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**Preludes in All Twenty-four Major and Minor Keys,
op. 67 by Johann Nepomuk Hummel:
An Investigation and Analysis**

by

Ja Young Jung

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Music
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Musical Arts, The City University of New York

2002

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Abstract

Preludes in All Twenty-four Major and Minor Keys, op. 67 by Johann Nepomuk Hummel: An Investigation and Analysis

by

Ja Young Jung

Advisor: Professor John Graziano

Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778-1837), a talented and skilled improviser, and renowned pedagogue, wrote a prelude collection for pianoforte in 1814. This dissertation presents an investigation and analysis of the little-known *Vorspiele vor Anfang eines Stückes aus allen 24 Dur und Moll Tonarten zum nützlichem Gebrauch für Schüler* (*Preludes Before the Beginning of a Piece in All Twenty-four Major and Minor Keys for the Practical Use of Students*).

The twenty-four preludes are didactic models for the brief improvised preludes, played before the beginning of a piece to be performed, of the early nineteenth-century concert stage. Used not only as didactic models, Hummel's preludes also exhibit some overall consistency: each prelude presents a similar harmonic structure and exhibits a distinctive mood.

Hummel's collection shows an interesting pattern of keys, which circumnavigate the circle of fifths, pairing major keys with their relative minors: this is the same tonal plan adopted by Chopin in his op. 28. The comparison of prelude collections by Hummel's forerunners, such as Tomaso Giordani and Muzio Clementi, and younger contemporaries, such as Johann B. Cramer, Maria Szymanowska, Henri Herz, Frédéric Kalkbrenner, Ignaz Moscheles, Joseph C. Cassler and Chopin, demonstrates that Hummel was the first composer after J. S. Bach to use all twenty-four keys to complete a set of twenty-four preludes.

The later rise of independent preludes coincided with the disappearance of the preluding tradition, and Hummel's preludes were possibly the turning point for this change.

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General Introduction

Statement of Purpose

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries numerous prelude collections for the harpsichord and piano were written for the purpose of teaching students. The preludes in these collections demonstrated how to prelude before the beginning of a piece to be performed. In addition, they were intended to help students develop their piano technique.

Among the numerous collections, Chopin's *Preludes*, op. 28, has a permanent place in the piano repertoire, owing largely to its uniqueness and independent character. Though it is believed that Chopin was not significantly dependent on his predecessors,¹ many features of his preludes resemble those of his forerunners such as J. S. Bach and J. N. Hummel. The real similarity between Hummel's and Chopin's works is in the pattern of keys, which circumnavigate the

¹ J. J. Eigeldinger insists that Chopin was only in the slightest degree dependent on his predecessors. See Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, "Twenty-four preludes op. 28: genre, structure, significance," in *Chopin Studies*, ed. by Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 173.

circle of fifths, pairing major keys with their relative minors.

The principal purpose of this dissertation is to present an analysis of the *Vorspiele vor Anfang eines Stückes aus allen 24 Dur und Moll Tonarten zum nützlichem Gebrauch für Schüler (Preludes Before the Beginning of a Piece in All Twenty-four Major and Minor Keys for The Practical Use of Students)*, op. 67 (1814), by Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778-1837).

This investigation of Hummel's Preludes encompasses four main areas of inquiry, namely: (1) unified harmonic structure of each prelude; (2) didactic features; (3) issues of performance practice; and (4) aspects of compositional style that show similarity to the style of later composers, especially Chopin and Schumann.

Though these pieces are intended as preludes to other pieces, as the title suggests, they can be considered as a set with twenty-four parts (published under the single opus number) for their logical key succession, similar harmonic structures, and varieties of distinct moods. The similar harmonic structure, especially, gives us a sense of consistency and coherence. Nevertheless, the improvised and elaborated tonalities of each prelude are interesting to examine because Hummel's preludes provide didactic models

for the improvised preludes of the early nineteenth-century concert stage.

As a preface to this study, a short description of the origin and development of the genre of "prelude" will be given. Then I will examine preludes by some of Hummel's precursors, and contemporaries as an additional, but secondary, purpose of this investigation. The final section in this study of these preludes will demonstrate Hummel's harmonic language. Unlike his contemporaries from the early part of the nineteenth century, Hummel adopted J. S. Bach's richer harmonies, which incorporate sequences of secondary dominants, dense polyphony, and chromaticism. These also became essential materials for compositions in the later periods.

Methodology

Hummel does not mention directly the intended purpose of these Preludes in his method book,² although he provides

² J. N. Hummel, *Ausführliche theoretisch-practische Anweisung zum Piano-Forte-Spiel* (Vienna: Tobias Haslinger, 1828).

_____ *A Complete Theoretical and Practical Course of Instructions on the Art of Playing the Pianoforte* (London: T. Boosey & Co., 1828?).

_____ *Méthode Complète theorique et pratique pour le piano-forte* (Paris: A. Farrenc., 1838; rpt. Geneva: Minkoff, 1981).

two pages of a short description of general improvisation that gives approaches for constructing short forms, including preludes. On the other hand, Czerny's treatise, *A Systematic Introduction to Improvisation* (henceforth, *Systematic Introduction*),³ gives clues for analyzing various sorts of preludes, not only by Hummel's but also by his contemporaries. Thus, my research on Hummel's Preludes is based on Czerny's treatise, which gives not only historical background but also practical uses for a variety of preludes.

A comparison between Hummel's Preludes and later composers' pieces, such as Chopin's Preludes, op. 28, is essential to adduce evidence to Hummel's style as a precursor of Chopin. Compared to the few studies on Hummel and his contemporaries' prelude collections, there is a relative abundance of sources about Chopin's achievement in this genre. According to my research, Hummel's preludes seem to have influenced Chopin's preludes, and thus merit serious attention. A large portion of this dissertation

³ Carl Czerny, *Systematische Anleitung zum Fantasieren auf dem Pianoforte*, op. 200 (Vienna: A. Diabelli und Comp.; London: Boosey; Paris, M. Schlesinger, 1829). A modern edition of Czerny's work has been published as *A Systematic Introduction to Improvisation on the Pianoforte*, op. 200, trans. and ed. by Alice L. Mitchell (New York and London: Longman, 1983).

will be devoted to the analysis of the twenty-four Preludes, categorized by type.

State of Research

Hummel was a gifted virtuoso concert pianist as well as a renowned pedagogue.⁴ He was especially talented and skilled in improvisation, and his sensitive interpretations of works by other composers, as well as of his own compositions, made him enormously successful on the concert stage.⁵ Hummel composed sixty-nine works for piano, from small and elegant potpourris, rondos, variations, and capriccios to seven huge sonatas and five piano concerti. Despite the large outpouring of compositions, his published works were not valued as much as his improvisational piano skills and his brilliance on the concert stage. In fact, for a long time his compositions disappeared from the standard piano repertoire. Many of his shorter works remain

⁴On Hummel's activities as a virtuoso pianist, see Joel Sachs, *Kapellmeister Hummel in England and France* (Detroit: Information Coordinators, 1977).

⁵ "There are few musical imaginations richer and more abundant than Hummel's. Even while only writing for the piano, he makes one dream of an orchestra, voices, dramatic effects. This wholly poetic manner of feeling and making his art speak reveals itself above all in improvisation." Concert report from *Le Globe* (March 21, 1830), translated by Joel Sachs.

unknown today. As with Spohr, Hummel was once considered a master, but has long since been neglected.

Recently, however, Hummel's pieces have been reevaluated. His trumpet and piano concerti and piano sonatas are performed and recorded with some frequency.⁶ Symposia on Hummel have been organized in Weimar and Eisenstadt, and numerous CDs of his music have been issued.

Although Hummel's preludes are interesting enough to be examined for their intrinsic value, musical ideas, and materials, there are no articles, dissertations, or books that investigate Hummel's little-known preludes. Nevertheless, there are a few studies regarding nineteenth-century preluding, such as Jane Lohr's thesis, "Preluding on the Harpsichord and Pianoforte: circa 1770 to circa 1850,"⁷ and Valerie Woodring Goertzen's article "By Way of Introduction: Preluding by 18th and early 19th Century Pianists."⁸ Although this thesis and article do not focus on

⁶ Hummel's complete piano sonatas, performed by Constance Keene, a faculty member at the Manhattan School of Music, were released recently on three Newport Classic CDs. The recordings were reviewed in *the New York Times* on Sunday, July 15, 2001.

⁷ Jane Lohr, "Preluding on the Harpsichord and Pianoforte: circa 1770 to circa 1850." Ph. D. diss. (University of Iowa, 1994).

⁸ *The Journal of Musicology* 14/3, (1996), 299-337.

Hummel's preludes in detail, they mention a variety of preludes by important composers during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Organization of the study

Chapter 1 deals with defining the genre, styles and structures of single preludes or prelude collections. Throughout the history of the genre, preludes have changed and developed in purpose and length; a variety of styles and textures will be discussed.

Chapter 2 concerns itself with a comparison and investigation of collections of piano preludes, including those by Tomaso Giordani and Muzio Clementi. Four collections of preludes that preceded Hummel's will be discussed:

Tomaso Giordani, *Preludes for the Harpsichord or Piano forte in All the Keys Flat and Sharp* (London: Welker, 1777).

Muzio Clementi, *Musical Characteristics*, op. 19 (London: Longman, Clementi, 1789).

Muzio Clementi, *Introduction to the Art of Playing On the Pianoforte*, op. 42 (London: Clementi, Banger, Hyde, Collard and Davis, 1801, rev. 1814).

Muzio Clementi, *Twenty-five Preludes and Exercises in All Major and Minor Keys* (London: Clementi, Banger, Hyde, Collard and Davis, 1811. rev. 1821).

A brief mention of the influence of Bach's preludes is included in this chapter because Bach's musical influence on the nineteenth-century prelude collections is fundamental. The preludes by Tomaso Giordani include only fourteen keys, mostly parallel majors and minors. The three collections composed by Clementi also do not include all twenty-four keys; however, a discussion of these works is warranted because they demonstrate short preludes and independent longer preludes that are systematized in Czerny's treatise, *Systematic Introduction*.

My third chapter focuses on Hummel's preludes (1814). For the first time in prelude collections, Hummel uses the circle of major keys ascending by perfect fifths, with each major key followed by its relative minor, so that all twenty-four keys are included.⁹ This logical arrangement is similar to Beethoven's in op. 39, and has the exact tonal plan later adopted by Chopin. Included also is an investigation of Beethoven's op. 39, which substantiates my

⁹ See Appendix on pages 128-137.

assertion concerning Hummel's key arrangements in the twenty-four Preludes.

Hummel, as a pedagogue and concert pianist, supplied anecdotes of his lifelong experience, entitled *Ausführliche theoretische-practische Anweisung zum Piano-Forte-Spiel*¹⁰ (henceforth, *Anweisung*). The discussion of this method book is included in the third chapter. Though there is little concerning how to improvise preludes in this book, it is a valuable resource for understanding early nineteenth-century performing techniques and practices. The chapters and exercises in the method book will be shown to provide ideas of performance practice of general pieces as well as numerous preludes during the period.

My fourth chapter presents an analysis of the twenty-four preludes, each categorized by type. Each prelude has a relationship to the others and their tonal structures are quite similar. While the style of the preludes as a whole is varied, they display harmonic consistency. Two charts of harmonic analysis will be provided in each major and minor key.

Chapter 5 deals with some of the prelude collections of Hummel's contemporaries (ca. 1818 to ca. 1839) from the

¹⁰ See n.2 on page 3.

late Classical and Romantic eras. The diverse nature of the Romantic prelude is apparent in the variety of forms found in the prelude collections. Some aspects of these preludes tell us that Hummel's music inspired many of his contemporaries and followers. With the exception of Chopin's work, however, the other collections are merely free assortments of various pieces entitled "prelude." The list that follows includes two collections (Kessler's and Chopin's) which have preludes in all the keys.

Johann Baptist Cramer, *Twenty-six Preludes or Short Introductions in the Principal Major and Minor Keys for the Pianoforte* (London: Chappel [sic] and Co. and Clementi and Co., 1818).

Maria Agata Szymanowska, *Vingt Exercises et Preludes* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1820).

Henri Herz, *Exercises and Preludes*, op. 21 (Bonn: N. Simrock, 1822).

Frederic Kalkbrenner, *Vingt-quatre Preludes pour le Piano-forte*, op. 88 (London: Clementi and Co., 1827).

Ignaz Moscheles, *Collection of Fifty Preludes*, op. 73 (London: S. Chappel and J. B. Cramer, 1827, rev. 1855).

Joseph C. Kessler, *Preludes*, op. 31 (Leipzig: Kistner, 1839).

Frederic Chopin, *Preludes*, op. 28 (Paris: Catelin; Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1839).

Hummel's strong influence on nineteenth-century composers can be seen in his prelude collection and other compositions as well, as the concluding chapter of the dissertation will demonstrate. In addition, I will address the lost tradition of preluding. Although pianists have not kept the preluding tradition alive, these pieces stand on their own as concert works or for didactic purposes.

I believe that Hummel's op. 67 is a cycle of miniatures and reflects a concisely expressed technique of improvisation. Further, Hummel combined the techniques of preluding with those of character pieces. This association continued in collections by Chopin, Heller, Busoni, Scriabin, Debussy, Shostakovich, Rachmaninov and others.¹¹

¹¹ Discussions of these collections will follow in Chapter 1.

