The Piano Concertos of Carl Maria von Weber: Precursors of the Romantic Piano Concerto

DOCUMENT

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by

Richard C. Lopez, B. M., M. M.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University

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Reading Committee:
Professor Burdette Green
Professor Jerry Lowder
Professor Rosemary Platt

Approved by

Burdette L. Green
Document Adviser
School of Music
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VITA

February 28, 1949..........................Born - Hollywood, California

1973...........................................B.M., The Ohio State University Columbus, Ohio

1976...........................................M.M., The Ohio State University Columbus, Ohio

1977-1983..................................Faculty Member at Bloomingdale House of Music and at the Metropolitan Music School in New York City

1983-Present..............................Doctoral Candidate at the Columbus, Ohio; Adjunct Faculty member at Denison University, Granville, Ohio

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The beginning of the nineteenth century saw the music world balanced between two aesthetics: those of the Classic and Romantic periods. Classical treatment of the instrumental sonata and the symphony by Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven had reached a culmination in the late eighteenth century--though Beethoven was to write some of his greatest works in the early decades of the nineteenth century. There was, however, a new spirit in the air, promoted by the composers Fide, Tomasek, Vorisek, Dussek and Weber himself. Weber's biographer, John Warrack, aptly describes the positions of Beethoven and Weber at this time:

Beside his contemporaries [Beethoven] seems like some vast rock around whose base the tide had begun to swirl in another direction, and Weber was undoubtedly the composer who led the new movement: evolving a new technique in order to do so.¹

During this period, the modern concert hall reached a position of unchallenged dominance in musical life, the virtuoso attained prominence, the status of the concerto changed with respect to other

instrumental forms, and composers and performers adopted a new attitude toward each other and their audiences.\textsuperscript{2} This era formed an important developmental link between Classical and Romantic music and witnessed the rise of a new middle class audience with its own aesthetic. Because composers were no longer attached to a court, they were forced to consider the demands of public audiences.\textsuperscript{3} Interest in simplicity, folk music and nationalism was gaining favor. This did not lead to a lessening of musical standards and achievement but to a necessary shifting toward the Romantic sentiment. Music moved from its abstract realm to that of the individual citizen, a true reflection of the current political atmosphere which was filled with the spirit of égalité and Napoleonic freedom.

The composers active during this period are pejoratively called the "lesser lights" of the nineteenth century: Cramer, Czerny, Moscheles, Hummel, Tomasek, and Field are but a few of the names heading the list. These composers, now often overlooked, fill an important place in the development of the nineteenth-century pianistic style, because each added an indispensable tool or innovation that became part of the Romantic style of pianism.

Carl Maria von Weber, though respected as an opera composer, falls into the above category as a piano composer. His piano compositions deserve more attention, for they are filled with important Romantic elements. Writers on Weber characterize him as "first genuinely Romantic composer" or as "first in a long line of


Romantic concerto composers." His innovative use of orchestral colors and striking dramatic effects are well documented. Only recently, however, have scholars begun to recognize the importance of his work and its influence on later Romantic composers. This recognition has yet to inspire performing musicians to program his works regularly.

Writers have given Weber a measure of the credit he deserves as a composer of piano sonatas. In 1824, A. B. Marks wrote of the sonatas, "next to Beethoven's, they are indisputably the most important and valuable works of the whole new period." In this century Dannreuther writes:

[Weber's sonatas are] the most original and technically the most advanced pieces after Beethoven and Schubert, and before Schumann and Chopin. In most of these pieces Weber has broken new ground and has proven to be the pioneer of later development.  

Newman states, "Carl Maria von Weber occupies a special and important historical niche not only as the founder of Romantic German Opera, but also as a significant pioneer of the Romantic Sonata." Gurlitt notes the importance of Weber's historical position.

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writing "...the sonatas of Weber and Schubert served as a bridge between the Classical and Romantic eras."\textsuperscript{8}

These remarks are germane to the present study since both the concertos and the sonatas involve the treatment of instrumental forms. Weber's sonatas form a massive and important block in his output for the piano. Like the concertos, the sonatas are remarkable for their development of piano technique, though formally they stay primarily within the Classical design. The sonata in the Romantic period underwent a diffusion from its preeminent position in the eighteenth century. Its formal treatment by the Romantics was idiosyncratic to each composer, whereas the concerto design continued to develop organically, changing its form to accommodate virtuoso display, and eventually taking on the form of a symphonic unfoldment not unlike the "tone poem."

My study will argue that in addition to the sonatas and operas, the two concertos and the Konzertstück are important witnesses to the virtuosic aspect of Weber's Romanticism, and therefore deserve close examination.

### Historical Setting and Biographical Sketch

By the time of Weber's birth in 1786, Haydn and Mozart had already composed masterpieces and Beethoven was 16 years old. Beethoven outlived Weber by one year, Schubert by two.\textsuperscript{9} Clearly the major figure on the musical scene at this time was Beethoven.


Although the influence of Romanticism can be seen in his works as well as in Weber's, Weber had, in many respects, a more important aesthetic influence on Romantics than Beethoven.¹⁰

Weber's father, Franz Anton, was determined to see his child excel as a musician, and began his son's instruction in music at the age of three. Franz Anton was the leader of a small theatrical troupe, largely composed of family members. This early exposure to the theater served Weber well in later years. At the age of ten, Weber was taken to study with Michael Haydn, and at age thirteen his first compositions began to appear. In 1803, at the age seventeen, Weber moved to Vienna where he became a pupil of Georg Vogler, a colorful figure who, in addition to boasting the title "Abbe," also formulated a "method" of composition, the details of which are vague.

In 1803, Weber obtained his first major position as Kappelmeister in Breslau. This was a stormy time for the young composer; jealous rivals offered much political resistance to his reforms. While recuperating from illness caused by accidentally drinking acid stored in a wine bottle, Weber's foes dismantled his reforms leaving him no recourse but to resign. In 1807, Weber moved to Stuttgart, where he served as secretary to Duke Ludwig Eugen. However, this post proved to be untenable, for friction developed between Duke Ludwig's older brother, King Friedrich, and Weber. The hostilities were brought to a head by the accumulation of numerous debts along with charges of embezzlement and bribery--charges that were never proved. These conditions finally caused Weber and his father to be banished from the

¹⁰Garvin, op. cit., p.24
kingdom of Württemburg. Weber spent the next few years travelling. He settled in Mannheim and Darmstadt for a time (1810), and during the years 1811-1813 he moved from city to city throughout Germany, gaining fame as a virtuoso pianist and conductor, and establishing important business contacts. In 1817, Weber became the opera director in Dresden, where he composed most of his important works, including Der Freischütz and the Konzertstück. Dresden remained Weber's base until he died in London in 1826, while there to direct his Oberon.\(^{11}\)

**Compositional Output**

Weber's compositional catalog reads much like Mozart's.\(^{12}\) This breadth of interest reflects Weber's Classical roots, and his proclaimed adoration of Mozart. Besides the ten operas, Weber composed numerous works for the stage including incidental music, singspiels and opera scenas, several concert arias, sacred and secular choral works, cantatas and songs. His instrumental works, for orchestra, include two symphonies; concertos for the piano, for the clarinet, and for the bassoon; several concert potpourris and concertinos; his chamber works include a piano quartet and a clarinet quintet.

Weber composed many pieces for solo keyboard, the earliest of which are the *Sechs Fughetten*, which have been described as "six of the shortest, driest and most naive little fughettas that can ever have issued from the pen of a composer who was ultimately to achieve

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\(^{11}\)The information for this biographical sketch was largely gathered from John Hamilton Warrack's *Carl Maria von Weber*, op. cit.

lasting fame."\textsuperscript{13} This opus, which dates from 1798, is Weber's sole piano composition in the "strict" style, and is the only survivor of many student works dating from before 1800. Other student works, including several sonatas, were destroyed by fire.\textsuperscript{14} In addition to the four piano sonatas which have survived, Weber produced eight sets of variations, and several individual works inspired by the dance including a \textit{Grande Polonaise}, Op. 21, several eccosaises and allemandes, and the famous "\textit{Aufforderung zum Tanze}.

\textbf{Weber as a Virtuoso, Writer and Conductor}

In addition to being a composer, Weber was quite active as a conductor, performer, and writer. After his youthful period, Weber seemed less interested in a career as a piano virtuoso than in gaining a reputation as a composer. Increasingly he busied himself with conducting and writing music criticism. However, judging from the virtuositic demands of his piano music, which it is clear he himself performed, there is little doubt that he was a highly skilled performer. The ability to negotiate rapid leaps at the keyboard was one of his strengths. In addition, Weber was famous for his crescendos, with which he electrified his audiences by commanding all gradations of volume, from the softest \textit{piano} to the mightiest \textit{forte}.\textsuperscript{15} In his memoirs (1833), Hinrich Lichtenstein, one of Weber's closest friends in his Berlin circle, gives this informative account of his playing:

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{14}Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{15}Karl Friedrich Weitzmann, \textit{A History of Pianoforte Playing and Pianoforte Literature} (New York: Schirmer, 1897), p. 140.
\end{itemize}
...he would go to a piano and taking any one of the masterpieces lying there, would use his powers to make everyone feel he had never heard the work until then. Next, to give the singers a rest, he would play some of his own piano pieces, of which the favorite was the as yet unpublished Sonata in C....Schneider's pupils would fall on their knees before him, other put their arms around his shoulders, everyone gathered round him until instead of a circlet of flower he seemed crowned by a ring of happy, friendly faces: and the passionately melancholy style he assumed on these occasions would ring on far into the night in the most profound and serious manner....His improvisations in this vein differed greatly from that of greater (or more accomplished) pianists like Hummel and Kalkbrenner, with whom, however little they may have meant it, there always seemed a desire to please. With Weber the impression at such times was that he above all had found a means of revealing his deepest feelings to his closest friends and that his whole being was concentrated on making himself understood...16

After leaving Darmstadt in 1811, Weber embarked on a tour which took him to Munich, Prague, Dresden, Berlin, Copenhagen and St. Petersburg.17 Ten years later, at a time when Weber needed funds, he set off on a tour of Northern Germany and Denmark. However, he was not satisfied with the life of a wandering virtuoso. This is clear from a letter written to Rochlitz, "...I know this perpetual wandering cannot be good for me. But how can I do otherwise than seek a fitting arena for the true exercise of my art?...I am now indeed alone"
(Written to Rochlitz, music critic and original editor of the A.M.Z).18 Lichtenstein's memoirs noted that Weber was particularly unhappy

17Warrack, op. cit., p. 123.
during this period (1812), partly due to feelings about his unsettled life and his father's recent death.\textsuperscript{19}

Weber was aesthetically ahead of his time in many ways. As a conductor, he sensed that the orchestra's sonority would improve by rearranging the seating of various instrumental groups to approximate present day practice. This, along with the idea of sectional rehearsals, and a policy of replacing players who had outlived their talent or who lacked sufficient talent, were ideas that were new and not always popular with orchestras.

Weber is valuable, like Schumann after him, as an important literary voice in the early Romantic era. Much is known about Weber's life and activities through his many letters, reviews, and commentaries. He also kept a personal diary and drafted the outline of a novella: \textit{Tonkünstlers Leben} or "Life of a Musical Artist." Written in an extravagant Romantic style,\textsuperscript{20} the work was not completed because Weber became preoccupied with his musical career; the draft is useful to us for its insights into Weber's view of the contemporary scene and the problems facing musicians. In it, for example, Weber demonstrates his desire to avoid the type of empty composition that might spring from the hand of a virtuoso improvisor: "These damned piano fingers which through endless practice, acquire a kind of life of their own, are unconscious tyrants and despots of the art of creation."\textsuperscript{21} Weber writes further that his ideal is the composer:

\textsuperscript{19}Kang, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{20}Veltnus, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 167.
\textsuperscript{21}Warrack, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 143.
...whose inner ear is the judge of things simultaneously imagined and criticized. This spiritual ear, strengthened and upheld by musical capacities, is a divine secret belonging only to music and incomprehensible to the layman: for--it hears whole passages, even whole pieces at a time, taking no notice of little breaks to unevenesses which are left to be filled in and smoothed out at a later thoughtful moment...²²

It is noteworthy that Weber felt the need to champion a standard for music criticism. He believed that only composers were qualified to criticize the compositions of others. To upgrade the level of music criticism in general, Weber formed a "secret" society entitled the "Harmonische Verein", to which members (Meyerbeer, Gännsbacher, Gottfried Weber and others), submitted articles, reviews and commentary, each under a pen name.

Weber possessed a sharp wit in his criticism; an amusing example can be seen in his remarks concerning one Josef Gelinek, a composer who was dubbed "Vienna's one-man wholesale piano variation factory," producing almost no other form of music. Weber writes: "Kein Thema auf der Welt verschonte dein Genie: Das simpelste allein-Dich selbst-variirst Du nie!" (Your genius spares no theme that comes within your thrall; Yourself you never vary--the simplest theme of all!)²³

Weber's literary period falls chiefly between the years of 1809 and 1820. After this time he was preoccupied with composition and conducting. His writings fall into four broad categories: 1) essays, reviews and announcements, 2) private communications about musical

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²²Warrack, op. cit., p. 95.  
matters, 3) fictional prose, and 4) poetry (mostly written for friends and amusement).  

These writings address the important issues of the day: the dominance of foreign works over indigenous compositions, the lack of incentives for poets and composers to turn their efforts to German opera, the lack of qualified singers in Germany, the problems of concert life, touring, the rights of virtuosos and composers, the craze for ballroom dancing, the adulation of Mozart and the resistance to Beethoven, growing appreciation for Bach, mechanical instruments, and many other topics. There is, however, a lack of material dealing with theoretical or speculative concerns. Technical matters such as discussions and analyses of compositions are only occasionally brought up. Because Weber did not explain his method of composition in publications, it is difficult to gain first hand knowledge of his creative processes.

As a reviewer, Weber put the press to good use, especially when it was helpful to his friends (Gännsbacher, Gottfried Weber, Meyerbeer) and to the cause of German opera. Weber's remarks are always cogent and accurate, if not always impartial.

First Movement Form Before Weber

To appreciate the extent of Weber's contribution to the development of the concerto first movement form, one must consider

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the extent to which the form was crystalized or modified by his immediate predecessors and influential contemporaries. Theorists have given us a few general descriptions of first movement form, and although both Mozart and Beethoven frequently depart from these generalities, a view of the Classical format can be seen from these descriptions.

Theorists who wrote descriptions of the overall concerto form include Scheibe, Quantz, Sulzer, Kirnberger, Vogler, Kollman, Koch, Türk, and much later, Czerny. These writers contributed much to the development of an early theoretical picture of the concerto. Koch's work is important because of its relevance to the development of nineteenth-century analysis and the influential nature of his work on other musicians. In the first two volumes of his *Introduction and Essay on Composition: The Mechanical Rules of Melody*, (1782-1787), Koch tells us that the overall concerto format has "...no definite nature... three main sections (two allegros and an adagio)..., and that it "can assume every mood which music is capable of expressing... (and)... is primarily for virtuoso display." While he admonishes against empty exercise-like writing, he defends the concerto as a musically viable form and recognizes the soloist's contribution to the form. He cites examples by Carl Phillip Emmanuel Bach as models of his ideal. Koch's description of the concerto form, given in his third volume outlines the formal principle as follows:


Figure 1. Koch’s description of the First Movement of a Solo Concerto in the Versuch of 1793

Carl Czerny’s views are important because he offers a perspective on practices current in the first part of the nineteenth century. His description of concerto form appeared in his School of Practical Composition, Op. 600, 1839, reflects the early nineteenth century tendency to feature the piano more than the orchestra. He admonishes that "during the solos, the orchestra must play a strictly subordinate part". He stresses the opportunity for a composer to combine the colors and brilliant effects of the piano with those of the orchestral instruments. This statement also represents a shift from interest in the Classical conception of balance, to the exploration of newly developed possibilities of the instrument, and the virtuoso’s

29Stevens, op. cit., p. 39.
ability to achieve "effects". From a structural point of view, Czerny describes the "perfect concerto" as having three movements: an Allegro, an Adagio or Andante, and a Finale or Rondo.

Czerny characterizes the linking of the adagio movement with the finale as a "modern" practice. The finale is usually a rondo, different in character than the first movement, similar in proportion to the sonata and "surpassing all that has preceded it" in brilliance. Czerny conceives of the concerto as a vehicle designed primarily for the display of the soloist, rather than for symphonic delineation, since the orchestral underpinning is clearly subordinate. In this view, Czerny can be seen to embrace the contemporary conception of the concerto, the one adopted by composers immediately following Beethoven, including Weber.

Clearly, the two figures who contributed most to the codification of the first movement form in the Classical period are Mozart and Beethoven. A brief summary of their contributions will help to determine the nature of the concerto as Weber inherited it.

Mozart was responsible for establishing as standard many of the basic elements that modern audiences have come to recognize in the concerto. He was responsible for popularizing the composition of piano concertos over the previously predominant violin concertos. The change from the harpsichord to the piano was effected during Mozart's time, and the sonority of both the piano and the orchestra was greatly expanded in his concertos.

31 Veinus, op. cit., p. 126.
32 Ibid., p. 73.
Stewart Macpherson offers a general overview of Mozart's contribution to the concerto form:

...it was not until the time of Mozart that the concerto definitely assumed the form with which we are now familiar, viz., that of a work, usually of the dimensions of a sonata, for a solo instrument with orchestral accompaniment. The concertos of Mozart and his immediate successors are mostly on the three movement plan, and consist of an allegro in sonata form, with a notable modification--the Double exposition.33

Formally, Mozart established the three movement plan as standard. He also codified the tradition of having a rondo as a finale. Most important to the history of the concerto is his codification of first movement form in the concerto. He was responsible for setting the broad outlines that future composers would use as a point of departure. However, in Mozart's first movement designs there is an infinite variety of detail. Hutchings states that there is no such thing as a "typical Mozart concerto (first movement),"34 and that, "These works baffle analysis in terms of 'sonata form' (just as the finales defy classification according to the traditional concerto or ritornello form)", and yet certain general formal principles can be clearly discerned. According to Hutchings, the most common scheme in Mozart's first movements is this: an opening ritornello on the tonic, comprising a primary theme and (after a tutti) a secondary theme with a cadential group; then in effect a sonata form exposition for soloist and orchestra, comprising the primary theme (sometimes with prefatory solo material), the secondary theme and often a new solo

33Stewart Macpherson, Form in Music (London: Joseph Williams, 1930), pp. 227-228.
theme, both in the dominant, and cadential material; a central ritornello; a widely modulating development or "free fantasia," with sequential writing and solo bravura but little thematic working, a recapitulation, including material from both the opening ritornello and the exposition, now in the tonic, and a cadenza and closing ritornello: rit. / exposition / rit. / development / recap / cadenza / rit.35

Cuthbert Girdlestone has also written extensively on Mozart's concertos. While both he and Hutchings agree on the main elements which appear, they present individual viewpoints that contribute to a general understanding of Mozart's first movement form.

Girdlestone's generalized form of a Mozart first movement gives little emphasis to the principle of ritornello per se, cataloging instead the great variety in the handling of themes. He also points to a three part division in Mozart's first movements, rather than the usual four part, textbook plan. He reaches this conclusion because of the shortness of the development sections in Mozart's concertos. Girdlestone sees the development beginning with the solo's entry; this concept will help to shed light on Weber's handling of the form.

The aforementioned models of the Classical and post-Classical first movements provide signposts to the events and, roughly, their order of occurrence, in a first movement concerto form. The various views of first movement form have been outlined, in the following table (see pp 16 and 17).

Clearly, the first movement form in Weber's First Concerto adheres to the principles of the Classical concerto. Weber also

adheres to many Classical procedures; both orchestral and solo expositions are typical. The primary exception occurs in the lack of a cadenza, in the First Concerto, and in the position of the cadenza in the Second concerto. Like Mozart, Weber gives the piano its own theme in the Second Concerto. This theme becomes its own "A" theme, being reprised in the recapitulation: the solo never presents the orchestra's "A" material. However, with the following section Weber experiments in a highly personal manner with the form. Instead of the usual "fantasia" or development, Weber provides a premature recapitulation, shortened, and interrupted by the soloist's reprise of its "A" theme.
Figure 2. Chart comparing views of Classical first movement concerto form with Weber's concertos.
Figure 2. (continued) Chart comparing views of Classical first movement concerto form with Weber's concertos.
The development is delayed in this concerto and comes unexpectedly after the recapitulation and before the cadenza. This treatment of first movement concerto form represents a major restructuring of the architectural symmetry of the form. It is with the Konzertstück that Weber is truly innovative, departing radically from the form by condensing three movements into one. Formally, this work stands a great distance from its predecessors and does not submit to typical first movement analysis.

Before turning to other composers of Weber's generation, one must examine the treatment of the concerto given by one of its most successful proponents: Beethoven. Beethoven, in his first movements, used the broad format established by Mozart but added his own unique and highly significant features.  

Beethoven followed the Mozartean sonata-allegro conception in his First Concerto in B flat, Op.19. However, in the opening ritornello he modulates straightaway to the minor key, which increases the drama early in the piece. He uses fewer themes than is typical of Mozart and only prefigures the second theme in the first ritornello, preferring to develop the primary theme instead.

