THE PIANO MUSIC OF
CHARLES-VALENTIN ALKAN

A Thesis
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree Master of Arts

by
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INTRODUCTION

During the restoration period in France that followed Napoleon's ultimate defeat, Paris became the artistic center of Europe, the scene of the "grand opéra," which, with its visual splendor and excitement, appealed to the relatively uncultured taste of the newly prosperous bourgeoisie. Paris was also the scene of the salon concert, a vogue that enjoyed a rapid rise in popularity in the early romantic period and brought fame to many brilliant piano virtuosos.

Through the advances in factory production made early in the nineteenth century pianos were being manufactured in increasing numbers and provided recreation for the restored French nobility. Soon, however, the piano was adopted by the bourgeoisie, which was fascinated with this mechanical marvel. As piano playing increasingly became a leisure activity, there was an equally growing demand for new music—especially anything based on a popular operatic theme—and an enlarged interest in attending concerts given by great piano virtuosos in the fashionable Parisian salons.

At almost any concert the audience could thrill to the dazzling technical display of a pianist playing a brilliant paraphrase, fantasia, potpourrie, or set of variations based on melodies from a currently successful opera. The popular pianists of the day, including Franz Liszt, Sigismond Thalberg, Henri Herz, and Alexander Dreyschock, among others, became celebrated heroes whose concerts were spectacular
exhibitions of technical display, often involving several pianists in ensemble. At a concert given in 1832 no fewer than six pianists appeared together in a performance of Friedrich Kalkbrenner’s Grande polonaise; the pianists involved on this occasion included Frédéric Chopin, Adalbert Sowinski, G. A. Osborne, Ferdinand Hiller, Carl Stamaty, and the composer.

The period in which such pieces were popular did not last long; by the latter half of the century shallow display began to disappear from the concert hall, to be replaced gradually by the classic repertoire that is heard today. Most of the virtuosos of the period also disappeared into oblivion, their fame not destined to outlive them. One of these forgotten pianists, whose name has survived in only a few histories of piano music, is Charles-Valentin Alkan.

Although a truly spectacular virtuoso and a prolific composer, hailed by Ferruccio Busoni as one of the greatest composers for the piano after Beethoven, Alkan seldom played in public, preferring instead the quiet existence of teacher and composer. In many respects his life resembles that of Frédéric Chopin, who was also an infrequent performer, possessing too delicate a nature to engage in the type of virtuoso display practiced by Franz Liszt. Both Alkan and Chopin lived and taught in Paris, composing primarily for the piano, each producing mostly small pieces, with a few serious essays in extended forms. Although Chopin died young, at age thirty-nine, leaving a legacy of piano masterpieces, Alkan lived on into old age, dying at age seventy-four and leaving behind a strange assortment of piano music, most of which has never been publicly performed. While Chopin’s fame was already established within his own lifetime, Alkan’s obscurity was similarly set
into place while he still lived, alone and friendless, in his native Paris, with his music ignored, misunderstood and unplayed.

Alkan's life and music present an interesting challenge to the musicologist because so little is known about either. Yet, a few eminent pianists have highly esteemed his music, placing it beside the better known works of Chopin and Liszt. The present writer feels that there is much to be gained through a detailed study of Alkan's life and work, not only a better understanding of a neglected composer, but also a better appreciation of the period in which he lived, a turbulent era filled with political unrest and many revolutionary musical trends. The writer, then, will attempt to place Alkan in proper relation to his contemporaries in an effort to evaluate his importance in the progress of the romantic movement, and, in addition, intends to estimate the intrinsic value of this composer's work.
CHAPTER I

THE LIFE OF C.-V. ALKAN

Background and Childhood (1813-1819)

Alkan was born in Paris on November 30, 1813, as the second of six children, five boys and one girl, born to a Jewish schoolteacher named Alkan Morhange and Julie Abraham. The boy, who was named Charles-Valentin, decided at an early age to drop the surname "Morhange," which his ancestors had adopted from the name of a small village in Alsace where they had settled. He assumed in its place his father's first name; thus he became Charles-Valentin Alkan.²

Although all of the children were musically inclined, Charles was particularly precocious, beginning lessons on the piano and violin at a very early age. His first teacher was undoubtedly his own father, who was the director of a private boarding school located on the rue des Blancs-Manteaux in the historic Jewish sector of Paris known as the Marais. This was a kind of preparatory school where predominantly Jewish boys acquired the rudiments of music as well as elementary

¹Letter from l'Administrateur chargé des archives et du musée, Paris, November 25, 1965. The only information the present writer has found concerning the identity of Alkan's mother comes from the composer's death certificate, the contents of which have been made available through this letter.

French grammar. With its emphasis on music the school became, as Antoine François Marmontel described it, "une annexe juvenile du Conservatoire."³

There is little known concerning the Morhange family. The only description of M. Morhange comes from Marmontel, who, having boarded at the Morhange pensionnat in 1827, characterized him as an "homme laborieux et intelligent."⁴ Historians are in disagreement concerning the number of Morhange children. Some reports list three brothers, while others list four. Recent research has revealed the existence of five brothers as well as a sister whom earlier reports failed to recognize.⁵ The names of only four of the brothers have been confirmed: Charles-Valentin, Maxime, Napoléon Alexandre, and Gustave.⁶

Charles-Valentin's name has also been the subject of much confusion through the years. An additional name—"Henri"—is sometimes found following "Charles"; although a purely fictitious name, this gratuitous interpolation seems to have been the result of a wrong interpretation of the abbreviated form of Alkan's name that appears on the title pages of many of his compositions: "CH. V. ALKAN." Further confusion has arisen concerning the name "Valentin." From another

³Antoine François Marmontel, Les Pianistes célèbres (Paris: Heugel et fils, 1878), p. 120.
⁴Ibid., p. 119.
⁵Alkan, p. v. Lewenthal, unfortunately, gives neither the specific names nor his sources of information.
abbreviation—"Ch.-Vin."—one writer has fashioned "Victorin."  

The present writer has emphasized certain discrepancies in the literature on Alkan in order to demonstrate the lack of documentary evidence concerning the details of his life, a life that is largely shrouded in mystery and misunderstanding. A search for the truth involves the examination of many conflicting studies, most of which are informal and personal impressions rather than scholarly treatises. A thorough investigation of Alkan's life is, therefore, a difficult if ultimately fascinating task.

**Student Years (1819-1834)**

The young Charles-Valentin's musical precocity must have been considerable, for he was admitted to the Paris Conservatoire in 1819 at the age of six, much in advance of the normal minimum age of ten. His career as a student there spanned a period of fifteen years, during which time his talents developed in several directions.

F.-J. Fétis gives a good account of Alkan's accomplishments as a student.  

In 1821, at the age of seven-and-a-half, Charles-Valentin won first prize in his solfeggio class and also gave a public performance of a "theme varié" by Pierre Rode on the violin. In 1824, as a student of Pierre Zimmermann, Charles-Valentin placed first in a public piano competition. In July 1827 he won first prize in the

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7Alkan, p. v. Lewenthal, through checking Alkan's birth certificate, clarifies the validity of "Charles-Valentin."

harmony and practical accompaniment class of Victor Dourlen. A notice concerning this award and other prizes offered in the harmony and counterpoint competitions held at the Conservatoire appeared in the August 1827 issue of Revue musicale, the music journal that was founded and edited by F.-J. Fétis.\textsuperscript{9} It is significant that by the time of this article Charles-Valentin was already known as "Alkan"; the notice refers to the prizewinner as "Alkan, âgé de douze ans."\textsuperscript{10} In addition to these studies, Alkan took counterpoint and fugue lessons with Zimmerman and, as his composition student, entered the Prix de Rome competition of 1832, winning an honorable mention for his setting of the provided text Hermann et Ketty, a "scène lyrique" by the renowned French scholar, writer and politician Count Claude-Emmanuel Pastoret.\textsuperscript{11} Alkan's studies at the Conservatoire continued into 1834, in which year he won first prize in the organ class of François Benoist, César Franck's teacher and predecessor.

Alkan's concert career as a piano virtuoso began as early as 1827. Under Pierre Zimmerman's guidance the young Alkan became a Wunderkind of fashionable Parisian society. Between the ages of thirteen and fourteen he was presented in numerous soirées given by the Princess de la

\textsuperscript{9}Revue musicale, II, No. 25 (1827), 20.

\textsuperscript{10}Alkan's age is listed incorrectly in this notice. According to the known birthdate, he was almost fourteen at the time of the harmony competition. It may well be that the journal inadvertently made the error; Alkan's precocity was already so considerable that there seems to have been little reason for him to have lied about his age.

Moskova, whose husband was also a student of Zimmerman. By the age of seventeen Alkan was a seasoned performer in both soirées and Conservatoire concerts and had attained the rank of one of the leading piano virtuosos in Paris. The only detailed knowledge concerning Alkan's early concert career comes from F.-J. Fétis. In an 1828 issue of the Revue musicale Fétis reviewed a concert given at the salon of the Parisian piano manufacturer Jean-Henri Pape in which the young Alkan performed the rondo movement of a piano concerto of his own composition with the accompaniment of an orchestra. In an article on Alkan written circa 1858 for the second edition of his biographical dictionary Fétis mentions that the young virtuoso had performed in public many times, most notably at a Conservatoire concert of 1831 in which he performed a concerto of his own composition, probably the first Concerto da camera, Op. 10.


14 Fétis, Biographie universelle des musiciens, I, 71. The rondo that Alkan performed in 1828 is probably the last movement of the Concerto, Op. 10, the only one of Alkan's concertos that was published with orchestral accompaniment. Bloch, p. 1, gives 1828 as the date of the performance of Alkan's Op. 10 at a Conservatoire concert and Henry Bellaman, "The Piano Works of C.-Y. Alkan," The Musical Quarterly, X (1924), 253, dates the composition of Alkan's Op. 10 "before 1828," but neither writer documents his information. Curiously, this work is not listed in the second edition of the Handbuch der musikalischen Literatur (Leipzig: Hofmeister, 1828) or in either of the first two supplements to that edition (1829 and 1834, respectively). The first reference to the publication of the Op. 10 concerto is contained in the third supplement of 1839, which catalogues new publications of the period 1834-1838.
Alkan's early concert career was centered almost exclusively in Paris. According to Marmontel, Alkan had a faithful, almost religious attachment to Paris; contrary to the ways of most eager young virtuosos he seldom concertized outside of his native city. Only once did he tour; in 1833, upon the pressing demands of his friends and of Zimmerman, Alkan consented to give a series of concerts in England. After this short but brilliant escapade the young pianist returned to his sedentary life in Paris and remained there.

During his final years as a Conservatoire student Alkan began to compose in earnest. The earliest listing of any published works appears in the second edition of the *Handbuch der musikalischen Literatur*, published in 1828, and the *Bibliographie de la France*, 1829 edition. Three works, all sets of variations for piano solo, are listed in these catalogues. The 1828 *Handbuch* lists "Variations (L'Orage de Steibelt)," Op. 17; and "Les Omnibus, Variations dédiées aux Dames blanches"; while the 1829 *Bibliographie* catalogues "Il était un petit homme, rondoletto pour piano," Op. 3. The most significant product of Alkan's student years is the aforementioned *Concerto da camera*, Op. 10, an interesting harbinger of the many brilliant and unique piano pieces that were to come later.

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\(^{15}\)Marmontel, p. 119.

\(^{16}\)Handbuch der musikalischen Literatur (2nd ed; ed. C. F. Whistling; Leipzig: Friedrich Hofmeister, 1828), II, 707; ibid., p. 1215; Bibliographie de la France (Paris: Chez Pillet Aimé, 1801-), XVIII (1829), 167. The listing of the first of these works as Op. 17 is probably a printing error, since all the other sources give this work as Op. 1.
Alkan was given the opportunity to develop as a teacher at an extremely early age. When Antoine François Marmontel first came to Paris in 1827 to enroll at the Conservatoire, Alkan was a piano instructor at his father's school. Upon the recommendation of Professor Zimmerman Marmontel went to the Morhange school to study with the young Alkan in preparation for his entrance into the Conservatoire. However, due to their proximity in age, Marmontel found it difficult to pursue these lessons seriously; his study with Alkan was discontinued after a few weeks.  

The first offer of a teaching position at the Conservatoire was extended Alkan in the form of an honorary professorship in solfeggio that was granted him in 1828 when he was not even fifteen. He held this post until 1835, at which time he became devoted exclusively to the piano. As a piano instructor at the Conservatoire Alkan was to spend most of his adult life influencing much of the pianistic talent that enrolled at this institution.

By the end of 1834 Alkan's studies were completed; at the age of twenty-one he left behind a most distinguished record of achievements as a student and seemed destined for a singularly prominent career as a teacher, composer and concert performer. Yet neither as a pianist nor as a composer was Alkan ever to find lasting fame.

17 Marmontel, p. 119. Marmontel describes Alkan as "mon afiné de quatre ans," but there is actually less than three years difference between their ages, Marmontel having been born on July 18, 1816.

Maturity (1835-1855)

During the early 1830s Alkan became a part of an artistic circle that included many of the leading young writers, artists and musicians in Paris. He was especially caught up in the social milieu which moved about George Sand and Frédéric Chopin. He also befriended Franz Liszt, despite his earlier jealousy of the famous virtuoso. When he first heard the phenomenal young Liszt perform in Paris, Alkan was overcome with envy of this astonishing talent that eclipsed his own; he cried throughout Liszt's performance and passed the next night without being able to sleep.\(^{19}\)

Alkan's public performances, as indicated by the dearth of concert notices in Parisian music journals, became more infrequent after he established himself as a piano teacher. His name is mentioned twice in the April 19, 1835 issue of the *Gazette musicale de Paris*, first in connection with a benefit concert to be held on the Monday after Easter in the hall of the Hôtel Lafayette, second as a participant in a grand potpourrie by Carl Czerny along with Liszt, Adalbert Sowinski and one "Herrmann of Hamburg," a young protégé of Liszt and the principal performer in this concert which was to be given in La Salle Chantereine on April 23.\(^{20}\) Alkan is mentioned two other times in the *Gazette* during


\(^{20}\) *Gazette musicale de Paris*, II (1835), 139. A comparison of this announcement with that which appeared in the *Revue musicale* of April 19, 1835 concerning the concert of Liszt's protégé reveals a curious discrepancy in information. Both notices use exactly the same wording, with the exception of one performer's name. In place of "Alkan" the *Revue* mentions a certain "Stamaty." Unless this be a misspelling of "Stamaty" (cf. page 1 of this work), the present writer has no proof that such a man ever existed.
1835. On May 31 the journal reported news of a concert that took place in London's Soho Square, an event which served to demonstrate the excellence of the French pianos of Jean-Henri Pape. Included on this program was an overture for three pianos, performed by Ignaze Moscheles, Johann Cramer, Adalbert Sowinski, Julian Fontana, a certain pianist named Schultz, and Alkan. In the November 23 issue of the Gazette, which on the preceding November 1 had combined with the Revue musicale of Fétis to become the Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris, mention is made of the Deuxième trio for violin, cello and piano by Joseph Mayseder, an eminent Viennese violinist, teacher and composer, which was performed by Chrétien Urban, Pierre Chevillard and Alkan at St. Vincent de Paul's Church in Paris as part of a concert given in celebration of the feast of St. Cecilia (November 22).

There is no further mention of Alkan in this journal until the issue of February 25, 1838, which contained an announcement concerning a benefit concert to be given by Alkan on March 3 at Pape's salon. The Mayseder trio was programmed together with several Alkan works: two études, the Troisième concerto da camera in its first performance, and his transcription of segments of Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 in A Major, arranged for two pianos and featuring Chopin, Zimmerman, Adolf Gutmann (one of Chopin's students), and Alkan. Subsequent announcements and reviews are few and far between.

21Gazette musicale de Paris, II (1835), 187.
22Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris, II (1835), 393.
23Ibid., V (1838), 96.
A review of an Alkan performance at Erard's salon on March 1, 1845 represents the earliest mention of this establishment which Alkan was to frequent almost daily in his later years. On this occasion he performed the slow movement of the *Concerto en si mineur* by Johann Hummel and two of his own works, the "Marche funèbre" and the "Marche triomphale." An 1849 review indicates that Alkan's repertoire was becoming increasingly oriented to the classic literature. At a concert played in 1849 at Erard's before a small and select audience, Alkan performed the allegro movement from the *Premier concerto* by J. S. Bach, some transcriptions of works by Haydn, Mozart and Gluck, and some of his own *Préludes*, Op. 31. The only other Alkan performance of this period for which there is documentary evidence occurred at Erard's in 1848. Before a small group of students and friends Alkan played several works by J. S. Bach on the pedal piano, an instrument upon which he often displayed his virtuosity throughout his later years.

During the late 1830s there appeared in print a number of compositions by Alkan, one of which aroused considerable controversy among music critics. In 1838 the "Trois morceaux dans le genre pathétique," Op. 15, drew a vicious attack from Robert Schumann in his influential *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, in which he described the pieces as "Schwäche und phantasielose Gemeinheit." Franz Liszt, to whom the works were

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dedicated, gave a much more favorable review in the Revue et Gazette musicale.\textsuperscript{28} Liszt's reaction, however, may possibly have been influenced by Alkan's courteous gesture of deleting all indications of tempo and nuance.\textsuperscript{29}

Alkan's music gained in Robert Schumann's favor with the next published work, the "Six morceaux caractéristiques," Op. 16. Schumann was impressed with Alkan's thorough knowledge of the keyboard; he described the composer as an imitator of Berlioz, an interesting player who must understand the rarer effects of his instrument.\textsuperscript{30}

There is a gap of almost ten years between the aforementioned works and the most important products of this period, the Grande sonate, Op. 33, and the Douze études dans tous les tons majeurs, Op. 35, both published in 1847 by Brandus. Hans von Bülow, reviewing the German edition of the études, found them to be musically satisfying pieces, considerably above the level of most of the modern piano compositions.\textsuperscript{31}

Little is known about Alkan's career as a teacher. As a piano instructor at the Paris Conservatoire his roster of students must have been considerable, but historical records have preserved only one name,


\textsuperscript{29}José Vianna da Motta, "Ch. V. Alkan (afné)," Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung, XXVIII (1901), 142.


that of Elie-Miriam Delaborde, an exceptionally talented child who began studying the piano with Alkan at the age of five. As a private teacher Alkan was undoubtedly kept extremely busy, since almost every well-known pianist in Paris was in demand as a teacher of his instrument which was then as much if not more in fashion than the harpsichord had been a century earlier.

Alkan, judging by the infrequency of his concert performances, seems to have been primarily a teacher by profession and a composer in his spare time. His career resembles that of Chopin; both taught and composed, but gave few exhibitions of their pianistic skills. Unlike Liszt, who thrived upon audience adulation, Alkan and Chopin preferred a comfortable existence in Paris among the members of their circle. Yet both expressed envy of Liszt's dynamic pianism. Alkan's adolescent jealousy has already been established; Chopin's attitude is revealed by a portion of a letter written to Stephen Heller, a fellow pianist and composer: "Liszt is playing my études, and transporting me beyond my respectable thoughts. I should like to steal from him the way to play my own études."[32]

Of all the highly talented members of the Parisian circle, Alkan was one of Chopin's few actual friends. According to Marmontel Chopin held Alkan in very high esteem both as a virtuoso and as a composer.[33] This esteem was reciprocated; for many years, while they both lived in the Square d'Orléans, Chopin was Alkan's closest friend. The two were


united in a search for aesthetic beauty and an avoidance of the vulgar and banal in their music. It is a tribute to this friendship that, upon Chopin's death in 1849, many of his students went over to Alkan in order to continue their studies.

Besides Chopin, Alkan seems to have had very few friends. Even within his own family there is no knowledge that he was close either to his parents or to any of his musician brothers except the youngest, Gustave, who helped organize a series of concerts for Charles-Valentin during the 1870s.34 Another brother, Maxime, enrolled at the Conservatoire during the 1830s, also studied with Zimmerman and won a first prize in 1834.35

There is little documentary evidence to suggest that Alkan had any intimate relationships with women. Like Chopin he never married, but he had one affair which resulted in the birth, on February 8, 1839, of a son, none other than his precocious pupil Elie-Miriam Delaborde. Most of the writers on Alkan seem to have been unaware of this relation between the two. Neither Marmontel, who taught alongside both father and son during his long career at the Conservatoire, nor Alexander de Bertha, who was introduced to Alkan by Delaborde himself, ever wrote

34 De Bertha, Bulletin français de la S.I.M., V, 139.

35 Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris, IV (1837), 378. This notice, which lists prize winners in Zimmerman's piano classes for a period of some twenty years, gives Maxime's last name as "Alkan." It seems that, following Charles-Valentin's example, his brothers also took the surname "Alkan." It thus became necessary for Charles to distinguish himself from the others by affixing onto his last name the word "ainé," which indicates "the elder." By the end of the 1830s Alkan was known by this augmented name; in this 1837 notice the first prize-winner in Zimmerman's 1824 class is listed as "Alkan ainé."
anything that would indicate their knowledge of Delaborde's parentage. Hans von Bülow revealed his knowledge of the relation in a letter to the German pianist Karl Klindworth, written in 1885, in which he described Delaborde as Alkan's "illegitimate son" ("natürlicher Sohn").36 In recent years the noted Bizet scholar Mina Curtiss has described Delaborde as "a virtuoso pianist who was said to be the illegitimate son of Alkan."37 Most recently the Alkan scholar Raymond Lewenthal has stated openly that Alkan and Delaborde were father and son.38

During the period from 1835 to 1855 Alkan's position at the Paris Conservatoire consisted of other duties besides instructing piano students. Together with other faculty members he served on the panel of judges for piano examinations. He was present on August 2, 1838 when the fifteen-year-old César Franck took his first-year examination. The young Franck's performance of a sight-reading piece in a transposed key amazed everyone on the jury except Luigi Cherubini, director of the Conservatoire, who was somewhat chagrined by Franck's audacious display.

Alkan also served as a piano accompanist for solfeggio classes. He was the pianist for a certain Professor Crohart's class when the


38Alkan, p. v.

ten-year-old Georges Bizet entered the Conservatoire in 1848.40

1848 marked a crucial year in Alkan's life. Not only was there a major political upheaval—the February revolution, in which there was much violence and rioting in the streets of Paris—but also a significant turn of events which proved unfortunate for Alkan's career at the Conservatoire. When Pierre Zimmerman decided to retire late in 1848, Alkan, considered to be his favorite student, seemed most likely to replace the seventy-three-year-old professor. However, three additional candidates for the position were announced: Émile Prudent, Louis Lacombe and Antoine Marmontel, all of whom had been students of Zimmerman. The retiring professor, in order not to promote any ill feeling among the four candidates, decided to remain neutral concerning the choice of a successor. In the ensuing rivalry, which Marmontel later described as an arduous struggle, Zimmerman at one point left his neutral position in order to defend Marmontel in a delicate situation involving some of the latter's students.41 This incident, the details of which are vague, may well have helped to determine the outcome of the rivalry, for Marmontel was ultimately awarded the position. One writer has openly declared that Marmontel won the post through Zimmerman's influence.42 Alkan's enmity was aroused by this unfortunate setback, which cost him his only chance to become a professor at the Conservatoire. He apparently misinterpreted Zimmerman's motives for testifying in Marmontel's behalf—a regrettable misunderstanding, ac-

40Curtiss, p. 22.
41Marmontel, p. 200.
42Curtiss, p. 21.
according to Marmontel—and carried a grudge against Marmontel for the rest of his life, never speaking to him again. Twenty-five years later Marmontel was still first on the list of those Alkan disliked most.\footnote{De Berth, \textit{Bulletin français de la S.I.M.}, V, 137.}

Precisely one year after the Conservatoire incident Alkan suffered another blow, the death of his friend Chopin on October 17, 1849. Considering the closeness of this friendship which had extended for almost eighteen years, Alkan must have been deeply grieved by this tragic loss. During Chopin's last years, most of which were spent in the Square d'Orléans, Alkan had seen him quite often. On one occasion in 1847 the two attended a performance of \textit{Ce qui femme veut}, a comedy by the distinguished French playwright Félix-Auguste Duvert (1795-1876), which featured the celebrated comic actor Etienne Arnal.\footnote{Fryderyk Chopin, \textit{Selected Correspondence of Fryderyk Chopin}, trans. & ed. Arthur Hedley (London: Heinemann, 1962), p. 279.} Two years later Chopin was on his deathbed. In his last hours the only names he recalled were those of Napoléon-Henri Reber, a composer and teacher, and Alkan; to them he bequeathed a piano method upon which he had been working prior to his last illness.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 375.}

These setbacks not only affected Alkan's career but also significantly altered his personality. Deprived of the estimable rank of professor at the Conservatoire, Alkan's thoughts now turned more and more to composition. It is not known whether he continued to instruct at the Conservatoire after Zimmerman's retirement, but, considering
his intense dislike for Marmontel, he would have been in a most awkward situation had he done so. He also would have had a rival in his own brother, Napoléon, who was appointed professor of solfeggio at the Conservatoire in 1850 and won second prize in the Prix de Rome competition for the same year. Alkan seems to have been, even as a youth, extremely jealous of anyone whose accomplishments excelled his own (such as Liszt); his dislike for his brother Napoléon became almost as intense as that for Marmontel.\footnote{De Bertha, \textit{Bulletin français de la S.I.M.}, V, 139.}

Composing was, during this period, a route of escape for the frustrated Alkan, a manifestation of his disillusionment with the world which seemed to deny him the recognition which he felt was rightfully earned. For the next twenty years Alkan's life was to be one of habitual solitude in his native Paris where he worked quietly, creating his most strikingly unique musical compositions.

\textbf{Seclusion (1855-1872)}

Alkan's withdrawal from the artistic circle and from the Parisian society that had first hailed him as a young virtuoso occurred very gradually. Although his public performances had never been frequent, after 1849 they were almost nonexistent except for some recitals given at Erard's for a small number of students and friends.

The solitary Alkan was far removed from the gay and confident young man that Marmontel had met at the Morhange school. At fourteen Alkan had possessed "faith, enthusiasm and the cherished
illusions of youth." Only after many years and several disappointments did Alkan's youthful optimism turn to misanthropy. By 1846 the conversion had already begun; in a Gazette review that appeared in that year, Alkan was described as "one of the misanthropes of the musical world." Marmontel's many meetings with the composer provided the following first-hand account of Alkan's preference for solitude:

"This eminent master, one of the leaders of the French school, almost always lived alone in the midst of the tumult of Paris and of artistic activity, fleeing noise and fame as vigorously as others sought them."

There exists little beyond speculation concerning the nature of Alkan's misanthropy. Kreutzer identifies the composer's withdrawal as an idealistic pursuit involving the perfection of his art; in striving to achieve this goal he forsook fame. Joseph Bloch identifies Alkan as an eccentric whose behavior was often the result of neurotic tendencies. Alkan was apparently so afraid of meeting someone he disliked that, whenever he was about to leave his studio at the Conservatoire, he would cautiously inspect the corridor to see if anyone was coming. If there was someone about, he would jump back into the studio until that person had passed.

1855 marks the year in which Alkan's withdrawal was completed.

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47 Marmontel, p. 120.


49 Marmontel, p. 118.


51 Bloch, p. 2.
Only one public appearance is known for this year: a demonstration that took place at the Erard exhibit at the Paris Exhibition, during which he performed works of J. S. Bach on the pedal piano. This marked Alkan's last significant performance for many years; his subsequent playing seems to have been for his own benefit alone.

Alkan's seclusion was so complete that there is very little documented information concerning his existence from 1855 until 1872. What little is known of this period emanates from a group of letters that Alkan wrote to the German pianist, composer and conductor Ferdinand Hiller between 1857 and 1871. Although it is not known when the two first met, Hiller had lived and taught in Paris from 1828 to 1835, during which time he often played at salons. The tone of the first letter substantiates a friendship of long standing; an enduring and mutual admiration between the two surely existed long before the date of the first of these letters.

In a letter of 1862 Alkan told Hiller of his lack of activity, treating the situation a bit humorously: "As usual I am not doing anything, not even making my bed at present,...and if there weren't a little reading, I would live scarcely in the manner of a cabbage or a mushroom." 