Chapter 1

The Prelude: Brief History and Styles

Instrumental preluding has had a long tradition through many centuries of Western music. In its earliest form, the fundamental purpose was to sample the sound of the piano and the hall, to check the tuning of an unfamiliar instrument, and to define the tonality of the following piece.¹ In this process, improvisational skill was also required.² Most of the preludes were unrelated to the composition that followed except in tonality. Prominent examples of European music that functioned in this way are: German organ tablature and lute music of the fifteenth century, the unmeasured lute and harpsichord preludes³ of

¹ David Ledbetter and Howard Fergusson, "Prelude," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed. Stanley Sadie, executive editor John Tyrrell (London: Macmillan Pub., 2001), 20:291.

² Bruno Nettl, "Thoughts on Improvisation: A Comparative Approach," *The Musical Quarterly* 60 (1974), 1-19, examines traditional improvisations and compositions as they relate to preluding situations.

³ The *Prélude non mesuré* is discussed in Davitt Moroney, "The Performance of Unmeasured Harpsichord Preludes," In *Early Music* 4 (1976), 143-152. The notations of extraordinary preludes are exemplified by French lutenists and the harpsichordist Louis Couperin, Jean D'Angelbert, and their contemporaries. The prelude presents improvisatory elements; undifferentiated notes are grouped

seventeenth-century France, and preludes that precede fugues of the German Baroque era.⁴

The prelude as an introductory piece to prepare a more substantial work appears in later prelude collections. Groups of preludes were systematically organized by mode, or key. The result was cycles of preluding pieces. Among works in this long tradition,⁵ Bach's *The Well-Tempered Clavier* is considered the most influential on later prelude collections. (Further discussion will appear in chapter 2.) The two volumes of *The Well-Tempered Clavier* include forty-eight Preludes and Fugues in all major and minor keys.

into irregular and unbarred patterns whose rhythmic interpretation is left to the performer. For the most comprehensive source of musical information regarding the *The Prélude non mesuré*, see Colin Tilney, *The Art of the Unmeasured Prelude for Harpsichord*, 3 vols. (London: Schott, 1992).

⁴ Valerie Woodring Goertzen, "By Way of Introduction: Preluding by 18th and Early 19th Century Pianists," *The Journal of Musicology* 14/3 (1996), 302.

⁵ Arthur J. Ness mentions other cycles of preludial pieces in all current keys. The composers are Ilebough (*preludes*, 1448), Muddara (*tientos*, 1546), Gabrieli (*intonazioni*, 1593), Frescobaldi (*toccatas*, 1615), Kindermann (*preludes*, 1645), Fischer (*preludes and fugues*, 1702), Muffat (*toccatas*, 1726), Hummel (24 *Präludien*, 1814), Heller (24 *Präludien*, 1853), Busoni (24 *preludi*, 1879-80). From "Prelude," *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music*, ed. by Don Michael Randel (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1986), 653.

In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, the term "prelude" also refers to a variety of introductory movements. Used not only as an improvised introduction to a song or to a piano, harpsichord, lute, or other instrumental piece, the prelude could also be a non-improvised composition.⁶ We can assume that the prelude's improvisatory tradition of checking intonation and warming-up gave way to preluding that was carefully notated and organized into performable pieces.

In a more general sense, a prelude might be an improvised piece having no prefatory function. Furthermore, independent, composed pieces embodying an improvisatory style were also labeled prelude. Examples include movements introducing suites, fugues, or fantasies.⁷ However, improvisatory textures and passages still can be seen in these cases.

Specific examples of preludes for eighteenth-century keyboard instruments include introductions to suites of

⁶ August Reissmann, "Präludiren," "Präludium," *Musikalisches Conversations-Lexicon*, 11 vols. (Berlin: Robert Oppenheim, 1877), 8:155-57.

⁷ Howard Fergusson, "Prelude," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), 15:211.

dance movements.⁸ Suites frequently begin with a "prelude" For example, all of Bach's six *English Suites* (1726) start with a "Prelude."⁹ Although they are really concerto-style movements, some of the preludes show improvisational textures such as the First and Sixth suites. Such preludes can also be found in Handel's *Suites de Pieces Pour le Clavecin* (1720).¹⁰ The improvisatory style is more apparent here than in the Bach: the traditional feature of arpeggiated passages begins Handel's suites.

More improvisational factors can be seen in Bach's *Toccatas* than in the preludes of his *Six English Suites*. Most of Bach's *toccatas* start with prelude-like passages and after that also have an internal section in quasi-improvisatory style.

The traditional practice of prefacing pieces with a short improvised prelude to prepare the listener for the ensuing music was continued on the private salon stages

⁸ Ibid., 212.

⁹ Bach's *French Suites* (1724) omit the prelude and start with an *allemande*.

¹⁰ These are sometimes called *Eight Great Suites*, and numbered 1-8.

during the second half of the eighteenth century.¹¹ Mozart, for example, arranged preludes and fugues for string trios (K. 404a), originally written for clavichord by J. S. and W. F. Bach. Dussek's *Three Sonatas and Three Preludes*, op. 31 (1795), contains examples of longer preludes composed for individual sonatas.¹² Examples of longer preludes are also found in Clementi's *Introduction to the Art of Playing on the Pianoforte*, and *Musical Characteristics*, op. 19 (1789). (Further discussion will appear in Chapter 2.) A. F. C. Kollmann provided preludes to several sonatas in the 1790s, as well as one to Clementi's *Toccata*.¹³ These examples tell us of the association of preludes with private performance situations, since sonatas were more

¹¹ During the contest between Mozart and Clementi, held at the court of Emperor Joseph II in 1781, each contestant improvised a prelude before playing the larger piece he was to play -- Clementi his Sonata in B-flat, op. 24, no. 2, and Mozart a set of variations. See the letter which Mozart wrote to his father, dated Vienna, 16 January 1782, in *Mozart: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen*, ed. by W. A. Bauer and O. E. Deutsch (Kassel: Bärenreiter-Verlag, 1962-75), III, 193.

¹² Jan Ladislav Dussek, *Three Sonatas with Scotch and German Airs and Three Preludes for the Pianoforte, With or Without Additional Keys Being the Continuation of Op. 25. With Accompaniments for a Violin or Flute & Bass ad Libitum*, op. 31 (London: Corri, Dussek and Co., 1795).

¹³ August Friedrich Christopher Kollman, *An Introduction to the Art of Preluding and Extemporizing, in Six Lessons for the Harpsichord or Harp*, op. 3 (London: R. Wornum, 1792?).

likely to be performed privately rather than publicly in eighteenth-century Europe.¹⁴

Keyboard preludes were also improvised before songs. C. P. E. Bach in his *Versuch* (1762) refers to preludes by accompanists; his remarks would appear to apply to instrumental works as well as to songs.¹⁵ The practice of improvising preludes to songs and sonatas, in order to give the singer the pitch and capture the listener's attention, has not survived in the present day, although in the past it was usual in formal performances. Because of the improvisatory nature of the preluding tradition (and thus a lack of properly written scores), as well as the growth in written-out "preludes" that opened songs, the practice eventually disappeared.

The verb "to prelude" was also used with the broader meaning to improvise. Czerny discussed improvisation in his *Systematic Introduction*: "The Performer should become

¹⁴ William S. Newmann, *The Sonata in the Classic Era*, 3rd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1983), 52-57.

¹⁵ C. P. E. Bach, *Versuch der wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen*, English trans. *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, trans. and ed. by W. J. Mitchell (London: Cassell, 1951), part II, 430-45.

accustomed to improvising a prelude each time and before each piece that he studies or plays."¹⁶

My understanding of piano prelude collections from the late eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century is based on Czerny's *Systematic Introduction*. It is believed that this work was inspired by the public's disappointment with the short description of improvisation in Hummel's *Anweisung*,¹⁷ although Hummel was a great master of improvisation. Czerny provided 200 examples of ways to construct preludes. Moreover, the introductory function of the genre and improvisatory matters are explained as well.¹⁸

He proposed three categories of notated improvisations: short preludes; longer and elaborated preludes or cadenzas; and very free, fantasy-like improvisation.

¹⁶ Czerny, *Systematic Introduction*, op. 200, ed. by Mitchell (Vienna: A. Diabelli; Paris: M. Schlesinger, 1829), 116.

¹⁷ Reviews in *The Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review* 10 (1828), 368 and *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* 31 (March, 1829), 177 and (Sep, 1829), 573-82 and 584-84. In his *Anweisung*, 468, Hummel claimed that "a person could neither give nor profit from instructions in this endeavor." A reprint of the French edition contains only a one-page discussion of improvisation.

¹⁸ Czerny's description of improvisatory preludes shall be discussed in this chapter because it corresponds to the nature of Hummel's Preludes.

According to Czerny, a short prelude is used by a performer to try out the instrument, warm up the fingers, or arouse the attention of the listener. It can be quite brief, consisting of a few chords or transitional materials. Or it can be a little bit longer, like an introduction belonging to the following piece. The thematic material also can be borrowed from the actual piece being performed. Czerny cited his op. 61¹⁹ as a reference in his *Systematic Introduction*. For further examples, see Moscheles, *Fifty Preludes*, op. 73 (Leipzig: Probst, 1827), and Czerny, *Forty-eight Preludes in all keys*, op. 161 (Leipzig: Probst, 1827).

Improvisatory preludes in the second category are longer and more elaborate: regular coherence in passage-work alternates with lyrical sections, and the introduction ends with a cadence on the dominant-seventh chord, leading directly into the theme of the following work. The second type of notated improvisation includes cadenzas, single chords marked with fermatas, and more extended elaborations. These preludes can begin in any key and their modulations can be quite free.

¹⁹ *Präeludium, Cadenza und Kleine Fantasien* op. 61 (Vienna: Diabelli & Co., 1824), especially in nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10 and 14.

The third type of notated improvisation includes all kinds of free types of improvisation such as theme and variations, fugues, potpourris, or full-fledged unrestrained forms. This third type of improvisation is the most extended in length and free in style.

The notated prelude described in Czerny's book includes scales, arpeggiation, and broken chords. It is unmeasured frequently, and chiefly tonic and dominant chords pervade in the piece. The textures are normally in the manner of style *brillante*. Many preludes can also function as pedagogical exercises. Prelude collections for student pianists in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were numerous and varied.

According to Czerny's description, Hummel's set of twenty-four preludes belongs to the first category, since the length, cadences, and harmonic progressions in Czerny's examples match those in Hummel's preludes. Most prelude collections discussed in this study fit within the first and second categories, or in some cases the two types are mixed. There is, however, one difference; the examples cited by way of illustration in Czerny's book are not simply works for performance. They are models that instruct how to create introductions to a piece about to be

performed. But in Hummel's collection, the preludes can be used as introductions in an actual performance, as his title makes clear.

Among the numerous nineteenth-century preludes, Frederic Chopin's Preludes, op. 28, are representative of character pieces and are best considered as independent preludes.²⁰ It has become a tradition today to play Chopin's preludes in groups or all immediately one after the other.

After Chopin, composers such as Alkan (op. 31, 1847), Heller (op. 81, 1853), Busoni (op. 37, 1879-80), and Cui (op. 64, 1903) continued the tradition of writing twenty-four independent preludes in the major and minor keys.²¹ Since the publication of Chopin's character piece set, prelude collections have even projected programmatic moods, as can be seen in the two books of preludes by Debussy (1910, 1913), in which each piece is given a descriptive title. In addition, the prelude, as an important kind of character piece, was subsequently exploited by such composers as Scriabin (op. 11, 1888-96; op. 74, 1914), Rachmaninov (op. 23, 1901-03; op. 32, 1910), Shostakovich

²⁰ The independent prelude has no sequel pieces. See Howard Ferguson's description on page 23 and the section below on *Chopin's Preludes*, pages 118-122.

²¹ Howard Ferguson, "Prelude," 211.

(*Twenty-four Preludes*, op. 34, 1932-3), Messiaen (*Eight Preludes*, 1929), and Ginastera (*Twelve Preludes*, op. 12, 1944). These preludes have no prefatory function, and are simply collections of short pieces exploring particular moods, musical figures or studies for technical problems.

Chapter 2

Preludes for Harpsichord or Pianoforte in the Baroque and Classical Eras (ca. 1722 to ca. 1811)

Tomaso Giordani and Muzio Clementi each provided a few conventional collections of preludes for piano or harpsichord.¹ Chronologically, these collections were published before Hummel's Preludes of 1814. Although the preludes in these publications function differently from each other and from Hummel's, all of the pieces can be considered as traditional preludes, in that they were intended to be played before other works.

Howard Ferguson, in his *New Grove Dictionary* article "Prelude," argues for three kinds of preludes:

The unattached prelude, which has no prescribed sequel but may precede any piece or group of pieces in the same mode or key; the attached prelude, which has one specific sequel; and the independent prelude, which has no sequel.²

¹ J. S. Bach's collection, *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, was published before Hummel's, but because it encompasses all twenty-four keys it is not usually compared to these two collections.

² Howard Ferguson, "Prelude," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 20 vols., ed. by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), 15:210.

Most of the preludes discussed in this chapter, which were written prior to Hummel's work, belong to the attached or unattached prelude category. For instance, Giordani's preludes are unattached, have no prescribed sequel pieces. Clementi's three collections include the attached and unattached types of preludes. As discussed in chapter 1, these prelude collections are best understood as examples of the prelude styles described in Czerny's *Systematic Introduction*.

The "prelude" as a genre in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is seen in all three of Czerny's notated-preludes categories.³ As the title suggests, Hummel's preludes belong in the group designated "unattached preludes." However, in subsequent chapters I will argue that these pieces can also be considered as independent preludes.

In Giordani's and Clementi's sets, there is no consistency in the presentation of key arrangements. Except for Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, no collections written before Hummel's provide pieces for all twenty-four keys, nor are any organized according to a tonal plan. Some

³ See page 18-20 on short preludes; extended, elaborated preludes; and very free, fantasy-like preludes.

composers wrote independent preludes in one key to introduce specific pieces. However, excluding Bach, the concept of tonal organization within a cyclic prelude set was not yet evident in any composer.

