A CONVERSATION ON MUSIC

ANTON RUBINSTEIN

TRANSLATED FOR THE AUTHOR

BY

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Madame von — honors me with a visit at my villa in Peterhof; after the usual salutations she expresses a wish to inspect my home surroundings; in the music-room she notices the busts of J. S. Bach, Beethoven, Schubert, Chopin, and Glinka on the walls, and, greatly surprised, asks:

—Why only these and not also Händel, Haydn, Mozart and others?

—These are the ones whom I most revere in my art.

—Then you do not revere Mozart?

—Himalaya and Chimborazo are the highest peaks of the earth; that does not imply, however, that Mt. Blanc is a little mountain.

—But Mozart is generally considered this highest point of which you speak! he has indeed given us in his Operas, the highest of which music is capable.

—To me the Opera is altogether a subordinate branch of our art.

—In that you are exactly opposed to the views of the present day, they advocate *vocal* music as the highest expression of music.

—That I am. First, because the human voice sets a limit to melody which the instrument does not, and of which the emotion of the human soul, be it joy or sorrow, does not admit. Second, because words, even the most beautifully poetised, are not capable of expressing exuberance of feeling, hence the very correct, "inexpressible." Third, because a human being may, in the most exalted joy, hum or carol a melody to himself, but could and would not set words to it—even as in the deepest sorrow he may perhaps hum a melody to himself, most certainly, however, without words. Fourth, because the tragic in no opera

sounds or can sound as it is heard in the 2d movement of Beethoven's D minor Trio, or in the Adagios of his F major, E minor, F minor and other string-quartets, or in the prelude in E flat-minor of Bach's "Wohl temperirte Clavier," or in the E minor prelude of Chopin; likewise no Requiem, not even the Mozart (*Confutatis* and *Lachrimosa* excepted), makes an impression so deeply moving as the 2d movement of the Symphony "Eroica" of Beethoven (a whole mass for the dead!), or contains the same proportion of the expression of joy and the soul's emotions in general as are heard in the instrumental works of the great masters. To me, for instance, the Leonore Overture, No. 3, and the Introduction to the 2d Act of Fidelio are a much higher expression of this drama than the Opera itself.

—There are, however, composers who have written vocal music exclusively; do you consequently despise them?

—Such composers seem to me like people who only have the right to answer questions proposed

to them, not, however, to ask questions or to declare and express themselves.

—But why does every composer, and as is well known did Beethoven, also, long to write an Opera?

—Quick and general recognition has in it something very enticing—to see gods, kings, priests, heroes, peasants, men of all times, all climes, and of every art, act and sing to one's melodies, has something, indeed, enticing in it—the highest, however, remains *to express one's self about them*, and that can be done instrumentally only.

—The public, however, prefers the Opera to the Symphony.

—Because it understands the Opera more readily. Aside from the interest which the subject of the play awakens, the words explain the music to it.—To be wholly enjoyable, the Symphony requires the comprehension of music and this quality is possessed only in the smallest proportion by the public. Instrumental music is the soul of music —but this truth must be anticipated, sought out,

discovered, fathomed. The public does not trouble itself to do this in listening to a work!—All the beauties to be found in the instrumental works of the great masters (classic) are known to the public from childhood, through the enthusiasm of parents or the expressed opinions of its teachers, which a priori admiration it brings with it; should it, however, be obliged to discover their beauties of itself, it would be sparing of its applause, even to the classical works, now-a-days.

—I see that you are entirely predisposed in favor of instrumental music.

—Not exclusively, of course, but at all events in a high degree.

—Mozart has written very much instrumental music of all kinds, too.

—And wondrously beautiful; but Mt. Blanc is still not as high as Chimborazo.

—How is it then that Chopin and Glinka are among your prophets?

—To explain that, would, I am afraid, weary you or interest you too little.

—I beg you to do so, with the single condition that you do not oblige me to agree with all you may say.

—On the contrary, I wish very much to hear the objections to my opinions, only do not be too much frightened by my paradoxes!

—I am all ear.

—It has always been a matter of interesting speculation to me *whether* and *in what degree* music not only reflects the individuality and spiritual emotion of the composer, but is also the echo or refrain of the age, the historical events, the state of society, culture, etc., in which it is written. And I am convinced that it does and is so, even to the smallest detail that even the costumes and fashions of the time in which the composer writes are to be recognized, entirely aside from the quaint "cue" which usually serves as a characteristic of a certain epoch—only, however, since music has become a language of its own and not the mere interpreter of set words, viz.: since the flourish of instrumental music.

—It is generally held that music does not admit of any positive characteristic at all; that one and the same melody may sound gay or sad, according to the character of the words to which it is sung.

—To me instrumental music alone is the standard, and I hold that music is a language—to be sure of a hieroglyphic tone—image, character; one must first have deciphered the hieroglyphics, then, however, he may read all that the composer intends to say, and there remains only the more particular indication of the meaning—the latter is the task of the interpreter. For example:—Beethoven's Sonata, op. 81; in the first movement, designated "*Les adieux*," the character of the Allegro, after the introduction, does not throughout give expression to the usual idea of sorrow at parting. What then is to be deciphered from these hieroglyphics? The care and preparation for departure, the numberless farewells, the sincere sympathy of those remaining behind, the varied reflections on the long journey,

the good wishes, in a word all the exchanges of endearment usual in leaving those we love. The second movement is called "*L'absence*;" if the executant be able to express the soulful tone of sorrow and longing in his interpretation, no further explanation is necessary. The third movement is called "*Le retour*," and the interpreter has to present to his hearers a whole poem on the joys of return. The first theme of unspeakable tenderness (one almost sees the tearful glance of happiness in meeting) then the joy that it is well with him, the interest in the recounting of his experience and the ever recurring: "What a joy to see you again!—do not leave us (me) again! we (I) shall not let him go again," and so on. Before the close another glance of pleased satisfaction, then the embrace and climax of happiness. Is it possible not to call instrumental music a language? Of course, if the first movement be rendered merely in a lively tempo, the second merely in a slow tempo, and the third merely in a spirited tempo, the executant feeling no neces-

sity for further expression, then we might call instrumental music non-expressive, and regard vocal music as alone capable of real expression. Another example:—The ballad in F major, No. 2 of Chopin. Is it possible that the interpreter does not feel the necessity of representing to his hearers:—a field flower caught by a gust of wind, a caressing of the flower by the wind, the resistance of the flower, the stormy struggle of the wind, the entreaty of the flower which at last lies broken there. This may also be paraphrased, the field flower, a rustic maiden, the wind a knight, and thus with almost every instrumental composition.

—Then you are an advocate of "programme music?"

—Not altogether. I am in favor of *the to-be-divined* and *poetized*, not of the *given* programme of a composition. I am convinced that every composer writes, not merely notes in a given key, a given tempo, a given rhythm; but, on the contrary, encloses a mood of the tone, that

is, a programme in his composition, in the rational hope that the interpreter and hearer may apprehend it. Sometimes he gives his composition a general name, that is, a guide for interpreter and hearer, and more than this is not necessary, for a detailed programme of emotion is not to be reproduced in words. Thus I understand programme music, not, however, in the sense of the reflected tone-painting of certain things or events; the latter is admissible only in the sense of the naive or comic.

—But the Pastorale Symphony of Beethoven is certainly tone-painting!

—The Pastorale establishes a characteristic expression in music of the rustic, the merry, the simple, the hardy (represented by the fifths in bass and organ point*). Besides this there are imitations of natural phenomena, as storm, thunder, lightning, etc., exactly the above-mentioned *naiveté* in music, as well as the imitation of the

*) This has no reference to the Russian Pastorale, the character of which is quite different, and is mostly of a vocal art.

cuckoo, and the twitter of birds. Aside from this tone-painting Beethoven's Symphony mirrors only the mood of nature and the rustic; that is, programme music in its most logical expression.

—The Romantic-Fantastic style: elves, witches, fairies, nixies, gnomes, demons, good and evil spirits, spectres, and so forth without a programme is inconceivable?!

—And quite correctly, as it is based entirely on *naiveté* in the composer as well as in the hearer.

—But every piece of music published now-a-days (with the exception of those in which the title designates the musical form, as sonata, etc.) bears a name, that is, a programme designation?!

—The publishers are mostly to blame for that; they compel the composer to give his composition a name in order to spare the public the trouble of having to apprehend it, and many titles, such as Nocturno, Romanze, Impromptu, Caprice, Barcarole, etc., having become stereotype, facilitate the understanding and rendering of the composition for the public; otherwise these works would

run the risk of receiving names from the public itself. How droll this may become is sufficiently shown by one example: "*The Moonlight Sonata.*" Moonlight demands in music the expression of the dreamy, fanciful, peaceful—a soft, mild radiance. Now the first movement of the C sharp minor Sonata is tragic from the first to the last note (the minor key itself indicates as much); a beclouded heaven, the gloomy mood of the soul—the last movement is stormy, passionate, and the exact opposite of peaceful radiance; the short second movement alone would in any case allow of a momentary moonlight—and this sonata is universally called "The Moonlight Sonata!"

—You claim then that the composer alone can give his work a proper title?

—I will not say that. Even with Beethoven's appellations, the Pastorale Symphony and Sonata op. 81 excepted, I cannot declare myself satisfied. If I did so I should be obliged to assume that he determined the name of the whole composition according to the character of *one* movement,

or the *theme* of one movement, or an *episodic* phrase of one movement. For example: "*Sonata Pathetique*"—probably so called from the character of the introduction, and its episodical repetition during the first movement; for the theme of the first allegro bears a decidedly dramatic, animated character; and the second theme with its mordents is anything rather than pathetic, and even the last movement—what indeed of the pathetic does it contain? Only the second movement, at most, would admit of this title. The same is true, in my opinion, of the Symphony "Eroica." The idea of heroic is in musical language the valorous, splendid, defiant, or, in other words, the tragic. That the first movement is not intended to be tragic is indicated at once by the major key; the $\frac{3}{4}$ measure also contradicts the idea of a tragic-heroic character. Besides this, the *legato* of the first theme indicates a decided lyric character, the second theme has a pronounced longing character, the third theme a sorrowing-dreamy one. That powerful effects appear in

the movement proves nothing. Powerful moments may also be found in compositions of a melancholy character, but a movement in which all of the themes are of a decidedly anti-heroic character I cannot designate heroic. The third movement of the symphony is probably a merry music of the chase; the fourth movement, a theme with variations, of which two at most have a heroic colour, might indeed be called of heroic character if it entered *forte* with the brass instruments. The title then is given to the Symphony only on account of the second movement, which indeed is of an entirely tragic-heroic character! This is an evidence that at that time one could give a title to his work which corresponded to one only of its movements; to-day it is otherwise (perhaps more correct); a title implies one and the same characteristic for the whole work from beginning to end.

—You speak of instrumental music only, then music for you begins with Haydn?

—O, much earlier! Two centuries were needed

to arrive at Haydn's maturity in form and tone effect. I call the time until the second half of the XVI. century the prehistoric era of music as an art, since we know nothing whatever of the music of the ancient Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans, or at least only its scientific progress; the latter too only from the time of the Christian era until the above-mentioned age; even of the folk-song*), and the dance rhythm, these two most popular expressions of music, there is almost nothing known to us**), hence I denote the above-mentioned date as the beginning of music as an art***). Palestrina's church compositions are the first works of

*) With the exception of the Ambrosian and Gregorian chants we cannot say with certainty whether folk songs, by a setting of religious texts, became church songs or the opposite, that church songs by the use of profane text have become folk-songs.

**) Of the Troubadours, Minne-singers, yes, even of the later Meistersingers, we know only the literary history, little or nothing of the musical.

***) The Netherland epoch I also reckon as only a scientific epoch of the art of music.

art, in the following sense: I call a work of art one in which the merely scientific ceases to be the prescribed standard, and in which a spiritual emotion asserts itself. Frescobaldi's organ compositions give to this instrument artistic character; the English composers, Bull, Bird and others, attempt the artistic for the Virginal and Clavecin (our modern pianoforte).

—Can we refer these beginnings of the artistic in music in any manner to the historical events of that day, or to its state of culture?

—In church music it is the immediate effect of the straits of the Catholic church, whose Popes, incited by the attacks of Protestanism, felt themselves obliged to carry out a stricter discipline and higher standard in monkish and ecclesiastic affairs, and a more earnest aim and more ideal views in questions of religion. In profane music it is the natural effect of the splendor of the courts of that day, especially the English Court of Elizabeth; her predilection for music and for the Virginal, which led composers to write

amusingly and, according to the standard of that time, interestingly.

—Do you find in their compositions a sufficient degree of spiritual emotion that you would call them artistic?

—Certainly not; I would call these the first endeavors to express something instrumentally.

—So these are naive expressions of art?

—Yes, of course; they are the first programme-music, in the sense of naive imitation, of entertainment, for society. This style held sway a whole century, that is, until the "Suite" (a succession of dances then in vogue); in France even longer, as there the two most distinguished musicians admired this style, and in it did really very remarkable work: Couperin and Rameau.

—And in Italy?

—There, church music flourished especially, but was gradually overshadowed by a new style of art which began to develop itself, viz.: the Opera. In instrumental music, with the exception of numerous organists, only two names can

command our attention, Corelli for the Violin and D. Scarlatti for the Pianoforte.*) The latter called his compositions Sonata, *i.e.*, "*sounding*," "*played*," but they have nothing in common with the later sonata form.

—So in instrumental music, and this, if I rightly understand you, is what alone interests you, we were then still in a state of infancy?

—Quite true, although I would not wish to have Scarlatti, Couperin and Rameau undervalued. The first, on account of his freshness, his humor and his virtuosity; in the second I appreciate a highly remarkable, artistic nature, and a combatant for higher art aims in an insignificant epoch in music, especially in his own country; the third I esteem as a pioneer and founder of the French Comic Opera, who also composed very ingeniously for the pianoforte.

*) Compositions written for Clavecin, Clavichord, Clavicembalo, Virginal, Spinett, etc., I designate as written for Pianoforte, as to-day we can only perform them on this instrument.

—But in England, instrumental music, at least for the Pianoforte, must have developed itself, since its first beginnings are discovered there?!

—There, too, vocal music occupied the foreground, especially in madrigals and other choral works, but it is as though, with Henry Purcell, this nation had given expression to everything of which it was capable, for after him complete silence reigns, and with the exception of the Oratorio and the Opera (both styles nourished and represented by foreigners) it has so remained almost to the present day, when it begins to wake again.

