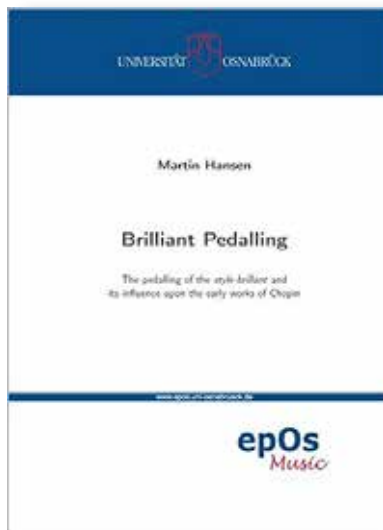


written by those authors, Malinowski subjects their reception of Chopin and his work to interpretation, as well as tracing the distinct tendencies that appeared in connection with a particular representation of Chopin at a given moment in history (Proust's personal Chopin, a sort of alter ego of the writer; the national and patriotic Chopin of the neoromantics on the eve of the First World War; the trivialised Chopin, whose music serves as the basis for pop songs that at times are poles apart from the original expressive character of the music; Chopin as a teacher of life and love in the prose of Schmitt).

Finally, the fourth part of the volume comprises articles that focus on specific literary works inspired by Chopin's music. Aleksandra Sikorska-Krystek and Jędrzej Krystek write about Artur Oppman, Augustin Voegele considers André Gide's comparison of Chopin with Baudelaire, Karolina Orłowska explores Cezary Jellenta's vision of Chopin, and Maria Jolanta Olszewska discusses Stanisława Fleszarowa-Muskat's play *Ostatni koncert* ('The last concert'), based on the farewell concert given by Chopin in Warsaw before he left Poland. This excellent issue of *Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne* concludes with a profile of Piotr Wierzbicki's Chopin-related essays drawn by Dobrawa Lisak-Gębala.

The field of Chopin studies is seeking new paths. Interdisciplinary studies, enabling various fields of learning to shed light on issues crucial to one another, have been successfully pursued for some time. The intense recent interest in Chopin's legacy among scholars representing disciplines other than musicology and music theory, meanwhile, is a new trend, and one that has already brought interesting and significant results. There is no doubt that within the current of interdisciplinary research combining literary studies with Chopin studies, this volume of *Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne* is one of the most notable achievements.



DAVID ROWLAND

Brilliant Pedalling. The pedalling of the 'style brilliant' and its influence upon the early works of Chopin
Martin Sehested Hansen

Osnabrück, epOs-Music, 2016; 580 pp.
ISBN 978-3-940255-54-9 (print)
ISBN 978-3-940255-62-4 (CD-ROM)
Price approx. 40 EUR (print); 23 EUR (CD-ROM)

Much has been written about Chopin's pedalling, and we might well ask whether there is room for another volume on the subject. Martin Hansen answers that question with a book that provides a broad and extremely useful examination of early nineteenth-century pedalling along with a minute investigation of Chopin's early pedal markings.

According to Hansen, the context for Chopin's pedalling is the *style brillant* of the early nineteenth century, the style developed by the likes of Dussek, his contemporaries and successors, which found its mature manifestation in the performances of pianists such as Hummel, Moscheles and Kalkbrenner. The style is transitional, lying between the emergence of true pianism – as opposed to the

hybrid harpsichord/piano style of the late eighteenth century – and the more modern style that emerged in the middle of the nineteenth century. Hansen contrasts the pedalling style of the *style brillant* with the style adopted by most modern pianists. He describes how the sustaining pedal was used in the early decades of the nineteenth century in the context of a generally unpedalled approach, whereas modern pianists use more or less continuous pedal. He points out that while the proponents of the earlier pedalling style used the pedal for sustaining bass notes, for arpeggios and to expand the expressive capabilities of the piano, it was not routinely used for legato. Inevitably, individual pianists such as Hummel and Kalkbrenner used the pedals during this period to differing degrees (Hummel conservatively and Kalkbrenner more liberally), but the overall approach of both was fundamentally different from that of their modern counterparts.

Having thoroughly reviewed the secondary literature, Hansen sets out the parameters of his study before embarking on a description of piano tutors from as far back as C. P. E. Bach (1753), through his detailed discussion of the key accounts of pedalling in works by Milchemeyer (1797), Adam (1804), Müller (1804), Steibelt (1810), Starke (1819), and others. This is probably the most thorough examination of the evidence of the early nineteenth-century tutors that there is, even though the author is going over well-trodden ground. The descriptions of pedalling in these tutors are certainly of use, but there are nevertheless shortcomings in it; authors tend not to go into great detail about matters of technique, and there are biases in what they have to say. Further important information has to be deduced from the musical scores themselves, and this is where the book covers newer ground with its extensive and detailed examination of selected musical publications. The discussion begins with the three volumes of Clementi's *Gradus ad*

Parnassum, published in 1817, 1819 and 1826. Hansen's approach is systematic. Critically, he reviews the precise placing of the pedal markings in the printed text. Clementi, of all early nineteenth-century composers, was about as precise as it was possible to be with the placing of his pedal markings, notwithstanding the fact that the term 'Ped' has little or no capacity to indicate the precise moment at which the pedal should be depressed. Of arguably greater use is the pedal release sign (*), which is often placed by Clementi at the beginning of a bar, or system, suggesting a knowledge of syncopated pedalling that is also found in other musical texts of the period.

