

“To Prevent the Abuse of the Open Pedal”: Meticulous Pedal Markings from Madame du Brillon to Moscheles

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HERE IS A RIDDLE: WHICH part of the body uses the pedal? Pianists immediately discern that this is a trick question, and proffer an array of different responses—including basically anything *but* the foot. Is it the upper thigh? the ankle? could it be the stomach muscles? The answer is, of course, “your ears.”¹

It is clear that our concept of what is tasteful, stylish, or desirable in terms of tone color and timbre is by no means transhistorical. Rob Wegman, John Butt, and Shai Burstyn have all critiqued the idea that “musicians of the past [...] heard and felt just like us, and that we hear and feel just like them.”² We know, for instance, that certain instruments and linguistic accents of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were probably quite nasal and forward, and that these sounds, unpleasant to many today, were considered interesting and were widespread, if our work on historical diction and the sounds of historical instruments are good indicators.³

Dahlhaus drew on the work of Habermas when he characterized “historical

¹ This paper was first presented at the Forte/Piano Conference hosted by the Westfield Center for Historical Keyboard Studies at Cornell University on Friday, August 7, 2015. I’d like to thank all those who contributed to the discussion afterwards, in particular the chair of the panel, Neal Zaslaw, and conference participants Maria Rose, Tilman Skowronek, Sandra Rosenblum, Tom Beghin, and especially Carmel Raz. I am indebted to Scott Davie for first introducing me to the riddle.

² Rob C. Wegman, “Sense and sensibility in late-medieval music: Thoughts on aesthetics and ‘authenticity,’” *Early Music* 23, no. 2 (1995): 311; John Butt, *Playing with History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 44; Shai Burstyn, “In Quest of the Period Ear,” *Early Music* 25, no. 4 (1997): 629–701.

³ For diction see Eugene Green, *La Parole Baroque* (Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 2001) and Timothy J. McGee, ed., *Singing Early Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004). On the preference for nasality in woodwind instruments, see, for example, Geoffrey Burgess and Bruce Haynes, *The Oboe* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2004).

thought” as an opposition between tradition as “memory institutionalized into a science” and history as a process of what he called “controlled estrangement,” or a conscious re-imagining of an entirely alien culture.⁴ The challenge, according to Dahlhaus, lies less in the separation between the historian and history itself but more in teasing out these conceptual differences—between history as tradition and history as rupture. As Christopher Morris points out, “[s]imply to view history as a gap to be bridged through knowledge would imply a degree of certainty about the nature of the gap: I am here, my object of enquiry is there.”⁵ Dahlhaus argues that the issue is more reflexive: to what extent is the historian already a participant in what she or he observes from without?

As Malcolm Bilson and others have observed in the realm of historical performance practice, greater strides in re-imagining an alien culture have been made in orchestras than in the piano.⁶ In a nice description of how the effects of “controlled estrangement” have changed contemporary tastes since the 1980s, Peter Walls comments in regard to the reevaluation of a once continual “Romantic” vibrato that “I am at a loss to pinpoint exactly when an intellectual acceptance of a musicological argument [becomes] metamorphosed into a way of listening.”⁷ Despite the pioneering efforts of scholars and performers such as Sandra Rosenblum, David Rowland, Michael Latham, David Breitman, and Tom Beghin in particular, I would like to argue that performers on historical pianos and their audiences have not really embraced the sonic implications of documented damper-raising practices.⁸ We might have somehow become accustomed to different kinds and uses of vibrato, as Peter Walls attests, but we have not yet become accustomed to long sections of either undamped open pedal, or indeed long sections with no pedal at all, in repertoire of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when damper-raising practices were most diverse. Even if many markings are

⁴ Carl Dahlhaus, *Foundations of Music History*, trans. J. B. Robinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 67–68.

⁵ Christopher Morris, *Modernism and the Cult of Mountains: Music, Opera, Cinema* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2012), 84.

⁶ Malcolm Bilson and Elizabeth Field, *Performing the Score* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2011), DVD.

⁷ Peter Walls, *History, Imagination and the Performance of Music* (Rochester: Boydell and Brewer, 2003), 52.

⁸ Sandra Rosenblum, *Performance Practices in Classic Piano Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988); David Rowland, *A History of Pianoforte Pedalling* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Michael Latham, ed., *Music of the Past – Instruments and Imagination* (Berne: Peter Lang, 2006); David Breitman, “The damper pedal and the Beethoven piano sonatas: a historical perspective” (DMA thesis, Cornell University, 1993); Tom Beghin, “Playing Mozart’s Piano: An Exercise in Reverse-Engineering,” *Keyboard Perspectives* 1 (2007–2008): 1–35.

precise in notating the raising and—more importantly—the subsequent lowering of the dampers, we see these as indicative and suggestive, and in performance and teaching we often use the pedal where no markings appear and also in very short, high frequency bursts, rather than the longer swathes notated at a lower frequency. Following Dahlhaus's observation, I would like to suggest that many pianists, in their damper-raising interpretations of scores performed on historical instruments, rely less on organological and notational implications and more on their ears and perhaps also on foot habits learned at contemporary uprights and grands. Here the status quo resembles more a history of continuing tradition and less a history of rupture.

