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The Price of Success: Pleyel and the Pirates

Allan Badley

More than any other composer of his generation, Ignaz Pleyel owed his fame and considerable fortune to the publication of his works. The intrinsic quality of the music itself naturally played its part – it was tuneful, elegant and well constructed – but technical merits alone would not have made Pleyel the celebrated composer he became had the dissemination of his works been restricted largely to manuscript copies. The publication and ready availability of his music ensured that to these qualities was added another – it was fashionable – and it was this quality that ultimately posed the greatest threat to his posthumous reputation. This paper explores the Pleyel phenomenon through the lens of publication and the influence it had, both for good and bad, on his development as an artist.

Although Pleyel's studies with Wanhall and Haydn clearly exerted a profound influence on his music, it is clear that from the outset of his career Pleyel consciously turned his back on Haydn's concentrated, intellectual approach to composition. The style that he cultivated was based loosely on that of his teacher but it was intentionally simplified in terms of texture, motivic complexity and developmental process. Burney attributed the lightness of his style to a desire for profit;¹ but the qualities of lightness and transparency were evident from the beginning. In other words, Pleyel pleased before he set out to please, an important distinction to bear in mind when considering the validity of Burney's assessment.

¹ 'Pleyel, in the height of his popularity was over-valued and afterwards, when the tide of fashion turned against him, was under-rated. Through nearly all his compositions a stream of agreeable melody flows; they are marked by a style peculiarly his own, generally light, sometimes very trivial, but occasionally bold and vigorous...Had posthumous fame been more his aim than immediate profit, Pleyel had that within him which might have secured the attainment of a considerable share of lasting celebrity.' Cited in Charles Burney, 'Franz Joseph Haydn.' *The Cyclopaedia: or Universal Dictionary of the Arts, Sciences and Literature*. Ed. Abraham Rees. London, Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme & Brown, 1819.

For all Rita Benton's extraordinary work on Pleyel sources it has not been possible to compile an accurate list of Pleyel's musical output during the first few years of his professional career. The earliest major works that can be dated – the marionette opera *Die Fee Urgèle* (1776) and the Symphonies in C (Benton 121) and A (Benton 122) both exhibit strong influences from Haydn. Landon draws particular attention to Pleyel's allusion to the overture to Haydn's oratorio *Il Ritorno di Tobia* in the first movement of Benton 121.² Derivative the movement might be but its musical craftsmanship is assured and the music is fresh and vigorous. The close relationship between the two works suggests that Pleyel deliberately used it as a model; it is unclear, however, whether he relied on his recollection of Haydn's overture when engaged in the composition of Benton 121 or consulted a copy. Benton 121 highlights the dilemma Pleyel faced at the conclusion of his studies with Haydn. He had learned his lessons so well that he found it difficult to escape the powerful influence of his teacher's style. Pleyel's solution was to travel to Italy, not, I believe, in order to complete his musical education in the conventional sense (for in that respect he was more than ready to pursue a professional career) or to experience Italian music at its source, but to distance himself artistically from Haydn.

It says a great deal for his patron Count Ladislaus Erdödy's generosity of spirit that he should have given Pleyel permission to visit Italy after having invested so much in his musical education. Although Italy had long been a place of pilgrimage for musicians it had been eclipsed by the late 1770s in virtually every respect by the music being written north of the alps and nowhere more so than in Vienna. The one field in which the Italians and their admirers still believed they reigned supreme was opera and it is possible that Pleyel convinced Erdödy that unless he experienced Italian opera at first hand his professional training could not be considered complete. Pleyel heard a great deal of music in Italy and met many of its leading composers and performers³ but this neither turned

² H C R Landon. *Haydn. Chronicle and Works. Haydn at Eszterháza 1766-1790*. London, Thames and Hudson, 1978. 361

³ Erdödy 'at first opposed this fancy, but yielded at length to the repeated solicitations of his protégé, gave him leave of absence, and supplied him with the means of carrying his wishes into execution. Pleyel accordingly set out for Naples. Once he arrived in Italy, he soon became acquainted with all the celebrated artists who shed their lustre over that Augustan age of Italian music; Cimarosa, Guglielmi, Paisiello, were numbered among his friends; his taste was formed

him into a composer of operas nor filled him with the ambition to become one. The Italian visit instead introduced him to a style of music the defining qualities of which were lyricism, clarity and brilliance of sound. Even though these qualities cannot have been entirely new to Pleyel, they struck him with the force of a revelation. The challenge he faced on his return to Austria in 1781 was how to reconcile these qualities with the more complex, concentrated style he had evolved under Haydn's long and careful instruction.

After the heady excitement of Italy, Pleyel found it impossible to settle down and the following year he set off on his travels once again spending time in Naples and Rome among other places. By the end of 1773 he had settled in Strasbourg, a turn of events that suggests he may have severed his professional connection with Count Erdödy before leaving for Italy in 1782.

Pleyel owed everything to Erdödy's longstanding generosity and he expressed his gratitude publically in the dedication to him of his first set of string quartets, the works that established his international reputation and launched what was to prove the most extraordinary phenomenon in eighteenth-century music: the Pleyel Rage.⁴

The composition of the Op.1 quartets occupied Pleyel on and off for over two years. It is possible, as Ludwig Finscher has argued,⁵ that the first two quartets were composed in Vienna as early as 1781, but Pleyel's dedicatory preface implies that all of the works

by hearing such singers as Marchesi at Milan, Guadagni at Padua, the Gabrielli, Pacchierotti, &c. Nardini was then still living, and in full possession of his unrivalled powers on the violin. Pleyel had frequent opportunities of hearing and admiring him. He was also intimate with Pugnani, and, indeed, with the majority of those great artists whose united talents rendered that period perhaps the brightest and most astonishing in the whole history of Italian music.' See 'Memoir of Ignatius Pleyel.' *The Harmonicon*. 1832, 25ff. An English translation of an article that had first appeared in *La Revue Musicale* shortly after Pleyel's death.

