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SEPTETS, OCTETS, NONETS:
ROMANTIC CHAMBER MUSIC IN ITS CULTURAL CONTEXTS

by

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A THESIS

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University of Nebraska, 2007

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In 1800, Ludwig van Beethoven wrote his Septet, Op. 20 for a chamber ensemble of strings and winds that included the double bass. This piece, an enormous popular success, became a direct compositional model for Franz Schubert in his Octet, D. 803. A great deal of scholarship exists connecting these two works, but does not extend to the many other chamber works of the Romantic period written for similar ensembles. To varying degrees, the compositions for large chamber ensembles written by Louis Spohr, Franz Lachner, Georges Onslow, Adolphe Blanc, and Louise Farrenc also take Beethoven's Septet as a model. It is the goal of this study to investigate the similarities and differences between the septets, octets, and nonets of these five composers, as well as the different circumstances in which these pieces were written.

The first chapter discusses the role of chamber music in Viennese society, beginning at the turn of the nineteenth century and extending through the Biedermeier period (1815-1848). Beethoven's Septet and Schubert's Octet are situated within these contexts in the following chapter, which continues with a brief discussion of the similarity between these two works. Following this, the same approach is undertaken with

pieces for large chamber ensembles written by Spohr and Lachner, who both worked in Vienna during this period.

The investigation continues with Paris in the third chapter. The period in question is slightly longer, extending from 1785 to 1850, because of gradual changes in chamber music's place in Parisian society taking place at this time. The effect of these changes on the large chamber ensembles of Onslow, Blanc, and Farrenc are fully described in the fourth chapter, as are the influences of Beethoven's Septet and other earlier Viennese works.

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INTRODUCTION

This project began with the following goal: to survey chamber music from the Romantic period that includes the double bass within the ensemble. After sifting through repertoire guides and catalogs of composers' works, three loose categories of chamber compositions emerged. The first of these is written for large ensembles of strings and winds, typically with seven to nine players. This group contains the most famous chamber works to include the double bass, such as the Beethoven Septet, Op. 20 and Schubert's Octet, D. 803. A second collection of works includes both the double bass and the piano. These works are scored for between five players, as in Schubert's "Die Forelle (Trout)" Piano Quintet, D. 667, and seven, as in Hummel's Septet, Op. 74. This group is highly diverse in instrumental combinations. Schubert, for example, writes his Quintet for strings and piano, while Hummel also includes winds in his Septet. The final category of works are string-only ensembles. These are the least common, and are usually scored for five players. Rossini's collection of quartets, his six *Sonate a Quattro*, is a notable exception. Dvořák's Quintet, Op. 77 is a typical example of this type of chamber composition, and Georges Onslow is perhaps the most prolific composer in this genre.

My research suggests that there is no standardized use of the double bass in Romantic chamber music. However, compositions of the second and third category do suggest a simple explanation for its inclusion. Especially in the case of Schubert's Piano Quintet, chamber works calling for both the double bass and the piano imply a distant relationship to the piano trio. Likewise, the string quintets of the third group are closely

related to the more typical string quartet. In both these cases, composers simply add ‘extra’ instruments to provide additional interest, but write these pieces in the idioms of their smaller counterparts.

The first group, however, cannot be accounted for so easily. There is no comparable genre of chamber music for large ensembles of strings and winds. Beethoven’s Septet, by far the most popular of any of the above-mentioned pieces, is often regarded as the most important of this first group. This gives rise to a number of questions. Given the popularity of Beethoven’s Septet, did other composers follow with similar works? Where and when were these pieces composed? How do these works resemble Beethoven’s Septet, and how are they different? What traditions did Beethoven invoke in his Septet? Why did he include the double bass? These questions form the initial thrust of this study.

I have discovered that a surprising number of composers wrote pieces for ensembles similar to Beethoven’s Septet throughout the Romantic period, and they come from a wide variety of locations. Several of these, however, can be grouped together by the location of their origin. Both Beethoven and Schubert wrote their pieces for large chamber ensembles in Vienna. While working in this same city, Louis Spohr wrote his Nonet and Octet. Franz Lachner also wrote a septet while living in Vienna, though he had moved to Munich before writing his Nonet.

A handful of other works center around Paris. Georges Onslow’s Nonet, Adolphe Blanc’s Septet, and Louise Farrenc’s Nonet all date from within a year of each other, and all three of these composers were active in Paris at the same time. Because these seven

composers can be grouped together chronologically and stylistically, they will each be discussed in greater detail through the course of this document.

The remaining works I have identified are highly scattered, as regards both time and place of composition. Conradin Kreutzer (1780-1849) wrote his Septet, Op. 62 around 1825 in Leipzig. At the age of eighteen, Mikhail Glinka (1804-1857) composed his Septet while in St. Petersburg. Josef Rheinberger (1839-1901), a pupil of Franz Lachner, wrote a Nonet, Op. 139 late in his life, also while living in Munich. In 1849, when only eleven years old, Max Bruch (1838-1920) wrote his Septet in Cologne. Hugo Kaun (1863-1932), though born in Berlin, wrote his Octet, op. 26 in 1891, while living in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Franz Berwald's (1796-1868) especially fine Septet was written in Stockholm in 1828. In 1893, Ferdinand Thieriot (1838-1919), who studied briefly with Rheinberger, wrote his Octet, op. 62 while working in Graz, Austria. Czech composer Heinrich Molbe (1835-1915) has an Octet, op. 20 that dates from 1897.¹

Because of the diverse origins of these large chamber ensembles, the focus on Vienna and Paris as centers of composition has proven useful. By grouping together the composers active in these locations, the similar cultural contexts in which they were written may help explain how and why they all took Beethoven's Septet as a model. The structure of this thesis is built around this idea. The first chapter discusses the role of chamber music in Viennese society, beginning at the turn of the nineteenth century and extending through the Biedermeier period (1815-1848). The second chapter situates the

¹ In his article "Septet" for [Grove Music Online](#), Michael Kube claims the existence of a Septet (1830) by Archduke Rudolph. On p. 346 of [Archduke Rudolph, Beethoven's Patron, Pupil, and Friend: His Life and Music](#) (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1988), Susan Kagan calls this attribution into question.

Viennese pieces for large chamber ensembles (written by Beethoven, Schubert, Spohr, and Lachner) within these contexts. In this chapter, the works of Spohr and Lachner are compared and contrasted with Beethoven's Septet.

The investigation continues with Paris in the third chapter. The period in question here is slightly longer than it was for Vienna, extending from 1785 to 1850, because of the gradual changes in the place of chamber music in Parisian society that took place at this time. The effect of these changes on the large chamber ensembles of Onslow, Blanc, and Farrenc is fully described in the fourth chapter, as are the influences of Beethoven's Septet and other Viennese works.

By examining the background of these compositions, several additional questions are addressed. The first two chapters help to establish that Beethoven's model for the Septet was the *divertimento*. As outgrowths of this piece, the other works considered here are also descendants of the eighteenth-century *divertimento*. Features of these later compositions that are indebted to the earlier genre are fully described through the discussion of each individual piece.

This leaves only the question of why Beethoven, along with these other composers, include the double bass within their ensemble. Results of this inquiry prove unsatisfying, and could themselves form the basis of another investigation. Michael Kube suggests that the instrumentation of Beethoven's Septet may derive from earlier works by Ignace Pleyel.² However, the use of the double bass was not standard in large ensembles of

²Michael Kube, "Septet," *Grove Music Online*, ed. L. Macy (London: Oxford University Press, 2006), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>.

strings and winds. Antonin Reicha, for example, wrote his Octet, op. 96 in 1817, for a mixed ensemble that does not contain the double bass. This is all the more surprising because Reicha was working in Paris at the time, and a student of his, Georges Onslow, regularly collaborated with two double bass virtuosos. The relationship of these individuals is explained in chapter 4. In Onslow's Nonet, the double bass performs a role similar to that in Beethoven's Septet.

For the Viennese composers discussed in this work, there is no evidence presently suggesting such partnerships with double bass players. Some amount of inference can still be made regarding the instrument's inclusion, however. Instrumentation within these large ensembles of strings and winds was highly variable, especially before Beethoven's Septet. Though other composers, including Pleyel, used the double bass in ensembles, the Septet marks the first 'serious' chamber work of its kind. Beethoven may have been familiar with these earlier works, and appreciated the balance in sonority that the double bass offers. Regardless of his motives, other composers took Beethoven's work as a model for their own compositions using large chamber ensembles of strings and winds. While some composers chose not to include the double bass (Reicha), many more retained Beethoven's instrumentation.

In doing so, these composers essentially standardized the usage of the double bass in septets, octets, and nonets of the Romantic period. Not only did most composers include the instrument in such ensembles, but the nature of the parts they wrote for it are surprisingly similar.

CHAPTER 1

CHAMBER MUSIC IN BIEDERMEIER VIENNA

By the end of the eighteenth century, Vienna had earned its title as the city of music. Not only had high-caliber musicians such as Mozart and Haydn made the city their home and numerous travelers remarked favorably on the skill of its players, but music permeated the daily lives of its citizens. When people gathered, whether in public or privately, music played a role in the event. The Viennese clearly shared a love for music, even if the tastes of individuals or entire social classes varied greatly. Everyone in the city literally came together for music, as it was as essential to a social gathering as food and drink.¹

The intrinsic relationship between music, food, and social gatherings is further evidenced by the list of most common venues of music performance: parks, pubs, dance halls, restaurants, theaters, hotels, salons and other private living rooms, and ballrooms.² That many of these venues seem unlikely concert halls to us demonstrates a different relationship between music and audience member than to which we are currently accustomed. Depending on the customs of a particular time and place, audiences could be expected to listen intently, participate in music-making themselves, or simply enjoy the atmosphere music provides while participating in other activities. So too did

¹ Mary Sue Morrow, Concert Life in Haydn's Vienna: Aspects of a Developing Musical and Social Institution, *The Sociology of Music*, no. 7 (New York: Pendragon Press, 1989), 98.

² *Ibid.*, 65.

circumstances dictate the typical composition of the assembly, or even the type of music played. Despite these many variables, the social aspects of music are by far the most important in early nineteenth-century Vienna.

As a result of the range of venues, each with its own traditions, a particular type of music could be performed in any number of completely different settings and situations. Since these many venues all have an inherent social element, chamber music, by its nature a very social type of music because of the close interaction of parts and players, flourished under these conditions. Performed in locations as contrasting as middle class homes and aristocratic salons or large theaters and neighborhood restaurants, chamber music proves its importance to the Viennese public through the diversity and extent of its presentation: all manner of people were exposed to various styles of chamber music, and in many different ways. In order to explore a single style of chamber music more fully, it must first be separated from the full range of possibilities, and placed within the context of Vienna's musical scene as a whole. This is best accomplished by grouping together those social gatherings for which music functioned in a similar way.

The first of these broad groups are those which focus more on the social gathering itself. In such situations, music is strictly a form of entertainment. Perhaps the most common example is that of the "spontaneous social concerts" of Vienna.³ These events were centered around social interaction within private homes, and featured performances of solo and small chamber music by the hosts, their children, and sometimes even the

³ Ibid., 3.

guests.⁴ Needless to say, many performances were not of an especially high quality, but that did not matter. The focus was on entertaining guests, or even one's self, with music serving the same ends as conversation or card-playing. Though decidedly low-profile events, they were commonly discussed in personal records, and illustrate the daily exposure to and involvement in music.⁵ They are also important as the basis for developments in music-making at home that take place in the years 1815-1830.⁶ These developments will be discussed later, along with the most familiar example of domestic music-making, the Schubertiad.

Private concerts in aristocratic homes could take on an altogether different shape. While residing in Vienna itself, typically during the winter months, many aristocrats employed professional ensembles, either by retainer as permanent staff, or by invitation for single occasions.⁷ These ensembles were expected to play for meals and various social functions. The repertoire for these settings typically consisted of popular opera numbers arranged for instruments. The tunes were already familiar, and were not the focal point of such engagements. Instead, the presence of music heightened the enjoyment of a fine meal or of good company. Mozart's *Don Giovanni* illustrates just such a scene in the finale of Act II, in which Don Giovanni enjoys a meal while being amused by his personal orchestra.

⁴Ibid., 4.

⁵Alice M. Hanson, Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 117.

⁶Ibid., 120.

⁷Morrow, 5.

Even outside their homes, citizens came together and in events where music was used to make an enjoyable event even more memorable. Ceremonies for religious feasts and state events were gatherings of this sort, since music played a key role in the celebrations, but was secondary to the festivities themselves.⁸ The type of music usually suited the needs of the event, and typically consisted of works like cantatas, overtures, or even presentations by military bands.⁹ Along with performances of music were a number of non-musical activities that expressed the day's significance. It was for these that the people turned out, but they looked forward to and reveled in the entertainment that musical numbers provided.

On more ordinary days, people gathering in public places such as restaurants, parks, and bars could also expect music to enhance social interaction. "Neighborhood family restaurants, coffeehouses, taverns, [and] public parks served as both salon and concert hall."¹⁰ Instrumentalists and singers shared popular and folk music anywhere they could, and even the most humble establishment could offer anything from marches and dance music to opera overtures and sections of symphonies.¹¹ Chamber music for small ensembles could easily be presented in nearly any establishment that had a few players on hand, and hearing larger ensembles perform was not necessarily a privilege exclusive to Vienna's elite. The *divertimento* (along with the *serenade*, *nocturne*, and *cassation*) grew

⁸ Ibid., 6.

⁹ Alice M. Hanson, "Vienna, City of Music," in *Schubert's Vienna*, ed. Raymond Erickson (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 98-118; see p. 114.

¹⁰ Hanson, *Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna*, 169.

¹¹ Ibid., 169.

from a local tradition of wind and string players playing light and diverting music in the streets and under the windows of friends in the evenings.¹² That the divertimento, which owed the bulk of its structural content to the three-movement *sinfonia*,¹³ a genre that was performed for private audiences, could be brought into any space where people gathered together is a testament to the degree to which the joy of making and listening to music permeated Viennese culture.

The second reason for music in social gatherings was specifically for enjoyment of the music itself. In these situations, the relationship of music and socialization were reversed: making or enjoying music was the pretext for assembling, while the social aspects were a side-benefit that made the occasion more enjoyable. These sorts of events could take place in the home, too, but were not as common as the “spontaneous social concerts” discussed previously. Both amateur and professional players met regularly in homes for the express purpose of playing chamber music.¹⁴ The string quartets of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven were the favored repertoire of such gatherings, though other challenging music was also played, including the solo piano sonatas of Clementi, Beethoven, and Dussek.¹⁵ Such meetings were meant to challenge the players, so they cultivated a higher quality of performance than the more typical variety of spontaneous

¹² Homer Ulrich, *Chamber Music*, 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), 122.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Morrow, 8.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

home music-making. The enjoyment also derived from participating in the performance of artful compositions, rather than delighting guests or oneself with one's talents.

In wealthier homes, full concerts could be staged. Quite unlike the smaller concerts discussed previously, large concerts were huge gala occasions that revolved around the presentation of a massive piece of music, typically an oratorio.¹⁶ Though records only indicate oratorio titles for such events, overtures or movements from symphonies or string quartets could possibly have been used as an introduction or during intermission, since this was a common practice in other varieties of staged concerts.¹⁷ Some of these events were hosted annually by a given family, but all were prepared for well in advance, performed by professional musicians, and attended by numerous guests. These works were sponsored out of a true love for the music, but in typical Viennese style, no expense was spared in providing ample food and drink for the audience in attendance.

Because of the grand scale of these gala events, they were not held frequently. Regular concerts on a much smaller scale did take place regularly in the homes of aristocrats, however, in the form of salons. These were “modeled on those of French aristocratic circles of the previous century,”¹⁸ and served as the primary concert venue during Advent and Lent. Most aristocrats did not reside within the city itself during the summer months, and the government prohibited balls and theater productions during

¹⁶ Ibid., 10.

¹⁷ Ibid., 142.

¹⁸ Hanson, Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna, 109.

these solemn religious periods.¹⁹ These events often featured larger instrumental and vocal works like symphony or opera excerpts, cantatas, overtures, but also included the smaller, challenging chamber music frequently performed by the participatory ensembles previously mentioned.²⁰

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, salons were exclusive to the homes of the wealthy, but were not class-restricted. Sponsors included established nobility, the recently ennobled, court officials, and successful businessmen, a group that by itself demonstrates a certain amount of class inter-mingling,²¹ but their homes were also open to friends and acquaintances of lesser status.²² These larger private concerts were a further example of the Viennese tradition of sharing music in the home and of making a social event out of a concert. Even more significant is the broader selection of venues and audience members for the performance of intricate chamber music that these concerts provided.

By far, the greatest cross-section of the Viennese public encountered music while attending social events in public spaces. Theaters dominated Vienna's social scene, and, since music played a role in every type of stage production,²³ they were the most popular musical venue as well. The theater was not, however, one of the many venues that exposed its patrons to chamber music. Since music typically functioned as a part of the

¹⁹ Morrow, 13.

²⁰ Ibid., 15.

²¹ Ibid., 22.

²² Hanson, Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna, 110.

²³ Ibid., 69.

drama itself or as prelude, interlude, or postlude, theater musicians would often present larger-scale instrumental pieces such as overtures or symphony movements. Despite this, the music of the theater is important to consider because its overwhelming popularity affected the performance of other types of music. Stage productions ceased only during the summer months, when many of Vienna's wealthier citizens lived outside the city, and during certain religious holidays during which the government prohibited theatrical entertainment. Even daily lives were affected by the theater. Many Viennese citizens built their daily routines around what time of day productions were staged, since the events were important for discussing business and current affairs.²⁴ The obvious preference for theatrical productions, especially opera, caused other performances to hold a lesser position both in social importance and in scheduling. The popularity of theatrical productions also forms the basis of a later disagreement among Viennese audiences.²⁵

Public concerts filled a similar role as the theaters during those religious and state holidays when the Austrian government forbade staged productions, though they too could be mounted any time from autumn to early summer.²⁶ Theater directors did not wish to add to their already copious duties in staging productions at their respective theater houses, which not only meant that public concerts performed in theaters were not mounted by theater staff, but also that public concerts had to be scheduled around the

²⁴ Ibid., 70.

²⁵ This is discussed in greater detail on p. 21.

²⁶ Ibid., 83.

house's staged productions.²⁷ In place of the theater director, four different types of sponsorship were available for the production of a public concert, and each tend to favor different genres of music. Virtuoso benefit concerts were the most common, which were arranged by and feature a virtuoso soloist, more often a traveling performer than a Vienna native.²⁸ Charity fundraisers were sometimes arranged for widows, orphans, or victims of natural disasters, with proceeds from tickets benefitting the specified party, since musicians and venue were donated to the cause.²⁹ Subscription series were established by prominent entrepreneurial performers, usually to offer concert series during the summer months, and featured their own playing.³⁰ Finally, there were series organized by friends of music societies, also attempting to provide entertainment during the summer months.³¹ These types of concerts were quite rare in Vienna in the early part of the nineteenth century, and will be discussed in greater detail along with the most successful example of a subscription series, the Schuppanzigh series, once important developments are set in place.

Beyond the theaters, public concerts were performed in Augarten park, several larger restaurants, and even the ballrooms of the Imperial palace.³² The selection of venues highlight the importance of the social aspects of the productions; this is especially

²⁷ Morrow, 107.

²⁸ Ibid., 50.

²⁹ Ibid., 51.

³⁰ Ibid., 53-6.

³¹ Ibid., 61.

³² Ibid., 93, 97.

true when the theaters were closed and public concerts were the only option for public entertainment. Programs for these concerts followed closely along the lines of those presented privately in the homes of the aristocracy, with alternating vocal and instrumental numbers, unless featuring an entire cantata or oratorio.³³ As with music for the theaters, overtures and symphony movements were generally selected to open the performance, rather than the chamber pieces that would have played in more intimate settings; this did not, however, rule out chamber music altogether, since both chamber ensembles and improvisatory solo pieces were performed at these concerts after 1800.³⁴ Because of difficulties caused by the performance schedules in public theaters, government regulations, performers' affiliations, and financing, public performances were not put on very often, and usually as one-time events rather than as a series. They were much more valuable as a method to introduce Viennese audiences to a certain performers' playing, a certain composer's works, or possibly even a genre with which they were not as familiar, than they were to satisfy an ongoing demand.

With Vienna's social world revolving around music, it is not surprising that there was a high demand for instrumental music. Through performances in streets and the prominence of large-scale productions, instrumental music became indispensable even in venues where it was not the focal point. Public concerts of all varieties included instrumental pieces in equal number to vocal ones, without fail opened with an

³³ Ibid., 142.

