

Jan Ladislav **DUSSEK**



Piano Music

**Douze Études
mélodiques, Op. 16**

**Fantaisie
in F major, Op. 76**

Vincenzo Paolini, piano

INCLUDES FIRST RECORDINGS

JAN LADISLAV DUSSEK: PIANO MUSIC

by Rohan H. Stewart-MacDonald

The cover of this disc shows a mezzotint portrait of Jan Ladislav Dussek (1760–1812) published by John Bland in London in 1793. Bland published prints of a number of prominent musicians of the day, including Joseph Haydn (1732–1809), Johann Peter Salomon (1745–1815), Ignaz Pleyel (1757–1831) and Muzio Clementi (1752–1832). The inclusion of Dussek in this series reflects his contemporary prominence. In Alan Davison's view, 'the fact that Dussek is shown resplendent in mezzotint would have signalled him as a noteworthy sitter. The portrait emphasises [Dussek's] youth and physical beauty'; and it matches one contemporary description of him as 'a handsome man, good dispositioned, mild and pleasing in his demeanour and agreeable'.¹

The prestige and glamour Dussek achieved in his lifetime – embodied in the Bland print – contrasts starkly with his comparative modern obscurity. With perhaps exaggerated pessimism, the current Wikipedia entry asserts that '[n]either [Dussek's] playing style nor his compositions [...] had any notable lasting impact' and that 'his music [...] is now virtually unknown'.² Typically for his time, Dussek pursued a multifaceted peripatetic career that encompassed piano performance, composition, teaching, administration and publishing in his native Bohemia, the Netherlands, Paris and London. His compositional output, strongly weighted towards the piano, includes a body of solo sonatas, a plethora of miscellaneous piano works, chamber music (including a piano quartet, piano quintet and three string quartets) and about eighteen piano concertos. Dussek also wrote various works for the harp, including a number of concertos: in August 1792 he married the famous Scottish harpist Sophia Corri (1775–1831), a composer in her own right.

¹ Alan Davison, 'Portraits of Dussek from London and Paris', in Roberto Illiano and Rohan H. Stewart-MacDonald (eds.), *Jan Ladislav Dussek (1760–1812): A Bohemian Composer 'en voyage' through Europe*, Bologna, Ut Orpheus Edizioni, 2012 (*Quaderni Clementiani*, Vol. 4), p. 234, quoting Charlotte Louise Henrietta Papandiek (Albert), *Court and Private Life in the Time of Queen Charlotte* [...], 2 vols., London, Richard Bentley & Son, 1887, vol. II, p. 186. The main biographical resource on Dussek is still Howard Allan Craw, *A Biography and Thematic Catalog of the Works of J. L. Dussek (1760–1812)*, Ph.D. Diss., University of Southern California, Los Angeles, 1964.

² 'Jan Ladislav Dussek', <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jan_Ladislav_Dussek>, p. 1 (accessed 15 August 2014).

Recent scholars have explored the complex interaction between political events relating to the Napoleonic wars, concomitant social change and the ever-altering contours of the musical marketplace.³ Close study of a figure like Dussek, taking into account the trajectory of his career, its varying branches, and the vicissitudes he experienced, sheds further light on the cross-fertilisation between politics, war, society, musical consumption and the history of the piano as an instrument and as a medium for social and intellectual intercourse. Dussek was one of several prominent musicians who fled France in the lead-up to the revolution. Like the composer-violinist Giovanni Battista Viotti (1755–1824), he made for London. The decade that he spent in the British capital (c. 1788–99) was arguably the most successful and important period of his career; but he made an abrupt departure for Hamburg in about 1799. This *volte face* was connected with the failure of a music-publishing and retail business in which he had been collaborating with his father-in-law, Domenico Corri, Italian composer, impresario, music publisher and voice teacher (1746–1825). A recently discovered document in the National Archive shows that, following his departure, Dussek would have been detained by the authorities had he returned to England – as he clearly intended to do. The immediate reason was probably accumulated debt:

Sir,

Should an Alien named John Lewis Duseck [...] land at your Port, I am directed [...] to desire that you will take particular care to secure any papers he may bring with him, and forward them immediately to this office for examination. I am also to desire that the Alien in question may be detained until you shall receive further directions concerning him.⁴

One of several factors leading to the failure of Corri, Dussek & Co. – including Dussek's lack of financial acumen and his growing lack of interest in the firm – was the contraction of musical activity in London during the 1790s. What Simon McVeigh has called a 'tapering of London's musical life' resulted from the weakening of the economy by the war with France that began in February 1793 and lasted until the defeat of Napoleon in 1815.⁵ Dussek's activities in 1800–12 vividly portray the complexities of an international musical marketplace which, with its lack of international copyright laws, necessitated the publication of works simultaneously in several different geographical centres, to avoid piracy.⁶ That, in turn, was much

³ For instance, Michael Kassler (ed.), *The Music Trade in Georgian England*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2014.