⁴ 'There has lately been a rage for the music of Pleyel which has diminished the attention of amateurs and the public to all other violin music.' Charles Burney. *A General History of Music, From the Earliest Ages to the Present*. London, 1789. Vol. 4, 581

⁵ "Daß einige der Quartette schon in den siebziger Jahren in Eszterháza entstanden seien und dort die gutmütige Kritik Glucks herausgefordert hätten, dürfte allerdings eine Erfindung des phantasievollen und legendenfrohen einzigen Gewährsmannes, Fétis, sein. Vielmehr dürften opus 1 bis 6 1781 in Wien, 1782 auf der zweiten Italienreise Pleyels, 1783 wieder in Wien und 1784/85 auf der dritten Italienreise und in Strasburg entstanden sein." Ludwig Fischer. *Studien zur Geschichte des Streichquartetts. I: Die Entstehung des klassischen Streichquartetts. Von dem Vorformen zur Grundlegung durch Joseph Haydn*. Kassel, Bärenreiter, 1974. Saarbrücker Studien zur Musikwissenschaft 3. 274

were composed in Italy and this is supported in part by the autograph scores of the third and fourth quartets which are dated respectively Naples 1783 and Rome 1782.⁶ In the preface Pleyel informs the dedicatee and his public that the works have been composed in the local Italian style and are not as musically profound as his earlier works, presenting instead a kind of beauty that is more commonly enjoyable.⁷ The tenor of Pleyel's dedication suggests that these 'earlier works' – string quartets by implication – were known to Erdödy and therefore must have been composed prior to his second trip to Italy (1782–1783). Like the Symphony Benton 121, these earlier, unidentified quartets may have been modelled closely on specific works of Haydn. There is no reason to assume that they were suppressed by Pleyel simply because he chose not to publish them as his Op.1. It is possible that some of the works were included in the unauthorized sets of quartets issued as Opp. 3 and 4. Pleyel's description of them as 'musically profound' suggests that their models may have been taken from Haydn's Op.20 quartets, works that he surely knew exceptionally well. The intriguing use of fugal finales in two of the Op.5 string quartets (Benton 328 and 330) may also indicate that the works predate Op.1.⁸ Whether this is the case or not, it is clear that when Pleyel once again turned his hand to the composition of string quartets in 1782 he adopted a substantially different approach, one shaped in part by the impact of Haydn's most recent string quartets, the epochal quartets of Op.33, and from his experience of living and working in Italy.

⁶ Op.1 No.3: 'Composto in Napoli Anno 1783. Quartetto Nro 3 di me Ignazio Pleyel' and Op.1 No.4: 'In N.[omine] D[omini] et N.[omine] Cr[iste] Di me Ignazio Pleyel / fatto in Roma 782 / Quartetto:' RUS SPsc [St. Petersburg, Gosudarstvennaja publicnaja biblioteka, formerly Rossiyskaya Natsional'naya Biblioteka].

⁷ ['Scrissi questi quartetti in Italia, e quindi secondo il gusto dominante di colà; non sono nè si difficili nell'esecuzione, nè si profondi nell'arte, come i miei precedenti, ma composti così a bella posta, accio si rendano più comuni, e piacevoli.'] SEI / QUARTETTI / a due Violini, Viola e Violoncelle / Composti da / IGNAZIO PLEYEL / a dedicati all' / Illustrissimo Signore Conte Ladislao / d'Erdödy Ciamberlano e Consigliere / di S.M.C.R.A: e supremo Conte / della Contea di Kretz / Opera 1 / Vienna, presso Rodolfo Graeffner. Libraj / sulla piazzetta chiamata dei Superiori Gesuiti / Jo. Eberspach fec. Inciso di Huberty. 1783.

⁸ The André edition of these works is dated 1787 but Benton [*Op. cit.* 119] notes that Johann Ludwig Gera offered copies of Op.5 for sale in manuscript in an advertisement printed in the *Frankfurter Ristretto* as early as February 1786. It is possible that this group of quartets was compiled from works composed over a number of years. If that is the case, then the fugal movements, with their obvious association with Haydn's Op.20, might well have belonged to the quartets referred to by Pleyel in the preface to Op.1.