One of the challenges is that the story or meta-narrative of damper-raising is one of teleological progression. Notations that resemble modern continual damper-raising, or composer/performers who appear to have used a lot of pedal are often labelled as “progressive” and “modern,” while others who differ from these practices are “conservative” or “rudimentary.” They are not “adventurous” or “advanced.” These adjectives, for example, come from David Rowland's 1993 account of the history of pianoforte pedaling.⁹ Accordingly, Rowland describes nineteenth-century pianists such as Jan Ladislav Dussek, François Adrien Boieldieu, and Ludwig van Beethoven as progressive (because they appear to pedal a lot) and Johann Nepomuk Hummel, Ignaz Moscheles, and Muzio Clementi as conservative (because they pedal more selectively). It can also be argued that a similar meta-narrative exists in regard to historical keyboard fingering. Practices on either side of the paradigm shift in which the thumb rather than the longer fingers begins to carry the hand attract similar adjectives: paired fingering is rudimentary and in need of reform, and thumbs-under is progressive.¹⁰ The anachronistic presence of a conductor in today's historically-informed performances (mostly of music composed before the widespread adoption of Louis Spohr's innovative baton technique around 1820) is explained away with similar adjectives. A conductor trained in the complicated gestures of twentieth-century conducting practices, it is posited, can rehearse the ensemble more effectively and communicate his or her vision much more quickly than someone using historical methods of beating time, or the dual violin/keyboard mode of musical leadership.¹¹ These stories of pedaling or fingering or conducting tend to support

⁹ Rowland, *A History of Pianoforte Pedalling*, 43, 105ff., 118, 71, 77, 78.

¹⁰ Jeffrey Swinkin, “Keyboard Fingering and Interpretation: a Comparison of Historical and Modern Approaches,” *Performance Practice Review* 12, no. 1 (2007): 1–26.

¹¹ Bernard D. Sherman, “Conducting early music,” in José A. Bowen, ed., *The Cambridge Companion*

the concept of inexorable progress toward a perfected musical practice, and, like all meta-narratives, they arguably serve an essentializing purpose that, in the words of John Butt, “is by no means innocent or universally valid.”¹²

Butt has made similar observations in regard to developments in music notation. In his chapter “Rewriting the story of notational progress,” Butt proposes several alternative relations between music notation and performance in order to counter the problematic belief that “music history has always had the goal of precise performance specifications, which was only imperfectly attained in the earlier periods.”¹³ His alternative five-fold model is as follows: Notation as Purposely Incomplete, Notation as “Fitted Suit,” Notation as Example, Notation as a Record of Performing Tradition/Notation as Description, and Notation as an Alternative Embodiment of Music. Most of these are self-explanatory, although the last is perhaps the most intriguing: this is “eye-music,” or notation that is “generally regarded as ‘complete,’ in some respect, on paper, but in which the composer, in fact, allowed, expected, or himself [sic] made deviations in performance.”¹⁴ It is precisely this last alternative story of notation that is invoked by many who raise the damper-block in places where there is no indication to do so in the score. Carl Czerny himself noted in 1846, almost two decades after Beethoven’s death, that the latter had used “much more [pedal] than is indicated in his works.”¹⁵

Inspired by Butt’s liberating recalibration of the history of musical notation, I would like to propose a similar set of alternative readings to our story of damper-raising. My goal is to cast a variety of approaches in a more positive light that is less concerned with marching toward standardized modernity and more calibrated to the diverse practices that appear to have flourished in the first five decades of the history of damper-raising. Butt’s five-fold model overlaps and coalesces at fuzzy borders and so does mine. The four I suggest here, heavily influenced by the work of Sandra Rosenblum, Tom Beghin, and Carmel Raz, are: Damper-raising as Aeolian Reverberation; Damper-raising as Legato Glue/Timbral Enhancer; Damper-raising as Imitative Device; and Damper-raising as

to *Conducting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 237–48; Matthias Maute, “Using the Art of Gesture in Conducting Early Music,” *Early Music America* 18, no. 3 (2012): 64–65.

¹² Butt, *Playing with History*, 102.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 101.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 118.

¹⁵ Carl Czerny, *Die Kunst des Vortrags der älteren und neueren Klaviercompositionen*, vol. 4 of *Pianoforte-Schule*, op. 500 (Vienna: Diabelli, 1846), 4.

Theatricalized Formal Function.¹⁶ Thinking about the pedal in these ways, rather than as progressively aligned events on a historical continuum, might help us better understand and perform the diverse practices that appear to be found in scores and treatises on damper-raising in the earliest decades of its history.

I have used the words “open pedal” and “pedaling,” but of course keyboardists have at various stages in the piano’s development used their hands, knees, and feet to lift the damper block, hence my preference for “damper-raising.” It comes as no surprise that the order in which these appeared coincided with developments in changes to harpsichord registration. At first operated by the keyboardist’s hands, harpsichord registration was altered from the 1760s onwards by the French with the knee and by the English with the foot. Women, who made up the overwhelming majority of those who performed keyboard music, appear to have had a special relationship with the raised dampers from the very earliest days. One of the first and also most famous accounts of the raising of the dampers comes from Charles Burney, describing Madame du Brillon in Paris in 1770, who, on an English square sent to her by J. C. Bach, refused to play with the “stops on—*c’est sec* [it’s dry], she said.”¹⁷ Burney opined privately in his journal that “with them off unless in arpeggios, nothing is distinct—‘tis like the sound of bells, continual and confluent.”¹⁸

Brillon was a particular advocate of keyboard technology, composing a remarkable trio for her English square, her German wing-shaped piano, and her French harpsichord.¹⁹ Female performers like Brillon appear to have included the pedal in their own compositions far earlier and with greater regularity than male professionals. A duet of Brillon’s for harp and keyboard in G minor from around 1780 contains extensive damper-raising markings and appears to predate by almost a decade the single marking in a 1787 sonata by Louis Jadin that is generally considered the “first music with pedaling indications.”²⁰ Example 1 shows

¹⁶ Rosenblum, *Performance Practices in Classic Piano Music*; Beghin, “Playing Mozart’s Piano”; Carmel Raz, “‘The Expressive Organ within Us’: Ether, Ethereality, and Early Romantic Ideas about Music and the Nerves,” *19th-Century Music* 38, no. 2 (2014): 115–44.

