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An improvisatory approach to nineteenth-century music

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Chapter 9. Preluding

9.1 Introduction

Originally a prelude was an improvised 'piece that preceded other music whose tonic, mode, or key it was designed to introduce'.[720] Preluding, or defining a key by means of improvised 'flourishes'[721] and in this way preparing for the performance of a piece of (in many cases composed) music, is an activity that always seems to have been part of Western instrumental music. Besides the improvised *preludia* (or *praeambula*) there is a long lineage of notated pieces that served as examples or models for extemporised ones. The oldest compositions in this manner are the *praeambula* for organ in the tablature of Adam Ileborgh (1448). Composed preludes developed into a musical genre with a very wide range of formal sophistication. Some of them make the impression of imitating a freely improvised flourish, but other ones are more developed and tightly organised. In the North German Baroque, the insertion of fugal sections in organ preludes eventually led towards the monumental diptychs entitled 'prelude and fugue' in the work of J.S. Bach. For other chord instruments such as harpsichord and lute as well, preludes could be notated, sometimes in a rhythmically open form such as the French *préludes non mesurés.* Besides chordal instruments, string and wind instruments were also used for preluding. For these categories, tutors and methods were published, especially from the early eighteenth century on. The advent of the piano at the end of the eighteenth century also gave rise to the publication of many instruction books that paid attention to preluding, again by way of sample compositions. Here as well the composed preludes vary wildly in scope, structure and refinement. Some preludes from the early nineteenth century (e.g. in Muzio Clementi's *Préludes et exercises* for piano) are hard to distinguish from etudes; other ones are more like carefully composed poetic miniatures, for instance Frédéric Chopin's *24 Préludes* op. 28, some of which have been and still are the subject of profound theoretical analysis. Time and again, tutors advise the reader to learn selected preludes by heart and transpose them, in order to eventually improvise similar pieces. In the second volume of his *Praktische Präludirschule*, Carl Gustav Hering even refers to Seneca's dictum 'Longum est iter per praecepta, breve et efficax per exempla' [teaching by precept is a long road, but brief and effective is the way by example]. He writes:

> Gute Beispiele, wie im Moralischen, sind für den jungen Geist wirksamer, als eine lange Reihe von Regeln, die übrigens ihren Werth behalten, und behalten mögen. Albrechtsberger, Beethoven, Clementi, Dussek usw. geben durch ihre Compositionen dem vorbereiteten und auf den Bau der

[720] Grove Music Online, entry: Prelude. https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.43302

[721] Mather, B.B. & Lasocki, D.: *The Art of Preluding, 1700-1830*. New York, 1982; 6.

> musikalischen Kunstwerke aufmerksam gewordenen Lernenden nun mehr Stoff zum fortgesetzten Studium, als ein bloßes Verzeichnis der Regeln, wovon er die Ausübung nicht vor sich hat. [722]
>
> [Like in the field of morality, good examples are more effective to the young mind than a long series of rules, that, incidentally, remain valuable, and should be so. Albrechtsberger, Beethoven, Clementi, Dussek, etc., offer through their compositions more material for advanced studies to the student who is well prepared and attentive to the construction of musical works, than a mere list of rules of which he doesn't have the application in front of him.]

Preluding in the later eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, particularly on the piano, has been the subject of relatively extensive twentieth-century scholarly research. An oft-quoted study is Robert Wangermée's article 'L'Improvisation pianistique au début du XIXe siècle'.[723] A comprehensive survey of the field is offered by Jane Lohr in her PhD dissertation *Preluding on the harpsichord and pianoforte, circa 1770 to circa 1850*.[724] Valery Woodring Goertzen published an influential article entitled 'By Way of Introduction: Preluding by 18th- and Early 19th-Century Pianists'.[725] Shane Levesque's 'Functions and Performance Practice of Improvised Nineteenth-Century Piano Preludes'[726] intends to complement Goertzen's text. Another contribution on the same topic is Claudio Bacciagaluppi's 'Die Kunst des Präludierens'.[727] Preluding on the violin is discussed by Catherine Coppola in 'Didacticism and display in the capriccio and prelude for violin, 1785-1840'.[728] A more practical approach is given in the highly valuable *The Art of Preluding, 1700-1830* by Betty Bang Mather and David Lasocki[729] which is addressed to 'flutists, oboists, clarinetists and other performers.' In the area of Baroque keyboard preluding, Jean-Claude Zehnder recently published 'Das einfache Präludium – Improvisationsmodelle um 1700'.[730]

In this chapter, the focus will be on nineteenth-century preluding, which however cannot be separated from developments during the later eighteenth century, as several of the titles quoted above

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[722] Hering, C.G. : *Praktische Präludirschule*, vol. 2. Leipzig, [1814]; Vorrede.

[723] Wangermée, R.: 'L'Improvisation pianistique au début du XIXe siècle.' In: *Miscellanea musicologica Floris van der Mueren*. Ghent, 1950; 227-253.

[724] Lohr, N.J.: *Preluding on the harpsichord and pianoforte, circa 1770 to circa 1850*. PhD dissertation, unpublished. The University of Iowa, 1993.

[725] Goertzen, V.W.: 'By Way of Introduction: Preluding by 18th- and Early 19th-Century Pianists.' *The Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Summer, 1996); 299-337.

[726] Levesque, S.: 'Functions and Performance Practice of Improvised Nineteenth-Century Piano Preludes.' *Dutch Journal of Music Theory,* Vol. 13, No. 1 (2008); 109-116.

[727] Bacciagaluppi, C.: 'Die Kunst des Präludierens'. In: Bacciagaluppi, Cl. & Brotbeck, R. & Gerhard, A. (eds.): *Zwischen schöpferischer Individualität und künstlerischer Selbstverleugnung. Zur musikalischen Aufführungspraxis im 19. Jahrhundert*. Schliengen/ Markgräflerland, 2009; 169-188.

[728] Coppola, C.: 'Didacticism and display in the capriccio and prelude for violin, 1785–1840.' In: Borio, G. & Carone, A. (eds.): *Musical Improvisation and Open Forms in the Age of Beethoven*. London, 2018; 149-160.

[729] Mather, B.B. & Lasocki, D.: *The Art of Preluding, 1700-1830*. New York, 1982.

[730] Zehnder, J.-Cl.: 'Das einfache Präludium – Improvisationsmodelle um 1700.' In: Schwenkreis, M. (red.): *Compendium Improvisation*. Basel, 2018.

suggest. The topic will be discussed from the perspective of music-making in public concerts and salons; the rich but very different topic of preluding on the organ will largely be passed over. More than the musicological articles mentioned, this chapter will focus on the questions of how students learned to improvise a prelude in those days, and how today's musicians can master this art. This investigation will start with a key figure in the musical life of the early nineteenth century: Carl Czerny.

9.2 Czerny's *Systematische Anleitung zum Fantasieren*: background, content, reception

Carl Czerny's reputation as a composer primarily rests on the large number of piano etudes he published in well-known collections such as the *Schule der Geläufigkeit* op. 299 and *Die Kunst der Fingerfertigkeit* op. 740. Musically sterile though they may seem to most musicians (Stravinsky was one of the few exceptions to prove the rule), they have played a central role in a classical pianist's training until nowadays. However, the etudes only occupy a small part in his enormous output. The catalogue lists 861 published works, but on top of this a very large number of compositions remained unpublished. The published works are dominated by variations, potpourris, etc., in the 'brilliant salon-style', which was very popular at that time and therefore much in demand with the publishers. Czerny's more serious compositions hardly received attention already during his life. That does not mean that he lived a life of poverty, however: after a career as a child prodigy, he became one of Vienna's most sought after and well-paid piano pedagogues at the age of 15 years; when he turned 45, he was able to stop his intensive teaching schedule (he often taught twelve hours per day, and composed at night) and devote himself completely to composing.[731]

Czerny lived on the crossroads of the Classical and Romantic styles, and his diligence as an author makes him a valuable witness of early-nineteenth-century Viennese musical life. He was a student and later a friend of Beethoven, and thanks to his impressive energy, his writings form one of the most important and elaborate sources about the composer. Czerny is also famous as the teacher of Franz Liszt (though he regretted that Liszt left him too early: he thought that Liszt's later playing lacked finesse, and he even considered it 'in jeder Hinsicht ziemlich wüst und verworren'[732] [in every sense rather rude and muddled]). In his long list of compositions, Czerny reserved the round numbers (op. 200, 300, up until 600) for major works, often textbooks. His first large book is the *Systematische Anleitung zum Fantasieren auf dem Pianoforte* [A systematic introduction to improvisation on the pianoforte] op. 200, published in 1829.[733] This is a remarkable book in many senses. First of all, it is the only work of this scope solely devoted to improvisation that was written

[731] Biba, O. & Fuchs, I.: *»Mehr Respekt vor dem tüchtigen Mann«*. Kassel, 2009; 11.
[732] Czerny, C.: *Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben* (Walter Kolneder, ed.). Strasbourg, 1968; 29.
[733] Czerny, C.: *Systematische Anleitung zum Fantasieren auf dem Pianoforte* op. 200. Wien, [1829]; facsimile reprint: Wiesbaden, 1993.

before the twentieth century.[734] Second, it is striking that Czerny wrote his first book (a book on fugue playing and comprehensive piano and composition methods were to follow) on this very subject. And finally, this publication is even more remarkable in light of the fact that Czerny himself never gave virtuoso concerts as many of his contemporaries did.[735] After his years as a child prodigy he avoided the concert stage, focusing entirely on teaching. In short: Czerny was famous as a teacher, not as a performer. It appears that his book came as an answer to Johann Nepomuk Hummel's *Ausführliche theoretisch-practische Anweisung zum Pianoforte-Spiel* (1827).[736] Contrary to Czerny, Hummel was a world famous improviser on stage, but the few pages he spent on improvisation in his piano method had disappointed his fans. Interestingly, Hummel added a few pages (but no more than that) to the rudimentary chapter about improvisation in the second edition of his *Anweisung*, which appeared after Czerny's book (1830).

Czerny wrote about improvisation in several other works as well. The title of his opus 300 is *Die Kunst des Präludierens* (1833?); the book is conceived as a second part to the *Systematische Anleitung* and basically consists of 120 additional examples of preludes, preceded by a few harmonic cadences. The third volume of the monumental *Pianoforte-Schule* op. 500 (1839), *Von dem Vortrage* [about performance], includes one chapter about preluding and one about *Fantasieren* [improvising]. Finally, Czerny's *Briefe über den Unterricht auf dem Pianoforte* (1830?, without opus number) contains a chapter about improvisation. Czerny wrote extensively about almost every aspect of piano playing and composing, which also provides a context for his texts about improvisation. In March 1878, Johannes Brahms wrote with appreciation about Czerny's *Pianoforte-Schule* in a letter to Clara Schumann; presumably Clara Schumann had asked Brahms for instructional materials on behalf of her oldest daughter Marie, who was to assist her mother with her teaching job at Dr. Hoch's newly founded conservatory in Frankfurt.[737]

> Die grosse Pianoforteschule ist wohl der Mühe wert, durchgelesen zu werden. (...) Der Fingersatz bei Czerny ist höchst sehr zu beachten, überhaupt meine ich, man dürfe heute mehr Respekt vor dem tüchtigen Mann haben.[738]
>
> [The great *Pianoforteschule* is worth reading. (...) Czerny's fingering definitely deserves our attention, I think anyway that we should pay more respect today to this competent man.]

[734] Earlier, but more limited examples (not mentioned by Czerny) are: Georg Andreas Sorge, *Anleitung zur Fantasie* (1767); André Ernest Modeste Grétry, *Méthode simple pour apprendre à préluder en peu de temps* (1801); Carl Gottlieb Hering, *Praktische Präludirschule* (1812 / 1814).

[735] Biba, O. & Fuchs, I.: op. cit., 11.

[736] Mahlert, U.: 'Einführung' to the reprint of Czerny's *Systematische Anleitung* ... Wiesbaden, 1993; III.

[737] Schumann, E.: *Erinnerungen von Eugenie Schumann*. Stuttgart, 1927; 286. Also: Babbe, A.: *Clara Schumann und ihre SchülerInnen am Hoch'schen Konservatorium in Frankfurt a. M.* Oldenburg, 2015; 35.

[738] Schumann, C. & Brahms, J.: *Briefe aus den Jahren 1853-1896,* ed. Berthold Litzmann, vol. 2. Leipzig, 1927; 136.

Today, Czerny's books are important sources for the performance practice of the first decades of the nineteenth century. In particular, harpsichordist Dirk Börner has called the third volume of op. 500 'eine wahre Fundgrube für die romantische Aufführungspraxis' [a real treasure trove for Romantic performance practice]. He adds:

> Ich muß zugeben, daß ich ob der präzisen Anweisungen, die dort zu finden sind, als Cembalist geradezu blaß vor Neid werde und mich wundern muß, daß die Kollegen Pianisten hier nicht vermehrt zugreifen.[739]
>
> [I have to admit that I, as a harpsichordist, am downright eaten up with jealousy because of the exact instructions that can be found in this book, and that I am astonished that my fellow pianists don't take more advantage of it.]

In his *Anleitung*, Czerny successively treats the different forms of improvisation on the piano that were usual in his time. Ulrich Mahlert wrote an introduction to the 1993 facsimile reprint of the book, in which he discusses a review of Czerny's book by Gottfried Wilhelm Fink. (This review was published in 1829 in two consecutive issues of the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*.) Fink proposes a different order of the chapters (which he thinks should be progressive in difficulty), but doesn't criticise the content – which suggests that he agreed with Czerny's taxonomy of piano improvisation in the early nineteenth century.[740] Chapter 1 in op. 200 deals with simple preludes, chapter 2 with more elaborate preludes with some thematic content; other chapters discuss cadenzas, fantasies on one or more subjects, variations, fugues and capriccios. Czerny's first chapter will serve as a starting point for the discussion of preludes in this study, whereas the other chapters will form a common thread throughout the remainder of part 3.

9.3 Ornamental preludes: function

In the first chapter of his *Anleitung*, Czerny explains the function and the set-up of simple preludes as they were supposed to be played before the performance of a larger piece. (This is the type of prelude mentioned at the beginning of the present chapter.) Because they basically consist of chords with more or less virtuosic flourishes (or only the flourishes in case of a monophonic instrument), I call such preludes 'ornamental'.

It seems that audiences at that time did not expect concerts to start abruptly out of the blue. The listeners had to be prepared and brought into the right mood by a suitable prelude; at the same time,

[739] Börner, D.: 'Carl Czerny – oder: Was würde passieren, wenn wir ihn wirklich ernst nähmen?' In: Bacciagaluppi, Cl. & Brotbeck, R. & Gerhard, A. (eds.): *Zwischen schöpferischer Individualität und künstlerischer Selbstverleugnung. Zur musikalischen Aufführungspraxis im 19. Jahrhundert.* Schliengen/
Markgräflerland, 2009; 26.
[740] Czerny, C.: *Systematische Anleitung...*; IX.

this would give the pianist the opportunity to get to know the piano,[741] or to check the condition of the instrument. Other functions of a prelude could be to let the player warm his fingers, or to arouse the attention of the audience.[742] Though preluding on the piano was described relatively often and extensively, players of solo-line instruments were also expected to improvise preludes. In 1799, Amand Vanderhagen devoted a chapter of his *Nouvelle méthode de flute* to this topic. It is interesting to read his remark that the sample preludes he shows should not be regarded as real preludes, but rather as sketches serving the students as a 'berceau' [cradle] for their own inventions – extempore, one may suppose. Vanderhagen also writes that a prelude should be played solo; like countless other authors, he detests the habit of orchestra musicians to prelude simultaneously before a piece, something 'one can hear unfortunately rather often in some orchestras where the leader isn't strict enough to forbid them'.[743]

Preluding to prepare the listeners, to check the instrument, to warm the fingers, to silence the audience: all of these aspects deserve a closer look. Starting with the musician's needs: today it would be rather strange for a pianist to come on the stage with cold fingers and not to know what to expect from the piano. Some modern authors suggest that pianos in those days were much more prone to imperfections than nowadays. This idea might be inspired by Liszt's reputation as a destroyer of pianos. However, there is no reason to assume that pianos generally were not taken care of, bearing in mind the enormous number of piano builders who were active during the first decades of the nineteenth century. Johann Peter Eckermann writes about a visiting pianist, Maria Szymanowska, who was to give a private concert in Goethe's house in Weimar on October 27th, 1823; one hour before the concert, one could hear a tuner at work on the piano[744] – just like pianists today hope that the concert organiser will have brought the piano into good shape. More likely, the pianist had no opportunity to try the piano in advance and to warm-up in a separate room. Czerny recommends such preludes especially for *Privatzirkeln*, by which he meant salons and house concerts. He writes that more elaborate preludes are out of place in public concerts, where just a few chords will suffice.[745] Such *Privatzirkeln* were social meetings for the upper class at a venue that was not naturally equipped for concerts. The concert room may have been occupied by the guests, and the soloist may have had to chat with his audience before the concert; that, at least, is what Liszt typically did.

In the short story *Een concert* (1839), the Dutch author Nicolaas Beets (whose alias was Hildebrand) describes with slight mockery a public concert in Haarlem, a provincial town. The

[741] Czerny, C.: op. cit., 5.
[742] For a comprehensive list, see Levesque, op. cit., 112.
[743] Vanderhagen, A.: *Nouvelle méthode de flute.* Paris, [1799]; 67.
[744] Eckermann, J.P.: *Gespräche mit Goethe.* Weimar, 1913; 54.
[745] Czerny, C.: *Vollständige theoretisch-practische Pianoforte-Schule* op. 500; part III: *Von dem Vortrage.* Wien, 1839; facsimile reprint: Wiesbaden, 1991; 90.

young pianist Henriette Kegge performs a solo piece in a programme that is typical for that time: the orchestra (consisting of *virtuozen en dilettanten*) performs three movements of a symphony ('of course the such-and-such one of Beethoven'), after which a virtuoso plays a solo on the French horn, followed by Miss Kegge's performance. After her solo, the orchestra performs the last movement of the symphony. Henriette does not wait her turn in some separate room backstage, but is sitting in the audience; when the moment is there, a gentleman descends from the stage to escort her to the piano.[746] As a matter of fact, public concerts usually did not yet take place in the type of building we think of as a concert hall – that is, a building especially designed for music with several halls, soloist rooms, etc. Probably Henriette didn't have a soloist room at her disposal! All the same, it is natural for any instrumentalist to 'feel' the instrument before the performance really starts – to check the tuning or the condition, as it were – but also to lower his anxiety before launching into the concert proper. A fairly recent example of a pianist trying the piano before the performance can be seen on the recording of Vladimir Horowitz's 1987 concert in Vienna – though the *Musikverein* building (raised in 1870) surely offers ample possibilities for a soloist to prepare for the concert!

[9.3 #1 Vladimir Horowitz (1903-1989) in Vienna: improvised prelude; rec. 1987[747]]

Arousing the attention of the listeners might have been more than necessary at a time when modern concert etiquette, demanding sacred silence during the performance, was still a long way off. Friedrich Wieck was just one of many observers who wrote, with barely hidden sarcasm, about the failing attention of chatting audiences; in *Clavier und Gesang* he says that one can stop in the middle of a piece when the listeners are talking loudly and continuously.[748] However, even an attentive audience apparently needed to be prepared. Part of this preparation was to get used to the key of the following piece.[749] A prelude was supposed to settle the tonality, or, in between pieces, to modulate from the previous tonality to the key of the next piece. Several early recordings show that this practice was still alive in the early twentieth century. In 1922, Ferruccio Busoni recorded a few pieces by Chopin; at this occasion, he connected the prelude in A major op. 28 no. 7 to the etude op. 10 no. 5 in G flat major with a simple dominant seventh chord, repeating the final motive from the prelude (at 0'56").

[9.3 #2 Ferruccio Busoni (1866-1924): modulating prelude (rec. 1922)[750]]

[746] Beets, N.: *Camera Obscura.* Haarlem, 1871; 179.
[747] https://youtu.be/Nz26IpXtIT4 (uploaded 2012 by 'mightysmeagol')
[748] Wieck, Fr.: *Clavier und Gesang.* Leipzig, 1853; 79.
[749] Incidentally, Horowitz's prelude was not in the key of the first composition.
[750] https://youtu.be/e3O1yygAEco (uploaded 2012 by 'pianopera')

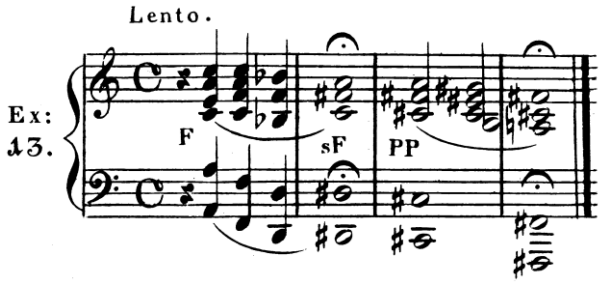
More elaborate is Josef Hofmann's modulating prelude between Chopin's Waltz in A-flat major (not on the recording) and *Andante spianato* in G major, recorded live during his Golden Jubilee Concert in 1937.

[9.3 #3 Josef Hofmann (1876-1957): modulating prelude (rec. 1937)[751]]

As late as 1950, Dinu Lipatti still connects Mozart's a minor sonata KV 310 with Schubert's *Impromptu* in G-flat major D 899 no. 3 on a live recording of his final recital in Besançon.

[9.3 #4 Dinu Lipatti (1917-1959): modulating prelude (rec. 1950)[752]]

Such modulations are not very different from examples in Czerny's first chapter, such as this one from a minor to f-sharp minor, based upon an enharmonic change in the diminished seventh chord:[753]



Example 9.3.1

Why was it so important to establish the key beforehand? Surely most musicians who put together a recital programme nowadays pay attention to a smooth connection of the keys of the pieces performed and try to avoid too obvious clashes, such as adjacent tonalities a tritone or minor second apart. A general experience, however, is that applauding between pieces tends to 'wash away' the old key in the audience's ears, making any difficult key relations less offensive anyway. So why bother to connect the keys with a transitional passage? Possibly in Czerny's day the issue was not so much to make the listener forget any previous key, but to bring him into the right mood for the piece to come. This might also be the reason why Czerny (like many other authors) emphasizes that the prelude should be adapted to the character of the composition it is to lead into. As Lohr notes, the entry *Fassung* in Johann Georg Sulzer's *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste* makes the same point.[754] Sulzer writes that it is important that somebody who is going to enjoy a work of art or a performance should have the appropriate *Fassung* [state of mind, mood]. 'Wer sich in einer vergnügten Laune

[751] https://youtu.be/crG_sRwDsuo (uploaded 2011 by 'StockhausenIsMyCat')
[752] https://youtu.be/9tjstsWoQiw (uploaded 2017 by 'The Piano Files')
[753] Czerny, C.: *Systematische Anleitung...* op. 200; 10.
[754] Lohr, N.J.: op. cit., 209.

befindet, den kann man leicht zum Lachen bringen; alles, was man vor ihm sagt, hat doppelte Kraft.'[755] [Who is in a joyful mood, can easily be brought to laughter; everything you tell him has twice as much power.] Lohr writes: 'Every form of art needs some means of establishing the *Fassung* necessary for its proper reception. In music, this means is preluding; in speech, it is an introduction; in poetry it is a title.'[756]

At the beginning of this section (9.3) I suggested that starting a piece without an introduction might have been experienced as abrupt at the time. I think this is a motivation not to be overlooked. For instance, Robert Schumann wrote about his own *Sechs Concert-Etuden componirt nach Capricen von Paganini*, op. 10 (1833):

> Da sie aber, was ein gemischtes Konzertpublikum nicht gewohnt ist, meistens sehr Frisch auf die Hauptsache losgehen, so würden sie am besten durch ein freies, kurzes, angemessenes Vorspiel eingeleitet.[757]
>
> [Since they however mostly go straight for the main point, something a mixed concert audience is not used to, they'd better be introduced by a free, short and suitable prelude.]

Surely an opinion that is likely to astonish many modern music lovers!

Czerny's first chapter is dedicated to short preludes that lack any clear thematic material. They vary from just a few chords to elaborate flourishes on such chords, or freely modulating chord sequences. Czerny makes clear that this is just the first step towards improvising; even the second chapter about longer and thematic preludes, and the third one about cadenzas, don't yet belong to the category of 'real, independent improvisation' (*zum eigentlichen, selbständigen Fantasieren*[758]). The latter only starts with the fourth chapter, dealing with fantasies on one theme. Here Czerny compares the act of improvisation to rhetoric (see also chapter 3.4):

> Sobald der Spieler sich vor einer grösseren Gesellschaft, und überhaupt vor Zuhörern zum Improvisieren hinsetzt, kann er sich mit einem Redner vergleichen, der einen Gegenstand deutlich und möglichst erschöpfend aus dem Stegreif zu entwickeln strebt.[759]
>
> [A player who sits down in order to improvise in front of a small or large gathering of listeners, can be compared with an orator who aspires to develop a topic clearly and profoundly on the spur of the moment.]

[755] Sulzer, J.G.: *Allgemeine Theorie der Schönen Künste.* Leipzig, 1774; II, 216.
[756] Lohr, N.J.: op. cit.; 210. Tonality may have been an important aspect of this, because the idea that every key had its characteristic mood was prominent at that time (more than it is nowadays). Exploring this topic further would lead into the vast field of key characteristics, which lies beyond the scope of this study.
[757] Schumann, R.: *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker,* Bd. 1, Martin Kreisig (ed.). Leipzig, 1914; 213.
[758] Czerny, C.: *Systematische Anleitung*... op. 200; 35.
[759] Czerny, C.: op. cit., 36.