The six string quartets Op.1 were published in Vienna by Graeffer towards the end of 1783. They were well received and famously won praise from Mozart himself.⁹ Pleyel might have described the works as having been written in the local Italian style but there was no fooling Mozart who saw in their elegant sophistication the unmistakable hand of Haydn. Mark Evans Bond might detect an ironic tone in Mozart's letter¹⁰ but in this he is perhaps guilty of looking for something that is not there. When Mozart was displeased with individual musicians or musical works he generally had no difficulty in expressing his opinion in an unambiguous fashion particularly in letters to his father. With Op.1 Pleyel succeeded brilliantly in writing a set of quartets on his own terms, balancing the clarity of the Italian style with the technical resourcefulness of the Viennese, and the music buying public loved them. The Viennese publisher Torricella was the first to issue a pirated edition that he advertised for sale in the *Wiener Diarium* on the very day Mozart wrote to his father;¹¹ the Amsterdam publisher J. J. Hummel issued the Op.1 quartets in 1785,¹² with editions appearing the following year from Götz in Mannheim¹³ and Longman in London.¹⁴ Artaria, the leading Viennese music publisher, did not issue an edition of Op.1 until 1787¹⁵ but by that time the rage for Pleyel's music was well established. By the end of the century many more editions had appeared, particularly in

⁹ 'I must tell you that some quartets have just appeared, composed by a certain Pleyel, a pupil of Joseph Haydn. If you do not know them, do try and get hold of them; you will find them well worth the trouble. They are very well written and most pleasing to listen to. You will see at once who was his master. Well, it will be a lucky day for music if later on Pleyel should be able to replace Haydn.' Letter to Leopold Mozart dated 24 April 1784. Emily Anderson ed. and trans. *Letters of Mozart and His Family*, 3rd edition. London, 1985. 875

¹⁰ Mark Evans Bond. 'Replacing Haydn: Mozart's 'Pleyel' Quartets. *Music & Letters*, 88 (2), 2007. 201.

¹¹ 'Pleyel, Ignatz. 6 Quartetten für 2 Violinen, Alt und Bass. Wien, Christoph Torricella.' See *Wienerisches Diarium* 24 April 1784: no copies have been located.

¹² 'SIX QUATUORS / A / DEUX VIOLONS, TAILLE et VIOLONCELLE / Composées / Par / M^r J. PLEYEL / Oeuvre premiere / Chéz J. J. Hummel, à Berlin avec Privilège du Roi / à Amsterdam au Grand Magazin de Musique aux Adresses ordinaires / N^o 467.'

¹³ Six / Quatuors / Pour / Deux Violons, Alto et Violoncelle / Composé / Par / M^r I. PLEYEL / Oeuvre 1 / a / Mannheim et Munich / Chez le S^r Götz Marchand et Editeur de Musiq. / N^o 114.

¹⁴ SIX / QUARTETTS / for two / VIOLINS, a TENOR / AND / VIOLONCELLO / COMPOSED BY / M^r J. Pleyel / OPERA I / Entered at Stationer's Hall / Price 10^s 6^d / LONDON / Printed by Longman and Broderip No26 Cheapside and No 13 Hay Market.

¹⁵ SEI / QUARTETTI / per / DUE VIOLINI, VIOLA E VIOLONCELLO / Composti / dal Sigr / IGN: PLEYEL / Opera 1 / IN VIENNA / presso Artaria Compagni / prezzo f. 4 / 1.2.78

London and Paris where Pleyel's music was exceptionally popular, but these need not detain us here.

The speed with which the Op.1 quartets were taken up by publishers in major centres was unusual in terms of eighteenth-century music publishing and it did a great deal to stimulate further demand for new works by Pleyel. An interesting detail concerning the earliest editions of Op.1 is that none of them identifies Pleyel as Haydn's pupil. Benton's dating of the editions of Schmitt (1783–1791) and Boyer (1784–1791) are too imprecise to be wholly reliable in this respect even though they do identify Pleyel as a 'very distinguished pupil of the celebrated J. Haydn'¹⁶ while Sieber's (1787) is too late to be considered one of the earliest editions of Op.1. The absence of the Haydn connection in the earliest editions suggests that Pleyel's own reputation was established by this time. The dedication of Pleyel's second published set of string quartets to Haydn – the Six Quartets, Op.2 – established a trend that by the end of Haydn's life had resulted in well over forty dedications by composers ranging from Mozart, Albrechtsberger and Beethoven to Hummel, Ries and Kreuzter.

The critical and commercial success of Op.1 ensured that future publications of Pleyel's works would also be successful. The Op.2 quartets were taken up with similar rapidity and the more enterprising publishers went to considerable lengths to promote the works. Torricella placed an advertisement in the *Wiener Diarium* to inform the public that the works will be 'played by four good artists in the Großer Passauerhof on 21 December at 7pm. Entrance tickets will be given out free of charge at his shop.'¹⁷ In the circumstances it is hardly surprising that publishers felt emboldened to go further in their determination to profit from Pleyel's growing popularity. His next two sets of string quartets – Opp. 3 and 4 (Benton 313–324) – were issued without any involvement on the composer's part. It was one thing to be paid by the first publisher and receive no further benefits from the subsequent editions but quite another matter to receive nothing at all. Pleyel's fury at the blatant theft of these works and the ongoing problem of corrupt reprints prompted him to consider new means of controlling the dissemination of his own

¹⁶ 'IGNACE PLEYEL / Eleve tres digne du Célèbre J. HAYDN' [Schmitt]

¹⁷ *Wienerisches Diarium* Nr.101, December 1784. "...von 4 Guten Künstlern im grossen Passauerhof am 21. Dezember um 7 Uhr... Die Eintrittsbillets werden in seinem Geschäfte unentgeltlich ausgeben."

works. On 19 July 1786 he placed a notice in the *Wiener Diarium* announcing a plan to offer twelve new string quartets for sale by subscription. The notice was printed in the *Preßburger Zeitung* a week later.¹⁸