J. S. Bach's forty-eight preludes⁴ (1722, 1742) are attached, with fugues as specific sequel pieces. Unconventionally, he presents all twenty-four keys available in the chromatic scale. The preludes are highly unified and organized,⁵ although some of them maintain the essential character of the genre, namely: freely treated arpeggiated passages that suggest an improvisational technique. Common preluding materials include scale patterns, arpeggios, and broken chords, even if most of the preludes are in strict meter.

According to Keller's observation, some of Bach's preludes have clearly defined sections, such as the Prelude in E-flat major from book 1, as described in Czerny's second grouping. In several preludes the thematic material at the beginning reappears in the original key toward the

⁴ J. S. Bach, "Das Woltemperierte Klavier," Teil I und II, *J. S. Bach Werke*, ed. by Bach-Gesellschaft, Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1851-1899.

⁵ Hermann Keller, *The Well-Tempered Clavier by Johann Sebastian Bach*, trans. by Leigh Gerdine (New York: W. W. Norton & Company. Inc., 1965; 1975), 36.

end, thus producing the effect of a return of opening thematic material (e.g. Preludes in C# minor, D major and A major from book 1, also Preludes in F minor, F# minor, F major and B-flat major from book 2). The rounded form effect appears in several of Clementi's preludes, too. Bach also frequently presents thematic material in imitation (e.g. Preludes in F# minor, G# minor from book 2).⁶ The diversity of form and style in Bach's preludes influenced the development of the prelude collection as a genre. This is true not only of Hummel's preludes, but also of many earlier and later collections, including Chopin's.

Preludes for the Harpsichord and Pianoforte in All the Keys Flat and Sharp by Tomaso Giordani

Among the eighteenth-century composers writing preludes after Bach was Tomaso Giordani (c.1730-1806), who illustrates several aspects of the *galant* style. Giordani was an opera composer principally active in London and Dublin between 1770 and 1785.⁷ He was the son of the Italian

⁶ Ibid., 39-40.

⁷ Egon Wellesz and Frederic Sternfeld, eds., "The Age of Enlightenment, 1745-1790," *New Oxford History of Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 7:486.

singer and librettist Giuseppe Giordani, the composer of the popular song *Caro mio ben*.⁸ The Preludes were produced during his years in London (1768-1783), when he probably owed his appointment at the King's Theatre to Tenducci's association with J. C. Bach, who was close to Giordani. Giordani's overtures, harpsichord and piano concertos, sonatas, and some of his chamber works, though not necessarily masterpieces, are good compositions. Their melodies are inventive, and they show a clear form and fine technique.⁹

In Giordani's early collection of preludes for piano (1777), keys considered to be too remote (i.e., far away from C major) were not included, since they were seldom used. Giordani's preludes are arranged in the order of parallel major and minor keys: C major and minor, D major and minor, E major and minor, F major and minor, G major and minor, A major and minor as well as B-flat and E-flat major each without its parallel minor. Each one, from ten to fifteen measures in length, shows technical virtuosity and a fine musical texture. On the title page Giordani

⁸ Christopher Hogwood and Charles Cudworth, "Tomaso Giordani," *The New Grove Dictionary*, 20 vols., ed. by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), 7:394.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 394.

indicates their primary purpose, which proves that these preludes are of the unattached type and didactic works:

This is intended as an assistance to young performers, as the beginning [of] any Song or Lesson, without using the key[,] has a very awkward appearance and often disconcerts the Performer.¹⁰

The pieces feature running scales, arpeggios and broken chords. Most preludes comprise approximately ten measures in allegro 4/4 time. Prelude no.1 shows simplicity with systematic repetition of arpeggios (example 2.1). Most of the preludes are short, simple, and straightforward, while some are reminiscent of an improvised toccata of the Baroque period that is built from scales and chords (example 2.2). A sense of delicacy and sweetness of a *galant* style can be found in the E-flat major prelude (example 2.3).

More evidence of the Baroque style is found in his preludes. For instance, fantasia figuration is notable in the A major prelude (example 2.4). The sequence of fifth progressions in measures 5 and 6 of Prelude in E minor is also typical of this type of prelude (example 2.2).

¹⁰ See Tomaso Giordani, *Preludes for the Harpsichord or Pianoforte in All the Keys Flat and Sharp* (London: Welker, 1777).

Further, Preludes no. 8 in F minor (Example 2.5) and no. 11 in A major are both contrapuntal (Example 2.4).

Giordani's preludes reflect simple rhythmic gestures; sometimes they are elegant and gracious. Though the composer lived in the pre-Classical period of the mid-eighteenth century, the overall impression of his preludes is that they are in a Baroque instrumental style.

The image displays a musical score for a piece in C major. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system features a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. A first ending bracket is placed above the first system. The second system continues the piece with the same grand staff and key signature. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings.

Example 2.1 Tomaso Giordani, Prelude in C major

in E 3/4
N° 6

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system features a treble clef staff with a treble clef and a bass clef staff with a bass clef. The second system also features a treble clef staff with a treble clef and a bass clef staff with a bass clef. The music is in 3/4 time and E minor. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and ornaments.

Example 2.2 Tomaso Giordani, Prelude in E minor

in Eb
Sostenuto
N^o 14

Example 2.3 Tomaso Giordani, Prelude in E-flat major

The image displays a musical score for a piano piece. It is organized into two systems, each consisting of a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The first system begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#), with the text "in A. 8^{da}" written above the staff. Below the first system, the text "N^o II" is printed. The second system continues the musical notation. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and bar lines, typical of a piano prelude.

Example 2.4 Tomaso Giordani, Prelude in A major

in F 3rd

v^o 8

The musical score is presented in two systems. Each system contains two staves for each voice part. The first system begins with a key signature of three flats (F, C, G) and a time signature of 4/4. The notation is dense, featuring many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, often beamed together. Dynamic markings like 'f' (forte) and 'p' (piano) are used throughout. The second system continues the piece with similar rhythmic complexity and dynamic contrast.

Example 2.5 Tomaso Giordani, Prelude in F minor

Musical Characteristics and Cadenza, op. 19 by Muzio Clementi

Muzio Clementi (1752-1832), who lived and worked mostly in London, had a varied career. He toured widely in Europe and Russia as a pianist and composer. He was also active as an instrument builder and publisher: establishing a piano factory and music publishing house in England (now Collard and Collard). Clementi composed symphonies, overtures, over 100 piano sonatas, numerous other piano pieces, and pedagogical piano works, including *Gradus ad Parnassum* (1817).¹¹

Clementi wrote this interesting collection of "Preludes and Cadenzas" in the styles of six composers, Haydn, Kozeluch, Mozart, Sterkel, Vanhal, and himself (1789). Each composer's style is represented by two preludes and one cadenza.

The twelve preludes are not presented in a particular system of key arrangements. Although the purpose and function of this collection are not clear, there is a possibility that these preludes were conceived as "attached

¹¹ On Clementi's multi-faceted career see, Leon Plantinga, *Clementi: His Life and Music* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1985).

preludes." For example, Eva Badura-Skoda has pointed out that there is motivic resemblance between the second prelude *alla Haydn* in C and the C major sonata of 1780 by Haydn (Hoboken XVI, 35).¹² Though Clementi does not define the purpose of these preludes in the title page, it is possible that these preludes were intended as models for amateurs wishing to improvise their own preludes and cadenzas. In this case, these preludes are probably meant as written-down improvisations.

The pieces are fragmentary. They consist of short passages with constant shifts in texture, tonality, tempo, and dynamics. Such aspects also tell us much about the nature of improvisation in late eighteenth-century keyboard music.

In this collection, *Preludio ii alla Sterkel* (example 2.6) falls into Czerny's "second category preludes," which consist of more than two sections and show musical diversity. The free and stylish form could be compared with the free fantasia from the Baroque period, though generally

¹² Eva Badura-Skoda, *Clementi's Musical Characteristics* op. 19, ed. by H. C. Robbins-Landon & Roger E. Chapman, *Studies in 18th Century Music* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970), 60.

a free fantasia is unmeasured and moves through more keys, with varied harmonic progressions that can be expressed in all manner of figuration and motive. This prelude by Clementi explores modulations, different rhythms, and scales.

Using a variety of preludial textures and materials, the prelude consists of five sections (see chart 2.1). (1) The introductory part begins with a "Vivace" in 4/4 on V of C major. (2) The A section in 3/4 time begins at measure 8. (3) The B section, an "Allegretto con molta grazia," begins at measure 19. (4) At measure 27 the A section seems to return in the "presto" section with the intervals in the left hand and rhythmic figures being similar to those in the earlier A section. (5) The concluding section starts at "Vivace ma dolce" and shows the arpeggiated typical ending of preludes. Improvisatory qualities appeal in the middle sections where bar lines are ignored and the tempo is varied.

Sections	Measures
(1) Introductory section	1-7
(2) A	8-18
(3) B	19-26
(4) A'	27-33
(5) Concluding section	34-37

Chart 2.1 Sections of Clementi, *Preludio ii alla Sterkel*

PRELUDIO II ALLA STERKEL

a cura di PIETRO SPADA

MUZIO CLEMENTI
(1752-1832)

(1) *Vivace* *Piú vivace*

I. p

(2) A

Example 2.6 Clementi, Preludio ii alla Sterkel

f *p* *f* *p* dolce, ma cresc. poco a poco

f *ff*

Vivacissimo

(3) *B* Allegretto con molta grazia
calando e smorzando *pp*

(4) *A'* Presto

Example 2.6 continued

ff *ca.*

ff *calando, e poco a poco rall.*

(5) *vivace ma dolce*

f ff dim. p cresc.

ff

Example 2.6 continued

**Introduction to the Art of Playing on the Pianoforte,
op. 42 by Clementi**

Introduction to the Art of Playing on the Pianoforte (henceforth, *Introduction*), written in 1801, enjoyed eleven editions in English by Clementi's firm, and was also translated into French, German, Spanish, and Italian. Particularly in the fifth edition (1811) Clementi provided more sophisticated musical material, as well as more advanced exercises. The preludes discussed herein are taken from the fifth edition. The preludes, in eighteen of the twenty-four tonalities, are followed by lessons. The preludes and lessons are in the easier keys, in alternating order of an ascending and descending circle of fifths, going as far as E major and C# minor in the sharp direction and A flat major and F minor in the flat direction.

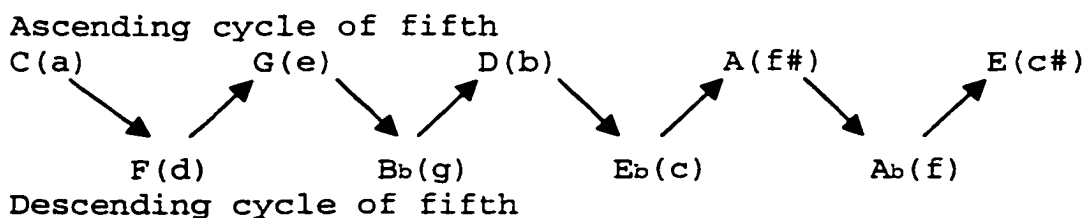


Chart 2.2 Ordering of the set from Clementi's *Introduction*.

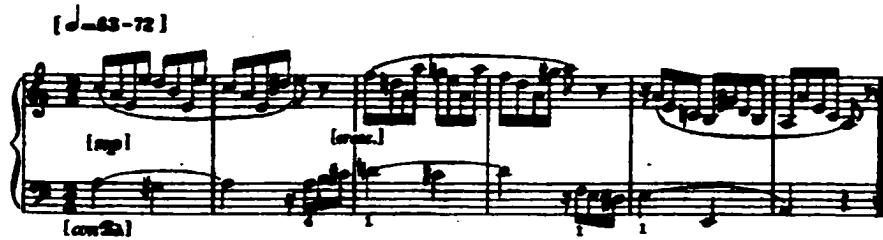
These preludes are "attached preludes" but are also rather useful as independent technical exercises. For each

of the preludes, Clementi used another composer's short work, which he called a "lesson" to serve as a sequel. This makes it possible to understand how the preludes function in the treatise.

The very short, improvisatory preludes demonstrate a harmonic formula using primary triads in each key and provide a small amount of finger exercise. Also, the lessons that follow the preludes show Clementi's outstanding skills as an arranger and collector of a variety of music during this period.¹³ Clementi also transposed some of the "lessons" for use in an appropriate key order. For example, if the preceding prelude was in the key of A, he would transpose the following lesson to correspond with that key.

Most of Clementi's preludes are very brief and they are typical of prelude genre (example 2.7). They show simple harmonic progressions and whole measures of arpeggiation and scale runs (example 2.8).

¹³ There were eleven transcriptions from Corelli's string music, as well as Clementi's arrangement of two Mozart Minuets and Trios originally written for small ensembles of string and wind instruments. Clementi, *Introduction to the Art of Playing on the Piano Forte*, preface by Sandra P. Rosenblum (Belmont, MA: Da Capo Press, Inc., 1973), 11.



Example 2.7 Muzio Clementi, Prelude in A minor, complete

Example 2.8 Muzio Clementi, Prelude in D major, complete

Twenty-five Preludes and Exercises in All Major and Minor Keys by Clementi

Twenty-five Preludes and Exercises was published initially as part of Clementi's *Introduction*. However, the pieces were subsequently extracted and published by several European firms, such as André, Mollo, Nouvelle and C. F.

Peters, as Preludes and Exercises in all Major and Minor Keys (1811).

This collection is arranged in the same order as the preludes in the *Introduction*. As in those, six keys are excluded. Some keys, however, such as C, F, and G major, are used for more than two preludes each because they were used more often than other keys. Another difference is that in the *Introduction* the lessons were transcriptions; however, in this volume scale exercises in eighteen keys replace the lessons.