Like Ferand many years later, Czerny seems to distinguish between 'relative' improvisation, which functions within the context of a composition (Czerny does not mention ornamentation in this respect) on the one hand, and 'absolute' improvisation, the 'real' improvisation, in which the pianist takes on the role of a musical storyteller, on the other hand. Here Czerny's position differs from that of his contemporaries. Most authors write about preluding, which for them is the paradigm of improvisation. Augustus Frederic Kollmann, for instance, opens his *An introduction to the art of preluding and extemporizing* (1792), which focuses on short preludes and gives a few examples of more thematic ones, with an elaboration on the benefits of improvisation that perfectly matches the principles of this study (→ chapter 1.5):

> The science of music very much resembles a Language, and a Person who can only play by Notes or Memory, but not out of his own Fancy or Invention, may be compared to one who can read a Language and repeat some Parts of it, but who cannot converse in it. One principal Object therefore in the Study of Music should be to obtain the Capacity of expressing voluntary Thoughts either before and between other Pieces of regular Composition, or without Regard to any musical Piece.[760]

Though Kollmann also mentions preludes and interludes as opposed to improvisations that are 'without regard to any musical piece', his book only deals with the first category.

Carl Gottlieb Hering's *Praktische Präludirschule oder Anweisung in der Kunst, Vorspiele und Fantasien selbst zu bilden* [practical school of preluding, or guide for the art of forming introductions and fantasies] gives the impression of having a wider scope. In the introduction Hering writes:

> Der Nutzen eines solchen Lehrbuchs ist wohl unverkennbar. Es werden dadurch nicht nur musikalische Ideen in unsern jungen Musikern erweckt, hervorgerufen, geordnet, daß sie bald Schöpfer von Melodien werden, sondern es hat auch auf den Ueberblick größerer Kunstwerke einen bedeutenden Einfluß, der sie geschickt macht, die Ausführung eines Tonstücks bald zu übersehen, wodurch selbst das vom Blattspielen (prima vista) erleichtert wird.[761]
>
> [The purpose of such a manual is indisputable. Not only does it awaken, evoke and organise musical ideas in our young musicians, soon to make them creators of melodies, but to a great extent it also affects the overview of larger works of art, enabling the musicians to gain a quick view of the performance of a composition and in this way even simplifying sight reading (*a prima vista*).]

All this still holds true today. Hering's examples, however, are dominated by ornamental preludes; the few models for more elaborate improvisations in his book are, ironically, existing compositions that by far exceed the simplicity of the small exercises. For example, Hering quotes the entire *Tempest*

[760] Kollmann, A.F.: *An Introduction to the Art of Preluding and Extemporizing in Six Lessons for the Harpsichord or Harp.* London, [1792]; 2.
[761] Hering, C.G.: *Praktische Präludirschule oder Anweisung in der Kunst, Vorspiele und Fantasien selbst zu bilden*, Bd 1. Leipzig, [1812]; Vorerinnerung (pages not numbered).

sonata by Beethoven – without mentioning the composer![762] To summarise, *das freie Fantasieren* [free improvisation], which for Czerny is 'the real thing', is either absent or touched upon only superficially in most contemporary manuals. Hummel seems to have thought along the same lines as Czerny, since he devotes only a few words to 'ornamental' preludes in the last chapter of the second edition of his *Anweisung* and elaborates upon more thematic improvisations. However, his text remains too general to give a clear picture of such extemporised music.

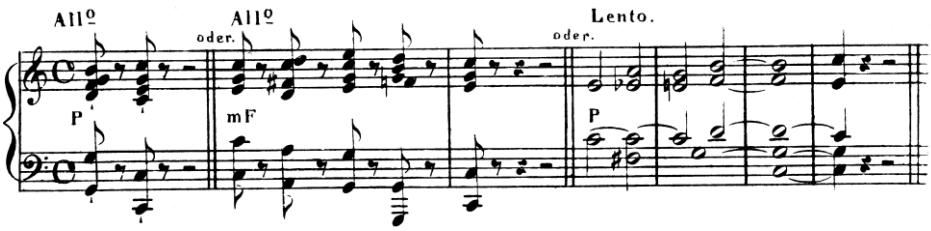
Another issue that distinguishes Hummel and Czerny from most other texts on preluding is in their didactic premises. Hummel writes that he presupposes that the student (a *Liebhaber*, incidentally) is thoroughly trained, both theoretically and practically, before he starts improvising. If not, he adds, such a player would be like somebody who can't draw and still wants to make a painting, or someone who wants to write a poem or a novel without knowing the language.[763] Similarly, Czerny insists (at least in opus 200) that an improviser needs to be a virtuoso and in full command of harmony. Conversely, most other authors present their manuals on preluding like an introductory harmony course; in the words of musicologist Thomas Meyer, preluding was seen (by them) as 'a propaedeutic to harmony and eventually even composition'.[764] This difference shows most clearly in the way the harmonic aspect of ornamental preludes is approached, which will be the subject of the next section of this chapter.

Prior to that I would like to emphasise that both views as presented here show a perspective that differs fundamentally from some twentieth- and twenty-first-century approaches to improvisation. In twentieth-century music pedagogy, improvisation became a tool to foster creativity – something that was seen as important at all levels of musical education, not only the higher ones.[765] Even in 'free improvisation' as it developed out of free jazz and other modernist music from the 1960's on, instrumental or vocal virtuosity in the traditional sense often seems to be less of a priority. In contrast, the nineteenth-century perspective, regardless the preferred didactic procedure, obviously acknowledged that music is like a language that must be mastered before one can express anything in it. For the implementation of improvisation in the professional training of modern musicians this is a highly relevant issue – if not the elephant in the room.

[762] Hering, C.G.: *Praktische Präludirschule oder Anweisung in der Kunst, Vorspiele und Fantasien selbst zu bilden*, Bd 2. Leipzig, [1812]; 35-62.
[763] Hummel, J.N.: *Ausführliche theoretisch-practische Anweisung zum Pianoforte-Spiel*, zweite Auflage. Wien, [1830]; 463.
[764] Meyer, T.: 'Über das Verfertigen von Präludien: eine Gebrauchskunst zwischen Komposition und Improvisation.' *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, Vol. 160, No. 4 (1999); 24.
[765] See for instance Ritzel, F.: '«Dieser freche Blödsinn wird seit Jahren in den Schulen geduldet»: Über Improvisation in der Musikpädagogik.' In: Brinkmann, R. (ed.): *Improvisation und neue Musik*. Mainz, 1979; 66-95.

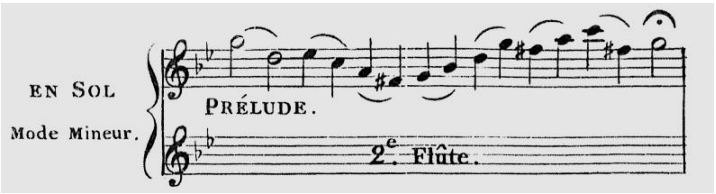
9.4 Ornamental preludes: harmony

Early-nineteenth-century ornamental preludes were in principle authentic cadences, with or without ornamentation. Czerny writes that just a few chords can already be sufficient as a prelude:[766]



Example 9.4.1

Preluding on melodic instruments followed similar patterns. Here too, it could suffice to play a harmonic cadence. For instance, Mathieu Peraut's *Méthode pour la flûte* (1800) gives the following example:[767]



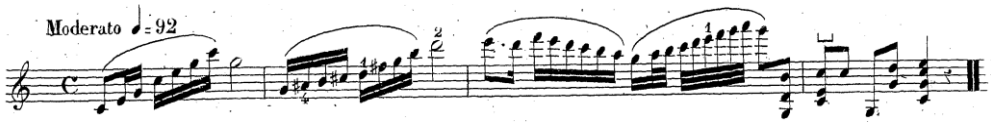
Example 9.4.2

Pierre Baillot's *L'Art du violon* (1834) gives extensive information on preluding on the violin. According to Baillot, 'modern' pianists do not disregard the art of improvising preludes, but of the violinists who are his contemporaries, he can only mention Rodolphe Kreutzer (the dedicatee of Beethoven's violin sonata op. 47) as being able to apply it with success; and Baillot notes that even he never improvises in public. (This supposedly means that Kreutzer improvised only at private concerts, exactly as Czerny wrote.) Baillot, who obviously thinks that violinists should prelude more often, writes that many have the talent to do so, but don't develop the required 'habitude acquise par une pratique constante' [routine acquired by continuous practising].[768]

It is interesting that Baillot, like so many contemporaries, emphasises the fundamental role of harmony, even for players of solo-line instruments. He even goes so far as to call the violin a 'harmonic instrument' in the sense that it can play the tones of a chord successively, like a harp, or

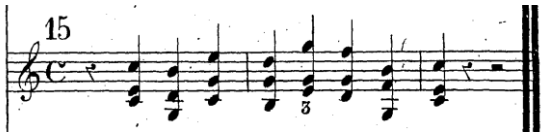
[766] Czerny, C.: *Systematische Anleitung* … op. 200; 5.
[767] Quoted in Bania, M: 'The Preluding on Melody Instruments in the 18th Century'. *The Consort*, vol. 70 (2014); 81.
[768] Baillot, P.: *L'Art du violon*. Paris, n.d. [1834]; 179.

simultaneously, like a piano.[769] The first way is illustrated in many sample preludes in the book, again based upon simple cadential harmony:[770]



Example 9.4.3

It is the latter way that, according to Baillot, is often neglected; for this reason he provides an ample number of harmonic preludes, usually consisting of an extended cadence (with the voice leading of course modelled according to the possibilities of the violin):[771]



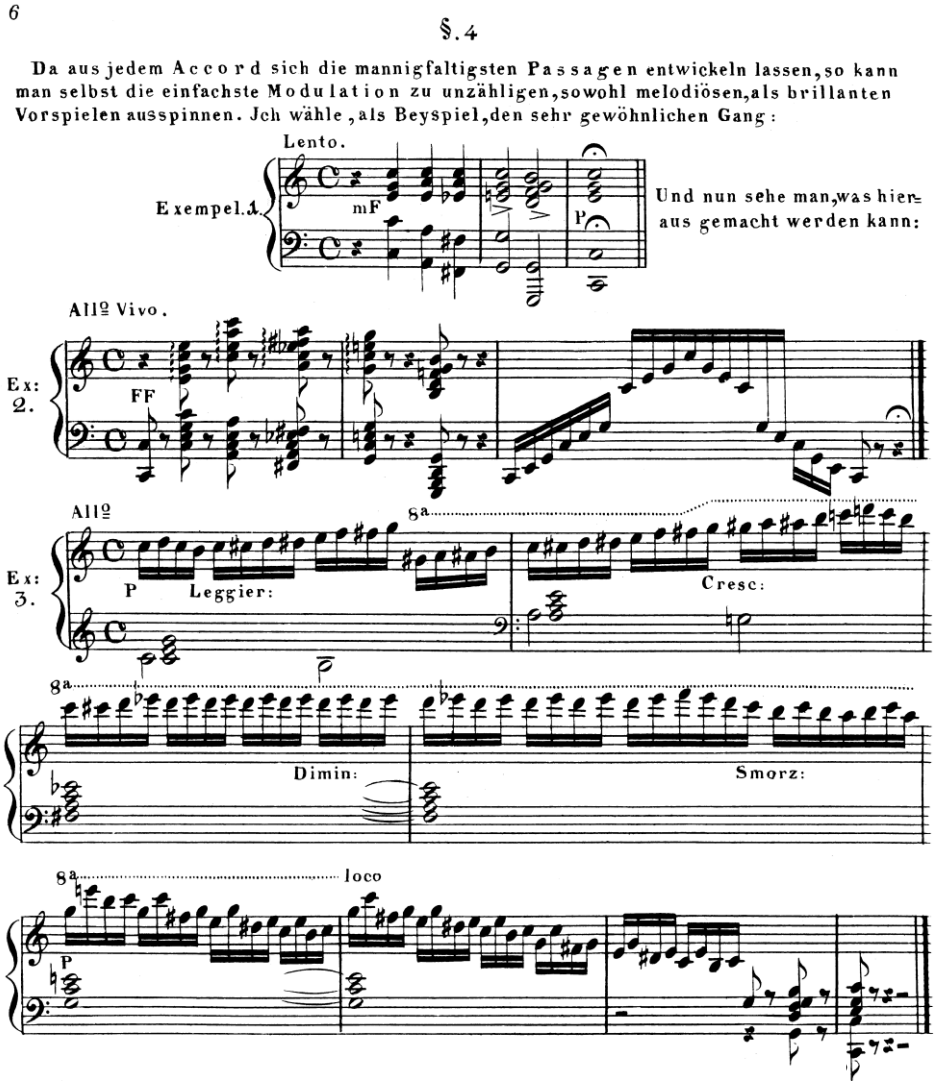
Example 9.4.4

Valerie Woodring Goertzen emphasises the long history of improvised introductions at the start of performances, tracing it back as far as Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, and summarising the phenomenon as an 'introductory gesture'.[772] That may be true, but then it is important to establish that the cadential model of ornamental preludes as presented by Czerny (and many others) actually does not 'open up': it closes.[773] Across Western tonal styles, cadences mark the end of sections. In this sense, such ornamental preludes cannot really be called introductory. This fact helps explain a remark of Baillot, who states that a prelude should always be followed by silence because 'le silence est, le plus souvent, la seul préparation qu'il convient d'employer' [in most cases, silence is the only preparation that is appropriate]. It is telling that Baillot supports his claim with two examples of famous musicians who created maximum effect by applying rhetorical silence: both of them were famous opera singers (Pierre Garat and Girolemo Crescentini). Along the same lines, Czerny writes that there should be a silence 'of approximately 20 seconds' between the prelude and the piece.[774]

The procedure of ornamental preluding is perfectly clear: the cadential progression may be dressed with flourishes and in this way be developed into a real prelude. Czerny's chapter mainly consists of examples of this idea. The nature of the flourishes will be discussed in the next section; but first, the harmony itself will be examined.

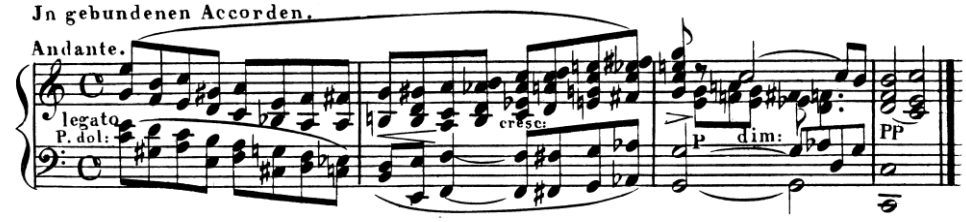
[769] Baillot, P.: op. cit., 180.
[770] Baillot, P.: op. cit., 182.
[771] Baillot, P.: op. cit., 184.
[772] Goertzen, V.W.: 'By Way of Introduction...'; 302.
[773] Cf. Caplin, W.E.: *Classical Form.* New York, 1998; 15.
[774] Czerny, C.: *Von dem Vortrage ...* op. 500 III; 62.

Czerny's focus is on showing a large number of possibilities for elaborating or ornamenting an underlying harmonic progression. The harmonic pattern as such is taken for granted. Indeed, for preludes in the so-called 'brilliant style', it remains virtually unaltered:[775]



Example 9.4.5

Other examples, however, show harmonic enrichments that are presented without any explanation:[776]



Example 9.4.6

[775] Czerny, C.: *Systematische Anleitung* ... op. 200; 6.

[776] Czerny, C.: op. cit., 7.

It is likely that many modern piano students would have difficulties turning the simple cadence above into this version, which is loaded with secondary dominants and deceptive cadences. However, it appears that even in Czerny's time, this step would be too ambitious for many. By the time he released his next magnum opus, the *Schule des Präludirens* op. 300, Czerny seems to have become aware of this problem, since he gives many more simple examples that stay closer to the original harmony. Probably to serve the very unexperienced improviser, the work opens with a page full of dominant – tonic progressions, written out in all major and minor keys. However, this is where Czerny's concern for the musically illiterate finishes; the next page gives a handful of richer cadence formulas, all of which have to be transposed by the student himself. The sample preludes that follow are of a level of difficulty that seems hard to reconcile with the utter simplicity of the first page of the book.

In the *Pianoforteschule* op. 500, Czerny is even more considerate of the beginning student. Here we read:

> Selbst der Anfänger kann und muss bereits in den ersten Monathen dazu angehalten werden, vor jedem Tonstücke ein kleines Vorspiel auszuführen, und auch hier sind die Scalenübungen das Erste und vorzüglichste Hilfsmittel.[777]
>
> [Even the beginner must already in the first months be urged to play a short prelude before every piece, and here as well, the scale exercises are the first and best tool.]

What follows is again the complete list of V^7 – I progressions; this time they are ordered according to the circle of fifths, whereas op. 300 showed them in chromatic order (such as the preludes and fugues in Bach's *Wohltemperiertes Klavier*). It looks as though this list was meant to give even the absolute beginner something introductory to play. It remains interesting from a modern pedagogical view that Czerny (and not only he, as will be shown) considered it necessary to write down such simple chords for students who, as can be seen from the chapter in the *Pianoforteschule*, should by then at least be capable of playing (diatonic and chromatic) scales and arpeggios. One suspects that members of the then booming group of amateur piano players were not always the creative musicians our time likes to imagine. It is possible to read Czerny's ops. 200, 300 and 500 as a gradual adaptation to the level of musicianship he was surrounded with.

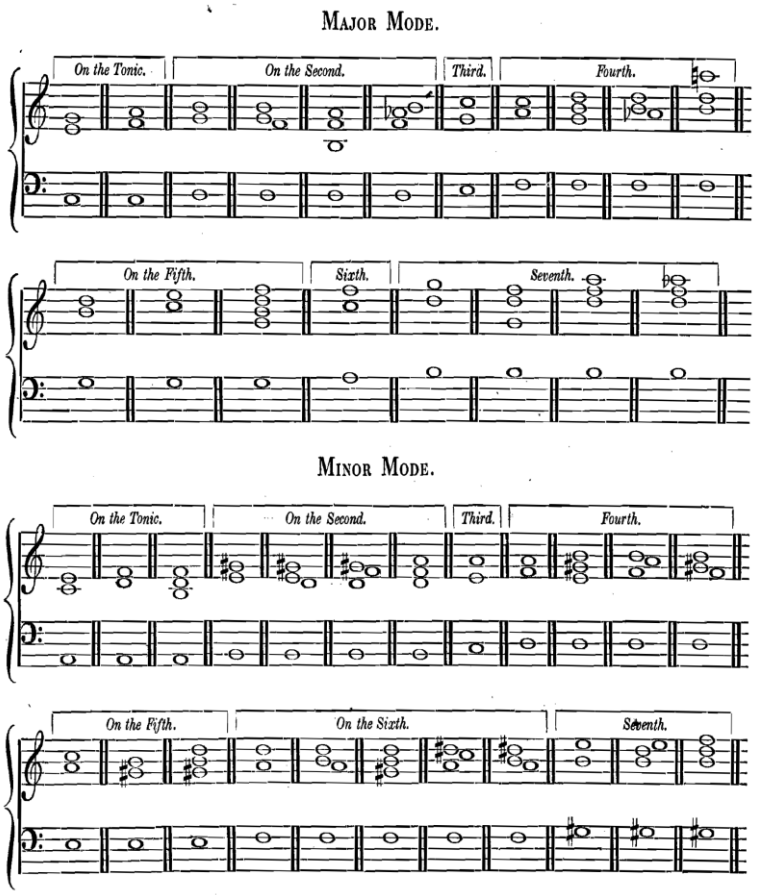
The methods that are intended for a more basic level of pianism use the ornamental prelude as a vehicle for learning elementary harmony; they are interesting sources with respect to musical training in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. Many of them start with an explanation of basics such as the names of intervals or even keys on the keyboard, followed by voice leading principles. Chords are always presented as root positions or inversions, but when it comes to the actual chord choice by the student, traces of a basso continuo-oriented approach sometimes appear.

[777] Czerny, C.: *Von dem Vortrage...* op. 500 III; 84.

In *The harp preludist* by the famous French but London-based harp player Nicholas Bochsa, for instance, the different harmonic possibilities are presented as interval constellations that may be constructed over the different bass scale degrees (see ex. 9.4.7). The student, who by then has learnt these options separately, is given the following advice:

> The Pupil will copy this Diagram, placing under each chord its proper denomination. The Master will then direct him to write a Prelude; furnishing for himself the bass as well as the upper parts, and including all the harmonics at present known to him.[778]

The musicologist Claudio Bacciagaluppi divides preluding manuals from around 1800 into 'verspätete Generalbaßschulen' and 'Papegeischulen' ['delayed figured bass-schools' and 'parrot-schools'].[779] Bochsa's approach is clearly based on figured bass pedagogy, and might be considered as anachronistic, given that the book was published around 1840. On the other hand, one might see this example (less pejoratively) as evidence of the longevity of a basso continuo approach to harmony.

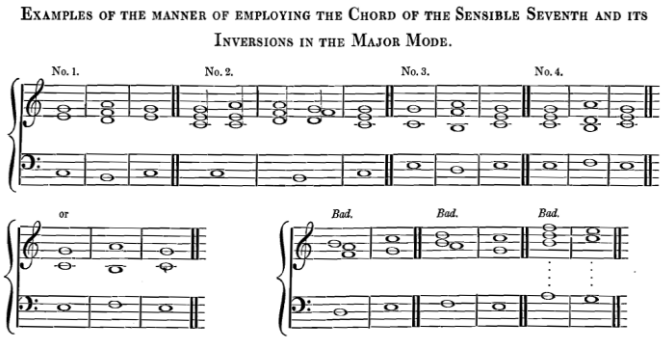


Example 9.4.7

[778] Bochsa, N.: *The harp preludist.* London, n.d. [1840]; 28.

[779] Bacciagaluppi, C.: 'Die Kunst des Präludierens'. In: Bacciagaluppi, Cl. & Brotbeck, R. & Gerhard, A. (eds.): op. cit., 175.

What the student actually learns in this book is how the different chords that are listed here occur in a voice leading context; when they are presented individually in the part of the book that precedes this table, they usually appear in examples consisting of two or three chords:[780]



Example 9.4.8

This approach gives the student tools to handle many different musical situations, thereby fostering flexibility. The flip side is that it requires familiarity with this harmonic language when creativity is desired. When an unfigured bass is provided (as is often the case in Bochsa's method), a student is able to harmonise it; when the student is improvising a prelude, however, there might be no given bass line. The tacit assumption of such pedagogy seems to be that experience with many given basses will somehow enable the student to come up with his own logical progressions. In other words: students are supposed to have become familiar with a number of harmonic loci communes. For present-day students, this can be a large problem. For them, the harmonic language of around 1800 is just one of many harmonic vocabularies between musical styles from Baroque music to pop. Students today need to be taught loci communes for this particular style.[781] This is where the category of 'parrot-schools' becomes relevant. This term refers to a large number of manuals on preluding that offer a number of musical 'ready-mades', composed building blocks that can be combined in various ways; the student is supposed to learn them by heart (and transpose them if necessary), and in this way he will be able to 'improvise' preludes. Philip Anthony Corri's *Original System of Preluding*, the fourth part of his comprehensive piano method *L'Anima di Musica*, uses this method.[782] Philip Anthony Corri, the son of Domenico Corri[783] (→ chapter 4), composed a large number of 'capos' (introductions) and 'codas' (endings), which could be combined to form an entire prelude. Corri even saved the student the trouble of transposing the fragments by writing them out in every key. In Corri's words:

[780] Bochsa, N.: op. cit., 22.
[781] Also to an experienced improviser, loci communes matter: they are a form of stylistic guidance.
[782] Corri, P.A.: *An Original Treatise upon Piano Forte Playing*. London, [1810].
[783] https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.06565

> By this means, and transposing certain preludes in different keys, the Scholar may form endless variety, and with perseverance become so habituated to passages, Arpeggios, and Modulation, that the Ear will imperceptibly guide the fingers, and direct the fancy to model preludes in various shapes.[784]

It is unlikely that an early nineteenth-century piano student needed to learn loci communes in this way, since his familiarity with this musical language may be taken for granted. Rather, I believe that books like this one must be seen as a reaction to the fast growing market of amateur pianists with a strong desire to 'play like a pro'. Several books promise the young student that the author 'shall not confuse the Pupil with its laws of avoiding octaves, fifths &c. but only give Examples for the Ear to catch' (Corri[785]), that the information will be offered 'in so new, clear, & concise a manner, as in a short time' (Bochsa[786]), or that harmony will be reduced to only two (types of) chords (André Grétry[787]). Obviously, the commercialisation of the music world is not just a phenomenon of our time.

To modern musicians, for whom early-nineteenth-century harmony has become a foreign language despite its apparent familiarity, books such as this offer valuable information. Musical building blocks are likely to be commonplace material. With respect to harmony in particular, the early piano students were provided with standard progressions that saved them 'the confusion of avoiding octaves, fifths &c.'. To us, such samples are 'loci proprii' (→ chapter 2.2) that help us defining more general loci communes.

9.5 Harmonic loci communes

In this section I will present a collection of harmonic loci communes for preluding that are based on the preluding manuals of Corri, Grétry, Czerny (op. 300), as well as one that has not been mentioned in detail yet: *L'Harmonie du pianiste* by Frédéric Kalkbrenner.[788] Kalkbrenner's book is remarkable because it is a compact harmony treatise in which almost every harmonic progression is not only given in its textbook form, but immediately applied to example figurations that may serve for preluding.

