

Technical and Musical Analysis of Trio No: 2 in C Major for Flute, Clarinet and Bassoon by Ignaz Joseph Pleyel

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ABSTRACT:

In this study, musical and technical analysis of the chamber music work, which Ignaz Joseph Pleyel wrote for flute, clarinet, and bassoon titled Trio no: 2 is done. As seen in other works of the composer, this work also carries the characteristics of the galant style, which is dominant in the 18th Century music. The work is written in C major key and has three movements. The composer pays attention to using the instruments equally in the score without differentiating between them technically and aesthetically. The first movement is a sonata in Allegro tempo, second movement is an Andante song, and the third movement is a rondo in Allegretto tempo. It can be said that, all movements of the Trio are basically written on the development of one theme. In addition, the piece is entirely made of elegant melodies with simple and plain accompaniment in homophonic structure.

Looking at the chamber music repertoire, it is evident that the number of pieces for flute, clarinet, and bassoon are limited. Pleyel is one of the few composers who wrote for this instrument group. In this respect, this piece demonstrates the composer's innovative approach.

This study examines Ignaz Joseph Pleyel's chamber music work for flute, clarinet, and bassoon. General goal of the research is bringing this piece in the pedagogical repertoire for flute, clarinet, and bassoon students.

Keywords: Ignaz Joseph Pleyel, Classical Period, Flute, Clarinet, Bassoon

INTRODUCTION:

Ignaz Joseph Pleyel (1757-1831)



During the period that includes second half of the 18th Century and beginning of the 19th Century, Pleyel was known as a publisher, piano maker, and a famous composer. The composer, who was born in Ruppersthal in 1757, preceded famous composers of the period such as Gluck, Haydn, and Mozart. Pleyel, whose talent for music was explored by his father, began his musical studies with Johann Baptist Wanhal (1739-1813).

The composer, who had the chance to study with Franz Joseph Haydn between 1772 and 1777, won great success and recognition in the music world with the Puppet Opera (Die Fee Urgèle, oder Was den Damen gefällt) that he wrote during his pupilage period. This work, which belongs to Pleyel's youth period, resembles a smaller version of Mozart's charming opera 'Magic Flute' (Ehrentraud, 2007, parag. 9).

Pleyel's innovative talent impressed not only the audiences, but also famous composers who were his contemporaries. One of these composers was Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Mozart mentions Pleyel in a letter that he wrote to his father in March 24, 1784:

I must tell you that some quartets have just appeared, composed by a certain Pleyel, a pupil of Joseph Haydn. If you do not know them, do try and get hold of them; you will find them worth the trouble. They are very well written and most pleasing to listen to. You will also see at once who was his master. Well, it will be a lucky they for music if later on Pleyel should be able to replace Haydn. (Scharff, 1991, p.9). This letter is the proof of Mozart's admiration for Pleyel's works.

Most of Pleyel's compositions are chamber music pieces. Nobility and creativity in these pieces are very remarkable. Pleyel's talent in composition allowed him to have an international reputation. Pleyel's works have a distinctive diversity compared to his contemporaries; his most evident characteristic is that his works rely on a detailed technique (Ehrentraud, 2007, parag.1). In his early works, especially thematic genuineness and presentation of the masterfully developed themes in an interesting way is observed. Another aspect that is prominent in Pleyel's work is the frequent use of the main theme and its rhythmic structure. The galant style, which is an important element in 18th Century music tradition, can be in foreground in the composer's works. The most important representative of galant style in that period is Haydn. Considering Pleyel being Haydn's student, these influences in his pieces are clearly heard.

Although Pleyel's career is primarily associated with keyboard music, he also wrote many works for woodwind instruments. Pleyel's C major concerto, which he wrote in 1797 for flute, or clarinet, or cello, is equally suitable to all three instruments (Toff, 1996, s.226). In addition, he wrote a bassoon concerto, and also made significant contribution to the woodwind solo repertoire. The composer's duets for flute and violin are some of the best examples of sonata and rondo forms (Toff, 1996, s.226). Pleyel often used flute, clarinet, and bassoon in his quartet and quintets too. In classical period, besides the solo concerto, sinfonia concertante, which includes more than one solo instrument, also plays an important role. Pleyel's use of woodwind instruments as soloists in three of his six sinfonia concertants shows his interest in wind instruments.