In accordance with the first exercise in C major, Clementi provides five preludes in C. Each prelude presents a different style to demonstrate various tempos of precluding. The fast, running sixteenth-note figure serves as a warm-up in many of the preludes. Example 2.9 presents a typical arpeggiation and chromatic progression, which mirror those seen in Bach's C major prelude from Book I of the *WTC*.

II

Moderato [$\text{♩} = 138-152$]

Example 2.9 Clementi, Prelude in C major, no. 2, complete

The three preludes that Clementi provides in G major are more extended and formal in their structures compared with the traditional short-style preludes. The first prelude (Example 2.10) is in two parts. The second part (m.11) begins with the same motive as in the main theme but is then altered. In the opening, the chord alternates between V and I. But the chords settle in the dominant

chord at measure 2. Then, the second phrase, at measure 5, progresses to a ii chord that acts as a pivot and gravitates towards C major. There is, then, an ascending and descending scale that returns to V of G major. The second part of the prelude begins on the dominant in measure 11 and moves through II₆ toward V⁷. Here again the V⁷ appears at measures 17 to 19. Then, returns to the tonic in the last three measures at measure 20. The long and varied passages and modulations fit the second category of notated preludes described by Czerny.

I

Allegro moderato [♩ = 88]

I

5

11

ten.

piu allegro

19

22

Example 2.10 Clementi, Prelude in G major, no. 1, complete

The second Prelude in G major (example 2.11) uses scales and arpeggations. The right-hand scale shows florid passages. The tempo changes, *Presto* in the middle and *Lento* near the end, are reminiscent of those in the music of C. P. E. Bach.

The third prelude (Example 2.12) demonstrates a very clear and simple texture, although sudden dynamic changes from *p* to *f* or *ff* to *p* are suggestive of the *Sturm und Drang* style. Clementi emphasizes a long and strong dominant chord that begins in measure 13 and is arpeggiated until measure 16. Particularly in these three works, he may have thought that the prelude was not only the preparation for another piece but also an autonomous piece that could have its own small form with interesting thematic development and dynamic changes.

A way of presenting a harmonic connection between the prelude and its sequel can be seen in the F# minor prelude. It concludes on a dominant chord that goes directly to the tonic key of the following piece (example 2.13).

II

Allegro [♩ = 88-104]

The musical score is presented in six systems of piano notation. The first system begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and a 'con sord.' marking. The second system starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The third system features a forte (*f*) dynamic. The fourth system includes a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic and a 'rall.' marking. The fifth system has a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic. The sixth system concludes with a piano (*p*) dynamic, a 'lento' marking, and a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and fingering numbers (1-5) for both hands. The right hand (R) and left hand (L) parts are clearly indicated throughout the piece.

Example 2.11 Clementi, Prelude 2 in G major, complete

Moderato [♩ = 84-88]

[mp] p

ten. f sf accrescendo

presto p rull.

allegro f dim. R 14 2 2

ff f p pp

Example 2.12 Clementi, Prelude in G major, no. 3, complete



Example 2.13 Clementi, Prelude in F-sharp minor, complete

Generally, Clementi's preludes are of lesser importance than the exercises in this book. Most of the exercises also contain fast scales and arpeggios. A few preludes are somewhat extended in length, but they are simple in form. In the collection, there is one canonic Prelude in E major.

To review the findings of this chapter, the function of these four collections is didactic, as their titles make clear. J. S. Bach clarifies the didactic purpose of his preludes and fugues on the first page of the collection:

The well-tempered Clavier; or, Preludes and Fugues on every Tone and Semitone, with the major third Ut, Re, Mi, and minor third Re-Mi-Fa. For the Use and Profit of Young Musicians anxious to learn, and as a Pastime for others already expert in the Art. Composed and sent forth by Johann Sebastian Bach, at present Capellmeister and Director of Chamber-music at the princely Court of Anhalt-Cöthen. Anno 1722.¹⁴

Giordani also indicated that before an actual performance a performer must have time to test the instrument. Clementi's purpose was to compose practice pieces and exercises for the student as well as the professional pianist.

Further, the preludes clearly reflect each composer's style. Bach's preludes demonstrate a complete mastery of keyboard musical forms of the Baroque period. Although Giordani's preludes frequently feature imitations, stylistically the preludes manifest the *galant* style of the pre-Classical period. Clementi's preludes are simpler than the preludes of other composers considered

¹⁴ J. S. Bach, *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, book 1 (Leipzig: J. S. Bach Werke Gesellschaft), translated by Cecil Gray. See Cecil Gray, *The Forty-eight Preludes and Fugues of J. S. Bach*, (New York: Da Capo Press, 1979), 6.

here. Most of his preludes are short. Some have very clear and homophonic textures, but others are just finger exercises.

Chapter 3

Hummel's Twenty-four Preludes: Editions and General Characteristics

Except for Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, prelude collections before Hummel's contain brief preludes, mainly made up of passage-work of simple scales, arpeggios, and finger exercises. The general tonal plan of sets of prelude was not yet established. These earlier collections provide the necessary background for an investigation of Hummel's work. In this chapter, there will be a brief summary of Hummel's general compositional style as well as the editions and styles of his preludes. In terms of the structural arrangement of keys, I will compare Hummel's preludes to Beethoven's op. 39, as both sets systematically go through a series of keys in a logical order.

Hummel was a public pianoforte performer, especially on the old Viennese action pianos that were so "eminently suited to a facile execution of light ornamentation."¹ His style of playing demonstrated delicacy combined with

¹ Duncan Hume, "Hummel," *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 5th ed., ed. by Eric Blom, 4:407.

deep feelings.² Hummel is acknowledged as a bridge figure from Classicism to Romanticism. Charles Rosen states that "Hummel belongs, in his outlook, to the age of Rossini, not the age of Mozart and Haydn."³ Schumann considered him an important precursor of Chopin.⁴ His compositional style influenced both Schumann and Chopin.⁵ As a teacher, Hummel worked with virtuoso Parisian pianists such as Hiller, Henselt, Pauer, Pixis and Thalberg, all of whom enjoyed successful concert careers.

Hummel's preludes are the culmination of his long and rich experiences as a teacher and performer. It is somewhat strange that his lengthy three-volume piano method book, *Ausführliche theoretisch-practische Anweisung zum Pianoforte-Spiel*, devotes only its final page to improvisation, and there are also no specific remarks regarding the *Vorspiele vor Anfang eines Stückes*. Instead

² Joel Sachs, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 20 vols., ed. by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), 8:785.

³ Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1972), 101.

⁴ Robert Schumann, *On Music and Musicians*, ed. by Konrad Wolff, trans. by Paul Rosenfeld (New York: Pantheon, 1946), 83.

⁵ The particular places in his music that resemble the works of both composers will be discussed in Chapter 4.

he presents at length a rational system of fingering and discusses the turns, trills, pedals, and levels of technical development.

During the years 1811–1816 Hummel stayed in Vienna for the last time, without appointment to any position, though he was active as a teacher and concert player. Because the preludes were written during that time, we can assume they were written as pedagogical models for teaching students how to prelude.

Genesis of the Twenty-four Preludes

The first edition of the *Vorspiele*, subtitled, "vor Anfang eines Stückes aus allen 24 Dur und moll Tonarten zum nützlichem Gebrauch für Schüler," was published in *Répertoire de musique pour les dames, Ouvrage périodique et progressif composée par J. N. Hummel* in 1814.⁶ This was a

⁶ There are potentially confusing factors in Hummel's documents. According to the description of Will Kahl, "Hummel, J. N." in *MGG*. (Kassel: Bärenreiter-Verlag, 1957), 6: 930, the first separate edition of the 24 Preludes was published by Artaria in Vienna, B & H in Leipzig and Schlesinger in Paris in 1815. However, according to Joel Sachs, "A Checklist of the Works of J. N. Hummel," *Notes* 30 (1972), 203-29, and Dieter Zimmerschied, *Thematisches Verzeichnis der Werke von Johann Nepomuk Hummel* (Hofheim: Hofmeister, 1971), 106, the first edition was published in the *Répertoire* in 1814. The opus number is also confusing. The fifth edition of *Grove's Dictionary* designates it as op. 63 instead op. 67. In 1812, Breitkopf & Härtel also reprinted the preludes as op. 63. However, as most of the

serial publication that issued Hummel's compositions in Vienna, ca. 1810-15. Later, Artaria reprinted the preludes in *Die Ausgabe des Selbstverlages* (1815). In 1823, Breitkopf & Härtel also reprinted the preludes. In Paris, M. Schlesinger reissued the collected series as *Collection Complète des oeuvres de J. N. Hummel* (1824). In 1844, Cranz in Hamburg and Meyer in Braunschweig also reprinted it. In 1855 Breitkopf & Härtel of Leipzig and later, in 1881, C. F. Peters of Leipzig reissued the preludes. In 1897 G. Schirmer of New York prepared the final edition, which has subsequently been reissued. It is interesting to note that, except for the first, no edition carried the subtitle "Preludes before the beginning of a piece." The reason may be that the tradition of preluding was abandoned in the course of the nineteenth century.

Ausführliche theoretisch-practische Anweisung zum Pianoforte-Spiel

Hummel's improvisation

In the seventeenth chapter in his method book, *Ausführliche theoretisch-practische Anweisung zum Pianoforte-Spiel*, Hummel describes two methods for

current editions regard the preludes as op. 67, I will refer to them with that designation.

constructing improvised preludes. The first method is "preluding in the style of the piece to follow" He notes that this method was preferred by the great masters, such as Bach, Handel, Scarlatti, and Mozart.

The performer begins with soft broken chords or slow arpeggios outlining the tonic harmony. Following gradual acceleration, and incorporation of more distantly related harmonies and more usual figuration, the principal theme of the piece would emerge and be developed in a way other than those employed by the composer. The prelude would then dissolve gradually into less specific figuration, dying away on a fermata, on the dominant of the piece.⁷

The second method is "preluding in contrast to the style of the piece to follow." It resembles the first method in general outline, but incorporates a lyrical, endearing secondary melody from the piece to follow. In this way, the composition is prepared by means of contrast rather than through the foreshadowing of its primary character.⁸ Despite his verbal description of these two

⁷ Hummel, *Anweisung*, translated by Valerie Woodring Goertzen, 466.

⁸ Czerny's description of the elaborate attached prelude agrees with Hummel's on a number of main points (from *Systematic Introduction*, 17-20). The performer is to begin softly, continue by alternating bits of passagework with lyrical sections, employ modulations, and end on a dominant harmony.

categories of preludes, no musical examples are given in the *Anweisung*. Indeed, Hummel indicates that a concrete demonstration of this kind could be pedagogically counterproductive. In fact, he says that the actual instruction for the operation of the ideas, and for their method of development, cannot be given. He claims that the preludes should be spontaneously inspired, otherwise they would not be free.⁹ Later in the discussion, Hummel adds that "with experience, a talented performer will learn many ways of altering and developing preludes: The creative spirit is infinite and inexhaustible, and so is art."¹⁰ The Preludes, op. 67, are probably a compact reference work on improvising preludes. Although one cannot find direct quotes from them in any of Hummel's surviving documents, the set demonstrates various ways of constructing preludes.

Styles of Preludes, op. 67

Most of the preludes are based on *arpeggios*, which makes the preludes sound technically brilliant. The

⁹ J. N. Hummel, *Anweisung*, 466.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 468.

cadences are not particularly varied; fewer than four kinds of cadences can be found.¹¹ The style of Hummel's Preludes was influenced by earlier composers' techniques, such as those of J. S. Bach and Clementi, but the technique, style and features of Classical and early Romantic music are also revealed throughout the preludes. I will discuss this eclecticism of the preludes later. Hummel's preludes were, nonetheless, good models of improvised preludes for later performers.

As indicated in the introduction, the compositional style of the preludes seems to have influenced Chopin and Schumann. The techniques used by Chopin in his etudes and preludes are already apparent in Hummel's preludes. An overall analysis of Hummel's preludes is helpful for putting Chopin's preludes and etudes into perspective.

The virtuosity of Hummel's preludes resembles that in Liszt's and Paganini's early etudes, which are technically very showy pieces. Thus, the preludes demand a particular method of practice. Like Chopin's etudes, certain passages require specific ways of practicing to strengthen weak fingers. Most likely Hummel wanted to show the materials

¹¹ In his *Systematic Introduction* (Vienna: A. Diabelli und Comp., 1829), 11-13, Czerny provided various types of cadences in the many examples of preludes.

and methods of preluding through the pieces themselves. Although the didactic purpose of these preludes is stated in the title, they are not necessarily intended to help students to check the tuning of the instrument, which was formerly the principal function of prelude.

Although these preludes seem to be simple, sometimes unresolved harmonies and mixed modes make them difficult to analyze. Hummel's harmonic vocabulary is more complex than that of his contemporary composers. However, it is clear that Hummel was influenced to some degree by his predecessors, such as Clementi. For instance, similar canonic gestures can be found in Hummel's Prelude no. 10 and Clementi's Prelude in C-sharp minor.

The Preludes constitute an organic work: they are put together according to certain structurally related principles. In the fourth chapter the *Urfurien* of the preludes in C major and A minor will be provided, and then the other preludes will be briefly surveyed. It will be seen (p. 77) that the following ones all have similar structures.