³⁴ Ibid., 161.

instrumental work, and often included two or three movements from symphonies.³⁵

Spoken dramas relied upon instrumental music to define the breaks between acts, and even oratorio productions were preceded by an instrumental opening. And, wherever symphonies and overtures were played, audiences preferred Austrian and other Germanic composers, both contemporary ones and those of the recent past. Haydn was the favorite by far, and other commonly performed composers included Mozart, Weber, Clementi, Eberl, and, after 1800, Beethoven, with foreign influences only evident through the inclusion of the works of Luigi Cherubini and Etienne-Nicolas Méhul to this repertoire.³⁶

Austrian and German composers were also the fashion for concertos, with Franz Anton Hoffmeister and Anton Eberl both very popular around the turn of the nineteenth century, although Mozart and Beethoven were performed far more frequently.³⁷

Despite this interest in instrumental music, the largest productions and the most important social events featured vocal music. Oratorios were the main source of choral music, and here too were Austrians and other Germans preferred, with Haydn still the most performed composer, and Handel, Mozart, and Beethoven not far behind.³⁸

However, this trend did not carry over into opera.

Italian opera was the single most popular genre of music in the Vienna of the first half of the nineteenth century, as it had been for many years beforehand.³⁹ Arias made up

³⁵ Ibid., 151.

³⁶ Ibid., 154.

³⁷ Ibid., 160.

³⁸ Ibid., 148.

³⁹ Hanson, Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna, 65.

the bulk of vocal pieces performed in public and private concerts, and were even frequently presented instrumentally in simple chamber arrangements. Though German operatic productions were produced regularly in certain theaters,⁴⁰ even when Rossini's music was most popular, this preference for a "foreign" music would soon form the basis of disagreement and disapproval.

Napoleon's conquests across Europe from 1805-1815 resulted in drastic changes to both the politics and social customs of Austria. The Congress of Vienna saw to the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire, changing the face of Austrian government. The long years of warfare, as well as the two sieges on Vienna itself, were quite expensive, and aristocrats were unable to match the financial burden placed upon them. Those with newer wealth such as bankers and industrialists then became the source of government funds. The affluent members of the lower classes consequently experienced newfound political clout, while the aristocracy diminished both in power and grandeur.⁴¹ Many musicians, therefore, were forced to seek other methods of employment, as domestic orchestras became increasingly scarce. In this area also, the monied-middle class felt obligated to fill in where aristocrats had once been dominant, as they became the chief patrons of music in Vienna.⁴²

Many of the venues discussed previously changed their face drastically or even approached nonexistence. Huge musical extravaganzas became quite rare, as few aristocrats

⁴⁰ Ibid., 64.

⁴¹ Ibid., 110.

⁴² Ibid., 109.

were willing to flaunt wealth and showcase power when both were on the downturn. Even the immensely popular salons lost their luster. By 1820, the artistic and intellectual stimulation so long essential to salons were replaced with dullness and superficiality.⁴³ They were also much smaller in scope, with entertainment of groups no larger than 100, and completely excluded the middle class.⁴⁴ For this reason, middle-class salons became increasingly common, and the aristocracy lost their formerly exclusive role as patrons of the arts.

Home and family became the focus of Vienna in all walks of life during the years following the Congress of Vienna. The ensuing era is frequently referred to as the Biedermeier period. This term derives from the name of a character in a satirical newspaper of the period, Gottlieb Biedermeier (God-loving common man), who “epitomized the self-confident, smug middle-class man.”⁴⁵ Due in part to a feeling of vulnerability caused by the wars, and in part to the repressive regime of Austria’s prince, Clemens von Metternich, the years between 1815 and 1848 were characterized by extreme conservatism. Simple pleasures, especially those enjoyed along with one’s family, were cherished. Paintings from this era frequently portray average, middle-class families enjoying the simple pleasures of home. It is precisely in this setting that most music concerts took

⁴³ Ibid., 113.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 110.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 1.

place during this time period.⁴⁶ Consequently, the importance and popularity of chamber music performances grew substantially.

Metternich was highly suspicious of large public gatherings, and consequently limited their occurrence. Other than operatic and other dramatic performances, few large public gatherings were permitted, and those that did take place were heavily policed and very difficult to arrange.⁴⁷ The Viennese focus on the home was more than a cultural trend, it was a political necessity. Salons held in middle class homes allowed an intersection between one's family, social, and intellectual lives.⁴⁸ They were, essentially, an outgrowth of the "spontaneous social concerts," and thus had a completely different character than the aristocratic salons they were modeled after. The quality of such musical performances, however, were vastly improved by this time. In a further attempt to emulate the position towards music that the aristocrats once held, the middle class increasingly pursued education in music. This trend also "reflected in part a middle-class agenda of social ambition for self-improvement against an image of aristocratic cultivation rooted in the myth and reality of Viennese musical life before 1809."⁴⁹

The influence of "spontaneous social concerts" upon the middle-class salon is evidenced by the fact that the events emphasized the participation of all its guests. The most frequently performed types of pieces were sonatas, theme and variation sets, dances,

⁴⁶ Ibid., 82.

⁴⁷ Leon Botstein, "Vienna: 1806-1945," Grove Music Online, ed. L. Macy (London: Oxford University Press, 2006), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>.

⁴⁸ Hanson, Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna, 109.

⁴⁹ Botstein, "Vienna: 1806-1945," Grove Music Online.

and short programmatic works, works for piano four-hands, duets, trios, quartets, and Lieder.⁵⁰ The range offered here is comparable to that present in the aristocratic halls of previous generations,⁵¹ but from this list we also see that both vocal and instrumental works were common, that the preferred genres reflected a more serious mindset than those favored before, and, most importantly, that chamber music was a favored medium. The ability for several guests to participate in a delightful interplay simultaneously was highly desired. Schubertiads are a commonly-known instance of these sorts of events, since Schubert wrote many pieces that matched the desires of this market perfectly: deliberately simple with a highly bourgeois feel to the interaction of parts, and noticeably different than his “more serious” style.⁵²

Patronage of the arts by the middle-class was often carried out simply through purchasing power. “By the end of the 1820s, Vienna boasted a significant infrastructure in music publishing and instrument manufacture that met the needs of a more broadly based literate public of active amateurs.”⁵³ However, several other approaches were quite common. Historical concerts were held by some individuals who collected rare publications from Austria and abroad. One such individual was Kiesewetter, who held five historical concerts in his home annually between 1816 and 1843, and presented works by composers as widely varied as Palestrina, Antonio Biffi, J.S. Bach, Antonio Caldara,

⁵⁰ Hanson, Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna, 119.

⁵¹ Sigrid Wiesmann, “Vienna: Bastion of Conservatism,” in The Early Romantic Era: Between Revolutions 1789 and 1848, ed. Alexander Ringer, Man & Music (London: Macmillan Press, 1990), 84-108; see p. 95.

⁵² Hanson, Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna, 120-121.

⁵³ Botstein, “Vienna: 1806-1945,” Grove Music Online.

Francesco Durante, and Niccolò Jomelli.⁵⁴ Such concerts would provide employment opportunities for performing musicians, but also the cultural enrichment of hearing works outside the standard varieties and repertoire. Sponsorship of composers was another device that the middle-class used in supporting the arts. Just as aristocrats had commissioned composers in previous generations, so too did the middle class in the nineteenth century.⁵⁵ Finally, certain individuals held salons that favored a certain genre of music, and supported high-quality performances within that genre. Franz Theodor Schubert, father of composer Franz Schubert, was a member of a quartet that favored “serious” chamber music, his son’s Schubertiads often revolved around Lieder, Josef Hochenadel presented symphonies and large choral works privately, while Ignaz Sonnleithner used both professional and amateur players to present works of his choice.⁵⁶

Beyond the contributions listed above, the middle-class supported music through an entirely new endeavor as well. Certain individuals, aristocratic and middle-class alike, believed that music had an important social purpose, and established societies that would work towards achieving this purpose. From these partnerships arose several musical organizations, with the Friends of Music (*Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde*) the most influential of these.⁵⁷ The Friends of Music was founded in 1814 to encourage the performance of “serious” art music and to preserve the Viennese performance tradition, in

⁵⁴ Hanson, *Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna*, 123-4

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁵⁶ Hanson, “Vienna, City of Music,” 110.

⁵⁷ Botstein, “Vienna: 1806-1945,” *Grove Music Online*.

order to combat the growing commercialism and novelty that focused around virtuosic displays.⁵⁸ Members of all classes filled the ranks of Vienna's largest theaters to witness the virtuosity of performers like Hummel, Moscheles, and Czerny.⁵⁹ Later, the arrival of Paganini fueled this desire for spectacle, but even more so did Rossini's operas. The Friends of Music embraced the Viennese composers of the recent past, while condemning the outbreak of virtuosic frivolities and influx of Italian opera.⁶⁰ They achieved this by performing instrumental works in the Viennese tradition such as those by Mozart, Beethoven, Franz Krommer, Cherubini, and Méhul, along with large choral works and oratorios that so long had been an integral part of the Viennese cultural life.⁶¹ Also present were solo concerti for violin or 'cello, but the Friends of Music preserved their distinction from the popular public concerts by avoiding piano concerti altogether. Instead, they focused on composers like Joseph Mayseder, Bernhard Romberg, and Ferdinand Bogner.⁶²

Beyond featuring selected composers, the Friends of Music sought to further its purpose through the creation of a music conservatory, the establishment of a standard "classical" canon of repertoire, and the formulation of standards to judge music and performances through the publication of a regular journal.⁶³ Though the Friends of Music

⁵⁸ Hanson, Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna, 102.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 94.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 92.

failed to maintain such a periodical, their other efforts yielded lasting success. The Vienna Conservatory was founded by the Friends of Music in 1817, and remains operational to this day. Due to the ideology put forth through their choices in programming, the Friends of Music also made a significant impact on the musical tastes of many generations.

Those who founded the Friends of Music felt that the overwhelming focus on music without substance was doing Vienna a disservice, and that the music once heard frequently in aristocratic halls and throughout the entire city was worth preserving. They offered three different types of concerts, all of which blended the boundaries between public and private that were so well defined in the eighteenth century. The biggest productions, called *Musikfests*, featured large oratorios, the while the smaller Society concerts were structured similarly to traditional public concerts, and the intimate Thursday evening concerts, or *Abendunterhaltungen*, were much like the salons held in the finer middle-class homes. The Friends of Music concerts were like the private concerts of aristocrats in that no tickets were sold at the door; instead, the concerts were open to all members, with membership available to those who pay a yearly membership fee.⁶⁴ In this way, the Friends of Music could present music in a fashion that fit both the private and public niche. Since chamber music was a common element in private concerts, and nearly ubiquitous in salon-type settings, the Society's two more popular concert outlets enabled a diverse audience to encounter chamber music performed to a degree or in a setting that may not have been previously available. Even more important, the Society recognized the

⁶⁴Hanson, "Vienna, City of Music", 104.

importance of this Austrian instrumental tradition, and promoted its performance in concert.

The Friends of Music Society was not the only association formed with such lofty ideals in the years following the Napoleonic wars. The Concerts Spirituels series was established in 1819 and ran regular performances until 1848.⁶⁵ Modeled after the French concert series of the same name, the Concerts Spirituels ran programs of sacred choral or instrumental music in churches and small secular venues, and intentionally “avoided any music with bravura.”⁶⁶ This goal was conceived to support vocal music of the Germanic tradition, rather than the Italian music that flooded Vienna’s theaters. The Concerts Spirituels also supported the important instrumental traditions of Austrian music, mostly through the presentation of symphonies, but also with the more serious varieties of chamber music included in programs. Concertos and the lighter varieties of chamber music were, for the most part, avoided, because the group’s supporters felt that they were overly ostentatious and lacking in seriousness. These same arguments form the basis of the group’s disdain for Italian opera, and demonstrate the contrast in ideology and aesthetics developing in Viennese audiences of the nineteenth century.

Unlike the concerts presented by the Friends of Music Society, the Concerts Spirituels were public performances. Tickets were sold to cover the fees for players and venue, and, like other public concerts, were open to all classes. Costs were not excessive, nor were the performances of especially high quality. The Concerts Spirituels were built

⁶⁵ Botstein, “Vienna: 1806-1945,” [Grove Music Online](#).

⁶⁶ Hanson, [Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna](#), 97.

around amateur participation, and even talented players were hindered by the paucity or even absence of rehearsal time.⁶⁷ Therefore, despite the series' high ideals, the Concerts Spirituels did not educate audiences in the manner that was intended. The participatory element, along with the sale of tickets to the general public, demonstrates not only the overall trends in support for music Vienna, but also that the conscious cultivation of music in the Germanic tradition was considered worthwhile by many.

Another series of public concerts was established through the entrepreneurial efforts of the brilliant violinist Ignaz Schuppanzigh (1776-1830). From 1799 to 1806, Schuppanzigh led groups of amateur and professional soloists who played regular concerts in the Augarten park.⁶⁸ These were subscription concerts funded by the wealthy that ran exclusively during the summer months and consisted of pieces typical of all public concerts. His much more famous venture as conductor and manager of public concerts began in 1810 and continued until his death in 1830. Details of this second series are quite similar to the first, in that he operated primarily out of the Augarten hall, featured both amateur and professional players, and scheduled his six concerts around the timetables of theatrical productions.⁶⁹ The biggest difference was that this series relied upon totally public subscription. As a quartet player, Schuppanzigh featured chamber music heavily in these

⁶⁷ Hanson, "Vienna, City of Music" , 107.

⁶⁸ Morrow, 59.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 61.

programs, and by combining their presentation with the standard fare of public concerts, he allowed the middle classes to hear the salon music of the previous generation.⁷⁰

The Biedermeier period saw a dramatic increase in middle class support for music. Support was both financial and participatory, through musical evenings like Schubertiads presented in private homes, and with the increasing popularity of amateur ensembles. Various series of public concerts were founded during this period, most of them for the purpose of preserving the Austrian instrumental tradition. These factors contributed to a high level of enthusiasm and support for chamber music, while also providing for a certain amount of experimentation. This is evident through a number of chamber pieces written for unusual ensembles, or at the very least, ensembles unseen before this time. The compositions of Beethoven, Schubert, Spohr, and Lachner that feature large chamber ensembles of mixed winds and strings, including the double bass, could only have come about through the social developments of the Biedermeier period. These pieces contain features that not only resemble one another, but that also reflect the general trends of Vienna at the time they were written.

⁷⁰Hanson, "Vienna, City of Music", 107.

CHAPTER 2

REPERTOIRE FROM VIENNA: BEETHOVEN, SCHUBERT, SPOHR, AND LACHNER

Ludwig van Beethoven

Combining wind and string instruments within a single chamber ensemble was not an unusual practice in 1800, but such works were small in scope, and used one or two woodwinds for a predominantly decorative purpose.¹ Beethoven was the first composer to break with this tradition. His Septet for Violin, Viola, Violoncello, Double Bass, Clarinet, Horn, and Bassoon in E-flat Major, Op. 20, premiered on 2 April 1800, and instantly became a popular success.² While much about this piece reflects the compositional style and method of presentation preferred in the eighteenth century, its six substantial movements and integrated use of three different wind colors establish it as the first of a new kind. The Septet's popularity caused several arrangements to be written for different instrumentation, and audiences across Europe were soon exposed to it, though Beethoven himself eventually grew tired of the work. In 1815, Beethoven remarked that the Septet was considerably less 'serious' than his later compositions for chamber ensembles.³ The Septet remained popular despite Beethoven's disapproval, and even provided inspiration for later composers to write similar chamber works.

¹ Homer Ulrich, *Chamber Music*, 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), 242.

² Sigrid Wiesmann, "Vienna: Bastion of Conservatism," in *The Early Romantic Era: Between Revolutions 1789 and 1848*, ed. Alexander Ringer, Man & Music (London: Macmillan Press, 1990), 84-108; see p. 89.

³ Melvin Berger, *Guide to Chamber Music* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1985), 43.

Beethoven's Septet reflects the trends of late eighteenth century Vienna in a variety of ways. The piece was premiered during a private concert in the home of prince Josef Schwarzenberg.⁴ The prince was a frequent sponsor of oratorios and chamber music, and his personal orchestra frequently performed for such events.⁵ The April 2 premiere was no exception, since the prince's orchestra was also responsible for premiering Beethoven's first symphony that very evening. Beethoven's Septet was intended to fit within a program including both chamber and symphonic works, and allowed the professional soloists that the prince hired, including the members of the Schuppanzigh Quartet, to be featured more prominently.⁶ The specifics of this concert, therefore, are very typical of the turn of the century: an aristocratic patron endorses Beethoven as a composer, and the performance of chamber music in general. The Septet required this kind of patronage in order to assemble the large and varied forces required to play it. However, because of its instant popularity, the Septet soon served as the reason for an ensemble to come together, as evidenced by the fact that the Schuppanzigh Quartet, along with the necessary wind players, made concert tours in both 1816 and 1823-1825 in order to feature this piece.⁷

In terms of form and style, Beethoven's Septet is also strongly rooted in eighteenth century traditions. The piece is built around a total of six movements, which calls to mind

⁴ Ibid., 42.

⁵ Peter Clive, *Schubert and His World: A Biographical Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 206.

⁶ John Michael Gingerich, "Schubert's *Beethoven* Project: The Chamber Music, 1824-1828" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1996), 245.

⁷ Ibid., 247.

the many short, tuneful movements typically played in a divertimento.⁸ The first movement accentuates the orchestral nature of the large ensemble by opening with a brief but highly dramatic introduction. This serves both as a method to seize the audience's attention, but also to provide adequate contrast to the quick, light-hearted material that unfolds throughout the remainder of the sonata-form movement. Beethoven again provides contrast in tempi with the second movement, as he continues to follow the conventions of both symphonic and chamber music. It is in the key of the subdominant, A-flat major, and is in the song-form typical of slow movements. The third movement is a minuet and trio, both of which are in the home key. Although the fourth movement presents a theme and variations, a form sometimes used in the fourth and final movement, Beethoven departs from tradition by using the key of the dominant. Since this harmonic choice fails to achieve tonal closure for the Septet as a whole, it informs the audience that the piece is not yet over. The piece continues with two more movements: a scherzo and trio, which also fails as a conclusive end to the piece despite returning to E-flat major, and a swift rondo in the character of a march.⁹ By opening this final movement with a slow, solemn passage, just as he did in the first movement, Beethoven convincingly denotes this as the final movement. This slow passage, written in the parallel minor, also provides contrast between what would otherwise be two similarly light-hearted movements.

⁸ Berger, 43.

⁹ John Herschel Baron, *Intimate Music: A History of the Idea of Chamber Music* (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1998), 294.

It is at the beginning of the fourth movement, therefore, that Beethoven finally clarifies the identity of his Septet. He had been able to handle the large number of instruments in the ensemble, along with the tasteful interplay of their parts, in a manner consistent with the serious chamber style.¹⁰ However, the mixture of strings and winds within the ensemble suggests that the Septet belongs more in the divertimento tradition. Beethoven chooses to balance the forms these two traditions suggest, and molds the work into a coherent and unique whole.¹¹ By including a large number of short movements, each of which are focused on the presentation of tuneful melodies, the Septet implies that its divertimento heritage is the stronger of the two.¹² Prince Schwarzenberg indubitably delighted in the formal sophistication present within the Septet, as this was the sort of music that flourished under aristocratic patronage. The piece's immediate and continuing success demonstrate that the middle class appreciated its charm, and that its rigorous and musical underpinning supported repeat performances without reducing it to mere triviality.¹³

The style of writing in Beethoven's Septet further demonstrates the importance of eighteenth century traditions in the composition and subsequent reception of the piece. Although becoming old-fashioned by the turn of the century, *style galant*, the defining

¹⁰ Thomas F. Dunhill, Chamber Music: A Treatise for Students (London: Macmillan and Co., 1938), 286.

¹¹ John Warrack, "Chamber Works With Wind Instruments (from 1700)," in Chamber Music, ed. Alec Robertson (Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books, 1967), 288-320; see p. 305.

¹² Berger, 43.

¹³ Donald N. Ferguson, Image and Structure in Chamber Music (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1964), 133.

feature of those Haydn and Mozart works that were played in numerous settings across Vienna, is also the essential feature within the Septet.¹⁴ By incorporating characteristic features of this conventional style, Beethoven again demonstrates that the divertimento tradition played an important role in shaping the Septet as a whole. Simple melodies are prevalent in every movement, and most are both tuneful and memorable. Delicately balanced motives, along with symmetrical and tonally closed eight-bar phrases, are the source of this simplicity.¹⁵ Simple bass lines and clearly delineated harmonic progressions gracefully support these melodies. The use of strings and winds within the ensemble is carefully controlled to project melody and accompaniment, as in his symphonies, but in the Septet, Beethoven combines the groups to a greater degree, and uses the double bass to highlight passages and progressions in a way that is “essentially different from that of an orchestral bass.”¹⁶ Beethoven also combines instruments to present single melodic lines to form timbres not common in symphonies at this time; the first movement presents examples of the violin doubling the horn, and of the viola filling out chords between clarinet and bassoon.¹⁷

Other stylistic fashions of the time are alluded to in the Septet. The slow introductions of the first and sixth movements are very similar to the slow introductions with which Mozart began many of his pieces in the 1780s. A desire to hear beautiful solo

¹⁴ Berger, 43.

