanism, “a

⁴⁵ Doran, “Introduction: Virtuosity and Liszt,” 6.

⁴⁶ Tom Beghin, *Beethoven’s French Piano: A Tale of Ambition and Frustration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022), 5.

⁴⁷ Sieghard Brandenburg, ed., *Ludwig van Beethoven: Briefwechsel Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 1 (Munich: G. Henle, 1996–98), 137, quoted in Beghin, *Beethoven’s French Piano*, 11.

⁴⁸ Beghin, *Beethoven’s French Piano*, 11.

⁴⁹ Doran, “Introduction: Virtuosity and Liszt,” 6.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁵¹ Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher as Seen by His Pupils*, 3rd English ed., ed. Roy Howat, trans. Naoimi Shohet et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 25.

choice that reflected his modernist approach to virtuosity.”⁵² Composers who made their preferences clear also provided invaluable publicity for the builders and revealed that composers actively shaped the instrument, while the instrument shaped their compositional output.

Organists also maintained a mutual relationship with organ builders. As they began to explore the symphonic capabilities of the instrument, builders such as Aristide Cavallé-Coll (1811–1899) and Joseph Merklin (1819–1905) responded with innovations that dramatically expanded the tonal and expressive range of the organ.⁵³ Louis James Alfred Lefébure-Wély (1817–1869), often regarded as the most popular organist of his time, was a key figure in this development.⁵⁴ His long-standing collaboration with Cavallé-Coll began in 1838 with the inauguration of the organ at *Notre-Dame-de-Lorette*. It continued for decades, with Lefébure-Wély frequently chosen as the inaugural recitalist for new instruments.⁵⁵ Cavallé-Coll, in turn, advanced Lefébure-Wély’s career, helping him secure prestigious posts at Parisian churches of *La Madeleine* and *Saint-Sulpice*.⁵⁶

Pianist-composer, César Franck (1822-1890) also worked closely with Cavallé-Coll, describing his organ at *Saint-Jean-Saint-François-au-Marais* as "like an orchestra," and performing across France to promote the builder’s instruments.⁵⁷ These collaborations between the two organists not only demonstrated the versatility of the new organs but also shaped the artistic and professional identities of the organist-composers. It was precisely this mutual relationship between performer and builder that enabled pianists, organists and instrument builders to flourish in the nineteenth century.

The evolving relationship between pianist-composers and instrument builders (both piano and organ) illuminates another dimension of the work-concept. As the piano and organ underwent technical innovation, the idea of the “work” began to encompass the instruments themselves. Beethoven’s

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ochse, *Organists and Organ Playing*, 27-28.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 21.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 32-33.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 28.

⁵⁷ Léon Vallas, *César Franck*, trans. Hubert J. Foss (London: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., 1951 [1949]), 101-02.

correspondence with piano makers, or Chopin's advocacy of the Pleyel, highlights how the choice of instrument would eventually become inseparable from the musical "work."⁵⁸

1.2.3 Harmony and Composition as a Tactile Phenomenon

Pianist-composers occupy a unique position among musicians. Not only can they perform a vast solo repertoire (plus the music of other instruments via transcription—see Chapter 2.2), but the piano has long been the primary tool for teaching harmony, composition and improvisation. For centuries, "mastery of composition, figured bass and improvisation" was assumed to go hand in hand with mastery of a keyboard instrument.⁵⁹ Its advantages are obvious: immediate sound production, polyphonic capability, complete harmonic control, wide range, and equal playability in all twenty-four keys. As Henri Herz (1803-1888) notes, although the piano cannot shape a single sustained tone like a violin or voice, "it is compensated for by the superiority afforded by its immense compass and the facility of playing 10 or even 12 notes at a time."⁶⁰ By contrast, string, wind, and brass instruments have limited harmonic capacity (they can play only single notes), difficulty with certain keys, and more complex sound production, making them far less suited to harmonic training.

This dual role as instrument of performance and instrument of composition is why so many composers worked at the piano. Czerny praised its "perfection and richness" that allows "nearly all forms and species of composition" to be performed on it.⁶¹ Fétis admired its "unity and spontaneity of intention."⁶² Moreover, Marx simply concludes that, apart from the organ, the piano alone offers both

⁵⁸ This will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 2.2 and 4.

⁵⁹ Beghin, *Beethoven's French Piano*, 262.

⁶⁰ Henri Herz, *New and Complete Piano-Forte School: Conducting the Student from the First Elements of Music to the Highest and Most Refined Styles of Performance, Illustrated by a Variety of Examples, Precepts, Exercises ... etc.* (New York: John F. Nunns, 1844 [ca. 1838]), 64, <https://archive.org/details/newcompletepiano00herz>.

⁶¹ Carl Czerny, *School of Practical Composition*, Op. 600, trans. John Bishop (London: Messrs Robert Cocks & Co., 1848), 1:3, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Die_Schule_der_Praktischen_Tonsetz_Kunst,_Op.600_\(Czerny,_Carl\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Die_Schule_der_Praktischen_Tonsetz_Kunst,_Op.600_(Czerny,_Carl)).

⁶² François-Joseph Fétis, *How to Play from Score: Treatise on Accompaniment from Score on the Organ or Pianoforte*, trans. Alfred Whittingham (London: William Reeves, 1888 [1829]), 1, <https://archive.org/details/howtoplayfromsco00feti>.

melody and harmony “with great fullness of tone and an almost unlimited power of execution.”⁶³ Czerny, Fétis, and Marx here demonstrate the piano’s versatility as both a performing and a pedagogical instrument.

One crucial factor in the emergence of the pianist-composer is the piano’s (or keyboard’s) role in teaching harmony and counterpoint. While it is well known that the formal study of composition in Western art music relies primarily on written notation, pianist-composers can complement this process by using the tactile element. This is perhaps what pianist-composer Ferruccio Busoni (1866-1924) meant when pianist-composers “dedicated their choicest thoughts to it [piano]” as the nature of the instrument’s mechanics allows the ability to play simultaneous parts with relative ease.⁶⁴ After learning the basic rudiments of music notation and proficiency in piano playing, the study of harmony is a natural follow-up, as Duvois explains: “The difficulties of mechanism for all instruments—especially for the piano—are a direct result of harmonic and melodic complications. From which it follows that...the teaching of harmony merges with that of mechanism.”⁶⁵

In organ playing, the connection to the study of harmony is even more pronounced as “[the subject] was classified with harmony and composition at the [Paris Conservatoire]”⁶⁶—“inextricably bound” to the subjects and “both indispensable to the organist.”⁶⁷ This tactile element allows the immediate execution of compositional ideas at the keyboard, whereas on other instruments, the production of

⁶³ Adolf Bernhard Marx, *The Universal School of Music: A Manual for Teachers and Students in Every Branch of Musical Art; with Additional Notes, a Special Preface, and Supplement to the English Edition*, trans. August Heinrich Wehrhan, from the 5th German ed. (London: Robert Cocks and Co., 1853 [1839]), 331, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Allgemeine_Musiklehre_\(Marx,_Adolf_Bernhard\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Allgemeine_Musiklehre_(Marx,_Adolf_Bernhard)).

⁶⁴ Ferruccio B. Busoni, *Sketch of a New Esthetic of Music*, trans. Theodore Baker (New York: G. Schirmer, 1911), 43-44. Busoni’s work as a pianist-composer will be significant in the latter portion of this thesis. See Chapters 4.4.1, 5.1 and 5.3.

⁶⁵ “C’est surtout en raison directe des complications harmoniques et mélodiques que se présentent les difficultés de mécanisme pour tous les instruments — et pour le piano surtout. Il en résulte que l’étude de l’Harmonie se confond avec celle du Mécanisme.” Charles Duvois, *Le Mécanisme du piano appliqué à l’étude de l’harmonie* (Paris: Au Ménestrel, Heugel et Cie, 1875), 1:preface, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Musique, VM8 S-282, <https://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb429729790>. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5. Duvois’ work will be further explored in Chapter 4.4.3.

⁶⁶ Ochse, *Organists and Organ Playing in Nineteenth-Century France and Belgium*, 183.

⁶⁷ Pierre, *Le Conservatoire National de Musique et de Déclamation*, 358, quoted in Smith, *Saint-Saëns and the Organ*, 5-6.

sound hinders the process. This intuitive approach to composition shows the pianist-composer's preference for music as an "event" and could inform their compositional decisions when producing a "work." Earlier centuries witnessed the keyboard's integral role in harmony and counterpoint pedagogy, such as in treatises used in J. S. Bach's circles. Andreas Werckmeister (1645-1706), in 1702, highlights the student's ability to "search" for notes "to a given keyboard using thoroughbass...and how to make a proper harmony."⁶⁸ Similarly, in Niedt's *The Musical Guide* (1700-17), he also explains the importance of thoroughbass and its relationship to the keyboard not only by ear but also by feel, "such that the left hand plays the prescribed notes, while the right hand grabs the consonances and dissonances so that the result is a well-sounding harmony."⁶⁹

The keyboard's relationship to learning harmony in an aural and tactile manner is further supported in Muffat's *Rugulae Concentuum Partituae* (1699), where the author uses the German word *Grieff*, describing the tactile sensation of realising chords via the fingers at the keyboard, a word with no equivalent English translation. The title proceeds with the following: "thorough explication of the most important *Grieffen* or *concentuum* which are applied to the score."⁷⁰ Here, *Grieff* functions as a substitute for the word "chord," yet unlike the latter, it carries with it the sense of touch and rote learning—elements that were essential to harmony pedagogy at the keyboard for both composer and performer. By the nineteenth century, as the pianoforte evolved, the keyboard took on an even greater role as a performance instrument. Czerny repeatedly stresses the connection between harmony, keyboard playing, and improvisation. Similar to Muffat's idea of *Grieff*, the process of composing out at the piano/keyboard is more immediate and easily realised compared to many other instruments.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Andreas Werckmeister, *Harmonologia Musica oder Kurtze Anleitung Zur Musicalischen Composition* (Frankfurt and Leipzig: Calvisius, 1702), 68, quoted in Derek Remeš, "Thoroughbass, Chorale, and Fugue: Teaching the Craft of Composition in J. S. Bach's Circle" (Freiberg: Hochschule für Musik im Breisgau, 2020), 23.

⁶⁹ Friedrich Erhardt Niedt, *The Musical Guide: Parts 1 (1700/10), 2 (1721) and 3 (1717)*, trans. Pamela L. Poulin and Irmgard C. Taylor (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 28.

⁷⁰ Georg Muffat, *Regulae Concentuum Partiturae*, ed. Bernhard Lang (typeset ed., 2004 [1699]), title page, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Regulae_Concentuum_Partiturae_\(Muffat,_Georg\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Regulae_Concentuum_Partiturae_(Muffat,_Georg)).

⁷¹ Czerny, *School of Practical Composition*, 1:3.

The tactile element was so essential that many pianist-composers relied on keyboard improvisation as part of their composition process. Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) is one such example, using it to “search” for an idea which he would then develop according to the rules of composition:

I sat down, began to improvise [at the keyboard], sad or happy according to my mood, serious or trifling. Once I had seized upon an idea, my whole endeavour was to develop and sustain it in keeping with the rules of art.⁷²

Similarly, those who heard Frédéric Chopin’s (1810-1849) “astonishing” improvisations agree that “[his] most beautiful, finished compositions are merely reflections and echoes of his improvisations.”⁷³ Despite belonging to different generations, Chopin and Haydn both used the keyboard similarly by relying on the tactile element of composition to inform their decision-making. This was possible not only because of their “genius” as a composer, but the thousands of hours of deliberate practice they put in in their youth studying harmony, counterpoint, and composition, supporting Czerny’s requirements of “natural aptitude,” “thorough training in all branches of harmony,” and “completely perfected technique of playing” to become fluent in improvisation.⁷⁴ This provided them with an intuitive command of their language through their improvisations, with an aural, tactile, and theoretical command shown through their works, as will be explored later in the thesis, regulated by the work-concept (see Chapter 4).

This keyboard training is not limited to pianist-composers. Using a non-keyboard performer as an example, the virtuoso violinist Niccolò Paganini (1782-1840) studied harmony, counterpoint, and composition in his youth with the Neapolitan maestro Gasparo Ghiretti (1747-1797), a highly regarded violinist and sought-after teacher at the time.⁷⁵ His success as a composer might be attributed to his compositional training, acquired through the study of partimenti (see Chapters 1.3.2 and 4.1.1). For

⁷² Felix Diergarten, “The ‘True Fundamentals of Composition’: Haydn’s Partimento Counterpoint,” *Eighteenth-Century Music* 8, no. 1 (2011): 74, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1478570610000412>.

⁷³ John Rink, “Chopin and Improvisation,” in *Chopin and His World*, ed. Jonathan D. Bellman and Halina Goldberg (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 250, <https://doi.org/10.23943/princeton/9780691177755.001.0001>.

⁷⁴ Czerny, *A Systematic Introduction to Improvisation*, 2.

⁷⁵ Stephen S. Stratton, *Niccolò Paganini: His Life and Work* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1971), 9.

cellists and violists, their instruments played a vital role in continuo playing, not just in playing the bass line itself, but also in playing chords, very much like a lute or guitar.⁷⁶ In studying various pedagogical material in the 1600s and 1700s, Olivieri concludes that cello pedagogy in Naples, with its “close contact with the concomitant partimento tradition,” resulted in the “extraordinary success of the eighteenth-century Neapolitan cello virtuosi.”⁷⁷ So, the keyboard and its relatives were essential instruments for all musicians, offering immediacy in sound production and serving as indispensable tools for learning harmony and counterpoint.

With its origins from the eighteenth-century composer-performer and the *Kapellmeister*, the pianist-composer emerged as a distinct category in the early nineteenth century due to several factors: 1) the versatility of the piano as a tool for performance and composition, 2) the pianist-composer’s mutual relationship with piano builders, and 3) their pursuit of technical excellence and raising the standards of piano playing. The next chapter examines how pianist-composers were nurtured at one of the first musical institutions, the Paris Conservatoire, and the core pedagogical material used in their training.

⁷⁶ See Guido Olivieri, *String Virtuosi in Eighteenth-Century Naples: Culture, Power, and Music Institutions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 82-126, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009273671>.

⁷⁷ Olivieri, *String Virtuosi in Eighteenth-Century Naples*, 108.

1.3 Nurturing the Pianist-Composer: The Role of the Paris Conservatoire

The pianist-composer owes its success and influence to the Paris Conservatoire and its distinguished faculty members, who played a critical role in their training. We often hear and recount the tales of the most gifted and talented pianist-composers of the nineteenth century and their ability to impress audiences through their performances and the high demand for their compositions across Europe and the Americas. However, we often neglect to acknowledge the work of pedagogues who are hidden from public view and the methods that trained several generations of pianist-composers and were partially responsible for their success in the competitive field. As Antoine Marmontel (1816–1898), a pianist-composer himself and later piano professor at the Paris Conservatoire, observed, the “learned masters, modest, skilful and devoted... fill a mission equal to the role of the greatest virtuosos.” Unlike performers who sought dazzling success, many of these figures “renounced...[their] display of their talent” to dedicate themselves to teaching. Marmontel singles out names such as Louis Adam, Zimmerman, Pradher, Mme Farrenc, Henri Herz, Kalkbrenner, and Czerny as artists who “have well deserved of art, not only by lending it the support of their science, but also by sacrificing their virtuoso reputation to it.”⁷⁸ Many of the names listed here were alumni of the Paris Conservatoire, an institution that nurtured them. It is no coincidence that the emergence of the pianist-composer was closely aligned with the institution’s establishment, as it provided their formal training and their professional networks.

Born out of the principles of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, the Paris Conservatoire became a global model by formalising what had once been an oral, apprenticeship-based musical

⁷⁸ “Les maîtres savants, modestes, habiles et dévoués, qui consacrent leur vie à l’enseignement, sans autre ambition que celle d’élever le niveau des études, sans autre désir que celui d’initier la jeunesse aux beautés de l’art, remplissent une mission égale au rôle des plus grands virtuoses. Les exécutants hors ligne ne sont pas toujours les meilleurs professeurs, tandis que beaucoup d’artistes de valeur ont renoncé à des succès éclatants et certains pour se dévouer tout entiers à un devoir plus modeste. Louis Adam, Zimmerman, Pradher, Mme Farrenc, Henri Herz, Kalkbrenner, et enfin Czerny ont bien mérité de l’art, non-seulement en lui prêtant l’appui de leur science, mais encore en lui sacrifiant leur renommée de virtuose, en renonçant à ce que nous appellerons la mise en scène de leur talent.” Antoine François Marmontel, *Les Pianistes célèbres, silhouettes & médaillons* (Paris: Heugel et Fils, 1878), 283, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Sciences et techniques, 8-V-1879, <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb30887786k>. Translated by the author from the original French with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

education into a systematic, written curriculum, making professional training more widely accessible to the middle class.⁷⁹ The institution's place as the "major center of nineteenth-century musical progress" attracted "an international faculty from various musical backgrounds, [and] which drew a diverse lot of students hoping for musical careers."⁸⁰ As Beghin puts it, "The privileges of birth no longer guaranteed success in life; instead, it was through ability—and tenacity—that one earned a *premier prix*. Aristocracy was superseded by meritocracy."⁸¹ This shift from inherited status to earned expertise not only shaped the ideal of the professional musician but also directly elevated the pianist-composer as a new model of the modern professional musician.

To teach such a large number of students, methods would have needed to be published to ensure uniformity across the delivery to each student. Indeed, the "corpus of official methods" published by the institution became widespread and published in great quantity with translations into other languages, becoming "one of the most significant achievements of the first years of the Conservatoire."⁸² In the year 1813, for example, there was an "exceptionally high enrollment of piano students, with 75 piano students out of 473 across the school."⁸³ These students received a well-rounded education designed to prepare them for the highly competitive world of music in nineteenth-century Europe. Liszt wrote the following piece in praise of the Paris Conservatoire as it is "incontestably the most famous one, and rightly so" because of the notable pedagogues that taught there, such as Cherubini, Reicha, Habeneck, Baillot, Nourrit, Tulou and Zimmerman—whose pedagogical works will be discussed throughout the thesis.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Jeanne Roudet, "Reconciling Innovative Pedagogy with Musical Heritage: The *Méthode de piano du Conservatoire* of Louis Adam," ed. Tom Beghin, trans. Tom Beghin and Hester Bell Jordan, *Keyboard Perspectives: Yearbook of the Westfield Center for Historical Keyboard Studies* XIII, no. 5 (2022): 126.

⁸⁰ Robert Wason, "*Musica Practica*: Music Theory as Pedagogy," in *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, ed. Thomas Christensen, *The Cambridge History of Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 60, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521623711.004>.

⁸¹ Beghin, *Beethoven's French Piano*, 253.

⁸² Roudet, "Reconciling Innovative Pedagogy with Musical Heritage," 106.

⁸³ Frédéric de La Grandville, *Une histoire du piano au Conservatoire de musique de Paris 1795-1850* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2014), 107, quoted in Beghin, *Beethoven's French Piano*, 259.

⁸⁴ Franz Liszt, *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris* (Paris: 1835), quoted in Philipp Teriete, "Pierre-Joseph-Guillaume Zimmerman's *Encyclopédie du Pianiste Compositeur*: The Musical Education of Piano Virtuosos in

To understand the relationship between the pianist-composer and the work-concept, it is essential to turn to the earliest fundamental theoretical approaches to the development of the piano/organ and composition curriculum at the Conservatoire, which, from the beginning, blended performance and theory in an entirely organic and “natural” fashion. Such methods were [mostly] devoid of “anachronistic attitudes” that later developed in the twentieth century.⁸⁵ Building on the influential Clementi piano school, the methods developed by Louis Adam (1758-1848) from his *Méthode de Piano* (1805) systematised and elevated the standards of piano playing, particularly through its approach to fingering, which was adopted by the Paris Conservatoire.⁸⁶ Harmony, counterpoint and composition pedagogy developed by Catel in 1802 and Choron in 1808 were based on the Schools of Italy (from Naples, Bologna, and Rome) and “[set] the conservatory on a course to continue [their] successful methods.”⁸⁷ The Conservatoire’s influence even spread as far as Sicily with Tommaso Consalvo (1780-ca. 1850), organist of the *Real Cappella Palatina*, advocating for the study of the following methods endorsed by the Conservatoire: Adam’s *Méthode de Piano*, Clementi’s various piano methods (Op. 42, for example), Fenaroli’s partimenti, and solfeggi by Perez—all necessary for the developing pianist-composer.⁸⁸

This chapter examines how pedagogical methods endorsed by the Paris Conservatoire shaped the first generation of pianist-composers in the early 1800s. Together, they reveal the broad set of skills expected of the pianist-composer, which prepared them for the highly competitive world of music in nineteenth-century Paris.

Chopin’s Paris,” in *The Universal Instrument: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on “Applied Piano,”* ed. Philipp Teriete and Derek Remeš (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2020), 279. Translated by Teriete. The Hungarian-born Liszt, in his youth, tried to apply for study at the Conservatoire but was rejected as he was not a French citizen by birth.

⁸⁵ Haynes, *The End of Early Music*, 149-50.

⁸⁶ Helyard, *Clementi and the Woman at the Piano*, 244.

⁸⁷ Robert O. Gjerdingen, *Child Composers in the Old Conservatories: How Orphans Became Elite Musicians* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 199, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190653590.001.0001>.

⁸⁸ “Breve dettaglio del nuovo metodo di musica detto alla lancastriana maniera Composto ad uso de’ Reali Stabilimenti del Regno di Napoli da Tommaso Consalvo Maestro della R. Casa de’ Miracoli, e Soprannumerario della Real Cappella Palatina.” Tommaso Consalvo (Napoli: Sangiacomo, 1823), quoted in Rosa Cafiero, “Un divulgatore di teorie armoniche della scuola napoletana a Parigi: Emanuele Imbimbo (1756–1839),” in *Francesco Salfi librettista, Studi e testi*, ed. F. P. Russo (Vibo Valentia: Monteleone, 2001), 219–20, quoted in Carlisi, *From Naples to Paris*, 45–46.

1.3.1 Adam's *Méthode de Piano*: An Institutional Standard of Piano Playing

Building on Clementi's innovations, Louis Adam's (1758-1848) *Méthode de Piano* (1805) established itself as the institutional standard of structured pianistic discipline. As the official pedagogical text of the Paris Conservatoire at its founding, with Marmontel predicting that, "the work that will keep the longest imprint of Louis Adam...without a doubt, the *Great Theoretical and Practical Method of Piano* made for the Conservatory." For Marmontel, the method "summarises so clearly and completely the knowledge and experience of the celebrated professor," and, though "published sixty years ago," it remained "one of the best-organised courses relating to piano instruction."⁸⁹ Indeed, even in the twenty-first century, the method remains the pedagogue's most famous work, playing a key role in shaping and elevating training standards for generations of piano students.

Roudet describes Adam as "a virtuoso of the intersection of European Schools" —a fitting description, considering the way it draws on a variety of keyboard methods and playing styles from different regions.⁹⁰ For example, the inclusion of: the legato, cantabile playing from the English, the brilliant-style passage work from the Viennese, the polyphony or "learned" style from Germany, reflected the "nascent canonic repertoire" and the "Conservatoire's global project."⁹¹ Marmontel highlights the method's comprehensive design: "students will find there not only the precepts and advice that should guide their studies... but also excellent fingering guides, laying down general rules and exceptions." To this, he adds attention to "sonority, expression, and style" as well as "a concise summary of the knowledge that a pianist should possess: good musician, harmonist, accompanist."⁹² As a didactic text,

⁸⁹ "L'œuvre qui gardera le plus longtemps l'empreinte de Louis Adam et rendra son souvenir présent à toutes les générations de pianistes, c'est, sans contredit, la Grande Méthode théorique et pratique de piano faite pour le Conservatoire. Cet important ouvrage, qui résume d'une façon si claire et si complète le savoir et l'expérience du célèbre professeur, reste, quoique publiée depuis soixante ans, un des cours les mieux ordonnés qui aient trait à l'enseignement du piano." Marmontel, *Les Pianistes célèbres*, 241. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

⁹⁰ Roudet, "Reconciling Innovative Pedagogy with Musical Heritage," 110.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 125.

⁹² "Les élèves y trouvent non-seulement les préceptes et les conseils qui doivent guider leurs études, de très-nombreuses formules de mécanisme, un choix gradué de pièces des maîtres, mais encore d'excellents préceptes de doigté, posant les règles générales et les exceptions. La sonorité, l'expression et le style, ont également des

Adam advocated not only technical fluency but also “correct” interpretation aligned with the musical tastes of his era. In this section, we examine how it played a pivotal role in training the pianist-composer and focus on fingering principles, which take up the majority of the treatise.

Adam’s *Méthode* follows an earlier model of keyboard treatises published in the eighteenth century, such as those by C. P. E. Bach and Turk, which covered the technical aspects of keyboard playing in general, as well as performance and composition, with lengthy chapters on figured bass and performance practice before the pianoforte era.⁹³ Clementi, whom Helyard claims to be “the father of French pianism,” published an influential piano method in 1798.⁹⁴ The method was also popular, initially published in English and later translated into French and German.⁹⁵

One of Clementi’s significant contributions was the modernisation of the principles of fingering, which he added meticulously in many of his pedagogical works. Fingering was important in a *sight-reading culture* that trained musicians to sight-read music (or rehearse with little time) because of the significant turnover of music that received very few repeat performances.⁹⁷ This would have made sight-reading works much easier since these passages would have already been encountered whilst studying these fingering patterns. Helyard makes a case for this that was prominent at the time, particularly with female pianists who expected pieces “with a relatively stagnant technique or delivered with the minimum of practice.”⁹⁸ This sight-reading culture put a limit on the technical difficulty of most works from the period, and most virtuosic elements, such as improvisation of ornaments and cadenzas, would have been practised during one’s initial training as a musician.⁹⁹ According to his sister, “Mozart never

chapitres spéciaux d’un grand intérêt. Les dernières pages de cette belle méthode, aujourd’hui la propriété des éditeurs du Ménestrel, sont consacrées à un résumé succinct des connaissances que doit posséder un pianiste, bon musicien, harmoniste, accompagnateur.” Marmontel,” *Les Pianistes célèbres*, 241. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

⁹³ Roudet, “Reconciling Innovative Pedagogy with Musical Heritage,” 118-19.

⁹⁴ Helyard, “Clementi: The Father (Also) of French Pianism,” 21.

⁹⁵ Even in 1799, C. P. E. Bach’s *Versuch* was still in circulation as Beethoven instructed the ten-year-old Czerny to purchase a copy. Beghin, *Beethoven’s French Piano*, 186.

⁹⁷ This will be further explored in Chapters 2.2.2 and 5.2.

⁹⁸ Helyard, *Clementi and the Woman at the Piano*, 81.

⁹⁹ There are exceptions to this, however, such as J. S. Bach’s keyboard music, which is very difficult to sight-read. This also supports the idea that Bach’s music was highly unusual at the time due to its demanding virtuosity for

practised the fortepiano after the age of seven but relied on his everyday musical activities to keep him in trim.”¹⁰⁰ Similarly, Liszt, primarily composing in his later years, “no longer practised [the piano] regularly” and “relied heavily on his memory and on his phenomenal powers of sight-reading.”¹⁰¹

Because of this sight-reading culture, rarely do we encounter fingering on manuscript copies written by the composer, and even rarer still, written fingering on published scores. When fingering is indicated, usually in piano/keyboard methods, it is specified for every note, leaving the student no room for error or variety.¹⁰² As the overall difficulty of the keyboard repertoire increased, we see a greater need not only for fingering principles but also for pieces that specialise in specific technical components (mechanics) of piano playing. Figure 2 shows an example of a page from Clementi’s *Introduction to the Art of Playing the Pianoforte*, Op. 42, where he attempts to apply fingering to various types of new passage work for the piano after laying out the fingering for scales and arpeggios. Should they have been encountered in the repertoire, a student could, for example, refer to this chart:

performers. It is tough to sight-read his most difficult keyboard works, such as the Keyboard Partitas and English Suites, even for performers of the twenty-first century. See Chapter 2.1 and 5.2.

¹⁰⁰ Small, *Musicking*, 215.

¹⁰¹ Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt Vol. III. The Final Years, 1861-1886* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 237.

¹⁰² This can be shown in the works by J. S. Bach’s *Klavierbüchlein für Wilhelm Friedemann Bach* (1720) and in A. Scarlatti’s *Primo e Secondo Libro di Toccate per Cembalo* (1723). In these examples, Bach and Scarlatti have meticulously provided fingering for every note in the selected pieces. They are also found in published music, usually from unique passage work that can only be played a certain way as indicated by the composer.

Figure 2: Clementi, *Introduction to the Art of Playing the Pianoforte*, Op. 42. Fingering Principles.¹⁰³

The image displays ten staves of musical notation from Clementi's *Introduction to the Art of Playing the Pianoforte*, Op. 42. Each staff is annotated with numerous fingering symbols. These symbols include numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4, often with a plus sign (+) to indicate a specific finger placement. Some staves also feature alternative fingering options, such as 'or 1+1+1+1+' or 'or 2+2+2+'. The notation includes treble clefs, various key signatures (including one with a sharp and one with a flat), and complex rhythmic patterns. The overall layout is dense with musical notation and fingering instructions, illustrating the author's specific approach to piano technique.

¹⁰³ Muzio Clementi, *Introduction to the Art of Playing the Pianoforte*, Op. 42 (London: Clementi, Banger, Hyde, Collard & Davis, [1803]), 18, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Introduction_to_the_Art_of_Playing_the_Pianoforte,_Op.42_\(Clementi,_Muzio\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Introduction_to_the_Art_of_Playing_the_Pianoforte,_Op.42_(Clementi,_Muzio)). This goes on for another page. The fingering style here uses + to indicate the thumb and 1, 2, 3, 4 for the other fingers, corresponding to the modern labelling 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Notice at the last few lines of the example, as Clementi teaches the student fingering principles for arpeggios, which became a staple in piano writing after the late eighteenth century and the avoidance of the thumb '+' on black notes and a comfortable fingering for chords that avoids unnecessary stretching. The key question here is why Clementi would add these pages when a beginner student would be unlikely to encounter them in the method itself? Perhaps it was a statement from Clementi to affirm the new modern school of piano playing. Indeed, later methods, particularly those in Paris, would build on Clementi's fingering principles, leading to a radical transformation of piano writing for the new century. From this empirical data, pedagogues would then have attempted to codify these fingering principles by studying Clementi's compositions with supplementary fingering.¹⁰⁴

Another significant precursor to Adam's 1805 *Méthode* was his earlier publication of a fingering manual titled *Méthode ou principe général du doigté pour le forté-piano* (1798) in collaboration with Ludwig Wenzel Lachnith (1746-1820).¹⁰⁵ Despite its publication a few years before Clementi's 1801 method, "Adam and Lachnith's fingering is aimed primarily at conquering the kind of pianism that Clementi was credited by Nägeli and others in creating."¹⁰⁶ It "[broke] tradition" by containing very few instructions (aside from a few pages of text in the opening pages) and features an [almost] complete lexicon of diminutions and textures for the piano at the time and a meticulous set of fingerings to accompany them.¹⁰⁷ While Clementi preferred to base his fingering principles on "a few guidelines," Adam and Lachnith create a "[formulation] of rational rules" which rely on rote learning.¹⁰⁸ The title page of the treatise makes its intentions clear: to "facilitate the work of teachers in accelerating the progress of their pupils, and even those who are not professors of this instrument will be able to train pupils solely with its help."¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴ See Helyard, "Clementi: The Father (Also) of French Pianism," 34-39.

¹⁰⁵ Helyard, "Clementi: The Father (Also) of French Pianism," 32-33.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Roudet, "Reconciling Innovative Pedagogy with Musical Heritage," 119.

¹⁰⁹ "Cet ouvrage facilitera le travail des Maîtres en accélérant les progrès des Élèves, et ceux même qui ne sont pas professeurs de cet instrument pourront former des Élèves par son seul secours." Louis Adam and Ludwig Wenzel

Helyard argues that this “algorithmic approach” to fingering, as proposed by the method, lays the foundations for principles of fingering now considered standard in the twenty-first century.¹¹⁰ Theoretically, if a student practices all exercises in the book in all 24 major and minor keys, they could play and even sight-read all piano/keyboard up to that point with relative ease by learning the passagework beforehand. For Helyard, the importance of this pedagogy lies in how “you learn through and with your hands,” creating what Trippet calls a “liminal space between the organic and the mechanic.”¹¹¹ This synthesis of tactile learning and theoretical understanding (as in Chapter 1.2.3) shows how nineteenth-century pedagogy trained pianists to rely on the tactile component as much as the visual component (reading from the score).

So, while Clementi published fingered editions using what we now call modern fingering principles, Adam-Lachnith laid out the algorithm for those principles.¹¹² Based on observation of the treatise, here are the fingering principles codified by Adam and Lachnith:

- The use of the thumb on white keys only for playing passages in step-wise motion.
- Natural position of hand (fingers 2, 3 and 4 placed on the black keys)—using this as the default position, yields the natural fingerings for passages using stepwise motion.
- Fingering for intervals and chords with different intervallic configurations and topographies spanning one octave.
- Fingering for arpeggios—avoiding adjacent fingers for large intervals (4th and above) and avoidance of the thumb on black—with few exceptions.
- Observation of the similar topography between key areas (especially in chords and arpeggios).
- Fingerings that adapt to the changing mechanism of the keyboard—for example, the changing of fingers for [fast] repeated notes and trills in response to a deeper key action, and later, the invention of the double escapement mechanism patented by Érard in 1821.¹¹³

Lachnith, with contributions by Muzio Clementi et al., *Méthode ou principe général du doigté pour le forte-piano*, (Paris: Sieber père, 1798), i, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Musique, L-5926 (1), <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b108785946>, quoted in Helyard, “Clementi: The Father (Also) of French Pianism,” 31. Translated by Helyard.

¹¹⁰ Helyard, “Clementi: The Father (Also) of French Pianism,” 36.

¹¹¹ David Trippet, “Exercising Musical Minds: Phrenology and Music Pedagogy in London circa 1830,” *19th-Century Music* 39, no. 2 (2015): 113, quoted in Helyard, “Clementi: The Father (Also) of French Pianism,” 29-30.

¹¹² Helyard, “Clementi: The Father (Also) of French Pianism,” 35.

¹¹³ Carew, *The Mechanical Muse*, 13.

Figure 3 shows a sample page from the treatise—located in a section dedicated to scales. What is immediately striking here is the passagework that was especially composed, not a generic scale exercise that moves up and down the keyboard. Like most exercises, including the ones in this treatise, they are first presented in C major, as it poses the fewest problems in terms of the use of the thumb. Any musical segment can be replicated as part of a sequence and using the same fingering. The real challenge lies in transposition, as the inevitable addition of black notes limits the placement of the thumb for comfort and sound quality. This is why the method transposes the examples in other key areas (in this case, G, D, E, B-flat and E-flat major), which familiarises the student with the topography of those key areas.¹¹⁴ Adam and Lachnith have meticulously fingered each one, making sure that should such a passage (or a similar-sounding one) occur in the repertoire, they can play it upon sight or with minimal practice:

¹¹⁴ The authors limit examples to select keys, noting that many share identical fingerings. minor keys follow their relatives, and rarely used black-key areas (B, F#, Db) could be transposed by students applying the book's principles.

Figure 3: Adam and Lachnith, *Méthode ou principe Général du doigté pour le forte-piano*. Exercise No. 80.¹¹⁵

The image displays a musical score for Exercise No. 80, consisting of six systems of piano and bass clef staves. The score is written in a single system with two staves per system. The music is highly technical, featuring complex fingering patterns and rapid passages. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The score is labeled 'N.º 80.' at the beginning. The fingering is indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below the notes. The score ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

This kind of rote learning played an essential role in the development of Liszt's virtuosity, whose technique would influence modern piano pedagogy (see Chapter 2.1.4). His teacher and influential pedagogue, Czerny, would also have been aware of these developments and modelled his exercises

¹¹⁵ Adam and Lachnith, *Méthode ou principe général du doigté pour le forte-piano*, 79.

accordingly. As Dufetel argues, Liszt’s “formidable technique was... forged through systematic analysis of the digital patterns of the repertoire,” enabling him to “play every digital pattern...in every key” and thus “sight-read anything at the first attempt” through a mental “mapping of the mechanics of piano technique.”¹¹⁶

The significance of this source lies in the fact that more than half of Adam’s *Méthode*, clearly built on his work in 1798, is devoted to fingering principles alone, illustrating its central role in piano pedagogy. The first 84 of its 234 pages follow a layout similar to Adam-Lachnith. Beyond this, the 50 progressive pieces written and/or arranged by Adam, along with selected works by other composers, reinforce fingering practice through his meticulous annotations.¹¹⁷ Take, for example, Figure 4, which comes from a passage in Adam’s *Méthode*, where he adds fingering to a passage in broken 3rds:

Figure 4: Adam, *Méthode de Piano*. Finger Exercises.¹¹⁸

Lorsque les notes sont liées par quatre, il faut alors faire le doigter comme ci après.

Quand ces passages ne montent que de deux ou trois notes, il ne faut pas déranger la position de la main.

The image shows five staves of musical notation in treble clef, featuring broken triads. The first staff is in C major and includes the text: "Lorsque les notes sont liées par quatre, il faut alors faire le doigter comme ci après." The second staff is in G major and includes the text: "Quand ces passages ne montent que de deux ou trois notes, il ne faut pas déranger la position de la main." The remaining three staves are in D major, E major, and F major, respectively. Each staff contains several measures of broken triads with various fingering numbers (1-5) written above or below the notes. Some notes are beamed together in groups of four.

¹¹⁶ Nicolas Dufetel, “Spirit and Mechanism: Liszt’s Early Piano Technique and Teaching,” in *Liszt and Virtuosity*, ed. Robert Doran, Eastman Studies in Music; 168 (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2020), 138, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781787448667-006>.

¹¹⁷ These are directly correlated with sight-reading ability, which will be discussed later in Chapter 5.2.

¹¹⁸ Adam, *Piano Method of the Conservatoire*, 69.

In the C major example, he groups the thirds in pairs that remain consistent throughout the ascent and descent. However, this fingering cannot be applied to other keys as it would inevitably place the thumb on a black note. This is why Adam devises unique fingerings for other keys with different topographies, featuring groupings of two-pairs and three-pairs to avoid the thumb on black notes.

Adam's *Méthode* was also a significant artistic statement regarding the formation of the French School of piano playing. With the institution behind him, "the Paris Conservatory became a major nexus of musical contacts, with Adam often at the center," as the author aimed to assert the role of the French piano school on the European stage as the leading authority on piano playing.¹¹⁹ Not only was there competition between the pianist-composers, but also the pianos and piano makers they endorsed, which had a significant impact on their compositional styles and preferences. Specific diminution figures and textures that would work well on a particular instrument would not work as well on another. Adam, who preferred the English and French mechanisms, "had become the main representative of an emerging national institution... endorsed Erard's new grand piano model" and had "defined pianism as taught at Adam's Conservatoire."¹²⁰ He, too, was also "deliberately" included in Marmontel's list of "celebrated pianists," as Beghin argues, "a new reality of institutionalized pedagogy that through the century had come to define both French and international pianism."¹²¹ In this sense, Adam's *Méthode* positioned the Conservatoire as the cultural gatekeeper of taste, technique, and modern pianism for most of the nineteenth century.

For this thesis, Adam's *Méthode* provides an important reference point and serves as critical evidence for the training of the pianist-composer, especially for fingering principles which aid in the "spontaneity of intention" as Fétis would say.¹²² Its contents will be frequently referred to throughout this thesis as they become relevant.

¹¹⁹ Beghin, *Beethoven's French Piano*, 253.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 109.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 255.

¹²² Fétis, *How to Play from Score*, 1 [text].

1.3.2 Catel and Choron's Treatise on Harmony and Accompaniment

Harmony and accompaniment at the Conservatoire were built upon two key complementary treatises: Catel's *Traité d'harmonie* (1802) and Choron's *Principes de composition des écoles d'Italie* (1808). Such works were integral for the pianist-composer, as it would have been “unthinkable” to “promote a professional curriculum that revolved around playing the piano exclusively.”¹²³ We see this advice at the final sentence of Adam's *Méthode*, where the author advocates for “young pupils, whose efforts have already been crowned, [to] not stop at this first success but enter into the temple of harmony and become initiated into its secrets.”¹²⁴ However, it is somewhat surprising that there is “no treatment or even allusion throughout the method to composition skills or at least figured bass and improvisation.”¹²⁵ This could also be seen as a change in pedagogical focus from improvisation to score-based learning—“illiterate” to “literate,” as Small would say.¹²⁶

Both were based on the use of *partimenti*—single lines of music that were realised in various ways to teach students harmony, counterpoint, composition, and improvisation. Many Italian maestri published their own collections of *partimenti*, often accompanied by a set of rules or *Regole*—many of which only existed in manuscript copies made by teachers and students. The most widespread collections were: Fedele Fenaroli (1730-1818), first published in Naples in 1775; Nicola Sala (1713-1801), first published in Paris in 1808; and Francesco Durante (1684-1755).¹²⁷ The similarity between these collections shows the strong oral tradition and “tight-knit” community of musicians in Italy at the time, who freely borrowed and adapted material from their teachers, colleagues, and students. Cafiero argues that this resulted in a more effective transfer of information between the disciplines.¹²⁸

¹²³ Beghin, *Beethoven's French Piano*, 262-63.

¹²⁴ Adam, *Piano Method of the Conservatoire*, 234.

¹²⁵ Beghin, *Beethoven's French Piano*, 262.

¹²⁶ Small, *Musicking*, 110-11.

¹²⁷ See Hippolyte Colet, *Partimenti ou traité spécial de l'accompagnement pratique au piano* (Paris: Chabal, 1846), Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Musique, VM8-198, <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb42917785b>. This treatise will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

¹²⁸ Cafiero, “The Early Reception of Neapolitan Partimento Theory in France,” 154-55.

The Italian *Regole* Collections offer us an invaluable insight into the rough organisation of material and the essential concepts necessary for the practical musician. They did not need excessive prose or highly theoretical scientific explanations to justify their axiomatic propositions. The influence of various collections of *Regole* and partimenti is evident in the similar layouts of the treatises by Catel (1802) and Choron (1808). These books, while certainly more text-heavy than their Italian predecessors (particularly the latter), use contemporary music theory to justify the axioms and *Regole* from the various partimento collections. Unlike the Italian Conservatories, the Paris Conservatoire was a much larger institution. Because of this, it became necessary to systemise partimento pedagogy and transform it from an oral to a literate one.¹²⁹ This, in turn, created more objective and consistent standards, which became essential for determining who should continue studying and who should be “scratched from the rolls.”¹³⁰ In eighteenth-century France, Rameau’s *Traité d’harmonie* (1722) was a widely disseminated treatise throughout Europe. Fétis regarded his theories of “chordal generation by mechanical third-stacking”¹³¹ as “the dominant paradigm for French music teachers.”¹³² Though “several elements of Ramellian theory survived in the teaching of music theory at the Conservatoire,” professors rejected its use due to its overly vertical approach to harmony.¹³³ “An introduction of contrapuntal techniques” came from the Schools of Italy, which served to provide the horizontal components.¹³⁴ So, the institution’s faculty commissioned the harmony professor, Charles-Simon Catel (1773-1830), to write a new harmony treatise specifically designed for its students that “would be the best compromise between the vertical and

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Gjerdingen, *Child Composers in the Old Conservatories*, 294.

¹³¹ Renate Groth, *Die französische Kompositionslehre des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Beihefte zum Archiv für Musikwissenschaft, Bd. 22 (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1983), 26-30.

¹³² M. Wagner, *Die Harmonielehre des ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Regensburg: Bosse, 1973), 62, quoted in Robert Wason, “*Musica Practica: Music Theory as Pedagogy*,” 61.

¹³³ Carlisi, *From Naples to Paris*, 50. Rameau’s treatise was well received in Vienna, which was critical to the development of their own music-theory lineage. See Bjørnar Utne-Reitan, “Music Theory Pedagogy in the Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of Music Theory* 66, no. 1 (2022): 70-71, <https://doi.org/10.1215/00222909-9534139>.

¹³⁴ Carlisi, *From Naples to Paris*, 50.

horizontal approaches to music,”¹³⁵ as the theories proposed by Rameau “garnered opposition by a number of younger committee members.”¹³⁶

Published in 1802, Catel’s *Traité d’harmonie* was explicitly directed at Conservatoire students and remained in use from 1802 until 1816, before being replaced by the treatises of Reicha (1816) and Savard (1853).¹³⁷ His work was so successful that it underwent numerous publications and revisions, including an expanded version by Leborne in 1834, an English translation by Clarke in 1854, and a reprint in 1874, attesting to its lasting relevance in nineteenth-century harmony pedagogy. Unlike his predecessor, Rameau, Catel sought to simplify harmony for learners by reducing technical language and relying on numerous musical examples. As Gjerdingen puts it, “speculations about harmony [in Rameau’s *Traité*] were of little use when teenagers confronted a *basse donnée* in a high-stakes examination.”¹³⁸ Catel clarifies in the preface that his aim was “to [simplify] the elements of Harmony... retracing it to its true origin, showing that in fact all dissonances are formed out of consonances.”¹³⁹ He divides harmony into two broad classes: “simple or natural harmony” and “compound or artificial harmony.”¹⁴⁰ For the beginner, the pedagogical value was clear: the former comprised chords requiring no preparation, while the latter arose from prolongations or suspensions of these same chords. As Catel put it, “every progression of simple harmony may become compound by the means of prolongation, and every compound progression may become simple by suppressing prolongation.”¹⁴¹

In just a few sentences, Catel distills the essential components of harmony useful to the practical musician. It is a first and crucial step that not only grounds the axiomatic principles of the Schools of Italy but also foreshadows and accommodates the broader palette of harmony used in the nineteenth

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ M. Wagner, *Die Harmonielehre*, 62, quoted in Wason, “*Musica Practica: Music Theory as Pedagogy*,” 61.

¹³⁷ Mildred Freeman Rieder, “*Traité d’harmonie* by Théodore Dubois in the Context of 19th-Century French Harmonic Theory and Vocabulary” (Master of Music, The University of Western Ontario, 1995), 15-17.

¹³⁸ Gjerdingen, *Child Composers in the Old Conservatories*, 199.

¹³⁹ Charles-Simon Catel, *Treatise on Harmony*, ed. Josiah Pittman, trans. Mary Cowden Clarke (London: J. Alfred Novello, 1854), 5, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Trait%C3%A9_d%E2%80%99harmonie_\(Catel,_Charles-Simon\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Trait%C3%A9_d%E2%80%99harmonie_(Catel,_Charles-Simon)). Rameau’s treatise takes up 500 pages while Catel’s 1802 edition is less than 100, mostly taken up by musical examples. The 1854 English edition used as a reference for this thesis is only 44!

¹⁴⁰ Catel, *Treatise on Harmony*, 5.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

century. Table 1 outlines the contents of Catel’s treatise (based on the 1854 English edition), with similar sections being grouped where applicable:

Table 1: The Contents of Catel’s Treatise.¹⁴²

Article	Subject
1-2	The General Theory of Chords (after Rameau’s Fundamental Bass Theory) The Common chord and its inversions (5/3, 6/3 and 6/4 chords)
3-5	Dominant 7th Chords Imperfect 7ths [major and minor 7th chords] Diminished 7ths
6	Dominant 9th Chords
7	Notes Foreign to the Harmony: ¹⁴³ passing notes, prolongations, suspensions, and retardations
8	Cadences
9-10	Realisations of the Diatonic Major Scale [Rule of the Octave] Sequences Realisations of the Chromatic Scale
11	Pedal Point
12	[Chromatic] Alterations
13	Modulation
14	Method of Figuring (Figured bass)

Catel organises harmony vocabulary according to Rameau’s fundamental bass, a framework that proved especially useful as harmonic vocabulary expanded in later treatises. The chapters on alteration and modulation are concise, reflecting their limited use at the time. Rather than offering exercises for students to realise independently, the treatise presents fully worked-out examples—intended for keyboard study and likely supplemented by externally supplied exercises (see Chapter 4). Students were expected to transpose and internalise these models before applying them in improvisation.

Influenced by Italian pedagogy, Catel avoids theoretical prose in favour of showing harmony in practice. His method, he writes, “unites the double advantage of teaching the real nature of every chord at the same time that its use is learned,” sparing students the “difficulty of memorising numerous isolated

¹⁴² Ibid., 6.

¹⁴³ This label is applied retrospectively by the author of this thesis, named after later harmony treatises on the same subject.

chords.”¹⁴⁴ He criticises harmony taught merely as taxonomy—producing pupils who were “complete novices in the art of counterpoint... although acquainted with the name of every chord.”¹⁴⁵ Harmony, for Catel, had to be learned as the progression of consonant chords, integrated into contrapuntal practice rather than treated abstractly. For example (Figure 5), the treatise presents ways of harmonising the diatonic scale using “simple harmony” (5ths, 6ths, 8ves) and its “retardation” in compound harmony. This progression, which Catel labels as the Rule of the Octave, will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 4.1.2:

¹⁴⁴ Catel, *Treatise on Harmony*, 5.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. Here, Catel was already foreshadowing what harmony pedagogy would become if the emphasis were on chord labelling. See Chapter 2.1.

Figure 5: Catel, *Treatise on Harmony*. Ways of Harmonising the Diatonic Scale.¹⁴⁶

ON HARMONY. 27

ARTICLE IX.

THE DIFFERENT PROCEDURES OF THE BASS THROUGHOUT THE EXTENT OF THE DIATONIC SCALE; WITH THE NATURAL HARMONY, AND THE DISSONANT PROGRESSIONS, MOST IN USE.

Rule of the octave in the major mode, with the single natural chords :—

Ex. 269.

The same, with the discord of the fifth on the fourth degree ascending :—

Ex. 270.

The same in the minor mode :—

Ex. 271.

SIMPLE HARMONY. The sixths retarded by fifths :—

A succession of sixths :— Ex. 273.

Ex. 272.

The same passage with syncopations :—

Ex. 273.

The sixths retarded by the fifths and sevenths, producing a succession of sevenths :—

Ex. 274.

SIMPLE HARMONY. Retardation of the octave, producing a succession of ninths :—

A succession of Common Chords :— Ex. 276.

Ex. 275.

Ex. 276.

¹⁴⁶ Catel, *Treatise on Harmony*, 27.

The limited prose here follows the Italian tradition of simply listing examples and letting the rules “speak for themselves,” and/or adding the teacher’s oral instruction. The examples in the treatise employ two staves (for keyboard-style realisations) and an open-score format (with three and four staves)—the former useful for pianists, the latter helpful for developing composers (see Chapter 4). In “compound harmony,” we see that Catel preferred to view music more horizontally than vertically, as in Rameau. It is specifically designed for students with few literacy skills to learn how to compose and improvise. Since its adoption by the Paris Conservatoire in 1802, the treatise paved the way for later treatises that would serve to fill in its details with heavy prose.

Filling this theoretical gap was Alexandre-Etienne Choron (1771-1834), who was one of the key figures in the development of the Conservatoire’s curriculum. The Catholic Church tasked him at the time with gathering and surveying the methods used in the Schools of Italy.¹⁴⁷ Described by Gjerdingen as “like an elaborate note in a bottle flung onto the seas of Napoleonic France,” we see for the first time musicological work on the Italian methods popular over the previous century and the publication of three large volumes of material, titled *Principes de composition des écoles d’Italie* (1808).¹⁴⁸ As a massive undertaking that required numerous subscribers, the project linked many of the major pianist-composers and theorists of the time. These included illustrious names from the Conservatoire faculty: Cherubini, Gossec, Catel, Adam, as well as famous pianist-composers: Beethoven, Haydn, Clementi, Hummel, Pleyel, and Zimmerman. Among the Italians, renowned partimento pedagogues included Fenaroli, Sala, and Zingarelli; among the Viennese composers, Salieri and Albrechtsberger.¹⁴⁹ While these volumes may have had little practical utility for students due to their massive format and “dry” presentation of material, they served as essential documents that transcribed the pedagogical details of a primarily

¹⁴⁷ Gjerdingen, *Child Composers in the Old Conservatories*, 42-44.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 42-45.

¹⁴⁹ Alexandre-Étienne Choron, *Principes de composition des écoles d’Italie* (Paris: Le Duc, 1808), 1: ix-xi, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Musique, VM8-156 (1), <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb429104896>. In addition, Choron also co-authored a smaller-scale treatise titled *Principes d’accompagnement des écoles d’Italie* (Principles of Accompaniment of the Schools of Italy), published in the same year. For the definition of the term “accompaniment,” see Chapter 4.1.1.

oral tradition. Carlisi argues that these “works [stood] as some of the most high-profile and remarkable examples of French response to the Neapolitan partimento tradition.¹⁵⁰ In doing so, Choron effectively served as a bridge, translating Italian compositional practice into a form that the emerging Conservatoire could adapt.

Written in academic prose, the work details the written and extemporised components of partimento. The first half of the treatise contains prose with musical examples of concepts that would have been orally taught in the Italian conservatories, whilst the second part in another book contains the partimenti of the Neapolitan maestri: Fenaroli, Cotumacci, Durante, and Sala, whose partimenti take up much of the first volume (see Table 2). Except for Fenaroli’s partimenti, which would have been in circulation, Choron derives selected partimenti of Sala, Cotumacci, and Durante from manuscript copies sold by various collectors to the Conservatoire, which would have been published for the first time.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ Carlisi, *From Naples to Paris*, 31.

¹⁵¹ Cafiero, “The Early Reception of Neapolitan Partimento Theory in France,” 139-40.

Table 2: Choron, *Principes de composition*. Table of Contents.¹⁵²

Chapter	Subject	Pages
1	Intervals List and classification Melodic use Harmonic use	1-10
2	Chord types and their inversions (after Rameau's Fundamental Bass Theory)	10-16
3	General considerations for the progression of chords	17-23
4	Progression of chords [according to the melodic interval in the bass] By ascending intervals By descending intervals Cadences	23-60
5	"Artificial" Harmony ¹⁵³ Suspensions (4 th , 7 th , 9 th , and 2 nd) Alterations (brief discussion only)	61-71
6	Enumeration and classification of chords	72-80
7	Modulation Diatonic Enharmony (brief discussion only)	81-86
8	Accompaniment of a [given] subject Lower part Upper part Cadences Pedal point	87-102
[In another book, part of the same volume]	Partimenti using the Rule of the Octave (from Fenaroli Book 1) Partimenti using dissonances (from Fenaroli Book 2; Durante and Cotumacci) General partimenti (Sala and Fenaroli selections from books 4, 5 and 6)	All

While most of the treatise's content drew on Italian pedagogy, it also introduced new concepts that would be further developed later in the nineteenth century. These included the use of Rameau's fundamental bass theory for the systematic listing and categorisation of chords, alterations, enharmony, and accompaniment of a given upper part (known as the *Chant donné*).¹⁵⁴ Since such practices were only becoming standard in composition, the theory behind those concepts would have been primitive. Figure 6, for example, shows how the accompaniment for the ascending scale was derived (The Rule of the

¹⁵² Choron, *Principes de composition*, 1:1-102.

¹⁵³ The term artificial harmony refers to harmony that does not use chords derived from the harmonic series. These include alterations and suspensions (*retards*, as the French would call it).

¹⁵⁴ Cafiero, "The Early Reception of Neapolitan Partimento Theory in France," 144.

Octave). Unlike the Catel, which writes the examples, Choron uses prose to explain its derivation from the inversions of the 5/3 chords on the first, fourth and fifth scale degrees.

Catel and Choron's publications laid a solid theoretical and practical foundation for the subject of harmony at the Conservatoire, both treatises acknowledging the importance of the piano in harmony and in composition pedagogy. Such codifications show how harmony became institutionalised, with what was once learned through practice and improvisation being reframed as examinable knowledge. For the pianist-composer, the subject was essential to become a composer, and for the many other performance-based skills that rely on the proficiency and, eventually, mastery of the subject:

Figure 6: Choron, *Principes de composition*. Derivation of the Rule of the Octave.¹⁵⁵

CHAPITRE HUITIÈME

de l'Accompagnement des Sujets.

Dans tout ce qui précède, nous avons cherché à faire connoître les éléments harmoniques considérés en eux mêmes et d'une manière générale, Il nous reste à présent à faire voir comment on peut les employer, selon les diverses circonstances.

Pour sentir l'importance et l'objet de cette étude, il faut savoir que, selon la maxime de l'École, dans toutes les compositions musicales, il y a un sujet sans lequel la composition n'auroit pas lieu. Le premier degré de l'art du compositeur est de savoir revêtir ce sujet de l'harmonie qui lui est propre. La marche à suivre pour arriver à ce but est différente, selon que le sujet est dans la basse ou dans une partie supérieure. L'examen de ces deux cas fera la matière des deux sections de ce chapitre.

1^{re} SECTION: DU SUJET DANS LA BASSE.

ou règles pour mettre l'harmonie et le chant sur la Basse.

Le sujet, soit qu'il se trouve dans la basse, soit qu'il se trouve dans une partie supérieure, peut n'avoir aucune forme particulière et déterminée, ou bien il peut marcher régulièrement et par progression. Nous allons examiner successivement ces divers cas.

§ I. SUJETS LIBRES ET IRRÉGULIERS.

Lorsque le sujet n'a point de forme régulière, chaque note de l'échelle a une harmonie qui lui convient dans le plus grand nombre de cas.

Règle générale.

La Première, la Quatrième et la Cinquième doivent porter Tierce et Quinte; la Deuxième, la Troisième, la Sixième et la Septième doivent avoir Tierce et Sixte.

Exception.

Pour la Deuxième. Lorsque la Deuxième va diatoniquement, soit en montant, soit en descendant, de la Première à la Troisième, on peut ajouter la Quarte: parce que cette Quarte est préparée, ce qui vaut mieux, en général.

Lorsque cette note descend de Tierce ou de Quinte, elle peut avoir Tierce et Quinte, ainsi que la Sixième; les anciens plaçoient toujours la Quinte sur ces deux degrés; ils ne donnoient la Sixte qu'aux notes qui montent par demiton: et même, à une époque plus reculée, ils ne donnoient la Sixte qu'aux notes qui

portent naturellement Quinte mineure, c'est à dire, à la Septième, ensorte que la Troisième du ton même, en majeur, portoit Tierce et Quinte. Cette observation est d'autant plus essentielle que tout le contrepoint ecclésiastique, dont on verra des exemples multipliés dans le Sixième livre de ces principes, est composé sur cette harmonie.

¹⁵⁵ Choron, *Principes de composition*, 1:87.

For this thesis, these two treatises serve as essential reference points and provide critical evidence for the pianist-composer's training. Their contents will be drawn upon throughout later chapters as relevant. As the identity of the pianist-composer began to emerge, it became evident that this figure required a form of training distinct from that of other instrumentalists. The term "pianist-composer" in its compound form most likely did not appear in print until 1840, designating a musician trained in both the mechanics of the piano and the discipline of harmony.¹⁵⁶

1.3.3 The Pianist-Composer's Bible: Zimmerman's *Encyclopédie du Pianiste Compositeur*

By the 1830s, the Conservatoire had established itself as Europe's leading musical institution, attracting students across the continent and the New World.¹⁵⁷ In addition to the professors who taught there, the institution oversaw the publication of influential treatises on instrumental playing and harmony, which provided income for its faculty and reinforced their stature within Paris' competitive music scene. Pierre-Joseph Zimmerman (1785–1853) was among its most remarkable success stories.¹⁵⁸ An alumnus of the institution (admitted in 1798), he became professor of piano in 1816 and had earlier won the Conservatoire's premier prix in harmony (1802).¹⁵⁹ Renowned for both his refinement and eclectic

¹⁵⁶ For example, in Fétis' *Biographie universelle des musiciens et bibliographie générale de la musique* (first published in 1837), he uses the term "*pianiste et compositeur*" to describe the professions of Chopin, Liszt, etc., throughout the book rather than the compound form "*pianiste compositeur*" as a way to deliberately classify the two disciplines. Perhaps the term may have appeared in periodicals and/or letters. Still, the mention of the compound term likely makes a significant appearance for the first time in Zimmerman's *Encyclopédie*.

¹⁵⁷ A notable example was Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829–1869), an American-born pianist from New Orleans, who studied in Paris and gained fame through concert tours across the Americas. He applied to the study at the Conservatoire but was rejected, like Liszt, due to his foreign citizenship.

¹⁵⁸ His full name is Pierre-Joseph-Guillaume Zimmerman, but he is sometimes referred to as Pierre-Joseph Zimmerman or Joseph-Pierre Zimmerman. His last name also has an alternate spelling, Zimmermann. This thesis will use the spelling consistent with that in the *Encyclopédie*.

¹⁵⁹ Pierre, *Le Conservatoire national de musique et de déclamation*, 415. According to Marmontel, "En 1816, Zimmerman fut nommé professeur d'une classe de piano ; en 1826, il obtint au concours la place de professeur de contrepoint et fugue ; mais il céda généreusement ses droits à son émule, Fétis, satisfait d'être sorti vainqueur de cette épreuve." "He won a competitive examination for the professor of counterpoint and fugue, but he generously ceded his right to his rival Fétis. He continued [teaching] piano classes, a more modest position in the teaching hierarchy." Marmontel, *Les Pianistes célèbres*, 196. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

teaching, he exercised an “exceptionally wide and remarkable influence,” evidenced by his many distinguished pupils—later dubbed by Marmontel as *génération de 1830*, a cohort that produced prominent figures in science, literature, and the arts.¹⁶⁰

In 1840, Zimmerman published his most famous and influential work, the *Encyclopédie du Pianiste Compositeur*, dedicated to Cramer, “whose doctrines [he] drew from his youth and continued to support.”¹⁶¹ Widely regarded as one of the most comprehensive mid-nineteenth-century piano treatises, it synthesised earlier pedagogical traditions into a unified system and redefined the pianist-composer by presenting not a single skill, but a complete artistic and technical curriculum (Figure 7).¹⁶² Marmontel praised it as “the fruit of [Zimmerman’s] extensive teaching experience [and] victorious proof of the excellence of [his] teaching.”¹⁶³ Its publication signalled the moment the pianist-composer emerged as a fully codified professional identity. Following “the Enlightenment’s own general credo of accessibility and dissemination of information,”¹⁶⁴ Zimmerman’s *Encyclopédie* drew on eighteenth-century keyboard treatises that combined technical training with compositional practice but adapted them for a mid-nineteenth-century context—one in which the pianoforte had assumed a far more central role in both performance and pedagogy (See Chapter 1.2.3).

¹⁶⁰ “On peut l’appeler la génération de 1830, ce n’est pas un reproche dangereux. Cette génération, quoi qu’en pensent quelques esprits étroits, a produit un nombre considérable de personnalités de haute valeur, dans les sciences, les arts et la littérature.” Marmontel, *Les Pianistes célèbres*, 195. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5. “His most notable students included Ambroise Thomas (1811–1896), Charles-Valentin Alkan (1813–1888), Louis Lefébure-Wély (1817–1869), Charles Gounod (1818–1893), Louis Lacombe (1818–1884), César Franck (1822–1890), Georges Bizet (1838–1875), and Antoine-François Marmontel.” Teriete, “Pierre-Joseph-Guillaume Zimmerman’s *Encyclopédie du Pianiste Compositeur*,” 283.

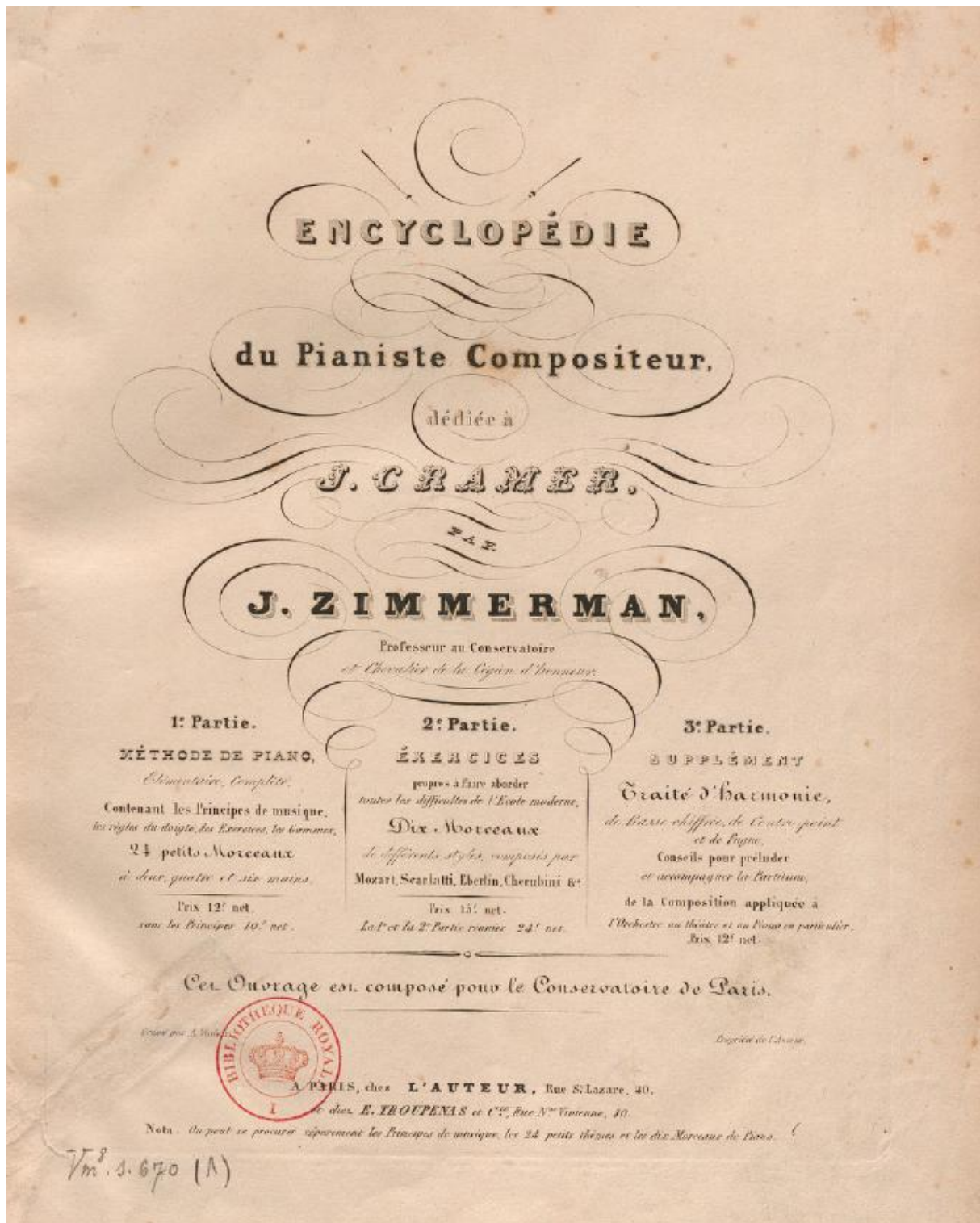
¹⁶¹ “En vous faisant hommage de mon travail, mon cher Cramer, j’acquiesce une dette de reconnaissance. C’est dans vos ouvrages que j’ai puisé dans ma jeunesse des doctrines qui sont encore aujourd’hui mes appuis les plus sûrs. C’est un élève qui se pare du nom de son maître, et qui en espère un reflet favorable. Votre suffrage voilà mon désir, ce sera mon succès. ZIMMERMAN. Paris, ce 15 février 1840.” Pierre-Joseph Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie du pianiste compositeur* (Paris: L’auteur, 1840), 1: I, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Encyclop%C3%A9die_du_pianiste_compositeur_\(Zimmermann,_Joseph\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Encyclop%C3%A9die_du_pianiste_compositeur_(Zimmermann,_Joseph)).

¹⁶² Teriete, “Pierre-Joseph-Guillaume Zimmerman’s *Encyclopédie du Pianiste Compositeur*,” 290.

¹⁶³ “L’Encyclopédie du Pianiste [Compositeur], cours théorique et pratique où Zimmerman a condensé le fruit de sa longue expérience, véritable code musical du virtuose et du compositeur. La deuxième partie comprend un cours d’harmonie, de contrepoint, de haute composition, et l’ensemble de la méthode reste une preuve victorieuse de l’excellence de l’enseignement de Zimmerman.” Marmontel, *Les Pianistes Célèbres*, 202. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

¹⁶⁴ Carew, *The Mechanical Muse*, 531–32.

Figure 7: Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie du Pianiste Compositeur*. Cover page.¹⁶⁵



¹⁶⁵ Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie*, cover page.

Zimmerman's use of the term "*Encyclopédie*" is somewhat "ambitious" to say the least but has become justified due to the piano's emerging role as "an orchestra of sorts which includes and summarises all parts of the musical art, from the accompaniment of a romance to that of the most complicated score, to the reduction and arrangement of a vast symphony."¹⁶⁶ The *Encyclopédie* accomplished more than teaching the rudiments of music and execution, as his predecessor, Adam, had already done. Still, its *Supplément* integrated harmony, figured bass, and improvisation with counterpoint and fugue, marking the transition from mere pianists to pianist-composers. Marmontel described the treatise as a "true musical code of the virtuoso and the composer."¹⁶⁷ Indeed, Zimmerman effectively "codified" the ideal of the all-round musician that the Conservatoire sought to produce.

Zimmerman's *Encyclopédie* was the first major treatise to explicitly define the pianist-composer (*Pianiste Compositeur*) as a distinct category, proposing a pedagogy that united technical mastery, compositional fluency, and everything in between. Its contents likely reflect both the training he received at the Conservatoire and the material he later used to teach the next generation. While its breadth may sacrifice some technical depth (as an encyclopedia designed to summarise rather than specialise), it nevertheless provides an entry point, guiding the student (and teacher) toward the broader network of treatises devoted to each specific skill.¹⁶⁸

The opening sections mirror Adam's *Méthode*, covering notation, fingering, mechanics of the instrument (scales, arpeggios, double notes, chords), and progressive pieces. But uniquely, Zimmerman introduces all standard clefs (including the five C-clefs) and specifies the voice types and instruments associated with each. This immediately signals that the treatise was not intended for amateurs, but for

¹⁶⁶ "Si le titre d'Encyclopédie paraît d'abord ambitieux appliqué à l'enseignement d'un instrument, on doit considérer que le piano est devenu pour ainsi dire un orchestre, qui comprend, résume toutes les parties de l'art musical, depuis l'accompagnement de la romance jusqu'à celui de la partition la plus compliquée, comme depuis la valse symphonie réduite et arrangée, jusqu'au léger quadrille avec lequel il règne et brille dans les salons à l'égal du classique violon, s'il ne l'a tout-à-fait détrôné." Blanchard, "Revue critique. *Encyclopédie du Pianiste Compositeur*, par M. J. Zimmerman," 306-07. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

¹⁶⁷ "Véritable code musical du virtuose et du compositeur." Marmontel, *Les Pianistes célèbres*, 202. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

¹⁶⁸ For example, Zimmerman mentions the study of Fenaroli's partimenti upon laying out the rules of harmony and counterpoint. See Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie*, 3:17.

professionals expected to read scores, accompany singers, and shift seamlessly between instrumental and vocal idioms. Figure 8 shows the C-clefs with each line and space indicated and their relationship to the standard clefs used in piano writing. Teriete argues that “this not only prepares the student for reading older music and trains the flexibility of intervallic reading but also lays the necessary basis for clef transposition and score reading,” which are skills beyond the requirements of the amateur performer.¹⁶⁹

Figure 8: Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie du Pianiste Compositeur*. The Seven Clefs for Score-Reading and their Ranges.¹⁷⁰

The diagram illustrates seven C-clefs (Clef de DO) on staves 1 through 5, and two F-clefs (Clef de FA and Clef de SOL) on staves 6 and 7. Each staff shows a scale of notes. A bracket groups the last three staves (6, 7, and 8) as "Cleps en usage pour le Piano". A note indicates that the 3rd and 4th C-clefs are rarely used for transposition.

Clef de DO 1^{re} ligne. (2) DO

Clef de DO 3^e ligne. DO

Clef de DO 4^e ligne. DO

Clef de DO 2^e ligne. DO

Clef de FA 3^e ligne. FA Sol

Clef de FA 4^e ligne. Sol La Si Do Ré Mi Fa Sol La Si

Clef de SOL 2^e ligne. Do Ré Mi Fa Sol La Si

Cette clef et la suivante ne servent guère que pour la transposition (3).

Cleps en usage pour le Piano

¹⁶⁹ Teriete, “Pierre-Joseph-Guillaume Zimmerman’s *Encyclopédie du Pianiste Compositeur*,” 295. See Chapters 2.2.2 and 5.2.

¹⁷⁰ Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie*, 1:iv.

Zimmerman also includes a detailed section on intervals and their formation alone—something that one may find in the opening chapter of a harmony treatise. Following on from this is the derivation of the major and minor scales from these intervals from the construction of two tetrachords (Figure 9):

Figure 9: Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie du Pianiste Compositeur*. Intervals and Scale Construction.¹⁷¹



Again, such detail is not usually found in a treatise for amateurs. Still, its presence here prepares the student for the study of harmony, which requires the application of these rudiments.

This is then followed by a section titled *Méthode du piano*, which shares many similarities with earlier piano methods. Following in the footsteps of his predecessor, Adam, this section opens with the *Tableau du Clavier* (Figure 10), which shows the full piano compass alongside the voice parts and all the orchestral instruments [at the time]. Teriete argues that this “not only imparts knowledge that is required when orchestrating or reducing orchestral scores but also creates haptic associations that enable and stimulate the pianist to make the piano sound fuller and richer, like an orchestra.”¹⁷² In doing so, Zimmerman frames the pianist as an orchestral thinker expected to internalise and express the full scope of the orchestra at the keyboard itself—useful for arranging practice (see Chapter 2.2) and justifying the study of C-clefs in the first volume:

¹⁷¹ Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie*, 1:vii.

¹⁷² Teriete, “Pierre-Joseph-Guillaume Zimmerman’s *Encyclopédie du Pianiste Compositeur*,” 296.

Figure 10: Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie du Pianiste Compositeur. Tableau du Clavier.* 173

TABLEAU DU CLAVIER A SEPT OCTAVES.