¹⁷ Charles Burney, *Music, Men and Manners in France and Italy, 1770*, ed. Edmund Poole (London: Eulenberg Books, 1974), 19–20.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ The extraordinary works and pedalling effects of Madame du Brillon is the current subject of another research project by the author.

²⁰ On the dating of Brillon’s manuscript see Bruce Gustafson, “The Music of Madame Brillon: A Unified Manuscript Collection from Benjamin Franklin’s Circle,” *Notes* 43, no. 3 (1987): 522–43, 535. For the earliest indications of pedal markings, see David Rowland, “Pedalling,” *Grove Music*



Example 1 An early use of damper-raising, ca. 1780, Sonata for Harp and Piano, Madame du Brillon. The direction reads “très doux et ensuite crescendo avec la grande pédale jusqu’au signe [fermata sign].” Mss. 761.508.B762. Courtesy of the Library of the American Philosophical Society.

her first indication, in which the “grand pédale” is used to create a massive wash of sound that is left to resonate at the height of its reverberation. All the notes of the (presumably?) square piano have been used to create the crescendo effect.

Although Burney refers dismissively to the sound of the square piano as an imitation of bells, it is entirely possible that Brillon was adding “reverb” to an instrument in a small room, thus evoking for the performer and her listeners the expansiveness of a public realm—a realm that, whether in- or outdoors, was generally considered off-limits for the majority of female amateur performers. Certainly, reverberations such as these seem to have induced feelings of transcendental expansiveness in others. “Open pedal” reverberations bring to mind the sounds of the damper-less harp. Listening to the harpist Madame Krumpholz, Susan Burney remarked in 1791 that “the effect of distance w[hich] she is able to produce in her diminuendo have [sic] an effect that I cannot describe—but w[hich] seemed to lift me to another sphere.”²¹ Example 2 shows Brillon experimenting with these two reverberant sounds. The pianist is directed to depress the pedal in addition to touching the chords lightly; such an effect serves as a halo for the harp player’s filigree.

Online, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed January 28, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40787>; and David Rowland, “Early Pianoforte Pedalling: The Evidence of the Earliest Printed Markings,” *Early Music* 13, no. 1 (1985): 3–17, 5–6.

²¹ Susan Burney, *The Journals and Letters of Susan Burney: Music and Society in Late Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. Philip Olleson (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 244.



Example 2 An early use of damper-raising, ca. 1780, Sonata for Harp and Piano, Madame du Brillon. The direction reads “avec la grande pédale et touchée légèrement.” Mss. 761.508.B762. Courtesy of the Library of the American Philosophical Society.



Figure 1 Aeolian Harp by Robert Bloomfield, ca. 1815. Photo by Simon Speed, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:BloomfieldAeolianHarp.JPG>, accessed August 23, 2016.

This idea of reverberation as evoking distance or space, and by extension, nature itself, coalesces most compellingly in the contemporary image of the Aeolian harp, as evoked in literature, novels, and treatises of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Named after Aeolus, the god of the wind, the Aeolian harp is a wooden box with a soundboard with strings of different materials and thicknesses being sounded invisibly by the motion of the air (see Figure 1). Many were attracted to this instrument because the forces of nature controlled



Example 3 Carl Czerny, *Piano Forte School*, op. 500, trans. J. A. Hamilton (London: Cocks, 1839), 3:61.

it.²² Poets in particular felt an affinity for it: all creative ‘music’ or inspiration came from outside the instrument, just as all creative power was thought to come from outside the poet in some sublime way. Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s 1795 poem “The Eolian Harp” compares the harp to the sensual moment between lovers, and muses on the relationship between nature and humanity. His view of sensation was a typical one for the time: “Sound was = Light under the praepotence of Gravitation, and Color = Gravitation under the praepotence of Light.”²³ The rippling sound of the Aeolian harp was thought to be analogous to the rippling of light under the influence of gravity. Coleridge writes:

O! the one Life within us and abroad,
Which meets all motion and becomes its soul,
A light in sound, a sound-like power in light,
Rhythm in all thought, and joyance everywhere—
Methinks, it should have been impossible
Not to love all things in a world so filled.²⁴

Czerny refers to the rippling effect in the third example on pedaling in his op. 500, which demonstrates how “dissonant chords” played “with extreme softness and delicacy” produce “the soft undulating effect of the Eolian Harp, or of very distant music” (see Example 3).²⁵

²² On the Romantic symbolism of the Aeolian harp, see Thomas L. Hankins and Robert J. Silverman, *Instruments and the Imagination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 86–112 and Raz, “‘The Expressive Organ within Us.’”

²³ David Jasper, *Coleridge as Poet and Religious Thinker* (Allison Park: Pickwick Publications, 1985), 36–37.

²⁴ Samuel Coleridge Taylor, “The Eolian Harp” (1795). Coleridge added these lines to “The Eolian Harp” in the Errata sheet of *Sibylline Leaves* in 1817. See Paul Magnuson, “The ‘Conversation’ Poems” in Lucy Newlyn, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Coleridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 36.

