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Stephanie Klauk (Hrsg.)

Instrumentalmusik neben Haydn und Mozart

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SAARBRÜCKER STUDIEN ZUR MUSIKWISSENSCHAFT

Herausgegeben von
Rainer Kleinertz

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Instrumentalmusik neben Haydn und Mozart

Analyse, Aufführungspraxis und Edition

Herausgegeben von
Stephanie Klauk

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SIMON P. KEEFE

“Es ist der Mühe werth”

The Performance and Reception of Pleyel’s Op. 1 String Quartets

Probably the most famous reference to the music of Ignaz Pleyel (1757–1831) written during the composer’s lifetime is found in a letter from Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart to his father Leopold on 24 April 1784:

Some quartets [op. 1] by a certain Pleyel have recently come out; he is a student of Joseph Haydn. If you do not know them yet, you should try to get them; it is worth the trouble. They are very well written and very pleasant; you will immediately recognize his master in them. Good – and lucky for music if Pleyel in his time replaces Haydn for us!¹

These remarks about Pleyel’s op. 1 (composed in 1782)² provide a useful starting point for evaluating both the quartets themselves and Pleyel’s music more generally. Mozart’s generosity has been proposed as disingenuous, a demonstration to his father of the need to court popularity for commercial gain while hiding a desire to succeed Haydn rather than have Pleyel assume that role.³ In his own quartets, Mozart’s well-known

- 1 Wilhelm A. Bauer, Otto Erich Deutsch and Joseph Eibl (eds.), *Mozart. Briefe und Aufzeichnungen, Gesamtausgabe*, 7 vols., Kassel 1962–1975, vol. 3, p. 311 (my translation): “Dann sind dermalen Quartetten heraus von einem gewissen Pleyel; dieser ist ein Scholar von Joseph Haydn. Wenn Sie selbige noch nicht kennen, so suchen Sie sie zu bekommen; es ist der Mühe werth. Sie sind sehr gut geschrieben, und sehr angenehm; Sie werden auch gleich seinen Meister herauskennen. Gut – und glücklich für die Musik, wenn Pleyel seiner Zeit im Stande ist, uns Haydn zu remplaciren!”. For a different translation see Emily Anderson (ed. and trans.), *The Letters of Mozart and His Family*, London 1985, p. 875. Pleyel studied with Haydn between around 1772 and 1777; see Howard C. Robbins Landon, *Haydn, Chronicle and Works: Haydn at Eszterháza, 1766–1790*, London 1978, p. 757.
- 2 The autograph of op. 1 (nos. 3 and 4 only) bears Pleyel’s inscriptions “composto in Napoli Anno [1]782” (no. 3) and “fatto in Roma [1]782” (no. 4).
- 3 See Mark Evan Bonds, “Replacing Haydn: Mozart’s ‘Pleyel’ Quartets”, in: *Music & Letters* 88/2 (2007), pp. 201–225. Elaine Sisman also remarks on the Pleyel reference: “This is hard to take seriously because op. 1 owes little to Haydn and does not give one confidence in any such acclamation. [...] It is hard from nearly any standpoint to credit Mozart with sincerity in the four categories he mentions (well written, pleasant, clearly from a Haydn pupil, able to replace Haydn).” See Elaine Sisman, “Observations on the First Phase of Mozart’s ‘Haydn’ Quartets”, in: *Words about Mozart: Essays in Honour of Stanley Sadie*, ed. by Dorothea Link and Judith Nagley, Woodbridge and Rochester 2005, pp. 33–58: 47. Other critics quoting the letter apparently take Mozart’s praise at face value: see Konrad Küster, *Mozart: a Musical Biography*, trans. Mary Whittall, Oxford 1996, pp. 193 f.; Maynard Solomon, *Mozart: a Life*, New York 1995, p. 317; John Irving, “Chamber Music”,

competitive streak may have been directed towards Haydn as well as Pleyel,⁴ accepting that the difference in stature between the two men would have led Mozart to feel that he had different relationships with them. If competitiveness, manifest in allusions and changes to musical processes witnessed in Haydn and Pleyel, did not preclude homage to Haydn,⁵ then it would not necessarily have done so relative to Pleyel. Homage to Pleyel cannot be ruled out through an interpretation of documentary evidence, only by extending in speculative musical directions the argument of subsequent generations of critics that Mozart's compositional procedures are considerably more successful than Pleyel's and the completed works vastly superior as a result. In short, we determine Mozart's 'real' thoughts by articulating what we want him to have wanted based on our own qualitative comparisons of the works at hand, rather than what we read that he believed. The resulting critical assumption is that Mozart, conscious ultimately of his own superiority and out to prove it musically, could not have simultaneously countenanced respect and admiration (even grudgingly) for Pleyel.

Supplanting a stated opinion with a 'true' sentiment is questionable, especially when the written opinion resonates with contemporary views: Pleyel's op. 1 quartets, widely admired and much played in the 1780s and 1790s, were acknowledged as 'very diligently and well done' and were so popular by early August 1783 (shortly after first publication in Vienna) that 500 copies had already been sent to Italy.⁶ In addition, hearing Haydn in Pleyel's music was not confined to Mozart.⁷ And implicitly or explicitly touting Pleyel as Haydn's successor was not uncommon. According to Haydn's early biographer, Albert Dies, the Professional Concert's engagement of Pleyel in London as direct competition for Haydn at the Salomon Concerts (1792) was a deliberate attempt to have the pupil usurp his erstwhile master: "They dared to picture Haydn in public newspapers as a worn-out old man [...]. After Pleyel's arrival Haydn could clearly see by his behaviour

in: *The Cambridge Mozart Encyclopedia*, ed. by Cliff Eisen and Simon P. Keefe, Cambridge 2006, pp. 61–87: 66; Howard C. Robbins Landon, *Mozart: the Golden Years, 1781–1791*, London 1991, pp. 132 f.; Théodore de Wyzewa and Georges de Saint-Foix, *Mozart*, vol. 2: 1777–1791: *Le grand voyage, L'épanouissement, Les dernières années*, Paris 2010 (original publication 1936), p. 307; Hermann Abert, *W. A. Mozart*, trans. Stewart Spencer, ed. by Cliff Eisen, New Haven 2007, pp. 764 f.; Alfred Einstein, *Mozart: His Character, His Work*, trans. Arthur Mendel and Nathan Broder, London 1971 (original publication 1945), pp. 139 f.