The score includes the following sections and instruments:

- TOUCHES NOIRES:** Musical notation for black keys with a keyboard diagram below.
- TOUCHES BLANCHES:** Musical notation for white keys with a keyboard diagram below.
- VOIX:** Four staves for Soprano, Contralto, Ténor, and Basse-taille.
- Alto:** Musical staff for the Alto instrument.
- Flûtes:** Musical staff for Flutes, including a section for 'Petite Flûte'.
- Hautbois:** Musical staff for Oboes.
- Cor Anglais:** Musical staff for English Horns.
- Clarinette:** Musical staff for Clarinets.
- Trompette:** Musical staff for Trumpets.
- Timbales:** Musical staff for Timpani.
- Cor:** Musical staff for Horns, with notes indicating 'L'effet est à l'octave au dessous' and 'Les sons indiqués ci-contre, sont les tons naturels à l'instrument...'
- Trombones:** Musical staff for Trombones, including 'Trombone-Basse' and 'Trombone-Alto'.
- Ophicléide:** Musical staff for Ophicleides.
- Basson:** Musical staff for Bassoons.
- Violoncelle et C. Basse:** Musical staff for Violoncelles and Double Basses, with notes indicating 'Contre-Basse, l'effet est une 6^e plus bas'.
- Harpe:** Musical staff for Harps.
- PIANO:** Musical staff for the Piano.

¹⁷³ Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie*, 1:2-3. This page folds out of the book, which is placed between pages 2 and 3, but does not include a page number. The violin staff showing the instrument's range is not shown in this scan as the page was not unfolded in full.

Laid out similarly to Adam's *Méthode*, the second part of the *Encyclopédie* is dedicated to the mechanics of the instrument, which by 1840 was well-established. Since more than three decades have passed, it is not surprising that new ground has been covered in piano writing. New fingering principles, more diminutions/textures and the formulation of practice techniques regarding the technical exercise itself. For example, a relatively new addition in this treatise, not included in Adam's *Méthode* or his 1798 fingering manual, is the use of alternating hands for various intervals and chord configurations (Figure 11):

Figure 11: Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie du Pianiste Compositeur. Gammes alternant des deux mains*.¹⁷⁴

GAMMES ALTERNANT DES DEUX MAINS. 43

T.B.

La main gauche doit se placer par dessus la main droite.

T.B.

T.B.

T.B.

T.B. Presto.

T.B. Presto.

¹⁷⁴ Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie*, 2:43.

These would have been employed in the repertoire just a few decades earlier and have become familiar enough in the repertoire to be included in the treatise.

What most distinguishes the *Encyclopédie* from contemporary piano methods is its third section. Described by Blanchard as the “crown” of the work, the *Supplément* is a “scientific summary of the art of composition applied to the piano,” serving as a comprehensive pedagogical resource for students and teachers alike. Though it condenses material that would usually fill multiple treatises, he praises Zimmerman for “avoiding scholastic nonsense by clarifying everything.”¹⁷⁶ Modelled on eighteenth-century figured-bass manuals, this section covers harmony, counterpoint, improvisation, and score reading (Table 3), with Zimmerman asserting that pianists lacking these skills remain merely “schoolboys,” thus emphasising their pedagogical significance.¹⁷⁷ Harmony and accompaniment are presented as the foundation for becoming a composer. As he writes:

The science of harmony...is useful in all instances for a pianist, whether he wants to prelude, compose, add a bass under a song, ornament a passage, correct a mistake, make a cut, play the organ, [or] accompany the score.¹⁷⁸

Later, he traces these practices directly to the Schools of Italy:

In Italy, the application of the rules of harmony is done at the keyboard; this method is excellent for preluding... and to perform on the piano old works that have no other accompaniment than the figured bass.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ “Cet ouvrage dans lequel il a su éviter le fatras scolastique en classant tout cependant, en définissant mille petites difficultés qu’une longue pratique de l’enseignement peut seule faire apercevoir, mérite d’obtenir un succès européen, brillant, durable ; et classerait son auteur parmi les premiers professeurs de notre époque s’il n’y était déjà depuis long-temps.” Blanchard, “Revue critique. *Encyclopédie du Pianiste Compositeur*, par M. J. Zimmerman,” in *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris* (Paris: 1840), 306-07. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5. Interestingly, this volume is advertised as a separate work from the *Encyclopédie*. See *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris* (Paris: 1840), 510.

¹⁷⁷ “À l’époque où nous sommes, le virtuose qui ne saurait que jouer du piano, quelque habile qu’il fût d’ailleurs, ne pourrait être considéré que comme un écolier, s’il ne joint pas à ce talent pratique la connaissance de l’harmonie qui est la grammaire de la musique.” Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie*, 3:1. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

¹⁷⁸ “La science de l’harmonie par laquelle je commencerais d’un usage de tous les instants pour un pianiste, soit qu’il veuille préluder, composer, mettre une basse sous un chant, orner un passage, corriger un passage, corriger une faute, faire une coupure, toucher l’orgue, accompagner la partition.” Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie*, 3:1. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

¹⁷⁹ “En Italie l’application des règles de l’harmonie se fait sur le clavier; cette méthode est excellente pour conduire à préluder. Il est d’ailleurs indispensable, de savoir accompagner d’après les chiffres, pour se servir des Solfèges, pour les recitatifs de quelques operas Italiens et pour executer au Piano d’anciens ouvrages qui n’n’ont d’autre

The schools of Italy, whose curricula were adopted in the formation of harmony and accompaniment courses at the Conservatoire, were integral to the training of composers and performers alike:¹⁸⁰

Table 3: Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie du Pianiste Compositeur*. Contents of the *Supplément*.

Section	Topics Covered
Harmony ¹⁸¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intervals and chords - Suspensions (<i>retards</i>) - 3 to 9-part counterpoint over sequential basses - Alterations - Pedal point - Cadences - Figured bass (<i>partimento</i>)
Counterpoint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Species counterpoint - Imitation - Fugue
Free Composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Treatment of dissonances - Melody writing - Types of music
Instrumentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Instruments and their ranges - Transposing instruments
Score Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading orchestral scores and reduction strategies

Of course, Zimmerman is fully aware of the limitations of his *Encyclopédie*, particularly with the study of counterpoint of fugue, which practically requires hundreds of pages. Though the study of harmony is “sufficient to guide his fingers, and to enable him to understand what he is performing,” he also advocated for the study of counterpoint and “[shortens] the work as much as possible, without neglecting anything useful.”¹⁸² Mortensen critiques Zimmerman’s inclusion of fugue but made no mention of its

accompagnement qu’une basse chiffrée.” Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie*, 3:17. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5. Zimmerman also published a guide on reading figured bass. See his *Précis de la Basse chiffrée. Proposé à MMrs les Professeurs du Conservatoire* (Paris: Bureau Central de Musique, n.d. [ca. 1830]), Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Musique, RECUEILS-24 (8), <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb44919065j>.

¹⁸⁰ Cafiero, “The Early Reception of Neapolitan Partimento Theory in France,” 138-39.

¹⁸¹ This section includes the Rule of the Octave and sequences, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.1.

¹⁸² “À cet endroit de mon ouvrage, la tâche indispensable d’un Pianiste peut être accomplie. Ce qui a été dit, au sujet de l’harmonie est suffisant pour diriger ses doigts, et pour le mettre à même de se rendre compte de ce qu’il exécute. Mais s’il veut ne rester étranger à rien de ce qui constitue l’art du compositeur et puiser de nouvelles

improvisation—a “significant” omission “and certainly a sign of changing times.”¹⁸³ Using his experience as a piano teacher and mastery of counterpoint practice, Zimmerman combines mechanical aspects of piano playing from Adam’s *Méthode* and a selection of relevant topics from Catel and Choron’s work on harmony and counterpoint. Though not entirely comprehensive, the *Encyclopédie* opens the doors for young pianists on their quest to become complete, professional musicians. Mentioning the skill alone in the treatise was sufficient for the student or teacher, who could then find another treatise that covered the topic in more detail.

Zimmerman’s contributions to the pianist-composer tradition cannot be overstated. While not widely recognised in the twenty-first century, he was highly respected and held in high regard within the Parisian musical circles in the early nineteenth century. Teriete argues that this was because “he was not an internationally touring soloist,” his compositional output was relatively small and “only moderately successful,” his pedagogical works, though “outstanding,” were limited in number compared to figures like Czerny. His publications were mainly confined to France and German-speaking countries, lacking the broader European reach of his more famous contemporaries.¹⁸⁴ Zimmerman’s stature links him to the great pianist-composers of the era, establishing a pedagogical foundation for the pianist-composer tradition.¹⁸⁵

The structure of the *Encyclopédie* clearly conveys its expectations by covering a broad spectrum of musical knowledge, such as harmony, counterpoint, accompaniment, preluding [improvisation], and

ressources dans l’étude de la fugue, je vais lui en offrir les moyens, en abrégant ce travail autant que possible, sans toutefois, négliger rien d’utile.” Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie*, 3:20. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

¹⁸³ John J. Mortensen, *Improvising Fugue: A Method for Keyboard Artists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2023), 211, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197645239.001.0001>. In conservatories across Europe, improvisation is an important part of musicians’ training. Institutions like the Royal Hungarian Academy of Music, founded in 1875 under Liszt’s directorship, maintained rigorous entrance examinations that tested both sight-reading and improvisation. Alan Walker, “Ernst von Dohnányi: A Tribute,” in *Perspectives on Ernst von Dohnányi*, ed. James A. Grymes (Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press, 2005), 9.

¹⁸⁴ Teriete, “Pierre-Joseph-Guillaume Zimmerman’s *Encyclopédie du Pianiste Compositeur*,” 316.

¹⁸⁵ For example, Zimmerman would host a soirée at his salon in Square D’Orleans attended by the likes of Chopin (1810-1849) and C.V. Alkan (1813-1888). Both were successful pianist-composers; the latter was Zimmerman’s pupil, and both lived in the same building in the late 1830s. Teriete, “Pierre-Joseph-Guillaume Zimmerman’s *Encyclopédie du Pianiste Compositeur*,” 284-88.

style, all of which are deemed essential for the pianist-composer. Zimmerman's legacy lies in establishing a model that bridges improvisatory traditions with the emerging work-concept. For this thesis, the *Encyclopédie* is a key reference by serving as evidence of the pianist-composer's identity and as documentation of their expected skill set. Its contents will be cited throughout the following chapters to support this analysis.

As seen throughout this chapter, the pianist-composer was a highly versatile figure—technically brilliant, compositionally fluent, and socially strategic, especially among the nobility and upper classes. The next chapter will examine how this adaptable persona confronted the rise of the work-concept in the nineteenth century.

2 Searching From Within: The Work-Concept and Its Influence on Compositional Aesthetics

Pianist-composers were renowned for promoting themselves through performance—whether by improvising on popular tunes or performing their own works. Many were known more as performers than as composers until the emergence of the work-concept shifted cultural priorities. They not only performed their own works, but they also freely arranged those of others, at a time when musical works were less rigidly owned, making the relationship to the emerging work-concept highly complex. Among the musical disciplines, composition and arranging were most fundamentally transformed, altering the composer's role. Pianist-composers typically began as performers and improvisers, treating music primarily as an event. But over time, they grew increasingly self-aware, valuing their written works as personal statements intended for *posterity*.¹

Organists, especially in France, followed a different trajectory. Their improvisatory tradition remained strong throughout the nineteenth century, and organ pieces were often written purely as training tools for improvisation. As a result, the work-concept arrived much later in the organ world, only taking hold toward the end of the century when composers began producing works for concert use. This divide is especially striking between 1800 and 1870, when many pianist-composers were also organists—seemingly inhabiting two parallel musical worlds, one aligned with the work-concept and one resistant to it.

¹ Although the work-concept is often associated with the nineteenth century, several of its core features predate 1800. The growing emphasis on attribution and ownership was reinforced by the 1709 Statute of Anne and encouraged composers to attach their names to published works and assert authorial identity. At the same time, increasing reliance on detailed notation strengthened the idea of the score as a fixed object, particularly in dense polyphonic works where performers were expected to play what was written. This is evident in the highly prescriptive textures of J. S. Bach's *Clavier-Übung*. Documentary practices also reflect this shift: W. A. Mozart kept a thematic catalogue of his works from 1784 onward, titled "*Verzeichniüss aller meiner Werke*." Even the term opera (from *opus*, "work") signals an early conception of the work-concept.

2.1 “Originality” and “Authenticity” in Compositions

Compositional aesthetics shifted in the early nineteenth century as the work-concept redefined originality and authenticity. Works were no longer primarily judged by their effectiveness as an “event,” but by their autonomy. For the emerging pianist-composer, this shift meant that their compositional output was now recast through this lens, as this chapter will explore.

2.1.1 Compositional Aesthetics Before and After 1800

Western art music before 1800 also followed compositional standards centred around the genre or *musical topics*, which were well known to composers, performers, and audiences.² In Western classical music, *topics* are specific musical gestures or motifs associated with particular cultural or social meanings. These meanings may be contemporary, historical, cultural, or specific schemas that have developed over time.

Before the work-concept, musical topics functioned as rhetorical and social codes—“[serving] as subjects for musical discourse.”³ They were central to a shared musical language that communicated effectively to listeners “associated with various feelings and affections” while “others had a picturesque flavor.”⁴ For example, a composer might use a specific musical utterance commonly associated with a particular emotion, such as sadness or joy; a specific rhythm associated with a particular dance or folk tradition; forms; and even a “specific turn of phrase.”⁵ These musical gestures can serve as “complete types of composition,” such as minuets and marches, or be interwoven into larger-scale forms, such as binary or ternary form or a sonata movement, creating a complex web of meaning and expression.⁶ As

² Musical topics form an important component of performance and composition pedagogy, which will be further discussed in Chapter 3.1.2 and 4.3, respectively.

³ Grout, Burkholder, and Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 547.

⁴ Leonard G. Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1985), 9.

⁵ A commonly used expression by Gjerdingen, found in his *Music in the Galant Style* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁶ Ratner, *Classic Music*, 9.

Cook observes, “the very fabric of the classical style is representational...not just a matter of the formulaic topics” and was “built deeply into performers’ thinking.”⁷

A “genre-centred” practice meant that objective standards in composition are necessary if they “fit” the genre’s tropes and standards. For instance, composition treatises from before 1800 often praised composers not for their “originality,” but for adhering to an agreed-upon objective standard.⁸ An excerpt from Quantz’s flute treatise (1752) describes the typical features of a French overture, with Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-1687) as having set the standard model for it and “some German composers, among others, especially Handel [1685-1759] and Telemann [1681-1767], have far surpassed him.”⁹ Talbot argues that this view is intriguing from our perspective because Handel and Telemann are celebrated not for their originality but for their mastery in highlighting the established characteristics of overtures.¹⁰ More importantly, Martin argues that the “value” of the topic lies in understanding classic music.¹¹ They “[existed] independently of particular works [and some] have strong emotional coloring and may lie at the root of the phenomenon of expressiveness in music.”¹² In this sense, musical topics were both a compositional and pedagogical resource that shaped how pianist-composers (and other musicians) learned to create, improvise, and communicate within the shared stylistic idiom.

Around 1800, a shift in compositional aesthetics began to prioritise formal coherence over the freer use of topics. Czerny captures this changing attitude by defining originality not as freedom from convention, but as the invention of new ideas *within* established forms. Composition, he writes, meant “to invent pieces which, in respect to their ideas and the development of the same, are *new*... A piece which possesses these properties is, therefore, an *original composition*.” Yet he immediately adds that such ideas “must assume a determinate *form*,” belonging to a recognised genre— “otherwise it would

⁷ Cook, *Beyond the Score*, 109.

⁸ Talbot, “The Work-Concept and Composer-Centredness,” 172.

⁹ Johann Joachim Quantz, *On Playing the Flute*, trans. Edward R. Reilly (London: Faber, 1966 [1752]), 174.

¹⁰ Talbot, “The Work-Concept and Composer-Centredness,” 174.

¹¹ Robert L. Martin, “Musical ‘Topics’ and Expression in Music,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 53, no. 4 (1995), 423, <https://doi.org/10.2307/430976>.

¹² *Ibid.*

not be [that said genre or form].”¹³ This critical passage illustrates a key tension between the work-concept and the pianist-composer’s identity. Czerny argues that true composition lies in the creation of “new,” individual ideas, but that these ideas *must* be realised within pre-existing forms and genres to be recognisable as a composition within the norms of art music at the time.

Herz, in his *New and Complete Piano-Forte School* (1838), offers cautionary advice to young pianists eager to compose or improvise. He warns against mistaking borrowed musical ideas for originality, highlighting the danger of unintentionally reproducing melodies one has unconsciously absorbed “like an echo in the woods.” True composition, according to him, requires not only invention, but also the ability to develop, contrast, and structure ideas into a coherent, balanced whole—hallmarks of the emerging work-concept.¹⁴ The inclusion of this advice in a beginner’s piano method is intriguing. It shows that, although improvisation was still practised, Herz discouraged the next generation of pianists from pursuing it.

This tension, however, was not absolute. Although the work-concept pressured composers to validate themselves through originality, Dahlhaus notes that the apparent gulf between “general rules of composition” and originality was often bridged by “generic norms and conventions,” which enabled both to co-exist.¹⁵ Goehr, who echoed Dahlhaus’ sentiment, also argued that “the demand for originality translated into a demand that each composer should create his works from scratch.”¹⁶ Dahlhaus and Goehr both point to this shift in compositional aesthetics. For the pianist-composer, this meant that improvisation could no longer carry the same prestige, even though it remained central to their training and craft. Despite this constraint, the pursuit of being an “original” composer in the early nineteenth century was a catalyst and driving force behind the wealth of masterpieces, particularly those written for the pianoforte.

¹³ Czerny, *School of Practical Composition*, 1:1. Emphases by Czerny.

¹⁴ Herz, *New and Complete Piano-Forte School*, 20.

¹⁵ Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, trans. J.B. Robinson, California Studies in 19th-Century Music; 5 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 27-28.

¹⁶ Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*, 220.

With the increasing importance of the “work,” composers began to compose with disregard for the performer and the audience, pushing the limits of instrumental technique and pursuing originality. Talbot explains: “The decline of genre as a significant factor in a work’s identity has been a natural corollary of the composer’s rise over the same period [ca. 1800s].”¹⁷ This contrasted with the new artistic path, which emphasised individuality and motivated composers to “transcend” rules and “to help guarantee originality in their compositions.”¹⁸ As a result, the work-concept abolished the “use of a general language that does not presuppose self-sufficiency, uniqueness, or ownership of any given expression,” but placed value on the “musical material resulting in complete and discrete, original and fixed, personally owned units.”¹⁹

Philosophical thought reinforced this change, as Arthur Schopenhauer’s (1788-1860) notion that “music is as direct an objectification and copy of the whole *will* as the world itself” elevated the composer to a *quasi-metaphysical* authority.²⁰ The performer, as a result, became secondary and needed to be “true” and “faithful” to the musical work, giving rise to the idea of *Werktreue*. Levin argues that this “critical turning point to musical modernity” occurred when composers such as Beethoven started to look “inward” for inspiration and music “[became] increasingly idealistic, as opposed to Haydn and Mozart, who were absolute realists.”²¹ As a result, composers focused more on “permanent” elements of the score so that it could be preserved, like a sculpture or a poem, transcending time and becoming a self-standing work. This pursuit for an original and authentic voice also had another consequence: the work’s political and social ramifications. Composers also became nationalistic symbols for their country

¹⁷ Talbot, “The Work-Concept and Composer-Centredness,” 175.

¹⁸ Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum Musical Works*, 221.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 206.

²⁰ Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea*, vol. 1, trans. R. B. Haldane and J. Kemp, 7th ed. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1909), Project Gutenberg, December 27, 2011, 336, <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/38427>. Emphasis added.

²¹ Robert D. Levin, “Turning Point to Musical Modernity: Beethoven as Executor of the Legacy of C. P. E. Bach,” in *Rund um Beethoven: Interpretationsforschung heute*, edited by Thomas Gartmann and Daniel Allenbach (Schliengen: Argus, 2019), 258, *Musikforschung der Hochschule der Künste Bern*, vol. 14, <https://doi.org/10.26045/kp64-6178-014>.

of origin. This “national spirit,” as Dahlhaus calls it, expected the composer “to be original, to bring forth the new in a manner which, at the same time, manifested the ‘origins’ of his existence.”²²

Chopin’s success as a composer may be attributed to what Samson sees as a “Classical view of the musical work” and its role as a “guiding aesthetic principle.”²³ Using older forms and writing styles, he devised his own unique sound world and vocabulary as a “[response] to the spirit of an emergent Romanticism.”²⁴ So while Chopin supposedly “rejected” these new compositional aesthetics, he nevertheless “admitted” to them in his own way.²⁵ After being politically exiled from his home country, Poland, following the 1830 Uprising, his longing to return led him to compose his most poignant and heroic works: the mazurkas and polonaises—two compositional genres that span his entire oeuvre. As news spread of the Uprising in Western Europe, becoming “a cause *célèbre* among the cultured classes,” such works, whether intended or not, became “politically symbolic.”²⁶ Schumann described the mazurkas as “cannons buried in flowers,” a fitting description due to their seemingly innocent charm.²⁷ Chopin’s pupil Wilhelm von Lenz (1809-1883) makes this connection even more explicit, claiming that: “In them [the mazurkas] resided Chopin’s originality as a pianist. He represented Poland... Chopin was the only political pianist. He incarnated Poland, he set Poland to music!”²⁸ As a result of these works and their “political symbolism,” Chopin became a national hero as “pictures of him decorate classrooms in every Polish school, alongside those of Polish Nobel Prize winners, writers and scientists.”²⁹ Such statements reveal how the composer’s originality was understood not only in musical but also in cultural-political

²² Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 37.

²³ Samson, *Virtuosity and the Musical Work*, 20.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Cook, *Beyond the Score*, 158.

²⁷ Jeffrey Kallberg, “Hearing Poland: Chopin and Nationalism,” in *Nineteenth-Century Piano Music*, ed. Larry Todd (New York: Routledge, 2004), 249, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315024479-15>.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 253.

²⁹ Zdzislaw Mach, “National Anthems: The Case of Chopin as a National Composer,” in *Ethnicity, Identity and Music: The Musical Construction of Place*, ed. Martin Stokes (Oxford: Berg, 1994), 65. Held generally every five years since 1927, the Chopin International Piano Competition honours the composer’s works, attracting world-class pianists and audiences worldwide.

terms. Hence, his music did not merely express Poland; it also became a lasting symbol of national identity.

Beethoven and Chopin, with their music, sought to express something beyond reality, aligning with Schopenhauer's idea that music became not a depiction of the real world but an expression of a more profound truth or "will."³⁰ Since their music became highly personal, often a reflection of their own lives, it became essential for performers to stay "true" to the text and let the composer's music "speak for itself" without any form of alteration, as it would result in obstruction of the composer's depiction of a "higher truth."³¹ Nineteenth-century composers "willingly adopted" and "enjoyed describing themselves and each other as divinely inspired creators" and wished "to objectify in music something unique and personal and to express something transcendent."³² This divine connection is even exemplified in the theorist Heinrich Schenker's (1868-1935) writings, claiming that "creation may have its origin anywhere, in any suitable voice-leading level or tone-succession; the seed, by the *grace of God*, remains inaccessible even to metaphysics."³³

With the new path of the artist now paved by Beethoven and Chopin, nineteenth-century composers wielded their divine-like status by placing themselves at the centre of the music ecosystem (intentional or not). Dahlhaus makes an insightful observation on the treatment of composition before and after the work-concept: composers before 1800 developed a style that could be "imitated," whereas composers afterwards developed a style that could be "emulated", and "that the only way to gain a place in posterity is by being original, even at the price of immediate failure."³⁴

³⁰ The influence of Beethoven on the future generations of composers was so significant that Goehr even labels this phenomenon the "Beethoven paradigm" in her book *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*.

³¹ Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*, 209.

³² Ibid. "Bizet described Beethoven not as a human, but as a God. Samuel Wesley referred to Bach as a "saint," a "Demi-God," and a "Musical High Priest" [...] Haydn's spirit was said to penetrate "the sanctuary of heavenly wisdom"... Baines looked back to Palestrina as an early "amanuensis of God." Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*, 208-09.

³³ Heinrich Schenker, *Free Composition (Der freie Satz)*, trans. and ed. by Ernst Oster (New York: Longman, 1979), 18. Emphases added.

³⁴ Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 323-24.

As we can see, pianist-composers were among the first musicians to embrace notions of originality and authenticity, driven by the evolving instrument and by their central role in the musical ecosystem of the nineteenth century. They were the bridge between both disciplines and were placed at a crossroads, which left them to forge their own paths as artists, embracers, and challengers of the work-concept. As a result, the use of musical topics came to be viewed as less “serious,” more associated with entertainment or a “superficial” effect, rather than with originality and authenticity. From this viewpoint, the pianist-composer embodies a tension: they were trained within traditions that valued improvisation and shared idioms, yet were increasingly constrained by an aesthetic that valued originality and textual fidelity.

However, another factor they would have had to contend with was the audience for their compositions. They would have to impress many classes of musicians [and non-musicians], all of them who would have something valid to *say* about their works. As composers no longer in service to a court or a chapel, they searched within for answers and asked, “Whom am I writing for?”

2.1.2 Composing for Whom?

As compositional aesthetics placed greater value on the autonomy of the musical work, questions regarding their audience and purpose began to occupy the composer’s mind. Since the mid-eighteenth century, the musical public consisted of a “mixture of connoisseurs (*Kenner*) and amateurs (*Liebhaber*).”³⁵ With the expansion of musical life in the nineteenth century, however, new forms of listening emerged. Friedrich Rochlitz, writing in 1813, distinguished not two but four types of listener: connoisseurs, dilettantes, laymen, and the “hopeless.”³⁶ As Gooley observes, Rochlitz’s “dilettante is essentially equivalent to the *Liebhaber*, but his categories of ‘laymen’ and ‘hopeless’ are new to the field, and they recognize a new class of listeners—a more anonymous, nominally ‘mass’ musical public—positioned

³⁵ Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation*, 78.

³⁶ “Kenner,” “Dilettanten,” “Laien,” and “Nichtige.” Friedrich Rochlitz, “Die Fuge. Zunächst an Dilettanten und Layen,” in *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (1813), 309-17, quoted in Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation*, 78.

at a greater distance from musical learning than the eighteenth century had known, or at least theorized.”³⁷

Within this taxonomy, the *Liebhaber* “enjoyed listening to and practising music without possessing knowledge of its theoretical underpinnings.”³⁸ With this growing market, publishers, who were in close contact with the pianist-composers of the era, “took a leading role in stimulating the production not only of scores, but also of music periodicals, pianos, pedagogical books, and, acting as managers of publicity and ticket sales, public concerts.”³⁹ So, to earn a sizable income from composition, composers needed to write for the *Liebhaber* market. However, they also needed to compose works for the *Kenner* that demonstrated their stature as artists, to signal to their fellow virtuoso colleagues and, possibly, to later generations of musicians who would go on to play and listen to their works beyond their lifetimes. This chapter will argue that the work-concept improved the quality of works for both *Kenner* and *Liebhaber*, particularly for canonical composers who could compose technically simple music suited to the former, whilst catering to the latter with the hallmarks of the ideal “work” in accordance with the emerging work-concept.

The nineteenth-century French and English piano’s expanded range, improved action, and greater dynamic capabilities offered new expressive possibilities, and composers eagerly explored them. Pianist-composers were also in constant artistic dialogue—and sometimes rivalry—with one another, aiming to produce the next major work that would capture public interest and solidify their reputation as artists. For example, each composer became well known for a specific texture and/or diminution figure that appeared in their works.

For Chopin, it was the lyricism drawn from the *bel canto* tradition made possible by the piano-forte’s ability to sustain longer tones; for Liszt, it was the frequent use of double octaves, repeated notes

³⁷ Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation*, 78. This divide was already prevalent in the nineteenth century. For example, C. P. E. Bach published a collection of sonatas that catered to these two classes of musicians. See his *Clavier-Sonaten für Kenner und Liebhaber*, Wq. 55-59, 61 (1779-87).

³⁸ Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation*, 78.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

and shimmering tremolando figures, courtesy of the double escapement action patented by Érard,⁴⁰ for Thalberg, it was the “three-hand technique” when a melody would be split among the two hands which play accompaniment roles to create the impression of three-hand playing, only possible through the use of the sustain pedal to bring out simultaneous parts;⁴¹ for Schumann, it was the conception of the piano as an orchestra, writing multi-layered works that were idealistic and, as a result, often unidiomatic for the instrument.⁴² A composer claiming “ownership” of a manner of piano playing is a hallmark of the work-concept, and copying such mannerisms would not be in the spirit of this originality-driven environment.

Yet amid this fierce competition, there was also a mutual respect among these composers. Many works were dedicated to teachers, peers or mentors, reflecting a culture of admiration. These dedications were not merely social gestures or “formalities,”⁴³ but also often homages, where a composer might adopt or reinterpret elements of the dedicatee’s style according to their own. For example, Schumann’s (1810-1856) monumental piano work, *Fantasie*, Op. 17 (1839), contains many hallmarks of its dedicatee, Franz Liszt, with the latter praising it as “a work of the highest kind” and the “honour” of being the dedicatee of such a work.⁴⁴ As a reciprocal gesture, Liszt dedicated his Sonata in B minor, S. 178 (1853) to Schumann, who, unfortunately, at the time of publication, was already confined in an asylum after a failed suicide attempt.⁴⁵ In this way, each new composition became part of an evolving back-and-forth exchange among the elite circle of pianist-composers—one that simultaneously honoured tradition and pursued the new. Table 4 shows major works by various pianist-composers and their dedicatees. Notice

⁴⁰ See his Hungarian Rhapsodies and Transcendental Etudes.

⁴¹ Carew, *The Mechanical Muse*, 83.

⁴² See his major works, including Piano Sonata No. 3 Op. 14 “*Concerto sans orchestra*,” Piano Sonata No. 1 Op. 11, 2nd movement of the *Fantasie* Op. 17, *Novelletten* Op. 21.

⁴³ “Chopin remained quite closed to Schumann’s art, his dedication of the Ballade op. 38... being merely a courteous formality, an official acknowledgement of Schumann’s dedication to him of the *Kriesleriana* op. 16.” Eigeltinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 138.

⁴⁴ Franz Liszt, “Letter to Robert Schumann, June 5, 1839,” in *Letters of Franz Liszt: From Paris to Rome. Years of Travel as Virtuoso*, vol. 1, ed. La Mara, trans. Constance Bache (London: H. Grevel & Co., 1894), 33, <https://archive.org/details/lettersoffranzli01lisz>.

⁴⁵ This sonata was not received well by Clara Schumann, who regarded it as “merely a blind noise.” Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years, 1848–1861* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 156-57.

that the works here are all large-scale, consisting of sonatas, variations and collections of etudes—works that would very much capture the public’s attention or, at the very least, that of musical connoisseurs:

Table 4: Some Major Works by various Pianist-Composers and their Dedictees.

Composer	Work	Date	Dedictee
Chopin	Ballade No. 2 in F major, Op. 38	1839	Robert Schumann
Chopin	Piano Concerto No. 1 in E minor, Op. 11	1830	Friedrich Kalkbrenner
Chopin	<i>Études</i> , Op. 10	1833	Franz Liszt
Clementi	Piano Sonata in G minor, Op. 46	1820	Friedrich Kalkbrenner
Liszt	Piano Sonata in B minor, S.178	1853	Robert Schumann
Liszt	<i>Transcendental Études</i> , S.139	1852	Carl Czerny
Moscheles	<i>Grande Sonate</i> in E major, Op. 41	1818	Ludwig van Beethoven
R. Schumann	Fantasia in C major, Op. 17	1836	Franz Liszt
R. Schumann	<i>Kreisleriana</i> , Op. 16	1838	Frédéric Chopin
R. Schumann	<i>Novelletten</i> , Op. 21	1838	Adolf von Henselt
R. Schumann	Piano Sonata No. 3 in F minor, Op. 14	1836	Ignaz Moscheles
R. Schumann	<i>Carnaval</i> , Op. 9	1835	Various (as indicated by the titles)

Out of all the pianist-composers, it is perhaps Liszt whose legacy as a composer has been most well-preserved. He lived a relatively long lifespan, outliving many of his contemporaries by decades and being directly linked to the first generation of pianist-composers. This makes him an interesting case study for the effect of the work-concept on his compositional output.⁴⁶ After withdrawing from his touring career as a piano virtuoso in 1847, he dedicated his time to composition, a period during which he composed his most famous piano works.⁴⁷ As Doran points out, the very works that define today’s virtuoso repertoire, such as the B minor Sonata, the First Mephisto Waltz, the Spanish Rhapsody, and the Hungarian Rhapsodies, were all completed after he retired from the concert stage, and thus “could not have contributed to Liszt’s legend as a performer.”⁴⁸ His “modernist rehabilitation,” as Loya argues, is directly related to the influence of *Werktreue* in the late nineteenth century, transforming virtuosity

⁴⁶ The same goes with his contemporary and more reclusive C.-V. Alkan (1813-1888), who also dedicated the latter part of his career to composition after a performing career during his early years.

⁴⁷ Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 114.

⁴⁸ Doran, “Introduction: Virtuosity and Liszt,” 2-3.

from “brilliant to bravura style,” as Doran claims.⁴⁹ Dahlhaus further argues that Liszt’s innovative use of harmony, such as “unusual dissonances” and “violent changes of key...kept Liszt’s virtuosity from devolving into mere “brilliance,” the pianistic equivalent of the derivative, classicist harmony and melody of the Thalbergs and Kalkbrenners.”⁵⁰

This binary opposition between the early and late periods of Liszt’s life reveals the impact of the work-concept on his compositional practice and, to varying degrees, on that of his contemporaries. Rather than settling for the “performance as event,” composers began to change their attitude towards composition by relying on the premise that their music would receive multiple performances during their lifetimes and beyond. They began to consider crafting their works for maximum impact on future generations of listeners, even if it meant sacrificing their appeal to the current audience. This is what Liszt meant by his ambition “to fling a spear into the limitless distances of the future.”⁵¹ Or what Schumann meant by “not judg[ing] a composition from the first hearing; that which pleases [the listener] in the moment” and to “discriminate between works of real art and those merely calculated to amuse amateurs.”⁵² Pianist-composers demonstrated their compositional process by composing for themselves, their colleagues and future listeners—made possible by the evolving compositional aesthetics in the nineteenth century. However, commissions from these major works alone would not be enough to sustain their daily lives. They needed to compose for a larger, growing market that demanded different approaches to composition without compromising their artistic integrity.

⁴⁹ Shay Loya, “Virtuosity in Liszt’s Late Piano Works,” in *Liszt and Virtuosity*, ed. Robert Doran, Eastman Studies in Music; 168 (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2020), 391, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvxhrkq3.16>.

⁵⁰ Doran, “From the Brilliant Style to the Bravura Style: Reconceptualizing Lisztian Virtuosity,” in *Liszt and Virtuosity*, ed. Robert Doran, Eastman Studies in Music; 168 (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2020), 269, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781787448667.010>.

⁵¹ “Ma seule ambition de musicien était et serait de lancer mon javelot dans les espaces indéfinis de l’avenir.” Letter from February 9, 1874, in *Franz Liszts Briefe*, vol. 7, ed. La Mara (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1902), 57–58, quoted in Loya, “Virtuosity in Liszt’s Late Piano Works,” 411.

⁵² Schumann, *Advice to Young Musicians*, 26.

The growing market of amateur performers and the resulting demand for simpler pieces on the piano reveal the pianist-composer's seemingly paradoxical relationship to the work-concept. While such works adhered to stylistic conventions with the incorporation of musical topics, the "great" composers found a way to apply the same compositional standards for these works as the major ones. As Czerny insists: "The talented composer detracts nothing from his merit by sometimes writing little easy works for less skilful players and beginners... Such compositions are always a valuable contribution to musical education, and that composer is not perfect, who can write *only for Virtuosi*."⁵³

As discussed in the previous chapter, musical topics played an essential role in compositional aesthetics until the emergence of the work-concept, as they were familiar and relatable to the *Liebhaber* audience. Pianist-composers, being the great entrepreneurs they were, capitalised on this demand from which a new genre of piano music was born—the Character Piece—which Carew describes as a "diversionary piece... that exhibited the greatest fecundity in post-Baroque music, splintering into many sub-genres."⁵⁴ Unlike keyboard works of the previous century, which consisted of more generic forms such as concertos, sonatas, variations, and dance suites, Character Pieces were often very short, usually following ternary form and developed a single texture and/or diminution pattern throughout the piece. Their use of simpler, homophonic textures also made them easier to execute, and their interpretations are clear through their descriptive titles and/or their associations with musical topics.⁵⁵ It is for this reason that Czerny warns composers of the difficulty of writing such "easy pieces... without appearing dull, feeble and childish, particularly when all octaves must be avoided."⁵⁶ For successful composers, however, Carew argues that the character piece inherently represents an "emancipation" from music as merely "didactic" or "functional" (e.g., accompaniment, salon background music, liturgical).⁵⁷ Instead, it becomes

⁵³ Czerny, *School of Practical Composition*, 1:99. Emphases original.

⁵⁴ Carew, *The Mechanical Muse*, 135.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 135-36.

⁵⁶ Czerny, *School of Practical Composition*, 1:99.

⁵⁷ Carew, *The Mechanical Muse*, 136.

a “self-contained” expressive object, intended for critical listening, mirroring the growing view of compositions as individual “works” with originality and authenticity.⁵⁸

Pianist-composers such as Chopin, Schumann, and Mendelssohn were pioneers of this transition. Their respective character pieces, such as *Préludes*, Op. 28, *Carnaval*, Op. 9, and *Lieder ohne Worte* (Songs Without Words), were not just casual salon miniatures, but self-contained poetic statements.⁵⁹ As amateurs would most likely play such works, the Character Piece proved a challenge for many composers who became self-conscious upon discovering an “original voice.” These short, often thematically similar pieces were frequently produced in large quantities, sometimes giving the impression of repetition or formulaic writing. Moreover, by working within musical topics, composers appeared to concede personal or “authentic” intentions. This was the main criticism that Czerny received from his contemporaries, prompting “sarcastic comments from other musicians” as he “manufactured models of passages... for further use whenever the need arose for a suitable chunk of music.”⁶⁰ His formulaic approach to composition, reliant on popular genres and a prolific output, has called his authenticity and artistry into question.

However, a defining feature of the “great” pianist-composers was their capability to elevate the Character Piece to profound artistic expression. The lower difficulty level did not limit these composers. Still, they found new ways to maintain and even surpass their “aesthetic value” in relation to the larger-scale works, which Doran argues is “an overlooked part of the creative process.”⁶¹ As previously discussed with Chopin’s mazurkas in Chapter 2.1.1, part of the reason for their commercial [and political]

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Chopin’s Preludes or works in general do not possess descriptive titles like those of Mendelssohn and Schumann. Nevertheless, they were given nicknames over time and may be classified as such.

⁶⁰ Carl Czerny and Ernest Sanders, “Recollections from My Life,” *The Musical Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (1956): 314, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/740427>. This overlooks the high demand for Czerny’s pedagogical and compositional output in the early nineteenth century, driven by the growing number of amateur piano students. Despite criticisms of his originality, he elevated students’ virtuosity, “sacrificing” his own, as Marmontel noted. Though best known in the twenty-first century for his etude collections (*The School of Velocity*, Op. 299, and *The Art of Finger Dexterity*, Op. 740), Czerny also made important contributions to harmony, thoroughbass, and improvisation, demonstrating the value of these practices for the nineteenth-century pianist-composer.

⁶¹ Doran, “Introduction: Virtuosity and Liszt,” 12.

success was their accessibility to many pianists, both amateurs and professionals alike.⁶² As Lenz described it as “the diary of his soul’s journey through the socio-political territories of his Sarmation dream-world,” Chopin’s more minor works not only expressed his innermost feelings but also introduced daring harmonic innovations that foreshadowed early modernism—often more so than in his larger, public works.⁶³ Such works would not have been widely received had they been technically more challenging.

Similarly, Schumann’s collection of piano pieces titled *Kinderszenen*, Op. 15 (1838) marked a turning point in how musical works achieved “meaning” with the “decline of patronage structures for musicians” in the nineteenth century.⁶⁴ All pieces in the collection feature descriptive, evocative titles that relate to musical topics to some degree. Though the composer described them as “merely gentle hints for execution and interpretation,”⁶⁵ Taylor argues that such titles, including “*Der Dichter spricht*” (“The Poet Speaks”), were part of a growing trend of “the increasing importance of extra-musical concerns such as words and dramatic programs, and the new emphasis on individuality and originality.”⁶⁶ Indeed, the work received praise from Liszt, who regarded it as “one of the greatest pleasures of [his] life” and often played it to his daughter Blandine Rachel (1835-1862) daily.⁶⁷ Table 5 shows some famous character pieces composed by the major pianist-composers of the nineteenth century:

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Elgeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 71.

⁶⁴ Timothy D. Taylor, “Aesthetic and Cultural Issues in Schumann’s *Kinderszenen*,” *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 21, no. 2 (1990): 161, <https://doi.org/10.2307/837021>.

⁶⁵ Robert Schumann, *The Life of Robert Schumann, Told in His Letters*, trans. May Herbert, 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1971), 230-31, quoted in Taylor, “Aesthetic and Cultural Issues in Schumann’s *Kinderszenen*,” 168-69.

⁶⁶ Taylor, “Aesthetic and Cultural Issues in Schumann’s *Kinderszenen*,” 168-69. While it is true that the titles of Schumann’s *Kinderszenen* are descriptive to stir the imagination of the performer and listener, they are still heavily based on musical topics, particularly in how they communicate with the listener. Pieces such as “An Important Event” have elements of the march style; “The Poet Speaks” has elements of *empfindsamer*. Such associations may have added to their expressive or even “nostalgic” value.

⁶⁷ Liszt, “Letter to Robert Schumann, June 5, 1839,” in *Letters of Franz Liszt: From Paris to Rome*, 33-34.

Table 5: Some Examples of “Minor” Works by various Pianist-Composers.

Composer	Work(s)
Ludwig van Beethoven	Bagatelles Op. 33, Op. 119, WoO
Frédéric Chopin	Nocturnes Mazurkas Waltzes
Robert Schumann	<i>Papillons</i> , Op. 2, <i>Fantasiestücke</i> , Op. 12 <i>Kinderszenen</i> , Op. 15 <i>Album für die Jugend</i> , Op. 68 Late piano works from Op. 99 onwards
Felix Mendelssohn	<i>Lieder ohne Worte</i> (Songs Without Words) <i>7 Charakterstücke</i> , Op.7
C. -V. Alkan	<i>Préludes</i> , Op. 31 <i>Esquisses</i> , Op. 63
Clara Schumann	<i>4 Pièces caractéristiques</i> , Op. 5 <i>Soirées Musicales</i> , Op. 6 <i>3 Romances</i> , Op. 11
Edvard Grieg	<i>Lyric Pieces</i> (10 volumes)
Franz Liszt	<i>Consolations</i> , S. 172

Interestingly, it is these “minor” works that arguably have the most emotional potency, combining musical topics with listeners’ familiarity with them and their original use of harmony and texture. For these composers, their works for amateurs also “spoke to connoisseurs” and were not a limitation on their creativity but gave their music “broad and enduring appeal.”⁶⁸

To see where the work-concept had the most impact on compositional aesthetics, we now turn to the prelude and fantasy, which show how genres stemming from improvisation might be transformed into masterpieces under its influence and how it became more popular in the nineteenth century.

2.1.3 The Prelude, Fantasy and Related Genres: Severing Their Improvisatory Roots

From a work-concept standpoint, the prelude and fantasy occupy a unique space that blurs the lines between improvisation and formal composition. Pianist-composers exploited this dual nature to make a

⁶⁸ Grout, Burkholder, and Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 617.

smoother transition from extemporaneous playing to fully structured works.⁶⁹ While more sophisticated preludes showed tight structural control, many of them, especially the unmeasured ones, encourage the performer to “continually modulate, so that a perpetual excitation may prevail the change of the harmonies,” and for “free” preludes, to “pass, at will, into extraneous keys.”⁷⁰ Since preluding was a practice that relied on Talbot’s “music as event,” it runs directly opposed to the notion of music as “work.” Goehr argues that the change in compositional aesthetics involved “the predetermination of as many structural elements as possible” and extemporisation “for the first time...was seen to stand in strict opposition to composition ‘proper.’”⁷¹

This paradigm shift in the nineteenth century resulted in the decline of improvisation practice and, by correlation, the pianist-composer as well. Many virtuoso performers began to specialise strictly as either composers or instrumentalists. In this transformation, the practice of improvisation receded not just in concert but, more importantly, in the compositional process, as previously discussed in Chapter 1.2.3. The prelude and fantasy genres, with their improvisatory roots, exemplify the dichotomy of pianist-composers: trained by teachers with different compositional aesthetics, they were driven to innovate, elevating the genres into serious “work” that later generations expanded upon. So how did pianist-composers turn these genres into “fixed” works?⁷²

According to Zimmerman, the art of preluding [and fantasising] was a core skill expected for a pianist-composer. They are genres of music that stem from improvisation practices, especially before the eighteenth century. C. P. E. Bach, in his keyboard treatise, mentions the difference: “The

⁶⁹ “In the 18th century, the word ‘improvise’ did not exist. They did not use the word ‘improvisation.’ They used the word ‘*phantasieren*.’” Levin, “Turning Point to Musical Modernity,” 256. Similarly, in nineteenth-century France, preluding was synonymous with improvisation, using the former term more often. Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation*, 5-6.

⁷⁰ Czerny, *School of Practical Composition*, 1:114.

⁷¹ Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*, 234.

⁷² The prelude and fantasy have been grouped here due to their shared emphasis on freedom, spontaneity, and expressive character. Both forms traditionally feature a free, improvisatory structure rather than strict, formal designs like the sonata or fugue. In the eighteenth century, particularly in keyboard repertoire, the terms were sometimes used interchangeably by composers such as J. S. Bach. The early versions of the preludes from J. S. Bach’s *Well-Tempered Clavier* Book 1 were initially titled “Fantasia,” which can be found in the *Klavierbüchlein für Wilhelm Friedemann Bach*. See Chapter 4.4.1.

construction of the former is determined by the piece which it prefaces [content and affect]” while the latter is “completely free, there being no attendant restrictions.”⁷³ Preludes often featured ambiguous use of harmony, frequent, abrupt or unprepared modulations, and an almost unmeasured rhythmic freedom, much in the tradition of the unmeasured preludes of seventeenth-century France and *Stylus Fantasticus* of Northern Germany of the same period. The prelude (and equivalent genres) had many musical and practical aims, as listed:

- To test out the capabilities of an unfamiliar instrument and venue acoustics.
- To “warm up” the fingers so that they are more dexterous.⁷⁴
- To “arouse the attention of the listener.”⁷⁵
- To introduce the tonality of the upcoming work or to bridge the gap between key areas between two works “to [impress] the tonality upon [the listener’s] memory.”⁷⁶
- To introduce the key and affect of the upcoming work or, if placed in between works, to bridge the same in both.⁷⁷

Preluding was still in practice in the nineteenth century, and many pianist-composers composed sets of preludes following the J. S. Bach tradition. They were mainly used by pianists who could not improvise and by professionals who used them as models for their own improvisation.⁷⁸ For instance, in Mendelssohn’s improvisation classes at the Leipzig Conservatory, he “insisted strongly upon the importance of a natural and carefully arranged system of modulation,” instructing students to “pass from a given key to some exceedingly remote one, with the least possible amount of effort.”⁷⁹ With the growing *Liebhaber* public, pianist-composers kept the preluding tradition alive among amateurs by publishing pedagogical works on the subject.

⁷³ C. P. E. Bach, *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, trans. William J. Mitchell (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1949), 431.

⁷⁴ Carl Czerny, *A Systematic Introduction to Improvisation on the Pianoforte*, ed. and trans. Alice L. Mitchell (New York: Longman Inc., 1983), 5.

⁷⁵ Czerny, *A Systematic Introduction to Improvisation*, 5.

⁷⁶ C. P. E. Bach, *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, 431.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ There is a recording which can be found on YouTube of an improvised prelude of the twentieth-century pianist Josef Hoffman, which precedes Chopin’s *Andante Spianato*, Op. 22.

⁷⁹ William Smith Rockstro, *Mendelssohn*, ed. Francis Hueffer (London: S. Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington, 1884), 111-12, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Mendelssohn_\(Rockstro,_William_Smith\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Mendelssohn_(Rockstro,_William_Smith)).

Fortunately, many nineteenth-century treatises on improvisation exist, including Czerny's *Systematische Anleitung zum Fantasieren auf dem Pianoforte* (A Systematic Introduction to Improvisation on the Pianoforte), first published in 1829. A few years later, he published a more focused work, *The Art of Preluding*, Op. 300.⁸⁰ From *Kenner's* perspective, such a treatise was ineffective. Stoepel critiqued the examples from Czerny's 1829 treatise as a "mass of reminiscences, disfigured leftovers of beautiful ideas invented by other composers, or indeed litanies of variants without intelligence or contrary to those ideas."⁸¹ Despite this criticism, which reflects the emerging compositional ideals of the work-concept, it was precisely this formulaic, modular approach that made the treatise valuable for amateurs, who required a practical rather than an inventive pathway into improvisation.

Figure 12 shows some exemplar preludes by Ignaz Moscheles (1794-1870), showing what a typical improvised prelude would have sounded like. Note the liberal use of meter with and without bar lines, which reflects the improvisatory origins of the genre. They are very short, often lasting less than a minute and aim to establish the key and affect of the proceeding piece:

⁸⁰ See Carl Czerny, *The Art of Preluding*, Op. 300, ed. and trans. John Bishop (London: Messrs Robert Cocks & Co., n.d.), [https://imslp.org/wiki/Die_Kunst_des_Pr%C3%A4ludierens,_Op.300_\(Czerny,_Carl\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Die_Kunst_des_Pr%C3%A4ludierens,_Op.300_(Czerny,_Carl)).

⁸¹ François Stoepel, *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris* (Paris: 1834), 61, quoted in Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation*, 72-73.

Figure 12: Moscheles, *Préludes*, Op. 50, Nos. 22-24.⁸²

16

Moderato. *Adagio.* I. MOSCHELES, Op. 73, Book 2.

22. B flat minor. *p* *cresc.* *f* *cresc.*

23. B flat major. *f* *f* *f* *f* *ff* *ff*

24. C minor. *p* *cre* - - *scen* - - *do.* *f* *ten.* *ten.* *Adagio.cresc.* *dim.*

The prelude and fantasy saw their most radical transformation through those composed by C. P. E. Bach. Despite being much earlier than Moscheles', his pieces played a critical role in turning a

⁸² Ignaz Moscheles, *Preludes in the Various Major and Minor Modes*, Op. 73, trans. Albert Ross Parsons (New York: G. Schirmer, 1882 [ca. 1830]), 16, https://imslp.org/wiki/50_Preludes%2C_Op.73_%28Moscheles%2C_Ignaz%29.

seemingly public, virtuosic display into a more intimate one. C. P. E. Bach's Fantasies were based on the *Empfindsamer Stil* (sensitive style)—“personal, emotionally charged music. [That was] more common in northern Europe, associated with the Germanic penchant for the intimately expressive clavichord, and characterised by dramatic and pathetic gestures.”⁸³ These fantasies were so well-known among piano circles that they featured in Clementi's *Selection of Practical Harmony*, WO 7 (1801-15), a compendium of contrapuntal works, up until 1800, as well as in Adam's *Méthode*, shown in Figure 13.⁸⁴

Figure 13: C. P. E. Bach, *Fantasia*, Wq. 63/6 (H75). Opening passage.⁸⁵

The image shows a page of musical notation for C. P. E. Bach's Fantasia, Wq. 63/6 (H75). The page is numbered 198 in the top left corner. The title "Fantasia d' MANUEL BACH." is written in the top left. The tempo marking "Allegro Moderato." is centered at the top. The score consists of five systems of music, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and dynamic markings such as "pp", "p", and "cres". Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes. The music is highly technical and expressive, characteristic of the Empfindsamer Stil.

⁸³ Carew, *The Mechanical Muse*, 15.

⁸⁴ See Muzio Clementi, *Clementi's Selection of Practical Harmony, for the Organ or Piano Forte*, 4 vols. (Clementi & Co., ca. 1815).

⁸⁵ C. P. E. Bach, "Fantasia," in Louis Adam, *Piano Method of the Conservatoire*, 198. As this work was included in a piano treatise, the *Bebung* has been omitted and written as long notes. The piano, however, has a sustaining quality achieved by releasing the dampers, which makes the fantasy quality even more pronounced. C. P. E. Bach also wrote another notable piece, *Fantasia* in F-sharp minor, H. 300, with the title "*Empfindungen*."

Written for the clavichord—an instrument capable of nuances in dynamics and vibrato (*Bebung*)—the C minor fantasia is an exemplar of C. P. E. Bach’s command of rhetorical gestures in non-metrical forms. The gradual unfolding of chords, through various uses of consonances and unprepared dissonances, prolongs the tension. We see the striking use of modulation in this excerpt—starting in C minor but finding a way to modulate to D major (see the 4th line) via the enharmonic spelling of a diminished [7th] chord. The limited use of strong cadential points in this excerpt also conveys the state of “flow” in improvisation, and with the use of a somewhat arbitrary rhythm, with note values seemingly used to notate relative rather than absolute durations. All these features help capture the unpredictability of improvisation practice. Levin argues that this “turning point” in the conception of the musical work occurred when composers like C. P. E. Bach, Mozart and Beethoven began to write their “inner-most feelings” in their compositions, which is one of the hallmarks of “authenticity” that became highly valued in composition.⁸⁶ The “feelings” were arguably best conveyed in a genre that, by its very nature, is personal and through improvisation.

In the nineteenth century, it was Chopin’s *Préludes*, Op. 28, which “transcended their predecessors in individuality and imaginative power.”⁸⁷ They were “divorced” from their “principal original function,” and they became “indistinguishable from the bulk of character pieces” as their “improvisatory element...[had] been neutralised.”⁸⁸ Many preludes in the cycle adopt a ternary form, showing clear thematic development and structural awareness within each prelude and across the cycle as a whole.⁸⁹ While the work-concept lens “[elevates] the standing of [Chopin’s] preludes by transforming them into a single, imposing composition with profound meaning and complex hidden structures,”⁹⁰ they are very

⁸⁶ Levin, “Turning Point to Musical Modernity,” 255.

⁸⁷ Nicholas Temperley, “Preluding at the Piano,” in *Musical Improvisation: Art, Education, and Society*, ed. Gabriel Solis and Bruno Nettl (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 338. Emphasis added.

⁸⁸ Carew, *The Mechanical Muse*, 442.

⁸⁹ Motivic relationships are also present between them (or rather, we would like them to be). From our modern perspective on the musical work, scholars such as Eigeldinger argue for the motivic relationships among them, viewing them as a “unified cycle.” Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, “Twenty-four Preludes op. 28: Genre, Structure, Significance,” in *Chopin Studies*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 180. It is questionable whether Chopin himself viewed the same connections.

⁹⁰ Temperley, “Preluding at the Piano,” 324.

much separate pieces in the tradition of his contemporaries, such as Clementi, Hummel, Moscheles, Czerny and Kalkbrenner. Chopin's 18th Prelude in F minor (Figure 14) from the collection is perhaps one that most resembles the rhetorical gestures found in C. P. E. Bach's C minor Fantasy:

Figure 14: Chopin, *Préludes*, Op. 28 No. 18 in F minor.⁹¹

18. Allegro molto.

⁹¹ Frédéric Chopin, *Préludes*, Op. 28 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, n.d. [ca. 1839]), 25, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Préludes%2C_Op.28_\(Chopin,_Fr%C3%A9d%C3%A9ric\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Préludes%2C_Op.28_(Chopin,_Fr%C3%A9d%C3%A9ric)).

Despite the cut common time signature, this piece is far from a metrical prelude. In fact, this work is practically non-metric through its notation of rhythm. The rhetorical gestures, too, are similar to the fast note values featuring cascades of scales and arpeggios, just like the C. P. E. Bach, just at a much louder volume but similarly punctuated by short silences. The specific notation of dynamics, articulation, and pedalling is carefully indicated, in contrast to the freer, unmeasured preludes of his contemporaries and predecessors, where such details were often left to the performer's discretion.

Schumann takes this genre a step further. As a fluent improviser in his early days, he warned young musicians with “a fine imagination” of the perils of overindulging in improvisation at the expense of disciplined composition.⁹² His advice to young musicians is to “write... more than you improvise,” a sentiment that, like Liszt's, encapsulated a growing trend: that permanent musical legacy was best secured through the written text.⁹³ Despite the decline of improvisation on the concert stage and Schumann's warning against its pursuit, “[he found] ways to *inscribe* improvisatory values in his fully composed works, thereby enshrining the spontaneous intimacy of artistic conception.”⁹⁴ Let us look no further than the first movement of his *Fantasie*, Op. 17, which contains sections that “conjure up the improvisatory rhetorical gestures of the eighteenth-century keyboard fantasy.”⁹⁵ While Chopin's *Préludes* transformed the improvisatory form into a set of character-like pieces, Schumann transformed the fantasy into larger-scale forms such as the sonata and rondo.⁹⁶ These usually featured “the avoidance or weakening of formal breaks between movements; an increasing unification of the musical material; and

⁹² Schumann, *Advice to Young Musicians*, 28-30.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, His shift to composition was due to an injury sustained while using a Chiroplast to improve his finger dexterity. The question is, had he not injured himself, would he have continued advocating for improvisation? Or would he have made a similar realisation as Liszt? For more information, see Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation*, 154-92.

⁹⁴ Robert S. Hatten, “Opening the Museum Window: Improvisation and Its Inscribed Values in Canonic Works by Chopin and Schumann,” in *Musical Improvisation: Art, Education, and Society*, ed. Gabriel Solis and Bruno Nettl (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 289.

⁹⁵ Nicholas Marston, *Schumann: Fantasie, Op. 17*, Cambridge Music Handbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 49, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511620140>. See also Chopin's Fantasy, Op. 49 and Polonaise-Fantasy, Op. 61.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 27. A set of pieces composed earlier, titled *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12, is more akin to character pieces and structurally organised.

the recall of specific passages at different points to create a cyclic effect.”⁹⁷ The first movement—initially titled “Ruins”—is perhaps the most passionate of the three (having been composed a few years earlier than the latter two) and the most “fantastic” due to its frequent use of improvisatory elements. Figure 15 takes us to the centre of the movement that best demonstrates these features.

As a “highly subjective, personal composer,”⁹⁸ he wrote the work as a “deep lament” to his future spouse, Clara Wieck. Schumann used the intimacy and unpredictability of the genre to convey his “inner-most feelings” towards their relationship.⁹⁹ In this section alone, we can see how Schumann adapted aspects of improvisation to a rigorous form, such as the sonata. Again, despite the meter, marked in common time, this section says otherwise. The frequent use of tempo modifications *rit.*, *ritard.* demonstrates a feature commonly found in unmeasured preludes. Even in the metrical sections, the beat is unclear due to frequent syncopation that disrupts the sense of pulse, a characteristic of his compositional style. For a piece that initially claims to be in C major, modulations are frequent, and the absence of definitive cadential points suggests a more flexible approach to sonata form and a recurring feature in these improvisatory-like works. In Figure 15, for example, the beginning of the excerpt is in F major, moves to B-flat major at bar 73, suddenly turns toward D major at bar 82 (which starts the second subject group of the movement), and immediately makes its way back to the dominant of C major via a sequence:

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁹⁸ Taylor, “Aesthetic and Cultural Issues in Schumann’s *Kinderszenen*,” 171.

⁹⁹ Marston, *Schumann, Fantasie, Op. 17*, 7-8.

Figure 15: Schumann, *Fantasia*, Op. 17, I. [Ruins], bars 60-99.¹⁰⁰

The musical score for Schumann's *Fantasia*, Op. 17, I, [Ruins], bars 60-99, is presented in a standard piano score format. The score is in C major and 3/4 time. It features a variety of textures and dynamics, including piano (p), fortissimo (ff), and piano-piano (pp). The tempo changes from Adagio to im Tempo and back to Adagio. The score includes markings for 'rit.', 'ritard.', 'Pedal.', and 'P'. The music is characterized by flowing lines and complex harmonic structures.

¹⁰⁰ Robert Schumann, *Fantasia in C Major*, Op. 17, ed. Clara Schumann, in *Robert Schumanns Werke*, Serie VII: *Für Pianoforte zu zwei Händen* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879 [1839]), 105, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Fantasia,_Op.17_\(Schumann,_Robert\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Fantasia,_Op.17_(Schumann,_Robert)). Bar numbers added. "Ruins" was the working title of the movement in 1836, then was changed in the 1839 publication to "*Durchaus fantastisch und leidenschaftlich vorzutragen; Im Legenden-Ton*" ("Quite fantastic and passionately delivered; In the tone of a legend").

Despite the work-concept's role in severing the prelude and fantasy from their improvisatory roots, improvisation still played a crucial role in both the act of composing and in the resulting work—even when composers sought to conceal its presence to conform to “social constraints” and “personal expression.”¹⁰¹ As Hatten argues, as compositional aesthetics evolved to prize the work-concept, pianist-composers relied on their improvisational prowess and “its inscribed values” to cement their legacy within the canon.¹⁰² In the next chapter, we explore a derivative of the prelude genre: the etude and its radical transformation under the emerging work-concept.

2.1.4 Etudes and the Limits of Virtuosity

An extension of the prelude, the nineteenth-century *étude* was also a genre that underwent radical transformation due to the work-concept's compositional standards, moving beyond its use as a technical exercise to a concert piece.¹⁰³ The *étude* (“exercise” or “study”) was intended “to exercise and impart dexterity to the fingers, and yet [to remain] musically interesting.”¹⁰⁴ Czerny described them as “nearly the easiest kind of musical composition,” built from a single figure repeated through modulation.¹⁰⁵ The genre's rise was tied to the growing number of amateur pianists and the instrument's technical demands. By the early nineteenth century, the market was “overwhelmed by a perfect deluge of ‘études’ or ‘studies’ for the piano,” as “every prominent teacher” and virtuoso deemed them “indispensable” for training.¹⁰⁶ Among the most influential were Cramer's Studies, Op. 30 and 44 (1804-08), Clementi's *Gradus ad Parnassum*, Op. 44 (1817–26), and Helene de Montgeroult's (1764-1836) monumental *Cours complet* (1820), which systematised nearly every pianistic texture conceivable at the time. These pieces attempted to provide interest to a genre reserved for pupils, “to use them as technical exercises that would help them climb the stepladder toward more difficult pieces or improve their sight reading.”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰¹ Hatten, “Opening the Museum Window,” 287.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 291.

¹⁰³ See also Chapter 4.4.

¹⁰⁴ Czerny, *School of Practical Composition*, 1:90.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Marx, *The Universal School of Music*, 333.

¹⁰⁷ Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation*, 165.

Due to their didactic use, the first composers of this genre may not have exerted all their creative energies into producing an “original” or “authentic” composition or maintaining the listener’s interest, which was generally reserved for sonatas, variations, and concertos.

Another precursor to the genre was Clementi’s *Préludes et exercices*, Op. 43 (1811), “expressive and surprisingly interesting miniatures” built from “fragments of scalic passages divided expressively between the hands.”¹⁰⁸ While simple enough for amateurs to practise legato fingering and alternative hand shapes, they also contained contrapuntal ingenuity—such as perpetual canons by contrary motion that offered composition models for advanced students.¹⁰⁹ Such examples remind us that even seemingly didactic works could be sophisticated, foreshadowing the etude’s later elevation to a concert work.

Early-nineteenth-century études, such as those by Clementi and Cramer, were didactic and equipped pianists to navigate technically challenging repertoire. With the emerging work-concept, however, the *étude* assumed a dual function by retaining its technical role while also serving as a stand-alone composition *worthy* of the concert stage. As compositional aesthetics evolved, composers sought to incorporate elements and procedures from their more serious works into the *étude*, which became a forefront of originality by experimenting with the limits of their own technique and the capabilities of their preferred instrument. The first composers to achieve this unity between bravura, form and thematic development were Chopin, Schumann, Liszt, and Alkan.¹¹⁰ Their etudes became known as *concert etudes*, paving the way for the inevitable transformation of the genre. They were, as Czerny says, “by no means mere finger exercises, but thoughtful, brilliant, and sometimes grand pieces; rich in melody, harmony, and new passages, and demanding the attention both of the player and the composer.”¹¹¹ This

¹⁰⁸ Helyard, *Clementi and the Woman at the Piano*, 185-86. Zimmerman also wrote his own set of these titled *Gammes, Exercices et Préludes pour Piano* (Paris: Combre, [n.d.]).

¹⁰⁹ Helyard, *Clementi and the Woman at the Piano*, 185-86.

¹¹⁰ Alkan and Schumann, for example, composed their *Symphony for Piano Solo*, Op. 39 Nos. 4-7 and *Symphonic Etudes*, Op. 13, respectively, of which the etude component aims to imitate orchestral textures at the piano, while greatly expanding its length and incorporating elements of sonata form and variation form, respectively.

¹¹¹ Czerny, *School of Practical Composition*, 1:90.

new kind of *étude* no longer *preceded* the “real” music but *became* the music itself. It redefined virtuosity as a vehicle for poetry rather than a sole didactic use.

Composers often competed with one another to expand the possibilities of piano playing through their etudes, establishing their stature at the time. Such works were very difficult for most pianists—even for the composers themselves—if not, impossible to sight-read accurately, as time must be spent learning them to a performable standard. Czerny described them as “splendid bravura-compositions, intended rather for highly cultivated players, and for public performances, than for the instruction of [amateurs, who] have still to climb many steps to arrive at perfection.”¹¹² For example, Chopin dedicated his ground-breaking *Études*, Op. 10, to Liszt, writing that the dedicatee played them with such mastery that he “wished he could steal his manner of rendering [his] own works.”¹¹³

However, it was the dedicatee, “who exhausted the technical possibilities of the Romantic piano.”¹¹⁴ The study of Liszt shows a figure who frequently blurred the boundaries of the conception of the musical work through his arrangements, transcriptions, and own compositions, and “allowed his ideas to spread out into multiple media, genres and forms.”¹¹⁵ As Dufetel argues, “the idea of continuity and coherence is important to understanding the evolution of Liszt’s pianism—for instance, through his three sets of *Études*” (published in 1826, 1837 and 1852 respectively).¹¹⁶ Samson describes the evolution of such works as an “‘open’ compositional process, whose apparent permissiveness cuts against the grain of a strengthening German tradition centred on the notion of the *Werktreue*.”¹¹⁷ As we will see in

¹¹² Carl Czerny, *Letters to a Young Lady, on the Art of Playing the Pianoforte, from the Earliest Rudiments to the Highest Stage of Cultivation*, trans. J. A. Hamilton (New York: Hewitt & Jacques, 1837), 43-44, <https://archive.org/details/letterstoyoungla00czeruoft/letterstoyoungla00czeruoft/>.

¹¹³ Franz Liszt and Frédéric Chopin, “Letter to Ferdinand Hiller, June 20, 1833,” in *Letters of Franz Liszt*, 11. The technical innovations of these etudes include: the rapid expansion and contraction of the hand (Nos. 1, 4, 8, 9, 11 and 12), independent use of fingers 3, 4 and 5 (Nos. 2 and 3), thumbs on black notes in scale and arpeggio playing (Nos. 4, 5 and 10) and various double note configurations (Nos. 7 and 10). See also Elgendinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 18-21.

¹¹⁴ Elgendinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 20.

¹¹⁵ Samson, *Virtuosity and the Musical Work*, 104.

¹¹⁶ Dufetel, “Spirit and Mechanism: Liszt’s Early Piano Technique and Teaching,” 138.

¹¹⁷ Samson, *Virtuosity and the Musical Work*, 107.

this chapter, each successive version not only increased in pianistic difficulty but also redefined its artistic purpose, shifting the *étude* from technical drill to an artistic and personal statement.

At around fifteen years of age, Liszt composed his *Étude en 12 exercices*, S. 136 (1826), clearly modelled after his teacher Czerny. These short pieces are built on generic keyboard figurations and often retain a somewhat monotonous, predictable character, featuring an abundance of schematic formulas (in Gjerdingen's sense).¹¹⁸ They already reveal Liszt's inclination to apply the harmonic and contrapuntal models absorbed in his composition lessons, making them excellent objects for student imitation, yet still very much confined to the pedagogical realm rather than intended for the concert stage. Figures 16 and 17 show various excerpts of passage work from the eighth etude:

¹¹⁸ See the accompanying YouTube video resource to Gjerdingen, *Child Composers in the Old Conservatories*, 201, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNWjgh-d_18. The video explores the use of schematic patterns in Liszt's Op. 1 set.

Figure 16: Liszt, *Étude en 12 exercices* No. 8, S. 136, bars 1-12.¹¹⁹

Allegro con spirito $\text{♩} = 88$



Figure 17: Liszt, *Étude en 12 exercices* No. 8, S. 136, bars 58-64.¹²¹



¹¹⁹ Franz Liszt, *Étude en douze exercices*, S.136, ed. Ferruccio Busoni, *Musikalische Werke*, Serie II, Band 1 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1910; reprint, Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1988 [1827]), 18, [https://imslp.org/wiki/%C3%89tude_en_douze_exercices,_S.136_\(Liszt,_Franz\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/%C3%89tude_en_douze_exercices,_S.136_(Liszt,_Franz)).

¹²¹ Liszt, *Étude en douze exercices*, 20.

From this opening alone, we can see that the etude's didactic goal is LH dexterity with scalic passages.¹²² It is the RH here that serves as an accompaniment—a texture reminiscent of a partimento realisation using plain chords (see Chapter 4.2). Common patterns that we have encountered in Catel and Choron's treatises are present here, such as the Rule of the Octave (bars 1-4) and a sequence (bars 5-8). Such figurations, of course, were not Liszt's invention, but an application of the exercises he would have learned during his studies with Czerny. One might imagine the teacher, owning a copy of Adam and Lachnith's treatise (or an equivalent method of his own) and assigning it to the young Liszt and instructing the prodigy to play all the exercises in all 24 major and minor keys with correct fingerings. It is not surprising that we find similar passages working among the hundreds of exercises in Adam and Lachnith's treatise. Figure 18 shows a possible derivation of the opening bars of Liszt's etude, while Figure 19 shows the ending of the etude:

Figure 18: Adam and Lachnith, *Méthode ou principe Général du doigté*. Exercise No. 37.¹²³



¹²² Left hand = LH and right hand = RH henceforth.

¹²³ Adam and Lachnith, *Méthode ou principe général du doigté pour le forte-piano*, 46.

Figure 19: Adam and Lachnith, *Méthode ou principe Général du doigté*. Arpeggiation of a Four-Part Chord.¹²⁴



A decade later, during his peak as a touring virtuoso, Liszt transformed his *Étude en 12 exercices* into the astonishingly demanding *Douze Grandes Études*, S. 137 (1837). Influenced by Paganini’s technical ambitions, these *études* pushed the limits of both the pianist and instrument—“one of the greatest revolutions of keyboard style in history,” writes Rosen.¹²⁵ Schumann famously declared that only “ten to twelve” pianists in the world could play them.¹²⁶ But this misses the point entirely, as their unplayability suggests they were intended less for performance than as self-standing *works* to be admired on the page. Rather than seeking harmonic or formal originality, Liszt was exploring the outermost boundaries of pianism—what Doran terms “abstract virtuosity.”¹²⁷ The 1837 *études* were “hardly crowd-pleasers,” unconcerned with accessibility; only Liszt himself could convincingly embody them.¹²⁸ Figure 20 shows how the eighth *étude* evolves from the generic figurations of S. 136 into a near-unplayable vision of pianistic excess:

¹²⁴ Adam and Lachnith, *Méthode ou principe général du doigté pour le forte-piano*, 132. Liszt’s chosen figuration is one of the many ways to break up a four-note chord—it is located at the penultimate semi-quaver figure on the second line.

¹²⁵ Charles Rosen, *The Romantic Generation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 491.

¹²⁶ Alexander Stefaniak, *Schumann’s Virtuosity: Criticism, Composition, and Performance in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016), 131.

¹²⁷ Doran, “Introduction: Virtuosity and Liszt,” 24.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

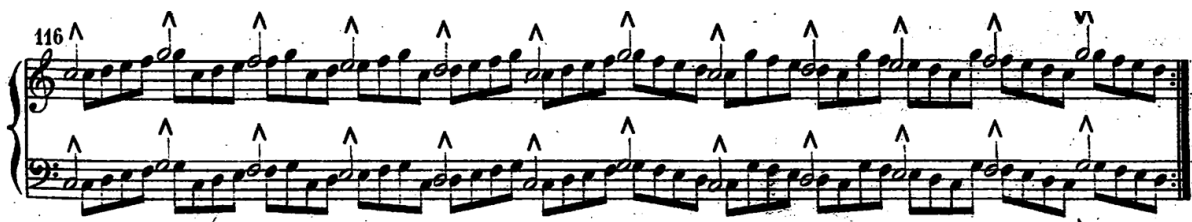
Figure 20: Liszt, *Douze Grandes études*, S. 137: No. 8, bars 1–15.¹²⁹

The musical score is presented in a grand staff format, with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The tempo is marked **Presto strepitoso**. The initial dynamic is *con forza*, which evolves into *sempre fortissimo e marcatissimo*. The score includes several performance instructions: *Pedale.* (pedal), *Rea* (pedal markings), and *s* (sustained notes). There are also asterisks (*) indicating specific points of interest. The score is divided into five systems, each containing two staves. The first system shows the beginning of the piece with a complex rhythmic pattern. The second system introduces a new rhythmic element with a *Rea* marking. The third system features a *s* marking and a *Rea* marking. The fourth system continues the complex texture with a *s* marking and a *Rea* marking. The fifth system concludes the passage with a *Rea* marking and a *s* marking. A small section at the bottom left is labeled *(Idee)* and *(F. B.)* with a *ff* dynamic marking.

¹²⁹ Franz Liszt, *Grandes études*, S.137, ed. Ferruccio Busoni, *Musikalische Werke*, Serie II, Band 1 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1910 [1837]; reprint, Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1988), 88, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Grandes_%C3%A9tudes,_S.137_\(Liszt,_Franz\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Grandes_%C3%A9tudes,_S.137_(Liszt,_Franz)).