Pleyel's bold initiative does not appear to have been very successful. He included these twelve quartets – the so-called 'Prussia' Quartets (Benton 331–342) – along with eleven symphonies in a contract he signed on 20 December 1786 with the Parisian publisher Jean Jérôme Imbault who retained Pleyel's idea of issuing the twelve works in four sets of three rather than the customary two sets of six. For all his precautions the 'Prussia' Quartets became Pleyel's most pirated group of works. Within a year of their publication the twelve quartets had appeared in editions by Artaria, Forster, Götz, Hummel, Longman, Schmitt and Schott. Within a few years, André, Boyer, Dale, Le Duc, Lunch and Naderman had all jumped on the bandwagon and other publishers continued to issue editions of the works well into the nineteenth century. It says something for the popularity and durability of the works that editions were still appearing as late as 1838. With this level of competition Pleyel could have been forgiven for not bothering to publish the works himself but he did and in a purportedly new edition that appeared between 1803 and 1806.¹⁹

¹⁸ Notice. Twelve new quartets that Ignace Pleyel intends to publish by subscription. The friends of my string music will be pleased that I am turning to them with my new undertaking, and I hereby invite them in the friendliest fashion to support me efficiently with their kind assistance. The confounded reprint, the often mutilated editions of my works which up to now have robbed me completely of the fruits of my labour, the gathering together of some manuscripts out of which a so-called set of Op.3 and Op.4 Quartets is rushed into print under my name but without my knowledge, both of which, from how they appear, can be quite impossible to recognize as my work, all these reasons persuade me to become my own publisher in the future for my own good and for the certainty of the public. [Ankündigung: Zwölf neuer Quartetten, die Ignaz Pleyel auf Pränumeration herauszugeben gesonnen ist: Die Freunde meines Saitenspiels werde es mir zu gut halten, dass ich bey meinem neuen Unternehmen mich gerade an sie wende, und sie hiedurch auf das freundschaftlichste einlade mich mit ihrer gütigen Beyhülfe wirksam zu unterstützen. Der leidige Nachdruck, vielfach verstümmelte Ausgaben meiner Werke, die auch mich bisher die Früchte meiner Arbeiten gänzlich beraubten, Zusammenraffung einiger Manuskripte woraus ein sogenanntes 3tes und 4tes Werk von Quartetten unter meinem Namen, doch ohne mein Vorwissen zum Druck befördert, und die ich beyde, so wie sie erschienen, unmöglich ganz für meine Arbeit anerkennen kann; alle diese Ursachen bewegen mich künftig hin zu meiner und des Publikums Sicherheit der Selbstverleger und besorger meiner künftigen Werke zu werden.]

¹⁹ Douze Nouveaux / QUATUORS / DÉDIÉS / À sa Majesté / Le Roi De Prusse / Composés par / IGNACE PLEYEL / Nouvelle Editions / 1^{ère} Livraison Prix 6^f / Sampier Sculpt. / A PARIS / Chez

After the failure of the subscription plan and the rash of unauthorized editions that followed Imbault's publication of the quartets, Pleyel seems not to have made any further efforts to protect his intellectual property. With copyright virtually non-existent he had few legal means of seeking redress. His anger at the theft of the quartets of Opp.3 and 4 must have been tempered by the realization that there was little or nothing he could do about it, but, being the enterprising man that he was, he may also have seen the value in such unprecedented popularity.

Although Pleyel's professional career began as early as 1778, it was not until he began publishing his works in the early 1780s that his reputation became firmly established. Very few manuscript sources for his early works are known and none of his works was listed in the *Breitkopf Catalogue* before 1782–1784.²⁰ The publication of Pleyel's compositions quickly came to follow a predictable pattern. He would issue a group of works through a publisher such as Rudolf Graeffner in Vienna and this edition – or manuscript copies of it – would then serve as the basis for editions appearing in other locations radiating out from the original place of publication. Thus, in the case of Opp. 1 and 2, we see Graeffner's 'authorized' edition followed quickly by that of Torricella (also in Vienna), Hummel (Amsterdam), Götz (Mannheim) and Longman (London). In important publishing centres such as Paris and London, other publishers would then pick up the works and issue their own editions. These might follow close on the heels of the first wave of editions or appear some years later to meet continuing demand for the works.

As the 1780s progressed and Pleyel's reputation grew, this pattern changed in several important respects. A greater number of editions appeared within the first twelve to eighteen months of the 'authorized' edition and several publishers in the same centre might issue the work around the same time thus placing themselves in direct competition with one another. While new works appeared, so too did new editions of previously published works. Thus, Artaria issued its edition of the Op.1 quartets in 1787 three years

PLEYEL, Auteur et Editeur de Musique, Rue Neuve des Petits Champs N° 1286, vis-à-vis La Trésorerie Imp^{le} / 619.620.621.622 .

²⁰ Supplement XV 1782, 1783, 1784. III. Sinf. Da Bleyel (Benton 125, 124,123). See Barry S Brook (ed.). *The Breitkopf Thematic Catalogue. The Six Parts and Sixteen Supplements 1762–1787*. New York, Dover, 1966

after Graeffe had published Op.2 and a year after its own illicit publication of the quartets of Opp.3 and 4. The constant flow of new works and reprints from the European music presses stimulated a second wave of piracy: the frenzied printing of unauthorized arrangements and adaptations of Pleyel's works.