**Two Preludes through All Twelve Major Keys, op. 39, by
Ludwig van Beethoven**

Harmonic Labyrinth

These two preludes, composed in 1789, show formal uniqueness (examples 3.1a and 3.1b). They are the most famous among the few compositions that circumnavigate the circle of fifths. Beethoven uses only major keys in ascending order. Each section is short and set off by double barlines. According to Craig Wright, "The series are in the tradition of harmonic labyrinth."¹² He insists that the harmonic labyrinth, the intricate combination of same harmonic passages of continuous modulations, has a long tradition in western music, such as in the compositions of J. D. Heinichen, G. A. Sorge, J. P. Kirnberger, L. V. Beethoven, and more recently Rudolf Rasche in his *Three Musical Circles for Keyboard* (1983).

In the first prelude the initial motive in the right hand [a] is answered by the left hand [a] in imitation.¹³ A second theme [b] is also answered alternately. ([a] and [b] are labeled in Example 3.1a.) This process continues

¹² Craig Wright, "Bachs Kleines harmonisches Labyrinth (BWV 591) Echtheitsfragen und theologischer Hintergrund," *Bach-Jahrbuch* 86 (2000), 51.

¹³ The themes are labeled in the music on page 66.

throughout the piece. For formal balance Beethoven expands the middle section, in C-sharp and D-flat majors, whereas the other key sections are relatively brief. The two themes, [a] and [b], are intertwined and developed in the middle section, containing the remote keys among the twenty-four tonalities. The final section in F major concludes with a G-based cadential chord and finishes back in C major with a modified reprise of the opening five measures. The second prelude is briefer than the first, although all twelve keys are circumnavigated twice. However, in the latter half of the piece the presentation of each key lasts only one measure.

Nº 1.

[a] [b]

[a] [b]

Example 3.1a Beethoven, two Preludes, op. 39, no. 1

The image displays a musical score for piano, consisting of seven systems of two staves each. The notation is in a complex, possibly chromatic, style. The first system shows a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a more rhythmic accompaniment. The second system continues the melodic development in the treble. The third system features a more active bass line. The fourth system shows a dense texture with many notes in both staves. The fifth system includes dynamic markings such as *f* and *p*. The sixth system has a *rit. mod.* marking. The seventh system concludes with a *dim.* marking. The overall impression is of a highly technical and expressive piece.

Example 3.1a continued

The image displays seven systems of musical notation for piano, continuing Example 3.1a. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The music is written in a minor key, indicated by three flats in the key signature. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth and sixteenth notes, as well as rests and dynamic markings like *f* (forte) and *sf* (sforzando). The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots at the end of the seventh system.

Example 3.1a continued

The image displays six systems of musical notation for piano, continuing Example 3.1a. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, dynamic markings, and articulation symbols.

- System 1:** Starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment.
- System 2:** Continues the melodic and accompanimental patterns, showing some chromatic movement in the right hand.
- System 3:** The right hand has more complex rhythmic figures, including some triplets and slurs. The left hand remains accompanimental.
- System 4:** Similar to the previous systems, with a focus on the interplay between the melodic line and the accompaniment.
- System 5:** Features a *calando* (ritardando) marking above the right hand and a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic marking. The music appears to be slowing down and becoming softer.
- System 6:** Ends with a *p* dynamic marking. The right hand has a final melodic flourish, and the left hand concludes with a few chords.

Example 3.1a continued

Nº 2.

Example 3.1b Beethoven, Two Preludes, op. 39, no. 2

The image displays six systems of musical notation for piano, arranged vertically. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and dynamic markings. The first system shows a complex texture with many notes and rests. The second system features a more active melodic line in the treble. The third system has a prominent bass line. The fourth system shows a dense texture with many notes. The fifth system has a more active melodic line in the treble. The sixth system shows a complex texture with many notes and rests.

Example 3.1b continued

In Beethoven's *Two Preludes*, op. 39, one can see the structural consistency that is also apparent in Hummel's preludes, except that Hummel's preludes are thematically independent pieces. They include a variety of textures, similarities of structural pattern, and equality of length in each prelude.

Although each of Hummel's preludes presents a different character and mood, from a brilliant style to a singing style, each incorporates approximately the same harmonic structure in the bass. Over this harmonic structure, Hummel invents a variety of textures and ornamental figures. In addition, many possible improvisational techniques are presented. The *Urlinie* of the first prelude (p. 77) is a model for the structure of the remaining twenty-three preludes. Each of Hummel's preludes is thus structurally similar to the first Prelude, and each section is presented with almost the same length as in the first prelude. Hummel's individual preludes can be seen as single components of the composite composition.

Chapter 4

Analysis of the Twenty-four Preludes

The analysis of Hummel's twenty-four preludes follows a number of criteria: compositional techniques, harmonic relationships, character of mood, and preluding and pedagogical techniques.¹ The analysis does not follow the order of the preludes; rather, the pieces will be discussed according to the various groupings into which they fall. The groupings are related to the four main purposes of this study, as described in the introductory chapter of this dissertation.

Harmonic Structure

The preludes possess a structural similarity and rhetorical balance. In the majority similarities with Chopin's harmonic structures can be found. Lawrence Kramer illuminates the structural principle used in Chopin's op. 28.

¹ Excerpts and specific analysis of the preludes will be given within the body of the text, and a complete copy of the preludes can be found in the Appendix, pages 128-137.

The unity of the cycle is assured by the harmonic rhythm: the rhythmic pattern created by the duration of successive harmonies: I-vi-V, with V returning to I. This succession is carried over into the structure of several of the pieces themselves, inspiring either an initial harmonic formula, a final cadence, or even a code determining the form.²

Chopin's harmonic structure resembles that in Hummel's preludes: the fundamental harmonic formula for the majority of Hummel's preludes is I-IV-V-I, although the final three preludes utilize continuing rising figures, such that the IV chord does not function well in this progression. Chart 4.1 lists the harmonic progressions of the individual preludes in major keys, showing how each prelude has a similar harmonic structure. One can notice that Hummel uses a variety of substitute chords for the subdominant, for instance ii, vi, Gr.6, Fr.6, or diminished chords. They function the same as the subdominant and prepare for final dominant chords. Then the dominant chords shortly resolve to tonics (see Chart 4.1).

² Lawrence Kramer, *Music and Poetry: The Nineteenth Century and After* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 91.

Chart 4.1 Chord Progressions in the Major-Key Preludes of Hummel

	<u>I</u>	<u>IV</u>	<u>V</u>	<u>I</u>
No. 1	I-V_{4/3}-I₆-	IV-vii^{o7}/V-I_{6/4}-	V'	I
No. 3	I-V_{4/3}/IV-V_{4/3}/ii-ii-V⁷-vii^{o7}/vi	vi(m. 5)-ii⁶-I_{6/4}	V	I
No. 5	I-I_{4/2}	VI-I_{6/4}-vii^{o7}/V	V'	I
No. 7³	I-II#-III#-#ii_{6/5}-#iv_{6/5}-I_{6/4}-Gr. 6-V	vi-ii_{6/5}(m. 4)	V'	I
No. 9	I-6-ii-6-V-6-I-6	IV(m. 3)-ii₆	V-(I_{6/4}, V')	I
No. 11	I-vi₆-V_{4/2}/V-V₆-V_{4/2}/IV-IV-iii-7-ii-V_{4/2}-I-ii_{6/5b}-V₆-I	ii₆ cadenza(m. 6)	V-'	I
No. 13	I-passing-vi-I₆-ii_{6/5}-V-I₆-I	ii_{6/5} (m. 4)	V	I
No. 15	I-6-V_{4/3}-4/2-I₆-IV-I_{6/4}-V_{6/5}/vi	vi-ii₆-vii^{o7}/V'	V'	I
No. 17⁴	I-vii^{o7}/ii-ii-iii^{o7}-I₆-iv₇-i₆-vii^{o7}-vi-V₆-I-IV₆-V-III(b₃)-	ii-vii^{o7}/V-V-chromatic sequence-ii_{6/5}-vii^{o7}/V-I_{6/4}-	V	I

³ The first three measures' use of chromatic passing tones is reminiscent of Bach, who also influenced Chopin in his Preludes.

⁴ The diminished chords, functioning as secondary dominants, make a circular sequence in the connecting passages.

No.19⁵	I-iv^{4/3}- Ib⁷-V_{6/5}/ii- II_{3b}-#v⁰⁷-	#iv_{6/5} (m.6)	I_{6/4} scale- V⁻⁷	I
No.21	I-V⁷/IV-IV- V-IV₆-ii_{6/5}- vi-vii- V_{6/5}/IV-IV- vii⁰⁷/V-i-	vii⁰⁷/V (m.7) Gr.6-	I_{6/4}-V	I
No.23	I-vi-IV- ii⁷-V-iii⁷- I-vi-ii₆- iii₆	IV₆-V₆-vi₆- vii₆-I(I, V)passing tones	V	I

Chart 4.1 continued

Hummel's preludes exploit the principles of alternation and contrast between the major-keyed and minor-keyed preludes. They differ from each other significantly in character and mood. Preludes in major keys present more vigorous and brilliant passage work, while those in a minor key suggest deeper emotion. They also have contrasting tempi. A diatonic progression usually occurs in major keys. Then a chromatic progression follows in the minor preludes. Especially in the minor preludes, one can find abundant use of altered or augmented chords. The many sequences of diminished seventh chords make the music harmonically adventurous.⁶ Chart 4.2 shows the harmonic progressions of

⁵ It presents unusual chromatic resolutions.

⁶ Other substitutes for IV will be discussed in the Elaboration of Tonality section.

the preludes in minor keys.

Chart 4.2 Chord Progressions in the Minor-Key Preludes of Hummel

	<u>i</u>	<u>iv</u>	<u>V</u>	<u>i</u>
No. 2	i-vii⁰⁷-I-vii⁰⁷/V-V₆#/5b-iv₆-#I_{6/4}-	N. 6 (m. 3) -vii⁰⁷/V-I_{6/4}	V⁷	i
No. 4	i-vii⁰⁷/V-#iv⁰⁷-	Gr. 6-I_{6/4}-	V	i
No. 6	i-vii_{6/4}-V/iv⁰⁷-iv-V-#vi_{6/5}-vii⁰⁷-I-vii⁰⁷/V-V-vii⁰⁷/IV-#IV-ii_{6/5}-i₆	N. 6 (m. 6) -ii_{4/3}	V	i
No. 8⁷	i-vii_{6/5}-i₆-ii_{6/5}-V-#iv₆-V₆-#vi₆-vii_{6/5}-i₆	N. 6-#iv⁰⁷	I_{6/4}-V	i
No. 10	I#₃-V-IV#₃ (m. 3) -vii⁰_{4/2}-III#-	Ii_{6/3}-vii⁰⁷-I#-vii⁰/V	V	i
No. 12⁸	i-vii⁰⁷-V₇/iv-iv-ii_{6/5}-i₆-	N. 6	V (m. 4) -vii⁰⁷/V-i₆	i
No. 14	i-vii⁰⁷-i₆-ii⁰⁷-V₇-vii/ii-ii⁰⁷-V_{4/2}-I₆	N. 6-vii⁰⁷-I_{3b}	vii⁰⁷/V-V⁷-9-	i

⁷ The ascending bass line is the natural minor scale.

⁸ The tenor voice descends over a pedal tone G#.

No.16	i-₆-iv⁰⁷- i_{6/4}-iv_{6/5}- vii⁰⁷/III_b- III₆-vii⁰⁷- i₆	IV₆- vii_{4/2}-iv₆	V	i
No.18	I	vii⁰⁷(m.4)	V	i
No.20	i-ii_{4/2}- i(m.2)- #vi_{4/3}-V⁷/IV chromatic passing- i(m.3)-V⁷- i-#3I	ii₆	V-vii⁰/ii- ii_{6/5}	i
No.22	I	I-N.6-V⁷/V- i_{6/4}	V⁷	i
No.24	I	V_{4/2}/IV-IV₆ -iv-Gr.6-	i_{6/4}-V	i

Chart 4.2 continued

A comparison of the first two preludes, in C major and A minor (examples 4.1a and 4.1b), illustrates the similarity and unity between major and minor preludes. Despite the fact that the bass progression moves in opposite directions, the basic progression of the A minor prelude is i-(passing V)-iv(substitute of ii)-V-i. The Neapolitan chord, flat ii, at measure 3 reaches the climax in the prelude. The voice exchange of the iv chord also emphasizes the flat ii chord. Hummel uses modal mixture, which generates an ambiguity in the progression.

I $V_{4/2}$ I^6 IV vii^7/V V^7 I

Example 4.1a The *Urlinie* of the Prelude in C major, complete

Example 4.1b The *Urlinie* of the Prelude in A minor, complete

Although all of the twenty-four preludes are quite short, the harmonic progressions are variable within the general scheme described above. The strong sense of tonality within each prelude reinforces well the function of the preludes.

The progression of tonic, subdominant, dominant, and tonic is the conventional way to define the tonality of a piece; to define the tonality is also a function of a prelude. The diversity of context and texture proves that these preludes are compact models for illustrating general forms and harmonic progressions for a variety of preludes.

Elaboration of Tonality

Although Hummel's preludes share harmonic unity, in a general sense, as is shown in the charts, the harmonic language is in reality rather complicated. Diminished seventh chords, particularly in the minor preludes, function to connect chords naturally and also to help create voice leading in descending or ascending lines. The harmonic progressions are colored by non-harmonic tones, altered chords, and augmented sixth and diminished seventh chords.

Jane Lohr called Hummel's A minor Prelude, no. 2, "an example of a skilled modulation."⁹

Specific examples of altered chords are found in the B minor Prelude (no. 6). The sequence of diminished seventh chords and the Neapolitan sixth prepare the final dominant chord (example 4.2).

m. 6

VII^{b7}/V V VII^{b7}/V IV II^{b7} i^6 N^6 ii^{b7} $V^6/3$ I

Example 4.2 Sequence of Diminished Seventh Chords in
Prelude no. 6

Prelude no. 8 in F-sharp minor also shows skill in compositional technique. The upper and lower neighbor tones in the right hand give the impression of dissonance, while the consonant triadic tones in the left create stability. A chain of neighboring diminished triads prevails between the minor and major triads (example 4.3).

