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INNOVATIONS IN THE USAGE OF THE DAMPER PEDAL

THESIS

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CHAPTER I

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE DAMPING MECHANISM

Origin

The piano first came into existence about 1709, but until the 1770's it was probably used most successfully as an accompanying instrument because of the small volume of tone it could produce. In its earlier stages the piano was not capable of producing even as big a tone as a large-sized harpsichord. During these seventy years piano builders experimented a great deal with the piano and its mechanisms. As with any instrument, some ideas were kept and improved, and others were tried and then discarded.

Many of the earliest pianos were made with dampers, but the idea of enabling the player to raise or lower them to alter the tone had not yet been thought of. "Schröter's two authentic models [of 1717] were fitted with dampers but with no means to raise them."¹ Due to the influence of

¹Rosamund E. M. Harding, The Piano-forte (Cambridge, 1933), p. 43.

Pantaleon Hebenstreit's² dulcimer playing, however, it soon became popular to allow harmonies to blend together on the piano. In trying to allow the piano sound to imitate that of the undamped dulcimer, makers began either leaving the dampers off the instrument or providing a means for raising them. Marius of Paris, in his two Clavecins à Maillets, was one of the first to do this.³

Hebenstreit, it will be remembered, visited Paris in 1705, where his pantaleon playing was no doubt heard by Marius. On his return, news of the wonderful effects that he obtained from his instrument spread throughout the Empire. We know from the evidence of Kuhnau that the blended harmonies mingling as it were in the air, where the strings were left undamped, were much admired.

Thus it may be concluded that the absence of dampers in a pianoforte or the presence of a damper-lifting device is due to the influence of Hebenstreit and his pantaleon; that the forte pedal was added to the pianoforte to⁴ enable the performer to obtain 'Pantaleon' effects.

Arthur Loesser, in his book, Men, Women, and Pianos, also refers to Hebenstreit's influence on the pianoforte damping mechanism:

It was the memory of Pantaleon Hebenstreit that encouraged the application of the most important of all the pianoforte stops. We recall how the

²Hebenstreit (1669-1750) was a German dulcimer player who was quite celebrated for his performances on this instrument and who also greatly enlarged the instrument. Fuller-Maitland, J. A., "Pantaleon Hebenstreit", Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 5th ed., Vol. 4 (New York, 1954).

³Harding, op. cit., p. 43.

⁴Ibid.

famous dulcimer player enchanted his hearers by making his sticks roll great chords over the strings and letting their resonances mingle and reverberate, to spread a great wash of harmony over the air. In the effort to permit something of a similar effect on the pianoforte, a contrivance was designed whereby the entire set of dampers could be raised off the strings independently of the hammers or keys at the player's discretion, by a single lever.⁵

Development

Using stops to vary tone quality and to produce more interesting effects was first experimented with on the harpsichord. Many new sounds were discovered by placing various materials between the jacks and the strings and by making the plectra of different materials. The idea of obtaining variety of tone by stops was carried over from the harpsichord to the piano. Among these were "lute" stops, "harp" stops, and "piano" stops. They were constructed, much as were the harpsichord stops, by applying various devices for softening or drying the tone, such as strips of leather or cloth inserted between the hammers and the strings.⁶

The idea of providing a way to raise the dampers was first conceived as a stop on the piano. The mechanism which lifted the dampers was operated by a hand lever, as

⁵Arthur Loesser, Men, Women, and Pianos, (New York, 1954), pp. 46-47.

⁶Ibid.

were all the harpsichord and piano stops. This reduced its actual usefulness, however, because the player could use only one hand for playing while operating the damper release.

At this period, [about 1777] the best instruments had a compass of only five octaves, were mounted with only doubled strings, and instead of pedals, were furnished with two iron springs, ornamented with copper knobs, in that part of the chest nearest to the bass, to raise the dampers. In order to move these springs, it was necessary that the player should use his left hand, and consequently he was obliged, for a moment, to quit the keyboard.⁷

As early as the mid-1600's, keyboard instrument builders were aware of the problem of having to stop playing in order to use the hands to operate levers for stops. John Hayward,⁸ an English harpsichord builder of that time, had the idea of using the feet to operate stops. He devised a plan and built a structure of rods and springs under the instrument to be worked by a couple of pedal levers. This involved much delicate labor and expense, however, and was not generally

⁷Edward Rimbault, The Pianoforte, Its Origin, Progress, and Construction, (London, 1860), pp. 118-119.

⁸Frank Hubbard gives the inconclusive information bearing on the identity of the maker of the pedal. Three Centuries of Harpsichord Making (Cambridge, 1965), Appendix E, p. 326. He cites three members of the Hayward family who were harpsichord builders and thinks it reasonable to assume that several members of the family made pedals. He states: "The earliest known reference to the pedal is 1664. Therefore, it is quite possible that John I invented it. On the other hand, John II or III were also flourishing by that date and either might have been responsible."

made use of. Thomas Mace, clerk of Trinity College in Cambridge, discusses the pedal in his book, Musick's Monument, about 1676:

...the Pedal, (an Instrument of a Late Invention, [was] contriv'd (as I have been inform'd) by one Mr. John Hayward of London, a most Excellent Kind of Instrument for a Consort, and far beyond all Harpsicons or Organs, that I yet ever heard of. . .

Concerning This Instrument, (call'd the Pedal (because It is contriv'd to give Varieties with the Foot) I shall bestow a few Lines in making mention of, in regard It is not very commonly used, or known, because Few make of Them Well, and Fewer will go to the Price of Them: Twenty Pounds being the Ordinary Price of One. . .

This Instrument is in Shape and Bulk just like a Harpsicon; only It differs in the Order of It, Thus, viz. There is made right underneath the Keys, near the Ground, a kind of Cubbord, or Box, which opens with a little Pair of Doors, in which Box the Performer sets both his Feet, resting them upon his Heels, (his Toes a little turning up) touching nothing, till such time as he has a Pleasure to employ them. . .

...he has several Various Stops at Pleasure; and all Quick and Nimble, by the ready turn of the Foot.⁹

Andreas Stein, a piano builder of the late 1700's, was the first to improve the spring on the piano which operated the damper release. He made it to act by means of a knob placed against the knee. This was the first attempt of piano makers at solving the problem of having to use the hands to operate the damper mechanism. In the year 1777 Mozart wrote a letter to his father in which he praised Stein's knee mechanism:

⁹Thomas Mace, Musick's Monument, Vol. I (Paris, 1958), pp. 235-236. Facsimile of the original edition published in London, 1676.

The last [Sonata], in D [K .284], sounds exquisite on Stein's pianoforte. The device too which you work with your knee is better on his than on other instruments. I have only to touch it and it works and when you shift your knee the slightest bit, you do not hear the least reverberation.¹⁰

Beethoven used instruments with a knee pedal during his first years at Vienna.¹¹

The earliest known piano with a damper pedal was made in 1777 by Adam Beyer of London. This piano is now at the Musikhistorisches Museum Neupert in Bamberg.¹² (See Figure 1.)

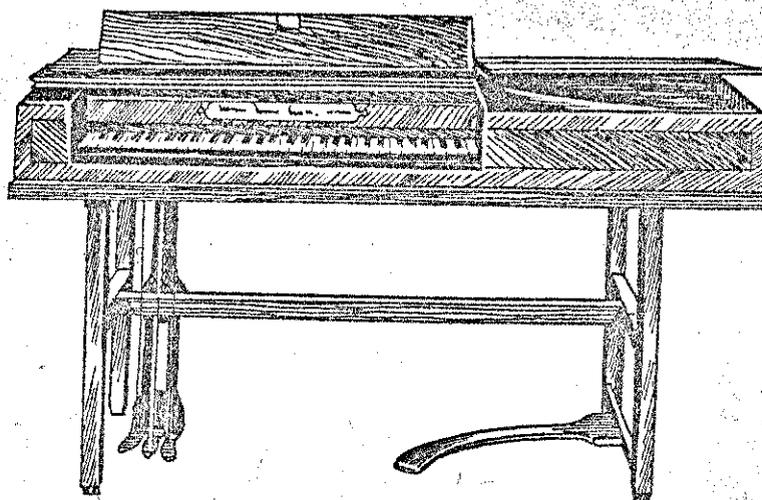


Fig. 1 -- Earliest known piano with a damper pedal. Built by Adam Beyer, 1777.

¹⁰Paul Badura-Skoda, Interpreting Mozart on the Keyboard (New York, 1962), p. 10.

¹¹Reimar Riefling, Piano Pedalling (London, 1962), p. 2.

¹²Franz Josef Hirt, Meisterwerke des Klaviers (Olten, Switzerland, 1955), p. 370.