—One thing is enigmatical to me—what Shakespeare could have heard of music there, in his time, that so inspired him with a love for this art?

—Is he not the one among poets who expresses himself the most often and the most enthusiastically on music, and even in his Sonnets on piano-playing.

—And in Germany?

—There church music, with Luther, acquired a new character by the introduction of the Choral and as in Italy, so in Germany distinguished organists appear (Frohberger, Kuhnau, Buxtehude). In general, however, music as an art, in comparison with Italy, has not as yet reached an important standpoint, but all at once, in the same year, and in villages merely a few hours apart, two names shine forth with which music expresses herself in a splendor, a perfection equal to the "*Let there be light!*" These two names are: J. S. Bach and G. F. Händel. Church music, organ, pianoforte virtuosity, opera, even the orchestra, everything musical of their time, these two names represent in a perfection that is inconceivable, and bordering on the miraculous. With them music first attains the rank to which she is equally entitled by birth among the arts—to be sure she is the youngest sister, but through these masters she receives the perfect stamp of maturity.

—And do you consider them equally exalted?

—To me Bach is incomparably higher, because more earnest, more genial, more profound, more inventive, more incommensurable; but to complete the idea of the art of music at that time, the union of the two names is necessary, if only on account of the remarkable work accomplished by Händel in the Opera, a branch of art which Bach ignored entirely.

—How does your idea that music is the expression of historical events and the standard of the culture of a given time coincide with the still-stand of the art of music in Germany during the whole of the XVII. Century and with the sudden appearance of these two stars? You can scarcely deny that exactly at this time many great events took place?

—It is oftener the echo than the re-echo, and so also here. It was the war between Catholicism and Protestantism; during the strife, music was only the prayer in the ritual; the Protestant religion gained an equal footing with the Catholic,

that is, it emerged victoriously from the strife, and Bach and Händel arose to sing her Hymn of Victory!

—But were they not fundamentally different in style?

—Certainly, that arises naturally from the difference in the style of life of each and its demands. Bach moved in a small world, lived in several, then insignificant cities (last in Leipzig), in the circle of his large family, in his narrow calling of Cantor at the church of St. Thomas; his character was serious, deeply religious, patriarchal, of a nature not given to sociability; his dress unpretending and plain, and he was an indefatigable worker, even to blindness. Händel lived mostly in the great city of London, had the patronage of the Court and of the public, was an Opera Director, was compelled to write Court and Festival music; we know little of his family, very little of his social life; he wore a long perruque, and in general the elegant dress of the higher English circle; grandeur, splendor, and some

superficiality*) characterize his creations; he wrote Operas, profane and sacred Oratorios, few instrumental works (the most beautifully in his Pianoforte Suites), thus, seldom *intime*, soulful, tender.

—To you Bach is more sympathetic, because he has written more instrumental works?

—Not merely on that account, (for has he not written a mass of vocal works unspeakably great and beautiful?) but on account of the qualities before mentioned. I do not deny, however, that he (Bach) appears to me greater at his organ and at his piano.

—You are thinking, of course, of the "Wohltemperirte Clavier"?

—You probably know the anecdote of Benvenuto Cellini, who had a great work to cast for the King of France, and found himself without

*) Proof thereof, the possibility of transforming an Opera number into an Oratorio and vice versa, an Oratorio number into an Opera, which he, as is well known not seldom did; also the rapidity of his work—the Messiah was written in three weeks, and immediately after that "Samson," in as short a time.

material enough to finish it; he decided to melt all of his models in order to increase the material; in doing so the model of a little goblet came to hand; he hesitates; *that*, he will not destroy; it would grieve him *too* much! The Wohl-temperirte Clavier is just such a jewel in music. If, unfortunately, all of Bach's Cantatas, Motettes, Masses, yes, even the Passion-Music, were to be lost, and this alone remained, we would not need despair, music were not entirely destroyed. Now, add to this the Chromatic-Fantasia, the Variations, Partiten, Inventions, the English Suites, the Concertos, the Ciacona, the Piano and Violin Sonates, and more than all—his Organ Compositions! Can one measure his greatness?

—Why does the public then call him only the "great scholar" (Grossen Gelehrten), personify him in the fugue, and deny that he has soulful feeling?

—From pure ignorance!—It is quite right to personify him in the fugue, as this form has in him its very greatest representative; but there is

more of soul in an instrumental cantilena of Bach than in any Opera aria or Church Music ever written. Liszt's saying, that "*there is music which comes of itself to us,*" and other music "*that requires us to come to it,*" is, in the latter sense, as regards Bach, most appropriate. A few come and are blest; the public is not capable of doing so; hence this so fundamentally false opinion of him.

—But is not the fugue after all, a dry, scholastic form?!

—With all others, but not with Bach. He knew how to express all imaginable emotions in this form—if we take the "Wohl-temperirte Clavier" alone, the fugues are of a religious, heroic, melancholy, majestic, lamenting, humorous, pastoral and dramatic character, alike in one thing only, their *beauty!* Add to these the preludes whose charm, variety, perfection and splendor are all entrancing. That the same being who could write organ compositions of such astounding grandeur, could compose Gavottes, Bourrées, Gigues

of such charmingly merry art, Sarabandes so melancholy, little Piano pieces of such witchery and simplicity, is scarcely to be believed. And yet I have mentioned only his instrumental works. When we add to these his gigantic vocal compositions, we must come to the conclusion that a time will arrive when it will be said of him as of Homer: "*This was not written by one, but by many.*"

—And what remains of greatness for Händel?

—Grandeur, splendor, mass-effect and effect on the masses by simplicity of outline in diatonic construction, (pregnant contrast to Bach's Chromatics), noble realism, and geniality in general. Aphoristically I would distinguish the two: Bach, a Cathedral; Händel, a Royal Castle; those in the Cathedral speaking low and timidly, impressed by the power of the structure and the exalted magnitude of its fundamental idea.*) In the Royal Castle the loud exclamations of wondering

*) That is in general the impression of the hearer in listening to the performance of a work by Bach.

admiration, and the feeling of humility awakened by the splendor, brilliancy, and grandeur.

—Then we must admit that after these heroes of the art nothing more of the grand and beautiful remains to be created?

—In many directions,—not in Church music, in Oratorio, for the Organ. Altogether I recognize in them the point of climax in the first epoch of the art of music; that is, beginning, according to my estimation, with Palestrina. But new times demanding new expression in art came after these two; new lyric, romantic, dramatic, tragic and fantastic styles resound, and lastly, nationality; these all represented by great spirits—and so the art of music still makes enormous advancement. A new era breaks upon us—the Orchestra supplants the Organ; the Opera the Oratorio and the Church-cantata; the Sonata supplants the Suite; the Pianoforte supplants the Clavecin, Clavicembalo, Clavichord, etc. But, although the Opera alone ruled the public for almost half of our century, instrumental music developed itself more

and more, and in it alone we recognize advancement in the art of music, and that in Germany only. On the other hand, Italy and France devoted themselves exclusively to vocal music. For this reason I, who recognize the ideal of my art in instrumental music alone, call music a German art.

—We have came now to Haydn and Mozart?

—Not yet. There is one still to be mentioned who, singularly enough, has only lately begun to be acknowledged as he deserves, and whom I regard as the Father of the second (instrumental) epoch of the art of music, and who has done most important work in *that* field in which the masters named by you were able to present us with so much of the beautiful—that is, Philipp Emanuel Bach. It is an error altogether, in music, to say *he* created the *Opera*, *he* the *Symphony*, *he* the *String-quartette*, *he* the *Sonata*, and so on. Everything has had its origin in many, and little by little; then one always appears who accomplishes the most beautiful in that particular form, and at once becomes the bearer of its name.

—Is Ph. Em. Bach in no-wise the legitimate successor of his father in music!?

—In the sense of geniality, certainly not; but he was the representative of a new time, of new ideas in the art. By his treatise on rendering and on the styles of expression in Piano playing alone, he opened new fields to the composers of this more and more prominent instrument; in his compositions also we find the germs of all later efforts. Haydn's amiability and naiveté, Mozart's loving tenderness, even Beethoven's dramatique and humor are indicated only, to be sure, but none the less is the germ apparent, filling in this manner the connecting link between J. S. Bach and Haydn, and in so doing, drawing music from North Germany to Vienna.

—This transmigration of music for a half century, and its return to North Germany is quite remarkable. Instrumental music develops more and more, and becomes in an astonishing manner the pronounced expression, the echo or re-echo of the age, its historical events and its state of

culture. It is scarcely possible to imagine a truer picture of the last quarter of the XVIII. century until 1825 than is sung in the works of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert, especially in reference to Vienna. This, of course, is not to be understood as literal or plastic expression, but as tone-allegorical, relative, and affinitive. An amiable, genial, merry, naive, careless tone; not touching in the slightest degree upon the weal and woe of mankind, or the spirit of the world and its sorrows; bringing his Maecenas (Prince Esterhazy) a new symphony or a new string-quartette almost every Sunday, that good old gentleman, with his pockets full of bon-bons (in a musical sense) for the children (the public), however always ready to give the badly-behaved a sharp reprimand; the good-natured faithful subject and functionary, the just and strict teacher, the good-souled pastor, the distinguished citizen in powdered perruque and cue, in a long, broad frock, in frill and lace, in buckled shoes—all that I hear in the music of Haydn. I hear him speak, not

High-German, but in Vienna dialect. Whenever I play or hear his compositions, I see his public; ladies who, on account of the prevailing toilette, can scarcely move themselves, and who smile and nod, applauding his graceful melodies and naive musical merriment with their fans. Gentlemen who, taking a pinch of snuff, snap the box-lid down with the words: "*Nay, after all, there is nothing to compare with our good old Haydn!*" ("*Ya, über unsern alten Haydn geht halt doch nix!*"). We have to thank him for very much as regards instrumental music. He brought the symphonic orchestra almost to Beethoven's maturity, stamped the string-quartette as one of the most noble and most beautiful forms of music, gave grace and elegance to pianoforte composition and technique, and enriched, broadened and systematized instrumental forms. Yes, he is a remarkable personage in the art, but withal, the amiable, smiling (sometimes sarcastic), careless, contented old gentleman—in his "Creation," as well as in his "Seasons," in his Symphonies as

well as in his Quartettes, in his Sonatas as well as in his Pianoforte pieces—in short, in his whole musical creation.

—And Mozart?

—Just as Haydn, as the *old Haydn*, becomes a type, so Mozart, as the *young Mozart*, may be called a type. Although as to his age and surroundings, standing on the same level of culture with Haydn, he is young, sincere, tender in everything; the journeys of his childhood also had an influence on his musical thoughts and feeling.—In consequence the Opera became his chief work, but his entire *Ego* he gives us in his instrumental works, and there I hear him too, like Haydn, speak the Vienna dialect. Helios of music I would call him! He has illuminated all forms of music with his splendor, on one and all impressed this stamp of the god-like. We are at a loss which to admire most in him, his melody or his technic, his crystal clearness or the richness of his invention. The symphony in G minor (this *unicum* of symphonic lyric), the last move-

ment of the "Jupiter" Symphony (this *unicum* in symphonic technic), the overtures to the "Zauberflöte," or to "Figaro's Hochzeit" (these *unica* of the merry, the fresh, the god-like), the Requiem (this *unicum* of sweet tone-in-sorrow), the Pianoforte Fantasias, the String Quintette in G minor; in the latter it is not uninteresting to see verified how greatly wealth of melody outweighs everything else in music.—We demand generally, in quartette style, a polyphonic treatment of the voices; here however, homophony reigns, the very simplest accompaniment to every theme that enters—and we revel in the enjoyment of this divine melodie! and at last, besides all these, the wonderful instrumental works, the wonderful operas! Gluck, it is true, had achieved great things in the opera before him; yes, opened new paths—but in comparison with Mozart he is, so to say, of stone.—Besides, Mozart has the merit of having removed the opera from the icy pathos of mythology into real life, into the purely human, and from the Italian to the German

language, and thereby to a national path.—The most remarkable feature of his operas is the musical characteristic he has given to every figure, so that each acting personage has become an immortal type.—It is true that the happy choice of material and its excellent scenic treatment was of great assistance in this.

—The text to the "Magic-Flute" is generally considered childish and ludicrous!?

—I hold a contrary opinion—even if it were only on account of the variety it offers to the musician. Pathetic, fantastic, lyric, comic, naive, romantic, dramatic, tragic, yes, it would be hard to find an expression that is wanting in it. The case is the same in *Don Juan*. It is evident the genius of a Mozart was required to reproduce it all musically, as he has done; but such Opera texts might incite less genial composers to interesting work.

—But that which *he* has made, he alone could make!

—Yes, a god-like creation—all flooded with

light. In hearing Mozart I always wish to exclaim: "Eternal sunshine in music, thy name is Mozart!"

—It is incomprehensible to me, how you, while giving him such exhalted admiration, still do not give him the highest recognition.

—Mankind thirsts for a storm—it feels that it may become dry and parched in the Eternal Haydn-Mozart sunshine; it wishes to express itself earnestly, it longs for action, it becomes dramatic, the French revolution breaks forth—Beethoven appears!

—But you do not mean to say that Beethoven is the musical reverberation of the French Revolution?

—Not the *Guillotine*, of course, but at all events of that great drama; in no-wise history set to music, but the tragedy echoing in music which is called "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity!"

—He is, however, the positive continuation of the Haydn and Mozart period, at least in the works of his first period.

—The forms in his first period are the forms then reigning, but the line of thought is, even in the works of his youth, a wholly different one. The last movement in his *first* Pianoforte Sonata (F minor), more especially in the second theme, is already a new world of emotion, expression, pianoforte effect, and even pianoforte technic. So too, the Adagio in the second Sonata (A major), the Adagio in the first String-Quartette (F major), and so on. And already the treatment of the instruments in his first three Trios is entirely different from that used until then. In the works of his first period altogether, as I have said, we recognize only the formulae of the earlier composers; for, although the garb still remains the same for a time, we hear even in these works, that natural hair will soon take the place of the powdered perruque and cue; that boots, instead of buckled shoes, will change the gait of the man (in music, too); that the coat, instead of the broad frock with the steel buttons, will give him another bearing, and even these works resound with the

loving tone (as in Haydn and Mozart) the soulful tone (not apparent in the former), and very soon after with the aesthetic (as in them), the ethic (in them wanting), and we become aware that he supplants the Menuet with the Scherzo, and so stamps his works with a more virile and earnest character; that through him instrumental music will be capable of expressing the dramatic even to the tragic, that humor may rise to irony, that music in general has acquired an entirely new art of expression. His greatness in the Adagio is astounding, from the innermost lyric to the metaphysical; yes, he attains to the mystical in this art of expression. But he is entirely unapproached in his Scherzos (some of them I would compare with the jester in "King Lear.") Smiling, laughing, merry-making, not seldom bitterness, irony, effervescence, in short, a world of psychological expression is heard in them. Emanating not from a human being, but as from an invisible Titan, who now rejoices over humanity, now is offended; now makes him-

self merry over them and again weeps—enough, wholly incommensurable!