4 On Mozart's reactions to Haydn in the six quartets K. 387, 421, 428, 458, 464, 465, see Mark Evan Bonds, "The Sincerest Form of Flattery? Mozart's 'Haydn' Quartets and the Question of Influence", in: *Studi musicali* 22 (1993), pp. 365–409; Stephanie Klauk and Rainer Kleinertz, "Mozart's Italianate Response to Haydn's Opus 33", in: *Music & Letters* 97/4 (2016), pp. 575–621.

5 See Bonds, "Mozart's 'Pleyel' Quartets", and Bonds, "The Sincerest Form of Flattery?".

6 For the quoted phrase, see *Wiener Zeitung*, 4 May 1785, p. 1052: "sehr fleißig und gut gemacht". An advertisement in the *Wiener Zeitung* (6 August 1783, n. p.; repeated 9 August 1783) attests to the popularity of op. 1 in Italy soon after first publication.

7 See, for example, the review of several Pleyel accompanied sonatas in *Erlangische gelehrte Anmerkungen* 16 (15 April 1788), p. 228; given in Mary Sue Morrow, *German Music Criticism in the Late Eighteenth Century: Aesthetic Issues in Instrumental Music*, Cambridge 1997, pp. 61, 187. Charles Burney also draws attention to Pleyel's "imitation of Haydn" in: *A General History of Music from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period* (1789), ed. by Frank Mercer, New York 1957, vol. 2, pp. 951 f.

that he had in his pupil an opponent who wished to contend with him for the prize.”⁸ The competitive situation in London affected Haydn’s musical activities too, as he explained in a letter to Maria Anna von Genzinger:

[Pleyel] promised to present a new work every evening. As soon as I saw this, I realized at once that a lot of people were dead set against me, and so I announced publicly that I would likewise produce 12 different new pieces. In order to keep my word, and to support poor Salomon, I must be the victim and work the whole time.⁹

For the *Morning Herald* in 1791, Pleyel had already begun to edge ahead, “becoming even more popular than his master [Haydn], as his works are characterized less by the intricacies of science than the charm of simplicity and feeling.”¹⁰

More important, it is unclear why Mozart in his letter from 1784 would have suggested Leopold acquire and play Pleyel’s op. 1 quartets had he considered them of little-to-no value. Even though Leopold had recommended Mozart write easy and popular works a few years earlier (the kind represented, perhaps, by Pleyel’s op. 1),¹¹ he surely did not doubt Mozart’s ability to identify such works – as Mozart had in the letter – only his ability ultimately to compose them. And in recommending Leopold get hold of the quartets, Mozart is advising him to play them, not simply to contemplate their compositional qualities, accepting that such qualities can be determined through performance.¹² Quartets were purchased in parts in the late eighteenth century, not in score, and invariably experienced in private performance rather than public concert.¹³ Leopold frequently played new chamber music in social settings with fellow musicians – including daughter Nannerl – in Salzburg and was always on the lookout for appropriate repertory; for example, he ran through the first three of Mozart’s ‘Haydn’ quartets from performing copies produced in advance of publication by Artaria and sent to him from Vienna.¹⁴

8 Vernon Gotwals (ed. and trans.), *Haydn: Two Contemporary Portraits*, Madison 1968, p. 128.

9 Given in Howard C. Robbins Landon, *Haydn, Chronicle and Works: Haydn in England, 1791–1795*, London 1976, p. 141.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 108.

11 Reported by Bonds (“Replacing Haydn”, p. 204) in contextualizing Mozart’s reference to Pleyel’s op. 1.

12 Emily Anderson’s well-known translation of the letter misrepresents Mozart’s recommendation by stating that the quartets are good “to listen to”. See Anderson (ed. and trans.), *The Letters of Mozart*, p. 875.

13 As a music publisher, Pleyel pioneered full-score publication of string quartets in the early nineteenth century. See Cecil Hopkinson, “The Earliest Miniature Scores”, in: *Music Review* 33 (1972), pp. 138–144; Rita Benton, “Pleyel’s Bibliothèque musicale”, in: *Music Review* 35 (1975), pp. 1–4; Hans Lenneberg, “Revising the History of the Miniature Score”, in: *Notes* 45 (1988), pp. 258–261.

14 A Leopold letter to Nannerl from Vienna (16 February 1785) makes clear that they already owned copies in Salzburg of K. 387 in G, K. 421 in D minor, and K. 428 in E flat. See Bauer, Deutsch and Eibl (eds.), *Mozart: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen*, vol. 3, p. 373; Anderson (ed. and trans.), *The Letters of Mozart*, p. 886. See also Simon P. Keefe, “Composing, Performing and Publishing: Mozart’s ‘Haydn’ Quartets”, in: *Mozart Studies* 2, ed. by Keefe, Cambridge 2015, pp. 140–167: 149 f.

Understanding late eighteenth-century string quartets as works to be played by the musical public purchasing them for their own use has implications for historically informed evaluation. In his dedication of op. 1 to erstwhile employer and supporter Count Erdödy, Pleyel recognized that compromises were made to accommodate the country of origin (Italy) and implicitly the intended players: written “in Italy, and thus according to the prevailing taste there[,] they are neither as difficult to perform, nor as profound artistically, as my previous [quartets], but are composed in a comfortable manner, such that they may be more commonplace and pleasing.”¹⁵ In an attempt to orientate discussion of Pleyel’s op. 1 quartets towards their primary status as works for performance in the here-and-now, I shall first examine critical assessments of Pleyel’s music from the late eighteenth century and then autograph and published sources for op. 1 specifically.