⁹ Jane Lohr, "Preluding on the Harpsichord and Pianoforte, ca. 1770 to ca. 1850", Ph. D. diss. (University of Iowa, 1994), 23.

The rising scale in each repeating figure seems to accelerate the tempo, and the measure-long motive presented at the beginning is shortened to three beats and begins to overlap at measure 4. The harmonic progression reaches a climax at the Neapolitan sixth in measure 6. At this point there is relaxation with a long descending arpeggio. In the final passage a long dominant chord is held that resolves to the tonic minor. Finally, the Adagio at the end is preceded with a retard, which is the same feature used in the preceding prelude in E minor.

Handwritten musical notation for Example 4.3, showing a progression of chords over six measures. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), and a common time signature. The chords are labeled with Roman numerals: i, VII°, i, II°, V, #IV°, V, #VI°, VII°, i, bI. The final measure (6) is marked with a double bar line and a fermata.

Example 4.3 Prelude, no. 7, Progression Using the Alternating Diminished Triads

Prelude no. 9 in E major continues the style of the Prelude no. 8 in C-sharp minor, with triplet figures, rising bass, and structure that match those heard in the

previous prelude. Along with the dominant chord at measures 4 and 5, chromatic intervals and inner voices can be found in the right-hand.

Scale-Based Preludes

The basic idea underlying nearly half of the 24 preludes is scalar motion that is then embellished. The scale-based preludes are nos. 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 20, 21, and 22. With respect to scale passages, if two or more scales are present in the piece, they will, in general, move in contrary motion (e.g., preludes no. 7, measures 2-3; no. 9, measures 2-3; no. 12, measures 1-3, between soprano and tenor). Scalar movement is apparent in the upper voice of the Prelude, no. 9 in E major (example 4.4).



Example 4.4 Scalar Motion in Upper voice from the Prelude,
no. 9

Prelude no. 6 in B minor presents a scale motion that creates stylistic diversity, though a pedal-like B note is sustained for the first four measures. Although it is in the key of B minor, the tenor voice presents a B major scale which ascends through an octave. Then the tenor part moves downward through a chromatic mix of major and minor harmonies. However, the prelude ends authentically with a B minor chord.

In Prelude no. 8 in F-sharp minor, once again one can see a rising scale in the bass. The scale in the bass is the melodic minor.

Allegro, molto animato.

8.

poco a poco

scen

do

molto ritard

Adagio.

pp

Example 4.5 Bass Scale in the F-sharp minor Prelude

A rising diatonic and falling chromatic scale again dominates in Prelude no. 12 in G-sharp minor. There is contrast between the rising voices of the soprano and alto and the descending tenor part. Except for the drone bass, it can be said that the hands move in opposite directions. Right hand and tenor unfold in chromatic harmonies while the G-sharp pedal tone holds the tonic throughout. The pedal-point feature, with ascending and descending voices, was previously encountered in Prelude no. 6 in B minor (see the holding bass line).

Prelude no. 15 in D-flat major, Allegro moderato, is a stereotype of a major-key prelude. Technical matters are emphasized more than in the other preludes; in particular, it requires the exercise of fingers 4 and 5. The key of D-flat presents a peaceful, pastoral, and joyful mood. Scale motion is also incorporated. From measure 5 to the end, the falling scale in the soprano and alto parts follows the same descending direction as the tenor part.

Arpeggiated Preludes

Arpeggiation is another important feature of the preludes. Examples of arpeggio-based preludes are nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 15, 16, 19, and 21.¹⁰

The C major Prelude, no. 1, takes the form of an improvisational piece and presents features of free fantasy, which is reminiscent, perhaps, of C. P. E. Bach. The typical C major preludes in many collections have common characteristics. Though Hummel's piece does not exactly follow a chromatic progression like Bach's C-major Prelude in Book 1 of the *WTC*, and is rather small in form, the common feature is a running scale and a simple arpeggiated chord progression. One can note that the style of Chopin's Prelude in C Major is also similar to this one.

Hummel's C major Prelude has fantasy-like passages, which are to be freely played; it has no bar lines and exhibits abrupt tempo changes. Also, it consists of simple chords, namely, tonic, subdominant and dominant. The final gesture of the descending broken octaves is found frequently in the piano works of the early Romantic period.

¹⁰ In addition, half of Preludes nos. 8 and 13 are arpeggios, and no. 23 has left-hand broken chords. Certain Preludes, such as 2, 6, 7, and 21, are also categorized into the scale based preludes because they have scale passages. (see page 81)

The cadence concludes with an arpeggiated tonic chord; all twenty-four preludes present similar types of arpeggiated cadences. The ascending and descending lines, broken chords, and cadences, which can be seen in most of Hummel's preludes, are also exemplified in Czerny's preludes (See the moving bass line and cadence from Czerny's C major Prelude in Example 4.6).

Ex. 14.

All^o

P. Legato.

Cresc.

Dim.

P.

Example 4.6 Czerny, Example of cadence, Prelude in C Major from *Systematic Introduction*, Op. 200

Technique-Oriented Preludes

The advance in piano technique in the early nineteenth century are clearly reflected in a majority of the preludes. A certain number of Hummel's preludes give prominence to the exercise of the weaker 3rd, 4th, and 5th

fingers. Examples are preludes nos. 2, 15, 22, and 24. Opportunities for practicing arpeggiations and scales are found in the majority of preludes in this group.

For instance, the A minor Prelude, no. 2, is such a practical, didactic piece. In addition, the exercise is similar to that in Chopin's Etude op. 10, no. 2, in A minor, which is designed to strengthen the three weaker fingers, and makes great use of the chromatic scale (the fingerings are Hummel's own, see examples 4.7a and b). These A minor preludes demonstrate the most striking resemblance between Chopin and Hummel. The similarities are found in the rising figure and practice for the three weakest-fingers.

Example 4.7a Hummel's Prelude in A minor

The image shows a musical score for Chopin's Etude in A minor, op. 10, no. 2, measures 1-4. The score is in 2/4 time and features a fast, technical passage with triplets and chromatic movement. The tempo is marked 'Allegro' with a metronome marking of quarter note = 166. The dynamics range from piano to fortissimo (f). The score is written for piano and includes a second ending marked '2.'.

Example 4.7b Chopin's Etude in A minor,
op. 10, no. 2, measures 1-4

Among Hummel's twenty-four preludes, technique-oriented preludes are D-flat major (no. 15), G minor (no. 22), and D minor preludes (no. 24). The final four preludes, especially, can all be categorized as technical studies.

Prelude in B-flat major (no. 21) is the longest, with 13 measures. The passage-work requires careful finger practice. The prelude is brilliant in style and the range of dynamics is wide. The chromatic falling scale in the final measures adds a particularly brilliant touch.

Prelude no. 22 in G minor consists mainly of fast triplets in contrary motion. Prelude no. 23 continues this idea of fast triplet movement, which begins in the lower voice, and all voices ascend for the first eight measures, finishing with a simple cadence. The broken chords and octaves are typical ingredients in creating a prelude. In

addition, the beginning suspension seems to help the ascending motion, but these resolve downward. The use of staccato notes as the music rises gives this prelude brilliance.

At the beginning of the Prelude no. 24 in D minor, the fast tempo of the right-hand passage-work requires an advanced technique. The right-hand octaves fall, with staccatos in the left-hand, and relax into a slow, soft cadence. Hummel probably consciously intended that these final four preludes be in the same style.

Additional Prelude

The Prelude no. 14 in E-flat minor is the shortest prelude of the set, and the music progresses in solid quarter notes. The unusual mark of *Alla cappella* and the sustained quasi-organ style with slow suspensions indicate that this minor prelude should convey a religious mood. Presumably it might be intended as an introduction to a rather serious and heavy work. The movement foreshadows the slow movement of Schumann's "Rhenish" Symphony.

Chopin's Prelude in C-sharp minor is similar in some aspects to this prelude: the consistent quarter notes and rather serious mood are quite characteristic. The ascending opening phrase reaches a point of climax at

measure 3, and then gradually descends. Such a shape creates structural balance. A solid style of playing is required in this short prelude.

Issues of Performance Practice

There are some interesting performing ideas and markings in the preludes, especially the varieties of rhythm and tempo flexibility. In the C major Prelude, flexibility of rhythm and tempo can be found. The piece starts slowly and gradually accelerates in the next measure. *Leggiero* arpeggios follow; the tempo increases to *presto*, with flamboyant right-hand passages, and finally relaxes into an *andante* at the end. This procedure is explained well in the Method of Improvisation in his *Anweisung*.¹¹

Hummel also gives a list of eleven situations for retarding. They are mostly structural in nature, such as the return of an important subject or a transition to a different rhythmic movement. One usually retards, he says, when a composer writes "espressivo." Terms such as *rallentando*, *ritenuto*, *sforzando*, and *calando* are

¹¹ Hummel, *Anweisung*, 466-8. See page 58.

distinguished from each other only by the degree of retard.¹²

However, in Prelude no. 4 in E minor, he marks "Andante" rather than using any of the terms similar to ritardando. In this particular piece, the Andante probably signifies a retard. As a written-out slowing down, it means slower to the end.

A similar situation occurs in Hummel's F minor Sonata, op. 20. In an earlier version of the sonata, the score indicated a *rubato* tempo marking (example 4.8a).¹³ The manuscript is probably from the late 1790s. When Hummel's sonata was finally published in 1807, the markings "Adagio" and "Allegro" replaced "Tempo Rubato" (Ex. 4.8b). So "Adagio" probably implies a freely slower tempo.

¹² J. N. Hummel, *Complete Theoretical and Practical Course of Introduction*, 2nd supplement, 31-8.

¹³ For clarification of Hummel's ideas on *Tempo Rubato*, I am indebted to Richard Hudson's discussion in *Stolen Time: The History of Tempo Rubato* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 141.

[Allegro moderato]
26
for.
Tempo Rubato
p

Example 4.8a Hummel, Sonata in F minor, 1st movement,
measures 26-29, original version in 1790s¹⁴

26
rallent: assai
pp
Adagio
Allo: agitato
P
P

Example 4.8b revised version in 1807

Compared to those of other early nineteenth-century composers, Hummel's dynamics, and tempo markings are relatively numerous; embracing a broad range of dynamics. For instance, the D major Prelude (no. 5) has a vast dynamic range (from *p* to *ff*). The features that appear in the B major Prelude (no. 11), such as the arpeggiated rhythmic pattern, the sequences, the flowing harmonic coloring, and the cadenza, foreshadow Schumann. Such

¹⁴ Scores are reprinted by Sachs in *Hummel's Complete Works for Piano*, I (1989), 165 and 31.

passages are familiar to us in Schumann's piano writing as well as in the piano accompaniments in his songs.

Even more interesting are instructions like "armonioso," "cresc. e sempre più pressante," "espress," etc. It is somewhat unusual to find so many indications such a short prelude.

The dramatic way Hummel suddenly changes dynamics at the end is also found in some of his preludes such as nos. 1, 5, 22, 24. At measure 6 of the B major Prelude (no. 11), the tempo is marked as "Meno Allegro" with "espress." Brilliant, strong and clear projections, along with finger velocity, change into an expressive and delicate mood at the end of this prelude.

The *gebunden*¹⁵ style is found in Hummel's Prelude no. 17 in A-flat major. According to Czerny, legato is an implicit feature of this style (see example 4.9).



Example 4.9 Czerny, Example of Connected Notes

¹⁵ The word, *Gebunden* (connected chords), is used by Czerny in his *Systematic Introduction*.

The somewhat complex harmonic progressions of no. 17 are typical of Hummel's prelude writing when he uses scales as the basis for his pieces. (The underlying scalar motion gives coherence to such passages.) Also, the harmonic succession of the middle part is firmly reflected in Chopin's Etude, op. 25, no. 6, which sometimes shows a chromatic passage with no bass line. Technically this prelude is meant for the practice of legato playing. Legato chromatic passages are important but difficult in keyboard playing. Thus, the practice of this particular piece is of great assistance. In the first six measures the scale ascends to the vi chord at measure 6; it then descends to the V₇ and back to the tonic chord. Hummel uses several diminished seventh chords to keep a forward momentum.

Among the collection, no. 20 in C minor is the rare example of an "Andante con moto." Another relatively relaxing tempo is the "Sostenuto" of prelude no. 16. According to Czerny, a slow tempo is usually used in minor-key preludes. For Hummel, a slow tempo probably means a more expressive piece, rather than a strict tempo reduction. According to his *Anweisung*:

The Adagio has its genuine solemn and pathetic character, as well as its own beauty, sweetness, and grace.¹⁶

Frequent tempo changes are also found in no. 20, such as *stringendo-il tempo-calando-rit.* The cadence is the same as that used by Czerny. The ending is a typical model for a slow improvisation (example 4.10). The characteristic of rising and falling scales appears once again. The upper parts generally ascend. In contrast, the lower parts generally descend.

The image contains two musical excerpts. The top excerpt, labeled 'Ex. 12.', is for piano and marked 'Lento.'. It features a treble and bass staff with a cadence. Dynamics include piano (p), sforzando (sf), and diminuendo (Dim.). The bottom excerpt shows a similar cadence with tempo markings 'il tempo' and 'calando', and dynamics 'p' and 'rit.' (ritardando).