—Well, it will be difficult to come into contradiction with you in regard to Beethoven, because all equally admire him.

—And yet I entertain some difference of opinion in regard to him which I cannot refrain from expressing. Thus, for example, I consider "Fidelio" the greatest opera in existence to-day, because it is the true music drama in every particular; because, with all the reality of the musical characteristic, there is always the most beautiful melody; because, notwithstanding all interest in the orchestra, the latter does not speak for the acting persons upon the stage, but lets them speak for themselves; because every tone of it comes from the deepest and truest of the soul and must reach the soul of the hearer—and still it is the generally accepted opinion that Beethoven could not be an opera composer. I do not regard his "*Missa solemnis*" as one of his greatest creations, and it is generally regarded as such.

—May I ask why it does not find grace in your eyes?

—Because, aside from the purely musical in it, with which in many ways I do not sympathize, I hear in the whole composition a being who speaks with God, disputes with Him, but does not pray to Him nor adore Him as he has done so beautifully in his "Geistliche Lieder" ("Spiritual songs"). I do not either share the opinion that the use of the vocal in the last movement of the Ninth Symphony was a desire on his part for a culmination of the musical expression in a technical sense for the symphony in general—but on the contrary, that after the "unutterable" of the first three movements he intended to have something utterable, hence the last movement, with addition of the vocal (with words).—I do not believe that this last movement is intended as the Ode to Joy but the Ode to Freedom.—It is said that Schiller was moved by the censure he received, to write Freude instead of Freiheit (joy instead of freedom), and that Beethoven

knew this—I believe it, most decidedly.—Joy is not acquired, it comes, and it is there; but freedom must be won—hence the theme begins *pianissimo* in the Bassi, goes through many variations, to ring out finally in a triumphant *fortissimo*—and Freedom too is a very serious thing, hence also the earnest character of the theme. "Seid umschlungen Millionen" ("Be embraced ye millions") is also not reconcilable with joy, since joy is of a more individual character and cannot embrace all mankind—and in the same way, many other things.

—So you also do not share the opinion that Beethoven would have written many things differently and others not at all if he had not become deaf?

—Not in the slightest degree.—That which we call his third period was the period of his deafness—and what would music be without this third period? The last Pianoforte Sonatas, the last String Quartettes, the Ninth Symphony and others were possible only because of his deafness.

—This absolute concentration, this being transported into another world, this tone-full soul, this lament never heard before, this bound Prometheus, this soaring above everything earthly, this tragic not even approximately present in any other opera; all that could only find means to express itself because of his deafness. He had indeed written the most beautiful, yes unrivalled works before his deafness; for example, what is the "Höllen-scene" of Gluck's "Orpheus" in comparison with the second movement of his G-major Piano Concerto? What any Tragedy (Hamlet and King Lear possibly excepted) in comparison with the second movement of his D-major Trio? —What is the whole Drama in comparison with the "Coriolanus Overture"?

—But yet the most exalted, the most wondrous, the most inconceivable, was not written until after his deafness. As the *seer* may be imagined blind, that is, blind to all his surroundings, and seeing with the eyes of the soul, so the *hearer* may be imagined deaf, deaf to all his surroundings and

hearing with the hearing of the soul. O deafness of Beethoven, what unspeakable sorrow for himself, and what unspeakable joy for art and for humanity!

—You did right to warn me of your paradoxes.

—If only as much truth as is contained in every paradox is to be found in this opinion of mine I am happy to have felt so.

—So then Beethoven has expressed the Alpha and Omega in music?

—Not quite.—He has taken us with him in his flight to the stars, but from below a song is resounding: "O come hither, the earth too is so beautiful!" This song Schubert sings to us.

—You are contradicting yourself there, he was vocal composer *par excellence!*

—Not in the pretentious sense of the opera (in which he achieved but little), but in the sense of the song, the one and only legitimate vocal music besides church music—and in addition he has written so much and such wondrous instrumental music! I regard Beethoven's second

epoch as the point of culmination in the art of music, and Schubert as the father of the third epoch. Yes, this Schubert is a remarkable presence in music! While in the case of all others (even the greatest) we find a preparatory forerunner, he appears as developed of himself (or even if he had predecessors they are entirely unknown to us), and that too in vocal as in instrumental music. He creates a new lyric, the lyric-romantic in music, before him the song was either the naive Couplet or the Ballade, stiff, dry, with recitatives, with shallow cantilena, scholastic form, meaningless accompaniment, etc. —He creates the emotional song, which comes from the heart and penetrates to the heart—gives the musical poem to the poetic one; the melody that declares the words; he creates a form of art in which very much that is beautiful has been done after him, but in which he still stands unrivalled. What can rival the "Winterreise," the "Schwanengesang," the "Müllerlieder," and so many others? Besides these he created the

little piano-pieces—and there he is too most inexplicable! Living at the same time and in the same city with Beethoven and so entirely uninfluenced in his musical creation—in his symphony as well as his chamber music; and also in his piano music.—Compare Beethoven's "Bagatellen" alone with Schubert's "Moments musicals," or with his "Impromptus."—Yes, he stands alone in his song, as in his little piano-pieces, in his "Rhapsody Hongroise" for four hands, in his Marches for four hands, his Waltzes and Fantasias, in short, in all that he has created. In one form alone he does not attain the highest altitude, that is the Sonata, but (1st) Beethoven had really said the last word in this form, and (2d) to the pronounced lyric-romantic character of his creation this epic form was not natural.

—He is generally accused of want of form.

—His peculiarity of inserting whole songs (without words) into his larger works (*heavenly* themes with *earthly* interludes and reproduction), in extending them to great lengths (especially to

be felt in his Pianoforte Sonatas with exception of two or three) Schumann has so rightly called "*heavenly lengths.*"

—Can he and Beethoven really have been so estranged?

—They were acquainted, but there was no mutual esteem; the latter is known only of Schubert. Beethoven was either entirely locked up within himself (toward musicians often rude and forbidding, besides being hard of access on account of his deafness), or moved in the highest circles of society (the Arch-Duke Rudolf was his pupil, friend and patron). Schubert was a genuine Viennese-child-of-the-people. The Folks'-garden, the street, the café, the gipsies, his world; the Vienna dialect (as with Hayden and Mozart) his language. His songs were seldom sung in public, mostly only in the circle of his friends; the same in regard to his instrumental music, and his C-major Symphony he himself never heard! So these two geniuses lived at the same time and in the same city, and remained almost

unknown to each other. A sad evidence that music even at that time was not the common property of the public (opera excepted), but only a pastime for certain circles!

—He died young?

—And did not gain recognition, even in his songs, until some time after his death.—Bach has only been rescued from obscurity since the year 1830, and Beethoven's third period was for the greater half of our century designated, even by musicians, as a sickly, yet crazed period.

—Schubert's enormous creation in so short a life is incomprehensible to me.

—"*He sang as the birds sing*" always and without ceasing, from a full heart, a full throat, gave himself as he was, and polished his works but slightly.

—That you do not intend to reckon as a merit?

—God created woman; certainly the most beautiful of his creations, *but full of faults.*—He did not polish them away, being convinced that all that was faulty in her would be out-weighed

by her charms—so Schubert in his compositions; his melody out-weighs all deficiency, if deficiency there be. One of his most sympathetic attributes is his naturalness—how harmlessly by the side of the highest and most beautiful he exhibits the "Kreuzfidelen Lerchenfelder Wiener" in the last movement of the C-major String Quintette, in the last movement of the D-major Pianoforte Sonata, in the last movement of the G-major Fantasia, and so forth, and withal the manifoldness and versatility of his creation.—And then his songs, "*Die Krähe*," "*Der Doppelgänger*," "*Du bist die Ruh*," "*Der Atlas*," "*Aufenthalt*," "*Der Erlkönig*," his Walzes—then his String Quartettes in A- and D-minor, his Hungarian Rhapsody—then his "*Moments musicals*," the Symphony in C-major—no—again, and a thousand times over and over, Bach, Beethoven and Schubert occupy the highest pinnacles in music!

—As yet you have not explained to me how Chopin and Glinka hold the right to be classed with these.

—Vienna has sung its song.—Music seeks its previous home, North Germany.

—You mean German music, as Mèhul, Gretry, Cherubini, Spontini, Rossini and others, did not live in Germany.

—They are composers of vocal music exclusively, hence for me, not *standard bearers* of the art of music.

—Who then in your opinion is the continuation of the chain?

—Weber.

—Would you, if he had not written his operas, regard him too as a standard-bearer of the art?

—Not in the full significance of the word; I could not however pass him by—as his pianoforte compositions, much that is new in his treatment of the orchestra, and especially his overtures, stamp him as such.—Still, you are quite right in regarding his operas as his greatest works.—It is remarkable how decidedly he has become a *type* in all the styles in which he created. Everything that he did has been imitated—the Folk-

tone (Freischütz), the Romantic-fantastic (Oberon), the Lyric-romantic (Euryanthe), his Arias, his Hunting Choruses, his Overtures and his Pianoforte compositions (Concertstücke, etc.). Concerning his Pianoforte Sonatas, although they do not by any means attain the height of invention, the depth of conception, the earnest emotion, the artistic standard of the Beethoven Sonatas, still in their art they are highly valuable compositions. For the pianoforte he is, as it were, Virtuoso-Composer.

—What do you mean by that?

—Compositions, in which the "passage" appears as personage—where brilliancy and effect occupy the foreground even at the expense of the musical contents—however, when we remember to what shallowness this style was brought *after him*, we can look upon *his* work with respect.

—Do you care so little for opera in general that you do not consider it worth while to mention its progress side by side with the progress of instrumental music?

—If I wished to illustrate to you only *my own* sympathies as regards the progress of our art, I should be obliged now to pass over at once to Mendelssohn.—You demand my opinion of everything, however, and so we will first explore two fields, which have been prodigiously cultivated, and which more than everything mentioned heretofore have entertained and delighted the public, these are: the *Opera*, in vocal music, *Virtuosity*, in instrumental music.

—With the Opera you will probably begin in Italy?

—Both have their beginning there,—there the Opera (buffa and seria) bloomed and flourished, developing very quickly and to a high degree, and in such a manner, that, with the exception of France, where with Lulli it appears at once in the French language, it was adopted in the Italian language, over the whole world and through the half of the present century.

—The reason for this is probably that the Italian climate and language have helped to give

us the best singers. To this circumstance Italy, however, is also indebted for the ever increasing decline in the art of creation among its composers. They were obliged to write beautiful Cantilenas, grand coloratur-arias, whether allowable by the subject of the drama or not, in order to give the singer opportunity to show his skill—and hence they were obliged to give the orchestra only an insignificant accompanying role. For these reasons, to the earnest musician, Italian Opera is to-day synonymous with *insignificant* and *inartistic*.

—From an aesthetic standpoint this is altogether justifiable, from a purely musical standpoint, not entirely so, for a beautiful Cantilena is after all, to be prized, and there are many to be found in Italian Opera.—Italian Opera in its prime, is the period before Mozart, the number of its composers is legion, and they rank as classic there in this style.—Of the Mozart and after-Mozart periods the most important are: Salieri, Cimarosa, Paesiello, Paër, and later Rossini—his "Barbier von Sevilla" in freshness, melody, humor, character-

istic, truly a master work—his "Comte D'Ory" also his "William Tell," very remarkable in color and drama as well as in orchestral treatment, notably in the overture which might be called a work of art if he had substituted something more appropriate for the last allegro! In his other operas also we find the trivial and inartistic side by side with much that is excellent. It is a not uninteresting fact that he, as well as the Italian composers *before* and *after* him, preserved a more noble tone, and gave the orchestra a more interesting treatment in the operas they wrote for the French Stage, in the French language, than in the operas written for Italy in the Italian language. Rossini ruled the entire European public for a long time—until the appearance of Bellini and shortly after that of Donizetti, who, the first by his sweet melody, the second by his *temperament* and in some measure modern dramatic tendency, crowded his works, with the exception of two or three operas, from the *repertoire*. The public and the artists revelled in these two com-

posers, and the French Grand Opera (Meyerbeer) was their only rival—and when one, as I, has heard these Operas sung by Rubini, Tamburini, Lablache, by Sontag, Grisi, Persiani, Tadolini, and Jenny Lind, he cannot help revelling in them, which I consequently did in my youth, and thoroughly.

—And has Italy done nothing in instrumental music?

—We have already spoken of Corelli and D. Scarlatti, after these nothing worthy of mention was created.—Clementi, of great significance in virtuosity and in a pedagogic sense; but of him later.—After these, Boccherini alone remains to be noticed, who has written much chamber music (Quintettes for stringed instruments), but which in no way approaches that of Haydn. Of the most importance is that which was done for and on the violin; after Corelli—Nardini, Tartini, Viotti, and especially Paganini made this instrument the most important musically after the Piano.

—France comes now on the list, since in Italy, France and Germany only, the art of music has made a progress worthy of mention, while in the other countries its progress has been of little or no importance.

—Until 1830 indeed; but from that time on lights of various magnitude arise in every corner and end of Europe; music becomes more and more a universal possession, and almost every country has more or less renowned representatives of this art.

—*Schools*, however, developed only in these three countries?

—From Rameau until Berlioz, with few exceptions, it was the Opera, solely and alone, that was cultivated in France.—The French cultivated almost exclusively the *genre* of Comic Opera, that is, opera with dialogue.—Foreigners mostly who, however, are regarded by the French as representatives of the French school (of course only those who have written in the French language) cultivated the so-called Grand

Opera, that is, opera with recitative.—They call Lulli, Cherubini, Spontini, Rossini (Italians), Gluck, Herold, Meyerbeer (Germans) "*Chefs de l'ecole Française.*"—The English also call Handel an English composer, because he wrote his Oratorios in the English language.—I cannot say that this kind of patriotism displeases me.