The stops on this piano include four pedals: the divided damper, lute, and deckelsweller (the large pedal on the right). Hirt claims that this is the oldest known hammerklavier with a damper pedal.¹³

It was not until 1783 that John Broadwood of England obtained a patent for the pedal. Within a few short years the pedal was an indispensable part of the instrument.

¹³Ibid.

CHAPTER II

EARLY USE OF THE PEDAL

Introduction

During the last two decades of the eighteenth century, many changes were taking place in piano building and in piano technique. The pianos of this period were still small and lacking in resonance. The damper pedal was rather unreliable in its action, but it was becoming more interesting to musicians. Pianists began experimenting with its use in playing, and it was being used mainly to help sustain harmonies and play in a cantabile style. Its usefulness was not universally accepted, however; as with any new invention, there was controversy as to its purpose and importance. Several pianists who were interested in trying to codify piano technique and who wrote methods on playing the piano included some instructions or comments on the damper pedal.

J. N. Hummel (1778-1837) in his piano method, The Complete Theoretical and Practical Course of Instructions on the Art of Playing the Pianoforte, seems to regard the pedal as a kind of toy with which to make mischief. He considered it superfluous and unable to have a favorable effect on the

tone. In line with his classic approach to the piano, he used the pedal very sparingly. In this method he wrote that playing with the foot constantly on the pedal is a cloak to an impure and indistinct method of playing. He recommends the pedal mainly for slow movements, and even there only "where the harmony changes at distinct intervals. [All other pedal effects] are of no value, either to the performer or to the instrument."¹

Carl Czerny (1791-1857) was one of the first composers to write fully and instructively about the use of the pedal. In the third and fourth volumes of his method, he discusses the specific manner of pedalling in which the pedal is depressed simultaneously with the attack of the note. He expressly designates this as the only manner of pedalling and seems to understand little of the pedal's tonal and artistic possibilities.²

Kalkbrenner (1785-1849), whose method, written in 1820, is one of the earliest, writes:

The use of the pedals in Germany is almost unknown. English pianos have a fuller sound and a heavier keyboard action. The players of that country have adopted a larger style and that beautiful way of singing that distinguishes them; and it is indispensable to use the large pedal in order to conceal the inherent dryness of the pianos. Dussek, Field, and J. B. Cramer, the chiefs of that school

¹Harold Schonberg, The Great Pianists (New York, 1963), p. 109.

²Riefling, op. cit., p. 5.

which was founded by Clementi, use the pedal when harmonies do not change. Dussek above all was responsible for that, for he used the pedal almost constantly when he played in public.³

Pedal notation came into existence during this time when a few composers attempted to indicate to the performer how they wished the pedal to be used in their compositions. The beginnings of pedal indication seem to have set a precedent, however, in being rather careless and inexact. This has been a problem throughout the history of the damper pedal. Composers have either been careless in indicating how they wished the pedal to be employed or have not fully understood its tonal possibilities. Also, the system of notation for pedalling has been less than adequate. The subtle nuances of the possibilities of the damper pedal have been left to the taste of the performer. Only in very recent times have there been serious attempts to establish an exact pedal notation.

The two composers who first became interested in the damper pedal and its possible effects were J. L. Dussek (1760-1812) and Daniel Steibelt (1765-1823). Both of these men were composer-pianists, and both used the pedal frequently in their music. There is some doubt as to which one was actually the first to indicate the pedal in a composition.

³William L. Sumner, The Pianoforte (London, 1966), pp. 49-50.

Dusseck

Dusseck is important not only from the technical point of view but also from that of true art. He is noteworthy as being the first musician to compose almost wholly for the piano, with or without accompaniment. His style was noble and full, and his pieces are more charming than was usual at the time. "Unlike Hummel he was very partial to the pedal, and it is in his pages, perhaps, that we find it for the first time accurately employed."⁴

In his book, The Great Pianists, Harold Schonberg writes that Dussek "was the first pianist fully to investigate the resources of the pedals, and the first who, in his own printed music, actually indicated pedallings."⁵ Reimar Riefling, in Piano Pedalling, writes that Dussek was one of the first composers who understood how to use the pedal with refined effect and who played the piano with a singing tone. Dussek frequently indicated the use of the pedal in his works, and he lived during the same period as Haydn and Mozart, who rarely did so.⁶

Dusseck wrote numerous sonatas and sonatinas for piano solo which are still in print today and which are quite useful

⁴Oscar Bie, History of the Pianoforte and Pianoforte Players (New York, 1966), pp. 163-164.

⁵Schonberg, op. cit., pp. 57-58.

⁶Riefling, op. cit., p. 4.

as teaching pieces. In many of these there are no pedal indications, but in some there are several. These indications are usually given to add resonance to the same reiterated harmony, such as in Figure 2, in which the pedal is to



Fig. 2 -- Dussek Quatuor pour piano, violon, alto, et violoncelle, first movement, measure 65.

be pressed down at "Pédale" and released at "♣". Figure 3 gives another example of his indicating the pedal to enforce

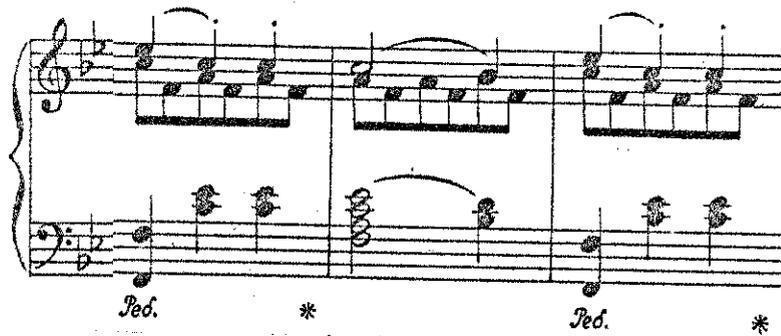


Fig. 3 -- Dussek Sonata in B^b Major, first movement, measures 3-5.

the bass note of the harmony and to sustain it throughout the duration of that harmony.

Steibelt

Steibelt was a minor pianist-composer who experimented widely with the supernumerary pedals used in the "Turkish" and "Janizary" music which was popular in the early nineteenth century, but he did add several things to the piano technical repertory. Schonberg writes that he "apparently knew more about the pedals than any other pianist after Dussek and before Chopin, [and that he] was a pioneer in pedal technique."⁷ In Steibelt's piano method,⁸ which has an uncertain date, he explains the use of and indications for the pedals, and in his included compositions he gives indications for pedalling. In this method he claims to have invented the pedal signs adopted by Clementi, Cramer, and Dussek.⁹

Steibelt recommends the sign "♯" for depression of the damper pedal and "*" for its release. In the section of the method on the correct usage of the pedals, he states that:

La 2.^e Pédale ... sert à lever les étouffoirs placés sur chaque corde. Lorsqu'on se sert de cette pédale, on entend la corde, qu'on a frappée par le moyen de la touche, vibrer longtems après qu'elle a reçu le coup du marteau; mais si vous ôtez le pied, le son est étouffé. On peut prolonger la vibration de la valeur de deux barres, lorsque le mouvement du morceau est ADAGIO.

⁷Schonberg, op. cit., p. 68.

⁸Daniel Steibelt, "Methode de piano ou l'Art d'enseigner cet instrument," (Paris, n.d.).

⁹Ibid., p. 66-67.

On doit se servir de cette pédale avec jugement et circonspection; et ne jamais l'employer dans des roulades; mais seulement dans des passages chantants, lorsqu'ils ne sont pas trop bas. On s'en sert encore lorsqu'il y a des passages à faire de la main gauche, comme il suit:¹⁰ (See Figure 4.)



Fig. 4 -- Steibelt Methode de piano ou l'Art d'enseigner cet instrument, p. 66.

In Figure 5 there is given an example where Steibelt's pedal indications have much the same purpose as Dussek's --



Fig. 5 -- Steibelt L'Orage, measures 24-25.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 66. The second pedal... [from the left] serves to raise the dampers placed on each string. When one uses this pedal, one hears the note that one has struck by means of the key, vibrate a long time after it has received the blow of the hammer; but if you take away the foot, the sound is muffled. One can prolong the vibration for the value of two bars when the tempo of the section is ADAGIO.

One ought to use this pedal with judgment and circumspection; and never use it during roulades; but only in singing passages, when they are not too low. One uses it also when there are passages to play with the left hand, as follows.

that of sustaining a harmony. However, Steibelt's pedal indications are too often erratic and without evident



Fig. 6A -- Steibelt Sonata IV, second movement, measures 46-51.