¹⁵ Kofi Agawu, “The Chamber Music of Beethoven,” in *Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music*, ed. Stephen E. Hefling (New York: Schirmer Books, 1998), 1-38; see p. 4.

¹⁶ Donald Francis Tovey, “Chamber Music a General Survey (1928),” in *Essays in Musical Analysis: Chamber Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1944), 1-19; see p. 18.

¹⁷ Dunhill, 288.

violin writing is also satisfied in the sixth movement, with an elegant bravura line immediately following the minor key area, and preceding the final entry of the rondo theme.¹⁸ This would have been played by Ignaz Schuppanzigh, who showcased his brilliant technique as soloist in numerous concerts. While the Septet as a whole would demand careful attention from the other soloists, the inclusion of such brilliant writing, uncommon in other forms of chamber music, demonstrates that Beethoven was fulfilling the desires of his audience, and possibly even accentuating the tuneful nature of the divertimento tradition. The predominantly simple melodies, harmonies, and textures appealed to the aristocratic audience of the premiere, while the inclusion of a showcase passage satisfied the growing desire for spectacle at the turn of the century. As the middle class support of chamber music grew, they inherited the taste for this simple style, but, as a whole, still preferred virtuosic displays over serious chamber music. A preference for either style is fulfilled in the Septet, with a definite emphasis on simplicity. Furthermore, since the technical demands were, for the most part, not excessive, there was the possibility of enjoying the Septet as an amateur performer. The numerous concerts that included this piece provided many this opportunity, which further expanded the audience base for this piece, especially among the middle class, though the large size of the ensemble would limit the occasions on which it could be played.

Franz Schubert

Like Beethoven's Septet, Schubert's Octet in F Major, D. 803 is the result of aristocratic patronage, and its instrumentation and arrangement of movements bear a strong

¹⁸Ulrich, 243.

resemblance to Beethoven's work. The Octet came about through a commission from Count Ferdinand von Troyer, and was premiered in the patron's apartment in the spring of 1824.¹⁹ Though still relying on aristocratic patronage for the creation of such a piece, the Octet demonstrates several of the trends present in the Biedermeier period. Troyer held a significantly lesser rank than Schwarzenberg, and performed the piece at a more intimate gathering in his own home, rather than at a sizable concert in the performance hall of a large estate. Furthermore, he required the Octet to include a clarinet part suitable to his own abilities, since he desired to play in the piece's premiere.²⁰ This demonstrates the increasing level of amateur participation within chamber music by the 1820s. While John Michael Gingerich, and many other scholars, assume that Troyer asked Schubert to make his Octet overtly similar to Beethoven's Septet, there is no evidence to support the claim.

The instrumentation of the Octet alone calls to mind Beethoven's work. The only difference is the addition of a second violin, enabling Schubert to include passages with the scoring of a typical string quartet, and also so that he could use standard orchestral doublings, with two violins an octave apart while the double bass plays an octave below the violoncello.²¹ Apart from the clarinet part for Troyer, Schubert wrote the Octet with specific players in mind, much as Beethoven had done with his Septet.²² In fact, though not participants in the first performance, Schubert wrote his string parts for the Schup-

¹⁹Alexander Brent-Smith, *Schubert: Quartet in D Minor and Octet*, The Musical Pilgrim (London: Oxford University Press, 1927), 30.

²⁰Gingerich, 247.

²¹J. A. Westrup, *Schubert Chamber Music* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1969), 13.

²²Leon Plantinga, *Romantic Music: A History of Musical Style in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1989), 89.

panzigh Quartet, just as Beethoven had done, and they went on to perform the piece many times across Europe.²³

With six movements of the same varieties as in Beethoven's Septet laid out in a similar pattern, the Octet is noticeably like the Septet "both in general plan and in detail."²⁴ The only difference in organization is that the minuet and scherzo exchange positions in Schubert's work. Even the key relationships of all six movements are virtually identical, although Schubert somewhat expands on the Septet by placing the trio of the third-movement scherzo in the dominant key and that of the fifth-movement minuet in the subdominant.²⁵ Schubert thus introduces an unexpected tonality for the fourth movement, just as Beethoven had done. Slow introductions precede the first and sixth movements in both pieces, and Schubert even follows the same general harmonic progressions and tutti scorings that Beethoven used.²⁶ In general, the Octet expands upon the methods that Beethoven used in his Septet, even to the point that Schubert invokes the same mood with the slow introduction of the sixth movement that Beethoven did through using the parallel minor, but draws out the similarity to the first movement's slow introduction by failing to provide resolution to the tonic minor chord.²⁷

²³ Clive, 241.

²⁴ J. A. Westrup, "The Chamber Music," in The Music of Schubert, ed. Gerald Abraham (New York: W. W. Norton, 1947), 88-110; see p. 98.

²⁵ Gingerich, 235.

²⁶ *ibid.*, 238.

²⁷ *ibid.*, 242.

Schubert therefore appears to be integrating the overall style of Beethoven's Septet into his Octet: many aspects bear a strong resemblance, while others reflect Schubert's personal artistic decisions. For instance, the two slow introductions provide the only dark moments in an otherwise light piece.²⁸ Schubert enhances the sombre feeling in the first slow introduction by borrowing chords from the minor mode, and in the sixth movement by invoking certain elements common in "ombra music," the highly dramatic moments of tragedy that in many overtures feature prominent horn lines, dissonant harmonies scored for winds, and tremolos in the low strings.²⁹ This contrasts with the simple, balanced, and upbeat melodies that dominate the remainder of the movement, and contribute to the piece's overall charm, deeply rooted in the Viennese tradition.³⁰

By favoring simplicity and entertainment over profundity and complexity, and by focusing attention on the playful blend of colors within the ensemble, Schubert asserts that his Octet is a divertimento, though one that is expertly crafted.³¹ And, in so doing, he captures the essence of chamber music within the Biedermeier period: "cheerful music-making for friends."³² Not only do parts interact in true chamber style, but tutti sections are judiciously used to bring all the members of the large ensemble into the discussion.³³

²⁸ Rey M. Longyear, *Nineteenth-Century Romanticism in Music*, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1988), 76.

²⁹ Gingerich, 267.

³⁰ Westrup, *Schubert Chamber Music*, 6.

³¹ Gingerich, 249.

³² Westrup, "The Chamber Music," 97.

³³ Robert Winter, "Schubert, Franz (Peter)," *Grove Music Online*, ed. L. Macy (London: Oxford University Press, 2006), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>.

Furthermore, Schubert includes only a single passage calling for virtuosity on the violin, much like Beethoven had done, to ensure that the piece would not far exceed the capabilities of friends meeting in living rooms and taverns, only in Schubert's case the passage immediately precedes a brief return of dark introductory material in the sixth movement.³⁴

Schubert incorporates a number of his personal compositional tendencies in the Octet as well. The unusual length of the piece is definitely characteristic of Schubert. At over twenty minutes longer than Beethoven's Septet, his penchant for lyrical development made the Octet more difficult to program within the Schuppanzigh Quartet's recitals while on tour.³⁵ The sixth movement also contains a number of rhetorical silences,³⁶ as well as a sequence of imitative contrapuntal entries elaborating the coda,³⁷ which are tools that Schubert frequently uses in keyboard and orchestral works. Other traits, however, demonstrate that Schubert was willing to use Romantic era developments in harmony in the presentation of what is at its heart an eighteenth century divertimento. Swift changes in key, usually by third-relations, are numerous.³⁸ The development of the first movement, in F major, reaches F-sharp minor through the introduction of melodic chromaticism, and he uses the large ensemble to full extent harmonically by presenting a

³⁴ Gingerich, 273.

³⁵ *ibid.*, 251.

³⁶ Brent-Smith, 51.

³⁷ *ibid.*, 55.

³⁸ Westrup, Schubert Chamber Music, 14.

dominant-thirteenth chord elsewhere in the development.³⁹ Schubert also increases the harmonic complexity by exploiting modal mixture, augmented sixths, the subdominant as a key area, and key relations by half-step, especially the Neapolitan, most of which Beethoven used little, if at all, in his Septet.⁴⁰

Despite the presence of these advanced harmonies, Schubert's smooth voice-leading ensures that the overall texture remains simple and light-hearted. The more remote harmonies function as interesting points of embellishment, while Schubert follows essentially the same course that Beethoven did in his Septet. The instrumentation of the Octet alone seems to suggest the divertimento tradition to Schubert, and preserving that tradition is the piece's primary function. The focus on participation and home-music making, overall mood, interplay of instruments of different timbre, and the range of movements all contribute towards this goal. A work in this tradition did not, however, have to be stylistically out-dated with respect to form and harmony. Schubert carefully incorporated new developments in these features as a method of making an artful and modern work in the divertimento genre.

Louis Spohr

Not all composers who wrote for chamber ensembles comparable to that of Beethoven's Septet while in Vienna approached his work as a model to be followed or expanded on. One such composer is Louis Spohr (1784-1859). Since his first lessons on

³⁹ Brent-Smith, 34.

⁴⁰ Gingerich, 258.

the violin in 1789, he showed considerable musical talent.⁴¹ And, as in Biedermeier Vienna, he participated in the performance of chamber music at his home in Brunswick throughout his childhood.⁴² Spohr's desire to excel at violin playing is evident through demanding perfection of his own skills in these informal settings,⁴³ but also through his great admiration of the violinist Pierre Rode (1774-1830), whom Spohr saw play a concert in Brunswick in 1803.⁴⁴ Composition and conducting became increasingly important to Spohr from that time on, as they were appropriate talents for any aspiring virtuoso of his age. From both the quality and quantity of the music he wrote, Spohr is acknowledged as the finest in the long tradition of violinist-composers,⁴⁵ and his fame as a conductor and composer perhaps exceeded that of his considerable talent on violin.⁴⁶

The first conducting position that Spohr took was in Gotha, where he was concertmaster in the city's orchestra between 1805 and 1812.⁴⁷ With the experience and renown of this position, Spohr was then able to make a number of concert tours as a virtuoso player. Between the years 1800 and 1820, Spohr performed in numerous cities across what is now modern-day Germany, as well as Austria, Russia, Switzerland, Italy,

⁴¹ Clive Brown, "Spohr, Louis [Ludewig, Ludwig]," *Grove Music Online*, ed. L. Macy (London: Oxford University Press, 2006), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>.

⁴² Clive Brown, *Louis Spohr: A Critical Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 3.

⁴³ Dorothy Moulton Mayer, *The Forgotten Master: The Life & Times of Louis Spohr* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1959), 11.

⁴⁴ Brown, *Louis Spohr: A Critical Biography*, 145.

⁴⁵ Henri Temianka, "A Flame Extinguished?" *The Strad* 100 (March 1989): 223-5, see p. 224.

⁴⁶ Mayer, 162.

⁴⁷ Brown, *Louis Spohr: A Critical Biography*, 33.

England, Holland, Belgium, and France.⁴⁸ A number of these visits were rewarded with more permanent positions. Count Palffy von Erdöd offered Spohr the *Kapellmesiter* position for the Theater an der Wien in Vienna for three years, between 1812 and 1815, while the violinist was on his way to Leipzig and Prague.⁴⁹ Spohr found similar temporary positions in Frankfurt and London, and in 1821 he finally settled in Kassel, where his primary responsibility was the production of operas. He held this position until a forced retirement in 1857.⁵⁰

In many ways, Spohr straddles the Classical and Romantic periods. He was not a rash innovator, and had strong opinions about the need for careful control in musical impulses. Even as a youth, he was a keen observer and frank critic of music, and firmly believed in unifying virtuosity and expression in his music.⁵¹ Spohr often succeeded in investing even his most dazzling lines with true emotional intensity,⁵² and these moments were carefully prepared through the “rational development of an initial musical impulse.”⁵³ On the one hand, he believed in the Romantic ideals of personal freedoms and expression, especially in the arts,⁵⁴ but on the other, remained a staunch advocate of

⁴⁸ Henry Pleasants, *The Musical Journeys of Louis Spohr* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), vii.

⁴⁹ Brown, *Louis Spohr: A Critical Biography*, 73.

⁵⁰ Brown, “Spohr, Louis,” Grove Music Online.

⁵¹ Brown, *Louis Spohr: A Critical Biography*, 4.

⁵² Mayer, 148.

⁵³ *ibid.*, 107.

⁵⁴ John Deathridge, “Germany: The Special Path,” in *The Late Romantic Era: From the Mid-19th Century to World War I*, ed. Jim Samson, Man & Music (London: Macmillan Press, 1991), 50-73; see p. 50.

conservatism in music until the end of his life.⁵⁵ While these viewpoints may seem in opposition, they demonstrate the degree of criticism and self-examination that Spohr undertook in his compositions. His instrumental works are the most experimental of his output, but this experimentation is counter-balanced by a preference for smoothness and a sense of inevitability.⁵⁶ New possibilities had to be explored in terms of the old. Whether in his own music, or in others', Spohr was "frightened by forceful originality and anything threatening the status quo."⁵⁷

The interplay of innovation and conservatism are perhaps most evident in Spohr's melodic lines. His slow movements are often characterized by the extended lyricism that becomes standard practice within the Romantic period.⁵⁸ However, these emotional outpourings, frequently incorporated in violin lines, are restrained by a necessity to balance the phrases, a practice strongly influenced by Rode, who played a large role in shaping Spohr's musical imagination.⁵⁹ In chamber music especially, Spohr leans excessively towards the conservative end with his melodic writing. He frequently scores for textures that are more like simple melody and accompaniment than interwoven and complementary voices, and in doing so, draws from the earliest string quartets of the *brilliant* tradition, which are characterized by a sharp contrast between the melody in the first

⁵⁵ Arnold Whittall, "Germany: Cross-Currents and Contradictions," in The Late Romantic Era: From the Mid-19th Century to World War I, ed. Jim Samson, Man & Music (London: Macmillan Press, 1991), 340-361; see p. 349.

⁵⁶ Plantinga, 255.

⁵⁷ Joshua Berrett, "Characteristic Conventions of Style in Selected Instrumental Works of Louis Spohr," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1974), 4.

⁵⁸ Brown, Louis Spohr: A Critical Biography, 28.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, 18.

violin and the bass and inner voice accompaniment in the remaining instruments.⁶⁰

However, much of this stems from a desire to showcase his own skills on violin, and these moments still follow an overall formal logic.

Early in Spohr's career, this soloistic quality was actually preferred.⁶¹ Practical considerations are also in play with such textures, as Spohr could not always rely on finding highly skilled performers to accompany him in performance while on concert tours. Spohr resorts to this soloistic style much less frequently in his later works. When he does score in such a fashion, however, the texture, dominated by the first violin, presents Spohr with opportunities to exploit his characteristic "fertility of invention,"⁶² either by presenting a memorable melody that will be developed in a more full texture later or by allowing earlier melodic material to be reworked prominently while undergoing steady intensification. Furthermore, these solo-like melodies provide the perfect vehicle for unifying motivic material across movements, and, even when motives are altered across these boundaries, their relationship to the original is made noticeable because of the prominence the scoring imparts to them.⁶³

Unfortunately, the consistent lyricism in melodic ideas does not provide for a great deal of contrast in Spohr's music.⁶⁴ To counteract the similarities in melody, he uses a

⁶⁰ Harvey Grace, "Spohr, Louis," *Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music*, 2 vols., ed. Walter Wilson Cobbett, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 446-50; see p. 447.

⁶¹ Baron, 241.

⁶² Maurice Powell, "Louis Spohr: A Retrospect of the Bicentenary," *Musical Times* 126 (June 1985): 347-8; see p. 347.

⁶³ Clive Brown, "The Chamber Music of Spohr and Weber," in *Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music*, ed. Stephen Hefling (New York: Schirmer Books, 1998), 140-169; see p. 157.

⁶⁴ William S. Newman, *The Sonata Since Beethoven*, 3rd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1983), 293.

range of chromatic harmonies. Surprising moments therefore derive from unexpected harmonic developments, rather than novel melodic ideas or their development.⁶⁵ These changes in color, in some cases, provide the impetus for entire movements.⁶⁶ Chromaticism plays a part in most of Spohr's melodic lines, and, besides maintaining interest in frequently repeated phrases, provides ample opportunity for enharmonic modulation.⁶⁷ This allowed Spohr to explore distant keys. Modulations into keys built on the third and sixth scale degrees are especially common.⁶⁸ Not surprisingly, Spohr attempted to incorporate these modulations as smoothly as possible, but many often criticized his use as excessive or perhaps even as exploitative.⁶⁹ However, these modulations are prepared as much as possible, so that the listener may become accustomed to the foreign key, and the flow of chromaticism serve the structural plan of the entire movement.⁷⁰ This process leads to development sections that provide a number of theme fragments combined with one another through an array of keys, and even recapitulations that present melodies in different keys than they were earlier.⁷¹ Spohr's overall approach to form was quite conservative, but daring harmonies could be introduced, so long as their approach was smooth and prepared for melodically.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, 292.

⁶⁶ Brown, *Louis Spohr: A Critical Biography*, 194.

⁶⁷ Nicholas Kilburn, *Chamber Music and Its Masters Past & in the Present*, rev. G. E. H. Anderson (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1932), 103.

⁶⁸ Brown, *Louis Spohr: A Critical Biography*, 18-9.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, 72.

⁷⁰ Harold Truscott, "The Individuality of Spohr," *The Listener* 31 (31 August 1961), Music: 329.

⁷¹ Brown, "The Chamber Music of Spohr and Weber," 155.

An interesting relationship came about during the years Spohr spent in Vienna. Not long after he was offered the position at the Theater an der Wien, a wealthy textiles merchant, Herr Johann von Tost, approached Spohr with an unusual commission. Tost, an avid music-lover, frequently came into contact with like-minded individuals through his travels as a merchant. His commission was very unusual in that he demanded ownership for three years of all the scores that Spohr would write during his stay in Vienna. Tost explained to Spohr that such ownership would ensure invitations to any performance of these works and of meeting with like-minded individuals during his travels.⁷² Furthermore, he expressed preference for “works suitable for performance in private circles, such as quartets and quintets for stringed instruments, and sextets, septets, octets, and nonets for strings and winds.”⁷³ Spohr, in turn, proposed that the payment for such chamber works be based on the number of instruments scored for.⁷⁴ He immediately set to work and wrote two string quartets for Tost, but felt unsure where to proceed from there. Tost recommended he write a nonet in which each instrument of the ensemble is “highlighted for its individual character.”⁷⁵ Never one to back from a challenge, Spohr pursued such a work, and the result is perhaps one of his finest.⁷⁶

In 1813, Spohr’s first full year in Vienna, he completed his Grand Nonet for Violin, Viola, Violoncello, Double Bass, Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Horn, and Bassoon in F Major,

⁷² Pleasants, 89-90.

⁷³ *ibid.*, 89.

⁷⁴ Brown, *Louis Spohr: A Critical Biography*, 86.

⁷⁵ *ibid.*

⁷⁶ *ibid.*

Op. 31. This piece was written before Schubert's Octet, and, unlike Schubert's work, does not take Beethoven's Septet as a model. Instead, Spohr conceives his Nonet in the same way he did all of his other chamber music. The ensemble for this piece essentially combines a woodwind quintet with a full family of strings, and by integrating these two subsidiary groups, Spohr firmly acknowledges the divertimento tradition within his Nonet.⁷⁷ The interplay of groups of strings or winds, along with numerous combinations of the two, also furthers Tost's request. Spohr in fact writes brilliant passages for each instrument of the ensemble, in order to bring out their distinctive color, but also as his usual method of involving all the instruments in the development of a single musical idea.⁷⁸ This is a fundamentally different conception of how chamber music works than present in Beethoven's Septet, but actually places Spohr much closer to the melodically derived interplay of the earliest string quartets and divertimenti.⁷⁹

Spohr's Nonet has features that set it apart from a divertimento. These works were typically in five movements, including two minuets, and typically relegated the strings to merely accompanimental passagework.⁸⁰ Spohr's Nonet, however, is in four movements, all of which are highly sophisticated in their formal design, and therefore it appears to be more closely related to a string quartet. The first movement is in sonata form, the second is a scherzo with two trio sections, the third is an Adagio in a sonata form with no devel-

⁷⁷ Truscott, 329.

⁷⁸ Brown, "The Chamber Music of Spohr and Weber," 152.

⁷⁹ *ibid.*

⁸⁰ Ferguson, 31.

opment section, and a swift-moving finale follows, also written in sonata form. Spohr employs instrumentation to help articulate form. The first movement, for instance, begins with a theme in the tonic for strings alone, answered in the dominant by a more imitative setting of the same theme in the winds. This pattern is altered in the recapitulation, when the first, simpler texture is played by flute, clarinet and string trio, and is answered, this time in the home key of F major, by oboe, bassoon, and full strings. In the scherzo, Spohr again uses the contrast between strings and winds to repeat the theme using a new texture and key. The initial eight measures present a theme in d minor that are scored almost entirely for strings. This same theme is played by the winds in mm. 17-20, but this time over a string accompaniment and in the dominant of F major, the goal of the phrase. This plan is further elaborated through the two trio sections, the first of which is in D major, and is scored mostly for strings. While Spohr also includes the winds in this section, their function is to clarify the harmonic motion, especially in the modulatory measures, 81-85 and 89-92. The remaining two movements use similar methods to enhance the contrast of different tonal areas, while also providing a method to emphasize the return to the home key through the use of a distinctive timbre.