—There is at least more pride in that than in disowning one born and bred in a country and avowing its religion, because his name is a foreign one. The "*Opera Comique*" is, properly speaking, the type of French music—and in it they have created most charmingly—Gretry, Mehul, Monsigny, Dalayrac, Isouard, Berton, Boieldieu, Adam, Auber, Grisar, Massè, Bizet, Delibes, and others, deserve not only the respect of their nation, but the respect of all nations.—Many of these have also written serious Operas—Mehul (whose "*Joseph in Egypt*" is the equal of the best in this style), Auber, "*Die Stumme von Portici*" and others, but still the character of their creations in general remains the Opera

Comique. It is worthy of mention that with them the treatment of the orchestra is much more interesting than with the Italian composers. —Lively rhythm, ingenious, piquant; refinement, often excellence, stamp the French in music so decidedly that they, even in their symphonic creation of to-day, are the principal mark of distinction.—What they now-a-days have completely lost is the graceful, simple, charming "*Chanson*," and that is a pity! They have become "*phraseurs*" in music (in the Comic Opera also). And indeed the other nations are not far behind them in this, it seems to be the general evil of our time!

—Since the time of the Second Empire, the "Opera Comique," this charming, witty, merry, interesting *genre*, has been thrown into the shade by the "Operetta," in which the charming has become frivolous; the witty, silly; the merry, vulgar; a sort of Comic-Journal set to music *à la* "*Journal pour rire.*" The (by-the-way) talented inventor of this *genre* was *Offenbach*—he had

many imitators (Hervè, Lecocq, Audran, and others) for anything of *that* kind has disciples! This style seems lately to be losing ground in France, and Germany intends evidently to elevate it again to the comic opera in the earlier form.—The serious (Grand) Opera was, as already mentioned, mostly in the hands of foreign composers, who, however, were obliged to conform to the demands of the French public—compose in the French language, directing their attention chiefly to declamation—the latter especially gave the typical character to the French Grand Opera.—Lulli, and later Gluck, striving to stem the inbreaking Italianism, had constructed a whole system in this direction—Cherubini and Spontini also (this musical echo of the Napoleon Militarismas) remained true to it.—Later on the public demanded in the Grand Opera, besides this, an interesting, almost symphonic orchestra, interesting treatment of the subject (especially in wealth of situation) unqualified addition of the ballet and a grand setting (the Grand Opera

would not allow of less than five acts). Meyerbeer more than any other composer fulfilled these demands, and has thus become the *type* of the French Grand Opera. This composer is *over-valued* in France and in Germany *under-valued* by earnest critics. He has indeed many sins on his artist conscience: sickly vanity, longing for immediate success, want of strict self-criticism, pandering to the bad taste of an unmusical public, gloss in musical characteristic—but he has two very great qualities: Theatre-blood, highly distinguished orchestral treatment, a highly artistic handling of the massive, powerful dramatic situation, virtuosi technic, etc.—Many musicians who abuse him would no doubt be very glad if they were able to imitate him.—"Robert der Teufel," "Der Prophet," and especially "Die Hugenotten," are at any rate opera compositions of first rank! Next to him, it is Halèvy who is counted the most important in France, and his "Jüdin" is a work very well worthy of note. From here on (with the exception of Rossini, Donizetti, and

Verdi, whose several operas were given there), the Grand Opera passes entirely into the possession of French composers: Thomas, Gounod, Saint-Saëns, Massenet, Reyer, and others.

—And the instrumental music?

—Begins with Berlioz, and is only developing itself earnestly at the present day.

—So now we must turn with the opera question to Germany?

—The beginnings of opera in the German language, in the first part of the XVIII. century, in Hamburg, have only a historical, yes, almost a mere archæological interest. There too it is the comic opera alone which figures in its national language, the serious opera in the whole of Germany was presented in the Italian language. The German serious Opera is, with few exceptions (Kayser, Fuchs, Mattheson, Hasse, Hiller), a child of the *after*-Mozart time, and flourished for some time as Vaudeville, Minstrelsy (Singspiel), that is, with spoken dialogue. We touch upon a circumstance here that to me is always a

tender spot in our art.—If the Opera is able to be, in any case, a possible form of art, it could be so only in case we voluntarily accept a conventional falsehood to speak what is sung—if, however, it be sung, then spoken, then sung again, then spoken again, how is an illusion conceivable? Even in a French Vaudeville (when, after a witty dialogue or interesting scene) the (incidental) "Bon jour, Madame, comment vous portez vous" is given in a singing voice, it is to me unbearable; but in an earnest, dramatic, lyric or fantastic piece (Opera!) the melo-dramatic in a French scene of terror, or in a poisoning scene or a midnight raid, etc., where the violins, *con sordini*, begin the tremolo is to me more acceptable—and when I remember that Mozart wrote his "Magic Flute," Beethoven his "Fidelio," Weber his "Freischütz," with a spoken dialogue it makes me entirely unhappy!

—Are you disturbed by the mixture of poetry and prose in Shakespeare's plays also?

—There it is different persons who speak

differently—the unimportant persons speak in prose—the important in poetry—but in the Opera, the person who has just sung begins to speak, or one who has been speaking begins to sing.—O ruling taste, a frightful thing in art!

—I did not know that in Italy Operas with spoken dialogue existed.

—For the Comic Opera the Italians invented the "*Recitativo secco*," a very proper art of speaking musically—in the serious Opera they sing throughout.

—In this then, they take precedence of other nations in music?

—Perhaps, however, in this regard only.

—Yet Gluck, Mozart, and the German Opera in general, developed under the influence of the Italians?

—In the case of Gluck and Mozart it was only an outward influence, necessitated above all by the language and by the prevailing forms in musical works; but neither on their melody, their musical expression, nor on the progression

of their ideas is there an influence apparent. Gluck is neither an Italian nor a French musician, although he wrote his operas in these two languages; nor is Mozart an Italian musician, even though he wrote the most of his operas in that language.—Gluck wrote Gluck-music and Mozart wrote Mozart-music, and the German calls them both *his own*, because he feels the German-musician in them, although they wrote in a foreign language.

—Are you in favor of, or opposed to, national creation in music?

—The nationality of *that* land in which a composer is born and bred will, in my opinion, always be recognized in his creation; he may live in another land and write in another language, as evidence, Händel, Gluck, Mozart and others; there is, however, a reflected national creation (very much in vogue in our day), and although it may be very interesting, it cannot in my estimation command the sympathy of the united world, and awakens an ethnographical

interest at most.—For example: A melody that would charm tears from a Finnlander would fall quite coldly upon a Spaniard; a dance rhythm that would compel a Hungarian to hop and spring, would not disturb the repose of an Italian, and so on. It is true that the dance rhythm of one nation may be so grafted upon that of another that it finally accustoms itself to it, yes, even enjoys it (as for instance the waltz has become universal); but two nations can never be of complete unity of feeling, nor of the same enthusiasm in their melody and dances. The composers of the reflective-national style must rest satisfied with the acknowledgement (often adoration) of their own country, which is not to be undervalued, as it probably has also its high worth and great satisfaction.

—You have omitted to give me the names of the German Opera composers?

—The nomenclature is an exceedingly voluminous one—in the Comic Opera from Dittersdorf, Schenk, Muller to Lortzing, Flotow, Götze,

and many others; in the lyric and dramatic from Winter, Weigl, Kreutzer to Wagner, Goldmark, Kretschmar, Nessler, and many others; in the Operetta from Strauss, Suppé, Millöcker to those growing up daily in our midst.—The most important of these are already known to you, the others increase the number without advancing the art.

—You spoke of a field of virtuosity that should be explored?

—Yes, the second field, which, next to the Opera, entirely rules the public; but before we turn to this we must once more clearly review the after-Beethoven period in instrumental music.

—Is this really worthy of mention before the time of Schumann?

—Only a very few composers in Germany devoted themselves to vocal composition exclusively, the most of them cultivated almost every style—as Weber, who besides being an opera and song composer was a pianoforte composer. Spohr, the head of the German school of the violin,

was a composer in all styles of music and distinguished in all, but in all too, exhibiting mannerism to monotony, hence probably not enduring —although works such as his Opera "Jessonda," his Symphony "Die Weihe der Töne" in C-minor, several Chamber Music pieces, and especially his Violin Concertos, assure him at all events an honorable place in the literature of music. Marschner, the most important German Opera composer between Weber and Wagner, has written, besides, a large amount of Chamber-Music; Lachner, Reissiger, and others, likewise.

—And Mendelssohn?

—To give to his appearance the value that it deserves, we must not leave unmentioned a period of time, that brought us much that was indeed worthy of mention in vocal music, a period that is known as the time of the "Capellmeister-music."

—What is the meaning of this term?

—It has reference to those composers who wrote according to every rule of the art, and

after given models, but who were destitute of all creative impulse, and of the creative vein.

—And who were these functionaries of the art?

—All those who lived in the said time.—I speak of instrumental music, and thus even the names of Marschner, Lachner, Reissiger, Lindpainter, Fesca, Kalliwoda, and many others must be enumerated.

—Did you not previously mention Marschner among the great ones?

—His Operas, "*Vampyr*," "*Templer und Jüdin*," especially "*Hans Heiling*," give him a place of honor among composers; but in his Pianoforte Trios, and other instrumental compositions, even in the overtures to his Operas, he belongs to the above category. Lachner we must not omit to mention, for, influenced in technique by the modern spirit, he made himself conspicuous in his last days by his Orchestra Suites; giving evidence of his old, masterly technic, and his rejuvenated power in invention. Now bring this

time home very clearly to your mind:—in the Opera, Epigonenthum; in Oratorio and Church style, dry barrenness and pedantry, and in the Symphony and Chamber style, Kapellmeister music; in compositions for solo instruments the most shallow opera-fantasia and variation-scribbling; can you estimate how beneficial to the art of music the appearance of Mendelssohn must have been?

—How comes it then that he is slighted at this day, and even by musicians?

—One principal reason for that is the very great esteem he enjoyed during his lifetime, after which a reaction must necessarily come; and then it is not to be denied that, in comparison with the other great ones of art, he was wanting in depth, earnestness and greatness; but that was compensated for by so many other qualities, that, I am convinced, art-lovers will certainly return to him with love and reverence, and still greatly delight in him.

—His chief work was instrumental music?

—All branches of art, except the Opera, had in him one of the noblest representatives—his creations were master-works in completeness of form, technic and beauty of tone, and furthermore, he was a manifold creator.—His "*Midsummer Night's Dream*" is a musical revelation!—New and genial in invention, in orchestral coloring, in humor, in lyric, in romantic—his type seems the fairy-like. His "*Songs without words*" are a genuine treasure of lyric and pianoforte-tone-perfection; his "six Preludes and Fugues for Pianoforte" a splendid work of modern-mode in this old form, and especially the first (E-minor); his violin-concerto is a unicum of beauty, freshness, grateful technic and noble virtuosity; and his overture to "*Fingal's Cave*" a pearl of musical literature.—These are, in my opinion, his most genial compositions, but his Oratorios, Psalms, Symphonies, Chamber-music, Songs, etc., are also works which place him among the heroes of the art.—In general I would designate his creations as the swan-song of the classic.

—His music has never deeply moved me.

—"Who ne'er his bread in sorrow ate."

"Who ne'er the sorrow-laden nights," etc. Mendelssohn and also Meyerbeer were the children of wealthy parents, and enjoyed the most refined training and education; in their homes, surrounded by an intellectually select society, they pursued Art, not as a means of subsistence, but followed it as an impulse of the mind; and learned life's bitterness at most in an unsatisfied ambition or injured vanity at the beginning of their musical careers; knew neither the cares of livelihood nor position—and all this is heard in their creations—there are no tears, no agonies of the soul, no bitterness, and almost no complaint.

—And yet Mendelssohn stands so high in your opinion?

—Yes, because he created the most beautiful works and the highest in abundance, and because he rescued instrumental music from ruin.

—And his contemporary, Schumann?

—The new spirit (Romanticism) that had been

hovering in the literature of all lands from 25 to 50 of our century, found in Schumann its musical echo; even the war against the formal, the scholastic, the pseudo-classic had in him its musical champion—he warred against the Philistines, against Capellmeister-music, against "cue"-critique, against the perverted taste of the public, and thus found in the beginning of his artistic activity the material for extraordinarily interesting and musically-new creations, especially for the Pianoforte.

—He was undoubtedly more tender, warmer, more soulful, more romantic, richer in fantasy, and more subjective than Mendelssohn. To me he is most sympathetic in his pianoforte compositions: his Kreisleriana, Phantasiestücke, Etudes Symphoniques, Carneval, Fantasia in C-major, and many others are pearls in the literature of the pianoforte, and his Pianoforte Concerto in A-minor is just such a unicum in pianoforte literature as the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto in the literature of the Violin; after these come his songs. I rank

his orchestral works, and his larger vocal compositions as third in the list.

—New Pianoforte forms (not always grateful, but always interesting), new rhythms, rich and new harmonies, new forms, combined with the most beautiful invention and wonderfully charming melody; all this stamps him as one of the highest we possess in music.

—And absolutely without fault?

—That I do not say.—Some rhythmic monotony, harmonic overloading, predilection for the song-form in his pianoforte works, often causing us to miss in them the great flight, the great outline—frequent faulty instrumentation in his orchestral and chamber-music (the doubling of the voices), and often mere contrapuntal treatment of the singing-voices in his larger vocal compositions are perhaps mere shadow sides of his creation, but all these vanish in presence of the wonderful beauty of his thoughts.

—How does the Schumann song compare with the Schubert?

—It is difficult to make the comparison. To me Schubert's songs are more sympathetic, because more original, tender, simple;—on the other hand, Schumann's are often finer, more poetic—at all events the song literature of Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn (since their time too, very much that is beautiful has been created in this branch) is a golden circlet in the crown of German lyric.

—Who comes now on the list?

—He, whose association with my chosen ones caused you so much astonishment.

—Chopin? Now you arouse my curiosity.

—You will perhaps have noticed that all the greatest of those of whom we have spoken until now, have intrusted their most intimate, yes, I may almost say, most beautiful thoughts to the Pianoforte—but the Pianoforte-*Bard*, the Pianoforte-*Rhapsodist*, the Pianoforte-*Mind*, the Pianoforte-*Soul* is *Chopin*. Whether the spirit of this instrument breathed upon him or he upon it,—how he wrote for it, I do not know; but only an

entire going-over-of-one-into-the-other could call such compositions to life. Tragic, romantic, lyric, heroic, dramatic, fantastic, soulful, sweet, dreamy, brilliant, grand, simple; all possible expressions are found in his compositions, and are all sung by him upon this instrument.

—You are becoming extravagant!