Reading seems to have been one of Alkan's primary occupations during his years of seclusion. The learned German music lecturer, critic and biographer Frederick Niecks knew him to be a reputed in-

52De Bertha, Bulletin français de la S.I.M., V, 146.

tellectual, learned in Jewish lore. Once Alkan confided to Niecks in a deprecating manner that Chopin was not a reading man; he did not even read George Sand's novels.\footnote{Frederick Niecks, "More Glimpses of Parisian Pianists of Another Day: Ch. V. Alkan," The Monthly Musical Record, XLVIII (January, 1918), 6.} In another letter to Hiller, Alkan mentioned that he was translating an apocryphal Old Testament text from the Syrian and had begun to translate the New Testament.\footnote{Sietz, p. 61.} Marmontel, writing in 1878, described Alkan as a studious man who possessed an artistic temperament formed by reading and meditation in the great traditions. He also mentioned Alkan's typical attire, a formal suit of the Second Empire under Napoleon III, with a black frock coat, white tie and tall hat, all of which gave him a rabbinical appearance.\footnote{Marmontel, pp. 122, 126.}

Alkan was seldom seen in public. Only very rarely did he leave his seclusion to attend concerts. He described to Hiller his reluctance to attend the first Paris performance of excerpts from Wagner operas scheduled for January 25, 1860 at La Salle des Italiens. He did attend the concert along with the German pianist Jacob Rosenhain, but left after the first part, enormously dismayed with Wagner, whom he considered a "plagiarist of Berlioz."\footnote{Reinhold Sietz, Aus Ferdinand Hillers Briefwechsel (1826-1861) ("Beiträge zur Rheinischen Musikgeschichte," Vol. XXVIII; Cologne: Arno Volk-Verlag, 1958), p. 156.}

Occasionally Alkan would leave his home to meet with fellow musicians such as Charles Gounod, whom he did not know very well and did
not desire to know any better. During these years there were a few visitors to Alkan's home. The pianists Liszt and Anton Rubenstein supposedly visited him every time they came to Paris. Yet Alkan never left the city, although he more than once expressed to Hiller his desire to do so, as in this letter of July 24, 1859:

You are without a doubt in the country at present, enjoying beautiful nature and increasing in zeal. As for me, I am always in the city, feeling my love for this beautiful nature incessantly increase, and feeling more and more like satisfying this need.

In another letter, dated April 24, 1860:

...I see clearly that this year will yet elapse without our meeting again; because, that which is to bring me together with you is becoming every day a more beautiful fantasy. And yet, how I would have loved, the way you tell me about it, to admire beautiful nature and your poetic company! At present I no longer admire it except in photographs and in written impressions when they are a bit illustrated; because I can spend in the country only the time which elapses between two meals.

Alkan's tone reflects both a kind of frustration concerning his sedentary life in Paris and a strong desire to see his friend again. The intimation that his health would not permit any lengthy excursions away from home suggests that Alkan's seclusion may not have been solely a matter of his own volition. With regard to performing in public, Alkan once told Hiller why he turned down offers to play: "My temperament would not bear testing the symphonic audience as a composer any more than my health would permit me to be engaged to play at a fixed day and hour."

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58 Ibid., p. 121.
59 Ibid., p. 145.
60 Ibid., p. 166.
However much Alkan may have regretted at times his lonely existence, he was thoroughly devoted to his studies and to the production of his major works, especially the Douze études dans tous les tons mineurs, Op. 39, a mammoth achievement comprising 275 pages of pianistic difficulties. Published by Richault in 1857, this collection represents years of labor, probably absorbing the composer's attention for much of the period that separates this set from its predecessor, Douze études dans tous les tons majeurs, Op. 35, published in 1847, although there are no documents to confirm the exact year in which Alkan began this enormous work.

Although Op. 39 represents the zenith of Alkan's career as a composer, at the time of its publication his music was almost totally unknown. Until the twentieth century Alkan himself seems to have been the only one to attempt the realization of his scores. But by 1857 Alkan no longer performed in public; thus his most ingenious creation lay unplayed and unknown.

Alkan's reputation as a composer grew very slowly. Although some of the most celebrated talents in Europe came to respect his music, the public was not given sufficient exposure to Alkan's extraordinary creations. The composer was deeply impressed, therefore, when he learned from Hiller in 1857 about von Bülow's enthusiastic review of his Op. 35:

Concerning the musical press, what you tell me of Mr. von Bülow...flatters me infinitely. I do not hear my praises sung often enough, and that is quite natural, not to feel rather mildly flattered when it comes. And in the German language yet!"62

62Sietz, Briefwechsel (1826-1861), p. 121.
Despite his extensive labors in composing, Alkan found some time for a few private students. Two pupils are mentioned in the composer's letters to Hiller. The one was Princess Orloff, wife of the Russian ambassador to France, while the other was Hiller's own daughter, Tony, who, on a sabbatical from her regular course of studies, sojourned in Paris, taking lessons from Alkan during this time.63

Alkan suffered numerous frustrations and disappointments during these years. One incident he detailed in his letters was the result of adverse financial circumstances. He was forced to move out of his home in early 1863 because he could not make his rent payments. Mortified by this experience, Alkan went apartment hunting, determined to sell everything he owned, if need be, in order to find a one-room flat in which he could reside in utter seclusion. He planned to spend his time in two ways: the one devoted to study and teaching, the other concerned with the tasks of housekeeping and cooking.64

This letter alludes to the earlier reports concerning Alkan's misanthropy; reversals such as being evicted did much to undermine his faith in humanity. In finding his new lodging, Alkan accepted total withdrawal, cutting himself off from every worldly contact. He was to spend the next twenty-five years mostly at home in his apartment at 29 rue Daru, shunning any and all social contacts. Those that knew him considered him to be a refugee from the outside world. In 1862 the German pianist and composer wrote to Hiller: "Alkan has taken refuge in the most complete obscurity; misanthropy must really have

63 Sietz, Briefwechsel (1862-1869), p. 72.
64 Ibid., p. 30.
done something with him." Alkan himself seems to have recognized a growing misanthropic attitude. His letters to Hiller convey a sense of isolation, but also a feeling of sadness and futility concerning his lone existence:

...I feel myself becoming more and more misanthropic and misogynous. And yet there are moments when not having anything good or useful to do for others, not having to sacrifice for anyone or anything renders me terribly sad and unfortunate. I have no luck with musical composition, because I don't see its utility, its purpose...But it is indeed too much to speak of my moral infirmities, I am totally confused with them, and I beg your pardon a thousand times for them.

Last Years (1872-1888)

Alkan remained alone for almost twenty years. Since Hiller rarely came to Paris, Alkan's one human contact was based purely on correspondence. A chance meeting with a Hungarian composer and pianist named Alexander de Bertha finally interrupted this self-imposed retirement and led to a close companionship which kept Alkan from spending his last years in complete withdrawal.

The meeting between Alkan and de Bertha came about indirectly, due primarily to some noteworthy recitals given in London in 1871 by Alkan's son Elie Delaborde, who was now a prominent concert pianist. Delaborde had fled to England in July 1870 at the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, taking with him his unique pet collection of 121 parakeets and cockatoos. During his stay in London Delaborde

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66 Sietz, Briefwechsel (1862-1869), p. 16.
67 Curtiss, p. 370.
gave a remarkable performance at Hanover Square Rooms where he played many of Alkan's pieces as well as some organ works of Bach on a pédalier grand piano specially constructed for him by the Broadwood firm.**68** On another occasion in 1871 Delaborde was one of twenty-two pianists who attended a soirée given by Walter Bache, the eminent English disciple of Liszt. De Bertha was also among those who were present. As a result of his studies with Liszt and Hans von Bülow, de Bertha must have had some interest in Alkan prior to hearing Delaborde's performances of his father's music. His interest was stimulated enough to make Delaborde's acquaintance at the soirée, and to request a meeting with Alkan.

De Bertha's presentation occurred early in 1872, when Delaborde escorted him to Alkan's apartment at 29 rue Daru. De Bertha quickly found Alkan to be a most eccentric individual. He learned that the composer kept two apartments, the one directly above the other, in order to avoid the noise of neighbors. The lower level, on the first floor, consisted of a bedroom and a study, while the upper flat comprised a bathroom, library and storeroom.**69** Another odd feature of Alkan's dwelling was its unique doorbell: a set of chimes tuned to the C-E-G triad. This, however, was no longer in service when de Bertha met the composer. One further claim about Alkan's eccentricity that has not been substantiated suggests that the use of the two apartments

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was a means of avoiding visitors. When anyone came to the door downstairs, the concierge could say that the master was not in—he would actually be upstairs—and discourage any unwanted callers.\textsuperscript{70}

Despite these oddities de Bertha found Alkan to be a superb conversationalist and a fascinating individual. Alkan, in turn, was impressed by de Bertha's experiences in Pesth (now part of Budapest), Leipzig and Berlin as a student of such eminent teachers as Moritz Hauptmann, Ignaz Moscheles and von Bülow. As a pianist de Bertha had travelled extensively, residing in Rome for a few years prior to his arrival in Paris after the War of 1870. According to his own account he was a disciple of the Liszt school, possessing a strong enthusiasm for the great pianist—an enthusiasm shared by Alkan, who had known Liszt for over forty years.\textsuperscript{71}

Despite the difference in their ages—de Bertha, who was born in 1834, was almost twenty-one years younger than Alkan, who was born in 1813—the two soon became intimate friends, sharing their thoughts during frequent meetings at Alkan's apartment. In the fall of 1873 Alkan invited de Bertha to come to his apartment every Saturday afternoon in order to exchange ideas about music; the invitation was accepted by an undoubtedly delighted de Bertha.

At first the two discussed piano pieces that Alkan himself played, but after a short time Alkan desired to hear more of de Bertha's reminiscences of his experiences in Germany and Italy. De Bertha, conscious

\textsuperscript{70} Bloch, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{71} De Bertha, \textit{Bulletin français de la S.I.M.}, V, 135-137.
of Alkan's unquenchable thirst for knowledge, obliged the composer, even accepting payment for his visits. Alkan had asked permission to pay de Bertha according to his means for this informal education; de Bertha, not wanting to offend the composer, agreed to the payment. Thus at each session de Bertha took a ten-franc piece that was placed on the piano for him.72

De Bertha quickly became fascinated with this unique man and learned much about his daily life and about the many misfortunes that continued to grieve him. Apparently the composer suffered from a stomach disorder; he informed de Bertha that, because of his poor digestive system, he did his own cooking and even bought his own groceries.73 This condition, as his correspondence indicates, had already existed many years earlier, and was largely responsible for Alkan's sedentary life in Paris.

The only friend about whom Alkan often spoke was Chopin, although he occasionally mentioned Liszt, especially recalling his youthful jealousy of the latter. Among those whom Alkan disliked, de Bertha soon learned that Marmontel always headed the list, closely followed by Alkan's brother Napoléon.

Besides the Conservatoire incident of 1848 there was another deep-seated injury about which de Bertha was to learn: Alkan's failure to win the cross of the French Legion of Honor. The composer felt that his setback at the Conservatoire had hurt his chances of winning the cross which was bestowed annually on a high-ranking faculty member of

72 Ibid., pp. 141-142.
73 Ibid., p. 136.
that institution. His name had once been accepted by the nominating committee but was subsequently rejected when it was learned that one of his colleagues had already won the honor for that year.\textsuperscript{74}

In October 1879 de Bertha approached his friend, the Russian ambassador to Paris, Prince Nicolas-Alexievitch Orloff, whose wife had been one of Alkan's students, in an effort to reverse the composer's failure to win the prized cross. The Prince, firmly convinced that this situation was an unjust slighting of Alkan's talents, determined to meet with the composer in order to arrange for his acceptance into the Legion of Honor. However, in nine trips to Alkan's apartment the Prince was turned away each time by the concierge without once being able to see the composer. Alkan returned each of the Prince's calls, but he always arrived at the Prince's residence at two o'clock in the afternoon, which was the latter's mealtime. After having been turned away nine times by the housekeeper Alkan indignantly replied: "That's unfortunate! because I eat until exactly two o'clock."\textsuperscript{75} Thus, despite the Prince's good intentions, Alkan's eccentric ways prevented him from ever receiving the cross.

Another incident that de Bertha witnessed, concerning Alkan's will, is further evidence of the composer's strange behavior. He once confided to de Bertha that he intended to disinherit his entire family in order to provide for an honorary professorship in pedal piano at the Conservatoire. De Bertha was persuaded to arrange a meeting be-

\textsuperscript{74}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 137.

\textsuperscript{75}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 139.
tween Alkan and the Baron Eugène des Chapelles, head of the theater
department at the institution, in order to set up the honorary position.
However, at the appointed time, Alkan failed to appear, causing de
Bertha considerable embarrassment. Later the same day de Bertha found
Alkan sitting at his piano in Erard's salon. The composer's only ex-
planation for his absence from the proposed meeting was that he had
changed his mind about the professorship.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 140-141.}

Despite Alkan's eccentric behavior, which did little to gain
friends, de Bertha remained a close associate and was ultimately suc-
cessful in promoting Alkan's return to the concert stage after a twenty-
year absence. Shortly after de Bertha met Alkan the composer commenced
an annual series of "Six petits concerts," to be given in La Salle
Erard, located on the ground floor of the Erard establishment.\footnote{Ibid., p. 139.} While
Gustave Alkan, the composer's youngest brother, took charge of the
material arrangements such as tickets, printed programs--with exact
timings of all compositions to be performed, and management of the hall,
de Bertha collaborated with the composer in selecting the works to be
performed.\footnote{Ibid.} Many well-known musicians of the day, including the singer
Pauline Viardot-Garcia and the pianist Wilhelmine Clausz-Szarvady among
others, assisted in these concerts; but Alkan always reserved the prin-
cipal role for himself, both as composer of the programmed works and
as performer on the piano and the \textit{pédalier}.\footnote{Ibid.}
De Bertha notes that Alkan was a nervous performer who had to struggle constantly against timidity in front of a concert audience. At one of his public appearances he was afflicted with such memory lapses that he had to begin the Toccata in F by Bach three times before being able to finish it.\(^{80}\) On another occasion he was so dissatisfied with his performance of a Bach toccata that, after finishing it, he announced to the audience that he would play it again at the end of the concert.\(^{81}\)

Alkan's renewed concert career was short-lived, terminating with the premature death of his brother Gustave in 1877. Thereafter the composer's only performances took place in one of the salons at Erard's which was traditionally set aside for his exclusive use. There he played every Monday and Thursday afternoon for a select group of students and friends. Except for the handful of "petits concerts," these salon appearances were Alkan's only performances during the last forty years of his life. While occupied with the "petits concerts," Alkan found in these informal recitals a means of combatting the nervousness which had long hampered his public performances.\(^{82}\)

Frederick Niecks has described the salon as a "spacious room, apparently used for solo recitals and chamber music," the only furniture being a few chairs and two keyboard instruments, an ordinary grand piano and a pedal grand.\(^{83}\) Apparently very few persons ever attended

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\(^{80}\)Ibid., p. 140.

\(^{81}\)José Vianna de Motta, "Aus Ch. V. Alkan's Leben," Klavier Lehrer, XXIII (1900), 355.

\(^{82}\)De Bertha, Bulletin français de la S.I.M., V, 140.

\(^{83}\)Niecks, The Monthly Musical Record, XLVIII, 6.
these concerts. Niecks came to hear Alkan two times; the first time there was an English couple present, the second time there were a dozen ladies.84 The famed French pianist and teacher Isidor Philipp, who eagerly attended Alkan's salon recitals in his youth, once observed that the audience consisted of "des dames très parfumées et froufro- nantes [sic]."85

Although Parisians for the most part ignored these concerts, many celebrated musicians came to Erard's during their visits to Paris. Among the many famous pianists to hear the elderly Alkan were Arthur Friedheim and Hans von Bülow. Friedheim, one of Liszt's eminent pupils, visited Erard's in 1882, at which time Alkan introduced him to Charles Gounod.86 Von Bülow, on a visit to Paris in 1885, heard Alkan play the first two movements of his Symphonie, from Op. 39, and some preludes for the pédalier.87

César Franck was another eminent musician who came to Erard's to pay his respects, visiting Alkan in 1875. The two first met many years earlier, probably at a concert given on April 30, 1837, in which they both appeared along with Franz Liszt and one of the leading Parisian virtuosos of the day, Johann Peter Pixis. On that occasion the four-

84Ibid.
teen-year-old Franck made an auspicious Parisian debut as a pianist.\textsuperscript{88} Through the years Franck came to greatly respect Alkan. He often referred to the latter as the "poet of the piano" and expressed his admiration for Alkan's piano works by including some of them in his concerts. In a recital given at Orléans on March 8, 1856, Franck presented a nocturne by Alkan along with works of Liszt, Mendelssohn and a once-renowned pianist and rival of Liszt, Sigismond Thalberg.\textsuperscript{89} Franck also dedicated to Alkan his "Grande pièce symphonique," Op. 17, one of the \textit{Six pièces poétiques} for organ composed between 1860 and 1862, and, in 1889, following Alkan's death, he transcribed for organ several of Alkan's \textit{Prière}s, Op. 64, and \textit{Préludes}, Op. 66.\textsuperscript{90}

Despite the admiration of many celebrated musicians as well as the effort of Alexander de Bertha to make him renowned, Alkan remained an obscure figure in his last years. He was essentially a lonely man whose eccentric behavior prevented him from becoming reconciled with society. When Frederick Niecks visited Paris in the summer of 1880 with the intention of meeting Alkan, he procured a letter of introduction from Madame Camille Dubois (née O'Meara), who had studied with Chopin and had become one of the most highly esteemed piano teachers in Paris as well as one of the few persons to ever successfully befriend Alkan. Even with the letter, however, Niecks could not get past the resolute concierge, who not only denied that Alkan was then at home,

\textsuperscript{88}Vallas, p. 24.
\textsuperscript{89}\textit{Tbid.}, p. 109.
\textsuperscript{90}\textit{Tbid.}, p. 243.
but firmly denied that he ever would be.\footnote{Niecks, The Monthly Musical Record, XLVIII, 6.} Niecks finally met the composer by attending Erard's at one of Alkan's informal recitals. The white-headed, white-bearded old man gave Niecks an amiable reception that seemed quite contrary to his reputed misanthropic behavior. Niecks was to learn that Alkan's aloofness was due to hyper-conscientiousness about himself rather than an intrinsic dislike of people.\footnote{Ibid.}

De Bertha found Alkan's behavior often less amiable than did the composer's acquaintances at Erard's. During his last years Alkan imposed upon de Bertha to escort him to the homes of de Bertha's friends, among them some of the most noted Parisians of the day. One of Alkan's characteristic eccentricities was revealed during these social excursions. Caring to spend only the hour from nine to ten in the evening away from home, Alkan would excuse himself precisely when most of the guests were arriving. His punctuality caused much embarrassment for de Bertha when, at the latter's home, he left promptly at ten o'clock, breaking off abruptly a conversation with a certain General Hippolyte Bernard; the General never pardoned Alkan's breach of good manners. Even when de Bertha took him to the house of Maurice Richard, the French Minister of Fine Arts, Alkan adhered to his solitary ways, leaving suddenly without advance notice at ten o'clock.\footnote{De Bertha, Bulletin français de la S.I.M., V, 140.}

Alkan passed through these years largely unnoticed, completely ignored except by those few who were fortunate enough to hear him perform at Erard's. Despite his delicate stomach Alkan maintained an active
weekly schedule, continuing to perform at Erard's every Monday and Thursday and to meet with de Bertha every Saturday afternoon. He devoted his leisure time to the study of literary classics, concentrating especially on religious works such as the Bible and the Talmud. With this established routine Alkan spent the last years of his life quietly and uneventfully.

The end came finally on March 29, 1888 when Alkan, an old man of seventy-four, died alone in his apartment. Death was apparently attributed to natural causes, since the death certificate that was drawn up at the offices of the eighth arrondissement of Paris by two civilian employees, Isidore Pohl and Jules Damlincourt, mentions simply that the composer died at 8:00 P.M. on March 29.94

Despite the evidence that Alkan died a natural death, most of the writers dealing with the subject have shared the belief that the composer died as a result of a violent accident. The earliest hypotheses concerning the nature of this supposed accident appeared in two articles written by the distinguished Portuguese pianist, composer and critic José Vianna da Motta which appeared in 1900 and 1901, respectively. According to the first of these studies the composer is said to have died after having been pinned down to the floor by a cupboard which fell on him as he attempted to remove something from it. Since he was alone in his apartment at the time there was no one to hear his cries; the helpless Alkan finally died of exhaustion.95 In the second


95 Da Motta, Klavier Lehrer, XXIII, 256.
article da Motta strengthened his earlier argument by stating that Alkan's death was discovered by the doorkeeper who forced his way into the apartment to find the composer whom he had not seen leave his room for several days.  

De Bertha's account of Alkan, published in 1909, presents a completely different version of Alkan's death. De Bertha relates that the composer was found lying lifeless on the floor of his kitchen in front of the stove; he had apparently been trying to light the stove for his evening meal when he died. The lack of further details leaves de Bertha's story strangely vague and inconclusive. No direct mention of an accident is made, nor is death attributed to natural causes. In view of de Bertha's close association with Alkan, this vagueness is not easily understandable, for he must have known the truth concerning the circumstances of Alkan's death.

On the one-hundredth anniversary of the composer's birth an article which sheds further light on the subject appeared in the Neue Zeitschrift für Musik. The writer, a certain critic named Theodor Bolte, corroborates da Motta's argument by reporting specifically that the accident occurred in the composer's study and that the fall involved a bookcase. Bolte's mention of a bookcase is the earliest reference the present writer found concerning the precise nature of the cupboard first mentioned by da Motta.

Since the da Motta and Bolte articles there has been little reference made to the circumstances of Alkan's death. Henry Bellamann,

96 Da Motta, Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung, XXVIII, 109.
97 Bolte, Neue Zeitschrift für Musik, LXXX, 665.
writing in 1924, states that "an accident in his apartment caused his
death."98 Joseph Bloch, who must be credited with the first biographi-
cal work on Alkan, presented in his thesis of 1941 a death account that
contains a curious mixture of details from the da Motta and de Bertha
articles. According to Bloch the concierge burst into Alkan's apart-
ment and found him in the kitchen, lying lifelessly beneath a huge
cabinet that had fallen on him.99

Nothing further concerning Alkan's death appeared until the
article written by Humphrey Searle for the fifth edition of Grove's
Dictionary, published in 1954. Searle's account, carrying forward the
tradition of da Motta and Bolte, again presents Alkan's death as the
result of a falling bookcase, but explains further that the composer
was fatally crushed as he reached for a Hebrew religious book on top
of a bookcase which somehow toppled over on the old man.100

The most recent writer on Alkan, the noted American pianist Ray-
mond Lewenthal, who has spent several years in an effort to solve the
many mysteries of this forgotten composer's life, confirms Searle's
account, adding only that the book for which Alkan was reaching when
the accident occurred was the Talmud. In Lewenthal's words, Alkan was
"killed by that which he loved best."101

At the time of the present writing the mystery concerning Alkan's


99Bloch, p. 3.

100Searle, Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, I, 111.

101Alkan, p. v. Lewenthal stated, however, in a letter to the
present writer dated July 12, 1965—that he had yet to clarify several
points concerning the details of Alkan's death.
death is far from being solved. The only documentary evidence on the subject favors the simple and undramatic notion that the composer died a natural death. Yet, the many reports to the contrary are the result either of considerable probing by some eminent musicians or of interviews with the few persons who knew Alkan directly or indirectly. The one man who seems to have inspired the story concerning Alkan's violent end is Isidor Philipp, who lived in Paris during the 1880s as a young pianist and teacher at the Paris Conservatoire. It is through Philipp that da Motta learned much of the information that is incorporated into his two articles; in one of these Philipp is credited as the primary source of material. Philipp also influenced Henry Bellamann's article of 1924; the latter studied with Philipp in Paris before becoming a noted lecturer and author on French music. In this article he credits Philipp several times for the information contained therein. The much more recent article by Searle again credits Philipp as authority for much of the information concerning Alkan's life, but lists another source for the material concerning the composer's death: the British pianist W. Robert Collet.

The present writer, in an attempt to uncover the truth concerning Alkan's death, wrote to Collet and received a reply which again credits Philipp as authority. Because of the pertinence of this account, the present writer wishes to include a part of that reply:

\[102\] Da Motta, *Klavier Lehrer*, XXIII, 256.
Philipp as a boy visited Alkan quite often, and it was on the occasion of one of Philipp's visits that Alkan's death was discovered. Philipp rang the bell many times and got no answer. He felt quite sure that Alkan had not gone out so the police were sent for and the door forced. Alkan was found dead, crushed by the fall of his bookcase. He had apparently been extracting a Jewish religious book.\textsuperscript{103}

This information dates from a meeting between Collet and Philipp which took place in Paris in 1937. At that time Alkan had been dead almost fifty years, but, according to Collet, Philipp possessed a superior intelligence and an exceptionally clear memory. Unfortunately, Philipp never wrote any reminiscences of Alkan, nor has Collet ever recorded his conversation with Philipp. Thus this account concerning Alkan's death is an undocumented report, but one that contains many realistic details that seem to support its validity. The mystery remains unsolved; the facts of Alkan's death are as obscure today as they were in 1888.

Knowledge of the composer's death apparently had little effect on the Parisian populace, for only four of Alkan's closest associates attended the funeral services which took place on April 1, Easter Sunday. Present at the Hebrew rites were Alexander de Bertha; Jean Pierre Maurin, a renowned violinist and teacher; Alphonso Blondel, the head of the Erard firm; and Isidor Philipp.\textsuperscript{104}

Alkan's death went unnoticed by the press, except for a few cursory obituary notices, one of which appeared in the April 1 edition of the magazine \textit{Le Ménestrel}. The author of this terse article, Balthazar Claes—which is the literary name used by Camille Benoît, one of

\textsuperscript{103} Letter from W. Robert Collet, Northwood, Middlesex, July 6, 1965.

\textsuperscript{104} De Bertha, \textit{Bulletin français de la S.I.M.}, V, 141.
César Franck's students and disciples—barely mentions Alkan's death, devoting himself instead to a minute sketch of this man who was "almost unknown to our generation."  

Through the years since 1888 there has been a long lineage of Alkan enthusiasts. It has become evident to the present writer that Isidor Philipp has been the primary generating force in this enthusiasm. In addition to the many musicians already mentioned who came under Philipp's influence Ferruccio Busoni, the renowned pianist and composer, became greatly enthused after hearing Philipp's personal reminiscences of the forgotten Alkan. Busoni, encouraged through Philipp's interest, learned and subsequently performed many of Alkan's works and generated an enthusiasm for Alkan's cause among his students, most notably Egon Petri and Rudolph Ganz, both of whom have been known for their performances of Alkan's works. Another member of the Busoni school, Bernard van Dieren, has written one of the leading articles on Alkan, "Down Among the Dead Men."  

Despite the efforts of these distinguished musicians very little has been unearthed about the details of the composer's life and death. Had Philipp ever written an account of his knowledge of Alkan the situation might be considerably different than it is. Without the prerequisite documentary evidence Alkan's life may well remain a

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fascinating puzzle, uniquely marked by a mysterious death the true circumstances of which may never be known. Whether or not the composer actually died as the result of a violent accident, this bizarre legend has contributed a strange fascination to Alkan's story and has become a popular detail of the current Alkan renaissance that has followed in the wake of Raymond Lewenthal's ambitious programming of some of the composer's major works. And this is the final irony: that Alkan's much belated claim to a renown that has until now eluded him is largely based on a biographical detail of uncertain authenticity.
CHAPTER II

A GENERAL SURVEY OF ALKAN'S PIANO MUSIC

Alkan and the Keyboard

An attempt to evaluate Alkan's achievements as a composer presents an enigma fraught with difficulties. The most immediate problem lies in the fact that there is no convenient way to divide his work into distinct style periods. The list of Alkan's published compositions indicates an obvious predilection for piano music of almost every conceivable type: études, preludes, nocturnes, impromptus, scherzos, songs without words, and miscellaneous pieces of a programmatic nature with characteristic titles, as well as the more classically oriented sonatas and sets of variations.¹ In addition to these original works there are numerous transcriptions for piano of works by other composers. Alkan's taste seems to have been equivalent to that of most of the other romantic pianist-composers, prominent among whom are Frédéric Chopin, Franz Liszt, Robert Schumann, and Felix Mendelssohn. But, unlike Schumann, who went through various phases of interest, devoting himself in successive periods to piano music, Lieder, chamber music, symphonies, and dramatic works, Alkan's enthusiasm, like that of his friend Chopin, remained oriented to the piano.

¹See the Appendix for a complete listing of Alkan's original works.
In selecting criteria for an understanding of Alkan's creative efforts it is important to consider his relationship with Chopin, for each was, in his own way, a specialist. While Chopin attempted to make the piano sing in order to reproduce the cantabile style of Bellini's arias, Alkan tried to produce an orchestral sound on the keyboard in an effort to imitate the sonorous effects of Berlioz. Alkan's success in this endeavor may be measured by the fact that several writers have dubbed him the "Berlioz of the piano."\(^2\) This affinity with Berlioz suggests the primary difference between Alkan's keyboard music and that of Chopin: Alkan's works are less in the idiom of the piano, less "pianistic" than Chopin's works. It is characteristic of Alkan's keyboard pieces that they are playable on more than one type of keyboard instrument. The Préludes, Op. 31, are designated "pour piano ou orgue" and the Pièces dans le style religieux, Op. 72, have this performance indication: "pour orgue, harmonium ou piano." While several of Alkan's works bear such suggestions on their title pages for the use of alternate instruments, Chopin's keyboard works are intended exclusively for the piano.