The reception of Pleyel in the late eighteenth century

Pleyel achieved extraordinary popularity in the final two decades of the eighteenth century.¹⁶ According to the esteemed music historian Charles Burney in 1789 “there has lately been a rage for the music of Pleyel, which has diminished the attention of amateurs and the public to all other violin music.”¹⁷ In a similar vein one year later Franz Friedrich Böcklin von Böcklinsau praised Pleyel’s handling of chromatic material and modulation, explaining that some ‘old masters’ of music would listen to hardly anything else once they had encountered Pleyel.¹⁸

Numerous advertisements for Pleyel’s works appear in the press from Viennese publishers Johann Traeg, Artaria and Rudolf Gräffer, attesting to their popularity and marketability.¹⁹ Where symphonies are concerned, Traeg’s catalogue from 1799 contains

- 15 For the dedication (in Italian) see Ignaz Pleyel, *Sei quartetti a due violini, viola e violoncello* [...] *Opera I*, Vienna 1783; also given in Rita Benton, *Ignace Pleyel: A Thematic Catalogue of His Compositions*, New York 1977, p. 100. Translation slightly amended from Bonds, “Replacing Haydn”, p. 211. It is unclear to which earlier quartets Pleyel refers; op. 1 were his first published works.
- 16 For a brief overview, see Simon P. Keefe, “Across the Divide: Currents of Musical Thought in Europe, c. 1790–1810”, in: *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Music*, ed. by Keefe, Cambridge 2009, pp. 663–687: 681 f.
- 17 Burney, *A General History of Music*, vol. 2, pp. 951 f.
- 18 Franz Friedrich Böcklin von Böcklinsau, *Beyträge zur Geschichte der Musik, besonders in Deutschland, nebst freymüthigen Anmerkungen über die Kunst*, Freiburg i. Br. 1790, pp. 54 f.
- 19 For the 1780s, in the *Wiener Zeitung* only, see for example: Traeg’s advertisements on 14 Sept. 1785, p. 2165; 17 Sept. 1785, p. 2192; 21 Sept. 1785, p. 2220; 21 Dec. 1785, p. 2949; 24 Dec. 1785, p. 2978; 28 Dec. 1785, p. 3005; 8 Feb. 1786, p. 296; 11 Feb. 1786, p. 320; 13 May 1786, p. 1126; 17 May 1786, p. 1171; 20 May 1786, p. 1202; 23 Sept. 1786, p. 2277; 30 Sept. 1786, p. 2340; 4 Oct. 1786, p. 2378; 17 Oct. 1787, p. 2527; 20 Oct. 1787, p. 2555; 24 Oct. 1787, p. 2587; 18 June 1788, p. 1507; 21 June 1788, p. 1538. For Artaria’s advertisements (with string quartets popular among works mentioned) in the same period, see: 25 Feb. 1786, p. 432; 26 Apr. 1786, p. 957; 29 Apr. 1786, p. 990; 24 Oct. 1787, p. 2587; 6 Feb. 1788, p. 298; 17 Jan. 1789, p. 121; 31 Jan. 1789, p. 243; 4 Feb. 1789, p. 278; 7 Feb. 1789, p. 306; 21 Mar. 1789, p. 687; 25 Mar. 1789, p. 731. And for Gräffer’s advertisements in the *Wiener Zeitung* see: 6 Sept. 1786, p. 2135; 9 Sept. 1786, p. 2165.

more listings for Pleyel than any other composer except Adalbert Gyrowetz.²⁰ And, in London in the 1780s and 1790s, Pleyel was probably a more popular composer of chamber music than Haydn.²¹ Pleyel’s own lengthy explanation for bringing out twelve string quartets on subscription (1786) is in part a sales pitch to potential players and purchasers: others had taken advantage of his numerous editions by erroneously publishing works under his name, and editions of his music were often poorly produced, both requiring control to be re-established through the new scheme.²² But the frustrated sentiment was also genuine; the string quartet sets opp. 3 and 4, for example, were apparently published without his involvement and consent.²³

As well as public popularity, Pleyel received critical recognition, being acknowledged implicitly or explicitly as one of the best and most famous contemporary composers, alongside Haydn, Mozart and others.²⁴ George Thomson, a collector and publisher of Scottish music who considered Pleyel “the most agreeable composer living” and whose services he enlisted to write accompaniments for Scottish melodies, thought Pleyel’s music would complement in effective fashion the work of venerable poet Robert Burns.²⁵ Writing to Burns, Thomson suggested: “Your verses upon Highland Mary, are just come to hand: they breathe the genuine spirit of poetry [...]. Such verses united to such an air, with the delicate harmony of Pleyel superadded, might form a treat worthy of being presented to Apollo himself.”²⁶ And in another letter to the poet, Thomson explained:

Pleyel has lately sent me a number of songs, with his symphonies and accompaniments added to them. I wish you were here, that I might serve up some of them to you with your own verses, by way of dessert after dinner. There is so much delightful fancy in the symphonies and such a delicate simplicity in the accompaniments – they are indeed beyond all praise.²⁷

- 20 David Wyn Jones, *The Symphony in Beethoven’s Vienna*, Cambridge 2006, pp. 20 f. All except one of Pleyel’s fourteen listings carries a publication date of 1792 or earlier.
- 21 See Simon McVeigh, *Concert Life in London from Mozart to Haydn*, Cambridge 1993, p. 105.
- 22 *Wiener Zeitung*, 19 July 1786, p. 1704.
- 23 On the publication of opp. 3 and 4, and on pirated editions of Pleyel’s music in general, see Allan Badley, “The Price of Success: Pleyel and the Pirates”. Paper read at the Third International Pleyel Symposium, Ruppersthal, Austria, 17–18 June 2011. On spurious editions of Pleyel’s symphonies in France, see Jean Mongrédien, “Paris: the End of the Ancien Régime”, in: *The Classical Era: From the 1740s to the End of the 18th Century*, ed. by Neal Zaslaw, London 1989, pp. 61–98: 65.
- 24 See, for example, *Oettingisches Wochenblatt*, 9 Nov. 1791, n. p.; *Augsburgische Ordinari Postzeitung*, 28 Apr. 1791, 21 Sept. 1791, n. p.; *National-Zeitung der Teutschen* (1796), col. 9; *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* 105 (1791), p. 119; *Der Reichs-Anzeiger* 1 (1798, no. 52, 2 Mar.), col. 594; Julius August Remer, *Handbuch der Geschichte unserer Zeiten, vom Jahre 1740 bis zum Jahre 1799*, Braunschweig 1799, p. 123; “Foreign Literature of the Year 1798”, in: *Annual Register or General Repository of History, Politics and Literature for the Year 1798*, London 1809, vol. 3, “Biographical Anecdotes and Characters”, p. 318.
- 25 James Currie (ed.), *The Works of Robert Burns; with an Account of His Life, and a Criticism on His Writings*, 4 vols., London 1806, vol. 4: *Correspondence with Mr George Thomson*, p. 1 (letter from Sept. 1792).
- 26 *Ibid.*, pp. 22 f. (Thomson to Burns, Nov. 1792).
- 27 *Ibid.*, pp. 47 f. (Thomson to Burns, 2 Apr. 1793). For discussion of musical aspects of Pleyel’s settings for Thomson, see Barry Cooper, *Beethoven’s Folksong Settings: Chronology, Sources, Style*, Oxford 1994, especially pp. 87 f., 123–125, 130–135, 169–172, 182–185.