—Would you like to know the names of the compositions that justify it? His Preludes (to me the pearls of his works), the greater half of his Etudes, his Nocturnes; his Polonaises, E-flat-minor, C-sharp-minor, F-sharp-minor, A-flat-major, especially the A-major and C-minor, which always seem to me a picture (the A-major) of Poland's greatness and (the C-minor) of Poland's downfall; his four Ballades, his Scherzos, B-minor and B-flat minor; his Sonatas, B-flat minor and B-minor, the first of which is a whole drama, with its last movement (after the very typical Funeral March), which I would name: "*Night winds sweeping over the church-yard graves*"—and added to all of these, "last, but not least," his

Mazurkas! His Polonaises and Mazurkas excepted, he has written no Polish-reflective music, but in all of his compositions we hear him relate rejoicingly Poland's vanished greatness, singing, mourning, weeping over Poland's later downfall, and that all in the most beautiful, the most musical way.—From a purely musical standpoint, how beautiful in invention, how perfect in technic and form, how interesting and new in harmony, and often how great! Withal it is not to be forgotten that he too (one of the very few) developed out of himself, with the exception of a few first efforts where the Hummel influence is felt in the predilection for passages; nor should we overlook the highly interesting fact that he is the only one of the composers who, conscious of his specialty, creates for this specialty (the Pianoforte) and (with the exception of a few songs) attempts no other style of composition.—He was indeed the soul of the Pianoforte!

—To me too he is very sympathetic, but I should still not have thought that he could be the object of such deification.

—Moreover he is to me as an exhalation of the third epoch in our art.

—May I ask you to explain your division of time into epochs a little more clearly to me? I do not understand it fully.

—I am not delivering to you a discourse on the History of Music, we are merely talking over the progress of music in general, and of its most important representatives.—As you already know, I regard Palestrina as the beginning of music *as* an art, and reckon from him on as the first *epoch* of our art, which I call the *Organ-* and *Vocal-epoch* —and as the greatest representatives of this epoch and its point of culmination I recognize Bach and Handel. The second *epoch*, which I call the *Instrumental-epoch*, that is, the development of the Pianoforte and of the Orchestra, I reckon from Ph. Em. Bach on, with Haydn and Mozart to Beethoven inclusive; recognizing these as the greatest representatives and the point of culmination of this *epoch*.—The third *epoch*, the lyric-romantic, I reckon from Schubert on, with

Weber, Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Chopin, whom I recognize as its last representatives. Everything else in regard to this question you will find in the history of music.

—I will try to follow you in your views.

—Now comes the second name, that caused you so much astonishment—that is, *Glinka*. We have spoken before of the striving for the national in music, my opinion of which you already know, but Glinka is so distinguished in this endeavor that he stands high above all others who have made like attempts.—Schiller says: "*The gods never come singly*," and that is noticable also in our art; with every manifestation of art whole groups arise, as also in the endeavor for national creation in music.—We will review these attempts in the different countries: Erkel in Hungary, Smetana in Bohemia, the majority of the composers in Sweden and Norway—earlier Balfe and now the majority of English composers, and so on; from all of these we hear the *all-the-world-music* in the Romanza, or the Chorus or a

Dance of national character—with Glinka this is not the case;—from the first note to the last in the overture, as well as in the vocal part of his Operas (Recitative, Aria, Ensemble), all is of national character; melody, harmony, yes, even the treatment of the orchestra. He has usually the combination of two nationalities in his operas; in his "*Leben für den Zar*," Russian and Polish; in his "*Russlan und Ludmilla*" the Russian and Circassian.—The character of both nationalities is heard throughout, at the same time united with the most perfect mastery and technic.

—Did he not write after the Italian model, introducing Arias, Ensembles, etc.?

—He has retained that form, living under the influence of the Italian Opera which ruled exclusively in Russia until a short time ago, but his melody and harmony, his invention and mood always retain a specific national coloring.

—So far as known to me, he was a composer of vocal music exclusively?

—He has not written many instrumental works,

but among them a Capriccio on the folk-theme "*Kamarinskaja*," which has become the type for Russian instrumental music, and is really of great geniality—some very beautiful Entr'act music to a tragedy, "*Fürst Cholmsky*," in which the Jewish element appears in remarkable coloring,—extremely interesting orchestral works on Spanish Folk-songs and Dances, and a few things for Pianoforte alone; his chief branch is, however, the Opera, and in spite of that he is to me one of my five.

—I cannot say that you have entirely convinced me, with reference to your five chosen ones, but in all that has reference to Bach, Beethoven and Schubert I agree with you, and can even comprehend too, that you as a pianist, so revel in Chopin, and as a Russian, in Glinka.

—Before we enter upon the new era of composition, the era of to-day (the fourth epoch of music as an art), we must explore the field of Virtuosity—divided into two epochs, the epoch including the first half of our century, in which

the Virtuoso brought out mostly his own compositions, and the succeeding epoch, in which he appears chiefly as an executant artist of the compositions of others. For us the earlier epoch only is of interest, as it alone could exercise an influence on the progress of the art of music. Of the wind instruments we can say but little, as the Virtuoso on them could have influence only in a technical sense, and as regards the construction of the instrument and its use in the orchestra.

—This literature has always been a cheerless one with the exception of some few compositions written for them by the great composers (Händel, Weber).—Of the Violin until Paganini and Spohr we have already spoken, if we add the names: Rode, Kreutzer, Molique, Lipinsky, Beriot, Vieuxtemps, David, Ernst, Wieniawski, whose compositions are of great importance for the instrument, although not for the art in general; for the latter, however, all that such masters as Bach, Beethoven and Mendelssohn have written for this instrument is of the greatest importance,

and we may now leave this instrument.—The literature for Violoncello, whose earlier representatives were Romberg, Dupont and others, later Servais, Davidoff, Popper and others, is still less significant than that of the violin and for the art in general. As regards technic, the great significance of Paganini for the violin, Servais for the Violoncello, and their indirect influence in this manner on the art in general must not remain unnoticed. Of the influence of the Song-Virtuoso on the composers (in no case beneficial) we have also spoken before, and now we come to the instrument that occupies the principal place, as regards the art, namely, the Pianoforte. On account of its compass, only inferior to that of the Organ (it still has precedence of the latter, however, in the shading of tone: *piano* and *forte*) it must of course be the instrument most attractive to the musician; in addition to the advantage of having this compass entirely at his command, he enjoys the power (so dear to the musician) of individual

rendering (for in any other interpretation he is dependent not alone upon himself, but upon numerous conditions); therefore the Pianoforte as the *instrument* of *music* has become, so to say, the photograph-apparatus of the musician, as the dictionary is the musical Encyclopaedia of the public. Every great composer was at the same time a Pianoforte Virtuoso; of those we have already spoken, now we must speak of the great Pianoforte Virtuosi, who at the same time were composers.—We must begin with Clementi, whom we may call the father or the teacher of modern pianoforte virtuosity.—Who the teachers of Scarlatti, Couperin, Rameau, Bach, Händel, Haydn, Mozart, and even Beethoven, were, we do not know and can only wonder how they acquired such technic (virtuosity), especially Scarlatti, Bach, and Beethoven, whose technic for us, still, to-day, is a hard nut to crack.—Clementi is the first representative of the Pianoforte pedagogy and his "Gradus ad Parnassum," even to the present day, the surest guide to virtuosity. His

Sonatas (a few among them are not without artistic value) are of the type of that scholastic period in which, under the cloak of classic-form, the chief interest was the virtuoso technic.—Not the façade, but the rear portal of the temple of art preserves such names as Dussek, Steibelt, Hummel, Cramer, Moscheles, Czerny, Field, Kalkbrenner, Herz, and many others, with whom first the Sonata pines away in meaninglessness, then the Pianoforte Concerto was cultivated merely from a standpoint of the passage, and Polaccas, Rondos brillants and à la Cosaque were principal works, and sadly enough, the favorite nourishment of the public.—The variation was the most horribly misused. This eldest of all instrumental forms, which in Beethoven rises to ethics, sinks to the emptiness of Herz,*) to unfold again, however, with Mendelssohn, and especially Schumann, into beautiful being—the pedagogic-

*) Mendelssohn even felt himself moved to give his variations the title "Variations sérieuses" in order to distinguish them from the "variations" in vogue at that day.

etude being the only branch of the art which at that time preserved a worthy position.

—But the names you mentioned are mostly contemporary with Beethoven, Schubert and Weber?

—They ruled the public entirely, however.—Soon after his death the Pianoforte-Beethoven (except two or three Sonatas which had attained some popularity) became solely the private *cult* of a very few music-fanatics; the Pianoforte-Schubert was entirely ignored; the Pianoforte-Weber, it is true, remained the order of the day, but only in a few of his works, and merely as a more earnest expression of the then reigning literature.—But Hummel, Moscheles and Field are personages who shine as meteors among the others mentioned. Hummel, if he had not been sicklied with the regulation- and the passage-craze, might have been counted among the *real* composers, for works like his Sonata in F sharp minor, his four-hand Sonata in A flat-major, his Fantasia in E flat-major, his Septette, his Con-

certo in A-minor, and especially B-minor give him entire right to a place in the "parterre des rois" in the Temple of Art.—Thus also Moscheles, whose Concerto in G-minor will always remain a beautiful work of music, and who, although stiffly scholastic, is one of the first who brought us the Fantasia (not variation) on opera themes, bringing with it a singing and dramatic rendering in pianoforte playing.—Field creates, it is true, in a small frame, but is of valuable influence in his Nocturnes.

—But now (again, simultaneously) Thalberg, Liszt, and Henselt appear; three personages who give the Pianoforte an entirely new character, freeing it from the scale and passage style and qualifying it for the canto with arpeggio accompaniment—Thalberg, in the orchestral—Liszt, in the polyphonic and broader harmony style—while Henselt crowded out the variation on an opera theme and introduced the Fantasia on several opera themes not however with the Moscheles simplicity, but with an until then unknown,

virtuosity and a climax-effect allowing two themes to sing at the same time.

—Liszt and Henselt gave the Etude aesthetic character, going from the purely pedagogic to the artistic (like the "Etüde" in the art of painting) and gave each a name or title ("Mazeppa," "Si oiseau j'étais, à toi je volerais," "Orage, tu ne saurais m'abattre," and so on*). All three introduce the transcription of songs and orchestral works for the Piano, dance rhythms with bravura and concert treatment, inaugurating in general the era of transcendental virtuosity for the Pianoforte.

—And what is the influence that they exert upon art?

—Virtuosity exercises an immediate influence on composition in general, widens the range of

*) Moscheles' "Etudes caracteristiques" are works of the same epoch. Chopin also wrote Etudes at this time without especial names, without programme, but worlds of pschycological contents; for instance, those in E major, E flat minor, C sharp minor, B flat minor, C minor, and others. I separate the Etudes of these two composers from the above mentioned, because they appear to me of a more serious character musically.

expression and multiplies the means for composition.—As the greatest composers were themselves Virtuosi, that is, had an excellent technic on their instruments, they influenced the style of composition of the "*minorum gentium*" and so one went hand in hand with the other, the composer was influenced by the virtuosity, and this again by the composer. Besides this, Virtuosity always influenced the construction of the instrument. When Beethoven in his Sonata op. 110, allows a tone to be struck 28 times in the beginning of the adagio, that is a challenge to the instrument maker to try, if possible, to prolong the tone of the Pianoforte.

—Why do the critics war against the Virtuoso and slight him?

—They do so against those who use virtuosity as an end and not a means.—I must protest, in a measure, against this ideal point of view.—I think "there must be such fellows too!" (Es muss auch solche Käuze geben)—for, first, perfection always commands respect, no matter in

what field it is found, and second, their influence if only indirect is still apparent in the art.

—Thus Paganini's compositions are not of especial worth in an artistic sense, but Paganini gave new life to the Violin; Servais' Violoncello compositions are of even less worth—Servais, however, gave new life to the Violoncello; Thalberg's Pianoforte compositions are of the most indifferent art, but Thalberg gave new life to the Pianoforte, and so on.—But since the Virtuosi of to-day dare not play their own compositions, but only those of others, they are not able to show us what they possibly *could* accomplish, but simply what they are compelled to give, hence the downfall of Virtuosity—for one may dare only in his own composition to "*break all bounds*," and this "breaking all bounds" furthers the promotion of Virtuosity.—The holding fast to what is prescribed and demanded is beautiful and noble, yet it does not further promotion. At an earlier day the Virtuoso incited the instrument maker, by his demands, to perfection of construction, now

the instrument maker tries to induce the Virtuoso, by all manner of inventions, to perfection of technic.—There are many very excellent piano players to-day, but of Virtuosi in the sense of *advancement* I would name *Tausig* as the last; the same with the Violin, and we may call Wieniawski its last Virtuoso; of the Violoncello, Davidoff, and in song, Viardot-Garcia.

—In this point I partly agree with you; I believe too, that we require the executive artist of to-day to express his individuality in too great a degree, and have in this way created a kind of musical respectability (so to say), which is interesting, but ultimately rather wearisome.

—And now you will be horrified with what I am about to say—I think, that with the death of Schumann and Chopin "finis musicae"!

—Ha, ha, ha, it cannot be possible that you mean that seriously?

—I mean it perfectly seriously—I speak of musical creation, melody, thought.—There is much that is interesting and perhaps valuable

written to-day, no doubt, but nothing beautiful, great, deep, or high; especially not in instrumental music—and that is, as you know, my standard.

—How can you prove that?

—By the existing excess of coloring at the expense of drawing, of technic at the expense of thought, of frame at the expense of picture.

—And now I would like to have a clearer and more precise explanation.

—Three names represent the standard bearers of the new era in music (fourth epoch of the art of music)—Berlioz, Wagner, and Liszt. The most interesting of the three, even on account of the time in which he appeared (in 1830, by the way), and because he did not *become* modern, but declared himself, on the contrary, at the very beginning of his musical activity *as such*, is *Berlioz*. He discovered new tone-effects in orchestra, held to no prescribed form, regarded the treatment of the text (declamation) as of the greatest value in tone-painting (programme-

music); introduced the realistic in music, that is, made an attempt to do this in his Requiem, where in the "Tuba mirum" he ranges a host of brass instruments at different places in the hall or church; took delight in strange and peculiar instrumentation—whole chords for eight pairs of drums, chords for contrabassi *divisi*, substituted flageolets for the stringed instruments of the orchestra, and other things of the same kind, but specific musical thought, melodic invention, beauty of form, richness in harmony (in this respect he was really weak) are not to be found in him.—Dazzling in coloring, effective, interesting, he is in everything, but in all too reflective, subtilized, neither beautiful nor great, neither deep nor high—and if one play one of his own compositions on the piano, even four-handed (that is full-toned) the coloring of the instrumentation is lost, and there remains—nothing.—But play the 9th Symphony of Beethoven upon the piano, even with two hands (that is with less tone) and one is overwhelmed with its greatness of thought and

soulful expression! One work I wish to except, it is the overture to the "*Roman Carnival*"—a famous composition in musical invention.—The second in interest is *Wagner*.