⁴ David Rowland, 'Dussek in London's Commercial World', in *Jan Ladislav Dussek, op. cit.*, p. 101. The document in question is document HO 5/6, pp. 211–12, The National Archive, Kew.

⁵ Simon McVeigh, *Concert Life in London from Mozart to Haydn*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge/New York, 1993, p. 9.

⁶ Cf. David Rowland, 'Haydn's Music and Clementi's Publishing Circle', in Richard Chesser and David Wyn Jones (eds.), *The Land of Opportunity: Joseph Haydn and Britain*, The British Library, London, 2013, p. 99.

complicated by the practical obstacles created by war-impeded travel as well as economic volatility. In a letter dated 30 November 1803 Dussek refers to an arrangement with Clementi's piano-manufacturing firm whereby, as a sales agent for Clementi's pianos, he received commissions from sales of the pianos as payment for the publication of his works by the publishing branch of Clementi's firm. Exasperated, Dussek writes:

This damned war has dealt a blow to my earnings, because I was accustomed to receiving as remuneration for my music some of Clementi's instruments that I used to resell here at a good profit, but since the blockade of the Elbe it has become impossible.⁷

Dussek's historical significance therefore resides in the insights that his activities generate into the panoply of problems that late-eighteenth-century musicians faced when trying to sustain a career of international eminence at a time of war, and when the infrastructure for travelling was comparatively primitive.⁸ But Dussek also made an important contribution to the evolution of contemporary pianos and of performing style. He was closely associated with pianos by English manufacturers like Clementi and also John Broadwood (1732–1812). Dussek often played on Broadwood pianos in concerts,⁹ and Broadwood is known to have extended the compass of his keyboards at Dussek's request.¹⁰ Here one must bear in mind the differences between the actions and sound qualities of English and Viennese pianos in this period. Viennese pianos had 'a light, clear ringing tone', whereas English ones produced 'a fuller, more resonant' sound, suitable for lyrical melodies and *legato* playing, often supported by the sustaining pedal.¹¹ As indicated by the letter quoted above, Dussek continued to work with English pianos beyond his 'London period', and they had a strong bearing on his style as player and composer. Dussek has often been acknowledged as a pioneer of the sustaining pedal and, certainly, early editions of his works are amongst the first to include printed pedal indications:¹² a contemporary (undated) edition of the *Fantaisie*,

⁷ Letter quoted in Massimiliano Sala, 'New Evidence on Dussek's Life and Works: Unpublished Correspondence and Concert Advertisements', in *Jan Ladislav Dussek, op. cit.*, p. 38.

⁸ James Hamilton nonetheless emphasises the 'great increase in the ability of English men and women to travel' in the decades around the turn of the nineteenth century: 'by 1810, there were 20,000 miles of turnpike roads in Britain. These developments and the increase in sea travel from port to port meant that more and more people were becoming aware of the shape of their land [...]' (in *Turner: A Life*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1997, p. 142).

⁹ Rowland, 'Dussek in London's Commercial World', *loc. cit.*, p. 116.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 107–8.

¹¹ Katalin Komlós, *Fortepianos and their Music: Germany, Austria, and England, 1760–1800*, Oxford Monographs on Music, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1995, p. 64.

¹² Cf. David Rowland, 'Early Pianoforte Pedalling: The Evidence of the Earliest Printed Markings', *Early Music*, Vol. xiii, No. 1, February 1985, pp. 5–17.

Op. 76, contains quite specific pedal instructions.

Indeed, Dussek's liberal deployment of the sustaining pedal is part of his most important legacy: the expressive lyricism that drew such approbation from contemporary listeners. Almost all accounts of Dussek cited is the description, by fellow Bohemian Václav Jan Tomášek (Wenzel Johann Tomaschek; 1774–1850), of an incident at one of Dussek's concerts in Prague in 1802 where

[a]fter the opening bars [...] the public uttered one general Ah! There was in fact something magical in the manner in which Dussek [...] through his wonderful touch, drew from his instrument delicious and at the same time emphatic tones. His fingers were like a company of ten singers.¹³

Jeremy Eskenazi locates in Dussek's Sonata in F sharp minor, Op. 61 (*Élégie harmonique*) a type of 'singing polyphony' whereby melodies are combined with 'the ability to project polyphony clearly';¹⁴ but more literal lyricism is also sustained by the second subjects of many sonata expositions, such as those of the Sonatas Opp. 70 in A flat major (*Le retour à Paris*), 75 in E flat major and 77 in F minor (*L'Invocation*). A second subject of similar disposition occurs in the *Allegro ma piano e moderato* of the *Fantaisie*, Op. 76 [15]. Dussek's lyricism was particularly central to the positive French reception of his playing and compositions, during his lifetime and posthumously. François-Joseph Fétis (1784–1871) extolled Dussek's ability 'to sing on an instrument lacking sustaining powers'.¹⁵ Dussek's sonatas were also held up by French critics as models of good taste and paragons of 'traditional', 'Classical' values that provided foils to the maelstrom of 'meretricious' operatic fantasias that poured forth during the 'cult of virtuosity' of the 1830s and '40s.¹⁶