In the final decades of the eighteenth century, determining the virtues of Pleyel's chamber music was often associated with the act of playing it, with discovering musical qualities through performance (as Mozart had suggested to Leopold for op. 1). For Carl Friedrich Junker, Pleyel is certainly Haydn's best student, one who combines a richness of ideas with urgent, full harmony: 'In playing it [a string quartet], I and Herr Director Kleinknecht discovered, alternating our judgments, the character of the piece and its various aesthetic components – the grand, true, beautiful, new.'²⁸ Pleyel string trios and sextets are said to 'touch even the most insensitive heart' when performed in an exact way ("mit Pünktlichkeit").²⁹ Christoph Torricella, agent for the publisher Gräffer, took the unusual step of arranging a free public performance of the op. 2 set of string quartets by 'four good musicians' on 21 December 1784 in Vienna, as if to model to prospective players – potential purchasers of the edition, needless to say – the discovery of musical qualities through performance.³⁰ Pleyel's participation as performer-composer may have had a similar effect too: the fact that 'people could not stop exalting and praising him [...] for the art and excellence of his compositions and his playing' (1790–1792)³¹ implies added value in him promoting both simultaneously. For the *Wiener Zeitung*, 'every gentleman and dilettante able to play completely comfortably with feeling' should procure the op. 1 set on subscription.³² And for Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart, it was performers ('violinists and fiddlers') as well as connoisseurs and music lovers in general who came to the admittedly rather extreme conclusion that any music not written by Pleyel could be discarded.³³ In a review of *Melody, the Soul of Music: an Essay towards the Improvement of the Musical Art* (Glasgow 1798), it is also suggested that performance markings in Pleyel's (and Haydn's) music, "the pianoes [*sic*] and the fortes", result in "some of the most touching melodies imaginable".³⁴ Even criticism of Pleyel draws attention to performative aspects of his music, including the "coquetry in *ralentandos* and *pauses*" that might be "soon construed into affectation" according to Burney.³⁵

28 Johann Georg Meusel (ed.), *Miscellaneen artistischen Inhalts*, vol. 25, Erfurt 1785, p. 103: "Unter dem Spiel entdeckten ich und Herr Direktor Kleinknecht einander wechselseitig unsere Urtheile über den Charakter des Stücks, und über seine mannichfaltige ästhetische Bestandtheile, – des Großen, Wahren, Schönen, Neuen...".

29 *Musikalische Korrespondenz* 48 (30 Nov. 1791), p. 377; as given in translation in Morrow, *German Music Criticism in the Late Eighteenth Century*, pp. 138, 227.

30 See *Wiener Zeitung*, 18 Dec. 1784, p. 2877.

31 Ernst Ludwig Gerber, *Historisch-Biographisches Lexicon der Tonkünstler*, 2 vols., Leipzig 1790–1792, vol. 2, cols. 160 f.: "Man konnte nicht fertig werden, ihn [...] wegen seiner Kunst und Vortrefflichkeit in Ansehung seiner Kompositionen und seines Spiels [...] zu rühmen und zu loben."

32 *Wiener Zeitung*, 6 Aug. 1783, n. p.; repeated in *Wiener Zeitung*, 9 Aug. 1783: "von jedem Kavalier und Dilettanten [*sic*] ganz bequem mit Empfindung gespielt werden können."

33 Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart, *Chronik: 1791*, Stuttgart 1791, p. 360.

34 *The Analytical Review, or History of Literature, Domestic and Foreign* 28 (1798), p. 396.

35 See Burney, *A General History of Music*, vol. 2, pp. 951 f. Also see discussion in a review of Burney's book, in: *The Monthly Review* 1 (1790), p. 271.

A passage from Pierre Perrin’s *Werther*-inspired epistolary novel *Werthérie* (1791), concerning a young woman’s affections for the married Monsieur Hertzberg, illustrates the power of a Pleyel string quartet in performance. Just before reaching a hermitage near Arlesheim in the Swiss mountains, the author and her travelling companions happen upon four men playing a ‘charming quartet’ by Pleyel.³⁶ The author’s heart began involuntarily to beat rapidly, amorous sensations from which she thought she had rid herself now returning with great force:

The one who played the first violin, put in this piece, a soul, a taste! [...] I had plenty of time to contemplate it; and this being seemed to be more than a mortal [...]. At the end of the quartet, these gentlemen received the compliments their rare talents deserved in all respects; because if the first violin played well, those who accompanied him reflected untold intelligence; there was an ensemble, a sharpness, a precision, nuances treated so artfully, between the *pianos* and the *fortes*; and the melody that dominated above all, was so well rendered, that in my life I had never felt a more voluptuous sensation.³⁷

Performers and their performance create the overwhelming effect, thereby shaping the ontology of the quartet for listeners. (The event itself merits one of only two pictorial illustrations in the entire first volume of *Werthérie*.³⁸) While the performance is a fictional one, of course, the choice of Pleyel as quartet composer reflects both his reputation at the end of the eighteenth century and the dynamic relationship in his music between notes on the page and their realization in performance.