—Truly, to me he is the most interesting.

—While I was visiting Mendelssohn one Sunday in Berlin, in '45 or '46, I met Taubert also, who noticing the orchestra-score of Tannhäuser on the piano, asked Mendelssohn what he thought of the composer of that opera? Mendelssohn answered: "*A man who writes text and music himself, to his operas, is no common man at all events!*" Yes, no common man, but still not one who reverses my opinion of the modern composers.

—He is also highly interesting, very valuable, but beautiful or great, deep or high in a specific musical sense, he is *not*.

—Would you deny him novelty too?

—He is so many-sided as he appears to us that it is difficult to give a general opinion of him. He is, besides, so unsympathetic to me in his art

principles, that my view of him would only annoy you.

—I have had the patience to hear all that you have said until now, and so will be able to listen to your opinion of him.

—He looks upon *vocal music* as the highest expression of music—with the exception of the song and church music, music-worship for me, begins where words cease. He speaks of a *Union of Arts* (combination of all arts for the Opera); I think that in such case we could not do entire justice to either.—He advocates the Legend (Sage), the Supernatural, as material for Opera text; in my estimation the legend is always a cold expression of art—it may be an interesting and poetic play, but never a *drama*, for we cannot *feel with* a supernatural being.

—When a despot compels a father to shoot an apple from the head of his son—or when a wife rescues her husband from the dagger-thrust of his enemy by throwing herself between them—or when a son is obliged to disown his mother

publicly and declare her mentally deranged in order to save her life—and so forth—it stirs the inmost heart, be it spoken or sung or merely represented in pantomime; but when a hero makes himself invisible in a Tarn-cap, or transcendent love is produced by a love-draught, or a knight appears drawn by a swan which shall at last unmask itself as a prince, it may be all very beautiful, very poetic for eye and ear, but the heart, the soul remain entirely apathetic.—A *Leit-motiv* for certain personages or situations is such a naive proceeding, that it leads to the comic rather than to appeal to an earnest thought; allusion—rather an old device in the art—is sometimes effective, yet does not admit of abuse; but the resounding of the same motive at each appearance of a character, or when he is only spoken of, and the same for particular situations is a hypercharacteristic, yes, I may say almost a caricature. The exclusion of Arias and *ensemble* in an Opera is, in my opinion, psychologically incorrect.—The aria in the opera is the same as the monologue in

drama—the state of mind of a character before or after certain events as well as the *ensemble* of the emotions of the several characters; how can it be excluded? Characters who speak only to each other, never to themselves (that is, to the public), become uninteresting, because one cannot discover *whether* anything, and *what* is taking place in their minds.—A love-duo in which no moment of mutual bliss (singing together) is permitted, cannot be quite sincere, the eye to eye, heart on heart resounding "I love thee!" is wanting! The Orchestra in his Operas is too much of a good thing, it lessens the interest in the vocal part; and although, according to his intention, it is to express all that is taking place in the minds of the actors, as they do not express it themselves, the additional importance it gains thereby can only be an evil, for it makes the singing on the stage almost superfluous; one often feels like begging that it may be silenced so that he may hear what is going on on the stage. It would be difficult to find a more in-

teresting orchestra in an opera than that of "Fidelio," and in it this necessity is not for one moment felt.—Making the change of scene *invisible* by means of rising vapours is really too unbearable.—Theatre impossibilities are not to be remedied, it is impossible to make a change of scene any other way than by changing the scene; whether the scene sinks or rises, whether an intervening curtain falls or vapours arise, it is the same, the illusion is disturbed, but any sort of disturbance is after all to be preferred to the Hiss-Symphony of rising vapours! Darkening the audience chamber during the performance is rather a caprice than a real aesthetic necessity. The proportion of illumination gained by the stage and impersonators by this means, is really not so important that the hearer should be obliged to suffer the longing for matches for a whole evening. For this innovation the Theatre Directors alone will return him thanks on account of the reduction in the expense of illumination. The *invisible orchestra* which is of real effect only in the

first scene of his "Rheingold" is an hyper-ideal demand, and for no other opera, not even for his own does it stand the test.—The muffled sound of the orchestra in this novel position makes it undesirable—aside from that, invisible music is effective only in the church, where one looks *within* himself, not *about* him; there are but few compositions, mostly of Beethoven or Chopin that gain in effect, heard in this manner—but the Tannhäuser-Overture, for example, would at any rate lose in effect, if one could not see the movements of the arms in the violin-figure at the close. From an ideal standpoint there is so much to disturb one in seeing or hearing a work of art, yet one accommodates himself to it and should not demand the impossible—hence the sight of a director and the musicians of the orchestra in the performance of an Opera is not so frightful that the pure musical effect in the beauty of tone should be sacrificed to avoid it.

—You speak altogether of art principles, but say nothing of his music?

—The doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope perhaps disgusted many a one with the Catholic Church.—Had Wagner composed, brought out, and published his Operas, without expressing his own opinions about them in his writings, they would have been praised, blamed, loved or not, as in the case of the other composers, but to declare himself as the only source of happiness, awakens opposition and protest. Some of his works are indeed worthy of respect (Lohengrin, Meistersinger and the Faust Overture I like best among them), but the principle, the reflected pretensions in his creations disgust me with them in general. The lack of naturalness, simplicity, makes them unsympathetic to me. All of the characters in his operas stride about on stilts (in the sense of the musical) always disclaiming, never speaking, always pathetic, never dramatic, always as gods or semi-gods, never as human, or as a simple mortal.—Everything makes the impression of the six foot Alexandrian verse, of the cold forced alliteration.

—His melody is either lyric or pathetic, no other mood is to be heard—it is noble and broad, but always *only* noble and broad; void of rhythmic charm and of variety—hence entirely lacking diversity of musical characteristic;—neither a Zerlina or a Leonora are imaginable from him—even in case of his Evchen in the Meistersinger, the diminutive *chen* is present in the *name* only, and not to be heard in the music. His melody never indicates the musical thought, the character, his text alone does that (the *leit-motiv* indicates only the outer, not the inner character); hence his operas with few exceptions played upon the pianoforte without underlying text would be mostly unintelligible, but Don Juan, Fidelio, Freischütz played upon the piano would always bring before one a satisfactory picture of the different characters, yes, even the whole action of the Opera.—His orchestra is indeed new and imposing, but not seldom monotonous in the means of effect or in the unimpassioned parts; often trying to the nerves in

the soft instrumentation as well as in the energetic powerful parts—wanting in economy and variety of shading, because Wagner (as to-day in fact all do) paints (musically) from beginning to end of his works with all the colors at his command.—Thus he is no doubt a highly interesting appearance in music, but in comparison with the great ones of the past, merely specifically musical for me, and of a very questionable art!

—Vox populi declares him a genius.

—The public has heard and read so often of its own incapacity to recognize a genius during his life-time that it is now ready to declare any one a genius out of mere fear of bringing upon itself the reproach of non-recognition.

—But *you* do not recognize that Wagner breathed a new life into the Opera?

—Every art has its own conditions of life, its especial claims, its limits and so on, also every branch of art. To wish to make anything else out of an Opera *than* an Opera may no doubt be very interesting, but it annuls the Opera. It

seems to me like the pianoforte manufacturer's attempt to make string- or wind-instrument "attachments" to the Pianoforte in order to prolong or change the character of the tone—a wholly useless attempt.—An Adagio of Beethoven or a Nocturne of Chopin is conceived and intended for the Pianoforte and its tone-character, its arrangement for another instrument is like *coloring a white marble statue*—(the arranging of an orchestral work for the Pianoforte is different —that is musical photography). Wagner creates then a new branch of art (Music-Drama)—whether it was necessary and whether it possesses vitality enough to live, time must teach us!

—You have not succeeded in taking away my admiration for him.

—I am far from wishing to force my opinion upon you in any one of the questions we have discussed so far.—I merely express them to you.

—The third of the "*ars militans*" is Liszt.—Demon of music I would call him! Inflaming, intoxicating by his fantastic style, bewitching by

his grace, raising one with him in his flight to the highest height, and dragging one with him to the deepest deep, taking on and off all forms, ideal and real at once, knowing all and able to do all, but—false in all, insincere, contentious, theatrical, and bearing in himself the evil principle. He has two periods in his artistic career —the first, the Virtuoso-period, the second, the Composer-period. The first is in my estimation his most illustrious—unattained and unattainable in piano playing, highly interesting in his Virtuoso compositions (Opera Fantasias, Etudes, Song-transcriptions, Hungarian Rhapsodies, smaller concert pieces, and others) he shone, the most brilliant star in the musical firmament from the year 1830 until 1852, dazzling the public of all Europe with his light. Appearing at the same time as Thalberg, one need only look over the Fantasias of both on a theme from Don Juan to become aware of the difference, wide as heaven, that distinguishes them.—Thalberg, the prim, smooth, curried, insignificant, perfect Salon-

gentleman (in a musical sense), Liszt the poetic, romantic, interesting, highly musical, imposing individuality—with long, shaggy hair, with a Dante profile, and with a captivating personality. Words are far too poor to describe his piano playing—incomparable in every way, the culmination of everything that Pianoforte rendering could require.—What a grievous pity that the phonograph did not exist in the years 1840, 1850, to receive his playing and hold it for the future generations who have no idea of real Pianoforte Virtuosity. One must have heard Chopin, Liszt, Thalberg, and Henselt to know what genuine piano-playing means. Added to all his greatness as Pianoforte Virtuoso Liszt has the inestimable merit to have helped by word, pen, and his art, many an unknown, forgotten, or unappreciated composer to recognition, and to have presented them to the public.—His period of composition, from 1853 on—is in my opinion of a sorry art. —In each of his compositions "*one marks design and is out of tune.*" Programme-music carried

to the highest extreme, eternal gesticulation; in his church music before God—in his orchestral works before the public—in his song-transcriptions before the composers*), in his Hungarian Rhapsodies before the Gipsies—enough, always and in all gesticulation "*Dans les arts il faut faire grand*" was a common expression of his, hence the sprawled out character of his compositions.—His desire for novelty (à tout prix) gave him the idea of forming whole compositions of one and the same theme. Sonata, Concerto, Symphonic Poem, all with one theme only—an absolutely unmusical proceeding.—A theme has a certain character, a mood—if it be forced to vary its character and mood by change of tempo and rhythm, the whole composition loses in character and mood, and can at best only arise to the variation. The forms of composition are not the

*) His most genial transcription is that of Schubert's Erl-König; the majority of the others are made very unpleasing and unsatisfactory by the use of the melody as phrase in various registers, and by changing and adding to it.

caprice of *one* composer, but have developed with the times and aesthetic necessities. So: the Sonata form—to set this aside means to extemporize, a Fantasia is however not a Symphony, not a Sonata, not a Concerto. Architecture is nearest allied to music in its fundamental principles—can a formless house or church or any other building be imagined? *) Or a structure, where the façade is a church, another part of the structure a railway station, another part a floral pavillion, and still another part a manufactory, and so on? Hence lack of form in music is improvisation, yes, borders almost on digression. Symphonic Poems (so he calls his orchestral works) are supposed to be another new form of art—whether a necessity and vital enough to

*) The C-major Fantasia of Schubert is also built upon a theme; it is however, first, a Fantasia, thus, logical freedom in the form—second, it is in four movements of which each is thoroughly worked out in a decided mood, hence not simply an episodic appearance of the motives; a little Adagio tempo, and a little Allegro tempo, a little of Scherzo character, and a little of tragic character, and so on.

live, time, as in the case of Wagner's Music-Drama, must teach us. His orchestral instrumentation exhibits the same mastery as that of Berlioz and Wagner, even bears their stamp; with that, however, it is to be remembered that his Pianoforte is the *Orchestra-Pianoforte* and his Orchestra the *Pianoforte-Orchestra*, for the orchestral composition sounds like an instrumented Pianoforte composition.—All in all I see in Berlioz, Wagner and Liszt, the Virtuoso-Composer, and I would be glad to believe that their "breaking all bounds" may be an advantage to the coming genius. In the sense however of specifically musical creation I can recognize neither one of them as a composer—and, in addition to this, I have noticed so far that all three of them are wanting in the chief charm of creation—the naive—that stamp of geniality and, at the same time, that proof that genius after all is a child of humanity.—Their influence on the composers of the day is great, but as I believe unhealthy; it is not uninteresting to

observe in this particular *which* of them and *where* their influence is greatest.—In Germany it is Wagner, on most of the young and Liszt, on a very few of the instrumental composers; in France and Russia only Berlioz and Liszt and on the instrumental composers alone, since in France Meyerbeer still holds sway; in Russia wholly in a reflected national style; in Italy it is Liszt alone whose influence has turned the young composers there to instrumental composition, a branch which until now seemed opposed to the nature of the Italian. I believe that this will finally remain so.

—For you then the art period of to-day is only a transition period?

—At best.—*Whether* it will develop and into *what*, time will teach us—I shall probably not live to see—and so I weep by the waters of Babylon, and for me the harp is silent!

—If that is really so, then you have eaten of the tree of knowledge, and for that reason lose your paradise of delight.

—Only the pleasures of memory are mine still.

—In your opinion then, there is nothing more that is beautiful and great to await in music?

—Who can undertake to foretell the future?—I speak only and alone of to-day.

—But the living, as Brahms, Dvôrák, Grieg, Goldmark, Massenet, Saint-Saëns, Verdi, Gounod, Tschaikowsky, and others of the composers, Joachim, Sarasate, Bülow, D'Albert, Stockhausen, Faure, Patti, and others of the executive art?

—"De vivis nihil nisi bene!" And besides the most of those you mention are the children of an earlier epoch—I mean after-growth.

—Well, if one take no pleasure in the music of to-day, he can surely enjoy the older music; it is offered him to-day oftener than ever and rendered in the best manner.

—Often certainly—altogether too often—there is really too much music now-a-days!

—Are you then opposed to the popularization of music?