By presenting themes and tonalities in contrasting instrument families, Spohr also gives each instrument of the ensemble the chance to be featured through short solo moments, in accordance with Tost's wishes, though the double bass is always paired with the 'cello in such situations. The violin, however, is frequently the most prominent part, as one might expect from Spohr. But, in accordance with his restraint in using virtuosic passages, especially in chamber music, these violin flourishes serve an important struc-

tural purpose. An example of such a passage begins with the 'cello at m. 28 in the first movement of the Nonet. This figure is immediately passed to the viola and then the violin, and is in fact a diminution and embellishment of the movement's primary theme, and coincides with the harmonically unstable transition to the dominant key area, before the second theme is presented. The most extreme example of violin-dominated scoring occurs just before the closing theme in both the exposition and recapitulation sections of the same movement. Both of these feature the same motive as earlier in the movement, this time preceded by the winds in m. 78 and again at m. 231. The violin maintains this fast-flowing motion for a full eleven measures in both instances, and provides an exciting closure to the respective sections. Similar examples can be heard in the other movements, and each time, the virtuosic displays are prepared by previous fragmentation and chromatic repetition of the motives, and heighten the anticipation of the return of the home key or recurring themes.

The first movement's principal theme also bears many other features that are highly characteristic of Spohr. As already discussed, the opening four notes of the Nonet generate an intense and prominent reworking in the violin during dramatic parts of the movement. Spohr sets the original presentation of this motive very simply, however, scoring it for string trio. This motive forms the bulk of the movement's melodic material, since transitional key areas are based on it, as is the closing theme, the coda, and the entire development section. It is thus carried through a wide variety of instrumental combinations and transformed by a number of compositional techniques, even to the point that it is heard in fugato in mm. 128-35 of the first movement.

Despite these many appearances, the theme does not become tiresome. This is in part because of the theme's solid construction. The initial 8 bars form a pair of complementary 4-bar phrases, each of which are easily divisible in two 2-bar ideas. But, while the careful balance of this phrase suggests the simplicity of the *style galant*, the theme bears Spohr's unique stamp. The first 2-bar idea alone features two chromatically altered pitches, and this idea is essentially transposed chromatically in the following two 2-bar ideas. Spohr conceived the motive chromatically, and immediately develops it chromatically. Therefore, it is primarily through chromaticism that this motive is repeated through so much of the movement, and Spohr achieves some very interesting harmonic effects. Chromatic voice-leading often leads to key areas related by thirds. In m. 48, Spohr tonicizes E minor from C major by means of a German augmented-sixth chord. Key relations become increasingly intriguing, as Spohr reaches b minor, A-flat major, and B-flat major, all from a starting point of C major, in the first movement alone. The scherzo theme is treated even more deftly, as Spohr alters it to be heard in both major and minor modes.

Even more surprising is that the primary theme of movement one is present in three of the Nonet's four movements.⁸¹ The main theme of the Adagio movement is quite similar to that of the first movement, and the double-neighbor motion is clearly seen in the violin between mm. 2-3, though in longer note values and with the half-step motion occurring at the end rather than the beginning. Finally, the oboe parodies the theme beginning in m. 32 of the fourth movement, and is swept into the current of run-

⁸¹ The present author agrees with the findings of Brown, *Louis Spohr: A Critical Biography*, 86.

ning eighth-notes through much of the remainder of the movement, as traces of it are evident in the second theme, presented first in m. 42.

In Spohr's Nonet, a traditional Viennese genre is updated to suit Romantic period taste. Beethoven focused on preserving the light-hearted mood of the divertimento in his Septet. Instead, Spohr opts to accentuate the melodic underpinning of the genre. The charm and bounce of the *galant* style fit naturally with Beethoven's tendency to integrate the ensemble in the presentation of both melody and accompaniment, while the trading-off of melodies suited Spohr's orchestrational penchant for brilliant writing. The flexibility of the melodic line also allowed him to broaden the range of harmonies used in composing such a work. Much like Schubert would later do, he modernized the sound by incorporating advances in compositional techniques.

The Nonet demonstrates the composer's intent to model his work on serious chamber pieces, rather than preserving the lighter style of the divertimento. He uses the same formal outline in the Nonet as he would in any other chamber piece, and essentially follows a single melodic idea through four movements. The six movements of Beethoven and Schubert provide a bouquet of different sounds, and each capturing the festive nature of participatory chamber music in Vienna, as well as a melodramatic flair through the incorporation of slow introductions. Although Spohr enjoyed such a background in his childhood education in music, he demonstrates a true seriousness of intention in his Nonet, and writes it for the serious audiences of wealthy, aristocratic circles.

Finally, Spohr offers a great deal of soloistic writing, especially for violin, which is not only characteristic of Spohr's chamber music, but also demonstrates the Nonet's

origins in private patronage. Tost asked for a piece ‘suitable for performance in private circles,’ and received exactly that. It is challenging to a listener as a piece of serious chamber music, but also requires highly skilled players available only to those who privately fund concert programs. The careful introduction of virtuosic elements within an otherwise typical chamber texture appealed to both upper- and middle-class audiences. While the Nonet earned a great deal of enthusiasm and performances during Spohr’s stay in Vienna, these were mostly at private recitals where guests did not participate.⁸² This implies that enjoyment for the Nonet primarily derived from listening to it in private concerts, and did not find popular success through amateur performances as Beethoven’s Septet had.

Spohr wrote a second chamber work for large ensemble under the patronage of Johann von Tost. In 1814, the year after he wrote the Nonet, Spohr completed his Octet for Violin, 2 Violas, Violoncello, Clarinet, 2 Horns, and Double Bass in E Major, Op. 32. The instrumentation is quite different than that of the Nonet, and is partially the result of suggestions from the horn player Herbst and the clarinet player Friedlowski, both of whom played in the orchestra at the Theater an der Wien under Spohr’s conductorship.⁸³ The resulting ensemble recalls the typical instrumentation of the eighteenth-century Viennese cassation: “Strings or mixed ensemble plus two horns.”⁸⁴ As mentioned in the

⁸² Pleasants, 99, 109.

⁸³ Brown, *Louis Spohr: A Critical Biography*, 96.

⁸⁴ James Webster, “Violoncello and Double Bass in the Chamber Music of Haydn and his Viennese Contemporaries, 1750-1780,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 29 (1976): 413-38; see p. 413.

previous chapter, serenades, nocturnes, divertimenti, and cassations were all related through a common aesthetic ideal, but are associated with slight differences in instrumentation.⁸⁵ By 1814, however, neither title nor instrumentation alone could define which category a piece belonged in.⁸⁶ Because Spohr included two horns in his Octet, he likely had the sound of a cassation in mind. Though very similar to the divertimento, the cassation is more closely associated with the music played by strolling musicians in late afternoons or evenings. The second viola is probably included to balance the sonority of the two horns.

In most regards, the Octet is similar in overall structure and style to the Nonet. The piece is in four movements that have the same general order of tempi, but Spohr employs different forms for each movement. The Octet's second movement is a minuet instead of a scherzo, the slow third-movement is a theme and variations based on the same melody as the Air with Variations movement from Handel's Fifth Harpsichord Suite in E Major (frequently referred to as "The Harmonious Blacksmith"), and the finale is essentially a rondo built from a single motivic idea. Spohr uses a very narrow range of principal keys, only E major and its parallel, E minor, though this more than made up for through a wide range of intermediary keys. Also unlike the Nonet, the later work begins with a slow introduction to the first movement. Although perhaps modeled on the slow introduction of Beethoven's Septet, as Schubert definitely did in his later Octet, those composers stayed mostly within the key of the first movement. Their introductions are not connected

⁸⁵ Ulrich, 122.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

motivically to the rest of the movement, but Schubert does at times refer to harmonic progressions and textures from this section.

By contrast, the introduction of Spohr's Octet differs from these in a number of details, and suggests a different compositional plan. While the first movement of his Octet is in E major, the introduction is in the parallel minor. And, though the thematic material of the introduction reappears in long-note values within the development section of the first movement at m. 79, the reference is brief. Spohr also writes this passage in the relative minor, C-sharp. When Schubert quotes the introduction of his Octet, he does so much more extensively, and remains within the movement's overall key of F major. But, beyond this overt reference to the introduction, Spohr also includes a number of subtle references. By including motives from the introduction in both the first and second movements, Spohr integrates this section into the piece as a whole, a similar process to that unifying the first, third, and fourth movements of his Nonet. The introduction begins with the clarinet falling a sixth before a rising fourth. This same motive appears as a fragment of the first movement's primary theme in m. 9, played by the horn, though the fourth is altered to a third. The second theme of the movement, a pair of dotted eighth-note upper-neighbor figures followed by a sustained note, is played by the horn in m. 38. This motive also derives from the introduction, where it is played by the viola in m. 6, and is seen again in the first three bars of the minuet, where it is played by the upper strings. This figure is followed by a stepwise descent of a fourth in the winds, seen in mm. 3-5, which resembles the clarinet part in mm. 2-3 of the introduction. Spohr continues to make subtle references that integrate the motives of the introduction and first

two movements with the accompanimental 'cello line in m. 16 of the minuet, since it strongly resembles the rising arpeggiation figure in the first movement's primary theme, as seen in m. 10.

Several of these motives first heard in the introduction also appear within transitional passages or in combination with other important themes. This process both highlights the importance of these motives and blurs formal boundaries. For example, in the transitional passage beginning in m. 18, the clarinet plays the dotted eighth-note neighbor figure of the second theme well before the theme is presented in full. This passage immediately follows the cadence to the dominant that marks the end of the primary theme, but B major is not firmly established as a key area until m. 38. This harmonic arrival, prepared by a lengthy pedal, coincides with the complete statement of the second theme. Furthermore, while the closing thematic group of the Nonet's first movement is mostly made up of fragments from the primary theme, the Octet combines fragments of both the primary and secondary themes, as seen in mm. 62-3. Spohr at times exploits this blurring of boundaries to build excitement and heighten anticipation. An example of this is seen immediately before the recapitulation in movement 1. The primary theme is presented in imitation by the winds at mm. 119-26, as in the exposition, but over a dominant pedal. These elements all intensify the climactic entry of this same theme by the strings, this time clearly in the home key of E major.

But, even as Spohr depends on our expectations of form, he also succeeds in thwarting these expectations. In m. 90 there is a prominent return to E major, marking this point as the beginning of the recapitulation. Attentive audiences would expect to hear

the primary theme here, as would be customary, but Spohr instead presents the secondary theme. The effect is not altogether jarring, however, since the preceding six measures are very similar to those leading into to the its presentation in the exposition section. Furthermore, the primary theme is not heard in its original key and instrumentation again until it is included as part of the closing theme in m. 120. By delaying its arrival, Spohr enhances the feeling of closure at the end of the movement.

As in the Nonet, the first violin presents many striking virtuosic lines that often serve a structural purpose. For example, running sixteenth-notes extend in the violin from m. 22 to the downbeat of m. 32, and continues to be the dominant instrument in the ensemble until m. 38, where the second theme is presented in the first horn. Spohr similarly features the violin in the exposition of the Nonet's first movement, but here it also serves to introduce the closing theme in mm. 56-61 and 116-119. But, while the Nonet typically only the used the violin in this way, Spohr takes greater care in balancing the roles of the violin and winds in the Octet. The violin articulates formal regions for much of the first movement, but Spohr balances this by using the winds in the initial presentation of each of the movement's important themes.

Spohr continues this balance in the second and third movements. The first reprise of the minuet begins exclusively for strings, continues with winds accompanied by low strings, and concludes with the full ensemble. The second reprise also opens with strings, this time in a brief fugato, but is again counter-balanced with scoring for winds alone and for full ensemble. A simple melody presented by both horns together starts the trio section in mm. 135-42, and is embellished by the violin. In the following measures, 143-

150, the roles are reversed: the violin uses double-stops to play the horns' melody, while the second horn and clarinet offer a similar embellishment to the line. These florid accompaniment lines are appropriately idiomatic to the given instrument. The entire third movement is built upon this process of alternation and embellishment.

This movement is based on a theme by Handel, frequently referred to as "The Harmonious Blacksmith." Spohr includes this melody at the request of Tost, who hoped to impress English audiences with the familiar tune.⁸⁷ The first eight measures feature an exact repetition of the theme by winds, then strings. Between these iterations, Spohr alters the accompaniment patterns to suit the larger size and different playing style of the string ensemble, as compared to that of the winds.

The five variations similarly alternate their focus between winds and strings. The first variation is scored mostly for strings and is clearly dominated by the violin, though there are several brief imitative lines in the winds. The second variation begins with the clarinet and horn in close imitation, and as in the opening presentation, their phrase is repeated by the strings, though with a different style of accompaniment. The clearly string-based third variation uses winds only to emphasize important chords, while two contrasting pairs of strings present the melody. Spohr offsets this emphasis in the fourth variation. He uses the horn, accompanied by intensely chromatic strings, to begin each phrase of the melody, and repeats the phrase with a full wind trio. Finally, the fifth variation exchanges sections scored for each group independently before combining them

⁸⁷ Brown, *Louis Spohr: A Critical Biography*, 97.

back together. The resulting texture is highly active, passing florid sixteenth-note figurations between groups while presenting the melody in long-note durations.

Spohr's Nonet was primarily built around the idea of passing melodic phrases between instruments, though he at times used scoring as a means of signifying important parts of the form. The Octet demonstrates a different conception of the ensemble's function. This is perhaps in part because the scoring suggests a cassation rather than a divertimento, and Spohr reflects the differences of their respective scoring and style in his two pieces. However, it is more likely that Tost's request to highlight each instrument of the Nonet resulted in the piece's distinct sound. Tost made no such requirement for the Octet, but the scoring was suggested by wind players from Spohr's theater orchestra.⁸⁸ The careful balance of melodic interest between winds and strings may have been implied by their suggestion, but it is more probable that Spohr wrote the wind parts with these specific players in mind, as well as his own violin playing. Such an interpretation is supported by the Octet's interplay between the three soloistic lines of clarinet, horn, and violin.

Despite these differences in style, the Nonet and Octet remain remarkably similar. With only four movements, and each one meticulously crafted, both pieces are more at home among other sophisticated chamber works than they are with actual eighteenth century divertimenti or cassations. And, as serious chamber works, they fit perfectly within the repertoire of the patronage for which they were composed. The demanding and sometimes virtuosic parts required professional musicians available only to the wealthy,

⁸⁸ Ibid., 96.

but also made the piece attractive to a wider audience. While certain amateur ensembles did perform these pieces, they were not as popular as the related works by Beethoven and Schubert. The sophistication of these two works by Spohr, their consequent aristocratic appeal, and most of all, their popularity, are indicated by their performance in 1814 for European heads of state at the Congress of Vienna.⁸⁹

Franz Lachner

Franz Lachner (1803-1890) offered a different vision for the use of large ensembles in Viennese chamber music. Although this Bavarian-born composer is remembered mostly for conducting the Munich court theater in the 1850's,⁹⁰ his earlier career is of equal importance. Lachner began as an organist in Munich, but moved to Vienna in 1823, when he earned a position as organist at the city's Lutheran church.⁹¹ Almost immediately, Lachner became friends with Schubert and immersed himself in his social circle, frequently participating in Schubertiads.⁹² The two composers often consulted one another about their work, and both enjoyed the act of composing in itself, as witnessed by their joint excursion to write fugues specifically for the organ at the Heiligenkreuz Monastery near Baden. The trip was suggested by Johann Schickh (1770-1835), a merchant, newspaper publisher, and mutual friend.⁹³ Schubert also held private

⁸⁹ Pleasants, 109.

⁹⁰ Deathridge, 55.

⁹¹ Horst Leuchtmann, "(2) Franz Paul Lachner," *Grove Music Online*, ed. L. Macy (London: Oxford University Press, 2006), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>.

⁹² Clive, 112.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, xxiv.

performances of several of his works at Lachner's apartment, including the "Death and the Maiden" string quartet and the Octet, prior to their public premieres. The two composers met less often when Lachner took a position as assistant conductor at Vienna's Kärntnertheater in 1827, and even more so when he travelled to Budapest for the production of his opera *Die Bürgschaft*. But this time apart did not diminish their friendship, and Lachner was able to visit Schubert again just before he passed away.⁹⁴

In 1836, Lachner moved back to Munich to accept an appointment as conductor of the Hofoper and Königliche Vokalkapelle. He continued to assist the city by leading the local Musikalische Akademie, as well as various ensembles at music festivals in the area.⁹⁵ He was promoted to Generalmusikdirektor in 1852, a post that he held until retiring in 1868, though he was much less active as a conductor after Richard Wagner arrived to the city in 1864.⁹⁶

As his good friend Schubert before him, Lachner took Beethoven's works as models to be emulated. His themes sometimes lack the originality of either Beethoven or Schubert, though they are always developed very skillfully.⁹⁷ Like Schubert, Lachner wrote a large quantity of music for amateur enjoyment, an audience that did not always appreciate artfulness for its own sake.⁹⁸ His participation with amateur music-making is

⁹⁴ Ibid., 109-110.

⁹⁵ Leuchtmann, "(2) Franz Paul Lachner," [Grove Music Online](#).

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Newman, 226.

⁹⁸ Wilhelm Almann, "Lachner, Franz," [Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music](#), 2 vols., ed. Walter Wilson Cobbett, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 86.

evident not only in the Schubertiads of Vienna, but also in Munich's Musikalische Akademie, an amateur performing ensemble. Not all of his works were intended for amateur audiences, however. His seventh orchestral suite and Requiem are especially well-crafted and have received wide performance.⁹⁹

Lachner composed his Septet in E-flat Major for Flute, Clarinet, Horn, Violin, Viola, Violoncello and Double Bass in 1824, later in the same year that Schubert wrote his Octet. Unlike all of the other large chamber ensemble pieces discussed thus far, Lachner's Septet shows no evidence of specific patronage. At this time, Lachner was still making his living as an organist at a Lutheran church, and this piece would be entirely out of place in such a setting. The only continuing supporters of his music were his musical friends, who, through the Schubertiads, were his only firm connection to the musical life of Vienna. Because Schubert's Octet was given a private premiere in Lachner's own residence, he was clearly familiar with the piece, and was able to pull together a large number of skilled instrumentalists who would assemble for the sheer enjoyment of making music. Lachner had written other chamber pieces by this time, such as his Woodwind Quintet in F Major of 1823. It is quite possible, then, that Lachner wrote his Septet for the performance atmosphere of a Schubertiad, and amateur players were its intended audience. This conjecture is further supported by the success that the Septet, along with Lachner's other chamber works works, later achieved through publication.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹Leuchtman, "(2) Franz Paul Lachner," [Grove Music Online](#).

¹⁰⁰Albmann, 86.

There is deference to the works of Beethoven and Schubert in Lachner's Septet, but this work diverges from its models in many notable respects. He uses five movements rather than six, creating an overt reference to the typically five-movement divertimento. The overall plan, however, strongly resembles that of Beethoven's Septet, since the movements' forms follow the same pattern, though Lachner omits the slow second movement. Both pieces are also in the same key, E-flat major, and precede the first movement sonata-form with a slow introduction. Lachner's Septet does include some formal and harmonic innovations, such as a minuet with two trio sections and a set of variations that explore the distant key of C major. The fourth movement, a scherzo of remarkably grim mood, employs the relative minor. However, the prevailing cheerfulness returns in the final movement, another use of sonata-form. By using distant keys, sophisticated forms, and a variety of moods, Lachner deviates from the expectations of a divertimento, and to some extent, of Beethoven's Septet, even though these expectations are encouraged by similarities in key and arrangement of forms.

Lachner's instrumentation also differs from that used in Beethoven's Septet or Schubert's Octet. While all three composers use the same number of wind instruments, Lachner includes a flute in place of the bassoon that both Beethoven and Schubert used, though he retains the clarinet and horn. The extra treble instrument expands the coloristic possibilities for melodic presentation, and lightens the overall feeling. However, his scoring leaves the wind section with no true bass voice, and thereby limits its ability to function independently from the strings.