Alkan's penchant for indicating alternate instruments is the result of several factors. Although both Chopin and Alkan expressed great affection for the music of J. S. Bach, only the latter showed any active enthusiasm for the organ, which he studied after having already become an accomplished piano virtuoso, winning the first prize in the organ class of François BENOIST in 1834. However, due to his religious affiliation Alkan was prevented from putting his organ

\(^2\)Van Dieren, p. 16.
technique to practical use. Unlike César Franck, who turned from the piano to the organ and subsequently became the organist at Ste. Clotilde, Alkan had no means of becoming established as a church organist, since the orthodox Jewish synagogues in France did not employ organs at the time. He was allowed some application of his organ technique on the pédaïer. The Erard firm, with which Alkan was closely affiliated throughout his adult life, was among the piano manufacturers that experimented with this hybrid instrument between the years 1825 and 1850. Alkan demonstrated this keyboard novelty at Erard's salon in 1848 and again at the Erard exhibit at the Paris Exhibition of 1855. His pédaïer pieces, all products of his later years, represent possibly the largest single body of music for this instrument.

3 Isaac Friede, "France," The Jewish Encyclopedia, ed. Isidore Singer (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1901-1906), V, 470. The earliest use of the organ in French orthodox synagogues in the nineteenth century occurred after the commencement of the Jewish Reform Movement in France in 1856. At an assembly called by the reform leader Salomon Ullmann many renovations were introduced into the Jewish ritual, one of which was the permission to employ the organ in the service.


Titles and Annotations

Aside from any consideration of the music itself, the titles and annotative directions that appear on the pages of Alkan's music stand out prominently as products of a most fecund imagination, representative of romanticism's many facets, especially the satanic element as personified by Nicolo Paganini. This exceptional violinist contributed greatly to the rise of a romantic atmosphere in the fine arts which had already found a fertile field of subject matter in the literary legends of Don Juan and Faust.

The influence of Paganini on the romantic pianists was considerable. Both Franz Liszt and Robert Schumann transcribed a number of Paganini's caprices for solo violin. Liszt was especially influenced to create piano works of unrestrained virtuosity; a satanic element is very much a part of his "Mephisto" waltzes. The Paganini influence is unmistakably present in many of Alkan's piano works, especially those with titles such as "Scherzo diabolico," "Les Diablotins" ("Little Devils"), and "Quasi-Faust." This last-named composition forms the second movement of Alkan's Grande sonate, Op. 33, which contains such bizarre annotations as "diabolique" and "sataniquement."

There are other grim elements in Alkan's music besides the "demonic" aspect. Titles such as "Allegro barbaro" and "Allegretto alla barbaresca" suggest the influence of primitivism, while other titles such as "Morte," "Le Mourant," "Morituri to salutant," and "Marche funèbre" depict an infatuation with death, representative of a fatalistic element. Yet, there is often a tinge of humor beneath the somewhat gloomy surface of Alkan's music; the "Marche funèbre sulla morte d'un Pappagallo [Parrot]" suggests that an irreverent humorist is lurking behind a death-mask.
In direct contrast to the satanic atmosphere of much of Alkan's music there are many pieces which are evidence of the composer's religious fervor. "Psaume 150ème," "Ancienne mélodie de la synagogue," "Cantique des cantiques," "Prière du matin," and "Prière du soir," all from the Prédues, Op. 31; and "Super flumina Babylonis," Op. 52, reflect not only the spirit of religiosity but also the direct influence of Alkan's Jewish heritage.

One of Alkan's most curious traits involving the titles of his own compositions is a penchant for juxtaposing pieces of contrasting character, such as "Marche funèbre," Op. 26a, and "Marche triomphale," Op. 27a; the "Deux petites pièces: Ma chère liberté, Ma chère servitude," Op. 60; "Une Nuit d'hiver" and "Une Nuit d'été," both from Les Mois, Op. 74; and "Jean qui pleure et Jean qui rit, Due Fugue da Camera." A few other works combine opposites within one title, as in "Héraclite et Démocrite," from the Esquisses, Op. 63; and the Chants "Horace et Lydie," Op. 65, No. 5; and "Neige et Lave," Op. 67, No. 1.

A final unique characteristic of Alkan's titles is their unusual sense of proportion. While his Grande sonate, Op. 33, extends over fifty printed pages, the Sonatine, Op. 61, despite its diminutive title is actually a long and elaborate work of thirty-five pages. Considering the scope of this composition, it is not surprising that Alkan chose to label many of his miniature sketches and preludes with diminutives such as those in the following list of titles compiled from the composer's Prédues, Op. 31, and Esquisses, Op. 63: "Fuguette," "Barcarollette," "Duetino," "Minuettino," "Triolotto," "Toccatina," "Scherzettino," "Andantinetto," and "Notturnino-Innamorato."
Works in Extended Forms

Despite the enormous length of many of Alkan's piano pieces only a few employ extended formal designs. There are three concertos, one sonata, one sonatina, and two works that serve to illustrate the composer's orchestral treatment of the piano, a symphony and an overture. Four chamber works might also be included in a list of Alkan's larger piano works, since the piano serves a primary role in each: a rondo for piano and string quartet; a trio for piano, violin and cello; a sonata for piano and violin; and a sonata for piano and cello.

Of Alkan's three concertos; only the earliest one, the Premier concerto da camera in A Minor, Op. 10, was conceived as a concerto in the traditional sense, with a solo part and an orchestral accompaniment. The piano, however, is completely self-sufficient; Alkan marked the orchestral part "ad libitum." Stemming from Alkan's student years, this three-movement work of twenty-three pages has no special musical distinction. Its significance lies in its highly developed pianistic style; although the work consists solely of numerous bits of tersely proportioned thematic material fitted into a loosely connected episodic framework, it displays a knowledgeable exploitation of the piano's resources. According to Henry Bellamann the Op. 10 concerto is Alkan's "earliest opus of distinct value."  

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6 The manifold difficulties in determining the exact date of this concerto's composition are discussed in detail in footnote 14 of Chapter I (see page 8).

The Deuxième concerto da camera, which bears no opus number, is of even more modest proportions than its predecessor, totalling only sixteen printed pages. The middle movement is the most extended section, framed by two short, brilliant movements. The significance of the term "chamber concerto" for this and the earlier concerto has not been fully explained by any of the writers on Alkan. To the present writer the annotation "da camera" indicates a relation between Alkan's work and the Baroque chamber concertos by such composers as Arcangelo Corelli and Giuseppe Torelli, the latter of whom published a set of Concerti da camera in 1686.\(^8\) Alkan's unique achievement in the two "chamber" concertos is the solo piano's effective imitation of the "tutti" and "solo" sections that are alternated in the Baroque concerto design. Alkan's "chamber" concertos are actually Baroque in their episodic format; the alternation of "tutti" and "solo" passages is their principal formal characteristic. The title "Concerto da camera," therefore, helped Alkan to indicate the distinction between his two "chamber" concertos and the solo concerto in the modern sense in which the soloist is given full opportunity to demonstrate his mastery of the instrument.

The third of Alkan's concertos is one of the composer's most remarkable works, a monstrous three-movement composition comprising 121 pages of some of the most difficult music ever conceived for two hands. This work actually consists of the Études 8 through 10 from the collection Douze études dans tous les tons mineurs, Op. 39 (1857). Étude

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No. 8, which forms the first movement of the Concerto, is probably the largest single piano piece ever written; it is a work of seventy-two pages containing 1,342 measures. In sonata form, this movement is based on three themes; in order to achieve its gigantic proportions, each section is greatly expanded, with the opening tutti section extending for 161 measures. The second and third movements are not as noteworthy as the first. The second is a modest eighteen pages of rather uninteresting material, while the third, entitled "Allegretto alla barbaresca," contains thirty pages of extremely difficult and brilliant keyboard writing. Due to its extreme length and continuously difficult writing, the Concerto has never been performed in its complete form. Alkan himself realized the excessive length of the first movement, for he marked a cut that could be taken from measure 378 to measure 1,113, at which point the coda begins. Although this concerto lacks stylistic consistency as well as a common key—the three movements are in the keys of G# Minor, C# Minor and F# Minor—there is a continuous flow of ingeniously pianistic effects, not the least among which is the shifting between "tutti" and "solo" passages. One must turn to J. S. Bach's Italian Concerto for a comparable use of this device.

Alkan wrote two sonatas for piano solo, the Grande sonate, Op. 33, and the Sonatine in A Minor, Op. 61. The latter work, although its title suggests that it is not a fully developed sonata, is actually more of a sonata in the traditional sense than the former, in which the composer departed from standard procedures in order to better accommodate his extra-musical program.
The Grande sonate, subtitled "Les Quatre Âges," which Alkan completed in 1847 and dedicated to his father, concerns the depiction of four periods in a man's life, describing this man in successive movements at the ages of twenty, thirty, forty, and fifty. In its construction the work contains some unusual characteristics. First, there is no common key among the movements, the key plan being B Minor, D# Minor, G Major, and G# Minor. Furthermore, the normal arrangement of the movements has been altered. The first part, "20 Ans," is a scherzo that is musically lively but undistinguished. The second movement, "30 Ans," subtitled "Quasi-Faust," is the longest part of the sonata, comprising twenty pages of some of the most brilliant and technically difficult passages in all of Alkan's music. Although this movement uses common-place melodic and harmonic materials to depict its Faustian theme, it achieves a grand effect through Alkan's marvelous exploitation of the keyboard. The most unique feature of "Quasi-Faust," the only sonata-form movement in the entire work, is the appearance of an eight-voice fugal exposition intercalated between the A and B themes in the recapitulation.9 The third movement, "40 Ans," subtitled "Un Heureux ménage" ("A Happy Household"), presents a lyric contrast to the violent drama of the preceding section; it contains the sonata's loveliest and most inspired moments. Closely resembling the programmatic concept of the Sinfonia Domestica of Richard Strauss (first performed in 1904), this movement depicts the sonata's hero with his family. Various musical devices are employed for descriptive effects; in the middle section, entitled "Les Enfans," a

9Cf. discussion of this fugal section on pp. 158-160.
steady succession of sixteenth notes represents the scampering about of children. After the return of the A section a series of repeated high D's, marked "10 heures," indicates the end of the day. The coda, entitled "La Prière," signifies the bedtime prayer. The last movement, "50 Ans," subtitled "Prométhée enchaîné," forms an epilogue to Alkan's panoramic work. Prefixed by three quotations from Aeschylus' tragedy Prometheus Bound, this short segment is a slow and somber funeral march.

Because of this sonata's atypical nature, Alkan's effort must be considered in terms of dramatic as well as musical effectiveness. The changes in mood depicted in the work give a fascinating indication of man's temperamental change from youth to old age. The tempo markings of the four movements give a fine illustration of this dramatic metamorphosis: "Très vite," "Assez vite," "Lentement," and "Extrêmement lent." The musical impact of this work, however, is disturbed by Alkan's unique arrangement of movements. By reversing the first and second movements the more inconsequential scherzo has been placed first; this piece in no way sets the stage for the dramatic movement which follows. More importantly, by arranging the movements in an order that proceeds from fast tempo to slow the composer has effected a gradual decline of musical momentum, so that the finale has no climactic impact to give the entire work a satisfactory conclusion. Joseph Bloch, in a long and involved analysis of this sonata contained within his musical biography of Alkan, states that in this work Alkan has sacrificed musical effect for dramatic effect.10 However, despite

10 Bloch, p. 37.
this fundamental weakness, the Alkan sonata remains an interesting and wholly unique creation, vivid proof of the composer's rich imagination.

The Sonatine, Op. 61, first published circa 1859, is actually a fully-developed sonata in four movements which, if less original in concept than the Grande sonate, is more coherent in its musical design through its use of a unified key plan and a more normal progression of movements. Lacking an extra-musical program, this work displays a complicated contrapuntal style of writing which frequently admits passages abounding in the use of free and canonic imitation; these imitative passages prove to be the Sonatine's most interesting feature. The melodic material, composed entirely of short, fragmentary themes that have the light-weight, almost inconsequential quality of the classical sonatinas of Muzio Clementi, is of relatively minor interest. Yet, despite the flaws in the basic thematic material, Alkan infuses considerable dramatic excitement into most of the Sonatine's thirty-five pages; the codas of both the first and last movements resemble Berlioz in their thick "orchestral" sound.

More effective than either the Sonate or the Sonatine is the Symphonie, a work for piano solo that comprises Études 4 through 7 of the Douze études, Op. 39. As in the Sonate, Op. 33, and the Concerto, also from Op. 39, each of the four études which form the four movements of this orchestral piano sonata is in a different key. The four parts include: an "Allegro" in C Minor, in sonata form; a "Marche funèbre," in F Minor; a "Menuet" in E♭ Minor; and a "Finale" in E♭ Minor, also in sonata form.

The opening "Allegro" has the most distinctly orchestral texture
of the four movements; the recurring use of rapidly shifting registers
on the piano effectively suggests changing orchestral combinations.
Based on a highly syncopated melodic motive, this movement is filled
with tremendous rhythmic vitality. Although the musical material is
neither wholly original nor unique, the dynamic sweep of this movement
achieves some powerful climactic moments, particularly in the passages
that contain motivic imitation and rhythmic hemiola.

In comparison with the dramatic first movement the "Marche funèbre"
is a rather phlegmatic composition, the tediousness of which is oc-
casionally relieved by means of a few interesting dissonant harmonic
effects. This piece, however, lacks the overall inventiveness of such
a work as the "Marche funèbre" movement of Chopin's Sonata in Bb Minor,
Op. 35. The serenely elegiac theme employed by Alkan in the middle
section momentarily lifts this movement out of the commonplace.

The "Menuet," like the opening "Allegro," is extremely vigorous
and exciting in its principal theme, but it bogs down in the Trio sec-
tion which contains a melodically undistinguished theme that is har-
monically repetitious and dull.

The "Finale" is a piece of virtuoso display whose effectiveness
rests upon the capabilities of the performer. Composed of two principal
melodic motives, this movement progresses at lightning speed without any
respite. The performance of this piece is further complicated by some
extraordinary enharmonic writing in the development section in which,
during a sequential passage, the keys of B# Major and Fx Major are en-
countered before a return to the tonic key of Bb Minor is effected.

The Symphonie ranks as one of Alkan's most successful works.
Despite its lack of a unifying key there is a great deal of stylistic consistency that is not to be found in other Alkan compositions such as the Grande sonate. While the manner of Alkan's writing is often superior to the material, there is enough genuinely distinguished music in this fifty-page work to justify its inclusion among the major piano works of the romantic period.

One other piano piece that belongs in a discussion of Alkan's large scale works is the "Ouverture," which, like the Symphonie and the Concerto, originated as one of the Douze études, Op. 39. The "Ouverture," No. 11 of that set, is a work of twenty-nine pages that begins very impressively, with a pseudo-orchestral theme in rapidly repeated chords. The initial excitement of this opening passage is soon forgotten, however, as the work bogs down in an episodic chain of uninteresting themes. No fewer than eight themes are woven together in a loose episodic framework. Much of the music is pompous, almost directly caricaturing the style of the operatic overtures of Alkan's day. As a musical potpourrie the "Ouverture" contains some highly interesting imitative orchestral effects, but as an entity it lacks both originality and formal coherence.

Because of the primary role the piano plays in Alkan's chamber music his four works in this idiom deserve to be discussed in this section. The piano's priority in these works is suggested by their title pages alone; there the piano is always listed before the other instruments.

The earliest chamber piece is the Rondo brillant for piano and string quartet, Op. 4, published circa 1830. The string parts, marked "ad libitum," serve a completely subordinate function in this work;
for the most part the strings merely double the melodic or bass lines of the piano part, which is a complete entity by itself. The piece offers nothing very original, being a pleasant piece of juvenalia in the style of such composers as Carl Maria von Weber and Johann Nepomuk Hummel.

Two works that may be passed over rapidly are the Grand duo concertant, Op. 21, for piano and violin (circa 1844); and the Grande sonate de concert, Op. 47, for piano and cello (1857). The former is essentially an accompanied keyboard sonata with a very simple violin part. Although the violin presents some of the themes, it is never called upon to display any virtuosic mastery of the instrument. The latter is a more dramatic work in which the piano often provides a simulated orchestral background for the cello, which handles the thematic material. The most interesting movement of this sonata, which suffers from excessive length, is the finale, a lively saltarello.

The best of Alkan's chamber works is the Premier trio, Op. 30, for piano, violin and cello (circa 1846). This is a mature and serious musical conception in which the three instruments share equally in the exposition of the thematic material. Its three movements are tersely written, with enough drama and virtuoso display to merit an effective performance.

Works in Smaller Forms

Like Chopin and Schumann, Alkan largely confined his creative activity to small pieces in the song forms. With the occasional exception of some rather episodic pieces with more than two or three divisions and a few extremely brief sketches with no sectional di-
visions at all, the vast majority of Alkan's works consists of simple binary and ternary designs.

The first group of small-scale works to be discussed is the études. Alkan, who was devoted throughout his career to the solution of pianistic problems, thereby attempting to extend the limitations of piano technique, was a prolific writer of technical studies. In composing such works he merely followed the taste of the times. Almost every piano composer of the early nineteenth century wrote dozens of "brilliant but not difficult" études, for this was the era in which the piano was becoming more and more the favorite form of musical recreation for society's middle class. "Brilliant but not difficult" was the slogan of the age.\(^{11}\)

At the end of the eighteenth century the piano's increasing popularity had given rise to the successful careers of many piano teachers, performers and composers. Muzio Clementi, J. B. Cramer and Carl Czerny were among those pianists who achieved considerable renown for their many collections of études. Most of their work was of a purely technical nature, intended as practice material for their students. Clementi, however, attempted to make musically interesting pieces out of his studies. His most famous work, the Gradus ad Parnassum, published in 1817, includes a group of 100 studies "which achieved a remarkable union of technical instruction and artistic expression."\(^{12}\)

\(^{11}\)Loesser, p. 291. The author gives an enlightening discussion of the times emphasizing the universal desire for accessible music for immediate and unimpeded enjoyment.

With Clementi's "remarkable union" the étude became elevated to the level of pure music. Subsequent étude writing did not always attain the level that Clementi had reached, but two courses were clearly laid out for composers to follow: practice studies, intended solely for the improvement of the pianist's technique, and "concert" studies, pieces of intrinsic musical value that could be performed in concerts. Many composers of the period, in order to satisfy both the demand for technical studies and the growing clamor for "brilliant but not difficult" pieces with fetching titles and attractive themes, proceeded to compose études that, with the appropriate programmatic designations, could be passed off as concert pieces. The resultant work of such minor composers as Friedrich Kalkbrenner, Henri Herz and Franz Hütten produced little of lasting musical value. It remained for the poetic genius of Frédéric Chopin to prove that an étude could be an effective concert piece. In his Douze études, Op. 10, published in 1833, Chopin succeeded in improving upon Clementi's original idea, producing études that are genuine works of art.

When Alkan began to compose in earnest during the early 1830s, the influences of Czerny on the one hand and Chopin on the other were sharply drawn. His work, therefore, demonstrates leanings in two directions: while some of his études are purely technical in nature, others attempt to reach a higher level of musical value. The distinction between these two trends reflects one of the basic factors in Alkan's music, that he remained aloof from the influences surrounding him. Despite his classical schooling and his close friendship with Chopin, he managed to work independently, freely incorporating both classical and romantic elements into his music, but refraining from be-
coming consistently attached to either idiom.

The earliest Études, composed during the mid-1830s, are the Études-Caprices, comprising four sets of Études, Op. 12, 13, 15, and 16, each set containing three pieces. The first set, subtitled "Improvisations dans le style brillant," is technically interesting but musically dull. Characteristic of its leaning towards Czerny is its repeated use of unvaried rhythmic patterns which persist for several pages. A significant musical advance is demonstrated by the next set of studies, Op. 13, entitled "Trois andantes romantiques." Especially romantic is the third piece, a Schubertian nocturne in the key of Cb Major, with a theme that is continually doubled in sixths and tenths. Op. 15, "Trois morceaux dans le genre pathétique," which comprises three extremely long and difficult pieces that fill fifty printed pages, represents the most ambitious collection in the entire series. The first piece, "Aime toi," which contains fifteen pages of virtuoso figurations based on a rather commonplace tune, is the least distinguished work in the set. The second piece, "Le Vent," includes twenty pages of chromatic scale passages built around a simple theme. Besides its astounding difficulty, which would challenge even the greatest piano technique, this piece contains some reasonably attractive material. "Le Vent" is certainly not great music, but it is pleasant enough for an effective performance. The third piece, "Morte," is the least difficult and most interesting work in the set. Its funereal imagery, which includes the effects of tolling bells and drum rolls, gives a good indication of Alkan's ingenious imagination. The piece also contains a reference to the "Dies Irae," the Gregorian melody that figures prominently in many works by Alkan's contemporaries, most notably the
Symphonie fantastique of Hector Berlioz and the Totentanz of Franz Liszt. Perhaps more interesting than the music of these "Morceaux" is the controversy which they caused among prominent nineteenth-century music critics. Robert Schumann's caustic review of Alkan's Op. 15 represents one of the more vicious tirades of the entire romantic period. The last set of Études-Caprices, subtitled "Scherzi," contains some good technical material, but again there is too much repetition of the same rhythmic figure. The third piece contains the best material of the three but is too long and boggs down in a monotonous middle section.

The next group of études consists of a number of individually published pieces with characteristic titles that were first published during the mid-1840s. The first of these works, "Le Preux," Op. 17, published circa 1844, is a twenty-page virtuoso study consisting mostly of brilliant octave passages. "Le Chemin de fer," Op. 27a (circa 1845), is a long programmatic study which strives to imitate the rhythmic movements of a train. As an étude, this piece, which anticipates the theme of Arthur Honegger's Pacific 231 (1923), contains a continuous array of rapid scale passages in an unvarying sixteenth-note movement; the only stop occurs at the conclusion, where the train's speed gradually slackens before coming to a complete stop. The next piece, "Bourrée d'Auvergne," Op. 29 (1846), is a lengthy but briskly paced study that contains much interesting material, especially in the B section which features irregularities in phrasing and rhythm.

13 For a discussion of Schumann's review as well as that of Franz Liszt, see pages 13-14.
Another work which originated in this period is the set of *Trois grandes études pour les deux mains séparées et réunies*, Op. 76. Despite the late opus number which appears in the Costallat edition of 1900, these are relatively early works which first appeared without an opus designation circa 1845. In terms of technical virtuosity, these three études, a "Fantaisie" for the left hand alone, an "Introduction, variations et finale" for the right hand alone, and a "Mouvement semblable et perpetuel" for the two hands together, are advanced far beyond the composer's other works written during the same period. Although these were intended as concert pieces their musical value is slight in comparison with their technical worth. The "Fantaisie" is probably the most musically satisfying work in the set; it is an extended, fourteen-page rhapsody with rapid tremolos, arpeggios and chordal successions. Both of the other two études are overlong and repetitious, with the right hand study the longest work in the set, extending for twenty-one pages. The last étude provides an interesting parallel with the similarly constructed last movement of Chopin's *Sonata in Bb Minor*, Op. 35, for in both works the hands move in parallel motion while playing octave unisons. Although these two compositions are of comparable technical value the Chopin work is more varied harmonically than the Alkan counterpart and says all that need be said in a mere four pages while the Alkan work extends seventeen.

The composer's two principal collections of études are separated by ten years. The first set, *Douze études dans tous les tons majeurs*, Op. 35, was first published in 1847, while the enormous second set, *Douze études dans tous les tons mineurs*, Op. 39, did not appear until 1857.
In the Op. 35 set Alkan attempted to follow the basic pattern of Chopin's two sets of études, Op. 10 and 25, in which each work is based on a technical figure which may either accompany a simple melodic formula or constitute the basic melody by itself. Alkan divided his work into two parts, the "Première suite," which includes Études 1 through 6, and the "Deuxième suite," which comprises Études 7 through 12.

Suite 1, which is the shorter of the two, constituting only thirty-nine pages of music, contains some highly interesting material. No. 2 presents a unique canonic treatment of a terse melodic motive while No. 3 has an extremely attractive étude figure consisting of repeated octaves. The most effective of the six pieces is No. 5, "Allegro barbaro," a vivacious octave study which employs only the white keys. Although written with the key signature of F Major, not a single Bb is used in the entire work.

The second suite of Op. 35 fills sixty pages of text. No. 7, popularly known as "L'Incendie au village voisin," is the most extended work in the entire collection, a spectacular piece of descriptive music depicting a burning village. This work belongs to a popular nineteenth-century class of programmatic works called "fire pieces."¹⁴ These melodramatic concoctions are characterized by their use of every available musical cliché to create an exciting atmosphere. Alkan's burning

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piece is remarkable for the almost complete banality of its musical material. The only real value lies in its writing, which features some excellently conceived technical devices. No. 8, entitled "Lento appassionato," is perhaps the finest piece in the entire opus, comprising seven pages of highly poetic writing. This is a wonderful study that severely tests the pianist's ability to differentiate between staccato and legato. The final works in this suite all contain worthy material but are overlong. No. 12 is especially notable for its unique time signature of $\frac{10}{16}$; this is a virtuosic octave study that contains alternating rhythmic groups of two and three fitted into a continuously flowing sixteenth-note design.

The monstrously large collection of Douze études, Op. 39, comprises two volumes filled with 275 pages of some of the most difficult piano music ever written. Unlike the modestly proportioned works of Op. 35, these twelve studies are not at all like the études of Chopin. Their titles alone serve to illustrate that these are études of a most original genre. The title and key of each work are given below.\(^\text{15}\)

1. Comme le vent, A Minor
2. En rythme molosique, D Minor
3. Scherzo diabolico, G Minor
4. Allegro moderato, C Minor
5. Marche funèbre, F Minor
6. Menuet, Eb Minor
7. Finale, Eb Minor
8. Allegro assai, G# Minor
9. Adagio, C# Minor
10. Allegretto alla barbaresca, F# Minor
11. Ouverture, B Minor
12. Le Festin d'Esop, E Minor

Only the first three pieces in Op. 39 are classifiable as "études."
The works which comprise the Symphonie and the Concerto have already been inspected, along with the "Ouverture," in the section on works in larger forms; "Le Festin d'Esco" will be treated in the final section of this chapter dealing with works in variation form. Although the technical writing is superior to the musical material in all of the first three works, No. 1, "Comme le vent," is the most purely technical étude in the entire opus, consisting of twenty pages of intricate finger passages that are marked to be played "Prestissimamente." Because of its extreme length and persistent difficulty this piece presents to the performer a true test of skill and endurance. Although both "En rythme molosique" and "Scherzo diabolico" have some interesting material in a bravura style, the former is weakened by its repetitious treatment of one basic rhythmic pattern and the latter, which contains the best thematic material of these first three études, suffers from its excessive length and episodic format. Musically these three works are inferior to the rest of the Douze études, Op. 39, which includes, in the four-movement Symphonie and the "Esco" variations, some of Alkan's most distinguished writing on a large scale. Considered as a whole, Op. 39 represents Alkan's most important work.

Some other études that should be mentioned include a set of Douze études pour les pieds seulement, intended for either organ or pedal piano. Although these pedal exercises do not pertain directly to the pianistic idiom, they are significant of the composer's attempt to establish a practice repertoire for the pedal piano. After completing the Études, Op. 39, Alkan wrote only one further piano étude, the
"Toccatina" in C Minor, Op. 75, a pleasant little piece that requires nimble fingers for its continuous passages in perpetual motion. His subsequent energies were directed mostly at producing concert pieces for the pedal piano, but none of these works are specified as studies.

After the Études the largest amount of Alkan's music conceived on a small scale is represented by thirty pieces collectively called Chants. Arranged in five books, with six pieces in each, the Trente Chants are Alkan's active tribute to Felix Mendelssohn's Songs without Words. Not only did Alkan arrange his individual sets of Chants like those of Mendelssohn, which were first published with six pieces grouped under each opus number, but he also adopted the key signature scheme that Mendelssohn used in his first collection of Songs without Words, Op. 19, composing each set of Chants with the following key scheme: E Major, A Minor, A Major, F Major, E# Minor, and G Minor. Alkan's five collections are these: Op. 38, first and second books, and Op. 65, 67, and 70.

There are other striking similarities between Alkan's Chants and Mendelssohn's Songs. One of the most prominent is the use of a short introduction that is thematically unrelated to the piece that follows, but which returns at the end to form a coda. Alkan's "Hymne" and "Barcarolle en Choeur," Op. 38, Nos. 1 and 6 (second book); and "Canon,

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16 This work has the distinction of being the first Alkan work ever recorded. It is performed by Raymond Lewenthal on the disc "Toccatas for the Piano," recorded in 1956 on Westminster XWN 18362. The more recent RCA Victor recording by Lewenthal of Alkan's Symphonie, "Le Festin d'Esop," "Quasi-Faust," and the "Barcarole," Op. 65, No. 6, recorded in 1965 on RCA LM 2815, represents the first entire recording ever devoted to the music of Alkan.
Op. 65, No. 3, which have both introductory and closing motives that are unrelated to the main body of the pieces they frame, are equivalent in their construction to Mendelssohn's "Confidence," Op. 19, No. 4; and "Consolation," Op. 30, No. 3 (from Books I and II, respectively, of the Songs without Words.)