The first movement of Beethoven's Second Concerto in C major, Op. 15, while also containing an important increase in the dramatic presentation of the solo by means of an immediate departure from the tonic, employs more modulations than Mozart typically used. In this

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concerto, Beethoven prefigures the second theme, rather than actually stating it in the exposition.

The most important modifications made by Beethoven are discernable in his last three concertos. The Third Concerto (C Minor, Op. 37, 1800) shows a marked development from the early ones; Beethoven increases enormously the sonority and drama of the forces at hand and reaches what Tovey calls "...the climax of Beethoven's powers of solemn expression in his first period...." Lang notes that the Third Concerto was Beethoven's initial attempt at reconciling an ample symphonic design with first movement form. This concerto has been considered to be a preliminary essay for the Erotica symphony from the same period, for it exhibits many of the same emotional characteristics. Beethoven allows the first orchestral exposition to become developmental within itself, enlarging the symphonic scope. Beethoven handles the thematic materials in a more balanced manner in this concerto. The form of this concerto is often labeled "the typical concerto first movement of the Classic Period," due in part to Macpherson's use of it as an example. The work displays a true "double exposition", but is actually exceptional among Classical concertos.

Beethoven introduces the piano immediately in the first movement of his Fourth Concerto, and while this was presaged in Mozart's K. 271, allowing the piano a brief appearance near the opening of the first ritornello, the significance of Beethoven's example

38 Veuve, op. cit., p. 137.
39 Stewart Macpherson, op. cit., p. 228.
40 Hutchings, op. cit., p. 10.
is much greater, because it places the solo at the very opening of the concerto, giving it the first word. The orchestral tutti and the solo exposition in the first movement show much interdependence and at the same time sharp opposition.\textsuperscript{41} Conflict is particularly evident in the slow movement, where each element takes its turn alone, contrasting color and mood and later resuming a dialogue. This opposition on the part of the solo represents a milestone in the development of the concerto; the piano has become an active partner in the symphonic unfoldment,\textsuperscript{42} and Beethoven’s treatment predicts the practice of later composers.

Beethoven’s modifications are great, to be sure, but rather than following the concept of symphonies with piano or sonatas with orchestra as a model, he returned after the Fourth Concerto to an essentially Classical conception. We can see this clearly in his handling of the Fifth Concerto and in his sketch for a proposed sixth.\textsuperscript{43}

The Fifth Concerto of Beethoven, like the Fourth, opens with a piano solo, this time given more weight and extended into a brilliant cadenza-like introduction. Here the novelty of the opening is supported by bravura display. This is an important modification, for it shows Beethoven making an initial attempt to alter the traditional "double exposition" of the concerto. Formally, this concerto is more conservative than the Fourth. It does contain an important linking of the second and third movements, and this proved influential to future composers.

\textsuperscript{41}Lang, op. cit., p. xii.
\textsuperscript{42}Lang, op. cit., p. xii.
\textsuperscript{43}Hutchings, "Concerto," pp. 634-635.
Beethoven's influence on Weber as a contemporary cannot be overlooked. In many ways, Weber avoided the implications of Beethoven's formal experiments. It is Weber's newness of direction that is the important factor when comparing their concertos. Beethoven had begun to explore the dramatic possibilities of the solo, along with the piano's developing potential as a mechanism. Weber took this aspect of development of the concerto as a point of departure, continuing to develop its dramatic possibilities. His Konzertstück is the concerto of major importance between those of Beethoven and Mendelssohn.

Weber's Contemporaries

Most important to the development of the virtuoso compositions of later Romantic composers, and certainly influential to Weber, was a group of contemporary virtuosi and pedagogues that included Clementi, Cramer, Hummel, Czerny, Moscheles, Dussek, and Prince Louis Ferdinand. These composers not only form a bridge to the virtuoso style of playing for which such pianists as Thalberg and Liszt were famous, but also developed the Romantic virtuoso-concerto style of composition which Weber promoted.

Although many of these composer-virtuosi can be accused of artistic vapidity, their works overflow with technical display and intriguing effects. Their recognition of the brilliant possibilities of the pianoforte was to be of great importance to a future generation of composers. Mendelssohn, Chopin, Liszt, Brahms, and others were able to synthesize, refine, and extend this brilliance, melding it with their individual musical styles.
Weber's important contemporary Muzio Clementi (1752-1832) belongs, properly speaking, to a previous generation; his famous contest with Mozart places him at a stylistic distance from the Romantic period. However, his seminal work, Gradus ad Parnassum, was not completed until the 1820's, and this late effort places him in a position to influence emerging Romantic composers.

Clementi was one of the first to develop the etude as a monomotivic study designed specifically for improving technical skills. Moreover, as teacher of Field, Cramer, Kalkbrenner and Moscheles, he firmly imprinted his mark on piano playing from about 1790 to well into the 19th century.44

In purely technical terms, Clementi's chief contributions are his studies in thirds, sixths and octaves, for which he was internationally famous. These double-stops are particularly influential in Weber's keyboard writing. Much of Weber's feeling for keyboard color and richness results from the influence of Clementi's music.45 Moscheles offers a cautionary summation of Clementi's virtuosity, citing his "cultivation of amazing powers of execution, overwrought sentimentality, and production of the most piquant effects by the most rapid changes from the soft to the loud pedal, or by rhythms and modulations which if not to be completely repudiated, should only be allowed on the rarest occasions."46

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45 Warrack, op. cit., p. 105.
Clementi wrote several concertos, but all are lost except one in C major, which Plantinga describes as an "estimable" work.\textsuperscript{47} Clementi drafted transcriptions of several concertos in solo sonata form, and fragments of them survive. Though many of the tuttis have been replaced by repetitions of solo sections, the disposition of forces seems to favor the piano part.\textsuperscript{48} Weber's concertos also show this marked increase in the piano's role, though it is difficult to sense any but the most general influence of Clementi beyond the frequent use of double-stops.

A pupil of Clementi's for a time, Johann Baptist Cramer (1771-1858), also had a great impact in his day and influenced future composers and pianists. A renowned pianist, he formulated an idiomatic, pianistic style of composition.\textsuperscript{49} His earliest Etudes (1804), the first of their kind to be issued, are forerunners of Clementi's Gradus ad Parnassum. They differed from the typical potpourri of pieces, all entitled "lessons," that were popular at the time. Each etude is based on a motive, usually rapid and in sequence, which is transposed, altered, or given other technical treatments. An emphasis on the kinesthetic and harmonic, rather than on the melodic or rhythmic can be seen.\textsuperscript{50} These etudes are remarkably close to the Chopinesque concept of an etude, containing musical and harmonic sensitivity, while serving as showpieces for technical brilliance.

\textsuperscript{48}Ibid., p. 162.
\textsuperscript{50}Loesser, \textit{op. cit.}, p.223.
musical ideas with technical utility, paving the way to the artistic fusion attained by Liszt and Chopin. The publication of these etudes seems to have inspired a rash of such collections, and imitators such as Steibelt and Wölfli quickly followed suit.\textsuperscript{51}

It cannot be disputed that Cramer was a superb musician and performer. Moscheles praised his legato while Beethoven considered him one of the best pianists of the time. He was known as a stringent classicist and featured the works of Bach and Mozart on his programs -- played in a very legato style with great evenness and expression.\textsuperscript{52} Indeed, Cramer stayed with the older masters long after it was fashionable to do so, complaining that the "modern music is too strong for my poor eyes, for my senile fingers. Formerly, piano playing was mighty good (fort bien), now it's good and mighty (bien fort)!"\textsuperscript{53}

However, in his prime Cramer did much to establish and advance the course of a piano technique based on a more modern instrument. A composer of nine piano concertos, Cramer features a cadenza placed before the second subject in his fourth concerto, in C, Op. 38 (1807), an arrangement also used by Weber in his E flat concerto (1810). It is difficult to know how well Weber knew Cramer's work; his name scarcely appears in the Weber literature or correspondence. However, Cramer was one of the established virtuosos in Europe and, on a second tour in 1799, in the Netherlands, Germany and Austria, he came into contact with Weber.\textsuperscript{54}

\textsuperscript{51}Loesser, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 255.
\textsuperscript{52}Schonberg, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 60.
\textsuperscript{53}\textit{Ibid.}, p 63.
\textsuperscript{54}Graue, \textit{op. cit.}, p.19.
Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778-1837) was one of the performers who was active during the period in which classicism was on the wane, when the old virtues of symmetry, clarity, and "learnedness" were replaced by emotion, bravura and bombast. His music is filled with faint predictions of the style of Schubert, Mendelssohn and Chopin.\footnote{Sachs, "Johann Nepomuk Hummel", New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 6th ed., 20 vols., Stanley Sadie ed. (London: Macmillan, 1980), vol. VIII, p.785.}

Hummel is often seen as the climax of the Viennese school: clarity, neatness, superb tone and delicacy were words often associated with his playing.\footnote{Ibid., p.783.} Czerny writes, "never before had I heard such novel and dazzling difficulties, such clarity and elegance in performance, or such intimate and tender expression, or even such good taste in improvisation."\footnote{Schonberg, op. cit., p.106.} (Young Czerny soon was to study with Hummel). Hummel, with his technical infallibility, was one of the pianists with whom Weber was vying.\footnote{Robert Langley, "Weber and the Piano," The Musical Times 11: 127, (1986), p. 604.}

For many years Hummel was one of the foremost teachers in Germany. Among his famous students were Mendelssohn, Henselt and Thalberg. Schumann even considered studying with him in order to benefit from his prestigious name.\footnote{Sachs, "Johann Nepomuk Hummel," p. 784.} Hummel’s main concerns in teaching were to instill a singing quality in the main voice, good, secure fingering and clarity.\footnote{Ibid.}

Hummel is important in the early history of pedagogical literature because he, like Czerny, developed what he called a "school." This
shows an early interest in a comprehensive approach, a direction to be taken up by modern pedagogues. His teachings, represented in his piano method-book, the *Ausführliche theoretische-praktische Amweisung zum Pianoforte spiel*, are a blend of an expert performer's knowledge and pedantry. The work is far above the usual "commercialized" instruction manuals popular at the time.\(^{61}\) In it a dichotomy of traditional and modern technical practice is evident. In over 2,000 examples, Hummel exhausts fingerling possibilities and techniques, including thumb crossing, substitution, passing long over short fingers and vice-versa, legato and a host of other ideas. As a result of his thorough study of every possible five-finger motivic pattern, Hummel arrived at new aural effects, many of which were to influence later composers, especially Schumann and Chopin.\(^{62}\)

Hummel composed many works for piano and orchestra including seven concertos, a concertino, and, notably, several one movement works. Among these are three sets of variations, two rondos, and a fantasy on the theme of Weber's *Oberon's Zauberdion*. The shift towards such fantasias and potpourris resulted from the search for more popular appeal: one of the results was an increase in individual, one movement works for piano and orchestra. In a performance of Hummel's *B Minor Concerto* in 1829, a reviewer remarked on the difficulty of the composition and Hummel's use of the flat ninth, objecting to this interval as unusual and extraneous.\(^{63}\) Weber was to use this interval often.

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\(^{61}\)Sachs, op. cit., p. 784.


There is no doubt that Weber was familiar with Hummel's style, for in addition to being an acquaintance of Hummel's, Weber reviewed several of his compositions. In 1816, Hummel performed the Second Concerto in C, Op.34, which Weber reviewed. Though impressed with Hummel's virtuosity, he found the composition to be "not one of the composer's finest...[being]...disappointed particularly by the extended adagio."  

There are similarities in the styles of the two composers. Like Hummel, Weber had a fondness for fast, rondo finales. In the sonata forms of both composers there is often a lack of strong contrast between first and second themes, and yet both provide sufficient interest in their sonata first movements. Hummel pays homage to Weber's Oberon in his Oberon's Zauberdion (Oberon's Magic Horn) Fantasy Op. 116; this work is a cross between a konzertstück and an operatic fantasy, a form that was becoming popular. 

John Field (1782-1837) wrote seven piano concertos which proclaim his desire for virtuoso display. These works, written in an improvisatory style, are structurally weak and often very episodic. They do, however, contain many features that influenced the development of the nineteenth century piano style. For example, Field's last concerto unites the adagio movement to the first by means of a connecting solo, an important step towards the one movement concerto. Known as "father of the nocturne," Field's individual style featured highly embellished melodies and novel uses of the pedal.  

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64 Cooper, op. cit., p. 181.  
65 Garvin, op. cit., p. 34.  
67 Veinus, op. cit., p. 203.
was, in fact, many years ahead of his time in his pianistic style. Field's First Concerto, No. 1 in E flat major, contains examples of novel effects, as does his Second Concerto, in A flat, which has many melodies and figurations that anticipate the style of Chopin. Like Field, Weber was to cultivate an extremely ornamented, coloratura style in the slow movements of his concertos. There is, in the section following the second orchestral tutti of Field's A flat concerto, a most expressive "scena" between piano and orchestra.  

Perhaps this section influenced Spohr and later Weber to develop this "scena" approach in their concertos. Field, like Weber in his First Concerto, also experimented with dance elements in his Seventh Concerto; there is a "waltz-mazurka" in the Rondo movement. Another important feature of Field's concertos is the lack of provision for a cadenza; only in the Fifth Concerto is there a written out, accompanied cadenza. This shunning of cadenzas is also characteristic of Weber's concertos. The improvisatory style of Field's work calls to mind passages from Weber's Konzertstück. Finally, like Weber, Field attached a "programmatic" title to his concerto No. 5, calling it, "L'Incendie par l'orage", a descriptive whose effect is difficult to trace in the music. Field's inspiration for this work came from his friend, Daniel Steibelt, whose Concerto No. 3 (1799) was entitled "L'Orage."

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68 Douglas Townsend, record jacket notes for John Field's Piano Concertos No. 1, E flat Major, and No. 2, in A flat Major, performed by Marjorie Mitchell with the Stuttgart Radio Orchestra, conducted by Willy Mattes (MHS 1575).


71 Arthur Hutchings, "Concerto," p. 635.
the early years of the nineteenth century, and though there is little mention of Field in the Weber literature, it is likely that his work and reputation came to Weber's notice.

Another figure who was caught between two eras and styles of performance was Ignaz Moscheles. A German pianist, composer and conductor, he was one of Vienna’s most popular pianists, sharing with Weber a style that combined dramatic animation with brilliant effect.\(^{72}\) Hanslick regarded Moscheles as one of the last great representatives of the Classical school.\(^{73}\) Nineteenth-century historians ranked Moscheles among the prominent musicians of the century, equal in stature to Chopin, Schumann, Liszt, Mendelssohn and others. Moscheles witnessed many changes which pointed to the Romantic style: an increase in drama and emotion, freer forms, and an increased use of chromatic harmonies. Trained in the Classical style, Moscheles succeeded in modifying his approach by adopting certain Romantic characteristics. Moscheles became a dazzling bravura artist known for his technical ability and improvisational skills. He captured the admiration of his public with his unrivalled precision in repeated notes, wide skips, and fast chord passages.\(^{74}\) He was also known for his crisp, incisive touch. Beethoven’s opinion of him was, typically, less than favorable. He complained, "Don't ever talk to me again about mere passage players."\(^{75}\) Much of Moscheles's output does indeed

\(^{72}\) Weitzman, op. cit., p. 140.
\(^{74}\) Schonberg, op. cit., p. 116.
reflect the epidemic of "brilliant but not difficult" compositions which were in fashion. 76

Moscheles was a friend of Weber's and kept in close touch with him at various times throughout his life. Moscheles was present at the premiere of Weber's *Euryanthe*, in Vienna. Although the work did not meet with the approval which critics afforded *Der Freischütz*, Moscheles found it meritorious, though modern: "the opera is unsuited for uninitiated ears...it is too bold in rhythm and harmony; the text so terribly far-fetched that the music must, to some extent, be of the same kind; it has, however, many beauties." 77

The two met again when they were taking cures at the Marienbad spa in 1824. Moscheles spent time with Weber during his fateful trip to London in 1826, where he died from tuberculosis. Saddened by this event Moscheles wrote;

> Any attempt to describe the depth of my sorrow would be profanation. I thought Weber a composer quite *sui generis*: one who had the imperishable glory of leading back to our German music a public vacillating between Mozart, Beethoven and Rossini. 78

Moscheles wrote many works based on themes of Weber, including a piano-duo and a set of variations for two pianofortes. It is likely that with all Moscheles's attention Weber, in turn, was well aware of and influenced by his music. 79 In Moscheles's *Concerto*.

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76*Loesser, op. cit.*, p. 286.
78*ibid.*, p.118.
79*ibid.*, p.117.
Fantastique, the three movements are unified into a single outlay, which is similar to Weber's procedure in the Konzertstück.\textsuperscript{80}

Moscheles admired the innovations of Chopin and Liszt but questioned their artistic merit. Regarding the Chopin études, he found "their chief effects lie in passages requiring a large grasp and stretch of the fingers, such as the peculiar build of their hands enables them to execute." He adds, "practice as I will, I can never do them smoothly."\textsuperscript{81} This quote underlies Moscheles' essentially "five-finger" school training, inculcated at an early age. The very "grasping" which he characterizes as the problems inherent, will be refined into pedagogical theories involving larger body units than the fingers alone. His despair at understanding the new brand of virtuoso is evident in his comment, "all effects now, it seems, must be produced by the feet---what is the use of people having hands?"\textsuperscript{82}

Carl Czerny (1791-1857) was certainly one of the most industrious pedagogues in the history of the piano. The number of his compositions runs up to 856, but few works other than his exercises are known today. Czerny enjoyed a fine reputation as a teacher; having observed Clementi and having studied with Beethoven, he was much in demand. From Beethoven he claimed to have learned the "proper" position of the thumb, hands and fingers, as well as a beautiful legato.\textsuperscript{83}

Among Czerny's most celebrated students were Liszt, Leschetitsky and Kullak. Schonberg points out that if the instructional procedures of these teachers owes much to Czerny, then he can be considered to

\textsuperscript{80}Veinus, op. cit., pp.204-205.
\textsuperscript{81}Schonberg, op. cit., p. 116.
\textsuperscript{82}Ibid.
be the fountainhead of modern technique.\textsuperscript{84} Czerny, although criticized for his exhaustive series of etudes, did produce some famous students and deserves an important place in the early history of the early piano pedagogues. His Op. 500 includes the School of Velocity, School of Legato and Staccato, and volumes which cover ornamentation, fugue, preluding, fantasia playing and octave study—according to Bie, "a mighty arsenal of mechanical appliances."\textsuperscript{85} Czerny wrote two piano concertinos, Op. 78 and Op. 210, both in C major. The merit of these works is dubious. About them Schumann remarked, "he who writes in this manner may easily bring it [opus numbers] up to Op. 1000."\textsuperscript{86}

These early Romantic figures worked in close response to the technical development of the piano as an instrument, formulating its repertoire and exploring its technical possibilities not only as performers but also as composers. As pedagogues, they expanded piano technique from the Classical requirements, albeit gently at times, and almost begging the question of how to employ the arm, shoulders and torso. Through much of their work they laid the foundation for a virtuoso style of piano playing.

\textsuperscript{84}Schonberg, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 95.
\textsuperscript{85}Bie, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 217.
\textsuperscript{86}Veinus, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 212.
CHAPTER II

Concerto No. 1 in C major, Op. 11

After their unhappy expulsion from Württemburg, Weber and his father went to Mannheim, where Weber composed his first piano concerto, Op. 11. Besides this work, the year spent in this city (1810-1811) saw only the production of the Six Progressive Sonatas for violin obligato and piano (Op. 10), and the beginning of Weber’s singspiel Abu Hassan. Nonetheless, this year was very important to Weber’s future development, for it was during this time that he became interested in the story of Der Freischütz, founded the Harmonische Verein and began to work on the Tonkünstlers Leben.\textsuperscript{87}

Weber’s Concerto No. 1, Op. 11 was written under the approving eye of Vogler. Weber, in a letter to Gännsbacher dated September 24, 1810, writes: "(I have)...composed the first Allegro of my concerto, with which 'papa' (Vogler) is very content."\textsuperscript{88} The degree of influence Vogler had on Weber’s compositional style is difficult to ascertain;

however, his personality was strong and his famous "system" of composition had a substantial impact on young Weber.\textsuperscript{89}

Weber completed the finale of the First Concerto first, as was his habit. This rondo movement bears the inscription "Completed in September, 1810 in Darmstadt." Weber was in this city to supervise rehearsals for a performance of Silvana in Frankfurt. Both the Adagio and the Finale of the First Concerto were completed on 22 May 1810,\textsuperscript{90} in Mannheim. M. J. André of Offenbach published the work in 1812. The work was published as Op.10, but in Weber's catalog it is counted as Op. 18. Discrepancies of dating are common in Weber's work and cause much confusion in the cataloging and chronology of his works.\textsuperscript{91} Weber also made an arrangement of the work for string quartet which was performed at Winterthur on 26 August 1811. Weber described the final product as "very labored," and complained of the process of transcription as "Devil's labor."\textsuperscript{92}

The first performance of the concerto took place in Mannheim; in addition, there is a record of a planned performance in Frankfurt, on 20 October 1810, which was cancelled due to student riots caused by French action against British merchandise.\textsuperscript{93} Weber used the First Concerto to promote himself as a composer and virtuoso many times throughout his career. It met with public success, and Weber seemed happy with the results. In a letter to Gottfried Weber, on 30 August 1810, Weber wrote: 

\begin{quote}
"(my)...concerto is finished and as has been said,
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{89}Letter to Ignaz Susann, October 8, 1803, quoted in Warrack, \textit{Carl Maria von Weber, op. cit.}, p.49.
\textsuperscript{91}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{92}Jähns, \textit{op. cit.}, p.119.
\textsuperscript{93}Alberti, \textit{op. cit.}, p.iii.
successful." Also, Weber's diary entry of 19 November 1810, reads, "My concerto is for the first time whole, all is going well and it is very well liked." Also, on 17 February 1815, "In concert with Hermstedt, I played the Adagio and Rondo from the C major concerto and carried the victory thereupon."94

The First Concerto shows the young composer searching to establish an individual style. Though this work exhibits many Classical traits and shows the influence of Mozart, Clementi, Dussek and Beethoven, it also displays many of the compositional characteristics that would be associated with Weber's mature style. These characteristics include a wealth of sub-themes, the melodic handling of dissonant intervals, the rhapsodic treatment of slow movements, a love of hemiola and rhythmic piquancy, and a relish of the brilliance and color of the piano's sound.