Indeed, Lachner scores few passages exclusively for winds in his Septet. The only such passages are solos for individual instruments. He features the clarinet immediately before introducing the second theme both in the exposition, in mm. 48-9, and in the recapitulation, in mm. 218-9. The flute is similarly featured at the very end of the exposition section, in mm. 218-9. Even shorter solos, all scored for winds, likewise close several sections of the form in the fourth movement. While the second and fourth movements have passages for the winds as a section, these are within the context of imitative textures involving all the instruments. For instance, Lachner scores the opening of the trio section of the fourth movement for winds alone, but he immediately weaves the strings into the texture. By using solo passages to emphasize important structural points in the music, Lachner's use of winds resembles Spohr's treatment of the violin. Lachner's passages are significantly shorter, however, and he distributes these passages among each of the primary melodic instruments, including the violin. To balance the passages for winds discussed above, Lachner scores for solo violin immediately before the appearance of the closing theme in the first movement, both in the exposition, in mm. 95-103, and in the recapitulation, in mm. 262-8.

But, even more often than using the winds to articulate form, Lachner uses them to create interesting changes in color between presentations of a melody. The clarinet part of the first movement's opening five measures, for example, is repeated by the flute in mm. 8-12, where it is doubled by the viola and 'cello. In fact, Lachner applies this pattern to the opening themes of each movement. The second movement also begins with the clarinet, but is contrasted by a repetition in the flute and violin. In the second trio of this

same movement, Lachner uses the flute and clarinet to repeat a melody initially presented in the horn. This practice continues in modulatory sections. For example, immediately after the cadence at the end of the first movement's second theme, in mm. 71-86, Lachner passes two- and four-bar phrases between the violin and flute. He establishes a similar dialogue between 'cello, flute, clarinet, and horn in the middle of the same movement's development section, in mm. 147-63.

Most often, however, Lachner changes not only the instrumentation, but also the texture and the motives themselves. He rarely repeats melodies in their entirety, even when presenting a movement's essential themes. For example, the clarinet melody at the opening of the first movement cadences in the seventh measure. Its opening gestures are immediately repeated, but this phrase is extended through the repetition of fragments for sixteen bars, mm. 8-23, and is accompanied by the full ensemble through a variety of patterns. Throughout this whole passage, the first theme is never restated in its entirety. Instead, the features Lachner uses to lengthen the phrase provide the impetus for the opening measures of the unstable and modulatory transition to the secondary key area, as seen in mm. 23-29. Examples of this process abound within the Septet, creating a direct link between changes in timbre and the organic development of melodic ideas.

With five movements, including both a minuet and a scherzo, relatively simple instrumental parts, and a concentration of thematic presentation in the winds, Lachner preserves the outward appearance of the eighteenth century divertimento. However, he also incorporates numerous elements to accommodate Romantic era tastes, resulting in a different mood than presented in Beethoven's Septet. The symmetry and balance of the

old-fashioned *style galant* have been removed entirely, and the unequal phrase-lengths that Lachner uses in their place complement a more advanced harmonic style. The smooth voice-leading into various tonalities, especially those related by a third, suggests a strong influence of Schubert's methods, though the technique is less subtle in Lachner's phrasing than in Schubert's. Lachner includes movements in both the major and minor keys built on the sixth scale-degrees, while Beethoven and Schubert used neither in their chamber works for large ensembles. In fact, these two composers only used minor keys in the introductions to their final movements, which both open rather ominously, but restored the prevailing cheerful mood through lively march-style writing. Lachner, however, maintains a tragic sound throughout the bulk of an entire movement, the scherzo, in his Septet. And, in place of a march-like finale, Lachner uses compound meter to evoke images of a pastoral countryside. Spohr makes similar evocations in the final movements of both his Nonet and Octet, though he does so more through the lyrical character of his themes.¹⁰¹

The early Romantic era elements of Lachner's Septet are very appropriate to its origins. Lachner operated within a circle that enjoyed coming together to make music. The conviviality of these amateur performing groups was more conducive to this focus on melodic unfolding and equal-treatment of solo instruments than the audiences of Beethoven or Spohr. Lachner's particular group of friends were able to mount a private production of Schubert's Octet, and would have little difficulty playing through his own Septet. While there are a few difficult passages in the Septet, they are primarily for the

¹⁰¹ Brown, Louis Spohr: A Critical Biography, 97.

soloistic treble instruments: flute, clarinet, and violin. These passages tend to be short, and could even be omitted if necessary. These features, along with interesting interactions between parts, solo passages that convincingly interweave with larger scorings, and a sophisticated yet understandable approach to form, would make the piece attractive to middle-class audiences of the Biedermeier period. And, though some of these attributes were present in the eighteenth century divertimento, Lachner deliberately includes them in his Septet, making this piece accessible to middle-class audiences, whether they were listeners or performers.

After retiring from his career as a conductor in Munich, Lachner wrote another chamber work for winds and strings. In 1875, he completed his Nonet for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Horn, Bassoon, Violin, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass in F Major. Despite the different time and place of composition, the Nonet and Septet are quite similar. The Nonet's instrumentation is typical of a large ensemble, and is in fact identical to that used by Spohr in his Nonet. The target audience and first performers of this work are likely comparable to those of the Septet. Establishing this, however, relies heavily on inference, since there is little record of Lachner's activities during his retirement. His biography suggests that he maintained some activity as a conductor, since he led the Aachen music festival in 1870, and his catalogue shows that Lachner continued to compose until 1881.¹⁰² Because of his continued activities as a conductor and of his life-long appreciation for informal music-making, evident through his participation in the Viennese Schubertiads and the Musikalische Akademie of Munich, Lachner presumably remained

¹⁰² Leuchtman, "(2) Franz Paul Lachner," [Grove Music Online](#).

friends with musicians who would gather to play chamber works for recreation. This too is supported by his output in his retirement years, 1868-1881, which feature the highest concentration of chamber works.¹⁰³

The overall layout of the Nonet does suggest a slightly different interpretation than does the Septet. With four movements instead of five, and only one of these a minuet, Lachner suggests a design closer to that of a string quartet than to that of a divertimento. He does, however, still begin the work with a slow introduction to a sonata-form movement that are both in the same key. This introduction begins in an usually grim manner, with the lower instruments playing an augmented neighbor-chord in dark registers twice within the opening five measure. Afterwards, the mood is lightened by the violin and upper winds. As in his Septet, Lachner writes the second movement in the same key as the first, and again includes a minuet here. The trio section of the Nonet's minuet explores a different key, however, which is in the third-related key of D-flat major. The Nonet's slow movement is also in D-flat major, but is the only slow movement discussed here that is not a theme and variations; Lachner instead uses a ternary form of ABA'. The final movement is another sonata-form, back in F major.

Lachner emphasizes important themes in the Nonet by preceding them with soloistic lines, as he did in the Septet. The first movement features such passages immediately before the closing themes in both the exposition and in the development. In the exposition, the violin dominates the ensemble with a series of very high repeated notes that begin in m. 106. This virtuosic passage extends until m. 124, and even includes an

¹⁰³ Ibid.

expressive passage on the violin's lowest string. This soloistic passage differs from those of the Septet, since it derives much of its energy from, and is motivically related to, the rest of the ensemble. The recapitulation uses a similar process, though here the flute leads into an intense passage for the entire woodwind quintet, seen in mm. 248-256. Lachner distinguishes the Nonet by giving an important structural function to the winds as a group. Because he prefaces the closing theme of the recapitulation with different instrumentation, intricate counterpoint, and longer phrases and motivic repetition than seen in the first presentation in the exposition, Lachner's Nonet incorporates two characteristic features also exhibited in the Septet: that is, between two soloistic passages that articulate sections of the form, he lengthens the second presentation through altered repetitions of motives, while also changing both the melody's timbre and its accompanimental texture.

Changes in scoring are even more important in the Nonet than in the Septet, since the expanded ensemble provides for many more combinations. In the Septet, most of a movement's main themes were presented by a single woodwind, but were repeated either in instrumental pairs or by the full ensemble. Instrumental doubling is much more frequent in the Nonet, and contrasts not only with Lachner's earlier practice, but also with that of Spohr, who frequently juxtaposed groups of strings with groups of winds. The closing theme of the Nonet's first movement demonstrates the expanded use and importance of instrumental doubling in this piece. The presentation of this theme begins in mm. 124-8 with a melodic gesture in the oboe, but in the following measures, mm. 128-132, both the flute and oboe repeat the same gesture. Following this, in mm. 132-4, the violin

plays a slightly altered version of this gesture, which is repeated by the viola in mm. 134-35. The original gesture returns as the closing theme is stated in the recapitulation, in mm. 257-61, but here is played twice by the bassoon and 'cello. Several measures later, in mm. 267-9, the flute, violin and 'cello play a new alteration of the gesture. This too is repeated, but with the addition of the clarinet the clarinet in mm. 269-71. The final iterations of this figure, in mm. 271-7, are scored for flute, clarinet, and violin.

The increased use of instrumental doublings sometimes creates multiple pairs playing different lines concurrently. This is especially common in modulatory sections, as in the development of the first movement, which begins with a sixteenth-note run for violin and viola in m. 141. These two instruments continue to combine in the presentation of a single running line, though at times through alternation, until m. 150. In the next phrase, mm. 150-8, the viola and 'cello interact in a comparable way. The second half of this phrase, mm. 154-8, introduces a melody, derived from that of the slow introduction, over this, and is scored for flute and oboe. Lachner continues to use contrasting instrumental pairs, some even joined in parallel thirds, until m. 177, where a brief tutti leads straight into the recapitulation.

There are also several features within the Nonet that have no counterpart in the Septet. As previously discussed, the closing theme of the first movement is slightly altered when it is presented in the recapitulation. Similarly, the secondary themes of both the first and fourth movements are altered in the recapitulation sections. Lachner extends and adjusts melodies even when they are presented in different parts of the form, and he uses the same methods as he does when immediately restating a theme. And, when he

does repeat melodies, Lachner typically highlights the differences by scoring the repetitions differently. Also unlike the Septet, Lachner, connects several of the Nonet's movements with similar dotted sixteenth-note figures. This rhythmic figure appears in the slow introduction, the primary theme of the first movement, the main minuet theme, and the B section of the third movement. The melodic contour of each of these appearances is quite different, so the relationship is purely rhythmic, but it is a curious element nonetheless.

Though some of the surface features of Lachner's Nonet appear to be at odds with his Septet, and even more with Beethoven's Septet, both of Lachner's works preserve several attributes of the eighteenth century divertimento. Lachner clearly incorporates advances in harmony and form within these two pieces, and with the Nonet, even simulates a string quartet's sequence of movements. But, even while including these Romantic era advances, Lachner preserves the light and diverting nature of the earliest divertimenti. These two works are also written for audiences and players not entirely dissimilar from those of the original genre. Beethoven, and Schubert with him, maintain different aspects of this same tradition in their work, but use an out-dated style to allude to their pieces' eighteenth century heritage and to suit the tastes of their aristocratic audiences. Spohr alludes to elements of eighteenth-century style, especially that of the earliest string quartets, while at the same time satisfying the tastes of his own patron. Each of these composers, however, with different styles and for different audiences, shares a common goal of maintaining the light and festive atmosphere of an eighteenth century

divertimento in works that appealed to the tastes of their nineteenth-century Viennese audiences through conservative use of innovations in form and harmony.

CHAPTER 3

CHAMBER MUSIC OF THE JULY MONARCHY

In the years leading up to the French Revolution, Paris led most of Europe in intellectual activity and cultural sophistication. Even in this stimulating environment, the city's musical life was relatively backward, but not because of a lack of patronage. As Ralph Locke states, Paris was "a city unsurpassed in musical resources yet deeply resistant to the demands of true musical originality."¹ Music was an essential component in the city's artistic life, but its development was impeded by audiences' conservative tastes. They delighted in the elegance of eighteenth-century Italian and German musical styles, and encouraged French composers to follow suit. By supporting these established, foreign-influenced, and sometimes old-fashioned styles, rather than the development of new styles, patrons of music imposed their conservative tastes on the course of music in France. Because much of this support derived from the aristocracy, they, ultimately, were responsible for the stagnation in musical development.

During these years, chamber music was enjoyed exclusively by royalty and the aristocracy,² so it reflected the conservative tastes of its audiences more distinctly than 'public' musical genres whose audiences were more diverse. To some extent, fashion

¹ Ralph P. Locke, "Paris: Centre of Intellectual Ferment," in *The Early Romantic Era: Between Revolutions 1789 and 1848*, ed. Alexander Ringer, Man & Music (London: Macmillan Press, 1990), 32-83; see p. 32.

² John Herschel Baron, *Intimate Music: A History of the Idea of Chamber Music* (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1998), 321.

dictated the use of foreign-influenced musical styles in all genres. As the sole patrons and audience for chamber music, however, the aristocracy most clearly determined its function, features, and setting.

Music written solely for the sake of enjoyment had a long tradition in France. In the seventeenth century, it often took the form of courtly *divertissements*. Louis XVI, the last of the Bourbon kings to rule before the Revolution, preserved the spirit of this practice. During his reign, the Viennese divertimento was the preferred chamber genre, and suited the same functional ends of enjoyment that the *divertissement* had in the previous century. The divertimento, as an ensemble of mixed winds and strings that shared its melodic lines equally between members, was a natural fit for Parisian aristocrats. Even before the divertimento became popular, other *concertante* style works were in fashion, including the *dialogué*. These duets and trios presented “complex, ornate Baroque melody” with complete equality between parts.³ And, as the *concertante* style came to be used in string quartets, this variety was preferred more than those in the *brilliant* style.⁴ French audiences had also long preferred works scored for both strings and winds.⁵

The divertimento especially suited French aristocracy because of its light and entertaining character. The *symphonie concertante*, in favor since the 1770’s, exhibited similar features with its “diverting sounds” and “elegant performance.”⁶ For chamber music,

³ Ibid., 196.

⁴ Ibid., 176.

⁵ Leon Plantinga, *Romantic Music: A History of Musical Style in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1989), 81.

⁶ Locke, 63.

these attributes were more than just a mark of elegance; they also suited the functional needs of French aristocrats, as once the *divertissement* had done. The divertimento served as background diversion: primarily intended as an accompaniment for idle hours.⁷

Soloistic chamber pieces were also quite popular, although these served different ends than the divertimento. Many combinations of small groups of instruments fit into this category. One variety was the *brilliant trio*, which has an instrumentation and progression of movements similar to that of the *dialogué*, but which, through virtuosic writing, focuses on a single instrument.⁸ String quartets of the *brilliant* style were also popular because of the soloistic aspects, which were emphasized by the first violin playing his part standing.⁹ Parisian audiences appreciated both types of string quartets, those featuring a soloist and those handling parts equally, near the end of the eighteenth century.¹⁰ While this appears contradictory, works in the two styles actually served different purposes. Works of the former variety provided a method for aristocratic patrons to showcase professional musicians they hired for an evening, while the equal treatment of parts in the latter was enjoyable in itself. Parisian audiences delighted in watching a virtuoso perform, and continued to enjoy technical showpieces for many years afterwards.¹¹ A variety of vocal works, including the *romance* and the *mélodie*, also fit in

⁷ Baron, 157.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 277.

⁹ Jean Mongrédian, *French Music from the Enlightenment to Romanticism: 1789-1830*, trans. Sylvain Frémaux, ed. Reinhard G. Pauly (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1996), 296.

¹⁰ Boris Schwarz, *French Instrumental Music Between the Revolutions (1789-1830)* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1987), 250.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 37.

the category of soloistic chamber music, though the featured soloists were sometimes amateurs instead of professionals.¹²

Beyond chamber music, aristocratic audiences also enjoyed instrumental music appearing in other genres, such as ballet and opera. In opera, of course, the concentration was on the voices, with instruments merely providing accompaniment; while in ballet, they provided similar accompaniment for dance sequences.¹³ It is not surprising, therefore, that French composers of the late eighteenth-century did not strive for originality, especially in instrumental genres. In the eyes of their patrons, instrumental music was a means to an end. It was a necessary backdrop for singing and dancing, though they also enjoyed the spectacle of a skilled performer. Even when enjoyed alone for its elegance, instrumental music was still thought of as an accompaniment to other activities.

Another important feature of chamber music in this era was an emphasis on graceful melody and uncomplicated textures. Especially in *concertante* style works, Parisian aristocrats enjoyed writing that was “natural, simple, and touching” above all else.¹⁴ They found simple, tuneful melodies more pleasing, and highly-contrapuntal lines too distracting. This focus on melody became a French characteristic, contrary to that of “Germany, home of harmony.”¹⁵ To support these simple melodies, the aristocratic audiences

¹²Locke, 57.

¹³Donald N. Ferguson, *Image and Structure in Chamber Music* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1964), 241

¹⁴James H. Johnson, *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press), 203.

¹⁵Mongrédien, 320; 338.

preferred straightforward forms and clear harmonic progressions.¹⁶ In effect, their preferred musical style shared many features with the Viennese *style galant*.

With the strong kinship between the simplicity of eighteenth-century Viennese style and the tastes of Parisian aristocrats, as seen through the popularity of the divertimento, the foreign influence on French music becomes clear. Because instrumental music always served functional purposes, as background or accompaniment, and therefore was of secondary importance, foreign composers--specifically, those of German or Austrian origin--were especially favored in chamber music.¹⁷ Haydn's music was performed far more than any other's, and his popularity only grew after the turn of the nineteenth century.¹⁸ Other composers' works became quite popular as well, including the string quartets and quintets of Luigi Boccherini and of Mozart.¹⁹ Haydn's earliest string quartets, as well as those of Boccherini, were favored for their soloistic writing, while his later quartets satisfied the demand for works in the *concertante* style.

Foreign composers dominated other genres as well, and Haydn's influence extended over symphonic music even more than it did over chamber music. Many orchestral programs began and ended with excerpts from Haydn.²⁰ His orchestral style did not greatly differ from his chamber style, and this similarity earned him much popularity. These characteristics also led French audiences to prefer Italian *opera buffa*:

¹⁶ Locke, 62.

¹⁷ Baron, 331.

¹⁸ Johnson, 202.

¹⁹ Schwarz, 38.

²⁰ Johnson, 199, 201.

primarily for its emphasis on tuneful melody, but also for the simplicity of accompaniment present in “the bustling overtures and finales of Italian *opera buffa*.”²¹ But by about 1800, Haydn’s symphonies were nearly as popular as Italian opera.²² Whatever the type of music, the tastes of Parisian aristocrats remained consistent: a preference for simplicity in melody, texture, and formal design.

In the late eighteenth century, chamber music was “exclusive to the salons of the aristocracy.”²³ For most of the century, intellectuals had gathered in these same salons. Their discussions established Paris as the leading city of European thought, and ultimately brought about the Revolution. Even in the salons hosting the most progressive intellectuals, instrumental music retained its traditional role as accompaniment. Aristocratic salons could range from informal gatherings to an assembly of great thinkers, but the events were primarily social. Hosts often provided food and drink for their guests, and music essentially filled the same role: delighting the guests and enhancing the social atmosphere.²⁴ At this time, there were no public performances of chamber music.²⁵ Apart from these social gatherings, where it served as a background or as a charming diversion, chamber music had no established venue.

²¹ Locke, 62.

²² Mongrédien, 207.

²³ Stephen E. Hefling, ed., Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music (New York: Schirmer Books, 1998), vii.

²⁴ Jeffrey Cooper, The Rise of Instrumental Music and Concert Series in Paris 1828-1871, Studies in Musicology (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1987), 87.

²⁵ Mongrédien, 235.

Much as intellectual gatherings in Parisian salons depended on an aristocratic host attracting eminent *philosophes* with financial contributions, so too were accomplished musicians hired for specific gatherings. Aristocratic hosts commissioned new pieces or had those by an established composer like Boccherini or Haydn performed. The host carefully selected specific players to make the evening memorable. This was especially common when programming works in the *brilliant* style, in order to make full use of a soloist's talents. Aristocratic hosts demonstrated their conservative tastes by offering music in Germanic or Italianate styles as such a backdrop, rather than promoting originality in new compositions. Only these foreign styles were considered elegant enough to accompany aristocratic social events.

The French Revolution, which began in 1789, brought about great changes in Parisian society. Many aristocrats fled the city, while others were in hiding or even executed. Despite this, musical tastes changed surprisingly little. The final decade of the eighteenth century saw an increase in attendance at the salons, with wealthy middle-class *bourgeoisie* and amateur players becoming an important part of events' interaction.²⁶ Salons continued in this way, though hosts ceased to commission new works or hire virtuoso performers.²⁷ The audience for chamber music was still extremely small and

²⁶ Joël-Marie Fauquet, "Chamber Music in France from Cherubini to Debussy," in Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music, ed. Stephen Hefling (New York: Schirmer Books, 1998), 287-314; see p. 287.