From late eighteenth-century writings, then, it emerges that Pleyel’s works are primarily experienced and appreciated by players in the act of performance; players in turn, through committed renditions, communicate qualities of the works to fellow musicians and to any listeners present. To be sure, such a state of affairs characterizes most late eighteenth-century chamber music. But Pleyel’s simplicity and directness – to which in effect he draws attention himself in op. 1, compromising earlier stylistic inclinations – gave his music a special status and popularity in this respect in the 1780s and 1790s. The “sociability” of Pleyel’s music, whereby “communicative urges seem to be built into the very utterance of the music” and “reciprocity and concession” come to the fore, was no doubt attractive in general ways to amateur players in late eighteenth-century chamber gatherings.³⁹ Pleyel’s

36 Pierre Perrin, *Werthérie*, 2 vols., Paris 1792, vol. 1, p. 25.

37 Ibid., pp. 26 f.: “celui qui jouoit le premier violon, mit dans ce morceau, une ame, un goût! [...] j’eus tout le temps de le contempler; et cet être me parut plus qu’un mortel [...]: à la fin du quatuor, ces Messieurs reçurent les complimens que leurs rares talens leur méritoient à tous égards; car si le premier violon fut bien joué, ceux qui l’accompagnoient y mirent une intelligence indicible; il y avoit un ensemble, une netteté, une précision, des nuances ménagées avec tant d’art, entre les *piano* et les *forte*; et le chant qui dominoit par-dessus tout, étoit si bien rendu, que de ma vie je n’éprouvai une plus voluptueuse sensation.”

38 Ibid., between pp. 24 and 25.

39 For the quoted material see Winton Dean Sutcliffe, “The Shapes of Sociability in the Instrumental Music of the Later Eighteenth Century”, in: *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 138 (2013), pp. 1–45: 6, 44. Discussion of Pleyel’s op. 1 has a prominent place in this article (for example, see pp. 6–9, 17–21). See also

own commitment to the performing experience in op. 1 and the commitment of others to it in producing early editions can begin to be gauged through an examination of early written and printed sources, including the autograph and first edition.

Performing Pleyel's op. 1

A partial autograph of op. 1, held at the Gosudarstvennaja Publičnaja Biblioteka in St Petersburg, comprises no. 3 in A major and no. 4 in B flat major, but is missing both the middle movement of the fourth quartet and the sixth page of the third (mm. 113–164 of the first movement). Following the publication of the first edition by Vienna-based Rudolf Gräffer in 1783, op. 1 appeared in at least 35 further editions over the next three decades or so, including from Artaria (c. 1787) and Sieber (c. 1788), leading publishers in Vienna and Paris respectively. A comparison of Artaria and Gräffer editions indicates that Artaria mostly used Gräffer's plates. The link between the publishers may have been the engraver Anton Huberty, whose name appears at the bottom of the title page of the Gräffer edition ("Inciso di Huberty") and who worked with several other Viennese publishers in the 1780s, including Artaria; he may have retained the plates after first publication and eventually sold them to Artaria.⁴⁰ At any rate, a number of plates were re-engraved by Artaria, presumably because the originals had worn out from frequent use. Artaria issued op. 1 twice in quick succession c. 1787, first as a set of six quartets and then as two sets of three. The net increase in price between Artaria editions, together with the desire swiftly to re-issue them and the need to re-engage some of Gräffer's plates, indicate that the quartets sold well, the publisher attempting to cash in on successful, marketable works: while the set of six was four florins, the subsequent two sets of three were three-and-a-half florins each.⁴¹ As well as the editions of string quartets, op. 1 appeared in numerous arrangements for string trio, keyboard and strings, keyboard four hands, a diverse range of duo combinations, and voices, a sign that musicians of all shapes and sizes wanted to perform them.⁴²

From examining the autograph and Gräffer first edition it is clear that on occasion markings missing from the former but implied in local context are included in the latter: for example, slurs and strokes on the scotch-snap rhythms in the first half of no. 3, first movement, measure 61 (first violin), are not given in the autograph for the same figure in measures 66–68; slurs in the second violin are absent from measures 39, 44

Winton Dean Sutcliffe, "Before the Joke: Texture and Sociability in the Largo of Haydn's Op. 33 no. 2", in *Journal of Musicological Research* 28/2–3 (2009), pp. 92–118.

40 With thanks to Dr Rupert Ridgewell (The British Library, London) for suggesting to me this possible connection among Gräffer, Artaria and Huberty.

41 On the first and second issuing of the op. 1 quartets by Artaria, and dates and prices, see Ignaz Pleyel, *Six String Quartets, Opus 1*, ed. by Simon P. Keefe, Ann Arbor 2005, "preface", pp. viii f. On dates and prices see also Benton, *Ignace Pleyel: A Thematic Catalogue*, p. 100.

42 For listings, see *ibid.*, pp. 100–105.

and 46 of no. 3, second movement, but included for the rest of the semiquaver accompanimental material; slurs and strokes are missing from the first violin and viola parts of no. 4, first movement, measure 137, but feature in all parts for the same figuration in the rest of the passage; and strokes are omitted from accompanimental semiquaver figures in mm. 2–7 of no. 4, third movement, in the second violin, after being notated at the onset in measure 1.

In most cases, though, differences between the autograph and the Gräffer edition appear to reflect different interpretations of the music in performance. Pleyel himself may have been responsible for changes, if Mozart’s experience of publishing instrumental music with Artaria in Vienna is a guide.⁴³ With a relatively long lead-in between receipt of an autograph and publication of an edition, Artaria generated performing copies in manuscript to be played through and annotated by Mozart; these copies along with any new markings and revisions from the composer they contained, were then used (rather than the autograph) as the *Stichvorlage* for the engraving.⁴⁴ Even if not representing Pleyel’s intentions specifically, markings in the edition that diverge from the autograph imply close engagement with the works in performance by whoever was given responsibility for producing a text for engraving purposes.