Subtitled *Pan demonium* (possibly after Milton's *Paradise Lost* [1667]), the *étude* evokes a demonic soundscape, its "sonata-form" design elevating the genre from didactic study to concert work.¹³⁰ Instead of the LH "perpetuum mobile" scales and block chords of S. 136, Liszt divides the material into two motivic layers: rapid five-finger scale groups and descending accented chordal attacks, creating extreme "registral whiplash." Its technical innovations were so striking that Zimmerman may have later cited the same passage in his *Encyclopédie* (Figure 21):

Figure 21: Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie du Pianiste-Compositeur*. A Five-Finger Exercise.¹³¹



At the climactic return of the second subject, Liszt presents us with a unique combination of arpeggiation, tremolos and thick chords (Figure 22). These textures represent the originality of Liszt's writing. Very few textures and diminutions in this etude are included in Adam and Lachnith's 1798 manual, which shows how much piano playing had progressed in the four decades prior:

¹³⁰ Samson, *Virtuosity and the Musical Work*, 183.

¹³¹ Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie*, 2:5.

Figure 22: Liszt, *Douze Grandes études*, S. 137: No. 8, bars 232-41.¹³²

Liszt’s final version of the etudes, the *Études d’exécution transcendante*, S. 139 (1852), was composed after he retired from the concert stage and reflects his mature identity as both composer and pedagogue. Dedicated to Czerny in recognition of his lineage, these works are far more idiomatic, refined, and expressively conceived than the virtuosic excess of the 1837 set. As Carew observes, they “[followed] the trend toward characterisation, with ten of the twelve now bearing programmatic titles”—for example, the fourth *étude* is now titled “*Mazeppa*,” increasing the appeal of the works to a broader audience.¹³³ By 1852, the work-concept had begun to influence Liszt’s thinking by reworking textures with greater clarity and reducing the earlier version’s excesses.

¹³² Liszt, *Grandes études*, S.137, ed. Ferruccio Busoni, 102.

¹³³ Carew, *The Mechanical Muse*, 52.

The eighth *étude*, retitled “*Wilde Jagd*,” draws on the “Gothic imagination of early Romanticism,” evoking “woodland scenes with more menacing, sinister and supernatural qualities.”¹³⁴ Its form shifts toward “scherzo-like” continuity featuring sectional contrasts that are elided for propulsion and dramatic effect.¹³⁵ Liszt simplifies much of the passagework not to dilute the difficulty, but to heighten the effect, as the hunting topic demands rhythmic clarity, sharp attack, and visceral pacing for the wide leaps. In the opening (Figure 23), the hand-alternating octave tremolo produces an orchestral-like volume impossible in the earlier versions. At the same time, the descending “equestrian” chords retain their galloping profile through repeated accents on the third quaver of each beat.¹³⁶ Compared to the 1837 version, we can see how Liszt simplifies this passage in the second subject recapitulation (Figure 24). Most of the tremolos and arpeggios have been omitted for both execution and clarity of motivic ideas, preferring the use of block chords (struck together):

¹³⁴ Samson, *Virtuosity and the Musical Work*, 182.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 183.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 182.

Figure 23: Liszt, *Études d'exécution transcendante*, S. 139: No. 8, bars 1-15.¹³⁷



Figure 24: Liszt, *Études d'exécution transcendante*, S. 139: No. 8, bars 172-81.¹³⁸



¹³⁷ Franz Liszt, *Études d'exécution transcendante*, S.139, ed. Ferruccio Busoni, *Musikalische Werke*, Serie II, Band 2 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1911 [1851]; reprint, Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1988), 50, [https://imslp.org/wiki/%C3%89tudes_d%27ex%C3%A9cuti%27on_transcendante,_S.139_\(Liszt,_Franz\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/%C3%89tudes_d%27ex%C3%A9cuti%27on_transcendante,_S.139_(Liszt,_Franz)).

¹³⁸ Liszt, *Études d'exécution transcendante*, S.139, ed. Ferruccio Busoni, 58.

Therefore, the transformation of Liszt's virtuosity in the *Études d'exécution transcendante* reflects the influence of the work-concept. As the idea of the musical work solidified, Liszt's earlier improvisatory flair from his youth gave way to carefully structured compositions—aligning with Dahlhaus' observation that it was “the very economy of Lisztian virtuosity that marked the end of the age of improvisation.”¹³⁹ The first set of *études* closely imitated its predecessors and served a primarily didactic purpose. Building on this foundation, the second set pushed the limits of virtuosity at the time, made possible by Liszt's technical mastery, imagination and the expanded capabilities of the piano. The third set brings this trajectory to its summit. Conceived as a monumental artistic statement, it refines the earlier versions while immortalising Liszt's own virtuosity. These works stand as a legacy for future generations—whether to test their limits by performing them or to admire them as lasting symbols of “transcendental” pianism.

The evolution of the etude thus shows how the pianist-composer mediated between the improvisatory practices of earlier traditions and the authority of the written score. Etudes thus stand as a testament to how virtuosity itself was reimagined under the work-concept's compositional standards, not simply as facility at the keyboard, but as an expression of authorship and compositional identity. However, not all pianist-composers were composing to preserve their legacy for future generations. There were also aspects of their careers concerned with “music as event,” in which improvisation served a practical purpose. Let us now depart from the salons and concert halls and make our way inside the Gothic cathedrals of Paris.

2.1.5 Organ Liturgical Music: Preserving “Style” instead of the “Work”

As previously discussed in Chapter 1.2.1, many pianist-composers were also organists, not only because of the similarities in instrument mechanics but also because organist positions provided stability for long-term employment. It is interesting to compare their secular and non-secular output; although their

¹³⁹ Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 138.

styles often overlapped, they generally adhered to different compositional aesthetics. Piano and organ music (or more generally, concert and liturgical music) in the first half of the nineteenth century differed in their purpose. The former fulfilled the role of music as “event” and the latter, music as “work” (see Chapter 2.1.1). Organ works, at least before the first half of the nineteenth century, were mostly functional first and bore generic titles, as shown in Table 6.¹⁴⁰ They were the embodiment of the former, not aiming to strive for originality per se. Organists were the ultimate practitioners of Small’s *musicking* (see Chapter 2.1.1).

The necessity for improvisation skills for organists stems from the liturgical service, which can vary in pace according to several “unpredictable” variables, such as the priest’s reading pace, incensation, “length of processions and the number of people receiving communion.”¹⁴² This sort of unpredictability in music making means there was little opportunity to compose works with the same aesthetics as instrumental concert music. Since performance had a variable length, there were few opportunities to apply, as Czerny would say, “development” and “form,” since the improvisation or piece could be cut short at any moment.¹⁴³ Any development in liturgical music would usually involve small, recurring motifs or a Plain Chant melody as a basis for improvisation. This is not to say there was not some degree of preservation involved, as specific musical procedures were deemed acceptable at various parts of the Traditional Latin Mass. An organist, for example, would not improvise a fanfare during communion or the elevation, nor would they improvise a lullaby during a postlude. While these works were being played, the service they accompanied was more important. Audience applause, for example, which is standard practice in recitals and operas, would be inappropriate for the congregation (except perhaps the

¹⁴⁰ Organ music was nearly synonymous with liturgical music up until the mid-nineteenth century. Concert music for organ (transcriptions, symphonies, etc) came into fruition with Cavaillé-Coll’s organs and the French Symphonic School (with Franck, Widor, Guilmant and Vierne). Peter Hurford, *Making Music on the Organ* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 134. Organ works from the latter half of the nineteenth century also became independent of the liturgy, particularly the organ symphonic tradition that arose from the French school around the same period. Playing these works in full would be suitable for a concert and thus would need to feature modes of development on par with serious piano works.

¹⁴² Smith, *Saint-Saëns and the Organ*, 7.

¹⁴³ Czerny, *School of Practical Composition*, 1: 1.

postlude). Furthermore, some of these works are performed only on specific dates in the Church calendar, limiting their performances to only a few times a year (Holy Week, Pentecost, and Christmas, for example).¹⁴⁴ This is in contrast to “serious” piano music or concert music in general, which could be performed at any time and was revered in salons and concert halls.

“Boasting the largest repertory of all instruments,”¹⁴⁵ Table 6 summarises the types of organ pieces typically found in liturgical contexts, focusing on their function (music as “event”), style/texture, and registration. While this reflects the French Catholic tradition, it can be adapted to broader Western liturgical organ usage:

Table 6: Table of Common Organ Pieces in French Nineteenth-Century Liturgical Music.¹⁴⁶

Type	Liturgical Function	Typical Style/Texture	Registration
Prelude	Pre-service sets the atmosphere as the congregation enters	Homophonic or light contrapuntal; often improvisatory	Moderate registration; bright but not overpowering
Processional	Occurs before, during and after the service as members of the clergy walk along the aisle.	Homophonic, usually march-like	Full organ or soft (depending on the type of processional)
Offertory	During the presentation of the gifts	Flowing lines, lyrical ornamentation	Soft foundation stops; warm and expressive
Prayer	Meditative interlude, often post-homily or during quiet time	Simple, slow-moving and chorale-like.	Soft foundation stops; possibly celeste or voix humaine
Elevation	Played during the elevation of the Host	Static, reverent; sustained chords or delicate arpeggios	Very soft stops; flute and strings
Communion	Played during the reception of communion	Melodic, introspective	Soft foundation stops: flute, strings

¹⁴⁴ However, there are liturgical works (especially those with text) that were initially played at a specific part of the Mass and/or time of year that became divorced from their practical origins and eventually became stand-alone concert works. For example, Ordinary Masses, Requiem Masses or short texts from the Ordinary Mass.

¹⁴⁵ Barbara Owen, Peter Williams, and Stephen Bicknell, "Organ," *Grove Music Online*, 2001, accessed July 3, 2025, <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000044010>.

¹⁴⁶ This table is based on a survey of the pieces found in Lefébure-Wély’s *Vade-mecum de l’organiste*, Op. 187 (1869) and Guilmant’s *L’Organiste liturgiste*, Op. 65 (1865-99)—two works consisting of pieces used for liturgical purposes. Their varying piece lengths are adapted to fit the different lengths of the liturgy, and both sets could have served as models for organ students who could not yet improvise.

Strophes or Versets	Alternatim practice—substitutes for sung hymn verses	Based on the chorale melody, varied contrapuntal or homophonic	Matches choir tone; alternates full and reduced registrations
Postlude	Concludes the service; recessional (Sortie, Toccata, March)	Brilliant, rhythmically driven; toccata or fanfare-like	Full organ

Many written (and improvised) organ pieces up to the mid-nineteenth century fell into one of these categories, indicating that organ liturgical music relied on Talbot’s “genre-centred” approach.¹⁴⁷ It is for this reason that organ music from ca. 1800-1870 is unpopular relative to our higher standards imposed by the work-concept on concert and other dramatic works. So rather than preserving the “work,” organists were concerned with the preservation of style. This culture of improvisation was widespread and even admired. Gigout, for example, was renowned for his spontaneous inventiveness as Franck called him “a very great organist and the most astonishing improviser.” At the same time, another observer remarked, “I never saw him with music in eyesight.”¹⁴⁸ In this context, improvisation was not a deviation from compositional authority, but the very measure of an organist’s legitimacy as an artist.

Organists in nineteenth-century Paris were notably divided into two aesthetic “camps.”¹⁴⁹ One side stood figures such as Lefébure-Wély, C.-A. Fessy, and Simon, known for their “colourful” and “popular” improvisations using elements of free composition and instrumental music; on the other stood more conservative organists like Benoist, Boëly, and Danjou, who adhered to a “dignified,” “contrapuntal,” and “sévère” style.¹⁵⁰ This divide also features critics from opposing sides, and despite their differences, both camps shared a liturgical function and generally operated outside the work-concept’s framework. They were not primarily concerned with authorship, originality, or permanence, but with serving immediate contexts and traditions, and even pleasing contemporary audiences to boost attendance in the church.

¹⁴⁷ See Talbot, “The Work-Concept and Composer-Centredness.”

¹⁴⁸ Charles-Augustin Collin, “Eugène Gigout, sa carrière, son œuvre,” *La Musique sacrée* 25, no. 5–6 (1926), 18–19, quoted in Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation*, 259.

¹⁴⁹ Ochse, *Organists and Organ Playing in Nineteenth-Century France and Belgium*, 33.

¹⁵⁰ Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation*, 33-39. Lefébure-Wély was a Paris Conservatoire alumnus, winning the 1835 Organ prize, and a piano pupil of Zimmerman.

For example, Lefébure-Wély's *L'Organiste moderne* (1867-69) is a twelve-volume work that documents this improvisation culture.¹⁵¹ What makes these pieces “modern” is their use of more popular, contemporary styles. Figure 25 shows an example of one such piece—the *Sortie* in E-flat from the 11th volume of the collection:

Figure 25: Lefébure-Wély, *L'Organiste moderne*: “*Sortie*,” bars 1-12.¹⁵²

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Sortie" by Lefébure-Wély. The score is written for three parts: G. CHOEUR (Choir), G. ORGUE (Organ), and PÉDALE (Pedal). The tempo is marked "Allegro moderato." The key signature is E-flat major (three flats), and the time signature is common time (C). The organ part is marked with a forte (f) dynamic. The score shows the first 12 bars of the piece, with various musical notations including notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

¹⁵¹ According to the title page, these pieces were written on the motifs improvised at services at St. Sulpice. “Collection de morceaux d’orgue dans tous les genres en 12 livraisons. Hommage à M. l’Abbé Hamon, Curé de St. Sulpice. Ces Morceaux ont été écrits sur les motifs improvisés aux offices de St. Sulpice.” Louis James Alfred Lefébure-Wély, *L’Organiste moderne: Collection de morceaux d’orgue dans tous les genres en 12 livraisons* (Paris: Simon Richault, n.d. [ca. 1857]; reissued Paris: Costallat, after 1898),

¹⁵² Lefébure-Wély, *L’Organiste moderne*, 11:2. Lefébure-Wély also composed a set of études featuring these kinds of textures. See his *24 Études en 2 livres*, Op. 23.

What we have here is an example of a contra dance, which one would likely find in a scene from a Grand Opera, which was very popular with the French public. An accompaniment part maintains a pattern, consisting of a downbeat bass (played in the pedals) and offbeat chords (played by the LH on the manuals), reinforcing the quadruple meter and rhythmic regularity of the dance. The melody, despite the occasional use of imitation, is simple and easy to discern in the texture, thanks to its placement in the high register. More importantly, there is a regular phrase structure in which bars and sections can be grouped into sets of 2, 4, 8 and 16; Carew describes these as “foursquare phrasing,” which are typically found in folk and popular music.¹⁵³ This makes the piece highly enjoyable and memorable for the listener as recurring patterns aid in its predictability. The use of surface chromaticism in the melody also references the playful character. These relatively simple elements, when combined, make them “ideal for improvising.”¹⁵⁴

Fétis, a central figure in nineteenth-century French musical reform, famously dismissed such pieces by Lefébure-Wély and those by Fessy for their supposed lack of discipline, claiming that “not one of them has what may be called an organist’s training. All their attention is turned towards special effects, tonal contrasts, and ways to arouse and gratify sensual instincts.”¹⁵⁵ Instead, Fétis draws on J. S. Bach as the model for organists, whose contrapuntal and obligato pedal styles were largely unfamiliar to French organists of the mid-nineteenth century, suggesting the growing reverence for the developing “canon.”¹⁵⁶

This reorientation was not limited to criticism, but also to active encouragement of the study of plainchant and its accompaniment, aiming to return liturgical music to a sense of solemnity and tradition

¹⁵³ Carew, *The Mechanical Muse*, 550.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation*, 259-60; François-Joseph Fétis, “L’Orgue mondaine et la musique érotique à l’église,” in *Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris* 23 (April 1856), 1, quoted in Rollin Smith, *Saint-Saëns and the Organ* (Stuyvesant: Pendragon Press, 1992), 10-11.

¹⁵⁶ French organs traditionally had small, flat pedalboards because the pedal played a limited role, unlike German Baroque organs, which required obligato pedal parts and hence broader, ergonomic pedalboards. Even into the nineteenth century, French Romantic organs retained this design until builders like Cavaillé-Coll, influenced by German organs and repertoire, began adopting larger, German-style pedalboards. See Hurford, *Making Music on the Organ*, 47-48.

and to remove its perceived secular influence. Justin Cadaux (1813-1874), in the preface to his *École d'orgue* (1844), wrote of the need to “restore the taste for this severe music which adds so much solemnity to our religious ceremonies,” while lamenting the “deplorable” inclusion of popular dance forms and romances.¹⁵⁷ Public reception, too, was divided, as one reviewer in *La France musicale* “praised Lefébure-Wély’s technical skill but advised him to adopt a more serious style... [though, he] knew what the public wanted, and continued to perform music of a popular operatic type.”¹⁵⁸ This tension between ecclesiastical ideals and public taste reveals how organists still operated within an event-driven, audience-responsive culture—far less constrained by the emerging idea of the “fixed” musical work that was beginning to dominate piano repertoire.

However, this was not to say that Lefébure-Wély was incapable of improvising in these styles. The collection of pieces from *L'Organiste moderne* shows a variety of styles to please both the changing tastes of the public and the honouring of tradition. Figure 26 is a chromatic fugue from the collection, which demonstrates how Lefébure-Wély’s mastery of the “ancient” style incorporates contrapuntal licence afforded by evolving use of dissonances:

¹⁵⁷ “Nous croyons de même pouvoir contribuer à rétablir dans les Églises le goût de cette musique sévère qui ajoute tant de pompe à nos cérémonies religieuses. En effet, combien n’est-il pas déplorable d’entendre exécuter pendant les Offices divins, les motifs des Contre-danses ou des romances les plus en vogue!” Cadaux, *École d'orgue ou méthode complète*, i. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

¹⁵⁸ Ochse, *Organists and Organ Playing in Nineteenth-Century France and Belgium*, 32-33.

Figure 26: Lefébure-Wély, *L'Organiste moderne*: “Fugue,” bars 1–11.¹⁵⁹



This polarisation of styles reflects the same broader dynamic seen in the pianist-composer’s trajectory: a shift from spontaneity to the reverence for the “fixed” musical work. Like early pianist-composers, many Parisian organists crafted musical events from improvisations, fantasies, and paraphrases that were designed for a particular moment and audience, not necessarily for posterity. But unlike their predecessors, later generations of pianist-composers (who were also organists), and especially those with strong links to composition and conservatoire training, began to internalise and reinforce the ideals of the work-concept in their organ works.

Figures such as César Franck (1822-1890) and Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921) exemplify this change. Though both were deeply gifted improvisers and trained under Benoist, perhaps it was their formative experience as pianists, the piano repertoire, and their prioritisation of composition that aligned them more closely with the ideals of the work-concept. As noted by Ochse, “neither was the darling of the general public,” and both were “respected more for their musicianship than for their popularity.”¹⁶⁰ Take, for example, the *Trois chorals pour grand orgue* (1890) by Franck, which are “extreme, both in

¹⁵⁹ Lefébure-Wély, *L'Organiste moderne*, 11:12.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 58.

design and in tonality” and “have exercised a profound influence on organ music.”¹⁶¹ Vallas has nothing but admiration for the collection, using descriptors we would associate with the “great” and “canonical” works. He highlights Franck’s individuality by noting how he set aside both strict old forms and the theatrical showiness of popular styles, instead aligning himself with “the style of J. S. Bach” and “the expressiveness” of Beethoven—composers who had already secured their place in the canon through their mastery of form and development.¹⁶² Figure 27 shows the opening passage of the first Chorale in E major:

¹⁶¹ Léon Vallas, *César Franck*, trans. Hubert J. Foss (London: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., 1951), 233.

¹⁶² Ibid. The comparison to these composers also reveals a growing reverence for their music (see Chapter 2.1.1).

Figure 27: Franck, *Trois chorals pour grand orgue*, No. 1, bars 1–22.¹⁶³

INDICATION DES JEUX	RÉCIT Fonds de 8 Hautb. POSITIF Fonds de 8 G. O. Fonds de 8 PÉD. Fonds 8 et 16 Claviers accouplés	PREPARE	SWELL Foundation Stops 8 Oboés. CHOIR Foundation Stops 8 GREAT Foundation Stops 8 PEDAL Foundation Stops 8, 16 Key Boards Coupled
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MANUALE

PÉDALE

Moderato

G.O. GREAT

RÉCIT SWELL

G.O. GREAT

From this opening alone, despite its learned-style texture, we see how Franck's style manifests in the work: the use of prepared and unprepared modulations (see the third and fifth lines) to create colour

¹⁶³ César Franck, *Trois chorals pour grand orgue* (Paris: Durand, 1892), 1, [https://imslp.org/wiki/3_Chorals_for_Organ_\(Franck,_C%C3%A9sar\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/3_Chorals_for_Organ_(Franck,_C%C3%A9sar)).

within the phrases, and the variable phrase lengths that hint at improvisation. His pianistic background focused most of the attention on the manuals (which were somewhat limited by his pedal technique).¹⁶⁴ Perhaps the most notable feature of Franck's organ music is the specific instructions regarding registration, which would typically have been left to the organist. "Whereas César Franck was precise," with his registrations, writing for his organ at *Sainte-Clotilde*, other organists, such as Saint-Saëns, were "at best, vague" and left it for the performer.¹⁶⁵ They are not just indicated in the beginning, as shown in Figure 27, but throughout the whole work. The music is even written in such a way as to accommodate a register change, whether by a free hand or by a foot controlling the pedals for expression and reeds (*anches pedale*).¹⁶⁶

"Organ performance was not the priority for either Franck or Saint-Saëns," and unlike Lefébure-Wély, they did not build their reputations solely on public performance.¹⁶⁷ Instead, they concentrated on composition, thus producing organ music for posterity. It is for this reason that Franck and Saint-Saëns are remembered as "great" organists in the twenty-first century, while earlier virtuosos like Fessy or Lefébure-Wély have largely faded from view. Their performance-centred practices—despite their brilliancy and widespread admiration from the public—did not align with the emerging criteria of the posterity that defined musical "greatness" by work-concept's compositional standards.

Despite stylistic divides among Parisian organists, who were also pianist-composers, we see how the work-concept reshaped liturgical, pedagogical, and aesthetic expectations for organ music. Pianist-composers, organists, and critics alike navigated this changing terrain—some adapting, others resisting, and a few, like Franck and Saint-Saëns, serving as mediators between the two.

¹⁶⁴ According to Widor. Ochse, *Organists and Organ Playing in Nineteenth-Century France and Belgium*, 183. Even for passages in the LH where it would be much easier to play with an 8' pedal part, he would rather have the LH play wide stretches spanning a 10th or 11th.

¹⁶⁵ Smith, *Saint-Saëns and the Organ*, 187.

¹⁶⁶ Registration is an improvisatory art, as organ specifications vary by instrument, venue and acoustics. Organists often adapt the composer's indications, substituting stops and considering acoustics, making exact adherence to the score generally impossible.

¹⁶⁷ Ochse, *Organists and Organ Playing in Nineteenth-Century France and Belgium*, 59.

2.2 Transcriptions, Arrangements and Paraphrases: Reconciling “Original” and “Derivative” Composition

As a result of the work-concept’s compositional standards, Goehr notes that nineteenth-century musicians responded by distinguishing “*original*” and “*derivative*” composition, thereby continuing to reuse “pre-composed music” without violating emerging ideals of authorship.¹⁶⁸ Clearly, the arrangement falls into the category of “derivative” composition, yet it occupies an ambiguous position by both supporting and challenging these aesthetics.¹⁶⁹ On one hand, they reinforced the canon by stabilising and circulating certain “great works,” as pianist-composers selectively arranged repertoire that reflected enduring artistic value—“[prolonging] the shelf-life” as Carew would say.¹⁷⁰ On the other hand, they subverted it by freely reworking, transcribing, or reimagining pieces to suit new instruments, audiences, or expressive purposes. Arguably far from being merely “derivative” works, such reworkings reveal the pianist-composer’s ability to mediate between improvisation, notation, and changing performance contexts.

Whereas other instrumental combinations were difficult to assemble, particularly for amateurs, the piano’s status as a household instrument ensured that arrangements involving it were both practical and profitable.¹⁷¹ They “also destabilized traditional musical divisions between symphonic and chamber genres, professional and amateur music culture,” bringing works from the concert hall or theatre hall to the home or salon.¹⁷² As Marx observed, “almost all” major genres were adapted for piano, making them accessible to a broader public.¹⁷³ Publishers capitalised on this domestic demand as arrangements

¹⁶⁸ Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*, 222.

¹⁶⁹ The difference between arrangements, transcriptions, and paraphrases is difficult to define, as such terms fall on a spectrum of fidelity to the original source. When referring to the three practices, the umbrella term “arrangement” will be used.

¹⁷⁰ Carew, *The Mechanical Muse*, 538.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 538-40.

¹⁷² Thomas Christensen, “Four-Hand Piano Transcription and Geographies of Nineteenth-Century Musical Reception,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 52, no. 2 (1999): 298, <https://doi.org/10.2307/831999>.

¹⁷³ Marx, *The Universal School of Music*, 331.

enabled “a literate musical public” to experience music otherwise rare in performance.¹⁷⁴ For piano solo arrangements, Cory argues that there was the “desire for financial profit” and “popularity when performed for the general public by virtuoso pianists.”¹⁷⁵

In this chapter, we will see the complex relationship pianist-composers had with arranging—“an ordinary *savoir faire* that professional pianists need[ed] to master, and that any piano student should acquire as part of their regular education.”¹⁷⁶ It begins with improvised arrangements and traces their decline as compositional aesthetics gradually came to be imposed upon improvisation. Then we look at the importance of score reading on the development of the pianist-composer’s arranging skills. Finally, we explore how arrangements by Liszt and his predecessors, J. N. Hummel (1778-1837) and Frédéric Kalkbrenner (1785-1849), navigated “a dangerous and exhilarating path between commentary and tribute,” where the boundaries between *original* and *derivative* composition virtually disappeared.¹⁷⁷ Together, these case studies will reveal how arranging preserved the work as an “event” and preserved the spirit of improvisation during the rise of the work-concept.

2.2.1 Applying the Standards of the “Work” in Improvised Arrangements

In the nineteenth century, the transcription, arrangement, and paraphrase (both improvised and written) formed a vital part of the pianist-composer’s practice. They often borrowed from opera and orchestral works, allowing performers to display their technical brilliance while creatively reimagining works familiar to many listeners (both critics and “laymen”). As acts of interpretation and reinvention, such practices challenged the emerging work-concept by blurring the boundaries between “originality” and “derivation.”

¹⁷⁴ Christensen, “Four-Hand Piano Transcription and Geographies of Nineteenth-Century Musical Reception,” 259.

¹⁷⁵ William Michael Cory, “Franz Liszt’s ‘symphonies de Beethoven: Partitions de Piano’ (Volumes I and II)” (D.M.A., The University of Texas at Austin, 1981), 4.

¹⁷⁶ Luca Montebugnoli, “‘On the Art of Accompanying the Score’: Louis Adam’s Instructions for Arranging Orchestral Music on the Piano,” *Keyboard Perspectives: Yearbook of the Westfield Center for Historical Keyboard Studies* XIII, no. 6 (2022): 129.

¹⁷⁷ Samson, *Virtuosity and the Musical Work*, 5.

Potpourri were the most popular kind, a type of paraphrase that combines several existing melodies, such as popular opera numbers, folksongs, and even symphonic tunes. They were impressive for the *Liebhaber*, who were not primarily concerned with the development of material, but rather, familiarity with the tune. Czerny recommends potpourri for the “largely heterogeneous public, [who were] entertained only by pleasant, familiar tunes and [were] sustained in spirit by piquant and glittering performances.”¹⁷⁸ By contrast, theme and variations and free fantasias are more complex improvisations that feature greater development and also fall under the paraphrase category, and will delight and impress the *Kenner*. Improvisers in the nineteenth century, such as Hummel, often juggled between the preferences of these two kinds of listeners and received mixed reviews for their improvisations.¹⁷⁹

Czerny provides examples of variation for a given theme and how it can be developed via texture, key, fragmentation, tempo, and meter, etc., which would please the *Kenner* (Figure 28). There is something somewhat ironic here about writing down an improvisation—an “event” which becomes transformed into a preserved work. We should ask ourselves whether Czerny owns these examples, or should they be freely claimed by the improviser who has yet to realise them?

¹⁷⁸ Czerny, *A Systematic Introduction to Improvisation on the Pianoforte*, 86.

¹⁷⁹ Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation*, 70-71.

Figure 28: Czerny, *Systematische Anleitung zum Fantasieren auf dem Pianoforte*, Op. 200. Variations (Incipits) on an Original Theme.¹⁸⁰

Figure 29 is something the *Liebhaber* would enjoy, as Czerny presents a medley of famous tunes in counterpoint. More importantly, this example is limited in its development and serves only to please listeners in the moment (music as “event”), without any expectation that they will listen and recall previously heard material.

¹⁸⁰ Carl Czerny, *Systematische Anleitung zum Fantasieren auf dem Pianoforte*, Op. 200 (Vienna: Diabelli & Cappi, n.d. [1829]), 37-38, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Systematische_Anleitung_zum_Fantasieren_auf_dem_Pianoforte,_Op.200_\(Czerny,_Carl\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Systematische_Anleitung_zum_Fantasieren_auf_dem_Pianoforte,_Op.200_(Czerny,_Carl)).

Figure 29: Czerny, *Systematische Anleitung zum Fantasieren auf dem Pianoforte*, Op. 200. Variations on a Theme, including a Combination of Famous Tunes.¹⁸¹

a.)
 als
 Canon
 in der r.
 oder:

Diesse Thema lässt sich auf mancherley Art benützen .

b.)

c.)
 mit
 Flute
 brittanis.

d.)
 mit
 Marlborough
 'en va.

e.)
 mit Mozarts
 Mädchen oder
 Weibchen

f.)
 mit
 das waren mir
 selige Tage.

Einzelne Noten kann man im Nothfall ändern .

D. et C. N.º 3270.

Here, we see the importance of musical topics for both sets of variations, which help the improviser navigate the many unknown variables of improvisation, such as meter, tempo, and texture, thereby reducing the cognitive load on the improviser. In both sets, Czerny was mainly concerned with the incipit of each variation, as it contains the essential information required to complete the rest, should the meter, tempo, and texture remain consistent. Improvised variations served to “alienate it [the tune] from its popular, commodified form” and made it more appealing to critical listeners.¹⁸²

However, criticism arose when pianists improvised variations and potpourris on popular material (e.g. simple songs or comic opera tunes), which the *Kenner* found lacking in structural depth.¹⁸³ The key component for a “good” improvisation was *Durchführung*, a method of “developing” a theme

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 76-77.

¹⁸² Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation*, 66.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

according to the standards of composition, thus “alienating” it from its commercial or trivial origins.¹⁸⁴ So when improvising in potpourri style, pianists were expected to achieve a “unifying” structure even when traditional development was not possible.¹⁸⁵ Overall, critics valued formal integrity and thematic development in improvisation, even when based on popular material—a view that embeds it in the work-concept’s compositional standards.

In improvising such variations, Herz insisted that “originality [was] even more indispensable” since the themes themselves are pre-existing. Success, he argues, depended on inventive harmonic treatment, textural variety, and “striking rhythmical effects.” At the same time, he advised students to approach public improvisation with caution, noting that even great improvisers like Hummel “sometimes failed to sustain his usual degree of excellence.” For this reason, Herz recommended that improvisation be reserved for private settings or for sympathetic audiences who will “pardon the imperfections,” since public performance carried a high risk of artistic failure.¹⁸⁶

These accounts show that improvisations were seen as “commodified” and artistically “inferior,” unless transformed into something more structurally refined and unified.¹⁸⁷ Even with the looser forms, such as potpourri, where rigorous development is impossible, there were expectations to aspire to the standards of the “work,” valuing structural cohesion over entertainment value for the masses. Therefore, under the influence of the work-concept, improvisation was no longer simply about spontaneous creativity, pleasing audiences, or music as “event.” Instead, it had to conform to aesthetic norms of rigorous composition practice, aligning it with the emerging ideals of the musical “work.”

As a reaction to the influence of the work-concept on improvisation, some composers abandoned the practice altogether: Mendelssohn stopped improvising by giving in to critics via temporary “self-

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Herz, *New and Complete Piano-Forte School*, 21.

¹⁸⁷ Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation*, 190.

doubt,”¹⁸⁸ while others, such as Liszt, became “dissatisfied” with the whole ritual.¹⁸⁹ With the added burden of structural coherence, they began writing down these improvisations, allowing them to release their creative energies within these refined aesthetic standards. These same standards not only shaped improvisation but also encouraged its preservation in written form.

Written transcriptions, arrangements, and paraphrases served an important role in nineteenth-century musical culture. As few musicians could improvise or transcribe accurately by ear, pianist-composers provided arrangements that balanced accuracy with technical accessibility for their intended audience. Arranging was also practical, enabling orchestral or operatic works to circulate in salon and domestic settings, for pianist-composers such as Liszt and Thalberg, much of whose “appeal rested for the most part on [their] opera fantasies and transcriptions of others’ works”—especially on the opera numbers of Bellini, Meyerbeer, Mozart, and lieder by Schubert and Schumann.¹⁹⁰

Before delving into specifics, it is important to distinguish the nuances among transcription, arrangement, and paraphrase. A transcription “is a significant alteration in the medium for which the work is written,” while aiming to preserve as much of the original structure, harmony, texture, and character as possible.¹⁹¹ An arrangement, on the other hand, is a freer adaptation of an existing work or “modifying... extensively the musical contents of the original.”¹⁹² They are often reshaped for a different purpose, audience, or expressive goal—usually serving a pedagogical purpose—and frequently appear in piano methods (a simplified arrangement of an instrumental work or song is common). A paraphrase is a type of arrangement that radically departs from the source, preserving only the most *essential* elements of the original—such as the thematic/motivic material—but altering its structure, harmony, and

¹⁸⁸ Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, *Briefe aus den Jahren 1830 bis 1847*, ed. Paul Mendelssohn Bartholdy and Carl Mendelssohn Bartholdy (Leipzig: Hermann Mendelssohn, 1889), 214–15 [Letter dated 18 October 1831], quoted in Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation*, 154–55.

¹⁸⁹ Robert Wangermée, “L’improvisation pianistique au début du XIXe siècle,” in *Miscellanea musicologica Floris van der Mueren* (Ghent: L. van Melle, 1950), 252–53, quoted in Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation*, 154–55.

¹⁹⁰ Doran, “Introduction: Virtuosity and Liszt,” 3.

¹⁹¹ Stephen Davies, “Transcription, Authenticity and Performance,” *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 28, no. 3 (1988): 217, <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjaesthetics/28.3.216>.

¹⁹² Davies, “Transcription, Authenticity and Performance,” 218.

texture—improvised variations and potpourris fall under this category.¹⁹³ Separating these terms is difficult due to the “substantial overlap and shading of function between them,” so Samson suggests that it would be better to lay them out on a “spectrum of genres journeying from literal translation to free composition.”¹⁹⁴ Table 7 shows a comparison of these three types:

Table 7: Transcription, Arrangement and Paraphrase in the Nineteenth Century.

Category	Definition	Relation to Original Work	Purpose/Context	Examples
Transcription	Significant alteration in medium (e.g., orchestral to piano) while aiming to preserve structure, harmony, texture, and character.	Closest to a “literal translation” of the source.	Dissemination of works; salon or domestic performance; fidelity to score.	Liszt’s transcriptions of Schubert and Schumann lieder, including <i>Erlkönig</i> and <i>Widmung</i> , respectively. Symphonic transcriptions by Hummel, Kalkbrenner and Liszt (see Chapter 2.2.3).
Arrangement	Freer adaptation, often modifying musical content extensively to suit a new purpose, audience, or pedagogical goal.	Moderately faithful—retains recognisable features but is reshaped.	Simplified versions for students, piano methods, salon reductions.	Simplified versions of operatic arias for amateurs as found in the Piano methods of Adam, Herz and Zimmerman.
Paraphrase	Radical departure from the source, preserving only thematic/motivic material while altering structure, harmony, and texture.	Loosest connection to the original; becomes recomposition.	Virtuosic display; improvisatory ethos; concert showpieces.	Liszt’s <i>Réminiscences de Norma</i> ; Thalberg’s opera fantasies.

Keep argues that due to the increasing versatility of the piano, nineteenth-century pianist-composers, such as Brahms and Liszt, “took their cue from Beethoven [and] sought to write pieces for the

¹⁹³ These *essential* elements will be further discussed in Chapter 5.1.1.

¹⁹⁴ Samson, *Virtuosity and the Musical Work*, 106.

piano that could reinvent what the instrument was itself increasingly capable of.”¹⁹⁵ While the former was “more strict about the fixed nature of the composition while somewhat flexible about its realization,” the latter was the opposite, “more flexible about fluidity of the work-concept” and “with his multiple versions of the *Transcendental Etudes*, his frequent ossia passages, and improvisatory treatment of paraphrases and transcriptions.”¹⁹⁶

The differing approaches of these composers show us two possible ways of looking at the musical work in relation to the work-concept: either a *fixed* or *fluid* entity. The tension between these two views highlights the evolving roles of the performer and composer in the nineteenth century, with the pianist-composer positioned between them. This might be represented as the typology, as shown in Table 8:

Table 8: A Typology Outlining the Work and Its Realisation during the Common Practice Period.

	Fixed Realisation	Fluid Realisation
Fixed Work	Modernism (Debussy, Ravel, Scriabin, Rachmaninoff) - Score and performance tightly controlled.	Classical tradition (Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert) - fixed scores, interpretive freedom in performance and instrumentation.
Fluid Work	Romantic tradition (Chopin, Liszt) -multiple versions with the same instrument(s), revisions; exacting performance expectations.	Baroque tradition (Bach family, Handel, Scarlatti)—score and performance are flexible.

Here, each cell corresponds to a specific period in Western art music and serves as a valuable tool for analysing how different composers and eras conceptualise the relationship between the score and performance. Note that during the era of the pianist-composer (ca. 1830’s), there was a particular preference for either the “fixed” work *or* its “fixed” realisation. This duality reveals that the musical “work” was not just a product of the written page but also of its evolution through multiple

¹⁹⁵ David Keep, “Brahms ‘versus’ Liszt: The Internalization of Virtuosity,” ed. Robert Doran, *Eastman Studies in Music*; 168 (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2020), 195, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvxhrkq3.10>.

¹⁹⁶ Keep, “Brahms ‘versus’ Liszt: The Internalization of Virtuosity,” 195.

performances. As Rosen argues, “composition and paraphrase were not identical for [Liszt], but they were so closely interwoven that separation is impossible.”¹⁹⁷ Hamilton extends this argument by claiming the creative output of composers and arrangers “as a continuum stretching from performance to original composition via improvisation and transcription—the categories are far from independent.”¹⁹⁸ This framework is essential for understanding how nineteenth-century musicians navigated authorship, taste, and artistic agency within a culture increasingly shaped by the work-concept’s compositional standards.

Therefore, the “[arrangement] does not call into question the originality or the profundity of the final version, but simply charts its evolution. Creation often begins with recreation; this is simply how composers tend to compose.”¹⁹⁹ Sometimes it even “surpasses the composition itself” as the new media is capable of new modes of expression, unavailable in the original, something which Borodin observed upon hearing Liszt improvise a transcription in Weimar.²⁰⁰ We will see in this chapter that transcriptions, arrangements, and paraphrases are, in their own way, compositions that demand the same prestige.

2.2.2 The Importance of Score Reading

As most arrangements were derived from orchestral and vocal works, score-reading was not only a necessity but a defining skill of the pianist-composer.²⁰¹ It trained pianists to translate orchestral, vocal, or chamber music textures at sight, balancing fluid adaptation with respect to the written text. Barrington famously recounts Mozart, aged eight, sight-reading an orchestral score in London: he “began to play the symphony in a most masterly manner, as well as in the time and style which corresponded with the intention of the composer.”²⁰² Czerny likewise recalls reconstructing complete symphonies of

¹⁹⁷ Rosen, *The Romantic Generation*, 502–03.

¹⁹⁸ Kenneth Hamilton, “Après une Lecture de Czerny? Liszt’s Creative Virtuosity” in *Liszt and Virtuosity*, ed. Robert Doran, Eastman Studies in Music; 168 (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2020), 71, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvxhrkq3.6>.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 72.

²⁰⁰ Alfred Habets, *Borodin and Liszt*, trans. Rosa Newmarch (London: Digby, Long & Co., 1895), 68.

²⁰¹ See also its companion section later in the thesis: Chapter 5.2.

²⁰² Daines Barrington, “Account of a very remarkable young Musician,” *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* 60 (1770): 54–64.

Beethoven, Haydn, and Mozart from individual parts in his youth, a testament to the essential role of score-reading in their formation as pianist-composers.²⁰³

We can see here that the popularity of arrangements and transcriptions began with the composer's desire to acquire new repertoire by playing music for instruments other than the piano. It was only around the mid-nineteenth century that full scores became common for the *Kenner* to "examine the piece at leisure, play through portions at the keyboard, and explore the complex relationships among the elements."²⁰⁴ The availability of the full score, the rapid development of the piano, and the demand for arranged symphonies and operas for domestic use created a new, untapped market for pianist-composers to write arrangements of these works for the *Liebhaber*.

Once it became widespread, the ability to play from a score was one of the most important skills for a pianist in the nineteenth century, as noted in many accompaniment treatises. In Adam's *Méthode*, the pedagogical value of the piano is highlighted as a self-sufficient medium capable of "execut[ing] music of all other instruments."²⁰⁵ But this potential was only available to those who combined fluency in harmony, score-reading, and compositional adaptation. Like Adam, Czerny emphasised the piano's orchestral potential, describing its "fullness of harmony" as enabling the pianist to perform symphonic and operatic scores convincingly.²⁰⁶ Together, their perspectives illuminate how the pianist-composer's training positioned the piano as both a practical and pedagogical substitute for the orchestra.

The growing popularity of opera, choral societies, and dance music in the nineteenth century also raised the demand for rehearsal pianists. Full orchestral rehearsals were costly and impractical, necessitating pianists who could read full scores and condense them into effective reductions, often at sight. Even though it is arguably a redundant skill in the twenty-first century, with piano reductions for

²⁰³ Czerny and Sanders, "Recollections from My Life," 308.

²⁰⁴ Grout, Burkholder, and Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 578.

²⁰⁵ Adam, *Piano Method of the Conservatoire*, 227.

²⁰⁶ Carl Czerny, *Complete Theoretical and Practical Pianoforte School from the First Rudiments of Playing to the Highest and most Refined state of Cultivation*, Op. 500. 3 vols. Translated by J. A. Hamilton. London: R. Cocks & Co., n.d. [1839], 3:104, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Pianoforte-Schule,_Op.500_\(Czerny,_Carl\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Pianoforte-Schule,_Op.500_(Czerny,_Carl)).

almost all works in the standard orchestral and operatic repertoire, score reading provides insight into the pianist-composer's mind, enabling spontaneous, real-time decisions about arrangement.²⁰⁸

Fétis' *How to Play from Score* (1829) presents several examples from the repertory on how a pianist might play from a score featuring multiple parts. He shows that it is not always necessary to transcribe a score note-for-note, but to make use of the idiomatic writing for the instrument. That being said, there are a few instances where a note-for-note transcription is possible. For example, when the texture is relatively thin with parts that can be played across the two hands, as shown in Cherubini's *Mass for Three Voices*, arranged for piano solo by Fétis (Figure 30):

²⁰⁸ Score reading remains invaluable, as some already existing arrangements and reductions are unnecessarily complex. Skilled readers can sight-arrange music to preserve essential parts and maintain rhythmic and textural integrity—the basis of textural modifications (see Chapter 5.3).

Figure 30: Cherubini, “Gloria” from *Mass for Three Voices*. Full Score and Piano Arrangement by Fétis.²⁰⁹

Andante con moto. From the same Mass by Cherubini.

Ex. 32. Violins. Alto. Voice. Violoncello and C. B. Lau-damus. *p*

Ex. 33. PIANO.

This is an example of “the fugued style, or contrapuntal style,” when “parts must be reproduced upon the pianoforte without the addition of any filling up of the harmony, and without the introduction of any strange ornament.”²¹⁰ Since every part is significant in the texture, additions and omissions are unnecessary.²¹¹ For textures like these, the arranger requires little creative input, as they play exactly as written. For more complex textures, however, this note-for-note approach is not possible—for example, Leo’s “*Ave maris stella*” (Figure 31):

²⁰⁹ Fétis, *How to Play from Score*, 15 [examples].

²¹⁰ Fétis, *How to Play from Score*, 36 [text].

²¹¹ This texture will be further explored in Chapter 4.3.5.

Figure 31: Leonardo Leo, 'Ave maris stella.' Full Score and Piano Arrangement by Fétis.²¹²

¹² Ex. 27. *Larghetto maestoso.*

The image displays a musical score for 'Ave maris stella' by Leonardo Leo, arranged by Fétis. It is divided into two main sections. The first section, labeled 'Ex. 27', is marked 'Larghetto maestoso' and includes staves for Violins, Alto, and Bass. The second section, labeled 'Ex. 28', is marked 'PIANO' and shows a piano arrangement with a prominent piano part. The piano part in Ex. 28 features a complex texture with multiple layers of notes and rests, and includes 'cresc.' markings. The score is written in a key signature of two flats and a common time signature.

²¹² Fétis, *How to Play from Score*, 12 [examples].

This texture consists of a discernible melody played by the first violins, and the bass part played by the cello [and double bass]. At bars 1-6, those two parts by themselves would be a sufficient reduction, but the “perpetuum mobile” semi-quavers played between the second violins, and viola also form an integral component of the texture. Since playing those inner parts between the two hands would “embarrass the accompanist”²¹³ Due to their difficulty, Fétis’ arrangement makes a compromise: the RH can play the melody while the LH plays arpeggios (spanning an octave), incorporating the bass part and the arpeggiation in the written middle parts. At the last three bars of the excerpt, the violins play a canon at the semi-quaver, creating a series of double notes that are impossible to play at the piano up to speed. Fétis’ solution is simply to omit the second violins altogether, which reduces the texture’s complexity but, in return, enables easier execution.

These kinds of textures, when the LH of the piano imitates tremolo strings, are widespread in piano arrangements—especially those for beginners. Known as the “Alberti Bass,” these capture the bass, harmonic and rhythmic elements of the music in the LH whilst keeping the RH free to play the melody. In nineteenth-century piano methods, simplified arrangements of operatic melodies and challenging piano works were common, which allowed even beginner to intermediate players to engage with popular musical material. Compared to their earlier predecessors, which contained works by the composer himself, this difference outlines the influence of the work-concept over the popularisation of these works. Figure 32 shows Zimmerman’s arrangement of a famous aria from Bellini’s *Norma* (1831), featuring textures suited for the beginner pianist. Similarly, Herz’s *Pianoforte School* also contains many arrangements from the same opera, spanning a range of difficulties, such as Figure 33, which shows his arrangement of a march. The textures here are more complex, but still much simpler than a literal transcription of the full score:

²¹³ Fétis, *How to Play from Score*, 27 [text].

Figure 32: Bellini, "Deh! Con te, con te li prendi" from *Norma*, arr. Zimmerman.²¹⁴

30

THÈME DE NORMA.

N° 9. Pour l'expression.

mesure à 4 temps

ANDANTE.

Mez. Forte. col espressione

BELLINI.

La main gauche écrite alternativement à la clef de Fa et à la clef de Sol.

Figure 33: Bellini, "Marche" from *Norma*, arr. Herz.²¹⁵

MARCHE FROM NORMA.

N° 11.

ALLEGRO MODERATO.

BELLINI.

²¹⁴ Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie*, 1:30.

²¹⁵ Herz, *New and Complete Piano-Forte School*, 80-81.

Typical textures in orchestral music include the tremolo. A literal transcription of such a passage not only goes against the mechanism of the instrument (even with the invention of the double escape-ment mechanism), but it is also injury-inducing. Rather than playing repeated chords, they are arpeggiated in different ways by playing the chord notes one after the other (avoiding adjacent note repetition). On the piano, due to its rapid attack, playing in such a manner creates the auditory illusion of tremolo. Fétis shows how such a passage at Figure 34, which “may be arranged by the accompanist in several [idiomatic] ways, the choice of which depends upon his Caprice and upon his taste.”²¹⁶

Figure 34: Fétis, *How to Play from Score. Various Ways to Play Tremolo Passages on Piano.*²¹⁷

17

Ex. 36.



Violins.

Alto.

Bass.

Ex. 37.



PIANO.

With a melody present, the LH plays the tremolo while the RH plays the melodic part (Figure 35):

²¹⁶ Fétis, *How to Play from Score*, 30 [text].

²¹⁷ Fétis, *How to Play from Score*, 17 [examples]. If a piano work uses a texture like Fétis’ Example 37, can performers switch to a similar texture for easier execution or to better reflect the composer’s intentions? Since both derive from the same orchestral texture, such substitutions seem feasible. This will be addressed in Chapter 5.3.2.

Figure 35: Fétis, *How to Play from Score*. Tremolos with the LH against a Melody.²¹⁸

Ex. 41. Allegro.

The image displays two musical examples. The first, labeled 'Ex. 41. Allegro.', is an orchestral score for Violins, Alto, and Bass. The Violins part features a melodic line with a slur over the first two measures. The Alto and Bass parts play a continuous tremolo accompaniment. The second example, labeled 'Allegro. Reproduction on the Pianoforte.', shows a piano transcription of the same piece. The right hand (RH) plays the melodic line, and the left hand (LH) plays the tremolo accompaniment. The piano part is marked 'PIANO.' and includes dynamic markings such as 'p' and 'f'.

Capturing this sound on the piano remains one of the most challenging components of arranging orchestral works, which Fétis regards as “difficult” and “destitute of effect.”²¹⁹ And it is an aspect that makes the transcriptions of various pianist-composers, such as Hummel, Kalkbrenner, and Liszt, unique (which will be explored in the next chapter)—especially the creative solutions devised by the latter.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 18 [examples].

²¹⁹ Ibid., 29 [text].

2.2.3 The Written Transcription: More Than Just a “Derivative” Work

While frequently dismissed as secondary or “derivative” in comparison to the autonomous work, the transcription occupied a central role in musical life, shaping both performance culture and pedagogy. It is easy to dismiss them as “little else than mere abortions [that] can be produced” during what Sidney Smith calls the “arranging age” in a 1826 review in the *Harmonicon*.²²⁰ Many critics supported the idea, while many rejected it, and such discussions brought up “the uneasy relationship that existed between the nineteenth-century arrangement and a prevailing Romantic ideology.”²²¹ Davies puts it best, saying: “transcription is creative precisely in that it seeks to reconcile the musical content of the original work with the limitations and advantages of a medium for which that content was not designed.”²²²

In the nineteenth century, specific genres, as a result of their performance and compositional aesthetics, demanded different levels of fidelity. For example, opera was understood as inherently variable as performances could differ drastically in staging, vocal ranges, and audience interactions, such as the cheering and heckling common in theatres. It is perhaps for this reason that many opera numbers were freely transcribed, arranged and paraphrased. As Goehr argues, opera’s flexibility meant that it was not treated with the same “reverence” as instrumental music. Thus, arrangements of operatic themes with elaborate virtuosic figurations and textures were culturally accepted and even encouraged.²²³ Some scholars, such as Strohm, characterise Baroque [and to an extent, early Romantic opera] as more “event-like” rather than fully “work-constituted.” He argues for the “‘writteness’ and work-character of this genre and the transient aspect of the performance event.”²²⁴ Even when a single composer was responsible for the music, later performances often introduced modifications without concern for maintaining consistency of the musical text. In cases like the *pasticcio* (operas assembled from various composers’

²²⁰ *Harmonicon* (August 1826): 170, quoted in Samson, *Virtuosity and the Musical Work*, 105-06.

²²¹ Samson, *Virtuosity and the Musical Work*, 106.

²²² Davies, “Transcription, Authenticity and Performance,” 218.

²²³ Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*, 273.

²²⁴ Reinhard Strohm, “Looking Back at Ourselves: The Problem with the Musical Work-Concept,” in *The Musical Work: Reality or Invention?*, ed. Michael Talbot (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 148, <https://doi.org/10.5949/liverpool/9780853238256.003.0007>.

works), this “casualness” was even more prominent.²²⁵ Because opera was seen as less rigidly “owned,” pianist-composers felt greater freedom in borrowing and transforming material without regard for the regulative work-concept.²²⁶

By contrast, arranging a symphony (or similar, including instrumental numbers from operas and ballets and even art songs) demanded a different kind of fidelity. Unlike opera, symphonies were more bound to the ideals of the work-concept (both as a fixed composition and fixed realisation)—performed with a particular group and number of instruments, which was relatively consistent. With the increasing versatility of the piano, for instance, pianist-composers took it upon themselves to liberate the work from its “fixed” realisation. Arrangements of Beethoven’s symphonies were especially popular, crafted for piano solo, piano duet, and various other small ensembles. Examples include: Hummel (piano solo with optional trio accompaniment—published 1825-35), Kalkbrenner (piano solo—published ca. 1841), and Liszt (solo, with his transcriptions arguably the most demanding ever written—composed between 1837-1865.²²⁷ Each transcriber reflects a unique approach to reimagining Beethoven’s orchestral language for the piano and balances between “fidelity” to the original and the mechanics of idiomatic writing for the instrument. While arranging for two pianos and one piano four-hands was a relatively common and simple endeavour, arranging for piano solo is much more difficult, for how can two hands imitate the sounds of 60-100 instruments at the same time?

It is for this reason that this chapter will focus on symphonic transcriptions, in particular three different transcriptions of tutti excerpts from Beethoven’s Symphony No. 7, Op. 92 (1812)—textures which pose a great challenge for any transcriber. It is interesting to see how transcriptions by Hummel

²²⁵ Talbot, “The Work-Concept and Composer-Centredness,” 177.

²²⁶ This also applied to oratorios to an extent. For example, Handel’s *Messiah*, HWV 56, presents itself in several versions depending on the size of the orchestra, number of singers and even length, with some performances choosing to omit certain sections of the oratorio. Similarly, J. S. Bach’s *St Matthew Passion*, BWV 244, was also rearranged and cut by Mendelssohn, whose performance of the work in 1829 was integral to Bach’s revival in the nineteenth century.

²²⁷ There was even the eight-hand arrangement by Alkan of Beethoven’s Seventh Symphony, Op. 92, which was played by Zimmerman, Chopin, Gutmann, and Alkan himself (unpublished). William Alexander Eddie, *Charles Valentin Alkan: His Life and His Music* (London: Routledge, 2007), 7. For a similar-sounding arrangement, see those by Naumann and Kirchner, published in 1856 and 1886, respectively, available on IMSLP: [https://imslp.org/wiki/Symphony_No.7,_Op.92_\(Beethoven,_Ludwig_van\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Symphony_No.7,_Op.92_(Beethoven,_Ludwig_van)).

(ca. 1829), Kalkbrenner (ca. 1841) and Liszt (ca. 1860) capture different aspects of the orchestral textures, made possible by their intended audiences, the improvement of technique, the instrument's expanded capabilities, and the transcriber's own personal touch.

Before analysing the transcriptions, it is useful to compare them with the textures within the symphony itself, as this will give us an idea of what each transcriber considered *essential*. At first hearing, the original symphonic texture may appear relatively simple, with its primary use of homophonic writing (melody and accompaniment). However, there is a surprising integration of textures associated with the learned style, which complicates the transcription process. As Marx writes, "it is often quite impracticable to render every note of a score upon the piano, or to do so without creating confusion."²³⁰ Incorporating these subtle contrapuntal and other textural details into a piano solo arrangement presents a significant challenge to the transcriber.

A key distinction in arranging regards the choice between *literal* and *idiomatic* transcriptions. The former aims to preserve every note of the original, but it is practically impossible to do so. Pianists are limited to playing 8-10 parts simultaneously, the piano's topography, which renders some hand positions difficult, and mechanical constraints such as repetition and tone production. The piano registers are also designed to be homogeneous (at least later models), which further complicates attempts to replicate the orchestra's different tone colours. A more realistic approach would be the latter, which seeks to "translate" the original work into pianistic terms, highlighting the piano's strengths while disguising its limitations—this is perhaps what Adam meant by "substitution."²³¹ Different versions between composers (or even ossias) can each represent a different component of the musical ideal. As Davies argues, "a change from one musical medium to another cannot be achieved mechanically or even automatically by the specification of a change in instrumentation,"²³² and this is precisely where the "original" component of transcription lies.

²³⁰ Marx, *The Universal School of Music*, 295.

²³¹ Adam, *Piano Method of the Conservatoire*, 227.

²³² Davies, "Transcription, Authenticity and Performance," 217.

A section from Beethoven's 7th symphony that best demonstrates this challenge is the first tutti passage of the *Vivace*, with all parts marked *fortissimo* shown in the full score (Figure 36). At bars 89-97, the basses, timpani, and trumpets sustain a dotted-rhythm ostinato on the tonic as a pedal point. The violins carry the melody, doubled two octaves lower by the natural horns, while the woodwinds sustain chords in the mid-to-upper register to enrich the texture. The second violins and violas provide rhythm by playing a tremolo figure outlining the semiquaver subdivision. At bars 97-100, the pedal point is maintained by the timpani and trumpets, now reinforced by the flutes and oboes, still following the rhythmic ostinato. The melody remains in the first violins, now doubled in unison by clarinets and bassoons an octave lower; the [natural] horns double whenever possible. Fragments of the melody are imitated by the string basses, producing a more active bass. The second violins and violas continue the tremolo figure. The subsequent bars 100-04 feature a descending arpeggio fragment from the tail end of the theme and appear in imitation between the first violins and flute, oboe, and bassoon, spread across two octaves. The string basses play the inversion of this arpeggio, creating an active bass line that spans two octaves. Capturing all these contrapuntal and registral layers on the piano is impossible; the challenge lies in deciding which elements to preserve.

Hummel's arrangement includes optional flute, violin, and cello parts, but these merely enhance colour; all essential melodic lines, basses, and textures are wholly contained in the piano part. Such auxiliary parts were likely intended for informal social gatherings, where available instrumentalists could join ad hoc. According to the editor of Kalkbrenner's Beethoven arrangements, Hummel's 1829 version was deliberately simplified for "technical accessibility" and commercial appeal, even at the expense of orchestral fullness, lacking "enough octave doublings to recreate the orchestral effect of the more powerful moments."²³³ Hummel's transcription (Figure 37) preserves the first violin melody in the uppermost note of the right hand, with inner voices moving in parallel 3rds and 6ths and the occasional octave, never spanning more than an octave for practical execution.

²³³ Cory, "Franz Liszt's 'Symphonies de Beethoven: Partitions de Piano,'" 10.

Figure 36: Beethoven, Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op. 92: I. *Vivace*, bars 89-109.²³⁴

The pedal point bass is assigned to the left hand, with an *Alberti-bass* style accompaniment spanning no more than a 9th. However, the imitative interplay between first violins and bass, and between first violins and winds, is omitted, as such a transcription would require awkward hand crossings ill-suited to the amateur pianist. Hummel's arrangement contains small but effective details: at bar 101, the left-hand arpeggiation begins with three parts, then expands to four parts at bar 105; at bar 109, the tremolo shifts an octave lower, creating an auditory illusion of a change in dynamics. This transcription

²³⁴ Ludwig van Beethoven, *Symphonie Nr. 7*, ed. Ernst Hertrich, series ed. Peter Hauschild (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1993 [1812]), 9-10. Breitkopf & Härtel's Orchester-Bibliothek, no. 5237, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Symphony_No.7,_Op.92_\(Beethoven,_Ludwig_van\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Symphony_No.7,_Op.92_(Beethoven,_Ludwig_van)).

fulfils all essential elements without “embarrassment” (to borrow Fétis’ term from Chapter 2.2.2), balancing score fidelity and playability while suiting the lighter Viennese pianos of Hummel’s time:

Figure 37: Beethoven, Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op. 92, arr. Hummel: I. *Vivace*, bars 89-112.²³⁵

The image shows a page of musical notation for the first movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op. 92, as arranged by Johann Nepomuk Hummel. The score is in 4/4 time and A major. It consists of four systems of music, with bar numbers 89, 95, 101, and 107 marked on the left. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and various musical symbols such as dynamics (ff, sf, p, f), articulation (accents, slurs), and phrasing. The lyrics 'eres - cen - do - sém - pre - al -' are visible in the lower systems, indicating a vocal line. The score is presented in a clear, legible format, typical of a printed musical score.

Kalkbrenner’s arrangement (Figure 38), likely conceived in response to Hummel’s, benefits from the more robust Erard piano and the transcriber’s own superior technique. The RH and the LH from bar 101 onwards are nearly identical to Hummel’s, but the opening eight bars incorporate more

²³⁵ Ludwig [Louis] van Beethoven and Johann Nepomuk Hummel (arr.), *Septième grande symphonie en la, Opus 92, arrangée pour le piano seul ou avec accompagnement de violon, flûte et violoncelle* (Mainz: Les fils de B. Schott, n.d. [1836]), 4, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Symphony_No.7%2C_Op.92_\(Beethoven%2C_Ludwig_van\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Symphony_No.7%2C_Op.92_(Beethoven%2C_Ludwig_van)).

textures from the original. From bars 89–95, the LH plays block chords in closed position following the dotted rhythm of the timpani and brass, dispensing with the tremolo and relying on thick chords in the low register to simulate the effect. Most notable is his handling of bars 96–100: the LH switches to a tremolo texture to accommodate the more active quaver bass line, adding semiquavers to simulate the orchestral tremolo. Kalkbrenner edges past Hummel with this tutti texture, incorporating more linear progressions while still maintaining a balance between fidelity and idiomatic writing.

Liszt, by contrast, took a more poetic and personal approach. In the preface to his Beethoven symphony transcriptions, he likens his role to that of an “intelligent engraver” or “conscientious translator,” aiming to grasp the “spirit of the work” and convey it through the piano.²³⁶ Unlike Hummel and Kalkbrenner, Liszt did not compose his arrangements for general performance because of their immense difficulty. Instead, they may have been written for himself alone for the sake of the art form, in a manner comparable to his *Études d'exécution transcendante* (see Chapter 2.1.4). This is when the “original” component comes in, and what made Liszt famous for his transcriptions. Despite being more tied down to the original work, critics like Schumann have argued that “[Liszt’s] bolder transcriptions are really original works” when referring to the transcription of Berlioz’s *Symphonie Fantastique*.²³⁷ His “careful attention to and virtuosic ability at representing the symphony in all its rich detail” was well received by the colleague who successfully “[conjured] up Berlioz’s massive orchestral complex” into a piano transcription.²³⁸

²³⁶ Ludwig van Beethoven and Franz Liszt, *Symphonies de Beethoven: Partition de Piano*, 2 vols. (Leipzig, Breitkopf & Hartel, 1865; reprint ed., Eng. trans. by C.E.R. Mueller, Melville, N.Y.: Belwin Mills), preface to both vols, quoted in Cory, “Franz Liszt’s ‘symphonies de Beethoven: Partitions De Piano’. (Volumes I and II),” 6.

²³⁷ Robert Schumann, *Music and Musicians*, trans. Fanny Raymond Ritter (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), 171.

²³⁸ Jonathan Kregor, “Paths through the Lisztian Ossia,” ed. Robert Doran, *Eastman Studies in Music*; 168 (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2020), 154, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781787448667-007>.

Figure 38: Beethoven, Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op. 92, arr. Kalkbrenner: I. *Vivace*, bars 89-

112.²³⁹

89

92

97

101

105

109

cres - cen - do - sem - pre - al -

²³⁹ Ludwig van Beethoven and Frédéric Kalkbrenner (arr.), *Collection complète des symphonies, pour piano seul* (Paris: Schonenberger, n.d. [1839]), 7:5, Bibliothèque nationale de France, <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k3248961>.

Unlike a score reduction, which provides the “main outlines of the symphonic fabric,” Cory argues that Liszt excelled as a transcriber not in the literal sense or even “mere reduction,” but in his ability to “conceive” orchestral textures for the piano “containing many figurations reminiscent of [his] own original piano compositions, but projecting the harmonic and thematic materials of [the original composer].”²⁴⁰ Let us see why Walker regards Liszt’s arrangements of the Beethoven symphonies as “one of the grand peaks of the art of arrangement.”²⁴¹

In the same tutti passage (Figure 39), Liszt departs entirely from his predecessors. Rather than preserve the tremolo in the second violins and violas, he prioritises contrapuntal detail and multi-octave doublings to enrich the orchestral sonority. At bars 96–101, he adds the imitation of the descending arpeggio fragment an octave lower (omitted by Hummel and Kalkbrenner), culminating in octave displacement to suggest instrumental interplay. The melody is consistently in octaves, with inner voices moving in parallel 3rds and 6ths, and occasional doublings two octaves below in place of the horns that play in that register. The dotted rhythm is assigned to a leaping left hand that alternates between the tonic pedal point and the melody notes. Liszt’s trade-off is the absence of a low bass note on certain downbeats, compensated by the melody played across many octaves:

²⁴⁰ Cory, “Franz Liszt’s ‘Symphonies de Beethoven: Partitions de Piano’ (Volumes I and II),” 61.

²⁴¹ Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years, 1811-1847* (London: Faber, 1983), 85.

Figure 39: Beethoven, Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op. 92, arr. Liszt: I. *Vivace*, bars 89-112.²⁴²

The image displays five systems of musical notation for a piano arrangement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 7, Op. 92, by Franz Liszt. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The first system (bars 89-93) is marked *ff sempre ben marc.* and features a complex texture with many beamed notes and chords. The second system (bars 94-99) continues this texture. The third system (bars 100-104) is marked *p cresc.* and shows a change in texture with more melodic lines. The fourth system (bars 105-109) is marked *ff* and features a dense, rhythmic texture. The fifth system (bars 110-112) is marked *p* and shows a more delicate texture. Below each system, there are handwritten annotations: 'Ra' followed by an asterisk, and 'R' followed by an asterisk, indicating specific rhythmic or articulation points. The score is set in A major (one sharp) and 2/4 time.

Moving on to another excerpt of the same movement, here is an example of a much more delicate texture that is impossible to transcribe literally: bars 142-51 (Figure 40):

²⁴² Ludwig van Beethoven and Franz Liszt (arr.), *Symphonie Nr. 7*, Op. 92 in *Franz Liszts Musikalische Werke, Serie IV, Band 2-3*, ed. José Vianna da Motta (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1922 [1865]), 58, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Symphony_No.7%2C_Op.92_\(Beethoven%2C_Ludwig_van\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Symphony_No.7%2C_Op.92_(Beethoven%2C_Ludwig_van)).

Figure 40: Beethoven, Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op. 92: I. *Vivace*, bars 139-51.²⁴³

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system, starting at bar 139, features a Violin I staff with dynamics *p*, *pp*, and *cresc.*, and a Violoncello/Contrabasso staff with dynamics *p*, *pp*, and *cresc. poco a*. The second system, starting at bar 147, features a Violin I staff with *cresc.*, a Violoncello/Contrabasso staff with *p cresc.* and *cresc.*, and a Violoncello/Contrabasso staff with *poco*. The score is in A major and 3/4 time.

²⁴³ Beethoven, *Symphonie Nr. 7*, ed. Ernst Herttrich, series ed. Peter Hauschild (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1993 [1812]), 13.

In this excerpt, the first violins play the melody throughout, accompanied by the tremolo second violins and violas in the middle register. The texture's complexity arises from three-note semiquaver interjections that span multiple registers. As many of these textural elements are far apart, writing a transcription for this excerpt will require some degree of compromise.

Liszt's aim here is to expand the piano's registral sonorities, creating the illusion of orchestral spread through arpeggiation and tremolo. His use of the "three-hand" effect—passing rapid notes between hands to mimic simultaneous orchestral layers—is seen in later passages of the symphony. Where Hummel and Kalkbrenner (Figure 41) prioritise the tremolo and the primary melody but omit the rising semiquaver figure exchanged between the bass strings and the woodwinds, Liszt incorporates all three elements (Figure 42). The melody retains its register, while the RH arpeggiates the harmony across two octaves, and the LH alternates between providing bass notes, sustaining harmonies, and playing the rising figure, in parallel 3rds rather than 10ths. This results in one of the most ingenious textures in nineteenth-century piano transcription:

Figure 41: Beethoven, Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op. 92, arr. Hummel: I. Vivace, bars 141-52.²⁴⁴

The image shows a musical score for piano transcription of Beethoven's Symphony No. 7, I. Vivace, bars 141-52. The score is in A major and 3/4 time. It features a complex texture with rapid semiquaver patterns in both hands. The right hand (RH) plays a melody with arpeggiated accompaniment, while the left hand (LH) provides bass notes and sustains harmonies. The score includes dynamic markings such as *pp*, *pp*, *cres.*, *poco a poco*, and *ff*, as well as performance instructions like "Loco." and "sva.".

²⁴⁴ Ludwig [Louis] van Beethoven and Johann Nepomuk Hummel (arr.), *Septième grande symphonie en la, Opus 92, arrangée pour le piano seul ou avec accompagnement de violon, flûte et violoncelle* (Mainz: Les fils de B. Schott, n.d. [1836]), 5. Kalkbrenner's arrangement in this section is identical.

Figure 42: Beethoven, Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op. 92, arr. Liszt: I. *Vivace*, bars 142-52.²⁴⁵

Due to the creativity required for a successful transcription, “it is inevitable that the transcriber presents the musical contents of the original from a personal perspective.”²⁴⁶ This may be precisely why the success of many pianist-composers depended on their creation of them as they reveal to us an “authentic” and “original” aspect of themselves—attributes valued by the work-concept. By using the works of others, a standard is set to which listeners can relate and “enrich” their understanding and appreciation of the merits (and demerits) of their models or the original work itself.²⁴⁷

Far from undermining originality, transcriptions exposed the musical work’s fluidity by enabling multiple coexisting versions. As Davies notes, “[Transcriptions are] valued not merely as a report of, but also as a commentary on, the composer’s original work and, as such, it continues to be of interest

²⁴⁵ Beethoven and Liszt (arr.), *Symphonie Nr. 7*, Op. 92, 60.

²⁴⁶ Davies, “Transcription, Authenticity and Performance,” 221.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

even where the original is accessible.”²⁴⁸ They reveal the pianist-composer’s role as mediator between fixed text and living practice, extending the reach of music across instruments, venues, and audiences.

As explored in this chapter, evolving compositional aesthetics profoundly shaped the pianist-composer’s creative identity, influencing not only their preferred genres but also how they adapted and transformed the works of others in forging a personal artistic voice. However, composition was only one side of their practice. The following chapter turns to the other: how the emergence of the work-concept redefined their role as performers, shifting expectations from creative agents to servants of the written text.

²⁴⁸ Davies, “Transcription, Authenticity and Performance,” 226.

3 In Servitude to the Composer: The Work-Concept and Performance Practice

The emergence of the work-concept shifted the balance of authority between the performer and composer. Whereas earlier traditions valued the former's autonomy in adapting the score, the new aesthetic ideals increasingly demanded fidelity to it, decisively shifting creative power towards the latter. This shift was encapsulated by the nineteenth-century philosopher G. W. F. Hegel (1770-1831), who insisted that the performer "must not add anything of his own... but submit himself entirely to the character of the work."¹ More than a century later, we have composer, Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971), who exemplified this new composer and performer relationship, warned against the "perilous risk" of the performer deviating from the composer's intentions that will make it "unrecognizable on one occasion, inert on another, and in any case [a betrayal]."² Performers became, in Goehr's terms, "subservient to works and their composers," where "the ideal of *Werktreue*" explicitly redefined the relationship from one of partnership to obedience.³

In this section, we explore how the work-concept transformed performance practice in the nineteenth century, from a creative act encouraging improvisatory freedoms to strict fidelity to the score. We investigate the split between amateur and professional performers, their training in musical literacy, and the birth of institutionalised music theory. Behind this, we explore how pianist-composers were a key initiator of this divide by actively cultivating both types of students, encouraging professionals toward mastery and amateurs toward practical enjoyment—revealing their dual approach to the role of musical study.

¹ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, "Die kiinstlerische Execution," in *Vorlesungen iiber die Asthetik*, in vol. 3 of his *Werke*, ed. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986), 219-20, quoted in Mary Hunter, "'To Play as If from the Soul of the Composer': The Idea of the Performer in Early Romantic Aesthetics," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 58, no. 2 (2005): 362, <https://doi.org/10.1525/jams.2005.58.2.357>.

² Igor Stravinsky, *Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons*, trans. Arthur Knodel and Ingolf Dahl, Charles Eliot Norton Lectures; 1939-1940 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1947), 123.

³ Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*, 231.

3.1 Amateurs and Professionals

The divide between the amateur and professional musician played an integral role in the separation of composer and performer. This is because, while the former group were somewhat restricted in practising “difficult music, sophisticated ornamentation, and free improvisation,” the latter group focused on performance due to the instrument’s growing technical demands.⁴ The changing role of the performer may not be understood without first recognising how the work-concept set new expectations for fidelity to the score, narrowing the creative freedom once integral to performance. Even though both groups were—and continue to be—worlds apart in the profession, they shared the same aesthetic goals because of the emerging work-concept—that is, the focus on technique and interpretation.

This growing divide was not merely social but also a result of the higher standards set by music institutions such as the Paris Conservatoire, which formalised a new professional identity grounded in mastery of instrumental technique, harmony, counterpoint, and the performance of the emerging canon of works. As we will explore in this chapter, the pianist-composer played a mediating role between the fluid practices of the salon and the institutionalised demands of the fixed work.

3.1.1 Piano and Organ Study: From Leisure to Dedication to Profession

The nineteenth century witnessed a clearer distinction between professional and amateur musicians. The former, who were trained within conservatories, were expected to master technical and theoretical knowledge that supported both performance and composition. The latter became numerous as a result of the piano’s growing affordability after the Industrial Revolution, and had greater access to published material such as sheet music and instrumental methods (see Chapter 1.2). For them, however, there were fewer opportunities for improvisatory training, and their playing was shaped by simple works and arrangements, which restricted rather than expanded creative engagement with the musical work.

⁴ Helyard, *Clementi and the Woman at the Piano*, 80-81.

To cope with the increasing number of amateur pianists, many teachers (being pianist-composers themselves) published numerous piano instruction manuals that often focused on the rudiments of music notation, technique, and aspects of performance practice, in varying degrees of detail. Nearly all the major pianist-composers of the nineteenth century did this not only to disseminate their teaching practice but also to establish their credibility within musical circles. The primary focus of these students was “careful study, by correct and chaste practice, to acquire a knowledge of music on its rudimental and scientific principles.”⁵ Yet Cramer also recognised the motivational needs of amateurs, noting in his method that “introducing popular Airs as Lessons for the practice of Learners, greatly promotes their application and improvement,” since such lessons “afford more entertainment to their hearers... [and are] arranged in a familiar style.”⁶ As discussed in Chapter 2.1.2, the inclusion of these popular works also indicated that pianist-composers such as Cramer prioritised public interest over their own artistic concerns to achieve greater sales and engagement.