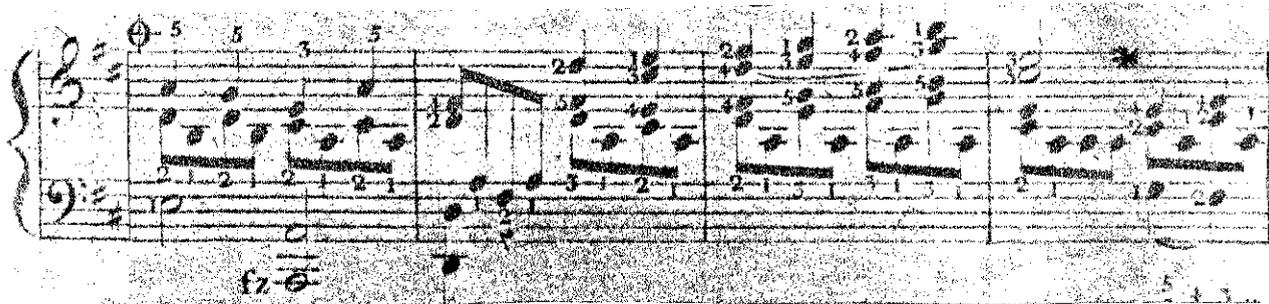


Fig. 6B -- Steibelt Sonata VI, first movement, measures 16-19.

purpose, as in Figure 6 A & B, in which the pedal is to be held through several measures, without regard to changing harmonies or melodic phrasing.

CHAPTER III

BEETHOVEN

Beethoven was the first pianist-composer to recognize the artistic possibilities of greater recourse to the pedal.¹ He was the direct link to the romantic pianists because he produced new effects, broke all the rules, used an extraordinarily wide dynamic palette, and was highly expressive in his playing. He made far greater use of the pedal than was customary at that time.² While Beethoven was still able to hear what he was doing, he "used the pedal constantly, with the highest art and in ways that were not remotely indicated by his written directions."³

Beethoven first indicated the use of the damper pedal in his first and second piano concertos (written in 1794 and 1795) and in the Sonata, Opus 26 (completed in 1800). He did not adopt in these the various symbols which had been used by earlier composers, such as Clementi and Cramer, but rather simply wrote out in the music senza sordino, meaning

¹Leslie Hodgson, "Piano Playing," The International Cyclopedia of Music and Musicians, 8th ed. (New York, 1958).

²Schonberg, op. cit., pp. 75-76.

³Donald Tovey, "Preface," Beethoven Sonatas for Piano-forte, Associated Board Edition (London, 1931), p. 6.

to play without damper (with pedal), and con sordino, meaning to play with damper (without pedal). In most standard editions Beethoven's own pedal marks have been discarded and replaced by the more common signs "Ped." and " * ". From the "Waldstein" Sonata, Opus 53, (1804) onward, he did adopt the signs "P" or "Ped." to indicate depression of the pedal and " * " to indicate its release.

In old manuscripts and first editions of various composers dating from around 1800, these earlier indications (which Beethoven used) are found constantly. These terms do refer at this time to the damper pedal only and not to the left pedal. The left pedal (soft pedal) was then indicated as una corda. The indication con sordino for the left pedal was not used until later; it was perhaps first used by Schubert.⁴

In the second Concerto (which was written first), Beethoven indicated the pedal for four bars in the first movement and once at the end of the second movement. In the first Concerto, he indicates senza sordino once for twelve bars in the first movement, three times in the second movement, and twice in the third.

The sonatas make up the bulk of Beethoven's piano music, and his pedal markings in these are the most interesting and indicative of changes in his pianistic style. The first indication appears in the Sonata, Opus 26, in the final bars

⁴Riefeling, op. cit., p. 4.

of the first movement. (See Figure 7.) Indications also occur in this sonata in the final bars of the third and last movements, and in the tremolandos in the Trio of the



Fig. 7 -- Beethoven Sonata, Opus 26, first movement, last four measures.

Funeral March. The second movement (Scherzo) has no pedal indications at all.

In Opus 26 and in the first movement of Opus 27, No. 1 (last measure), Beethoven has indicated the pedal simply to add depth and resonance to the piano tone. The last three movements of this sonata have no pedal indications. Through these sonatas Beethoven treated the pedal much as it had been treated in the past. In the later sonatas he tends to mark only pedalling indications which will cause a special effect in the music. Ordinary pedalling he leaves to the player's discretion.

At the beginning of the first movement of the "Moonlight" Sonata, Opus 27, No. 2, Beethoven wrote these instructions: "Si deve suonare tutto questo pezzo delicatissimamente e senza sordini. Sempre pianissimo e senza sordini." Whether or not Beethoven actually intended for the entire movement to

be played without dampers (with the pedal) is doubtful; however, it is recorded that he himself did so. Possibly he was indicating a characteristic mood and was actually leaving specific pedallings to the performer. Pedal indications in the remaining movements are sparse, the second movement having none and the third having only frequent short pedals marked.

In the middle sonatas Beethoven indicates pedalling rather spasmodically, and a large number of these marks occur at pedal points or at long-sustained bass notes. Several sonatas have no marks at all: Opus 31, No. 3; Opus 49, Nos. 1 and 2; and Opus 54.

Opus 28 has only one pedal indication, and it is in the first movement (measures 253-256). It is used here to aid in sustaining the full tone of a chord over several beats. (See Figure 8.) In Opus 31, No. 1 there is also



Fig. 8 -- Beethoven Sonata, Opus 28, first movement, measures 253-256.

only one indication. In the first movement Beethoven has marked that the pedal be held through eleven measures (170-181)

of unchanging harmony. (See Figure 9.) Interest is given to this passage by its rhythmic figuration and the special effect caused by Beethoven's pedalling.

Fig. 9 -- Beethoven Sonata, Opus 31, No. 1, first movement, measures 170-181.

Several of Beethoven's original pedalling indications have caused quite a controversy among musicians. Questions have arisen mainly because of markings which indicate that the pedal be held down during changes of harmony. The sonatas in which these markings occur quite frequently and which are

so controversial as far as "correct" pedalling are Opus 31, No. 2, first movement; Opus 53, Rondo; and Opus 57, first movement.

The first movement of Opus 31, No. 2 (the "Tempest" Sonata) is built on two contrasting sections which alternate. One of these is a slow, recitative-like section which is marked "Largo" or "Adagio." The other is faster ("Allegro") and is characterized by two-note slurs using a repeated note motive. The controversy comes with Beethoven's indications to hold the damper pedal down throughout the slow section each time it occurs. (See Figure 10.)

The image shows a musical score for the first movement of Beethoven's Sonata, Opus 31, No. 2, measures 143-158. The score is written for piano and is divided into two systems. The first system is marked 'Largo' and 'Allegro'. The second system is marked 'Adagio' and 'Largo'. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'pp', 'p', 'sf', and 'cresc.', and performance instructions like 'con espressione e semplice' and 'ped.'. The score is in G major and 2/4 time.

Fig. 10 -- Beethoven Sonata, Opus 31, No. 2, first movement, measures 143-158.

The first two movements of Opus 53 (the "Waldstein" Sonata) have no pedal indications. In the Rondo movement Beethoven has marked a pedalling which blends tonic and dominant harmonies. He was consistent in marking this

pedalling each time the rondo subject appears. (See Figure 11.) It is interesting to note here that many of the

Fig. 11 -- Beethoven Sonata, Opus 53, measures 1-8.

pianos of the early 1800's had two damper pedals (See Figure 1.), one controlling the dampers of the upper half and the other those of the lower half of the keyboard.⁵ The manuscript of the "Waldstein" Sonata contains this note in Beethoven's handwriting:

N.B. When "ped." is marked all the dampers, both bass and treble (Discant), are to be raised. "0" means that they are to be released.⁶

⁵Henry Krehbiel, The Piano and its Music (New York, 1925), p. 175.

⁶Tovey, op. cit., p. 6.

In the first movement of Opus 57 (the "Appassionata" Sonata) the original markings again cause a blending of harmonies. Particularly significant is the combining in one pedal the melodic half step figure in the third measure of Figure 12.

The image shows two systems of musical notation. The first system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble clef part has a melodic line with a half-step figure, and the bass clef part has a half-step figure. The marking 'sempre Pedale' is written below the bass line. The second system also consists of a grand staff. The treble clef part has a melodic line with lyrics: 'p dimi : : nu : en : do pp', 'ritar : : dan : do do'. The bass clef part has a half-step figure. The marking 'sempre Pedale' is written below the bass line. The tempo marking 'Adagio' is written above the treble clef part. There are some markings like 's', 'ff', and 'pp' throughout the score.

Fig. 12 -- Beethoven Sonata, Opus 57, first movement, six bars before più allegro.