Orchestral Treatment

The First Concerto is scored in Classical chamber music style, and from the very opening of the ritornello one can hear the Classical influence, especially in terms of regularly occurring events such as theme groups and key levels. Few unexpected events occur in the opening ritornello. There is the lack of symphonic development in the opening ritornellos that one associates with the last three concertos of Beethoven. However, there are resemblances to Beethoven's style, especially in the overall balance of the piano and orchestra and in the effort to place dramatic importance on slow

94Jähns, op. cit., p. 119.
movements. Weber makes aggressive use of the orchestra in the ritornellos. However, when the piano has material, the orchestral accompaniment is often minimal, noticeably thinner and containing less counterpoint than is characteristic of Beethoven. Beethoven weaves a dialog between the piano and the orchestra, while Weber gives the piano increased independence. In addition, Weber provides more extended solo passages than does Beethoven in his early concertos. This reliance on the solo part can also be seen in Weber's chamber music, where the piano predominates over the other instruments. This predominance may have resulted from the influence of Vogler's, Air de Marlborough Variations for piano and orchestra, in which the orchestral provides only a thin underpinning.

While strings continued to provide the foundation for Weber's orchestral sound, he experimented with them, seeking out separate color schemes with combinations of divided strings. Weber explored string sounds by use of such techniques as viola tremolos and sustained low notes to create dramatic effects. Weber was one of the first of the Romantic composers to take advantage of the sound of the solo cello in a concerto setting (in both the First Concerto, second movement, and in the Second Concerto, last movement).

Weber uses the woodwinds primarily in pairs, dividing the flute, oboe and bassoon parts. The score does not include one of Weber's favorite instruments, the clarinet. Trumpets and horns are scored in

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95 Warrack, Carl Maria von Weber, p. 105.
96 Warrack, Carl Maria von Weber, p. 27.
98 Garvin, op. cit., p. 10.
99 Engel, op. cit., p. 45.
typical four part harmony. The orchestra used by Weber in these works included both trombones and tympani, already an established feature in Beethoven's use of the orchestra.

Weber was innovative in his orchestral handling. Many of the characteristic sounds and textures of early nineteenth century music that historians credit to Schubert or Beethoven actually began with Weber. Beethoven strove for orchestral unity in his concertos while Weber attempted to separate orchestral colors, giving a new importance to single voices, sometimes by means of virtuoso treatment, sometimes by means of solo treatment. Weber's orchestral innovations include his use of the piano as a coloristic resource within the ensemble, an expertise at mixing instrumental colors, and his emphasis of particular tone qualities such as those of the low register viola and clarinet and muted violins.

Although Weber's interest in color effects became more pronounced in the period of *Der Freischütz* and the *Konzertstück*, and there is evidence of it in the First Concerto. In the opening movement, for example, in measures 187-197. Weber skillfully weaves the theme between violins and violas, while the cellos double the piano's low, chromatically descending trill. He combines the colors of these instruments to create a mysterious, coloristic transition to the recapitulation. (Ex. 1)

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100 Garvin, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
103 Garvin, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
Example 1 Combined colors. I:1, mm. 185-197

The slow movement of the First Concerto provides a clear example of Weber's effective use of combined instrumental colors. Here Weber contrasts pianistic delicacy with the dark hues of low register horns, violas, solo cellos, and double basses (Ex. 2).  \(^{105}\)

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Example 2  Contrast of color and register. I:2, mm. 26-28

In this movement the piano is often in the high register, with fioritura and arpeggio figures that sparkle against the low sustained string sound. This Adagio has its stylistic roots in Weber’s two early symphonies.\textsuperscript{106} In both the Andante of the first, and the Adagio of the second, Weber creates dark, atmospheric moods with only a few instruments. Weber himself felt that only the Adagio of the first symphony had merit,\textsuperscript{107} and it is clear from the Adagio of the First Concerto that he excelled in creating mysterious colors and textures using the orchestral instruments available to him.

**Piano Treatment**

A foundation for Weber’s keyboard style can be seen in the works of early composer-virtuosi such as C. P. E. Bach, Prince Louis Ferdinand, Clementi, Cramer, Steibelt, Hummel and Dussek. The

\textsuperscript{106} Warrack, Carl Maria von Weber, p. 107.
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., p. 58.
works of these composers contain many examples of the techniques which Weber made the basis for his style, notably, passages in thirds (Clementi), frequent use of arpeggio figures (Clementi, Dussek and Steibelt), and rapid passages with accented non-harmonic tones (Prince Louis Ferdinand).\textsuperscript{108} Weber took these techniques as a point of departure, blending and developing them into a forward looking technical approach\textsuperscript{109}, adding such elements as octaves, octaves with doubled notes, multi-voice textures, fioratura passagework, high register effects that rely heavily on the pedal, an increased degree of melodic dissonance, a variety of rhythmic complexity, declamative, vocal writing and Rossini-like allegro passages.

Before further examining the "modern" aspects of Weber's First Concerto, it is important to note technical elements that indicate the composer's ties to the Classical period. His employment of Alberti bass patterns is an example (Ex. 3):\textsuperscript{110}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example3.pdf}
\caption{Example 3 Alberti bass patterns. I:1, mm. 105-109}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{108}Warrack, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 105.
\textsuperscript{109}Ibid., p. 105.
\textsuperscript{110}Garvin, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 57.
Another feature which demonstrates elements of Classicism in Weber's style is his reliance on static rhythmic repetitions of accompaniment patterns (Ex. 4):

![Musical notation image]

**Example 4** Static repetitions. I:1, mm. 174-176

Despite these Classical characteristics, there is much that is modern even in the earliest of Weber's concertos, the Op. 11. Sir George Grove points to the newness of Weber's approach, contrasting the difference between the keyboard style of Beethoven and that of Weber. He writes:

His (Beethoven's) piano writing looks backward rather than forward. He retained the clear, indeterminate line, textures containing no more than 2 or 3 simultaneous notes...are sometimes long maintained and his music would not greatly fail of its effect without the sustaining pedal: but not so Weber! ¹¹¹

Engel describes Weber's works as being "full of elegant joy in the keyboard." Underlying this statement lies an appreciation for Weber's knowledge of the piano's sonority—especially in the high register, in

¹¹¹Hutchings, "Concerto", p. 634.
massive chordal structures,\textsuperscript{112} and in his ebullient sense of piano virtuosity. Weber enjoyed the sound of the piano in virtuosic passages for its brilliant effect and coloristic potential.

Weber was one of the first composers to take advantage of the newly developing pianoforte's potential--both in terms of attack and volume--for singing tone, nuance of color, and increased brilliance of sound. Weber owned a pianoforte built by Brodman of Vienna which had four pedals, the Verschiebung (una corda), the laute (lute), a piano and a forte pedal.\textsuperscript{113} It is important to know something of the Viennese pianofortes of this period, in order to better understand Weber's piano style. The action of these pianos, in part, accounts for Weber's facile, delicate passage-work. The Viennese piano was known for its light action, as opposed to the English grands--favored by Beethoven and others--which were stiffer and less responsive. Much greater control of dynamics was possible with the Viennese pianos.

The duration of sound they produced was shorter, but "sweeter" and more articulated. Because the hammer had a hard core covered by soft leather, and the strings had a relatively low tension, a light, singing tone could be achieved rather easily. This type of action lent itself to the kind of melodic writing common in the music of Weber and Schubert. Because of the sound's short decay time, effects such as sforzandi were sudden and effective, and thick voicings of chords in

\textsuperscript{112}Engel, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 145.

low registers were not muddled.\textsuperscript{114} Weber is fond of such voicings in his concertos.\textsuperscript{115}

A final aspect of the Viennese piano that affected Weber’s style of writing was its narrow key width. The octave span was 15.9 cm. as compared with the modern 16.5 cm. Thus, certain difficult reaches favored by Weber would have been facilitated.

To learn something of his unique style, it is necessary to catalog elements of Weber’s pianistic idiom. Characteristic hallmarks of Weber’s style which are introduced in the First Concerto include an abundant use of double notes, especially octaves and thirds, wide leaps in rapid succession, widely spaced chords, glissandi, and fleet, light scalar passages. A brief look at each of these techniques will help to clarify Weber’s contribution to the Romantic virtuoso piano style in the concerto format.

In the First Concerto there is a much greater density of virtuosic passagework than is usually seen in Classical concertos. One means by which this density is achieved is by the use of double notes: thirds, sixths and octaves.

It is true that Beethoven had already employed thirds, fourths and octaves in his concertos,\textsuperscript{116} but, Weber uses them much more frequently and in more difficult combinations (see meas. 71, 75, 170).

For example, the combination of octaves and thirds in measure 203


\textsuperscript{115}In the slow movement of Op. 11, meas. 46; in the Op. 32 concerto, adagio movement, meas. 25, 43, 61-66; and much later in the Konzertstück (meas. 52, 60-66).

\textsuperscript{116}His first concerto, in C major, Op. 15, contains brief passages in thirds. In the coda of the Finale of the second concerto, there is a trill in double thirds (meas 306-312). Finally, in the "Emperor" concerto, No. 5, in E flat Major, Beethoven’s most brilliant concerto, there are examples of octaves, (meas. 311) and thirds and fourths (meas. 115-119).
provides a massive, brilliant gesture which typifies Weber's interest in technical display (Ex. 5).

Example 5  Combined octaves and thirds.  I:1, mm. 202-4

An even more difficult example occurs in measure 76, in the first movement (Ex. 6):

Example 6  Combined staccato octaves and thirds.  I:1, m. 76

These measures possess a rawness of brilliance that surpasses Beethoven, suggesting that Weber wished to establish the piano as a force equal to the orchestra. These chordal structures are unusual and
the use of staccato octaves, with added thirds, at such speed was an unheard of boldness for the time.\textsuperscript{117}

Another technical trait of Weber is his use of rapid, wide leaps across the keyboard. Because of his extremely large hand and the narrow keys of the Viennese piano, he was able to reach widely spaced chords and negotiate wide skips easily. More than one writer has commented on the visual, as well as aural effect of these leaps on the audience and that Weber was surely aware of their theatrical appeal. In the First Concerto, for example, in the presto movement, he introduces wide skips for the left hand (Ex. 7):

![Example 7 Wide left hand skips. I:3, mm. 107-112](image)

and, later in the last movement (Ex. 8):

\textsuperscript{117}Warrack, \textit{Carl Maria von Weber}, p. 71.
Example 8  Wide skips in both hands. I:3, mm. 395-6

Weber's use of widely spaced chords, inspired in part by his large reach, provides a depth of richness to the piano texture. The left hand chords cause difficulties for all but those with exceptionally large hands (Ex. 9):

Example 9  Wide left hand stretches. I:1, mm. 156

Earlier in the movement, there is a further example of widely spaced chords (Ex. 10).
Example 10  Widely spaced, large chords. I:1, m. 63

Weber himself must have broken this chord as follows, still leaving a large span for the right hand to encompass (figure 3):

Figure 3  Method of breaking a chord

The slow movement of the First Concerto also provides examples of enormous chord reaches. Here the voicings take on greater significance, providing contrast to a stark solo line and needed textural richness (Ex. 11).
Example 11  Wide chord reaches.  I:2, mm. 5, 9, 10

Weber also employs widely spaced broken chord figures in virtuosic Alberti-like accompanimental patterns (Ex. 12).

Example 12  Virtuoso Alberti-like patterns.  I:1, mm. 125-127

Octave skips occur for the left hand, combining massive piano forces with difficult skips, and highlighting the brilliant upper register of the piano (Ex. 13):
Example 13  Octaves combined with difficult skips.  I:1, mm. 244-245

Here Weber employs a characteristic arpeggio figure with chromatic neighbors; but more important is the octave tripling and use of broken octaves which Liszt was to develop later. Weber’s expansion of the range and interval distance with each half bar shows his natural understanding of the piano’s brilliant possibilities. Weber uses the full range of the piano to good effect as he works toward each extreme of the keyboard in contrary motion (Ex. 14):

Example 14  Extreme ranges combined.  I:1, mm. 258-259
The sheer relentlessness of this section and its close in bars 258-270 gives a strong étude quality and proclaims the virtuosity with which this concerto is imbued.

Weber’s treatment of the piano in the slow movement of the First Concerto is highly unusual by Classical standards. Thematic exposition is relegated to a secondary position in this movement. Instead, an approach closer to opera recitativo is followed; the piano supplies the solo coloratura voice in this movement. Consequently, the piano often lies high above the strings and is given improvisatory sounding passagework (Ex. 15):

![Musical notation](image)

**Example 15** High passagework. I:2, mm. 3-6

Weber imitates a *recitativo secco* in the solo exposition of the theme, underlining the movement’s vocal, operatic nature (Ex. 16).
Example 16 *Recitativo secco* I:2, mm. 8-12

This unique textural device is one of Weber's favorites; he uses it again in both the Andante of the Op. 39 sonata and in the first section of the *Konzertstück*.

Another unusual technique indicative of the greater freedom of Romantic pianism\(^{118}\), was the use of the glissando.\(^{119}\) Weber includes an unheard of double octave glissando in the last movement of the First Concerto (Ex. 17):

\(^{118}\)Garvin, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

\(^{119}\)Beethoven used glissandi --though not as theatrically--in his *Sonata, Op. 53*, the "Waldstein" (in the Coda to the finale), and in his *First Piano Concerto*, in C major (meas.339).
Example 17  Double octave glissandos. I:3, mm. 535

Weber's frequent use of glissandi stems from his knowledge of the audience's desire to be excited, and while it may be seen by some as a lack of serious artistic judgment, it demonstrates his awareness of theatrical effects.\textsuperscript{120} Weber's use of such blatantly titillating effects points clearly to a fundamental shift toward virtuosic writing, and to the recognition of the audience's role as an important element in his conception of the concerto's dramatic makeup. Einstein notes the essential role of the audience in Weber's compositional style in his variations, rondos, and Polonaises;\textsuperscript{121} this holds equally true for the concertos.

Finally, there is a hint in the finale of the fleet passage work coupled with driving, propulsive rhythm, which Weber would develop fully in his Konzertstück. The movement is filled with arpeggios and chromatic scales which move at very high speed. Weber employed this style in his later concertos, and he influenced a future generation of composer-pianists in expanding the horizons of piano technique.

\textsuperscript{120}Garvin, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 57.

\textsuperscript{121}Einstein, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 94.
Mendelssohn was clearly influenced by this type of light, fast passagework in his piano style, especially in scherzando writing.

Texture in Weber's Piano Style

In Weber's First Concerto, there are early indications of his interest in creating novel pianistic textures, especially passages that interweave multiple melodic ideas with accompanimental figures. In Weber's "C" theme, in the first movement, textural density is achieved by means of double stems in the right hand, in the upper register voice, in order to create a melodic line which stands out from the sixteenth note texture. The left hand part is also double stemmed to indicate the proper accentuation of the bass line (Ex.18).

Example 18 Double stemmed figures. I:1, m. 121-122

Beethoven introduced these multi-voice textures, though perhaps not as explicitly, in his piano works. A passage from his First Concerto
reveals a similar treatment, though with less double stemming and a more static bass line (Ex. 19):

Example 19 Double stemmed figures. Beethoven, I:1, mm. 188-190

Weber fully develops textures of this sort in his Op. 32 concerto and in the Konzertstück.

Sound
Weber's piano compositions show that he was fascinated by the sonority of the instrument; he was especially aware of the increased response and fuller tone quality that was being developed by piano manufacturers. An example of staccato chords against a single line melody (See Ex. 16) would have been impossible on earlier pianos whose tone was not sufficiently sonorous, and Weber's use of these effects indicates a sensitivity to the piano's sonorous possibilities. Similarly, Weber contrasts a staccato line for the right hand with a
non-staccato accompaniment for the left, exploiting the articulative capabilities of the piano (Ex.20):

Example 20 Contrast of staccato and non-staccato elements. I:1, mm. 70

Weber's use of grace notes, providing glinting sparks of virtuosity, takes into account the sound of the instrument, especially the sparkle of the high register. For example, in the last movement of the First Concerto Weber combines a skillful use of the pedal, highlighting the harmonic resonance of the diminished chord, with a series of octaves with grace notes (Ex.21):
Example 21  Octaves with grace notes. I:3, mm. 447-450

Weber combines his talent for pianistic leaps with the use of the acciacatura, relying upon the brilliant sound of the piano's upper register (Ex.22):

Example 22  High register acciacaturas. I:3, mm. 398-403

Although Weber was one of the first composers to use the increased range of the piano, he remains conservative in his use of high and low extremes in the First Concerto; it is not until the Second Concerto that an expanded range is visible. The range of the first movement of the First Concerto spans G' to d'". By comparison, Beethoven's Fourth Concerto (1808) displays an almost identical
range, from F\#' sharp to to c\"", the same as his Fifth Concerto (1810), written a year before Weber's First Concerto. Thus Weber's use of the piano range in this concerto is much the same as Beethoven's. However, Weber's First Concerto abounds with wide ranging register changes, often set off with sudden dynamic contrasts (Ex.23).

Example 23 Wide ranging register changes. I:1, mm. 154-156

Weber often employs rapid sweeps from one extreme register to another. This provides a dynamism in the piano part that gives this concerto a strong forward propulsion (Ex.24).

Example 24 Rapid sweeps. I:1, mm. 97-99
In the Adagio, this motion is particularly effective (Ex. 25). Here Weber spans virtually the entire keyboard, combining contrast of registers, dynamics (note the fortepiano at the beginning of the measure contrasted with the piano high notes, floated-off with a portamento at the end), and a feeling of rapid "sweep". These measures rely heavily on the sustaining pedal for their effect (Ex. 25).

Example 25 Wide ranging sweeps. I:2, mm. 26-27

The Adagio movement also provides examples illustrative of Weber's ability to contrast the sound of the piano with that of the orchestra. In the opening bars Weber contrasts the sound of the sustained low register of the strings with a glinting grace note in a very high register of the piano. The four sixteenths of the piano statement also contrast the sustained sound of the strings (Ex. 26).
Example 26 Register contrasts between strings and piano.

I:2, mm. 1-4

Later in the movement, again in contrast to the strings, the piano provides a harp-like arpeggio in a high register, the effect of which is heightened by the use of the damper pedal (Ex. 27).
Example 27  Harp-like arpeggios. I:2, mm. 20-21

A fortissimo announcement in the orchestra, set in alternation with the piano, pianissimo, in a high register, provides great contrast in sound (Ex. 28).
Example 28  Contrast of dynamics between orchestra and dynamics.

I:2, mm. 31-34

Weber enjoyed the effect of the tremolo, using the piano as a resource for additional orchestral color. In the Adagio, he employs it to create a magical conclusion, combining the solo viola line with the piano tremolo

(Ex. 29):
Example 29 Piano tremolo. I:2, mm. 45-46

In the following bars, Weber allows the piano to float upwards in a beautiful juxtaposition of the bell-like color of the piano arpeggio with that of the warm, sustained sound of the strings (Ex. 30).

Example 30 Bell-like effects. I:2, mm. 47-48
To understand Weber's contributions to piano technique and Romantic style, it is essential to understand that his emphasis was not, like Beethoven's, on thematic development or interaction of dialog between the piano and orchestra, or on the logical resolution of opposed forces (in a climatic catharsis), but on a more effective dramatic handling of materials at a local level--a contrasting and novel presentation of sounds, textures and registers. The role of the orchestra, except in the slow movements, is often one of introducing the piano, or preparing the listener's expectation for some new pianistic texture or technical effect. This shift of emphasis from form and architecture to postures such as elegance, declamation, and other "stylistic" elements, that rely on virtuosity to sustain the listener's interest, is characteristic of emerging Romantic composers.