Having looked at the means of notating pedalling, Hansen goes on to discuss some other general issues. One of those is the extent of the similarity in pedalling of analogous passages within individual studies that form the content of the *Gradus*. This raises some important questions. In particular, should similar passages be pedalled in the same way each time they occur? Are differences in similar or identical musical texts explained by inconsistencies in the composer's notation (or in the engraving process – a matter which Hansen perhaps should have examined in more detail, notwithstanding the difficulties of doing so in the absence of an autograph)? Or are the differences sometimes intentional?

Another general issue concerns the prevalence of so-called 'finger pedalling' in Clementi's music, meaning held notes and chords sustained only by the action of the fingers, not by the pedals, for which a particular kind of notation was used. There then follows an examination of Clementi's pedalling under more specific headings such as scales, passagework, octaves, various accompaniment figures, melodic lines in the upper registers, chordal and homophonic writing, repeated notes, tremolos and trills, arpeggios, the blurring of harmonies and spatial effects.

Having examined Clementi's *Gradus* for some 20 or so pages, Hansen draws a variety of conclusions, underlining the relative conservatism of Clementi's approach, but also his care and attention to detail. These features of Clementi's writing have been observed by other authors, but the evidence for them has not been documented in similar detail elsewhere.

I labour the discussion of Clementi's *Gradus*, not because it is more extensive than that of other early nineteenth-century figures, but because it epitomises the approach taken in this book. Systematising the discussion in this way certainly clarifies the issues, although wading through the detailed argument at times becomes somewhat overwhelming. But it is nevertheless invaluable for anyone undertaking a serious study of Clementi's music.

A similarly rigorous discussion of pedalled music from didactic sources follows, including Hummel's piano tutor, Czerny's Op. 500, Moscheles's Op. 70, Kalkbrenner's piano method, and Herz's Op. 21 and *Méthode*, leading to a comprehensive view of pedalling patterns in music by *style brillant* composers. Although the discussion inevitably focusses on printed sources (because the composers' manuscripts have not survived), a pattern emerges which defines the main pedalling characteristics of the style. What is perhaps less useful, but is included nevertheless, is an account of pedalling pedagogy for the rest of the nineteenth century, through later figures such as Wieck, Kullak and the authors of specialist pedalling methods like Schmitt, Lavignac and others. These later specialist publications include works by authors who were so disillusioned with the method of notating pedalling that they invented their own system for doing so. However, while their new systems had their individual merits and demonstrate how far the technique of pedalling had come by the end of the nineteenth century, they never

became commonplace and largely fell out of use within a few decades. But if nothing else, they emphasise the gulf that separates the pedalling of pianists in the *style brillant* from those who came later.

For the sake of completeness, Hansen also reviews a number of other, later piano methods and comments on reviews of published music, concert reviews and any other literature he can lay his hands on, and a whole chapter of nearly 200 pages is devoted to a survey of pedalling in works that Chopin is known to have played. While the discussions are useful and show how close Chopin was to the *style brillant* in his formative years, they generally add little to what we learn from the didactic literature and the discussion of musical texts reviewed earlier in the book.

All of the above paves the way for a review of Chopin's pedalling as evidenced in his works up to the mid-1830s. The clear message of this chapter is that Chopin was the inheritor of the pedalling style adopted by the composers of piano music in the *style brillant*. Such findings are potentially controversial for modern pianists, who still have to make decisions about performing Chopin's music on pianos designed in a manner unknown to the composer and whose techniques have been shaped according to the capabilities of modern instruments.

Hansen emphasises the message of many writers on Chopin's music who have observed the composer's minute attention to detail in his pedalling, despite the challenges of using an inherently imprecise notation. He observes many of Chopin's notational habits, including his habit of notating the indication 'ped' to the left of the note or chord to which it applies (unless the constraints of space within the notation dictates otherwise). He addresses the issue of possible mistakes and omissions, as well as the question of pedalling for parallel passages, for which the pedalling notation is not necessarily identical. These

and many other questions are addressed with characteristic thoroughness and according to the methods laid out earlier in the volume. Having been a student of Chopin's notation and pedalling for a number of decades, I learned much and would recommend this book to any serious student of the composer's works.

Despite the obvious qualities of this volume, there were some omissions which I found a little puzzling. The discussion is more or less entirely focussed on the use of the sustaining pedal. This is understandable in one sense, because the overwhelming weight of evidence concerns this essential feature of nineteenth-century and modern pianos. But the so-called *una corda* pedal ('so called' because it is not possible on modern pianos to reduce to one string) barely features, and a pianist who plays Chopin's music nowadays could surely do with some guidance on its use (or omission).

Another omission that somewhat compromises the usefulness of the book is the absence of an index. Perhaps this is understandable, given the text's nature as a published doctoral thesis, but it would have been useful nonetheless to readers who want to dip in and out of it for information on a range of composers, which inevitably many pianists will want to do.

But these omissions should not detract from the real strengths of his book. It is well conceived and written, with a rigorous approach. It is copiously illustrated, so readers have no need to delve into online or paper libraries. The book is a very valuable addition to the literatures of pedalling and of Chopin performance and will be of use to scholars and practitioners alike.