Czerny’s correspondence with his pupil, Ms Cecilia, provides an insight into the expectations for an amateur pianist in the nineteenth century. As requested by the publishers of his *Pianoforte School*, he included these letters in the method’s appendix as a “peculiar mode” of instruction to beginner pupils—in his words, “[to] explain, under the epistolary form, and in a concise, clear, and familiar manner.”⁷ In one such letter, he praises his student’s rapid progress, noting how “the zealous practice of all the finger-exercises, and the quickly studying of a good many musical pieces, would soon bring [her] very forward,” and commends that her fingers have “already acquired very considerable facility and certainty,” that she can play “at sight, many short, easy movements, intelligibly and without stopping,” and that even keys “with a good many sharps or flats” no longer confuse.⁸ This letter reflects a particular

⁵ “Desultory remarks on the study and practice of music, addressed to a young lady while under the tuition of an eminent master, written in the years 1790–1 and 2,” *European magazine and London review* (October 1796): 270, quoted in Helyard, *Clementi and the Woman at the Piano*, 80.

⁶ Johann Baptist Cramer, *Instructions for the Piano Forte* (London: Chappell & Co., [1812]), 2,

[https://imslp.org/wiki/Instructions_for_the_Piano_Forte%2C_M.3.03_\(Cramer%2C_Johann_Baptist\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Instructions_for_the_Piano_Forte%2C_M.3.03_(Cramer%2C_Johann_Baptist)).

⁷ Czerny, *Letters to a Young Lady*, iii. It is interesting that these letters also include Czerny’s instruction on thoroughbass, so perhaps even the amateur student was expected to learn harmony and composition as well.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

stage in the pupil's musical development, highlighting the transition from mechanical training to expressive performance. Zimmerman, too, advocates for repertoire study but insists on repertoire drawn from "classical authors"—names that would later be granted with canonical status.⁹ The advocacy of disciplined effort and the importance of foundational technique through rigorous finger exercises enabled freedom of expression. They became fundamental to piano playing at *all* levels at the time.

Since neither performers nor teachers need to compose music for their own use or for their students to play, this diminished the need for compositional skills among pianists. As a result, these students and their teachers became highly dependent on the score, requiring as much detail as possible from the composers themselves to avoid many difficult performance decisions. While improvisation, for example, a practice generally reserved for professionals, became a redundant skill for amateurs, as little time was dedicated to teaching theory and composition. Students' technical expectations were inflated, and the role of instrumental innovation, both contributed to the changing role of the piano, not just as an instrument for leisurely study, but students, both at the amateur and professional level, were expected to "attain a superior and finished degree" of finish to a piece.¹⁰ The rising standards of piano playing provided composers with the opportunity to write more technically demanding music, drawing on these new expectations and the effort students put in. The primary focus on technique and the interpretation of repertoire became synonymous with piano playing, along with the expectation that most would learn challenging repertoire beyond the sight-reading level.

Conversely, the organ remained largely within the domain of professional musicians throughout the nineteenth century, whereas the piano saw a significant rise in amateur participation. Organs, though growing in number and in rapid development, were built primarily in churches and other places of gathering (such as town halls or salons) due to their large size and high construction costs. Thus, the

⁹ "De même qu'il n'est pas permis à un littérateur d'ignorer ses auteurs classiques, un pianiste doit connaître les œuvres de Haendel, Sébastien et Emmanuel Bach, Dominique et Alexandre Scarlatti, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Weber, Clementi, Dussek, Cramer, Hummel, Field, etc." Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie*, 3:62. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

¹⁰ William Seaman Stevens, *A Treatise on piano-forte expression, containing the principles of fine playing on that instrument* (London: M. Jones, 1811), 2.

musicians who played them required professional training. English organist John Stainer (1840-1901) makes a distinction between the differing practice approaches of amateurs and professionals in his *The Organ* (ca. 1877). While the former group “avoid[ed] the difficulties which present themselves and [were] content with mastering just so much of the art of playing as will afford little amusement,” the latter group “face[d] at once special difficulties of the instrument and persevere[d] until they have surmounted [them].”¹¹ Such remarks highlight how organ playing, unlike the increasingly domesticated world of the piano, retained its identity as a disciplined and specialised art, one that demanded rigorous study rather than leisurely accomplishment.

As previously discussed in Chapters 1.3 and 2.1.4, professional pianists are trained from a young age by mastering every type of figuration and harmonic progression in advance, preparing them for the difficulties they will encounter on the instrument. Amateurs, by contrast, confronted technical challenges only as they occurred, progressing more slowly. The next chapter explores how technique and interpretation became central to formal musical training for both groups, and were transmitted orally and through annotated scores.

3.1.2 The Pursuit of *Style*: A Focus on Technique and Interpretation

The work-concept’s performance standards shifted teaching habits in the nineteenth century, not only emphasising the emerging canon of works as fixed texts but also following a tradition of written and oral performance set by the composer. Unlike earlier periods, when “there was an immediate identification of the performer with the music performed,” we see more frequently post-1800 that composers’ works are performed by others.¹² For the first time, there was no longer an obligation for performers to compose or composers to perform. Many pianist-composers, who were teachers throughout their careers, were the main instigators of this phenomenon, and they demanded absolute technical realisation and close interpretation of the score in the execution of their own musical works and those of others. As

¹¹ John Stainer, *The Organ*, ed. John Ebenezer West (London: Novello and Co., ca. 1877), iv, [https://imslp.org/wiki/The_Organ_\(Stainer%2C_John\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/The_Organ_(Stainer%2C_John)).

¹² Samson, *Virtuosity and the Musical Work*, 25.

both performers and composers, they were aware of this emerging gap and sought to use their experience in both fields to teach the next generation of interpreters how to carry out the newly found role. Adam, in his *Méthode*, makes this explicitly clear by defining *style* within performance aesthetics:

We consider *style* in two different ways: in one, the manner or the character of the execution one has created; in the other, the art of giving a piece the kind of expression that suits it; the first has to do with mechanism and the second with feeling.¹³

More importantly, because different composers have their own unique styles, Adam encouraged performers to “sympathise with the composer’s genius” and implied the performer’s role as a servant to the composer by adapting their own style to suit the composer’s.¹⁴ This aligns with Dahlhaus’ observation that, “around mid-[nineteenth] century, the primacy of virtuosity was gradually undermined by the principle of interpretation.”¹⁵ In between these “separate worlds,” an interpreter emerged who “mediated” between them.¹⁶ The rise of the interpreter marked a decisive shift in musical culture, as performance was no longer an act of self-display but of servitude.¹⁷

Before the emergence of the work-concept, performers were often regarded as more publicly significant than composers, particularly in opera, where the *prima donna* stood at the centre of musical life well into the nineteenth century. In instrumental music, composers were frequently performers of their own works, meaning that self-display and authorship coincided: to perform was simultaneously to compose and to present oneself. Even when performing another’s music, performers commonly asserted their individuality through ornamentation, textural modifications (see Chapter 5), or reinterpretation; such intervention was not only accepted but expected. With the emergence of the work-concept,

¹³ Adam, *Piano Method of the Conservatoire*, 233. Emphasis original.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 234.

¹⁵ Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 138.

¹⁶ Samson, *Virtuosity and the Musical Work*, 25.

¹⁷ It is telling that the French word for “performance” is *interprétation*, suggesting that from early on the act was conceived not as self-expression but as the realisation of another’s work.

however, performance increasingly came to be framed as an act of fidelity and service to the composer’s intentions, ideally suppressing overt signs of the performer’s personality.¹⁸

Interpretation, however, was made possible by a high level of technique cultivated at music institutions such as the Paris Conservatoire. One way to set high standards was to hold regular piano competitions. To win the first prize (*premier prix*), students often chose from a small pool of works that were so difficult that it almost guaranteed them the prize. Beghin suggests that Adam composed his fiendishly difficult Piano Sonata, Op. 8 No. 2 so that when “performed with perfection... [was] deadly effective as a concours piece.”¹⁹ Even a review from a French journal commented on “the prestige” of Clementi’s highly virtuosic Piano Sonata, Op. 33 No. 3, which “was solemnly banned from the concours...because it always made the person who played it win the prize.”²⁰ The criteria for these competitions were so rigorous that it would have been nearly impossible to assess such performances subjectively. So, the Conservatoire separated performance categories to aid in the assessment process. Table 11 shows a list of these criteria based on the contents of Adam’s (piano) and De Beriot’s (violin) pedagogical works:

Table 9: *Concours* Criteria based on Adam and de Beriot’s treatises (after Beghin).²¹

Necessary foundation of the mechanism	Fingers	Style [1]	Style [2]	Necessary foundation of talent
Position of the body	Striking the piano and pulling sound from it	“Notes of taste” or ornaments	Time, tempi, and character	To understand the style of the composer
Clarity, facility		Nuances and sensitivity	Manner of using the pedals	To have a particular style as a performer
Groundedness	Slurring and detaching sounds	To give a piece the expression that suits it	Variety in repeated passages	

¹⁸ A notable twentieth-century counterexample was the pianist Glenn Gould (1932-1982), who argued that performers in the recording age should assume a creative role akin to that of the composer. His stance remains controversial precisely because modern performance aesthetics tend to position servitude and self-display as opposites. This distinction was far less pronounced before the full emergence of the work-concept. See Glenn Gould and Tim Page, *The Glenn Gould Reader* (London: Faber and Faber, 1987), 287.

¹⁹ Beghin, *Beethoven’s French Piano*, 265.

²⁰ *Le pianiste* 1, no. 1 (November 20, 1833): 3, quoted in Beghin, *Beethoven’s French Piano*, 265.

²¹ Beghin, *Beethoven’s French Piano*, 274-77.

The criteria for a piano competition at the Paris Conservatoire around 1800 reveal an ideal of musicianship that predates the work-concept, in which the performer was expected to embody both technical mastery and personal artistry. The emphasis on clarity, facility, groundedness, ornaments, nuances, and pedal usage demonstrates the importance of the former. At the same time, categories such as expression, character, and the development of a particular style illustrate the latter. This extensive list of criteria is clearly laid out in the latter half of Adam's *Méthode*, which aimed to "train the artist" through detailed instruction in performance practice, reinforcing the developing values of fidelity, technical execution, and stylistic considerations. This is particularly evident in his treatment of dynamics, articulation, ornamentation and phrasing—all of which were to be executed "correctly," in accordance with established performance conventions *rather* than individual taste.

The repertoire included in Adam's *Méthode* also reflects a changing attitude toward musical works. The inclusion of numerous pieces by Adam's contemporaries and those before him, rather than his own compositions (excluding the preliminary pieces in the earlier part of the treatise), further illustrates the shifting pedagogical priorities. Names as they appear in the section include: W. A. Mozart, Clementi, D. Scarlatti, C. P. E. Bach, Handel, and J. S. Bach, whom we would now associate as canonical composers.²² These pieces, selected for pedagogical use, required details about performance practice in the score that were not as well known to composers and students outside their inner circles.

Take, for example, the two editions of Mozart's Keyboard Sonata in A minor [K. 310]. Figure 43 shows the first edition (Vienna, ca. 1783), and Figure 44 shows the edition in Adam's *Méthode*. From the former, we mainly see notes and their durations; dynamics are rare, with the occasional slur added. Despite the lack of such markings, performance practices were still taught and well known among the composer's inner circle and pupils:

²² The names listed here are in their order of appearance in the latter part of the treatise. Interestingly, Adam places the fugues of Handel and J. S. Bach towards the end of the section, suggesting their difficulty.

Figure 43: W. A. Mozart, Keyboard Sonata in A minor [K. 310]: I. *Allegro maestoso*, bars 29-49.²³



Contrast this with the latter, which features much more detail regarding performance practice. Articulation and dynamics are more frequent, especially the use of hairpins to indicate gradation in dynamics, now possible on the pianoforte. The engraving is also much neater and more spacious than the first edition, paying particular attention to the alignment of noteheads at the beat.

²³ W. A. Mozart, “Sonata II” [Piano Sonata No. 8 in A Minor, K.310/300d], in *3 Sonates pour le clavecin ou le forte-piano*, No. 2 (Mannheim: Götze, n.d. [after 1783]), 11, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Piano_Sonata_No.8_in_A_minor,_K.310/300d_\(Mozart,_Wolfgang_Amadeus\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Piano_Sonata_No.8_in_A_minor,_K.310/300d_(Mozart,_Wolfgang_Amadeus)).

Figure 44: W. A. Mozart, Sonata in A minor [K. 310] - I. *Allegro maestoso*, bars 31-49 (Adam, 1805).²⁴

While prevailing performance stylistic norms guide Adam's additions, their inclusion in the score implies their authority rather than mere suggestions, since there is no distinction between the composer's

²⁴ W. A. Mozart, "Sonata de Mozart" [Piano Sonata No. 8 in A Minor, K.310/300d], in Adam, *Piano Method of the Conservatoire*, 164.

and the editor's markings (they were not concerned with such matters anyway). His method, therefore, shifts the performer's role from spontaneous creativity to deliberate "intention."²⁵ This reflects a broader aesthetic shift identified by Carew as "greater emphasis on expressiveness and individualism" in composition practice and eventually performance, which saw the "escalation and intensification of tempo directions and of expression and dynamic markings" as "one of the earliest manifestations."²⁶ In a period when such matters were once left to the performer's discretion, these instructions helped train students in emerging performance traditions without direct access to composers. By curating and editing works by other composers, Adam not only capitalised on their popularity but also helped shape the early canon and foreshadowed the institutional role in cultivating the work-concept in nineteenth-century education.

Similarly, at the Leipzig Conservatory, piano students in the mid- to late nineteenth century were expected to practice at least four hours a day to develop their technique.²⁷ Navon argues that this new expectation from students obliged them to be "capable of playing even the most technically challenging of works."²⁸ While the focus on technique raised the standards of instrumental playing among conservatory students and on strict adherence to the composer's written intentions, it came at the cost of their compositional and improvisational skills, which gradually became neglected. For example, Mendelssohn's composition student, Wasielewski, felt no desire to pursue composition studies, but instead to practice the violin and engage in music theory exercises.²⁹ Upon the study of performance students' reports from the institution, Navon concludes that the interpretation of musical works became a "highly prized virtue in performance."³⁰

²⁵ Whether such additions are historically informed and/or follow the composer's intentions is another matter altogether.

²⁶ Carew, *The Mechanical Muse*, 136.

²⁷ Letter from Ethel Smyth to Nina Smyth, November 1877; HMT-Archiv, A, VI.5/17: 16, quoted in Navon, "Pedagogies of Performance," 79.

²⁸ Navon, "Pedagogies of Performance," 79.

²⁹ Wilhelm Joseph von Wasielewski, *Aus Siebzig Jahren* (Leipzig: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1897): 37, quoted in Navon, "Pedagogies of Performance," 80.

³⁰Ibid., 73-74.

We see a similar situation unfolding in the Russian Piano School in the late nineteenth century. Founded by Anton Rubinstein (1829-1894) in 1866, this school revolutionised piano playing by promoting a high standard of virtuosity.³¹ A key requirement of this institution as a performer was the complete mastery of the instrument through the study of extensive, canonical repertoire. The school's emphasis on technical proficiency also included a deep commitment to the "faithful execution" of the musical text. Even the pianist Josef Hofmann (1876-1957), a practitioner of improvisation, noted, "The true interpretation of a piece of music...depends solely upon scrupulously exact reading."³² The emphasis on technical perfection was also mentioned by Rachmaninoff's piano teacher, Nikolai Zverev (1833-1893), "Composition is a waste of time for the pianist."³³ But as Cook argues, Zverev's teaching practice "was an immersive experience which encompassed all aspects of music, attendance at concerts and the theatre, and literary education."³⁴ So despite the "[emphasis] on performance, it is significant that two of his pupils, Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915) and Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943), developed into major composers."³⁵ Just as amateur performers succumbed to text fidelity, professional performers also succumbed to it due to the increasing technical demands of the instrument from composers and listeners.

Beyond these institutions, the same teaching focus also applied. For many pianist-composers, teaching was a primary and reliable source of income, unlike composition, which would only benefit them if sold in large quantities. As a highly sought-after teacher, Chopin earned most of his income from aristocratic pupils, often describing his busy teaching schedule as a "treadmill of lucrative hours."³⁶ Diligent pupils documented their lessons with the master, as did many other contemporaries who heard him play. They warned that "[the composer's works] run the risk of being misunderstood if one has not known the master's way of playing, his intentions and his conception of the instrument" and the

³¹ Ogura Mayumi Randall, "The History of Piano Improvisation in Western Concert Music." (Ph.D. diss., University of Cincinnati, 1993), 64-78.

³² Harold C. Schonberg, *The Great Pianists* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 378.

³³ Victor Ilyitch Seroff, *Rachmaninoff: A Biography* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1950), 35.

³⁴ Max Harrison, *Rachmaninoff: Life, Works, Recordings* (London: Continuum, 2006): [Chapter 3].

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Elgeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 7. "The core of Chopin's clientele consisted of ladies of the Faubourg-St-Germain or of the Slavonic aristocracy exiled in Paris." Elgeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 4.

composer “resented sharply [any] deliberate misreading of his compositions.”³⁷ The detail with which Chopin would go through his lessons exemplifies this new focus on technique and interpretation, sometimes causing “many tears to flow” in the process.³⁸ Chopin left behind endless oral instructions on the performance of his works to his pupils and inner circle, who would then pass them on to their own students.

According to his pupil, Lenz, Chopin was “exacting and finicky” even in the simplest passages, such as those from his C minor Nocturne, Op. 48 No. 1, insisting that notes emerge with the right “intention” and nuance. The composer demanded subtle phrasing that students often failed to achieve until guided by his own playing.³⁹ Lenz’s account illustrates how Chopin’s teaching centred on stylistic precision and interpretive depth. What might appear as a straightforward phrase became a site of intense scrutiny, where every note had to carry intention and meaning. His approach reflects a pedagogy that moved beyond technical facility, training students to internalise a highly refined sense of style and expression—which Adam regarded as the “necessary foundation of talent.”⁴⁰

If instructions could not be conveyed verbally, Chopin would write them on his pupil’s scores with various symbols. He would often insist that students bring a score to his lessons, issuing the ultimatum: “I want to teach either precisely [with the score] or not at all,” underscoring the importance of the musical text in his pedagogy.⁴¹ Figure 45 shows a copy of the opening page of the C minor nocturne, belonging to his pupil Camille Dubois (née O’Meara [1828-1907]), featuring some annotations in Chopin’s hand, including fingering, dynamics, articulations and the “correct” execution of the composer’s written ornaments:

³⁷ Ibid., 60.

³⁸ When studying the Exercise in A-flat major from Clementi’s *Préludes et Exercices*, Op. 43. Elgeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 60.

³⁹ Elgeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 80-81.

⁴⁰ Beghin, *Beethoven’s French Piano*, 277.

⁴¹ When studying the composer’s famous Nocturne in E-flat major, Op. 9 No. 2. Elgeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 7.

Figure 45: Chopin, Nocturne, Op. 48 No. 1, bars 1-12. Mme. Dubois' Score with annotations by Chopin.⁴²

The image displays a page of handwritten musical notation for Frédéric Chopin's Nocturne, Op. 48 No. 1, specifically bars 1 through 12. The score is written in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time, marked 'Lento'. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains the melodic line, which begins with a half note G4, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The bass staff provides harmonic support with chords and single notes. The score is annotated with 'm.v.' (more vivace) and 'Ped.' (pedal) markings. The 'Ped.' markings are represented by a circle with a cross inside, indicating where the sustain pedal should be used. The score is titled '15. NOCTURNE' on the left side.

⁴² Frédéric Chopin, *13e et 14e Nocturnes pour piano*, Op. 48 (Paris: Maurice Schlesinger, [1842]), Plate M.S. 3487–3488, Online Chopin Variorum Edition, <https://chopinonline.ac.uk/ocve>. Camille Dubois' copy of the score is shown with annotations by F. Chopin.

Chopin belonged to a group of piano teachers who frequently used their own works in teaching. As the century progressed, we would see many fewer writing their own, preferring to use those of past composers or those of their contemporaries specialising in composition.

As an important aside, while Chopin established himself as a renowned pedagogue for the piano, it is surprising that he did not pass on the art of improvisation and composition to his students, even the professional ones. This goes to show the shifting attitudes towards piano pedagogy, which focused on technique and interpretation (though such ambitions may have been cut short by his premature death). Teriete makes a rather compelling case about Chopin's unfinished *Méthode de Piano*, which would have contained similar sections to Zimmerman's *Encyclopédie*, as the former "mostly agreed with [the latter's] approach."⁴³ Whether Chopin would have included a composition component in his *Méthode* is hard to say. But we do know his interest in intensive counterpoint study in the latter portion of his career, having owned a copy of Cherubini's *Cours de contrepoint et de fugue* (1835) in his salon in *Square D'Orléans*.⁴⁴ He also earnestly recommended the study of harmony from the Conservatoire professor, Henri Reber (1807-1880).⁴⁵ To have a composer of Chopin's calibre and influence in pianistic circles advocating for the study of harmony and counterpoint in a piano method would have no doubt encouraged successive generations of pianists to learn and advocate for the craft.

While Chopin's teaching emphasised the intimate transmission of style, Liszt approached it from a different vantage point. His Weimar masterclasses between 1869 and 1886 shifted the focus from technical discipline to the more imaginative world of interpretation. Reflecting the same institutional and aesthetic turn towards the musical work, but expressed through a public, almost ritualised setting. They were attended by the likes of the upcoming generation of pianists: Lamond, Tausig, Klindworth,

⁴³ Teriete, "Pierre-Joseph-Guillaume Zimmerman's *Encyclopédie du Pianiste Compositeur*," 315.

⁴⁴ Letter to Julian Fontana [n.d.] in Frédéric Chopin, *Chopin's Letters*, trans. E. L. Voynich (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1988), no. 135. We also see this study reflected in his later output from around Op. 50 onwards featuring more learned-style textures, which will be discussed in Chapter 4.

⁴⁵ Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 59.

Bülow and Schellendorff, who would become famous at the turn of the twentieth century.⁴⁶ During these masterclasses, Liszt spared no time regarding technical work, often telling his students to “Wash [their] dirty linen at home” and focusing instead on teaching advanced students about interpretation.⁴⁷ Students described him as the “Pied Piper of Weimar” and “left a wealth of personal testimony...to capture for posterity Liszt’s views on piano playing and musical interpretation.”⁴⁸

The masterclass setting alone already implies a ritualistic aspect of the event, placing the musical work at the centre of the discussion. Because of the focus on interpretation of these works, Liszt often resorted to descriptive language to encourage students to play more expressively. Many students have documented many aspects of Liszt’s teaching, so we have a wealth of quotes and interpretation advice on works from the past, especially those of Chopin:

“Do I care how fast you can play your octaves?” he once thundered at a pupil in the middle of the celebrated octave passage of the Chopin A-flat-major Polonaise [Op. 53]. “What I wish to hear is the canter of the horses of the Polish cavalry before they gather force and destroy the enemy.”⁴⁹

The imagery here, though evocative, becomes abstract and has little to do with practical piano playing. Does he want the pianist to play heavier? More articulate? How much pedal should be used? Should the melody be played similarly as well? From this instruction alone, it is not clear how Liszt wants us to play the passage from a pragmatic point of view, yet this is just one example of how the regulative work-concept often focuses on the work itself, with very little guidance for elements of practical music-making.⁵⁰

Like Chopin, Liszt did not appear to have taught improvisation or composition to his students; instead, he focused on the interpretation of existing repertoire. The private studios and salons of the

⁴⁶ For a comprehensive list of Liszt’s pupils, see Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years, 1861-1886* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 249-52.

⁴⁷ Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years, 1861-1886*, 228-29.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁴⁹ Frederic Lamond, *The Memoirs of Frederic Lamond* (Glasgow: William Maclellan, 1949), 68.

⁵⁰ Perhaps Liszt may have quickly followed up on this with a technical instruction for clarity, but it is the metaphor that survives as the anecdote.

pianist-composers serve as a microcosm of these teaching practices, and, given that they taught many students, they left a much greater impact on pedagogy when their students went on to become teachers themselves.

Sometimes metaphors and analogies were not enough. Since the musical work was increasingly tied to the composer personally, it became essential to “penetrate into its deepest being,” as Hoffmann insists of Beethoven, where the performer “must dare boldly to enter into the circle of mystical visions which its powerful magic calls forth.”⁵¹ Of course, this advice is impractical to the amateur, who is only interested in “playing the notes,” but for the professional, it is indispensable. The pianist-composer taught both classes of students and developed a virtuosic and compositional fluency that positioned them well within the evolving musical culture of the nineteenth century.

Even in organ playing, a tradition seemingly “immune” to the emerging work-concept, we find its ideals taking hold.⁵² Alexandre Guilmant (1837-1911) and Charles-Marie Widor (1844-1937) were two organists and professors at the Paris Conservatoire who began to specialise in organ repertoire “of all periods” and its execution, particularly on the works of J. S. Bach.⁵³ In addition to classes in improvisation at the Conservatoire around the late nineteenth century, Widor, in particular, “[placed] much greater emphasis on repertoire than had previously been the case” and required his students to prepare “a new piece each week” performed according to his strict rules of technical execution.⁵⁴ This shift in focus from improvisation to repertoire demonstrates the influence of the work-concept in establishing the canon of works championed by organists later in the nineteenth century.

While nineteenth-century aesthetic and pedagogical writings frequently advocate an ideal of fidelity to the musical text, as advanced by the emerging work-concept, this prescriptive rhetoric should

⁵¹ Arthur Ware Locke, “Beethoven’s Instrumental Music: Translated from E. T. A. Hoffmann’s ‘Kreisleriana,’ with an Introductory Note,” *The Musical Quarterly* 3, no. 1 (1917): 132, <https://doi.org/10.1093/mq/III.1.123>.

⁵² The term “immune” is used because organists rarely wrote works for posterity even by the work-concept’s standards, at least up to the mid-nineteenth century. Though such pieces are well-crafted, they almost always prioritise function and practicality. This can be shown by their generic titles (according to the parts of the mass in which they were performed) and the titles of the collection of works (see Chapter 2.1.5).

⁵³ Ochse, *Organists and Organ Playing in Nineteenth-Century France and Belgium*, 196.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 190.

not be correlated with actual performance practice, as evidenced by recordings. It is important to mention that performers remained far more interventionist than such discourse might suggest. For example, tempo modifications, ornamentation, recomposition of passages, alterations of dynamics, asynchrony/arpeggiation (in piano playing), and cuts were common and often expected as part of performance practice, which, in a sense, is tied as much to the “servitude” to the work as to the written text.⁵⁵ As a result, the nineteenth century did not eliminate interpretative freedom but rather reframed it within an evolving rhetoric of textural fidelity.

In the twentieth century, it was more valued, and the associated performance practice for prior nineteenth-century works became obsolete in mainstream performance. For example, the organist Marcel Dupré (1886–1971), himself one of the greatest improvisers of his time, insisted that “the interpreter must never allow his own personality to appear... By concealing himself sincerely before the character of the work... he serves the [composer] and confirms the authority of the work.”⁵⁶ Dupré’s position here appears paradoxical, as one might expect a master improviser to advocate for performer creativity. Instead, he reinforces the importance of the musical work over the performer. This goes to show how much work-concept and the idea of the servant performer have manifested themselves in performance practice, even in a performing tradition that prides itself on improvisation. The irony here is that pianist-composers themselves were the main instigators of this change by writing more detailed instructions on the score to compensate for performers with limited compositional training.

By prioritising technique and interpretation above all else, nineteenth-century pedagogy led to what Haynes calls “the doctrine of the transparent performer”—the ideal of an artist who merely transmits the composer’s intentions with minimal personal input.⁵⁷ In the absence of living composers and oral traditions, “text-fetishism”—the obsession with faithfully reproducing scores, supported by ever-

⁵⁵ See Neal Peres da Costa, *Off the Record: Performing Practices in Romantic Piano Playing*, 1st ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195386912.001.0001>.

⁵⁶ Marcel Dupré, *Philosophie de la musique* (Tournai: Collegium Musicum, 1984), 43.

⁵⁷ Haynes, *The End of Early Music*, 93-94.

more precise notations.⁵⁸ Although many pianist-composers spent much of their careers in the teaching studio, they also appeared frequently as performers, especially early on. The next chapter examines how they themselves embodied (or resisted) these ideals in practice, and how this shaped the performance culture around the growing canon of musical works.

3.1.3 Evolving Concerts: From Improvisation to “Museum” Works

Around 1800, audiences witnessed daring, live improvisations alongside meticulously composed works by pianist-composers. This would later be affected by the growing influence of the work-concept, which would favour the latter. Free fantasies often close recitals, often drawing on themes suggested by the audience, making them participants in the performance.⁵⁹ Small recounts that “no musician would give a whole concert on his own; local performers, amateur and professional, would be called in to collaborate and possibly the local orchestra...generally at sight or with at most a single rehearsal.”⁶⁰ Improvisation was central to this ethos of performance, with Czerny describing it as the “crown of distinction for the keyboard virtuoso.”⁶¹ He also recounts that if the “celebrated” improvisations of Hummel had been written down, they would have ranked among the best of [their] kind.”⁶²

Following Hummel, Chopin, and Liszt, recital programs also included improvisation, usually based on famous opera numbers (ca. 1820).⁶³ Liszt himself said that this “[established] a more direct rapport between the public and the artist... it becomes a communal work.”⁶⁴ As Doran notes, Liszt’s

⁵⁸ Ibid., 90.

⁵⁹ Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation*, 72.

⁶⁰ Small, *Musicking*, 30.

⁶¹ Czerny, *A Systematic Introduction to Improvisation on the Pianoforte*, 1.

⁶² Czerny, *School of Practical Composition*, 1:87.

⁶³ Christian Johansson, “Fryderyk Chopin—Performance Chronology,” *Classical Pianists*, accessed April 14 2026, <https://classical-pianists.net/iv/fryderyk-chopin/repertoire/>; Christian Johansson, “Franz Liszt—Performance Chronology,” *Classical Pianists*, accessed April 14 2026, <https://classical-pianists.net/iv/franz-liszt/repertoire/>. “At his concert at Pleyel’s (21 February 1842) with Pauline Viardot and Franchomme. Among Chopin’s own works, the programme specifies: Andante suivi de la 3^e Ballade; Suite de Nocturne, Preludes et Etudes; Nocturne, Preludes, Mazurkas et Impromptu - nine titles in fact comprising perhaps about fifteen pieces.” Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 293.

⁶⁴ Franz Liszt, *Artiste et société: édition des textes en français*, ed. Rémy Stricker (Paris: Flammarion, 1995), 125-26, quoted in Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation*, 72.

early reputation was based on “spontaneous improvisation,” “operatic fantasies,” and “pianistic stunts.”⁶⁵ Tours featured varied programs tailored to each audience and location. Composers rarely repeated the same works across concerts, treating each event as unique. In Goehr’s words, “music was not always produced to outlast its performance or survive more than a few performances... Rarely did musicians think of their music as surviving past their lifetime in the form of completed and fixed works.”⁶⁶ In this era, music existed fundamentally as an event, not yet as an enduring work—a shift that the rise of the work-concept would radically challenge.

Later in pianist-composers’ careers, they would perform less frequently, devoting more time to composition, with the concert stage becoming a platform for the growing canon of works. In the latter part of Liszt’s performing career in the mid-1840s, his programs had begun to include more music by the “old masters,” with one critic observing: “How often classical names appeared in Liszt’s concerts! They, and the particular care that he devotes to their performance, clearly betrayed the noble taste Liszt brings to the task.”⁶⁷ Initially calling these solo concerts “monoconcerts,” Liszt later adopted the now-familiar term “recital.”⁶⁸ This, in turn, paved the way for a new career path: conveying the intentions of canonical composers through performance with technical perfection. With its establishment of the canon in the mid-nineteenth century, performers and conductors became especially selective of the works they chose, mixing contemporary and older repertoire, for instance, Alkan’s programs for the six *Le Petites Concerts* (1873-77), which featured his own works, old masters, contemporaries and his own arrangements of them.⁶⁹

Doran also argues that it was Clara Schumann (1819-1896)—not just Liszt—who more fully embodied the ideals of the modern recitalist.⁷⁰ She consistently programmed serious, canonical works

⁶⁵ Doran, “Introduction: Virtuosity and Liszt,” 2.

⁶⁶ Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*, 186.

⁶⁷ *Wiener Zeitung* 1846: 822, quoted in Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation*, 231.

⁶⁸ Small, *Musicking*, 30.

⁶⁹ For programs, see Christian Johansson, “Charles-Vaentin Alkan—Performance Chronology,” *Classical Pianists*, accessed April 14 2026, <https://classical-pianists.net/iv/charles-valentin-alkan/chronology/#vii>.

⁷⁰ Doran, “Virtuosity and Liszt,” 27-28.

such as Beethoven's "Appassionata" and emphasised "scrupulous attention to the musical text, subservience of virtuosity to the musical idea."⁷¹ Her commitment to textual fidelity helped redefine public expectations of performance, transforming the recital into a "reverent" space to admire works rather than a mere superficial display of the performer's technique.

Organists, too, participated in this touring culture. Figures such as Lefébure-Wély, Franck, Guilmant, and Gigout played essential roles in demonstrating new Cavillé-Coll organs throughout France and Belgium.⁷² Their touring programs were "popular" and included the "little-known repertoire by Bach and Handel" but centred on improvisation—demonstrating the capabilities of the new instrument rather than themselves.⁷³ This echoed the "event-like" nature of early concerts by pianist-composers.

Having lived through the height of this transformation, Liszt's long career encapsulates the shift from music-as-event to music-as-object. In the 1820s and 1830s, Liszt embodied spontaneity, invention, and personal expression. From the 1840s onward, he pioneered the recital format, gradually adopting what Haynes calls "romantic habits" such as "canonism, untouchability, text fetishism, and ritualized performance," thereby transforming the very idea of what a concert could be.⁷⁴

As Berlioz exclaimed after Liszt's 1836 performance of Beethoven's "*Hammerklavier*" Sonata, Op. 106, "not a note was left out, not one added... Liszt, in thus making comprehensible a work not yet comprehended, has proved that he is the pianist of the future."⁷⁵ However, that future would increasingly minimise the improvisational creativity and performer autonomy once so vital to the pianist-composer's identity. Ultimately, these developments reveal how the work-concept redefined this identity. The divide between amateurs and professionals, who were taught by pianist-composers themselves, was shaped by pedagogy and social change and exemplifies how the work-concept reshaped performance practice. Without the living composer present, how could performers best convey their intentions? This is when

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation*, 259.

⁷³ Ibid. This was already discussed in Chapter 2.1.5 of the thesis.

⁷⁴ Haynes, *The End of Early Music*, 68

⁷⁵ *Revue gazette et musicale de Paris*, June 12, 1836, quoted in Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years*, 236.

score literacy became much more critical in the education of both amateurs and professionals, as the following chapter will explore.

3.2 Training Musical Literacy: Scores and Editions

The nineteenth century witnessed the growing importance of scores in performance pedagogy. While most musical traditions value the spontaneity of live creation, Western art music evolved a sophisticated system of notation that, over centuries, allowed performers to execute complex compositions without the composer present.⁷⁶ This shift brought about a new dichotomy: on one side, the “literate” musician trained to interpret a detailed score, and on the other, the “non-literate” (oral/aural) performer who would improvise additions and changes to it.⁷⁷ Small, for instance, highlights the benefits of standard notation practice but also warns of its tendency to “atrophy” improvisational skills—something that became more prevalent with the emerging work-concept.⁷⁸ Taruskin argues that there are three steps to music literacy: 1) the invention of music notation, 2) printing and 3) recording.⁷⁹ Each one of these media contributed to the increasing control that composers had over their music—both in score and performance— “as they came to conceive of their music as being preservable in fixed and lasting works.”⁸⁰

As pianist-composers advocated the performance of works by the old masters, new, reliable editions were sought to convey their intentions most accurately. Unlike Liszt and his contemporaries, who had contact with a pedagogical tradition that trained the pianist-composer, the generation of pianists born around 1850 would witness only the dawn of the recital and could hear only stories about the wealth of practices around 1820 that were disappearing from the concert stage. For this to become a possibility, scores and editions of the old masters’ works needed to become more reliable and widespread, contrary to “early editions, which were often highly inaccurate” and published in a single country (with a few exceptions, of course).⁸¹ This chapter will discuss the pianist-composer’s role in the creation of these complete editions, which were separated into two main camps: the *urtext* edition and the Performance

⁷⁶ See Small, *Musciking*, 110.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 110.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 111.

⁷⁹ Taruskin, *Text and Act*, 353-54.

⁸⁰ Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*, 29.

⁸¹ Neal Peres da Costa, *Off the Record: Performing Practices in Romantic Piano Playing*, 1st ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), x, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195386912.001.0001>.

(student) edition, both of which have different approaches and lay claim to delivering the “composer’s intentions” to a diligent performer in servitude to them.

3.2.1 Complete Editions and the Urtext Edition

The emergence of complete editions in the mid-nineteenth century reflected a desire to preserve and disseminate a composer’s output as a stable body of work. As we have explored in Chapter 3.1, pianist-composers, who were teachers themselves, placed the score at the forefront of music pedagogy. In the 1840s, we already see this attitude manifesting itself in performance practice: “In the performance of [Beethoven’s] works (and generally for all classical authors), the player must by no means allow himself to alter the composition, nor to make any addition or abbreviation.”⁸² This practice, of course, relies on reliable sources, which were relatively difficult to obtain in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries because of the difficulty of accessing autograph manuscripts, numerous handwritten sources, and numerous errors in early editions. To solve this, complete editions of composers’ works were first published by Breitkopf & Härtel in the 1870s, under the direction of Oskar von Hase (1846-1921).⁸³ These monumental publications were made possible by advances in printing technology, which enabled greater precision and consistency in musical engraving.⁸⁴ J. S. Bach, Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann and Chopin were among the first composers chosen by the company to become “enshrined in such monumental collected editions.”⁸⁵

Placing value on the composer’s text, the preparation of such editions drew upon autograph manuscripts, first editions, and, where available, the composer’s own handwritten annotations. For this reason, they came to be designated as Urtext editions (from the German, meaning “original text”). The term denotes “a printed version that is intended to be the original, or as exact as possible, based upon

⁸² Carl Czerny, “On the Proper Performance of all Beethoven’s Works for Piano Solo,” in *Complete Theoretical and Practical Pianoforte School*, 4:32. Published as a supplementary volume.

⁸³ IMSLP / Petrucci Music Library, “Breitkopf und Härtel,” accessed May 2, 2025, https://imslp.org/wiki/Breitkopf_und_H%C3%A4rtel.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Peres da Costa, *Off the Record*, x.

the composer's original intent, without modifications or additions."⁸⁶ Closely related to this notion is the concept of *Fassung letzter Hand* (literally "version of the last hand"), which designates the last revision of a work authorised by the composer.⁸⁷ Whereas Urtext aims to reconstruct the work's most *authentic* state through critical comparison of sources, *Fassung letzter hand* takes the compositional process into account. The two concepts thus represent complementary approaches to textual authority, which represent two ways to define what constitutes a work's most legitimate form.

As Peres da Costa observes, this so-called "Urtext mentality" sought not only to revive earlier music but also to canonise more recent figures, "partly through those who contributed toward the production of collected editions of the works of more recent composers whose achievements were deemed worthy of preservation."⁸⁸ Schenker, an advocate for Urtext editions, even claimed that "a composition does not require a performance to exist...The reading of the score is sufficient."⁸⁹ The publication of these complete editions marked a significant turning point in the way composers' legacies were preserved and presented.

For example, Chopin's works appeared under the grand title *Friedrich Chopins Werke*, published between 1878 and 1880. The edition comprises 14 volumes of his music, an additional volume containing supplementary works (published in 1902), and three volumes of critical commentary.⁹⁰ For the first time, all of Chopin's compositions were brought together in a single volume. During his lifetime, his works had been published sporadically and as individual opuses. Now, they were systematically organised by genre and publication date (at least as best understood at the time), bringing a sense of order and continuity to Chopin's oeuvre. The editorial team behind *Friedrich Chopins Werke*

⁸⁶ Dan Rager, "Urtext Editions? (What Is an Authentic and Honest Original Manuscript?)," *Article*, January 17, 2020, <https://csuohio.elsevierpure.com/en/publications/urtext-editions-what-is-an-authentic-and-honest-original-manuscri>.

⁸⁷ See Gero von Wilpert, "Ausgabe letzter Hand," in *Sachwörterbuch der Literatur*, 8th rev. and enl. ed. (Stuttgart: Kröner, 2001), 58.

⁸⁸ Peres da Costa, *Off the Record*, x.

⁸⁹ Heinrich Schenker, *The Art of Performance*, ed. Heribert Esser, trans. Irene Schreier Scott (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3.

⁹⁰ IMSLP/Petrucci Music Library, "Friedrich Chopin's Werke (Chopin, Frédéric)," accessed May 2, 2025, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Friedrich_Chopin%27s_Werke_\(Chopin,_Fr%C3%A9d%C3%A9ric\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Friedrich_Chopin%27s_Werke_(Chopin,_Fr%C3%A9d%C3%A9ric)).

consisted entirely of pianist-composers, including Liszt, Reinecke, and Brahms. Their involvement added a layer of authority to the edition, bringing both their expertise with the composer's music and their own experience as pianist-composers. Their editing process was transparent, "with much more systematic scholarly scrutiny and documentation of the sources," as evidenced by the publication of critical commentary.⁹¹

The commentary was not intended for the amateur student, even if they could afford such lavish collections requiring daily subscriptions. Even composers and their publishers just a few generations earlier demonstrated minimal concern for the authenticity or reliability of source material. Instead, these complete editions were aimed at the professional performer or *Kenner*, who became increasingly concerned with fidelity to the composer's intentions. Take, for example, the opening page of Mozart's Sonata K. 310 from the Breitkopf & Härtel edition (Figure 46):

⁹¹ Peres da Costa, *Off the Record*, x.

Figure 46: W. A. Mozart, Keyboard Sonata in A minor, K. 310: I. *Allegro maestoso*, bars 1-17.⁹²

2 (78)

SONATE N° 8
für das Pianoforte
von
W. A. MOZART.
Köch. Verz. N° 310.

Mozarts Werke. Serie 20. N° 8.

Allegro maestoso.

The image shows a page from a music book. At the top, it says '2 (78)'. Below that is the title 'SONATE N° 8 für das Pianoforte von W. A. MOZART. Köch. Verz. N° 310.' To the right, it says 'Serie 20. N° 8.' Below the title is the tempo marking 'Allegro maestoso.' and the first system of music. The score is in 2/4 time and consists of four systems of music. The first system is marked 'Allegro maestoso.' and begins with a forte (f) dynamic. The second system features a piano (p) dynamic. The third system continues with a forte (f) dynamic. The fourth system includes markings for 'calando' (decelerating), piano (p), and legato. The score is presented in a Breitkopf & Härtel edition style with a detailed title page.

The Breitkopf & Härtel edition of the sonata presents itself with an elaborate and detailed title that clearly displays the composer's name and its place within his oeuvre. This approach contrasts with the first edition from the 1780s discussed in Chapter 3.1.2. Unlike earlier, generic titles such as "Sonata in A minor," this edition clearly identifies the piece by its Köchel number (K. 310/K. 300d), thanks to

⁹² W. A. Mozart, *Piano Sonata No. 8 in A Minor*, K.310/300d, in *Mozarts Werke*, Serie XX: *Sonaten und Phantasien für das Pianoforte*, No. 8, ed. Carl Reinecke et al. (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1878), 79, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Piano_Sonata_No.8_in_A_minor,_K.310/300d_\(Mozart,_Wolfgang_Amadeus\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Piano_Sonata_No.8_in_A_minor,_K.310/300d_(Mozart,_Wolfgang_Amadeus)).

the work of Ludwig Ritter von Köchel (1800-1877), and allows it to be located precisely within Mozart's oeuvre, for example, "Sonata no. [X], K. [Y]"), in addition to relying on generic titles that included key, instrument and genre. Visually, the score displays a cleaner, more precise layout, benefiting from significant advances in printing and engraving technology introduced in the mid-nineteenth century. Every slur, articulation and ornament sign is presented in a neat, reproducible form that moves beyond a copy meant for a leisurely undertaking. The absence of fingering here is telling, which further supports that such editions were primarily used for study or for professional pianists who would supply their own (at this point, amateurs were not as well-versed in fingering principles as they were a century before). As an edition designed for long-term use, this once-in-a-generation scholarly project reflects the meticulous care of editors and publishers. This marks a shift in attitude, or rather, in historical consciousness, toward the musical work, which is no longer seen merely as music to be played but as cultural artefacts to be studied, curated, and preserved for future generations—supporting Goehr's "museum" metaphor.

This impulse eventually developed into the Urtext ideal, which sought to present the musical text with maximum fidelity to the composer's manuscript. Just as Schenker created his analytical methods for the study of "Great" composers, Paul and Eva Badura-Skoda also credit him as "a pioneer in the purification of texts and the observation of sources" as a requirement for his study.⁹³ Schenker argues for the "[urgent] need for an authentic text: a text based on manuscripts and first editions, read not only in a philologically diplomatically accurate manner but also musically."⁹⁴ These so-called Urtext editions were based on extensive and meticulous research, often consulting autograph manuscripts, first editions, and handwritten annotations by the composers themselves, where available.⁹⁵

While such editions should invite greater freedom for the performer to shape their interpretation, many performers, unaware of performance practice, may perform the text as written, prompting Paul and Eva Badura-Skoda's caution: "it must be made clear that faithfulness to a work is not to be confused

⁹³ Eva Badura-Skoda and Paul Badura-Skoda, *Interpreting Mozart on the Keyboard*, trans. Leo Black (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1962), 128.

⁹⁴ Schenker, *The Art of Performance*, 6.

⁹⁵ G. Henle Verlag, "What Is Urtext?" Henle, n.d., accessed April 4, 2025, <https://www.henle.de/What-is-Urtext/>.

with what we may call literal exactness.”⁹⁶ Despite the Urtext edition’s intent to represent the “truth” of the score, it often erased centuries of performance practices, many of which were not documented in the score but were nonetheless essential to the music.

We see this discrepancy when comparing composers’ autograph manuscripts with heavily edited nineteenth-century editions (to inform the amateur performer, as discussed in the previous section) and when listening to early recordings on wax cylinders, piano rolls, and electric recordings by nineteenth-century pianists.⁹⁷ Many details, such as improvisatory ornamentation, tempo modifications, and extemporaneous arranging, were assumed by composers and thus were not written down. Therefore, the performer’s role goes far beyond the *Fassung letzter Hand*: realising these unwritten traditions was vital, yet the focus on the work-concept has diminished this once-essential creative aspect of the art.

As embracers of the work-concept, pianist-composers played a significant role in the creation of complete editions. However, they also needed a way to reach out to amateur performers, as they would find the limited performance indications in these complete and Urtext editions challenging, particularly those of older works from before 1800.

3.2.2 Performance Editions

In contrast to Urtext editions, performance editions—marked by fingerings, dynamics, phrasing, and interpretative advice—intervened more directly in the act of interpretation. The specialisation of performance from both amateurs and professionals resulted in composers’ “well-grounded skepticism toward the performer” and “accustoming themselves to writing down in the most precise manner every detail that conceivably might be considered part of the composition.”⁹⁸ In the late nineteenth century, performance editions emerged as a vital pedagogical tool for beginner and intermediate musicians, particularly those without access to an experienced teacher. Up until this period, most students were in contact with

⁹⁶ Eva Badura-Skoda and Paul Badura-Skoda, *Interpreting Mozart on the Keyboard*, 4.

⁹⁷ For more information on this matter, see Peres da Costa, *Off the Record*.

⁹⁸ Schenker, *The Art of Performance*, 70-71.

musicians who heard the composer play their own works, or with students of the composer who heard their teacher play. The rise of performance editions also signalled the decline of oral transmission. Where earlier generations relied on the direct example of the pianist-composer to convey style and nuance, editions now took over this role by conveying such practices on the printed page.

Published alongside the more scholarly complete editions, performance editions were far more detailed and interpretive in nature, even more so than the composer's own written instructions. They included a range of practical and theoretical additions designed to guide the performer through both the technical and expressive demands of the music. A seminal example is Hans von Bülow's editions of the "classic works," which included the Sonatas of Haydn, Clementi, and Beethoven, Etudes by Cramer and Chopin, and many other miscellaneous works.⁹⁹ Though written advice from the composer and the composer's student is not a new phenomenon, as we can find in Czerny's *On the Proper Performance of all Beethoven's Works for Piano Solo*, from his *Pianoforte School*. The key difference here is that while Czerny's interpretive insights are brief and published in a separate volume, performance editions include these within the edition itself as part of the preface and/or footnotes below the score.

One of the first sets of performance editions was the complete edition of J. S. Bach's keyboard [piano] works, edited by Czerny in 1843.¹⁰⁰ These consisted of performance instructions in the score that were missing from Bach's manuscript copies, such as tempi, articulation, and dynamics. Being an advocate and teacher of these works, according to many student testimonies, Chopin began making his own [performance] edition of the *Well-Tempered Clavier* Book I by copying out markings from the 1837 Paris edition (though he only did this for the first seven preludes and fugues) and added his "own corrections to Bach's text."¹⁰¹ These markings reveal Chopin's pedagogical attitude by prescribing a

⁹⁹ Based on a survey of editions on Bülow's IMSLP page as editor. See https://imslp.org/wiki/Category:B%C3%BClow,_Hans_von.

¹⁰⁰ See J.-S. Bach, *Collection complète pour le piano des œuvres de J.-S. Bach*, 10 vols., edited by Czerny (Paris, Launer, 1843).

¹⁰¹ Bach, Johann Sebastian, Frédéric Chopin, and Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger. "Vingt-Quatre Préludes et fugues (Le Clavier bien-temperé, Livre 1)." In *Clavier bien tempéré, Livre 1.*, Publications de la Société française de musicologie. 1ère série; t. 28. Paris: Société française de musicologie, 2010, XLI. For these accounts, see Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 60-61. Chopin intended to create his own edition of the work.

“ready model” of style for students. They, in turn, became “servants” to the musical text not because they lacked interpretive imagination (though most of them probably did), but because the authority of the written page now carried unprecedented weight.

Later performance editions typically feature three broad categories of editorial content: practical, theoretical, and interpretive. The practical elements include highly detailed fingerings—often multiple options to accommodate various hand shapes and preferences—as well as written-out ornamentation such as trills, appoggiaturas, and turns. Editors frequently clarified ambiguous performance directions and translated German and French markings, for example, into the more universal Italian terms. Additions of articulation, dynamics, and metronome markings—not only at the beginning of a piece—but also at points of tempo change, like the second subject of a sonata or a “B” section of a piece in ternary form, were common. In some cases, editors freely rewrote passages to suit the expanding keyboard, adjusted note values to reflect more “academically correct” notation practices, and “ironed out” noticeable inconsistencies (see Chapter 5.3). These editions were not without criticism, however, as overly detailed instructions remove the spontaneity in performance. For example, Schenker criticised Bülow’s performance editions of C. P. E. Bach “for encouraging just such an ignorant, mechanical approach [on the performance of ornaments],”¹⁰⁴ and suggested following C. P. E. Bach’s advice to “play from the soul, not like a trained bird.”¹⁰⁵

Beyond practical tools, editions with theoretical commentary reveal the influence of the work-concept in nineteenth-century musical thought. They informed performers of their historical context and emotional content, in line with Hoffman’s performance advice on Beethoven’s piano sonatas in Chapter 3.1.2. These editions situate works within larger bodies of work, deepening understanding of the evolution of performance practice. Figure 47 shows us one such example, another edition of Mozart’s A minor sonata:

¹⁰⁴ Heinrich Schenker, “A Contribution to the Study of Ornamentation,” trans. Hedi Siegel, *Music Forum* 2 (1976 [1903]): 46, quoted in Cook, *Beyond the Score*, 283.

¹⁰⁵ C. P. E. Bach, *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, 150.

Figure 47: W. A. Mozart, Sonata in A minor, K. 310: I. *Allegro maestoso*, bars 1-16.¹⁰⁶

Sonata XIV
(K. No. 310)

Edited, revised and fingered by
Richard Epstein

<p>Abbreviations: P.T., Principal Theme; S.T., Secondary Theme; D., Development; Ep., Episode; M.T., Middle Theme; R., Return.</p>	<p>Abreviaciones: T.P., Tema Principal; T.S., Tema Segundo; D., Desarrollo; Ep., Episodio; T.M., Tema Medio; R., Retorno.</p>
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Allegro maestoso (♩ = 116)

The musical score consists of four systems of music. The first system shows the beginning of the piece with a forte dynamic and a 'T.P.' marking. The second system shows the 'T.S.' with a piano dynamic. The third system continues the 'T.S.' with a forte dynamic. The fourth system shows the end of the first system with a piano dynamic and a 'calando' marking.

This Schirmer Edition, edited by Richard Epstein, indicates performance-oriented directions far more prominently than the Breitkopf & Härtel and Adam's editions discussed in previous chapters. It includes fingering accents, *forzando* markings, and more detailed hairpins, and it guides a more legato, expressive

¹⁰⁶ W. A. Mozart, *Piano Sonata No. 8 in A Minor*, K.310/300d, ed. Richard Epstein, Sigmund Lebert, William Scharfenberg, and Hans von Bülow, in *19 Sonatas for the Piano* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1893), repr. in *Sonata Album*, Book II, No. 22 (New York: G. Schirmer, 1896), 83–101.

touch (interpretations most likely derived from Late-Romantic performance traditions rather than necessarily from Mozart's intentions). In the opening subject of the sonata, these editorial additions encourage shaping phrases at the "micro level" with greater legato and emphasis, superseding the detail provided by earlier editions. Most notably, the Schirmer edition explicitly labels sections corresponding to the recently theorised sonata-form structure (the exposition, development, and recapitulation). By this period, a performer was expected to understand the work's formal divisions and phrase architecture and how they may inform their interpretation.

These additions do come with some drawbacks, however, as it is unclear which elements of the musical text are by Mozart and which are by the editor. Some editions were transparent with their editing processes, indicating which readings were original and which were editorial interventions—not the case for this Schirmer edition. This ambiguity reflects an ongoing paradox with the pianist-composer's identity: on one hand, editors assumed the authority of the composer and their performance traditions; on the other, they also echoed earlier eras in which fidelity to sources was of little concern by making changes to the text freely, also basing their reasoning on following the composer's "intentions" however accurate they may be. Therefore, the Schirmer edition offers more detailed performance instructions but raises concerns about editorial intrusion. By contrast, the earlier Breitkopf & Härtel edition from 1878 emphasises fidelity to the first edition. Still, it raises concerns about unannotated performance practices that are, arguably, just as integral to the work as its written text.

Later performance editions would even incorporate relevant biographical information necessary for a more personal interpretation. These additions, described by Cook as "emotional storyboards," often portrayed an emotional or psychological narrative.¹⁰⁷ For instance, Bülow described Chopin's Prelude in E minor, Op. 28 No. 4, "as one of the composer's paroxysms" brought on by his tuberculosis.¹⁰⁸ He interpreted the pulsating accompaniment figure as the composer's "heavy breathing," the melody that

¹⁰⁷ Cook, *Beyond the Score*, 95.

¹⁰⁸ Harold C. Schonberg, *The Great Pianists* (London: Gollancz, 1965), 128.

outlines the semitone as his “suffering,” and the final chords as his slow descent into “sleep.”¹⁰⁹ While these readings aim to inspire expressive performance, they inevitably impose a specific interpretation, which poses the same dilemma as Urtext editions by constraining the performer’s agency.

Taken as a whole, performance editions reveal the widening gap between the score and its evolving performance conventions. Through their detailed instructions, they both support and reject the work-concept by limiting the interpretive freedom afforded to performers, but through the editor’s subjective lens.

3.2.3 The Birth of Institutionalised *Music Theory* and Its Servitude to the *Work*

Music theory has existed for centuries, developing in response to the increasingly sophisticated use of music notation and to ways of theorising contemporary and historical compositional practices. The nineteenth century saw music theory institutionalised as a result of the emerging work-concept. It shifted performance pedagogy by proposing that teaching canonical works and their forms was the way forward, rather than teaching fluency and mastery of common vocabulary. Thus, music students aiming to become professionals would need to study harmony and counterpoint, and, by extension, composition, even though they did not intend to become composers themselves. Schema-based approaches eventually gave way to scientific approaches that emphasised abstract conceptions of harmony and form. This shift was reinforced by German theoretical traditions in the nineteenth century, which played a pivotal role in separating composition and performance in conservatory curricula. Here, we witness the birth of institutionalised music theory and its impact on musical literacy, shaping the canon of works.

The ideals and doctrines of the Age of Enlightenment had a profound impact on many fields, including science, politics, religion, and the arts. Driven by its principles, many musicians felt the need to theorise music, to justify its status as a rigorous art form grounded in scientific principles. While music theorists have existed throughout music history, most were seasoned performers and composers

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

themselves and were always concerned with practical application.¹¹⁰ We see, for the first time, the publication of many treatises, each containing hundreds of pages, attempting to describe the science of harmony, with varying degrees of success. It was in this period that one saw the first attempts to define *tonality* and to incorporate natural phenomena, such as the harmonic series.¹¹¹ The most influential was Rameau's *Traité de l'harmonie réduite à ses principes naturels* (1752), which formed the solid theoretical foundation of Western music theory (see also Chapter 1.3.2).¹¹² "His theory of the *bass fondamentale* offered a revolutionary reconceptualization of tonal harmony that has continued to influence music theory to this day."¹¹³ This shift marked the beginning of a divide between speculative theory and practical musicianship—one that would directly influence the training (or lack thereof) of nineteenth-century pianist-composers.

In conjunction with the rise of conservatories and formal music education, the use of schema was gradually replaced by abstract harmonic theory, form, and species counterpoint. Burnham argues that "the emphasis on form has been a central preoccupation of music-theoretical writings ever since the 'work-concept'" and "decisively shifted theoretical focus to whole works of music."¹¹⁴ German composers and theorists pioneered the writing of extensive theoretical works regarding musical form and were much more rigorous than their counterparts from elsewhere in Europe. The two critical German theorists of the Enlightenment period were Johann Mattheson (1681–1764) and Johann Philipp Kirnberger (1721–1783), the former of whom published *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (The Complete Chapel Master) in 1739, a 500-page treatise that covered the history and theory of music, composition,

¹¹⁰ In the Renaissance period, for example, there are Zarlino's *Istitutioni harmoniche* (1558) and Santa Maria's *The Art of Playing the Fantasia* (1565).

¹¹¹ See the theoretical works by Fétis.

¹¹² Utne-Reitan, "Music Theory Pedagogy in the Nineteenth Century," 70. As a result of the empirical method, the Rule of the Octave, a core schema in harmony and counterpoint pedagogy in Naples and Paris, was formulated independently by not only Rameau himself, but many other theorists around the same time, such as Gasparini (1708), Campion (1716) and Heinichen (1711 and 1728). See Chapter 1.3.2 for more information.

¹¹³ Wason, "*Musica Practica: Music Theory as Pedagogy*," 54. Fundamental bass theory constructs and labels chords by superimposing major/minor thirds.

¹¹⁴ Scott Burnham, "Form," in *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, ed. Thomas Christensen, The Cambridge History of Music (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 880, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521623711.030>.

and performance. This academic tradition would continue into the nineteenth century with theorists such as Gottfried Weber (1779-1839) and Marx, who promoted the study of harmony as a science through the promotion of *Stufentheorie*, known in the English-speaking world as Roman numeral analysis.¹¹⁵

The Leipzig Conservatory, for example, played a key role in shaping Western music education in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹¹⁶ Navon draws a strong link between the conservatory's pedagogical methods and the proliferation of the work-concept.¹¹⁷ The institution excelled at teaching both performance (divided into a technical and interpretation component) and a highly academic form of music theory, divorced from its practical roots. Unlike the Conservatoire and its predecessors, which used theory as a way to understand harmonic vocabulary and compositional procedures, the Leipzig Conservatory used music theory primarily as a means to teach performance.¹¹⁸ Treatises promoted by the institution no longer served to teach composition to become a composer, but rather "promoting the composition of entire pieces in the available forms" and frequently cited "the [exemplary] works of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven."¹¹⁹ As a result, "what was primarily at stake was no longer the education of a young composer but rather the viability of theories of music that attempted to determine what were felt to be the natural laws of music."¹²⁰ This transition from practical to theoretical pedagogy marked the rise of German music theory as the dominant educational standard across Europe and North America.

Ernst Friedrich Richter (1808-1879), a professor of harmony at the Leipzig conservatory and grand pupil of Padre Martini (1706-1784) from the school of Bologna, continued this tradition with his influential harmony treatise, which turned "Weber's critical empiricism into textbook dogma, popularizing his use of Roman numerals and other notational innovations."¹²¹ Figure 48 shows the employment of Roman numerals for the diatonic chords of the major and minor scales:

¹¹⁵ Utne-Reitan, "Music Theory Pedagogy in the Nineteenth Century, 74-77.

¹¹⁶ Navon, "Pedagogies of Performance," 65.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 63.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 65.

¹¹⁹ Burnham, "Form," 880.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Wason, "*Musica Practica: Music Theory as Pedagogy*," 64.

Figure 48: Richter, *Treatise on Harmony*. Diatonic Chords and their Assigned Roman Numerals.¹²²

COMMON CHORDS OF THE MAJOR AND MINOR SCALES.

MAJOR SCALE.

C: I. II. III. IV. V. VI. VII°.

60.

MINOR SCALE.

a: I. II°. III. IV. V. VI. VII°.

Major chords are found—

In Major.	In Minor.
C: I. IV. V.	a: V. VI.

Minor chords are found—

In Major.	In Minor.
C: II. III. VI.	a: I. IV.

Diminished chords are found—

In Major.	In Minor.
C: VII°.	a: II°. VII°.

An augmented chord is found—

In Minor.
a: III°.

Although the treatise claims to be practical, Richter's exercises often featured the use of simplified examples for the theory's sake, which bear minimal resemblance to composition practice and

¹²² Ernst Friedrich Richter, *Treatise on Harmony*, trans. Franklin Taylor (London: J. B. Cramer and Co., 1864), 28, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Lehrbuch_der_Harmonie_\(Richter,_Ernst_Friedrich\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Lehrbuch_der_Harmonie_(Richter,_Ernst_Friedrich)).

neglect the broader scope of compositional techniques required for developing composers. One prominent issue with German pedagogy is its failure to connect harmony exercises to practical composition. These treatises often presented harmony as a scientific study, prioritising Roman numeral analysis and four-part chorale exercises over creative music-making. Take, for example, this four-part chorale style exercise featuring homogenous note values (Figure 49):¹²³

Figure 49: Richter, *Treatise on Harmony*. A Given Chorale Melody and its Four-part Realisation.¹²⁴

“O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden.”

The image displays three systems of musical notation. The first system is labeled '326.' on the left. Each system consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The top staff of each system contains a single melodic line with a soprano clef (C1) and a soprano voice part. The bottom staff of each system contains four parts: a soprano part (C1), an alto part (C2), a tenor part (C3), and a bass part (C4). The music is in a common time signature (C) and features a homogenous note value of quarter notes. The title '“O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden.”' is centered above the first system. The notation includes various accidentals (sharps, flats, naturals) and rests, with some notes beamed together. The first system ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

¹²³ Richter, *Treatise on Harmony*, 126. The Bach family, particularly J. S. Bach, shaped German musical pedagogy through practice-based learning rooted in the Lutheran chorale tradition, using simple, rhythmically uniform chorale melodies to teach harmony and counterpoint. See also Remeš, “Thoroughbass, Chorale, and Fugue: Teaching the Craft of Composition in J. S. Bach’s Circle,” 9.

¹²⁴ Richter, *Treatise on Harmony*, 122.

For a treatise that culminates in four-part chorale writing in the style of the Lutheran Chorale tradition, we might see how this may have been rather underwhelming for a pianist-composer who desired a more practical approach and one that covered much more contemporary harmonic practices. It is not surprising that pianist-composer Edward Grieg (1843-1907) was dissatisfied with his studies at the institution, regarding it as a “waste of time.”¹²⁵ Though covered by the text, either very few or no practical exercises exist for modulations, enharmonisations and melodic dissonances.

This transformation deeply affected the training of the generation of pianist-composers after Chopin and Liszt, who relied on schema-based fluency to compose, improvise, and perform in real time just as their predecessors did in the eighteenth century. As pedagogies became more abstract and canonical, the pianist-composer’s model of creativity was seen as outdated and lacking in originality and authenticity. This is not surprising considering that the goal for performers in the Leipzig Conservatory, according to Richter, was to use the “knowledge of music theory [to] ensure that a student’s interpretation of a work, rather than relying on pure instinct, was built upon recognising the musical laws employed by the work’s author.”¹²⁶ This shift formalised a performer’s role as an *analytical interpreter*, solidifying the hierarchy between composer and performer that defined later nineteenth-century performance pedagogy.

By extension, the conservatory separated the roles of performer and composer, with harmony studied primarily on paper rather than in practice. As a result, harmony became a tool, not to develop composers, but to acquire interpretive *insight* into works from the great composers of the past—an emergence of canonical thinking.¹²⁷ Harmony became a mode of cultural literacy rather than creative fluency, mainly aimed at upper-class students, educating them about music rather than training them to *make*

¹²⁵ Bjørnar Utne-Reitan, “Edvard Griegs øvelser i harmonilære og kontrapunkt,” *Studia Musicologica Norvegica* 44 (2018): 57–78, <https://doi.org/10.18261/issn.1504-2960-2018-01-05>. Despite this, the Conservatory produced notable theorists such as Hugo Riemann, whose work exemplified the academic rigour of the German system.

¹²⁶ Ernst Friedrich Richter, *Lehrbuch der Harmonie: Praktische Anleitung zu den Studien in derselben, zundchst für das Conservatorium der Musik zu Leipzig* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1853), vi, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Lehrbuch_der_Harmonie_\(Richter,_Ernst_Friedrich\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Lehrbuch_der_Harmonie_(Richter,_Ernst_Friedrich)), quoted in Navon, “Pedagogies of Performance,” 75.

¹²⁷ Navon, “Pedagogies of Performance,” 75.

it.¹²⁸ This emphasis on theory as a tool for music appreciation led to the development of more advanced analytical techniques by figures such as Schenker in the early twentieth century.

An interesting question to ask here is what would have happened to the Leipzig curriculum had Mendelssohn lived for another decade or so? As a pianist-composer, he devoted time to teaching “counterpoint, composition, and improvisation,” which were subjects regarded as a “higher concern” and would perhaps have channelled harmony pedagogy towards the mastery of style, not the work itself.¹²⁹ Gooley even postulates that had Mendelssohn lived longer, at least one of his students would “have carried the free fantasy tradition forward.”¹³⁰

As the work-concept took hold, pedagogical models that emphasised improvisation and rote learning gave way to more analytical and theoretical approaches. As a result, treatises like those of Czerny, Kalkbrenner, or Zimmerman became “dated” in the eyes of later conservatory curricula. By linking historical pedagogy to compositional practices, we might see how the decline of schema-based teaching was rooted in broader aesthetic changes initiated by the work-concept. As a result, the notion of “music theory” came into being with the sole purpose of educating students about the recently formed canon of works and consolidating its place as exemplary models for composition.

Taken together, these developments reveal how abstract music theory redefined musical literacy. The focus on interpretation and analysis in fixed musical texts devalued improvisatory and compositional skills that had once distinguished the pianist-composer. This contributed to the eventual decline of the training of this figure within nineteenth-century music institutions.

¹²⁸ Peter Schubert, “Global Perspective on Music Theory Pedagogy: Thinking in Music,” *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy* 25, no. 3 (2011), 217-18, <https://doi.org/10.71156/2994-7073.1269>; Roger Graybill, “Thinking ‘in’ and ‘about’ Music: Implications for the Theory Curriculum,” *Engaging Students: Essays in Music Pedagogy*, no. 2 (2014), <http://flipcamp.org/engagingstudents2/essays/graybill.html>.

¹²⁹ Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation*, 252.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 253.

4 Harmony and the Mechanics of the Keyboard: A Pianist-Composer's Unique Insight

Now we come to the latter half of the thesis, which proposes an explanation of the pianist-composer's complex relationship with the work-concept. This chapter will examine a critical component of their pedagogy: the realisation of *Chant Donné et Basse Donnée*, along with its many realisation types. Its relationship with the mechanics of keyboard playing and composition pedagogy will provide insight into the constituent "layers" of a musical work. Eventually, we can see how realisations, which were initially improvised, became fixed in writing to meet the evolving composition aesthetics arising from the work-concept. As this pedagogy straddles both sides of the work-concept argument, it may explain the pianist-composer's ethos as a musician capable of operating within and beyond its bounds.

4.1 Components of Realisation

In this tradition pioneered by the Schools of Italy, partimenti were central, which Sanguinetti defines as “a sketch, written on a single staff, whose main purpose is to be a guide for improvisation of a composition at the keyboard.”¹ These could be realised in two ways: *accompagnamento*, improvising chords and counterpoint at the keyboard (the tactile mode), and *disposizione*, later called “harmony,” writing out parts in open score (the written mode). The two approaches were complementary. As stated in a 1795 edition of Fenaroli’s *Regole*, realisation began at the keyboard before moving to written counterpoint—foreshadowing the Conservatoire’s later division of these tasks.² Table 10 outlines the key differences between the two subjects:

Table 10: Main Differences Between *Accompagnamento* and *Disposizione*

	<i>Accompagnamento</i>	<i>Disposizione</i> (later called Harmony)
No. of parts	Variable (usually 3 or 4 parts).	Usually 4, but treatises expected students to realise between 2 and 8 parts.
Instrumentation	A keyboard instrument (piano, organ or harpsichord). Harp, guitar and other related instruments. ³	Voices (SATB)—If other instruments are used, they serve to extend the range of the voices. Combinations included string quartet, woodwind quartet and brass quartet.
Layout	Standard clefs (treble and bass)	Each part has separate staves written on C-clefs. ⁴
Texture	Plain chords and arpeggiation for the given bass. If a melody is given, pianistic textures are to be played by the left hand as accompaniment.	Learned style (rarely in the instrumental style) ⁵

¹ Sanguinetti, *The Art of Partimento*, 14.

² Fenaroli, *Partimenti Book 3*, ed. and trans. Robert Gjerdingen, www.partimenti.org, [n.d.], 55.

³ These instruments were frequently used in the eighteenth century to learn accompaniment, but less so in the nineteenth century, as the composer wrote obligato accompaniment parts and no longer improvised.

⁴ This practice continued well into the twentieth century, as seen in the harmony classes with the *Avant-Garde* French composers such as Messiaen and Boulez. Yves Balmer and Christopher Brent Murray, “Pierre Boulez and Olivier Messiaen’s Harmony Class.” *Musicalia*, no. 7 (2010), 36. There are some vestiges of this tradition from Messiaen, for example, including a fully realised disposition of CD or BD based on the styles of composers throughout the common practice period, including contemporary composers at the time of publication, such as Ravel and Debussy. However, these alone are insufficient in learning the expanded harmonic vocabulary of the twentieth century.

⁵ See Chapter 4.3.5 for more information.

Adherence to counterpoint rules	Less strict - some rules regarding hidden parallels and direct motion are possible.	Usually very strict.
Link to Work-concept	Fluid realisation—music as “event.”	Fixed realisation—music as “work.”

The contrast between *accompagnamento* and *disposizione* can be seen as a precursor to evolving composition aesthetics initiated by the work-concept. The former was understood to prioritise adaptability, with improvised realisations often adjusted to the player’s technical abilities, the keyboard instrument, or the demands of a given performance/pedagogical context. The latter was a “fixed” and rule-bound exercise, with 3-8 parts realised according to strict contrapuntal discipline and written out in full notation. The shift from *accompagnamento* to *disposizione* reflects not only a pedagogical but also a conceptual transformation, marking a gradual movement from a practice-based, performative culture toward the “fixed” work. Thus, the Paris Conservatoire builds on the primarily oral partimento tradition, employing the method in an era when the emerging work-concept valued the written text.

4.1.1 *Chant Donné et Basse Donnée: An extension of the Partimento Tradition*

The Paris Conservatoire built upon the partimento tradition, calling the practice by a different name: *Chant Donné et Basse Donnée* (given melody and given bass).⁶ Unlike the Schools of Italy, which draw upon a given bass, the French also provide a given upper part.⁷ Conservatoire students were provided with complex and expressive melodies that reflected the styles and tastes of contemporary music practice, with the following features:

⁶ *Chant Donné et Basse Donnée* will henceforth be referred to as CDBD or CD and BD separately. The term partimento is still used in French treatises up until the 1920s.

⁷ Nicola Sala (1713-1801), who was one of the pupils and eventually the primo maestro of *La Pietà del Turchini*, wrote a comprehensive treatise on counterpoint in 1794 (publications were rare in Naples at the time). The treatise briefly mentions adding counterpoint below a given line, but in the context of invertible counterpoint. Nicola Sala, *Regole del contrappunto pratico: Tome I* (Naples: Stamperia reale, 1794), 17-18. Another source can be seen from Fenaroli’s student, Lavigna. For more information, see Giorgio Sanguinetti, “Diminution and Harmony-Oriented Counterpoint in Late Eighteenth Century Naples: Vincenzo Lavigna’s Studies with Fedele Fenaroli,” *Journal of Schenkerian Studies* 7, no. 1 (2013): 1-32.

- The implied use of a more expansive harmonic vocabulary, including dominant 9ths, various types of 7ths, alterations, enharmonisation, and pedal point.
- Clearer attenuation of cadences often outlines a periodic phrase structure (an important feature of Galant melodies).
- The use of melodic dissonances such as appoggiaturas, anticipations, and escape tones that obscure the structural notes (which can be challenging to interpret) elides the preparation of dissonances in general.
- Exceptional resolution of tendency tones (natural resolution vs. exceptional resolution).
- Detailed use of dynamics, tempi, and articulation in the given melody/bass itself.
- Careful treatment of false relations (which are permissible in some contexts).

They came in many forms, ranging from simple exercises to fugues to sonata movements.⁸

CDBD often covered a specific progression or was freely composed, encouraging the student to use the entire harmonic vocabulary as they saw fit. They were not only didactic in nature but also arguably high-quality (albeit to varying degrees). The teachers (i.e. the composers of the exercises) went to great lengths to provide several opportunities for a student to realise, according to objective standards, depending on the pedagogical or artistic goal. CDBDs reflected the different musical styles of nineteenth-century France. Whether the student pursued a career as an organist or an opera composer, the versatility and applicability of these exercises prepared them for the industry's changing demands.