Opinions as to how Beethoven's own pedal indications should be treated differ widely. Some musicians advocate strict adherence to his markings. Artur Schnabel, in his edition of the sonatas, writes: "The pedalling of the original must be followed (without any anxiety). Changing the pedal would rob the bars of their profound mystery, of their intrinsic essence."⁷ According to what Czerny told Theodore

⁷Riefeling, op. cit., pp. 42-43.

Kullak, Beethoven aimed at producing a sound such as arises when one speaks into a cave, where the resonance causes the sounds to reverberate and to merge into one another.⁸

Other musicians feel that the changes in the resonance of the instrument render a literal adherence to Beethoven's markings impossible. "On the early piano many things could be allowed which would sound very messy on our present instruments."⁹ Perhaps because of this, Beethoven could play the first eight bars of the slow movement of the C minor Concerto or the entire first movement of the C-sharp minor Sonata (Opus 27, No. 2) without changing the pedal. Several of these musicians have suggested other pedal effects to replace the original long pedal markings. K. U. Schnabel in his book, Modern Technique of the Pedal, suggests using 'partial' changes of the pedal rather than complete changes or no changes.¹⁰ York Bowen, in Pedalling the Modern Pianoforte, also suggests this type of pedalling: "use a little judicious, but effective, half-pedalling, causing a diminuendo, to obtain an effect equivalent to that intended by the composer."¹¹

⁸Ibid.

⁹Tovey, op. cit., p. 6.

¹⁰K. U. Schnabel, Modern Technique of the Pedal (New York, 1954), p. 34.

¹¹York Bowen, Pedalling the Modern Pianoforte (London, 1936), p. 22.

Donald Tovey makes an interesting suggestion concerning the recitatives in the first movement of the D minor Sonata (Figure 10). He writes:

The effect was, as Beethoven desired, like a voice coming from a vault. Something very like it can be produced now by merely continuing to hold the low bass chord through the recitative; or, on large instruments, by the more cautious device of silently putting down that chord (or any notes whatever) in the extreme bass an octave lower. The reverberation from the strings thus set free is very like a subtle pedal effect.¹²

During Beethoven's lifetime the effect of the damper pedal on the sound produced on the piano changed greatly due to the greater resonance and longer-sounding tone of the instrument. Donald Tovey states that because of this,

his [Beethoven's] indications of pedalling must be studied with caution. Fortunately, like all composers who have a practical grasp of the conditions of good performance, Beethoven shows in this matter a common-sense which time does not invalidate. He indicates only the larger pedal effects which suit all conditions. It is not to be supposed that he or any important composer (except Liszt in his very last works) attempts to indicate the use of the pedal for details of legato playing where harmonies are constantly changing.¹³

Adolf Kullak wrote about Beethoven's instrument and pedalling in his book, The Aesthetics of Piano-Playing:

But aesthetical considerations take precedence of historical ones, and for Beethoven's compositions... a sparing use of the pedal is on the whole to be recommended. One should bear in mind, that

¹²Tovey, op. cit., p. 6.

¹³Ibid.

at the beginning of the century the thinner tone of the pianoforte made a cautious employment of the damper pedal less urgently necessary than the full tone of the modern instrument.¹⁴

In the sonatas Opus 78, Opus 79, Opus 81A, and Opus 90 and even in as late a sonata as Opus 101, Beethoven marked very few pedal indications. In the first movement of Opus 78 and of Opus 81A and in both movements of Opus 90, there are no indications at all. The few indications he does mark are usually for special effects. In the first movement of Opus 78, measures 57-59, 61-63, and 176-177, Beethoven's pedalling gives a harp-like effect. In the third movement of Opus 81A, measures 37-40 and 41-44, is found a good example of Beethoven's understanding of the relationship of keyboard touch and the damper pedal. He has marked the octaves staccato and *sf*; and to further emphasize the kind of touch these notes require, the rhythm is notated as quarter notes with eighth rests (in 6/8 time). (See Figure 13.) Beethoven has marked the pedal to be held

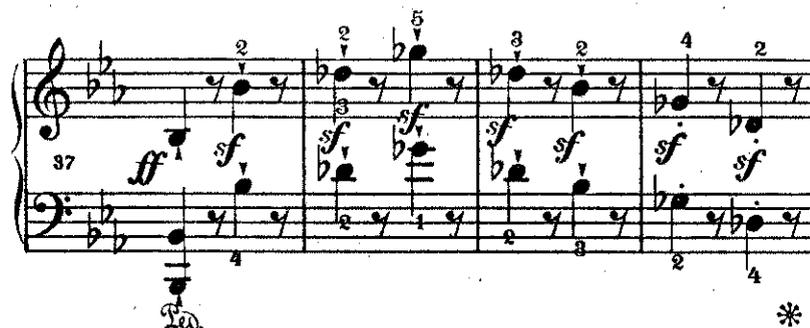


Fig. 13 -- Beethoven Sonata, Opus 81A, third movement, measures 37-40.

¹⁴Adolf Kullak, The Aesthetics of Piano-Playing (New York, 1895), p. 307.

through four bars, however, without being changed. This pedalling and touch combined give the passage a very characteristic sound.

In the last four sonatas, Opp. 106, 109, 110, and 111, Beethoven made a large number of pedal indications, and these reflect a greater subtlety than any made earlier. Many of the indications in these sonatas are for special effects, and Beethoven's expanded scope of pianistic possibilities in his last period calls for careful and intricate pedalling. His markings in these sonatas should be noted and followed closely. Many of Beethoven's pedal indications in these late sonatas show clearly the movement toward the romantic pianistic style, in which the piano is treated orchestrally. Of course, this orchestral style is dependent entirely on the damper pedal for sound and color. The damper pedal is used to add bigness and resonance to forte passages and makes possible the sounding of many and wide-spread notes at once. The fingers are actually multiplied by skillful use of the damper pedal.

CHAPTER IV

THE ROMANTIC ERA

Pedalling During the Nineteenth Century

Nineteenth century piano music is hardly conceivable without a good understanding of many types of imaginative pedal effects. Pedalling plays an extremely important part in giving the required shades of tone and expression to this music. The piano music of composers before Beethoven could possibly have been played and enjoyed without the damper pedal. However, after the second decade of the nineteenth century, composers' conceptions of piano music included the damper pedal, and their music demands its skillful and thoughtful use.

Before 1830 the damper pedal was not actually essential to the effectiveness of piano music; it was called for mainly as an aid to producing certain effects. Many of Beethoven's pedal indications simply added resonance to a chord or even a single note. The pedal was also often used as an aid to cantabile playing.

During the third and fourth decades of the nineteenth century the art of pedalling evolved considerably. The

possibilities of sonority on the piano became greater as the instrument reached its full development. Harold Schonberg relates that "by the time of the romantic upheaval starting about the 1830's in Paris, the piano--with a few later modifications, such as Steinway's cross-stringing innovation in the 1850's--was substantially the instrument we know today."¹ As the character of the instrument became more stable and individualistic, composers developed a more stylistic and idiomatic manner of writing for the piano. The piano style during the nineteenth century is based primarily on the sonorities made possible by the damper pedal.

One of the most important innovations in the piano compositional style during this period was the use of orchestral sonorities. This expanded scope of piano sounds was begun when the damper pedal freed the composer from the necessity of limiting chords and stretches to such as can be reached by the average hand. This change in the manner of writing for the piano was begun by Beethoven when he wrote a few chords having the compass of a tenth. These occur principally in his concertos in E^b and G. Larger reaches, both in chords and arpeggios, became more frequently evident in the piano music of Schubert, Schumann,

¹Schonberg, op. cit., p. 119.

Chopin, and Brahms; and orchestral style in piano music reached its culmination in the music of Liszt.²

Although the music of romantic composers calls constantly for the damper pedal, its use is often very obvious. The harmonic structure, bass and melodic lines, and rhythmic structure generally clearly outline the necessary pedalling. For this reason composers often made little or no effort to mark many of the pedallings. Schubert, Brahms, and many other composers of this period simply wrote at the beginning of the piece, "Pedale," "con Pedale," or "sempre Pedale," leaving the general use of the pedal throughout the piece to the player's discretion. Liszt often marked detailed pedalling indications; however, few of these brought about new pianistic sounds.