In his handling of tonality, Dussek nonetheless soon came to be seen as a 'pre-Romantic'. A twentieth-century exponent of this view was Eric Blom, who in an article entitled 'The Prophecies of Dussek' wrote the following about the three Sonatas, Op. 35:

For Dussek the sonata form becomes more and more the carrier of intimate feelings. [...] A good deal of ostentation still clings to his musical language, but a darker colouring, a brooding introspection, now begin to temper his effective rhetoric. [...] Romanticism is foreshadowed quite unmistakably now.¹⁷

¹³ Tomaschek, 'Selbstbiographie', *Libussa*, iv (1845–49), pp. 393–94.

¹⁴ Jeremy Eskenazi, "'Singing Polyphony": Performing Dussek's Sonata in F-sharp minor, Op. 61 (*Élégie harmonique*)', in *Jan Ladislav Dussek, op. cit.*, p. 471.

¹⁵ *Biographie universelle des musiciens et bibliographie générale de la musique*, Firmin-Didot, Paris, 1862, vol. iii, p. 96.

¹⁶ Cf. Laure Schnapper, 'La postérité de Dussek en France au XIX^e siècle', in *Jan Ladislav Dussek, op. cit.*, p. 226.

¹⁷ 'The Prophecies of Dussek', *Classics Major and Minor: With Some Other Musical Ruminations*, J. M. Dent, London, 1958, p. 102.

The view of Dussek as a ‘pre-Romantic’ has always been strongly connected to his approach to harmony and his use of devices like enharmonic modulation. (An example is seen in the development section of the *Allegro ma piano e moderato* of the *Fantaisie*, Op. 76 [15], where an enharmonic pivot connects B flat minor and B major.) Similarly ‘pre-Romantic’ is the ornamental chromaticism Dussek often uses to adorn stable harmonies, including the curvaceous chromatic shapes of the *major*e from the *Menuet du Carême*, again from Op. 76 [16]. The *Fantaisie* also contains various brief excursions to centres like the flattened submediant and flattened mediant: the *Grave* [13] transposes its own opening to D flat major about halfway through; the *Marche Solennelle* [17], in E flat major, briefly invokes G flat major during its second half and the refrain of the *Finale alla polacca* [20] touches on A flat major just before its internal reprise. The first sustained analysis of Dussek’s harmony was supplied in 1975 by Orin Grossman, who identified ‘pre-Schubertian’ approaches to harmony and structure in Dussek’s sonatas.¹⁸ In fact, as contemporary commentators seemed to realise, Dussek’s compositions maintain a fairly strong fidelity to eighteenth-century principles. Chromaticism, enharmonicism and forays into distant key-regions are most often confined to the larger, more ambitious later works, and even there, clear structural articulation is usually maintained. Dussek’s habit of truncating recapitulations, furthermore, might invoke mid-eighteenth-century approaches to binary form, as cultivated in the keyboard sonatas of the Neapolitans Domenico Scarlatti (1685–1757) and Giovanni Marco Rutini (1723–97) and Venetian Baldassare Galuppi (1706–85).¹⁹ Indeed, Dussek strongly invites Friedrich Blume’s conception of a ‘Classic-Romantic’ period spanning the last decades of the eighteenth century and the first few of the nineteenth, in which ‘Classical’ and ‘Romantic’ orientations co-exist and intersect rather than enacting a chronological progression.²⁰

The *Douze Études mélodiques*, Op. 16, date from 1794. By this year Dussek was firmly established in London and began his (initially prosperous) business collaboration with Domenico Corri. The apex of public success towards which Dussek was progressing was stimulated by, and no doubt also stimulated, ever more ambitious compositional endeavour. Fine examples are found in the piano concertos of that decade (such as Op. 14 in F major, the first ‘London concerto’; Op. 27 in F major; and the famous ‘Grand Military’ Concerto in B flat major, Op. 40²¹) and also the set of three sonatas, Op. 35, sited by Blom.

¹⁸ Orin Grossman, *The Piano Sonatas of Jan Ladislav Dussek (1760–1812)*, Ph.D. Diss., Yale University, New Haven; UMI Research Press, Ann Arbor, 1975.

¹⁹ Charles Rosen summarises the approaches to recapitulation in a set of sonatas by Rutini published in 1757 in *Sonata Forms*, Norton, New York/London, 1988, pp. 144–45.

²⁰ Friedrich Blume, *Classic and Romantic Music: A Comprehensive Survey*, transl. M. D. Herter Norton, Faber, London, 1979.