Take, for example, the *Basse Donnée* by Cherubini (1830), a bass in the learned style that encourages the student to write for voices (Figure 50). The varying note values in the bass hint at the possibility of using imitations between the bass and at least one of the upper parts:

⁸ The *Chant Donnée* parallels the jazz and pop lead sheet, since once a pianist can realise a CD, they can easily realise a lead sheet—the main difference lies in rhythm, as the harmonic language is similar and even less strict in dissonance treatment. See Gjerdingen, *Child Composers in the Old Conservatories*, 114.

Figure 50: Cherubini, *Basse Donnée* (1830). Used for the Harmony and Accompaniment Classes.⁹



The *Chant Donnée* by Aimé Leborne (1845), by contrast (Figure 51), is more instrumental in character with its use of a broader range, angular lines and double/triple stopping, which heavily implies that this was written for a violin and to be realised as a string quartet (see Chapter 4.3.4 and 4.3.5). This one is long and almost forms a short sonata-like movement, following a ternary form:

⁹ Luigi Cherubini, “Basse donnée, 1830,” in Constant Pierre, ed., *Basses et chants donnés aux examens et concours des classes d’harmonie et d’accompagnement (années 1827–1900)* (Paris: Heugel & Cie, 1900), 146, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Musique, VM8-1483, <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb43204301c>.

Figure 51: Leborne, *Chant Donn * (1845). Used for the 1845 Harmony Competition.¹⁰

1845

10

Agitato.

dolce.

ff

¹⁰ Aim  Leborne, "Chant Donn  (Style Instrumental), 1845," in Pierre, ed., *Basses & Chants Donn s*, 11.
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The *Chant Donné* by Thomas (1879) is also instrumental but much shorter, having been used for an accompaniment exam at a keyboard instrument (Figure 52):

Figure 52: Thomas, *Chant Donné* (1879). Used the 1879 Accompaniment Exam.¹¹



The heightened importance of the CD as a pedagogical tool could be seen as an adaptation to the changing musical tastes brought about by the Galant and Classical styles in the eighteenth century, favouring the melodic line, simpler textures, periodic phrasing, and importance of larger-scale forms and syntax. By working through standard bass patterns and schema (as Gjerdingen points out in his *Music in the Galant Style*), the student internalises harmonic progressions and their syntax so thoroughly that they can improvise/compose music quickly.¹² The pedagogy values music as a process rather than

¹¹ Ambroise Thomas, "Chant donné, juin 1879," in Pierre ed., *Basses & Chants donnés*, 294.

¹² See Robert O. Gjerdingen, *Music in the Galant Style* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

a product, as its goal is not to compose “fixed” works but to improvise/compose fluently within a repertory of a *shared* musical language (common schema). Table 11 shows a comparison between the pedagogical aims of the partimento tradition vs. the values of the work-concept:

Table 11: Comparison between the Work-Concept and the Partimento Tradition.

Aspect	Partimento Tradition	Work-concept
Attitude to musical text	Fluid: While the partimento itself is unchanging, the realisation surrounding it is meant to be realised and varied each time, for every realisation.	Fixed: The performer performs the text as written.
Role of performer	Co-composer: The performer takes part in the composition process by performing and/or writing the realisation.	Interpreter: There is no expectation for the performer to take on the role of a composer, practising fidelity to the score.
Conception of the musical “work”	Based on a shared language on a common schema.	A completed, self-contained artwork with no additions required. There is also an expectation for the work to be “original” and “authentic.”

The ideal realisation of the CDBD needs to account for these many elements. However, due to its scope and the continuously evolving musical styles, it is difficult for any single treatise to cover all topics comprehensively. Some tend to specialise in some areas more than others, relying on implicit learning through exercises and exemplar realisations, while others treat them as assumed knowledge.

Here is a list of all the necessary prerequisites for the realisation process:

- Cadences (finding them in the melody via long note rests and actual cadential progressions)
- Phrasing—symmetry, balance and placement of cadences
- Finding melodic dissonances (or identification of dissonances in general)
- Two-part realisation (scaffold)
- Texture—Learned, Instrumental, and Piano
- Realisation of inner voices (variable)
- Disposition of parts (depending on the texture)
- Rhythm (meter or hypermeter)
- Musical topics—which combine all the elements above.¹³

¹³ As discussed in Chapter 2.1.1, nineteenth-century compositional aesthetics prioritised originality and authenticity, often suppressing overt use of musical topics in composition. Yet, in pedagogy, topics remained central—not as clichés, but as powerful tools for realisation. Selecting a topic immediately provides rhythm, texture, dynamics, and expressive character, bringing the CDBD closer to a self-standing composition. Topics thus serve both practical and expressive functions in the realisation process.

This thesis categorises two types of realisations that serve different pedagogical goals: the *Primary Realisation* style, which would be insufficient as a piece of music on its own, serves as a crucial stepping stone to the more complex *Secondary Realisation* styles (discussed in Chapters 4.2 and 4.3). The CDBD reveal an understanding of form and function rooted in intuition and the imitation of older models, rather than in abstract concepts, challenging our “anachronistic attitude” of the work-concept toward earlier pedagogical traditions.¹⁴ Before delving into the realisation process, we first need to explore the schema that students need as a prerequisite.

4.1.2 Rule of the Octave and Sequences

Before the widespread adoption of the work-concept’s compositional standards, composition and improvisation were typically taught using schema—pre-established, modular musical patterns primarily derived from the Rule of the Octave, sequential bass motions (*moti del basso*), cadential formulas and modulations. These patterns formed the foundation of an aural and tactile pedagogy rooted in the partimento tradition. Rather than promoting originality, this system prioritised fluency within a shared musical vocabulary.

Among the most foundational schemas was the Rule of the Octave (henceforth R8)—a standard harmonisation of the diatonic scale in the bass. As a prerequisite for engaging with more complex exercises, students were expected to play and memorise the R8 in all 24 keys and in three positions (i.e., with varying upper-voice arrangements) at the keyboard.¹⁵ As Fenaroli states, this schema was thought “to guide the fine playing of partimento and thus learn counterpoint with greater facility.”¹⁶ The R8 was such a critical component of partimento playing that several treatises included it, even those dedicated to instrumental technique, as will be shown by the subsequent figures (53-59). Choron’s treatise shows a standard presentation of the schema, found in most Italian *Regole*:

¹⁴ See Haynes, *The End of Early Music*, 149-50.

¹⁵ For more information on the R8, see Thomas Christensen, “The ‘Règle de l’Octave’ in Thorough-Bass Theory and Practice,” *Acta Musicologica* 64, no. 2 (1992): 91–117, <https://doi.org/10.2307/932911>.

¹⁶ Fedele Fenaroli, *Partimenti Book 3*, ed. and trans. Robert Gjerdingen, www.partimenti.org, [n.d.], 22.

Figure 53: Choron, *Principes d'accompagnement*. The R8.¹⁷

DURANTE. PREMIERE POSITION.

Echelle Ascendante.	Echelle Descendante.
La Première aura Octave, Tierce et Quinte.	L'Octave de la 1 ^{ère} aura Tierce et Quinte.
La Deuxième..... Sixte Majeure, Octave, Tierce Quarte.	La Septième..... Tierce, Sixte.
La Troisième..... Sixte, Octave, Tierce.	La Sixième..... Tierce, Quarte, Sixte Majeure
La Quatrième..... Quinte, Sixte, Octave, Tierce.	La Cinquième..... Tierce, Quinte, Octave.
La Cinquième..... Tierce Majeure, Quinte, Octave,	La Quatrième..... Triton, Sixte, Seconde.
La Sixième..... Tierce, Sixte.	La Troisième..... Sixte, Octave, Tierce.
La Septième..... Tierce, Fausse-Quinte, Sixte.	La Deuxième..... Sixte Majeure, Octave, Tierce, Quarte.
L'Octave de la 1 ^{ère} Tierce, Quinte.	La Première..... Octave, Tierce, Quinte.



Zimmerman's R8 (Figure 54) is presented in first position and includes the occasional variant on some scale degrees, including a version employing the cadential 6/4 progression and the interrupted cadence.

Figure 54: Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie*. The R8.¹⁸

RÈGLE D'OCTAVE EN DO MAJEUR.



1^{re} Position ou prolongation ou en Sol (5) retour en Do en Sol ou ou

Prolongation de la 5^{ème} qui sert elle-même à préparer la 4^{ème}

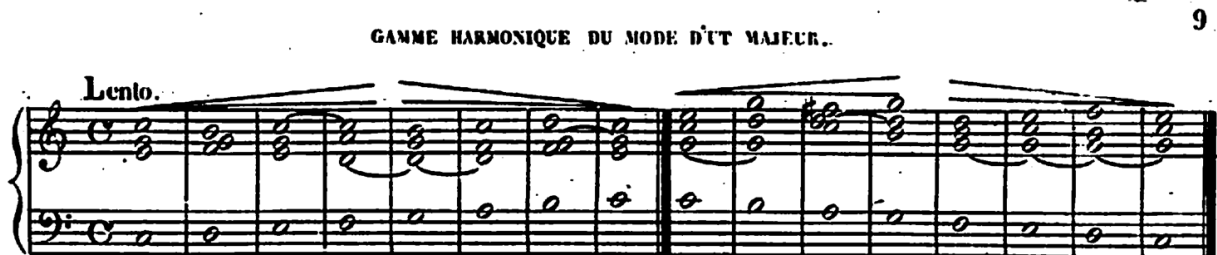
Formule pour conclure

¹⁷ Choron, and Flocchi, *Principes d'accompagnement des écoles d'Italie*, 5. It is important to note here that Durante labels the positions of the R8 differently from those of his pupil Fenaroli. Durante's 1st, 2nd, and 3rd positions are Fenaroli's 3rd, 1st, and 2nd, respectively. The former labels are according to the chord note of the tenor, while the latter are the chord note of the soprano.

¹⁸ Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie*, 3:17.

Lefébure-Wély's inclusion of R8 in his organ treatise, primarily dedicated to the development of manual technique, is interesting. Its inclusion here is somewhat peculiar given its pedagogical goals. Though he does not mention the schema by name, its presentation is nearly identical to that of Choron's, but only presents it in one position. The hairpins indicate the use of the expression pedal on the organ or harmonium (Figure 55):

Figure 55: Lefébure-Wély, *Méthode théorique et pratique pour orgue*. The R8.¹⁹



Felix Clément's (1822-1885) *Méthode d'orgue* (1873) dedicates a significant portion of its contents to the R8, which presents it in several keys and all three positions (Figure 56):

¹⁹ Louis James Alfred Lefébure-Wély, *Méthode théorique et pratique pour le Poikilorgue (orgue expressif) : suivie de plusieurs morceaux appropriés à toutes les ressources de l'instrument* : op. 9 (Paris: Canaux et Nicou-Choron, 1839), 9, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Musique, VM8 R-117, <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb431040241>.

Figure 56: Clément, *Méthode d'orgue*. The R8.²⁰

Règle d'octave dans le ton de *la* majeur.

TON DE LA MAJEUR.

TON DE LA MINEUR.

TON MAJEUR. 2^e POSITION.

TON MINEUR. 2^e POSITION.

Among the most comprehensive R8 is the version provided by Hippolyte Colet (1808-1851) in his *Partimenti ou traité spécial d'accompagnement* (1846), whose treatment of the R8 reveals an expanded harmonic vocabulary more reflective of mid-nineteenth-century practice (Figure 57). Colet also presents the R8 after Choron's version but includes variants that employ the inversions of diminished 7ths and half-diminished 7th chords, as substitutes for the inversions of the dominant 7th chords from the "standard" R8.

²⁰ Félix Clément, *Méthode d'orgue d'harmonie et d'accompagnement, comprenant toutes les connaissances nécessaires pour devenir un habile organiste, et divisée en cinq parties...*, nouvelle éd. (Paris: Hachette et Cie, 1894 [1873]), 79-80, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Musique, VM8 R-188, <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb42914598d>.

Figure 57: Colet, *Partimenti ou traité spécial*. R8 Variants.²¹

**ACCORDS DE SEPTIÈME DOMINANTE,
NEUVIÈMES MAJEURE ET MINEURE AVEC OU SANS FONDAMENTALE,
ET DANS TOUS LEURS RENVERSEMENTS.**

1^{re}
POSITION.

1^{re}
POSITION.

2^{de}
POSITION.

3^{de}
POSITION.

The figure displays four musical staves, each representing a different position for dominant seventh chords. The first staff is labeled '1^{re} POSITION.' and shows a sequence of chords with figured bass notation (5, 7, 5, 8, 6, +4, 6, 6, 7+, 6, 6, 7+) and chord symbols (G7, F7, E7, D7, C7, Bb7, Bb7, Ab7, G7, F7, E7, D7). The second staff is labeled '1^{re} POSITION.' and shows a sequence of chords with figured bass notation (7, 5, +4, 6, 5, +2, 7+, 6, 5, 6, 6, 7+, 5) and chord symbols (G7, F7, E7, D7, C7, Bb7, Bb7, Ab7, G7, F7, E7, D7). The third staff is labeled '2^{de} POSITION.' and shows a sequence of chords with figured bass notation (7, +4, 6, 5, +2, 7+, 6, 5, 6, 6, 7+) and chord symbols (G7, F7, E7, D7, C7, Bb7, Bb7, Ab7, G7, F7, E7, D7). The fourth staff is labeled '3^{de} POSITION.' and shows a sequence of chords with figured bass notation (7, +4, 5, +2, 7+, 6, 6, 7+) and chord symbols (G7, F7, E7, D7, C7, Bb7, Bb7, Ab7, G7, F7, E7, D7).

For the given bass, the R8 is useful but is insufficient in given melodies where a different “rule” is required. As the Paris Conservatoire implemented the given melody in its harmony classes, theorists have also applied a kind of “inverse” R8 by accompanying the scale in the upper voice. Though rare in the Schools of Italy, they are frequently mentioned in Parisian treatises on harmony and organ playing. Choron presents his version of the “inverse” R8 (Figure 58) in his *Principes de composition*. Here, the accompanying bass line moves linearly by avoiding root-position triads that would otherwise create an

²¹ Colet, *Partimenti ou traité spécial de l'accompagnement pratique au piano* (Paris: Chabal, 1846), 152-53, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Musique, VM8-198, <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb42917785b>.

angular bass line. Rather than presenting it in four parts, Choron uses figures to indicate the middle parts, which permits flexibility with its disposition:

Figure 58: Choron, *Principes de composition*. The “Inverse” R8 for the Major and Minor Scale.²²

W. I. CHANTS LIBRES ET IRRÉGULIERS.

Lorsque le chant n'a aucune forme régulière, on ne peut donner d'autres règles pour placer la basse que celles que nous venons de prescrire à l'instant. Nous prendrons pour exemple l'échelle diatonique, non considérée comme progression. L'exemple (1) appartient au mode majeur les (ex. 2. et 3.) au mode mineur. L'exemple (2.) convient quand la Sixième du ton est mineure, et l'exemple (3.) quand elle est majeure.

(1) chant

(2)

(3)

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L. 1. 7

Goupil, in his *Petite école d'orgue* (1861), presents the R8 (Figure 59) differently from the Choron version, by writing down the inner parts and using root position chords primarily to accompany the ascending and descending scale in the upper voice, which can be labelled as an “inverse” R8:

Figure 59: Goupil's *Petite école d'orgue*. The “Inverse” R8.²³

Sequences or *Marches harmoniques* were also included as part of the lexicon of harmonic vocabulary. The simplest form of the sequence consists of a fragment of the R8, in which each iteration

²² Choron, *Principes de composition*, 1: 95-96.

²³ I. Goupil, *Petite école d'orgue*, 3rd ed. (Paris: Victor Sarlét, 1861), 36, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Musique, VM8 R-99, <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb430233794>.

undergoes either diatonic/or real transposition. One prevalent sequence is one in which the bass moves down by a 3rd and up by a 2nd. This progression is ubiquitous in the repertoire, so it is not surprising that it is included in several treatises, including those of Fenaroli (and his Neapolitan predecessors), Colet, Catel, Choron, and Zimmerman. Figure 60 shows the *Modèle* progression with its simplest realisation, followed by Zimmerman’s own elaboration, featuring the use of dissonances at Figure 61:

Figure 60: Colet, *Partimenti ou traité spécial de l'accompagnement pratique au piano*. The Sequence whose Bass Moves Down a 3rd and Up a 2nd.²⁴

Figure 61: Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie*. Realisation of a Sequence.²⁵

Catel offers multiple realisations of the sequence, with each one becoming progressively more elaborate than the previous (Figure 62). The textures employed in these realisations are closely associated with the learned style (see Chapter 4.3.5):

²⁴ Colet, *Partimenti ou traité spécial de l'accompagnement pratique au piano*, 185.

²⁵ Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie*, 3:11.

Figure 62: Catel, *Treatise on Harmony*. Realisations of a Sequence.²⁶

The same, with passing notes in the melody and bass :—

Ex. 286.

The same, differently treated :—

Ex. 287.

The sixths retarded by fifths :—

Ex. 288.

The same passage made more florid :—

Ex. 289.

Succession of fifths, sixths, and seconds :—

Ex. 290.

Particularly notable is Colet's extensive section on sequential motions, which adapts traditional sequential formulas to accommodate contemporary harmonic practices, such as the use of dominant 9ths and diminished 7ths, and even a modernised version of the "omnibus" progression as a way to accompany the chromatic scale shown in Figure 63. Their presentation in the treatise shows how far harmonic

²⁶ Catel, *Treatise on Harmony*, 29.

vocabulary had advanced in the nineteenth century. They had become so common by the 1840s that they warranted their inclusion in a treatise such as Colet's:

Figure 63: Colet, *Partimenti ou traité spécial de l'accompagnement pratique au piano*. The “Omnibus” Progression.²⁷



Of course, it is one thing to learn to read these patterns on the page, but playing them is another matter altogether. Zimmerman, too, was also aware of harmony as a tactile phenomenon (see Chapter 1.2.4). He writes that once a student has absorbed the R8, “the fingers will have acquired the *instinctive habit* of bringing each degree of the scale to the appropriate chord,” an embodied reflex that creates what he calls an “immense advantage” (emphasis added).²⁸ In the same vein as Fenaroli, Zimmerman stresses that such harmonic formulas are essential tools for improvisation. He refers to harmonic sequences as “ready-made formulas that everyone uses without scruple,” recommending that they be memorised and practised “in all positions and all keys,” particularly as preparation for preluding [improvisation].²⁹ By internalising these reflexes, students turned theory into embodied musicianship central to the pianist-composer’s craft. Despite the conservative approach inherent in this kind of instruction, these examples from Fenaroli through to Clement (though published several decades apart)

²⁷ Colet, *Partimenti ou traité spécial de l'accompagnement pratique au piano*, 139. There is an error in this progression—the chord in the 5th bar should read an F-flat, not F-natural.

²⁸ “Quand on se sera familiarisé avec la règle d’octave, les doigts auront pris une habitude instinctive, d’amener sur chaque degré de l’échelle l’accord qui convient, ce qui est un immense avantage.” Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie*, 3:19. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

²⁹ “Les progressions harmoniques sont des séries d’accords appartenant à tout le monde; elles sont considérées comme des formules toutes faites que chacun emploie sans scrupule; elles sont d’un excellent usage pour préluder. J’engage donc à les savoir par cœur et à s’exercer à les jouer à diverses positions dans tous les tons.” Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie*, 3:18. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

demonstrate a long-standing pedagogical lineage stretching from the Neapolitan schools to the Paris Conservatoire. These examples include more variants to reflect the harmonic developments of their respective period. However, as the work-concept emerged, schema-based pedagogy came to be viewed as mechanical and derivative. Tools that once enabled fluent, idiomatic and “instinctive” composition were reframed as constraints on originality. For example, Anton Reicha (1770-1836), writing in his *Course of Musical Composition* (1824), dismissed the R8 on precisely these grounds, claiming that it was “of so little use in practical composition that it is not worth the trouble of discussing,” since its relevance assumes that “the bass were constrained to proceed continually by ascending or descending scales,” ignoring the many other possible harmonic paths available to a “modern” composer.³⁰ Reber’s assessment was more tempered, conceding that the R8 was “incontestably good.” Still, he also warned that “there are many other ways of realising two [major and minor] scales, and nothing justify[d] either the exclusive adoption of [them].”³¹ What we see in both cases is not the rejection of R8 as *incorrect* but the growing discomfort with formulaic thinking as a tool for generating musical ideas. This signalled a cultural shift that valued originality as a means of validating artistic legitimacy (see Chapter 2.1). The fact that these patterns persisted, essentially unchanged, from the early eighteenth century to the late nineteenth century, emphasises the resilience of a pedagogical tradition that valued composition technique over novelty.

³⁰ Antoine Reicha, *Course of Musical Composition; or Complete and Methodical Treatise of Practical Harmony*, ed. John Bishop, trans. Arnold Merrick (London: Robert Cocks & Co., 1854 [1818]), 191. <https://archive.org/details/course-of-musical-composition-anton-reicha>.

³¹ “Ces deux formules étaient considérées comme la règle des enchaînements harmoniques dont la Basse représente, soit une gamme entière, soit quelque fraction de gamme. Or, quoique cette manière d’enchaîner les accords, dans ce cas, soit incontestablement bonne, il est évident qu’il y a beaucoup d’autres manières de chiffrer les deux gammes, et que rien ne justifie ni l’adoption exclusive de deux formules uniques, ni surtout le nom inexplicable de *règle d’octave* qu’on leur a donné.” Henri Reber, *Traité d’harmonie*, 9th ed. (Paris: Colombier, 1880 [1862]), 128, <https://archive.org/details/traidharmonie00rebe>.

4.2 Primary Realisation Styles

There are two components of the *Primary Realisation styles*: the plain chord and the two-part realisation, which represent the foundational approaches to harmony pedagogy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Often introduced at the earliest stages of training, these styles prioritise clarity of harmonic structure and serve as essential exercises in voice-leading, disposition, and harmonic syntax. The plain chord style typically involves realising a given bass (with or without figures) into three to four-part plain chords accompanying the bass line. By contrast, the two-part realisation strips the texture to its most essential parts—most often the bass and soprano (the melody). This “polarity between treble and bass,” as Ratner calls it, was fundamental to the music of the early Baroque and Galant styles. “The treble carried the leading melodic line,” while the bass “set the harmony and provided rhythmic punctuation; middle voices completed the texture.”³²

Beyond their use as elementary exercises, the plain chord and the two-part realisation form the technical and conceptual basis for the *Secondary Realisation styles*. They were designed not only for internalising harmonic progressions but also for developing the stylistic awareness necessary for idiomatic realisations. Choron provides us with a realised partimento by Fenaroli (Gj. 1301), showing the progressive and cumulative nature of the Primary Realisation styles (Figure 64):

³² Ratner, *Classic Music*, 108. The composition of the inner voices will be discussed in Chapter 4.3.

Figure 64: Choron, *Principes de Composition*. A Fenaroli Partimento [Gj. 1301] Realised by Choron.³³

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system contains four staves. The top staff is a vocal line in C major, marked 'Moderato chant', featuring a melodic line with passing dissonances and ornaments. Below it are three staves for a keyboard realization: a treble staff with a '3.' fingering, a treble staff with a '4.' fingering, and a bass staff with a '6 3' fingering. The second system also contains four staves, with the top staff featuring a trill. The page number '95' is located at the end of the second system.

The first treble staff above the bass consists of plain chords of the R8 in three parts—a schema already discussed in Chapter 4.1.2. The one above is the same, but with three parts, which would be helpful for the severe style realisation to be discussed in Chapter 4.3.5. Moreover, the uppermost staff is a melodic realisation that uses passing dissonances, arpeggiation, and other melodic ornaments. This chapter will explore the relationship between these realisation styles in detail.

4.2.1 Plain Chord Realisation

Originating from continuo practice, the plain-chord realisation is the most fundamental stage of harmony instruction and the one most frequently discussed in treatises. It involves realising a given bass line as chords with two to four parts in the right hand. For beginners, especially those with smaller hands,

³³ Choron, *Principes de Composition*, 1:94-95. The partimento (Gj. 1301) is originally in G major.

playing several parts in one hand can be difficult, which is why the two-part florid realisation may be simpler to start (see Chapter 4.2.2). Still, such an approach is much easier to grasp conceptually, as it relies on familiar harmonic patterns and progressions that are easy to recall. The resulting texture uses uniform note values in the upper voices, favouring clarity and emphasis on structural notes, with suspensions (*retards*) adding tension. Typically, such realisations were improvised, but sometimes also written down on a grand staff by the late nineteenth century, with the bass in the lower stave and the upper parts condensed in the treble stave.³⁴

After Choron's *Principes de composition*, Fétis published one of the first practical treatises on accompaniment specifically designed for young learners. Titled *Méthode élémentaire et abrégée d'harmonie et d'accompagnement* (1823), it was likely used by pianists of Marmontel's *génération de 1830*, and he frames the treatise as a conceptual bridge between harmony and practice, writing that "composition in multiple parts is a science that aims to unite voices...based on considerations different from those of chords."³⁵ Crucially, Fétis situates his approach in continuity with "the method of the ancient Italian schools,"³⁶ whose methods served as a foundation of understanding the rudiments of harmony (see Chapter 1.3.2).

³⁴ For example, see Luigi Cherubini and Paul Vidal, *52 leçons d'harmonie* (Paris: Enoch & Cie, 1904), Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Musique, VM8-1552, <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb429075200>. Vidal provides the plain-chord realisations over Cherubini's given basses.

³⁵ "La Composition à plusieurs parties est une science qu'on désigne sous le nom de Contrepoint; c'est celle que M. Reicha et moi enseignons à l'École Royale de Musique. Elle est fondée sur d'autres considérations que celles des Accords pris isolément. J'en ai développé les principes dans un traité qui paraîtra sous peu. Quant à l'Harmonie proprement dite, je la considère sous deux rapports : 1^o comme moyen d'exciter en nous le sentiment harmonieux, par l'usage de l'accompagnement du Clavier, c'est ce que j'enseigne ici ; 2^o comme tableau Synoptique des connaissances acquises par l'étude du Contrepoint." François-Joseph Fétis, *Méthode élémentaire et abrégée d'harmonie et d'accompagnement* (Paris: Ch. Boieldieu, 1836 [1823]), 14, Royal College of Music Library, London (GB-Lcm): [D2627/1](https://naxos.com/doc/urn:uuid:00000000-0000-0000-0000-000000000000).

[https://imslp.org/wiki/M%C3%A9thode_%C3%A9l%C3%A9mentaire_et_abr%C3%A9g%C3%A9e_d%27harmonie_et_d%27accompagnement_\(F%C3%A9tis,_Fran%C3%A7ois-Joseph\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/M%C3%A9thode_%C3%A9l%C3%A9mentaire_et_abr%C3%A9g%C3%A9e_d%27harmonie_et_d%27accompagnement_(F%C3%A9tis,_Fran%C3%A7ois-Joseph)). Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5. "Accompaniment," here refers to continuo playing where chordal instruments add chords above a given bass line.

³⁶ "Au reste, en ne considérant l'Harmonie que sous le rapport de l'Accompagnement, je ne fais que suivre la méthode des anciennes Écoles d'Italie, qui n'y ont jamais vu autre chose, et qui ont formé les meilleurs Accompagnateurs." Fétis, *Méthode élémentaire*, 14. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

At barely 50 pages in length, with half of them dedicated to musical examples and exercises, the influence of the Schools of Italy is evident, particularly with its small word count, emphasis on the R8, numerous examples, and progression of material. The main deviation from Italian practice is the inclusion of written-out realisations in each chapter. Their purpose would have been to acquire the muscle memory to play the chords and to distinguish between three- and four-part realisations. A typical lesson by Fétis is very brief, lasting no more than one page and provides several musical examples. Chapter 6 of the treatise, for example, which deals with suspensions, presents all the common dissonances and their preparation in a table (Figure 65). This “brute force” approach is a tradition dating back to the Schools of Italy:

Figure 65: Fétis, *Méthode élémentaire*. The Preparation of Dissonances.³⁷

EXEMPLES,
De toutes les circonstances de Prolongation et de Retardement.

The image displays four systems of musical notation, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and numbered examples. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 below notes.

- System 1:** Examples 1-4. Example 1: "Prolongations dans le passage d'un accord parfait à un accord parfait." Example 2: "Dans le passage d'un accord de Sixte à un accord parfait." Example 3: "D'un accord de Quarte et Sixte à un accord parfait." Example 4: "D'un accord de Sixte à un accord de Sixte."
- System 2:** Examples 5-8. Example 5: "D'un accord parfait à un accord de Sixte." Example 6: "D'un accord de Sixte à un accord de Sixte." Example 7: "D'un accord de Quarte et Sixte à un accord de Sixte." Example 8: "D'un accord de Sixte à un accord de Sixte."
- System 3:** Examples 9-12. Example 9: "D'un accord parfait à un accord de Sixte." Example 10: "D'un accord de Sixte à un accord de Sixte." Example 11: "D'un accord de Quarte et Sixte à un accord de Sixte." Example 12: "D'un accord de Sixte à un accord de Sixte."
- System 4:** Examples 13-16. Example 13: "D'un accord de Quarte et Sixte à un accord de Sixte." Example 14: "D'un accord de Sixte à un accord de Sixte." Example 15: "D'un accord de Quarte et Sixte à un accord de Sixte." Example 16: "D'un accord de Sixte à un accord de Sixte."

Rather than presenting the rules for each suspension type and their preparation in prose form, which would take several pages, these rules are explained in context, thereby resisting abstraction.

In another set of partimenti, Fétis provides examples featuring imitation and a written-out Sala partimento (Figure 66). Interestingly, despite the invitation to use imitations, Fétis's realisation is surprisingly texturally homogeneous, lacking melodic inventiveness, as is typical of this realisation style:

³⁷ Fétis, *Méthode élémentaire*, 14. All of Fétis' examples are written in C major and employ scale degrees centred around the key. He would have expected the diligent student to transpose the fragments in all major and minor keys, and in all three positions, following the advice in Fenaroli's *Regole*.

Figure 66: Fétis, *Méthode élémentaire*. A Sala partimento, realised by Fétis.³⁸

The image displays five systems of musical notation for a piano accompaniment. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The first system is labeled 'N° 55'. The second system has the annotation 'Imitation du trait principal de la Basse' above the treble staff. The third system has 'cipal de la Basse' above the treble staff and 'Imitation de la Basse' above the bass staff. The fourth and fifth systems continue the piece. At the bottom of the fifth system, the text '516. C. B.' is printed.

In this example, we see that the plain chords above the bass line provide a rudimentary texture—not the most “original”—but they fulfil the function of accompanying the bass. Points of interest occur when the subject in the bass is imitated in the upper-most voice (*Imitation de la Basse*) whilst maintaining the three-part texture in the RH. This realisation exemplifies the essential elements of the texture—that is,

³⁸ Fétis, *Méthode élémentaire*, 44.

the use of consonances and the development of material via imitation. The little prose suggests that this book was used alongside oral instructions, making it a suitable treatise for young learners.

Perhaps the most comprehensive manual dealing with this realisation style is *Traité d'harmonie pratique et théorique* (1833), authored and published by Henry Lemoine (1786-1854). In the preface, he explains that the book was “specially intended for students who engage in the study of the piano, to give them the most essential notions of harmony, to put them in a position to prelude [improvise] and finally to make a Bass and a correct harmony, under any song [*Chant Donné*].”³⁹ Lemoine framed harmony as a practical foundation for improvisation, realisation, and accompaniment, embedding theoretical study directly into the pianist’s daily practice. This “science, accompanied by chains of reasoning,” is ill-suited for “young minds” as they are “unaccustomed to reflection.”⁴⁰ With the young learner in mind, the treatise is specifically designed for practical work, avoiding any unnecessary prose that would otherwise overwhelm or bore the student. Before presenting any prose, he provides a set of bass lines realised with plain chords that anticipate the harmonic vocabulary of the upcoming lesson. This is so that students have the vocabulary in their muscle and aural memory to facilitate learning the theoretical components. Figure 67 shows an excerpt from Lemoine’s treatise demonstrating the use of the dominant 7th chord and its inversions in various contexts—quintessentially the R8:

³⁹ “Cet ouvrage est spécialement destiné aux Élèves qui se Livrent à l’Étude du Piano, dans le but de leur donner les notions les plus essentielles de l’Harmonie, de les mettre à même de préluder et enfin de faire une Basse et une Harmonie correcte, sous un Chant quelconque.” Henry Lemoine, *Traité d'harmonie pratique et théorique* (Paris: Henry Lemoine, n.d. [1833]), cover page, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Musique, 4-C2-289. <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b54000116x>. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

⁴⁰ “Il m’a toujours semblé que ce retard dans les progrès devait être principalement attribué à la forme même des traités d’harmonie existants, lesquels représentent la Science escortée de raisonnements que ne sauraient saisir de jeunes têtes peu habituées à la réflexion.” Lemoine, *Traité d'harmonie, avertissement*. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

Figure 67: Lemoine, *Traité d'harmonie*. Preparatory Exercises on the Dominant 7th Chord.⁴¹

39

EXERCICES PREPARATOIRES
Sur l'accord de Septième de dominante.

N^o 1. 1^{re} Position. 2^{de} P.

en Ut. 1^{re} P.

3^e P. en Sol.

In this example, we can see how Lemoine pays particular attention to the voice-leading in each position, ensuring that each exercise ends in the same position it started. This ensures that all inversions of the chord are learned in the student's muscle memory for the chord type in question.

After the preparatory exercises, Lemoine introduces brief prose, accompanied by concise musical examples, that explain the theoretical foundations of the harmonic vocabulary. The author then includes a combination of realised and unrealised basses in plain chords, and the student would be expected to apply them to the same given basses transposed to keys with up to four accidentals (the practicable keys) and notated in all three positions. Figure 68 shows a set of realised and unrealised exercises by Lemoine that use dominant 7ths and their inversions (with their natural resolutions):

⁴¹ Lemoine, *Traité d'harmonie*, 39.

The influence of the Italian schools is more evident in the supplement of the treatise, where Lemoine includes a translation and expanded version of Fenaroli's partimento treatise (after the 1812 Paris edition), using Books 1, 2, 3 and selections of Book 4, as well as selections from another Neapolitan maestro, Cotumacci.⁴³ Lemoine has included them to teach the student how to accompany both figured and unfigured basses.⁴⁴

On the final page of the treatise, Lemoine mentions an essential component of disposition technique, that is, the open position, a rarity in harmony treatises for pianists that often focus on the upper voices solely played by the RH with the bass note played by the LH (Figure 69):

Figure 69: Lemoine, *Traité d'harmonie*. Disposition Types.⁴⁵

The figure displays musical notation for various disposition types of chords. The first system is divided into four sections: 'Positions ordinaires des accords plaqués' (labeled A and B), 'Positions de l'harmonie divisée' (labeled A and B), 'Positions ordinaires des accords plaqués' (labeled A and B), and 'Positions de l'harmonie divisée' (labeled A and B). Below the first two sections are the labels 'Accord parfait des lés direct' and 'idem'. Below the last two sections are 'Accord parfait dans son 1^{er} renvers' and 'idem'. The second system is labeled 'Le même Harmonie divisée' and 'idem autrement divisée'. Below it is 'Le même Exemple en Fa'. The third system is labeled 'EX: en accords plaqués 1^{re} Pos.', 'idem 2^{de} Pos.', and 'idem 3^e Pos.'. Below this system is figured bass notation: '5 6 5 5 6 6 #', '5 6 5 3 6 6 #', and '5 6 5 5 6 6 #'.

⁴³ The first book of Fenaroli partimenti appears in the original keys from the first Fenaroli editions, rather than the transposed order found in Choron's edition for student convenience.

⁴⁴ Lemoine, *Traité d'harmonie*, 185.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 196-97.

Open-position chords can be derived from closed positions by lowering the second-highest voice (alto voice) an octave, which becomes the new tenor voice. Although more challenging to play, this method produces a transparent texture useful for composing and improvising in the learned style. The space between voices then promotes their independence, which will become much more important in Secondary Realisation styles (see Chapter 4.3.5).

Therefore, Lemoine's treatise is highly practical, as it includes both realised and unrealised examples to speed up rote learning. While it deals with an expanded harmonic vocabulary, it still lacks exercises in application in areas such as exceptional resolutions, alterations, and enharmonisation, since the theory for such practices would have been primitive. Even Lemoine states in the introduction that the harmony treatises of Catel, Fétis, and Reicha should be studied in conjunction, especially for those who wish to learn the theoretical background, making them a valuable pedagogical resource.⁴⁶ While the book categorises the harmonic vocabulary more systematically, it neglects to include the process of realising the CD. Regardless, the treatise is an excellent supplement to the listed treatises, which are full of text but lack practical exercises, and is particularly useful for "[young] students with two to three years of piano study."⁴⁷ Like Fétis, Lemoine frames harmony not as an abstract theory but as a practical tool, central to improvisation, accompaniment, and the cultivation of the pianist-composer.

The plain-chord realisation style, despite its rather primitive form, already has an immediate application: accompanying plainchant melodies in liturgical settings. In Goupil's *Petite école d'orgue* (3rd ed. 1861), we can see that the initial stage of its accompaniment (which can either be in the upper or lower voice) bears striking similarities to the plain chord realisation style. Take, for example, the way Goupil has accompanied the plain-chant *O Salutaris* (Figure 70):

⁴⁶ La conviction où je suis que cette méthode doit être la meilleure pour de jeunes élèves ne me dispense pas de conseiller à ceux que leurs progrès et leur vocation appellent à cultiver la science, de recourir plus tard aux traités plus savants et justement estimés de M.M. Catel, Reicha, Fétis, &c." Lemoine, *Traité d'harmonie, avertissement*. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

⁴⁷ "Ce n'est donc point pour rivaliser avec ces auteurs que je me suis décidé à publier cet ouvrage ; mon seul but est de répondre aux sollicitations d'un grand nombre de professeurs auxquels l'utilité de ma méthode a paru incontestable, pour des élèves de deux à trois ans d'étude de Piano." Lemoine, *Traité d'harmonie, avertissement*. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

Figure 70: Goupil, *Petite école d'orgue*. Plain-Chord Realisation of *O Salutaris*.⁴⁸

O SALUTARIS

Méthode française.

The image displays a musical score for the piece "O Salutaris" from Goupil's *Petite école d'orgue*. The score is presented in two systems. The first system consists of two staves: a single-line melody on a treble clef staff and a two-staff accompaniment (treble and bass clefs) on a grand staff. The melody is written in a 2/4 time signature and includes a series of fingerings: 3^r 3, 5 5, 4 3, 5, 3 3, 5 3, 5 5^d, 3. The accompaniment is labeled "Méthode française" and features a bass line with a steady eighth-note rhythm and a treble line with block chords. The second system continues the two-staff accompaniment, showing more complex chordal textures in the treble and a consistent bass line.

Here, Goupil accompanies the plain chant in the bass with the R8 in first position using plain chords. Because of its accompaniment function, the somewhat arbitrary placement of these chords, which could have been placed in second and third positions, shows that the specific notes themselves are not a primary concern, but rather, the texture and the specific intervals used above the given bass. As a piece, this is unoriginal by the work-concept's compositional standards. Still, as an improvisation,

⁴⁸ Goupil's *Petite école d'orgue*, 36. According to Goupil, the placement of the given line in the bass is the "French style," while the placement of the given line in the upper-most voice is the "German style."

it is remarkable how such a simple texture can already be used in a liturgical performance setting, further refining the argument explored in Chapter 2.1.5: liturgical music is not “works” in the same way as concert music was in the early nineteenth century.

Playing chords is one of the most important aspects of piano playing (or keyboard playing in general). The relative ease in executing multiple parts and in many key areas is a unique advantage of keyboard instruments. However, plain chord realisations are often difficult for young learners with smaller hands. Its counterpart, the two-part realisation, will be discussed in the following section.

4.2.2 Two-Part Realisation (Given Bass)

Two-part realisations are the opposite of plain chord realisations—easier to play technically, but a much more difficult concept to grasp. In the Schools of Italy, students were almost always given a bass and tasked with improvising or composing counterpoint above it. The relationship to keyboard mechanics is more evident in this realisation style, as the diminutions became more difficult and were used exclusively for the piano. In the eighteenth century, keyboard *intavolature* was used to train keyboard technique and to provide models for realising partimenti.⁴⁹ Since these pieces were designed for beginner keyboardists, they were short, repetitive, and generally written in two obligato parts with straightforward diminution patterns. Not only that, the patterns of tonal music or schema were ever more present in the pieces due to their “Galant” nature, as Gjerdingen argues, “learning the phrases of contemporary musical styles [of the eighteenth century] may have been the second benefit of lessons in *intavolature*.”⁵⁰ Since isolating either part reveals a structure similar to a partimento, with varying levels of complexity and pedagogical intent, he further explains that *intavolature* “gave [students] examples of what contemporary keyboard music sounded like, how it felt in the hands and fingers.”⁵¹ This method bridged the gap

⁴⁹ The term *intavolature* has a long history in Western music, but here it is best described as a “short keyboard piece for beginners.” Notable Italian collections include works by Greco, Leo, Cotumacci, and Fenaroli. For more information, see Gjerdingen, *Child Composers in the Old Conservatories*, 145-58.

⁵⁰ Gjerdingen, *Child Composers in the Old Conservatories*, 147-48.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 42.

between composition and performance, allowing students to internalise harmony and technique as a unified discipline (see also Chapter 4.4).

Many composers from the Schools of Italy who wrote partimenti also wrote accompanying *intavolature* as part of their pedagogical material. For example, in Leonardo Leo's *Lezioni per cembalo*, we find lessons in both keyboard playing (intavolature) and harmony and counterpoint (partimenti). Figure 71 shows a transcribed excerpt from the Leo manuscript showing an *intavolatura* from the collection:

Figure 71: Leo, *Intavolatura*.⁵²

Using the *intavolature* as a realisation model, students would gain an intuitive understanding of how to transform a plain-chord realisation into a florid, two-part one. Unlike the four-part harmony used

⁵² Leonardo Leo, *Selected Intavolature: Toccatas and Exercises from Manuscript Sources in Naples and Milan*, ed. Robert O. Gjerdingen, accessed July 17, 2025, https://partimenti.org/intavolature/collections/leo/leo_intav.pdf.

in the plain-chord style, this method favours a more transparent texture that often relies on diminutions to outline multiple voices, forming a *compound melody*. While such virtuosity expected by the Conservatoire would have been beyond the technical reach of most Neapolitan Conservatory students, as shown in Leo's example, advancements in piano technique and fingering increased the level of realisation feasible for the former.

Such methods of realisation were not as common at the Paris Conservatoire, which makes Colet's revival of the practice especially significant. His *Partimenti ou traité spécial de l'accompagnement pratique au piano* shows a standard in the "golden age" of partimento which had largely been lost by the late eighteenth century.⁵³ As "an important representative for the French reception of partimento," the inclusion of the word "partimenti" in the title was already significant, as the term was rare outside the Schools of Italy.⁵⁴ His dedication of the book to all pianists highlights its pedagogical ambition and reflects the rise of the pianist-composer who benefited most from this pedagogy. Colet's work also offers a rare glimpse into a pedagogical model in which composition, performance, and improvisation were closely connected. Unlike Lemoine's treatise, which transcribes Fenaroli's *Regole* verbatim, or the treatises by Fétis and Dourlen that provide numerous written-out exercises, Colet goes a step further. He expands Fenaroli's original *Regole* to fit a nineteenth-century context, and the inclusion of additional partimenti to expand Books 1-4 (with selections from Book 5) also draws on Cotumacci, Sala, and Durante.⁵⁵

One such collection from the period was Durante's *Partimenti Diminuti*, which features realisation hints spanning a few bars to accompany a bass fragment whenever it occurs in a partimento. In Colet's treatise, they have a particularly intriguing label: *Partimenti pour l'étude du piano*, translating as "partimenti for the study of the piano." This poses an interesting question: a *study* in what exactly? Sure, Colet makes the mechanical element clear in the preceding instruction: "To properly perform these

⁵³ Sanguinetti, *The Art of Partimento*, 67.

⁵⁴ Carlisi, *From Naples to Paris*, 125.

⁵⁵ It is important to note that Colet's treatise contains what may be the first known publication of Durante's *Partimenti diminuiti*, which until then had circulated as manuscript copies by students and teachers.

Partimenti, it is appropriate to have studied the piano etudes composed by the best masters.”⁵⁶ However, the harmony and compositional elements are also of great importance here, which shows that these are, in fact, studies in both mechanics *and* harmony. Gjerdingen outlines the significance of the treatise and its revival of older, more florid realisation styles after J. S. Bach, D. Scarlatti, and Durante, which were not available in nineteenth-century Paris.⁵⁷ Figure 72 shows an example of one of these partimenti and its realisation fragment provided by Durante himself (the arpeggiated figure at the second bar):

⁵⁶ “Pour bien exécuter ces Partimenti, il est à propos d’avoir étudié les études de Piano composées par les meilleurs maîtres.” Colet, *Partimenti ou traité spécial de l’accompagnement pratique au piano*, 274. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5. As examples, Colet cites a selection of Preludes and Fugues from J. S. Bach’s *Well-Tempered Clavier* and D. Scarlatti Sonata in A-flat major, K. 127. Colet, *Partimenti ou traité spécial de l’accompagnement pratique au piano*, 247-61.

⁵⁷ Gjerdingen, *Child Composers in the Old Conservatories*, 201.

Figure 72: Durante, *Partimenti Diminuiti* [Gj. 5]. Realised by Colet from Durante's Fragment.⁵⁸



The emerging influence of the work-concept was also present in what would have been a purely oral tradition just a century before Colet's publication. He instructs that "The student must first sight-read at the piano, in front of his teacher, each of the following Basses [partimenti]; then he will figure them in different ways on *paper*" (emphases added).⁵⁹ The sight-reading element here suggests that

⁵⁸ Colet, *Partimenti ou traité spécial de l'accompagnement pratique au piano*, 271. Durante provides multiple realisations for the first two bars, which a student could apply over a similar bass as it occurs in the partimento. Note: there is an error at the fourth beat of the 2nd bar, which should read an A-natural, not A-sharp.

⁵⁹ "L'élève devra déchiffrer d'abord au Piano et devant son maître chacune des Basses suivantes ; puis il les chiffrera de différentes manières sur le papier." Colet, *Partimenti ou traité spécial de l'accompagnement pratique au piano*, 274. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

improvisation was still part of the pedagogy, but only served as a stepping stone toward the student eventually committing their realisations in writing. However, this contradicts the purpose of the pedagogy, for how can a student achieve variation if they are expected to write down their realisations? While committing a realisation to paper makes it easier to assess, the nuances and variety that stem from improvisation are reduced. At least, it is counterintuitive to a pedagogy that always requires a realisation to be in flux. In keyboard realisation, which was originally extemporised in the eighteenth century and earlier, the expectation that they be written down on paper could show the increasing value of the musical text. This is the paradox that arises in pedagogy through its adoption by the Paris Conservatoire.

Colet's treatise provides a rare glimpse into a pedagogical world where composition, performance, and improvisation were unified—an approach that helped shape the figure of the pianist-composer and resisted the separation between composer and performer. In his words, “This work [partimento realisation], done with care and perseverance, will familiarise the student with improvisation and make him capable of composing for the piano.”⁶⁰ Therefore, Colet positions two-part partimento realisation as a bridge between theory and practice, affirming that compositional skill arises through practical engagement at the keyboard.

4.2.3 Two-Part Realisation (Given Melody)

The two-part realisation under a given melody emerged as a key pedagogical practice in early nineteenth-century French compositional training. Unlike given bass lines, given melodies often contain idiomatic dissonances and embellishments reflective of the nineteenth-century style, which did not appear as prominently in earlier repertory (at least not in written form). These features introduced unique complications that could not have been addressed using *intavolature*-style partimento methods. Through the nineteenth century, the CD became more instrumental in character, featuring a wider range, frequent

⁶⁰ “Ce travail, fait avec soin et persévérance, familiarisera l'élève avec l'improvisation, et le rendra capable de composer bientôt pour le piano.” Colet, *Partimenti ou traité spécial de l'accompagnement pratique au piano*, 246. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

angular motion, and complex surface-level chromaticism that became more difficult to sing. Eventually, accompanying a given melody became a much more useful skill than accompanying a given bass, as the former was given “more responsibility as the governing voice in the texture.”⁶¹

Elwart’s *Petit manuel d’harmonie* (1839) is a critical treatise in this regard. Despite its simplicity and dedication to amateurs, who were expected to “possess at least the elementary notion of the science of chords” so they do not “deprive themselves of a multitude of intellectual satisfactions” from performing repertoire, it provides a useful guide on the harmonisation of melodies at the piano.⁶² One instrumental section identifies the necessary elements needed when adding a bass under a given melody (paraphrased by the author from the French):⁶³

- Key areas and passing modulations: Salient scale degrees and phrase endings help locate structural cadences (perfect, imperfect, half).
- Structural vs. non-structural notes: distinguishing between “real” or “transient” notes of the given melody and how to accompany “most appropriately.”
- General character: determined by the musical topic.⁶⁴

Reicha offers a crucial conceptual framework by emphasising the bass, distinguishing between the simple “heavy” bass and the “singing” bass, the latter of which carries both melodic and harmonic roles, making them more challenging to accompany than a melody in the upper part. Reicha adds that

⁶¹ Ratner, *Classic Music*, 116. Many nineteenth-century compositional treatises focused on writing melodies and their form at all levels of development (see Chapter 4.3 for such examples). Accompanying basses, though still an active part of the pedagogy, became more redundant due to the following reasons: 1) the declining role of continuo practice in the performance of repertoire, 2) the increasing popularity of melodies in operas and lieder. “Light” music also consisted of well-structured melodic lines that followed a predictable four-square pattern. 3) A bassline that was “singing” (which was usually the case for these given basses), but was not popular in the music of this time. Far more common was melody and accompaniment – the latter featuring a “heavy bass.” Accompanying a “heavy” bass from the outset was rare in performance practice in the nineteenth century, but still vital in pedagogy.

⁶² “Car, au point où en est à présent l’art musical, un artiste, et même un amateur, se privent d’une foule de jouissances intellectuelles s’ils ne possèdent pas au moins les notions élémentaires de la science des accords.” Antoine Elwart, *Petit manuel d’harmonie, d’accompagnement de la basse chiffrée, de réduction de la partition au piano et de transposition musicale*, 5^e éd. (Paris: Colombier, 1862 [1839]), iii, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Littérature et art, V-37736, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k1315403>.

⁶³ Elwart, *Petit manuel d’harmonie*, 50.

⁶⁴ “On doit, avant que d’écrire l’accompagnement d’une mélodie, observer : 1^o Dans quel ton cette mélodie est écrite. 2^o Quelles sont les modulations passagères des phrases principales ou incidentes. 3^o Quelles notes du chant peuvent être réelles ou passagères relativement à l’harmonie qu’on supposera devoir les accompagner le plus convenablement ; et, enfin, 4^o Quel est le caractère général de la mélodie, son mouvement lent ou vif, sa physionomie particulière.” Elwart, *Petit Manuel d’harmonie*, 50.

while some melodies can accept multiple satisfactory basses and harmonies, others present significant challenges in producing a “natural” and correct accompaniment.⁶⁵

One way to address this challenge is a “brute force” approach, as seen in Victor Dourlen’s (1780–1864) *Traité d’accompagnement* (1840), one of the first treatises to formalise the CD. Dourlen builds on Choron’s *Principes de Composition* by offering tables that map melodic intervals against composed bass lines (Figure 73)—a more advanced version of the “inverse” R8 explored earlier in Chapter 4.1.2. He instructs students to practice “putting under the different [intervallic] movements of the given melody, the various harmonies they can bear...[and] to increase the [number of possible realisations] by seeking out others.”⁶⁶ However, this table does not take rhythm and meter into account, which, while simplifying memorisation, limits its application in irregular melodic contexts. Nevertheless, this abstraction serves as a bridge from rote learning to a more expressive, technically informed realisation:

⁶⁵ Reicha, *Course of Musical Composition*, 154.

⁶⁶ “Maintenant pour s’habituer à mettre une basse sous un chant, il faut s’exercer à mettre sous les différents mouvements du chant, les différentes harmonies qu’ils peuvent porter ; en voici quelques-uns, on fera bien d’en augmenter le nombre en en cherchant d’autres.” Victor Dourlen, *Traité d’accompagnement contenant les notions d’harmonie nécessaires pour accompagner les basses chiffrées et par suite la partition* (Paris: M.me Cendrier, 1840), 74, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Musique, VM8-256, <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb429608311>.

Figure 73: Dourlen, *Traité d'accompagnement*. Ways of Accompanying Melodic Intervals in the Upper Voice.⁶⁷

Chant descendant d'un degré.

Chant descendant de tierce..

Chant descendant de quarte..

Cherubini provides an exemplary realisation of the given melody for the 1827 Harmony Competition (Figure 74). Particularly revealing is that the solution consists of a bass line without figures. This is not surprising given how these components provide sufficient information in writing out the inner parts:

⁶⁷ Dourlen, *Traité d'accompagnement*, 74. Dourlen provides solutions for unisons, ascending and descending diatonic 2nds, 3rds, and 4ths (noting that they can be inverted to obtain solutions for the 7th, 6th, and 5th). He also includes solutions with up to four diatonic steps in a row, ascending and descending.

Figure 74: Cherubini, *A Chant Donn e* and its Realisation.⁶⁸



Cherubini’s realisation, however, is confined to the learned style, which limited itself to the use of melodic dissonances uncharacteristic of the post-Galant and classical idiom. Reicha asserts that the realisation process is complex because it is frequently used. He shows the importance of understanding the accidental notes in a melody: even “distinguishing how many notes” are non-harmonic “is already a great advantage; for there are melodies in which the number greatly exceeds that of the essential notes.”⁶⁹ This observation underscores the practical realisation that demands careful attention to the interplay between melodic embellishment and harmonic structure.

Elwart’s *Petit Manuel d’harmonie* stands out for explicitly addressing melodic dissonances used in given melody exercises. In Figure 75, for example, Elwart shows us how the choice of key area for a given melody determines which notes are structural or embellishing (marked with ‘+’), yielding three

⁶⁸ Luigi Cherubini, *Pour le concours d’harmonie et d’accompagnement pratique, ann e 1827* (manuscrit autographe), 1827, Biblioth que nationale de France, d partement Musique, MS-1693 (3), <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb147926765>.

⁶⁹ Reicha, *Course of Musical Composition*, 154. He further explores this idea in his *Treatise on Melody*, published in 1814. See Antoine Reicha, *Treatise on Melody*, trans. Edwin S. Metcalf (Chicago: E.S. Metcalf & Co., 1893 [1814]), <https://archive.org/details/treatise-on-melody-anton-reicha>.

very different solutions. The uppermost stave is the given melodic fragment; the bottommost stave is the accompanying bass; the middle stave is for didactic purposes, which notates the notes integral to the harmony (those accompanied by a structural bass) and those that are not with rests:

Figure 75: Elwart, *Petit Manuel d'harmonie*. Realisations of the Same Melody in Different Keys.⁷⁰

N° 1. — D'UT MAJEUR modulant en SOL MAJEUR.

Fragment mélodique (1).
Notes réelles ou radicales.
1^{re} Basse.

N° 2. — De LA MINEUR en MI MINEUR.

Répétition du fragment.
Notes réelles ou radicales.
2^e Basse.

N° 3. — De FA MAJEUR en commençant par la dominante, passant sur la tonique, et retournant à la dominante.

Répétition du fragment.
Notes réelles ou radicales.
3^e Basse.

Another feature of Elwart's treatise is the isolation of melodic dissonances such as appoggiaturas and anticipations (Figure 76). He embeds them in progressively complex exercises to train student

⁷⁰ Elwart, *Petit Manuel d'harmonie*, 51-52. The third solution "bends the rules" slightly by changing the key signature.

recognition and response in real time. These unrealised examples are then followed by the author's own in Figure 77 and reflect how a "heavy," structural bass may first be composed beneath the given line before the plain chords and textures are added:

Figure 76: Elwart, *Petit Manuel d'harmonie*. An Unrealised *Chant Donn e* by Elwart.⁷¹

N^o 2. — Appoggiatures.

Andantino.

N^o 3. — Anticipations.

Moderato.

⁷¹ Elwart, *Petit Manuel d'harmonie*, 56.

Figure 77: A *Chant Donn * by Elwart Realised by Hadap with a “Heavy Bass.”⁷²

Andantino

Given this complexity, some melodies allow multiple valid harmonisations, while others are fixed, with only one valid realisation, as per the teacher’s pedagogical goal. Elwart even offers multiple bass realisations for Mozart’s famous aria “*Voi che sapete.*” Mozart’s original bass is much simpler, serving only to support the melody and text (Figure 78). The “heavy” bass here is well-suited for the instrumental realisation, which will be further discussed in Chapter 4.3.2:

Figure 78: W. A. Mozart, “*Voi che sapete*” from *Le nozze di Figaro*, K. 492, bars 1-12 (Transcribed and Figured by Hadap).⁷³

Andante con moto

⁷² The stemming and articulation have been preserved.

⁷³ The figures are based on the arpeggios played by the violin parts of the aria.

Elwart’s realisations, on the other hand (Figure 79), range from strict-style counterpoint enriched with nineteenth-century chromaticism compared to the more simplified Galant approach reminiscent of Mozart’s own practice. These examples vary in harmonic rhythm and colour, enabling students to explore the expressive potential of different solutions. As Czerny would say, with this realisation style, such a “beautiful melody is stifled by the overcharged, forced, and so-called learned accompaniment.”⁷⁴ However, such solutions may be ill-suited to the libretto. Still, as in independent melody, they serve as creative exercises to encourage the student to explore many equally viable realisations—challenging the notion of the “fixed” work and linking it to the process of recomposition and arranging already explored in Chapter 2.2. These demonstrate the composer’s skill set in providing multiple viable solutions to the same musical problem:

Figure 79: Elwart, *Petit Manuel d’harmonie*. Bassline Realisations under Mozart, “Voi che sapete” from *Le nozze di Figaro*.⁷⁵

The image shows a page of a musical score for 'Voi che sapete' from Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*. The score is for the character Cherubin and three basses (1^{re}, 2^e, and 3^e BASSE). The tempo is marked 'Andante con moto.' The lyrics are: 'Mon cœur sou-pi-re la nuit, le jour; Qui peut me di-re Si c'est d'a-mour? Qui peut me di-re Si c'est d'a-mour? etc.' The score features complex bassline realisations with many accidentals and chromaticism, as described in the text.

⁷⁴ Czerny, *School of Practical Composition*, 1:96.

⁷⁵ Elwart, *Petit Manuel d’harmonie*, 53-54.

Using the same CD by Elwart, we can provide a realisation using a “singing bass” (Figure 80). This solution is an elaboration of the “heavy bass” solution with the addition of passing notes, resulting in a faster harmonic rhythm, just as Elwart had done with Mozart’s “*Voi che sapete*.”⁷⁶

Figure 80: A *Chant Donn * by Elwart Realised by Hadap with a “Singing Bass.”

Once the bassline is formed, it can serve as a foundation for a plain-chord realisation (Figure 81) using fragments of the R8 and its modulations, opening the possibility of rearranging into various textures: piano style, instrumental style and learned style—to be discussed in the following chapter. This scaffold, ideally learned through extemporisation, enables the stylistic flexibility essential to the accompanist, composer, and improviser alike—a link explored later in this thesis:

⁷⁶ As will be explored further in Chapter 4.3.5, this will serve as the bass line for the learned-style texture.

Figure 81: A Realised Bassline Using Plain Chords for Elwart's *Chant Donn * by Hadap.⁷⁷

Andantino

The musical score is for a piece titled "Andantino" in 3/4 time and B-flat major. It consists of two systems of music. The first system contains 9 measures, and the second system starts at measure 10 and contains 10 measures. The bass line is realized with plain chords, and the upper part consists of chords. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 below the notes. Chord symbols are written below the bass line.

Measure 1: 5, +6, 6/5, 5, #5, 6, +6, 5, #6, #, 5, 6

Measure 10: 5, 6, 6/4, x, 5, 6, 4, 6/5, 5, 6, 6/4, 7, 5, 6/4, 5, 3, 5, 3, 7, 8

Treatises like those by Reicha, Dourlen and Elwart specialise in different aspects of the realisation process of the CD: Reicha provides us with general insights into its treatment, especially the use of melodic dissonances; Dourlen's treatise, in addition to the plain-chord realisation style, offers wide-ranging examples combining both partimenti and CD examples; Elwart excels in isolating and categorising melodic dissonances and provides exercises that deal with that technique. Once the two-part scaffold has been realised, other elements are added, such as inner parts, texture and rhythm, which turn these exercises into self-standing compositions—the goal of the Secondary Realisation styles explored in the following chapter.

⁷⁷ This realisation begins arbitrarily in 2nd position but can also be realised in any, so long as the chords are placed above the bass (see Chapter 4.2.1 for more information). The specific position is irrelevant until a texture is composed, so long as all the upper parts are above the bass.

4.3 Secondary Realisation Styles

Building on the primary realisation styles, the secondary realisation styles inch closer to compositional practice, allowing students to transform basic exercises into polished musical fragments. As with the previous chapter, this section examines key treatises to show how different variables inform writing in each style. At this stage, the contrast between *strict* and *free* composition becomes more apparent. *Free composition* allows greater freedom with dissonance, arpeggiated textures, and ornamentation—textures that invite performer adaptation.⁷⁸ By contrast, the *strict composition*,⁷⁹ associated with church music, canons, and fugues, demands precise contrapuntal control, leaving little room for addition.⁸⁰ The type of writing, therefore, determines its adaptability: strict textures tend to be “fixed,” while free textures remain flexible and open to rearrangement.

Pianist-composers, however, were expected to master all these textures, balancing improvisatory pedagogy with the compositional precision of the “serious work.” Mastery of these styles enabled them to move fluidly between free and strict textures, a skill that underpinned their ability to realise their own ideas and arrange others’ with ease. This is why treatises that progress beyond plain-chord realisations are vital, as they train students in strategies for tackling more challenging textures and evolving styles. Let us delve into the pianist-composer’s mindset by exploring how these realisation styles might have informed their compositional thinking.

4.3.1 Piano-Style Realisation: Considerations

Realisation at the piano differs from that of vocal or other instrumental textures. Most obviously, the piano cannot sustain tones for as long as most other instruments (see Chapter 1.2.3). This mechanical limitation tends to manifest as arpeggios and repeated chords/notes, rather than the passing and

⁷⁸ The piano and instrumental realisation styles fall under the domain of *free composition*, not because they lack rules, but because they draw on idiomatic writing rather than learned counterpoint. Examples of learned piano writing do exist, but they are rare due to the instrument’s mechanics.

⁷⁹ Also known as *style rigoureux* (rigorous style) and *style sévère* (severe style). See Chapter 4.3.5.

⁸⁰ For more information, see Reicha, *Course of Musical Composition*, 223-24.

neighbouring tones typical of monodic instruments and voices. This aspect of piano writing makes it one of the most challenging instruments for which to write idiomatically. This differentiates it from the organ where the writing “most advantageously” requires a “slow degree of movement, as rapid figures are ineffective on the instrument.”⁸¹

Adam and Lachnith’s *Méthode* already deals with these unique aspects of piano writing. While an organ may sustain the chord infinitely, Figure 82 shows the many ways that a four-part chord can be “sustained” by arpeggiating the notes based on four-note permutations on the piano. Figure 83 demonstrates for three-part chords:

Figure 82: Adam and Lachnith, *Méthode ou principe général du doigté*. Ways of Arpeggiating a Four-part Chord.⁸²

Chaque Accord où il y a quatre notes ensemble, peut se retourner en le brisant, autant de fois que l'exemple ci après l'indique.

On peut faire la même chose avec la main gauche en prenant toujours les doigts de l'accord.

⁸¹ Czerny, *School of Practical Composition*, 1:128.

⁸² Adam and Lachnith, *Méthode ou principe général du doigté pour le forte-piano*, 132. This example was already included in Chapter 2.1.4, but deserves another mention here. See also Figures 34 and 35 in Chapter 2.2.2, which feature the tremolo textures by Fétis.

Figure 83: Adam and Lachnith, *Méthode ou principe général du doigté*. Ways of Arpeggiating a Three-Part Chord.⁸³

152
N^o 176: Arpeggio. Signifie de faire entendre successivement toutes les notes qui se trouvent dans l'accord désigné. ce qui peut se faire de beaucoup de manières.

Arpeggio Exécution autrement.

Exemple

autrement. autrement.

autrement. autrement par Triolets.

autrement.

autrement par doubles Croches.

autrement.

These arpeggiated textures become especially useful on the piano with the invention and greater employment of the damper pedal in the nineteenth century (nowadays called the sustain pedal). Czerny explains “the [damper] pedal [had] become extremely important” for its ability to create “an apparent fullness of tone and harmony, which seems even to multiply the number of our hands.”⁸⁴ Figure 84 shows Czerny’s example of such a texture (upper staves) and its effect (lower staves) when “each lower octave every where [sic.] sounds like a genuine sustained bass, while the left hand plays the accompaniment more than two octaves higher up the instrument.”⁸⁵

⁸³ Ibid., 152.

⁸⁴ Czerny, *Complete Theoretical and Practical Pianoforte School*, 3:57

⁸⁵ Ibid.

Figure 84: Czerny, *Pianoforte School*, Op. 500. Use of the Pedal.⁸⁶



On the piano, it is not enough to simply arpeggiate the accompaniment; the placement must also be considered. Czerny writes that “care should never be taken to place the chord notes in the lower octaves of the piano; the resulting effect would be too muffled.”⁸⁷

To find examples of piano writing with the employment of the sustain pedal, we can turn to Hummel’s *Anweisung zum Piano-Forte-Spiel* (1827). It features a similar lexicon of idiomatic diminutions and textures for the piano found in the Adam and Lachnith *Méthode*. Though he intended to use these as technical exercises, they can also serve as models for improvisation, containing a greater variety of diminutions and textures than their predecessor.⁸⁸ These also include the arpeggiated textures for the LH with the use of the sustain pedal, as shown in Figure 85.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Ibid., 3:58.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ This link will be made much more apparent in Chapter 4.4.

⁸⁹ Hummel’s exercises appear to be freely composed by intuition rather than the “brute force” or “algorithmic” methods of Adam and Lachnith (see Chapter 1.3.1). They account for hand biomechanics, making difficult passages easier to execute, and emphasise artistry over mechanics, often drawing on his own and contemporaries’ piano works.

Figure 85: Hummel, *Anweisung zum Piano-Forte-Spiel*. Selected Arpeggiated Textures.⁹⁰

The image displays a page of musical notation from Johann Nepomuk Hummel's *Anweisung zum Piano-Forte-Spiel*. It features several numbered examples of arpeggiated textures, specifically in the bass clef. Examples 23, 24, 30, 31, 37, and 38 are clearly visible. Example 23 includes a handwritten note: "a) Die untere Note wird gehascht und kurz abgefertigt." The notation includes various fingerings, accents, and articulation marks such as asterisks and slurs. The examples demonstrate different rhythmic and melodic patterns for arpeggiated chords and sequences.

⁹⁰ Johann Nepomuk Hummel, *Ausführliche theoretisch-practische Anweisung zum Piano-Forte-Spiel* (Vienna: Tobias Haslinger, 1827), 304-06, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Anweisung_zum_Piano-Forte-Spiel_\(Hummel%2C_Johann_Nepomuk\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Anweisung_zum_Piano-Forte-Spiel_(Hummel%2C_Johann_Nepomuk)).

These examples are well-composed for the instrument, show the multitude of textures that can be used to simulate various pianistic effects (even orchestral ones) across different meters and subdivisions, and in different forms, styles, and characters (musical topics). Although the use of the sustain pedal is not explicitly indicated in these examples, its role in supporting a legato sound is implied. More importantly, Hummel reveals the construction of these textures by deriving them from plain four-part chords, notated in small notes at the start of many exercises. In some cases, he further clarifies the texture by distinguishing the bass from the arpeggiated accompaniment: the bass is written with downward stems and typically with longer note values, while the arpeggiated accompaniment is written with upward stems. This notation not only demonstrates the texture's complexity but also aligns with Czerny's notion of creating a two-handed effect with just one hand, using the sustain pedal. These textures, as Ratner argues, are most commonly associated with Galant music onwards, as "slow, regular chord changes, along with fuller textures, made it possible... to create expressive nuances purely through the sound of a given chord."⁹¹

From these examples, we may deduce the following guidelines when composing textures at the piano. When realising given basses and melodies at the piano, certain factors should be considered:

- The Harmonic Series guides spacing for clarity and resonance—especially in the bass register.
- Avoidance of closed-position chords in the low register, which can produce muddled textures.
- Use of the sustain pedal becomes necessary to compensate for decay, especially in open spacing.
- Arpeggiation across subdivisions gives the illusion of sustain and enables one hand to imply multiple voices.
- Arpeggiation, while rhythmically elaborate, still obeys the procedures regarding the disposition of chords.

Categorising piano textures is a difficult task; its number is only limited by the human imagination. However, upon exhaustive study of the piano repertoire, both solo and accompaniment, the majority of them can be categorised depending on a limited number of variables, as shown in Table 12:

⁹¹ Ratner, *Classic Music*, 65. This also applies to the instrumental-style realisation discussed in Chapter 4.3.4.

Table 12: Variables for Composing/Improvising Piano Textures.

Variable	Sub-variable
Rhythm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homogenous • Varied
Number of obligato parts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixed • Varied
Placement of the melodic line (or the primary obligato part)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest voice • Middle voice • Lowest voice
Bass line movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Heavy” or “singing”
Number of voices in the accompaniment (including doubling)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixed • Variable
Disposition of voices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open • Closed • Keyboard style—closed position with the upper parts and bass note no more than three octaves away from the highest voice
Diminution type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arpeggiation • Repeated chords • Passing, neighbour notes • Melodic dissonances (escape tone, anticipation, appoggiatura)
Articulation and silence(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustain pedal and “legatissimo” • Non-legato and staccato

More simply, Ratner splits these textural components into “(1) the number of voices heard, (2) the action assigned to them, and (3) the effects of sonority created,” which could be applied to any realisation style.⁹² Now that we have established some principles of piano writing, let us explore how a given bass and melody may be realised at the piano.

4.3.2 Piano-Style Realisation with a Given Bass

In general, piano realisations of a given bass line are rare in the nineteenth-century pedagogical tradition. Mechanically, the piano is not well-suited to sustained lines over long durations—something that melody-based realisations solve through chordal figuration (see Chapter 4.2.2). Pedagogically, the given

⁹² Ratner, *Classic Music*, 108.

bass format was more suited to the organ or other monodic instruments, where the performer's attention was on clarity of part-writing and independence of lines. On the piano, with its immediate decay, the "singing" bass line is less effective. This lack of suitability is reflected in the fact that partimento-based instruction (which centres on given bass realisations) largely disappeared from piano curricula by the late nineteenth century, replaced by harmonisation of melodies and accompaniment-based exercises in which realisations can be adapted to suit piano-writing idioms (see Chapter 4.3.3). Despite the limited role of the upper voices in this context, several devices may be employed to enrich the texture, depending on the register, harmonic rhythm, and bass line activity:

- Octave Doublings - When the bass line lies in a mid-to-lower register, it can be doubled at the octave (either above or below) as a form of reinforcement (range permitting, which can differ from piano to piano).
- Arpeggiation - Arpeggios may be employed either to fill in vertical harmonies while preserving the "singing" quality of the bass or to imply an accompanying upper texture without introducing an actual melodic line. These arpeggios are often non-melodic and function purely to compose out the vertical sonorities in a pianistic manner.
- Addition of chords in the LH - Extra voices may be added in the LH to fill out the texture by increasing its density and volume.

Colet's realisation of a Fenaroli partimento (Figure 86) offers one of the few pedagogical examples demonstrating how a given bass could be translated into a pianistic texture. He adapts the material idiomatically to the piano by retaining simple chords and occasionally reinforcing the bass line through octave doubling and adding consonances in the LH. There are also occasional moments of melodic invention and virtuosity, such as the use of parallel 3rds in the second line and brief semi-quaver flourishes found in the third. The use of ties is rare in this realisation, as Colet prefers to restrike common notes to compensate for the piano's rapid decay:

Figure 86: Colet, *Partimenti ou traité special*. A Fenaroli Partimento realised by Colet.⁹³

(A) (B) On peut, comme on le voit ici, placer l'harmonie dans la main gauche, tandis que la main droite fait des traits; il est permis aussi de doubler la Basse par les octaves comme à la lettre B.

The piano realisation style with a given bass, while foundational in earlier centuries, plays a marginal role in nineteenth-century realisation technique. Its ill-suitedness to the instrument's mechanics, combined with its proclivity for arpeggiation and repeated chords, means that such exercises are more often approached from a theoretical perspective, as most piano music in the nineteenth century was not written this way. When attempted, they are best realised through chordal textures, minimal

⁹³ Colet, *Partimenti ou traité spécial de l'accompagnement pratique au piano*, 200.

upper-voice motion, and careful pedalling (which should be avoided) to maintain the bass’s linear, “singing” quality.

A given “heavy” bass, on the other hand (which creates a basic structure of a chord progression—see Chapter 5.1.1), provides much more freedom in terms of composing out the texture more pianistically. Given the many variables, such an exercise is more akin to improvisation. Kalkbrenner’s *Traité d’harmonie du pianiste* was an “especially detailed and influential [treatise] on formal pedagogic training” of improvisation practices around the early nineteenth century.⁹⁴ Unlike earlier, more theoretical harmony manuals, Kalkbrenner’s *Traité* is a practical guide tailored for pianists, focusing extensively on preluding and related genres. Compared to its predecessors, it offered a more immediate, applied method for guiding the pianist from spontaneity to structured improvisation and composition. To demonstrate this principle, he first shows us how to compose an ascending scale progression that alternates between the chords of the 5th and 6th—an archaic form of the R8 (Figure 87):

Figure 87: Kalkbrenner, *Traité d’harmonie du pianiste*. Ascending Scale Progression.⁹⁵



Since the bass progression itself is already in its most simplified form, there is nothing in this progression that would constitute as “original” by the work concept’s compositional standards. This is perhaps what

⁹⁴ Robin Moore, “The Decline of Improvisation in Western Art Music: An Interpretation of Change,” *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 23, no. 1 (1992): 63, <https://doi.org/10.2307/836956>.