Another marked similarity between the two composers concerns the relationship of Alkan's barcarolles to Mendelssohn's Venetian boat songs. Mendelssohn wrote four boat songs, the first and second of which form the sixth pieces of the first two sets of Songs without Words, Op. 19 and 30, respectively. Alkan followed Mendelssohn's plan by including a barcarolle at the end of each of his five sets of Chants. A comparison of these five barcarolles to those of Mendelssohn reveals that Alkan's pieces are modeled closely after the style of the Venetian boat songs. The "Barcarolle," Op. 38, No. 6 (first book), employs an accompaniment figure that is almost identical to that of the first Venetian boat song, Op. 19, No. 6, in G Minor, the key in which all of Alkan's barcarolles are written. The "Barcarolle," Op. 67, No. 6, uses an accompaniment figure that is merely a rearrangement of the pattern that Mendelssohn employed in his third boat song, in A Minor, Op. 62, No. 5.

While the Chants represent some of Alkan's most romantic and melodic creations, only a few can properly be considered works of exceptional musical originality. Among those pieces that deserve to be given individual recognition "Choeur," Op. 38, No. 3 (first book), is noteworthy for its steady rhythmic drive and for its effective exploitation of both the high and the low extremes of the piano's register.
while the "Barcarolle," No. 6, of that set, is one of Alkan's most effective small pieces in an expressive style. Among the pieces in the second book of Op. 38, No. 2, "Allegretto," which is entitled "Fa" in the Lewenthal edition, contains some of Alkan's most dissonant harmonic effects. Based simply on a diatonic tune with an arpeggiated accompaniment, this piece includes a middle voice which consists solely of a pedal point on the F above middle C. Probably inspired by Mendelssohn's Etude in A Minor, Op. 104, No. 3, which also contains an internal pedal point on F, this work incloses an almost incessant sequence of dissonant harmonies resulting from the clash of this pedal and the surrounding parts. The effect produced by the bold maintaining of this pedal point throughout the work is unique for its time (1857). Two other pieces from the second book of Chants, No. 3, "Chant de guerre"; and No. 4, "Procession-Nocturne," contain interesting material, the former displaying some complicated fugal writing in its middle section and the latter including a legato theme and staccato accompaniment.


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17Alkan, p. xvi. In this introductory note Lewenthal reveals the similarity between the Mendelssohn and Alkan works, which are both in the same key. The score of "Fa" is included on pages 103-108 of the Lewenthal edition.
comprising some interesting features, is musically inferior to the other books. No. 1, "Duettino," is worthy of mention for its Debussyesque arpeggio style; and No. 2, "Andantinetto," features the unique vertical juxtaposition of two time signatures, with $\frac{4}{3}$ over $\frac{2}{3}$. The difficult cross rhythm of four eighth notes over three quarters appears in practically every measure.

Two large collections of piano miniatures, most of which possess descriptive titles, comprise some of Alkan's most distinguished small-scale work. The Vingt-cinq préludes dans tous les tons majeurs et mineurs, Op. 31, and the Esquisses, subtitled "Quarante-huit motifs divisées en quatre suites," Op. 63, consist of brief sketches, some a mere few lines in length.

The set of Préludes, first published in 1847, not only encompasses every major and minor key, like Chopin's Préludes, Op. 28, and J. S. Bach's Well Tempered Clavier, but goes one step further, including an additional prelude in C major, the key of the first piece, at the end of the series. Although designated "pour piano ou orgue," these short works are distinctly pianistic in their figurations. In a few of them, however, the organ facilitates the performance of some intricate bass passages through its rank of pedals.

A wide variety of musical styles is displayed in these works. Several are reminiscent of the style of Bach: No. 3, "Dans le genre ancien"; No. 10, "Dans le style fugue"; and No. 16 in C Minor, a little four-voice invention that employs imitative entrances of its principal thematic motive. Several reflect Alkan's Jewish heritage: No. 5, "Psaume 150ème"; No. 6, "Ancienne mélodie de la synagogue"; and No. 13,
"Cantique des cantiques." A general religious atmosphere is evident in No. 4, "Prière du soir"; No. 19, "Prière du matin"; and No. 25, entitled simply "Prière." Several others evince a richly romantic character: No. 12, "Le Temps qui n'est plus"; No. 17, "Rêve d' amour"; No. 18, "Romance"; and two other lilting preludes without specific titles: No. 7 in Eb Major and No. 14 in B Minor. Another piece, No. 11, "Un Petit rien," invites comparison with the clavecin piece "Le Petit-Rien" from the Quatorzième ordre in D Major by François Couperin.18 This is only one of the many instances in Alkan's music that suggest the influence of Baroque keyboard music on the composer's style. One further prelude that deserves mention is No. 24 in E Minor, a marvelously Chopinesque étude comprising six pages of right-hand thirty-second notes. While not among those few pieces in the series that contain truly original material, this work is as effective technically as anything that Alkan officially designated as an "étude."

The Esquisses, Op. 63, first published in 1857, demonstrates a distinct advance in Alkan's pianistic idiom over the earlier Préludes. Divided into four suites of twelve pieces, these forty-eight sketches embrace every major and minor key in a scheme that encompasses the complete cycle of keys two times, once in the first two suites and again in the last two suites. The basic key plan is equivalent to that employed in the Préludes. In both collections works in major keys

alternate with those in minor keys. Another similarity between these two sets is the inclusion of a forty-ninth Esquisse, "Laus Deo," which serves as an epilogue to Op. 63 in the same manner that "Prière" concludes the Préludes: by a return to C Major, the key of the first piece in each collection.

While only a few of the sketches contain truly original and distinguished music, almost every one of the pieces includes at least one unique characteristic. Among the works in the first suite No. 1, "La Vision," encloses a long and expressive theme with a simple accompaniment figure. No. 2, "Le Staccatissimo"; and No. 3, "Le Legatissimo," are interesting little études that display some of Alkan's most chromatic writing. No. 5, "Les Initiés"; and No. 6, "Piquette," are imitative pieces in the style of J. S. Bach. The two most unique

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19 The scheme used in the Esquisses consists of an arrangement based on the grouping of the pieces into couplets of 1 and 2, 3 and 4, etc. The successive couplets are arranged in a series of ascending whole steps. In the first two suites the pieces within each couplet are separated by the interval of a perfect fourth, while in the last two suites they are separated by a perfect fifth. A further aspect of the scheme is that in the first and third suites the odd-numbered pieces, 1, 3, 5, etc., are in major keys, while the even-numbered pieces, 2, 4, 6, etc., are in minor keys. In the second and fourth suites this pattern is reversed; thus the major keys of suites 1 and 3 become the minor keys of suites 2 and 4, respectively. The scheme is presented below, with capital letters representing major keys and small letters representing minor keys. The sole exception to this arrangement is No. 26, which has the key signature of G Minor but which is written in the Phrygian mode with a final on D.

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<th>Suite I</th>
<th>Suite II</th>
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<td>9. Ab 10. c#</td>
<td>21. g# 22. Db</td>
<td>33. Ab 34. eb</td>
<td>45. g# 46. Eb</td>
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pieces in the first set are No. 10, "Increpato"; and No. 11, "Les Soupirs." The former contains some interesting grace-note dissonances as well as a unique rhythmic movement, with a steady flow of sixteenth notes in groups of five to a beat, while the latter consists mostly of arpeggio figures over sustained octaves which provide a dominant pedal point for the first eleven measures. "Les Soupirs" is distinctly impressionistic in its vague harmonic progression.

The second suite contains a few interesting ideas. No. 21, "Morituri te salutant," with an incessant chromatic movement in triplets, attempts to evoke the tense drama of the gladiatorial arena. No. 23, "L'Homme aux sabots," employs numerous chromatic grace notes to ornament its tune. No. 24, "Contredanse," is a vivacious little dance in imitation of an eighteenth-century idiom.

Only three pieces in the third suite are worthy of mention. No. 27, "Rigaudon," is another lively eighteenth-century dance. No. 29, "Délire," is a marvelously effective octave and arpeggio study that uses simple musical materials but exploits the piano's brilliance throughout its three pages. No. 31, "Début de quatuor," is an example of Alkan's occasional tendency to compose with tongue in cheek. This piece is, on the surface, a musically unoriginal work, but beneath the façade there lies a humorous parody of a string quartet, with standard string figurations and phrasings carefully reproduced on the piano.

The fourth and last suite contains the most interesting material in the entire opus. No. 39, "Héraclite et Démocrite," is noteworthy for its unique alternation between two themes of contrasting character and the final vertical juxtaposition of this material. No. 41, "Les
Enharmoniques," is extraordinary for its chromatically conceived harmonic scheme that effectively approaches atonality in its avoidance of a tonal center. Three pieces, No. 42, "Petit air à 5 voix"; No. 43, "Notturnino-Innamorato"; and No. 46, "Le Premier billet doux," all present some of the most attractive themes in the entire opus, with the last-named work containing some of Alkan's most subtly varied harmonic writing. Altogether the brief works in Op. 63 present a microcosm of Alkan's musical idiom.

A few other collections of small pieces are worthy of consideration, although their musical content is inferior to their highly developed pianistic style. Two of these sets consist of pieces written for the pedal piano during the composer's last years. The principal distinction of these works lies in the fact that they contain some intricately complicated writing for the pedals.

The earliest set of works for the pedal piano, the Treize prières, Op. 64, published in 1867 with the threefold instrumental indication "pour orgue, piano à clavier de pédales ou piano à trois mains," contains some mildly interesting music. Alkan's contemporaries must have esteemed these works, for both César Franck and José Vianna da Motta, the famous Portuguese pianist and student of Franz Liszt, made arrangements of some of them, with Franck transcribing them for organ and da Motta making them feasible on a piano equipped with pedals.20

20 The Franck edition, entitled Préludes et prières de Ch. V. Alkan, choisies et arrangées pour orgue en trois livraisons (Paris: Richault, 1889), consists of ten pieces taken from Alkan's Op. 64 and 66, while the da Motta work, Prières pour orgue (ou Piano à clavier de pédales), Op. 64, arrangées pour piano à deux mains (Paris: Costallat, 1901), includes eight of the original thirteen pieces.
Of the works in the da Motta edition Nos. 2, 6 and 7 contain interesting melodies and have a romantic cantabile character. No. 5, "Deus Sebaoth [sic]," effectively employs motivic imitation, but its basic melodic and harmonic materials are lacking in originality.

The second set of pédalier pieces, the Onze grandes préludes et une transcription du Messie de Haendel, Op. 66, intended "pour piano à clavier de pédales ou piano à trois mains," represents no significant musical advance over Op. 64. These are merely a series of well-conceived virtuoso studies that are interesting primarily for the technical maturity of the writing. The extremely difficult pedal passages, such as that in steady sixteenth notes found at the beginning of No. 1, suggests that Alkan was a veritable master of pédalier technique.

Another set of keyboard pieces, Onze pièces dans le style religieux et une transcription du Messie de Haendel, Op. 72, is so similar in its title to Op. 66, that two of the principal listings of Alkan's music mistakenly consider the two works to be identical. A closer examination, however, reveals the existence of two distinct collections, each of which contains a different excerpt from Handel's Messiah. The early catalogue of Alkan's works by Franz Pazdirek, although one of the most comprehensive listings, contains this reference under Op. 72: "vide Op. 66." Joseph Bloch, in his 1941 listing, also

21 Op. 66 contains a transcription of the accompanied tenor recitative "Thy rebuke hath broken his heart"; Op 72 includes an arrangement of the "Pastorale Symphony."

assumes that the two works are identical.\textsuperscript{23} Most recently, in the scholarly catalogue compiled by Humphrey Searle, the two sets are listed separately—as they originally appeared in the list of Alkan's music contained in the Richault editions of his works—but Op. 72 is incorrectly listed "for organ or pedal pf."\textsuperscript{24} The title page of the Richault edition of this set clearly refutes Searle's claim that this is a \textit{pédalier} work; Op. 72 was originally intended "pour orgue, harmonium, ou piano; sans \textit{pédalier}.

The "religious" pieces of Op. 72, which were first published in 1867, represent a complete stylistic change from Alkan's other late works of Op. 64 and 66. These are simple and tuneful miniatures that avoid altogether the dramatic and virtuosic pretentiousness of the \textit{pédalier} works. There is, however, little significant advance in musical quality in Op. 72. The most interesting pieces in that set are the fugal No. 3, "Quasi-Adagio"; No. 7 in F Major, which employs imitative devices; and two lyrical pieces, No. 4 in G Major and No. 11 in A Minor, which both contain fine cantabile melodies. No. 4, with some unusual dissonant touches in its harmonic scheme, is especially effective, while No. 11 contains another example of rhythmic groups of five in its B section.

Two other sets of short pieces are worthy of mention, although the present writer has been unable to review them. These are the \textit{Petits préludes sur les huit gammes du plainchant}, published by Héugel

\textsuperscript{23} Bloch, p. 47.

\textsuperscript{24} Searle, \textit{Grove's Dictionary}, I, 112.
in 1839, and the *Douze fugues pour piano ou orgue*, published by Richault (not datable). Although there are few examples of modal and fugal writing in his other music for the piano, these two sets suggest that the composer's enthusiasm was at least momentarily directed back beyond the classical period.

A survey of Alkan's small scale works would not be complete without a discussion of the vast amount of miscellaneous characteristic music. Although most of the composer's descriptive pieces are contained within three large collections that have already been inspected, the *Préludes*, Op. 31, the *Esquisses*, Op. 63, and the *Trente Chants*, there are numerous other smaller collections as well as a great number of individually published pieces.

The most prominent of these smaller collections of characteristic pieces is *Les Mois*, Op. 74, which consists of four suites with three pieces in each set. Although this work bears a late opus number in the Costallat edition of 1900, it was originally published by Richault without an opus number sometime during the 1850s. Six of the pieces were written even earlier as "Six morceaux caractéristiques," which was published circa 1838 as Op. 8 (in the Schlesinger edition) and as Op. 16 (in the Hofmeister edition). Robert Schumann's review of the latter appeared in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* in 1839. The twelve pieces of *Les Mois*, which depict the months of the year, are more noteworthy for their many orchestral effects than for their melodic and harmonic content. No. 2, "Carnaval," marked "Mouvement de galop," has

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25Cf. discussion of this review on pages 13 and 14 of Chapter I.
some marvelous octave and chordal passages built around familiar musical
clichés. No. 3, "La Retraite"; and No. 10, "Gros temps," have deep tre-
molo passages that imitate drum rolls. No. 10, "L'Opéra," is the best
piece in the entire collection, a witty satire on the pompous banality
of the "grand opéra."

Two other noteworthy collections are the two sets of **Impromptus**,
Op. 32, first published by Brandus in 1849. The **Premier recueil
d'impromptus** consists of four small pieces, "Vaghezza," "Fantasietta
alla moresca," "L'Amitié," and "La Foi." The "Fantasietta" and "Vag-
hezza," which were both first published circa 1845 as Op. 26b and 26c,
respectively, are the finest pieces in the set; the "Fantasietta" con-
tains especially pleasant tunes and a vivacious rhythmic drive. The
**Deuxième recueil d'impromptus** contains "Trois airs variés à 5 et à 7
temps," which illustrate irregular rhythmic patterns.

Among Alkan's characteristic pieces there is a small number of
works which evince the influence of dance music, both Baroque dance
forms and folk dances. Two works written during the 1840s are the
"Saltarelle," Op. 23, a delightful but extremely difficult exercise in
arpeggios and repeated-note figures; and the "Gigue et Air de ballet,"
Op. 24, which effectively combines the "style ancien" with some inter-
esting harmonic touches. Another piece entitled "Saltarelle" is a
four-hand version of the last movement of the Grande sonate de concert
for piano and cello, Op. 47. Alkan wrote four minuets during the late
1850s; the "Minuetto alla tedesca," Op. 46, marked "Allegro pesante,"
is an effective octave study that resembles the style of the mazurka
with an accent on the second beat of each measure, while the "Trois
minuets," Op. 51, contains some interesting writing, but is lacking in musical originality. There are two works which demonstrate the influence of French folk music, the "Bourrée d'Auvergne," Op. 29, a fast-moving dance piece that has already been discussed as an étude, and the "Réconciliation, petit caprice pour piano, mi-parti en forme de Zorcico, ou Air de danse Basque à cinq temps," Op. 42. This latter piece, first published in 1857, is interesting primarily for its middle section, a dance in 5/4 time, with dotted rhythm patterns in the melody.

Another genre which had considerable influence upon Alkan's music is that of the march. There are numerous examples of two types of marches among the composer's small pieces: slow-moving funeral marches and lively military marches. Alkan wrote three works entitled "Marche funèbre," one of which forms the second movement of the Symphonie from Op. 39, while another is the choral piece "Marche funèbre sulla morte d'un Pappagallo," published in 1859. The third work, called simply "Marche funèbre," Op. 26a, is a relatively early work, having been performed with its companion piece, the "Marche triomphale," Op. 27a, in 1845.26 The former is a doleful bit of descriptive music in Eb Minor, while the latter is one of Alkan's most ostentatious examples of technical display. Alkan wrote two further sets of marches, the musically pleasing "Trois marches, quasi da cavalleria," Op. 37, and the harmonically unoriginal "Trois marches" for four hands, Op. 40, all of which were first published in 1857.

26Cf. page 13 of Chapter I.
The following types of romantic descriptive music, the fantasy, nocturne, impromptu, and caprice, are represented in Alkan's music by a select group of small pieces. The "Trois petites fantaisies," Op. 41, dedicated to Liszt, are not actually "petites," consisting of thirty-five pages of text. None of the three works contain very original music, although No. 3, the most extended work in the set, presents some truly effective virtuoso writing. Greater musical interest is provided by three other fantasies, "Le Désir," published circa 1845; the "Fantasticheria" ("Reverie") in B Minor (1867); and the "Deuxième fantasticheria" in F♯ Minor (1872). This last work bears a subtitle ("Chapeau bas!") which was probably derived from the text of a work by the French romantic poet Pierre Jean de Béranger.²⁷ Alkan wrote four nocturnes, No. 1 in B Major, Op. 22 (1844); Nos. 2 and 3, Op. 57 (1859); and No. ⁴, "Le Grillon," Op. 60b (1859). These are rather weak conceptions, lacking both the melodic and harmonic originality of Chopin's nocturnes. In addition to the two sets of impromptus, Op. 32, Alkan wrote "Une Fusée, introduction et impromptu," Op. 55 (1859), a rather insignificant work; and the "Impromptu sur le choral de Luther: Un Fort rempart est notre Dieu," Op. 69. This latter work, despite its title, is actually an extended set of variations, one of Alkan's principal achievements in this particular genre.²⁸ Of Al-

²⁷Norbert Outeman, A Book of French Quotations with English Translations (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1963), p. 258. Béranger (1780-1857) was the author of several books of Chansons, written between 1815 and 1833. One of these works, "Le Marquis de Carabas," contains the couplet

Chapeau bas! Chapeau bas!
Gloire au marquis de Carabas!

²⁸Cf. discussion of this work on page 83.
kan's three caprices, the first, "Réconciliation, petit caprice,"
Op. 42 (1857), has already been mentioned for its unique middle sec-
tion in the form of a cerciac. The "Quasi-Caccia, caprice," Op. 53
(1859), is a brilliant étude in the style of a hunting piece. It lacks
melodic originality but presents some accomplished technical writing
of immensely difficult octave and chordal passages. The "Capriccio
alla soldatesca" and its companion piece "Le Tambour bat aux champs,"
Op. 50, Nos. 1 and 2 (1859), represent Alkan's most highly developed
descriptive writing. Besides some remarkably vivid orchestral effects,
most noteworthy among which is the drum roll passage at the beginning
of "Le Tambour," this opus contains effective and pleasant thematic
material.

Among Alkan's descriptive pieces a few miscellaneous works remain
to be mentioned. The "Alleluia" in F Major, Op. 25, published in 1844,
is a very brief sketch that employs massive chords to produce an ex-
pansive piano sonority. The "Scherzo fuoco," Op. 34, of 1847, is
an extended virtuoso octave study, the musical material of which is
not comparable to its technical value. Two further pieces, "Salut,
cendre du pauvre, paraphrase," Op. 45, and "Super flumina Babylonis,
Psaume CXXXVII, paraphrase," Op. 52, published in 1856 and 1859, re-
spectively, are musical interpretations of literary texts.29 The
latter work, which bears the French translation of the text of Psalm
137 on its title page, is the more distinguished of these two para-

29 The present writer has been unable to identify the literary
source of "Salut, cendre du pauvre," which, according to da Motta, is
based on a poem (da Motta, Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung, XXVIII, 125).
phrases. In terms of its design "Super flumina Babylonis" is one of Alkan's most extraordinary creations, a work which is vividly orchestral in intent and which carefully distinguishes the various instrumental colors. While its musical material consists mostly of chordal passages such as may be found in many other Alkan compositions, the piece is conspicuous for its highly romantic use of this familiar material.

The "Benedictus" in D Minor, Op. 54, published in 1859, is the earliest piece written by Alkan for the pedal piano. It consists of fifteen pages of virtuosic music that begins pompously and ends brilliantly but lacks profundity throughout. "Ma chère liberté" and "Ma chère servitude," which comprise the "Deux petites pieces," Op. 60, are noteworthy only for their interestingly contrasting titles. The two-part work "Jean qui pleure et Jean qui rit, Due Fugue da Camera," is somewhat more worthy of attention. Henry Bellamann describes this composition as "humorous and delightful," and as a "pleasantly sugar-coated polyphonic study."30 According to da Motta, the latter segment is based on the "Champagne Song" from Mozart's Don Giovanni.31

Two further pieces without opus numbers remain to be mentioned, the "Petit conte," published in 1859, a charming little salon piece; and the "Bombardo-Carillon," published in 1872, one of the nineteenth-century's major curiosities, intended "pour clavier de pédales à quatre pieds seulement ou quatre mains sur clavier ordinaire." Although this

31Da Motta, Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung, XXVIII, 126.
piece lacks musical substance, it should prove of value, as Albert Lockwood, a modern authority on piano music, jestingly intimates, "to armless pianists."\(^{32}\)

Works in Variation Form

Alkan wrote a considerable number of works in variation form, most of which are youthful compositions written in the classical idiom of the "thème varié," with elaborate decorative figures built around a simple tune. During the early part of the nineteenth century the great enthusiasm for grand opera led the aspiring pianists of the day to arrange brilliant sets of variations on themes from operas that were then popular in order to attract audiences to their concerts. With operatic titles on their programs these pianists were able to arouse considerable attention.\(^{33}\) Even Chopin contributed to this genre; "IÀ ci darem la mano, varié, pour le piano avec accompagnement d'orchestre," Op. 2 (1830), based on an aria from Mozart's Don Giovanni, represents a catering to the popular taste that is far removed from the same composer's later poetic nocturnes and ballades.

As a youth Alkan was numbered among the eager piano virtuosos who wrote operatic arrangements. There are three sets of variations among Alkan's first compositions, "Variations (L'Orage de Steibelt)," Op. 1; "Les Omnibus"; and the "Rondoletto," Op. 3. While the first work is


\(^{33}\)Loesser, p. 359.
based on the German pianist Daniel Steibelt's "Storm" concerto, one of the most dazzling of early romantic concertos (first performed in 1798), the "Rondoletto," first published in 1829, is based on a song entitled "Il était un petit homme," whose origins are obscure.

Alkan's two most important creations in variation form are "Le Festin d'Esope," No. 12 of the Douze études, Op. 39, and the "Impromptu sur le choral de Luther: Un Fort rempart est notre Dieu," Op. 69, for pedal piano or "piano à trois mains." The "Esope" variations, published in 1857, forms an extended set of twenty-five short variations on a tune of naive simplicity. Although the theme is neither original nor inspired, Alkan's ingenious treatment of thematic embellishments and decorative accompaniment figures lifts this work out of the ordinary. In many respects this is the most significant piece of music that Alkan ever wrote. In it may be found all of Alkan's chief traits, including spectacular octave and chordal passages, occasional harsh dissonances, brilliant pseudo-orchestral effects, and some vivid satanic touches. "Le Festin d'Esope" is a microcosm of Alkan's art.

The "Impromptu" is a long and somewhat tedious work comprising seventeen variations and an extended fugue. Here Alkan did not reproduce the ingenious effects of "Le Festin." The work includes several virtuoso passages, but the harmonic idiom is more confined than in the "Esope" variations and the entire work lacks a dynamic vital spark. The use of the Lutheran chorale provides a devout character for the work, with a grandiose fugue that is as long as the entire preceding seventeen variations. The coda, a long non-fugal section
contains the best writing in the work. It is here that Alkan's pianistic gifts are exploited in a brilliant and effective finale.

There are a few other sets of variations by Alkan that should be mentioned. The "Variations-Fantaisie sur deux motifs de Don Juan," Op. 26, for piano duet, is a product of 1844, while "Variations sur un air favori de l'opéra Ugo conti di Parigi de Donizetti" dates from circa 1840. A work of considerably more originality than the variation works of the 1840s is the humoristic set of "Variations à la vielle sur un air de L'Elisir d'amore de Donizetti," dating probably from the late 1850s. The use of the piano to imitate the vielle (hurdy-gurdy) is one of Alkan's most unique effects, one that ranks with Variation X of "Festin d'Esope" in which the piano imitates a music box.

Three further sets of variations are listed in the fifth edition of Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians. This is the only source the present writer has found for these works, the titles of which indicate that Alkan shared Chopin's enthusiasm for Italian song: "Ah seguata è la mia morte, de l'opéra Anna Bolena de Donizetti, varié"; "Bellini, Air des Capulets, varié"; and "Variations quasi fantaisie sur une barcarolle napolitaine."

\[34\] Searle, Grove's Dictionary, I, 112.
CHAPTER III

STYLE CHARACTERISTICS OF ALKAN'S MUSIC

In order to place the creative work of any composer into the proper perspective it is necessary to select certain salient characteristics for detailed study. In the following discussion the writer will attempt, by means of numerous musical examples, to illustrate the fundamental aspects of Alkan's melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and contrapuntal practice, and also the principal traits of dissonant writing in his music. An intensive study of the composer's treatment of these basic elements will reveal the existence of a musical style that comprises not only several features that resemble the work of his contemporaries but also some distinctly unique traits.

Melody

Among the many basic elements in Alkan's melodic writing one of the most important is the use of a fragmentary structure. The composer's employment of one concise melodic unit as the basis for an entire theme is evident in the first of the "Trois andantes romantiques," Op. 13, the first eight measures of which are presented as Example 1.

The basic pattern found in measures 1 and 2 is repeated twice in sequence, with an extension of the two-bar fragment occurring on the third statement of the pattern.

This fragmentary structure may be found throughout most of Alkan's major works, including the Grande sonate, Op. 33, the Symphonie, Op. 39, and the Sonatine, Op. 61. Even in the beautifully lyrical opening theme of the third movement of the Grande sonate this motivic structure is employed. Here, however, the fragmentation is skillfully concealed by means of melodic decoration and the constant use of flowing triplet arpeggios as an accompanying figure, as shown in Example 2 (see next page). The four measures of this excerpt form only the beginning of an extremely long thematic section which extends for forty-four measures.

\(^1\)In the musical examples presented in this thesis Roman numerals, wherever used, indicate movements of a large work while Arabic numerals indicate measure numbers.

Yet, the total length of this theme, as with most of Alkan's longer themes, is incidental to the method of its construction.

A comparison of the two melodies presented in the preceding examples reveals another trait that is commonly displayed in Alkan's music: the tendency of the melodic line to move within a confined range. The opening theme of the first movement of the *Symphonie* remains within a range of four notes for an entire phrase, as shown in Example 3.²


This theme demonstrates two other noteworthy traits that are often found in Alkan's melodies: conjunct motion, almost completely without

²Other Alkan melodies that have a limited range may be found in these *Chants*: "Choeur," Op. 38, No. 3 (first book); "Allegretto" ("Fa"), Op. 38, No. 2 (second book); and "Barcarolle en choeur," Op. 38, No. 6 (second book). These *Esquisses* also contain examples: "La Vision," No. 1; "Graces," No. 19; and "Notturnino-Innamorato," No. 43.
melodic skips, and the tendency to hover about one tone.\(^3\) In this latter trait Alkan's melodies bear a striking resemblance to those of César Franck.\(^4\)

Another melody that displays a predominantly small range and conjunct construction is presented in the third "Andante romantique," Op. 13, No. 3, the first section of which is shown in Example 4 (see next two pages). Within the A and B segments of this ternary thematic design (measures 3 through 18) there are only three melodic skips, an ascending leap of a perfect fourth that occurs between the notes Ab and Db where the first phrase is connected to the second (between measures 6 and 7), and two occurrences of a minor third (the first of which is shown in measures 12 and 13). The only succession of skips in the entire theme occurs at the end of measure 18, where an ascending arpeggio figure announces the return of the A portion of the theme.

In contrast to the confined movement of the melodies shown in the first four examples the Prélude in B Minor, Op. 31, No. 14, contains an unusual mixture of conjunct and disjunct movement (see Example 5, page 91). In the first four measures the tune hovers about four notes,


\(^4\)Compare Alkan's "Choeur," Op. 38, No. 3 (first book), with the D Major theme from the first movement of Franck's D Minor symphony. There is also a unique similarity between the beginning of Alkan's Symphonie (as shown in Ex. 3) and the first theme of the second movement of Franck's Sonata in A Major for violin and piano.