²¹ Stephan D. Lindeman, ‘Dussek’s Only Orchestral Genre: The Piano Concertos’, in *Jan Ladislav Dussek, op. cit.*, p. 261.

Each of the Op. 35 sonatas is written on an expansive scale – No. 3 is one of the few to include four movements²² – and all three are sufficiently virtuosic to tax the technique of even professional players. The title of Op. 16 suggests a more modest, didactic purpose; but this is no group of diminutive ‘teaching works’, for as the alternative title (*Leçons progressives*) implies, the set enacts a rather sharp increase of technical and intellectual demands. The succession of keys and arrangement of tempi outlined by the series of twelve, furthermore, suggests a superstructure of four three-movement sonatas, each with two faster outer movements (the first always in sonata form, the third a rondo), flanking slower counterparts. The key structures of each implicit set of three follow the eighteenth-century convention of placing a slow movement in a closely related key. The third-relation in the hypothetical ‘Sonata No. 3’ (B flat major–G major–B flat major) simply reflects the predilection, at this time, for establishing third relations between the individual movements of multi-movement works. Haydn, Beethoven and many other composers experimented with this pattern: Beethoven’s Third Piano Concerto in C minor, Op. 37 (1800), has its slow movement in a distant E major, and in his Sonata No. 62 in E flat major Haydn resorts daringly to a chromatic relationship (E flat major–E major–E-flat major).

Nos. I–III of Op. 16 [1]–[3] remain unimposing: No. II [2] never even tonicises a secondary key, remaining throughout in F major. As the set progresses, structural regions like the exposition transition and *codetta* expand. No. I [1] omits an exposition transition; but by No. IV [4] it has been reinserted, and in No. VII [7] it has become quite elongated, featuring triplet figuration laced with flamboyant hand-crossing. The exposition *codetta* of this movement contains similar figuration, it and the transition both strongly prognosticating the first movement of the B flat major Sonata, Op. 35, No. 1. Development sections, vestigial in the early numbers, are also elongated and intensified. The development of No. IV, although compact, processes several exposition themes. It begins by explicitly quoting the opening unisons; thereafter a quaver figure from bar 3 is detached, reiterated and extended as continuous figuration. Several bars later the left hand introduces a variant of the *codetta* theme in G minor, before a pivot leads to the dominant pedal that launches the recapitulation. In No. VII [7] the development is quite substantial. It contains several sub-segments which isolate different combinations of motives from the exposition. Ex. 1 shows the juxtaposition of a fragment from the exposition *codetta* with a variant from the second subject:

²² The others are the Sonata in E flat major, Op. 40 (*The Farewell*) (1799) and the Sonata in A flat major, Op. 70 (*Le retour à Paris*) (1807).

Ex. 1

Second subject: first five bars

dolce
legato

Exposition codetta: first four bars

p cresc.
f

Development section
'Codetta' material

ff
decrec.

Second subject modified

p

Op. 16 contains several examples of the kinds of harmonic twists and turns underpinning the 'proto-Romantic' image of Dussek. No. VI [6], structured as a five-part rondo, has an initial couplet (or episode) in the submediant key of B flat major. The couplet contains two brief but striking engagements with D flat major, the flattened mediant of B flat major (Ex. 2(a)). This characteristically Dussekian 'flatwards slipping' also appears in a very different manner in the first movement of the Sonata in B flat major, Op. 23, composed the previous year (1793). Ex. 2(b) shows the digression to A flat major within the second subject, another local flattened mediant. The effects are quite different in the successive examples: whereas the shift to D flat in the rondo provides a brief, flamboyant-sounding excursion, in the sonata the more sustained move to A flat adds colour and expressive depth to the melody.

Ex. 2

(a)

32

ff
dim.

(b)

The musical score is for a piano piece, Op. 16, No. VII, measures 30-36. It is written in E-flat major (three flats) and common time. The score is arranged in three systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The first system (measures 30-33) shows a melody in the alto and tenor registers, with a bass line featuring quaver figuration. The second system (measures 34-35) continues the melody and bass line. The third system (measures 36-37) shows the texture thinning down to three parts. The score includes dynamic markings such as *cresc.* and *f*.

Like so many of Dussek's piano works the last few pieces in Op. 16 directly exploit the capacities of the English piano. The 'fuller, more resonant sound' defined by Katalin Komlós as the feature distinguishing English from Viennese instruments²³ encouraged not only a preponderance of long-breathed melodies but also certainly types of texture. Bart Van Oort identifies a 'full, sometimes chordal style' emanating from the 'thicker tone, long after-ring, heavier touch and deeper key dip of the English piano'.²⁴ This type of texture is epitomised by the opening of Dussek's Sonata in E flat major, Op. 75, from 1811; but it appears earlier, in the first movement of Op. 35, No. 2, for instance, and also at the opening of Op. 16, No. VII [7], where a regularly phrased melody, often in thirds and sixths, sits on a bedrock of quaver figuration in a low register. The melody soon dips in register, producing a characteristically warm sonority of the type also seen at the opening of Op. 35, No. 1 in B flat major. A more sensuous type of lyricism emanating from a four-part texture in the middle registers appears in the second subject of No. X [10] (Ex. 3). Dussek's continual re-distribution of the melodic line amongst different parts of the texture is notable here: the melody begins in sixths in the 'alto' and 'tenor' before passing to the 'soprano' in bar 36, where it remains as the texture thins down to three parts.