None of these manuals works from figured basses; the chords are always written out in full. In the case of Corri, this happens in only one position (according to the 'parrot-principle'), while Kalkbrenner often gives several possibilities and adds figures as well. Chords in open structure are discussed in none of the methods. For this study, I have decided to notate the progressions by means

[784] Corri, P.A.: op. cit., 85.
[785] Corri, P.A.: op. cit., 83.
[786] Bochsa, N.: op. cit., title page.
[787] Grétry, A.E.M.: *Méthode simple pour apprendre à préluder en peu de temps, avec toutes les ressources de l'Harmonie.* Paris, 1802; Avant-propos.
[788] Kalkbrenner, F.: *Traité d'Harmonie du pianiste.* Paris, 1849; facsimile reprint Amsterdam, 1970.

of figured bass, for reasons mentioned earlier (→ chapter 4.6). The term 'locus communis' is not used by these authors, but the idea seems to have been in their minds. For instance, Grétry finishes the *Méthode simple* with a table of all different formulas he has shown in his book, described in general terms. The application of this *tableau* as imagined by him comes very close to the concept of locus communis:

> J'ai souvent remarqué qu'en préludant ou en fuguant, l'élève, même d'une certaine force, est embarrassé sur ce qu'il va faire; c'est pourquoi je regarde le tableau suivant comme très-commode. En travaillant, l'élève l'aura sous les yeux; il en parcourra les chiffres, sans suite; et il se remémorera toutes ses ressources harmoniques, qu'il adaptera à ce qu'il exécute. On a laissé, à la fin de ce tableau, des numéros en blanc sous lesquels le maître peut écrire les marches de basse et les accords qui nous ont échappé.[789]
>
> [I have often noticed that even a gifted student who is improvising preludes or fugues can be embarrassed, not knowing what to do; therefore I consider the following table very helpful. The student can keep it under his eyes during practising; in his mind, he will run through the list, remembering all harmonic means, and adapt them to what he is playing. At the end of the table I left blank a couple of lines where the teacher can notate bass progressions and chords that have escaped my attention.]

Joseph Zimmermann comes even closer to conveying the idea of loci communes in his *Traité d'harmonie, du contrepoint et de la fugue* (1840):

> Les progressions harmoniques sont des séries d'accords *appartenant à tout le monde*, elles sont considérées comme des formules toutes faites que chacun emploie sans scrupule; elles sont d'un excellent usage pour préluder.[790]
>
> [Harmonic progressions are series of chords that *belong to everyone*, they are considered ready-made formulas that everybody uses without any objection; they are very useful for preluding.]

Zimmerman specifies a number of progressions that match the ones included in this section and will therefore not be repeated. About keyboard harmony, he remarks:

> En Italie l'application des règles de l'harmonie se fait sur le clavier; cette méthode est excellente pour conduire à préluder.[791]
>
> [In Italy they train the application of the rules of harmony at the keyboard; this is an excellent way to arrive at preluding.]

[789] Grétry, A.E.M.: op. cit., 89-90.
[790] Zimmerman, P.-J.-G.: *Encyclopédie du pianiste compositeur*, 3e partie: Supplement. Traité d'harmonie, du contrepoint et de la fugue. Paris [1840]; 18. The italics are mine.
[791] Quoted in Bacciagaluppi, C.: op. cit., 176.

Nine years later, Kalkbrenner's *Harmonie du pianiste* would do precisely that. Zimmerman's reference to 'Italy' is also interesting, since it alludes to the *partimento* tradition, which has become a popular field of theoretical and practical study since the appearance of Robert Gjerdingen's *Music in the Galant Style*[792] (→ chapter 2). Zimmerman was teaching at the Paris conservatoire, where the Italian influence was very strong (→ chapter 4). However, he only refers to the Italian *maestri* in these general terms. The other authors do not mention the connection with Italy at all – not even Corri, whose father was an Italian émigré. Kalkbrenner traces back the 'rule of the octave' (see below) to Johann Georg Albrechtsberger, one of the teachers of Beethoven.

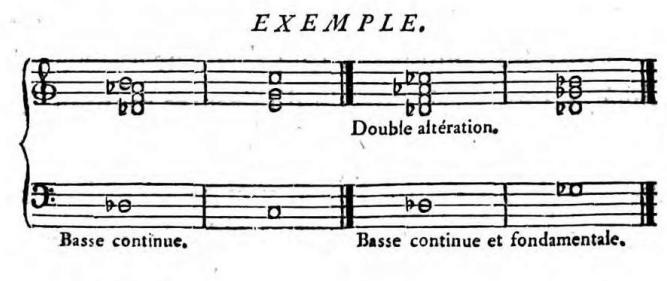
It goes without saying that no list of musical loci communes can ever be complete. The one below gives a survey of harmonical patterns as they occur in the methods mentioned above, supplemented with fragments from sample preludes in these works. Czerny hardly gives any harmonic guidance (as mentioned above), but his preludes in op. 300 in particular are harmonically rather consistent. Corri's more developed sample preludes in the second half of his book are harmonically much richer than the 'parrot' ones. In general, the harmonic patterns I discuss below were selected because of their ubiquity in many other compositions from the same period (roughly between 1795 and the1840's); in other words, I included only models that I believe to have been 'communes'. Some of the patterns Kalkbrenner shows cannot really be called common, and are therefore not on this list. (It is possible that Kalkbrenner included them mainly as voice leading exercises.) The provenance of the loci is indicated by the abbreviated names of the authors: C = Corri, G = Grétry, Cz = Czerny and K = Kalkbrenner. The patterns have been grouped and organised by their functions in a prelude: cadences, prolongations, movements from tonic to dominant, sequences, and scales. All models have been transposed to C major or a minor.

a. Cadences

The first harmonic locus communis to be mentioned is of course the authentic cadence itself, usually V^7 – I or I – V^7 – I. Czerny (in op. 300) and Corri write them out in full, covering all keys. Both Grétry and Kalkbrenner confusingly list the different forms of cadences using French Rameau-based terminology, but sometimes with a different meaning. Apart from the *cadence parfaite* (V – I), they include the *cadence imparfaite* (I – V, or Rameau's *cadence irrégulière*); the *cadence irrégulière* (V^7 – I^6, or Rameau's *cadence imparfaite*, found only in Grétry); the *cadence rompue* (V^7 – VI); and finally (both of which are found only in Kalkbrenner), the *cadence plagale* (I – IV!) and the *cadence évitée* (V – I^{b7}). Please note that Kalkbrenner's definition of the plagal cadence is very unusual; I was not able to trace it back to any other author.

[792] Gjerdingen, R.: *Music in the Galant Style*. New York, 2007.

In the perfect authentic cadences, the diatonic subdominant chord is always a IV, not a II^6. In addition, Czerny very often includes the raised fourth scale degree in the bass,[793] always with a fully diminished seventh chord. Grétry also mentions the possibility of an alteration of this chord, with a diminished 3rd replacing the minor 3rd above the root.[794] This results in the German augmented sixth chord (which typically occurs in the first inversion), and Grétry discusses the potential of this chord to be interpreted enharmonically as a dominant seventh chord. Grétry has difficulty explaining the German chord and calls it an *accord de fantaisie*. He regards it as an incomplete dominant ninth chord with a flat fifth (which serves as the bass) and the root missing; this chord 'cannot be inverted'. Nevertheless, this is an interesting early mention of the enharmonic equivalence of German sixth chord and dominant seventh (where the fundamental bass is the same as the actual bass note),[795] which would be fully explored in compositions of Franz Schubert, a few decades later.



Example 9.5.1

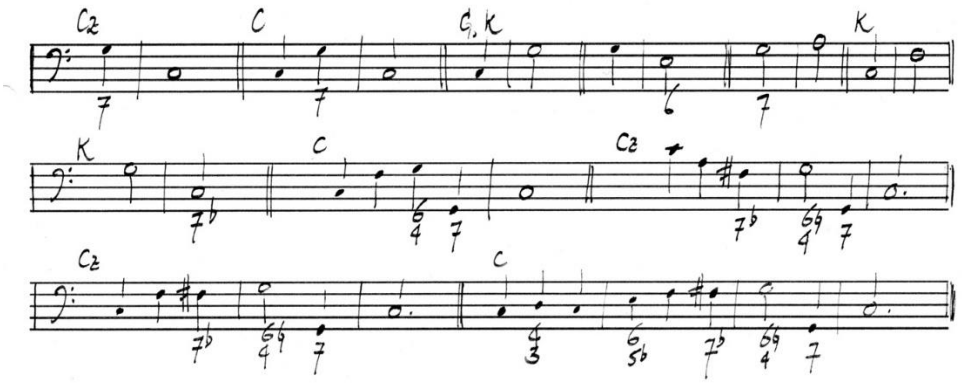
Kalkbrenner also mentions this chord (*accord de quinte et sixte augmentée*), but 'for practical reasons' regards it as being in root position and consequently shows all 'inversions' with their resolutions (some of which are actually rather unusual).[796] In the variants of cadences as they appear in these treatises, the German sixth chord does not occur. Possibly it was considered too 'special' for commonplace cadences; the fact remains that it did occur in composed music, for instance in the repeated final cadence of Robert Schumann's piano piece *Traumeswirren* op. 12 no. 7 (1837): I - $\#IV^{6/5}{}_{(d.dim)}$ - $I^{6/4}$ – V^7 – I - $\#IV^{6/5}{}_{(d.dim)}$ - $I^{6/4}$ – V^7 – I.

[793] Some readers might prefer to label this chord as a secondary VII to V.

[794] In German: *doppelt vermindeter Septakkord* ['double diminished seventh chord'].

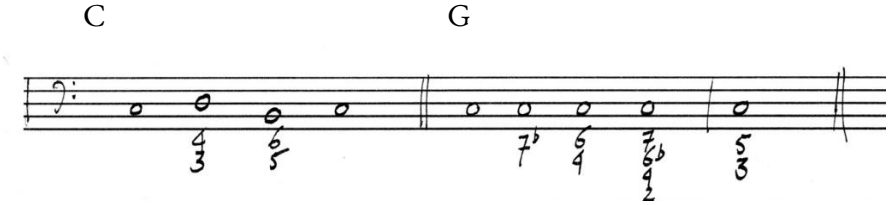
[795] Grétry, A.E.M.: op. cit., 27. Grétry notates the roots of the chords (the *basse fondamentale*) on a separate staff; he asks from the student to sing the *basse fondamentale* while playing the harmonies – an idea that might still be pedagogically interesting today!

[796] Kalkbrenner, F.: op. cit., 26-27.



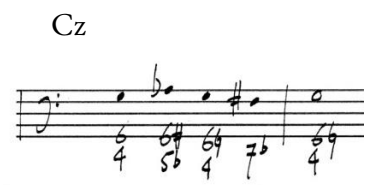
Example 9.5.2

In a prelude, chord progressions like the ones shown above may be extended by prolonging important chords – for instance, the tonic triad. Example 9.5.3 shows two tonic prolongations, the first one typical for a beginning, the second one for the end of a piece:



Example 9.5.3

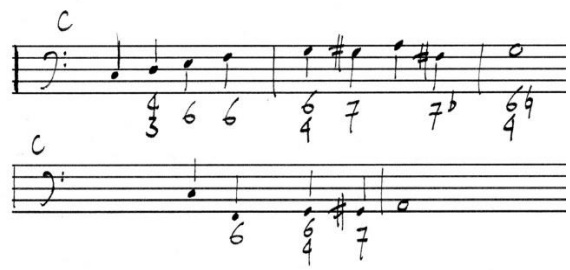
Also the cadential 6/4 chord is prone to prolongation (with the German sixth chord as a neighbour chord):



Example 9.5.4

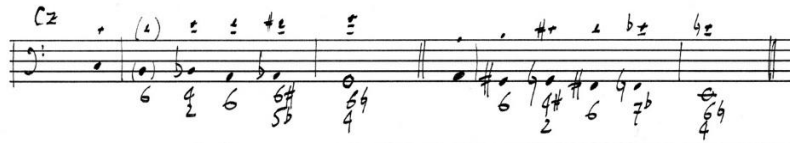
b. Tonic – dominant movement

In a longer prelude, the movement from the initial tonic to the cadential 6/4 is likely to be ornamented harmonically, often with stepwise bass-progressions. The lower of the two patterns from Corri (below) can be seen as an alternative to the top one; in fact it only ornaments the I – VI progression, and usually will be followed by (#)IV – $I^{6/4}$.



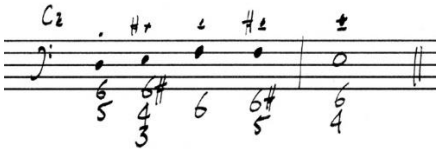
Example 9.5.5

Chromatic bass progressions are also characteristic. The little notes indicate the most appropriate upper voice – as a result of which the pattern acquires the character of a voice leading combination:



Example 9.5.6

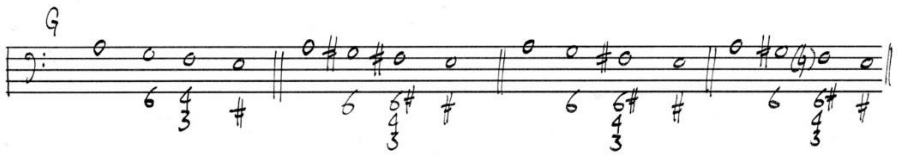
An alternative harmonisation of the latter upper voice:



Example 9.5.7

[9.5 #1 Examples 9.5.6 and 9.5.7]

In the context of his discussion of the rule of the octave in minor (see below under *d*), Grétry gives several options for the descending movement from I to V.



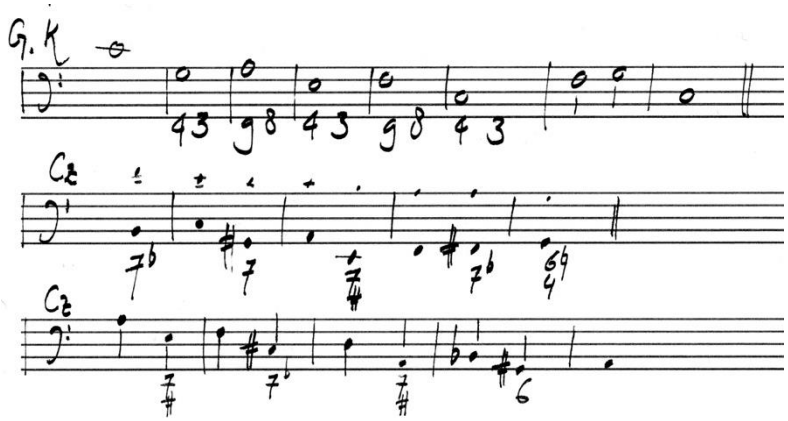
Example 9.5.8

c. Sequences

The loci communes to be mentioned in sections *c* and *d* have old roots and many of them can also be found in eighteenth-century treatises, for instance in the chapter 'Von dem Fantasiren' in Jacob Adlung's *Anleitung zu der musikalischen Gelahrtheit* (1758). The *Romanesca* ('Pachelbel-sequence') is a very old sequential model. It appeared in written form already in the sixteenth century[797] and lost little of its importance in nineteenth-century music. Both Grétry and Kalkbrenner add the

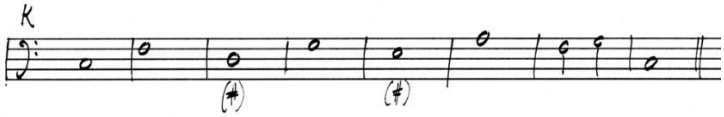
[797] Erhardt, M.: *Upon a ground.* Magdeburg, 2013; 14.

characteristic 4-3 and 9-8 suspensions. In the nineteenth century, its polyphonic origins were gradually forgotten, giving way to a harmonic interpretation. The examples from Czerny show how it is seen as a succession of deceptive cadences, basically ornamenting a falling third sequence (I – VI – IV – II) that functionally circumscribes a tonic – subdominant movement.



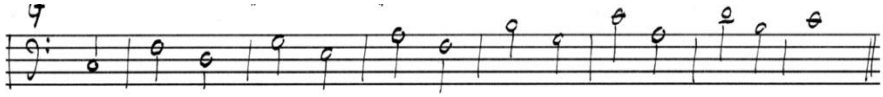
Example 9.5.9

Another well-known old model is the so-called *Monte* sequence. Kalkbrenner shows it in its most simple form; his textbook version contains no secondary dominants. In the versions with pianistic figurations, however, sometimes thirds are raised, resulting in a chromatic upper voice.



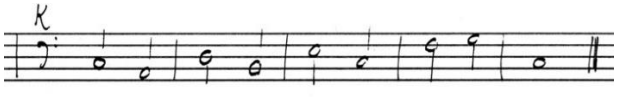
Example 9.5.10

Grétry's version is remarkable in that it continues the sequence further than usual, which occasionally results in diminished triads in root position, notably on the VII before the final I.



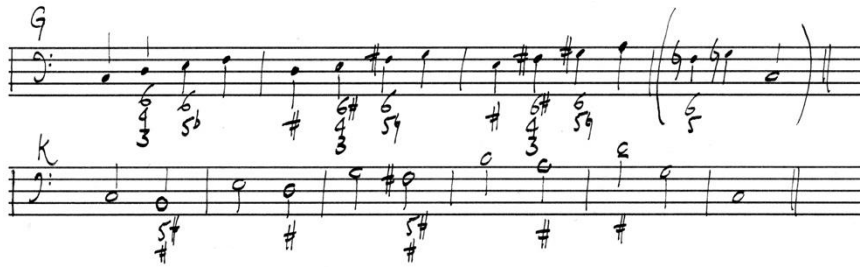
Example 9.5.11

Kalkbrenner also gives a version that reverses the metrical positions of the chords :



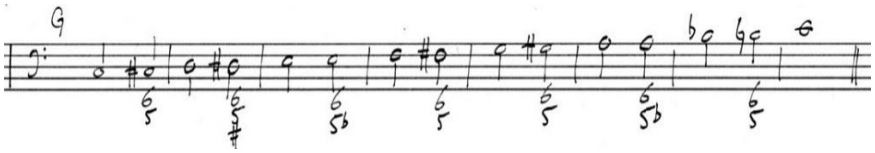
Example 9.5.12

Grétry furthermore mentions a harmonically ornamented version, and Kalkbrenner a modulating sequence that can be regarded as a reversed Romanesca:



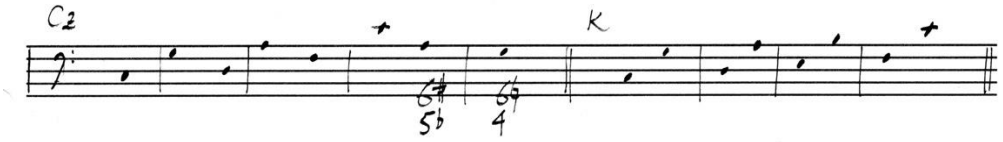
Example 9.5.13

Grétry uses the Monte sequence to harmonise a rising chromatic scale in the bass:



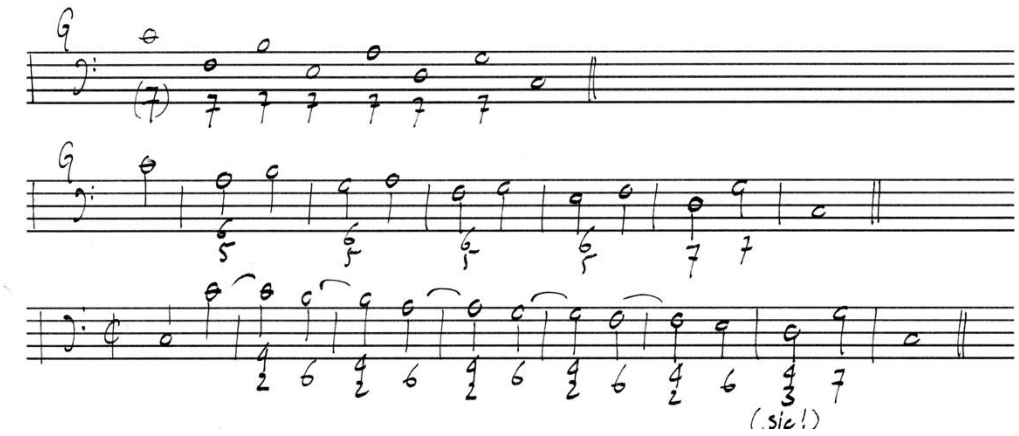
Example 9.5.14

Gjerdingen refers to Fedele Fenaroli (1770) for a description of a model that he terms 'Monte Romanesca' and that occurs in Czerny and in Kalkbrenner.[798] Schubert made frequent use of it:



Example 9.5.15

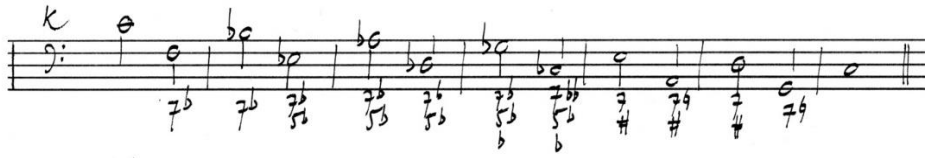
Diatonic falling fifth-sequences are mentioned in various forms:



Example 9.5.16

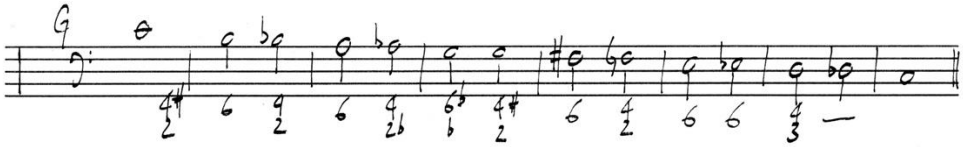
Kalkbrenner adds the chromatic version:

[798] Gjerdingen, R.: op. cit., 98.



Example 9.5.17

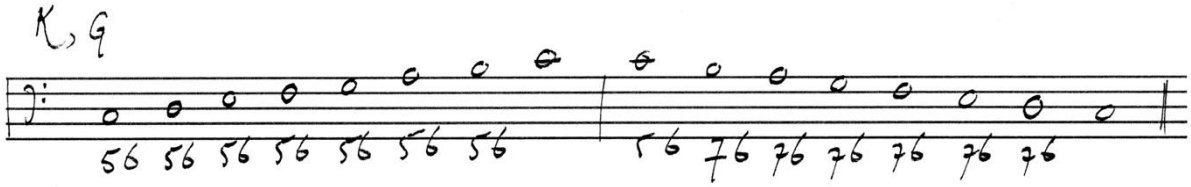
Grétry uses the chromatic falling fifth-sequence for the harmonisation of the descending chromatic scale:



Example 9.5.18

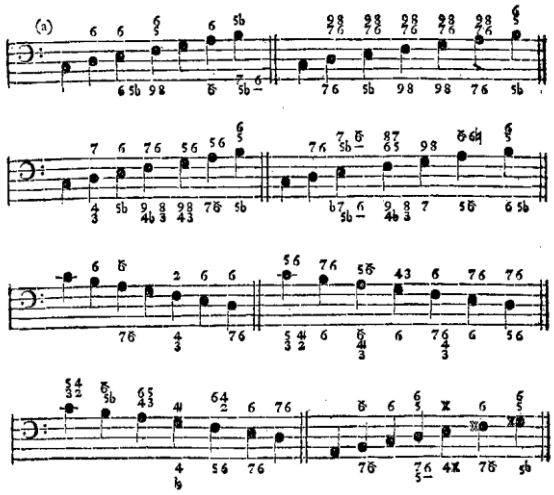
d. Scales

Both Grétry and Kalkbrenner mention the following traditional harmonisation of the major scale in the bass (the rising scale with 5-6 progressions harmonically can also be seen as a Monte sequence):

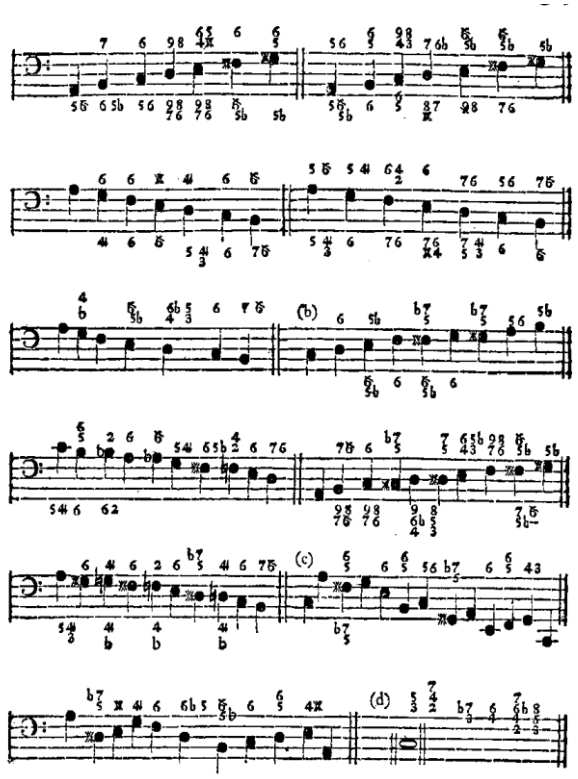


Example 9.5.19

The idea of basing a prelude on a harmonised scale in the bass was already elaborated by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, who gives several options in his *Versuch über die wahre Art, das Clavier zu spielen* (1762):[799]

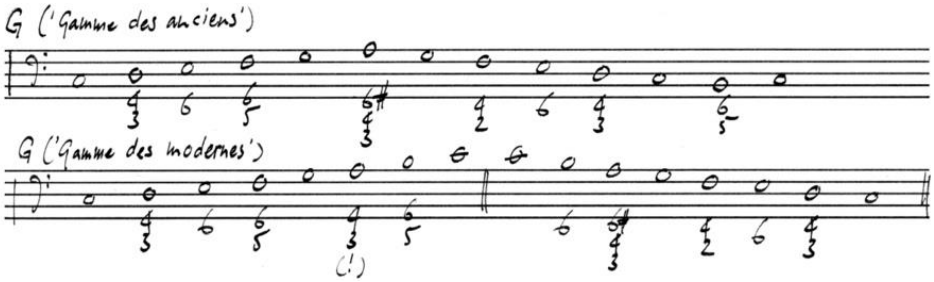


[799] Bach, C.Ph.E.: *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen*, vol. 2 (Berlin, 1762). Facsimile reprint: Wiesbaden, 1986; 328-329.