⁹⁵ Frédéric Kalkbrenner, *Traité d’harmonie du pianiste: principes relationnels de la modulation pour apprendre à préluder et à improviser, exemples d’études, de fugues et de préludes pour le piano*, Op. 185 (Paris: L’auteur, 1849), 31, Bibliothèque nationale de France, VM8-445, <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb43070568b>.

Zimmerman meant when such progressions “belong to everyone” and are “used without qualm.”⁹⁶ Kalkbrenner then composes a series of variations from this progression, first in the manner of the learned style (to be discussed in further detail in Chapter 4.3.5) before presenting the more pianistic variations that progressively increase in technical difficulty (Figure 88):

⁹⁶ “Les progressions harmoniques sont des séries d’accords appartenant à tout le monde, elles sont considérées comme des formules toutes faites que chacun emploie sans scrupule; elles sont d’un excellent usage pour préluder.” Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie*, 3:18. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

Figure 88: Kalkbrenner, *Traité d'harmonie du pianiste*. Variations on a Chord Progression.⁹⁷

The image displays a musical score for Variations 6 through 9 on a chord progression by Kalkbrenner. The score is written for piano and consists of seven systems of music, each representing a variation. The first system, labeled '9r. 6.', is marked 'All^o' and 'Pour l'exécution.' with dynamics 'sp' and 'cresc.'. The second system, '9r. 7.', is marked 'marcato.' and features a 'tr' (trill) in the bass line. The third system, '9r. 8.', is marked 'non troppo All^o' and includes '8' (octave) markings above the treble staff. The fourth system, '9r. 9.', is marked 'Risoluto.' and 'sp' with 'cresc.' and 'ff' dynamics. The score is characterized by dense, arpeggiated textures and tremolo-like passages, typical of the *stile brillante*.

Notice that in these textures, we see the use of arpeggiation and tremolo-like passages—hallmarks of the so-called *stile brillante*. These serve to prolong contrapuntal sonorities across several

⁹⁷ Kalkbrenner, *Traité d'harmonie du pianiste*, 32-33. The penultimate semi-quaver of the first bar of Variation 6 should read a G-natural.

octaves and bars to compensate for the piano's rapid decay. The RH part Variation 6 for example, is clearly a compound melody in two parts where the repeated high, soprano note is interpolated by a moving alto line underneath; in Variation 7, the RH features rising and falling arpeggios spanning a two to three-octave range, while the LH plays the bass notes in octaves and trills to create sustain; the RH of Variation 8 is really one part, but enlivened by tremolo octaves; Variation 9 consists of a bass that one could find in a partimento (most likely performed at a much slower tempo of course) and the RH moves with the bass in parallel 3rds.

These textures, despite being impressive, were not particularly “original” by the work-concept's standards—in fact, any well-trained nineteenth-century pianist-composer could have composed/improvised them. The key point here is “Kalkbrenner's approach to improvisation and schema based pre-luding,” which was the norm for pianist-composers of his calibre.⁹⁸ Just as Quantz praised Handel for writing successful French overtures that surpassed its original creator, Lully (see Chapter 2.1.1), Kalkbrenner here was successful at passing on this improvising tradition, whose goal was not to be “original” or “authentic,” but to improvise music based on a set of standard procedures that would please the listener in the moment—music as “event.”

In terms of pedagogy, a piano-style realisation over a given “heavy” bass may be too liberating, as it places responsibility for melodic and textural invention on the realiser, which can be an overwhelming task for young learners. It is perhaps for this reason that most given basses in harmony and counterpoint treatises do not appear in this form. For a student aiming to improvise, however, this remains an invaluable exercise.

4.3.3 Piano-Style Realisation with a Given Melody

When approaching a piano realisation style with a given melody, especially in the nineteenth century, one immediately confronts a significant difference with realisations with a given bass. In harmony

⁹⁸ Gjerdingen, *Child Composers in the Old Conservatories*, 201.

pedagogy (especially in the Paris Conservatoire tradition), the emphasis shifted toward homophonic textures (melody and accompaniment), partly because a bass line alone, when written in a “singing” or melodic style, already implies much of the rhythm and character of the exercise. As a result, little needs to be added texturally beyond simple harmonic support. In such cases, the plain-chord realisation remains the most appropriate and idiomatic solution.⁹⁹

Unlike the realisation of a given bass, the realisation of a given melody presents far more options for the student. A realised given melody in the piano style inherently requires textural support via rhythm and harmony, which takes the piano’s mechanism into account. This necessity gives rise to a vast array of realisation techniques, unique to the piano, which evolve from the more vertical-based structures found in Primary Realisation Styles.

Adolphe Le Carpentier’s (1809–1869) *Petit traité de composition mélodique* (1843) is an essential treatise on the piano-style realisation of a given melody. Dedicated to “amateurs of music,” this treatise relies on musical topics to teach accompaniment for “light music” genres such as the waltz, contradance and the romance.¹⁰⁰ In the preface, he notes that, although works in the easy genre “do not possess all the gravity that a classical work possesses...[it] would be useful to write a work that teaches how to write correctly for this kind of production.”¹⁰¹ Notice here, the acknowledgement of the amateur as well as the popularisation of character pieces, as already discussed in Chapters 2.1 and 2.2. Again, we see that the use of musical topics is critical to pedagogy and helps bridge the educational gap between professionals and amateurs. As Ratner notes, “dances, by virtue of their rhythm and pace, represented

⁹⁹ The texture in which the keyboard realisation outlines three or four parts, but with one line, was previously discussed in Chapter 4.2.2.

¹⁰⁰ “Le but spécial de ce petit traité de composition dédié aux amateurs de musique, est de donner des instructions précises sur la manière d’écrire les compositions légères, telles que : Valses, Contredanses et Romances.” Adolphe Le Carpentier, *École d’harmonie et d’accompagnement ou méthode théorique et pratique sur la transposition et sur la réduction au piano des partitions d’orchestre*, Op. 48 (Paris: L’auteur, 1841), 1, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Musique, VM8-482, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k9631857z>.

¹⁰¹ “On objectera peut-être qu’un ouvrage exclusivement consacré au genre facile, n’a pas toute la gravité qui convient à une œuvre classique ; cependant, d’après la tendance des idées nouvelles qui portent un grand nombre d’amateurs à s’essayer dans la composition de Valses, Contredanses ou Romances, j’ai dû penser que, dans l’intérêt même de l’art, il serait utile de faire un ouvrage qui apprit à écrire correctement ce genre de productions.” Le Carpentier, *Petit traité de composition mélodique*, 1. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

feeling. Their trim and compact forms served as models for composition.”¹⁰² Figure 89 shows the accompaniment styles for a typical contra dance in 2/4 time:

Figure 89: Le Carpentier, *Petit traité de composition mélodique*. Accompaniment Styles for a Contradance.¹⁰³

RHYTHMES D'ACCOMPAGNEMENTS POUR LES CONTREDANSES.
MESURE A DEUX-QUATRE.

The figure displays five distinct accompaniment styles for a contra dance in 2/4 time, labeled 1^{er} Rhythme through 5^{er} Rhythme. Each style is presented in a two-staff system (treble and bass clef). The first system shows the first two styles, the second system shows the next two, and the third system shows the fifth style. The styles vary in their rhythmic patterns and textures, illustrating different ways to accompany the same melody.

Here, Le Carpentier provides several examples of accompaniment under the same melody, which he labels *Rhythme*. These examples, while maintaining the same underlying harmonic progression, use rather distinct textures designed to alter their relationship with the given melody. With each



¹⁰² Ratner, *Classic Music*, 9.

¹⁰³ Le Carpentier, *Petit traité de composition mélodique*, 21.

example, the LH accompaniment becomes progressively more difficult (especially for amateurs), yet the dance’s underlying character remains intact. This adaptability is a critical aspect of nineteenth-century pedagogical thinking.

Similarly, Elwart’s *Petit Manuel d’harmonie* avoids discussing similar concepts in too much detail. Instead, he focuses on the interplay between the melody’s rhythmic features and the accompanying piano part. Elwart lists what he calls “six species” of accompaniment types for a given melodic line (Table 13), emphasising simplicity above all to make sure that the melody is clearly heard throughout.¹⁰⁴

Table 13: Elwart, *Petit Manuel d’harmonie*. Table of Accompaniment Types by Rhythm.¹⁰⁵

Type and Description	Example from <i>Petit Manuel d’harmonie</i>
<p>Passive Rhythm —the accompaniment moves in rhythmic unison with the melody.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Allegro marcato.</i></p> 
<p>Active Rhythm —the accompaniment follows the skeletal structure of the melody but moves in faster, more “active” note values—usually some form of arpeggiation.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Andantino.</i></p> 

¹⁰⁴ Elwart, *Petit Manuel d’harmonie*, 59.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 59-67. Both the melody and the accompaniment are composed by Elwart.

<p>Divisional Rhythm —the accompaniment moves in rhythmic counterpoint against the melody, usually with faster note values. This texture resembles the “singing” bass.</p>	<p><i>Allegro.</i></p>
<p>Strong-Beat Rhythm – the accompaniment, usually in the form of plain chords, is struck on the strong beats of the bar.</p>	<p><i>Allegro marcato.</i></p>
<p>Weak-Beat Rhythm – the accompaniment, usually in the form of plain chords, is struck on the weak beats of the bar. It is rarely used solely on the weak beats, but also on the strong beats to maintain the meter.</p>	<p><i>Allegro spiritoso.</i></p>

Arpeggio Rhythm—the accompaniment combines elements of divisional rhythm and down-beat rhythm to create an arpeggiation of the harmony.



These are the most standard (and simplest) accompaniment figures used when the piano accompanies the voice or another instrument. Of course, Elwart himself was aware that these categories oversimplify and should be applied only in specific settings with a leading melodic line. In actual compositional practice, we find that unique textures in the piano repertoire are not only derived from combinations of these “species” of accompaniment but also change frequently to create variety and interest in larger-scale works.

While the accompaniment can be placed in either one or both hands, it is more common to place the accompaniment solely in one hand so that the other hand can play more active melodic lines. Reicha shows us how a plain chord realisation in the LH can be composed into a texture—in this case, classified under Arpeggio Rhythm (Figure 90) in addition to a florid melodic part played by the RH:

Figure 90: Reicha, *Course of Musical Composition*. Conversion from Plain Chords to an Arpeggiated Texture.¹⁰⁶

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. Compare the two following examples:

Nº 1.

Nº 2.

Using the same CD by Elwart, we can create a plain chord realisation with the LH alone (Figure 91) and compose it out according to Elwart's "six species" of rhythm. Texture 1 shows a realisation with plain chords in the LH, followed by the Weak-Beat Rhythm (Texture 2) and the Arpeggio Rhythm (Texture 3). In these examples, the LH is designed for simple execution and moves minimally:

¹⁰⁶ Reicha, *Course of Musical Composition*, 153.

Figure 91: Realisation of Elwart's CD by Hadap. Textures 1-3.

Andantino

Texture No. 1

Andantino

Texture No. 2

Andantino

Texture No. 3

From this, we can create other textures, based on the same progression that explore more textural possibilities. Figure 92 shows these two textures: Texture 4 uses the Weak-Beat Rhythm and Texture 5 uses the Arpeggio Rhythm. Both textures employ a wide range and necessitate the use of the sustain pedal:

Figure 92: Realisations of Elwart's CD by Hadap. Textures No. 4 and No. 5.

Texture No. 4

Andantino

con pedale

5 +6 6 5 #5 6 +6

7 5 $\flat 6 + \frac{4}{4}$ # 7 + 5 6 6 4 x 6

13 6 6 7 + 5 6 4 5 3 5 3 7 + 8

Texture No. 5

Andantino

con pedale

5 +6 6 5 #5 6 +6

7 5 $\flat 6 + \frac{4}{4}$ # 5 6 6 4 x 6

13 6 6 7 + 5 6 4 5 3 5 3 7 + 8

All the Elwart realisations presented so far have been for piano solo, though it is not too difficult to adapt the texture by assigning the melody to another instrument. Figure 93 shows the rearrangement of Textures No. 4 and No. 5, and Textures No. 6 and No. 7, respectively, featuring the exact accompaniment figure between the two hands and assigning the melodic part to another instrument:

Figure 93: Realisations of Elwart’s CD by Hadap (Piano + Solo Instrument). Textures No. 6 and No. 7.

Andantino

The figure displays two musical textures, No. 6 and No. 7, for a solo instrument and piano. Both are marked *Andantino*.
Texture No. 6: The solo instrument part (top staff) features a melodic line with slurs and accents. The piano accompaniment (middle and bottom staves) consists of chords and single notes. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 and symbols like +6, 6/4, and 7+. Measure numbers 10, 11, and 12 are shown.
Texture No. 7: The solo instrument part (top staff) is similar to Texture No. 6. The piano accompaniment (middle and bottom staves) features a more active, rhythmic pattern with slurs and accents. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 and symbols like +6, 6/4, and 7+. Measure numbers 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 are shown.

Notice the similarity between the realisation styles—both capture the melody’s characteristics in different ways; whether for a piano solo or an instrumental sonata is irrelevant. From these two approaches, we might see that there are elements of a musical work which lie beyond the musical notation—not only in relation to performance practice, but to the actual notes themselves. This emphasis on

multiple realisation styles for a given melody exemplifies a pedagogical model that highlights the importance of musical topics and prioritises fluency and adaptability, essential to the pianist-composer figure. One could see them as lightening the cognitive load on the elements of composition by providing texture and rhythm, allowing the student to focus on harmony and counterpoint.

Rather than directing the student toward the creation of original “works,” Reicha, Le Carpentier, and Elwart cultivate a flexible skill set that enables the student to respond to unique musical contexts, idioms, and conventions. Their pedagogical approach placed them in opposition to the compositional ideals of the work-concept. In the next chapter, we explore how the piano realisation style seamlessly translates to the instrumental style.

4.3.4 Instrumental-Style Realisation and Arranging: A Pre-Work-Concept Ideal

In addition to the piano-style realisation, basses and melodies can also be realised in the instrumental style, aiming to apply textures commonly used in chamber and orchestral ensembles without the piano. Although such realisations were often associated with textures employing string instruments, the principles are readily translatable across families of instruments such as wind and brass (accommodating for their respective ranges and technical limitations, of course), and for the organ—particularly in the French symphonic tradition, where orchestral instruments are imitated through the various stop combinations. This mode of writing was common in the era before the emerging work-concept, when instrumental and even vocal works often lacked strictly specified instrumentation and were performed ad hoc.¹⁰⁷

Usually written in three or four parts, the instrumental-style realisation prioritises the idiomatic writing of each part, often placing the melodic and rhythmic interest in the uppermost part (usually the melody); the middle voices often execute diminutions, such as arpeggios and chordal repetitions (e.g., double stops in string textures). The bass part tends to be stable and restrained (“heavy” as Reicha

¹⁰⁷ For example, works with continuo could be accompanied by an organ, harpsichord, lute, theorbo etc. Concerti grossi and solo concertos were adapted for various instruments with few modifications, vocal parts in operas were freely transposed to suit the singers’ range, madrigals were freely tabulated and arranged for lute, allowing one singer/lutenist to perform the madrigal.

describes it). By avoiding excessive use of passing notes, it is differentiated from the more linearly active learned style. Reicha's composition treatise documents this phenomenon in instrumental writing in general, by explaining that "chords may be exhibited as [plain chords and broken chords]" and the latter modification is "remarkable" as "a single part... [has] the possibility of executing harmony on a single instrument."¹⁰⁸ Figure 94 shows two examples from the treatise that demonstrate how a three-part progression can be arpeggiated on an instrument such as the violin in various ways. It even explains the use of non-harmonic notes in detail. The first example illustrates the use of passing notes, while the second demonstrates suspensions. Both are only possible because the reduced form adheres strictly to counterpoint rules, as Reicha also shows in his examples:

¹⁰⁸ Reicha, *Course of Musical Composition*, 148. The upper staves show the arpeggiated chords, and the lower staves show the reduction of the arpeggios into plain chords in three or four parts.

Figure 94: Reicha, *Course of Musical Composition*. Arpeggiated Textures Created by a Single-Line Instrument.¹⁰⁹

Broken chords with passing-notes.

Broken chords with suspensions.

9 - 3 7 - 6 4 - 3 5 - 6 7 - 6

5 - 6 4 - 3 7 - 6

Just as in the piano-style realisation, the two-part realisation is key here, providing the counterpoint and the implied inner voices. Figure 95 shows how a three-part harmonic progression can be outlined with just one part (bottom staff). This realisation could also be played on the piano note-for-note with the violin melody in the RH and the viola accompaniment in the LH, creating an Arpeggio Rhythm (using Elwart's terminology):

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 148, 150.

Figure 95: Reicha, *Course of Musical Composition*. An Instrumental-Style Realisation in Two parts and its Reduction.¹¹⁰



which produces the following effect of harmony in four parts.



Figure 96 is similar but uses three instruments. The bass here is sustained, perhaps played by a cello. At the same time, the accompaniment situates itself in the middle register (played by either a second violin or a viola)—the melody, as usual, is given to the first violin part. This texture is more difficult to play on the piano, but still possible: the RH can play the melody as written with little difficulty; for the LH, the first quaver takes the bass note, and the remaining quavers take the arpeggiated accompaniment. The pedal is essential here to sustain the bass, which would need to be changed at the bar and/or half-bar:

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 247.

Figure 96: Reicha, *Course of Musical Composition*. An Instrumental Style Example in Three Parts.¹¹¹



The more parts that are employed in an instrumental style realisation, the more opportunities there are to create more active and varied textures. Colet's treatise contains exemplary realisations of given melodies and basses used for competitions. He published them in the appendix of his *Partimenti ou traité spécial* not only as exemplars for future students, but also to cement his stature as a pedagogue. Take, for example, this instrumental style realisation by Caspers using a *Chant Donné* by Leborne used for the 1845 harmony competition of the Paris Conservatoire (cited earlier in Chapter 4.1.1):

¹¹¹ Ibid., 242.

Figure 97: Caspers' (A Pupil of Colet) Realisation of a *Chant Donn * by Leborne 1845. Instrumental Style in Four Parts.¹¹²

CONCOURS DU 13 JUILLET, 1845.
HARMONIE VOCALE ET INSTRUMENTALE.
CHANT DONN  POUR ˆTRE  CRIT AVEC QUATRE PARTIES INSTRUMENTALES.
2^d Prix d cern    l'unanimit    M. H. CASPERS,  l ve de M. H^o COLET.
COMPOSITION DANS LE GENRE LIBRE.

Agitato.

1^{er} VIOLON.
2^d VIOLON.
ALTO.
BASSE.

9
16

This realisation was awarded second prize, likely due to its successful integration of instrumental style and use of varied rhythmic textures. It features frequent tremolo figures, such as the Strong Beat Rhythm

¹¹² Colet, *Partimenti ou trait  sp cial de l'accompagnement pratique au piano*, 355. The realisation awarded first prize will be discussed in Chapter 4.3.5.

(using Elwart's terminology) in bars 13–14, which add a dramatic, orchestral quality to the texture. Moments of Passive Rhythm in bars 4, 12, and 15–16, and Downbeat Rhythm in bars 5–7 are included, contributing to a shifting rhythmic momentum within the phrase. From bar 17 onward (corresponding to the middle section), the passage uses a continuous Arpeggio Rhythm played by the viola in triplets, which contrasts with the simple duple meter outlined by the other parts, and maintains momentum while reinforcing harmonic clarity. The textures throughout the realisation are notably more variable—even within individual phrases—creating greater interest and contrast for the listener. There are also brief but effective instances of imitation between the first violin and viola parts (bars 1–2 and 9–10) and between the first violin and cello parts (bar 15), adding to the realisation's thematic coherence and contrapuntal richness. Although the texture is well-crafted, it is relatively straightforward in construction and could be transcribed for piano with some adjustments. It lacks the appropriate rhythmic and textural variety, which may have led to it being awarded only second prize.¹¹³

To highlight this conversion process, Figure 98 shows an instrumental style realisation of the same Elwart *Chant Donn e* from the previous chapter. This is almost a note-for-note transcription of Texture No. 6 from Chapter 4.3.3:

¹¹³ The next chapter will show the first-prize realisation of this *Chant Donn e*, also by a student of Colet.

Figure 98: Instrumental-Style Realisation No. 1 of Elwart’s *Chant Donn e* by Hadap.

Andantino

The musical score is written for four instruments: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. It is in 3/4 time and marked 'Andantino'. The score is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 1-9) shows the Violin I part with a melodic line, while Violin II, Viola, and Cello provide harmonic support. The second system (measures 10-18) continues the instrumental texture. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 and symbols like #5, +6, 6/5, 7+, 5, 6. The tempo is marked 'Andantino'.

This solution would most likely not be awarded any top prize due to its simplicity. For a piece of “light music,” this texture would be sufficient, but as a work, it lacks interest to sustain attention. However, the point is that this was composed with minimal effort. So, practically speaking, it is relatively successful as a functional piece, following the compositional aesthetics before the emerging work-concept.

The relationship between the instrumental style realisation, piano writing, and organ writing is evident in Lef bure-W ly’s “* l vation ou Communion*,” which features orchestral-like textures (Figure 99). The layout of the parts across three staves, each on a different manual, already suggests instrumental thinking. It is not too difficult to arrange this for three instruments—they can play one staff each. In contrast, a piano arrangement can play everything as written, perhaps omitting the first quaver of each bar of the middle staff to play the critical bass note on the downbeat. The sustain pedal can also be used in the arrangement to enhance the legato effect.

Figure 99: Lefébure-Wély, *L'Organiste moderne*: “*Élévation ou Communion*,” bars 1-12.¹¹⁴

CLAVIER de RÉCIT. *Hautbois*. CLAVIER du 6^d ORGUE. *Gambe de 8 et Bourdon de 16*.
 CLAVIER du POSITIF. *Flûte de 8 ou Bourdon*. PÉDALE *Flûte de 16*.

Andante sostenuto.

More importantly, Reicha argues that the foundation of orchestral writing lies in the four-part harmony realised through this instrumental style, particularly in strings, which he identifies as the core of the orchestra. He writes, “A complete orchestra is divided into two parts or two masses—into stringed-instruments and wind-instruments,” and “the most important of these two masses is that of the stringed-instruments: it forms the body of the orchestra and may be called its *quartett*.”¹¹⁵ This so-called *quartett* (comprising first and second violins, violas, and cellos) was central to orchestration pedagogy. Reicha affirms that “harmony in four parts is the basis of an orchestra,” even if it is occasionally “interrupted by harmony in two or three, and by passages in unison.”¹¹⁶ In standard roles, the first violin is

¹¹⁴ Lefébure-Wély, *L'Organiste moderne*, 2:2.

¹¹⁵ Reicha, *Course of Musical Composition*, 277. Emphasis original.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

assigned the melodic role; the cello is the bass; the second violin and viola usually serve accompaniment roles, providing rhythm and harmony in accordance with the various textures discussed in Chapter 4.3.1.

Reicha explains that the quartet can function independently: “The stringed-instruments (or the *quartett*) frequently play without being accompanied by wind instruments. Indeed, a great number of compositions exist composed for this *quartett* alone,” and many more passages of the orchestral literature are predominantly strings.¹¹⁷ In such cases, the rules and observations he previously laid out for harmonic writing in two, three, or four parts apply directly. Thus, the instrumental four-part realisation does not merely support string writing—it defines it, providing a blueprint from which orchestral textures can be expanded. When wind [and brass] instruments are added, Reicha explains, “very many combinations result which deserve to be pointed out, to shew the great resources which the orchestra offers to the composer.”¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, these combinations (most often, the doubling of these core string parts) build upon the string quartet, reinforcing its role as the harmonic and pedagogical foundation of orchestral writing.

Reicha’s treatise shows how four-part instrumental writing evolves seamlessly into orchestrated examples. His pedagogical model documents the kind of creative orchestration that defined the pianist-composer’s toolkit. The blurring of boundaries between four-part realisation and orchestration in these sources reveals a broader educational approach that trains pianist-composers across various instrumental combinations beyond the piano. The study of instrumental style serves multiple roles:

- It equips pianists to sight-read or reduce orchestral scores for piano without compromising musical integrity.
- It enables pianists to re-interpret piano scores that imitate orchestral textures, bringing out inner voices and colours more vividly using careful voicing, pedalling, and layering of the sound.
- Should the pianist pursue the path of orchestration, it strengthens their awareness of the dispositions of parts, clarity, and spacing.
- It prepares pianists to compose idiomatically for orchestra.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

These aspects are codified in treatises through standard textures. For example, Table 14 provides a summary of the key variables in constructing instrumental textures:

Table 14: Variables for Composing Instrumental Textures.

Variable	Sub-variable
Rhythm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homogenous • Varied
Number of obligato parts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixed • Variable
Placement of the melodic line (or the primary obligato part)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest voice • Middle voice • Lowest voice
Bass line movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Heavy” • “Singing”
Number of voices in the accompaniment (including doubling)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixed • Variable
Disposition of voices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open • Closed
Diminution type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arpeggiation • Repeated chords • Passing, neighbour notes • Melodic dissonances (escape tone, anticipation, appoggiatura)
Roles of instruments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constant • Variable
Articulation and silence(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legato • Non-legato and staccato

From this perspective, it is understandable why Adam and Zimmerman stressed the importance of familiarity with orchestral instruments regarding the piano’s range (see Chapters 1.3.1 and 1.3.3). This was not incidental, as Teriete argues, the pianist-composer was expected to be well-versed in instrumental writing, as part of a broader literacy in musical craft (as we have already explored in Adam’s *Méthode* and Zimmerman’s *Encyclopédie*).¹¹⁹ The instrumental-style realisation thus provided a bridge between keyboard practice and orchestral writing, thereby reinforcing the historical role of the pianist-

¹¹⁹ Teriete, “Pierre-Joseph-Guillaume Zimmerman’s *Encyclopédie du Pianiste Compositeur*,” 295-96.

composer as a figure who could freely write and arrange works across different media—a connection that will be further explored in Chapter 5.1.1.

4.3.5 The Learned-Style Realisation: A Work-Concept Ideal

Among the various textures studied in nineteenth-century harmony pedagogy, the *strict* or *learned* style (*style rigoureux* or *style sévère*) holds a singular place—not only for its technical compositional demands but also for its proximity to the ideals of the work-concept. In Koch’s formulation, the *strict* style (also called the bound or fugal style) is a contrapuntal manner of composition characterised “by a serious conduct of melody,” limited ornamentation, and strict regulation of harmonic and melodic progression. It features closely bound voice-leading, frequent suspensions, and development of a principal subject treated imitatively (as in fugue or canon), such that all voices participate equally in expressing the musical idea. It is associated primarily with church music and the *fugue*, in contrast to the freer, more ornamental galant style.¹²⁰

Unlike other realisation styles, which encourage adaptability and improvisation, the *learned style*, the more general term that “signifies imitation, fugal or canonic, and contrapuntal composition,” demands a fixed approach due to its complexity.¹²¹ When composing in this texture, Reicha insists that the student “must calculate rather than feel, renounce all musical inspiration—in short, resign oneself to being only a skilful craftsman.”¹²² His insistence on “calculation” differentiates the severe style from the textures discussed so far. It is therefore not surprising that improvising such textures is difficult in

¹²⁰ Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon* (Frankfurt am Main, 1802), 1451-52 quoted in Leonard G. Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1985), 23.

¹²¹ Ratner, *Classic Music*, 23. The thesis will use the more general term “learned style” when discussing such textures, as “strict style” implies a much stricter handling of dissonances, which was rarely applied in the nineteenth century. But it is important to note the subtle nuances between the terms: strict, severe, rigorous, learned, etc, which are often used interchangeably.

¹²² “Pour se livrer de nos jours à ce genre de composition dans toute sa sévérité, il faut ignorer entièrement les progrès que l’art musical a faits depuis un siècle et demi ; et, au lieu d’écrire à la main, il faut plutôt calculer que sentir, faire abstraction de toute inspiration musicale, en un mot se résigner à n’être qu’un habile ouvrier.” Antoine Reicha, *Traité de haute composition musicale*, 2 vols. (Paris: Zetter & Cie, [ca. 1825]), 1:6, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Musique (VM8 1356), <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k97264521>. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

partimenti, as Cafiero argues: “[realisations] severe in style [provide] no opportunities for improvisation.”¹²³ While organists (even pianists) were often expected to improvise fugues, these extemporised examples were rarely equivalent to composed fugues encountered in written repertoire.¹²⁴

The learned style was frequently studied in Conservatoire harmony classes and considered an essential requirement of contrapuntal training, especially for organists, who were expected to improvise fluently in such textures.¹²⁵ It was integral to the composition of sacred works (which were still in demand by the mid-nineteenth century) and to the instrumental music that employed this kind of texture. It typically involves three or more independent parts, often treating the given line as an inner or outer voice. Unlike piano- or instrumental-style textures, where one part frequently dominates (usually the melody), learned-style textures are non-hierarchical, with all voices generally melodically and rhythmically independent. Diminutions occur through passing and neighbouring melodic motion of a single line, rather than arpeggiation or repeated chords. The bass line is active, moving with the same linear fashion as the upper parts (“singing”). This results in a highly contrapuntal texture that resists any form of change, as it would interfere with the clarity and “correctness” of the counterpoint.

The treatment of dissonances and modulations is much stricter in this style and often follows the counterpoint procedures established centuries earlier. Reicha emphasises the pedagogical value of this approach, noting that students who “practice for some time in the rigorous style...will learn to write purely for voices, to modulate wisely, to make good use of chords, and to employ dissonances with more restraint and understanding.”¹²⁶ This style was also particularly suited to the organ, where the instrument’s natural sustain supports the texture’s requirement for voice-leading clarity. Though playable on

¹²³ Cafiero, “The Early Reception of Neapolitan Partimento Theory in France,” 154.

¹²⁴ The most advanced partimenti by eighteenth-century standards are fugues found in Books 5 and 6 from Fenaroli’s collection, and those of Sala (found in Choron, *Principes de Composition des écoles d’Italie*. Elements of the learned style were also expected in piano improvisations, as in the exemplars by Kalkbrenner, *Traité d’harmonie du pianiste*. Fugues were also categorised as études, targeting the polyphonic component of piano playing.

¹²⁵ For a detailed account of fugue improvisation at the Paris Conservatoire in the late nineteenth century, see Ochse, *Organists and Organ Playing in Nineteenth-Century France and Belgium*, 149-51.

¹²⁶ “Que les élèves s’exercent quelque temps dans le style rigoureux, ils apprendront à écrire purement pour les voix, à moduler sagement, à tirer grand parti des accords, et à employer les dissonances avec retenue et connaissance de cause.” Reicha, *Traité de haute composition musicale*, 1:6. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

the piano, its percussive attack and rapid sound decay often render severe-style textures ineffective— unless played at fast tempi, where diminutions can compensate for the lack of sustain. Instruments too, with the capability of sustaining all suit the severe style, though sometimes the distinction between the instrumental style and itself is unclear. The learned style also requires a clear understanding of voice disposition and the relationships among the parts. While some of the same structural variables used to describe other textures are applicable here, their specific values differ. Table 15 shows the variables to consider when writing in the severe style:

Table 15: Variables for the Learned Style Texture.

Variable	Sub-variable
Rhythm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homogenous • Varied (the rhythm throughout the texture is homogenous, but the parts rarely play the same rhythm at any given point for extended periods)
Number of obligato parts	Fixed
Placement of the melodic line (or the primary obligato part)	N/A—there is no melodic part in this texture, as all the voices can theoretically be inverted. If a melody is undergoing development, it is better placed in the highest or lowest part where it can be heard clearly. If it is placed in the middle, it should be louder or placed with an instrument of a different colour.
Bass line movement	“Heavy,” “Singing”, or a combination of both
Number of voices in the accompaniment (including doubling)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixed • Variable
Disposition of voices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open • Closed <p>Voice overlaps are frequently employed in the texture.</p>
Diminution type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arpeggiation • Repeated chords • Passing, neighbour notes • Melodic dissonances (escape tone, anticipation, appoggiatura)
Roles of instruments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constant • Variable
Articulation and silence(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legato • Non-legato and staccato • Extended periods of rest for each may be used for textural variety.

A realisation by Doin (a pupil of Colet) of a CD by Leborne shows how to work with such a texture (Figure 100). From first glance, we can see a “singing” bass line in the lowest part—one of the hallmarks of the learned style. We also have moments of contrapuntal complexity, such as brief imitations at the middle and end of the excerpt. Almost all material is derived from the CD to create a motivically unified realisation:

Figure 100: Doin’s (A Pupil of Colet) Realisation of a *Chant Donn * by Leborne. Learned-Style in Four Parts.¹²⁷

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled "CHANT" in four parts: Soprano, Contralto, Tenore, and Basso. The score is organized into three systems. The first system shows the vocal parts. The second system includes a piano accompaniment with "Imitation du Chant" in the middle voice. The third system includes a piano accompaniment with "Canon   l'8va" in the middle voice and "Canon" in the bass line.

¹²⁷ Colet, *Partimenti ou trait  sp cial de l'accompagnement pratique au piano*, 330.

In compositional terms, the learned style—though a worthwhile exercise—serves as a key example of complex textures that challenge the listener. Its use in critical moments highlights its importance in illustrating textural contrast, as seen in Crèvecoeur's realisation of Leborne's *Chant Donné*, which was awarded first prize in the Conservatoire's 1845 harmony competition (Figure 101). The professors favoured this realisation for its sophisticated instrumental style combined with elements of the *style sévère*, making it a compelling demonstration of a complex texture and a valuable pedagogical resource for those preparing for exams and competitions:

Figure 101: Crèvecoeur's (A Pupil of Colet) Realisation of a *Chant Donné* by Leborne 1845. Instrumental Style in Four Parts.¹²⁸

351

CONCOURS DU 13 JUILLET, 1845.
HARMONIE VOCALE ET INSTRUMENTALE.
CHANT DONNÉ POUR ÊTRE ÉCRIT À 4 PARTIES INSTRUMENTALES.
1^{er} Prix décerné à l'unanimité à **M. E. CRÉVECOEUR**, élève de **M. H. COLET**.
COMPOSITION DANS LE GENRE LIBRE.

1^{er} VIOLON. *Agitato.*

2^d VIOLON.

ALTO.

VIOLONCELLE.

8

15 *dolce.*

Using Elwart's terminology once again, which proves difficult to use in this example, the realisation incorporates frequent tremolo figures just like Caspers' (see Chapter 4.3.4), supporting the

¹²⁸ Colet, *Partimenti ou traité spécial de l'accompagnement pratique au piano*, 351.

Agitato character of the CD. These are complemented by contrasting rhythmic modes throughout the texture: moments of Passive Rhythm in bars 4, 12, and 15–16; Downbeat Rhythm in bars 5–7; and an extended passage of Weak Beat Rhythm from bars 17–25. The learned-style features are particularly compelling: the viola’s imitation of the main melody in bars 1-3 and 8-10, and the interplay in the contrasting *dolce* section, where the second violin enters in rhythmic imitation against the first violin.

However, this high level of detail comes at the expense of its adaptability for transcription. The dense inner lines and overlapping imitative entries would be nearly impossible to preserve in a piano solo reduction, where tremolo and principal rhythmic gestures must take precedence over textural and imitative detail (see Chapter 2.2). In contrast to Caspers’ realisation (see Chapter 4.3.4), though more uniform and thus more adaptable for piano arrangement, it lacked the rhythmic, stylistic, and contrapuntal complexity that marked Crèvecoeur’s as a clear winner and pedagogical exemplar. It is perhaps this synthesis of instrumental style and learned style textures that became increasingly prized under the emerging work-concept’s compositional standards. In other words, this texture is not adaptable and can only be played in its original medium.

Following our arranging journey of Elwart’s CD, Figure 102 shows its realisation in the learned style. It builds on the “singing” bass realised under the same melody from Chapter 4.2.3 with two added middle parts to enrich the contrapuntal texture. This melody was complicated to realise in the learned style due to the use of unprepared dissonances that would not usually be tolerated. It is an exercise on the *appoggiatura* after all, a melodic dissonance employed in free composition:

Figure 102: Learned-Style Realisation of Elwart's *Chant Donn * by Hadap.

Andantino

The musical score consists of three systems of four staves each, labeled Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The tempo is marked 'Andantino'. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The score includes figured bass notation below the Cello staff, such as '7 5 +6', '6 3 5 #4 5 3 6 6 5', and '6 6 4 +7 7 6 5 6 5 6'.

Even though such a realisation diligently follows the rules of counterpoint, the lack of textural variety in this realisation may not have resulted in a first prize by the Conservatoire's standards. Following in the footsteps of Cr vecoeur, we can compose a realisation that incorporates both learned and free writing styles, as shown in Figure 103. The author has extended it to allow more opportunity for textural development. This realisation has now come a long way since the two-part version from Chapter 4.2.3. Despite the rather "unoriginal" melody, this texture may have all the hallmarks of a "fixed" work, which the work-concept would have highly valued. Here, the interplay between parts, the variety of

textures, and adherence to the technical rules of harmony and counterpoint differentiate this realisation from the previous ones explored in this chapter:

Therefore, the variety of realisation styles in nineteenth-century harmony pedagogy serves as a case study in how composition, arrangement, and performance were related. Certain realisation textures associated with free composition were more adaptable than others, recalling an era before the work-concept. At the same time, some, such as the learned composition, were more suited to an era after its onset. For the pianist-composer, who was expected to master both types, these were not only a compositional tool but also a medium of expression that explains their complex relationship to the work-concept.

4.4 Composing and Improvising Exercises

With the link between the study of harmony and the mechanics of the keyboard established (see Chapter 1.2.3), a student might further expand the pedagogical utility of the given bass and melody exercises. With the flexibility to change its difficulty at will, each realisation (whether written or extemporised) can be tailored to the student's technical and compositional needs. Unlike composed etudes, where the notes are already written and may be too difficult for the student, realisation in real time ensures that the performer always determines the difficulty. Composing and improvising exercises not only provided pianists with a technical foundation but also developed a creative dimension in their training and counterbalanced the growing dominance of the work-concept's compositional standards.¹²⁹

Various pedagogues throughout the common practice period have held different views on the importance of keyboard technical exercises. On the one hand, you have pedagogues such as Czerny who made his pupil Liszt "drop his entire repertory for a barren regime of mechanical exercises."¹³⁰ Later in his life, Liszt wrote to his pupil about the importance of such exercises:

I practise four to five hours of exercises (thirds, sixths, octaves, tremolos, repetition of notes, cadenzas, etc.). Ah! Provided I don't go mad, you will find in me an artist! Yes, an artist...such as is required today.¹³¹

On the other hand, you have pedagogues such as Chopin who "kept technical exercises to a minimum" by developing his students' technique through careful study of repertoire.¹³² This divergence suggests that while some teachers prioritised mechanical discipline, others sought more organic ways of

¹²⁹ This thesis does not address keyboard biomechanics in detail, though it is worth noting that they partly shape diminutions and textures. Biomechanics were at the forefront of Chopin and Liszt's composition process, making sure every note "fit well" with the hand without the proper coordination between the fingers, hand and arm. Composers such as Beethoven, Schumann and Brahms often conceived of their textures orchestrally, using the piano as a medium for expressing them. Thus, the textures of the latter composers were often idealistic, aiming for a level of difficulty beyond the pianist's capabilities. Though it is also important to note that Liszt made a study of refining the piano texture to give an outstandingly convincing orchestral effect, as already discussed in Chapter 2.2.3, so orchestral textures, as difficult as they may seem, can be written in the keyboard idiom.

¹³⁰ Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years*, 72.

¹³¹ Franz Liszt, "Letter to Pierre Wolff, May 2, 1832," in *Letters of Franz Liszt*, 8.

¹³² Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 27.

developing technique through improvisation and composition. This debate continues to shape how exercises are conceived in relation to artistic development.

With the rise of the virtuoso in the nineteenth century, technical exercises became an indispensable component of instrumental technique not only due to the copious amounts of repertoire that had to be learned, but also their ever-increasing difficulty. Yet, as Marx cautions, such practice should remain purposeful: “A certain degree of technical skill must be acquired by the practice of finger exercises and other studies. But all this is evidently only a means towards an end... still it is possible that the object desired may be as well attained by a short as by a long course, that the necessary exercises may be confined to certain essential requirements.”¹³³ His advice advocates efficiency over mechanical routine, ensuring that technical study always serves musical ends.

While the rigorous study of technique may be avoided by beginners or amateurs in general, due to its “dryness,” it is possible to make this routine more engaging for the group. This section of the thesis will bridge the study of the mechanics of piano playing and harmony and explain how these studies might be combined to create a more enriching learning experience for the student. We look at how J. S. Bach reworked his preludes for pedagogical purposes, how Chopin’s contemporaries frequently improvised etudes based on fragments of existing works, and Duvois’ treatise, which combines the study of harmony and the mechanics of the piano. Taken as a whole, we can see how the pianist-composer’s fluency in harmony and mechanics can turn seemingly mundane technical exercises into something more artistically oriented.

4.4.1 From Bach’s Revisions to Busoni’s Rewritings: The Prelude as Malleable Text

Just as partimento realisation can yield multiple variations in texture and diminutions, we can apply the same principles to the minor keyboard works of J. S. Bach and his contemporaries. They often strike a

¹³³ Marx, *The Universal School of Music*, 333.

delicate balance between compositional craft and meeting the student's technical needs. Throughout the common practice period, they were used by various pedagogues as exercises in developing keyboard technique, ranging from revisions by the composer himself to Busoni's modern adaptations of the master's works to fit the evolving piano writing style of the late nineteenth century.

Before the J. S. Bach revival in the nineteenth century, we have Beethoven using the master's works in his teaching practice with his pupils, as recounted by his student Czerny. During his first lessons, "Beethoven made [him] work solely on the scales in all keys and showed me many technical fundamentals... He then went through the various keyboard studies in Bach's book."¹³⁴ As Chopin's favourite composer for the keyboard, he also realised the necessity of Bach for developing pianists, earnestly recommending his works for all his students.¹³⁵ Both Beethoven and Chopin thus viewed Bach's works not merely as technical studies but as a means of developing musicianship in general. This is a view reflected in Bach's own pedagogical aims, stating in the preface to his own *Inventions and Sinfonias*: "to play two voices [and three] voices clearly," and "to achieve a cantabile style of playing," but also "gain a strong foretaste of composition."¹³⁶ This last point is significant, since these pieces, despite their mechanical nature, were also designed to serve as compositional models for students by implicitly teaching them about harmony and counterpoint.

This relationship between keyboard technique and composition is more apparent in the *Klavierbüchlein*, a compendium of short keyboard pieces written by J. S. Bach for his son, Wilhelm Friedemann Bach (1710-1784). This collection includes the earlier versions of what would become the preludes from his first book of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*.¹³⁷ Some of these pieces, titled "fantasias," consisted of basic diminutions on a given chord progression and were consistent enough that J. S. Bach

¹³⁴ Czerny and Sanders, "Recollections from My Life," 307.

¹³⁵ Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 60-61. Chopin used Bach's works solely for developing piano technique, but less so in teaching composition, since he did not have any [documented] composition students. See Chapter 3.1.2.

¹³⁶ J. S. Bach, *Inventionen und Sinfonien* (BWV 772–801), ed. Georg von Dadelsen (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2005), XV, Urtext edition taken from *Neue Bach-Ausgabe*, Serie V, Band 3, ed. Georg von Dadelsen (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1970).

¹³⁷ The *Well-Tempered Clavier* will be referred to as WTC henceforth.

(or his son) need not write out the diminutions in full, but simply in plain chords as a time-saving device.¹³⁸ By comparing the versions of the *Klavierbüchlein* with their final form in the WTC, we see that such works are in a state of flux and do not exist in a “fixed” form. It seems that J. S. Bach’s composing out of these textures is arbitrary, and from these revisions, we can infer that he may have engaged a student to recompose these textures, just as he himself had done with different versions of the WTC. This can be shown by comparing the two different versions of the Prelude in E minor, BWV 855 (BWV 855a in the *Klavierbüchlein*), as shown in Figure 104, as J. S. Bach recomposes existing material by diminutions and expansion of sections:

¹³⁸ For example, see J. S. Bach’s Prelude in C major, BWV 846a.

Figure 104: J. S. Bach, Prelude in E minor, BWV 855 and 855a.¹³⁹

The first version (BWV 855a) of the prelude from the *Klavierbüchlein* consists of a plain-chord realisation of a bass line featuring complex diminutions played with the LH. The RH, by contrast, plays an accompaniment figure composed of plain chords, which are very static, with the soprano notes not forming a discernible melodic line. It seems J. S. Bach wrote this for his son as an “etude” for fingers 1, 2, and 3 of the LH, whilst also teaching a common schema of the descending minor scale in the bass.

¹³⁹ Transcribed and figured by Hadap after the autograph manuscript and the Czerny edition, respectively. *Klavierbüchlein*: [https://imslp.org/wiki/Klavierb%C3%BChlein_f%C3%BCr_Wilhelm_Friedemann_Bach_\(Bach,_Johann_Sebastian\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Klavierb%C3%BChlein_f%C3%BCr_Wilhelm_Friedemann_Bach_(Bach,_Johann_Sebastian)). WTC Book 1: Peters 1863 edition edited by Czerny: [https://imslp.org/wiki/Das_wohltemperierte_Klavier_I,_BWV_846-869_\(Bach,_Johann_Sebastian\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Das_wohltemperierte_Klavier_I,_BWV_846-869_(Bach,_Johann_Sebastian)).

Compare this to the latter version (BWV 855), where J. S. Bach adds an obligato melodic line that is highly ornamented above the plain chord texture. He further develops the figuration pattern in the LH and adds a new *Presto* section that uses the same figuration pattern with the hands moving in parallel motion. An extended pedal point and cadence to reaffirm the original key of E minor draw the prelude to a more dramatic conclusion.¹⁴⁰

Pieces like these are ideal for pedagogy, as their textures lend themselves to continuo-style exercises, training students to “compose out” chords creatively while building keyboard fluency. Bach demonstrates how a student might transform an existing *étude* by retaining its harmonic framework while altering surface diminutions and textures—a hallmark of partimento realisation. Similarly, students could apply the same texture to new progressions, paving the way for improvisation and preluding (see Chapter 2.1.3).

More than a century later, the evolution of piano writing has rendered these works by J. S. Bach somewhat outdated due to changes in the piano mechanism and modern writing styles (see Chapters 2.1.4, 2.2 and 4.3.1). To fill this gap, Busoni expands the pedagogical scope of Bach’s WTC by creating a new edition of the work by providing not only detailed performance instructions (see Chapter 3.2.2) but also turning each applicable prelude into studies suited for more modern piano writing styles.¹⁴¹ For example, the C minor prelude from the set, which he describes as “an agitated stream reflecting the flames of a conflagration,” has been reworked into several textures and figurations: “strict holding” of the outer voices, “alternate striking of the hands in double notes,” or a “study in [parallel] sixths” (Figure 105).¹⁴² Busoni claims that certain works in the canon transcend media, such as those of J. S. Bach.

¹⁴⁰ The Siloti arrangement of this prelude transposes it to B minor. It changes the texture, placing the figuration in the right hand and arpeggiated chords in the left, creating an incidental melody from the emphasised notes at the start of each figure. A performance by the Russian pianist Emil Gilels is available on YouTube.

¹⁴¹ Rimm, *The Composer-Pianists*, 56.

¹⁴² Johann Sebastian Bach and Ferruccio B. Busoni, *The Well-Tempered Clavichord: Revised, Annotated and Provided with Parallel Examples and Suggestions for the Study of Modern Pianoforte-Technique by Ferruccio B. Busoni* (New York: G. Schirmer Inc., 1894), 8, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Das_wohltemperierte_Klavier_I,_BWV_846-869_\(Bach,_Johann_Sebastian\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Das_wohltemperierte_Klavier_I,_BWV_846-869_(Bach,_Johann_Sebastian)). The aesthetics of Busoni’s arrangements will be discussed further in Chapters 5.1 and 5.3.

Their “modernization...does not violate the ‘Bach style’ —but rather seems to bring it to full perfection” by adapting it to the new capabilities of the instrument.¹⁴³ Though such claims are bold, they address the fluid nature of such works and the importance of adapting them:¹⁴⁴

Figure 105: J. S. Bach and Busoni, *The Well-Tempered Clavichord*. 3 Studies based on J. S. Bach’s Prelude in C minor, BWV 847.¹⁴⁵

The image displays three musical examples, labeled a), b), and c), which are adaptations of J.S. Bach's Prelude in C minor, BWV 847. Each example is presented in a two-staff format (treble and bass clef).
Example a) is titled "Studie. (Etude.)" and includes the instruction "ten." (tenu) in both staves. It shows a series of sixteenth-note patterns with slurs and accents.
Example b) is also titled "Studie. (Etude.)" and includes fingering numbers (1-5) and a "3" marking, indicating a triplet or similar rhythmic figure.
Example c) is titled "Allegro moderato." and includes a "4" marking, likely indicating a four-measure phrase or a specific rhythmic pattern.
The notation includes various musical symbols such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings, illustrating different technical and interpretive approaches to the original piece.

These examples show that Bach’s preludes could also be viewed as fluid pedagogical texts, meant to be recomposed, varied, and technically exploited. Such works were frequently adapted by pianist-composers such as Beethoven, Czerny, Chopin, and later Busoni, carrying on the improvisation tradition by transforming them to meet the evolving technical standards of nineteenth-century piano playing.

¹⁴³ J. S. Bach and Busoni, *The Well-Tempered Clavichord*, introduction.

¹⁴⁴ See also Chapter 1.2.3 on the versatility of the piano.

¹⁴⁵ J. S. Bach and Busoni, *The Well-Tempered Clavichord*, 8-11. Bach’s original version corresponds with *Studie A*, but without the held minims.

4.4.2 Composing and Improvising Etudes: Lessons from Schumann and Heller

As we discussed in Chapter 2, the prelude and its successor, the etude, served as critical pedagogical pieces for training the mechanical aspects of piano playing, which pianist-composers transformed into “works” of their own right because of the emerging work-concept. These exercises may have originated in improvisatory habits and reveal much about the performer’s instinctive relationship between keyboard mechanics and harmony. These then appeared in print in response to the growing popularity of performance editions (see Chapter 3.2.2). Take Figure 106, for example, a seemingly trivial exercise composed by Adam. The addition of counterpoint against the scales creates harmonic and melodic interest in what would otherwise be a dull exercise:

Figure 106: Adam, *Méthode*. Counterpoint Against a Scale Exercise.¹⁴⁶

EXERCICES et Exemples de Gammes ou il est nécessaire de s'écarter des principes établis pour le doigter des Gammes.

N^o 48

¹⁴⁶ Adam, *Piano Method of the Conservatoire*, 29. These form a common schema: the ascending 5-6 and Romanesca on the way down.

Following in his pedagogical footsteps, we can add a counterpoint against one of the exercises from the Adam and Lachnith treatise. Take, for example, the exercise (Figure 3) from Chapter 1.3.1 of this thesis. The same exercise can be adapted as a partimento (Figure 107). Since the hands play in parallel octaves, either hand can play as written while the other plays an accompaniment against it, made possible by rules of counterpoint (see Chapter 4.1):

Figure 107: Adam and Lachnith, *Méthode ou principe général du doigté pour le forte-piano*, Exercise No. 80 realised by Hadap.¹⁴⁷

The image displays two systems of musical notation for Exercise No. 80. The first system features a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The tempo is marked 'Allegro'. The music begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a melodic line with slurs. The bass clef staff provides accompaniment with fingerings 5, 6, 7, 6, 7, and 7. The second system continues the piece, starting with a forte (*f*) dynamic in the treble and a piano (*p*) dynamic in the bass. The treble staff has a melodic line with slurs, while the bass staff has a rhythmic accompaniment with fingerings 5, 7, 5, 7, 5, 7, and a final measure with a 2/2 time signature and a +4/2 marking.

This practice of turning seemingly trivial exercises into pieces was prevalent throughout the nineteenth century. Giacomo Meyerbeer (1791-1864), best known for his opera works, was also an accomplished pianist, and a reviewer from the *Revue et gazette musicale* wrote about his visits to Chopin's studio:

Meyerbeer had preserved from the days of his piano studies a great command of technique that served him well in improvisation. In Chopin's house, where his visits were always welcome, discussions of fingering, rhythm, and phrasing almost always led to an improvised *étude*.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ After Adam and Lachnith, *Méthode ou principe général du doigté pour le forte-piano*, 79.

¹⁴⁸ Maurice Cristal, "Des Mélodies de Meyerbeer et de ses œuvres en général relativement au piano," in *Revue gazette et musicale de Paris* (Paris, 1864), 227–28, quoted in Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation*, 52. Translated by Gooley.

This anecdote shows a valuable insight into the studio. Here, one could imagine Meyerbeer sight-reading a passage from Chopin's work and stumbling on a tricky passage. He then attempts to play the passage repeatedly, trying out different fingerings, and with Chopin's assistance, finds the right one that suits him. Rather than playing the passage repeatedly, Meyerbeer uses the passage as a prompt for improvisation—perhaps as a *Chant Donn * or *Basse Donn * and improvises a short etude based on the figuration alone. To his delight, playing the passage as written on the score could now be achieved flawlessly without further practice, should a similar figuration come up in the repertoire. Such a figuration may also subconsciously appear in one of Meyerbeer's future improvisations and even as a number for a future opera.

Fortunately, we do not have to imagine what such an event would have been like. Schumann's pedagogical outlook aligns with their views on improvisation exercises. As discussed earlier in Chapter 2.1.3, he was an excellent improviser in his youth and an advocate for its study. Gooley notes that while most pianists used preludes and etudes as technical exercises, they “were encyclopedias of invention [for Schumann], offering a world of possibilities for the elaboration of idiomatic figures through improvisation and composition.”¹⁴⁹ In the preface to his *Studien f r das Pianoforte, nach Capricen von Paganini bearbeitet*, Op. 3—itself a form of “derivative” work, he offers valuable advice to students on practising and composing exercises for it.¹⁵⁰ He suggests that “more advanced players” should “invent their own [exercises], introducing them, for instance, as preludes into extemporisations,” thereby cultivating “vitality and comprehensiveness.”¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation*, 165-66.

¹⁵⁰ Liszt would later surpass Schumann with the difficulty and scope of his own arrangements of Paganini's caprices, just as he did with his own *Transcendental Etudes* (S. 136 reworked into S. 137). See his * tudes d'ex cution transcendante d'apr s Paganini*, S.140 (1840), and its final version, *Grandes  tudes de Paganini*, S.141 (1851). See Chapter 2.1.4.

¹⁵¹ Robert Schumann, *Studies for the Pianoforte on Caprices of Paganini*, Op. 3, ed. Clara Schumann, trans. Mevanwy Roberts, in *Robert Schumanns Werke*, Serie VII (Leipzig: Breitkopf & H rtel, 1885 [1832]), 25, <https://ks15.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/d/d2/IMSLP52421-PMLP02187-Op. 3, Etudes after Paganini's Caprices.pdf>. Schumann would then go to write another set of studies, Op. 10, based on Paganini's Caprices, Op. 1. These were intended for concert use and are much more rewarding for the performer and listener, aiming to fit the compositional aesthetics of the nineteenth-century piano etude.

This statement is revealing as Schumann's dismissal of "Schools of Pianoforte playing"¹⁵² such as those discussed in Chapter 1.3, suggests his alignment against a mechanical approach to pedagogy, in which "pre-packaged" drills were monotonously repeated. Instead, he advocates for invention, encouraging students to transform exercises into improvisatory etudes and preludes, adding a creative dimension to what would otherwise be a "dry" exercise. Figure 108 shows preparatory exercises for a typical progression that one may find in the Op. 3 (or even repertoire in general). The key aspect here is variation, a pedagogical principle encouraged in the realisation stages, as already discussed in Chapter 4. These compositions by Schumann are arguably in the same pedagogical vein as those composed by Kalkbrenner using a similar sequential figure (see Chapter 4.3.2); the former used it for training improvisation, while the latter used exercises to train the performances of passages within the prescribed work in question:

¹⁵² Schumann, *Studies for the Pianoforte on Caprices of Paganini*, 25.

Figure 108: R. Schumann, *Studies for the Pianoforte on Caprices of Paganini*, Op. 3. Composing Out the Parallel 6/3 Progression.¹⁵³

In presenting these “etudes for etudes,”¹⁵⁴ Schumann stresses that such an approach gives technical study “greater vitality and comprehensiveness.”¹⁵⁵ What he offers, then, is not merely an alternative to methodical drills but an enriching practice regimen that blurs the line between performer, improviser, and composer.

Similarly, pianist-composer Stephen Heller (1813-1888) adds his own flair to this activity. Described by Marmontel as “Chopin’s brother in musical poetry,” he was one of the few composers who

¹⁵³ Schumann, *Studies for the Pianoforte on Caprices of Paganini*, 32.

¹⁵⁴ Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation*, 165.

¹⁵⁵ Schumann, *Studies for the Pianoforte on Caprices of Paganini*, 25.

“contributed to elevating the musical taste and to enhancing the education of contemporary artists.”¹⁵⁶ He held a “strong reputation as an improviser,” though only improvised in private company.¹⁵⁷ Hallé observed that during such moments, “the change that came over him and his execution was marvelous... all difficulties seemed to vanish... [he was] equally fascinating, dominating his listeners and pouring out a wealth of ideas of which his published compositions give no idea.”¹⁵⁸ It is perhaps this proclivity for improvisation and pedagogy that led Heller to compose such a pedagogical work as his *21 Études spéciales d’après Chopin*, Op. 154. He may well have been sight-reading a piece of Chopin and then wandered off into free improvisation based on its textures—he then wrote and published them, capitalising, perhaps, on the popularity of Chopin’s style and his works in the process.

In his Op. 154, Heller transforms Chopin’s challenging passagework from various parts of his oeuvre into *études* that make them more engaging and manageable for students. Though not intended for concert use, these studies effectively prepare pianists for similar challenges in the composer’s works. For instance, Figure 110 shows Heller’s reworking of Chopin’s *Étude*, Op. 25 No. 1, where he extracts the figuration and applies it to a newly composed harmonic progression (Figure 109). Just as J. S. Bach recomposed the textures of his preludes (see Chapter 4.4.1), Heller reversed the process by retaining Chopin’s textures while inventing his own progressions. This aligns with the preluding tradition, in which figuration served as a foundation for free improvisation (see Chapter 2.1.3 and 4.3.2):

¹⁵⁶ “Stephen Heller, nous pensons avoir nous-même sérieusement contribué à élever le goût musical et à compléter l’éducation des générations contemporaines... Tel est Stephen Heller, une des belles figures de l’époque, le frère de Chopin en poésie musicale, et aussi le proche parent des grands maîtres de la symphonie, de Mendelssohn et de Schumann, par la nature des idées, l’art parfait de l’exposition et la science du détail.” Marmontel, *Les Pianistes célèbres*, 27, 33. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

¹⁵⁷ Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation*, 54.

¹⁵⁸ C. E. Hallé and Marie Hallé eds., *Life and Letters of Sir Charles Hallé* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1896), 54–55.

Figure 109: Chopin, *Études*, Op. 25 No. 1.¹⁵⁹

All.^o sostenuto.

$\text{♩} = 104$

p

The image displays four systems of musical notation for Chopin's Étude Op. 25 No. 1. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef on top and a bass clef on the bottom. The music is in 3/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The tempo is marked 'All.^o sostenuto.' and the metronome marking is $\text{♩} = 104$. The first system begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The score is heavily annotated with 'Ped.' markings, indicating where the sustain pedal should be used. These markings include horizontal lines with a circled cross symbol (⊗) above them, indicating the duration of the pedal effect. The dynamics vary throughout, with the final system starting with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The notation includes complex rhythmic patterns, such as sixteenth-note runs and chords, and various articulation marks like slurs and accents.

¹⁵⁹ Frédéric Chopin, *Études pour le piano: deuxième livre d'études: Op. 25* (Paris: Henry Lemoine, n.d. [1844?]), 1, in *Recueil. Œuvres pour piano de Frédéric Chopin, annotées et corrigées par l'auteur et son élève, Jane Wilhelmina Stirling*, vol. 3, Bibliothèque nationale de France, <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k4500410r>.

Figure 110: Heller, 21 *Études spéciales d'après Chopin*, Op. 154 No. 10.¹⁶⁰

Tempo ad libitum.

The musical score is presented in four systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 2/4. The first system is marked '10.' and 'p'. The second system is marked 'mf' and 'f p'. The third system is marked 'marcato'. The fourth system is marked 'p'. The score includes various dynamic markings and articulation symbols, such as asterisks and 'Ad.' (ad libitum) markings.

This raises the question: since Heller derived his material from someone else's work, should we consider it an original or derivative composition? By the work-concept's compositional standards, it is the latter.

¹⁶⁰ Stephen Heller, *21 Études spéciales d'après Chopin*, Op. 154 (London: Edwin Ashdown, n.d. [1884?]), 20, [https://imslp.org/wiki/21_%C3%89tudes_sp%C3%A9ciales_d%27apr%C3%A8s_Chopin,_Op.154_\(Heller,_Stephen\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/21_%C3%89tudes_sp%C3%A9ciales_d%27apr%C3%A8s_Chopin,_Op.154_(Heller,_Stephen)).

Yet this distinction blurs when a different figuration is applied to the same progression. Would my own composition at Figure 111, for instance, be considered original or derivative? Such a composition would be classified as “original” by Baroque standards—especially at a time when chord progressions/ground basses were used as a basis for whole works (a chaconne or passacaglia, for example), but maybe not as much so by nineteenth-century compositional aesthetics.

Figure 111: Hadap: *Méditation*. Using the same progression but a different texture from Chopin’s Op. 25 No. 1.

Méditation
sur l'Étude Op. 25 N° 1 de Fr. Chopin

Andrei Hadap

Andante religioso

The musical score for "Méditation" by Andrei Hadap is presented in two systems. The first system begins with the tempo marking "Andante religioso" and the dynamic marking "pp Gambes et voix célestes". The second system includes the marking "poco rit.". The score features various fingering numbers and dynamic markings throughout.

Therefore, composing and improvising exercises add another form of interaction to the musical work. It immerses the student in the unique intersection of piano mechanics, harmony, and composition, skills indispensable for the developing pianist-composer. In the next section, we explore a pedagogical approach that focuses on the intersection of these disciplines, thus illustrating the practices of J. S. Bach, Chopin, Meyerbeer, Schumann, Heller and Busoni.

4.4.3 Duvois' Treatise: The Critical Link Between Harmony and Mechanics

With the evolution of piano technique and the harmonic vocabulary in the nineteenth century, piano treatises covering a range of musical concepts, such as those found in C. P. E. Bach's *Versuch* and Türk's *Klavierschule* (1789), became increasingly rare. Fortunately, a few figures sought to preserve the integral relationship between harmony and the mechanics of the piano. Among these is Charles Duvois (1830–1894), a Conservatoire professor whose eight-volume treatise *Le Mécanisme du piano appliqué à l'étude de l'harmonie* (1875) addresses the widening gap between composition (specifically, harmony) and performance. Marmontel regarded the treatise as a “fine work,” while Georges Mathias (a student of Chopin) and Oscar Comettant also praised its “inventiveness” and “ingenuity.”¹⁶¹ The treatise is an exceptional example of integrated musicianship pedagogy.

Duvois sets high expectations in his preface by attempting to unify training in harmony and the mechanism of the keyboard. He critiques the fragmented specialisation of Conservatoire instruction and identifies the pedagogical shortcomings resulting from the performer-composer divide. In this, he joins the lineage of professors such as Catel, whose own harmony treatise critiques the superficiality of “striking chords” without real understanding (see Chapter 1.3.2).¹⁶² Critiquing the separation of performer and composer, he argues that this “ignorance not only deprives [students] of the precious advantage of being able to analyse works and appreciate their beauties, but is a real obstacle to the very progress of virtuosity.” For Duvois, “to perform a piece of music, the first condition is to understand its meaning,

¹⁶¹ Marmontel: “Je me résume, pourtant, en vous disant que votre beau travail est l'œuvre d'un maître expérimenté doublé d'un artiste de grand mérite”; Mathias: “Ce travail porte le cachet d'un esprit réfléchi, classificateur, quelquefois inventeur ; celui qui l'a écrit connaît tout ce qui a été fait sur la matière ; il a surmonté tout ce qui, dans les anciens ouvrages, est applicable à l'art d'aujourd'hui et il a su être souvent neuf dans un sujet que l'on pouvait croire épuisé”; Comettant: “Monsieur, ingénieuse comme plan, remplie de détails heureux et qui atteint pleinement son but.” Duvois, *Le Mécanisme du piano appliqué à l'étude de l'harmonie*, preface. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

¹⁶² Catel, *Treatise on Harmony*, 5 (See also Chapter 1.3.2). “Le plus souvent, nos jeunes pianistes n'ont reçu qu'une notion imparfaite de la constitution des accords qu'ils font entendre ; encore moins connaissent-ils les règles de leur succession et de leur enchaînement.” “Most often, our young pianists have only a very imperfect notion of the constitution of the chords they play; still less do they know the rules of their succession and connection.” Duvois, *Le Mécanisme du piano appliqué à l'étude de l'harmonie*, 1: preface. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

to penetrate its secrets,” which can only be achieved through “a perfect coordination between the pianist’s hand and the composer’s thought.” His conclusion is clear: “One cannot become a good pianist without also being a good harmonist.”¹⁶³

Duvois articulates the need for a “new direction” pedagogy that forms both “real musicians at the same time as virtuosos,” a conception that sharply contrasts with finger exercise collections found in Adam and Zimmerman, which largely omit any discussion of their relationship with harmony.¹⁶⁴ He hopes that his method “will not be useless for the study of an instrument which is becoming more widespread every day, and for which so many masterpieces have been written.”¹⁶⁵ This aligns directly with the pianist-composer ideal that preceded the rise of the modern work-concept. Duvois’ method does not treat harmony as mere background theory but as both a foundation for analysis and a tool for expressive performance. His insistence that one “enter into the thoughts of the composer” gestures toward a pre-analytical, embodied form of understanding the musical work.¹⁶⁶ So, despite linking the study of harmony and mechanics at the keyboard, its goal is surprisingly *not* to develop a pianist-composer, but a pianist capable of thinking *like* a composer. This shows the growing influence of the work-concept, even when combining the disciplines of harmony and piano technique. Nevertheless, it is these pedagogical principles that were once deemed essential for their training.

After a series of preliminary five-finger exercises in Books 1 and 2 (customary in piano treatises), the third volume onward presents material not as abstract knowledge but as applied technique.

¹⁶³ “Cette ignorance non-seulement les prive de précieux avantages, de pouvoir analyser les modèles qu’ils ont sous les yeux, et, conséquemment, d’en apprécier toutes les beautés ; mais elle est un obstacle réel aux progrès de leur virtuosité... Il est clair que, pour exécuter une pièce musicale, une première condition est d’en comprendre le sens, d’en pénétrer les secrets, dont on ne peut s’emparer que par une parfaite coordination entre la main du pianiste et la pensée du compositeur... En un mot, on ne saurait devenir pianiste sans être tout ensemble harmoniste.” Duvois, *Le Mécanisme du piano appliqué à l’étude de l’harmonie*, 1: preface. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

¹⁶⁴ “Bref, il nous a paru qu’il y avait une nouvelle direction à donner à l’art de jouer du Piano, en formant de véritables musiciens en même temps que des virtuoses, et c’est pourquoi aux simples exercices de mécanisme, nous avons voulu ajouter un double travail destiné à rendre l’élève capable d’analyser les œuvres des maîtres.” Ibid. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

¹⁶⁵ “Nous osons espérer que notre nouveau mode d’enseignement ne sera pas inutile à l’étude d’un instrument qui se répand chaque jour davantage, et pour lequel tant de chefs-d’œuvre ont été écrits.” Ibid. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

For example, rather than list scales and arpeggios in isolation as with most treatises, he introduces the construction of major and minor scales, chords, scale degrees, and broken intervals (*brissés*), always linking this material to an exemplar found in the keyboard repertoire. Scales, which are written in parallel 8ves, 3rds, 6ths, and 10ths (Figure 112), are used to teach intervals, their size, quality, and inversion (Books 2 and 3):¹⁶⁷

Figure 112: Duvois, *Le Mécanisme du piano appliqué à l'étude de l'harmonie*. Presentation of Scales and Teaching Composite Intervals.¹⁶⁸

16

GAMMES À LA DIXIÈME.

INTERVALLES COMPOSÉS.

On donne le nom d'*intervalles composés* à ceux qui dépassent l'Octave.

Les *Intervalles composés* sont majeurs ou mineurs, suivant que l'intervalle simple dont ils tirent leur origine est majeur ou mineur.

Les gammes à la Dixième ne diffèrent de celles à la Tierce que par le déplacement de la main droite qui est transportée à l'Octave supérieure.

Les règles du doigté sont les mêmes que dans les autres gammes.

Neuvième.

Seconde.

Dixième.

Tierce.

Onzième.

Quarte.

Douzième.

Quinte.

etc.

Gamme majeure à la Dixième.

Gamme mineure avec Sixte mineure.

Gamme mineure avec Sixte maj: en montant et avec Sixte min: en descendant.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 3: 12-16.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 3:16.

A particularly modern feature in Books 3 and 4 is the use of dissonant chords. Where most piano methods present arpeggios of triads and dominant 7ths, Duvois teaches consonant and dissonant intervals, the derivation of the “perfect” chord (5/3), dominant 9ths, 7ths on other scale degrees and their inversions, and even includes suspensions (*retards*)—a rarity among technical manuals of the time. These additions expand the harmonic vocabulary and aim to equip students with fingering patterns for the late nineteenth-century piano repertoire. Drawing on the Schools of Italy, Figures 113 and 114 add another instance of the R8 (after Fenaroli’s *Regole*) and sequences found in a piano treatise. This example shows us how such a progression may be composed using arpeggios in all three positions and contributes to the pedagogical significance of the R8 in keyboard treatises up until the late nineteenth century:

Figure 113: Duvois, *Le Mécanisme du piano appliqué à l'étude de l'harmonie*. Arpeggiation of the R8 in Three Positions.¹⁶⁹

Toutes les *progressions* ou *Marches d'harmonie* qui précèdent doivent aussi être exécutées en *accords brisés* ou *arpégés* avec différents rythmes.

1 3° Position.

2° Position.

1° Position.

Basse. 8 4 6 6 5 6

8 5 6 5 6 8

2 3° Position.

2° Position.

1° Position.

Basse 5 5 6 +6 3 +4 6 +6 8

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 6:11.

Figure 114: Duvois, *Le Mécanisme du piano appliqué à l'étude de l'harmonie*. Arpeggiation of Common Sequential Patterns.¹⁷⁰

12

PROGRESSION DE TIERCES (voir page 5)
à faire dans les trois positions.

La basse est surmontée d'une Tierce.

3 PROGRESSION DE QUINTES (page 5) MÊME PROGRESSION.

La basse est surmontée d'une Tierce.

5 MÊME PROGRESSION. 6 MÊME PROGRESSION.

PROGRESSION DE TIERCES EN DESCENDANT. ACCORDS DE QUINTE ET SIXTE (page 10)

La basse est surmontée d'une Tierce.

8

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 6:12. See also the examples from Chapter 4.1.2 with realisation of the identical sequences by Zimmerman and Catel.

Later books begin to include compositional models, often citing the “great works,” to demonstrate the use of common schema—not only piano works, but also orchestral, choral, and operatic works transcribed for solo keyboard by Duvois himself. Unlike earlier treatises, where examples were typically written exclusively by the author (and their contemporaries), Duvois embraces the citation and adaptation of these works, contributing to the training of musical literacy as already discussed in Chapter 3.2, as well as initiating the student into the art of transcription and arrangement as discussed in Chapter 2.2. Figure 115 shows Duvois’ simple arrangement of Haydn’s 104th symphony. The purpose of this example is to show the pianists the use of sequential passages in the repertoire as outlined by the figured bass. In doing so, he anticipates the shift toward a repertory-based pedagogy that would become central in twentieth-century Conservatoire culture. This missed opportunity in many piano pedagogical works (namely, the lack of integration between harmony and technique) is precisely what Duvois’ work addresses. It is an attempt to sustain the holistic musician-training of earlier traditions in the face of increasing specialisation. Whether the treatise is used with the guidance of a teacher or a motivated amateur, it lives up to its preface by training “real musicians at the same time as virtuosos.”¹⁷¹

¹⁷¹ “En formant de véritables musiciens en même temps que des virtuoses.” Duvois, *Le Mécanisme du piano appliqué à l’étude de l’harmonie*, 1: preface. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

Figure 115: Haydn, Symphony No. 104, arr. Duvois: I. *Allegro*. With Figured Bass.¹⁷²

SYMPHONIE (1)

JOSEPH HAYDN.
Né à Rohrau (Autriche) le 31 Mars 1732.
Mort à Vienne le 31 Mai 1809.

Allegro.

(1) Oeuvre divisée en quatre morceaux composés pour orchestre. H. 5721(c).

¹⁷² Duvois, *Le Mécanisme du piano appliqué à l'étude de l'harmonie*, 6:17. Following sonata-allegro form, the excerpt begins from the recapitulation section of the first movement

Therefore, playing and composing exercises prepare the student for all the technical challenges they will encounter in the repertoire. From a pedagogical standpoint, manipulating the musical text offers another way to interact with the piece, treating it as a basis for composition. More importantly, it reflects the pianist-composer as an artist who straddles composition, pedagogy, and performance and also challenges the modern work-concept by resisting rigid definitions of originality and authorship. What J. S. Bach, Meyerbeer, Chopin, Heller, Schumann, Busoni and Duvois offer are alternative models of creativity grounded in embodied learning and interaction with existing musical material.

In this light, composing exercises not only supported technical development but also functioned as acts of composition, as the clear-cut definitions of “original” and “derivative” fall apart. This validates the pianist-composer’s role as a mediator within a musical culture increasingly preoccupied with the fidelity of the “work,” whilst also maintaining the fluidity of the time before the inception of its performance and compositional standards.

5 Pedagogical Implications: A Theory of Performance Based on the Application of Harmony and Keyboard Mechanics

This final chapter builds on the historical and analytical discussion of the previous chapters and examines their implications. It proposes a theory of musical application in which the pianist and/or composer makes responsible, tasteful decisions in performance, grounded in technique and harmonic fluency. It takes a more balanced approach to the authority of the composer and their written works—not necessarily as the ultimate source of truth in performance, but as entities that invite interaction.¹ In doing so, it challenges rigid notions of the work-concept and restores the freedom of the pianist-composer in the twenty-first century.