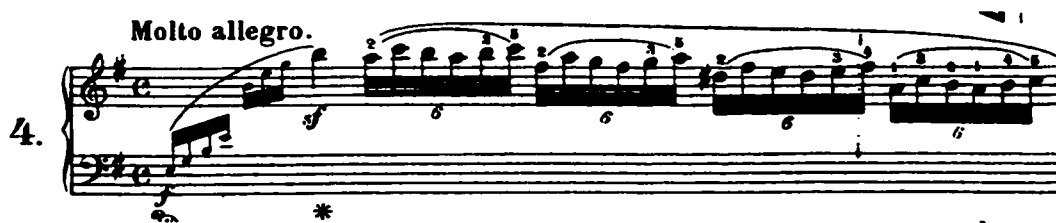
Example 4.10 Czerny's cadence example and Hummel's no. 20

¹⁶ Hummel, *Anweisung*, book 1, 102.

Stylistic Diversity of Hummel's Preludes

Stylistic similarity between Hummel, his predecessors, and his contemporaries can be seen in a majority of his preludes. Preludes nos. 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 13, 16 and 18 demonstrate conventional textures from earlier composers such as J. S. Bach and Clementi, as well as Hummel's contemporaries, Czerny and Chopin.

In the E minor Prelude (no. 4), the initial rising arpeggiation creates an up-beat quality. This "preparatory flourish" is common among several composers' preludes. Certain preludes by Clementi also start with the same gesture as Hummel's.



Example 4.11a Hummel, Prelude in E minor

The image shows a musical score for Clementi's Prelude in G major, marked "Moderato." The score is written for piano and consists of two staves. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#) and the time signature is common time (C). The music begins with a rising arpeggiated figure in the right hand, marked with a "13." The right hand features a series of sixteenth-note arpeggiated chords, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment of eighth notes. The tempo is indicated as "Moderato."

Example 4.11b Clementi, Prelude in G major

In the Prelude in D major (no. 5) the brilliant rising broken chords add to its technical difficulty. The running right-hand passages and scales are typical of major-key preludes. According to Czerny's description in his *Systematic Introduction*, the characteristics of his major-mode preludes include varieties of fast tempi and scales with markings of forte or fortissimo. Here is an example from a major-mode prelude by Czerny (example 4.12).

The musical score for Example 4.12 is presented in three systems. The first system features a right-hand staff with a treble clef and a left-hand staff with a bass clef. The right hand begins with a treble clef and a common time signature. The tempo is marked 'Allo' and the dynamics include 'p', 'Leggier.', and 'Cresc.'. The second system continues the piece with markings for 'Dim.' and 'Smer.'. The third system concludes the piece with a marking for 'lacc.' and ends with a double bar line and a final chord.

Example 4.12 Example from a major-mode prelude by Czerny

In the last measures of the D major Prelude (no. 5), the movement suddenly stops in the next-to-last measures. Dynamics change abruptly from *ff* to *p*, with *tenuto* marks over the final rolled chords with their wide range.

The *Allegro con fuoco* in the F-sharp major Prelude (no. 13) is a typical example of the major-mode preludes. According to Czerny's description, fast running sixteenth notes are typical of major-key preludes. The Prelude no. 13 exhibits fast and brilliant scales and requires fluent playing, at least in the right hand. Although scales are also prevalent in a few of Chopin's preludes, fast and abrupt dynamic changes are characteristic of Hummel's pieces.

Examples of a similar style in typical major-key preludes can be seen in the F minor Prelude (no. 18), which is short but very passionate and brilliant. As one of the typical technique-oriented preludes, it begins with a virtuosic passage. Then, at measure 4, the long arpeggiation of the diminished seventh chord leads to the brief V^7/V that prepares for the return to the tonic chord. Although it shows a short and simple progression, it clearly demonstrates improvisational style.

Another example of Hummel's chromatic blur can be found in the C# minor Prelude (no. 10). Although this short

prelude is not a full-blown fugue, it demonstrates that contrapuntal techniques can also be used in improvisation. The passages of dense chromaticism with a descending scale are especially reminiscent of Chopin's writing, as for instance, Chopin's Etude in G-sharp minor, op. 25, no. 6 (example 4.13).

The Prelude in B-flat minor (no. 16) presents arpeggiated chords with notated finger pedaling and in a meditative mood. Similar passages can be found in Kessler's preludes of 1839.¹⁷ The rhythmic gestures and melodic leaps of Kessler's Prelude in B-flat major, no. 3, suggests possible influences of Hummel's writing on Kessler (example 4.14).

¹⁷ Joseph Christopher Kessler, *Preludes*, op. 31 (Leipzig: Kistner, 1839).

Example 4.13 Chopin, Etude in G-sharp minor, measures 31-34

Example 4.14 Kessler, Prelude in B-flat major, no. 3, complete

In conclusion, the general features of Hummel's preludes are: first, the use of improvisational techniques is one of his principal tools for composing these preludes; thus, scales and arpeggiations are the essential materials for the preludes. Second, the brilliance of Hummel's preludes comes from their technical difficulty. The preludes are designed for a piano with the light Viennese action, which allows these preludes to be even more brilliant. Third, "legato" playing is emphasized throughout the preludes. The "legato" passages are also linked to the concept of a singing melody, which is familiar from Chopin's piano writing.

Chapter 5

Prelude Collections by Hummel's Contemporaries: Diversity of Types in the Romantic Era (ca. 1818 to ca. 1839)

Numerous collections of preludes by Hummel's contemporaries were published during the years 1818-1839. This chapter is concerned with the seven most important of these collections. Various stylistic types are represented in these preludes. However, except for Chopin's pieces, they all belong to the category of "unattached preludes."

The collections to be discussed are primarily technique-oriented preludes¹ that contain some type of passage-work and are useful as exercises. There is no particular similarity between Hummel's preludes and the other collections that will be discussed in this chapter. However, Chopin's preludes, as has been already suggested, have similarities with Hummel's preludes, and as character pieces they stand firmly in the prelude genre. Their strong resemblance to Hummel's preludes will be discussed later in this chapter.

¹ Jane Lohr identifies four general categories of that unattached prelude type: the technique-oriented prelude, the thematic prelude, the interlude, and the fantasy-like prelude. Jane Lohr, *Preluding on the Harpsichord and Pianoforte, ca. 1770 to ca. 1850*, Ph. D. diss. (University of Iowa, 1994), 166.

During the first three decades of the nineteenth century, collections of preludes published for the use of amateurs served as models for constructing these short pieces. However, we may also use these collections to observe stages in the transformation of the prelude from an introductory to an independent piece.

Johann Baptist Cramer (1771-1858), Clementi's famous pupil, wrote two sets of model preludes, one of which is included in his *Anweisung das Pianoforte zu spielen* (1812). The title suggests that these preludes are unattached:

to which are added compositions in the principal major and minor keys, with a prelude to each composition ²

The preludes are extremely short exercises, technically and musically of too little interest to describe at length. The eighteen tonalities presented are arranged in the order of ascending fifths, including relative minors, through F minor.³

² See J. B. Cramer, *Preludes: The Fifth Edition with Additional Improvements of J. B. Cramer's Instruction for the Pianoforte* (London: S. Chappel, 1812).

³ The ordering is C-a-G-e-D-b-A-f#-E-c#-B-g#-F#-d#-C#-a#-Ab-f.

Another set from 1818 is entitled *Twenty-six Preludes or Short Introductions in the Principal Major and Minor Keys for the Pianoforte*. All the preludes in this set are notated without bar lines, and, with a few exceptions, no sense of meter prevails. Oscar Bie states that this set presents improvisational styles and harmonic progressions that are more elaborately developed from simple chords.⁴ The collection also conforms to P. A. Corri's instructions from his *Original System of Preluding* in 1814 given for the performance of preludes, in which the style for the improvised prelude should be bold and energetic with running passages executed with brilliance and speed.⁵ The B-flat major prelude (example 5.1) is a written-out example of the genre.

⁴ Oscar Bie, *A History of the Pianoforte and Pianoforte Players*, trans. and rev. by Kellett and Maylor (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1899), 21.

⁵ P. A. Corri, *Original System of Preluding*, 1, quoted in the *Gentleman's Magazine* 84 (January 1814), part 1, 60.



Example 5.1 Cramer, Prelude in B-flat major from *The Twenty-six Preludes or Short Introduction in the Principal Major and Minor Keys* (1818), complete

Maria Szymanowska (1789-1831), an important woman composer in the history of Polish music before Chopin⁶, composed one set of preludes, *Vingt Exercises et Preludes*, in 1820. According to Nowak-Romanowicz, these are some of the best pieces ever written by Szymanowska.⁷ The preludes

⁶ The celebrated virtuoso Szymanowska gave a concert in Warsaw in 1827. She performed a Hummel's concerto, variations by Ries and a Potpourri on Weber's Freischütz. The concert was anticipated with excitement by Chopin. Frederic Chopin, Warsaw, to Jan Białobłocki, Sokołow, 8 [January 1827], Sydney edition, 1:75.

⁷ Alina Nowak-Romanowicz, "Maria Szymanowska," in *The New Grove Dictionary*, 19: 499.

herald Romanticism in their style, and demonstrate new technical and coloristic possibilities for the piano. The pieces appear to be pedagogical in nature. Her collection is a mixture of preludes and etudes, though they do not offer a logical ordering of the twenty-four keys. The length of the pieces is also varied, from a minimum of one or two systems to an exceptional maximum of three pages.

Regarding categorization of these pieces according to Czerny's types, Szymanowska's collection belongs to the second group of longer and more elaborate preludes. Most of these preludes are in three sections.

The preludes often resemble some of Chopin's etudes: the resemblance is especially true for Szymanowska's third Prelude, in F major. Both Chopin's Etude in F major, op. 10, no. 8, and Szymanowska's F major Prelude present running sixteenth-note figures and are in rounded binary form (example 5.2). The formal structure and musical ideas are in the spirit of Romantic music. Section A in F major, is rather short, section B starts with the V of D minor, and returns to F major in measure 24 of section A'. Finally, it returns again to F major in section A'', measure 37. A cadential extension with chordal arpeggiations of the brilliant style can be observed at the end.

Some preludes, including Szymanowska's Prelude in E-flat major (example 5.3), are technique-oriented. Their stylistic similarity is evident not only in the etude pieces of Romantic virtuosos, such as Chopin, and Liszt, but also in the preludes of her contemporaries, Paganini (1782-1840), Moscheles (1794-1870), and Thalberg (1812-1871).

Vivace **A** MARIA SZYMANOWSKA

The musical score is presented in five systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system is marked 'Vivace' and 'A'. The second system is marked 'f'. The third system is marked 'B' and 'p'. The fourth system is marked 'f'. The fifth system is marked 'f' and 'p'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and fingerings.

Example 5.2 Szymanowska, Prelude in F major

The image displays five systems of musical notation for a piano piece, continuing from Example 5.2. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The notation includes various musical elements such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The first system is marked with a *dim* (diminuendo) dynamic and features a section labeled *A'* with a dashed line above it. The second system includes a *f* (forte) dynamic marking. The third system is marked with *f* and *cresc* (crescendo). The fourth system is marked with *ff* (fortissimo). The fifth system includes *f* and *p* (piano) dynamic markings. The music is written in a style typical of 19th-century piano literature, with intricate melodic lines and harmonic accompaniment.

Example 5.2 continued

The image displays five systems of musical notation for a piano piece. The first system is marked with a large *A* and a fermata. The second system continues the piece. The third system is marked with a large *C.E*. The fourth system includes the performance instruction *poco a poco crescendo* written across the staves. The fifth system concludes the piece with a fermata and a *Colt.* marking at the end of the bass line.

Example 5.2 continued

Vivace

The musical score is presented in five systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system begins with the tempo marking 'Vivace' and includes dynamic markings *(f)*, *(mp. leggeri)*, and *(f)*. The second system continues the piece. The third system includes a *(f)* marking. The fourth system features a *crescendo* marking. The fifth system concludes the excerpt. The notation includes various rhythmic values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests.

Example 5.3 Szymanowska, Prelude in E-flat major,
measures 1-26

Henri Herz (1803-1888), a Parisian virtuoso, wrote a set of preludes, *Exercises et Preludes*, op. 21, in 1822. Most of the preludes are technique-oriented. But they are also didactic compositions for improving one's ability using improvisation skills. Lisztian-technique exercises are very frequent. The rather long preludes have virtually no modulations. The last piece is a fugue. Such contrapuntal material is already shown in some of other preludes (examples include some of Bach's and Kalkbrenner's, and even Hummel's Prelude no. 10).

Frédéric Kalkbrenner (1785-1849) was one of the most important pianists and teachers active among the Parisian virtuosos. He composed *Vingt-Quatre Preludes pour le Piano Forte*, op. 88, during his great decade as a concert pianist, 1825-1835. In the *Vingt-quatre préludes*, Kalkbrenner provided a subtitle which indicates that the pieces "pouvant servir d'exemple pour apprendre à préluder."⁸ Presumably Kalkbrenner's are unattached preludes which were clearly published as studies in the art of improvisation. The preludes are extended in length with free modulations and are capable of standing

alone. As in *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, all keys are explored in an ascending chromatic pattern. Bach's influence is strongly revealed in each prelude (example 5.4). In particular, a resemblance can be seen between Bach's prelude in C major and Kalkbrenner's in C major. Overall, the pieces range from short preludes to long, elaborate ones in the form of a fugue, canon, fantasy, binary structure, or even a German waltz. The length varies from the one page of no. 1, C major, to the eleven pages of no. 24, B minor.

The last prelude (Example 5.5) incorporates the advanced compositional method of fugue within the prelude genre. The introduction, theme, and fugue are arranged well in the final prelude.

⁸ They "Could serve as models for learning to prelude."

Legato.

Féble.

Allegro.

Dim.

Rall.

Tempo ?