Sempre pp, Legato e con due pedali.
avoiding skips completely. In measure 5, however, the melody rapidly ascends in skips and then descends suddenly in measure 6.

Another unique mixture of conjunct and disjunct motion is displayed in the Chant "Appassionato," Op. 67, No. 5, but in contrast to the scheme of the melody presented in Example 5 this theme commences with large skips and gradually becomes more conjunct as it progresses, as shown in Example 6.5


Pertinent to a discussion of conjunct and disjunct motion in Alkan's melodies is the mention of another important style characteristic, one which concerns the direction of movement within the individual thematic motives. The prevalent use of descending motion within small melodic fragments, usually two-bar units, comprises one of the predominant idiosyncrasies of Alkan’s musical style. The melody of Example 1 (page 86) is based on a two-measure fragment that has a descending shape. Here, as in many other Alkan themes (such as that shown in Example 4, pages 89 and 90), the first note of the phrase is also the

5Other examples of Alkan themes with a mixture of conjunct and disjunct motion are the Chant "Assez vivement," Op. 28, No. 1 (first book); the Esquisses "Confidence," No. 9; "Duetino," No. 14; and "Fais Dodo," No. 33, which all begin disjunctly; the Chant "Scherso-Coro," Op. 70, No. 5; and two Esquisses: "Rigaudon," No. 27; and "Début de quatuor," No. 31, which all begin conjunctly.
highest in pitch. Another characteristic arrangement is displayed in Example 6 (page 92) in which the motive begins with an ascending leap and then changes direction, moving conjunctly downward. This directional tendency of Alkan's melodic units accounts for the limited range of many of the composer's themes; his tunes, instead of moving upward in order to reach climactic high points, turn inward after having commenced with an initial upward step or leap.

A few of Alkan's melodies are constructed solely of descending motives. The Chant "Agitatissimo," Op. 38, No. 5 (first book), presents a series of descending fragments, as shown in Example 7.  


The melodies presented in the preceding two examples contain an additional characteristic feature: chromatic movement in the melodic progression. While both themes contain chromatic passing tones in the course of their descending movement, there are instances in each example of "dissonant" melodic intervals that contain chromatic elements.

6Other examples of descending melodies are the "Barcarolle," Op. 38, No. 6 (second book of Chants); the Trio of the "Memuet" movement of the Symphonie; and the following Esquisses: No. 24, "Contredanse"; and No. 27, "Rigaudon." Three of the Préludes, Op. 31, present melodies that begin with an upward step or leap and then turn around and descend conjunctly: No. 7 in Eb Major (Ex. 16); No. 12, "Le Temps qui n'est plus" (Ex. 52); and No. 16 in C Minor.
In Example 6 (page 92) the interval of a minor ninth occurs two times, between C# and D in the first measure, and between F# and G in the third measure. In both measures this interval follows after a similar melodic figure whose upper note is an octave above the lower. The upper constituent of the minor ninth interval is felt as an appoggiatura because of the shift of rhythmic accent that occurs at this point. The note is then melodically suspended on the first beat of the following measure. In Example 7 another characteristic Alkan interval, the diminished octave, appears in the second measure between the last note of the first descending pattern and the first note of the second figure. The second note of the dissonant interval, as in the previous example, is an appoggiatura which resolves chromatically downward. In both of these illustrations the chromatic use of the appoggiatura results in a sharp dissonance.

In order to understand Alkan’s treatment of melodic chromaticism it is necessary to consider the general character of his melodic embellishments, because chromaticism in his themes is most often the result of elaborating a simple diatonic melodic progression with chromatic tones that are interpolated between diatonic scale notes. This process of elaboration is clearly displayed in the middle section of the "Barcarolle," Op. 65, No. 6, from which Example 8 has been extracted (see next page). The figure beginning in the fourth measure contains a melodic and harmonic formula that is identical to that of the first figure. The chromatic notes that appear as passing and auxiliary tones in the second phrase (beginning on the fourth beat of measure 4 of the example) represent decorations inserted into the dia-

Embellishments in Alkan's melodies often take the form of grace notes, appearing as either diatonic or chromatic additions to the melodic line. In the Chant "Chanson de la bonne vieille," Op. 67, No. 2, the grace note functions in a completely diatonic role. As shown in Example 9 (see next page) the graces form an inverted pedal point on the dominant note E.

Alkan uses chromatic passing and auxiliary tones in numerous works, including the "Allegretto" ("Fa") and "Procession-Nocturne," Op. 38, Nos. 2 and 4, respectively (both from the second book of Chants); the barcarolles Op. 67, No. 6, and Op. 70, No. 6; and "Le Festin d'Esopo," variations XVII, XVIII, XIX, and XXIII. A more detailed discussion of Alkan's treatment of passing and auxiliary tones and other melodic elements such as suspensions and appoggiaturas will be presented later in this chapter in the section on dissonance.

In contrast to this diatonic treatment there are many works by Alkan which contain grace notes used as chromatic embellishments. In the Esquisse "L'Homme aux sabots," Op. 63, No. 23, presented as Example 10 (see next page), the graces, by their continued reiteration of the notes preceding them, reinforce the chromatic movement of the melodic line, following the outline of the theme so closely that they attain an almost independent melodic significance.\(^8\)

In general Alkan's treatment of melodic embellishments differs from that of Chopin, in whose music the ornamental figure forms an intrinsic part of the basic melodic line. Ornamental figures in Alkan's music, whether diatonically or chromatically conceived, are fundamentally nonessential to the basic thematic outline.

A few of Alkan's works contain melodic elements that are foreign to normal diatonic treatment. In the Prélude entitled "Ancienne mélodie de la synagogue," Op. 31, No. 6, the composer twice employs the

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\(^8\) Other examples of ornamental grace notes in works by Alkan include "Carnaval," from Les Mois, Op. 74, No. 2; and "Le Festin d'Esopo," Var. XIII, which contain chromatic grace notes; the "Barcarolle," Op. 38, No. 6 (first book of Chants); and the Esquisse "Innocenza," Op. 63, No. 22, which contain diatonic graces; and the enormous first movement of the Concerto, Op. 39, No. 8, which includes examples of both types of grace notes.

N° 23

D'un pas ordinaire.
augmented second interval in a stepwise descent from F# to Eb (in measures 2 and 4 of Example 11).


While both of the notes in this melodic progression belong to the harmonic minor scale of G Minor, the tonic key of the prelude, The Eb seems out of context with the D Major chord underneath it. Alkan's use of this unique interval, in view of the title of this piece, would seem to indicate an attempt to capture the flavor of Hebraic folk music.

The composer makes occasional use of the ecclesiastical modes in his music. Probably the most characteristic example of his treatment of modal elements is the "Allegro barbaro," No. 5 of the Douze études dans tous les tons majeurs, Op. 35. This is a veritable "white-key" étude that successfully avoids any use of the black keys. Although written with the key signature of F Major, this piece circumvents Bb through the continual use of the raised fourth step of the scale. Thus the melodic and harmonic structure resembles that of the Lydian mode.

Alkan uses the Phrygian mode in the Esquisse "Petit air. Genre ancien," Op. 63, No. 26. Although this brief sketch has a key signature of two flats, its final cadence occurs on D, as shown in Example 12.
The basic rhythmic characteristics of Alkan's melodies consist of a few principles which thoroughly dominate over his themes. The first factor is the regulated pattern of the rhythmic movement. There are many Alkan themes which consist almost entirely of repetitions of one basic rhythmic motive. In the "Hymne," Op. 38, No. 2, from the second book of Chants, the two-measure rhythmic figure presented at the very beginning of the work provides, through an unbroken series of fourteen motivic statements, the rhythmic basis of the entire A section, the first four measures of which are shown as Example 13.⁹


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⁹Other rhythmically repetitious melodies may be found in the following Préludes, Op. 31: No. 1 in C Major, No. 2 in F Minor, No. 21 in Bb Major, and No. 25, "Prière"; the Etude in D Major, Op. 35, No. 2; the Etude "En rythme molosique," Op. 39, No. 2; and "La Pâque," from Les Mois, Op. 74, No. 4 (Ex. 15).
This example illustrates a trait that is common throughout Alkan’s music: the tendency of the theme to be based on a simple melodic pattern with an accompanying rhythmic figure. Both elements are intrinsic to the repetitious nature of Alkan’s thematic material.

Very few examples of unmetered melody can be found in Alkan’s music. There is almost a total lack of cadenzas; not even in the concertos does the rhythmic movement break away from the metric structure. One significant exception to this basic stylistic trait occurs at the end of the remarkable Esquisse entitled "Les Enharmoniques," Op. 63, No. 41, the concluding two measures of which consist of a rhythmically unmetered figure, as shown in Example 14.


In summary, Alkan’s melodies may be said to be fundamentally diatonic in structure, based on succinct melodic and rhythmic motives and very often limited in range. The presence of some ingenious features in many of his themes does not alter the basic fact that Alkan preferred simplicity of design to the elaborately complex melodic flourishes of his contemporaries Liszt and Chopin.
Harmony

The music of Alkan, like that of almost all the prominent nineteenth century composers, is basically homophonic in texture. Although much of his work was conceived contrapuntally, the independent horizontal part movement is most often modified by a concern for the vertical harmonic structure. Alkan’s music, which in many ways is thoroughly oriented to the idiom of the late eighteenth century, strongly reflects his study at the Paris Conservatoire at a time when that institution was still under the guidance of such classical masters as Luigi Cherubini and Antonin Reicha. In this section, devoted to a discussion of Alkan’s general harmonic idiom, it will be demonstrated how the composer dealt with the problems of classicism in his attempt to create an individual style.

The first element to be considered is Alkan’s fundamentally diatonic harmonic structure. Numerous examples of purely diatonic harmony may be found among the composer’s piano pieces. One that deserves special mention is "La Pâque," one of the early "Six morceaux caractéristiques," which subsequently became part of Les Mois, Op. 74. Throughout this piece of seventy-four measures there is not one chromatic embellishment in either the melodic line or the chordal accompaniment. One of the work’s most characteristic harmonic features is its almost static emphasis of the tonic key of A Major. As shown in Example 15 (see next page) a rhythmically simple melody outlines the tonic triad while the underlying series of repeated chords provides a tonic and dominant pedal point that is sustained throughout the piece.¹⁰

¹⁰Other purely diatonic schemes include the "Andante romantique," Op. 13, No. 3 (Ex. 4); the Prélude in Bb Major, Op. 31, No. 21; and the "Deus Sebaoth," Op. 64, No. 5 (da Motta edition).
While few of Alkan's piano works are as wholly diatonic in structure as "La Fâque," a detailed study of the composer's music will demonstrate an abundance of purely diatonic passages within his several collections of small pieces. Example 16, taken from the Prélude in Eb Major, Op. 31, No. 7, illustrates a uniquely chordal structure in which all four of the voices sound simultaneously (see next page). After the initial eight measures in the tonic key there is a sequential passage involving secondary dominant chords (measures 9 through 13). This use of tones foreign to the tonic key is characteristic of Alkan's tendency to expand his tonal resources only as a particular situation might demand. In this instance the sequential formula involves the use of certain chord or passing tones that are outside of the tonic key; this use, however, implies no significant key change.

An interesting comparison with the prelude of Example 16 is provided by the Esquisse "La Vision," Op. 63, No. 1, which is presented in full as Example 17 (see pages 104 and 105). In contrast to the almost completely chordal idiom of the prelude this little sketch, a miniature nocturne in a loosely improvisatory style, is freely modulatory in its harmonic progression. Employing the simplest of means, a

Assez lentement.
Ex. 17—Continued
melody composed of repeated melodic and rhythmic figures and an accom-
paniment consisting of a series of bass tones and repeated chords, this
piece begins in C Major and remains in that key for eight measures, un-
derscored by a tonic pedal in the bass. The middle section begins at
measure 9 with a sudden harmonic change to the key of A Minor. This
section is marked by a descending chromatic bass progression and a wan-
dering melodic line that includes many chromatic elements, the most
characteristic of which occurs in measure 18 where an enharmonic change
from G# to Ab is used in order to effect a modulation back to the origi-
nal key for a return of the A section.

The expanded chordal movement contained in "La Vision" is one of
the two principal factors in Alkan's treatment of chromatic harmony.
The other element, the melodic projection of chromaticism, which con-
cerns the impact of melodic chromatic elements upon the harmonic idiom
of the accompaniment, needs to be discussed in detail first, because
of the significant and unique role that this process plays in the for-
mation of chromatic passages in Alkan's music.

The prominence of the melodic line in the employment of chromatic
elements in the composer's work is exemplified by the Esquisse "Le
Staccatissimo," Op. 63, No. 2. This is basically a diatonic work, but
in the coda the melody ascends in a chromatic scale progression accom-
panied by a lower part that moves chromatically in the opposite direc-
tion. This descending voice, which appears to be a mirror reflection
of the upper part, consists of a direct inversion of the ascending
melodic line, as shown in the third and fourth measures of Example 18
(see next page). The last four measures of the example display another

chromatic passage in which all of the voices move in a descending sequential pattern.

Example 19, taken from one of the nineteenth century's most unique piano pieces, the Esquisse "Les Enharmoniques," Op. 63, No. 41, gives further evidence of the importance of melodic projection in Alkan's chromatic harmony. This work, which is written in a completely chordal style, consists of two pairs of voices moving in contrary motion.

During the forty-six measures of this sketch the tonality wanders almost aimlessly. The tonic key of E Minor is not established until measure 17 and is left behind four measures later, not being regained until the very last measure of the piece.11

In contrast to the highly chromatic passages shown above in which a chromatic melodic line projects an expanded harmonic idiom, many of Alkan's works contain chromatic elements that are purely harmonic devices. Among the specific traits that need to be discussed are the composer's employment of expanded, borrowed and altered chords; his treatment of modulatory elements as well as enharmonic modulation; and the singular trait of effecting key changes without the use of transitional chords.

The middle section of the Esquisse "Contredanse," Op. 63, No. 24, provides a good example of Alkan's chordal expansion within a diatonic scheme. Over a series of repeated dominant seventh chords in the bass the composer places a melody in thirds that produces a dominant ninth chord at the beginning of the first measure of the following excerpt.


11Other examples of melodically induced chromatic harmony are contained in these Esquisses: No. 21, "Morituri te salutant" (Ex. 45); No. 23, "L'Homme aux sabots" (Ex. 10); and No. 29, "Délire" (Ex. 55).
As the melodic line ascends in the second and third measures of this example a gradual expansion of the dominant harmony occurs, forming momentary eleventh and thirteenth chords in the third measure of Example 20.12

The use of borrowed chords as a means of expanding his harmonic resources is so much a part of Alkan's music that a thorough examination would entail a separate study. Two examples will serve to give the basic gist of the composer's usage. In the opening section of "Le Festin d’Esopé" a series of secondary dominant and dominant seventh chords in a sequential harmonic progression produces an interestingly modulatory passage, as shown in Example 21.


12 Expanded dominant chords may be found in these Esquisses: No. 1, "La Vision" (Ex. 17); No. 13, "Ressouvenir" (Ex. 29); and No. 39, "Héraclite et Démocrite" (Ex. 25). Other examples include the Préludes No. 2 in F Minor and No. 13, "Cantique des cantiques" (Ex. 42); and the Chant "Canon," Op. 65, No. 3 (Ex. 46).
Another Alkan work that is noteworthy for its use of borrowed dominant seventh chords in a modulatory passage is the Prélude "Rêve d'amour," Op. 31, No. 17, which begins on the dominant of the key of Ab Major and moves through a modulatory pattern which consists of secondary dominant seventh chords arranged in a circle of fifths progression before the tonic key is reached in measure 6. As shown in Example 22 this circle of fifths progression, which is based on a series of roots consisting of C, F, Bb, Eb, and Ab, involves a direct succession of dominant seventh chords.¹³


There are numerous works by Alkan which employ altered chords. The alteration most often used is the augmented fifth step of the major triad. Both of the preceding two examples display this particular alteration in a dominant seventh chord. In Example 21 the dominant seventh chord in measure 4 is augmented by the chromatic raising of the melodic note F♯ to Fx. This alteration appears also in the fifth measure of Example 22. Here Alkan raised the Bb in the melody to B♯

¹³Other examples of borrowed dominant chords may be found in the Esquisse "Petit air à 5 voix," Op. 63, No. 42 (Ex. 54); the Préludes No. 13, "Cantique des cantiques" (Ex. 42); No. 23 in Eb Major; and No. 25, "Prière"; and the Chant "Tempo giusto," Op. 65, No. 4.
above the dominant chord on Eb as a way of strengthening the sense of resolution from dominant to tonic harmony.

Another alteration process that occurs often in Alkan's works is the raising of the fifth of the subdominant minor triad, the result of which produces the equivalent of the Neapolitan sixth chord in enharmonic spelling. This chord, which is the first inversion of a major triad on the flatted supertonic, is often used by Alkan as a substitute for subdominant harmony. In the coda of the last movement of the Sonatine, Op. 61, the Neapolitan sixth is part of an elaborate cadential formula. In measures 11 through 14 of Example 23 (see next two pages) the Neapolitan chord precedes the dominant chord in a repeated attempt to prepare the tonic resolution that finally occurs in measure 23 of the example. 14

Most of the preceding examples illustrating chromatic elements in Alkan's harmony show a radical departure from the occasional passages in his works that are purely diatonic and sometimes, as in the case of "Le Pâque" (Example 15), completely static in their lack of modulatory harmonic progression. The final movement of the Sonatine presents one of the composer's most characteristic uses of modulatory harmony. The sequential pattern displayed in measures 15 to 19 of Example 23 is employed as a means of delaying the return to the tonic key of A Minor. By the use of a circle of fifths succession this passage touches brief-

14 Other significant examples of the Neapolitan chord appear in the Symphonie, I, 185-186, and two other Études from Op. 39: No. 1, "Comme le vent," meas. 47-60; and No. 3, "En rythme mélodique," meas. 17-18, 25-26, 35-36, etc. Three Esquisses contain noteworthy examples: No. 10, "Incrédulité"; No. 13, "Ressouvenir"; and No. 46, "Le Premier billet doux" (Ex. 24).
Ex. 23—Continued
ly the following series of keys: A, D, G, C, F#, B, E, and A. As in the circle of fifths scheme employed in the theme of "Le Festin d'Esoppe" (Example 21), this pattern does not adhere strictly to the circle. In both schemes Alkan altered the progression by modulating to the key of F# instead of F#. The resultant root relation between this key and the one which immediately precedes it is a diminished fifth interval.

Two additional Esquisses will indicate that Alkan's use of modulatory harmony is sometimes extremely modern, not only in the remoteness of the harmonic relationships that exist among the various keys participating in the modulation, but also in the vagueness of the transition between adjacent keys. "Le Premier billet doux," Op. 63, No. 46, is a unique example of an Alkan work that modulates so freely and so often that it seems to lack a principal tonal center. Instead of a key that functions as a point of departure and return there is only a momentary tonic that is established after one modulation and is abandoned after another key change occurs. As shown in Example 24 (see next page) this piece modulates freely, moving through the keys of G Minor in measures 1 and 2, Eb Major in measures 5 and 6, and Cb Major in measures 9 and 10, before settling in measure 12 into Eb Major, which is the tonic key of the work. One of the most unique features of this sketch, which is one of Alkan's most advanced harmonic conceptions, is the enharmonic change of Bb at the end of measure 8 to Cb at the beginning of measure 9. Through the use of this Cb the harmony takes an unexpected turn, avoiding in the process a resolution to Ab harmony and continuing to modulate until the first unequivocal cadence in the tonic key of Eb Major occurs at the beginning of measure 12. It may be safely affirmed
that few nineteenth-century piano pieces avoice the assertion of tonic harmony as strenuously as this sketch. 15

"Héraclite et Démocrate," Op. 63, No. 39, is a perfect illustration of the very free manner in which modulatory transitions are often treated in Alkan's music. In the remarkable middle section of this work, whose title is derived from the names of two ancient Greek philosophers, modulations occur in the most direct manner possible—without any transition at all. As shown in Example 25 (see next three pages) the middle section of this work is a patchwork of four-bar phrases. The first phrase, measures 21 to 24, in A Major, is followed directly by a phrase in C# Minor, measures 25 to 28. The third and fourth phrases are again in A Major. After the double bar which follows measure 36 the tonality wanders almost aimlessly through E Major, B Minor, G Major, D Minor, and Bb Major before returning to A Major at the end of the section. Whereas in "Le Premier billet doux" pivot chords are employed in order to facilitate the key changes, in "Héraclite" shifts of tonal center occur suddenly and often without preparation, so that the ear is forced to adjust to a new key which bears only a remote relation to the key that precedes it. 16

15 Enharmonic changes occur also in the Symphonia, II, 57-58; and the Esquisses No. 1, "La Vision," meas. 18 (Ex. 17); and No. 41, "Les Enharmoniques," meas. 32. This latter sketch, together with No. 3, "Le Legatissimo," gives further evidence of vague tonal determination in Alkan's music.

Ex. 25—Continued
Ex. 25—Continued

1er Mouvement. \( (43, \text{j}) \)

2ème Mouvement. \( (43, \text{o}) \)

3ème Mouvement.

4ème Mouvement.

Dolce expressivo.

A tempo 2\( \text{ème} \) \( (63, \text{o}) \)
One of the major characteristics of Alkan's harmonic idiom is the pedal point. The composer employed sustained pedal tones in several of his important compositions and achieved a great number of interesting harmonic effects through his ingenious treatment of various pedal devices, which include the tonic and dominant pedals as sustained harmonic elements, the tonic pedal as an inverted pedal in a sustained melodic line, and the internal pedal, or pedal in a middle voice, which is sometimes a highly dissonant harmonic element.

"La Pâque," from Les Mois, Op. 74, No. 4, provides a good example of a combined tonic and dominant pedal employed as a harmonic bass. As shown in Example 15 (page 102) the diatonic theme of this work is underscored by a sustained tonic harmony which consists of a series of repeated chords composed of the open fifth A-E. This tonic-based theme, which begins after a four-bar introduction, forms the entire A section, measures 5 through 44. After a short interlude, measures 45 through 52, this theme returns and extends with the double pedal point to the end of the piece.

A dominant pedal employed as a harmonic bass is displayed in the Esquisse entitled "Délire," Op. 63, No. 29. For the first sixteen measures of this piece a series of octaves on the dominant note B are sounded on every second and fourth beat (see Example 55). ¹⁷

¹⁷Other examples of tonic harmonic basses include the following Préludes: No. 6, "Chanson de la folle au bord de la mer"; No. 19, "Prêtre du matin"; and No. 21 in Bb Major; sections of two études also contain tonic pedals: Op. 35, No. 3, meas. 24–36; and Op. 39, No. 2, "En rythme molosique," meas. 192–221. Dominant pedals may be found in the Prélude in F Minor, Op. 31, No. 2; the Esquisse "Les Soupirs," Op. 63, No. 11; two portions of the Symphonie: I, 374–369 (partially shown in Ex. 30); and IV, 324–355; and "Le Festin d'Ésope," Var. XXV, meas. 229–236.
There are relatively few illustrations of inverted pedal in Alkan's works. The final measures of the coda of "Le Festin d'Esope" contain a melodic pedal point on the tonic note E. As shown in Example 26 this sustained tone produces some interesting harmonic combinations with the underlying parts.


Another interesting treatment of inverted pedal is contained in the Chant "Chanson de la bonne vieille," Op. 67, No. 2, in which the recurrent grace note E before each melodic tone forms a dominant pedal point above the main body of the work, as shown in Example 9 (page 96).18

The internal pedal point is a harmonic device that Alkan employed rather frequently. In the "Andante romantique," Op. 13, No. 3, a trill-like figure consisting of Db and Eb appears throughout the A section as a decorative pattern, as shown in Example 4 (pages 89 and 90). In the Prélude "Cantique des cantiques," Op. 31, No. 13, one of Alkan's most chordal pieces, the dominant note Db is employed as the top note of each left-hand chord in measures 1 through 8 and also in measures 16 through 28 (see Example 42). The composer's most unique use of internal pedal is displayed in the Chant "Allegretto," Op. 38, No. 2 (second book), in

which a repeated F continually clashes with the harmonic structure of
the underlying arpeggio figures. Because of the dissonance inherent in
this free use of the internal pedal a more detailed discussion of this
aspect of Alkan's treatment of pedal points will be contained in the
section on dissonance. 19

Another important trait that needs to be considered in this sec-
tion on harmony deals with the composer's tendency to mix together ele-
ments of major and minor harmony. Among the several manifestations of
this stylistic idiosyncrasy one of the most prominent aspects is the
sudden and sometimes unannounced change of key within a thematic state-
ment. The first eight measures of Alkan's "Andante romantique," Op. 13,
No. 3, adequately illustrate this particular characteristic, as shown
in Example 1 (page 86). After the first thematic fragment in Bb Major
(measures 1 and 2) the key changes to C Minor for the second statement
(measures 3 and 4). Then the key reverts to Bb Major for the completion
of the phrase (measures 5 through 8). Another example, taken from the
Prélude "Prière du matin," Op. 31, No. 19, demonstrates the absence of
transitional material which leads to sudden key changes. As shown in
Example 27 the first three-bar phrase, in the key of A Major, is fol-
lowed immediately by the same thematic material transposed to the key
of G# Minor. At the end of the second phrase a modulation does occur
in order to reintroduce the original key.

19 Other examples of internal pedal may be found in the "Bourrée
d'Auvergne," Op. 29 (Ex. 53); the Symphonie, I, 342-353; the Esquisse
"L'Homme aux sabots," Op. 63, No. 23 (Ex. 10); the Pièce, Op. 72, No.
4, meas. 50-75; and "Le Festin d'Escope," Var. III (Ex. 35), and Var.
IV, meas. 5-8.

In both of these examples the key changes involve the transition from major to minor, and then from minor back to major.\textsuperscript{20}

A further important characteristic of Alkan's music is the general modal ambiguity of several of his short pieces. The Esquisse "Nottur-no-Innamorato," Op. 63, No. 43, presented as Example 28 (see next page), is a two-part work that begins in the tonic key of F\# Minor, reaches the relative major key of A Major in measure 5 and then jumps to B Minor for a repetition of the opening material. In measure 10 the harmony reverts to the tonic key in order to complete the first section. The second segment begins in F\# Major, the parallel major key of the original tonic, modulates to A\# Major in measure 25 and quickly returns to F\# tonality which persists until the end of the piece.\textsuperscript{21}

A third aspect of modal change in Alkan's music concerns major-minor shifts at final cadences. Several of the composer's works which begin in a minor key are climax ed by a shift to the parallel major mode

\textsuperscript{20}Other Alkan works with modal and key changes include the following Chants: "Chant de guerre" and "Barcarolle en choeur," Op. 38, Nos. 3 and 6, respectively (both from the second book); and "Chanson de la bonne vieille," Op. 67, No. 2; and the Esquisse "Héraclite et Démocrates," Op. 63, No. 39 (Ex. 25).

\textsuperscript{21}Modal ambiguity is also found in the Prélude "Le Temps qui n'est plus," Op. 31, No. 12 (Ex. 52); the Esquisse "Le Premier billet doux," Op. 63, No. 46 (Ex. 24); and the Sonatina, Op. 61, I, 158-175.

Notturno-Innamorato,

Andantino.

Legato molto.

Poco cresc.

Dim.

cresc.

Pffrissimo.

P

Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª

Pffrissimo.

P

Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª

Pffrissimo.

P

Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª

Pffrissimo.

P

Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª

Pffrissimo.

P

Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª

Pffrissimo.

P

Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª Preª
through the use of the "Picardy" third in the final tonic chord. Such a work is the Esquisse "Ressouvenir," Op. 63, No. 13, the ending of which is shown as Example 29.


The reverse of this "Picardy" ending occurs in "Notturnino-Innamorato," cited above as Example 28. Although this work also begins in a minor key, its latter portion is in the parallel major of the original tonic key. In the final cadence which begins in measure 33 an ascending melodic figure outlines the subdominant triad on B and then a second figure, whose pattern is exactly like the first, outlines the tonic major triad on F#. The shift from major to minor occurs at the end of this pattern with the substitution of Ab for A# as the third of the chord. 22

One additional harmonic aspect that is characteristic of a number of Alkan pieces is the composer's peculiar mannerism of concluding a work with an inverted position of the tonic harmony so that the third or fifth of the chord appears in the bass. "Notturnino-Innamorato" (shown as Example 28) ends on the second inversion of the tonic triad,

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with C#, the fifth of the chord, as the sustained bass note.\[^{23}\]

**Dissonance**

Although the piano music of Alkan is not excessively modern in its general melodic and harmonic structure, it contains some highly dissonant elements that deserve to be analysed in an effort to fully comprehend the composer's principal stylistic traits. The list of the fundamental musical devices employed by Alkan in dissonant passages which involve both the diatonic and the chromatic idiom includes a small number of basic elements. Devices of a specifically melodic nature comprise passing tones, auxiliaries, suspensions, and appoggiaturas, while harmonic elements include free pedal points and chordal passages that involve altered chords and, occasionally, unresolved dissonance. One additional characteristic concerns the contrapuntal device of strict canonic movement, which often produces dissonant harmonies.

