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Dussek's Pianoforte Sonatas (Concluded)

Author(s): Ebenezer Prout

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bäcker, "I cannot renounce the plan, so essential to my happiness, of your living with me. If God would only grant me that joy, I should be at the height of my felicity." But the dear friend was not to be sanguine: "At a court like this innumerable people are on the watch for such a post, and they do not scruple to use any means. Go on therefore quietly with your Innsbruck affairs, and do not throw away any other chance. . . . You must always be prepared for many things and many annoyances which would never occur to the mind of a straightforward Tyrolese who has lived far from courts. But the man who steadily goes on his way animated by pure zeal will find himself respected here as elsewhere, and content. Besides in me you have a friend who knows the depth of the stream and who will be your faithful pilot." Shortly afterwards Weber exultingly wrote, "Now, thanks be to God and to my excellent chief, I have the intense joy of procuring for my King a faithful servant and admirable artist, an ornament to our artistic establishment; for you an honourable sphere of work; and for myself an attached comrade in joy and sorrow. I congratulate both you and ourselves from the depths of my heart, and rejoice unspeakably in the hope of soon embracing you." With this letter went 200 gulden to pay the expenses of Gänsbacher's journey, &c. But the union was, after all, not to take place; the Capellmeistership of St. Stephen's, Vienna, fell vacant, and Gänsbacher succeeded in obtaining the appointment, whereupon his faithful Weber wrote, "Beloved brother and colleague, in haven at last! God be praised, who in the end does all things well. My most heartfelt good wishes attend you and your beloved wife. You have everything that can contribute to the happiness of life: an existence free from care, a sphere for work; a faithful, prudent wife by your side, and loving friends; now do not fail to prize all these blessings and to enjoy them with gladness of heart. This is the greatest boon that I can wish for you and yours; for though God has bestowed so many rich bounties upon me beyond what most enjoy, I do not possess a cheerful spirit to elevate these gifts to pure earthly felicity, and therefore I best know that, without such a boon from the Almighty, you may persuade yourself by force of reason to be happy, but—the heart feels there is something wanting." With this my notice of the pure and touching friendship of Weber for Gänsbacher may well end. As to the light that it reflects upon the master not another word need be said.

Did space permit, Weber's letters might be quoted to show his modesty, conspicuously lacking as they are in self-glorification, his pious thankfulness for worldly benefits, and the earnestness with which he pursued his art. But the extracts I have made suffice to throw a flood of light upon a nature which, when properly studied, seems in marvellous accord with the music Weber's genius produced. Noting the master's keenness of sympathy, the energy of his spirit, and the romanticism of his friendship, the mingled spirituality and power of his artistic creations seem the most natural thing in the world.

DUSSEK'S PIANOFORTE SONATAS.

BY EBENEZER PROUT, B.A.

(Concluded from page 424.)

THE Sonata in E flat, Op. 44 (commonly known as "Les Adieux"), is the longest of the whole series, containing four movements, and an Introduction, in E flat minor, to the first Allegro. Of the thirty-two Sonatas included in Breitkopf's edition there are

only three which contain a Minuet and Trio—the present work, the "Retour à Paris" (Op. 70), and "L'Invocation" (Op. 77). In this respect Dussek resembles Mozart, who in all his pianoforte works shows a decided preference for the three-movement over the four-movement form. It was left to Beethoven to assert the true importance of the Minuet, which he developed into the Scherzo; but it is somewhat strange that Mozart and Dussek, and it may be added Clementi also, should, comparatively speaking, neglect this form, which had been so frequently and so charmingly employed by Haydn. In the Introduction to the present Sonata we meet with the organist Dussek again, the sustained harmonies and suspensions which abound in the music being quite appropriate to the "king of instruments." The succeeding Allegro, in E flat major, $\frac{3}{4}$ time, is one of its author's best movements; both the principal subjects are of great beauty, and the developments of the middle portion are of unusual interest. The *Molto adagio e sostenuto*, in B major, has much affinity of style with the better-known slow movement of the "Retour à Paris" ("Plus Ultra"). Though very beautiful, it suffers somewhat from diffuseness—a rare fault with the composer. The Minuet, in G sharp minor, with a Trio in its enharmonic key of A flat, is so good, especially the Trio, as to increase our surprise that Dussek should have written so few movements in this form. A very graceful, though rather long, Rondo forms a worthy conclusion to this admirable Sonata, which must rank as among the very best of its author's works. It is too difficult for any but very advanced pupils, and is indeed best suited for concert purposes. It has been played once, I believe, by Madame Goddard, at the Monday Popular Concerts, and would certainly be heard there again with pleasure.