²³ *Op. cit.*, p. 64.

²⁴ Bart Van Oort, 'Haydn and the English Classical Piano Style', in: *Early Music*, Vol. xxviii, No. 1 (February 2000), p. 84.

Ex. 3



The titles appended to many numbers of Op. 16, such as *Rondeau à la turque*, *Air russe varié* and others, show Dussek engaging with the contemporary fashion for music with popular or exotic associations. Clementi's accompanied sonatas, aimed more explicitly at the amateur market, incorporate similar exoticisms: Dorothy de Val cites 'a "Siciliano" in Op. 27 and a "Calemba-Arietta alla Negra" in Op. 28'.²⁵ Popular elements often also congregated in concerto finales: the rondo in *Tempo di Polacca* that concludes the Piano Concerto No. 3 in E flat major, H32 (c. 1806), of John Field (1782–1837) is inhabited by similar rhythms to the *Polonaise* that appears in Dussek's Op. 16. The *Rondeau à la turque* (No. III [3]) obviously parallels the famous *Alla Turca* that ends Mozart's Sonata in A major, K331 (first published in 1784); both reflect the vogue for *turquerie*, the ultimate embodiment of which is of course Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, K384.²⁶ The finale of Mozart's K331 was sometimes performed on pianos built with a 'Turkish stop' that added extra percussive effects, and the coda of Dussek's *Rondeau à la turque* contains the indication 'Tambourin', as if calling for an instrument with similar capacities.²⁷ The final number of Dussek's Op. 16, No. XII [12], is subtitled *Rondeau sur le retraite espagnol* and reflects the fashion for programmatic music commemorating specific political or military events. Dussek's *The Sufferings of the Queen of France* in C minor, Op. 23, graphically depicting the execution of Marie Antoinette, is one of the most lurid specimens of this type.²⁸ Another significant example is *The Naval Battle and Total Defeat of the Grand Dutch Fleet by Admiral Duncan on the 11th of October 1797*

²⁵ Dorothy De Val, 'The Ascent of Parnassus: Piano Music for the Home by Clementi and his Contemporaries', in Roberto Illiano, Luca Sala and Massimiliano Sala (eds.), *Muzio Clementi: Studies and Prospects*, Ut Orpheus Edizioni, Bologna, 2002, p. 57.

²⁶ Cf. Eve R. Meyer, 'Turquerie and Eighteenth-Century Music', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. vii, No. 4 (1974), pp. 474–88. Further examples abound: the finale of Viotti's Violin Concerto No. 28 in A minor includes a triangle.

²⁷ Cf. Kenneth Mobbs, 'Stops and Other Special Effects on the Early Piano', *Early Music*, Vol. xii, No. 4 (November 1984), pp. 471–76.

²⁸ De Val, *loc. cit.*, p. 58.

(Craw 152). No. 12 from Op. 16 might be referring to the Second Battle of Boulou (April–May 1794): the French Army of the eastern Pyrenees under Jacques François Dugommier attacked the Spanish-Portuguese Army of Catalonia, led by Luis Firmin de Carvajal. The French victory was decisive and led to a significant regaining of territory lost to the Kingdom of Spain the previous year. The rondo refrain has a vibrant, jocund character, especially in a passage marked *giocoso* that turns briefly towards E major.

For the ‘exotic’ members of Op. 16 Dussek adopts an inventive approach to structure. This strategy challenges any assumption that tailoring piano music to the more modest abilities of amateur players caused an automatic vitiation of the artistic quality. One of the most curious pieces structurally is the *Air russe varié* (No. V [5]). Cast in ternary form, this piece has outer sections that vacillate between C major and A minor, with a strong C-minor emphasis in the first section. That the key of the central section is A major, and that the final section begins and ends in A minor, suggests that the original home key of C major is gradually subsumed by its relative minor; accordingly, the mood clouds over as the piece progresses, becoming deeply sombre during the reprise. The *Chansonette* (No. XI [11]) does not adhere to any recognisable ‘Classical’ form. Instead, it alternates between a slow, introspective G-minor theme and a faster counterpart whose drones create overtly popular overtones. The structure unfolds as ABABA. Notably, when the faster B material returns, it does so in A flat major, the key of the flattened supertonic: another typically Dussekian slip to the flatwards side of the home key.