One of the most useful and impressive of Benton's achievements in cataloguing Pleyel's works was the identification and differentiation of authentic Pleyel works from those adapted or arranged from them. Although Pleyel himself adapted existing material from time to time, particularly in the later stages of his career as a composer, he did not do so on any great scale. The table of incipit concordances in Benton's catalogue suggests that around forty works were treated in this way,²¹ a small number in comparison with the hundreds of arrangements that were in circulation during his lifetime. In only five instances did Pleyel adapt entire works. The Quartets for Flute, Violin, Viola and Bass (Benton 387–392)²² furnished material for five trios for two violins and violoncello,²³ two of which were also adapted as accompanied keyboard sonatas.²⁴ While the adaptations of the works are successful enough, they are indicative more importantly of a significant attitudinal shift on Pleyel's part from a composer who publishes to a publisher who composes. This is seen not just in Pleyel's obvious interest in increasing the commercial value of the works through extending their utility, but also in the uncharacteristically poor compositional finish of some of the movements with their trivial themes and loose, repetitive style. The publication of the sonatas did Pleyel's reputation a great deal of damage. The *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* published two scathing reviews of the works; the only positive thing the reviewer had to say of the

²¹ Benton. *Op.cit.* 389

²² Six / NOUVEAUX QUATUORS / pour / Flûte, Violon, Alto et Basse / COMPOSÉS / PAR J. PLEYEL / DÉDIÉS AUX AMATEURS / Oeuvre de Quatuor de Flûte / Partie Prix 7^{te} 10^s / Enregistrés à la Bibliothèque Nationale / A PARIS / Chez Pleyel, Rue Neuve des Petits Champs, N^o 24, entre la rue / S^{te} Anne et celle de Chabannais / Propriété de l'Auteur

²³ Six / NOUVEAUX QUATUORS / pour / Flûte, Violon, Alto et Basse / COMPOSÉS / PAR J. PLEYEL / DÉDIÉS AUX AMATEURS / Oeuvre de Quatuor de Flûte / Partie Prix 7^{te} 10^s / Enregistrés à la Bibliothèque Nationale / A PARIS / Chez Pleyel, Rue Neuve des Petits Champs, N^o 24, entre la rue / S^{te} Anne et celle de Chabannais / Propriété de l'Auteur

²⁴ Trois Grandes / SONATES / Pour Forte-Piano / Avec Accompagnement de Violon et Violoncelle / PAR J. PLEYEL / Dédiées / a Mademoiselle Eugénie Beaumarchais / Oeuvre 31 Prix 9 / Gravées par Michot / A PARIS / Chez l'Auteur Rue Neuve des Petits Champs entre la rue / S^{te} Anne et celle de Chabannais N^o 24 / Propriété de l'Auteur

edition issued by Hummel concerned the quality of the engraving.²⁵ The remaining adaptations represent individual movements that were put to use in other works. Although they are drawn from a variety of genres including symphonies, the adaptations typically represent changes of medium in chamber works. Significantly, all of these authentic arrangements and adaptations were published first by Maison Pleyel.

The unauthorized adaptations, however, present a very different picture. These began to appear towards the end of the 1780s as the piracy of the authentic works escalated. Pleyel himself seems not to have had any involvement in either their creation or publication and he is unlikely to have profited financially from them. His attitude to this new phenomenon can only be guessed at, but like the ‘theft’ of the Opp.3 and 4 string quartets a few years earlier, it no doubt reinforced his view that the only means of protecting his interests lay in becoming a publisher himself. This he did in 1795 but the early history of Maison Pleyel reveals a far broader and more ambitious vision than the protection of Pleyel’s own music. Indeed, it might be argued that Pleyel suspected that so many editions of his older works had been published that there was no longer any great profit to be had from them; he directed his energies instead towards the publication of new works and increasingly the works of other composers. It is Pleyel’s own works that concern us here, however, and the nature of the works that he composed or chose to publish during the first decade Maison Pleyel’s existence is very revealing [**Table 1**].

The majority of these compositions – small-scale chamber works such as duos and trios – were issued in parallel versions like the Concerto for Clarinet/Flute/Violoncello (Benton 106). A number of important earlier works were also reissued, notably the string quartets Opp.1 and 2, and, doubtless to Pleyel’s great personal satisfaction, the string quartets Opp.3 and 4.

The types of works that Pleyel composed during this period correspond closely to the unauthorized arrangements and adaptations that had been appearing all over Europe during the course of the past decade. In other words, he responded to the pirates by giving the public what they had so obviously wanted while he sought to control as best he could the initial dissemination of the works. Pleyel’s response to the pirates was not restricted

²⁵ “Der Stich, wie man aus der Hummelschen Offizien gewohnt ist, hat viel Schönes, Deutliches und Sauberes, und kann noch imer andern Notenstechereyen zum Muster dienen.” *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* 30 January 1799.

to the choice of instrumentation. He also took note of the stylistic types that had proved to be the most popular since one of the most important aspects of the systematic piracy of Pleyel's works was its selectivity. Some works were adapted or arranged in full by musicians such as André (who also published his own adaptations), Lachnith and Fodor but most of the illicit arrangements were of individual movements, typically slow movements, variations, and rondos. These movements were frequently anthologized and served as the basis of new Pleyel publications. In some instances unrelated movements were combined to form 'new' compositions. If it were any consolation to Pleyel, the pirated arrangements were themselves furiously copied and reissued by other publishers.