Of the three Sonatas, Op. 45, the first and second (in B flat and G major) are gems of the first water. That in B flat is especially enjoyable. It is much less difficult than the Sonatas last noticed, being well within the reach of fair amateur players. What chiefly distinguishes it is its essentially melodious character. The Allegro cantabile is worthy of its name, being nearly throughout one long song; and the Adagio patetico is also in its composer's best manner. Both, however, are surpassed by the sparkling Rondo entitled "Allegro di Ballo." Speaking from an intimate acquaintance of many years with all these Sonatas, I am inclined to call the present movement the most perfect specimen of the Rondo which Dussek has left. It is impossible on paper to give any idea of the indescribable charm, or of the irresistible "go" of the music; I can only recommend all pianists to make its acquaintance. The second Sonata, though less striking than the first, is also a work of true inspiration. It is somewhat unusual in its form, as it commences with an Introduction, almost long enough to be called a slow movement, and of too much importance in its subjects to be considered a mere Prelude. To this succeeds an Allegro, the principal theme of which is in two parts only, and written in double counterpoint. This movement is more scientific, in form and treatment, than any other in the Sonatas, the nearest approach to it in this respect being the Allegro of the Sonata, Op. 35, No. 2. In spite of the strictness of its imitations in many parts, the composer's vein of melody never seems to fail; the music is throughout as tuneful as if it made not the slightest pretension to science. The Finale of this work is a Rondo in slow time, *andantino con moto*, the subjects and treatment of which are alike fresh and original. One is so accustomed to associate the idea of a Rondo

with a rapid movement that an effect of great novelty is produced by the present piece, which is moreover totally unlike any other movement in all the Sonatas. The third Sonata, in D major, may be recommended as an excellent and brilliant teaching piece; but, though pleasing, it is not equal to the first and second numbers of this set, nor is it needful to dwell upon it.

The two Sonatas, Op. 47, may also be very briefly dismissed. They are both rather easy, and useful for pupils, but neither will rank among Dussek's finest works. Of the two, the second, in G, with a charming Rondo in $\frac{3}{8}$ time, is the better.

There are few things more unsatisfactory than the attempt to convey in words the impression produced by music. One is almost driven to use such common-places as "very graceful," "very beautiful," "characteristic of the composer," &c.; and after all the feeling remains that, by those who do not know the work described, only the most indistinct idea on the subject can be gained. I fear I have more than once laid myself open to the charge of this kind of generalisation; my apology must be that it has been my aim rather to call the attention of the readers of this journal to Dussek's beautiful but almost forgotten works than to attempt any description or analysis of them. I must ask the indulgence of my readers if I am compelled to offend in the same way again in the present article. The only way to avoid it would be to give copious extracts from the Sonatas, and to do this would require far more space than is available in these columns.

In Dussek's latest Sonatas, now to be noticed, may be observed a development of the *technique* of the piano as compared with his earlier works. The form and the melodic style are but very little, if at all changed; but the passages are frequently different from those which have been met with previously. It is not so much that they are *more* brilliant as that they are *otherwise* brilliant. In the earlier Sonatas the passages are mostly founded upon the scale or on broken chords; in those which we are now approaching will be found new and bolder dispositions of the arpeggios, which frequently embrace a tenth, and a much freer use of passing notes and appoggiaturas. When this change took place cannot be said with certainty. If, as is probable, the opus-numbers of Dussek's works correspond with the order of their production, a considerable interval must have elapsed between the Sonatas last noticed (Op. 47) and the "Élégie harmonique sur la mort du prince Louis-Ferdinand" (Op. 61), which is the next in order—how long it is difficult to tell, for none of the musical dictionaries give any dates for Dussek's compositions, and it is only indirectly that a few can be approximately fixed. For example, it is known that Prince Louis-Ferdinand was killed at the battle of Saalfeld in October 1806, and we cannot therefore be far wrong in assigning the "Elegy" to the end of that year or the beginning of the next. Again, Fétis tells us that Dussek returned to Paris in 1808; we may therefore safely infer from its title that the Sonata "La Retour à Paris" was composed about that time.