²⁵ Carl Czerny, *Piano Forte School*, op. 500, trans. J. A. Hamilton (London: Cocks, 1839) 3:61. This musical example, as well as most of the following examples, are available as recordings on the



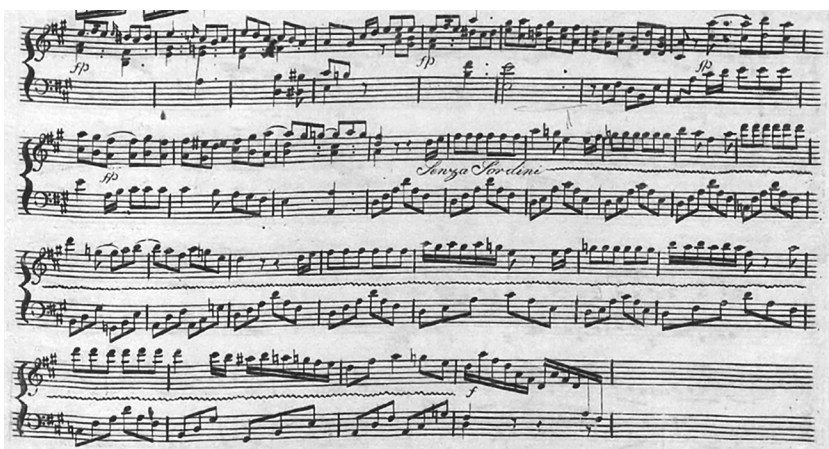
Example 4 Muzio Clementi, op. 37, no. 1 (London: Longman & Broderip, 1798), mm. 77–87.



Example 5 Joseph Woelfl, op. 6, no. 3 (Augsburg: Gombart & Co, 1798), p. 29.

Coleridge's contemporary, Muzio Clementi, began to notate Aeolian effects in his op. 37 of 1798 (Example 4). It is a texture that is reserved for the close of each formal section, something to be savored and caressed (marked *dolce e legato*). The reverberation suggests something otherworldly or even nostalgic—a rural calmness perhaps, or bagpipes as heard from a distance, as some reviewers described it. In Vienna in the same year, Joseph Woelfl (1773–1812) appeared to be picking up on a similar Aeolian sentiment. The third of his sonatas dedicated to Beethoven contains the Viennese equivalent of “open Pedal” and “without Pedal”: “senza sordini” and “con sordini” (see Example 5). Again, damper-raising effects are reserved for closing sections. But there are also otherworldly sections that might suggest nature and distance, highlighted by changes in key and reverberation. Note the particularly elegant swerve to the subdominant in the fourth measure of the second stave of Example 6. Daniel Steibelt too seems

website accompanying this volume.



Example 6 Joseph Woelfl, op. 6, no. 3 (Augsburg: Gombart & Co, 1798), p. 39.

a RONDO Pastoral.
 in which is introduced an Imitation of a Storm.

 A page of handwritten musical notation for a piano piece. The score is written on two staves. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'Solo'. The piece is titled 'a RONDO Pastoral.' and includes a subtitle 'in which is introduced an Imitation of a Storm.'

Example 7 Daniel Steibelt, op. 33 (London: Preston, ca. 1798), p. 20.

to be lifting the dampers in an Aeolian evocation of idyllic nature at the start of his famous “Storm” rondo of 1798 (see Example 7).

Like Brillon, the talented English pianist and composer Jane Mary Guest (ca. 1762–1846) provided extensive open pedal markings that demonstrate an idiomatic knowledge of keyboard technology in her Sonata with violin accompaniment of 1807 (see Example 8). In this example, release markings in mm. 47 and 48 provide clarity for the upper register and seem particularly well-timed for the “feather-duster” dampers of a typical English piano of the period. This mechanism dampened only partially, allowing for notes to ring on a little even when the dampers had been lowered. Guest uses a syncopated figuration that often accompanied open pedal designations and may have had its roots in emulating the pantalon, another Aeolian-like instrument of distant memory. The romantic haze provided by this open pedal foreshadows the haunt-

The image displays a musical score for Example 8, featuring a piano part and a violin accompaniment. The piano part is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It includes several measures with complex textures and markings. The violin part is written in G major and 4/4 time, providing a harmonic and melodic accompaniment. The score is divided into four systems, with measure numbers 47, 49, 51, and 56 indicated at the beginning of each system. The markings include 'mez.' (mezzo-forte), 'Ped.' (pedal), 'dim.' (diminuendo), 'ritard.' (ritardando), 'loco' (loco), 'pp Legato sempre' (pianissimo, legato sempre), 'rit.' (ritardando), and 'pp' (pianissimo). The piano part features a variety of textures, including arpeggiated figures, sustained chords, and moving lines. The violin part consists of a single melodic line with various articulations and dynamics.

Example 8 Jane Mary Guest, *Adagio con Molto Espressione* from *Sonata for the Piano Forte*, with an Accompaniment for the Violin *ad libitum* (London: Clementi & Co, 1807), mm. 47–60.

ing opening to the “*Adagio Dolente*” from *Didone Abbandonata*, composed in 1821 by Guest’s teacher, Clementi (see Example 9). In Clementi’s programmatic scenario, Dido laments to the echoing, empty vales conjured up by Clementi’s pedaling indications. The Aeolian mixed harmonies of these markings also seem to create a sonic space into which the keyboardist might be able to project a lyric voice. Crying out, like Dido in Clementi’s *scena tragica*, she hears only her own laments as responses. The famous pedal markings under the textless recitative in Beethoven’s “*Tempest*” sonata of 1801/2 similarly appear to outline and highlight an eerie and disembodied voice that sings to its own echo. Aeolian effects here seem to suggest nature or the sublime, or both at once, as they did for Coleridge.

