

Massimiliano Sala, ed, *Piano Culture in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Paris*. Speculum Musicae 26 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015). xii + 413 pp. €105,00.

From the Speculum Musicae series, published through the Centro Studi Opera Omnia Luigi Boccherini, comes an ambitious and handsomely-produced volume of diverse contributions on a major facet of nineteenth-century musical life. *Piano Culture in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Paris*, edited by Massimiliano Sala, includes 18 chapters (in English, French or Italian) drawn from the international conference *Central European Musicians and the Birth of French Piano Virtuosity* (Rome, 2012). As Sala sets out in the preface,

This book investigates the world of the piano and piano culture in France between the *ancien régime* and the Restoration. It explores the circulation of European pianists within Parisian musical life at the turn of the nineteenth century; publishing and the piano industry in France and its impact on the development of French musical taste; issues of performance practice and the bravura tradition. (p. ix)

The scope, which spans approximately from the 1790s through the 1840s, represents a rich period of development in Parisian musical life that is often relegated to a minor position amid discussions of the Austro-German and Italian traditions. The emergence of a new public musical world and the transition from harpsichord to piano were greatly stimulated by the complementary contributions of individuals native to Paris, outsiders who made it their permanent home, and a dazzling array of visiting virtuosi, with the young Conservatoire at its centre. Throughout the volume, which is organized into six thematic sections, discussions of Johann Nepomuk Hummel, Ignace Pleyel, François-Joseph Fétis and numerous others who made significant contributions to musical life in Paris appear as recurring threads. Individual chapters focus on imported musicians such as Antoine Reicha, Henri Herz, Frédéric Kalkbrenner, Carl Czerny and John Field; additionally, an entire section on the Czech pianist, composer and professor Jan Ladislav Dussek – an often-overlooked but important predecessor of Franz Liszt – is assembled from papers given in honour of the bicentennial year of his death.

Leon Plantinga provides an initial overview that considers why Paris was so attractive to international musicians in the post-Napoleonic era and establishes the overarching themes of this volume. Citing the new political and artistic freedoms that emerged from the July Revolution of 1830, Plantinga identifies factors that brought musicians to the city, including the Conservatoire, piano manufacturers (in particular Érard, which Liszt was under contract to promote exclusively), publishers, the elite salon culture, and the growth of opera and its extension to new piano repertoire. Additional consideration is given to the respect extended to professional musicians in Paris compared to other European cities.

*Publishing and the Piano Industry* comprises five chapters, beginning with David Rowland's discussion of the music business in early-nineteenth century Paris amid the fluctuating economy, and the relative isolation of its piano industry at the time. Individual chapters illustrate the importance of French publishers in establishing a standard piano repertoire: Henri Vanhulst discusses the inclusion of piano concertos by Mozart and Beethoven, among others, in the catalogues of publishers in Paris and Lyon; Cécile Reynaud considers the piano works by Czerny published in Paris (1825–30); and Herbert Seifert examines select correspondence of Pleyel, an essential and multi-faceted figure in the Parisian music

industry of this period, regarding his activities as publisher, pianist and composer. Finally, Pierre Goy turns to the physical development of the modern piano between 1820 and 1830, most notably changes in strings, hammers and instrument casing, and their effect on performance technique. Statements by nineteenth-century writers including Fétis, Hummel, Alfred Hipkins and others illustrate the topic; Hummel's analysis of the characteristics of French and English pianos, compared to those manufactured in Vienna will be of particular interest to some (pp. 89–90).