To return, however, to the "Élégie harmonique" (Op. 61). The Sonata opens with a long Introduction, *lento patetico*, which is not only very beautiful, but interesting from the employment of what, though in strict time, are really passages of recitative for the piano. The style of this Introduction is alternately plaintive and declamatory, and the modulations are of remarkable boldness. A curious and suggestive direction is given at the beginning of the piece, "senza ornamenti." From the composer's thinking such a

caution necessary, one is led to infer that it was the habit of performers to embellish the music as they thought fit. It is traditionally known that Mozart did not play his own music as it is written, but introduced such ornaments as suggested themselves to him at the moment. Was this the custom of the time, and, if so, may it not be an explanation of the discrepancy of different editions, referred to in my first article in speaking of Dussek's Op. 39? To the Introduction of this work succeeds a *Tempo agitato non presto*, the two chief themes of which are in the strongest possible contrast. The first is full of passion and restlessness, the second very sustained and stately; it is as though there were a sudden lull in the storm of grief. It is, however, of but short duration; a new figure, even more agitated than the first, appears, and a very beautiful and pathetic melody in C sharp minor leads to the close of the first part. The second half of the movement, which is by no means regular in its form, is constructed almost entirely of material previously heard. To this Allegro succeeds a Finale, *tempo vivace e con fuoco quasi presto*, the present being the last example of the two-movement Sonata which will be met with. This Finale is remarkable as a probably unique instance of a figure of syncopation carried incessantly through a movement of eight pages. Now in the treble and then in the bass, this constant displacement of the accent pursues us till within five bars of the end; but so great is the variety, both of melody and harmony, that no feeling of monotony is produced. A charming episode in the major relieves the agitated character of the music somewhat, though even here the persistence of the syncopation gives no absolute repose. It is difficult to see why, as the key of the Finale is F sharp minor, Dussek should have written this episode in G flat (instead of F sharp) major, unless it was to avoid double-sharps; and this hardly seems a sufficient explanation, as they are found in abundance in other parts of the movement. Though not one of the most popular in style, the present Sonata must undoubtedly be reckoned among its composer's best works.

The next Sonata in the volume (in D major) bears in Breitkopf's edition the simple opus-number, "Op. 69." It is more accurately, Op. 69, No. 3. In this set of three Sonatas Dussek has, rather singularly, grouped together two works for piano and violin and one for piano solo. The first of the set is the Sonata in B flat, so well known to amateurs from its frequent performance at the Monday Popular Concerts; with the second, in G major, I am unacquainted; the third, in D, is indisputably one of its author's most charming compositions. Dussek must have been in one of his happiest veins when he wrote the work; nowhere throughout the whole series do we find a more lovely flow of melody or more graceful passage-writing than in the first Allegro. The second subject and its continuations are especially beautiful. The developments of the "free fantasia" are unimportant, and mostly founded upon one single figure taken from the first page of the work. The slow movement of this work (*larghetto espressivo*) is short and unpretending; it is in fact a simple little Romance, in which everything depends upon the player, and which requires a singing and sympathetic touch to bring out its beauties. The Finale, "à la chasse" is an exceedingly brilliant movement, which will be most appropriately characterised as "jolly." No other word will so exactly express its effect. It is extremely melodious, and full of the most delightful passages for the player. There is not one of Dussek's Sonatas which is more thoroughly enjoyable than this, which, while important enough for concert

use (I believe Mr. Charles Hallé played it some years since at one of his Recitals), is at the same time not too difficult for fairly advanced pupils. I have often taught it myself, and have always found it an especial favourite.

"Le Retour à Paris," in A flat, Op. 70 (usually called in this country "Plus Ultra") is so well known to musicians here that, as this paper has already far exceeded its intended limits, I shall pass very hastily over it. To this Sonata more than to any other, unless it be "L'Invocation," apply the remarks made above as to the technical development observable in Dussek's later works. Many of the passages are quite in Hummel's style, while one (page 6, first line, B. and H. edition) is remarkably like Weber. Next to Op. 44, this Sonata is the longest of all its composer's; its beauties are so well known that it is needless to enlarge further upon them.

Far otherwise is it with the next work, the Sonata in E flat, Op. 75, which is one of the most unjustly neglected of the whole series. Though decidedly less difficult, it is hardly less brilliant than "Le Retour à Paris," and in the charm of its melodies it is almost more beautiful. The passage-writing in the first Allegro is very new and elegant; the slow movement has some slight resemblance in character to the author's well-known Andante "La Consolation," to which, however, it is superior; and the final Rondo is one of the most perfect that Dussek has left us. Madame Goddard introduced this beautiful work once at the Monday Popular Concerts; it is much to be regretted that hardly any one seems to think it worth while to imitate her example.