Aeolian effects have been discussed in vivid historical detail by Carmel Raz, who notes the interaction between poetic descriptions of the Aeolian harp and contemporary accounts of the nerves of the brain and other sensitive organs and



Example 9 Muzio Clementi, *Didone Abbandonata*, op. 50, no. 3 (London: Clementi & Co, 1821), 49.

components of the human nervous system.²⁶ Raz documents reactions to swelling and receding dynamic effects, as well as composers' efforts to imitate or conjure up the Aeolian effect. Fanny Burney's hair-raising account of Krumpholtz's playing was not unique. For many, the Aeolian effect was by turns awe-inspiring, ghostly, and otherworldly. For some the sound was attractive, ethereal, and transcendent. For Hector Berlioz, it induced feelings of suicide and despondency.²⁷ Regardless, it was an effect, a state of mind and body that was very much in the spirit of the times in the early nineteenth century.

Some printed admonishments against abusing the open pedal may indeed be a sign that Aeolian effects were a favored technique among many in keyboard culture of the time, and perhaps it was being used so much that its unique attributes were being somewhat lost. A disciplinary agenda begins to appear. In 1797, Steibelt warned that "when you hear the harmony is too confused, release the pedal for the value of a quaver and retake it immediately."²⁸ A year later, Steibelt specifically introduced pedal markings in order to prevent "Discord

²⁶ Raz, "The Expressive Organ within Us," 125–34.

²⁷ "Écoutez [...] la fantastique harmonie d'une harpe éolienne balancée au sommet d'un arbre dépouillé de verdure, et vous pourrez éprouver un sentiment profond de tristesse, un désir vague et infini d'une autre existence, un dégoût immense de celle-ci, en un mot une forte atteinte de spleen jointe à une tentation de suicide." "[Listen] to the weird moans of an Aeolian harp hung in the leafless branches of a tree, and you will experience a feeling of intense sadness, an infinite yearning for another state of existence, an intense disgust with the present; in fact, a regular attack of blue devils and a longing for suicide." Hector Berlioz, *Memoirs of Hector Berlioz, From 1803 to 1865*, trans. Rachel Scott Russell Holmes and Eleanor Holmes (London: Macmillan, 1884), 156.

²⁸ Steibelt's op. 27 No. 1 (1797), 34, quoted in Rowland, *History of Pianoforte Pedalling*, 63.



Example 10 Muzio Clementi, *Four Sonatas for the Piano Forte* [...] *A new Edition with corrections and additions by the Author, op. 12* (London: Clementi & Co, ca. 1801), 3.

& Confusion.”²⁹ When Clementi revised his op. 12 in 1801/2, for example, he added a significant footnote that echoed Steibelt’s concerns: “N.B. To prevent the *Abuse* of the open pedal, the Author has marked Ped: when it is to be put down, and * when it is to be taken up.”³⁰ This remarkable edition documents, in meticulous detail, Clementi’s considered use of the pedal. Over the course of forty pages he indicates the pedal in only thirty instances, and many are not in places where our modern ears might intuit it. For example, there is no pedal marking here to sustain the bass note F in the first system of Example 10, as we might do intuitively today, but Clementi does reserve it, in classic fashion, to outline the close of this section, just as Woelfl and others do. And Hummel, writing in

²⁹ Introductory note to op. 33, quoted in Rowland, *History of Pianoforte Pedalling*, 71.

³⁰ Muzio Clementi, *Four Sonatas for the Piano Forte* [...] *A new Edition with corrections and additions by the Author, op. 12* (London: Clementi & Co, ca. 1801), 2.



Example 11 Hummel's example of mixed tonic-and-dominant. Johann Nepomuk Hummel, *Art of Playing the Piano Forte* (London: Boosey and Co, 1827), 3:63.



Example 12 Hummel's example of open pedal with the moderato, again mixing tonic and dominant. Johann Nepomuk Hummel, *Art of Playing the Piano Forte* (London: Boosey and Co, 1827), 3:63.

Weimar in 1827, disapproves of the improvised Aeolian effect: “A performance with the dampers almost constantly raised, resorted to by way of a cloak to an impure and indistinct method of playing, has become so much the fashion that many players would no longer be recognized, if they were debarred the use of the Pedals.”³¹ Yet his own examples of their use, which freely mix tonic and dominant, might be said by some today to exhibit a “confusion of sounds, arising from a series of notes clashing one against another,” to quote his own censure.³² Here is a good example of history as rupture (see Examples 11 and 12).

The markings of Clementi, Steibelt, and Hummel, among others of the generations born in the 1750s, 1760s, and 1770s, reveal a style of piano playing on both

³¹ Johann Nepomuk Hummel, *Art of Playing the Piano Forte* (London: Boosey and Co., 1827), 3:62.

³² *Ibid.*



Example 13 Johann Nepomuk Hummel, op. 13 (Vienna: Bureau des arts et d'industrie, 1805), 14.



Example 14 Johann Nepomuk Hummel, op. 13 (Vienna: Bureau des arts et d'industrie, 1805), 21. Following Hummel's own example from his 1827 treatise, one might choose to depress the pedal four times in 2-measure patterns in the pedal-point passage, thereby mixing tonic and dominant.

Viennese and English instruments that relies more on the fingers than on the feet. Indeed, W. S. Stevens's *Treatise on Piano-Forte Expression* (London, 1811) explicitly condemned those who were "trusting for effect more from the pedals than from the finger, which when properly applied, is only truly capable of yielding musical effect and expression."³³ Many composers were careful to avoid notating counterpoint that cannot be physically played. Note in Example 13, from Hummel's op. 13 dedicated to Haydn, how the elegant bass line has half notes when all the notes can be grasped, and eighth notes when the hand must leap. Later in the movement (see Example 14) there is a pedal-point section that resembles Hummel's own explication on the pedals (Example 12). One can imagine two interpretations (both of which are available on the website accompanying this

³³ W. S. Stevens, *Treatise on Piano-Forte Expression* (London: Jones, 1811), 16.