The 'Prussia' Quartets once again proved irresistible to publishers. Arrangements and adaptations were published for all manner of instrumental combinations ranging from flute quartet, prepared by the flautist-composer François Devienne, to horn duo. Arrangements for fortepiano, violin and violoncello proved especially popular and these began to appear almost simultaneously with the original string quartets. Imbault led the way with four sets of arrangements issued in 1787–88 but these significantly did not correspond to the groupings of the string quartets [**Table 2**]. In Imbault's publications we see not only the selective nature of the movements chosen for adaptation but also the insidious practice of combining movements from different works to create new works. The integrity of these adaptations is weakened further in Sets 3 and 4; these include movements taken from works that do not belong to the original twelve 'Prussia' Quartets. The duo arrangements of the works take this practice even further. It is difficult to believe that Pleyel would have approved of such cavalier treatment of his carefully judged multi-movement designs and yet he issued all four sets through Maison Pleyel in later years. Judging from the number of pirated editions of Lachnith's arrangements, the trio versions remained immensely popular and Pleyel's decision to publish them is understandable.

The ubiquity of these arrangements and others like them helped to make Pleyel the most popular and famous composer in the world but they exerted a more sinister influence on him by encouraging him to produce more and more movements of the same kind. To Burney, Pleyel's exceptional success as a composer came at a cost. In his *General History of Music* he wrote:

‘But whether this ingenious and engaging composer does not draw faster from the fountain of his invention than it will long bear, and whether his imitation of Haydn, and too constant use of semitones, and coquetry in *rallentandos* and *pauses* will not be soon construed into affectation, I know not; but it has already been remarked by critical observers, that his fancy, though at first so fertile, is not so inexhaustible, but that he frequently repeats himself, and does not sufficiently disdain the mixture of common passages with his own elegant ideas.’²⁶

Burney’s observation, made as early as 1789, was typically astute in its identification of the danger ahead given Pleyel’s high level of productivity, but the assertion that Pleyel aped his teacher’s style was rather less perceptive and yet it has exercised an unfortunate influence on later commentators. Landon accepted Burney’s position without reservation, writing that

‘when Pleyel began to capitalize on his master’s ‘popular style’, imitating to a nauseous degree those catchy rondos, sudden silences, jumps into foreign keys after the double bar, etc., he made himself almost as popular as his master but debased the whole Haydn style.’²⁷

Both Burney and Landon were guilty of ignoring the fact that in his early works Pleyel seems to have consciously attempted to distance himself from Haydn’s powerful influence. His initial popularity was due in large measure to the intrinsic qualities of his own music and it was the success of these early publications that did so much to determine the style of his later works. Far from slavishly imitating Haydn, Pleyel fell at times into the trap of parodying himself in the drive to meet the insatiable demand for new works. He became in some respects a victim of his own success, a cash cow for publishers from one end of Europe to the other.

Pleyel’s successful embrace of commercialism has long been viewed in a negative light by scholars and commentators whose views are informed by nearly two centuries of

²⁶ Burney. *Op. cit.* Vol. IV, 915f.

²⁷ Landon. *Op. cit.* 361

worship at the altar of High Art. His decision to write music that differed in its complexity to that of Haydn and Mozart has been seen as a failure on his part or even a betrayal of his great talent. Landon's use of an adjective like 'nauseous' strays far beyond objective criticism and into the realm of the highly subjective. The received view of the history of late eighteenth-century music has until recently been formed largely by the spectacular achievements of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, a Vienna-centric view if you will. Pleyel too belonged to that tradition but critically he worked outside Vienna for virtually his entire career. He did not work in the isolated splendour of Esterháza where Haydn was forced 'to become original' but in Strasbourg and Paris with their vibrant musical lives and strong local traditions. The composers he competed with for the support and affection of the public were figures such as Carl Stamitz, Joseph Boulogne, Chevalier de Saint Georges and François Devienne and there is little doubt that Pleyel's music quickly eclipsed their own in popularity. To buck fashion and tradition would have been to court professional and financial disaster before the Revolution and personal danger after it as art became increasingly democratic. Pleyel was brought before the Committee of Public Safety on seven occasions in the aftermath of the Revolution. The reasons for this were varied but they were all potentially dangerous. As a musician, he had strong ties with both the aristocracy and the church and this made him suspect in the eyes of the Committee. Worse, he was a foreigner, an Austrian, like the hated Marie Antoinette. His categorization as a Royalist Collaborator could easily have earned him a term of imprisonment or a trip to the guillotine but with prudent opportunism he survived and later flourished.

Pleyel's artistic conscience may not have been troubled in the least by simplifying his style in order to write music that was agreeable to his public but, as in all matters of conscience, we can never know.

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Table 1: Pleyel Works issued by Maison Pleyel ca1795-1805¹

PN	Title	Op	Ben	Published	Composed	Comments
1	Grand Trio: pfte fl vc	29	461	1795-96	1795-96	
2	Duos: arp & pfte	28	530	1795-96	1795-96	
3 ²	Trois Duos: vn va	30	529-31	1795-96	1795-96	
4	Trois Duos: 2vn	30	529-31	1795-96	1795-96	
5	Trois Duos: 2fl	30	529-31	1796	1796	
6	Deux Sonates: pfte	30	529-31	1796	1796	
7	Sonata: 4-m	30	530	1796	1796	
9	Trois Grandes Sonates: pfte acc vn vc	31	465-67	1796-97	1796	
43	Trois Solo: fl [& va/vc]		571-73	1796-97	1787-88	Orig. Sonata pfte vn obl. [Imbault, Op.7]
44	Six Duos faciles: 2fl	liv.1	Anthology	1796-97	Various	1 in C: 350/ia, 135/iv 2 in G: 515/i, 332/iii 3 in D: 318/iii, 405/ii 4 in G: 138/iii, iia, iv 5 in C: 433/ii, 346/iii 6 in D: 336/ii, iii

¹ Publications of older works are highlighted.