Example 9.5.20

When we compare Bach's harmonic richness with the *regola dell'ottava* [rule of the octave][800] that played such a prominent role in the *partimento*-tradition, it is striking to see how clearly defined and unified the Italian version was. The late-eighteenth-century preference for elegance, simplicity and 'naturalness', resulting in a very strong focus on the three principal degrees (I, IV and V), is also seen in Grétry's version of the rule of the octave. Remarkably, Grétry distinguishes between the 'scale of the elders' (*gamme des anciens* – basically a hexachord) and the *gamme des modernes* (the full scale). The latter in principle matches the Italian *regola dell'ottava* (with the exception of the ascending sixth scale degree, which is not harmonised with a secondary dominant).



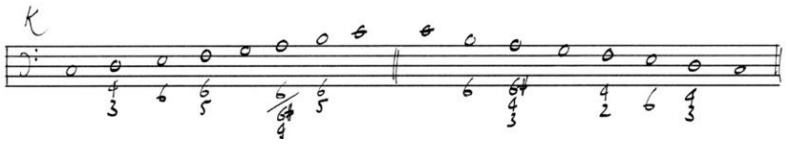
Example 9.5.21

Unlike Grétry, Kalkbrenner does use the term *règle de l'octave.* About the major scale, he writes:

[800] The 'rule of the octave' is a standardised harmonisation of the ascending and descending diatonic scale in the bass.

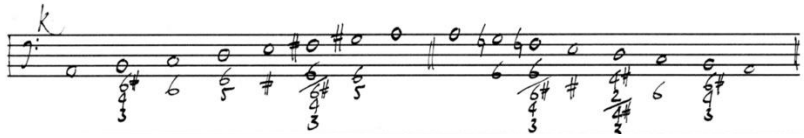
> Je n'ai jamais pu m'expliquer pourquoi la gamme du mode majeur ascendante, ne détermine pas le ton de sol, comme elle le fait en descendant. Je le préfère beaucoup.[801]
>
> [I have never been able to understand why the rising major scale doesn't move towards the key of G major, like it does when it descends. I prefer that very much.]

Both variants are included here, separated by a slash:



Example 9.5.22

For the minor scale as well, Kalkbrenner 'asks permission to suggest a small alteration' that would break the *fastidieuse monotonie* [dreadful monotony] of the rule of the octave 'as it has been given to us by Albrechtsberger *et les anciens*'.[802] Both versions are again separated by slashes here:



Example 9.5.23

Apparently the clarity of late-eighteenth-century harmony increasingly felt like a straitjacket during the course of the nineteenth century, and more and richer harmonic variants were added to the rule of the octave. At the same time, it is striking that authors of texts on preluding nevertheless keep falling back on old models such as the Rule in its original diatonic version. Also Zimmerman mentions the rule of the octave in great detail, adding the following comment:

> Il faut encore joindre aux marches que nous venons d'indiquer la règle d'octave; elle est encore plus féconde en ressources pour préluder. On la saura également par cœur et on la jouera aux 3 positions[803] dans tous les tons majeurs et mineurs.
>
> On appelle règle d'octave l'échelle diatonique dont chaque note reçoit l'accord qui lui est propre.
>
> On comprend qu'en préludant on n'est pas tenu de faire entendre cette gamme dans son intégrité en montant et en descendant, on pourra l'employer par fragment et en la variant de mille manières. Quand

[801] Kalkbrenner, F.: op. cit., 30.
[802] Kalkbrenner, F.: op. cit., 31.
[803] This is a clear distinction from 'parrot-schools' in which just one notated form was to be memorized.

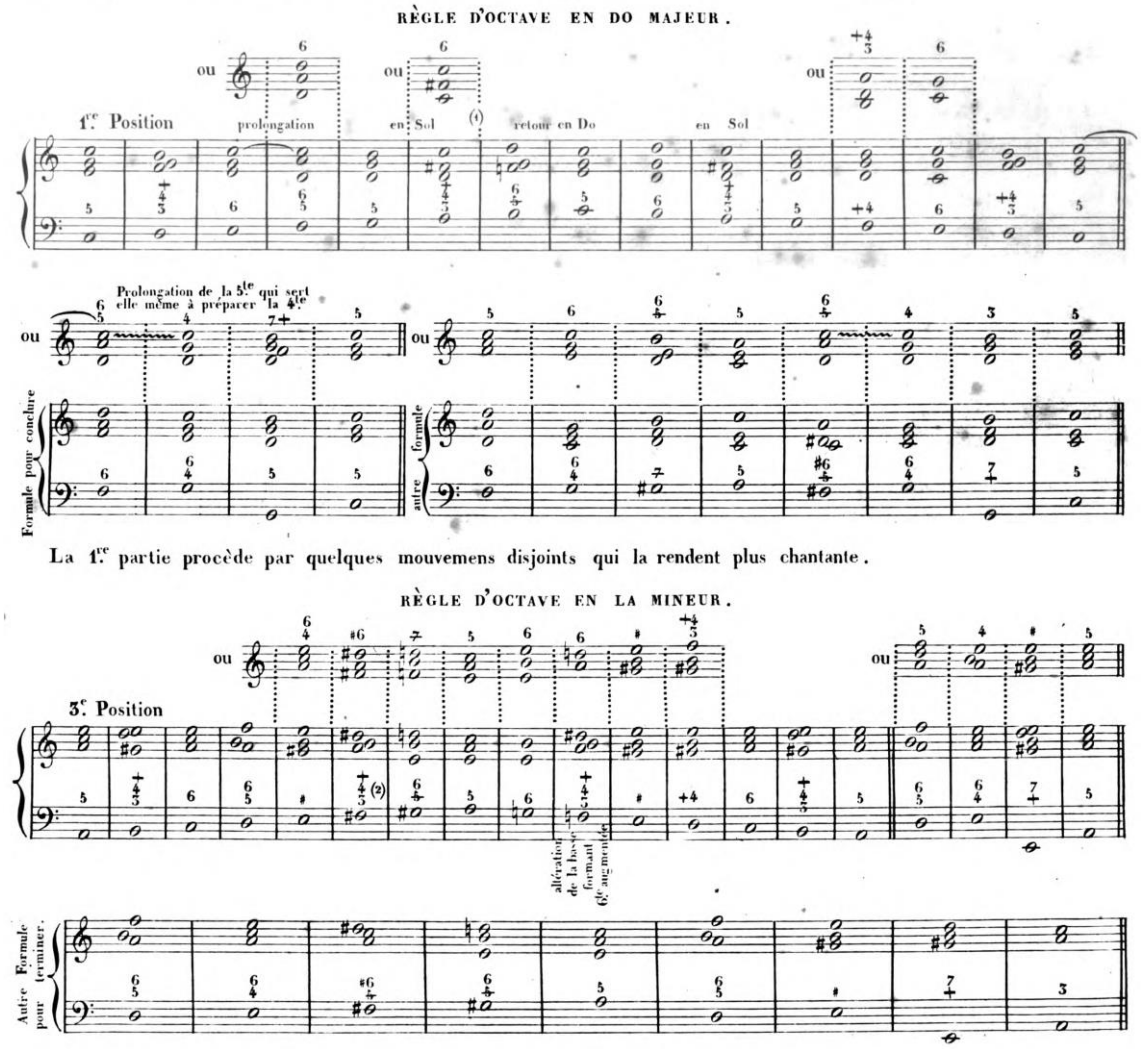
on se sera familiarisé avec la règle d'octave, les doigts auront pris une habitude instinctive, d'amener sur chaque degré de l'échelle l'accord qui convient, ce qui est un immense avantage.[804]

[To the progressions we have mentioned we should add the rule of the octave; it is even richer in resources for preluding. It has to be known by heart as well, and one should play it in three positions through all major and minor keys.

What is called the rule of the octave is a diatonic scale of which every note gets the appropriate chord.

It is clear that, when preluding, one is not obliged to play this scale in its entirety, ascending and descending; it can be used by fragments, varying it in a thousand ways. When one has become familiar with the rule of the octave, the fingers will have acquired the instinctive habit to let every degree of the scale be accompanied by the suitable chord, which is an enormous advantage.]

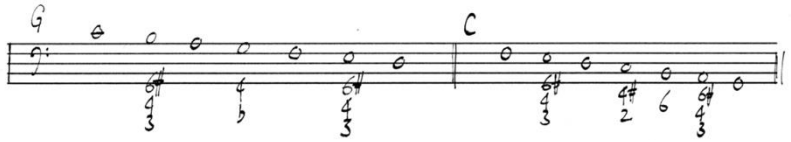
Zimmerman adds more variants, which justifies a reproduction of his overview in full:



Example 9.5.24

[804] Zimmerman, J.: op. cit., 19.

Finally, two alternative scale harmonisations by Grétry and Corri may serve to conclude this section:



Example 9.5.25

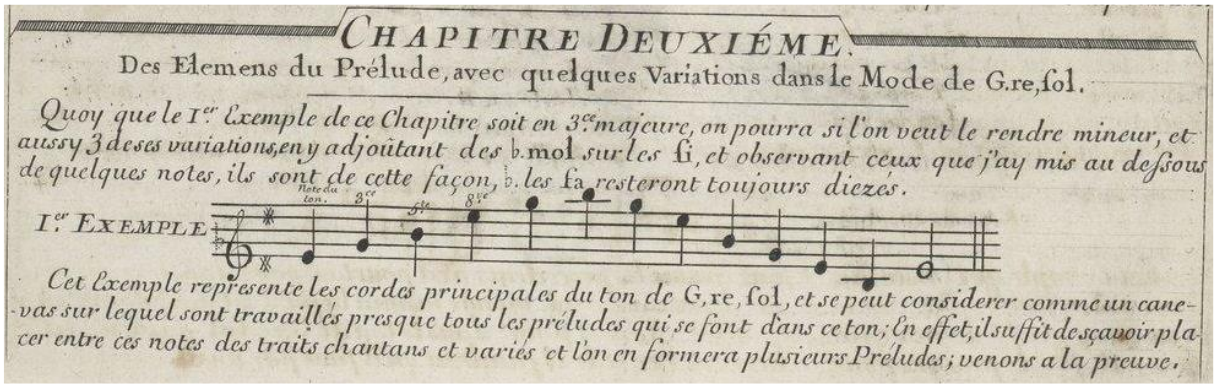
Note that Grétry's is basically a sequence of descending thirds, connected by secondary dominants.

9.6 Figuration

The brilliant style

In the nineteenth century, an ornamental prelude was one of the few types of music entirely determined by the harmonic content. In Baroque music, variations on a ground showed a similar organisation, and the same can be said about ornamentation. The latter, however, occurs on the level of one chord or, at the most, a phrase, whereas an ornamental prelude is a complete piece. Still, the connection with ornamentation is significant, as will be shown. As soon as thematic or melodic elements come in, the balance starts to shift: no longer is the harmony the undisputed motor of the piece, since the melody will claim its place.

In this section, the focus will be on ornamental preluding on basis of harmonic loci communes as mapped out in the previous section. The basic idea of ornamenting a tonic triad had already been clearly explained in *L'Art de préluder* (1719) by Jacques Hotteterre. Hotteterre shows how a woodwind prelude is nothing more but 'playing around' the tonic triad:[805]



CHAPITRE DEUXIÉME.

Des Elemens du Prélude, avec quelques Variations dans le Mode de G.re, sol.

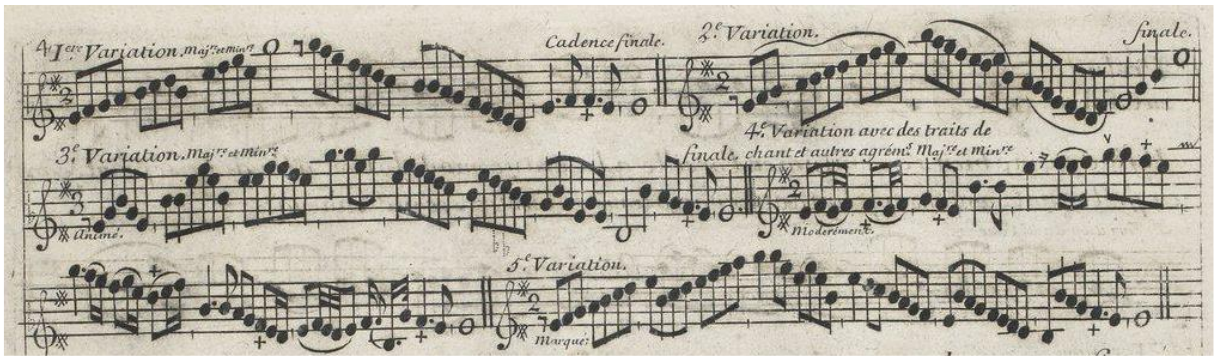
Quoy que le 1.er Exemple de ce Chapitre soit en 3.ce majeure, on pourra si l'on veut le rendre mineur, et aussy 3 de ses variations, en y adjoûtant des b. mol sur les Si, et observant ceux que j'ay mis au dessous de quelques notes, ils sont de cette façon, b. les fa resteront toujours diezés.

1.er EXEMPLE

Note du ton. 2.de 3.ce 8.ve

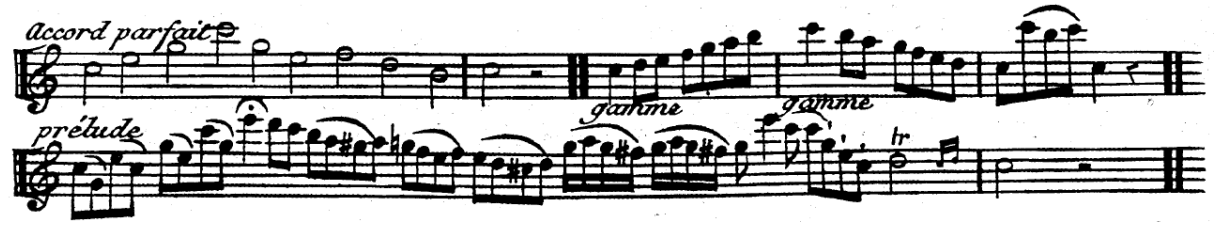
Cet Exemple represente les cordes principales du ton de G, re, sol, et se peut considerer comme un canevas sur lequel sont travaillés presque tous les préludes qui se font dans ce ton; En effet, il suffit de sçavoir placer entre ces notes des traits chantans et variés et l'on en formera plusieurs Préludes; venons a la preuve.

[805] Hotteterre, J.: *L'Art de préluder*. Paris, 1719; 3-4.



Example 9.6.1

The mechanisms he shows will remain valid for nineteenth-century preludes as well: the chord serves as a 'canevas', a pattern (or, literally, a canvas) on which scales and arpeggios can be improvised. Both are guided by the chord; the arpeggios are always based on it, and the scales tend to have the members of the chord (explicitly designated by Hotteterre as the root (*note du ton*), third, fifth and octave) as their extremes or turning points. Eighty years later, the Flemish musician Armand Vanderhagen would approach the topic in a very similar way in his *Nouvelle méthode de flute*:[806]



Example 9.6.2

Especially in late eighteenth-century Vienna, a virtuosic and florid style developed that featured extensive passage work (often scale-based) on a relatively slow harmonic rhythm. Mozart's music is an early example of this style, and his student Johann Nepomuk Hummel,[807] among others, developed it into a style that became known as 'the brilliant style': graceful, elegant, and often virtuosic. This style was highly fashionable during the first decades of the nineteenth century, and it forms an important context for Czerny's work. Already at that time, though, it was severely criticised by many, notably 'serious' composers such as Schumann, who could write sarcastically about empty-headed virtuosity. Viewed from that perspective, it is surprising that Beethoven had considered subtitling his *Kreutzer* sonata 'in the brilliant style', a qualification he withdrew later.[808]

[806] Vanderhagen, A.: *Nouvelle méthode de flute.* Paris, [1799]; 66.

[807] That is to say: Hummel was eight years old when he was offered lessons by Mozart, and remained his student for about two years.

[808] Coppola, C.: 'Didacticism and display in the capriccio and prelude for violin, 1785-1840.' In: Borio, G. & Carone, A. (eds.): *Musical Improvisation and Open Forms in the Age of Beethoven*. London, 2018; 149.

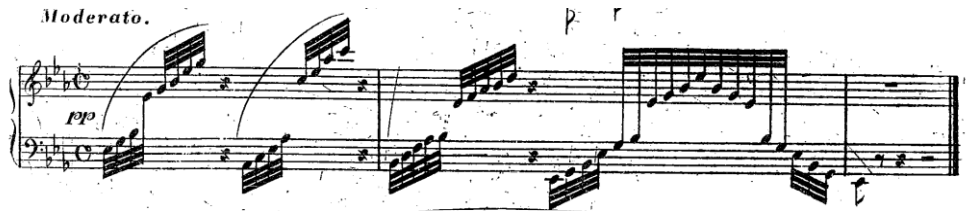
While the work of such 'serious' composers has become part of the musical canon, compositions in the brilliant style have largely fallen into oblivion. We are facing two ironies of historically informed performance practice here. The first one is that we are relatively well informed about the nature of early-nineteenth-century preluding, especially on the piano. Indeed, it should be possible to come up with more or less faithful style-imitations in this genre, were it not that few musicians today are really interested in the brilliant style. The other irony is that amid today's hyper-specialisation in music we see an idealisation of the nineteenth-century pianist-composer – not least in higher music education, where concerns about the need for a more inclusive type of musicianship are paramount. However, the qualification 'pianist-composer' applies first and foremost to the generation of virtuosos who traversed Europe in the early nineteenth century. Pianists with a solo career such as Kalkbrenner and Thalberg were supposed to perform compositions of their own making during recitals. Public concerts had a high entertainment value at that time; subtleties as found in the music of Beethoven, Schubert or Schumann were not expected from the pianist-composer, but rather virtuosic brilliancy and fantasies on famous opera tunes. In his autobiography *Aus meinem Leben* (1894),[809] Eduard Hanslick emphasises the differences between the period before the 1848 revolution (the *Vormärz*) and the second half of the nineteenth century. He depicts the *Vormärz* as a kind of cultural infancy, and he regards composer/virtuoso pianists as definitely belonging to that distant world. It is true that many of the greatest nineteenth-century composers played the piano very well – but they rarely had careers as virtuosos.

However, there are a few exceptions: virtuosos whose compositions are still important and for whose work the brilliant style is highly relevant. The music of Hummel, for example, is enjoying a certain revival; most strikingly, though, the relevance of the brilliant style is especially apparent in the work of Chopin and Liszt. Chopin in particular was indebted to the brilliant style, as can be seen in early compositions such as the *Fantasy on Polish Airs* op. 13. He managed to incorporate virtuosic brilliancy within his highly personal style with its melodic lyricism and harmonic richness. In this way, Chopin can be said to have transformed the brilliant style into something new that has never ceased to move music lovers up to the present day.

Figuration in ornamental preludes

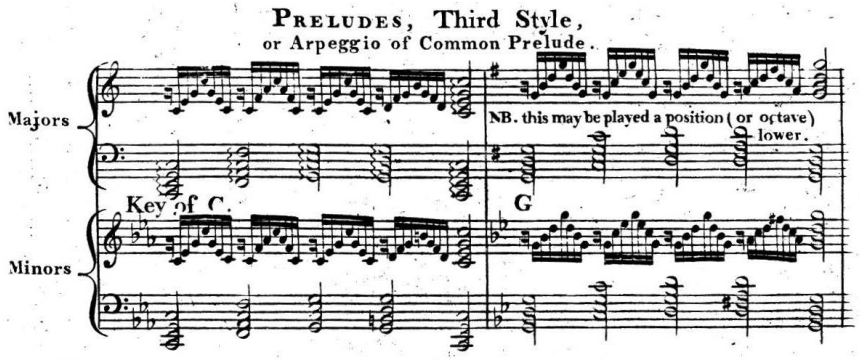
How did preluding manuals teach adding figuration to a harmonic progression? On the piano, the easiest way – and therefore the first step – was to arpeggiate the chords. Czerny gives an example:[810]

[809] Hanslick, E.: *Aus meinem Leben* (Peter Wapnewski, ed.). Kassel, 1987.
[810] Czerny, C.: *Von dem Vortrage...* op. 500 III; 90.



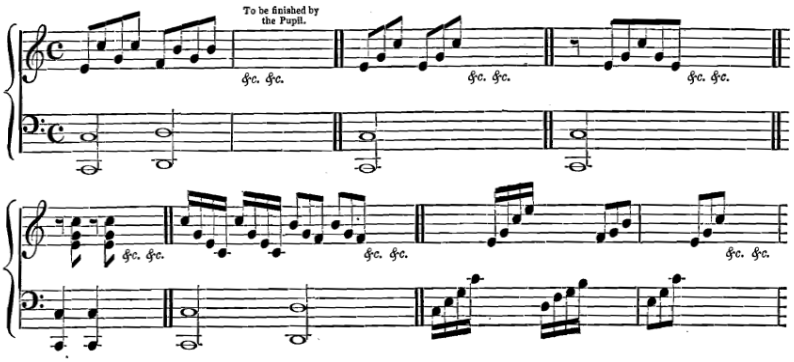
Example 9.6.3

Corri's first 'parrot'-preludes consist of arpeggiations as well, albeit more primitive:[811]



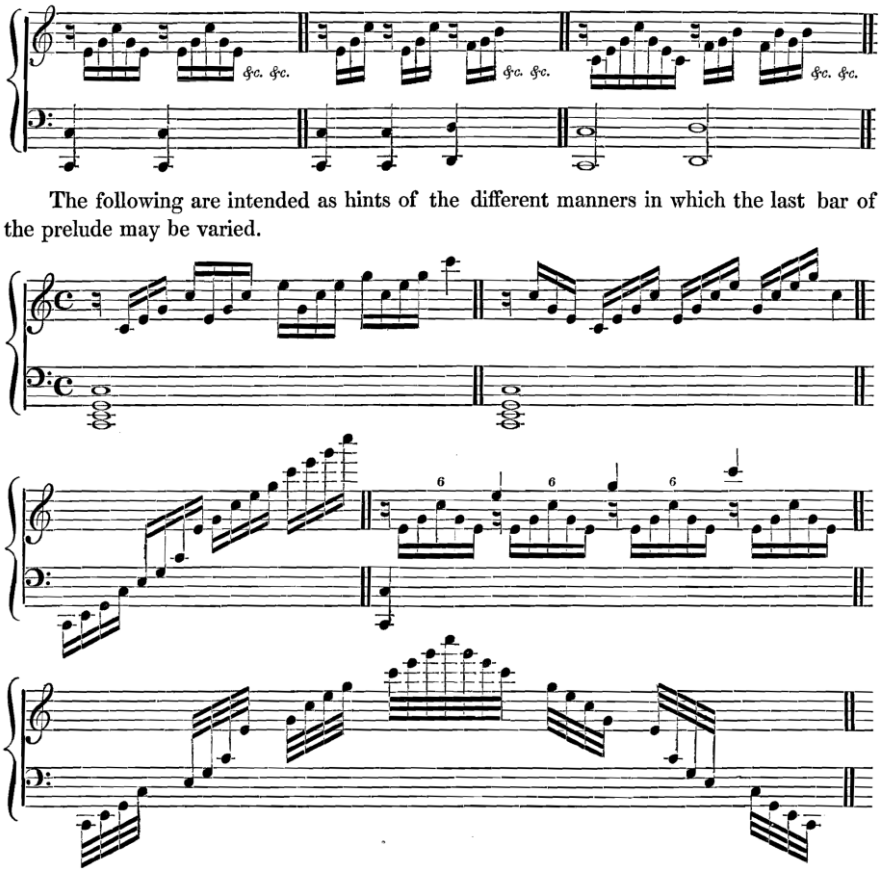
Example 9.6.4

Grétry pays extensive attention to harmony, but his figuration hardly ever goes beyond such arpeggiations! Bochsa's *Harp Preludist* teaches the student various ways of arpeggiation (examples 9.6.5 and 9.6.6):[812]



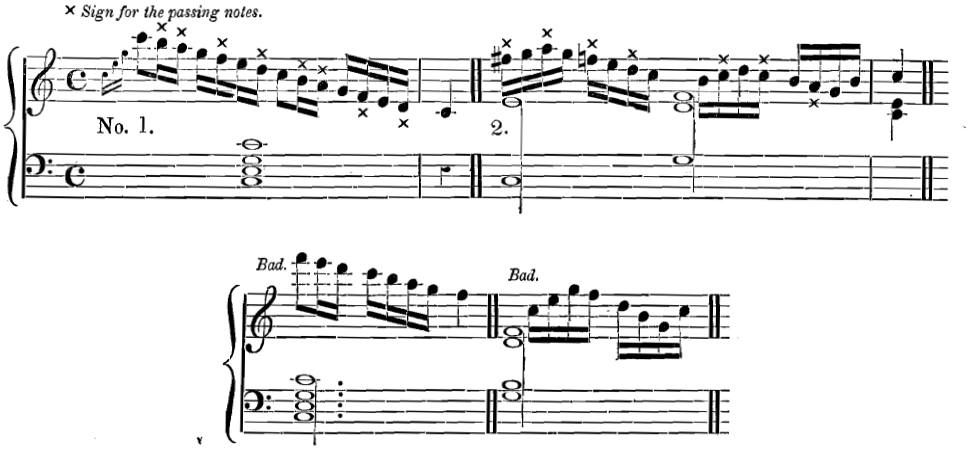
Example 9.6.5

[811] Corri, P.N.: op. cit., 87.
[812] Bochsa, N.: op. cit., 16-17.