Example 15 Franz Schubert, *Sonata in A major*, op. posth. 120 (D. 664), ca. 1819, mm. 1–10. Does the careful left-hand articulation preclude or include damper-raising?

volume), one without pedal and another inspired by Hummel's example of a mixed tonic and dominant, in which the pedal is depressed every two measures, and by which means "the damper Pedal may be resorted to with the least breach of propriety."³⁴ Schubert, too, employed this careful kind of notation in op. 120. A version without pedal would reveal and highlight the left-hand articulation; a performance with pedal inspired by Czerny's comments of 1839 ("the pedal must always be relinquished and resumed at every change of chord") would, however, sonically efface Schubert's articulation (both versions are recorded on the website accompanying this volume).³⁵ The dots and slurs, in this latter interpretation, may simply suggest the carriage of the hands (see Example 15).

By contrast, clear and precise notation that appears to indicate damper-raising is actually quite rare, probably because it lies outside the natural grasp of the hand. Exceptions occur mainly in French publications in which the use of the pedal was apparently more widespread. A typical indication is the span of the tenth, such as that in mm. 1–3 of the first movement of François-Adrien

³⁴ Hummel, *Art of Playing the Piano Forte*, 3:62.

³⁵ Czerny, *Piano Forte School*, 3:61.



Example 16 Clear damper-raising counterpoint: François Adrien Boieldieu, op. 6 (Paris: Cochet, 1800), mm. 1–8.

Boieldieu's op. 6 of 1800 (see Example 16).³⁶ Raising the dampers to assist the newly fashionable legato delivery of the early nineteenth century was allied with the concept that the pedal augments and assists the resonance of the piano. Louis Adam (1758–1848), Johann Baptist Cramer (1771–1858) and Joseph Czerny (1785–1842) all specifically mention that damper-raising helps unite the tones.³⁷ Legato delivery and increased resonance are good ways to characterize the rationale behind the approaches at the so-called “dawn of modern piano pedaling,” as one recent author puts it.³⁸ This approach was dominated by the syncopated technique that many of us use today and unequivocally advocated by Hans Schmitt in 1875. “Since [...] the pedal strengthens and beautifies the tone,” he wrote, “it should be used with every single tone and chord whose duration is long enough to admit of the foot being lowered and raised during the same, whether the composer has indicated it or not.”³⁹

It is significant in this regard that, rather than resort to increased use of the pedal in the way that Schmitt suggests, Frédéric Kalkbrenner in 1824, desperate to make a Viennese instrument work for him before a concert, hit upon the idea

³⁶ For other examples see Rowland, *History of Pianoforte Pedaling*, 64, 73.

³⁷ Louis Adam, *Méthode de piano du Conservatoire* (Paris: Magasin de Musique du Conservatoire Royal, 1804), 218; Johann Baptist Cramer, *Praktische Pianoforte-Schule* (Berlin: Lischke, 1826), 46; Joseph Czerny, *Der Wiener-Klavier-Lehrer* (Vienna: n.p., ca. 1826), 15.

³⁸ The language of evolution, or the imagery of darkness-to-dawn, is prevalent and all-pervasive in many discussions of pianoforte pedalling, both old and new. Note the title of Andrea Marie Keil, “The Dawn of Modern Piano Pedaling: Early Twentieth-Century Piano Pedaling Literature and Techniques” (M.Mus thesis, Graduate College of Bowling Green State University, 2015). See also Joseph Banowetz, *The Pianist's Guide to Pedaling* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).

³⁹ Hans Schmitt, *The Pedals of the Piano-Forte*, trans. Frederick S. Law (Philadelphia: Theodore Presser, 1893), 97.

Example 17 Franz Xavier Mozart, *Polonaise mélancoliques*, op. 17, no. 5 (1815). Pedal as timbral enhancer.

of placing “a piece of cork under the damper rail in the treble, so the upper two octaves were almost not damped; thus I succeeded in avoiding that dryness and separateness that existed between the notes and in realizing the effects I wanted.”⁴⁰ Kalkbrenner created on the Graf piano the English singing style he was accustomed to, but he did so by permanently adjusting the damper block itself, rather than using the pedal mechanism. Franz Xavier Mozart might have been responding to a similar timbral preference with pedal markings such as those in Example 17, which serve to provide a halo for the upper two octaves of a Graf-type piano. The long pedal markings in this unusually-titled *Polonaise*

⁴⁰ Frédéric Kalkbrenner, *Méthode pour apprendre le piano-forte à l’aide du guide-mains* (op. 108) (Paris: for the author, 1831), 10. The translation is Tilman Skowronek’s, from his *Beethoven the Pianist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 162.

Larghetto con moto

p

Ped.

pp

Ped.

Tempo 1mo

pp

p

stringendo - - - cresc. - - -

Example 18 Ferdinand Ries, *Prelude in G*, op. 60, no. 34 (1815).

Mélancholique might also refer to the all-enveloping wash of melancholy itself. In a prelude of 1815 by Ferdinand Ries, published in simultaneous editions in London and on the Continent and so destined for English as well as Viennese-type pianos, the pedal serves again to reinforce the “additional keys,” as the English called the higher notes. But there are also Aeolian effects that mix tonic and dominant in distant reverberance, and, at the close, the pedal (with no release mark) knits all the tones together to assert the tonality for the piece that is to follow (see Example 18).