About the aural effect of Weber's concertos Kathleen Dale writes:

They anticipate to no small degree the vivid coloring of Schumann's, the sensuousness of Chopin's, and the rhetoric of Liszt's. To play them is to be transported to a glowing world of sound, in which immediacy of expression counts for more than formal balance and the systematic development of thematic material.\textsuperscript{122}

Harmony

As a harmonist, Weber was primarily conservative in his concertos. Indeed, his extensive alternations of tonic and dominant harmonies are excessive--especially in the piano part--resulting in almost Czerny-like passage-work at times. It is only due to Weber's genius for creating brilliant, interesting piano textures, and his gift for

\textsuperscript{122}Dale, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 43.
melody, that such harmonic simplicity in expository sections does not become tedious. Weber also provides contrast by the use of secondary dominants, and momentary references to new keys. In the piano exposition of the First Concerto, Weber uses the tonic chord 45 times, the dominant, 30 times; diminished and secondary dominants, 23 times; the subdominant only 5 times; and other diatonic chords such as II, III and VI, 12 times. These statistics clearly show the predominance of tonic and dominant chords. Weber's reluctance to become involved in wide-ranging modulations, and the exploration of subsidiary harmonic levels, underlies his discomfort with the development and extension of thematic and harmonic materials.

Weber is often accused of overuse of diminished seventh chords. They appear with less frequency in the opening movement of the First Concerto than in the Second Concerto and the Konzertstück, but can be seen in abundance in the second and third movements. Weber uses diminished chords to create dramatic tension. Warrack labels the effect of its use in measure 80 of the first movement of the First Concerto a "true Romantic shudder"\textsuperscript{123}(Ex. 31).

\textsuperscript{123}Warrack, Carl Maria von Weber, p. 100.
Example 31 Use of diminished seventh chord. I:1, mm. 78-80

Here, and later in measure 84, Weber combines a diminished chord with a momentary suspension of the rhythmic pulse: this unusual gesture, along with the sinister rumbling of the tympani, shows his mastery of dramatic effect.

Weber’s occasional departures from straightforward harmony are effective, especially his allusions to the parallel minor. For example, in measures 5-8. Weber presents the minor 6th scale degree in a half diminished ii chord (Ex. 32):
Example 32 Use of borrowed minor sixth degree. I:1, mm. 5-8

Later, we are given even more explicit reference to the minor, with the minor 6th and 3rd (Ex. 33):

Example 33 References to the parallel minor. I:1, mm. 19-21
These references to the minor make Weber's choice of E flat major, the relative major of the parallel minor, a logical choice, although this abruptly introduced change of key and mode is made more for coloristic effect and contrast, that for directional purpose.\textsuperscript{124}

Weber uses declamatory octaves to arrive at this dramatic modulation (Ex. 34):

Example 34. Dramatic shift of key and mode. I:1, mm. 152-156

The addition of a dramatic pause--to augment the effect of this key change--is early evidence of Weber's genius for effect. This modulation may have been inspired by the first movement of Beethoven's First Concerto, in C major, where the key of E flat also appears. The choice of the lowered mediant as a secondary key level is interesting also because it is characteristic of Schubert's style.

In the First Concerto, the most harmonically interesting passages are the transitions. Here Weber introduces more remote harmonies and increases the chromaticism of the melody. In the transition from the first theme area to the second, Weber begins his transition on the unexpected dominant of E flat. The second theme which follows in

\textsuperscript{124}\textit{Falk, op. cit.}, p. 195.
the orchestra is only an allusion, in the minor, to the melodic material of the theme, which will be presented fully by the piano. As shown in Example 33, this presentation of the second theme in the minor key has been prepared earlier in the movement. Weber moves quickly from the tonic minor to the subdominant minor before finally returning to C major (Ex. 35):

Example 35  Sudden modulation. I:1, mm. 23-35
Later in the movement, Weber handles the transition to the recapitulation in a highly inventive manner, "melting" the harmonic stability of the previous material by means of a trill. This trill employs the lower neighbor of the dominant harmony in F major, before turning unexpectedly to D flat (Ex. 36):

Example 36 Interrupting bass trill. I:1, mm. 187-9

The ensuing thirteen bars are held together by the low rumbling trill in the piano. The color which this background trill provides is similar in effect to the opening phrase of Schubert's B flat, posthumous sonata, with its intimation of Romantic disturbance, also in the form of an interrupting bass trill. The harmony of D flat, with which Weber begins this section, is bold, considering the key of this
work is C major. However, this key level lasts only three and a half bars; then Weber introduces a diminished chord leading to a few bars of D minor, and another diminished chord leading to the dominant of C major (Ex. 37).

Example 37 Harmonically ambiguous transition. I:1, mm. 190-201

Weber's unusual use of chromatic and diminished chords shows his ability to delay and obliterate the sense of home key. The
placement of this harmonically ambiguous passage is dramatically astute; it provides a moment of mysterious expectation, which the reprise resolves. This dramatically effective means of setting up the recapitulation is different from a typical development in which various thematic units culminate in a climax leading directly into the recapitulation (all but the Second Concerto of Beethoven adhere to this treatment). Weber's insertion of this passage serves to slow down the forward motion of the action in order to provide contrast and mystery before the recapitulation.

Chromaticism is an essential part of Weber's music; he was one of the first composers to use it extensively in non-sequential progressions.\textsuperscript{125} Weber's use of chromatic harmony is primarily decorative, often providing the kind of charm and wit that can be seen in his \textit{Six Progressive Sonatas}, for piano with violin, (Op. 10).\textsuperscript{126} An element of chromaticism often results from Weber's use of contiguous diminished chords, as in the slow movement of the First Concerto (meas. 22-25). More often, chromaticism is confined to melodic characteristics, such as the frequent use of chromatic scales, or the combination of altered scale segments, such as in measure 93, where Weber uses a scale that is neither wholly chromatic nor diatonic (Ex. 38).

\textsuperscript{125}Garvin, \textit{op. cit.}, p.53.
Example 38 Use of chromatically altered scale passages. I:1, m. 93

In the choice of A flat major for the key of the second movement Weber may have been inspired by Beethoven's examples (in his First, Third and Fifth Concertos,) of a tertian relationship between the first and second movements. Weber achieves harmonic variety in the middle of the second movement, where chains of diminished chords lead the listener through somewhat unstable territory: (meas. 20-31) B dim., C, B dim., A flat dim., A dim., B flat dominant, E flat, B Flat, E Flat minor, and G Flat. (Ex. 39, p. 75)

The finale proceeds with little that is unusual harmonically, as the choice of excursions into A minor, C minor, and E minor within this movement provide contrasting dramatic coloring.
Example 39. Chains of diminished chords. I:2, mm. 20-31
Melody

Weber's melodic writing in the concertos combines elements common to his vocal and instrumental music. His melodies are highly individual, often with a marked dolce quality stemming from an indirect assimilation of German folk and popular music. His themes have a regular phrase structure and his bravura vocal melodies often seem pianistic. 127

One of Weber's most characteristic techniques is to interweave themes into clever, highly effective textures. For example, in the first movement Weber combines a subsidiary theme, which can be labeled "C." with the "B" theme, to produce a pleasing duet between orchestra and piano (Ex. 40):

Example 40 Thematic duet between piano and orchestra. I:1, mm. 231-133

127 Longyear, op. cit., p. 39.
Likewise, in the finale, an apparently insignificant secondary melody (Ex. 41):

Example 41  Melody introduced as secondary item. I:3, mm. 262-269

later assumes an important role when it is combined with the "A" theme (Ex. 42):

Example 42  Theme combination I:3, mm. 479-485
This clever type of theme combination, typical of Weber, is often used to bring finales to a surprising and effective conclusion.\textsuperscript{128}

Weber's melodic palette is extremely rich. The slow movements of his concertos are filled with examples of his melodic gift. In these unusual aria-like melodies he clearly predicts later Romantic usage.

In the First Concerto, Weber often uses the solo material as an embellishment to the orchestra. It is written in a high, descant fashion, ornamenting the orchestral content, a practice employed by later Romantics. Weber's use of highly varied rhythms in his melodic lines adds an improvisatory quality to this slow movement.

In Weber's First Concerto, his use of the trill, in an expressive, Romantic manner, is an example of this ornamentation (Ex. 43).

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{ex43.png}
\caption{Example 43}
\end{figure}

\begin{center}
Use of expressive trill. I:2, m. 6
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{128}Dale, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 51.
This type of melodic decoration is an offshoot of a new style of ornamental writing that originated in Vienna at the end of the 18th century.¹²⁹

Weber makes effective use of the chromatic scale in this movement, to convey a dramatic outcry (Ex. 44):

![Music notation]

**Example 44** Dramatic use of chromatic scale. I:2, m. 43-44

Weber's use of sequential upper and lower neighbors and appoggiaturas is a hallmark of his style of melodic writing. Warrack points out Weber's debt to the composers Dussek and Prince Louis Ferdinand in this type of figuration¹³⁰. His examples give compelling proof of a connection among the three composers (Ex. 45):

Example 45 Comparison of styles.\textsuperscript{131}

These characteristic uses of non-harmonic tones permeate Weber's writing for the piano. Appoggiaturas, changing notes, upper and lower neighbors, and accented passing tones can be found in almost every measure of his concertos. Changing notes, typical in Weber's instrumental music, can be seen in measures 64-65 (Ex. 46):

\textsuperscript{131}Example Cited in Warrack, \textit{Carl Maria von Weber}, p. 136
Example 46  Use of changing tones.  I:1, mm. 68-69

These tones have the effect of reducing the forward motion of the melody, while adding graceful, color values to the line.

Weber also employs appoggiaturas to increase the vocal expressiveness of his melodies.  In the following example, the seventh provides a tinge of dissonance (Ex. 47):

Example 47  Expressive use of appoggiaturas.  I:1, m. 157-158

These figures provide a Romantic yearning quality, and in quick tempos add much brilliance.  Additional examples can be seen throughout the First Concerto.  Notable is the accented non-chord usage of the 6th above the chord root--a particularly Weberian trait (Ex. 48, 49):
Weber's personal melodic imprint is felt sharply in the closing of the first ritornello, (m. 50) where he employs an unexpected augmented triad. The impact of this "wrong sounding" chord is no less than shocking. This harmony, though technically an augmented triad, can be better understood as an example of Weber's penchant for using the chromatic lower neighbor melodically. Although it gives a startling harmonic impression because of its whole note length, it acts as an accented lower neighbor, resolving to the third of the following IV chord. (Ex. 50)
Example 50  Dramatic use of the augmented triad.

I:1, mm. 47-51

Weber's use of accented non-harmonic tones, which often creates essentially dissonant intervals with the accompaniment, gives his writing a brilliant and highly piquant sound (Ex. 51):
Example 51  Non-harmonic dissonances with the accompaniment.
I:1, mm. 81-83

In the dolce theme in E flat (m. 155) Weber uses many melodic dissonances, such as the accented minor ninth (Ex. 52):

Example 52  Expressive use of melodic dissonance of minor 9th.
I:1, m. 163-165

These expressive intervals, coupled with the use of chromatic neighbors in measures 162 and 172, add to the yearning Romantic quality of this passage; indeed, it almost resembles a nocturne with its coloratura, operatic melody and quiet accompaniment.
Rhythm

One of the factors that contributes to the success of Weber's early concertos is his employment of strong propulsive rhythms--frequently dance rhythms such as the polka and the polonaise. Weber's First Concerto is infused with these elements. The presence of dotted rhythms is explained by the Napoleonic, militaristic atmosphere with which the times were charged. Besides revealing Weber's early ties to the Classical heritage,\textsuperscript{132} the strong sense of forward motion in his concertos stems no doubt from Weber's prowess as a virtuoso: there is a fleet-fingered virtuosic disposition that is present in most of Weber's allegro movements--especially his rondos. It is clear that he was more comfortable composing rondos, as these were always completed first. Despite the extreme rhythmic energy of the first movement, moments of repose can also be found. Weber brings the orchestra to a complete halt with a dramatic fermata in bar 155, changing the mood, and marking the tempo \textit{dolce e ritenuto un poco}. This change of tempo is a Romantic trait not typical of Classical concertos.

Weber uses the slow movement to provide a marked contrast of mood; here the pulse is often diffused by the fantasia nature of the piano obligato and the sustained harmonies in the strings. Indeed, Weber at times seems to allow this movement to float in mid-air, especially in measures such as 28-29 where the orchestra sustains long chords under the harp-like gestures of the piano (Ex. 53):

\textsuperscript{132}Longyear, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 39.
Example 53 Floating effects. I:1, mm. 28-29

The finale of the First Concerto evolves from the Mozartean rondo-finale in its general rhythmic character and form,\textsuperscript{133} but with several innovative features. The level of difficulty is greater than in a typical Mozart concerto; the movement is a \textit{moto-perpetuale} of eighth notes, a veritable etude of velocity.

In much of his piano music Weber employs frequent hemiola and rhythmic shifts which serve as momentary meter changes. The most famous example of such changes occurs in the scherzo movement of his First Sonata, Op.24. This sonata was written in 1812, and it is possible to see relationships between it and the First Concerto, especially in Weber's interest in rhythmic displacement and in the non-stop quality of the finales.

\textsuperscript{133}Longyear, \textit{op. cit.}, p.40.
An example of rhythmic ambiguity can be seen in the last movement of his First Concerto, where Weber shifts the downbeat to beat three by means of syncopation (Ex. 54):

Example 54 Metric shift. I:3, mm. 16-20

Weber returns to the natural order in bars 22-25 (Ex. 55):

Example 55 Return to natural metric order. I:3, mm. 22-25

This is followed by an unexpected 2/4 for five bars (Ex. 56):
Example 56 Use of temporary meter change. I:3, mm. 24-28

Example 56 demonstrates Weber's great rhythmic flexibility. This style of piano writing is scherzando in nature and, though Weber never included a scherzo movement proper in his concertos, it is a quality which is present in his concertos and is important in the development of the Romantic scherzo, fully realized by Mendelssohn, through the influence of Weber.

Another interesting feature of this concerto is the rhythmic elasticity of its phrase structure. Compare the harmonic rhythm of the second theme of the first movement, for the piano (Ex. 57):

Example 57 Normal harmonic rhythm. I:1, mm. 106-110

to the "C" theme in E flat in bar 156 (Ex. 58):
Example 58  Extended harmonic rhythm. I:1 mm. 156-160

Weber has shifted from a bar-to-bar feeling to a four-bar harmonic articulation of the rhythm. This, coupled with the aria-like narrative quality of the melodic contours, creates unique contrast.

In the finale Weber again displays his ease at effecting metrical shifts. At the beginning of the movement there is no question as to the dominance of the bar line (Ex. 59):

Example 59  Normal metric accentuation. I:3, mm. 1-4

However, Weber changes the rhythm from a 3/4 feeling to a 6/4 (more likely heard as 3/8 to 6/8 at this brisk tempo). In measure 81
the metric pattern has switched from once every bar-line to one inflection every two-bars, possibly even every four; this change serves to slow the periodicity of the phrase units as defined by points of harmonic rhythm (Ex. 60)

Example 60 Augmented metric inflections. I:3, mm. 81-85

By employing these metric effects, Weber provides the listener a respite from the strong rhythmic predictability of the first theme—a respite achieved by means other than thematic contrast.

Dance Rhythms

Weber's implicit use of dance rhythms, which permeates the First Concerto, is later made explicit with his Polacca Brillante Op. 72 and the "Aufforderung zum Tanze." The former anticipates the concert Polonaise, while the latter is a brilliant example of the concert waltz, which will be cultivated by later Romantic composers. To the Aufforderung zum Tanze (1819) Weber adds, like the Konzertstück, a program: a lady is approached, invited to dance, then, after much evasion and discussion, the couple dance, bid farewell and part.
Although this work was composed several years later than the Second Concerto, it demonstrates Weber's interest in incorporating dance elements into his piano music. Weber's infusion of this component in the concerto form is a significant early contribution, especially when one recalls the concertos of Chopin, in which the dance element is all important. Weber's use of running arpeggio patterns is similar to the later, Chopinesque style of variation in the waltz.\textsuperscript{134}

In Weber's First Concerto, the dance element is heard in the first movement when a polonaise-like rhythm is introduced in the soprano line (Ex. 61):

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{example61.png}
\end{center}

\textbf{Example 61} Use of polonaise rhythm. I:1 mm. 73-75

A rhythm which is similar to a polka rhythm is heard in bars 82 and 83 (Ex. 62):

\textsuperscript{134} Garvin, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 55.
Example 62  Use of polka rhythm. I:1, mm. 81-83

The polonaise appears again in measures 90-91 (Ex. 63):

Example 63  Return to polonaise rhythm. I:1, mm. 90-91

More remarkable is Weber's use of contrasting dances in the finale. The etude-like virtuosity of the opening theme is given relief by a dolce, F major waltz in bar 118 (Ex. 64):
Example 64  Contrasting waltz rhythms. I:3, mm. 118-122

Weber provides contrast not so much by slowing the driving, metronomic rhythm and giving the listener a truly cantabile theme, as by slowing the harmonic motion from two to four bar units. In addition, the key of F, which is often associated with pastoral settings, lends supports the folk-like quality of the simple melody.

In measure 340 of the finale the orchestra comes to a dramatic halt, marked first with a grand pause and then with a fermata (Ex. 65). This fermata, creates a sense of expectation, and is a dramatic way of heightening the effectiveness of the surprising dance medley which follows.
Example 65  Use of dramatic halt. I:3, mm. 340-349

As can be seen in Example 64, the strong inflections on beat three in bars 349 and 352, and again in bar 359 are characteristic of a folk dance.

In the following section Weber introduces a wonderful potpourri of dance variations, consisting of four repeated eight bar units. Like a valse brillianente that becomes ever more virtuosic, this section acts as the final and most effective episode of the rondo. One of these dance passage variations brings to mind Mozart’s "Rondo à la Turka"
movement from the Sonata in A. K. 331, only set in a waltz style. (Ex. 66)

![Musical notation](image)

**Example 66** "Use of à la turka" setting. I:3, mm. 361-364

The regularity of eight-bar phrase groups in this "dance section" strengthens its formal function. In a sense, it has the same effect as a trio section of a minuet and trio movement, only inserted into the rondo as a "digression."

Weber's weakening of the waltz rhythm, in order to return to a final presentation of the rondo theme is clever; the use of diminished chords creates a static harmonic motion while the repeated quarter-notes interrupt the strong inflections of the accompanimental waltz pattern (Ex. 67):
Example 67 Use of static harmonic motion. I:3, mm. 421-432

In the ensuing passage, Weber suspends the dance rhythm forcefully with a sustained unison in the orchestral parts, in a dramatic final lull before the brilliant coda (Ex. 68).
Example 68 "Dramatic lull" I:3, mm. 448-455

In measures 462-468 Weber interrupts the driving rhythm to provide the only hint of quiet lyricism in the entire movement (Ex. 69).

Example 69 Lyric interruption of driving rhythm. I:3, mm. 462-468
The placement of this quiet section before the brilliant return of the piano shows Weber's instinct for the dramatic possibilities of the concerto medium.

**Form**

Weber, along with later Romantic composers, struggled to reconcile the formal demands of Classical first movement design with the burgeoning Romantic aesthetic. Weber's training was somewhat haphazard, making him ill equipped to resolve these formal problems. Although he clearly was more comfortable composing variations, concert pieces and rondos (this is made evident by viewing his catalog of compositions), he did attempt to grapple with sonata form, writing four sonatas for piano, two symphonies, three piano concertos, and two Clarinet concertos.

Weber's first two concertos follow a three movement plan, much the same as his Classical predecessors. Like many of Beethoven's sonatas, Weber's piano sonatas have four movements (with the exception of the third); Weber was unwilling in his early concertos to add a fourth movement. Only in the Konzertstück did Weber hint at the Allegro-Slow-Scherzo or Menuetto-and Rondo, four-movement format with which later concerto composers experimented.\(^{135}\) In this respect the early concertos are formally conservative. Dale characterizes the form of Weber's early concertos, writing: "While following in the main the accepted principles of Classical sonata form

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\(^{135}\) Paul, op. cit., p. 42.
they display a freedom from formal restraint and an exuberance in style that bring them within the category of the early Romantic."\textsuperscript{136}

Weber's formal design in the first movement of his First Concerto seems to look back to Mozart, rather than to the models of Beethoven as an inspiration. The lengths of Weber's opening tutti is closer to Mozart's, whereas in Beethoven's concertos the lengths are approximately twice that of Weber's. This indicates a less symphonic approach to the concerto form. Moreover, it is clear that Beethoven in his Fourth and Fifth Concertos experimented with the piano's position at the onset of the concerto, violating tradition boldly, while Weber, in both early concertos, gives a more cautious and typically Mozarteian arrangement. (Mozart only positioned the solo near the opening once, briefly, in his K. 271 concerto).

Despite this conservative approach, Weber employs several unique features in the First Concerto which bear closer examination. His sense of form in this work is greatly affected by the virtuosic, technical nature of his writing. Thus, to a degree, form follows the dictates of display, a facet which constitutes one of Weber's greatest contributions to the development of the early Romantic piano concerto.