Schumann

Although Robert Schumann indicated many pedallings in his works, his marks are often incomplete and difficult to understand. He often wrote simply "Pedale" or "con Ped." at the beginning of a piece or section of a piece. The Clara Schumann edition of his piano works is generally accepted as one of the most accurate available as to original editing and pedal marks. In it the pedal is indicated by "P" and

²Hans Schmitt, The Pedals of the Pianoforte (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1893), p. 22.

lasts until the indication for release "*", or in its absence, until the "P" next in succession.³

In the Carnaval, Opus 9, one of Schumann's earlier works (written in 1834-1835), the pedal indications are characteristic of those marked in his groups of shorter character pieces. Within this work the pedal marks seem rather inconsistent. In several there are many pedal indications, in some there are one or two marks, and in a few there are none. Many of these marks indicate pedalling which was already accepted as being standard, but some of his pedal marks produced new and very effective sounds on the piano. In the "Préambule" Schumann has made many pedal marks. In measures 39-40 (See Figure 14.) there is a very



Fig. 14 -- Schumann Carnaval, "Préambule," measures 39-40.

clear indication to hold the pedal through two measures of notes which move in stepwise motion. This produces a

³Riefeling, op. cit., p. 44.

blending of harmonies which is unusual for this period.
In measures 57-58 (See Figure 15.) there is an interesting

Fig. 15 -- Schumann Carnaval, "Préambule," measures 57-58.

off-beat pedal which accentuates the syncopated rhythm.

In the second piece, "Pierrot," there is only one pedal mark. (See Figure 16.) Schumann has indicated the

Fig. 16 -- Schumann Carnaval, "Valse Noble," measures 9-10.

pedal here to show that the rest on the second half of beat two is simply a technical indication and that legato is actually intended. "Valse noble" contains a few pedal marks. The most interesting is an example of the extended arpeggios

referred to earlier, which the average person could connect only with the aid of the pedal. (See Figure 16.)

One of the most original of Schumann's pedal indications is found at the end of "Paganini." (See Figure 17.) The pedal



Fig. 17 -- Schumann Carnaval, "Paganini," last three measures in 2/4 section.

is held through four repeated chords marked *sf*. Then a different chord is played *ppp* in the same pedal and is held while the pedal is changed. The resulting sound is most unusual. The last twenty-three measures in the Finale, "Marche des 'Davidsbündler' contre les Philistins," there are two significant pedal marks. This whole section is fiery and fortissimo. The first mark indicates that the pedal be held through a descending melody and the second through seventeen measures of staccato chords and rests. (See Figure 18.)

The first system of the musical score consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The time signature is 3/4. The music is marked *ff possibile*. The first measure is marked with an '8' and a double bar line. The piece concludes with a double bar line and the marking *ff*. Pedal markings are present: a 'Ped.' marking with a wedge-shaped symbol at the beginning of the first measure, and another 'Ped.' marking with a wedge-shaped symbol at the end of the piece.

The second system of the musical score consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The key signature has two flats. The music continues from the first system. A large number '1' is written in the final measure of the system.

The third system of the musical score consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The key signature has two flats. The music continues from the second system. The first measure of this system is marked with a large number '1'. The system concludes with a double bar line and a small asterisk symbol.

Fig. 18 -- Schumann Carnaval, "Davidsbündler," last twenty-three measures.

The Symphonic Etudes, Opus 13, were written in 1834 and revised in 1852. Although these were published by the above name, they were originally called Etudes in Orchestral Style. These pieces are a good example of the romantic orchestral piano style, and the pedalling called for augments the effectiveness of the style. In the first measure of the theme, which is marked "Andante," Schumann has indicated the pedal

during a descending melody. (See Figure 19.) Although the harmony is not changed, the melody is easily blurred by



Fig. 19 -- Schumann Symphonic Etudes, "Thema," measure 1.

this pedal. The first etude has no pedal marks. In the third, there are many harmonic pedals. In the first measure of the second section there is an interesting pedal mark. (See Figure 20.) Although the harmony is unchanged during the pedal, the melody is in stepwise two-note slurs.

Fig. 20 -- Schumann Symphonic Etudes, "Etude II," measure 9.

In the first measures of Etudes IV and V, the pedal marks make the phrasing and accents of the melody clear. (See Figures 21 and 22.) At the beginning of Etude IX



Fig. 21 -- Schumann Symphonic Etudes, "Etude IV," measure 1-2.



Fig. 22 -- Schumann Symphonic Etudes, "Etude V," measure 1.

Schumann has marked "senza Pedale"; later in the piece there are some pedals which make accents distinct. The pedalling in Etude XI is important because of the impressionistic sounds it causes. (See Figure 23.) The dissonant

Fig. 23 -- Schumann Symphonic Etudes, "Etude XI,"
measures 1-2.

notes of the harmony and melody blend together resulting in a beautifully mysterious, shimmering tone color.

In the "Finale" of Papillons, Opus 2 (1830-1831), is an original indication which is very romantic in the Schumannesque manner. (See Figure 24.) A heavy D in the bass must continue to sound for twenty-six bars, although the upper parts contain many diverse intervals and sounds.

Musical score for Schumann's *Papillons*, "Finale," last forty-six measures. The score is written for piano and consists of five systems of two staves each. The first system includes a "poco" marking. The second system includes "poco" and "dim." markings. The third system includes "nuovo", "do", and "pp" markings. The fourth system includes "> ma p" and "p" markings. The fifth system includes "pp" and "ritard." markings. The score concludes with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

Fig. 24 -- Schumann *Papillons*, "Finale," last forty-six measures.

Karl Leimar has written in his Rhythmics, Dynamics, Pedal:

In the final piece of the Papillons, Robert Schumann writes twenty-six measures over a sustained bass-tone "d," these measures being played with a prolonged pedal. It is to be expected that in such cases foreign tones and harmonies intermingle, which do not sound very pleasant to the sensitive ear. As an independent number of Papillons, this final piece would, therefore, create a bad impression upon the listener. However, when this final piece is combined with the preceding ones, the last scene of the Papillons portrays a final, dreamlike 'floating by' of the formerly described 'Carnival Scenes.' For that reason the prescribed repudiated pedalling can be represented esthetically and artistically.⁴

There is also an interesting effect in the last four measures of this example (Figure 24). The notes of an ascending arpeggio are to be held down by the fingers and by the pedal. When the last note of the figure is played, the pedal is raised but the fingers are kept down. The notes are then released one at the time until only the top note is sounding.

In the first section of the Fantasy, Opus 17 (1836), the pedal is again used to blur the dissonances of the accompaniment figure. The rolled chords at the beginning of the second section ("Mässig") are good examples of widely extended chords which can be connected only by the pedal. In the first movement of the Fantasy, at the Adagio bars (See Figure 25.), Schumann wrote in two horizontal lines to indicate a prolongation of the tones.

⁴Oscar Bie, History of the Pianoforte and Pianoforte Players, (New York, 1966), pp. 163-164.



Fig. 25 -- Schumann Fantasy, Opus 17, first movement, Adagio bars.

The third chord is not written as a minim, nor is there a crotchet rest on 'four,' but simply these two curious horizontal lines. The pedalling direction indicates the meaning. The chord of G minor is to be prolonged and the passage, with its delicate expression and tone quality, must have the appropriate pedal colouring--perhaps only a half-change after the last quaver.⁵

Chopin

Chopin was one of the earliest composer-pianists who used in his playing and indicated in his music more detailed and effective pedalling. He did not use any earlier or contemporary colleague as a model but relied rather upon his own innate musical ideas. The effectiveness of Chopin's music is very dependent on the proper use of the damper pedal.

Even though the treatment of the pedal in Chopin demands great accuracy and a highly developed feeling for the composer's particular harmony and tone quality, the general situation is not as complicated as one

⁵Riefling, op. cit., p. 61.

might think. This is due primarily to his splendid writing for the instrument which uses its acoustic properties in such brilliant fashion.⁶

Much of the impressiveness of Chopin's playing was due essentially to his idiosyncratic pedalling. He used both pedals freely and fully in his playing to produce subtle nuances in the music. He was a master of touch, and with the assistance of pedal effects he endowed his musical sounds with distinctive coloring.⁷ Both Jean Kleczynski, in The Works of Frederich Chopin,⁸ and Wakeling Dry, in Chopin,⁹ recount a specific manner of pedalling which Chopin used, in which he depressed the pedal immediately after the note had been struck. Chopin made many innovations in the use of the pedal which were not substantially altered until Debussy and Prokofieff appeared.¹⁰

Chopin was very much aware, in his playing and in his teaching, of the importance and difficulties of pedalling. In the preliminary notes of his method of teaching, which he intended to write but never completed, he made the

⁶Ibid., pp. 47-48.

⁷Ibid., p. 47.

⁸Edith J. Hipkins, How Chopin Played, from contemporary impressions collected from the diaries and notebooks of the late A. J. Hipkins (London, 1937), pp. 18-19.

⁹Wakeling Dry, Chopin (London, 1926), pp. 102-103.