²⁷ David Charlton, John Trevitt and Guy Gosselin, "Paris: 1789-1870," Grove Music Online, ed. L. Macy (London: Oxford University Press, 2006), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>.

elite, however, and most of Paris was simply unfamiliar with the genre. Lower classes only knew and understood theatrical productions, especially those of the Théâtre Italien.²⁸

As mentioned previously, however, music for salon and theater have similar features. The legacy of the aristocracy, which preferred the simplicity and melodic focus of Italian opera, lived on in nineteenth-century theater music. After the Revolution had begun, theatrical music reached wider audiences. Parisian theaters became important centers of patriotic and revolutionary fervor, and became accessible to all classes, provided they could pay for entry.²⁹ While some of opera's excesses were reformed during this period, those features that appealed to new audiences were retained.³⁰ Simple melodies were still a staple of operatic productions, but the wealthy middle-class also enjoyed opera's "spectacle, grandiosity, and effects."³¹ These same attributes were present in chamber music from before the Revolution. Beautiful melody was the focal point of all musical genres, but virtuosity was the main attraction of soloistic chamber music.

Because theaters now relied upon paying ticket-holders to provide income, impresarios became increasingly responsive to audience turnouts. Theaters began to repeat the most popular performances, as they were the most profitable to produce. Under these circumstances, music became something of a commodity. Impresarios also began to sell

²⁸ Johnson, 204.

²⁹ Locke, 33-5.

³⁰ Ibid., 39.

³¹ Cooper, 209.

tickets for instrumental music concerts to the public, causing these events to be similarly commodified. The Académie Royale previously had a monopoly over all public instrumental concerts, but following the Revolution, any with the economic means could mount such productions.³² Several entrepreneurs established concert series to capitalize upon this new opportunity. Audiences were still largely unfamiliar with chamber music, and so these programs were primarily symphonic. In response to favorable turnouts, Haydn's orchestral music continued to grow in popularity at this time. Through his works, audiences encountered those stylistic features shared between his chamber and symphonic music.

During the Revolution years, two earlier public concert series, the *Concert Spirituel* and the *Concert de la Loge Olympique*, came to an end.³³ These were subscription series that primarily programmed symphonic music, though the *Concert Spirituel* also included Latin-texted sacred music. Both series were primarily attended by aristocracy, a class of patrons that disappeared during these years.³⁴ The republican government hoped to fill the resulting cultural void with the establishment of the Paris Conservatoire in 1795.³⁵ It offered its first public concerts in 1801.³⁶ As a government-funded series, these concerts would not suffer financially from small turnouts. The programs were audience-friendly,

³² Johnson, 197.

³³ Locke, 60.

³⁴ Elisabeth Cook and John Eby, "Paris: 1723-89," *Grove Music Online*, ed. L. Macy (London: Oxford University Press, 2006), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

³⁵ Charlton et al., "Paris: 1789-1870," *Grove Music Online*.

³⁶ Johnson, 201.

and included many popular Haydn symphonies and virtuosic pieces in the programs.

They were also attractive to the public because concerts were held on Sunday afternoons, and ticket prices were substantially lower than those for other concert series.³⁷

Several entrepreneurial individuals also hoped to establish public concerts after the monopoly of the Académie Royale had been lifted. The first of these, the *Concert de la Rue Cléry*, was established in 1798. This series relied heavily on amateur players and vocalists in its concert presentations.³⁸ Programs from this series also favored Haydn, but virtuosic repertoire was limited, since the ensemble was comprised mostly of amateurs. This subscription series went bankrupt in 1805. The preceding year, a second series was founded, the *Concerts rue Grenelle*, but it lasted only a single season.³⁹ Programs from this second series were performed by both amateur and skilled players, and likewise catered to the public tastes by including numerous Haydn symphonies.

The failure of these privately funded concert series demonstrates that instrumental music was not in high demand at this time. The most successful programs were those that appealed to both the conservative tastes originally established by the aristocracy and to the lower-middle class who preferred only spectacular virtuosity. Appealing only to the Parisian infatuation with Haydn was not enough to support public concerts of instrumental music. To contrast this with later events, it is important to note that chamber music had little, if any, role in these concerts. As a genre that appealed to a significantly

³⁷ Mongrédien, 215.

³⁸ Johnson, 198.

³⁹ Ibid., 201.

smaller audience base than symphonic music, chamber music made little sense within the business venture of a public concert series.

In 1814, however, Pierre-Marie Baillot (1771-1842), a composer and violin-player, established a public concert series centered around chamber music. Baillot did not undertake this project lightly, and he learned both from the success of theatrical music and from the failures of the various symphonic series. The series began with twelve performances a year to a limited audience of approximately 150 subscribers.⁴⁰ This series continued to 1840, and though the season became less regular, his audience eventually grew to 600-700 in number.⁴¹ Baillot quickly came to the same realization that the house managers of Paris' theaters had: the most popular performances were the most profitable. Accordingly, he built a repertoire of works that audiences would pay to hear time and again.⁴² And, just as entrance to the theater was not restricted to a single class, Baillot opened his series to any who could afford the ticket prices. Tickets were not cheap, however, because the government levied taxes on those renting performance halls,⁴³ and Baillot had to set prices high to cover this tax. Because chamber music remained a genre associated with the privileged, the audience was small and elite.

Baillot recognized the divergence in tastes developing between classes, and intended to cultivate more elevated taste through his concert series. Early on, he realized

⁴⁰ Ibid., 204.

⁴¹ Cooper, 66.

⁴² Mongrédien, 249.

⁴³ Fauquet, 288.

that his small, loyal audience was sufficient to make the relatively small scope of his series profitable. His audience retained the conservative tastes established by the eighteenth-century aristocracy, but Baillot hoped to extend their horizons through careful programming. They found the late string quartets of Beethoven immediately distasteful, for instance, but Baillot was successful in introducing the works of several younger composers, including his own and those of Felix Mendelssohn. Composers like Haydn, Mozart, and Boccherini continued to be mainstays.⁴⁴

By programming contemporary works, whether from Paris or abroad, Baillot hoped to shift his audience's tastes away from virtuosic showpieces and others of the *brilliant* style.⁴⁵ Gradually, these audiences embraced the aesthetic Baillot set forth. And, as they did so, they found a new role for chamber music in Paris. Previous generations enjoyed this genre only for its functional ends. Now, however, audiences enjoyed chamber music for its own sake, even when not written exclusively to showcase a performer's virtuosity.⁴⁶

Part of Baillot's success stems from changes in Parisian society that occurred before 1814, when he began his chamber music series. The French Revolution essentially came to an end when Napoleon came to power in 1799. By 1803, with the fear of persecution mostly abated, several aristocrats came out of hiding to resume their roles as

⁴⁴Locke, 71

⁴⁵Mongrédien, 298.

⁴⁶Ibid., 299.

patrons of music.⁴⁷ Napoleon supported the aristocracy's participation in the arts, and extended them amnesty. Many exiled aristocrats had returned home by 1814.⁴⁸ In this same year, Napoleon was defeated and deposed. European heads of state restored the monarchy of the house of Bourbon by proclaiming Louis XVIII as king.⁴⁹ Needless to say, not all of France supported this decision, and a second revolution broke out in 1830. As a result, Louis Philippe, a much more tolerant ruler than Louis XVIII, came to power.⁵⁰ His reign, 1830-48, is commonly referred to as the July Monarchy.

Changes in audience taste were slow to take hold. Even a decade after Baillot's series began, chamber music filled essentially the same role that it had in previous generations. Soirées and matinées, evening and morning gatherings in salons that typically included the performance of chamber music, were still meant primarily as social occasions.⁵¹ Most of these salons took place in the homes of the wealthy, although not necessarily the aristocracy. But in both upper- and middle-class salons, the repertoire remained identical to the exclusively aristocratic salons of the eighteenth century. The *symphonie concertante* had somewhat decreased in popularity by this time. Virtuoso pieces, on the other hand, became even more prevalent. Arrangements of operatic arias and flashy piano music joined with the still-popular chamber music in the *brilliant* style.

⁴⁷ Charlton et al., "Paris: 1789-1870," [Grove Music Online](#).

⁴⁸ Locke, 40.

⁴⁹ Charlton et al., "Paris: 1789-1870," [Grove Music Online](#).

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Cooper, 87.

Through all these genres, however, the audiences' attention remained focused on tuneful melodies.⁵²

By the July Monarchy, the middle-class had earned increased political and financial power, allowing for greatly expanded support for music. Achille Gouffé (1804-1874), the virtuoso double bass player,⁵³ played a vital role: his soirées came to be “among the most important events for Parisian musicians, especially composers.”⁵⁴ Other musicians became important sponsors of music through salons, including the cellist Charles-Joseph Lebouc (1822-1893), while Baillot's chamber music series remained very important. During this period, such musical salons also took place in the homes of industrialists, bankers, and even music publishers,⁵⁵ a far more diverse participation than before the Revolution. While Baillot focused his attention on educating his initial audience, younger musicians, such as Gouffé and Lebouc, applied similar goals on a much larger scale. Their musical salons quickly brought about significant changes in audiences' tastes, and “succeeded where Baillot had not.”⁵⁶ During the July Monarchy, chamber music appealed to a far greater audience than it had in previous generations.

⁵² Locke, 63-4.

⁵³ Gouffé was principal bass of the Paris Opera Orchestra and Society of Conservatory Concerts Orchestra for 35 years. He was highly influential as a teacher, especially through publication of his “45 Études,” but was also a successful soloist, arranger, and composer. For more information on Gouffé see pp. 456-7 in Alfred Panyavsky, *Geschichte des Kontrabasses*, 2nd ed. (Tutzing, Germany: Hans Schneider, 1984) and pp. 163-4 in Paul Brun, *A History of the Double Bass*, trans. Lynn Morrel and Paul Brun (France: by the author, 1981).

⁵⁴ Cooper, 96, 60.

⁵⁵ Charlton et al., “Paris: 1789-1870,” [Grove Music Online](#).

⁵⁶ Locke, 71.

Since the eighteenth century, Paris supported the largest number of music publishers in Europe.⁵⁷ Before the July Monarchy, publishers refused to print music premiered in musical salons.⁵⁸ Their output primarily consisted of works from Italy and Germany, printed in Paris because of their immense popularity there.⁵⁹ By the 1830's, eleven publishing houses operated in Paris, and many of these began to issue editions of chamber music by contemporary French composers.⁶⁰ With the wider audience base and increased activity in chamber music during the July Monarchy, publishing these works became profitable.

As music publishers increased their output of chamber music, audiences grew even larger. New works by French composers became readily available for performance by both amateur and professional musicians in musical salons, even if the composer was not in attendance. Increasingly often, professional musicians gave full concerts in musical salons instead of in concert halls because they favored the setting's informality.⁶¹ Such concerts did not involve the cost or ritual involved in subscription series or symphonic concerts, making chamber music concerts an enticing option to those who otherwise would not have attended. Furthermore, as certain salons hosted such concerts on an

⁵⁷ Ibid., 60.

⁵⁸ Cooper, 151.

⁵⁹ Henry Prunières, "French Chamber Music Since the Revolution," Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music, 2 vols., ed. Walter Wilson Cobbett, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 430-4; see p. 431.

⁶⁰ Charlton et al., "Paris: 1789-1870," Grove Music Online.

⁶¹ Cooper, 88.

increasingly regular basis, many developed into actual concert series. Many new concert series began during the July Monarchy.⁶²

Only at this point were Baillot's hopes realized. Parisian concerts had faced the "struggle between surface glamour and inner seriousness" for a long time.⁶³ Baillot's concert series favored those chamber pieces of a 'serious' nature, providing a role for the genre beyond mere diversion. But only through the increased audience-sizes and additional performance venues for chamber music seen in the July Monarchy did the genre finally demand serious attention. By the 1850's, Parisian musicians officially recognized the skill and care necessary to compose chamber music. At this time, the Prix de Rome, a composition competition initiated by the Paris Conservatoire in 1803, began to demand string quartets from the winner's year of residency.⁶⁴ Other institutions followed suit and began to offer prizes for chamber compositions during this period. These include the Prix Chartier in 1861,⁶⁵ and an annual chamber music competition established by the Société des Compositeurs de Musique in 1862.⁶⁶

This new attitude towards chamber music resulted in several dramatic changes to the musical salon scene. Amateur participation was on the decline, mostly because parts for chamber pieces became increasingly difficult. Works written in the *brilliant* style could easily be accompanied by amateur players, with the evening's featured soloist play-

⁶² Ibid., 20.

⁶³ Locke, 70.

⁶⁴ Fauquet, 292.

⁶⁵ Charlton et al., "Paris: 1789-1870," [Grove Music Online](#).

⁶⁶ Fauquet, 292.

ing the difficult line. But as this style became less fashionable, most works presented challenging lines in all the parts, as typified by Beethoven's late string quartets. Unlike in the early years of Baillot's concert series, audiences of the July Monarchy enjoyed the sophistication of these pieces. However, they were far beyond the technical capabilities of amateur players.⁶⁷

Salons, therefore, became places to hear music that only professional musicians could play. Amateur performers participated as knowledgeable audience members instead. And, with the increased sponsorship of chamber music, French composers could explore a wider variety of musical styles. They were no longer limited to mimicking the chamber music of Haydn, Mozart, or Boccherini; nor was mere virtuosity enough to establish a piece.⁶⁸ While earlier works in the *brilliant* style were not always as appealing to listen to as to play, there is no such disparity in the sophisticated chamber styles that French composers began to explore.⁶⁹

Since the difficulty of the chamber works written during the July Monarchy required all of the performers to be highly skilled, a number of performing ensembles originated during this period. These include the Bohrer Quartet, the Société Maurin-Chevillard, the Dancla Quartet, and many others.⁷⁰ Such groups could be called upon to play for a specific salon, or in some cases, hosted their own concert series. Truly ambi-

⁶⁷ Ibid., 287.

⁶⁸ Cooper, 212.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 175.

⁷⁰ Charlton et al., "Paris: 1789-1870," [Grove Music Online](#).

tious hosts would commission both a contemporary French composer to write a new work and one of these standing ensembles to perform it. In such cases, “the typology of the French string quartet . . . takes into account the stylistic and technical peculiarities of the ensemble for which the composer’s work is intended.”⁷¹ As standing ensembles became more common, so did composers’ tendency to write for specific players, especially when composer-performers were the head of an ensemble, or when composers frequently worked with a particular performer at a given salon or concert series.

In the same way, many ensembles preferred to play chamber works of a certain style or by certain composers. The Société de Musique Classique, for instance, specialized in works for seven to ten players.⁷² Gouffé, in his soirées, tended to play works by those composers who most often wrote parts specifically for him, Adolphe Blanc and Georges Onslow.⁷³ However, not all ensembles specialized in performing works by contemporary composers. Each ensemble, composer, series, and soirée had its didactic purpose and unique programs. The sheer number of musical events supported this high degree of specialization, while the expanded audience for chamber music continued to encourage the vibrancy of the musical salon scene.

While the tastes of these Parisian audiences were still conservative when compared to those of other European centers, chamber music became a prominent and foundational element of the city’s musical life. French audiences still enjoyed the elegant stylistic

⁷¹ Fauquet, 293.

⁷² Cooper, 72.

⁷³ Fauquet, 288.

features of eighteenth-century Viennese composers during the nineteenth century, but native, contemporary composers did experiment with chamber music within these general stylistic guidelines. By writing for specific players or occasions, or by alluding to the popular eighteenth-century divertimento style, contemporary composers could adapt their distinctive personal style to conservative music. Works for large chamber ensembles of mixed winds and strings, especially those written for the prominent double bassist Gouffé, demonstrate such individuality. As evidenced by the unusual ensemble, this is precisely the subtle experimentation present within works by Georges Onslow, Adolphe Blanc, and Louise Farrenc.

CHAPTER 4

REPERTOIRE FROM PARIS: ONSLOW, BLANC, AND FARRENC

Despite the popularity of chamber pieces for strings and winds in the eighteenth century, French composers wrote few works for such ensembles during the first half of the nineteenth century. Meanwhile, the musical salons of this period favored Haydn's string quartets over his chamber works for winds, such as his *divertimenti* or *serenades*. Beginning in 1817, preferences began to shift once more towards woodwinds. Over the following three years, Antonin Reicha (1770-1836), who moved to Paris in 1808 and taught at the Conservatoire, published twenty-four woodwind quintets.¹ These quintets reinvigorated the demand for winds in chamber music, and established Reicha as the local master for this genre. Many of Reicha's students, who include Georges Onslow, Louise Farrenc, Hector Berlioz and César Franck, continued to explore the use of winds in various settings.²

Not long after Reicha's woodwind quintets achieved popularity, works for strings and winds became increasingly common in salons. Beethoven's Septet, though already known to Parisian audiences, saw an increase in performances. In 1820, Louis Spohr brought his Nonet with him on a visit to Paris, and its performance delighted both

¹ Joël-Marie Fauquet, "Chamber Music in France from Cherubini to Debussy," in *Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music*, ed. Stephen Hefling (New York: Schirmer Books, 1998), 287-314; see p. 288.

² Boris Schwarz, *French Instrumental Music Between the Revolutions (1789-1830)* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1987), 265.

composer and audience.³ As a result, Spohr's chamber works, including his Octet and Nonet, were performed in many musical gatherings. Both Spohr and Franz Lachner also became popular in various chamber concert series, including the *Concert Populaires*.⁴ Works for large chamber ensembles of strings and winds, including those with double bass, continued to grow in popularity. By 1850, French composers began to make their own contributions to this genre.⁵

Georges Onslow

Georges Onslow (1784-1853) was the first to write for such an ensemble. In 1849, he composed his Nonet for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Horn, Bassoon, Violin, Viola and Double Bass in A Minor, Op. 77. This piece dates from very late in Onslow's career, and is among the last he wrote. By this point, Onslow was a well-established composer, and many had considered him the foremost composer of chamber music in France since 1825.⁶ In that year, Baillot introduced Onslow's chamber music to his concert series, but it was also played in many musical salons.⁷ Onslow's works were especially common in Achille Gouffé's *séances* (another term for soirées or other musical events in Parisian

³ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁴ Jeffrey Cooper, *The Rise of Instrumental Music and Concert Series in Paris 1828-1871*, Studies in Musicology (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1987), 51.

⁵ Viviane Niaux, "Onslow, (André) George (Louis)," *Grove Music Online*, ed. L. Macy (London: Oxford University Press, 2006), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>.

⁶ John Herschel Baron, *Intimate Music: A History of the Idea of Chamber Music* (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1998), 324.

⁷ Jean Mongrédian, *French Music from the Enlightenment to Romanticism: 1789-1830*, trans. Sylvain Frémaux, ed. Reinhard G. Pauly (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1996), 249.

salons), but were of sufficient popularity in other venues that he was one of the most-performed French composers of his time.⁸

In fact, Onslow's popularity extended beyond France as well. Through his experimentation with string quintets, he remained important in chamber music internationally into the 1850's.⁹ His fame abroad is also a partial result of having three nations claim him as their own.¹⁰ Georges Onslow, though born in Clermont-Ferrand, France, descended from English nobility. Specifically, he was the grandson of George, the first Earl of Onslow.¹¹ It was Georges' own father, Edward, who relocated to France, because of his implication in a scandal.¹² Edward decided to remain in Clermont-Ferrand, and adopted French customs and nationality upon marrying a French woman.¹³ The Germans also lay claim on Onslow, "because of his affinity to German music."¹⁴ However, his fame did not survive, especially at an international level. Interest in his works began to dwindle, even in France, by the 1860's.¹⁵

⁸ Cooper, 127.

⁹ Joël-Marie Fauquet, "Chamber Music in France from Cherubini to Debussy," in Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music, ed. Stephen Hefling (New York: Schirmer Books, 1998), 287-314; see p. 294.

¹⁰ Schwarz, 269.

¹¹ Many sources refer to Georges Onslow by the English version of his name [George], but the present author deliberately prefers the French spelling to distinguish between these two individuals.

¹² Colwyn Edward Vulliamy, The Onslow Family 1528-1874 With Some Account of Their Times (London: Chapman & Hall, 1953), 209.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 224-5.

¹⁴ Schwarz, 269.

¹⁵ Cooper, 119.

Onslow's influence was largest on the French musical scene, but he was also quite active in London. His participation with the London Philharmonic Society earned him an honorary membership in 1830, and brought him into contact with another double bass virtuoso, Domenico Dragonetti.¹⁶ At a London concert featuring one of Onslow's string quintets, Dragonetti filled in for an absent performer by playing the second 'cello part on his bass. Onslow disapproved at first, but was so pleased with the results that he included optional double bass parts in all of his later quintets. Furthermore, when he returned to Paris, Onslow commissioned Gouffé to provide similar parts for his existing nine quintets, originally scored for two cellos.¹⁷

The aristocratic ancestry of the Onslow family played an important role in Georges' education and musical development. He became acquainted with music as a member of polite society, and his interest in music grew as he was provided with the finest teachers. Onslow studied piano with J.N. Hüllmandel and J.B. Cramer in England, and with J.L. Dussek in Hamburg. He also spent two years in Vienna studying his most esteemed musical models, such as Haydn and Mozart.¹⁸

By 1806, Onslow felt certain that music was his calling. He decided to let the public judge his ability, and used his family's wealth to publish his works even before he was known as a composer.¹⁹ The resulting collection of piano works was nothing more

¹⁶ Myles Birket Foster, History of the Philharmonic Society of London: A Record of a Hundred Years' Work in the Cause of Music (London: John Lane Company, 1912), 99.