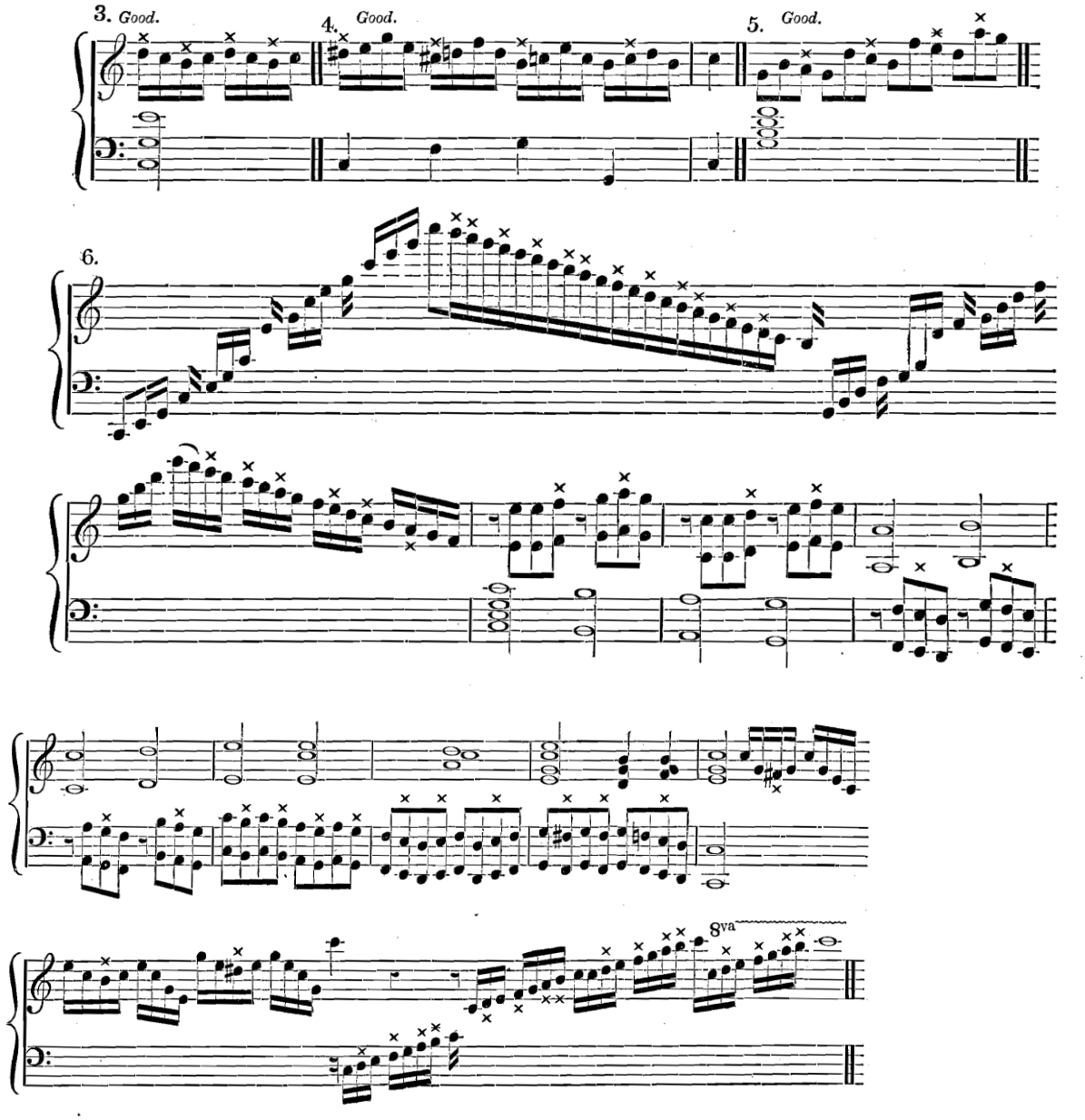
Example 9.6.6

Not only in his treatment of arpeggiations, but also when it comes to scale-like patterns, Bochsa is the most methodical of the authors mentioned. He explains the phenomenon of embellishing notes (using the term 'passing note' throughout) and gives examples of different situations in which such patterns might appear:[813]



Example 9.6.7

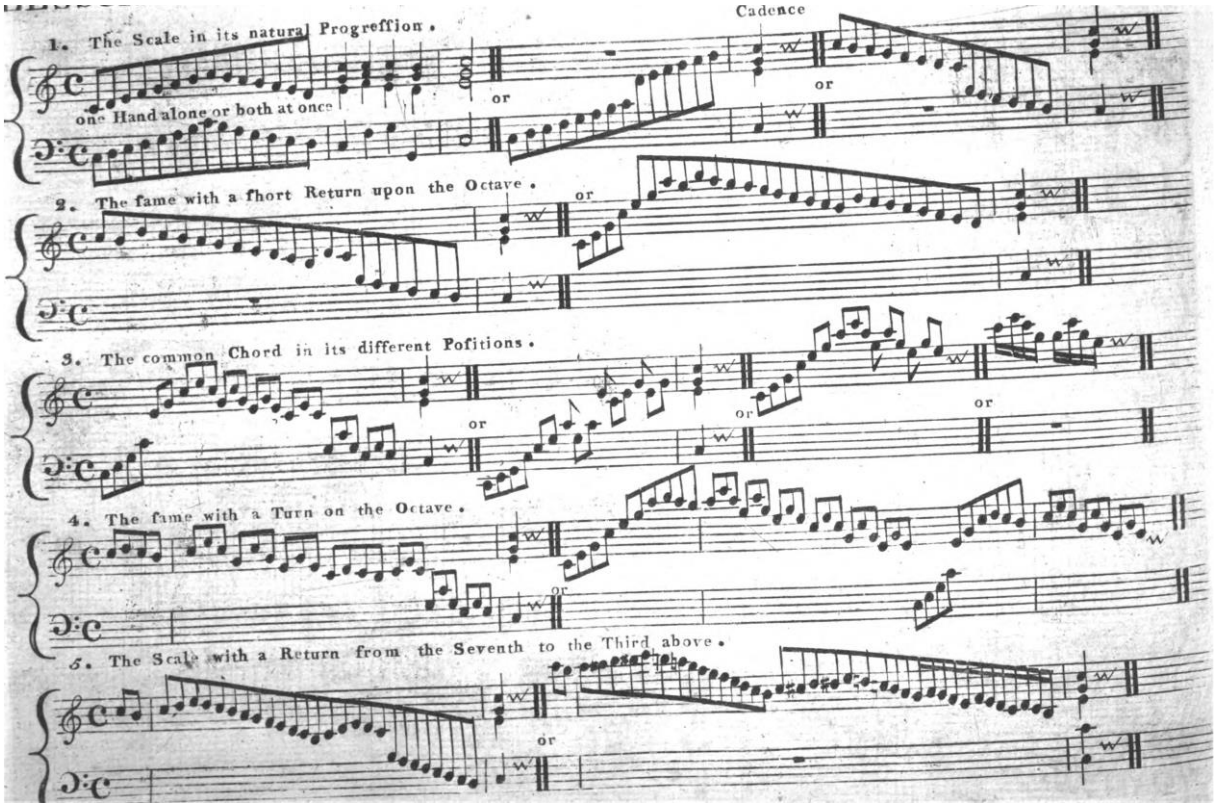
[813] Bochsa, N.: op. cit., 38.



Example 9.6.8

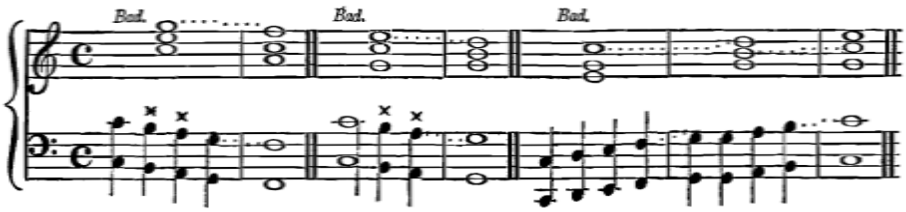
Likewise, Kollmann shows different figurations over a single chord:[814]

[814] Kollmann, A.F.: op. cit., 8.



Example 9.6.9

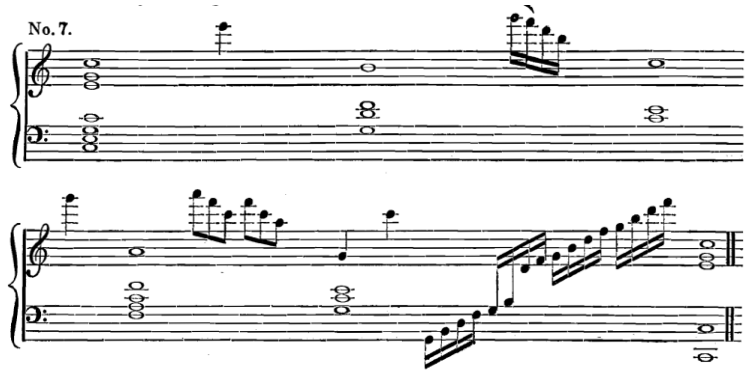
Bochsa even pays attention to parallel octaves and fifths that might occur as a result of passing notes that have been added to a chord. (The offending parallels are shown with dotted lines in his example.)[815]



Example 9.6.10

Then Bochsa gives a first exercise to apply all this (as he calls it) 'scientific information'[816] – an exercise that would still make a lot of sense today. He not only provides a harmonic skeleton, but also shows where the melodic line should change direction, sometimes adding an idea for figuration.[817]

[815] Bochsa, N.: op. cit., 39
[816] Bochsa, N.: op. cit., 49
[817] Bochsa, N.: op. cit., 39.



Example 9.6.11

A method like Bochsa's looks comprehensive enough – for a nineteenth-century student, that is. As for arpeggiations, he gives an elaborate survey; however, the scale-based patterns remain rather unspecified. Again, this might have been enough for a nineteenth-century student who could be expected to be familiar with melodic ornamental loci communes. The 'explanation' of embellishing notes, for instance, is of a kind that only has value when the student is already acquainted with similar patterns: it makes him aware of certain qualities of material that is familiar to him. A present-day musician doesn't have this internalised stock of loci communes. Nineteenth-century students probably did; the question, however, remains how and where they learned them. A part of the answer might be that they familiarised themselves intuitively with a range of patterns since this was the music they heard and played every day. As was demonstrated in section 9.5, several authors nevertheless presented a comprehensive set of harmonic loci communes, and in so doing they organised the available intuitive knowledge. Why didn't this happen with figuration?

The role of technique

Before this question can be answered, ornamental loci communes have to be identified. For this research project, an attempt has been made to collect melodic models as they can be found in ornamental preludes for piano. A large number of virtuosic runs in sample preludes by Czerny, Clementi, Cramer, Herz, Hummel, Kalkbrenner, Moscheles and others were examined, and this survey revealed a common denominator of melodic conventions that, indeed, may be called ornamental loci communes. Three things became quickly obvious: (1) the ornamental loci in preludes are not different from patterns in written-out ornamentation to melodies in compositions, or in composed cadenzas; (2) basically the same ornamental loci occur in music for almost any instrument, including vocal music; (3) ornamental loci strongly resemble standard technical exercises. In response to conclusions (1) and (2), other compositions with features of the brilliant style were included in the comparison as well.

Conclusion (3) gave rise to experiments with conservatory students (pianists and other instrumentalists): if the loci communes resemble technical exercises, it should be not too difficult for

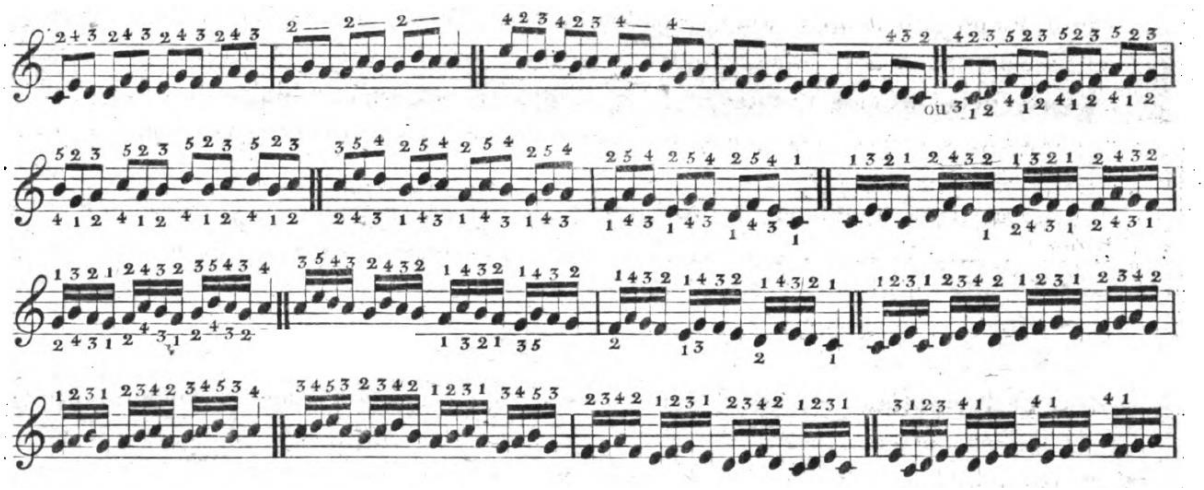
the students to improvise a short ornamental prelude on a given harmonic progression, assuming they would be familiar with their own technical exercises. After trying this out in classes and workshops at several institutes across Europe, I realised that reality is different. Many students were unable to fulfill even Czerny's most modest demands. There might be several reasons for this. First of all, I noticed that many lacked the musical drive to come up with such a prelude. This confirms what was written in the previous section: the brilliant style hardly appeals to most musicians nowadays. Improvising music that one does not like is an almost unfulfillable task. It might also be true that to many musicians, technique is something almost disconnected from music – which contributes to the negative attitude mentioned above. Another reason, though, is that in many cases the level of technical training – in the sense of a mastered body of standard exercises such as scales, arpeggios, etc. – was not sufficient to be able to adapt such material to the concrete harmonic situation of the (given) harmonic skeleton. When teaching workshops abroad and in my home institution, I have made it a habit to inquire (informally) about the practising habits of students, especially whether they practise technical exercises as a matter of course. My impression is that to many students nowadays, 'technique' is something they did when they were younger, or something they feel guilty about because they think they should practise it more often, or something their teacher leaves up to them – in short, something that is not a part of their daily practising routine.

To be sure, the situation differs according to the instrument, as does the content of what one calls 'technique': playing long tones for instance is not a technical issue on a piano but of fundamental importance to wind players, and transposing a scale means something different to a singer than it does to a violinist. Also, there are of course differences between individual musicians. In general, however, the predominant approach to practising technique in modern classical music-making seems to be that separate technical exercises are at the most seen as a kind of musical gymnastics, something that helps a musician to remain in shape and that should preferably take as little time as possible; developing technical skills for the majority almost exclusively happens by way of practising repertoire. It is an attitude that logically results from the *Urtext*-paradigm: if the performance ideal is to approach the most 'perfect' rendering of a composition as closely as possible, than this is where the focus will be.

In chapter 4 about bel canto, I showed how even well into the nineteenth century, vocal training mainly consisted of technical exercises. A similar picture arises from the history of instrumental teaching. This is obviously a huge topic that cannot be discussed sufficiently here, but a few examples from the history of (especially) piano teaching may serve to sketch a picture.

The early nineteenth century produced a large number of piano methods. It is risky to pronounce upon the ratio of the study of piano repertoire to practising technique purely on basis of published methods. Nevertheless, some interesting facts emerge when different methods are compared. Early

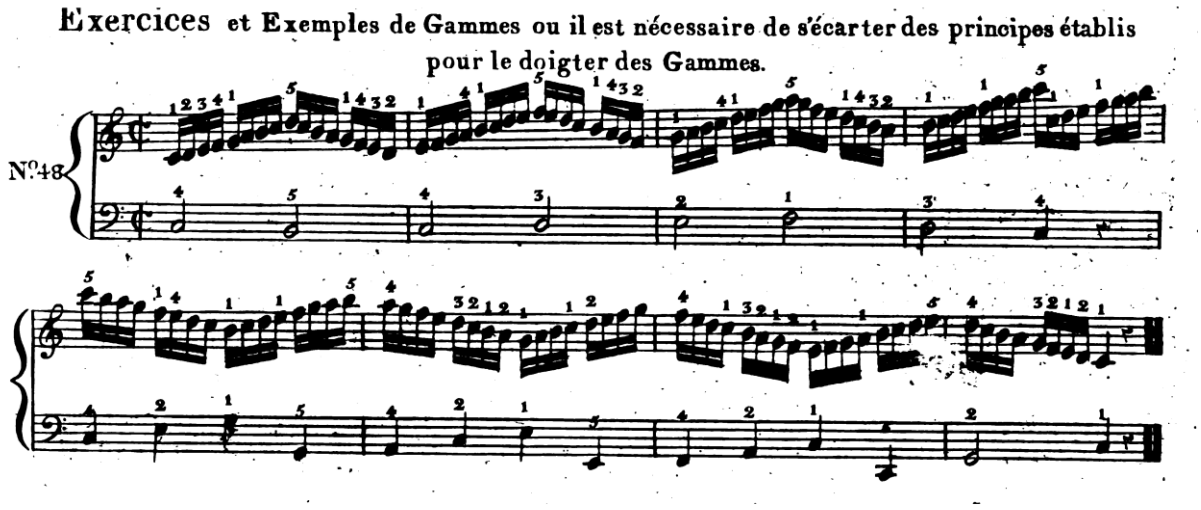
piano methods tend to pay a lot of attention to fingering; usually, they provide a large number of sample patterns with fingerings, rather than focusing on the general principles. Louis Adam's *Méthode de piano du Conservatoire* (1804) organises such passages in a way that is very similar to the vocal exercises in e.g. García's *L'Art du chant*, that is, as sequences on a diatonic scale. Exercises such as the following ones could even have been taken from García's book (ex. 9.6.12). Adam fills 15 large pages with such exercises for both hands. Similar (though shorter) lists of *Passagen* can be found in other well-known methods such as the *Méthode pour le pianoforte* of Ignaz Pleyel and Jan Ladislav Dussek (1797), Muzio Clementi's *Introduction to the Art of Playing the Pianoforte* (1801) or Johann Baptist Cramer's *Instructions for the Piano Forte* (1804).[818]



Example 9.6.12

As in the preluding manuals, scales and arpeggios are two fundamental categories. These basic patterns are also moulded into sequences. The following example illustrates this:[819]

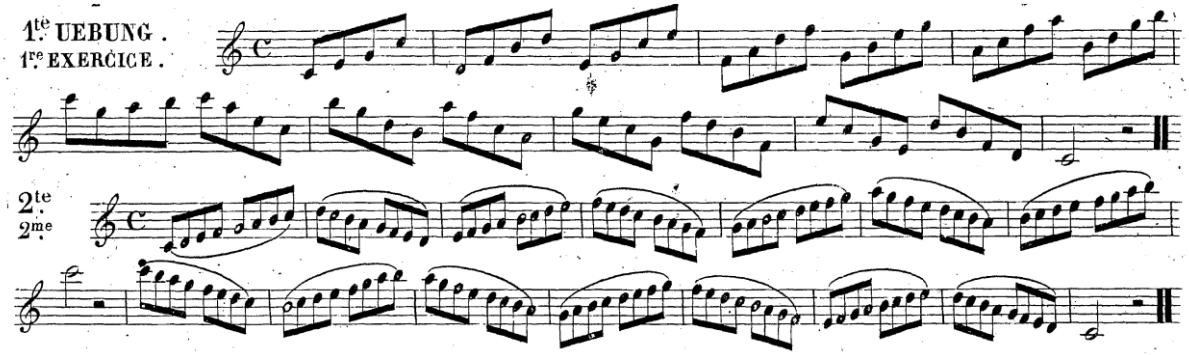
[818] Adam, L.: *Méthode de piano du Conservatoire.* Paris, 1804; 67.
[819] Adam, L.: op. cit., 29.



Example 9.6.13

The great value of an exercise such as this one is that the scale is not only practised from tonic to tonic, as usually happens in standard scale exercises. By starting on every tone of the scale, this exercise prepares much better for situations as they may occur in 'real life', situations that will call for adaptations in the standard fingering (precisely as Adam writes: 'ou il est nécessaire de s'écarter des principes établis pour le doigter des gammes' [in which it is necessary to deviate from the established fingering principles for scales]). Beethoven's sketchbooks also contain comparable exercises, though they are probably meant for private use.[820]

Baillot's influential violin method also uses the same approach already for elementary exercises. This fact only reinforces the impression that musical training on any instrument, including the voice, to a large extent consisted of systematically practising a repertoire of patterns; as will be shown, this repertoire perfectly matches the ornamental loci communes that can be distilled from notated ornamental structures in compositions. The following exercises by Baillot, for instance, could also be found in any piano of vocal method:[821]



Example 9.6.14

[820] See for instance Derry, S.R.: *Beethoven's Experimental Figurations and Exercises for Piano* (unpublished diss.). University of Manchester, 2012; 296-297.
[821] Baillot, P.: op. cit., 37.

Czerny devotes the entire second volume of his *Pianoforte-Schule* op. 500 to fingering. The book consists of an endless list of patterns, referred to by Czerny as *Passagen und Übungen* (passages and exercises). This combination of terms describes in a nutshell the view of that time: passages (ornamental musical material) could serve as exercises, and vice versa. It recalls the close connection between preludes and etudes (→ section 9.1). Czerny himself considered the passages from the second volume of the *Pianoforte-Schule* as material for preluding, as can be seen from the following remark in the chapter 'Über das Präludieren' in the third volume (following examples of preludes, based upon simple scales and arpeggios):

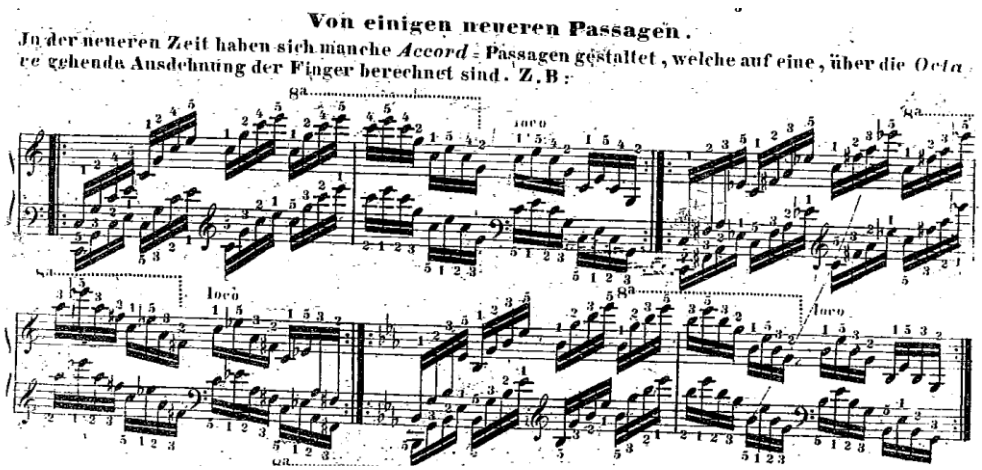
> Wenn der Schüler bereits eine bedeutende Fertigkeit erlangt hat, so kann er, anstatt diesen Scalenpassagen, andere interessantere auf dieselbe Weise benützen, wozu er im 2ten, vom Fingersatz handelnden Theile dieser Schule, in den praktischen Übungen hinreichenden Stoff findet.[822]
>
> [When the pupil has already acquired enough proficiency, he can use in the same way other ones that are more interesting, instead of these scale passages; in the second volume of this school that deals with fingering he will find adequate material.]

The idea that exercises were at the same time musical material demands from us a rethinking of the concept of a technical exercise. Technique was not something disconnected from music-making, but was rather a part of it. Passages could have real musical value and were subject to fashion and change. A telling instance of this mindset is the following remark in the second volume, under the heading 'Von einigen neueren Passagen' [About some newer passages]:

> In der neueren Zeit haben sich manche *Accord*-Passagen gestaltet, welche auf eine, über die *Octave* gehende Ausdehnung der Finger berechnet sind.[823]
>
> [More recently some chord-passages have developed that are intended for a stretch of the fingers beyond the octave.]

Czerny uses the impersonal form 'haben sich gestaltet', suggesting that the new passages were not associated with any particular composer, but rather were considered as a new fashion. Furthermore, his remark shows that there could be something new and exciting about a specific pattern. It recalls the world of the early virtuosos who could be famous for their personal 'inventions', soon to be imitated by others, like Thalberg with his 'third hand technique'.[824] The example Czerny gives was used (and possibly introduced) nine years before by Chopin: it is the pattern of his etude op. 10 no. 1.[825]

[822] Czerny, C.: *Von dem Vortrage* ... op. 500 III; 86.
[823] Czerny, C.: *Von der Fingersetzung*... op. 500 II, 89.
[824] Thalberg developed a texture in which the melody appeared in the tenor range, to be played with the thumbs of both hands alternatingly, surrounded by arpeggios in both hands; it sounded as if the pianist had three hands.
[825] Czerny, C.: *Von der Fingersetzung*... op. 500 II, 89.



Example 9.6.15

This, then, is an answer to the question that concluded the previous section: there was probably no need in methodical works to show the student ornamental loci communes because they already were the basic material of any training. This, incidentally, was nothing new; it is generally acknowledged that up to then, all vocal and instrumental training worked in this way, and in fact it is still like that in jazz. It is a way of training that presupposes something crucial: that the student practices his 'licks' with the intention of using them creatively. Improvisational preluding and ornamenting was a perfect vehicle for this. In the second half of the nineteenth century, both ornamental preludes and free ornamentation disappeared. A collection such as Anton Schmoll's *300 préludes* (1898), intended as an incentive to improvised preluding, may be regarded as an extremely late (and indeed stylistically old-fashioned) example; its range of ornamental patterns is, however, only a shadow of what can be found in similar books from the beginning of the century.[826] Kalkbrenner's complaint in the introduction to *L'Harmonie du pianiste* – 'Combien parmi nos meilleurs Pianistes en est-il, qui puissent faire un prélude, tant soit peu satisfaisant?'[827] [How many of our best pianists are able to produce a somewhat satisfactory prelude at all?] – might be more than just a selling point for his book; he was writing this at a moment when at least ornamental preluding had been in decline already for some time. Indeed, Kalkbrenner's examples on basic harmonic patterns, however rich they may be pianistically, have in fact already moved away from the brilliant style.