Example 5.4a Kalkbrenner, Prelude in C major,
measures 10-22

846
Præludium 1

Allegro

28 Takte

Example 5.4b Bach, Prelude in C major,
measures 1-2

Métre 126 = ♩
 All^o agitato.

PRELUDIO
 24

The musical score is presented in six systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The first system includes the tempo marking 'All^o agitato.' and the meter 'Métre 126 = ♩'. The piece is titled 'PRELUDIO 24'. The notation includes various dynamics such as *p*, *ff*, and *p*. The score shows a complex rhythmic and melodic structure characteristic of a fugue.

Example 5.5 Kalkbrenner, Prelude in B minor, No. 24,
 Introduction and Fugue, measures 1-34

Fifty Preludes in the Major and Minor Keys, op. 73, by **Ignaz Moscheles** (1794-1870) is a typical collection that is didactic in purpose. It provides practice pieces to improve technical skill with delicate musical ideas. This collection is distinctive in its degree of melodic interest and regular form. Czerny recommended this collection as a model for the short prelude category.⁹ Fifty preludes in various keys are presented randomly, though they start with a prelude in C major.

In a later edition, Moscheles recommended that these preludes serve as preparatory practice pieces for the latest edition of his *Studies*, op. 95.¹⁰ When Moscheles revised the op. 95 set in 1855, however, he discarded the subtitle, "Short Introduction before the Beginning of the Pieces."

Moscheles makes the work particularly useful by offering alternative fingerings. Many passages have two or three suggested fingerings, in order that the player may know the various systems of fingering. Students can compare them all and choose the one which best suits their fingers.

⁹ See page 18.

¹⁰ Moscheles, *Twelve Celebrated Studies*, op. 70 (1825-6), was revised in 1836, as a new edition of *Twelve Celebrated Characteristic Studies*, op. 95.

Practice in playing thirds, scales, broken chords, arpeggios, and even cadenzas is incorporated in them. Each piece is short in length; the maximum being fifteen measures, with an average of eight. Generally, they show off a pianist's technical virtuosity. The harmonic structures of these preludes are rich, supported by dramatic textures and frequent brilliant scales. The virtuosic right-hand passages with difficult fingerings are good exercises for professional pianists. However, half of the fifty preludes are unmeasured, like the French harpsichord preludes that were composed by Louis and Francis Couperin. The B major Prelude is representative of the typical style of Moscheles' preludes (Example 5.6).

34. B major.

Sostenuto.

Allegro.

ritara.
dim.

Example 5.6 Moscheles, Prelude in B major, complete.

Joseph C. Kessler (1800-1872) published one set of *Preludes*, op. 31, in 1839, which he dedicated to Chopin. In return the dedicatee Chopin offered Kessler his own preludes, op. 28, in gratitude for the dedication. Kessler's preludes are similar to Chopin's and they are now regarded as an independent prelude set, like Chopin's. Originally the book of preludes provided ready-made material for pianists preferring not to improvise. (This suggests a change in concert culture and in the training of keyboardists.) All the preludes are obviously calculated to suggest improvisation, but some of the pieces are no more than embellished cadences, though occasionally there is a revelation of canonic writing and a contrapuntal display of virtuosity.

Preludes, op. 28 by Frederic Chopin (1810-1849)

Compared to the collections mentioned thus far, Chopin's preludes (1839) display a more advanced level of technical depth and artistry. Some of his preludes are relatively short and simple, while others are character pieces and large in scale. The keys are also in a logical arrangement, using the circle of fifths previously employed by Hummel.

Despite the fact that performers and scholars have long considered Chopin's preludes to be independent pieces, Chopin himself never indicated whether they should be independent or preparatory. On the other hand, Chopin considered at least some of the preludes to be suitable as an introduction. According to the surviving printed program from his recital in Glasgow on 27 September 1848, Chopin coupled a prelude to another of his works: The program lists the first item to be performed "Andante et Impromptu."¹¹

More commonly, Chopin performed the preludes as separate pieces, or in groups with other preludes. A program listing, from Chopin's 1842 recital in Paris, was 'Suite de Nocturnes, Préludes, et Etudes.'¹²

Individuality is one of the characteristics of Chopin's preludes; like Bach's, each one presents a

¹¹ Jeffrey Kallberg suggests that the Andante referred to was probably Prelude, no. 8 in F# minor and the Impromptu was op. 36 because of the parallel tonalities of the Prelude and Impromptu, see Jeffrey Kallberg, "'small forms': in defense of the prelude," *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*. ed. by Jim Samson, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 137.

¹² *Ibid.*, 138.

distinct mood. The musical resemblance to, and influence of, Bach has been noted.¹³

It is not appropriate to say that when Chopin composed his preludes, he used Hummel's preludes as models. However, the features discussed in my analysis suggest the possibilities of these influences. In April 1828, Hummel himself came to Warsaw and gave a couple of concerts. He was introduced to Chopin, listened to him play, and was impressed.¹⁴

According to documents from Chopin's pupils,¹⁵ Chopin used Hummel's pieces as well as the *Anweisung* as valuable teaching pieces.¹⁶ He held that Clementi's *Gradus ad*

¹³ Walter Wiora, "Chopins Preludes und Etudes und Bachs Wohltemperiertes Klavier," in *The Book of the First International Musicological Congress Devoted to the Works of Frederic Chopin*, ed. Zofia Lissa (Warsaw, 1963); Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 3rd English edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

¹⁴ Letter to Family, August 12, 1829 see Frederyk Chopin, *Korespondencja Fryderyka Chopina*, 2 vols. ed. by B. E. Sydow (Warsaw: Panstwowy Instytut Wydawniczy 1955), 1:93. Hummel's influence on Chopin is discussed in Jim Samson, *Chopin* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 34-69.

¹⁵ Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher as Seen by his Pupils*, trans. by Naomi Shoher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

¹⁶ From the lists by Camille O'Meara (Mme. Duboius), Chopin considered some works as Hummel's best pieces, such as the *Rondo brilliant mêlé d'un Thème russe*, op. 98; *La Bella*

Parnassum, Bach's keyboard *Fugues*, and Hummel's compositions were the best keys to good pianoforte playing, and he considered training in these composers a fit preparation for his own works.¹⁷

Many of Chopin's preludes are short and possess, as Schumann noted, a sense of incompleteness or need for something to follow. Although Chopin works with short melodic and rhythmic figures, in many cases he holds to one idea throughout the course of a prelude, an approach which makes it possible to view these preludes as a set. As previously discussed, the conception of the preludes as a set can also be seen in Hummel's Preludes.

Although the prelude began as a relatively simple genre, through time it has developed in such a way as to include complicated textures and harmonic structures. Preluding, which was a necessary gesture in private and public concerts,¹⁸ began to gradually, though not

Capricciosa, op. 55; the Sonata in F sharp minor, op. 81; the Concertos in A minor, op. 84, and B minor, op. 89; and the Septet, op. 74. However, Hummel's preludes are disregarded in these documents.

¹⁷ Frederic Niecks, *Frederic Chopin as a Man and Musician*, 3rd edition (London: Novello, 1988), 2:189.

¹⁸ William Newman, *The Sonata in the Classic Era*, 3rd ed. (New York and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1983), 52-57.

completely, disappear. On the one hand, the improvised prelude developed into a now complex, composed and ready-made genre, which might be considered an independent piece with a definite form. On the other hand, the earlier improvised tradition can still be found today in small, private concert settings, as part of some harpsichord performances, or as an introductory piece in a vocal concert.

Chopin's preludes are today substantive enough to be heard separately by themselves. The introduction of independent preludes coincided with the disappearance of the tradition of preluding. Hummel's preludes were the turning point for this change.

VI. Conclusion

Through the brief investigation of prelude collections in certain eras, I have shown that Hummel was the first composer after Bach to use all twenty-four keys to complete a set of twenty-four preludes. His set probably influenced Chopin's preludes, op. 28. It is no exaggeration to say that composers of the Romantic period learned a great deal from Hummel, most especially Chopin. We cannot quite imagine what Chopin's music would have been like without Hummel. Hummel's influence on Cramer, Moscheles, Schumann, and Liszt was also significant.

The possible influences of Hummel's preludes can be found in certain features of prelude collections by Cramer, Moscheles, and Chopin; first, the brevity of their preludes is characteristic. Except for Chopin's, most preludes are generally ten to fifteen measures in length. Second, each of these composers' preludes utilizes many types of materials and styles. Hummel's twenty-four preludes show a diversity of style. These features cannot be observed in

the preludes by Giordani, Czerny, or other Classical composers prior to Hummel. Third, the use of the complete circle of fifths was an important influence on Chopin. In fact, Hummel was the first composer to use this method of organization directly in an independent prelude set. Finally, prior to Hummel's prelude collections, composers like Czerny and Clementi aimed to make the collections into exercises or a guide or model for constructing improvisations. However, after Hummel's preludes, the approach changed; prelude collections were then seen as actual performing pieces. Contemporaries who learned from Hummel were greatly influenced in this regard.

Through an investigation of Hummel's preludes, a general conclusion can be drawn regarding preluding techniques during the middle of the nineteenth century. Compared to previous eras there were few prelude collections published during that time, indicating a decline of public interest in the improvisational preluding that had occurred in the private salons, but could not survive in the more expansive concert hall because of the performers' concentration on the canonic repertory rather than on their inventiveness as improvisers.

Further, although methods for improvising can be learned from a teacher, it is mostly dependent on the

innate ability of the performer. This point is emphasized by the fact that Hummel did not devote full and detailed instructions about improvisation in his method book.

However, some interest in the preluding tradition has been maintained until today. During the second half of the nineteenth century, new editions of several earlier collections reappeared. For instance, Clementi's *Preludes and Exercises* appeared through 1880, Moscheles's *Fifty Preludes*, op. 73, through at least 1882, and Hummel's *Preludes*, op. 67, through 1897. Thus, improvisatory prelude was thereby transformed into a composed piece, examples of which were collected into independent sets. Although the introductory function of preludes has been lost, published preludes for use by amateurs continued to be useful for didactic purposes. For example, the Schirmer edition of Moscheles' collections (preface dated 1882) no longer carried the original subtitle "intended as short introductions to any movement and as preparatory exercises to the author's studies," but instead emphasized the purpose of a technical exercise. Also, the later editions of Hummel's preludes discarded that part of the title indicating the introductory function of the preludes.

Today, performers frequently need to improvise an introductory piece in order to check the sound and the

action of the instrument to be performed, particularly when they are unfamiliar with the instrument and unable to test it before the concert. Hummel's preludes offer splendid models for such pieces. Improvisational technique can be revived by modern artists who devote some time to the study of old method books or preludes by Hummel and Czerny and perform their own preludes in concerts.

In the published collections of preludes, we observe the transformation from introductory pieces to independent pieces. Individual items in the collections of Kalkbrenner, Moscheles, and Cramer are distinctive in their degree of melodic interest and regular form, and seem capable of standing on their own as individual pieces.

The importance of Hummel's preludes lies not only in the notated improvisation but also in their service as models for other improvisers' preludes. The challenge of a performance is the possibility of performing all the preludes together, because of their harmonic relations. The frequent change of mood in them corresponds also to what we experience in many character pieces of the Romantic era.

Preluding is a valuable tradition that should not be lost. It provides viable options for a concert program. For instance, Hummel frequently performed his improvisations at

the end of the concerts.¹ Audiences were most impressed by his improvising.²

Although the preludes are short and simple miniatures, they represent an important aspect of the preluding tradition, and I believe a concerted effort should be made to revive the tradition, in conjunction with the ready-made prelude pieces that are more prevalent.

¹ All the programs from April 7, 15, 20, 28, May 17, 25 in 1825 in Paris contained Hummel's Improvisations. The program notes were recorded in *La Gazette de Paris*.

² Reviews and concert reports are from *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, 1798-1849.

Appendix

Preludes
 In All Twenty-four Major and Minor Keys
 by J. N. Hummel

1. *Quasi improvvisazione.*

a capriccio sostenuto

accelerando poco a poco

leggiere

sf presto

p andante

2. *Allegro moderato.*

sempre più cresc.

rallent.

3. **Allegro.**

4. **Molto allegro.**

5. **Allegro con fuoco.**

Allegro.
p
cresc.
f
p
rallent.
p
Molto allegro.
f
p
Andante.
f
p
Allegro con fuoco.
f
ff
p
ten.
ten.

Allegro, molto animato.

8.

p *poco a poco* *cre.*
p *f*

sf *f* *pp*
molto ritard.
scen - do

Adagio.

9.

Allegro
p *f*
cresc.

ritard. poco *a poco* *slarg.*
p *sf*

Energico.

10.

sf *f*
cresc.

dim. e rall. *p andante*
p *p*

11. **Allegro.** *p*
armonioso

cresc. e sempre *più pressante* *f*

Meno allegro. *espress.* **Andante.** *allegro*

12. **Allegro moderato.** *dolce e sostenuto*

f *ri - tar - dan - do*

13. **Allegro con fuoco.** *p* *cresc.* *f*

Andante.
f risoluto
decresc.

14. *Alla cappella.*

f
p

15. *Allegro moderato.*

f
p

p

espress.
p

pp
*
1 2 3 4 5 6

Sostenuto.

16.

Allegro moderato.

17.

Con molto fuoco.

18.

Allegro con brio.

21.

f

cresc.

ritard.

p *stringendo*

f *presto*

ritard. *p andante*

p

Allegro vivace.

22.

p

do - scen - do - f

f

ff

Andante sostenuto.

sf *farpeggi* *p*

23. Allegro con fuoco.

p 3

p * * * * *

molto cresc. * * * * *

24. Allegro spiritoso.

p 3 * * * * *

sostenuto *p* * * * * *

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