Publication of Pleyel's works without his knowledge and far from the original made him consider actively publishing and distributing sheet music himself. In 1797 he started a publishing firm in Paris named 'Chez Pleyel.' In his publishing firm, almost 4000 musical

works were published. Pleyel published works of his master Haydn, as well as other composers including Mozart and Beethoven (Ehrentraud, 2007, parag. 23).

Pleyel's most important success was his 'miniature scores' series published in Bibliothèque Musicale (Music Library). This series had started in 1802 with Haydn's Symphony No. 4, and continued until the end of 1830 with chamber music pieces written for string quartet by Beethoven, Hummel and Onslow (Benton, 1980, p. 920).

Pleyel was admired not only in Germany but also in other European countries. His opera, which was commissioned from him during his pedagogical visit to Italy, was a great success, and it was performed 19 times. Looking at the newspaper interviews of the period, it becomes apparent that the Italians were very fond of Pleyel's compositions. In one of the interviews Pleyel was mentioned as follows:

"A short while ago we met Haydn's excellent student Pleyel and we are extremely happy to see him here. He is a young, passionate, and a very talented composer. His modesty is delightful. He showed us his quartets and trios, which were quite excellently and originally written. However, none of the works were better than his quintets for two violins, two violas, and contrabass. Especially the one in F-minor key was truly a work of mastery. Both melodically and harmonically, it was a demonstration of great mastery" (Ehrentraud, 2007, parag. 12).

Pleyel's most productive period was between 1785 and 1789, when he was in Strasburg. During the same period, the music life in London was also developing rapidly. Pleyel, who gave successful concerts here, was mentioned in an article of February 15, 1972, published in Times:

"Pleyel's symphonies and his great talent as a composer is finally approved by the audience" (Ehrentraud, 2007, parag. 19).

ANALYSIS OF IGNAZ PLEYEL'S TRIO II FOR FLUTE, CLARINET, AND BASSOON

1. First Movement, Allegro

The first movement of the work has a structure, which fulfills all the requirements of the traditional sonata form. These requirements can be summarized as tonal relationship between the themes, development principles, and observation of relationships in recapitulation. The work begins with an assertive expression of the first theme. The main theme is made of two phrases. The second phrase is the ornamented repetition of the first phrase. These sections, which end in the tonic key, are followed by a two-sectioned bridge that brings the first theme to the key of the second theme. In sections of the bridge, the tonal structure, which moves away from the tonic key with sequences, stands out.

The second theme is somewhat a harmonic and rhythmical variation of the first theme that is transformed to the G-major key. Although the endings of the themes maintain the same characteristics of expression, they show melodic differences. The second theme, like the first, is made of two sections; however, the second section is made of three phrases and instead of the bridge, it is followed by the supplementary theme of the exposition.

Example 1. Similarity of the first and second themes.

1 Flute

34 Clarinet in Do

p

The development section of the movement is made of two segments. While the first segment is the basis for both tonal and thematic progression of the first theme, the second segment is the basis for that of the second theme. Since the second theme is almost entirely based on the first theme, it can be said that, in fact, the whole development section is built on the first theme. Another striking feature of the development is that, it is written with the counterpoint technique, instead of the homophonic structure, which dominates all movements of the work (see example 2).

Example 2. Canonic beginning of the development section

78

Fl.

Cl.

Bsn.

p

After the pseudo return effect of the second segment, the music moves from G-major to the following keys in order: F-major, C-major, E-major, and E-minor. After these modulations, the development section ends with the dominant seventh chord of the tonic key and recapitulation begins with recurrence of the first theme. Except for the usual applications and minor changes, the recapitulation has the same harmonic elements as the exposition.

2. Second Movement, Andante

The second movement, titled *Romance*, is written in the form of a three-movement song in Andante tempo. The function of this movement, which has a very simple structural organization, is to provide the necessary interlude between the two fast movements. Considering that the work is written for woodwind instruments, this rest is almost imperative since the players need to rest in between the tiresome fast movements.