Weber's melodies in the First Concerto already show a decreased reliance on motivic elements and a tendency toward the longer phrase lengths typical of Romantic composers. This is reflected in the design of his forms. The main theme of the First Concerto, as presented by the piano, has an eight bar structure, which is divided by a half cadence. The length of the phrase does not readily adapt to motivic

\textsuperscript{136}Dale, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 48.
segmentation. The repetitiveness of the rhythm focuses attention upon the melodic contour (Ex. 70).

Example 70  Phrases with repetitive rhythms.  I:1 mm. 55-60

Weber's underlying conception of the concerto as a vehicle for brilliant virtuosity leads him to structure passages that would typically develop thematic material rather than virtuosic variations of the harmonic underpinnings. This treatment results in squarely designed structures, less thematically integrated than either Mozart or Beethoven would have preferred. Both Weber’s main theme "A" and his second theme "B" follow the harmonic variation principle (Ex. 71).
Example 71 Harmonically based variation.  I:1, mm. 55-80

Garvin labels Weber's forms as "more fantasy in sonata form than real sonata form." 137 While this statement clearly applies to the slow movements of all of his concertos, the first movement of the First Concerto also contains an anomaly which displays a "fantasia" quality. This occurs in measure 155, after a brief ritornello introducing the development. After a modulation from C major to E flat major, by means of an arpeggiated flourish in the dominant, Weber halts the orchestra with a fermata (Ex. 72):

137Garvin, op. cit., p. 25.
Example 72 The signal for a "fantasia". I:1, mm. 153-155

This fermata is a significant gesture, because historically it has been reserved to signal the cadenza. But here it occurs far too early to signal such an event. The Romantic quality of the piano writing in the ensuing section is rhapsodic and florid (Ex. 73).
Example 73  Rhapsodic interjection.  I:1, mm. 157-167

The improvisatory nature of this passage, along with the static quality of the harmony, and the signaling fermata, briefly serves to interrupt the "action," providing an articulated break in the form. The passage is similar to a cadenza which has arrived early, replacing the more usual thematic development in order to provide a unique,
melodic form of dramatic contrast. In this section Weber is more intrigued by the juxtaposition of opposing forces, orchestra and solo, than by an opportunity for the development of harmonic and motivic elements. The solo part and the orchestra part share no dialog in this section; indeed the orchestra, performing a familiar theme in the ritornello which announces the development, is sharply interrupted by this solo piano section, with its completely new and contrasting theme, both texturally and rhythmically. Weber's interruption of the expected thematic development, with its accompanying rhythmic momentum, shows that the composer wished to experiment with the dramatic possibilities inherent in the development section.

Weber departed from the traditional style of development sections. His developments are not as continuous as those found in contemporaries such as Hummel; instead Weber provides many "cadences" or breathing points which give technical passages a goal for which to strive.  

138Example 72 demonstrates one such pause; another can be seen in the same movement, immediately following the transition that leads to the recapitulation. Here, the piano trill stops the forward motion, though only momentarily, providing a sense of expectation. Immediately following this solo trill, in bar 188, there is a colorful, Romantic transition which leads back to the recapitulation (see Examples 36 and 37). Weber connects the end of the piano solo to this transition seamlessly, creating, through modulation, the use of diminished chords and colorful piano sonorities, a feeling of mysterious expectation, which the recapitulation resolves. In this

138Garvin, op. cit., p. 51.
section Weber uses his strong dramatic sense to extricate himself from the development, allowing form to follow his dramatic concept.

In the First Concerto the shortness of thematic restatements in the recapitulation is unusual. Weber abbreviates the recapitulation by presenting only eight bars of theme "A," heard this time only in the orchestra, before straightaway introducing the "B" and "C" themes, both for the piano, and for only eight bars each. The thematic material is shared by both the orchestra and the piano, with only single statements of each theme, and the digressions and transitions present in the exposition are omitted. The "C" theme is then prolonged, combined with "B" and later, briefly with "A" in a kind of stretto leading to the coda. Weber often uses a subsidiary theme to develop or prolong, or even close his rondo movements; here a similar treatment is present in the first movement. Weber's abbreviation of the recapitulation propels the forward motion of the movement at a point where Classical composers would generally seek to balance the architectural symmetry. Weber's procedure accelerates the dramatic action, perhaps to compensate for the lack of a cadenza, typically the final dramatic event in first movement form. In view of this omission, Weber's plan seems particularly well conceived.

Weber omits a cadenza following an innovation of Beethoven (in the Concerto No. 5, in E flat) thereby pointing the way to Mendelssohn and later Romantics. However his coda (beginning in measure 244) consists of highly virtuosic, largely piano solo material, that compensates for the display usually present in a cadenza. The orchestra provides only occasional forte quarter notes, resulting in a section which has a cadenza-like function, even ending on a typical
dominant trill, in bar 269. During this trill, the orchestra enters, with imitative motives taken from the main theme, which are then followed by eight bars of concluding material. Weber does not prolong this final orchestral section, which merely closes the first movement.

The slow movement form in Weber's first two concertos is inherently similar both in drama and in design to the operatic aria. Weber's success in the latter idiom is readily apparent in these movements; they are generally considered his best. The slow movement of this concerto is modeled on da capo aria form, being essentially three-part. Pauer\textsuperscript{139} describes the textual structure of a grand aria as, "consisting of two sentences, of which the first expresses a general feeling, the second, however, a particular feature of this feeling." This description is especially appropriate for Weber's opening phrase in the Adagio movement.

The orchestra presents the main theme, which is reprised in an embellished version by the solo in the returning "A," or da capo section at the close. Above this sustained, almost hymn-like opening the solo enters with a theme that is essentially an ornamental descant, though it too reappears in the return. The piano then takes up the main theme, unaccompanied. Thus there are two statements of "A."

The middle or "B" section is fantasia-like, and lacks an identifiable theme, giving it a feeling of "free-form."\textsuperscript{140} The organization of the "B" area is quite free, moving briefly through the related minor, and sequences of diminished harmonies. It is brought to a close by a dramatic alternation of fanfare-like chords between the

\textsuperscript{139}Ernst Pauer, \textit{Musical Forms} (London: Novello and Company, 1878), p. 73.
\textsuperscript{140}Paik so describes the form of the slow movements of Weber's sonatas, noting elements of rondo (op. 39) or variation (op. 49).
orchestra and solo which modulate back to the tonic key. The "da capo," or reprise of "A," is effected in the orchestra, with an arpeggiated, coloratura-like obligato in the solo, which closes the movement. The overall structure can be outlined "A," "A," "B," "A."

The most remarkable thing about this movement is not, however its form, but rather its feeling of free structure. Although the "A" theme for both the piano and the orchestra return, their characters are not sufficiently thematic as to be distinctive in the reprise. The three bars of opening orchestral material, while technically the "main" theme, scarcely count for more than an introductory swell, causing the listener to expect a more substantial "tune," an expectation which is not resolved by the improvisatory nature of the piano obligato. In addition, the middle section of this movement has no strong thematic character, nor is it, strictly speaking, developmental. Thus, aside from the cognizance of a return of the "A" material, a strong sense of architecture is not heard. What allows the movement to be effective as a piece of music is Weber's handling of his melodic and textural ideas in a natural, logical manner, and his use of orchestral and piano sonority and color.

The final movement of Weber's First Concerto is a rondo that can be outlined A B A C D A E F G E A E A. It is clear from this outline that Weber provides a wealth of themes. The main theme is altered and extended each time in a variational fashion.\textsuperscript{141} Weber employs a variety of themes in the movement and uses them as a means of

\textsuperscript{141} Garvin, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 50.
diversification, rather than following a more Classical approach of motivic development.

Some of Weber's secondary themes develop the drama through their technical nature, and are often coupled with excursions into closely related minor keys. They function less as thematic, formal identities than as episodal "patches." For example, note Weber's "C" theme (Ex. 74):

Example 74 "C" theme. I:3, mm. 81-91
This theme retains the arpeggio figure of the "A" theme, and the simple harmonic rhythm of the tonic/dominant alternation has also been retained in augmentation. Here the difficult passagework provides contrast more than the melodic or harmonic content of the theme itself. Also, when Weber designs a theme that bears the function of providing contrast, such as his "D" theme, he devises an extended close for it as well (Ex. 75):
Example 75 "D" Theme with extended close. I:3, mm. 118-139

Formally the most remarkable item in this movement is Weber's employment of dance "scena" in the rondo. Once again, he stops the action (as in the first movement) with a fermata (bar 340). This formal articulation comes at a point where Mozart might typically have provided a third movement cadenza. This intrusion serves as a dramatic lull before the moment when the piano is allowed to break
free of the orchestra, with cadenza-like virtuosity, increasing the
tension through chains of diminished chords that prepare the final
return of the "A" theme.

The final presentation of this theme is artfully rendered; Weber
combines "A" with "E" in an opera-duet style. The importance of
Weber's addition and stress on the "E" theme is great; Weber gives the
rondo of the Second Concerto, and that of the Konzertstück, a similar
treatment. Apparently, Weber wished to dispense with the
architectural balance a return to "A" would provide, opting instead to
"free" the rondo form at the moment of its dénouement, and to
transfigure a previous sub-theme, for the sake of a brilliant, dramatic
ending.
CHAPTER III

Concerto No. 2 in E Flat major, Op. 32

Background Information

The refinement and development seen in the piano Concerto No. 2 represents a marked step towards Weber's mature style. Despite the brief interval between the First and Second Concertos, the growth in style is apparent. In the Second Concerto, the influence of Mozart and the Classical style is replaced by that of Beethoven.\(^{142}\) Weber himself was keenly aware of the differences between the two concertos. In a letter to Gottfried on 15 November 1811, he writes of his Second Concerto: "It has a completely different character and it is much more brilliant and difficult than the first, a really bold piece of *Sturm und Drang.*" \(^{143}\)

The Second Concerto was begun in 1811 in Munich and completed in 1812 in Gotha. It bears a dedication to Duke Emil Leopold August, who was responsible for Weber's position as court composer.\(^{144}\) Other compositions from this period of Weber's life include his *Sonata in C major*, (Op. 24; J.138), the *Seven Variations on a theme from Méhul's Joseph*, (Op.28; J.141), and the singspiel *Abu*

\(^{142}\)Alberth, *op. cit.*, p. iv.
\(^{143}\)Warrack, *Carl Maria von Weber*, p. 147.
\(^{144}\)Ibid., p. 87.
Hassan (J.106). The First Sonata, an extremely virtuosic work, has a slow movement with a Romantic, aria-like theme, and many "orchestral" effects in the piano texture. Abu Hassan continues in the style of Mozart's singspiels rather than looking forward to Romanticism; its subject matter--exotic far away places and times--is the only element that reflects modern trends.

Weber completed the rondo of his Second Concerto months before finishing the other movements, and this enabled him to use the movement as the finale in a performance of the First Concerto. Weber's lack of concern over substituting movements reflects a Classical attitude on the subject, much like Mozart's. Weber first played the new concerto in its entirety Gotha on 17 December 1812, when, according to his diary it "...made a furor and went excellently. I didn't play it badly either."\textsuperscript{145}

This concerto owes a debt to Beethoven's Emporer Concerto; not only in choice of key and bravura gesture, but also in the heroic, Napoleonic air of victory with which it is imbued. Beethoven had already written his piano concertos at that time, and Weber must have been familiar with the last of them, since according to a diary entry, he had bought a copy of the E flat concerto in the beginning of 1811. However, it is unlikely that Weber had heard any of them in actual performance; at the time, Beethoven's concertos were not yet widely known.\textsuperscript{146} The similarities between the two concertos are readily seen. The solo entrances in both begin with arpeggiated figures in forte, bravura gestures. Both concertos share identical key

\textsuperscript{145}Warrack, Carl Maria von Weber, p. 50.
\textsuperscript{146}Alberti, \textit{op. cit.}, p. iii.
relationships between movements: E flat, B major, E flat. Finally, both last movements have a triple time, dance-like quality. These traits point to the kinship between the two works. But, despite these similarities, Weber's Second Concerto bears the composer's personal stylistic imprint, a more mature style that continues to develop towards a highly Romantic pianistic idiom.

**Orchestral Treatment**

Weber's orchestra in this concerto is similar to Beethoven's, minus the oboes (which were apparently not available in the ducal orchestra at Gotha). However, unlike the scoring for the First Concerto, this orchestra does include the clarinet, which, in the first movement, is given a brief duet with the bassoon, creating an interesting color combination with which to contrast the piano sound (Ex. 76).

![Example 76 Clarinet/bassoon duet. II:1, mm. 64-65](image)

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In the slow movement, the clarinet also has a brief solo that is replete with typical Weberian intervals—the ninth, major and minor seventh and sixth. This solo also concludes with a dotted sixteenth and thirty-second figure which Weber characteristically employs in his themes (Ex. 77).

Example 77 Concluding dotted figure. II:2, m. 28

Weber continues to score for "choirs" of strings, dividing both the first and second violins into two parts. This is a practice which Beethoven employed only occasionally in his concertos; perhaps Weber was prompted in this type of setting by the vocal quartet common in operas (Ex. 78).
Weber's handling of the orchestration, in the opening ritornello is more powerful than in the First Concerto. He uses all the forces available to him more consistently than in the previous concerto. The drama is increased in the first ritornello by an immediate turn to a diminished chord in the second measure, and by liberal use of tympani rolls for added brilliance and drama. In the second theme Weber again uses divided strings to provide contrast to the massive sound of the opening. The solo entrance is colorfully prepared by a mysterious, rumbling tympani solo (Ex. 79).
Example 79  Prepared piano entrance. II:1, mm. 41-44

Despite the vigorous use of the orchestra in the opening, the orchestra still adds only cursory comments when both piano and orchestra are together; many sections are essentially piano solos punctuated only by occasional quarter note chords and fanfare-like statements in the orchestra. There are, however, a few places where Weber uses the piano as an accompaniment to the orchestra (Ex. 80, see also Ex 76):
Example 80 Piano in accompaniment role. II:3, mm. 193-197

In this concerto the polarity of elements is clear: Each force, piano and orchestra, behaves as accompanist or solo; seldom is there an intertwining of the thematic material between the two.

The Adagio of the Second Concerto has been judged one of Weber's finest movements.148 As in the slow movement of the First Concerto, the thematic material exhibits much more interdependence of piano and orchestra that is not found in the outer movements. The orchestra often responds to the material in the piano part and vice-versa in a true dialog (Ex. 81).

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Example 81  Dialog between piano and orchestra. II:2, mm. 5-15

In Example 81, the coloristic use of instruments is most apparent.

The mysterious sounding viola line, matched against the staccato chords of the piano in measure 6, and the legato strings, with harp-like piano accompaniment in measure 13 create a dreamy, Romantic atmosphere.

Note also in Example 82 the seamless manner in which Weber moves from solo to orchestra, blending skillfully the colors of the two forces:
Example 82  Blended transition from piano to orchestra.

II:2, mm. 25-27

This concern over the melding of the colors of the solo and the orchestra, apparent in the slow movement of the First Concerto as well (see examples 26 and 27), is unusual in Classical concertos, and underscores Weber's love for coloristic effects.

Piano Treatment

The increased difficulty in the solo part of the Second Concerto is pronounced. Weber has greatly extended the range of virtuosity. The textures no longer contain any hint of Mozart, nor do they imitate Beethoven. Einstein characterizes the difference in the technical demands of Beethoven and Weber:

[Weber's Sonatas] are of an entirely different order from most of Beethoven's piano sonatas...While Beethoven's
Appassionata and Waldstein sonatas and his opus 106 are also recital pieces, they are not brilliant in the same way as are Weber's. Weber always thought of the Concert hall and always ended with an exhibition of bravura. His tradition is that stream which ran out into the broader and broader shoals in the compositions of Thalberg, Dreyschock, Herz and Hünten—until it was dammed up by Chopin and Schumann and grew to a torrent in Liszt.\textsuperscript{149}

Even though there is a similarity in texture in the music of these two composers, Weber's emphasis on bravura produces some truly influential and "modern" technical creations.

The Classical conception is compromised with the piano's opening chords in the Second Concerto. The massive block of sound which Weber envisioned at this moment belongs clearly in the Romantic period. The use of close-position arpeggios in extreme ranges of the keyboard exploits the piano's strength and brutally wrenches the audience's attention from the orchestra to the piano as an equal, if not superior force (Ex. 83):

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{ex83}
\caption{Example 83 Arpeggios in extreme ranges. II:1, mm. 42-44}
\end{figure}

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{149}Einstein, Music in the Romantic Era, p. 74.
A departure from Classical style is seen in Weber's treatment of the second theme in its solo entrance (Ex. 85). This theme reveals much growth from the Mozartean treatment given its counterpart in the First Concerto. The following examples (Ex. 84 and 85) show the stylistic contrast evident between the two concertos:

**Example 84** Mozartean single line statement. I:1, mm. 106-112

**Example 85** Octave doubling of thematic statement. II:1, mm. 84-87
The octave doubling of a cantabile theme is an unusual feature in the Classical period but one which Romantic composers would often employ. Its use in the previous example (Ex. 85) shows that Weber took full advantage of the improved singing quality of the pianoforte sound. Note also the aria-like breadth of the phrasing, as the second phrase weakens the half cadence by beginning on the high point of the section. This eight-bar unit has a vaulted, ardent song quality that is characteristically Romantic. This theme does not lend itself to motivic fragmentation as easily as does the second theme in the earlier concerto. The only vestiges of the Classical heritage evident here are the Alberti-like bass patterns, and even these have been thickened to increase their sonority. The supportive harmonies are more colorful. The diminished chord in bar 23 strengthens the arrival of the dominant, and the concluding phrase includes a secondary dominant of iv and a diminished chord to color the I 6-4 at the final cadence. This progression contrasts sharply with the simple I, IV, V harmonies of the second theme of the First Concerto (Ex. 84).

Many of the keyboard textures that Weber included in the First Concerto are also evident in the Second Concerto. Wide skips, large left hand chord stretches, fast, light, scherzando passages, and tremolos are present in this concerto. These elements will remain a feature inseparable from Weber's style of piano writing.

In the Second Concerto Weber uses the tremolo often (Ex. 86):
Although he had trouble with pianos in Gotha,\textsuperscript{150} Weber's reliance on piano tone in these tremolos suggests knowledge of an instrument whose sound was quite resonant. He uses a tremolo to introduce, with a powerful crescendo, the massive gestures of the soloist's entry in its recapitulation. This passage indicates that Weber wished to segue from the orchestral recapitulation into the solo material, connecting the colors of both elements (Ex. 87):

\textit{Example 86} Low register tremolos. II:1, mm. 133-136

\textit{Example 87} Tremolos introducing crescendo passage. II:1, mm. 133-136

\textsuperscript{150}Warrack, \textit{Carl Maria von Weber}, p. 147.
A similar tremolo appears in the last movement (Ex. 88):

![Musical notation](image)

Example 88  Tremolos used as accompaniment.  II:3, mm. 128-132

In this concerto thirds and octaves appear in abundance. Those seen in measures 100-112 (Ex. 89) may be due to Clementi's influence. The use of third doublings in such profusion is atypical of Mozart and Beethoven, particularly in the concertos.
Example 89 Third doublings. II:1, mm. 100-112

Weber combines thirds and fourths in alternation with octaves, along with contrary motion for the left hand to further complicate this difficult passage. Example 90 illustrates these intervals and the syncopated displacement of the beat in the right-hand part:

Example 90 Octave/third alternation. II:1, mm. 212-213

Weber’s preoccupation with the virtuoso style is apparent in measures 165-186, in a highly technical passage which precedes the cadenza. The modernity of this passage can be seen when it is compared to a section of Chopin’s Etude Op. 10, number 4, which has the same character and disposition: (Ex. 91, 92)
Example 91  Intricate passagework.  II:1, mm. 165-166

Example 92  Intricate passagework.

Chopin Etude Op. 10, No. 4 mm. 9-10, 20-21

Weber’s slow movements contain his most Romantic pianistic elements. Warrack writes of the Adagio of the Second Concerto:

The piano writing in this Adagio shows not merely a liking for subtle effects of color but the ornamental vocal quality that was to characterize much of the nineteenth
century's piano music....The entire movement is a locus Classicus of Romantic technique.\textsuperscript{151}

Weber uses expressive, vocal intervals and appoggiaturas often:

(Ex.93, 94):

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{example93.png}
\end{center}

\textbf{Example 93} Expressive, vocal intervals. II:2, mm. 6-8

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{example94.png}
\end{center}

\textbf{Example 94} Lyric, expressive skips. II:2, m. 15

Weber's use of rolled chords is a Romantic trait. A common tool of nineteenth century composers, rolled chords served to increase the expressive quality of a vocal line in a chordal texture by imparting a dreamy, harp-like character. (Ex. 95)

Example 95 Rolled chords used for harp-like effects. II:2, m. 12

Measures 24 and 25 (Ex. 96), set in extreme contrasts of register, range and dynamics demonstrate the noticeably Romantic, virtuosic nature of Weber's developing style. Passage-work of this nature is uncommon for the time; similar passages will occur in the Konzertstück, written a full decade later:
**Example 96** Extreme contrasts of range and dynamics.