The first-theme section of no. 3, first movement (mm. 1–28) is a good case in point (see Exx. 1a and 1b, reproducing the autograph and Gräffer edition respectively). The second violin semiquavers are un-slurred in measures 1–4 and 11–13 of the autograph, and thus played with separate bows, but slurred in Gräffer. In both sources the first group of oscillating semiquavers in measure 1 of the first violin is un-slurred, but the comparable segment in measure 3 is slurred. As a result, the articulation for the first and second violins in measure 1 matches in the autograph, but not in the Gräffer edition, whereas in measure 3 slurs match in Gräffer but not in the autograph. In the tonic-minor segment (mm. 11–14), the articulation pattern of the opening remains the same in the autograph, but is altered in the first edition as a result of the first-violin slur on measure 11 beat 2. In the second half of the section (mm. 15–28) articulation for the first and

43 Pleyel was probably in or close to Vienna in 1783 when the Gräffer edition was being produced, only moving to the assistant *Kapellmeister* post in Strasbourg around 1784. The autograph date of 1782 for the composition of op. 1 nos. 3 and 4 and publication by Gräffer in late 1783 does not discount the possibility of a lengthy lead-in period between submission of the autograph to Gräffer and eventual publication.

44 We know of the existence of such performing sources from Mozart’s correspondence as well as from extant parts for the string quintet in C major, K. 515, which include Mozart’s annotations. Differences between the autograph and first edition of the ‘Haydn’ quartets (K. 387, 421, 428, 458, 464, 465) almost certainly can be attributed to Mozart’s annotations to performing copies. On the ‘Haydn’ set, see Keefe, “Composing, Performing and Publishing”, and Wolf-Dieter Seiffert, “Mozart’s ‘Haydn’ Quartets: an Evaluation of the Autographs and First Edition, with Particular Attention to mm. 125–142 of the Finale of K. 387”, in: *Mozart Studies 2*, ed. by Cliff Eisen, Oxford 1997, pp. 175–200. For identification and description of the string-quintet parts, see Ernst Hertrich, “Eine neue, wichtige Quelle zu Mozarts Streichquintetten KV 515 und 516”, in: *Im Dienst der Quellen zur Musik: Festschrift Gertraud Haberkamp zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. by Paul Mai, Tutzing 2002, pp. 435–445, and discussion in Simon P. Keefe, *Mozart in Vienna. The Final Decade*, Cambridge 2017, chap. 10.

Example 1: Pleyel, op. 1, no. 3: String quartet in A major, 1. Allegro assai, mm. 1–28: autograph (1a); Gräffer edition (1b)

1a

Musical score for measures 1–6 of the string quartet in A major, first movement by Pleyel. The score is for four staves: Violin 1 (vn. 1), Violin 2 (vn. 2), Viola (va.), and Violoncello (vc.). The key signature is A major (two sharps) and the time signature is 8/8. The music begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The first violin part features a melodic line with some grace notes. The second violin and viola parts play rhythmic patterns, while the cello provides a steady bass line. Dynamics include *f*, *fp*, and *p*.

Musical score for measures 7–12 of the string quartet in A major, first movement by Pleyel. The score continues from the previous system. The first violin part has a more active melodic line. The second violin and viola parts continue their rhythmic patterns. The cello part has a more complex bass line. Dynamics include *ff* and *pp*.

Musical score for measures 13–20 of the string quartet in A major, first movement by Pleyel. The first violin part has a melodic line with some grace notes. The second violin and viola parts continue their rhythmic patterns. The cello part has a more complex bass line. Dynamics include *ff* and *p*.

Musical score for measures 21–28 of the string quartet in A major, first movement by Pleyel. The first violin part has a melodic line with some grace notes. The second violin and viola parts continue their rhythmic patterns. The cello part has a more complex bass line. Dynamics include *pp* and *f*.

1b

Musical score for measures 1-6. The score is for four staves: Violin 1 (vn. 1), Violin 2 (vn. 2), Viola (va.), and Violoncello (vc.). The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#) and the time signature is 3/8. The music features a variety of dynamics including *f*, *fp*, and *p*.

Musical score for measures 7-13. The score continues for the four staves (vn. 1, vn. 2, va., vc.). Dynamics include *ff* and *pp*. The texture is dense with many sixteenth notes.

Musical score for measures 14-21. The score continues for the four staves. Dynamics include *ff* and *p*. The music shows a change in texture with some sustained notes in the upper staves.

Musical score for measures 22-28. The score continues for the four staves. Dynamics include *pp* and *f*. The music features a mix of sustained notes and moving lines.

Example 2: Pleyel, op. 1, no. 3: String quartet in A major, 1. Allegro assai, mm. 199–203: autograph (2a); Gräffer edition (2b)

2a

2b

second violin in the autograph and edition again diverges: while the autograph carries no slurs for the oscillating figure in the two instruments in measures 15–16 and slurs in measures 17–18, Gräffer notates them for all four measures; and, at the end, both carry two-note slurs for oscillating semiquavers for the first time in measures 25 and 27, but in measure 26 give markings different from the adjacent measures in their own source and the same measure in the other source.

The Gräffer markings in the first-theme section of no. 3, first movement, I would suggest, do not ‘correct’ or ‘complete’ those in the autograph, but capture a different interpretation of the evolving relationship between first and second violin parts. This is apparently confirmed by the coda, where the main theme delayed from the beginning of the recapitulation finally returns (see Exx. 2a and 2b for autograph and Gräffer versions of the beginning of the coda, mm. 199–203). Here, the autograph and edition both change the articulation they gave at the opening of the movement, but retain consistency with regard to matched and un-matched first and third measures in the violins, which again differ in the third not the first measure in the autograph, but in the first not the third in the edition. It is as if Pleyel plays – and notates – the articulation of this quartet movement one way when working on the autograph and then another way when preparing the text for the edition. (Or, if Pleyel was not in fact involved in pre-publication

work on the edition, then he was replaced by a musician equally committed to active interpretation of the musical text in performance.) In keeping with late eighteenth-century musical attitudes, and often demonstrated in primary sources, Pleyel would not have striven for a *Fassung letzter Hand* in compositional and publishing contexts, instead accepting alterations to performance markings over time as part of a fundamentally creative musical process that involved input from performers as well as the composer. The Sieber edition (c. 1788) may be a case in point: all of the first violin’s oscillating semiquavers in the main-theme section of op. 1, no. 3, first movement are now slurred (until the last measure), as they are in the coda.⁴⁵

The relationship between autograph and first edition in quartet no. 3, first movement, then, testifies to vibrant – and different – performing interpretations and experiences of the movement. Unlike articulation, dynamic markings in the first-theme section are the same in autograph and first edition. They invite an expressively nuanced rendition from players, from *f* at the start, with *fps* interspersed, to *ff* – *pp* – *ff* contrast to accompany modal and tonal exploration, a return to *pp* via a *p*, and conclusion *f* at the section’s original dynamic level. In the spirit of Burney’s criticism of Pleyel, some players and listeners might have found such a sequence of dynamics overly affected. But, since dynamics do not designate absolute volume levels and are subject to the interpretation of players, a high concentration of them in a short passage demonstrates compositional awareness of the ontological impact of performers’ decisions in a chamber music setting.