The first movement of the *Symphonie*, which, together with "Le Festin d'Esope," includes some of the most noteworthy dissonant passages in Alkan's music, contains a diatonic passage in the coda that illustrates passing tone dissonances. The F passing tones which occur at the beginning of the second measure of Example 30 clash with the C Minor harmony underneath. In the same manner the low Ab at the beginning of measure 4 clashes with the dominant harmony on G.

Another dissonant effect displayed in this example results from the combination of elements of two forms of the C Minor scale. In the third and fourth measures the upper voices employ the harmonic minor scale while the lower voices use the natural minor. The resultant dissonance is a cross relation between the B♭ of the upper voices and the B♭ of the lowest part.

Among Alkan's works there are several which employ chromatic scale passages. One piece in particular which illustrates a highly dissonant treatment of chromatic passing tones is the descriptive sketch entitled "Le Tambour bat aux champs." In the middle section, which consists primarily of a simple diatonic melody and accompaniment, an extremely dissonant situation is created through the placement of chromatic passing tones on the second half of each beat, as shown in Example 31.

Particularly dissonant intervals contained in this example include the diminished octave between the C# and C in the first measure, the augmented fourth C–C# in the third measure and the minor ninth C#–D in the fourth measure. The harsh effect of these intervals is enhanced by the syncopated accent caused by the placement of the dissonant middle-voice notes behind the beat.24

Auxiliary tones are often found among the dissonant elements in Alkan's music. In an example from the first movement of the Symphonie cited above as Example 3 (page 87) the octave Eb that is sounded in the second measure and tied into the third clashes with the sustained harmony above. An example of chromatic treatment of auxiliaries is presented in the Esquisse entitled "Délire," Op. 63, No. 29, in which the lower auxiliary A# clashes with the accompanying octave on A in the second and third full measures.25

The suspension, by nature a highly dissonant element, is frequently employed in Alkan's works in order to produce a discordant clash. The first movement of the Symphonie encloses innumerable examples of suspensions, many of which are highly dissonant in nature. In Example 3

24 Other Alkan works with sharply dissonant passing tones in diatonic passages are the Sonatine, Op. 61, III, 13–22; and the "Chant de guerre," Op. 38, No. 3 (second book of Chants); Chromatic passing-tone dissonances may be found in the Chant "Agitissimo," Op. 38, No. 5 (first book); the Esquisses No. 2, "Le Staccatissimo" (Ex. 18); and No. 41, "Les Enharmoniques"; and "Le Festin d'Espe," Var. XXV, meas. 252–255 (Ex. 33).

(page 87) the bass melodic line in octaves ascends in the first measure and ties over into the second where a sharp clash occurs between the suspended Eb octave and the chordal accompaniment. At the end of the second measure the bass line moves back up to the Eb, which is suspended melodically at the beginning of the third measure. Another work which contains numerous clashing suspensions is "Le Tambour bat aux champs," Op. 50, No. 2. In the middle section the bass line, which consists of octaves moving in sixteenth notes, produces several jarring dissonances through the suspension of certain notes against changing chords in the upper parts. As shown in Example 32 suspensions occur on C in the first measure, and on G, D, and E, in the second, third and fourth measures, respectively. 26


The appoggiatura, by which is meant a nonharmonic tone that is approached by leap and left by step, is represented in Alkan's works by numerous passages, many of which contain a highly dissonant treatment of this melodic device. "Le Tambour bat aux champs" illustrates

a diatonic usage of dissonant appoggiaturas in its middle section, as shown at the beginning of the third measure of Example 32. In this excerpt the appoggiatura forms the sharply dissonant interval of an augmented octave with the accompanying chord before it resolves downward.

The coda from the last movement of the *Sonatine*, Op. 61, presents a unique example of chromatic appoggiaturas employed for a highly dissonant effect. Beginning in measure 15 of the coda (presented as Example 23 on pages 112 and 113) a modulatory pattern moves through a circle of fifths succession in which both appoggiaturas and suspensions are involved in the progression of the lower part which moves in octaves. The second Eb octave in measure 15 is reached as an appoggiatura which is then suspended into the next measure and resolved immediately following the first beat. On the second beat a new appoggiatura is formed on Ab which is then suspended over the third beat. This pattern of appoggiatura, suspension and resolution, which represents one of Alkan's most ingenious dissonance situations, is prolonged over four measures; the sequence is finally dissolved at the beginning of measure 19.\(^{27}\)

One further example will illustrate more clearly the operation of dissonant devices in Alkan's melodic writing. In measures 252 through 262 in the final variation of "Le Festin d'Esope" the composer has em-

ployed almost all of the melodic devices that contribute to the realization of a dissonant idiom. While the bass descends diatonically, with melodically suspended notes occurring at the beginning of each beat, the upper part employs a mixture of diatonic and chromatic elements in the form of passing tones and auxiliaries. Against this contrary movement one of the middle voices sustains a pedal point on B in the first two measures of the example and on E in the third measure, as shown in Example 33.

Ex. 33. "Le Festin d'Esopè," Var. XXV, 252-255.

Characteristic dissonant intervals contained in this example include the minor ninth B-C# in the upper voices in measure 2 of the example, the augmented octave G#-C# in measure 3 and the diminished octave G#-C# in measure 4. This excerpt brings to light one of the salient points concerning dissonance in Alkan's writing—the independence of the movement of each melodic line often results in dissonant harmonic combinations in the vertical structure. These dissonant elements occur incidentally: in the midst of passages in which the composer's concern for harmonious agreement among the various melodic voices is secondary to his concern for the successful delineation of each individual line.
A comparison with the music of another nineteenth-century French composer will indicate that Alkan was not the sole creator of sharp dissonance in romantic music. The middle section of the "Carillon" from Georges Bizet's incidental music for _L'Arlesienne_ provides a good example of dissonant treatment of certain melodic devices that Alkan also employed. As shown in Example 34 the B♭ appoggiatura of the top melodic line clashes sharply with the B♭ underneath in both the second and fourth measures of this excerpt. These two notes produce the dissonant vertical combination of a diminished octave—an interval which is frequently employed in Alkan's "Le Tambour bat aux champs."

Ex. 34. Bizet, "Carillon," 64-68.

Other dissonant devices employed by Bizet include the suspension on D♭ that is sounded in the second and fourth measures and repeated each time over the bar line, and the lower auxiliary on B♭ that may be found in the third and fifth measures of this fragment. The dissonant nature of this passage is enhanced by the composer's use throughout of a double pedal point on the tonic note C♯ and the dominant note G♯. Bizet's usage of these musical materials clearly resembles Alkan's treatment as shown in the examples presented in this section.
There are certain dissonant elements in Alkan’s music that are basically harmonic factors. The most prominent of these is the composer’s free use of pedal points. In the Chant entitled "Allegretto" ("Fa"), Op. 38, No. 2 (second book), the sustained F of the middle voice seems impervious to the harmonic idiom that surrounds it. This note is repeated without respite throughout the entire piece, causing in the course of 141 measures some truly jarring harmonic discords. Another notable example of dissonant pedal in Alkan’s music is Variation III of "Le Festin d’Esop." Only eight measures in length, this segment contains a constant double pedal on the Bb and C above middle C. The harmonic scheme consists basically of one chord, a dominant seventh chord with a C root. Through a subtle variation of the original melodic line of the theme this harmonic entity is made to persist without ever being resolved to a tonic chord.  

Ex. 35. "Le Festin d’Esop." Var. III.

28 "Le Festin" contains other dissonant pedal points: Var. IV, 37-40; Var. VI, 53-55; Var. VIII; Var. XXIV; and Var. XXV, 229-236.
Besides the use of dissonant pedal points there are other harmonic factors that contribute to the discordant nature of this variation. In Variation III the composer has employed several alterations in the basic chordal structure. Although the harmonic scheme appears to be centered on the dominant of F, certain aspects of the tonality of E Minor, the tonic key of this set of variations, are preserved in both the uppermost melodic line and the bass part. The melodic progression, in fact, is reproduced from the introductory thematic statement (as shown in Example 21) almost completely without change; only the Bb of measures 3, 4 and 6 and the G# of measure 6 represent an alteration of the original melodic design. There are several changes, however, in the underlying accompaniment. Many of the chords resemble a skeleton of E Minor harmony with the superimposed pedal tones Bb and C added for dissonant effect. In addition to the generally complex harmonic idiom of this variation there is the fact that the dissonant dominant seventh chord is never resolved; this is perhaps the crowning dissonant factor.\\(^{29}\\)

One last dissonant element in Alkan's music concerns the strictness of his imitative writing. In numerous contrapuntal passages which employ canonic movement dissonant intervals occur between two independent voices. In the first movement of the Sonatine, Op. 61, which is one of the composer's most contrapuntal works, a three-note melodic figure forms the basis of a two-voice strict canon in which the second voice reproduces the first an octave lower. As shown in Example 46 the two voices clash on the third beat of the first measure where D#

\(^{29}\)These other variations from "Le Festin" contain unresolved dissonance: Var. VIII, Var. XIX, Var. XXIV, and XXV, meas. 229-236.
sounds above D#. They clash again at the end of measure 2 and in the middle of measure 4 where there is a cross relation between the D# of the upper voice and the D# of the lower.

Another work which illustrates dissonance in canonic passages is the Etude in D Major, Op. 35, No. 2, an excerpt from which is presented as Example 47. In this piece a strict canon is carried out between two parts at the unison, with a simple chordal accompaniment underlying the contrapuntal movement. The canon, which consists simply of a series of three-note figures that are echoed by the second voice, leads to a momentary clash of tonic harmony with dominant in the fourth measure of the example. While the second voice repeats the melodic figure B-G#-E in the fourth measure, the first voice sustains an E above a momentary tonic chord on A. This dissonant combination of tonic and dominant harmony points towards bitonality; the incidental clash between the second canonic voice and the chordal harmony illustrates one of the most uniquely dissonant situations in Alkan's music.

Rhythm

The rhythmic aspect of Alkan's music forms a significant part of the composer's general musical style. The basic principles of rhythmic organization in Alkan's works consist of a small number of stylistic elements, one of the most prominent of which resembles an important rhythmic trait of Ludwig van Beethoven: the dominance in a particular work of one principal rhythmic motive.

Almost all of the examples presented thus far in this chapter illustrate the predominance of motivic repetition of rhythmic patterns.
In a few of Alkan's works the idea of regularity of movement has been
carried to the utmost extreme—a rhythmic flow that, regardless of the
prescribed tempo, consists of a continuous and unchanging movement
that completely lacks any rhythmic variation. The *Esquisse* "Morituri
te salutant," Op. 63, No. 21, consists entirely of a sequence of trip-
let patterns that continues uninterrupted until the very last chord
(see Example 45). Another *Esquisse*, entitled "Délire," Op. 63, No. 29,
presents a series of triplets for the right hand and quarter note oc-
taves for the left hand; this unvaried scheme persists until the pen-
ultimate measure (see Example 55).\(^{30}\)

In contrast with the small number of Alkan works that contain a
completely unvaried movement there is a rather large number of pieces
that are constructed by means of recurring rhythmic patterns. "La
Pâque," from *Les Mois*, Op. 74, No. 4, is based almost exclusively upon
a two-measure rhythmic motive. As shown in Example 15 (page 102) the
melodic line consists of a recurring two-measure pattern while the
bass, a double pedal point which persists throughout the work, is or-
organized in a series of one-measure rhythmic patterns. Another work,
similar rhythmic organization in its A section, the beginning of which
is shown as Example 13 (page 99).\(^{31}\) Despite the apparent monotony of

\(^{30}\) Other Alkan pieces with unvarying rhythmic movement include the
*Esquisse* "Le Staccatissimo," Op. 63, No. 2; the *Prélude* "Cantique des
cantiques," Op. 31, No. 13 (Ex. 42); and three *études*: Op. 35, No. 12;
"Le Chemin de fer," Op. 27; and the third of the *Trois grandes études*,
Op. 76: "Mouvement semblable et perpetuel."

\(^{31}\) Other Alkan works with recurring rhythmic motives include three
of the *Préludes*, Op. 31: No. 1 in C Major, No. 2 in F Minor, and No.
7 in Eb Major (Ex. 16); the Chants "Allegretto" and "Barcarolle en
choeur," Op. 38, Nos. 2 and 6 (both from the second book); and two of
the *Études*, Op. 39: No. 1, "Comme le vent"; and No. 2, "En rythme
molossique."
of such unvaried rhythmic schemes many of Alkan's works achieve a brilliant effect through the use of recurring patterns, because, at a brisk pace, these steadily moving patterns contribute greatly to the generation of an exciting rhythmic drive.

Two of the major influences responsible for Alkan's extensive adherence to repeated rhythmic motives are the dance and the march. Dance forms, especially those of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, are represented in several piano pieces. Two of the Esquisses, the "Contredanse," Op. 63, No. 24; and the "Rigaudon," Op. 63, No. 27, are particularly successful reproductions of Baroque dance idioms. While both of these sketches are vivacious and melodic creations the "Rigaudon" contains a rhythmic movement that is an especially effective imitation of an actual dance step, as shown in Example 36.32


32 Other works whose rhythmic designs are influenced by specific dance steps are the "Saltarelle," Op. 23; the "Cigue et Air de ballet," Op. 24; and the "Minuetto alla tedesca," Op. 46. To these may be added two works with a folk music influence: the "Bourrée d'Auvergne," Op. 29; and the "Réconciliation, petit caprice," Op. 42, the middle section of which is a "zorcico," a Basque dance in 6 time.
Alkan's enthusiasm for the march seems equivalent to that of many of the early romantic piano composers who catered to the tastes of the fashionable salon audiences. Alkan's particular penchant may be due to the fact that he grew up as a salon performer, often playing his own compositions. Several of his pieces expressly bear the title "march," while others use titles that allude to a military style. The most notable pieces in this latter category are the two works which comprise Op. 50: "Capriccio alla soldatesca" and "Le Tambour bat aux champs." The latter contains especially militaristic rhythmic figures, the most prominent of which is a drum roll accompaniment that is found throughout the work, as shown in Example 32 (page 129). One other work with several noteworthy military effects is "Le Festin d'Espe," which contains march sections in these variations: V, a thunderous passage marked "marziale"; VIII, which contains a series of low drum rolls; XIV, marked "Trombata"; XV, which contains massive fortissimo chords; and XXV, measures 201 through 224, marked "Trionfamante."

Although much of Alkan's music, in its adherence to simple dance and march patterns, avoids rhythmic complexities, there are many complicated rhythmic effects in his works, many of which contain instances of a highly interesting and original treatment of rhythmic figures. The most frequently employed of these effects is syncopation, which is abundantly used throughout the first movement of the Symphonie. The opening four-measure motive, which is employed as a motto theme through the entire movement, contains a highly syncopated pattern, with an accent occurring on the last beat of the measure where the melodic note is

\[33\text{Cf. the discussion of Alkan's marches in Chapter II, p. 78.}\]
tied over the bar line, forming in one case a suspension which is resolved on the weak third beat of the new measure (see Example 3, page 87).\footnote{33}

A second excerpt from the first movement of this work illustrates another rhythmic trait that is often found in Alkan’s music: the effect known as hemiola. As shown in Example 37 a momentary conflict between the upper and lower parts occurs in the third and fourth measures in which the $\frac{6}{8}$ meter is disturbed by the upper parts which demonstrate a $\frac{3}{4}$ rhythmic grouping. The occurrence of accents on the weak third and fifth beats against the normal metric accents on one and four produces the particular syncopation effect that is classified as hemiola: a rhythmic device in which three notes take the place of two in a given metric unit; in this instance three quarter notes replace two dotted quarters in the right-hand part of measures 3 and 4.


Another instance of hemiola takes place in the *Chant* entitled "Bravement," Op. 67, No. 3, in which all of the parts temporarily change from the designated $\frac{6}{8}$ metric scheme to a $\frac{3}{4}$ rhythmic arrangement without a change in the time signature. As shown in Example 38 the first and third measures display a syncopated accent on the third beat and a tie on the fourth and fifth beats. The second and fourth measures, while presenting exactly the same rhythmic pattern as the right-hand part of the measures that precede them, are notated according to a $\frac{3}{4}$ metric design.\(^{34}\)


A similar change of notation occurs in the *Chant* entitled "Appassionato," Op. 67, No. 5, which, in addition to an extensive use of hemiola figures, contains an accompaniment figure that almost never falls on a strong metric accent. As shown in Example 39 (see next page) the metric emphasis of the melodic line is shifted from the fourth beat to the third in the first two measures and the bass line always comes behind the normally accented beats in $\frac{4}{8}$ time. This lack of metric definiti-

\(^{34}\)Other passages in Alkan's works that employ hemiola include the *Symphonie*, I, 9-11, 165-167, 240-241, 298-301, and 403-406; the *Sonatine*, I, 62-77 and 209-228; and the *Chant* "Appassionato," Op. 67, No. 5, meas. 13-24, 62-106 and 138-150.
tion, which is a characteristic rhythmic element of much of Robert Schumann's piano music, is displayed throughout the entire twenty-seven-measure first section of "Appassionato." In no other work by Alkan is there such a total disregard for metric design; only intermittently is there an accompaniment figure which emphasizes the normal pattern of accents according to the time signature.

Another important rhythmic element found in Alkan's works is that of changing meter. In the Esquisse "Héraclite et Démocrate," Op. 63, No. 39, presented earlier as Example 25 (pages 117 through 119), use is made of two themes of contrasting character and metric pattern. The A section, in \( \frac{2}{4} \) meter, contains a slow, plaintive theme in the key of D Minor. The B section, in \( \frac{4}{4} \) time, is of a distinctly different character, enclosing a bright, vivacious theme in A Major. Though the metric shift between the first and second sections does not in itself cause a significant alteration in the rhythmic design, a number of factors combine to make the B section a radical departure in style from the opening segment. At the beginning of the second section a sudden change of tempo is effected with the annotation "Deux fois plus vite"; the tempo actually shifts to a speed four times faster than the beginning tempo—the metronome marking of the A section, 63=\( \frac{3}{4} \) is followed by the marking 63=\( \frac{1}{4} \) at the beginning of the B section. The
last part of this work (shown at the start of the third page of Example 25, page 119) illustrates a remarkable application of changing meter. Beginning with fragments of previously stated themes, this section first presents three measures from the A section and then four measures from the B section. Following this minute recapitulation the two thematic fragments become uniquely combined, with the B theme superimposed over the A theme and the two time signatures vertically juxtaposed. The original tempos of the two sections thus combined are not altered; both themes move at their original speeds so that the individual tempos are preserved while being merged.35

Although "Héraclite" contains no intrinsic rhythmic complexity, disparate rhythmic elements are often vertically juxtaposed in Alkan's works, producing intricate cross-rhythmic patterns. The most frequently employed cross rhythm in Alkan's music consists of groups of two against three. This rhythmic device is illustrated in the B section of the Chant "Neige et Lave," Op. 67, No. 1, in which triplet sixteenth notes underlie groups of regular sixteenth notes, as shown in Example 40.


35 Other examples of changing meter include the Prélude in F Minor, Op. 31, No. 2; the Étude "L'Incendie au village voisin," Op. 35, No. 7; the Pièce, Op. 72, No. 5; and two Chants: "Hymne," Op. 38, No. 1 (second book); and "Canon," Op. 65, No. 3 (Ex. 48).
Among other cross-rhythmic devices used by Alkan the most prominent is that of three against four, which is displayed throughout the Chant "Andantinetto," Op. 70, No. 2. As shown in Example 41 this work contains two juxtaposed time signatures, \( \frac{2}{4} \) over \( \frac{3}{4} \), with four eighth notes in the melodic line moving above three quarter-note chords. The only departure from this basic pattern is an occasional group of five eighth notes in the melody such as that which occurs in the seventh measure of this excerpt. 36


The final rhythmic trait to be examined in this section concerns Alkan's extensive use of groups of five. Several works are based either wholly or in part on rhythmic units of five. The "zorcico"

which forms the middle section of the caprice "Récognition," Op. 42, contains a chordal accompaniment which consists of quarter notes grouped according to the quintuple pattern of this folk dance in $\frac{5}{4}$ meter. The Prélude "Cantique des cantiques," Op. 31, No. 13, also entitled "J'étais endormie, mais mon coeur veillait...," provides a good illustration of this particular rhythmic element. As shown in Example 42 (see next two pages) this work consists almost entirely of chordal figures based on a five-note rhythmic pattern. There is no variance from this quintuple grouping in any of the prelude's twenty-eight measures until the last two measures. 37

Although Alkan's works contain a relatively small number of rhythmic devices, there is a significant stylistic distinction between those works which are based on simple patterns and those which display complex rhythmic elements. Despite such apparent inconsistencies in Alkan's rhythmic idiom, there is always one dominant characteristic in his treatment of rhythmic patterns: the use of a specific device in order to achieve a certain effect. Whether the fundamental pattern is of a monotonous or a diversified nature, Alkan's musical ingenuity is ever at work in an effort to construct an effective work by means of one principal rhythmic pattern.

37Other works with five-note rhythmic groups include the Étude, Op. 35, No. 12; the Esquisses "Increpatio," Op. 63, No. 10; and "Laus Deo," Op. 63, No. 49; and the Pièce, Op. 72, No. 11.
Ex. 42—Continued
Counterpoint

An appraisal of Alkan's principal stylistic traits would not be complete without a brief survey of his work with contrapuntal devices. Alkan's mature compositions, like the later works of Frédéric Chopin, contain a wealth of contrapuntal passages that reflect the influence of J. S. Bach, whose works were gaining in popularity among romantic composers as a result of the efforts of Felix Mendelssohn and others to revive the music of the Baroque master.

Contrapuntal elements in Alkan's music may be traced back to the relatively early set of Vingt-cinq préludes, Op. 31 (circa 1847), which includes several examples of germinating contrapuntal ideas. The Prélude No. 14 contains a uniquely contrapuntal treatment of its two themes; in the last section the A theme is vertically juxtaposed over the B theme. The top melodic line, as shown in Example 43, duplicates the A theme as presented at the beginning of the work (shown in Example 5, page 91).[38]


[Diagram of music notation]

[38] Other works in which the A and B themes are vertically combined include the Prélude, Op. 31, No. 7; the Esquisse "Héraclite et Démocrite," Op. 63, No. 39 (Ex. 25); and two Prières: Op. 64, Nos. 6 and 7 (da Motta edition).
Many of Alkan's later works were conceived for the pedal piano, which provided him with the opportunity to perform Bach's organ compositions. This instrument, with a rank of pedals affixed beneath a regular piano keyboard, furnished Alkan with the resources necessary for the realization of works of a contrapuntal nature. His earliest collection of pieces for the pedal piano, the *Treize prières pour orgue ou piano à clavier de pédales*, Op. 64, contains several contrapuntal features, the most noteworthy of which is the use of imitative entrances of the principal melodic motive in "Deus Sebaoth," No. 5 in the da Motta edition. As shown in Example 44 a four-note ascending figure is stated by four successive pairs of voices, all of which blend smoothly into a diatonic harmonic idiom.


The stylistic device employed in this piece illustrates one of the most basic contrapuntal traits in Alkan's music: the imitative treatment of terse melodic motives.

The first movement of the *Symphonie* contains some noteworthy imitative passages based on its short, motto-like theme. At the beginning of the coda an altered version of a two-measure fragment of this theme is presented in a series of statements which alternately uses the lower
and the upper register. After four repetitions of this pattern a second variant of the theme is presented in an imitative passage in which each four-bar statement overlaps the preceding statement by two measures. As shown in Example 30 (page 127) the upper voices introduce this variant in the first measure; the bass voice enters with the same motive in the third measure, overlapping the first statement. This imitative procedure is continued for sixteen measures, with the statements again appearing alternately in the opposite registers.39

Among the numerous Alkan works that contain motivic imitation there are several in which the strictness of the imitative part-writing leads to a canonic treatment. The Esquisse "Morituri te salutant," Op. 63, No. 21, displays an imitative style which simulates a four-voice canon in its opening measures. As shown in Example 45 (see next page) this sketch begins with four successive statements of a chromatically ascending motive. Each voice enters on D# four beats behind the preceding voice which continues to proceed chromatically downward. At the end of measure 4 there begins in the top voice a new pattern (D#-G#-F#-E) which is subsequently imitated by each of the remaining three upper voices at four-beat intervals. This descending passage, however, is not treated as a strict canon; the second voice enters with the pattern A-G#-F#-E, the third voice with C#-C#-E-D#, and the fourth voice with D#-G#-F#-E. The opening figure returns at the end of measure 11.

39 Other examples of motivic imitation include two Préludes from Op. 31: No. 15, "Dans le genre gothique"; and No. 16 in C Minor; the Esquisses No. 5, "Quasi-Coro"; No. 31, "Début de quatuor"; No. 38, "Le Ciel vous soit toujours prospère!"; and No. 49, Laus Deo"; and two Chants from Op. 67: No. 1, "Neige et Lave"; and No. 2, "Bravement."
to form a two-voice canonic fragment which echoes the canonic format of the first phrase.

In several of Alkan's more important works canonic imitation is treated as a developmental device which employs melodic fragments based on motives from the principal thematic material. No fewer than six canonic fragments may be found in each of the first two movements of the Sonatina, Op. 61. One notable canonic passage contained in the first movement is based on a three-note motive from the second theme. As shown in Example 46 this motive, which is stated twelve times by the upper voice, is imitated at the interval of an octave by the lower voice, which follows three beats behind the first part.  


The strictness of Alkan's contrapuntal treatment is nowhere more remarkably displayed than in the Etude in D Major, Op. 35, No. 2, which presents a two-voice canon above a chordal accompaniment. As shown in Example 47 this canon consists of a series of imitative fragments based

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on a three-note melodic and rhythmic figure, with the second voice forming an echo of each motivic statement of the first voice. In the fourth measure of this example the reiterated figure of the second voice clashes with the underlying harmony, producing a momentary bitonal effect. The canonic figure shown here is employed in almost every section of this work of 180 measures.


Some unique harmonic combinations also occur in the *Chant* entitled "Canon," Op. 65, No. 3, the most completely canonic work in all of Alkan's music. After an eight-bar non-imitative introduction the canonic theme begins in the top voice in measure 9, followed at the interval of one measure by a second voice imitating the first voice an octave lower. As shown in Example 48 (see next three pages) this two-voice canon is accompanied by an inner chordal movement and by a bass line in dotted half notes.

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41Cf. discussion of this bitonal tendency on page 135.

42Two other works that contain fully-developed canons include the *Étude "Contrapunctus,"* Op. 35, No. 9, the middle section of which is a canon entitled "Trio-Canonico"; and the *Chant "Appassionato,"* Op. 67, No. 5, which includes two canons, meas. 36-43 and 115-122, and a sequential passage involving canonic interplay between two motives, meas. 87-94.
Ex. 48—Continued
Ex. 48—Continued

Ped.  Ped.

Ped.  Ped.

Ped.  Ped.

TT Mouvement.

Astre. Lentement:

Sosten.
Relatively few of Alkan's works in imitative style employ fugal techniques. Of his mature fugal compositions, the Esquisse "Fugue," Op. 63, No. 6; and the Pièce "Quasi-Adagio," Op. 72, No. 3, are purely academic exercises. The latter contains slightly more interesting material than the former, employing several strettos based on the subject in both its original and inverted forms. Both works contain considerable sequential material, illustrating once again Alkan's fondness for this particular device.

Only two fugal compositions may be included among the composer's major contrapuntal works. The one forms part of the finale of the "Impromptu sur le choral de Luther," Op. 69, which is based on the German chorale "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." The other forms a section of the second movement of the Grande sonate, Op. 33.

The first of these fugues is introduced following a series of seventeen variations on the Lutheran hymn. This chorale is employed as the fugal subject, while a simple sixteenth-note motive forms the countersubject. In both its particulars of design and in its general harmonic idiom this four-voice fugue is stylistically comparable with many fugal compositions of J. S. Bach. Alkan's work, then, is essentially more derivative than original; it contains a few characteristic Alkan touches superimposed on a generally traditional fugal structure.

The work is divided into four sections, the first forming an exposition consisting of a statement and restatement of the subject and its tonal answer. In the restatement, comprising measures 15 through 24, canonic imitation makes its first appearance in a passage based on
a three-note descending motive from the subject. The second part, measures 34 through 55, consists of a series of strettos based on a fragment of the subject in its inverted form, and two more canonic passages based on a three-note figure from the subject. The third part, measures 56 through 75, is an extended episode that consists of a series of five sequential passages based on fragments of the countersubject. The fugal subject is totally absent from this section, while the countersubject is presented only once in its complete form. The last part, measures 76 through 105, represents a further development of fragments of the subject, first in a sequence which combines the original form with its inversion, then in another canonic passage based on the same three-note figure used in three earlier canons, and finally in a four-voice stretto involving both the original and inverted forms. This stretto, which is actually a series of four strettos arranged in an ascending sequential pattern, invites comparison with the contrapuntal technique of J. S. Bach, who employed a stretto of similar design in "Fuga V" from the second volume of The Well Tempered Clavier. The beginnings of both passages are shown in the following example, in which the Bach excerpt is presented as Example 49a and the Alkan fragment is given as Example 49b (see next page). Beneath the Alkan stretto there is a tremolo figure scored for the pedal board which forms a dominant pedal point that extends to the end of the section. In measure 105 this fugue is abruptly cut off before a satisfactory conclusion can be made. The dominant pedal continues to sound through the last measure, which offers no resolution from dominant to tonic harmony. Following this sudden truncation of the fugue a homophonically conceived closing


section is commenced which brings the work to a grandiose conclusion.