—This question has two sides—each of which

has its justification—but as often as I have thought it over, I cannot decide which is the better. It is certainly desirable that the masses learn to know the master works of the art of music, hear them and come to hear them, bringing with them some understanding for them; for this it is necessary to found Garden and Popular Concerts, etc., to found Music Schools, Choral Societies, Philharmonic Societies, Symphony Concerts, and so on—but on the other hand music demands, I feel, a consecration, a cult in a temple to which only the initiated have entrance; she requires that she be the chosen of the elect, enough, to hold some mystery in herself and for the outer world—which of these two views is the right one?

—I would not like, for example, to hear the 9th Symphony, or the last String Quartette, or the last Pianoforte Sonatas by Beethoven in a Garden—or Popular Concert—and not at all for fear that it would not be understood, but for fear it might perhaps be understood!

—You really take too much delight in paradoxes.

—I am also not clear whether the Art Museums (in a real sense) are or have been an education of the people for the plastic art, or whether they are not and always were merely educational institutes for the intellectual part of the community.

—I believe that for the people the art of music is subject to other educational laws than those of the plastic arts, and hence cannot be compared with them.

—Well, we will leave this question altogether unsolved.—I am however in all earnestness of the opinion that on account of the hearing and making of too much music, for example, it is very difficult for a composer of to-day to concentrate himself (one of the principal necessities in creating); for he is obliged to hear and play so much of the music of others, *not his own*, is obliged still, after an exciting winter season and the ever increasing throng of springtide music festivals

(of the public I will say nothing, and can only wonder at its enormous love for music!) to rush away tired, mayhap even ill, to a summer-resort; to listen three times a day there to a concert!—and if these programmes were only made up of Dances, Folk-songs, Military Music and the like —but no, it is again the Tannhäuser Overture, the Feuer-Zauber, Mozart, Weber, and so on.

—But the public is not composed solely of musicians who should not and do not wish to hear music.

—For this reason one seldom returns from a summer-resort really benefited.—But let us again resume our conversation seriously. You spoke before of the best interpretation of the master works now-a-days—I have my doubts of that—the interpreters of to-day (Director and Virtuoso) delight especially in a capricious interpretation of the classical works (for which Wagner and Liszt are most to blame)—change of tempo, holds, ritardandos, stringendos, crescendos, and so on, not written by the composer.—Pianoforte editions,

with effect-expression (?) revisions of pianoforte compositions (Henselt, Tausig), adding Orchestra to Pianoforte compositions, melting two compositions into one (Liszt), re-instrumentation of Chopin's Pianoforte Concertos (diverse), yes, even "horribile dictu" adding instruments to Beethoven's 9th Symphony (Wagner!) ignoring the signs of repetition and much besides.—In the last particular it is really astounding that professional musicians can give themselves to such an unmusical proceeding! In Haydn, Mozart, and especially Beethoven the signs of repetition are in no case *caprice*, but on the contrary an integral part of the structure of the composition. Perhaps in the Adagio of Mozart's Jupiter Symphony, and in the repetition of the Scherzo after the Trio in Beethoven's 9th Symphony only, are the signs of repetition of a questionable nature (in Schubert, with exception of the Scherzos, they also generally bear the usually-accepted character) but, for example, in the Trio in D-major, in the last movement of the F-minor

Sonata, op. 57, in the second movement of the B-flat major Trio, and above all, in the String Quartettes and Symphonies of Beethoven their omission is absolutely a "crimen laesionis majestatis"! Cutting, (customary so often, in the works of Schubert especially) belongs to the same category of crime. How shall one describe the way in which the latter is done in the Operas, the Directors always justifying themselves by saying that it is done for the good of the composition and the composer—that seems to me like the theory of the Inquisition, which compelled a man to be burned alive "*in order to save his soul.*"

—It is not however to be denied that many an opera has gained by cutting?

—Without doubt, but this must be done by the composer himself, or not without his acquiescence.

—There are still several questions in regard to the art of music upon which I should like to have your opinion—will you give it to me?

—Willingly—of course entirely uncondition-

ally, not as a law, but according to the best of my knowledge and feeling.

—I hear so much said about the *subjective* and *objective* in interpretation—which is the better?

—I am wholly at a loss to understand what is meant by the objective in interpretation in any case.

Every interpretation, if it is made by a person and not by a machine is *eo ipso* subjective. To do justice to the object (the composition) is the law and duty of every interpreter, but of course each one in his own way, that is, subjectively—and how is any other imaginable? There are no two persons of the same character, the same nervous system, the same physical complexion; even the difference of touch of the piano players, of the tone of Violin and 'Cello players, and the quality of the voice in singers, of the nature of the Director effect the subjective in interpretation.

—Should the conception of a composition be objective, there could be only *one* right one, and all executants would be obliged to accommodate

themselves to it—what would an executive artist be in that case? A monkey?

—Of course, if a subjective interpretation makes an Allegro of an Adagio or a Funeral March of a Scherzo it becomes nonsense—but to render an Adagio in a given tempo according to one's own feeling cannot be called doing injustice to the object.—Should it be different in the interpretation of music than it is in the Art of Acting? Is there only *one* correct art of Hamlet or King Lear? and must each actor only ape *one* Hamlet, or *one* King Lear in order to do justice to the subject? Ergo, I can only allow of the subjective in the interpretation of music.

—What is your opinion of our young Russian school?

—It is, in instrumental music, the fruit of the influence of Berlioz and Liszt with the additional influence of the pianoforte compositions of Schumann and Chopin, and in general an effort in the direction of the reflective-national. Its creation is also based on a perfect control of technic and on

masterly coloring—but also on an entire absence of outline and the previously-reigning want of form. —Taking Glinka, who has written a few orchestral works on Folk-songs and Folk-dances (Kamarinskaja, Jota Aragonesa, Nuit à Madrid, as model), they write too, mostly on Folk-songs and Folk-dances, giving evidence thereby of their own lack of invention, yet cloak their works with the name "National Art," "New School," and so on.—Whether we are to await anything from the future in this direction I do not know; I do not wish to despair entirely—for I believe that the peculiarity in melody, rhythm, and in the musical character of the Russian Folk-music gives promise of a new harvest for music in general (I consider the Oriental music also capable of as much); there are besides a few representatives of this new school not without high musical endowment.

—In all that we have said heretofore, you have only mentioned the names of women in speaking of the art of singing, was that forgetfulness or intentional?

—The growing increase of women in the art of music, in instrumental execution as well as in composition (I exclude the art of singing, the field in which she has always accomplished so much of excellence) dates from the second half of our century—I consider this excess also as one of the signs of the downfall of our art.

—Woman is wanting in two principal requisites for the executive art as well as for the creative —Subjectivity and Initiative.—They cannot raise themselves as executants above the objective (imitation)—for the subjective they are wanting in courage and conviction. For musical creation they lack depth, concentration, the power of thought, breadth of feeling, freedom of stroke, and so on.—It is enigmatical to me that exactly music—the noblest, most beautiful, most refined, soulful, loving art that the mind of man has created, is so unattainable to woman, who is still a combination of all these qualities!*) In poetry,

*) And the same of Architecture—another proof of the relationship existing between the two arts.

literature, painting, and all the other arts, even in the sciences, she has accomplished much!

The two feelings most natural to her: her love to man and her tenderness to her children, have never found, from her, their echo in music. I know no love-duet composed by a woman, and no cradle-song.—I do not say that there are none in existence, but that none composed by a woman has had sufficient artistic value to be stamped as type.

—That is not flattering for our sex.—If it be the case, however, we must comfort ourselves with the hope that, as women have devoted themselves in such quantity to music of late, they may in time attain and give evidence of corresponding quality. Perhaps the next Beethoven and the next Liszt may be women!

—I shall not live to see it—hence I will not try to rob you of the hope.

—I should like to know your views in regard to Music Schools and Conservatories—the advantages of which are doubted by so many, yes, the

very existence of which is entirely discountenanced by others.

—There you touch a tender spot for me—I myself have been founder of such institutions.—It is not to be denied that our great masters are not the offspring of Schools of Music—but still that does not prove that Music Schools are unnecessary, and that they have not been of great value to the art.—The principal object of the Music School was always and must always be to increase the average number of well-schooled musicians. The immense spread of the art of music makes the Music School a demand also, yes, a necessity. When we think what a *host* (Choruses, Orchestras, Soloists, Directors, Music Teachers, and so on) the Art of Music requires now-a-days we must acknowledge that private instruction could not possibly meet the requirements. Besides, the Music School has advantages in itself that are not to be undervalued—the musical atmosphere of the school alone is of great advantage to a disciple of music—added to this

the stimulation which belongs to all class instruction, and always acts as an incentive and so on. That Music Schools do not always fulfill their task is no doubt true, in my opinion for two reasons: first, for lack of sufficient money, when the school is not a government institution, and second, because the programme of instruction is made up too exclusively of the technical, that is, not enough of the ideal and neglects the practical education of the pupil. If the school be a government institution, the first point is probably solved, but then comes the system of protection, philanthropic standpoints, mostly false ideas of art, disregard of the most important and ideal in the count of cost, so that the institution may be very easily turned into a Music-factory, or a Music-barracks, or even into a Music-hospital.—If the Music School be a private undertaking, the money question is apt to play such a weighty role that one can scarcely speak of the interests or demands of art.—This second point deserves very earnest consideration—especially in reference to the final

examination.—Generally a pupil of the Music School during the whole time spent there is drilled technically by his teacher to such a degree that he almost always makes a *good* final examination, and so receives the diploma accordingly—he is, however, rarely ripe for independent work, and therefore receives the slight of the public, and with him also the institution where he received his musical education. This could be remedied, in my opinion, in the following manner:—Give the pupil, perhaps two months before his examination, a number of pieces of different composers, of different character, of different epochs of art (Concerto, Chamber Music, and Solo) for the Pianoforte for example, from Scarlatti on until and including Liszt, which he must be required to study *alone, that is without the assistance of his teacher* (of course one must be able to depend entirely upon the honor of both teacher and pupil!?)—in the same way for singing, for string or wind-instruments, and for each and every branch of the profession.—If the pupil absolve

such an examination with honor, he, his teacher and the institution may rest assured—the ripeness of the pupil is proven, the paedagogic qualities of the teacher exhibited, and the value of the school no more a question—that each has fulfilled his task.

—I once met a pupil of a well known conservatory, shortly after his examination, who played me his examination piece (the first solo!) from Hummel's B-minor Concerto, and that very well,—but who could play me neither its first *tutti* nor one measure beyond the solo he had learned!

—I too have had a remarkable experience in this regard!

—When I hear piano playing I think how happy the earlier composers would have been to have known the instrument of to-day!

—I believe that the instruments of all times must have had tone-coloring and effects that we cannot produce on the Pianoforte of to-day. That the compositions were always intended for

the character of the instrument in use, and only upon such could be heard fully as intended, and therefore played upon the pianoforte of to-day they would perhaps be heard to disadvantage. If Ph. Em. Bach could write a book on the expression in Pianoforte playing it must have been possible to interpret with expression on the Piano of that day, but we cannot imagine it possible on the instruments now known to us as Clavecin, Clavichord, Clavicembalo, Spinet, etc., and he speaks no doubt of an instrument known to his father also.—We can at any rate know nothing decidedly of the instruments of that day; even those to be found in the Museums of London, Paris, Brussels, and so on, give us no idea, since time would destroy the tone of a piano entirely beyond recognition, and besides to us, the most important point, *the manner of playing these* instruments is wholly unknown. It is strange how little the professional makers (instrument makers) know of these things!

—In London I attended a lecture on this sub-

ject, where a professional declared that J. S. Bach wrote his Pianoforte compositions, among them the Chromatic Fantasia for the Spinet—is it possible to imagine this? Even the recitative in it would brand this statement as false—but in addition, such compositions as the Prelude in F-major in Part II. of his Wohltemperirte Clavier, or the Sarabande in G-minor or D-minor from the English suite! Are the four to eight measures prolongation of a tone written for the eye alone? There must have been attachments to the Spinet of that day (now unknown) which made it possible to sustain a tone, as on the harmonium of to-day.

—Just so I do not believe, as is generally said to-day, that Mozart wrote for the Spinet—the orchestration of his Pianoforte Concertos makes that improbable, also the five octave compass of his Pianoforte compositions.—It is possible that he had a Spinet in his work room, but publicly he must have played upon a beautiful toned Grand Piano. The pinched, short, small tone of

the Spinet known to us would not allow the brilliancy of the *passage* or the wonderful charm of his melody in his compositions, it must be, then, that the instrument a hundred years ago had an entirely different tone from the one we hear from it to-day.

—In your opinion then, the Pianoforte of our day is no advance?

—No advance in the sense of works *before* the time of Beethoven.—I would like to recommend a different use (touch and pedal) of the Pianoforte of our day, in playing the compositions of different epochs. So for example, I would play a piece of Haydn or Mozart on the instrument of our day, especially in "*forte*" with the left pedal—because their "*forte*" has not the character of the Beethoven "*forte*," especially not of the latest composers. Playing Händel and especially Bach, I would try by means of variety of touch and change of pedal to *register*, that is, give them throughout an organ-like character. Hummel I would try to play with scholastic, short, clear touch and very

little pedal. Weber and Mendelssohn with very brilliant execution and pedal—Weber in his Sonatas and Concertstück with operatic, dramatic, and Mendelssohn in his Songs without Words with lyric character.—Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, and of course the later composers, require all the resources imaginable in our instrument of to-day.

—I must confess, that to me also the compositions of Haydn and Mozart sound too strong and full played upon the Pianoforte of to-day.

—I go so far, that I do not like to hear their string-quartettes played with a large tone and broad bowing, neither do I like to hear their Symphonies by an orchestra of great number—in short, my desire in the interpretation would be variety in the tone coloring for the different epochs of art.

—You speak of organ registration for the Pianoforte—how do you mean that?

—Of course merely in the sense of suggestion, by means of change of pedal and powerful or

light touch.—In doing so I imagine the places which demand the pedal, played with the right pedal of the Pianoforte, and that not in the sense of the theoretical requirements of the harmony, but in the sense of the weight of the organ pedal, that is, often without lifting the pedal in the change of harmony.

—Still, that could only be applicable to Organ compositions arranged for the Piano, since no Organ character is required in the compositions written by Bach for the Piano.

—It seems to me as though Bach thought of the Organ in everything he wrote with the exception of his Dances, and perhaps the Preludes (and even among these there are many which have an organ-like character); but, as a matter of course, what he has written for the Pianoforte must be played upon the Pianoforte—it is only that I cannot dismiss the idea that his Piano must have had attachments that made it possible to vary the quality of tone, hence this continual desire for "registering" when I play these compositions.—

I confess that this is a musical paradox of mine and—"peccavit."