II:2, mm. 24-25

A recitative style of melodic treatment, reinforced by octave doubling, is another feature of this slow movement. This declamatory effect will appear often in the compositions of later Romantics, such as Chopin and Liszt. Compare these declamatory passages from their concertos (Ex. 97, 98, 99):
Example 97  Declamatory setting. II:2, mm. 24-25

Example 98  Chopin, Concerto in fm, Second Movement mm. 162-165
Texture

Compared to that of the First Concerto, the textural density of the Second Concerto shows a marked increase. The extensive use of doublings, thicker accompanimental patterns and unique textures designed for tonal effects\(^1\) result in greater technical difficulty and a "bigger," more typically Romantic piano sound.

Weber often seeks orchestral effects in the piano part, through the use of thick chord structures (Ex. 100):

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\(^{152}\)Warrack, *Carl Maria von Weber*, p. 147.
Example 100 Thick chords for orchestral effect. II:2, mm. 40-43

Longyear comments on the orchestral quality of Weber's piano style:

A striking characteristic of his style is his transfer of orchestral idioms to the keyboard: not just a virtually orchestral range of sonority, as in Clementi and Beethoven, but an actual imitation of orchestral sounds, like the timpani strokes in the second movement of the Op. 24 piano sonata, the timpani rolls and horn-like arpeggios opening the Op. 39 sonata, or the string tremolando in the solo piano part of the Op. 32 concerto. Weber is the first composer whose piano works...have been successfully transcribed for orchestra.153

In the Second Concerto there are numerous examples of double-stemmed notes which increase the density and complexity of the piano part (Ex. 101):

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153 Longyear, op. cit., p. 40.
Example 101 Complex texture with double-stemmed notes.
II:1, mm. 92-93

In Example 101 there are at least three or more simultaneous voices written into the fabric:

Figure 3. Contrapuntal fabric of right hand part, II:1, mm. 92-93

Because Weber's harmonic approach in these works tends toward an excessive use of tonic and dominant harmonies, the novel textures such as shown in the previous example (Ex. 101) increase the appeal of the the piano sound and compensate for the lack of harmonic interest. Measures 70-72 illustrate the enriching effect of an intricate texture on the alternating of I and V harmonies (Ex. 102).
Example 102 Intricate texture. II:1, mm. 70-72

The simple harmonies in the previous example are presented by broken chords, with chromatic appoggiaturas adding points of dissonance, combining chromatic and diatonic patterns. The interest here is not only textural but also melodic. The texture of the solo part is complex, containing both an upper melodic voice which is heard because of its chromaticism and higher register, and a lower accompaniment part which provides a harmonic underpinning. Figure 4 shows this contrapuntal structure of the right-hand part.

Figure 4. Contrapuntal fabric in II:1, m. 71
Weber may have influenced Chopin with these multi-voice textures. Comparison with a passage from Chopin's F Minor Concerto, written nine years later, demonstrates Weber's originality in the use of piano textures and his sensitivity to the sonorous possibilities of the piano's sound (Ex. 103):

\[\text{Example 103 Weberian multi-voice texture in Chopin Concerto in F Minor, First Movement mm. 161-164}\]
Weber's Interest in Instrumental Sonority

Perhaps Weber's greatest achievement in the Second Concerto is his realization of a Romantic style of piano sonority. In the First Concerto he experimented tremolos, rapid sweeps, register contrasts, frequent use of the damper pedal and colorful juxtapositions of orchestral and piano tones. All of these devices are present in the First Concerto; however, in the Second Concerto they are fused with thicker textures and an expanded range. This results in the wider range of resonance and an aural complexity that is characteristically Romantic. In the First Concerto such Romantic sonorities appeared chiefly in the slow movement; in the Second Concerto they have been integrated into the entire work. In this respect the Second Concerto reveals a considerable growth towards Weber's mature style, the style of the Konzertstück.

Because aural characteristics cannot be separated from textural settings, the previous examples, which dealt with pianistic treatment and texture, also serve the subject of sonority. For example, the massive chord structures in Example 99 depend on careful use of the damper pedal for realization of the full, culminative effect of this passage. The impassioned nature of the Romantic declamation of this section, combining the "pathetic" melodic intervals of the major seventh and the minor ninth, accompanied by octaves and full chords, suggests a characteristically Lisztian sound.

Another example of the synthesis of Romantic sound and texture in this concerto can be seen in Example 102. Here the damper pedal once more helps to achieve an ephemeral, delicate piano sound, tinged with mild dissonance. The combination of arpeggiated chords
against diatonic and chromatic melodic elements lends an aural richness to the passage.

In the first movement of this concerto, Weber provides proof of the sustaining ability of the contemporary piano. Starting at bar 79 he writes a low F pedal octave, tied for two and a quarter bars, above which he contrasts various harmonies, including vii/V, I6/4, V/ii (Ex. 104).

![Musical notation]

Example 104 Sonorous use of damper pedal. II:1, mm. 79-81

Weber also takes advantage of the piano's naturally brilliant high register, employing broken octaves and grace notes to produce a scintillating aural texture (Ex. 105).
Example 105  Scintillating broken octaves. II:2, m. 19

Weber uses the damper pedal to project the piano tone in a harp-like arpeggiation of chord inversions (Ex. 106):

Example 106  Harp-like arpeggiation of chord inversions. II:2, m. 55

Engel writes an apt poetic description of the lush sonorities present in the slow movement of the Second Concerto:
It is full of German Forest Romanticism, and we may be excused for assuming a definitely descriptive element, with the glittering piano octaves [Ex. 105] spreading moonlight over the nocturnal scene, while the low tremolo on the piano makes the thunder rumble in the distance [Ex. 107].

Example 107 "Thunder" Descriptive tremolo. II:2, mm. 64-66

Engel's description of this movement seems to project, as if in hindsight, some of the programmatic, pictorial elements at work in the Konzertstück. This is clearly a result of the evocative treatment given this slow movement.

The colors that Weber extracts from both orchestra and piano accentuate the Romantic quality of his idiom; Weber contrasts the piano's declamatory octaves with muted violins, accompanied by flutes.

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154 Engel, The Solo Concerto, p. 45.
When the piano strikes the low octave F sharp, Weber colors this entrance with a unison in the lower strings and horns (Ex. 108).

Example 108  Color combinations in the piano and orchestra. II:2, mm. 48-50

In the following example Weber combines a high register trill in the piano part with muted violins in the return of the "A" material. This, along with a fortepiano and his indication in the piano part," come una fantasia ma in tempo," underscores his attempt to infuse the movement with Romantic mystery and color (Ex. 109).
Example 109 Effective use of piano and muted violins.

II:2, mm. 51-52

The piano tremolos employed in the final six bars show Weber's interest in using the color of the piano to form part of the orchestral palette as a whole. Instead of writing a tremolo for the violas or the cellos, Weber uses the coloristic possibilities of the piano as a member of the orchestra to achieve a similar but heightened effect.

Weber employs tremolos again in the finale. Here, in measure 128, he dissolves the piano rhythm from quarter/eighth-patterns to a tremolo, passing the rhythm to the flute, clarinet, and cello, which trade imitative motives. The piano part forms a backdrop, a color-
providing tremolo, against which instrumental colors are brought into relief. This arrangement is a unique setting of the concerto forces.\textsuperscript{155}

Form

One of Weber's most significant explorations in this work lies in his treatment of first movement sonata form. The dilemma posed for Romantic composers in their attempts to integrate expansive melodies into sonata form is clearly addressed in this concerto. In the Second Concerto, Weber departs in several ways from the formal approach taken by earlier composers, moreover, his formal treatment in the Second Concerto than that attempted in the First Concerto. It is useful to look at his experiments and to trace their effects on the overall form of the Second Concerto.

The opening orchestral ritornello proceeds along traditional lines; both first and second themes occur in their expected positions. However, the piano enters with its own "theme," or better, "identity." It does not reiterate any previous material, nor does it have a typically singable theme (Ex. 110).

\textsuperscript{155}Weber uses tremolos frequently in his solo works as well (Examples of tremolos occur in the sonatas: Op. 39, mm. 132-134, Op. 39, mm. 1-11, Op. 49, mm. 75-82).
Example 110  Piano's exclusive theme. II:1, mm. 43-45

The notion of giving the piano an exclusive theme is present in the concertos of the Classical period, especially in those of Mozart. However, the style of Weber's opening solo is closer to that of Beethoven's, in his Fifth Concerto, the "Emperor". Rather than displaying a thematic contour, this entrance provides pianistic postures: strength, elegance, and playfulness (scherzando). These traits show a character of true independence in the piano part, which Weber handles confidently, establishing coherence by maintaining virtuosic brilliance, instead of by traditional thematic reiteration.

The significance of the piano entrance becomes obvious when one examines Weber's treatment of the recapitulation in measure 137. The reprise occurs in the piano part, not in the orchestra, with neither the "A" nor the "B" theme but with the "C" theme, the material presented solely by the piano. The "A" material is heard briefly in measure 122 in the section preceding the piano entrance. This is the expected moment for Weber to have reprised his "A" theme. Instead, there is just a brief reference to it, only its first bar and a half. Instead of following through with the orchestral recapitulation, Weber departs
from the "A" theme in order to construct a passage which serves to introduce the piano entrance. The reprise of the piano material which follows gives a better sense of recapitulation than the preceding orchestral material does. It is as if Weber had wished to reshape the typical forces of the recapitulation to favor the solo part. Weber's restructuring of elements in the first movement form is very effective. The omission of the "A" theme in its recapitulation throws the thematic symmetry out of balance. The thematic obfuscation of the orchestral reprise gives the concerto an episodic character, continuing the forward motion and prolonging the listener's expectations. 156

Another remarkable departure from a "typical" 18th century first movement format is seen in Weber's indication of a cadenza (not provided by Weber) in the middle of the recapitulation, before the second theme. This feature has broad implications for the overall formal and dramatic balance of the first movement form. Weber's provision for a cadenza at this unusual and premature position in the movement causes it to negate its function as the final summation of the soloist's role in the concerto. The cadenza follows the beginning of the recapitulation so quickly that it assumes a "developmental," or "episodic" character. Weber's positioning of the "B" theme after the cadenza extends the final section of the movement and opens it up to extended formal development. This has the effect of throwing the final orchestral section into relief, especially given the body of important thematic material which follows. After the cadenza, the

156Palk, op. cit., p. 42.
entire second theme and its "variation" are followed by the reprise of a ten-measure section from the exposition and a final transition to the coda. This represents a novel conception of a first movement sonata form. Mendelssohn is usually credited as the first Romantic composer to rethink the concerto first movement form, condensing the "double exposition" and dividing the presentation of themes between solo and orchestra, and, in the violin concerto, moving the cadenza to a point two thirds into the overall duration.\textsuperscript{157} Yet Weber, by whom Mendelssohn was strongly influenced, broke at least some of this ground in the Second Concerto. The relationship between the two composers regarding the placement of the cadenza is put in perspective by Veinus:

...following the path indicated by Weber and Spohr... Mendelssohn presents the first satisfactory solution to the problems of post-Classical concerto form and about the violin concerto. The great inspirations are reserved for the cadenza and close. The cadenza traditionally occurs at the end of the movement, where the continuity of thought is put aside for a section of functionless display...Mendelssohn wrote no cadenzas in the concertos...he transposed the cadenza to a point two thirds of the way through the recapitulation. It is no longer a brilliant parasitic growth.\textsuperscript{158}

While Veinus' contempt for virtuoso display is perhaps overstated, this statement indicates Mendelssohn's debt to Weber.

The form of the slow movement of the Second Concerto has much in common with that of Weber's First Concerto. Both have a triparte form (A B A) and the main themes are brief, only four measures in

\textsuperscript{157}Veinus, op. cit., p. 156.
\textsuperscript{158}Ibid., p. 185.
length. In addition, both have highly fantasia-like, improvisatory characters that tend to obscure the form. However, this movement is not as unusual for its form as it is for the manner in which Weber handles the exposition of thematic material. In this Adagio Weber divides the theme between the orchestra and the solo, giving the orchestra the antecedent phrase and the piano the consequent, though motivically the phrases have little in common (Ex. 111).
Example 111 Orchestral antecedent and piano consequent. II:2, mm. 1-11

The middle section of this slow movement is highly episodic, and there is little that is thematic. Despite the disjunct quality of this section, Weber achieves a thread of continuity by carefully connecting solo and orchestral material, and by providing a strong sense of drama and color. The return of the "A" theme, in the orchestra, is embellished with a high, coloratura-like descant in the piano part, thereby enriching the form through variation.
The finale is a rondo, thematically represented: A B C A D A C B. This can be seen as a modified seven-part rondo form, with an added appearance and final extension of the B theme. Weber's talent for creating themes which can follow in close succession is apparent, although these themes are often of a similar nature, providing little contrast. An important feature of the thematic arrangement is the emphasis placed on the "B" theme, inserted instead of the "A" theme, to close the movement. Weber followed the same procedure in his First Concerto, selecting a subsidiary theme with which to close. It is unusual to avoid a final restatement of "A." By doing so Weber creates a feeling of freshness in the ending, forfeiting the final balance that a return to "A" would provide.

In summary, Weber's Second Concerto shows clear growth in his pianistic palette. Many of the textures and difficulties present in it are also present in the Konzertstück. Weber has not yet achieved a completely integrated handling of first movement form, and yet his experimentation results in a work which ties his ideas together quite successfully.
CHAPTER IV

Weber's Konzertstück in F Minor, Op. 79: A Study in Program Music

The Konzertstück is probably the single concerted work of Weber's that is readily familiar to today's audiences. It has a broad, popular appeal due to the effortless unfolding of its form, the colorful program that Weber appended, and its fully realized virtuoso pianism. It is important to examine each of these facets in order to understand Weber's mature style.

The period in Weber's life that saw the completion of the Konzertstück was extremely fertile: Der Freischütz was hailed a resounding success and Weber was feted as the "father of German Romantic opera." During the years 1819-1822 he composed his last sonata, the operas Preziosa, Die Drei Pintos, Euryanthe, the Konzertstück and a trio for flute, cello and piano.\footnote{Palk, op. cit., p. 21.}

The Konzertstück was completed in the spring of 1822\footnote{According to Alberti the date is 1821.} -- finished on the very morning of the premiere of Der Freischütz\footnote{Warrack, Carl Maria von Weber, p. 112.} -- and first published by the Bureau de Musique of Leipzig. Unlike Weber's other works for solo instrument and orchestra, it was published not only in parts but also with score. This factor may explain in part why this work has become a standard in concert.
programs, as opposed to his other works, many of which still lack modern editions in scores and parts. 162

Precursors to the Konzertstück

Clearly, Weber's Konzertstück represents a milestone in the history of the piano concerto. It is significant that Weber unified three movements into an organic whole, leaving no breaks between sections. Moreover, the programmatic nature of the work, in conjunction with the binding of movements, is a truly Romantic feature and points the way to the development of the one movement concerto and the symphonic poem. Although Weber broke new ground with the Konzertstück, he may have been influenced by the compositions of several earlier composers which are also based on "programs."

In the broad outline, the programmatic content of the Konzertstück represents the Adieux, Absence, Retour format already adopted by Beethoven in his sonata "Les Adieux," Op. 81a, a sonata that may well have influenced Weber. Beethoven's sonata features a short, 16 bar, Adagio introduction, with the word "lebewohl" inscribed over the first three beats. While this introduction is much shorter than Weber's opening section, it nonetheless has a similar organic importance to the overall form. An Allegro follows, without a break, in both works. However the similarities end here as Beethoven gives us next a movement that is completely in sonata allegro form, its conclusion coming to a full close, unconnected to the slow movement. Beethoven's inclusion of a middle, slow movement is also proof that he

162 Alberi, op. cit., p. ii.
was conforming to the general layout of a Sonata fast-slow-fast design. This slow movement is connected to the finale, a procedure similar to the one adopted by Weber. The last movement of *Les Adieux* is in a sonata-rondo form which also confirms a Classical treatment. However, further similarities to the Konzertstück appear in the opening of the finale of *Les Adieux*, which commences with a cadenza-like flourish of brilliant material, an announcement of action to be followed shortly by the thematic material of the last movement. These bars are comparable to the *più mosso* bars that precede Weber's finale.

Weber may also have been influenced by Beethoven's Fifth Piano Concerto. Weber knew it and was aware of the significance of the linking of the second and third movements.

Another likely precursor by a contemporary of Weber is the little known Gesangsszene concerto for violin, dated 1816, of Louis Spohr. Although this work retains the three movement concerto format, the links between movements are smoothed over by means of modulation, with no break between movements. Veinus provides this historical perspective:

His (Spohr's) Gesangsszene concerto in A Minor, Op. 47, however is not program music. It is designed in the form of a vocal "Scene" and was part of his preparation for a trip to Italy where opera loving audiences would take more willingly, he believed, to a kind of operatic concerto, with the solo violin substituting for the voice. It suffers less than his other violin concertos from the vacant nobility of style which he inherited from Viotti and Rode, or from the turgid melancholy which was already seeping into the consciousness of composers...his concertos are among the
first carriers of that public melancholia which later settled like an interesting sickness over Romantic music.\textsuperscript{163}

Veinus mentions several aspects of this work and others of the period which are true of the \textit{Konzertstück} as well. The "nobility of style" is a mode of expression that is essential to the Romantic virtuoso style, the chief exponent of which is Liszt. The infusion of the concerto with "operatic" elements was also adopted by many Romantic composers. The attitude of "melancholia," became a glorified Romantic posture.

Sporh's \textit{Gesangsszene} concerto is a likely influence on Weber's \textit{Konzertstück}: Weber knew Spohr's work and had a good opinion of it, speaking with admiration of Spohr's \textit{Jessonda} though avowing that he generally considered his works cold. He looked upon him as a composer for the learned.\textsuperscript{164} Spohr's concerto is in the form of a vocal \textit{scena} and contains many features that may have influenced Weber, especially the development of recitative into a full assumption of operatic style, with the violin adopting the role of the heroine.\textsuperscript{165} Likewise, Weber himself told his student, Julius Benedict that the piano represented the "Lady" in his program.\textsuperscript{166}

The placement of the soloist as heroine helps to draw more clearly the analogy of these works to opera-scenas and explains why Weber's \textit{Konzertstück} in particular is so successful. Hans Engel

\textsuperscript{163}Venus, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 157.
\textsuperscript{165}Venus, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 11.
comments on the dramatic relationship that results from this characterization of the soloist:

[Weber's Konzertstück is] essentially a dramatic scene similar to those Weber created in Der Freischütz, Euryanthe and Oberon, transplanted into a concerto setting. The north Italian violin concerto had already given the solo instrument a human aspect, turning it into an individual facing, and struggling against other powers and destiny. The dialogue character took on human traits. This can also be felt stirring in Bach, Mozart and Beethoven, but in this Konzertstück the dialogue grows into a dramatic scene; Spohr was the one to take this to its logical conclusion in his Gesangsszene violin concerto, where he even followed the operatic form of a recitative and arioso.\footnote{Hans Engel, The Instrumental Concerto, p. 45.}

In addition to these earlier models, Weber had experimented himself with numerous earlier one-movement works for various instruments. He composed in all nine such concerted pieces; some are merely three movements connected without break, others are in more organic, single movement forms.\footnote{Romanza siciliana for flute, 1805; Sechs Variationen for viola, 1806; Grosses Potpourri for cello, Op. 20, Andante und Rondo ungarise for viola, 1809; Variationen for cello, 1810; Concertino for clarinet, Op. 26; Adagio und Rondo for harmonichord, 1811; Andante und Rondo ungarise, for bassoon, Op. 35; and Concertino for horn, Op. 45.} Although most of these are minor compositions, they served as forerunners to the more fully realized Konzertstück.\footnote{Parkinson, Del. R. "Selected Works for Piano and Orchestra In One Movement," (D.M.A. Document Indiana University), 1974, p. 7.}

Background Information on Weber's Program

The Medieval Period, with its pomp and fanfare of knights, chivalry, and the mystery of the forest, provided Weber with a rich programmatic inspiration. Much has been written about the depiction
of the mystery of the German forest in Weber's music.\textsuperscript{170} Although this no doubt stems chiefly from the memorable "Wolf's Glen" scene in \textit{Der Freischütz}, there does seem to be a dark, mysterious atmosphere in many of the slow sections of Weber's concertos.

Weitzman has interpreted the \textit{Konzertstück} as a reflection of the spirit of national liberation that arose in Germany toward the close of the Napoleonic Wars.\textsuperscript{171} The march section in the \textit{Konzertstück} represents the return of "victorious soldiers" and in the finale depicts the maiden's joyous "redemption" from suffering. These programmatic elements can readily be seen as corollaries to events in Europe at the time.

Weber first mentioned this work as early as 1815, in a letter to F. Rochlitz:

I have an \textit{f} minor piano concerto planned. But as concertos in the \textit{minor} without definite, evocative ideas seldom work with the public, I have distinctly inserted into the whole a kind of story whose thread will connect and define its character --moreover, one so detailed and at the same time dramatic that I found myself obliged to give it the following headings: \textit{Allegro}, \textit{Parting}. \textit{Adagio: Lament}. \textit{Finale}: \textit{Profoundest misery, consolation, reunion, jubilation}.\textsuperscript{172}

Weber writes of having a concerto planned and of inserting the program into it as though the musical concept preceded the program. However by writing that the story will "connect and define its character", Weber leads the reader to believe that the story shaped the form and the dramatic make-up of the work. The latter procedure


\textsuperscript{171}Venius, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 169.