¹⁰Schonberg, op. cit., p. 134.

following observation: "The correct use of the pedal remains a study for life."¹¹ In a letter to Delphine Potocka, which has recently been found, he wrote:

Be careful with the pedal for this is a frightfully touchy and noisy rascal. One must deal with it very politely and delicately--as a friend it is very helpful, but it isn't easy to reach the stage of intimate acquaintance and love with it. Like a great lady, mindful of her reputation, it will not dally with the first comer... But, once it consents and yields, it performs real wonders, like a practical lover...¹²

Because Chopin was very conscious of the possible effects of the damper pedal, he was usually very exact in placing indications in his music. This is especially true in his more mature and more subtle works. In some of his teaching pieces the pedalling indications are unoriginal and seemingly hastily done. It is thought that perhaps publishers marked in pedalling when they thought that Chopin had not marked enough for the average student. The preface to the Paderewski Edition of Chopin's complete works, contains the following remarks about Chopin's pedal marks:

Chopin's pedal marking is usually careful, precise, and in certain places very delicate, even producing entirely new pianistic effects... Those passages in which Chopin has not marked the pedallings are most often explained by the fact that the required pedalling is simple, and is therefore self-evident; or, on the contrary,

¹¹Ibid., p. 147.

¹²Stephen P. Mizwa, ed., Frederic Chopin (New York, 1949), p. 69.

that it is so subtle as to be too complicated, if not impossible, to indicate.¹³

Perhaps the latter would be true of the Berceuse, Opus 57 (1844). It is surprising that there are no pedal indications in the manuscript of this piece. It is so obviously dependent for its beauty on the effects of the damper pedal. Also, on the first page of the F Major Ballad there is only one pedal mark and it is in the first three measures. Apparently Chopin intends that the pedal be used as needed.

In a letter to Breitkopf and Härtel (September 26, 1877), in which he commends their new edition of Chopin's complete works (Moskauer Ausgabe von Karl Klindworth), Franz Liszt observes the following about Chopin's editing marks:

Vorker bemerkte ich, wie wenig eigentlich an Chopin's Compositionen zu besorgen übrig bleibt, da er selbst mit rühmlicher, ausnahmsweiser Genauigkeit die möglichen Vortrags-Bezeichnungen- und sogar die des Pedals, welche in keinem andern Autor so häufig vorkommen-anmerkte.¹⁴

Some of Chopin's most intricate and effective pedal marks are found in the Nocturnes (1830-1846). These short

¹³Ignacy J. Paderewski, Ludwik Bronarski, and Józef Turezyński, editors, The Complete Works of Fryderyk Chopin, Vol. VII, according to autographs and original editions with critical commentary (Warsaw, 1949), "Critical commentary," p. 115.

¹⁴La Mara, editor, Franz Liszt's Briefe, Vol. II (Leipzig, 1893) p. 258. I had noticed before how little remained to be provided in Chopin's Compositions, since he himself notated with praiseworthy, exceptional exactness the possible editing signs-and even that of the Pedals, which do not occur so frequently in any other composer.

character pieces are among the most typical works of Chopin. They call for cantabile playing, expressiveness, and a careful study of intricate pedal effects. Although there is much similarity among the nocturnes as a whole, each requires unique pedal usage.

A very good example of Chopin's attention to detail can be seen at the end of the E major Nocturne, Opus 62, No. 2. (See Figure 26.) In the opening of the D-flat Nocturne,

The image displays two systems of musical notation for the final measures of Chopin's Nocturne in E Major, Opus 62, No. 2. The first system, labeled with the measure number 78, shows the right hand with a melodic line and the left hand with a bass line. A slur covers the right hand's melody, with a fingering sequence of 1 2 5 2 4 1. Pedal markings 'Ped.' and '*' are indicated below the staff. The second system shows measures 80 and 81. The right hand features a triplet of eighth notes in the melody, and the left hand has a bass line. Pedal markings '* Ped. * Ped.*Ped.* Ped. *' are shown below the staff.

Fig. 26 -- Chopin Nocturne in E Major, Opus 62, No. 2, last four measures.

Opus 27, No. 2 (See Figure 27.), Chopin has indicated that the pedal be held through four bars. This pedalling meshes the harmony and melodic line into an impressionistic coloring

Lento sostenuto ($\text{♩} = 50$)

(sempre legato)

*

Fig. 27 -- Chopin Nocturne in D-flat Major, Opus 27, No. 2, first four bars.

effect. This is also one of many passages in Chopin where the pedal is essential to cantabile playing because of wide extensions. In the E-flat Nocturne, Opus 9, No. 2 (See Figure 28), Chopin has indicated the pedal to be held through a cadenza-like passage which is chromatic. These notes are in the higher register and this pedalling is very effective.

8

32 *ff* *senza* *tempo*

cresc. *dim.* *rall.* *smorz.*

*

Fig. 28 -- Chopin Nocturne in E-flat Major, Opus 9, No. 2, measure 32.

Chopin's most delicate and original pedal marks can be found in the Barcarolle, Opus 60 (1846). In the first three measures he indicates exactly how the pedal should be used. In the second measure it is interesting to note that the pedal is to be put down on the third part of each beat and changed on the second. (See Figure 29.)

Allegretto

Ped. * Ped. *

Fig. 29 -- Chopin Barcarolle, first three measures.

In bar thirteen the pedal marks and touch indications together relate the exact sound which Chopin sought. (See Figure 30.) Throughout this piece there are examples of

Ped. * Ped. *

Fig. 30 -- Chopin Barcarolle, measure 13.

extended arpeggios which require the pedal in order to be played legato.

In the penultimate bar of the Barcarolle Chopin's understanding of piano writing is clearly evidenced. He indicates the release of the pedal as the bass notes move into the lower register of the piano. (See Figure 31.)

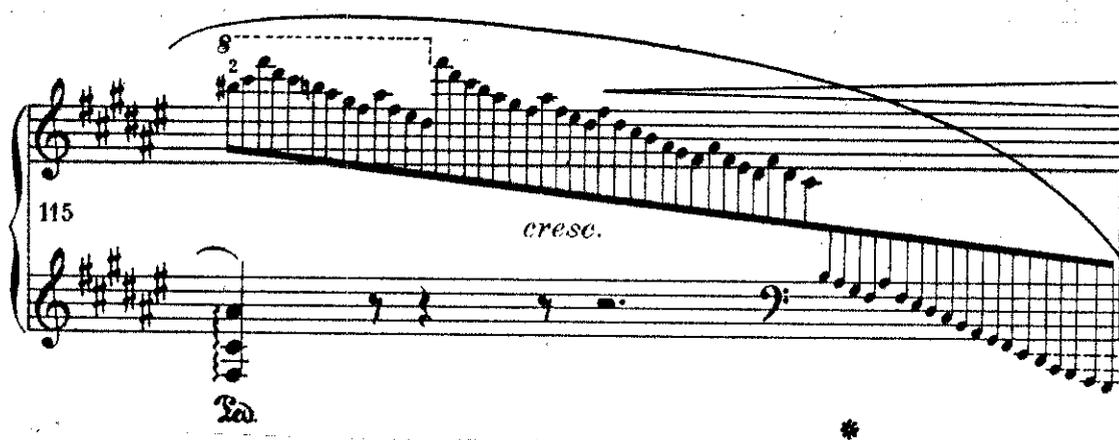


Fig. 31 -- Chopin Barcarolle, penultimate measure.

Another example of this can be found in the F major Ballade, Opus 38 (1838-1839). In measures 73-75 Chopin has indicated each time exactly where he wished the pedal to be released in the descending chromatic runs in the bass. (See Figure 32.)



Fig. 32 -- Chopin Ballade in F Major, Opus 38, measures 73-75

In Chopin's works, as in Schumann's, there are numerous places where the composer's pedalling indications seem to contradict some of his other indications, such as staccato notes and rests. One such example is found in measures nine and ten of the E major Scherzo, where the pedal is to be held through rests. (See Figure 33.) K. U. Schnabel remarks that full pedal is "obviously not what Chopin intended;

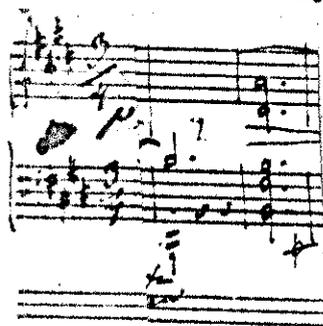


Fig. 33 -- Chopin Scherzo in E Major, Opus 54, measures 9-10.

[and] releasing the pedal on the second beat produces an unsatisfactory result, which explains the necessity of Chopin's pedal marking."¹⁵ He recommends a 'half-pedal' as producing the best result. It is also thought that rests in places where the hand must make a large leap are often simply technical indications. In this case, the pedal would indicate that legato is actually intended but that the chord must be released in time for the hands to be placed in position for the next chord.