The four chapters of *Central European Composers and the Development of Piano Virtuosity* bring together a number of composers from beyond France whose compositions, performances and critical writings contributed to a new style of virtuosity in Paris. Alban Ramaut considers the term itself, and the changing understanding of 'virtuosity' as reflected in the writings of Antoine Reicha in relation to older definitions going back to the early 1700s. Alicia C. Levin discusses the varied musical activities of Frédéric Kalkbrenner at the Conservatoire, to establish his role in French pianism and virtuosity amid the shadows of his negative contemporary reception, especially concerning his interactions with Chopin. Rohan H. Stewart-MacDonald maintains the focus on Kalkbrenner, addressing his influence on the evolving style of the piano concerto in the 1830s, in particular the second solo section of opening movements. His discussion of orchestration, themes and contrasting lyrical or virtuosic passages includes excerpts by Chopin, Dussek, Field and Schumann, among others. Christian Ahrens concludes the section with a question of genre designation for what he refers to as Hummel's '(Double) Concerto for Piano and Violin Op. 17' (p. 207). Ahrens seeks to align this work with the *symphonie concertante*, comparing it in terms of instrumentation, form and style to four such works by Pleyel, using selections by Haydn and Mozart as points of balance.

In the first of three chapters in the section on Dussek, Michaela Freemanová assesses the significance of author Johann Ferdinand Opiz in establishing a contemporary biography of Dussek and his family, and Opiz's process in gathering sources for his volume *Neue polygraphische Ephemeriden* (1801–05), which Freemanová identifies as a 'source of important information' for music history (p. 239). Frédéric de La Grandville considers Dussek's professional and personal connections to the fledgling Paris Conservatoire (1807–12), his tenuous connections to other faculty and students and the fluctuating presence of his piano works as repertoire in pedagogy, examination and student concerts. Richard Fuller illuminates Dussek's long-neglected Piano Concerto in G Minor Op. 49/50 (1801) through the lens of the composer's personal struggles (domestic and financial), and the narrative of this concerto in relation to Goethe's popular novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774). Fuller considers elements of formal structure and tonal plan, and suggests that other composers, among them Hummel, Kalkbrenner, Johann Baptist Cramer and Ferdinand Ries, imitated or directly borrowed elements of the concerto for their own compositions. Readers familiar with the works cited here might feel motivated to engage in some musical sleuthing and pursue the suggested points of influence or borrowing.

*Performing Style and Didactics* includes three chapters that consider themes of performance practice and pedagogy among professional and amateur pianists of this era. Stephanie Frakes considers the tradition of improvised ornamentation in *cantabile* sections of Italian arias, as applied to French piano pedagogy and represented in method books by Dussek, Louis Adam, Hélène de Montgeroult and Pierre Zimmermann published in Paris during the first half of the century.

J. Mackenzie Pierce discusses the practice of improvising or 'preluding', as set out in treatises and manuals for amateurs by Hummel, Fétis and Kalkbrenner, among others; the discussion is framed in relation to the composed elements in Chopin's *Preludes* Op. 28, and their contemporary use as 'improvised' introductions to other compositions. (Pianists might welcome the opportunity to consider how this relates to current approaches to the performance of this repertoire today.) Fiorella Sassanelli discusses the introduction of the pianoforte as a solo instrument at the Conservatoire, extending for the first time its use far beyond that of an accompanying instrument, and the development of new repertoire for student examinations during Luigi Cherubini's directorship (1822–1842).

*Reception of Piano Music and Virtuosos* concludes the volume with three chapters on topics of repertoire and individual pianists. Shaena B. Weitz considers musical life in Paris in the early 1830s, as reflected in the short-lived yet essential journal *Le Pianiste* (1833–1835) and those who shaped the public's understanding of the musical past beyond the traditions of the Viennese School. Weitz argues that *Le Pianiste* promoted an 'alternative canon of musicians' to the younger generation, in the hopes of preserving those composers in danger of being forgotten, specifically Dussek, Johann Baptist Cramer, Daniel Steibelt and Muzio Clementi, from the perspective of those who had studied piano at the Conservatoire in the previous generation (p. 356). Turning to the English composer John Field, Majella Boland challenges the current understanding of Field's reception in Paris, including the differences before and after his death, as reflected in *La Revue musicale*, and in critical writings by Fétis and others. Boland's hope is to advance scholarship on this composer, and to elevate Field's status beyond that of a minor contributor to musical life. Finally, moving beyond the European continent, Yael Bitrán addresses Henri Herz's role in encouraging a national identity for Mexico during his tour in 1849–1850, his position as a model of the European virtuoso pianist, and his biography as it was established in Mexican publications. An additional thought-provoking element in this chapter is the projection by Mexican critics of a masculine image for Herz, compared to the more effeminate image commonly projected by European writers. (This sort of gendered characterization is often identified in broader discussions of 'masculine' German versus 'feminine' French musical traditions.)