By 1811 Dussek was well established in Paris, having been working in the employ of Prince Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord (1754–1838) since 1807. He was also nearing the end of his life; the following year, he died at the comparatively young age of 52, of some combination of gout, alcoholism and obesity; as one modern commentator has facetiously expressed it, ‘Dussek le beau’ had turned into ‘Dussek le gros.’²⁹ The *Fantaisie*, Op. 76, is one of several large-scale piano works that Dussek composed in the final years of his life. Another is the Sonata in E flat major, Op. 75, mentioned above, and his very last work, the Sonata in F minor, Op. 77, dating from 1812. The title ‘fantasia’ carries with it connotations of improvisation, structural fluidity and harmonic exploration. Leonard Ratner associates fantasia with ‘unexpected, even eccentric turns of figure, texture, and harmony.’³⁰ One of the most influential exponents of fantasia in solo keyboard music was C. P. E. Bach (1714–88), and one of the most impressive ‘modern’ equivalents of C. P. E. Bach’s approaches was the volatile and chromatically laden fantasia introduction

²⁹ Jeff Baskerville, ‘Jan Ladislav Dussek: Composer of the Week’, BBC Radio 3, five programmes, October 1997.

³⁰ Leonard Gilbert Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form and Style*, Schirmer Books, New York/Collier Macmillan, London, 1980, p. 314.

to Dussek's Sonata, Op. 61, the *Élégie harmonique*, written to commemorate the death on the battlefield of Dussek's patron and close musical and personal associate, Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussia, on 10 October 1806. Into other works Dussek periodically injects short bouts or episodes of fantasia: in the first movement of the Sonata in A flat major, Op. 5, No. 3 (1788), the approach quite explicitly recalls C. P. E. Bach. The first movement of the Piano Concerto in G minor, Op. 49 (1801), contains a particularly extended and sensational example of fantasia that has drawn literary associations from one recent scholar.³¹ Multi-movement fantasias of the type of Op. 76, by contrast, were not saturated in material of an 'improvisatory' or otherwise wayward nature; a distinction is necessary between fantasia as a short-lived style or 'topic', that can inhabit works of any genre, and fantasia as a large-scale, sectional structure, as epitomised by the fantasias of Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778–1837),³² Beethoven's sonata-fantasia, Op. 27, No. 2, in E flat major also follows this principle. Dussek structures Op. 76 as a series of mainly discrete sections in a number of forms, including sonata-rondo³³ (No. III [15]); minuet and trio (No. IV [16]) and rondo (No. VIII [20]). Coherence is enhanced by the inclusion of a compressed reprise of the *Grave* in No. VII (*Adagio*), almost resembling a distant memory of the music that opens the work. Fantasia also manifests itself as a short-lived 'topic' in Op. 76, most explicitly in the *Prélude* (No. VI [18]): functioning as a modulatory link between Nos. V and VII, the *Prélude* employs the type of roving sequential figuration found in traditional, improvised (or 'improvisatory') preludes;³⁴ it is also found as an opening strategy in works like Mozart's (unfinished) Fantasia in D minor, K397, where it connotes 'warming-up' before the 'work proper' begins. (A more flamboyant equivalent might be the 'improvisatory' arpeggiation that begins Dussek's Fantasia and Fugue in F minor, Op. 55, dating from 1804.) Other direct evocations of the fantasia 'topic' in Op. 76 include the highly elaborate melodic rhetoric in the *Grave* [13] and the *Larghetto con molto espressione* [14]. The *Marche Solennelle* [17] contains a slightly incongruous juxtaposition of styles: an ultra-formal, hymn-like 'chorale' in E-flat major gives way in the first half of the (binary) structure to

³¹ Richard Fuller, 'A Musical "Wertheriade"? The Particular and Unique Character of Dussek's Piano Concerto in G minor, Op. 49', paper presented at *Compositori mitteleuropei e la nascita di un virtuosismo pianistico francese*, Istituto Storico Austriaco and Villa Medici, Rome, 11–13 October 2012.

³² Examples include the *Fantasia* in E flat major, Op. 18; the *Fantasia* in C major, 'Recollections of Paganini', WoO 8; the *Fantasia* in G minor on themes of Neukomm and Hummel, Op. 123, and the *Fantasia* in C minor on themes by Haydn and Mozart.

³³ A classic 'sonata-rondo' consists of a sonata-like exposition (a first theme or thematic group in the tonic; transition; second theme or thematic group in the secondary key) followed by a refrain of the opening. A 'developmental' episode follows, leading to a recapitulation of part or all of the 'exposition'. Dussek's *Allegro ma piano e moderato* [15] adheres to this model, except that the 'recapitulatory' part includes only the second theme and exposition codetta.

³⁴ Cf. Valerie Woodring Goertzen, 'By Way of Introduction: Preluding by Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Pianists', *The Journal of Musicology*, Vol. xiv, No. 3 (1996), pp. 299–337.

a frivolous interspersing redolent of comic opera.