\textsuperscript{172}Warrack, \textit{Carl Maria von Weber}, p. 245.
seems the more likely one in view of Weber's expertise as an opera composer and his experience in setting libretti to music. Moreover, Weber was very successful in composing music to preconceived programs: his two most famous compositions for piano, the Aufforderung zum Tanz and the Konzertstück in F Minor, share this distinction. It is important, however, not to attach overriding importance to Weber's dependency on his program in any but the broadest musical analogies. Veinus offers a balanced view of Weber's relationship to the program of the Konzertstück:

...it was by way of his dramatic imagination that he was most readily stimulated to a satisfying formal design--not at all the same thing as following a preconceived story with illustrative music. With the exception of the March, much the weakest of the four sections, there is nothing in the work to betray anything more specific than generalized emotions: the very lack of any attempt to portray the quasi-Medieval shows that he was not concerned with illustration. In the same letter Weber told Rochlitz that he hated pieces of music with labels attached and was a little nervous of being mis-understood over this one; and although he was prepared to admit at any rate to his wife and pupil, the dramatic basis of his invention, he never printed the story or indeed gave any encouragement for the work to be treated as program music.\textsuperscript{173}

By giving his Romantic spirit full reign in programmatic compositions Weber could make full use of orchestral color to create moods. With an overt "program" his sense of dramatic effect and instrumental color "painting" was given inspiration. The presence of a program also relieved Weber from the rigors of "abstract" musical forms, where his compositions are less formally integrated.

\textsuperscript{173}Venus, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 170.
Weber’s Fourth Sonata, published in 1823\textsuperscript{174}, is of the same period as the Konzertstück and is also endowed with a program. The program is similar to that of the Konzertstück in dramatic content. The chronological proximity of these two pieces indicates that he was interested in developing a form that would follow a dramatic evolution. Both compositions begin with a mood of melancholy, achieved in a 'fantasia-like' setting. The second section of both works depict the wild, hysterical imagination of the victim. These sections are, appropriately, Allegro. The third sections differ: in the Konzertstück, a March, and in the Sonata in E Minor, an Andante. However both compositions end with effective Allegros: in one, the "joy of reunion," and in the other, insanity. The similarities of these dramatic outlines indicate a connection between the two compositions. Benedict described the program of these works, writing:

Like the Invitation à la Valse and the Konzertstück, this splendid [sonata] has a subject. The 1st movement, according to Weber’s own ideas, portrays in mournful strains the state of a sufferer from fixed melancholy and despondency with occasional glimpses of hope, which are however, always darkened and crushed. The second movement describes an outburst of rage and insanity: the Andante in C is of a consolatory nature, and fitly expresses the partly successful entreaties of friendship and affection endeavoring to calm the patient, though there is an undercurrent of agitation—of evil augury. The last movement, a fantastic tarantella with only a few snatches of melody, finishes in exhaustion and death. None but Weber himself could give the true picture of this fierce struggle of reason against the demon of insanity which this fine composition so graphically describes.\textsuperscript{175}

\textsuperscript{174} Warrack, "Weber," p. 263.
The actual program inspiring the Konzertstück was never overtly detailed by Weber himself, at least not in writing. We do have the above mentioned letter to Rochlitz telling us that he clearly had a program in mind. The version of the program that appears in connection with the Konzertstück originates again with Benedict who, on a visit with Weber and his wife Caroline, witnessed a private performance of the work with Weber at the piano providing a running commentary. Benedict recounts the following outline:

The lady sits in her tower: she gazes sadly into the distance. Her knight has been for years in the holy land. Shall she ever see him again? Battles have been fought; but no news of him who is so dear to her. In vain have been all her prayers. A fearful vision rises to her mind: her knight is lying on the battlefield deserted and alone; his heart's blood is ebbing fast away. Could she but be by his side! Could she but die with him! She falls exhausted and senseless. But Hark! What is that distant sound? What glimmers in the sunlight from the wood? What are those forms approaching? Knights and squires with the cross of the crusades, banners waving, acclamations of the people; and there, it is he! She sinks into his arms. Love is triumphant. Happiness without end. The very woods and waves sing the song of love: a thousand voices proclaim its victory!176

These programmatic descriptions tell us much about the fervid, highly exaggerated Romantic imagination that Weber and his generation possessed and its inclusion points to a synthesis of literary and musical ideas of the early nineteenth century.

The Relationship of Weber’s ”Program“ to the Music of the Konzerstück

The significance of Weber’s plan to design a concerto around a programmatic idea is great, and a closer look at the interaction of his program with the music of the Konzerstück will help to determine the overall form of the work. The musical depiction of Benedict’s account is hard to pinpoint in the score except in the broadest manner. Engel outlines these sections:\textsuperscript{177} the opening (Larghetto Affettuoso) represents the Lament of the ”Lost damsel in distress”, the ensuing Allegro appassionato the ”alarmed, anguished dreams of the Damsel,” the final piano flourishes (Meas. 191-221) the ”final exhaustion of the tortured dreams.” The lines, ”What is that distant sound?... What glimmers from the sunlight from the wood...What are those forms approaching?,” are heard in the brief, four-measure Adagio (meas. 222-226). The ”first clamor of the victorious, returning soldiers”, is clearly depicted in the Tempo di Marcia beginning in measure 227. This march commences pianissimo, with each phrase becoming progressively louder, in a movement which represents victorious soldiers approaching from the distance. Not until 34 bars later do we hear a fortissimo, the arrival of the troops and the climax of the march. Engel concludes that the final prestissimo represents the ”joy of reunion”.\textsuperscript{178}

Beyond this general outline, it is impossible to go into detail assigning Weber’s reported program to particular musical phrases and motives. It is more important to trace the way in which the dramatic

\textsuperscript{177}Hans Engel, Die Entwicklung des Deutschen Klavier Konzertes von Mozart bis Liszt, p. 167
\textsuperscript{178}Ibid., p. 167.
content of the story colors the music and directs its form. Although the program itself was never detailed in terms of its passage for passage interpretation, it is interesting and helpful to attempt to assign the program its broadly corresponding musical parallels.

The opening setting, of the Châtelaine "gazing far away into the distance," is certainly represented in the slow, introductory section. Even in the first bar, the skip of a diminished fourth to an accented appoggiatura heightens the pathos of the melody (Ex. 112):

Example 112 Melodic portrayal of pathos. Konzertstück, mm. 1-2

The diminished seventh chord in measure six, on the accented second beat, underscores the feeling of melancholy and is another example (see ex. 31) of what Warrack aptly called a Romantic "shudder" (Ex. 113):
Example 113  A Romantic "Shudder." Konzertstück, m. 3-7

Another way in which Weber portrays a sense of melancholy in the introduction is seen in measure 8. The melodic contour of the first violins, punctuated by ascending skips of a minor 6th and two diminished fifths, creates the effect of the nervous "palpitating" heart of the heroine. The effect is heightened by the contrasting repeated notes in the second violins and the violas (Ex. 114):

Example 114  Musical portrayal of agitation. Konzertstück, mm. 8-12
A breathless quality is portrayed in the piano’s statement of the initial theme (bar 25) through Weber’s use of staccato chords in the accompaniment. Engel speaks of the influence of the Konzertstück on Liszt’s Second Piano Concerto in A Major, originally entitled “Grande Concerto Symphonique.” In both works, Engel sees the piano representing the "role of the faithful," the orchestra, "its opponents". If we assume that the soloist represents the heroine in Weber’s Konzertstück, then the vocal quality of the soprano line, supported by the breathless, staccato chords, seem to depict the characterization perfectly
(Ex. 115):

Example 115  Breathless staccato chords against plaintive melody.  
Konzertstück, mm. 24-29

Weber drops the orchestral part in measure 38 and gives the piano part a coloratura outcry serving, in a sense, to liberate the solo from its accompaniment. This, along with the following tenuti figures in bar 40 could represent the desolate sobs of the unhappy Châtelaine (Ex. 116):
Example 116 Coloratura outcry. Konzertstück, mm. 38-42

Indeed, all of the material from measures 43-52, with its rich variety of melodic figuration, chromaticism and precipitously changing registers, seems to depict the wild imagination of the heroine's fevered state (Ex. 117).
Example 117  Portrayal of "fevered state." Konzertstück, mm. 43-52

The following "movement," the Allegro passionato, is less clear as to precise programmatic delineation. The diminished arpeggio followed by an F minor broken chord, which is the principal motive of this movement, seems to provide a dramatic suggestion of the lines:
"Her knight is lying on the battlefield deserted and alone; his heart's blood is ebbing fast away. Could she but be by his side--Could she not die with him!" The undefined sonata-form of this movement has a brief development section which serves to depict these visions, by its movement through several key levels and diminished chords. This Allegro closes in bar 219 with pianissimo chords in the solo part, perhaps representing the line "She falls back unconscious" (Ex. 118):

![Musical notation image]

**Example 118** Depiction of "She falls back unconscious."
**Konzertstück**, mm. 215-221

Doubtless, the five bar Adagio (mm. 222-226) is a musical depiction of the lines "But hark! What notes are those in the distance? Over there in the forest something flashes in the sunlight---nearer and nearer." The suspense of the moment is captured in the tentative bassoon fanfares and the hint of the military drum in the string parts. The fermatas just before the **Tempo di marcia** reinforce the anticipation of some important event (Ex. 119):
Example 119 Portrayal of anticipation. Konzertstück, mm. 222-226

The March which follows commences *pianissimo*, and by gradually building both in dynamics and instrumental forces, realistically portrays the image of "knights and squires" approaching "nearer and nearer." This triumphant march continues until it reaches a fortissimo, preceded by the piano's famous octave glissando, the solo's only appearance in this movement. Possibly the piano represents the arrival of the hero in the lines "...and there---is it he"? Again there is the suggestion of the piano representing the role of the faithful, the orchestra representing its opponents.\(^{179}\)

A light scherzando passage which is typically Weberian can be seen in the 21 bar *più mosso* which begins in measure 284 (Ex. 120):

\(^{179}\)Engel, *The Instrumental Concerto*, p. 53.
Example 120 Scherzando passage. Konzertstück, mm. 284-286

With its lightly running chords and rapidly ascending passagework, this section perfectly conveys the feeling of elation, of joy unbounded, as in the lines "Love is triumphant. Happiness without end."

The presto gioioso finale continues these sentiments in a lilting 6/8 tarantella. The text at this point is "The very woods and waves sing the song of love; a thousand voices proclaim his victory." This happy mood is well suited to Weber; he often achieves effortless success in spirited rondo movements (Ex. 121).
**Example 121** Lilting tarantella. *Konzertstück*, mm. 305-310

**Form**

Weber first approached the concerto form using conventional procedures; it is therefore interesting to speculate why he chose to adopt a novel plan for his third work in this genre. Perhaps Weber felt that he must address, in his first two concertos, the Classical demands for distinct, formal entities, while in the *Konzertstück*, his innate discomfort with Classical forms finally led him to abandon sonata form. This discomfort, along with a growing confidence in handling dramatic settings, allowed him to overcome Classical restraints. The form of Weber’s *Konzertstück* is highly individual for its time and has few predecessors. In connecting each of the movements into a unified whole, Weber demonstrated that he was seeking to modify the concerto form significantly.

Weber dispensed with sonata form altogether in several of his concerted works as, for example, in his *Hungarian rondo* for violin and orchestra (1809-1813), and the *Adagio and Rondo* for harmonichord and orchestra (1811); both works are essentially concertos with an
unconventional first movement form. In the Konzertstück Weber dispensed with traditional formal plan almost entirely, producing a fresh, original work which was an inspiration to future generations of concerto composers.

Weber allows the program of the Konzertstück to influence his form in a much more integrated manner than that accomplished by his predecessors. He undertakes many formal experiments resulting from the program which go beyond Beethoven's programmatic treatment in the Les Adieux sonata. For example, Weber spends much more time in transitional areas, indicating his interest in cultivating an evolutionary piece whose form would follow the dramatic action of a "program." Weber's placement of a March movement, instead of the typical slow movement, between the Allegro movements when his "program" dictated the necessity for one, is strong proof he was subordinating formal conventions.

The Konzertstück contains four main divisions. Larghetto affettuoso, Allegro passionato, March, and Presto. There are no breaks between the "movements." Weber consciously strives to hide the structural seams as much as possible. The connections between movements signal a conscious attempt to shape the work as an organic whole, to avoid moving abruptly from one independent idea to another.

The Konzertstück begins with what is usually labeled an introduction. However, whether this is a true introduction or, in fact, an actual movement, bears scrutiny, since this judgement will clarify the overall form. The opening is introduced by the orchestra,

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180 Veinus, op. cit., p. 170.
with a compelling eight-bar phrase followed by an answering "B" theme, built on an upward moving sequence. After a brief arpeggio for the piano, the solo also has the same material followed by an embellished form of the answering phrase, which the orchestra now repeats along with the piano. The piano concludes this section with extended fantasia-like passages that are strongly individual and dramatic, though lacking thematic identity. This virtuosic section leads to the actual "introduction" of the Allegro passionato, which occurs in measure 72, the Poco a poco più mosso a piacere (Ex. 122).

Example 122 Introduction of the Allegro Passionato.
Konzertstück, mm. 72-85
Beethoven's influence may again be at work in the transition to the second major division, the Allegro. Beethoven's "Appassionata" Sonata, Op. 57, also in the key of f minor, has a transition to the finale which is similar to this passage. In the "Appassionata" sonata, there is no break between second and third movements. In the Konzertstück there is no break between the first and second sections. In both works there is also a diminished arpeggio that acts as a dramatic link between movements. Compare this passage from the Appassionata (Ex. 123, 124)

Example 123 Beethoven, "Appassionata" Op. 57, mm. 90-96, mm. 1-8

to this similar passage from the Konzertstück:
Georgii notes elements of a sonata first movement form in this Allegro; he believes a first theme, second theme and "development" can be seen. According to Georgii, the Allegro passionato commences with the principal theme (see ex. 124) then, after 57 bars, during which there is much stormy developmental material, even a reference to a "C" theme, a secondary theme appears which is in the relative major key (Ex. 125):
The key change provides the primarily contrast in this subordinate theme. Instead of two rhythmic inflections per-measure as in the main theme, the rhythmic pulse slows to one-per-measure, thus giving the theme additional calm and providing contrast. Georgii sees the following section as the development, during which the primary theme in the relative major is presented, moving directly through a few sequences, before returning to the primary theme in the tonic. Thus, the form of this section can be represented by A B C A A. If Weber did have a variant sonata form in mind, he abandons it abruptly in bar 221 where a mysterious Adagio introduction precedes the March segment of the work.

The March forms the third major division of the Konzertstück and is unexpected in the concerto format, appearing in the typical position of the scherzo movement in later Romantic concertos. This "movement" is strophic; the same 16 bar period is repeated three times (represented A A A'), increasing both in dynamics and in the size of the orchestral forces.
The following *Più mosso* section introduces the last "movement" of this piece, *the Presto giojoso*. Again, Weber writes an extended transition, in order to lead logically into the final section of the work. The final presto movement is in a rondo form which can outlined as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meas.</th>
<th>305</th>
<th>317</th>
<th>329</th>
<th>333</th>
<th>343</th>
<th>371</th>
<th>390</th>
<th>404</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A'</td>
<td>A'</td>
<td>trans.</td>
<td>A'</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p</td>
<td>p &amp; o</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>p &amp; o</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>p &amp; o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>425</th>
<th>429</th>
<th>441</th>
<th>465</th>
<th>477</th>
<th>486</th>
<th>534</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>A'</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Coda (B)</td>
<td>Codetta (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>vi</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>6/4</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>6/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p</td>
<td>p &amp; o</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>p &amp; o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p = piano

o = orchestra

Figure 5. Diagram of the *Presto giojoso*.\textsuperscript{182}

The themes in this movement are not highly contrasting and are more motivic than melodic, relying on virtuosic effect rather than melodic originality. Only the "C" episode provides new color by a modulation to D flat. As is typical of Weber, he ends the piece with a theme other than the "A" theme.

**Pianistic Treatment**

Weber's colorfully Romantic "program" is important for its determination of both the emotional tone and the structure of the *Konzertstück*. However, no knowledge of the "program" itself is

\textsuperscript{182}Del R. Parkinson, *op. cit.*, p.16.
necessary to the success of the work as an "abstract" musical experience. Weber himself wished to avoid composing a work dependent on an extra-musical "program" for its success. Perhaps the program's real value lies in its role as a catalyst for Weber's musical creativity and dramatic sense of form. In the Konzertstück, Weber's program stimulated his imagination and allowed him to produce a highly successful work. The program of the Konzertstück has much the same relation to the music as do the programmatic titles of later tone poems of Strauss, which it in many ways predicts.

From the very first bars of orchestral tutti it is apparent that the style of this work is markedly different from that of the earlier concertos. The lush, Romantic, elegiac strains of the strings in the opening foretell of the scope of the tale and its psychological portent.

Weber's "program" dictates the nature of the solo's first appearance, a slow melancholy unfolding of the plot (Ex. 126):

![Example 126 Quiet piano opening. Konzertstück, mm. 19-23](image)

Weber's keen sense of the "orchestral" possibilities of the piano, both with the instrumental ensemble and in solo appearances, is
apparent in this piece. Such an "orchestral" texture can be seen in the piano's treatment of the Larghetto theme already stated by the orchestra (Ex. 127).

\begin{example}
\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{example.png}
\caption{Orchestral texture in solo piano part. \textit{Konzertsstück}, mm. 24-29}
\end{figure}
\end{example}

This texture is highly individual to Weber's music; he uses a similar effect in his First Concerto (see example 16).

Weber's treatment of the Larghetto theme, in the solo's first appearance, showcases the vocal possibilities of the piano. It is to Weber's credit that he dispensed with the thundering entrance typical of Romantic concertos, a choice that surely refutes any detractor's claim of empty virtuosity.

Several passages show that Weber's pianistic vocabulary had increased markedly by this time. One way in which Weber enriches the piano part is by using chordal voicings that are thicker and more complex than the textures in his earlier concertos (Ex. 128):
Example 128  Complex accompanimental texture.  
Konzertstück, mm. 36-37

In addition, he more frequently inserts expressive, filigree passagework. Indeed, it would be difficult to imagine that Chopin had not been influenced by the opening section of this work, for it resembles the elegant vocal pathos that he was to cultivate in his Nocturnes. This vocal, coloratura style is particularly evident in measures 53-59 (Ex. 129).
Example 129 Coloratura writing for the piano.  
Konzertstück, mm. 53-59

Here, the rich rhythmic variety and chromatic complexity in the floratura passagework is very progressive, a characteristic already explored to a degree in his First Concerto (first movement, 2nd theme, meas. 156-175). The exaggerated expressive style of the piano part in these measures with its strong ascents and descents, tenuti and wildly contrasting dynamics, show that Weber has departed from the Classical characteristics evident in the earlier concerti.

Weber's use of the piano's extreme high and low registers for the sake of brilliance and sonority shows his understanding of the piano's
dramatic and virtuosic potential. The thick chord voicings in bars 60-61, add much depth to the piano sonority. In these measures Weber has fused turgid, low register voicings of chords with a tremolo in the strings to create a dark, forbidding instrumental color. (Ex. 130):

Example 130 Colorful combinations of piano and strings. Konzertstück, mm. 60-61

In the Konzertstück Weber has balanced dramatic moods and displays of technical virtuosity in a manner that is extremely successful. He has integrated a wealth of thematic materials more logically than in the previous concertos. This work represents the apogee of Weber's output in the concerto medium. Its pianistic advancement over the previous concertos indicated the fertile path that Weber might have taken had illness not overcome him at so early an age.
CHAPTER V

Performance Problems and Considerations in Weber's Piano Music

Weber's status as a brilliant virtuoso accounts for many of the difficulties in his music. As one of the earliest Romantic virtuosic-composers, Weber produced music distinctly disposed toward display. Apart from difficult interval spans--made easier by Weber's large hands--and quick register shifts, his piano writing often lies well under the fingers. Indeed, there is much that employs Czerny-like arpeggios and scales written in easily negotiated patterns. These natural hand positions suggest that Weber often relied on his strong improvisational abilities to design many of his passages. Nonetheless, Weber's piano writing is often quite difficult. Warrack notes the characteristic combination of facile and awkward keyboard styles that Weber employs in his piano compositions:

Weber's piano music is always superbly written and usually extremely difficult to play. There is no contradiction in terms here: his difficulties are invariably pianistic, never written against the natural possibilities, though they often take their nature from the exceptional size of his hands...\(^{183}\)

It is possible to categorize the pianistic difficulties in Weber's music into four areas. They include difficulties arising from: 1) widely

\(^{183}\)Warrack, *Carl Maria von Weber*, p.106.
spaced chords and rapid leaps, 2) rapid passagework, double note passages and octaves,
3) sensitive effects of sonority and color and, 4) rhythmic complexity, especially hemiola.