—Is it really so entirely impossible to find out anything reliable in regard to the manner of interpretation of the older compositions?

—Unfortunately the composers before Haydn have left us entirely in the dark as to their intentions in the rendering of their compositions; neither tempo nor shading has been indicated by them (Ph. Em. Bach has even writtten only the upper voice and the bass in his Pianoforte compositions), they have left it then altogether to our understanding and caprice, and by so doing have created a truly chaotic state of affairs.

—This has, however, been ameliorated in later times by classical editions edited by distinguished musicians?

—Regarding this I expressed my opinion several years ago in a letter to the music publisher, Bartholf Senff; the evil has rather increased than diminished. One can scarcely obtain a composition by these masters—until

and including Chopin, that is not published after the manner of some famed musician. If after the publication of the large editions by Bach, Händel, Mozart, Beethoven, etc., the publisher would only publish the pieces *singly*, the public would be correspondingly thankful! Now, if one wishes to know how a fugue of the Wohltemperirte Clavier looks in the original edition he must find it in the Library Book X of the Bach edition. The public derives no benefit from this and must content itself with the edition of a famous musician; of what a problematic nature these editions are we have sufficient proof in Czerny's edition of the Wohltemperirte Clavier.

—But exactly his edition has been regarded as a model for many years?

—Yet, in my opinion, it is *so* unhappy. I have never been able to reconcile myself either to the indications of tempo or to the shading in the Preludes or in the Fugues.

—A very few examples will be sufficient.— To give the fugue in C-minor, Part I., a delicate

staccato character where immediately after (the fugue is one of the shorter ones) a close enters whose import would require a 32-foot Organ is, to say the least, very questionable; to give the theme of the succeeding fugue in C sharp major a lively character by making the eighth staccato is again questionable, for the whole fugue is of lyric import and legato character. The notation: two notes legato and two staccato in the theme of the fugue in G minor, Part I., is really too much against reason, since by this means it gains a scherzo character, while it plainly (as the minor key indicates) is of a melancholy, complaining, singing character.—To give the Prelude in F minor in Part II. a slow tempo is also singular, for from the fifth measure a figure is used which in a slow tempo would be very tiresome—is the latter even imaginable in Bach? and in the same manner, many other things. In this I do not mean in any way to call into question or depreciate the pedagogic importance of Czerny, I myself reckon him as one of the very best in this

respect—his edition however seems to me absolutely false. It is true that our beautiful, divine art has this misfortune that it cannot make two musicians the same in feeling. And how differently musicians feel is proved sufficiently in the Prelude in C major of Part I. of the same Wohltemperirte Clavier.—To me it is the real modulatory Pianoforte prelude, a chain of broken chords (Arpeggi) to be played in quick tempo with brilliant touch—to many others a dreamy piece, to be executed with soft shading.—Since Gounod used it as a foundation for his "Ave Maria" many are of the opinion that without the melody it has also a religious character, etc.

—This is indeed sad for the classic compositions?

—O very, very sad, unless an academic edition of their works should be published soon, in which tempo, marks of expression, character of the composition, art of embellishment, etc., are academically decided.

—To the best of my knowledge Ph. Em. Bach has written a treatise on embellishments?

—Yes, he has, but first, he had in view the manner of rendering the embellishments for the instruments of that day; whether this would be applicable now-a-days to our instruments of the same character is very questionable—second, the composers of that day did not write their embellishments in one and the same manner, and Ph. Em. Bach wrote his treatise merely for the embellishments in his father's works,—third, there are to-day not two musicians of the same opinion in regard to the rendering of embellishments.

—In such a condition of affairs an academic edition of composers until and including Beethoven at least is a great need.

—If musicians might only agree on any one question in music!?

—I have heard that you do not agree with the programmes of the Symphony Concerts.

—I confess that the "*tutti frutti*" character

usual in the arrangement of such programmes is disagreeable to me. A Symphony by Haydn, and immediately following "Tannhäuser-Overture" by Wagner, or the reverse, is offensive to me; and that not on account of the preference for one composer or another, or one work and another, but on account of the glaring difference in tone-coloring.—I would prefer a whole programme (Overture, Aria, Concerto, Songs, Solo, Symphony) by one and the same composer.

—Is there one, Beethoven perhaps excepted, who would dare put the patience of the public to such a test?

—I do not speak of Operas, in which subject and scenery might make amends for the occasional tedium of the music; nor of sacred or profane Oratorios and Cantatas where the text helps the interest.

—But we go to hear a lecture on a certain theme, and whether one agrees with the lecturer or not he listens to him. We visit too the Atelier of a painter or sculptor, the objects there

may not please us altogether, but we look at them.—So it must be in the case of a composer.

—If, however, the listening to the different works of *one* composer is not practicable I would at least recommend the division into two epochs; the epoch from Palestrina to Schumann and Chopin inclusive, and the epoch from Berlioz to the composers of the day*) inclusive, and in this way include in each series of Subscription-Concerts a Concerto of the first and a concerto of the second epoch.

—To the best of my knowledge you are also opposed to the customary placing of the orchestra?

—The placing of the orchestra is a question not solved so far—the Symphony requires one placing, the Oratorio another, the Opera again another. It has always seemed to me, that in the Symphony Concerts, in placing the I. violins

*) I reckon the composers Raff, Gade, Brahms, Bruch, Goldmark, etc., as belonging to the first epoch, first on account of the character of their creations, and second, on account of their musical training.

to the left and the II. violins to the right of the director, the listeners on the left hear too little and the listeners on the right too much of the second voice. I have attempted (the orchestra always grumbling) placing the string quartette *in plenum* on both sides of the Director, that is, the second violins next to the first ascending the *estrade*, and then the violas, then 'celli, then contrabassi on the left of the estrade: and in the same manner again the first, second violas, etc., on the right side of the estrade,—the wind instruments from the flutes and oboes on to the trombones, in the middle of the estrade, ascending the estrade from the director, and above these also the timpani and other percussion instruments.—I was told the sound was much more satisfactory and beautiful to the audience, but it is hard to root out old prejudices, and so I gave up this manner of placing it.—In chorus too I think it best to place all four chorus voices on each side of the estrade—in double choruses it appeared to me a matter of course, but in this too I met with un-

willingness and opposition! There is still another position that I cannot understand, that is the position of the Director in the Opera. If he would do his task justice, he must be able to make himself felt on the stage, and at the same time in the orchestra; a glance or a wave of the hand is often sufficient to assist the singer, be it in tempo or in musical expression if he should accidentally lose his way—and how is that possible if the Director has his stand not at the footlights of the stage (as formerly) but at the edge of the orchestra (as now)? There he can at most merely give the orchestra the necessary hint, the artists on the stage are entirely forsaken by the Director—that is left entirely to themselves. To be sure in view of the demands made on the singer of to-day (good memorizing, correct intonation, and clear declamation) where singing, phrasing, and technic and many other things are scarce given a thought, the Director is not of importance or use for the stage!

—What do you think of musical prodigies?

—It is true that the most of our heroes of music have been prodigies—but their number is still a very small one in comparison with the numberless talented children who almost daily appear, and of whom later nothing or very little is known. These children generally exhibit astounding musical talent from a very early age, but there comes a time (with boys from the 15th to the 20th year, girls from the 14th to the 17th year) when the musical gift weakens or sleeps altogether; and only those who are able to cross this Rubicon, will then become real artists. Of such the number is very small.

—There is still another question, that interests me very much, and about which I am not clear—What is the church style in music?

—"*Das will ich Sie gleich sagen, meine Gutste, das weiss ich Sie selber nicht.*" (That I will tell you at once, my good friend, I don't know it myself."—) After all how do you mean that, do you speak of prayer set to music or of compositions with sacred subject or with sacred text?

.—Well, both.

—It is not possible, in my opinion, to have *one* church style for all the Christian world.—The southerner feels in prayer different from the northerner, the Catholic other than the Protestant, these again different from the orthodox, etc. To me the singing of a choral in unison by the congregation supported by the organ, as harmonic base, as it is done in the Protestant churches is the most sympathetic, in a musical sense.—Part singing has already within itself even more the character of an artistic performance, hence ceases to be individual prayer—but I can well understand that the Catholic, for the splendor of his service, requires Organ, Chorus, Solo, Orchestra, etc.*)—In the church compositions of our great masters, it would be difficult to discover a standard or prescribed church style, it seems to me. —Take for example, the "Missa Papae Marcelli" of Palestrina, the "Messe" in B-minor of Bach,

*) The Greek-orthodox service allows of no instrument, and is in musical expression merely of a choral (a capella) nature.

and the "Missa Solemnis" of Beethoven, which of the three is really in prescribed church style? or, instead of the Mass of Palestrina (since it is a capella while the other two are with orchestra accompaniment), the Requiem of Mozart, can we speak here of a strict, recognized, prescribed church style? All these compositions are serious in character, with sacred texts and of unusual beauty, and that is all. Or ought the fugue and the polyphonic treatment of the voices alone distinguish the church style in music? or should church style absolutely require the usual A——men, Hale——luja, Hosa——na, with several measures of figuration on the vowel? The reason that in Protestant countries Church Music is musically more earnest than it is in Catholic countries is that in Latin countries the Opera has influenced Church Music (that is again only the unhealthy influence of the Vocal Virtuoso on the composer), which it could not do in Protestant countries, because there, and even to-day, the pious Protestants abhor the

theatre.—I think it an error, however, to condemn for that reason the "Stabat Mater" of Rossini or the "Messe" of Verdi in Protestant countries. —The Protestant may indeed say: "*I have a different feeling,*" but not "that is bad, because it is *other than my feeling of worship.*"

—The operatic and homophonic in these compositions is to be condemned at any rate, from a purely artistic standpoint, is it not?

—Heaven is different in Palermo than in Insterburg, and that explains very much. As an example:—A beautiful maiden of Palermo throws herself upon her knees at the street corner before an image of the Virgin Mary, and prays "O Virgin Mary, help me to win Beppo for my husband, if thou dost I will offer thee my coral necklace, if thou wilt not, then"——such a prayer, under such a sky, at such a shrine, I cannot imagine set to music otherwise than with a melody in allegro tempo in $\frac{6}{8}$ measure; but when a beautiful maiden of Insterburg turns to God with her heart's desires, her humility, her

earnestness and her contrition demand in musical expression a melody in adagio tempo in $\frac{4}{4}$, perhaps in $\frac{3}{2}$ tempo.

—Paradoxes again!

—Possible, but is true.

—We were speaking though of a given Latin text, of a Mass, composed by musicians of different religions.

—And must not fail to consider therefore the difference in their religious feeling, each according to the clime, the training, the historical character, the culture-epoch, the tradition, etc.

—It is with that as with the art of painting: a picture by Holbein or by Albrecht Dürer has another character than the same picture painted by Leonardo di Vinci or Rafael, or any other Italian, and so too another character than the same painted by Rubens, Rembrandt, etc.

—You spoke in the beginning of the historical events, state of culture, the age, echo and re-echo, etc., in music, what connection have they with the terrible events of our century?

—You seem to wish to carry the question to the extreme, it could easily become comic in that case, and still I hold firmly to my saying. Yes, music is to me the echo and re-echo of all these —and though you may again call them paradoxes, I can follow musically even the events of our century.

—Our century begins either with 1789, the French Revolution (musically with Beethoven) and the year 1815 is to be looked upon as the close of the XVIII. century: Disappearance of Napoleon from the political horizon, the Restoration, etc. (musically, the scholastic-virtuoso period, Hummel, Moscheles, and others) flourishing of modern philosophy (third period of Beethoven). The July revolution of 1830, Fall of the Legitimists, Raising of the son of Philip Egalitè to the throne, the Orleans dynasty, democratic and constitutional principle in the foreground, monarchical principle in the background, 1848 in sight—(Berlioz), the Aeolian harp of the Polish rebellion of 1831 (Chopin). Romantic altogether

and a victory over the pseudo-classic (Schumann), flourishing of all the arts and sciences (Mendelssohn), the Triumph of the Bourgeoisie, in the sense of material existence, a shield against all disturbing elements of politics and culture (Capellmeister music); Louis Napoleon becomes Emperor (Liszt, the Virtuoso, becomes composer of Symphonies and Oratorios) his reign (the Operetta a branch of art); the German-Franco War, Germany's unity, the freedom of Europe resting on ten millions of soldiers; change in all formerly accepted political principles (Wagner, his music-drama, his art principles); the present condition of Europe, the awaiting and seeking to prevent a frightful collision, uncertainty, general feeling of unstability in the politics of the day (condition of music, foreboding, possibility of downfall in the art of music, transition period, longing for a genius); division and conflict of the ever increasing political religious social parties (representatives and defenders of all musical-schools-classic, romantic, modern nihilist); striv-

ing of diverse nationalities and races for autonomy, or federation, or political independence (more and more striving for reflective nationalism in music) and so on.

—In such paradoxal flight I cannot possibly follow you.

—But you must acknowledge that in all this a certain affinity is not to be denied.

—From all that I have heard from you I conclude that you cannot be happy in your profession now, and I deplore it sincerely.—What you revere *has been;* what *is* you do not revere, and thus you find yourself in complete opposition to the reigning taste, to art critique, the cultivation of music, the executive and creative, to musical education, the modern views of art, the modern art principles, in short to all connected with music. Therefore it is easy to understand that you with your criticisms, as your much lauded Virtuoso with his technic, "break all bounds."

—I feel that I shall not live long enough now to enjoy the coming Bach or Beethoven, and that

is sorrowful to me. My only solace is that I may still have the same enthusiasm for an Organ Prelude or Fugue for the Bach that *was*, for a Sonata, a String Quartette or a Symphony of a Beethoven that *was*, for a Song or Impromptu or Moment Musicale of a Schubert that *was;* for a Prelude or Nocturno or Polonaise or Mazurka of a Chopin that *was;* for a national Opera by the Glinka that *was*,—to-day as ever.

—I recognize the creation of to-day as an advancement in the art—and if it is, as you say, only a period of transition, it interests me greatly more than that which *was*. I hope most assuredly to enjoy the future Bach or Beethoven, and to delight thoroughly in his *new* art.

—O happy being!

—After having accompanied Madame von —— to her carriage, I returned to my studio and remained standing there, meditating, whether it might not be the *musical Götterdämmerung* that is now breaking upon us.

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