¹⁵Schnabel, op. cit., p. 35.

These seemingly contradictory markings and also some of the very long pedal marks have caused questions as to the effect that Chopin actually desired. Reimar Riefling offers the explanation that the difference in the instruments of the mid-nineteenth century accounts for Chopin's need for fewer changes of pedal than seem necessary on more modern instruments:

One must, of course, remember that the more slender and thinly toned Parisian instruments of Chopin's time could stand far more pedalling than these of our own day. We must consequently change the pedal much more often than is indicated. The rich and exquisite harmonic structure must come into its own clearly and cleanly, but one must take the very greatest care that the tone does not acquire the very least touch of dryness or unimaginativeness.¹⁶

Chopin's pedal marks must be studied very carefully and tried at the piano. Very often a long pedal indication which seems to blur too much can actually be used literally and have a beautiful effect if the passage is played very softly.

In any case, the use of the pedal is a very delicate and entirely individual matter, depending on many factors, such as touch, tempo, the acoustics of the room, the piano on which the given work is to be performed.¹⁷

¹⁶Riefling, op. cit., p. 48.

¹⁷Paderewski, op. cit., preface.

CHAPTER V

POST ROMANTIC PEDALLING INNOVATIONS

Introduction

From the time of Dussek and Steibelt until Chopin the importance and necessity of the use of the damper pedal in piano music steadily increased. In the late nineteenth century, however, this tendency split into two directions. For one new type of music the damper pedal was absolutely indispensable, and for the other type it was relatively unimportant. The first of these styles calls for an impressionistic use of the pedal with much tone coloring and tonal blending; the other calls for a percussive treatment of the piano, using the pedal chiefly for rhythmic accents.

After Chopin, the significant advance in piano technique came from two composers--Claude Debussy in France and Serge Prokofieff in Russia.¹

It was Debussy who pointed to the twentieth century, who gave to the world entirely new color combinations, with a use of pedal effects that went far beyond anything Chopin ever dreamed of.² ...

¹Schonberg, op. cit., p. 388.

²Ibid., p. 389.

[He] wanted to suggest a piano without hammers. Prokofieff, Bartok, Stravinsky, and Hindemith had the opposite view... The piano is a percussive instrument, and there's no use trying to disguise the fact.³

Impressionism

The piano was an excellent medium for the expression of Debussy's music. It is an instrument of harmonic and tonal blending rather than of simple melodic statement, and his music is based on these two attributes.⁴ The lush, shimmering sounds for which his music calls are possible only with the damper pedal. He himself was a pianist and understood the subtleties and possible sonorities of the instrument. In his own playing "he was an original virtuoso, remarkable for the delicacy and mellowness of his touch... and he achieved particularly characteristic effects by the use of both pedals."⁵

Although the pedal must be used abundantly and with great artistry in his music, or perhaps just because of this, Debussy actually indicated very little pedalling. Only in nine of his piano pieces are there a few sparing marks--less than twenty in all. These are merely a few

³Ibid., p. 390.

⁴John Gillespie, Five Centuries of Keyboard Music, (Belmont, California, 1966), p. 332.

⁵Léon Vallas, Claude Debussy: His Life and Works, (London, 1933), p. 141.

mentions of 'les deux pédales' (the two pedals); his indications for the damper pedal alone are extremely rare. His authentic directions for pedalling are easily cited. It is called for in the final measures of "Voiles", "Serenade for the Doll", and "Jardins sous la pluie". In "La Soirée dans Grenade" the pedal is indicated once in each of the final four bars. It is indicated twice in "Brouillards", and three times in "Masques". In Etude V, he has written: "La pedale forte sur chaque temp" (forte pedal on every beat). In "Jimbo's Lullaby" and "Pagodes", both pedals are indicated simultaneously. The pedal is required for the mark "quittez en laissant vibrer" (let go [the keys] but let the sound continue).

Debussy did not often indicate the use of the pedal with pedal notation. However, he has written into the actual music many passages where a wealth of pedal is clearly needed. When the notes of a passage are spread over three staves with long note values, the pedal must sustain, as the fingers cannot. There are numerous examples of this in the Préludes. (See Figure 34.)



Fig. 34 -- Debussy Prélude, Vol. II, No. 10, last two measures.

In the final four bars of "Reflets dans l'eau" (See Figure 35.) an example of Debussy's orchestral spacing can be seen.

Fig. 35 -- Debussy Images, "Reflets dans l'eau", last four measures.

Again, the pedal is necessary for sustaining the half notes their full value.

Many times this type of writing necessitates holding the pedal down through many bars and diverse notes. In Debussy's music this blending and mingling of tones is possible because of his new concept of harmony. In expanded tertian harmony (using ninth, eleventh, and thirteenth chords) more notes are included within the harmony. Therefore, there are more harmonic tones in a passage which can sound at once and still be accepted by the ear as homogeneous. In the first two measures of "Reflets dans l'eau" (See Figure 36.) there is only one harmony, and all the notes in these measures are a part of it (D^b MMMPM₁₃ chord).

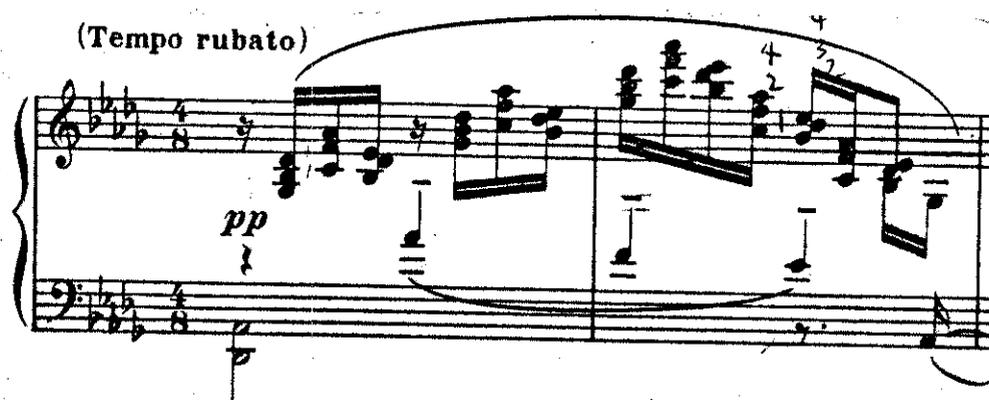


Fig. 36 -- Debussy Images, "Reflets dans l'eau", first two measures.

It is often necessary in Debussy's music to hold the pedal down through a change of harmony to produce a misty, blurred sound. In such places the best effect is usually produced

by playing very lightly. The French composer and music critic, Maurice Emmanuel, in describing Debussy as a pianist, wrote that:

his playing had incomparable grace...He conjured from the keys all the diverse sounds of the orchestra and his touch was peerlessly delicate and apparently limitless in its wealth of shading. He was a master of pedalling and understood how to combine the most disparate chords in the most natural way by means of his legato.⁶

Percussive Treatment of the Piano

Prokofieff's interest in innovation led him to employ not only dissonance in the creation of most unusual harmonies, usually coupled with extremely lyrical melodies, but also to treat the piano as a percussive instrument.⁷ His own playing was almost without pedal and had a percussive, metallic-sounding tone.⁸ Because of this concept of his music, Prokofieff made very few indications for pedalling in his music. In his sonatas, there are not more than fifteen indications. However, the directions "senza Ped." or "secco" (dry, without much pedal) are found frequently.

There are three specific instances in Prokofieff's music where the pedal must be used. In his percussive writing the

⁶Riefeling, op. cit., p. 57.

⁷F. E. Kirby, A Short History of Keyboard Music (New York, 1966), p. 430.

⁸Schonberg, op. cit., p. 390.

effect desired is usually rough and bombastic. Sometimes this requires no pedalling, but often the pedal can be very helpful in accentuation of the rhythm and for added percussiveness. This is true, for example, in the opening of the third Sonata. (See Figure 37.) The pedal is necessary



Fig. 37 -- Prokofieff Sonata, No. 3, first four bars.

for connection of notes, sonority, and can even be used somewhat impressionistically in the lyrical themes of his music. (See Figure 38.)



Fig. 38 -- Prokofieff Sonata, No. 3, measures five and six after "Moderato".

Prokofieff carried on the style of the romantics and of Liszt in particular in his orchestral writing for the piano. The total range of the piano is included in his writing, and his melodies and chords are often very wide-spread. The damper pedal is essential to connection of these leaps and to achieving an orchestral sound in these places. One example of this orchestral writing can be seen in the arpeggiated grace notes of Figure 39.