In contrast with the conventional fugal treatment employed in the "Impromptu," the other significant fugal composition by Alkan is a truly remarkable achievement. This work consists of a multi-voiced fugal exposition which is interpolated into the second movement of the *Grande sonate*, interrupting the progress of the recapitulation following the return of the first subject. As shown in the last three pages of Example 60 the fugal subject, which is thematically unrelated to the surrounding sonata movement, commences after a series of four arpeggiated cadential chords. This short motive is followed by a complex chain of statements of subject and countersubjects (measures 231 through 258)
in which, by the simple process of adding a new voice with each subsequent statement of the subject, a new countersubject is appended. Following the four-bar design of the subject the entire section is arranged in a series of four-measure phrases, with each successive phrase systematically comprising a new countersubject in addition to all that has gone before. After six statements of the subject and the appearance of five countersubjects the climactic point of this fugal exposition arrives. With the entrance of the sixth countersubject (measure 255) the subject becomes doubled in octaves, the first countersubject becomes doubled in thirds, and the fifth countersubject is echoed by an additional voice that follows two beats behind, stating that motive in its inverted form. The resultant phrase, as shown in measures 255 through 258, contains no fewer than ten distinct voice parts. Following this massively constructed four-measure phrase the strict pattern that has been maintained for twenty-eight measures is discontinued. The fugal subject, in full chords, is stated above the first and third countersubjects, both of which are also treated in full chords, with a pedal point in the bass consisting of the chord C#-F#-C# (measures 259 and 260). This pattern forms a bridge with the rest of the sonata movement, which recommences with the second subject.\textsuperscript{43}

The preceding fugal composition contains a further element which demonstrates an important aspect of Alkan's contrapuntal style: the use of an ostinato figure. The subject of the fugal section in the

\textsuperscript{43}Another interpolated fugal passage occurs in the Chant "Chant de guerre," Op. 38, No. 3 (second book), in which four themes presented in the first section of the work are employed in the second as a fugue subject and three countersubjects. Several strettos are involved in the complex working out of this material which encloses meas. 83-128.
Grande sonate is presented continuously throughout the course of the twenty-eight measure exposition. Although this procedure differs from standard ostinato treatment in that the basic ostinato figure appears in a variety of keys (beginning successively on C#, F#, C#, F#, B, G#, and E) rather than always in the same key, it does resemble an ostinato figure in its basic construction, which consists of a steady succession of slow-moving half notes.

An actual ostinato pattern is employed at the beginning of the "Impromptu sur le choral de Luther." The eight-bar theme of this set of variations is introduced on the pedal board as a bass motive in the key of Eb Major and remains on the pedals as a bass progression in that key through the eighth variation. As shown in Example 50 (see next five pages) this figure is presented without a single alteration in the first three variations; it forms an ostinato beneath a progressively larger number of upper voices ranging from a single additional part in the first variation to three in the third variation. A slight change in the figure occurs in the fourth variation, in which the notes of the pattern alternate between a lower and upper octave (see the bottom of page 162 and the top of page 163). In the fifth and most of the sixth variation the motive is presented as a staccato figure with shortened time values and intervening rests. In the seventh and eighth variations the theme is presented in its original form, differing from the opening statement only in its employment of a pitch level an octave higher than that used at the beginning.

After the eighth variation the theme is treated more freely. In the ninth through the fourteenth variations the figure is presented
Ex. 50—Continued
Ex. 50—Continued
in the upper voices, with the latter portion of the chorale tune entering into the work in the twelfth and thirteenth variations. There is no further consistent use of the theme as an ostinato figure beyond variation 11.

One last ostinato figure that deserves to be mentioned is that which occurs in Variation X of "Le Festin d'Ésope." As shown in Example 59 a four-note descending figure is immediately superimposed over a simple statement of the theme in E Major. This variation, which bears the characteristic annotation "Scampanatino" ("Tinkling"), presents an effective imitation of a music box that bears a striking resemblance to Variation XXII of Johannes Brahms' Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Händel, Op. 24. This variation, entitled "Alla Musette," contains a double pedal point on E♭ and F which functions as a drone figure, cleverly imitating the lower pipes of the musette, the French bagpipe of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In view of the close similarity between these two variations, it is interesting to note that Alkan's work precedes by five years the work of Brahms, which was first published in 1862.

CHAPTER IV

FORM IN ALKAN'S MUSIC

General Considerations

Alkan was basically a composer of small pieces who, like his contemporaries Frédéric Chopin, Robert Schumann and Felix Mendelssohn, found the two and three-part song forms the most ideal idioms for the expression of his thematic ideas. His themes, which usually consist of relatively brief melodic motives, are self-contained, fully developed conceptions. Even though these melodies do not contain the expressive lyricism of Chopin's nocturnes or Schumann's sets of miniatures, they are characteristic romantic creations in that they are stated in a highly finished form as an end in themselves rather than expressed as terse motives requiring further development to expose their full meaning.

Alkan's music thus avoids the larger forms, as does that of most of his contemporaries, because the central ideas are not capable of the kind of inner growth that denotes a successful use of sonata form. Yet, he did delve occasionally into the problem of relating his predominantly nineteenth-century ideas to the techniques of the eighteenth century, as indicated by his works in extended forms.

Before it can be demonstrated how Alkan related his ideas to specific forms the general traits of his formal organization must first be surveyed, with primary attention devoted to the basic considerations of the construction of the individual phrases and the re-
lationship of the phrase to the sectional divisions of the various part forms.

Phrase Construction

In order to understand the principles of formal structure in Alkan's music one prominent aspect of the composer's style must be taken into account: the extensive use of repeated melodic, harmonic and rhythmic patterns. The motivic nature of Alkan's musical ideas bears a direct influence on the formal design of both his brief and more extended works, thereby affecting the basic fabric of his musical organization. The fragmentary aspect of Alkan's melodies combines with the use of a repeated rhythmic figure to give many of his works a patchwork design consisting usually of two-measure units. Such a structure is presented throughout "Le Festin d'Esope," which is based on an eight-measure theme that consists of a two-measure melodic and rhythmic figure, as shown in Example 21 (page 109). This basic motive provides the structural organization for the entire work.\(^1\)

Alkan's phrases generally consist of successions of two-measure units, usually forming phrases of either four or eight bars. Four-measure phrases dominate several Esquisses, including "La Vision," Op. 63, No. 1 (see Example 17, pages 104 and 105); and "Héraclite et Démocrate," Op. 63, No. 39 (see Example 25, pages 117 through 119).\(^2\) Eight-


\(^2\) Other examples include the entire last movement of the Symphonie and the first movement of the Sonatine.
bar phrases are employed quite frequently, with the first four measures assigned the role of establishing the prominence of a two-bar figure and the last four measures used to form an extension of the basic pattern which provides a satisfactory climax to the phrase. The "Andante romantique," Op. 13, No. 3, employs such a two-measure melodic and rhythmic unit which involves a sequential treatment of the basic harmonic scheme (see Example 1, page 86). After the third appearance of this figure in measure 5 and 6 the melodic motive becomes extended, breaking away from the basic pattern and moving rapidly to a cadence in measure 8. Another typical eight-bar construction is displayed in the Prélude in B Minor, Op. 31, No. 14, in which the melodic line is almost static for the first four measures, finally moving out of its confined range by rising suddenly in measure 5 and dropping sharply in measure 6, as shown in Example 5 (page 91).

In some of Alkan's works the consistent application of one two-measure thematic motive results in a completely uniform structure based on two-measure units. The Chant "Canon," Op. 65, No. 3, contains a two-measure rhythmic motive which is employed throughout the central canonic section that extends from measure 9 to measure 52, as shown in Example 46 (pages 153 through 155). Another work that makes repeated use of a two-bar rhythmic unit is the first movement of the Symphonie. As shown in Example 51 this two-measure motive is a condensation of the original four-bar thematic statement presented at the beginning of the work.3

3Cf. Example 3, page 87.
Ex. 51. Symphonie, I, 342-345.

Another work that contains independent two-bar units, the Prelude "Le Temps qui n'est plus," Op. 31, No. 12, has an interesting phrasing that results from the overlapping of one phrase into the next. As shown in Example 52 (see next page) measures 7 and 8 serve a dual function, forming both the last two measures of the first phrase and the first two measures of the second phrase. Alkan has constructed the melody of this piece in an ingenious way, devising what appears to be an eight-bar phrase whose first two measures are identical to the last two. However, measures 7 and 8, instead of concluding the first phrase, embark unexpectedly on a new phrase that is interconnected with the preceding phrase. The same procedure occurs between the second and third phrases and between the third and fourth phrases. A chart of this work, showing the two-measure units that comprise each phrase, indicates the overlapping between adjacent phrases:

I: 1-2 3-4 5-6 7-8

II: 7-8 9-10 11-12 13-14

III: 13-14 15-16 17-18 19-20

IV: 19-20 21-22 23-24 25-26
Ex. 52. "Le Temps qui n'est plus," Op. 31, No. 12.
In the last phrase the final cadence is prepared through an extension of the third two-measure unit (measures 23 and 24). The resultant structure of this piece consists of four eight-bar phrases condensed into twenty-six measures.

The Prélude in Eb Major, Op. 31, No. 7, indicates that Alkan's phrases do not always contain an even number of measures. As shown in Example 16 (page 103) this work begins with a succession of four-bar phrases; but initial regularity of structure is soon broken through a process similar to that which is employed in "Le Temps qui n'est plus." The use of material which serves a dual function, belonging simultaneously to two phrases, causes the phrase beginning in measure 17 to overlap the phrase beginning in measure 20; the two phrases thus joined are linked together as one combined phrase unit of seven measures, extending from measure 17 through measure 23. Measure 20, in its dual capacity as the last measure of one phrase and the first measure of the next, performs the work of two measures, thereby eliminating one measure from the phrase structure.

In contrast to the two works cited above which employ contracted phrases the Prélude in B Minor, Op. 31, No. 14, presents an example of a phrase extension that results from an unexpected harmonic progression which prevents an impending cadence and forces the continuation of the existing phrase. As shown in Example 5 (page 91) this work begins with an eight-measure phrase, then continues with another phrase similar to the first. This second phrase approaches a cadence in measure 15, but the introduction of secondary dominant harmony at the beginning of measure 16 causes the avoidance of a tonic cadence. As a result of this
harmonic change the second phrase is extended four measures, finally reaching a tonic cadence in measure 20.

A few Alkan pieces contain examples of irregular phrasing. The Prélude "Prière du matin," Op. 31, No. 19, begins with a succession of three-bar phrases which extends for twelve measures, as shown in Example 27 (page 123). The étude "Bourrée d'auvergne," Op. 29, contains many unique features in its phrasing. The section extending from measure 35 through measure 56 is organized in three-bar phrases, while the long section from measure 69 to measure 138 contains irregular phrase lengths throughout. Its most characteristic grouping consists of units of two-and-a-half measures, as shown in Example 53. There are also units of two, three, four-and-a-half, and five measures in this remarkable section, which contains some of the most unusual phrase construction in all of Alkan's music.


Song Forms

Within the more than 200 pieces by Alkan that employ song forms there is an almost infinite variety of formal treatment. While a great many of the pieces in the collections of Préludes, Esquisses and Chants adhere to the classical binary and ternary designs, there are many
pieces that employ a loose, episodic part-form treatment as well as a few extremely terse little sketches that are through composed, having no sectional divisions at all.

Only a small number of Alkan's works in song forms can be classified as symmetrical in design. The Prélude "Cantique des cantiques," Op. 31, No. 13, presents a rare example of a perfectly shaped ternary form. This work consists of an eight-measure A section, with a seven-measure middle section and a four-bar coda. The following chart gives the sectional arrangement of the prelude, which is shown as Example 42 (pages 143 and 144). Since the A theme begins in the middle of the first measure, all of the successive sectional changes occur also in the middle of measures; the resultant sectional divisions occur within measures, as follows:

A (meas. 1-9), B (9-16), A (16-24), Coda (25-28).

Another symmetrically constructed work is the Esquisse "Petit air à 5 voix," Op. 63, No. 42, which combines a two-part structure with a three-part musical scheme to form a rounded binary design, as shown in Example 54 (see next page). This work consists entirely of a series of four-bar phrases arranged in two sixteen-measure sections, with each section comprising four phrases. The following diagram indicates the musical contents of each section:

A (meas. 1-16), B (17-24), A (25-32).

The Esquisse "Héraclite et Démosthène," Op. 63, No. 39, represents a unique ternary design in which the final section recalls material from both the A and B sections, presenting the two contrasting themes in vertical juxtaposition. As shown in Example 25 (pages 117 through
119) the A section, in D Major, extends from measure 1 to measure 20. The B section, in A Major, extends from measure 21 to measure 53. The A theme then returns, but in the remote key of F Minor. After three measures of A, a four-measure fragment of the B theme is stated, followed by the two themes sounding simultaneously, with the B theme superimposed over the A theme. The work concludes with a four-measure fragment of A, followed by a six-measure cadential figure based on B.

Several of Alkan's Chants present interesting examples of an episodic treatment of song-form structure. "Agitatiissimo," Op. 38, No. 5 (first book), includes an extended formal scheme that consists of the following sections:

A (meas. 1-20), B (21-31), A (32-61), B (62-71), A (72-80), B (81-96), and Coda (97-109).

"Chant de guerre," Op. 38, No. 3 (second book), comprises these sections:

Introduction (meas. 1-17), A (18-58), B (59-82), A (83-128), B (129-154), A (155-186), and Coda (187-191).

This latter work treats its thematic material in a very free manner. The second A section consists of a fugal treatment based on the thematic material of the first A section, which contains four thematic motives. The first of these themes forms the fugal subject, while the other three themes form countersubjects. The third A section bears only a vague resemblance to the beginning A material. It forms a bridge between the preceding section and the coda, which contains a reprisal of the thematic motive presented in the introduction.

Another Chant, "Allegro vivace," Op. 70, No. 3, contains an episodic format that approaches sonata form in its treatment of key relationships. The A section, in the tonic key of A Major, is followed
by a B section which comprises two themes, both in E Major, the dominant key of the work. The A theme then returns, presented in a sequential passage which resembles a developmental section. The B material follows, transposed to the tonic key, with the order of the B themes reversed. A coda based on a fragment of the first B theme ends the work, the diagram of which is shown as follows: 4

\[
\text{Introduction (meas. 1-4), A (5-20), B^1 (21-37), B^2 (38-59), A (60-99), B^2 (100-117), B^1 (118-135), and Coda (136-161).}
\]

**Free Forms**

Alkan did not work extensively with free forms. In contrast to the larger works of Chopin, such as the four ballades and four scherzos, Alkan's music, from a formal standpoint, is thoroughly oriented to the classic period. Two works, however, defy classification as standard part forms because of the free arrangement of a profusion of melodic material that is incorporated into them. These two works are "L'Incendie au village voisin," from the *Douze Études*, Op. 35, No. 7; and the "Ouverture," from the *Douze Études*, Op. 39, No. 11.

"L'Incendie" uses an extremely free musical format in order to depict its extra-musical program. 5 Seven themes are employed during the course of this three-section work, which consists of an introductory "Adagio," a central movement marked "Allegro moderato," and a closing "Cantico," marked "Andante." These three sections are thematically unrelated, except for a recurring fragment of a transitional theme which

4Three other episodic Chants are "Procession-Nocturne" and "Andantino," Op. 38, Nos. 4 and 5, respectively (both from the second book); and "Appassionato," Op. 67, No. 5.

5Cf. discussion of this work in Chapter II, page 63.
first appears connecting the opening section with the principal melodramatic section that depicts the fire, and later returns to connect this part with the closing "Cantica." The work is through composed, with the single exception of the principal theme of the middle section, which makes one re-appearance; the resultant format consists of the following arrangement:

Section I: A B (with transition)
Section II: C D E C F (with transition)
Section III: G (with coda—new motive)

The "Overture" is a grandiose work of twenty-nine pages, comprising 946 measures; it contains nine distinct themes, organized in a sequence of four sections which are clearly indicated to be separate movements, although they are all woven into one continuous whole. The various sections comprise the following material:

Section I (meas. 1-76): A B A B (with transition)
Section II (77-114): C
Section III (115-463): (transition) D E F G F G D F G D G
Section IV (464-946): H (with coda, based on D)

A transitional figure, based on a fragment of the A theme, recurs numerous times in the third section, linking the various thematic statements that occur in a highly episodic format.

Sonata Form

Although Alkan's fragmentary themes are most often presented in small-scale designs, there are a few notable works which display classical sonata form construction. The works that employ sonata form include the Grande sonate, Op. 33, second movement; the Symphonie, first and fourth movements; the Concerto, from Op. 39, first movement; and the Sonatine, Op. 61, first and fourth movements.
A detailed examination of one of these sonata constructions, the first movement of the Symphonie, will serve to illustrate the ingenuity of the composer's treatment of an extended part form. An analytical diagram of this movement is presented on the next two pages as Figure 1. The thematic material comprises six distinct themes and an additional transitional motive. Only the opening theme, however, is treated with any regularity; this is a concisely expressed motive, a motto theme that serves as a unifying factor throughout the movement. This principal theme, which is presented as Example 3 (page 87), is represented in the diagram as theme A₁.

In the exposition section of this work two themes are presented in the A group, followed by a short transitional motive and a succession of four thematic motives in the B group. In the development, which is the longest section of the work, the motto theme A₁ is the only previously stated thematic entity represented. In place of thematic development, which is almost totally absent in this work, a number of imitative passages are included, all based on the motto theme. The most interesting aspects of Alkan's treatment of sonata form in this movement are contained within the recapitulation and coda. Perhaps in order to compensate for the overuse of the A material in the development, the return of the A section is presented in an abbreviated form, with the B material commencing after only twelve measures of A. The B group is also shortened, with the second B theme excluded altogether. In the coda, the most remarkable section in the entire movement, the motto theme is presented in an imitative passage which leads to a restatement of theme B², which was deleted from the recapit-
FIGURE 1

DIAGRAM OF SYMPHONIE, 1

EXPOSITION (meas. 1-109)

| A1  | 1-11 | Theme in bass in tonic key of C Minor, with repeated eighth-note chords above. |
| A1  | 12-18| Theme repeated in upper register, over eighth notes; modulation in meas. 18 to relative major key (Eb). |
|     | 19-22| Sequential passage based on extension of theme; modulation back to tonic key. |
| A2  | 23-34| Syncopated motive, based on rhythm of A1, in two-measure patterns. |
| Trans. | 35-50 | Transitional theme of modulatory design, chordal style. |
| B1  | 51-71| New theme in relative major key (Eb). |
| B2  | 72-79| Simple theme in Eb with sixteenth-note arpeggio accompaniment. |
| B3  | 80-97| Modulatory chordal passage with syncopated melodic pattern. |
| B4  | 98-109| Closing theme in octaves, first in bass, then in upper register. |

DEVELOPMENT (meas. 110-254)

| A1  | 110-139| Theme in Ab Major, then in A Major, E Major, and C Major, employing fragment of motto theme. |
| A1  | 140-149| Canonic treatment of fragment of motto, in modulatory pattern centered around C Major. |
| A1  | 149-160| Two-note fragment of motto with new motive as countertheme, modulates from C Major. |
| A1  | 161-168| Altered version of motto in octaves in B Minor, employing hemiola patterns. |
| A1  | 169-173| Altered version of motto in stretto. |
|     | 174-185| Modulatory passage with new motive in octaves, in E Minor, with modulation. |
| A1  | 186-197| Motto theme in Eb Major, then motto fragment in Bb Major, same as treatment in meas. 110-139. |
| A1  | 198-225| Extension of preceding material, using two-note motto fragment, in Bb Major. |
| A1  | 226-241| Modulatory passage, employing two-bar variant of motto, begins on dominant. |
| A1  | 242-254| Transition back to tonic key and return of first theme, uses motto and extension. |

6In this diagram the left column indicates what part the material has in the thematic structure of the movement. The second column gives the inclusive measures of that material, and the right column gives a descriptive comment. The score of this movement may be found in Raymond Lewenthal's edition of The Piano Music of Alkan, pp. 27-44.
FIGURE 1--Continued

RECAPITULATION (meas. 255-341)

A\(^1\) 255-266 Motto theme in tonic key of C Minor, altered after six bars and leading without modulation to the B theme group.
B\(^1\) 267-287 First B theme in C Minor.
B\(^3\) 288-313 Third B theme, modulates to AB Major, then F Major.
B\(^4\) 314-341 Closing theme begins in F Major, modulates to C Minor, then to C Minor, using extension of closing theme material.

CODA (meas. 342-413)

A\(^1\) 342-353 Two-measure variant of motto presented in alternating registers, with sixteenth-note accompaniment, in C Minor.
A\(^1\) 354-369 Imitative treatment of two-measure variant, with dominant pedal in internal part.
B\(^2\) 370-380 Second B theme, skipped in recapitulation; appears in B Major, then in C Minor.
381-396 Episodic material, unrelated thematically, all in octaves, prepares climactic conclusion to movement.
A\(^1\) 397-402 Altered fragment of motto, with descending chromatic scales above, in C Minor.
A\(^1\) 403-406 Syncopated motive from motto, in full chords, leads to final cadence.
407-413 Chordal progression, ending in tonic key of C Minor.
ulation. The appearance of this theme in the coda is made doubly unique by the fact that it is presented in the remote key of B Major. The motto theme returns in a triumphant closing passage in the tonic key.

Alkan's weaknesses as a composer of large formal designs is clearly revealed by the nature of the development section of this movement. Although there is much interesting material in this section, it is loosely episodic and repetitious in its repeated use of the motto theme, which never receives a true developmental treatment. While imitative passages are constructed upon it, this theme undergoes no basic changes, except for a two-measure abbreviation of the original four-measure motive that is presented in the coda, as shown in Example 51 (page 169).

A comparison of this development section with parallel sections of Alkan's other works in sonata form reveals that not once is there a true development of the basic thematic material. The Concerto and Sonatine do include several canonic passages based on fragments of the principal themes, but such treatment does not influence the construction of the themes themselves. The second movement of the Grande sonate contains an especially weak development section, consisting primarily of literal restatements of entire themes interspersed with episodic material of a modulatory character.

Variation Form

Of Alkan's two prominent sets of variations, "Le Festin d'Esopo" and the "Impromptu sur le choral de Luther," the former is decidedly the more original in both its use of variation techniques and its harmonic design. A detailed study of this work offers one an opportunity to gain an insight into Alkan's mosts creative and imaginative writing
for the piano; this work displays many aspects of musical skill and originality that are not to be found in many other works by this composer. An analytical diagram of this work is presented on the next three pages as Figure 2.

"Le Festin" possesses a structural design of utmost simplicity; with the single exception of Variation XXV, which is extended to form a brilliant coda, all of the variations follow the formal design of the theme, which consists of two four-bar phrases. The basic melodic design of the theme is also retained throughout the set. The principal techniques employed in this work are devoted to harmonic and rhythmic variation of the initial thematic statement, which is presented as Example 21 (page 109).

This set contains some of the composer's most chromatic and dissonant writing; a few of the variations include bold examples of unresolved dissonance that are to be found nowhere else in Alkan's music. Variation III, presented as Example 35 (page 133), is a remarkable illustration of the composer's harmonic ingenuity.
FIGURE 2

DIAGRAM OF THE VARIATION DESIGN OF "LE FESTIN D'ŒSOP" 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>Simple chordal theme in E Minor, based on two-bar melodic and rhythmic motive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>9-16</td>
<td>Unaltered theme in bass, with chords above, based on chordal figure of measure 8.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>17-24</td>
<td>Unaltered theme in parallel sixths, with broken chord accompaniment above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>25-32</td>
<td>Slightly altered theme in chordal style with double pedal point in middle voices on Bb and C, ends with suspended dominant harmony.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>33-40</td>
<td>Rhythmically simplified version of theme in quarter notes, chordal design, in tonic key of E Minor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>41-48</td>
<td>Elaborate chordal treatment of theme, with triplets in the melodic line, above octave accompaniment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI.</td>
<td>49-56</td>
<td>Chordal treatment of theme in C Major, using triplet figures and inverted pedal in meas. 5-7 of this variation, returning to E Minor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII.</td>
<td>57-64</td>
<td>Slightly altered version of theme, in bass chords, with thirty-second note scales above. In last four measures the parts alternate back and forth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII.</td>
<td>65-72</td>
<td>Syncopated chordal version of theme, using diminished seven chord harmony, over a tremolo figure built on dominant note B.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX.</td>
<td>73-80</td>
<td>Rhythmically altered version of theme in parallel major key of E Major. In meas. 5-8 of this variation chromatic embellishments obscure the original harmonic scheme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X.</td>
<td>81-88</td>
<td>Theme in E Major, slightly altered version in parallel sixths, with a four-note ostinato pattern above (see Ex. 59).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI.</td>
<td>89-96</td>
<td>Original version of theme in bass, but still in E Major, with sixteenth-note figures above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII.</td>
<td>97-104</td>
<td>Chordal treatment of original version of theme, employs dominant seventh harmonies throughout, with sixteenth-note arpeggio figures underneath.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7The left column indicates the progression of variations analyzed, while the second column shows the inclusive measures of each section. With the sole exception of Variation XXV all of the variations are eight measures in length. The right column gives a descriptive comment on each variation.
<p>| XI | 105-112 | Altered theme, doubled in sixths, uses diminished seventh harmonies, returns to E Minor in eighth measure. |
| XI | 113-120 | Rhythmically elaborate version in E Minor, with lower parts doubling upper voices. |
| X | 121-128 | Continuation of melodic pattern of X, but now in full chords, with sixteenth-note octaves in bass. |
| XI | 129-136 | Rhythmically altered theme, with lower parts doubling the upper in first four measures, followed by a sequential chordal pattern in last four measures. |
| XII | 137-144 | Melodic outline obscured by elaborate sixty-fourth note scale pattern, over sixteenth-note arpeggios. |
| XII | 145-152 | Same melodic treatment as XII, but in C Major, and with thirty-second note arpeggio figures underneath. Modulation back to E Minor in last measure. |
| XIII | 153-160 | Chromatically descending chordal and octave pattern in thirty-second notes contains basic melodic outline. Last four measures almost totally obscure original thematic design. |
| XIV | 161-168 | Simplified version in chordal patterns, in E Minor. |
| XV | 169-176 | Chordal arrangement, a &quot;Caccia,&quot; contains vague melodic reference to theme. Last four measures contain circle of fifths harmonic progression, parallels last four measures of theme, in E Major. |
| XVI | 177-184 | The &quot;Caccia&quot; version, above ascending chromatic grace-note figures, in E Major. |
| XVII | 185-192 | Tremolo figures in thirty-second notes present vague melodic outline, with broken fifths and octaves in thirty-second notes underneath; return to tonic in the last measure. |
| XVIII | 193-200 | Melodic outline presented in arpeggio figures built on diminished seventh harmony, with C pedal in bass. This harmony remains unresolved. |
| XIX | 201-224 | Full chord treatment of elaborate version of theme. This section has a ternary design. Meas. 201-208 are in E Minor. Meas. 209-216 are modulatory. Meas. 217-224 are in E Major, with same material as in meas. 201-208. |
| XX | 225-228 | Motivic imitation based on three-note motive of theme, based on C. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>229-236</td>
<td>Imitative passage based on two-measure fragment of theme, with C pedal point in bass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>237-243</td>
<td>Arpeggiated chords give vague outline of theme. Last three measures present circle of fifths progression based on original thematic statement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>244-246</td>
<td>Chordal extension of last measure of theme, with three repetitions of one-measure pattern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>247-251</td>
<td>Further extension of one-measure pattern in upper voices, with original theme in bass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>252-262</td>
<td>Elaboration on preceding material, in sixteenth-note figures, with upper parts ascending chromatically and lower parts descending diatonically (see Example 33).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>263-270</td>
<td>Chordal passage in sixteenth notes, with circle of fifths progression in fifth and sixth measures of this section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>271-279</td>
<td>Concluding passage, with simplified version of theme in eighth notes in bass, with repeated sixteenth-note chords above, containing tonic pedal point throughout (see Example 26).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER V

THE INSTRUMENTAL STYLE OF ALKAN'S PIANO MUSIC

In Alkan's music there is a tremendous dichotomy between the simple and the complex. A comparison of the examples presented thus far in this thesis will adequately demonstrate that there is a wide variance of style among Alkan's works for the piano, a stylistic range that extends from absolute simplicity to sheer virtuosity. This division between the modest and the grand manner reflects one of the principal curiosities of Alkan's piano music: its lack of a consistent musical style. While most of the famous romantic piano composers, including Chopin, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Liszt, and Brahms, possessed distinctly individual styles that may be easily identified in their works, Alkan seems to have lacked a consistent method of approach in his writing for the piano. Because of the diversity that exists among the prominent musical elements displayed in his works, Alkan's music presents a stylistic enigma.