The Sonata "L'Invocation," in F minor, Op. 77, appears to have been Dussek's last work; at all events no "Op. 78" exists. It is a worthy companion to the two last noticed. I have been unable to meet with any explanation of the title; can any of my readers supply the information? The first Allegro of this Sonata is distinguished by the dignified grace of its melodies, and by the brilliance of its passage-writing, in which it approaches very near to Op. 70. The second movement is a Minuet and Trio, of which the former is written in canon throughout. It is marked "canone alla seconda," but, though indicated "seconda grave," it is not really in the second below, as might be inferred, but in the *seventh* below, which of course is the inversion of the second. Towards the close we find the actual canon in the second above. The use of this form was a favourite with Clementi, in whose Sonatas many specimens are to be found; Dussek's canon seems to flow more naturally, and to have less pedantic stiffness about it than is frequently the case in those of his great contemporary. The Trio of this movement is in charming contrast with the Minuet; here science is abandoned and melody resumes her sway. The following Adagio non troppo ma solenne, in D flat, is one of our composer's most beautiful slow movements; and the final Rondo is in no way inferior to the rest of the work.

At the end of the series of Sonatas is printed one called "La Chasse." It is not really a Sonata, but only an Allegro in $\frac{3}{4}$ time, preceded by seven bars of introduction. It is very pretty, but in no way great, nor does it require more than a word of mention for the sake of completeness.

It is the fashion with some musicians of the present day to depreciate Dussek, and to speak of his music as old-fashioned and dull. To a very limited extent the truth of the former epithet may be admitted as regards some of his works. Many of the passages which he invented have been so frequently used and imitated since that they no longer possess the charm

of absolute novelty; but in his best works even the passage-writing cannot at this day be called antiquated. And as to the charge of dullness, I am almost inclined to call it an outrage upon common sense. Trivial at times, nay, even commonplace, Dussek may be; but he certainly is never dull. If ever a man possessed an unfailing fountain of melody, that man was Dussek. Even in his least important and interesting Sonatas, the *tune* flows on continually, sometimes in a jog-trot sort of way, it is true, but it never stops. We never feel, as we do sometimes with Clementi, that the man has got to the end of his ideas, and is forced to eke out invention with science. It is probable that those who speak disparagingly of Dussek have so accustomed their musical palates to the highly spiced viands of Liszt and the school of "higher development" as to have lost their taste for simple and natural food. It is not risking much to predict that the best of Dussek's Sonatas will live as long as those of Mozart, with which in melodic charm they are quite on a par, while technically they are even more advanced. I trust that this article may do something towards calling the attention of musicians and of teachers to the writing of one who, though not a star of the first magnitude in the musical heavens, was nevertheless a man of real genius, and, within the comparatively limited range of pianoforte music to which he almost exclusively confined his attention, a true "tone-poet."

A SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF MUSIC-PRINTING, FROM THE FIFTEENTH TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

BY FRIEDRICH CHRYSANDER.

(Continued from page 378.)

SECOND PERIOD (continued).

BEFORE we advance further, the final words in the previous number, pages 377 and 378, require an explanation. The result of type-printing during the nearly 400 years of its existence, which is described there, is expressed far too briefly to be safe against all misunderstanding, or to be an accurate statement of the present usage of all countries. The words, "Of late years type-printing has been given up again, even for publications which have a large sale," and "it is now almost entirely confined to theoretical, historical, and instruction books on music," strictly describe only what is usual on the Continent. The obligation of an historical description is to pay especial attention to those countries which at the present time give the tone, and to regard their practice as that which is most sure of having a future before it. It should, indeed, have been added to the above words that music is still brought out by means of typography in a quantity perhaps greater than that issued from the combined presses of the engravers and lithographers. England and the United States, the dominions of the Anglo-Saxon tongue, are the countries where the leading musical firms bring out the majority of their publications by type-printing. A gentleman who is practically engaged in the business, and who brings great knowledge and interest to bear on everything connected with music-printing, declares his opinion that type-printing will be found the more suited to vocal music—the combination of music and speech—and engraving the best for instrumental. Although this view harmonises with what I remarked on page 377 on "the same system," which would come to be employed in printing letters of the alphabet and musical notes, still I think there is no need to draw so