By 1850, Czerny's 'neuere Passagen' must have already been a familiar part of the pianistic vocabulary, and the brilliant style something with at most historical value. Musical style had moved on, and a growing emphasis on composed music and on the individual originality of musical works (which, in the understanding of that time, corresponded with compositions) made the ornamental flourishes from the first decades of the nineteenth century seem pale and commonplace. The direct connection between technique and musical material may have become less strong in the course of

[826] Schmoll, A.: *300 Préludes dans tous les tons majeurs et mineurs.* Paris, [1898].
[827] Kalkbrenner, F.: op. cit., 1.

the nineteenth century. However, this does not mean that an approach to technique as seen in much education today had replaced the old way of training. In her memoirs, Eugenie Schumann gives a valuable insight into the aesthetic principles of her mother, Clara Schumann. With respect to Clara's view of piano technique and its relationship to repertoire, Eugenie writes:

> Brahms sowohl als auch meine Mutter waren der Ansicht, daß man Fingerfertigkeit und vor allem einen festen Fingersatz an Übungen lernen müsse, damit man beim Studium der Stücke das Augenmerk sofort auf die musikalische Erfassung richten könne.[828]
>
> [Both Brahms and my mother were of the opinion that dexterity of the fingers, and especially a solid fingering, should be acquired through exercises, so that, when practising pieces, one could concentrate immediately on the understanding of the music.]

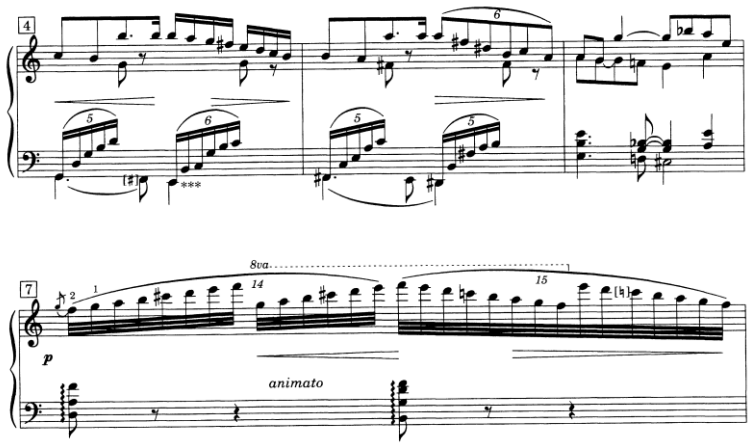
Apparently, for Clara Schumann (one of the most famous musicians of her time) virtuosity was to be developed in a general sense, so that it could be applied in the performance of compositions – or in improvising. Eugenie writes passionately about her memories of her mother's practising. Clara started the day with an hour of technical exercises, every time according to the same plan, and yet every time new, *wie aus geheimen Quellen geschöpft* [as if she drew from secret sources].

> Wie Meereswogen brausten die Tonleitern, an- und abschwellend, gebunden und abgestoßen, in Oktaven, Terzen, Sexten, Dezimen und Doppelterzen, manchmal in einer Hand allein, während die andre begleitende Akkorde spielte, dann Arpeggien aller Art, Oktaven, Triller, alles im lebhaftesten Zeitmaße ohne die geringste Unterbrechung, in herrlichen Harmonien von einer Tonart in die andre übergehend.
>
> [The scales roared like the waves of the sea, swelling and ebbing away, legato and staccato, in octaves, thirds, sixths, tenths and double thirds, sometimes in only one hand, with the other one playing accompanying chords; then all sorts of arpeggios, octaves, trills, everything in a very brisk tempo and without any pause, passing from one key into another with exquisite harmonies.]

She calls her mother's technical training *ein wunderbar vergeistigtes Kunstgebilde* [a wonderfully spiritualised piece of art], and mentions a visitor who compares her with Paganini, who was said to be able to move the listeners to tears with just a scale. The children often begged their mother to write down such a practising session, but Clara declined, saying that it was impossible for her to record this way of free improvising ('diese Art von freiem Phantasieren festzuhalten').[829] As it turns out however, she eventually gave in and wrote down several preludes, including some that provide a picture of how such a practising session might have started out.[830] The following fragment, for instance, shows a

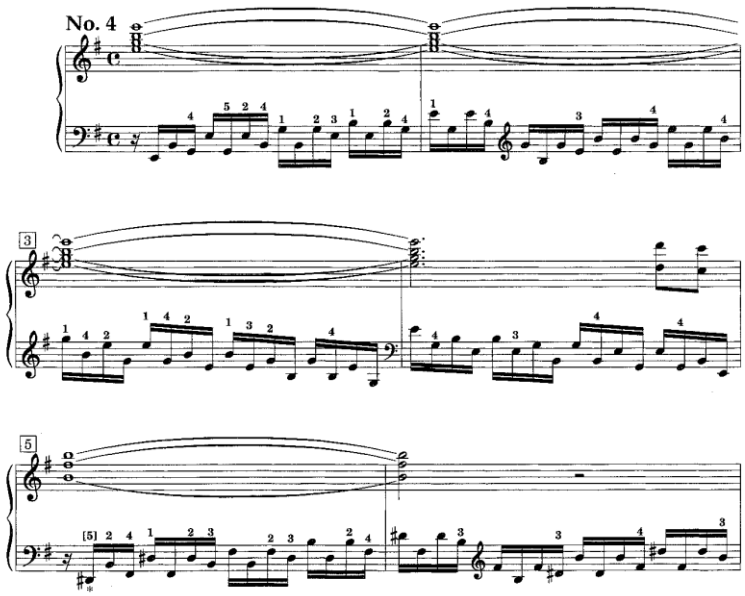
[828] Schumann, E.: *Erinnerungen*. Stuttgart, 1927; 266.
[829] Schumann, E.: op. cit., 33-34.
[830] Handwritten note by Marie Schumann, dated 1929, on the autograph; quoted in: Schumann, Cl.: *Preludes, Exercises and Fugues* (ed. by Valerie Woodring Goertzen). Bryn Mawr, 2001; [introduction]. The preludes Schumann eventually notated were not intended for publication. Thanks to Cynthie van Eijden for pointing out this edition to me.

moment where the texture changes from gentle wider arpeggios to fast *gammes lancées*, both harmonically supported by falling fifth sequences.[831] It is easy to imagine this as a 'warming-up prelude', possibly to be followed by more extensive scale exercises in both hands.



Example 9.6.16

An impression of her improvised chord exercises is given by seven technical preludes in the same collection. The harmonic models resemble the harmonic loci communes in chapter 1.4.2; the accompaniment can also be in the right hand, as in the following example:[832]



Example 9.6.17

[831] Schumann, Cl.: op. cit., 36.
[832] Schumann, Cl.: op. cit., 27.

Eugenie writes that she never heard her mother practising slowly, bar by bar. As a child, Clara had already conquered all technical difficulties, and she had grown up with the compositions of Chopin, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Liszt, Thalberg and Henselt.

> Neu für sie waren nur die Sachen von Brahms, und auch bei diesen konnte sie immer gleich an die Gestaltung gehen, ohne sich mit Vorübungen aufhalten zu müssen. Und so tief drang sie in den Geist eines jeden Werkes ein, daß sie ihr sozusagen in Fleisch und Blut übergingen; sie lagen wie Spiegelungen auf dem Grunde ihrer Seele, und zog sie sie hervor, so erschienen sie stets wie neu geschaffen. Sie übte meist ohne Noten, und ich erinnere mich einzelner Gelegenheiten, wo sie mir, als ich während des Übens in ihr Zimmer kam, zurief, ich möge ihr das Stück, welches sie gerade spielte, heraussuchen, sie müsse etwas nachsehen.[833]
>
> [New were for her only the things of Brahms, and also there she could always immediately start with the creation, without having to linger over preparatory exercises. So deeply did she penetrate into the spirit of every work, that they as it were passed into her flesh and blood; they lay like reflections on the bottom of her soul, and when she pulled them out, they seemed to have been created newly. Usually she practised without scores, and I remember a few occasions, when I entered her room when she was practising, and she called at me, begging me to find her the piece she was just practising because she wanted to check something.]

The remarks about Clara Schumann practising without a score suggest that she applied the so-called 'mental practising', a method that dates back to Czerny student Theodor Leschetitzky, and that was propagated in the twentieth century by (among others) Walter Gieseking and Louis Kentner.[834] In mental practising, a piece of music is at first learnt by heart in great detail, just by reading the score and imagining the music, but without touching the instrument. If Eugenie's report is correct, Clara Schumann's way of learning a score must have been radically different from how many pianists today learn a new composition. It is usual nowadays that a pianist (or any musician) gets to know a piece while mastering any technical difficulties the score contains. The result is that the idea of the piece, as it takes shape in the mind of the musician, tends to be influenced by the struggle for technical mastery; studying a piece of music easily becomes striving for a predetermined sense of perfection. It takes a very high level of musicianship to be able to 'forget' about technical obstacles and to approach the score anew. Schumann, on the other hand, seems to have consciously separated technical and musical mastery. If the stories are true, she hardly needed to practise 'slowly, bar by bar': she had acquired a general ability to handle any situation, and could technically do whatever she wanted. This put her into an incomparably free position towards any composition she would perform – a freedom that was only enhanced by her mental practicing, which enabled her to truly 'improvise' with a score – or without one.

[833] Schumann, E.: op. cit., 35.
[834] Kentner, L.: *Piano.* London, 1991; 88.

Clara Schumann's approach to technique, as described by her daughter, can be characterised as a transformation of early-nineteenth-century pedagogy; the direct musical application of ornamental patterns as training material might have become less relevant to her, but what had remained was the truly musical value of practising technique. The mastery of the instrument was acquired and maintained by means of a body of 'commonplace' patterns such as scales, arpeggios and trills in endless variants; compositions did not serve as practise material but as *Vortragsstücke* (literally 'performance pieces'), with an emphasis on their rhetorical and communicative qualities. Just like an actor does not practise his language skills by means of a play he is studying, a musician did not 'misuse' (my qualification) a *Meisterwerk* for developing his technique. It is this attitude that enables a musician to internalise a compositional creation, to make it his own, and to deliver it with improvisatory freedom, 'wie neu geschaffen'. As mentioned before, it is also an attitude that makes possible *das freie Fantasieren* – precisely as Czerny demanded in his *Anleitung*.

It must be said that all this might sound fairly idealistic to modern ears. Indeed, without taking anything away from Clara Schumann's genius, her approach seems more realistic for repertoire that is still based upon a common ground of technical difficulties than for pieces that have a more individual relation with virtuosity. Can one master Scriabin's late sonatas, Ravel's *Gaspard de la nuit* or Stravinsky's *Trois mouvements de Pétrouchka* in this way? I doubt it, and this may explain why modern pianism is as it is. Nevertheless, I propose to seriously consider the benefits of Schumann's approach. Already in the nineteenth century, there was a tension between the then usual way of practising and certain new pieces that did not quite fit the standard models of virtuosity – witness the initial reactions to compositions such as Beethoven's and Brahms's violin concertos, which were initially considered to be unplayable. The 'modern' approach (if the reader allows me the generalisation) might be more effective here: the said concertos are nowadays standard study material in conservatories. What we should be aware of, though, is that the 'old' way also had a tremendous advantage that we have lost: it facilitated an improvisatory approach to music-making.

A personal note may conclude this section. When I started to improvise more frequently during piano recitals, I was struck by a sudden insight with respect to pianistic virtuosity. I realised that I managed to play all kinds of fast scales, arpeggios and octaves in a technically convincing way, whereas I would certainly have spent many hours practising such passages when they had occurred in a composition I was learning. This experience seriously made me think about what we are actually doing when we are practising a piece. There is no simple answer to this question, but it surely takes a lot of time to internalise a composition, to make it our own and to arrive at the same level of 'urgency' as when we are improvising. I argue that regaining an understanding of instrumental technique like Clara Schumann's will not only enable a musician to improvise technically demanding music, but also to develop a more sovereign attitude vis-à-vis the score.

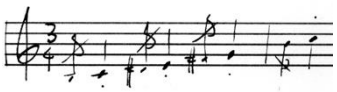
A dictionary of ornamental patterns

This section discusses a 'dictionary of ornamental patterns' that can be found in its complete form in the appendix to this study. It is basically a listing of ornamental loci communes, taken from compositions in the brilliant style, including the early works of Chopin. One source of ornamental material is the scale as such; in the brilliant style, such scales could be very extended, especially on the piano with its constantly increasing range. Scales are not included in the dictionary because it focuses on a different category: small-scale patterns. The vast majority of ornamental passages in compositions in the brilliant style can be analysed as an ornamented version of a rising or descending arpeggiated triad or dominant seventh chord, which is why the list is organised according to these categories. The list is organised quantitatively; the first patterns ornament each note of the triad or dominant seventh chord with only two notes, a number that gradually increases up to six.

The purpose of the dictionary is to show patterns as loci communes, not as specific instances of concrete situations. An attempt has been made to preserve a certain generality. The chosen notation therefore does not intend to be an exact representation of the rhythm: the beams only indicate the grouping of notes. Thus the following notation:

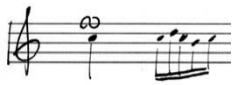
Example 9.6.18

may rhythmically also be interpreted as follows:



Example 9.6.19

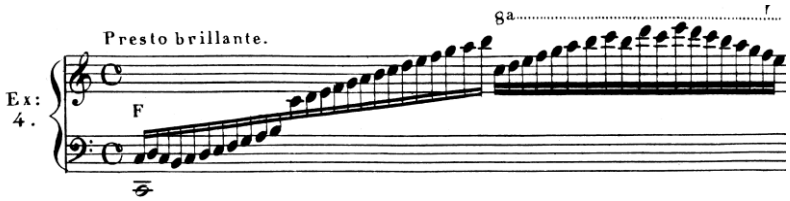
A basic way of ornamenting, prolonging, or simply marking a single tone is the turn, as such an old embellishment (*gruppetto, Doppelschlag*):



Example 9.6.20

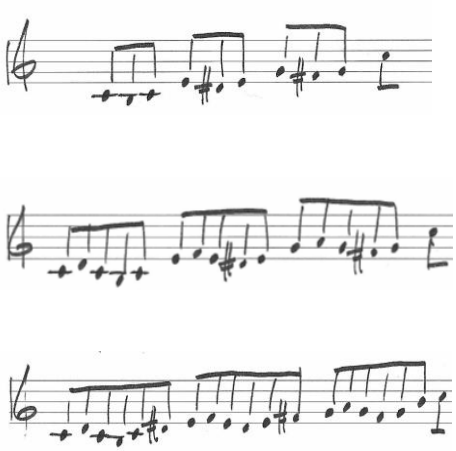
By the early nineteenth century, it had become common for the lower neighbour in the turn to be a leading tone for the main note, even when that main note is not the tonic scale degree. The upper neighbour occurs usually according to the scale (*leitereigen*). Typically, a long ascending scale passage would start with a turn on the first note:[835]

[835] Czerny, C.: *Systematische Anleitung* ... op. 200; 6.



Example 9.6.21

The turn often forms the basis of an ornamental pattern, be it in abridged, complete or extended form:



Example 9.6.22

It goes without saying that for practical use such sequences may be continued or abridged at will; all examples in the dictionary found in the Appendix are notated in C major or a minor, but may of course be transposed to any key.

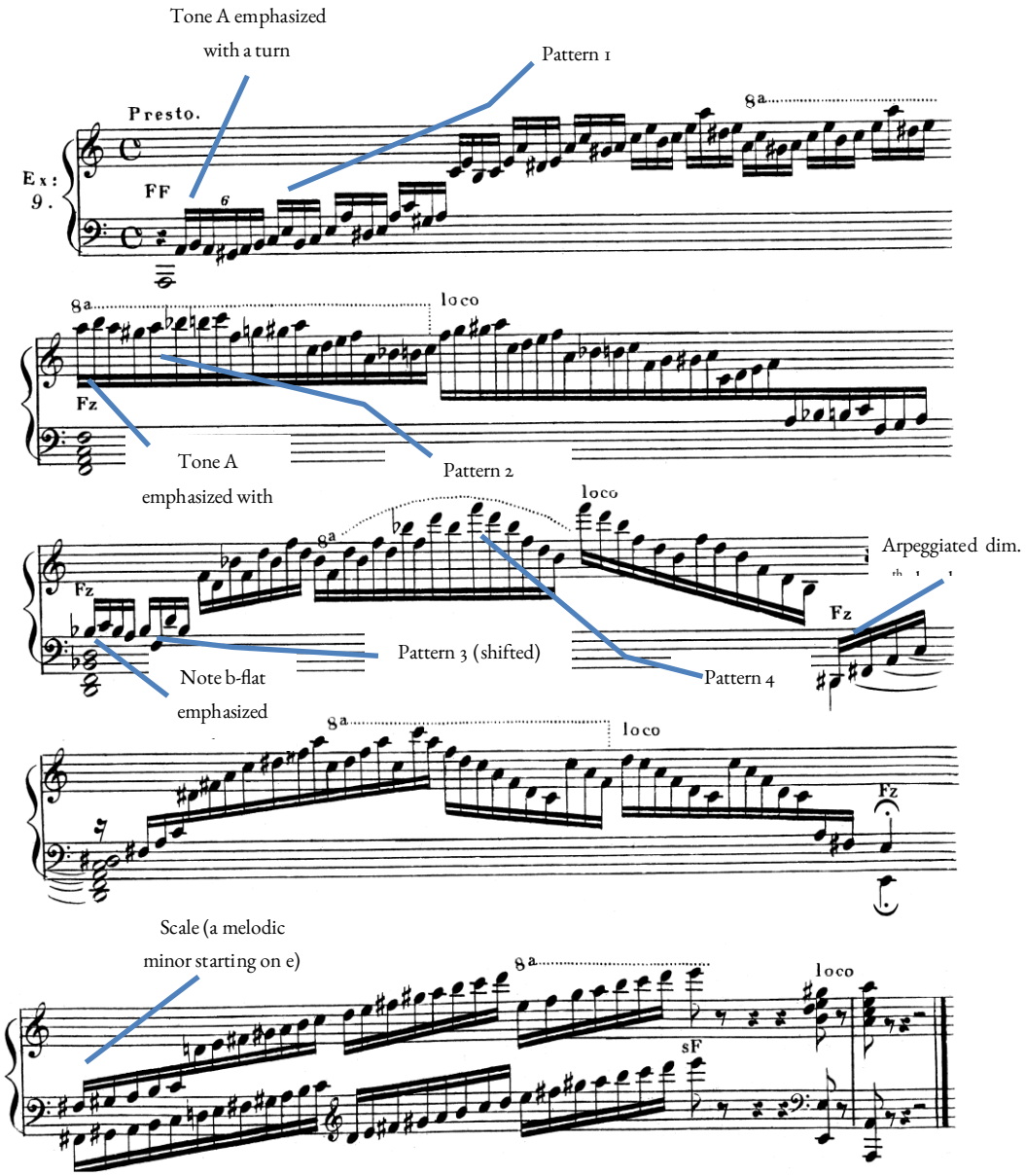
Why bother about ornamental patterns if, as was stated above, not many musicians feel attracted to the brilliant style today? The list may serve several purposes. First of all it can be of use to anyone who desires to make his own stylistically convincing ornamentation. This may be a pianist who still likes to create an ornamental prelude in the style of Czerny, but also a singer who is searching for material to ornament a Rossini aria or to use for a cadenza. Then there is also an interesting technical aspect to it. On the piano, scales and arpeggios have a standardised fingering that only has to be adapted slightly to circumstances such as starting on another tone than the root, or an unusual metrical or rhythmical situation. The patterns listed in the dictionary are different. In C major the fingering is usually obvious enough, but as soon as patterns are transposed, difficulties arise. Sequences that almost seem to 'play themselves' in C suddenly become highly problematic in D-flat. To be sure, a survey of Czerny's etudes or other compositions in the brilliant style shows that composer-pianists tended to apply patterns only in comfortable situations: if a particular pattern is awkward to play in D-flat, they would use another one in that key. In the heat of the improvisatory moment, however, it is not uncommon that one finds oneself starting a pattern in a key of which one realises too late that it is actually a difficult one. When patterns such as the ones included in the list

are being practised through all keys, one prepares for such situations – not so much by 'programming' all different fingering variants, but by training a mental fluency and a flexibility that will be of value in many practical situations. Finally, though Clara Schumann as a teacher most likely did not ask her students (including her daughters) to improvise ornamental preludes, she certainly did appreciate Czerny's fingering exercises as valuable material. She even published a collection of them in *Fingerübungen und Studien aus Carl Czernys grosser Pianoforteschule op. 500.*[836] Eugenie writes that the practice of these exercises eliminated for herself all technical difficulties in Beethoven's sonatas and concertos. Interestingly, Eugenie observes that the only thing 'modern' players might criticise in the exercises is the fact that Czerny avoids the use of the thumb on black keys, something that by the end of the nineteenth century had already become normal. 'Anderseits wird gerade dadurch der Daumen so gelenkig gemacht, daß man ihn später mit großer Leichtigkeit auch auf den schwarzen Tasten anzuwenden vermag.'[837] [On the other hand this makes the thumb so flexible, that it may later be used on black keys with great ease.] This suggests that Clara Schumann made her students initially follow Czerny's fingerings, even when they should be against the current practice; it would only make them more flexible afterwards.

Example prelude

One simple ornamental prelude from Czerny's op. 200 may serve as an example for analysis.[838]

[836] Schumann, Cl. (ed.): *Fingerübungen und Studien aus Carl Czernys grosser Pianoforteschule op. 500*. Hamburg, 1880.
[837] Schumann, E.: op. cit., 266.
[838] Czerny, C.: *Systematische Anleitung …* op. 200; 8-9.



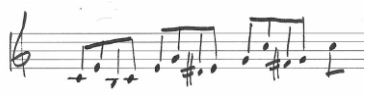
Example 9.6.23

The following loci communes can be identified in this passage:

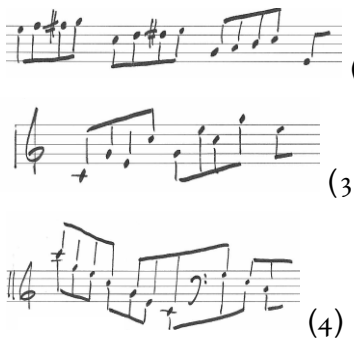
1. Harmonic: the prelude is built on a clear cadence formula:

I – VI – II^{6}_{Neap} – #$IV^{dim.7}$ - $I^{6/4}$ – V^{7} – I.[839]

2. Melodic patterns as represented in the dictionary:

 (1)

[839] Depending on the analytical tradition, '#$IV^{dim.7}$' may also be labelled 'viio7/V'.



Example 9.6.24

3. Gestural loci communes:
- Starting with an isolated bass note, followed by an ascending run is a common opening gesture (usually in fast tempo, *forte* dynamics).
- The gesture on the $I^{6/4}$ harmony is familiar from, for instance, many of Mozart's composed keyboard cadenzas: a fermata on the low dominant tone, followed by a quick scale upward (chromatic or diatonic) that finishes abruptly in a pause.

It is clear that Czerny strives for variety in the patterns he uses. All runs have a clear direction (up or down); there is no 'wandering around', probably because that would not be in accordance with the *presto* character. The first two – relatively neutral – chords receive a flourish in one direction, while the more expressive Neapolitan sixth and the diminished seventh chord on #IV are both played with ascending and descending arpeggiations.

Performing an ornamental prelude

Ornamental preludes were supposed to be performed in a (rhythmically) free manner. With respect to the performance of his composed sample preludes, Czerny writes:

> Natürlicherweise muss man (...) alles mit solcher Leichtigkeit und Ungezwungenheit vorzutragen wissen, dass die Vorspiele den Charakter des augenblicklichen Einfalls erhalten. Denn nichts stört mehr deren Wirkung, als wenn man ihnen das Eingelernte ansieht.[840]
>
> [Naturally, one must (...) know how to execute everything with such ease and lack of constraint that the preludes maintain the character of the momentary fancy. For nothing is more disturbing to the effect than the recognition that it has been drilled into the performer. [841]]

Philip Anthony Corri writes that a prelude 'is supposed to be played extempore, and to lay down rules would be as impossible as wrong, For the fancy should be unconfined (...).'[842] That the last

[840] Czerny, C.: *Systematische Anleitung ...* op. 200; 9.
[841] Czerny, C.: *A systematic introduction to improvisation on the pianoforte op. 200 ...*; 11.
[842] Corri, P.A.: op. cit., 81.

remark did not imply the absence of 'rules of Counterpoint or Composition' may be obvious from the examples shown in this chapter. Music really was conceived as a language with its own grammar and syntax, and 'fancy' could inspire the improviser to express whatever he liked in this language. Or, to stay within the vocabulary of this study: music is based on loci communes; what counts artistically is what an improviser does with them.

Unfortunately, we don't know how precisely Czerny imagined this *Leichtigkeit und Ungezwungenheit.* Most likely he referred to rhythmical freedom, witness Corri:

> In the performance of Preludes, all formality or precision of time must be avoided; they must appear to be the birth of the moment, the effusion of fancy, for which reason it may be observed that the measure or time is not always mark'd at preludes.
>
> As this style of preluding ad libitum, without measure is so difficult, I have occasionally introduced Bars as guides, to shew where the Bass should be thrown in.
>
> The running passages must move without the slightest interruption, both hands acting independently from each other.[843]

When there are no bar lines in a composed prelude, such notation usually denotes passages that can be understood as bass notes or chords with fermatas, embellished with passage work (such as in cadenzas and *Eingänge*); the ending of the prelude in the previous section, for instance, actually does have a metre, even though it is indicated only rudimentarily.