Like the fantasias of Hummel and other composers, Dussek's Op. 76 circumscribes its 'fantasia-like' digressions within a logical framework. Apart from the recollection of the *Grave* already noted, Dussek imbues each individual movement or section with tighter motivic logic than he reserves even for his later piano sonatas.³⁵ In the *Allegro* [15] the *codetta* theme is derived from the opening; both feature dotted rhythms. The reprise of the *Menuet* [16] synthesises the stentorian, opening octave unisons with quaver figuration drawn from the more docile *majore*; and the *majore*, which functions like a contrasting trio, is quoted directly in the coda of the minuet. The *Finale alla polacca* [20] displays an unusually high degree of motivic continuity for a rondo: the French *rondeau* and the Italian *rondo* of the eighteenth century had relied on a differentiation of material between the refrain and each individual couplet, but Dussek's first couplet derives its material directly from the refrain, as does the *minore* (couplet 2), where refrain material clearly permeates the bass-line (Ex. 4(a) and (b)). Although Dussek certainly had already composed rondos whose couplets process refrain motifs rather than introducing wholly new material (the rondo that ends the Sonata in D major, Op. 31, No. 2 (c. 1795) is a case in point), in the finale of Op. 76 the process is pursued more rigorously.

Ex. 4

(a)

Finale alla Polacca
Tempo allegro, ma moderato

(b)

113 Minore

Variant of rondo refrain

³⁵ The first movement of the Sonata in A flat major, Op. 70 (*Plus Ultra*) is punctuated with harmonic digressions that give an impression of diffuseness. Op. 77 in F minor displays rather more motivic continuity, with an inter-movement dimension: Cf., Erik Entwistle, 'Dussek's "Invocation" Sonata and the Mystique of the Last Work', in *Jan Ladislav Dussek, op. cit.*, pp. 347–73.

The *Douze Études mélodiques* and the Op. 76 *Fantaisie* belong to very different stages of Dussek's career; and whereas the *Douze Études* was connected to the amateur market through its didactic orientation and the (partial) simplification of style that entailed, the *Fantaisie* is indubitably 'professional' piano music, of the kind Dussek would have performed himself. The 'progressive' structure of Op. 16 nonetheless allows considerable scope for compositional enterprise; and Op. 76, with its carefully balanced and logically constructed array of eighteenth-century forms, provides indisputable evidence that the 'proto-Romantic' qualities of Dussek's style were firmly stationed on 'Classical' foundations. Eric Blom tempered his own observation about the Sonatas Op. 35 foreshadowing 'Romanticism' as follows:

not the German romanticism of fantastic fairy lore, still less the idealized licence of the French Romantics, nor the ironic self-analysis and self-torture of Byron, Heine and Lermontov, and least of all the grisly horrors of the *Symphonie fantastique* or the wolf's glen in *Freischütz*. [...] He will not go out, like Weber, into a stormy night when the oak creaks, the owl hoots and ragged clouds flit across a pale moon, but he does [...] care for the sunny landscapes among which Weber's muse loves to roam [...].³⁶

An independent scholar, Rohan H. Stewart-MacDonald studied at St Catharine's College, Cambridge, between 1993 and 2001. Since completing his PhD he has specialised in British music of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, publishing the book New Perspectives on the Keyboard Sonatas of Muzio Clementi in 2006 (Quaderni Clementiani, Vol. ii, Ut Orpheus Edizioni, Bologna). In 2012, with Roberto Illiano, he co-edited and contributed to the multi-author, multi-lingual Jan Ladislav Dussek: A Bohemian Composer 'en voyage' through Europe (Quaderni Clementiani, Vol. iv, Ut Orpheus Edizioni, Bologna). He reviews regularly for journals at home and abroad and is an honorary member of the Centro Studi Opera Omnia Luigi Boccherini in Lucca. He also performs regularly as a solo pianist, with programmes that combine Classical repertory with his own arrangements of mid-twentieth-century American popular music.

³⁶ Blom, Eric. *Op. cit.* (see note 18).

Vincenzo Paolini was born in Loreto (in the Province of Ancona, on the east coast of Italy) in 1979 and studied with Giuseppe Di Chiara at the Conservatorio G. Rossini in Pesaro, graduating in 2001 with honours, maximum results and a mention of honour. He completed the exams for a classical education (Latin and Greek) at the Liceo Classico Cappuccini in Ancona and then in 2007 took a degree in music (with first-class honours) at the Conservatorio G. B. Pergolesi in Fermo with Enrico Belli with maximum result.

He went on to achieve a Masters in piano and Romantic piano at the Academia Incontri con Maestro in Imola, under the tutelage of Stefano Fiuzzi, and has perfected his skills in master-classes with Pierre-Laurent Aimard, Lazar Berman, Cristina Ortiz and Piero Rattalino.