¹ These practices generally apply to solo instrumental or chamber music from the common practice period. Applying them in music with large ensembles, due to logistics and the music after ca. 1900, would be difficult, given the increasing notational precision of scores. Any deviations here would be detrimental to the work-concept's compositional and performance standards.

5.1 The Pianist-Composer Dichotomy

As already discussed in Chapter 3, research in historical performance practice has largely discredited the sole, literal reading of a musical text to convey the composer's intentions. We begin the journey in the eighteenth century, inside the practice studio of a female amateur pianist. She sluggishly works through a difficult, recently published sonata by her teacher. Without them or another instrumentalist by her side, she employs several techniques to make the experience more enjoyable that would typically have been "frowned upon."² Her small acts of adaptation already suggest how performers could move beyond the written score, foreshadowing the tension between fluidity and fidelity to the score that the pianist-composer would later embody.

5.1.1 "Essence" and "Skeletal Structure:" That which Lies Beyond the Score

The turn of the nineteenth century saw the rise of the amateur musician, who often played an instrument for domestic and/or social purposes (see Chapter 3.1). As documented by Cole, these students were "predominantly women" and "[faced] inconsiderable ideological strictures when playing the keyboard."³ Though the technical and sight-reading skills of amateurs were limited, composers such as Clementi pushed their limits by prescribing challenging passage work that "dramatically bursts in on this ideology."⁴ Upon encountering such a passage, they employed various strategies to run through the piece from beginning to end, thereby overlapping with the pianist-composer's skills as listed in Zimmerman's *Encyclopédie*.⁵ To make this a leisurely experience rather than a chore, the student may have needed to "misread" or "misplay" the score.⁶ Helyard argues that the score itself, and the discipline it

² Helyard, *Clementi and the Woman at the Piano*, 114-16. This hypothetical was inspired by Helyard's work on Clementi's piano students.

³ Michael Cole, "Transition from harpsichord to pianoforte—the important role of women," in *Geschichte und Bauweise des Tafelklaviers*, ed. Boje E. Hans Schmuhl with Monika Lustig (Augsburg, 2006), 43–60, quoted in Helyard, *Clementi and the Woman at the Piano*, 73-74. Helyard cites Clementi's Op. 2 Keyboard Sonatas as a specific example of this.

⁴ Helyard, *Clementi and the Woman at the Piano*, 83.

⁵ See Chapter 1.3.3.

⁶ *Ibid.*

demanded in practice, carried importance as a “disciplinary agent” for domestic piano playing. He writes:

In many ways it appears one can [misread a musical composition]. You can skip over the “difficult” sections and play instead the prettier and more ingratiating sections of [a piece or work]...The circular nature of repetitive practice itself is a kind of misreading... [This] obviously works only in private solitude or pedagogy and not for public performance.⁷

Though the prefixes of the terms carry a somewhat negative connotation to the practices, they are arguably essential components regarding the practical and even metaphysical execution of a given score.

This thesis argues that not only do such alterations make the execution much easier for amateurs, but they also provide professionals with the opportunity to “misplay” and “misread” in the other direction, that is, make it more complex via textural modifications. So-called “errors” in performance often stem from deeply embedded assumptions about the work-concept. However, the dichotomy of “correct” and “incorrect” playing collapses when we recognise how misreadings might reflect a performer’s engagement with something beyond the score, rather than fidelity to it. For this reason, rather than retaining the negatively coded terms “misplaying” and “misreading,” this thesis adopts the more neutral concept of *the interpretive extension of the score*, a hallmark of virtuosity that can arise through both simplification and complexification for practical and/or expressive reasons.

When addressing this topic, perhaps the most penetrating insights come from Busoni, whose dual identity as virtuoso and thinker positioned him uniquely between composition and performance. Though best known for his transcriptions of J. S. Bach’s organ works, Busoni’s real significance lies in his critique of the limits of musical notation and his refusal to accept the score as a fixed object. As he saw it, the rise of the work-concept—whose “demands for originality and untouchability put a stop not only to tampering with works, but also to the open borrowing of music”⁸—represented not progress, but

⁷ Ibid., 113-15.

⁸ Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*, 222.

a loss of more profound understanding of the musical work. In opposition to this, Busoni proposed not preservation but the collapse of the boundaries between notation, transcription, and performance.

More importantly, he should not be mistaken for an anarchist: Busoni “waged war on two fronts — against wingless academism on the one hand and vulgar dilettantism on the other.”⁹ In other words, he rejected both sterile, museum-like fidelity *and* tasteless virtuoso “self-display” that stems from the alteration of a work’s performance. This tension might explain why some contemporaries were scandalised, since “the special indignation of these critics was aroused by the fact that Busoni not only departed from the accepted understanding and from the traditions but also indulged in altering the original text.”¹⁰ However, in Busoni’s eyes, such departures were not acts of distortion but legitimate performance decisions, rather than “violation” of the composer’s idea.¹¹

Dismissing the “irrational criticism”¹² that opposed him, he insisted that “every notation is, in itself, the transcription of an abstract idea,” for “the instant the pen seizes it, the idea loses its original form” by “[compelling] a choice of measure and key.”¹³ From this standpoint, even the act of performance is a transcription—“whatever liberties it may take, it can never annihilate the original.”¹⁴ This logic reframes the ontology of the musical work. If every score is already a transcription, then the performer is not merely reproducing a fixed object, but rather, engaging in a secondary (or tertiary) act of composition. Busoni reinforces this point by declaring that “transcription occupies an important place in the literature of the piano; and looked from a right point of view, every important piano piece is the reduction of a big thought to a practical instrument.” The “work,” then, may not tied to the medium of

⁹ Grigory Kogan, *Busoni as Pianist*, trans. Svetlana Belsky (Boydell & Brewer, 2010), 36-37.

¹⁰ Kogan, *Busoni as Pianist*, 28.

¹¹ J. S. Bach and Busoni, *The Well-Tempered Clavichord*, introduction.

¹² Ferruccio Busoni, *Sketch of a New Esthetic of Music*, trans. Theodore Baker (New York: G. Schirmer, 1911), 17-18.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

its initial conception: “Vivaldi’s concertos, Schubert’s songs, Weber’s ‘Invitation to the Waltz’ are still there in each case, when changed over to Bach’s organ, Liszt’s pianoforte, Berlioz’s orchestra.”¹⁵

Such statements raise the provocative question: if the medium is arbitrary and adaptable, what exactly does the composer “own”? For Zoltán Kocsis (1952-2016), the answer lies in the “*essence*.” Defending Busoni’s transcriptions, he insists that “the *essence* of the music is much more important than the final form in which it emerges... if Bach knew the modern piano, he would certainly use it” (emphases added).¹⁶ What matters, then, is not fidelity to a particular notated text or medium, but the preservation of the work’s *essential* musical thought. Samson identifies here a “larger ethical point” concerning arrangements: the “ownership of ideas is more problematic than the ownership of objects,” particularly in music, where a work’s “ontology lies somewhere between ideas and objects.” Busoni’s insight was that in “the very act of writing down an idea, we lose its original form,” and it is precisely in this unstable space between idea and form that “the act of recomposition” resides.¹⁷

This observation strikes at the core of this thesis’ broader argument concerning the pianist-composer and the work-concept. The ambiguous “ontology” of the musical work, which lies between “intangible idea” and “fixed object,” reflects the very tension that pianist-composers navigated throughout the nineteenth century. Busoni’s insight shows the fragility of this concept: the moment an idea is written down and/or performed, it ceases to be what it was. Since the location of this boundary of ownership is unclear, this ambiguity *may* allow us to make artistic changes to these works, balancing practicality and artistry.

Therefore, the amateur’s simplification of the score and the professional’s complexification may appear to stand at opposite ends of the continuum. But it is the pianist-composer who serves as the mediator between both ends. Given a piece’s technical difficulty and its chosen medium, any performing

¹⁵ Ferruccio Busoni, *The Essence of Music and Other Papers*, trans. Rosamond Ley (New York: Philosophical Library. Reprint: Westport, Conn.: Hyperion Press, 1979), 87, quoted in Rimm, *The Composer-Pianists*, 238-39.

¹⁶ Zoltan Kocsis, interview by Robert Rimm, Budapest, Hungary, December 1999, quoted in Rimm, *The Composer-Pianists*, 237. Emphasis added.

¹⁷ Samson, *Virtuosity and the Musical Work*, 107.

musician could translate these musical ideas across any media, as we have already seen through examples in Chapter 2.2, 4.3 and later, 5.2. Small reaches a similar conclusion from a different angle, drawing on his concept of “musicking.” Instead of performance as transcription (which is text-based), Small places performance as “the primary process of musicking from which all other processes follow” and suggests that notation “crystallizes out from the flowing stream.”¹⁸

The pianist-composer’s unique insight allows them to straddle two different modes of performance. On the one hand, Dahlhaus argues that their role as performers permitted them to adapt the “skeletal structure” of a work through various forms of improvisation and rearrangement. This was made possible in an era that treated musical text as mere “scenarios,” either to suit the occasion and/or for virtuosic display.¹⁹ On the other hand, when a work is conceived as a scaffold for elaboration, every performance becomes an opportunity to invent new ornamental or virtuosic display. Changes here are trivial because the “skeletal structure” survives, which suggests that there are aspects of “the work” that are “untouched” and lie beyond the musical notation.²⁰

Reicha and Czerny present what this “skeletal structure” might be, with their respective reductions of Beethoven’s Piano Sonata, Op. 53 (Figure 116) and Chopin’s Etude, Op. 10 No. 1 (Figure 117)—calling it “the harmonic groundwork” and “ground-harmony” respectively:²¹

¹⁸ Small, *Musicking*, 113-4.

¹⁹ Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 138.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Schenker would then develop these approaches in the early twentieth century through his analytical methods.

Figure 116: Beethoven, Piano Sonata, Op. 53: I. *Allegro con brio*. Reduced by Reicha.²²

HARMONIC GROUNDWORK OF BEETHOVEN'S SONATA OP. 53.

All^o con brio.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28
29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36

Figure 117: Chopin, Etude, Op. 10 No. 1. Reduced by Czerny.²³

Allegro.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24
25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36

²² Reicha, *Course of Musical Composition*, 330.

²³ Czerny, *School of Practical Composition*, 1:92.

Notice in both these reductions, we see something akin to a plain chord realisation of a partimento (see Chapter 4.2.1). According to nineteenth-century compositional aesthetics, nothing here would feature as something “original” or “authentic.”

Perhaps it is then the “thematic argument” of the score that constitutes the original and authentic component?²⁴ This opposing viewpoint held that the composer’s original notation, or Urtext, embodies the true “spirit” of the work.²⁵ When a composition is built on motivic development and complex forms, it cannot tolerate any form of arbitrary alteration, as its meaning lies in the “strictness” and “rigour” of its unfolding of ideas.²⁶ This is because such alterations “infringe” on the *integrity* of these works, whose coherence depends on logic.²⁷ In this case, fidelity takes precedence over adaptation. Hunter calls this “to play as if from the soul of the composer,” an expression derived from a German performance treatise in 1792.²⁸ In her article, she contrasts Galeazzi’s demand that ornamentation should “sound as though it were already written in the score” with Hegel’s insistence that the performer reproduce only what is written but make it sound “as though he were creating it anew.” These differences, she argues, stem partly from the work-concept’s shift from unrealised template to a complete record of the composer’s thought, but “also reflect the layered ways in which new performance ideals” were taking shape.²⁹ These opposing approaches to performance ask a critical question: does playing “as if from the soul of the composer” mean fidelity to the written text, *or* its expected realisation?

In this light, the pianist-composer’s success as a musician involves both rigorous defence of the work’s identity (composer’s perspective) *and* its judicious, free adaptation (performer’s perspective). More critically, this notion resonates with the harmony and counterpoint pedagogy explored in Chapter 4, as it suggests endless possibilities for realisation that extend beyond the written page. Exercises

²⁴ Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 138.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ J. A. P. grossen Mannes versenken, dass meine Ichheit Schulz, “Vortrag,” in *Sulzer, Allgemeine Theorie der Schönen Künste*, enlarged ed., (Leipzig: Weidmann, 1792); facsimile, ed. with pref. by Giorgio Tonelli (Hildesheim: Olms, 1967), 4:706-07, quoted in Hunter, “To Play as If from the Soul of the Composer,” 364.

²⁹ Hunter, “To Play as If from the Soul of the Composer,” 365.

demonstrate how a musical “essence” or “skeletal structure” can transcend any medium or performance context. The different realisation styles (as discussed in Chapter 4.3) thus become secondary to the composer’s conception, which is ultimately shaped and constrained only by the instrument’s mechanics and the performer’s technical capacity. As Pace argues, the score is a “stimulus for a whole range of possible performances” to channel creativity, questioning the viability of the work-concept.³⁰ The score, then, can be represented as the *highest probability* of occurrence, but it is not always certain, since the performer could change it for various reasons.³¹

Therefore, the pianist-composer’s skills listed by Zimmerman’s *Encyclopédie*, though arguably forms of “misplaying” and “misreading,” are in fact a crucial intermediary step to a more practical and expressive execution of a given piece. The question now is what is this “essence,” or “skeletal structure,” how do we define its parameters, and to what extent can we change a piece of music for our own purposes so that it is practical, expressive, and within the boundaries of good taste?

5.1.2 The *Hierarchy of Musical Elements*

The *Hierarchy of Musical Elements* (italics original) allows the performer to determine the “essence” and “skeletal structure” of a piece of music. After realising hundreds, if not thousands, of melodies and basses in various textures and styles, executed with adequate technique, the student would have a clear grasp of the realisation stages, which are integral to making informed, instantaneous decisions in performance and composition. Thus, these more “deliberate” elements would be much clearer to find in early styles of Western music, such as the Baroque period. As Haynes observes, Baroque notation functioned as a kind of “shorthand” or “thin writing,” which “rarely included” phrasing, dynamics and tempo modifications. Such features were “implied in the playing style” and demanded “spontaneous input,”

³⁰ Ian Pace, *Beyond Werkzeuge: Ideologies of New Music Performance and Performers* (paper presented at the Royal College of Music, January 14, 2014), [38], <https://openaccess.city.ac.uk/id/eprint/6558/>.

³¹ It is interesting to note that this phenomenon is analogous to Quantum Mechanics, where the location of a particle is best represented by a field of probabilities rather than a specific point in space and time. Arguably, the score can be regarded as a field of probability, with the notation being the most likely result, but it is not always certain.

since to play “only what was written” would not have sufficed—“least of all” for the composer.³² While Haynes frames this argument around the Baroque period, it can be extended to the entire common practice period, albeit to varying degrees.

More generally, Davies raises the question of the comparison between rock and classical music. He argues the importance of “*Ontologically Thin Music*,” using the former genre as a prime example—that is, music that is purposely thin, which leaves greater room for interpretive freedom.³³ He further argues that regardless of the score itself, which may be “thin,” the performance itself “will be thick with properties... governed by standards accepted within the appropriate performance tradition.”³⁴ However, the work-concept’s compositional and performance standards have perpetuated the idea that *all* of classical music is “thick.” Still, as research in historical performance has shown from the 1980’s onward, there are elements in Western art music that are purposely “thin,” depending on the style and period, and these provide the performer with license to realise a composition.

This thesis argues that the harmony and counterpoint pedagogy discussed in Chapter 4 trains students to navigate “Ontologically Thin Music.” From the realisation of CDBD exercises, it becomes clear that the given line (either the bass or melody) is the most essential component of the texture supporting the idea of Ratner’s Treble-Bass Polarity (also a proposition on which Schenkerian analysis is based).³⁵ On the other hand, the textures and rhythms of the inner parts, as complex as they may look on the score, are somewhat arbitrary and more malleable than one may expect. The latter elements may be rearranged by adding, subtracting, and recomposing notes for facility and/or to better express the composer’s intentions. Once the student accepts the limitations of their technique, the imperfections of the composer and their scores, and the impossibility of a note-perfect [sight-read] performance, their decisions will become more instantaneous and informed.

³² Haynes, *The End of Early Music*, 5.

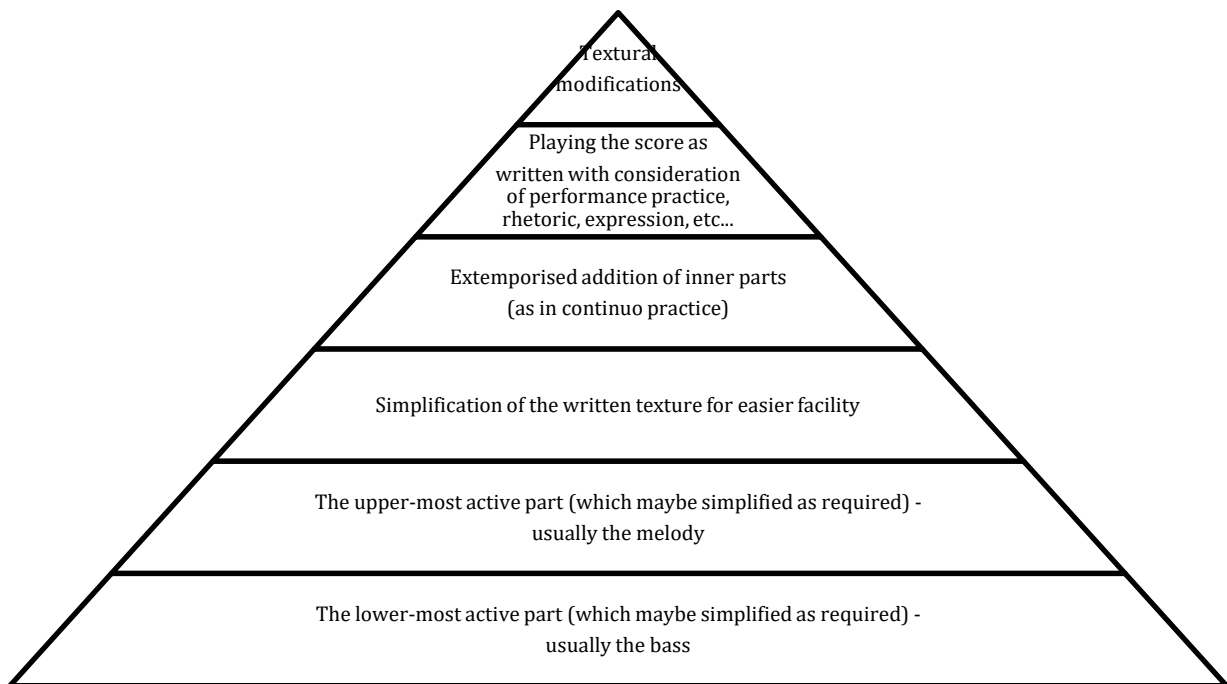
³³ Stephen Davies, “Rock versus Classical Music,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 57, no. 2 (1999): 199, <https://doi.org/10.2307/432312>.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Ratner, *Classic Music*, 108.

The pyramid in Figure 118 shows the various elements to consider when reading a score for performance. The bottom layers of the pyramid are *stable*, arguably the most important, and should be identified and kept note-for-note when possible. The top layers are *volatile* and focus on the work's performance and the addition of elements beyond the written notes.³⁶ The middle layers are more difficult to place, as one element can take precedence over the other depending on the context, performer and the work itself:

Figure 118: A Pyramid Chart showing the Hierarchy of Elements Within a Musical Texture.

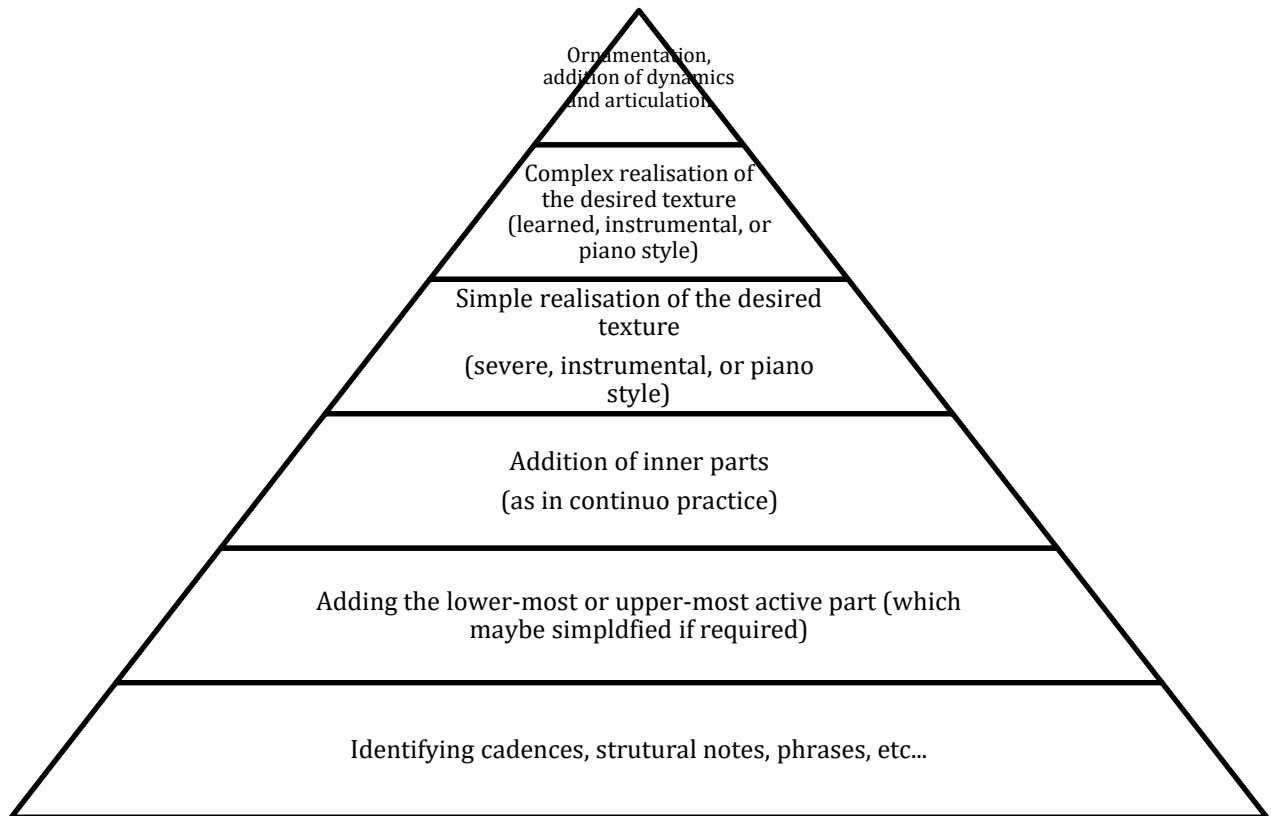


While every performance should strive to include as much of the pyramid as possible, this is not always achievable due to many factors such as time constraints, technical limitations or the performer's psychological state before and during the performance. For this reason, a hierarchical approach is often more practical, conserving mental resources for moments where they are most needed. It is useful to

³⁶ This pyramid, of course, only applies to music of the common practice period in Western music and its derivatives. Some genres, such as the fugue, are difficult to break down using this pyramid, as are some twentieth- and twenty-first-century works, in which composers developed new musical languages, making it unclear how to separate the musical elements into a hierarchy. This leaves little room for the performer's contribution.

compare the pyramid in Figure 119 with its corresponding realisation stages for the CDBD as outlined in Chapter 4:

Figure 119: A Pyramid Chart showing the Realisation Stages of the CDBD.



CDBD pedagogy inherently trains students to recognise hierarchy within musical texture. Engaging with its realisation stages enables performers to prioritise material in real time—essential for sight-reading and ornamentation, where decisions are instantaneous. The lowest level of the pyramid contains the most structurally vital elements, forming the foundation of both sight-reading and analysis. The middle levels involve flexible addition or reduction of inner voices (akin to continuo practice) and correspond directly to CDBD realisation, adapting to the desired texture (learned, instrumental, or piano). The higher-level tasks require the performer to take on a quasi-composer role by correcting incomplete sections of the score.

Though admittedly simplistic, this hierarchical way of thinking validates the need to approach music beyond the score alone. Small's *musicking* is especially relevant: all actions represented in the pyramid contribute to meaning, which lies not in the work itself but in the event.³⁷ Performance is shaped as much by instrument, performer, audience, and context as by the score. As Small reminds us, "the score is not a sacred text," and "performance is for performers and listeners"—the performer may rightfully alter or interpret it as needed.³⁸ This chapter, therefore, does not ask *whether* such alterations are permissible, but rather *how* they serve the overall musical experience. Answering this is complex, particularly in its efforts to persuade the composer, listener, and performer alike. However, it is only by treating these practices as interdependent, not isolated, that we can understand the true agency of the nineteenth-century pianist-composer.

Before delving into the application of the hierarchy, we need to discuss how to navigate among its levels. At any given point in a musical activity, the musician is always in a fluid relationship with a musical score (or idea) when composing or improvising. The score might be "sketchy," or too complicated, the performer may not be warmed up, or the piece may be too long; all these variables need to be considered in any musical activity. For each performance application, the musician has the following three options:

The first is *realisation* (elaboration), in which the performer adds to the musical text. This is usually reserved for those who are ambitious and willing to take risks in the moment by enhancing the musical experience. Second, we have the *reduction*, in which the performer reduces the musical text. It is ill-advised to apply this during performance unless necessary, as oversimplification may detract from the overall musical experience. Finally, we have a new realisation of the reduction (reduce then elaborate). This is the most complex option, breaking away from the musical text upon its reduction. It is the most complicated of the three and is the most effective when applied correctly. Figure 120 shows the three options as a diagram, where the level of detail of a given work is represented by a line with

³⁷ Small, *Musicking*, 11-12.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 217.

increasing detail from left to right. The solid line indicates the written musical text; dashed lines show a potential realisation available to the performer. The circle indicates an arbitrary point of execution, which can be adjusted—a slider that the performer can move at will:

Figure 120: Realisation and Reduction Process.

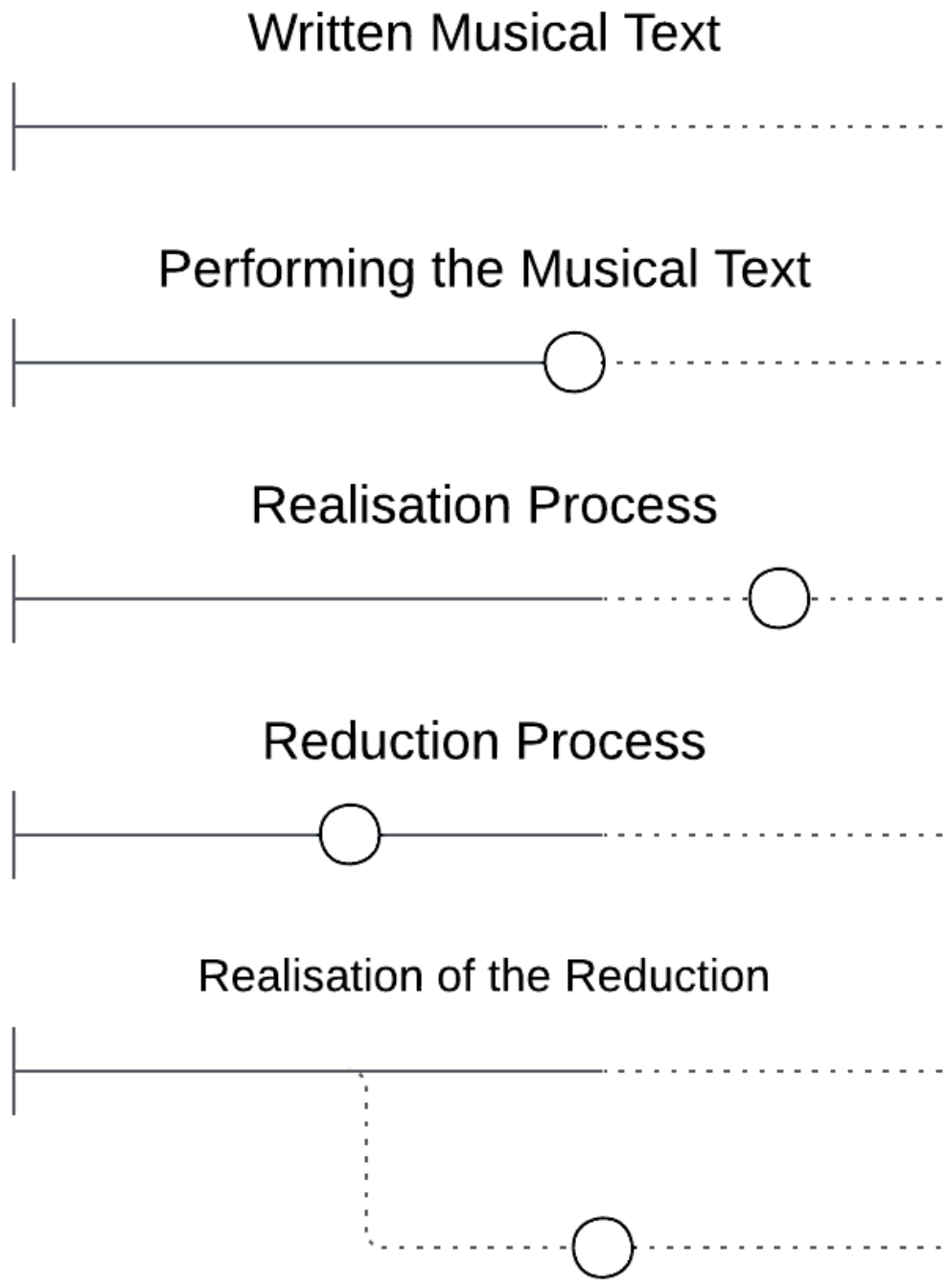


Figure 120 illustrates how musical works vary in their notational completeness throughout the common practice period. Earlier repertoire leaves the score “ontologically incomplete,” requiring the performer to realise or even recompose the texture—the slider sits to the left with many possibilities. By the mid-twentieth century, notation had become highly prescriptive, pushing the slider to the far right and leaving almost no room for performer intervention. In this way, the diagram bridges philosophical views of the work (by Goehr, Small and Haynes) with the practical pedagogy of CDBD realisation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Therefore, performance as realisation reveals a spectrum between fidelity and fluidity of the musical text, and affirms the pianist-composer’s role as mediator within the work-concept paradigm.

5.1.3 The Value of the Compositional Process: Sketch as the *Chant Donn * or *Basse Donn e*

To understand the process of performance as realisation, we can explore composers’ sketches, which reveal ways that their music is “ontologically thin.” Many studies of early nineteenth-century improvisation ultimately reveal less about the spontaneous act than they do about its written traces found in published works, and, especially, composers’ sketches.⁴⁰ They illuminate how printed compositions preserve the character of improvisation and invite us to consider how the “unfinished” in music functions as an invitation for further creative engagement.⁴¹

In this chapter, we explore two different forms of the sketch: the first is from Schubert’s Sonata in C minor, D. 958, which shows how the composer transforms a written form of the “skeletal structure” of the piece; the second is Mozart’s Piano Concerto in E-flat, K. 482, the latter demonstrating that even what we would in the twenty-first century call a “finished” work is, in many respects, an advanced compositional sketch. These examples raise critical questions about authorship and the evolving status of the musical work. Studying these different stages of the composition process reveals an interesting

⁴⁰ Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation*, 8-9.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

relationship between the realisation of CDBD exercises, the act of composition, and the performance of a work, which may itself serve as a kind of realisation (as discussed in section 5.1.3).

In Schubert's case, who trained under Salieri and demonstrated mastery of counterpoint at a young age, we are fortunate to possess several of his working sketches.⁴² When compared to their final versions, these sketches not only reveal what Schubert considered the essential elements of a piece but also reconsider the performer's creative role in performance. Figure 121 shows a working draft of the *Menuett* from his C minor sonata, D. 958. The use of plain chords in the sketch resembles what Czerny and Reicha would have referred to as the "ground harmony" of a composition (see Chapter 5.1.1). Here, we have a typical harmonic structure for the opening phrase of a minuet, beginning in the principal key of C minor and modulating to the relative major (E-flat). The sketch captures the phrase structure and harmonic rhythm in full, especially the irregular 3 + 4 + 5 bar phrasing, which is an unusual feature for a minuet. By itself, the sketch sounds plain and uninteresting, but already has the "essence" of the music:

Figure 121: Schubert, Piano Sonata in C minor, D. 958: III. *Menuett: Allegro*. Sketch.⁴³

Entwurf zum dritten Satz
(Menuett: Allegro)

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system consists of six measures, starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second system begins at measure 7 and also consists of six measures, ending with a fortissimo (*fp*) dynamic. The notation is in treble and bass clefs, with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. The music is primarily chordal, with some melodic lines in the upper voice of the treble staff.

⁴² Christopher Howard Gibbs, *The Life of Schubert, Musical Lives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 29-30.

⁴³ Franz Schubert, *Piano Sonata in C minor*, D. 958, ed. Walburga Litschauer, *Neue Schubert-Ausgabe* VII/2:3 (Kassel: Bärenreiter-Verlag, 1996), 166 (sketches).

From this framework, a performer or composer could “realise” a melody over the chords, preserving the skeletal harmony and responding to its expressive potential. Figure 122 presents such a realisation:

Figure 122: Schubert, Piano Sonata in C minor, D. 958 – III. Menuett: *Allegro*. Realised by Hadap.

The image displays a musical score for the third movement of Schubert's Piano Sonata in C minor, D. 958, titled 'Menuett: Allegro'. The score is presented in two systems. The first system begins with the tempo marking 'Allegro' and a dynamic marking 'p'. The music is in 3/4 time and C minor. The right hand features a melodic line with a long slur over the first six measures, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and some moving lines. The second system starts with a measure rest marked '8', indicating the beginning of a new section. The melodic line continues with a slur, and the left hand accompaniment remains consistent with the first system.

Schubert’s own published version (Figure 123) elaborates the same structure through continuous quaver motion in the left hand and a melodic line doubled in octaves, while preserving the underlying phrase structure, rhythm, and harmony. This may show how deeply entwined the composition process and performance were in the early nineteenth century. It also calls into question the idea of the “fixed” text by showing how even canonical works like Schubert’s sonata might emerge from a process more akin to improvisation:

Figure 123: Schubert, Piano Sonata in C minor, D. 958: III. Menuett: Allegro. Published Version.⁴⁴

The image shows a musical score for the third movement, 'Menuett: Allegro', from Schubert's Piano Sonata in C minor, D. 958. The score is in 3/4 time and C minor. It consists of two systems of music. The first system starts with a piano (p) dynamic and includes a crescendo (cresc.) marking. The second system begins with a forte (f) dynamic, followed by a piano (p) dynamic, and concludes with a first and second ending. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

From the composer's perspective, Schubert's sketches show us the "essence" and "skeletal structure" of his works. They remind us that an interpretation can also be based on a sketch, proposing that performers balance fidelity to the score with an awareness of the compositional process behind it.

Sketches can also take the form of what we in the twenty-first century regard as fully notated scores. Mozart's piano concertos are a particularly instructive example. As the soloist to his own concertos, Mozart often felt no need to write out the complete piano part, trusting his own ability as an improviser to realise it during performance. Mozart's compositional sketches frequently consisted of two-part textures—typically melody and bass—which, like partimenti, assumed a degree of elaboration by the performer. A review from the *Literary Gazette* describes the solo parts to Mozart's concertos as "barren and deficient [...] mere skeletons,"⁴⁵ with improvisation and composition deeply entwined in his creative process.

A striking example of this appears in Carl Reinecke's (1824-1910) nineteenth-century arrangement of Mozart's Keyboard Concerto in E-flat major, K. 482. Reinecke, who was one of the editors of the *Alte Mozart-Ausgabe*, preserved the musical text with literal fidelity, even in passages that clearly

⁴⁴ Schubert, *Piano Sonata in C minor*, 166 (sketches).

⁴⁵ *The Literary Gazette* 437 (1825), 364, quoted in Helyard, *Clementi and the Woman at the Piano*, 21-22.

demand realisation. In the concerto's first edition, only the full score and orchestral parts were published (no complete piano part was included), suggesting Mozart's assumption that the soloist (himself) would improvise from the full score.⁴⁶ Take, for instance, bars 161–77 (or, rehearsal mark E of the edition) of the third movement (Figure 124): the piano part features only dotted minims—clearly structural notes that outline the top and bottom notes of a more elaborate figuration, most likely some arpeggiation. To perform them as written would be grotesquely unstylistic and bare, especially at such a climactic moment in the movement, demanding the preservation of the rhythmic momentum established in the previous bars:

Figure 124: W. A. Mozart, *Keyboard Concerto, K. 482*, ed. Reinecke: III. *Rondo*, bars. 161-77.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ See the autograph manuscripts, which can be found here: [https://imslp.org/wiki/Piano_Concerto_No.22_in_E-flat_major%2C_K.482_\(Mozart%2C_Wolfgang_Amadeus\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Piano_Concerto_No.22_in_E-flat_major%2C_K.482_(Mozart%2C_Wolfgang_Amadeus)).

⁴⁷ W. A. Mozart, *Keyboard Concerto in E flat major*, K. 482, arr. and ed. Carl Reinecke (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, n.d.), 25-26, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Piano_Concerto_No.22_in_E-flat_major%2C_K.482_\(Mozart%2C_Wolfgang_Amadeus\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Piano_Concerto_No.22_in_E-flat_major%2C_K.482_(Mozart%2C_Wolfgang_Amadeus)). Just a few bars before this excerpt is a progression passage to Figure E, where the harmony changes at the bar instead of every two bars. There, Mozart uses ascending and descending semi-quaver arpeggios to compose out the progression.

A nineteenth-century reading of this material, however, already reveals a shift in attitude. Busoni, for example (despite his radical approach to J. S. Bach), cautions that the “clavier-compositions of Mozart and Haydn permit in no way an adaptation to *our* pianoforte style,” insisting their conception is inseparable from their original sound world.⁴⁸ For Busoni, they belong wholly to their own period and must not be reimagined as if they were “proto-Liszt.” In other words, by the late nineteenth century, Mozart’s notation was already beginning to be treated as something to be fixed, not fluid.

And yet not all nineteenth-century musicians agreed. Hummel, Mozart’s own student, offers a striking counterexample with his arrangement of the same concerto—taking what Busoni later described as Mozart’s “internally weakened” form and “externally enriching” it (Figure 125).⁴⁹ Although Hummel’s version may appear non-Mozartian to modern ears, its additions should be understood as a *continuation* rather than a distortion of Mozart’s style—a style which Czerny already praised as having been “brought to such exquisite perfection.”⁵⁰ With its use of the extended keyboard range, hand alternations, and virtuosic arpeggiation, this passage demonstrates Hummel’s freedom to adapt Mozart’s skeletal writing to the expectations of nineteenth-century virtuosity. In doing so, Hummel treats Mozart’s notation not as a “fixed” text, but as a springboard for creative realisation. This reinforces the notion that Mozart’s “works” were “ontologically thin,” an idea primarily at odds with the later work-concept (see Chapter 5.1.1):

⁴⁸ Johann Sebastian Bach and Ferruccio B. Busoni, *The Well-Tempered Clavichord*, introduction. Emphasis added.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Czerny, *Complete Theoretical and Practical Pianoforte School*, 3:99.

Figure 125: W. A. Mozart, Keyboard Concerto, K. 482, arr. Hummel: III. *Rondo*, bars 160-77.⁵¹

However, even in moments that appear more “complete” on the surface by the work-concept’s standards, Mozart’s textures can remain bare. These must first be reduced before a new realisation can be constructed, as previously explored in Chapter 5.1.2. For example, we can compare Reinecke’s literal arrangement of bars 166–81 in the first movement (Figure 126) with Hummel’s fuller version (Figure 127). Hummel, possibly due to the nature of his solo arrangement (which includes essential orchestral lines), adds a left-hand accompaniment that suggests what a pianist of Mozart’s calibre might have spontaneously added in performance. This practice reflects the freedoms that pianist-composers once

⁵¹ W. A. Mozart, *Concertos de Mozart arrangés pour piano à deux mains par Johann Nepomuk Hummel*, 2 vols. (Braunschweig: Henry Litolf’s Verlag [Collection Litolf], n.d. [1871]), 2:158-59, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Concertos_de_Mozart_\(Mozart,_Wolfgang_Amadeus\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Concertos_de_Mozart_(Mozart,_Wolfgang_Amadeus)).

enjoyed. If this is surprising for us, it underscores how far we have shifted under the influence of the work-concept:

Figure 126: W. A. Mozart, Keyboard Concerto, K. 482, ed. Reinecke: I. *Allegro*, bars 168-78.⁵²



⁵² W. A. Mozart, *Keyboard Concerto No. 22 in E flat major*, K. 482, arr. and ed. Carl Reinecke, 7-8.

Figure 127: W. A. Mozart, Keyboard Concerto, K. 482, arr. Hummel: I. *Allegro*, bars 168-78.⁵³

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So, while Reinecke's edition aims to preserve the text, Hummel aims to preserve (or extend) style; each in their own way, reflecting different positions along the spectrum between improvisation and notation. If Hummel could do it, what is stopping twenty-first-century performers from doing the same?⁵⁴ Realisations need not even be confined to Mozartian language. Hummel himself modernised the texture in line with the evolving standards of pianism. In doing so, he reminds us that the pianist-composer tradition was once grounded in imaginative recreation, a practice the work-concept's performance standards would eventually constrain.

⁵³ W. A. Mozart, *Concertos de Mozart arrangés pour piano à deux mains par Johann Nepomuk Hummel*, 2:6.

⁵⁴ It is the question of taste and aesthetics that mainly limits this decision. This will be discussed in further detail in Chapters 5.1.2 and 5.3.

The pyramid model introduced in Chapter 5.1.2 provides a useful framework: just as performers can realise CDBD exercises at multiple levels of complexity, composers might achieve the same by starting with sketches and progressing to completed works through similar stages of elaboration. The pyramids of composition, the realisation of a CDBD, and the performance/realisation of a composition thus run in parallel. For cases like this, Hogwood advocates for what he calls the “process” edition, where the various stages of the composer’s “adaptations are made clear and given a chance of performance.”⁵⁵

He highlights the limitations of the Urtext edition by assuming the composer’s work is “perfect.”⁵⁶ Composers such as Mendelssohn and Chopin presented a conundrum for publishers claiming Urtext authenticity. Both composers tended to revise their works extensively, resulting in multiple versions, which the former called *Revisionskrankheit*.⁵⁷ Due to Chopin’s popularity, for instance, his music was published in three separate countries: France, England and Germany, each requiring a separate autograph manuscript.⁵⁸ However, Treitler argues that “for Chopin the score was not the ultimate touchstone for the work as he often changed many details of his scores, none more so than his student copies.”⁵⁹ Such practices complicate the notion of a *Fassung letzter Hand* (see Chapter 3.2.1), suggesting that a “finished” work is never truly finished and continues to evolve throughout the composer’s life and beyond. In this sense, realising a given melody and bass is not just an exercise, but a *re-enactment* of the compositional process itself. The relationship between improvisation, sketch, and composition remains central to understanding the pianist-composer tradition.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Christopher Hogwood, “Urtext, Que Me Veux-Tu?,” *Early Music* 41, no. 1 (2013): 123, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43306812>.

⁵⁶ Hogwood, “Urtext, Que Me Veux-Tu?,” 123.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Leo Treitler, “History and the Ontology of the Musical Work,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 51, no. 3 (1993): 493, <https://doi.org/10.2307/431520>.

⁵⁹ Treitler, “History and the Ontology of the Musical Work,” 493.

⁶⁰ Some composers, such as Hindemith, Britten, and Shostakovich, wrote directly into a full score without sketching. This speaks not to a rejection of the process, but to a high degree of internalisation; their realisations may have occurred in their mind rather than on the page. Each composer has their own creative process, but the underlying principle remains: realisation depends on transforming essential material into a complete musical argument.

When read as a CDBD, compositional sketches bridge the divide between composition, performance, and pedagogy. They show that composition is about both the fixed work and the process. The performer, when engaging with a sketch or a “sketch-like” work, becomes a participant in this process as well. In this way, the tradition of the pianist-composer may live on—not through imitation, but through an understanding of how to think and perform compositionally at the keyboard.

5.2 Sight-Reading (or Score Reading in General)

Sight reading has been and continues to be one of the most essential skills for any musician, allowing them to perform music at sight, even without prior knowledge or hearing it. This was especially important in earlier periods, when rehearsal time was limited by tight deadlines and limited funds for extended rehearsals. Not only that, but it was also a way for musicians to learn a large quantity of repertoire and develop their musicianship. For example, Czerny recounts his father's avoidance of "making a superficial virtuoso" out of himself and "strove to develop [his] sight-reading ability through continuous study of new works and thus to develop [his] musicianship."⁶¹ This was also reflected in his pupil Liszt, who at just nine years old, could already "decipher the most difficult scores and play at sight everything placed before him."⁶² He was often challenged by his teacher to "learn everything quickly," thus compelling him to become an expert sight reader.⁶³ A few decades later, Liszt would then be regarded by his contemporaries as "the best sight-reader in the world."⁶⁴ Many pianist-composers during the common practice period boasted excellent sight-reading skills (relative to the technical difficulty of the repertoire, of course). Sight-reading, depending on the performer's level of skill and the work's difficulty, may be considered a reduction endeavour, and more daring performers will go further and create their own arrangement of the work in the process.

Viewed this way, sight-reading methods might offer insight into how performers can internalise harmony and mechanics, shaping the real-time construction (or reconstruction) of works through a pianist-composer lens. Sight reading, in a way, becomes an act of arranging and composition.

5.2.1 Prerequisites: The Importance of Harmony and Technique

Maximum sight-reading fluency depends on harmony and instrumental technique. Without this integrated skill set as a prerequisite, a performer may struggle to interpret structural cues and/or adapt

⁶¹ Czerny and Sanders, "Recollections from My Life," 303.

⁶² *Pressburger Zeitung*, November 28, 1820, quoted in Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years*, 68.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁶⁴ *La France musicale* (1847): 366–67, quoted in Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation*, 230.

textures idiomatically in real time. Czerny clarifies this point in his *Pianoforte School*, insisting that “a thorough knowledge of the Theory of Harmony... [assists] in playing at sight,” whereas “he who has only a mere superficial knowledge of it... will only be led the more astray, when he attempts to apply it in this way.”⁶⁵ He reiterates this in his private letters, even to amateur pupils, stressing that “thorough-bass is of the greatest assistance in extemporizing, playing at sight, and accompanying,” which reminds us that what might be considered a professional skill was in fact expected from pianists of all levels.⁶⁶

Dourlen makes the same connection in his *Traité d'accompagnement* (1840). Though directed towards score-reading, his remarks resonate with sight-reading more generally. To succeed, one must be “a good pianist... to be able to convey the spirit of the score... [and] a good harmonist to make a choice and to always render the harmony which is in the intention of the author.”⁶⁷ Here, Dourlen identifies the balance between mechanical facility and the ability to identify harmonic patterns as the prerequisite for arranging in real time. Marx confirms the same principle, noting that “the interpretation of scores” requires not only “fluency in the fingering” and “perception of the forms of art” but “especially a proficiency in real composition.”⁶⁸ Zimmerman even elevates sight-reading to the pinnacle of a “true artist,” precisely because so few virtuosi, despite their technical facility, could achieve it convincingly.⁶⁹

Fétis offers perhaps the clearest rationale for why the study of harmony mattered. “In certain cases,” he writes, “harmonic knowledge, previously acquired, may prove a great assistance [sic.], and greatly *relieve* the eyes. For instance, sequences and progressions of harmony, cadences, simple and natural successions of chords, need not the attention, but may allow it to wander in advance in

⁶⁵ Czerny, *Complete Theoretical and Practical Pianoforte School*, 2:98.

⁶⁶ Czerny, *Letters to a Young Lady*, 55.

⁶⁷ “Pour bien accompagner la partition, il faut être bon harmoniste et bon pianiste : bon pianiste pour pouvoir rendre l'esprit de la partition en exécutant facilement les traits qui se trouvent dans les différentes parties, sans cependant qu'il soit toujours possible de les faire tous ; bon harmoniste pour en faire un bon choix et pour rendre toujours l'harmonie qui est dans l'intention de l'auteur ; et ici quelle que soit l'imagination de l'accompagnateur, il n'est qu'un traducteur et il ne lui est jamais permis de changer l'harmonie de ce qu'il accompagne.” Dourlen, *Traité d'accompagnement*, 83. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

⁶⁸ Marx, *The Universal School of Music*, 293.

⁶⁹ “Plus l'étude du piano se propagera et plus il sera ordinaire de rencontrer des virtuoses prêts à exécuter infailliblement des morceaux travaillés plus ou moins longtemps, mais ce qui sera toujours rare et qui distinguera le véritable artiste, c'est la faculté de dire à première vue un morceau de musique dans l'esprit de l'auteur.” Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie*, 2:61. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

anticipation of that which follows.”⁷⁰ The emphasis here demonstrates two points: first, harmonic literacy “relieves” the eyes by reducing visual complexity into familiar schema (as discussed in Chapter 4.1); second, it trains the performer to anticipate what lies ahead, relying on ingrained knowledge of progressions—both aspects mirroring CDBD realisation practice. Overall, Ernst Pauer (1826-1905) clarifies that “*economy* is the key to good sight-reading,” which requires the pianist to “[avoid] unnecessary focus on what is already familiar,” such as chord shapes, scales and various ornaments (emphasis added).⁷¹ Taken together, these writers show that fluent sight-reading depends on processing aural, visual, and tactile information, transforming it into a process of predicting schemas and patterns rather than note-to-note recognition.

Fétis provides a practical example of the usefulness of harmony in sight-reading. He argues that all music (from his time) could be reduced to plain chords—even with the most complex of textures. Figure 128 shows such an example: he composed a fragment for a string quartet featuring the learned-style texture, but the reader, undeterred, could “see” the music according to the reduction at the stave below, which is like the Primary Realisation Style with the use of plain chords above a bass line:

⁷⁰ Fétis, *How to Play from Score*, 19 [text]. Emphasis added.

⁷¹ Ernst Pauer, *The Art of Pianoforte Playing*, (London: Novello and Co., 1877), 70-71, [https://imslp.org/wiki/The_Art_of_Pianoforte_Playing_\(Pauer%2C_Ernst\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/The_Art_of_Pianoforte_Playing_(Pauer%2C_Ernst)).

Figure 128: Fétis, *How to Play from Score*. A Score Fragment and Its Reduction.⁷²

3

Ex. 15.

1st Violin.

2nd Violin.

Alto.

Bass.

Ex. 16.

Not only should the reader “see” the music in such a manner, but also can “anticipate” and allow “the eye [to] pass lightly over [a] progression,” turning a complex task of reading notes into something much more manageable, which leaves mental capacity to focus on other matters.⁷³ Since this is a typical progression that a piano student would have learned from treatises by Colet, Fenaroli, Fétis, Dourlen, and Zimmerman, this ability to “anticipate” significantly reduces the difficulty, as such a progression would already be in the student’s tactile and aural memory so that they can devote their attention to the technical matters, interpretation, and even registration (for organists).

⁷² Fétis, *How to Play from Score*, 3 [examples]. See also Figure 62 in Chapter 4.1.2, which shows Catel’s realisation of the same progression.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 19 [text]. This passage is also a sequence that makes anticipation much easier.

While these pedagogues all agree on the importance and necessity of sight-reading, it is only as good as the pianist's technique. One must keep one's tolerance for mistakes in check, as excessive sight-reading may prove detrimental to overall artistic development. Czerny warns against "such gluttony of notes" that "robs [the pianist] of the much higher degree of delight which the art affords from *Perfection of Execution*," insisting that sight-reading is "only a duty of the performer, and...not his ultimate aim."⁷⁴ Zimmerman, though celebrating sight-reading as the "pinnacle of virtuosity," voices a similar caution. If the work on "exercises, studies, mechanism" is neglected, "the habit of overcoming difficulties too quickly" can "take away from playing the regularity and finish it should have."⁷⁵ For both authors, sight-reading was a vital but ultimately subordinate skill that serves, rather than replaces, deliberate technical refinement (see Chapter 4.3).

Therefore, sight-reading is an integral part of the pianist-composer's development and trains the student in "seeing" the "essence" and "skeletal structure" of the music. It is a test of a performer's ability to absorb musical information, process it and execute it as accurately as possible. As we will explore in the next chapter, a note-perfect performance in sight-reading is not always the goal. In fact, we can use the principles of realisation to determine which notes should be played, which should not, and which should be rewritten, thereby forming parallels with the various realisation styles. It is for this reason that sight-reading may be treated as a reduction endeavour.

5.2.2 Sight-Reading: A Reduction Process

Sight-reading can be understood as a process of reduction, in which the score is rearranged to suit one's technical strengths and situational constraints. While a note-for-note performance is ideal, it is rarely practical, especially for works far beyond the reader's sight-reading ability. The sight-reading pianist is

⁷⁴ Czerny, *Complete Theoretical and Practical Pianoforte School*, 2:98. Emphases added.

⁷⁵ "Pour devenir grand lecteur il faut que la première jeunesse on ait fait une étude sérieuse du solfège et qu'ensuite on se livre à la lecture de la musique, il ne faudrait cependant pas sacrifier à la lecture le travail des exercices, des études, du mécanisme en un mot, parceque l'élève qui n'aurait passé par ces labeurs difficiles sans s'y arrêter suffisamment, ôterait au jeu la régularité et le fini qu'il doit avoir." Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie*, 2:61. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

often under pressure to absorb and process complex information, and must make rapid decisions that prioritise continuity and expression over literal fidelity.

This is precisely the skill cultivated in realisation practice, only applied in reverse as the pianist must reduce complexity rather than generate it. Thus, they draw on the same principles as two-part realisation to simplify elaborate figures and textures into something more practically playable. As Marx observed, “even the most complete representation upon the piano can only give an *incomplete* idea of the rich contents of a score.” Thus, a skilled performer “will not always play the same passage in the same manner,” but adapts, highlights different parts, and “resorts to various temporary expedients” to convey a fuller idea.⁷⁶ Since sight-reading shares many similarities with performance, it should not become just a passive reproduction, but also a moment-to-moment exercise of judgement, channelling the same creative thought processes from CDBD realisation itself.

While Marx applies this to score reading, it highlights the pianist-composer’s adaptability. These so-called “temporary expedients” are arguably not an “incorrect” mode of performance, but a valid “representation” of the score.⁷⁷ Just as realisation of a given melody begins with a bass line (and vice versa), good sight readers must immediately locate and play these parts where and when they occur. These constitute the “essence” and “skeletal structure” of the music (as already discussed in Chapter 5.1.1). Should either the bass or melody involve elaborate diminutions (whether as florid passing notes or chordal arpeggiations), the reader has the option to simplify these at sight. This is precisely what the harmony pedagogy at the Paris Conservatoire teaches pianist-composers, by equipping them with tools to manage complex textures in real time, even something as tricky as a Beethoven sonata or a Chopin etude (see Chapter 4.2). Thus, it is not surprising that “two-part texture characterized much keyboard music” in the eighteenth century as it turned “many full-voiced compositions—quartets, concertos, symphonies” into performable pieces for “musical amateurs.”⁷⁸ So if one were to read a full score with many

⁷⁶ Marx, *The Universal School of Music*, 298. Emphasis original.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ratner, *Classic Music*, 108. Also related is the fact that partimento realisations and intavolature also consisted of two parts (including the bass). See Chapters 4.2.2 and 4.2.3.

parts, a sight-reading performer could find the two most important parts in the texture and play them, which should be sufficient for analysis or rehearsal purposes.

To demonstrate this process, consider R. Schumann’s “*Erinnerung*” in his *Album für die Jugend*, Op. 68 (Figure 129). This piece was specifically chosen for its many hallmarks of piano playing at the time, featuring a discernible melody, arpeggiated textures in the LH, and hints of the learned style in both hands. For a late beginner or intermediate pianist trying to learn this piece, or even an advanced pianist attempting to sight-read it, it may be a daunting task to play it as written:

Figure 129: R. Schumann, “*Erinnerung*” in *Album für die Jugend*, Op. 68, bars 1-8.⁷⁹

A sight reader (or a beginner with their teacher’s assistance) might initially play the bass, then the bass and melody alone, omitting inner arpeggiation (Figure 130)—corresponding to the Primary Realisation styles (Chapter 4.2). As an added step, more advanced students could realise the structural bass with plain chords like a continuo part:

⁷⁹ Transcribed and figured by Hadap after Robert Schumann, “*Erinnerung*” in *Album für die Jugend*, Op. 68, ed. Clara Schumann, in *Robert Schumanns Werke*, Serie VII: *Für Pianoforte zu zwei Händen* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1887), 29, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Album_f%C3%BCr_die_Jugend,_Op.68_\(Schumann,_Robert\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Album_f%C3%BCr_die_Jugend,_Op.68_(Schumann,_Robert)). Schumann wrote this piece as a tribute to Mendelssohn’s compositional style upon receiving the news of the composer’s passing. The subtitle reads “4. November 1847.”

Figure 130: R. Schumann, “Erinnerung.” Sight reading levels corresponding to the Primary Realisation Styles.

Basse donnée etc...

Plain chord realisation of the *Basse donnée* etc...

Two-part realisation of the *Chant donné* (or vice versa) etc...

After playing the outer parts, a student can then add more of the accompaniment as time allows, and finally aim to play the work as notated (Figure 131). These “middle voices,” as Ratner would say, constitute the “reinforcement” and represent the richness of sonority.⁸⁰ Comparing this to Elwart’s *Chant Donné*, realised by Hadap (see Chapter 4.3.3), reveals that realisations can also work in the other direction, starting from a bass and melody and generating stylistically idiomatic accompaniments. Fétis even suggests the reduction of textures where necessary:

In all this, there is much to embarrass the accompanist, and the exact execution of the music as it is written will be without effect. The accompaniment should therefore be limited to a simple left hand arpeggio, in which only the harmony and progression of the Bass is retained.⁸¹

This is precisely the function of the Primary Realisation Styles. They allow the performer to determine the bass and inner parts, which can be realised with a simpler texture:

⁸⁰ Ratner, *Classic Music*, 108.

⁸¹ Fétis, *How to Play from Score*, 25 [text].

Figure 131: R. Schumann, “Erinnerung.” Sight-reading levels corresponding to the Secondary Realisation Styles.

- Uppermost line of the RH played
- Rhythm of the LH is followed
- The arpeggiation of chords falls within one 8ve for easier execution - only possible knowing the harmon

1

6 7 + +4/2 6 +4/2 6 6/5 8 7 + 6 -

5 - +6 7 + 6/5 7 + 7 + etc...

- Uppermost line of the RH played
- Rhythm and notes of the LH is followed

2

6 7 + +4/2 6 +4/2 6 6/5 8 7 + 6 -

5 - +6 7 + 6/5 7 + 7 + etc...

- As written by R. Schumann (1847)
- The chords in the RH are added which serve to thicken the texture
- Ornaments added

3

6 7 + +4/2 6 +4/2 6 6/5 8 7 + 6 -

5 - +6 7 + 6/5 7 + 7 + etc...

However, Fétis also cautions the pianist against “abusing” such liberties through “the most convenient manner for execution,” calling it “a certain sort of negligence.”⁸² So, while sight reading is an essential skill for the pianist, they should still aim to reproduce the score as exactly and practically as possible. Acts of reduction should be considered carefully and not detract from the composer’s intentions (an idea embedded in the work-concept).

In practice, sight reading can proceed through a series of staged realisations, with each level corresponding to greater complexity as more elements of the music are added. The performer could follow the steps as listed below when sight-reading a new piece:

1. **Play the bass** or the lowest-sounding part throughout. Even in the most complex textures, the bass retains the harmonic rhythm and pulse. Accompaniment textures, for example, can be omitted entirely, or displaced bass notes can be shifted to the beat as a practical adaptation.
2. **Add the melody**, simplified as needed. Play the most structurally essential notes in the melody; omit florid diminutions and take liberties with rhythm if it allows for more fluent playing.
3. **Simplify the accompaniment by rearrangement**. Reduce inner voices to block chords or closed-position figurations. Large leaps may be to retain rhythmic fluency and character (This will be explored in Chapter 5.3.2).
4. **Play as written**. Only at this stage does a performer attempt to play with detail: phrasing, dynamics, articulations, and pedal markings.

Each stage corresponds to partimento realisation: starting from the most basic “skeletal structure,” which can then be built upon according to context and skill. The pedagogical value of sight reading as a reduction extends well beyond the practical skill of decoding notation with broader implications. It supports targeted practice techniques in which pianists simplify material to focus on technical or musical elements separately, as well as improvisatory training, encouraging pianists to complete or simplify music according to principles learned through CDBD realisation.

Of course, there is a limit to how much information on the score can be absorbed at a rapid tempo. In Zimmerman’s time, the most challenging repertoire for sight-reading was “fugues in general, especially those of Bach, the third book of Alkan’s Caprices, as well as almost all the works of Chopin and

⁸² Fétis, *How to Play from Score*, 25 [text].

Liszt.”⁸³ Such examples demonstrate not only the increasing technical demands on the nineteenth-century performer, but also that sight-reading, even at the highest level, was rarely about literal accuracy, but rather about grasping and realising the *essential* musical idea as swiftly and convincingly as possible.

Therefore, we might view the process of sight reading as akin to a conversation with the composer—an ongoing and flexible “meeting,” rather than a fixed representation of the work. Every sight-reading session, then, becomes an interactive process in which the pianist’s skill in realisation and reduction meets their technical craft and personal artistic voice. This is a perspective the pianist-composer can offer, which becomes more apparent through the link between harmony and the instrument’s mechanism. With the higher technical standards introduced by the work-concept, it is unlikely that performers will sight-read works during performance.

However, just because they can play all the notes in the score does not mean their role in the realisation process is complete. As noted in Chapter 5.1.3, more advanced performers in the nineteenth century were aware of the ontologically thin music of their period that warranted some degree of realisation. The next chapter will explore these types of score modifications and their use in the piano and organ repertoires of the common practice period.

⁸³ “Je signalerai aux plus habiles la musique suivante, que je considère comme la plus difficile à déchiffrer: les Fugues en général, surtout celles de Bach, le 3e livre des caprices d’Alkan, ainsi que presque tous les morceaux de Chopin et de Liszt.” Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie*, 2:62. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

5.3 Textural Modifications: Performer as Co-Composer

Textural modifications are another pedagogical implication of combining the knowledge of harmony with the mechanics of the keyboard. With their application, not only should the piece retain its “essence” and “skeletal structure,” but they ideally should exceed the composer’s intentions and deepen the expression of the work. These skills follow the realisation and reduction process to an even greater extent and significantly challenge the work-concept by elevating the performer’s role to equal, and even more significant, than that of the composer.

One of the main reasons for this practice is the evolving capabilities of the piano, as previously discussed in Chapters 1.2.2, 4.3.1 and 5.1.4, which rendered the performance of older works less effective and necessitated adaptation to the more modern instrument. Even Busoni’s principles for arranging organ works are especially relevant here, given how closely interconnected piano, organ, and orchestral writing had become by the late nineteenth century. For this reason, his principles of arrangement will serve as a reference throughout this chapter.⁸⁴ When applied, such changes to the score are subject to scrutiny by many listeners accustomed to the repertoire, especially in the digital age, when recordings are widely available. For this reason, the question of *taste* will also need to be considered when applying such practices.

5.3.1 Modifying Texture: Expansion

Textural modifications and the extemporised arrangement of keyboard works can be traced back to continuo practice, where chordal instruments filled out the texture to accompany obligato parts. While continuo in performance as accompaniment became nearly obsolete in the nineteenth century, fuller orchestration and written-out accompaniment parts replaced the need for continuo to fill the texture.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ See Ferruccio B. Busoni, “On the Transcription of Bach’s Organ Works for the Pianoforte,” in *The Well-Tempered Clavichord by Johann Sebastian Bach: Revised, Annotated and Provided with Parallel Examples and Suggestions for the Study of Modern Pianoforte-Technique by Ferruccio B. Busoni*, ed. Ferruccio B. Busoni (New York: G. Schirmer Inc., 1894), 154–90.

⁸⁵ See Jesper Bøje Christensen, *Eighteenth Century Continuo Playing. A Historical Guide to the Basics*, trans. J. Bradford Robinson (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2002), 132–37.

This chapter argues the use of textural expansion as a valid and effective performance tool, on par with other practices such as ornamentation, dynamics, articulation, and tempo modifications. A wide range of evidence will be examined, including nineteenth-century editions of contemporary and older works, annotations found in students' scores, and even one of the earliest forms of analogue recording—the piano roll.

The most common textural modification that can be applied is the addition of lower octaves in the bass part. Since the addition of the octave does not alter the harmony and counterpoint, it can be employed by pianists without training in continuo practice. These doublings can create a richer sound without increasing volume. These additions were encouraged by Zimmerman in his *Encyclopédie* in a chapter dedicated to stylistic playing:

There are cases where one should not fear to add something to the text. For example, if a piece was composed before pianos had six octaves, we sometimes notice the constraint the author felt in not being able to extend his passage sufficiently; it would be a *childish scruple* not to dare to complete what the composer was obliged to leave imperfect.⁸⁶ (Emphases added)

This practice is common in eighteenth-century keyboard repertoire, since most keyboards at the time had a range of C2-C6, with notable exceptions. By the nineteenth century, the keyboard range was expanding in both directions, until the bass reached F1, then C1, and eventually A0 for the standard modern grands. Linking this practice to organ and orchestral writing, Busoni compares these doublings to the “8-foot and 16-foot stops” on the organ and “the ordinary mode of writing for the cello and double-bass in the orchestra.”⁸⁷ Such additions were not seen as distortions of the text, but as necessary enhancements idiomatic to the evolving instrument.

⁸⁶ “Il se présente des cas où l'on ne doit pas craindre d'ajouter quelque chose à son texte: par exemple si un morceau a été composé avant que les pianos comptassent six 8ves, on s'aperçoit quelquefois de la contrainte qu'éprouvait l'auteur de ne pouvoir assez étendre son passage, ce serait un scrupule puéril que de ne pas oser achever ce que le compositeur était dans la nécessité de laisser imparfait.” Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie*, 2:60. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

⁸⁷ Busoni, “On the Transcription of Bach's Organ Works for the Pianoforte,” 155.

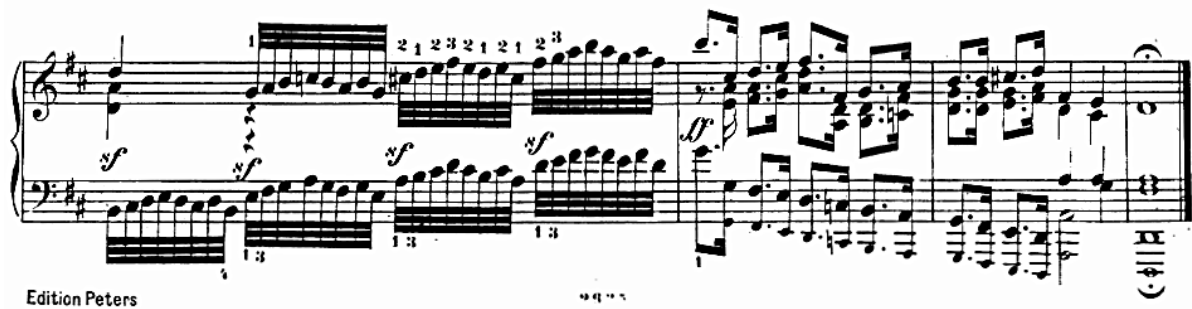
A repertoire example where octaves may be applied retrospectively is J. S. Bach's WTC, written for a keyboard spanning C2- C6.⁸⁸ In Czerny's edition of the work, he adds octave doublings written in small notes to bass parts whenever the LH is free to do so and meets the other criteria as mentioned earlier. Figures 132 and 133 show examples from the C minor and D major fugues from WTC Book 1 where Czerny has added octave doublings, indicated by the small note heads:

Figure 132: J. S. Bach, *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book 1, BWV 847: Fugue in C minor, Final Bars.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ There is one instance in the B minor Prelude and Fugue from Book 2 where B1 is used. There are also A1 notes in the Keyboard Partitas by the same composer.

⁸⁹ Johann Sebastian Bach, *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier I*, BWV 846–869, ed. Carl Czerny and Friedrich August Roitzsch (Leipzig: C. F. Peters, n.d. [ca. 1863] [ca. 1720]), 11, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Das_wohltemperierte_Klavier_I,_BWV_846-869_\(Bach,_Johann_Sebastian\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Das_wohltemperierte_Klavier_I,_BWV_846-869_(Bach,_Johann_Sebastian)).

Figure 133: J. S. Bach, *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book 1, BWV 850: Fugue in D major, Final Bars.⁹⁰



Czerny, in these excerpts, adheres to the convention of adding octaves in louder passages to enrich the texture. In Chopin's own copy of the WTC Book 1, he annotates all the performance markings added by Czerny, including tempi, articulation, and octave bass doublings.⁹¹ In Busoni's own edition of this work, he also adds octave doublings, acknowledging Czerny as the source. Such additions, according to him, "cannot be considered a violation of Bach's style."⁹² Such instances show the widespread nature of this practice throughout the nineteenth century, particularly in older repertoire.

In nineteenth-century works, this practice was just as common. For example, they frequently appear in Chopin's works not in the composer's autograph or published editions, but in handwritten annotations of his students' scores. Take, for example, a passage from his famous Nocturne, Op. 9 No. 2, where there is an occasional "8" marking in pencil (Figure 134). The addition of the octave here enhances the *forte* dynamic marking and the diminished 7th chord. Of course, such additions would need to be applied tastefully as they may sound too harsh, especially in the overall tranquil character of a nocturne:

⁹⁰ J. S. Bach, *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier I*, 23.

⁹¹ Johann Sebastian Bach, Frédéric Chopin, and Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, "Vingt-Quatre Préludes Et Fugues (Le Clavier Bien Tempéré, Livre 1)," xxxvii-xxxix. Aside from his portfolio of unpublished works, the only music he took on his trip to Majorca with his companion George Sand was in 1839.

⁹² J. S. Bach and Busoni, *The Well-Tempered Clavichord*, 13.

Figure 134: Chopin, Nocturne, Op. 9 No. 2, bars 10-12. Contra Octave Markings.⁹³



For a composer who “[resented sharply] any deliberate misreading of [his own] compositions,”⁹⁴ The addition of these notes, especially in a nocturne, is rather surprising. Yet, such a performer in the twenty-first century would most likely be scrutinised with such a “tasteless” addition.

Apart from the octave, adding other intervals was a more difficult endeavour that required a sensitive ear, as they are determined by the venue’s acoustics, the piano itself, and the performer’s execution. Busoni calls these “fillings, or the completion of the harmony,” that are added “to obtain greater fullness of tone,” to connect parts that are too far apart, to create climaxes, or when literal doublings are impractical. They may also serve “to enrich the piano-effect.” Such additions are “usually harmonic or figurative” rather than “contrapuntal, melodic, or in any way independent nature.” The tasteful “introduction of additions, without violating the style,” is ultimately the test of a skilled transcriber.⁹⁵ Their addition would usually occur in live performances *ad libitum*, requiring the performer to have a sensitive ear. When added and executed correctly, the addition of other intervals adds richness and depth to the desired chord that would otherwise have been lacking.

Using a much later example, Liszt’s edition of Weber’s complete piano works capitalised on their popularity, perhaps transferring his own performance practice from his touring years into written

⁹³ Frédéric Chopin, *Trois Nocturnes pour le piano, Op. 9* (Paris: Maurice Schlesinger, 1842–45), Plate M.S. 1287, *Online Chopin Variorum Edition*, <https://chopinonline.ac.uk/ocve>. Camille Dubois’ score with annotations by F. Chopin. This is just one of the few examples found in his Nocturnes. See also contra octave additions in Op. 27 No. 2 and Op. 32 No. 2 as annotated in the scores of Chopin’s pupils.

⁹⁴ Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 65.

⁹⁵ Busoni, “On the Transcription of Bach’s Organ Works for the Pianoforte,” 169.

form. As Gooley shows, Liszt's textural modifications were often received not as editorial but as authoritative, as he often wrote such changes without acknowledging their original form.⁹⁶ A contemporary review observed that "Mr. Liszt changes many things... makes passages more difficult, and perhaps also more brilliant... and often introduces a wealth of striking ornaments and decorations."⁹⁷ Issued by Cotta as part of the *Instruktive Ausgabe*, the edition was clearly aimed at conservatory pedagogy, and its reach extended internationally, evidenced by Goetschius's English translations in the 1890s (used for this thesis). Just as Liszt frequently altered his own music (see Chapter 2.1.4), he includes numerous ossia passages written above Weber's original text, perhaps preserving the improvisatory virtuosity that had defined his earlier concert life.

One work in the volume is Weber's famous second sonata for the piano, Op. 39 (also titled *Grande Sonate*). It was considered a staple of the piano repertoire in the nineteenth century and cited by Robin as one of the composer's successful piano works.⁹⁸ As Chopin's favourite works, he often assigned them to his pupils as an entry point for his own compositions.⁹⁹ However, it is a work with many sketch-like tendencies that hinder the delivery and clarity of its many musical ideas. Such writing would have suited the suppleness and lightness of the Viennese pianos, but to suit the more modern, orchestral-like sonorities of the Erard and Bechstein, alterations to the musical text would be needed to make them more sonorous.¹⁰⁰

In the first movement, employing the sonata-allegro form, a virtuosic passage occurs near the end of the development section, culminating to a local climax (Figure 135). In the first edition, we see

⁹⁶ This was especially true for his edition of Beethoven's 32 piano sonatas. For further insight into Liszt's textural modifications of Weber's famous *Konzertstück*, Op. 79, particularly through a narrative lens, see Dana Gooley, "Warhorses: Liszt, Weber's 'Konzertstück', and the Cult of Napoléon," *19th-Century Music* 24, no. 1 (2000): 62–88, <https://doi.org/10.2307/746872>.

⁹⁷ *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 42 (April 1, 1840), 297, quoted in Gooley, "Warhorses: Liszt, Weber's 'Konzertstück', and the Cult of Napoléon," 76.

⁹⁸ Langley Robin, "Weber and the Piano," *The Musical Times* 127, no. 1726 (1986): 604–08. <https://doi.org/10.2307/964268>.

⁹⁹ Stephen John Marinaro, "The Four Piano Sonatas of Carl Maria von Weber," in *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses* (D.M.A., The University of Texas at Austin, 1980), ProQuest One Academic (303056108), 5.