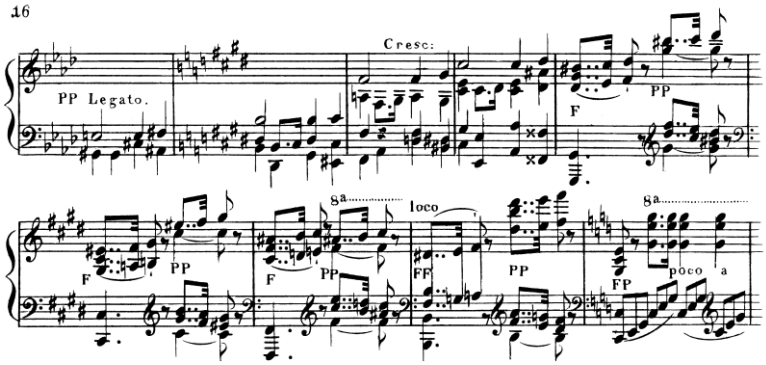
9.7 More extended preludes

So far, ornamental preludes of the more basic kind have been discussed relatively extensively. The reasons for this detailed attention should have become clear by now: this is the type of prelude which was described most widely; moreover, the technique of preluding returns in a wider range of musical genres, which might be why it received so much attention in early-nineteenth-century methods and instruction books. There were no essential differences between preluding on a piano and on a melodic instrument; also, ornamentation of a chord progression in a prelude used the same patterns as any other ornamentation, be it in a cadenza or in a composition (including vocal music). Finally, improvised preluding involves an approach to technique that significantly contrasts with more recent habits and views on this topic.

There is, however, no reason to neglect more elaborate forms of preluding that have existed as well. Czerny devotes the second chapter of his *Anleitung* to *Preludien längerer und mehr ausgeführter Art* [longer and more elaborate preludes], which are meant to form introductions to specific pieces. Though such preludes also contain *Passagen*, these alternate with sections of more

[843] Corri, P.A.: op. cit., 84.

melodic nature (*Gesangsstellen*). I will designate such preludes as 'thematic' because they contain thematic material, often taken from or hinting at the composition that is being introduced. Another important formal difference with ornamental preludes is that thematic preludes are clearly conceived as true introductions, finishing on a dominant chord (instead of the tonic that normally concluded ornamental preludes). The thematic material could be developed at will, as is shown in this fragment of a prelude by Czerny to his own variations on 'God save the King' op. 77 (example 9.7.1), in which the opening phrase of the anthem is put in a different metre and led through modulating imitations, while the final motif is split off and developed on its turn – very much according to what Czerny learnt from Beethoven. Czerny explains that using different metres for the prelude and the composition helps to avoid monotony:[844]

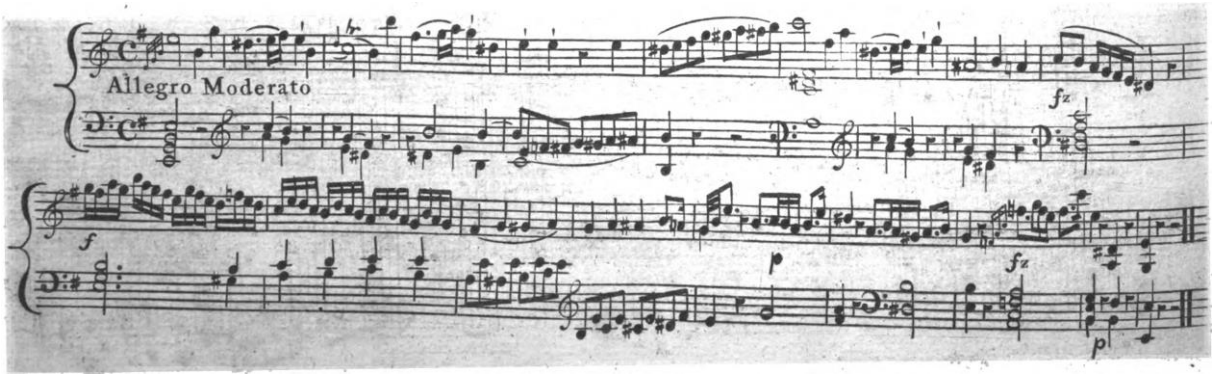


Example 9.7.1

Czerny explicitly writes that any well-written composed introduction can serve as a model (*Muster*) for this way of improvising. Primarily, preludes of this kind are supposed to be played when the composer had not written an introduction himself. Interestingly, Czerny states that one should not play this kind of extended prelude before 'more serious pieces' ('zu ernsteren Werken') such as Beethoven's *Appassionata* sonata op. 57. This suggests that thematic preludes were seen as most appropriate in combination with compositions in the brilliant style, especially since he mentions 'rondos or variations that start with the theme immediately'.[845] A few decades earlier, though, Kollmann had provided examples of thematic preludes to sonatas of different composers (and even a postlude to a sonata by himself), 'as short Specimens how some chief Thoughts of a musical Piece may be used with more or less Liberty for preluding in the Character of the same'.[846] Most of his preludes stay close to the beginnings of the pieces they introduce, but the prelude to Haydn's 'Sonata II. Op. LVIII' is different. Insofar as I know, this prelude is intended for the sonata Hob. XVI / 34

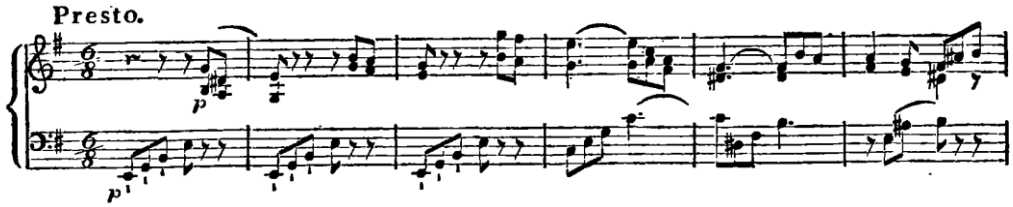
[844] Czerny, C.: *Systematische Anleitung …* op. 200; 16-17.
[845] Czerny, C.: op. cit., 15.
[846] Kollmann, A.P.: op. cit., 17.

in e minor. Indeed, the contour of the opening idea is recognisable in Kollmann's prelude, but the metre has been changed radically:



Example 9.7.2

The beginning of Haydn's sonata reads as follows:

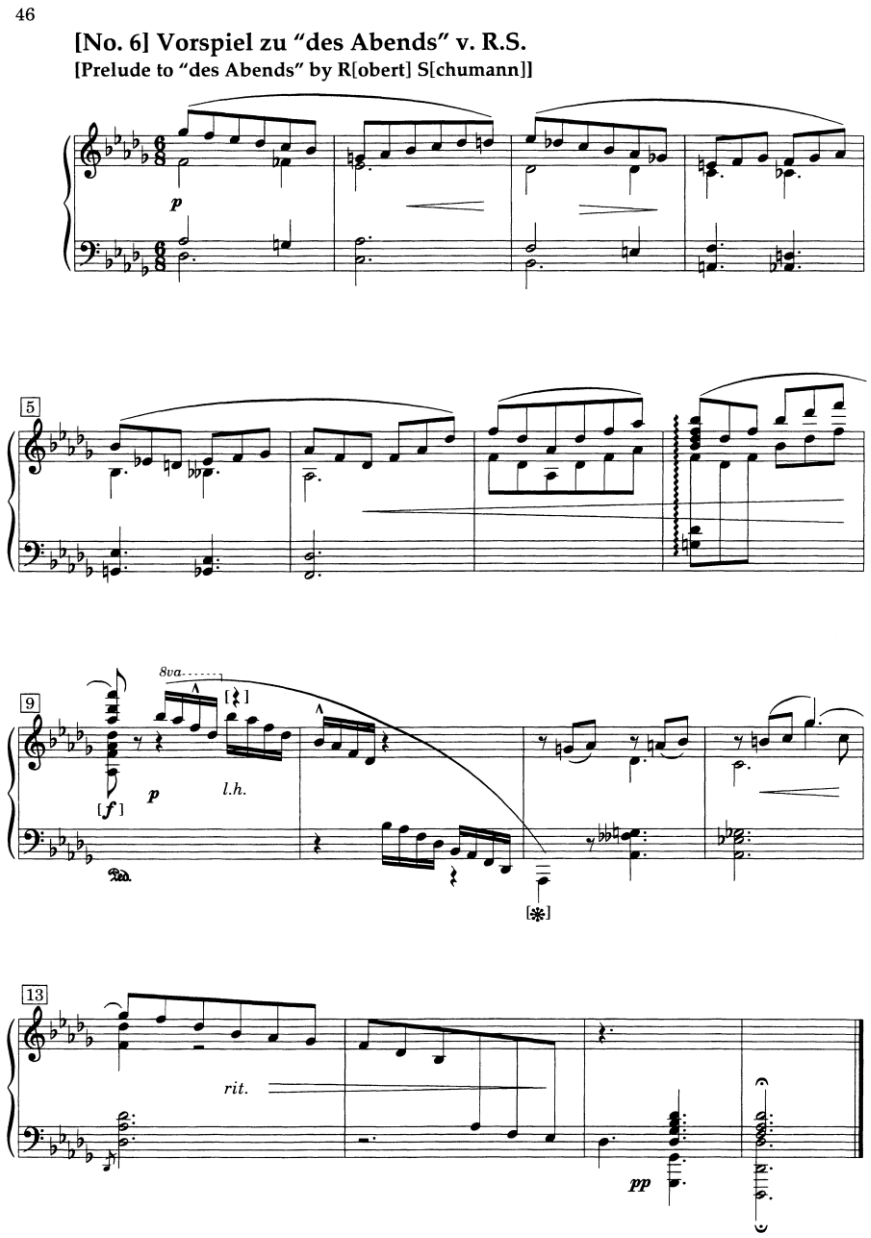


Example 9.7.3

There is also evidence of this type of preluding from later in the nineteenth century. Among the preludes Clara Schumann notated at her daughters' request, we find a few that are intended to introduce specific pieces by Robert Schumann. As Valerie Woodring Goertzen has shown, Clara programmed in her recitals short 'suites' consisting of a few shorter compositions that might be connected by such preludes.[847] The preludes are often supposed to have served to help the audience understand 'difficult' compositions such as Robert Schumann's. Indeed, public concerts before 1848 had a high entertainment quality that was better served with brilliant variations or fantasies on opera tunes. It is hard to believe, though, that audiences later in the century would still need to be introduced to Robert Schumann's music. In this respect, it is remarkable how much Clara 'gives away' of the composition that she means to introduce. For instance, her prelude to *Des Abends*, the first of the *Fantasiestücke* op. 12 (example 9.7.4), opens with exactly the same bitter-sweet dissonance that makes the beginning of the piece so special, but presents it in a less subdued way by displaying the underlying four-part voice leading in all its nakedness. The g-flat – f motif in the upper voice (a 4-3 suspension) returns in bars 12-13, and then reappears in the plagal cadence that concludes the

[847] Goertzen, V.W.: 'Clara Wieck Schumann's Improvisations and her 'Mosaics' of Small Forms'. In: Rasch, R. (ed.): *Beyond Notes: Improvisation in Western Music of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries.* Lucca, 2011; 153-162.

prelude.[848] It must be mentioned that the preludes of Clara Schumann all finish on a tonic chord (instead of the dominant, as Czerny wrote).



Example 9.7.4

A very touching example from more recent times is taken from the last recital Wilhelm Backhaus gave at the age of 85. During this concert he performed Beethoven's sonata op. 31 no. 3, but he collapsed after the third movement. After a short break, the old master decided not to play the final movement of the sonata, but two (technically less demanding) pieces of Schumann instead: *Des Abends* and *Warum*, both from the *Fantasiestücke* op. 12. On this live recording one can hear Backhaus preluding into *Des Abends.* The prelude is in fact a single prolonged dominant chord.

[848] Schumann, Cl.: *Preludes, Exercises and Fugues for piano* (V.W. Goertzen, ed.). Bryn Mawr, 2001; 46.

Remarkably, he not so much prepares for Schumann's composition, but rather seems to look back at the piece he had to abandon: the prelude opens with the opening motif of the first movement of Beethoven's sonata. The recital took place on the 28th of June, 1969; seven days later, Backhaus died of heart failure.

[9.7 #1 Wilhelm Backhaus (1884-1969): prelude to *Des Abends* (R. Schumann; with announcement); rec. 1969[849]]

In addition to his thematic preludes, Czerny gives an example of a prelude that is clearly inspired by the genre of *freye Fantasie* as described by C.Ph.E. Bach. This way of improvising will be discussed in chapter 12.3.

9.8 Modulation

More extended preludes are naturally harmonically more diverse than the short ornamental preludes, which are principally based upon a cadence formula. Harmonic loci communes as they were shown in section 9.5 hold for thematic preludes as well, but an important difference is that a larger form generally requires more variety with respect to the keys. Whereas the ornamental preludes often remain within one key, 'längere und mehr ausgeführte' preludes tend to modulate. Indeed, Czerny writes that the longer preludes don't have to start in the key of the piece that will follow, and that modulations can be very free.[850] Bochsa even uses the amount of modulation as a taxonomic principle, dividing preludes into pieces that don't modulate, pieces that modulate freely from any key towards the key of the composition that is prepared for, and finally preludes that are more like interludes connecting two compositions in different keys. Regarding the second category, Bochsa writes:

> At first, the harmony should move rather slowly, without being too much modulated; and afterwards the passage will gradually become more quick and brilliant, while the modulations assume a more scientific character. In the midst of a rapid flow of ideas, it will be judicious to throw in some favourite phrase of melody, taken from the piece the Pupil is about to perform, as a sort of announcement. Having fancifully sported with this strain, he will begin to wind towards the perfect close, which may consist of animated chords and sweeping passages.[851]

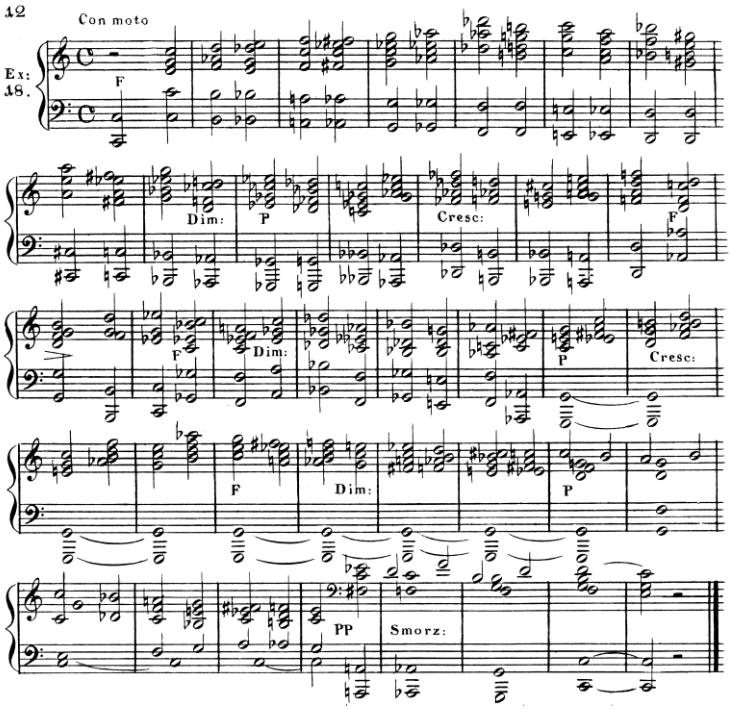
It has to be said that the term 'modulation' was used slightly differently in the nineteenth century compared with the present day. Today a proper modulation is generally seen as a change of key in

[849] https://youtu.be/G6TticNoDOA (uploaded in 2011 by 'gullivior')
[850] Czerny, C.: *Systematische Anleitung …* op. 200; 15.
[851] Bochsa, N.: op. cit., 49.

which the new key is 'firmly established' by means of 'characteristic harmonic progressions';[852] many nineteenth-century authors, however, apply the term to any hint of a different key, including temporary alterations in the scale of the main key that would today be analysed as secondary (sub)dominants. César Franck's famous motto 'modulez toujours'[853] should probably be understood in that way. Already in the first chapter of his *Anleitung*, Czerny recommends the use of frequent modulations even in short preludes (which can start and finish in different keys):

> Auch sind selbst kühne, fremdartige Modulationen in diesen Vorspielen recht gut an ihrem Platz, und wer gründliche Harmonie-Kenntnisse besitzt, kann sich hier leicht die interessantesten Wendungen erlauben.[854]
>
> [Furthermore, even daring, remote modulations are appropriate in these preludes, and whoever possesses a thorough knowledge of harmony can easily indulge in the most interesting ventures in this respect.][855]

Here is an example of such a modulatory prelude;[856] the first eight bars might already contain 'daring, remote modulations' in Czerny's eyes, but from a modern perspective these bars can be analysed in C major:



Example 9.8.1

[852] Oxford Music Online, entry: Modulation
https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.18843

[853] Flothuis, M.: *"...exprimer l'inexprimable...": essai sur la mélodie française depuis Duparc.* Amsterdam, 1996; 17.

[854] Czerny, C.: *Systematische Anleitung...* op. 200, 9.

[855] Czerny, C.: *A systematic introduction to improvisation on the pianoforte op. 200*; 11.

[856] Czerny, C.: *Systematische Anleitung...* op. 200, 12.

In his review of Czerny's book, Gottfried Wilhelm Fink disapproves of such harmonic adventures and recommends that the performer apply them with moderation.[857] This way of preluding might at first seem out of place in Czerny's first chapter, but it should be kept in mind that these preludes are, like the ornamental ones, short and non-thematic introductions. Even so, the distance between these harmonically adventurous preludes and the simple cadences of a few pages earlier in Czerny's book is considerable. From the perspective of modern harmonic analysis, incidentally, the harmony of such preludes can as such certainly be called 'ornamental'.[858]

By the first decades of the nineteenth century equal temperament had become the predominant tuning system, enabling the keyboard player not only to play in all keys, but also to modulate by means of enharmonic changes. In the course of time, modulation tended to become a more or less independent and technical topic. In the words of Peter Rummenhöller, it has been 'hochstilisiert' [blown up] in harmony books and in the curricula of institutions of music education 'zu einer Quasi-Disziplin' [as a quasi-discipline], 'deren illegitimes Eigenleben sich vom musikalischen Satz und seiner Geschichte immer weiter entfernt hat' [whose illegitimate life of its own has moved off more and more from musical texture and its history].[859] It is a tendency that started as early as the beginning of the nineteenth century. The *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* from October 12th, 1812 published a review of a new book by Heinrich Christoph Koch, well-known for his *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Composition* (1782-1793) and for his *Musikalisches Lexikon* (1802).[860] The new book, *Versuch, aus der harten und weichen Tonart jeder Tonstufe der diatonisch-chromatischen Leiter vermittels des enharmonischen Tonwechsels in die Dur- und Molltonart der übrigen Stufen auszuweichen* [Essay about modulating from all major and minor keys to any other keys by means of enharmonic changes], was published in 1812; it consisted of more than 700 modulatory formulas, without explanation. The anonymous reviewer uses many words to give a picture of musicians who might welcome such a book: a church organist who has to make sudden modulations in order to connect hymns and other liturgical music in different keys; a trained amateur pianist, who improvises but is not sure about the correctness of his modulations and becomes nervous when somebody with the appearance of a connoisseur is listening; a composer who is unsure of the correct notation of this or that turn; finally, any music lover who enjoys the beauties of harmony just like the changing colours of sunset. According to the reviewer, these readers will be disappointed by the book, not only because of flaws

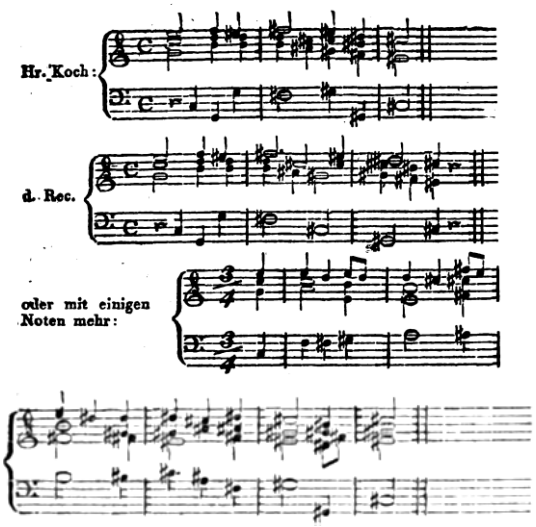
[857] Fink, G.W.: review of 'Systematische Anleitung zum Fantasieren op. 200'. In: *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, (2 September 1829, no. 35); column 576.

[858] An early example of such an ornamental modulating prelude is W.A. Mozart's *Modulierendes Präludium* (KV deest) from 1776 or 1777.

[859] Rummenhöller, P.: 'Harmonielehre'. In: *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Sachteil 4. Kassel / Stuttgart, 1996; col. 147.

[860] [Anonymous]: review of 'Versuch, aus der harten und weichen Tonart jeder Tonstufe der diatonisch-chromatischen Leiter vermittels des enharmonischen Tonwechsels in die Dur- und Molltonart der übrigen Stufen auszuweichen'. In: *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (14 October, 1812, no. 42); columns 679-684.

in the voice leading, but also because it shows the 'weite Kluft (...) zwischen dem Wissen und dem Thun' [wide gap between knowing and doing]. Koch's abstract modulatory formulas suffer from 'Armuth bei ängstlicher Künsteley, (...) Trockenheit, Monotonie, Steifheit'[861] [poverty along with timid artificiality, dryness, monotony, stiffness]. In the first issue of the *Intelligenzblatt* of the AMZ (January 1813), Koch replies. His defence is that every connoisseur knows that 'geistreiche Erfindung und Ausarbeitung in edlem Geschmacke' [brilliant invention and elaboration in a noble gusto] belong in real compositions, not in such harmonic formulas which aim at 'den Unterricht in einem mechanischen Theile der Kunst' [the teaching in a mechanical part of art] – by which he only reinforces the reviewer's point. The polemic continues with a reaction of the reviewer in the same issue, in which he writes that the works of Albrechtsberger, Vogler and many others could easily have convinced Koch of the opposite.[862] Besides voice leading intricacies (the reviewer is very critical about progressions of diminished to perfect fifths), his criticism mainly seems to concern the pace of the modulation, as seen in the example below (taken from his reply) in which the modulation from C major to C-sharp major according to 'Herr Koch' is contrasted with two alternatives by 'Der Recensent' (the latter one 'mit einigen Noten mehr' [with a few more notes]).[863] The first alternative exactly follows Koch's route via an enharmonic change of the dominant-seventh chord in C major into a German sixth chord in B minor; it only extends the final cadence in C-sharp, in this way allowing the new key more time to settle.



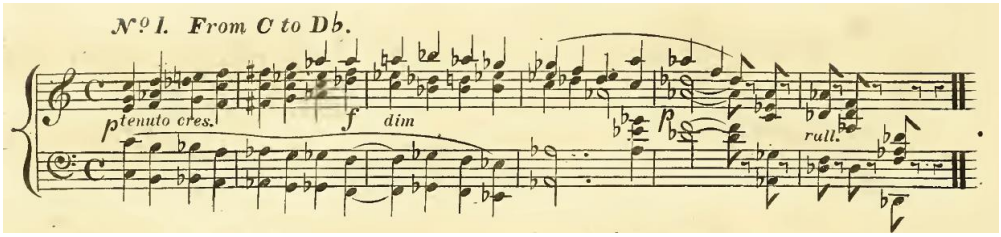
Example 9.8.2

[861] Ibidem, col. 682.
[862] *Intelligenzblatt zur Allgemeinen musikalischen Zeitung* (January 1813, no. 1); columns 1-9.
[863] Ibidem, col. 7.

It is worth noting that the reviewer's second example works completely differently: it is not an enharmonic modulation, but one that is essentially based upon a Monte-sequence (E^6 – A – $F\#^6$ – B – $G\#^6$ – C#). To a modern reader, this illustration reflects a very unsystematic mindset on the part of the reviewer. Early-nineteenth-century thinking about harmony was still heavily indebted to the practice-based approach of basso continuo. Grétry's problematic explanation of the German sixth chord (→ section 9.5*a*) clearly shows that harmonic loci communes exist prior to their theoretical explanation. A more systematic approach, initially inspired by the systems of philosophical idealism, dates mainly from the second half of the nineteenth century. One of the earlier examples of such a systematic approach is Moritz Hauptmann's discussion of modulation, which is clearly based upon the concept of what is usually termed a common or pivot chord.[864] It is this 'scientific' approach that, when applied to 'dry' formulas such as Koch's, opened the gateway to treating modulation as a 'Quasi-Disziplin deren illegitimes Eigenleben sich vom musikalischen Satz und seiner Geschichte immer weiter entfernt hat'. Less pejoratively, one could say that the way modulation is still being discussed in the training of professional musicians today is of a primarily analytical nature. Experience shows that this analytical approach is not necessarily helpful for an improviser. A player who is in the process of an improvisation and intends to move towards a specific new tone centre is too busy with the musical 'foreground' to be able to calculate which common chord could connect the new key with the previous one. If such a modulatory route would be used again and again, and in this way develop into a locus communis, this approach might be more useful; however, the number of modulatory possibilities is such that this is in general rather unlikely (maybe with the exception of a small number of very common modulations). It seems that the pivot chord as a concept is too abstract for practical application.