Damper-raising seems also to have signified various different kinds of aural, visual, and dramatic effects for some writers. Johann Milchmeyer’s 1797 and Friedrich Starke’s 1819–21 treatises compare various combinations of damper-raising mutations to little bells, a duet for two men, a duet by a man and woman,



Example 19 Muzio Clementi, *Didone Abbandonata*, op. 50, no. 3 (London: Clementi & Co, 1821), p. 53. There is a page turn after the pedal release.



Example 20 Steibelt, op. 33 (London: Preston, ca. 1798), p. 10.

a solo female voice, the rising sun, clouds dispersing, the setting sun, a rocket being launched, a person angrily seizing another by the hand, the glass harmonica, castanets, the tambourine, the harp, the mandolin, distant music, and the answer of an echo.⁴¹ The sun metaphors and the last two examples resonate with Aeolian imagery. These descriptions accord with similar references in guitar treatises of Fernando Sor and Dionisio Aguado.⁴² Clearly, reverberant sounds of the early nineteenth century stimulated a search for imitative equivalents that categorized an imagined sonic universe of the solo player at the guitar, harp, or keyboard.

My last alternative reading of the relationship between damper-raising and performance—Theatricalized Formal Function—is heavily indebted to the research of Sandra Rosenblum, who outlines many examples in the literature that highlight or theatricalize formal function.⁴³ The ramifications of these markings,

⁴¹ Johann Peter Milchmeyer, *Die wahre Art das Pianoforte zu spielen* (Dresden: Meinhold, 1797); Friedrich Starke, *Wiener Pianoforte-Schule*, 3 vols. (Vol I, Vienna: Bey dem Verfasse, 1819; Vol. II, Vienna: Sprenger, 1819; Vol. III, Vienna: Bermann, 1821).

⁴² Fernando Sor, *Méthode pour La Guitare* (Bonn: Simrock, 1831); Dionisio Aguado, *Escuela de Guitarra* (Madrid: for the author, 1825).

⁴³ Sandra Rosenblum, "[Pedal] Indications that Highlight Form," in *Performance Practices in Classic*

4

The author thinks that he cannot express better than he has done in this and the following page, his idea for producing an effect quite different from that of playing, in the usual way, either without or with the pedal which raises the dampers. The figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, marked at equal distances one from the other, represent the six quavers contained in each bar, and are marked here in order to facilitate the student in keeping perfect time. The demi-semi-quaver rests *thus* ♩, on one line under the figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, show that the foot must be entirely off the pedal during the rest ♩; and the pedal acted upon immediately after, and kept down till the next rest ♩. The mark **P** (for brevity's sake) is here made use of, instead of the word "pedal." The quavers and the dotted crotchets are, of course, the only notes that are to be played *sostenuto* by keeping the thumb down, while the other notes, on the contrary, are to be played *staccato* as written. The proper movement of the six quavers contained in each bar, may be easily ascertained without the aid of a *metronome*, by referring to the fifth bar of this page and playing the four successive chords as quickly as possible.

NB. This and the following page must be played *forte* till the word *dolce* is marked.

Adagio ♩ = 80.

Example 21 Auguste-Benoît Bertini, *Lultima Fantasia* (London: n.p., 1844), p. 4.

I would argue, have yet to be employed or imitated by players in performances of works in which the composer has not given any hint of damper-raising. Clementi used the pedal as tellingly as Beethoven to theatricalize formal function. One of the many intriguing effects in *Didone Abbandonata* appears in the finale. The vacillation between the raised seventh and eighth degrees of the scale has been an important element since the opening: Will it rise, or it will fall? Will Dido be saved or abandoned? Clementi uses the pedal to outline formal function and long-range melodic structure at the close in order to highlight the implacability of Dido's fate. She is stuck in eternal dissonance: twice Clementi uses the pedal in order to permit the listener and performer to meditate upon her hopelessness, an effect heightened in both instances by the performer with a dramatic page turn (see Example 19). Steibelt binds tones together in a similar way in his famous "Storm" rondo (see Example 20), which ethereally mixes tonic and dominant of the distant key of G-sharp minor after a rumbunctious passage in B major. Has the storm abated, or is it just a lull? We contemplate the beating of intersecting tones created by the confluence of magnetically repelling poles of tonic and dominant, or storm and calm—the winds blowing over the Aeolian harp.

Thinking of damper-raising in alternative ways such as these might help us make sense of unusual pedal markings. Auguste-Benoit Bertini (1780–1843), for instance, documents a unique marking in which silence—and not sound—is



Example 22 Ignaz Moscheles, *Hommage à Weber*, op. 102 (Leipzig: Kistner, 1842), 10–11. The primo (top system) takes the pedal from the secondo and then turns the page (marked by “V. S.” [Volti Subito]).

pedaled (see Example 21, with Bertini’s elaborate explanation). Here is an extreme kind of Aeolian effect. In a strange mix of keyboard music and science experiment, Bertini tries to amplify with the pedal the sounds of the dampers themselves, as if, like the many poets who built Aeolian harps, he was trying to capture the sound of the wind.