The movement, which is in F-major key, is almost entirely made of four-measure phrases. The first theme that is used in the first segment reappears in the second segment with

ornamentations. The ornamented reuse of this theme adds a structural balance to the movement. Each instrument presents the theme of the movement respectively, in a manner of taking turns in singing the same song. For instance, the theme that appears in the first segment with third intervals in flute and bassoon part is presented in the second segment in clarinet and bassoon parts along with ornamented arpeggios of the flute.

The theme of the second movement is similar to the main theme of the first movement. In this movement, the interval structure and rhythmical characteristics of the theme of the first movement is clearly observed (see Example 3).

Example 3. The similarity of the themes of the first and second movements.

Although the second section brings in some dynamism to the music with the sixteenth notes, this is in fact nothing but processing of the main theme with ornamentations, and reappearance of the tonal contrast in C-major. After the C-major theme in the second segment, the F-major main theme reappears in the third section.

Although the third section is made of two segments, in fact, the second segment is a small two-phrase codetta of repetition of the figures.

3. Third Movement, Allegretto

The third movement of the work is composed in the main key of C-major and in rondo form. Instead of the seven-part rondo (ABACABA), which was more common towards the end of the 18th Century, it is structured in five-part rondo (ABACA) form. In this respect, it can be defined as a small rondo. The refrain of the movement, as mentioned at the very beginning, is a short, dance-like two-part song in itself, which was built on the main theme of the work.

The first section is based on developing the refrain theme with modulations. It begins in a-minor and modulates to the following keys respectively: E-major, e-minor, and b-minor. The relationship of the theme with the refrain theme is clearly heard, however this thematic movement develops in a descending manner, instead of ascending.

The bridge back to the refrain is made of two phrases; the first one is a four-measure phrase, while the second one is ten measures long. The function of the bridge that follows the first episode is to create a connection between the key of the second episode, which had moved away considerably from the main key, and the key of the refrain. Reappearance of the refrain brings no alterations; the music moves to the second episode right away.

The second episode, which is in F-major, has a much stable tonal structure than the first one. Although in the first episode there are modulations to various keys away from minor modes, the temporary effect of these modulations is not sufficient to be as effective as the second episode. The theme of the second episode is also based on the refrain theme; however, this time it is changed with rhythmic variation. For instance, triplets were used instead of the dotted notes as a part of this rhythmic variation. The similarity between the themes of the refrain and the episodes is illustrated clearly in Example 4.

First theme

C-Dur

30 Second theme

a-moll

85 Third theme

F-Dur

The movement returns to the last refrain after a single-phrase bridge, which follows the second episode. Refrain is once again repeated without any changes. The coda, which follows the ending of the refrain with a whole cadence, is in the manner of an extension. This coda highlights the main key with motives in the themes of the movement, instead of bringing in a new theme.

CONCLUSION:

Pleyel, who combined the characteristics of the classical period with his unique innovative approach, was one the most important and well-known composers of his time.

Although he lived during the same period as the most important composers of the classical era, such as Gluck, Haydn, and Mozart, who shaped the music life of our time, Pleyel's fame eventually died out. One of the most important differences between Pleyel and his contemporaries is that, although a lot of the important composers were not understood and could not reach large numbers of audiences during their lifetime, Pleyel was greatly admired by both audiences and authorities of music while he was alive.

Also differently from his contemporaries, Pleyel paid great importance to the woodwind instruments. For instance, the bassoon, which usually acts only as an accompaniment bass part, is used equally with the flute and clarinet in the work analyzed in this study. This approach shows that Pleyel gives equal opportunity to all instruments without discriminating them as solo or accompaniment. Clear rendering of rhythmical and musical expectations

reflects all the stylistic characteristics of the classical period. Thus, the work also is an important part of the pedagogical repertoire for conveying the stylistic characteristics of this period.

In this study, formal analysis of the chamber work piece written for flute, clarinet, and bassoon (Trio No. 2) by Ignaz Pleyel, who was a classical period composer, was performed. It is thought that this study will light the way for both today's, and future flute, clarinet, and bassoon students.

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