The Dual Sonority of Alkan's Piano Music

The dichotomy that exists in Alkan's general musical style extends into the very nature of the instrumental sound of his piano music. His works for the piano are based on two distinctly different kinds of sonority, one that employs specifically pianistic colors
and one that employs unique devices which attempt to simulate an orchestral sonority.

There can be no doubt that Alkan understood the possibilities of pianistic color. Together with Liszt, he extended the limits of bravura technique by producing some of the most difficult piano music that has yet been written. The *Esquissé* "Délire," Op. 63, No. 29, gives a good illustration of Alkan's immense knowledge of the piano's capabilities. This tersely constructed essay in brilliance comprises practically every aspect of bravura technique: octaves and arpeggios, wide stretches and leaps, all intended to be played at rapid speed, as shown in Example 55 (see next three pages).

The *Chant* "Canon," Op. 65, No. 3, is a world apart from "Délire" in terms of its pianistic style, but it contains its own instrumental color, a sentimental kind of lyricism reminiscent of Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words*, which served as actual models for Alkan's *Chants*. "Canon" is one of Alkan's most purely romantic creations, a lyric essay that effectively exploits the piano's varied colors in its chordal writing, which is decorated with melodic appoggiaturas and large descending leaps.

Alkan's attempt to treat specific pianistic colors occasionally reached beyond the limits of romanticism. In the *Chant* "Duetino," Op. 70, No. 1, in which a simple theme is decorated with flowing arpeggios, the concentration on the piano's upper register contributes a distinctly impressionistic flavor, a quality that prefigures much of the writing of Ravel and Debussy. As shown in
Example 56 (see next two pages) this work contains a certain
Debussy-esque quality in its very appearance on the page.¹

Works such as "Délire," "Canon" and "Duettino" indicate that
Alkan not only understood the pianistic idiom but was capable of
creating ingenious sound effects, both for the sake of brilliance--
as in "Délire"--and for pure lyric effect--as in "Canon." His
special talent for imitating specific sound effects led him to ex-
tend his treatment of the piano far beyond its limits that existed
at the time. More than Liszt, Alkan realized that the piano could
effectively imitate the sonorities of the full orchestra. Perhaps
influenced by the work of Hector Berlioz, Alkan produced the
astonishing collection of Douze études dans tous les tons mineurs,
Op. 39, which contains such significant works as the Symphonie,
Concerto, "Ouverture," and the remarkable "Le Festin d'Esopé."
These extraordinary works run the gamut of imitative orchestral
effects; their creator is justly known by the popular epithet--
the "Berlioz of the piano."

A good example of Alkan's "orchestral" piano style is afforded
by the first movement of the Symphonie, which may be described as
an orchestral sonata, for it contains numerous passages which
attempt to imitate orchestral colors and figurations. One of its

¹ Other examples of characteristic piano sonorities include the
five barcarolles from the collections of Chants; three Préludes from
Op. 31: No. 12, "Le Temps qui n'est plus" (Ex. 52); No. 13, "Cantique
des cantiques" (Ex. 42); and especially No. 14 in B Minor (Ex. 5);
and two Esquisses: No. 11, "Les Soupirs"; and No. 46, "Le Premier
billet doux" (Ex. 24).
Ex. 56--Continued
most orchestral aspects is the rapid shift of piano registers, which produces the effect of changing instrumental combinations. As shown in Example 57 a solemn brass-like motive marked "sordamente" alternates with a short motive in the upper register which suggests the string section.

Ex. 57. Symphonie, I, 35-38.

The "Ouverture" is another pseudo-orchestral work that contains many interesting imitative orchestral effects. The opening passage, which consists of a series of repeated chords, simulated a string tremolo figure, as shown in Example 58 (see next two pages). The pianism of this work is so unwieldy in its massive chords and continuous rhythmic drive that the overall effect is that of a piano reduction of an orchestral score.

One further example of Alkan's imaginative use of piano sonority is Variation X from "Le Festin d'Esopo." This short segment presents an interesting imitation of a music box, using a repeated four-note descending figure which forms an ostinato in the piano's upper register, as shown in Example 59 (see page 197).³

³This variation should be compared to a similar variation found in Brahms's Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel, in which Variation XXII, a musette, also imitates a music box.
Pianistic Devices in Alkan's Music

Alkan lived and composed during a period in which the modern piano was being perfected and, consequently, he was witness to many of the technical improvements in the instrument. Along with Chopin and Liszt, Alkan developed the technical resources of the piano beyond the limitations that were then present. Whether Alkan takes precedence over Liszt in the formation of transcendental technique is not at all clear to historians. It is not a point which can be established without knowing more about Alkan's life. However, Alkan can safely be credited with many extraordinary experiments. His infatuation with orchestral devices labels him as a unique figure in the history of piano music. Alkan is always the equal of Liszt in bravura technique, but Alkan's work falls short of Liszt's in inspiration, thereby offering less to the enterprising pianist in the way of musical value. Another negative factor concerning Alkan's technical style is that it is so often essentially unwieldy for fingers, almost unpianistic. One extended passage
from the "Quasi-Faust" movement of the Grande sonate, Op. 33, will support the view that Alkan's piano writing achieves the utmost levels of virtuosity, but falls short in its meager degree of warmth and inspiration (see Example 60, pages 199 through 208).

This example, which shows the development and the part of the recapitulation that precedes the fugue, contains every major difficulty that can be found anywhere in Alkan's piano music. Every page presents some terrifying pianistic difficulty which makes the combined effort a truly Herculean task.

The first page of this example shows some formidable leaps, followed by some amazing leaps for the right hand on the second page where it is expected to play both repeated chords and the octave melody above. The third page contains some of Alkan's most difficult arpeggio writing, with figures that cover a width of two octaves. Page four contains alternating hand figures followed by enormous leaps for the left hand which continue onto the fifth page. At the bottom of page five a tremolo passage begins which includes a rapidly repeated figure in the piano's lowest register. The most unusual chordal passage in Alkan's music appears on page seven of this example, in measures 227 through 230. No fewer than twenty notes are amassed in one arpeggiated chord.

The technical material of this movement compares with any of Liszt's purely exhibitionistic display pieces. Indeed, both composers seem in retrospect to have been attempting to create that which would be virtually unplayable.
Ex. 60—Continued
Ex. 60--Continued

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Ex. 60--Continued
Ex. 60--Continued
CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Problem of Evaluation

In drawing conclusions concerning the value of Alkan's music, one is immediately confronted with the basic problem of making an impartial and unbiased evaluation of his achievement. The music of this unique individual is so inconsistent with the general trend of nineteenth-century romanticism that any attempt to relate Alkan's creative endeavor with that of his contemporaries will meet with very little success.

Many conflicting influences are inherent in Alkan's principal style characteristics. Two primary factors which clash throughout his work are: (1) preservation of the old, such as his preoccupation with Baroque dance forms, and (2) experimentation with the new, exemplified by his bold attempts to produce orchestral effects on the piano. These two contrary tendencies operate continually in Alkan's music. Another factor which assumes considerable importance in an evaluation of Alkan's style is his tendency to imitate. As a composer who often showed his admiration through emulation, Alkan, in his piano music, imitated the styles of other composers, other periods, and other media. This tendency severely complicates an attempt to appraise Alkan's fundamental musical originality. One further factor, in many ways the most important single characteristic, is Alkan himself, whose
remarkable personality is, without any doubt, largely responsible for the development of a uniquely diversified musical idiom.

The Problem of Classicism

Alkan's music strongly reflects the classic orientation of his studies at the Paris Conservatoire. Although some of his works contain much harmonic and rhythmic complication, there is almost always a simple diatonic basis to his musical structure. Alkan cannot be characterized exclusively as a classicist, but the systematic adherence to diatonic harmony and metrical rhythmic organization in his work clearly demonstrates the operation of a classical reserve.

A significant aspect of this restraining element is the fact that although Chopin was a very close friend, his work had seemingly little effect on the musical style of Alkan, who preferred instead the sentimentalism of Mendelssohn's Songs without Words. In retrospect, it seems difficult to conceive that Alkan managed to remain aloof from the romantic spirit that is engendered in the music of Chopin and Liszt, for during the exciting musical era of the 1830s these three musicians were young pianists who attended and participated in each other's concerts. Since much of the music included in these programs consisted of pieces written by the performers themselves, Alkan must have been exposed to the romantic piano works of his two famous contemporaries. Yet his music conveys little of such exposure; his melodies are almost completely lacking in the flowing cantabile line of Chopin and the free cadenza-like movement of Liszt.

There is a romantic quality about the titles of many of Alkan's characteristic pieces, especially "Déliire," "Les Soupirs" and "Nottur-nino-Innamorato." Among his annotative markings "appassionato," "dol-
cissimo," "con amore," and "con dolore" appear rather frequently. Yet, Alkan's romanticism seems to be contained in his external effects rather than in the music itself. The similarity between Alkan's nocturnes and impromptus and those of Chopin is one in name only.

Alkan's friendship with Ferdinand Hiller is a possible indication of his classical attitude. While it is not at all unusual for Hiller to have befriended Alkan--Hiller had a rapport with practically every noteworthy contemporary musician in Europe--it is significant that the misanthropic Alkan befriended Hiller. Their lasting friendship may well have been based on a sharing of Alkan's classical attitude towards music, for Hiller was an early exponent of the music of Bach and Beethoven, even introducing the latter's Emperor Concerto in Paris.¹ On one occasion Alkan confided to Hiller his personal feeling about Berlioz: "I don't like Berlioz's music at all, although I appreciate his marvelous skill in certain effects of instrumentation."² This criticism of his famous namesake by the "Berlioz of the piano" is significant evidence that Alkan was unimpressed with romanticism in music. While he respected the modern orchestral effects enough to imitate them on the piano, he failed to be influenced by the actual romantic traits in the music of his contemporaries.

The Problem of Experimentation

Within the fundamentally diatonic framework of Alkan's music there

¹Schonberg, p. 220.
²Sietz, Briefwechsel (1826-1861), p. 166.
are many unusual and modern effects. Yet, while these effects occur frequently in his later works, there is no systematic design to their occurrence, for Alkan did not consciously attempt to expand harmonic resources or establish new metric schemes. He used a certain device for a specific effect. An example is his frequent use of tremolos in imitation of the lower strings of the orchestra.

There are two terms which are often used to characterize the nature of Alkan's experimental effects: "bizarrie" and "grotesquerie." His use of unusual effects is lucidly interpreted by Joseph Bloch:

Alkan's harmonic language makes an interesting study, for while the general flow of his harmonies is familiar, he will, in the midst of commonplaces, introduce a sudden unusual alteration or some other curious effect which gives a harsh and grotesque aspect to the music. It is these little harmonic twists which are mainly responsible for the characteristic Alkan bizarrie.3

"Le Festin d'Esope" represents Alkan's most consistently advanced writing, with unusual effects appearing on every page. The frequent use of pedal points and unresolved harmonies has already been illustrated in Example 35 (page 133). "Le Tambour bat aux champs," while a much more traditional work than "Le Festin d'Esope," contains some of Alkan's most dissonant effects in its use of chromatic passing tones, as shown in Example 31 (page 127).

An unusual experimental feature of Alkan's music is illustrated by the Esquisse "Les Enharmoniques," which contains an enharmonic style of notation that is extremely unconventional for musical scores of its time, as shown in Example 19 (page 107).

A few of Alkan's major works enclose modulatory passages which involve the use of extremely low keys. The last movement of the *Symphonie* contains a remarkable modulatory passage in the development section in which the principal theme passes momentarily through the keys of E\# Major, F\# Major and B\# Minor. The appearance of this score, the notation of which contains a profusion of double sharps, bears little resemblance to that of Alkan's famous contemporaries Chopin and Liszt. While the *Symphonie* includes many stylistic traits that link Alkan's work with established musical trends, the technique of writing displayed in this composition is exceptionally original. The composer's role as an innovator of modern piano technique and style of notation is recognized by many of the writers on Alkan, one of whom has described him as "the Charles Ives of his time."  

Originality versus Imitation

The wide stylistic variance in the music of Alkan is a significant indication of several important factors which influenced his writing. During his long lifetime, much of which was spent in virtual seclusion, Alkan was known principally as a teacher and pianist rather than as a composer. His musical idiom is a direct reflection of his isolated existence away from the world of the concert hall. He seems to have composed primarily for his own enjoyment, often expressing his fondness for a particular musical idiom by composing a piece that attempted to imitate that idiom. Several of Alkan's works indicate clearly his

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4 Schonberg, p. 197.
enthusiasm for French folk music, Baroque dance forms and military marches. His numerous transcriptions for the piano of chamber and symphonic works by Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven illustrate his strong affection for the music of the pre-romantic period.

Despite the apparent absence of basic individuality in his compositions for the piano, Alkan's tendency to imitate orchestral writing on the keyboard is a manifestation of a creative musician. Some of his most effective writing is contained within the orchestrally conceived *Symphonie*, in which his technical ingenuity is brilliantly displayed. Yet, an inherent weakness of Alkan's work lies in this factor: the basic concept of his music consists primarily of ingenious effects, such as the unusual notation of "Les Enharmoniques," rather than of intrinsically original themes. Joseph Bloch, while considering Alkan a creative inventor of pianistic effects, criticizes the composer's basic melodic materials:

...his melodies which are distinctive are so because of elements other than the primarily melodic ones—either because of a curious harmonic twist or because of a rhythmic device.\(^5\)

The problem of Alkan's insufficiently original melodies is complicated by another element which is a deeper and more general flaw in the composer's style: the lack of variation in the treatment of a basic melodic, harmonic or rhythmic design. The fundamental material employed by the composer is often subjected to monotonous repetitions stretched over long sections of works, such as the first movement of the *Symphonie*, in which the motto theme is treated almost constantly, as indicated by the diagram of this work (pages 179 and 180). Such ceaseless repetition weakens the effect of many of Alkan's works,

which otherwise contain noteworthy thematic material.

Alkan's Musical Personality

In the preceding sections of this chapter the writer has attempted to evaluate Alkan's music on the basis of the numerous influences that affected his style. There can be no question that the music suffers because of the composer's continued application of simple motivic structure, because of his tendency to limit his harmonic resources to diatonic usage, and because of his devotion to the past, which led him to forsake the problems of creating music that is innately original.

The remaining discussion centers on the personal influence on the music, that of Alkan's own temperament. As an individualist who sought for few personal friendships, it is understandable that his style reflects few specific influences. Outside of the imitations of Bach inventions and Mendelssohn pieces, there is little to be said for Alkan the imitator. His generous production of dances in antiquated genres, as well as numerous preludes, Esquisses, études, marches, and the like, indicates to this writer that he composed more for himself than for an audience. His actual performances were few, and involved little playing of his own music. His composing was far away from the main stream of the nineteenth-century trends. His unusual experiments were a personal attempt to create unique effects, rather than an effort to further the progress of music. Alkan's aloofness from his times is manifested in his retreat into his own world, a retreat that closely parallels Robert Schumann's break with reality that led to his mental disintegration.

Whether it is possible to separate a consideration of Alkan's music from an attempted analysis of his personality, the music re-
 mains as the rather dubious achievement of a strange talent in which the estimable value of individual passages is often shaded by the ineffective structure of the work as a whole.

Frederick Niecks gives a good summation of Alkan's abilities, with a perceptively acute insight into the inherent musical problems of the composer's music:

Those who know of Alkan from hearsay only are apt to form all sorts of misconceptions. His writing, for instance, was not always difficult, not even in his studies, nor was it full of eccentricities and barren of melody. Indeed, with regard to the last point, melody abounds, and does so even with unabashed straightforwardness. But the misfortune is that the melody often lacks the desirable distinction and grace. The contentment with which he dallies with the commonplace and superficial sentimentalism shocked one in so superior a musician, in so great a student and lover of the classics, and on the whole so noble a striver.... But I cannot help thinking that the principal cause of this regrettable neglect of Alkan's music is to be sought in the fact that the master's creative powers were insufficiently abundant, and speculatively inventive rather than spontaneously creative, happier in the presentation of ideas than in their conception.\(^5\)

One other quotation, from Bellermann's article, sums up the essential weakness of Alkan the composer:

It is a striking thing that, in a close study of the works covering a long and busy life devoted to serious composition, it is not possible to remark or divide Alkan's work into "periods." There are no transitions in style and no noteworthy change or development of emotional content. There is expansion of matter and manner, extension and elaboration, but no growth in "inwardness." There, at once, is the fatal defect of Alkan as a composer. All of the flood of his imaginings was turned into decoration and design. Absorbed in technical efflorescence, he worked over and over again the same slight material. At the beginning of his career his work, because of its chronological position, looms large; at the end it was lost in the luxuriant growth of the new romanticism and appears faded and old-fashioned.\(^6\)

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The preceding statements point to Alkan's creative shortcomings, while giving him credit for tremendous technical skills. In truth, Alkan cannot be denied his marvelous pianistic skills nor the fine pianism of his works. In the history of the piano, Alkan should along with Chopin and Liszt share an equal amount of the credit for developing the modern style of piano playing, for each worked independently to extend the technical possibilities of the instrument. Whether Alkan's music would have stood the test of time if it had been given proper exposure during the composer's own lifetime cannot be clearly answered. Yet there are enough pieces of intrinsic musical value to make a case for resurrecting Alkan's music. Whether that second chance will be offered depends upon the attitude of the musical world towards a secondary composer who produced some first-rate pianistic works.
**APPENDIX**

**LIST OF ORIGINAL WORKS BY C.-V. ALKAN**

A. **WORKS IN EXTENDED FORMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Opus</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Rondo brillant, piano and string quartet ad libitum</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>c.1830</td>
<td>Lemoine</td>
<td>P</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Concerto da camera, A Minor</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>c.1834</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>This work was composed between 1828 and 1831.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Grand duo concertant, F♯ Minor, piano and violin</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>c.1844</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>P</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Premier trio, G Minor, piano, violin and cello</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>c.1846</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>H</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Grande sonate, &quot;Les Quatre Âges&quot;</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1847</td>
<td>Brandus</td>
<td>L</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Concerto, G♯ Minor</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>This work comprises Nos. 8-10 of Op. 39.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*aAll works listed in this appendix are for piano solo unless otherwise indicated.

*bThe following scheme of abbreviations has been used to identify the various sources of information: B=Bibliographie de la France; R=Handbuch der musikalischen Literatur; L=Raymond Lewenthal, in The Piano Music of Alkan; N=Neue Zeitschrift für Musik; F=Franz Pazdirek, Universal-Handbuch der Musik-Literatur; R=Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris; S=Humphrey Searle, Grove's Dictionary, 5th ed.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Opus</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grande sonate de concert, E Minor, piano and cello</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>The finale, &quot;Saltarelle,&quot; was also published as a piano duet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonatine, A Minor</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>c.1859</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>P</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deuxième concerto da camera, C# Minor</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>This work was originally conceived with orchestral accompaniment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troisième concerto da camera</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1838?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>This work is listed in the <em>Revue et Gazette musicale</em> as part of a program to be given by Alkan at Pape's salon on March 3, 1838.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX—Continued

#### B. WORKS IN SMALLER FORMS

**SECTION 1: WORKS WITH OPUS NUMBERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Opus</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Six morceaux caractéristiques&quot;</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>c.1838</td>
<td>Schlesinger</td>
<td>H, N</td>
<td>This work also appeared as Op. 16 (Hofmeister edition); it later became part of <em>Les Mois</em>, Op. 74.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Trois études de bravoure&quot; (&quot;Improvisations dans le style brillant&quot;)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>c.1837</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>P, S</td>
<td>Op. 12, with the sets of Op. 13, 15, and 16, forms the set entitled <em>Etudes-Caprices</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Trois andantes romantiques&quot;</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>c.1837</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>P, S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Trois morceaux dans le genre pathétique&quot; (&quot;Souvenirs&quot;)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1837</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>N, R</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Trois études de bravoure&quot; (&quot;Trois Scherzi&quot;)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>c.1837</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>P, S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Le Préux, étude de concert&quot;</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>c.1844</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>H</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Premier nocturne,&quot; B Major</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1844</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Saltarelle,&quot; E Minor</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1844</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Gigue et Air de ballet, dans le style ancien&quot;</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1844</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Opus</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Publisher</td>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Remarks</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>22.</strong> &quot;Alleluia,&quot; F Major</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1844</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>This work and its companion piece, the &quot;Marche triomphale,&quot; were first performed on March 1, 1845, at Erard's salon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>23.</strong> &quot;Marche funèbre,&quot; Eb Minor</td>
<td>26a</td>
<td>1847</td>
<td>Schlesinger</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>24.</strong> &quot;Fantasietta alla moresca&quot;</td>
<td>26b</td>
<td>c.1845</td>
<td>Schlesinger</td>
<td>N, P</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>25.</strong> &quot;Vaghezza,&quot; A Minor</td>
<td>26c</td>
<td>c.1845</td>
<td>Schlesinger</td>
<td>N, P</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>26.</strong> &quot;Le Chemin de fer, étude&quot;</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>c.1845</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>P, S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>27.</strong> &quot;Marche triomphale&quot;</td>
<td>27a</td>
<td>1847</td>
<td>Schlesinger</td>
<td>B, R</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>28.</strong> &quot;Bourrée d'Auvergne,&quot; étude</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1846</td>
<td>Heugel</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>29.</strong> Vingt-cinq préludes dans tous les tons majeurs et mineurs</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>c.1847</td>
<td>Schlesinger</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>The set of &quot;Huit morceaux caractéristiques&quot; for harmonium (publ. by Mustel) is taken from Op. 31.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>30.</strong> Premier recueil d'improtmptus</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>c.1847</td>
<td>Schlesinger</td>
<td>B, R</td>
<td>Two of these four pieces originally appeared as Op. 26b and 26c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(&quot;Vaghezza,&quot; &quot;L'Amitié,&quot; &quot;La Foi,&quot; and &quot;Fantasietta alla moresca&quot;)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>31.</strong> Deuxième recueil d'improtmptus</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>c.1847</td>
<td>Schlesinger</td>
<td>B, R</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(&quot;Trois air variés à 5 et à 7 temps&quot;)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Opus</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Publisher</td>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Remarks</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Scherzo fuocooso&quot;</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1847</td>
<td>Brandus</td>
<td>R</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douze études dans tous les tons majeurs</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1847</td>
<td>Brandus</td>
<td>L, R</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Trois marches, quasi da cavalleria&quot;</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trente Chants, premier recueil</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trente Chants, Deuxième recueil</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>B, L</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douze études dans tous les tons mineurs</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>B, L</td>
<td>Only Nos. 1, 2 and 3 actually pertain to a listing of Alkan's smaller works.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Trois marches,&quot; four hands</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Trois petites fantaisies&quot;</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>c.1857</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>P, S</td>
<td>This work is dedicated to Franz Liszt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Réconciliation, petit caprice avec un mi-parti en forme de sorcico&quot;</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>B, H</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Salut, cendre du pauvre, paraphrase&quot;</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1856</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>B, H</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Mimetto alla tedesca&quot;</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>Heugel</td>
<td>B, H</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Capriccio alla soldatesca&quot;</td>
<td>50, 1</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Opus</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Publisher</td>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Remarks</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------</td>
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<td>--------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Le Tambour bat aux champs&quot;</td>
<td>50, 2</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Trois minuets&quot;</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Super flumina Babylonis, paraphrase du 137e Psaume&quot;</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Quasi-Caccia, caprice&quot;</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Benedictus,&quot; D Minor, pour piano à clavier de pédales ou piano à trois mains</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Une Fusée, introduction et impromptu&quot;</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Deux nocturnes&quot; (Nos. 2 &amp; 3)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Deux petites pièces: Ma chère liberté, Ma chère servitude&quot;</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Le Grillon, quatrième nocturne&quot;</td>
<td>60b</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esquisses, quarante-huit motifs divisés en quatre suites</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>B, L</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trois prières pour orgue, ou piano à clavier de pédales ou piano à trois mains</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>c.1861</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>P</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trente Chants, troisième recueil.</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>L</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Opus</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Publisher</td>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Remarks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
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<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onze grandes préludes et une transcription du Messie de Haendel, pour piano à clavier de pédales ou piano à trois mains</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1867</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trente Chants, quatrième recueil</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>c.1867</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>P, S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trente Chants, cinquième recueil</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>c.1867</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>P, S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onze pièces dans le style religieux et une transcription du Messie de Haendel, pour orgue, harmonium ou piano; sans pédales</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1867</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les Mois, douze morceaux caractéristiques divisés en quatre suites</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>c.1857</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>P, S</td>
<td>This set, which incorporates Op. 8, was originally published without opus number.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Toccatina,&quot; C Minor</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>c.1860?</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>P, S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trois grandes études pour les deux mains séparées et réunies (&quot;Fantaisie pour la main gauche seule,&quot; &quot;Introduction, variations et finale pour la main droit seule,&quot; and &quot;Étude à mouvement semblable et perpetuel pour les deux mains réunies&quot;)</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>c.1845</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>These were originally published without opus number. The third work has been published by Schmidt in a shortened version arranged by Edward MacDowell under the title &quot;Perpetual-Motion.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX--Continued

#### B. WORKS IN SMALLER FORMS

**SECTION 2: WORKS WITHOUT OPUS NUMBERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Bombardo-Carillon,&quot; pour clavier de pédales à quatre pieds seulement ou quatre mains sur clavier ordinaire</td>
<td>1872</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Caprice ou étude&quot;</td>
<td>c.1840</td>
<td>Diabelli</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>The writer has not been able to establish a French publisher for this work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Chord Study in C&quot;</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Augener</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>This piece, which is contained in the Ernst Sauer collection New Gradus ad Parnassum, may have been derived from another Alkan work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Le Désir, fantaisie&quot;</td>
<td>c.1845</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>H</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Douze fugues pour piano ou orgue</strong></td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Richault?</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>The only reference to this work is in Pazdirek. It is not included in the Richault listing of Alkan works.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Douze études pour les pieds seulement</strong></td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>This work is listed as Op. 17 in Pazdirek.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Finale,&quot; four hands</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>P</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Publisher</td>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Remarks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Fantasticheria,&quot; B Minor</td>
<td>1867</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Deuxième fantasticheria&quot;</td>
<td>1872</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(&quot;Chapeau bas!&quot;)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Jean qui pleure et Jean qui rit,</td>
<td>c.1845</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>H</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due Fugue da Camera&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Marche funèbre sulla morte d'un Pappagallo,&quot; pour chœur à quatre</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>voix (deux sopranos, tenor et basse) avec hautbois ou basson et</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>orgue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Petit Conte&quot;</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Petits préludes sur les huit gammes du plainchant&quot;</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>Heugel</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Stances de Millevoye,&quot; pour trois voix et piano</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>This work is based on verses by the French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>poet Charles-Hubert Millevoye.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX--Continued

#### C. WORKS IN VARIATION FORM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Opus</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Variations (L'Orage de Steibelt)&quot;</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1828</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>H</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Il était un petit homme, rondoletto pour piano&quot;</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1829</td>
<td>Schlesinger</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>This work is entitled &quot;Rondoletto sur un air connu&quot; in the Searle listing in Grove's.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Variations-Fantaisie sur deux motifs de Don Juan,&quot; piano duet</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1844</td>
<td>Heugel</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Le Festin d'Esopo&quot;</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>This work is No. 12 of the Douze Études, Op. 39.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Impromptu sur le choral de Luther,&quot; pour piano à pédales ou piano à trois mains</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>c.1867</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>P</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Ah seguata è la mia morte de l'opéra Anna Bolena de Donizetti, varié.&quot;</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Searle is the only source for this work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Bellini, Air de Capulets, varié&quot;</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Searle is the only source for this work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Les Omnibus, variations dédiées aux Dames blanches&quot;</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1828</td>
<td>Schlesinger</td>
<td>H</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Opus</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Publisher</td>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Remarks</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85. &quot;Variations à la vielle sur un air de L'Elisir d'amore de Donizetti&quot;</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Richault</td>
<td>P, S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86. &quot;Variations quasi fantaisie sur une barcarolle napolitaine&quot;</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Searle is the only source for this work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87. &quot;Variations sur un air favori de l'opéra Ugo conti di Parigi de Donizetti&quot;</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>c.1840</td>
<td>Mechetti</td>
<td>H, P</td>
<td>The writer has found no French publisher for this work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Volumes for the years 1827 through 1880 provide valuable information concerning the dates of Alkan's works.


The writer has inspected volumes cataloguing new works of the period 1828 to 1881, inclusively.


   The writer has consulted volumes from 1834 through 1850.


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________. "Ch. V. Alkan (Années)," Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung, XXVIII (1901), 109-110, 125-126, 141-143.


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Music


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Bizet, Georges. L'Arlesienne, piano four hands. Edited and fingered


The second volume contains two works by Alkan: the Prélude
74, No. 11.