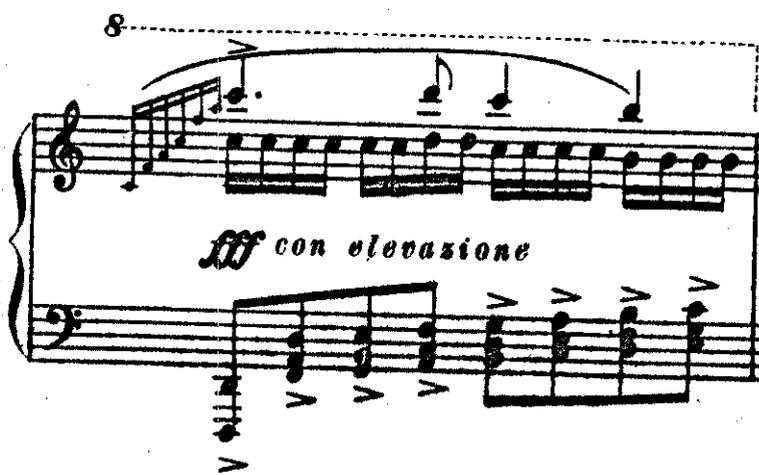


Fig. 39 -- Prokofieff Sonata, No. 3, measure fifteen after "Più Animato".

Bartók follows many of Prokofieff's ideas in the percussive treatment of the piano. His music very often calls for a hard, harsh, percussive sound from the piano. The fortissimo passages come with the force of explosion because of the absence of pedal.⁹ This style can be seen throughout

⁹ Emil Haraszti, Béla Bartók: His Life and Works (Paris, 1938), p. 34.

many of his larger piano works, particularly in the Allegro Barbaro and the Sonata. No pedal marks are given in these pieces.

In some of his music Bartók does call for coloristic pedal effects. The Elegies, Opus 86 (1908-1909), are character pieces in a large rhetorical style with expressive, unaccompanied recitative-like phrases. They allow for improvisation by the player, loud, dissonant chords, and coloristic pedal effects.¹⁰ In the first Concerto Bartók writes tone clusters and marks pedalling to add to their effect. (See Figure 40.) The Rumanian Folk Dances



Fig. 40 -- Bartók Concerto, No. 1, first movement, rehearsal number 45.

(1915) have many useful pedalling indications. The third of these calls for an especially effective treatment of the pedal. (See Figure 41.) It is held unchanged through several bars. The melody is in the higher registers of the piano and is to be played very softly. A faint bell-ringing sound, which is very beautiful, is produced.

3. Der Stampfer. - *Topogó.* - *Pe loc.****)
 Andante. (♩ = 116.)

The musical score is written for piano and consists of two systems. The first system shows the beginning of the piece with a piano (p) dynamic and a half note in the right hand. The second system continues the piece with various articulations and dynamics, including a piano (p) dynamic and a half note in the right hand.

Fig. 41 -- Bartók Rumanian Folk Dances, No. 3, measures 1-8.

Schoenberg's piano pieces do not form a major portion of his compositional repertoire, but they are strategically important. They employ new procedures for the first time which were extended to other varieties of musical composition.¹¹ Schoenberg experimented with the damper pedal in his piano pieces and is important as the one who opened the doors which led to new ideas of pianistic sounds in the mid-twentieth century. These new sonorities are directly related to the damper pedal and the damping mechanism.

¹¹Ibid., p. 409.

Schoenberg wrote six sets of pieces for the piano: Opp. 11, 19, 23, 25, and 33 a and b. His markings in these pieces are "minute to a disconcerting degree."¹² His own explanations of these markings precede several of the works. The first of the sets is Opus 11 (1908). It introduces a very interesting new pianistic technique--the use of "harmonics" on the piano. This effect is achieved by pressing down a tone or tones soundlessly with one hand and then, while holding these, have the same note struck audibly in another octave.¹³ This technique is found in measures 14-16 of Opus 11, No. 1. (See Figure 42.) In measure 50, Schoenberg

Press the keys down silently!
Die Tasten tonlos niederdrücken!
Flag. (Harmonics)

*slower
langsamer*

sf *sf* *sf*

senza Ped...... *senza Ped.*....

Fig. 42 -- Schoenberg Drei Klavierstücke, Opus 11, No. 1, measures 14-16.

has marked "martellato, senza Ped." This type of touch and pedalling was indicated very often by Bartók and became a

¹²James Friskin and Irwin Freundlich, Music for the Piano, (New York, 1954), p. 286.

¹³Dika Newlin, Bruckner, Mahler, Schoenberg, (New York, 1947), pp. 236-237.

characteristic of his music. The last piece of this opus shows Schoenberg's use of extensions and the wide range of the keyboard. In it he extended the orchestral style of writing for the piano used by Liszt and Prokofieff and adapted it to his own style.

Schoenberg indicated only one pedalling in the Sechs Kleine Klavierstücke, Opus 19 (1911). In the fourth piece, measure four, it is used for connection of chords. Dika Newlin, in Bruckner, Mahler, Schoenberg, points out that these pieces are important because

they started a Viennese vogue for the composition of short musical aphorisms which, while they might at times present an 'impressionistic' appearance superficially, were worlds removed from the truly impressionistic utterances--extended and improvisatory in form--of a Debussy. As so often in past epochs of musical history, the new style had come into being on the piano.¹⁴

In the opening written instructions to Fünf Klavierstücke, Opus 23 (1923) and Suite, Opus 25 (1924), Schoenberg wrote: "In general the best fingering is that which allows an exact interpretation of the note groups without the aid of the pedal. On the other hand the soft pedal will be found useful."¹⁵ In Opus 23 there are two pedal indications which are innovative techniques and which produce very interesting new pianistic

¹⁴Ibid., p. 245.

¹⁵Arnold Schoenberg, Suite Für Klavier, (New York, 1925), p. 3.

effects. The first is found in measure seven of No. 2.
 (See Figure 43.) Schoenberg has indicated that the pedal

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The upper staff is in bass clef and the lower staff is in treble clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The music is marked with a dynamic of *p* (piano) in the lower staff and *ppp* (pianissimo) in the upper staff. Performance instructions include *frei* (ad libitum) and *accel* (accelerando). A slur covers a series of notes in both staves, and a large slur is placed over the final chord in the upper staff. A small asterisk is visible at the bottom right of the score.

Fig. 43 -- Schoenberg Fünf Klavierstücke, Opus 23, No. 2, measure 7.

be held through an arpeggiated run and *ppp* chord. After the chord is played, the pedal is released but the notes of the chord are held down with the fingers (indicated by slurs). The effect is a mysterious echo and it is very striking. In the fourth piece (See Figure 44.) Schoenberg has marked in

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The music is marked with a dynamic of *p* (piano) and the instruction *dolce* (softly). A slur covers a series of notes in both staves. The lower staff has a performance instruction *legato (ohne Pedal!)* (legato without pedal). A circled number 20 is at the beginning of the upper staff.

Fig. 44 -- Schoenberg Fünf Klavierstücke, Opus 23, No. 4, measure 20.

two measures (20 and 29) the instructions "legato (ohne Pedal!)." "

Schoenberg marked the beginning of a period of experimentation in pedalling effects. The pedal remained very important to connecting extended chords and intervals as the entire range of the keyboard was frequently used. Composers became more interested in the sonorities produced by effects of overtones and in more subtle overlappings of harmonies which the pedal could produce.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Early in the development of the piano a need became apparent for some way of sustaining tones. Composers were continually seeking more means of variety and tone color, first on the harpsichord and later on the piano. Stops of different kinds were experimented with and from this experimentation came the idea of a damping mechanism. Daniel Steibelt and Jan Dussek were two of the earliest composers to indicate the pedal in their music and both also used the pedal constantly in their playing.

The importance of the damper pedal to the style of composition for the piano increased constantly after its invention, and the piano music of the Romantic era depends largely for its coloring and character on the damper pedal. Its use was necessary first for merely sustaining tones. However, as piano music became more subtle and idiomatic, the damper pedal was used to create new effects and opened up new possibilities of tone painting. The damper pedal has directly influenced and inspired piano composition. In

the music of many composers, such as Chopin and Debussy, the pedal has helped to create the musical style.

Ernest Closson, the noted Belgian musicologist, has very well summed up the relationship of the medium to music:

The instrument directly influences musical composition, conditions it and even inspires it, both by its capacities and by its limitations. In a sense the instrument creates musical style,¹ as his building material does for the architect.¹

Nowhere is this more true than with the damper pedal.

¹Blaise Montandon, "The Importance of Footwork," American Music Teacher, (January, 1966), p. 42.

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