Another resource for meticulous pedal markings can be found in the literature for four hands. Here, feet need to be coordinated as much as hands. Adrian Daub, in his account of four-handed music culture, notes that, as the secondo usual pedals, it is that player who “determines what kind of sound emerges.”⁴⁴ Daub asks us to imagine “a singer whose sound could be manipulated by the accompanist just by pushing down a pedal!”⁴⁵ Ignaz Moscheles, for example, crams his duets with many instances of “warning” pedal markings; these occur in both primo and secondo parts, suggesting that responsibility for the pedals swapped from player to player (see Example 22). So, entwining arms were also entwining legs. This image lends credence to Adrian Daub’s remarkable, close reading of the monstrous four-handed rat-king in E. T. A. Hoffman’s *Prinzessin Brambilla*.⁴⁶

Many authors, performers, and composers of the early nineteenth century were

⁴⁴ Adrian Daub, *Four-Handed Monsters: Four-Hand Piano Playing and Nineteenth-Century Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 125.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 198–99.

familiar with both English and Viennese types of pianos, and both grands and squares. Clementi, for example, described the tone of the Viennese piano in 1804 as “clear, sharp or silver,” whereas the English liked their pianos to sound “thick and sweet”—neither description is pejorative.⁴⁷ His later editions were printed simultaneously in many different cities and so were conceived for a variety of different practices, and he also added a multitude of pedal markings when he revised many of his earlier works for publication in his *Oeuvres Complètes* of 1804. These revisions are invaluable for documenting Clementi’s pedal technique around this time. Clementi asks the pianist to depress the pedal only 28 times in the entirety of *Didone Abbandonata*. In this way, like vibrato, the pedal becomes marked by its infrequent use and not unmarked by continual use, which tends to obscure the notations already in place. “Controlled estrangement” such as this might encourage us to re-assess Moscheles’s comment that “a good pianist uses the pedals as little as possible; too frequent use leads to abuse. Moreover, why should he try to produce an effect with his feet instead of his hands? A horseman might as well use his spur instead of the bridle.”⁴⁸

How, then, to employ the pedals in a historically-informed manner? In the Viennese camp, Hummel himself advises, “Let the Pupil never employ the Pedals before he can play a piece correctly and intelligibly.”⁴⁹ In the English one, Stevens similarly recommends that “the student must regard the [pedaled] example, as if the pedal was close [sic], and then the *manner* of playing it is to be considered.”⁵⁰ Kalkbrenner, an advocate of pedaling and English instruments in general, also warns “pupils to practice without the pedal all those parts which require much execution, lest their mistakes should be hidden by the confusion which might result from their inexperience.”⁵¹ Even as late as 1880, Hans von Bülow recommends in his edition of Chopin’s opp. 10 and 25 that the “use of the pedal during practice is entirely excluded.”⁵² Conceptually, the idea here is that the pedal is only to be added once the fingers are in control.

⁴⁷ Clementi to Frederick William Collard (August 17, 1803), quoted in Leon Plantinga, *Clementi: His Life and Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1977), 192.

⁴⁸ Ignaz Moscheles, quoted in *The Etude* 6, no. 8 (1888): 122.

⁴⁹ Hummel, *Art of Playing the Pianoforte*, 62.

⁵⁰ W. S. Stevens, *Treatise on Piano-Forte Expression*, 15.

⁵¹ Frédéric Kalkbrenner, *A Complete Course of Instruction for the Piano Forte* (op. 108) (Edinburgh: Alexander Robertson, ca. 1835), 8. This is an English translation of his *Méthode pour apprendre le piano-forte à l’aide du guide-mains* (see footnote 42).

⁵² Frédéric Chopin, *Auserlesene Klavier-Etüden aus op. 10 und op. 25*, ed. Hans von Bülow (München:

Indeed, when evaluating remarks from composer-performers, it seems that Viennese pianists, like Moscheles, Hummel, and perhaps even Schubert, were remarkably restrained in their use of the pedal.⁵³ Kalkbrenner, who discusses English and Viennese instruments in the context of his section “On the Use of the Pedals” notes in 1831 how

In Germany the use of the pedal is hardly known. The English instruments have a fuller tone, and a touch somewhat heavier, and that delightful manner of making their notes flow into each other, for which they are so distinguished. For the acquisition of this style, the damper pedal is indispensably necessary, as it corrects the dryness of sound which otherwise belongs to all Piano Fortes. Dussek, John Field, and J. B. Cramer, the leaders of that school of which Clementi was the founder, use the damper pedal, when there is no change of harmony. Dussek was particularly remarkable for this, for he almost always kept down the pedal when he performed in public.⁵⁴

Time and time again, the Clementi school is credited with the new singing style and it is this style, on English instruments, that seems to be the most consistent with a more widespread use of the pedal. Even if Beethoven appears to have used the pedal on Viennese instruments far more than his contemporaries—but even here we are not absolutely certain—the evidence from Viennese notations and also from comments made in treatises seems to support the hypotheses first advanced by Herbert Grundmann and Paul Mies in their 1966 study. The authors emphasized that the Viennese of Beethoven’s time appeared to have viewed the damper-raising pedal as a kind of special “registration” only.⁵⁵ One thing is clear: damper-raising practices in the first half of the nineteenth century are extraordinarily diverse from city to city and from instrument to instrument. There was no standard approach to raising the damper block. “Controlled estrangement” in performance may allow us to explore, reevaluate, and rediscover these differing approaches.

J. Aibl, 1880), 3.

⁵³ On Schubert’s use of the pedal as a “registration” device only, see “The Sonic Imagination” and “Expression and Expressive Devices,” in David Montgomery, *Franz Schubert’s Music in Performance* (Hillsdale: Pendragon Press, 2003), 1–37, 117–73.

⁵⁴ Kalkbrenner, *Complete Course of Instruction for the Piano Forte*, 8.

⁵⁵ On Beethoven’s pedaling as a “special effect” that was not as used as Czerny and others would have us believe, see Herbert Grundmann and Paul Mies, eds., *Studien zum Klavierspiel Beethovens und seiner Zeitgenossen* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1966); and Breitman, “The damper pedal and the Beethoven piano sonatas.” For a slightly different perspective, see “Legato in Melodies and the Split Damper Pedal,” in Skowronek, *Beethoven the Pianist*, 208–16.