There are numerous examples of difficulties inspired by Weber's large hand. Schonberg provides these insights: "Weber had hands as big as Wölfl's, and his stretch was such that he could play left-hand chords like A flat, E flat, A flat, and C (from the A flat sonata); or F, C,F,A or C, G, B flat, E (both in the fourth variation of his Variations on an Original Theme, Op. 9.). The man must have been able to stretch a twelfth at least." Many examples of wide span chords can be seen in the First Concerto. The lyrical E flat section is accompanied by a chord which is impossible to play simultaneously by any but the largest of hands (Ex. 131):

![Musical notation](image)

**Example 131** Wide-span chords. I:1, mm. 157-159

Further examples of Weber's unusually large hand span can be found in the Adagio movement of the Op. 11 Concerto. The left hand

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accompanimental chords in bar 5 and again in bars 9 and 10 are impossible to play without rolling, except for hands which easily span more than a tenth (Ex. 132):

Example 132  Wide span chords.  I:2, mm. 5, 9-10

Additional examples of accompaniments with wide span can be found in Weber's Second Concerto, Op. 32. The accompaniment to Weber's second theme for the piano, bar 84, is quite uncomfortable to play if one holds down the low b flat as written. The following measure contains the same treatment in the dominant. While Weber's large hand may have facilitated his execution of these textures, for most players they are simplified by use of the damper pedal, which allows one to release the bass notes. In the slow movement of the Second Concerto, Weber includes a few difficult stretches, clearly wishing to increase the sonority of the piano in this exposed solo passage: (Ex. 133)
Example 133 Difficult stretches. II:2, m. 24

Note also the extended chordal work, in this instance not overly demanding in stretch, but difficult due to its speed and the thickness of the texture. (Ex. 134):

Example 134 Extended chordal passage. II:2, mm. 40-43

It is interesting that in his last "concerto," the Konzertstück, Weber includes fewer examples of these wide spans. Weber has refined his style, adopting a more glib and pianistic vocabulary. In the Konzertstück the only measures which show the influence of Weber's wide hand span occur in the accompaniment for the left hand part in
measure 371, and even this, if played lightly, lies well beneath the fingers (Ex. 135).

Example 135  More comfortable reaches.  
Konzertstück, mm. 371-374

A type of difficulty which also stems from Weber's large hand is that of wide interval skips in quick succession. Each of the concertos is filled with examples of this technical trait. In the First Concerto, in the initial solo piano section, there is a very pointed example of these wide and effective leaps (Ex. 136).

Example 136  Difficult leaps. I:1, mm. 67-68
An example can also be found in the left hand part in measure 169. (see Ex. 137)

Example 137 Wide leaps in the left hand. I:1, mm. 168-170

Finally, in a quintessentially Weberian gesture, in bar 395 of the last movement (Ex. 138), Weber combines wide skips with grace notes in the brilliant upper register of the piano:

Example 138 Wide skips with grace notes. I:3, mm. 395-396

Perhaps his most famous examples of wide skips are in the Konzertstück, in bars 160-163 (Ex. 139):
Example 139  Difficult wide skips. Konzertstück, mm. 160-162

These skips, it has often been said, were designed as much for visual effect as for aural effect, much in the way that Weber's frequent use of glissandos must have added a strong theatrical flair to his public performances.

The sheer speed of Weber's passage work, usually scalar or arpeggiated but sometimes with added harmonies and passing chords, is a further area of difficulty in his concertos. This demand for speed was something new to the era and poses technical difficulties even for today's performers. Examples of this sort of difficulty are seen less in Weber's First Concerto, where his pianistic style has not yet fully developed. However, in the Second Concerto, Op. 32, several examples appear (Ex. 140, 141):
Example 140  Rapid passagework.  II:1, mm. 216-217

Example 141  Difficult rapid sweeps.  II:2, mm. 232-233

In the slow movement, there are several fantasia-like flourishes which require the utmost delicacy and speed: (Ex. 142)

Example 142  Fantasia-like flourishes,  II:2, mm. 24-25
The finale is perhaps not essentially more difficult than is normal for the Classical period, except that Weber demands more speed (Ex. 143, 144):

Example 143 Rapid passagework. II:3, mm. 7-8

Example 144 Rapid passagework. II:3, mm. 19-20

The Konzertstück contains numerous examples of fast passagework. In measure 51 and 52 of the opening section, for example, the fantasia writing calls for very fast scale-work, including frequent groupings of 32nd notes as high as 16 per beat. The finale is consistently written in very quickly moving passages, implying a *moto-perpetual* texture. This type of extremely fast playing requires a steady rhythmic control, combined with delicacy and extremely well disciplined, fast fingers.
In these concertos, the demands on the pianist's ear for sonority and color are great. In the first two, the performer must be sensitive to both the Classical tradition of control, balance of tone and symmetry of phrasing, and to Romantic lengths of phrase, richness of texture, contrast of dynamics and emotional expression. Both styles exist in these transitional works. For example, in the First Concerto, compare the opening of the piano exposition (bars 56-64), written in a completely Classical style, with the Romantic yearning and Chopinesque E flat theme of bars 157-170: (ex. 145, 146).

Example 145  "Classical" theme. I:1, mm. 106-110

Example 146  Chopinesque theme. I:1 mm.156-160

Even more demanding on the pianist's ability is the example to be found in the Adagio movement. Here a lush, dreamlike Romantic
quality must be conveyed. The cantabile theme is difficult to perform given the natural decay of the piano's tone. Set against detached chordal accompaniment, the performer must summon great control to insure that the melody reaches the audience in a convincing, vocal manner, without being distracted by the thick chordal accompaniment (see Ex. 147).

Example 147 Vocal melody against thick chords. I:2, mm. 9-16

A final source of difficulty in Weber's concertos results from complexities of rhythm. Weber is fond of displaced accents that constitute metric shifts. Frequent syncopations often require the pianist to phrase across bar lines, with frequent syncopations. The finale of Op. 11 gives a clear example (Ex. 148). Here the meter has been shifted from 3/4 to 2/4.
Example 148  Metric shifts from 3/4 to 2/4. I:3, mm. 527-533

In the theme of the third movement of the Second Concerto (Ex. 149) Weber employs hemiola, changing the rhythmic inflections from two to a measure to three:

Example 149  Use of hemiola. II:3, mm. 3-6

The Konzertstück offers several examples of highly syncopated, rapid passagework (Ex. 150, 151, 152):
Example 150 Rapid syncopations. *Konzertstück*, mm. 181-183

Example 151 Syncopations with hemiola. *Konzertstück*, mm. 405-408

Example 152 Rapid syncopations. *Konzertstück*, mm. 510-514

Pianistic difficulties such as those described above are, for the most part, new to the scene at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The employment of "finger" technique alone, as exemplified in the works of Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven and carried on by such transitional figures as Hummel and Czerny was no longer sufficient for the proper interpretation and performance of Weber's works. The
carriage of the hand without help from the wrist, arms and torso became insufficient for the power of Weber's octaves, octaves plus thirds, and thick chordal writing. For these powerful gestures to be communicated, the follow-through of larger units such as the upper arm and torso is necessary. Similarly, the use of wide leaps, though ventured in Scarlatti's harpsichord works, now, because of the increased range and dynamics and the use of thicker textures, require a correlation of the muscles of the wrists and forearms.¹⁸⁵

From an interpretive standpoint, the difficulties in Weber's work are subtle. His concertos are strongly individualistic, not only technically, but stylistically as well. Lying between the aesthetics of two periods, these concertos require a balance and a sensitivity to elements of both periods. Thus, a successful performance of these works will accommodate themes whose style is Classical in origin, such as the 1st theme of Op. 11 Allegro, as well as themes which have a Romantic quality, such as the secondary theme in e flat.

¹⁸⁵Park, op. cit., p.34.
CHAPTER VI

The Influence of Weber's Concertos

Weber exerted a strong influence on composers of the nineteenth century. Indeed, many who were influenced by his piano compositions went on to become more famous than he as composers for the piano. Thus Weber served as a germinal stimulus for the development of the virtuosic style of Romantic piano compositions. Warrack gives an overview of Weber's influence on several composers:

Mendelssohn was to find much of his lightness of touch in Weber's scherzos; Schumann, who narrowly missed becoming Weber's pupil, echoes many of his effects of sonority; and if Chopin took from the rondo [of the Second Concerto] his liking for brilliant upward leaps and from the Adagio of the First Concerto, Weber's trick of matching held staccato notes, it is in the Adagio of this Second Concerto that he found the limpid, decorative brilliance which hints so strongly at the human voice that it has been repeatedly attributed to Bellini. Chopin's fondness for letting ornamentation play the role of variation, for allowing the piano to sport like a fountain around a theme, has its roots in Weber's quasi-vocal writing, with its arpeggios, written out portamentos and reflected especially in Chopin's own concertos--piano coloratura and finger virtuosity transformed into intense poetry.\textsuperscript{186}

Mendelssohn, a great admirer of Weber, first met Weber as a young boy, and was given the chance to study some of his scores.\(^{187}\) Weber's influence on Mendelssohn can be seen in many of the younger composer's rhythmic and pianistic devices. \(^{188}\) These include syncopated rhythmic passages, fast, staccato passages and extremely light, fast textures in which the right hand plays an upper melody--with the fourth or fifth finger--filled out with arpeggiation, also in the right hand--with the first, second and third fingers. Similarities in aural effect and form can be seen in the *Konzertstück* and Mendelssohn's *Capriccio* Op. 22, a similar one-movement work. The fortissimo main theme of Mendelssohn's G Minor Concerto, followed by light staccato chords, is a sound which was inspired by the music of Weber.\(^{189}\) Mendelssohn's innovative treatment of first movement form in the concerto format, condensing the "double exposition" into one shared by piano and orchestra, was given inspiration by Weber's early concertos, especially the *Second Concerto*. In Mendelssohn's *G Minor Piano Concerto*, Op. 25 (1831), first and second movements are linked, as in Weber's *Konzertstück*. It is in Mendelssohn's *E Minor Concerto* for Violin, Op. 64 (1844) that Weber's most pronounced influence can be seen. In this work Mendelssohn places the cadenza at the end of the development section, where it functions as a re-transition to the recapitulation. Weber's placement of the cadenza in his *Second Concerto*, mid-way through the recapitulation, as a


\(^{188}\)Werner, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

\(^{189}\)Engel, *The Instrumental Concerto*, p. 52.
transition between first and second themes, anticipates Mendelssohn's treatment by a full 32 years.

Mendelssohn's personal closeness to Weber is apparent in these reflections written shortly before Weber's death:

Poor Weber! How well I recall his wasted appearance before he left for England. He jestingly told someone that he was 'going to London to die'—a wit even to death. He came to our house often, and sometimes played us entire numbers from his still unfinished Oberon, singing in a tired, thread-like voice that even then was capable of moments of wildest passion. Oberon killed him. But he was a fatalist! A few years or a few months, what did it matter?...Fortunate was Smart to have such a man die in his house...Do you know his last waltz—the Aufforderung zum Tanze? A little drama of gallantry, the gallantry of love. I play it often. The lover reminds me of Weber himself—so tender and considerate to his wife.\(^{190}\)

Another work of Weber's which Mendelssohn performed was the Konzertstück for which he was feted in London as soloist.\(^{191}\)

The idiosyncratic characteristics of many of the passages from the slow sections of Weber's sonatas and concertos had an impact upon Chopin, especially the use of chromatically inflected scale-flourishes,\(^{192}\) fioratura passages, and dance-like sections. The use of nationalistic dance elements in finales is common to both Weber's and Chopin's works. In Chopin's F Minor Concerto the mazurka is present and in the E Minor, the krackowiac. The two early concertos of Weber also have "popular," dance-like episodes similar to those in the

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\(^{191}\)Engel, *The Instrumental Concerto*, p. 52.

concertos of Chopin.\textsuperscript{193} Further, in the second ritornello of both Weber's \textit{First Concerto} and Chopin's \textit{E Minor Concerto}, the orchestra gives way to a ruminative solo.\textsuperscript{194} Engel notes these similarities, writing: "Chopin, in the themes of his \textit{1st Concerto}, in E Minor, completely follows the type established by Dussek, Steibelt, Field, Weber, Hummel, Ries, Kalkbrenner and even the violinist Viotti."\textsuperscript{195}

In Weber's solo works there are several stylistic characteristics that anticipate Chopin's piano writing. Weber's \textit{First Sonata} opens with a descending left hand flourish, strongly resembling the opening of Chopin's \textit{'Revolutionary' Etude}, Op. 10, No. 12. In the \textit{La ci darem la mano Variations} of Chopin there are several variations which suggest Weberian textures such as flowing left hand parts with repeated notes and arpeggiation and rhythmic settings which have a \textit{moto-perpetuo} quality. There is also a strong resemblance between sections of Weber's \textit{Grande Polonaise Op. 21}, and Chopin's \textit{Polonaise in G sharp Minor}\textsuperscript{196}.

Liszt was an ardent champion of Weber's music. His performances of the \textit{Konzertstück} were legendary, drawing praise even from Schumann.\textsuperscript{197} Liszt himself was clearly aware of his affinity to Weber, writing:

\begin{quote}
I know that at present I oughtn't to live in any one milieu because I am superior to any one I could live in. I'm an intermediate being. I long to finish with the piano, I would then compose something beautiful that nobody
\end{quote}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{194}Ibid., p. 54.
\textsuperscript{195}Engel, \textit{The Instrumental Concerto}, p. 50.
\textsuperscript{196}Samson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 30.
\end{flushright}
could play, that I wouldn't play myself. Then would come somebody who would be to me what I have been to Weber, who would illumine me...\textsuperscript{198}

Liszt also produced critical editions of Weber's piano sonatas and various other works, clearly showing his admiration for Weber. In a letter to his publisher it is suggests, however, that his patience for one of Weber's works had thin during this project:

Send me also a copy of the \textit{Aufforderung zum Tanze} that is so drummed at everywhere...years ago I had to play this 'Invitation' over and over again, times innumerable--without the smallest 'invitation' on my part--and it became a detestable nuisance to me. However, such a showpiece must not be omitted in Cotta's edition of Weber.\textsuperscript{199}

Liszt was influenced by Weber in the binding together of movements into a larger, single outlay, as in the \textit{Konzertstück}. This procedure was followed in both of Liszt's concertos for the piano. Engel sees a connection between the \textit{Konzertstück} and Liszt's \textit{Grande Fantasie Symphonique} of 1834-5 which he refers to as a "Psaume Instrumentale" in one movement. Engel states, "the piano represents the role of the faithful, the orchestra his opponents; evidently, Weber's \textit{Konzertstück} supplied the inspiration for the dramatic form and content."\textsuperscript{200}

Both Berlioz and Strauss were influenced by Weber's exploitation of orchestral color. Berlioz admired Weber's writing of "those coldly


\textsuperscript{199}Letter to Prof. Dr. S. Lebert, 2 December 1868. La Mara (Marie Lipsius) Letters of Franz Liszt, trans. by Constance Bach (Greenwood Press Publishers: New York, 1894), V.II, p.165.

\textsuperscript{200}Engel, The Instrumental Concerto, p. 53.
threatening effects in the lower register of the clarinet, producing those dark accents of quiet rage which Weber so ingenuously invented.”

Richard Strauss recognized Weber’s contribution, remarking on his string writing: "Coloristic effects alien to the style of chamber music are observed in Gluck and Weber before they became a means of expression complete in themselves in the work of Wagner.”

Several twentieth century figures have also been directly influenced by Weber. Paul Hindemith sketched out a score for a ballet which was to be based on Themes from Weber’s Turandot overture, and from some of the pieces for piano duet. This work, planned as a paraphrase, rather than an arrangement, later became the basis for his Symphonic Metamorphosis of Themes by Carl Maria von Weber.

Igor Stravinsky’s assimilation of the music of Western culture includes specific references to Weber. The third tableau of the ballet Petruska Stravinsky includes a Konzertstück for piano which is built on a motive based on the mode B C sharp D E F G A flat B flat. The derivation of this mode has been traced to, among other nineteenth century compositions, a passage from Weber’s Second Concerto.

Also included in this work are cadenzas which are strongly reminiscent of Weber’s style. Stravinsky himself states that his

\[201\] Lockspeiser, op. cit., p. 140.
\[202\] Ibid., p. 130.
"model for the Capriccio is Carl Maria von Weber, in particular his well-known Konzertstück and the piano sonatas."206

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206 Stated in Chronicle of My Life (pp. 258-259), cited in Roman Vlad, op. cit., p. 91.
CHAPTER VII

Conclusion

Weber's piano music, with the possible exceptions of the Konzertstück, the Invitation to the Dance and the First Sonata, Op. 24, has been largely ignored by pianists in the twentieth century. His piano works were far more popular in the previous century, and appeared on concert programs with frequency.\textsuperscript{207} The concertos have recently been championed by a few pianists in recordings,\textsuperscript{208} yet rarely does any concerto of Weber's appear on programs save an occasional performance of the Konzertstück. Reasons for this neglect are difficult to ascertain, but it is helpful to pose possibilities which might explain this unwarranted disregard.

One explanation for the lack of attention to Weber is his proximity to such well known and admired composers as Mozart and Beethoven. Clearly these composers were of a magnitude to dwarf all others of the era, although Beethoven, in his time, was considered by many to be extreme--an unpolished experimenter--while Weber, once having achieved success with "Der Freischütz," was hailed as a great composer. History more than amply repaid its oversight in not immediately recognizing the genius of Beethoven. It overlooked many

\textsuperscript{207}Stephen John Martinro, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 5.

\textsuperscript{208}Notably, Malcolm Frager.
of the figures immediately following him including Weber; even Schubert was eclipsed by Beethoven's reputation in the early nineteenth century.

Weber, born in a time of transition, composed in an aesthetically changing era. Because of this historical position, his music is difficult for listeners to characterize. The musical epoches referred to as Baroque, Classical and Romantic are labels which often too-neatly compartmentalize the listener's expectations and are limiting indeed. Given the wealth of composers who were Weber's contemporaries, whose works have also been all but ignored (Spohr, Hummel, Tomasek, Moscheles, Field to name a few), there is a case to be made for a missing aesthetic on the part of today's audiences and musicians. Perhaps Weber and his contemporaries's works would fare better if today's listeners became more open in their musical tastes.

In terms of public acclaim, Weber's instrumental music fared badly for a time, as did Schubert's, especially during the latter part of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth. Even the currently respected figure of Liszt has only recently regained favor in the musical community. These attitudes may be explained in part by nineteenth century music critics who, after eventually accepting Beethoven's compositions as masterpieces of architecture and abstract music, later gravitated towards Brahms as the inheritor of "serious" music. These critics tended to judge composers like Weber and Liszt--who admittedly made provision for the applauding public--by the aesthetic standard applied to Classically oriented composers.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{209}Einstein, op. cit., p. 95.}\]
The opinion of important thinkers and writers on a composer's merits greatly influences public approval. Goethe was a respected writer who, unfortunately, had a poor opinion of Weber. According to Rolland, Goethe disliked Weber's "sickliness, his grotesque shape, his incessant snuffling, his ugly spectacles, his wretchedness...he despised his mind, the mind of the self appointed mouthpiece of vulgar national and military instincts...[he disliked his]...noisy, rowdy music--a lot of noise for nothing".\textsuperscript{210} This blast from a poet who was to influence the aesthetic of future generations can have had nothing but a disastrous affect on Weber's credibility\textsuperscript{211}. Much the same phenomenon was true in relationship between the famous critic Eduard Hanslick and Franz Liszt, whose reputation has recently been re-established.

Weber seems to have garnered the reputation of a composer whose instrumental music is superficial. It is true, that these concertos are unadventurous harmonically, and that in emotional content they traverse rather shallow waters. To dismiss them as lightweight, however, does not do justice to the wealth of positive attributes they contain. A response to the perception of Weber's superficiality lies in understanding the deeper, more complex issue of Weber's aesthetic, and his motives in composing these concertos. Weber was clearly one of the first of a long line of virtuoso-composers. These works were written primarily for the promotion of Weber as a pianist, and the early concertos were written during his days as a traveling virtuoso. Though they are salon-like in their obvious, popular appeal, they showcase the piano's sound and virtuosity in an extremely


\textsuperscript{211}Ibid.
effective manner. Moreover, these compositions are highly successful examples of Weber's working-out of dramatic ideas. Formally they are certainly interesting, if not always completely successful. At this time Weber himself admitted being a little unsure of himself compositionally in larger works;\textsuperscript{212} thus it seems gratuitous to judge these early compositions too harshly from a formal standpoint.

Alberti offers a further explanation for the neglect of Weber's early piano concertos. Because they were published without printed scores, there was little incentive for conductors to program them.\textsuperscript{213} Only the Konzertstück appeared with complete scores.\textsuperscript{214} Alberti further notes that Weber became celebrated for the works he composed after 1822. Because both the First and the Second Concertos were written before this time, and because Weber himself quit playing them before the public, they received little attention.

Weber's piano concertos represent one of great original styles in the history of piano literature. The neglect of these works is unfortunate and overlooks both their musical and pedagogical value. It is hoped that future generations of pianists will delve into these interesting compositions and put them more firmly into their repertoires.

\textsuperscript{212}Warrack, \textit{Carl Maria von Weber}, p. 94.
\textsuperscript{213}Abertl, \textit{op. cit.}, p. iv.
\textsuperscript{214}Ibid.
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