Elsewhere, differences between dynamics in the autograph and first edition of op. 1 may indicate conscious reinterpretation rather than unintended engraving error or omission. Towards the end of the exposition of no. 3, first movement, for example, *pps* in the second and first violin in the autograph (mm. 83, 84) are not included in the Gräffer edition, the instruments thus continuing at the prevailing *p*: a precedent in the autograph had been set at the beginning of the transition for the violins to play *p* and the viola and cello simultaneously *pp* (m. 29). In a similar way, distinguishing the first violin *ff* from the rest of the ensemble *f* and the first violin and cello *ff* from the second violin and viola *f* (Gräffer edition of no. 3/1, mm. 106 and 112 respectively), rather than following the consistent *f* then *ff* markings in the autograph, may represent deliberate re-reading rather than inadvertent mistake. In variation 3 of no. 3, second movement, simultaneous *p* and *pp* then *f* and *ff* in the edition (mm. 56, 63), going against the autograph, points towards variety rather than homogeneity of volume among instruments in the ensemble. Likewise, the dynamic differentiation of the second violin and viola from the first violin and cello in no. 4, first movement (*f* and *ff*, m. 86), contrasting with *ffs* for all instruments in the autograph, may capture a desire for more prominent melodic outer voices than inner accompanimental ones. On the whole, then, the Gräffer edition carries different simultaneously-notated dynamics more often than the autograph,

45 See Ignace Pleyel, *Six quatuors concertants pour deux violons, alto et basse ... Oeuvre 1^e*, Paris c. 1788. The second violin part in the copy I consulted lacks op. 1 no. 3/1, necessarily limiting comparisons with the autograph and Gräffer edition.

either Pleyel or the musician to whom preparation of the edition was assigned reflecting a little more on the individual contributions to be made by the quartet players than Pleyel had during the compilation of the autograph.

In sum, demonstration in primary sources of a commitment to playing, interpreting and re-interpreting the op. 1 quartets complements late eighteenth-century appreciation of them in performance. Their immediacy, vitality and playability guaranteed popularity among players and listeners alike, and mirrors close, creative engagement with articulation and dynamics in the production of the musical texts.

Pleyel after 1800

Pleyel's compositional reputation took a nosedive from around 1800 onwards. The *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* wrote a harsh review of his piano trios in 1799, claiming that they were for 'vulgar dilettantes' ("für den großen Haufen gemeinerer Dilettanten"), did not distinguish themselves in any way, and recycled old material.⁴⁶ The *Zeitung für die elegante Welt* (1805) separated the great quartets of Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven, Romberg (Andreas, Anton or Bernhard) and Paul Wranitzky, from the out-of-style easy keyboard music of Pleyel (as well as Johann Baptist Vanhal and Leopold Koželuh).⁴⁷ And the *Neues historisch-biographisches Lexikon der Tonkünstler* (1812–1814) complained about the quantity and quality of his works, having no intention of documenting the countless arrangements of them either.⁴⁸ The *Musikalisches Taschenbuch* (1803) described Pleyel's symphonies as "mediocre [...]. [His] one-sidedness and limitations cannot be mistaken".⁴⁹ Heinrich Christoph Koch did not name Pleyel among exemplary practitioners of the string quartet in the *Musikalisches Lexikon* (1802), having done so in the earlier *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Composition* (1782–1793).⁵⁰ And in the *Statistique générale et particulière de la France et de ses colonies* (1803), Pleyel is consigned to the "musiciens-artistes" rather than "compositeurs" category. Since "compositeurs" such as André-Ernest-Modeste Grétry, Etienne-Nicolas Méhul, François-Joseph Gossec, Georges Granges de Fontenelle, Luigi Cherubini, Christian Kalkbrenner and Pierre Gaveaux assume more prominence in the volume

46 *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 1 (1798/99), cols. 572 f.

47 As given in Mary Sue Morrow, *Concert Life in Haydn's Vienna: Aspects of a Developing Musical and Social Institution*, New York 1989, p. 9.

48 Ernst Ludwig Gerber, *Neues historisch-biographisches Lexikon der Tonkünstler*, 4 vols., Leipzig 1812–1814, vol. 3, cols. 733–739. These three sources are discussed in more detail in Keefe, "Across the Divide", pp. 682 f.

49 As given in Wayne M. Senner, Robin Wallace and William Meredith (eds.), *The Critical Reception of Beethoven's Compositions by His German Contemporaries*, Lincoln/NE 1999, vol. 1, p. 29.