In this respect it is interesting to consider how early-nineteenth-century improvisation methods approach modulation, for (witness the review in the AMZ) it was acknowledged as an issue of importance. Several of them show a table with example modulations. For instance, Czerny included sixteen compact modulations from C major to all major keys (some keys are represented twice and Czerny does not distinguish between enharmonically similar keys) in *Die Kunst des Präludierens,* op. 300, followed by more elaborated modulating preludes. He does not add any analysis or explanation. This is his modulation from C to D-flat major:[865]

[864] Hauptmann, M.: *Die Natur der Harmonik und der Metrik.* Leipzig, 1853; 173-207.
[865] Czerny, C.: *Die Kunst des Präludierens* op. 300. Wien, [1833]; 44.



Example 9.8.3

Such a modulating progression *can* be analysed by means of pivot chords; in terms of style it resembles the second example of Koch's reviewer, but when it is stripped of the ornamental chord progressions, a simple model in the manner of Koch remains. The key moment seems to be the German sixth chord in the second bar, which resolves (via a root position) as a dominant seventh chord in D-flat. Bars 3 through 6 are nothing but an extended cadence. For reasons mentioned above, I deem it unlikely, however, that this common basic progression was what guided Czerny. The opening bars are clearly based upon a (foreground) voice leading model that was mentioned in chapter 9.5*b*. The rising chromatic line in the upper voice is loosely continued until the high b-flat in bar 3, after which a descending diatonic scale leads back towards the tonic d-flat (interrupted by an ornamental arpeggiation of the tonic triad in bar 5). On the one hand, such a clearly directed melodic motion functions as a generative framework for the musical structure of this little piece: indeed, stepwise progressions in the bass and / or upper voice can prompt harmonic inventions. As for the chord connections as such, on the other hand, several early-nineteenth-century books about preluding do formulate a guiding principle that is straightforward and practical: namely, the idea that two connected chords in a modulation should have at least one tone in common. This principle provides the improviser with a great deal of freedom: as long as at least one tone remains, the other voices can in principle move wherever they like. Without bothering about pivot chords, the player can abandon tones from the old key that he doesn't need anymore, and acquire the new tones of the key to which he wants to move, heading for the dominant seventh chord of the new key. Bochsa formulates this principle in great clarity:

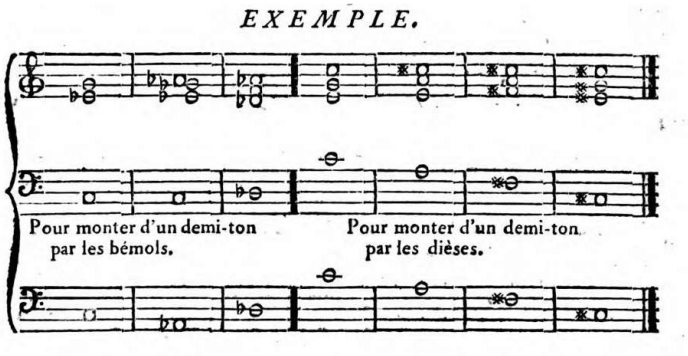
> No modulation can be perfectly agreeable, unless some note of the chord about to be relinquished is retained in the chord it is intended to adopt. This note, by forming a part of both harmonies, will promote their junction, and bind them more firmly together.[866]

The examples Bochsa shows are simple: the modulations move usually a fifth up or down. He doesn't exclude more daring modulations however, and expresses a view that would amuse theorists today:

[866] Bochsa, N.: op. cit., 29.

> There are some modulations too distant, fanciful, and unconnected, to be brought under any known rule, although they are always terminated by means of a dominant seventh.[867]

Almost 40 years earlier, Grétry had written in similar terms about modulating: 'Dans tout accord, il faut deux notes, au moins une note de l'accord qui l'a précédé'[868] [In each chord there should be two notes, or at least one note, from the previous chord]. In an example, Grétry shows that he does distinguish between enharmonically similar keys:[869]



Example 9.8.4

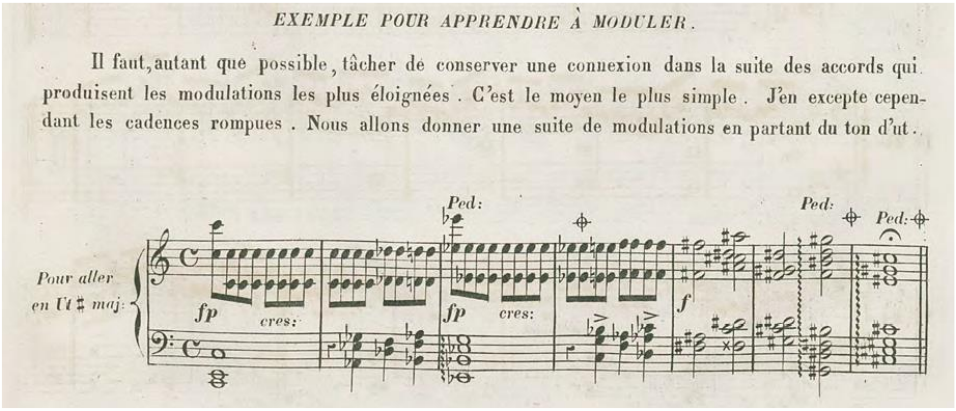
The first example again employs the German sixth chord as an enharmonic equivalent of the dominant seventh. The second one is interesting, especially for the time in which it was written: the turn from the C-major triad to the A-major chord can hardly be explained in functional terms (incidentally, it is questionable whether Koch's reviewer would have approved of approaching C-sharp major plagally through its minor subdominant, either – hardly a convincing way to establish the new key!). The C to A chord change might be interpreted as an example of a progression that is motivated by the common-tone rule only. It is Franz Schubert who would turn such chromatic mediants into a locus communis, decades later. I would like to emphasise, though, that in general a large majority of the common-tone chord connections can easily be explained in functional terms, as long as both chords are third-based.

In 1849, Kalkbrenner still referred to the common-tone principle to explain modulations:

> Il faut, autant que possible, tâcher de conserver une connexion dans la suite des accords qui produisent les modulations les plus éloignées. C'est le moyen le plus simple.[870]
>
> [If possible one should seek to save a connection within the chord progressions that produce the most remote modulations. This is the most simple way.]

[867] Bochsa, N.: op. cit., 34.
[868] Grétry, A.: op. cit., 47.
[869] Grétry, A.: op. cit., 49.
[870] Kalkbrenner, F.: op. cit., 36.

His example of a modulation from C major to C-sharp major is, again, essentially based upon the German sixth / dominant seventh equality, followed by a Monte-based structure to confirm the new key.[871]



Example 9.8.5

Generally such tables with common-tone modulations to all keys show a typical set-up: they are not organised by the cycle of fifths, but by the absolute distance between the point of departure (usually C major) and the goal of the modulation. For instance, Kalkbrenner's first example (shown above) modulates a semitone up, the next one modulates to c-sharp minor, the following ones a semitone down (C-flat major and minor), after which he modulates a whole tone up (D-major and minor), and so on until g-flat minor.

That this approach to modulation was not limited to chordal instruments can be seen in Louis Drouët's *Nouvelle méthode pour la flute*. Drouët dedicates a chapter to modulation in a general sense; his goal is not to teach harmony, but just to provide a few notions that are absolutely necessary when one wants to play an instrument. He gives the principles of modulation only in order to enable the student to prelude, to improvise and to make a cadenza 'ad libitum' without offending the rules of harmony.[872] Like the other authors discussed above, Drouët describes modulation in terms of arriving at the dominant of the new key by a succession of chords that always have (at least) one tone in common. He gives a list of modulations that resembles the ones mentioned above, but chooses chord positions that remain within the range of the flute. The explanations in the following example show that he is thinking enharmonically, and that he makes no distinction between the minor and major resolutions of the dominant seventh chord.[873]

[871] Ibidem.
[872] Drouët, L.: *Méthode pour la flute*. Paris, [1828]; 27.
[873] Ibidem.

Example 9.8.6

Drouët adds the important remark that only a few chords may suffice to establish a modulation when they are played as firm chords (*accords plaqués*); on a monodic instrument such as the flute, however, they are always played as arpeggios, and are therefore less effective. For that reason a modulation on the flute needs more time; Drouët advises the performer to stay with each new harmony for at least one bar.[874]

The difference between describing modulations in terms either of common (i.e., pivot) chords or of common tones may not seem to be very fundamental: in the end it is the same principle, namely the fact that one moves from one collection of tones to another by using as a link tones where the two collections overlap. The common-tone principle, one might say, belongs to the musical foreground, whereas the idea of a pivot chord is at a deeper level – but analytically, there is no essential difference. In the practice of improvisation, though, the difference is quite crucial. Analysis and creation are opposite processes. It is not strange that, given the decline of tonality and the rise of the *Urtext*-paradigm in Western music during the twentieth century, an analytic approach to harmony became dominant in the education of professional musicians. Improvising with harmony requires a different skill, though, one that is better developed with a methodology that focuses on the here and now of the musical foreground. The figured bass-related approach as represented in C.Ph.E. Bach's *Versuch*[875] is such a methodology, and it is not a coincidence that it remained influential until well into the nineteenth century (nor that the chapters on harmony were omitted in the 1925 edition by Walter Niemann[876]). It is not my intention to suggest that an improviser doesn't need to bother about the deeper structure of music; I do believe, however, that an improviser's awareness of the 'background' in the musical texture of tonal music tends to function through loci communes, not by means of abstract concepts.

[874] Drouët, L.: op. cit., 28.
[875] Bach, C.Ph.E.: *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen*, vol. 2 (Berlin, 1762). Facsimile reprint: Wiesbaden, 1986; 32-171.
[876] Bach, C.Ph.E.: *Versuch über die wahre Art das Klavier zu spielen* (ed. W. Niemann). Leipzig, 1925.

9.9 Postlude

Preluding today

Should the art of preluding be revived? Jane Lohr finishes her dissertation with the conclusion that 'composers prior to the second half of the nineteenth century conceived many of their works with the understanding that they would be preceded by an extemporaneous introduction'. She suggests that 'those who are engaged in the modern quest for authenticity have only to profit from attempts to investigate and recapture the once flourishing art'.[877] On the other hand, she also acknowledges that the cultural premises have changed dramatically since the first half of the nineteenth century. And indeed, most reasons for preluding as they are handed down to us by several authors quoted in this chapter have disappeared. An audience that also listens to chromatic and modal harmonic styles, not to mention atonality, doesn't need to be prepared for a new key. Modern classical concert etiquette is stricter than ever before, and even applauding between the movements of a composition is seen as a sign of ignorance. This means that, unlike in the nineteenth century, there is now no need to 'silence' the audience by means of improvised transitions between pieces. In more traditional classical music scenes, an audience is considered 'educated' when it is already familiar with many of the works that are performed. Moreover, preludes were primarily appreciated in musical salons – a type of concert venue that has disappeared, together with the social structure in which it functioned. At the time when extempore preluding flourished, concerts as we know them were unheard of. Outside opera and oratorio performances, public concerts for a large audience were essentially a nineteenth-century development, and (at least in the first decades) were to a large extent vehicles for entertainment. Solo recitals were exceptional. Until the advent of the age of recording, music-making in the home must have been a much more important part of musical life. Lieder were meant to be sung at home by amateurs in particular, and whoever wanted to get to know Brahms's very popular *Ein deutsches Requiem* bought the piano arrangement and played the piece with a friend, representing both orchestra and vocal parts with four hands.

The musical landscape of the nineteenth century was different from ours in so many respects that attempts to revive parts of it, for instance by re-introducing improvised preluding during a traditional piano recital, will too easily make an anachronistic impression. The deepest reason, I believe, is in the clash between the modern understanding of (in this case) a piano recital as a rendering of a collection of canonic musical works on the one hand, and the nature of extempore preluding (or of any improvisation) on the other hand. It is probably not an exaggeration to see preludes as they were described in this chapter as a form of *Gebrauchsmusik* – a term that might best be translated as 'functional music'. In our time it has gained a strongly negative connotation as 'commercialised

[877] Lohr, N.J.: op. cit., 269.

music', 'background music' or even 'audio wallpaper'. As a matter of fact, these pejorative meanings are a repercussion of the twentieth-century understanding of a concert as the 'reproduction' of a collection of masterworks, and of music history as a history of compositions. Re-interpreting 'classical' music-making as a process that is stimulated by an encounter with (in most cases) musical texts (I am happy to call these texts as such musical 'works') might remove some of the stress from this alleged contrast between the 'sacred' masterwork and the 'commonplace' prelude. My intention here is not to denigrate the importance of the score itself, but to affirm that any performance is a unique event rather than a 'reproduction' of some imaginary original. Such a perspective emphasises the aspect of situationality in a performance.[878] *Gebrauchsmusik* is by definition music that is primarily meant for a specific occasion. It still occurs in places where music is a part of a larger whole, such as in liturgy and in theatre.[879] Just as an organist in his improvisations can make the planned parts of liturgy stand out well, as if he provides a mounting for a jewel, so may extempore preludes and interludes in a concert unite the performed compositions and turn a recital into a series of connected stories, and the musician into a narrator. Whereas initially recordings attempted to bring the concert hall into the living room, classical concerts have for a long time been seeking to imitate recordings with respect to the type of perfection, and even the way of programming (e.g. by performing 'complete works' in a series of concerts). A stronger emphasis on situationality has the potential to regain the 'event-character' that concerts must have had in the nineteenth century – without making any claims about 'authenticity' at all. In a way it draws the concert into the sphere of the theatre and the church. Incidentally, it was not at all uncommon in nineteenth-century parlance to speak about non-religious music in liturgical terms: already in 1838, Clara Schumann was depicted as a 'Priesterin der neuen Kunst' [priestess of new art] who called for a 'romantisch-musikalische Wallfahrt' [Romantic and musical pilgrimage].[880]

Historically inspired preluding

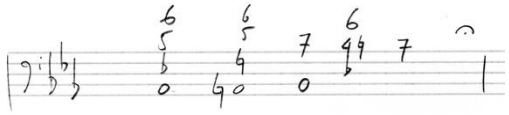
To conclude, I would like to give a few examples of 'historically inspired improvisations', preludes as I wove them into various concert performances. The first one is a prelude I played before a performance of a very little known piano composition of Julius Röntgen: *Impromptu* (1910). In order to make the 'situation' understandable, the opening applause (it was the start of a solo recital on both piano and organ in the Orgelpark in Amsterdam on November 13th, 2015) is included. The piano is a large Érard concert grand from 1899.

[878] See Fidom, H.: *Muziek als installatiekunst* (Orgelpark Research Reports, vol. 2). Amsterdam, 2012.
[879] Another example of preluding as *Gebrauchsmusik* were the radio performances ('Klassiek met Caroline') of the Dutch pianist Joop Stokkermans in the 1990's. Stokkermans provided the causeries by hostess Caroline Kaart with improvised background music, preluding into the next 'light classical' masterwork to be broadcasted.
[880] Klassen, J.: *Clara Schumann: Musik und Öffentlichkeit.* Köln, 2009; 143.

[9.9 #1 Bert Mooiman: Röntgen Impromptu with prelude; rec. 2015]

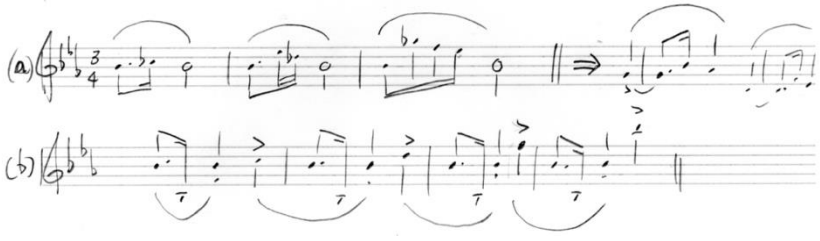
Since it is likely that nobody in the audience knew Röntgen's composition, and the prelude was not announced in the programme, it is very well possible that a majority of the listeners didn't realise that the prelude was extempore and not composed by Röntgen. It is a 'risk' that also Czerny was aware of: when the prelude begins *kräftig und bestimmt* [boldly and firmly], the listeners might think that the piece itself has already started.[881] Incidentally, this also means that Czerny assumed that most compositions were new to the audiences.

The prelude is built upon a cadential harmonic locus communis that is stylistically slightly more advanced than the ones in section 9.5, because I intended to connect with the rather chromatic harmonic language of the *Impromptu.* It starts on an accented subdominant (such as heard, for instance, in Rachmaninov's *Prélude* op. 23 no. 3) that via a passing secondary dominant moves into the dominant seventh chord; however, by lingering on the half-diminished $II^{6/5}$ and using the secondary $V^{6/5}$ as a neighbour chord, the cadential feeling is suspended. Eventually there is a long dominant prolongation, resolved by the opening of the *Impromptu* on the tonic.



Example 9.9.1

Both 6/5 chords are prolonged by means of extended arpeggiations; on the dominant prolongation, I 'threw in' material from the concert programme: a melodic cell from the opening melody of Röntgen's piece is freely combined with material from another piece in the same programme,[882] and the mazurka-rhythm of the *Impromptu* was prepared for (b).



Example 9.9.2

It is probably good to emphasise that the analysis above took shape on the basis of the recorded improvisation; the prelude was not 'planned' in any way, the analysis just makes explicit which models were applied extempore.

[881] Czerny, C.: *Von dem Vortrage* ... op. 500 III, 90.

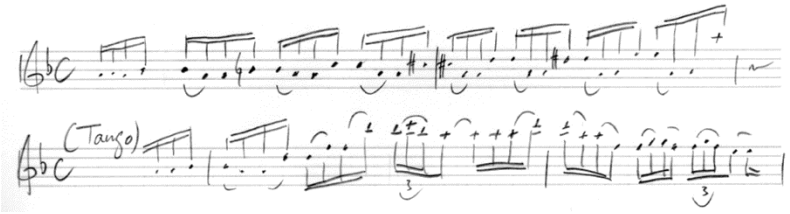
[882] The *Vondelpark-suite* for organ, composed by Wijnand van Klaveren and premiered during this concert.

During a programme with salon music (piano with string quartet), two connecting preludes were added to keep the succession of many short items from becoming tiring (as well as to forestall too frequent applauding between pieces). Since the key successions were simple (from C major to G minor and from D major to D minor respectively), prolonged dominants sufficed in both cases as a harmonic frame. As for the ornamentation, the figuration was of a late-nineteenth-century type, rather inspired by Liszt than by his teacher Czerny.

The first example connects Johann Strauss's *Pizzicato Polka* with the fifth Hungarian dance of Brahms. Its double intention is to smother the applause and to prepare for the very different atmosphere of the Hungarian dance. The piano is a Pleyel from 1906.

[9.9 #2 Bert Mooiman: Improvised connecting prelude Pizzicato Polka – Hungarian Dance; rec. 2015]

The second prelude connects Sydney Baynes's waltz *Destiny* with the tango *El Choclo* of Ángel Villoldo. In this prelude I am 'sporting with' the opening motif of the tango's melody, chromatically enlarging the minor second a – b-flat into the fifth a – e.



Example 9.9.3

[9.9 #3 Bert Mooiman: Improvised connecting prelude Destiny – El Choclo; rec. 2015]

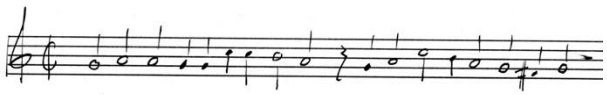
The possibility of improvising strongly thematic introductions such as Clara Schumann's – basically rounded pieces with allusions to the composition they are meant to prepare for – can be translated to later styles as well. Though liturgical preludes have not been discussed in this chapter, partly because it is such a wide field with very specific formal characteristics, such thematic preludes can serve within a liturgical setting as well, for example before the start of a service or mass. To close this chapter, I would like to show two examples that are taken from the same morning service on April 2nd, 2017, in the Nieuwe Badkapel, a Protestant church in The Hague. Their stylistic inspiration comes mainly from music of the early twentieth century.

The first one is an extended prelude that serves as introductory music when the congregation is entering the church. Its basic musical goal is to announce the key and the tune of the introit (the first hymn); at the same time, though, it also aims to prepare the churchgoers for the mood of the service. It is not to be seen as a concert piece; rather it is music that accompanies an act, namely the congregation approaching a place of worship. Usually such a prelude is of course played on the organ,

but this church also possesses a beautiful 1906 Pleyel grand piano (the same instrument of the previous examples), and on this occasion I used this instrument for the prelude.

[9.9 #4 Bert Mooiman: Piano introduction to service; rec. 2017]

Since the music uses an idiom from a time (roughly: the early twentieth century) that put a high value on the originality of individual composers or even pieces, it is harder to specify loci communes in the sense of anonymous patterns or models. It is possible, though, to show connections with existing compositions, and because these pieces are part of the musical canon and therefore 'common' ground, I argue that the term 'locus communis' can be extended to this material. The recorded prelude has a strongly modal character: the left hand accompaniment has a pentatonic ostinato that might recall Claude Debussy; the joining melody in the right hand extends the pentatonic mode to a mixolydian scale. By its character and register it might remind the listener of Bela Bartók, especially the opening theme from the third piano concerto, or the 'Swine-Herd's Dance' from *For Children* (vol. 1). At 2'15", contrasting harmonic structures built on parallel dominant seventh chords appear (another Debussyan trait). The rising chords at 3'38" were a conscious allusion to the image of the congregation ascending to the sanctuary; this is not only an idea that describes the beginning of any mass or service, but actually refers to a phrase (precious to many believers) from the 43rd psalm: 'Then I will go to the altar of God / To God my exceeding joy'.[883] This psalm is the introit of the Sunday at which the prelude was played. In this way a key phrase from the text finds its way into the instrumental prelude, followed at 4'08" by the appearance of the (beginning of the) psalm melody according to the Genevan psalter (1551), the hymn that will be sung by the congregation a few minutes later.



Example 9.9.4

Within the six-minute prelude, the hymn melody itself has only a subordinate and discrete role; however, since the listeners can be expected to be very familiar with it and to recognise it at once, it only has to be touched upon briefly to produce maximum effect. In this way the familiarity of the listeners (something I as an improviser knew of) makes possible a rhetorical game. In addition, the listeners can be expected to associate the melody with the textual phrase quoted above, which adds an extra-musical meaning to the music. It is situationality 'in optima forma': not only is the prelude tightly connected with the liturgical situation, it is also addressed to this specific group of people with their particular backgrounds. Besides the rhetorical role and despite its almost shy appearance, the

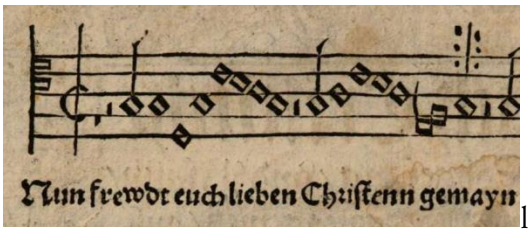
[883] Psalm 43: 4. New King James Version (1982).

first line of the hymn is the basis of much of the musical material: it provides not only the modal environment but also the fourth as a distinctive interval in the 'other' melody. This was a conscious decision of mine to the extent that the hymn melody was in my mind all the time, influencing the musical decisions. Analysis shows that the result is what Janet Schmalfeldt has called 'music in the process of becoming'.[884]

The 'sporting' with the phrase from the hymn consists of trying out various 'thickened line voicings' (harmonisations by parallel chords), at first with superimposed fourths, later with chords inspired by Maurice Ravel and Olivier Messiaen. Starting from 4'45", it alternates with the 'Bartók' melody, which is now enriched with chromatic extensions that recall Messiaen's *style oiseau*.

During the prelude, the congregation can be heard entering the church quite clearly; in fact, it is a recurring complaint among fellow organists that the people are talking through their music before the service. I think, however, that the somewhat messy situation on this recording is very similar to what Czerny and his contemporaries must have experienced when they were preluding – that, indeed, the noisiness was one of the main reasons to prelude at all.

Liturgical organ playing also provides the unique possibility, not really existing in concerts, of a type of piece that mirrors the thematic prelude, as it were: the improvised organ postlude or *sortie*, music that is played when the congregation leaves the church. It is not unusual to base an extempore postlude on the last sung hymn. After the same service, I improvised a *sortie* on the organ (Van Dam, 1926). The hymn melody it uses is from an old Lutheran chorale: *Nun freut euch, lieben Christen g'mein* (1523):



Example 9.9.5

[9.9 #5 Bert Mooiman: postludium; rec. 2017]

The melody makes it possible to connect loosely with the opening prelude played an hour before (and discussed above), though the atmosphere is completely different. It provides the same modal environment, and highlights even a more elaborated structure of fourths. The *sortie* takes the (French) form of a *toccata* on the *tutti* of the organ. The short introduction on the reeds outlines the

[884] Schmalfeldt, J.: *In the Process of Becoming: Analytical and Philosophical Perspectives on Form in Early Nineteenth-Century Music.* New York, 2011.

thematic function of the fourths and the mixolydian mode with a strong pentatonic flavour, after which an 'accompaniment' in repeated chords with alternating hands starts, referring to Marcel Dupré and Olivier Messiaen (the end of *Dieu parmi nous* from *La nativité du Seigneur*). Harmonically it mainly consists of triads in a chromatically enriched mixolydian mode. The fragmented melody of the hymn sounds in the pedals (starting at 1'03''). The toccata-patterns in the manuals are based upon motifs from the hymn melody, including the descending tetrachord C – B – A – G that is harmonised in parallel triads, thus recalling the end of Ravel's piano concerto in G major (1'25''). Musically such a postlude has features of a coda, rhetorically of a peroration. Tonally it is rather static, continuously confirming the key of G 'mixolydian' (though conventional authentic cadences are generally avoided). In order to increase the feeling of climax, two digressions are interpolated: at first a modal digression at 2'03'', and finally a rhythmical one at 3'01''. Their rhetorical function can be described as 'reculer pour mieux sauter': departing from the tonal and rhythmic uniformity to 'jump higher' in the final cadences.

Increasing the tension before the final cadence is certainly a function of another showpiece of early-nineteenth century improvisation: the solo cadenza, which will be the topic of the next chapter.