In 2006, as a member of the Belli Piano Duo, he recorded the CD *Mythical Dances* with music of Stravinsky and George Crumb, released by Wergo (WER 6807 2).

In addition to his appearances in Italy, he has played in France, Germany and Lithuania, both as recitalist and soloist with orchestra.



Jan Ladislav Dussek (1760–1812): A Bohemian Composer 'en voyage' through Europe, edited by Roberto Illiano and Rohan H. Stewart-MacDonald

This first multi-author, multi-lingual study of Dussek aims to stimulate renewed debate about an unjustly neglected figure. Dussek's multifaceted, geographically diverse career is explored in order to shed new light on the interactions between the early nineteenth-century music business and those contemporary political events with which Dussek himself was closely associated, to an almost unique degree. The book's fifteen chapters include new biographical information on Dussek himself, appraisals of several branches of his compositional output, and explorations of reception, iconography and performance practice.

More information at http://www.utorpheus.com/product_info.php?products_id=2661



Recorded on 8–10 August 2013 in the Teatro La Fenice, Amandola, Ascoli Piceno, Italy,
during the Perpianosolo Festival.

Sound-engineer and editing: Andrea Lambertucci

Page-turner: Andrea Paolini

Piano: Steinway & Sons Model D

Tuner: Michele Mainoldi Fabbrini

Co-production with Perpianosolo

Booklet texts: Rohan H. Stewart-MacDonald

Design and layout: Paul Brooks, paulmbrooks@virginmedia.com

Executive producer: Martin Anderson

TOCC 0275

© 2014, Toccata Classics, London

© 2014, Toccata Classics, London

Come and explore unknown music with us by joining the Toccata Discovery Club. Membership brings you two free CDs, big discounts on all Toccata Classics recordings and Toccata Press books, early ordering on all Toccata releases and a host of other benefits, for a modest annual fee of £20. You start saving as soon as you join. You can sign up online at the Toccata Classics website at www.toccataclassics.com.

Toccata Classics CDs are also available in the shops and can be ordered from our distributors around the world, a list of whom can be found at www.toccataclassics.com. If we have no representation in your country, please contact: Toccata Classics, 16 Dalkeith Court, Vincent Street, London SW1P 4HH, UK
Tel: +44/0 207 821 5020 E-mail: info@toccataclassics.com

The compositions of the Czech-born Jan Ladislav Dussek (1760–1812) show the Classical style gradually taking on the expressive characteristics of Romanticism, foreshadowing composers like Beethoven, Chopin, Schubert and Schumann. The *Douze Études mélodiques* (also published as *Leçons progressives*) offer a sort of musical United Nations of the day, its Polish, Russian, Scottish, Spanish, Turkish and other national elements intended to appeal to the contemporary fashion for the exotic. His F major *Fantaisie* is in effect an eight-movement suite, presenting an array of musical forms and capturing the improvisatory spirit and harmonic exploration of the fantasia.



TOCC 0275

JAN LADISLAV DUSSEK Piano Music

<i>Douze Études mélodiques, Op. 16</i> (c. 1794)*		44:36	<i>Fantaisie in F major, Op. 76</i> (1811)	28:36	
<i>(Leçons progressives, Op. 32)</i>					
1 I	<i>Allegro non troppo</i>	3:21	13 I	<i>Grave</i>	3:58
2 II	<i>Andante sostenuto</i>	2:20	14 II	<i>Larghetto con molto espressione</i>	1:52
3 III	<i>Rondeau à la turque: Molto allegro</i>	2:10	15 III	<i>Allegro ma piano e moderato</i>	6:07
4 IV	<i>Molto allegro</i>	3:05	16 IV	<i>Menuet du Carême: Andante rustico</i>	3:58
5 V	<i>Air russe varié: Andantino moderato assai</i>	2:36	17 V	<i>Marche Solennelle: Larghetto maestoso ma con moto</i>	3:58
6 VI	<i>Polonaise: Allegretto moderato</i>	3:47	18 VI	<i>Prélude</i>	1:23
7 VII	<i>Allegro vivace</i>	6:18	19 VII	<i>Adagio</i>	1:46
8 VIII	<i>Air anglais varié: Andante moderato</i>	4:20	20 VIII	<i>Finale alla polacca: Tempo allegro ma moderato</i>	6:22
9 IX	<i>Rondeau sur un air écossais: Allegro</i>	2:54			
10 X	<i>Con spirito</i>	5:26			
11 XI	<i>Chansonette</i>	3:54			
12 XII	<i>Rondeau sur la retraite espagnol: Allegro moderato</i>	4:12			
				TT 73:49	

Vincenzo Paolini, piano

*FIRST RECORDING

DDD

TOCCATA CLASSICS
16 Dalkeith Court,
Vincent Street,
London SW1P 4HH, UK

Tel: +44/0 207 821 5020
E-mail: info@toccataclassics.com

© Toccata Classics, London, 2014
© Toccata Classics, London, 2014