¹⁰⁰ The pianist Alfred Cortot (1877–1962) made an EMI recording of Liszt's edition of this work in 1939, which can serve as a reference recording. See <https://www.cortotarchives.org/recordings/233>.

a peculiar bar at the end of the first system, where Weber strips the texture down into two parts. This is counterintuitive from a composer's viewpoint, as the piano writing should become much thicker to supplement the increasing volume. Liszt picks up on this shortcoming and rewrites the passage with more octave doublings and the addition of chord notes to enrich the harmony in his ossia passage:

Figure 135: Weber, Piano Sonata No. 2, Op. 39, ed. and arr. Liszt: I. *Allegro moderato*.¹⁰¹

The image displays a musical score for the first movement of Weber's Piano Sonata No. 2, Op. 39, as edited and arranged by Franz Liszt. The score is presented in two systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The top system shows the original manuscript with a thin texture and a 'cre - - - scen - - - do - - - rinforzando' marking. The middle system shows Liszt's editorial changes, including octave doublings and chord notes, marked 'sempre più crescendo ed agitato'. The bottom system continues the piece with further editorial changes, marked 'sempre crescendo il forte al'. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

¹⁰¹ Carl Maria von Weber, *Zweite große Sonate*, Op. 39, in *Ausgewählte Sonaten und Solostücke für das Piano-forte*, ed. Franz Liszt, trans. Percy Goetschius, *Instructive Ausgabe Klassischer Klavierwerke*, Abtheilung 5, Band 1 (New York: Edward Schuberth & Co., 1890), 45, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Ausgew%C3%A4hlte_Sonaten_und_Solost%C3%BCcke_f%C3%BCr_das_Piano-forte_\(Weber%2C_Carl_Maria_von\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Ausgew%C3%A4hlte_Sonaten_und_Solost%C3%BCcke_f%C3%BCr_das_Piano-forte_(Weber%2C_Carl_Maria_von)).

The final movement of the work is where we encounter the most alterations in response to the frequent extremes of range that are ineffective on Liszt's modern piano. Take, for example, one of the episodes of the *Rondo* as shown in Figure 136:

Figure 136: Weber, Piano Sonata No. 2, Op. 39, ed. and arr. Liszt: IV. *Rondo*.¹⁰²

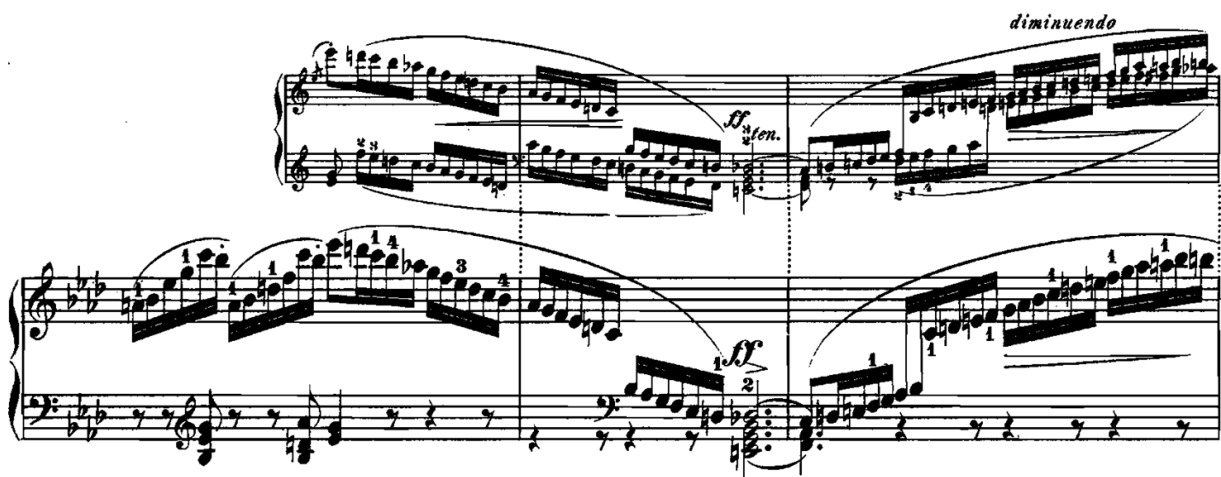
The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system consists of two grand staves (treble and bass clef). The second system consists of three grand staves, with the top two staves sharing a treble clef and the bottom staff having a bass clef. The third system consists of two grand staves. The score includes various performance markings such as *ten.*, *staccato e marcato molto*, *sempre f*, and *p*. There are also dynamic markings like *ff* and *pp*. The score is marked with *Ad.* and *ten.* throughout. The page number 67 is visible in the bottom right corner of the score.

¹⁰² Weber, *Zweite Große Sonate*, 67.

Weber's original writing here is sparse, but Liszt fills in the texture in several ways to accommodate this. Octaves are more frequent in the RH, but the most significant alteration is the LH accompaniment, where Weber's original chordal writing is thickened from two to three parts.

Liszt's modifications do not consist of just chordal passages but also extended scale passages, which would sound brilliant on a Viennese action but dull on the more modern Erard and Bechstein, especially if they are unsupported by an accompaniment figure. Playing these as parallel octaves with one hand and in tempo would be difficult and take away from the lightness and elegance of the passage. Liszt responds by adding parallel 3rds and 6ths to add to the virtuosity without changing the overall character of the passage (Figure 137). These are frequently employed in the mid-high register of the keyboard, where clarity is less of an issue:

Figure 137: Weber, Piano Sonata No. 2, Op. 39, ed. and arr. Liszt: I. *Allegro Moderato*.¹⁰³



Liszt's edition of Weber's works reflects both his role as pianist-composer amid the growing influence of the work-concept. Ironically, it is these alterations that helped stabilise Weber within the canon by reframing him as a composer worthy of serious study and performance. So, they can also be

¹⁰³ Weber, *Zweite Große Sonate*, 40, 69. Cortot does not play these alterations in his 1939 recording, perhaps due to technical difficulty or taste considerations.

seen as a way to limit performer agency, given the growing divide between composers and performers (see Chapter 3.1). This duality reveals the central tension of the period, in which reverence for the fixed musical text coexisted with a lingering culture of creative performance through textural modifications. Pianist-composers such as Liszt shaped both repertoire and performance practice.

We are also fortunate to have piano-roll recordings by Reinecke, who, having lived in the era of the *génération de 1830*, applied such practices to older repertoire. As the oldest pianist known to be recorded in any media, his playing of the canonical works reveals an interesting relationship between the “work” and the performer’s role. In 1904, the *Zeitschrift für Instrumentenbau* hailed Reinecke “as the greatest and most conscientious performer of Mozart,” so his recordings of the composer are invaluable in “[preserving] the style of the famous Leipzig Mozart-Players.”¹⁰⁴ In the earliest known Mozart recordings by the artist, we find notable examples of adding notes to expand the texture. For a Classical composer known for his lightness and transparent textures, his addition aligns with Hummel’s approach in Chapter 5.1.3 by opening the possibility of textural expansion uncommon in twentieth- and twenty-first-century performance practice. Rather than the sparse three-part texture as written on Mozart’s manuscript, Reinecke’s execution of Mozart’s famous “*Rondo Alla Turca*” provides extra voices for both as a form of accentuation, employing this technique at several instances throughout the recording, as shown in Figure 138. The top two staves show Mozart’s original as notated in the first edition, while the bottom two show a transcribed version of Reinecke’s piano roll recording—the additions indicated with small notes:

¹⁰⁴ “Reinecke gilt bekanntlich als der größte und gewissenhafteste Mozartspieler, der jetzt lebt... Weitere Aufnahmen sind in Aussicht genommen, bis auf diese Weise sämtliche Mozartschen Klavierwerke in der Auffassung des berühmten Leipziger Mozart-Spielers der Nachwelt überliefert sein werden.” Anon., “Altmeister Karl Reinecke und das Pianola,” *Zeitschrift für Instrumentenbau* (Sept. 11, 1904): 1039, quoted in Peres da Costa, *Off the Record*, 162. Translated by Peres da Costa.

Figure 138: Reinecke's Performance of W. A. Mozart, Keyboard Sonata, K. 331: III. Rondo: *Alla Turca*, bars 8-12.¹⁰⁵

Mozart (1784) etc...

Reinecke (ca. 1907) etc...

Here, the addition of notes effectively conveys the orchestral qualities and the rumbunctious nature of the Turkish march. The LH is played an octave lower, with 5ths and 6ths added in the middle voice, depending on the chord type.

In the ending of the A major section (Figure 139), rather than finish with an open octave, Reinecke adds the 3rd and 5th in the LH in a closed position for volume and richness. In the final bars of the Coda. He also does the same for the RH by continuously adding a 3rd and a 5th between the octaves for volume, even though it may be hard to execute. Perhaps most surprising is the final chord in the LH, which is played an octave lower with the same disposition of notes, a rare occurrence in Mozart's keyboard writing:

¹⁰⁵ Carl Reinecke, "Rondo alla Turca" from Mozart's Piano Sonata No. 11 in A Major, K. 331, performed on Hupfeld piano roll No. 50318 (c. 1907), Leipzig: Hupfeld, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XXapt6YRkY>. Transcribed by Hadap.

Figure 139: Reinecke’s Performance of W. A. Mozart, Keyboard Sonata, K. 331: III. *Rondo: Alla Turca*, final bars.¹⁰⁶

Reinecke’s piano-roll rendition of Mozart’s “*Rondo: Alla Turca*” exemplifies the pianist-composer’s role as mediator of the original text and contemporary performance practice. His playing provides a window into what such pianists of the era would have done and challenges evolving assumptions about the “fixed” musical work. Reinecke’s textural adaptations, at first glance, appear to contradict Busoni’s later insistence that Mozart’s music “permits in no way an adaptation to our modern pianoforte style.”¹⁰⁷ Moreover, even the twenty-first-century view that insists on Mozart, having “favored a clear, translucent sound with sparse use of pedal, and a singing melody.”¹⁰⁸ However, these recordings by Reinecke and Hummel’s arrangements of Mozart’s concertos prove otherwise.¹⁰⁹

Perhaps Busoni’s warning was not a total rejection of modifications but rather a caution against anachronistic adaptations of Mozart. In other words, he resisted modernising Mozart according to later tastes, not performing him in the spirit of Mozart’s own time. Reinecke’s performance belongs firmly

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. Transcribed by Hadap.

¹⁰⁷ J. S. Bach and Busoni, *The Well-Tempered Clavichord*, introduction.

¹⁰⁸ Robert D. Levin, “Mozart’s Solo Keyboard Music,” in *Eighteenth-Century Keyboard Music*, ed. Robert L. Marshall (London: Routledge, 2003), 314, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203427118-17>.

¹⁰⁹ See also Reinecke’s piano roll recordings of the *Adagio* from Mozart’s Keyboard Concerto, K. 488 and *Larghetto* from Mozart’s Keyboard Concerto, K. 537 as exemplars for textural modifications in “thin” writing.

to the latter approach: it does not impose early twentieth-century pianism backwards. However, it reflects an aesthetic still rooted in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, just as Hummel's modifications did. Reinecke's performance integrates elements of the Turkish style into his own playing and adapts it to the late-nineteenth-century audience.

In organ playing, the addition of notes is already built into the mechanics of the instrument by means of registration practice. In the manuals, which start from the 8' ranks, the entire premise of organ registration is the build-up of sound through the accumulation of octaves (4', 2' and 1') and sub-octaves (16', sometimes 32') of different ranks in the pedals; the 8' is almost always coupled with a 16'. Organs also have octave and sub-octave couplers on some manuals, which fulfil the same function as additions sought by pianists such as Czerny, Chopin and Reinecke.¹¹⁰ This practice is useful when the registration cannot be altered for reasons such as: it would change the overall colour, be impractical since a *tutti* registration is used, or when a loud dynamic occurs for a single instant or a short period of time.

Just as registration is adaptable, so could be the addition of octave doublings in organ music as a compromise or to complement the composer's intentions. For example, in the concluding bars of the *Allegro Moderato* from Mendelssohn's Organ Sonata, Op. 65 No. 1 (Figure 140), the editor, Hull, notes that "some players double the harmony of this phrase in the 8ve above, to secure a more brilliant conclusion."¹¹¹ Such doublings are possible since the upper three voices span less than an 8ve and can easily be played with one hand. In a *tutti* registration and with octave couplers on a large organ, it is sufficient to follow Mendelssohn's writing here (top staves of Figure 140). However, suppose the organ is small and/or without sub-octave couplers. In that case, it may be effective to "grab" as many notes of the chords as possible, as in the full-voiced, continuo style, to create the impression of a *tutti* organ (see bottom staves of Figure 140). This is possible due to the *ritard* and the *adagio* from performance

¹¹⁰ However, not all organs have these couplers, so perhaps the addition of notes can fulfil the same function for harmoniums and smaller organs without the device.

¹¹¹ Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, "Organ Sonata No. 1" in *Complete Organ Works*, edited by A. Eaglefield Hull (London: Augener Ltd., 1914), 7.

practice, which allows the performer to play thick chords without excessive technical difficulty. The reverb will create legato, which is physically impossible given multiple parts in each hand:

Figure 140: Mendelssohn, Organ Sonata, Op. 65 No. 1: I. *Allegro Moderato*, final bars. Original vs. Hull's Suggested Execution.

The image displays two musical staves for the final bars of Mendelssohn's Organ Sonata, Op. 65 No. 1, I. *Allegro Moderato*. The top system, labeled 'Mendelssohn Original 1844', shows a complex texture with multiple voices in both hands, including thick chords and a melodic line in the bass. The bottom system, labeled 'Hull's Suggested Execution', shows a simplified version of the same passage, with a more direct melodic line in the bass and a more compact texture in the upper parts. Both systems are marked 'Full Organ'.

We can apply the same principles in a similar passage. Take these concluding bars of the *Allegro* movement from Widor's Symphony No. 6, Op. 42 No. 2 (1878) at Figure 141. In addition to doubling the upper parts in 8ves, pedal notes—already doubled at the 8ve—it may be useful to play the 5th above instead to create a resultant 32' sound, especially useful when such a rank is unavailable on the organ. Therefore, the effect here is more spectacular and emphasises Widor's intention of a powerful and dramatic conclusion to the opening movement of the 6th Organ Symphony:

Figure 141: Widor, Symphony No. 6, Op. 42 No. 2: I. *Allegro*, final bars. Widor Original vs. Hadap Arrangement.¹¹²

The image displays a musical score for the final bars of the first movement of Widor's Symphony No. 6, Op. 42 No. 2. The score is presented in two systems. The top system is labeled "Allegro" and compares "Widor's Original 1878" (top two staves) with the "Hadap Arrangement" (bottom two staves). The bottom system is labeled "[molto rit.]" and "[Adagio]" and shows a more complex texture with multiple staves for both piano and organ. The score is written in a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a common time signature (C). The original score features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The Hadap arrangement expands the texture by adding lower octaves and other intervals, particularly in the organ part. The bottom system shows a transition from a "molto rit." section to an "Adagio" section, with a change in tempo and dynamics.

Therefore, the expansion of textures through the addition of lower octaves and other intervals can be applied to both piano and organ music, appearing in many nineteenth-century editions of

¹¹² Olivier Latry (b. 1962) is a French organist who frequently applies this playing in tutti passages. Since it is difficult to discern this practice from audio recordings alone (for example, from early-twentieth-century organ recordings), it is hard to know for sure whether such additions were practised, and we can only rely on anecdotal evidence.

eighteenth- and nineteenth-century works, in score annotations, and in recordings in the twentieth century. They reveal the importance of the plain-chord realisation style in harmony pedagogy and its direct application in the performance of keyboard works.

5.3.2 Modifying Texture: Reduction

Continuing from the previous chapter, the process of reduction is also a possibility in performance practice. Though much rarer, it is not merely a matter of making the music easier to play, but often reflects deeper interpretive, practical, and expressive considerations. Editors and even composers themselves have advocated omitting and simplifying the written music for specific reasons: to facilitate sight-reading, memory work, and idiomatic playing.

For example, Adam provides practical advice in his *Méthode* regarding this practice. Though they explicitly apply to accompanying the score, these principles can also be used when piano textures become quite complex. He stresses that “one of the principal aspects of accompaniment is to know how to divide the parts of a chord well,” sometimes by “subtract[ing] several notes” so that “the part of the melody stand[s] out more.” For Adam, the accompanist “[should] not [be] embarrassed for pruning superfluous notes,” since they “always know how to appropriately employ the most essential notes in a chord”—a principle he explicitly links to Catel’s *Traité d’harmonie*.¹¹³ Equally pragmatic is Adam’s recognition of physical limitation. He instructs that when passages “present an extension that small or medium-sized hands cannot reach,” the pianist should omit or redistribute inner notes, while ensuring “the highest note of the right hand” and “the lowest note in the left hand” remain intact as melody and bass, respectively.¹¹⁴ His instructions here emphasise the importance of preserving the “skeletal structure” by including melody and bass, while treating inner voices as malleable. Figure 142 shows an application of this advice: the top two staves show a composed excerpt by Adam with frequent use of

¹¹³ Adam, *Piano Method of the Conservatoire*, 229.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 84.

10ths; the bottom two staves show a reduction of the same passage, through the redistribution of the upper voices so the parts span less than one octave and can be played much more easily with one hand:

Figure 142: Adam, *Méthode de piano*. Reduction Methods.¹¹⁵

Exemple.

Andante.

The image displays a musical score example titled "Exemple." in "Andante." tempo. It is divided into two systems. The first system shows the original score for the right hand ("Main droite. Extension.") and left hand ("Main gauche."), followed by a reduction ("Exécution.") where the upper voices are redistributed to fit within a single octave range. The second system shows another example of the original score ("Extension.") and its corresponding reduction ("Exécution.")).

This advice from Adam arguably applies not only to accompanying scores but also to solo and chamber works with the piano. We could also take Adam's advice even further and remove the inner

¹¹⁵ Ibid. Interestingly, Adam's example does not effectively demonstrate his point, as it is rare for piano music to have consecutive tenths in this way. However, an orchestral piece may follow that specific disposition for parts, so Adam's advice is still useful here in that regard.

parts altogether, which would facilitate sight-reading at a fast tempo (see Chapters 4 and 5.1.2). While Adam demonstrates these techniques in practice, he rarely explains *why* they work musically. Zimmerman’s advice is more explicit about avoiding unwanted effects such as muddy or “dull” bass sonorities (already discussed in Chapter 4.3.1).¹¹⁶ Busoni extends this logic beyond practicality into aesthetics, outlining the following principles in his piano transcriptions of J. S. Bach’s organ works that often feature wide spacing between the manual and pedal parts, and the necessity for octave doublings to capture the *organo pleno* (full organ) sound:

Hiatuses in part-progression, incomplete doublings, inexact reproduction of the positions of chords, and belated or anticipated entrances, necessarily arise:—From the limited stretching capacity of the hands; or from facilitations in playing; or where there are too many parts. Frequently, only a single tone is omitted, transposed into the octave, or replaced by some other harmonic interval. With careful treatment, the effect of such omissions is *not* very disturbing.¹¹⁷

Here, Busoni articulates with absolute clarity the importance of the melody and the bass, as shown in Chapter 4.3 and the arbitrary distribution of the inner parts. What Adam and Zimmerman recommend for practical purposes, Busoni elevates to the level of aesthetics by selectively reshaping the texture, preserving as much of the “essence” as possible while adapting the media. Viewed through the lens of the work-concept, Adam, Zimmerman, and Busoni’s advice underscores a more pragmatic, performer-centred conception of the score.

Using a repertoire example, Chopin’s works offer an illuminating case study of textural modification via reduction. Having taught many amateur pupils, he often simplified textures to better suit their technical abilities, without altering the “essence” of the work. For instance, Chopin simplifies a complex tremolo figure in a copy of his Nocturne, Op. 15 No. 1, belonging to one of his pupils, Jane Stirling (1804-1859). The bottom stave, which features Chopin’s original, consists of a tremolo passage using double notes played by the RH—one of the most challenging components of piano playing. The top

¹¹⁶ “On aura le soin de ne jamais placer l’harmonie dans les octaves graves du Piano, l’effet qui en résulterait serait trop sourd.” Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie*, 3:19. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

¹¹⁷ Busoni, “On the Transcription of Bach’s Organ Works for the Pianoforte,” 172. Emphasis added.

stave shows a reduction based on Chopin's hand, transcribed from the notes crossed out by the composer (Figure 143).

Instead of rapid re-articulation across different fingers with a 1-4 and 2-5 pair, which is difficult, the right hand plays a chordal pattern that isolates the top note of the chord, which is much easier at a fast tempo and, more importantly, preserves the piece's turbulent character. A notable detail at bar 25 is the omission of the C in the tremolo figure. The purpose of this is to ensure the tremolo occurs between fingers 3 and 5 rather than 4 and 5, which, with the three-part, would be much more challenging to execute. What Chopin writes here is one possible realisation of a tremolo texture. Still, as previously discussed in Chapter 2.2.2, Fétis shows us the many ways tremolo textures can be adapted on the piano. Any slight change to the texture here should arguably be permissible so long as it does not change the overall effect. In fact, most of the tremolo solutions from Figures 34 and 35 from Chapter 2.2.2 can be used in this context—some being more effective and/or idiomatic than others:

Figure 143: Chopin, Nocturne, Op. 15 No. 1, bars 25-28. Transcribed and Fingered by Hadap.¹¹⁸

The image displays a musical score for Chopin's Nocturne, Op. 15 No. 1, bars 25-28. It is presented in two systems. The top system compares a 'Simplification of RH from Jane Stirling's Copy' with 'Chopin's Original (ca. 1830)'. The bottom system shows a further simplified version. The tempo is marked 'con fuoco' with a quarter note equal to 84. The key signature is three flats (B-flat major/C minor). The score includes fingerings (1-5) and dynamics (f) for both hands. The right hand part is a series of chords, while the left hand has a more complex arpeggiated accompaniment.

Another instance of this practice is found in the two versions of Chopin's *Fantasie-Impromptu*, Op. Post, which presents similar yet markedly different left-hand arpeggiation (Figure 144). In the earlier version (1834), the upper voice of the arpeggiation remains comparatively static; parallel 8ves and 5ths simplify execution, and fewer *voice exchanges* (a Schenkerian term) facilitate memorisation and reduce the movement required of pianists with smaller hands. By contrast, the later version (1835)—less well known in the twenty-first century and first made public by the pianist Arthur Rubinstein (1887-1982) in 1962¹¹⁹—shows more intricate and deliberate voice-leading. These “Chopinesque corrections

¹¹⁸ Fryderyk [Frédéric] Chopin, *Nokturny: op. 9, 15, 27, 32, 37, 48, 55, 62*, *Wydanie Narodowe dzieł Fryderyka Chopina. Seria A, utwory wydane za życia Chopina*; vol. 5A, ed. Jan Ekier and Paweł Kamiński (Warszawa: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne; Fundacja Wydania Narodowego, 1995), 4, Performance Commentary, https://www.chopin-nationaledition.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/nocturny_komentarz.pdf. On Jane Stirling's copy of the score, the notes are crossed out rather than written out on a separate stave.

¹¹⁹ Frédéric Chopin, *Impromptus*, ed. Jan Ekier (Wien: Wiener Urtext Edition, 2016), VIII.

of the accompaniment” include voice exchanges and transfers (in Schenkerian terms), more frequent 10ths, and wider intervals that demand rapid expansion and contraction of the hand.¹²⁰

The difference in approach between the two versions raises intriguing questions about performance practice and the nature of the musical text. Let us imagine, hypothetically, that the 1835 version was the one preserved in *Friedrich Chopins Werke* published by Breitkopf & Härtel in the 1870s, while the 1834 version had been lost. In that case, a performer might choose to simplify the left-hand to something akin to the earlier version. This endeavour reduces the technical demands while retaining the musical “essence.” Conversely, if the 1834 version were the sole surviving text, a pianist could “improve” the accompaniment to the 1835 version, effectively polishing the composer’s writing.

Ultimately, the coexistence of both versions demonstrates that the evolution of a musical text can justify changes in either direction. Whether one chooses to simplify or refine the musical text should remain incumbent on *both* the performer and composer, guided by technical practicality, stylistic integrity, and artistic intent:

¹²⁰ Ibid.

This highlights a recurring principle of this chapter: the performer may simplify textures while preserving musical character and voice-leading. Again, for Chopin, who “[resented sharply] any deliberate misreading of [his own] compositions,”¹²² the reduction of these notes appears to contradict his own advice, prompting us to analyse *what* exactly constitutes a “deliberate misreading.” According to the composer’s alterations, this act is more about capturing the “essence” of the music than adhering strictly to the literal notes.

Based on a range of evidence from historical editions with inked additions or deletions, pianists’ revisions in teaching copies, and various piano methods, textural reduction and redistribution are not exceptions but part of an established tradition. Even on modern pianos with a greater range and power, the performer may choose to simplify or redistribute for musical and/or practical reasons. Later in the nineteenth century, demand would increase for fidelity to every notated element, treating any adjustments as a betrayal of the composer’s authority, while Adam and others, however, treated such alterations as legitimate acts of performance.

5.3.3 Old Music on New Pianos: Re-writing for the Expanding Instrument

With the rapid development of the piano, composers in the early nineteenth century were compelled to adapt their writing to the ever-expanding capabilities of the instrument. One of the most notable changes was the extension of the keyboard range. However, due to the lack of international standardisation and the sheer number of pianos being manufactured with varying specifications, composers faced a challenging dilemma with technical and aesthetic consequences: whether to write for the newest instruments or risk alienating pianists with older models by constraining their writing to outdated specifications. This chapter explores these questions by focusing on piano writing around 1810, a moment when the instrument and its repertoire were coevolving.

¹²² Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 65.

Beethoven, “[living] at a time of noteworthy advances in all aspects of piano construction,”¹²³ often reached the extremes of the available keyboard range, sometimes inelegantly. In the *Presto* of his Sonata, Op. 10 No. 3 (Figure 145), for example, he includes both an E1 in bar 15 and an F#6 in bar 22, notes that would not have existed on his 1798 piano (indicated by the editor with brackets). When these notes finally became available on newer pianos, Beethoven made use of them emphatically, as seen in the *Presto* of his Sonata, Op. 101 (Figure 146). Such extensions were so “innovative” at the time that Beethoven even asked his publisher, Haslinger, to “put the letter names [*Contra E*] beside the new lower notes... to identify them for the performer.”¹²⁴ In this case, Beethoven’s treatment of register—especially in his later piano works—reflects a belief in the piano’s future development. Still, his music nevertheless assumed a fixed ideal that later performers were expected to reproduce:¹²⁵

Figure 145: Beethoven, Piano Sonata, Op. 10 No. 3: I. *Presto*, bars 13-22.¹²⁶



¹²³ William S. Newmann, *Beethoven on Beethoven: Playing His Piano Music His Way* (W. W. Norton & Company Inc., 1991), 58.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 58-59.

¹²⁵ For information on this subject, see Newmann, *Beethoven on Beethoven*, 57-62.

¹²⁶ Ludwig van Beethoven, “Sonate D-dur, Op. 10, Nr. 3” in *Klaviersonaten Band I*, ed. Bertha Antonia Wallner (München-Duisburg: Henle Verlag, 1976), 124.

Figure 146: Beethoven, Piano Sonata, Op. 101: IV. *Presto*, bars 213-31.¹²⁷

By contrast, Daniel Steibelt (1765-1823) adopted a more flexible approach. His music frequently includes *ossia* passages that allow performers to choose between versions suited to older or newer pianos. These can be found throughout the pieces in his *Méthode de piano* (ca. 1809), which was clearly intended to increase accessibility and sales by accommodating players with different instruments. In the final piece of his method, a version of his famous *Rondo Pastoral* from the Third Piano Concerto “*L’Orage*” arranged for piano solo, many *ossias* are given that suggest the “work” is not one fixed text, but something closer to a realisation of an underlying “skeletal structure” that is adaptable to specific instruments and situations. Figure 147 shows one particularly brilliant passage from the concerto written for the expanded upper range of newer pianos (up to C6), written in larger staves. To cater for older

¹²⁷ Ludwig van Beethoven, “Sonate, Op. 101” in *Klaviersonaten Band II*, ed. Bertha Antonia Wallner (München-Duisburg: Henle Verlag, 1976), 223.

pianos, Steibelt also provides an *ossia* that reconstructs the melodic contour rather than merely displacing the passage by an octave, as shown by the smaller upper staves. This suggests that musical “essence” resides not in literal pitches but in other factors such as rhythm, texture, and contour. The “work,” in this case, transcends the written score:

Figure 147: Steibelt, Piano Concerto No. 3: III. *Rondo Pastoral* “L’Orage.”¹²⁸

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¹²⁸ Daniel Steibelt, *Méthode de piano, ou l’art d’enseigner cet instrument* (Paris: Imbault, n.d. [ca. 1809]), 160, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Musique, VM8 S-627, <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb432834628>. This piece was very popular in its time, and many composers arranged it. For example, C. -V. Alkan’s Op. 1 (composed at 14 years old) was a set of variations on the movement’s principal subject; Zimmerman also created an arrangement of an excerpt of this concerto for four hands, which can be found in his *Encyclopédie*, 1:42-45.

Zimmerman, in his *Encyclopédie*, was also a strong advocate for such alterations. He encouraged performers to adjust passage work for newer, expanded keyboards. He warns, however, that such changes must be made with taste and stylistic awareness. Uninformed alterations may damage the character of the piece or obscure the composer's intentions. This is why Zimmerman believed such decisions should be made by those trained in harmony, counterpoint, and musical composition.

To demonstrate this, Zimmermann offers a hypothetical expansion of a passage from Beethoven's *Pathétique* Sonata, Op. 13, proposing an alternative realisation to the "imperfect" passage that the composer might have used had his piano allowed it (Figure 148). From a compositional standpoint, this makes sense: the phrase must ascend further, mirroring the pattern that begins each iteration of the sequence. However, Beethoven's 1801 piano imposes limits that modern performers can justifiably overcome:

Figure 148: Beethoven, Piano Sonata Op. 13: I. *Grave - Allegro di molto e con brio*, bars 38-49.¹²⁹

The figure displays three musical staves. The top staff is labeled 'Zimmerman (1840)' and shows a melodic line with a dotted line and the number '8' indicating an octave extension. The middle staff is labeled 'Beethoven (1799:1976)' and shows the original melodic line. The bottom staff is labeled 'LH part' and shows a continuous eighth-note accompaniment. Below this, a section titled 'Small notes realised by Hadap' shows a continuation of the melodic line with a dotted line and the number '8' indicating an octave extension, ending with 'etc...'. The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and the time signature is common time (C).

¹²⁹ Transcribed from Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie*, 2:60; Beethoven, "Grande Sonate Pathétique, Op. 13" in *Klaviersonaten Band I*, ed. Bertha Antonia Wallner (München-Duisburg: Henle Verlag, 1976), 146.

Zimmerman also offers this kind of adaptability in his *Fantaisie*, Op. 3, where high-register textures are rewritten with *ossia* versions for older instruments (Figure 149). For the pianist-composer, such flexibility was the norm. The very fact that these *ossias* exist demonstrates a mindset before the later work-concept, when the musical text was still regarded as provisional and adaptable rather than definitive (even if it would “betray” the composer’s intentions):

Figure 149: Zimmerman, *Fantaisie sur l'air "Salut ô sol hospitalier,"* Op. 3. 8th Variation.¹³⁰

The image displays a page of musical notation for the 8th variation of a fantasia. It consists of five systems of grand staff notation (treble and bass clefs). The music is highly technical, featuring rapid sixteenth-note passages and complex chordal textures. Performance markings include 'loco' (indicating a change in articulation), 'Cres.' (crescendo), and 'Ped.' (pedal). Dynamics range from piano (p) to fortissimo (ff). The score ends with a double bar line and a star symbol.

As the issue of range became especially prevalent at the turn of the nineteenth century, when the piano was evolving rapidly, this raises a critical interpretive question: if a passage was initially written for a smaller-range piano, and no *ossia* exists, should modern performers with extended keyboards recompose

¹³⁰ Joseph-Pierre Zimmerman, *Fantaisie sur l'air "Salut ô sol hospitalier,"* Op. 3 (Paris: Auguste Leduc, [n.d.]), 9, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Fantaisie_sur_l'air_%27Salut_%C3%B4_sol_hospitalier%27,_Op.3_\(Zimmermann,_Joseph\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Fantaisie_sur_l'air_%27Salut_%C3%B4_sol_hospitalier%27,_Op.3_(Zimmermann,_Joseph)).

the passage to suit their instrument? Steibelt, Zimmerman, Chopin, Liszt, and Reinecke—all of them pianist-composers have demonstrated that the answer is yes.

Conversely, Czerny offers contrary advice that conflicts with Beethoven's own considerations, "and generally all classical authors."¹³¹ He writes:

The player must by no means allow himself to alter the composition, nor make any addition or abbreviation. In those pianoforte pieces also, which were written for the five octave instruments of former times, the attempt to employ the sixth octave, by means of additions, is *always* unfavourable.¹³² (Emphasis added)

Despite this advice, Newmann argues that Beethoven himself considered making such changes to his piano sonatas up to Op. 49 "to take advantage of the wider ranges that had become available"—a project he never realised.¹³³ Czerny's advice here is somewhat counterintuitive, not only because Beethoven himself considered making such changes, but as we have already seen in his own editions of J. S. Bach (Chapter 5.3.1), he adds the contra octaves in the LH, so how are we supposed to follow this advice from someone who fails to follow it himself?

The "constant and unidirectional" evolution of the keyboard shows pianist-composers' flexibility regarding their use of the instrument.¹³⁴ While it is true that the relationship between composers and builders suggests a conception of the musical "work" as something realised through the capabilities of the instrument, we also see the opposite, as pianist-composers frequently played older works on newer keyboard instruments. For the latter, there was no immediate concern for "authenticity" regarding the selection of the original "intended" instrument, but rather, "understanding the possibilities and limitations of the instruments that composers had at their disposal."¹³⁵ This shows pianist-composers' complex relationship with the work-concept, both as embracers and challengers to the phenomenon.

¹³¹ Czerny, "On the Proper Performance of All Beethoven's for Piano Solo," in *Carl Czerny, Pianoforte School*, Op. 500, trans. J. A. Hamilton (R. Cocks & Co., [1839]), 4:32.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ William S. Newmann, *Beethoven on Beethoven: Playing His Piano Music His Way* (W. W. Norton & Company; Inc., 1991), 62.

¹³⁴ Doran, "Introduction: Virtuosity and Liszt," 6.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

5.3.4 Ornamentation and the Question of *Taste*

The final textural modification to be discussed in this chapter is ornamentation, which, unlike other alterations that may arise from practical necessity, is pursued almost exclusively for aesthetic purposes. Ornamentation not only complicates the surface of the texture but also directly raises questions of *taste*, fashion, and the performer's relationship to the written score, making it a uniquely revealing aspect of the pianist-composer's art. Ornamentation, in this sense, sits at the very fault line of the emerging work-concept. What was once a fluid and improvisatory practice in Mozart's time became increasingly fixed in notation by Chopin's era, even as older performing traditions continued.

Nineteenth-century pianist-composers approached textural modifications liberally across a wide range of music, from J. S. Bach through to their contemporaries—a natural extension of performance practice. For modern pianists, however, the issue of taste is more pressing. Czerny provides a short commentary on this matter in his *School of Practical Composition*, written at a time when the practice of ornamentation was shifting, with expectations changing for both composers and performers. As an “offspring of fashion,” Czerny's remarks highlight how ornaments are not timeless entities but socially and historically conditioned. For example, he notes that cadential formulas that were once regarded as “charming” later fell into “bad taste,” only to be replaced by newer idioms.¹³⁶ For the pianist-composer, this underscores their dual responsibility: to invent or adapt ornaments that reflect current tastes while still demonstrating their compositional skill (as previously shown in Hummel's arrangement of Mozart's keyboard concertos in Chapter 5.1.3).

Czerny's remarks also reveal the tension between stability and volatility in ornamentation. The “few notes” added, omitted, or modified by the performer are decisions that blur the line between composition and performance. However, his insistence was that ornaments must be “new and pleasing” and added “*at the right places*,”¹³⁷ showing how taste became a regulating force as fidelity to the text

¹³⁶ Czerny, *School of Practical Composition*, 1:88.

¹³⁷ Ibid. Emphasis original.

increasingly restricted performers' freedoms. For Czerny, the critical question was not whether they *should* be added, but rather *how* they are added.¹³⁸ Since embellishments are “an offspring of fashion,” one should consider: does this mean that ornaments deliberately composed as integral to the development and form of a work may be altered? This is a difficult question to answer, but it points directly to the balance between fidelity and fluidity that lies at the core of the pianist-composer's craft.

Historically, ornamentation was an expressive component of performance central to both performers and composers. C. P. E. Bach called ornaments indispensable: they “enliven tones,” clarify structure, and heighten expression—without them, “the best melody is empty and ineffective.” Yet he also warned that their “poor” or excessive use could obscure the music, which is why many composers specified ornaments directly in the score rather than leave them to “tasteless performers.”¹³⁹ Daniel Gottlob Türk (1750–1810) likewise stressed that ornaments must suit the “character of the composition,” equal or surpass the given melody, and appear effortless.¹⁴⁰ Above all, they “must be based on the given harmony,” since deviations risk undermining the entire texture.¹⁴¹ Zimmerman echoes these sentiments with one word: “sobriety,” which is “one of the qualities” that a musician must possess when applying ornaments, especially if the “melody belongs to a great master.”¹⁴² This duality—ornamentation as both indispensable and risky—runs throughout eighteenth and nineteenth-century discourse. It is for this reason that they will always be scrutinised regarding their employment in the repertoire, irrespective of era and style.

This tension is frequently encountered in Mozart, whose notated embellishments complicate the performer's role. As Irving observes, Mozart often writes “all the embellishments already, leaving no

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ C. P. E. Bach. *Essay*, 79.

¹⁴⁰ Daniel Gottlob Türk, *School of Clavier Playing or Instructions in Playing the Clavier for Teachers and Students*, trans. and ed. Raymond H. Hagg (Lincoln, NE, and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1982 [1789]), 312-14.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² “La sobriété doit être une des qualités du musicien qui ajoute des ornements à une mélodie, surtout si cette mélodie appartient à un grand maître.” Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie*, 2:60. Translated by the author with the aid of Google Translate and ChatGPT-5.

room for the player to embellish it.”¹⁴³ The problem intensifies when, as Bandy notes, “embellishments occur in more closely juxtaposed phrases,” making the ornaments themselves integral to the development of thematic material.¹⁴⁴ This blurs the distinction between written and improvised elements, recalling this thesis’ earlier discussions of improvisation’s absorption into formal genres such as the sonata or concerto (see Chapter 2.1.3).

The intended audience and use for the text may also determine the suitability of the ornaments. For example, works dedicated to pupils and amateur players may require a highly detailed text (as previously shown with performance editions in Chapter 3.2.2) in terms of the actual notes to play and the performance markings (dynamics, articulation, expressive markings), while Mozart’s “sketchier” autographs left room for elaboration (see Chapter 5.1.3).¹⁴⁵ The *Adagio* from Mozart’s Sonata in C minor, K. 457, cast in rondo form, offers a particularly revealing case study in ornamentation through its seven-bar reprise. Figure 150 shows Duvois’ edition of the work, which presents the three variations as three superimposed pairs of staves for reference. In the autograph manuscript, Mozart writes “*Da capo 7 Takt*” as a time-saving device. However, another source contains two alternative sets of ornaments for these reprises, reflecting Mozart’s typical practice of what Bandy calls “pacing” embellishments across returns. As he argues, “embellishments added in rondos would need to compensate by advertising their presence through sheer density.”¹⁴⁶ For this sonata, one may ask why Mozart did not simply write out the ornaments into each reprise from the outset?

¹⁴³ John Irving, *Understanding Mozart’s Piano Sonatas* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010), 126.

¹⁴⁴ Dorian Bandy, “Thema Da Capo: Another Look at Mozart’s Embellishments,” *Eighteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge) 19, no. 1 (2022): 43, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1478570621000233>.

¹⁴⁵ Bandy, “Thema Da Capo,” 39.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 43.

Figure 150: W. A. Mozart, Keyboard Sonata [K. 457]: II. *Adagio*. Ornaments written out for each reprise for comparison.¹⁴⁷

ADAGIO DE LA SONATE EN UT MINEUR.

W. MOZART.

1^{re} fois. MÉLODIE SIMPLE.

2^e fois. MÉLODIE BRODÉE ET VARIÉE.

3^e fois. id.

1. MÉLODIE SIMPLE.

2.

3.

H. 5721 (8)

¹⁴⁷ W. A. Mozart, “Adagio de la sonate en ut mineur,” in Duvois, *Le Mécanisme du piano appliqué à l’étude de l’harmonie*, 7:28. Most articulations and dynamics are editorial. The pedal markings are by Duvois.

Wolf suggests that the Adagio may predate the outer movements, noting its different paper, ink, and notational features. Likely composed first as a teaching piece for his pupil Therese von Trattner (1758-1793), it uses clefs and key signatures on every staff, unlike the rest of the sonata, pointing to its pedagogical function. In addition, Mozart also drafted ornaments for the two thematic returns (“*bey der ersten Reprise*” and “*bey der 2ten Reprise*”), less “polished” than the 1st edition by Artaria but revealing a version of plain reprises and more elaborate versions, perhaps for Trattner’s benefit.¹⁴⁸

This raises a crucial historical question: what would have happened had Mozart published the sonata with literal repeats of the reprise? In a pre-work-concept context, Mozart and his contemporaries would have taken ornamentation for granted, freely adding ornaments at each return. In work-concept culture, however, fidelity to the text became paramount, and performers would have played literal repetitions without any ornaments (variation might have been created through tempo modifications, articulation, and pedalling—modifications that are less susceptible to criticism). Mozart’s preserved draft ornaments are therefore a rare and invaluable glimpse into his own expectations for the ornamentation practice of his own works, and perhaps by extension, his contemporaries.

The pedagogical context is key here. Written for an amateur student, the *Adagio* provides both the plain reprise *and* its ornamented variants (after writing down the former), offering a model for tasteful ornamentation similar to the famous varied reprise sonatas of C. P. E. Bach, in particular (Wq. 50, 1758–59). For professional performers, Mozart would most likely have expected improvisation based on the opening measures rather than a literal repetition of his written examples. Yet within the framework of the work-concept, these notated ornaments became fixed artefacts, preserved as “museum” pieces rather than as a living practice. What once offered a flexible palette of expressive possibilities is transformed into a single “snapshot...at a single moment in his creative development” with novelty

¹⁴⁸ Eugene K. Wolf, “The Rediscovered Autograph of Mozart’s Fantasy and Sonata in C Minor, K. 475/457,” *The Journal of Musicology* 10, no. 1 (1992): 22-23, <https://doi.org/10.2307/763559>.

quickly lost.¹⁴⁹ The performer is then left to try to make these ornaments “sound” spontaneous and fresh.

This duality might be visualised in a typology (Table 16):

Table 16: A Typology of Ornamentation in Mozart, *Adagio* from Sonata K. 457.

	The 7 bars written without ornaments (hypothetical)	The 7 bars written with ornaments (actual)
Pre-Work-Concept	Performers improvise ornaments freely at each reprise.	Performers improvise ornaments that reinvent or depart even further from Mozart’s notated versions.
Post-Work-Concept	Performers play literal repeats with no variation, “locked” into text fidelity.	Performers repeat Mozart’s notated ornaments identically each time, preserving at least one avenue of creativity but quickly exhausting novelty.

These four scenarios illustrate how Mozart’s own practice complicates the division between composition and performance. His written ornaments may offer a provisional solution for amateurs or professionals seeking consistency across multiple performances (performers still play the same set of ornaments in the twenty-first century). However, the question remains whether the composer’s modifications should be regarded as “fixed” works (*Fassung letzter Hand*) or as improvisation models that provide performers with a licence to modify the score in a similar way.

Chopin, by contrast, integrated embellishments so thoroughly into his written score that performers faced a different challenge: how to create variation when the page was already saturated with ornaments (i.e. ornaments on top of ornaments). His nocturnes, especially the famous Op. 9 No. 2, exemplify a style of ornamentation that reflects the aesthetic ideals of his time—akin to the vocal flourishes of Bellini, Donizetti and Rossini from the Italian *bel canto* tradition. Notably, he himself rarely repeated ornaments verbatim, “[liking] here and there to add [them].”¹⁵⁰ Wishing to preserve them, “Chopin replaced [the written text] with a ravishing figuration[s] which he copied into the scores of his favourite

¹⁴⁹ Bandy, “Thema Da Capo,” 40.

¹⁵⁰ Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 52.

pupils.”¹⁵¹ As Kiorpes observes, “no performer of his works can afford to view the delivery of the ornaments as unworthy of the most serious consideration.”¹⁵² Figure 151 shows the various ornaments of the same recurring passage of the Nocturne, Op. 9 No. 2, as annotated by his pupils:

Figure 151: Chopin, Nocturne, Op. 9 No. 2a. Ornaments for each corresponding section.¹⁵³

The image displays a musical score for Chopin's Nocturne, Op. 9 No. 2a, in B-flat major, 4/4 time. It is divided into four systems of staves, each representing a different section of the piece. The first system (Bars 22-24) is in the treble clef and features a trill (tr) on the final note of the phrase. The second system (Bars 14-16) also in the treble clef, shows a mordent (mw) on the final note. The third system (Bars 5-7) in the treble clef has a mordent (mw) on the final note. The fourth system (Bars 1-3) is in the bass clef and shows a mordent (mw) on the final note. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings. A first ending bracket labeled '8' spans the first two systems, and a second ending bracket labeled '2' spans the last two systems. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 78. Many editions of Chopin’s works, edited by his pupils, feature these variants.

¹⁵² George A. Kiorpes, “The Performance of Ornaments in the Works of Chopin” (D.M.A. diss., Boston University, 1975), 426.

¹⁵³ After Chopin, *Nokturny*, ed. Jan Ekier, 22-25. The LH for each iteration also contains slight variations, but the harmony and texture are identical. Only the first iteration at bars 1-3 has been transcribed in this excerpt.

Ekier underscores this point, noting that “sources reveal that when performing the piece Chopin introduced (or recommended the introduction of) only a few variants at a time.”¹⁵⁴ Unlike Mozart, who tended to write out entire sets of ornaments in one go, Chopin’s practice unfolded gradually across his teaching and performing career. For this reason, it makes little sense to speak of an “original” versus an “ornamented” version of works like the Nocturne, Op. 9 No. 2. His continuous revisions suggest his lingering affinity with the pre-work-concept ideal of a fluid text, even as he felt the pressures of compositional aesthetics oriented toward the fixed text—the pianist-composer dichotomy. This might also be represented by a typology (Table 17):

Table 17: A Typology of Ornamentation in Chopin, Nocturne, Op. 9 No. 2.

	Original Version (Op. 9 No. 2)	Ornamented “Version” (Op. 9 No. 2a)
How Chopin performed	Improvise ornaments freely at each reprise.	Improvise ornaments that depart even further from his notated variants.
How Others Performed	Performers play music as written with no variation, “locked” into text fidelity. Variations already written preserve at least one avenue of creativity.	Performers can choose which ornaments to add or omit. Although bound by text fidelity, the abundance of ornaments preserves multiple—albeit a narrow domain of performance possibilities.

Ornamentation, in Chopin’s hands, became not only decorative but also appears constitutive of an *original* or *authentic* voice. However, Schumann’s stern warning in his *Advice to Young Musicians*—“Consider it an *abomination* to alter works of good composers, to omit parts of them, or to insert new-fashioned ornaments”—appears at odds with this view.¹⁵⁵ Yet, as Isserlis suggests, Schumann’s caution is less a prohibition of ornamentation than a plea for taste.¹⁵⁶ Indeed, historical evidence shows that composers themselves, including Chopin and Liszt, ornamented their own works in performance. The

¹⁵⁴ Chopin, *Nokturny*, 3, Performance Commentary.

¹⁵⁵ Steven Isserlis and Robert Schumann, *Robert Schumann’s Advice to Young Musicians* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017), 47. Emphasis added.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

genuine concern was maintaining stylistic integrity, which links back to this thesis' earlier argument with organ music (Chapter 2.1.5): should text-fidelity occur to the musical text or the musical style?

So far, the examples shown assume that ornaments should remain within the composer's vernacular. While this grants the performer some freedom, it still binds them to the work-concept, positioning them as servants to the composer's authority. True liberation would allow performers to ornament according to their own style, such as Hummel's arrangements of Mozart concertos (see Chapter 5.1.3). His bravura-style embellishments conform to the expectations of musical practice of his time, depart from Mozart's aesthetic, yet remain musically convincing, showing that ornaments and other textural modifications need not strictly conform to the composer's original style.

Ultimately, such liberties were conditioned by *audience expectations*. For example, listeners in Hummel's time anticipated modernised, virtuosic treatments of earlier works; their aesthetic norms encouraged performers to renew familiar repertoire through textural modifications.¹⁵⁷ By contrast, contemporary audiences generally expect ornaments to remain faithful to the composer's style. A jazz-inspired cadenza in a Classical concerto, for instance, would now seem jarring, even if it has occasionally been attempted.¹⁵⁸ The distinction lies not in the act of textural modifications itself, but in how cultural expectations determine what is *tasteful*. This thesis, therefore, argues that the performer's freedom to apply textural modifications could be understood in relation to the expectations of their own audience, just as Hummel's was in his (see Chapter 4.4.3).

The shifting aesthetics also carry practical consequences: what an earlier performer might have altered freely now often feels untouchable, and vice versa. Thus, the same principles of taste that guide interpretation (see Chapter 3.1.2) also shape how and when ornamentation can be applied in practice. For music composed before the work-concept, ornamentation faces less scrutiny since the performer

¹⁵⁷ For an extensive discussion on Hummel's arrangements regarding the composer and audience aesthetic, see Irene Margarete Setiawan, "Serving Two Masters: Hummel's Arrangement of Mozart's Piano Concerto in C Major, K. 503 (ca. 1828)" (DMA thesis, University of British Columbia, 2019).

¹⁵⁸ See Bobby McFerrin, cond., *The Mozart Sessions*, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Chick Corea, piano (Sony Classical SK 68479, 1996). The cadenzas to Mozart's Keyboard Concerto, K. 488, demonstrate this.

needs only to build upon an already existing and probably “skeletal” text. Since there is a wide gap between the composer’s text and the limits of intelligibility and taste, the performer has more artistic license to find this “ideal.” This provides more varied performances over time. Ornamentation in music after the work-concept is more vulnerable to criticism since the composers themselves not only wrote out the ornamentation but are also always in a constant state of flux.

Thus, ornamentation can be viewed along a continuum from “stable” (structurally fixed) to “volatile” (open to variation), depending on how much the texture invites or resists performer intervention. For instance, Corelli’s skeletal sonata textures invite elaboration, whereas a similar sparseness in a Chopin nocturne resists it. Even dense or chordal writing may occupy either end of this spectrum, as Busoni’s arrangements demonstrate, showing how context determines whether a texture can be adapted. Understanding a two-part contrapuntal reduction underlying a texture (as developed in CD exercises) helps the performer understand where and how ornaments might tastefully occur.¹⁵⁹ Table 18 shows the distinction and various examples of these two categories:

¹⁵⁹ It is less common for ornaments to be applied to lower parts when they do not assume a melodic role.

Table 18: “Volatile” and “Stable” writing in the Common Practice Period

Type of Writing	Definition	Historical Context and Characteristics	Examples
“Stable” (Structurally Fixed)	Writing where harmony, texture, and rhythm are saturated or self-sufficient, leaving little room for additional notes.	Such passages feature rich contrapuntal textures, dense figuration, or deliberate sparseness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fugal or canonic textures (e.g., J. S. Bach) where extra notes distort voice-leading and clarity of the counterpoint. • Virtuoso figurations and textures fully occupying all registers (e.g., Liszt’s <i>Transcendental Études</i>). • Expressive stillness (e.g., Debussy <i>Preludes</i>).
“Volatile” (Open to Variation)	Writing that leaves harmonic ambiguity and/or rhythmic freedom for elaboration, diminution, or recomposition. Texture and structure are incomplete by design or convention.	Volatility depends on the performer’s ability to supply ornamentation or recomposed variants. This “openness” depends on the era, which may be stylistic, idiomatic, or expressive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corelli or Handel solo/trio sonatas: skeletal outer voices invite diminutions. • Homophonic accompaniment under a melody (e.g., Mozart’s slow movements). • Written-out ornaments serving as models for further elaboration (e.g., Chopin nocturnes, Mozart sonatas in general).

Thus, ornamentation not only emerges as an essential practice that operates along a spectrum between stability and volatility. When approached this way, it reconnects performance with the pianist-composer tradition, where the boundary between composition and performance was more fluid than fixed.

Taste also applies to texture modifications that consider the evolving keyboard. For example, rather than always playing at the full range of the keyboard, it is sometimes important to consider when instrumental limitations themselves become an inherent part of expression. Beethoven, who was infamous for writing beyond his instrument’s range (see Chapter 5.3.3), offers a telling case in the third movement of his Piano Sonata, Op. 31 No. 2 (Figure 152). At the recapitulation, the passage is transposed up a 4th, but his 1801 Viennese piano reached only to F6, falling short of the required G6 or Bb6 to match the corresponding section in the exposition. Casella remarks in his performance edition of the

work that some modern editors extend the line to the higher notes, but that this “serious alteration” disturbs the “beautiful harmonies” it produces.¹⁶⁰

Figure 152: Beethoven, Piano Sonata, Op. 31 No. 2: III. *Allegretto*, bars 303-16.¹⁶¹



Here, the limited range produces a soprano pedal point against a rising middle part, heightening the tension more effectively than the “correct” transposition with broken octaves would have accomplished. Texturally, this is a critical section where recomposition sits at the crossroads of taste and changing performance expectations.

In terms of ornaments, works such as Chopin’s *Ballade No. 4, Op. 52*—a work that resembles a sonata/variation hybrid— demonstrates a different kind of problem. Each reprise of the main subject features complex variation in texture and ornamentation. Adding or manipulating ornaments here might distort the structure and motivic development. This represents an extreme version of Bandy’s point about Mozart: sometimes the surface is already so decorated that further intervention might threaten to

¹⁶⁰ Ludwig van Beethoven, *Sonate per pianoforte*, ed. Alfredo Casella (Milano: Ricordi, 1919–20), 2:104, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Sonate_per_pianoforte_\(Beethoven,_Ludwig_van\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Sonate_per_pianoforte_(Beethoven,_Ludwig_van)).

¹⁶¹ Ludwig van Beethoven, “Sonate, Op. 31 Nr. 2” in *Klaviersonaten Band II*, ed. Bertha Antonia Wallner (München-Duisburg: Henle Verlag, 1976), 47.

undermine the work. Although it would not be surprising if Chopin himself had ornamented such a work, it stemmed most likely from an improvisation.

Performers should also recognise when texture and register are integral to the meaning of the work. Alkan's "Chanson de la folle au bord de la mer" from his *Préludes*, Op. 31 (Figure 153), for instance, relies on unorthodox sonorities: closed-position chords in the low bass register and a sparse, ghostly melody. Any attempt to "improve" this texture by adding octaves or figurations would weaken its haunting effect.

Figure 153: Alkan, *Préludes*, Op. 31 No. 8, "Chanson de la folle au bord de la mer."¹⁶²

16

N° 8.

CHANSON DE LA FOLLE AU BORD DE LA MER.
Gesang der Wahnsinnigen am Meeresgestade.

Lento. Tristo.

PIANO
ou
ORGUE.

Ped. *sostenuto.* *p* *Pedale sempre. molto sostenuto.*

The image shows a page of a musical score for piano or organ. It features three systems of music. The first system is a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The bass clef part consists of dense, low-register chords. The treble clef part has a sparse, melodic line. Pedal markings are present: 'Ped. sostenuto.' in the first system, 'p' in the second, and 'Pedale sempre. molto sostenuto.' in the third. The tempo is marked 'Lento.' and the mood 'Tristo.' The title is 'CHANSON DE LA FOLLE AU BORD DE LA MER. Gesang der Wahnsinnigen am Meeresgestade.' and the number 'N° 8.' is centered above the title. The page number '16' is in the top left corner.

¹⁶² Charles-Valentin Alkan, *25 Préludes dans tous les tons majeurs et mineurs pour piano ou orgue* (Berlin: A.M. Schlesinger, n.d. [ca. 1847]), 1:16, [https://imslp.org/wiki/25_Pr%C3%A9ludes,_Op.31_\(Alkan,_Charles-Valentin\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/25_Pr%C3%A9ludes,_Op.31_(Alkan,_Charles-Valentin))

Therefore, the decision to modify a score depends on prevailing aesthetic norms. For example, adding contra octaves in the bass voice to J. S. Bach's keyboard works might be heard as tasteful, while doing the same to Alkan or Ravel's risks undermining the *essence* of the work (see Chapter 5.1.1). The goal of this proposed theory of performance is not to erase or criticise the flaws of the work-concept, but to situate it within a continuum of practice. At one end, strict fidelity to the score, and on the other, fluidity that invites modification. At the centre stands the nineteenth-century pianist-composer whose practices might be thoughtfully emulated by performers in the twenty-first century, balancing the demands of both ends of the continuum and guided always by the continually evolving criterion of taste.

Therefore, textural modifications, though seemingly trivial on the surface, carry significant weight. In today's "museum" culture of performance, where standard repertoire is well-known, any departure from the notated score risks being scrutinised. Yet the question is not whether such changes are "right" or "wrong," but whether they may be accepted as viable performance practices rooted in historical examples. If the pianist-composer tradition teaches us anything, it is that fidelity to the "essence" of the music, rather than the written text, should guide our interpretive choices and technical execution of these works.

6 Epilogue: The Pianist-Composer in the Twenty-First Century

To become a true pianist-composer for the nineteenth-century musician was to undergo one of the most demanding musical apprenticeships imaginable: mastering every pianistic figuration, learning the complexities of detailed harmony and sight-reading any score as fluently as piano solo works, and applying improvisation in daily practice. This learning journey was arduous and took decades to fully master. With time being the ultimate commodity, the difficulties of pursuing performance and composition simultaneously took a toll on many pianist-composers. Rimm notes that “Busoni, Godowsky, and Rachmaninov, with their many additional activities, suffered from ill health, overwork, stress, and fatigue that shortened their lives.”¹ Is the pursuit of this tradition a valuable endeavour in an era of specialisation? In the early 2000’s, Kocsis believed that the future of classical music would require the reunification of the composer and performer:

In the recent past, composers generally have not played an instrument properly, nor have instrumentalists been interested in composing. Sooner or later it will unite again. I would very much like to believe that the future will bring more Busonis and Rachmaninovs.²

This thesis has argued throughout that the nineteenth-century pianist-composer embodied this duality. Let us use Chopin as the exemplar pianist-composer, and examine how his training and practices embody the different sections of this thesis. A gifted pianist and improviser, he was trained in his youth solely by Josef Elsner (1769-1854) in a compositional method that prized fluency over originality, and he gravitated to the lighter Pleyel piano and a more “classical” idiom featuring the *stile brillante*. As Chapter 2 showed, his political exile as a result of the 1830 Uprising and yearning for the return to his native country, Poland, became a catalyst for originality, authenticity, and the “national flavor” of his

¹ Rimm, *The Composer-Pianists*, 257.

² *Ibid.*, 255-56.

compositions, paving the way for a nationalist approach in music that would become increasingly prevalent in the later nineteenth century.³

In his teaching, he became increasingly concerned with authenticity, and “[resented sharply] any deliberate misreading of [his own] compositions.”⁴ Pupils preserved his oral and written instructions and later codified them in performance editions that became vehicles for transmitting performance practice beyond the score. Yet, in time, this proliferation of annotated editions provoked the opposite reaction: the Urtext movement, seeking to strip away layers of performing traditions and recover a “pure” text, a *Fassung letzter Hand*. Nevertheless, as Chapter 3 showed, neither edition can fully resolve questions of intention, since they “freeze” works whose very performance histories were fluid.

Chapter 4 took the thesis in a new direction by exploring harmony and counterpoint as a bridge between pedagogy, improvisation, and performance, providing insight into the pianist-composer ethos. This is the training that Chopin himself and his composition teacher, Elsner, would have been very familiar with, at least in part. Chapter 5 examined taste, fidelity, and textural modifications, revealing how performers and composers navigated the continuum between the “fixed” and the “fluid.” This explained why many of Chopin’s works were constantly evolving and without a “definitive” single version. Table 19 shows the evolving relationship between the pianist-composer and work-concept during the common practice period:

³ Grout, Burkholder, and Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 615.

⁴ Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 65.

Table 19: The Evolution of the Pianist-Composer alongside the Work-Concept

Period	Notable Pianist-Composers of the era - Organists denoted with *	Events relating to Pianist-Composers and Practice	Work-Concept Evolution and Composition Aesthetics
ca. 1730–1770 Late Baroque - Galant	J. S. Bach* D. Scarlatti* Handel* Telemann*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Functional music for the court and the church - Improvisation is central in composition and performance practice, which were regarded as a continuum - Partimento, thoroughbass used in training - Composer-performer inseparable - Invention of the Pianoforte around 1710, but the harpsichord remained the more popular instrument 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No fixed “work” idea as music is functional, process-based—music as “event.” - All composers were performers and vice versa. - Composition aimed for mastery of craft—notion of originality and authenticity not a priority
ca. 1760–1800 Galant-Classical	W. A. Mozart* J. Haydn* Clementi C. P. E. Bach* J. C. Bach* I. Pleyel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keyboard composers freely improvise, embellish, compose at keyboard - Different types of piano mechanisms (Viennese vs. English action) - Pianoforte emerging as the more popular keyboard instrument 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First stirrings of aesthetic autonomy, especially in German Enlightenment thought (Schopenhauer and Kant) - <i>Empfindsamer Stil</i>—an artistic movement emphasising personal self-expression
ca. 1800–1830 Late Classical-Early Romantic	Beethoven Kalkbrenner Hummel* Adam Zimmerman Steibelt Ries Moscheles Weber* Schubert Czerny Cramer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The rise of the pianist-composer as a distinct category. - Strengthening relationship with piano builders - Increasing popularity of the piano - The influx of amateur students - performer and composer split - Invention of the double escapement mechanism - Expanding keyboard range 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rise of “masterworks” and idealism: work seen as an autonomous object—the score as the “work.” - Distinction between “original” and “derivative” composition. - Improvisation applied to preluding, cadenzas, variations and potpourri. The addition of ornaments and other surface-level alterations is rare.
ca. 1830–1870 Romantic	Chopin Liszt* Alkan* Mendelssohn* R. Schumann* Henselt Thalberg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Generation 1830, arguably the ‘golden age’ of the pianist-composer - Rise of technical standards - Flexible rubato, ornaments, expressive liberties to varying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The work-concept consolidates as scores are published with greater precision - Composers deliberately aimed for originality and authenticity in their works to

	Herz Litolff Franck*	extends according to genre, composer and listener - Liszt coins the term “recital”	differentiate themselves from the competition. - Holding improvisation-re- lated genres to the same stand- ard as “fixed” works - The composer’s “intentions” become a consideration in ped- agogy - Changes to the score are gen- erally avoided - Concertos from this period onward contained pre-com- posed cadenzas and lead-in passages - Arrangements and transcrip- tions became popular
ca. 1870– 1900 Late-Ro- mantic	Brahms* C. Schumann Reinecke Moszkowski Granados Blumenfeld Grieg Fauré* Reger* Widor* Saint-Saëns*	- Decline of the pianist-com- poser - Early recordings, tempo mod- ifications, unmarked expres- sion, and some components of improvisation - Works by these pianist-com- posers are lesser known com- pared to the previous genera- tion - The modern piano took its fi- nal form around this period with the invention of cross- stringing	- Formation of the canon of works - Value placed on sources re- lating to “ <i>Fassung letzter Hand.</i> ” - Critical editions (Urtext) and performance editions emerge - Fidelity to the composer’s in- tention is emphasised in peda- gogy - Music theory developed as a tool for analysing composi- tions
ca. 1900– present Modern	Debussy Ravel Rachmaninoff Medtner Scriabin Bortkiewicz Gigout* Busoni Godowsky	- Early recordings show linger- ing Romantic freedom (e.g. Pa- derewski, Hofmann) - Recordings of complete works of the same composer - Improvisation largely disap- pears from the concert stage - Conservatory education for performers standardises fidelity to the score - Conservatory education for composers standardises origi- nality— <i>Avant-garde</i>	- Recording technology (piano rolls, gramophones, etc) as an- other form of the work - Performance practice narrows to text-fidelity - Biographical and historical context became an important prerequisite for the interpreta- tion of the work

The implications of this thesis go beyond historical musicology. We can reevaluate the performance culture surrounding canonical and non-canonical works, improvisation, and arranging, thereby recalibrating the relationship between fidelity to the score and performers’ agency. For pedagogy, it

highlights the value of integrating harmonic fluency and technical skill with creative application. The thesis also shifts the focus not from the preservation of the music, but by “[taking] active possession of the musical language” and having all musicians “think of themselves as creators in the fullest sense.”⁵

Future research may build on this study by exploring violinist-composers during the common-practice period, who also had their own lineage of performer-composers that existed in parallel to that of pianist-composers (or keyboardist-composers in general). The influence of the work-concept on jazz and pop pianists may also be illuminating, as these styles rely primarily on improvisation. It might also be interesting to investigate to what extent the notion of the work-concept applies in music of other cultures, particularly those reliant on improvisation, where the idea of intellectual work is less rigidly understood. Such research avenues would continue to deepen our understanding of how musicians navigated the tensions between freedom and fidelity to the work, which may be uniquely defined.

The current musical landscape can indeed thrive without the need for pianist-composers or composer-performers, and it can be argued that the pedagogical practices of the past are no longer relevant in a modern context. After all, it has been nearly two centuries since the divide between composers and performers emerged, and the classical music industry has at least managed to stay afloat (though it is now arguably in decline).⁶ Let us address some arguments that support the continued relevance and necessity of the pianist-composer in the twenty-first century.

First, the revival of historical pedagogies aimed to train pianist-composers may not resonate with contemporary audiences and musicians. The twenty-first music landscape is vastly different, with a greater diversity of genres and its own system of music theory, evolving in parallel to Western music.⁷ However, their revival does not prevent engaging with more contemporary music, as learning from the

⁵ Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation*, 17-18.

⁶ For more information, see Susanna Eastburn, “Is Classical Music a Living or Heritage Art Form?” in *The Classical Music Industry*, ed. Chris Dromey and Julia Haferkorn (New York: Routledge, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315471099-11>.

⁷ For example, Indian classical music is arguably more popular than Western classical music, with the population of its country of origin reaching 1.4 billion in 2023. They have their own system of music theory that contains many concepts analogous to those of Western music. Gamelan music from the island of Java, Indonesia, features an orchestra with proportions similar to those of a symphony orchestra and complex counterpoint.

past can better enrich modern practices. For example, many pianist-composers from the Western art music tradition, such as Debussy and Godowsky, have composed works that borrow elements from Gamelan music and East Asian music.⁸ As the digital age allows for easier access to information than ever before, the Western art music tradition would benefit from consolidating its rich blend of oral and written history. Integrating historical and modern approaches can create a more well-rounded and versatile musician, capable of appealing to both traditional and contemporary audiences. This approach to the twenty-first-century music scene might sustain the relevance of the pianist-composer.

Second, the specialised training required for pianist-composers, based on historical methods, might be inaccessible to many due to the high level of skill and knowledge and the time commitment required for complete mastery. In the fast-paced modern world, with a desire for instant results, it is rare for anyone to commit to several years of study with the same standards and learning environments as those of the nineteenth-century Paris Conservatoire. This approach might reinforce claims of elitism within classical music education and performance, further alienating students and audiences.⁹ In an industry already facing financial hardship, it may be a struggle to invest in rigorous training programs necessary to revive the pianist-composer tradition.¹⁰

Despite this, historical training methods can be adapted to modern educational contexts to make them more accessible. Incorporating these techniques into existing music programs can deepen students' understanding of music theory and practice, regardless of their background. For example, over the past few years, many classical musicians around the world have sought this kind of rigorous training since the start of this decade. Many professors and seasoned professionals, such as John Mortensen

⁸ Debussy's *La Mer* and Godowsky's *Java Suite* are notable examples of works with East Asian influences. Spanish music, particularly in Andalusia, incorporates elements of Arabic music, which has been a source of inspiration for many Spanish composers, such as De Falla and Granados, as well as French composers such as Bizet and Ravel.

⁹ Julia Haferkorn, "Dancing to Another Tune: Classical Music in Nightclubs and Other Non-Traditional Venues," in *The Classical Music Industry*, ed. Julia Haferkorn and Chris Dromey (New York: Routledge, 2018), 153, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315471099-12>.

¹⁰ In the college or university system, for instance, it is impractical to teach students individually and for extended periods, as it becomes too time-consuming and labour-intensive. Instrumental and composition lessons are generally taught on an individual basis, but music theory is usually taught to large groups due to its efficiency.

(cedarvillemusic and *Improv Planet*), Michael Koch (*En blanc et noir*) and Richardus Cochlearius, have capitalised on this demand by publishing content on the internet that has become widely available for free or at low cost, reaching hundreds of thousands of views and daily subscribers.¹¹ Gjerdingen's *partimenti.org* site contains hundreds of free, typeset partimenti editions, allowing any student with internet access to study as the old masters did.¹² There has been a growing market in historically informed performances and pedagogy, attracting (and continuing to attract) audiences seeking new ways to listen to Western music. These training methods can serve to better educate the next generation of aspiring pianist-composers.

Therefore, the work-concept is central to informing the current discourse in pedagogy, performance and composition practice. Showing how current practices relate to this concept will help underline the necessity of reviving aspects of the nineteenth-century pianist-composer in the twenty-first century, if classical music is to thrive and engage new audiences. The long-term benefits of producing highly skilled, versatile musicians could outweigh the trend towards specialisation, leading to something like a renaissance in the classical music industry.

This thesis ultimately advocates for a post-work-concept paradigm in which a pianist-composer reclaims their role as mediator of the changing expectations in pianistic performance during this momentous shift in musical culture. In doing so, it hopes to expand the possibilities of performance and composition in today's institutionalised culture, not as a nostalgic return to the past, but as a forward-looking idea of what the classical music industry might become with the revival of the composer-performer. This means insisting that music is not merely preserved, but lived, re-created, and re-imagined—a contemporary art, not a historical one.

¹¹ See their respective YouTube channels - <https://www.youtube.com/@cedarvillemusic>, <https://www.youtube.com/@en-blanc-et-noir>, <https://www.youtube.com/@RichardusCochlearius>. The availability of these channels was last verified in March 2026.

¹² See the website www.partimenti.org.

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Appendix A — Use of Generative AI in the Preparation of this Thesis

During the preparation of this thesis, the author used OpenAI’s ChatGPT (GPT-4 and GPT-5 series), Microsoft Copilot, Google Translate, and Grammarly for a range of research support, moderate copyediting, OCR, and translation across multiple sections of text, as detailed below. The author confirms that all AI-assisted text was reviewed for errors, inaccuracies, and bias, and that the final work is entirely the author’s own, produced in accordance with [the University of Sydney’s generative AI guide for researchers](#).

In all instances: AI outputs served as preliminary drafts or scaffolding; all claims and analyses were independently verified; arguments, interpretations, and conclusions are the author’s own; and no AI-generated content was included without substantial revision and author oversight.

A.1 Translation and OCR Support

AI was used to produce preliminary OCR transcriptions of French and German archival texts, translate them for analysis, and generate bilingual comparison tables. The AI tools used were ChatGPT-5 and Google Translate.

Sample prompt:

“The following image is from [insert work title]. Create a bilingual comparison table for the excerpt with the original language on the LHS and English on the RHS. Make sure to apply OCR accurately and translate so it is appropriate for the subject [insert screenshot of excerpt]”

A.2 Citation Management

Generative AI was used to assist with managing and formatting citations throughout the thesis. This included converting sources into Chicago 18th (footnote and bibliography) format, identifying missing publication details (e.g., dates, DOIs, places of publication) based on information available in various

online sources and generating draft citations from archival metadata (e.g., BnF and IMSLP catalogue entries). The AI tools used were ChatGPT-4o and ChatGPT-5.

Sample prompts:

“Create a Chicago style 18th edition footnote and bibliography entry for the following source: [insert details such as author, title, publisher, place of publication, date, etc].”

“Find the DOI for this source if available [insert source details]”

“This source contains some details missing. Find the missing information from the WEB based on the included information [insert source details]”

The author independently verified all citations.

A.3 Finding Sources

Generative AI assisted in finding sources on a particular topic. The AI tools used were ChatGPT-4o, ChatGPT-5 and Microsoft Copilot.

Sample prompts:

“List articles and books from [insert year] to [insert year], that deal with [insert research area]. Make sure to provide a link to the source”

This was used solely as a search tool. All sources included in this thesis have been verified.

A.4 Summarisation of Excerpts from Treatises, Books and Articles

Generative AI supported summarising long passages from treatises and scholarly articles. The AI tools used were ChatGPT-4o, ChatGPT-5 and Microsoft Copilot.

Sample prompts:

“Create a summary of the critical points for this excerpt from [insert title of work]. Here is the excerpt:
[insert excerpt]”

No AI-generated summary replaced engagement with the sources.

A.5 Assistance with Tables and Lists

AI was used to generate draft tables and lists to save time on formatting. The author provided the content. The AI tools used were ChatGPT-5 and ChatGPT-4o.

Sample prompts:

“Create a table based on the following paragraph [insert paragraph]. Use [insert label] for the Y-axis and [insert label] for the X-axis”

All tables and lists generated by AI were independently checked and verified by the author.

A.6 Moderate Copyediting

Generative AI assisted with spell-checking, refining phrases for cohesion, adjusting tone to academic conventions, and polishing the text across the thesis. The AI tools used were Grammarly, ChatGPT-4o and ChatGPT-5.

Sample prompts (for ChatGPT-4o and ChatGPT-5):

“Improve consistency of academic voice in this paragraph and italicise any changes: [insert paragraph]”

“Rewrite this sentence to make it clearer and more concise and italicise any changes: [insert sentence]”

“Use the right punctuation for this sentence: [insert sentence]”

“Find a more fitting word to replace this current one from this sentence in square brackets: [insert sentence]”

“Remove redundancies from this paragraph and italicise any words removed: [insert paragraph]”