² 'Despite the somewhat ambiguous statement in *FR* that the versions for 2vn, 2fl and pf trio were "alle 3 von dem Autor selbst für die genannten Instrumente arrangiert, the PNs and announcements for the André, Artaria, Corri and Pleyel editions seem to indicate that the versions for 2vl and vl vla were conceived and published simultaneously while the versions for 2fl and pf trio (as well as those for 2 pf and pf 4-m) may be considered arrangements.' Benton. *Pleyel Catalogue*. 256

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PN	Title	Op	Ben	Published	Composed	Comments
45	Six Duos: 2cl	liv.1	Anthology	1803 cat	Various	1 in C: 318/iv, 303/iii 2 in F: 385/ii, 140A/iv, iva 3 in C: 313/iv, 311/iii 4 in F: X56, 408/i 5 in C: 132/iii, iia, iiib 6 in F: 321/ii, 131/iii, 274/iii
46	Trois Grandes Duos: fl vn		440-42	1796-97	1791	Orig. Sonata pfte acc vn vc [Imbault, Op.21]
47	Six Duos faciles: 2fl	liv.2	Anthology	1796-97	Various	Contents identical with PN44
48	Six Duos: 2cl			1798-99	1798-99	Contents identical with PN45
52	Six Quatuors: 2vn va vc	2	307-12	1796-97	1784	No reference to Haydn on TP [Graeffe, Op.2]
54	Six nouvelles Sonatines progressives: pfte acc vn	27	574-79	1796-97	1796	
57	Six Duos faciles et progressives: 2vn	5	574-79	1796-97	1796	
66	Six Quatuors: 2vn va vc	1	301-306	1796-97	1782-83	[Graeffe, Op.1]
69	Trois Grandes Duos: 2fl	liv.3		1803 cat		Unlocated; contents unknown
72	Suite de 12 Grandes Sonates: pfte acc vn vc	32/2	468-70	1796-97	1796-97	
83	Six Sonates: arp acc vn	3		1796-97		Unspecified arrangements

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PN	Title	Op	Ben	Published	Composed	Comments
95-96	Six Trios: 2vn vc	3, pt1, 2	410-12 413-15	1797	1797	
97-98	Six nouveaux Quatuors: fl vn va b	3, pt1, 2	387-89 390-92	1797	1797	Op.3 pt. 1, 2
100	Troisieme Sinfonie conc: pfte vl obl	No.3	114	1797	1792	
100	Troisieme Sinfonie conc: 2v pr	No.3	114	1797	1792	
121	Méthode: pfte		801-27	1797-99		Piano method with Dussek
123	Duo: 2fl	29	461?	1803 cat		Arranged by Garnier; unlocated
130	Suite de 12 Grandes Sonates: pfte acc vn vc	33/3	471-73	1798		
131	Duo: 2fl	29	461	1803 cat		Arranged by Garnier
133	Trois Sonates: pfte acc vn	27/1	580-82	1799	1798	
133	Six nouvelles Sonates progressives: pfte acc vn	27	580-82	1799	1798	
143	Trois Sonates: pfte acc fl/vn vc	14	431-33	1806 cat	1788	[Imbault, Op.14/1]
144	Trois Sonates: pfte acc fl/vn vc	15	431-33	1806 cat	1788	[Imbault, Op.14/1]
160	Trois Duos: 2vc	5	532-34	1799	1799	
166	Trois Grandes Sonates: pfte acc vl ad lib	11	571-72	1799- 1801	1787-88	[Imbault, Op.7]
168	Concerto: cl	1	106	1798	1797	
168	Concerto: fl	1	106	1798	1797	

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PN	Title	Op	Ben	Published	Composed	Comments
168	Concerto: vc	4	106	1798	1797	
171	26 ^e symphonie périodique		150	1799	1799	
174- 75	Six Duos: 2vn	6, liv.1,2	532-34 535-37	1799	1799	
179	Six Duos concertantes: 2vn	13	507-12	1803cat	1788	[Imbault, Op.13]
200	Six Duos concertantes: vn vc		501-06	1802	1788	[André, Op.13?]
235	Six Duos: 2fl	liv.1, no.1		1799		Unlocated; contents uncertain
244	Six Duos: 2fl	liv.4/2		1800		Unlocated; contents uncertain
246	Airs varies, Andante et Rondo: pfte			1800		Wh1828: contents uncertain
248	Trois Quatuors: pf 2vn b (arr. Lachnith)			1834cat		Arranged Lachnith: unlocated, contents uncertain
250	Trois Sonates: pfte	liv.2	516-18	1806cat	1789?	[André, Op.23?]
287	Six Quatuors concertantes: 2vn va vc	4	319-24	1803cat	1786	Pirated
309	Six Quatuors concertantes: 2vn va vc	3	313-18	1803cat	1785	Pirated
405	Trois Duos: ob			1802		Arranged Gebauer: unlocated, contents uncertain
520	4 ^e Symphonie concertante: 2vn va fl ob fag obl		113	1802	1792	
537	Trois Sonates: pfte acc vn vc (Steibelt)	35	474-76	1803cat	1803	Arranged Steibelt
538	Trois Sonates: arp acc vn vc	35	474-76	1803	1803	