As this volume features the pianoforte at an essential juncture in its development and mainstream use, readers will appreciate the photographs and schematic diagrams of different models of Érard, Pleyel and Stodart instruments as given throughout Goy's chapter, which also includes graphs depicting the attack and decay of several pitches for three models of Érard. Additional historical content includes extracts from personal correspondence, critical writings and contemporary journals, as well as facsimile copies of Conservatoire documents. Musical examples appear in several chapters, and text tables or graphs are included to support discussions of music analysis in chapters by Stewart-MacDonald, Ahrens and Fuller. Of considerable practical benefit are the reference tables that appear throughout the volume. For instance, Vanhulst, Reynaud and Pierce list the piano works that appear in the catalogues of various French publishers, while de La Grandville and Sassanelli include tables of repertoire performed by student pianists at the Conservatoire. And of broader interest, Weitz offers a general chronology of keyboard performers discussed in *Le Pianiste*, from Handel to Clara Wieck.

Those familiar with the *Speculum Musicae* series will recognize the attractive presentation of text, musical examples and reference tables, as well as the sturdy construction of the volume. The selection of cover art is appealing, if somewhat surprising: Camille Pissarro's famous painting *L'Avenue de l'Opéra: Sunshine Winter Morning* dates from 1898, and this Impressionist view of a very obviously post-Haussmann Paris with its wide boulevards, electric street lamps and the presence of the Palais Garnier (construction of which did not begin until 1861) does not represent the city as it would have appeared during the period under consideration. Perhaps it could be taken as metaphor of a Paris moving *toward* modernism through this earlier stage of cultural development (and, indeed, the title of this volume itself suggests a more expansive chronology). Nevertheless, one is often reminded not to judge a book by its cover, and, in this case, the contents within are richly informative, engaging and generally accessible. The careful reader will notice minor typographical errors, either through translation or editing, and some individual chapters seem to end abruptly (one wonders whether some of the original conference presentations were shortened for publication); however, these elements do not detract from the overall content. Presented with the challenge of incorporating eighteen substantial chapters, Sala has devised a logical gathering of topics into sections, and although the volume is not presented as a linear narrative, the chronology of events and developments as they occurred is well structured. This impressive volume offers an opportunity to reconsider Parisian musical life as it unfolded during a crucial period that straddles the Classical and Romantic eras, and saw the emergence of a recognizably modern musical infrastructure in education, publication and performance; its readers will also learn much about numerous individuals frequently overlooked in today's accounts of music history. As Sala suggests, this Paris was 'the center of a cyclone of virtuosity' (borrowing a phrase from Paul Metzner's *Crescendo of the Virtuoso*<sup>1</sup>) fostering an invaluable cultural transfer between native and international musicians associated with the city during this period (p. ix).

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Jean-Michel Nectoux, ed. *Gabriel Fauré: Correspondance suivie de Lettres à Madame H.* (Paris: Fayard, 2015). 913 pp. €38,00.

The release of a major new publication about Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924) by Jean-Michel Nectoux always is a cause for rejoicing. Mr Nectoux has devoted his career to the promulgation of the life and the music of Fauré, who had heretofore been the least well-known of the major early twentieth-century French composers. Detailed information on Fauré's life and the history of his musical output was difficult to come by for many years after his death. In 1951, the composer's son

<sup>1</sup> Paul Metzner, *Crescendo of the Virtuoso: Spectacle, Skill, and Self-Promotion in Paris during the Age of Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998): 2.