¹⁷ Richard Nelson Franks, "George Onslow (1784-1853): A Study of His Life, Family, and Works" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1981), 353-6.

¹⁸ Vulliamy, 225-6.

¹⁹ Baron, 325.

than what Onslow-family biographer Colwyn Vulliamy describes as an “extraordinary number of very ordinary pieces.”²⁰ Realizing that he still had much to learn, Onslow began his studies under Reicha in 1808.²¹ Onslow continued to exercise the advantages of his aristocratic lineage throughout his life by publishing many works at his own expense, especially those that appealed to amateur performers.²² Not all his works were conceived for amateur players, however. His later string quintets have high technical demands, especially in the double bass parts intended for Dragonetti.²³ But no matter the difficulty of executing the piece, Onslow uncompromisingly maintained “the serious standards of chamber music composition during a period when French music was swept by glittering salon pieces.”²⁴ Without the need to earn a living from his music, Onslow could stand by his ideals. As is well known, even composers from Onslow’s era who are of greater renown today, such as Liszt and Chopin, were at times forced to cater to public demands for trivial salon pieces.²⁵

The Nonet is unique among Onslow’s works in terms of instrumentation, but in style it is very typical of his own works and others written during the July Monarchy. The nine players he scores for, a woodwind quintet and a full family of strings, evokes a

²⁰ Vulliamy, 226.

²¹ Baron, 325.

²² Henry Prunières, “French Chamber Music Since the Revolution,” Cobbett’s Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music, 2 vols., ed. Walter Wilson Cobbett, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 430-4; see p. 430.

²³ H. Woollett, “Onslow, George,” Cobbett’s Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music, 2 vols., ed. Walter Wilson Cobbett, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 194-200; see p. 195.

²⁴ Schwarz, 271.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 272.

number of connotations. This mixture of strings and winds establishes the Nonet as a descendent of the eighteenth-century Viennese divertimento, but also reproduces the precise combination that Spohr used in his Nonet. By using the same instrumentation as Spohr, he draws from its popularity, but makes an already conservative genre even more so. Just as easily, Onslow could have assembled a different collection of strings and winds, like Spohr did in the creation of his Octet. Instead, he uses models both in scoring and structuring the Nonet. By including a 'standard' wind quintet, Onslow also draws from the expertise of his teacher, Reicha. Following the Nonet, Onslow wrote two additional works that include woodwind quintets, while he wrote none beforehand. One of these, Onslow's Woodwind Quintet in F Major, Op. 81, overtly emulates the sound of Reicha's quintets.²⁶ The Nonet may be Onslow's first attempt at writing a chamber work in the style of his teacher.

Though the instrumentation duplicates that of Spohr's Nonet, Onslow does not imitate the overall structure of Spohr's work. The progression of tempi is similar to the four-movement works by Spohr and Lachner previously discussed, and thus does not model Beethoven's Septet to the degree that Schubert's work does. However, like Beethoven, Onslow placed a rondo movement in final position, while Spohr and Lachner both used sonata forms. Unlike Beethoven's march-like finale, Onslow's rondo uses compound meter. He also reverses the order of episodes after the developmental thematic section, creating the following pattern: ABA'CB'A''. Onslow does precede the movement with a slow introduction, as Beethoven did in his Septet. Although there is no formal

²⁶Baron, 290.

introduction to the first movement, it is implicit in the large block chords and dotted-rhythms of the primary theme.

All the pieces for large chamber ensemble discussed thus far are in major keys. Because eighteenth-century Viennese divertimenti were predominantly bright and cheerful, pieces alluding to the genre retain this overall mood. There were several exceptions, but somber passages were generally followed by light-hearted ones. Of the repertoire considered in the present study, Onslow's Nonet is the only piece in a minor key. The first, second, and fourth movements are all in A minor, so this darker tonality is the first and last heard. Onslow continues to demonstrate this unusual predilection for minor keys in his second movement scherzo. The trio section opens and closes in A major, but explores C-sharp minor much more extensively. Trio sections of other minor-key scherzo movements offered greater contrast with brighter tonalities. Onslow delays this contrast until the third movement, in theme and variation form, which does not stray long from F major.

Though Onslow favors the minor mode in the overall structure of his Nonet, he preserves the cheerfulness of the divertimento through the internal balance of moods in each movement. The exposition of the first movement, for instance, moves to C major for both the secondary and closing themes. Onslow develops these themes much more extensively than those from minor-key areas. In the recapitulation section, Onslow continues to contrast bright and dark tonalities with a presentation of the secondary theme in the parallel, A major. Though the Nonet's sombre passages are frequently balanced with cheerful ones

that are more typical of the eighteenth-century divertimento, its bookends of darker tonality are unique within its genre.

Other coloristic issues separate Onslow's Nonet from pieces for similar ensembles. He scores for muted strings in the second variation of the third movement, an effect that none of the other composers investigated have used. The timbre created by this effect further demonstrates Onslow's fondness of darker colors. His scoring for winds also provides a number of different possibilities. Much like Spohr in his Nonet, Onslow writes many passages for the wind quintet that contrast with those presented by strings. Spohr, however, illustrates these differences across the span of an entire movement, while Onslow alternates choirs in close proximity. In the fourth movement, for example, the violin, viola, and 'cello present a motive in mm 270-1. The flute, oboe, clarinet, and bassoon then respond to it in mm. 272-3. The full four-bar phrase is then repeated before moving into a tutti passage. This pattern appears more extensively in the third movement, where attention is divided between the two sections of the ensemble across phrases, as in the first variation, where every motive is scored in this way.

Both the ample financial resources and international appeal of Onslow are evident in the creation and reception of his Nonet. He premiered this work at one of the many musical salons focusing on serious chamber music. Since both Gouffé and violinist-composer Adolphe Blanc, who frequently played for Gouffé's salon gatherings, participated in the premiere, one of Gouffé's séances was likely the performance venue.²⁷ Onslow valued the sharing of serious chamber works among friends and interested audi-

²⁷ Franks, 734.

ences, which was exactly the purpose of these séances. To further this end, Onslow published the work almost immediately, and within a year, audiences in France, England, and Germany had heard his Nonet.²⁸ He dedicated this publication to Prince Albert, husband of Queen Victoria and supporter of the London Philharmonic Society, with the hope of enhancing his reputation in England.²⁹

Several passages in Onslow's Nonet suggest that he is not specifically composing for amateur players. In general, the greatest demands on players are with ensemble. Onslow uses many tutti passages, as well as those for subdivisions of strings or winds, and synchronizing these would be the biggest challenge to amateur players. Furthermore, almost every instrument has prominent lines of running sixteenth-notes at some point in the work. These are most common in the flute and clarinet, as seen in the closing theme of the first movement, mm. 61-80. Here, two winds trade off ascending figures and have intricate passagework in parallel thirds in while the violin, viola, and 'cello have similarly taxing lines.

Surprisingly, there is a complete lack of virtuosity in the double bass part, even though it was specifically written for the virtuoso bassist Gouffé. Only a handful of moments in the entire Nonet bring the double bass to any degree of prominence, and it is usually coupled with the 'cello when they do. Of these, the most striking is in the developmental central section of the fourth movement. In mm. 156-60, the double bass plays a prominent counter-melody against the flute and other winds, but the importance of this

²⁸ Ibid., 733

²⁹ Ibid., 728-9.

figure is diminished by its appearance in the viola and 'cello in the preceding measures. Also, though the low strings present the theme in the fourth variation of movement three, mm. 100-7, they are not the focal point of this passage, as the violin plays an embellished version of the line in thirty-second notes above them.

Onslow perpetuated the conservatism of French chamber music during the July Monarchy in his Nonet, a work that preserves the overall sound of the Viennese divertimento. He followed the trends of his time, as well as his own personal credo, by writing sophisticated chamber works, that included challenging passages for professional players. By publishing the Nonet, he made it accessible and appealing to professionals and amateurs alike. His primary goal was to share serious chamber music with friends, and everything about the Nonet supports this ideal. However, even though he included highly challenging bass lines intended for Gouffé in many of his string quintets, no such virtuosity is present in the Nonet, in which the bass part closely resembles that in other works for comparable ensembles. Onslow instead imposes his personal style on the medium by concentrating on instrumental and harmonic colors that other composers did not use.

Adolphe Blanc

Adolphe Blanc (1828-1885) belonged to a younger generation than Onslow, but he contributed a work for large chamber ensemble in 1852, only three years after the publication of Onslow's Nonet. By this time, Blanc was a reputable violinist, and had established himself as a composer of some talent. His compositions grew in esteem from

this point onward, and many were regularly performed until 1870.³⁰ Joël-Marie Fauquet attributes the popularity of Blanc's works to their "melodious character."³¹ Blanc emphasized the presentation of beautiful melodies in his chamber music over contrapuntal textures.³² And, as reported in the previous chapter, French audiences of this era preferred beautiful melodies in all genres of music.

Blanc did not focus exclusively on melody, however. He was a highly conservative composer, as seen in his near exclusive use of the style and forms of the nineteenth-century Viennese masters.³³ This, of course, was another major factor in Blanc's popularity. Because these Viennese composers still dominated the French chamber music scene, "Blanc appeared to the public to be the most worthy representative of the Classicism that he perpetuated."³⁴ By conveying beautiful melodies within the sophisticated context of the nineteenth-century Viennese style, Blanc epitomized the trend towards seriousness in French chamber music, as indicated by his receipt of the Prix Chartier, an award that recognizes important composers of chamber music, in 1862.³⁵

Blanc's chamber music was performed in many of the same settings as Onslow's. His works were first exposed to the public through Baillot's series, and quickly spread to

³⁰ Cooper, 120. The importance of this date will be addressed at the end of chapter 4.

³¹ Fauquet, 299.

³² Ibid., 292.

³³ Adolphe Piriou, "Blanc, Adolphe," *Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music*, 2 vols., ed. Walter Wilson Cobbett, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 126.

³⁴ Fauquet, 299.

³⁵ Piriou, 126.

other concert series and numerous musical salons.³⁶ His music was especially common at the séances of Gouffé and Lebouc, largely because he performed in both these gatherings regularly.³⁷ In fact, Blanc was one of the few composers of chamber music active during the July Monarchy who was also a string player.³⁸ Onslow and many other French composers of chamber music were primarily pianists. As both Gouffé and Lebouc played string instruments as well, Blanc's music fit in especially well at their musical gatherings.

Even though Blanc could draw from the talented pool of performers present at these events, he often geared his pieces toward amateur performers. They appreciated the similar style of Blanc's works and the chamber music of late eighteenth-century Vienna, finding them both familiar and accessible.³⁹ By attracting the interest of amateur players, Blanc established an audience base that could easily support the publication of his works. Several publishers circulated his chamber music throughout Paris,⁴⁰ allowing his music to be performed frequently and in a variety of settings between 1828 and 1871.⁴¹

It is for this audience that Blanc wrote his Septet for Violin, Viola, Violoncello, Double Bass, Clarinet, Horn, and Bassoon in E Major, Op. 40. The ensemble is identical to that used by Beethoven in his Septet. Blanc opens his work with a graceful two-octave run in the violin, and this idea unfolds across the opening ten measures with only light

³⁶ Baron, 329.

³⁷ Cooper, 61, 64.

³⁸ Fauquet, 293.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 299.

⁴⁰ Piriou, 126

⁴¹ Cooper, 124.

accompaniment. This phrase immediately establishes the focus on melody within the Septet. Every important theme is initially presented in a very thin scoring, usually with only two instruments playing very simple accompanimental lines. The opening of the second movement provides an exception. In the first three measures of the movement, this theme is presented by the viola and 'cello together, but following this, in mm. 3-5, the violin plays the melody and is accompanied by the clarinet, bassoon, viola, and double bass. However, the slow harmonic rhythm and long note-values of this passage emphasize the main melodic line. The elegance and balance of Blanc's melodies demonstrate the mastery of his designs.

The pattern of movements remains typical of four-movement works: fast-slow-scherzo-fast. Within this arrangement, Blanc demonstrated his ingenuity with a more unusual choice of forms. The Septet opens with the typical sonata form and closes with a rondo, as had the works by Beethoven, Schubert, and Onslow. But Blanc employs a rondo form in the second movement as well, and provides a unique character for his scherzo. He designates this movement a tarantella, and captures some of the style and metrical feel of this dance within the context of a fairly standard scherzo and trio form. The choice of tonality in these movements is also standard, but not identical to other works in the same genre. Blanc moves from the opening in E major to C major for the second movement. He follows with A minor for the tarantella, and returns to the home key for the final movement. As both Beethoven and Schubert had done, Blanc precedes the finale with a slow introduction in the parallel minor.

The final movement is the most unusual. Here, he alludes to themes from each movement. The A section of the rondo begins with a phrase in the clarinet, mm. 48-51, that is identical to that played by the viola in mm. 1-4, at the beginning of the introduction. The B section, employing the dominant, alludes to two themes from previous movements. For example, the clarinet begins with a sustained note that moves up a fifth after an ascending passing-figure, in mm. 124-31. This phrase strongly resembles the figure that opened the B section of the second movement--also a rondo--as played by the horn in mm. 31-5. The rhythm of these two motives is nearly identical, but the earlier figure only moves up a fourth instead of a fifth. Blanc also alludes to the entire opening scoring (mm. 1-9) of the tarantella in the middle of the fourth movement's B section (mm. 124-31). He adjusts the rhythms to suit the different meter, but he uses the same layering of instruments to present a similar motive. Finally, Blanc alludes to the two-octave ascent that opens the Septet, from m. 2 of the first movement, in the coda of his finale (mm. 352-6).

Each of the above references is brief, but Blanc emphasizes them in a number of ways. The most striking is the relatively thin textures in which both the original motives and their subsequent references are presented. In addition, each of these motives begins a melodic phrase. By focusing attention on these thematic relationships, Blanc clearly intends to unify his Septet as a whole. Another, even more subtle process unifies Blanc's Septet. He begins each movement with the repetition of a single pitch in rhythm, from which the graceful unfolding of Blanc's melodies naturally flows. None of the other works considered in this study allude to melodies in the cyclic manner that Blanc does in

all four movements of his Septet. By doing so, Blanc may be absorbing the compositional style of more progressive composers from his own generation, such as César Franck (1822-1890).

Blanc also provides an internal balance in his work through his instrumentation. Throughout most of the Septet, Blanc alternates the scoring of main thematic areas between string and wind soloists. In the second movement, for example, Blanc writes the most interesting melodic part for the violin in the A section, but for the horn in the B section. Since this movement is in rondo form, both these sections return, and Blanc gives corresponding parts to the 'cello and horn, respectively. In the final statement of the A section, Blanc breaks this pattern by scoring for the clarinet. However, this final A section is immediately preceded by a prominent viola line, thereby maintaining the balance of soloistic instruments.

At times, Blanc extends this procedure to the alternation of treble and bass instruments. In fact, such a process forms the basis of the development section in the Septet's first movement. A return of the prominent opening passage (m. 2), but written for the viola in m. 98, marks the beginning of this section. Blanc develops this same motive until m. 104, scoring first for the bassoon, then the 'cello, and finally, the violin and viola together. Between the bassoon and 'cello entries, however, Blanc inserts an arpeggiation in the violin, continuing the alternation between treble and bass instruments. From this point, in mm. 107-131, Blanc develops motives from the second theme. This time he begins with the 'cello, and from there he passes the motive to the clarinet, followed by the bassoon, then to the horn, and concludes the section with the double bass and 'cello

paired together. This ordering not only continues the alternation of treble and bass voices in the presentation of thematic material, but also uses every instrument in the ensemble at least once. The 'extra' appearance of the bassoon, for instance, demonstrates that Blanc is more concerned with maintaining this exchange than in using each instrument only once. But, as soon as he introduces all the instruments in such a way, he concludes the development section. The double bass entry marks the beginning of the dominant-pedal that precedes the recapitulation section.

Blanc's focus on simple melodies and thin textures makes his Septet very approachable for amateur players. He uses instrumental pairings and tutti passages in the presentation of thematic material less frequently in his Septet than do other composers for similar ensembles, for example, Onslow and Lachner. He reserves instrumental pairs for the returns of melodies, such as in the recapitulation section of the first movement. Also, Blanc does not regularly punctuate his formal sections with elaborate decorations, as Spohr does in his works. Although he occasionally includes such passages as the running flow of sixteenth-notes within the first movement's closing theme in mm. 95-7, it is rare. As in this passage, Blanc tends to use the clarinet in this way, instead of the violin. This is especially unusual since he, like Spohr before him, was a highly skilled violinist.

Most other difficult passages within the Septet are strictly ornamental. This practice stands in direct contrast with Spohr's virtuosity, which he only tolerated to increase expressive ends, but actually allows Blanc to make his work appealing to both professional and amateur players. The ornamental passages allow highly-skilled players to display their talents, while Blanc crafts them in such a way that amateur players could easily omit

them. For example, the violin cadenza following the fourth movement's introduction is highly virtuosic, but could easily be removed in amateur performances. This cadenza is, in fact, far more flamboyant than any of those encountered thus far, and makes full use of Blanc's technical skills. However, he underlays most of the cadenza with sustained chords, and these alone could provide a convincing entry to the fourth movement proper. Even when ornamental passages occur in the middle of a movement, many of them could easily be left out. Blanc elaborates the B theme of the second movement with a decorative string of sixteenth-notes in the violin and viola in mm. 37-52, but these parts simply emphasize the light-hearted character of the passage. The melody and its supporting harmonic progression would remain intact should these parts be removed.

Even though Blanc worked with Gouffé on many occasions, his Septet shows little virtuosity for the double bass. While this omission may be due to Blanc's desire to make the Septet performable by amateurs, all of the other instruments have at least brief virtuosic moments. Blanc does, however, emphasize the double bass part in his Septet more than in other pieces discussed to this point. The importance of the double bass in the closing measures of the first movement's development section has already been mentioned, but an interesting pairing in the fourth movement especially highlights the timbres of the double bass. The viola presents the melody in the introduction to the fourth movement, but when this melody is repeated in mm. 10-16, Blanc adds the double bass underneath the viola. Since the double bass traditionally doubles the 'cello part, this pairing is very noticeable. Several other locations within the Septet call attention to the

double bass, either through its function or tone colors, but such effects do not call for virtuosity and typically last less than a measure.

As a highly conservative composer, Blanc adhered to the style and melodic formulae of the divertimento tradition in his Septet. Through his focus on melody, he highlighted the essential feature of this nineteenth-century genre, appealed to the tastes of his audience, and made his work accessible to amateur performers. However, Blanc goes beyond the models of his predecessors and experimented with form. In doing so, he allowed for an extended unfolding of melody in the slow movement, provided a colorful new twist on the scherzo, and, to a certain extent, unified the entire work in its finale. The subtle elaborations on previous works Blanc made in his Septet fit perfectly within the context of the audiences of the July Monarchy, and contributed to his popularity.

Louise Farrenc

Louise Farrenc (1804-1875), one of the most prominent and skilled woman composers of the nineteenth century, composed her Nonet for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Horn, Bassoon, Violin, Viola, Violoncello and Double Bass in E-flat Major, Op. 38 in 1849. While this work falls chronologically between the works by Onslow and Blanc already discussed, the skill and originality of her chamber composition demands the honor of concluding this chapter. Not only was Farrenc one of the few woman composers whose works were published and performed in her own century, but her talent, in this writer's opinion, exceeds that of the other Parisian composers considered in the present study.

Farrenc's Nonet, though written for an ensemble identical to other nonets presented in this study, fit into her oeuvre much differently than did similar works by Onslow or Blanc. Both these composers filled essentially the same role in Parisian musical life: they had mutual friends, their compositions were performed in the same concert series, and they both wrote more chamber music for strings than any other instrumental combination. Farrenc, however, was primarily a pianist. While she focuses on the piano less in her compositions after 1839, the instrument continued to play an important role in her life

Even as a young girl, Farrenc took the piano very seriously. "By her mid-adolescence, she had developed into a pianist of professional calibre as well as an exceptional theory student and promising composer."⁴² However, she did not enjoy the touring life or the kind of repertoire expected of a concert pianist. Instead, she found the artfulness of Beethoven's sonatas most appealing, as well as the keyboard works of "his Classical predecessors."⁴³ Farrenc adopted these models for her own piano pieces composed between 1825 to 1839, in spite of the Parisian audiences' preference for superficial piano pieces during these years. It was largely the efforts of her husband, Aristide, a flutist, publisher, and music scholar, that her piano works were published. Many of these pieces were critically acclaimed, and even reprinted abroad in London and Bonn, but were given less attention in Paris.⁴⁴

⁴² Bea Friedland, "Farrenc (2) (Jeanne-)Louise Farrenc [née Dumont]," *Grove Music Online*, ed. L. Macy (London: Oxford University Press, 2006), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>.