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PN	Title	Op	Ben	Published	Composed	Comments
614	Six Duos: 2vn	liv.3	519-24	1806cat	1787	Unlocated; [Imbault, liv.3]
615	Trois Sonates: pfte acc vn vc	21	437-39	1806cat	1790	[Imbault, Op.21]
616	Trois Sonates, pf vl vlc	23	440-42	1806cat	1791	[Imbault, Op.21]
619-22	12 nouveau Quatuors: 2vn va vc	liv.1-4	331-342	1806cat	1786	[Imbault, liv.1-4]
623-26	Trois Quatuors: pfte, acc vn vc	liv.1-4	Anthology	1806cat	1789	1: 338 2: 337/i, 342/ii, iii, iv 3: 334/i, 341/ii, 334/iii Arranged Lachnith
627-28	Six Quatuors: pfte	Pt.1-2	Anthology	1806cat	1789	Contents identical with PNs 623-26 Arranged Lachnith
629	Six Trios: 2fl va or fl vl vla			1834cat		Arranged Vanderhagen; unlocated
633-36	Petites pieces et rondeaux: pfte vn	liv.1-4	Anthology	1806cat	1791	1 in C: 334/iii 2 in C: 341/ii 3 in D: 312/ii 4 in D: 306/iii 5 in F: 338/ii 6 in G: 309/iiia 7 in G: 341/iii 8 in a minor: 276/i

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						9 in A: 335/iii 10 in A: 137/iii 11 in D: 342/iii 12 in D: 133/iii, iiii 13 in Bb: 136/ii 14 in Bb: 506/I, ib 15 in F: 136/iii, iiii 16 in F: 136/iv 17 in G: 274/ii 18 in G: 309/iv
637	Trois Sonates: pfte 4-m	liv.3	516-18	1799	1789	Unlocated [André, Op.23]
638	Sonate: pfte 4-m	liv.4		1799		Unlocated; contents unknown
671	5 ^e symphonie concertante: fl ob cor fag	No.5	115	1802	1802?	
675	Trois Trios concertantes: fl cl fag		474-76	1805	1803	
676	Trois Trios concertantes: fl vn vc		474-76	1805	1803	
680	2 ^e symphonie concertante: pfte vn	No.2	115	1805	1802/05	
721- 22	Douze Petits Duos: 2vn	Op.8 liv.1-2	538-40	1806cat	1806	

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PN	Title	Op	Ben	Published	Composed	Comments
723-24	Douze Petits Duos: 2fl	Op.8 liv.1-2	539-42	1806cat	1806	
725-26	Douze Petits Duos: 2vl	Op.8 liv.3-4		1806cat	Various	Probably: 1-6 = 538-43 7 in G: 580 8 in D: 574 9 in F: 575A 10 in Bb: 582 11 in a minor: 583 12 in C: 584
727-28	Douze Petits Duos: 2fl		539-42	1806cat	1806	
733	Six Duos: 2cl	liv.1		1803cat		Arranged Gebauer: unlocated; contents unknown
741	Six Duos: 2cl	liv.2		1803cat		Arranged Gebauer: unlocated; contents unknown

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Table 2: ‘Prussia’ Quartets Benton 331-342 (Trio Version)

André (1788) 1. 334 2. 340 3. 341 4. 336/iii	Beck [1788?]	Lachnith [1787-88] also Lachnitt, Lachnitz	Schmutz [1790]	Unspecified Arranger
	Bossler [1790] 334/i, 341/ii, 334/iii	Imbault Set 1 [1787] 1. 333 2. 332/i, iii 3. 335	André, 1790 1. 337/i, ii, 342/iii, iv 2. 336	Artaria [1788] 334/i, 341/ii, 334/iii Contents identical with Bossler
		Imbault Set 2 [1787] 1. 338 2. 337/i, 342/ii, iii, iv 3. 334/i, 341/ii, 334/iii		Schmitt [1787-91] Contents = Imbault Set 2
		Imbault Set 3 [1788] 1. 331 2. 340/i, iii 3. 346		
		Imbault Set 4 [1788] 1. 347/i , ii, 336/iii 2. 349 3. 336/ii, 348/iii		
		Andrews [1789–ca 93] Contents = Imbault Set 2		

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André	Beck	Lachnith	Schmutz	Unspecified
		Bland [1792] 1. 336/i, 348/iii 2. 347/iii 3. 336/iii		
		Boyer [1788–92] Contents = Imbault Set 3		
		Boyer [1788–92] Contents = Imbault Set 4		
		Dale [1791–ca 1802] Contents = Imbault Set 1		
		Dale [1795] Contents = Imbault Set 3		
		Dale [1795] Contents = Imbault Set 4		
		Hummel [1793] Contents = Imbault Set 2		
		Hummel [1793] Contents = Imbault Set 4		
		Le Duc [1787-97] Contents = Imbault Set 2		
		Le Duc [1797-98] Contents = Imbault Set 1		
		Le Duc [1797-98] Contents = Imbault Set 3		
		Le Duc [1797-98] Contents = Imbault Set 4		

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André	Beck	Lachnith	Schmutz	Unspecified
		Longman [1788] Contents = Imbault Set 1		
		Longman [1788] Contents = Imbault Set 2		
		Longman [1789] Contents = Imbault Set 3		
		Longman [1789] Contents = Imbault Set 4		
		Pleyel [1803-08] Contents = Imbault Set 1		
		Pleyel [1834cat] Contents = Imbault Set 2		
		Pleyel [1803-05] Contents = Imbault Set 3		
		Pleyel [1834cat] Contents = Imbault Set 4		