50 See Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon*, Frankfurt 1802, col. 1209; and *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Composition*, 3 vols., Leipzig 1782–1793, partially trans. by Nancy Kovaleff Baker as *Introductory Essay on Composition: The Mechanical Rules of Melody Sections 3 and 4*, New Haven 1983, p. 207.

than “musiciens-artistes”, the implied hierarchy does not work to Pleyel’s advantage.⁵¹ In 1801, a French correspondent for the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* explained that Pleyel’s muse had deserted him ever since he established his music publishing business.⁵²

Compliments are still paid to Pleyel in the first two decades of the nineteenth century: he is praised for his rendition of as yet un-published string quartets in Leipzig (1800); his playfulness, lightness and joviality is said to give a true picture of the national character of the French (1813); and he is included in a British collection of sacred music as one of only four composers listed in the volume title alongside Handel, Haydn and Mozart (1818).⁵³ But the dye had been cast: his period of popularity and acclaim was in the past, not in the present or future. Burney, an early dissenter as we have seen, summed up the position in 1819:

Pleyel, in the height of his popularity, was over-rated, and afterwards, when the tide of fashion turned against him, was under-rated. [...] Had posthumous fame been more his aim than immediate profit, Pleyel had that within him which might have secured the attainment of a considerable share of lasting celebrity.⁵⁴

Pleyel’s career progression may have worked against appreciation of his music in the early nineteenth century: the promising student of Haydn, still young in the 1780s and early 1790s, had turned his attention towards publishing and piano construction as he grew older and – as a corollary – away from fulfilling his true compositional potential. As is pointed out in the *Neues Zeitungs- und Conversations-Lexikon*, Pleyel comes across in his music as a less authentic Haydn student around 1812 than in earlier works.⁵⁵ According to Jérôme-Joseph de Momigny (1818), ‘he occupied himself with lining the hammers [of the piano] in order to perfect the sound. This reminds us, it seems to me, of those Roman generals who put down the sword to pick up the plough.’⁵⁶ And a careless,

51 See Pierre Etienne Herbin de Halle, *Statistique générale et particulière de la France et de ses colonies*, Paris 1803, vol. 3, pp. 94–98. While the “compositeurs” collectively receive three pages, the “musiciens-artistes” get only half a page.

52 *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 3 (1800/01), col. 414.

53 See *ibid.*, col. 40; *Zeitung für die elegante Welt Berlin: Mode, Unterhaltung, Kunst* 13 (1813), p. 1083; John Whitaker (ed.), *The Seraph, a Collection of Sacred Music suitable to public or private devotion consisting of the most celebrated psalm and hymn tunes with selections from the works of Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Pleyel and favorite English and Italian composers*, London 1818.

54 *Penny Cyclopaedia* (1819); as given in A. Peter Brown, *The Symphonic Repertoire*. Vol. 2: *The First Golden Age of the Viennese Symphony: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert*, Bloomington 2002, p. 300.

55 See *Neues Zeitungs- und Conversations-Lexikon*, 8 vols., Vienna 1812–1814, vol. 4, pp. 250 f. Benton (*Ignace Pleyel: A Thematic Catalogue*, p. ix) dates the start of the publishing business to 1795 and the piano production to 1807. For more on his publishing activities, see Rita Benton and Jeanne Halley, *Pleyel as Music Publisher: a Documentary Sourcebook of Early 19th-Century Music*, Stuyvesant 1990.

56 Jérôme-Joseph de Momigny, “Quatuor”, in: *Encyclopédie méthodique: musique*, ed. by Pierre-Louis Ginguené, Nicolas Etienne Framéry and Momigny, Paris 1818; repr. New York 1971, vol. 2, p. 298: “il s’occupe lui-même à en garnir les marteaux pour en perfectionner le son. Cela rappelle, ce me semble, ces généraux romains qui déposaient le glaive pour prendre la charrue.”

error-strewn early nineteenth-century edition of the op. 1 quartets from Pleyel's own publishing company, containing serious rhythmic and pitch-related errors and obvious misprints,⁵⁷ lends some support to Burney's claim about financial profit for Pleyel superseding an aspiration to long-lasting fame.

Above all, though, evolving aesthetic views around the turn of the century put pay to Pleyel's compositional reputation. As Koch explained in 1795: "True artistic beauties in works of fine art defy the ravages of time; the imagined beauties of fashion, however, lose their reality like a dream as soon as the fashion that favored them changes."⁵⁸ Pleyel is not specifically mentioned, but when judged by arbiters of high musical taste at the time would have found himself firmly in the second category. The *Neues Zeitungs- und Conversations-Lexikon* (1812) captures in microcosm how changes in the aesthetic environment since the 1780s affected Pleyel: his attempts to satisfy the fashionable desires of music lovers, bemoaned by connoisseurs, is linked to a downturn in the reception of his recent music relative to his earlier music.⁵⁹ And the same source associates Pleyel's initial 'flattering reception' ("schmeichelhafteste Aufnahme") with both his compositions and his violin playing.⁶⁰ By implication, experiencing and appreciating Pleyel's music required proper attention to performance in conjunction with compositional attributes. Thus, when perceptions of the balance and interaction between these activities shifted, as they did around 1800 towards the idea of the performer as voice of the composer rather than as the previously assumed expressive co-creator,⁶¹ Pleyel's fate was sealed.

The evaluation of Pleyel's music solely against compositional criteria is the norm today (in as far as it receives attention at all). According to one recent critic, his string quartets are "interpretatively undemanding. With exceptionally light parametric density and complete avoidance of topical troping and expressive dissonance, [they] relieved the players and their listeners from interpretative responsibility".⁶² Re-assessing the op. 1 set – and Pleyel's output in general – as music experienced and actively contemplated in the moment by composer, players and listeners in both musical and critical sources foregrounds musical process as much as product. In re-capturing performance as an essential feature of the creation and re-creation of op. 1, and re-embracing Pleyel's short-lived popularity and critical acclaim, we can begin to appreciate once again the musical virtues that made him such a success in the last twenty years of the eighteenth century.

57 For more on this source, see Pleyel, *Six String Quartets*, "preface", pp. viii f.

58 See Heinrich Christoph Koch, "Ueber den Modegeschmack in der Tonkunst", in: *Journal der Tonkunst* 1 (1795), col. 63; as given in David Gramit's translation in Gramit, "Selling the Serious: The Commodification of Music and Resistance to it in Germany, circa 1800", in: *The Musician as Entrepreneur, 1700–1914: Managers, Charlatans, and Idealists*, ed. by William Weber, Bloomington 2004, pp. 81–101: 87.

59 *Neues Zeitungs- und Conversations-Lexikon*, vol. 4, pp. 250 f.

60 Ibid.

61 See Mary Hunter, "'To Play as if from the Soul of the Composer': the Idea of the Performer in Early Romantic Aesthetics", in: *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 58 (2005), pp. 357–398.

62 Melanie Lowe, "Amateur Topical Competencies" in: *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, ed. by Danuta Mirka, New York 2014, pp. 601–628: 626.