⁴³ Bea Friedland, *Louise Farrenc, 1804-1875: Composer, Performer, Scholar* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1980), 11.

⁴⁴ Friedland, "Farrenc (2)," *Grove Music Online*.

In 1842, she was appointed as a professor of piano at the Conservatoire. Before this, the only women who taught at the Conservatoire were vocalists, and these positions rotated frequently. Farrenc, on the other hand, held her position for thirty years.⁴⁵ Through the prestige of this position, she came into contact with many important musicians. The majority of her students went on to be influential in their profession. Farrenc also began to participate, on occasion, in several concert series, including those sponsored by Lebouc, where she played in numerous concerts that included serious chamber works for the piano.⁴⁶

Even after the Farrencs' only child, Victorine, died of a fatal illness in 1859, Louise Farrenc continued to support the presentation of serious keyboard works to the Parisian public. Later that year, she began a joint-venture with her husband to provide a scholarly edition of keyboard works by masters from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries. The collection, entitled *Le Trésor des Pianistes*, included works by C.P.E. Bach, Domenico Scarlatti, François Couperin, and many other composers who were little-known in the musical salons of the time. The combined twenty-three volumes of this work also contained a table of ornaments necessary to perform many of these earlier pieces.⁴⁷ Farrenc spent eight years assembling this collection, and continued with the project after her husband's death in 1865. Her efforts on *Le Trésor* demonstrate the dedication Farrenc had towards improving Parisian audiences' tastes.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Cooper, 164.

⁴⁷ T. Elizabeth Cason, "Music Reviews: Louise Farrenc," *Notes: Quarterly Journal of the Music Library Association* 59, no. 3 (2003): 758-762; see p. 760.

Beginning in the 1840's, Farrenc wrote chamber music that did not include the piano. Through these works, she developed her mature compositional style, and maintained the aesthetic set forth through her piano music.⁴⁸ In her instrumental writing, Farrenc drew heavily from her studies under Reicha, which extended intermittently throughout most of the 1820's.⁴⁹ She also took the chamber music of Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778-1837) as a compositional model, because she especially favored his "clarity and restraint."⁵⁰ Farrenc also favored Hummel because she had easy access to his works. Her husband had acquired the rights to publish Hummel's music in 1825, and the Farrencs became friends with him shortly afterwards.⁵¹

Farrenc's chamber compositions were extremely popular with the concert-going public of the July Monarchy. Indeed, she was one of the most-performed French composers during this period.⁵² Her pieces, however, were played in slightly different settings than were Onslow's and Blanc's. "Unlike her colleagues . . . , she achieved celebrity without either organizing a major concert series of her own or receiving much help from the *salons* of Gouffé and Lebouc; although she presented some concerts herself, and was supported by her friends (particularly women pianists), most of her music was played at 'nonseries' concerts."⁵³ By abandoning her career as a performer, Farrenc lacked the

⁴⁸ Friedland, *Louise Farrenc*, 24, 119.

⁴⁹ Friedland, "Farrenc (2)," *Grove Music Online*.

⁵⁰ Friedland, *Louise Farrenc*, 12.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Cooper, 107.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 125.

influence necessary to establish her own series. Instead, she used her position at the Conservatoire to bring her music to private musical salons. She performed her own works in these concerts, and many of her students did so as well. Furthermore, her husband's status as a music publisher allowed her works to circulate in print. Farrenc established herself in Parisian musical life this way, and since her chamber music suited the prevailing trends towards seriousness, her popularity continued to grow.

The 1850 premiere of Farrenc's Nonet was a huge success. Audiences received the work so enthusiastically that it "became, thenceforth, indelibly associated with her name."⁵⁴ Despite this, Farrenc did not publish it. She had already delayed performance of the work for a year, and, at this time, became increasingly withdrawn from society.⁵⁵ This is likely attributable to Victorine's health, since 1850 was the same year that she became ill. However, these events did not prevent her Nonet from being performed, though only a handful of concerts presented it over the following two decades.⁵⁶

The popularity of her Nonet served to increase interest in Farrenc's later instrumental works. By 1850, her symphonies had been performed in Paris and abroad while she also had earned recognition as a piano pedagogue, with the adoption of her piano etudes as part of the Conservatoire curriculum. Her growing reputation at last convinced the director of the Conservatoire to raise her salary, making her compensation equal to that of her colleague Henri Herz, who had been appointed at the same time as

⁵⁴ Friedland, *Louise Farrenc*, 41.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 41, 49.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 153.

Farrenc.⁵⁷ Her attention to the advancement of serious chamber music earned her the Prix Chartier in 1861, and a prestigious award from the Académie des Beaux Arts in 1869.⁵⁸

The key of her Nonet, E-flat major, provides a clear association with Beethoven's Septet. Farrenc's work, however, is in four movements instead of six. Also like Beethoven's Septet, both the first and final movements contain slow introductions in the key of the movements they precede. Within the four-movement pattern, Farrenc follows the same order of tempi, fast-slow-scherzo-fast, as in Blanc's Septet, while, as previously mentioned, the instrumentation is identical to the Nonets of Spohr and Onslow.

Farrenc's Nonet, however, is unique among these works for placing a theme and variations in the second movement. Like the set of variations in Beethoven's Septet, Farrenc writes this movement in the key of the dominant, B-flat major. Other than Schubert's Octet, all of the other pieces for large chamber ensembles examined that have variations use a third-relationship for this movement, and for other movements as well. Farrenc also acknowledges Beethoven's work in her choice of form for the fourth movement. Beethoven, and following him, Schubert, Onslow, and Blanc, all used a rondo form for their finales. Farrenc taps into this tradition by writing hers in a sonata-rondo form, though one with very strong tendencies towards sonata form, which most closely resembles Schubert's finale. From these details, Farrenc's conservatism is clearly evident, as is her commitment to sophistication in chamber music.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 31, 42.

⁵⁸ M. Drake-Brockman, "Farrenc, Louise," *Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music*, 2 vols., ed. Walter Wilson Cobbett, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 386.

She shares these traits with Onslow and Blanc, but her music is frequently described as more innovative than that of other French composers from the July Monarchy.⁵⁹ Her themes are typically more creative and her harmonic progressions more advanced than those of her contemporaries, but, according to one Farrenc scholar, the Nonet “[falls] somewhat short of the originality and verve of Louise Farrenc’s chamber music for smaller forces.”⁶⁰ However, it is by no means devoid of fresh ideas and experimentation. The organic form of the fourth movement is a prime example of this.

After the introduction, this movement begins with a theme that, through triadic outlines and a clear harmonic progression, firmly establishes the key of E-flat major. Initially, this theme is presented in the violin, but Farrenc repeats its first phrase in the clarinet. The perfect authentic cadence immediately following this repetition solidifies the presentation of this theme as the first formal section (A). However, this movement’s other formal sections are much more ambiguously defined. The B section presents a number of similar motives through a variety of textures and tonalities: though it begins in E-flat major, and uses a series of third relationships in transitioning to F major at the beginning of the C section, Farrenc employs B-flat major the most extensively. The developmental C section is very brief and distinguishable mostly because of its colorful scoring.

Following the C section, both the A and B sections return in the home key of E-flat major, though with numerous differences in instrumentation. After the repeat of the B

⁵⁹ Edward Lockspeiser, “French Chamber Music (from 1700),” in *Chamber Music*, ed. Alec Robertson (Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books, 1967), 357-89; see p. 358.

⁶⁰ Friedland, *Louise Farrenc*, 153.

section, Farrenc continues with new motivic development that uses a scoring process that closely resembles that of the C section. With only these three sections as reference points, Farrenc suggests the formal pattern ABCA'B'C'. Though this movement's strong ties to sonata form are evident in such a pattern, it completely overlooks the most interesting parts of the movement. Especially in the B section, Farrenc deliberately draws attention to a seemingly carefree flow of ideas. This is supported by the section's several harmonic goals, unequal phrase-lengths, and high level of repetition. Strict motivic control is evident on a much smaller scale, however. The ideas Farrenc presents in this B section call to mind the various episodes of a more conventional rondo form, though they are joined much more smoothly. And, by structuring this movement in such a way, Farrenc demonstrates the balance of progressive and conservative elements in her works. As a whole, the movement's form resists any precise categorization, but there is a coherent and even familiar strategy for the progression of ideas. Furthermore, the effect is clearly deliberate, as it accentuates the underlying character of this movement's motives, as well as that of the divertimento genre.

Of the works for large chamber ensembles discussed here, Farrenc's Nonet is by far the most colorful. She attains a wide variety of sounds by using several interesting scoring effects, by alternating passages between strings and winds, and by integrating accompanimental lines into the presentation of melodies. The most distinctive example of Farrenc calling for a specific effect is in the opening of the third movement of her Nonet. Here, Farrenc uses pizzicato strings to introduce the main scherzo theme. None of the compositions previously discussed call for this string effect, and Farrenc uses it aptly. The

detached sound of plucked strings supports the theme's quiet agitation, and also provides a soft initial dynamic to which Farrenc adds increasing levels of volume and activity over the span of the movement.

Other types of scoring effects accentuate dramatic portions of the Nonet. In the exposition of the first movement, just before the closing theme, Farrenc builds excitement by layering in additional instruments. She begins with the strings alone, which present a two-bar theme in mm. 103-4. Motives drawn from this theme are scored for new instrument including the horn and bassoon, and the viola. In the following ten measures, mm. 109-18, Farrenc adds the clarinet as accompaniment, while the viola continues to present figurations on the original motives. The flute enters for the final four bars preceding the closing theme, at mm. 119-22. The ensemble literally grows in intensity through this passage, and the effect is heightened by sequential repetition. Several other composers, most notably Spohr, included flashy, virtuosic lines at this formal juncture. Farrenc, instead, uses this layered buildup of instruments to achieve the same expressive effect as Spohr's virtuosic violin lines.

In the developmental C section of the fourth movement, Farrenc employs an opposite process. In this passage, mm. 123-31, the strings, along with the horn, present a series of block chords that outline a chromatically descending sequence. Meanwhile, the woodwinds provide a flurry of instrumental colors. On nearly every strong beat within this section, at least one wind instrument plays the same motive, a double-neighbor figure. In the first three measures of this section, Farrenc presents this motive in the bassoon, clarinet, and oboe. The next three measures similarly highlight the flute, oboe,

clarinet, and bassoon. In the final three measures, Farrenc uses the violin to repeat the figure on every beat, but also includes parallel motion with the bassoon and clarinet. In this passage, Farrenc focuses all attention on the various wind timbres, since the harmonic motion and presentation of motives are essentially static.

In a similar way, Farrenc uses the different instrument families to provide contrasts in color between repetitions of themes and motives. Since she contrasts these passages within short distances of each other, rather than across whole movements, Farrenc's use of this alternation is closer to Onslow's method than to Spohr's. And, as in Onslow's Nonet, this concept can be extended to form the basis of an entire variation. However, the most significant example of Farrenc utilizing this texture within her Nonet appears immediately before the recapitulation section of the first movement. Over the dominant pedal, mm. 219-31, Farrenc presents the same motive a total of five times. She scores the first two instances for the flute, but then passes the motive to the viola, followed by the bassoon, and finally, to the double bass, though now in an altered form. In several of the other works discussed, the dominant pedal preceding the recapitulation was another common place to insert virtuosic parts. Again, Farrenc prefers to draw from the wide range of timbres available within the large ensemble to punctuate and intensify these formal divisions. For this reason, her use of alternation between strings and winds differs from Onslow's. He tends to use the process to repeat melodic fragments in the middle of phrases, as a method of building into a tutti presentation of the entire theme. Farrenc, on the other hand, uses this process to usher in the presentation of new themes.

The seamless unfolding of melodies in Farrenc's Nonet also contributes color and variety. By preparing thematic entries with well-crafted countermelodies, Farrenc is able to extend a single melody through a wide variety of instrumental timbres. An example of this is seen in the final statement of the B section in the fourth movement, mm. 232-8. This passage's melody begins in the horn and bassoon, and is played in relatively long note-values. For the bassoon, this line emerges as a continuation of gestures presented over a long series of block chords. Over the long note-values played by the horn and bassoon, the flute plays a flowing eighth-note melody. At measure 236, with the horn and bassoon now present in longer note-values, while the flute and oboe pair together with the same melodic line first heard in the horn-bassoon pair. Here, the viola, plays figuration similar to that given to the flute before. The main melody closes this section with a homophonic passage. Clearly, changes in instrumentation and texture are vital to the Nonet's argument, perhaps as much so as was virtuosity in Spohr's works.

With a broad palette of instrumental colors, Farrenc demonstrates that she has a different conception of the ensemble's sound than had other composers who wrote for similar chamber groups. However, like these composers, she remains highly conservative in her use of form. In the Nonet, she refers, both subtly and overtly, to Beethoven's Septet and those of similar instrumentation. But far more significant than any direct references is Farrenc's invocation of the eighteenth-century Viennese divertimento. This older chamber genre focused on the presentation of melodies in different wind colors, and Farrenc's use of instrumental timbres places this process in a central role, though

in a highly sophisticated way. At the same time, Farrenc distills the carefree nature of the divertimento, especially through the linear development of her formal structures.

This last feature is perhaps the most important, since it unites her Nonet to similar works by her French contemporaries, and even those composed in Vienna earlier in the Romantic period. Well into the nineteenth-century, Parisian audiences enjoyed the simplicity of Viennese Classicism, and the works of Onslow, Blanc, and Farrenc all reflect this preference. Furthermore, these composers, though each with their own individual stylistic choices, sought a seriousness in form and tone, within a genre that originally had very little of these qualities. Thanks to the concert series of Baillot and others, such sophistication was embraced by audiences of the 1850's, and, accordingly, these works for large ensembles met with popular acclaim in the salons and concert halls of the nineteenth century. The subtle experimentation evident within these compositions demonstrates the conservatism of their musical background, as well as their ability to create fresh works in old genres, and their sincere desire to educate audiences. However, the originality of these pieces was not sufficient to meet the drastic changes in taste that swept Paris in the 1870's, which ultimately led to their neglect and disappearance from concert settings.

Following its defeat in the Franco-Prussian war, the French government took a direct role in the support of instrumental music. This began in 1871, as seen in the establishment of the Société Nationale de Musique. This organization presented instrumental works by French composers with the hope of invigorating patriotism and removing foreign--especially Germanic--musical influences. "Aestheticization of the grand forms

of instrumental music thus became the stake of an artistic idealism that would be embodied in the person of César Franck.”⁶¹ Though the composers discussed in this chapter had upheld the importance of chamber music through most of the nineteenth century, and therefore laid the groundwork for the popularity of Franck, Saint-Saëns, and others, their conservative, Germanic style fell from favor.

⁶¹ Fauquet, 303.

CONCLUSIONS

The popularity of Beethoven's Septet, Op. 20 had a significant impact on a large number of composers. One of the initial goals of this project was to investigate later nineteenth-century works that might have been influenced by the Septet. Instrumentation and chronology were the only criteria for determining this influence. The present study has examined chamber music from the Romantic period specifically written for large ensembles of winds and strings that included the double bass, but not the piano.

While investigating these works, I discovered a number of meaningful similarities. More chamber pieces for large ensembles of strings and winds were composed in Vienna and Paris than anywhere else. To a certain degree, the musical scenes of these two cities closely resembled one another, especially regarding the chamber music repertoire. During this period, instrumental concerts consisted primarily of the music of Haydn and other late Classical composers. Informal musical gatherings, in which both professional and amateur players participated, were on the rise. In such settings, chamber music was frequently the instrumental genre of choice. In both cities, the middle class became increasingly responsible for the patronage of music.

Composers in Vienna and Paris responded similarly to these artistic circumstances. Chamber music remained a highly conservative genre in both cities, but at the same time, reacted to audience demands. Virtuosity was favored earlier on, but interest moved more towards simpler styles that both amateurs and professionals found inviting. Many composers used a standard set of instruments in their ensembles, and their formal designs

were fairly regular as well. Composers established their personal style through subtle deviations from these conventions.

All of these trends can be seen in the septets, octets, and nonets written in Vienna and Paris during the Romantic period. Beethoven's Septet, though a definite model for other composers, is itself part of an earlier tradition. With its six-movement format, characteristic combinations of wind and string instruments, interplay between instrument families, light and charming character, and simple melodic style, this piece clearly draws from the Classical Viennese divertimento. While later composers tended to write their divertimento-based chamber compositions in four movements, all of these other traits are present in their works as well.

The inclusion of the double bass in chamber ensembles of winds and strings is the feature that initially motivated this study. While examining these works more closely, I detected many other similar features. All the nonets examined consist of a string quartet and woodwind quintet, and, with the exception of Lachner's substitution of flute for Beethoven's bassoon, the septets of this period are also identical in instrumentation. The greatest differences in scoring are found in the octets by Schubert and Spohr. Even in these, however, the ensemble consists of three wind instruments, as in Beethoven's Septet, and are joined by an additional string instrument.

Each of the composers investigated here had his or her own approach to scoring for their large chamber ensembles, but the alternation between instrument groups is essential to all their works, as it was in eighteenth-century divertimenti. Some composers, like Spohr, continue this interaction across the span of movements. Others, such as Onslow,

prefer a more localized approach to the dialogue between winds and strings. Farrenc frequently provides a flurry of different instrumental colors. Regardless of the specific approach, the interplay between winds and strings remains primary.

The light-hearted character of the divertimento is also preserved in all these works. Several composers, in fact, demonstrate that this is a conscious decision. The sinister opening to the finale of Schubert's Octet gives way to a far more cheerful series of melodies. The scherzo of Lachner's Septet, though very dark, is immediately succeeded by a bucolic closing movement. Onslow's Nonet is in a minor key, but still focuses most attention on bright, upbeat themes. Highly dramatic moments in these pieces are brief, and are always followed by periods of repose. These traits make it clear that these composers chose to preserve the overall mood of the divertimento.

Simplicity is another distinguishing feature of these pieces and its manifestation depends upon the occasion for which each particular piece was written. Beethoven achieves simplicity in his Septet through use of the eighteenth-century *style galant*, largely because this style suited the tastes of his aristocratic audience. Spohr, on the other hand, uses complex, chromatic melodies, but presents them with relatively little counterpoint. Blanc's writing for thin textures and plain themes in his Septet offers yet another method of realizing this goal. Whether by writing in an out-dated style, or by writing specifically for amateur performers, these composers invoke some amount of the unadorned composition style of the traditional divertimento, a style with much audience appeal.

With his Septet, Beethoven also introduced a new facet to the traditional divertimento: sophisticated forms. This piece is just as artfully conceived as his early string quartets. Following Beethoven, later composers of septets, octets, and nonets used sophisticated forms in writing their own pieces. In fact, most of these compositions follow widely-used four-movement patterns, demonstrating their composer's aims of writing complex music within the divertimento genre. The specific formal choices differ between Vienna and Paris. Excluding Beethoven's Septet and Schubert's Octet, the Viennese composers used sonata form in their finales, while the Parisian works usually employed rondo forms.

Besides these advancements in form, a number of other features not present in the divertimento became widely used in nineteenth-century chamber works. Equality of instrumental parts, subtle experimentation in formal and harmonic design, slow introductions to first and last movements, pastoral evocations in the finale, and at least some virtuosity are found in most of the compositions discussed throughout this work. Because these elements are found in chamber works both in Vienna and Paris, the similar approach to chamber music in these cities is further supported.

Together, these features establish the septets, octets, and nonets of the Romantic period as a distinct genre. Elements of the eighteenth-century divertimento are similarly present in all these works, as are newly added components. Furthermore, the development of this genre is supported by cultural and social similarities between Paris during the July Monarchy and Biedermeier Vienna. The resemblance of the compositions discussed here extends so far beyond instrumentation that the features they share can be

used to determine whether other works belong within this genre. Specifically, these criteria can be applied to pieces with slightly different chamber ensembles, or those written at a different time or place.

The only question remaining is why, specifically, Beethoven used the double bass in his Septet. For the other composers investigated in this study, their overall conservatism and use of Beethoven's work as a model makes the inclusion of the double bass not especially surprising. However, even in cases where later composers worked regularly with bass virtuosos, as both Onslow and Blanc did, the style of writing for this instrument is consistent with that of the earlier works in this genre. This suggests that Beethoven probably did not include the double bass in his Septet as a way of showcasing some acquaintance of his. Perhaps he did, in fact, take Pleyel's chamber music as a model, or his own sense of orchestration led him to the decision. Beethoven does not include the double bass as an equal partner in the Septet, nor does he relegate it to a strictly orchestral role, yet the bass still provides its usual functions: strengthening harmonic motion, balancing ensemble sonority, and establishing the absolute bass--especially when other instrumental parts are more active. By using the bass in such a way, Beethoven makes his Septet much more concert-oriented than most chamber music. In the absence of specific evidence, however, this question must remain unanswered. Whatever his reason, the model Beethoven presented in his Septet brought about a vibrant tradition that, throughout the nineteenth century, produced an attractive and approachable body of chamber music.

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